

# LOOE HERITAGE TRAIL

- 1 St. Nicholas Church
- 2 Jolly Sailor Inn
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- 5 Riverside Church
- 6 Medieval Bridge
- 7 Old Bridge House
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This trail of discovery, which will take you up to about two hours to complete, has been designed for those interested in finding out more about Looe's historical heritage. Do you wonder what life must have been like when Looe was a buzzing fishing port, or when tin, copper and granite were exported from the quayside, or when Looe was an important boat building centre? Wherever you care to go in Looe, there are signs of our past history which will remind you of events that have built this small town into what it is today. Remember as you walk that Looe was at one time two separate borough towns – East and West Looe, each with its own mayor and corporation, and each sending two members to parliament.

- 9 Buller Quay
- 10 Banjo Pier
- 11 Old Lifeboat Station
- 12 St. Marys Church

i Interpretation Board

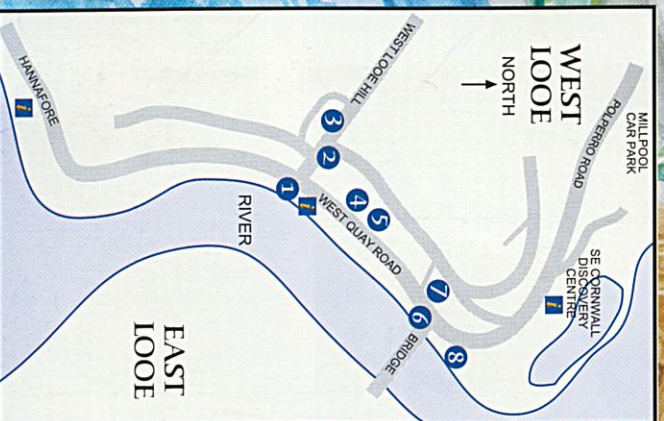
## WEST LOOE

To follow this Heritage Trail you need to start at St Nicholas Church (OS 254.533) on the west side of the Looe River, and about 10 minutes walk south from the Millpool Car Park. The map with numbers suggests points of specific interest along the trail.

1

i

Looe Island

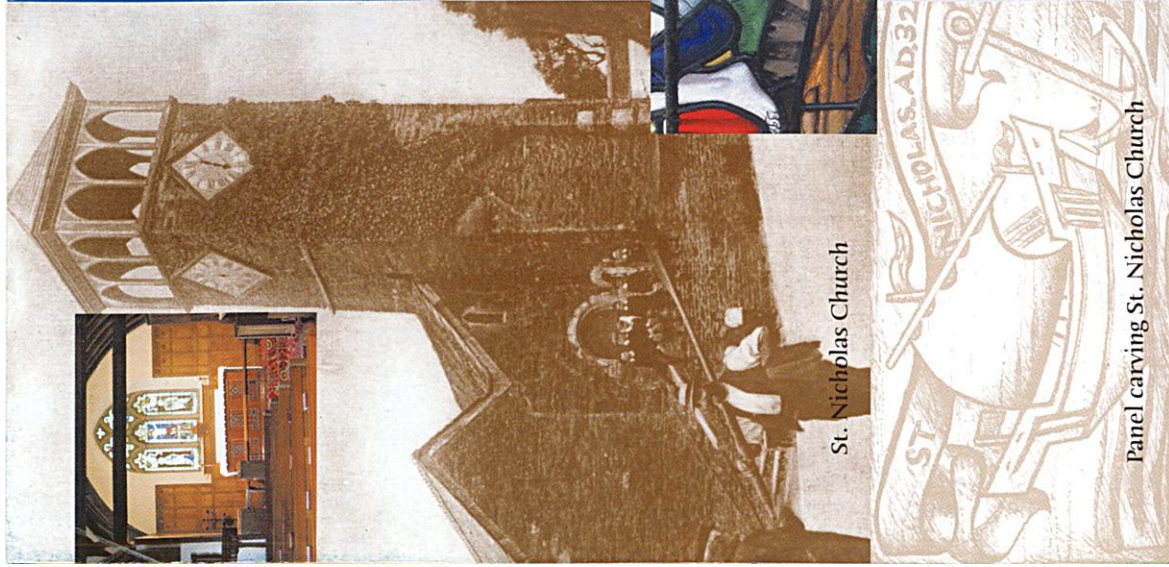


## EAST LOOE

Seaford Promenade

- 13 Church House
- 14 Smugglers Cott
- 15 The Old Guildhall
- 16 Ye Olde Fishermans Arms
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St. Nicholas Church

