

A Walk in the Past



William Rootes first car showroom in Hawkhurst under construction c1900s.

YOUR choice in **Hawkhurst*
for a most suitable victualler ...*

*Café, Chinese, Coffee Shop, Deli, Diner,
Fast Food, Fish & Chip Bar, Garden Centre,
Hot Snack, Indian, Kebab, Nursery, Pizza,
Pub, Restaurant, Sandwich, Snack Bar,
Store, Take-Away, Tea Room or more ...*

See the back cover for a full selection.

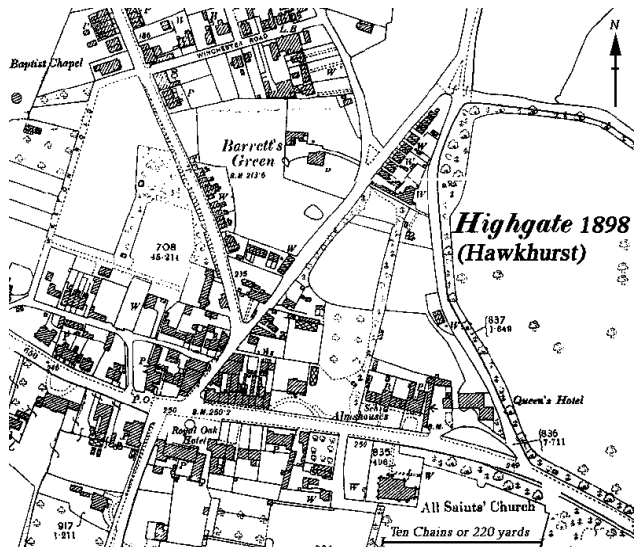


www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk



www.visithawkhurst.org.uk

Around the 'town' for 3/4 mile (Start at Jempson Store: 2 hrs parking)



A Walk in the Past with 'Historic Hawkhurst' photographs

Leave Jempson's car park (2 hrs free); cross main Rye road at the pedestrian lights.

HAWKHURST was made infamous by the 'Holkhourst Genge' of notorious smugglers who 'Ruled The Weald' across the middle of the 18th Century.

The final episode in their reign over Southern England was reported by a 'Gentleman at Chichester' in his anti-smuggling tract first published in 1749, which is still in print today as the 10th edition entitled '*Smugglers Murders*'.

In 2012, the Hawkhurst Community Partnership launched a *Smugglers Trail* from the coast, where goods were landed and run into the Weald via a score of smugglers wayside inns – see displays at ***Smugglers Adventure Caves*** Hastings.



All Saints Chapel-of-Ease set in Highgate, Hawkhurst, by Sir Geo. Gilbert Scott for Rev. Henry & Miss Charlotte Jeffreys, was built by J T E Davis Builders in 1861. The Grade II listed building was deconsecrated by the Church Commissioners and sold to a property developer in 1998. ▼



A Walk in the Past with 'Historic Hawkhurst' photographs

View southward to Library and Kino (Victoria Hall) and then turn westward.

The Library, originally Hawkhurst fire station, was given to the village by Charles Gunther in memory of his two sons who died in the Great War.



Victoria Hall was built as a lecture hall by Henry Maynard 1875. It served as an ARP Station during WWII and became the Kino Digital Cinema 2005.



Charles & Helen Gunther bought Tongswood 1902. They employed an army of gardeners, maintenance staff, farmhands and foresters to keep the estate in showground condition. Charles refurbished 'The Jewel of Hawkhurst' and added a ballroom, inseting O X O in brick outlines – he was Oxo company chairman. He also built Oxo Tower HQ on the South Bank, London. Although a German immigrant, both his sons fought for Britain in WWI. The house and home farm later became St Ronan's Independent School at Four Throws. ▼



A Walk in the Past with 'Historic Hawkhurst' photographs

Walk west 150 yards to alongside The Colonnade row of shops and look around.

