



BUSHY RUFF (or Rough)
Alkham, Kent



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INTRODUCTION

This site report and description has been prepared for Dover District Council by volunteers of the Kent Gardens Trust with support and training from consultant Virginia Hinze.

The extent of the area identified represent 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.

BUSHY RUFF

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Summary

A mid C19 now (2014) derelict house and pleasure grounds with a lake on the river Dour, built by a Dover solicitor with an interest in a nearby C18 paper mill on the river. Planning permission has been granted to convert the house into flats. The grounds immediately along the river and a late C19 walled garden have been owned and managed since 1973 as a public park and nothing remains of the mid C19 layout. The walled, but uncultivated, kitchen garden, entrance pillars and lodge and the lake are surviving features together with the C19 stables which are now used as a private residence.

Rarity and survival

Nothing remains of the C19 pleasure grounds which, like those of Kearsney Abbey, were designed around a C18 mill pond which survives substantially unaltered. Although the walls of the kitchen garden are still relatively intact, the garden itself is derelict.

Group value

The Mill at Bushy Ruff is one of a series of paper and corn mills which existed along the river Dour in the C18 and C19 and possibly earlier and as such it forms part of the industrial history of the area. After the Bushy Ruff mill was closed in c.1850 a picturesque landscape was created for Bushy Ruff House around the mill pond. The river at Kearsney Abbey was exploited in a similar fashion to develop picturesque features enhancing the gothic mansion.

It is a sign of the increasing prosperity and importance of Dover in the C19 that substantial houses and gardens were being created in the countryside nearby for successful and prominent Dover businessmen to show their wealth and status. William Knocker at Bushy Ruff was one example and the Fectors at Kearsney Abbey another.

Bushy Ruff House like Kearsney Abbey and Kearsney Court was requisitioned during WWII as part of the war effort for use by the Home Guard.

Bushy Ruff has been managed as a public park by Dover District Council since 1973 together with Kearsney Abbey and Russell Gardens and is linked to Russell Gardens by a footpath running alongside the river skirting the buildings which formerly housed the paper mill.

Historic Association

William Knocker who built the house in c 1820 was a lawyer and prominent Dover businessman. He was mayor of Dover several times.

Social and Communal value

The site of the garden and the walled garden have been managed as a public park by Dover District Council since 1973 and the area along the lakeside has been popular with artists, botanists, birdwatchers and schools since the last quarter of the C19. Although the park is managed as a natural area of open grass and trees without any formal planting, in contrast to Russell Gardens, it is popular with ramblers and dog walkers continuing a longstanding tradition as a place where people from the town could enjoy the countryside along the valley.

SITE DESCRIPTION

KENT

BUSHY RUFF

DOVER
ALKHAM
TR 2828 4374

SUMMARY OF HISTORIC INTEREST

A mid C19 now (2014) derelict house and pleasure grounds with a lake on the river Dour, built by a Dover solicitor with an interest in a nearby C18 paper mill on the river. The grounds immediately along the river and a late C19 walled garden have been owned and managed since 1973 as a public park, the walled, but uncultivated, garden and the lake being the only features surviving intact from its mid C19 layout.

CHRONOLOGY OF THE HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

The land around Bushy Ruff (the former name 'Rough' had changed to Ruff by 1929, 4th edition OS map) was open and unenclosed with 'intolerably bad' roads until the end of the C18 on the north-east corner of the parish of Alkham, part of the barony of Folkestone (Hasted). A mill is shown on the site in the initial survey drawing for the OS map (c 1800) which depicts a substantial mill pond. The property was acquired by William Knocker (1761-1847) a solicitor in Dover in 1820 (Dover Historian), mayor of Dover and Freeman of the town as a tenant of the Earl of Mexborough (Tithe Award Schedule 1838). Knocker is listed as occupying the house, paper mill and surrounding land. He improved the mill and built the house which stands on a terrace cut into the hillside above the river and dates from 1833 (listed building description). The garden is shown in the 1st edition OS map (1862-1875) and 2nd edition (1897-1900) as simply laid out with paths around the house and alongside the mill pond, a shrubbery south of the house and an orchard at the far western end of the mill pond.

A substantial (0.25 ha) walled garden is shown on the 3rd edition O.S. map (1907-1923) north of the house.

The unexpired term of the lease was put up for sale in 1850 and again in 1856 and the paper mill appears to have ceased production by then since the machinery was included in the 1856 sale particulars and substantial outbuildings for Bushy Ruff House were built on its site between 1862 and 1872. A lodge was built on the Alkham road at the same time.

