

# THE VANGUARD WAY

‘From the suburbs to the sea’

## ROUTE DESCRIPTION

and points of interest along the route

### SECTION 7

## Blackboys to Golden Cross

COLIN SAUNDERS

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

**Designed by Brian Bellwood**

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

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

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

## **SECTION 7: BLACKBOYS TO GOLDEN CROSS**

**12.2 km (7.6 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 <http://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

KA = keep ahead

TL = turn left

TR = turn right

L = left

R = right

N = north

S = south

E = east

W = west

m = metres

km = kilometres

### Public Transport

On route: Buses at Blackboys, Chiddingly and Golden Cross.  
Link with bus stops at East Hoathly.

### Distances from Blackboys Crossroads to:

>East Hoathly (bus)	7.6 km (4.7 miles)
Chiddingly	9.3 km (5.8 miles)
Golden Cross (Deanland Road)	12.2 km (7.6 miles)
>Golden Cross (pub/bus stop)	12.7 km (7.9 miles)

### Distances from East Hoathly to:

Chiddingly	5.0 km (3.1 miles)
Golden Cross (Deanland Road)	7.9 km (4.9 miles)
>Golden Cross (pub/bus stop)	8.4 km (5.2 miles)

### Overview

This section passes through relatively low-lying but undulating and sparsely populated terrain. The only settlements (apart from the occasional house or farm) are the hamlet of Graywood and the tiny village of Chiddingly, with its interesting church and charismatic pub. Having started in the valleys of streams that feed the Uck, you cross a watershed at Hawkhurst Common Wood to meet streams that feed the Cuckmere.

*Note: Many stretches on this section cross large fields, often with no distinguishing feature to guide you. So we give a compass bearing as a guide, and for this purpose a compass would of course be helpful!*

**Lowest and highest points.** Golden Cross (24m); Hawkhurst Common Wood (93m).

---

## VANGUARD WAY ROUTE DESCRIPTION: SECTION 7

---

### Section 7 of the Vanguard Way starts at Blackboys Crossroads [TQ 522 207]

on the B2012 Uckfield Road. This is in Wealden District in East Sussex.

[Transport] Buses (not Sundays) to / from Uckfield, Heathfield, Etchingham 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.

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

*Note that the stretch covered in the following paragraph has been diverted from the original route. It now passes through Kiln Wood.*

#### 7.1 [TQ 523 208]

- Cross Rd (B2012 Uckfield Road) with care and KA along School Lane for 300m to **Blackboys Inn**.
- Cross Rd (B2192 Lewes Road) with care and TR for 30m to pass through gap in fence on your L into the Woodland Trust's **Kiln Wood**.

*Note: If leaving Blackboys Inn by the exit on the righthand side of the green, this fence is directly opposite.*

[Refreshments] Blackboys Inn.

#### 7.2 [TQ 522 203]

- Follow Fp down L side of plantation to telegraph pole.
- Bear R on Tk to next telegraph pole then down over stream, which feeds the River Uck.
- Follow Fp under telephone wires, down steps and over footbridge to Tk.
- TR to gate and squeeze-stile on to Rd (*Hollow Lane*).

#### 7.3 [TQ 523 200]

- TL along lane for 500m to pass Meadhurst Farm (converted stables).
- At next bend TR through wooden gate to R of entrance to Bushmere.
- Follow grass Tk (a veritable green lane) for 650m, eventually crossing two stiles to Rd (*Bushbury Lane*).

#### 7.4 [TQ 523 190]

- TL, passing Toad Hall cottage of 1892, for 150m.
- Where Rd turns R, locate hidden, narrow Fp between bush and fence at entrance to Pear Tree Cottage.
- Follow Fp to stile then follow R edge of field to pass through gate on to Rd (*Hollow Lane again*), opposite Hawkhurst Common Wood.

#### 7.5 [TQ 526 190]

- TR and at junction with Beechy Road TL through gate.
- Bear half R (bearing 120°) across field on faint Fp towards corner of wood.
- On reaching wood bear R along wood edge and cross stile to Rd (*Hawkhurst Lane*).

