

Mudford Smugglers' Run Audio Trail Transcript

1. STREETER'S WELCOME – WITH LOVEY

[Sea gulls in background]

JOHN [To the listener] Hello. Can you hear me? Oh...no, you won't be able to see me. It don't work like that, across time and space. I can see you, mind.

LOVEY [Rushing in] John Streeter! 'Across time and space' this ain't no ghost walk! You might greet people like that in Kent, but you've lived in Mudford long enough to know a proper welcome involves the inn!

JOHN Lovey Warne, storming in from the New Forest to cause trouble, young fry! I ain't introduced meself yet.

LOVEY Well, get on with it, then!

JOHN I am John Streeter.

LOVEY I said that.

JOHN Some say I'm the most well-known smuggler on the Christchurch coast/

LOVEY /Who exactly said that?

JOHN Folk. Rumour has it. It is said –

LOVEY [Groans]

JOHN I am trying to tell a story, Lovey. Go your ways!

No, not you, newcomer. You, friend, look like you've skills that could be put to good use around here. An' you're as fresh-faced as I when I blew into the harbour as a young lad, when there weren't much more than a few poor fishermen around here...

LOVEY Tell it straight, John!

JOHN There was another trade that thrived here...Perhaps you might be looking for such, er, employment?

LOVEY Come on to Haven House, we'll toast your welcome there!

JOHN No need to make your mind up yet. Walk with us a while... Tell me, how do you imagine the life of a smuggler?

[Sound of feet walking on sand/gravel path as if off to the inn. Sea gulls wheeling above.]

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2. HAVEN HOUSE – HANNAH'S WELCOME

[Sound of sea and wind. A door creaks open. Background: lively banter and chatter of the busy inn, perhaps a musician playing a refrain of the sea shanty]

HANNAH Hello stranger! Welcome! You found the inn alright then? Come on inside, let Mother Seller fetch thee a pint of whatever tickles your fancy – don't ask how it's so cheap though...

[Internal: background inn sounds continue, a few raucous shouts]

Oh, take no notice o' the noise. Harmless lot here. Mostly. I know the ones to keep an eye on. I know the ones who watch me, too. Even revenue officers get thirsty from time to time... Though, mark my words, everyone has their price. Oh, except me, of course! [Laughs heartily]

Now, will you be wanting a hearty meal? A bed for the night?

[close/whispering] Did John Streeter send you? Wink once if he did.

[pause] Was that a wink or a blink? Oh, no matter. Has he shown you the spots for stowing the... er, the particular goods? No? Then I must show you. Drink up and let me acquaint you with another side of Mudford ...

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3. WILD MUDEFORD

[Sound of sea and wind, swifts and starlings, feet walking on sandy/gravel path coming to a stop.]

HANNAH: Here we are. How's this for a grand view? See the tip of Haven Spit?

Stand there and you can see the whole of Christchurch Harbour. And you'll have clear sight of any Revenue Cutters sailing in, searching out smugglers. Though you and I would never need to know about such things, eh?

But, if you were looking to stow away some contraband, friend, the bunnies are the ideal way to bring the goods in. No, I don't mean rabbits! Bunnies be chines, cut into the sandy cliffs by streams. Chewton Bunny's a favourite with locals. You could say nature's helping smugglers. Tis it not nature's way to adapt and survive under all conditions?

I don't blame local folks for topping up their wages themselves, with a little bit of 'Gentlemen's business' shall we say? Oh yes, a smuggler may be as civilised as can be... John Streeter himself is a charming man. Oh, he left a message with one of my barmaids for you. He'd like you to join him for a cup of tea...

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4. SMUGGLING – STEALING FROM THE KING?

[Sounds of the inn, quieter background chatter.]

JOHN Lovey, you're here! Allow me to pour you a cup of tea.

[Sound of tea being poured. Close: the slurp of LOVEY drinking tea, chink of crockery]

LOVEY Thanks. Oh, that's a good cuppa!

JOHN Tastes better knowing no duty's been paid on it.

LOVEY I reckon over half the tea we drink's been smuggled. Don't tell them toffs!

JOHN What, like George Rose over the way at Sandhills? Chief financial adviser to the Prime Minister – he hikes the taxes up and down like a pair of britches!

LOVEY [Laughs]

JOHN I jest, but some folks say smuggling's worse than highway robbery, 'cause it's stealing from the king.

LOVEY Like he's short of money.

JOHN Hey, Lovey. Is that Peter from the farm, and his wife, just come in? My eyesight ain't what it used to be.

