

THE VANGUARD WAY

(NORTH TO SOUTH)

From the suburbs to the sea!

SECTION 4

Edenbridge to Forest Row

(Version 6.0.3, 2020)

via new route in the Edenbridge area



THE VANGUARD WAY

ROUTE DESCRIPTION

and points of interest along the route

SECTION 4

Edenbridge to Forest Row

(via new route in the Edenbridge area)

COLIN SAUNDERS

In memory of Graham Butler 1949-2018

Version 6.0.3 (North-South)

This edition (6.0.3) of the north-south route description was first published in 2020 and replaces previous printed editions published in 1980, 1986 and 1997, also the online 4th and 5th editions published in 2009 and 2014. It is now only available as an online resource.

Designed by Brian Bellwood

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

© *VANGUARDS RAMBLING CLUB 1980, 1986, 1997, 2009, 2014, 2019, 2020*

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.

Vanguard Way Route Description: Section 4

SECTION 4: EDENBRIDGE TO FOREST ROW

16.5 km (10.3 miles) from Crouch House Green. Add 1.5 km (0.9 miles) from Edenbridge Town Station.

Route overview

This version of the north-south Route Description is based on a completely new survey undertaken by club members in 2018.

After a gentle start through farmland and an airfield, the VGW very soon enters the rolling hills of the Weald, climbing steadily to the Iron Age site at Dry Hill Camp. The area is well wooded, and you frequently pass from fields to trees and back to open fields. A long, level ridge walk towards the end of this section follows an ancient quiet lane past the small but imposing mansion of Thornhill, before descending into Forest Row. There are links with Haxted Mill and Gabriel's Fishery – a fine spot for a picnic on the grass.

Just north of Forest Row, we have provided an alternative route that was originally intended to avoid a footpath, which had become difficult and unpleasant to follow. This has now been upgraded and should be in good condition, so you can use it to reach Forest Row directly. However, if time is not an issue, you may prefer to use the alternative, which takes you closer to the café and toilets at Tablehurst Farm, passes historic Tablehurst Manor, and provides an outstanding view at one point.

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

New route in the Edenbridge area

This section partially follows a completely new route between Troy Town (in Section three) and Cernes Farm (in this section), with a new break point between Sections 3 and 4 at Crouch House Green, on the western outskirts of Edenbridge, instead of Haxted Mill. The reason for this is the exponential increase in traffic since the VGW was launched in 1981, which has made the original route unviable where it followed nearly 4 km of what were then minor lanes. Instead, this slightly longer route is almost entirely in open country, following public footpaths across a golf course and fields. Also, the restaurant and tea-room at Haxted Mill has closed, as has the mill museum, though it is hoped that this will re-open in due course. The interesting old watermill still makes a fine photo-opportunity, and the route description for this section includes a link for anyone wishing to see it.

Another advantage is that, whilst there was no public transport at Haxted Mill, this new route takes you to the outskirts of Edenbridge, with a shorter link to its two stations. Consequently, the original two links (one for each station) are no longer necessary and have been abandoned. We hope you will find this route more attractive and convenient, and your comments will be welcomed.

You may find that signage along the new stretch is not yet complete, but we hope to fill the gaps soon.

How to use this route description

Paragraphs are numbered for ease of reference. The route is marked on Ordnance Survey Explorer and Landranger maps, though you should note that in some places it is incorrectly marked on some older maps - we draw your attention to specific instances where relevant. Grid references are given at each numbered point to help identify the route. The country is divided into 100 km squares identified by a two letter code, and following standard OS practice we include these letters in our grid references. In this section they are in square TQ.

The actual route description is shown in black Roman (upright) text.

Links with railway stations and other key places off route are shown in boxes with a green 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.

Vanguard Way Route Description: Section 4

* 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.

Busy roads

You often need to cross busy roads. Rather than tediously advising you to take care, which is common sense, we remind you with the symbol  – it means ‘Cross with care!’

Roads with no pavement

‘NP’ in the route description indicates a road with no pavement, and there are several of them in this section. Although they are usually quiet, 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 bright, luminous or reflective on top.

Public transport


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

Links with Edenbridge Town, Edenbridge (Kent), Dormans and East Grinstead stations, and bus stops at Edenbridge, Ashurstwood and East Grinstead. Brief indications (subject to change) are shown at the relevant locations in the route description - for more information please see the Vanguard Way Companion on our website (click Directions & Maps).


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		

Key to symbols

 = Bus	 = *Cafés etc	 = Toilets	 = Tram
 = Train	 = *Pubs	 = Phone box	 = Cross with care
 = Taxi	 = *Accommodation	 = *Equipment shop	

* For the contact details of these facilities, please refer to the VGW Companion.

 Please note that, with improvements in mobile connectivity, phone boxes (or the equipment inside) are being removed.

Vanguard Way Route Description: Section 4

Distances

Edenbridge Town Station* to:

Hammerwood (A264)	11.5 km	(7.2 miles)
>Ashurstwood (pub/bus)	15.8 km	(9.9 miles)
Forest Row (bus)	17.0 km	(10.6 miles)
>East Grinstead Station	22.3 km	(13.9 miles) (via Forest Way)

* From Edenbridge (Kent) Station add 0.4 km (0.2 miles).

Crouch House Green to:

Hammerwood (A264)	10.0 km	(6.3 miles)
>Ashurstwood (pub/bus)	14.3 km	(8.9 miles)
Forest Row (bus)	15.5 km	(9.7 miles)
>East Grinstead Station	20.8 km	(13.0 miles) (via Forest Way)

Dormans Station to:

Hammerwood (A264)	8.7 km	(5.4 miles)
>Ashurstwood (pub/bus)	13.0 km	(8.0 miles)
Forest Row (bus)	14.2 km	(8.9 miles)
>East Grinstead Station	19.5 km	(12.2 miles) (via Forest Way)

In the route description, distances are only shown in metres (m) or kilometres (km); but if you are more familiar with yards and miles, remember that 100m is about the same as 110 yards, and that 1 km is about five eighths of a mile.

Altitudes are shown in metres – for an approximate conversion into feet multiply by 3 and add 10 per cent.

