

A Bridge Too Far....

In the ongoing programme to maintain and renovate the important historical features at Mount Edgumbe House and Country Park, this winter saw the return of the Ice House Bridge (approach to the Main House) to its former glory.

The Bridge has undergone extensive refurbishment work as well as reinstating the pineapple stone ornaments to the plinths.

During the time of Christopher Columbus the pineapple was a highly prized delicacy of the Carib Indians. It was introduced to Europe during the 1600's, Charles II was painted being presented with a pineapple. However, it was another 200 years before the horticulturists mastered the art of growing the fruit in the hot houses of large country estates. The fruit became a show piece of grand dinner parties during the 18th and 19th centuries before the canning process and refrigeration made it a common everyday fruit.

"In larger, well-to-do homes, the dining room doors were kept closed to heighten visitors' suspense about the table being readied on the other side. At the appointed moment, and with the maximum amount of pomp and drama, the doors were flung open to reveal the evening's main event. Visitors confronted with pineapple-topped food displays felt particularly honoured by a hostess who obviously spared no expense to ensure her guests' dining pleasure", (extract taken from <http://www.levins.com/pineapple.html>)

The Mount Edgumbe pineapples displayed on the ice house bridge were designed and sculpted by William Croggon (active between 1813 until his death in 1835) in 1827. He worked for his cousin Miss Eleanor Coade (1733-1821) in her works in Lambeth. He also sculpted decorative works for Buckingham Palace. Mount Edgumbe boasts other rare examples of Coade stone sculptures in the Lower Gardens for example Lady Sophia's Urn and Timothy Brett's monument.

The pineapples are currently protected by covers until they can be unveiled when the frosty weather of winter has passed and they can once again herald visitors' arrival to the House.

Mount Edgumbe House

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Pictures of the Ice House Bridge during the renovation process

