

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

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Fourth Edition

Version 4.1

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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 2006 and 2007. 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 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.

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

Distances and altitudes 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.

Abbreviations

> = off route
Bw = bridleway
Fp = footpath
Rd = road
Tk = track
VW = Vanguard Way

N = north
S = south
E = east
W = west

KA = keep ahead
TL = turn left
TR = turn right
L = left
R = right

m = metres
km = kilometres

VANGUARD WAY ROUTE DESCRIPTION: SECTION 2

Public transport

On route: Buses at Chelsham Common, Worms Heath, Moorhouse and Limpsfield Chart.
Links with Woldingham and Oxted stations.

Distances from Chelsham Common to:

Worms Heath (bus)	2.6 km	(1.6 miles)
>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)	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)	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)	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)

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 (260m).

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] *Bus services operate (except Sundays) to here from stations at East Croydon, Upper Warlingham, East Grinstead, Caterham and Dormansland; also from Tatsfield, Warlingham Green and Redhill. A more frequent service operates (including Sundays) from West Croydon Bus Station to Sainsbury's Warlingham store, 1.1 km to the south along Chelsham Road.*

2.1 [TQ 372 592]

a) At Chelsham Road TR then in 20m just past bus stop bear half L on Fp through trees to Rd (*Ledgers Road*).

b) KA on access Rd opposite to the Bull pub.

[Refreshments] *At the Bull pub.*

2.2 [TQ 372 590]

a) KA between posts then immediately TL and bear R across Chelsham Common to R of pond.

b) Join *Chelsham Common Road* and TL for 30m, passing a signed Fp.

c) Just before crossroads TR past gate along signed, broad Bw to field.

d) Follow R edge of very large field, and after 900m go through trees and past barrier to rejoin *Ledgers Road*.

e) TR to junction with *B269 Limpsfield Road* at Worms Heath.

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 Lane*), then immediately before gateway TL (signpost and concrete sign) past fenced garden of Lodge Cottage.

c) At end of fence bear slightly R for 40m and KA on Fp between posts, passing L of second house.

d) Cross stile into field and proceed in same direction uphill between horse jumps, passing L of trees and shrubs that surround the fenced off **Nore Hill Chalk Pinnacle**.

e) Pass fingerpost by fence and KA to far corner of field, to find waymark post by Worms Heath Cottages, a little to L of radio mast.

[Transport] *A bus service operates at school journey times only from Tatsfield to Warlingham, Caterham and Redhill along the B269 Limpsfield Road on the far side of Worms Heath Cottages.*

2.4 [TQ 381 574]

a) TR to follow L edge of field beside hedge, descending very steeply, with **Warren Barn Farm** in the valley below.

b) Still descending steeply, cross two stiles (the second one was broken as at August 2007) and KA with fence on L.

c) You now start to ascend a little and in 50m cross farm Tk (*Upland Road*) by two more stiles.

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

2.5 [TQ 376 567]

a) Do not cross stile but TL inside field and follow chalky Tk (permissive path) parallel to Rd.

b) Go through gap L of metal gate to Tk.

Note: if permissive path not available for any reason, cross stile on to Rd and TL along it. After 200m, where Rd bends R, KA to rejoin route.

VANGUARD WAY ROUTE DESCRIPTION: SECTION 2

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

- a) TR on to Slines Oak Road then TL along 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, but a pleasanter and mostly traffic-free route is to TR then shortly TL down Park View Road.
- c) Follow this as it bears R, then in 250m (between Hardam House and The Red Cottage) TL along Fp between hedges/fences downhill and through wood to lane (Church Road).
- d) TR and follow Church Road for 750m past Church Road Farm and station car park to Woldingham Station.

[Transport] Trains to East Croydon, central London, East Grinstead and Buxted.

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

[Refreshments] Near Woldingham Station, the Dene Coffee Shop at Knight's Garden Centre (300m past station).

If starting from Woldingham Station:

- a) From the main station exit KA then immediately TR along Church Road, parallel to station car park and railway.
- b) In 500m pass Church Road Farm, then in 250m TL and ascend Fp.
- c) At top of field bear R through wood then KA to Rd.
- d) TR along Park View Road bearing L to village centre.
- e) TR then shortly TL along Slines Oak Road for 1 km.
- f) At the foot of the hill, where the Rd bears L, TR on to Tk.

