

# THE BOROUGH OF PLYMOUTH

## From White's 1850 History, Gazetteer and Directory of Devonshire

PLYMOUTH, DEVONPORT, and STONEHOUSE, are commonly called "*The Three Towns*," though they adjoin each other, and form one of the largest sea ports and principal naval and military stations in England, situated at the south west corner of Devon. They extend about three miles from east to west, and comprise, with their northern suburbs of Morice Town and Stoke, about 90,000 inhabitants. Plymouth is on the east, Stonehouse in the centre, and Devonport on the west; and their eastern, southern, and western sides, are skirted and deeply indented by the broad, deep, and extensive creeks and harbours in the estuaries of the Tamar and Plym, which meet in *Plymouth Sound*, and take the names of *Catwater*, *Sutton Pool*, *Mill Bay*, *Stonehouse Pool*, and *Hamoaze*; to the latter of which the great naval arsenal of Devonport Dock Yard presents its massive sea wall and numerous docks, slips, &c, in a semicircular range of more than half a mile, exclusive of the Gun Wharf, and the large Government Steam Yard on the north, opposite Torpoint, to which there is a steam ferry across the estuary of the Tamar. Plymouth Citadel and Mill Bay front that broad arm of the English Channel called the *Sound*, in which the force of the Atlantic surges is considerably broken by a stupendous *breakwater*, while the harbours and creeks on either side are shut in from the violence of ocean storms, on the west by that bold peninsular range of hills, extending from Cornwall to Mount Edgcumbe, and that long projection of Stonehouse terminating at the Devil's Point, opposite Mount Edgcumbe; and on the east by the bold promontory of Mount Batten, at the entrance to Catwater, the Mouth of the river *Plym*, from which Plymouth has its name. The South Devon Railway extends from Plymouth to Exeter, and connects the three towns with the great railways traversing most parts of the kingdom; but the line intended to pass hence through Cornwall to Falmouth, &c., is not yet made, though an act for its construction was obtained a few years ago. The ground on which the most populous parts of Plymouth and Stonehouse are built, falls towards the centre, making a sort of hollow, extending from east to west; from which the suburbs rise to a considerable elevation on the north, and to the high ground called the Hoe, overlooking the Sound on the south. The site of Devonport is more elevated, but its face has a gradual southern inclination, and on three sides it falls abruptly to the water. The northern suburbs at Higher Stoke rise much higher, and command delightful views of the towns, harbours, headlands, and the castellated mansion and sylvan grounds of Mount Edgcumbe. *Devonport*, *Morice Town*, *Stoke*, and *Higher Stoke*, form the PARISH OF STOKE DAMEREL, which had 33,820 inhabitants in 1841, of whom more than 25,000 were in Devonport, 306 in the Parish Workhouse, 1148 in seven Barracks, 478 in the Convict Hulk, and 155 in Stoke Military Hospital. This parish forms the *Municipal Borough of Devonport*; but the *Parliamentary Borough* includes also the PARISH OF EAST STONEHOUSE, which in 1841 had 9712 inhabitants, including 102 persons in the Parish Workhouse, 437 in the Royal Marine Barracks, and 307 in the Royal Naval Hospital. This parish maintains its poor under the provisions of the New Poor Law, and Stoke Damarel Parish is now petitioning to be placed under the control of that act, though neither parish is or wishes to be united with any other for the support of its poor. The BOROUGH OF PLYMOUTH comprises the two *parishes of St. Andrew and Charles the Martyr*, except Pennycross Chapelry in the former, and Compton Gifford tithing in the latter, which are in Roborough Hundred and in Plympton St. Mary Union, as afterwards noticed. The borough parts of these parishes maintain their poor conjointly, under a local act, and their population in 1841 amounted to 36,520 souls, of whom 12,956 were in Charles the Martyr's parish, and 23,564 in St. Andrew's. The latter included 219 persons in the Royal Marine Barracks; 741 in the Citadel Barracks; 332 in Plymouth Workhouse; 79 in the Chatham Hulk; 56 on Drake's Island; and 320 poor Irish waiting for emigration ships. The total *population* of the two boroughs was 61,212 in 1821; 76,001 in 1831; and 80,052 in 1841, and it may be now estimated at about 90,000 souls. The four parishes in the two Boroughs are in the *Archdeaconry of Totnes* and *Deanery of Plympton*, and in the Southern Parliamentary Division of Devon, and in Plymouth Polling and County Court District. Stonehouse is in Roborough Hundred and Petty Sessional Division, but the municipal boroughs have separate quarter and petty sessions.

