



THE NUNNERY

NUNNERY LANE, SMARTS HILL, PENSHURST

INTRODUCTION

The Building: an irregular shaped house mostly on two storeys but with some attic rooms.



rear elevation overlooking open countryside

Location: in the area of Smarts Hill in the south west part of the parish of Penshurst, Kent. Set back from Nunnery Lane along a short drive.

Commissioners: the present owners, in residence since 1993

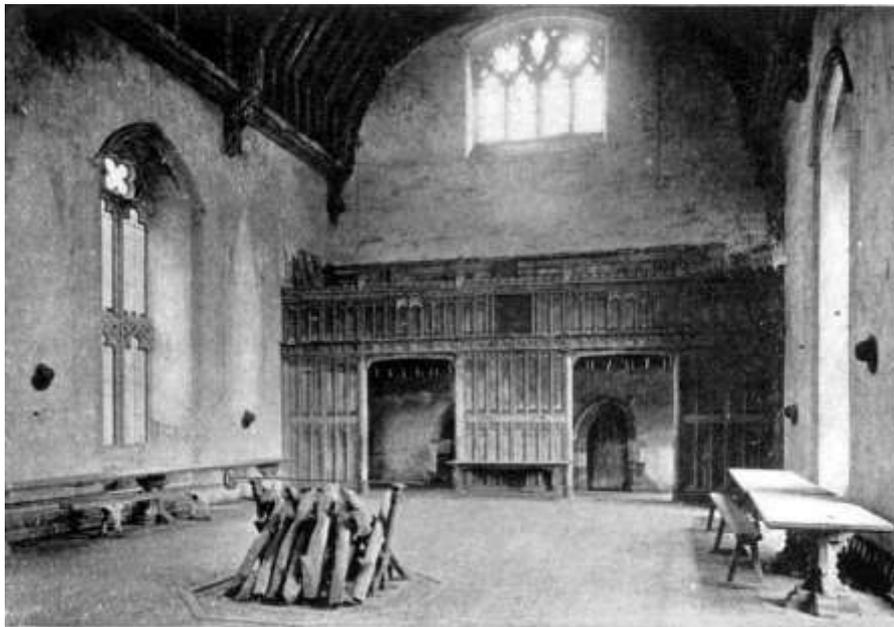
Listing details: **Grade II** - listed 16 January 1975 when the name had been changed to Ranmoor before reverting again in 1993.

C16 timber framed house with modern extensions. Entrance front shows long lean-to and modern gable at right. Main garden front of two storeys and attic, five windows. High pitched tiled room, hipped at left, with two dormers. Tile hung first floor, brick ground floor. Modern right wing. Diamond paned casements.

Reproduction plank door under flattened Tudor arch. Modern loggia on left return. Inside two inglenooks with incised plaster work above; and much exposed timber. Side purlin roof with wind braces.

Penshurst Village and area early history:

Situated in the Weald of Kent the name Penshurst means a wooded hill *within a pen or enclosed place*. It became a convenient river crossing point for drovers, at the confluence of the rivers Eden and Medway where a church was subsequently established. The group of ‘dens’ (cleared grazing sites in the Wealden forest) around Penshurst were retained by the Archbishop of Canterbury because of the unusually fertile soil, which could be utilised for agriculture. The village also grew around the local traditions of iron working and woollen cloth production. An early glassworks was specific to Penshurst. Penshurst village is dominated by the famous Penshurst Place established in the mid 1400s and home of the De’Lisle family for many years.



the Great Hall, Penshurst 1915

South Park was a large largely wooded estate due north of The Nunnery with a house originally built by the Leicesters of Penshurst Place and subsequently occupied by Sir Brownlow Sherrard in 1745. It was substantially renovated by Richard Allnutt who

lived there from 1770 and further improved and extended by the first Viscount Hardinge in 1830. The house became dilapidated and was demolished in 1989.



South Park 1809

Smart's Hill

The hamlet of Smart's Hill developed around Smart's Hill house and the Spotted Dog public house. The Tithe map of 1838 shows a modest sized house where Reverend Boissier lived with his family and on Smart's Hill itself a series of buildings all owned by William Hopkins. He lived in one together with Adam Jeffries and others being described as 'beer shop, cottage, gardens etc.' By 1870 there had been considerable change with several more buildings appearing including the Congregational Chapel. Apart from a few minor differences the buildings have stayed much the same since then.

The census shows that in 1851 members of the Welfare family were engaged in making cricket balls but most others were agricultural workers and shopkeepers.

Street directories from the early 1900s such as Peltons and Kellys list a series of residents and the businesses they ran there. The Spotted Dog was the centre of a range of shops providing all the basic essentials to local residents. The Waghorn

family were the landlords in 1905 until 1913 and then followed a series of licensees - 1913-1924 Henry Coulstock, 1930 George Powell, 1934 Arthur Worster, 1938 Leslie Blackiston.



The Spotted Dog c1900

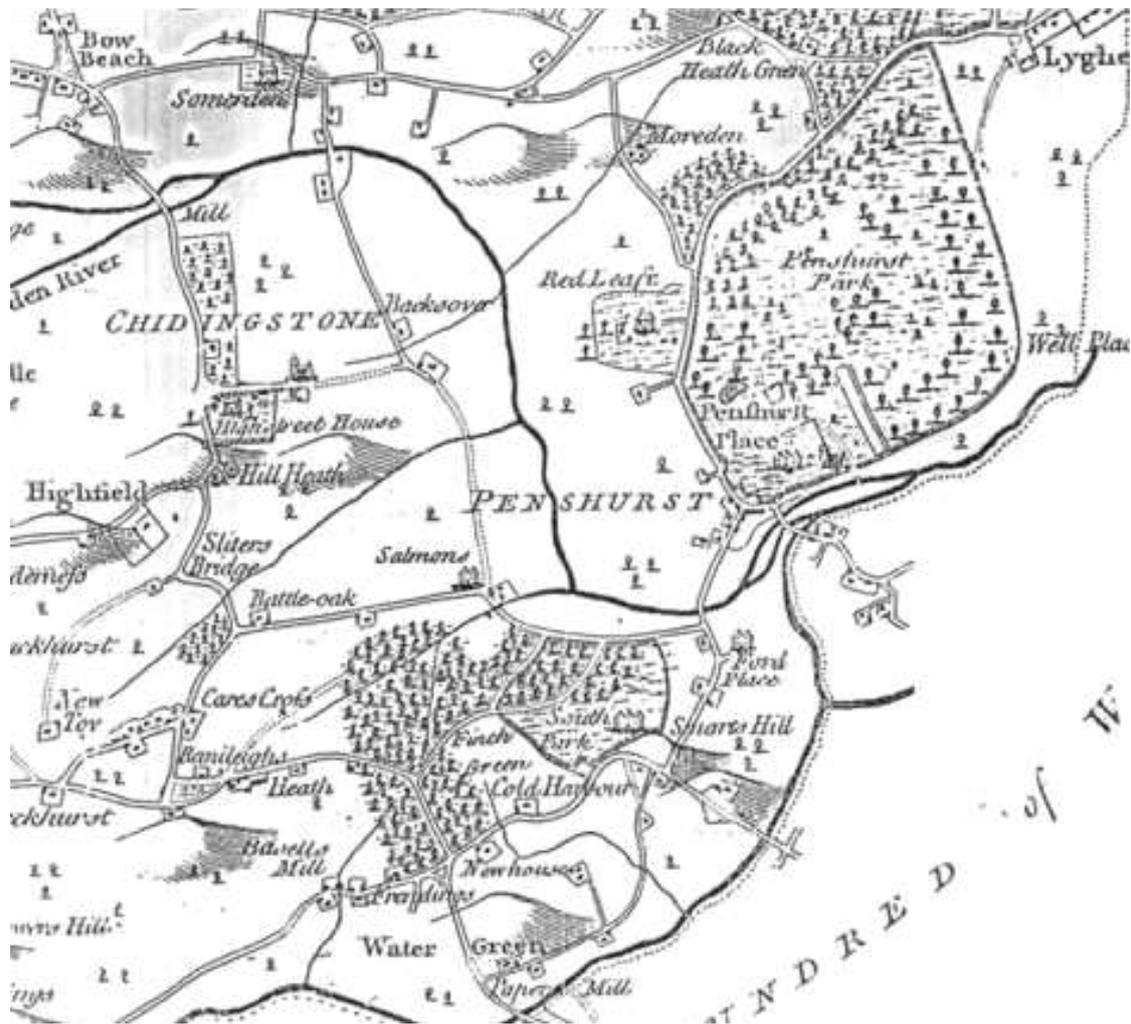
There was a baker's shop that for many years was run by members of the King family until 1927 when followed William Rattan, 1930 Edwin Friar, 1934 Mrs L Sargent, 1938 Herbert Harman.