The property was occupied by A. Schreiber Esq in 1866 (Kelly's Directory) and a lease of the property from Elizabeth Sladen to Gen. Henry Darby-Griffith dated 30th April 1884 refers to the house, lodge, stables, coachhouses, buildings, gardens, shrubberies, plantations and pasture amounting to 711 acres (287 ha). Gen. Darby-Griffith died there in 1887 (memorial in St. Peter's Church) but his widow continued to live at Bushy Ruff. Particulars for a sale of the property (referred to as a freehold and sporting estate) in 1897 mention two conservatories, a boat house and a 'capital' walled garden with fruit trees planted on both sides of the walls and a brick built well house.

During the last quarter of the C19 the former mill pond was a popular place for artists, botanists and bird watchers and children from Dover were brought by train to Kearsney station on outings to walk along the valley to the lake (Dover Historian).

The house continued as a private residence until WWII when it was requisitioned for use by the Home Guard (Dover Historian). After the war the house was unoccupied and the estate was bought by Dover District Council in 1973 since when the grounds have been managed as a public park. The house was badly damaged by fire in 1982 and again in 2010. The house and the land

immediately around it was sold in 1986 and is now (2014) in private ownership but unoccupied and derelict. Planning permission has been granted for conversion to flats.

SITE DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM and SETTING

Bushy Ruff is situated on the north side of the B2026 Alkham Road 0.96 kilometres south west of Temple Ewell, 2 miles north east of Alkham and 4.8 kilometres north-west of Dover. It is 10.5 ha in area. The site is on a steep hill running down to the lake in the Alkham valley formed from the river Dour. The southern boundary is Alkham Road and to the north it is woodland. The fenced boundary on the east side runs along the parish boundary, which also forms the boundary of Kearsney Court, and on the west is woodland. The area was described by Hasted as an area of deep vales and high mountains 'affording a most wild and romantic scene' which was not enclosed until the C19. The lower parts of the Alkham valley through which the River Dour meanders present a softer and more fertile appearance than the hills on each side. The river was dammed in the C18 to create the mill pond at Bushy Ruff and continues down the valley past the site of Bushy Ruff mill through a weir to the village of Kearsney. Alkham Road on the southern boundary is a busy road but to the north and west of the site the setting is woodland and pasture.

ENTRANCES and APPROACHES

Bushy Ruff is approached at its extreme eastern end by an unmade driveway from Alkham Road running north through an area of grass and trees for 20 metres and then passing over a bridge crossing the river Dour. A C19 lodge stands on the road on the east side of the entrance and a pair of stone gate posts inscribed 'Bushy Ruff' stand on each side of the entrance. The remains of decorative iron railings survive along the road to the west of the entrance. The driveway terminates at a grass area on the north-east corner of Bushy Ruff lake immediately south of Bushy Ruff House. There is a pedestrian entrance giving access to Russell Gardens from the eastern corner of Bushy Ruff. This footpath runs east/west past the remnants of a weir on the river Dour as it spills from the Bushy Ruff Lake into the long canal at Kearsney Court.

PRINCIPAL BUILDINGS

Bushy Ruff House (listed grade II) stands on the eastern boundary of the site on a steep bank on the north side of the river Dour. A painting in Dover Museum by S.J.Mackie dating from c 1842 shows a relatively modest house standing above the river in a rural landscape. The present house dates from the mid C19 and is built of stucco on brick and flint with two storeys and a basement and hipped roof. There are six sash windows with louvered shutters on the first floor and four French doors with louvered shutters on the ground floor. A trellised veranda with a tented roof runs along the ground floor. A single story C20 extension has been added on the west side. The house stands on a paved terrace reached by a flight of 10 steps with low side walls and capped piers. The building was used as a nursing home during the 1970s and was badly damaged by fire in 2010. It is now (2014) empty and derelict. Planning permission for conversion into flats has recently been granted.

Approximately 20 metres south of the house and adjoining the footpath from Russell Gardens are buildings formerly associated with the paper mill which by 1907 were used as stables for Bushy Ruff House. They are now converted to residential use and are in separate ownership.

