

THE VANGUARD WAY

(NORTH TO SOUTH)

From the suburbs to the sea!

SECTION 7

Blackboys to Golden Cross

(6th edition 2019)



THE VANGUARD WAY

ROUTE DESCRIPTION and points of interest along the route

SECTION 7 **Blackboys to Golden Cross**

COLIN SAUNDERS

In memory of Graham Butler 1949-2018

Sixth Edition (North-South)

This 6th edition of the north-south route description was first published in 2019 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

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Vanguard Way Route Description: Section 7

SECTION 7: BLACKBOYS TO GOLDEN CROSS

12.2 km (7.6 miles)

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

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 hamlet of Stalkers Lane and the tiny village of Chiddingly, with its interesting church and charismatic pub. Having started in the valleys of streams that feed the Uck, you cross a watershed at Hawkhurst Common Wood to meet streams that feed the Cuckmere. Much of the central part of this section follows quiet country lanes.

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, and for this purpose a compass would of course be helpful!

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

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.

* 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 mostly 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.

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Public transport

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

Distances

Blackboys Crossroads to:

>East Hoathly (bus)	7.6 km (4.7 miles)
Chiddingly	9.3 km (5.8 miles)
Golden Cross (Deanland Road)	12.2 km (7.6 miles)
>Golden Cross (bus stop)	12.7 km (7.9 miles)

East Hoathly to:

Chiddingly	5.0 km (3.1 miles)
Golden Cross (Deanland Road)	7.9 km (4.9 miles)
>Golden Cross (bus stop)	8.4 km (5.2 miles)

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.

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.**

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

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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.

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.




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Vanguard Way Route Description: Section 7

Section 7 of the Vanguard Way starts at Blackboys Crossroads [TQ 522 207]

on the B2012 Uckfield Road. This is in Wealden District in East Sussex.

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

 Blackboys Inn is 300m further along the VGW.

7.1 [TQ 523 208]

- Cross Rd (B2012 Uckfield Road) with care and KA along *School Lane* for 300m to **Blackboys Inn**.
- Cross Rd (B2192 Lewes Road) with care and TR for 30m to pass through gap in fence on your L into the Woodland Trust's **Kiln Wood**.

Note: If leaving Blackboys Inn by the exit on the right hand side of the green, this fence is directly opposite.

 Blackboys Inn.

7.2 [TQ 522 203]

It can get very muddy and slippery in this wood.

- Follow Fp down L side of plantation to telegraph pole.
- Bear R on Tk to next telegraph pole then bear L down over stream, which feeds the River Uck.
- Follow Fp under telephone wires, down steps and over FB to Tk.
- TR to gate and squeeze through narrow gap on to Rd (*Hollow Lane*).

7.3 [TQ 523 200]

- TL up lane **NP** for 500m to pass Blackwell Farm (converted stables).
- At next bend TR through wooden gate to R of entrance to Bushmere.
- Follow grass Tk (a veritable green lane) for 650m, eventually through gate and across stile to Rd (*Bushbury Lane*).

7.4 [TQ 523 190]

- TL along Rd **NP**, passing Toads Hall cottage of 1892, for 150m.
- Where Rd turns R, locate hidden, narrow Fp between bush and fence at entrance to Peartree Cottage.
- Follow Fp beside fence then R edge of field to pass through gate on to Rd (*Hollow Lane again*), opposite Hawkhurst Common Wood.

7.5 [TQ 526 190]

- TR along Rd **NP** for nearly 400m then at junction with Beechy Road TL through gate.
- Bear half R (bearing 120°) across field on faint Fp towards corner of wood, heading for L end of fence where it joins wood.
- On reaching wood bear R along wood edge to go through gap to Rd (*Hawkhurst Lane*).

7.6 [TQ 530 184]

- TL along Rd **NP** and after 100m TR on to Tk, which soon becomes grassy.
- Pass garden and KA in field.
- Go on through gap into next field and TL to go through another gap in corner into third field.
- TR and after about 60m bear half L downhill to cross bridge over stream (which feeds the Cuckmere River) and stile beneath trees (this path can be overgrown).
- Continuing in same direction, ascend grassy Tk which curves round to R then goes through trees.
- Cross unconventional and rather awkward stile in fixed gate on to Rd (*Moat Lane*).

