



TRAWLER LIGHTS

HISTORY ARCHIVE

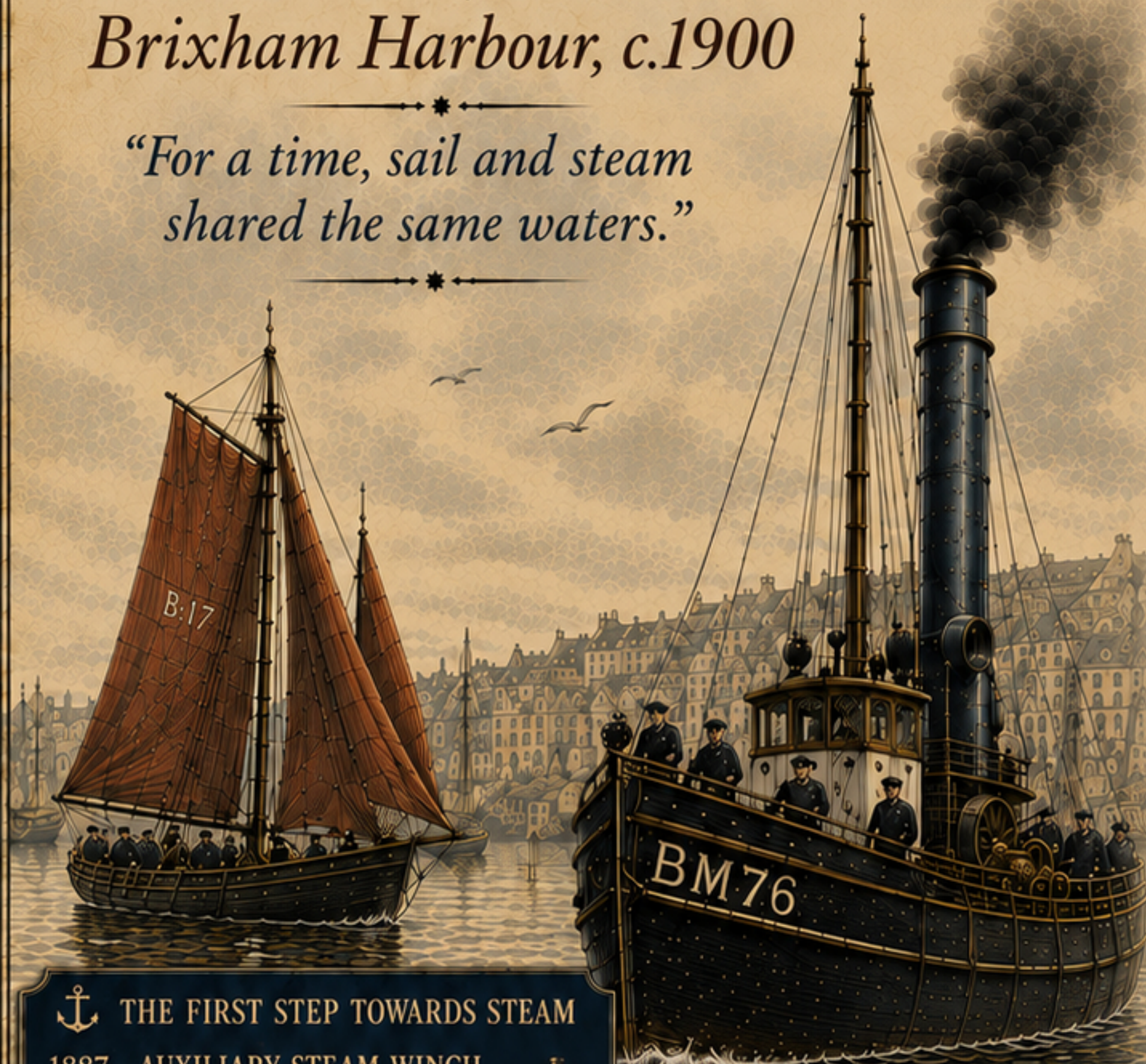
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THE COMING OF STEAM

Brixham Harbour, c.1900

*"For a time, sail and steam
shared the same waters."*



For generations, Brixham's fishermen depended on the wind, the tide and their skill. Our red-sailed trawlers became famous across the Channel, built and sailed by families who understood the sea.

As a new century dawned, steam power began to find its way into our harbour. Faster, stronger and more reliable, it offered new opportunities and greater catches.

For a time, sail and steam worked side by side. Then gradually, steam trawlers took over, able to travel further, work longer and return regardless of the wind.

Progress had arrived, and with it a future full of possibility. Yet it also marked the passing of an era that had shaped our town for centuries.

THE FIRST STEP TOWARDS STEAM

1887 - AUXILIARY STEAM WINCH

The fishing trawler *Ethel* (DH68) became one of the first vessels in Brixham to use an auxiliary steam winch to haul heavy gear.

It was a small but important advance – the beginning of steam in our fishing fleet.



KEY MOMENTS IN BRIXHAM'S TRANSITION

1887



Ethel (DH68) is fitted with an auxiliary steam winch – the first use of steam power in a Brixham fishing vessel.

1890s



Widespread adoption of steam winches across the fleet. A major improvement for Brixham's sail-dominated fishing vessels.

1900–1905



Steam trawlers begin to appear in greater numbers. For the first time, many fishermen could see a future in which the wind no longer ruled the fleet.

1910–1920



Steam trawlers dominate local fishing. Longer voyages and bigger catches bring new opportunities.

BY THE 1930s



The last commercial sailing trawlers leave the fishing grounds. The great red-sailed fleet that made Brixham famous passes into history.

"The engine changed our boats, but the sea still tested our men."

RECORDED FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS
LEST WE FORGET WHO WE ARE
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Brixham Harbour
Record Office