A general stores, which on occasions was grocer, butcher, wine & spirit dealer and post office in various combinations, again run by one family named Hardwick who traded until 1938 when J Hawkett took over.

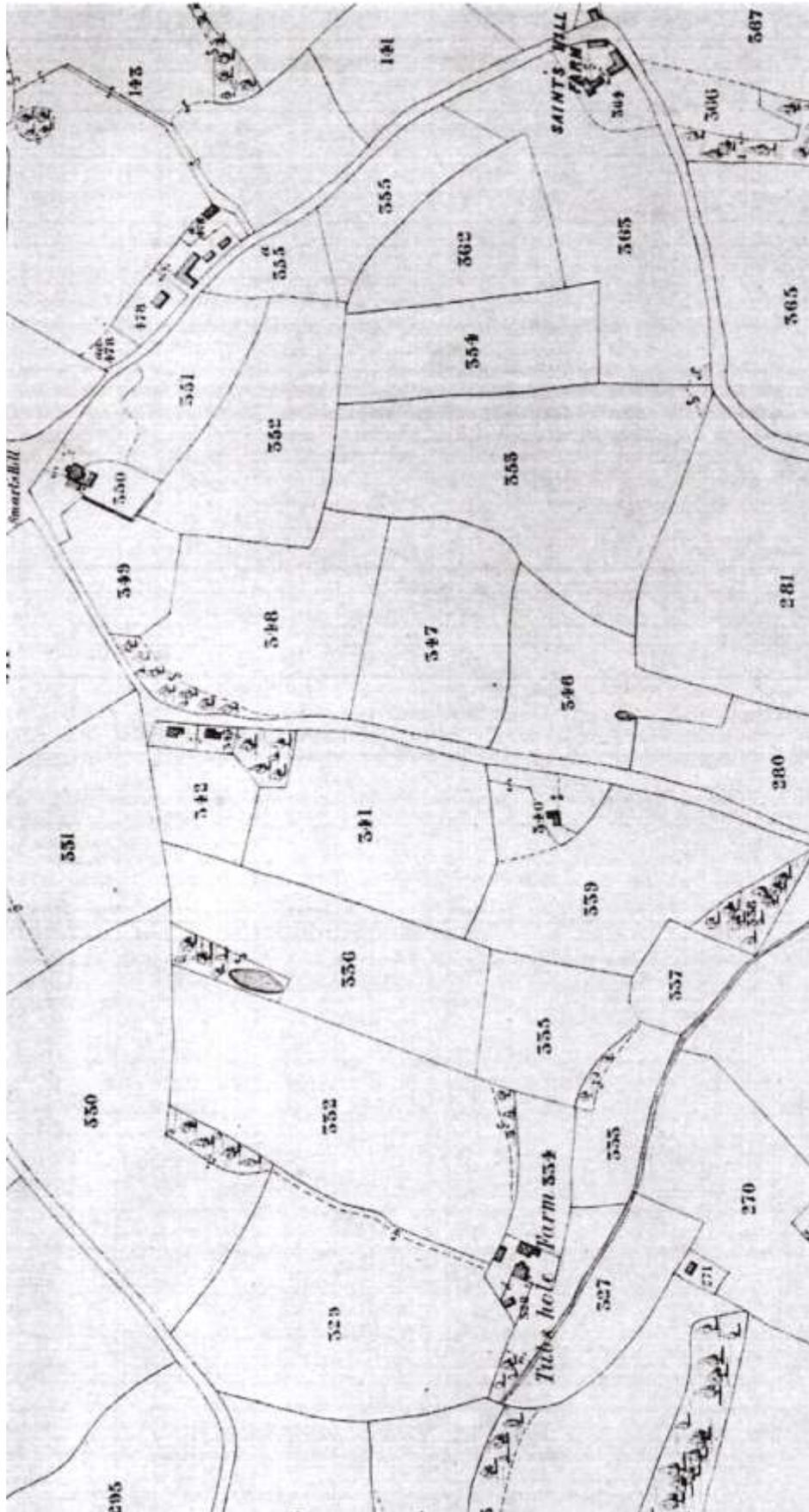
The last outlet was a dairy run by Henry Cooper who lived at Godfrey House in Coldharbour Road. His son William succeeded him in 1930.

