

Some more facts about Plymouth

Plymouth began as a fishing village owned by the Prior of Plympton and became a town in the early 1200's. Its growth from medieval times and on through the Middle Ages came through the activities of traders and fishermen. By the time of the Civil War in 1642 Plymouth was quite a large town with a population of around 7000. Today, Plymouth's population is about 260,000.

Sir Francis Drake, in addition to his exploits as a sea captain, was made Mayor of Plymouth in 1581. He was instrumental in the building of a leat (man-made river) to bring a fresh water supply off Dartmoor into the city, the work being completed in 1590.

Lady Astor lived in a house in Elliott Terrace, just along the Hoe from Drake's statue, and was the first woman to take her seat in the House of Commons in 1919. She was an MP for Plymouth for 25 years.

Drake's Island has been a fortification since the 1500's defending the entrance to the dockyard. It was originally called St Nicholas Island when a chapel was built dedicated to the Saint. It later became known as Drake's Island in reference to the starting point for Sir Francis Drake's circumnavigation of the world 1577 – 1580.

Mount Batten & Lawrence of Arabia. Mount Batten was a flying boat station and Royal Air Force base from 1913 until 1986. During the 1930's T.E. Lawrence (Lawrence of Arabia) served there as an ordinary aircraftsman using the surname Shaw.

Devonport Dockyard has been looking after ships of the Royal Navy since 1691. In 1689 William III ordered a new dockyard to be built in the West Country and a site on the River Tamar was chosen. Originally called Plymouth Dock but later renamed Devonport Dockyard.