



WELCOME TO
TRESYLLIAN
CASTLE

HOME OF THE
TRESYLLIAN FAMILY

HAUNT OF THE
LEGENDARY WHITE LADY



he best way to approach Cornwall is from the sea, as the first traders did thousands of years ago. Mediterranean travellers, rounding Gibraltar and sailing north along the coast, find a peninsula shaped like a miniature Italy, tipped on its side and projecting from the southwest corner of England into the Atlantic waters.

It is in Cornwall that King Arthur held court, at a spot now known as Camelford. Across these moors rode Galahad and Lancelot. On these shores Iseult pined for her lost love, Tristram. And on these mighty cliffs Jack killed the giants Cormoran, Galligantus, and Thunderbore.

Many Cornish folk believe in fairies, wishes, charms, and omens. And why not? In Cornwall, such things do exist. Gnomes hammer away in the tin mines. Pixies turn the milk sour. When a pin is thrown into the Holy Well near Roche on Maundy Thursday, the bubbles reveal your fortune. A ghost coach drawn by headless horses appears in Penryn just before Christmas. If you don't avert your eyes when you see it, the coachman will spirit you away.

Cornwall has many interesting old manor houses, a number of them built in the Middle Ages. There are also several castles, mostly in ruins but still impressive. These ancient dwellings have housed distinguished Cornish families and witnessed countless historical events. Tresyllian Castle, a mediaeval fortress with a residential wing attached, is a fine example of such a home.

The oldest parts of the castle, the Tower and the Curtain Wall, were built in 1242 by Horace of Tresyllian, to defend Frobzance Cove from pirates at sea. In 1251, Horace constructed a Chapel (uniquely situated on the second floor of the Tower) for the baptism of his first son and heir.

Tresyllian Castle has its share of Cornish lore. The legend of the White Lady originated in the 14th century, when Sir Thomas Tresyllian's young bride proved unfaithful and was walled up alive as punishment. Her woeful spirit wanders the Tower on moonlit nights.

Tresyllian Castle was renovated in the mid 1500's, when Francis Tattersall-Tresyllian, 11th Earl of Frobzance, 3rd Baron Tatdale, built a Residential Wing on the site of the eastern part of the original Curtain Wall. The rooms were refurbished in 1867 in anticipation of a visit from Queen Victoria.

Situated on Frobzance Cove, with a commanding view of the English Channel, the castle is a charming blend of historical treasures and everyday comforts, carefully maintained for our enjoyment by the noble Tresyllian family.

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TRESYLLIAN CASTLE IS ALMOST EIGHT CENTURIES OLD. AFTER ALL THESE YEARS, IT IS STILL INHABITED BY MEMBERS OF THE TRESYLLIAN FAMILY.

Imagine yourself as an eighteenth-century traveller, riding your horse across the desolate Cornish moors. Throughout the long day, you see nothing but scrub and bog and craggy rocks looming on the horizon. Toward evening, a dank fog rolls in off the coast. Just as you're contemplating the terrors of spending a night on the moor, the stone turrets of a castle appear through the mist. A flag bearing a noble coat of arms flutters from the tower. As you ride closer, light blazes from the mullioned windows and a servant runs out to take your weary steed. You have arrived at Tresyllian Castle.

Today, Lord Tresyllian offers thousands of yearly visitors the same hospitality family friends have been accorded through the centuries. When viewing the castle, it is easy to picture oneself as the historic traveller, arriving at last at a civilised place.

The Courtyard

The stones which pave the Courtyard bear the marks of centuries of revelry, warfare, and everyday life. The crumbling Curtain Wall southwest of the gate once surrounded the castle, guarding against invaders. The Tower (also called the Keep) provided living space. During the frequent battles, mediaeval maidens huddling in barren rooms could hear the shouts of the marauders and the thud of the battering ram against the massive wooden door.

Now a luxurious Residential Wing has replaced the eastern section of the Wall, and the only sounds you hear are the surging surf in the nearby cove and the welcoming voice of your host.

The Foyer

The decor of the austere, high-ceilinged Foyer reflects the Tresyllian family's pride in their Cornish heritage. Footsteps echo on the granite paving stones, carved from the Cornish hills. The huge sculpted bronze doors leading into the Great Hall tell the tale of Tristram and Iseult, unhappy bride of the King of Cornwall. And the oil painting near the mahogany coat rack shows Jack the Giant Killer, another famous resident of Cornwall, slaying the two-headed giant Thunderbore.

The umbrella stand by the front door is actually an elephant's foot. When the eccentric Lord Chester Tresyllian was on safari in 1902, a large bull elephant trampled the campsite, breaking his Lordship's foot. In revenge, Lord Chester shot the elephant and brought back *its* foot to hold his umbrellas.

