

THE VANGUARD WAY

'From the suburbs to the sea'

ROUTE DESCRIPTION
and points of interest along the route

SECTION 4
Haxted Mill to Forest Row



COLIN SAUNDERS

Fifth Edition (Version 2)

Incorporating a new link with pubs in Dormansland and Dormans Station, which replaces the former links with the Wheatsheaf pub at Marsh Green and Lingfield Station.

This second version of the fifth edition was first published in 2015.
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 and the first version of the online fifth edition published in 2014.

Designed by Brian Bellwood

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VANGUARD WAY ROUTE DESCRIPTION: SECTION 4

SECTION 4: HAXTED MILL TO FOREST ROW

13.4 km (8.3 miles)

This revised version incorporates a new link with Dormansland and Dormans Station. It replaces the links with the Wheatsheaf pub at Marsh Green, which closed permanently in 2014, and with Lingfield Station.

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 into 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 4

Roads with no pavement

‘NP’ in the route description indicates a road with 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 Starborough (Moor Lane) and Forest Row.

Links with Edenbridge Town, Lingfield and East Grinstead stations, and bus stops at Edenbridge, Ashurstwood and East Grinstead.

Although Haxted Mill has no public transport, it is an easy place for local taxis to find (taxi operators are listed in the Public Transport section of the Vanguard Way Companion) and is well signed in the area.

Distances from Haxted Mill to:

>Edenbridge Town Station	5.4 km	(3.4 miles)	(via Eden Valley Walk)
Moor Cottages (B2028, bus)	2.9 km	(1.8 miles)	
>Dormans Station	7.2 km	(4.5 miles)	
Dry Hill Camp	5.3 km	(3.3 miles)	
Hammerwood (A264)	8.2 km	(5.1 miles)	
>Ashurstwood (pub/bus)	12.5 km	(7.8 miles)	
Forest Row (bus)	13.4 km	(8.3 miles)	
>East Grinstead Station	18.8 km	(11.7 miles)	(via Forest Way)

Distances from Edenbridge Town Station (via Eden Valley Walk) to:

>Dormans Station	9.5 km	(5.9 miles)	
Dry Hill Camp	7.5 km	(4.2 miles)	
Hammerwood (A264)	10.4 km	(6.5 miles)	
>Ashurstwood (pub/bus)	14.7 km	(9.1 miles)	
Forest Row (bus)	15.6 km	(9.7 miles)	
>East Grinstead Station	21.0 km	(13.0 miles)	(via Forest Way)

Distances from Dormans Station to:

Dry Hill Camp	5.8 km	(3.6 miles)	
Hammerwood (A264)	8.7 km	(5.4 miles)	
>Ashurstwood (pub/bus)	13.0 km	(8.0 miles)	
Forest Row (bus)	13.9 km	(8.6 miles)	
>East Grinstead Station	19.3 km	(10.9 miles)	(via Forest Way)

Overview

After a gentle start through farmland, the VGW very soon enters the rolling hills of the Weald, climbing steadily to the Iron Age site at Dry Hill Camp. The area is well wooded, and you frequently pass from fields to trees and back to open fields. A long, level ridge walk towards the end of this section follows an ancient quiet lane past the small but imposing mansion of Thornhill, before descending into Forest Row.

Lowest and highest points. River Eden (43m); Dry Hill Camp (172m).

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 are:

4.1 to 4.11(b) -Surrey County Council

4.11 (c) to end – East Sussex County Council

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



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VANGUARD WAY ROUTE DESCRIPTION: SECTION 4

Section 4 of the Vanguard Way starts at Haxted Mill [TQ 418 455]

This is in Tandridge District in Surrey.

[Transport 🚗] Taxi (see VGW Companion) from:

Edenbridge station for trains from Tonbridge & Redhill.

Edenbridge Town Station for trains from Oxted, East Croydon, central London, Buxted, Uckfield; also buses (not Sundays) from Westerham, Tunbridge Wells and Sevenoaks.

[Refreshments 🍷] Riverside Brasserie and Restaurant.

4.1 [TQ 418 455]

a) Before Rd crosses stream (Mill Brook), cross stile opposite Haxted Mill and KA through field with hedge on L and Mill Brook on R. Note brick pill box on far side of brook beside tree.

b) In 450m cross FB and concrete culvert over River Eden (see Section 2) and go half L (185°), aiming for stile in hedge to R of road bridge.

c) Cross stile and TL on Rd **NP** (Water Lane) to cross bridge over Eden Brook (tributary of River Eden).

4.2 [TQ 417 446]

a) At fork go L (Starborough Lane) – this Rd **NP** is prone to flooding after very heavy rainfall.

b) After 400m, as Rd turns sharp R, KA over plank bridge and stile (no DG). Note: At time of survey a car had been abandoned here and vegetation had partly obscured the Fp sign.

c) Bear L around fallen tree then go through gap in hedge into adjacent field.

d) Bear R to cross another plank bridge over ditch and continue along right-hand side of field.

e) At end of field bear slightly L to locate and cross stile and plank bridge.

f) In next field continue with hedge on R for 30m then KA across field, aiming for fingerpost to R of electricity post and timber farmhouse near pond (which may be obscured by vegetation).

g) With Cernes Farm to your L, go through KG and over plank bridge to farm drive. The **Eden Valley Walk** starts here, and you rejoin the Tandridge Border Path (see location 1.15) for the next 750m.

