

Tales of the New Forest

By Philip Klitz

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APPENDIX

SMUGGLING

Edited extract from "The Commoners New Forest"

In the early 1800s almost every labourer was a poacher or smuggler or both, as much for the excitement as for financial profit.

Well beaten runs were operated up narrow wooded coombes such as Beckton Bunny and Chewton Bunny, where streams had pierced the cliffs.

Often in a single night 'runs' of a hundred or so tubs, each containing 4 gallons of spirit worth several guineas apiece, would be operated. Processions of men with kegs slung fore and aft would bustle the contraband up the glen to where pack-ponies or wagons awaited. Or, if the run was at a steeper place, the kegs would be passed from hand to hand by a chain of men from the beach to the cliff-top.

A well-organised traffic such as this must have been closely planned and carefully safeguarded from betrayal.

In addition to these large scale organisations forest smallholders operated their own private ventures in homemade boats, to some mid-channel or even cross-channel rendezvous.

Plenty dramatic brushes and skirmishes with "King George's men" must have taken place, but as to these, all is silence, lest the secret traffic of the neighbourhood and the safety of tribesmen be imperilled.

So it becomes easy to understand why it is not possible to acquire the information necessary to piece together any coherent picture of the traffic as it was in its palmy days.

Smuggling eventually dwindled due to the scaling down of import duties and the adoption of free trade etc. but a beloved and exciting a sport so deeply ingrained and inbred for centuries is not easily abandoned, even when profits become negligible.

"Who shall cast the first stone? He who returning on furlough declared the country 'cheroots' in his suitcase in the hopes that his trunks might escape rummaging in the customs shed? Or she who hath not donned three pairs of silk stockings before facing the draughts of the landing gangway?"

THE HAMPSHIRE RIOTS

Extract from the Hampshire magazine 1969

Some farmers and others were sympathetic to the labourers plight and gave some degree of encouragement. There was also general outrage at the unfairness of the sentences meted out. The prisoners were not allowed a defence and the defendants were not able to brief the council. If fellows volunteered to give evidence on behalf of a prisoner they ran a risk of being indicted for complicity. Some men suffered accordingly.

Eventually, in Winchester, only two men were hanged the rest were given variable sentences or sent for transportation for periods from seven years to life.

THE HAMPSHIRE RIOTS

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Extract from the Hampshire Magazine 1969

The first rumblings of the storm with the destruction of threshing machines began in August 1830 in the Kent countryside and quickly spread into Sussex and reached Hampshire in November of that year. As well as destruction of the modern machinery they requested that all labourers should receive 9 shillings a week and for reduced rents and tithes.

As the industrialisation of farming gathered pace so more labourers found themselves without work and forced into starvation or the workhouse. There were no factories in the south to which they could turn for alternative employment.

Autumn in the 1830s was no "Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness" for the labourer. Instead the onset of winter was dreaded not just because his work was harder in the harsher weather, but lest he should have no work at all and so be forced to exist on the meagre, and begrudgingly given poor law payment. The scanty sum barely enabled a man and his family to survive until Spring when work became more generally available. To make matters worse much of the common land, on which threadbare cottagers had been able to pasture a precious beast for food and sustenance, had been enclosed and sold off in cheap lots to the local gentry. So in November 1830, goaded beyond endurance, exacerbated by the arrival of the threshing machine which could do the work of ten men, thus leading to further un-employment, the labourers in village after village rose in revolt against yet another winter of discontent.

Extract from The Hampshire Telegraph, Winchester Saturday November 27th 1830

The disturbances in this neighbourhood have increased to an alarming degree and require all the energy of the Magistrates and Police, assisted by the Military, for their suppression. The city remained quiet but many excesses were committed in the surrounding villages, by extorting money, plundering and destroying. Several threshing machines were destroyed and their owners severely threatened.

Cavalry and Infantry reinforcements arrived and Winchester was declared as the Head Quarters of the county for the duration of the disturbances. A great number of prisoners were secured in the gaol.

