



# The Installation of the Chancellor Dawn French





Let it be known to all members of the University, that today in Falmouth, Cornwall, a congregation of Falmouth University is taking place.

Under the authority of the University's Articles of Government, this congregation meets to receive Dawn French who, by virtue of her profession and accomplishments, has been appropriately appointed according to the statutes of the University and found worthy of her place as first Chancellor of Falmouth University.

By the authority of the aforementioned University's Articles of Government, I declare this congregation open for the conferment of Chancellorship.

\_\_\_

Bedhens aswonys dh'eseli oll an Bennskol, hedhyw yn Aberfala, Kernow, dhe hwarvos kuntellva Pennskol Aberfala.

Yn-dann awtorita Erthyglow a Wovernans an Bennskol, yth omguntel war-barth an guntellva ma rag degemeres Dawn French neb, war sel hy galwesigeth ha kowlwriansow, re beu apoyntys yn hwiw herwydh reythyow an Bennskol, ha kevys bos gwiw dh'y le avel kynsa Chansler Pennskol Aberfala.

Der awtorita Erthyglow a Wovernans ragleverys an Bennskol, y tiskleryav bos ygor an guntellva ma rag rians a Janslorieth.



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On paper, Falmouth University and I are a pretty good match. Being a good match on paper is not why I am so completely honoured to become Chancellor of this wonderful and prestigious institution. There are 5,000 reasons why I accepted the invitation, 5,000 students who have come to Falmouth to study... 5,000 dreamers with their big, wild dreams.

Dawn French Installation Speech, 26.03.15

### The Role of the Chancellor

When Falmouth University was granted University title by Her Majesty's Privy Council in December 2012, this milestone was widely celebrated because it gave Cornwall its own University. It also bestowed upon Falmouth the right to appoint a Chancellor to play a leading role in the public life of the University.

A ceremonial and ambassadorial position, the Chancellor works closely with the Vice-Chancellor's office to help raise Falmouth's profile and advance the University's mission globally through advocacy. The role of Chancellor is granted in recognition of significant accomplishment and a shared ethos with the University.

Dawn French was announced as the first Chancellor of Falmouth University in September 2014 and the formal ceremony to install her as Chancellor took place on 26 March 2015.

Dawn is an ideal figurehead for Falmouth as she exemplifies the outlook and skills that are needed to succeed in the creative industries. She is a pioneering artist, an award-winning actor, comedian and bestselling novelist. Her career encompasses numerous contributions to television, film, theatre and writing, seven BAFTA nominations and receipt of a BAFTA Fellowship.

She has a lifelong association and total passion for Cornwall, where she has made her home.





Falmouth's ties with the creative industries are what attracted me. I was amazed at the facilities and the calibre of students I met at the University. It's a beautiful place with so many subjects that are close to my heart. I'm already bursting with ideas and want to make sure that my Chancellorship is an active one, working with the many talented students.

**Dawn French** 

## **Behind the Scenes**



## The Making of the Crown

Mirri Damer is an award-winning sculptor and jeweller. From her Falmouth based studio she designs pieces directly influenced by the Cornish coastline. For the installation, Mirri was asked to design the Chancellor's headpiece.

How did the idea for Dawn to have a crown made come about? I think it was decided fairly early on that Dawn could not wear the Tudor bonnet that Chancellors usually wear! So the idea of some kind of ceremonial headpiece was born.

What was that original brief and how did you start to unpick it? The original brief was to create some form of headpiece that was ceremonial but not regal, bridal or comedic. A gold wreath, Roman in style, was put forward as a response.

## How did you begin the process of actually designing the crown and what were the major influences?

Referencing the mood boards from the creation of the Chancellor's gown, I began to explore the use of common themes, such as the botanical elements, to align aesthetics between the headpiece and gown. The term "blasted heath", used to describe the windswept trees on the coastline of Cornwall, jumped out at me. For me it sums up beautifully the wild natural countryside of Cornwall. I began to research floral wreaths in folk traditions such as Helston's Flora Day. I liked the idea of picking plants/flowers from the hedgerow and making an informal wreath to celebrate a special day.

#### How did you make material choices?

I work in precious metals — silver and gold — so it was natural for me to use these. We wanted to use the colour gold as this is one of the colours in the Falmouth University ceremonial gowns. I was also keen to try and incorporate Serpentine, a semi-precious stone that is found on the Lizard Peninsula.

