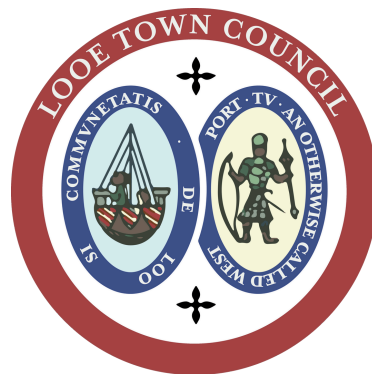
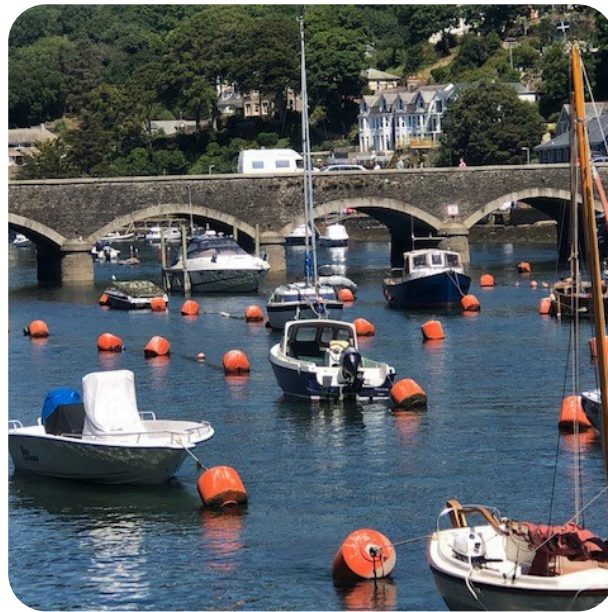


**FREE**

# Explore Historic Looe

(Approx 2 hours)



Produced by: Looe Tourist Information, Looe Library and Community Hub, Millpool, Looe PL13 2AF Tel: 01503 261335. For more ideas of places to visit and things to do visit our website at [www.visitlooe.co.uk/whats-on](http://www.visitlooe.co.uk/whats-on). Correct at time of printing. With thanks to LOCS for their help.

*This walk starts at Looe Railway Station, located on Station Road, on the approach into town. Enjoy a stroll and a taste of Looe's history.*

## Station 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, thus, Buller Quay was built in 1856, and ran from the bridge almost to the sea front. A vast amount of copper was shipped through Looe, which 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 - a reminder of the original railway built in 1860, linking Looe to the railhead at Liskeard.

## Warehouse



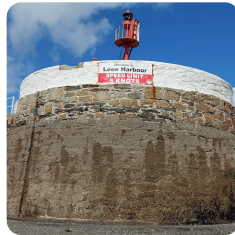
From the station, follow the River Looe south, towards the sea. Along the estuary, lies the quay with its fish merchants. With its fleet of small fishing boats returning their catches to port daily, Looe maintains a reputation for procuring excellent fresh fish. You will pass many old buildings along the harbourside, one of which is a 19th century three-storey warehouse. Notice the pulley wheels in the walls that were used to hoist goods to the upper floors.

# Life Boat Stations



Continue walking along the quayside towards the sea. By the slipway, you will see the 'new' lifeboat station which opened in 2003. Turn left along the seafront and discover the old lifeboat station, established in 1866. This station, next to the watchtower and obelisk, remained in use until 1930, when the lifeboat service was withdrawn and was not reinstated until 1992.

## Banjo Pier



The retaining wall above East Looe Beach, was added in the latter part of the 19th century to allow walks along the seafront and to protect the town from high tides. To the right of the beach lies Banjo Pier, originally built in 1840, as a long straight strip with a tapering end. The design was intended to prevent sand clogging the harbour mouth but it was not entirely successful. Joseph Thomas, put forward the idea of making the end round, and this distinctive design was constructed between 1896-1897. The light on the pier was given by Admiral Riley, once Chairman of Looe 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!

# Pennyland



From the pier, look across the river towards the arches and walkway of Pennyland. Joseph Thomas was the instigator and architect responsible for this road leading round to Hannafore, which was built in 1895. Prior to this, West Looe 'stopped' at St. Nicholas Church and the only route to Hannafore was via a narrow lane.

# St Mary's Church



Walk east along the seafront, towards St. Mary's Church. The original church was established in 1259, and eventually replaced by the existing building in the late 19th Century (apart from the original tower). 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. Note it faces only towards East Looe - thus preventing residents of West Looe, from seeing the time! East of the tower, stands the church house, with the old vicarage located next to it, on the corner. In the 1990s, the church was converted to private residences.



## Back Streets



Turning away from the sea, head back into the narrow streets of the town. The layout of these narrow backstreets, dates back to early Tudor Times. Many of the old houses were built in the 19th century. Amidst the back streets, you will find an open area that was once an old meat market.

## Old Guildhall Museum and Goal



On Higher Market Street, you will find the Old Guildhall Museum and Goal, built in 1450. It was the Magistrates Court and Town Hall between 1587-1878. Beneath the magnificent timber framed roof, laws were made and enforced, and the town was administered by the Mayor and Corporation, made up of Burgesses. The building retains many of its medieval features, with the ancient prison cells downstairs and the original raised magistrates bench, with the Royal Coat of Arms. The building is now a museum housing local, historical artifacts.

