

Kent Compendium of Historic Parks & Gardens – 2009 review of Tunbridge Wells Borough

Fig. 5 A Map of a farm formerly called the Spread Eagle but now the Star and Crown 1726. Medway Archives.

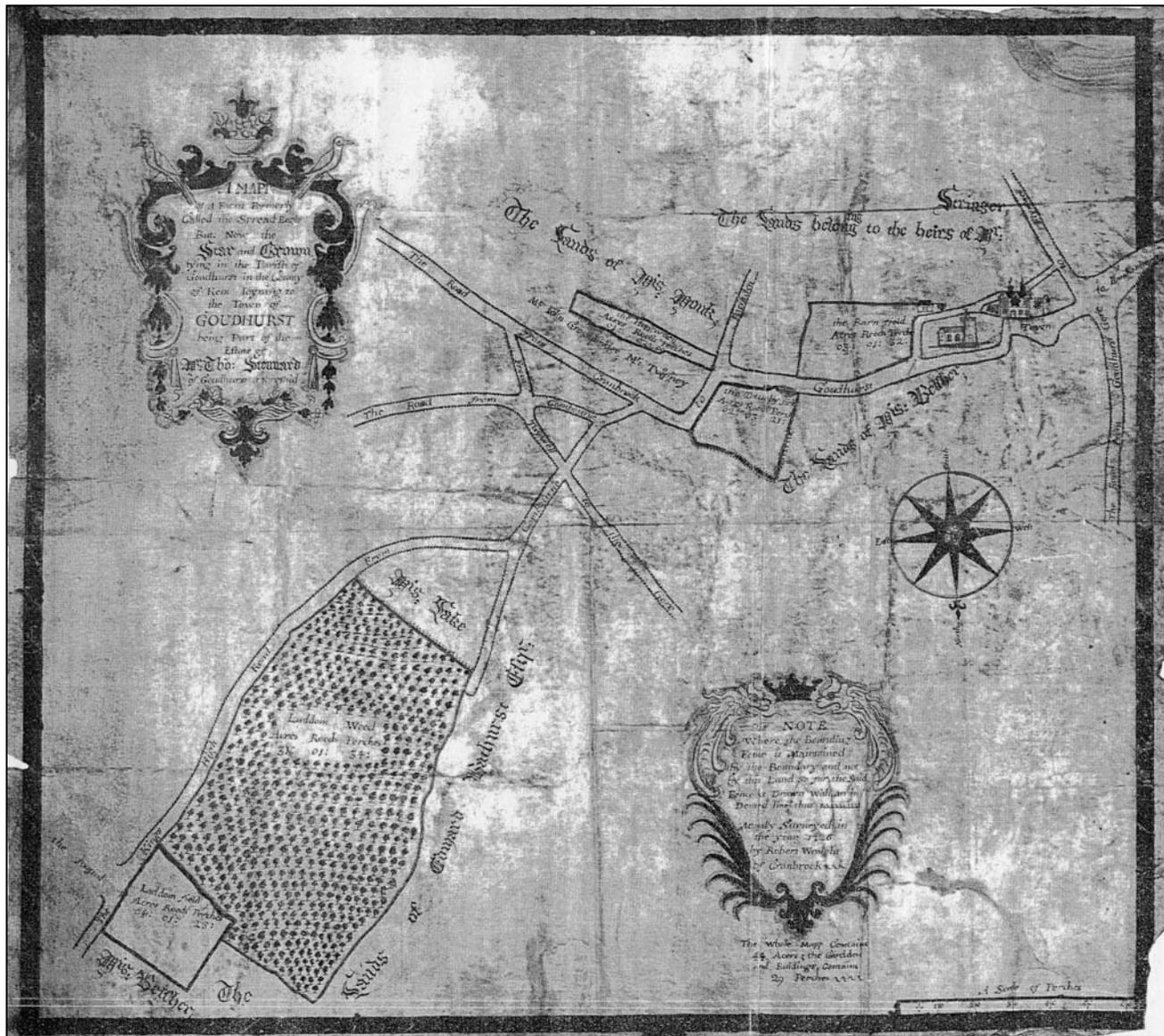


Fig. 6 Andrews, Dury and Herbert map of Kent 1769.



Fig. 7 Hasted map for Goudhurst 1778.



Fig. 8 William Mudge, *A New and Accurate Survey of Kent* 1801.