A special commission for trial of the rioters was set up for early commencement as the gaol was much crowded and also because the government feared, that what had begun as a local revolt might develop into national civil war if not ruthlessly stamped out.

The mobs are not found to consist entirely of labouring men, as has been represented; nor are their only objects the destruction of machines and an increase in wages. Many persons in full employment at high wages, have been apprehended and lodged in prison, as ringleaders of most flagrant outrages.

Large sums of money have been extorted by violence and threats from several individuals at their own houses, and persons have been stopped and pillaged on the public roads. Some were heard to declare that they would not work while they can earn so much more by mobbing!

SWING, or Captain Swing was a pseudonym often used by rioters in the Southern counties. The followers identified themselves by wearing a laurel in the hat. Many farmers, not only in Hampshire, received threatening letters - as follows:

"Sir,

We will give you till a fortnight to destroy your threshing machine.

If it is not destroyed by that time you must take the consequences.

SWING"

Acknowledgements

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Posthumous thanks must go to Bill Klitz (02.07.1925 - 24.12.1993) for his research and his choices for the cover page design and Preface to this book.

Bill also made a list of possible pictures for use in the New Edition proposed at that time, after his research identifying some of the places mentioned by Philip in his book and also obtaining the pictures by J. R. Morton.

Philip Klitz dedicated his book to Mrs Southey. This lady was the second wife of the poet Laureate, Robert Southey. Their marriage took place in Boldre church in the New Forest on 04 June 1839.

Mrs Southey was formerly Caroline Anne Bowles, spinster of Lymington.

Thanks to:

The people who have given permission for the pictures in these pages. Details on the illustrations page.

The St. Barbe Museum & Art Gallery, Lymington.

The New Forest Museum, Lyndhurst.

Lord Montagu of Beaulieu

Also included in the book are edited extracts from:

“The Commoners New Forest” - about smuggling (No date or publisher available)

The Hampshire Magazine 1969 - The Hampshire Riots

The Hampshire Telegraph 1830, Winchester Saturday November 27th - The Hampshire Riots

Presenters of this new edition of The Sketches



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INTERPRETATIONS / MEANINGS

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PAGE	WORD	MEANING
07	Defalcation	Misappropriate property in ones charge
16	Syren (siren)	Greek Myth. Woman. Sweet singer
16	“With Rogers”	...followed by a verse... maybe - with feeling/without doubt?
22	Panegyric	Laudatory discourse
22	Pannage / Pawnage	Payments for the right to turn swine into the Forest from 01 September for 6 weeks
23	Gamin	Street urchin, neglected boy
24	Springe	Part of a mechanical bait for hares
25	Unctuous	Oily
29	“Perpetrate a bull”	? (Dictionary says - perpetrate - to perform, commit blunder, pun or other thing viewed as outrageous)
37	Benisons	Blessings
39	Pigeon pair	Boy and girl twins
42	“Given over”	...“wife has been given over”... Expecting birth?
47	Plaguey	Exceedingly annoying
49	Statty	Statue (colloquial)
49	Phantasmagoria	Exhibition of optical illusions in London 1802
53	Euphonious	Pleasing sound
53	Cognomen	Nickname
54	Dollond	Early telescope
64	Simoom	Hot, dry, suffocating dust wind chiefly in the Arabian desert
65	Peruke maker	Wig maker
67	Levee procession	Assembly by Sovereign or representative at which men only are received ?
73	Moiety	Half, especially legal
73	Proselyte	Convert from one opinion, creed or party to another
75	SWING	Capt. Swing (& Capt. Hunt) both agricultural protesters in the Hampshire Riots. The name SWING was often used as a pseudonym by other protesters
77	Moutons	...“return to our moutons”...? Maybe - turning back to our sheep/original position?
78	Coterie	Circle. Set of persons associated by exclusive interests
79	Maximist	Obtaining the most benefit, in this case, from the horses.
79	Otium	Dignified Ease
83	Fealty	Feudal tenants acknowledgement/obligation of fidelity to his lord
83	Freewarren	Free of payment ?