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## PLYMOUTH

PLYMOUTH, as already stated, is the most eastern of the "three towns" and occupies an important maritime situation at the head of Plymouth Sound, which here extends its expansive waters into the noble harbours of Catwater, Mill Bay, Sutton Pool, Stonehouse Pool, and Hamoaze, and receives on the east and west the broad estuaries of the Plym and the Tamar. It is distant 44 miles S.W. of Exeter; 29 miles W. of Dartmouth; 15 miles S. of

Tavistock; 5 miles E.S.E. of Saltash; and 216 miles W.S.W. of London. The *Borough* increased its population from about 16,000 souls in 1801, to 36,520 in 1811, and has now upwards of 40,000, including the soldiers in barracks, and others attached to the naval and military establishments. It has now about 5500 houses, of which no fewer than 500 were built in 1846-7. Its *street arrangements* extend about a mile each way, and its site ascends on a bold and broken gradient, back from Mill Bay and Sutton Pool, and the intermediate headland occupied by the Citadel and the Hoe; and is such as to render some of the streets steep, and the entrance from the north east rather inconvenient; but many of the streets and some of the entrances to the town have been much improved during the last 20 years; and the new buildings in many of the older parts have imparted an air of renovation and beauty to what was before an assemblage of architectural craziness and disorder. There are now in the suburbs many handsome villas and rows of neat houses; and in the *town* are several good streets and many commodious public buildings, well-stocked shops, and large inns and taverns. The large modern town of Devonport which is separated from Plymouth by that of Stonehouse, was called Plymouth Dock till 1824, as afterwards noticed. In the Saxon era, the site of Plymouth was called *Tameorwerth*, but after the Conquest, it acquired the name of *Sutton*, or South Town, in reference to its more ancient neighbour Plympton. In the reign of Edward I., one part of it was called *Sutton Prior* and the other *Sutton Valletort*; the north part of the town being on the lands of the Prior of Plympton, and the south part on the estate of the Valletorts. These names were relinquished in the reign of Henry VI. for the more appropriate appellation of *Plymouth*. In the beginning of the reign of Edward II., great disputes arose between the Prior of Plympton and the king, respecting certain rights and immunities, claimed by the former, but always contested by the Crown. At length, by a writ issued from the Exchequer in 1313, a jury was summoned to examine the various claims, and determine the differences between the King and the Prior. By their decision, the Prior, in consideration of a fee-farm rent of £29. 6s. 8d. to be annually paid into the Exchequer for the use of his Majesty, was confirmed in the exercise of various privileges, among which were - the right of granting leases of houses as lord of the fee; of having a manor view of frank-pledge, assize of bread and beer, a ducking-stool and pillory, and the fishing of the waters from Catwater to the head of the river Plym. In the reign of Edward III., the manor was given to John de Eltham, Earl of Cornwall, who had many disputes with the Prior, whose claims were again confirmed by a special jury. About this period, Plymouth, which had been much improved under the liberal building leases granted by the Prior, became an object of jealousy to the French, who landed here and endeavoured to destroy the town by fire, but were repulsed, with the loss of 500 men, by Hugh Courtenay, Earl of Devon, under whose conduct the surrounding gentry and their vassals had associated with celerity. In a second attempt, in the 6th of Henry IV., the French were more successful. Landing at the head of Sutton Pool, near Britonside, they burnt upwards of 600 houses; but failing in their attempt to destroy the castle and the higher parts of town, they retired to their ships, and proceeded to Dartmouth, where Mons. du Chastel, one of their commanders, and about 400 men, were killed, and 200 others were made prisoners. (See page 487.) From the time of this occurrence till the reign of Henry VI., the town dwindled to a mere fishing village, but it was then improved by the Prior of Plympton, who rebuilt [sic] many of the houses at his own expense; and by liberally granting certain privileges, and leases at small fines, occasioned a considerable increase of inhabitants. Trade revived, and the spirit of industry and enterprise being awakened, its capacious harbours were again frequented by merchant and other vessels. About 1438, the inhabitants petitioned Henry VI. for a *charter of incorporation*, and also that they might have a *wall* round the town, for its better defence against the irruption of an enemy. In the following year, the king granted a charter which incorporated the inhabitants by the name of the *Mayor and Commonality of Plymouth* and divided the town and borough into four *wards*, called Old Town, High Vintry, Low Vintry, and Looe street Wards; each to have a Captain and inferior officers, but all to be under the control of the Mayor. In the 4th of Edward IV. a confirmation of the liberties and franchises of Plymouth was granted to the Mayor and Commonalty, on condition of their paying a fee-farm rent of £41 to the Prior of Plympton, and one of ten marks to the Prior of Bath; and from this period "the *lordship of the fee of the manor of Sutton Prior and Valletort* (now Plymouth,) was vested in the Corporation of Plymouth, together with the assize of bread and beer, fishery of the waters, view of frank-pledge, tolls of the markets and fairs, and the use of the ducking stool and pillory. In the reign of Elizabeth, a *new charter* was granted to the borough, through the solicitation of the celebrated Admiral *Sir Francis Drake*, by which the former charters were confirmed, and the Corporation declared to consist of a mayor, 12 aldermen, 24 common councilmen, and an indefinite number of freemen, with a recorder, town clerk, coroner, and a number of inferior officers. The above-named gallant Admiral was born near Tavistock, and was the first Englishman that circumnavigated the globe. Through his skill and perseverance, a stream of *water* was brought to Plymouth from the sources of the river Meavy, in Dartmoor, by a winding channel nearly 24 miles in length. This noble undertaking was entirely executed at his own cost, and the channel has ever since been vested with the Corporation, and still supplies the town water-works. The Corporation claims to be by prescription, and has *charters* from eleven monarchs, beginning with Henry VI. and ending with

