

Education Pack



LOOK & SEA

Smuggling in West Sussex

Education and Learning Pack



Key Terms

- Smuggling/Owling
- Tax
- Government
- Illegal
- Customs Houses
- Exporting

Learning Objectives

- To understand why people smuggled
- To understand why Littlehampton was important for smugglers
- To understand what a Customs House did
- To establish a timeline for smuggling along the West Sussex Coast
- To find out who the Hawkhurst Gang were

Smuggling

It seems that almost every single port or coastal village in West Sussex has some association with the widespread smuggling that went on in the late 18th and early 19th centuries.

While a lot of the stories around smuggling seem fanciful, there is actually a large degree of truth in many based in West Sussex. This is due to the simple reason that smuggling was a large and prosperous trade until the 1820's.

While many of these stories may seem romantic, in truth the smugglers were a mixture of hardened criminals, enterprising businessmen and, mostly, frightened locals who were desperately poor and welcomed the extra few shillings a night's smuggling could bring their families.

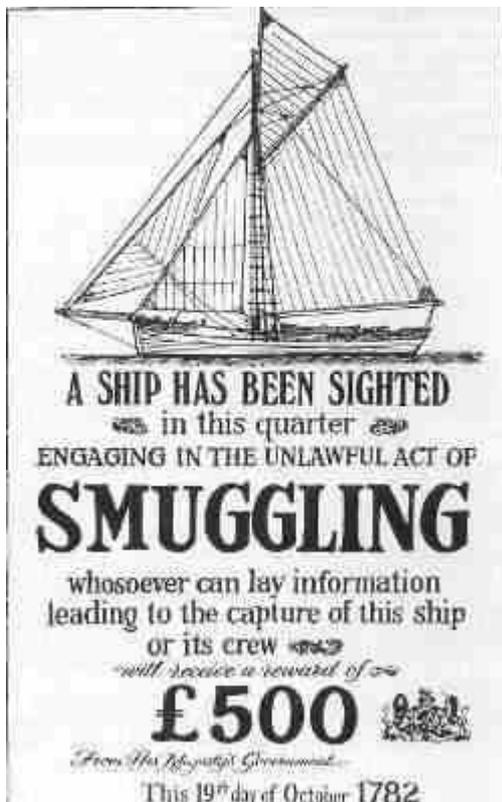


West Sussex was an obvious place for a smuggler to ply his trade. Before the seaside resorts of Bognor Regis, Worthing and Brighton became popular the West Sussex coastline was barely inhabited. This is possibly due to the fact that the coastline changed dramatically due to big storms rearranging beaches, river mouths and shingle spits. Additionally, the coast was largely uninhabited as those living on the coast found it difficult to make a living.

Key Stage One

- Smuggling started in the 1700's.
- Owling was the original term for smuggling as it developed from around 1300.
- It was called owling because of the way the smugglers communicated with each other and because they worked at night.
- It was illegal to smuggle as it meant bringing things into the country without paying any tax on it.
- Tax was the money that the government put on some items so they could make money. In this case to fund their wars in Europe.
- For example, the tax on tea was almost 70% of its actual cost.
- Many of the rural communities were often close to starvation. They hated the large amount of tax, and the customs and excise duties that tried to keep an eye on and stop the smuggling.
- As the government was so busy with fighting wars, they were blind to the illegal items flowing through West Sussex.
- In the early days, a smuggling trip would see around 3000 gallons of spirits illegally brought into West Sussex.
- It is said that there was so much alcohol coming into the county that people used it to clean their windows!
- The smuggling was carried out using sailing ships on the sea and horse and cart carriages on land.

- There were custom houses along the coast. There was one in Arundel but with the amount of illegal goods coming through Littlehampton, they moved the custom house to Littlehampton in the 1710's.
- There was often violence surrounding smugglers.
- Wool became illegal to export in 1661 and was made punishable by death. This meant the smugglers armed themselves with weapons.
- The army was the only authority that could stop the smugglers as many Customs Men would rather work things out with the smugglers and let them pass.
- Littlehampton was not the only local town involved. Many smugglers would pass their goods through to areas such as Chichester and Pagham.
- In the 1900's free trade and new systems of coastal patrol were available so the amount of smuggling went down.
- However, today there are still types of smuggling in the UK.



