

# The Fruit Schooners



# The Deep Sea Traders



In the early 1800s, Salcombe was little more than an obscure fishing port with an unsavoury reputation for smuggling. By 1835, however, the town had become famous for its beautiful clipper schooners, the ‘Salcombe fruiterers’.

Built for speed in the five shipyards at Salcombe and at Date’s Shipwright’s Yard in Kingsbridge, these small, fine-lined vessels raced home with cargoes of highly perishable fruit from the Azores and the Mediterranean to the fruit markets of London, Liverpool, Bristol, and Hull. Particularly profitable was the trade in St. Michael’s oranges from the Azores.

With mainly local owners, masters and crews, the Salcombe fruiterers played a leading part in the fruit trade for nearly forty years. Other ports were involved, but it was the Salcombe schooners that were the most acclaimed.



Oranges and lemons from the Azores, Spain and Italy

Raisins and nuts from Spain

Currants from Greece & figs from Turkey



The Fruit Schooners by Montague Dawson

# The Newfoundland Saltfish Trade



Dried and salted cod

Driven out of the fruit trade by steamships, many of the Salcombe schooners entered the gruelling Newfoundland trade in the late 1860s bringing back saltfish to southern Europe.

Other schooners such as the *Lord Devon* (pictured on the right) and the *Lady St John’s* were built specifically as fish carriers. When she was sold in 1930 *Lady St John’s* was the last British sailing vessel in a trade that went back four and a half centuries.



The brig Phantom

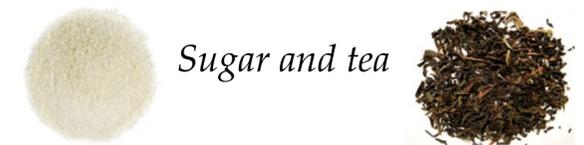
With the fruit trade suffering from competition from steamships in the 1860s, local shipowners began to invest in new, larger vessels, such as brigs, barques and barquentines which could be employed in those trades where sailing vessels could still compete with steam.

The deep sea traders carried out coal from Cardiff and brought back cargoes



The schooner Lord Devon

such as sugar from the West Indies, Brazil and Mauritius and tea from China. By the mid 1880s steamship competition finally drove local shipowners out of business and the town’s glory days as a shipbuilding and shipowning port came to an end.



Sugar and tea

# The Pineapple Trade

Salcombe ships also played a leading role in the pineapple trade, shipping them from the Bahamas to the London market. Employed in the trade were three-masted schooners and barquentines, such as the *Brizo*, pictured below.



The barquentine Brizo