The Drawing Room

The airy Drawing Room is where the Tresyllian family meets to enjoy each other's company as well as that of their guests. The Dresden blue walls and furnishings soothe the senses and complement the elegant gold-leafed frames around the many mirrors and paintings.

The spacious feeling is enhanced by the tall French windows, which overlook Frobzance Cove to the east and the formal gardens to the north. The Belgian tapestry on the south wall is a treasured family heirloom. Woven of wool and spun gold, it depicts a maiden tending a unicorn in a beautiful rose garden.

The satin cushion of the small gold-leafed arm-chair before the fireplace bears the imprint of Queen Victoria, for this is where she sat on her visit to Tresyllian Castle in 1867.

The New Great Hall

In the Middle Ages, entire families lived and slept in a castle's great hall. By the time the Tresyllian Family built their New Great Hall, the room was used mostly for holiday entertaining and for conducting important business.

When the local villagers arrive for Christmas dinner, they are seated around the long oak table in the centre of the room. A fire is lit in the massive fireplace, which is decorated with the Tresyllian coat of arms. The elaborate wood carving surrounding the fireplace extends upward through a vast open stairwell to the gallery, where the portraits of Tresyllian ancestors gaze down upon the festivities.

The suit of armour standing by the bronze doors was worn by Sir Geoffrey Tresyllian at Bosworth Field in 1485. You might think that a knight wearing this armour would feel protected. However, the metal is so heavy that even a strong man had difficulty walking, and fighting an enemy or riding a horse was nearly impossible.

The Gallery

The Gallery is reached by climbing one of the staircases on either side of the fireplace.

The walls of the Gallery display the Tresyllian family portraits. Among the somber faces of knights and peers, a lighter note is struck by the charming double portrait of Hadley and Zoe Tattersall-Tresyllian by the sixteenth century Austrian painter Baron Roland von Langosy.

High above the fireplace on the south wall, a Gothic window offers a dramatic view of the English Channel, with cargo and pleasure boats plying the blue-grey waters.

The Sitting Room

The Sitting Room is a delightful place to spend an idle afternoon. It is filled with warm colors and invitingly comfortable furniture. The yellow silk brocade has covered the walls for over a hundred years, and the faded carpet patterned with peacocks and chrysanthemums was purchased in India by Lady Gayle Tresyllian in 1912.

A guest at the castle might write a letter at the Louis XV writing desk that once belonged to Marie Antoinette. Or play a romantic melody on the grand piano especially built by the Klugenhofer Klavierwerke in Germany. Or curl up with a book on the window seat, charmingly decorated with small carved wyverns projecting like gargoyles from either end.

The Dining Room

In the Dining Room, the Tresyllians and their intimate guests gather to sample the culinary masterpieces of the family cook. It is easy to imagine the servants waiting in attendance as the family settles into the leather-cushioned chairs around the gleaming mahogany table. The matching sideboard can hold an impressive array of food, along with a silver punchbowl on festive occasions.

The room was designed to provide a peaceful and relaxing place to dine. The walls are covered in pale lilac, decorated with plaster friezes of cupids at play. Above the fireplace is a large oil painting of fruits and flowers. The bracketed shelf on the south wall holds a collection of porcelain vases, as well as a bronze bust of Lord Lionel Tresyllian.

Junction

This is where the Residential Wing joins the old part of the castle. Here you can easily see the double outer wall of the Tower, designed to strengthen the castle against attackers. If invaders did manage to break in, they would have to fight their way up a winding stairway between the two walls, then cross to the opposite side of the Tower in order to reach the next stairway.

Winding stairways take up some of the space between the walls. Legends tell of secret passageways in other parts of the Tower.

The Old Great Hall

Centuries ago, the Old Great Hall was a dark and gloomy place, heated by a smoking fire in a vast stone fireplace and lit by small narrow windows. The only furnishings were a large oak table, a few benches, and a pair of armchairs for the Lord and Lady.

Today, the Old Great Hall looks very much the same. The rough plaster walls are empty of decoration, and light still filters in through the slit windows. The main difference is that the original furniture has been moved to the New Great Hall. In its place, Lord Lionel Tresyllian has set up a collection of mementoes from his travels to the far corners of the globe. Among these curiosities, be sure to look at the following:

❖ **An oil painting of the Battle of Blood River** by the famous half-Zulu, half-Afrikaner artist, Chaka Pretorius. In this battle, a few hundred Boer settlers circled their wagons on the banks of the Ncome River to defend themselves against an army of Zulu warriors brandishing spears and clubs. Earlier, friends and relatives of these settlers had been slaughtered in a gruesome massacre. The present band, confronted now by overwhelming odds, might well have suffered the same fate. Instead, on Sunday the 16th December 1838, they fought off their attackers, totally defeating the army of the dreaded Zulu king known as Dingaan the Vulture. More than three thousand of his highly trained warriors were killed, whilst only three settlers were wounded. The river ran red, giving the battle its name.

