

Cornwall Study Tour Report 24-09-17 to 28-09-17.

Day 1: The Study Tour to Cornwall began with an unexpected, but pleasant, break at the ‘**Jamaica Inn**’ on **Bodmin Moor**. This Inn, built in 1750 as a coaching inn, became famous as the subject of Daphne du Maurier’s novel of the same name. The inn, situated on the ‘turnpike road’ between Launceston and Bodmin, has a Museum dedicated to the author and to the smuggling trade which went on, as depicted in the novel.



Photo courtesy of www.jamaicainn.co.uk

Day 2: morning – Eden Project. Conceived 22 years ago and housed in a china clay pit that was nearing the end of its economic life, the site covers an area the equivalent of 30 football pitches. It was opened to the public on 17th March 2001, and contains two massive biomes within which are different climates and plantings. The Rainforest Biome stands 50m tall and is the largest indoor rainforest in the world. It has a waterfall, banana trees, rubber trees, a paddy field and a Canopy Walkway among its many attractions. The temperature is between 18°C and 35°C and it is very humid. The Biome is divided into four rainforest environments: Tropical Islands; Southeast Asia; West Africa and Tropical South America. Exotic birds live among the lush plantings.

The Mediterranean Biome has over 1,000 varieties of vegetation and has a more temperate climate of between 9°C and 25°C. The planting within the Biome is a particular feature, including landscapes of the Mediterranean; citrus groves; olive groves; South African plants and flora from Western Australia. Two outstanding specimens are the red-and-green ‘Kangaroo Paw’ (*Anigozanthus manglesii*) and the Scarlet Banksia (*Banksia coccinea*).

The grounds of the clay pit have also been carefully planted, to produce vibrant round-the-year colour and interest. There are themed walks and paths to take the visitor from the Visitor Centre down into the base of the pit, through the ‘Avenue of Senses’, or the ‘Zigzag Through Time’ or the ‘Slopes of Earthly Treasures’ among other delights. There is also a Viewing Platform, where the full scale of the site can be appreciated.



Overview of The Eden Project with Biomes.



Outdoor planting with Biomes in background.



Rainforest Biome



Olive Grove in Mediterranean Biome.

More information about the Eden Project can be found at www.edenproject.com

Between the Eden Project and the next destination, Charlestown, we passed many evidences of the tin mining industry that had been in the area, including ‘pyramids’ of waste tin ‘slag’ and the tall chimneys of redundant tin mines.

Day 2: afternoon – Charlestown. This charming little town near St Austell is an unspoiled example of a late Georgian working port, constructed 1791 – 1801 by Charles Rashleigh and named after him. The harbour was built to export copper and import coal and later used to export china clay. The Shipwreck and Heritage Centre was fascinating and informative, with many displays, room sets, films, maps and other objects of interest, among them a stone anchor dating from the Middle Bronze Period, 2000 BC and cannon balls from the ill-fated ‘Mary Rose’. The delightful, timeless harbour is a very popular location for film and television, including the ‘Poldark’ series.



Cottage in Charlestown, with tin mining chimney behind it.



Charlestown Harbour.

For more information on Charlestown go to www.cornwalls.co.uk/Charlestown or www.visitcornwall.com/places/charlestown

Day 3: morning – Poldark Tin Mine. The 'Poldark Tin Mine' is situated in Wendron, near Helston, on the site of a former tin mine. Many of the buildings and much of the equipment has remained as it was when it closed, making the site redolent of a Gold Rush ghost town. The museum was founded in 1966 and was opened to the public in 1971.

The parish of Wendron is the oldest mining district in Cornwall and became part of the Cornish mining boom from the 1700s – the parish had very rich deposits of tin. Poldark Mine of today gives a unique insight into working conditions in 18th and early 19th century tin mines and into Cornwall's geology. It is the only complete underground mine open to the public in Cornwall. The Group who made an underground tour of the mines, lasting an hour, commented on the very wet and dreadful conditions in which the workers laboured. Boys, from the age of nine years, worked in cramped, dark and dangerous conditions and their growth was often stunted, due to a lack of natural sunlight. They also had a very short life expectancy.

The Group viewed an informative and interesting introductory film and were free to explore the interesting museum and grounds. One point of interest was that miners from the Cornish tin mines settled all around the world, taking their expertise with them. Thus there are Cornish communities in South America, India, Australia and many other parts of the globe. For more information visit <http://www.poldarkmine.org.uk>



Poldark Tin Mine.



(seen from a coach window).

House and Gardens (National Trust). This mock-Jacobean late-Victorian house contains more than fifty rooms which are open to public view. It gives fascinating glimpses into Victorian life for the upper – middle classes, with a huge kitchen;

servants' working quarters; State rooms; nursery suite, including Schoolroom; servants bedrooms in the attic and Master bedroom suite. The fittings, wood panelling, flooring, technology and furniture all display the best of Victorian craftsmanship. Within the 1,000 acres there are also extensive grounds to explore, with colourful formal gardens, Victorian parterres and ancient woodlands. Among the treasures in this charming house are a Geneva Bible and a rare copy of the Domesday Book. The Domesday book is a printed late C18 version commissioned by the Society of Antiquaries. When the antiquarian movement really took off there was a demand for copies of the Domesday book in the original script. They were produced as a county-by-county guide and published as separate volumes. This is all the counties bound together in one volume. It is unusual to find a full set bound together.

The 116ft Long Gallery, in which these two significant books are held, has a magnificent and ornate barrel-vaulted 17th Century plasterwork ceiling, dating to the reign of Charles I. For more details visit www.nationaltrust.org.uk/lanhydrock .



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gardens in the UK. At the end of the nineteenth century the gardens were at their zenith, but the Great War (as WW1 was then known) caused the grounds to slide into neglect, as many of the workforce went off to fight and never returned. It was not until 1990 that the skeleton of the gardens was rediscovered and restoration work began.

The gardens are typical of 19th Century style, with wonderful grounds including an Italian Garden; an old Walled garden containing flower, fruit and kitchen gardens; a 'Jungle'; a Ravine; a Lost Valley; Sundial Garden; Rope Bridge (which some intrepid members of the Group crossed); a boardwalk and a restored Pineapple Pit, producing pineapples. The Walled Garden has a restored 'Thunderbox', with poignant signatures on the walls of Estate workers who left to fight in the Great War and never returned. Some of the Group were privileged to have a guided tour of the Walled Garden and were given in-depth information on the restoration of this part of the Estate. Many Heritage varieties have been re-introduced into the gardens as have fruiting vines. A quirky touch in the gardens is the living sculptures found just off the main path – the 'Mud Maid'; the 'Grey Lady' and the 'Green Giant'. A morning really was not long enough to explore this delightful venue, and left many of the Group planning to return.

For more information visit www.heligan.com/the-story



The restored apple tunnel in the Walled Garden. The Pineapple Pit.

Autumn Bounty at Heligan.

Day 4: afternoon – Truro Cathedral. Our final visit on this Study Tour to Cornwall was to Truro Cathedral. This was the first Anglican Cathedral to be built in England since the Reformation, as all Cathedrals previously had belonged to the Roman Catholic tradition. It was built between 1880 and 1910 in a Gothic Revival style by John Loughborough Pearson on the site of the Parish Church. Uniquely parts of the old Parish Church remain within the walls of the Cathedral, so the building is both a Cathedral and a Parish Church. There is some magnificent Victorian stained glass and also some remnants of medieval glass. The Reredos at the High Altar is very impressive and the Cathedral boasts some interesting features such as a Willis Organ, stained glass windows commemorating famous people and events connected to Cornwall and a central Tower of 250 feet, one foot for every mile of the City's distance from London! There is also a large, well preserved marble monument dating back to 1614 of a local dignitary and his wife. The 'Service of the Nine Lessons and Carols', now a Christmas tradition and often broadcast from King's College Chapel, Cambridge, actually originated in Truro Cathedral. More information can be found at www.trurocathedral.org.uk .



The old Parish Church within the Cathedral.



The magnificent Reredos.

The Group were recommended to try Cornish Pasties while in Truro and two good and authentic pasty shops were found.

Other places visited by the Group, though not on the designated timetable were:

Padstow – with its charming harbour; the Camel Trail along the Camel Estuary and the Rick Stein restaurant.

Port Isaac – the TV series 'Doc Martin' was filmed here and some members of the group met a local man who was an extra on both 'Doc Martin' and the recent 'Poldark' serial. He gave them some inside stories about the production and the locality. This picturesque, traditional fishing village has a harbour where fishermen still land their daily catch of fish, crab and lobsters.

Watergate Bay – a two-mile beach set in a valley between Newquay and Padstow. It is known for its fresh mussels and its Jamie Oliver restaurant.

Newquay – a surfing centre on the Atlantic Coast and also known for its seven miles of golden, sandy beaches and fantastic coastal scenery.

The Study Tour ended with a concert after dinner on the last evening, given by our Ukelele Group. This was very well received by us, and showcased a wide variety of musical styles, with an opportunity to 'sing along'. Margaret was thanked for all her hard work in enabling the Tour to be made and a Presentation was made to her and John. A fitting ending to a most interesting Study Tour.



The Ukelele Group perform on the final evening.

Heidy Hague