



Forde Abbey Wins Gold – Again!

For the second time in as many years Forde Abbey, the 800-year old former Cistercian monastery and 30-acre garden on the Dorset/Somerset border near Chard, has won South West Tourism's 'Celebrating Excellence' Gold Award for the region's Best Small Visitor Attraction. It will now go forward to the National Enjoy England Awards for Excellence in April 2008.

The win was announced at an Awards dinner in Torquay on Monday night where the region's tourism industry gathered to celebrate the best the South West has to offer. Owner Mrs Elizabeth Roper accepted the award on Forde Abbey's behalf. "This is marvellous news; to win once is great but twice is just fantastic. All of the Forde Abbey staff work so hard to make sure our visitors enjoy themselves and this award is public recognition of their success."

The judges were also impressed by the level of customer service and the great breadth of knowledge shown by the staff. They also praised the exceptional gardens and the dedication to improving both the standard of the planting and the accessibility of the grounds.

For the first time the finalists in each category were visited by winners from last year's competition rather than South West Tourism staff members and these previous winners also formed part of the final judging panel. Mrs Roper commented on this change "To be judged the best by your peers is particularly rewarding. They know better than anyone the challenges we face in the tourism sector and for them to recognise our efforts is very special." Mrs Roper's daughter, Alice Kennard who undertakes the day to day management of Forde Abbey, was a judge for the Best Bed & Breakfast category. "I know that Alice enjoyed the process immensely and learnt a great deal from it. We all gain from ensuring that visitors to the South West enjoy their stay. When their accommodation is first class, the food is delicious and they have enjoyable days out they will want to come back again and again. In the long run that would make us all winners."



Picture by Theo Moyles@pennnewsipix.com 29.10.07 The South West Tourism Excellence Awards at the Palace Hotel, Torquay. Pictured is the gold winner of the Small Visitor Attraction, Forde Abbey.

Mrs Roper receiving the award

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For Editors:

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Forde Abbey

Gardens Open daily throughout the year 10.00 am - 4.30pm

From 1st November -16th December there is free access to the gardens on Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays with the Tea Room and Gift Shop open from 10am-4pm.