

CORN RIOTS - 1769

TIMELINE

- 1583** 1st Corn Market built.
- 1668** 2nd Corn Market built. Corn had to be imported as more land was used for growing apples for the Island's important cider industry.
- 1730** Six-au-Sou riots - a protest about a change of currency which was felt to benefit merchants rather than farmers and workers.
- 1750** Charles Lemprière is appointed Lieutenant Bailiff and establishes a monopoly on power by appointing family members and supporters to office.
- 1760s** Price of corn, wheat and barley rentes are manipulated by the Seigneurs and the Lemprière family who are in charge of courts.
- 1767** Corn exports banned due to bad harvest.
- 1768** Bad harvest in England so corn exports are allowed despite shortages of food in Jersey. The newly formed Jersey Chamber of Commerce buys cargoes of barley for the relief of the poor.
- 1769** Lemprière orders corn to be exported in order to benefit from high prices in England.
- March - June 1769**
Severe corn shortages in the Island.
- June 1769**
13 women board a boat loaded with barrels of corn for export and sell them to people on the harbour side. They are arrested.
- September 1769**
Philip Larbalestier is arrested for 'insulting the Deputy Vicomte' with non-payment of rente.
- 28 September 1769**
Tom Gruchy leads men from Trinity and they gather with others in St Helier. These protestors force their way into the Royal Court and list their demands.
- 1 October 1769**
The Lieutenant Bailiff and Jurats take refuge in Elizabeth Castle and petition the King.
- 1770** Colonel Rudolph Bentinck is appointed by the King as Lieutenant Governor with instructions to oversee reform.
- 1771** Bentinck's Code of Laws is adopted by Jersey. It paved the way for a fairer and more democratic government in the Island.

OVERVIEW

CORN RIOTS, 1769

After a long period of Jersey being ruled by the Lemprière family, there was a feeling of unrest in the Island about so much power being held by just one family. People felt unable to obtain justice through the courts and some individuals were wrongfully imprisoned. It was the Age of Enlightenment and revolutionary ideas were taking hold in France and America.

In June 1769, despite a bad harvest and food shortages, Charles Lemprière the Lieutenant Bailiff, ordered corn to be put on a ship and sent to England to be sold for his personal gain. A group of women boarded the boat and sold the corn to Jersey people on the harbour side, and were arrested for their actions.

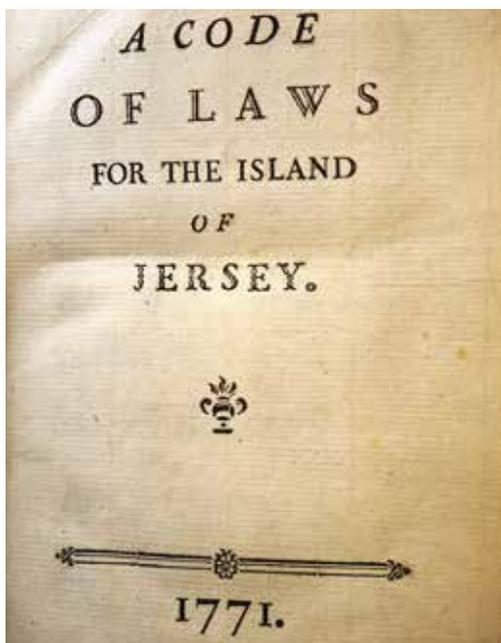
In September, Philip Larbalestier was arrested and imprisoned for non-payment of rente. This was the ignition moment. Tom Gruchy, who had returned from many years living in Boston in America, rallied a group of men to march from Trinity to demand changes in the Island's government. Amice Durrell and Jean Luce led other groups and they came together in St Helier. The protestors forced their way into the Royal Court where they produced a set of demands.

Following conflicting reports of events in the Island, the King sent Colonel Rudolph Bentinck to oversee reform and a new Code of Laws was adopted by Jersey in 1771. Charles Lemprière remained as Lieutenant Bailiff until 1781.

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Charles Lempière



KEY WORDS

Corn - a plant (or crop) that is grown in fields and used for food. It can be wheat, barley or oats.

Rente - payment by person who lives on land, made in corn or other crops to the land owner. Prices were fixed by the Royal Court.

Seigneur - land owner of a specific area in Jersey - similar to a Lord of the Manor.

Harvest - the collection of crops or the amount of crops that have been grown that season.

Protest - an objection or a complaint against something .

Riot - a violent disturbance made by a large number of people.

Sedition - actions or speech intended or helping to create rebellion against a government.

Bailiff - person who had the power to make the laws and was Chief-Judge over the courts.
