

# Newsletter 151

March 2026

**Abertawe Centre**

yn cefnogi'r  
in support of



**Ymddiriedolaeth  
Genedlaethol  
National Trust**

## **From the Chair**

We have a great year of events planned for the Abertawe Centre in 2026.

Anne Thomas has been able to organise some excellent speakers and the final two for March and April are below.

Kathleen Boyce has arranged our three days out for June, July and August and the locations and dates are in the newsletter. She has also been working very hard on our September holiday. This year we are off to Winchester and the properties that we will visit are also listed below. We are all so grateful to her for her and Hazel Harrison's superb organising skills.

Ken and Mary Owens continue to provide excellent arrangements for our lunches at Norton House. Our November lunch had one of our largest attendances. The details of the Spring Lunch and booking form are in this newsletter. Ken has even booked our Christmas Lunch for Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> November, again at Norton House.

We have now updated our constitution and changed our membership payments to individual payments of £10 each so that everyone now pays the same amount for a yearly subscription. To meet the requirements of being affiliated to the National Trust we have to have policies covering data protection, equality and diversity, and safeguarding. These are now in place and available to all members should they wish to see them.

The final improvement that we have made is to re-vamp our website to be more user-friendly and easier to keep up-to-date and Peter Horry has taken on the role of the website coordinator. It is accessible by typing [ntswansea.org.uk](http://ntswansea.org.uk) into your browser and National Trust – Abertawe Centre will be the heading. Please look at the website to keep update with our events.

I hope that you will be able to join us at the evening talks and make a note in your diaries for the days out, the holiday and the lunches. Have a great year with National Trust – Abertawe Centre.

*Janet Thomas*

**All meetings are held at St Paul's Parish Centre, Sketty at 7.00 for 7.30 pm. Meetings are open to non-members for a £3 charge. Bring your friends and neighbours, they would be most welcome.**

## EVENING PROGRAMME 2026

**25th March 2026 "Shakespeare" John Richards**

**29th April 2026 "The Williams Family of Aberpergwm" Elizabeth Belcham**

### October 2025 talk

We have all heard of the War of the Roses, but few of us know more than it was between the House of Lancaster and the House of York and ended in a field in Bosworth with Henry Tudor defeating Richard III. So what was the Welsh involvement? Stephen David gave us an excellent, informative and often amusing talk which traced the conflict through the Mansels of Margam starting with John Mansel who inherited lands in Oxwich, Penrice and Scurlage. His son was Philip Mansel who became a paid retainer to Jasper Tudor. By 1461 Owain Tudor, Jasper's half-brother, had been defeated at the Battle of



Mortimer's Cross and beheaded. Philip was exiled, with all his lands expropriated. In 1470, Jasper Tudor, with his retainer Philip, invaded England and deposed Edward IV. The next year Edward returned and at the Battle of Tewkesbury regained his crown. Both Philip's eldest sons, John and Leonard, were killed and he was captured and beheaded as an act of revenge in Chepstow. The youngest son, Jenkin, kept a low profile and when Henry VII became king after the Battle of Bosworth in 1485, the Mansel's lands in Carmarthen and Gower were returned to them for their loyalty to the Tudor cause. Jenkin, purchased the Abbey of Margam which was the richest in Wales and his descendants became Barons, MPs and Privy Councillors. This was a Welsh rollercoaster of battles, alliances, treachery, defeats, victories, invasions and beheadings in this 15<sup>th</sup> century conflict and I would recommend Stephen David's book "Birth of the Red Dragon: Wales and the War of the Roses."

