THE VANGUARD WAY

(SOUTH TO NORTH)

A different experience in the other direction!

SECTION C
Berwick Station to Golden Cross

Third edition (2025)

VANGUARD WAY ROUTE GUIDE

SECTION C

Berwick Station to Golden Cross

COLIN SAUNDERS

Third Edition (South-North) 2025
Version 3.0

This 3rd edition of the south-north route description was first published in 2025 and replaces the 1st edition published in 2011 and the 2nd edition published in 2017. It is only available as an online resource.

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Published by the Vanguard Way Association
35 Gerrards Close, Oakwood, London, N14 4RH, England

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To find out about any late changes to the route, please visit www.vanguardway.org.uk and click on the 'latest news' button. Or visit our Facebook page (Vanguard Way Association).

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.

Cover photo: Sheepcote Lane, Chalvington, East Sussex – cc-by-sa/2.0 - © Simon Carey – geography.org.uk/p/2770459

SECTION C: BERWICK STATION TO GOLDEN CROSS
6.6km (4.1 miles)

Distances from Berwick Station to:

>Yew Tree Inn, Chalvington	3.9km	(2.4 miles)
Golden Cross (Deanland Road)*	6.7km	(4.2 miles)

*To the Golden Cross bus stops on the A24 add 0.5 km (0.3 miles).

Public transport

On route: Trains and buses at Berwick Station. Buses at Chalvington and Golden Cross. The Flexibus service operated by East Sussex County Council may be able to help in places that are poorly served by public transport: for details search 'East Sussex Flexibus' or phone 01273 078203 (Monday to Saturday 06:30 to 19:30).

Abbreviations and symbols

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		

= Bus		= Cafés etc		= Toilets	
= Train		= Pubs		= Phone box	
Ž	= Taxi	ã	= Accommodation		= Take extra care – see below.

Route overview

Most of this sparsely populated section traverses low-lying and generally level farmland, but soon after the start.it climbs gently to lonely Mays farmhouse, then descends to follow a long, straight stretch (with a link to the Yew Tree Inn) that betrays the Roman connections of the area around Mount Pleasant and Limekiln Farms. Finally it passes through the Mohair Centre to reach Golden Cross.

Lowest point: Chalvington Road (16m). Highest point: Mays Farm (35m).

How to use this guide

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 C(8.9) to C(8.1). (The individual route description paragraphs in this South-North section are preceded by the letter C 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. Maps showing the correct route are appended to this route guide. 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.

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In this route guide:

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 blue 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.

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

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.

⊗ **- Walking on roads and other hazards**

When walking, one should of course take care in all sorts of potentially hazardous situations, but especially when crossing or walking along roads. **Please read the 'Safety' chapter in our Introduction to the Route, which can be downloaded from our website vanguardway.org.uk.** We use this symbol ⊗ to draw your attention to situations that require extra care.

'**NP**' in the route description indicates that the road has no pavement or other provision for pedestrians. 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 light, luminous or reflective on top, and carry a torch.

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.

ALL INFORMATION SHOWN IS SUBJECT TO ALTERATION WITHOUT NOTICE

This third edition of the South-North version of the Route Description is based on a completely new survey undertaken by members of the Vanguard Way Association in 2023.

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 please refer to the Latest News page on our website vanguardway.org.uk for any changes that may have taken place meanwhile. You might also like to join our Facebook page, where news of developments ►►**

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affecting the Vanguard Way will be posted – just search Vanguard Way Association. Another way would be to join the Association, as members are kept up to date through the bi-monthly VGW News – details on our website.

We will always be pleased to hear about any changes you may find, in which case please email route@vanguardway.org.uk.

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.

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 route@vanguardway.org.uk.

Section C of the VGW(S-N) starts at Berwick Station *[TQ 526 067]*
This is in Wealden District in East Sussex.

