

THE VANGUARD WAY

‘From the suburbs to the sea’

ROUTE DESCRIPTION

and points of interest along the route

SECTION 6

Poundgate to Blackboys

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Fourth Edition
Version 4.1

This fourth edition was first published in 2009.
It is only available as an online resource.

It replaces previous printed editions published in
1980, 1986 and 1997

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

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VANGUARD WAY ROUTE DESCRIPTION: SECTION 6

SECTION 6: POUNDGATE TO BLACKBOYS

11.1 km (6.9 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 6

Public transport

On route: Buses at Poundgate, High Hurstwood, Pound Green and Blackboys.
Link with Buxted station.

Distances from Poundgate to:

High Hurstwood (church)	3.1 km (1.9 miles)
>High Hurstwood (Maypole pub)	4.5 km (2.8 miles)
>Buxted Station (via northern link)	7.5 km (4.7 miles)
Pound Green	6.7 km (4.2 miles)
>Buxted Station (via southern link)	8.0 km (5.0 miles)
Blackboys Crossroads	11.0 km (6.8 miles)

Distances from Buxted Station to:

Blackboys Crossroads (via northern link)	6.6 km (4.1 miles)
Blackboys Crossroads (via southern link)	5.6 km (3.5 miles)

Overview

This is an idyllic area of rolling countryside and small farms, mostly in open countryside and pastures. From Poundgate you gradually descend a ridge to High Hurstwood, then cross the River Uck just before reaching Pound Green on the outskirts of Buxted. The VW then passes through one of its most delightful stretches around Tickerage Mill, and briefly joins the Wealdway.

Note: After heavy rain the area around the River Uck can get very wet and muddy, and even flooded.

Lowest and highest points. River Uck (32m); Poundgate (184m).

VANGUARD WAY ROUTE DESCRIPTION: SECTION 6

Section 6 of the Vanguard Way starts at Poundgate [TQ 492 288]

50m west of the Crow & Gate pub on the A26 Uckfield Road. This is in Wealden District in East Sussex.

[Transport] *Bus services operate along this road between Tunbridge Wells, Crowborough, Uckfield, Lewes and Brighton. They stop by (or opposite) the phone box near the Crow & Gate pub.*

[Phone box] *Opposite.*

[Refreshments] *The Crow & Gate pub.*

6.1 [TQ 492 288]

- Continuing from Section 5, cross Rd to phone box / bus stop and cross stile.
- KA beside fence and across field to cross another stile.
- Pass between houses on concrete Tk then in 30m by metal gate TR on grass Tk.
- Immediately cross stile on L then TR along side of field.
- Cross stile before partly concealed bunker, then keep to R edge of next field.
- In 100m by next tree in hedge cross stile and TL following fenced path between fields.

6.2 [TQ 490 285]

- Cross stile into wood and in 25m bear R on Fp along edge of wood.
- In 500m cross stile into field and follow L edge of field.
- Cross stile and bear L through woods ignoring turnings to L and R.
- Tk passes under telegraph wires then leaves wood by cottage on R.
- KA for 75m to fingerpost.

For the next 600m the VW has been substantially diverted from the route shown on some maps. Instead of passing through Stroods House Farm, the route now angles round to the west and south of it, and is well marked by signs at frequent intervals.

6.3 [TQ 487 277]

At fingerpost bear half R through trees to descend steps on to concrete Tk by lake.
*You can TR along this Tk if you wish to visit **Barnsgate Manor**.*

[Refreshments] *Barnsgate Manor, 1 km NW along concrete Tk and across A26 Rd.*

6.4 [TQ 487 277]

- Continuing along VW, TL along concrete Tk then in 25m bear R across grass to go through gate.
- KA beside fence for 200m.
- At end of fence, by fingerpost, TL up steps and go through gate into next field, with tennis court on your L.
- Keep to L edge of field, veering R towards end to go through gate 20m from field corner.
- Descend to corner of next field to rejoin original route at stile on R. (*End of diversion.*)

6.5 [TQ 489 274]

- Cross stile and bear half L down large field to cross stile by metal gate in corner.
- TR along narrow Fp downhill between fence and hedge towards houses for 200m.
- Cross footbridge over stream (infant **River Uck**), then up steps via raised boardwalk to Tk.
- Follow Tk by houses to Rd (*Chillies Lane*).

[Phone box]

6.6 [TQ 493 266]

TR on Rd for 200m to Rd junction. (**Sussex Diamond Way** comes in from R here.)

VANGUARD WAY ROUTE DESCRIPTION: SECTION 6

6.7 [TQ 493 264]

TL up lane, with car park on your R, towards Holy Trinity Church at **High Hurstwood**.

