

THE VANGUARD WAY

(SOUTH TO NORTH)

A different experience in the other direction!

SECTION G Forest Row to Haxted Mill



cc-by-sa/2.0 - View from the Vanguard Way... by David Kemp

ROUTE DESCRIPTION
and points of interest along the route

SECTION G
Forest Row to Haxted Mill

COLIN SAUNDERS

Second Edition (South-North)
Version 2.0

This second edition of the south-north route description was first published in 2017 and replaces the first edition published in 2011. It is only available as an online resource.

Designed by Brian Bellwood

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

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To find out about any late changes to the route, please visit www.vanguardway.org.uk and click on the 'latest news' button.

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 or write to Colin Saunders, 35 Gerrards Close, Oakwood, London, N14 4RH, England.

Cover photo: View from the Vanguard Way, 3km from Marsh Green, Kent –
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SECTION G: FOREST ROW TO HAXTED MILL

13.4 km (8.3 miles)

This second edition of the South-North version of the Route Description is based on a completely new survey undertaken by club members in 2017. 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 **please 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. However, please note that this South-North version uses the same numbering system for locations along the route as the original North-South version, so they appear to run in reverse order, i.e. in this section from G(4.17) to G(4.1). (The individual route description paragraphs in this South-North section are preceded by the letter G to distinguish them from the North-South versions.)

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. Downloadable maps in pdf format showing the correct route are available on our website. 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 kilometres (km) and metres (m); but if you are more familiar with miles and yards, remember that 1 km is about five eighths of a mile and that 100m is about the same as 110 yards. To roughly convert metres to feet, multiply by three and add 10 per cent.

Abbreviations

Bw	=	bridleway	KA	=	keep ahead	N	=	north
CB	=	compass bearing	TL	=	turn left	S	=	south
FB	=	footbridge	TR	=	turn right	E	=	east
Fp	=	footpath	L	=	left	W	=	west
KG	=	kissing gate	R	=	right			
NP	=	no pavement (see below)						
Rd	=	road	m	=	metres			
Tk	=	track	km	=	kilometres			
VGW	=	Vanguard Way	>	=	off route			

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Key to symbols

 = Bus	 = Cafés etc	 = Toilets
 = Train	 = Pubs	 = Phone box
 = Taxi	 = Accommodation	 = Equipment shop

Roads with no pavement

‘NP’ in the route description indicates that the road has no pavement. 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 light, luminous or reflective on top.

Public transport

On route: Buses at Forest Row and Starborough (Moor Lane).

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

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 Forest Row to:

From East Grinstead add 5.4 km (3.4 miles) (via Forest Way)

>Ashurstwood (pub/bus)	3.0 km	(1.9 miles)
Hammerwood (A264)	5.2 km	(3.3 miles)
Dry Hill Camp	8.0 km	(5.0 miles)
Moor Cottages (B2028, bus)	11.7 km	(7.3 miles)
>Dormans Station	14.4 km	(9.0 miles)
>Edenbridge Town Station	15.6 km	(9.7 miles) (via Eden Valley Walk)
Haxted Mill	13.4 km	(8.3 miles)

Distances from Dormans Station to:

>Edenbridge Town Station	9.2 km	(5.7 miles) (via Eden Valley Walk)
Haxted Mill	6.9 km	(4.3 miles)

Distances from Edenbridge Town Station to:

Haxted Mill	5.4 km	(3.4 miles) (via Eden Valley Walk)
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Overview

After a steady ascent the VGW follows an ancient, quiet lane on a long, level ridge past the small but imposing mansion of Thornhill, with outstanding views towards the Surrey Hills. Then you descend through a well-wooded area to cross the A264 at Hammerwood before climbing steadily to the Iron Age site at Dry Hill Camp. After descending again to pass Starborough Castle, the section finishes gently through farmland in the Eden valley to historic Haxted Mill.

Note that some paths on this section are in very poor condition, as mentioned in the route description – a walking pole or two may be helpful. There is also a long stretch where you must walk along a minor but busy road with no pavement – see ‘Roads’ in the Safety section on page 8 of ‘An Introduction to the Route’ downloadable for our website.