❖ **An exquisite carving in Chinese jade** of a rather ape-like, pre-human skeleton, probably some ancestor of modern man.

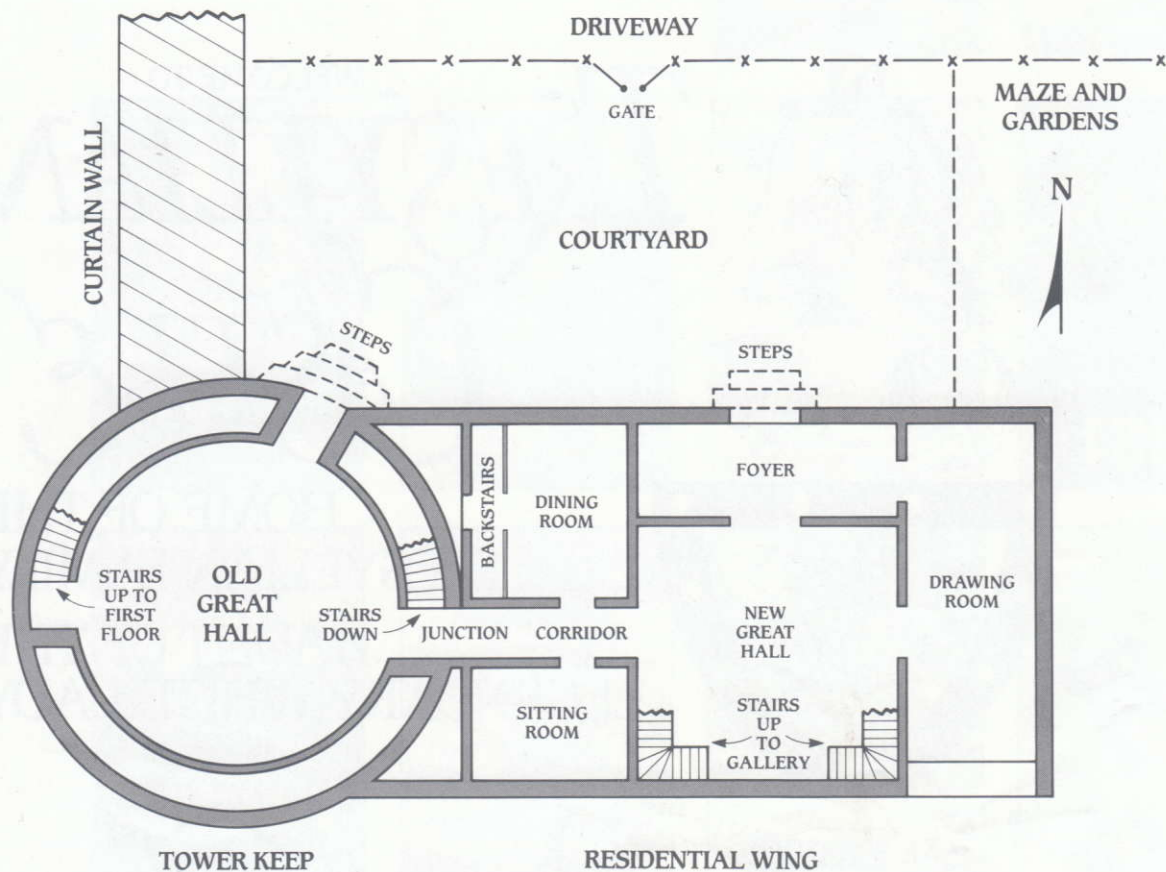
❖ **A giant oyster shell** from the South Pacific ocean, its interior surface mysteriously lacquered jet black.

❖ **A papier-mache figure of an Amazon Indian**, dressed in the weird costume of a tribal witch doctor, performing the elaborate secret ritual by which the anaesthetic drug used on the tribal blowgun darts is extracted from the rare moonflower plant.

The Hedge Maze

In 1862, the children of Jonathan Tresyllian, 21st Earl of Frobzance, pleaded with their father to let them plan a maze in the garden. The resulting hedge maze is one of the best-known in England. Today, young people (as well as old) still enjoy wandering through the clipped passages of the maze. Hidden in the centre is a beautiful salt-air garden with a stone fountain and a pond filled with shimmering goldfish.

PLAN OF GROUND FLOOR



PLAN OF FIRST FLOOR

TRESYLLIAN CASTLE