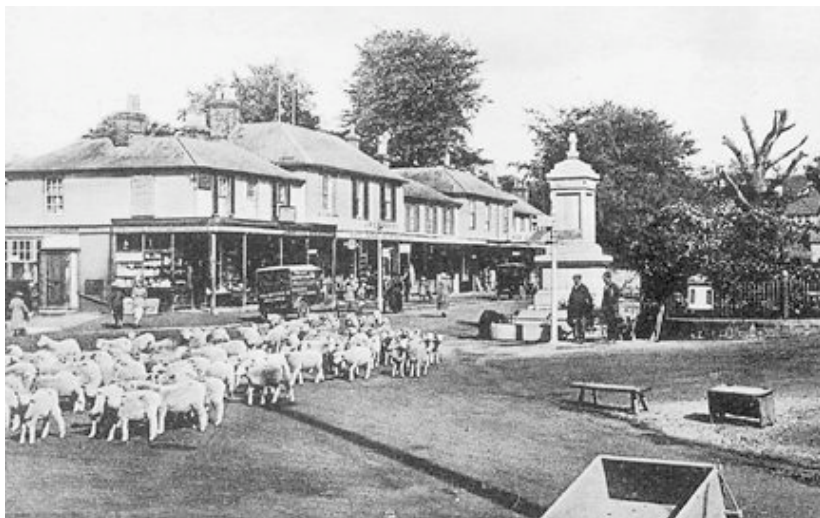
Colonnade Views. John Davis, late 19th century owner of the Royal Oak Hotel, bought Rootes Motors premises in Hawkhurst after they moved lock, stock and motor car to their brand new HQ and classic *art deco* works in Maidstone. His Highgate petrol station next door to the Royal Oak operated right through to the 1960s.



Colonnade parking permitted.

Brenchley postal worker William Hodges, tricycled the Weald of Kent mid 19th century with his glass plate camera and wooden tripod, creating photographs such as this donkey carriage with attendant locals.

And by the mid-1920s there was still very little traffic to stem the flow of local wandering flocks. ▼



A Walk in the Past with 'Historic Hawkhurst' photographs

The Colonnade parade of buildings has changed very little over the past century.

The Colonnade white weather boarded row of buildings belonged to Richard Turner in the reign of George III but they were acquired and developed by James Doubell in 1831 to become *the* shopping arcade feature of Highgate, Hawkhurst.

Master photographer, Ebenezer Williams, bought the Colonnade printing works 1879 (11/12th windows from left) where he published *Weald of Kent News* 1881, to become *Kent & Sussex Post* – and later the first home of *Wealden Advertiser*.



Colonnade, Hawkhurst



A Walk in the Past with 'Historic Hawkhurst' photographs

At the traffic lights look around westward and southward towards 'The Square'.



Hawkhurst Cenotaph memorial designed by Henry Liley of Theobalds for *Highgate Green* commemorated 'seventy two fallen heroes who gave their lives' in the Great War. In earlier days the Odd Fellows met at Royal Oak Lodge. And the open space or square in front was a coaching halt before the inn's name changed. Later a petrol station & showroom was installed next door in Highgate Lodge; then it became a shop; then a restaurant and furniture house. ▼

Assembling the procession at Highgate Green, or Square as named on a postcard printed to celebrate the coronation of King George V in June 1911. See Butcher's Emporium for millinery, drapery, furnishings, gents outfitters, groceries and general provisions. *Far right.* ▼



A Walk in the Past with ‘Historic Hawkhurst’ photographs

Cross the road westward at the lights and walk 50 yards to redundant Post Office.

Post Office Scene. Hawkhurst was a major postal centre with 63 sub-offices serving over 40 villages. In 1897, both the new post office at Highgate crossroads and the postmaster dressed-up for Queen Victoria’s Diamond Jubilee. Just over a century later the main post office closed for business. The 2011 postmistress and her dog left to seek employment elsewhere.

Butcher’s store opposite went in a 1960s development boom. Now there’s a café, tackle shop, funeral parlour, 2 Chinese take-aways and a fish ‘n chip bar.



