



ADMIRAL SIR JOHN KINGCOME KCB
AND FAMILY

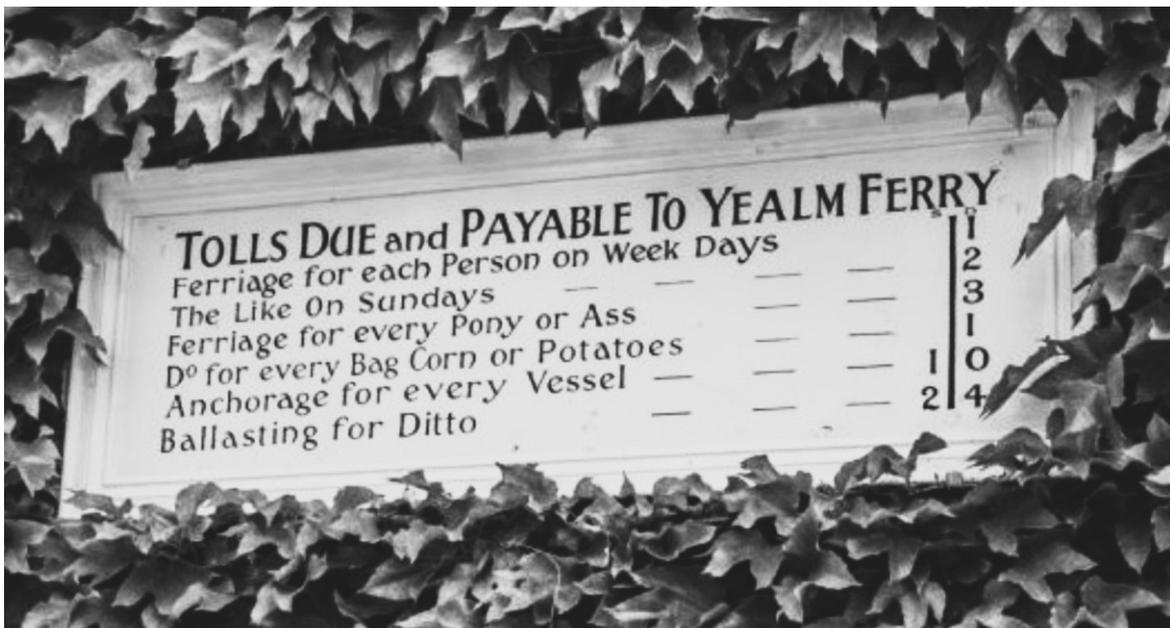
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WEMBURY LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Admiral Sir John Kingcome K C B and Family

The Kingcome family were well known and established fishermen of Noss Mayo in the Parish of Revelstoke. Henry Kinkam married Mary Perring on 6th April 1790 at the Parish Church of St Peter the poor fisherman, situated above the cliff at Stoke Beach. The couple were to produce at least ten children only three of whom were girls. Henry was the village baker in Noss, and later with his brother John in 1817 leased the ferry, passage house, fishery and oystering of the Yealm from E. P. Bastard Esq. of Kitley. These riparian rights had always belonged to the Manor of Wembury, but were sold by Thomas Lockyer junior to Edmund Bastard Esq., for the sum of £2400 in 1811. Henry and Mary's boys would have known all about tides and boats from an early age. There was a busy pilchard fishing industry in the Yealm at the time.



John Kingcome was born in 1793 and joined the Navy 28th May 1808 on board the Emerald as midshipman under Captain F R Maitland with whom he served on several occasions during his long and eventful naval career. His only surviving son was named after Captain Maitland, Frederick Maitland Kingcome, who sadly was lost at sea



Admiral Sir John Kingcome KCB

while aboard the Belleisle, his father's ship as a midshipman in 1847. He was skylarking with another lad and fell from the rigging. John had covered the globe in his travels from the Canadian Lakes to Australia and New Zealand. As a lad he had been present at the destruction of the French Fleet at Basque Roads. The following year he was at the first Anglo-Burmese War of 1809. Promoted Commander in 1828 and Captain in 1838, he commanded HMS Belleisle during the first Opium War of 1841. He later took charge of HMS Simoon and HMS St George, and then HMS Royal William in the Baltic Sea during the Crimean War. He was appointed Commander in Chief of the Pacific Station in 1862 aboard HMS Sutlej a steam frigate, made KCB in 1866, and retired a



Admiral Kingcome's Flagship – HM Steam Frigate Sutlej (right)

full Admiral in 1869. Kingcome inlet in British Columbia is named after him. Sir John retired to Windsor Villas Plymouth. He was a strong swimmer and regularly swam, year-round, off the Hoe in his retirement. He died 5th August 1871 and is buried in Ford Park Cemetery.

While away his brothers forged a different career path. Richard 1795-1860 and Josias Kingcome 1798-1849 joined the preventative service. Smugglers had been having a free reign bringing goods across the channel from Roscoff, until early 1800s. Richard was based at Fowey and for a while had his hand in both camps. He left the service and from his Crown and Anchor Inn became a major player in organising deliveries from France. The authorities kept a close eye on his activities for years but never seemed to catch him. He did well and became a ship broker in Plymouth. Josias remained with the service, but another brother Philip Brown Kingcome 1808-1838 was a renowned smuggler. He left with his crew on a stormy night from Roscoff. They nearly made it to the safety of the Yealm, but were wrecked on the Mewstone and all drowned. The boat later was washed up at Hope Cove, with the contraband strung around the gunnels, and the bodies of the men still in the bottom of the boat. Many stories have been written about the Kingcome brothers, often calling them Kingcup with connections to Cawsand, a known centre for smuggling.

The youngest brother Charles Kingcome 1818-1873 was mentioned in Sir John's Will as executor. He had forged his career in Bombay India, and had returned to live in Liverpool as a ship owner. The other brothers happily continued fishing out of the Yealm, but no doubt assisted hauling in the illicit goods with their crab pots, the barrels having been sunk with weights, below the waves to avoid detection.

We know that Sir John knew Wembury well, as he gave evidence during the court case between the Lockyers and Nathaniel Barwell of Wembury House. Passage or Warren Lane as it is called now was the quickest route to Plymouth if you lived at Noss Mayo. Later a cousin, Eliza Kingcome b1847 was to become the mistress of Peter F. Bluett Esq, and lived with him and several children at Thorn. Peter Bluett had left his wife and family at Holcombe Rogus, and run away with his servant girl. Settling at Thorn he found a new love in Eliza.