

THE VANGUARD WAY

(SOUTH TO NORTH)

A different experience in the other direction!

ROUTE DESCRIPTION and points of interest along the route

SECTION E

Blackboys to Poundgate

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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SECTION E: BLACKBOYS TO POUNDGATE

11.1 km (6.9 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 E(6.22) to E(6.1). (The individual route description paragraphs in this South-North version are preceded by the letter E 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 E

Public transport

On route: Buses at Blackboys, Pound Green, High Hurstwood and Poundgate.

Link with Buxted station.

Distances from Blackboys Crossroads to:

Pound Green	4.5 km (2.8 miles)
>Buxted Station (via southern link)	5.8 km (3.6 miles)
>Buxted Station (via northern link)	6.8 km (4.2 miles)
>High Hurstwood (Maypole pub)	7.9 km (4.9 miles)
High Hurstwood (church)	8.0 km (5.0 miles)
Poundgate	11.1 km (6.9 miles)

Distances from Buxted Station (via northern link*) to:

>High Hurstwood (Maypole pub)	4.3 km (2.7 miles)
High Hurstwood (church)	4.4 km (2.8 miles)
Poundgate	7.5 km (4.7 miles)

*Via southern link: add 0.5 km (0.3 mile).

Overview

This is an idyllic area of rolling countryside and small farms, mostly in open countryside and pastures. The VGW passes through one of its most delightful stretches around Tickerage Mill, briefly joining the Wealdway, to reach Pound Green on the outskirts of Buxted. It then crosses the River Uck and climbs to High Hurstwood before descending gradually to Poundgate.

Note: After heavy rain the area around the River Uck can get very wet and muddy, and even flooded.

Lowest and highest points. River Uck (32m); Poundgate (184m).

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

Section E of the Vanguard Way (South-North) starts at Blackboys Crossroads [TQ 522 207] on the B2012 Uckfield Road. This is in Wealden District in East Sussex.

[Transport] Buses (not Sundays) from Uckfield, Heathfield, Etchingham and Hurst Green.

[Phone box] 300m to L along B2012 Uckfield Road.

Note that some old Ordnance Survey maps show the VGW route incorrectly here as going first a little to the Left (west) along the B2102 road then right (north) along Fp.

E(7.1) [TQ 522 207]

a) KA (N) along Gun Road for 100m to Village Hall.

[Accommodation] *For The Glade (formerly Blackboys Youth Hostel) KA here and follow lane northwards for 750m. Run on similar lines as a youth hostel, it is now privately owned. We are especially pleased about this, as it was one of the establishments that influenced the route of the VGW.*

E(6.22) [TQ 522 208]

a) Bear L up drive behind hall (picnic tables on your L) and go through gate into allotments.

b) KA to path junction (fingerpost) then TR and follow Fp to lane.

E(6.21) [TQ 519 208]

a) TL for 40m then TR beside Rangers Cottage on Fp between hedges.

b) Shortly bear L to follow fenced Fp between fields.

c) Pass grand old pine trees then descend slope and steps to Tk(Bw).

d) TR down Tk for 200m, *passing dedicated fingerpost for the VGW and Wealdway, which joins from the left here for the second and longest encounter between the two routes.*

e) Cross weir by **Tickerage Mill**.

E(6.20) [TQ 515 211]

a) KA through gate and ascend Tk, *passing another dedicated fingerpost where Wealdway goes off to the left.*

b) In 150m go through field gate and continue up Tk to Rd (*Pound Lane*).

c) TR along Rd for 150m then TL through gate (Scantlings Farm).

E(6.19) [TQ 512 215]

a) Follow Tk, bearing L as it descends past fingerpost into junk-filled farmyard.

b) TR in farmyard, past more junk and KA into pine copse.

c) Go through metal kissing gate then KA along L side of field.

d) At end of field go L through gate then immediately TR beside stream to cross gated bridge.

E(6.18) [TQ 511 219]

There may be fallen trees on this section.

a) Ascend sunken and sometimes overgrown Fp among trees and shrubbery between fields.

b) At top KA through squeeze stile.

c) Continue past farm buildings and cross stile.

d) At fingerpost KA (*Lower Lowlands Farm down to your R*) between embankments, with old earthworks on your R.

e) At top KA and cross stile to Rd (**Nan Tuck's Lane**).

E(6.17) [TQ 509 226]

a) TL on Rd to crossroads (*this is a part of Buxted called Etchingwood*) then TR (*Pound Green Lane*).

b) Follow this Rd for 500m, passing Popeswood Reservoir.

c) At Rd junction join *Pound Lane* again and KA for another 200m to a corrugated iron garage.

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

E(6.16) [TQ 511 236]

Note: Some older Ordnance Survey maps incorrectly show the VW continuing north along Pound Lane to the A272 and turning L there.