Key Stage Two

- Smuggling really started in the 1700's as it grew across the coast at a fast pace.
- Owling was the original term for smuggling as it first developed from around 1300.
- It was called owling because of the way the smugglers communicated with each other and because they worked at night.
- The Dolphin Hotel in Littlehampton was very popular for smugglers.
- In the early days, a smuggling trip would see around 3000 gallons of spirits illegally brought into West Sussex.
- It is said that there was so much alcohol coming into the county that people used it to clean their windows!
- The smuggling was carried out using sailing ships on the sea and horse and cart carriages on land as steam power had not been invented yet.



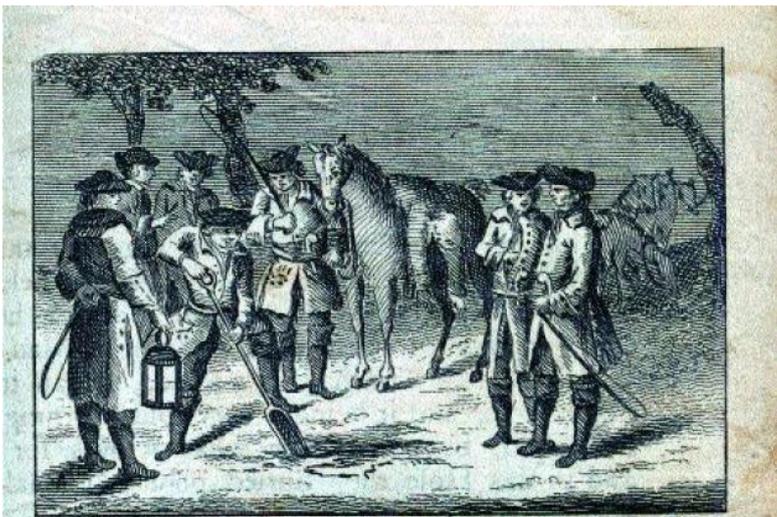
The Smugglers Stone. Erected in 1749 at the site of where a convicted smuggler was buried.

- It was illegal to smuggle as it meant bringing things into the country without paying any tax on it.
- Tax was the money that the government put on some items so they could make money. In this case to fund their wars in Europe.
- For example, the tax on tea was almost 70% of its actual cost.
- Many of the rural communities were often close to starvation. They hated the large amount of tax, and the customs and excise duties that tried to keep an eye on and stop the smuggling.
- It was said that smuggling, along with fishing and farming were the 3 main industries in West Sussex for many years.
- As the government was so busy with fighting wars, they were blind to the illegal items flowing through West Sussex.

- There were custom houses along the coast. There was one in Arundel but with the amount of illegal goods coming through Littlehampton, they moved the custom house to Littlehampton in the 1710's. It moved backwards and forwards between the 2 until finally staying in Littlehampton from 1864.
- There was often violence surrounding smugglers.
- Wool became illegal to export in 1661 and was made punishable by death. This meant the smugglers armed themselves with weapons.
- The army was the only authority that could stop the smugglers as many Customs Men would rather work things out with the smugglers and let them pass.
- Littlehampton was not the only local town involved. Many smugglers would pass their goods through to areas such as Chichester and Pagham.
- In the 1900's free trade and new systems of coastal patrol were available so the amount of smuggling went down.
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The Hawkhurst Gang

- The Hawkhurst Gang were a notorious gang of criminals that were involved with smuggling along the south coast.
- They were named for the village of Hawkhurst in Kent. Their influence stretched from Kent to Dorset.
- They were first mentioned as the Holkhurst Genge in 1735. Based in Hawkhurst, it is claimed that they frequented The Mermaid Inn in the town of Rye, where they would sit with their weapons on the table.
- There are lots of local legends and folktales surrounding the gang. It is believed that they created a network of tunnels to transport their goods through.



