

World of food

Conwy Feast serves up all-local banquet.

By JILL TUNSTALL

SOME 10 years ago, for an article in the Daily Post, I attempted to live on local food for a week.

For me that meant food from Conwy and in those days it wasn't easy. Without my mum's courgettes and Snowdonia Cheese I would have starved.

At the time everybody was concerned with organic food – still a relative novelty.

Few gave much thought to the fact that much of it had been flown half way across the world.

Food miles was a discussion for the future.

How things have changed.

Although food was being grown and raised in Conwy county a decade ago, it was almost impossible to buy locally. Today there are farm shops, flourishing farmers' markets and shops and restaurants that stock it with pride.

This year at Gwledd Conwy Feast (October 23-24), you'll discover a very different landscape when it comes to food from North Wales.

To demonstrate the sheer variety of local produce now available in Conwy, Feast organisers devised a unique challenge: to source all the principle ingredients for a typical Sunday lunch from within a 30-mile radius of the town.

It wasn't difficult: in fact, the hard part was deciding what to leave off the menu.

Toby Watson, executive chef at Cantina in Deganwy, took up the challenge of creating the 30 Mile Menu.

The farthest ingredient, Blodyn Aur rapeseed, came from 29.2 miles away – yes, we've counted.

OK, the flour's from South Wales.

But it is Welsh and we couldn't have made crepes without it.

"It was remarkably easy to find everything," admits Toby.

"To be honest I thought it would be a lot harder. Certainly in the last 10 years the standard of food in Conwy has improved dramatically. Now it's on a par with the best you will find anywhere in the UK."

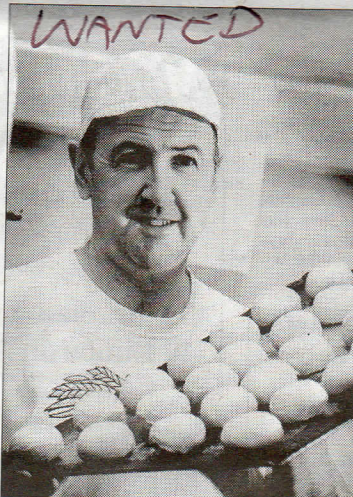
● To book for the 30-Mile Menu in the Feast Café on Sunday, October 24, call 01492 593874. Cost is £20 per head for three courses.

See www.gwleddconwyfeast.co.uk.

THE 30 MILE MENU... STARTERS

Conwy has the UK's sole surviving community of rake-only mussel fishermen who can trace their history back 400 years. The mussels' distinctive taste is the result of growing in estuary waters where the fresh River Conwy meets the salty sea. **Distance: 100 yards.**

The mussels will be simmered in light ale from Bragdy Conwy Brewery which Gwynne Thomas set up seven years ago, restoring Conwy's tradition of brewing in the process. A key ingredient of this beer is rainwater. Collected at Llyn Cowlyd reservoir and naturally abundant, Gwynne will never run short! **Dis-**



The 30 Mile Menu

Starters:
*Moules au Conwy, light ale, leeks and crusty bread
 Wild Game Terrine, apple chutney, seasonal piccalilli
 Welsh onion soup, Snowdonia cheese croutons*

Main course:
*Roast Oakwood Pork, roast potatoes, apple sauce, slow roasted baby carrots
 Duo of organic Bryn Dowski loin of lamb, mini shepherd's pie, braised red cabbage
 Great Orme fish pie of mussels, lobster and smoked bass*

Puddings:
*Welsh rarebit, confit tomato chutney
 Crepes with Anglesey Limon cello
 Rhubarb panna cotta, rhubarb and elderflower compote*



30 Mile Menu suppliers, clockwise from top left, this page: Beekeeper Peter McFadden, Rowen; Gwynne Thomas, of Bragdy Conwy Brewery; Michael Mort, of Snowdonia Cheese; Dafydd Roberts of Bryn Dowski Farm, near Henryd, supplying lamb and beef; fishmonger Wayne Sharman with locally caught wild sea bass at Mermaid Seafoods, Llandudno; baker Alun Williams, of Becws Alun, Penmaenmawr.

Pictures: RICHARD WILLIAMS



cooking with game thanks to TV cookery programmes, says Margot Pilling of Mermaid. **Distance: 20-23 miles.**

Snowdonia Cheese is one of the county's big food success stories. Started nine years ago to give a better price for North Wales' dairy farmers milk, it now turns over £3m producing the likes of Little Black Bomber and Ginger Spice at

knows a thing or two about how to bake the perfect loaf. He has a shop in Penmaenmawr but his bread is baked in Conwy itself. **Distance: 1.4 miles.**

The croutons accompany a warming Welsh onion soup made with freshly dug vegetables from Penloyn Farm Shop, Llanrwst.

MAIN COURSE

David Maloney's Gloucester Old Speltz Oxford Sandy Blacks and Middle White pigs roam freely just above the town where they live a carefree existence at Conwy Farm beside Sychnant Pass and Conwy Mountain.

David sells a variety of boxes of