- a) Opposite garage TL on narrow fenced Fp and follow it past field then across grass to Tk at entrance to Pound Cottage.
- b) KA on Tk to Rd (*Limes Lane*).
- c) KA on Rd past fenced green to main Rd (A272 *Buxted High Street*) at **Pound Green**.

[Transport] Buses (Monday-Friday) to/from Uckfield, High Hurstwood, Poundgate, Hurst Green and Heathfield.

*If you need to divert to **Buxted** for the station or pubs, the Southern Link along the main road is more direct but the Northern Link along footpaths and quiet lanes is more pleasant.*

To continue on VGW cross main Rd with care.

Southern Link to Buxted Station [1.3 km, 0.8 miles, TQ 497 233]

- a) TL along *Buxted High Street* for 1 km, following the L-hand pavement.
- b) In 1 km, opposite *Buxted Stores*, cross zebra crossing then TL past *Buxted Inn* and bear R to *Buxted Station*.

[Transport] Trains & buses: see Northern Link above.

[Refreshments] See Northern Link.

[Phone box] See Northern Link.

[Accommodation] In *Buxted*.

If starting from Buxted Station:

- a) TR through station forecourt to A272 *Buxted High Street*.
- b) TL past *Buxted Inn* then at *Buxted Stores* go over zebra crossing and continue up on the right-hand side.
- c) At *Pound Green* TL along *Redbrook Lane* to rejoin the VW.

E(6.15) [TQ 508 236]

- a) KA along *Redbrook Lane* (private road). *Note fine view to your right across the Uck valley towards Crowborough.*
- b) In 500m, at the last house (*Bracken Cottage*) KA on Fp beside wood, descending to Fp junction with fingerpost.
- c) KA over two stiles into field.

The Northern Link to Buxted starts here – see next page. ►

Northern Link to Buxted Station [1.5 km / 0.9 miles, TQ 497 233]

- a) Between stiles TL on Fp in trees.
- b) Cross stile and KA to cross second stile by metal gate.
- c) Follow Tk ahead past houses, leading on to tarmac Rd (Church Lane).
- d) Follow lane for 1 km, later becoming Church Road, to A272 Buxted High Street, at Buxted Stores.
- e) TR past Buxted Inn and bear R to Buxted Station.

[Transport] Trains to Uckfield, Crowborough, Oxted, East Croydon and central London. Buses (Monday-Friday) to /from Uckfield, High Hurstwood, Poundgate, Hurst Green and Heathfield.

[Refreshments] Buxted Inn, next to the station; Buxted Stores, on link.

[Phone box] By Buxted Stores.

[Accommodation] In Buxted.

If starting from Buxted Station:

- a) TR through forecourt to A272 Buxted High Street.
- b) TL past Buxted Inn then at Buxted Stores TL along Church Road, passing the church of St. Mary the Virgin.
- c) In 400m ignore waymarked Tk to L and continue along Rd as it bears R past St. Mary's Garth.
- d) In 600m KA on rough Tk, still with houses, to cross stile by metal gate.
- e) KA to cross second stile and follow Fp down through trees to junction by fingerpost.
- f) TL to rejoin VW.

E(6.14) [TQ 506 243]

To continue along the VW:

- a) In field follow right side of field beside trees. When the trees bend round to the right, KA to pick up worn Fp (bearing 330°) heading across open field into more trees. *Note that this is a generally used route; the correct line is slightly to the L, leading to a fingerpost. The next stretch can be very muddy. There were also fallen trees in August 2010 but they were easily crossed.*
- b) Continue on Fp in trees and KA to cross stile.
- c) Go through arch under East Croydon to Uckfield railway line and bear R on narrow and sometimes overgrown Fp through wood (Coe's Rough).

E(6.13) [TQ 504 246]

- a) Cross wooden footbridge over River Uck into field then TR beside river. *Note Greenhurst Viaduct over to your right.*
- b) TL with field edge beside sunken stream.
- c) Pass brick pillbox on your L, now with stream in trees to your R.
- d) At end of field go through trees to cross stile into next field.
- e) Follow faint Fp up field (bearing 5°) then cross stile on to Rd (*Fowly Lane*).

E(6.12) [TQ 504 252]

- a) TR for 100m, passing Greenhurst Farm, then shortly TL to cross broken stile L of gate.
- b) Go half R (bearing 330°, around mounds of dumped earth as at March 2010) across field to bottom R corner.
- c) Cross footbridge and stile beside large oak tree.
- d) Bear L across corner of next field and cross gated footbridge over stream in dip.

