

# Queen set to open Eden's £15m Core educational centre

SOPHIA MILLIGAN

THE Queen will be visiting the Westcountry this summer to open Eden Project's new £15 million educational centre - the Core.

The Western Morning News can exclusively reveal that the Queen will be performing the opening ceremony on June 1. Other details of the Queen's summer visit have not yet been revealed.

It has been nearly three years since Eden Project's Westcountry has been host to the Queen, who visited Plymouth in July 2003 to perform an historical ceremony honouring the pride and professionalism of the Royal Navy.

She presented a new Colour to the Regiment in a glorious and dramatic ceremony, which had been performed only twice in 80 years.

It is not the first time that the Eden Project has been supported by Royalty. In December last year the Prince of Wales wrote a letter to chief executive Tim Smit to be read out at the opening of Barefoot at Eden - a collection of Indian art and music with the best of Cornwall.

The letter expressed the Prince's delight that the beauty and magic of Westcountry has come to Cornwall as part of the Eden Project's A Time of Festivals festival.

The unveiling of the Core was led by the Eden Project as "the latest moment in the Eden Project's history since the opening of the world's biggest plant Biomes".

The design is based on the fundamental rule of how plants grow, incorporating a central trunk and canopy roof that shades the ground and harvests the sun.

Designed and built by many of the Eden Project team who delivered the Humid Tropics and Warm Temperate



● **SPECTACULAR:** The Eden Project's new £15 million educational centre - the Core - will be officially opened by the Queen on June 1 in her first visit to the region for nearly three years

Biomes, the Core educational centre will soon be open to the public, taking its place alongside the Biomes as a global icon.

Perhaps the most breathtaking of the Core's features is the amazing double spiral roof structure, based on the Fibonacci sequence. Designing the structure was a feat in itself but the challenge was turning the drawings into reality. Being based on

a tree, the roof had to be timber framed, and the unique shape - with 21 spirals in one direction and 34 in the other - called for wooden beams that curved not just in two planes.

The project team travelled across Europe in search of the beams and in Switzerland eventually came across Chris Haring, entrepreneur, businessman and timber devotee - and an expert beam curver.

The enormous project was funded by many local and national organisations. The greatest commitment was made by the Millennium Commission, with a contribution of £10.5 million. The South West of England Regional Development Agency has invested £2.89 million and The Objective One Programme for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly contributed £1.07 million.