#### How did you actually design the shape of the crown?

With the crown I was extremely aware that the shape of the crown needed to suit Dawn's face shape. I wanted her to look beautiful and feel comfortable wearing it, along with the crown communicating "ceremony without formality" which was the key element inspired by my research into folk traditions.

Using the upward sweep of flora from the "blasted heath" I was able to add lift at the front, which suited Dawn's face shape. The actual forms are an abstracted gorse flower. I felt this was key to give the crown a contemporary twist on the ancient wreaths I had been researching.

I tried to mimic the informal nature of picking flowers and twisting them into a wreath by using a loose structure of wires to suggest branches and stems.

Once you had first concepts together how did that process work with Dawn — I assume she came in for a fitting?
Once I had a basic idea I made a number of trial models that I showed to Dawn and the fashion team at Falmouth University at various meetings. This was an invaluable part of the process.

#### Who was involved and how did you all collaborate?

I worked closely with John Boddy and Di Downs and their students from Falmouth University's Fashion & Textiles Institute. This was a part of the project that I particularly loved. I tend to work in my studio with my assistant, so to be part of a team was wonderful. I found the students to be professional and inspiring in their approach to this project. It was lovely to watch as the gown and crown came together bringing the design brief to life.





## The Making of the Gown

A challenge laid down by Dawn French herself, the creation of the Chancellor's installation robes involved updating the traditional academic gown through the use of a modern silhouette. The resulting piece showcases the breadth of skills and collaborative approach that run through the Fashion & Textiles Institute here at Falmouth.

Leading the project was Head of Fashion John Boddy and Head of Textiles Di Downs.

"We chose students from across the department who had the skills, dedication and above all creativity to help us realise the garment. Designers, pattern cutters, weavers, embroiderers — the making of the Chancellor's gown provided an opportunity for cross-disciplinary collaboration on a live project."

Di Downs, Head of Textiles

After the first consultation with Dawn, it was clear Falmouth's new Chancellor wanted the garment to reflect Cornwall. Following development of the first simple toile out of calico, a mood board was developed to further explore details and garment structure. Other elements, such as the jewellery designer Mirri Damer was working on, provided inspiration; in this case informing the neckline. After a second fitting, length, drape and proportions were altered before the final pattern was cut from the finished fabrics.

"It was essential that the entire process and finished garment would reflect the progressive nature of Falmouth's approach to design. One that was bold, contemporary and challenging of established codes and rules." John Boddy, Head of Fashion Mirroring the theme of applying contemporary aesthetics to traditional design, the textiles team worked with traditional Cornish tartan as their starting reference. The resulting fabric shows a woven cross hatch design with key Cornish flora embedded within, hand drawn by student Jade Evans. Using weave equipment within the Fashion & Textiles Institute, a process of continuous sampling was undertaken to test designs and colour ways.

The process of creating the exterior fabric design became a reductive one, at each stage elements were removed to simplify the garment and ensure a clean, contemporary aesthetic. Many of those processes first removed, such as embroidery, found application across other elements of the garment, in this case through the creation of the dedication: a highly personal note from the designers of the garment to Dawn, stitched into the collar of the robe. Once the final exterior fabric had been designed, samples were sent to Humphries Weaving in Suffolk for final manufacture.

Alongside this process, the textiles team began the challenging process of creating an interior fabric design that would reference Cornish tartan while balancing the now complete exterior fabric design. Visible at certain angles, the crux to designing the fabric was absolute attention to colour. In early samples this manifested itself in a graduated tartan from full colour to black. Later samples used a hand-painted effect. Finally, after attending a fitting at Dawn's home, Head of Textiles Di Downs used photographic references from paintings hung in Dawn's lounge to pull key tonal references used in the end design. Alongside this, colours were pulled from Cornish flora, a continuation of the creative direction used on the exterior of the garment. The pinks of foxgloves, greens of bracken and gold of gorse were all incorporated.

Key to this final element in the design of the Chancellor's gown was context; at one point the team were convinced they'd completed the interior fabric only to realise the yellows became too bright and dominant when combined with the darker hues of the exterior fabric.

The end result of both the garment and textile design processes is a gown as creative, distinctive and playful as Dawn herself.

#### **Student Involvement**

Olivia Bagott, Terri Louise Coysh, Jade Evans, Naomi Golding, Sarah Johnson and Jemma Scanlon

#### Staff Involvement

Chihoko Jones, Di Downs, John Boddy, and Jill Weeks.









## Pop-Up Exhibition: "Let's French"

At the heart of Falmouth University is a 4,500+ community of students. Let's French was a celebration of this, a group show presenting work from our own emerging practitioners in pop-up format.