- *From London, East Croydon, Gatwick Airport, Brighton and Lewes stop at the Down platform (north side of the lines), where the ticket office and Vanguard Way relaunch plaque are located. Trains from Hastings and Eastbourne stop at the Up platform (south side of the lines) – take care when crossing the lines.*
- *The Cuckmere Community Bus serves Berwick Station from various places in the area such as Brighton, Eastbourne, Hailsham, Polegate, Alfriston, Chalvington, Ripe, Seaford, Exceat, Westdean, Charleston Manor, Litlington, Drusilla's Roundabout. It operates to a complicated timetable in which services follow different routes each day – for more information please visit www.cuckmerebuses.org.uk.*
- *The Berwick Inn. Small shop in Berwick Service Station nearby.*

C(9.1) *[TQ 526 067]*
a) From Berwick Station TL along Rd *(Station Road)* – ⊗ **take care** if crossing the railway lines.
b) Just before Berwick Service Station TL on Tk between station car park and hedge. Here the VGW joins a walk called '***With the Ramblers in Arlington'***.
c) At end by gate TR through squeeze stile and follow narrow and uneven Fp behind gardens, across plank bridge and into Nightingale Wood (may be overgrown and muddy).
d) Go through gate into field then follow L edge of field.
e) Go through KG in fence then TL along drive, passing through gate beside cattle-grid.
f) Immediately before 2nd cattle-grid at entrance to ***Ludlay***, fork L through gate and along tarmac Tk.
g) As Tk bears L, KA across grass to stile.

C(8.9) *[TQ 522 073]*
a) Cross stile and fork R between bushes and trees, with Mays farmhouse prominent on hillside ahead.
b) Cross plank bridge, go through gate (Harvey's Gate) then continue in same direction, still heading for Mays.
c) Go through gate at Mays then TR on Tk beside flint wall and past pond to farmyard.

C(8.8) *[TQ 521 079]*
a) Cross farmyard with commercial properties then go half R to pass between R-hand barn and containers to fingerpost.
b) TL on Tk then immediately TR through gate and down field, keeping 5m to L of electricity pole. ►►

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c) Go through gate, down 4 steps and cross plank bridge into next (large) field and continue almost in same direction, heading for electricity pole at L end of trees.
d) Go through squeeze stile and cross plank bridge.
e) Follow R side of field to another squeeze stile in corner and cross it to Rd *(Langtye Lane)*.

C(8.7) *[TQ 519 085]*

⊗ ***This stretch follows lanes with no pavement – see Road Safety in 'An Introduction to the Route'.***

a) TR along Rd then shortly TL at Rd junction *(Poundfield Road)*.
b) Follow Rd for 650m, passing Meadow Cottage and Blackberry Farm (formerly Bungalow Farm), to sharp L-hand bend. *(For Chalvington village centre TL along Rd here for 500m.)*

🚌 *From Chalvington village centre the Cuckmere Community Bus serves: (Wednesdays) Berwick Station, Alfriston and Hailsham; (Thursdays) Berwick Station, Alfriston, Polegate and Eastbourne; (Fridays) Berwick Station, Exceat and Seaford; also Brighton on alternate Thursdays.*

☎ *300m to L along Poundfield Road.*

C(8.6) *[TQ 524 091]*

a) KA along Tk (***Sheepcote Lane***), a byway which is closed to four-wheeled traffic during the winter months.

C(8.5) *[TQ 527 094]*

a) After 450m, where Tk edges L a little, you reach a path junction with a stile. If you are now continuing along VGW, KA for another 550m. If you wish to divert to the Yew Tree Inn the link starts here; we show a different route for the return link.

Link with Yew Tree Inn at Chalvington *[650m, TQ 525 100]*
This, together with the return link, avoids 550m of the track. Note that it can be squelchy after heavy rain.

a) Cross stile on L beside barbed wire 'gate', now following the same direction (CB 355°) all the way to the pub, crossing five fields.
b) KA across first field to gap and cross wooden 'horse jump' into second field.
b) Cross second field half R and cross ditch into third field.
c) Cross third field to R-most tall tree and go through gap into fourth field.
d) Cross fourth field to cross plank bridge and stile in hedgerow.
e) Cross fifth field (cricket pitch with pavilion to your R) to reach garden of Yew Tree Inn.

🍺 *Yew Tree Inn, Chalvington.*

Returning from Yew Tree Inn:
a) Return across first field (cricket pitch) to cross stile, where you divert from the outward route.
b) Cross second field quarter L (CB 70°) and go through field gate.
c) TR for 45m along side of third field and cross broken stile among trees.
d) Cross fourth field diagonally L to gate, cross stile to R of it and TL to rejoin Sheepcote Lane (now a tarmac road) opposite Selmeston Croft.