[🍷 🚻] **Gabriel's Fishery** is half a mile along this link. The toilets are usually open but the kiosk has limited opening times.

Southern Link with Edenbridge and Edenbridge Town Station [3.7 km / 2.3 miles, TQ 445 466]

This link follows the Eden Valley Walk.

a) With Cernes Farm to your left, cross drive and KA under electricity wire to follow faint Fp along lefthand side of field beside scrub.

b) In field corner cross stile and concrete bridge then follow Fp bearing half L (70°) across field (which may be very soggy after heavy rain), aiming for righthand gate.

c) Cross dilapidated stile by gate then KA on wide grass and earth Tk between fences.

d) Beside large pond join gravel Tk, which leads between trees through a gateway.

On your R now is the car park for **Gabriel's Fishery**, which has a shop/kiosk and toilets in a sylvan setting beside a fishing pond (limited opening times).

e) KA across field, parallel to L edge, then cross concrete FB over River Eden.

f) TR on Fp beside or close to river which soon swings L past end of grass airstrip (the two airstrips in this field are normally only used for private flying at weekends).

g) Go L of a brick pillbox, crossing the other airstrip, then through high metal barrier and across concrete FB.

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- h) KA along Fp beside or close to mill stream, passing through gap in hedge into next field and enter copse. This is Devil's Den, the site of a medieval moated manor, built about 1300, and now a scheduled ancient monument. The moat lies over to your L inside the copse, but nothing of the manor is visible.*
 - j) Rejoin River Eden and emerge into field, where KA on Fp as it bears L beside river for 350m.*
 - k) Cross small wooden FB beside another brick pillbox then KA across larger FB into recreation ground.*
 - l) KA along R side of playing field, then TL beside raised grass embankment.*
 - m) At car park TR on to Rd (Coomb Field) then KA past Lucilina Drive.*
 - n) At main Rd (Lingfield Road) TR past triangular green to traffic lights at B2026 (Mont St. Aignan Way).*
 - p) KA (using controlled crossing to R) along lane to High Street (toilets in Co-op store to R). Leave Eden Valley Walk here.*
 - q) TL along High Street past Costa Coffee (formerly White Horse Inn) for 300m.*
 - r) TR along Station Approach to Edenbridge Town Station.*
- Edenbridge Station (toilets) is 1 km (half a mile) further along the main Rd.*

  Trains to Oxted, East Croydon, central London, Buxted, Uckfield. Also buses (not Sundays) to Westerham, Tunbridge Wells and Sevenoaks.

  Gabriel's Fishery, and in Edenbridge.

 In Edenbridge.

If starting from Edenbridge Town Station

- a) From station forecourt KA along Station Approach to main Rd (Station Road).*
- b) TL along Station Road, which soon becomes High Street.*
- c) In 300m. just past Costa Coffee (formerly White Horse Inn) and opposite NatWest Bank, TR along lane (actually Lingfield Road but unmarked), joining Eden Valley Walk.*
- d) At traffic lights KA across B2026 (Mont St. Aignan Way), using controlled crossing to L (toilets in Co-op store to L).*
- e) KA (still Lingfield Road, L of triangular green) and pass Tanners Mead.*
- f) Shortly TL along Coomb Field past Lucilina Drive and enter recreation ground.*
- g) At car park TL beside raised grass embankment then TR along edge of playing field and cross large wooden FB.*
- h) KA beside or near River Eden, crossing smaller wooden FB beside brick pillbox.*
- j) KA with river, soon bearing R, then KA into copse (Devil's Den, see above) now following former mill stream*
- k) Emerge from copse into field and continue beside or close to mill stream.*
- l) Pass through gap in hedge into next field then in 80m KA across plank bridge and through high metal barrier into large field.*
- m) KA to R of concrete pillbox, crossing grass airstrip – normally only used for weekend flying by light aircraft.*
- n) Follow Fp beside or close to River Eden as it swings R, still in same large field and passes the end of another grass airstrip.*
- p) Immediately after Fp takes short cut avoiding bend in river, where field narrows, TL between bushes to cross concrete FB over river.*
- q) KA across field, parallel with R hand side, and with car park of Gabriel's Fishery to L (see above).*
- r) Join gravel Tk through gateway then KA between trees*

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- s) When gravel Tk swings L, beside large pond, KA on broad grass and earth Tk between fences.
- t) When Tk swings L, KA to cross dilapidated stile beside gate and follow faint Fp across field (which may be soggy after heavy rain) in same direction (250°), aiming slightly L of farm buildings.
- u) Cross concrete Fb and another stile then keep to R side of field beside scrub to Tk by entrance to Cernes Farm, where TL to rejoin VGW.

4.3 [TQ 425 445]

a) TR on drive for 250m and bear R at end through metal gate beside **The Coach House** and past an entrance to **Starborough Manor**.

b) KA along lane with hedge to your L for 30m and cross stile on L.

[↔] At Starborough Manor.

4.4 [TQ 424 442]

a) Follow Fp close to hedge (note wooden tree house clasped by branches of vast, spreading oak tree).

b) On reaching wooden gate, stay inside field for 100m then cross stile (no DG) to L.

c) TR along drive of **Starborough Manor** (shown on some maps as Starborough Castle).

4.5 [TQ 425 439]

a) In 230m cross stile on R and go three-quarters L (bearing 220°) on Fp to far L corner of field (ignore direction indicated by adjacent fingerpost).

b) Cross stile on to Rd (B2028 Moor Lane) by **Starborough Nursery** and TR for 20m to junction with **Starborough Road**.