William III. The borough sent *two members to parliament* in the 26th and 33rd of Edwd. I; in the 4th and 7th of Edward II., and the 4th of Edward III.; and it has regularly returned two members since the 20th of Hy. VI. A *market* is said to have been established here as early as 1253. In the reign of Edward, the port had 325 vessels. In 1512, an act of Parliament was passed for fortifying Plymouth and other seaports in the west; and in 1520, Bishop Lacey granted an indulgence to all such persons as should contribute to the fortifications at Plymouth. *Leland*, who visited it in the time of Henry VIII, says, "the mouth of the gulph, where the shippes of Plymouth lyeth, is waullid on eche side, and chained over in tyme of necessitie; on the south-west side of the mouth in a block-house, and on a rocky hill hard by it is a strong castle quadrate, having on each corner a great round tower. It seemeth to be no very old peace of worke." The little island of St. Nicholas, or *Drake's Island*, was afterwards strongly fortified, and batteries and block-houses were erected on all sides of the town. On the 20th of July, 1588, part of the English fleet, consisting of 120 sail, under the command of Lord Charles Howard and Sir Fras. Drake, lay at anchor in Plymouth Sound, when the *Spanish Armada* sailed up the channel, and some of its ships looked into the Sound, where the Spanish Admiral is said to have fixed upon Mount Edgcumbe as his future residence; but not liking the company he saw, his fleet passed out to sea, followed by the English, who overtook the enemy on the following day, kept up a running fight till the 24th, and being joined by another squadron off the Isle of Wight, drove the fight to a more general engagement, and continued it at intervals till the 28th, when they assailed the Armada with fire ships, and in two days saw "the invincible" sea force totally destroyed or dispersed. To this victorious fleet, Plymouth contributed seven ships and one fly-boat, a quota greater than that supplied by any other port except London. In 1595, twenty two chests of the *Pope's bulls and indulgences*, which had been taken from a discomfited party of Spanish invaders in Cornwall, were publicly burnt in Plymouth market place. In 1596, Plymouth Sound was the grand rendezvous of the fleet for the expedition against Cadiz. In 1625, Charles I., with his whole court, a fleet of 120 ships and 6000 troops, remained ten days at Plymouth, and was sumptuously entertained by the Corporation. In the following year, the *plague* carried off nearly 2000 of the inhabitants.

