

## **Statement for the National Assembly for Wales' Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee inquiry into the future for media in Wales**

by Beverly Thomas, managing editor of Cambrian News Ltd (Wales' biggest-selling weekly newspaper), who will be representing Tindle Newspapers Ltd at the hearing on 1 December 20110

In this statement, the intention is to give a brief history of the Tindle Newspaper Group and its standing in Wales; along with our views on the threats currently facing the Welsh media, on the future for local newspapers in Wales and on how local newspapers like ours could be helped to flourish and grow and continue to serve their communities well. Also attached is a breakdown of Tindle newspaper coverage in Wales, with details of each centre.

### **The Tindle Group:**

The Tindle Newspaper Group has more than 200 weekly, fortnightly and monthly newspapers – including a new paid-for weekly title launched just this week.

Its newspapers in Wales have a total circulation of nearly 105,000, and around 216,000 readers, covering a large proportion of the country. Tindle employs more than 200 staff in Wales and also provides freelance employment for hundreds of others.

Tindle has six centres in Wales, producing the following Welsh titles: Abergavenny Chronicle, Brecon and Radnor Express, Cambrian News, County Echo, Glamorgan Gem Series, Monmouthshire Beacon, Tenby Observer, Y Cymro and Y Dydd.

The company also has a further three centres just over the border which produce the Ross Gazette, The Forester and the Forest of Dean Review, papers which also circulate in Wales.

Tindle's involvement with Wales began 33 years ago, when Sir Ray Tindle, the founder and sole shareholder, rescued the Tenby Observer after it went into administration. He rallied the staff and insisted that every word in the paper should be about Tenby or have a direct bearing on the inhabitants. His prompt action saved the paper and, within a short time, the staff brought the newspaper back into profit and circulation returned. In 2003 the Prince of Wales visited Tenby to lead the celebrations for the newspaper's 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary and it still flourishes today.

The success story led other newspaper proprietors in Wales to approach Sir Ray and he continued to acquire Welsh titles over the last three decades, giving the Welsh general managers a lot of autonomy over their businesses and ploughing profits back, with further acquisitions, launches and facilities.

Most recent - in 2005 - is Sir Ray's acquisition of two Welsh language publications – Y Cymro, Wales' only Welsh language weekly newspaper; and Y Dydd, a monthly publication in Meirionnydd.

Sir Ray's philosophy is that his papers should be local community newspapers with plenty of local names, faces and places.

That same philosophy has seen Tindle Newspapers grow not only in Wales but also across the south of England. Each general manager is given responsibility for driving his or her business forward to the benefit of the local community and the Tindle group.

## **The current situation:**

The Tindle Group believes that truly local weekly newspapers are the key to a vibrant and successful future for the printed media in Wales. There is evidence to show that it is the truly local, community-orientated newspapers which are riding the current recession better than other categories of newspapers. Their market is local, loyalty amongst readers is strong, and they do not have such a heavy reliance on the national, recruitment and property advertising, the huge reduction in which is hitting larger and more national publications hard.

Despite the recession, Tindle Newspapers has continued acquiring publications, and has also launched new publications in core areas. Just this week, Sir Ray has launched a new paid-for weekly for Wales, the Chepstow Review, which will circulate in Chepstow and Caldicot, with a cover price of 40p. He also, over the summer launched the Pembroke Dock Observer, which is under the management of the Tenby Observer team in Pembrokeshire. There are also plans for new launches in other centres in Wales in the near future. This is part of Sir Ray's commitment to the communities his company serves and a strengthening of the Tindle stable.

We have been hit by the economic downturn like any other group but most of our local community papers around the country are performing better than the average and providing the profits to keep the others going.

Our publications are holding their own circulation-wise – not seeing the huge drops some papers have recorded. Indeed, it has been during the recession that one of Tindle's papers, the Cambrian News, has risen up the rankings to become Wales' biggest-selling weekly newspaper.

Sir Ray's commitment to not make any redundancies (including in editorial departments) makes him stand out from other companies which have been pushing through serious reductions in staff. While there has been some natural wastage, our staffing numbers remain buoyant and quality has not been compromised.

The two Welsh language publications are an important part of our Welsh stable of newspapers, but it is a difficult market, with little funding and reductions in advertising revenue, because of a previous reliance on the public sector. That is one area which should benefit from a change in funding/assistance strategies to secure the future and enable growth.

The Tindle Group do not believe that local community newspapers are under threat from the internet. Certainly it has not been our experience in Wales. Tindle newspapers are using their own websites to enhance their publications and encourage readers and advertisers to move between the two.

In Wales, our strategy has been to make sure that our websites do not steal the thunder of our weekly newspapers. So tasters of stories are included, but readers must go to the papers to get the full story. Also, our paid-for e-editions have been a success, especially in mid and north Wales and with our Welsh language weekly – enabling readers to access the titles wherever they are in the world (but not for free).

Of course, the print media has to evolve, to continue to embrace the digital age – but with careful management and balance, newspapers have an increasing role to play, especially in Wales, where a sense of community and belonging is perhaps more in evidence than in other more industrialised areas.

## **The future:**

Welsh newspapers would welcome more structured support from the government and public bodies.

What must be borne in mind are the particular difficulties that papers in rural Welsh areas face, with the problems of the transport network and the huge distribution and operational costs.

In particular, we would like to see less dominance of the regional dailies in the public notices market. A commitment by public bodies to giving more public notice business to weekly papers spread across Wales could lead to a link-up between independent publishers, giving advertisers greater penetration.