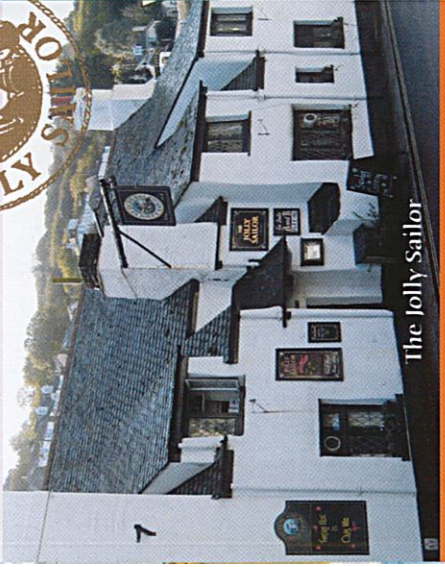


Panel carving St. Nicholas Church

## 2 Jolly Sailor Inn

Now walk away from the church and quay side towards the fire station and West Looe Square beyond. Here you will find The Jolly Sailor Inn, Looe's oldest pub, built in the 15th Century. Go in and you'll find old beams, taken from 'Three Masters' after the battle of Trafalgar.

Inside you will see the illustration showing how back in the 18th century the landlady foiled the revenue men. Outside again, stand back and you will also find 'The Devil on Horseback', a ridge tile. The tradition in Looe is that they ward off ill luck from the house and its occupants.



The Jolly Sailor

## 4 Riverside Art Gallery

Now walk back a few yards towards the river and take the little side road to the left, before the Spar shop, walking northwards between the buildings. You'll come to The Riverside Art Gallery, originally the Congregational Sunday School building dating from the 1880s.

It was extensively restored in the 1990s as an art gallery. In the wall of the building is 'The Band of Hope' stone. This organisation preached 'temperance' and tried to persuade the young to sign the pledge of teetotalism.

## 1

### St. Nicholas Church

In the 14th Century the appalling state of the Cornish roads and the dangerous nature of the cliff path particularly in winter were the prime reasons for the establishment of the chapel-of-ease of St Nicholas in West Looe, by a member of the Dawnay family of Shevick.

The mother church of the West Looe Parish was at Talland (OS 229.516), about four miles west of Looe towards Polperro. In the mid 16th Century St Nicholas Church was used as a Guildhall by the Borough Council and the magistrates.

A small jail was built out from the north wall and the original entrance to it, the 'dark house', is still visible, though blocked up. In 1852 St Nicholas Church was taken back into the care of the Church Commissioners and restored by the efforts of the Rev. E. Seymour. The oak pews with their carved and decorated ends, the priest's stall, and the font cover are splendid examples of modern ecclesiastical furniture by the Rev. John Harvey, 1960. The two east stained glass windows and the one over the west door are 19th Century work and pleasantly Victorian. There is a 20th Century Good Samaritan stained glass window on the east wall of the north aisle with a curious artist's aberration. Can you spot the two left feet? The tower clock face is an exact replica of the 18th Century original but the mechanism is electronic with a timing adjustment controlled by a radio signal.



St. Nicholas Church



Panel carving St. Nicholas Church

## 6

### Medieval Bridge

A minute or so further up the river we pass The Harbour Moon and above on the hill the line of grey old Coast Guard Cottages. Just beyond the pub and in the side of the wall, is an ancient stone. This shows the location of the medieval bridge completed 1436, with its 15 uneven stone arches.

William of Worcester, writing in 1478 was so impressed that he described the bridge as "six bow shots" in length. It had a central buttress with an oratory dedicated to St Anne. The stone reads 'REPEARED BY THE COUNTY 1689', which reminds us that the county unusually paid the bill.



Prince George (Duke of Kent)

Just opposite the Old Bridge House, at the top of a flight of stone steps down into the river, is a stone laid by Prince George in 1931 to mark the start of the refurbishment of the quay side.