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Fig. 9 A Plan of an Estate called the Star and Crown Goudhurst 1823. Medway Archives ref. CCRc P24



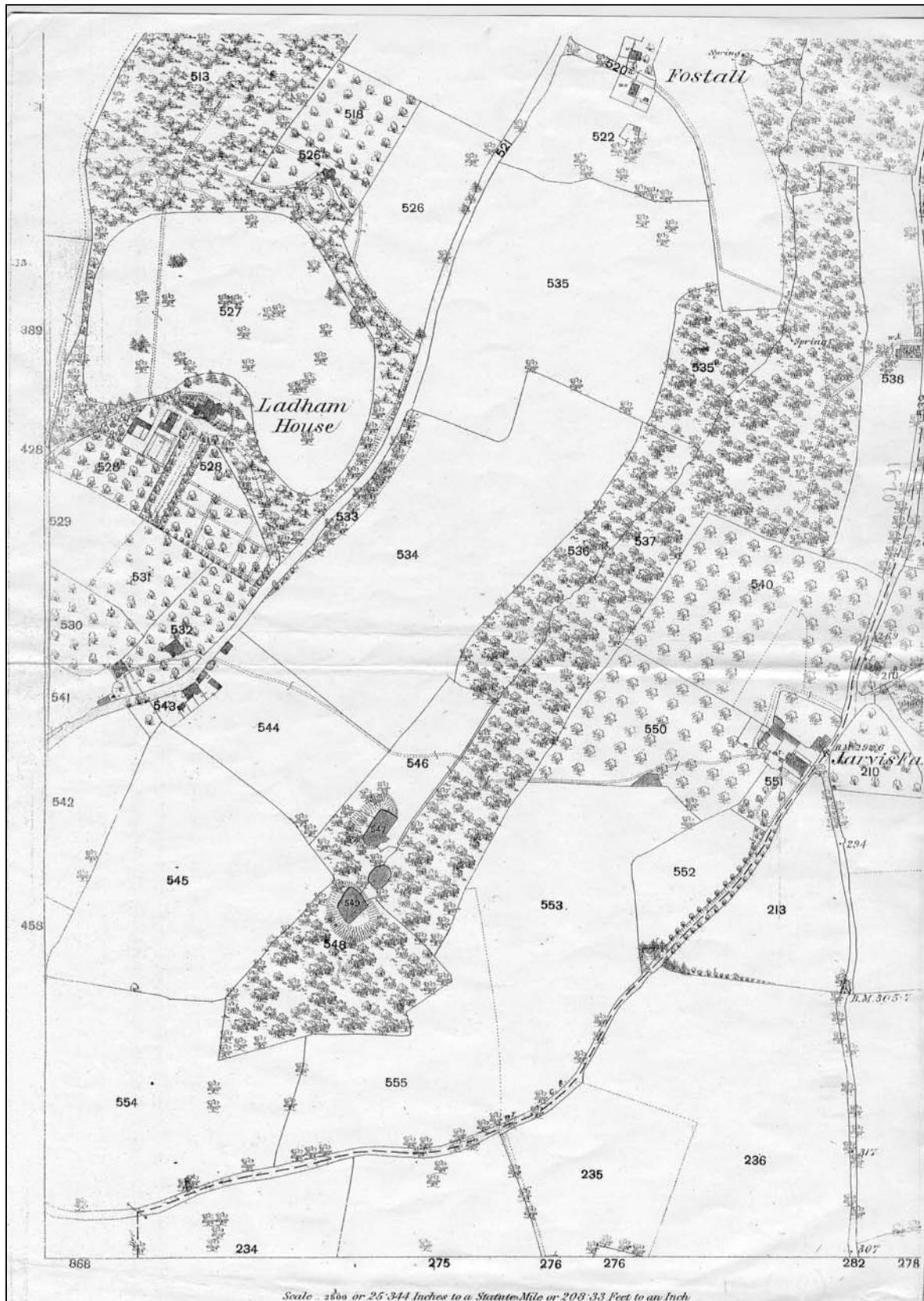
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Fig. 10 Tithe Map 1840.



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Fig. 11 1st edn 25" OS map 1870 Sheet 62/14.





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Fig. 13 3rd edn 25" OS map 1906 Sheet 62/14.

