

# The Hawkhurst Gang

Nearly 300 years ago,

stories about the Hawkhurst Gang were on everybody's lips, not just in the Wealden village where this notorious band of smugglers based their lucrative business, but across the south-east, stretching from Deal in Kent to Poole in Dorset.

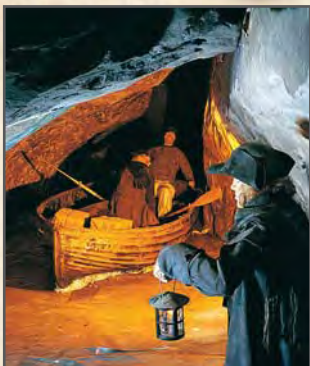


Image © C.Parker

A hard core of Gang leaders ran what appears to have been a village-wide 'cottage industry' with much of the rural population taking part in the larger free-trading operations.

Smugglers hatched their plans for smuggling of tea, brandy, rum and coffee from France and the Channel Islands in the local pubs still running today, from Hastings to Hawkhurst, Rye to Goudhurst.

Eventually, Hawkhurst Gang leader Arthur Gray was captured, tried at the Old Bailey for smuggling at

Lydd and executed in 1748.

Thomas Kingsmill from Goudhurst assumed leadership, though the Gang's influence was reduced after its defeat by the Goudhurst Band of Militia in April 1747.



## How to get here -TN18 4EY

From the A21 at Flimwell, or from the A28, via Tenterden, take the A268 to Hawkhurst; By train to Etchingham or Staplehurst followed by bus to Hawkhurst.

For train times visit: [www.nationalrail.co.uk](http://www.nationalrail.co.uk)

For bus information visit [www.travelline.org.uk](http://www.travelline.org.uk) or call 0871 200 22 33.

National Express, daily service between London and Flimwell or Hurst Green, visit [www.nationalexpress.com](http://www.nationalexpress.com).

## Further Information

For accommodation, current events and further information on the village and surrounding attractions go to:

[www.visithawkhurst.org.uk](http://www.visithawkhurst.org.uk)

For more on the wider area please visit:

[www.visitkent.co.uk](http://www.visitkent.co.uk)

[www.1066country.com](http://www.1066country.com)

Supported and funded by



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[www.visithawkhurst.org.uk](http://www.visithawkhurst.org.uk)



# Your Guide to Hawkhurst and Smuggling in Kent & Sussex

[www.visithawkhurst.org.uk](http://www.visithawkhurst.org.uk)



# Welcome to Hawkhurst



Welcome to Hawkhurst, home of the Hawkhurst Gang, where most villagers in the 18th Century used to moonlight with Freetraders for a better living. In those days, smuggling was an approved trade, even if a little risky!

More recently, the Rootes Motor Car and OXO empires were started in this ancient Wealden village.



Image © John Hunt

Set on the Kent Sussex border, within the inspiring landscape of the High Weald, Hawkhurst is within easy reach of sandy beaches, rugged coastlines and historical towns like Rye, Tunbridge Wells, Battle and Hastings.

Hawkhurst is home to “Kino”, the U.K.’s first all-digital cinema, fabulous country pubs, fishing, horse-riding, cycling and rambling; along with excellent countryside attractions including Bedgebury National Pinetum, Bewl Water Reservoir and world-famous castles, houses and gardens which have inspired the likes of Jane Austen, Charles Dickens, Rudyard Kipling and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.

Come and discover Hawkhurst, “The Crossroads of the Weald”.



