

SUFFOLK SMUGGLERS' PUBS

Terry Townsend

On Monday, 4 February 1734, Walter Plummer MP told the House of Commons he had recently been in Suffolk where smugglers went about in such formidable bodies, that if something was not done to put a stop to them: *'they might soon threaten danger even to the Government'*. He went on to say he had often met them in gangs of forty or fifty together, all so well mounted, that even the Dragoons *'could not come up with them'*.

In English maritime counties 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 book explores smuggling connections of Suffolk down the whole of the eastern seaboard from the northern border with Norfolk to the southern border with Essex. It is a guide to a significant number of authentic pubs patronised over two and a half centuries ago by Suffolk 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 the free traders.

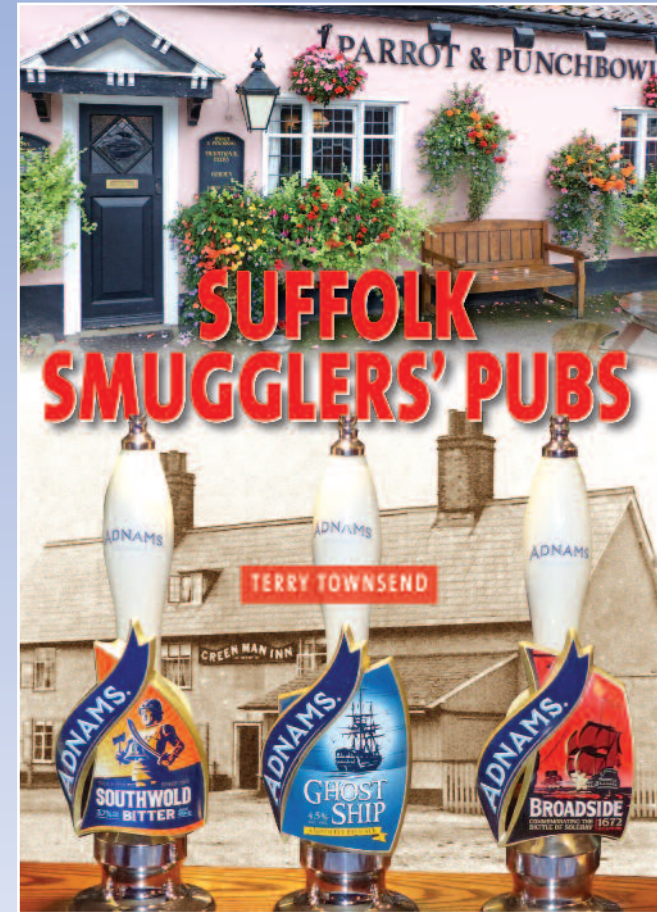
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Terry Townsend, has written extensively about English life in the eighteenth century including books on smuggling, the Bristol slave trade and the life of Jane Austen. He lives in the West Country with his wife Carol and their cat Smudge.

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The Vulcan Arms, Sizewell as the smugglers would have known it.



Above: During the eighteenth century pitched battles were fought at Southwold between smugglers and Revenue Men.

Left: Troops from the 1st Regiment of Dragoon Guards, mounted on Sorrel horses were called upon to assist local Preventive Men in combating smuggling.

Below: The contraband landing beach at Dunwich, overlooked by the terrace of Coast-guard cottages and watch house, is just 100 paces from the front door of The Ship Inn.



Left: The 600-year-old Bell Inn is situated in the heart of the picturesque seaside village of Walberswick, a stone's throw from the rolling dunes and harbour.



The Old Customs House is a reminder of Orford's smuggling era.



Example of a double-page spread.