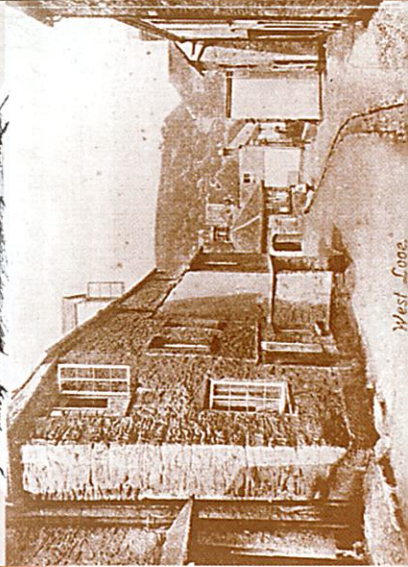
Old Meat Market

## 3

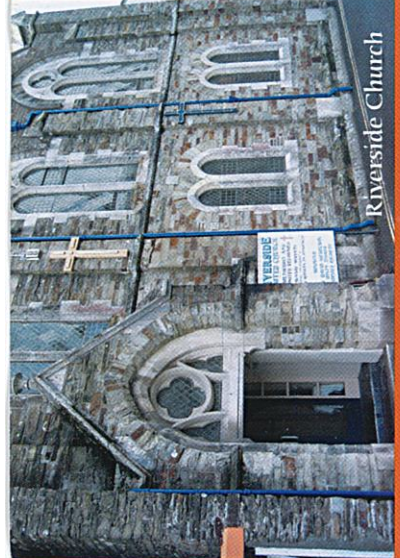
### The Old Meat Market

A similar ridge tile can be seen on the roof of Islander Cottage on the right just beyond the Old Meat Market. This hexagonal building (now a florists) on an island site was built originally as a meat market in 1853.

Find the date stone over one of the archways, which were provided to allow plenty of fresh air to reach the meat in those pre-refrigeration days. They would have been filled with louvres rather than glass. The auction for live animals was held just outside, and was announced by the ringing of the bell in the cupola above. Notice the weathervane depicting an archer mariner armed with sword, bow and bol is on the Looe Town Seal.



West Looe



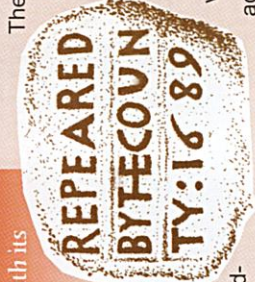
Riverside Church

## 5

### Riverside Church

Back on the quayside now we pass the Porbyhan which is the old name for West Looe and means 'Little Harbour'. Next you'll come to The Riverside United Church set up originally as a Congregational Church in 1777 in West Looe Square by Sir Harry Trelawney.

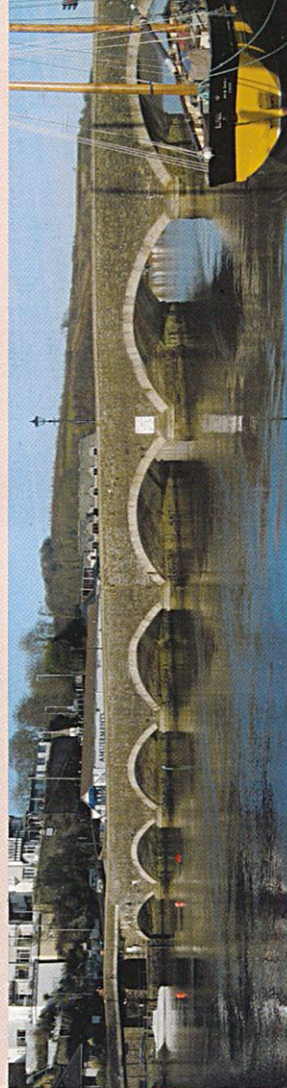
However he soon withdrew his support on his return to the Church of England, and the present site was bought and a chapel erected in 1787. The present building dates from the 1880s, and was refurbished in the 1990s.



The present bridge was built in 1853 to replace the medieval one. Seven fine arches now span the water. The tunnel arch at the western end gave vehicular access from the bridge to West Looe until 1895, by means of a loop road bearing right off the bridge and turning in front of the tide mill (see 8) to go seawards underneath. At the time no road along the quay existed. The present bridge, built twelve feet wide, was doubled in width in 1960. The new work is on the upstream side. Look for the joins underneath the arches and a slate plaque in the parapet half way across. A further arch, on the east side, has been filled in, but arch stones can be seen on the seaward side.

