

MORE DORSET SMUGGLERS' PUBS

Terry Townsend

During the eighteenth century, cliff-top fires were used to alert incoming smuggling vessels to the presence of patrolling Customs Officers. Lighting these warning fires was a specific and extremely serious offence carrying the death penalty. Inland, communication between illiterate people relied on word of mouth which begs the question of how gangs of a hundred or more contraband carriers could be organised to rendezvous at an appointed time and place.

In those days the pub was the hub of rural communities and often acted as the nerve centre of smuggling operations. It was in the pubs that plots were hatched, arrangements for transportation agreed and runs commissioned. At these meetings certain key men were each assigned to raise small groups and the overall task of assembling a workforce was completed through pyramid delegation.

Historian and author Terry Townsend has once again travelled to towns, villages and hamlets across his home county seeking 'more' of the authentic pubs patronised over two and a half centuries ago by Dorset smugglers. The result is a beautifully-illustrated companion guide presenting a new selection of pubs that served not only as meeting places but also recruitment centres, secret storage facilities, distribution depots and valued customers.

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 men who called themselves 'free traders'.

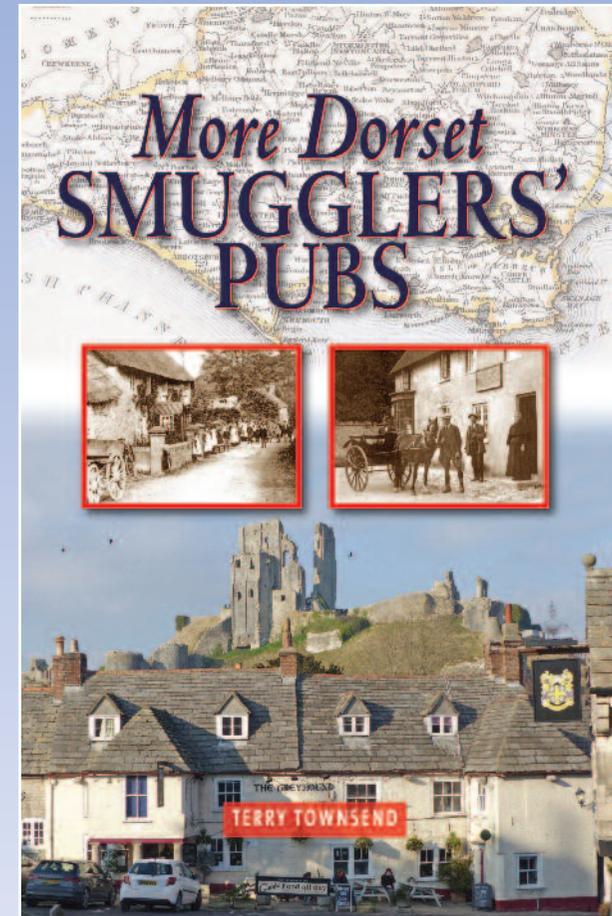
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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 Dorset with his wife Carol and their cat Smudge. The predecessor volume to this book, *Dorset Smugglers' Pubs*, was published by Halsgrove in 2015.

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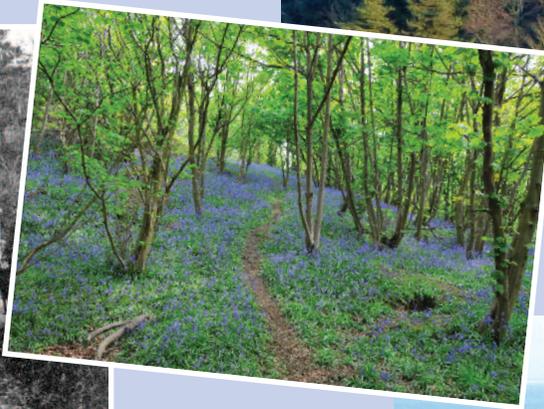
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The extremely sheltered Lulworth Cove could be used virtually in all weathers by the smugglers of Chaldon Herring and Owermoigne.



Above: The perfect lookout and signalling station of St Catherine's Chapel overlooks Fleet Lagoon and the smugglers' landing ground of Chesil Beach.

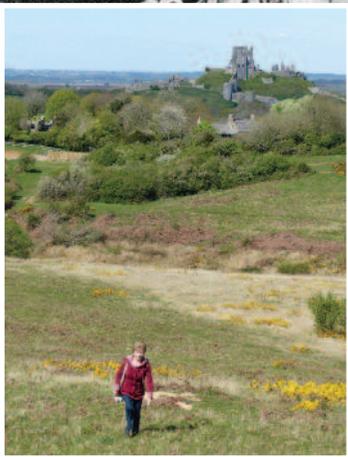


Left: A tranquil coppice in Hooks Wood where in March 1779 a famous battle between smugglers and Dragoons took place.

Below: A row of former Coastguard cottages stands back from the smugglers' landing beaches at Kimmeridge and Worbarrow Bay.



Left: Corscombe village children helped excavate pits to conceal contraband.



Eighteenth-century smugglers conveyed contraband such as fine French brandy and ladies' silk gloves across Corfe Common on their way from the Purbeck coast to London.

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It is said to have been built by a smuggler, who used it as a meeting place for his associates. The building was used as a warehouse for contraband and was destroyed by fire in 1850. The site is now a public house.

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Example of a double-page spread.