[🚌] Buses operate along this road Monday to Saturday between Crawley & Oxted, and Lingfield & Tunbridge Wells.

4.6 [TQ 422 434]

a) Cross with care to the gap L of **Moor Cottages** (a slight diversion R to see the inscription on the far wall is recommended).

b) KA on broad Bw between hedges then along lefthand side of large field, through a copse, with Skitts Farm over to your L.

c) In 500m reach path junction, then in 30m at second junction KA on Bw winding along L side of copse, now with **Hoopers Farm** away to your L.

Coming in from the left once again is the Tandridge Border Path (see Section 1), which we rejoin for the fifth and last time for the next 3.5 km (2 miles).

d) At Bw junction go through gate on to farm Tk, TR and in 50m TL through another gate (usually open; we refer to this junction as Greathed Turn).

The link with pubs in Dormansland and Dormans Station starts here.

Link to Dormansland [2.3 km / 1.4 miles*] and Dormans Station [3.9 km / 2.5 miles, TQ 396 414]

**The Plough Inn [2.0 km / 1.2 miles] is a little closer.*

a) Instead of turning L, bear R up Tk, which soon passes Littleworth Cottage.

b) In 250m enter woodland through wooden latch gate to follow earth Tk. It may be very muddy in places but you should be able to avoid the mud on slightly higher adjacent ground. (Note deep gully on your L, and later on your R, which appears to be the ancient course of a usually dry stream.)

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c) On emerging from woodland beside Copse Cottage, KA on metalled Tk, soon passing double gates of **Tobias & The Angel Workshop**.

d) Turn sharp R at junction beside wooden barn (with Home Farm to your L), joining tarmac lane (Ford Manor Road).

e) In 150m you reach two junctions in quick succession: the first leads to Ford Manor, the second to **Greathed Manor**, and both are visible over to your L.

f) KA on lane for 375m to pass through former gateway between stone columns beside lodge.

For the **Plough Inn** [TQ 405 427, phone 01342 832933] KA along Ford Manor Road for another 650m.

g) For Dormansland village centre and Dormans Station, immediately TL on narrow earth Fp between hedges.

h) Soon pass through metal latch-gate and KA along R-hand side of large field.

i) In 200m pass overgrown remains of wooden KG and grass strip, which subdivides the field.

j) KA for another 120m, now with trees on your R, and leave field by keeping ahead past remains of metal KG to enter narrow earth Fp among trees.

k) In 340m reach and cross Rd (Hollow Lane), then KA along narrow tarmac Fp to R of St Clair Cottages.

l) Shortly join drive leading to Rd (Dormansland High Street), then TL to **Royal Oak** pub [TQ 404 421, phone 01342 836611]. The post office/village store is opposite.

[🚰] [↩] [🚰] In Dormansland.

m) For Old House at Home pub and Dormans Station, continue past Royal Oak for 50m to find public toilets on your R.

n) Go L of toilets then bear R down narrow tarmac Fp into playing field, passing between tennis courts and playground.

o) At foot of hill TL along drive to Rd (West Street). To your R is the **Old House at Home** pub [TQ 401 421, phone 01342 832117].

p) For Dormans Station, TL along West Street and KA at junction (Barnfield, View Terrace).

q) In 200m at junction TR past Cherry Tree Cottage to end of lane then KA along tarmac Fp for 600m, briefly joining drive serving houses. Ignore all side turnings.

r) On reaching Rd (Dormans Station Road) TR to station [TQ 396 414].

[🚆] Trains to East Grinstead, Oxted, East Croydon and central London.

If starting from Dormans Station:

a) From footbridge TL past station house then immediately TL again along narrow tarmac Fp (signed Greenwich Meridian Trail).

b) KA for 600m, briefly joining drive serving houses. Ignore all side turnings.

c) On reaching lane, KA then bear R to junction beside Cherry Tree Cottage.

d) TL along lane (View Terrace), which widens out and joins West Street.

e) In 250m, just before **Old House at Home** pub, and opposite house number 100, TR along drive between fences into playing field.

f) In 15m bear R up narrow tarmac Fp leading between playground and tennis courts.

g) Bear L at top past public toilets to reach Rd (Dormansland High Street).

h) TL to pass **Royal Oak** pub and post office/village store.

i) In 170m (opposite Moorkeyes/Park View) TR along drive then KA along narrow tarmac Fp to reach and cross Rd (Hollow Lane).

j) KA along earth Fp, which leads for 750m, at first among trees, then along L-hand side of two large fields separated by grass strip.

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- k) At end of second field KA through metal latch-gate on narrow fenced Fp beside trees to reach lane (Ford Manor Road) and TR. (If you went to the **Plough Inn** you rejoin the link here by keeping ahead.)
- l) Go through former gateway between stone columns and KA for 375m, reaching two junctions in quick succession (for Greathed Manor then Ford Manor).
- m) Bear L, following 'Courtyard' sign, and follow lane for another 150m to junction, with Home Farm ahead.
- n) Fork L on metalled Tk then sharp L again at wooden barn.
- o) Follow Tk as it veers R to pass double gates of Tobias & All Angels Workshop.
- p) When metalled Tk ends beside Copse Cottage KA up grassy Tk into trees, with stream in gully on L (later on R).
- q) Leave woodland through wooden latch gate and KA for 250m, passing Littleworth Cottage, to Bw junction, where TR to rejoin VGW.

