

THE VANGUARD WAY

(SOUTH TO NORTH)

A different experience in the other direction!

ROUTE DESCRIPTION

and points of interest along the route

SECTION D

Golden Cross to Blackboys

COLIN SAUNDERS

First Edition (South-North)
Version 1.0

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

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

SECTION D: GOLDEN CROSS TO BLACKBOYS

12.2 km (7.6 miles)

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 for any changes that may have taken place meanwhile.

Paragraphs are numbered for ease of reference. 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 D(7.21) to D(7.1). (The individual route description paragraphs in this South-North section are preceded by the letter D 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	

VANGUARD WAY *SOUTH-NORTH* ROUTE DESCRIPTION: SECTION D

Public Transport

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

Distances from Golden Cross (Deanland Road*) to:

Chiddingly	3.0 km (1.9 miles)
>East Hoathly (bus)	7.9 km (4.9 miles)
Blackboys	12.2 km (7.6 miles)

*From Golden Cross pub/bus stop add 0.5 km (0.3 miles).

Distance from East Hoathly to:

Blackboys	7.2 km (4.5 miles)
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Overview

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

Note: Many stretches on this section cross large fields, often with no distinguishing feature to guide you. So we give a compass bearing as a guide – see the Equipment section of the Introduction to the Route.

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

VANGUARD WAY *SOUTH-NORTH* ROUTE DESCRIPTION: SECTION D

Section D of the VGW(South-North) starts on Deanland Road, 500m south of Golden Cross
[TQ 533 120]

Link from Golden Cross pub and bus stops (500m).

a) From the back of the pub and car park go southwest along Deanland Road for 500m until you reach the white railings, where TR across stile.

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

[Refreshments] Golden Cross pub(www.thegoldencrossinn.co.uk).

D(8.1) [TQ 533 120]

Some OS maps may show the VGW continuing along a footpath further north along the road, but it now follows the footpath almost opposite.

- At the white railings, cross Rd (Deanland Road) and cross two stiles into field (ignore bridge between stiles).
- Follow L side of field to its end then cross stile by gate to L.
- Follow Tk past barn to shop at **Mohair Centre**.

[Refreshments] Vending machines at the Mohair Centre (www.mohaircentre.co.uk), also afternoon tea on Sundays.

[Toilets] At the Mohair Centre.

D(7.21) [TQ 532 123]

Follow Tk twisting R then L then R, through car park and past junctions and gates for 250m to Rd (B2124 Lewes Road).

D(7.20) [TQ 531 126]

- Cross stile opposite (may be hidden in dip) and KA on Fp along L side of field to next Rd (A22 London-Eastbourne Road) beside what used to be the Wattle Tearoom (sadly missed).

The far end of this path, about 100m along, may be obstructed by dense brambles and water. If you cannot get through, return to B2124, TL (east) for 175m to the main A22 London-Eastbourne Road then TL along it for 200m to the former Wattle Tearoom to rejoin the VGW route.

D(7.19) [TQ 532 128]

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

- TL along L side of Rd.
- In 100m, at entrance of Holmes Hill Estate, by bend in Rd, you should have better visibility of, and be more easily seen by, approaching traffic in both directions.

[Refreshments] [Toilets] Happy Days Café (closed Tuesdays) in Holmes Hill Estate (tea room is last building on right by lake) www.holmeshill.com.

- Cross Rd with great care.
- Cross stile in gate, KA along L side of field and go through gate.
- Continue on fenced Fp through wood and go through second gate.
- KA (bearing 60°) across field to gate.

Continued on next page. ►

VANGUARD WAY *SOUTH-NORTH* ROUTE DESCRIPTION: SECTION D

g) KA (bearing 50°) across next field, passing L of lone tree in middle of field. *The hamlet of Muddles Green is away to your R.*

D(7.18) [TQ 536 134]

- a) Cross concrete footbridge and stile into next field then bear quarter L (bearing 20°) up towards fingerpost in middle of field, which marks the line of a crossing Fp.
- b) At fingerpost bear slightly R, heading for gap in hedge by spreading oak tree. *This field has in the past been obstructed by crops, and ploughed lines may not follow the required direction.*
- c) Cross another concrete footbridge and stile into next field and KA (bearing 50°) to far corner.
- d) Do not cross stile but TL following winding Fp through trees. *This stretch can be waterlogged after heavy rain.*
- e) Cross concrete footbridge and KA on Fp inside wood, then in 50m TR at fingerpost.

D(7.17) [TQ 539 139]

- a) KA through trees and cross plank footbridge and stile into field.
- b) Go half L across field a short distance and go through gate.
- c) Continue in same direction (bearing 70°) on faint Fp aiming a little to R of spire of Chiddingly church and large house (Place Farm Cottage). ***Place Farm** itself is over to your L.*
- d) Cross new (as at 2009) stile and bridge on to Rd (*The Street*).