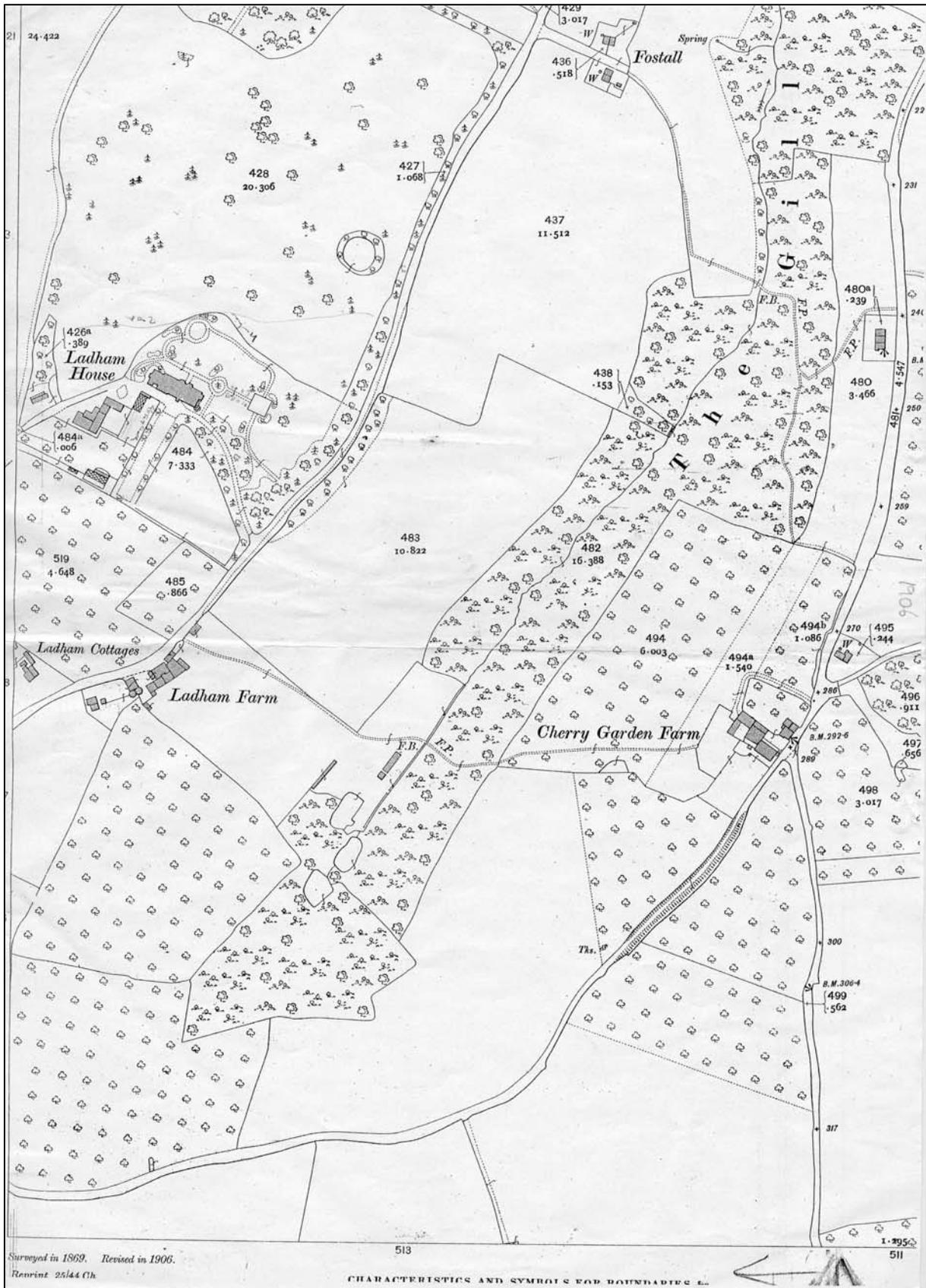


Fig. 14 Revd edn 25" OS map 1938 Sheet 62/14.



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**Fig. 15 Postcards of Ladham House 1897 and 1935. Goudhurst and Kildown History Society.**



Above: Postcard of Ladham House, 1897



Above: Postcard of Ladham House, 1937

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**Fig. 16 Photograph of Ladham House. Jessel collection.**



Fig. 17 Extract from Ladham House sales particulars 24 May 1870.

## EXCELLENT RANGE OF OUT-BUILDINGS,

INCLUDING

### STABLING FOR FIVE HORSES,

Double Coach House, Brewing and Baking Houses, with a large Room over, recently used as a Laundry, but available as Apartments for Coachman;

### A SMALL FARMERY,

With Cow Houses and other Buildings, Two occasional Loose Boxes, Fowl House, Wash House, with coppers, oven, &c.