LOCATION MAPS THROUGH TIME

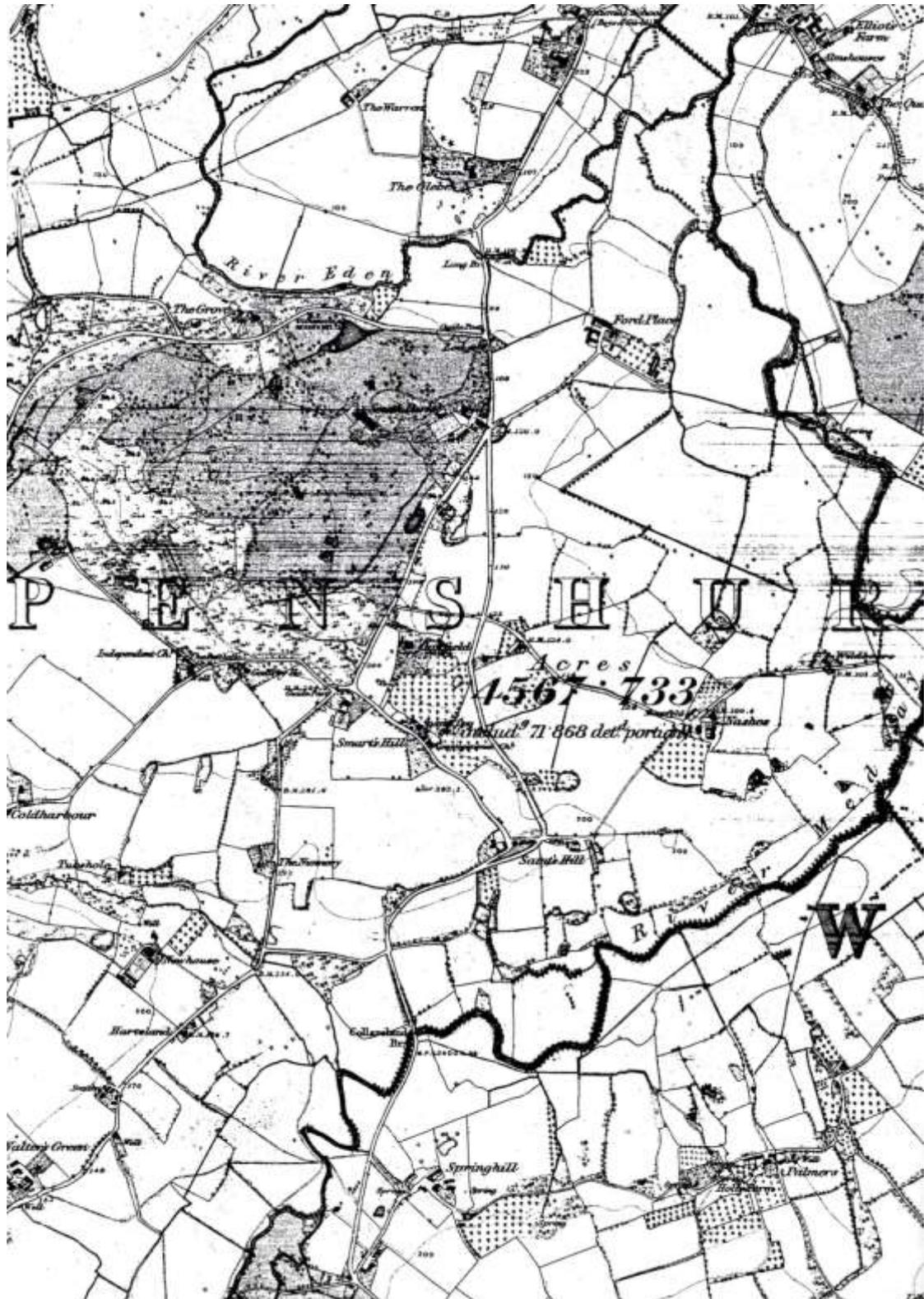
Edward Hasted c1799



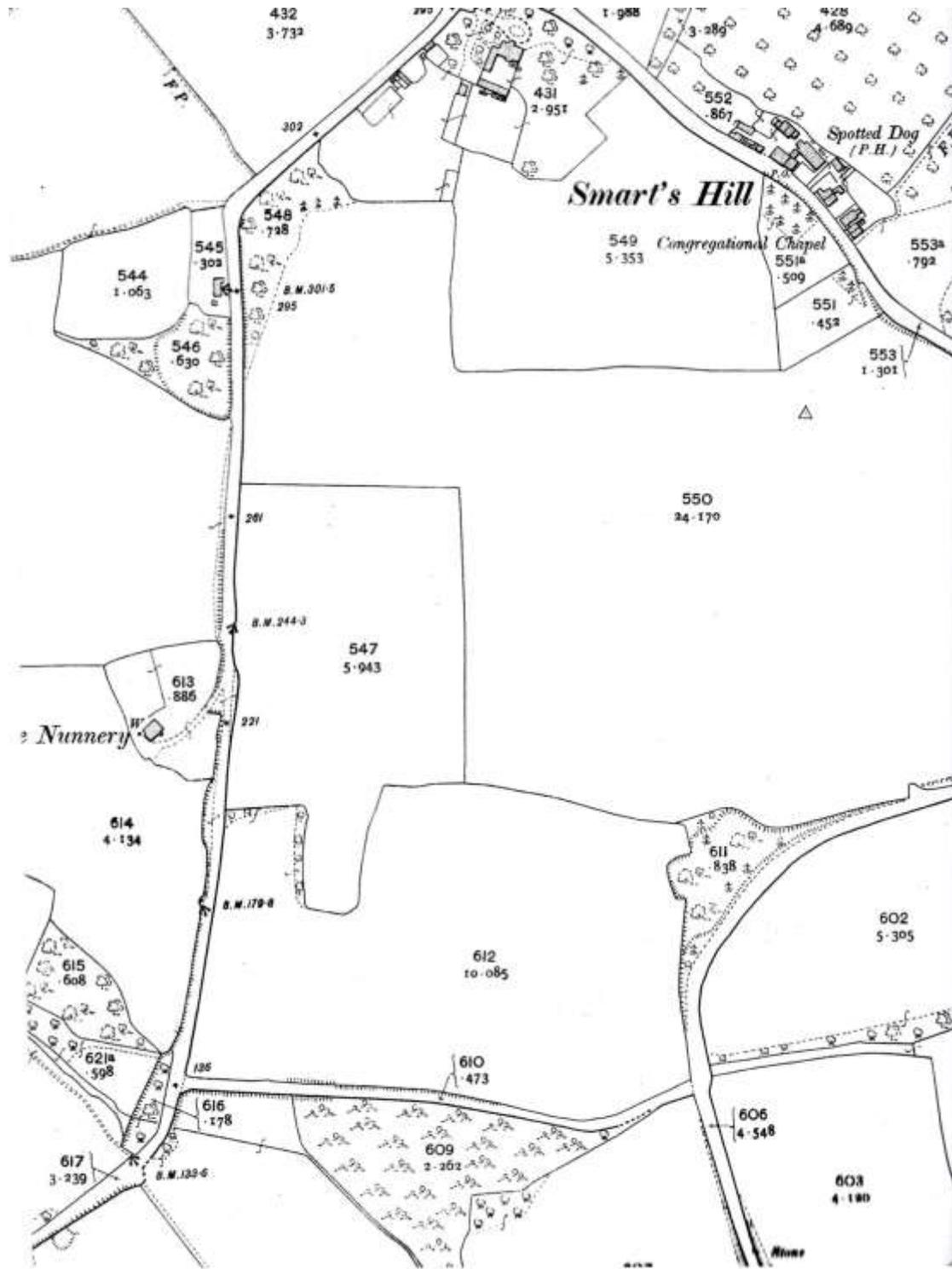
Penshurst Tithe Map 1838



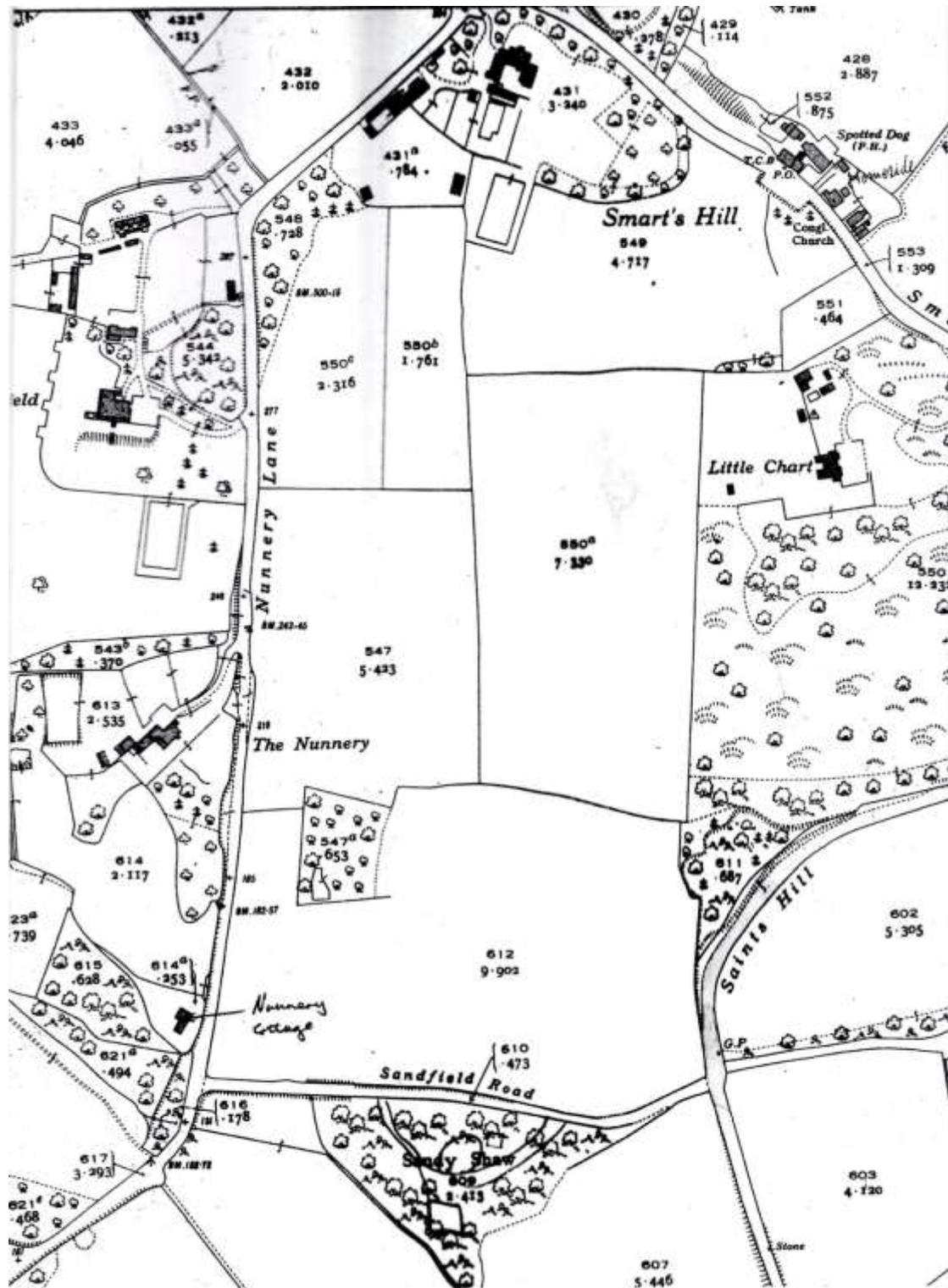
1st 6inch Ordnance Survey Map c1870



3rd 25inch Ordnance Survey Map 1909



Revised 25inch Ordnance Survey Map 1936



PEOPLE WHO HAVE LIVED IN OR OWNED THE NUNNERY

An investigation made in 2002 by Richard Howell of Robin Nugent Architects failed to find early records of The Nunnery. However he put forward a theory that the name had been adopted locally over time because of occupation by the late Prioress of Ruser Priory in Sussex about the time the house was built. Her name was Elizabeth Sidney and the likelihood of a connection with the Sidney family of Penshurst was made. This was especially probable because the family supported the Priory financially being close to their Sussex estate at Alford. Unfortunately the parish burial records for Penshurst only start from 1558 and there are no entries for Elizabeth Sidney or Elizabeth Hays.



image of a prioress from The Canterbury Tales

The hierarchy of land ownership in previous centuries is a complicated subject. At one time there was no legal process to actually transfer land because it all technically belonged to the Lord of the Manor. It is only relatively recently that ordinary people have been able to own their houses completely, usually with the aid of a mortgage. Before that property was ‘owned’ at several levels. At the top was the wealthy landowner who installed tenants; these tenants were permanent with the right to hand on the tenancy to their heirs. However, they frequently owned the tenancies of several properties. They lived in one whilst renting out the others to sub-tenants. If

attached to a large estate, older farmhouses were often used to house their farm workers.

This seems to have been the case for many years with The Nunnery, which from at least 1791, the building and land became subsumed into the holding of Tubshole Farm (aka Tubsole), which was often part of a larger estate together with Forde Farm or Saints Hill Farm. Property holdings on farms varied from year to year depending on the farmer and what he needed for his particular crop or livestock making it almost impossible to track tenancy of a single piece of land.

The De L'Isle Archives are very extensive covering several counties as well as Kent. It was therefore only possible to search the most likely documents for information about The Nunnery.¹ It has been established that in 1793 Tubshole was part of the Manor of Heppesbrook aka Ford Place and therefore research was concentrated on those papers. Unfortunately manorial documents dating back as far as 1582 do not mention The Nunnery at all. This was presumably because it was an insignificant building on a larger estate. Furthermore, De L'Isle estate maps drawn up in the mid 1700s don't include the area of land where The Nunnery stands and no document could be found regarding the transfer. At that point it hadn't become part of the South Park estate still owned by the De L'Isle family.



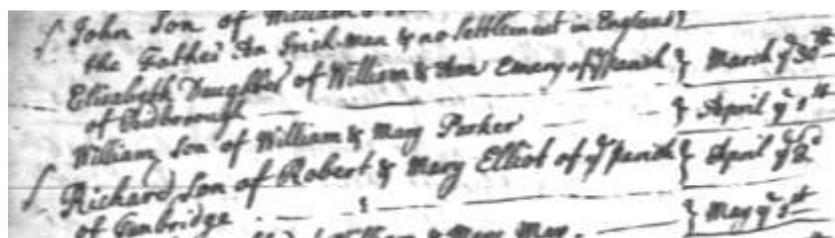