Smuggling & Smugglers in Sussex.

THE GENUINE HISTORY
OF THE INHUMAN AND
UNPARALLELED MURDERS
OF
MR. WILLIAM GALLEY,
A CUSTOM-HOUSE OFFICER, AND
MR. DANIEL CHATER,
A SHOEMAKER,
BY FOURTEEN NOTORIOUS SMUGGLERS,
WITH THE
TRIALS AND EXECUTION OF
SEVEN OF THE CRIMINALS AT CHICHESTER,
1748-9.

Illustrated with Seven Plates, Descriptive of the Barbarous Cruelties.

ALSO THE
Trials of John Mills and Henry Sheerman; with an account of the
wicked lives of the said Henry Sheerman, Lawrence and Thomas
Kemp, Robert Fuller and Jockey Brown; and the Trials at large
of Thomas Kingsmill and other Smugglers for Breaking open
the Custom House at Poole; with the Sermon preached in the
Cathedral Church of Chichester, at a Special Assize held there,
by Bp. Ashburnham; also an Article on "Smuggling in Sussex,"
by William Derrant Cooper, Esq., F.S.A. (Reprinted from Vol. X.
of the "Sussex Archaeological Collections"), and other Papers.

W. J. SMITH, 41-43 NORTH STREET, BRIGHTON.

Title page from a book detailing the trial of the 7 smugglers who killed 2 revenue officers. From Smith, W.J. *The Genuine History of the Inhuman and Unparalleled Murders...* (Brighton, Undated Reprint, c. 1880).

- The gang often clashed and fought with customs officials.
- For example, in 1740 officers found over 750kg of smuggled tea in a barn at Etchingham. So they transferred it into a cart to transfer to Hastings. The gang found out, gathered a group of 30 men with weapons and horses and attacked the officers. They shot the leader dead and captured the soldiers. Only one of the smugglers was punished for this.
- Normally, smuggling gangs were popular with the local people. However, the Hawkhurst Gang were so violent and brutal that instead it turned everyone local against them.
- Many of the gang met their match against the Goudhurst Band of Militia. 3 of the gang died here.
- However, in 1748 the government issued a list of men wanted for 'murders, burglaries and robberies' in Sussex. 7 were turned in due to this list. 6 were hanged and 1 died in prison.
- The rest of the names of the wanted were then published within the 'London Gazette'. They were instructed to hand themselves in within 40 days.



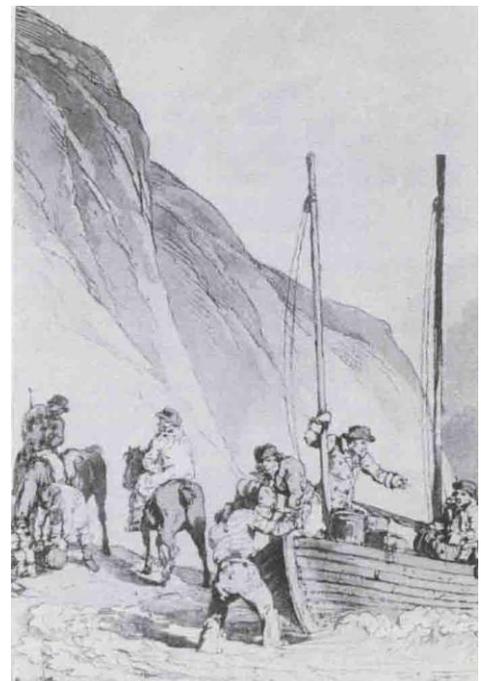
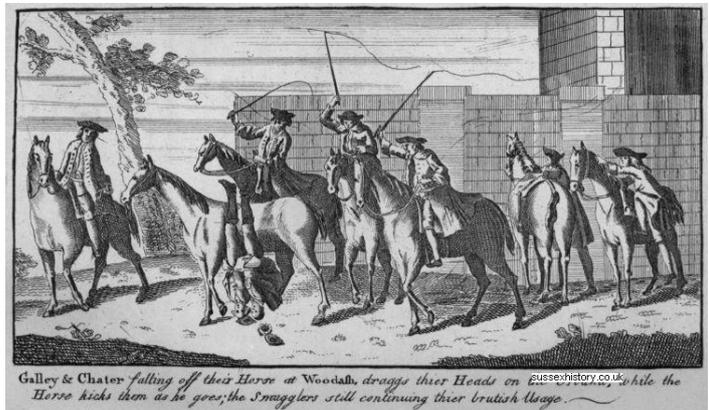
Representation of the Hawkhurst Gang. From Keble Chatterton, *E. King's Cutters and Smugglers 1700-1855* (Leonaus, 2008).

