

“Once upon a time”

Wembury Memories

By Peter Lugar

Wembury Beach & The Mill

The Mewstone

Wembury Point Holiday Camp

HMS Cambridge

The Eddystone Lighthouses

Book 4

WEMBURY MEMORIES

Foreword

These books, which now number ten, started about five years ago when I decided that photographs which were scattered all over the house should be brought together in one place. I then decided that each photograph should have a little written account of the scene or event. After filling one quite large photograph album I decided that the system needed to be more flexible where pages could be added and the categories altered as the system expanded. The A4 clip folders and punched pockets proved to be absolutely ideal for this purpose. As more and more memories came flooding back the written work was beginning to far outstrip the photographic work. I also realised that there were now very few of us left in Wembury who had been born here and grew up in the village in the 1940s and 1950s and that really a record needed to be made of what life was like in those days just after the war when we were going through our 'austere period'.

Quite a lot of the photographs were in my parents' collection and I have accumulated a lot more. Some have been lent to me to copy by friends, some have come from the internet. I have augmented these with quite a lot of new photographs. The 'Memories' are now interspersed with 'Snippets of History' and in some places my own observations and ideas. I don't think that I would have attempted this project without my 'I Mac' computer which has proved to be a godsend, although I always had it in mind to write an account of what it was like to be an eight year old in Wembury right in the middle of the twentieth century.

Peter Lugar

November 2005

**“Once upon a time when the bird shit lime
and the monkey chewed tobacco**”

**These books are dedicated to Elsie,
and many others like her, who have
gone before us in this place.**

(The story of Elsie may be found in books 2 and 9)

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AERIAL VIEW OF SPIREWELL WITH THE MEWSTONE IN THE DISTANCE

This photograph was taken in the early summer of 1998 in preparation for the sale of Spirewell farm later that year. It gives a good panoramic view over the parish.

Spirewell is one of those little gems in the midst of the parish, tucked away in its coombe but quite unnoticed by everybody. The centre ground shows the farmhouse and buildings surrounded by the farmland.

Wembury Point can be easily made out on the coast towards the right of the photograph, also on the right are Langdon Barton Farm, Langdon Court and Langdon Home Farm. The main residential part of Wembury can be seen on the left of the photograph.

The Church Tower can be clearly seen standing sentinel over the beach as it has done for many hundreds of years. Also out at sea, the Mewstone.

The road in the foreground is Train Road.



WEMBURY BEACH COASTAL DEFENCES

These wartime photographs show some of the sea defences, which were erected right across the beach. Similar arrangements were made on all the other beaches along the south coast. The 'pill box' on the left of the photograph has long gone but there is still part of the base and the steps remaining. This one, the on the Yealm side of the beach adjacent to the Mill house. There was another on the other side of the beach, of which only the base remains. Gara Point with the Coastguard Station can be made out in the distance.

The defences across the beach were comprised of two rows of scaffolding poles fixed together in an 'A' frame formation, with their ends bedded in concrete. Cross members and bracing struts were added, and the whole lot linked together by longitudinal members. A fair amount of barbed wire was also used but this soon rusted and fell away. The structure, which was designed to prevent enemy small boats landing, received quite a battering by the sea, as is quite evident in the photograph.

Further back on the shore and all along the cliffs were barbed wire fences. These were supported on long iron supports, which had a 'corkscrew' section at the bottom so that they could easily be screwed into the ground, and two or three open loops in the top section through which the barbed wire could easily be threaded. There were a lot of these still around long after the defences had been taken down.

Similarly with the scaffolding on the beach, many fragments hung around on the beach and in rock pools long after the war has ended. Redundant and rusted scaffolding clips often featured in our construction of sandcastles, dams etc.



The next photograph shows the two rows of defences, one going right across the beach at the high tide level and one going part way across lower down on the rocks.



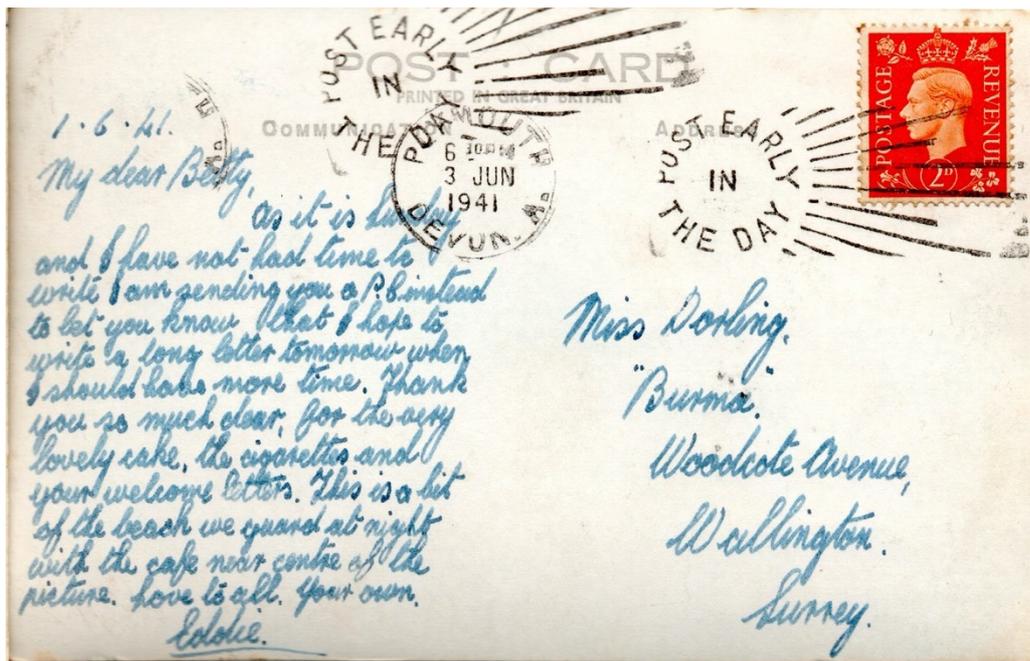
Some fragments still remain and come to light from time to time. The photograph below, taken in October 2007, shows a coil of barbed wire which was exposed by the natural erosion of the cliff.



WEMBURY BAY AND CHURCH 1930s - POSTCARD

This postcard of the Bay and Church was sent on 1st June 1941 by one of the Coastal Defence Force personnel manning the defences on the Beach. As it predates the war, the coastal defences that were erected on the beach are not shown. There were two pill boxes, one each side of the beach, and scaffolding poles erected across the beach to prevent landing by small craft.

There was another pill box in the garden of Bay Cottage, which is still there, fully intact, although it is now well hidden by the ivy that has grown up over it. In addition, there was also a lookout post on the top of the church tower.



WEMBURY BAY AND ST WERBURGH'S CHURCH

Wembury Bay with St Werburgh's Church above the Mill, and the mouth of the River Yealm to the right. Clearly visible, in the centre of the photograph, the building on the extreme right is the ruin of the house that was bombed during the war. This was removed in about 1960. The photograph was taken from the path going towards the Gully and Langdon Beach, by Samuel Rodgers in 1949, and developed by him at home.



The Happy Family 'snap' below, taken in 1938, clearly shows the house on the cliff before its destruction by bombing in 1941.



MORE PHOTOGRAPHS FROM THE 1930s

The photograph below was taken from behind the mill looking towards Wembury Point. Some of the buildings of the Holiday Camp can just be made out on the top of the hill. Ironically since the closure in 2001, and the subsequent demolition of HMS Cambridge, the view is very much as it looks today.

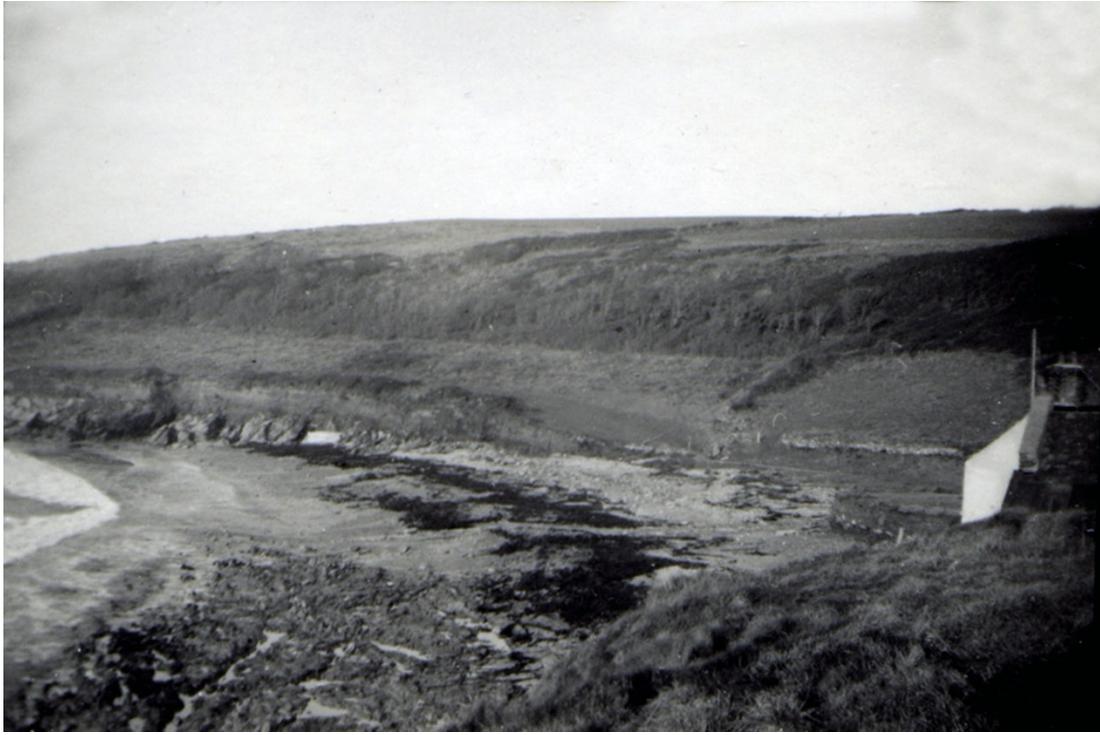


The lower photograph shows the agricultural buildings associated with the mill, where the Marine Study Centre now stands. Many years ago the mill was predominantly, a farm and was known as 'Church Farm'. The field above the mill is practically free from scrub, as is the church wall, which, sadly, is not the case today (2010).



WEMBURY BEACH FROM THE CAR PARK – 1948 & 2004

This photograph, which shows that there has been very little change, was taken by Samuel Rodgers in 1948 and developed by him at home. The remains of the “Pill Box” (wartime gun emplacement) can be clearly seen. There was another one on the near side of the beach beside the Mill Cafe. The gable of the mill is clearly visible and also the end of the range of outbuildings that later became the National Trust Shop.



This photograph Below, was taken in 2004. The remains of the “Pill Box” (wartime gun emplacement) can still be seen although much reduced in size due to the constant battering from the sea. This photograph was taken from a position slightly further back than the 1948 one, due to the dense undergrowth and the area being now fenced off.



YEALM ESTUARY

The Photograph below was taken by Samuel Rodgers on 27th August 1949, and developed by him at home. It shows the view from the high cliffs at Wembury, and remains absolutely unchanged.



The next Photograph taken on 9th August 2001, showing the view from the high cliffs at Wembury, and is virtually unchanged from the earlier 1949 photograph.

Season Point can clearly be seen jutting out into the estuary. This was a favourite place for swimming when we were children. There are some good diving places, and a cave, which was ideal for games involving pirates or shipwrecks! Just off the point is the sandbar, which varies in size from year to year, sometimes there would be quite an expanse visible at low tide. We never did venture out to it as it was rumoured that the currents around it could be quite treacherous especially on a rising tide.



Season point was just a bit too accessible for us, and was also frequented by 'grown ups' on walks! We preferred the more daring prospect of climbing down to Connor's Cove and the 'Tomb' slightly further to the west. There we could play unhindered, and once in the inlet by the tomb and the great cave, we could, in the seclusion offered, go 'skinny dipping'. We thought this was extremely daring, especially as the older boys had told us that we could go to prison if the coastguards over at Gara Point saw us!

The 'Tomb'

This photograph was taken in July 1996 from the high cliffs on the New Barton Farm boundary. When we were children, we used to spend a lot of time out here playing on the Warren and on the cliffs. I think that our parents would have gone mad if they knew exactly what we did. To them the Warren was the Warren, whereas to us the Warren included the high cliffs as well! Just as to our parents the Beach was the Beach, but to us it also included the high cliffs!



In the photograph, the inlet in the foreground goes into Connor's Cove, normally only accessible by boat, unless you are determined 11 or 12 year olds. We used to climb down the escarpment at the right side of the photograph, the big lump of rock at the edge of the photograph, near the top, is actually about halfway down, and we used to sit on the top of it for breather on both downward and upward trips! . We would usually have our swimming gear and picnics as well, and also our dog 'Nipper' who went everywhere with us. We would set up camp on the ledge where the boulders are (level with the half way point of the fence post in the photograph). Although it doesn't look it, it is quite a reasonably flat area, and there was always plenty of brushwood and driftwood around to make a fire. Why exactly we needed to make a fire in the middle of the summer, I have never been able to fathom out, it just seemed to be the right thing to do at the time! From the ledge it was quite easy to get down to the cove, which was always lovely and sandy and a very good swimming place. We also used to look in the seagulls, nests for eggs, and saw many but would not disturb them. It was also good fun to jump across the chasm where the daylight can just be seen to be peeping through. It was then quite easy to get over and into the next inlet, at the head of which is a large cave, with a lovely echo, and the waves used to go right into it and make a wonderful booming noise. Depending on the state of the tide, one could swim or wade across to the next outcrop where the 'Tomb' is. The tomb is that great square lump of rock that sits on top of the outcrop. The rock itself is covered in barnacles; the tomb is quite smooth and quite difficult to climb on top of. We used to go off on these trips first thing in the morning, and get home after it was dark, none of us had watches, we used to judge the time of the day by the position of the sun, and the direction and length of shadows.

This next photograph shows the sandbar at the mouth of the Yealm one summer day when there was very much of it exposed at high tide. Most years it can be made out just below the surface of the water at low tide. There is much movement of the sand in the bay and river mouth during the spring storms, and we often have a situation where most of the sand is deposited on the main beach. On other occasions there is very little sand on the main beach, but plenty in the river mouth where the sandbar becomes large enough to be exposed at high tide. The sand bar is sometimes easily accessible on foot from Season Point, but anybody trying this should go out on the falling and tide make sure that they return to the shore before the tide turns. The incoming tide combined with the river flow in the opposite direction gives rise to rather treacherous currents.



This photograph taken from the field at New Barton on a lovely clear summer's day shows the estuary and sand bar, the Blackstone Reef, Wembury Bay, Wembury Point, then across Plymouth Sound, to Maker and Rame in Cornwall.



WEMBURY BAY WITH CHURCH AND MEWSTONE - FROM THE AIR

This aerial photograph was taken in 2003

It shows very nicely, the church in its isolated position, overlooking the main beach and the bay, with the Mewstone in the distant haze.



WEMBURY BEACH AND CHURCH - 1950s

The photograph below, of the Beach and the Church, dates from the mid 1950s.

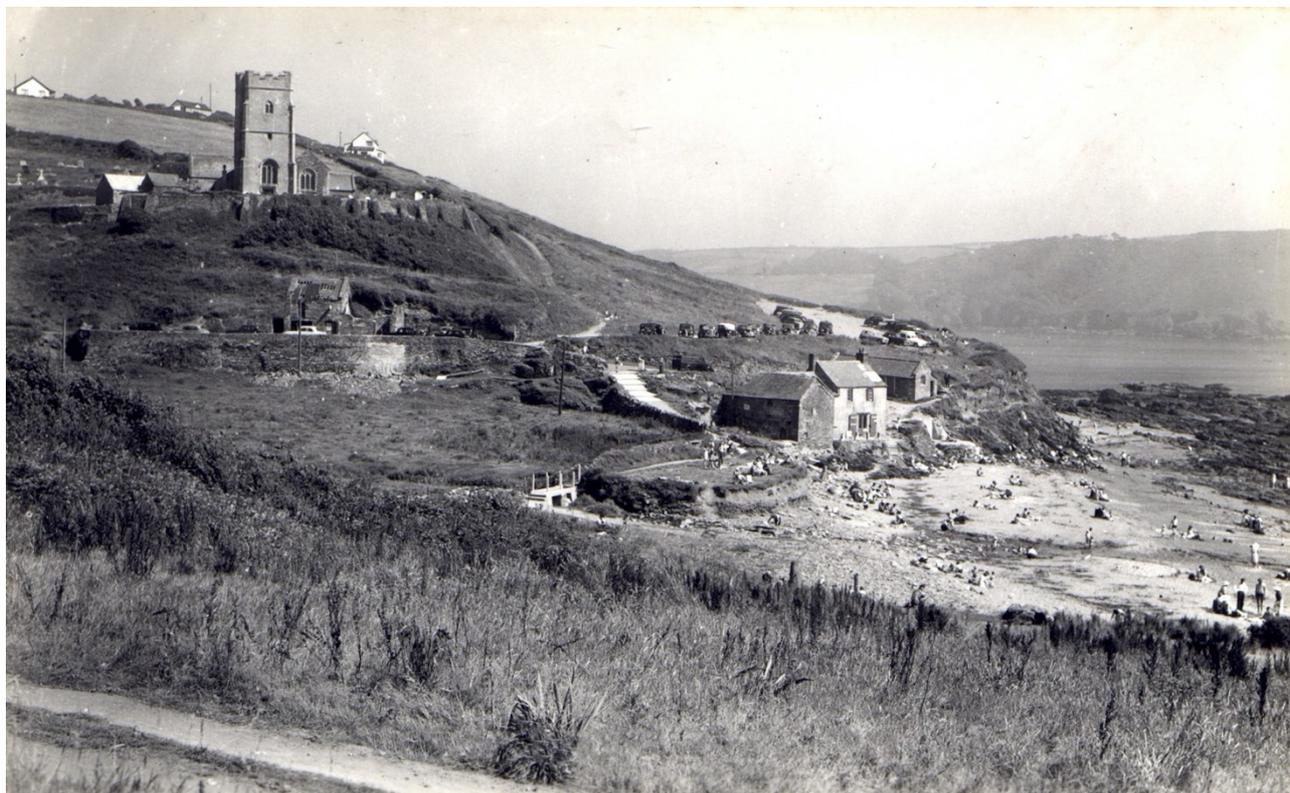
The steps and slope giving access to the beach from the car park is quite recent. The bridge over the stream is also quite new, being of a reinforced concrete construction with concrete rail posts. This replaced a previous bridge which just comprised a single slab of concrete with no kerbs or safety rails and which was in an advanced state of dereliction!

It was on this earlier bridge whilst riding my pony that a 'gentleman' in tweeds and a trilby hat charged up, waving his walking stick saying that I had no right to have the pony on the beach. The pony of course, was startled by this, and reared up onto her hind legs, but I managed to hang on. The gentleman however lost his hat, the blame for this, was of course, attributed to me, and he didn't take too kindly to me answering him back. He didn't need to ask me my name, he knew who I was, and by the time I got home the telephones had been ringing madly. The gentleman, it turned out was Captain Viner, a 'big noise' in the National Trust locally, and something to do with Viner & Carew the Estate Agents. I think that he was told by my father that the people of Wembury had every right to take ponies onto the beach, it was also their right to take horses and carts down there to remove seaweed for fertiliser, and that he should know better than to startle the pony anyway. I think that I was given a thick ear for using bad language! The pony was a black Shetland called 'Monkey' and she was beautiful.

Above the church can be seen the gable end of 'Red Gables' George and Katrina Welch lived there. She was Spanish, and we children thought her completely mad. Further down the slope is 'Cliff Cottage' which I think has been rechristened a couple of times since and is now called 'Bracken'.

The old ruined buildings in the car park entrance are still there, only the centre one now being of two storeys and with a corrugated iron roof. The right-hand ruin was a sort of unofficial parking area for bicycles as it had high walls and the inside was shaded for most of the day.

The church wall although ivy clad, is free of the scrub that has since grown up to completely obscure it.



WEMBURY BEACH AND CHURCH AND YEALM ESTUARY - 1960

Kenneth O'Connor took this photograph of the Beach, the Church above, and the Yealm Estuary in the early 1960s.

The public lavatories had only been recently built, and the mill buildings refurbished to resite the shop in the old mill part of the building instead of around the back of the cottage. This gave much easier access from the beach, even though a flight of steps still had to be negotiated. The old ruined buildings in the car park entrance had, by this time, been reduced one storey, the centre section, the only part that still had a roof was given a new sloping roof of corrugated asbestos, and made into a garage for the tenant of the Mill. The car park had also been enlarged

The church wall although ivy clad in places, is free of the scrub that has since grown up to completely obscure it.



THOSE WERE THE DAYS !

This is a car parking ticket from the late 1950s, when the Smith family were at the Mill.

1/- (one shilling) equates to 5p in today's money (2006).

My older brother Jim did the car park in the early years of the 1950s during the Davis' tenure at the Mill. Back then it was sixpence (2½p) for a car, and three pence for a motorcycle.



WEMBURY BEACH - LATE 1950s – EARLY 1960s

There are only a few years between these two postcard photographs.

In the top one the “new” concrete steps going down to the beach can be seen, and the old “rickety rickety” bridge going over the stream has been replaced by a concrete one, which means that this photograph was taken in about 1956.



In the lower photograph, the public lavatories have been built, the Mill Building has been made into the shop and café. The French windows on the front of the house, which used to be way in to the old café, have been removed, and the ruin below the Church has lost some more of its roof covering! This puts this photograph into the early 1960s.



WEMBURY BEACH – THEN AND NOW

The top photograph of the early 20th Century shows a very tranquil scene of hens scratching and the little promontory, cultivated as a vegetable garden



This lower photograph advances us to the 1980s when the area once gleaned by the chickens is now the site of the public lavatories, and the little promontory is used as a picnic area.



PHOTOGRAPHS FROM THE EARLY 1930s

The upper photograph shows the old farm buildings still intact where the Marine Study Centre now stands. Note the tennis court set out on the field in front.

The lower photograph was taken from the church wall. Note the bell tent pitched behind the mill cottage and next to it, on a higher level, a caravan. The little promontory is laid out as a garden with a garden shed.



WEMBURY CHURCH AND MILL - 1862

This is the oldest photographic copy that I have come across showing the Mill and the Church purported to date from 1862.

There is something quite strange about the gable to the right of the church tower, and there are no buttresses supporting the churchyard wall. The first 5 buttresses were erected in 1867 at a cost £12-5s-0d. In 1927 these were augmented by further 6 at a cost of £80-14s-6d.

The mill wheel and the launder above look incredibly rickety, but I am sure functioned quite satisfactorily.

The track down to the beach is graduated rather than the steps that are there today, this was to enable horses and carts to be brought onto the beach to pick up seaweed for fertiliser

In the foreground of the photograph, just to the left of centre, can be made out two people reclining on the bank.



WEMBURY BEACH - LATE 1800s

This photograph is thought to have been taken in the closing years of the 19th Century

It is interesting to note that there is another building just below and to the right of the church. This had obviously been removed by the time that the photographs were taken in early part of the 20th Century.

The foundations of that building are still there in the undergrowth but are now almost inaccessible. In the 1940s and 1950s, although they were covered right in with the scrub, we could get into them quite easily, and often used them as a makeshift 'den' when down on the beach.



WEMBURY BEACH IN THE EARLY 20TH CENTURY

This photograph is thought to have been taken about 100 years ago. The fall of the shadows would indicate that it would have the early evening, with the sun around to the west.

The children, who seem to be quite well dressed, could well have been on a School, or Sunday School 'treat'.

The mill is being run as a small farm, alongside its milling operations, as was generally the case.

The track comes straight down to the beach, so that farmers could bring their carts down the foreshore, to pick up seaweed for fertiliser. This was possible right up until the mid 1950s when the present steps were put in.

The church wall is clear of ivy and scrub, and there are shown to be only five buttresses, whereas now their number has increased to twelve.



WEMBURY BEACH IN THE LATE 20TH CENTURY

The photograph was taken in August 1995 from almost the same position as the one taken nearly 100 years earlier.

The mill buildings do not look a lot different apart from the absence of the overshot wheel.

The ivy and scrub has grown up almost hiding the church wall and the buttresses.

The old buildings directly below the church have been removed and replaced with the new visitors centre, and of course there are now public lavatories.

The old track down to the beach has given way to partially stepped and partially sloped access. The base of the wartime gun emplacement is still in evidence on the lower rocks to the right of the mill house.

The photograph, which was taken in the early evening shows fewer people on that beach than would have been there earlier in the day.

There are quite a few cars in the car park which is quite indicative of the amount of leisure time enjoyed by people today, when compared to 100 years earlier.



THE MILL AND THE CHURCH - EARLY 1900s

This photograph is thought to have been taken in the very early years of the 20th century, sometime prior to 1907.

The church wall is all but clear of ivy although there is a large growth of it over the roof of the old stable, which is now used as a Sunday School room.

The sloping track, which allowed the local farmers to bring their horses and carts on to the beach to collect seaweed for fertiliser, is in place. The mill wheel and launder are also in place, as are the agricultural buildings near what is now the car park entrance.

Those buildings were still there in the 1940s and 1950s, mostly in a ruinous state, although one still had a roof of sorts intact. In the 1960s these were swept away only to be replaced a few years later by the Wembury Marine Centre which ironically meant bringing more stone to the site, after having dumped all that had could be salvaged and reused from the old buildings. Unfortunately the new stone is too cleanly cut, making the new building look quite alien against the others in the area, a bit like a stone clad bungalow.



THE MILL AND THE CHURCH - LATE 1940s

This photograph is was taken sometime in the late 1940s.

The old track going down to the beach can be clearly seen. This was replaced in the early 1950s by the present concrete steps and asphalt slope. Just to the right of the track can be made out, the single cubicle, ladies lavatory, which was the only toilet provision for people on the beach. It was of an unrendered breeze block construction, with a lean to corrugated iron roof. Two of the inside walls were formed by the bank against which it stood, also unrendered. It contained just the lavatory pan and cistern, there was no hand washing facility. It did however, have a 'penny in the slot' door lock!

The old mill building itself was disused, the cafe was run from the mill house. The French doors, opening out onto a small terrace at the front gave access to the tea room, where one was able to go in and take afternoon tea. I remember there being a very nice oil painting of the mill and the beach over the mantelpiece. For take away items such as tea trays, ice creams, deck chairs, etc., one had to go round to the right of the house, to two windows at the back, one for ice creams and lemonade, and the other for tea trays, deck chairs etc.

The church wall and the buttresses can be clearly seen. I can remember when people used to sit up there between the buttresses and have their picnics and sunbathe. They were absolute little sun traps as the buttresses served as wind breaks. In the springtime the area was full of primroses.

I remember the lifebelt on the front wall of the house being there for many years, whether or not it would have worked for its designed purpose, or not, was rather open to conjecture!



