

Visit by FF Newcastle, Australia to Cornwall - June 9th - 16th 2002

After weeks of meetings, planning and anticipation we finally found ourselves standing at the Old County Hall in Truro on Sunday lunchtime waiting for the coach which was bringing our guests down from Dartington Hall in Devon, where they had been attending a three day 'Arthurian Festival'. We had been involved in the Festival and some of us had already met our guests when they came to Tintagel and Boscastle for a day's trip the previous Thursday. Sadly the Cornish weather had been feeling treacherous and the first drops of rain fell just as their coach arrived in Boscastle - conditions then deteriorated throughout the day and by the time they departed to return to Dartington Hall we were all thoroughly soaked! The weather in Truro by Sunday was better, though by no means bright Never mind, we weren't going to allow a few clouds to dampen the warmth of our welcome. - and the weather was bound to improve ! HOW WRONG WE WERE. Throughout the whole week it rained, was chilly, misty, drizzly, cold etc., and was more like November than June (Flaming June!) Still, despite the elements we had a wonderful week. On Monday evening there were several dinner parties across the County and all of the hosts and guests began to get to know each other. If the noise and banter at the one I attended was anything to go by, we were not going to have any trouble making friends.



FF Newcastle Exchange Director, Colleen Potts tries on some Civic Regalia whilst the Mayor looks on.

.On Tuesday, our guests were taken by coach to the China Clay museum to the north of St Austell, clay being one of Cornwall's primary industries. Lunch down at the historic china clay harbour of Charlestown was followed by a trip to the Eden Project, Cornwall's fantastic new project set in a disused clay pit. On Wednesday evening some 70 members and guests descended on Vyvyenne and Jason's house for a 'Friendship Party' (although by happy coincidence was Vyvyenne's birthday as well). Another splendid time was had by all!

Thursday morning saw us all assembled to meet the Mayor of Truro, Cllr. Ron Cook. Although only in the post three weeks, he was an excellent host and the informality of the proceedings, with some of our party dressing up in Civic regalia, was a pleasant surprise to our guests. After tea and biscuits with the Mayor, we let our guests loose in Truro for some time shopping and exploring on their own. On Friday, after a free day with their hosts, our guests were taken off to their 'farewell party'. It had been a well kept surprise, and they were thrilled to discover that we had been able to 'borrow' the Keep at Pendennis Castle, one of Cornwall's finest monuments built by King Henry the Eighth as a defence against marauding Spanish and French in the Seventeenth Century. A mini-banquet was followed by a lecture/performance by a local historian who dressed herself as a seventeenth century lady would have done, whilst explaining what it would be like to be a lady in those times.



Dusk at Pendennis – warmer inside than out!

On Saturday morning, it was time for the second 'day out' for our guests who boarded a coach for a trip around the South West of the Cornish peninsular, visiting Mousehole, Lands End and St Ives. Sadly the weather was still misbehaving and the best views of our lovely county were obscured in the mists. Sunday midday found us all back at the Old County Hall to bid farewell to our new mates. They were off to another hosting in Helsingborg in Sweden. We all agreed that we had enjoyed the week tremendously and looked forward to perhaps having the opportunity to see our friends again some day.