ALL INFORMATION SHOWN IS SUBJECT TO ALTERATION WITHOUT NOTICE

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.

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 colin@vanguardway.org.uk.


Vanguard Way Route Description: Section 4


Section 4 of the Vanguard Way starts at Crouch House Green near Edenbridge [TQ 434 467]

This is in Sevenoaks District in Kent.

 *Edenbridge Town Station for trains from Oxted, East Croydon, central London, Buxted, Uckfield.*
Edenbridge (Kent) Station for trains from Tonbridge and Redhill.



 *Buses (not Sundays) from Westerham, Tunbridge Wells and Sevenoaks.*

 *Several places in Edenbridge, including the community-run Bridges Centre. Also, the café in Edenbridge Leisure Centre is convenient for the link to the VGW.*

 *At Edenbridge Town Station and in the Leisure Centre. No toilets at Edenbridge (Kent) Station but available in the Esso fuel station's café, which you pass on the link to the VGW.*

Link from Edenbridge Town Station (1.4 km) and Edenbridge (Kent) Station (1.8 km).

This link has many twists and turns, so you need to concentrate! Note that there are proposals to build on some of the grass areas mentioned in this link, but they should not affect the public highways it follows.

- a) *From Edenbridge Town Station. From station exit KA on R-hand pavement along Station Approach to main Rd.*
- b) *TR to cross main Rd  at two-stage lights.*
- c) *TR for 220m, passing Leisure Centre and crossing Wellingtonia Way, to just before railway bridge, where TL along tarmac Fp. Continue at (f).*
- d) *From Edenbridge (Kent) station. Using exit from Platform 1, go down steps then TL to Rd.*
- e) *TR along B2026 Station Road for 650m (KA at mini-roundabout) to just past railway bridge, where TR along tarmac Fp.*
- f) *Follow Fp (take R fork beside railway fence) for 180m to Rd (Moles Mead/Hawthorn Close), where TR then immediately TL to Rd junction (Park Avenue).*
- g) *Cross Rd and grass, then TR on tarmac Fp, then TL along Fp between house numbers 25 and 37.*
- h) *At next Rd (Cedar Drive), TR for 75m then follow Rd L around bend.*
- j) *In 30m TR on short tarmac Fp leading into grass area, bear L to fence corner and follow fence to L.*
- k) *Follow tarmac Fp for 200m between houses and gardens, through KG and ignoring stile.*
- l) *At end, bear L past barriers to Rd (Crouch House Road).*
- m) *Cross Rd  and bear R past The Lodge and along grit drive of Crouch House Farm, for 120m to junction with Fp, where TL to join Section 4 of the VGW.*

Section 4 of the VGW starts at Crouch House Green on the west side of Edenbridge, Kent, 120m along the drive into Crouch House Farm from Crouch House Road.

4.1 [TQ 434 467]

- a) *Coming from Edenbridge, TL (or coming from Section 3 TR) along earth Fp to pass gate.*
- b) *Shortly go through KG and bear R in field beside (possibly temporary) fence (CB 215°).*
- c) *At field corner go through KG, then beside fence and shortly TR on narrow Fp between fence and hedge beside field.*
- c) *Jink L/R through gate and continue between hedges, then TL with Fp (ignore gap into wood ahead) between fence and hedge.*
- d) *In 300m near barns KA through KG at Fp junction, then continue beside hedge along L side of next field for another 300m to KG on to Rd (Lingfield Road).*

Vanguard Way Route Description: Section 4

4.2 [TQ 431 458]

Note that this stretch crosses the airfield of East Haxted Farm, with its network of taxiways and runways – you may see the orange windsock that indicate the wind direction to pilots. ☒ Aircraft movements are only occasional, but you should nevertheless keep an eye out for them and stand aside in the long grass if an aircraft approaches. We number the fields to help with identification

- a) Keeping to R-hand side, TL along Rd **NP** ☒ for 135m to double field-gate.
- b) TR across stile and follow R side of first field for 275m.
- c) Cross stream (Kent Brook, crossing back from Kent into Surrey) then TR along edge of second field, beside brook.
- d) At field corner, go through gap in hedge, then through another gap in rusty iron contraption forming some sort of stile, into third field.
- e) *The right of way actually continues diagonally left uphill on bearing 255°, but clearly nobody goes that way and follows the mown grass aircraft taxiways.* In the absence of a clear path on the actual line of the right of way, go L on first taxiway, then in 60m TR on second taxiway up field.
- f) Climb beside scrubby grass area, then go through a wide gap into fourth field.
- g) At top of field, ignore another wide gap ahead and TL along field edge beside trees.
- h) When trees end, TR through gap in hedge and follow R-hand side of fifth field, crossing another taxiway, to go through gap in field corner, with the hamlet of **Haxted** on your R.

4.3 [TQ 424 454]

*Here you rejoin the Tandridge Border Path (see Section 1) and the two routes run intermittently together over the next 5 km. Here too, you can if you wish make a diversion to see **Haxted Mill**, though at time of writing (September 2018) it was not open to the public. Visibility is poor in places along the road and you are advised to wear something light or bright on top.*

Link with Haxted Mill [TQ 418 455] (860 metres each way).

Haxted Road is quite busy and you need to take great care ☒, generally keeping right in single file. There's a verge beside some of it, which you should retreat to when necessary.

- a) TR along Tk (Normans Lane) to cross stile by gate and pass Old Haxted Dairy and other buildings to Rd (Haxted Road). TL for 575m, passing junction with Dwelly Lane, which was where the original VGW route came in. Cross to L-hand side here (for better visibility with approaching traffic) to reach Haxted Mill at foot of hill. Take even more care here as traffic comes fast around bends and visibility is poor under overhanging trees. The VGW used to continue over the fields opposite the mill.
- b) To rejoin the VGW, return up Haxted Road keeping to R-hand side all the way. In 575m reach drive (Normans Lane) into Old Haxted Dairy etc. TR past buildings and stile/gate to reach Fp junction.

Again there are several numbered fields on this stretch.