## THE GARDENS AND GROUNDS

Are artistically displayed in North and South Lawns, planted with a variety of ornamental and rare Shrubs and Trees, including

Fine Specimens of the Araucaria, Deodora, Excelsior, Webbiana, &c.

THERE IS

### A CAPITAL KITCHEN GARDEN

With Forcing Pits, having a Warm Sunny Aspect, fully planted and in good order, Grass Walks bordered by Flower Beds, a choice Collection of Roses, &c.; also

### WELL-SELECTED FRUIT ORCHARDS,

Stocked with thriving Plum, Cherry, Pear, and Apple Trees. Separated from the Lawn by a há há fence, is

### A BEAUTIFUL MINIATURE PARK,

Studded with Oaks and other thriving Timber in Clumps and single Trees, and having a semi-circular boundary protected by ornamental and very profitable

### Chestnut and Sarcy Plantations,

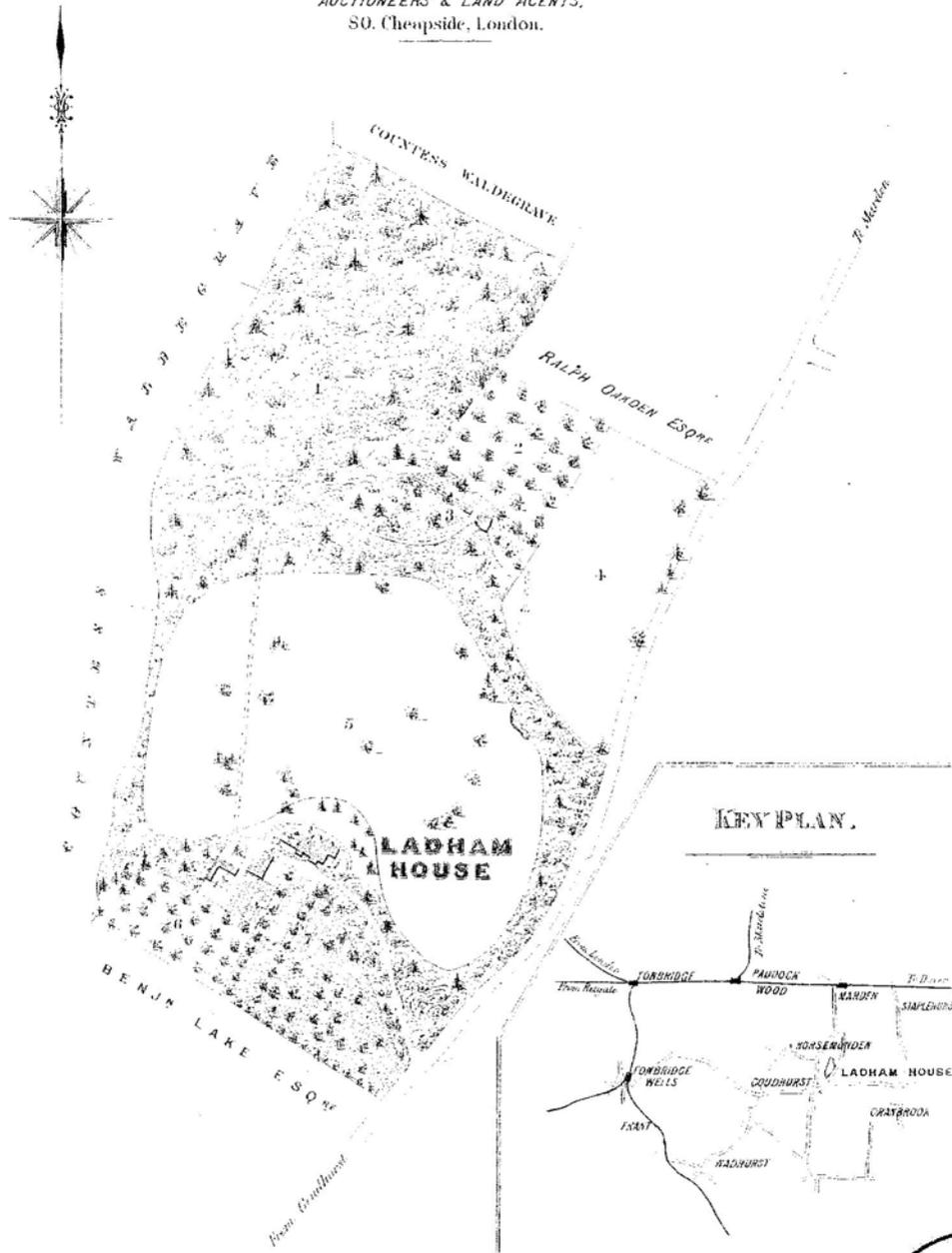
Which contain about a mile of pretty Shady Walks, adorned with a great variety of Rhododendrons and other Shrubs, presenting, when in bloom, a grand mass of rich and well-contrasted color, and giving evidence of the attentive care bestowed upon the Property by the present Proprietor during his long and uninterrupted occupation. There is a productive