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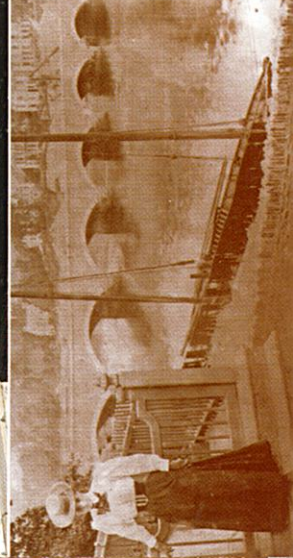


## 7

### Old Bridge House

This large house possibly originated in the 17th century, and is clearly shown in 18th century pictures, standing alone beside the abutment of the medieval bridge.

It was always called 'Bridgend' until 1985. In 1703 the Herell (later spelt Hearle) family leased it from Sir Jonathan Trelawney, Bishop of Exeter, and were to live there until 1869, producing several mayors of West Looe and church wardens of Talland Church. Nathaniel Hearle was also customs officer from 1726-1750, and a later Nathaniel was the last Mayor of West Looe at his death in 1869. Thereafter the West Looe Town Trust was established.



## 8

### The Old Mill

As you cross the bridge, take time to look northwards towards where the East and West Looe Rivers converge. On the left (west side) note The Old Mill, a 17th century technology, that worked well here for three hundred years, by using the rise and fall of the tide.

In 1614 a Thomas Arundell of Tremadart obtained the right to enclose 13 acres of the West Looe estuary. (Now mostly tarmaced over as The Millpool Car Park). He built a stone wall around the lake with a mill house and lock gates at the seaward end. The flow of the incoming tide would open the lock gates and the lake would fill up. When the tide turned the gates would be closed by the force of the water, and the contents of the lake would be available to work the four undershot wheels in the mill house. A gristmill for many years, it turned to the processing of imported bones to make fertiliser, and was working until about the time of World War 1. Look low down for the bricked up archways where the used water came out.



17

## Meat Market

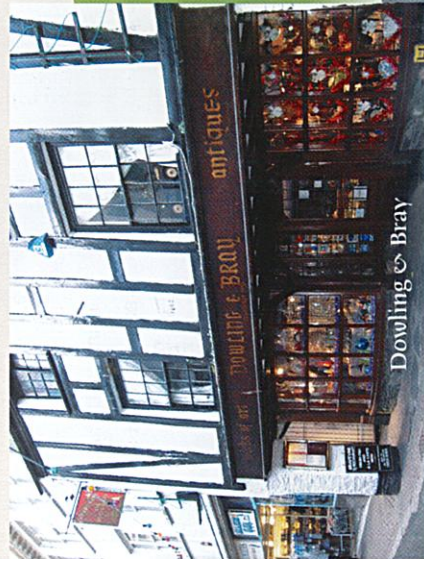
Retrace your steps to just before the Smugglers Cott where on your left you will find the Meat Market, (now a restaurant).

The road widens with the addition of a raised cobbled pavement. The building rising up has large window apertures originally louvered to admit a good supply of fresh air for the meat. Look for the meat hooks in the beams outside. The upper floor, reached by the flight of stone steps, was originally the Mechanics Institute.



Salutation Inne

Old Ships' timbers were used to build the 'Sal' in the seventeenth century. The façade is 18th century.



Dowling & Bray

20

## Golden Guinea

Nearby and opposite is The Golden Guinea, one of Looe's finest old houses. The date 1632 may be found in the middle corbel of the left hand upstairs window.

Thomas Bond lived here and published a History of Looe (around 1823). He left a fortune of 10,000 guineas – in gold – in the house for his heir.

21

## New Guildhall

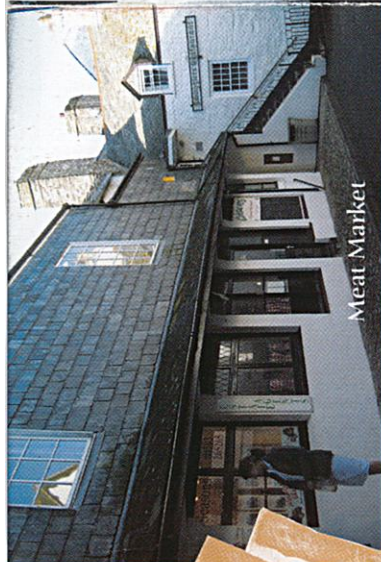
Keep walking towards the clock tower and you'll be at the New Guildhall and the rose garden to its side which offers sheltered places to sit.