Note that there are no pubs or other refreshment or toilet facilities on or near the route on this section, though there are basic toilets at Gabriel’s Fishery, 400 metres off route along the Southern Link with

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Edenbridge, where there may also be refreshments available. Otherwise the nearest are at Dormansland (2.3 km / 1.4 miles off route, on the link with Dormans Station. You may wish to carry your own food for a picnic lunch.

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

PLEASE NOTE

We are considering a possible alternative route in the Haxted area to avoid so much walking on roads. If this takes place it will be shown in the Latest News pages of the Vanguard Way website.

ALL INFORMATION SHOWN IS SUBJECT TO ALTERATION WITHOUT NOTICE

If your trip relies on the provision of public transport, catering etc, you are strongly advised to check in advance that they will be available on the day of your visit. Further information about these facilities is provided in the Vanguard Way Companion available at www.vanguardway.org.uk (click the 'Directions and Maps' button). If you carry a smartphone, there are apps that give up-to-date information on public transport. Search engines will provide information on refreshments, taxis and other services nearby. This can also be done on Google or Bing maps by typing e.g. 'Pubs Forest Row' in the search box, then the map will highlight locations together with website links if available.

We will always be pleased to hear about any changes you may find, in which case please email colin@vanguardway.org.uk.

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.

PROBLEMS WHILE WALKING THE ROUTE

If you encounter an obstruction, closure or diversion on a public right of way, please tell us about it by emailing graham@vanguardway.org.uk.



Vanguard Way **SOUTH-NORTH** Route Description: Section G

Section G of the Vanguard Way (S-N) starts at Forest Row [TQ 426 350]

This is in Wealden District in East Sussex.

 From East Grinstead, London, Crawley, Three Bridges, Coleman's Hatch, Tunbridge Wells and Eastbourne. Also (not Sundays) from Haywards Heath, Uckfield, Burgess Hill and Brighton.

 A notice in Sainsburys at East Grinstead Station in May 2016 advertised taxis to Forest Row at £6.80.

  Several pubs and cafés in the town centre – see VGW Companion. The Foresters Arms adjacent to VGW at end of Station Road had closed as at May 2016. The friendly little River View Café in Station Road is just 85m after the start. Seasons in the car park behind the Foresters Arms is well known for its organic fruit and vegetables.

 In the Community Centre, 100m east along the main road from the junction with Station Road.

 In Forest Row – see VGW Companion.

The link with East Grinstead starts at point G(4.17) below.

G(5.1) [TQ 426 350]

a)(i) **Approaching along Hartfield Road from Section F**, at the end of a grassy area, TR along Station Road (former Foresters Arms pub closed as at May 2016).

OR

a)(ii) **Approaching from the town centre bus stops**, beside the Chequers Inn, walk up the hill along a narrow side road (Hillside) past shops, then TL at the top along B2110 Hartfield Road, past more shops. In 150m at a grassy area, TL along Station Road.

b) Pass car park, now in Forest Row's 'commercial quarter', which consists of a growing number of warehouses, offices and business parks, passing:

 River View Café.

c) At Forest Row Village Club's car park bear half L towards Forest Lodge Veterinary Centre, crossing but before reaching its car park TR through gap in bushes to lane (*crossing former railway track carrying **Forest Way** and **High Weald Landscape Trail***).

 500m to your right along lane is Tablehurst Farm (Grade II listed) which has an organic farm shop and café open Mondays to Fridays 09.00-17.00.

The link with East Grinstead starts here –

→ see next page. →

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 to divert to the village centre for a bus or taxi. 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 and linear nature reserve, mostly along the Forest Way. It is not without interest, but note that it is mostly uphill into East Grinstead, so you may prefer to take the bus there and return on foot.

