

# THE VANGUARD WAY

## (SOUTH TO NORTH)

**A different experience in the other direction!**

### ROUTE DESCRIPTION and points of interest along the route

## SECTION G Forest Row to Haxted Mill

**COLIN SAUNDERS**

First Edition (South-North)  
Version 1.1

This revised version of the first edition of the south-north route description was first published in 2015. It is only available as an online resource.

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

**Designed by Brian Bellwood**

Published by the Vanguards Rambling Club  
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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 G: FOREST ROW TO HAXTED MILL**

**13.4 km (8.3 miles)**

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

This South-North version of the Route Description is based on a completely new survey undertaken by club members in 2010. 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](http://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**

|                    |                 |               |
|--------------------|-----------------|---------------|
| VGW = Vanguard Way | KA = keep ahead | > = off route |
| Bw = bridleway     | TL = turn left  | N = north     |
| Fp = footpath      | TR = turn right | S = south     |
| Rd = road          | L = left        | E = east      |
| Tk = track         | R = right       | W = west      |
| m = metres         | km = kilometres |               |

### 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) |
|-------------|--------|------------------------------------|

### 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. 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.

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

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## 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.

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

[🍷] The Foresters Arms is adjacent to VGW at end of Station Road. There are more pubs and cafés in the town centre - TL for 150m at the Foresters Arms – and a café a little way along the VGW in Station Road.

[🚗] At back of car park.

[📍] In Forest Row.

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

#### G(5.1) [TQ 426 350]

- At Foresters Arms TR (Station Road) passing car park (toilets). Continue across the infant **River Medway** and past Riverview Café. Here is Forest Row's 'commercial quarter', which consists of a growing number of warehouses and other business premises. Just before the Medway, a Fp to L leads directly to Forest Row's bus stops and most of its facilities.
- At Forest Row Social Club bear half L through car park for 20m then TR through gap in bushes to lane (former railway track carrying **Forest Way** and **High Weald Landscape Trail** by Forest Lodge Veterinary Centre and Forest Row Water Treatment Works.

[🍷] 150m to your right is Tablehurst Farm which has an organic farm shop open Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays.

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

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

- TL along lane past veterinary centre, parallel with former railway track on embankment to L.
- In 300m cross A22 London Road at controlled crossing then bear R up Fp behind fence.
- 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. Points to watch out for are Brambletye Crossing, a picnic table about halfway, a brick road bridge, and a fairly busy estate road towards the end.
- At the end, bear L up to A22 Lewes Road in East Grinstead. The road opposite, Beeching Way (ironically along a former railway line), is named after Dr Richard Beeching (1913-1985), the architect of the infamous 'Beeching Axe' of massive railway line closures in the 1960s, who lived in East Grinstead.
- TL for 300m, leading up to the High Street.
- Just after the Rose & Crown pub, take the R fork, then at mini-roundabout TR down London Road, signed for Worth Way.
- At foot of hill KA past traffic lights (Queens Road to left, King Street to right - toilets in car park) then at next lights by Broadway pub TL along Railway Approach for 350m.
- At the roundabout for B2110 (Brooklands Way), the station lies ahead, but unfortunately local planners have made poor provision for pedestrians and you must follow a tortuous route, at first along the pavement to the left then come back on the far side and TL for the station - take care as you cross over as there is no protected pedestrian crossing.

*Continued on next page.*

*Continued from previous page.*

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

[👉] *and most other facilities in East Grinstead.*

**If starting from East Grinstead Station:**

- a) *From forecourt KA to roundabout then KA along Rd (Railway Approach) - head for the Mid Sussex Timber warehouse. If traffic is heavy by the station use the zebra crossing to the right. At the roundabout use the light-controlled pedestrian crossing to the right.*
- b) *At end of Railway Approach TR along London Road for 350m to junction at top of hill.*
- c) *TL for 300m along High Street which becomes Lewes Road.*
- d) *KA to 2<sup>nd</sup> roundabout at junction with A22 ring road.*
- e) *Descend ramp to R on to Forest Way Country Park and follow the Forest Way for 3.8 km (2.4 miles), eventually descending ramp to London Road at Forest Row.*
- f) *Cross Rd at light-controlled crossing then KA along lane signposted Hartfield / Forest Way. (Or for facilities in village centre TR along London Road, turning L at B2110 to rejoin VGW at 5.1a above.)*
- 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.*

