

## CREMYLL AND WEST STONEHOUSE

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### CREMYLL

#### The Name

Crimela:	deed of Roger de Valletort c 1200
Cremill:	Plympton Prior lease 1512
Crilby:	Cecilia Fiennes 1698
Crimbel:	Rame Register 1701
Crimhill:	"Panorama of Plymouth"

Principal importance for the passage and ferry for which see "The Cremyll Ferry" by P L Hull, among parish papers.

The original crossing was from Devil's Point to Barnpool. The route from there on the Cornish side took travellers close to the eventual site of Mt Edgcumbe House and then by a path still deeply cut into the hillside leading to the north side of Maker Church.

The inconvenience of this route to the Edgcumbes was met by shifting the western terminal of the ferry to Cremyll about 1730. It would be reasonable to suppose that the road continued then as now to the westward outside the park. For the attendant effect on West Stonehouse, see below.

When the Royal William Yard was built the eastern terminal was moved from Devil's Point to Admiral's Hard.

The Cremyll passage was arduous and dangerous by reason of the current in the days of oar and sail. Cecilia Fiennes in her "Journey to Cornwall 1698" says:

"From Plymouth I went one mile to Crilby Ferry which is a very hazardous crossing passage by reason of three tides meeting. Had I known the danger before, I would not have been very willing to have gone it, not but this is the constant way most people goe and saves several miles riding. I was at least an hour going over and it was about a mile, but indeed in some places, notwithstanding there was 5 men rowed and I set my own men to row also, I do believe that we made almost not a step of the way for a quarter of an hour, but blessed by God I came safely over; but those ferry boats are so wet and the sea is always so cold to be upon that I never fail to catch cold in a ferry boat as I did this day, having two more ferries to cross, tho' none so bad or half so long as this. Thence to Millbrook, 2 miles, and went all along by the water and had the full view of the dockyards".

## Rame Register 1701

Six women and a man are named "all these were drowned at Crimble July 26".

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The presence of a dangerous crossing would account for the supersession of Julian of Maker by Julian the Hospitaller, a passage saint, who appears in all the older guide books. Julian the Hospitaller was a favourite of Henry II owing to a connection with the latter's birthplace. The founder of Plympton Priory, Bishop Warewast, had been an "obsequious courtier" of Henry I.

The chapel believed to have existed at Barnpool would also have been a passage chapel. Canon J H Adams says:

"The Barnpool chapel might well mark the spot where the original Julian first landed and perhaps built a small oratory as thanks-giving for his safe landing, although he later settled at the top of the hill".

Whether or not the Barnpool chapel goes back to Celtic days, the later chapel almost certainly corresponded to a ford chapel. Murals of St Christopher often show a hermit standing outside his chapel on the far side of a river holding a lantern to guide the Saint over the dangerous crossing. There were chapels on either side of the Camel at Wadebridge before the bridge was built and there are a number of chapels sited near fords.

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There is little doubt that Barnpool was similar, built perhaps as a thankoffering by an early medieval traveller after a narrow escape at the dangerous crossing. But it is not mentioned in the episcopal registers which rather suggests that it goes back to very early days and had obtained a prescriptive right like so many other Celtic chapels which are never mentioned.

As at Wadebridge and Egloshayle, there was a corresponding chapel on the other side of the ferry. A print of St Lawrence Chapel is reproduced in Bracken's History of Plymouth and on page 33 he says:

"At Devil's Point once stood the little chapel of St Lawrence. It was removed towards the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century when plans were being made for building the Victualling Yard. It had a small belfry and perpendicular windows, a long low building with gable ends. There seems to have been one transept with a small tower".

It existed in 1472 when a license was issued.

Bracken speaks of a battlemented churchyard wall, but the existence of a churchyard is doubtful unless it had a Celtic origin or was obtained for the burial of unfortunate travellers drowned on the crossing.

### The Obelisk

To the north of the Cremyll-Millbrook road formerly stood on Penlee Point as a conspicuous sea-mark but before 1829 had been moved to its present site, and reduced in size. It was still on Penlee in 1789 and a full account of it is in the Plymouth Local History Library.

### Chapel Lands

Which are the fields lying to the south of the road and extending as far as the actual Park fence, are of about 20 acres and appear to correspond exactly with the Priory Cremyll Estate leased to Sir Peter Edgcumbe in 1512 and purchased by Sir Richard in 1545. The title may refer to the Barnpool chapel or might be an endowment for some other chapel.

### Cremyll Boat Yard

The visit of young Joshua Reynolds to Mt Edgcumbe (see page 7) suggests that some sort of yard existed in 1734. In 1839 the yard was a Mr Bank's and on 1 May 1839 the Plymouth and Devonport Weekly Journal reported a serious fire to the ship "Parmelia" whilst lying alongside the wharf in the building yard. The interior of the hull, the masts and rigging were destroyed.

