

# The Kent Compendium of Historic Parks and Gardens for Tunbridge Wells District



## St Ronan's, Hawkhurst



April 2012



# St Ronan's

## Hawkhurst, Kent

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## INTRODUCTION

This site dossier and description has been prepared as a follow-on action from the **Review of The Kent Compendium of Historic Parks and Gardens for Tunbridge Wells Borough 2009**, and should be read in conjunction with the full project report which can be found at <http://www2.tunbridgewells.gov.uk/>. This site is one of many sites that have been researched, visited and written about across the Borough and as a consequence has been included in the revised list of Historic Parks and Gardens covered by the Borough Council's Planning Policies. The list is not conclusive and further gardens may be added over time as research continues or information comes to light.

The review for Tunbridge Wells Borough was a pilot project to establish a partnership and methodology for the review of the compendium across Kent and provide an example of good practice across the County and the region. The research was largely carried out by volunteers of the Kent Gardens Trust with support and training from the project consultants Virginia Hinze and Dr Barbara Simms.

The extent of the area identified represents the remains of the designed landscape and does not necessarily cover all remaining elements or the historical extent of landscape changes and takes no account of current ownership. Further Information is available from the contacts listed below. The partnership would like to thank the volunteers and owners who have participated in this project and given so much of their time, effort and hospitality to complete this challenging and rewarding task.

Planning Services  
Tunbridge Wells Borough Council  
Town Hall  
Royal Tunbridge Wells  
Kent  
TN1 1RS  
01892 526121  
[www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk](http://www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk)

Kent County Council  
Heritage Conservation  
Invicta House  
County Hall  
Maidstone  
ME14 1XX  
01622 696918  
[www.kent.gov.uk](http://www.kent.gov.uk)

Kent Gardens Trust  
[www.kentgardenstrust.org.uk](http://www.kentgardenstrust.org.uk)

## **SITE DESCRIPTION**

KENT

ST RONAN'S SCHOOL/TONGSWOOD

TUNBRIDGE WELLS

HAWKHURST

TQ 7780 3075

## **SUMMARY OF HISTORIC INTEREST**

Gardens comprising terraces, informal shrubberies, flower beds and a rock garden by Backhouse of York, all largely dating from the late C19 and early/mid C20, set within a C19 park containing a lake, ancient woodland, a Pinetum and a walled kitchen garden and surrounding a predominantly C19 mansion now in use as a school.

## **CHRONOLOGY OF THE HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT**

St Ronan's, known as Tongs in C18 and from mid C19 as Tongswood, lies in the hundred of Barnfield and parish of Hawkhurst. The name Tong derives from the old English *twang* or *tang* meaning fork and refers to the two streams of the River Rother flowing through the estate. This area of the High Weald of Kent became associated with the immigration of Flemish weavers in the fourteenth century and it was the wealth acquired from this which enabled the Dunk family to purchase the property. Simon Dunk is recorded as the owner of Tongs at his death in 1512 (Hasted). The estate remained in the same family (also recorded as Donke or Dunke) for 200 years and, on the death of Sir Thomas Dunk in 1718, it passed by inheritance to William Richards and on his death in 1733 to his daughter, Anne on condition that she changed her name to Dunk. In 1741 Anne married George Montague Earl of Halifax who added Dunk to his name. The Earl created a 1000 years lease, at an annual rent of six pence, for the main mansion and the immediate land surrounding (Hasted).

In 1767 the Earl of Halifax et al. leased this property for one year to Jeremiah Curteis, a lawyer and the town clerk of Rye (Centre Kentish Studies, U2746 T10). The lease contains a description of the principal buildings and lands to be leased which included a large garden to the west of the house 'which said garden is almost surrounded by a brick wall.' Lands at Pipsden, immediately to the south of Tongs, were part of the estate at that time as well as a further area of farmland lying to the north of the house (CKS U2746 T 10).

Between 1770 and 1841 numerous leases are recorded, each lasting for short periods, to the following named persons: Curteis, Jenkins, Delves, Langton, Wilson, Ellis and Dawson (CKS U2746 T10). The house is shown on the Hasted map of 1778 (St Ronan's School archive) and the Mudge map of 1801 ([www.archivemaps.com/mapco/kent](http://www.archivemaps.com/mapco/kent)) but the larger scale of the tithe map of 1840 (CKS) provides much more detail of the property. In that year the tithe

apportionment shows the owner and occupier to be the Hon. Felix Tollemache (MP for Ilchester 1827-30). The gardens and pleasure grounds lay on the south side of the earlier and smaller house (of which nothing remains), which was on the site of the present house, surrounded by pasture. The home farm, to the northwest, was in separate ownership at this date (CKS Tithe apportionment 1840) and described in a sale advertisement in 1839 as a farmhouse with all requisite outbuildings, 'forming a complete ferme ornée.' The 1839 auction particulars give details of a 'gentlemanly and most comfortable residence on a moderate scale with well-planted grounds, walled garden, superior stabling and out-offices' (Sales Advertisement Daniel Smith & Son 1839 for the Tongs Estate).

Following the death of the Hon. Felix Tollemache in 1843, the property was sold to Sackville Phelps (for £4000 plus interest) who subsequently acquired the home farm (CKS U2746 T10). He in turn sold the house and surrounding land to Major George Robert Stevenson of the 7<sup>th</sup> Dragoon Guards (for £5000 plus interest) in 1849 but retained Pipsden and the home farm. These sales were subject to mortgages (CKS U2746 T10).