### November 2025 talk

We were treated to an informative and entertaining talk on Elizabeth I by Kathleen Boyce, whose deep knowledge enabled her to do so without notes. She told us how Elizabeth, who



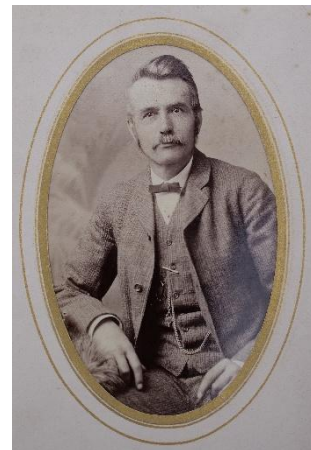
ruled for 45 years, was able to govern and survive when the stakes were high in Tudor England. Kathleen showed us the influences of her three predecessors and their spouses in an age when religion, core values and the relationship between the home nations were very different to what we have today. She was adept at choosing the right advisors and astute at steering a path through the many plots, rebellions and suitors, as well as self-managing her image through her travels, portraiture and words. All of this was at a time when the world was opening up through trade, exploration and printing. Kathleen's information on the Welsh

connections was fascinating. Who knew that Elizabeth's chief lady-in-waiting for most of her

reign was Blanche Parry, a Welsh speaker, or that Wales was seen as part of England under the Acts of Union and the William Morgan bible of 1585 was the first complete translation into Welsh? The slides of some of her suitors, advisors and court favourites gave faces to the names which was particularly enlightening and we could all see what she saw in Sir Christopher Hatton whose legs she had admired when dancing! Elizabeth was able to steer a middle course avoiding the extremes, calling herself Supreme Governor (not Head) of the Church of England, and fining people for not attending church rather burning them at the stake. Even when she was nearing the end of her life she refused to name her successor until her dying breath to avoid factions forming, so the succession to James VI of Scotland to become James I of England was peaceful. It was a thoroughly enjoyable talk.

### **January 2026 Talk**

Peter Russell, our Treasurer, stood in at very short notice and gave us a really interesting, amusing and informative talk on John Player (1842-1931) of Clydach and his family. This was illustrated by photographs of the family in albums which had been rescued from an imminent bonfire in Cheltenham (to where John retired) and found their way back to Clydach. The photographs showed us how the well-off lived in late Victorian/Edwardian times and illustrated the family in their finery, playing croquet, John Player's love of cars, the family cycling, his steam yacht and their dogs. They also showed the connections to other affluent families such as the Stricks, the Martins and the Llewellyns. All this came from the profits of the tin rolling mills in which John was an innovator. There were no photographs in the album of the workers who produced the tin or of the process itself. Peter provided these and local views held by the Clydach Historical Society. Whilst John and his son Percy were respected in the community and their wealth helped build St Mary's Church in Clydach and brought gas and electricity to the community, it was a tough life for those workers, both male and female, in the tin rolling mills. His son, Percy, ran the mills until his death after the second world war and today there are but a few reminders of their influence on Clydach, a road named Quarr Road after their house in Clydach, now demolished, Players Industrial Estate and St Mary's Church.



### **February 2026 AGM**

It was good to see over a third of our membership at the AGM. Our chair, Janet Thomas, said that the last year had been very successful with the talks at our monthly meetings, the three days out, the holiday in North Wales, and the spring and Christmas lunches, all of which were well supported by the members. She thanked the members of the committee for their hard work in making the events happen. A similar programme was planned for this year with the holiday based in Hampshire. The revamped website was up and running and members were encouraged to take a look. Peter Russell, our treasurer, reported that it had been a successful year financially and we have a healthy bank balance. We had been able to make a £1,000 donation to two National Trust projects (see below). Because of the 50p cost to cash each cheque, it would reduce our bank charges if members were to pay by bank transfer. Kathleen Boyce, our membership secretary, reported that at the end of 2025 we had 168 members. Nearly all members are now contactable by e-mail. Other members of the committee gave short reports on their areas of responsibility. The committee was re-elected for 2026 and the next AGM will be on 24 February 2027 at 7.30pm

