

ISLE OF WIGHT SMUGGLERS' PUBS

Terry Townsend

Smuggling, although always illegal, was a major trading activity in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century. This 'delicious deception' was an activity inhabitants of the Isle of Wight engaged in with enthusiasm. The Island's prominent smuggling role can be largely attributed to its offshore location with its sheltered coves and sandy beaches. Much of the contraband shipped by Island smugglers was destined for mainland customers.

The Island became a natural forward base for traffic to and from the continent. Separated from the mainland by The Solent, this diamond shaped landmass was a natural gift to the 'free traders' and developed into a main dumping depot where contraband purchased in Northern France and the Channel Islands could be stockpiled reasonably safely.

The nerve centre of smuggling operations was predominantly the local pub, where 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 copiously illustrated guide features a significant number of authentic pubs patronised over two centuries ago by Isle of Wight smugglers. These wonderful old buildings with their low-beamed ceilings, flagstone floors, inglenook fireplaces and secret hiding places are where, with a little imagination, one can sense the desperate days of smuggling's golden era.

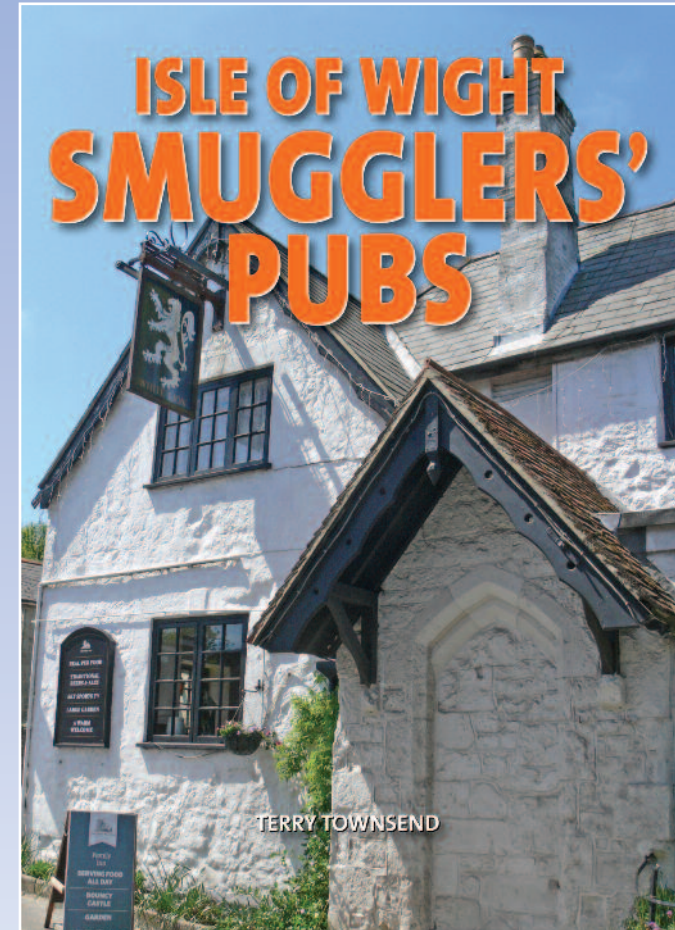
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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*, *Hampshire Smugglers' Pubs*, *Jane Austen's Hampshire*, *Jane Austen and Bath* and *Jane Austen's Kent*.

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Smugglers' caves in the cliffs at Freshwater Bay.



Above: Situated right on the beach at the foot of Shanklin Chine, this unique thatched pub dates from 1817.

Left: Bottle ends built into brickwork indicate a safe house for smugglers.



Below: The White Lion stands at the cross roads in the centre of the smuggling village of Niton.



Left: Most of the crew and passengers from the doomed Clarendon are buried in St Andrew's churchyard near the Wight Mouse.



Example of a double-page spread.



Weights such as these were attached to kegs to sink them below the surface for later retrieval.