In 1865, Stevenson sold the main house and surrounding land to William Cotterill, a tea broker, for £8750. The land was freehold while the house and ground immediately surrounding it, including the almost completely walled garden mentioned in the original lease, was leasehold. The whole extent is shown on a map in the agreement and totalled 99 acres. A 'park' of 20 acres (8.3 hectares) lay to the west of the house and further pasture, with some more distant arable lands and hops, extended around the other three sides (CKS U2746 T10). In the following year William Cotterill bought the Pipsden estate from Sackville Phelps and Tongs Farm, the home farm, from the Rev. Thomas Phelps. A map relating to this sale shows the buildings and lands of the farm to be unchanged from the tithe map of 1840 (CKS U2746 T10).

Over the next few years William Cotterill carried out extensive works to both the house and gardens sufficient for Tongswood to merit the description, in 1874, of 'an extensive and richly decorated edifice, also Elizabethan, with conservatories in keeping with the structure; the grounds in rear are in terraced or Italianate style' (Kelly's Directory 1874). These terraces lay adjacent to the south-eastern side of the mansion between this and the existing pleasure gardens while the conservatories lay in the same direction beyond the gardens (OS map 1862-75). The mansion had been largely rebuilt by the same time, a new stable block (the Coach House) added to the northwest and the lesser buildings demolished. A connecting roadway was constructed north-westwards between the house and the Home Farm. The pleasure grounds were extended to fill the area between the pond to the east of the mansion and the walled garden and a further formal area was made in the woodland to the northwest between the mansion and the Home Farm (OS map 1898 and CKS U2746 T10) around what is now Orchard House, built originally as the bailiff's (steward's) house (1910 Inland Revenue CKS Land Tax records IR 4/84 Hawkhurst)

A mortgage of 1877 to William Playfair shows a total acreage of 285 acres and following a further mortgage to Capt John Newton Spicer in 1891 the estate was



sold to the Misses Isabel, Flora and Emma Goldsmid, three daughters of Sir Julian Goldsmid Bt. of Somerhill, Tonbridge in 1892 (CKS, U2476 T10). By 1898, the main mansion had been further enlarged and more conservatories added beside the walled garden (OS map 1898).

In 1903 Charles Eugene Gunther, chairman of the parent company of Oxo, bought the estate which by then comprised 319 acres (auctioneers Messrs. Tuckett & Sons 1903), and subsequently bought back much of the original estate. Gunther substantially remodelled the mansion and its grounds and gardens. Within eight years a transformation had taken place during which the original pleasure grounds and glass houses were demolished and a new walled kitchen garden with green houses created further south. By 1910 Charles Gunther had also extended the mansion westwards, creating the ballroom, known as the 'Great Space' (School website).

On the western side of the property a Pinetum was planted between the walled garden and the mansion and this was bordered by a new drive to the entrance lodge at Pipsden on the main Hawkhurst to Rye road. In the northern part of the property extensive changes were made to the farm buildings and the whole estate grew to 430 acres (180 hectares) by 1910 (OS map and land tax assessment IR4/84).

The C17 farmhouse of the Home Farm was retained and a 'model farm' was built 1902-10 (see listing) for breeding bulls for export to Argentina. Few of the buildings shown on the tithe map of 1840 were retained. The farm no longer forms part of St Ronans estate having been sold in c 1992 for residential development.

After the death of his first wife Mr Gunther married an heiress, Helen Bell, in 1912 who is credited with the development of the gardens in collaboration with the head gardener, Mr. Hardcastle. By 1925 Tongswood was considered to be one of the country's top 50 gardens (*Gardener's Chronicle*). A substantial rock garden (Nathaniel Lloyd photos 1927) was built in 1911 by the James Backhouse Company. More greenhouses were added to the walled garden including a melon house and a frame area with an additional area for growing peaches placed outside the south wall (OS map 1932).

After Mr Gunther's death in 1931, his widow lived there until 1936 when the estate, which had been enlarged during his ownership to 871 acres, was put up for sale. Only about 634 acres of the outlying parts of the estate were sold at this time including various farms, cottages and building sites. Three years later the house was requisitioned by the army and in 1945 Tongswood, its contents and 260 acres of land including the walled garden, Orchard House and the Home Farm were sold to Mr W B Harris, the headmaster of St Ronan's School. The school had been founded in 1883 in Worthing; it moved to Bicton Park in Devon for the duration of the war and from there to Tongswood in 1946. Harris died in 1957 and, in his will, placed the estate in trust. He bequeathed his share of the school business to Sir Richard Vassar-Smith whose son, Sir John, subsequently converted this into an educational trust in 1997 (St Ronans

School website). In the last 50 years many changes have taken place with the necessary development of buildings for the school. The Home Farm and the walled garden were sold in 1992 and remain in separate ownership. Despite changes, the layout of Mr Gunther's gardens remains recognisable today.

## **SITE DESCRIPTION**

### **LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING**

St Ronan's is located some 23 km south-east of Tunbridge Wells, one and a half kilometres east of Hawkhurst and about ½ km north of the junction between Water Lane and the A268, part of an ancient ridge way which runs northwest/southeast between Flimwell and Rye. Cranbrook is 6 kms to the north. The area of historic interest covered in this site description is 146 acres or 59 hectares (KLIS). Water Lane and Foxhole Lane form the north-western and south-eastern site boundaries. To the southwest the site is bordered by the farmland of Pipsden and to the north by Tongswood Home Farm (once known as Tebbitts). The site lies in typically undulating Wealden countryside of farmland interspersed with woods some of which are classified as ancient woodland including the area of woodland to the southeast of the house known as Tongs Wood. The house is built on the ridge with views southeast across a shallow valley towards the ancient woodland on the hill beyond.

