

My great-aunt wrote the history of our family in Cornwall many years ago. She mentioned names, places and how our family came to America. We are so grateful that she passed this information on to us.

Before home computers were invented, writing letters was the only way I knew how to find family. So I wrote a letter to the editor of the largest newspaper in Truro, Cornwall, which, is close to my family's town of St. Austell. I asked for help finding my family, gave all my family surnames, and my mailing address in Napa.

I was surprised to receive more than 25 letters. The British love genealogy, and I loved getting their mail. It was so much fun seeing Cornwall on the return envelopes. I did find a few family names and kept all of them. Little secret clues could be hiding in them for the next generation.

To my great surprise, one letter was from a fifth cousin, Mike Trethewy in Grampound, Cornwall. He was a member of the Trethewy Family Society and had been working on our genealogy all these years. I did have trouble reading it as he wrote in a very fancy script, almost like calligraphy. I decided he was an older gentleman. We exchanged Christmas cards for years.

Years later we decided to visit Cornwall. We contacted Mike, and he invited us to stay at his B&B in Grampound. As we parked in front of his historical building, a young man was standing there with a ponytail, wearing jeans, and an earring. He had a welcoming smile on his face.

His B&B was full of old, traditional beautiful English antiques and he was an expert in Victorian silver and blue Wedgwood dishes. These dishes came from the clay found in the soil of St. Austell. Many of our family had worked in the mines. Mike had just been on the local radio station speaking about his collections and their history. He was so friendly, a fabulous cook and we enjoyed our stay for a few days.

He drove us all over Cornwall to see family graves, the family churches they had attended and my fifth great-grandparents' home, which was still standing. I was busy taking photos all afternoon.

He took us to lunch and to meet his parents and sister, a nurse in Plymouth. He showed us the three bakeries that his family owned and introduced us to another cousin who worked for the City of Truro. When we left, he gave me rolls of our genealogy charts.

My new cousin was equally friendly. We were invited for lunch at his home with his family in Truro. It was the first time we ever had a British style tuna sandwich without mayonnaise. We spread out our large genealogy sheets all over the living room rug and

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By Lynne Champlin

had a great time looking at our shared history. He was very personable and had recently won the honor of being the top baritone in Cornwall.

I was so lucky to have found this wonderful family connection with cousins who were friendly and willing to share family history.

It was a trip of a lifetime.