WEMBURY BEACH - LATE 1950s

The photograph below was taken in the late 1950s.

The public toilets have recently been completed and the area behind containing the septic tank has been fenced off. The old single cubicle ladies toilet on the other side of the track has not yet been demolished. The mill house still has the French doors on the front so the photograph must date from 1958 or 1959.

The old buildings up in the car park are still there the centre one of the three being the only one now having a roof, the two flanking ones having been reduced to the walls of the ground floor only.

The boat park is a recent innovation, the sailing club having been formed in about 1958.



THE MILL AND THE CHURCH - 2004

This photograph was taken in October 2004.

The church wall can now hardly be seen for the growth of the scrub, this should really be kept cut back, a few years ago the wall was clearly visible and the areas between the buttresses were used for picnicking. The growth of the scrub now presents a real hazard. Should there ever be an outbreak of fire, the church would stand a very good chance of being severely damaged. When we were children the cliff would catch fire quite often, one year it was completely burnt from below Cliff Road right around to Rocket Cottage.

The part of the wall that is visible is almost completely ivy clad. The huge evergreen in the churchyard also needs some serious 'tree surgery'.

The mill buildings are maintained to the usual high standard of the National Trust. The Wembury Marine Centre looks a bit like a suburban bungalow with stone cladding. The public toilets continue to be the eyesore that they have been from the day that they were built!

The church sits serenely over all of this like some benevolent old mother hen.



WEMBURY MILL AND THE BRYANT FAMILY - 1913

In 1913 The Bryant Family, Joseph, Mary, his wife and their son Jack, lived in the old mill.

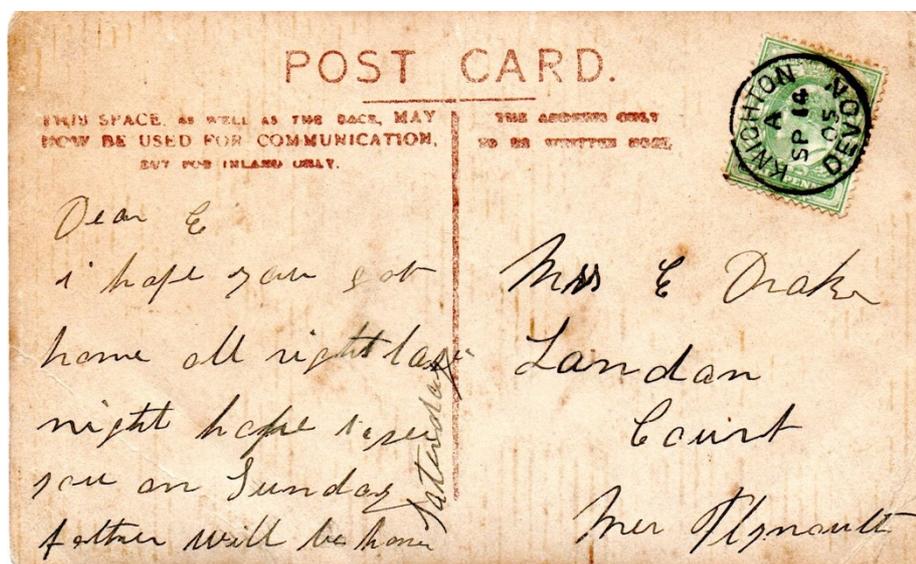
They occasionally entertained visitors to tea and allowed them to use their musical box for 1d (one penny). Shortly after this photograph they left for a new home, and a new life in New Zealand.

The mill wheel and launder are still in place, although the mill had ceased to function since about 1900.



STOP PRESS!

In 2016 an indential photograph came to light, in the form of a post card, which was postmarked September 14th 1905. This therefore puts this scene fairly and squarely into the early 1900s.



THE BRYANT FAMILY - 1913

In 1913 The Bryant Family lived in the old mill.

This family group was taken on 11 June 1913 on Wembury Beach showing Joseph, Agnes and Mary Bryant who later emigrated to New Zealand.



WEMBURY BEACH - SWIMMERS - EARLY 1900s

This photograph is believed to have been taken in the early years of the 20th Century.

The boys have obviously just enjoyed an afternoon swim, and from where they are positioned on the beach, the tide must be out. One of the boys is a Hendy from Staddiscombe, the family is still farming there.

The churchyard wall can clearly be seen, and with only five buttresses, puts it fairly and squarely in the first quarter of the century.

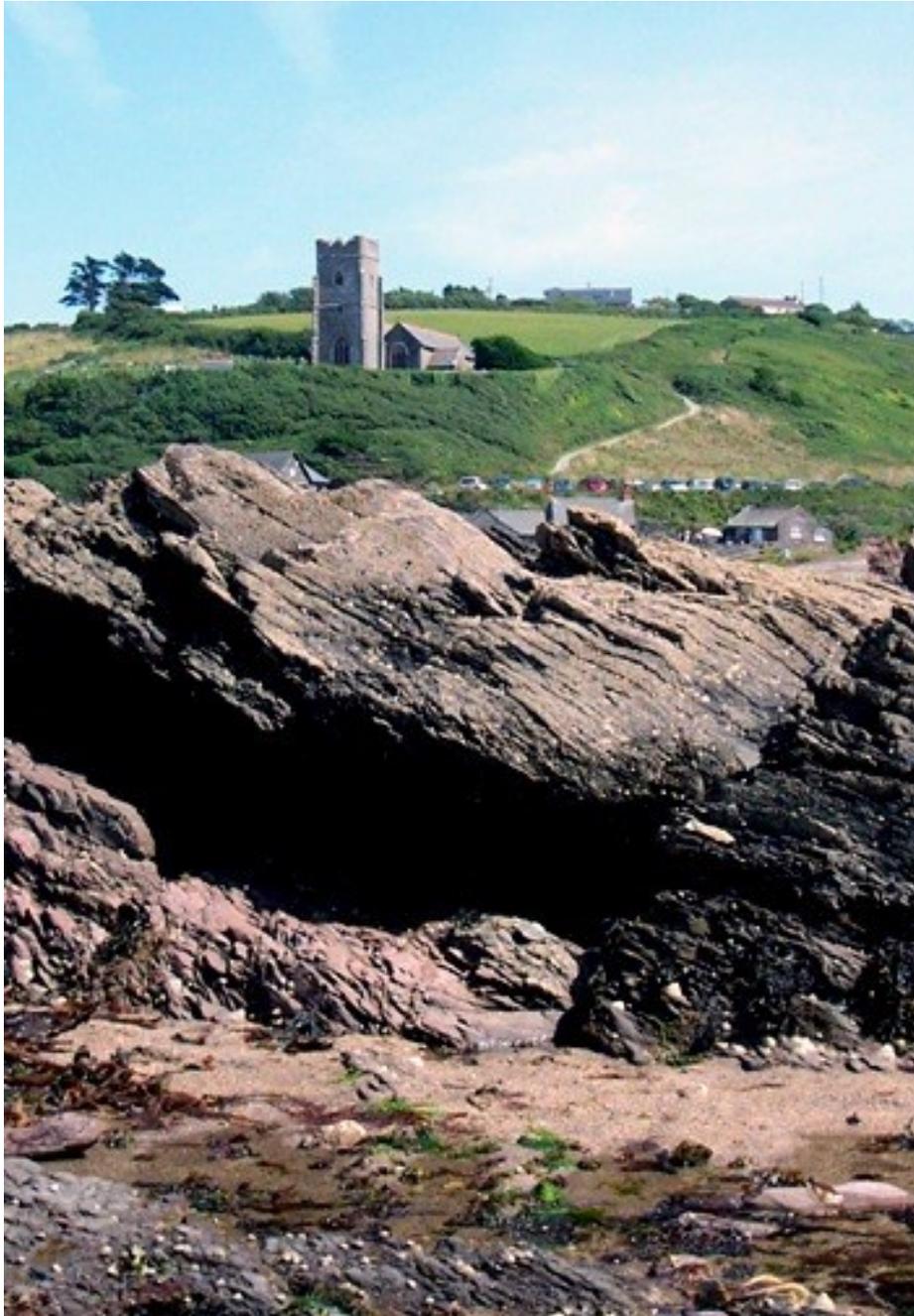
No development has yet taken place on the cliff above the church.



WEMBURY BEACH - ROCKS AND CHURCH - 2005

This photograph was taken in August 2005 from roughly the same position as the one of the boy swimmers taken about 100 years earlier.

The rocks are actually quite low and the boys must have been quite small. To get anywhere near the same shot the camera had to be almost at ground level.



WEMBURY BEACH OUTING - EARLY 1900s

This photograph, has all the characteristics of Rugg Monk, the prominent Plymouth photographer at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. He liked people in his photograph to be in informal groups rather than stiffly posed, looking as though they were going about whatever they would normally be doing.

This group of rather well-dressed children are on Wembury Beach, the centre of their attention seems to be the comic which has a "Fry's" advertisement on the back. They would probably been brought to the beach on a Sunday school outing or special treat. For children who lived in inland areas it was a very special treat to be brought to the seaside for the day.

One of the Coleman brothers of the forge in Wembury told me that when he was a boy it was even a treat for the children of Wembury to be taken to the beach for the day. Most of the time the children, as soon as they could walk and talk, had to work. The girls usually helped their mothers in the home, or in the 'big house', and the boys, helped their fathers with whatever they did, whether it be on the estate or as an 'independent'.

He said that once a year his grandfather, who had an enormous ginger beard, would load all of the children of Knighton and West Wembury into his cart and take them to Wembury Beach for the day. Five of the children of course, were his own! The cart would have to be especially scrubbed out for the occasion, and clean straw put in. The children would take food for their lunch, which was usually augmented by cakes and apple pies made by Mrs Coleman. For drink there would be pitchers of home-made ginger beer, or water from the stream that runs down across the beach.

The children enjoyed doing exactly what children still enjoy doing, exploring rock pools, playing in the sand, paddling, and swimming in the sea.



THE LUGAR FAMILY ON WEMBURY BEACH - 1918

At that time the Lugar family lived at Oreston in 'Hillside', a detached house on the higher side of the railway line, overlooking the village.

Whenever the weather permitted they would come out to Wembury by pony and trap and spend the day on the beach.

Shown from left to right there is:

Mother	Mrs Minnie Lugar,
Only Son	Henry Lugar, (later to become Farmer at Gabber Farm)
Eldest Daughter	Lucy Lugar
Youngest Daughter	Hilda Lugar
Father	James Lugar



WEMBURY MILL AND THE SMITH FAMILY - 1950s

The Smith Family lived in the Mill from 1952 to 1964, Prior to that that they had lived in a bungalow in Church Road Called "Thelma". This bungalow was the centre one of the three on the bank above the narrows just before one gets to the Post Office.

There was Sid (whose actual name, I believe, was John), Jo his wife and three children, Angela the eldest, then Roger, and finally Martin.

They took it over from the Davis family who were only there for about two years. Prior to them Herby Wills and his wife ran it for many years. Herby was a brother to Mrs Snell at Hollacombe

Sid was actually a Clockmaker and Silversmith by trade. He could turn his hand to quite a lot of DIY tasks and manufactured outside tables and benches for the cafe from pieces of wood washed up on the beach. There seemed to be quite a lot of it, and some quite substantial pieces, in those days.

It was during the Smiths' time at the Mill that the old mill building itself was converted into the shop and café. Up until then Ice cream and teas were sold from windows around the back of the Mill House Tea trays could be taken on to the beach, for a small deposit, and there were also deck chairs available for hire.

There was a two shillings and sixpence (12½p) deposit for the tea trays (real cups and saucers, teapot milk jug etc) and one shilling (5p) deposit for a deckchair.

In those days, when very few people had cars, this was a real service as most people were restricted in what they could bring to the beach, by what they could carry on the bus.

One could also take tea in comfort, inside the Mill Cottage, entering by the French windows that were at the front via the little terrace.

The photograph shows Sid in about 1958 with the family dog, 'Ben'



WEMBURY MILL - MARTIN SMITH 1950s

The Smith Family lived in the Mill from 1952 to 1964, Martin was their youngest son

The photograph, taken in 1959, is of him proudly showing off the enormous lobster that he had just caught.

It was at low tide, and he caught it in 3 feet of water about one hundred yards out.

The lobster is at least 2 feet long, Martin at the time was only about nine or ten years old, and less than four feet in height!



WEMBURY BEACH 1961

The photograph below was taken in 1961 and shows my youngest sister, Nichola between Geraldine Thomas on the left, and Jill Galloway on the right. This was actually over at the “Gully” where we spent most of our time during the summer when we were children and teenagers.

Quite a lot has happened since that time. My sister has been married twice and now lives in Preston, in Lancashire. Geraldine has also been married twice and now (2005) lives at Ford Farm (Mrs Booth). Gill, very sadly, died in her early twenties from a blood disorder.



WEMBURY BEACH - FAMILY OUTING – 1930s

This is a family photograph taken on a day out to Wembury, one of the only two cars in the car park probably having been their mode of transport. Probably a Sunday with everyone being in their “Sunday best”, the only concession to casual wear being, that the younger gentlemen are not wearing ties! The older gentleman is carrying a raincoat and the lady is wearing a hat.

The year is estimated to be 1936 judging by the number of graves in the recently extended churchyard. The outbuildings below the church are largely intact, although the right hand one has lost its roof. Below, in the field, the fenced off area of the tennis court can just be made out. Up on the brow of the hill there has been some development since the late 1920s, “Red Gables”, “Seascape” and “Cliff Cottage” are all clearly visible plus a couple of others. The house on the extreme right (only partially showing) was the one which received a direct bomb hit during the Second World War, and was destroyed. The ruins remained in place until the mid 1960s

The Mill Café is open for business, indicated by the open French windows at the front. The path is well trodden (and not fenced in as today) which would indicate that the walk from Wembury Beach to Wembury Point was as popular then as it is now.



THE MILL 1960

This photograph was taken in 1960 just after the old mill part of the complex had been converted into the Cafe. The overshot mill wheel used to be positioned alongside where the new large window and door is, with its spindle going through the wall to drive the mill workings inside. Areas of reconstruction are clearly visible. Up until then people had to go up the steps to the right of the house and round to the back to make their purchases of ice cream, lemonade etc.,. It was possible to take tea trays out onto the beach for which one had to pay a two shillings and sixpence deposit (twelve and a half pence). Deck chairs were also available for hire.

The concrete steps had been put in some years earlier to replace the rough sloping track. This deprived the villagers of their right of being able to take their horses and carts down onto the beach to pick up seaweed, but not many people seemed to be worried about it in the 1950s!

When the Cafe reopened in the freshly converted mill, there was an upstairs with a gallery, but Sid Smith just kept it as a storage space for summer stock, i.e., buckets & spade, rubber rings and the like. Down stairs there was an espresso coffee machine, so it became quite the thing to while away a couple of hours on a Sunday afternoon, in the winter, over a cup of 'espresso' in the Mill!



MILL CAFE' ADVERTISEMENT 2004

This advertisement appeared in 'Devon Life' in July 2004.

The Mill has changed very little since the major reconstruction which took place in 1959. Much of that work is still clearly visible. Since then the front gable elevation has been rendered, the roof has been reslated, and the guttering and drain pipe configuration altered.

The advertisement features a photograph of a two-story stone building, identified as 'The Old Mill Café'. The building has a dark, gabled roof with two chimneys. The front facade is made of rough-hewn stone, with a white door and a window. A stone staircase leads up to the entrance. In the background, a blue sky and a view of the sea are visible. The text 'The Old Mill Café' is overlaid in a large, white, serif font at the top left of the image. To the right of the image, there is a text box with a light blue background containing details about the café's offerings, hours, and location.

The Old Mill Café

Try our traditional Devon Cream Teas, served with homemade scones, local clotted cream and jam whilst enjoying the magnificent views overlooking Wembury bay. Also serving homemade cakes, doorstep sandwiches and baguettes, locally produced dairy ice creams, organic juices, speciality teas and coffees.

Open 10.30 am – 5.00pm
7 days a week throughout the summer

Wembury, Nr Plymouth
Tel 01752 862314

WEMBURY MILL 1881 & 1900

Top picture is from a fine watercolour of St Werburgh's Church and the overshot water mill on Wembury beach and was painted in 1881 by Frank Browning. He lived in Plymouth and was active from about 1875 to 1895. A watercolourist of some quality, he usually produced large works of scenes near Plymouth. He was a friend of the fellow artist G H Jenkins, a member of the Plymouth Sketching Club, and an exhibitor at the Athenaeum, Plymouth.

The lower picture is from a drawing by Philip Mitchell and dates from about 1900. The overshoot is arranged in such a position that the millwheel is bypassed by the race. This was done when it was required to stop the wheel, usually for maintenance purposes.



MILL PAINTINGS - LATE 19TH / EARLY 20TH CENTURY

The top picture is a water colour and was painted by Francis Harris Edgcumbe in 1909, not a lot is known about him except that he lived at Elburton. The painting measures 20" x 24" and is in the ownership of a member of the Smith family who lived in the Mill from 1952 to 1964.

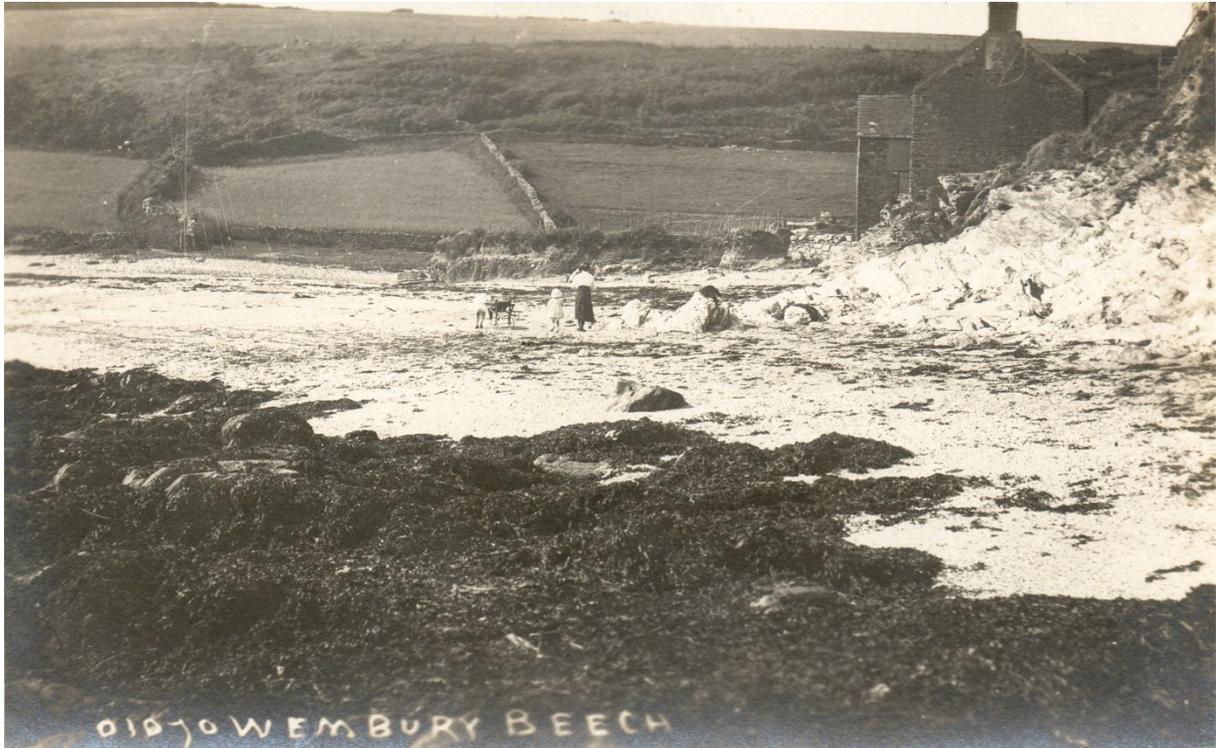
There is even less information on the lower picture, it is believed to have been painted in the latter part of the 19th century, it was believed to have been in the art collection of the Royal Albert Memorial Museum in Exeter, but that has now been refuted,



WEMBURY "BEECH"

Two views taken from roughly the same position but separated by 100 years, note the spelling on the older photograph.

In the lower photograph the scrub has been allowed to grow to such an extent that the field boundaries are totally indiscernible. Certainly not the well-kept and maintained farmland that it once was.



WEMBURY MILL LATE 1800s / EARLY 1900s

The upper photograph was taken in the early 1900s, and shows the mill with its overshot water wheel and launder, down which the water flowed. Traces of the old millrace still exist, although much was destroyed when the public lavatories were built on the other side of the track in the late 1950s, and much more during the installation of mains drainage in the 1960s. The mill ceased to operate in about 1900 when the miller was Mr William Beer. The wheel was probably scrapped for metal during the First World War.



The lower photograph taken in 1895 shows the mill with the *August Smith* aground on the Blackstone Rocks. She had drifted onto the rocks on 18th November 1895 after her rudder had been broken away in a gale. She was a Norwegian Barque carrying 1,500 tons of logwood and was bound for Rotterdam from Buenos Aires. The Norwegian crew were all rescued.



SHIPWRECKS

Lloyd's records for the year of 1800 give an average of one wreck per day around the coast of Great Britain. In 1830 there were 677 recorded for the year, and in a 25-year period from 1854, 49,000 were recorded. Charts were often incomplete or inaccurate and unless a mariner was familiar with the area and the coastline, his chances of successfully negotiating a difficult waterway was slim. Especially in darkness, or adverse weather conditions.

Many ships met their fate on the rocks off our shore here at Wembury. Most were wrecked on the rocks around the Mewstone or the Little Mewstone just slightly to the west. Fatalities were usually very high, in a lot of cases all hands being lost. A few ships managed to get washed up on the rocks, usually the Blackstone Reef, on the beach.

Quite unusually, on 23rd November 1824 two ships were wrecked at the same time and in the same place, the brig *Welcomb* of Aberdeen, carrying a cargo of Baralier from Mount Serat and the Canary Isles. And the brig *John of Bideford* carrying a general cargo from Leghorn (Livorno in Italy).

We are told that this was the most dreadful storm as was ever witnessed in the neighbourhood of Plymouth. The water rose up so high as to go over the Mill House at Wembury, and did considerable damage to the Mill, and also to the goods of the tenant of the Mill. It broke down the whole of the windows in the ground floor, and in the mill itself it washed down the mill bed, also one of the millstones from the top part to the lower part of the mill, and filled the mill with shingle and wrecked wood. Much of the household furniture was carried away, and a new dry stone wall at the bottom of Mill Meadow, which the tenant had built at great expense, was also carried away. About thirty ducks and fowls, which were being reared for the table, were drowned and mostly carried away. Mr E Gullett the tenant of the mill said that the mill was out action for six weeks following the event, for which he received six shillings in compensation.

One of the earliest awards made by the Royal National Institution for the preservation of Life from Shipwreck (the forerunner of the RNLI) was for a rescue, which took place from the *John of Bideford*. The report says "Horried watchers on shore could do nothing as her crew were washed from her decks and drowned." James Cragg, a boatman from the coastguard station was posted to keep guard of the wreck. It was still blowing hard and the wreck was about 100 yards or so from the shore, when in the tangle of the spars and sails he suddenly saw a movement. The sea was dashing with great violence on the reef, but with determination and a desperate struggle he reached the wreck and hauled himself onto the deck. There amid the wreckage was the Captain's unconscious wife. He lashed her limp body to his back and half swam and was half driven shorewards until outstretched hands helped him ashore. He was awarded the Institution's Silver Medal.

The wreck of the *Welcomb* was sold to Mr Cummins of Plymouth for the sum of £1,110 and was removed after long and tedious labour on 17th April 1825.

The wreck of the *John of Bideford* was sold to Mr Nelson Wake of London for the sum of £200 and was removed, after great expense, on 19th April 1825. The hull being built of stout Devon oak, survived and went back into service after being repaired at Plymouth.

On 26th December 1852 the barque *Ocean Queen* was wrecked off the Mewstone. She was on a voyage from London to Jamaica carrying a general cargo, her propulsion was sail/screw. On Sunday night (26th December) at 8pm a heavy south west gale, force 11, raged until midnight when it swung around to the south forcing the ship down onto the Little Mewstone where she quickly broke up, drowning all on board. It is supposed that the Master was endeavouring to make the Port of Plymouth from eastward, and having caught sight of the Breakwater light inside the range of the Great Mewstone, erroneously considered himself in a fairway for the harbour. This mistake wasn't realised until it was too late and the ship ran onto the dangerous reef connecting the Great and Little Mewstones.

A portion of the wreck was washed ashore at Wembury, it consisted of a stern frame with part of the truck, painted black, and had on it in large white letters "*Ocean Queen of London*". Fourteen bodies were washed ashore on the Wednesday (29th December) morning, one being that of the Master, Joseph W Hore; another that

of a passenger Mr G P Vidal, and another passenger, un-named. The remainder were crew members including two mulattoes and one negro. The father of the Master came from Fowey to identify the body and presumably took it home for burial. The remainder including Mr Vidal, were buried in the churchyard at the Parish Church on Friday 31st December.

A report in *The Times (London)* of 1st January 1853 stated “Plymouth Thursday – Messrs Collier Brothers of this port, agents for Lloyds have since Tuesday morning been actively engaged at Wembury Bay in securing portions of the wreck and cargo of the brig *Ocean Queen* on behalf of her owner Mr Shephard of London. Undercover of a self made law by which they rule that, when no living thing survives in a ship, her contents belong to whoever can grasp them. The Parishioners of Wembury have stolen and secreted in their cottages a stock of linen, dresses, candles etc., sufficient to supply all their reasonable wants for the next half century. One shoemaker is said to have stocked himself in leather equal to his ordinary requirements for a very long period, and the distribution of saddles, boots and caps has extended some distance into the County. Such undisguised pilfering and open robbery deserves a severe check from the proper authorities. Among the articles found there is a leather travellers bag marked “*G P Vidal, London*”. Affixed to the body of a seaman there is a belt having a knife attached, both marked “*W Gray*”. On the little finger of one of the passengers was found a ring bearing inside the following inscription “*From E Patterson to H Patterson as a token of friendship 1834*”. On the breast of one of the seamen, tattooed with gunpowder, was a picture of a large full rigged ship. On the left arm of the body of a very fine young man, supposed to be the master, was the form of a heart attached to the upper part of a wreath of laurel inside of which were the initials “*W.H. G.H. W.H. E.M. E.H. H.A.H. H.K. J.L.H. T.H. & E.H.*”. The father of the Master is on the road from Fowey to Wembury to identify the body of his son.”

On 18 November 1895 the *August Smith* drifted onto the Blackstone Rocks, (Sometimes referred to as Church Reef) at Wembury after her rudder had been broken away in a gale. Photographed below, on the dropping tide, it can be clearly seen how her back was broken on the rocks amidsthips. She was a Norwegian Barque carrying 1,500 tons of logwood and was bound for Rotterdam from Buenos Aires. The Norwegian crew were all rescued. Much gear was salvaged from her, and she was broken up in situ over the next couple of years.

