

## THE ARMS OF THE EARL OF MOUNT EDGCUMBE

Noel Cox

The Right Honourable Robert Charles Edgcumbe, eighth Earl of Mount Edgcumbe (Great Britain 1789), eighth Viscount Mount Edgcumbe and Valletort (Great Britain 1781), tenth Baron Edgcumbe, of Mount Edgcumbe, in the county of Cornwall (Great Britain 1742) succeeded to his titles in 1982. The present earl was an estate manager in New Zealand, and now lives in England.

Members of the Edgcumbe family, one of the most distinguished in the west country of England, have lived in New Zealand since the 1860s. The current earl and his immediate predecessor both went to England on succeeding to the title. The earl's family live in both New Zealand and England, where he lives in Empacombe House, Cornwall. The heir to the earldom, a half-brother, lives in New Zealand.

The former principal seat of the family was Mount Edgcumbe House, Plymouth. It occupies a magnificent promontory overlooking Plymouth Sound, and was built in 1547-53. Mount Edgcumbe was completely gutted by incendiary bombs in 1941. The house was rebuilt for the sixth earl by Adrian Gilbert Scott, who kept to the old plan but simplified the decoration of the rooms. The house was lived in by the Earls of Mount Edgcumbe to 1987, though it has been run by the City of Plymouth and Cornwall County Council since 1971. Mount Edgcumbe has one of the great eighteenth century gardens, created between 1761 and about 1800 by the first and second earls.

The earlier seat of the family was Cotehele, also in Cornwall. The family owned the estate from 1354, when William de Eggecomb married Hillaria, daughter and heiress of William de Cotehele. The present house was built around 1480-1500 by Sir Richard Edgcumbe. The Edgcumbe's gave up Cotehele almost entirely well before the end of the eighteenth century. In 1948 the house and estate were given to the National Trust. The family retain some lands in the west of England.

The arms of the Edgcumbe family are of considerable antiquity. The shield of the armorial bearings of the Earl of Mount Edgcumbe are today the same as that borne by Richard Edgcumbe in 1290, that is *Gules, on a bend ermines cottised Or, three boars' heads coupéd Argent*.

The earl has as supporters *two greyhounds Argent, guttée-de-poix gorged with a collar dovetailed Gules*. The expression *guttée-de-poix* means that the greyhounds are charged with drops of Sable.

The crest is *a boar statant Argent, gorged with a wreath of oak-leaves fructed Or*. Fructed simply indicates that the oak-leaves are bearing acorns.

The motto is *Au plaisir fort de Dieu*.

**Robert, Earl of Mount Edgumbe**

- Arms: *Gules, on a bend ermines cottised Or, three boars' heads coupéd Argent.*
- Supporters: *Two greyhounds Argent, guttée-de-poix gorged with a collar dovetailed Gules.*
- Crest: *A boar statant Argent, gorged with a wreath of oak-leaves fructed Or.*
- Motto: Au plaisir fort de Dieu.