## Smugglers Cott



Further along Higher Market Street, is the Smugglers Cott Restaurant, with an 18th century façade and original arched doorway. Timbers used in the later renovations and extensions of this building are said to come from The Spanish Armada. The building also boasts a secret passageway, which may have been used to hide smuggled goods.

## The Golden Guinea



Turning right onto Fore Street, you will pass the Golden Guinea, once, one of Looe's finest houses. The building is believed to have been built in 1632 - a datestone can be found in one of the window frames. Thomas Bond who lived here was a topographer, publishing many journals about Cornwall. He was also appointed Town Clerk of both East & West Looe in 1789. Apparently, Bond left 10,000 guineas of gold in the house for his heir!

Opposite the Golden Guinea is Brays, another 17th century building, although the façade is 18th century.

## The Guildhall



The 'new' Guildhall was built in 1877, in gothic revival style and boasts a series of stained glass windows illustrating Looe's history. Much of this building is original. 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.

## War Memorial



Continue along Fore Street, to the War Memorial beside the harbour. The memorial was unveiled in 1921, and features a worked Celtic Cross on a square plinth and a two-stepped base.

# Looe Bridge and Old Bridge Head



The first Looe bridge was built in 1436. Opposite The Harbour Moon Pub, is an ancient stone that shows the original location of the bridge (look out for this later on in the walk).

The stone (pictured above), commemorates repair work carried out in 1689. The medieval bridge was replaced with the present bridge in 1853. Until 1895, West Looe had no vehicular access from the bridge and residents of West Looe had to go down to the The Old Mill, and pass underneath. The current bridge was originally only 12 feet wide and widened to its current width in 1960. At this time, the bridge was also shortened slightly and an original arch can still be seen near the war memorial.

Once across the bridge, turn left to walk under the bridge and past the amusements.

## The Old Mill



This 17th century mill operated for three centuries using the rise and fall of the tide. In 1614, Thomas Arundell obtained the right to enclose 13 acres of West Looe Estuary, and 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, and when the tide turned the gates would close. The contents of the lake would power the four undershot wheels on the mill house. For many years this was a grist mill, then later used to process imported bone for fertiliser.

The mill continued to be in operation until the First World War. Low down on the building (from East Looe), you can still see the outline of the arches where the waste water came out.

Retrace your steps and follow Quay Road, further along the river into West Looe. Pause under the bridge, to notice Old Bridge House, which has been on this site since before 1809.

## Memorial Stone



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

## Coastguard Cottages



Look up and you will see a row of old grey stone coastguard cottages. These were built in 1892 to house local coastguards.



# Riverside United Church



The original church was built in 1787. The present building dates from the 1880s and was refurbished in the 1990s.

Continue walking along Quay Road. You will pass the Portbyhan Hotel (Porthbyhan is the old Cornish name for West Looe), until you reach St. Nicholas Church.

## St Nicholas Church



The church was built in the 13th or 14th century by the D'Aubigny family. In the mid-17th century, the church became the Guildhall for West Looe, then briefly restored for public worship on the accession of King Charles II. The building remained a Guildhall and prison until 1852, when once again, it became a church.

The original entrance, now blocked up, can still be seen as an outline in the wall. Notice the beautiful 19th century stained glass windows. The chancel was lengthened with timber from HMS San Josef. The clock faces on the tower, are exact replicas of the 18th century originals, modernised with an electronic timing adjustment controlled by radio signals. Notice that these clock faces look only towards the west. Do you remember the orientation of the clock face on the tower of St. Mary's Church over in East Looe...? West Looe residents were not going to give the East Looe residents the time of day either!

At one time, St Nicholas Church was the end point of West Looe and had houses adjacent to it. These houses were demolished in 1895, when the outcrop of rock was cut, so that the road to Hannafore could be built. Prior to this, the only access to Hannafore, was the steep and narrow Hannafore Lane, still used today. This lane can be accessed from behind the fire station.

## The Old Sardine Factory & Heritage Centre



Take the pedestrian path, heading seaward along the quay, and you will come to the Old Sardine Factory and Heritage Centre. This Mid-19th century building was renovated and reopened in 2018, with a heritage centre full of the maritime history of Looe, plus a cafe and restaurant.

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

## Nelson



Nelson, the one-eyed, grey seal was a popular fixture in Looe Harbour, for over 25 years and would greet the fisherman coming into port. When Nelson died in 2003, the local fishermen had this bronze sculpture commissioned in his memory.

Retrace your steps to St Nicholas Church, cross over Quay Road and walk up Fore Street, passing the fire station and The Jolly Sailor Inn, towards the Old Meat Market.

## Old Meat Market



This hexagonal shaped building was built in 1853, marked by 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. On the roof sits a weather vane; this depicts an archer mariner armed with sword, bow and arrow - a symbol found on the ancient West Looe town seal.

*Thank you for taking the time to enjoy a taste of the history of Looe.*

Visit **Looe Tourist Information Centre** for more ideas to enjoy your holiday.

### **TOURIST INFORMATION CENTRE**

Monday 9:30am - 1pm  
Tuesday 9:30am - 5pm  
Wednesday Closed  
Thursday 9:30am - 5pm  
Friday 9:30am - 1pm  
Saturday 10:00am - 2pm



### **LEAFLET TRAILER**

(SEASONAL)

Monday 9am - 5pm  
Tuesday 9am - 5pm  
Wednesday 9am - 5pm  
Thursday 9am - 5pm  
Friday 9am - 5pm  
Saturday 10am - 2pm

Looe Library and Community Hub, Millpool, West Looe PL13 2AF  
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