Reflecting Falmouth's broad course portfolio, "Let's French" witnessed submissions from across disciplines and media. The final exhibitors were chosen by a selection panel comprising of academic directors, senior management and the Students' Union president, with a final four bands and 22 exhibitors featured.

Presented in an intimate self-curated style, students discussed their material with the audience and Dawn French, providing their first Chancellor with an insight into Falmouth's core — the students.

#### **Organiser**

Ellie Scouller

#### Curator

Claire English

#### **Artists**

Janie Anderson, Joe Cox, Michael Eddy, Jamie Elder, Joe Fenwick-Wilson, Ferne Glannan-McRae, Helena Harran, Alessi Heitman-Rice, Rudi Keats, Jordan Kilford, Samuel Kaye, Tylor O'Brien, Angharad Thomas, Sarah Weigold, Jonathan Wilson.

## Spoken Word Performance: Three Sonnets

Given Dawn's profile as a performer, it was only fitting that the ceremony incorporated her first craft — acting. Students Katie Campbell, Connor Ford and Grace Juleff from the Academy of Music and Theatre Arts (AMATA) had the rare privilege of performing for the Chancellor. Each recited a Shakespearean sonnet, selected by AMATA staff for the occasion.

Rehearsed with direction from award-winning director, producer and visiting professor Michael Grandage, students had a glimpse into Dawn's world, who was originally introduced to Falmouth while rehearsing at AMATA under Michael's direction.

On the day, Katie, Connor and Grace performed sonnets 8, 14 and 65 respectively.

#### Sonnet No. 8

Music to hear, why hear'st thou music sadly?

Sweets with sweets war not, joy delights in joy.

Why lov'st thou that which thou receiv'st not gladly,

Or else receiv'st with pleasure thine annoy?

If the true concord of well-tuned sounds,

By unions married, do offend thine ear,

They do but sweetly chide thee, who confounds

In singleness the parts that thou shouldst bear.

Mark how one string, sweet husband to another,

Strikes each in each by mutual ordering,

Resembling sire and child and happy mother,

Who all in one, one pleasing note do sing,

Whose speechless song, being many, seeming one,

Sings this to thee: 'Thou single wilt prove none.'

## **Group Performance**

Falmouth's Academy of Music and Theatre Arts (AMATA) welcomed Dawn's appointment with a devised performance, "Come to the Edge".

Inspired by Christopher Logue's poem of the same name, the piece characterised Falmouth's ethos: creative, courageous, connected.

Featuring music composition from sound artist Jon Hughes, cellist Frances Jones and choreography from Dance Course Coordinator Simon Birch, the work saw a cast of twenty students transform the venue with contemporary dance.

"The aim was to create a work that captured a sense of optimism and took the idea of moving forward, celebrating both Dawn's embarking on her new role with the University and our students as they contemplate their own leap into the future."

Simon Birch, Course Coordinator BA(Hons) Dance & Choreography

Offering physical form to Logue's verse, students harnessed the entirety of the site, adapting movements organically to match the space. Devised material featured challenging lifts, falls and extensions, leading to a crescendo in the final couplet, while ambisonic music mixing and a six-speaker setup allowed the sound to roam through the space, offering an immersive experience.

"We were anxious to create a work that was sympathetic to the occasion and yet add a different dimension to the event," adds Simon. "It was such a valuable experience for the students who invested a huge amount of time and energy in the work."

#### **Performers**

Year 2 students: Shadora Bloomfield, Louise Brant, Lilian Deans Allison, Paul Duddy, Astrid Fletcher, Amelia Graham, Bethany Hughes, Bethan Ireland, Ryan Legge, Flora McMurtrie, Jazmine Moast, Amy Nicholls, Harry Scott, Cara Searle, Abbey Siswick, Megan Tallis, Alaina Tucker, Aino Vartianinen, Kelly White, Martha Yapp.

#### Costumes

Tegen Amos, BA(Hons) Performance Sportswear Design, Year 3.