### **ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES**

The main entrance to St Ronan's is located on the east side of Water Lane. A lodge (the date 1865 inscribed on the wall) stands on the north side of the tarmac drive which can be seen on the 1<sup>st</sup> edition OS map (1862-1875). The driveway runs for 300 metres eastwards towards the house finally forming a circle round a magnificent Cedar of Lebanon reputedly planted in the 1780s and clearly visible on the OS map of 1898. The drive runs through lawns with a planting of mixed mature trees where there are parking areas. In 1840 this area, called the Park, was pasture land (Tithe map) and by the end of C 19 an avenue of lime trees had been planted along the driveway some of which survive (OS map 1862-1875).

Another, now disused, entrance, approximately 100 metres east of Water Lane, on the Hawkhurst to Rye road, is marked by a brick and stone lodge built after 1900, presumably as part of the improvements made to the estate by Charles Gunther, which appears to have been the principal entrance to the estate and the main driveway to the house from then until Pipsden was sold. This driveway continues northwards through the present Pipsden housing estate before being blocked off halfway along. It was originally about 800 metres long, planted with mixed deciduous and conifer trees on either side and joined the present drive 200 metres west of the house (OS maps). The remaining northern section provides access to the walled garden which is now a commercial nursery garden in separate ownership.

## **PRINCIPAL BUILDING**

St Ronan's (listed grade II) is of mid C19 date (Listing TQ 7630-7730 17/45) and was extended 1904 - 6 by Messrs JT Davis, builders, of Hawkhurst. The building is of red brick with some diapering in blue brick and ashlar details and has an ornamental tiled roof with a large and ornate clock tower capped by a cupola and weather vane. The eight bay main front has sashed, mullioned windows and a classical porch in 'Jacobethan' style. The ballroom, added to the south by 1910, is built in a similar style.

Some 30 metres to the north-west and set at an angle to the mansion, is a mid C19 coach house (listed grade II) of red brick with an ornamental tiled roof. Within its south side are domestic quarters. Behind this to the west and north is the old dairy built of timber and plaster, the workshop and the 'electric power station' (1910 Inland Revenue CKS Land Tax records IR 4/84 Hawkhurst)

Between the coach house and the mansion is a brick chapel which was brought from the former school in Worthing and rebuilt here (School archive). The chapel was originally built in 1904.

## **GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS**

The formal terraces are immediately adjacent to the south-west and south-east sides of the mansion. The south-west terrace occupies an area excavated from rising land to the south which is retained by a one metre brick wall with stone capping and piers and consists of an enclosed sloping grass area and gravel path 30 metres long. The larger, south-eastern terrace extends the whole length of the house and comprises a level gravelled area about 15 metres wide and retained by a similar wall with a stone capping. French windows open directly onto the terrace from the library and ballroom.

A flight of stone steps at the northern end leads down to lawn below the terrace. When originally built in the second half of the C19 there were two levels of terracing, connected by central steps, but the lower of the two was removed before 1930 (OS map 1932). From the terrace grassland extends eastwards, sloping downhill to Tongs Wood and now forming playing fields for the school. It was originally part of the extended pleasure grounds created by William Cotterill before 1874 and subsequently removed by Charles Gunther before 1910. Some idea of the extent and layout of this area showing the wooded walks and formal beds can be seen in the sale details and photographs of the 1903 Auction (Messrs Tuckett & Sons 1903).

At the northern end of the south-eastern terrace and 30 metres to the east is a lake. In the mid C19 it comprised a small stretch of water with a pump house and was gradually enlarged to form a small lake about 50 metres long with an island by 1932 (OS map). A folly about 3m x 3m, made of rough hewn stone and cement with an arched doorway and 2 arched windows overlooks the east side of the lake. Still a largely open area in 1950, it became overgrown with mature trees and scrub which is now being cleared (aerial photograph c.1950, School archive).

At the junction of the two terraces a small plateau of grass provides a setting for a fountain (currently, 2009, removed after vandalism and stored for renovation, photo in school archives). From here stone steps from the main terrace descend to grass below while the ground on the southern side of the plateau slopes gently to more grass playing fields and the site of the C18 'partly walled' pleasure grounds (Tithe map 1840) covering an area of approximately 20 sq m but of which nothing visible remains.

A further, southward, exit from the fountain area is provided by a shallow, rising flight of nine steps. Built of stone with a balustrade on each side and terminating in roundels at the top step, this provides access to the rock garden created 1910-15 for Gunther by the firm of Backhouse of York at the cost of £4000 (IR 58/52893 NA). It was made from 2000 tons of sandstone carried from Wadhurst in East Sussex and attracted national interest and compliments both for its construction and planting. 'The dominant idea of the designers was to produce a miniature Switzerland' (*Architectural Review*, vol LX111, no 375, 1928 pp43-7). 'Outside the rockery is mown turf out of which the rocks rise gradually with broad shelves for the accommodation of plants in groups.' Nathaniel Lloyd's photographs show it as having been planted with small alpine plants described in *The Gardener's Chronicle* (August 22 1925) as some of the finest of the species. This article also states that 'some of the stones are arranged as big outcrops, others placed irregularly as steps lead to crags above and down again into dells and along a winding valley past a very natural looking cave'. Other plants detailed include ferns and dwarf rhododendrons.

The size of the rocks gave the effect of mountainside and gorge and the remains of one bridge and the cave still survive. Measuring about 80 metres x 40 metres, it is now overgrown with scrub and trees, largely self sown. The rocks are all still in place and an aerial photo c.1950 (School archive) shows an area instantly recognizable as the original garden.