GARDENS and PLEASURE GROUNDS

The c 1842 painting of Bushy Ruff does not show any formal gardens around the house or along the banks of the mill pond. Terraces and flower beds immediately around Bushy Ruff House appear in the 1st, 2nd and 3rd editions of the OS maps (1862 – 1907) but are now (2014) derelict and uncultivated. The area north of the former mill pond is shown as having a long path leading west to a glasshouse, a boat house on the north bank of the lake and being planted with trees. Nothing remains of this garden or the structures. This relatively level ground is now open grass planted informally with native trees. The north side of this area is densely covered with trees and the ground rises steeply to another moderately level area of open grass and trees approximately 500 metres long by 50 metres.

KITCHEN GARDEN

At the east end of the higher level and approximately 25 metres north of Bushy Ruff House is the walled garden. The 2.4 metre high brick walls, in fair condition, have entrance doorways on the south and west sides. Within the walls the ground is covered with young self sown trees and brambles and nothing remains of glasshouses or other structures shown on OS editions from 1862-1907. A steep path through trees leads south past Bushy Ruff House down to the level of the lake.

REFERENCES

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Maps

Alkham, Hasted Volume 8 (1799)

Ordnance Surveyor's Drawing 2" to 1 mile: 1801

William Mudge, An entirely New and Accurate Survey of the County of the County of Kent (1801)

OS 1st edition 25" map (1862-1875)

OS 2nd edition 25" map (1897-1900)

OS 3rd edition 25" map (1907-1923)

OS 4th edition 25" map (1929-1952)

OS modern edition

Illustrations

Painting of Bushy Ruff by S.J. Mackie c.1842 (Dover Museum)

Archival items

Sale Particulars of Bushy Ruff Mills 16th September 1850 (Kent Archives)

Advertisement for sale of Bushy Ruff Paper Mills 3rd September 1856 (Kent Archives)

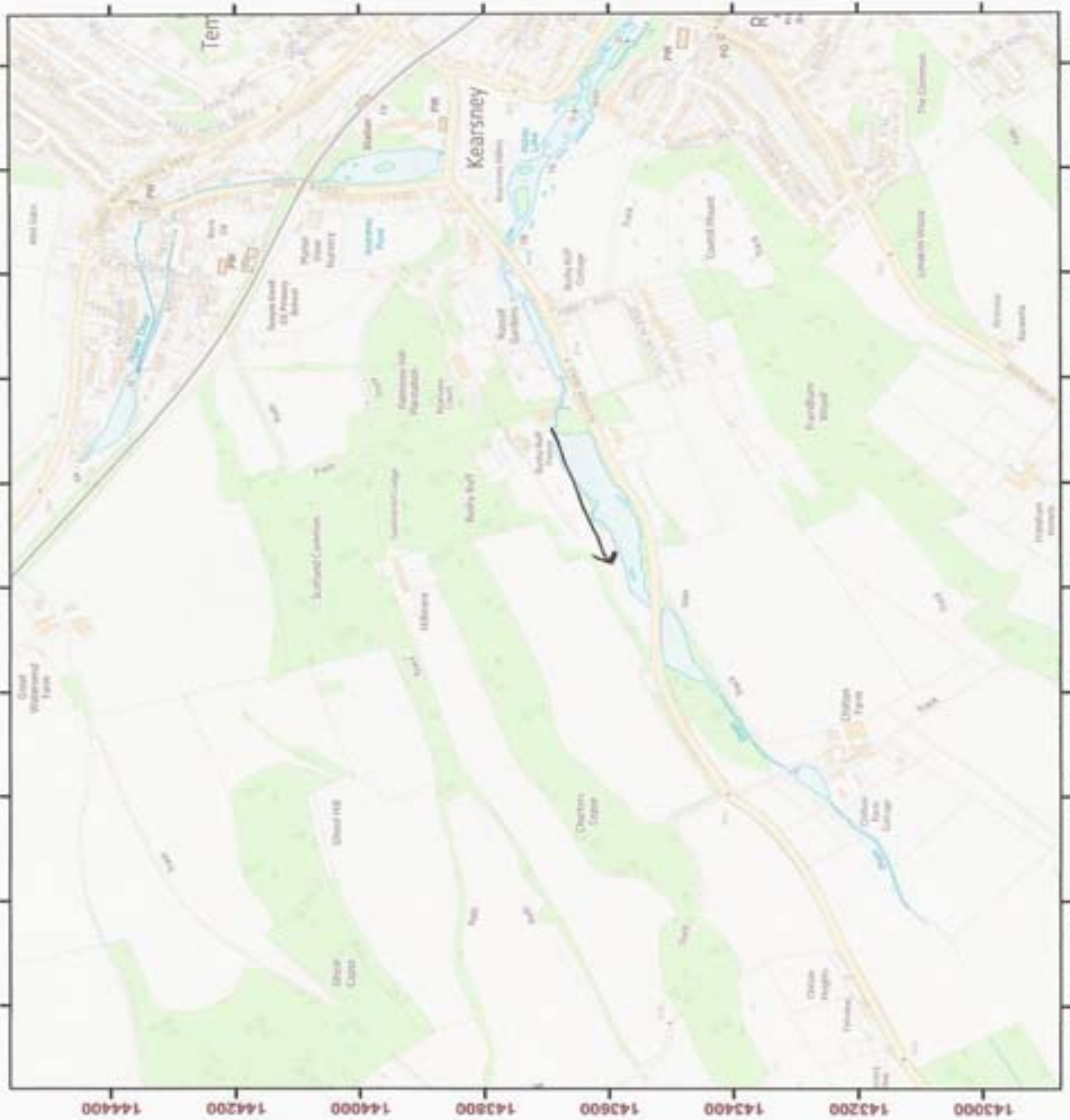
Indenture 30th April 1884 (Kent Archives)