## **MAKER, including MOUNT EDGCUMBE**

### **From White's Devonshire Directory of 1850**

MAKER parish, which occupies a great part of the bold promontory and peninsula, which juts into the English Channel on the west side of Plymouth Sound, and the south side of the Harbour of Hamoaze, opposite Stonehouse and Devonport, is partly in Cornwall, and contains 2725 inhabitants, and 2260 acres of land, of which 1156 souls and about 1320 acres are in VAULTERSHOLME tithing, which is in Devonshire, and includes the beautiful seat of *Mount Edgcumbe*, the parish church, the village of *Kingsand*, and part of *Millbrook*. The whole parish is in the Archdeaconry of Cornwall and Deanery of East, and the Union of St. Germans. *Makerton* was one of the manors of the ancient family of the *Valletorts*, from whom *Vaultersholme* had its name. Mount Edgcumbe had formerly a village called *West Stonehouse*, as noticed at page 689, and was the property of the ancient family of Stonehouse, whose heiress brought it to the Durnfords. *Sir Piers Edgcumbe*, who died in 1539, married the heiress of the Durnford family, and the estate has since remained in his family. His son, *Sir Richard*, built a castellated mansion on the hill, to which he gave the name of Mount Edgcumbe. Richd. Edgcumbe, Esq., the immediate descendant of Sir Richard, having filled several important public offices in the reigns of George I. and II., was created *Baron Edgcumbe*, in 1742. His grandson, George, the third baron, was created *Viscount Mount Edgcumbe and Valletort* in 1781; and in 1789, was raised to the dignity of *Earl of Mount Edgcumbe*. He died in 1795, and was succeeded by his son, Richard, the late Earl, who died in 1839, when he was succeeded by his son, the present *Right Honourable Ernest Augustus Edgcumbe*, EARL OF MOUNT EDGCUMBE, and *Viscount Valletort*, who was born in 1797, and married the daughter of the late Admiral Fielding. He is an aid-de-camp to the Queen, and colonel of the Cornwall Militia.

MOUNT EDGCUMBE, the delightful seat of the Earl of that name, occupies that towering promontory of verdant lawns, groves, parks, rocky cliffs, and sylvan terraces, which overlooks the spacious harbours of Hamoaze and Plymouth Sound, and the towns of Plymouth, Stonehouse, and Devonport; and is approached from thence by the *Cremill ferry boat*. The beautiful grounds are about three miles in circuit, and the mansion is an extensive and handsome castellated building, which was erected in the reign of Queen Mary, by Sir Richard Edgcumbe, whose father obtained the estate by marrying the heiress of the Durnford family; but it has at various periods undergone considerable alterations. It occupies an elevated situation on the side of a beautifully wooded hill, in a spacious lawn, bounded with rich old timber trees, growing down to the water's edge. The house is built chiefly of red limestone, obtained near the spot, and covered with stucco; but the doors and window cases are of moor-stone. Its