Image © Britainview



Image © Britainview

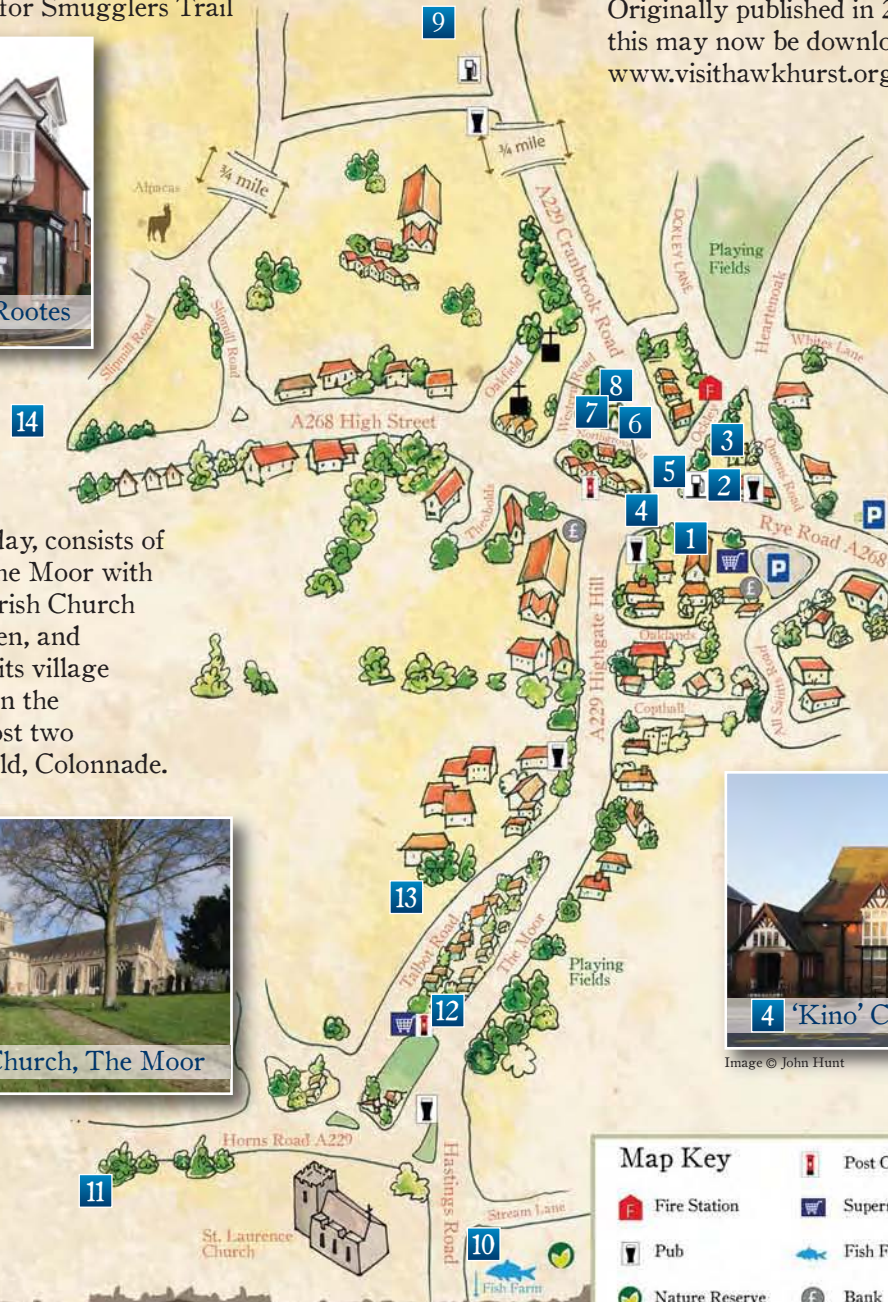
# Hawkhurst Heritage Trail



Please see over for Smugglers Trail



Image © John Hunt



Hawkhurst, today, consists of two districts: The Moor with its beautiful Parish Church and village green, and Highgate with its village shops centred on the attractive, almost two hundred year old, Colonnade.



Image © John Hunt



Image © John Hunt

Originally published in 2009 as a full-sized map, this may now be downloaded from our website: [www.visithawkhurst.org.uk](http://www.visithawkhurst.org.uk)

Follow the blue plaques of the Hawkhurst Heritage Trail (just under six miles), to discover some more of our history.

- 1 - Library
- 2 & 3 - Dunk's Hall
- 4 - Victoria Hall
- 5 - Colonnade
- 6 - Infant School
- 7 - Private Lunatic Asylum
- 8 - William Rootes
- 9 - Railway Station
- 10 - Collingwood House
- 11 - The Laundry
- 12 - Moor School
- 13 - Gas Works
- 14 - Cottage Hospital

Map Key			
	Post Office		Alpacas
	Fire Station		Supermarket
	Church		Fish Farm
	Pub		Bank
	Nature Reserve		Petrol Station
	Parking		





# When Hawkhurst Ruled the Weald...



## Follow in the footsteps of the Hawkhurst Gang...

They were the 'Mafia' of the early 18th Century. The Gang was appreciated by the poor for employment after the demise of the wool and iron industries, and by parsons and others for duty-free 'baccy', brandy and tea.

Within this map, you will find some of the key landmark sites associated with the dastardly exploits of this infamous Gang of smugglers. At each place identified with a symbol, you will find further details on how they would operate with fearsome ruthlessness.



*If you wake at midnight, and hear a horse's feet,  
Don't go drawing back the blind, or looking in the street.  
Them that ask no questions isn't told a lie.  
Watch the wall, my darling, while the Gentlemen go by!  
Five and twenty ponies,  
Trotting through the dark -  
Brandy for the Parson,  
'Baccy for the Clerk;  
Laces for a lady, letters for a spy,  
And watch the wall, my darling, while the Gentlemen go by!*

From 'A Smugglers Song' by Rudyard Kipling, who lived at Bateman's (Burwash) between 1902 and 1936.



Hawkhurst Sign image © John Hunt

## Hawkhurst

- The Royal Oak - TN18 4EP
- The Queens Inn - TN18 4EY
- The Great House - TN18 5EJ
- The Oak and Ivy - TN18 5DB
- Tudor Court B&B - TN18 5DA



Goudhurst Church image © John Hunt

## Goudhurst

- The Star & Eagle - TN17 1AL
- St. Mary's Church - TN17 1AL

## Hurst Green

- The White Horse - TN19 7PU
- The George (Eurasia) - TN19 7PN



Cranbrook image © Heart of Kent

## Cranbrook

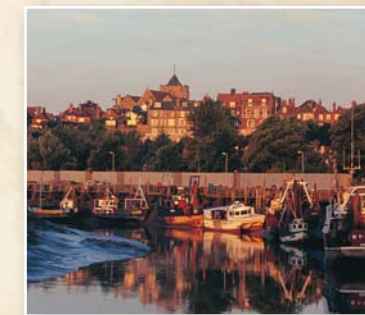
- Terracotta Restaurant - TN17 1DP
- The George - TN17 3HE
- The White Horse - TN17 3EX

## Robertsbridge

- The Seven Stars - TN32 5AJ

## Rye

- Simon the Pieman - TN31 7LB
- The Mermaid - TN31 7EY



Rye Town image © CParker

## Hooe

- The Red Lion - TN33 9EW

## Hastings

- The Bo-Peep - TN38 0AA
- The Stag - TN34 3BJ
- Hastings Arms - TN34 3EG
- Smugglers Adventure - TN34 3HY



Hastings Net Huts image © Bob Mazzer

## Whatlington

- The Royal Oak - TN33 0NJ

## Newenden

- The White Hart - TN18 5PN

## Sedlescombe

- The Queens Head - TN33 0QA



Newenden Church image © John Hunt