

Edinburgh to Newquay flight opens up the southwest

Cornwall is a big tourism draw in the southwestern corner of England, but now it has become very accessible from Edinburgh as there is a new direct flight from Edinburgh Airport to Newquay every Saturday morning. There are a whole seven miles of golden beaches for walking and relaxing and the picturesque town is situated on the Atlantic cliffs – nothing much between here and America.



The new flight allows you to avoid overnight car journeys meaning that by the time you get there you have no energy left to enjoy the many sports or the sights – oh and the food!



The Edinburgh Reporter was invited to stay at the 4 Silver Star Headland Hotel, a wonderful early 20th century building right on the promontory giving rise to its name. It has a spa (more of that later) and a restaurant with two Michelin rosettes. But most of all it is family owned by John and Carolyn Armstrong, and run by a staff who care about you while you stay with them. I had never visited Cornwall and enjoyed discovering the county which I had heard so much about. The flight was a short hour and a half, transporting us to the most distant part of England.

Opened in 1900 the hotel took a while to construct owing to local objections, the most obvious of which was the group of locals who pulled down the foundation walls and threw the foreman's hut in the sea! When it opened the finest rooms were available for £5 a night. Nowadays you can opt for one of the Best rooms which feature a super king-sized four poster bed and a freestanding bath. Best Rooms and Suites are priced from

£265 for two people sharing.

There are also self-catering cottages with one, two or three bedrooms with private decks and large living areas. All of these can be booked [online](#).

One of the regular guests is so in love with the place that he has built a scale Lego® model!



When we arrived there was a small family wedding taking place in one suite, and on the other side of the hotel guests sunning themselves on the terrace. This is a hotel big enough to take all of this activity without feeling at all cramped. They clearly do it well as they have won three awards this year already, and several in previous years too.



Our king-size room had a large en-suite with a fabulous shower and a great view across the beach. There were tea-making facilities and a fridge. One of the little add-ons that you could order is a rose petal strewn bath with bubbly... of the drinking kind! They also offer to polish your car or make you a picnic, trying hard to ensure that you enjoy your stay.

We did try to eat out, and went to the couple of little restaurants which lie a short walk away from the Headland Hotel, but one (the Rick Stein fish and chip emporium) was so dirty we dared not sit down. The other was simply (and very understandably) fully booked.

But the hotel dining room was fabulous with many tables set by the large windows to allow you to savour the views at the same time as the food. We were treated to dinner in the dining room on the first night and then on the second night we ate on The Terrace. One of the features of Cornwall is that everything is described on every menu and anywhere they can cram it in as –

Cornish! For example, there was a char-grilled Cornish sirloin steak on the menu for £19 or Cornish ale battered fish 'n chips with tartare sauce and mushy peas for £13. I had the local fish curry which was simply delicious.

Until they build the new outdoor swimming pool (they are going to use the site of the existing one for something else!) the absolute gem of the whole hotel is their spa.



I spent a fabulously relaxing couple of hours here, firstly lounging outside in the sunshine, then tried hard not to fall asleep during my Thalgo facial so that I could report every detail back to you. (too many different creams and oils to remember, but the beneficial effect lingered noticeably for several days).

The five bubble rated spa was launched in 2014 and has almost 9,000 square feet of loveliness for you to relax in or be pampered in. There are six luxury treatment rooms, a couples treatment room with hydrotherapy bath (not for me – I prefer my pampering in private!) a heated pool, sauna and a Cornish salt steam room. But this is reasonably priced in comparison with other spas we have experienced. You could have two hours here for two people for £200. They also rather charmingly offer Litte Miss Headland manicures for the 8-16 year old guests who want to be polished!



On Sunday morning we rose early for our surfing lesson courtesy of Dom at Surf Sanctuary Surf School which is right under the hotel (and can be accessed by a secret door from the spa!) There was no surf to speak of, so the right decision was to learn paddle boarding. As is the way with many of these sports you need some balance and nerve, but once out on the water it was surprisingly easy to get back on the board after falling off, and to stand up! (no photos of this as water and

cameras don't mix...) It was also a great form of outdoor exercise as we found out the next day.

This is a hotel where you could host a conference of any size. Their staff know how to do events! Equally if you can get a booking then you could have a family Christmas or New Year in the hotel where winter walks on the beach would blow the cobwebs away.

Headland was featured in the film *The Witches* starring Rowan Atkinson and Angelica Houston, and has links to royalty with one notable guest, The Prince of Wales, (later Edward VIII), who came to convalesce in the hotel after a bout of mumps. He was training at the Royal Naval College in Dartmouth. The younger prince, Bertie, came to join him and they stayed in rooms 102, 103 and 104 which at that time were all interconnecting.

