

A Tale of Two Pembrokeshire Mills

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On a recent trip to south Pembrokeshire, I visited two mills, within just a few miles of each other. Both mills were built at the beginning of the 19th century; both were designed by George Brown, a local engineer and architect; both ceased milling in the mid-20th century, and both retain most of their internal infrastructure, and both are open to the public. Both mills also deliver a strong message that local and traditional artisan food should be preferred to that derived from the 20th century industrial technology, part of which brought about an end to their milling operations. But each does it in a completely different way.

Carew Tidal Mill



As part of a visitor attraction which includes the remains of Carew Castle, all managed by the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority, the mill is no more than a static museum experience. But a rich experience at that, in the very complete array of machines – including a Bentall Corn and Malt Crusher – all enhanced by a recorded verbal commentary at the press of a button, as you, preferably, descend the three floors rather than the other way around.

The two undershot waterwheels, the north wheel and the south wheel, are in a very poor state of repair, the north wheel clearly disintegrating. But the Park Authority inform us that they do hope to restore the mill in the coming years. Their plan is to replace the south wheel, in order to power at least one pair of millstones, which can then be used for demonstrations, and work with schools. Grinding wheat and producing flour would lend so much more emphasis to their commendable message.

Black Pool Mill

This mill, built in 1813, has only very recently undergone a major programme of repair and restoration, retaining much of its internal machinery. In 2023 it opened as a restaurant. Owner, and operator of this attraction, is Bluestone Resort, a local business focused on the discreet blending of tourism into the immediate countryside. But this is not just another restaurant, this is a fine dining experience, but one which will not break the bank. The staff are all very courteous and delightful, and they conduct you to the tables which are laid up on the first floor alongside the millstones, and all the complimentary woodwork and metal drive shafts.

The menu starts off with a long list of all the local suppliers from which most of their dishes are sourced. My starter of lambs liver was exquisite, while my wife's equivalent, described as "Mini Fish 'n' Chips" was actually scallops in a light batter. My knife sliced through my sirloin steak as if through butter, and finally my wife's desert listed as "Miller's Caramel Bar" was actually a chocolate mousse coated in dark chocolate. Truly amazing food!



These two mills are less than 10 miles apart, and so a visit to both can be achieved on the same day. Does anyone know anywhere else where you can share a similar dual mill experience?