form is nearly square, with a tower at each corner, and battlements on the top. The towers were originally round; but about 80 years ago, they were rebuilt in an octagon shape, and of a larger size. The hall occupies the centre of the house, and rises to the height of the second story. This spacious and elegant room was newly fitted up by the first Lord Edgcumbe, in the Grecian style, and is handsomely decorated with Doric columns and pilasters of Devonshire marble, surrounded by an Ionic entablature. At each end of the hall is a gallery, in one of which is an organ. The chimney-pieces, tables, and *termini* supporting the busts, are of different varieties of Cornish granite, highly polished. Among the numerous family portraits which decorate the mansion, is one of Margaret Edgcumbe, maid of honour to Queen Elizabeth, painted in the 68th year of her age, and the 48th of her widowhood. Here are also full-lengths of Charles II., James II., William III., and Prince Rupert; and also finely executed heads of Charles I. and his natural grandson, the Duke of Monmouth. The northern windows command a noble vista, irregularly bounded by trees of various species, extending down to the broad harbour of Hamoaze, near its confluence with Plymouth Sound. Of the modern additions which have been made to this edifice, that of a wing, containing a library well stored with books, and other rooms, is not the least important. The grounds surrounding the house are laid out in the most pleasing and diversified manner. They rise on the east in precipitous acclivities from the rocky shore of the Sound; but those parts which stretch along the shore of Hamoaze and Millbrook Lake, on the north and north-west, slope to the water with a gentler inclination. "Throughout the whole demesne, an agreeable alternation of lawn, grove, and garden scenery, gratifies and relieves the eye; yet the prevailing style is of a richly varied woodland character. The general impression which an examination of its beauties leaves on the mind, is that of a magnificent Italian landscape, with its thick umbrageous woods rising proudly above each other." To walk round and view this beautiful mount, it is necessary for strangers to make application to Mrs. Huss, bookseller, Stonehouse, when a guide may be obtained for a party not exceeding six persons; but on Mondays free admission is given to the public., without more trouble than entering names at the lodge gate. On the left of the entrance are pleasure grounds or gardens, which skirt the entrance to the harbour, and are laid out in the respective styles of the English, French, and Italian horticulturists: the latter enriched with a noble conservatory, statues, urns, fountains, and long avenues of oderiferous orange trees. In the French garden is an octagonal room, opening into conservatories. At the back of this apartment a pleasing illusion is created by the removal of a picture; - a small antique statue of Meleager is then discovered, behind which is a mirror that reflects most of the various objects within the garden. In this division, opposite a beautiful magnolia tree, is a votive urn and tablet, inscribed to the memory of the late Countess of Mount Edgcumbe, who died in 1806, and to whose genius these grounds owe many of their improvements. The English garden is larger than the others, and contains many majestic and beautiful trees, including several magnolias, Libanian and Virginian cedars, &c. Here, likewise, is a neat pavilion, of the Doric order, the marble basin of which is supplied with hot and cold water, from the mouths of bronzed dolphins. A walk leading from this garden descends into a deep excavation or quarry, which, from being embosomed amidst lofty evergreens, overspread with parasitical plants, and interspersed with antique urns, sarcophagi, and other funeral emblems, assumes the character of an ancient cemetery. At one extremity, to increase the interest from association, amidst a heap of architectural fragments, lies a fine capital of the Corinthian order, brought from the ruins of Alexandria. Near this spot, on the margin of Barnpool, is the block-house, now partly in ruins and mantled with ivy. This, with a similar fort at Devil's Point, the opposite promontory, was erected in the reign of Elizabeth, for the defence of the harbour. Near Barnpool is the "amphitheatre," a noble assemblage of trees, rising with symmetrical curvature, rank above rank, to a great elevation, and displaying an endless variety of form and foliage. Among the exotics are some beautiful tulip trees, a majestic cedar of Libanus, several vast plane trees, and a Caroline poplar of extraordinary height. Near the beach is a neat Ionic rotunda, in which is a bust of Milton, and an inscription quoted from his *Paradise Lost*, in apposite allusion to the umbrageous mantling of the contiguous acclivity. The next object of attraction is an artificial ruin, representing the remains of a Gothic tower, the summit of which commands a panoramic prospect of great beauty. Near this ruin is a cottage, romantically situated near the cliff, and having a neat garden plot, teeming with shrubs and flowers. The southern side of the hill, towards the sea, is an abrupt rocky cliff, planted with almost every kind of evergreen tree and shrub, many of them of extraordinary size. Midway up the bill, through these plantations, extends the great terrace; and walks cut in zig-zag directions have been carried from thence upwards towards Redding Point, and downwards to the very brink of the precipitous cliff. These walks lead to numerous points of view, affording an extraordinary variety of wild and romantic scenery. The imitation Indian cottage, on the summit, overlooks the Sound. In Picklecombe is a little secluded valley, in which stand the imitative ruins of an ancient Gothic chapel, mantled with ivy. In Hoe Lake valley is a keeper's lodge, and a deep ravine, which forms the western boundary of the park, which is enlivened by numerous herds of fine deer. From the loftier points of the park, and especially in the neighbourhood of Maker Church, at its western extremity, the more distant landscape presents a series of prospects of the most varied description. In front, and right and left, are the towns and spacious harbours of