4.7 [TQ 424 425]

- a) In 20m bear L up enclosed Bw (*fine view to L in winter*) which after 300m goes through wood called Old Plantation. *Before entering wood look back for another fine view.*
- b) Where wood ends follow Bw as it winds to L around L side of field, barns and garden, with Reynolds Wood on your L.
- c) TR at junction with broad Tk (Bw) by house at Dry Hill Farm, where the **Sussex Border Path** briefly joins the VGW for just 100m – it comes in from the L here and continues ahead at the next junction.

4.8 [TQ 430 420]

- a) At next junction in 100m TL up Bw.
- b) Keep to broad main Tk which after 350m bears L through gap in overgrown embankments. *This was probably the main entrance into **Dry Hill Camp**, and the embankments are the remains of its walls.*
- c) Continue along the Tk (which can get very muddy here), now inside Camp. *Over to your left in a field is a **trig point** at altitude 172m or 564 feet – this is one of the highest points along the VGW.*
- d) In 200m you leave the Camp and pass between two field gates then descend a fenced Tk between fields.
- e) At foot of slope, bear R on Tk through trees for 20m.
- f) At Bw junction keep SA to concrete Dutch barn by **Beeches Farm**.

4.9 [TQ 434 413]

- a) TL then shortly TR along concrete farm Tk, passing through farm gate on to tarmac lane.
- b) Descend lane for 500m through another farm gate by Woodlands Farm.
- c) Continue along lane for a further 500m to grass triangle with elderly fingerpost at junction of Tk and Rd in the **Kentwater valley**. *Near foot of lane, look back at recessed entrance on R to gate that bears a sign 'Vanguards' – the owner decided to name the property after the Vanguard Way!*

[🍴] TL along lane for 300m to Basings Farm (open to the public Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays), which sells a variety of refreshments (including goats milk ice cream) and has a farm shop.

[👉] At the White Horse Inn, Holtye Common (3 km / 2 miles) east along Smithers Lane - a pleasant walk along a normally quiet lane, which passes a series of small artificial ponds (constructed to provide power to the iron foundries in this area), the much larger Furnace Pond, and crosses Holtye Golf Course on the common. NB The White Horse Inn was closed at time of writing (December 2013), and it was not clear whether or when it would reopen.

[🚌] Infrequent buses at Holtye Common.

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The next kilometre of route to the A264 at Hammerwood, is not ideal, being along a fairly busy road with no pavement. We hope that a better route will become available eventually, using a more easterly route mostly on public rights of way. However, unfortunately and frustratingly, this is not yet available due to a very short gap in the right of way at this end. We have asked Kent County Council to investigate.

4.10 [TQ 434 403]

TR on Rd **NP** (Smithers Lane), passing the chocolate-box cottage called Smithers, for 500m to Rd junction.

[J] 275m to R along Shepherds Grove Lane.

4.11 [TQ 429 401]

a) TL on Rd **NP** (Shepherds Grove Lane).

Take great care on this road as it is quite busy and has several blind righthand bends with no pavement - see Road Safety in 'An Introduction to the Route'.

b) Follow Rd for 750m, crossing Kent Water and passing **Gotwick Manor** to junction with main Rd (A264 Holtye Road) at Hammerwood.

[🚌] Surprisingly, there is no bus service along this main road. The nearest is at Holtye Common (2.5 km east, not Sundays). You could walk into East Grinstead (5.3 km southwest) but you may as well walk on to Ashurstwood (4.8 km) or Forest Row (5.4 km further along VGW), which both have bus services. It should be possible to get a taxi (see Taxi list in the VGW Companion) to come from East Grinstead to collect you here (say you are on the A264 at the junction of Holtye Road and Shepherds Grove Lane).

4.12 [TQ 432 395]

a) Cross Rd with great care to 'private drive' opposite (a public Fp signposted to various properties.

*If you wish to visit **Hammerwood Park** (1.5 km off route) TL here and walk with great care along Rd for 500m, then TR past village hall and follow lane to far end of village.*

b) Follow drive **NP** for 500m.

Just past Brooklands Farm sign, look R to see a recent example of landscaping in the style of Capability Brown.

c) Where lane bends R, TL sharply on Fp (becoming Tk) to junction.

4.13 [TQ 435 389]

a) TR along Bw beside line of trees, with fields to your L.

b) At metal gate KA on Bw into **Wet Wood**.

c) On leaving wood cross stream by brick FB and KA on Bw.

d) Continue uphill for 400m between hedges, fences and bushes, eventually along edge of wood (*The Grove*) to Rd.

4.14 [TQ 435 380]

a) At Dog Gate Lodge TR on lane **NP** (**Thornhill Road**) and follow it along a ridge between valleys for 1,500m, passing Harelands, Owletts House, Songhurst (with its pond, formerly Barton House), Hurstbrook House and imposing grey-stone **Thornhill** all on your L.

b) In 1,500m reach junction by Homefield Cottage.

[🚌] For **Ashurstwood** (1 km) TR at Homefield Cottage and continue along lane. Buses to East Grinstead, Forest Row, Tunbridge Wells and Uckfield stop by the Three Crowns pub.

[🍷] Pubs in Ashurstwood.

4.15 [TQ 430 368]

a) At Homefield Cottage TL past post box along lane **NP**.

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b) In 70m TR (opposite 'private lane' sign for Great And Little Surries) along rough Tk for 200m to lane (***Cansiron Lane***).

c) Bear L and follow lane **NP** past Grove Farm Cottages and Home Meadow.

