

A trip to remember

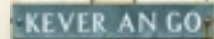
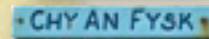
2011 - ENGLAND

13 April 2011

"As I was going to St Ives I met a man with seven wives." So says the famous verse but because of the cold wind and rain the wives wisely stayed at home!!

ST IVES

The guide books tell us that St Ives is a "pretty place by the sea". Despite the rain and wind and cold we can now agree. We parked well outside the town and rode our bikes down, down, down, down to the bottom of the hill to the town centre. We spent an hour enjoying the seaside area and even sat down to relax and eat a genuine Cornish pasty - a folded pastry case filled with seasonal meat and vegetables. Yum yum. We decided not to wash them down with mead - the local warm thick alcoholic brew, because we were worried what effect it would have on our balance. The rain had certainly kept the crowds away so we were easily able to ride the narrow streets of the old town without bumping into people or getting comments about "bloody bikes". In fact we did not see another bike the whole time we were in the town. St Ives is considered to be an art town and there were many galleries and craft shops but we only window shopped. The harbor area was filled with fishing boats and fishermen tending their nets. When it was time to get back to the van we simply folded up our bikes and took the tourist bus back to the car park at the top of the hill. Easy peesy.

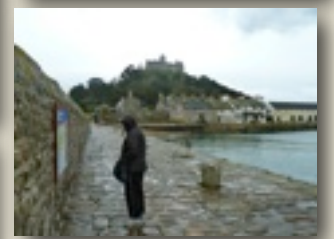




St Michael's Mont is very impressive (as is it's namesake in France)

DRIVING ALONG THE "TIN" COAST

Cornwall has a history of smuggling and piracy. Penance, near the tip of the toe of England, and a town we did not visit, was know well for its pirates (hence the "Pirates of Penance"). We traveled west along the rugged northern coast line where there were many tin mines (tin added to copper makes bronze - a much stronger metal). The land was very bleak and the farm houses were always old and grey. The road was also very narrow and winding. We did not stop for any tours of tin mines because we were keen to visit St Michael's Mont on the southern coast.



THE ISLAND CASTLE

Thirty years ago we visited Mont St Michael in France (across the English Channel). The British version of this castle is very similar but the rocky outcrop of the island is not as high. Because we are members of the National Trust there was no the entrance fee. The castle has been fully restored and is as impressive as the French version. The original family still live here. We spent 2 hours exploring and admiring the view. The boat trip over was wet and uncomfortable but coming back was appreciably drier.