Sale Particulars of Bushy Ruff 1897 (Kent Archives)

Research by Elizabeth Cairns

Editor Virginia Hinze

Bushey Ruff - modern OS map KEY VIEW



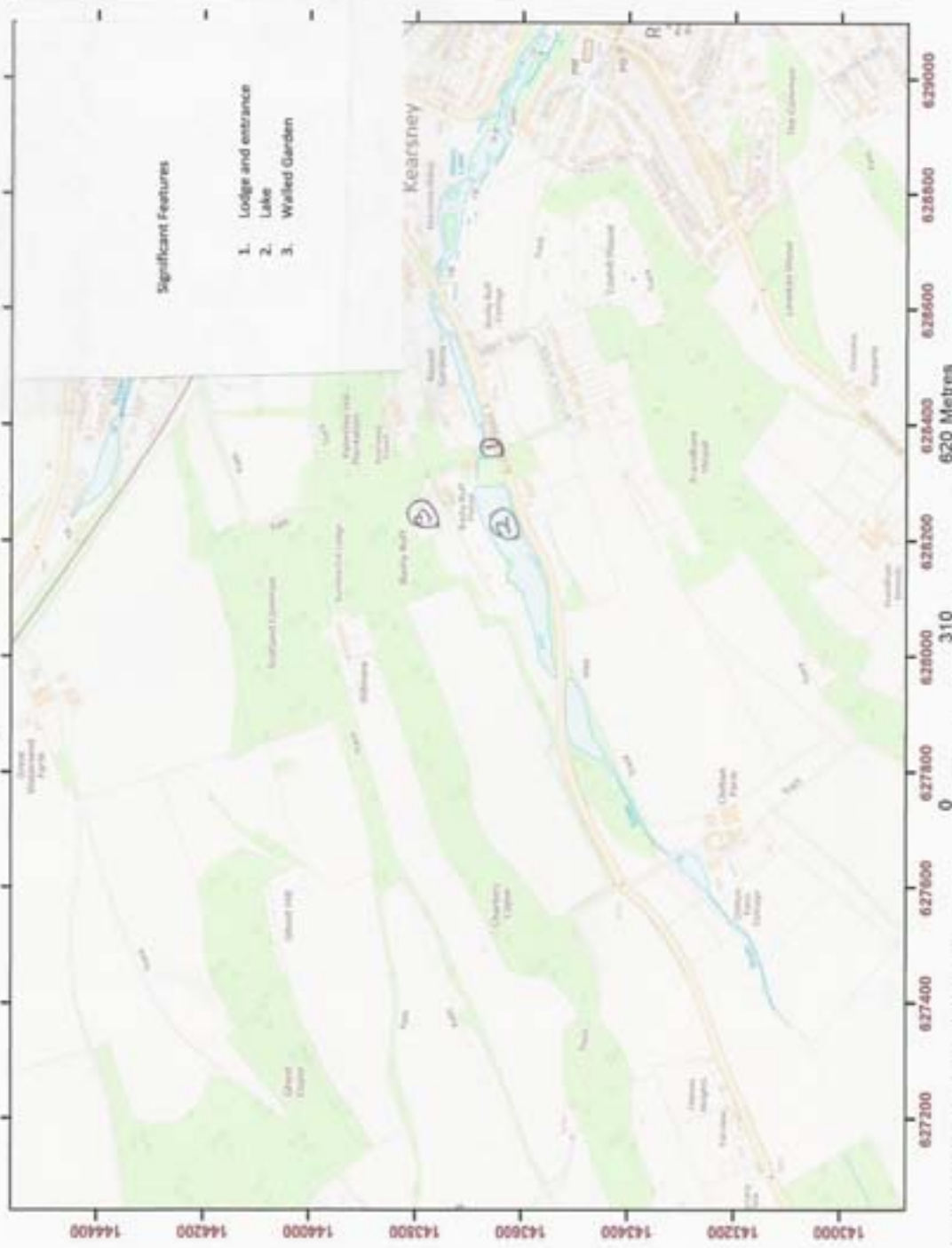
Bushey Ruff

Address:
Kearsney
Dover
Kent

centred on:
628163 143834



Bushey Ruff - modern OS map



Significant Features

1. Lodge and entrance
2. Lake
3. Walled Garden

Bushey Ruff

Address:
Kearsney
Dover
Kent
centred on:
628163 143634



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Figure 4. Significant Features



Figure 5. William Mudge map 1801



Figure 6. Ordnance Surveyor's Map 1801



Figure 7. Tithe Map 1838

Sheet 15

		343	Wolverton Close	Arable	5.3.35			
		344	Two Acres under common	Arable	2.1.12			
		345	Little two Acres behind Dittons	Arable	2.1.17			
		346	Wall Ways	Arable	5.1.7			
		347	Part of Wall Ways	Sainfoin	6.3.27			
		348	Bar Meadow	Meadow	5.0.8			
		349	Hop Green	Pasture	2.0.12			
		635	Long Field	Arable	<u>22.3.13</u>			
					<u>339.2.36</u>	<u>15.15.0</u>	<u>23.18.5</u>	
		335a	Pt of further 18 Acres	Arable	2.2.22			
		336a	Pt of further 18 Acres	Sainfoin	0.1.18			
		635a	Arable Spot called Paris Town	Arable	<u>0.3.28</u>			
					<u>3.3.28</u>	<u>1.5.9</u>		
Earl of Meeborough John Savile		629	Wolverton Carvel	Wood	4.1.12			
		630	Crow Carvel	Wood	5.0.23			
		631	Oaks Wood	Wood	20.0.18			
		632	Gork Hill Wood	Wood	29.1.10			
		633	Stoney Hill Wood	Wood	5.3.4			
		634	Trenham Wood	Wood	<u>8.3.36</u>			
					<u>73.2.23</u>	<u>5.4.5</u>		
William Moslin		638	Cottage lodge & plot	Homestead	0.0.23			