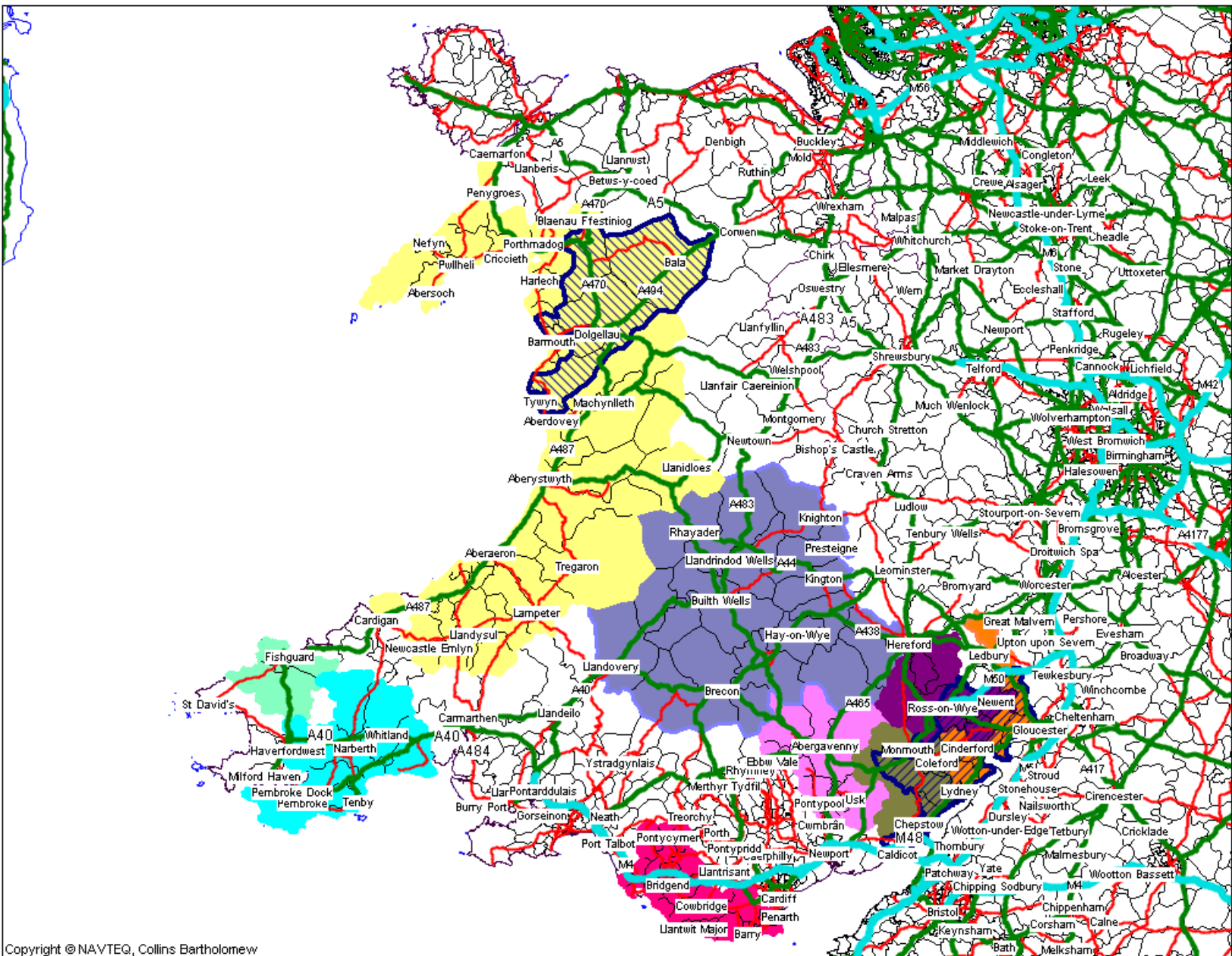
Local authorities need tighter regulation over their own publications, which carry censored news and threaten the viability of commercial newspapers. Local newspapers are vital in Wales to give local communities a voice and to hold public bodies to account. In the main, websites and national papers do not get down to a local enough level to do this. What councils spend on their own publications could be ploughed into advertising features and supplements in their local papers to the benefit of both.

Imperative is a change in the way Welsh language media is supported to ensure the survival of the few Welsh-language publications which remain. Plurality is vital but these are challenging times for Welsh publications like Y Cymro. More government subsidies and grant-aid, and more advertising support from public bodies would be welcomed. Also, what about examining a link-up between the media and training bodies to offer apprenticeships/work experience, which could lead to a reduction in heavy newspaper staffing costs?

Beverly Thomas  
Managing Editor, Cambrian News Ltd.  
Tindle Newspapers Ltd

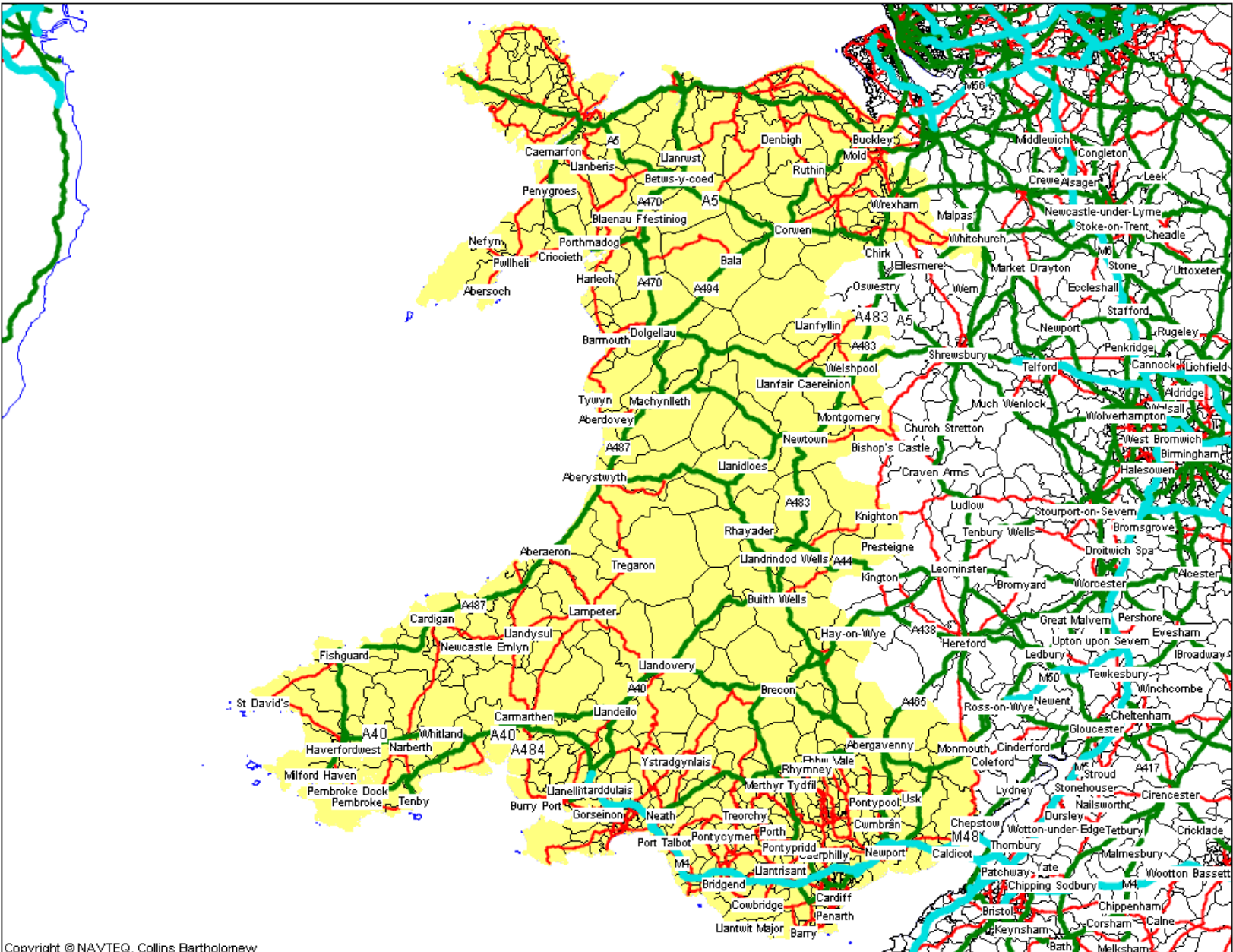
10 November 2011

# Tindle - Wales



- Abergavenny Chronicle
  - Brecon & Radnor Express
  - Cambrian News
  - County Echo
  - Glamorgan Gem
  - Tenby Observer Group
  - THE FORESTER - CINDERFORD
  - Monmouthshire Beacon
  - Ross Gazette
  - Y Dydd
  - Forest & Wye Valley Review
  - Motorway
  - Trunk
  - A Class
- 10m