**G(4.17) [TQ 428 353]**

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

- a) *KA on Fp beside water treatment works and through gate, leading into field where, in 50m, follow L edge.*
- b) *At end of field go through latch gate to ascend enclosed Fp between wood and field, with small reservoir on your R.*
- c) *Continue uphill, later with fields on both sides.*
- e) *Follow Fp through trees and past horse training paddock to lane by wooden field gates (Melbank).*

**G(4.16) [TQ 431 364]**

- a) *TL along lane (Cansiron Lane, Bw) for 200m past Home Meadow and Grove Farm Cottages.*
- b) *Where lane bears L, bear R along rough Tk for 200m to another lane (Surries Lane).*
- c) *TL along lane for 70m to Homefield Cottage (with postbox).*

[🚌] *For 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.*

**G(4.15) [TQ 430 368]**

- a) *TR along lane (a private road) and follow it along a ridge 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. Near the end, on your R, are the long, low sheds of a chicken farm, now closed.*

**G(4.14) [TQ 435 380]**

- a) *At Dog Gate Lodge TL down Bw along edge of wood (The Grove). The large house on your R is Hammerwood Park – see below.*
- b) *In 400m, now in open farmland, cross stream on brick footbridge and KA up Bw into Wet Wood.*
- c) *Leave wood through metal gate and KA along L edge of field for 300m to junction with Fp.*

*The secluded village of Hammerwood lies tantalisingly close (you can see some its houses nearby) but*

## VANGUARD WAY *SOUTH-NORTH* ROUTE DESCRIPTION: SECTION G

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there is no direct access. If you wish to visit **Hammerwood Park** you must follow the footpath ahead for 600m to the main road, then turn right along the verge for 150m to Hammerwood Village Hall, where a lane leads down to the village.

### G(4.13) [TQ 435 389]

- a) To continue along the VGW, TL along Fp between field and wood to lane (*Brooklands Lane*).
- b) 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.

[🚌] 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 Shepherds Grove Lane).

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

### G(4.12) [TQ 432 395]

- a) Cross Rd with great care and KA along Rd (*Shepherds Grove Lane*), passing between a mobile phone aerial and a horse training paddock.

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

- b) Follow Rd for 750m, 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**.

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

[🏞️] At the White Horse Inn, Holtye Common (3 km / 2 miles) east along Smithers Lane - a pleasant walk along a normally quiet lane, which passes a series of small artificial ponds (constructed to provide power to the iron foundries in this area), the much larger Furnace Pond, and crosses Holtye Golf Course on the common.

[🚌] Infrequent buses at Holtye Common.

### G(4.10) [TQ 434 403]

- a) TL up tarmac Tk (Bw) (*Beeches Farm Lane*) for 1 km, passing through a gate by Woodlands Farm and continue to Beeches Farm.

### G(4.9) [TQ 434 413]

- a) Pass through gate towards farmhouse, then in 50m TL between barn and tall hedge.
- b) At end of hedge TR through gate and up Bw.

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- 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** at altitude 172m (564 feet).*
- e) At fenced reservoir go L through gap in embankment, then follow Tk in same direction downhill (with fine view ahead across the Surrey Weald towards the Greensand Ridge) for 350m to Tk junction by **Dry Hill Farm**.

### **G(4.8)** [TQ 430 420]

- a) TR for 100m – here the VGW briefly (for 100m) joins the **Sussex Border Path**.
- b) At Bw junction, by concrete culvert, TL down Bw as it winds around R side of garden and field, with Reynolds Wood on your R.
- 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.*

