

THE VANGUARD WAY

'From the suburbs to the sea'

ROUTE DESCRIPTION
and points of interest along the route

SECTION 2 Chelsham Common to Limpsfield Chart



COLIN SAUNDERS

Fifth Edition

This fifth edition was first published in 2014.
It is only available as an online resource.

It replaces previous printed editions published in
1980, 1986 and 1997, also the online fourth edition published in 2009.

Designed by Brian Bellwood

Published by the Vanguards Rambling Club
35 Gerrards Close, Oakwood, London, N14 4RH, England

© VANGUARDS RAMBLING CLUB 1980, 1986, 1997, 2009, 2014

Colin Saunders asserts his right to be identified as the author of this work. Whilst the information contained in this guide was believed to be correct at the time of writing, the author and publishers accept no responsibility for the consequences of any inaccuracies. However, we shall be pleased to receive your comments and information of alterations for consideration. Please email colin@vanguardway.org.uk or write to Colin Saunders, 35 Gerrards Close, Oakwood, London, N14 4RH, England.

VANGUARD WAY ROUTE DESCRIPTION: SECTION 2

CHELSHAM COMMON TO LIMPSFIELD CHART

12.8 km (7.9 miles)

The Route Description is based on a completely new survey undertaken by club members in 2012 and 2013. Inevitably changes to the route and facilities will occur, and we try to keep abreast of them. It is our intention to bring out an updated version of the Route Descriptions and Companion as necessary, but you can refer to the Latest News page on our website www.vanguardway.org.uk for any changes that may have taken place meanwhile.

Paragraphs are numbered for ease of reference. The route is marked on Ordnance Survey Explorer and Landranger maps, though you should note that in some places it is incorrectly marked on some older maps - we draw your attention to specific instances where relevant. Grid references are given at each numbered point to help identify the route. The country is divided into 100 km squares identified by a two letter code, and following standard OS practice we include these letters in our grid references. In this section they are in square TQ.

In this route description:

The actual route description is shown in black Roman (upright) text.

Links with railway stations and other key places off route are shown in boxes with a grey background.

Italic text is used for items that are not part of the main route description, including:

- Key information about facilities (see Vanguard Way Companion for more details)
- Road and street names *
- Advice and asides.

* The mention of a road or street name does not necessarily mean that you will see this name on the spot, but it may be helpful if you need to be picked up or set down, or to find your position on a street map.

Names that are not visible are shown in italics within brackets.

Underlined bold italic text indicates that more details can be found in the Commentary, which follows the route description.

Distances are given in metres (m) or kilometres (km); but if you are more familiar with yards and miles, remember that 100m is about the same as 110 yards, and that 1 km is about five eighths of a mile. Altitudes are shown in metres – for an approximate conversion to feet multiply by 3 and add 10%.

Abbreviations

>	= off route		
Bw	= bridleway	N	= north
FB	= footbridge	S	= south
Fp	= footpath	E	= east
KG	= kissing gate	W	= west
Rd	= road (NP = no pavement, see below)		
Tk	= track	m	= metres
VGW	= Vanguard Way	km	= kilometres
KA	= keep ahead		
TL	= turn left	L	= left
TR	= turn right	R	= right

VANGUARD WAY ROUTE DESCRIPTION: SECTION 2

Roads with no pavement

'NP' in the route description indicates that the road has no pavement, and there are several of them in this section. Although they are usually quiet, you should take great care when walking along them, as traffic may approach at speed. Generally, you should walk in single file along the right-hand side, but this may be dangerous at a right-hand bend, where you cannot see approaching traffic, and the driver, not seeing you, may keep too close to the bend. You should therefore follow the advice given in the Highway Code for such situations, which is: 'It may be safer to cross the road well before a right-hand bend so that oncoming traffic has a better chance of seeing you. Cross back after the bend.' If walking in poor light conditions or in the dark, always wear something bright, luminous or reflective on top.

Public transport

On route: Buses at Chelsham Common, Moorhouse and Limpsfield Chart.

Links with buses and trains at Woldingham and Oxted stations, and with buses at Grasshopper Inn and Westerham.