manorial roll

From 1601 until 1925 two overseers from each parish were appointed yearly to levy a poor rate on the wealthier members of the community and supervise its distribution to the needy. Some of these records have survived and allow us to discover who lived in the parish at any given time between these dates. Although addresses are not generally shown, it is sometimes possible to follow the occupancy of a house by working backwards from a known resident, as the rate of payment assigned to the house remained pretty constant through time.

The earliest known occupant of The Nunnery taken from these records was Thomas Baker who paid taxes for the property from 1752. Thomas married Ann Speed in Penshurst in 1743 and they produced eight children, the last being Moses in August 1760, all christened at Penshurst. Prior to 1752 the trail unfortunately goes cold. After Baker came John Rogers in 1760 who was married to Sarah and had at least two children – Thomas and James. By 1764 there was an unknown occupant although The Nunnery is specifically named.

In 1769 Richard Fullman came onto the scene. He paid overseer's poor tax for The Nunnery as part of Foords and Goodsales and was therefore unlikely to have lived at The Nunnery. He had been born in Speldhurst where he had married his wife Elizabeth Nye in 1742. However, their six children were christened in Penshurst Church between 1744 and 1759. Richard died in 1779 intestate and in a declaration by his daughter Elizabeth Hollamby she confirmed that he was a widower. He was buried in Speldhurst with his wife.

From 1776 William Parker took on the tenancy. He married Mary Crowherst in Penshurst in February 1768 two months before their first child William was born. Whilst in Penshurst they had two further children before leaving the records in 1784.

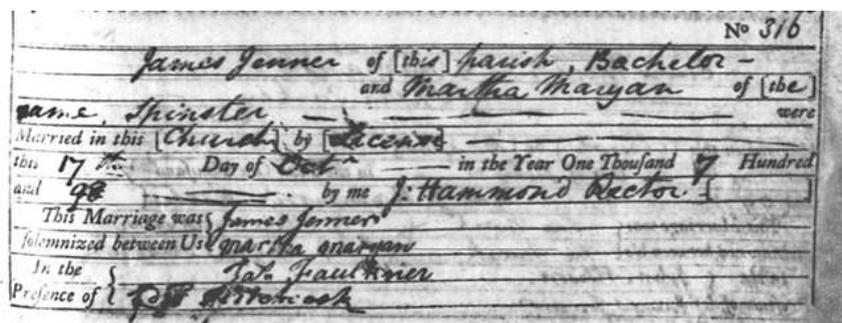


page from the parish register of 1768 showing the christening of William Parker on 1st April

Robert Head was the next tenant from 1784. He had married Susannah Waghorn in Chiddingstone in 1745 and had two children, John and Susanna in the same parish. Subsequent to moving to Penshurst two more children were christened in St Johns. Robert died in September 1785 and was buried in Chiddingstone whilst his son John took over as owner and occupier of The Nunnery when the annual rent was £18. However he was also charged for Tubshole and so that was probably his residence. He had married his wife Lucy Lomas in 1762 in Tonbridge where they had two children. Their five further children were christened in Penshurst and so it seems likely that the family had moved to Penshurst in about 1766, to help on the family land and take over on his father's death. He had gone from the records by 1790 and when he died in 1808 was buried in Chiddingstone with his parents.

A document dated 27th September 1790², concerned the transfer of tenancy of Forde Farmhouse and Tubshole, which included The Nunnery, from Sam Wilson to Richard Sex the younger. No records have been traced of Sam Wilson in Penshurst, which probably means that he didn't live in the parish.

