

Hooe Lake Cottage

Between Fort Picklecombe and Sandways is the Hooe Lake scouts campsite. The iconic building nearby has an interesting but little known history. Throughout the years it has not just been called by various names but not many people know it actually started life as a thatched cottage.



Early 1900s view



Feb 2024 view

A very early local map (by Gardner - dated 1784) indicates the building but gives no name. Early Mount Edgcumbe visitors and early walking guides however offer us some glimpses. John Henry Manners is the first to give a description of the cottage in 1795 (published 1805): "In our way, we passed a house belonging to the gardener". He also mentions a glen in the woods, close to sea and there is a small room 'fitted up for a place to drink tea or dine'.



1784 map



1821 print

The first Mount Edgcumbe walking guide, by Warner in 1812 ('Walk around Mt Edgcumbe') refers to it as: "in a winding valley, called Old Lake, with Cawsand Bay immediately in front" and "a small cottage under a tuft of trees in the bottom". Cooke in 1817 uses the – nearly - correct 'Hoe Lake' name. Interestingly, an 1821 edition of the original guide has an actual image and it show the building as a thatched cottage.

In 1834 Anna Eliza Bray wrote the novel "Warleigh - or the Fatal Oak". She had set the novel partly around Mt Edgcumbe and had spent time writing the novel at Mt Edgcumbe House. This extract is from this novel:

'After some time spent in toiling up the hill against the wind and storm that blew directly in their faces , the party gained the back of the peninsula, and gradually began to descend towards the beach ; passing

through a little valley (in the direction of Cawsand Bay) , surrounded on either side by bold and abrupt heights. A cottage stood in the bottom, about a hundred yards from the sea. * Two lofty elms, uninjured by their proximity to such a tempestuous neighbour, being so well sheltered on either side, marked the little garden of the dwelling, which stood thus embosomed in solitude and beauty. Rocks of ebon blackness skirted the shore, and the ocean rolled its majestic waves above them , bursting and breaking into sheets of foam ; whilst the surrounding heights presented the wildest combinations of broken and cragged cliffs, red in colour, and here and there hung with dark pines, or with wood'.

She also added the following note: * "A beautiful cottage, lately built, now stands on the same spot." This gives us a date indication when the new cottage was built but no indication as to 'why'.



pre 1834 naive painting

Beasley in 1846 talks about "Next is the Hoe Lake Valley, and the Keeper's Lodge". The same in the 1850 History Gazetteer. So does Murray in 1851 - he also mentions trophies, etc.

On the 1856-66 OS map (and subsequent ones) 'Hoe Lake Cottage' is used as description

Wood in 1860 is the first one to use the name 'Huntsman's Cottage'. Most subsequent descriptions use this name, like for instance Duprez/Wright in 1871, although "the channel pilot - part 2" in 1863 still uses the name 'the gamekeeper's cottage'.

The print below from around 1870 is the first image to be found that shown the new Hoe Lake Cottage; it goes by the name of 'Huntsman's Cottage'



approx 1870

Below some early 1900s postcards - when it was called 'Huntsman's Cottage' and also an aerial view (approx 1980s) before alterations were done. Note the wrong name on some postcards; this is not Beechwood Cottage.



Huntman's Cottage "1887-1904"

A few years ago I came across this 'Distinguished Gentlemen' hunting party photograph online – (here some colour added). It was labelled as taken in Norfolk but I immediately recognised the features of Huntsman's Cottage behind the sitters.



Below the photograph superimposed over a 1904 postcard .



Who are the sitters? The National Portrait gallery website - where I found the photograph - is most helpful: www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/portrait/mw67928/Royal-shooting-party-including-King-Edward-VI

-Although labelled as 'Royal shooting party including King Edward VIII', Edward at the time was still 'Prince of Wales' (but also 'Duke of Cornwall', amongst various other titles).

-William Henry Edgcumbe, the 4th Earl of Edgcumbe, and Piers Alexander Hamilton Edgcumbe, the later 5th Earl of Edgcumbe.

-John Bulteel: From Holberton, S. Devon. Hunting was a great passion in the Bulteel family (note: it looks like the website has father and son Bulteel mixed up: this is most likely John Sr (B 1827 – D. 1897), whose father btw. was also called John, and so was his father, and so was ...