# Y Cymro - the only national Welsh language newspaper



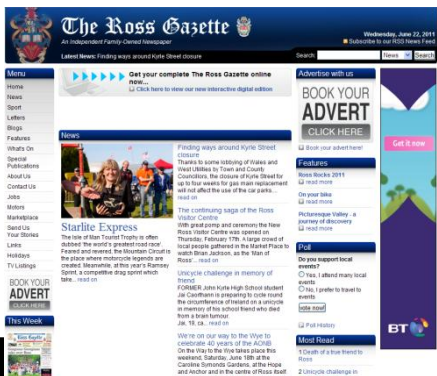
- Y Cymro
- Motorway
- Trunk
- A Class

10m



- Paid-for weekly tabloid newspaper.
- Published Wednesday.
- Circulation: 4,714 April 2009 to March 2010.
- Total A.I.R.; 12,703
- Readership social grade profile: 58.20% ABC1, 41.80% C2D&E.
- Providing the highest reach of Ross On Wye by some way!

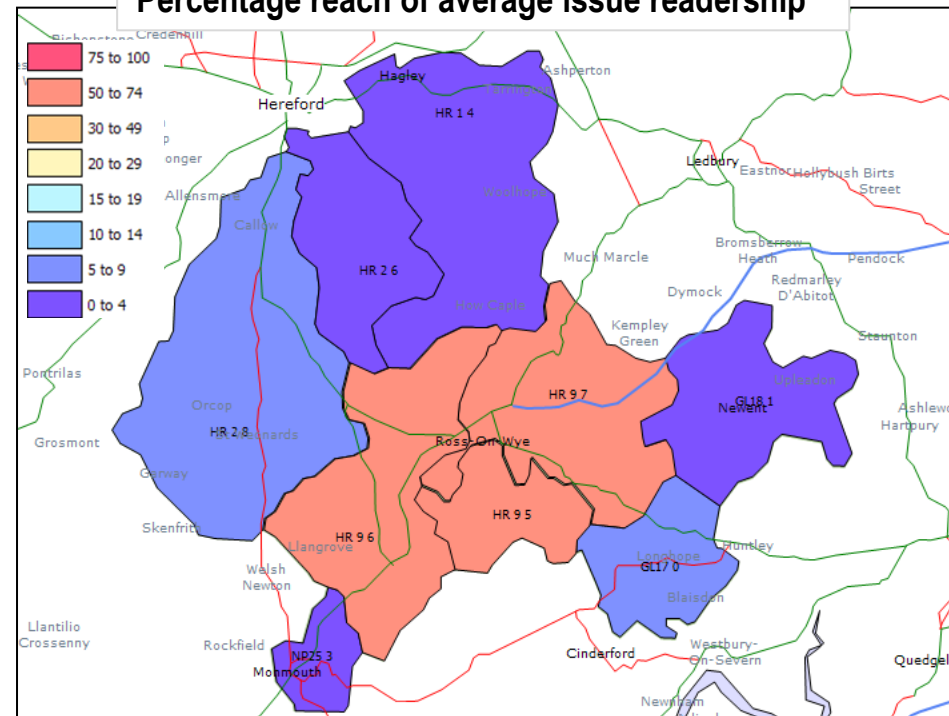
Ross-on-Wye is an historic market town described as “the jewel in the crown of Herefordshire”. It has easy access to the Midlands and South Wales. A thriving forward-thinking town needs a local newspaper such as The Ross Gazette to reflect the life within it. The Ross Gazette has always been at the heart of the local community supported by local families for generations, it appeals to all age groups. In its role as the Town’s weekly newspaper, it has served the area around Ross-on-Wye for almost 150 years.



- Content website updated daily.
- Average weekly page views: 1,643.
- Average weekly unique visitors: 414

Source: Google Analytics May 2011.

## Percentage reach of average issue readership



Location	Population	Households	Adult AIR	AIR %	Circulation	H'hold %
Cinderford	22681	11564	223	0.98	74	0.64%
Hereford Rural	38450	19961	397	1.03	141	0.71%
Monmouth	14855	7623	194	1.3	68	0.89%
Newent	9838	4867	52	0.53	19	0.39%
Ross On Wye	17215	9315	11837	68.76	4412	47.36%

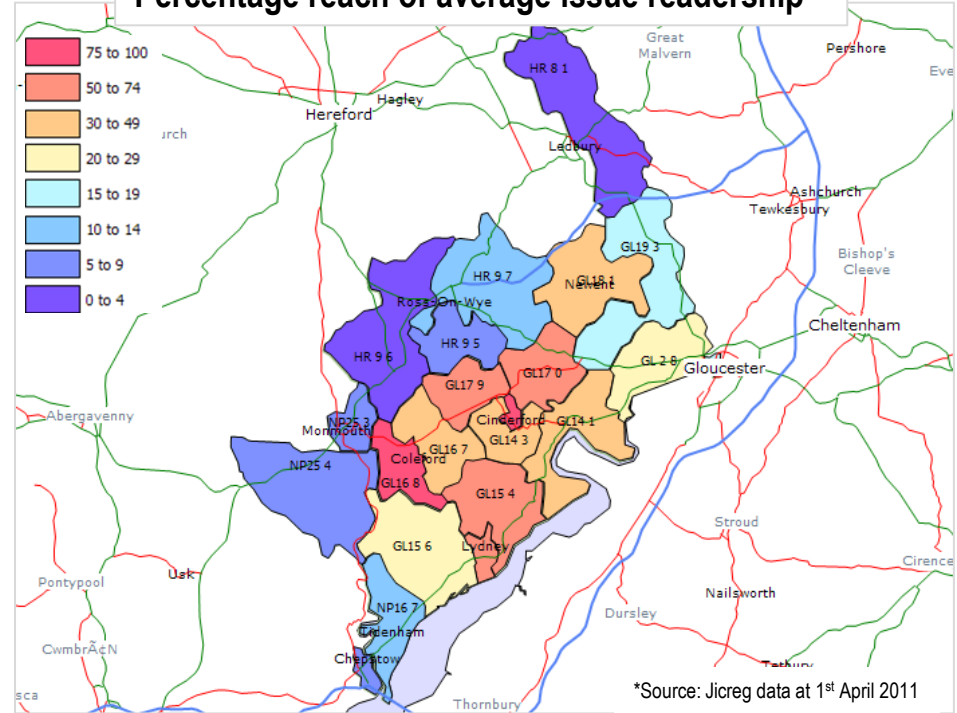
Source: Jicreg data at 1<sup>st</sup> April 2011



- Paid-for weekly tabloid newspaper.
- Published Thursday.
- Circulation: 9,791 Jan 2010 to June 2010.
- Total A.I.R.; 37,929
- Readership social grade profile: 49.41% ABC1, 50.59% C2D&E.
- Providing the highest paid-for readership across the Forest of Dean.