In 1791 Richard Sex appeared as the taxpayer but is known to have lived at Tubshole Farm and owned considerable other land in Penshurst and district. He was brutally murdered in 1813 when he was 57, by a farm labourer who lived in one of his properties. Thomas Maryan was the most likely occupant of The Nunnery at this time as he appears in the records from 1793. He eventually died but his widow Martha took on the liability in 1798. Nothing has been found about this couple although he probably came from a family in Speldhurst.



marriage of James Jenner and Martha Maryan 1798

Yet another change in occupation happened in 1802 when James Jenner came on the scene. He was the parish clerk and had married Martha Maryan in Penshurst in 1798 almost immediately after the death of Thomas. She was possibly Thomas' widow or his daughter. James tenanted The Nunnery until his early death in 1810 at the age of 45. His will states that he was a victualler but also owned several pieces of land and property including a public house where he was living. Unfortunately nothing was named. He left everything to his wife and daughter Mary. In 1811 Martha, took on the tax liability. She left in 1814 when Edward Turner is listed and who continued until 1842.



the beginning of James Jenner's will 1810

The Tithe Commutation Act of 1836 required the production of very detailed parish maps accompanied by a list of tenants and owners. Penshurst's version was published in 1838 where there is confirmation that Edward Turner was Reverend George Boissier's tenant. It was part of the combined property of Tubshole and Saints Hill Farms. At that time Boissier at the age of fifty was unmarried and shared the large house at Smarts Hill with Turner and his family.

Edward had been born in 1773 and married Sarah Young in 1802 in Penshurst. They had nine children between 1803 and 1823 – six girls and three boys. Sadly two boys died in their twenties and two girls as infants. This was by no means unusual for the time. Sarah had died in 1834 at the age of 58 and therefore doesn't appear on the 1841 census. Edward died in 1843 aged 70 and was buried in Penshurst churchyard with his wife and children who pre-deceased him.

This is the last Will and Testament of me Edward Turner of the County of Kent Farmer made published and declared the first day of April in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and thirty nine and I nominate and appoint my sons in law James Longley of the County of Kent and William Slater of Kent in the County of Kent my Executors in the said County of Kent to be joint Executors of this my will and also to be the Guardians of my daughter Anna Turner during her minority whereas my only son John Turner is sufficiently provided for by means of the property made into by him in right of his late mother and whereas I have abundant means and abundance in it for the use and support of my wife and

the beginning of Edward Turner's will

During the 1800s The Nunnery building was occupied by a series of labouring types although in 1841 Elizabeth Day was an independently financed lady. She seems to have been living in half the cottage with the Pound family headed by Rebecca Pound, a laundress originally from Wales. Agricultural labourer Jesse Murrell, his wife and two children lived in the other half.

| | | | | | |
|----------------|---|--------------------------|----|----------|-------|
| Nunnery | 1 | Jesse Murrell | 50 | Ag. Lab. | Yes |
| | | Mary D ^r | 50 | | No |
| | | Elizabeth D ^r | 15 | | Yes |
| | | Edward D ^r | 12 | | Yes |
| D ^r | 1 | Elizabeth Day | 76 | Ind. - | Yes |
| | | Rebecca Pound | 40 | | Wales |
| | | John D ^r | 8 | | Yes |
| | | George D ^r | 6 | | Yes |
| | | Henry D ^r | 3 | | Yes |
| | | Ann D ^r | 1 | | Yes |

part of the census record for Penshurst parish showing the occupants of The Nunnery

By 1851 Elizabeth was gone but a total of thirteen people resided in the building, members of the Murrell and Pound families. These residents were all sub-tenants and in 1852 a new tenant became their landlord. He was George Hammond who continued until 1861 when in December Thomas Hammond took over. George was born in Penshurst as was his brother Thomas. They lived at Nashes Farm where his father Thomas farmed 630 acres employing 38 men. By 1871 Thomas junior had married and moved to Walters Green Farm with his widowed father from where they ran the estate together.

| | | | | | | |
|---------|-----------------|------|----|----------|--------------|-----------------|
| Nunnery | John Russell | Head | 62 | Labourer | John Russell | London St James |
| | John Russell | Wife | 60 | | | |
| | Richard Butcher | Head | 25 | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|---------|----------------|------|----|------------------|--------------|--|
| Nunnery | Robert Butcher | Wife | 50 | | | |
| | Kate | Wife | 5 | | | |
| | Joseph Russell | Wife | 28 | Labourer | John Russell | |
| | John Russell | Wife | 15 | | | |
| Nunnery | Robert Pound | Head | 50 | Labourer | John Russell | |
| | John | Wife | 18 | | | |
| | Henry | Wife | 12 | Domestic servant | John Russell | |
| | Ann | Wife | 11 | | | |
| | Miss Constance | Wife | 16 | | | |
| | John King | Wife | 27 | Labourer | John Russell | |

occupants of The Nunnery in 1851 shown on two pages of the Penshurst census book. It seems to show three separate dwellings

A valuation compiled in November 1852³ of the joint estate of Saints Hill, Smarts Hill and Tubshole Farms was produced for Rev. George Boissier by outgoing tenant Robert Hopkins, in partnership with James Holmden. Correspondence from Hopkins asked why his tenancy was being cancelled as there seemed to have been no obvious problems.

Hopkins was a local farmer living at Saints Hill and in 1851 was working 150 acres and employing 23 labourers. He lived with his wife Anna and three children together with six servants. Holmden was born and lived at Marlpit Hill Farm in Edenbridge and he farmed even more land totalling 430 acres. He and his wife Margaret had four children but just one servant. Holmden was also styled a Farm Appraiser.

| | | | | | | |
|---------|--------------|------|-----|----------|--------------|--|
| Nunnery | Edward Wade | Head | 50 | Gardener | John Russell | |
| | Margaret | Wife | 31 | | | |
| | John | Wife | 6 | | | |
| | Clara | Wife | 1 | | | |
| | Rebecca | Wife | 11 | Wife | John Russell | |
| | George | Wife | 25 | | | |
| | William | Wife | 23 | | | |
| | Miss Whalley | Wife | 60 | Wife | John Russell | |
| | John | Wife | 100 | Gardener | John Russell | |
| | Maria | Wife | 100 | | | |
| | John | Wife | 4 | | | |

the 1861 census also showing three dwellings with three different families

Rebecca Pound was to stay at The Nunnery until 1881 when at the age of 82 she lived there with her son George and a lodger. The other half of the building retained settled tenants called the Hoaths. William Hoath and his family of seven appeared in 1871 and were still there in 1901 although during that time parents William and Margaret

left. Their son Henry then set up house with his wife Martha and had seven daughters although one died in childhood. George Pound also married late in life and continued to live at the Nunnery.

| | | | | | | |
|----|--------------|-----------------|--------|--------|-----------|------------|
| 1 | William Head | Head | Male | 70 | Labourer | St. Edmund |
| | Margaret de | Wife | Female | 60 | | St. Edmund |
| | John de | Son | Male | 20 | | St. Edmund |
| | Bartha de | Daughter | Female | 19 | Scholar | St. Edmund |
| | Marietta de | Daughter | Female | 17 | de | St. Edmund |
| | Henry de | Son | Male | 16 | de | St. Edmund |
| | John de | Son | Male | 14 | de | St. Edmund |
| | James de | Son | Male | 12 | de | St. Edmund |
| de | 1 | Rebecca Pound | Head | Female | 70 | Widow |
| | George de | Son | Male | 30 | Carpenter | St. Edmund |
| | John de | Son | Male | 20 | de | St. Edmund |
| | Ann Wheatley | Boarder | Female | 25 | de | St. Edmund |
| de | 1 | Michael Headman | Head | Male | 70 | Farmer |
| | John de | Wife | Female | 60 | | St. Edmund |
| | Fanny de | Daughter | Female | 16 | de | St. Edmund |
| | James de | Son | Male | 14 | de | St. Edmund |
| | Isabel de | Daughter | Female | 12 | de | St. Edmund |
| | Mary de | Daughter | Female | 10 | de | St. Edmund |
| | Emily de | Daughter | Female | 8 | de | St. Edmund |
| | Ann de | Daughter | Female | 6 | de | St. Edmund |