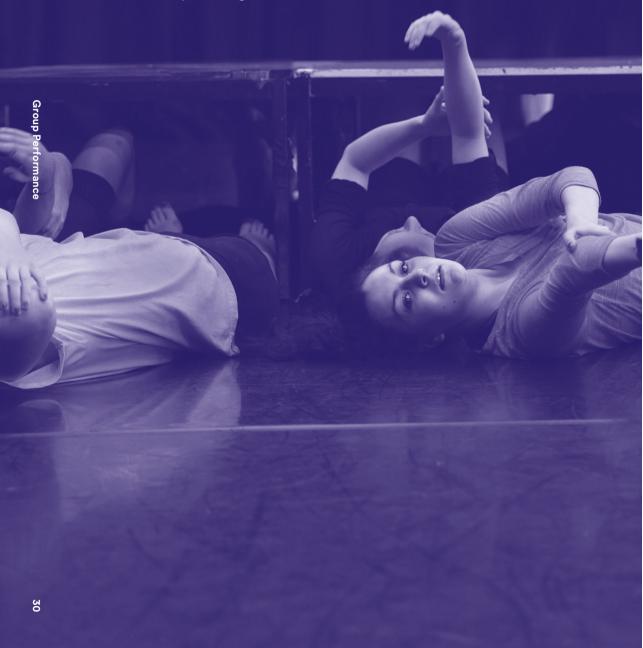
#### Soundscape by Jon Hughes

soundcloud.com/jon-hughes-37/come-to-the-edge



Come to the edge.
We might fall.
Come to the edge.
It's too high!
COME TO THE EDGE!
And they came,
And he pushed,
And they flew.

**Christopher Logue** 





## A Cornish Soundscape: Jon Hughes

"A Cornish Soundscape", composed by sound artist and researcher Jon Hughes offered an ambisonic welcome, inviting guests to reflect on Cornwall's landscape, spirit and voice.

Inspired by lived experience, Cornish travel and tradition, the piece offered a tale of place. Jon explains, "When I create, my work is always inextricably bound up with my own experience and life lived whilst creating the piece."

During composition Jon travelled around Cornwall, reading tourist guides on route, dipping in and out of travel writer and Honorary Fellow Philip Marsden's book Rising Ground — a meditation on the Cornish landscape.

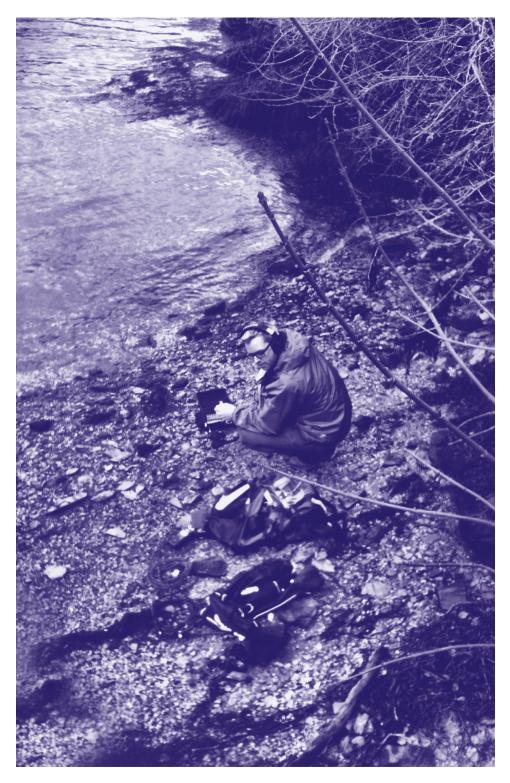
The journey identified several key themes. "I focused on collecting sounds relating to these themes," tells Jon. "People responded with generosity, opening up museums and their archives to help record the sounds of Cornwall. I recorded the fishermen sorting their nets on a trawler in Newlyn, I recorded sounds at all sorts of coves and beaches. There was a particularly lovely hour at Mullion Church where the church warden rang the bells for me... I spent about ten days just travelling around, absorbing the sound."

Using an ambisonic speaker array with six speakers arranged to achieve surround sound, Jon captured a range of recordings both new and old. "I used these to create atmospheres and textures that I could build into a musical form. I like to experiment using the sounds together in different ways, and I'm looking to create an emotional effect from different and interesting combinations of sound."

The resulting work offered a literal Cornish soundscape — grounding the Installation Ceremony to its location, encouraging the audience to reflect on and experience the County. "Music and art is about life being lived in the present," comments Jon. "The thing you create is experiential — it is something that happens to people — it is time and experience for the audience to live through."

Jon Hughes is a Leverhulme research fellow at the University of York and a longstanding collaborator with the Academy of Music and Theatre Arts. A composer in residence, he works with staff and students through devised performance.

soundcloud.com/jon-hughes-37/cornish-soundscape



Charles Causley said that creative artists of any shape or form need one special gift in addition to their own creative talent, and that is courage. The courage to reveal their creative talent. To risk. To fail. And to ceaselessly try again. We need these courageous Falmouth students, because as Pablo Picasso said of artists, "they are the weapons of war against brutality and darkness."

