

Holderness U3A Local History Group

“Smuggling in Holderness” – a few online research tips

Ever thought about finding out more about the history of where you live? The Holderness U3A Local History Group meet every month to discuss various topics on the history of Holderness and the surrounding area. You may come along to just listen or, like many of the group, you can do your own research into the chosen subject for the month. Research? Where do you start?

There are a number of information sources available. TV documentaries, libraries, museums, public records, church records, etc. However, by far the largest source of information today is the internet, which of course is still available for use during the current periods of Coronavirus social isolation restrictions and so now is a great time to look into what information is available on the internet.

The group are currently investigating “Smuggling in Holderness”. Carol Osgerby, a local historian, creator of a daily Hull and History Group blog <http://www.facebook.com/HEY> and website (<https://hulleastyorkshistorycalendar.com>) and member of the Holderness U3A Local History Group has shared some thoughts and advice about the start of her own online research into smuggling in Holderness.

“Generally, the problem with smuggling is fiction. Daphne du Maurier author of the classic Jamaica Inn has persuaded many of us that smuggling mainly happened in Cornwall. Characters like Robin Lythe imply that Robin Hood’s Bay was the only smuggling port in Yorkshire. Think about it – if everyone knows about it, it was not a successful smuggling port! Beware of ‘popular’ history writers who write anecdotes and snippets they have gathered, often without indicating where they found them, and the same story is repeated in several places, often with different places or dates.

Smuggling happened in little creeks and bays, and Holderness, as we know, had plenty of those.

Court records may give prosecutions – try looking for Quarter Sessions in Beverley or York.

Customs officers kept records, and were known as excise men, customs riding officers, collectors.

Smuggling was known to have taken place at Flamborough, Hornsea, and even inland places like Brandesburton were used for storage.

Google is the start for most people (other internet search engines are available), but often brings up far too much material. You will need to be as specific as you can to narrow down your search, and use any small pieces of information you have (names of people, job roles, places etc) to search for.

When I did a Google search for:

Brandesburton Moor Bee – I found:

EYLHS <http://www.eylhs.org.uk/dl/88/private-lunatic-asylums-of-the-east-riding>

<https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/yorks/east/vol7/pp245-254>



Searching for 'smuggling East Riding' I found:

http://www.smuggling.co.uk/gazetteer_e_15.html

<https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/yorks/east/vol1/pp11-85>

<https://archiveshub.jisc.ac.uk/search/archives/6fb70bb1-6dce-32d9-82e9-49d7a142b7a0>

Wikipedia – will come up on many searches. Try going into Wikipedia and then searching the topic/place you're interested in. Wikipedia is much criticised, for gaps and errors, but it does give sources if you scroll down to the references at the bottom. Some of these will be available online (e.g. those in pdf format).

Other useful links:

<http://www.scarboroughsmaritimeheritage.org.uk/articlecategory.php?category=6>

http://etheses.whiterose.ac.uk/1848/1/DX194332_1.pdf

“Smuggling in Yorkshire, 1700-1850’ by Graham Smith available on Amazon, possibly also Kindle

East Yorkshire Local History Society (EYLHS) has a large number of publications available free online.

Carnegie Heritage Centre has an online shop for local history books, even though the centre itself is closed for the time being.

If you have a reader's ticket for either the History Centre or Treasure House, you can access a number of files for free quoting your County Archive Research Network number from your card.

Have fun searching - and don't forget to share what you find.”

So even if you are not a current member of the Local History Group, why don't you spend some time during this period of social isolation to do your own research on the internet to see what you can find out about smuggling in Holderness and along the east coast. Please share what you find by emailing to holdernessu3a@outlook.com so that we can share this with other members of the group.

Please visit the group page on the Holderness U3A website

<https://u3asites.org.uk/holderness/welcome> to find out more about what the Local History Group are up to.

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