LOVEY Yes. It is. What of it? Oh, they come this way.

JOHN Then I shall concentrate with all my might on this cup of tea.

[PETER and SARAH speak while passing by]

PETER Sarah, my wage ain't enough to feed the family.

SARAH It ain't right, Peter, you could get caught.

PETER The next run is soon...

SARAH Let me think on it.

[Conversation fades as PETER and SARAH walk on]

JOHN [Coughs. Slurps tea.]

LOVEY Time to go?

JOHN Yes.

[They stand, sound of stools being moved as they move to leave]

LOVEY [Groans] Look out the window. I can see a revenue officer coming our way.

JOHN Let's scarper.

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5. SLIPPERY ROGERS – THE DARING, RECKLESS RUN

[Sea in the background, the occasional bark of a dog, children playing in the distance, sound of a horse trotting by – a sense of movement and daily life.]

ROBERT Hey, you. See this Wanted poster? I wrote it. Part of my plan to catch the infamous Slippery Rogers. He's evaded me for years. Until now.

Listen:

[Coughs to clear throat]

Proclamation for the apprehension of Slippery Rogers, wanted for smuggling.

Rogers is a man of mean stature, low and broad. He is of a sallow complexion with a very great nose. Aged betwixt 40 and 50. Hair: grizzled, beard, too, though it is not much. He does mumble in speech and his handshake is limp like a dead cod. I added that last bit though my superior told me not to. A red rage took a hold of me. But today is a joyous occasion. And why?

[Sound of an accordion amongst the bustle of the French port]

Rogers left France last month on a boat bloated with fleece, tea, spirits and wine: the lot. Only he wasn't paying attention to the weather close to home...

[Sea grows louder. Wind grows louder. And louder. A few shouts and cries from oarsmen.]

Rogers thought he could brave it and sailed into the storm with his crew of forty men, then he ran the whole boat ashore!

[Sea roars. Thunder claps. Lightening. Crashing and splintering of oars and boat. A few oarsmen scream and shout. Storm fades out back to present time at Mudford beach]

His ship was wrecked. The cargo: lost at sea along with some of his crew. Ruined himself!

Fare well, Reckless Rogers!

[To Listener] Fare thee well, too. Stay away from slippery characters...like that fop Isaac Gulliver and his ridiculous flock: The White Wigs! They're next on me list.

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6. ISAAC GULLIVER

LOVEY Hey! There you are, friend! Have you met The White Wigs? They're Isaac Gulliver's men.

THE WHITE WIGS [song] Isaac Gulliver, gentleman

successful smuggler

our most-esteemed employer

We are the White Wigs

Fully employed

Our families well-fed

Mister Gulliver dresses us

in the finest attire

posh smock-frocks

powdered hair

We work in daylight

businessmen

gentlemen

gentle men –

not one of us armed

not one harmed

in all his smuggling days:

no riding officer, nor revenue officer and not one of our own.

Business is business,

To Isaac, our boss

he invests in

property and people and proper professions.

Say that again!

Proper professions

a smuggler of sense

brawn – and brains –

and we are his men!

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The White Wigs

We walk among you.

One day

we may

take the King's pardon

like Isaac

and serve the nation in the navy

to retire as

respectable gentlemen.

The White Wigs

We are the White Wigs

respectable

smuggling

gentlemen.

LOVEY Now you've seen another slice of smuggling life. Let's change times and traverse the New Forest. I want to show you the risks and the goodness of folk, too.

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7. DR. QUARTLEY'S TALE

[An owl hoot in the distance]

LOVEY Hush friend, and lay low. Watch Doctor Quartley's door

[Horses whinny and come to a halt]

MAN ONE [to horse and to men] This is the cottage.

[Sound of men dismounting, feet hitting the frosty ground with a crunch, walking a few steps]

MAN ONE Hurry. He's not long to live, I'm sure of it.

[Sound of door being pushed open, violently, fire crackling in the background, moans of MAN TWO in pain and fear]

DR. QUARTLEY Good grief! There's blood everywhere. What happened to him?

MAN ONE I cannot say, Doctor Quartley, for it will incriminate ye.

DR. QUARTLEY Let me see the damage [MAN TWO YELPS as if prodded in the wound]
There's a pistol ball lodged in his back! We must extract it immediately. You man, boil some water.

MAN ONE Doctor, he has to get away from here, lest he be caught. I have a cart we can take him on –

DR. QUARTLEY If he survives, this man must not be moved – it will kill him.

MAN TWO [Groans] They'll hang me!