Dawn French
Installation Speech
26.03.15

## Selected Media Interviews

## The Chris Evans Breakfast Show

Chris Evans: Dawn French is here.

Dawn French: Good morning Christopher how are you today?

CE: Listen to the smile in that voice. I am fantastic, how are you?

DF: It is a happy, happy day. Gorgeous Cornwall talking to you

now, broadcasting from Cornwall.

CE: Yes, come in, Cornwall, come in. So what's going on, how

did this come about?

DF: Can you believe it! I'm going to be the Queen of Falmouth

University today, that's how I see it.

CE: So what's happened?

DF: Well I was rehearsing at Falmouth University, the show that I took on tour last year, "Thirty Million Minutes". I live in Cornwall and I'm from Cornwall and I wanted to rehearse down here with Michael Grandage who's also from Cornwall. That gave me a chance to see the campus and facilities that I absolutely did not know exist at this remarkable, phenomenal University. I knew it was there because it goes back to 1902 when there was Falmouth School of Art so it's got a kind of bedrock in all that academic heritage. It's a phenomenal place with dance studios, TV studios and photography studios and theatres, it's an amazing place with huge facilities and great teaching. And one evening the Vice-Chancellor took me out for supper and asked me if I would like to become the first Chancellor of the first University in Cornwall and how can

CE: How can you have a Vice-Chancellor if there's not already a Chancellor?

DF: Well the thing is the Vice-Chancellor is sort of the one who runs the show. She's the sort of Chief Executive of the University but the Chancellor is the kind of titular — we love that word, titular — ceremonial leader of the University. So the great thing about this is that she, today, she has to — and she's really the top boss — she has to doff her cap to me, imagine that.

CE: So you are the Lord Mayor to her Boris Johnson?

DF: Yes that's exactly right.

I say no to that?

CE: Ok right, I get that now. I think I sense from what you've already said and from the research that the team have brilliantly done that you're going to take on more of an active role, aren't you?



- DF: Well I hope so, I mean you know, I've never been a Chancellor before so I don't really know what's required of me except to give out the degrees. Do you want a degree by the way? I'll try and find one for you.
- CE: Well yes I would like one actually, producer Paul would like one too if you're not busy next Tuesday.
- DF: Open to any kind of chocolate blackmail there. But basically I will give a speech on graduation day and I'll give out degrees and stuff like that. But, the way I see it I don't really want to just do that; I want to be an advocate for this amazing place and make sure that people know, because the more young people who come into Cornwall the better. And also because I think the teaching is amazing there, and I want to make sure that with time, if I could do a little bit of teaching there and if I can bring people from my industry down, CHRIS-TO-PHER, people involved in the industry...
- CE: Done deal.
- DF: I'd like them to come down, maybe give masterclasses, something like that.
- CE: Well I could make the tea. I don't know about masterclasses, but count me in Dawn, I love all that stuff, you know that.

  And I love Cornwall and if Cornwall ever breaks away you could actually be the Queen, because this is a good pitch you're giving us here now.
- DF: It's true, and do you know they showed me the kind of robes that you normally have as an academic in this kind of role, right, and they're those big heavy things with the Tudor bonnets that make you look a bit like a hobbit. And I said, "Come on guys, this is an arts university with a fashion and textile design course for heaven's sake, let the students make it". So the students have made me the most exquisite gown. It's absolutely beautiful. It's made with references to Cornish tartan, its got beautiful embellished Cornish hedgerow flowers, flora and fauna from Cornwall... You know hollyhock and primrose and bracken and broom and it's clad in the inside. Oh and it's got the most beautiful thing on the inside, which is like a little secret thing at the back of the gown, where every single students on the third year fashion course has put a stitch into this gown. And guess what Christopher?
- CE: What? What? What?
- DF: I'VE GOT A CROWN!
- CE: She has a crown everybody.
- DF: I've got a crown. I wouldn't get a crown anywhere else in my life. Absolutely nobody was looking like they were going to make me the Queen of England which I've been slightly waiting for, I'm not gonna hide that. Today, they're going to put this most beautiful kind of wreath thing on my head that's been made by a marvellous woman who works in Cornwall called Mirri Damer and she has made it especially and it looks like an abstracted Cornish gorse flower and it's absolutely beautiful. It's like having Bodmin Moor on my head. In gold.