#### 7.6 [TQ 530 184]

- TL and after 100m TR on to Tk.
- Pass garden and KA in field.
- Go on through gap into next field and TL to go through another gap in corner into third field.
- TR and after about 60m bear half L downhill to cross bridge over stream and stile beneath trees (this path can be overgrown).
- Continuing in same direction, go uphill along Tk (faint at first then broad and sometimes muddy) which curves round to R.
- Cross stile in fixed gate on to Rd (*Moat Lane*).

## VANGUARD WAY ROUTE DESCRIPTION: SECTION 7

---

### 7.7 [TQ 537 184]

- a) TR for 1 km to junction (*Scallows Lane*).
- b) TR across Scallow Bridge.

*You have now crossed a watershed: the stream below flows southeast to feed the River Cuckmere.*

### 7.8 [TQ 537 176]

- a) Immediately TL along *Graywood Lane*.
- b) Follow this Rd for 1 km, passing under electricity wires, Graywood Farm barns and junction with *Stalkers Lane* to second junction (*Graywood Road to R, Allies Road ahead*).

*This is the nearest point to **East Hoathly**, which has a bus service, accommodation, pubs and cafés. There is no convenient link on footpaths, so our link below follows lanes that are generally quiet, though you should still take care.*

### **Link with East Hoathly** [1.8 km / 1.1 miles, TQ 521 161]

- a) TR along *Graywood Road* and follow Rds with care for 1.6 km, keeping L at each of three junctions (*Holdcroft Lane, Scallows Lane and Hollow Lane*).
- b) Pass *King's Head pub and Muffins Tearoom and KA* at junction along *South Street* for 200m to bus stops (L side for *Eastbourne*, R side for *Uckfield and East Grinstead*). The *Forest Arms pub* is 200m further along *South Street*.

[Transport] A bus service operates from there to *Eastbourne, Uckfield and East Grinstead* (Mondays to Saturdays).

[Refreshments] In *East Hoathly* (*King's Head brew-pub, Forest Arms*).

[Accommodation] In *East Hoathly*.

[Phone box] In *East Hoathly*.

### **If starting from East Hoathly:**

- a) From bus stops go northeast to village centre and KA at junction past *King's Head pub*.
- b) Follow Rds with care for 1.6 km, keeping R at each of three junctions (*Hollow Lane, Scallows Lane and Holdcroft Lane*), following signs to *Graywood*.
- c) At junction with *Graywood Lane and Allies Road* KA through gate along fenced Fp to L of gate of *Graywood House* to rejoin VW at 7.9b.

### 7.9 [TQ 535 166]

- a) Continuing along VW, KA briefly along *Allies Road* then immediately TL through gate along narrow fenced Fp to L of gate of *Graywood House*.
- b) Continue on Fp through wood.
- c) Soon Fp crosses private drive by houses and runs between garden fences.
- d) KA through wood to kissing gate.
- e) Cross Tk and stile into field and KA in same direction along L side of field, with *Broomfield Wood* on your L.

### 7.10 [TQ 541 161]

- a) Cross stile to L and continue in same direction along fenced Fp beside caravan park.
- b) Cross stile into field and continue in same direction across two more stiles and fields.
- c) KA to gate and stile in far R corner.
- d) TL along Tk for 200m to Rd (*Stalkers Lane*) at **Graywood**.

## VANGUARD WAY ROUTE DESCRIPTION: SECTION 7

---

### 7.11 [TQ 548 156]

- a) TR on Rd and follow round bend to L, passing Holdens and Chiswells Farms.
- b) At end of hamlet continue along Rd.
- c) Soon pass broad field access drive and in 50m climb to stile on R by wooden fingerpost.