The people in the foreground of the picture give some idea of the size of the vessel



SHIPWRECK - THE AUGUST SMITH - 1895

On 18 November 1895 the *August Smith* drifted onto the rocks at Wembury after her rudder had been broken away in a gale.

In the foreground of the photograph seaweed is being collected to be used as fertiliser on the fields. It was the right of the people of Wembury to be able to take carts on to the beach to pick up seaweed for this purpose. There were cart tracks to the main beach and to Langdon Beach and also to Wembury Point, these have now mostly disappeared. The track to the main beach was replaced with concrete steps in the mid 1950s thereby denying the people of Wembury the right to take horses and carts on to the beach to collect seaweed.

In the 1950s Bob Stansell used to take his manure spreader down on to the beach and load it up to fertilise his fields on the cliff adjacent to the footpath to Wembury Point. These fields were later sown with potatoes and usually produced an abundant crop.



W.M.N. 16. 4. 36

YARD-ARM IN WINDOW

Sir,—On seeing the delightful picture of Wembury Bay, with the old corn mill and its residence standing on the edge of the shore, an unusual incident was brought back to my mind which occurred there close upon 70 years ago—I forget the actual year.

One night during a severe gale a rather large vessel was blown on to the beach directly in front of these buildings, and the yard-arm was driven through a window of the dwelling-house, where it extended for some distance into the room, causing much alarm to the miller's family.

Fortunately, no further damage was done. The vessel remained in this position for several days. Probably many others besides myself had the opportunity of seeing the vessel in this position. W. B.

Okehampton, April 18.

W.M.N. 21. 4. 36

Shipwrecks along our coast were by no means unusual in the days before the navigational aids that are available to mariners today. I think what makes the *August Smith* stand out is that she was probably the first one that occurred on Wembury Beach to be photographed.

The letter on the right from the *Western Morning News* of 16th March 1936 makes interesting reading. I came across the cutting in the *Devon History Library* in Exeter. This wreck must have occurred sometime in the late 1860s. I have no idea as to the name of the ship, and had never heard of the incident before, or seen any other reference to it.

SHIPWRECK - THE AUGUST SMITH - 1895

Another photograph of the *August Smith* which drifted onto the rocks at Wembury on 18 November 1895 after her rudder had been broken away in a gale.



SHIPWRECK - THE AUGUST SMITH - 1895



Here follows a copy of the report of the wrecking of the August Smith that appeared in the Western Morning News on Monday 18th November 1895

GALE IN THE WEST

----- THE WRECK ON WEMBURY BEACH

About half-past three on Friday afternoon Mark Northmore, coastguard watchman, observed a large barque in distress in Wembury Bay. She had some canvas set, and she eventually dropped two anchors with the apparent intention of riding the gale. The anchors did not hold, and she drifted ashore just west of Wembury about four o'clock. The crew were observed to cut away the foremast, which in falling overboard carried the maintopmast with it. The watchman promptly warned the coastguard at the Yealm station, and they immediately called out the lifeboat, and themselves proceeded with all dispatch to the beach, after telephoning to Mount Batten for the rocket apparatus. The coastguard were in charge of Chief Officer Weeks and Chief-Boatman Johns. It was at once seen that the only hope for the crew was the abatement of the weather, or the quick arrival of the rocket apparatus. The vessel was in such a position that no lifeboat could possibly do anything. Although fortunately not on the rocks, she was surrounded with dangerous reefs. For quite half a mile around her the sea was one mass of surf. The lifeboat was promptly manned under Coxswain W Hockaday, and made a gallant attempt to get as near the wrecked vessel as possible. Great fears were entertained by watchers on the shore that the boat would get into difficulties. It was felt that should she get in among the rocks and breakers there would be no hope for her crew. The wind and sea were so rough that they could never have pulled out again. The coastguard, therefore, signalled to the lifeboat to return. The wind then ceased to blow so hard, and the sea was ebbing. It was soon felt that the crew were safe, and would be able to walk ashore when the tide left the vessel. About nine o'clock the tide had receded sufficiently to allow the vessel to be communicated with. Captain Grey, the commanding officer of the coastguard, who had arrived from Plymouth, boarded her, and it was ascertained that she was a Norwegian barque, August Smith, 1,500 tons with a cargo of logwood

from Buenos Ayres to Rotterdam. The crew were taken off. Although the rocket apparatus did not arrive for some hours after it was sent for, and not before the crew got ashore. It was felt that there was no blame attached to the men. In view of the difficult road from Mount Batten, it was felt under the circumstances, all had been done that could have been done. Before horses could be obtained, the men dragged the cart as far as Fort Stamford. General surprise was expressed that that the Yealm station was not provided with life-saving apparatus. Had the vessel grounded a few yards either to the right or the left, the crew must have perished hours before the apparatus could have been brought into use from Mount Batten. The crew were taken every care of Mr Weeks at the Yealm coastguard station during the night, and on the Saturday they were removed to the Sailors' Home at Plymouth. Captain Johann Smith, who is staying at the Westminster Hotel, Plymouth, attributes the disaster to the thick and heavy weather. After passing the Lizard in daylight he saw no land until he reached the Mewstone. In the fog he mistook it for Rame Head, and altering his course to the northward, so as to find shelter, as he hoped, in Plymouth Sound, he soon found himself in the broken waters of Wembury Bay, and utterly unable in the face of so strong a south-westerly breeze to escape driving ashore. On Saturday and yesterday at low water salvage operations were in progress, and the wind having veered to the northward they could be carried out under favourable conditions. The crew got out their effects, and there is every chance of saving the cargo. The back of the barque seems broken and little hope is entertained of getting her off. As she went ashore an hour after a high spring tide she is well up on the beach.



This photograph clearly shows her back broken on the reef

WEMBURY BEACH FROM BEHIND THE MILL

Quite a heavy sea, this photograph is thought to have been taken in the mid 1950s. The roof of the mill and the house have been quite newly cement rendered, this was a stop gap measure to keep them going until they could be completely re-done with Delabole slate in the 1970s. An "X" television aerial can just be made out on the right hand chimney.

The roof of the outbuilding to the left of the house is still of corrugated iron.



WINTER SUNSHINE

These photographs of the Mill and the Mewstone were taken on a mid January morning in 2004.



THEN AND NOW – 1942 AND 2008

The left hand side of the beach with 'pill box' and beach defences in place.



The same scene 28th July 2008



BUILDING OF THE MARINE STUDY CENTRE

The top photograph taken in March 1994 shows the building of the Marine Study Centre in progress



The following photographs were taken on the opening day on 12th July 1994.





It seems ironic that just a few years after demolishing the derelict stone buildings that were on the site, and disposing of the stone, more stone is imported to construct this new building.

ECLIPSE - AUGUST 1999

On 11th August of 1999 there was the once in a lifetime opportunity for us to be in the total eclipse area for an eclipse of the sun. The path was across Cornwall and the south west corner of Devon and then across the Channel and through France. This meant, of course that Wembury was in the direct line and, would experience this great phenomena. There was great excitement throughout the country as many people headed for the South West.

On the day itself there was some disappointment in that there was quite a lot of cloud and so the sun was mostly hidden from view. We set off to the field behind the Church at about 1030. We felt that this would be the best place from which to witness the event with there being a good view out over the channel, and over the low lying areas around. I think that the actual timing was that total coverage in our area would be at about 11.13am.

There were quite a few people there but it was by no means crowded, there was quite a hubbub of conversation going on. The sea was like a mill pond, birds were singing, the gulls were mewling, and the crickets were quite busy in the hedge behind. As it got darker the birds and the gulls stopped their noise, and the hedge fell silent, there was a distinct drop in temperature! The conversation died down as people stood in awe of this great and wondrous thing that was unfolding all around them. It got darker and darker, the street lights came on, as did the Eddystone Lighthouse. At the darkest point there was a very thin line of silver light along the horizon, I think that the track was 70 miles wide and as we were not in the centre, I would assume that a certain amount of light would have seeped in from the edge. All too quickly it seemed to get light again, the birds and the gulls came back to life; as did the crickets in the hedge. It was the most amazing and quite a humbling experience, in that it made one realise that we are not in control, no matter how much we think we are. I think that the whole thing took about 7 minutes. from daylight through to pitch darkness and back to daylight again. At the end of it some people started applauding, like as though it was some kind of stunt, which I thought was a bit odd.

I think that the last eclipse, that I remember of any significance, was in 1954. The path was much further south on mainland Europe. Although there was no appreciable change to the daylight in our area, we were able to see the moon making it path in front of the sun. I remember that I was at School at the time, and we were instructed not to look directly at the sun, but were to use a welder's mask, (of course every schoolboy has one of those!), exposed negative, or glass that had been blackened by a candle flame, the latter is what we had to resort to, and it was a wonder that we didn't burn the school down in our efforts to get our bits of glass blackened in time. I don't think that our mothers were too impressed either when we arrived home with bits of sooty broken glass in our pockets!



LANGDON BOATHOUSE

The top photograph of the boat house from the field above was taken in the early 1900s.

In the census of 1881 it is recorded that James Hockaday, 32, a boatman, and his wife Harriet, 33, with a son, Raymond, 1 year old, lived there. He would have been obliged to provide fresh fish and shellfish for the squire's table, probably selling whatever he could on the side! He would also have been required to row out on occasions to the Mewstone to catch rabbits for the squire's table. He would probably have rowed others out for a small fee as well! Another part of his job would be to provide craft for pleasure for the Squire and his family, taking them on boat and fishing trips into the bay, sometimes even rowing them as far as Newton Ferrers and Noss Mayo, or around to the beach at Bovisand.

I can remember my father bringing his threshing machine to this field in the early 1950s to thresh corn for Lewis Andrews of Langdon Barton. It was a particularly hot day and some of the men went 'skinny dipping' in the sea during the lunch break to cool off! (there was not the number of casual visitors back then as there are now). The boathouse by this time was a roofless ruin but quite a good place for playing.

The lower picture is from an 1885 painting by William Gibbons, showing the boathouse with the Mewstone brooding in the distance. There is no other information on it to date (2006).



LANGDON BOATHOUSE 1967

In the 1960s HMS Cambridge brought the slipway back into use, and extended it a few years later. The living accommodation used to go across top of the boathouse and was accessible by a flight of steps from the beach level.

I have no idea as to when it fell into disuse, I always remember it as being a roofless ruin from the 1940s.



THE MEWSTONE

The Mewstone lies in the eastern approach to Plymouth Sound about a mile and a quarter from Wembury Beach and half a mile from Wembury Point. It is more correctly named the “Great Mewstone”. It stands 190 feet high and measures about 700 feet across at the widest point. A couple of hundred yards to the south west, at the end of a jagged reef, there is a smaller rock known as the “Little Mewstone”, although when we were children this was often referred to as the “Cat Stone”.



The photograph above, taken from the south, shows the Great Mewstone with the Little Mewstone offset to the left. The Little Mewstone cannot be seen from Wembury Beach, but from the Yealm appears to the left of the Great Mewstone and from Wembury Point and Heybrook Bay, to the right of it.

The drawing below is by the great English painter J M W Turner (1775–1851) and is entitled “The Mewstone at the entrance to Plymouth Sound”. It is 6¹/₄” x 9¹/₂” (15.6 x 23.7 cm), and dates from about 1814. It hangs in the National Gallery of Ireland, in Dublin.



In W Thornbury’s ‘Life of Turner’ (1877), he says, “In the ‘Mewstone’ there were some strange weird clouds introduced, which had a demoniacal air about them; inasmuch that Mr Stokes (the owner of the drawing) was struck by them and asked Turner if he meant for them to be the demons and angels of the storm. Turner confessed the intention.”

The Great Mewstone, named after the seagulls which inhabit it, was first seen by Turner in 1813 when he sailed past it on a trip to Burgh Island.

The drawing has a magnificent tonal range. Immediately above the rock are the wisps of clouds that so reminded Stokes of angels. Turner completely captures the racing movement of both the clouds and the tide. The small merchantman is in no danger though. He has reefed his topsails in order to lower his centre of gravity in the strong wind, and is sailing into the calmer waters of the Sound.

Joseph Mallory William Turner began as a topographical painter working in watercolour. Early oils were in emulation of Claude, Poussin, and Dutch marine painters. His rendering of light and dissolution of form, in an attempt to capture atmospheric effects, make his late works almost abstract. Works include *Rain, Steam and Speed* and *The Fighting Temeraire*.

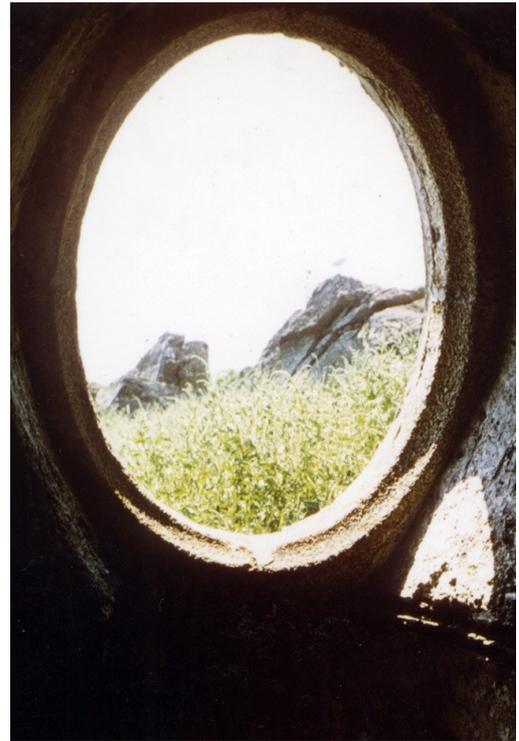
THE MEWSTONE - SAM WAKEHAM'S COTTAGE

The photograph on the right was taken in 1978, and shows the elliptical window in the south side of the building as seen from the inside.

We know that the square section of the building was a later addition. I believe that the round part was originally just a gazebo or shelter for use of the family of the squire should they have come to the island, for pleasure or to shoot rabbits. This would have provided shelter in the event of a change in the weather, or a venue for their picnic lunch or tea.

There was another elliptical window in the north side of the structure to balance that on the south. This was made into a doorway when the building was extended, and part of the granite frame was re-used in the round headed window in the north gable of the extension.

This is clearly shown in the photograph below, of the building, from the north-east, also taken in 1978,



THE MEWSTONE - VIEW WITH SAM WAKEHAM'S COTTAGE

The photograph below was taken in 1978, and shows the view from above Sam Wakeham's cottage looking towards the Yealm Estuary.

When I first went to the Mewstone in 1959, the corrugated iron roof was fully intact on the square part of the cottage. This photograph, taken almost twenty years later shows that about half of it has gone, and now (2005) almost twenty years on again it is completely gone.



VIEW FROM THE TOP OF THE MEWSTONE

The photograph below was taken in 1978, and shows the view from the top of the Mewstone looking towards the mainland.

Wembury Beach with the church above can be made out, through the haze, in the top right of the picture.

Proceeding leftwards, the rocks, the gully and Langdon Beach can also be seen.



THE MEWSTONE - VIEWS OF SAM WAKEHAM'S COTTAGE

The top photograph shows Sam Wakeham's cottage as seen from the Mewstone Channel.

The bottom photograph shows the cottage viewed from the south.



THE MEWSTONE - POEM OF 1823



The sea-bird claims that solitary spot,
The *Mewstone* ; and around loud screaming wheels
In undisturbed possession. Other sounds,
Save those of shrieking winds, and battling cliffs,
Are seldom heard in that deserted isle !
The spirit of desolation seems to dwell
Within it ; and although the sun is high,
And nature is at holy peace, it has
An aspect wild and dreary. Even now
The waves are rudely breaking at its base,
And a white feathery girdle clasps it round.
But in the wintry storm, when all that sea,
The terrible Atlantic, breasts its rocks
In thundering conflict, the unearthly howl
Might almost wake the dead !

But here, are scenes,
Which if the wildness of the seaward view
Has giv'n the mind a melancholy tone,
Will yield a sure relief. 'Tis but to turn,
And all the landward view unfolds itself ;
Soft flowing streams, and harbours wide, and towers,
Fair seated villages, and peace-crown'd cots,
And noble Mansions mantled deep in woods,
With all the humbler leafage springing up
From those warm hedge-rows that make England seem
A region of fair gardens. There the Yealm
Strays murmuring among his wooded cliffs ;
And on his banks is *Langdon*, seated deep
In its own clust'ring groves, and who would hope
Who haply treads that desert bay below
Where ends the course of Yealm, to find so near
A spot so sweet as *Langdon*. Fairer scenes
Than those that lie beneath the raptur'd eye
This green isle knows not : ever varied too
Is the full prospect ; valleys softly sink
And uplands swell, no level sameness tires,
While in the distance, happily dispos'd,
Sweeps round the bold blue moor.

Island Offered For Sale

EAGER APPLICANTS

The Mewstone Off Devon Coast

The Mewstone, the little island just south of Wembury Point, at the eastern entrance of Plymouth Sound, had about 300 visitors yesterday. They were not trippers, having come independently from all over the country, some indeed from outside England.

The Mewstone is for sale. Mr. R. A. Stansell, the owner of the Heybrook Bay estate, having put the property up for sale, has been inundated with would-be purchasers. To use his own phrase he "has been kept busy all day" rowing people across to inspect the island.

One, an Irish clergyman, has made an offer to Mr. Stansell to exchange for the Mewstone an island in the centre of an Irish lough. Two applications have been received from Belgium.

"They all seem to want it for a personal retreat," Mr. Stansell told a "Western Morning News" reporter last night, and added that nearly all the applicants were anxious to ascertain whether the owner of the island would have the right to refuse permission to land. The owner, of course, can exercise this right.

BOUGHT FOR £500.

Mr. Stansell bought the property for £500 in September, 1927, at an auction held in the Royal Hotel, Plymouth, by a Bournemouth and Southampton firm of auctioneers, in conjunction with Messrs. Viner, Carew and Co., of Plymouth. It was his intention to develop the Mewstone as a resort for Plymouth, cutting paths and turning the old hut into a tea-house. So occupied has he been with his property on the mainland, however, that Mr. Stansell has decided to abandon the scheme and sell.

The island covers an area of about three acres. With the island went certain rights-of-way on the mainland, but Mr. Stansell, of course, is not bound to include these with the property.

Of the many schemes put forward during the last 30 to 40 years for the development of Plymouth as a shipping port, one contemplated the construction of great docks in Wembury Bay, with the Mewstone as one of the sheltering features. It was, however, found impossible to surmount the financial obstacle, which has been a barrier to all such plans.

Making reference to the Mewstone, an article which appeared in "The Western Morning News" in 1927 states: "To thousands of people who pass it in pleasure steamers, it appears more suitable as a residence for goats than a place for less agile creatures. Still, people have lived there, and may do so again."

NMN 27/3/1934

ISLAND OFF DEVON SOLD FOR £575

Woman Buys Mewstone

LONDON OWNER'S WEEK-END RETREAT

The market for large, precipitous islands facing right into the Atlantic swell appears to be a very good one.

It is less than a fortnight since Mr. R. A. Stansell, owner of the Heybrook Bay Estate, intimated that the Mewstone, a three-acre island at the mouth of the Yealm, not very far from Plymouth, was for sale, and from that time he has been inundated with callers from all parts of the kingdom and outside wanting to view this "desirable property."

Now it has parted hands to a Miss Goldman, of London, for £575.

Mr. Stansell acquired the property at an auction in 1927 for £500, intending to use it in connection with his estate, but he has found it impossible to give it his attention, owing to the estate, and so parted with it.

QUICK DECISION.

He has very little information about the new owner, for Miss Goldman telephoned about the island on Friday, and travelled down during the night, arriving with her brother early on the Saturday morning. Later she was taken out to see the island, and after viewing it decided to purchase it right away, and left again soon afterwards.

It is understood, however, that she does not mean to make the island a permanent residence, as many people wanted to do, but will use it for week-ends, and for this will doubtless use the building already on the island, which would serve this purpose.

Miss Goldman's brother is connected with the film industry, but Mr. Stansell understands that there is as yet no question of the island being used for scenic or other business purposes.

WMN 10/4/1934

DEVON ISLAND AS A WEDDING PRESENT

Gift Of The Mewstone

BY OUR LONDON REPRESENTATIVE.

A Devon island—the Mewstone, at the mouth of the River Yealm, four and a half miles south-east of Plymouth—was an unusual gift at a Society wedding in London yesterday.

The marriage was that of the Hon. Margaret Thesiger, youngest daughter of the Dowager Viscountess Chelmsford, and Mr. John Goldman, eldest son of Maj. C. S. Goldman and the Hon. Mrs. Goldman, of Hamble, Hants, which took place at St. John's Church, Smith-square.

The Mewstone was purchased at an auction for £500 by Mr. R. A. Stansell, of Heybrook Bay, in 1927. Mr. Stansell sold it for £575 to Miss Hazel Goldman in April this year, and now Miss Goldman has presented it to her brother.

Although nothing has been definitely decided, the island will probably be used for bulb-growing.

WMN 11/7/1934

MEWSTONE ISLAND SOLD

Sir,—The Mewstone Island has been sold for £575.

If the Press had not published the price I paid, I believe I could have secured the profit of £200 that the speculative nature of the transaction justified.

I hope the result of this rather unusual deal in real estate will be an object lesson to those safety-first critics who, being totally lacking in imagination and enterprise, cannot realize that romance and adventure still have a part in the world of business to-day.

R. A. STANSELL.
Heybrooke Bay, Plymstock, April 9.

WMN 10/4/1934

THE SOUTH DEVON
MONTHLY MUSEUM.

PLYMOUTH, SEPTEMBER 1ST, 1834.

No. 21.] PRICE SIXPENCE. [VOL. IV.

THE MEWSTONE.

Most knowing reader, are you acquainted with Sam Wakeham, Lord of the Isles, Baron Seul of Mewstone? If not, go and see him; his dominion is abundant in live stock, and he will not have the slightest objection to sell you a bottle of porter, or brew a cup of tea for your daughters. He will supply you with a couple of dozen eggs, a ham or so, a cask of biscuits, fresh butter, cabbages, leeks, turnips, onions, potatoes and parsley; rabbits roast, boiled, stewed, hashed, grilled or fried, until you may exclaim "The Lord be praised, I've had enough." So if you be not a man of weighty appetite, you may contrive to make a decent evening meal.

The Mewstone is about five miles from Plymouth. Any one of the old gentlemen who ply for hire at the Barbican, with shore boats, will convey you thither for a crown, in about three hours and a half. If, however, you can tool a boat yourself, and know any friend who is fond of bending an ashen oar, hire one of Wallis's skiffs for half a day, which will amount to sixpence each: his little craft, the "Belzeebub," has been frequently shoved over to the Mewstone, by two handy amateurs, in from fifty to fifty-three minutes.

The island is part of the property of C. Calmady, Esq. of Langdon; and, at low water of spring tides, a person may walk to it over the rocks from the mainland. The most picturesque route, however, is

VOL. IV.--1834. N

by water: in passing under the bold heights of Staddon some peculiar geological formations may be observed, which have been noticed by Mr. Prideaux, in the "Transactions of the Plymouth Institution." Bovisand pier, and watering place, the Preventive station, the Harbour master's house, and the Breakwater present themselves in pleasing and picturesque succession. At high water a boat may pass with safety between the Reny rocks and the shore, or between the former and the Shag stone; either of these passages will afford a shorter course than going outside the Shag stone; the latter however is safer at low water, as a reef of rocks runs from the shore to the Reny, and is continued to the Shag: some of which, lying just below the surface, might not be perceived by those unaccustomed to a boat or the passage. In passing outside the Shag stone, a boat may almost touch it with her broad-side, as there is a depth of four fathoms and a half at low water; and by approaching as closely as possible, a good estimate may be formed of the size and form of this singular rock, heaving its vast cubical mass out of the tormented waters, that, in the calmest weather are whitening at its base.

Should the voyager to the Mewstone choose to make his excursion in a July sea-fog, he will be well repaid for his risk of steering out to sea: he is hereby recommended not to take a compass, the surety derived from that will spoil all his excitement; let him steer by the dim image of the sun, which, though burning in a clear cloudless sky above him, sheds but a subdued light on the mist curtained waters; it is very probable that he will not loose sight of land until he has passed Bovisand pier; he will shortly afterwards have the satisfaction of beholding nothing but sea and sky, or rather sea and fog. Nothing will be visible but the heaving waters and their canopy of white cloud, which sometimes sheds so much obscurity around, that a vessel bound to port may not be perceived a-head until there is but just time to

avoid the glory of being run down. Sometimes, when the wind raises the fog a little, and it rolls along a few feet above the surface of the sea, the then visible white line of surf thrown out by the black girdling rocks of the coast will be sufficient to indicate pretty clearly the course which must be steered: should this not occur the voyager must guide himself to the best of his ability by the position of the sun and the sound of the breakers.

The Mewstone itself will not be visible until he has arrived close under it, and he will most probably feel some surprise at its apparent magnitude, looming like a huge mountain shadow above him. From the highest pinnacle of the island, where the fog is less dense, a singular mist-bow may be perceived varying in distinctness and sharpness of outline as the sun is more or less obscured; its proportions will be found to differ materially from those of the rainbow as generally seen, its height being much greater than its breadth at the base. The spectator also will perceive a gigantic image of himself shadowed out on the subjacent mist, which will perform every motion made by the looker on: it may be formed similarly to the spectre of the Brocken which appearance has been explained by Dr. Brewster.

The group of savage looking rocks called the little Mewstone will be seen, dimly visible or sternly black, as the mist rests upon or rolls over them, they are seen to most effect at low water.

Sam Wakeham is a tender husband and loves his wife; Sam Wakeham's wife is a good natured spouse and loves Sam: she rests her hand upon his shoulder by pure accident and calls him her dear Sam: and so he ought to be, for while he was doing the affectionate to his dame futura he built her a house or rather enlarged the one which was on the island before, a small and inconvenient dwelling not exactly fitted for Sam's offspring and appearing very much like a tar-barrel with a nightcap on and the bung knocked out. He prepared a spot for a garden by clearing it of

stones and manuring it with sea weed and sand, carried up from the beach with much labour and perseverance; he built a wall round the garden as a manœuvre to keep out the rabbits, but the latter have outmanœuvred him by boring under his fortification.

In this garden he has grown potatoes, turnips, cabbages, leeks, onions, parsley, &c.; the rabbits had sufficient judgment to allow the latter to come to its full growth, but then they made a supper of the whole bed. They have also demolished sundry potatoes, so that Sam has yet to find out an effective barrier to their depredations; with his rabbits and garden one would suppose that Sam might provision his dinner table all the year round, but, being a bit of an epicure, he keeps some poultry, and moreover a couple of pigs; not long since a very "promising" porker, in making a spring from one cliff to another, fell into the sea; the dead body floated over to Newton, and Sam has built two or three styes to guard against such an accident for the time to come.

The word "Civility" is engraved on Sam's face, but there are lines in it which tell that he might be a tartar, especially if he found any one poaching on his manor: a rifle bullet might be sent through the tail of an intruder's coat to warn him off before bones were broken.

