

### **STOP 13 – COASTGUARD COTTAGES**



These cottages were originally built as Ryde Coastguard Station and there is evidence of coastguards being here from the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Launching boats was a particular problem on this stretch of coastline, as the water went out so far at low tide. Smuggling was rife probably due to the large numbers of fishermen and longshoremen in the area. Records of court cases tell of offences related

to rum, brandy & spirits in quite large amounts such as seventy-nine gallons, thirty-six kegs, ninety-two tubs, as well as the handling of tea and tobacco, and Hoarding and Aiding Contraband. When apprehended, the smugglers were in court within a week, and the sentences were often harsh. Here are some examples from the 1820s and 30s.

*“The two SANDERS: five years each in the Navy. DYER: to Queen Charlotte “man-o-war”. MOORMAN and PERKIS: Winton goal. BOWERS and WOODBRIDGE: to Winchester goal and £100 fine. And you – bribing a boatman! Fine: £125. As for you – more than twenty tubs of spirits. See how you like HMS Victory for five years!”*

Owing to the sprawling nature of Ryde, this area had its own mounted coastguard named David Porter, a familiar figure, often seen riding his horse across the sand and along the lanes. He served most of his time at Ryde, although it was usual for coastguards to move frequently, to prevent becoming integrated into the community.

Let us travel back in time... March 21<sup>st</sup> 1871: a Royal wedding day, Princess Louise and the Marquess of Lorne, celebrated across the land. During the night of the 21<sup>st</sup>, three men and a boy attempted to haul across the sands forty-six kegs of brandy, each containing three gallons. As the coastguards had taken part in the procession the preceding day, in honour of the Royal marriage, the smugglers thought they would not be fit for patrol during the night of the celebrations. They were mistaken, and seeing the men on duty, decamped and left the booty in the hands of the guards. *“Well done lads, look lively, we must get this haul to the Customs House at Cowes”*.

Now continue along to the Esplanade Hotel.

Image of Coastguard Cottages © Janette Gregson