*This is the easternmost point of the VW. For much of the next 1.5 km you will see the spire of Chiddingly Church against the backdrop of the South Downs.*

### 7.12 [TQ 549 155]

- a) Cross field beside shallow ditch, passing 20m to R of telegraph pole, to corner of fence.
- b) Continue with fence then hedge on R, with **Hilders Court** to your R, to end of field then cross stile.
- c) Pass through gate then follow fenced Fp beside fields and stables.
- d) Cross stile on to Rd (*Honeywick Lane*) and TR. *This area of disturbed ground is the site of an old brickfield, in use until 1939.*

### 7.13 [TQ 546 147]

- a) In 40m (*just before point where Rd becomes Parsonage Lane*) TL through kissing gate with stile (may be hidden by vegetation) into field (*managed under Countryside Stewardship Scheme*).
- b) Cross brief, sometimes boggy section and KA to another stile.
- c) Follow R side of next field to gate.
- d) Follow L side of next field between fences to another gate.
- e) KA past horse trough (not half R as misleadingly indicated by waymark) to another stile into a small plantation and KA to next stile. *Away to your right, in the field corner, you may spot the remains of a Second World War observation post.*

### 7.14 [TQ 544 144]

- a) Follow L side of field towards church spire.
- b) Cross stile and KA along Fp between hedges to Rd (*Church Lane*) at **Chiddingly**, opposite former village shop (*now sadly closed but retaining its listed façade*).

*Once again we encounter the Wealdway (see Section 5), which comes in from the right, joins the VW for just 50m then goes off to the left.*

[Transport] Buses (limited service Mondays to Fridays only) to / from Lewes, Polegate, Hailsham and Golden Cross.

[Refreshments] Six Bells pub to your R.

[Phone box] Opposite former village shop.

### 7.15 [TQ 544 142]

- a) TL at Rd.
- b) Enter churchyard (*note old stone mounting block*) and go along paved Fp to R of **Chiddingly Church** and over stile into field.
- c) Follow R side of field past pavilion to stile by gate and Rd (*The Street*).

### 7.16 [TQ 544 141]

- a) Cross half L to gate, and take care climbing dilapidated stile 2m left of it - possibly hidden in foliage.
- b) Cross field half L (bearing 250°) aiming 20m to R of hedge corner, with **Place Farm** to your R.
- c) KA to pass through gate and continue in same direction to stile into wood.
- d) Cross stile and plank bridge and walk through wood to fingerpost.

## VANGUARD WAY ROUTE DESCRIPTION: SECTION 7

---

### 7.17 [TQ 539 139]

- a) TL inside wood, follow Fp to pond and cross footbridge. *This section can be waterlogged after heavy rain.*
- b) 50m further, cross into field (to R of stile).
- c) Turn half R across field, ignoring more obvious field edge path, to walk uphill towards horizon (bearing 230°) roughly R of centre between two woods. *This path has been obstructed by crops, and ploughed lines may not follow the required direction.*
- d) At top of rise KA to stile in hedge and plank footbridge.

### 7.18 [TQ 536 144]

- a) In next field bear quarter L (bearing 200°) to stile by tallest tree. *The hamlet of Muddles Green is away to your L.*
- b) Cross field (bearing 240°), passing R of lone tree, to gate into next field.
- c) Bear slightly R (bearing 240°) to far R corner and gate in corner of wood.
- d) KA through gates each end of fenced Fp through wood then along R side of field.
- e) Cross stile on to Rd (*A22 London to Eastbourne*) at Holmes's Hill.

**Do not cross here. This road is very busy and vehicles come round the bend very fast.**

- f) TL for 100m to Holmes Hill House and cross there, giving yourself and drivers maximum visibility.

