



# GROES NEWS

January 2009



Proud sponsors of Siena Hoerner and her pony Machno Ramozes. Our local dressage champion!

## Britain's Oldest Pancake Day Celebrations?

**New research has revealed that the Groes Inn, could be the site of Britain's oldest surviving Pancake Day celebrations.**

Local historian Stan Wicklen explained: "Pancake Day, or Shrove Tuesday, was once part of a much bigger Welsh religious celebration, dating back at least 1400 years. There is strong evidence that the Groes Inn could have played an important part in the original festival."

The Groes has been a licensed house since 1573, but the site on which it stands is known to have provided refreshments for travelers, pilgrims and drovers for many centuries before that.

The inn is built at Groesyndd (Ynyd's Cross), believed to be the site of a wooden cross marking the junction for the ancient Royal Ferry at Tal-y-Cafn. And Pancake Day in Wales is called Dydd Mawrth Ynyd (Ynyd's Tuesday).

Stan has discovered Welsh manuscripts that refer to Ynyd as a sixth century saint, who gave his name to Gwyl Ynyd (Ynyd's Festival) – an early religious celebration, notorious for its feasting, drinking, singing and dancing. It was recorded by Tudor historian Polydore Virgil (1470-1555) as being as important in Wales as the Roman festival of Bacchus.

"The connection between Ynyd's Festival and the Groes Inn strongly suggests that there have been pancake festivities there stretching back into the mists of time," he said. "It may even be the oldest site to have celebrated Pancake Day continuously in Britain."

Ynyd's Festival originally included customs such as parading along country lanes wearing masks and playing tricks on passers by, as well as feasting on pancakes and ale. But as the other jollities have faded, Pancake Day at the Groes has continued to thrive.

Groes Inn proprietor Justin Humphreys said: "We have been celebrating Pancake Day for as long as anyone can remember and pancakes of all sorts are always a popular choice on the menu all year round."

"It's good to know we are keeping such an ancient tradition alive, so our chefs will definitely be laying on something special for Shrove Tuesday on February 24th."



## Groes Ale is coming!



Regular visitors to the Groes will know of the very popular Orme beer, brewed by our family across the river in Glan Conwy. The success and popularity of this fine beer has led us to design our very own brew. A light, hoppy style cask ale which will be available exclusively to Groes customers in early Summer. Watch this space!

## An Evening of Fine Wine and Food, Jan 30th

**Now a regular event at the Groes and always very popular.**

Our head chef Mark and our wine expert Alex have put their heads together once again to produce a very special menu with dishes such as - Brown onion soup with Caerphilly croutons, Pan fried pork medallions with a Welsh honey sauce and Black forest gâteaux with kirsch foam.



Starting with a sparkling wine reception, each course is accompanied by a specially selected wine this time from New Zealand, Italy and France, chosen to enhance and compliment the flavours of each dish. Alex will give an introductory talk and be on hand as ever to explain his wine choices. A limited number of tickets at £36.95 are now available, please call the Groes for more information, full menu and booking requirements.

## The Box a Whiff of Nostalgia

By H. J. Chantrey.

This was my big day, I was 15 and on my way to my first real job. My mum and I set off by tram bound for John Player and Sons tobacco factory in Nottingham, all my dreams had come true!

After changing into my brand new overalls I was introduced to a massive machine. The supervisor demonstrated how to operate the machine to produce the boxes which would be used to pack cigarettes and tobacco for transportation all over the world and with strict instructions to "keep my fingers out of the way" I was left to it.

Before long I was turning out about 150 box panels a day, six days a week for the princely sum of 21 shillings and threepence.

When war broke out my country needed me so at the tender age of 18 I enlisted in Her Majesty's Royal Marines. After the war, I was fortunate enough to return to Player's but having spent several years as a POW I could no longer cope with the smell of tobacco and sought alternative employment.

Many years have passed since then and I had almost forgotten those early days a Player's, I am now 89! So imagine my surprise when I saw an article about the Groes in a local paper and a photograph showing one of those old players boxes that I made when I was a lad. I was delighted when the Humphreys responded to my enquires and kindly invited my family and I to the Groes so that we could view the box.



Our friends, Jim and Edna Chantrey.

It has been a wonderful trip down memory lane and I greatly appreciate the Humphreys hospitality and for allowing me to share the memories evoked by a nostalgic whiff of smoke.

## St. Valentine's Day falls on a Saturday this year.

So why not treat the one you love to dinner at the Groes? We offer a special romantic menu with lots of dishes designed for sharing. Tickets are now available at £35 per head including Champagne on arrival. Or really spoil yourself and combine with our special spring break.

## Special Spring Break

Available for a stay of two nights or more during April, May and June 2009.  
Midweek (Sun - Thur) Standard £130, Balcony £158, Deluxe £185  
Weekend (Fri and Sat) Standard £150, Balcony £185 Deluxe £220  
Prices are per room, per night, based on two people sharing and include dinner in our bar or dining room to a value of £60 per couple, per night.  
Also with this very special break, we offer a third night at half price.\*  
All breaks and offers are subject to availability and/or amendment without notice. Normal booking terms and conditions apply.  
Not available during bank holidays or special events or in conjunction with any other offer. \*Lowest priced night is half price.

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