To the south of the rock garden is an area known as the 'children's garden,' a grassed area surrounded by hedge. Running westwards for 75 metres, it terminates at an angle to the eastern wall of the walled kitchen garden at a wrought iron gate. Used now for educational purposes, it was originally laid out as Mrs Gunther's herbaceous borders backed by yew hedges, parts of which survive (photo 1932 private collection). The hedges were cut back in 2003 and are partly regenerating. South of the yew-enclosed garden was a rose garden and big border of Michaelmas daisies, now gone (*Gardeners Chronicle* 1925; vol 11; pp.150-3). Mr & Mrs Gunther travelled widely and brought back choice specimens that were replanted into suitable habitats throughout the gardens.

## **PARK**

Open parkland at present extends to the east and south of the mansion, and is now used as playing fields for the school which occupy an area approximately 250 metres x 600 metres lying between the mansion and Tongs Wood (ancient woodland) to the south-east. To the north school buildings and new sports facilities occupy former parkland.

The earliest record of any park is on the tithe map (1840) which shows an eight hectare area to the west between the mansion and Water Lane. The enlargement of this to make the present park seems to have been a logical development to create a designed landscape from the pasture surrounding the mansion by incorporating the more distant arable lands, thus establishing the whole area eastwards to Tongs Wood as grassland. The band of woodland which now composes the northern boundary of the property formed a natural background to the view from the mansion and a separation from the Home Farm. To the south a belt of trees which extended westwards from Tongs Wood appears to have been partly removed by 1910 thus enhancing the vista in that direction (OS map 1910).

At the eastern end of this belt and on the edge of Tongswood a dell marks the area where a sub-tropical garden was created by the Gunthers. This was described in the *Gardeners Chronicle* in 1925 as being planted with bamboos, tree ferns, camellias and gunneras. Some of the original planting, such as palm trees, can still be seen.

By 1913 the park extended to 200 acres (IR 58/52839 land valuation, NA) which suggests that this must have included the land at Pipsden and the Tongs Wood, an area of ancient woodland whose extent appears unaltered in the last 170 years and thus not included in the designed landscape. Originally composed of native species and managed by traditional coppice and standard methods, some conifers were added about 100 years ago together (possibly to commemorate Queen Victoria's Jubilee in 1897) with an underplanting of rhododendron (St Ronan's Estate Management Plan). Many trees are identified in the National Tree Register, a number of which are deemed 'county champions.'

To the north of the mansion C19 landscape features are still apparent, in particular the woodland (one hectare) to the west and north of the bailiff's house (Orchard House) containing a large pond (0.2 hectare), originally a marl pit. Nearby are the remains of an aviary built by Cotterill. The sale details of 1903 suggest that the woodland was a mixed conifer and deciduous planting with well defined footpaths surrounding a small orchard but not continuous with the main pleasure gardens. The roadway which ran north-westwards from the house (OS map 1898) to the Home Farm no longer exists although the remains of an avenue of horse chestnut trees planted about 100 years ago are still visible.

At the northern end of this avenue, the buildings of the Home Farm (Tongswood Farm), although not included within the designated site boundary and now in separate private ownership, are clearly visible. These include a C17 or earlier timber framed and weather boarded house which has a tiled roof with catslide to the rear (Listing TQ 7630-7730 17/454, grade II). Late C19 buildings consist of a stable block, similarly constructed with the addition of a central dovecot turret, spire and weather-vane, an open side barn for silage making, a stock yard and two specially constructed roofed water tanks (photograph from *The Courier* January 19, 2001). The whole was listed in 1996 as a 'good model farm group' (*Home Buyer*, July 3, 1998 p. 46).

Eastwards from the Coach House (30m north-west of the mansion) the remains of an avenue of oak trees extends about 250 metres into Tongs Wood and to the north of this are four large Holm oaks. These trees date from after 1910 (OS map). Some 200 metres to the south of the avenue is another pond, overgrown with mixed coppiced woodland, and the remains of another marl pit.

To the west of the mansion lies the Pinetum created from the eight hectare area shown as the park in the tithe map (1840). This area is planted with conifers of varying ages, some dating from about 100 years ago, and some that are very recently planted. At the edges of the Pinetum are deciduous trees, such as silver birch, beech and the remains of the C19 lime avenue. A stone memorial to the Gunther's two sons, Charles and Norman and the estate workers of Tongswood who fell in the First World War, is sited here, just to the north of the walled kitchen garden.

## **KITCHEN GARDEN**

The walled kitchen garden (Listing TQ 7630-7730 17/453, grade II) lies about 115m southwest of the house. Built between 1898 and 1910 it was probably part of Charles Gunther's extensive works. The walled garden is 92 metres x 70 metres, surrounded by a 3m high capped brick wall with regularly-spaced, flat-topped, brick, buttressed piers. Originally the garden was divided into four by gravel paths which intersected in the centre where a fountain, which still exists, is said to be complete but not in working order (pers. comm.). Of the original four gates, only the three located in the centres of the southeast, northeast and northwest walls remain, the fourth now blocked up. The original gates were wrought iron (photograph in private collection) but now replaced with gates of painted wood. After the Second World War the garden was leased to a succession of market gardeners. The kitchen garden was laid out as much for the growing of fruits including melons and peaches, as for cut flowers and stock plants such as begonias and pelargoniums (*Gardener's Chronicle*; 1925; vol 11 pp. 150-153). The glasshouses which date from 1898-1910 and included a vinery, peach house, melon house, fern house and fruit and carnation houses, have recently (2009) been restored and are owned and used by a commercial nursery. At the entrance to the nursery on the north-west facing wall are the potting sheds that are now used as offices and a museum.