Sam and his wife hold the island rent free, and have the privilege of eating every thing which grows thereupon, on condition that they will protect the rabbits during the time when it is not lawful to shoot them; during the proper season they may shoot and eat as many as they will; the "Squire" visits the island occasionally, and sometimes shoots seventy during an evening, which are left at Sam's disposal.

When you take a trip to the Mewstone, reader, as you value your character for benevolence, export a few ounces of snuff to Sam, he is a most inveterate snuff taker; and, until Imeson may see fit to establish a branch store on the little Mewstone, he is

not likely to have a tobacconist's shop in the immediate neighbourhood. Poor Sam! it's a pity that he ever should have recourse to sea-sand wherewith to tickle his olfactories in his hour of need.

Sam was married last April, his age may average about two score, and his wife's ditto, he "never takes no physic whatsoever, and never means to take none," so that he has a chance of existing a little longer than such dwellers in his vicinity as have the advantage of Morrison and Moate's mixture of gamboge and colocynth.



SAMUEL WAKEHAM'S HOUSE, ON THE MEWSTONE.

Sam does not care one rush for any other part of the World except the Mewstone; like the Samoide in his cave, the Esquimaux in his snow house, the Australian in his hollow tree, or King William the fourth in Windsor palace, Sam believes that his own spot of land and his own dwelling place are unexceptionably the most desirable on the face of the earth; some wise fellow may exclaim,

"O! Solitude, where are the charms that Wakeham can find in
[thy face:]"

But Sam is ready to answer, in the words of Lord Byron.

"To sit on rocks, to muse on pigs fed well,
To send a bullet spinning o'er the green
Where conies free from man's dominion dwell
And smuggling feet have never (seldom) been.
To house the cocks and hens, for Ah! I ween
They need a shelter from the winter's cold,
This is not Solitude—"

Not a bit of it: solitude's only an "illagent humbug." Surrounded by crab-pots and sea-gull's eggs, scolding waves and frowning rocks; cabbages, chick-



The Cottage on the Mewstone.

ens and onions, what can Sam know about Solitude.

When approached in fine weather the Mewstone is much less imposing than when seen in a mist; but there is a great advantage in being able to survey it on a clear day. The north face seems wholly incapable of cultivation, not merely from the great precipitousness of its declivity, but also from the scantiness of earthy stratum, which is just sufficient to allow of its being covered with a green carpetting; along the narrow, inaccessible paths of which hundreds of rabbits may be seen hurrying away from the gaze of an intruder.

Besides the spots of ground, which have been already reduced to a cultivated state, there is much more on the southern side capable of being made productive, and it is not improbable, that when Sam has six or seven young Wakehams to lend him a hand, his garden grounds will be made much more extensive, and turned to much better account than they are at present.

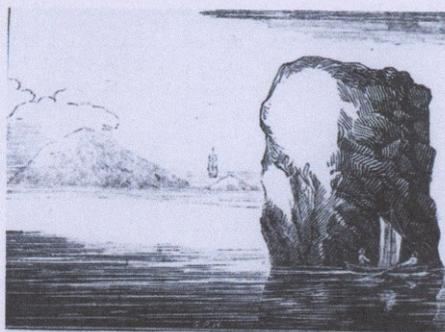
There is not a shrub of any kind growing, in a wild state, on the island; a few currant bushes have been planted in a favorable situation, but present rather a woful sort of appearance. On the highest point of the island, Sam has mounted a flag staff, rather ricketty at present; and has hewn out of the solid rock a pair of thrones, wherein the lover of nature may sit and indulge his solitary musings. A magnificent amphitheatre of sea, and a fine sweep of coast lie before him, on one side; on the other he may turn and gaze on the boundless ocean.

The extent of view commanded from this spot will be best exemplified by enumerating the principal points: dim in the eastern distance is shadowed the Bolt head, south westward of it may be observed the mouth of the Avon, and the long line of Bigbury bay, receiving the waters of the Erme, but the mouth of this river is hidden behind the promontory called Stoke Point. The river Yealm is seen winding its way between headlands into the Sound; nearly opposite the Mewstone; and a little southward of its mouth stands the lonely church of Wembury; thence the eye is carried to Bovisand bay and pier; Staddon Heights; Mount Batten; the Hoe; Mount Edgcumbe; Maker Heights, with Kingsand and Cawsand nestling below them; Penlee point, the Obelisk, and Adelaide chapel; Rame head, and its crowning chapel; Whitsand bay, and the rugged line of Cornish coast, stretching away to the Lizard Point.

The Geology of the Mewstone has been noticed by Mr. John Prideaux, in a paper which has been already alluded to, in the "Transactions of the Ply-

mouth Institution," he is of opinion that the Mewstone was formerly joined to the main land.

THEOBALD.



The Mewstone and Shag Rock.

THE WHALE ON WEMBURY BEACH

In the winter of 1954, I think that it was in February; there was great excitement in the village when a whale got washed up on the beach.

The first that we heard of it was when we were at Youth club in the old Village Hall; I think it was a Tuesday evening. Edward (Spud) Milden came in and said that a whale had been washed up on Wembury Beach. That was it, there was a mass exodus, as we all headed off towards the beach. It did cross my mind that I should go home and tell my mother where we were going (that is my brother and I) but thought better of the idea knowing full well that she would stop us, saying that the beach in darkness, and in the middle of the winter, was no place for children.

Half running and half walking, rushing to get there for fear of the whale being taken away on the next tide, we reached the beach in quite a breathless condition. Imagine our disappointment not to find it there high and dry on the sand on the first beach. We thought that it must be further on, over on one of the other beaches, so we set off towards the gully, but no, it was not there. We carried on to Langdon Beach, some people on the beach, and some on the cliff top scanning the area as we went along. We had almost got to Wembury Point and were about to give up, when we heard other voices and could see torches down on the beach. There in the darkness we could just make out the shape of the whale. We raced down to the beach and there it was. The people already there were from Down Thomas and Heybrook Bay, mostly children like us who had heard about it and sneaked away without telling the adults! Of course the poor creature was dead, it had been brought in on the spring tide and left high and dry. The weather had been very stormy of late. It was quite a young whale, about 30 feet in length. One could imagine it being easily separated from rest of the school in a storm, getting disorientated and finally ending up battered and out of breath on the beach. I remember it being grooved underneath, a bit like a boat, we kept climbing on it to walk down to the tail, but kept slipping off and getting soaking wet in the process, which we thought was great fun. There was amongst the driftwood nearby a sign which read "out of order" which somebody thought was a good idea to put on the whale.



Ann Cosway of Hillcrest, Wembury Point, peers cautiously into the mouth of the whale which was washed up on Wembury Beach, The whale measures 29 feet in length, it has a 20 foot girth, and its mouth is 4 feet from corner to corner

By the time we had done all of this and walked back to the village it was well after 10.30pm. Of course my mother went absolutely mad, demanding to know where we had been until “this time of night”, but before we were able to answer the smell made itself only too apparent! Our excitement in telling her all about the whale took the wind out her sails a bit, and subdued her wrath, but she was not very happy about having to deal with our wet, smelly clothes, and also having to run the bath, especially on a weekday night! My father in his usual good natured way, thought the whole thing was highly amusing, and I think, secretly wished that he had been with us as well!

We couldn't wait to get to school the following day to tell everybody about it. I think that children from the other villages were quite jealous and in some cases feigned disinterest! The catchment area for Plymstock School in those days took in all the South Hams Villages from Wembury, through to Ermington, which was in fact the old Plympton Rural District area. Nevertheless they all came to Wembury on their bicycles in droves, over the weekend, to see it for themselves.

On the Saturday morning we were off to the beach as soon as we could. The poor old whale was looking a bit pathetic by this time, and smelling quite badly. One of the older boys had his scouting knife with him, and was cutting out the teeth, and we all had about three or four each. They were not teeth, as we know them but more like banks and banks of bristles. Evidently the whale would open its mouth and take in a great mouthful of water, including small fish, plankton etc. It would then close its mouth and expel the water through the bristles (“sieves” as we were told was the correct name for them), leaving all the fish and plankton in its mouth to be digested.

Of course, by this time it had hit the papers and a photograph appeared in the Western Morning News and Western Evening Herald. The people from the National Marine Biological Association on Plymouth Hoe had been out and taken measurements, samples etc., and it was they who had established that it was a very young whale. We, of course, as children, thought it was enormous, 30 feet long, after all that that was as long as a Western National bus!

On the Sunday, it seemed as though the whole world had gone mad, busses upon busses came out from Plymouth bringing scores of people who wanted to see the whale. The car park at the beach was very soon overwhelmed, it was very much smaller in those days and would have only held about 30 cars. Of course, back then double decker busses could not get down through the village, so we ended up with Knighton West Wembury and Church Road being log jammed with Western National single decker busses. There were four jammed in the square and two more parked in Higher Ford outside of the Parish Room. There were two down the bottom of Church Road in the space at the bottom of the church drive, and another outside on the road. There was one parked in at the bottom of Cliff Road and another one at the top of Church Road just above ‘Marconi House’ (now better known as the Vicarage), Plus others that were in transit. I think altogether we counted fourteen busses between the bottom of Church Road and the Jubilee Inn. In those days most of Church Road was too narrow for parking in fact there were very few places where two cars could pass each other. Back then course twas no “Mewstone Avenue” or “Southland Park Road” to alleviate the situation.

My mother decided on the Sunday that she wanted to see the whale, so we walked down with her after lunch. We couldn't believe the number of people that there were milling around. Many who had come out from Plymouth had expected to see the whale on the main beach and of course didn't bargain for an extra walk of a mile or so across the cliffs. When we got to where the whale was, there were a lot of people there, but not getting too close as by this time the poor thing was really smelling very badly. The sun was quite warm in spite of it being in the middle of the winter, which did nothing to improve the situation. The poor old thing had been there now for at least five days. My mother would not venture down to the beach, being quite content to view the whale from the cliff top.

On the Monday I took my whales teeth to school to show everybody, they were all most intrigued. Mr Hurford the science teacher was quite annoyed because I wouldn't donate them to the school for the natural history lab. I hung on to them for many years afterwards, but I don't know what eventually became of them.

The decision had to be made as to how to get rid of the whale. It had now deteriorated to such a degree that any chance of moving it in one piece had been lost. The depth of sand was not sufficient for a large enough hole to be dug near where it was laying, to bury it. Eventually, the Army, who back then still had a presence

at Wembury Point, were brought in and they blew it up. What a mess! There were bits of whale spread over a very large area, above and below the high water line, and even over the fields on the cliff top. It took many months for the smell to eventually subside; I can remember it still smelling quite badly in that area during the height of the summer that year.



This is where the whale was washed up, in the centre foreground of the photograph where the seaweed is

THE WEMBURY DOCKS SCHEME

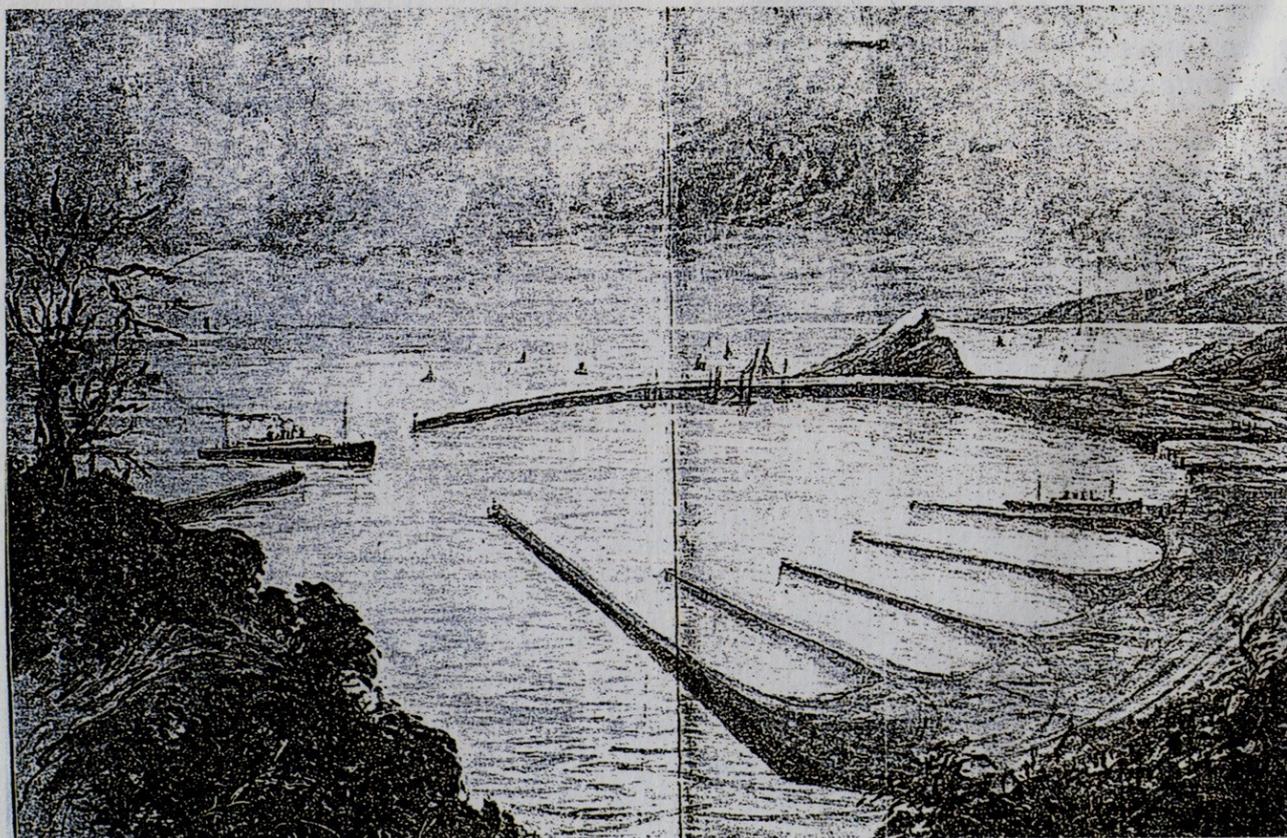
In the very early part of the 20th Century there were plans in hand which had they come to fruition would have changed this area completely, and forever.

The proposal was to make the whole of Wembury Bay into a major harbour with four huge jetties and two dry docks capable of taking the largest ships afloat. There would also be needed railway sidings and dockside buildings with the associated offices, workshops, warehouses and other amenities necessary to service such a huge complex. Also in the vicinity, housing, for the four or five thousand people who would be required to man and operate the complex, from the bosses right down to the dockside workers.

The proposal was brought about by the fact that the advent of steel construction and steam propulsion, meant that the ships were getting ever larger in numbers and in size. At that time the newly built ships Lusitania and Mauretania, both of about 31,500 tons did not have a British port where they could enter at all states of the tide. The draught of the Mauretania was about 36 feet whereas the lowest depth at the low water springs was 27 feet at Liverpool, and 30 feet at Southampton. Plymouth had the deepest water being able to cope with the 31.5 feet draught of the Dreadnoughts. The ships were still increasing in size. In 1909, White Star had two vessels of 40,000 tons on the stocks, and the Titanic, 46,000 tons, was on the drawing board.

Speed was also an issue, for passengers, a high speed vessel and a shorter route meant that they reached their destinations sooner. A quicker turnaround was also beneficial to the shipowners. A journey from the proposed docks at Wembury to New York, would have meant a saving of 305 miles on the same journey from London, 125 miles, from Southampton, 181 miles, from Bristol, and 351 miles from Liverpool. Therefore a return journey from Wembury to New York would have been over 700 miles shorter than the same journey from Liverpool. So the idea was to attract the large liners away from London Liverpool and Southampton, offering a shorter voyage time, and to operate an efficient rail link to get the passengers quickly to their destinations in the country, also a cross channel ferry service to the continent via Cherbourg, and St Malo.

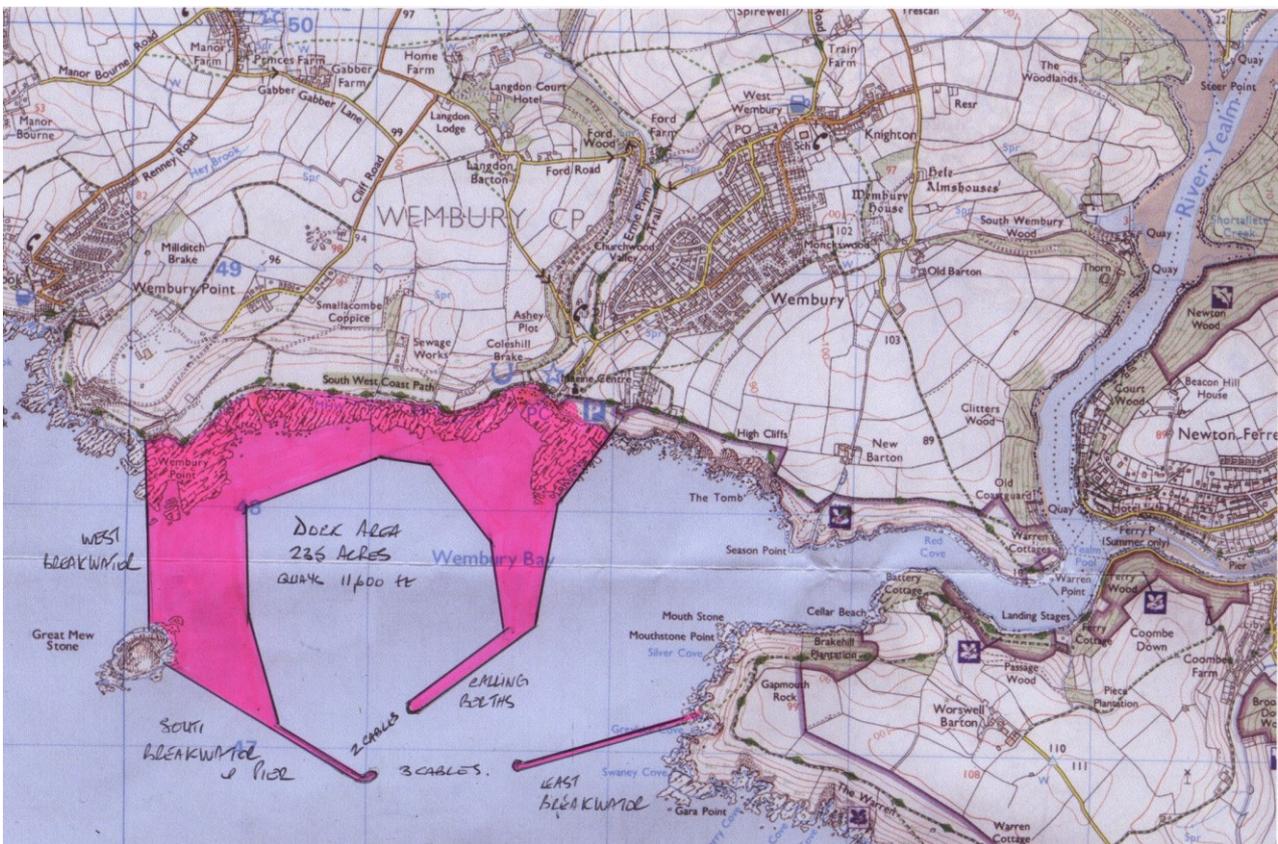
Contemporaneous artist's impression of Scheme



In 1907 attempts to develop the harbour at the Cattewater in Plymouth met with objections from the Admiralty and so the plans had to be dropped. A consortium of businessmen then hit on the idea of building a totally new harbour at Wembury. In 1908 a company was formed which was called “The Wembury (Plymouth) Commercial Dock and Railway Company Limited”. the scheme was more commonly referred to as “Wembury Docks”. The Corys were not involved in this scheme, and were initially opposed to it, in spite of it being their ‘stock in trade’, they obviously didn’t like the thought of it being on their doorstep! Richard Cory managed to get an agreement from the company that if it was necessary to purchase any of his land for the scheme (which it obviously would have been) they would have to purchase the whole of the estate including Langdon Court. Having got this agreement, his opposition to the scheme then ceased.

The civil engineering work involved would have been massive, probably the equivalent of the channel tunnel in our own time. The whole of Wembury Bay was to be enclosed within a mole or breakwater, which would run from Wembury Point to the Mewstone incorporating the island into the structure and continuing onwards towards Gara Point. Another mole was to be built outwards from Gara Point. There would be a gap between the two of 3 cables (600 yards), which would be the entrance to the harbour and the mouth of the Yealm. Yet another mole would extend outwards along the Blackstone Reef below the church towards the entrance, leaving a gap of 2 cables (400 yards), as the entrance to the harbour itself. There would have been five hundred acres of hard standing covering the whole of the beach and inshore waters, on which would have been built the offices, workshops, warehouses, cranes roads, railway lines etc. The total area enclosed was to be in the region of 880 acres

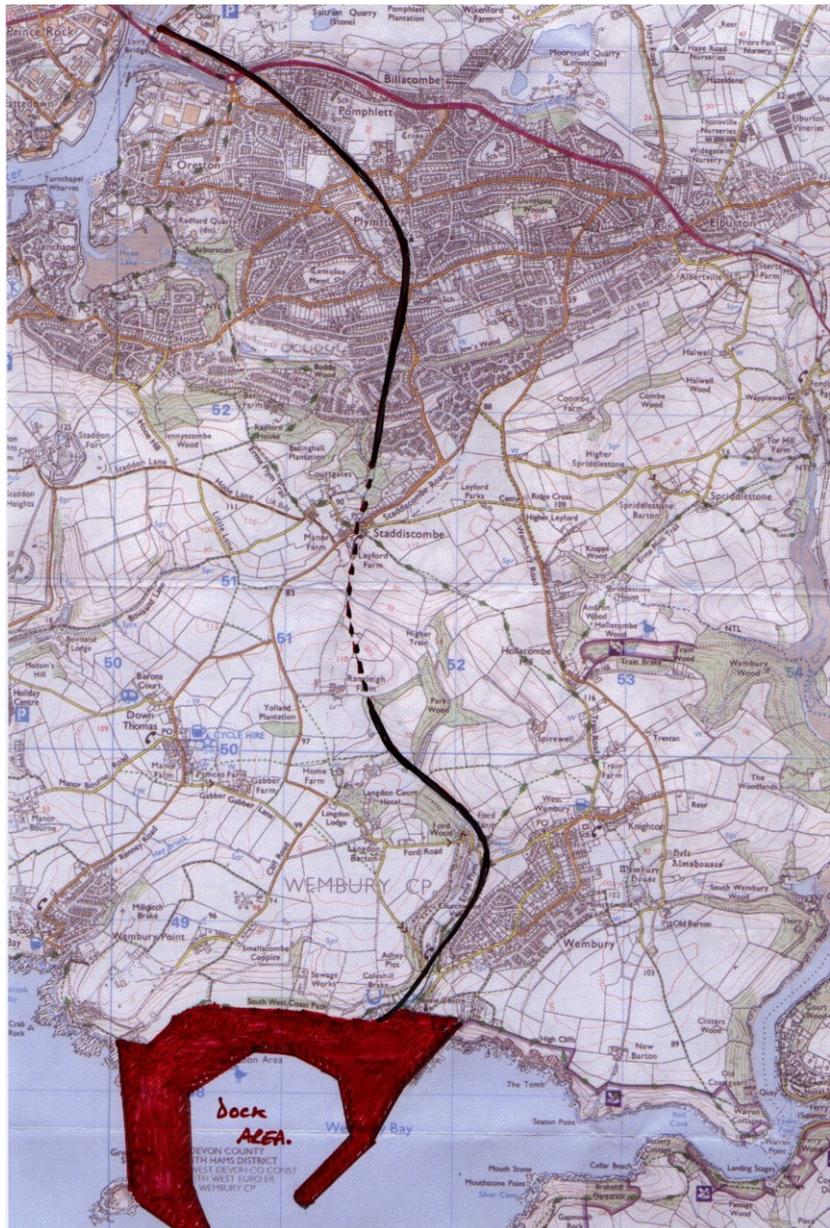
Preliminary plans, engineering specifications and estimates were prepared by Mr J.M. Dobson of Hawkshaw and Dobson of Great George Street, Westminster. The firm had been responsible for the planning and design of the first proposed Channel Tunnel in the late 19th century. The grandfather of my best friend, David Haines, who I went Wembury School with, was a diver and carried out a lot of the surveying of the sea bed between Wembury Point and the Mewstone, and also towards Gara Point for the scheme.



There would have been a railway terminus to move passengers quickly and efficiently to London, the Midlands and the North. The railway lines would have run across the floor of the Church Walk Wood valley covering most of the water meadow. At Ford they would have veered to the left following the valley beside the woods to the east of Langdon Court. Just to the north of Langdon Court they would have entered a tunnel running under Staddiscombe and emerging in Plymstock at Lower Gooswell. Then cutting right across Plymstock itself, past the church and the Plymstock Inn, straight through the Lidl's site and alongside the Pomphlet Road to link up with the line at Plymstock Station, thence over the railway bridge at Laira to join the main network. Initially this was to have been single track for reasons of economy although the land required and the design of the bridges tunnel etc., indicated that this would have been doubled up at a later date. This would have meant that railway the bridge at Laira would have needed to be enlarged and rest of the track through Plymstock upgraded as well.

The proposals were put before a House of Lords committee in the spring of 1909. Many expert witnesses gave their opinions of the scheme, not all of them in favour. The committee, whilst agreeing that the construction of the harbour was technically possible, rejected the scheme on the grounds that they did not find the financial aspects convincing.

It is quite hard to imagine what Wembury would look like today had the scheme gone ahead. Along with the docks would have been the workforce, all dock work in the early years of the 20th century was very manpower intensive. The workforce would have numbered about five thousand. There would have been dockers, crane drivers, stevedores, shipwrights, caulkers, welders, Customs and Excise Officers, Docks Police, railway workers, office workers, cleaners etc., etc. They would need to have been housed, and of course that would have needed to be near to their place of work. The Executives would also need housing, as would their household staff, chauffeurs, gardeners etc.,



The valley slopes either side of the railway line would probably have had rows upon rows of Edwardian terraced houses clinging to them just like Ford or Keyham in Plymouth. The whole area around the church would have been the same, and up through Church Road. Langdon, Raneleigh, and Down Thomas would probably been the posh end where the executive housing would have been sited.

A main road would probably have been built alongside the railway line but going off to the right just to the north east of Langdon Court to follow the valley at Spirewell then on through Staddiscombe and Elburton and

Plymstock. The road and railway would have to have been built first in order to get construction workers and materials to the site, as the existing village roads would have been totally inadequate. Some materials, probably the stone for the building of the moles and jetties would have been brought to the site by water.

Five thousand workers would have all had families, which would have trebled or even quadrupled the number needing to be housed. In addition to the houses there would have needed to have been Shops, Schools, Pubs, Non Conformist Chapels, Roman Catholic Churches, another Anglican Church or two, Community Halls, Theatre, Music Hall, Hospital and probably a Gasworks, definitely a brewery! There would have been a "Missions to Seamen", a Temperance Mission, a Salvation Army Canteen, Pubs with names like "St Werburgh's Vaults", or "The Dockers' Arms" or "The Prince of Wales" for he would have probably opened the complex.

