

20. FHA. THE GYLLYNGDUNE 'CHAPEL' 5 JULY 2024

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From 1837 and for many years that followed, the part of the seafront where the 'chapel' can be seen today, and the wooded area behind it, was privately owned, and known as the Gyllyngdune Estate.

Initially this was the home of the Reverend William Coope, Rector of Falmouth, said to be an authoritarian and controversial figure. In 1859 he was in dispute with the local Waywardens over the interruption of a footpath that went across his land. As a result, he was forced to reinstate access, but built a 'lower path' (still in use today), apparently so that he and his family would not have to see people walking along it ...!

During the time the Reverend was in residence he erected a large house 'Summerlands', laid out extensive gardens, constructed the chapel building, and created access to the family's beach - Tunnel Beach - via a set of spiral steps and tunnel.

It is thought that the chapel was never consecrated but was instead used as summer house by the Reverend and his family.

A contemporary, Barclay Fox, said he envisaged the chapel as the place where the Reverend: '... rested, wrote sermons, read, and changed for bathing on his private beach below.'

What happened to the Gyllyngdune Estate over time? Find out in our next post ...