[Refreshments] [Toilets] *Lakeside Tea Rooms (closed Tuesdays) in Holmes Hill Estate opposite (a few metres to R as you reach main Rd) but as stated above great care needed while crossing so may be better to cross as indicated above then walk back on far side.*

### 7.19 [TQ 532 128]

- a) Cross Rd to Wattle Hair Works (*formerly the Wattle Tearoom, sadly missed*).
- b) Go down enclosed and often overgrown Fp to R of salon - watch out for ditch on R which may be hidden.  
*The brambles may continue for 50m: if you cannot get through, return to road, TR then in 200m turn sharp R along B2124 Lewes Road, and in 200m TL down Tk to Mohair Centre.*

### 7.20 [TQ 531 126]

- a) Cross stile and follow R side of field to Rd.
- b) Cross and go down Tk ahead, signed 'Mohair Centre'.
- c) Where it divides, KA on Tk, still signed 'Mohair Centre'.
- d) At yard between **Mohair Centre** buildings take Tk half L.

[Refreshments] *Vending machines at the Mohair Centre, also afternoon tea on Sundays.*

[Toilets] *At the Mohair Centre.*

### 7.21 [TQ 532 123]

- a) At the shop TL past barn and cross stile by gate between ponds.
- b) TR in field with fence on R and cross two stiles on to Rd (*Deanland Road*) by white railings, where Section 7 ends at:

### 8.1 [TQ 533 120]

*Some OS maps may show the VW heading east to the road, but it now follows the footpath going south. If you intend to divert to Golden Cross here, instead of TR at 7.21b KA to Rd then TL.*

**Link to Golden Cross pub and bus stops (500m).** TL along Deanland Road for 500m back to the A22. Buses go left (this side) towards East Hoathly, Uckfield, Forest Row, East Grinstead and London; and right (far side) towards Hailsham, Polegate and Eastbourne.

[Transport] Buses (not Sundays) call at the Golden Cross pub to East Grinstead, Forest Row, Uckfield, East Hoathly and Hailsham. There is also a daily express coach service to London, East Grinstead, Polegate and Eastbourne. The Cuckmere Community Bus (Monday only) serves Berwick Station, Hailsham, Polegate and Eastbourne from the Golden Cross car park.

[Refreshments] Golden Cross pub.

© Colin Saunders, 2009

### COMMENTARY

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

#### 7.1

The **Blackboys Inn** ([www.theblackboysinn.co.uk](http://www.theblackboysinn.co.uk)) was built in 1389 as a farmhouse and converted to an inn in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century. It was frequented by drivers taking charcoal from the nearby woods to Lewes, and the name is thought to derive from the dirty faces of the boys who brought the charcoal to them. It is said to be haunted by the ghost of Anne Starr, who was the daughter of the licensee and died in childbirth in 1804, having been deserted by her lover.

**Kiln Wood** was acquired by the Woodland Trust in 1979 and consists of 13.36 hectares of ancient woodland adjoined to two hectares of new native woodland. Its trees are mostly oak but there are also sycamore, ash, alder, Norway maple and other native broadleaves. The ground flora is generally quite sparse but you may see bluebells, lords-and-ladies, wood anemone and garlic mustard. Further information at: [www.wt-woods.org.uk/KilnWood](http://www.wt-woods.org.uk/KilnWood).

The **Woodland Trust** ([www.woodland-trust.org.uk](http://www.woodland-trust.org.uk)) was established in 1972 and has made remarkable progress in the care and protection of woodland sites. They now own over 1,100 sites throughout Britain, many of them consisting of ancient woodland. Individuals can join the Woodland Trust and can sponsor a tree, to be planted in the woodland of your choice.

#### 7.8

**East Hoathly** (1.6 km SW on link) is a pleasant village, made even more attractive by having been bypassed in 1992, until when the A22 passed through it. Its population at the 2001 census was 1,374. The name comes from the Saxon Hathleah, meaning heathery clearing, via the medieval Hodlegh. In the mid 17<sup>th</sup> century it was the home of Colonel Sir Thomas Lundsford, known as the Sussex Cannibal, who was said to eat children - this was probably a myth designed to scare people away, as the village was a haunt of smugglers at that time. The 15<sup>th</sup> century church was almost completely rebuilt in 1855 around the original tower, and contains an unusual Norman piscina (ceremonial washbasin). It is called East Hoathly only to distinguish it from West Hoathly, also in Sussex, which is actually 22 km (14 miles) northwest, near East Grinstead.