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

E(6.11) [TQ 503 256]

- a) KA on narrow, overgrown Fp with fence and field on your L and concealed ditch on your R.
- b) In 50m cross stile and KA on Tk between hedges.
- c) Pass between Four Chimneys and Holders Farms then bear L on lane (*Royal Oak Lane*) at junction.
(*Sussex Diamond Way* comes in from R here.)
- d) Follow lane for 700m to junction with Tk(Bw) just past Hurstwood Farm. *The house on your L used to be the Royal Oak beerhouse, but is now a private home.*

[Refreshments] *For the Hurstwood Inn KA along Royal Oak Lane as it winds L then R for 650m down to Chillies Lane in High Hurstwood, where you will find the pub on your left.*

[Phone box] *Opposite pub.*

[Transport] *Buses: Mondays only to/from Crowborough Station and Heathfield.*

E(6.10) [TQ 499 260]

- a) TR (signposted Royal Oak and Mount Pleasant Farms) on Tk (concrete as far as farms) and follow this for 350m to Rd (*Burnt Oak Road*).
- b) TL along Rd for 75m then TR through kissing gate.

E(6.9) [TQ 496 262]

- a) KA down field through bracken.
- b) Go through kissing gate to follow Fp in trees beside garden and house. *Beware low overhead branches, and note ornamental pond down to your L.*
- c) Go through another kissing gate beside brick shed.
- d) Descend field half L towards church and go through third kissing gate to Rd (*Church Lane*).

E(6.8) [TQ 494 264]

- a) Pass Holy Trinity Church at ***High Hurstwood*** to junction with *Chillies Lane* (car park on your L).
(*Sussex Diamond Way* continues ahead here.)

[Transport] *Buses (Monday to Friday) to / from Buxted, Poundgate and Uckfield.*

E(6.7) [TQ 493 264]

- a) TR on lane for 200m, using pavement on L hand side.

[Phone box]

E(6.6) [TQ 493 266]

- a) At phone box TL down Tk beside houses.
- b) In 170m (at white weatherboarded cottage) TL to descend steps on to raised boardwalk then descend more steps to cross footbridge over infant River Uck (see above).
- c) Ascend Tk(Fp) between fences and hedges.
- d) In 200m, at end of Tk, TL across stile by metal gate into field.
- e) Ascend field diagonally R (bearing 330°) passing gated corner of plantation to stile (R of trough).

For the next 600m the VGW has been substantially diverted from the route shown on some maps. Instead of passing through the grounds of the house called Stroods, the route now angles round to the south and west of it, and is well marked by signs at frequent intervals.

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

E(6.5) [TQ 489 274]

- a) Cross stile, TL along L side of first field and in 20m climb up to gate beside fingerpost.
- b) KA along R side of second field to fence corner and continue along R side of field.
- c) Pass through gate, with tennis court on your R, and descend steps to third field.
- d) TR to follow R side of field beside fence for 200m, passing Stroods on your R.
- e) Go through gate and KA across grass to fingerpost beside concrete Tk, with lake down to your L.

*You can continue along the concrete Tk if you wish to visit **Barnsgate Manor**.*

[Refreshments] *Barnsgate Manor, 1 km NW along concrete Tk and across A26 Rd.*

E(6.4) [TQ 487 277]

- a) TR up steps and bear L through trees to next fingerpost. *Diversion ends here.*

E(6.3) [TQ 487 277]

- a) TL on Tk(Fp) for 75m and enter wood, with cottage on your L.
- b) KA for 150m, ignoring turnings to L and R.
- c) Cross stile and follow R side of field for 125m.
- d) Cross another stile then immediately bear L along L side of wood.
- e) In 500m at path junction TL to cross stile.

E(6.2) [TQ 490 285]

- a) KA on fenced Fp between fields to stile.
- b) TR to follow L side of field.
- c) With partly concealed brick bunker on your L, cross stile into muddy paddock.
- d) TR to follow fence bending L.
- e) Go through metal gate, then KA on concrete Tk through farmyard.
- f) TL on concrete Tk by metal gate and KA between buildings.
- g) As Tk bears L, KA to cross stile, then bear R along fenced Fp across field.
- h) Cross stile to Rd (*A26 Uckfield Road*) where Section E of the VW (South-North) ends at:

E(6.1) [TQ 492 289] **Poundgate**.

[Transport] *Bus services operate along this road between Tunbridge Wells, Crowborough, Uckfield, Lewes and Brighton. They stop by (or opposite) the phone box near the Crow & Gate pub.*

[Refreshments] *The Crow & Gate pub.*

[Phone box]

COMMENTARY

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

E(6.21)

Tickerage Mill was, from 1961 until her death, the home of the actress, Vivien Leigh (1913 - 1967) who married and divorced Laurence Olivier. Her ashes were scattered over the millpond. According to *Notable Sussex Women* (Hastings Press), ‘she described the house as “an absolute dream”, adding “I am miserable at the thought of having to leave it”’.