- a) TL to descend Tk between hedges for 300m (may be overgrown in places), emerging into first field, where you KA across the airfield's main runway (☒ keeping an eye out for approaching aircraft) then keep to L of hedge.
- b) Cross footbridge over stream then bear slightly L over a second, small field to cross another footbridge over River Eden (see Section 2).
- c) KA across third field towards hedge and in far corner, and cross stile into fourth field.
- d) Keep close to L side of field, then at end go through gap into fifth field and KA beside fence and trees.
- e) Pass buildings of Cernes Farm, then after (probably dry) pond TL to go through KG and over plank bridge to farm drive.

*This is where the new VGW route joins the original route. The **Eden Valley Walk** starts here by going ahead across the track, and you can follow this for **Gabriel's Fishery**.*

Vanguard Way Route Description: Section 4

Link with Gabriel's Fishery [TQ 431 447] (515 metres)

- a) With your back to Cernes Farm, TL on grass beside scrub to reach stile in corner (may be muddy here). Bear half L across field towards two gates (CB 60°), heading for R-hand gate. Cross stile and KA along rough Tk for 150m to junction with grit drive. TR along twisting drive between fishing lakes into trees and car park of Gabriel's Fishery. There are **♿ toilets** here, and if you TL along a grassy avenue of trees between lakes for 230m there's a small shop (limited opening times) and more toilets. There are no seats but in dry weather this makes a lovely spot for a picnic on grass.
- b) To rejoin the VGW, from the car park go back along the grit drive to TL at the junction and follow the rough Tk to cross stile. Cross field half L on CB 240° to find stile, cross it and bear L on worn Fp to drive of Cernes Farm. TL to rejoin VGW.

4.4 [TQ 425 445]

- a) At entrance to Cernes Farm, TR on drive for 250m and bear R at end through metal gate beside **The Coach House** and past an entrance to **Starborough Manor** (shown on some maps as Starborough Castle).
- b) KA along lane with hedge to your L for 30m and go through gap on L beside defunct stile.

➡ At Starborough Manor.

4.5 [TQ 424 442]

- a) Follow Fp bending L close to hedge, then on reaching wooden gate, stay inside field for another 100m.
- b) Cross stile to L on to drive of Starborough Manor (*the Fp mentioned in the Commentary is opposite*) then TR.

4.6 [TQ 425 439]

- a) In 230m by fingerpost cross stile on R and go three-quarters L (CB 220°) on Fp to far L corner of field (ignore direction indicated by adjacent fingerpost). *The field is part of **Starline Farm**.*
- b) Cross stile on to Rd (B2028 Moor Lane) by **Starborough Nursery** and TR for 20m to junction with Starborough Road.

🚌 Buses operate along this road Monday to Saturday to/from Crawley, Oxted, Lingfield and Tunbridge Wells.

4.7 [TQ 422 434]


- a) Cross with care to the gap L of **Moor Cottages**. *A slight diversion R to see the inscription on the far wall is recommended.*
- b) KA on broad Bw between hedges then along L-hand side of large field, through a copse (barbed wire fence on L), with Skitts Farm over to your L.
- c) In 500m at path junction, KA then in 30m at second junction KA on Bw winding along L side of copse, now with **Hoopers Farm** away to your L.
- d) At Bw junction go through gate on to farm Tk, TR and in 50m TL through another gate (usually open; we refer to this junction as Greathed Turn).



For the link with Dormans Station and pubs in Dormansland [see next page](#) ►.

Vanguard Way Route Description: Section 4

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.

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

  **Post Office.** In Dormansland village.

- a) Instead of turning L, bear R 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 an adjacent path. 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 stony Tk, soon passing double gates of **Tobias & The Angel Workshop**, where Tk swings L.
- d) Turn sharp R at junction beside wooden barn, then bear R at fingerpost (with Home Farm to your L) and join tarmac lane **NP** (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 and fingerpost.
For the **Plough Inn** [TQ 405 427] KA along Ford Manor Road for another 650m.
- g) For Dormansland village centre and Dormans Station, immediately TL on worn, uneven and narrow earth Fp between hedges (beware barbed wire fence and exposed roots).
- h) Soon pass through metal latch-gate and KA along R-hand side of large field.
- j) In 200m pass overgrown remains of wooden KG and grass strip, which subdivides the field.
- k) 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.
- l) In 340m reach and cross Rd (Hollow Lane), then KA along narrow tarmac Fp to R of St Clair Cottages.
- m) Shortly join drive leading to Rd (Dormansland High Street), then TL to **Royal Oak** pub [TQ 404 421].
The post office/village store is opposite.
- n) For **Old House at Home** pub and Dormans Station, continue past Royal Oak for 50m to find public toilets on your R.
- p) Go L of toilets then bear R down narrow tarmac Fp into playing field, passing between tennis courts and playground.
- q) At foot of hill TL along drive to Rd (West Street). To your R is the **Old House at Home** pub [TQ 401 421].
- r) For Dormans Station, TL along West Street and KA at first junction (The Platt, Barnfield, View Terrace).
- s) In 200m at second junction TR past Cherry Tree Cottage to end of lane then KA along tarmac Fp for 600m, ignoring all side turns. It briefly broadens on tarmac for a while to serve as a drive to houses, then continues as a narrow path again at Nobles Green, where there's a seat.
- t) On reaching Rd (Dormans Station Road) TR to station [TQ 396 414].

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, ignoring all side turns and briefly joining tarmac drive serving houses (Nobles Green, seat on left).
- c) On reaching lane, KA then bear R to junction beside Cherry Tree Cottage.
- d) TL along lane (View Terrace, The Platt), which widens out and joins West Street.

Continued on next page ►

Vanguard Way Route Description: Section 4

- 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, then cross Rd ⊗ to R-hand pavement.
- j) In 170m (opposite Moorkeyes/Park View) TR along drive then KA along narrow tarmac Fp to reach and cross Rd ⊗ (Hollow Lane).
- k) 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.
- l) At end of second field KA through metal latch-gate on to worn, uneven Fp beside trees (beware barbed wire fence and exposed roots) to reach lane (Ford Manor Road) and TR. (If you went to the **Plough Inn** you rejoin the link here by keeping ahead.)
- m) Go through former gateway between stone columns beside fingerpost and KA along lane **NP** for 375m, reaching two junctions in quick succession (for Greathed Manor then Ford Manor).
- n) Bear L, following 'Courtyard' sign, and follow lane for another 150m to junction with fingerpost (Home Farm ahead).
- p) Fork L on stony Tk then sharp L again at wooden barn.
- q) Follow Tk as it veers R to pass double gates of **Tobias & All Angels Workshop**.
- r) When stony Tk ends beside **Copse Cottage**, KA up grassy Tk into trees, with stream in gully on L (later on R). If Tk is muddy use parallel Fp on R.
- s) Leave woodland through wooden latch gate and KA for 250m, passing Littleworth Cottage, to Bw junction, where TR to rejoin VGW.