		639	Garden	Garden	0.0.28			
		636	Two Acres	Pasture	1.3.32			
		637	Shaw in two Acres	Wood	0.1.32			
		640	Orchard	Pasture	0.0.19			
		641	Little Meadow	Meadow	<u>0.2.2</u>			
					<u>3.1.18</u>	<u>0.7.3</u>		
Joseph Diton		642	Cottage Barn etc	Homestead	0.0.17			
		643	Hop Green	Pasture	0.2.7			
		644	Garden	Garden	0.0.28			
		645	Orchard	Pasture	0.2.20			
		646	Long Meadow	Meadow	0.3.11			
		647	Brow Bank	Pasture	<u>0.3.7</u>			
					<u>3.0.10</u>	<u>0.8.6</u>		
William Knocker		37	Bushy Ruff House Mill etc	Homestead	1.2.28			
		38	Garden	Garden	0.1.2			
		39	Part of Sunny Hill	Down	4.0.8			
		47	Part of Sunny Hill	Down	9.0.4			
		40	Bushy Ruff Pasture	Pasture	1.3.21			
		42	Part of Bushy Ruff pasture	Pasture	2.0.10			
		43	Mill Stream	Water	6.1.4			
		41	Sunny Hill Down	Down	<u>0.2.32</u>			
					<u>25.3.29</u>	<u>1.13.6</u>		
William Macdonald		45	House & Garden	Garden	<u>0.0.15</u>			
Daniel Pain		48	Rough Close	Sainfoin	12.0.28			
		44	Bushy Ruff (part of)	Pasture	<u>3.3.35</u>			
					<u>15.0.23</u>	<u>0.2.6</u>		
Owner	Occupier	No.	Description	Cultivation	Quantities	Vicarial	Appropriator	Remarks
Earl of Meeborough John Savile	William Norman	48	House and garden	Garden	<u>0.0.15</u>			
	Earl of Meeborough John Savile	583	Cakon Dale Wood	Wood	<u>1.2.2</u>	<u>0.2.6</u>		
James Marsh	James Marsh	350	House lodge & gdn	Homestead	0.0.16			
		351	Long Meadow	Meadow	1.2.26			
		352	Little Meadow	Meadow	0.3.27			
		353	Little Down	Down	0.3.21			
		354	Barr Close	Pasture	4.2.37			