It was built in 1877 in Gothic Revival style, to replace the smaller medieval building in Higher Market Street and boasts a fine series of stained glass windows, illustrating Looe's history, in the upper Council Chamber. Over the main, original doorway, is a representation of the coat of arms of East Looe, which depicts a single masted ship with the two figures of Joseph of Arimathea and the boy Jesus. Legend says Jesus stayed on Looe Island whilst his uncle traded in Looe. East and West Looe were combined under one Town Council in 1898. The combined coat of arms can be seen on the mural you passed on Buller Quay.



New Guildhall



Meat Market

18

## Ye Olde Salutation Inne

Moving further along Higher Market Street towards The Mayflower Studio you can now see another pub, Ye Olde Salutation Inne.

The original Shark Angling Club used to meet, here, led by Brigadier Caunter. Note the many photographs on display around the bar. In the nineteenth century the 'Sal' was for a time a Temperance Hotel! Step down and notice the inside and notice the sloping floor. It had its uses in the past when high spring tides flooded into the building.

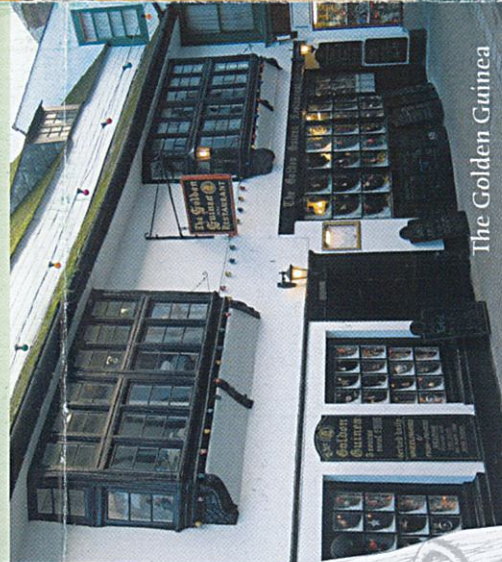


Salutation Inne

19

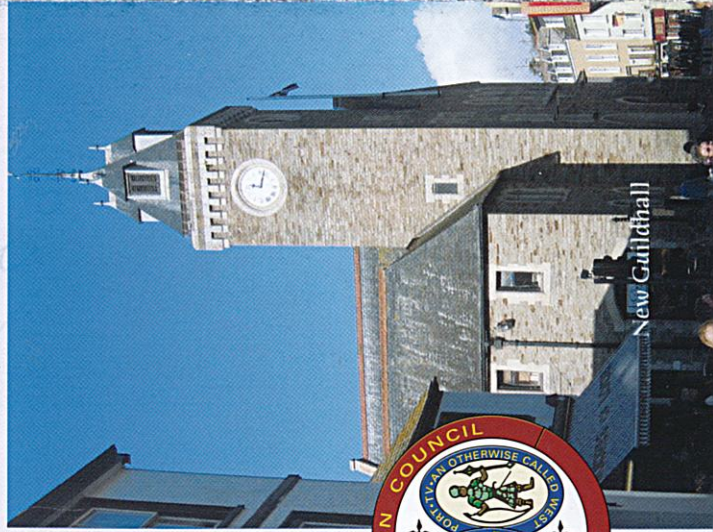
## Dowling & Bray

Along Fore Street, and just after the Grapevine Restaurant, note the timbered exterior of Dowling and Bray Antique shop dated 1666.

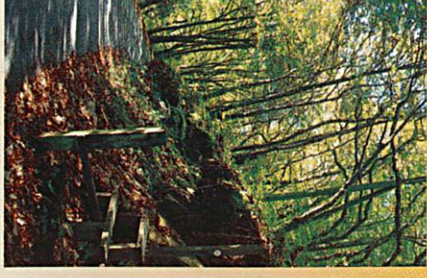
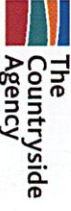


The Golden Guinea

Now walk northwards along Fore Street past The Swan, an old coaching house. Further on and almost opposite Boots the Chemist can be found in the low wall the bridge stone marking the eastern extent of the medieval bridge. This is a duplicate of the stone seen on the opposite side of the river near the Harbour Moon pub. You are now back at the bridge: a central point from which to survey the journey and the heritage uncovered.