Dedicated to serving the local communities within the Forest of Dean, The Forester is a successful paid-for weekly newspaper published every Thursday. Its broad range of news with targeted editorial editions and information ensures it caters for all needs. The Forester which benefits from \*33% reach within its marketing area joins a portfolio of Tindle newspapers with high coverage within the rural market towns positioned between the commercial centres of Gloucester, Hereford, Newport and Bristol.

### Percentage reach of average issue readership



\*Source: Jicreg data at 1st April 2011

Location	Population	Households	Adult AIR	AIR %	Circulation	H'hold %
Chepstow	19608	10077	1076	5.49	285	2.83%
Cinderford	22681	11564	14171	62.48	3629	31.38%
Coleford	11419	5938	7376	64.6	1898	31.96%
Gloucester	126214	66723	1648	1.31	417	0.62%
Ledbury	13026	6930	62	0.47	17	0.25%
Lydney	17703	9128	9038	51.05	2321	25.43%
Monmouth	14855	7623	615	4.14	162	2.13%
Newent	9838	4867	2453	24.93	667	13.70%
Ross On Wye	17215	9315	1491	8.66	395	4.24%



- Content website updated daily.
- Average weekly page views: 5013.
- Average weekly unique visitors: 993

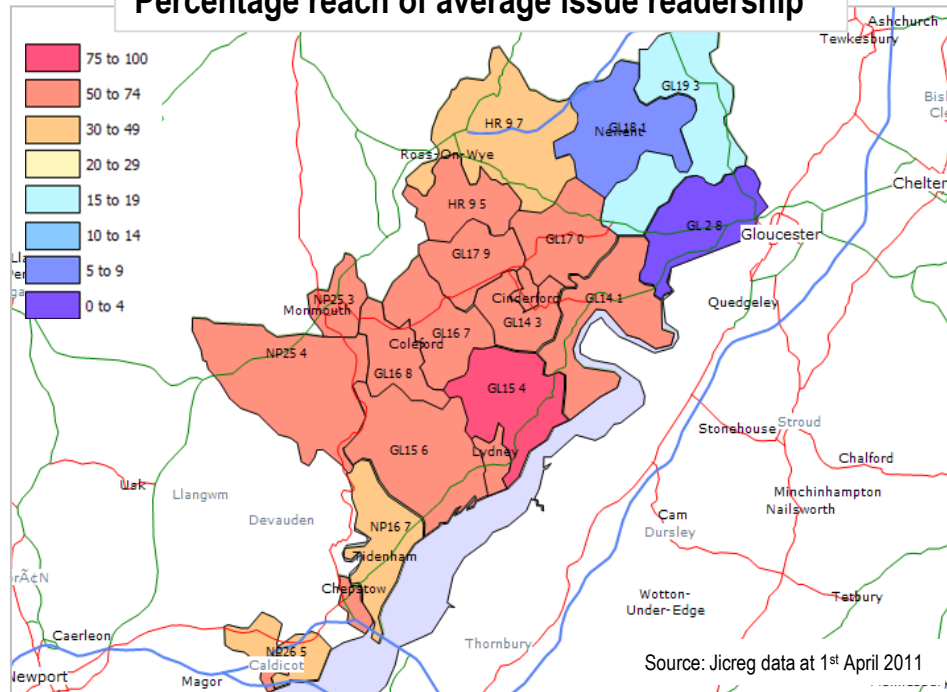
Source: Google Analytics May 2011.



- Free weekly tabloid newspaper.
- Published Wednesday.
- Circulation: 44,527 Jan to Dec 2010.
- Total A.I.R.; 64,844
- Readership social grade profile: 53.96% ABC1, 46.04% C2D&E.
- Providing the highest reach of Caldicot, Chepstow, Cinderford, Coleford and Lydney.

Launched in 1982 in an area said to be suspicious of change, the Forest of Dean and Wye Valley Review quickly became accepted as a new and fresh voice for the area. Its open platform and encouragement to readers to have a say has always proved popular: from far Left to far Right, devout Christian to convinced atheist, all views have been aired in its pages, and this will continue. Now owned by the Tindle Group the success continues. The weekly circulation is now audited at more than 43,000, making it one of the biggest weekly newspapers in the West of England and South Wales.

**Percentage reach of average issue readership**



Location	Population	Households	Adult AIR	AIR %	Circulation	H'hold %
Caldicot	11186	5643	6282	56.16	4194	74.32%
Chepstow	19608	10077	8585	43.78	5862	58.17%
Cinderford	22681	11564	16057	70.8	10803	93.42%
Coleford	11419	5938	8093	70.87	5558	93.60%
Gloucester	126214	66723	95	0.08	61	0.09%
Lydney	17703	9128	12861	72.65	8749	95.85%
Monmouth	14855	7623	5393	36.31	3580	46.96%
Newent	9838	4867	1256	12.77	794	16.31%
Ross On Wye	17215	9315	6222	36.14	4493	48.23%



- Content website updated daily.
- Average weekly page views: 3,939.
- Average weekly unique visitors: 1,315

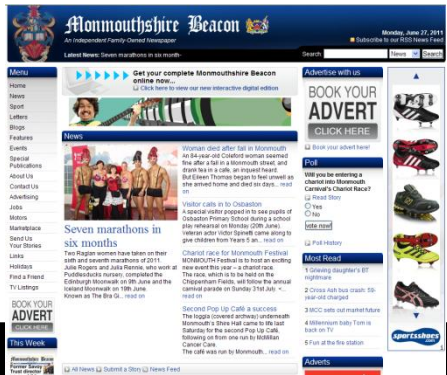
Source: Google Analytics May 2011.





- Paid-for weekly tabloid newspaper.
- Published Wednesday.
- Circulation: 4,926 April 2009 to March 2010.
- Total A.I.R.; 13,916
- Readership social grade profile: 63.20% ABC1, 36.80% C2D&E.
- Providing the highest reach of Monmouth by some way!

