



The Shrouded Coast: A Curse Laid Bare

Victorian Secrets Unearthed in Frank Hurst's Gripping Cornish Mystery

It is 1881. When Henry Gough journeys to a remote and mysterious Cornish village steeped in secrets, what begins as a quiet investigation quickly descends into chaos when he uncovers a tangled web of vicious smugglers, strange hauntings, and long-buried grudges.

The mystery only deepens when the local parson collapses at the font of his church under suspicious circumstances. As Henry delves further into the darkness surrounding the village, he finds himself pulled into a dangerous game—where every shadow hides a secret, and every ally may be a foe...

Frank Hurst was born in South London and spent thirty-six years as an investigator and intelligence officer for the British Government. He travelled widely in the service of the Crown, including many years working in India, South East Asia and the Eastern Caribbean. Frank has written seven novels. His Golden Triangle Trilogy has received wide acclaim and won literary awards. In 2024 Frank assisted the BBC in their series *Hunting Mr Nice*, a documentary about drug smuggler Howard Marks.

Frank explains: *"This is a work of fiction, although the central character in the novel, Henry Gough, actually lived. He was born in the London suburb of Marylebone in 1835, and was my great-grandfather. Research has shown us Henry's family life was both scandalous and complicated, to say the least... for example, siring twenty-one children – nine with his wife, Hannah, and twelve with his mistress, (my great-grandmother) Caroline, who subsequently became his second wife. This novel is a whimsical attempt to add further colour to his story."*

Given my own working background, it was inevitable that crime, notably smuggling, would enter part of Henry's fictional story. The Revenue Officers, Excisemen, policemen and War Office characters are all inventions, although, like Scotland Yard, the Excise Detective Branch at Tower Hill and the War Office Intelligence Branch at Horse Guards Avenue both existed.

What happens to Henry Gough in this nineteenth century West Country story is a wonderful flight of fancy, although I have made every effort to preserve as much historical detail of the period as possible. A few of the prominent events of the time are cited, and some of the lesser characters were conspicuous in Victorian Britain.

It has been fascinating to speculate about my great grandfather's life."

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