- a) TL 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) for 3.8 km (2.4 miles). This is also National Cycle Route 21, so watch out for fast-moving cyclists. In 650m, after two memorial seats, reach Brambletye Crossing, with remains of former railway crossing keeper's house. Soon after this, a parallel footpath up to L leads to a seat with a fine view towards and beyond Brambletye House (see Section F). About halfway along is a picnic table, just before a brick bridge carrying Luxford's Lane. Embankments pass two 'enchanted woodlands', and there is usually a chorus of bird song all the way.
- d) Towards end of former railway track, cross Herontye Drive with care and continue along Forest Way Tk for another 275m, taking L fork near the end 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, passing mini-roundabout.
- f) At Dorset Arms pub take R fork then cross to R-hand pavement by Crown pub. At another mini-roundabout TR down London Road.
- g) At foot of hill KA past traffic lights (Queens Road to left, King Street to right with Wetherspoons Ounce & Ivy Leaf pub, also toilets in car park), then at next traffic lights by Railway Tavern TL along Railway Approach, using R-hand pavement, for 350m.
- h) At Mid Sussex Timber (with Woody's Café) KA across three parts of B2110 (Brooklands Way) and continue past bus stops to station. - **take care** as you cross over as there is no protected pedestrian crossing.

 Trains from East Grinstead to Oxted, East Croydon and central London.

 Many bus services from East Grinstead.

  Many facilities in East Grinstead including Starbucks at Sainsburys beside East Grinstead Station.

 In East Grinstead.

 Milletts in London Road.

If starting from East Grinstead Station:

- a) From forecourt KA past bus stops, with Sainsburys over to R. Cross three parts of B2110 Brooklands Way to pass Mid Sussex Timber and KA along Railway Approach.
- b) At end of Railway Approach TR up London Road for 350m, crossing to L-hand pavement near top.
- c) TL along High Street, crossing to R-hand pavement at Crown pub.
- d) KA to 2nd mini-roundabout at junction with A22 ring road.
- e) Descend ramp to R (signed for Forest Way and West Sussex Border Path) and follow former railway track for 3.8 km (2.4 miles), eventually descending to London Road at Forest Row.
- f) For facilities in village centre TR along R side of Rd, but for VGW cross Rd at light-controlled crossing then KA along lane signposted Hartfield / Forest Way
- g) Follow lane for 300m (the former railway line is to your R here), then immediately after water treatment works and veterinary centre TL on Fp.

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G(4.17) [TQ 428 353]

(joining one of the *Forest Way Circular Walks*)

- KA on (possibly overgrown) Fp beside water treatment works, leading into field and follow L edge.
- At end of field go through latch gate to ascend enclosed Fp between wood and field.
- Continue uphill, later with fields on both sides. *Take care as this path was in very poor condition as at May 2016 – it has been reported to East Sussex County Council.*
- Follow Fp through trees and past horse training paddock to lane by wooden field gates (Melbank).

G(4.16) [TQ 431 364]

- TL along lane (**Cansiron Lane**, NP, Bw) for 200m past Home Meadow and Grove Farm Cottages (Grove Farm itself, nearby, is Grade II listed).
- Where lane bears L, bear R along rough Tk, for 200m to another lane (**Surries Lane**, NP).
- TL along lane for 70m to Homefield Cottage (with postbox).

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

🍺 Pubs in Ashurstwood – see *VGW Companion*.

G(4.15) [TQ 430 368]

- TR along concrete/tarmac lane (**Thornhill Private Road**, NP, part of the ancient track from Ashurstwood to Hammerwood) and follow it along a ridge at altitude 100-120m between valleys for 1,500m. *You pass the imposing grey-stone **Thornhill** and the adjoining Coach House, Hurstbrook House, Songhurst (formerly Barton House) and Owletts House, all on your R. On your left are the remains of an old quarry – it is thought that the stone for Thornhill may have been obtained from this and others nearby. You also pass on your left a deep gully containing a spring – another source of the Medway. Near the end, on your R, are the long, low sheds of a defunct chicken farm.*

G(4.14) [TQ 435 380]

- At Dog Gate Lodge TL down Bw (still the old Hammerwood track) along edge of wood (*The Grove*). *Away to your right is the spire of Hammerwood church – see below.*
- In 400m, now in open farmland, cross stream (a Medway feeder) on brick FB and KA up Bw into Wet Wood, where there is evidence of minor craft or industrial activity in the past. *Note that this path is very muddy and clearly local people use a parallel path inside the woods to your right.*
- Leave wood through metal gate and KA along enclosed Bw along L edge of field for 300m, passing a horse-training paddock, to junction with Fp.

