

## MOUNT EDGCUMBE

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William Henry, 4<sup>th</sup> Earl, published "Records of the Edgcumbe Family", ending with Sir Richard, died 1639. A copy of this is in Mt Edgcumbe and another in the parish, in the custody of Mr H G Winchester.

There is an account of the Edgcumbe family in the Western Antiquary vol 5 p 267 (Plymouth Local History Library). Musical recollections of Richard, 3<sup>rd</sup> Earl, are in Western Antiquary, vol 7 p 186.

A life of the 4<sup>th</sup> Earl was prepared by Mrs N J Gaye and is with the "Records" above.

See also Debrett and Jewers "Heraldic Church Notes from Cornwall" 1886.

The Edgcumbe family first appear in the parish of Milton Abbot in Devon holding freehold land there. We may presume that they had received a grant of unreclaimed land from Tavistock Abbey, that they settled it and took their name from it. The senior branch of the family remained there until about 1840.

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### Some Edgcumbe Notes

"The early months of 1536 brought a stream of letters declaring the interests of numerous laymen up and down the country in the future disposition of the lands of monasteries rumoured to be scheduled for suppression. Sir Peter Edgcumbe wrote from Cotehele about the Devonshire priories of Totnes and Cornworthy of which he was a founder by virtue of a grant to his father by Henry VII of former Yorkist estates. He and no doubt many other of the king's subjects, also had ideas of resuming some of their ancestors' ill-considered gifts to the Church, although Sir Peter did suggest that the worthy prior of Totnes might continue to enjoy his spiritual revenues".

(Joyce Youngs "The Dissolution of the Monasteries", Allen and Unwin 1971, p 41, quoting Letters and Papers, Foreign and domestic of the Reign of Henry VIII, X, 551).

### Epitaph of Pearse Edgcumbe

On Monument in Calstock Church.

Translation:

"A pattern for posterity, and an ornament of the present age, who was master of sciences and languages, champion of King and Church; whose cause (falling alas! into all too great ruin by civil war) he endeavoured to support with the utmost of his strength and at his own expense.

Pearse Edgcumbe of Mount Edgcumbe esquire son of Richard Edgcumbe knight (of a most distinguished lineage) who took to wife Mary daughter of John Glanville knight of Broadhinton in the County of Wiltshire of whom he had two sons and as many daughters. Leaving as his heir Richard, Knight of the Bath, he gave back to God his soul (his remains being buried near this place) on the sixth day of January in the year of our Lord 1666 and of his age 56”.

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### Profit of Wreck

“In 1575 some Spanish ships were driven in by tempest upon the rocks of Stonehouse: the spoil came mainly into the tenacious hands of Mistress Edgcumbe, her husband being away (Acts of Privy council ix 27). The vice-admiral of Devon was ordered to sequester the goods to the benefit of the owners. Mrs Edgcumbe utterly refused to give them up and hath otherwise mis-used herself by disobeying the commission, and since the coming home of her husband hath been by him maintained in her ill-doing”. (APC ix 42). He was commanded to restore the goods and to appear before the Council (A L Rowse, “Tudor Cornwall”).

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### The Pig Cupid (Works of Peter Pindar 1794, vol 2, p 433)

“A Consolatory Stanza to Lady Mount E ...”

On the death of her Pig ‘Cupid’

Oh dry that tear, so round and big,

Nor waste in sighs your precious wind.

Death only takes a single pig –

Your lord and son are still behind.

Peter gives this explanatory note (p 465):

“This pig, Cupid, who many years ago fell in love with the Earl, has a monument erected to its memory with an inscription on it by Lord Valletort, the Earl’ son.

It is said that when his Majesty (George III) at Mt E was gravely pondering near its grave, the Queen asked him what he was looking at so seriously. His Majesty, with a great deal of humour, replied “The family vault, Charly, family vault, family vault”.

### Memorial Tablet to the Fourth Earl in Maker Church

TO THE MEMORY OF

William Henry 4<sup>th</sup> Earl of Mount Edgcumbe

P.C., G.C.V.O., V.D., Lord Lieutenant and Vice-Admiral of Cornwall.