Distances from Chelsham Common to:

>Woldingham Station	6.3 km	(3.9 miles)
>Oxted Station (via western link)	8.2 km	(5.1 miles)
>Oxted Station (via eastern link)	9.0 km	(5.6 miles)
>Botley Farmhouse (pub/bus nearby)	8.7 km	(5.4 miles)
>Titsey Place	9.2 km	(5.7 miles)
>Grasshopper Inn (pub/bus)	11.9 km	(7.4 miles)
A25 Moorhouse (bus)	11.2 km	(7.0 miles)
Limpsfield Chart (bus)	12.7 km	(7.9 miles)
>Westerham (bus)	16.4 km	(10.2 miles)

Distances from Woldingham Station to:

>Oxted Station (via western link)	6.2 km	(3.9 miles)
>Oxted Station (via eastern link)	7.1 km	(4.4 miles)
>Botley Farmhouse (pub/bus nearby)	6.9 km	(4.3 miles)
>Titsey Place	7.1 km	(4.4 miles)
>Grasshopper Inn (pub/bus)	9.9 km	(6.1 miles)
A25 Moorhouse (bus)	9.2 km	(5.7 miles)
Limpsfield Chart (bus)	10.8 km	(6.7 miles)
>Westerham (bus)	14.5 km	(9.0 miles)

Distances from Oxted Station (via western or eastern link) to:

>Botley Farmhouse (pub/bus nearby)	4.5 km	(2.9 miles)
>Titsey Place	4.8 km	(3.0 miles)
>Grasshopper Inn (pub/bus)	7.6 km	(4.7 miles)
A25 Moorhouse (bus)	6.9 km	(4.3 miles)
Limpsfield Chart (bus)	8.4 km	(5.2 miles)
>Westerham (bus)	12.1 km	(7.5 miles)

VANGUARD WAY ROUTE DESCRIPTION: SECTION 2

Overview

This section starts gently, but is one of the hilliest of the Vanguard Way, and includes the highest point along the whole route. There are some very steep and quite long ascents and descents, but the effort is compensated by outstanding views. Along the way you pass the mystical Nore Hill Chalk Pinnacle and cross the North Downs, part of the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. A level walk across farmland of the Titsey Estate is followed by a long climb through the Greensand Hills to Limpsfield Chart. Titsey Place is worth a detour, but its open days are limited.

Lowest and highest points. River Eden (108m); North Downs near Flint House (262m).

BEFORE SETTING OUT ALONG THE VANGUARD WAY

Please read the **Introduction to the route**, available from the 'Directions and maps' pages of our website www.vanguardway.org.uk. It contains important information that will be helpful when reading this route description.

And don't forget to look at the **Latest News** page on our website for any developments affecting this and any other part of the route.

IF YOU ENCOUNTER ANY PROBLEMS affecting the rights of way, such as obstructions, closures or diversions, your first course of action should be to contact the relevant highway authority, which on this section is:

Surrey County Council

Please also let us know about it by email to graham@vanguardway.org.uk

VANGUARD WAY ROUTE DESCRIPTION: SECTION 2

Section 2 of the Vanguard Way starts at Chelsham Road [TQ 372 592]

on the north side of Chelsham Common, in Tandridge District in Surrey.

[Transport 

2.1 [TQ 372 592]

a) At Chelsham Road TR then in 20m immediately after bus shelter TL on faint and possibly overgrown Fp through trees to Rd (*Ledgers Road*).

b) TL then immediately R along access Rd to the Coach House bar/bistro.

[Refreshments 

2.2 [TQ 372 590]

a) KA between posts on to grass of Chelsham Common then bear half L on worn grass Fp towards Rd.

b) TL on Tk between trees and follow it into woods, passing pond on your L.

c) Join Rd **NP** (*Chelsham Common Road*) and TL for 30m, ignoring a signed Fp on your R.

d) Just before crossroads TR through gate along signed, broad Bw to field.

e) Follow (sometimes muddy) Tk along R edge of very large field, and after 900m go through trees and past barrier to Rd (*Ledgers Road* again).

f) TR along Rd **NP** to junction with B269 *Limpsfield Road* at Worms Heath. *Take great care, keeping left as you approach the main road as vehicles may turn off it fast from the right.*

Take care on righthand bend as vehicles turn fast off the B269.

2.3 [TQ 376 579]

a) TR along path beside B269 for 60m.

b) Cross Rd with great care towards private drive (*Barnards Road*), then immediately TL (low concrete sign) past gatepost and fenced garden of Lodge Cottage.

c) At end of fence bear slightly R on faint Fp through trees for 40m, then in 25m beside sawn up tree trunk bear slightly L (160°).

d) Pass L of house and garden to continue on faint Fp between posts.

e) Cross stile into field (note miniature cottages in trees to your R – a sometime horse jump) and proceed in same direction up worn grass Fp (110°) to pass fingerpost between another horse jump and large fenced depression containing **Nore Hill Chalk Pinnacle**.

f) Continue along worn Fp past clump of bushes and head (120°) towards far corner of field, to find waymark post by Worms Heath Cottages, a little to L of radio mast.

2.4 [TQ 381 574]

a) TR to follow L edge of field beside hedge, descending very steeply and crossing two stiles.

b) You now start to ascend a little, with **Warren Barn Farm** away to your R, and in 50m cross farm Tk (*Upland Road*) by two more stiles (no DG at second stile).

c) With hedge on L follow Fp uphill then down to Rd (*Slines Oak Road*), with the scattered houses of Woldingham occupying the hillside opposite.