## Your committee

- **Janet Thomas**, Chair. Tel: 07704 058585/ 01792 298468  
[janet.m.thomas4@gmail.com](mailto:janet.m.thomas4@gmail.com)
- **Anne Bennett**, Vice-Chair and Secretary. Tel: 07743 926697  
[anne.bennett1@gmail.com](mailto:anne.bennett1@gmail.com)
- **Peter Russell**, Treasurer. Tel: 07817 150801 [peter.russell40@btinternet.com](mailto:peter.russell40@btinternet.com)
- **Kathleen Boyce**, Membership and Joint Outings & Holidays. Tel 07795 37431  
[kathleenedieboyce@btinternet.com](mailto:kathleenedieboyce@btinternet.com)
- **Hazel Harrison**, Joint Outings & Holidays. Tel: 07468 09143  
[hazelgharrison@outlook.com](mailto:hazelgharrison@outlook.com)
- **Ken Owens**, Social Lunches. Tel: 01792 201850, [kenandmaryowens@btinternet.com](mailto:kenandmaryowens@btinternet.com)
- **Peter Horry**, Newsletter Editor and Website Coordinator. Tel: 07598 285481  
[f.horry@btinternet.com](mailto:f.horry@btinternet.com)
- **Anne Thomas**, Speakers Secretary and Minutes Secretary
- **William Bennett**, Hall Steward.
- **Shirley Thomas**, Publicity.
- **Anita Walters**, Refreshments.

## Supporting National Trust Projects in 2026

There are two projects which are part of the National Trust's Rhossili Interpretation & Community Engagement which we have agreed to support.

The National Trust are developing a series of creative and educational initiatives aimed at deepening connections with Rhossili's rich heritage and natural beauty. These projects will focus on inspiring local children and communities through hands-on experiences and storytelling in collaboration with *Gower Unearthed*.

### 1. Rhossili History Trail & Workshop

With *Gower Unearthed*, they will be creating a dynamic history trail that brings Rhossili's hidden stories to life. Through interactive workshops, children from Swansea and the surrounding areas will explore local heritage and help shape the trail's narrative, making history accessible, engaging, and memorable.



### 2. Willow Weaving & Nature Sculpture Project

This nature-based art initiative will introduce children to the ecology and history of Rhossili through the traditional craft of willow weaving. Participants will help create a sculpture that reflects the landscape and stories of the area. The project will culminate in a school visit to Rhossili, where children can experience the trail, contribute to the sculpture, and enjoy an afternoon of free sports and outdoor fun in their event field.

## 2026 Day Visits

The day trips in 2026 will be to Kentchurch Court on 4 June, Berrington Hall on 9 July, both in Herefordshire, and Lacock Abbey and village, Wiltshire on 6 August.



Kentchurch Court is not a National Trust property. It is a private estate which has been in the possession of the Scudamore family for almost a 1000 years. The gardens are extensive and the present house exemplifies Regency design. The trip includes a garden tour, a guided house tour (90 minutes) and tea and cake in the garden tea room.

We will also visit Abergavenny after Kentchurch. Abergavenny is a renowned market town with an ancient priory (now parish church and historical centre), a castle, the famous Angel hotel and a host of independent shops and eateries.

Berrington Hall is a Georgian House with interiors by Henry Holland and sitting within Capability Brown's final garden and landscape. You will need a valid National Trust members card for this visit.

You will recognise Lacock from its appearance in Harry Potter films, Downton Abbey and Pride and Prejudice. Lacock also hosts the iconic Fox Talbot Museum. You will need a valid National Trust members card for this visit

Please note that all day outings in 2026 will depart from and return to the Brynmill end of the Recreation. Forms to join these trips will be at our monthly meetings. It will save us money if you can pay by bank transfer but if you pay by cheque please write only one cheque for all the trips that you are on.

## September 2026 Holiday

Our 2026 holiday will be based in Winchester at the Norton Park Manor Hotel from 3-7



September. This is over a weekend but it reduces the cost considerably. The overall cost will be £610 and again we will be travelling there and back on a DJ Thomas luxury coach. The hotel is in the same chain and standard as we stayed at in Stratford-upon-Avon in 2024. We will be visiting Mottisfont, Hinton Ampner, Hatchlands and The Vyne. There will be a day

for us to explore Winchester including the City Mill. The holiday now fully booked and there is a waiting list in case someone is unable to go.