Southeast of the walled garden bordered by the herbaceous walk is the site of the Edwardian orchard of which a few trees still remain.

## **REFERENCES**

### **Books, articles & advertisements**

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Daniel Smith & Son, Oct 1839; Sales poster (reprinted in *Historic Hawkhurst* 2001)

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N. de Dixterne, *A Notable Rock Garden*, Architectural Review, vol LXIII, no 375, 1928, pp 43-7  
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John D Wood, auctioneer's advertisement; Country Life Oct 1935  
Home Buyer, July 3 1998 Dovecote Home Farm photo and article Page 46  
The Courier, January 19 2001 Water Tank in Tongswood Farm photo and article  
Calcutt Maclean Standen, Estate Agents advertisement for Tongswood Lodge October 2009

## Maps

Edward Hasted, Map of Kent 1778. (Possession St Ronans School)  
Mudge Map, 1801 ([archivemaps.com/mapco/kent1801](http://archivemaps.com/mapco/kent1801)).  
OS 25" to 1 mile: 1<sup>st</sup> edition published 1871 (sheet 78/3).  
2<sup>nd</sup> edition published 1898 (sheet 78/3).  
3<sup>rd</sup> edition published 1910 (sheet 78/3).  
Revised edition published 1932 (sheet 78/3)  
Tithe map and apportionment (Hawkhurst Parish) 1840. (CKS)  
Estate maps 1866-1901 U2476 T10 (CKS).  
Estate map for sale by auction by Messrs Tuckett & Sons, 1903 (possession of St Ronan's School)

## Illustrations

Garden View of the House circa 1870 Private collection  
View of Grounds round Lake circa 1870 Private collection  
Mr & Mrs Gunther & Sons circa 1900. Private collection  
Garden View of House 1909 by F. Couchman Private collection  
Cricket team and Mrs Gunther 1913. Private collection  
Nathaniel Lloyd, Set of Rockery Photos 1927. [held by English Heritage Nat. Monument Records]  
Williams series: View of East Front circa 1928  
Herbaceous Garden 1932. [held by English Heritage Nat. Monument Records]  
Susan Marden Cook, Set of Photographs of House and Garden, circa 1946.  
Set of Photographs of House and Garden early C20. St Ronan's School collection.  
Aerial photograph c. 1950. (Possession St Ronan's School)

Other aerial photos, English Heritage National Monuments Record Swindon.

## Archival Items

Census data 1841-1901.  
CKS. Material relating to Tongswood Estate 1767-1901, U2476 T10.  
CKS. Land Tax records (1910) IR 4/84, Hawkhurst.  
Sussex Record Office, Archive of the Frewen Family.  
Northants record Office, Archive of the Elwes Family (Great Billing).  
National Archive, Inland Revenue records IR 52839 and IR 124/8.

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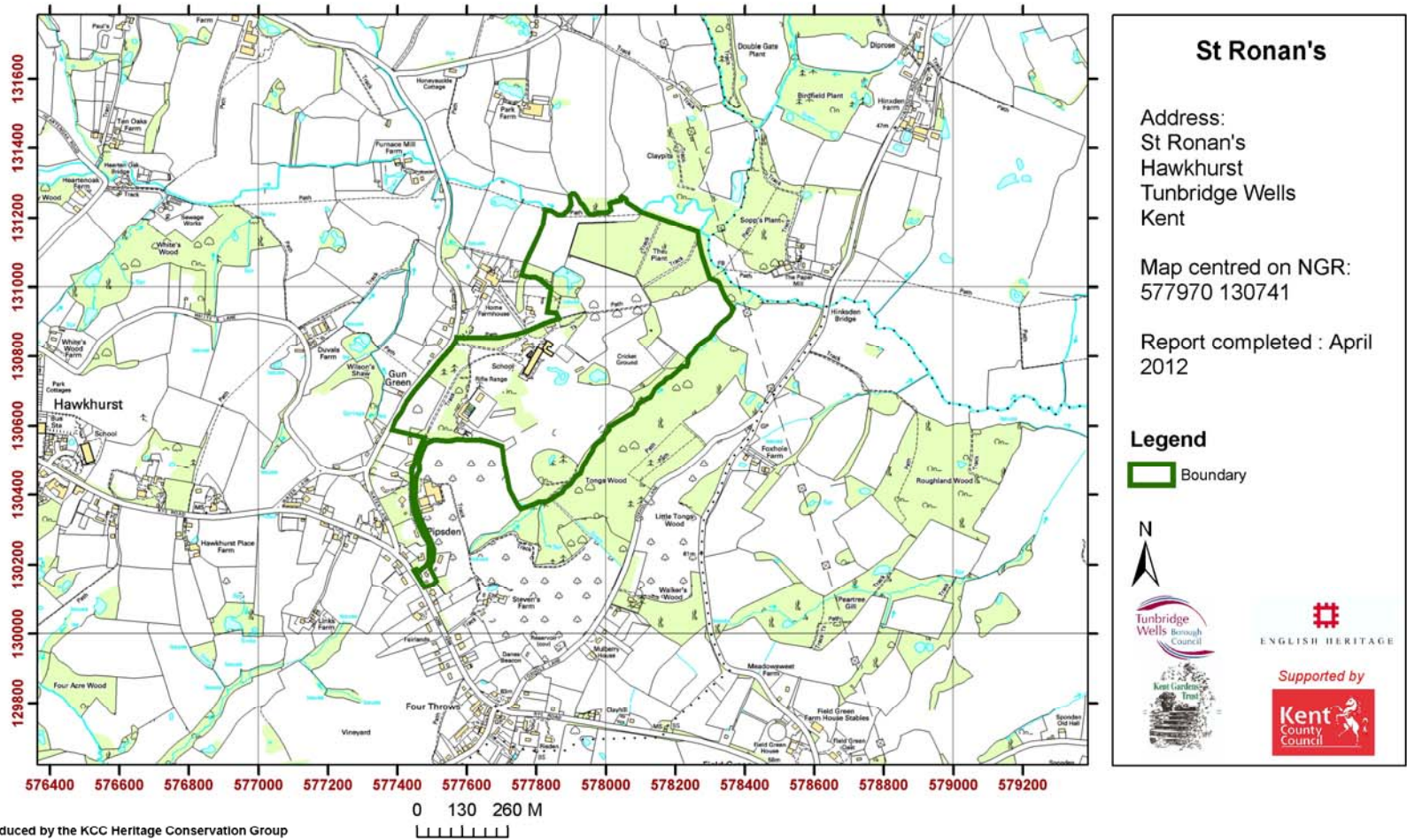
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**Virginia Hinze and Elizabeth Cairns (editors)**