### **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 Littleworth Cottage.
- b) In 250m enter woodland through wooden latch gate to follow earth Tk. It may be very muddy in places but you should be able to avoid the mud on slightly higher adjacent ground. (*Note deep gully on your L, and later on your R, which appears to be the ancient course of a usually dry stream.*)
- c) On emerging from woodland beside Copse Cottage, KA on metalled Tk, soon passing double gates of **Tobias & The Angel Workshop**.
- d) Turn sharp R at junction beside wooden barn (with Home Farm to your L), joining tarmac lane (Ford Manor Road).
- e) In 150m you reach two junctions in quick succession: the first leads to Ford Manor, the second to **Greathed Manor**, and both are visible over to your L.
- f) KA on lane for 375m to pass through former gateway between stone columns beside lodge. For the **Plough Inn** [TQ 405 427, phone 01342 832933] KA along Ford Manor Road for another 650m.
- g) **For Dormansland village centre and Dormans Station**, immediately TL on narrow earth Fp between hedges.
- h) Soon pass through metal latch-gate and KA along R-hand side of large field.
- i) In 200m pass overgrown remains of wooden KG and grass strip, which subdivides the field.
- j) KA for another 120m, now with trees on your R, and leave field by keeping ahead past remains of metal KG to enter narrow earth Fp among trees.
- k) In 340m reach and cross Rd (Hollow Lane), then KA along narrow tarmac Fp to R of St Clair Cottages.
- l) Shortly join drive leading to Rd (Dormansland High Street), then TL to **Royal Oak pub** [TQ 404 421, phone 01342 836611]. The post office/village store is opposite.

**[P]** **[S]** **[J]** In Dormansland.

- m) **For Old House at Home pub and Dormans Station**, continue past Royal Oak for 50m to find public toilets on your R.
- n) Go L of toilets then bear R down narrow tarmac Fp into playing field, passing between tennis courts and playground.
- o) At foot of hill TL along drive to Rd (West Street). To your R is the **Old House at Home pub** [TQ 401 421, phone 01342 832117].

***Continued on next page.***

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- p) For Dormans Station, TL along West Street and KA at junction (Barnfield, View Terrace).*
- q) In 200m at junction TR past Cherry Tree Cottage to end of lane then KA along tarmac Fp for 600m, briefly joining drive serving houses. Ignore all side turnings.*
- r) On reaching Rd (Dormans Station Road) TR to station [TQ 396 414].*


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

***If starting from Dormans Station:***

- a) From footbridge TL past station house then immediately TL again along narrow tarmac Fp (signed Greenwich Meridian Trail).*
- b) KA for 600m, briefly joining drive serving houses. Ignore all side turnings.*
- c) On reaching lane, KA then bear R to junction beside Cherry Tree Cottage.*
- d) TL along lane (View Terrace), which widens out and joins West Street.*
- e) In 250m, just before **Old House at Home** pub, and opposite house number 100, TR along drive between fences into playing field.*
- f) In 15m bear R up narrow tarmac Fp leading between playground and tennis courts.*
- g) Bear L at top past public toilets to reach Rd (Dormansland High Street).*
- h) TL to pass **Royal Oak** pub and post office/village store.*
- i) In 170m (opposite Moorkeyes/Park View) TR along drive then KA along narrow tarmac Fp to reach and cross Rd (Hollow Lane).*
- j) KA along earth Fp, which leads for 750m, at first among trees, then along L-hand side of two large fields separated by grass strip.*
- k) At end of second field KA through metal latch-gate on narrow fenced Fp beside trees to reach lane (Ford Manor Road) and TR. (If you went to the **Plough Inn** you rejoin the link here by keeping ahead.)*
- l) Go through former gateway between stone columns and KA for 375m, reaching two junctions in quick succession (for Greathed Manor then Ford Manor).*
- m) Bear L, following 'Courtyard' sign, and follow lane for another 150m to junction, with Home Farm ahead.*
- n) Fork L on metalled Tk then sharp L again at wooden barn.*
- o) Follow Tk as it veers R to pass double gates of Tobias & All Angels Workshop.*
- p) When metalled Tk ends beside Copse Cottage KA up grassy Tk into trees, with stream in gully on L (later on R).*
- q) Leave woodland through wooden latch gate and KA for 250m, passing Littleworth Cottage, to Bw junction, where KA to rejoin VGW.*

**G(4.7) [TQ 424 425]**

- a) In 50m, with **Hoopers Farm** visible ahead, TL through latch gate and follow Bw as it swings R then L.*
- 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) at **Moor Cottages**.*

 *Buses operate along this road Monday to Friday only between East Grinstead and Westerham via Lingfield, Dormansland and Edenbridge.*

*Although you can reach the Wheatsheaf pub from here by turning right along the road, we suggest you continue a little further to use a much pleasanter route on footpaths.*



**G(4.6) [TQ 422 434]**

- a) Cross Rd with care then cross stile to R of Starborough Nurseries.
- b) Go half R (bearing 30°) on Fp across field to cross stile and TL along drive (*rejoining Tandridge Border Path for next 750m*).
- c) In 230m reach junction with Fps with stiles on both sides.