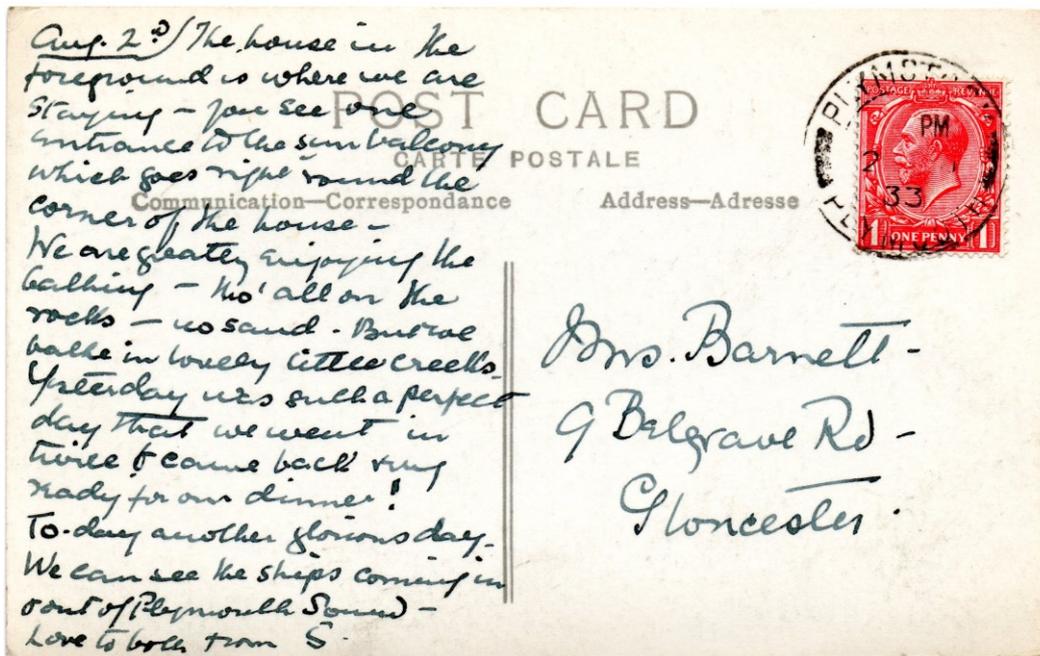
Ford Farm and Ford Cottage would have been demolished as part of the scheme. There would have probably been a railway station at Ford to serve the residential area. This area would have spread up though the valley to Watergate, Train and Knighton. A main road would have gone up through the valley to join up with Wembury Road at the top of Knighton Hill, which would have been widened right through to Elburton where it meets the Plymouth to Kingsbridge Road. Knighton and West Wembury would have been bypassed and would probably have retained some of its old village atmosphere, and would have been one of the more desirable places to live. St Werburgh's Church would have been serving an inner-city parish, it would have not been possible to enlarge it but a church hall would probably have been built, and maybe a daughter church somewhere in the maze of terraced Edwardian Streets. The whole area along with Plymstock and Elburton would have become a part of Plymouth.

All would have been fine until the Second World War, the whole of the docks would probably been requisitioned by the Navy. The area would have sustained its share of aerial bombardment, and like the rest of Plymouth there wouldn't have been one street without bomb damage. After the war, there would not have been the demand for cruise liners especially in the years of austerity when foreign travel for pleasure would be the prerogative of the very rich. In the 1960s air travel would be coming into its own and companies like Cunard would be having trouble filling the great "Queens" Mary and Elizabeth, for the New York run, each week. In the 1970s, the passenger trade, except for a few cross-channel ferries, would have all but died out, there would have been a certain amount of cargo trade remaining. Quite a lot of the area would have gone into decline with many of the dockside buildings becoming derelict. House prices would have dropped with the fall off in work. Shops and businesses would have closed down, the brewery would have closed. The railway would have escaped the "Beeching Axe" as it was a necessary life line for the many people who now had to travel into Plymouth for work, and for those using the cross-channel ferries.

The 1980s and 1990s would have been the renaissance, the docks would have gone over to pleasure in a big way and be made into an enormous yachting marina. The old dockside buildings and warehouses would have been converted into up market places to live, or wine bars, boutiques, bistros and restaurants, small art galleries, and shops selling 'precious things'. New apartment blocks would have been built on the redundant shunting yards and called things like "Mewstone Heights" or "Eddystone Towers", the Brewery would have been made into a massive eating and drinking complex. The Missions to Seamen would have become a night club called something like "Orgasm" and the Temperance mission, a lap dancing club - Wembury would be the place to be, and house prices would soar!

HEYBROOK BAY IN THE 1930s

The postcard below was posted in 1933 on August 2nd. The person who sent it was staying the house which dominates the picture, and which was the "Heybrook Bay Guest House". Just over six years later this house would be requisitioned by the War Office as accommodation for the Naval Camp which was established on Wembury Point in 1939, and which later became HMS Cambridge. The house was returned to its previous owners at the end of the war. Wembury Point though, remained in the ownership of the Royal Navy until the closure of HMS Cambridge in March 2001.



HEYBROOK BAY IN THE 1930s

The photograph below shows Heybrook Bay as it looked in the 1930s.

The large building in the centre of the picture is what is now the 'Eddystone Inn' but back then was the "Heybrook Bay Hotel". During the war years it was requisitioned by the Admiralty and became the WRNS Quarters for the Naval Camp at Wembury Point. After the war, when it was again in private ownership it became "The Seahorse Hotel". I think that there were a couple more name changes before arriving at the one it has now!

At the top of the hill, partially blocked by the telegraph pole on the right of the picture is 'Pantiles', which since the 1950s has been occupied by the Etchells's.

The second house, going up the hill, on the lower side, is 'The Haven' where Mrs Trott ran her mission church "The Church of the Holy Nativity" until late into the 1970s.

The large house at the bottom of the bottom of the hill was the "Heybrook Bay Guest House" which was also requisitioned during the war

Some of the houses at the top of the hill were flat roofed and in the Art Deco style.

At the bottom of the slope in the foreground on the right hand side was the "Rendezvous Cafe", where it was possible to buy ice creams and bottles of lemonade. I think that this closed in the 1960s and is now a private house.

Back in the 1950s we didn't get to know people all that well in Heybrook Bay as the children from there, and also Down Thomas, went to Hooe School on account of the village school being small to accommodate them. It was really quite sad as it split the parish in half, with one part always referring the other as 'the other side'.



HEYBROOK BAY IN 1980 AND 2009

The upper photograph was taken in 1980, and the lower one in May 2009.

Not a lot of difference in the two photographs except that the top photograph was taken from a higher vantage point, and further inland, so that things are viewed from a different angle, and the buildings lower down in the valley are out of view.



RENDEZVOUS CAFE

The photograph below shows the “Rendezvous Cafe” at Heybrook Bay and judging by the lack of development on the other side of the valley, is thought to have been taken in the 1940s, probably during the War.

Further confirmation of this can be deduced from the flags. Apart from the Union flag, there is also the Stars and Stripes of the United States, and the Free French flag with the Cross of Lorraine. Personnel from these forces were billeted in the area during the war. The bomb on display also gives some indication of this, as many defused unexploded bombs were often put on display in the area where they fell as a morale booster.

The Cafe proudly advertised that it was open for Teas, Luncheons and Suppers, although due to rationing the fare was probably very limited.

The terrace was obviously used when the weather was fine, but there was also a cosy moderate sized dining room, accessible through the French window.

In later years casual sales of ice cream, lemonade etc., were from a sort of kiosk on the other side of the building accessible by its own flight of steps.

When we were children we would often walk around the cliffs from Wembury Beach to Heybrook Bay, and reward ourselves with an ice cream or a bottle of “Vimto” at the Rendezvous before making our way back.

Back then it was possible to walk through the HMS Cambridge site without ‘let or hindrance’. The closure of the right of way didn’t come about until many years later when the increased threat from terrorist groups made it impossible to keep it open. An alternative, much more tortuous route was made around the outside of the perimeter fence passing in front of the gunsites, so of course it was inadvisable to use it when live firings were taking place.



SWIMMING POOL AT WEMBURY POINT 1930s

This photograph taken in the 1930s shows the swimming pool or as it was more properly called “The Lido” that was built at Wembury Point. It was actually part of “The Lido” holiday camp on the hill above, which was run by the Beaumonts and Mr Eric Lancaster (‘Paddy’ Lancaster as he was more better known, was a friend of my parents). “The Patches Holiday House and Club” run by the Trotts was all part of the same complex. Tommy Hart and Bob Stansell who ran the “Wembury Point Holiday Camp” had an agreement with Paddy, which allowed the holidaymakers at the camp use the Lido. It was the Stansells who were in the process of developing Heybrook Bay in the 1920s and 1930s.

Telephone numbers from the 1939 Trade Directory:

Heybrook Bay Lido Ltd, Telephone Wembury 230.
Wembury Point Holiday Camp Limited, Telephone No. Wembury 234.
Wembury Point Sport and Social Club, J Stansell, Secretary;
Heybrook Bay Estate Office, Proprietor, R Stansell, Telephone Wembury 256
Stansell’s Acetylene co Ltd (Reg’d office), Telephone Wembury 256

The pool was formed by a reinforced concrete wall spanning a small inlet between two small rocky outcrops, side walls were built later. There was no lining of any kind, the slope from the shallow to the deep end was the natural lay of the beach, and was floored with the natural shingle. There was an inlet/outlet pipe fitted in the wall which allowed the pool to be filled on the incoming tide and gradually emptied on the the falling tide. I would imagine that it would, at one time, have had a valve on it so that the pool would remain filled at low tide. The water was just ordinary sea water and not treated in any way.

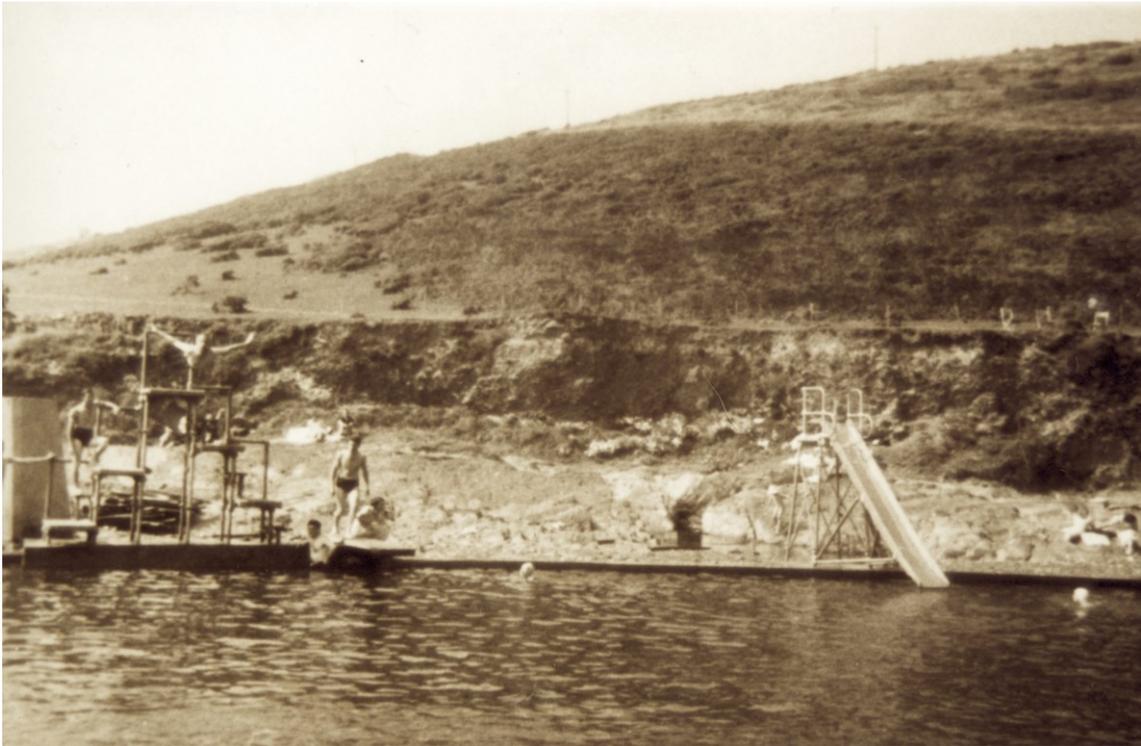
The photograph below is quite an early one, as later on a filtration plant was added, and a three tiered diving board was built over on the far side at the deep end. Also further in towards the shallow end there was a slide for the children, and on the near side a paddling pool for toddlers was formed.



At the outbreak of the Second World War the whole area was requisitioned by the War Office, as being of strategic importance. There had been an Army Observation Post just in front of the holiday camp for quite some time before the outbreak of war which was later equipped with the new revolutionary invention, Radar. Gun emplacements were built on the lower levels, which were manned by the Royal Navy. The swimming pool was used by them for recreational purposes

After the war the pool gradually fell into dilapidation, but we had many happy hours there as children using the, by then, heavily rusted diving board framework which had long given up its springboards to the elements. Also by the diving boards was a reinforced concrete structure, which had contained the filtration plant, just a single compartment with a doorway, and sloping outside walls, looking a bit like something from an Egyptian tomb.

The photograph below shows the Lido as it was in about 1938, just before the whole area was requisitioned by the War Department. By this time, diving boards and a slide had been provided. A filtration plant had also been installed, the sloping side of which can be seen on the extreme left of the photograph.



In the years to follow the cliff above would bristle with the close and medium range guns of the Royal Navy as the area gradually developed into the Gunnery School HMS Cambridge. This function ceased in 2001 and the area will hopefully now be reverted to “green and pleasant land”.

WEMBURY POINT HOLIDAY CAMP 1930s

This advertisement appeared in the Southern Railway's Handbook of 1936, section entitled "Hints for Holidays". "Terms from 35/- per week" that would be £1.75 in today's (2005) money!

WEMBURY POINT HOLIDAY CAMP
PLYMSTOCK, NR. PLYMOUTH

On 100 acres by the sea with own riding stables, safe bathing, good fishing.

"a smaller type of camp with that family atmosphere."

Accommodation for 150.



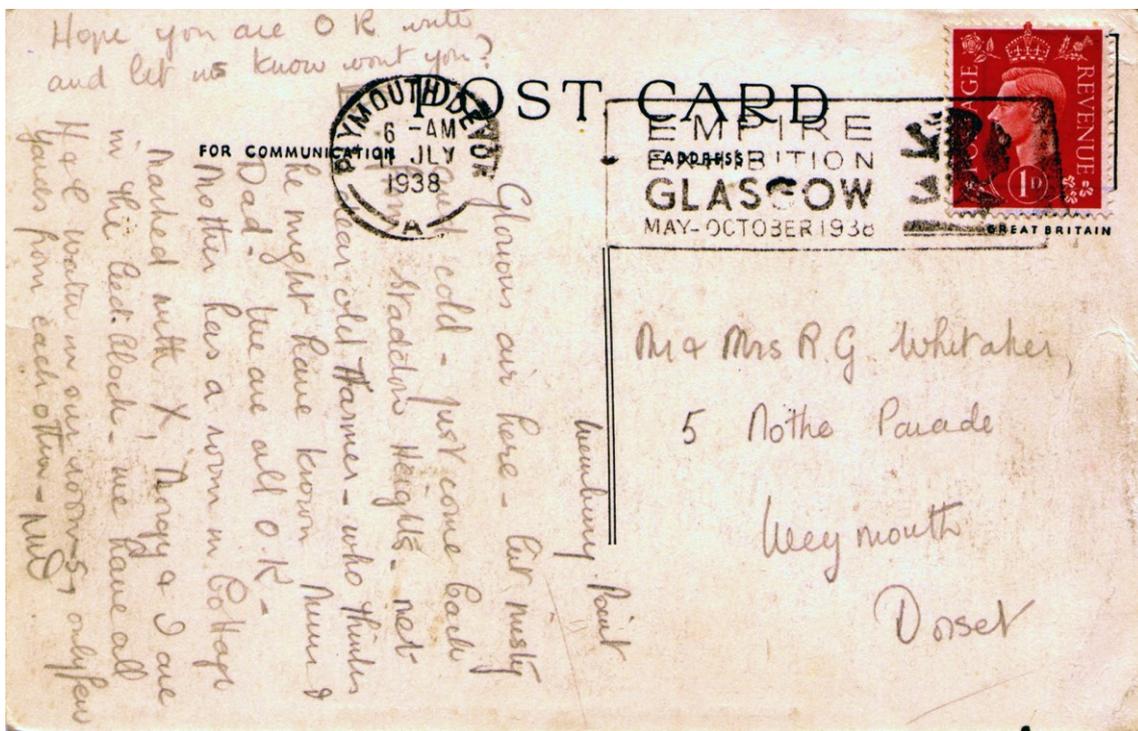
Cricket.
Tennis.
Dancing.
Table tennis.
Licensed club.
Excellent food and cooking.
Comfortable Bedrooms.

Terms from 35/- per week. Free Illus. Brochure on request.



WEMBURY POINT HOLIDAY CAMP POSTCARD - 1938

The postcard below, postmarked 11th July 1938, was sent by someone staying at the Holiday Camp, to family in Weymouth.



WEMBURY POINT - BELLE VUE COTTAGE

Belle Vue Cottage was built in the 1930s, by Mr William Wallace Davey. It stood in a most prominent position on the top of Wembury Point, on the other the side of the road to the main Holiday Camp, next door to "The Patches" the smaller holiday camp owned and run by Mrs Trott.

The tower, a novel way of adding a couple of extra rooms, was a later addition, which I suppose, in todays parlance, would be seen as "making a statement".

It was demolished in the early 1950s as part of the redevelopment of the area as HMS Cambridge.



AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH OF WEMBURY POINT HOLIDAY CAMP 1930s

The photograph below is of the “Wembury Point Holiday Camp”, which was owned and run by Bob Stansell and Tommy Hart. Over to the left is the “Lido” complex run by the Beaumonts and “The Patches” run by the Trotts.

At the beginning of the Second World War it was all requisitioned by the War Office as being of strategic importance. There was already an Army ‘Listening Post’ in the lozenge shaped area in front of the Holiday Camp and where the first RADAR scanners were installed. Naval guns were installed in two tiers on the cliffs below.

It was always referred to as the Navy Camp although there were Army personnel manning the radar post. The service personnel were billeted in the holiday camp accommodation, although this was quite limited as the Wembury Point Holiday Camp catered, in a large part, for those with their own tents. The War Department erected several wooden huts to augment the accommodation but even then many people still had to be billeted with local families. During the whole period of the war we had people billeted on us at Gabber Farm. Because of the close proximity to the Naval Dockyard, none of the farms or villages in this part of Devon had evacuees.

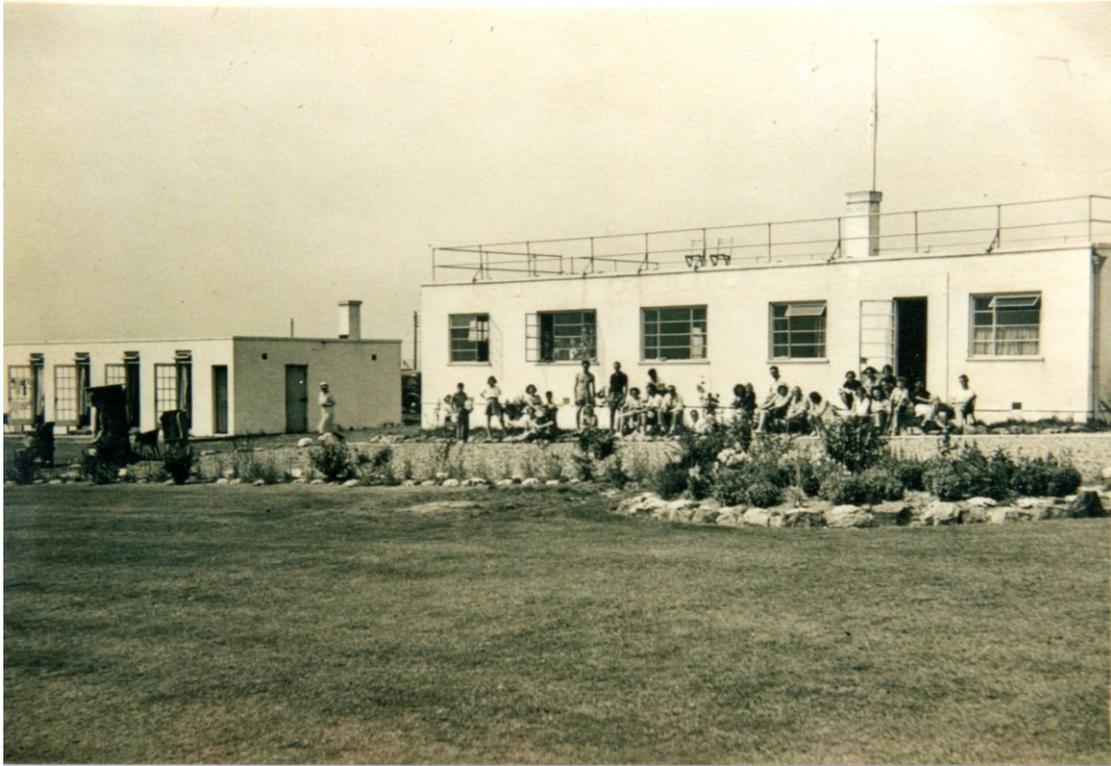
The road layout of the camp remained virtually unchanged throughout all of its time under government ownership.



WEMBURY POINT HOLIDAY CAMP 1930s

The photographs below were taken in 1938. The top photograph shows the main recreation building containing the bar facilities, with the roller skating rink on the roof, many “Happy Campers” outside enjoying the sunshine. Over on the left is the more “Up Market” accommodation for the more discerning visitor. This was concrete built, each chalet having a French window, but still with communal bathrooms and toilet facilities,

The bottom photograph shows the shop.



WEMBURY POINT HOLIDAY CAMP 1930s
PHYSICAL JERKS AND TUG OF WAR

Two photographs taken in 1938. The top one shows the 'happy campers' doing 'physical jerks' outside of the main building. They all look incredibly fit anyway!

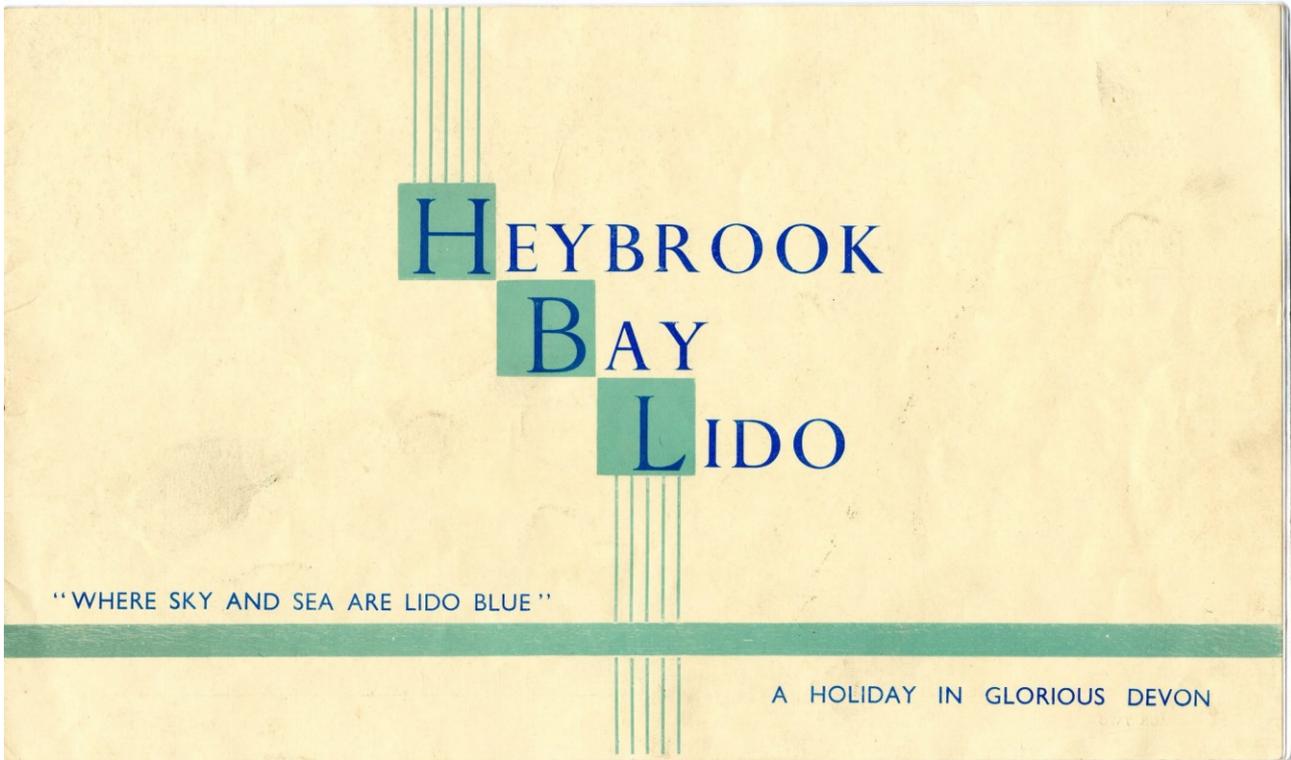


The lower photograph shows one of the 'tug of war' teams 'taking the strain' during one of the recreational periods,



“THE PATCHES” AND “HEYBROOK BAY LIDO”

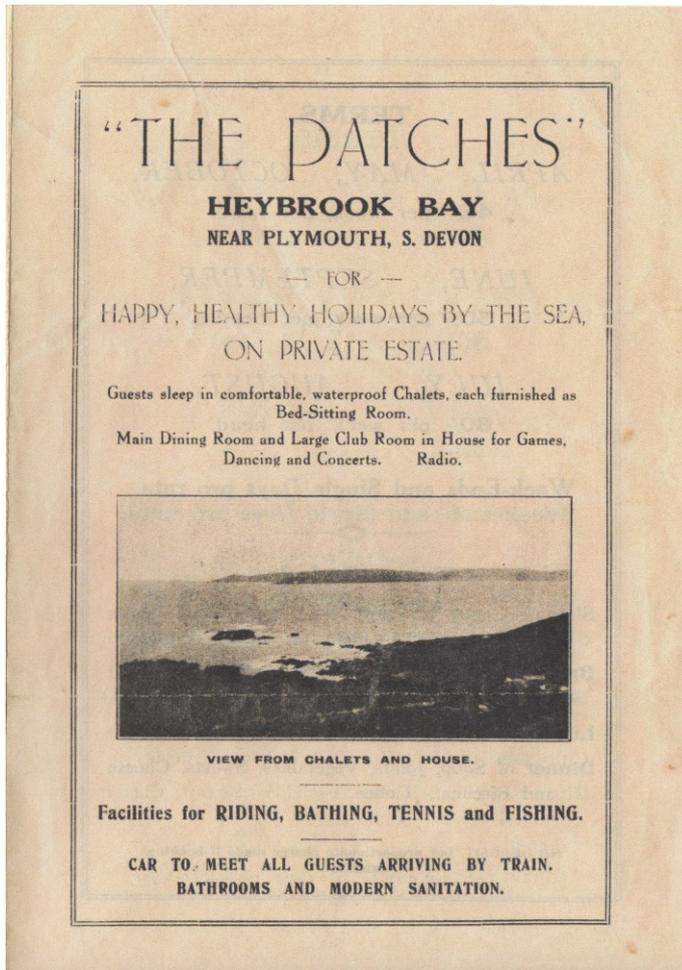
This smaller establishment stood alongside the larger Wembury Point Holiday Camp and offered facilities for those requiring a quieter, more relaxed holiday. The Heybrook Bay Lido, which was actually at Wembury Point, was also owned by them, and I believe that there was a temporary membership arrangement which made it available to those staying in the larger camp.