[Transport] Buses (Monday to Friday) to /from Buxted, Poundgate and Uckfield.

6.8 [TQ 494 264]

This section involves four kissing gates - keep track carefully of where you are!

- Just before church, TR through first kissing gate.
- Ascend righthand side of field to go through second kissing gate (to R of large oak-tree).
- Pass small brick shed, noting ornamental pond down to your R, and follow Fp in trees past house and garden.
- Go through third kissing gate and up field to (but not through) fourth kissing gate.

6.9 [TQ 496 262]

- Ignore black VW waymark pointing half L; instead, follow yellow VW waymark by turning L immediately before kissing gate to follow narrow Fp along edge of garden.
- Cross stiles on either side of drive and KA.
- On reaching lawn, TR through kissing gate in hedge on to Rd (*Burnt Oak Road*).
- Cross Rd and KA on rough Tk (which later becomes concrete), passing Royal Oak and Mount Pleasant Farms, to lane (*Royal Oak Lane*).

The house almost opposite used to be the Royal Oak beerhouse, but is now a private home.

[Refreshments] For the Maypole pub TR along Royal Oak Lane for 650m down to Chillies Lane in High Hurstwood, where you will find the pub on your left.

[Phone box] opposite pub.

[Transport] Buses (Monday to Friday) to /from Buxted, Poundgate and Uckfield.

6.10 [TQ 499 260]

- TL on lane (now a rough Tk) past Hurstwood Farm.
- In 700m keep R at fork beside power line. (*Sussex Diamond Way continues ahead here.*)
- At Four Chimneys Farm KA on Tk between hedges, signed Holders Farmhouse.
- In 50m cross stile and KA on narrow Fp with fence on your R and concealed ditch on your L.

6.11 [TQ 503 256]

- KA across gated footbridge over stream in dip by trees.
- Ignore VW waymark pointing R behind trees*; instead ascend to field and turn quarter R up field to cross stile and footbridge behind large oak tree.

**Note that the arrow actually points along the correct line of the right of way, but this has been obstructed for some time. If it should be cleared, you should follow the arrow's direction.*

- Bear half L up field (bearing 150°) to far corner, keeping well L of wooden barn among trees.
- Cross stile beside gate on to Rd (*Fowly Lane*) at entrance to Greenhurst Farm.

6.12 [TQ 504 252]

- TR for 100m then TL across stile beside metal gate into field.
- Bear half R passing wood with stream in gully on L.
- Cross stile to follow L edge of next field for 300m to end of wood by brick bunker on R.
- Bear L down slope beside ditch (*note Greenhurst Viaduct over to L*), then bear R at telegraph pole.
- Cross footbridge over River Uck (see 6.5).

6.13 [TQ 504 246]

This section can be very muddy. There were also two fallen trees in December 2007 but these were easily crossed.

- a) KA on narrow and sometimes overgrown Fp through wood (Coe's Rough) then go through arch under **East Croydon to Uckfield railway line**.
- b) Cross stile then KA on Fp in trees to edge of field.
- c) Follow worn Fp ahead across field (ignoring Fp to R up field towards houses).
- d) Follow Fp into valley and beside wood, eventually climbing to cross stile by fingerpost.

*If you need to divert to **Buxted** for the station or pubs, the Northern Link is much more pleasant and direct than the Southern Link along the road, described later.*

Northern Link to Buxted Station [1.5 km / 0.9 miles, TQ 497 233]

- a) TR on Fp in trees up to stile.
- b) Cross stile and KA to cross second stile by metal gate.
- c) Follow Tk ahead past houses, leading on to tarmac Rd (Church Lane).
- d) Follow lane for 1 km, later becoming Church Road, to A272 Buxted High Street, at Buxted Stores.
- e) TR past Buxted Inn and bear R to Buxted Station.

[Transport] Trains to Uckfield, Crowborough, Oxted, East Croydon and central London. Buses (Monday-Friday) to /from Uckfield, High Hurstwood, Poundgate, Hurst Green and Heathfield.

[Refreshments] Buxted Inn, next to the station; Buxted Stores, on link.

[Phone box] By Buxted Stores.

[Accommodation] In Buxted.

If starting from Buxted Station:

- a) TR through forecourt to A272 Buxted High Street.
- b) TL past Buxted Inn then at Buxted Stores TL along Church Road, passing the church of St. Mary the Virgin.
- c) In 400m ignore waymarked Tk to L and continue along Rd as it bears R past St. Mary's Garth.
- d) In 600m KA on rough Tk, still with houses, to cross stile by metal gate.
- e) KA to cross second stile and follow Fp down through trees to junction by fingerpost.
- f) TR to rejoin VW.