You could also rent a Cornish cottage as the hotel has 39 5 star self-catering cottages in addition to the 96 bedrooms. The Headland Cottages are a place to relax and enjoy the scenery. You have snug sofas or sundecks to use, depending on the weather.

Headland Hotel Fistral Beach, Newquay. TR7 1EW T 01637 872211

Website <http://www.headlandhotel.co.uk>

Twitter <https://twitter.com/HeadlandHotel>

Room Prices vary from £100 upwards, but regular offers and discounts are posted on their website.

We hired a car from Newquay Airport on arrival and although there are buses, trains and cycle ways it seemed the best option to see as much as possible in a short time.

We were able to drop the car back at Exeter Airport on the way home making this quite a convenient arrangement. If you are able to stay for a week however then you can take advantage of

the direct flight back too. Our flight courtesy of Flybe brought us home by way of Manchester.



Sunny Cornwall



Places to visit

Eden Project

This award winning destination is just a short car ride away from Newquay near St Austell, by way of the A30, A390 and A391, this is much more than just another gardening experience. Although the gardens are not bad with lavender in

swathes in the summer and a Rainforest Biome where they grow bananas in the summer!

The whole purpose behind the project is to show off sustainability and so they collect rain and ground water which allows them to water the plants here three mornings a week, or daily in the summer. This global garden was created from a clay pit about 15 years ago and things to watch out for in Summer 2016 include gardening courses, guided tours, testing of Australian plants in the Mediterranean Biome which will then be planted out in 2017.

You can also travel to Eden by train (followed by 20 minutes on a First Bus route 101) or bus, and if you do you will get a discount on your admission ticket. Dogs are welcome on a lead, although they are not permitted in indoor areas (except guide dogs).

Staying overnight is also an option as there is Snoozebox accommodation in a converted shipping container at the YHA Eden Project.

Often the visitor destination is home to outdoor concerts in the summer.

More details at www.edenproject.com

The Lost Gardens of Heligan Pentewan, St Austell, PL26 6EN T 01726 845100

Billed as a romantic adventure story this is an estate which has opened to the public following some 50 years of neglect. There is a riot of camellias and rhododendrons at Heligan among the 200 acres of garden featuring plants from New Zealand, Italy and Sikkim. They also have a jungle...if you're brave enough.

You can eat at the Heligan Kitchen where they offer food grown in the gardens at breakfast and lunchtime. They offer

horticultural apprenticeships in the gardens and on the farm where they rear cattle, poultry, pigs and sheep.

A family ticket costs £35 and it is open every day year round. (no wifi in the woods!)



Flybe will take you from Edinburgh Airport direct to Newquay on a Saturday morning at 7:00am. Our top tip is that you must opt for quite a small in-flight bag as the overhead lockers are not big. It is best to book a bag and travel with a small rucksack aboard.

On the flight I read about Olympic rower Helen Glover's Cornwall in their in-flight magazine, Flight Time. Helen won a gold medal at the 2012 London Olympics, a sport she took up relatively late at the age of 22. She explains in the interview that she represented the county in many sports before excelling on the water.



We saw the gold postbox in Penzance which marks her rowing achievement in the Coxless Pairs where her family still run the ice-cream shop Jelberts.

There are many options for the return journey. We opted to come back on the Monday from Exeter via Manchester with flybe (although you would clearly be better to stay the week!). This allowed us some time to stop off and explore Exeter Cathedral which is a stunning Anglican cathedral in the centre of the city.

Under the longest uninterrupted vaulted ceiling in the world, you might be lucky to be there when there is a service, but you can enjoy a guided tour to explain the many carvings, the astronomical clock and the various tombs around the honey coloured stone building.

Exeter is a great place for cycling as you have the option of fairly level cycle paths along the Exeter Ship Canal and plenty of other off road cycle paths around the city. They also offer [Pay as you Go](#) electric bikes! Look for National Cycle Network Route 2 along the south coast which can take you across the channel by way of the Tour de Manche!

National Trust

The National Trust has a host of places that it can welcome you across Cornwall. Nearest to Newquay is Carnewas at Bedruthan. This is a famous cliff top walk and there is a cafe! T 01637 860563.

South of Newquay Terrace is an Elizabethan manor house hidden away from the 21st century! Barn restaurant offers great lemon meringue pies T 01637 875404. Holywell and Crantock Beach is one of the classic Atlantic coast beaches away from the hustle and bustle that can be Newquay. Dogs are welcome here. T 01208 863046 for more information.

Find out what's on in Cornwall on the www.whatsoncornwall.co.uk website

The Edinburgh Reporter was a guest of the Headland Hotel for two nights with dinner included on one night and a spa treatment. Fistril Rooms are available from £175 B & B. Flybe also provided one flight for us which cost £140 return.

Flybe flies to Newquay from Edinburgh up to four times a day, with prices from £35.99 one way including taxes and charges. Available for booking at www.flybe.com