

The Smugglers Gangs

Aldington Gang -Alias 'South Kent Gang' or 'The Blues'

Early leader was Cephus Qusted, hung 4 July 1821. George Ransley took over leadership along with two cousins James and William (the 'Rascally Brothers'). The cousins died at the gallows at Penenden Heath in August 1800 for horse stealing and robbing the King's mail. George Ransley 1780-1856 died of yellow jaundice in Tasmania where he had been deported

Hawkhurst Gang

Formed 1740's by Arthur Grey. Leadership was taken over by Thomas Kingsmill in 1747. 1749 saw the end of the main leaders

Groombridge Gang

Said to be run by the Bowra family. Young John, Grandfather Thomas and father John The gang was betrayed by Jerome Knapp 1749.

Mayfield Gang

Leader Gabriel Thompkins otherwise Kit Jams 1717-1750. Hawkhurst, Groombridge and May field gangs worked very much together.

Callis Court Gang

Leader Jos Snelling 1741,1769 involved in the battle of Botney Bay between Foreness Point and Kingsgate. He was the most famous Broadstairs smuggler He died aged 96 Son George and grandson both took part in smuggling.

North Kent Smugglers

First recorded in 1820, used the coastline between the River Medway and Ramsgate, Reculver being a favourite landing place. Burntwick Island at the mouth of the Medway was also used.

Whitstable Smugglers

The best known episode was a raid on an escort of nine soldiers carrying a toad of captured gin with 53 smugglers involved; they recovered their gin Retribution followed when 18 year old John Knight was tried and hung at Maidstone. During the war years a profitable business was made shipping out French prisoners of war.