- CE: I was going to say what's in it for you but now I know, it's the crown.
- DF: It's the crown.
- CE: Do you have a flight case for your crown?
- DF: There is. There's a special box for it where it's going to live because it's very precious. The crown has got inside it the most beautiful beads that are made from serpentine which is this special granite that comes from under the sea down at the Lizard. And all this gorgeous rock has been polished up to make little beads in St Austell so it's all Cornish, Cornish, Cornish, It's got seashell in it and it's absolutely beautiful and there's going to be a procession through the streets in Falmouth this morning I can't even believe that. I never got to be, what do you call that when you're in the procession, you're the, not the prom queen, what do they call it, you're the May Day Queen. The kids are going to hand out daffodils as we're walking up the main street in Falmouth this morning at eleven o'clock.
- CE: Well you don't sound very excited, but have a good day anyway.
- DF: It's the happiest day of my life
- CE: Thank you, Dawn.

## **Westcountry News**

Dawn French:

I was a little bit scared of it because I'm not a big one for all the pomp and circumstance and so I was busy first of all saying "Oh no, no, no please don't give me something where people are looking at me," and I jumped immediately from that to, "Can I have a crown?" And um, I have got a crown. So I'm there.

Interviewer:

Fantastic and what do you hope to actually bring to role, 'cause you want to be quite hands on, I think, don't you?

DF:

I would like to, I've never been a Chancellor before, I've got to find out more about this University, I've got to find out more about the students and I've got to find out what I can bring.

I mean I know I'm going to be there for graduation and so on and obviously we've got this big installation day which I'm very excited about but as time goes by I'm going to see where I think I fit.

I hope I might be able to do a little bit of teaching, in time, and I certainly will bring people from my industry down to the University to teach.

Interviewer:

Fantastic and when you think back to your own student days if this had been here then, with these facilities, do you think you might have come here?

DF:

I would have been in heaven if this University had existed, I don't think I would have left Cornwall to be honest. I was amazed when I came here to rehearse my one woman show last year, and that's how I found out... I knew there was a University going on in Cornwall — but I didn't know about these facilities I didn't know about the phenomenal level of teaching, I didn't know this was here in the way that it is, in both of these campuses.

I mean obviously if you're from Cornwall you know about the School of Art, you know how revered it is, so this University has a bedrock of proper academic heritage and for the arts I think that's really important.

But when I came to rehearse here with Michael Grandage for a show that I toured round the country last year, we worked in one of the studios here and that's when I got to walk around the campus and meet some of the students and see how many restaurants there are.

I was just so impressed with everything that I jumped at the chance then when they asked me.

#### Interviewer:

And because of that, the big creative department, did that make you feel: "Well yes I can really get my teeth into this" because you've got a kind of a connection to that?

DF: Yes, definitely and because I believe that this county deserves a University and it deserves a great University like this and it deserves great students and it means that a whole injection of new young blood has come into Cornwall.

I mean I left Cornwall because I had to go and find my education and I had to find my career, and if I had known that — if there had been a University like this — I probably wouldn't have done that. I would have come here.

I mean my heart has always been in Cornwall and I've always encouraged people to come to Cornwall and I think a massive amount of positive stuff has happened because there's a University here, I think Falmouth has changed entirely. I used to come to Falmouth a lot when I was young and it's a different place now. It was always beautiful, but it's just alive now, with all this lovely, vital young, thrusting kind of blood that's here, it's wonderful, it's wonderful.

