

WEST SUSSEX SMUGGLERS' PUBS

Terry Townsend

With its pivotal position between French contraband suppliers and an avaricious London market, West Sussex became a strategic link in the supply chain of tax free luxury goods during the Georgian era. Beginning with small village ventures, supported by clergymen sympathetic to the plight of their impoverished parishioners, the enterprise developed into serious organised crime with marauding gangs terrorising whole communities. This extraordinary period lasting 150 years, is revealed here on a journey across West Sussex from Rottingdean to Chichester.

Pubs were the hubs where plots were hatched, arrangements for transportation agreed and runs commissioned. In addition to supplying secret storage facilities the smugglers' pub served as a meeting place, recruitment centre, distribution depot and valued customer. These wonderful old buildings with their low-beamed ceilings, flagstone floors, inglenook fireplaces and secret hiding places ooze history. With a little imagination it's not difficult to picture the desperate men who preferred to call themselves 'free traders', dividing their booty or gambling away their ill-gotten gains with the ceiling mounted 'spinners' still surviving in some historic West Sussex pubs.

The intriguing story of smuggling in West Sussex is revealed here in this fascinating and superbly illustrated guide, through visits to fifteen authentic inns and taverns frequented by the old time free traders.

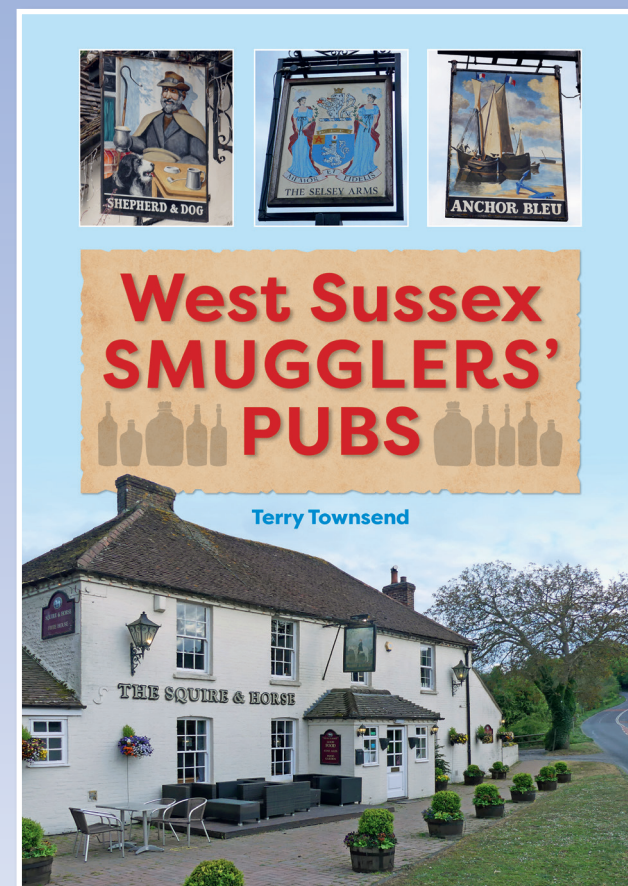
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Terry Townsend, who has written extensively about the social history of English pubs and inns, lives in the West Country with his wife Carol. Terry Townsend is the author of more than a dozen books published by Halsgrove.

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