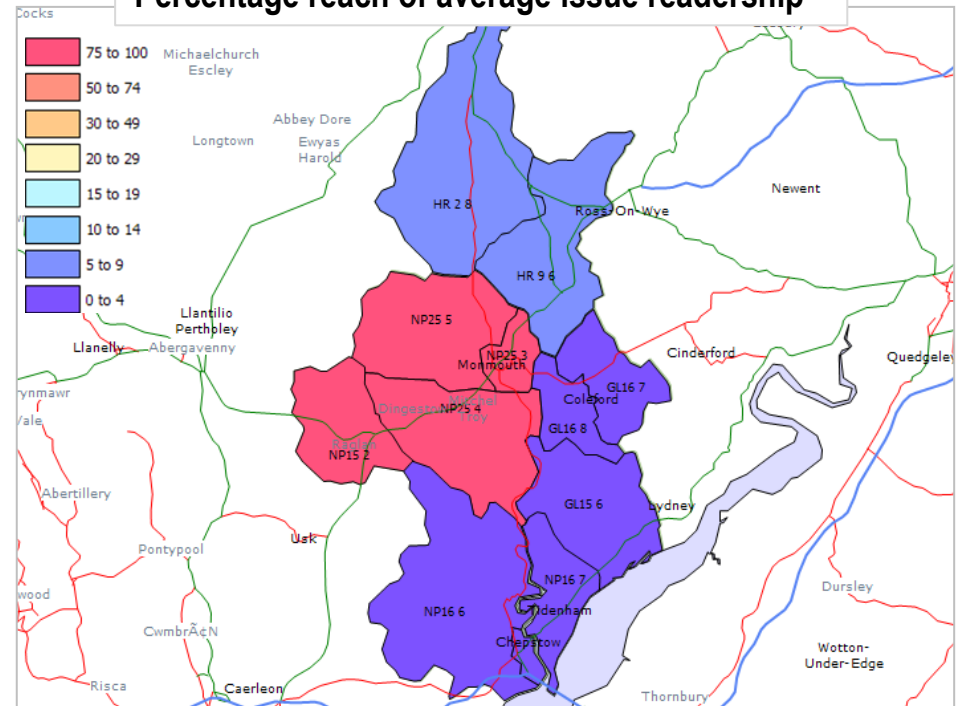
The first Beacon was published on October 14th 1837; the Beacon now plays a pivotal role in the local community, printing each week numerous exclusive columns from all sectors of the community. These include columns from Members of parliament, the Assembly member, the Chamber of Commerce, the Citizens Advice Bureau, the County Councilor, County trading standards officer, Christian comment and others. Our ever increasing pages of letters and sports reports and pictures fully demonstrate the Beacon's role as the newspaper at the heart of the local community.



- Content website updated daily.
- Average weekly page views: 2,948.
- Average weekly unique visitors: 906

Source: Google Analytics May 2011.

**Percentage reach of average issue readership**



Location	Population	Households	Adult AIR	AIR %	Circulation	H'hold %
Chepstow	19608	10077	489	2.49	171	1.70%
Coleford	11419	5938	397	3.48	143	2.41%
Hereford Rural	38450	19961	246	0.64	86	0.43%
Lydney	17703	9128	50	0.28	18	0.20%
Monmouth	14855	7623	12462	83.89	4411	57.86%
Ross On Wye	17215	9315	272	1.58	97	1.04%

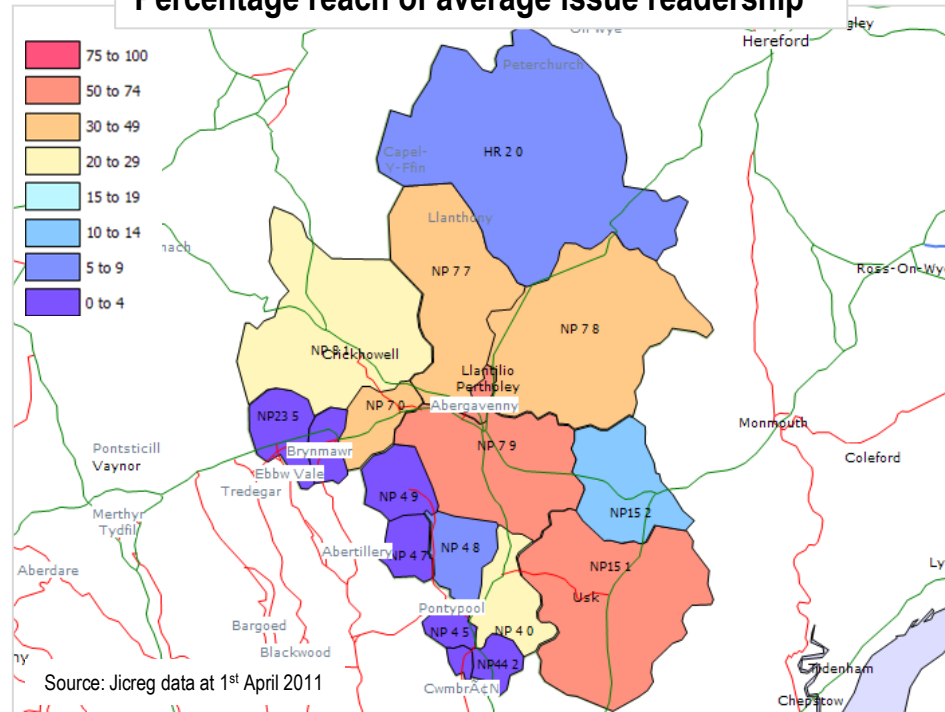
Source: Jicreg data at 1st April 2011



- Paid-for weekly broadsheet newspaper.
- Published Thursday.
- Circulation: 7,046 April 2009 to March 2010.
- Total A.I.R.; 18,995
- Readership social grade profile: 60.17% ABC1, 39.83% C2D&E.
- Providing the highest reach of Abergavenny & Usk.

The Abergavenny Chronicle was founded in 1871, today the Chronicle is one of only a handful of weekly broadsheet newspapers published in Wales. Read by almost 50% of adults in the Abergavenny location the Chronicle has seen off rival publishers with aspirations of covering Abergavenny.

## Percentage reach of average issue readership



Source: Jicreg data at 1st April 2011

Location	Population	Households	Adult AIR	AIR %	Circulation	H'hold %
Abergavenny	26392	14325	12925	48.97	4873	34.02%
Abertillery	25242	13699	320	1.27	123	0.90%
Blaenavon	5211	2760	211	4.05	77	2.79%
Cwmbran	38459	20456	296	0.77	110	0.54%
Ebbw Vale	18843	10248	72	0.38	27	0.26%
Hereford Rural	38450	19961	250	0.65	90	0.45%
Monmouth	14855	7623	272	1.83	95	1.25%
Pontypool						
Abersychan	32919	16862	1958	5.95	689	4.09%
Usk	4696	2434	2692	57.32	962	39.52%

- Content website updated daily.
- Average weekly page views: 4,859.
- Average weekly unique visitors: 1,018

Source: Google Analytics May 2011.