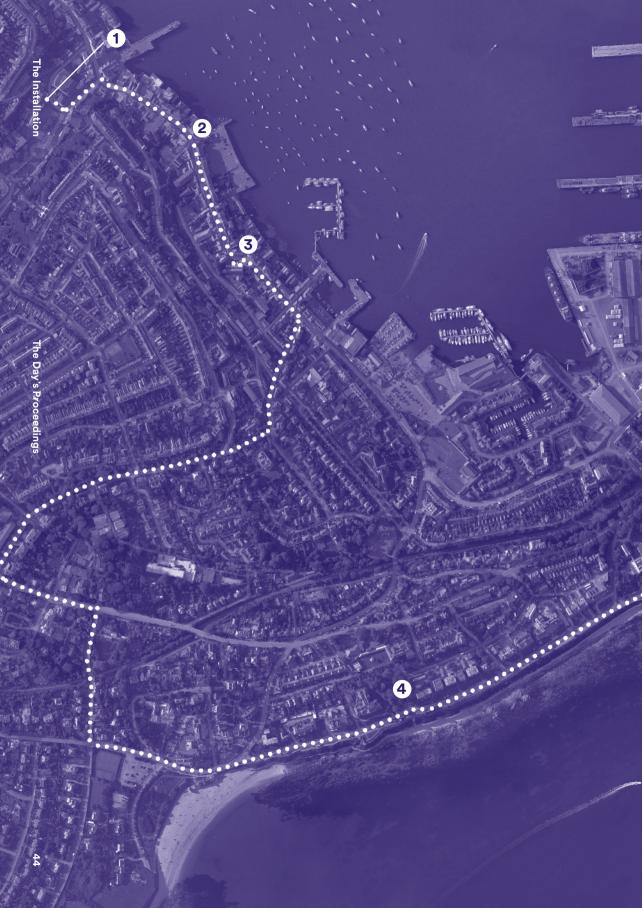


Thank you so much for inviting me to be installed today as the very first Chancellor of Falmouth University.

Yes, installed — like a fridge.

Dawn French
Installation Speech
26.03.15

# The Installation













The Mayor's Parlour, Falmouth Town Hall, The Moor

Academics dressed into their robes in Falmouth Town Hall while local school children handed out daffodils to onlookers on The Moor for the start of the Spring Festival.







### **The Academic Procession**

Led by Kernow Pipes and Drums, academics, students, school children and the general public, formed a procession from The Moor towards The Church of King Charles the Martyr.









### The Church of King Charles the Martyr

The formal installation of Dawn French as Falmouth University's first Chancellor.







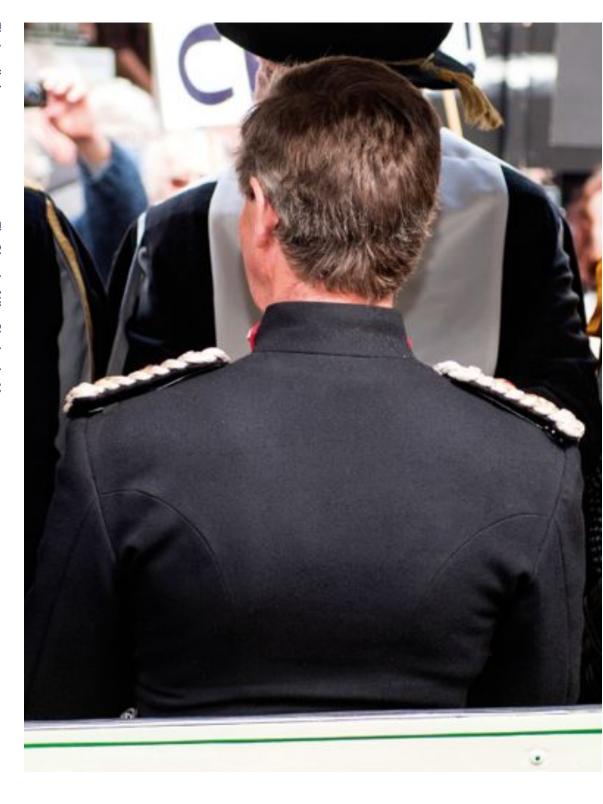




Look at who's wearing the crown and ask yourself, "who's the boss?"

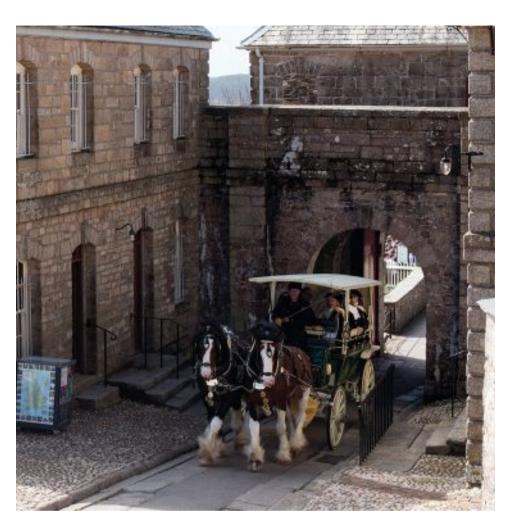
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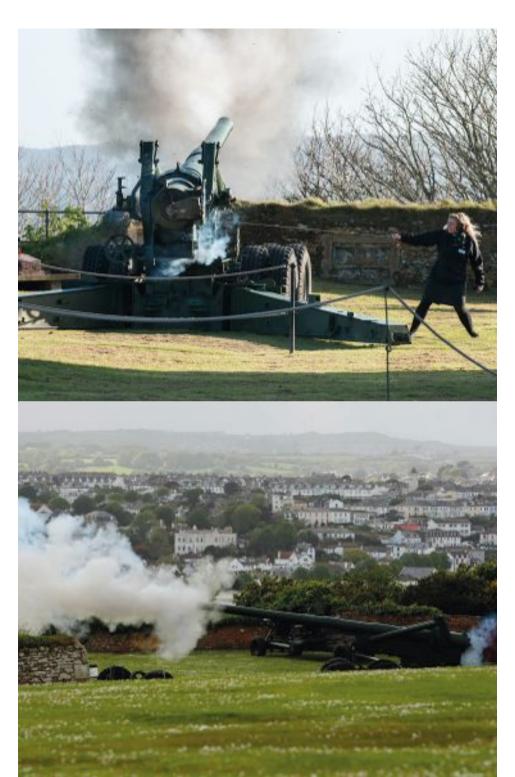






