

HAMPSHIRE SMUGGLERS' PUBS

Terry Townsend

Walk any section of the 34-mile long Avon Valley Path from Christchurch to Salisbury and you will be walking in the steps of the smugglers of old. Take any one of the well-worn tracks across the New Forest and you will be traversing a route created by smugglers' pack ponies.

Cross the Hamble River on the little ferry from Warsash and the ghosts of contraband carriers will trudge with you up Hamble's winding cobbled street. Wander through the churchyard at Boldre and wonder at the solid table-top tombs which provided additional service as giant tea caddy storage safes for the gentlemen of the night.

Above all, seek out a smugglers' pub. These wonderful old buildings with their low-beamed ceilings, flagstone floors, inglenook fireplaces and secret hiding places are where you should go to get a real sense of the desperate days of the free traders

In all the southern counties of England the nerve centre of smuggling operations was predominantly the local pub. It was here that plots were hatched, arrangements for transportation agreed and runs commissioned. The smugglers' pub served as a meeting place, recruitment centre, secret storage facility, distribution depot and valued customer.

This lively guide will lead you to a significant number of authentic pubs patronised over two centuries ago by Hampshire smugglers, where you can experience directly a sometimes unexpected slice of the county's colourful history.

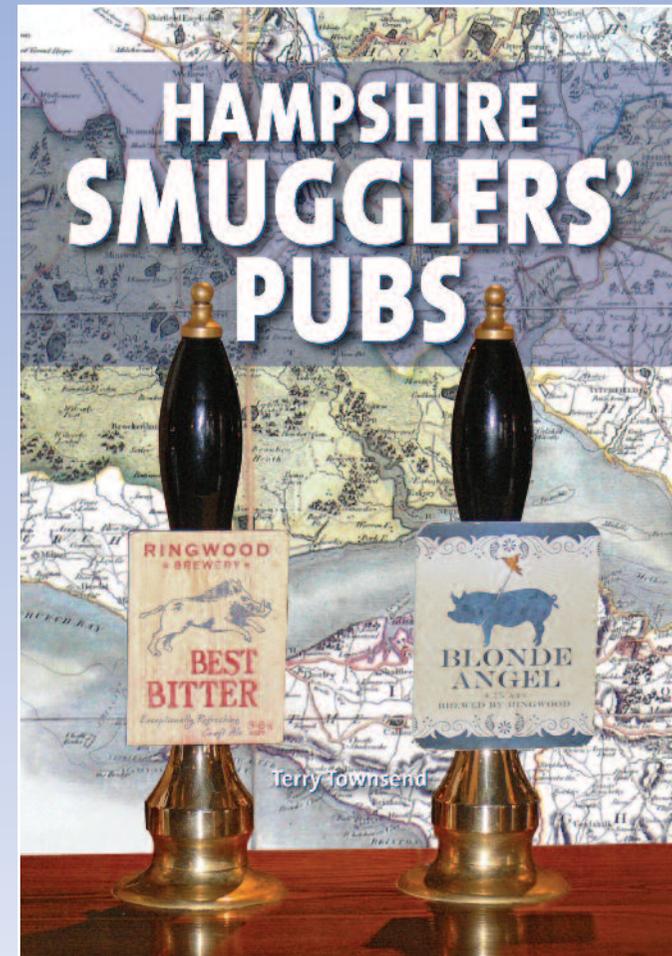
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Retired graphic designer Terry Townsend lives in Dorset with his wife Carol and their cat Smudge. His other books for Halsgrove include: *Once Upon a Pint – A Readers Guide to the Literary Pubs and Inns of Dorset and Somerset*, *Kent Smugglers' Pubs*, *Dorset Smugglers' Pubs*, *Jane Austen's Hampshire*, *Jane Austen and Bath* and *Jane Austen's Kent*.

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There is a tradition of contraband being stored in all manner of places locally, particularly in Boldre church and in one of the table-top tombs in the churchyard.



Above: *The Cat & Fiddle at Hinton was not only the smugglers' first paying customer but also provided one of their most important storage facilities.*

Left: *Along one side of tiny Langstone High Street stands a row of thatched cottages formerly occupied by generations of fishermen smugglers.*

Below: *Part of the smuggling exhibition in Buckler's Hard Museum. Casks of brandy or gin were the stock-in-trade of most smuggling voyages.*

Left: *Large quantities of illicit goods were shipped cheaply and stealthily up the branching River Hamble.*



An early illustration of Lovey Warne on Christchurch Quay smuggling silks and laces past a suspicious looking Customs man.



Example of a double-page spread.