DR. QUARTLEY [To MAN ONE] Fetch some brandy, he won't want to be sober for this.

[Groans and wails from MAN TWO, the fire rises, clink of medical instruments/ hiss of a wound being cauterised]

LOVEY Bet you're wondering if the young man lived or died? Dr. Quartley didn't know either, he just seen him dragged off in a cart. But, some fifteen years later, Doctor Q took a boat ride on the River Avon...

[Sound of ducks, reeds in the wind, moorhen, gentle lapping of the river on the boat]

the oarsman of the boat kept looking at Quartley summat strange. The man lifted his shirt to show a great big scar on his back. He had a great big grin on his face. Quartley had saved his life!

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8. THE PHOENIX – AND A SEA BATTLE OFF THE ISLE OF WIGHT

[Sound of the sea, choppy, men yelling, gunfire, explosions]

JOHN Get down! Do you want the French to blow your brains clear from your head?! The Phoenix has sixteen guns but it won't stop incoming fire!

[JOHN fires a gun] Gah! A near miss!

I am not a man who gives up easily. When the government seized the Phoenix for having a bit of brandy and baccy on board, I couldn't pay the £55 to reclaim her. Absolute fortune! I had to become a privateer to make money. [To enemy vessel as he fires] take this!

[JOHN fires a gun]

I got and Admiralty licence to go after enemy ships. Attack and capture. I did, until I had the money to buy back the Phoenix and arm her! Hang on – [to enemy vessel] get a load of this!

[JOHN fires a gun. Then hoots triumphantly]

Yes! Let's bring the Phoenix in closer. See the white flag they wave.

It's over for them. C'mon, friend! Let's take that ship back to Poole and claim the Admiralty prize – that award's my ticket home to Mudford.

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9. RETURN TO MUDEFORD AND A RENEWED AMBITION

[Sound of sea gulls. Gentle lapping of sea on the shore.]

JOHN Greetings, William Parrott!

WILLIAM PARROT Greetings, John Streeter: the man who employs half the hamlet, it seems!

JOHN Business seems to grow and grow! 'Tis a pleasing position to be in!

Though my wife Rose might disagree. The fine clothes, four horses, our children are in school. The house is a library with all the books we have now! Still she complains.

WILLIAM PARROT What is the cause of her complaints?

JOHN Business is too busy! And I am too absent. So, you see, I need a man to run my boat, the Phoenix. Thomas Warren said you're keen to be employed?

WILLIAM PARROT That I am, John. For the right price.

JOHN You have a smuggler's spirit. Thomas assures me you are a man of passion and ability. Have you the experience to command a large boat?

WILLIAM PARROT That I do, John.

JOHN Do you have some way to prove this?

WILLIAM PARROT Only my word.

JOHN Hm...is that so...

WILLIAM PARROT If my word is not good enough, I will gladly seek employment elsewhere.

JOHN Let us not be hasty/

WILLIAM PARROT /Perhaps you should speak with your wife on this decision –

JOHN No. I will tell my wife I have employed a man to operate the Phoenix.

WILLIAM PARROT I could be that man/

JOHN /Good!

WILLIAM PARROT For a hearty fee...

JOHN William. I need you to take the job and start tomorrow. You say yes and we'll find a price you like.

WILLIAM PARROT Yes. A pleasure doing business with you, John. You won't regret this.

JOHN Hm. Good. Meet me at the Haven Inn this evening to discuss the sum. We'll talk of the first run to France.

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10. THE GREAT RUN SUCCESS TURNS TO DISASTER

[Sound of sea etc.]

HANNAH I was sweeping out the Haven House Inn when it happened. Mother Seller sees everything. First the two Revenue Cutters, then the sloop of-war like some strange sea urchin with all its guns. John and his crew were just back from the latest run. I knew trouble was brewing.

FISHERMAN I was reeling in a bass when it happened. I heard the gunshot and couldn't think of nothing else but how the silver scales of the fish caught the sun. I heard a man cry out but couldn't look away from the fish, gulping for air on the end of the line, spinning and thrashing, like it knew it was going to die.

ROSE 2 (AS CHILD) Me and me sister Mary, were off crabbing when it happened. Father weren't at home.

MARY STREETER (AS CHILD) I wanted to fight! Rose burst into tears!

ROSE 2 (AS CHILD) Did not!

SMUGGLER I was dozing in the sunshine when it happened. William Parrot and Streeter's men pushed me out the way and hid behind the marram grass.