the Port of Plymouth, and beyond them the horizon is bounded by the lofty and rugged hills of Dartmoor. The far-famed beauties of Mount Edgcumbe have elicited the admiration of the most illustrious personages both of this and foreign nations; poets have been lavish in its praise, and the Admiral of the Spanish Armada fixed his longing eyes upon it from the Channel. and declared that it should be his future residence, after the partition of England among the *dons*, but as John Bull and his jolly tars were not parties to this arrangement, the Spanish Duke's elysian dreams were never realized. (See page 636.) It was occupied as one of the royal garrisons, to act as a check upon Plymouth, during the civil wars of the 17th century, and was the last fortress in Devon, except Salcombe, that held out for the King. The *Parish Church of Maker* is dedicated to *St. Macra*, and the living is a *discharged vicarage*, valued at £233, in the patronage of the Lord Chancellor, and incumbency of the Rev. Edward Trelawney, M.A. The great tithes were appropriated to Plympton Priory, but now belong to the Earl of Mount Edgcumbe, together with most of the parish. The church occupies a commanding eminence between Mount Edgcumbe and Rame Head, and its tower serves as a land-mark, and in the late wars was used as a signal station. A house at Plympton, let for £12 a year, has been long vested in trust for the repairs of Maker church. Several tenements at Plymouth, left to Maker parish by Joan Bennett, in 1650, are let for £20 a year, of which £14 is divided among the poor, and £6 is paid to the vicar for monthly sermons. The poor parishioners have about £14. 10s. per annum, left by J. Trevill, J. Lanyon, J. Kerley, and other donors. There are several schools and a Wesleyan chapel in the parish.  
*Brian Randell, 31 Jan 1999*

## Index to

# PLYMOUTH: A New History

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## PLYMPTON ST MARY

### From White's Devonshire Directory of 1850

PLYMPTON ST. MARY adjoins Plympton-Earl, and is an extensive parish, on the east side of the vale of the river Plym, from 3 to 5 miles N.E. of Plymouth. It contains 9984A. of land, and 2757 inhabitants. It has no village of its own name, but includes those of RIDGWAY, UNDERWOOD, and COLEBROOK, and the hamlets of *Hemerdon*, *Sparkwell*, *Venton*, and part of *Lee Mill Bridge*. It includes the seats of Saltram, Newnham Park, Furzdon, Beechwood, Hemerdon House, Goodamore, Chaddlewood, &c., and many scattered farm-houses, some of them about four miles N.N.E. of the church, among the hills on the southern borders of Dartmoor Forest. RIDGWAY is a large and respectable village near the church, and *Plympton Railway Station*, 3 1/2 miles N.E. of Plymouth. It has three inns, at one of which (the George,) *petty sessions* are held every alternate Tuesday, by the magistrates of Ermington and Plympton Division, to whom, Mr. T. Kelly, of Yealmpton, is clerk. UNDERWOOD is a

considerable village, near Ridgway, and in it is the *Union Workhouse*, as noticed at page 551. This workhouse is a large stone building, in the Elizabethan style, erected in 1841. There is a *cattle fair* at Underwood, on the 5th of July. A *College* was founded at Plympton St. Mary, by one of the Saxon kings, for a dean and four prebendaries, or canons; but it was suppressed by Bishop Warlewast, in 1121, because the chapter "wold not leve their concubines." The bishop founded on the site of the college a *Priory of Black Canons*, which was endowed by the Earl of Devon, Walter de Valletort, and other benefactors, and became one of the most opulent monasteries in the county. Its revenues were valued at the dissolution at £912 per annum. In 1534 it was surrendered by John Howe, the last prior, who, with twenty monks, subscribed to the king's supremacy. The site, with the demesne, was granted to Arthur Champernowne. and was afterwards sold to the Strodes. The estate was subsequently sold in parcels, and the immediate site of the Priory now belongs to Mr. Heal, corn miller. The Earl of Morley is lord of the manor and barony of Plympton, and resides at SALTRAM, a stately mansion, in an extensive and finely wooded park, on the east side of the river Plym, about 2 miles E.N.E. of Plymouth. In the reign of Charles I., Saltram was the property and residence of Sir James Bagg, Knight. Having been forfeited to the crown, it became the property of Lord Carteret and Mr. Wolstenholme, who sold it in 1712 to *Geo. Parker, Esq.*, great-grandfather of the late Earl of Morley.

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