1871 census

| | | | | | | |
|----|---------------|--------------|--------|------|---------------|------------|
| 1 | Rebecca Pound | Head | Female | 70 | Farmer's Wife | St. Edmund |
| | George de | Son | Male | 30 | Carpenter | St. Edmund |
| | Ann Wheatley | Boarder | Female | 25 | de | St. Edmund |
| de | 1 | William Head | Head | Male | 70 | Farmer |
| | Margaret de | Wife | Female | 60 | | St. Edmund |
| | William de | Son | Male | 30 | de | St. Edmund |
| | Bartha de | Daughter | Female | 20 | de | St. Edmund |
| | Henry de | Son | Male | 16 | de | St. Edmund |
| | John de | Son | Male | 14 | de | St. Edmund |
| | James de | Son | Male | 12 | de | St. Edmund |
| | Isabel de | Daughter | Female | 10 | Scholar | St. Edmund |

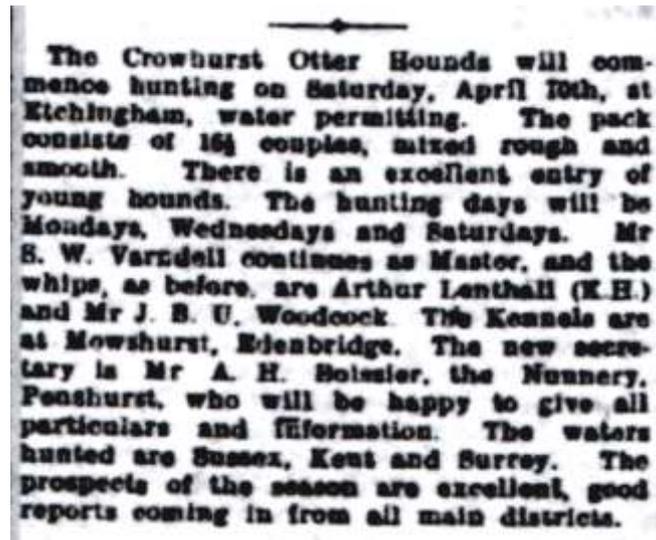
1881 census

| | | | | | | |
|----|--------------|------------|--------|------|----------|------------|
| 1 | George Pound | Head | Male | 70 | Labourer | St. Edmund |
| | John de | Wife | Female | 60 | | St. Edmund |
| | Fanny de | Wife | Female | 50 | Scholar | St. Edmund |
| de | 1 | Henry Head | Head | Male | 70 | Labourer |
| | Marietta de | Wife | Female | 60 | | St. Edmund |
| | Edith de | Son | Male | 10 | de | St. Edmund |
| | Margaret de | de | de | de | de | St. Edmund |
| | Theresa de | de | de | de | de | St. Edmund |
| | John Head | Wife | Female | 50 | de | St. Edmund |

1891 census

When the census was taken in 1901 there was incredibly a total of seventeen people living in what was a very modest cottage of eight rooms.

An Inland Revenue Valuation recorded about this time names Boissier junior as the tenant of L B Corfe esq. who was living at Saints Hill Farm and also owned Westfield House. The Nunnery was still part of Tubs Hole estate with a rateable value of £16. An article in the Kent & Sussex Courier in April 1909 informs us that Arthur was the new secretary of The Crowhurst Otter Hounds. When Arthur died in 1924 at the age of 76 at Godfrey House, having never married, probate was granted to Leonard Basil Corfe.



The Crowhurst Otter Hounds will commence hunting on Saturday, April 10th, at Etchingham, water permitting. The pack consists of 16½ couples, mixed rough and smooth. There is an excellent entry of young hounds. The hunting days will be Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays. Mr S. W. Vardell continues as Master, and the whips, as before, are Arthur Lenthall (K.H.) and Mr J. B. U. Woodcock. The Kennels are at Mowshurst, Edenbridge. The new secretary is Mr A. H. Boissier, the Nunnery, Penshurst, who will be happy to give all particulars and information. The waters hunted are Sussex, Kent and Surrey. The prospects of the season are excellent, good reports coming in from all main districts.

a cutting from the Kent & Sussex Courier 1909

BOISSIER Arthur Henry of Godfreys Penshurst **Kent** died 15 December 1924 Probate **London** 25 May to Leonard Basil Loder Corfe esquire. Effects £75 8s. 10d.

probate record for Arthur Boissier

In 1914 William and Mary Wood took on the Nunnery, which was in need of renovation. For this task they employed John D Clarke, an architect who specialised in restoring old houses.



John D Clarke

Born in Somerset to a woollen cloth manufacturer William Levi Wood had married Mary Louisa Bonner in Berkshire in 1908 and by the 1911 census they were living in Surrey with their one year old daughter Diana and Mary's mother Gertrude. The household also included two servants and in October 1916 Mrs Wood advertised in the local paper for a 'good Cook-General' for The Nunnery. William was employed in the publishing trade eventually becoming a newspaper proprietor and the editor of *Vogue* from 1916 to 1923. Between 1926 and 1946 he was editor of *Architect and Building News*. William later employed Clarke again to restore a house called Frensham Manor in Surrey where he died in 1959.

— — —
 Mr. William L. Wood, the newspaper proprietor and publisher and editor of the English edition of *Vogue* from 1916 to 1923 and of the *Architect and Building News* from 1926 to 1946, died on Thursday at the age of 79.

Wood, William Levi, of Frensham, Surrey, newspaper proprietor and publisher and editor of the English edition of *Vogue* 1916-23, and of the *Architect and Building News* 1926-46 (gross, £163,886) (duty paid, £58,421) £156,826

cuttings from *The Times*

It was probably during Clarke's renovation that a rather curious feature was added to the décor. It is part of a stained glass window claimed to have been taken from the Cathedral at Ypres in November 1914 by a Lt. H B Pollard. No positive connection has been found between this gentleman and The Nunnery apart from the fact that he was at one time a journalist at the *Daily Express* and *Country Life*. William Wood could have met him through his newspaper connections or John Clarke might have done as he wrote occasionally for *Country Life*. But this man had a colourful background beyond civilian life.

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>Obituary</p> <p>MAJOR H. B. C. POLLARD</p> <p>PISTOLS, GAME BIRDS AND ADVENTURE</p> <p>Major H. B. C. Pollard, who died on Thursday at the age of 78, described himself as an authority on modern and ancient firearms.</p> <p>This was true for he wrote agreeably and with close knowledge of pistols and guns and had given expert evidence in more than one <i>crème célèbre</i>. But his knowledge and his writings were not confined to these matters; he published several works on game birds and wildfowl, anything but dull text books and showing Pollard's vivid powers of description and a volume or two of personal reminiscences.</p> | <p>He was a man of spirit of whom his friend Douglas Jerrold wrote that he had a habit of letting off revolvers in any office he happened to be visiting. He had had first hand experience of revolution in Mexico and in Ireland and in July, 1936, was dramatically associated with the flight of General Franco from the Canary Isles.</p> <p>The story is graphically described by Jerrold in <i>Georgian Adventure</i>. Jerrold was asked by the Spanish writer and journalist Luis Bolin to find a man and two girls to fly to Africa the next day. Pollard was approached, accepted, and with his daughter Diana and another girl left Casdon in a chartered aircraft piloted by Captain C. Bebb. They called at Bordeaux, Oporto and Casablanca and finally reached Las Palmas—honest to goodness tourists, free from suspicion. Not many days later the same aircraft, still piloted by Captain Bebb, but without the three English tourists, landed with General Franco at Tetuan in Spanish Morocco. The Spanish Civil War was about to begin.</p> <p>Pollard had a varied career in journalism; he was for many years on the staff of the <i>Daily Express</i> and was at one time sporting editor of <i>Country Life</i>. He saw service in both world wars.</p> |
|---|---|

cutting from *the Times*

Chronicled on the website about the Cairo Gang⁴ and Wikipedia, Pollard was recorded as being enrolled in the London Cyclist Battalion achieving the rank of Captain in 1916. But in 1914 he was still a Lieutenant and this battalion never saw active service in Flanders. It is therefore supposed that this was a cover story for his real position as a British spy, which is when he probably acquired his 'souvenir' that eventually arrived at The Nunnery.