A Walk in the Past with 'Historic Hawkhurst' photographs

View eastward along Rye road and over to the Royal Oak hotel on Highgate Hill.

High Gate is middle to four hamlets north, south, east and west ... Gills Green, The Moor, Four Throws and High Street (or Igglesden Green) that make up the village of Hawkhurst. For over 200 years the village centre crossroads hardly changed, except for traffic lights. The Arch (right) celebrated a Royal visit 1886: the X-roads (below) show early 1800s/1900s scenes.

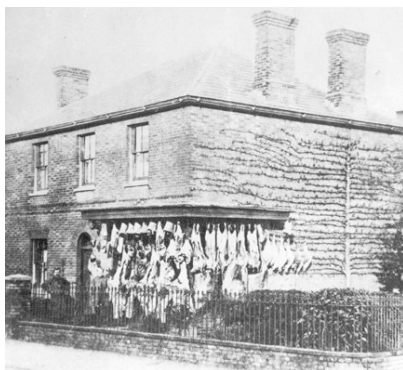
In 2006 Highgate was designated a 'town' and The Moor a village. Such a unilateral 'township' decision by the Borough was fiercely disputed by 'villagers' who overflowed the Council meeting in the church.



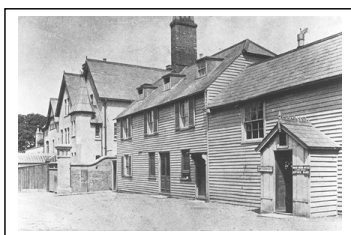
A Walk in the Past with 'Historic Hawkhurst' photographs

Turn up Post Office road, right in Northgrove road and through alley to Western Ave.

Alma House was built mid-19th century for the Blink's family of farmers, graziers & butchers. Bert Blinks mid-1920s held a part share briefly with Wm Rootes in the Moor Brewery. His pure-bred specimen horses, prize winners of many awards, were commandeered by the military for the Great War. They did not return.



North Grove Clinic established 1839 (see below) was rebuilt 1877 for Dr Wm Milsted Harmer as a high class asylum for 'mentally ill' young ladies. After the disastrous fire in 1890 (p12), one gateway pillar remains to be seen (LHS opp) in Northgrove Road by the old Post Office.



A Walk in the Past with 'Historic Hawkhurst' photographs

Walk 150 yds west along Avenue, right 200 yds down Western road to chapel at end.

Highgate School for infants was built 1900 as a memorial to Canon Jeffreys, who had given a schoolroom to the village in Northgrove Road 30 years earlier. He had also endowed Gilbert Scott's Chapel of Ease at Highgate (p1) in 1861. Highgate infant school was closed in 2003 for demolition. ▼

A new, purpose-built school, combining Highgate infants and The Moor juniors, was opened on Fowlers Park field in 2004. The scheme had been reserved for Hawkhurst CEP school during WWII.

The foundation stone from the 100 year old Highgate infant school (see photo opposite taken on a stormy Demolition Day) is held at the new CEP school. The old site was then redeveloped for housing – the Canon Jeffreys Court Estate.



Going ... going ... gone!



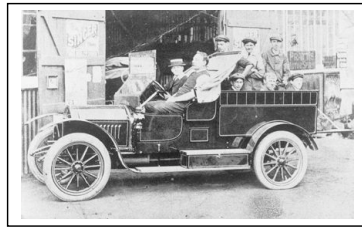
A Walk in the Past with 'Historic Hawkhurst' photographs

Follow road east 25 yds and cross Cranbrook road into Winchester road opposite.

The Rootes Group began trading in cycles 1899 from No 7 Station Road, now Cranbrook Road. And when Wm Rootes Snr was delivering a new cycle to Hensill House, he was asked his opinion of 'these new motor cars'. He took on a number of agencies for *New Orleans*, *Clement*, *Starberry* and *Rex*, the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th autos stood in procession outside his corner shop: see bottom of page.

He also opened an extensive workshop behind the showroom, where he liked to display engineering prowess with skilled engineers of Rootes Motor Works of Hawkhurst, testing early marques; see the photos below.