D(7.16) [TQ 544 141]

- a) Cross Rd half L and go through pedestrian gate.
- b) Follow L side of cricket pitch past pavilion, heading for church.
- c) Keep L as you approach church, cross stile in corner and follow Fp to L of **Chiddingly Church**. (*Note old stone mounting block.*)
- d) TL along Rd (*Church Lane, note green plaque on wall referring to Domesday Book*) to phone box opposite former village shop (*now sadly closed but retaining its listed façade*).

*Here for the first time we encounter the **Wealdway**, which comes in from the right, joins the VGW for just 50m then continues ahead past the pub. Note the shared fingerposts.*

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

[Refreshments] Six Bells pub at junction ahead.

[Phone box] Opposite former village shop.

D(7.15) [TQ 544 142]

- a) TR at phone box and follow Fp between hedges.
- b) Cross stile and follow R side of field to cross second stile into a small plantation.

D(7.14) [TQ 544 144]

- a) At field KA along R side to another stile, cross into next field and KA past horse trough.
- b) Go through gate and follow R side of next field between fences.
- c) Go through second gate and follow L side of next field.
- d) Cross brief, sometimes boggy section in a small nature reserve (*managed under Countryside Stewardship Scheme; this area of disturbed ground is the site of an old brickfield in use until 1939*).
- e) Go through kissing gate on to Rd (*Parsonage Lane*), then TR along Rd (*which now becomes Honeywick Lane*) for 40m.

D(7.13) [TQ 546 147]

- a) At bend TL over stile and follow fenced Fp past stables and along L side of four fields.

Continued on next page. ►

VANGUARD WAY *SOUTH-NORTH* ROUTE DESCRIPTION: SECTION D

- b) Pass through gate, then go through gap and follow L side of field with ***Hilders Court*** to your L.
- c) Halfway across field continue beside shallow ditch to stile (may be hidden in hedge) with wooden fingerpost, passing 20m to L of electricity pole, and KA to cross stile onto Rd (*Stalkers Lane*).

This is the easternmost point of the VGW.

D(7.12) [TQ 549 155]

- a) TL along Rd into hamlet of ***Graywood***, passing Chiswells and Holdens Farms. *There is no pavement through this village – take care, especially at R-hand bend where keep left. See paragraph on Road Safety in ‘An Introduction to the Route’.*
- b) Follow Rd around R-hand bend (take care) past Fox Hunt Farm then in 40m TL into drive of Clarklye Farm.

D(7.11) [TQ 548 156]

- a) Follow drive for 200m then TR over stile into field.
- b) Cross field quarter R (bearing 330°) and cross stile.
- c) KA in same direction to hedge corner and continue along L side of field.
- d) Cross stile and follow Fp between hedge and caravan park as far as kissing gate.

D(7.10) [TQ 541 161]

- a) Do not go through gate but bear L to cross stile.
- b) TR along R side of field, with Broomfield Wood on your R.
- c) Cross stile and Tk then go through kissing gate into wood.
- d) KA through wood following Fp between garden fences and under rose arbour.
- e) Cross private drive by The Little House and KA between fences to Rd by Graywood House (*Alies Lane*).
- f) Briefly TR to Rd junction. To continue along VGW KA along Graywood Lane.

*This is the nearest point to ***East Hoathly***, which has a bus service, accommodation, pubs and a tea room. There is no convenient link on footpaths, so our link below follows lanes that are generally quiet, though as they have no pavement you should still take care, especially in rush hour and on right-hand bends (see Road Safety in ‘An Introduction to the Route’).*

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

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

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

[Refreshments] In East Hoathly (King’s Head brew-pub, Foresters Arms).

[Accommodation] In East Hoathly.

[Phone box] In East Hoathly.

If starting from East Hoathly:

- a) From bus stops go northeast (past Lydfords Care Home) to village centre and KA at junction past King’s Head pub (*Graywood Road*).
- b) Follow Rds with care for 1.6 km, keeping R at each of three junctions (*Hollow Lane, Scallows Lane and Holdcroft Lane*), following signs to Graywood.
- c) At junction TL along Graywood Lane to rejoin VGW.

VANGUARD WAY *SOUTH-NORTH* ROUTE DESCRIPTION: SECTION D

D(7.9) [TQ 537 184]

- a) Follow this Rd for 1 km, passing junction with *Stalkers Lane*, barns of Graywood Farm and under electricity wires.
- b) TR at *Scallows Lane* to cross Scallow Bridge, over stream which feeds the Cuckmere.

