

THE VANGUARD WAY

‘From the suburbs to the sea’

ROUTE DESCRIPTION

and points of interest along the route

SECTION 8

Golden Cross to Berwick Station

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Designed by Brian Bellwood

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SECTION 8: GOLDEN CROSS TO BERWICK STATION

6.6 km (4.1 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 8

Public transport

On route: Buses at Golden Cross. Trains and buses at Berwick Station.

Link with bus stop at Chalvington.

Distances from Golden Cross (Deanland Road)* to:

>Yew Tree Inn, Chalvington 3.4 km (2.1 miles)

Berwick Station 6.7 km (4.2 miles)

*From the Golden Cross pub/bus stops on the A24 add 0.5 km (0.3 miles).

Overview

Most of this sparsely populated section goes through low-lying and generally level farmland, but some gentle ascents towards the end herald the approach of the South Downs, which you can see ahead.

Note 1: This section includes the muddiest section of the whole route, for about 1 km, where you may find a walking stick or pole helpful to keep your balance.

Note 2: 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 - see the Equipment section of the Introduction to the Route.

Lowest and highest points. Chalvington Road (16m); Mays Farm (35m).

VANGUARD WAY ROUTE DESCRIPTION: SECTION 8

Section 8 of the VW starts 500m south of Golden Cross [TQ 533 120]

in Deanland Road, by the white railings. This is in Wealden District in East Sussex.

Link from Golden Cross pub and bus stops (500m). From the back of the pub and car park go southwest along Deanland Road for 500m until you reach the white railings.

[Transport] Buses (not Sundays) call at the Golden Cross pub from East Grinstead, Forest Row, Uckfield, East Hoathly and Hailsham. There is also a daily express coach service from 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.

8.1 [TQ 533 120]

Until recently, all the stiles on this stretch were in very poor condition, but smart new stiles have replaced some of the old ones. Where old stiles are still in place you should take great care while climbing them.

- a) TL over dilapidated stile just before stream with low railings.
- b) Bear slightly R (bearing 140°) to field corner and cross stile by gate.
- c) Cross next field (with gymkhana enclosure) to stile and ditch.
- d) Continue along R edge of next two fields, with stiles in between and with stream to your R.
- e) Ignore stile and bridge on R which leads to fishery only.
- f) Pass through fenced enclosure used as rubbish tip. *The stiles were in atrocious condition when last inspected - may be better to climb gates.*
- g) Cross stile (or gate) on to Rd (*Chalvington Road*).

8.2 [TQ 536 113]

- a) TR (ignoring Bridlegate Poultry Farm) and in 75m TL down drive through gate signposted **Limekiln Farm**.
- b) When drive turns R, KA to cross stile by gate.
- c) KA through next field, bearing L at end.
- d) Cross stile by gate on to lane (*Sheepcote Lane*) by Marnhull Farm House.

8.3 [TQ 538 110]

- a) TR and follow lane for 2.5 km, passing rambling barns of **Mount Pleasant Farm**.
- b) Continue 300m to end of surfaced Rd by Selmeston Croft.

The link with the Yew Tree pub at Chalvington starts here.

Link with Yew Tree Inn at Chalvington [650m, TQ 525 100]

This, together with the return link (see next page), avoids 500m of the muddy track.

- a) Take Fp to R through gate opposite Selmeston Croft.
- b) Cross field half L then cross stile and pass through trees.
- c) Go 45m along L side of field to cross field gate on L.
- d) Cross field half R (bearing 250°) towards line of trees.
- e) Cross stile and KA across playing field to Yew Tree Inn.

[Refreshments] Yew Tree Inn, Chalvington.

Returning from Yew Tree Inn:

- a) Return across playing field to stile, where you divert from outward route.
- b) Bear slightly R across field to fingerpost.
- c) Continue in same direction across next field to another fingerpost.
- d) Go through gap into next field and continue in same direction half R, aiming for far R corner.
- e) Bear L through hedgerow to cross stile.
- f) KA across field to stile on to Tk (Sheepcote Lane) where TR to rejoin VW at point 8.5.

8.4 [TQ 530 099]

KA along very muddy and sometimes flooded Tk (defined as a byway).

This track has been in an atrocious state ever since the VW was launched, and despite requests to East Sussex County Council there has been no noticeable improvement. We continue to ask them to take remedial action.

8.5 [TQ 527 094]

In 500m the return route from the Yew Tree Inn comes in from the R. Keep plodding through the mud until you eventually emerge at bend on Rd (*Poundfield Road*) near Chalvington. (TR for village centre - 500m.)

[Transport] From Chalvington village centre the Cuckmere Community Bus serves: (Wednesdays) Berwick Station, Alfriston and Hailsham; (Thursdays) Berwick Station, Alfriston, Polegate and Eastbourne; (Fridays) Berwick Station, Exceat and Seaford; also Brighton on alternate Thursdays.

[Phone box] 300m to R along Poundfield Road.

8.6 [TQ 524 091]

- a) KA on Rd, passing Blackberry Farm (formerly Bungalow Farm as shown on some maps) and Meadow Cottage.
- b) TR at Rd junction (*Langtye Lane*).
- c) Pass North Mays and Mays Corner then cross stile on L.