2.6 [TQ 376 565]

- a) TL past metal gate to follow narrow Bw (formerly a Tk).
- b) At next metal gate fork L on clear Bw steeply uphill between fields to enter wood by gate.
- c) 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.
- d) The path broadens out by Springfields Animal Rescue Centre, then passes **Greenhill Shaw** on your L.
- e) Continue to the point marked on maps as '**WT Sta**', where the Bw becomes metalled, passing the highest point of the VW at about 262m (860 feet).
- f) KA along access Rd for 400m, with Whistlers Wood on your R, to Rd (*The Ridge, but shown as Woldingham Road on some OS maps*) at Flint House, with its venerable, globe-topped red-brick wall.

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 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 VW 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.*

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

You can now either TL to continue along the VW 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 VW to use the slightly longer Eastern Link at the end of 2.8, which is mostly on footpaths.

VANGUARD WAY ROUTE DESCRIPTION: SECTION 2

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

- a) TR steeply down NDW.
- b) TL on 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 KA 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.

[Transport] Trains to East Croydon, central London, East Grinstead and Buxted.

Buses to/from Redhill, Westerham and Edenbridge; also (not Sundays) Lingfield, Limpsfield Chart.

[Refreshments] 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 parallel with railway line.
- c) At end 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 TR up Chalkpit Lane and follow this for 500m. Pavement runs out as you pass under M25, then you should keep R and take care.
- f) 125m after M25 TR up steps, joining NDW and Woldingham Millennium Walk, and climb steeply for 100m, where TR to join VW and NDW.

2.8 [TQ 385 543]

- a) Continuing along the VW, TL past seat to follow path by wire fence for 400m, together with NDW. The impressive red-brick building on hillside beyond the M25 is the former **St. Michael's School**.
- b) Bear R across stile, then go through gap in hedge into next field.

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 a signed 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 cross stile and continue along Fp leading to footbridge 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.

[Transport] Trains to East Croydon, central London, East Grinstead and Buxted.

Buses to/from Redhill, Westerham and Edenbridge; also (not Sundays) Lingfield, Limpsfield Chart.

[Refreshments] In Oxted - see above.

[Toilets] In Oxted - see above.

[Accommodation] In Oxted - see above.

VANGUARD WAY ROUTE DESCRIPTION: SECTION 2

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.
- f) Cross M25 on footbridge then TL and continue on Fp for 250m.
- g) Cross stile and KA beside field to join VW 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 VW 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, crossing stile, to end of field, marked by line of trees.
- c) Go through kissing gate and down steps to join sunken Tk (*Pitchfont Lane*). NDW turns left (uphill) here.

[Transport] Follow NDW uphill for 650m to B269 Limpsfield Road at Botley Hill, where a bus service operates during school journey times only from/to Redhill, Caterham, Warlingham, Chelsham Common and Tatsfield.

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

2.10 [TQ 398 548]

- a) TR downhill past barns and through gate between Pitchfont Farm and Limpsfield Lodge Farmhouse.
- b) KA on tarmac farm lane past Pitchfont Lodge and Titsey Foundation Walk indicator board at entrance to **Titsey Place**. VW crosses Pilgrims' Way here (see 2.7 above).

2.11 [TQ 401 544]

- a) Where Rd bears R, KA for 20m along Bw then cross stile on L.
- b) Go half R on faint Fp across field, heading for fenced recess in far (E) corner of field.
- c) After crossing small stream and stile by metal gate, continue in same direction through several fields, crossing stiles and heading for R side of copse, to cross wooden footbridge (stile at each end) over infant **River Eden**.

2.12 [TQ 408 542]

- a) Cross another stile (broken as at August 2007) on to Rd (*B269 Titsey Road*).
- b) TL for 100m and TR through gate just beyond water company building and power substation.
- c) Follow wire fence on R and when this ends proceed ahead to motorway fence and Fp sign.
- d) TL beside fence and M25, through 'hawthorn tunnels' and up steps to cross stile.

2.13 [TQ 417 544]

- a) TR to cross motorway on concrete bridge.
- 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.
- d) In 150m reach junction with Fp.

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

If you wish to visit the **Grasshopper Inn** the following should be preferable to walking along the busy A25. 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 for 1.3 km (with care as this road has no pavement). Along the link there were fallen trees in the wood at time of writing (March 2008, easily avoided) and the field may be ploughed (i.e. muddy).

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

[Refreshments] Grasshopper Inn.

[Accommodation] Premier Inn, Clacket Lane Services.

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

Returning from Grasshopper Inn:

- a) TR along 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 - look out for waymark post to R by stream.
- d) Go half L across field (bearing 300°) to second waymark post.
- e) KA on Fp through wood, past large water tank, for 400m to Broomlands Lane where TL to rejoin VW.