4.16 [TQ 431 364]

a) In 200m, where lane bears L, TR by wooden field gates (Melbank); do not go through gates but follow Fp through trees and between fields (joining one of the *Forest Way Circular Walks*).

b) Fp soon descends gently into small wood then levels out between more fields.

c) Descend again, with shallow overgrown gully on your L, then much deeper wooded gully on your R (*this gully may be the bed of an ancient stream, which seems to flow below ground level in its upper stages but appears further down*).

d) KA down uneven and often muddy Fp to L of wood, between hedge and fence. (*There is a small reservoir over to your L, though it may not be visible from the Fp.*)

e) Eventually pass through latch gate and follow R edge of field.

f) When field edge bears L, KA along Fp between hedge and fence beside Forest Row Water Treatment Works.

g) In 120m (after passing through field gate) cross lane and former railway track beside Forest Lodge Veterinary Centre (***Forest Way, High Weald Landscape Trail***) and go through gap in bushes opposite into car park.

[🍴🍷] 650m to your left along the lane is Tablehurst Farm which has an organic farm shop and café open 9 am to 5 pm Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays. The River View Café is on the far side of the car park, while members of the CIU (Working Men's Club & Institute Union) are welcome to use the facilities of the Forest Row Social Club on L side of the car park.

The link with East Grinstead Station starts here.

Link to East Grinstead Station [5.6 km / 3.5 miles, TQ 388 382]

If you need to get to East Grinstead Station, the quickest way is probably to continue into Forest Row for a bus. But from this point there is an easily followed and pleasant walk of 5.7 km (3.5 miles) using this link, a former railway line, mostly along the Forest Way. But note that it is mostly gently uphill into East Grinstead, so you may prefer to take the bus there and return on foot.

a) TR along lane past veterinary centre, parallel with former railway track on embankment to L.

b) In 300m cross A22 London Road at controlled crossing then bear R up Fp behind fence.

c) Follow disused railway Tk (*Forest Way/High Weald Landscape Trail*) for 3.8 km (2.4 miles). This is also National Cycle Route 21, so watch out for fast-moving cyclists. Points to watch out for are two memorial seats, Brambletye Crossing with its former gatekeeper's lodge (under reconstruction at time of writing), a picnic table about halfway, a brick road bridge, and a fairly busy estate road towards the end.

d) At the end, bear L up to A22 Lewes Road in East Grinstead. The road opposite, Beeching Way (ironically along a former railway line), is named after Dr Richard Beeching (1913-1985), the architect of the infamous 'Beeching Axe' of massive railway line closures in the 1960s, who lived in East Grinstead.

e) TL for 300m, leading up to the High Street, and KA along it to mini-roundabout.

f) TR down London Road, signed for Worth Way.

g) At foot of hill KA past traffic lights (Queens Road to left, King Street to right - toilets in car park) then just after next lights by Tommy Flynn's pub TL along Railway Approach for 350m, crossing to right-hand side.

Continued on next page.

Continued from previous page.

h) At the roundabout for B2110 (Brooklands Way), the station lies ahead. Using dropped kerbs at junctions, KA through station car park, with bus stops on your R. If traffic is heavy, use the light-controlled crossing to your left.

 *Trains to Oxted, East Croydon and central London; many bus services.*

 *and most other facilities in East Grinstead.*

 *The Tommy Flynn's pub is located at the start of Railway Approach, there is a snack bar at the station and a Starbucks in Sainsbury's opposite the station. There are many other pubs and cafés in the town centre. Toilets at the station and in Sainsburys.*

 *At the station and in Sainsburys.*

 *Millets, London Road.*

If starting from East Grinstead Station:

a) From forecourt KA through car park to roundabout (with bus stops on your left) then KA along Rd (Railway Approach) - head for the Mid Sussex Timber warehouse. If traffic is heavy by the station use the light-protected crossing to your right.

b) At end of Railway Approach TR along London Road for 350m to junction at top of hill (toilets to L at junction with King Street).

c) TL for 300m along High Street which becomes Lewes Road, crossing to righthand pavement.

d) KA to 2nd roundabout at junction with A22 ring road.

e) Descend ramp to R on to Forest Way Country Park/West Sussex Border Path and follow the Forest Way for 3.8 km (2.4 miles), eventually descending ramp to London Road at Forest Row.

f) Cross Rd at light-controlled crossing then KA along lane signposted Hartfield / Forest Way. (Or for facilities in village centre TR along London Road, turning L at B2110 to rejoin VGW at 5.1a below.)

g) Follow lane for 300m (the former railway line is to your R here), then immediately after water treatment works and veterinary centre TR through gap in bushes (signed 'Forest Row village').

4.17 [TQ 428 353]

a) Bear half L through car park to open area, passing Forest Row Social Club and commercial buildings.

b) Bear R past Riverview Café and beside Rd (Station Road), through Forest Row's 'commercial quarter', which consists of a growing number of warehouses and business premises.

*c) In 100m you cross the infant **River Medway**.*

Just past this (opposite timber yard) a Fp to R leads directly to Forest Row's bus stops and most of its facilities.