4.8 [TQ 424 425]

- a) In 20m bear L up enclosed Bw (fine view to L in winter) which after 300m goes through wood called Old Plantation. Before entering wood look back for another fine view.
- b) Where wood ends follow Bw as it winds to L around L side of field, barns and garden, with Reynolds Wood on your L.
- c) TR at junction with broad Tk (Bw) by house at Dry Hill Farm, where the **Sussex Border Path** briefly joins the VGW for just 100m – it comes in from the L here and continues ahead at the next junction.

4.9 [TQ 430 420]

- a) At next junction in 100m TL up Bw (look back near top for fine view across Eden valley towards Greensand Ridge).
- b) Keep to broad main Tk which after 350m (soon after a pair of opposing field gates) bears L through gap in overgrown embankments. This was probably the main entrance into **Dry Hill Camp**, and the embankments are the remains of its walls.
- c) Continue along the Tk (which can get very muddy here), now inside Camp. Over to your left in a field is a **trig point** at altitude 172m or 564 feet – this is one of the highest points along the VGW.
- d) In 200m you leave the Camp and pass between two field gates then descend a fenced Tk between fields. This can get very muddy – beware barbed wire if you use the verge).
- e) Continue into trees then bear R at foot of slope to Bw junction with fingerpost. **Tandridge Border Path** rejoins VGW here for the next 1.5 km.
- f) KA to concrete Dutch barn by Beeches Farm.

4.10 [TQ 434 413]

- a) TL then shortly TR along concrete farm Tk, passing through farm gate on to tarmac lane.
- b) Descend lane for 500m through another farm gate by Woodlands Farm.

Continued on next page ►

Vanguard Way Route Description: Section 4

- c) Continue down lane past Woodlands House for a further 500m to grass triangle with elderly fingerpost at junction of Tk and Rd in the **Kentwater valley**. *Near foot of lane, look back at recessed entrance on R to gate that bears a sign 'Vanguards' – the owner decided to name the property after the Vanguard Way!*

The next kilometre of route to the A264 at Hammerwood, is not ideal, being along a fairly busy road with no pavement. We hope that a better route will become available eventually.

4.11 [TQ 434 403]

- a) TR on Rd **NP** ⊗ (*Smithers Lane*), passing the chocolate-box cottage called Smithers, for 500m to another grass triangle and Rd junction.

☎ 275m to R along *Shepherds Grove Lane*.

4.12 [TQ 429 401]

- a) TL on Rd **NP** (*Shepherds Grove Lane*). *Tandridge Border Path leaves VGW here.* ⊗ **Take great care on this road as it is quite busy and has several blind right-hand bends with no pavement. Keep right except at right-hand bends where you should move carefully over to the left, returning to the right-hand side when safe to do so. See Road Safety in 'An Introduction to the Route'.**

- b) Follow Rd for 750m, crossing Kent Water and passing **Gotwick Manor** to junction with main Rd (A264 *Holtye Road*) at Hammerwood.

🚌 *Surprisingly, there is no bus service along this main road. The nearest is at Holtye Common (2.5 km east, not Sundays). You could walk into East Grinstead (5.3 km southwest) but you may as well walk on to Ashurstwood (4.8 km) or Forest Row (5.4 km further along VGW), which both have bus services. It should be possible to get a taxi (see 'Taxis' 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).*

4.13 [TQ 432 395]

- a) Cross Rd ⊗ with great care to 'private drive' opposite (a public Fp signposted to various properties. *If you wish to visit **Hammerwood Park** (1.5 km off route) TL here and walk with great care along Rd for 500m, then TR past village hall and follow lane to far end of village.*

- b) Follow drive **NP** for 500m. *Just past Brooklands Farm sign, look right through a gap thoughtfully provided in the hedge to see a recent example of landscaping in the style of Capability Brown.*

- c) Near foot of hill, where lane bends R and wooden fence starts, turn sharp L into foliage to find obscure Fp, and ascend it to join Tk for short distance to junction with Bw, where the buildings of Hammerwood can be seen over to your left.

4.14 [TQ 435 389]

- a) TR along Bw beside line of trees, with fields to your L.

- b) At metal gate KA to descend well-surfaced Bw (due to become part of national cycle network) into **Wet Wood**.

- c) On leaving wood cross stream by brick FB and KA on Bw (narrow with barbed wire fence at time of writing, but this too may be improved in the near future).

- d) Continue uphill for 400m between hedges, fences and bushes, eventually along edge of wood (*The Grove*) to Rd.


4.15 [TQ 435 380]

- a) At Dog Gate Lodge TR on lane **NP** (**Thornhill Road**) and follow it along a ridge between valleys for 1,500m, passing Harelands, Owletts House, Songhurst (with its pond, formerly Barton House), Hurstbrook House and imposing grey-stone **Thornhill** all on your L.

- b) In 1,500m reach junction by Homefield Cottage.

Continued on next page ►

Vanguard Way Route Description: Section 4

 For **Ashurstwood** (1 km) TR at Homefield Cottage and continue along lane. Buses to East Grinstead, Forest Row, Tunbridge Wells and Uckfield stop by the War Memorial and the Three Crowns pub.

 Pubs in Ashurstwood.

4.16 [TQ 430 368]

- At Homefield Cottage TL past post box along lane **NP**.
- In 70m TR (opposite 'private lane' sign for Great and Little Surries) along rough Tk for 200m to junction with lane (**Cansiron Lane**), beside house called Gilly's.
- Bear L and follow lane **NP** past Grove Farm Cottages and Home Meadow, and lane becomes unmade.