2.14 [TQ 421 535]

KA to Rd (A25 Westerham Road) at Moorhouse.

[Transport] 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 double swing gates.
- b) KA across field, pass through righthand (smaller) of two gates then bear slightly R to pass through another gate behind shrubbery into Loampit Wood. Cross Tk which carries the **London Countryway**.

2.16 [TQ 423 528]

- a) Bear half R uphill and KA, passing two path junctions, each with waymark post.
- b) At third junction with waymark post 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 VW and Section 2 of the VW ends at:

3.1 [TQ 426 519] Limpsfield Chart.

[Transport] *A once-daily bus service operates from the Carpenters Arms to Westerham, Oxted and Redhill.*

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

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

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 Tk.

b) In 100m at fork, bear L on lesser Tk.

c) Follow this general direction (around bearing 70°) for next 900m to end of wood, keeping ahead at all cross Tks. Soon after start pass Titsey Foundation Woodland sign, and towards the end join major Tk at five-ways junction.

d) At second five-ways junction with water tank, bear half R on Bw, past stone plinth marking GW halfway point, then between gardens.

e) Cross Rd (Goodley Stock Road) with care and cross stile beside fieldgate.

f) KA on permissive Fp/Bw for 80m to T-junction.

g) Here main GW route goes R, but VW link goes L, now on GW link to Westerham. (GW waymark post here broken off at time of writing - March 2008.)

h) Follow this Fp in same general direction (around bearing 15° to 20°) for 900m, ignoring all side turns.

i) At edge of wood, cross first stile and KA through sparse copse, now in Squerryes Park. (Prominent white dovecote down to L is part of 17th century Squerryes Court complex.)

j) Cross second stile and KA across field to third stile, then KA along fenced Fp.

k) Cross fourth stile then descend steeply towards pond.

l) At foot TL to Park Lodge then TR along lane (Mill Lane).

m) In 100m by pond TR down steps, over footbridge and through kissing gate, then KA along foot of sloping field.

n) In 300m TL through kissing gate and along paved alley (Water Lane) between high fences and walls.

o) At end go down steps to enter Westerham opposite the village green (bus stops close by).

[Transport] *Buses to Bromley and Sevenoaks; also (Mo-Fr only) East Grinstead and Edenbridge.*

[Refreshments] *Several places in Westerham.*

[Accommodation] *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 likely to be covered in shrubbery. 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

As well as being a working farm, **Warren Barn Farm** is a horse-jumping centre where show-jumping and point-to-point events take place. It is also the base of Warren Chasers, one of the national chain of cross-country horse-riding centres, UK Chasers (www.ukchasers.com), whose waymarks you pass. The field and combes to your left are regularly used by hang-gliders. In 2006, the steep field ahead was designated as access land under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, which means you can wander anywhere within that field - but most VWayfarers will be concentrating on getting to the foot of the hill without falling over! To your right is the last view of London along the VW.

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.

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 located 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

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wits about you while negotiating the station's maze of subways and exits. The Barn Theatre (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. It runs for 227 km (142 miles) from Farnham to Dover, mostly following the crest of the North Downs. The VW shares its route for the next 1.5 km.

At this point the NDW also happens to be the **Pilgrim's Way**, and the two routes are very similar, though do not always run together. It is one of the best known long-distance routes in Britain, though its origins have been the subject of much contention. It 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. It was said to have been used later by medieval pilgrims between Winchester, the old capital of England, and the tomb of Thomas Beckett in Canterbury Cathedral - King Henry II is said to have been the first of these in 1174. However, doubt has been cast on these stories by those who claim that both traders and pilgrims would surely have preferred the easier and more logical route along the Thames valley via London, and that the idea of a Pilgrims' Way along this route was the misconception of influential Victorian antiquaries. 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 Pilgrim's 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 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 Vanguards 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 VW 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.

VANGUARD WAY ROUTE DESCRIPTION: SECTION 2

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 VW (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 Eadelmesbregre meant the bridge of a person called Eadhelm) not the other way round. The VW encounters the Eden again in Sections 3 and 4.

2.12

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. 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

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. 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 path (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, a co-founder of the Long Distance Walkers Association (www.ldwa.org.uk). Further information at: http://www.ldwa.org.uk/ldp/members/show_path.php?menu_type=S&path_id=278.

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. It follows the Greensand Ridge, running parallel to and south of the North Downs, from Haslemere in Surrey to Folkestone in Kent. Further information at: www.ramblers.org.uk/info/paths/greensand.html.