# Kent Compendium of Historic Parks & Gardens – Tunbridge Wells Borough

Fig. 1 Boundary map.

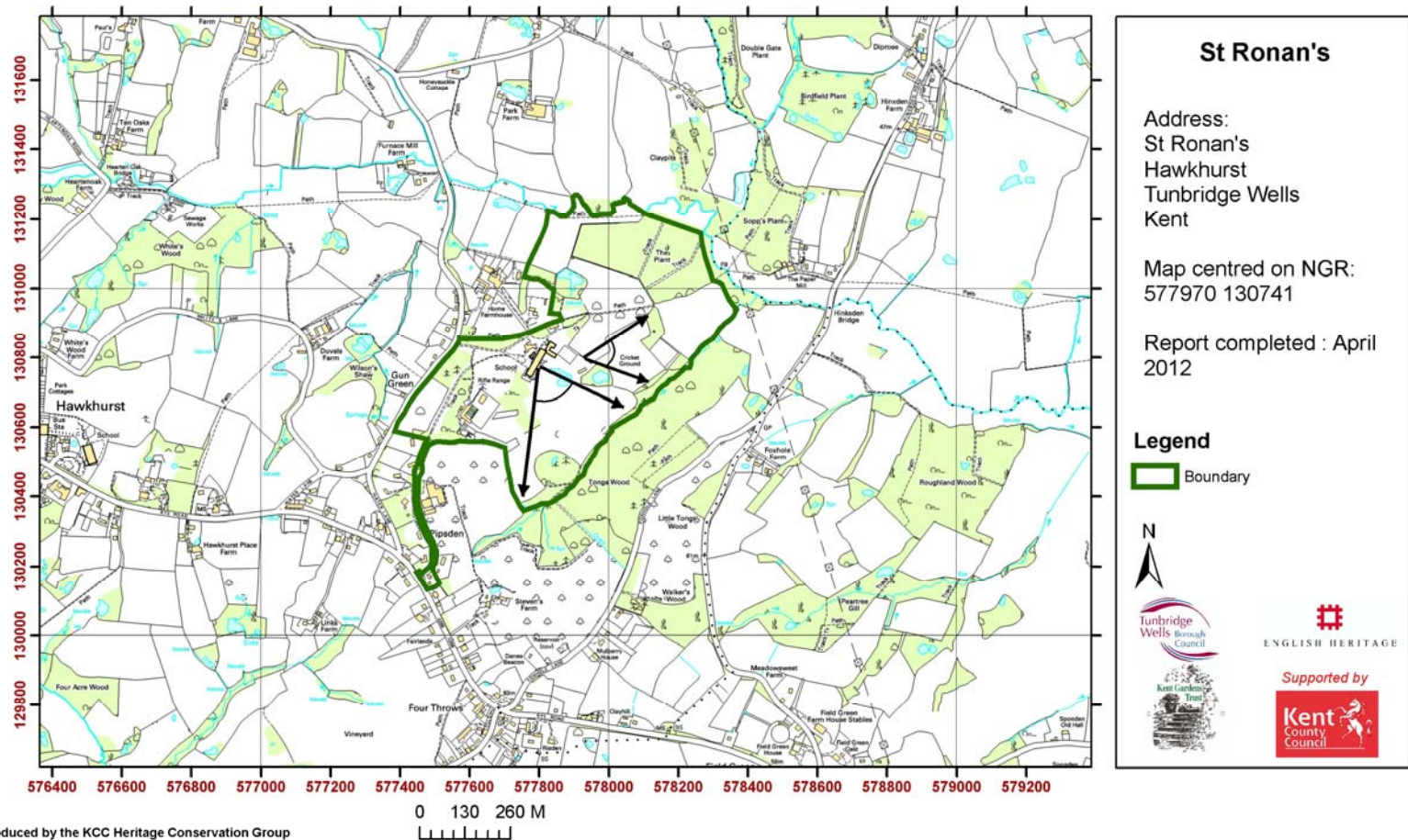


Produced by the KCC Heritage Conservation Group

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# Kent Compendium of Historic Parks & Gardens – Tunbridge Wells Borough

Fig. 2 Key views map.