At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century the yard was Waterman's. Mr Waterman was churchwarden of Maker and head of the Sunday School. On May Day the yard's "bulldogs", wearing new white smocks or jerseys and with ribbons and rosettes in their caps, paraded the village carrying six foot models of boats made of lath and decorated with flowers and garlands. They collected money and then went to Plymouth Barbican for the same purpose. They had a fife and drum band and the practice continued until 1930.

The Western Antiquary 7 of 1887 describes the "Millbrook Ship" as still being carried through Devonport on May Day with drum and fife band accompanied by children with garlands. One flower-decked ship called "Black Prince" was complete with guns which were fired at Mount Wise.

Rogers took over from Waterman about 1905/6 and the yard became Mashord's early in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

WEST STONEHOUSE

Trans. Plymouth Institution 1886/7

A paper by R N North on the "Early History of Stonehouse" says that the first record that he could find of East Stonehouse was dated 1369 under the name "Estere Stonhous".

Of this, C W Braken says:

"At that date, therefore, there must not only have existed a West Stonehouse but it must have grown so large as to make the distinction necessary".

Why the new village across the Hamoaze should have been called Stonehouse instead of Cremyll is open to speculation, but the name may well originate from the time when the Stonehouse family were in possession.

Worth here is referring to those Valletorts who in the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> Centuries owned Maker, Cremyll and the Tamar Passage and bore the territorial name 'de Stonehouse'.

C S Gilbert says:

"Mt Edgcumbe is said formerly to have been called West Stonehouse and in the 27<sup>th</sup> of H.III was the dwelling place of Joel de Stonehouse, 1243".

The same grant that licensed Sir Piers Edgcumbe to "embattle" his manor house, empowered him also to "empark" 500 acres in West Stonehouse and Cremyll.

In 1376 the Bishop granted a license to William Trerys and his wife for his mansion in Stonehouse and if this mansion were west of the Tamar, it could have occupied a site where the Orangery gardens of Mt Edgcumbe now are and this would account for the curious division of the gardens.

Carew – Survey of Cornwall 1602

"Certain old ruins yet remaining confirm the neighbours' report that near the water's side there stood once a town called West Stonehouse until the French by fire and sword overthrew it".

This is a reference to the Breton raids of the late 14<sup>th</sup> and early 15<sup>th</sup> Centuries.

Robert Brindley – Directory of Plymouth Stonehouse and Devonport

Writes in 1830:

“About 1730 Barnpool was removed from the annoyance which it caused to the lordly domain of Mt Edgcumbe, and at the same time, West Stonehouse which had a chapel and was inhabited by fishermen was razed by the owners of the lovely domain of Mt Edgcumbe and not destroyed by the French as generally supposed”.

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There is no necessary contradiction between the two accounts.

Mrs Rosina Algate, born 1879 in Millbrook and widow of the head gardener of Mt Edgcumbe, recalled being told by her father, Samuel Henwood, born Millbrook 1836, that long before his time a ruined chapel at Barnpool had been removed to the Picklecombe valley and turned into a sort of summer-house. This is “Picklecombe Seat” which may have been constructed at the time of the general laying out of the grounds in 1730; it forms an object of interest on one of the paths then devised. The date of the laying-out can be fixed fairly closely by a picture in Mt Edgcumbe showing the newly laid out gardens and dated 1737.

#### Picklecombe Seat

Lies on the broad walk running round the Picklecombe valley and is so marked on the maps. It resembles a deeply recessed church porch with a wooden seat where the door would be. It is well built from shaped stone, about 17' broad, 10' deep and 12' high with a roughly flat top.

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On each side of the front there is a shallow canopied recess. The centre portion is arched over with four centred granite arches springing from granite slabs and diminishing from about 10' wide and 10' high at the front to 8' 6" wide and 8' high at the back. In the centre of the back wall is a canopied niche similar to those at the front which may once have provided a supply of water; the niche resembles a piscina. This, and the front arches are of freestone and may have been made for the purpose; the granite blocks and particularly the final arch at the back might very well be remains of a church, perhaps arcading. The well shaped stone of which the whole is built could well have been robbed from Barnpool.

Note

## The Ruin

Bracken, "History of Plymouth", writes:

"The so-called Ruins at Mt Edgcumbe and the Alcove at Picklecombe include fragments of ecclesiastical buildings, without doubt parts of the two old chapels of St Lawrence and St George ... Portions of the old Stonehouse Barrier Gates are also incorporated in the Ruins. Since Stonehouse was never a walled town, these are probably the gates of the Abbey or the Manor House".