Grass Orchard, a Paddock, and a Neat Six-Roomed Cottage,

With excellent Garden, Out-house, &c.

Plan of a  
 FREEHOLD PROPERTY,  
 known as  
**LADHAM HOUSE,**  
 GOUDHURST,  
 in the  
 COUNTY OF KENT.

For Sale by  
 MESS<sup>RS</sup> DEBENHAM, TEWSON & FARMER,  
 AUCTIONEERS & LAND AGENTS,  
 50, Cheapside, London.



Key: 1. Wood etc 2. Orchard 3. House & Garden 4. Pasture etc. 5. Ornamental Grounds 6. Orchard 7. Houses etc.

Fig. 18 Tom Wright, *The Gardens of Britain. Kent, East and West Sussex and Surrey*

1874  
"THE GARDENS OF BRITAIN" By TOM WRIGHT.  
Kent, East & West Sussex & Surrey.  
Ladham House

TQ 735 389 (Sheet 188) West Kent. 1 mile N of Goudhurst off B2084.  
Owner: The late Sir George and Lady Jessel. Open several Sunday after-  
noons in late spring, early summer and in October for the N.G.C.

A well-designed garden of some 40 years maturity, with contrasting areas of formal and informal planting. There are fine collections of flowering shrubs and plenty of autumn colour. Arrangements for visitor days are extremely well-organized.

Sir George inherited the partly Georgian and partly Victorian house in 1930 with some 15 acres of land and he and Lady Jessel have developed the garden since then. The garden lies in the High Weald, the house being set on a small plateau some 230 ft above sea level.

70 Ladham House

with a gentle slope to the north-east and north and sufficiently elevated to offer distant views through the trees and parkland of the River Beult valley towards Headcorn and the distant North Downs beyond. Fine perimeter belts of mixed deciduous and evergreen trees provide important screening and shelter to the garden. The climate here tends to be slightly cooler and wetter than the eastern areas of Kent, and with the combination of light tree shade and the deep retentive lime-free soils, offers good conditions for rhododendrons and many unusual trees and shrubs. Rainfall 29.5–31.5 inches. Sunshine 4 hrs. Soils are of the Wealden series being acidic light, sandy loams with some clay near the house. They respond well to good management and organic matter.

The garden really consists of two quite contrasting areas. The larger part is the informal area to the east of the house and approach drive where one can find the main collection of trees and shrubs. From the car park in the stable yard area walk to the east side of the house (having paid your entrance fee first!) and pause on the terrace. Note the climbers on the house – Banksian Roses, *Rosa banksiae*, the white and yellow forms; wistaria; and great masses of *Choisya ternata* against the walls. The style of these gardens lying to the north-east and east of the house is a blend of parkland with stately trees, and drifts and informal blocks and masses of exotic shrubs and some unusual trees. The specimen trees on the main lawn include limes, oaks and beeches, some exceeding 82 ft, and a young Tulip Tree, *Liriodendron tulipifera*. Note the very important screening and shelter belts of spruce and fir and deciduous trees to the south-east. Bold shrub islands lie in the main 'sea' of the lawns in this direction composed of massed rhododendrons, the tabulate, white tiers of *Viburnum plicatum* 'Mariesii' the autumn colouring *Enkianthus campanulatus* and various *Berberis* species. Beyond these islands lie the main wealth of mixed plantings. One large area beneath a fine group of mature Scots Pine, *Pinus sylvestris*, is a 'heath' of low carpeting and shrubs and unusual plants. Dominant are many varieties of *Erica* and *Calluna*, *Rhododendron* dwarf species and hybrids and other ericaceous shrubs like *Pernettya mucronata* with its shining green foliage and red and purple berries in late autumn. There are groups of 30–40-year-old specimens of such beautiful trees as the Japanese Snowbell, *Styrax japonica*, the Snowdrop Tree, *Halesia monticola*, and some exceptionally fine flowering dogwoods, including the white-flowered *Cornus florida*, the rich pink variety *C. florida rubra* and the Japanese *Cornus kousa*. All these flower in mid to late May. Note the fine young specimen of the Chilean Fire Bush, *Embothrium coccineum*, with brilliant orange-scarlet flowers in

