

**CORPORATION CHRONICLES:
BEING SOME ACCOUNT OF THE
ANCIENT CORPORATIONS OF
EAST LOOE AND OF WEST LOOE
IN THE COUNTY OF CORNWALL**

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Corporation Chronicles: Being Some Account of the Ancient Corporations of East Looe and of West Looe in the County of Cornwall by A. L. Browne

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A. L. BROWNE

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LOOE, FROM THE SEA, IN THE YEAR 1837.

Corporation Chronicles.



BEING SOME ACCOUNT OF THE
ANCIENT CORPORATIONS OF EAST
LOOE AND OF WEST LOOE
IN THE
COUNTY OF CORNWALL.

—:O:—

BY
A. L. BROWNE, M.A.,
S. EDMUND HALL, OXFORD.
And sometime Vicar of East and West Looe.



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CONTENTS.

Chapter.	Page.
INTRODUCTION	6
I.—HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE NOTICES OF LOOE	9
II.—EAST LOOE CHARTERS	15
III.—EAST LOOE CONSTITUTION BOOK	30
IV.—EAST LOOE COURT BOOK (1664-1709)	46
V.—EAST LOOE PRESENTMENTS	63
VI.—EAST LOOE MAYORALTY ACCOUNTS (1651-1855)	69
VII.—EAST LOOE CORPORATION CHAPEL	83
VIII.—WEST LOOE CHARTERS	94
IX.—WEST LOOE COURT BOOKS (1611-21)	101
X.—WEST LOOE COURT BOOKS (1641-69)	112
XI.—WEST LOOE COURT BOOKS (1672-82)	126
XII.—WEST LOOE MAYORALTY ACCOUNTS	142
XIII.—ST. NICHOLAS CHAPEL AND GUILDHALL	153
XIV.—WEST LOOE PRESENTMENTS	159
XV.—THE BRIDGE AND HARBOUR	166
XVI.—EAST LOOE PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION (1796)	173
XVII.—EAST LOOE MAYORAL ELECTION IN 1823	176
XVIII.—THOMAS BOND, THE HISTORIAN OF LOOE	179
XIX.—BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES	185
XX.—ODDMENTS	191

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

Name.	Page.
VIEW OF LOOE IN 1837	FRONTISPIECE.
EAST LOOE CORPORATION SEAL	29
THE OLD GUILDHALL, EAST LOOE	37
EAST LOOE CORPORATION MACES, PUNCH BOWL AND LADLES, SERGEANTS HATS AND CLOAKS	52
THE STOCKS OF EAST LOOE	66
EAST LOOE FIRE ENGINE	77
STREET IN EAST LOOE, WITH CHURCH TOWER IN THE DISTANCE	89
WEST LOOE CORPORATION SEAL	94
MACES OF THE SERGEANTS OF WEST LOOE	132
OLD INN, WEST LOOE	140
ST. NICHOLAS CHURCH—EXTERIOR	154
ST. NICHOLAS CHURCH—INTERIOR	155
SILHOUETTE OF THOMAS BOND	179
THOMAS BOND'S HOUSE	181
TALLAND CHURCH—INTERIOR	186



INTRODUCTION.

THIS work does not aspire to the dignity of a history, nor does it claim the utility of a guide-book. It endeavours to give just what it professes to give,—“Some Account of the Corporations of East Looe and West Looe.” The principle adopted in its preparation has been,—to let such papers and documents as still survive tell the story, while connecting links have been inserted, when necessary for coherence.

The compiler does not seek to supersede Bond's well-known History of Looe; he only seeks to supplement, and has therefore tried to avoid the repetition of matter already accessible in that work. In some few cases the presentation of an intelligible record, or the recital of the different steps in the growth and developement of the corporate life, has compelled him to ignore this rule. During the past six years the Looe Parish Magazine has contained notes on the history of the towns, but with the passing on of time, materials ready to hand became exhausted, and other sources of information had to be sought. Permission was sought from R. A. Peter, Esq, ex-mayor of East Looe, to examine the records of the extinct Corporation, and readily granted by him. The compiler eagerly availed himself of this consent, and spent many dusty hours, in a study of the documents available.

With regard to the records of the also extinct Corporation of West Looe, a long time elapsed before any could be found. That such were existing in Mr. Bond's time, is implied in his book, and it was scarcely credible that they had been entirely destroyed between his day and ours. Encouraged by this belief, enquiries were diligently pressed, until with the assistance of Mr. J. B. Hooper, of West Looe, a box in a cupboard in the Maybralty House, containing a quantity of old papers, was unearthed.

This compilation is the result of the investigation of these two sets of records, and does not claim to be at all exhaustive.

There is still much to occupy the attention and research of one possessed of riper experience in the reading of old documents, than the present compiler.

For nearly three centuries each borough returned two representatives to the House of Commons. Some little surprise may therefore be felt at the absence of any systematic treatment of their political history. But to have done so would have been beyond the scope within which the compiler sought to work. It might be reasonably urged, that political and municipal life in these old world boroughs so intertwined and overlapped, that the separation of the one from the other means a mutilated presentation of the local history. This may be perfectly true, but to have dealt adequately with this branch of the subject, would have demanded a fuller research than the exigencies of time permitted.

The documents on which this work is based, for the most part describe the government of the boroughs; they disclose the deeds and misdeeds of many, they show the angularities and singularities of the rulers and the ruled. And while the writer approached his task in a rather hyper-critical temper, it has been his constant care never to be less than just to the memory of those, who, in their day and generation, did service in Church and State. At times the expressions used may seem to an outsider unduly severe, but they represent a matured feeling of abhorrence for that mental attitude which finds its happiness in seeking to maintain the rivalry, which is reputed to exist between the inhabitants of the two Looes. A sentiment, which in 1885 successfully opposed the incorporation of the towns under one charter, and put back the development of local municipal life for some twelve years. This selfish localism, if scotched, is not entirely killed; but it is to be hoped that the existence of the one governing body for both towns, which has taken the form of an Urban District Council, will gradually exorcise this unintelligent antipathy from local municipal life.

As far as possible, a little of everything has been selected from the old records, as it seemed more than a pity to let such interesting documents pass away, without some attempt to at least record an analysis of their contents. Indeed, from the inevitable wear and tear of age, from damp and past neglect, many of the documents will be altogether undecipherable, before many years have passed.

The work has been done in holiday time and in spare hours at home, but spare hours in the life of a clergyman to-day are

few and far between. Week after week has too often gone by without a page being turned or a word written. Let this be the writer's apology for imperfections which are manifest, in what has been—at any rate to him—a labour of love.

He begs to offer his thanks—to Richard Peter, Esq., of Launceston, for the invaluable analysis of the West Looe Court Books, written out by himself in spite of his four score and ten years—to A. E. Hurford, Esq., of Looe, for his kindly aid in the elucidation of many a knotty point or an obscure writing, and especially for revising the proofs,—to C. Davies Gilbert, Esq., of Trelissick, for access to the MSS in his possession,—to C. Prideaux-Brune, Esq., of Padstow, for the use of his library,—to J. D. Enys, Esq., to E. Rashleigh, Esq., to the Rev. T. Taylor, to D. Borlase Childs, Esq., the last Town Clerk of East Looe,—to Mr. John Taylor, of West Looe, for the loan of the last Mayoral Account Book of that borough,—to Mr. T. H. Hicks, C.C., of East Looe, for help in many ways,—and to the proprietors of the "West Briton" and of the "Cornish Times,"—for their courteous permission to search the files of their respective newspapers.