Note that in the Terms, in the height of the season, the going rate was 63/- per week (3 Guineas), which in today's money equates to £3.15. This was for full board. For people going out for the day whether to visit other tourist areas, or just to go shopping, packed lunches would be provided, but notice must be given on the previous evening.

<p>TERMS</p> <p>Easter, Whitsuntide 9/- per day May and October 50/- per week June and September 55/- per week July and August 63/- per week</p> <p>Children: 6—12 years 33 1/3 per cent less. Under 6 years, 50 per cent less.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>No Extras.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Bookings to be accompanied with 10/- deposit per person per week. ● Saturday tea to lunch Saturday following constitutes a week. Terms for broken periods pro rata. ● Cheques and Postal Orders payable to: “Heybrook Bay Lido Ltd.” ● All communications to be addressed to: THE SECRETARY, HEYBROOK BAY LIDO, HEYBROOK BAY, NR. PLYMOUTH, SOUTH DEVON. CAR PARK FREE 	<p>Specimen Menu</p> <p>Breakfast: Grape Fruit or Cereal. Bacon and Eggs. Marmalade. Hot Rolls. Tea.</p> <p>Lunch: Cold Meats or Savoury. Salad. Hot Sweet. Cheese and Biscuits.</p> <p>Buffet Tea: Tea and Cakes or Biscuits.</p> <p>Dinner: Soup. Roast Joint or Poultry. Two Vegetables. Cold Sweets. Cheese and Biscuits Coffee.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><small>DEVONSHIRE CREAM SERVED DAILY.</small></p>
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PAGE TWELVE



“The Patches” seems to refer to a separate holiday house and club house operating within the establishment, and boasts “A large club room with dance floor and radiogram!”

In the brochure, we are told, that indoor amusements are well catered for, games and dancing in the pavilion, “which has a specially laid out floor (3,200 square feet), and is the hub of the evening entertainment”. Table tennis, darts, skittles etc are all provided for. The Club (which I believe was “The Patches”) to which all can become temporary members is also at the disposal of guests. This had been designed solely for those who wish to take advantage of its amenities. “The lounge with its tastful furnishing is a place - just to lounge in. What could be more desired after a day in the open?”

“The Dining Hall is a spacious room with separate tables and has been designed so that all may enjoy the view. The Kitchens – staffed by those who know how to cook ensure that you enjoy your meals. Everything of the best quality. There is no lack of variety, and the quantity is unstinted, with up to the minute service.

Along the front of the Dining and Dance Pavilion is the verandah where one can loll in the sunshine and laze a happy day.”



To the left is “The Patches”, the Club House, notice the randomly placed darker coloured shingles, hence the name “The Patches”. In later times it became the Senior Rates Mess for HMS Cambridge which later occupied the site, and remained in place until the late 1960s.



Here are some photographs of the camp and some of the “Campers”

It is quite amusing to see what constituted “casual dress” in those days. In the photograph below, three of the men are wearing 3 piece suits complete with waistcoat, one is wearing a tie, and another a bow tie, and two others, their concession to being casual was to wear an open neck shirt!



To the right a family group in one of the chalets which we are told are “comfortable and adequately furnished. The beds are the spiral spring divan type”. We are also told that there are “Bathrooms, Hot and Cold water, Electric Light, mains water and drainage equal to any first-class guest house”.



children in the 1940s and 1950s. The beach huts backing against the cliff had gone by then, as had the buildings

Above is a photograph of the “Lido” which was mostly still there when we were



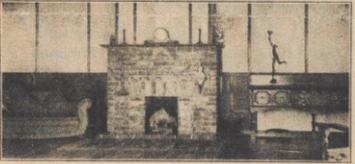
on the level above, neither was there a diving board on the outer corner of the pool. The remains of the boards on the nearside of the pool (out of view) were there but had long given up their springboards to the elements. The whole thing had been requisitioned during the war as part of the Naval Camp and had been allowed to deteriorate.



MEW STONE ISLAND, AND BATHING POOL, HEYBROOK BAY.

Private Car for Hire for visits to
all parts of Devon and Cornwall.
VERY MODERATE TERMS.
WITH CAREFUL DRIVER WHO KNOWS THE DISTRICT.

Picnics arranged at various Beauty Spots with
Luncheon Baskets provided.



CORNER OF CLUB ROOM.

Plymouth Printers Limited. 6888/35

TERMS.

APRIL, MAY, OCTOBER,
42/- per week, per head.

JUNE, SEPTEMBER,
50/- per week, per head.

JULY, AUGUST,
60/- per week, per head.

Week-Ends and Single Days pro rata.

—◆—

Terms Include:

Sleeping Chalets in garden, for one or two adults
and child (children under 12 years, half-price).

Breakfast of Cereal, Eggs, Bacon, Marmalade, and
Toast.

Luncheon of Meat Course, Salads and Sweets.

Dinner of Soup, Joints, Vegetables, Sweets, Cheese
and Biscuits. Coffee.

NO DEPOSIT, but proportionate charge made if bookings
cancelled.

In those days when there were not many people who owned cars it is nice to see that a “careful driver who knows the district” was on offer “for visits to all parts of Devon and Cornwall.”



A Morning Dip
at Heybrook Bay Lido

A Kodak Photograph



Off for
a Ramble

A Kodak Photograph

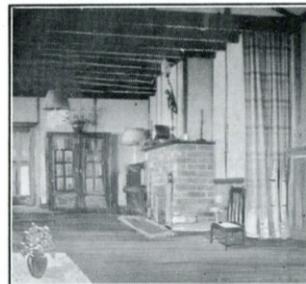
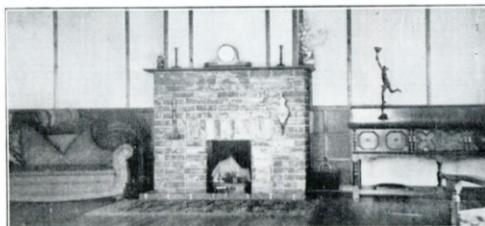


Starting out
for a jolly ride



On the Courts

Interior Views
of Clubhouse





The Patches was run by the Trotts, Leonard and Doris, shown in the photograph left, Doris seated and Leonard behind with two members of the staff. Theirs was an odd match, Leonard was a smoker, he liked a drink and had an eye for the ladies. Doris, on the other hand, was profoundly religious

She was a gifted needlewoman and could turn her hand to most upholstery and furnishing tasks and also many other things that would be classed as "D I Y" these days. It is said that she built the brick fireplace in the Patches clubhouse herself without any assistance.

In 1939 the whole of Wembury Point was requisitioned by the War Office as being of strategic importance. The Army "Listening Post", which had been in place for some time, was augmented by a Naval Gun Battery on the cliff just above the Lido, in order to guard the entrance to Plymouth Sound. Both the Wembury Point Holiday camp, and the Lido and Patches, were to be used as accommodation for the extra personnel that would need to be brought in to man the guns and sightfinders. Basically the Wembury Point Holiday

camp was used as accommodation for the Junior Ratings, while the Lido and Patches was used for the Senior Ratings. The Officers were accommodated in "Pilot Waters" a recently completed house with most commanding views of the Sound, and which the owners had never ever had a chance to live in. This remained as the Wardroom of what would later become HMS Cambridge until the closure of the establishment in 2001.

A Christian cannot be blamed if she seeks divorce from a partner who has deserted her, in order to secure herself against grave consequences; provided always that she does not marry during the lifetime of her first partner. There is, therefore, no reason why the lady about whom you write should not sue her husband for divorce since the threats he utters against her would, if carried out, cause grave damage to her.

The end of the Lido and Patches also spelt the end of the Trott marriage, which was not without a lot of acrimony. Doris would not grant Leonard a divorce on account of her religious conviction, but after

seeking advice from a vicar friend, who in turn sought the guidance of his Diocesan Bishop, she relented. An extract from the Bishops Letter is shown on the left.

Novel Mission Church In a Basement

For Heybrook Bay Residents

NOT long ago the small basement of "The Haven", a house overlooking Heybrook Bay, was packed with gardening tools, broken furniture and the usual paraphernalia of a store room.

But to-day, transformed, it is the worshipping-place of the 100 inhabitants of the neighbourhood.

The church, with seating for 15 people is one of the smallest in the country, with cream stone walls, blue altar hangings, and a bright orange latched doorway.

The idea originated from a Londoner, Mrs. Doris Trott who came to live at Heybrook Bay in 1939 and was surprised to find that the village had never had a church or Sunday School of its own, the nearest being 2 1/2 miles away at Wembury.

The Idea

After living in the district for five years Mrs. Trott received a visit from a clergyman, an old friend. She explained to him the difficulty of having no place of worship and he suggested that the 204 sq. ft. basement of her house should act as Sunday school for local children.

A few months later Mrs. Trott conducted her first Sunday school

lesson in the basement, attended by four pupils, and these gradually increased to a membership of 20.

But this arrangement made no provision for adult worshippers and subsequently the owner made a further decision that the Sunday school should be converted into a Church.

The Dedication

An altar was erected, draped with blue hangings and adorned with a gilded crucifix made from an odd piece of timber, together with a gift of two candle-sticks with flowers placed in vases on either side.

Early in 1945 the Bishop of Plymouth dedicated the basement and named it "the Mission Church of the Holy Nativity," because it was near Christmas time.

Communion services are conducted by the Vicar of Wembury (the Rev. Kenneth Tagg) every Sunday morning and Sunday school classes held during the afternoon, but the church has no organ.

To a "Western Independent" reporter Mrs. Trott said: "This is only a temporary measure which will have to suffice until Heybrook Bay can build its own little place of worship. About eight baptisms have taken place in the sanctuary, but so far no confirmations, marriages or funerals. Members of the congregation have formed a working party and run sales of work to pay for the Mission's upkeep."

Doris moved into "The Haven" in Heybrook Bay and it was in that house in 1945 that she established The Mission Church of the Holy Nativity to provide a place of worship for the residents of Heybrook Bay for whom the Parish Church was just too far away, especially in those days when very few people had cars.

Doris established a "Building Fund" in order to provide a permanent building sometime in the future. But by 1980 the regular congregation had dropped to just seven, and the Bishop of Plymouth advised that the money should be used to build a suitable room onto the side of the Silver Jubilee Hall at Down Thomas where it would better serve the community. Doris remained at The Haven until her death in 1988 at 87 years of age.

HEYBROOK BAY LIDO – THE PATCHES – ADVERTISING AND BOOKING FORM

HEYBROOK BAY LIDO LTD

"Where Sky and Sea are Lido Blue"

HEYBROOK BAY
NEAR PLYMOUTH

Telephone: Wembury 236.
Telegrams: Lido, Heybrook Bay.

AS a holiday resort, The Patches can be especially recommended to all indoor and town workers, because of the complete contrast to their everyday life.

The Patches Holiday House and Club should not be confused with the ordinary type of camp—rowdiness & excessive unconventional behaviour are not encouraged. You sleep in a comfortable, weatherproof chalet in the garden near the house. They are comfortably and adequately furnished. The beds are the spiral spring divan type.

The service and food leave nothing to be desired. Meals are prepared in a spotless model kitchen (which is open for inspection) and served in the dining room at the house.

Dear Sir or Madam,

I have great pleasure in forwarding our Booklet and hope it will interest you enough to stimulate a desire to visit us. Should that desire be realized I am quite sure you will enjoy your stay to the full.

To those of you who know Devon it is unnecessary to say anything for its seductive charm will have in you, a willing victim. You to whom Devon is unknown, except in song and story, I extend a welcome and Devon itself will do the rest.

The Lido is ideally situated for all classes of Holiday Makers, the Nature Lover, the Motorist, the Rambler and the many others who seek Sunshine, Health and Pleasure. World renowned beauty spots within easy reach by car, Dartmouth, the River Dart, Dartmoor, Totnes, Bovey Tracy, Buckfast, Torquay and many others and the incomparable Clovelly in North Devon is a fine day's outing. You are also on the doorstep of Cornwall; such places as Looe, Polperro, Fowey, etc., are easy journeys. Newquay, Bude, Tintagel on the North Cornish Coast are also interesting.

For those who wish to meander around "tiny undiscovered places," what better after breakfast, taking a lunch (you have only to let us know in time and we'll have it ready) ramble along the coast to the Mouth of the Yealm, spending a little time at Newton Ferrers, a beautiful spot, and then up the valley to Yealmpton.

Also, what about a day in Plymouth? The romance of the days of Drake and the Elizabethan sea kings and the modernity of a Naval Port of to-day, curiously intermingle into a charm of its own.

To those who do not wish to go out, what could be nicer than just lazing about, "the world forgetting, by the world forgot," feeling the invigorating and strengthening breezes, basking in the sunshine and enjoying the panorama of the Sound.

We have provided plenty of Outdoor Games—Tennis, Bowls, and Putting, and also who wish, Equestrian Exercise—by the way, haven't you noticed how this has come to the front lately?—well, we can fix you up with a good mount. And in the evenings—our floor is lovely—yes, of course, Dancing! and other evening pleasures, and so ends a day.

Come and see us.

Sincerely Yours,

L. J. TROTT.

ACCOMMODATION FORM

To the Secretary,

HEYBROOK BAY LIDO Ltd., and Club, HEYBROOK BAY, Near PLYMOUTH

If available, please reserve accommodation for, and nominate as temporary members of the Heybrook Bay Lido and Lido Club, the undermentioned persons.

It is understood that the temporary membership subscription, as laid down in the rules, is included in the Tariff Charge.

IMPORTANT—Please give names, actual address and description (Mr. and Mrs. Miss, etc.) of all adult members of the party

Mr. and Mrs. Date from to
 Miss and Miss Date from to
 Mr. Date from to
 Miss Date from to
 Mr. and Mr. Date from to
 Mrs. and Mrs. Date from to

CHILDREN

Name } Age Sex Date from to
 and } Age Sex Date from to
 Sex } Age Sex Date from to

Please write in BLOCK LETTERS and your Friends' Addresses on the back of this Form

I/WE enclose 10/- per Person, CHEQUE/P.O. being Booking Fee and Club Subscription which will be returned to ME/US immediately if the accommodation required is not available.

Amount enclosed CHEQUE/P.O. £ : s. d.

I have noted, and agree, that the above Company will not be held responsible for loss of, or damage to, property or person of myself or any, of the above-named persons arising from any cause whatsoever, and I certify that, on arrival, no member of the party will be suffering from any contagious complaint or have recently been in contact with persons so affected.

Signature of person making booking Date

Address in full please

The Management reserve the right to refuse applications at their discretion.

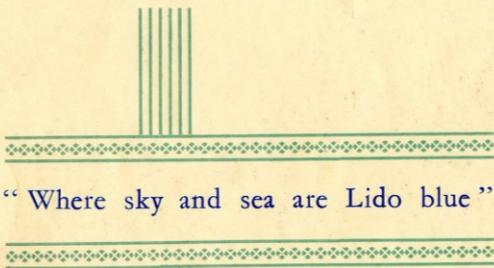
All enquiries must be accompanied by stamped addressed envelope.

3238.338

THE patches is situated on a private estate of over 100 acres of unspoiled country by the sea, seven miles by road from Plymouth, and has uninterrupted views of the Channel, Cornish Coast and Sound. For interest, one can watch ships of every description entering and leaving the harbour. The surrounding coast is very beautiful and provides secluded spots for safe sea bathing, pic-nics or walks. Apart from its own beauty, Heybrook Bay is an ideal centre for excursions to all parts of Devon and Cornwall. For those who seek entertainments, cinemas, Theatres, etc., or wish to make a shopping expedition in a large town, there is a frequent bus service to Plymouth, or it is a pleasant walk around the cliffs.

The inside of the Clubhouse of "The Patches" showing the brick fireplace reputedly built by Doris Trott herself. This is the large Club Room, which boasted as having "Dance Floor and Radiogram. Table Tennis, and Bagatelle." and also that "Dances, Bridge, Whist Drives, Concerts and Tournaments could be arranged to guests' requirements."

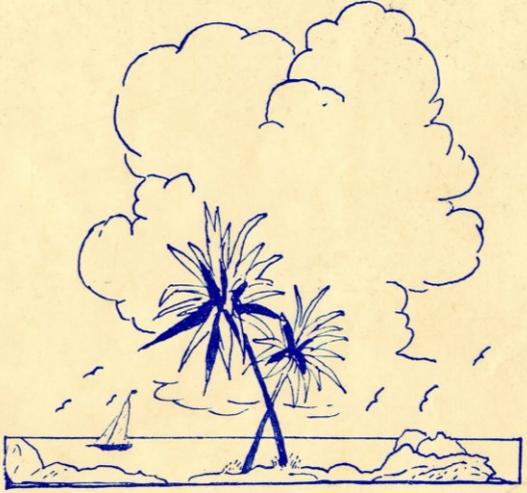




 "Where sky and sea are Lido blue"

THE
HEYBROOK BAY LIDO
 HEYBROOK BAY, Nr. PLYMOUTH, S. DEVON

Proprietors: Heybrook Bay Lido Ltd.
 M. Beaumont (CHAIRMAN), M. Beaumont (DIRECTOR), F. Cutler (DIRECTOR), C. W. Stebbing (DIRECTOR), L. J. Trott (MANAGING DIR. & SEC.)





'PILOT WATERS' AT WEMBURY POINT

This photograph was taken in the 1950s.

'Pilot Waters' was built in 1938 by a couple for whom it was to be their retirement home. They never got the chance to live in what was their dream. It's completion coincided with the start of the Second World War, and it was requisitioned by the War Department, In 1941 it became the Wardroom for the Naval Camp.

It remained as the Wardroom until the closure of HMS Cambridge in 2001. During that period it had been greatly extended, more than doubling its size, but done completely in keeping with the original building.

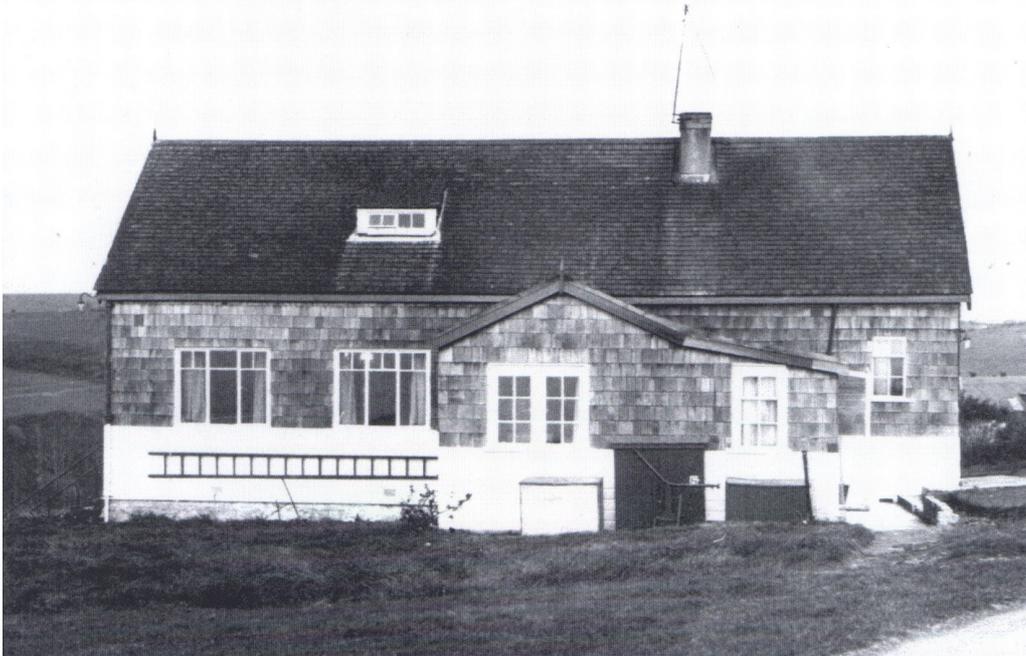
When the establishment closed it was demolished under a MOD agreement to return the site to 'green field'. It seems rather a pity as I am sure that it could have been leased out and run as a small and quite select hotel, under the ownership of the National Trust, thereby generating much needed revenue.



CPO'S & PO'S MESS AT WEMBURY POINT

This photograph was taken in the 1950s.

This building was, at one time, "The Patches, Holiday House & Club" part of the Heybrook Bay Lido Holiday Camp. It was requisitioned at the beginning of the war by the War Department and in 1941 became the Chief and Petty Officer's Mess for the Naval Camp.



It remained as the Senior Rates Mess until the mid 1960s when the new Senior Rates Mess was built alongside Drake Block, and it was then demolished. The photographs below date from the 1930s and show it as it was in its previous usage.



The WRNS were billeted in the "Heybrook Bay Hotel" which was also requisitioned. After the war it became the "Sea Horse Hotel", it has had a couple more name changes since then and but is now known as "The Eddystone Inn". The Heybrook Bay Guest House was also requisitioned,

HMS CAMBRIDGE 1956

This photograph was taken in 1956. Three newly built accommodation blocks for junior ratings are shown on the right of the photograph, Exeter Block, then Leander Block and just the end of Devonshire Block. The large building with the vertical articulation and the gable end with three windows, also newly built in 1956, was Drake Block. This contained the NAAFI and dining halls. The wooden huts and other wartime buildings were kept in use until the rest of the establishment could be built.

In 1955 the Army still occupied part of the site and I remember going into one of the wooden huts when I was in the Scouts as our Scoutmaster, Jack Duffin, was stationed there as a National Serviceman in the Army, and took us all up there and showed us around the Radar installation. We were each allowed to turn the rotate the radar dish using a huge brass handle, which we were told, was used in the event of a power failure. I thought later that surely if there was no power to rotate the dish, there would also be no power to operate the radar. Much later on I found out the handle was usually only used for maintenance purposes to check out the mechanical gearing, and also to check for any discrepancies between radar dish and compass bearing. We thought that we were witnessing one of the wonders of the age watching the screen and seeing the beam sweep around and the blip when the Eddystone Lighthouse was intercepted. The Mewstone was too close in to be picked up.

The three junior rates' accommodation blocks were under construction at that time, I remember that because we asked Jack what was going on and he told us that the Navy were going to take over the whole site.



HMS CAMBRIDGE COMMISSIONING 1956

This photograph was taken in 1956.

What started off as an Anti Aircraft Gun Station for the wartime defence of Plymouth, was commissioned as HMS CAMBRIDGE, the Gunnery School of the Plymouth Command, on 9th August 1956.

In 1907 the Gunnery School had moved ashore into HMS Drake from hulks in the Hamoaze where it had been since 1856 and known as HMS Cambridge. One Hundred years later to the day, in 1956 the Gunnery School moved from HMS Drake to Wembury Point and became commissioned as HMS Cambridge once again.



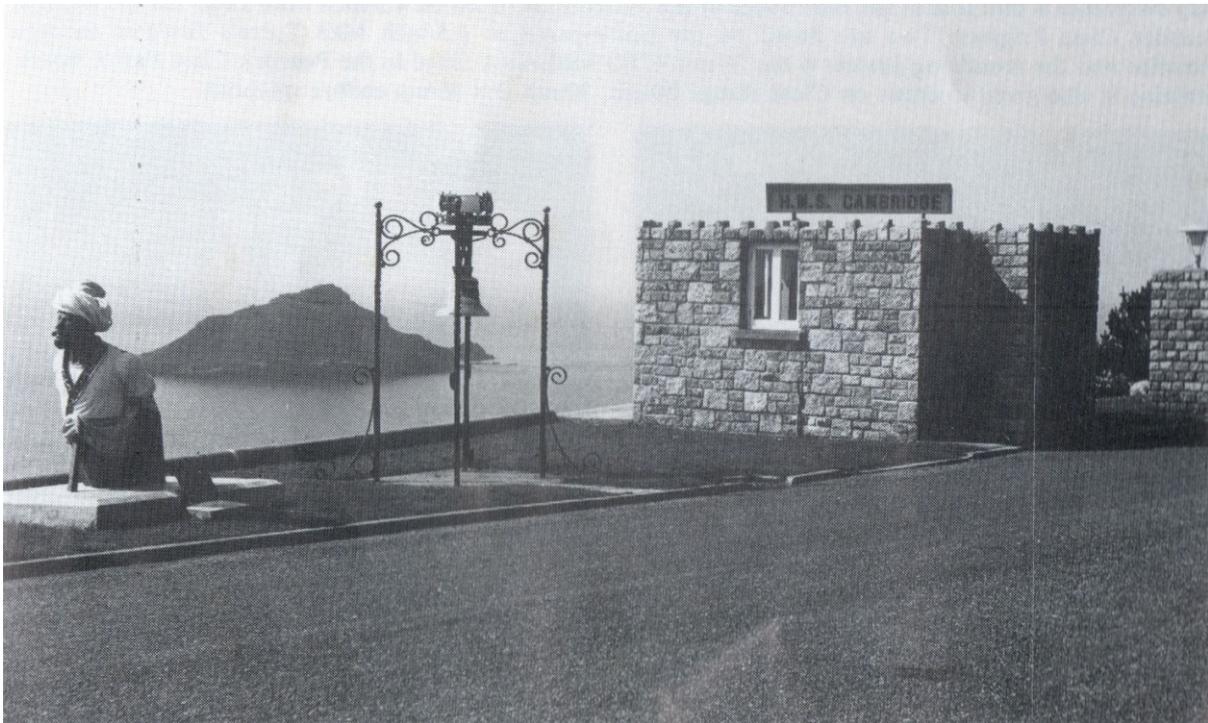
HMS CAMBRIDGE - MAIN GATE 1956

This photograph taken in 1956, shows the Main Gate area with its unrivalled view of the Mewstone and the English Channel. The actual gate is just out of view to the right. The rather small but very substantial Guard Room looks out onto the grassed area with the ships bell in its own wrought iron belfry, surmounted by the Naval Crown.

The figurehead is that of HMS SPHINX, a paddle sloop, which saw service from 1816 to 1881.

