

## **Reports on GSMD Governor General Lisa Pennington’s visit to SMD(E), May–June 2025**

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29th July, 2025

Dear SMD(E) Members,

Lisa Pennington, Esq., Governor General of the General Society of Mayflower Descendants, accepted my invitation to visit the Society of Mayflower Descendants (Europe) during May and June, 2025. This is the first time that the SMD(E) has officially hosted a GSMD officer; it was a leap of faith for everyone involved. There was no template to follow; there was no one, particular place where we could offer her a nice, cosy seat, the perfect cup of tea, and a concise introduction to the SMD(E) story.

Therefore, I determined that we would coordinate a large-scale, high-value, go-for-broke Royal Progress. It was my goal to offer this brave GSMD Governor General a sampling of Europe's deep history, while also introducing her to our diverse membership. I hoped to give her some sense of just how widely our membership is scattered across Europe's vast spaces, while also hinting at the differing laws and conventions that shape our daily lives. Of necessity, I recruited assistants from among our officers and membership, and the GG contributed her adventurous spirit and gracious presence. With her husband, David Furrow, at her side, Lisa tackled the gruelling schedule that resulted with the aplomb of a hardened campaigner. It made the days of connection both a reward and a joy for everyone involved.



What follows are the reports from the people who made this complex, coordinated plan possible. First, you will hear from Our Man in Paris, the redoubtable Mark Primmer. The French Embassy, some fine dining, and back-street views of Ben Franklin are involved.

Next up was our SMD(E) Secretary, Donna Heys, hailing from the history-drenched shores of southwest England. Never forget, it was the Women's Institute that really won the Second World War in Great Britain; Donna has served as the President of one of its chapters.

Finally, the imposing silence of our Deputy Governor, William English, CBE, is almost broken (though you might need to read between the lines, a little), with his report from Kent, England. He DID run this event like a military campaign, and like most good campaigns,



William English CBE,  
Colonel, British Army (ret'd)



Donna Heys, former  
President, Broadwindsor  
Women's Institute (WI)



Mark Primmer, Naval Flight Officer,  
USN (ret'd); Commander - Dept of  
Europe, Veterans of Foreign Wars  
(VFW)

much of the subtext remains fully submerged. His report lists me as the host; I was, however, present at HIS house, and you will have enough sense to fill in the many unspoken implications which arise from this reality. Finally, I will give you my own short narrative. My part in this episode figures as an incomplete story, however: some of my (most excellent!) news will be reported at a later date.

Once again, the SMD(E) has shown its capacity to meet major challenges. Our strength lies in our ability to collaborate, coordinate, and elaborate on the individual strengths of our membership. We are good at welcoming people from anywhere and everywhere into our wondrous realm of history and kindred spirits; we find common ground. In some cases, as in that of Lisa Pennington and David Furlow, this gives us the opportunity to welcome those people as SMD(E) Associate Members. As such, I am delighted to announce that Lisa and David have joined the SMD(E) community following their visit.

Europe holds a special place in Mayflower history. It is where the Mayflower story began; the people who braved the rough Atlantic storms on that storied ship were born on European shores, and bred from the forces that were loose on this continent. They carried that heritage into the New World. In every case, Mayflower heritage can be traced back to Europe. It is a glimpse of this world which we shared with the GSMD Governor General, Lisa Pennington, Esq.

Share that journey with us now!

*Carmen Kew*

Carmen Kew

Governor

Society of Mayflower Descendants (Europe)



