

UK Trefoil Guild Gathering Report.

What a wonderful experience and opportunity it was for Doreen Edwards from Brisbane Waters Trefoil Guild in NSW & me from Glenorchy Trefoil Guild, Tasmania to attend the UK Trefoil Gathering from 4 – 7 Oct 2019 at the Hayes Convention Centre in Swanwick, Derbyshire, England.



The Centre was built in the 1850s as a private residence and named ‘Swanwick Hayes’ and is part of a 90 acre estate of lovely gardens with a lake. Since 1910 it has been used as a convention centre apart from the Second World War when it was used as a POW camp for German & Italian prisoners. The centre is now one of the largest employers in the Swanwick area and prides itself on using mostly local suppliers. There are 274 spacious bedrooms, most with ensuite and it is an easy walk to the main building where the dining room and the main conference room were located.

Doreen & I arranged to meet at the venue and timed it very well with both arriving within minutes of each other. After registering and checking out our rooms, we took our map and set off to explore the venue and get our bearings as the property had numerous other buildings. We didn’t get very far before we were stopped by two UK Trefoil members who commented on our Trefoil attire. They were wearing casual clothes with the UK Trefoil Scarf. It is a beautiful scarf that can be worn at any time. Within minutes, we had made new friends, with many more friendships to be made over the next few days.



Happy hour was from 5pm each night and gave us plenty of opportunity to mingle and meet new members and for the UK members to catch up and chat. The Trefoil Shop was also open from 4pm – 5.30pm each day.

After dinner on Friday night, we all gathered in the main conference hall for the Official Welcome and together with the Canadian Contingent were introduced. We then enjoyed the evening entertainment – A 72-member Rock Choir who had many of us tapping our feet and joining in the singing.

The weekend program had a variety of options including days trips to local attractions or staying onsite to participate in the many varied activities.

The day trips were to the Crich Tramway Village and the Cromford Cotton Mills or the National Memorial Arboretum and Barton Marina or a visit to the National Trust property – Hadden Hall.



For Saturday, I chose to go offsite to visit the tramway and the cotton mill.

For those staying onsite, the choices were numerous and included a Book Folding Workshop, Water Colour Workshop, Pyrography Workshop, Campfire singing, Craft Workshop, learning to play the Steel Drums or Handbells, Well Dressing to name a few.



The Saturday night entertainment has us in stitches and was provided by David Bell aka 'The Plague Doctor'. David is not a doctor or historian but a retired civil servant from Newcastle who moved to Eyam and discovered the waterfall on the farm he had bought was the site where a Matthew Morton had taken up residence in 1665 to escape the plague. David decided to research those times and events in the village and his conclusion was that the stories commonly told would appear to have been embellished over the centuries.



With the props David brought with him, including a blow-up Samuel Pepys doll, partially dressed in 17th century clothes and which had a urinary tract infection, a bladder stone and constipation, we knew we were in for an entertaining evening. What followed were butt-clenching descriptions of the cures for ailments in the Samuel Pepys Diaries which were graphically demonstrated by David on the dummy. We all had to grab the tissues as we were laughing so much.

On the Sunday, Doreen & I stayed onsite and had a fun day trying Book Folding, Campfire Singing, Steel Drums, Pyrography and other crafts.

Doreen had stayed onsite on Saturday as well and she also tried Handbells and Well Dressing - which is a tradition practised in some parts of rural England in which wells, springs and other water sources are decorated



with designs created from flower petals and leaves. The activities were well organised and were thoroughly enjoyed by everyone.

The Sunday night entertainment was preceded by the Official Closing and then it was a night of Ceili Dancing which are a type of Irish Folk Dancing originating in Ireland in the 1400s (similar to square dancing) where you dance in groups of usually four couples, pairs facing each other. We danced to the Derbyshire Ranters Ceillidh Band and had a great night.



The Gathering was purely a few days for Trefoil members to come, socialise, renew old friendships, make new ones and enjoy the fun, food, fellowship and the activities organised by the hard-working committee and is held every four years.

Thank you to Barbara Dean, Trefoil Guild International Consultant and Girl Guides Australia for the opportunity to attend.

Bev Brooke
Contingent Leader
UK Trefoil Guild Gathering
24 Oct 2019