7.7 [TQ 537 184]

- TR along Rd **NP** for 1 km to junction (*Scallows Lane*).
- TR across Scallow Bridge – *it's plural for the lane but singular for the bridge!*

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7.8 [TQ 537 176]

- a) Immediately TL up *Graywood Lane*.
- b) Follow this Rd **NP** for 1 km, passing under electricity wires, Graywood Farm barns (Jentree Classic Cars) and junction with *Stalkers Lane* to second junction (*Graywood Road to R, Ailies Lane ahead*).

*This is the nearest point to **East Hoathly**, which has a bus service, accommodation, pubs and cafés. There is no convenient link on footpaths, so our link below follows lanes with no pavement that are generally quiet, though you should still take care.*


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

- a) TR along Graywood Road **NP** 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).

 East Hoathly to Eastbourne and Uckfield (Mondays to Saturdays).

 In East Hoathly (King's Head brew-pub).

 In East Hoathly – see Vanguard Way Companion..

 In East Hoathly, adjacent to King's Head.

If starting from East Hoathly:

- a) From bus stops go northeast to village centre and KA at junction past King's Head pub (Waldron Road).
- b) Follow Rds **NP** 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 with Graywood Lane and Ailies Lane KA through gate along fenced Fp to L of gate of Graywood House to rejoin VGW at 7.9b.

7.9 [TQ 535 166]

- a) Continuing along VGW in Ailies Lane, almost immediately TL through gap to L of gate along narrow fenced Fp to L of gate of Graywood House.
- b) Continue on Fp through Gray Wood.
- c) Soon Fp crosses private drive by houses and continues ahead through ivy-covered arbour then between garden fences.
- d) KA through wood to KG.

7.10 [TQ 541 161]

- a) Cross Tk and stile into 1st field then KA in same direction along L side, with Broomfield Wood on your L.
- b) At end of first field, cross stile to L and continue in same direction along fenced Fp beside 2nd field (ignore gates leading into Broomfield Farm caravan park).
- c) Cross stile into 3rd field and continue in same direction along R-hand side of 4th and 5th fields, separated by stiles.
- d) In 6th field, KA on worn Fp to gate and stile in far R corner.
- e) TL along stony drive of Clarklye Farm for 200m past pond to Rd (*Stalkers Lane*) in the hamlet that is also called ***Stalkers Lane***.

7.11 [TQ 548 156]

- a) TR on Rd **NP** and follow round bend to L, passing Holdens and Chiswells Farms (*note former oast house on your R, now part of a private residence*).

Continued on next page ►

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- b) At end of hamlet continue along Rd.
- c) Soon pass broad gap in hedge (field access) and in 50m climb to dismantled stile on R by wooden fingerpost.

This is the easternmost point of the VGW. For much of the next 1.5 km you will see the spire of Chiddingly Church against the backdrop of the South Downs.

7.12 [TQ 549 155]

- a) KA on worn Fp across field passing 20m to R of telegraph pole, to corner of fence (*beware hidden ditch on your L*).
- b) Continue with fence then hedge on R, with **Hilders Court** to your R, and drop through gap at end of field.
- c) Pass through gate then follow fenced Fp (*barbed wire*) beside two fields and stables.
- d) Cross stile on to Rd (*Honeywick Lane*).


7.13 [TQ 546 147]

- a) TR along Rd **NP** for 40m to wide entrance into Hilders Court (just before point where Rd becomes Parsonage Lane).
- b) TL through KG (may be hidden in bushes) into small 1st field.
This area, managed under the Countryside Stewardship Scheme, was the site of an old brickfield, in use until 1939.
- c) Follow R side of field to TR through gap in brambles and cross stile. *It may be boggy here at times.*
- d) Follow R side of 2nd field to gate.
- e) Follow L side of 3rd field between hedge and fence to another gate.
- f) KA across 4th field to cross stile into small plantation, then KA to next stile.