VANGUARD WAY ROUTE DESCRIPTION: SECTION 2

2.5 [TQ 376 567]

- a) Do not cross stile but TL inside field and follow chalky Tk (permissive path) parallel to Rd to field gate.
- b) Very thin people may be able to squeeze through the gap to L of gate (beware barbed wire), but a gap in the hedge 30m further on should provide an easier transit!

*Note: Dogs may not be taken along the permissive path. If this path is not available to you for any reason, cross stile on to Rd **NP** and TL along it. After 200m, where Rd bends R, KA on Tk to rejoin route.*

Link to Woldingham Station [2.7 km / 1.7 miles, TQ 359 564]

- a) At Tk TR on to Slines Oak Road **NP** then TL up it for 1 km, ignoring side turns, to Station Road in Woldingham village centre, where there are shops to your right.
- b) You can obviously TR along Station Road for the station, passing shops, but a pleasanter and mostly traffic-free route is to TR then shortly TL down Park View Road **NP**.
- c) Follow this as it bears R, then in 250m (between Hardown House and The Red Cottage) TL down narrow stepped Fp between hedges/fences and through wood.
- d) Cross stile and continue steeply down L side of field to KG and unmade lane (Church Road).
- e) TR and follow Church Road for 750m past Church Road Farm and station car park to Woldingham Station.

[Transport 

Buses from Woldingham village (Monday to Friday only) to Warlingham, Caterham and Redhill.

[

If starting from Woldingham Station:

- a) From the main station exit KA then immediately TR up Church Road, parallel to station car park and railway.
- b) In 500m pass Church Road Farm and cottages, then in 185m TL and ascend Fp.
- c) At top of field cross stile and KA up narrow stepped Fp through wood to Rd.
- d) TR along Park View Road **NP** bearing L to village green.
- e) TR then shortly TL along Slines Oak Road for 1 km (pavement at first then **NP**).
- f) At foot of hill, where Rd bears L, TR on to Tk.

2.6 [TQ 376 565]

- a) Pass metal gate then in 120m at fork by another metal gate keep L on clear Bw steeply uphill between fields to enter wood.
- b) Climbing more gently now, enter wood then KA for 1 km on narrow Bw following ridge between two deep valleys, which appear first on your L and later on your R.
- c) The path broadens out by gate marked 'Springfields Animal Rescue Centre', then passes **Greenhill Shaw** on your L.
- d) Continue to the point marked on maps as '**WT Sta**', where the Bw becomes metalled.
- e) KA along access Rd for 400m, passing the highest point of the VGW at about 260m (853 feet), and with Whistlers Wood on your R, to reach Rd (*The Ridge, but shown as Woldingham Road on some maps*) at Flint House, with its venerable, globe-topped red-brick wall.

VANGUARD WAY ROUTE DESCRIPTION: SECTION 2

2.7 [TQ 386 546]

- a) Cross Rd. As traffic comes fast round the bend, for greater visibility you are strongly advised to do so at the bend itself, by the watchtower attached to the outside of the wall.
- b) KA along lefthand side of *Chalkpit Lane* **NP** opposite.
- c) After 90m, as Rd bears R, KA on Fp down through trees, bearing R at junction to cross stile by gate into **Oxted Downs**.

Note that the VGW heads southwesterly from this point to join the NDW, not southeasterly as shown on some OS maps.

*You now have a fine view across **Oxted** and The Weald towards the high ground of Ashdown Forest, though unfortunately it is rather spoiled by the noise and traffic on the **M25 motorway** below.*

- d) Descend slope called Whistlers Steep - it is indeed very steep and may be slippery if wet.
- e) At foot by bench seat join **North Downs Way** (NDW).

You can now either TL to continue along the VGW at 2.8, or TR to follow our Western Link to Oxted Station (2.0 km), however this is almost entirely on roads and you may prefer to continue along the VGW to use the slightly longer Eastern Link at the end of 2.8, which is mostly on footpaths.

Western Link to Oxted Station [2.0 km / 1.3 miles, TQ 393 528]

- a) TR steeply down NDW.
- b) TL on Rd (*Chalkpit Lane*) through tunnel under M25. *There is no pavement at first - keep right and take care.*
- c) At foot of hill (just before railway bridge) bear L along *Gordons Way*.
- d) In 350m at Rd junction bear L along *Barrow Green Road*.
- e) In 300m pass under railway bridge then TL along *Bluehouse Lane* and immediately TR along *Station Approach*, which leads in 200m to Oxted Station.

[🚂 🚌] *Trains to East Croydon, central London, East Grinstead and Buxted.*

Buses to/from Redhill, Westerham (Mon – Fri) & (Mon – Sat) Edenbridge, Lingfield, Limpsfield Chart.