First Chairman of Cornwall County Council and

President of the Territorial Force Association.

Member of Parliament for Plymouth 1859-61

A Lord of the Bedchamber to His Royal Highness the PRINCE OF WALES 1862-66,

Lord Chamberlain of Her Majesty QUEEN VICTORIA'S Household 1879-80

and Lord Steward 1885-92

A member of the Council of the Duchy of Cornwall

and Keeper of the Privy Seal of the Duchy.

Hon Colonel 5 Bn Devonshire Regt and Commander of Plymouth Volunteer Brigade.

Provincial Grand Master of the Free Masons of Cornwall from 1872

and Deputy Grand Master of England 1891-6

Born November 5 1832 – Died September 25 1917

He was loved and esteemed throughout the West Country

and died mourned by all who knew him.

This memorial is erected in affectionate remembrance

by his son and three daughters

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Roman Altar in the Back Courtyard at Mount Edgcumbe

This small altar may have been brought back from Italy by the 2<sup>nd</sup> Lord Edgcumbe (see Lady Ernestine's account below). It bears an inscription translated as:

To the deified departed spirits of Marcus Ancharius Chresimus

and Valeria Trophimenes his patrons

M Ancharius Hermes Beneficiarius erected this altar

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Account of Mount Edgcumbe (from Duprez' "Visitors Guide" dated 1871)

"For a very long period the Rt Hon the Earl of Mt Edgcumbe has, with great liberality, thrown open his grounds to the public every Monday throughout the year, as well as on some special occasions. We are not aware that the Earl's liberality is in any way intruded upon, or that any mischief is done to the shrubs, plants or flowers. This is a matter of pleasant surprise when we consider the large number of persons who congregate in all parts of the grounds. The public, as a rule, seem thus to acknowledge the Earl's kindness and take an especial interest in the protection of his property".

Whimsical Stanza by David Garrick:

This Mount all the mounts of Great Britain surpasses  
'Tis the haunt of the Muses, the haunt of Parnassus,  
Fame lies. 'Twas not Stratford, this, this is the spot  
Where Genius on Nature our Shakespeare begot.  
This only the birthplace of Shakespeare can be  
Whose wonders can e'en make a poet of me.

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"Little steamers ply during the summer months from the Barbican to Cremyll beach and vice-versa. The boat from Mount Wise steps, the ferry boat, is not at all well adapted to the requirements of the holiday-making public and we trust that the present cumbrous and uncomfortable boat may soon be replaced by a steam-ferry. In addition there are numerous well-appointed watermen's boats of safe and comfortable capacity with genial old fellows to ply the oars.

Having paid the boatman and having paid the toll levied on all persons landing, in respect of the ferry rights there are a few houses of various pretensions making up the village of Cremyll, the principal of which, the Mount Edgcumbe Arms Hotel is an old-fashioned well-regulated house and has been for many years in the occupation of Mrs Grave. Visitors staying at the hotel have the privilege of having the Park open to them at any time during their stay.

There is a newly erected battery just a little to the seaward side of Cremyll beach and upon the same site as the Old Block House. The new fort is of very massive construction, although small, being casemated and mounted with heavy guns in the lower tier, the upper portion bearing a number of smaller arms of an ornamental character.

The visitor should see also:

Lady Emma's Cottage, a pleasant tea-house ... the grand terrace ... the Arch, which was for sometime in ruins but has now been rebuilt and is made to offer accommodation for weary pedestrians ... the Zigzags

... seats are placed here and there along the paths for the convenience of the rambler ... at the top there is a cottage known by a variety of names such as The Red House, the Chinese Pagoda, the Indian Cottage etc but the former is the most familiar, we presume from the appearance of the building itself ... at the back of the cottage is an entrance into the Deer Park.

... Picklecombe, a strongly fortified building erected some years since by the government. It is now supplemented by a much more formidable structure known as Picklecombe Fort, not yet completed ... turning up the new road to the right we come to Picklecombe Cottage with numerous pretty bowers for tea parties.