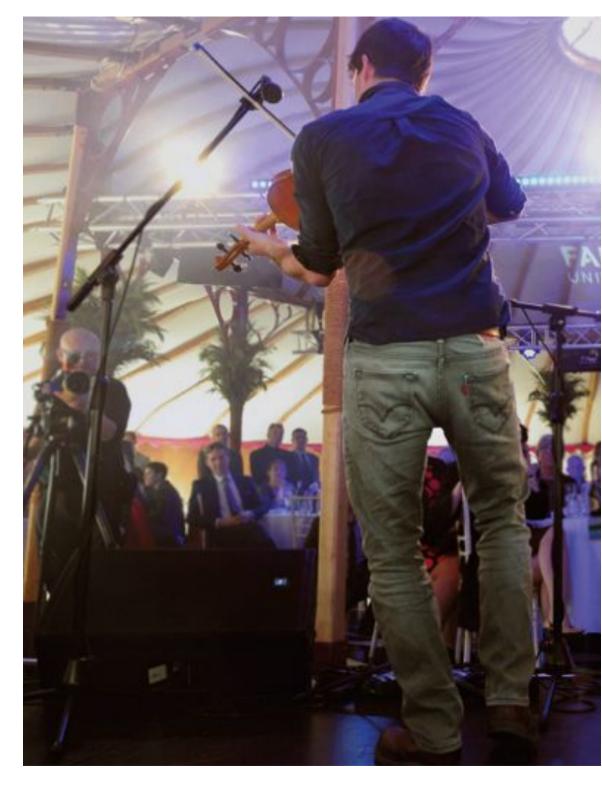


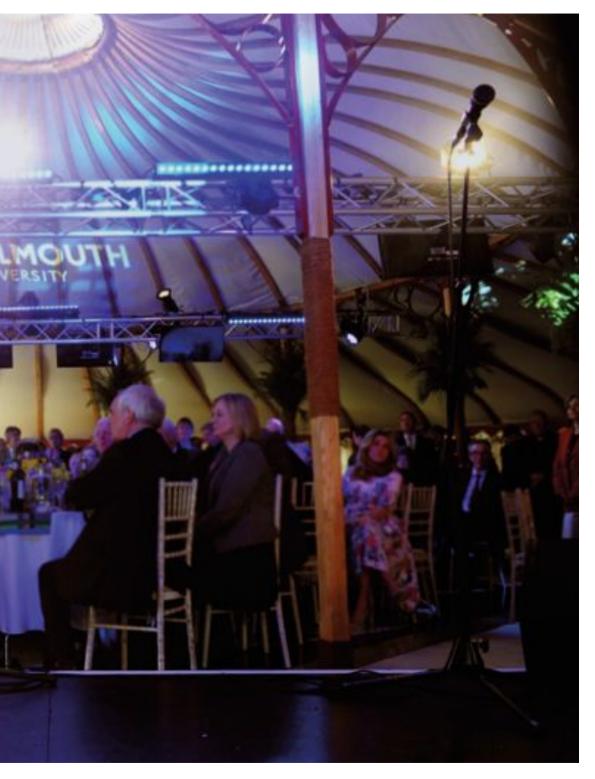






















I will remain their loyal and occasionally violent chancellor.

Dawn French Installation Speech 26.03.15 Published in 2016 on the occasion of the first anniversary of the Installation of the Chancellor Dawn French

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