6.14 [TQ 506 243]

- a) Continuing along the VW, cross second stile and KA on ascending Fp between wood and field.
- b) At end of wood KA on rough Tk past houses, eventually leading on to lane (Redbrook Lane) and in a further 450m to main Rd (A272 Buxted High Street) at **Pound Green**.

[Phone box] 75m to L along main Rd.

[Transport] Buses (Monday-Friday) to/from Uckfield, High Hurstwood, Poundgate, Hurst Green and Heathfield.

Southern Link to Buxted Station [1.3 km, 0.8 miles, TQ 497 233]

- a) TR along Buxted High Street for 1 km. The pavement is not continuous on either side, so you will need to switch from one side to the other as you progress.
- b) In 1 km at Buxted Stores KA past Buxted Inn then bear R to Buxted Station.

[Transport] Trains & buses: see Northern Link above.

[Refreshments] See Northern Link.

[Phone box] See Northern Link.

[Accommodation] In Buxted.

If starting from Buxted Station:

- a) TR through station forecourt to A272 Buxted High Street.
- b) TL past Buxted Inn then at Buxted Stores KA on A272 for 1 km. The pavement is not continuous on either side, so you will need to switch from one side to the other as you progress.

Note: Some older Ordnance Survey maps incorrectly show the VW going east along the A272 then turning right at Toll Farm. It actually crosses directly from Redbrook Lane to Limes Lane as described below.

*Between Buxted and Exceat (Sections 6 to 9) the VW is joined or crossed at various points by the **Wealden Walks**.*

6.15 [TQ 508 236]

- a) Cross Rd with care, and immediately TL then bear R beside grass pound along *Limes Lane* (signposted 'Potters Green').
- b) At far end of pound KA along rough Tk signed Pound Cottage.
- c) When Tk bears R into cottage KA along grass.
- d) At field gate take Fp to L of wire fence and field.

6.16 [TQ 511 236]

- a) In 150m TR at Rd (*Pound Lane*) and in 200m KA at junction to pass Popeswood Reservoir.
- b) In 700m at crossroads TL along **Nan Tuck's Lane** (signed Blackboys).

6.17 [TQ 509 226]

There may be fallen trees on this section.

- a) In 50m TR along Tk through trees. It soon bears L, generally downhill, deteriorating into narrow Fp.
- b) Follow Fp with old earthworks on your L and KA through wooden barrier.
- c) Continue past a piggery, with Lower Lowlands Farm down to your L.
- d) Cross stile and KA past farm buildings, then go through squeeze stile.
- e) KA to follow sunken and sometimes overgrown Fp in trees between fields, soon bearing L downhill.

6.18 [TQ 511 219]

- a) Cross gated bridge over stream and, when stream soon bears away to L, immediately TL through gate into corner of field.
- b) TR along edge and when it bears R KA through metal gate (very muddy here) into junk-filled farmyard (Scantlings Farm).
- c) Immediately turn sharp L on rising Tk, which soon bears R, and go through gate to Rd (*Pound Lane again*).

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6.19 [TQ 512 215]

- a) TR along Rd and in 150m TL through gate on to Tk, which crosses field then descends to L of trees.
- b) Go through gate (*Wealdway comes in from R here*) to reach **Tickerage Stream** and millpond.

6.20 [TQ 515 211]

- a) Go between houses (former mill buildings), across weir then uphill on Tk for 200m (*Wealdway goes off to the R halfway up*).
- b) At fingerpost TL past metal gate then ascend small rise with steps to follow fenced Fp past stand of grand old pine trees.
- c) Go through gap, still following fenced Fp between fields towards houses.
- d) Bear R between hedges to lane.

6.21 [TQ 519 208]

- a) TL and in 30m TR up Tk into allotments.
- b) After 50m bear L on Fp between allotments.
- c) Go through gate then bear R down to Rd (*Gun Road*) by Village Hall.

Note that some old Ordnance Survey maps show the VW route incorrectly here as going south from the allotments to the B2102 road.