# GSMD Governor General trip to visit SMD(E)

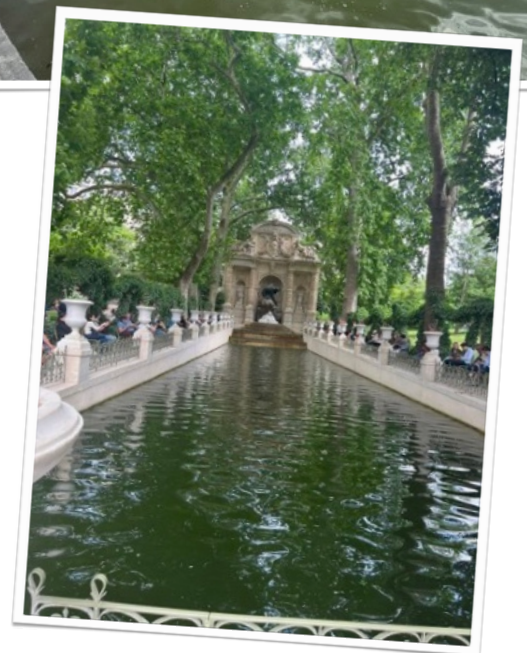
Paris, 29 May – 1 June

*Report from Our Man in Paris: Mark Primmer, SMD(E) Member*

Thursday, 29 May

Timing	Activity
10:24 (GMT) – 14:00 (CET)	Eurostar from London to Paris
14:00 – 15:00 (CET)	Transfer to Hôtel Le Sénat
Afternoon	Informal neighbourhood walk/ sightseeing
19:00 (CET) Evening	Informal dinner at Le Petit Medicis

Visiting the European Mayflower Society in Paris, first stop the Luxembourg Gardens. The creation of the garden began in 1612 when Marie de' Medici, the widow of King Henry IV, constructed the Luxembourg Palace as her new residence, with the magnificent Medici Fountain situated just nearby. The garden today is owned by the French Senate, which meets in the palace. Tucked away in a quiet green side of the garden is an original model of Liberty Enlightening the World, commonly known as the Statue of Liberty.





Friday, 30 May

Timing	Activity
Morning	Free time
12:30 (CET)	Arrive US Embassy
13:00 – 13:30 (CET)	Meeting at US Embassy with Ms. Kimberly Krhounek, Deputy Chief of Mission
14:15 – 15:45 (CET)	Lunch: Café Lapérouse Paris Concorde
15:45 – 17:00 (CET)	Visit to the Hôtel de la Marine, Place de la Concorde
Evening	Informal dinner at local café/bistrot

Friday began with a special meeting at the US Embassy with the US Minister of Political Affairs, Kimberley Krhounek, and her talented associates at the US Embassy. We discussed the importance of the Mayflower story to the beginnings of democracy and law in America, and the beginnings of trade between the Pilgrims and the French Acadian Gov. Charles D'Aulnay in 1635. We hope to join in celebrating the special American and French relationship in the coming America 250 festivities! Just



outside the US Embassy is a lovely statue of Benjamin Franklin, the first Minister Plenipotentiary from the United States of America at the Court of Versailles, the forerunner of Ambassadors.

SMDE Historian Julie Wilson joined us and we toured exquisite and newly reopened Hotel de la Marine situated on the Place de la Concorde.

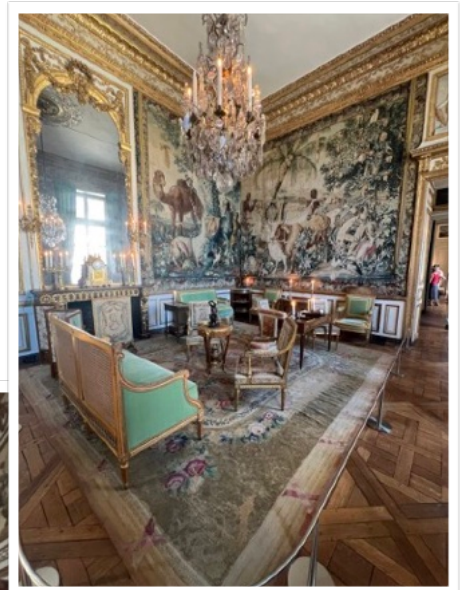
The Hôtel de la Marine was originally the home of the royal Garde-Meuble, the office managing



the furnishing of all royal properties. Following the French Revolution it became the Ministry of the Navy, which occupied it until 2015 (as part of the Ministry of Defence).



The building was entirely renovated between 2015 and 2021, for it to now display the restored 18th century apartments of Marc-Antoine Thierry de Ville-d'Avray, the King's Intendant of the Garde-Meuble, as well the salons and chambers later used by the French Navy.