During the Second World War it had been a combined Army/Navy establishment. The Army manning the Radar Post which started off as an observation post in the First World War, and the Navy manning the gunsites just above the shoreline, which were installed in the early part of the Second World War to defend the entrance to Plymouth sound, to provide anti-air cover for the protection of the City. The Army and Navy personnel lived cheek by jowl in the pre war Holiday Camp accommodation, which was sited adjacent to the Radar Post.

It became a wholly Naval organisation in 1956, when it was commissioned as HMS CAMBRIDGE, the Gunnery School of the Plymouth Command, on 9th of August of that year.



HMS CAMBRIDGE - MAIN GATE THEN AND NOW

The upper photograph was taken in 1956, and the lower one in 2010

The upper photograph shows the Main Gate area with its unrivalled view of the Mewstone and the English Channel, with the ship's bell and the figurehead of HMS SPHINX, a paddle sloop, which saw 65 years of service with the Royal Navy from 1816. The children in the photograph are June Walker and her younger brother. They lived in "Three Jays", a bungalow about 400 yards up the road from the main gate



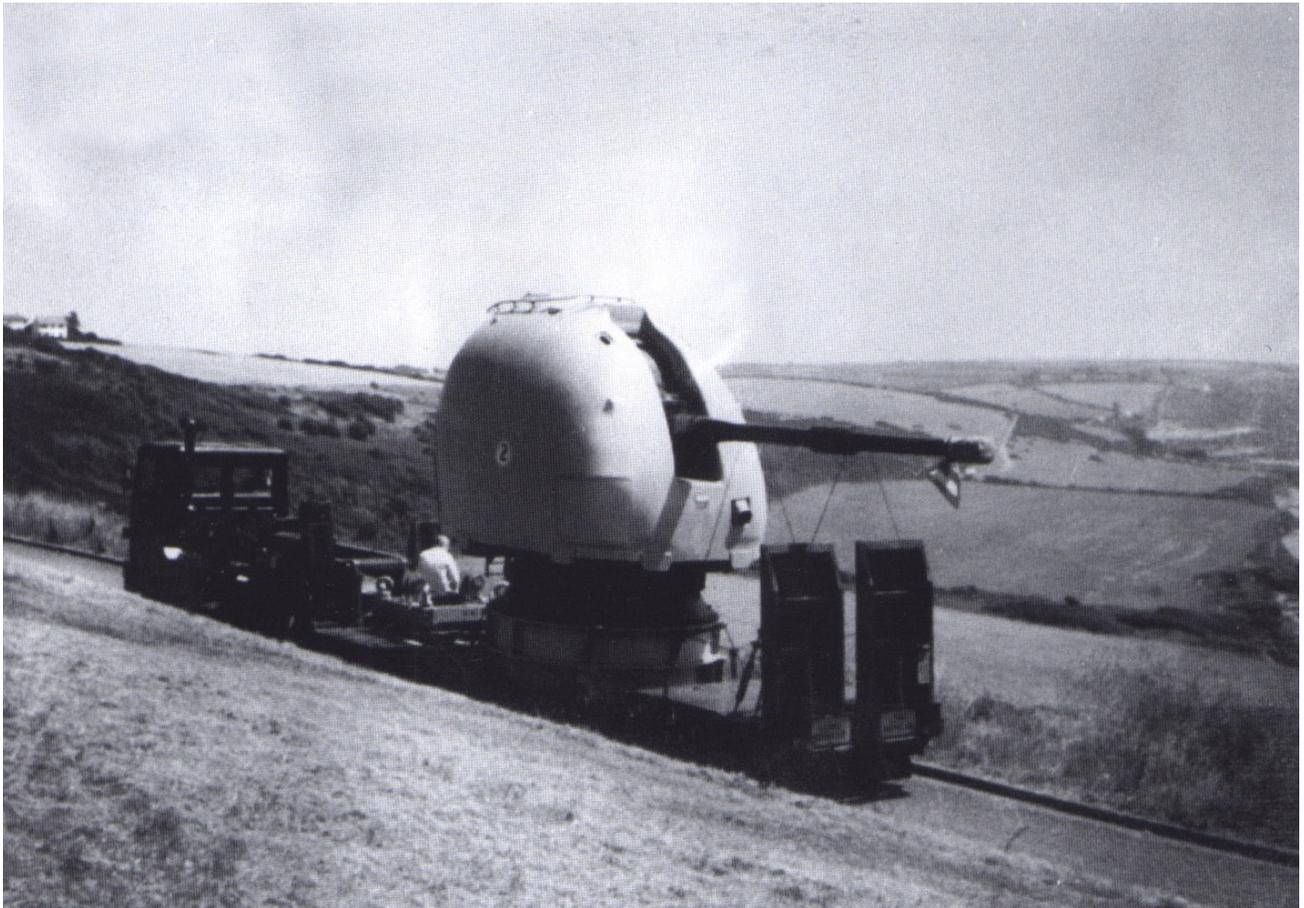
The establishment closed in 2001 and shortly afterwards was completely demolished apart from a small radar installation, so that there is now very little evidence that it ever existed. The lower photograph was taken in 2010 from roughly the same position as the upper one.



HMS CAMBRIDGE
4.5 MK 8 GUN ON THE MOVE

This photograph was taken in 1971.

This is a 4.5" Mk 8 gun being taken from the range at HMS Cambridge having been replaced with an updated model. All of the guns at HMS Cambridge had to be transported by road between the dockyard at Devonport and the gunsites at Wembury Point. One can imagine what a job it must have been manoeuvring these enormous pieces of equipment around the many twists and bends in the narrow roads.



HMS CAMBRIDGE ARIEL VIEW 1970

The Upper part of the establishment (towards the left of the photograph) contains the administration, accommodation and recreational facilities. The three junior ratings blocks are near the top perimeter and are offset from each other. Behind them against the perimeter are the three single storied blocks which are the only buildings remaining from the pre-war Holiday Camp. The squarish block on its own at the bottom of this area is the squash court.



The lower part of the site is occupied by the ranges and instructional area, with the Wardroom directly above. This was the private house "Pilot Waters" which was built in 1938, and later very much extended.

4/086 HMS CAMBRIDGE
DEDICATION OF THE SECOND CHAPEL OF ST BARBARA - 1972

This photograph was taken in 1972.

The event being recorded is the dedication of the Chapel of St Barbara by the Chaplain of the Fleet the Ven C C H M Morgan, QHC, MA., second from the right in the photograph.

The Commanding Officer of HMS Cambridge, Commander Hames, is fourth from the right.

The Revd Kenneth Gray, Vicar of Wembury and Officiating Chaplain, HMS Cambridge, is second from the left.

This was the second Chapel of St Barbara to be dedicated, and shared the same building as the gymnasium.

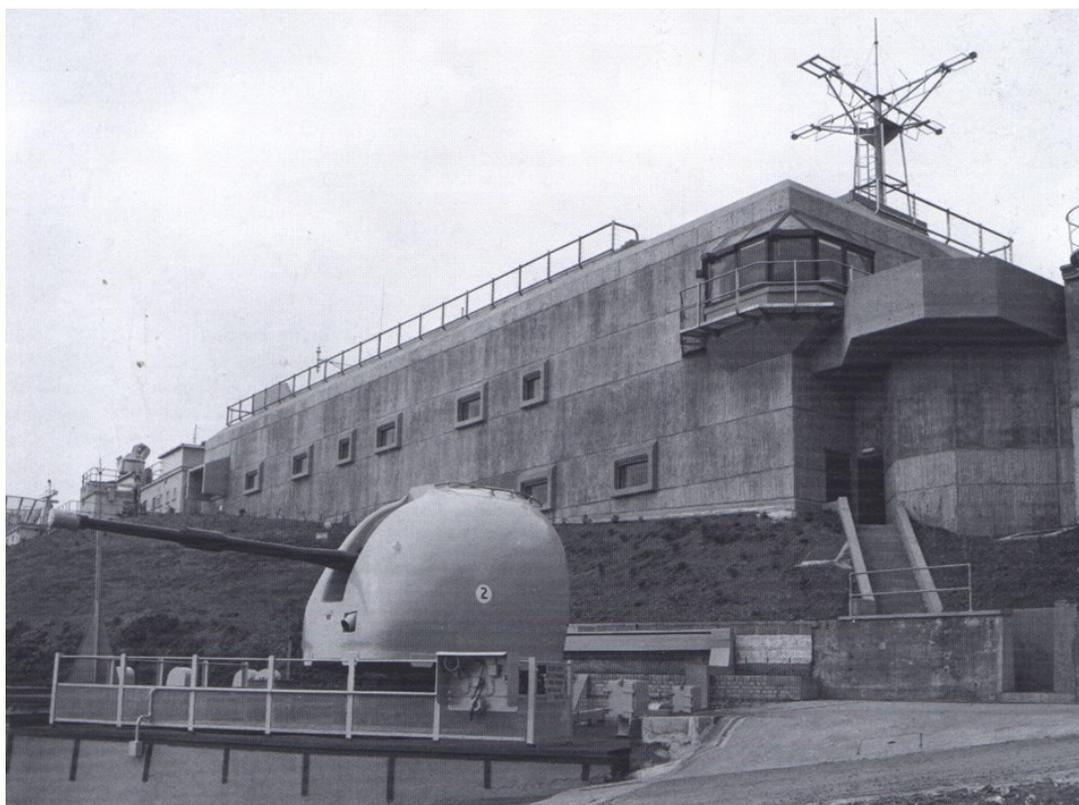
There would be a third Chapel, in its own building, before the establishment finally closed in 2001.



HMS CAMBRIDGE
RANGE CONTROL CENTRE 1985

These photographs were taken in 1985. The upper one shows some of the conglomeration of buildings bristling with aerials and antennae involved with the operation of the guns. In the foreground the site has been cleared and the foundations being laid for the new Range Control Centre, which will be named 'Leach Building' in honour of Admiral Sir Henry Leach.

The lower, taken later in the year, one shows the newly completed 'Leach Building'. The building was designed to be used as the secondary headquarters of Flag Officer Plymouth in the event of war, but was never fitted out as such. The Glass 'conservatory' on the corner is from where the Range Officer controlled firings.



HMS CAMBRIDGE
BUILDING LOCAL RELATIONSHIPS

The upper photograph is of the Wembury School visit 19th July 1990, and the lower one of the visit the following year 24th July 1991. The school children visited HMS Cambridge annually where they toured the gunsites and control rooms, and also had plenty of 'hands on' experience of firearms etc., very much under the watchful eye of the Gunnery School Staff.



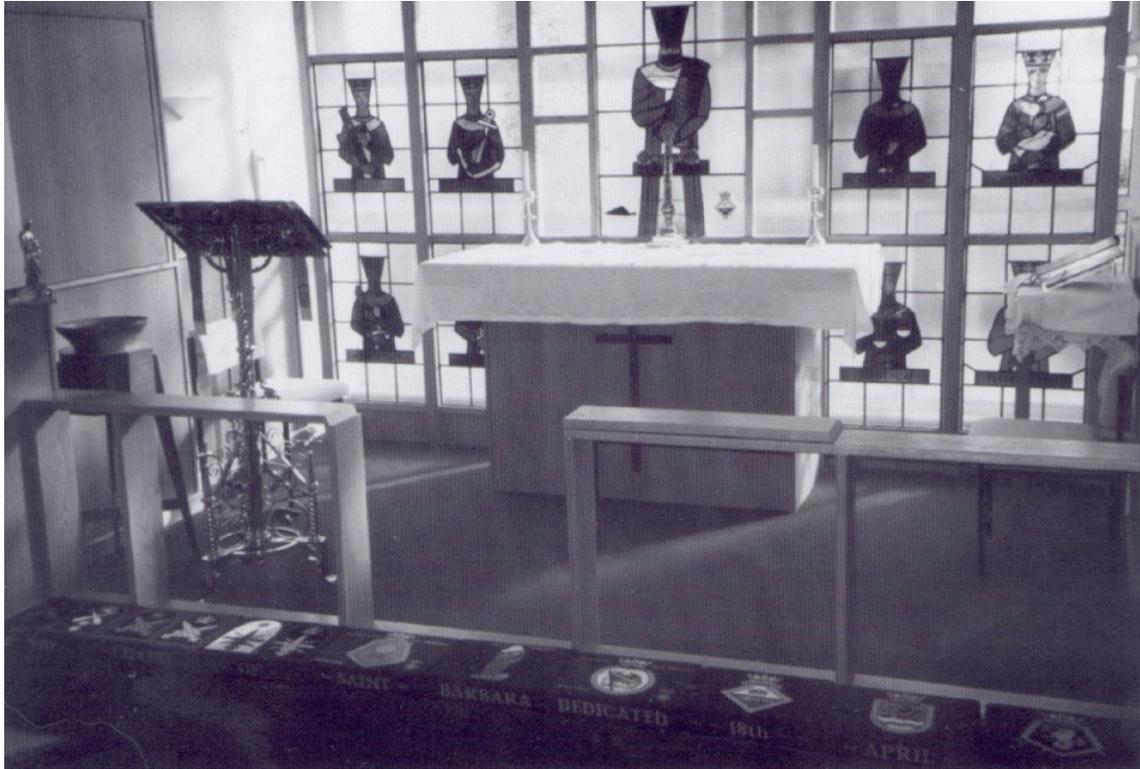
HMS CAMBRIDGE
BUILDING LOCAL RELATIONSHIPS

The upper photograph is of the Wembury School Visit in 1994. The lower photograph is of the Wembury Amenity Society visit in 1995. The Gunnery School encouraged these visits in the interest of building up good local public relations.



HMS CAMBRIDGE - CHAPEL OF ST BARBARA - 1998

These photographs were taken in 1998. This was the third and last chapel of St Barbara to be dedicated in HMS Cambridge before its closure in 2001. The Window comprises nine panels, four each side, depicting the virtues. These came from the Chapel in HMS Vernon, in Portsmouth when that establishment closed. The centre large panel depicting St Barbara was specially commissioned in a matching style.



The kneelers emblazoned with branch badges, and badges of ships associated with the Gunnery School, were stitched by the ladies of Wembury, led by Mrs Daphne Freeman, wife of the Revd Terry Freeman, Vicar of Wembury, who was the Officiating Chaplain of the establishment.



HMS CAMBRIDGE OPEN DAY

2 - 6pm Thursday 22 July 1999 free entry
car parking

fun for the whole family

RM band
Sea King helicopter display
sea cadets field gun run
commando weapon display
Royal Marine display
rifle shooting competition
medium and close range tours

ACTIVITIES

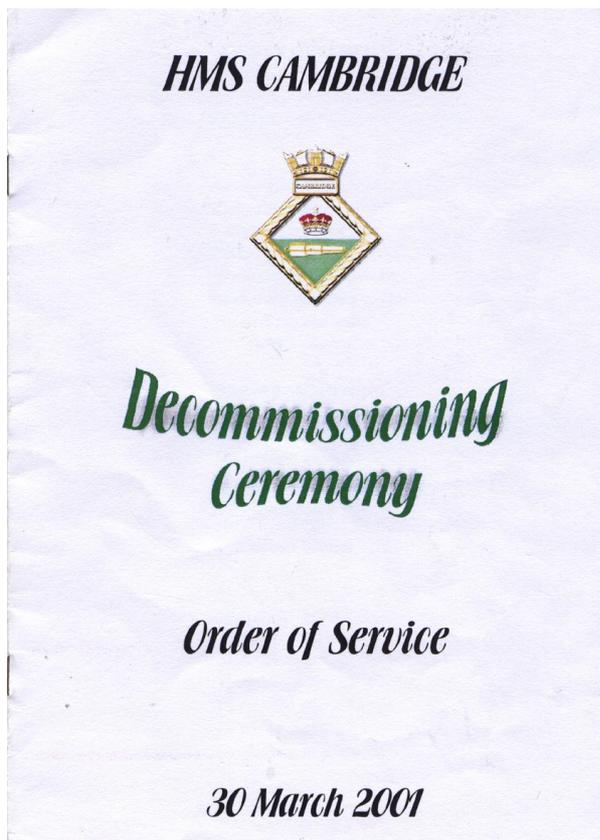
sports competitions
refreshments
bouncy castle
grand raffle ticket draw
bar
cream teas



come and see the GUNS fire

Programmes on sale - £1.50;
all proceeds donated to The Kosovo Appeal
and The Dame Hannah Rogers School
for physically disabled children

HMS CAMBRIDGE – DECOMMISSIONING SERVICE - 2001



HMS CAMBRIDGE DECOMMISSIONING CEREMONY ORDER OF SERVICE - 30 MARCH 2001

Introduction by
The Reverend Terry Freeman, Officiating Anglican Chaplain

HYMN

He who would valiant be
'Gainst all disaster,
Let him in constancy
Follow the Master:
There's no discouragement
Shall make him once relent
His first avowed intent
To be a pilgrim

Who so beset him round
With dismal stories,
Do but themselves confound -
His strength the more is.
No foes shall stay his might,
Though he with giants fight:
He will make good his right
To be a pilgrim

Since, Lord, thou dost defend
Us with thy Spirit,
We know we at the end
Shall life inherit.
Then fancies flee away!
I'll fear not what men say,
I'll labour night and day
To be a pilgrim.

Let us pray
All

Our Father, who art in heaven
hallowed be thy name,
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our trespasses
As we forgive them that trespass against us
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil;
For thine is the kingdom,
The power and the glory
For ever and ever. Amen

A Reading from St John's Gospel

read by Commander Jim Donaldson Royal Navy, Commanding Officer
Peace is what I leave with you; it is my own peace that I give you. I do not give as the world does. Do not be worried and upset; do not be afraid. You heard me say to you, "I am leaving, but will come back to you". If you loved us you would be glad that I am going to the Father; for he is greater than I. I have told you this now before it all happens, so that when it does happen, you will believe. I cannot talk with you much longer, because the ruler of this world is coming. He has no power over me, but the world must know that I love the Father; that is why I do everything as he commands me. Come let us go from this place.

A Reading from the Sailor's Psalm; Psalm 107 v 23-31

read by the Reverend David Yates Royal Navy, Roman Catholic Chaplain
They that go down to the sea in ship: and occupy their business in great waters: these men see the works of the Lord: and his wonders in the deep. For at is word the stormy wind ariseth: which lifteth up the waves thereof. They are carried up to heaven, and down again to the deep: their soul melteth away because of the trouble. They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man: and are at their wits end.

So when they cry unto the Lord in their trouble: he delivereth them out of their distress. For he maketh the storm to cease: so that the waves thereof are still. Then they are glad, because they are at rest: O that men would therefore praise the Lord for his goodness: and declare that he doeth for the children of men.

*Prayers are led by the Reverend Terry Maze QHC Royal Navy,
Principal Church of Scotland and Free Churches Chaplain*

Let us pray

Almighty God, we thank you for all those who have served in this ship during their lifetime, and for the fellowships that unite us. We ask your blessing today, as we remember the past and prepare for the future, through Jesus Christ, thy Son, our Lord. Amen

O Lord, when thou givest to thy servants to endeavour in any great matter, grant us also to know that it is not the beginning but the continuing of the same until it be thoroughly finished that yieldeth the true glory; through Him who for the finishing of thy work laid down his life, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

O Lord Almighty, bless us as we go our different ways: May good success and thy protection and the guardianship of the Holy Angels be with us wherever we go. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

THE NAVAL PRAYER

O Eternal Lord God who alone spreadest out the heavens and rulest the raging of the sea; who hast compassed the waters with bounds until day and night come to an end; Be pleased to receive into thy almighty and most gracious protection the persons of us thy servants and the Fleet in which we serve. Preserve us from the dangers of the sea and of the air and from the violence of the enemy; that we may be a safeguard unto our most Sovereign Lady, Queen Elizabeth, and her dominions, and a security for such as pass on the seas upon their lawful occasions; that the inhabitants of our Island and Commonwealth may in peace and quietness serve Thee our God; and that we may return in safety to enjoy the blessings of the land, with the fruits of our labours and with a thankful remembrance of thy mercies to praise and glorify thy holy Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

NAVAL HYMN

Eternal Father, strong to save,
Whose arm doth bind the restless wave,
Who bid'st the mighty ocean deep
Its own appointed limits keep;
O hear us when we cry to thee
For those in peril on the sea.

O Saviour, whose almighty word
The winds and waves submissive heard,
Who walked'st the foaming ocean deep
And calm amidst its rage did sleep;
O hear us when we cry to thee
For those in peril on the sea.

O sacred Spirit, who didst brood
Upon the chaos dark and rude,
Who bid'st its angry tumult cease
And gavest life and light and peace;
O hear us when we cry to thee
For those in peril on the sea.

O trinity of love and power
Our brethren shield in danger's hour;
From rock and tempest, fire and foe,
Protect them whereso'er they go;
And ever let there rise to thee
Glad hymns of praise from land and sea.

DISMISSAL

Go forth into the world in peace; be of good courage; hold fast that which is good; render no man evil for evil; strengthen the fainthearted; support the weak; help the afflicted; honour all people; love and serve the Lord, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit.
And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, The Son, and the Holy Spirit be upon you and those you love, today and always. Amen

HMS CAMBRIDGE AERIAL VIEW 2001

This aerial view was taken in 2001 not long before the establishment closed down.



RANGE DANGER AREAS OFF HMS CAMBRIDGE

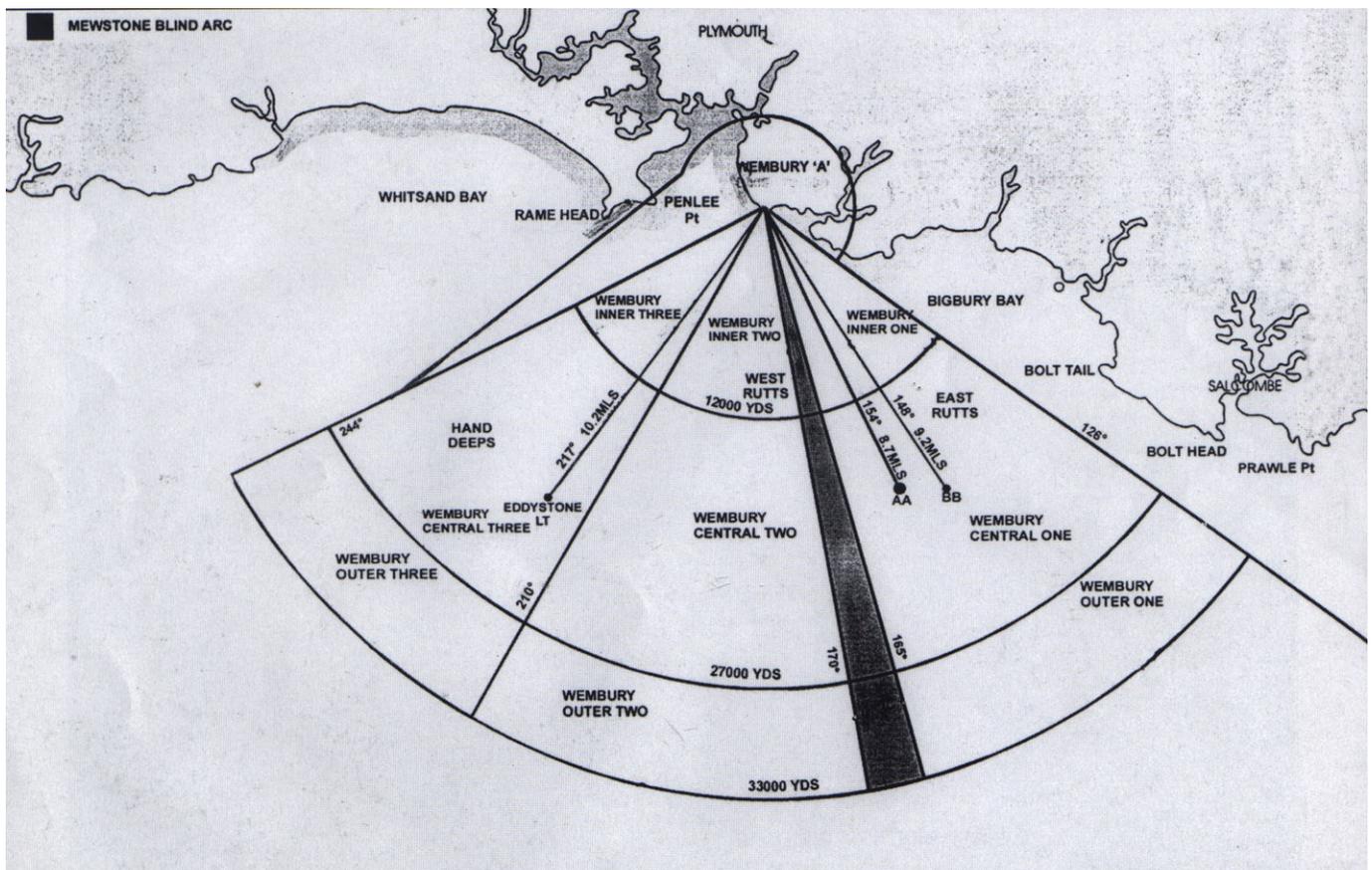
These were the permanently active areas extending up to 55,000 feet.

The close range guns (up to 30mm) would fire into the areas Wembury Inner Two, and Wembury Inner Three.

The 4.5" Mk 8 guns could fire into all of the areas, although there were safety arcs set up to protect the Mewstone and the Eddystone Lighthouse.

The buoys AA and BB were used as targets in shore bombardment training.

The Wembury 'A' area was a non-firing area firing area up to 22,000 feet and covered the turning circle required by the target towing aircraft.