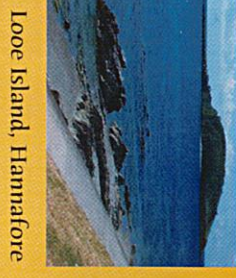


## Local Heritage initiative



Kilminorth Woods

The Looe Old Cornwall Society would like to express its sincere appreciation to its members, who have helped put this pamphlet together:  
Notably: Nancy Jolliff, Iris Ward, Jeanne Dingle, Fred Leese and Peter Leggat.  
We would also like to thank Looe Town Council and the Looe Harbour Commissioners for their assistance.



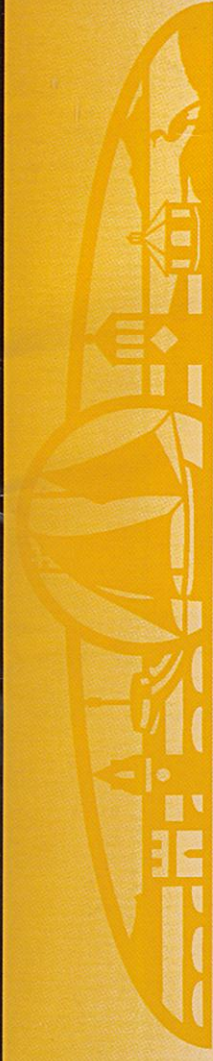
Looe Island, Hannafore

You may wish to visit the site of the old Lammana Chapel at the end of Hannafore (OS 251.522) and maybe walk further to Polperro: St Martin's Church (OS 260.550) some two miles out of town; the old boat building yard at Polean (OS 246.536) (presently occupied by Jewson Builders Merchants); or the fascinating walk through Kilminorth Wood (OS 246.538) and the Giant's Hedge.

"A Giant one day had nothing to do, so he built a hedge from Lerryn to Looe".

The local train from Looe to Liskeard enables you to see the remains of the old canal, opened in 1828. These are just some of the other outlying areas which are worth visiting.

For further information there is the Discovery Centre in the Millpool Car Park or the Tourist Information Centre by the Guildhall (no 21).



# LOOE HERITAGE TRAIL

Whilst this walk has been around the centre of Looe, there are places in the surrounding area that played just as important a part in the development of the town.



Distinctly Cornish

Take a walk into the past of the historic maritime port of Looe

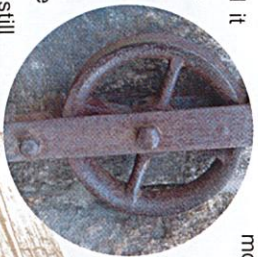


## 9 Buller Quay

Now cross into East Looe and walk south along Buller Quay beside the river and harbour. You'll see some magnificent old luggers lovingly restored in the harbour. 'Our Daddy' and 'Our Boys' were both built in Looe for the fishing industry around 1921 by Dick Pearce and Son, for the Pengelly family.

In 1836 when an exceptional seam of copper was discovered near Minions (OS 261.711) around the area of Caradon Hill on Bodmin Moor, huge amounts of copper ore were brought down from the moor by the horse railway and canal barge and deposited at the side of the river to be collected by ships to be smelted at works in South Wales.

It became necessary to build a quay both to store the copper and to support the railway. Buller Quay was built in 1856 and ran along the side of the river from the bridge almost to the sea front. At one time half the world's copper was shipped through Looe and it led to prosperity for the town and the surrounding area. This in turn led to improvements to roads and the building of a new bridge to replace the 1436-structure. To this day the ground underneath the quay is still

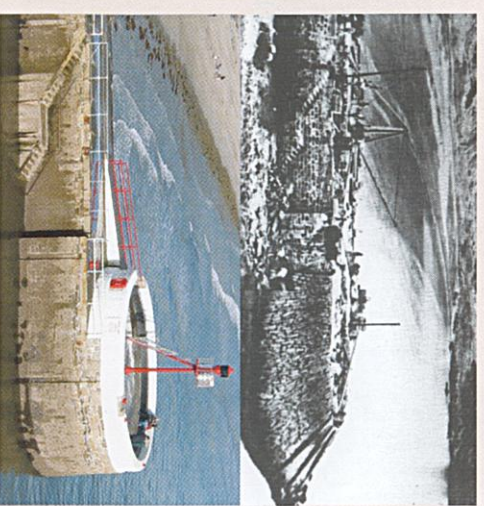


heavily tainted with the copper and ornamental trees planted along the wall sometimes die from its effects. You are now walking south towards the sea, a short walk of about three hundred yards.