Saturday, 31 May

Timing	Activity
11:00 – 12:00 (CET)	Walking Tour: <i>Benjamin Franklin's Paris: A Guide to the Revolutionary's Life in the City</i>
12:30 – 14:30 (CET)	Lunch: Café du Trocadéro
Late afternoon	Visit Notre Dame
Evening	Informal dinner with SMD(E) members at local café/bistrot

On Saturday, SMDE member Lynn Vial and her daughter Natalie joined the group for a Benjamin Franklin's Paris walking tour in the 16<sup>th</sup> Arrondissement. Guided by Ellen Hampton, Historian and member of Rochambeau Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution, we visited monuments honoring the American and French alliance over the last 250 years.





Afterwards, we continued to explore the old Parisian capital at the Île de la Cité and Notre Dame Cathedral.



Sunday, 1 June

Timing	Activity
10:00 (CET)	Depart Hôtel Le Sénat, transfer to Paris Gare du Nord
11:32 (CET) – 13:00 (GMT)	Eurostar Paris to London



# Governor General Pennington's Visit to the Southwest

2nd-5th June, 2025

Donna Heys, SMD(E) Secretary

I will admit to feeling a certain level of apprehension as my husband John and I stood on the platform at Crewkerne Railway Station on Monday, the second of June, awaiting the arrival of Governor General Lisa Pennington and her husband David Furlow. Their train was delayed and we had never met, and it was essential that the visit went smoothly. But as soon as our guests alighted from the train, we knew we were going to love these wonderful folks. The next couple of days were to fly by.

Squeezing into our compact car (essential on the narrow Dorset lanes), we made the short trip back to our village of Broadwindsor and delivered Lisa and David to The Old George B&B in the Square, the site of the inn from which King Charles II escaped capture (during his flight after the Battle of Worcester) by climbing out of a window while dressed as a woman. They quickly checked in before beginning their whirlwind stay with us. We crossed the road to St. John the Baptist church, for a hasty walk-through as this would be their only opportunity to see Broadwindsor's ancient place of worship with its ties to Rev. Thomas Fuller, the famous 17<sup>th</sup> century clergyman (whom David had heard of). Fuller was noted for his sayings, many of which are still in common use today.



*Lisa and David at St John's*



*Donna, Lisa and David at Rev. John White's cottage*

A quick lunch back at our house just a few hundred meters away set us up for an afternoon's visit to Dorchester, about 40 minutes' journey by car. Walking past the statue of Thomas Hardy, David realised they had been in the town briefly before. A short walk took us to the remains of a Roman villa just behind the Council buildings, then another five-minute walk up the road led us to the cottage once occupied by Rev. John White, who was instrumental in the Great Migration in 1630. Just around the corner in the porch at St Peter's church, we found White's burial place. Then up through the main shopping



*David at Maiden Castle*

area we passed the building Hardy used as inspiration for *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, and onward to Maumbury Rings, an ancient



*David and Lisa with the Countess of Sandwich*

earthworks in the town. From there, a mile or so in the car saw us visiting Maiden Castle, an Iron Age Hill Fort. A meal back at our home finished the first day.

The second morning began with a pre-arranged tour of Mapperton House in Beaminster, the home of the Earl and Countess of Sandwich. This was followed by a 45-minute lunch





*Lisa visited the Cobb...*

large in-situ ammonites before we headed back to West Bay, to view the cliffs made famous in the TV production of *Broadchurch*. An Indian meal in Bridport was just what we needed that evening, during which we discussed where we would spend their final day.