*The secluded village of **Hammerwood** lies tantalisingly close (you can see some of its houses nearby) but there is no direct access. If you wish to visit **Hammerwood Park** you can stay on the bridleway ahead for 600m to the main road, then turn right along the verge for 150m to Hammerwood church and Village Hall, where a lane leads down to the village.*

G(4.13) [TQ 435 389]

- To continue along the VGW, TL along Fp between field and wood past gate to lane (*Brooklands Lane*).
- TR uphill and follow lane for 500m to main Rd at Hammerwood (*A264 Holtye Road*). *On the way up, look L to see a recent example of landscaping in the style of Capability Brown – a set of three hammer ponds in the grounds of High Meadows.*

Ž *Surprisingly, there is no bus service along this main road. The nearest is at Holtye Common (2.5 km east, not Sundays). 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 Shepherdsgrrove Lane).*

➔ Continued over ➔

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The next kilometre of route along Shepherds Grove Lane is far from 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 the north end. We are investigating alternative routes.

G(4.12) [TQ 432 395]

- a) Cross Rd **with great care** and KA along Rd (*Shepherds Grove Lane, NP*), passing between a mobile phone aerial and a horse training paddock. *Away to your right is Dry Hill, which you will soon be climbing.*

Take great care on this road as it is quite busy and has no pavement and several blind right-hand bends, where you should take extra care and keep left – see Road Safety in ‘An Introduction to the Route’.

- b) Follow Rd for 750m, passing **Gotwick Manor** and crossing Kent Water to Rd junction at triangular, overgrown green area.

 275m ahead along Shepherds Grove Lane.

The **Tandridge Border Path** comes in from the left here for the first of five encounters with the VGW: on this occasion the two routes run together for the next 3.5 km.

G(4.11) [TQ 429 401]

- a) TR on Rd (*Smithers Lane*), passing the chocolate-box cottage called Smithers, for 500m to another triangular grass area with elderly fingerpost in **Kentwater valley**.

 Infrequent buses at Holtys Common.

G(4.10) [TQ 434 403]

- a) TL up tarmac Tk (Bw) (*Beeches Farm Lane*) for 1 km, passing gate of a property called Vanguards – the owners took its name from the VGW! KA past Woodlands Farm, where fork L and continue up to Beeches Farm.

G(4.9) [TQ 434 413]

- a) At barns fork R through gate towards farmhouse, then in 50m at tall coniferous hedge TL between barn and hedge.
b) In 20m TR along Bw between hedges and past pond.
c) At next Bw junction KA to ascend fenced Tk between fields, then in 200m you pass between two gateways to enter **Dry Hill Camp**, with remains of ramparts stretching away on either side.
d) Follow Tk along L edge of field, with rampart on your L. *Over to your R on the summit of Dry Hill is a trig point (see Section F) at altitude 172m (564 feet). Note that this stretch of Bw can be very muddy – beware barbed wire on right-hand side.*
e) At fenced reservoir go L through gap in embankment, then follow Tk downhill (with fine view ahead across the Surrey Weald towards the Greensand Ridge) for 350m to Tk (Bw) junction at **Dry Hill Farm**.

G(4.8) [TQ 430 420]

- a) TR for 100m past gate of Orchard Cottage. *Here the VGW briefly (for 100m) joins the **Sussex Border Path**.*
b) At Bw junction, by concrete hump, TL down Bw as it winds around R side of garden and field, with Reynolds Wood on your R. *Take care as this path is badly rutted and in poor condition.*
c) Enter wood (Old Plantation) and descend for 400m to Bw junction (Greathed Turn) (*fine view to R as you leave wood*). Go through gateway (the gate is usually open) and TR.