Figure 8. Tithe Award Schedule

OS Maps

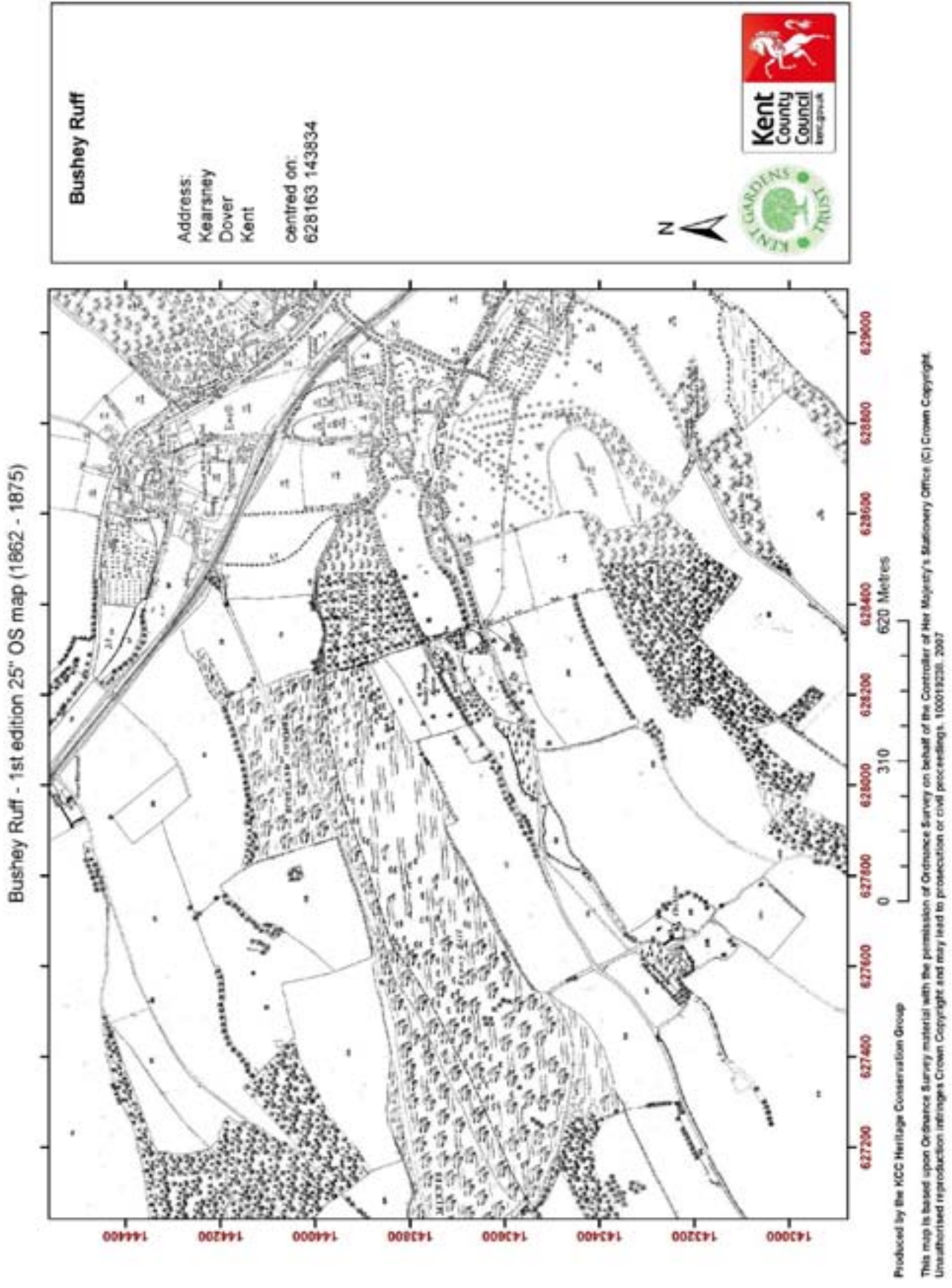


Figure 9.