The millpond was formed from the Tickerage Stream, which rises in low hills to the northeast then flows for 12 km (7.5 miles) to join the River Uck near Uckfield. Here the VGW bounces off the Wealdway (see paragraph 5.10) for just 165m.

E(6.18)

Nan Tuck was one of the more colourful residents of Buxted. In the 17th century she was accused of witchcraft and murdering her husband, but when being chased completely disappeared. Depending on whose story you believe, she was either never seen again or later found hanged in a wood, but either way her ghost is said to haunt the lane that bears her name.

E(6.16)

Pound Green, at the east end of Buxted, gets its name from the grassy triangle here, which used to be a pound for stray animals. They have been replaced by a majestic, straggling, pollarded horse chestnut tree.

The straggling village of **Buxted** (1.5 km SW on link, www.buxtedvillage.org.uk) gets its name from the Anglo-Saxon, Bocstede, which roughly translates as beech wood - appropriate today as it boasts two shops specialising in furniture. The village used to be further west, beside the River Uck, and was a thriving centre for the production of iron, silk and hops. An extraordinary local character was George Watson (1783-1838), who possessed wondrous talents for arithmetic and memory but in all other respects was the village idiot.

In the 1830s the owner of Buxted Place, Lord Liverpool, forcibly moved the inhabitants and demolished the original village to improve the view from his mansion. The original 18th century Georgian mansion was partially destroyed by fire in 1940. In its grounds is the parish church of St. Margaret the Queen, which dates from the 13th century and has much of interest. The present village developed around the railway station, opened in 1858.

E(6.14)

The **East Croydon to Uckfield railway line** (also known as the Wealden Line) was opened in 1858 for the London, Brighton and South Coast Railway. It originally ran on to Lewes but that section was closed in 1968 - there is a campaign to restore it.

E(6.13)

The **River Uck** rises from several springs in the low hills south of Crowborough, a few kilometres to the northeast. It flows for some 20 km (12.5 miles) through Uckfield to join the River Ouse near Isfield. In recent years it has flooded after heavy rain, causing much damage to nearby properties. You will cross it again further up at location E(6.6).

The **Greenhurst Viaduct**, built in 1858, is 169m long and has ten arches.

Pillboxes are a type of small bunker, constructed in wartime, usually of concrete or brick, to conceal snipers in the event of an enemy invasion. Those you see along the Vanguard Way were built in anticipation of a threatened German invasion in 1940 – which never came. They were camouflaged with foliage or shrubbery. The name comes from their hexagonal shape, similar to boxes in which pills were sold at that time.

E(6.11)

The **Sussex Diamond Way** used to share its route with the VW for the next kilometre, but sadly is now apparently defunct, though you may still be able to find copies of the guidebook. It ran (unsigned) for 97 km (60 miles) between Midhurst and Heathfield, and was named to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Ramblers' Association. More information at:

www.ldwa.org.uk/ldp/members/show_path.php?path_id=1079.

E(6.8)

The name of the sleepy little village of **High Hurstwood** has a tautological history: first recorded in 1602 as Heyhurst - which on its own means 'high enclosed wood' - it later became Hayhurst Wood and even High Heyhurstwood = 'high high enclosed wood wood'! The church, Holy Trinity, is of an unusual design, with its partly half-timbered porch tower and flat bellcote. It was built in 1871 with later additions including an elaborate chancel ceiling. Described by Pevsner as 'Arcadia indeed' because of its location next to the rhododendrons of the parsonage garden.

E(6.5)

Barnsgate Manor (1 km NW along the concrete track and across the A26 road, www.barnsgate.co.uk) is now run as a conference centre and has a restaurant and tea-room. It also has a vineyard, gift shop and children's zoo with llamas and donkeys. The 16th century manor house was built by the Barns Gate, one of the gates into the Ashdown Forest.

E(6.1)

At **Poundgate** was located one of the gates into the fenced Ashdown Forest, which was beside a pound (enclosure) for livestock. But the name of the pub, Crow and Gate, is thought by some to be a corruption of Crowborough Gate, so this may have been an alternative name for the same gate. Nearby is Warren Camp, an army training camp. During World War 2, the 23rd Army Brigade was stationed there before going to North Africa with General Montgomery in 1942. The pub sign was 'borrowed' by the 40th Tank Regiment, with the intention of carrying it into battle, but the irate landlord retrieved it before this could happen. However, in 1986 that original sign was presented to the regiment and is displayed at their annual reunions.

The nearby woodlands were used to conceal contraband during the heyday of smuggling in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. They were also notorious for illicit stills, producing 'moonshine' spirit.