4.17A [TQ 431 364]

This stretch includes the footpath that was in very bad condition, but has now been upgraded, as mentioned in the overview. If you would like to try the alternative route, see paragraph 4.17B below in box ▼.

- In 200m, where Cansiron Lane bears L, TR by wooden field gates (Melbank); do not go through gates but follow Fp through trees and between fields (joining one of the *Forest Way Circular Walks*).
- Fp soon descends gently into small wood then levels out between more fields.
- Descend again, with shallow overgrown gully on your L, then much deeper wooded gully on your R (*this gully may be the bed of an ancient stream, which seems to flow below ground level in its upper stages but appears further down*).
- KA down uneven and often muddy Fp to L of wood, between hedge and fence.
- Eventually pass through latch gate and follow R edge of field.
- When field edge bears L, find entrance to Fp in bushes to R, then KA along it between hedge and fence beside Forest Row Water Treatment Works.
- In 120m (after passing through field gate) cross Tablehurst Lane and former railway track beside Forest Lodge Veterinary Centre (**Forest Way, High Weald Landscape Trail**) and go through gap in bushes opposite into car park.
*To continue along VGW from here go to paragraph 4.19, or TR for link with **East Grinstead** and its station. For facilities of Tablehurst Community Farm (see below) TL for 550m along lane.*

4.17B [TQ 431 364]

Alternative route via Tablehurst Manor.


- Continue along Cansiron Lane for 100m to fork, where bear R on Tk to Windmill Cottages.
- At cottages, go R through gate into field then bear L to follow curving hedge.
- Go through gate/gap to follow worn Fp ahead across field (CB 135°) and dip then rising to narrow corner. *Ignore path leading R to gate and Tk – this is not a right of way. At top look back for an outstanding view of Windmill Cottages set among rolling fields.*
- Pass old fingerpost then at new fingerpost TR across stile (*beware exposed roots*). *Here you join the **High Weald Landscape Trail**.*
- Descend main Fp bearing R through scrub (may be muddy here).
- At junction TL on Tk and KA through gate between field and wood.
- When Tk widens, among poultry farm sheds, cross stile on R by gate and descend broad, grassy Tk between hedge and farm fence.
- At foot of slope, by gate, cross squeeze stile to pass more farm sheds and KA down enclosed Fp to R of field.
- At junction TR on Tk, which soon bends L, and go through gate to pass barns and reach Tablehurst Lane. *For facilities of Tablehurst Community Farm (see below) TL for 350m along lane.*

Continued on next page ►

Vanguard Way Route Description: Section 4

k) KA on tarmac lane to entrance of ***Tablehurst Manor*** then follow lane as it swings R to enter the ***Forest Way Country Park***.

l) In 150m you rejoin the original route, just before the Forest Lodge Veterinary Centre, where TL through trees to continue at paragraph 4.18. (Or KA for link with East Grinstead Station.)

 *Tablehurst Community Farm has a café and an organic farm shop open 9 am to 5 pm Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays.*

 *At Tablehurst Community Farm (always open).*

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 continue into Forest Row 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 gently uphill into East Grinstead, so you may prefer to take the bus there and return on foot.

a) *From 4.17 TR (or from 4.18 KA) along Tablehurst 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/High Weald Landscape Trail) 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 two memorial seats, Brambletye Crossing with its two gates, a picnic table about halfway, a brick road bridge, a fairly busy estate road towards the end and an ornate bridge.*


d) *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.*


e) *TL along B2110 Lewes Road for 300m, with Grade I listed Sackville College and St Swithun's Church on your R, leading up to the High Street, then KA along it to mini-roundabout.*



f) *TR down London Road, signed for Worth Way.*


g) *At foot of hill KA past traffic lights (Queens Road to left, King Street and Wetherspoons to right - toilets in car park) then just after next lights by Railway Tavern pub TL along Railway Approach for 350m, crossing to right-hand side (Open Arms micropub along here).*


h) *At the roundabout for B2110 (Brooklands Way), the station lies ahead. Using dropped kerbs at junctions, KA through station car park, with bus stops on your R. If traffic is heavy, use the light-controlled crossing to your left.*

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

 *and most other facilities in East Grinstead.*

  *The Railway Tavern pub is located at the start of Railway Approach, the Open Arms micropub is halfway along it, there's a snack bar at the station and a Starbucks in Sainsbury's opposite the station. There are many other pubs and cafés in the town centre.*

 *At the station and in the nearby Sainsburys.*

 *Millets, London Road.*

Continued on next page ►


Vanguard Way Route Description: Section 4

If starting from East Grinstead Station:

- a) From forecourt KA through car park to roundabout (with bus stops on your left) then KA along Rd (Railway Approach) - head for the Mid Sussex Timber warehouse. If traffic is heavy by the station use the light-protected crossing to your right.
- b) At end of Railway Approach TR along London Road for 350m to junction at top of hill (toilets and Wetherspoons to L at junction with King Street).
- c) TL for 300m along High Street which becomes Lewes Road, crossing to righthand pavement.
- d) KA to 2nd roundabout at junction with A22 ring road.
- e) Descend ramp to R on to Forest Way Country Park/West Sussex Border Path 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 Tablehurst 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 below.)
- g) Follow lane for 300m (the former railway line is to your R here), then immediately after water treatment works and veterinary centre TR through gap in bushes (signed 'Forest Row village').

4.18 [TQ 428 353]

- a) Bear half L through car park to open area, passing Forest Row Social Club and commercial buildings.
- b) Bear R past Riverview Café and beside Rd (Station Road), through Forest Row's 'commercial quarter', which consists of a growing number of warehouses and business premises.

 The River View Café is on the far side of the car park.


 Members of the CIU (Working Men's Club & Institute Union) are welcome to use the facilities of the Forest Row Social Club on L side of the car park.



- c) In 100m you cross the infant **River Medway**.


Short cut to Forest Row's pubs, shops and bus stops. Just past the Medway, TR beside it on tarmac Fp, then in 140m take L fork to cross Lower Road and KA on Fp to reach Village Hall, where TR for shops, pubs, cafés and bus stops (by Chequers and Brambletye Hotels).