*Donna, Lisa and David at West Bay*

had found the tomb of one of her ancestors, William Longespée, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Earl of Salisbury. We viewed the Magna Carta, had a quick lunch and then drove a short distance to visit Old Sarum, the earlier site of Salisbury and one of the most historically important sites in southern England. Tired but happy, we convinced Lisa and David that to

with the Countess. We were thrilled she could fit us into her schedule, and she and Lisa found plenty to talk about. We stayed local for the rest of the day, beginning with a visit to Lyme Regis. Lisa was delighted to see the cottage believed to have been the holiday home of Jane Austin, and then to be photographed on the Cobb which featured in *Persuasion*. David and John walked along the shoreline to view some



*...while David went fossil hunting*

David and Lisa have a particular interest in the Magna Carta, so the obvious destination for Wednesday, the final full day, was Salisbury Cathedral. Walking from the car, we passed the school at which William Golding was headmaster. Once in the Cathedral, Lisa excitedly announced she



*Longespée's tomb*

appreciate fully English village life, they really had to have a meal in our pub that evening and stay on for the pub quiz! We didn't win, but their specialised knowledge saved us on a few occasions.

Thursday morning, 5<sup>th</sup> June, brought an early car drive back to Crewkerne Station. The visit had flown by much too quickly, with Lisa and David pledging to return soon, with their family next time. And so we proved the truth in the cliché - they arrived as strangers but left as friends.



*David, Lisa, Donna and John, 'The Mayflowers' quiz team*



**Governor General, General Society Mayflower Descendants (GSMD)**  
**Visit 29 May–9 June 2025 (in general) / visit to Kent 5–6 June 2025 (in detail)**

William English, CBE, Deputy Governor SMD(E)

**Introduction.** The programme for GSMD Governor General, Lisa Pennington and husband, David Furlow, ran from 29 May–9 Jun 2025. This report briefly reviews the planning for the visit hosted by SMD(E) in Paris, France; West Country & Kent, UK, then looks in more detail at the visit in Kent on 5–6 June 2025.

**Programme Visit Overview.** SMD(E) Governor Carmen Kew invited GSMD Governor General Lisa Pennington and husband, David Furlow, to undertake a visit to the SMD(E) 29 May–9 Jun 2025 on the back of their private travel visit to the UK; the invitation was accepted and Deputy Governor William English set about planning the programme. The programme was compartmentalised to offer maximum opportunity for engagement both geographically and in person with SMD(E) members.



Gov Gen discussions with Gov SMD(E)

- |                          |              |                             |
|--------------------------|--------------|-----------------------------|
| • Thu 29 May – Sun 1 Jun | Paris        | Host: Mark Primmer [Member] |
| • Mon 2 – Thu 5 Jun      | West Country | Host: Secretary Donna Heys  |
| • Thu 5 – Fri 6 Jun      | Kent         | Host: Governor Carmen Kew   |

The SMD(E) purpose for requesting the visit was 3-fold:

- **Introduction.** Introduce the SMD(E) membership's cultural variances across Europe, a continent of 44 countries (UN recognised).
- **Transition.** Understand the SMD(E)'s transition from an Unincorporated Association to a Company, 'not for profit', Limited by Guarantee, with a timeline for completion @ 09 Nov 25 (Compact Day).
- **Opportunity.** Explore the potential offered to the GSMD through the SMD(E)'s unique placement in European society; present the advantages the SMD(E)'s new governance construct; discuss the SMD(E)'s new Objects within the Articles of Association; provide a bridge between the GSMD and the SMD(E) with its privileged view of the period before the sailing of the Mayflower in 1620.

The programme was developed over 3 months.

**Programme Review.** The successful execution of this programme provided both variety and context. It connected continental mainland Europe with the UK. Pennington and Kew met and held discussions in Kent at the end of the visit.

**GSMD Gov Gen Visit to SMD(E) Kent 05/06 Jun 25.** The visit to Kent was the last formal step in the hosted SMD(E) visit programme. The purposes of this phase in the Gov Gen's journey were:

- **Zoom Call to SMD(E) Members.** GSMD Gov Gen Zoom call to SMD(E) Members.
- **Leadership Meeting.** Engage with Gov SMD(E) at end of SMD(E) visit programme. Discuss issues and opportunities.
- **Transition.** Provide an update on the SMD(E)'s transition to a limited company, ensuring Objects and delivery are congruent with GSMD.
- **Opportunity.** Appreciate the breadth of the SMD(E) access to the pre-1620 period in the Mayflower sailing narrative. Strengthen the SMD(E) role within GSMD.