[🚻] *Oxted Inn beside station (west side), also cafés in Station Road East.*

[Toilets 🚻] *In Station Approach, almost opposite station entrance. Also in Morrisons supermarket (west side).*

[Accommodation 🏠] *In Oxted.*

If starting from Oxted Station, from the station platforms:

- a) Follow signs to Ticket Office.
- b) KA along *Station Approach*, past taxi office and public toilets, parallel with railway line.
- c) At junction with *Bluehouse Lane* TL then immediately TR along *Barrow Green Road*, passing under railway bridge.
- d) Bear L with Rd and in 300m take right fork (*Gordons Way*).
- e) In 350m at Rd junction TR up *Chalkpit Lane* and follow this for 500m. *Pavement/verge runs out as you pass under M25, then you should keep R and take care.*
- f) 125m after M25 take great care as you move into narrow part of *Chalkpit Lane*, then 50m further TR up steps, joining NDW and *Woldingham Millennium Walk*, go through KG and climb steeply for 100m, where TR to join VGW and NDW.

VANGUARD WAY ROUTE DESCRIPTION: SECTION 2

2.8 [TQ 385 543]

- a) Continuing along the VGW, pass seat to follow wide path (which later becomes narrow) path by wire fence for 400m, together with NDW.
- b) Bear R through KG then go through barrier into next field. *The impressive red-brick building on hillside beyond the M25 is the former **St. Michael's School**.*
The Eastern Link with Oxted Station starts here.

Eastern Link to Oxted Station [2.3 km / 1.4 miles, TQ 393 528]

This is also shown on OS maps as a link between the NDW and the Greensand Way.

- a) After gap in hedge TR on Fp leading downhill with hedge on your R.
- b) At bend go through KG and continue along Fp leading to FB over M25.
- c) Follow this twisting Fp for 1 km through small wood and beside fields, ignoring side turns through hedges. Beware of shallow ditch on lefthand side, which may be hidden.
- d) Eventually Fp reaches stile, which cross and TR to pass playing fields of Oxted School to Rd at bend.
- e) KA (Park Road) to junction then TR along Bluehouse Lane.
- f) In 200m TL along Gresham Road, which bears R.
- g) At its end TR along Station Road East to Oxted Station in Station Approach East.

  Trains to East Croydon, central London, East Grinstead and Buxted.

Buses to/from Redhill, Westerham (Mon – Fri) & (Mon – Sat) Edenbridge, Lingfield, Limpsfield Chart.

 In Oxted - see above.

 In Oxted - see above.

 In Oxted - see above.

If starting from Oxted Station:

- a) From the station platforms follow signs to Station Approach East.
- b) KA to main Rd and TR.
- c) In 200m TL along Gresham Road, which bears L.
- d) At end, TR along Bluehouse Lane, then in 200m TL up Park Road.
- e) Where Rd turns R, KA on Fp past playing fields of Oxted School.
- f) Cross stile and TL to follow twisting Fp for 1 km along field edges and through small wood towards M25. Beware of shallow ditch on righthand side, which may be hidden.
- g) Cross M25 on FB then TL and continue on Fp for 250m.
- h) Go through KG and KA beside field to join VGW and NDW, where TR.

2.9 [TQ 389 543]

- a) Continue together with NDW along edge of very large field, with Titsey Woods on your L and M25 down to your R.
The VGW has now entered the Titsey Estate, which has a network of trails indicated by arrows of various colours, which you should ignore.
- b) In 600m reach plaque indicating **Greenwich Meridian**, then continue 250m further, passing through KG to end of field, marked by line of trees.
- c) Go through KG and down steps to join sunken Tk (Pitchfont Lane). NDW turns left (uphill) here.

 For Botley Hill Farmhouse (pub) follow NDW uphill for 650m to B269 Limpsfield Road, then TL along it for 300m.

VANGUARD WAY ROUTE DESCRIPTION: SECTION 2

2.10 [TQ 398 548]

- a) TR downhill past barns and through gate between Pitchfont Farm and Limpsfield Lodge Farmhouse. *At time of survey a large fallen tree blocked this path but could easily be got round.*
- b) KA on Pitchfont Lane to junction with Rd (*Water Lane*) beside Pitchfont Lodge and Titsey Foundation Walk indicator board at entrance to **Titsey Place**. VGW crosses presumed line of the **Pilgrims Way** here.

[☞] *There is a tea room at Titsey Place, which can only be used by those buying tickets into the house or gardens – for opening times see Commentary.*

2.11 [TQ 401 544]

- a) KA for 20m along Bw (still Pitchfont Lane) then cross stile on L.
- b) Go half R on faint Fp across field (95°), and enter fenced area where field narrows into far (E) corner of field.
- c) After crossing small stream and stile by metal gate, continue in same direction (115°) up next field to stile L of tall tree.
- d) Cross next field in same direction to pass remains of old stile.
- e) KA over next (larger field) heading for far corner (120°).
- f) Cross wooden FB (stile at each end, may be hidden by foliage) over infant **River Eden**.