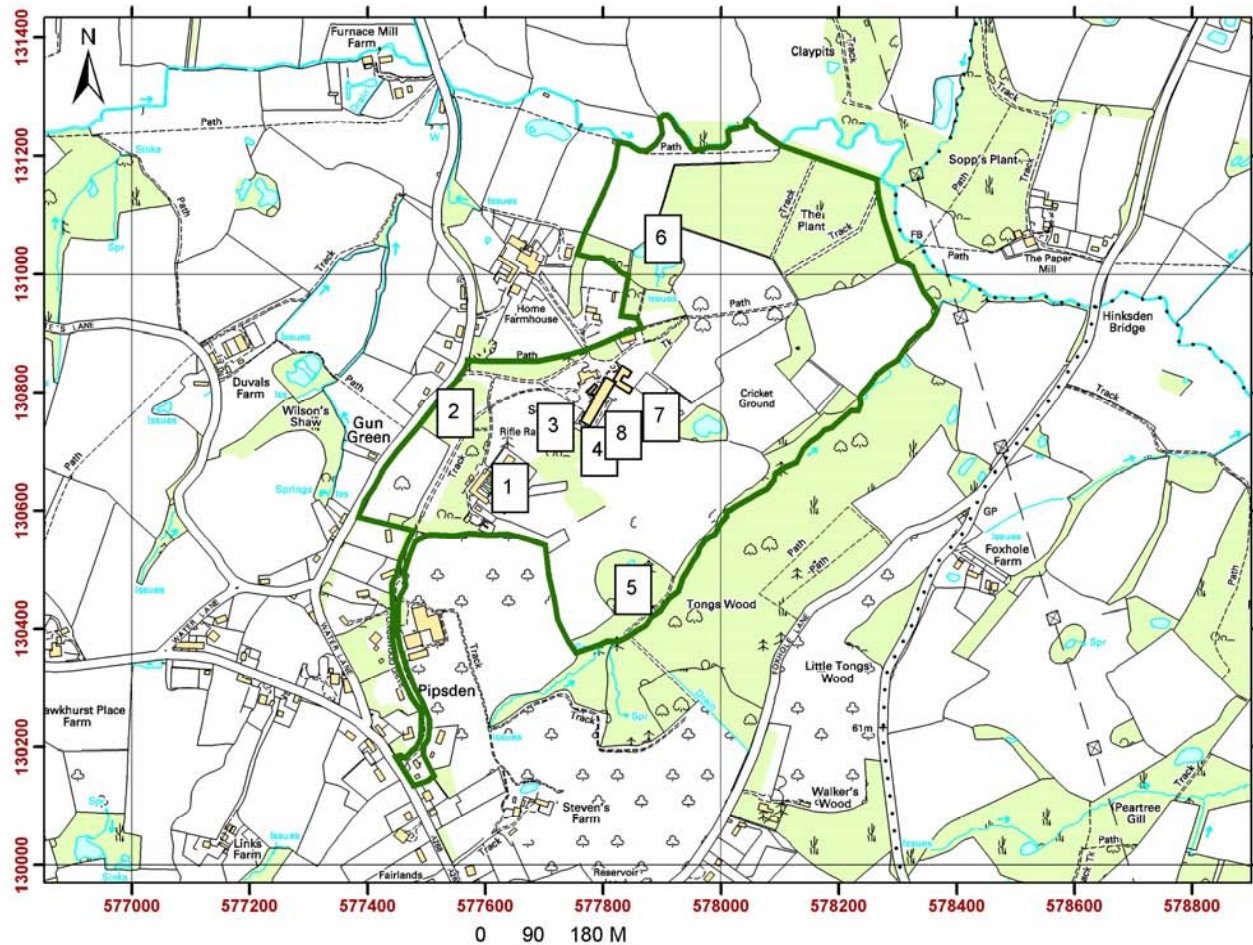
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# Kent Compendium of Historic Parks & Gardens – Tunbridge Wells Borough

Fig. 3 Key features map.



**St Ronan's**

Address:  
St Ronan's  
Hawkhurst  
Tunbridge Wells  
Kent

Map centred on NGR:  
577970 130741

Report completed : April  
2012

Map of key features:  
1 Kitchen garden  
2 Pinetum  
4 Rockery  
4 Fountain  
5 The Dell  
6 Marl Pit  
7 Folly  
8 Lake

**Legend**

- Boundary
- ENGLISH HERITAGE

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Fig. 4 Aerial photograph (2008).



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## Fig. 5 Map of listed buildings at St Ronan's School.



## Kent Compendium of Historic Parks & Gardens – Tunbridge Wells Borough

Fig. 6 Listed buildings at St Ronan's (from the Kent Historic Environment Record).

### Kent Historic Environment Record Reference: MKE37041

The following text is from the original listed building designation:

HAWKHURST WATER LANE TQ 7630-7730 (east side)  
17/452 Coach-house block and The Flat, about 20  
metres north-west of Tongswood GV II

Coach-house and accommodation. Mid to late c19. Red brick with polychrome brick details and ornamental tile roof. Domestic block to left, of 2 storeys with gable and projecting paired gables to left return; entry by boarded door in left return, with 2 glazing bar sashes on each floor, and lower gabled extensions to rear. Main range of 1 storey and attic, with parapet gabled roof, central louvred turret and 4-gabled half-dormers, that at end right a loft door. Boarded doors to end right and to centre, in gabled porch, with casement between them, all with arched surrounds. Inappropriate C20 metal casement to left. Coach-house wing to right, projecting from main range, with kneelered parapet gable, and boarded carriage doors to ground floor. Included for group value.