Mount Edgcumbe ... the circular towers were converted during the latter part of the last century to their present octagonal form. In the hall there is a minstrels' gallery and it is often used for music. Some years since a considerable addition was made to the building at the west end, consisting of a library, a dining room and other apartments, the architect, George Wightwick of Plymouth.

In 1789 King George and his consort paid a visit to the then Lord Edgcumbe. This visit is referred to in a poetical work published in Dock in 1804 entitled "Mount Edgcumbe – a Descriptive Poem" composed by G Woodley.

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Near the Garden House is a grand cedar under which King William IV and Queen Adelaide held a levee. In the Garden House is a study and a tastefully furnished boudoir behind which is a dressing room communicating with a bath into the capacious basin of which hot and cold water are poured from the mouths of two bronze dolphins.

In the French Garden is an elegant room of octagonal form opening on each side into well-stocked conservatories. A very pleasing illusion may be created in this room by removing a picture when a small statue of Meleager is discovered, behind which a glass is so placed to reflect the whole of the garden. This figure is answered by another of Mercury opposite to it outside the enclosure. See also a votive urn in memory of the Countess Sophia ... the Orangery designed by Lord Chelmsford some years since ... and stanzas "On the Italian Garden" by the Rev Sir Robert Hughes, for some time curate of Maker.

The battery was restored in 1747 and remounted some years later and now bears 21 French 18 pounders taken from prizes and purchased by the owner of the domain ... near the Block House in a deep excavation, a capital of the Corinthian order brought from Alexandria".

Notes on Mount Edgcumbe (from an article by Lady Ernestine Edgcumbe in "More Famous Homes of Great Britain" published 1899)

"The Italian Garden is celebrated for its numerous and splendid orange trees, some more than 150 years old, having been brought from Constantinople by Richard, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lord Edgcumbe when a very young man. The Orangery, a fine building erected in the last century from the designs of Lord Camelford (apparently not Chelmsford) of Boconnoc. The handsome marble fountain in the middle of this garden was a present from Lord Bessborough to Richard, 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl.

A collection of water colour drawings by Badeslade (1737) shows the "Wilderness". In one is represented the still existing part of a Garden House to which the 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl added wings with sitting rooms where he and his daughter Emma, afterwards Countess Brownlow, spent much time.

The battery was renovated by the 2nd Earl when Port Admiral and remounted with 21 guns taken out of a French frigate. On these guns can still be seen an anchor and the cap of liberty and "R F An lieme Ruelle". Every guest in the house received salutes on landing or going off. A prince received 21 guns, a duke or archbishop 19, a bishop or earl 15 while a foreign nobleman is credited with 15 and an esquire with 11. 15 guns regularly commemorated the anniversary of the "Popish Conspiracy" and 42 that of the King's Accession. The records for 1767 note the discharge of no less than 345 rounds. This noisy hospitality has now ceased but the old guns still testify to their owner's loyalty on Her Majesty's birthday or the landing of any royal personage.

Some 30 years ago (1869) a casemated fort was built here and the private battery mounted on its terraced roof, the Old Blockhouse thereby losing its sight of the sea.

In the House, the old hall or saloon is very lofty and an admirable music room. The drawing room or gallery occupies the whole ground floor of the east front. The library, separated from the saloon by the billiard room, is large and well-proportioned; it was built by George, 1<sup>st</sup> Earl and his son added the dining room, ingeniously fitting it in to a limited space which obliged him to make it oval. On the walls hang family portraits by Sir Joshua Reynolds, Sir Peter Lely and Mascal, going back to Col Piers Edgcumbe of the Civil Wars.

Reynolds, as a boy of 12, and the artistic young "Dick", afterwards 2<sup>nd</sup> Lord Edgcumbe, painted a portrait of Parson Smart, Vicar of Maker in Cremyll boathouse on a piece of sailcloth ... In 1749 Lord Edgcumbe introduced Reynolds to Commodore Keppel who gave him a passage to Italy in the "Centurion", thus enabling him to study in Rome where he purchased the fine marble busts of Roman Emperors now in the saloon. Sir Joshua's receipt for payment of the expenses he incurred is preserved.