- Paid-for weekly broadsheet newspaper.
- Published Thursday.
- Circulation: 9,623 April 2009 to March 2010.
- Total A.I.R.; 25,957
- Readership social grade profile: 58.08% ABC1, 41.92% C2D&E.
- Providing the highest reach of Brecon, Builth Wells and Hay On Wye.

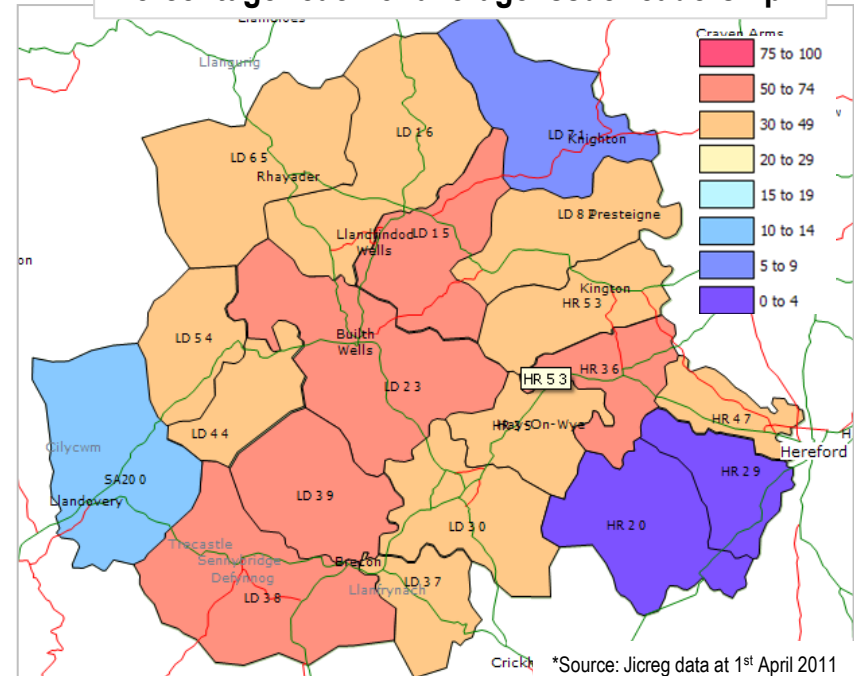
The Brecon and Radnor Express has existed in one form or another since 1892. The modern paper is a vibrant broadsheet with eight editions, that cover vast tracts of beautiful countryside - including all of the Brecon Beacons National Park. Significantly Hereford is the areas key commercial centre and \*73% of B&R readers fall with Herefords dominant trade area despite having to travel up to an hour to shop.



- Content website updated daily.
- Average weekly page views: 1,719.
- Average weekly unique visitors: 611.

Source: Google Analytics June 2011.

## Percentage reach of average issue readership



Location	Population	Households	Adult AIR	AIR %	Circulation	H/hold %
Brecon	16664	8836	8378	50.27	3067	34.71%
Builth Wells	6728	3540	3800	56.48	1381	39.01%
Hay On Wye	6723	3519	3264	48.55	1176	33.42%
Hereford Rural	38450	19961	1702	4.43	585	2.93%
Knighton	9727	5144	267	2.75	100	1.94%
Llandoverly	6488	3220	428	6.6	149	4.63%
Llandrindod Wells	9551	5500	4507	47.19	1794	32.62%
Llanidloes Rhayader	6527	3568	840	12.87	328	9.19%
Presteigne	7816	4264	2771	35.45	1043	24.46%

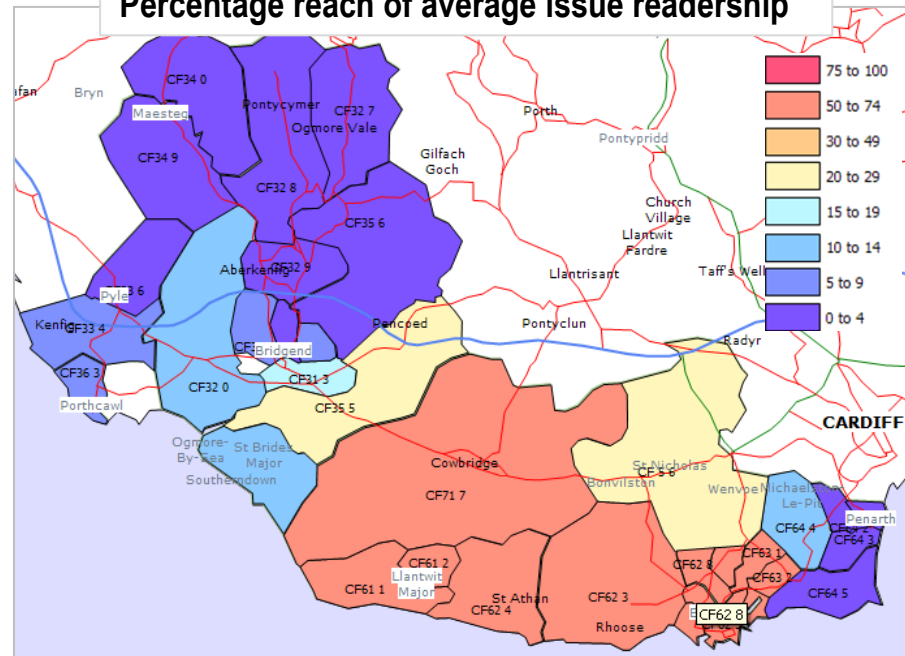
Source: Jicreg data at 1st April 2011



- Free weekly tabloid newspaper.
- Published Thursday.
- Circulation: 41,621 January to December 2010.
- Total A.I.R.; 55,657
- Readership social grade profile: 57.36% ABC1, 42.64% C2D&E.
- Providing the highest reach of across the affluent Vale of Glamorgan especially in the key locations of Barry, Cowbridge and Llantwit Major.

The Vale of Glamorgan in one of the most affluent counties in Wales and is in close proximity to Cardiff. The 'GEM' Series are quality free newspaper that proudly claim that they are the Vale's longest serving community Newspaper. With a bias to strong campaigning editorial the 'GEM' Series is a fine example of what a true local community newspaper is all about. The Bridgend and Porthcawl edition of the Gem is a quality 'pick-up' title.