-Stanley Clarke, Colonel and equerry (an officer of the household of a prince or noble - see magazine cutting)

- Charles Harbord, 5th Baron Suffield, courtier (a person who attends a royal court as a companion or adviser to the king or queen - see magazine cutting)


- Lord John Hay, Admiral (see magazine cutting)

-According to 'Images of the Past' by Carne/Thomas (still a great resource , which has some images on the subject of hunting - see for instance the 'scorecard' for 7 consecutive hunts in 1865), Mount Edgcombe employed 4 gamekeepers/beaters/retrievers. These are most likely the other 4 people in the back of the photograph.

IMAGES OF THE PAST - CORNWALL'S FORGOTTEN CORNER



1865 Date	Place	H/1 H/2	H/3 H/4	H/5 H/6	H/7 H/8	H/9 H/10	H/11 H/12	Total
Sept 7 th	Ciffle	5	104	22	8	2	2	138
13	Wendra North	5	159	7	4	2		175
14	Challinck	7	299	11	11		2	323
15	Padra	7	281	40	15	1	4	341
16	Padra Padenick	8	94	23	10		3 H. Pagan	131
22	Lidford The Camp	8	146	29	36		5	216
23	Clampye Fouze Park	8	165	66	13	2	2 Smith	249
Grand Total			1241	197	97	7	17	1561



64. The same sheet following a shoot at Saint Germans

1865 'scorecard'

Note: over the years Mount Edgcombe hosted multiple Royal visits – as well as welcomed many other distinguished guests.

What's the date of the photograph? The visit of the Prince of Wales to the Westcountry was big news at the time and – amazingly - also got extensively covered in the 5 November 1887 issue of 'The Illustrated London News' – both in writing and including some great illustrations – one of them showing the hunt in progress. On the 3rd of November the Prince went on to Truro for the Consecration of the (newly built, but not finished until 1910) Cathedral. So, this gives as an exact date for this photograph: the 2nd of November 1887.





THE PRINCE OF WALES AT PLYMOUTH.

Great preparations were made at Plymouth for the reception, on Monday, of the Prince of Wales, who came to distribute to the local battalion of Volunteers his name, the 2nd Volunteer Battalion, Devonshire Regiment, mouth, Devonport, detachments, the during the past travelled from pined by Lord Clarke, by Great arriving at Mill- minutes to six station he was met Plymouth (Mr. W. members of the Earl of Mount John Hay, Naval Chief; and Major, commanding the Western District. A Royal salute was fired from Plymouth Citadel, and the party proceeded to the Guildhall, the Royal Irish Regiment furnishing a guard of honour. The route



SEARGENT S. T. ELLIS, Volunteer Batt., Devon Dist.

tees, called by (Prince of Wales's) lion of the Devon- embracing the Ply- and the Tavistock prizes won by them season. The Prince London, accom- Suffield and Col. Western express, bay at a few o'clock. At the by the Mayor of H. Alger) and the Corporation; the Edgcombe; Lord Commander-in- Lyons, General

from the station to the Guildhall, including Millbay-road and the two chief thoroughfares of the town, George and Bedford streets, was brilliantly illuminated, and coloured fires were burst as the carriage passed along. The streets were lined with troops of the Cameron Highlanders, the South Staffordshire and Royal Irish Regiments, and the Artillery Volunteers. All the space between the troops and the shop fronts was densely packed with spectators, who, as the Prince passed, cheered enthusiastically. Bands were stationed at intervals, and played the National Anthem as the carriage of his Royal Highness passed. The weather, which until the middle of the afternoon was boisterous and very wet, cleared in the evening, and there was no rain during the progress to the Guildhall, where the presentation took place.

A brilliant assembly of naval, military, and volunteer officers and the chief residents of the neighbourhood received his Royal Highness with hearty cheers as he entered. The Mayor welcomed the Prince, and the Recorder of Plymouth (Mr. Bompa, Q.C.) read an address; it recalled the Prince opening the Guildhall thirteen years ago, noticing with satisfaction his intention to open Truro Cathedral, the honour done

to the Volunteers in the borough of which he is Lord High Steward, and offering renewed expressions of loyalty. His Royal Highness expressed pleasure at being able to carry out the agreeable duties of presenting the prizes and opening Truro Cathedral. The Earl of Mount Edgcombe proposed a vote of thanks to his Royal Highness, upon which the whole audience rose and cheered the Prince, who said it had been no trouble to him to come there, but a source of great pleasure; but in the first place he was anxious, as a very old friend of Lord Mount Edgcombe, to give away the prizes to the Volunteer Battalion of which he was Colonel.