8.7 [TQ 519 085]

- a) Follow L side of field to cross plank bridge and stile in corner. *Beware ditch and awkward wire above top step.*
- b) Cross next field on clear Fp, aiming for buildings to R on horizon (bearing 160°).
- c) Cross plank bridge and stile into next field, then continue in same direction up to fingerpost in front of lefthand barn.
- d) Follow Tk beside barn into yard of **Mays Farm**, then cross farm drive.
- e) Go through gate L of buildings.

8.8 [TQ 521 079]

- a) Follow Tk to R past pond.
- b) At fingerpost TL through gate at back of Mays house, then half R through field (bearing 170°).
- c) Aim for large barn behind trees to locate stile and bridge in field boundary.
- d) Continue in same direction towards house (**Ludlay**) to L of barn.
- e) TR before stile and go round trees to stile near barn of Ludlay Farm.

VANGUARD WAY ROUTE DESCRIPTION: SECTION 8

8.9 [TQ 522 073]

- a) Cross stile, KA along Tk and go through gate by entrance of Ludlay.
- b) Follow drive for 300m, then, after cattle-grid and barn, TR over stile in fence into field.
- c) Go half L, following faint Fp along R edge of field.
- d) Cross stile into wood then follow clear Fp through wood and behind garden fences.
- e) Cross stile at end of fences and TL beside station car park to Rd (*Coldharbour Road*) opposite Berwick Stores.
- f) TR to **Berwick Station**, where Section 8 ends at:

9.1 [TQ 526 067]

[Transport] *Trains from Berwick Station to Eastbourne, Hastings, Lewes, Brighton, Gatwick Airport, East Croydon and central London. Trains to Eastbourne and Hastings go from the Down platform (this side of the lines), where the ticket office is also located. Take care if crossing the railway lines to the Up platform (towards Lewes, Brighton, Gatwick Airport, East Croydon and London).*

Note that if there is no through train towards London it may be quicker to change at Brighton rather than Lewes.

Buses: On Mondays to Fridays the Cuckmere Community Bus only departs from Berwick Station on mornings, so is unlikely to be of use to VW walkers arriving here at the end of their walk. On Saturdays and Sundays from March to October there is a late afternoon departure to Alfriston, Exceat and Seaford.

[Phone box] *By Berwick Stores.*

[Refreshments] *At the Berwick Inn. Convenience store on north side of level crossing.*

COMMENTARY

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

8.2

Just after **Limekiln Farm**, the VW follows a straight road or track for just over 3 km. A glance at the map shows that it runs parallel to several other roads and tracks, which together with many parallel crossing tracks form a grid divided into multiples of the Roman actus. An actus was 120 Roman feet, and as human feet were slightly smaller in those days this corresponds to approximately 116 modern English feet (about 35 metres). You are in fact following the eastern boundary of a huge Roman agricultural estate, stretching from here southwestwards towards Ripe. The individual fields created by this grid were each five acti square, so covered 25 square acti (about 30,000 square metres). They were laid out more than sixteen centuries ago, and records indicate that it still existed in Norman times, so the grid remained in use for at least six hundred years. Time has warped or obliterated some of the Roman farm tracks but the pattern is still recognisable.

8.3

We believe that one of the cottages in the **Mount Pleasant Farm** complex is called Vanguard Cottage, though we have yet to establish its exact location, and whether it was named after the VW.

8.7

The isolated hilltop community of **Mays** consists of an impressive Georgian brick house, a farm and some farmhands' cottages. The Sussex breed of cattle originated here. Nowadays much of the farm is used as a business centre, occupied by small, specialist companies. The house was built in the mid 17th century for the Reverend John Nutt, rector of Berwick. It was the birthplace in 1835 of Nathaniel Blaker, the stern author in 1906 of a collection of moralising essays that were typical of the late Victorian and Edwardian period.

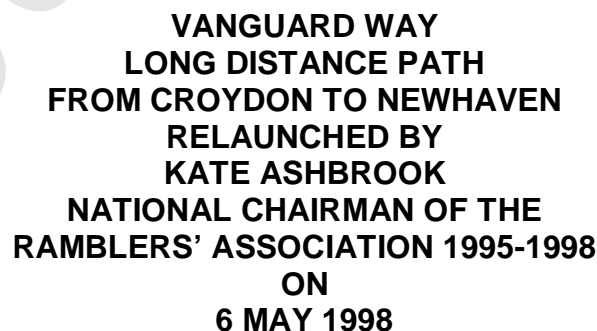
8.8

Until 1966 the area northeast of **Ludlay** was the site of a brickworks, using clay from local pits and served by a narrow gauge railway, now disappeared. Ludlay Farm occupies a compound within a high flint wall, within which all the buildings are made of flint.

8.9

Although this small settlement has no official name on the map, we refer to it as **Berwick Station** to distinguish it from Berwick Village further south. The pronunciation is 'Berrick'. The community developed around the railway station and includes the Berwick Inn, the proposed original final destination for the VW (see *How it all began* on our website). The inn was originally called the Fuller's Arms, then became the Berwick Arms before reaching its current name.

*Brass plaque on
outside wall of the
ticket office at
Berwick Station*



VANGUARD WAY
LONG DISTANCE PATH
FROM CROYDON TO NEWHAVEN
RELAUNCHED BY
KATE ASHBROOK
NATIONAL CHAIRMAN OF THE
RAMBLERS' ASSOCIATION 1995-1998
ON
6 MAY 1998