### Percentage reach of average issue readership



Location	Population	Households	Adult AIR	AIR %	Circulation	H'hold %
Barry	53043	27818	33473	63.11	23846	85.72%
Bridgend	44081	23814	2240	5.08	2240	9.41%
Bridgend Rural	28979	14856	2075	7.16	2075	13.97%
Cardiff	283495	142710	1000	0.35	1000	0.70%
Cowbridge	7602	3831	5373	70.67	3673	95.88%
Llantwit Major	11810	5947	8495	71.93	5786	97.29%
Maesteg	20310	11541	140	0.69	140	1.21%
Penarth	25071	13560	1426	5.69	1426	10.52%
Porthcawl	26329	13524	1435	5.45	1435	10.61%

- Content website updated daily.
- Average weekly page views: 3,294.
- Average weekly unique visitors: 1,083

Source: Google Analytics June 2011.

Source: Jicreg data at 1st April 2011



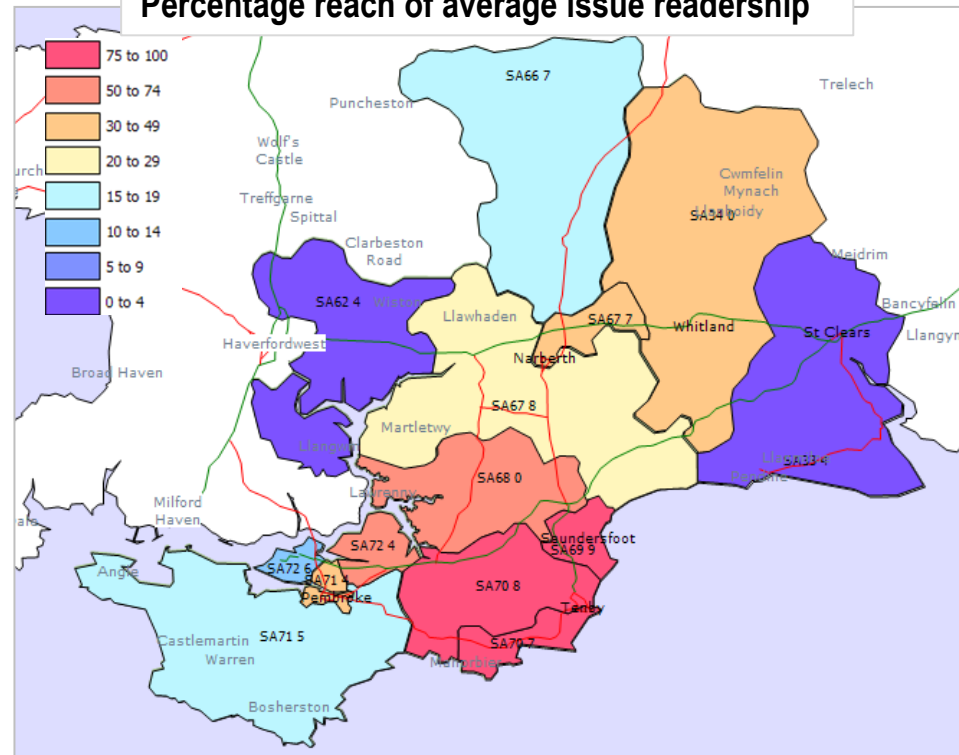


- Paid-for weekly tabloid newspaper.
- Published Friday.
- Circulation: 6,851 January to December 2010.
- Total A.I.R.; 18,277
- Readership social grade profile: 58.20% ABC1, 41.80% C2D&E.
- Providing the highest reach of Tenby.

The Tenby Observer is over 150 years old. As well as providing an invaluable news resource to a large area of South West Wales, it is also popular with Tenby exiles and people who have made Pembrokeshire their "second home".

Also under the 'Tenby Observer' banner are the 'Narberth and Whitland Observer', established 1906, the 'Pembroke and Pembroke Dock Observer' launched in 2011.

## Percentage reach of average issue readership



- Content website updated daily.
- Average weekly page views: 6,950.
- Average weekly unique visitors: 1,567

Source: Google Analytics June 2011.



Location	Population	Households	Adult AIR	AIR %	Circulation	H'hold %
Carmarthen Rural	21411	11355	41	0.19	16	0.14%
Haverfordwest	28783	15813	29	0.1	11	0.07%
Narberth Whitland	11946	6450	3474	29.08	1293	20.05%
Pembroke	17045	9175	3711	21.77	1366	14.89%
Tenby	14485	7947	11022	76.09	4169	52.46%

Source: Jicreg data at 1<sup>st</sup> April 2011



Latest News: Celebration to welcome new mayor to the job



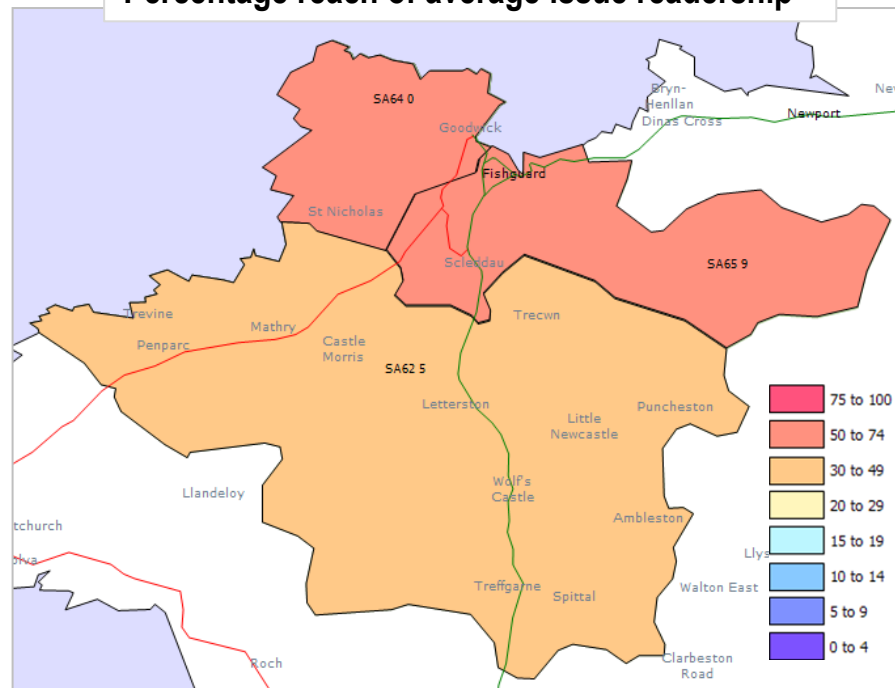
- Paid-for weekly tabloid newspaper.
- Published Friday.
- Circulation: 2,144 January to December 2010.
- Total A.I.R.; 5,746
- Readership social grade profile: 59.12% ABC1, 40.88% C2D&E.
- Providing the highest reach of Fishguard Goodwick.

The County Echo is your weekly newspaper for Fishguard, Goodwick, St Davids, Letterston, Dinas, Newport and Cardigan and founded in August 1893.

The 16-page tabloid newspaper is published on a Friday and costs 38p.