**Programme.** Dep Gov English and his wife Frances hosted a dinner and overnight stay at their home, Westbery Manor, on 05/06 Jun. Pre-arrangements were made for a visit to Ightham Mote on Fri 06 Jun 25, formerly owned by HC Robinson (USA), a Mayflower descendant.

**Review.** Westbery provided a private location from which Pennington could participate in a Zoom call with SMD(E) members across Europe. Drinks were then hosted in the drawing room with Gov Kew. Dinner was followed by Wimbledon strawberries,



Westbery Manor



Dinner — Strawberries from Hugh Lowe Farms, provider of Wimbledon Strawberries

provided from Dep Gov English's cousin's farm – Hugh Lowe Farms. During the pre-dinner drinks and dinner, Gov Kew and Dep Gov English brought GSMD Gov Gen Pennington up-to-date with the progress of the SMD(E) transition with a planned for end date of 09 Nov 25; Pennington was extremely supportive. Pennington also appreciated the value of the SMD(E) within the wider narrative of the Mayflower, especially in the period prior to the 1620 sailing.

The visit was successful at the Strategic and Operational level. Strategically, GSMD Gov Gen returned to the USA with an understanding of SMD(E) coherence, its complexity, and the direction of travel both in terms of governance and structure. Operationally, the Gov Gen recognised the cultural differences in the European model, and appreciated the opportunities found in engaging with the pre-1620 narrative.



# GSMD Governor General Lisa Pennington in Kent

Carmen Kew, SMD(E) Governor

5 June 2025

I arrive at Westbery Manor in Kent to find...no-one at home. I know I am in the right place. I also know that we have a Zoom meeting planned for the SMD(E) membership in less than an hour. The roses and the medieval manor house are lovely to gaze at as my husband and I wait in the cooling



car, but I am terribly fidgety. Governor General Lisa Pennington's visit has gone very well up until this point, but there is definitely no-one here, and I am the Governor, the instigator-in-chief, and I am becoming slightly worried.

There is an echo of history in the moment when they suddenly roll up — there seem to be a great many people all packed into a very small space, all bursting with a sense of urgency to land, get settled, and get things started. Our Deputy Governor drives exactly how you would expect a tank-commander to drive: you wouldn't want to

get in his way. Lisa and David take this easily, with the panache of Texans saddled-up for a round-up. The car pulls into the drive in a blur of dry Kent dust and good English pollen, later than I expected, but everyone seems remarkably relaxed. In truth, Will looks inordinately pleased with himself, having achieved the goal we have planned towards towards for months. He is, perhaps, slightly disconcerted when the American-bred women-folk devolve into squeals and hugs; it is not very Governor-like, it is true, but it feels like a long-lost family reunion. My British husband looks on, bemused. David Furlow, Lisa's husband, glows with benevolence. I do believe I am related to David, too — we have ancestors in common from the English village next-door to my own. Suddenly, the world feels much smaller.

The hustle to get into the house and get set up for the Zoom meeting is a marvel of efficiency. Everyone knows what needs to be done and how to make it happen, and our communications become remarkably swift and to the point. Somehow, computers are turned on, the internet signal found, tea served, and calm descends. The SMD(E) membership turns out in force on Zoom to welcome Lisa in this first official GSMD visit to Europe, and I am both pleased and proud.



'You do that very well,' Lisa says.

'What's that?' I ask.

'The whole online meeting thing! You're really good at that!'

'It's what we do,' I murmur.



This IS what we do. This is what we have built up over the last couple of years, and this Board and this membership make it work. It is so apparent when I look out at all the faces across Europe: we may be spread out across a continent, but we are a community in every way that counts, and it shows.

"You've got the greatest people," she says, and this time, I know exactly what she means. The SMD(E) ARE amazing, exceptional people. I feel like I am sharing the wealth of

half the world with this woman, and suddenly I am inordinately pleased, too. The bustle and the fuss settle into pleasure.

The meal is lovely. Will and his wife have obviously done this diplomatic dinner thing before, but it is more than that. Conversations spark and flame, running easily around the table, and the smiles are real.

