Step back in time with medieval sports at Oystermouth Castle

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Tournaments and battle re-enactments throughout the ages by Gwerin y Gwyr, the Colliegiate of Knights Templar and the Marcher Stuarts will create a colourful display at the opening of Oystermouth Castle on Saturday, 16 June. King Arthur, his queen, jesters and wandering minstrels will mingle with the crowds throughout the festivities.

The event will last from noon to 5pm and will also feature live music, a birds of prey display and tours of the castle to limited numbers of people. Swansea Council, supported by the Friends of Oystermouth Castle, has organised the fun as part of the Swansea Bay Festival.

There will be opportunities to meet the Ostreme Players Lady Alina inside the castle. Visitors will also be able to explore a maze of dark, vaulted chambers and newly-discovered secret spiral staircases that haven’t been explored for hundreds of years.

The re-opening celebrations will mark the near completion of a major conservation project funded by Heritage Lottery Fund, the Welsh Government through Cadw and the European Regional Development Fund with support from the Friends of Oystermouth Castle.

Visitors will also be able to discover the depths of the central block cellars for the very first time and enjoy interpretation that's being added to tell the castle's story. This includes a visit from King Edward I in 1284 – also known as Edward Longshanks.

Cllr Nick Bradley, Swansea Council’s Cabinet Member for Regeneration, said: "The conservation works are now reaching their final stages and their completion will allow better access to many more parts of the castle than ever before. It’s an attraction that’s steeped in fascinating history that will offer an educational and fun visitor experience for people of all ages.

"The re-opening event is going to be a real treat. It will give hundreds of people an up-close encounter with a medieval tournament that would once have attracted hundreds of the finest knights from across Europe."

Huw Lewis, the Welsh Government’s Housing, Regeneration and Heritage Minister, said: “Our historic buildings provide an excellent backdrop for bringing history to life and helping people of all ages learn a little about the Wales of old and how it has shaped the nation we're in today. I am delighted that Cadw funding has contributed to making such an exciting and accessible attraction that will provide local people with an opportunity to learn more about their history and will encourage people from further afield to visit.”

The Heritage Lottery Fund awarded a grant of more than £800,000 to restore the 12th-century castle. Jennifer Stewart, Head of HLF in Wales, said: "Oystermouth truly is one of Wales’ finest castles and this injection of lottery funding means it has been given a new lease of life for future generations to enjoy and explore. It is fantastic to see the continued active involvement of the community and volunteers who have helped make this project such a success. Together with the enthusiasm from local people, the new interpretation centre will help keep the past alive, improve the educational

experience and boost visitor numbers.”

New visitor facilities, an educational space and a 30-foot high glass viewing platform and bridge that leads to Alina's Chapel were introduced in time for the castle’s first phase opening last summer. Over 12,000 people made a visit to the Castle between July and September.

Other events planned at the attraction this summer include an archaeology day during National Archaeology week and a medieval living history day with the Friends of Oystermouth Castle.

Have a look at Swansea Council's website for more information.