*d) Continue ahead for another 200m to main Rd (B2110 Hartfield Road) at **Forest Row**, where Section 4 of the VGW ends beside the Foresters Arms pub at:*

5.1 [TQ 426 350]

 *Buses to East Grinstead, London, Haywards Heath, Crawley, Three Bridges, Uckfield, Coleman's Hatch, Tunbridge Wells and Eastbourne. Also (not Sundays) to Hailsham, East Hoathly, Golden Cross and Westerham.*

 *You pass the Riverview Café along Station Road. The Foresters Arms is adjacent to VGW at end of Station Road. There are more pubs and cafés in the town centre - TR for 150m at the Foresters Arms. In Lower Road at the back of the car park is Seasons Organic Fruit and Vegetables.*

 *The public toilets in the car park have closed, to be replaced by a Community Toilet Scheme, in which the public are able to use the facilities in the following places: Forest Row Community Centre*

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(which the VGW passes soon after the start of Section 5), Lenny's Sandwich Bar (almost opposite the Foresters Arms), and both the Chequers Inn and Brambletye Hotel in The Square.

[↔] *In Forest Row.*

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COMMENTARY

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

4.2

The **Eden Valley Walk** is 24 km (15 miles) long and links the Vanguard Way at Cernes with the Wealdway at Tonbridge, naturally following the River Eden as much as possible. Jointly promoted by Kent and Surrey County Councils, it passes through Edenbridge and close to three of southeast England's best-loved stately homes: Hever Castle, Chiddingstone Castle and Penshurst Place. For Vanguard Wayfarers it provides a pleasant link with Edenbridge. More information at:

www.edenbridgetown.com/maps/eden_valley_walk.shtml.

Gabriel's Fishery is about half a mile along the Southern Link with Edenbridge and Edenbridge Town Station. It is intended mainly for anglers (but walkers are welcome) and provides an idyllic setting for a picnic among trees and small lakes, with a refreshment kiosk (limited opening times) and toilets. The lakes also attract many species of birds and insects.

4.3

The **Coach House**, built in the late 18th century, was formerly the stables of Starborough Manor.

Starborough Farm is the home of Telescope House (www.telescopehouse.com), specialists in astronomical instruments, whose customers included the late Sir Patrick Moore. It has a small observatory and holds observing evenings in association with Starborough Manor (see below). Note that the farm is only a service centre – the retail shop is in Lingfield town centre.

4.4

Starborough Manor is the name of the rather grand former farmhouse on your left, built circa 1880, which offers bed and breakfast. The remains of a Norman castle, and of a later one built in 1342 by the first Lord Cobham, are situated on a moated island on the far (east) side, and these are marked on OS maps as Starborough Castle, which also appears on a sign nearby. The original name was Sterburgh, meaning Sterr's Castle (after a local squire, Richard Sterr), so the addition of Castle is tautological! Lord Cobham's castle had four turrets and a main gate. In 1642, during the Civil War, it was garrisoned by the Parliamentarians and dismantled in 1649; only the moat and some traces of the building survive. A battlemented Gothic-style summerhouse was built in 1754. The moat and ruins are inaccessible to the public, but can be seen by making a short diversion along the footpath opposite (on the link with Marsh Green) as you join the drive. Note too the narrow-boat moored incongruously in the moat beside the island.

4.5

Starborough Nursery is well known for growing a wide variety of rare and unusual trees and shrubs including acers, camellias and rhododendrons. More information at:

www.gardenvisit.com/nursery/starborough_nursery.

4.6

Whether or not you speak German, a very short detour westwards (ahead) along the road past **Moor Cottages** will both entertain and educate. At the far end of Moor Cottages look back and up to see the following inscription on the side wall: 'Der wein ist geldeswert; er lindert alle Schmerzen, er macht die Zunge oft leichter, and bessert von Herzens'. By our loose translation and imperfect German, this means 'wine is worth every penny; it soothes every pain, it often makes the tongue lighter, and improves the heart'. This is the result of a visit by the owners in the 1980s to a wine festival beside the River Rhine in Germany, where they were captivated by this inscription on the wall of an inn.

Hoopers Farm is one of the largest farms in this area, and you will see its signs in several places. It is family run and produces mainly beef and lamb, with a herd of pedigree Sussex cattle and a flock of pedigree Dorset Down sheep. The farm participates in the Environment Stewardship Scheme, has planted over 1 km

of new hedges, uses no artificial fertilisers, has removed lorry-loads of accumulated rubbish, installed solar panels and a woodchip boiler. Its produce can be bought online at www.hoopersfarm.net.

Tobias & The Angel Workshop (on link with Dormansland) is where craft items are made for their shop in Barnes, London, SW13, whose name is taken from a famous 15th century Italian painting. More information on their website www.tobiasandtheangel.com.

Greathed Manor (on link with Dormansland) was originally called Ford Manor – the building that now carries that name is a later construction. It was built in 1868 and designed by Robert Kerr, author of ‘The Gentleman’s House’, for Josiah Spender Clay, one of the founders of Bass Brewery. During the First World War it was used as a convalescent home for American officers, and during the Second World War it was requisitioned for the Canadian Army. From 1946 to 1959, still called Ford Manor, it housed London University’s School of Divinity, whose principal was Dr Donald Coggan, later Archbishop of Canterbury. It then became retirement apartments under the management of the Country Houses Association, who renamed it Greathed Manor in memory of their founder, Rear Admiral Bernard Greathed, and it is now a nursing home run by Pressbeau Ltd.

4.7

Coming in from the left now is the **Sussex Border Path**. This is a 240 km long-distance walking route from Emsworth to Rye along the county border, with a branch from East Grinstead to Southwick along the border that divides East and West Sussex. The route was created in 1983 by Aeneas Mackintosh and Ben Perkins. More information at www.sussexborderpath.co.uk.