His sons William & Reginald set-up Rootes Group after WWI becoming a major influence in the car & aero engine industry and developing a worldwide demand for Humber, Hillman and Sunbeam. Rootes also built 1 in 7 of WWII bombers, 2 out of 3 armoured cars and manufactured over 50,000 aero engines.



A Walk in the Past with 'Historic Hawkhurst' photographs

Down Winchester rd 250 yds to Ockley rd right at end, right 250 yds to Cranbrook rd.

Winchester Road was a busy village area with general stores, butchers, bakers, bus depot, workshops, a Ford dealer and Oliver's road testing a new carriage – towards Rootes Motors at the far end, see photo below.

Ivy clad *Beehive Stores* stocked all the goods people needed, while round the corner up towards Highgate centre, *The Flying Horse* offered locally brewed beer – see photos opp.

The Weald of Kent or *The Flying Horse* taking delivery from the local brewers drey.



A Walk in the Past with 'Historic Hawkhurst' photographs

Return to alley on right into Norris Close estate, right at end south to Rye rd 150 yds.



The 1966 Sinkhole Cranbrook Road opened up under the weight of a heavy lorry, attracting urgent exploration by the local bobby.

It sank opposite the undamaged stables & coach-house of the North Grove private lunatic asylum destroyed by fire 1890 (see ruins photo below with local firemen).



Fire Carts attending the 1890 fire were handicapped by poor water pressure. In desperation villagers were organised to form a human chain to bucket water from Theobalds lake. Chas Gunther gifted a fire station and 45hp Dennis engine 1921.

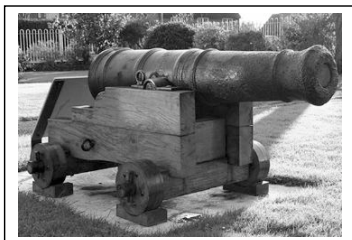


A Walk in the Past with 'Historic Hawkhurst' photographs

Turn left eastward towards Rye and in 50 yards visit Dunk's almshouses to view gun.

Dunk's three pounder (c1750) had been half buried outside Waters grocers & garage, Four Throws, as a protective bollard.

When the premises were sold in 2001 for private development, the old iron cannon was retrieved, refurbished and relocated to stand sentinel in front of Dunk's almshouses. ▼



Dunk's almshouses and schoolroom ran for 200 years until the class was closed in 1922.

Today, the room is used for local meetings, photographic exhibitions and village events.

The premises are still owned by the charity now helping fund youngsters to travel to college courses or to begin work experience.

Dunk's schoolhouse for 20 boys and almshouses for 6 'decayed housekeepers' were endowed by Thos Dunk, a wealthy Hawkhurst man who died in 1718. ▼



A Walk in the Past with 'Historic Hawkhurst' photographs

Continue on main Rye road walking eastward past Queens Inn for about 250 yards.

London & County Bank bought the business lease after The Hastings Old Bank was bankrupted in 1857: the Bank left Hawkhurst as NatWest in 1997.



When Fanny Hopkins inherited the property from her manager father, she was appointed agent, the first female member of staff of any bank in Britain – she was in effect the first bank manager-ess, 1859 – 1905.

Next to L&C bank sat The Shades public bar before one of the oldest bowling clubs in the country, shown opposite preparing for a match with Maidstone, 24th August 1907.



The Queens Head Hotel beside The Shades was originally home farm for Fowler's Park estate, where Richard Kilburne wrote the first *Kent County Survey* in the 17th century. ▼



A Walk in the Past with 'Historic Hawkhurst' photographs

Cross Queens road, past Tesco (free car park/old bus station) walking 100 yards.

Hawkhurst Bus Station arrived mid 1950s bringing together the Winchester Road garage and the terminus point at The Shades adjoining the Queens Hotel. And there was a waiting room and toilet beside the ticket booking office. Such fine facilities stayed in service for fifty years until Arriva sold out and the original Maidstone & District station became another Tesco superstore ...