2.12 [TQ 408 542]

- a) Cross another stile on to Rd (*B269 Titsey Road*).

[🚌] *Bus (Mon – Sat) to Westerham & Oxted.*

- b) TL along grass verge for 100m (*if you wish to visit **Titsey Church** continue along Rd **NP** for 700m*) and TR through gate just beyond water company building and power substation.
- c) Follow Tk beside high fence on R and when this ends cross field heading for fingerpost (105°, a little to R of red emergency phone marker, which may be hidden by foliage in summer, beside M25 motorway ahead) – note spire of Titsey Church away to your L.
- d) TL beside fence and M25, through ‘hawthorn tunnels’ and up 25 steps to cross stile. *Beware of barbed wire on disused stile along this path.*

2.13 [TQ 417 544]

- a) TR to cross motorway on concrete bridge. Just 500m away to your left is **Clacket Lane Service Station** but at present the only way to reach it is via a diversion of 3.2 km (see link to Grasshopper Inn below).
- b) KA on clear broad Tk (*Broomlands Lane*) which later becomes metalled at Broomlands Farm.
- c) Ascend with Titsey Wood on your L to crossing Rd - *beware large earth-moving vehicles. This is the access road to the huge **Moorhouse Sandpits**, on your R, and you are now crossing the **Greensand Ridge**.*
- d) In 150m reach junction with Fp.

VANGUARD WAY ROUTE DESCRIPTION: SECTION 2

Link to Grasshopper Inn [1.0 km / 0.6 miles, TQ 428 533]

Although there is a pavement beside the A25, if you wish to visit the **Grasshopper Inn** the following may be preferable to walking along the busy main road. You can also use this link if you wish to visit **Moorhouse Bank**.

If you are staying at the **Premier Inn at Clacket Lane Services**, you can use this link to the Grasshopper, then continue 200m to junction and TL along Clacket Lane **NP** for 1.3 km.

- a) 150m after sandpits access, TL on Fp through wood for 400m.
- b) Soon after large water tank, emerge into field.
- c) Go half R across field (bearing 120°, may be muddy) towards small brick building.
- d) TR along field edge to layby beside A25 Westerham Road (may be overgrown at exit point).
- e) TL to A25 (there may be a mobile refreshment kiosk here) and entrance to Moorhouse Sand Pits and KA for 75m to Grasshopper Inn.

[🍴] Grasshopper Inn.

[↔] Premier Inn, Clacket Lane Services.

[🚌] Infrequent buses to/from Westerham, Sevenoaks, Oxted, Redhill, Reigate.

Returning from Grasshopper Inn:

- a) TR beside A25 for 75m, then KA past entrance to Moorhouse Sand Pits along layby.
- b) In 75m, at tall wooden pole (almost opposite mobile refreshment kiosk which is usually here), TR through trees into field (may be overgrown).
- c) Follow R-hand side of field for 150m to small brick building.
- d) Go half L across field (bearing 300°) to locate Fp into wood.
- e) KA on Fp through wood, past large water tank, for 400m to Broomlands Lane where TL to rejoin VGW.

2.14 [TQ 421 535]

KA to Rd (A25 Westerham Road) at Moorhouse.

[🚌] Infrequent buses to/from Westerham, Sevenoaks, Oxted, Redhill, Reigate.

2.15 [TQ 420 532]

- a) Cross Rd with great care and take Bw opposite, which goes at first between fences and through gate.
- b) KA across field, pass through righthand (smaller) of two gates then bear slightly R to pass through another gate behind bushes into Loampit Wood. TR along Tk (which carries the **London Countryway**).

2.16 [TQ 423 528]

- a) Almost immediately bear half L uphill and KA, passing two path junctions.
- b) At third junction fork R to reach Rd (*Ridlands Lane*) by lamppost at **Limpsfield Chart**.
- c) Cross Rd and KA on L side of hedge along Fp (becoming gravel drive) past houses, with cricket field to your L, to Rd at bend (*Stoneleigh Road*).
- d) KA between houses and common to junction (*Moorhouse Road and Tally Road*), where **Greensand Way** crosses VGW and Section 2 of the VGW ends at:

3.1 [TQ 426 519] Limpsfield Chart.

[🚌] A bus service (Mon – Sat) operates from the Carpenters Arms to Oxted.

[🍴] TR for 100m along Tally Road for the Carpenters Arms pub (closed Monday lunchtimes).

[Phone box 📞] 150m to R along Tally Road.