Pennyland

## 10 Banjo Pier

Walk past the Lifeboat station and the toilets out onto the Banjo Pier. In the 1840s a long straight groyne, tapering off at the seaward end, was built between the harbour/river mouth and the beach.



It was hoped that it would prevent sand clogging the harbour mouth but in this it was not entirely successful. Joseph Thomas put forward the idea of taking the end off the groyne and substituting a round. The locals were sceptical and he had to offer to forgo his fee if the plan failed. The round at the seaward end was constructed in 1886-7, and was successful. Admiral Riley, Chairman of the Harbour Commissioners, gave the lamp which was now erected at the pier end. It was to be named 'Riley's Pier'. However, two local girls chatting were heard to say "My dear, it do look exactly like a banjo, don't it?" And so it became the Banjo Pier. Look also on the sides of the pier for the wooden pegs, put in to absorb water and swell, helping to hold the stone work together. Next to the pier and in the corner of the beach is a pile of World War 2 tank traps - concrete tapered blocks about 6 ft long with metal spikes.



Belaying Pins

Original railway lines

A section of the original rail line that brought the ore from the mines on Bodmin Moor can be found on the quayside just before the tower crane which you see before you. Beyond the modern structures were built to conform to EU regulations, the Packing Sheds in 1990 and the Fish Market in 1986. Walk past the colourful Mural which shows the East and West Looe Coat of Arms and turn to the left away from the quayside a little further on towards Pengelly's wet fish shop. Here you will see another length of railway line embedded in the tarmac, a reminder that the railway from Liskeard built in 1860 used to run all the way into Looe along the quay, almost as far as the mouth of the river. Note the height of the fish market above the road, which is just right for loading the fish boxes onto the trucks. In 1955 the line down from the station was dismantled.

Now walk a further hundred yards beyond the fish market towards the river mouth passing the large 19th century, 3-storey, warehouses on your left. Look for the low down pulley wheels in the walls. In front of you is the Lifeboat Station opened in 2003. At this stage look across the river to the arches at Pennyland in West Looe. Joseph Thomas was the instigator and architect of the road to Hannaford, built in 1895. Previously West Looe had stopped abruptly at St Nicholas Church, which had buildings adjoining it (see the large photo in the Salutation Inne (trail stop 18), and there was no access to the coast except the steep and narrow Hannaford Lane which can be seen higher above the road. Building the road involved demolishing the two buildings nearest to the church, and cutting through the outcrop of rock behind. The next part, the little bay at Pennyland, needed a causeway to carry the road and Joseph Thomas built the three arches and the larger arch beyond to carry his road. The turrets were not in the original plans, but were added for decoration. The Round House above was built as a dwelling in the early 20th century.

## 11 Old Lifeboat Station

From the pier walk along the promenade towards the church tower. You will see The Old Lifeboat Station built for Looe's first lifeboat in 1866. This station, next to the Watch Tower and obelisk with its sundial, remained in use until 1930 when the lifeboat was withdrawn. It was re-instated in 1992.



## 12 St. Mary's Church

Further on you come to St Mary's Church. Originally the church was established as a chapel of ease in 1259 by Henry de Bodrugan.

The present building of Plymouth limestone, converted to flats, is only about 100 years old. However, the original tower, still standing is all that remains of the original church.

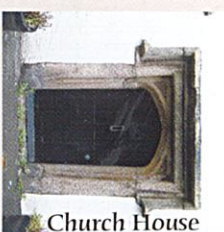
This tower used to be white washed and served as a daymark for shipping up to the beginning of World War 1. Note the 18th Century single-handed clock renovated in 1996.



