

CI Arb Western Counties

Summer Meeting

Sunday 20 June 2010



**The Mayflower Monument, West Pier,
Sutton Harbour, Plymouth**

In glorious sunshine on 20 June, twenty members and guests of the Western Counties branch met by the sparkling waters of the Barbican, Plymouth, for a boat trip at the start of their Summer Meeting, organised by vice chairman, Jonathan Wyatt.

The visit would comprise leaving the Barbican on a pleasure boat, cruising around Plymouth Hoe and up past the famous historic Dockyards, then landing at Mount Edgcumbe House and Country Park on the Cornish bank of the mouth of the River Tamar. While at Mount Edgcumbe the group had a tour of the house, lunch in the Orangery and a guided tour of the fascinating gardens, culminating, of course, in a Cornish clotted cream tea!

Before leaving the Barbican the boat captain manoeuvred to give the group a closer look at the Mayflower Monument from the seaward side. The monument marks the point of departure on the 16 September 1620 of the Pilgrim Fathers for a new life in the land of America. Committee member, Steve Wilkinson, had been project manager for improvements to the monument in the year 2000, carried out as part of ITV's Year of Promise campaign.

Westcountry TV's contribution to the national campaign was to get many local companies to assist with funding the improvements to the monument in partnership with Plymouth City Council. They would then televise the whole process for a programme to be broadcast in May 2000. With the TV schedules set by late 1999 there could be absolutely no delay in the design and construction programme!

The design, from a concept by public art specialists, Easton Waygood, was developed by Plymouth City's chief architect to open up a sandstone portico in the line of the sea wall of West Pier so that the public could walk out over the water, as if moving up to the prow of a boat. This meant constructing a cantilevered platform, anchored by mass concrete bases beneath the pavement of the pier, the bases being connected to the platform by insitu concrete beams running either side of the somewhat fragile portico.

A major feature of the platform, which was named *Pilgrim's Point* by local school children, was the polished stainless steel balustrade which was produced in the workshops of Devonport Dockyard and resembled the railing of a luxury yacht. The rail was topped by a curved stainless steel tray inlaid with a bronze casting featuring pictures and writings of the surviving Pilgrim Fathers. In particular a quote from William Bradford, Massachusetts governor, runs the full 11½ m length, reading:

*"As one small candle may light a thousand, so the light here kindled
hath shone to many, yea in some sort to our whole nation"*

While many will know of the city of Plymouth, Massachusetts, where the Pilgrims settled, this was not the first landing place after their voyage. They in fact dropped anchor in what is now known as Provincetown, on Cape Cod, and representatives from that town not only contributed to the cost of *Pilgrim's Point* but were also at the opening ceremony on the 19 May 2000. Interviews with dignitaries from Provincetown as well as the construction process and opening ceremony were featured in a ½ hour programme called *Past Pilgrims & Present* broadcast on 21 May 2000, just two days after the opening.

Steve Wilkinson
Midas Group Limited

Further photographs:



Casting the cantilevered platform

Getting ready for Opening 19 May 2000



The monument "as was"



Pilgrim's Point, as completed