Dry Hill Farm used to include fruit production, with huts and toilets alongside the VGW for the seasonal pickers. Then for a while it was Pick-Your-Own, with a refreshment kiosk that is sadly no longer available.

4.8

Dry Hill Camp (also called Dry Hill Fort) was an Iron Age hill fort dating from about 500 BC, and would probably have been permanently occupied by Celtic tribes. Roughly rectangular in shape, it covers 10 hectares and has a circumference of 1.5 km. The VGW follows its southwestern side for about 250m, but the body of the camp extends some 350m to your left, with its main entrance at the far end. The fort is described as ‘multivallate’, which means it had several walls or earth embankments - in this case three embankments separated by two ditches, which survive for about half of the total length. The last archaeological excavation took place in 1932, when flint artefacts and evidence of pre-Roman iron-working were found. The site is privately owned but is registered as both a Scheduled Monument by English Heritage and a Site of Special Scientific Interest by Natural England. Its integrity has been rather compromised by the covered reservoir, on your left as you enter the site, built in 1910 and now owned by Sutton and East Surrey Water. There is in fact a second, smaller reservoir within the southwestern ramparts.

A **trig point** is the popular term for a triangulation pillar, also known as a trigonometrical point or station, whose abbreviation gives rise to the popular term. Some 7,000 of them were set up in Britain from 1935 by the Ordnance Survey, and were used by their surveyors to measure distances and altitudes – in order to do this at least two other pillars would have to be in line of sight. A brass plate with three arms and hooks is fixed to the top to provide a secure mounting for a theodolite (an instrument for measuring angles). On the side are the letters OSBM (Ordnance Survey Bench Mark) followed by the reference number of the trig point.

After this process was replaced in the early 1990s by satellite measurements the trig points became redundant, however, they are still of much use to walkers as landmarks and for navigational purposes, and most remain in place, often maintained by a variety of local groups and individuals. This trig point at Dry Hill is situated at altitude 172m (564 feet). You pass two others along the Vanguard Way: at Gaywood (3.6b in Section 3, though this one is difficult to spot) and Gills Lap Clump (5.8c in Section 5).

Beeches Farm is a 'Red Tractor Farm'. This means that it has been accredited as producing food products of a high standard under a scheme introduced by Assured Food Standards in 2000, and can use its red tractor quality mark. The farm has pedigree Aberdeen Angus cattle and pure-bred Suffolk sheep.

4.9

There is a pleasant and interesting diversion to your left (SE) along Smithers Lane in the **Kentwater valley**. It is normally quiet but can get busy in rush hours. Refreshments are sometimes available at Basings Farm Shop (350m), and 600m beyond that is Scarletts, a scattering of picturesque buildings, including a furnace that was in use from the 16th to 18th centuries, which has been excavated by its owner. As well as the furnace itself, there is a wheelpit for the furnace bellows and a gun casting pit. Further along, the lane passes a series of small artificial ponds, fed by Kent Water, and constructed to provide power to the iron foundries in this area. Beyond these is the much larger Furnace Pond (2 km). There is a golf course on Holtye Common, and on its far side is the White Horse Inn (3 km), which offers a wide choice of meals and accommodation.

4.10

Gotwick Manor was the home of Elaine Marks, daughter of Michael Marks, the co-founder of Marks & Spencer. Its garden had a stream that could be turned on and off from inside the house. Just before Gotwick Manor you cross from Tandridge District in Surrey into Wealden District in East Sussex.

4.11

The secluded village of **Hammerwood** is part of the tied estate of Hammerwood Park. It lies just 300m from the VGW as the crow flies but can only be reached from it on an 800m diversion. It contains several buildings described by Pevsner. The mansion called **Hammerwood Park** (500m further SE, www.hammerwood.mistral.co.uk) has an interesting history. It was built in 1792 for one John Sperling, and designed by the Yorkshireman, Benjamin Latrobe, who emigrated to the United States in 1795 and became one of that country's leading architects, including in his portfolio the White House and the Capitol in Washington DC, and Baltimore Cathedral. His only other remaining design in England is Ashdown House (see Forest Row). In the 1960s Hammerwood Park was turned into flats, then in the 1970s was acquired by the rock band Led Zeppelin. It seems that bed and breakfast is no longer offered, but the house is open to the public on Wednesday and Saturday afternoons and bank holidays from June to September and the tour includes afternoon tea. Nearby Bower Farmhouse dates from the 15th century, and St. Stephen's Church on the main road is 19th century.

4.13

Wet Wood has a slightly mysterious atmosphere. Scattered about near the Vanguard Way are the abandoned and rotting remains of what appear to be workbenches with sinks, also a camp fire area with a picnic table and rustic seats. Our research has so far failed to identify what all this was used for, so if any reader has more information please get in touch.

4.14

Thornhill Road follows a ridge at an altitude of about 100m between tributaries of the Medway. In effect, it is a continuation of Hammerwood Road, which starts at Ashurstwood and is thought to lie on the line of an important pre-Roman track to Hammerwood that was used by iron-smelters - the names Hammerwood and Cansiron (see above) betray associations with the iron industry.

The imposing Jacobean-style house called **Thornhill** was built in 1795 of local sandstone – probably quarried from pits you pass along the VGW – possibly as a bailiff's house linked to the Hammerwood Estate. It has recently been converted into luxury apartments. (We are grateful to Ashurst Wood Historians for this information.)

