

Old Meat Market



This hexagonal shaped building is next to The Jolly Sailor. The original building was built in 1853 with a date stone over one of the archways. The windows were once louvre shutters, this was to allow air flow around the meat before fridges became available.

The auctioning of live animals was held just outside, which was announced by the peal of a bell. At the top of the roof is a weather vane. This depicts an archer mariner armed with sword, bow and arrow. This symbol is on an ancient West Looe Town seal.



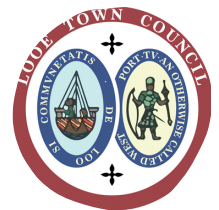
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Railway and Quay



In 1836, an exceptional seam of copper was discovered on Bodmin Moor. This was brought down from the moor by the horse railway and canal barge and deposited in Looe, to be collected by ships to be smelted at works in South Wales. It became necessary to build a quay to both store the copper and to support the railway. Buller Quay was built in 1856, and ran from the bridge almost to the sea front. At one time a vast amount of copper was shipped through Looe and led to prosperity for the town and surrounding areas. A section of the original railway line can be found on the quayside, just before the crane. This is a reminder of the railway that was built from Liskeard in 1860.

Warehouse



Moving seaward, towards the river mouth pass the 19th century 3 store warehouse with low down pulley wheels in the walls that were used to hoist materials to the upper floors.

The seafront retaining wall was added in the latter part of the 19th century to allow people to walk along the seafront and also to protect the town from high tides.

The tower clock faces are exact replicas of the 18th century originals, but have now been modernised with an electronic timing adjustment controlled by radio signals. The two clock faces on St Nicholas Church look only towards the west. We must remember, at the time of building, East and West Looe were very different and there was some rivalry between them, and because of this West Looe residents were not going to give the East Looe residents the time of day!

Sardine Factory and Heritage Centre



Next, going along the path between the church and the quay, heading seaward you will come to the Sardine Factory and Heritage Centre.

This Mid-19th century building was renovated and reopened in 2018, and contains a heritage centre along with coffee shop, climbing wall and restaurant.

Part of the building is still leased to local fishermen, so its links to fishing and the sea continues.

Finally we return to St Nicholas Church, and cross the road passing the fire station and The Jolly Sailor Inn towards the Old Meat Market.

The Riverside United Reform Church is a short distance away. The present church has been built on the site of the original church that was built in 1787. The present building dates from the 1880s and was refurbished in the 1990s.

Continuing seawards we pass the Port-by-Han which is the old name for West Looe, and continue on towards St Nicholas Church.

At one time St Nicholas Church was the end point of West Looe and had houses adjacent to it. These were demolished in 1895, when the road to Hannafore was built.

Prior to this the only access was the steep and narrow Hannafore Lane which can still be seen and used. This lane is higher above the road and can be accessed just up from the firestation. Building the road also meant cutting through the outcrop of rock behind the church.

St Nicholas Church



The church is a 14th century building. The mother church is based at Talland overlooking the Bay. In the mid 16th century, the church was used as a guild hall by the borough council and the magistrates has a small jail built out from the north wall.

Its entrance, although now blocked up, can still be seen as an outline in the wall. In 1852, the church was taken back into the care of the church commissioners and restored. There are a number of 19th century stain glass windows within the church.

Life Boat Stations



Moving along towards the seafront, we pass the new lifeboat station that was opened in 2003. Heading east along the seafront see the old lifeboat station that was built in 1866. This station next to the watchtower and obelisk remained in use until 1930, when the lifeboat was withdrawn and was not reinstated until 1992.

Banjo Pier



The Banjo Pier was originally built in 1840, as a long straight strip with a tapering end. It was hoped that this would prevent sand clogging the harbour mouth but this was not entirely successful. Joseph Thomas put forward the idea of making the end round. The round end was constructed between 1896-1897. The light on the pier was given by Admiral Riley, the then Chairman of the Harbour Commissioners. Originally, the pier was going to be named after Admiral Riley, but this idea was dropped when locals kept referring to it as a banjo!

St Mary's Church



Further along, finds St Mary's Church. The original church was established in 1259, but was eventually replaced by the existing building in the late 19th century (Apart from the tower that is the original). The tower used to be whitewashed and used as a day marker for shipping up to the beginning of WWI. The single clock face dating from the early 18th century, was renovated in 1996, but note it faces only towards East Looe preventing residents of West Looe seeing the time! East of the tower stands the church house which was built for the clergy and stands directly opposite the door of the church with the old vicarage next to it on the corner.