## Spring Lunch

Below is the menu for the Spring Lunch on Thursday 14 May. The form for completion is at the back of this newsletter. If you pay by bank transfer and not by cheque you will save the Abertawe Centre money as it costs the Centre 50p to cash each cheque.

**Please note that the closing date for submitting the form AND payment is 29<sup>th</sup> April 2026. No forms will be accepted after this date.**

## NORTON HOUSE

Thursday, 14 May 2026

National Trust Abertawe Spring Lunch

12.30 for 1.00pm

**2 Courses £27.00, 3 Courses £32.00 (includes gratuities)**

### Starters

Soup of the Day with Crusty Bread (vg) (gf\*)

Thai Salmon Fishcake with a Thai Dipping Sauce (gf\*)

Classic Prawn Cocktail with Bread & Butter (gf\*)

Classic Caesar Salad (vg\*)(gf\*)

### Main Courses

Lamb Shoulder, Mashed Potato, Seasonal Vegetables, Redcurrant & Mint Jus (gf)

Pan Fried Salmon, Parmentier Potatoes, Seasonal Vegetables, Pea & Leek Sauce (gf)

Pan Fried Chicken Breast, Roasted New Potatoes, Seasonal Vegetables, Pancetta & Wild Mushroom Sauce (gf)

Celeriac and Watercress Risotto (v) (vg\*)(gf)

### Desserts

Egg Custard Tart, Nutmeg Chantilly Cream (v)

Cherry & Almond Cheesecake (gf\*)(v)

Chocolate & Hazelnut Tart, Chocolate Ice Cream (v)

Trio of Sorbet (gf) (vg)

Followed by Tea or Coffee

v – vegetarian, vg – vegan, vg\* – can be made vegan, gf – gluten free, gf\* – can be made gluten free

## Spring Lunch 2026 – Booking Form - Norton House

**Thursday 14 May 2026 12.30pm for 1.00pm**

Please reserve me.....place(s) for the Spring Lunch

First Full Name.....

Contact Telephone Number.....

Second Full Name.....

Third Full Name.....

Fourth Full Name.....

Fifth Full Name.....

If any of the named people have paid by bank transfer please tick the box next to their name

Please tick the appropriate box below: the first column for the first person named above, the second column for the second person named above and so on. If the gluten free alternative is your choice please put "gf". If the vegan alternative is your choice please put "vg".

		1	2	3	4	5
Starters:	Soup of the Day (tick or gf)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Thai Salmon Fishcake (tick or gf)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Prawn Cocktail (tick or gf)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Caesar Salad (tick or gf)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Main Course:	Lamb Shoulder (tick or gf)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Pan Fried Salmon	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Chicken Breast	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Celeriac Risotto (tick or vg)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dessert:	Egg Custard Tart	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Cherry Cheesecake (tick or gf)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Chocolate Tart	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Trio of Sorbet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please enclose your payment, 2 courses £27.00 or 3 courses £32.00. Pay by bank transfer - (**Lloyds Bank plc**, Sort Code **30-95-46 NATIONAL TRUST ABERTAWE CENTRE** A/C no. **00177350** and enter **Your Name** as the reference) then send this form to **Ken Owens, 117 Saunders Way, Derwen Fawr, Swansea, SA2 8BH**. Tick the box above for those who paid by bank transfer. (Our preferred method of payment).

Pay by cheque - cheques payable to: **NATIONAL TRUST ABERTAWE CENTRE** and return the booking form with the cheque to: **Ken Owens, 117 Saunders Way, Derwen Fawr, Swansea, SA2 8BH**. Please note that Lloyds Bank charges the Abertawe Centre 50p for each cheque.

Payment made and Forms returned by no later than **Wednesday, 29<sup>th</sup> April 2026**

### Seating Preference

If you would like to be seated with people not mentioned on the booking form, please note names below: