



Silver Success for Forde Abbey

Forde Abbey, the beautiful stately home on the border of Somerset and Dorset near Chard, has been named as the silver award winner in the best small visitor attraction category of the Enjoy England Awards for Excellence. The award was announced at a glittering award ceremony held at the newly restored St George's Hall in Liverpool on 23rd April and, with two successive regional gold awards already under their belt, the national recognition has been warmly welcomed at Forde Abbey.

Owner Mrs Lisa Roper was particularly pleased with the news. "To be named as the best in the South West, a region that boasts some of the finest attractions in the country was amazing, but to know that we are rated so highly nationally as well is a huge honour."

Now in their 19th year, the awards are affectionately known as the 'Tourism Oscars'. They promote healthy industry competition and high standards, helping to ensure England's place as a world-class destination. Winning South West Tourism's competition put Forde Abbey through to the national competition but it still had to go through a second round of tough judging to narrow the field from seven regional winners and become one of three national finalists.

Forde Abbey was represented at the awards by Mrs Roper's daughter and son-in-law, Alice and Julian Kennard, who are particularly involved with the day-to-day management of Forde Abbey and its estate. Alice was also a judge for the bed and breakfast category in the regional competition and knows how thorough the judging is. "To have a few excellent features and then only to be rated as satisfactory on others is not good enough. It is the overall experience that counts. By receiving this award in a competition that included some of the best attractions in England we know that Forde Abbey, backed by a fantastic staff, delivers a great visitor experience across the board."

Alice clearly knows what she is talking about as her recommendation for the regional bed and breakfast top prize, the Salty Monk from Sidmouth, went on to take the national gold award.

In the Small Visitor Attraction category the Roald Dahl Museum in Buckinghamshire won the gold award with Rockingham Castle in Leicestershire also gaining silver alongside Forde Abbey.

End

24th April 2008

For Editors:

For more information on this please contact Hannah Galvin on 01460 220231 or at hannah@fordeabbey.co.uk

Forde Abbey

Established in 1141 as a Cistercian monastery, Forde Abbey became a private home following the dissolution of the monasteries in 1539. Passed around a series of absentee landlords for more than a century it was saved by Edmund Prideaux, Cromwell's Attorney General in 1649. Under his supervision Forde Abbey became a family home and remains so to this day. It has now been the home of the Roper family since 1905 and is at the heart of a 1600 acre estate.

Enjoy England Awards for Excellence – Silver Award 2008
South West Tourism's Small Visitor Attraction of the Year 2006 & 2007

Gardens Open daily throughout the year 10.00 am - 4.30pm

House Open 12 noon – 4pm Tues-Fri, Sun & Bank Hols 18th March – end Oct

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