- d) Continue ahead for another 200m to main Rd (B2110 Hartfield Road) at **Forest Row**, where Section 4 of the VGW ends beside a Co-op store at:

5.1 [TQ 426 350]

 Buses to Coleman's Hatch and Tunbridge Wells stop 50m to L along Hartfield Road. Some buses to East Grinstead stop opposite there, but there's a more frequent service from the Brambletye Hotel (TR along Hartfield Road to lights then R past Village Hall, or see short cut above). Buses to Haywards Heath, Burgess Hill and Brighton stop near the Chequers Hotel (opposite Brambletye).

  You pass the Riverview Café (closed Sundays) along Station Road. The Chequers and Brambletye hotels/pubs and more cafés in the town centre. There's a Co-op supermarket to your R at Hartfield Road. In Lower Road at the back of the car park is Seasons, which sells organic fruit and vegetables.

 The public toilets in the car park have closed, to be replaced by a Community Toilet Scheme, in which the public are able to use the facilities in the following places: Forest Row Community Centre (which the VGW passes soon after the start of Section 5) and both the Chequers Inn and Brambletye Hotel in The Square.

 In Forest Row – see VGW Companion.

COMMENTARY

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

4.2

The hamlet of **Haxted** includes several interesting old buildings: Haxted House (17th century) and its nearby timber-framed barn (18th century), Old East Haxted Farmhouse (15th century with 17th century additions) and East Haxted Farm Cottage (18th century) are all Grade II listed buildings; also The Old Dairy and West Haxted Farmhouse. The modern barn houses the flying club's aircraft.

4.3

Haxted Mill consists of three weatherboarded buildings, all Grade II listed, beside the River Eden, described by Pevsner as 'a charming group'. There has been a mill on this site since the 14th century, when it was owned by Reginald de Cobham of Starborough (passed later along the VGW). The smaller, tile-hung left-hand building (which until recently was a restaurant and tea-room but now a private residence) is the oldest buildings, built in 1680; the larger right-hand one, with double mansard roof, was added in 1794, when the smaller one became a stable block. To the right of the main building is the Old Mill House, home of the miller and his family. 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 small 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, scheduled as a building of historic interest – sadly at the time of writing this was closed with no re-opening date in prospect (open April to September only), and. 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, horse-mounting steps and a flood mark which shows the level reached by the River Eden in 1968.

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. Until we changed the route in this area, it provided the rather long VGW's southern link into Edenbridge.

Although **Gabriel's Fishery** lies some 500m away from the VGW, and is mainly for anglers, it provides an idyllic setting for a picnic on grass among trees and small lakes. It is intended mainly for anglers, but walkers are welcome, there are 24-hour toilets and a refreshment kiosk at busy times. The lakes also attract many species of birds and insects.

4.4

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

Starborough Manor is the name of the rather grand house on your left, built circa 1880, which offers bed and breakfast (see VGW Companion). 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, and these are marked on OS maps as Starborough Castle, which also appears on a sign nearby. The original name was Sterburgh, meaning Sterr's Castle (after a local squire, Richard Sterr), so the addition of Castle 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 as you join the drive (in paragraph 4.4) – there's also an excellent view of the manor.

Starborough Farm (750m west of Starborough Manor) is the home of Telescope House and Starborough Farm Observatory specialists in astronomical instruments, whose customers included the late Sir Patrick

Vanguard Way Route Description: Section 4

Moore. The observatory holds observing evenings in association with Starborough Manor (see above). Note that the farm is only a service centre – the retail shop is in Edenbridge.

4.6

Starline Farm and Beeches Farm (at 4.9) are members of the Red Tractor Scheme, established 2000 to promote 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.

Starborough Nursery is well known for growing a wide variety of rare and unusual trees and shrubs including acers, camellias and rhododendrons. It is open to the public.

4.7

Whether or not you speak German, a very short detour westwards (ahead) 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.

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. The farmhouse is a Grade II* listed building.

On the link with Dormansland and Dormans Station are:

Copse Cottage has a former railway guard's van in its garden, to which is attached a sign 'Printers and ticket writers'. Inscribed above this is a dictum that surely applies to all VGW walkers: 'Be daring, be different, be anything that will assert integrity of purpose and imagination (vision?) against the play-it-safers, the creatures of the commonplace, the slaves of the ordinary'.

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.

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.

4.8

Coming in from the left now is the **Sussex Border Path**. This is a 240 km long-distance walking route from Emsworth to Rye along the county border, with a branch from East Grinstead to Southwick along the border that divides East and West Sussex. The route was created in 1983 by Aeneas Mackintosh and Ben Perkins.

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.

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

Trig point is the popular term for a triangulation pillar, also known as a trigonometrical point or station, whose abbreviation gives rise to the popular term. Some 7,000 of them were set up in Britain from 1935 by the Ordnance Survey, and were used by their surveyors to measure distances and altitudes – in order to do this at least two other pillars would have to be in line of sight. A brass plate with three arms and hooks is fixed to the top to provide a secure mounting for a theodolite (an instrument for measuring angles). On the side are the letters OSBM (Ordnance Survey Bench Mark) followed by the reference number of the trig point. After this process was replaced in the early 1990s by satellite measurements the trig points became redundant, however, they are still of much use to walkers as landmarks and for navigational purposes, and most remain in place, often maintained by a variety of local groups and individuals. This trig point at Dry Hill is situated at altitude 172m (564 feet). You pass two others along the Vanguard Way: at Gaywood (3.6b in Section 3, though this one is difficult to spot) and Gills Lap Clump (5.8c in Section 5).

4.10

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 and has no pavement so take care especially on right-hand bends, where you should carefully cross to the left-hand side for better visibility, returning to the right-hand side when safe to do so. You pass Basings Farm (which once had a farm shop and provided refreshments, but no more alas) on the way to 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).

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 Tandridge District in Surrey into Wealden District in East Sussex.

4.13

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) 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 seems that bed and breakfast is no longer offered, but the house is open to the public on Wednesday and Saturday afternoons and bank holidays from June to September and the tour includes afternoon tea. Nearby Bower

Vanguard Way Route Description: Section 4

Farmhouse dates from the 15th century, and St. Stephen's Church on the main road is 19th century.