Last Bus Day proved so popular with villagers and club enthusiasts that it was repeated yet again 2005. ▼



A Modern Motorworks 1933 built in the trade style of the time had a most memorable telephone number ... *Hawkhurst 8* ▼



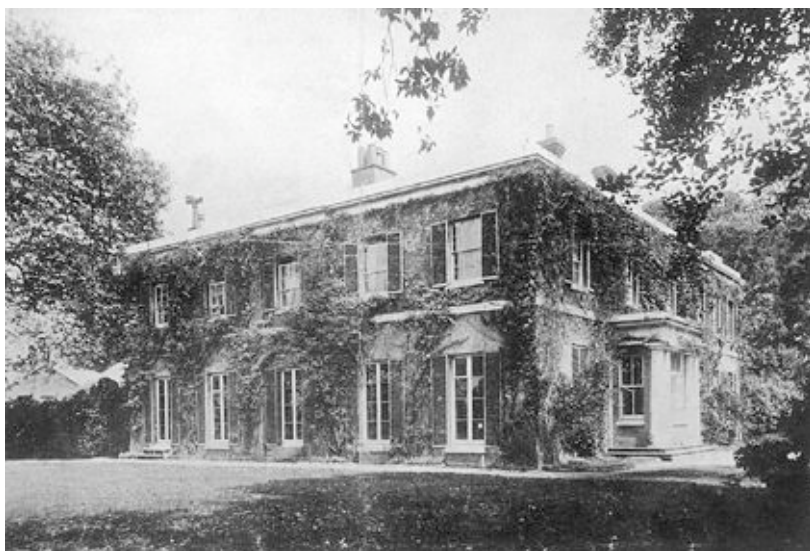
A Walk in the Past with 'Historic Hawkhurst' photographs

Turn into school car park (free parking) to complete Highgate section of the Tour.

Fowlers Park was the home of Richard Kilburne who wrote a *Survey of Kent* in 1659. Naturally, he devoted more pages to Hawkhurst than any other village or town in Kent. Fowlers Park was also the place in 1881 where one of the first tennis clubs in the country was founded under MCC Rules. This was by a letter of invitation from the incumbent at the time, Sir Edmund Hardinge.



Finally, 'Walter' from *My Secret Life: the Sex Diary of a Victorian Gentleman* (circa 1888) shared Fowlers Park with the real Hawkhurst author, Henry Spencer Ashbee. He bequeathed his erotic collection of 15,299 books to the British Library candidly explored by Ian Gibson in *Erotomaniac* (2001).



Highgate Tour Route – working with Highgate-Central walk map.

Page **Walk Tour** Route description: walk distance 1/2 mile or 40 chains.

(where 1 chain = 1 cricket pitch length of 22 yards)

- 1 Leave Jempson Store car park (free parking 2 hours **only**) and cross the main Rye Road at the pedestrian lights.
- 2 View southward to Library and Kino (Victoria Hall) then turn westward.
- 3/4 Walk west 150 yards alongside The Colonnade and look around.
- 5 At the traffic lights view southward and westward towards 'The Square'.
- 6 Cross road westward at lights walking 50 yards to redundant Post Office.
- 7 View eastward along Rye Road towards Rye and over to Royal Oak.
- 8 Turn up Post Office Road 50 yards, then right Northgrove Road 75 yards; return 65 yards to Asylum pillar, right into alley to Western Av 50 yards.
- 9 Walk 150 yards west, right 200 yards in Western Road to chapel at end.
- 10 Follow road east 25 yards and cross Cranbrook Road to Winchester Road.
- 11 Continue Winchester Road 250 yards to Ockley Road round right at end, then walk northward 250 yards all the way up to Cranbrook Road.
- 12 Now return 22 yards to alley on right and then into Norris Close estate; turning right walk south 150 yards through passage out onto Rye Road.
- 13 Turn left eastward towards Rye and visit Dunk's almshouses in 50 yards.
- 14 Continue along main Rye Road walking eastward for another 250 yards.
- 15 Cross Queens Road, past Tesco (free car park/old bus station) 100 yards.
- 16 Turn into school car park (free) to complete Highgate section of the Tour.