Bushey Ruff - 2nd edition 25" OS map (1897 - 1900)

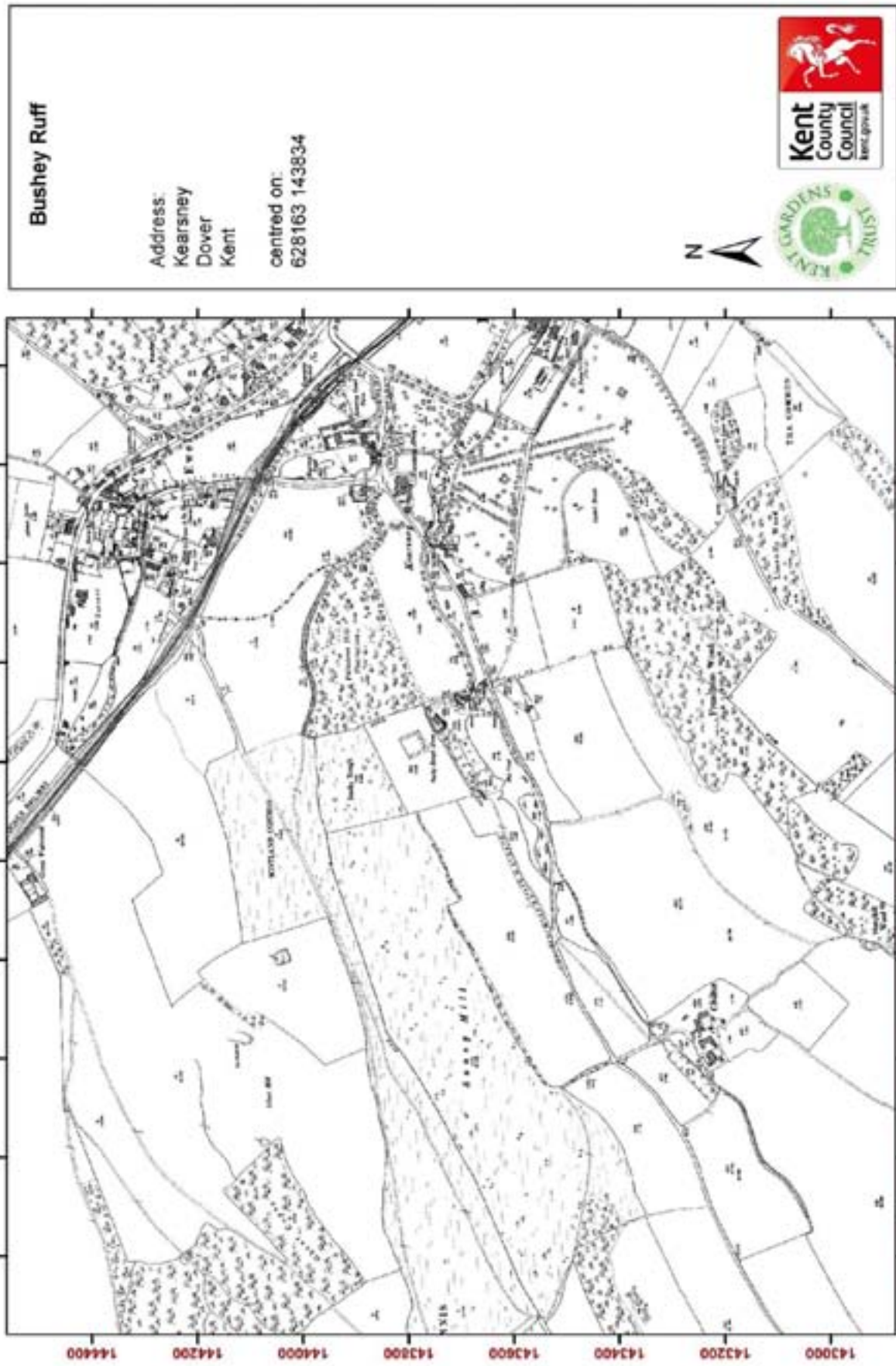


Figure 10.