The link with Dormansland and Dormans Station starts by turning L here – → see next page. →

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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) TL up Tk, which soon passes Grade II listed 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 adjacent ground to the left. (Note deep gully on your L, and later on your R, which appears to be the ancient course of a usually dry stream.)
- 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 Bw fingerpost to 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 in shrubbery 'tunnel' among trees.
- k) In 340m reach and cross Rd (Hollow Lane), then KA along narrow tarmac Fp to R of St Claire 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 – see VGW Companion.
- 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 (The Platt, 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 and KA at litterbins/seat.
- r) On reaching Rd (Dormans Station Road) TR to station [TQ 396 414].
-  Trains to East Grinstead, Oxted, East Croydon and central London.

For return directions from Dormans station and Dormansland, see → next page. →

If starting from Dormans Station:

- a) From FB 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 (NP), KA then bear R to junction beside Cherry Tree Cottage.
- d) TL along narrow lane (View Terrace, NP), which soon 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 between **Royal Oak** pub and post office/village store.
- i) In 170m (opposite Moorkeyes/Park View) TR along drive then KA along narrow, fenced tarmac Fp to reach and cross Rd (Hollow Lane) **with care**.
- 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.
- 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 fingerpost and Home Farm ahead.
- n) Turn 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 with fingerpost, where KA to rejoin VGW.

G(4.7) [TQ 424 425]

- a) In 50m, at another junction with fingerpost and with **Hoopers Farm** visible ahead, TL through latch gate and follow Bw as it swings R then L (beware adjacent barbed wire on R).
- b) Shortly after swinging L, KA at Fp junctions. *The Tandridge Border Path goes off to the R at the first junction.*
- c) KA for 500m, with Skitts Farm over to your R, to reach Rd (B2028 Moor Lane, opposite Starborough Road) at **Moor Cottages**.

 *Infrequent buses operate along this road daily except Sundays from/to Lingfield, Dormansland, Edenbridge, Tunbridge Wells; also (Monday to Friday only) from/to Oxted, Three Bridges and Crawley.*

G(4.6) [TQ 422 434]

- a) Cross Rd with care, TR then cross stile at end of fence beside **Starborough Nurseries**.
- b) Go half R (CB 30°) on Fp across field, part of Starline Farm, which belongs to the **Red Tractor** scheme.
- c) Cross stile and TL along drive (rejoining Tandridge Border Path for next 750m).
- d) In 230m, just before **Starborough Castle** sign, reach junction with Fps with stiles on both sides.

The castle and its grounds are not open to the public but you may be able to get a glimpse of it (as well as the moat with its incongruous narrow-boat) by turning right at this junction: cross stile and go through hurdle gate, then follow Fp in field beside fence for 140m. Return by same route.

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G(4.5) [TQ 425 439]

a) Continuing along the VGW, cross stile to L and immediately TR along side of field, bearing L with hedge of **Starborough Manor** to another stile.

ã At Starborough Manor – see VGW Companion.

G(4.4) [TQ 424 442]

a) TR along lane for 40m to junction beside gate of **The Coach House**.

b) Of two KGs, go through the one ahead (beside metal farm gate) then TL on Tk.

c) In 250m, after passing under power lines, KA past fingerpost to Fp junction at another fingerpost just before Cernes Farm, where the VGW turns L. The **Eden Valley Walk** starts here, going off to the right.

*This is also the VGW's southern link to **Edenbridge** and Edenbridge Town Station.*

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) TR through small field on faint Fp beside nettles and scrub (may be in long grass).

b) In field corner cross stile and concrete FB, then follow faint Fp bearing half L (CB 60°) across field (may be very soggy after rain in long grass), aiming for R-hand of two field gates.

c) Cross stile by gate then KA on broad grass-and-earth Fp between fences, with rushy pond to R.

d) Join gravel Tk leading ahead through trees into field. (To your R here is **Gabriel's Fishery** in a sylvan setting with basic toilets, usually always open, and a refreshment kiosk usually open weekends only.)