HANNAH I stayed close to the Haven. The Revenue cutters launched six longboats. Streeters men spread, weapons in hand. I could hear Parrott swearing. He looked like a little lad with that great musket in his hand. Threw himself in the dunes along with the others. If Streeter had been up there with 'em, it never would have happened.

[Sound of gunshot]

ROSE 2 (AS CHILD) Where's Father?!

MARY STREETER (AS CHILD) Did they shoot him?

SMUGGLER No, no, no, no! William Parrot shot an officer! The fool has ruined it for us all! We'll have to flee.

FISHERMAN My hand shakes as I pull the hook from the fish's mouth. A droplet of blood falls into the lead-grey sea. I throw the fish back in. Its still, silver body sinks. I turn towards home, knowing Mudford will never be the same.

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11. A WANTED MAN AND AN INCREDIBLE ESCAPE

LOVEY Looking for John Streeter, are you? Ain't everyone. After William Parrot shot and killed revenue officer William Allen at Mudeford, Streeter's men fled. Getting hung for smuggling's rare, unless you're part of an armed gang, like many of them were that day. There's a reward of £100 if you hand John in. It's tempting in 'it?

JOHN Oi, none of that Lovey! Over here! It's me, John. Lovey's right, I had to flee. I wasn't in no armed gang but the treble fine on all me contraband goods would have ruined me – and my family. I couldn't have that. I stayed away, visiting my wife Rose and the children, when I could. I was so sure of meself, it came as a shock when I got caught and thrown into Winchester Gaol. But, like the Phoenix, my boat, I rise again and again...

LOVEY [Groans] Humble is his middle name.

JOHN Hush, girl! Fellow smuggler Henry White and I managed to escape Winchester Gaol.

LOVEY Did you fight you way out, all fists and kicks?

JOHN No. We moved a few loose bricks at the back of our cell's fireplace. Through that hole in the chimney, hanging by a rope, we escaped!

LOVEY Not quite the hanging the Sheriff wanted...

JOHN No, though the government did their very best to get what they really wanted, within weeks of the affray at Mudeford...

LOVEY And what was that?

JOHN Let's journey onwards and see...

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12. GEORGE ROSE, SANDHILLS AND THE KING'S ARMS HOTEL

[Sound of quill upon paper]

GEORGE ROSE Dear Prime Minister William Pitt, As your chief financial advisor, Secretary to the Treasury, senior politician and, as a local man building my new house in Mudeford, a hamlet riddled with smugglers, I fervently advise to take one simple measure that, I guarantee, will decrease smuggling ten-fold. My vision is thus: reduce the customs duty on tea to 12 and $\frac{1}{2}$ percent.

This will render the smuggling of tea immediately unprofitable and, as the smuggler's profits plummet, the quality of those frequenting coastal areas will rise, along with the government's profits from reputable businesses.

I close with an invitation: it would be an honour to host you for a sojourn at my soon-to-be completed new home, Sandhills, here in Mudeford. It will be a very pleasant bathing place for dignitaries and the most influential of people. Your most humble and obedient servant, George Rose.

P.S. I have plenty of fine French Brandy and gin in my reserves, should that further tempt you to visit.

Oh and P.P.S. Completely separate from my role as financial advisor, now truly is a very good time to invest in properties in Mudeford. Or, at least it will be, if you go ahead with the proposed scheme to deter smugglers.

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13. AT WAR AGAIN AND THE KING'S PROMISE

HANNAH Oh, it's you! I cannot offer you a drink for, I, Hannah Seller, am no more at the Haven Inn. My time came. You can't outrun age and death.

Look at John Streeter: he returned to Mudford on the King's Pardon to find me gone, his wife dead and his daughters full-grown. He'd traded time, life, and for what? Don't take my word for it, listen:

ROSE 2 (As an adult) Mary, Mother is dead. John Streeter is our father. Though he came back a stranger, it is now our duty to care for him in his dotage.

MARY (As an adult) The Great John Streeter, 'finest smuggler in the South,' what rot Rose! Riches to rags, he's penniless now!

ROSE 2 (As an adult) Mary! Show some respect.

MARY (As an adult) Rose, show some guts!

ROSE 2 (As an adult) Mary. Betwixt looking after father, cooking, cleaning and making sure you don't burn the house down while I'm out, I am run ragged. And I can't stop.

MARY (As an adult) You find time to stop at the Haven Inn most days.

ROSE 2 (As an adult) Oh! You would deny me a moment of conversation? And a gin. Just to take the edge off. Or three if I've had a particularly bad day.

MARY (As an adult) Or four...