Afterwards, we visit Will's garage, with its rich inheritance of WW II armaments and airplane pieces. The penny-farthing and the livestock prizes, both pre-dating WW I, are my favourite artefacts, but I can also feel when the visceral understanding of a war having happened on this very ground begins to gain traction with the Americans. That is meaningful. History lives in England, especially in a family property this old. Ghosts are said to be in the house, too.



Everyone, including the ghosts, are happy to be here. The night passes without any particularly odd noises. We rest well, over-looked by a eighteenth-century portrait of Will's ancestor.





**6 June 2025**

Will had planned a magnificent coup for Friday. He has discovered that Igtham Mote, a local National Trust property, has a Mayflower connection. He laid all the groundwork for them to give us a special tour; we were also planning to use this visit to convince the National Trust to find other Mayflower connections in further properties so that we can create a series of Mayflower-linked tours. Much hinges on this one visit, however. At the last minute, though, Will cannot go with us. I am handed a packet of information, two passengers whom we did not expect, and a great deal of luggage. Thank goodness we came in my husband's car, the one we use to haul my concert harp.

In the car, I tell Lisa what we are plotting. We had intended it as a surprise, but now I need her as an ally. I can see when her lawyer-instincts kick in: she



understands that we need to convince the property manager of the importance of our interest, but she is also sceptical about the Mayflower connection, since it is not proven. It is better that I did not have more time to consider what I am up against in this situation, because there are suddenly pulls in several directions, and I am very much on the spot.



The property is far, far more beautiful than I expected. I have a National Trust membership, so I have seen my fair share of stately homes, castles, and archaeological sites, but this is truly exceptional. I cannot believe that I did not know about it before. The manager of the site is there, ready to meet us, and that is incredibly special, too — things do not follow the usual order of events on this day.

The site manager is prepared, knowledgeable, and willing and able to adapt his presentation to the audience. I am impressed. Lisa asks penetrating questions about the lineage of the American owner who willed the property to the National Trust, and I can see that

she is less than certain of the legitimacy of the claim. There are Mayflower references all through this medieval house, though, and I suspect that the staff do not understand the full import of many of the things that are present. Surely the sculpture on the windowsill, the Dutch tiles around the fireplace, the fact that this historically-minded, northeastern American



made such a claim so emphatically mean that it is at least possible — ? I tell myself that this is not my business, really. It will need to be researched and verified. Whatever else, this is a beautiful location to show Lisa and David.

The architectural writer John Newman described Ightham Mote as ‘the most complete small medieval manor house in the county.’ Dating from 1340-1360, it is a grander version of Will’s farmhouse, and would have been built about the same time. The ghosts that lived and worked at this manor would have known the ghosts that lived and worked at Westbery Manor, and this fact

lends an unexpected poignancy to the visit. Beyond that, Lisa and David are the best people in the world to visit such a place with, Mayflower history or no, because they have deep knowledge of history and boundless curiosity for new information. It helps that we are being treated with the professional deference that I imagine to be usually reserved for Royalty; Will laid the groundwork well, and Lisa is the best compatriot you could ever hope for on such a mission.

Too suddenly, really, it is all over. We have toured. We have talked. We have interrogated the poor young man who led us all over the property, answering our endless questions. He seems to understand, now, that the Mayflower Society will not accept a word-of-mouth declaration of lineage, and he seems slightly downcast. Lisa promises to follow-up. I promise to check on things.



Then, after this whirlwind, the Governor General’s visit to the Society of Mayflower Descendants (Europe) is over. Lisa and David have a train to catch for London; they have documents reserved for viewing waiting for them that are related to another Mayflower project. History has now happened for the SMD(E) and the tide of time is moving on. The GSMD Governor General has made her visit, and it is finished. The connections seem lasting, though.

‘I will see you in Leiden,’ Lisa calls back as they move swiftly towards the train.

This seems like the ghostly echo from our shared lineal past, as well as a promise for the immediate future.

‘I will see you in Leiden,’ I call back, and wave them off.