**G(4.5) [TQ 425 439]**

Cross stile to L and immediately TR along side of field, bearing L with hedge of Starborough Manor (shown as Starborough Castle on map) to another stile.

[↔] *At Starborough Manor.*

**G(4.4) [TQ 424 442]**

- a) TR along lane for 40m to pass The Coach House.
- b) Ignoring stile, go through metal gate and TL on Tk.
- c) In 250m, after passing under power lines, KA past fingerpost to Fp junction at another fingerpost just before Cernes Farm.

*The Tandridge Border Path continues ahead here, and 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) *At Cernes Farm TR on faint Fp along left-hand side of field beside scrub.*
  - b) *In 75m in field corner cross stile and follow Fp bearing half L across three fields for 700m. Note that there is a grass airstrip here, which you have to cross at one point; it is normally only used for weekend flying by light aircraft.*
  - c) *Cross bridge and TR to follow Fp beside or close to River Eden for 1.3 km. You pass through a copse which is the site of Devil's Den, a medieval moated manor, built about 1300, and now a scheduled ancient monument.*
  - d) *KA on Fp as it bears L beside river and follow for 350m into recreation ground.*
  - e) *KA along R side of playing field, then TL beside raised grass embankment.*
  - f) *TR past car park and pavilion on to Rd (Coomb Field) then KA past Lucilina Drive.*
  - g) *TR along Lingfield Road past triangular green to main Rd (B2026 Mont St. Aignan Way).*
  - h) *KA (using controlled crossing to R) along lane to High Street. Leave Eden Valley Walk here.*
  - i) *TL along High Street past White Horse Inn for 300m.*
  - j) *TR along Station Approach to Edenbridge Town Station.*
- Edenbridge Station is 1 km (half a mile) further along the main Rd.*

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

[🚶] *In Edenbridge.*

[↔] *In Edenbridge.*

***If starting from Edenbridge Town Station:***

- a) *From station forecourt KA along Station Approach to main Rd (Station Road).*
- b) *TL along Station Road, which soon becomes High Street.*
- c) *In 300m. just past White Horse Inn and opposite NatWest Bank, TR along lane (actually Lingfield Road but unmarked), joining Eden Valley Walk.*

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- d) At bypass Rd (B2026 Mont St. Aignan Way) KA, using controlled crossing to L.
- e) KA at triangular green and pass Tanners Mead.
- f) Shortly TL along Coomb Field and enter recreation ground.
- g) At car park TL beside raised grass embankment then TR along edge of playing field and cross metal footbridge.
- h) KA beside or near River Eden, crossing wooden footbridge by concrete pillbox.
- i) KA with river, soon bearing R, then KA into copse (Devil's Den).
- j) Follow Fp along L side of next two fields.
- k) Bear L across plank bridge then KA across grass airstrip close to another concrete pillbox (the airstrip is normally only used for weekend flying by light aircraft).
- l) Follow winding Fp along L side of large field until it comes close to bushes.
- m) TL across concrete footbridge and KA across field.
- n) Go through gate then KA on Tk, which broadens out between fences.
- o) Cross stile and follow faint Tk towards farm buildings.
- p) Cross another stile and keep to R side of field beside scrub to Tk by Cernes Farm, where KA across stile to rejoin VGW.

**G(4.3) [TQ 425 445]**

- a) Cross stile on L then cross field quarter left (bearing 255°) 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, by waymark post.
- e) At end of field bear L to cross stile on to Rd (*Starborough Lane*).