SEN

We are flexible and open to the requirements of any child that visits the Look and Sea. We will therefore tailor the experience, in conjunction with teachers and carers, to the requirements and needs of each child.

Guidelines for Teaching SEN

- Provide oral instructions and written instructions.
- Make instructions brief and clear, and teach one step at a time.
- When necessary, plan to repeat instructions in both written and oral forms.
- Give immediate feedback to students. Frequent progress checks and specific praise should be provided.
- Make activities concise and short; adjust work time so it matches attention span.
- Learning disabled students have difficulty learning abstract terms and concepts. Whenever possible, provide them with concrete objects and events – items they can touch, hear, smell etc.
- Encourage cooperative learning activities when possible. Invite students of varying abilities to work together on a specific project or toward a common goal. Create an atmosphere in which a true 'community of learners' is facilitated and enhanced.
- Students with physical impairments: Focus on the intellectual investment in an activity. That is, help the child use his or her problem-solving abilities and thinking skills in completing an assignment.



Teacher/Volunteer Notes

Smuggling, to avoid paying taxes, dates back to the 17th century and was common along the Littlehampton coast in the 18th and early 19th centuries. The town saw many kinds of materials coming ashore, including wine, rum, brandy, tobacco, wool and lace. Tons of this contraband came in to towns along the coast, particularly from France and Holland. The British Government was concentrating on wars all over the world at this time, and was somewhat distracted from this illegal trade.

However, smuggling in Littlehampton really began with the illegal export of highly taxed wool. As early as 1274 wool was being smuggled from nearby Shoreham. By the 18th century luxury goods were being smuggled into the country, avoiding import taxes and making high profits.

Smugglers hid their contraband in some very clever ways. Tobacco was stained with rum and woven together with strands of hemp to make it look like rope. Additionally, on one occasion excise men found one boat built with a double hull. The 5 inch (127mm) gap was crammed full of tobacco, tea, silk and spirits.

From the Littlehampton coast, smugglers delivered their contraband inland, even to London. It was said that smuggling, along with fishing

and agriculture were the three main industries in Sussex for many years. Members of the public in Littlehampton would often turn a blind eye to smuggling and would not speak about it. It is thought that the reserved nature of local people originates from 'keeping quiet' in the smuggling days.

Everyone was involved. Smugglers or free traders ranged from farm labourers to shopkeepers and supplied everyone from vicars to local landowners and magistrates. Tea was the most valuable contraband item.

There were regular seizures of contraband. In one particular story, about 200 years ago, some smugglers were found in nearby Ferring Sluice and were attacked by Revenue Officers. The officers managed to confiscate 170 casks of spirits and around 40 sacks of tea that had been illegally imported. It is also said that during the raid one of the officers received a gunshot wound to a leg, after the smugglers had taken up arms to defend their illegal cargo. The confiscated goods were stored in the Arundel Custom House.

Rivalry between Littlehampton and Arundel was strong. The Customs House moved to Littlehampton briefly in the early 18th century (1710's) but protests saw it return to Arundel. The Customs House eventually moved back to Littlehampton Harbour in 1864.

After the end of the Napoleonic Wars in 1815 attempts were made to prevent smuggling by building coastguard stations along the south coast, including one here at Littlehampton. Only once import duties were reduced, in the mid-19th century, was smuggling doomed.