Back Streets



The narrow backstreets of Looe were originally set out in early Tudor times and are said to be unique for the time. There are a number of old houses built within the narrow streets and many are said to date back to when Looe was exporting copper. Part way down the back streets, you will find an open area that was once the old meat market.

Old Guild Hall and Museum



Memorial Stone



On the quayside, by the steps leading into the river, there is a stone laid by Prince George in 1931. It marks the start of the refurbishments of West Looe Quay.

Coastguard Cottages



Passing the Harbour Moon Public House, looking up you will see a row of old grey stone coastguard cottages. These were built in 1892 to house those who worked as local coastguards.

Riverside United Reform Church



Old Bridge Head



Crossing Looe Bridge, and following the road down into West Looe, you will pass the Old Bridge House that has been on this site since before 1809.

Slightly further down the hill and just before The Harbour Moon Public House, is an ancient stone that shows the westward location of the medieval bridge that was completed in 1436.

The stone commemorates the repair work carried out in 1689, that was paid for by the council, which at that time was very unusual.

This was replaced with the present bridge in 1853, and until 1895, West Looe had no vehicular access from the bridge. Residents of West Looe had to go down to the mill and pass underneath the bridge.

This passage is still in use today for pedestrians.

The 1853 bridge, was originally only 12 feet wide but was widened to its current width in 1960. At this time, the bridge was also shortened slightly and an original arch can be seen by the war memorial.

The Old Guild Hall is spread over two floors; the upper floor of the building, which was in use from 1587 - 1878, was the East Looe Town Hall and Magistrates Court.

Beneath the magnificent timber framed roof, laws were made and enforced, and the town was administered by the Mayor and Corporation, known as Burgesses. The building has now been converted into a museum and is well worth a visit.

Smugglers Cott



Just down from the Old Guild Hall is the Smugglers Cott. This is now a restaurant with its 18th century facade. The original arched doorway opens onto Higher Market Street and suggests this is one of the oldest buildings in Looe. It has a massive chimney and prominent timber.

The timbers used in the later renovations and extensions are said to come from ships of the Spanish Armada. The house also boasts a secret passageway which may have been used to hide smuggled goods.

The Golden Guinea



This is one of Looe's finest houses. Thomas Bond lived here and published "A History of Looe" in around 1823. He left 10,000 Guineas of gold in the house for his heir. The building is believed to have been built in 1632, a date stone can be found in one of the upstairs window frames. Opposite the Golden Guinea is Bray's, another 17th century building, although the facade is 18th century.

The Guild Hall



The current Guild Hall was built in 1877, in a gothic revival style and boasts a series of stained glass window illustrating Looe's history. Much of this building is original and over the main doorway is a representation of the coat of arms for East Looe which depicts a single mast ship with the two figures of Joseph of Arimathea and the boy Jesus, who legend says spent time on Looe Island while his uncle traded in Looe.

Pennyland



From here we can look across the river towards the arches and walkway of Pennyland. Joseph Thomas was the instigator and architect of the road to Hannafore built in 1895. Previously West Looe had stopped at St Nicholas Church.

Because the little bay at Pennyland needed a causeway to carry the road, Joseph Thomas built the 3 arches and the large arch beyond to carry the road. The turrets were not on the original plans but were added for decoration. Much later in the 20th century the walkway was added.

The Old Mill



The Old Mill is a 17th century mill that operated for three centuries by using the rise and fall of the tide. In 1614 Thomas Arundell obtained the right to enclose 13 acres of West Looe Estuary. This is now mostly used as the Millpool Car Park.

Thomas Arundell built a wall around the lake with a mill house and lock gate at the seaward end. The flow of the incoming tide would open the lock gate and the lake would fill up, then, when the tide turned the gates would be closed by the force of the water.

The contents of the lake would be available to work the 4 undershoot wheels on the mill house. For many years this was a grist mill before turning to process imported bone to make fertiliser.

The mill continued to be operated until about the time of the First World War. If you look low down on the building from East Looe you can still see the outline of the arches where the used water came out.