

CONFIDENTIAL RECORD

TL Archive No. 002

Seized at
Brixham Harbour
by order of
the Customs.
12th June
1821

DEVON CUSTOMS OFFICE

THE SMUGGLERS OF BRIXHAM

Our Ladys Bird, c.1700-1850

* FILED WITHIN THE TRAWLER LIGHTS HISTORICAL ARCHIVE *

*"By moonlight they landed their cargo.
By sunrise they had vanished."*

Long before tourism arrived in Tor Bay, hidden coves around Brixham provided perfect landing places for smugglers. Under cover of darkness, small boats slipped ashore carrying tea, brandy, tobacco and rum, avoiding the heavy taxes imposed by the Crown. Local fishermen, labourers and innkeepers often helped move the goods inland before dawn. Many stories tell of secret tunnels, hidden stores and coded lantern signals, though fact and legend have become difficult to separate over time. Today, walking the cliffs and coves around Brixham, it is easy to imagine a distant lantern flickering across the bay and a silent boat appearing from the darkness.



*Goods seized from
the sloop 'Our Ladys Bird'
landed in a small cove
on the 12th June 1821*

*14 casks Brandy
8 chests Tea
5 boxes Tobacco
2 barrels Rum
6 bolts Fine Silk
Assorted Hardware*

*The sloop 'Our Ladys Bird'
was seen standing off the coast
after dark. A small boat was
rowed in and the goods landed
at low water.
No shore party could be
apprehended.*

*Mr Fish
Customs Officer*