4.14

Wet Wood has a slightly mysterious atmosphere. Scattered about near the Vanguard Way are the abandoned and rotting remains of what appear to be workbenches with sinks, also a camp fire area with a picnic table and rustic seats. Our research has so far failed to identify what all this was used for, so if any reader has more information please get in touch.

4.15

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 below) betray associations with the iron industry.

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.)

Ashurstwood (1 km W) was originally called Aesehyrstwilde - 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 and an industrial estate. 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.

4.16

Cansiron Lane is an ancient track that links Ashurstwood with Holtye. It too is thought to have been used for transporting iron produce from the Ashdown Forest.

4.17

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.

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.

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.

Vanguard Way Route Description: Section 4

Tablehurst Manor is a delightful 16th century building set in beautiful grounds, with a quaint summerhouse. **Tablehurst Community Farm** is a community-owned social enterprise, under the auspices of the Co-op. Its produce is almost entirely organic, and visitors are welcome to explore. There is a café, alfresco kitchen, farm shop and toilets, as well as a care home and a straw house.

The **Forest Way** is a linear country park, 15.5 km (9.6 miles) long, used as a shared walking and cycling route from East Grinstead to Groombridge. It uses the former railway line from Three Bridges to East Grinstead and Tunbridge Wells.

The bustling and attractive town of **East Grinstead** in West Sussex is worth exploring if you are travelling that way en route to or from the Vanguard Way, and a good place to spend the night. The High Street, with its Market Square and Middle Row, is a gem, packed with listed buildings, too numerous to mention but including the Grade I Sackville College on the VGW link.

4.18

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.

Forest Row is still sometimes described as a village, indeed on several occasions won the title of Best Kept Village in the county (of East Sussex), but it is now officially classified as a small town with 5,278 inhabitants at the 2011 census. It originally developed around a row of royal hunting lodges in the forest, and expanded when John of Gaunt established a castle at Kidbrooke around 1372.

During the coaching era it became a staging-post on the London-Eastbourne road. In 1801 it was the scene of a notorious highway robbery by the Beatson brothers, who were hanged here the following year. Forest Row has become a popular place for retirement, and has a good shopping-centre, some accommodation and refreshment facilities.

Forest Row has three highly respected schools nearby. Ashdown House School (2 km northeast, designed by Benjamin Latrobe, see Hammerwood Park above) is preparatory, while two for older pupils follow the Steiner Waldorf philosophy, which encourages pupils to develop creativity, self-confidence and practical skills; they are Emerson College (1 km northeast) and Michael Hall (see Kidbrooke Park below).

Forest Row is twinned with Milly-la-Forêt, a community of similar size, 53 km south of Paris in the Forest of Fontainebleau.

Interesting buildings include:

The Grade II listed **Village Hall** was formerly the headquarters of the Conservators of Ashdown Forest, built 1892. The gable end on the south side has a spectacular fresco showing that it was erected by Henry Ray Freshfield of Kidbrooke Park in 1892. On the wall below is a plaque commemorating the visit of President John F. Kennedy in June 1963: while staying with Prime Minister Harold Macmillan (who lived at Birch Grove, 4 km southwest) he attended a service at Forest Row's catholic church, Our Lady of the Forest.

Holy Trinity Church (also Grade II listed) was built 1834 in an unusual north-south alignment on the site of a former cockpit. Forest Row was originally in East Grinstead parish but separated from it in 1894.

Other Grade II listed buildings include the Chequers Inn, the Swan Inn (closed at time of writing) and the Post Office.

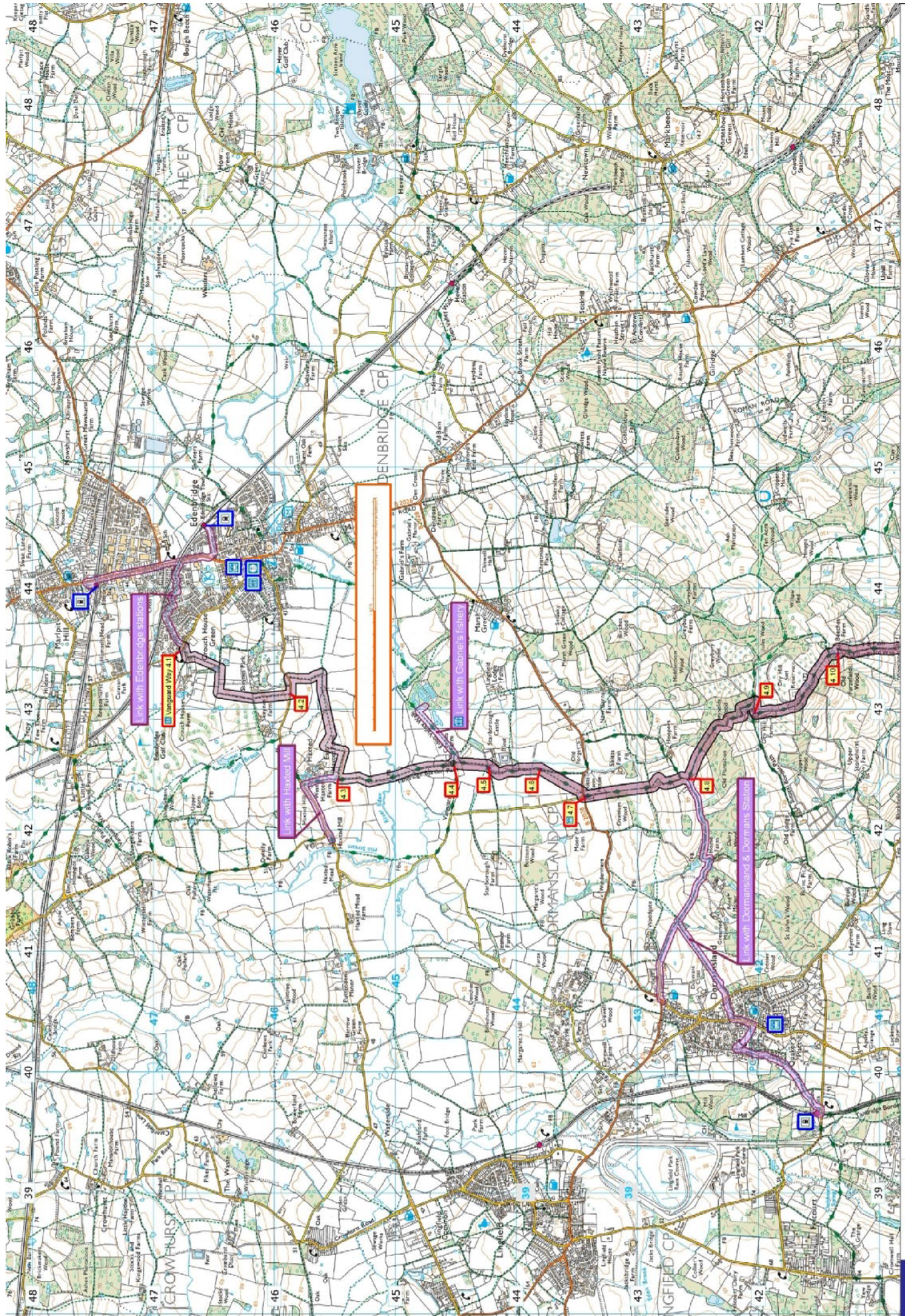
Brambletye House (1.2 km NW). Ruins of an Elizabethan-Jacobean moated manor-house built in 1631 for the local MP, Sir Henry Compton. It was later acquired by Sir James Richards, who was accused in 1683 of high treason. He fled to Spain and the house was allowed to deteriorate. This was the setting for Horatio Smith's novel, 'Brambletye House', written in 1826. A new house was built in 1919.

