

Thomas Thunder

Thomas Thunder was a "Riding Officer" in Birchington for over 40 years. We don't know where he lived, but his gravestone, beside the south porch at All Saints Church, tells us he was 79 when he died in 1789. He was one of the lucky ones, to survive that long in such a perilous occupation.

The men who tried to keep the smuggling trade under control were given several different official names over the 150 years when the trade flourished so well.

Blockade Men

Excise Men

Revenue Officers

Preventative Officers

Riding Officers

Surveyors of Customs

Coast Guards

The smugglers themselves called them all "gobbies".

(Gobbies was a naval term for ex-naval ratings who had completed a set number of years' service. They then went into the 'reserve' of Coastguards, but were liable for recall in time of war.)