[Accommodation] *For The Glade (formerly Blackboys Youth Hostel) TL here and follow lane northwards for 750m. Run on similar lines as a youth hostel, it is now privately owned. We are especially pleased about this, as it was one of the establishments that influenced the route of the VW.*

6.22 [TQ 522 208]

TR to main Rd (B2012 Uckfield Road) at **Blackboys** Crossroads, where Section 6 ends at:

7.1 [TQ 523 208]

[Transport] *Buses (not Sundays) to / from Uckfield, Heathfield, Etchingam and Hurst Green.*

[Refreshments] *There is a village store 50m to the left along B2012 Uckfield Road. Blackboys Inn is 300m further along the VW on Section 7.*

[Accommodation] *In Blackboys.*

[Phone box] *300m to R along main Rd.*

COMMENTARY

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

6.3

Barnsgate Manor (1 km NW along the concrete track and across the A26 road, www.barnsgate.co.uk) is now run as a conference centre and has a restaurant and tea-room. It also has a vineyard, gift shop and children's zoo with llamas and donkeys. The 16th century manor house was built by the Barns Gate, one of the gates into the Ashdown Forest.

6.5

The **River Uck** rises from several springs in the low hills south of Crowborough, a few kilometres to the northeast. It flows for some 20 km (12.5 miles) through Uckfield to join the River Ouse near Isfield. In recent years it has flooded after heavy rain, causing much damage to nearby properties. You will cross it again lower down at location 6.9.

The **Sussex Diamond Way** used to share its route with the VW for the next kilometre, but sadly is now apparently defunct, though you may still be able to find copies of the guidebook. It ran (unsigned) for 97 km (60 miles) between Midhurst and Heathfield, and was named to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Ramblers' Association. More information at:

www.ldwa.org.uk/ldp/members/show_path.php?path_id=1079.

6.7

The name of the sleepy little village of **High Hurstwood** has a tautological history: first recorded in 1602 as Heyhurst - which on its own means 'high enclosed wood' - it later became Hayhurst Wood and even High Heyhurstwood = 'high high enclosed wood wood'! The church, Holy Trinity, is of an unusual design, with its partly half-timbered porch tower and flat bellcote. It was built in 1871 with later additions including an elaborate chancel ceiling. Described by Pevsner as 'Arcadia indeed' because of its location next to the rhododendrons of the parsonage garden.

6.13

The **East Croydon to Uckfield railway line** was opened in 1858 for the London, Brighton and South Coast Railway. It originally ran on to Lewes but that section was closed in 1968 - there is a campaign to restore it.

The straggling village of **Buxted** (1.5 km SW on link, www.buxtedvillage.org.uk) gets its name from the Anglo-Saxon, Bocstede, which roughly translates as beech wood - appropriate today as it boasts two shops specialising in furniture. The village used to be further west, beside the River Uck, and was a thriving centre for the production of iron, silk and hops. An extraordinary local character was George Watson, born 1785, who looked like a village idiot but was a mathematical genius.

In the 1830s the owner of Buxted Place, Lord Liverpool, forcibly moved the inhabitants and demolished the original village to improve the view from his mansion. The original 18th century Georgian mansion was partially destroyed by fire in 1940. In its grounds is the parish church of St. Margaret the Queen, which dates from the 13th century and has much of interest. The present village developed around the railway station, opened in 1858.

6.14

Pound Green, at the east end of Buxted, gets its name from the grassy triangle here, which used to be a pound for stray animals. They have been replaced by a majestic, straggling, pollarded chestnut tree.

6.15

The **Wealden Walks** is a network of 20 walks set up by Wealden District Council. They vary in distance between 6.5 and 18.5 km (4 and 11.5 miles) and have a distinctive 'W' waymark. More information at: www.wealden.gov.uk/environment_and_transport/Roads_and_Footpaths/Wealden_Walks.aspx.

6.16

Nan Tuck was one of the more colourful residents of Buxted. In the 17th century she was accused of witchcraft and murdering her husband, but when being chased completely disappeared. Depending on whose story you believe, she was either never seen again or later found hanged in a wood, but either way her ghost is said to haunt the lane that bears her name.

6.19

The millpond was formed from the **Tickerage Stream**, which rises in low hills to the northeast then flows for 12 km (7.5 miles) to join the River Uck near Uckfield. Here the VW bounces off the Wealdway (see paragraph 5.10) for just 200m.

Tickerage Mill was, from 1961 until her death, the home of the actress, Vivien Leigh (1913 - 1967) who married and divorced Laurence Olivier. Her ashes were scattered over the millpond. According to *Notable Sussex Women* (Hastings Press), 'she described the house as "an absolute dream", adding "I am miserable at the thought of having to leave it"'.
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6.22

The village of **Blackboys** clusters around the junction of two B roads linking Heathfield with Uckfield or Lewes. Its name is attributed alternatively to a 15th century local squire, Richard Blakeboy, or to the local 'black boys' (charcoal-burners). A plaque on the seat by the crossroads tells us that 'This seat and the surrounding maple trees were presented by the Canadian forces to commemorate their happy association with this village during the Second World War 1939-1945.'