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

f) TR on faint Fp in large field, possibly in long grass, keeping close to river, and soon crossing end of mown grass airstrip (one of two in this field owned by East Haxted Farm and used for private flying, mainly at weekends – note windsock away to your L).

g) Keep L of a brick pillbox (see Section A) to cross the other airstrip, then negotiate strange iron barrier-cum-stile and across a concrete FB.

h) KA on Fp near mill stream, passing through gap in hedge (beware exposed roots) into next field.

i) Continue into small wood (more exposed roots) known as **Devil's Den**.

j) Emerge into field to follow Fp beside River Eden as it swings L, to cross a wooden FB beside another brick pillbox.

k) KA to cross larger wooden FB into a recreation ground.

l) KA along R-hand side of recreation ground, with pavilion over to your L, then climb embankment to tall iron structure.

m) TR to join straight, narrow tarmac Fp beside houses and on to B2026 Mont St Aignan Way (Edenbridge town centre bypass).

n) Cross Rd at pedestrian refuge then TR along tarmac Fp beside Waitrose car park, leading down to River Eden.

o) Follow riverside Fp via steps and on to Edenbridge High Street.

p) TL along High Street for 550m, passing Ye Olde Crown Inn, Eden Valley Museum and Costa Coffee. (Note the antiques shops on your R, one of which is that of Lennox Cato of the BBC's Antiques Road Show.)

q) Soon after the road rises, past Edenbridge Primary School, TR along Station Approach to Edenbridge Town Station, using the pavement on the L-hand side.

For Edenbridge Station continue ahead along Station Road for 1 km.

 Trains from Edenbridge Town to Oxted, East Croydon, London, Buxted and Uckfield.

 to Crockham Hill, Westerham, Oxted, Sevenoaks, Tunbridge Wells, Dormansland, Lingfield, East Grinstead.

 ã In Edenbridge – see VGW Companion.

For directions from Edenbridge Town station, see → next page. →

Vanguard Way **SOUTH-NORTH** Route Description: Section G

If starting from Edenbridge Town Station:

- a) From station forecourt KA along Station Approach, using pavement along R-hand side, to main Rd (Station Road).
- b) TL along Station Road, which soon becomes High Street, for 550m, eventually passing Costa Coffee, Eden Valley Museum and Ye Olde Crown Inn.
- c) Opposite Baptist Church and immediately before bridge over River Eden, TR on paved Fp between hedges, leading down to river.
- d) Follow riverside path via steps and cross B2026 Mont St Aignan Way (Edenbridge town centre bypass) at pedestrian refuge (Waitrose nearby).
- e) Bear L down tarmac Fp, which swings R beside houses to reach tall, iron structure, with pavilion ahead.
- f) TL down embankment and follow L-hand side of recreation ground to its end.
- g) Cross long wooden FB and KA to cross another, smaller, wooden FB beside brick pillbox.
- h) Continue on Fp beside River Eden, soon bearing R into small wood (**Devil's Den**) – beware exposed roots.
- i) Emerge from wood and KA on Fp close to mill stream.
- j) Go through gap in hedge (more exposed roots) into another field then in 80m KA across concrete FB and negotiate strange iron stile-cum-barrier into large field.
- k) KA across mown grass airstrip (see above) to pass R of another brick pillbox, on faint Fp possibly in long grass.
- l) Follow Fp as it crosses another airstrip and swings R, keeping close to river.
- m) 20m after reaching some tall trees, TL through bushes to cross concrete FB.
- n) KA across small field, parallel with R-hand side, and with **Gabriel's Fishery** (toilets/refreshments – see above) over to your L.
- o) Join gravel Tk and KA through trees.
- p) When gravel Tk swings L, KA on broad grass-and-earth Fp between rushy pond and fence.
- q) At Tk junction KA to cross stile beside gate and follow faint Fp half L (CB 230°) across large field, possibly through long grass.
- r) Cross concrete FB and stile then follow R-hand side of small field, beside nettles and scrub, to reach Tk and fingerpost near entrance to Cernes Farm, where KA through KG to rejoin VGW.

G(4.3) [TQ 425 445]

The cross-field paths here may not be clear in long grass.