4.15

Ashurstwood (1 km W) was originally called Aesehyrstwilde - wilde being the Saxon for waste land - and was first recorded in 1164. In recent years it has expanded from a small, sleepy village to a well-heeled commuter centre, with a population of nearly 2,000 and an industrial estate. As well as two pubs (Maypole and Three Crowns) it has the 19th century Christ Church, which contains an early 16th century Flemish carved altarpiece. The mansion called Dutton Homestall (500 m N of the church on Homestall Road) was created from the original building, Homestall, to which in 1933 was added the ornamental timber-framed Dutton Hall, transferred lock stock and barrel from Cheshire.

On 1st January 2000, the village came to national prominence when it declared independence as the 'People's Republic of Ashurst Wood Nation State' (PRAWNS), announcing to a bemused media that its residents were 'no longer prawns of the government of the Disunited Kingdom, we are now Prawns in our own right'. A ruling in the 10th century by King Ethelred, exempting the village from taxation, was cited as justification for this action. Under a retired colonel who called himself Chief Prawn, ministers were appointed, a constitution was written, passports were issued, a national anthem composed and checkpoints established on the road from East Grinstead. We assume that this good-natured, tongue-in-cheek revolution has now come to an end, though we have yet to find a definitive statement to this effect.

Cansiron Lane is an ancient track that links Ashurstwood with Holtye.

4.16

The **Forest Way** is a linear country park, used as a shared walking and cycling route, which between East Grinstead and Groombridge (15.5 km / 9.6 miles) follows part of the former railway line from Three Bridges to Tunbridge Wells West. More information at:

www.eastsussex.gov.uk/leisureandtourism/countryside/walks/forestway.

The former Forest Row station occupied the area to your left - only part of a platform remains. The line was opened in 1866 for the London Brighton & South Coast Railway as a rival to the earlier (1845) route to Tunbridge Wells Central of the South Eastern Railway. The two lines were linked in the 1870s, in 1922 became part of the Southern Railway, and in 1946 were nationalised as part of British Railways. This line was closed in 1967, though the section from Tunbridge Wells West to Groombridge still operates as the steam-hauled Spa Valley Railway (www.spavalleyrailway.co.uk).

The track is also used by the **High Weald Landscape Trail**, which is 145 km (90 miles) long from Horsham in West Sussex to Rye in East Sussex, via Haywards Heath, East Grinstead and Tunbridge Wells. More information at:

www.kent.gov.uk/leisure_and_culture/countryside_and_coast/walking/high_weald_landscape_trail.aspx

4.17

The **River Medway** rises from several streams close to the west of this point (around Turners Hill) and flows for 112 km (70 miles) to reach the Thames Estuary west of the Isle of Sheppey.

Forest Row (www.forestrow.org) is still sometimes described as a village, indeed on several occasions has won the title of Best Kept Village in the county, but in recent years it has expanded to the extent that it is really a bustling small town with, at the 2001 census, 4,700 inhabitants. It originally developed around a row of royal hunting lodges in the forest, and expanded when John of Gaunt established a castle at Kidbrooke around 1372.

During the coaching era it became a staging-post on the London-Eastbourne road. In 1801 it was the scene of a notorious highway robbery by the Beatson brothers, who were hanged here the following year. Forest Row has become a popular place for retirement, and has a good shopping-centre, some accommodation and refreshment facilities.

Forest Row has three highly respected schools nearby. Ashdown House School (2 km northeast, designed by Benjamin Latrobe, see Hammerwood Park above) is preparatory, while two for older pupils follow the

VANGUARD WAY ROUTE DESCRIPTION: SECTION 4

Steiner Waldorf philosophy, which encourages pupils to develop creativity, self-confidence and practical skills; they are Emerson College (1 km northeast) and Michael Hall (see Kidbrooke Park below).

Forest Row is twinned with Milly-la-Forêt, a community of similar size, 53 km south of Paris in the Forest of Fontainebleau.

Interesting buildings include:

Village Hall. Formerly the headquarters of the Conservators of Ashdown Forest, built 1892. The gable end on the south side has a spectacular fresco showing that it was erected by Henry Ray Freshfield of Kidbrooke Park in 1892. On the wall below is a plaque commemorating the visit of President John F. Kennedy in June 1963: while staying with Prime Minister Harold Macmillan (who lived at Birch Grove, 4 km southwest) he attended a service at Forest Row's catholic church, Our Lady of the Forest.

Holy Trinity Church. Built 1834 in an unusual north-south alignment on the site of a former cockpit. Forest Row was originally in East Grinstead parish but separated from it in 1894.

Brambletye House (1.2 km NW). Ruins of an Elizabethan-Jacobean moated manor-house built in 1631 for the local MP, Sir Henry Compton. It was later acquired by Sir James Richards, who was accused in 1683 of high treason. He fled to Spain and the house was allowed to deteriorate. This was the setting for Horatio Smith's novel, 'Brambletye House', written in 1826. A new house was built in 1919.

Kidbrooke Park (1.2 km W). A mansion built in 1724 of local sandstone for the Earl of Abergavenny in a park designed by the landscape gardener Humphrey Repton on or near the site of a castle built by John of Gaunt in the late 14th century. Since 1945 it has been the home of the Michael Hall School (see above), named after the Archangel Michael, and is the largest in Britain of the Steiner Waldorf schools. Its grounds are no longer open to the public.