During the Civil War, there were two summonses for the surrender of the house, one signed by Lord Warwick. It held out until May 1645.

The Upper Garden was shorn by the blizzard of 1891 of its chief glory, a grand group of cedars. A terraced drive, passing the Ruin, enters what was called the Beech Wood until the blizzard destroyed it. By March 1891 hundreds of great beeches lay prostrate up the hill, their great roots upreared.

Picklecombe Fort, strengthened and modernized since its erection in 1848 ... indeed, both park and woods bristle with fortifications. The ode written in the last century by the then parish clerk is now truer than ever:

Mount Edgcumbe is a pleasant place

It looketh on Hamoaze

And on it are some batteries

To guard us from our foes.

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The time when wrestling matches used to attract country people from far and near to Maker Church green is long past, but those now living can remember an episode of old smuggling days when the vicar, having taken the Rural Dean to the top of the tower, espied 23 kegs lodged in the gutter between the church roofs. It is said that the next morning there was a keg at the vicarage door.

At the south-eastern point of the Park, overlooking the Terrace (Zigzag walks) is The Kiosk, a summer house with a splendid view (this must be the Red Seat).

Cosimo de Medici was entertained by Sir Richard on his way to the court of Charles II. In 1781 George III and Queen Charlotte came from Saltram which had been let to them by Lord Boringdon and dined in the Saloon, the decorations of which date from the first Lord Edgcumbe, who also planted the Terrace. William IV and Queen Adelaide stayed at Mount Edgcumbe before their accession and there have been visits from many foreign royalty”.

#### Records at Mount Edgcumbe

Almost all records have now been removed to Truro.

However, there are some papers of interest:

#### In the Study

Left Bookcase : Papers on Rame Peninsula

Records of the Edgcumbe Family – 4<sup>th</sup> Earl

Middle Cupboard on Right : Notebook on rebuilding of Mt Edgcumbe

Right Hand Cupboard : Local history notes, Tonkin etc

Chest of Drawers – Top : Index to papers and records of Earl (see under “landownership” below)  
with other catalogues

Visits of Fanny Burney, Mrs Siddone etc to Mt Edgcumbe

Various royal visitors

Chest of Drawers – 3<sup>rd</sup> Shelf : Baron Porcelli on the Emma, Countess of Mt Edcumbe story

Coats of Arms ... Heralds

Story of the dog and the Garden House

St Julian's Well house in ruins (Hine)

Mt Edgcumbe as a ruin

Portrait of Sir Richard Edgcumbe

Chest of Drawers – 4<sup>th</sup> Shelf : Cotehele

### In the Library

In Low Cupboards on the Right: Cotehele House, pictures and commentary by 4<sup>th</sup> Earl

Mt Edgcumbe, pictures and commentary by 4<sup>th</sup> Earl

Commonplace book (pigskin cover) with cuttings, menus etc and the address of the 4<sup>th</sup> Earl to his Plympton constituents on ceasing to be MP on his accession 1861

Family portraits

Book of cuttings about Lady Valletort (5<sup>th</sup> Countess) etc

1976

In the original document there is a diagram of the Edgcumbe Family tree. Editors note - Apologies for the layout of the following 2 images. They can be downloaded and saved by right clicking and 'save image as', and then viewed in an image viewer

image

1

image 2

To Cromwell

His burial there rather than at Maker may be attributed to the condition of Mt Edgcumbe after the Civil War.

The two persons first named had probably at one time owned the donor and had manumitted him: as a freedman he had joined the army and become a 'beneficiarius', that is, a soldier promoted to special employment by a governor – they seem often to have posted to frontier regions or to important points on roads further South in a way that suggests that their responsibility was for the security of supply routes.

A freedman normally took the tribal and family names of his patron and would expect to maintain towards them such duties as care of their tombs etc.

As 'Chresimum', 'Trophimenos' and 'Hermes' are all Greek, the probability of Eastern origin is increased.

The Zigzags are described as leading from a point soon after the Arch up to the Red House and down to the bottom of Picklecombe Valley.

In 1945 when the Garden House was converted for occupation the dolphins were removed to the Upper Garden and the bath boarded over.

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