7.14 [TQ 544 144]

- a) Follow L side of 5th field towards church spire, keeping L of small fenced paddocks/gardens.
- b) Continue along Fp between hedges to Rd (*Church Lane*) at **Chiddingly**, opposite former village shop (*now sadly closed but retaining its listed façade*).

Once again we encounter the Wealdway (see Section 5), which comes in from the right, joins the VGW for just 50m then goes off to the left.

 *Six Bells pub to your R.*

 *Opposite former village shop.*

7.15 [TQ 544 142]

- a) TL at Rd **NP** past car park to the Old Vicarage.
- b) Enter churchyard (*note old stone mounting block beneath fence by gate*) and go along paved Fp to R of **Chiddingly Church**.
- c) At church door KA over grass then cross stile into field – take care on drop on far side.
- d) Follow R side of cricket field past pavilion and scoreboard to white board then TR through gate to Rd (*The Street*).

7.16 [TQ 544 141]

- a) Go half L to cross FB and stile.
- b) Cross field half L (CB 250°) aiming 20m to R of hedge corner, with **Place Farm** to your R.
- c) KA to cross stile L of gate then continue in same direction across corner of field to stile into wood.
- d) Cross stile and plank bridge and walk through wood to fingerpost.

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7.17 [TQ 539 139]

- a) TL outside wood, follow meandering and sometimes indistinct Fp to (possibly dry) pond, then cross plank FB over stream.
This stretch can be waterlogged after heavy rain.
- b) Continue along Fp as it bears L for 50m to leave the wood at another fingerpost.
- c) Turn half R across field, ignoring field edge path, to walk uphill towards horizon (CB 230°) roughly R of centre between two woods.
This path has been obstructed by crops, and ploughed lines may not follow the required direction.
- d) At top of rise KA to cross stile in hedge in line of trees, then concrete FB.

7.18 [TQ 536 144]

- a) In next field bear quarter L (CB 200°) to locate stile in hedge between tall trees.
The hamlet of Muddles Green is away to your L.
- b) Cross field (bearing 230°) and cross stile or gap into next field.
- c) Bear slightly R (bearing 240°) on clear Fp (may have high crop) to far R corner and go through gate on to fenced Fp through small wood.
- d) Go through another gate then along R side of field.
- e) Cross stile in gate on to Rd (A22 London to Eastbourne) at Holmes's Hill.

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

- f) TR along verge to bend opposite entrance to commercial area (containing Happy Days Café), where you can see and be seen by approaching traffic.

☕ *Happy Days Café (closed Tuesdays) in Holmes Hill Estate opposite (a few metres to R as you reach main Rd) but as stated above great care needed while crossing so cross as indicated above then walk back on far side. The café is in the last building past the lake.*

7.19 [TQ 532 128]

- a) Cross Rd ⊗ to commercial area then TL along broad verge for 170m to electricity pole beside former basket shop (fondly remembered by many VGWayfarers as the Wattle Tea Room). As a shorter alternative to the link with Golden Cross bus stops as described at 8.1 below, you can continue ahead here for 500m, following the pavement opposite.
- b) Go down enclosed Fp to R of shop, which may be overgrown and very boggy in parts. It can be avoided if necessary by continuing L along A22 verge for 200m then turn sharp R along B2124 Lewes Road, and in 200m TL down Tk to Mohair Centre at 7.20(b).

7.20 [TQ 531 126]

- a) Cross stile and follow R side of field to cross another stile onto Rd (B2124 Lewes Road).
- b) Cross Rd with care and go down drive ahead, signed 'Mohair Centre'.
- c) Where it divides, KA still signed 'Mohair Centre'.
- d) In Mohair Centre's second car park take Tk half L and cross stile by gate.
- e) Shortly reach entrance gate into the **Mohair Centre** (Brickfield Farm).
There are no facilities here for public use.