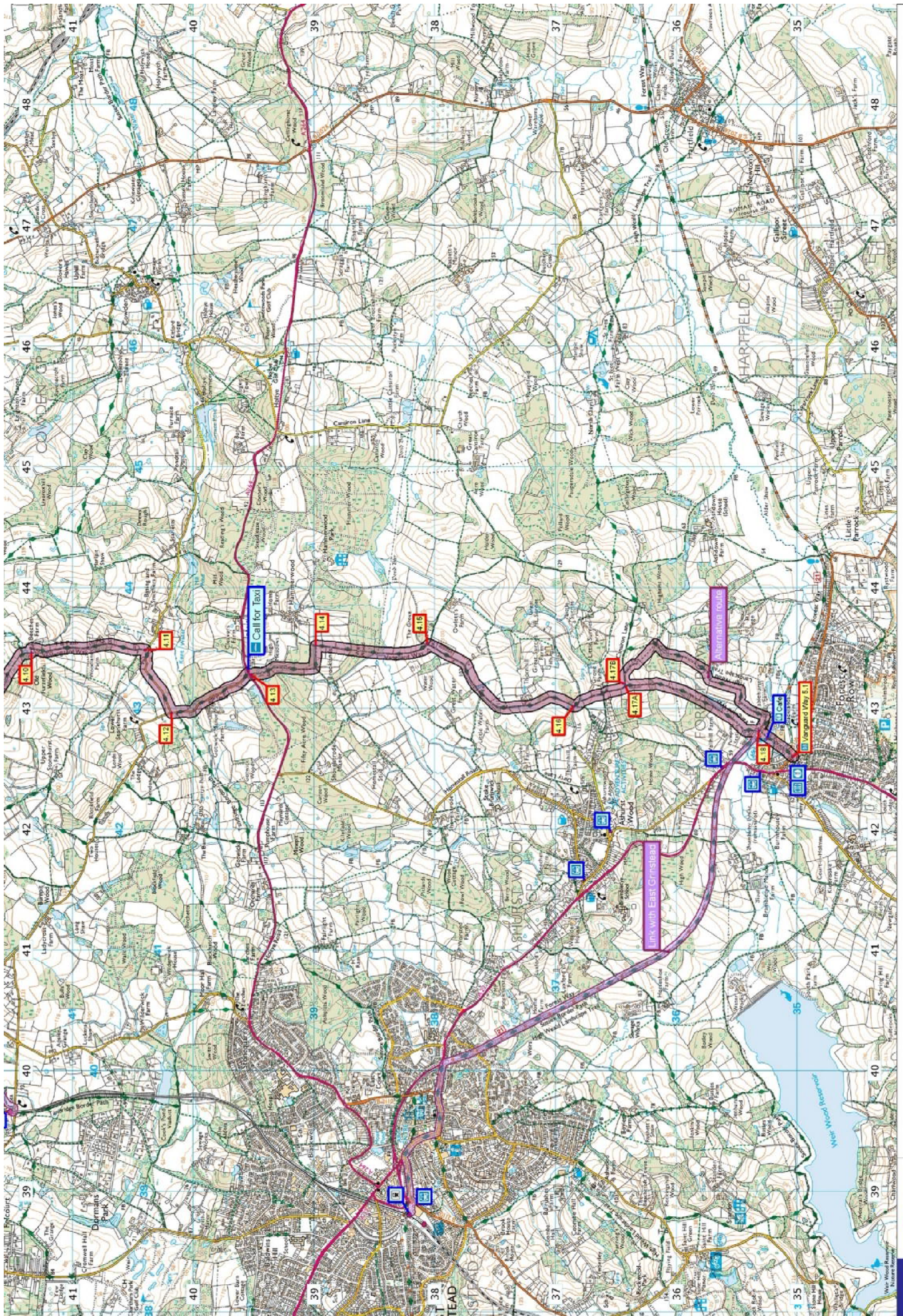
Kidbrooke Park (1.2 km W). A mansion built in 1724 of local sandstone for the Earl of Abergavenny in a park designed by the landscape gardener Humphrey Repton on or near the site of a castle built by John of

Vanguard Way Route Description: Section 4

Gaunt in the late 14th century. Since 1945 it has been the home of the Michael Hall School (see above), named after the Archangel Michael, and is the largest in Britain of the Steiner Waldorf schools. Its grounds are no longer open to the public.

© 2020 Colin Saunders





Mapping sourced from  Ordnance Survey. This product includes mapping licensed from Ordnance Survey with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown Copyright 2019. All rights reserved. Licence Number PU 100040361. This map was generated and printed by TrackLogs Digital Mapping software. For more information see www.tracklogs.co.uk