early June. Foliage effects are enriched with well-sited specimens of Japanese Maples, *Acer palmatum*, ending the season in a flame of autumn colour, and a continuity of winter effects follows with massed planting of various evergreens, including good holly varieties, and some conifers, noteworthy being the unmistakable drooping form of *Picea breweriana* planted some 30 years ago.

The garden falls gently to a small wooded dell where a former old pond has been cleverly planted with a lush and leafy collection of waterside perennials like the Royal Fern, *Osmunda regalis*, *Rodgersia*, *Peltiphyllum* and various *Iris* species. On the fringe of the dell are more masses of *Viburnum plicatum (tomentosum)* 'Mariesii' and a fine symmetrical plant of the Dawn Redwood, *Metasequoia glyptostroboides*, up to 50 ft. Look for the unusual grey-leaved thorn *Crataegus orientalis*, a fine Japanese Crab, *Malus floribunda*, some good autumn colouring trees like *Parrotia persica* and *Liquidambar styraciflua* and Colorado Blue Spruce, *Picea pungens glauca*. Beside the tall beeches nearer the house are effective boundary 'hedges' of the sterile-flowered form of the Guelder Rose, *Viburnum opulus* 'Sterile'. Background planting is enriched here with dense, glaucous-green masses of the Japanese White Pine *Pinus parviflora*. Behind these lie the rock garden which is a deeply excavated, rather gloomy, labyrinthine affair dating from that era 50-60 years ago when even the most fantastic creations in stone could be constructed with cheap labour and plentiful materials. A mysterious adventure-type of rock garden with deep, winding paths, craggy rocky steps, a rustic arch or two and dark tunnels beneath great canopies of vast, mature, 'dwarf' shrubs rather than true alpines or rock plants. Look out for the fine gnarled dwarf Japanese Maples *Acer palmatum* 'Dissectum', great spreading masses of *Rhododendron obtusum* 'Amoenum' (*Azalea amoena*) and other rhododendrons and azaleas, dwarf conifers, *Pieris*, *Arbutus*, *Arctostaphylos* and many carpeting ferns, small bulbs and Lily of the Valley.

The formal gardens: to the west of the house are the formal gardens, probably created from part of the former kitchen gardens. Two fairly narrow borders divided by a wide grass path lead away from the west door of the house to a focal corner seat set in a cool green corner flanked by two splendid *Magnolia x watsonii*, each over 30 ft high, their richly fragrant white saucer-shaped flowers appearing in June and July. Some fine late July and August flowering *Eucryphia* species grow here. In the two borders is a profusion of carefully selected foliage and flowering plants in grey, white, pink and yellow. Old shrub roses, peonies, the grey-leaved *Senecio* 'Sunshine', *Cistus*, *Potentilla fruticosa*, *Artemisia*, fennel and many others make a most effective

72 ~~Leeds Castle~~ Ladham House

blend. A walled enclosure to the north side of these borders encloses a delightful rose garden of brick paths and a careful selection of roses. Note the spilling mass of wall plants: *Lonicera periclymenum* 'Belgica' (Early Dutch), *Ceanothus x veitchianus*, *Clematis montana* 'Rubens' and the very attractive blue and white forms of *Abutilon vitifolium*. A small pool and garden-house in the north-west corner of the rose garden has also been well planted. Two good shrubs, *Kolkwitzia amabilis* (pale pink) and *Azara serrata* (yellow), look well here in early summer. The kitchen garden leads off on the south side of the two formal borders. It is large, splendidly stocked and very well maintained, a pleasure to behold.

Maintenance standards are very high throughout the gardens at Ladham and very sympathetic to the style and range of plants grown.

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Fig. 19 Photographs of Ladham House January 2009.



Above left: The rose garden

Above right: Terrace and garden front

Left: The ha-ha