The King's Head pub is well known to aficionados of real ale, as it brews its own (as the 1648 Brewing Company) in the adjoining stables.

A plaque attached to a seat at the edge of the village on the VW link bears this thoughtful reminder, attributed to Dorothy Frosdick:

*If you should wonder why this wooden seat is placed where many cannot see the wider view,  
Ponder awhile and then give thanks that you can walk this far as others long to do.*

#### 7.10

Although not marked as such on the OS map (indeed not named at all (surprising in view of its size), we are assured by local residents that this quiet hamlet is **Graywood**, despite the fact that Graywood Farm and House are some distance to the northwest.

**Hilders Court** was the home of the Agg family during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, and the scene of many parties and fetes, which the family put on for the benefit of the people of Chiddingly.

#### 7.14

The compact village of **Chiddingly** (pronounced Chidding-lie) was first recorded in Saxon times as Cittingaleah, which means 'Citta's people's clearing'. Over the years it has been recorded variously as Cetelingi (Domesday Book, 1086), Chitingelegh (1230), Chittinghlegh (1274) and Chudyngelee (1348) - which just goes to show how liberal the spelling of English used to be! Most of the old houses in the village date from the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century. At the 2001 census the parish had a population of 864.

The Six Bells pub is over to your R, in The Street. Named after the number of bells in the church tower, it is a popular resort for friendly bikers, and jazz bands often play here. The cottage called Cordwainers (craftsmen who made goods of cordovan leather from Spain) in The Street (turn right for 50m at the Six Bells) was the home of the Russell family, who established the shoe firm Russell and Bromley in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Old Bakery was the childhood home of the actor, writer and TV presenter, Julian Fellowes, who won an Oscar in 2002 for Best Original Screenplay for *Gosford Park*.

### 7.15

**Chiddingly Church** dates from the 13<sup>th</sup> century and has a 15<sup>th</sup> century sandstone spire 40m (130 feet) high, one of few built of stone in Sussex. In 1897 the spire was damaged by lightning and is now held together by an iron chain around its base. Look for the 'Pelham buckles' carved on the west doorway, which you pass - they are associated with the Pelham family, who were local lords of the manor during the 15<sup>th</sup> century.

Inside is an ornate memorial to the Jefferay family: Sir John Jefferay (died 1573) is shown standing on a stone block shaped like a large cheese (see Place Farm). Some of the hands and fingers of the monument have been dismembered, reputedly by an infuriated mob of locals in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century who were under the mistaken impression that the late Sir John (himself a judge) was related to the notorious 'Hanging Judge', Baron George Jeffreys.

### 7.16

Previously called Chiddingly Place, **Place Farm** was the home of the Jefferay family (see above). Sir John Jefferay was its most famous squire, in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. He was a judge and member of parliament for Arundel, and rose to become Chief Baron of the Exchequer under Elizabeth I. It is said that his family was so proud, they had large cheeses placed on the ground to act as stepping-stones across the mud.

More recently, from 1934 to 1981 it was the home of the Earl and Countess of Limerick. Lady Limerick (née Angela Trotter, 1897 - 1981) was a leading figure in the British Red Cross, serving in both World Wars, and championed the family planning movement.

### 7.20

The **Mohair Centre** was established in Brickfields Farm in 1988 by Jacky and Martin Webb. It is a small farm and craft centre specialising in raising angora goats, which produce the lustrous and smooth mohair wool. Items made of angora wool, spinning equipment and related books are sold at the farm shop. If you feel so inclined, and have the facilities to care for it, you can even buy a goat! Or you can adopt one of the farm's goats. Spinning lessons can be arranged. The centre has toilets and refreshments from vending machines, and afternoon tea is offered on Sundays. More information at:

[www.ukattraction.com/south-east-england/mohair-centre.htm](http://www.ukattraction.com/south-east-england/mohair-centre.htm).

---