Keyham Steam Yard: See PPP series Ad KSY
The original Naval Dockyard, constructed on the River Tamar at Froward Point from about 1691, was provided to build and repair wooden sailing warships. The 1820s saw the start of a revolution in warship design. Steam engines were installed in wooden ships to augment wind power and to provide the opportunity to sail against the wind and to manoeuvre more easily in confined areas. Subsequent developments saw the hulls in wooden ships clad in iron - then ships with all iron hulls. The original dockyard, better known as Devonport’s ‘South Yard’, was not equipped for this new technology and could not be easily adapted. A new yard was required.

Work started on the Keyham Steam Yard in 1844. It was completed in May 1853, although some of the associated buildings were still under construction. The Yard was to the north of the Torpoint Ferry hard and Pottery Quay. A great deal of the site was reclaimed from the sea, with Keyham Creek to the north and Keyham Road to the east. Gates to the new Steam Yard were built at the bottom of Albert Road (then Navy Row) and off Keyham Road, just south of Keyham Creek. The Creek was soon infilled which allowed St Levan Road to be constructed.

Since the Steam Yard was outside the Dock Lines, and was being built for the Admiralty, boundary stones were positioned to identify its perimeter.

To the south of the site, a wall followed an irregular line from the SE corner of the Moon Cove Canal, where stone No1 was located, then eastward to align with the north-south wall running along the west side of Keyham Road. Stone No4 was located near the Albert Road gates. The tall limestone wall that ran north along Keyham Road to the second gate had five more boundary stones set into it. Some of this group had VR (Victoria Regina) inscribed on them, but all carried the fouled anchor, the broad arrow and the stone number. In addition, the wall mounted stones also bear a dimension in feet and inches and the letter ‘E’ for east. This indicates that the wall was not the true boundary of the Steam Yard. In fact the boundary line runs between 7ft 11in (2.41m) and 8ft 5in (2.57m) to the east of this wall.

Stone Ad KSY 6-1, pictured left, shows the format (minus the VR which only appears on stones made of granite). Note the unusual style of the number 6. Was this a stonemason error; first carving a 7 and then changing it to a 6? However, interestingly, this numeric style is duplicated on the partner stone Ad KSY 6-2.
The existence of a second set of associated granite partner stones is unusual. They have been laid in the footway surface, along the Keyham Road kerb line. Each one relates to the partner stone set in the wall. These paving stones are offset from the wall in the direction and by the distance indicated on the wall mounted stone. Stone **Ad KSY 5-2**, pictured right, shows the simple form of broad arrow used on these paving slabs.

It seems that some effort has been made to hide the details of stone **Ad KSY 8-1**, a wall set stone. The surface has been covered with a cement based coating allowing for only some of the markings to be read.

The original pair of No 9 stones is now missing, probably as a result of the gate which they marked being removed when the new entrance facing St Levan Road was built. Because this eastern boundary extended up to the former site of Keyham Gunpowder Works, already owned by the Government, it is possible that no additional markers were placed to define the Steam Yard’s northern limits along the shoreline and to the west of stone No 9.

However, we have included a No 9 stone in this series. This has been classified here as **Ad KSY 9-3**, pictured left; quite different in style to other stones in the Keyham Steam Yard / Keyham Road series and, possibly, associated with later Admiralty and Dockyard developments to the north. This stone is located on Saltash Road, north of St Levan Road. It is set in the northern parapet wall of a road bridge carrying the highway over the railway, near Keyham Junction.

In partial explanation, the following is a summary of Admiralty led developments north of Keyham Steam Yard and south of Weston Mill Creek in the period 1880-1910. In 1881, work started on building the Naval Barracks and related shore based facilities. These were positioned north of the Steam Yard, on the south shore of Weston Mill Creek where it met the east shore of the River Tamar. Originally called **HMS Vivid**, these barracks were renamed **HMS Drake** in 1934.

The land to the south, bounded by Saltash Road to the east, was left undeveloped until work commenced on the Keyham (or Northern) Dockyard Extension. This major project took place between 1896 and 1906, creating docks and basins suited to the ships and needs of the late Victorian and Edwardian Navy. The Dockyard Extension occupies the area from the north boundary of the original Steam Yard to the south side of the Naval Barracks, and includes reclaimed foreshore to the west of the Barracks.

**NB** - No other stones have been found along the 1000 metre long Saltash Road frontage. However, old Ordnance Survey maps show three an additional boundary stones on the land to the north west of **Ad KSY 9-3**, pictured above, around the railway at Keyham Junction. This area is currently inaccessible and, for now, the purpose and survival of these stones remain unknown.