Listing NGR: TQ7777430828

### Kent Historic Environment Record Reference: MKE37385

The following text is from the original listed building designation:

HAWKHURST RYE ROAD TQ 7630-7730 (north side)  
17/411 The Lodge, Tongswood GV II

Gate lodge. Early C20. Red brick with ashlar details and plain tiled roof. Free Baroque-revival style. Single storey and attic, with pediment-gabled roof with central stack cluster and pediment-gabled dormer with Arms cartouche and 5-light stone mullioned window. Ground floor with 3-light mullioned and transomed window to left and to right in ashlar, parapeted sections with obelisk finials, and central Doric columned arcade in antis. Bracketed pentice roof to right return with mullioned and transomed windows. Single storey rear wing with parget gable and end stack, and canted bay with raking roof and diamond-leaded windows. Originally the main gate lodge to the Tongswood Estate.

Listing NGR: TQ7748230171

### Kent Historic Environment Record Reference: MKE37391

The following text is from the original listed building designation:

HAWKHURST WATER LANE TQ 7630-7730 (east side)  
17/451 Tongswood, now St Ronan's School, with garden terrace  
GV II

House. Mid-late C19, extended 1904-6. Red brick with some diapering in blue brick, with ashlar details and ornamental tiled roof. Jacobethan style. Main range of 2 storeys and attic on plinth with string course and moulded brick dog-

tooth cornice to roof with 3 projecting gables, those to centre and to right shaped with finials, and with 2 gabled dormers to centre stacks ranged left to right, and large central clock tower, with tiled spire, and 2 tier wooden top-piece with cornices, leaded spire roof and ogee cupola with weather-vane. Three-storey bay to left and 2-storey bay to right, both with enriched parapets. Eight-window bay front, with sashed stone mullioned windows, mullioned and transomed on ground floor. Central panelled doors in C16 style Classical porch in projecting ground floor with banded attached columns, pediment with achievement, and keyed arch. Ballroom extension to right, with the details of the main range carried over, with semi-dormer to left, and central shaped gable, with canted bay on ground floor, with pierced balustrade and full-height mullioned and transomed window. Identical bay window to right return, with 2 shaped gables and central segmentally-headed gable with arms cartouche. Garden elevation with shaped pilastered gables, semi-dormer and 2 central dormers, bow windows on ground floor, Ionic columned canted bay to ballroom with half-glazed doors and fanlights. Two storey service wing to left of main front, with built-out ground floor; with moulded stacks, 4-bay front with gabled wing to left. Garden terraces to right return and to rear, with red brick walls, with regular buttress piers, with stone capping, reached by stone steps to right of main front, with pierced stone balustrade. Interior: the earlier main range richly panelled, with 4-centred arched doorways, especially to entrance hall, with openwell stair with landing, with ramped handrail on iron-twist balusters. Sugar-barley twist balusters to rear stair. Dining room with wainscotting, columned overmantel (present library). Plaster ceilings throughout. Ballroom and adjacent en-suite bedrooms finished in rich late C17 Classical style; the ballroom with pilaster and free-standing columned corners, and supporting cross-beamed ceiling with central roundel, with stepped main entry to house, the whole enriched (fluted columns, scaled pulvinated frieze, enriched beams). The ceiling painted after the Italian manner, as are those in the en-suite bedrooms and bathroom, and bar-room, also with enriched door surrounds, marble fireplaces, cornices etc. The main house built for William Cotterill before 1874; the ballroom added for William Gunther 1904-6 and built by J T Davis, builders of Hwkhurst. Gunther made his fortune from Argentinian beef products and drinks, and from 1902 to 1931 lived here, a general benefactor to the parish. Anciently the seat of the Dunks, the last of whom, Sir Thomas, founded the almshouses bearing his name in Highgate, Hawkhurst. Subsequently the property of Jeremiah Curteis of Rye, one of the leaders in mid C18 of the Hawkhurst Gang, probably the most notorious smuggling gang of the time. Listing NGR: TQ7780130807

**Kent Historic Environment Record Reference: MKE38100**

The following text is from the original listed building designation:

HAWKHURST RYE ROAD TQ 7630-7730 (north side)  
 17/412 Quadrant walls and gate piers to Tongswood Drive GV II  
 Quadrant walls and gate piers. Early C20. Red brick and ashlar details with cast or wrought iron railings. Free Baroque revival style. Stone, panelled gatepiers with modillion cornice to ball-finial (ball lost on right hand pier), with brick quadrant walls sweeping in concave curves to left and to right, the cornice depressed in semi-circular sweeps filled with lengths of spear-head rails with

scrolled centre panels, with pedimented central feature. The quadrants terminated by lower stone piers, the walls ramped down and extending some 10 yards to right, and about 40 yards to left. The central iron carriage gate is missing. Formerly the main entrance to the Tongswood estate.  
Listing NGR: TQ7746030185

**Kent Historic Environment Record Reference: MKE38622**

The following text is from the original listed building designation:

HAWKHURST WATER LANE TO 7630-7730 (east side)  
17/453 Walled garden with glasshouses about 100 metres south-west of Tongswood GV II  
Walled garden and glasshouses. Mid to late C19. Red brick. Walls about 10 feet high, with regular buttress piers, capped and extending about 60 by 100 metres, the entrances on north and south walls framed by capped piers with ball finials, the walls ramped down to the piers. East and west walls pierced by single doors, with baluster-screen upper panels, with segmental heads, and framed by paired buttresses. Attached to the exterior of the east and south walls are single storey lean-to storehouses and cottages, with ranges of glasshouses, with red brick bases; lean-to against east wall, and ranged in south-west corner.

Listing NGR: TQ7766430635

Not on 1st or 2nd edition Ordnance Survey 25" mapping, suggesting very late 19th century date, or even early 20th.