

Cream of the soggy resorts

CREAM teas... fresh fish suppers... lashings and lashings of ginger beer... For some reason (probably greed) my holidays don't seem like holidays unless I return with a significantly expanded waistline.

So I was able to occupy myself on the seven-and-a-half hour drive from Nottingham to St Ives by imagining all the dollops of clotted cream, mouthfuls of pastry and plates of moules marinière I was going to consume on arrival. Yum.

Cornwall is one of those counties, like Northumberland, that seems exaggeratedly long.

Sometimes this is wonderful (limitless skies, limitless beaches) but if you're in your car trying to get somewhere, you can have too much of a good thing.

My travel-buddy and I got all excited as we crossed the border out of Devon (cunningly bypassing the queues for the county show, which tailed back for miles in the other direction), only to discover Cornwall was much bigger than we'd thought. And St Ives still lay a good two-and-a-half hours away.

We did begin to wonder if the little fishing village was destined to remain tantalisingly out-of-reach — a little like Virginia Woolf's never-to-be-visited lighthouse, which was supposedly inspired by the area.

But when the village did eventually loom into view, it caught us by surprise.

"There's the sea!" we cried, as we squeaked sharp right along a track so vertiginous we thought we were driving down a cliff face.

At the bottom of this precipitous little plummet, though, stood the Primrose Valley Hotel.

This pristine, whitewashed, ten-bedroom

ST IVES, CORNWALL

Jennifer Scott

Edwardian villa stood just a few seconds' walk from St Ives' gleaming Porthminster sands — one of just three Cornish beaches to hold a Blue Flag award.

We had booked for two nights' B&B, but this was not bed and breakfast as we knew it.

The beds in our contemporary cream 'n' cappuccino coloured rooms were piled high with faux fur throws and rosebud-patterned cushions, while the breakfasts were a smorgasbord of Cornwall's local cheeses and fish that sated our appetites... at least until lunch.

Husband and wife Sue and Andrew Biss bought Primrose Valley four years ago, with the help of Sue's parents.

"We decided to create the sort of place that we would want to stay in if we were coming here as guests," said Andrew.

Unfortunately, Andrew and Sue couldn't do much about the weather which was typical British summertime stuff (ie, chucking it down).

Still, a rainy afternoon in St Ives does actually have more appeal than a wet weekend in Whitby.

There's more culture, for one thing.

Whitby, unlike St Ives, doesn't have a Tate art gallery, nor a museum dedicated to Britain's most famous female sculptor, Barbara Hepworth.

First up was the tiny Tate — a five-gallery version of its large-scale cousins in Liverpool and London, which includes pieces by Cezanne, Matisse,

Turner and local fisher-artist Alfred Wallis.

Then we followed a clipboard-carrying school trip into Barbara Hepworth's garden, a tiny patch of turf dominated by abstract cultures in smooth stone that held glistening pools of water and droplets of rain.

The next day we travelled east to Eden — the site of two 50-metre-high honeycomb-patterned



COMFORT SPOT:
One of the bedrooms