- a) To continue along the VGW, go through KG on L (passing another fingerpost where the Tandridge Border Path turns R) then cross field quarter left (CB 265°) to hedge corner.
- b) KA (with hedge on your L) to cross plank bridge and stile.
- c) KA across field, gradually closing on its L side, towards far corner.
- d) Cross plank bridge over ditch (may be hidden in long grass), by waymark post.
- e) 30m before end of field, bear L through trees to cross stile and plank bridge onto Rd (*Starborough Road*).

G(4.2) [TQ 417 446]

- a) KA on Rd (**NP**). *Note that the further part of this road is subject to flooding after heavy rain.*
- b) In 300m at Rd junction bear right (*Water Lane, NP*). *There are signs here for a cycle route called the Yew Tree Way, which follows a circular route of 24 km (15 miles) around Tandridge District.*
- c) Cross bridge over Eden Brook (tributary of River Eden).
- d) Cross metal barrier and fence with complicated stile on R immediately after bridge. *Take care not to get your foot caught in the gap between the barrier and the fence.*
- e) Turn quarter L across field (CB 10°), heading for tallest tree.
- f) Cross concrete culvert and FB over **River Eden**. ***Beware steep drop on far side.***
- g) KA through field for 450m with hedge on R and stream (Mill Brook) on L.
- h) Cross stile opposite **Haxted Mill** to Rd (*Haxted Road*) **NP** and end of Section G at:

Vanguard Way **SOUTH-NORTH** Route Description: Section G

G(4.1) [TQ 418 455]

Take great care crossing this road (NP), as traffic comes fast around a bend in each direction.

Ž Taxi (see Transport Guide in VGW Companion) to:
Edenbridge station for trains from Tonbridge, Redhill and Gatwick Airport; also (not Sundays) East Croydon, central London, Crawley, Horsham, Tunbridge Wells.
Edenbridge Town Station for trains from Oxted, East Croydon, central London, Buxted, Uckfield; also buses (not Sundays) from East Grinstead, Westerham, Tunbridge Wells and Sevenoaks.

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COMMENTARY

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

G(5.1)

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.

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 from:

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

The former Forest Row station occupied the area to your right - 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), which now continues to Eridge.

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 from: www.highweald.org/explore/walking-and-cycling/long-distance-walks/625-high-weald-landscape-trail.html.

G(4.16)

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

Ashurstwood (1 km W) was originally called Aeschyrstwilde - 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. 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.

G(4.15)

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.)

Thornhill Private 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.

G(4.14)

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** (a Grade I listed building, 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 is now one of the most exclusive bed and breakfast establishments in the country, and claims the largest and grandest rooms in any B&B. The house is open to the public on Wednesday and Saturday afternoons from Easter to September and the tour includes afternoon tea. Nearby Bower Farmhouse (Grade II* listed) dates from the 15th century, and Grade II listed St. Stephen's Church on the main road is 19th century.

G(4.12)

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 Wealden District in East Sussex into Tandridge District in Surrey.

This is the first of five encounters with the **Tandridge Border Path**. It runs for 80 km (50 miles), closely following the border of Tandridge District and was established in 2002. The eastern side of its route runs roughly parallel with the Vanguard Way. More information from Per-Rambulations at www.per-rambulations.co.uk.

G(4.11)

There is a pleasant and interesting diversion to your right (SE) along Smithers Lane in the **Kentwater valley**, but take care as there is no pavement, and it can get flooded after heavy rain. It is normally quiet but can get busy in rush hours. You soon pass Basings Farm, 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, but sadly the White Horse Inn here has closed.

G(4.9)

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 right, built in 1910 and now owned by Sutton and East Surrey Water. There is in fact a second, smaller reservoir within the southwestern ramparts.

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.

G(4.8)

Coming in from the left now is the **Sussex Border Path**, though here actually in Surrey. This is a 240 km long-distance walking route from Emsworth to Rye following the county border as closely as possible, with a branch from East Grinstead to Southwick along the border that divides East and West Sussex. The route was the creation in 1983 of Aeneas Mackintosh and Ben Perkins, now in the care of the Ramblers' Sussex Area. It diverges from the VGW by keeping ahead at the next junction. More information at www.sussexborderpath.co.uk.