**G(4.2) [TQ 417 446]**

- a) KA on Rd. **This stretch of road has no pavement - see Road Safety in 'An Introduction to the Route'**.  
*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*). *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) Ignore first stile on bridge, then after 20m cross second stile and turn quarter L across field, heading due N for a concrete structure (L of tallest tree).
- e) Cross culvert and footbridge over **River Eden**.
- f) KA through field for 450m with hedge on R and stream (Mill Brook ) on L.
- g) Cross stile opposite **Haxted Mill** to Rd (*Haxted Road*) and end of Section G at:

**G(4.1) [TQ 418 455]**

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

*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.*

**[🍴]** *Riverside Brasserie and Restaurant.*

**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 at:

[www.eastsussex.gov.uk/leisureandtourism/countryside/walks/forestway](http://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/leisureandtourism/countryside/walks/forestway).

The former Forest Row station occupied the area to your left - only part of a platform remains. The line was opened in 1866 for the London Brighton & South Coast Railway as a rival to the earlier (1845) route to Tunbridge Wells Central of the South Eastern Railway. The two lines were linked in the 1870s, in 1922 became part of the Southern Railway, and in 1946 were nationalised as part of British Railways. This line was closed in 1967, though the section from Tunbridge Wells West to Groombridge still operates as the steam-hauled Spa Valley Railway ([www.spavalleyrailway.co.uk](http://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 at: [www.highweald.org/text.asp?PageId=29](http://www.highweald.org/text.asp?PageId=29).

**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 19<sup>th</sup> century Christ Church, which contains an early 16<sup>th</sup> 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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 10<sup>th</sup> 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 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** (500m further SE, [www.hammerwood.mistral.co.uk](http://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. It is open to the public on Wednesday and Saturday afternoons from Easter to September and the tour includes afternoon tea. Nearby Bower Farmhouse dates from the 15<sup>th</sup> century, and St. Stephen's Church on the main road is 19<sup>th</sup> 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 at: [www.tandridge.gov.uk/LifeinTandridge/Leisure/Walks/tandridge\\_border\\_path.htm](http://www.tandridge.gov.uk/LifeinTandridge/Leisure/Walks/tandridge_border_path.htm).

### G(4.11)

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

### 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 of Aeneas Mackintosh and Ben Perkins. It diverges from the VGW by keeping ahead at the next junction. More information at:

[www.ldwa.org.uk/ldp/members/show\\_path.php?menu\\_type=S&path\\_id=442](http://www.ldwa.org.uk/ldp/members/show_path.php?menu_type=S&path_id=442).

**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](http://www.tobiasandtheangel.com).

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

### 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](http://www.hoopersfarm.net).

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, and bessert von Herzens’. By our loose translation and imperfect German, this means ‘wine is worth every penny; it soothes every pain, it often makes the tongue lighter, and improves the heart’. This is the result of a visit by the owners in the 1980s to a wine festival beside the River Rhine in Germany, where they were captivated by this inscription on the wall of an inn.

### 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](http://www.gardenvisit.com/nursery/starborough_nursery).

### G(4.5)

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

### G(4.4)

**The Coach House**, built in the late 18<sup>th</sup> 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](http://www.edenbridgetown.com/maps/eden_valley_walk.shtml).

**Edenbridge** (1.9 km E on link, [www.edenbridgetown.com](http://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 13<sup>th</sup> century and has much of interest. The southern part of the High Street is dominated by the distinctive overhead sign of the Crown Hotel.

### 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** ([www.haxtedmill.co.uk](http://www.haxtedmill.co.uk)) consists of two weatherboarded buildings beside the River Eden, described by Pevsner as 'a charming group'. There has been a mill on this site since the 14<sup>th</sup> century, when it was owned by Reginald de Cobham of Starborough (passed later along the VGW). The smaller, tile-hung left-hand building (now the Riverside Brasserie and Bar) is the older of the two existing buildings, built in 1680; the larger right-hand one, with double mansard roof, was added in 1794. This is one of just six watermills in southeast England that still have a working wheel - this is the one on the left of the larger building (the one to the right is for display only). The wheel here is overshot, which means that water enters the buckets at the top of the wheel, then gravity forces it round. The mill ceased commercial operation in 1945 but was restored in 1969 as a watermill museum (open summer only), and scheduled as a building of historic interest. There is also a museum of parts retrieved from other mills, and an exhibition of the Wealden iron industry. There is a set of stocks, and a flood mark shows the level reached by the River Eden in 1968.

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