ROSE 2 (As an adult) I suggest you return to your fantasies and whatever else it is your little mind busies itself with. And then you can empty father's slop bucket. It's your turn.

MARY (As an adult) What are you going to do?

ROSE 2 (As an adult) I shall take myself for a walk to Sandhills and see if I can't look upon that handsome poet William Rose or, perhaps, I shall walk the shoreline and find a dead crab and think of you.

[Sound of ROSE 2's footsteps exiting]

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14. LOVEY WARNE – WILD CHILD OF THE FOREST

[Sounds of the New Forest. Wind amongst trees. Blackbird. Chiff chaff. Coal tit]

LOVEY I been here two hours. So bored. My brothers always say to me: 'Lovey, you're too young, you have to be look out.' I'm the smartest of us all and they put me up on Verely Hill! They're down the coast now, bringing the goods in.

Guess what I have to do, if I sees a revenue officer near 'em? I flashes the lining of my cloak: look! Blood-red it is! The red tells my brothers trouble's coming and to get clear. They'd be lost without me.

It ain't fair though. Last week, I got to do some proper smuggler's work. Boarded a boat, all innocent-like. Then, I got below deck: dropped me dress and had meself bound up tight in silk and lace. I put me frock back on over the top and stepped back onto shore, still all innocent-like, a little plumper, soon to be richer, and every other fool about me none-the-wiser! Ha!

My talent's wasted here. See, I got an eye for opportunities. You know, like the politicians do and them toffs, they're always on the make, same as smugglers! Come with me to meet the well-to-do of Sandhills and I'll show you what I mean...

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15. MUDEFORD TAMED. BREAKFAST AT SANDHILLS

LOVEY Now you've met George Rose, secretary to the Treasury but do you know his son William? He chooses to live in a tent by his father's house. He's got aspirations of being a poet...

[Sound of tent walls flapping in the wind]

WILLIAM ROSE Have you ever contemplated the simplicity of the human hand?

[Launching into a poem] Hands that hold, hands that grab, like the pincers of a Mudeford crab...no, no.

GEORGE ROSE Knock, knock!

WILLIAM ROSE Father, you can simply come in, no need to announce yourself.

GEORGE ROSE But I want to announce myself. I want to ring a bell or at the very least knock on a wooden door – not this flimsy tent you choose to live in.

WILLIAM ROSE A tent? It is an oasis for the creative spirit. I want nothing more.

GEORGE ROSE Then you won't want to know that cook is about to serve dinner in the main house, will you?

WILLIAM ROSE Oh. Though the fire in my soul sustains me, I must let food fuel this mortal form.

GEORGE ROSE Is that a yes to dinner, William?

WILLIAM ROSE Will there be brandy after?

GEORGE ROSE Yes.

WILLIAM ROSE Then yes.

GEORGE ROSE Good. And please don't bring your poetry notebook. I want to enjoy my dinner.

LOVEY Come on, friend, our journey together is all but over. Let us return to the beginning to sit with John Streeter. Age has stooped his stature. Life has weathered him, yet he waits for us with his usual charm and welcome.

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16. STREETER'S FAREWELL

[Harbour sounds. Water lapping against The Phoenix. Gulls.]

JOHN (as an old man) Lovey!

LOVEY John Streeter! There you are.

JOHN Come, climb aboard The Phoenix to bid me farewell. You find me now an old man of three score years and ten.

LOVEY And the rest!

JOHN I may look worn, but Mudford and Christchurch have turned from wild and barely inhabited to thriving hamlets of elegance with marine villas and bathing machines! How times have changed!

LOVEY Have they? Truly?

JOHN Perhaps I am changed. Or not. I still want to sail the Phoenix – out of this life and into the next adventure.

LOVEY Still you chase a challenge! Tell me, what do you regret, John Streeter?

JOHN I regret the death of William Allen. I regret trusting William Parrott who killed him. His musket blew a twenty-year absence into my life. I regret not seeing me family enough.

For all the riches I once had, I returned home with nothing, to live off the Parish Poor Relief and the kindness of me daughters Rose and Mary.

I regret the government's excessive customs duty! The greed of the rich and powerful. Yet my ambition shaped my life. Was it greed or need?

LOVEY What would you do differently, Streeter?

JOHN Ah, Lovey. I'd have to look back over me life thrice more. I am tired. I long to sail on.

LOVEY Then I shall join you. Onwards through time and space.

JOHN With a flask of the finest French Brandy in me pocket! Well, friends, this is where we leave you. Thank you for your fine company. Tell me, is this how you imagined the life of a smuggler?