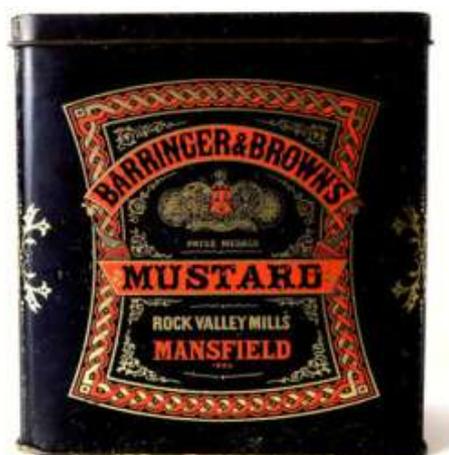


H B Pollard in action



H B Pollard's stained glass 'souvenir'

From 1922 until 1938 a Mrs Lilian Barringer lived at The Nunnery. She was the widow of Walter Barringer whose family founded the company of Barringer, Wallis and Manners in Mansfield in 1830. Originally a spice and mustard grinding business it diversified into many other areas of production including metal boxes.



Walter died in 1912 and eventually Mrs Barringer moved south. In 1930 her daughter Mary married the son of the former vicar of Fordcombe, Douglas Field. Lilian died in a house on Mount Ephraim, Tunbridge Wells in 1951 at the age of 85.

MR. D. C. FIELD AND MISS BARRINGER

The engagement is announced between Douglas Conan Field, fourth son of the Rev. W. St. John Field, formerly vicar of Fordcombe, near Tunbridge Wells, Kent, and Mrs. Field, of 5, Park-lane, Sevenoaks, Kent, and Mary Edleen, only daughter of the late Walter Barringer, of Mansfield, Notts, and Mrs. Barringer, The Nunnery, Penshurst, Kent.

cutting from The Times 1930

BOY WHO STOLE HAD EXCELLENT CHARACTER.

When a 22-year-old youth was charged with theft his employer stepped forward and paid tribute to his excellent character.

Alan William Melton, a kennel-man, of Walters Green, Penshurst, was charged with stealing a pair of hair brushes, four handkerchiefs and a tie, valued at £8 15s., the property of Mr. A. J. Walters, of The Nunnery, Penshurst.

Mrs. Louisa Sedgwick, of Nunnery Cottage, Penshurst, who said that she was employed as caretaker by Mr. Walters, stated when she went to The Nunnery on June 20 she found the bedroom doors and the nursery open, and the articles mentioned in the charge were missing. The key to The Nunnery, she added, had been kept behind a shutter.

P.C. Boyer, of Penshurst, said he saw the accused at Penshurst on June 26, and he took him to his bedroom, where he produced the articles and made a statement, in which he said he had been asked to go to The Nunnery to take a dog back. He noticed the key, but did not go in on that occasion. Later he did so, however, and took the hair brushes.

A police officer stated that the accused bore an excellent character, and nothing whatsoever was known to his detriment.

The boy's employer said he was absolutely honest and patient. He was also exceedingly kind to the 19 dogs which were under his care, and she was absolutely at a loss to be able to account for his action, which she put down to nothing more than a very foolish boyish prank.

The Chairman commented that Melton was fortunate to have persons to come forward and testify to his good character. After taking into consideration his excellent character, however, they had decided to bind him over for 12 months in his own recognisances.

From 1939 until the mid 1940s Austen and Barbara Walters were in occupation. Unfortunately in their first year they were the victims of a robbery, which was described in the Kent and Sussex Courier of the time. In the report it was revealed that Mrs Louisa Sedgwick, who lived at Nunnery Cottage, was employed by the Walters as a caretaker, which suggests that this wasn't the Walters' main house.

In 'Memories of Penshurst during the Second World War', David Martin recalls in chapter two that two sisters, the Misses Black, ran a smallholding called The Nunnery, at the top of Smarts Hill. They kept goats for milking and either delivered it by pony and trap on request or sold it through Miss Lavender's 'Green Tea Rooms', in the main village street. However, it doesn't seem likely that they lived at The Nunnery as the Walters were there until at least 1945 and Edward and Nancy Parker were in residence by 1950. The explanation was they probably rented the Nunnery fields.

The Parkers were married in Harrogate where Edward was employed as a merchant, probably working with his father. Shortly after moving away Edward died in hospital in Brighton.

1929. Marriage solemnized at The Parish Church in the Parish of St. Andrew's Church, High Harrogate in the County of York

| No. | When Married. | Name and Surname. | Age. | Condition. | Rank or Profession. | Residence at the Time of Marriage. | Father's Name and Surname. | Rank or Profession of Father. |
|-----|-----------------------------|----------------------|------|------------|---------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 145 | April 20 th 1929 | Edward Bruce Parker | 34 | Bachelor | Merchant | Fish House Harrogate | James Parker | Merchant |
| | | Nancy Isabel Sherman | 31 | Spinster | | Queen Hotel Harrogate | John Earl Sherman (Deceased) | Merchant |

Married in the Parish Church according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Established Church by after Blessing by me, Edwin Payne

This Marriage was solemnized between us, Nancy I. Sherman in the Presence of us, Thos Sherman W. T. Barber, C. B.

the Parkers' marriage details

PARKER Edward Bruce of Flat 4 28 Medina-villas Hove Sussex died 26 August 1955 at The General Hospital Brighton Probate London 8 December to Nancy Isabel Parker widow and Norman Sidney Layland Smart solicitor. Effects £208 4s. 7d.

probate for Edward Parker

From 1954 until 1961 Dr Maurice Walter Ramsden MRCP was recorded in the electoral registers as living at The Nunnery where the telephone number was 228. He had married Margaret Joy Clarke at the beginning of 1938 in Tonbridge. He had qualified in 1922 and by the 1950s had a surgery in East Street, Tonbridge together with one in Clanricarde Gardens in Tunbridge Wells. He died in the Lewes area in 1989 at the age of 90.

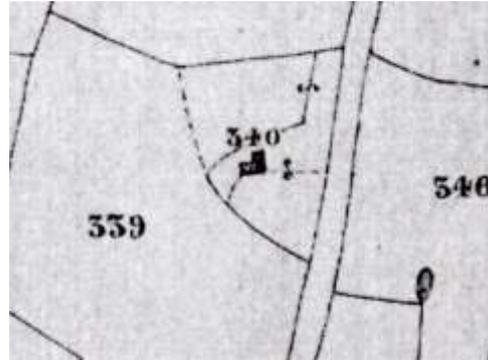
DR. W. M. RAMSDEN AND MISS CLARKE
 The engagement is announced between Walter Maurice Ramsden, M.D., M.R.C.P. (Lond.), Merrifield, Tonbridge, son of the late Rev. C. Ramsden, of Loftus, Yorks, and Mrs. Ramsden, and Margaret Joy, only daughter of the late Mr. W. E. V. Clarke, of Longleys, Sandhurst, Kent, and Mrs. Clarke, of The Spinney, Brenchley.

cutting from The Times

Charlotte and Derek Wilde bought the property next, changed the name to Ranmoor and embarked on further extensive alterations.

THE BUILDING – AGE AND CONSTRUCTION

The tithe map of 1838 shows The Nunnery as **340**, part of the combined property of Tubs Hole and Saints Hill Farms. The area of house, yard and garden covered 2rds 24p in size (just over half an acre). The house was L-shaped and there seems to be barely a track from the lane.