With reference to this ceremony, we give a Portrait of Sergeant S. T. Ellis, one of the prize-winners, who was in the Queen's Prize Hundred at the Wimbledon meeting in 1886. Portraits of the Mayor and Town Clerk of Plymouth, and of the Chairman of the Plymouth Mercantile Association, Mr. E. S. Lancaster (wearing the Volunteer uniform), are also presented.

On leaving the Guildhall his Royal Highness drove to Stonehouse, the route in that town being lined by Royal Marines and men from the Cambridge gunnery-ship. He

embarked for Mount Edgcombe in a boat of her Majesty's ship Iron Duke. The crowd in the streets had greatly increased, and the Prince was again enthusiastically cheered.

Mount Edgcombe, of which we present several Views, is situated on the western shore of Plymouth Sound, at the entrance to the Hamoaze, or Devonport Harbour, which is formed by the estuary of the Tamar with several deep inlets. It is the promontory of a rising ground called Maker Heights, overlooking Crossand Bay on the seaward side, and forming part of a peninsula which extends six or seven miles, in Cornwall, along Whitesand Bay, terminating in Baze Head, to the south, nearly opposite the Eddystone Lighthouse. The beautiful seat of the Earl of Mount Edgcombe, with its woods and grassy dells, is a charming sight on entering Plymouth Sound. It is nearer to Stonehouse and Devonport than to Plymouth, facing Mount Wise, with its batteries and the official residences of the Port-Admiral and Military Commander of the Western District. The mansion is an elegant building, and its picture-galleries contain many fine works of art. The Edgcombes are an ancient Devonshire family, one of whom rendered great services to King Henry VII., and was

slighted on the field of Bosworth; the house of Mount Edgcombe was erected by his grandson. The peerage, as a barony, was conferred on Richard Edgcombe in 1742, and was raised to an earldom in 1789. The present Earl was born in 1832, and succeeded his father in 1861; he has held the office of Lord Chamberlain and other posts in the Royal Household.

The Prince of Wales remained at Mount Edgcombe till Wednesday, and enjoyed shooting over the Earl's preserves. His Royal Highness went on by railway to Falmouth, where he slept on board the Royal yacht Osborne, and on Thursday went up to Truro for the opening of the Cathedral.

A few last points to note:

-This Lodge / Cottage was very much part of the landscape - and visitor experience - of Mount Edgumbe. Like Lady Emma's/Beechwood Cottage, Picklecombe Cottage and the Lodge near Maker Church, these cottages served as rest stop / tea house too. Only Lady Emma's/Beechwood Cottage is nowadays owned by the Mount Edgumbe Country Park. The other cottages have been sold off; Picklecombe Cottage as recent as 2011.

-It is unclear why this 'Cottage' was never registered as a Listed Building on the Historic England register, given it is older than for instance Beechwood Cottage or Picklecombe Cottage. Likely the fairly recent alterations would not have happened if it had been?

-No proof has been found (yet) but my guess is that the original thatched Lodge (partly?) burned down pre 1834, like for instance Lady Emma's Cottage would in the early 1880s. Interestingly, the Earl of St Germans also had a thatched Cottage (and also a Zig-Zag path) as part of the Port Eliot Estate - this seemed to be the fashion at the time. It was called 'St. Germans's Hut' and also served as a tea house and a Huntman's meet. And... it also burned down: in 1833 – see news cutting below. The Hut got rebuilt and much used around 1900 but is sadly now only a ruin.

The Earl of St. Germans' cottage hut, situate on the coast in Whitsand Bay, caught fire on Friday afternoon, and but for the most strenuous exertions would, in all probability, have been burnt to the ground. All the furniture was destroyed, with a quantity of valuable antique china and glass. The fire is supposed to have originated by some sparks from the kitchen chimney falling on the roof, which was of thatch. It was a favourite resort of his lordship, is about three miles from Port-Elliott House, and was occupied by a hind and his wife, who had charge of the premises. — *Cornubian*.



nb. a few years ago I did some research on this St German's Hut near Downterry. You can read more about it here: ramehistorygroup.org.uk/files/a_history_of_st_germans_hut_-_v2.pdf

Tonny Steenhagen – v4 – Feb/Nov 2024

nb. Hooe Lake Valley is one of my favourite views on the Peninsula – even on an overcast Winter's day - see below.



2024

November 2024: The following extra information has been kindly supplied by Mr. Gordon Porter.

I was born in 1937 and brought up in Plymouth. My father (1908-1993) was born and brought up in Stonehouse, and his father (Edward) was born and brought up in the Huntsman's Cottage. Our family has always felt a strong link with Mount Edgcumbe and the Rame Peninsula.