## 13 Church House

Just east of the tower stands Church House, which was built for the clergy. It stands directly opposite the door of St. Mary's Church with the Old Vicarage next to it on the corner.

The date is believed to be 16th century. It has been suggested that the house could have been used by the monks who administered St. Mary's when the original stone church was built in the 1200s. Behind the church you now enter the narrow back streets of Looe.



Church House

## 14 Smugglers Cott

Leaving the square at the far end find the Smugglers Cott, now a restaurant with its impressive 18th century facade. Turn immediately right through another narrow alleyway into Higher Market Street.

The original arched doorway of Smugglers Cott opening onto Higher Market Street suggests that it is one of the oldest buildings in Looe. The truly massive chimney is very prominent. Timbers from the Spanish Armada are said to have been used in the later remodeling and extension of the house. The house boasts a secret passage way which may have been used for hiding smuggled goods.

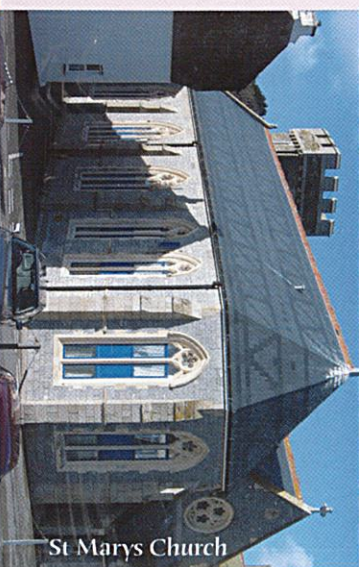
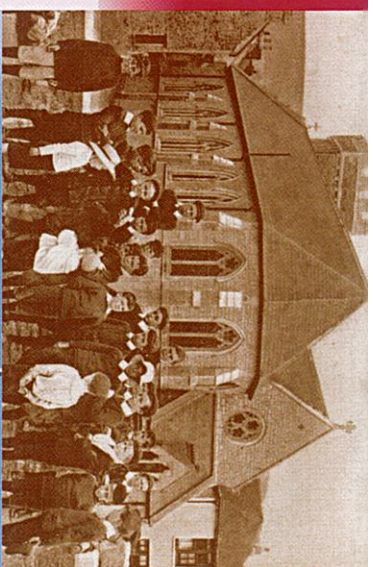


Smugglers Cott

## 16 Ye Olde Fishermans Arms

Ye Olde Fishermans Arms opposite, was built as a merchant's house in 1611. It has been a public house for many years now. The local papers record a William Eford, landlord there, having his licence endorsed (1883) for illegal Sunday hours, and being fined £5 (1888) for allowing drunkenness.

A suicide in the loft in 1875 has resulted, some say, in a haunting. Notice the twin gables facing out onto the street, and then look at the original doorway, the jambs chamfered with reeded design ending in patterned stops. Note the great buffer stones set on the corner to protect the house from damage by the iron tyred wheels of the vehicles entering Looe, as Barbican Hill here was once the main road for traffic from the east.



St Marys Church

It is best to refer to the small street plan here as it is easy to get lost in the many fascinating little streets and alleys. The area between Higher Market Street and Lower Street was laid out in a grid pattern (said to be unique) in early Tudor times, hence the narrow streets. Facing 'Sea Breeze', opposite the church tower turn right down Lower Chapel Street and pass 'Lantau' house. This building is possibly a merchant's house. Further on down Lower Chapel Street you will come to Osborne House, now a restaurant. This has been much altered but is still a substantial building and may also have been a merchant's house. Cut eastwards now



Lantau House

through the archway. The first floor oriel windows of Lantau house are original as are the front and back doorways. Continue on and take the second left into the old market square (now a convenient car park for residents). In the south-east corner (towards the sea) and by the wall of the cottage called 'Curlews' is a plaque in the pavement showing where the town well used to be in the nineteenth century.

## 15 The Old Guildhall

Still in Higher Market Street, turn seaward a short way to the The Old Guildhall, now a museum which is well worth a visit. Climb the steps and enter to absorb further history of Looe.



Old Guildhall Museum

The building was raised to accommodate a first floor in 1587, when East Looe obtained its Royal Charter. Note the barred prison cell windows of the ground floor, a reminder that justice was administered here. The magistrates' bench is still there in the upper room. Outside, under the gable of the porch is the pillory.



Devil Fish on display in Museum