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. Greathed Manor 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.

The 273-mile **Greenwich Meridian Trail** was established in 2009 to coincide with the 125th anniversary of the Greenwich Meridian, when a zero longitude through the Royal Observatory at Greenwich was set up by international agreement – despite objections from France, which wanted it to go through Paris! It starts at Peacehaven, to the east of Brighton and dives into the North Sea at Sand-le-Mere in Yorkshire. More information at www.greenwichmeridiantrail.co.uk.

G(4.7)

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. The farmhouse is a Grade II* listed building.

Whether or not you speak German, a very short detour westwards (to the left) 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, & 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.

G(4.6)

Starborough Nurseries are 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.

The **Red Tractor** scheme (www.redtractor.org.uk), established in 2000, promotes high standards of animal welfare, food safety, traceability, clearer labelling and environmental protection. All farms in the scheme are regularly checked by independent experts to ensure that they attain the scheme's high standards.

G(4.5)

There has been some confusion between the two separate buildings, **Starborough Castle** (as shown on the Ordnance Survey Explorer map) and **Starborough Manor**. The manor is the red-brick building which you pass on the VGW, a former farmhouse built circa 1880, which offers bed and breakfast accommodation (see www.starboroughmanor.co.uk). The 'castle' lies behind the Manor, surrounded by a moat, which incongruously has a narrow-boat moored to the bank. The present Grade II* listed building is actually a rather grand, battlemented summerhouse built in 1754 for the manor on the site of the original moated Norman castle, which was replaced by one built 1342 for the first Lord Cobham. 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. The original name was Sterburgh, meaning Sterr's Castle (after a local squire, Richard Sterr), so to call it Starborough Castle is tautological!

G(4.4)

The Grade II listed **Coach House**, built in the late 18th century, was formerly the stables of Starborough Castle.

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.

Devil's Den is the site of a medieval moated manor, built around 1300, now a scheduled ancient monument. The moat lies to the north of the route through the small wood, but nothing of the manor is visible now.

Edenbridge (1.9 km E on link, www.edenbridgetown.com) is a small town (population around 4,000) straddling the old Roman road from London to Lewes. The earliest mention of the name was around 1100 as Eadelmesbrege, meaning Eadhelm's bridge. Its parish church, St. Peter and St. Paul, dates from the 13th century and has much of interest. The southern part of the High Street is dominated by the distinctive overhead sign of Ye Old Crown Inn. Nearby are Doggetts Barn and Church House, in which are located the Visitor Centre and Edenbridge Town Museum.

G(4.2)

The **River Eden** is formed from several streams that rise in the Titsey area. It flows first south through Oxted then east through Edenbridge to join the Medway near Penshurst. The river took its name from the town of Edenbridge (which in its original form Eadelmesbrege meant the bridge of a person called Eadhelm) not the other way round. The VGW encounters the Eden again in Section H.

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.

Haxted Mill consists of two weatherboarded buildings (both Grade II listed) beside the River Eden and a mill stream. There has been a mill on this site since the 14th century, when it was owned by Reginald de Cobham of Starborough (passed earlier on the Vanguard Way). The smaller, tile-hung left-hand building of 1680 was for many years a restaurant and tea-room, but sadly this closed in 2015 and is now a private residence. The right-hand, larger building with a double mansard roof was added in 1794. The mill ceased commercial operations in 1945 but the newer building was restored in 1969, and scheduled as a building of historic interest, to house a watermill museum, with parts brought from other mills, and an exhibition of the Wealden iron industry. At the time of writing (March 2017), the museum was closed while new owners negotiated access arrangements. However, the mill's own substantial wheel can be seen between the two

Vanguard Way **SOUTH-NORTH** Route Description: Section G

buildings: it is an overshot one, which means that water enters the buckets at the top, then gravity forces it round. Two other smaller wheels brought from elsewhere lie outside the building. A flood mark outside the newer building shows the level reached by the River Eden in 1968. Further information from:
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Haxted_Watermill

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