VANGUARD WAY ROUTE DESCRIPTION: SECTION 2

Link to Westerham [3.8 km / 2.4 miles, TQ 446 540]

This link follows the Greensand Way (GW) for the first 1.5 km then the GW link with Westerham. The route is mostly well signed by GW discs and fingers.

- a) On reaching Tally Road at Limpsfield Chart, opposite white fence of The Mill House, TL into wood at fingerpost along GW, following stony (sometimes muddy) Tk.*
- b) In 60m at first fork, keep R on main Tk. Note that GW signs are missing in this area.*
- c) In another 200m fork L on narrow Fp, leaving main Tk.*
- d) Follow this winding Fp in the same general direction (around bearing 70°) for next 900m to end of wood, keeping ahead at all cross Tks, then at five-ways junction bear L on broad main Tk.*
- e) At second five-ways junction with water tank, KA to pass R of stone plinth marking GW halfway point, then along fenced Bw between gardens.*
- f) Cross Rd (Goodley Stock Road) with care and pass wooden fieldgate.*
- g) KA on broad gravel Tk (permissive Fp/Bw) for 80m to T-junction.*
- h) Here main GW route goes R, but VGW link goes L, now sharing GW link to Westerham. (GW waymark post here missing at time of writing – November 2013).*
- j) Follow this Fp in same general direction (around bearing 15° to 20°) for 900m, descending gently and ignoring all side turns.*
- k) At edge of wood, cross Tk and go through first KG then KA through copse, now in Squerryes Park. (Prominent white dovecote down to L is part of 17th century Squerryes Court complex.)*
- l) Go through second KG and KA across field to third KG then KA along winding fenced Fp.*
- m) Go through fourth KG then descend steeply towards pond, with fine view of the North Downs.*
- n) At foot TL beside Park Lodge then TR along lane (Mill Lane).*
- p) In 100m by pond and just after small car park TR down steps, over FB and through KG, then KA along foot of sloping field.*
- q) In 300m TL down through KG and along fenced Fp, which is actually the start of Water Lane, to cross stone stile and FB. (Note steps leading down to a stream – the infant River Darenth – which must be where people once washed clothes and may now provide an opportunity to clean your muddy boots!)*
- r) At end go down steps to enter Westerham opposite the village green (bus stops close by).*

 Buses to Bromley and Sevenoaks; also (Mon - Fri) Edenbridge.

 Many pubs, cafés and tea-rooms in Westerham.

 In Westerham.

COMMENTARY

on places shown in bold italics and underlined in the route description

2.3

Nore Hill Chalk Pinnacle is registered as a Regionally Important Geological and Geomorphological Site (RIGS) and is managed by Surrey Wildlife Trust (www.surreywildlifetrust.co.uk). This field was previously a gravel quarry, which was filled in with domestic refuse then covered with soil. Whilst digging the gravel, a number of submerged natural chalk pinnacles were discovered, and one of these has been left in situ as the RIGS, although it is gradually being worn away by rainfall. It was the first geological local nature reserve to be established in Britain. You can enter the site through a gate on the righthand side, but note that the descent into the depression is very steep, often overgrown, and may be slippery when wet. Be sure that you can climb back out again!

2.4

In addition to being a working farm, **Warren Barn Farm** is a horse-jumping centre where show-jumping and point-to-point events take place, as well as game shooting. It is also the base of Warlingham & District Horse Club. The field and combes to your left are regularly used by hang-gliders. To your right is the last view of London along the Vanguard Way.

2.6

Greenhill Shaw is one of many shaws in Surrey. Often used in this part of England, 'shaw' is an Old English word meaning a small wood. It has the same root as 'shaggy', implying that the word may have been applied to an untidy clump of trees.

'**WT Sta**' on the OS map stands for Wireless Telegraphy Station, though nowadays such installations are usually known as Microwave Relay Stations. Built around a water tower, the masts are part of a national network used for communications between pilots and air traffic controllers.

2.7

Oxted Downs, part of the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (www.surreyhills.org), is an area of chalk downland owned by the National Trust (www.nationaltrust.org.uk). In spring and early summer wild flowers such as bluebell, cowslip, dog's mercury and sanicle may be found in profusion, while later on ploughman's spikenard and autumn gentian make an appearance. This is part of the North Downs, a range of hills formed from a chalk stratum that dips beneath London to reappear further north as the Chiltern Hills. Chalk was formed during the cretaceous period (65 to 145 million years ago) from the shells of microscopic creatures, which sank to the bottom of the sea (by which this area was covered at that time) and were eventually crushed to become a soft, porous rock. As recently as 8,000 years ago, these chalk hills extended across to mainland Europe, but it is thought that a huge tsunami around that time and rising sea levels caused the destruction of the land link.

