

Title:	Smuggling in Southend
Date:	1700 to 1892
Location:	Southend-on- Sea
Image:	
Headline:	With Revenue officers few and far between, the Essex coast between Southend-on-Sea and Rochford was ideal smuggling country, honeycombed as it was with creeks and rivulets which returned to mud when the tide was out.
Fact 1	During the period from 1700 to the 1830s, known as the heyday of smuggling, there was a hugely profitable trade in smuggled luxuries including tea, tobacco, Dutch Gin, brandy, silks, pearls, gold watch chains, and lace.
Fact 2	Despite the romantic associations passed down by history, in reality smuggling was a vicious, violent and bloody undertaking. Locals were forced to 'face the wall' when smugglers came past so they could not inform on them.
Fact 3	The ruins of Hadleigh Castle were used by smugglers to signal across the Thames to the Kent Marshes where boats loaded with contraband waited for the all clear before setting out.
Fact 4	Southend's smugglers we also known to try their hand at 'wrecking' where lights on the shore, or rowing boat, were used to lure a ship to a sand bank where it would be grounded and locals would 'salvage' cargo thrown overboard to lighten the ship, and would be paid to tow it back to deep water.
Fact 5	Hero of Southend, William Bradley was reportedly slightly less heroic in his youth, on his father's boat Quick Sliver Bradley was chased by a customs cutter but he and the crew either drank or threw over board their cargo of spirits.
Fact 6	Respected families, the Dowsetts and the Blyths, were implicated in smuggling, the 'Big Jane' was captured by customs agents in 1870 and found to be carrying over a tonne of tea and a thousand gallons of brandy and rum.
Close:	in 1892 the Peter Boat Inn in Leigh High Street burned down, few were surprised to discover a big cellar with direct access to the waterside adjoining the Alley Dock.
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