Leave car park for *Highgate-South* The Moor (2.5 miles) or *Hawkhurst-North* Gills Green (2.5 miles) walking by road, footpath and byway: follow the further route maps and read the next *A Walk in the Past* booklet offering descriptions and *Historic Hawkhurst* illustrations.

Note: buses serving Hawkhurst to and from Maidstone, Tenterden, Hastings, Tunbridge Wells, Tonbridge: HC4; 5; 254; 255; 292; 293; 299; 304; 305; 349.

Hawkhurst Victuallers: *Take-aways, Eat-ins & Allsorts food purveyors.*

Going Northward from Highgate X-roads to Cranbrook Road A229:

Dulcet Tea Room, *paninis, ploughmans, toasted sandwiches, cakes & teas.*
The Great House, *French food dining & wines, drinks, lunches & bar meals.*
High Banks Garden Café, *full English breakfast, lunches, home made cakes.*
Hartley Coffee Shop, *breakfast, lunch, soups, toasties, tea, coffee & cakes.*

Going Southward Hastings Road B2244 and back to Horns Road A229:

Hawkhurst Cafe, *all-day breakfast, omelettes, lesagne, soups, varied drinks.*
Lovely's of Chan & Chung Chinese, *Peking & Cantonese take-away menu.*
Happy Garden Chinese, *Peking & Cantonese take-away menu.*
Hawkhurst Fish Bar, *fried fish & chips, scampi, chicken, pie, sausage, fritter.*
The Black Pig, *'Get-together' special lunches, delicious menus, bar drinks.*
Moor Stores & Off-Licence, *sandwiches, snacks and drinks.*
The Eight Bells, *mid-week food specials, Sunday carvery, bar snacks & drinks.*
via Hastings Road to Fish Farm Waterside Café, *luncheon, snacks, tea & cake.*
The Curlew, *fish specialities, roast meats, main courses, puddings & wines.*
back to Horns Road for Merrimants Garden, Hurst Green, *home cooked meals.*

Going Eastward from Highgate X-roads to Rye Road A268:

Zan Chinese, *restaurant & take-away menus for Peking & Cantonese cuisine.*
The Royal Oak Hotel, *hot lunches, roast dinners, bar snacks & evening meals.*
Junaki Tandoori Indian, *chicken, lamb, prawn dishes, curries & rice.*
Kino Cinema Café-Bar & Terrace, *coffee & cakes, snacks, beer & wines.*
Park Farm Butchers, *smugglers pies and meat pasties.*
Baldock Bakers, *sandwiches, filled rolls, sausage rolls, pasties, buns & cakes.*
Colonnade Kebab Pizza Café, *shish/donner kebabs, pizzas, burgers & chips.*
Londis Garage, *hot & cold snacks, sandwiches, sweets & crisps.*
Jempson's Conservatory Café, *soups, baked potatoes, toast, cakes, coffee, tea.*
The Queen's Inn, *bar snacks and restaurant meals.*
Tesco Store, *sandwiches, wraps, sushi, salads and snacks.*
The Oak & Ivy, *snacks, lunches & dinners in oak timbered restaurant & bar.*
Walled Garden Nursery, *tea, coffee & cakes in original Victorian greenhouse.*

Going Westward on the Flimwell Road A268 and then Southward A21:

British Legion Unity Hall, *bar snacks and lunchtime drinks.*
Hawkhurst Golf Club, *snacks & lunches available from 12 till 2pm.*
Wealden Smokery, *purveyors of smoked food, cheeses, wines & local produce.*
A21 Car Wash Diner, *hot food selection, snacks, choice of cakes, tea, coffee.*
A21 Orchard Farm Café, *big breakfast, snacks, scones, cakes, tea & coffee.*

And Finally ... *browse local books by local authors at Cranbrook Bookshop.*

Or for titles and tasters email johnadawes@yahoo.co.uk