Bushey Ruff - 3rd edition 25" OS map (1907 - 1923)



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Figure 11

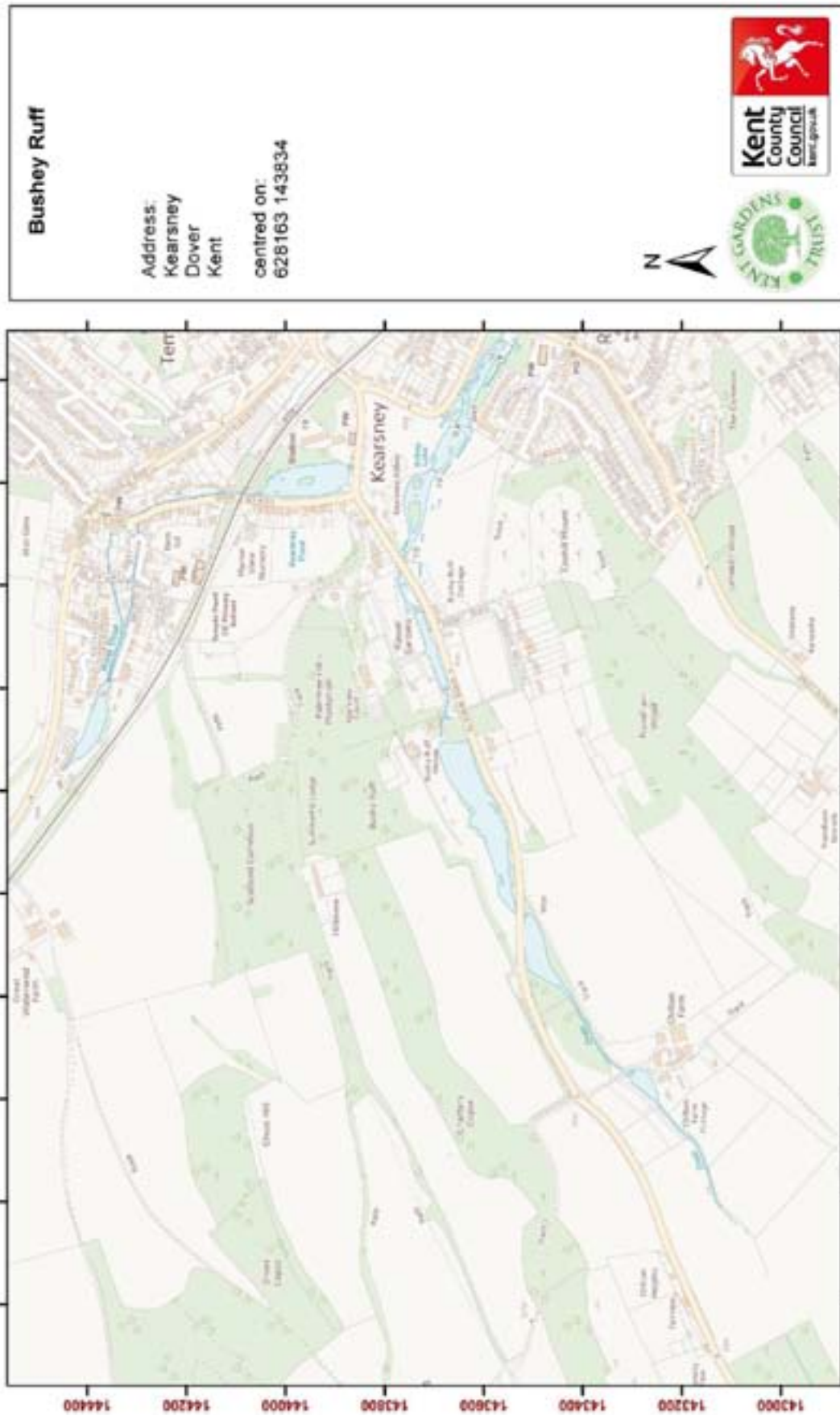
Bushey Ruff - 4th edition 25" OS map (1929 - 1952)



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Figure 12.

Bushey Ruff - modern OS map



Bushey Ruff

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Kearsney
Dover
Kent
centred on:
628163 143834



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Figure 13.

Bushey Ruff - from the Kent Compendium of Historic Parks and Gardens



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Figure 14



Figure 15.

Photographs 2014



Figure 16. Bushy Ruff House



Figure 17. The Lake



Figure 18. Entrance posts and railings



Figure 19.. The entrance from Alkham Road