

SEARCHING  
FOR  
THE

CENTRE

Start  
Walked 129.02 km, 129.02, 1.9km  
129.02 - 4.2km

End  
Walked 129.02 km, 129.02, 1.9km

129.02, 2.9km

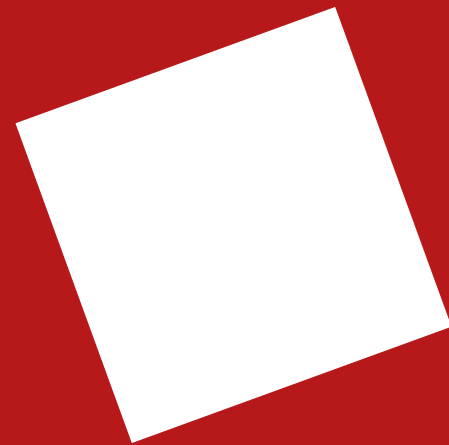
Watch me walk down the hill in the sharp winter day, watch me join a fisherwoman,  
Watch us meet, watch us talk like you do in the centre, red skirts ablaze in the sun.

Wendy Haslam

Front cover - Four GPS tracks:  
Searching for the centre.

Walked 4.16km on 21\_01\_2017.tcx  
Walked 4.04km on 21\_01\_2017.tcx  
Walked 4.20km on 21\_01\_2017.tcx  
Walked 4.01km on 21\_01\_2017.tcx

SEARCHING  
FOR  
THE





A square is a good place  
for a centre. It implies  
solidity, safety and being  
supported. Most people  
have said Castle Square is  
the centre but the emotion  
has been taken out of it.

Member of the public



A strange phenomenon had befallen the town centre. Time past and collective memories evolved, the centres are multiple, overwhelmed by a celebration of the constantly roaring combustion engine and confused by the urgency of standardisation; Costa, Wilko's, escalators and WH Smith. Centres emerge from entangled footpaths, roads and ruins. Peaceful paths and crazy concrete lead to revered retail giants, passing ancient castles through well-lit tunnels.

With baskets in hand, wearing woollen shawls against the harsh winter air, four Llangwm fisherwomen walk full of purpose to re-discover their meeting place. They enter the town from North, South, East and West in search of a midpoint, the hub, the focal point, the trading centre, the antecedent, the nucleus, the crux, the core.

Shoppers, residents, young and old, become temporary road signs, arms out-stretched as their directions flow in, out around and about the cool indifferent flow of the Cleddau. Points, mid-points, the probable, the possible identified. Empty squares fringed with hopeful rendezvous, clock towers, market halls, the past and present. Where is the centre? What should it hold? Who knows and who decides? 'Excuse me please, could you tell me where the centre is?'

Then a gathering of dog owners, councillors, in comers, residents, young, old and everyone in between re-imagine a renewed centre where the rumble is silenced, green spaces are created and playful places ebb and flow in, out around and about the Cleddau; creative mid points, independent retail hubs, temporary focal points, extraordinary trading centres, antecedents become oases, the nucleus floats, the crux is a small boat and the core is for us.

Anna Evans





## WEST

West of the town lies the Hive, a youth community group working with some of most vulnerable young people in the town. The centre is run by Anji Tinley. Originally from Manchester Anji started her journey outside the entrance of the Hive, surrounded by temporary housing that was originally built for military families.





Can you help me please, I'm trying to find the centre of Haverfordwest. Where would you say the heart of the town is? The very, very centre?

The dead centre?

Yes.

It's gone.

What happened to it?

What happened to it, it went floating off down the river 30, 40 years ago. You're not going to find it, you're not. It's like so many towns of this size.





## NORTH

In the north the Withybush Retail Park, near Prendergast, was historically where the Welsh stayed before entering 'Little England'. Today "out of town" department stores dominate the landscape here. Anna Evans travelled down from Ceredigion and began her search for the centre in the cosmetics department at Debenhams.







You go down the slope past Morrisons on your right and then you can walk you're way right up into the town.

Ok, and where's the centre?

Yes, well that's more or less the centre. There's the square but there's so little there. What is it you're looking for?

I'm just looking for the centre.

I'm not sure what the centre is you see.