We cannot add anything about the history of the building. However we can provide some information about who lived here between about 1860 and the late 1930s - my great grandfather and his family were the occupants during that period.

My great grandfather, George Henry Vincent Porter, was born in Honiton, Devon on 12 Nov 1827 to John Porter (a potter) and Mary (nee Capron). By 1851 he had moved to Plymouth, and worked as a mason and was married to Mary Jane.

In the 1861 census he was head of household at Hoe Lake Cottage, Maker with his wife, six sons and a daughter. His occupation is given as mason and the three youngest children (aged 4 yrs, 2 yrs and 9 mths) were born in Maker. The four older sons were born in Stoke Damerel (Plymouth), so I think it can be assumed that the family moved to Maker in about 1856/7. Three more sons followed - Edward (my grandfather) born in 1865, Mark in 1867 and James in 1869.

The photo below is a photograph, taken in about 1898 (my best estimate), of a small family group outside Huntsman's Cottage. The background is very similar to that of the Royal Party in the subject article.

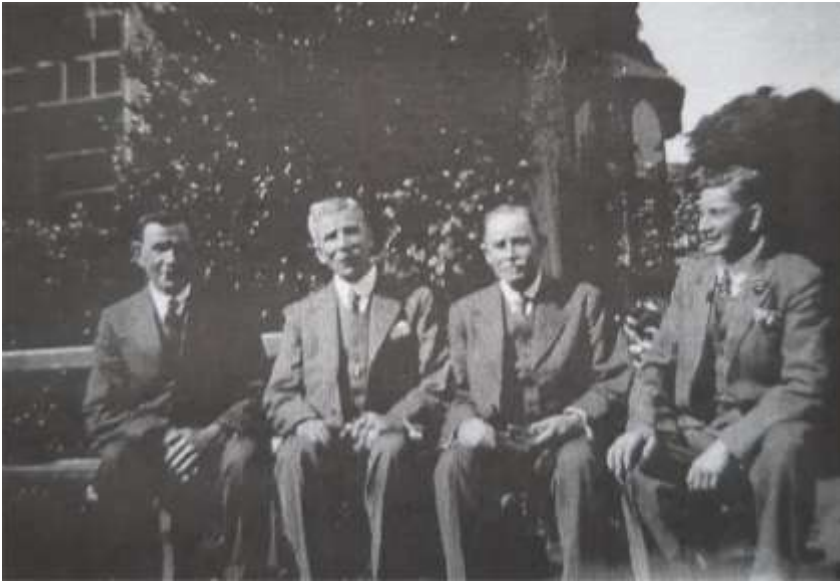


The two adults are: Mary Jane Porter (left) and her sister Elizabeth Avery (nee Porter). On the left is Lillian Porter, daughter of Frederick, a brother to the two above. The infants are Marjorie and Winifred, daughters of Elizabeth.

Elizabeth was married to Henry Avery: in the 1911 census they and their daughters lived at Maker Lodge and Henry is recorded as Head Gamekeeper.

George Henry Vincent died in 1906 and was buried in Maker churchyard. The 1911 census records have Mark Porter, a mason on the Estate, as head of household at Hoe Lake Cottage, the other members being his sister Mary Jane, his widowed brother Frederick and his daughter Lillian, and his two sons Charles William and Richard Frederick.

I have not looked at 1921 census records but believe some family members remained in the property until the late 1930s. I have a number of photographs taken by my father during a family gathering in the garden in 1936 (I believe) to mark the visit of cousin Mary Porter from the USA. Her father John Andrew Porter was the eldest son of my great grandfather; he migrated to the States when he was about 20 and stayed there.



This photo shows four brothers, from L to R, Mark, Frederick. Edward (my grandfather) and James.



I can name almost all in this large group. Cousin Mary (white bow on dress) is third from left; the frail looking lady at second L is probably Mary Jane, who also appeared in the 1898 photo. At far right is Lillian (also in 1898 photo, when she was 11 or 12).



This smaller group includes my parents, my dad's elder sister and, standing at rear, Lilian's husband George Pedrick and Reginald (son of James), who lost his life in France in 1940.

The 1939 population register records Mark Porter and two others as living at Tower House, Cremyll.

My wife has established that the property was requisitioned by the government early in WW2.



Finally, this is a drawing of Huntsman's Cottage by my grandfather in 1946, as he remembered how it was in 1874.