A feature of chalk landscapes is flint. This rock is normally only visible as small nodules made of a kind of quartz or silica, which are light coloured on the outside and very dark, almost black, inside. When fractured, extremely hard and sharp edges result, and during the Stone Ages they were highly prized for the manufacture of hand axes and arrow heads. This durability also led to their use as a building material, and they feature in many churches, barns and other buildings in this part of Britain.

Oxted (2.0 km S on link) is an expanding small town whose population at the 2001 census had reached 15,200, many of whom commute into Croydon and London. Its name was originally Acstede, Saxon for 'oak place'. Situated on the lower southern slopes of the North Downs among the headwaters of the River Eden, it is the administrative centre of Tandridge District, whose council offices are here. The charming original village (Old Oxted) lies on the A25, 1 km west of the modern town, which has developed around the railway station, with its main shopping centre in Station Road East. You will need to keep your wits about you while negotiating the station's maze of subways and exits. The Barn Theatre

VANGUARD WAY ROUTE DESCRIPTION: SECTION 2

(www.barntheatreoxted.co.uk) in Bluehouse Lane was opened in 1924; built with timber from the 13th century Saw Mill Barn in nearby Limpsfield, it is the home of two community groups, Oxted Players and Oxted Operatic Society.

The **North Downs Way** (NDW, www.nationaltrail.co.uk/northdowns) is a national trail, managed by Natural England, and the Vanguard Way shares its route for the next 1.5 km. Almost equally divided between the crest of the North Downs and the lower terrace that carries the Pilgrim's Way (see below), it extends for 201 km (125 miles) from Farnham to Dover by its shortest route via Folkestone, with a longer option of 211 km (131 miles) following a loop via Canterbury.

The **M25 motorway** is the outer of London's two ring roads, extending 188 km (117 miles). It was built in stages from the early 1970s and was completed in 1986, with three or more lanes in each direction. People either love or loathe it: there are frequent accidents and delays, and it has blighted the scenery and peace of much of the countryside, yet at the best of times it provides a relatively quick and easy way of avoiding the clogged main roads of Greater London, and enterprising coach companies even offer day trips around it!

The **Pilgrims Way** is one of the best known long-distance routes in Britain, though its origins have been the subject of much contention. The name is often written with an apostrophe (Pilgrim's or Pilgrims') but as there is confusion about whether it should be singular or plural we have chosen to omit it! The route used to be widely regarded as having been a prehistoric trading route between Wessex and Kent, with possible termini in the vicinities of Southampton and Folkestone. Generally following an ancient trackway along a terrace roughly halfway down the southern slope of the North Downs, it was said to have been used later by medieval pilgrims travelling to or between the tomb of St Swithun (died c 862) in Winchester, the old capital of England, and those of St Augustine (died c 604) and St Thomas Becket (died 1170) in Canterbury Cathedral.

However, doubt has been cast on these stories by those who claim that both traders and pilgrims would surely have preferred either the easier and more logical route along the Thames valley via London, and that the idea of a Pilgrims Way along this lower route was the misconception of influential Victorian antiquaries and, possibly, an imaginative Ordnance Survey mapmaker. Others maintain that the low ground was too heavily forested, and frequented by dangerous animals, while the ridge of the North Downs provided a clearer and safer route. Whatever the truth, the Pilgrims Way is shown on maps as following the northern rim of The Weald and the southern slopes of the North Downs. Much of its length is now on roads or inaccessible to the public and therefore, though passing many places of interest, not very suitable for a walking tour.

2.8

St. Michael's School, on the hillside beyond the M25, was built in the late 1800s for the children of missionaries; former pupils include Anneke Rice. The school closed in 2002 and the Grade II listed building has been converted into 20 luxurious apartments.

2.9

The **Greenwich Meridian** (from the Latin *meridianus* meaning midday) is indicated by a plaque commissioned jointly by the Vanguard's Rambling Club and Surrey County Council, to mark the Millennium in 2000. Your current coordinates are therefore officially longitude 0° 0' 0", latitude 51° 16' 25" N". In effect, a meridian is a line of longitude, i.e. any line with the same radius as the Earth that passes through the North and South Poles. The Greenwich Meridian, also known as the Prime Meridian, was established in 1884 at the International Meridian Conference in Washington DC. Passing through the Old Royal Observatory in Greenwich, it is now internationally accepted as the line from which all other longitudes are measured, after a period when various countries each had their own meridian lines, with much confusion as a result. For more information visit the National Maritime Museum website www.nmm.ac.uk.

2.10

The Titsey Estate (www.titsey.org) covers a huge area north and south of the M25, and the VGW passes through it for 4km. **Titsey Place** (900m NE) can be reached by following the drive to the left through the gateway. The original manor house was built in the 1530s for Sir John Gresham, a leading financier, founder of the Royal Exchange and Lord Mayor of London. In 1776 Sir Thomas Gresham replaced it with the present building, rather disparagingly described by Pevsner: 'The outward appearance is all now indifferent; there are hundreds of country houses like it'. The estate remained in the Gresham family, and its descendants the Leveson Gowers, until 1992, when it was turned into a charitable foundation. Containing four paintings by Canaletto, the house (together with its formal garden and kitchen garden) is open to the public on certain days from Easter to September, but the woodland walks in the estate are normally open all year round. Much of the surrounding farmland is owned by the Titsey Estate.