A new website for the newspaper has recently been set up – [www.countyecho.co.uk](http://www.countyecho.co.uk)

**Percentage reach of average issue readership**



- Content website updated daily.
- Average weekly page views: 916.
- Average weekly unique visitors: 273.

Source: Google Analytics June 2011.

Location	Population	Households	Adult AIR	AIR %	Circulation	H'hold %
Fishguard Goodwick	8054	4410	3867	48.02	1451	85.72%
Haverfordwest	28783	15813	1879	6.53	693	9.41%

Source: Jicreg data at 1<sup>st</sup> April 2011

For further information telephone: 01348 874445

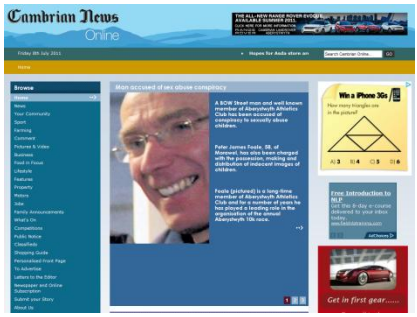
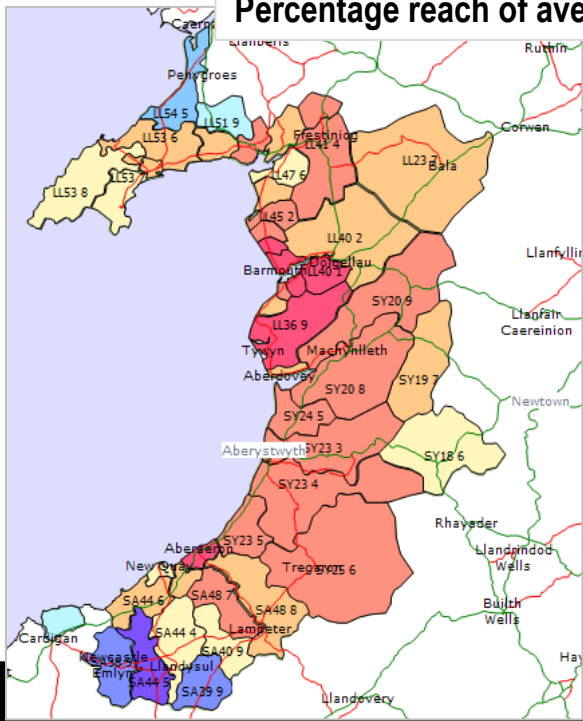


- Paid-for weekly tabloid newspaper.
- Published Wednesday/Thursday.
- Circulation: 22,546 January – December 2010.
- Total A.I.R.; 63,170
- Readership social grade profile: 58.43% ABC1, 41.57% C2D&E.
- Providing the highest reach of all locations highlighted in yellow.

The Cambrian News is an award-winning weekly newspaper, with a huge circulation area in mid, west and north Wales. It has five editions – covering Aberystwyth, south Ceredigion, Montgomeryshire, Meirionnydd and Arfon/Dwyfor. Such is the Cambrian News's geographical spread that it circulates in five different Welsh counties, Ceredigion, Powys, Gwynedd, north Carmarthenshire and north Pembrokeshire, and covers 3,000 square miles.

The Cambrian News is a tabloid newspaper and is unique in that three of its editions – Aberystwyth, South and Machynlleth & Llanidloes - go to press on a Tuesday, while the two Gwynedd editions – Meirionnydd and Arfon/Dwyfor – go to press on a Wednesday.

### Percentage reach of average issue readership



**Weekly print & online audience across the total marketing area**  
 Cambrian News (print) 63,171 a.i.r. (47.03%)  
 Cambrian News (on-line) 3,390 (2.52%)  
**Combined net weekly audience 64,947 (48.35%).**  
 FACT – 52% of online users do not reader the print version of the Cambrian News.

Source: Jicreg data at 1<sup>st</sup> April 2011 applied through Telmar.

Location	Population	Households	Adult AIR	AIR %	Circulation	HH %
Aberystwyth	32223	15656	20124	62.45	6747	43.10%
Bala	3469	1784	1368	39.42	485	27.19%
Barmouth	3472	1902	2513	72.37	948	49.84%
Blaenau Ffestiniog	5907	3281	3198	54.13	1229	37.46%
Caernarfon	27224	14608	378	1.39	133	0.91%
Cardigan	11381	6138	668	5.87	250	4.07%
Cardigan Rural	18210	9059	2105	11.56	709	7.83%
Carmarthen Rural	21411	11355	189	0.89	70	0.62%
Criccieth	2355	1228	926	39.32	333	27.12%
Dolgellau	3945	2132	2455	62.24	923	43.29%
Harlech	2942	1593	1214	41.25	452	28.37%
Lampeter	10229	5143	5048	49.35	1705	33.15%
Llanidloes Rhayader	6527	3568	1196	18.32	441	12.36%
Machynlleth	6854	3767	4610	67.26	1758	46.67%
New Quay Aberaeron	5223	2693	2850	54.56	1014	37.65%
Portmadog	6619	3568	3486	52.67	1316	36.88%
Pwllheli	14938	7941	5162	34.56	1897	23.89%
Tregaron	3780	2097	2272	60.09	869	41.44%
Tywyn	6673	3641	3409	51.09	1267	34.80%

Source: Jicreg data at 1<sup>st</sup> April 2011

- Y Cymro ("The Welshman") is a paid for newspaper published every Friday.
- **Y Cymro is the only national Welsh language newspaper published entirely through the medium of Welsh.**
- It is dedicated to serving a loyal readership throughout Wales and has been established since 1932.
- In May 2004 it was purchased by Cambrian News Ltd. The content is now more appealing to all age groups and aimed at a wider readership with news items, features and sports articles relevant to Welsh people.
- Potential niche market of 100,000 fluent Welsh speakers plus those learning Welsh.
- Bilingual content is also acceptable.
- Circulation: 2,831 January to December 2010 - wholesalers distribute and they are split into areas:
- Chester 1175 copies to north Wales.
- Newport Gwent 350 copies to East & South Glamorgan and Gwent.
- Shrewsbury 440 copies to mid Wales
- Swansea 100 south west Wales.
- Postcode allocation is not available as it would be reams of paper, could be 1 newspaper to 1 post code area, as it is so thinly spread all over Wales.



Source: Jicreg data at 1<sup>st</sup> April 2011





Paid-for weekly tabloid newspaper.

Published Saturday.

Circulation: 434

Established in 1868, Y Dydd weekly newspaper covers Dolgellau, the old county town of Meirionnydd and its surrounds.

The predominantly Welsh language publication was acquired by Cambrian News Ltd in November 2003 when approached by the previous owners to prevent its closure with the retirement of its staff.

Continuing the philosophy of community led newspapers, Y Dydd is well suited to Cambrian News Ltd's portfolio of quality community newspapers.