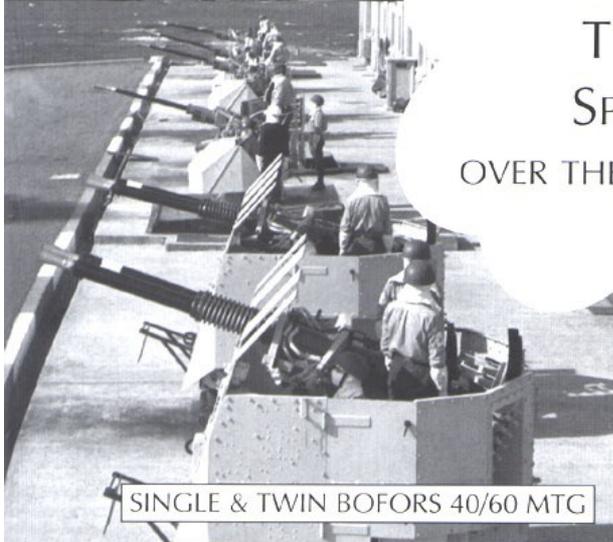




TWIN 4.5" MK6 TURRET

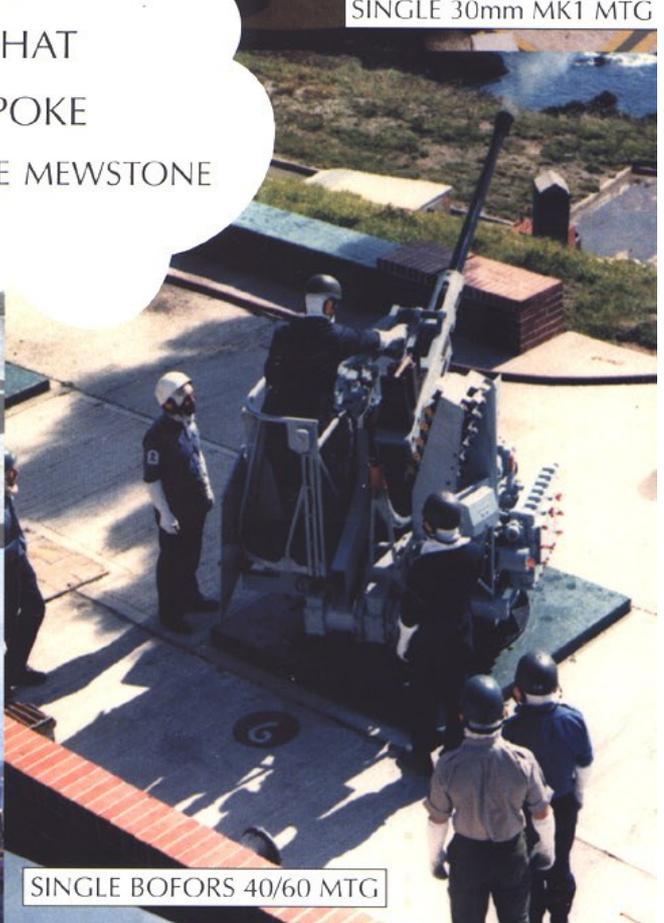


SINGLE 30mm MK1 MTG



SINGLE & TWIN BOFORS 40/60 MTG

GUNS THAT SPOKE OVER THE MEWSTONE



SINGLE BOFORS 40/60 MTG



SINGLE 30mm MK1. MTG



TWO SINGLE 4.5" MK8 TURRETS

THE EDDYSTONE LIGHTHOUSE

When we were children, we learnt that the lighthouse shown on tails side of the old penny coin alongside Britannia was in fact the Eddystone Lighthouse. This was the lighthouse that was built by John Smeaton and completed in 1759, and it was the third lighthouse of four to be built on the Eddystone Reef since Henry Winstanley's first attempt in 1698.

The reef is fourteen miles from Plymouth, in the channel fairway, in line with Start Point in Devon, and the Lizard in Cornwall. At high tide it is barely visible, but the swell eddying around indicates its position, and accounts for its name. There are three ridges of jagged rock, which break the surface. The centre one runs for about 200 yards in a line approximately north to south, whilst the others splay outwards for about 50 yards. These are the pinnacles of an underwater rock mass which rises very steeply from the sea bed and runs for about 600 yards. On the west side they slope upwards at an angle of about thirty degrees, whereas on the east side they fall away very steeply. When the tide is from the west the waves pile up and go crashing over the reef, when from the east, they hit the almost vertical side of the reef, and send a large curtain of spray skywards.

Winstanley's Light 1698 - 1703

Henry Winstanley was born in Essex in 1644, and as a young man had a natural ability for drawing, and for inventing and building all manner of mechanical contrivances, usually water powered. By the age of 51 he had amassed a fortune through his various business enterprises, and like many successful businessmen invested in shipping, eventually owning five ships. In the autumn 1695 he lost two ships on the Eddystone reef within a few weeks of each other, and rushed to Plymouth to find out why these calamities were occurring and at such regular frequency.

He found that although authority had been given to build a light on the reef, no one had accepted the challenge. Enthusiastically he readily accepted, totally unaware of the associated dangers, and quite unqualified for the kind of work involved. Only one part of the reef showed above high water being about thirty feet across and at an angle of about thirty degrees. It took between six to eight hours to reach the reef from Plymouth, and being able to land on the reef depended upon the sea state, and the eddying currents. This usually left between one and two hours in which to do any construction work. The working season ran from July to October. Sometimes men were not able to land on the reef because of high waves, and many days could be spent waiting for good weather. By the end of the first year Winstanley had managed to bore twelve holes in the rock and to fix heavy iron stanchions into them, holding them into place with molten lead. Although this appeared to a straightforward task the rock was much harder than was anticipated (being of an unusual kind of granite called 'gneiss'). The site was cramped and was difficult to maintain a foothold. Conditions were seldom dry out there, which posed problems when trying to heat and pour molten lead. By the time the second building season opened granite blocks had been quarried and cut into shape in Plymouth ready to be taken out to the rock. These were very precariously swung into place from the pitching boat onto the wave swept rock, and cemented into place around the iron stanchions, to form the foundation of the lighthouse.

Trouble now came from an unexpected source, a French Privateer captured Winstanley and his men and carried them off to France. Fortunately, King Louis XIV of France heard of it, and despite being at war with England at the time, decreed that the men should be returned to the rock to continue their work, as he was at war with England, not humanity. This incident meant that Winstanley lost two weeks out of the working season. In spite of this delay the schedule of work for the season was met. By the autumn the foundation had been built up to a height of twelve feet and a diameter of fourteen.

During the winter of 1697/98 he redesigned the lighthouse, which meant increasing the height of the base to eighteen feet and the diameter to sixteen. The King had by this time taken an interest in the project, and the next season Winstanley was determined to put a light on the rock by the end of the year. The next stage was still of stone and was octagonal in shape and contained a storeroom and a living room called the State Room. This provided welcome shelter from the elements and meant that stores and tools could be left at the rock instead of being taken back to Plymouth at the end of each day. It also meant that in good weather the men could now stay out on the rock which would lengthen the working day. Even then during one of these periods a storm broke out compelling them to stay on the rock for eleven days without adequate provisions or a relief boat being able to get out to them. The work proceeded apace and the wooden structure which had all been

built on shore and then dismantled, was brought out to the rock and assembled on site, everything fitting exactly into place. The whole was crowned by a very large weather vane supported by heavy ornate ironwork. On the evening of 14th November 1698 it was a very proud moment for Winstanley as he climbed to the lantern and lit the sixty tallow candles for the first time. The Eddystone had finally been beaten by a man with no previous knowledge of such work and no maritime or navigational experience. The news of the lighthouse was met with great joy by mariners and fishermen alike, many people went up onto Plymouth Hoe and other coastal vantage points in the evenings to try and catch a glimpse of the light.

In the spring of 1699 an inspection of the structure revealed that the base was not standing up to the constant buffeting of the waves. The salt water had been penetrating the cement and the whole of the base needed to be repointed. The keepers also reported that the wooden structure had been flexing and bending quite alarmingly during the worst of the winter's storms. Work was immediately put in hand for more stone to be cut, and sections for new wooden upper floors to be made. The base of the lighthouse was increased to twenty four feet, and its height to twenty feet. The full height of the lighthouse was increased from eighty feet to one hundred and twenty feet. The whole structure was now much more robust and hopefully better able to withstand the winter storms.

The strengthening of the building had been so successful that hardly any repair work was necessary the following spring. There had been no wrecks on the reef for two years and the light had become a welcoming beacon for mariners plying the English Channel. Winstanley had always said that he

would like to be in the lighthouse for the worst possible weather conditions, if only to prove to sceptics that it would stand up to it. In November 1703, Winstanley got his wish. A furious storm broke over the south of England playing havoc with shipping and leaving a trail of destruction along the south coast. Winstanley quickly returned to Plymouth and set out to the lighthouse on the morning of Friday 26th November 1703 to check it for damage. He got there in time to make a quick survey before turning in for the night. In the early hours of the morning the storm broke out again with renewed ferocity and when daylight came the lighthouse, Winstanley and his men were no longer to be seen. Winstanley had his wish but perished with his lighthouse almost five years to the day after lighting the candles for the first time.

The sceptics soon came to the surface saying that the reef would never be lit again, and if it was, any replacement lighthouse would meet the same fate as Winstanley's. Two days after the disaster there was an incident which quickly determined the outcome of any debate. A vessel the "Winchelsea" homeward bound



from Virginia and laden with tobacco, went down on the unlit rocks with all hands save two. This happening only two days after Winstanley's light being extinguished shocked everybody, especially as there had not been a wreck on the Eddystone reef for the previous five years whilst Winstanley's light shone out.

Rudyerd's Light 1706 - 1755

Although there was an urgent need to get the work on a replacement lighthouse under way as soon as possible, there was an unaccountable delay which resulted in the work not commencing until July 1706. Trinity House transferred the lease of the rock to Captain Lovet who decided on a second attempt. He engaged John Rudyerd, a Silk Mercer of Ludgate Hill to be his architect, which seemed a strange choice. Rudyerd was concerned mainly with reducing the effect of wind and weather on the building and for this reason decided upon a circular structure as opposed to the angular one of his predecessor. To this end he decided to sheath the whole structure with carefully cut and tapered lengths of wood to form an almost smooth cladding to the building. The building was not entirely of wood as we are often led to believe but strengthened by courses of Cornish granite alternating with layers of oak up to a height of thirty six feet. There was a central wooden mast running up from the bottom to the top through the structure to give it extra strength with flexibility.

Rudyerd's first job was to prepare the rock. All that was left of Winstanley's light was some rusty remains of the stanchions. He decided to alter the sloping rock face to steps, which would more readily accept the stone blockwork, and then to bore thirty-six holes in two concentric circles into which the heavy metal uprights would be fixed. This took much longer than planned due to the hardness of the rock and also that each hole had to be tailor made to each bar so that they would fit exactly. The bars were designed so that the foot splayed out so that they would have a better grip in the holes.

There was a problem with trying to keep the holes dried out, this was eventually overcome by filling them with molten tallow. The ends of the bars were heated up to 550° F and plunged into the tallow, which melted and allowed them in. Molten pewter was then poured in fusing the bar with the rock. A flat base was formed by building blocks into the steps until the level of the top of the rock was reached. The tower was gradually built up by layering granite and timber courses for nine feet.

At this level the entrance door was positioned and the courses continued being built up with spaces for rooms stairs and corridors until a height of thirty-six feet was reached. It was here that the tower was weighted down with 273 tons of granite as ballast around the central mast. It was at this point that Rudyerd had the



lengths of timber brought out to the rock that were to form the outer skin of the tower. Great care had been taken, only the best timber had been used and a very high skill was demanded in shaping each piece to fit the tapering circumference of the tower. Seventy-one lengths were required for the whole work. They were each one foot wide, and nine inches thick at the bottom, and tapered upwards. Any joins in the timber lengths were staggered and were scarfed to one another, with ends bevelled to form an overlap whilst maintaining a smooth outer surface. All of the joints were plugged with oakum and then pitched, thereby making the structure watertight and further reducing the resistance between the outer surface and the elements. An outwards curving rim was formed at the top so that any waves reaching that height would be deflected away from the lantern.

Above the thirty-six foot level the outer timber cladding formed the walls to four rooms, these being the store, the living room, the bedroom and at the highest level, the kitchen. Above the kitchen was the lantern. The sub structure was sixty three feet in height, with the lantern on top taking up to a total of ninety two feet. Although Rudyerd had a temporary light on the rock from 1706, the actual lighthouse wasn't completed until 1709.

Over the ensuing years there were minor problems with woodworm infestation in the ends of some the timbers, it seemed to be impossible to eradicate them completely even when the affected areas were covered in copper. So nothing could be done apart from replacing much of the timber over a period of time. Another problem was with the wind when some timbers would be wrenched off during a strong gale. For nearly half a century Rudyerd's light shone out and gave good warning to shipping.

For many years people worried that the lighthouse might be swept off the rock as had happened to Winstanley's, but the end came in 1755 from an unexpected source. In the early hours of the morning on the 2nd December the duty keeper found smoke billowing down from the cupola and on further examination found the timbers of the lantern to be well alight. The duty keeper's name was Henry Hall, and he was ninety-four years of age, a bit past his prime for fire fighting! He roused the other keepers but their efforts were either too late or too feeble and the structure came crashing down brining with it burning timbers and molten lead from the roof. Henry Hall looked and got drenched with molten lead, he persisted that some had gone down his throat but they didn't believe him. Twelve days later he died and at a post mortem examination a mass of lead weighing seven ounces was found in his stomach. The keepers could do nothing to save the lighthouse so they waited down at the lower level to be rescued. A fishing boat from Cawsand picked them up at 10 a.m., the following morning by which time almost the whole of the lighthouse had been destroyed. Thus another chapter of the story of the Eddystone Lighthouse comes to a sudden end.

Smeaton's Light 1759 - 1882

After the destruction of Rudyerd's lighthouse, no time was wasted in getting another lighthouse built on the rock. This time a Yorkshireman, John Smeaton, who already had a reputation as an engineer was entrusted with the work. Smeaton carried out detailed studies of the two previous lights, and decided that the new lighthouse would be built entirely of stone and whilst keeping to Rudyerd's idea of making it circular, he would increase the taper, and thicken the base to hold it more firmly on the rock. He also devised a method of dovetailing the blocks together with clamps to secure each layer. Granite would be used for the outside work and Portland stone for the inside. Smeaton established a work yard in Plymouth, at Millbay, where all of the stone would be shaped and assembled, and the metal work prepared before being taken out to the rock. Each block would weigh approximately one ton. Two teams of workmen were recruited, one to out on the rock and the other to be in the workyard. Smeaton also has a storage vessel moored about a quarter of a mile away from the rock to avoid constant boat trips in and out from Plymouth. This also meant that the workforce were able to stay overnight during periods of good weather.

Work actually started on 3rd August 1756, Smeaton went out with the first team to mark the centre point of the foundation and the guide lines for cutting steps into the sloping rock. He hoped to have this work finished by the end of the first season. Work actually started on 5th August, the teams working during each low tide, night and day, until it was finished. Several days work were lost due to weather conditions making it impossible to land on the rock, but the work was completed by the October and Smeaton was very pleased. The following year the team went out in May and erected the special lifting tackle into position on the rock. On 12th June 1757, the first stone weighing two and a quarter tons was successfully lifted into position and

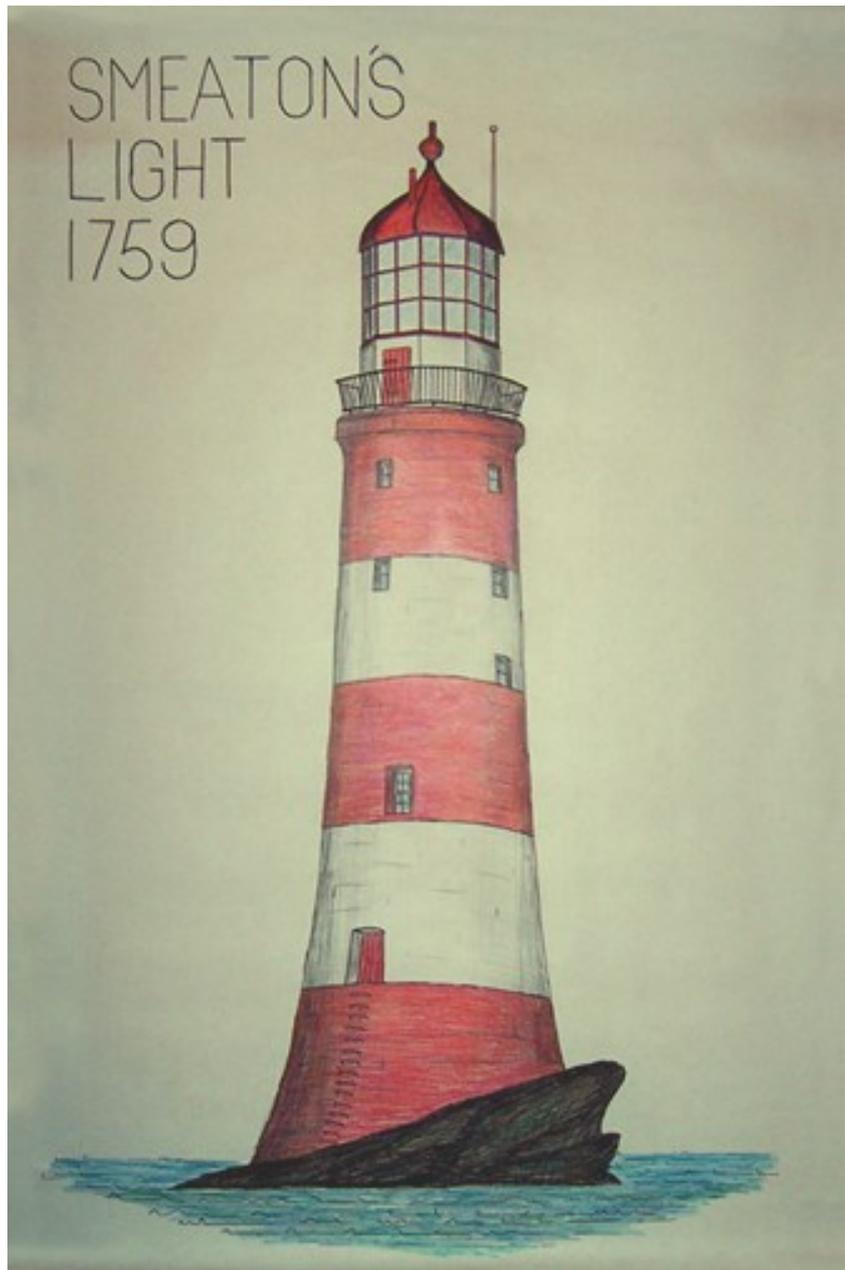
cemented. Stone by stone the new tower began to rise. The sixth stone course reached the top of the sloping rock so from then on the teams would be working on the level. The work continued until September by this time the foundations courses had been completed, which had now become one solid block of masonry thirty five feet in height. A further three courses had also been completed above the foundation. This meant the teams would no longer have to work in water or be in danger of being swept from the rock.

There would still be great difficulties, as with the completion of each course of stonework, the great stone blocks had to be hoisted that much higher. The last working season began on July 5th 1759, level by level the height of the tower increased until the lantern platform was reached. Here the top tier of outer blocks formed an outwards curving ledge that would deflect the waves away from the lantern. Smeaton gave the date of 16th October for lighting the new lighthouse. The lantern arrived from London in mid September and now it was the turn of the plumbers, glaziers and carpenters, to come out to the rock and erect and prepare the lantern which would be lit with twenty-

four, six pound, tallow candles. The lighthouse was actually lit for the first time on 8th October. Smeaton was prevented from going out to the rock because of bad weather but was able to witness crowning of his great achievement from Plymouth Hoe. His lighthouse had been completed without accident or loss of life. Smeaton's lighthouse shone out for over 120 years until it was found that another unexpected enemy had been at work.

Douglass' Light 1882

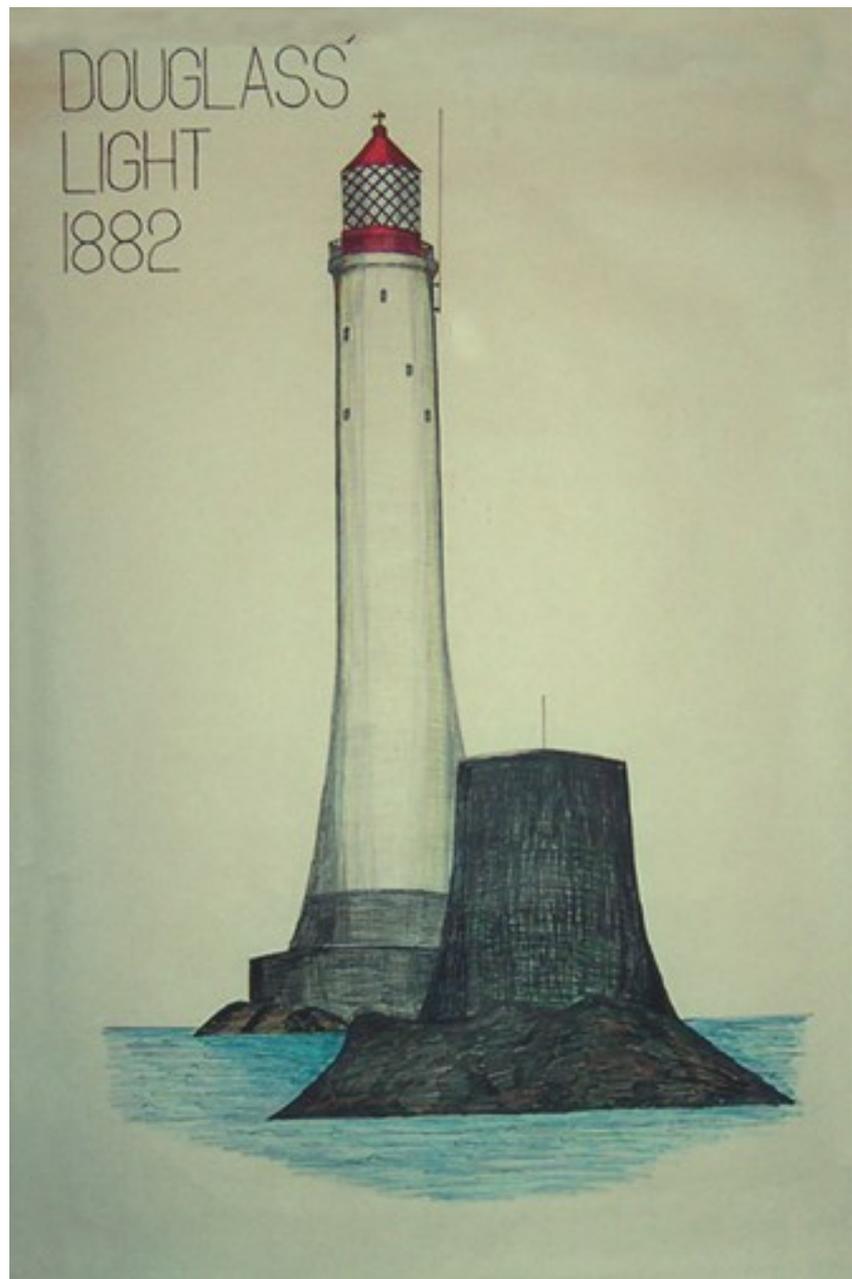
In 1870 it was reported that the rock upon which Smeaton's Tower had stood for almost 120, years was being gradually undermined by the sea, and the and the lighthouse was in danger of falling. The keepers had spoke of it juddering during severe storms. It was therefore proposed that a new light be constructed on the next highest rock. Lighthouse design and building techniques had very much advanced since the time of the building of Smeaton's Light, but the light was regarded as a National Monument so there was much outrage and opposition when the proposals were made public. Nevertheless replacement of the light was necessary, and the great task was undertaken by James Douglass, Engineer in Chief, to Trinity House. He was 52 years old and had recently completed the Bishop Rock Lighthouse. Now he had to turn his attention to working fourteen miles out to sea on the notorious Eddystone Reef. He had a specially built ship, the "Hercules", which



could carry 120 tons of stone, steam at ten knots and also contained support facilities such as workshops and living accommodation.

In addition it also had pumping equipment, cranes, heavy lifting gear, and pneumatic drills for penetrating the hard rock of the reef. Douglass started work in July 1878. The new site was submerged even at low tide so the team could only work for three hours each tide up to their waists in water and roped to a boat for safety. That first season they managed to remove 1,500 cubic feet of rock and construct a quarter of the cofferdam. The following year an early start was made and by June 1879, the cofferdam was completed. The pumps on the Hercules were removing the remaining water at each low tide and compressed air from the ship being supplied to operate the pneumatic drills. Everything went to schedule and on the 19th August 1879 the Duke of Edinburgh went out to the reef to lay the foundation stone. By the end of the working season in December, eight layers of stone were in position bringing the base up to a few feet above the normal high water level. The next season started in February Hercules making the hour's journey each day laden with stones each weighing between one and two tons. Each stone was cut with a ridge along the top and a groove underneath, which enabled the layers to fit firmly together. In three years 2,171 blocks of granite weighing 4,668 tons had been taken out to the reef, hoisted into place and cemented. The granite had been quarried in Scotland and Cornwall. The lighthouse was twice as high as Smeaton's and overall, four and a half times as large. This enabled the building to hold substantial water and fuel tanks, modern machinery, and adequate living accommodation, also later on, room to fit generators to power the light. The interior of the light comprised, first, the water tanks buried deep into the solid base and capable of holding a year's supply, above that the engine room and above that the fuel store. On the next level the winch room, from where stores and personnel are winched to from the relief boats. Above this the kitchen and living quarters for the keepers. On the next level is the 'low light' room so called because it houses the light that shine on to the "Hands Deep" shoal about three and a half miles from the reef. Above this the bedroom contains bunks for the duty crew and visitors, and the last level, the service room, which contains the equipment to control the light.

There is then a short stairway up to the lantern. Argand type lamps with six wick burners were first installed within a twelve-sided structure of glass made up of Twenty-four six inch lenses and nearly 1,000 prisms. The whole apparatus weighed just over seven tons and rotated silently on wide steel rollers. It was possible to move this assembly with one finger. Later these burners were replaced with gas mantles and lamps burning vapourised oil. These in turn were replaced in 1959 with

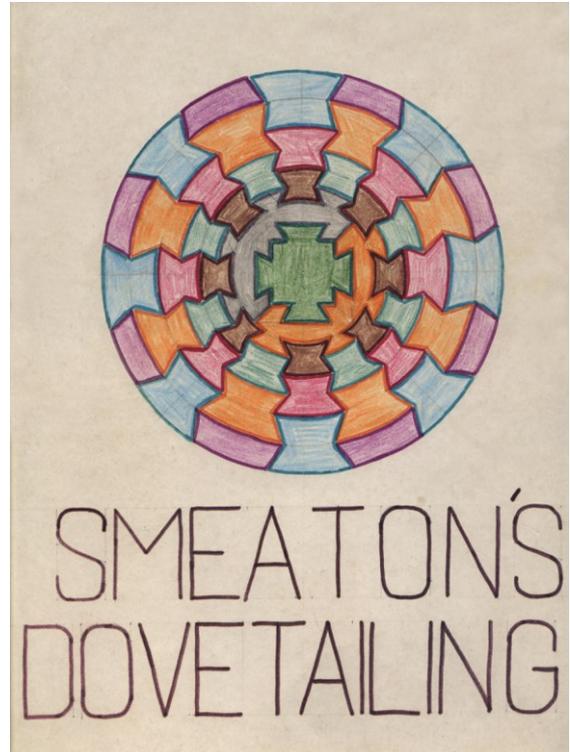


Electricity from generators feeding a 1,250 watt lamp producing a beam of 570,000 candle power which can be seen from a distance of seventeen miles.

Douglass had planned for the work to take five years at a cost of £78,000, he actually completed the job in three and a half years at a cost of £59,000. The new light was put into service on 18th May 1882. In the same year he was knighted for his work “on the occasion of completion of the new Eddystone Lighthouse”.

Smeaton’s Tower was dismantled stone by stone, loaded into the Hercules and brought back to Plymouth where it was reconstructed as the centrepiece on Plymouth Hoe.

N.B. The illustrations which accompany these notes are photographic copies of the much larger drawings that I did for a lecture that I gave in 1974 about the four Eddystone Lighthouses.





DOUGLASS' LIGHT – 1882