D(7.8) [TQ 537 176]

Immediately TL along *Moat Lane* and follow it for 1 km.

D(7.7) [TQ 537 184]

- a) At settlement of several houses, 80m after house called Covert TL across stile in fixed gate.
- b) Descend Tk(Fp) which bends R then L towards field gate.
- c) Cross stile by gate and stream then KA up field (255°) to hedge.
- d) TR beside hedge then in 100m TL through gap.
- e) Follow R side of second field for 100m then TR to go through another gap.
- f) Again, follow R side of third field then KA along Tk(Fp) to Rd (*Hawkhurst Lane*).

D(7.6) [TQ 530 184]

- a) TL for 100m then TR across stile.
- b) Follow R side of field beside wood, pass round end of fence and KA for 15m to end of wood.
- c) Bear half L (bearing 295°) across field to metal field gate and go through it to Rd (*Hollow Lane*).
- d) Ignore *Beechy Road* ahead and TR along *Hollow Lane* for 400m.
- e) 80m after long brick barn on your R, by *Hawkhurst Common Wood*, ignore metal gate and TL through wooden gate.

D(7.5) [TQ 526 190]

- a) Follow L edge of field to stile then KA on Fp to Rd (*Bushbury Lane*) by Pear Tree Cottage.
- b) KA on Rd for 150m, passing Toad Hall Cottage of 1892.

D(7.4) [TQ 523 190]

- a) Opposite Little Barns TR to cross stile.
- b) KA on grass Tk – a veritable green lane – for 650m, shortly passing through gate. *In good visibility you can see Uckfield, spreading up the hillside, 5 km away to your L.*
- c) At Rd (*Hollow Lane* again) TL and go downhill for 500m, passing Meadhurst Farm (converted stables) and Blackwell Farm to foot of hill.

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

D(7.3) [TQ 523 200]

- a) When Rd bears L TR past gate into **Kiln Wood** (*memorials to Bill Pickering 1915-2007 and George Charles Saulez 1908-1985*).
- b) In 25m TL at fingerpost to cross footbridge over stream. *You have now crossed a watershed: the stream below flows southwest to feed the River Uck.*
- c) Climb steps and KA on broad Fp between trees and under telephone wires (*passing memorial seat to Peter Jack Butler 1930-2005*).
- d) Follow Fp round to L, crossing another stream.
- e) Immediately TR then fork R to follow Fp along edge of plantation to Rd (*B2192 Lewes Road*).

[Refreshments] *Blackboys Inn.*

[Accommodation] *Blackboys Inn.*

VANGUARD WAY *SOUTH-NORTH* ROUTE DESCRIPTION: SECTION D

D(7.2) [TQ 522 203]

- a) Cross Rd with care, TR past ***Blackboys Inn*** (www.theblackboysinn.co.uk) then immediately fork L along *School Lane*.
- b) In 300m reach junction with *B2012 Uckfield Road* where Section D of VGW(S-N) ends at:

D(7.1) [TQ 523 208] ***Blackboys*** Crossroads.

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

[Accommodation] *In Blackboys.*

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

COMMENTARY

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

D(8.1)

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

www.ukattraction.com/south-east-england/mohair-centre.htm.

D(7.17)

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

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

D(7.16)

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

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

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

The Six Bells pub is over to your R, in The Street. Named after the number of bells in the church tower, it is a popular resort for friendly bikers, and jazz bands often play here. It was named 'Bargain Pub of the Year' in the 2009 edition of the Good Pub Guide. The cottage called Cordwainers (craftsmen who made goods of cordovan leather from Spain) in The Street (turn right for 50m at the Six Bells) was the home of the Russell family, who established the shoe firm Russell and Bromley in the late 19th century. The Old Bakery was the childhood home of the actor, writer and TV presenter, Julian Fellowes, who wrote *Downton Abbey* and won an Oscar in 2002 for Best Original Screenplay for *Gosford Park*.

The Chiddingly Walk, a 3 km circular walk in the area around the village, can be downloaded at: bit.ly/chiddinglywalk

The **Wealdway** is a long-distance path, established like the VGW in 1981, and devised by the Kent and Sussex Areas of The Ramblers. It runs for 128 km (79.5 miles) from Gravesend to Eastbourne and encounters the VGW in three places: here at Chiddingly, just after Blackboys, and in the Ashdown Forest. Further information at: www.ramblers.org.uk/info/paths/wealdway.html.

D(7.13)

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

D(7.12)

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

D(7.10)

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

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

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

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

The seat was donated by G.Grinning Esq. of Belmont in 1975.

D(7.3)

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

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

D(7.2)

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

D(7.1)

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