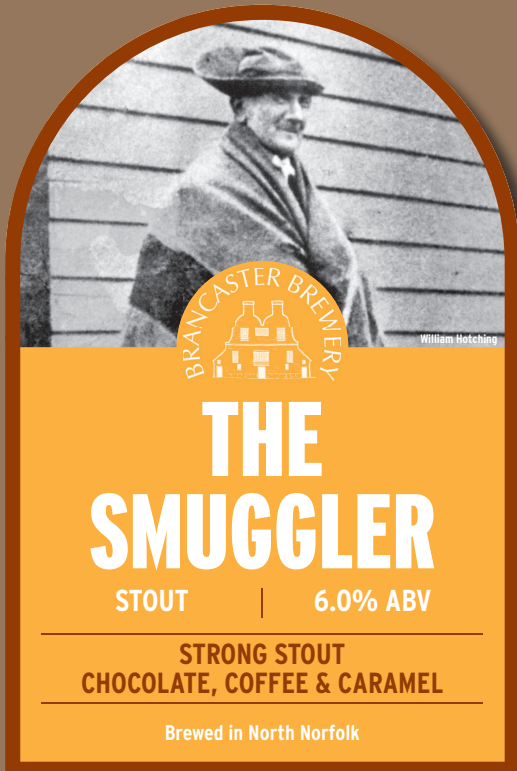


Limited  
Edition  
Special Brew

# THE SMUGGLER

## WILLIAM HOTCHING RSE



**William Hotching RSE (rum smuggler extraordinaire) born in 1784** was first & foremost a humble shellfish carrier, formerly a smuggler.

The Hoe property on the marsh side of the road in Brancaster Staithe (to the left of The White Horse), probably built in the early 1800s, comprised 3 cottages; the easterly one of which was used by William as his Hat & Feathers beer house. He operated an illicit still & was also involved with cock fighting.

He became a very successful smuggler owning a coastal lugger and having shares in a cutter.

His smuggling hunting ground ran from the coast at Wells to the Wash & into Lincoln. The shore, being awash with creeks, making secret landings comparatively easy.

In his first deals he bought two tons of American strips (tobacco) from Amsterdam and Flushing. He made a handsome profit & was very pleased. A risky business, obviously because of trust, he landed his 'crop' in the middle of the night, then buried or hid until he found his 'trade'. He had a cellar at the back of the Hat and Feathers, which was a good store & soon raised sufficient funds to buy a fast clipper of 50 tons, the Harlequin

The contraband was distributed throughout the area by 'mare' & trap. The tobacco was hid under a pile of herring. He was robbed extensively throughout his 'career'.

His father was a smuggler before him living in London and dealing in silks.

In 1865 William's career came to an end. He was apprehended at Boston whilst conducting illicit trade with a man named Smythe. Brancaster butcher William Lane was also arrested. Hotching & Lane were both fined £840 with the option of serving 6 months in prison. They opted for the latter, discovering on their release that all their assets including the Harlequin had been sold!

William Hotching was 'a giant' of a man, standing over 6 feet in height and having the appearance of a Viking. He lived well into his 80s but died poor and honest.

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