The Roman road from London to Lewes passed nearby - it went slap bang through the middle of what is now **Clacket Lane Service Station** - look left as you cross the motorway. You will cross this Roman road twice as you progress along the VGW (see paragraphs 3.3 and 5.10). Titsey seems to have been a religious site in Roman times, and the remains of two Roman villas and a Celtic temple have been found on the estate. Artefacts from these can be seen on the anticlockwise side of the service station, in a display case outside the toilets. The tiny village of Titsey (from the Saxon Tydiceseg = Tydice's meadow) and its church lie close to the house.

2.11

The **River Eden** is formed from several streams that rise in the Titsey area. It flows first south through Oxted then east through Edenbridge to join the Medway near Penshurst. The river took its name from the town of Edenbridge (which in its original form Eadelmesbrege meant the bridge of a person called Eadhelm) not the other way round. The VGW encounters the Eden again in Sections 3 and 4.

2.12

Titsey Church (St. James the Great) lies in the tiny village of Titsey (from the Saxon Tydiceseg = Tydice's meadow). The village used to lie further west, by Titsey Place, but was moved to its present site around 1860. The present church was built in 1861. There seems to have been a religious site here in Roman times, as the remains of two Roman villas and a Celtic temple have been found nearby.

Moorhouse Sandpits are owned by the Titsey Estate. Roman and medieval artefacts have been found here. This clearly demonstrates that you have moved from the chalk of the North Downs to the sand of the **Greensand Ridge**, which runs parallel to and south of the North Downs, from Haslemere in Surrey to Folkestone in Kent. The greensand rock is made of sand that was deposited 100 - 130 million years ago under vast freshwater lakes. Though called greensand, due to the high content of a mineral called glauconite, you may be hard pressed to detect a greenish hue in the sand quarried from this area.

2.13

Clacket Lane Services opened in 1993. It consists of two separate service stations, one for each direction, on either side of the M25, both operated by RoadChef, and includes a Premier Inn (www.premierinn.com) on the south side. The original proposed name was Titsey Wood Services. The Roman road from London to Lewes, which you have encountered twice already, went slap bang through the middle of the service stations. Artefacts from the Roman buildings that lay in the Titsey estate can be seen in the anticlockwise (north) service station, in a display case outside the toilets.

The **Grasshopper Inn** dates back to the 13th century, when a small cottage here called the Plough served as the beerhouse for the hamlet of Moorhouse. It is thought that the original Grasshopper Inn stood at Titsey - a grasshopper being part of the coat of arms of the Leveson-Gower family - and when this closed they ordered that the Plough should be renamed.

Moorhouse Bank (1 km E up side road opposite Grasshopper Inn) is the remains of a remarkable bank and ditch, probably built by King Ethelbert of Kent after an invasion by men of Wessex in 568 AD (CE).

VANGUARD WAY ROUTE DESCRIPTION: SECTION 2

Moorhouse probably refers to the home of John de la More who lived here in the 14th century.

2.15

The **London Countryway** is an unsigned long-distance trail (328 km / 205 miles) forming a complete circle in the countryside around London, nearly always outside the M25. It was the idea of Keith Chesterton of the Long Distance Walkers Association (www.ldwa.org.uk). Further information about the route at: www.ldwa.org.uk/ldp/members/show_path.php?path_name=London+Countryway.

2.16

The village of **Limpsfield Chart** is also known as The Chart, which is local dialect for overgrown common land, from the Saxon 'cert' - not to be confused with Limpsfield Common, 1½ km to the northwest. Confusingly, the chart is part of a group of several separate National Trust properties in the area, which the NT administers in one unit under the name Limpsfield Common. During the coaching era of the 18th and early 19th centuries, the B269 here used to be the main road from London to Lewes.

At 169 km(105 miles) the **Greensand Way** is one of the longest walking routes in southern England, following the Greensand Ridge (see above). It is managed by Kent and Surrey County Councils. Further information at: www.kent.gov.uk/leisure_and_culture/countryside_and_coast/walking/greensand_way.aspx

The small town of **Westerham** would make a good break point between Sections 2 and 3 as it is served by a pleasant VGW link (shared with the Greensand Way) and has many places for refreshment and good bus connections with Bromley and Sevenoaks. It also has associations with General James Wolfe and Sir Winston Churchill, who both have statues on Westerham Green. For more information visit www.visitwesterham.org.uk/.