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7.21 [TQ 532 123]


- a) At the gate TL past barn and along grass Tk to cross stile to R of gate between ponds.
- b) TR in field with fence on R then cross stile on to Rd (*Deanland Road*) by white railings, where Section 7 ends at:


8.1 [TQ 533 120]

*Some old OS maps may show the VGW heading east to the road, but it now follows the footpath going south. If you intend to divert to **Golden Cross** here for a bus, instead of TR at 7.21b KA to Rd then TL.*

Link to Golden Cross bus stops (500m).

- a) TL along Deanland Road **NP** for 500m back to the A22. Buses go left (this side) towards East Hoathly, Uckfield, Forest Row, East Grinstead and London; and right (far side) towards Hailsham, Polegate and Eastbourne.

 *Buses from Lewes to Hailsham and Eastbourne (Mondays to Fridays only) call at Golden Cross. There is also a daily express coach service to 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.*

 *Sadly, the Golden Cross pub is now permanently closed. For the Inn on the Park at Deanland Wood Park (closed Mondays), TR along Deanland Road **NP** for 900m. Entertainment is often provided in the bar: if it's bingo, you will be expected to remain silent while numbers are being called!*

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COMMENTARY

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

7.1

The Grade II listed **Blackboys Inn** was built in 1389 as a farmhouse, which soon offered accommodation and refreshments for drivers transporting charcoal from the surrounding woods to Lewes – the name is thought to derive from the dirty faces of the boys who brought the charcoal to them. The building became an inn at some point in the 18th century, and is said to be haunted by the ghost of Anne Starr, the licensee's daughter, who died in childbirth in 1804, having been deserted by her lover.

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.

The **Woodland Trust** was established in 1972 and has made remarkable progress in the care and protection of woodland sites. They now have over 300,000 members and 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, or even a copse in memory of a loved one, in the woodland of your choice.

7.8

The hamlet of **Stalkers Lane** is not named as such on OS maps, but we have been assured by the clerk of Chiddingly Parish Council that this is correct. This was confirmed by some local residents, though others told us they thought it was part of Graywood.....or Chiddingly!

East Hoathly (1.6 km SW on link) is a pleasant village, made even more attractive by having been by-passed 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, in West 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) in the adjoining stables.

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

*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.*

In later life she walked with a stick, which may account for the sentiment expressed here.

7.10

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.

7.14

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 Cetelingai (Domesday Book, 1086), Chitingeleghe (1230), Chittinghlegh (1274) and Chudynglee (1348) - which just goes to show how liberal the spelling of English used to be! At the 2001 census the parish had a

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population of 864.

The Grade II listed Six Bells pub, over to your R, in The Street, was named Bargain Pub of the Year in the 2009 Good Pub Guide. Named after the number of bells in the church tower, it is a popular rendezvous for friendly bikers, and jazz bands often play here. The Grade II listed 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, Lord (Julian) Fellowes, who won an Oscar in 2002 for Best Original Screenplay for *Gosford Park*, but is now even more famous for having written *Downton Abbey*.

The old Post Office Stores is the first building you see as you arrive on the Vanguard Way – it too is Grade II listed, so its old shop front can't be removed or changed. This and several other Grade II listed buildings in the village (the Vicarage, Pilgrims, Thorn House, Yew Tree Cottage and 1-2 Highlands Lane'), most of which date from the mid-18th century, are all on a 3 km trail, which can be downloaded from the East Sussex County Council website (enter 'Chiddingly Walk' in the search box).

7.15

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.

7.16

Previously called Chiddingly Place, **Place Farm** was the home of the Jefferay family (see above). 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.

7.20

The **Mohair Centre** was established in Brickfields Farm in 1988 by Jacky and Martin Webb. As well as being a small farm specialising in raising angora goats (which produce the lustrous and smooth mohair wool), it's a nursery, holiday play scheme, after-school club, forest school and training centre (not open to the public).

8.1

Golden Cross is a small settlement on the A22 London to Eastbourne road that developed around the former pub of the same name, which sadly closed in 2015 and was converted into flats. It's a Grade II listed building, so the smart inn signs that dominate the walls cannot be removed – no doubt much to the chagrin of the residents if passing motorists knock on the door demanding sustenance!