## EAST

In the east is Higgons Well, located on the banks of the River Cleddau. The Llangwm women, who were of Flemish descent, would have entered from this direction. For many centuries following the river into town was a traditional way to enter the centre. The well here dates back to mediaeval times and is reputed to have never dried up. Louise Pepperell started her journey by taking a drink from the well. She grew up in Llangwm and her grandmother lived in one of the Fisherwomen's cottages just a few feet away from the river.





Could you tell me where the centre of Haverfordwest is?

It used to be the High Street, it was the busy shopping area.

When are we talking about?

We're talking back in the Llangwm Fisherwomen days. These fisherwomen walked miles and miles.

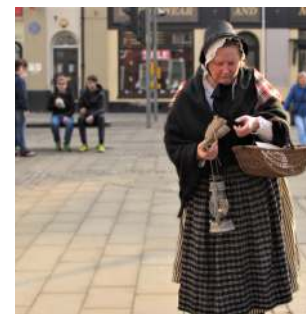
What time did you set off?

11.30am.

Well you've been walking around and around for ages then looking for the centre.

I've got to keep going though.

Good luck with finding the centre.







SOUTH

Tesco Extra in the south has changed the way in which the town operates. Nearby Dew Street, leading down into the High Street was once full of small inns, workshops and daily markets but is now characterized by parked cars, moving traffic and struggling small businesses. Wendy Haslam was born in Haverfordwest and her father's family had a shoeshop on the High Street for over 100 years.





I'd say the centre is Castle Square.

Castle Square is it? Ok and how do I get to Castle Square?

Turn left and go straight down the hill.

Excellent. People keep saying Castle Square is the centre but no one has been able to tell me why it's the centre. Why would you say?

I don't really know, it's always been the centre to me.

It's always been the centre.

Yes.

There you are, so I'm looking for somewhere called Castle Square that's always been the centre of Haverfordwest.







At 11.30am on the 21st January 2017 I accompanied one of the four fisherwomen from her starting point. I watched her ask for directions to the centre and then walk to where she had been guided. The women were instructed that if when they reached the location they met with one of the other women they could join forces. Either way they must keep on the move, asking people for directions to the centre, leaving a lit candle at each destination reached.

The four women's paths crossed many times but never at the 'centre' they had been directed to. I would occasionally see a touch of red crossing a bridge in the distance or passing on the other side of the road. Their paths entangled throughout the day leaving the traces of their journeys around the town.

Early on in the walk a passerby told the fisherwoman I was with that the centre had died long ago; the exchange took place in a cemetery.

I then watched as she was directed to Swan Square, the Castle and Castle Square. We ascended along Holloway and descended down the dark stone walled pathway, where we left a group of young people still arguing about where the centre was. As we diagonally crossed Castle Square the bright winter sun cast the fisherwoman's shadow across the eerily empty square. She walked towards two lit candles and lit her own and I was moved by the sight of the flickering lights. By the end of the day a fourth had been added bringing the four together.

Afterwards the fisherwomen and the public gathered together in the warmth of 17 High Street, their storm lamps gently illuminating the space. They spoke and listened and shared their thoughts. One of the fisherwomen shared how the experience for her had been about risk taking and understanding it might not be easy. Being involved had given her time 'for growth and to just feel and be me'.

Haverfordwest too must be given a chance to grow and rediscover its own character and potential. As the person at the beginning of this booklet suggested; a centre needs emotion.

## THANKS

Catriona Hilditch at Scolton Manor and the volunteers who helped clean and prepare the clothes worn by the women.

Hew Fuller at Pembrokeshire College for his support throughout the project and to his students Carole Fletcher and Rosie Myers who helped document the day along with Shaun Morris and Jessica Collier.

To the four Llangwm fisherwomen, Anji Tinley, Anna Evans, Louise Pepperell and Wendy Haslam and to all the people who directed them to their 'centre'.

Searching for the Centre was commissioned by Confluence, a creative collaboration delivering a series of artist residencies and commissions as part of an experimental programme called the Lab, exploring art and regeneration in Haverfordwest. The project commissioned artist Janetka Platun to go in search of deeper meanings of what the centre might hold.

To find out more visit [www.thelabhaverfordwest.org](http://www.thelabhaverfordwest.org)