Description of the "Ruin":

It is a square tower with an internal staircase leading up to a platform about 15' above ground, with windows at the south, east and north and a doorway on the south. Built for the most part from cut local red stone and difficult to date. The window traceries and arches are of granite and apparently made for the job. However:

- a) The bottom uprights on each side of the south window are not of granite but of a smooth pock-marked stone used extensively in tracery at Bere Ferrers where it is dated early 14<sup>th</sup> Century. The doorway re-erected under the tower at Rame is of the same stone. The pieces in the ruin are, on the left from inside, about 3' high and on the right about 4' with an elaborate vertical pattern. The pieces above them are of granite.

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- b) In the east and north windows some of the granite uprights and sills have holes for bars which do not correspond with the holes in their opposite numbers. These may have been for a railing to prevent people falling out of the windows.

It seems possible to conclude that the ruin contains part of a doorway and some window tracery from a building with 14<sup>th</sup> or 15<sup>th</sup> Century characteristics.

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Note

## Lady Emma's Cottage – "Beechwood"

An ornamental building of classical style situated opposite the end of the Breakwater. It was destroyed by fire in 1875 and replaced by a pair of estate cottages.

## Cremyll School

For the building of this see Page 9.

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## Cremyll, Millbrook and the Royal Navy

Duprez' "VISITORS' GUIDE TO MT EDGCUMBE" published 1871 at 1s. Descriptive and historical sketch by W H K Wright:

"Millbrook ... the ruined building of the Southdown Gunpowder works, originally erected as the Victualling Office for the Navy.

Guardships etc ... the guardship, the Royal Adelaide bearing the flag of the Port Admiral. This vessel lies close to Mt Edgcumbe, off the Obelisk at Cremyll. Near it is another large vessel, the Impregnable, now used as a Training Ship for boys ... in attendance are several brigs.

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At the mouth of St John's Lake is Cambridge, a gunnery ship where is taught the use of the "great guns". The practice ground is up the lake and the shot is dropped into the mud. Off the Dockyard lies the Indus, the Dockyard guardship bearing the flag of the Admiral Superintendent of the Dockyard. Near the yard also is the "Sheer Hulk" with its immense sheers. Implacable, Training Ship, lies just above Torpoint".

The Navel Brewery, on a site leased from Margaret Countess of Oxford in 1735, was at Southdown until the construction of the Royal William Yard and the Maker Registers contain many entries relative to the workforce. The Rope Walk was at Anderton; Wood Park was a Superintendent's House and the actual Walk is represented by the long straight road westward to the east entrance to West Park, lying close the public lake-side road.

COUNTRY LIFE, 1 December 1955 – "An Unchanged Landscape", Article by Bryan D Little:

"... the peninsula of Inceworth divides Millbrook Lake from the remoter more silent expanse of St John. Its buildings are of some note, for out at its tip, at Southdown, are the massive stone-built remains of the great brewery which served the Navy in Georgian times. It ante-dates Rennie's monumental Victualling Yard at Stonehouse; two of its better preserved buildings bear dates of 1745 and 1791. Halfway to Millbrook the building of a one-time water mill has a date plaque of 1598. On the narrow neck between the creeks a roofless ruin, smothered now with ivy so that its early 14<sup>th</sup> Century windows are hardly discernible, is the manor chapel of Inceworth, licensed for its Champernowne owners in 1331. It is almost the only relic of what was once a considerable house".

Commenced 1825

Legend in Smith and Wace

"Parmelia", 3 masts, 120 foot and 443 tons, had sailed from Portsmouth and Plymouth in 1829 to found and colonise the State of Western Australia. Her final fate is unknown.

III, 380-

And a chapel

Mt Edgcumbe, Nr Plymouth, Devonshire: Seat of Richard Edgcumbe. From a drawing by T Badeslade showing a plan of the Gardens in the Wilderness

As it appeared in 1966

There is a diagram in the original document

As observed in 1966

St George's was demolished in 1789 and a new chapel erected by public subscription, only to be destroyed in the enemy action of 1940/2.

Association with the Ruin would give a later date to Picklecombe Seat, perhaps connecting it with the further landscaping which included the "Earl's Drive" to Penlee. The argument for the use of Barnpool material is, however, not affected.

As observed in 1966

Two uprights and a lintel

There is a diagram in the original document

Now converted into one

In the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century there were more than 50 pupils. The late Mrs Rosina Algate was a teacher. The building was used as a social club until the 1960's but this was finally closed in 1970.

A brass chandelier, perhaps from Mt Edgcumbe, which in the in apse (not on inventory of church property) was removed on closure of the building and taken to the church at St John where it hangs below the tower. About 1974 the building was sold for conversion into a private house.