Surrounding fields are arable or pasture with mostly self-explanatory names. A couple are intriguing – cricketing field, old woman’s field and I wonder if there is still a yew tree in **332**? Two have the name of Nunnery Field, both around 4 acres in size.

| Owner | Occupier | No. | Description | Cultivation | Quantities | Rectr |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|--|---|------------------|------------------|--------|
| Rev George Richard Bessier | Rev George Richard Bessier | 332a | Smalls Hill Estate Three corner plantation | Plantation | 0 2 1 | |
| | | 332 | Smalls field including site of new house Buildings, plantations Meadow and Pasture | Pasture | 6 3 22 7 2 24 | 0 16 2 |
| | Isabella Bentley | 348 | Meadow | Pasture | 5 1 3 | |
| | | 350 | House Garden Yard buildings & paddock | — | 1 5 32 | |
| | | 351 | Wool house Mead | Pasture | 1 2 22 | |
| | | 352 | Cart house field | Meadow | 2 2 34 2 3 31 | 1 3 5 |
| | Edward Turner | Tubs Hole & Saints Hill Farms | | | | |
| | | 327 | Shaw on south of brook | Wood | 1 3 20 | |
| | | 328 | House Yard Garden paddock & shaw | — | 1 1 9 | |
| | | 329 | Bar field | Arable | 6 1 11 | |
| | | 330 | Little dean & shaw | Arable & Wood | 7 1 1 | |
| | | 331 | Buttle house shaw & shaw | Arable & Hops | 6 2 20 | |
| | | 332 | Yewtree field | Arable | 1 1 26 | |
| | | 333 | Grass field | Pasture | 1 0 14 | |
| | | 334 | Orchard | Orchard | 1 0 14 | |
| | | 335 | Hilly field | Pasture | 4 3 6 | |
| | | 336 | Stone field & shaw | Arable & Wood | 6 3 26 | |
| | | 337 | Sprynny wood field | Pasture | 6 3 26 | |
| | | 338 | Shaw | Wood | 6 1 24 | |
| | | 339 | Stammy field | Arable | 4 6 24 | |
| | | 340 | House yard & garden | — | 0 3 22 | |
| | | 341 | Stammy field | Arable | 4 1 13 | |
| | | 342 | Garden | Arable | 1 8 11 | |
| | 343 | Yard shaw and house | — | 0 2 24 | | |
| | 346 | Lower hollow field | Pasture | 3 0 17 | | |
| | 347 | Upper hollow field | Arable | 3 2 13 | | |
| | 348 | Cricketing field & shaw | Arable | 4 2 12 | | |
| | 353 | Seven acres | Arable | 6 3 20 | | |
| | 354 | Little 3 acres | Arable | 2 3 26 | | |
| | 355 | Old hopgarden | Arable | 1 3 6 | | |
| | 362 | Three corner piece | Arable | 2 2 33 | | |
| | 363 | Old woman's field | Arable | 5 1 6 | | |
| | 364 | House buildings yards gardens &c | — | 0 2 29 | | |
| | 365 | Sand hill | Arable | 5 1 16 | | |
| | 366 | Shaw and orchard | Wood & Pasture | 2 8 1 | | |
| | 367 | Perry field | Arable | 4 2 3 | | |
| | 368 | Merchants field | Meadow | 4 3 21 | | |
| | 369 | House Yard Garden &c | — | 0 2 26 | | |
| | 370 | Sawpt close & shaw | Pasture & Wood | 2 0 25 | | |
| | 371 | The crans | Meadow | 1 0 9 | | |
| | 372 | Gardens | Pasture | 0 1 13 | | |
| | 373 | The four Acres | Meadow | 6 2 15 | | |
| | 374 | Meadow Mead | Meadow | 1 3 22 | | |
| | 375 | part of slyp | Pasture | 1 0 14 | | |
| | 376 | remainder of slyp | Pasture | 0 1 26 | | |
| | 377 | Bar field | Arable | 6 3 25 | | |
| | 378 | Hag field & shaw | Pasture & Wood | 2 0 29 | | |
| | 379 | High field | Arable | 6 3 29 | | |
| | 380 | River field | Arable | 1 2 20 | | |
| | 381 | bridge Mead & shaw | Meadow & Shaw | 1 0 8 2 1 2 | 25 1 5 | |

A valuation survey⁵ taken in November 1852 to cover the handover from Robert Hopkins to Rev. Boissier showed the condition of each field. The total value of Tubs Hole, Saints Hill and Smarts Hill Farms was given as £646.19.9d. The Nunnery dwelling itself was not mentioned but presumably was one of ‘several cottages’. Upper Nunnery Field **339** was currently fallow after a crop of tares, grown as animal fodder. It had been ploughed three times, drag harrowed twice and small harrowed twice. The Lower Nunnery Field was cultivated for straw.



The next detailed map of the area, the first 25” Ordnance Survey of 1870 shows that the Nunnery shape has changed and become more of a square with a porch at the top right of the building. The **W** indicates the position of a well and to the north the garden is laid out in sections with a neatly planted orchard. The Nunnery is one of only two houses on Nunnery Lane.

By the time of the 3rd Ordnance Survey of 1909 the porch at The Nunnery appears to have moved to another side of the building. The height above sea level is noted as about 221 feet.



It is known that architect John D Clarke FRIBA who specialised in rescuing old houses restored The Nunnery in 1914 when the Woods took up residence. He took pride in making sure that the new parts of the conversion blended with the older section. His photos of before and after renovation are the earliest known images of

The Nunnery. His practice of using old materials and styles it is not easy to determine what was original. However, this was probably the front of the house, to the left of the photo below.



Incised plasterwork below (as mentioned on the listing details) shows a date of 1631.



Curved arch showing the remains of a bread oven.

Marks commonly found above the fire to ward off witches in the late 16th and 17th centuries.



The 'before' picture (above) shows a timber frame house of two storeys with a dormer window in the attic and a sloping outshot to one end. The ground floor still has the exposed timber framework whilst the first floor and roof seems to be clad in traditional Kent clay tiles. The original chimney position has been retained and the style is typical of examples found in Kent and Sussex in the mid 1600s. The chimney looks to have been built on a gable end with the outshot added afterwards. This

created two heated rooms on the ground and first floor with a 'utility' area under the sloping roof containing a bread oven. Although the exterior framing shows some alteration the style of the internal framing is typically 16th century.

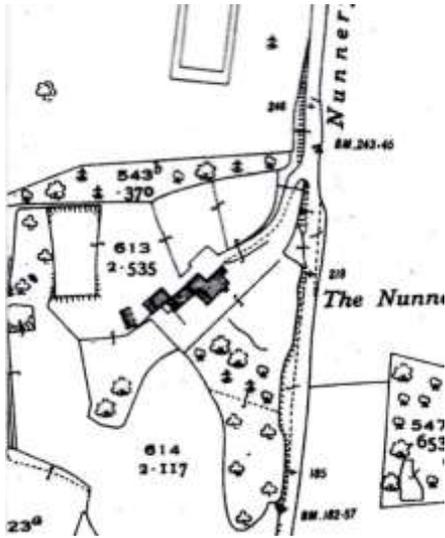


A 'lost' door between square panel framing popular in cottages from the late 15th century.

John Clarke added a completely new façade, bringing the outshot up to full height and creating a flat gable end. He extended the other end of the house to the front to add at least two new rooms and put a new larger dormer where the old front door was. The front door was relocated into the old outshot section.



The Nunnery after Clarke's renovation



The revised edition of the Ordnance Survey map dated 1936 shows that there had been additional development in Nunnery Lane, the first time this name appears. The Nunnery itself shows the newly extended shape with various additional outbuildings.

The Wildes created a new drawing room with a bedroom above and the present owners have also made changes.

Acknowledgements:

Thanks are expressed to Viscount De L'Isle for granting access to the De L'Isle archives presently lodged at the Kent History and Library Centre in Maidstone.

Thanks to Roger and Gill Joye for help with research on H B C Pollard.

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