C(8.4) *[TQ 530 099]*

a) KA past Selmeston Croft, *(*still Sheepcote Lane, now a tarmac road*)* for 1.2 km, passing extensive barns of ***Mount Pleasant Farm*** and Marnhull Farm Cottage to Marnhull Farm House.

C(8.3) *[TQ 538 110]*

a) Cross stream (one of the Cuckmere's headwaters) then TL to cross stile set back by gate.
b) KA through narrow meadow, which then bears R.
c) Cross another stile by gate and KA along drive, passing ***Limekiln Farm***.
d) At Rd *(Chalvington Road)* TR for 75m, then TL through gate.

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C(8.2) *[TQ 536 113]*
This stretch crosses beside or close to the L side of five fields, following a public Fp on grass (roughly CB 340°) with a stream to your L. The fields are divided by hedgerows, which are crossed by stiles or gates. Occasional gymkhana events take place in these fields.

a) Follow narrow, uneven Fp to L of yard to cross stile, then cross first field.
b) Cross plank bridge to gate into second field, where stream and field edge veer away to L and ground rises to your R.
c) As large barns appear up to your R (Golden Cross Equestrian Centre), cross plank bridge to gate into third (small) field.
d) Cross third field then go through gate into fourth field.
e) Cross fourth field, keeping 30m away from field edge, ignore field to your L to go through small gate to R of field gate.
f) Cross fifth field to stile and plank bridge leading to Rd *(Deanland Road)*, where Section C of VGW(S-N) finishes at:

C(8.1) *[TQ 533 120]* Deanland Road, 500m south of ***Golden Cross***. This is in Wealden District in East Sussex.

Link to bus stops at Golden Cross *(500m). TR along Deanland Road for 500m to the A22 Whitesmith Road.*

- *For buses (no Sunday service) go through car park beside former Golden Cross pub then TL for 100m along A22 Whitesmith Road. The stop on this side is for buses to East Hoathly, Uckfield, Forest Row and East Grinstead. The stop on the far side is for buses to Hailsham, Polegate and Eastbourne. The Cuckmere Community Bus comes to Golden Cross from Berwick Station and Hailsham once on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, stopping in the car park beside the former pub.*

  Regency bus 28 goes from Golden Cross to Hailsham, Polegate and Eastbourne or Lewes and Brighton.

- *The garage shop opposite has a coffee machine. The Golden Cross pub closed in 2015 – see Commentary.*

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

C(9.1)
With the Ramblers in Arlington is a 12.3 km (7.5 mile) circular walking route devised by Travelog Lewes, which devises walk and cycle rides using public transport in this area.

Until 1966 the area northeast of **Ludlay** was the site of a brickworks, using clay from local pits and served by a narrow-gauge railway, now disappeared. Ludlay Farm occupies a compound within a high flint wall, where all the buildings are made of flint.

C(8.9)
The isolated hilltop community of **Mays** consists of an impressive Georgian brick house, a farm and some farmhands' cottages. The Sussex breed of cattle originated here. Nowadays much of the farm is used as a business centre, occupied by small, specialist companies. The house was built in the mid-17th century for the Reverend John Nutt, rector of Berwick. It was the birthplace in 1835 of Nathaniel Blaker, the stern author in 1906 of a collection of moralising essays that were typical of the late Victorian and Edwardian period.

C(8.6)
The VGW follows **Sheepcote Lane**, as either a track or surfaced road, for just over 3km. Its straightness suggests a Roman road, but no evidence has yet been found to prove it. A glance at the map shows that it runs parallel to several other roads and tracks, which together with many parallel crossing tracks form a grid divided into multiples of the Roman actus. An actus was 120 Roman feet, and as human feet were slightly smaller in those days this corresponds to approximately 116 modern English feet (about 35 metres). You are in fact following the eastern boundary of a huge Roman agricultural estate, stretching from here south-westwards towards Ripe. The individual fields created by this grid were each five acti square, so covered 25 square acti (about 30,000 square metres). They were laid out more than sixteen centuries ago, and records indicate that it still existed in Norman times, so the grid remained in use for at least six hundred years. Time has warped or obliterated some of the Roman farm tracks but the pattern is still recognisable.

C(8.4)
One of the cottages in **Mount Pleasant Farm** is called Vanguard Cottage after the VGW. Note the unusual wind vane on a barn near the gate: it seems to consist of a red-winged horse, which is being ridden by a cockerel.

C(8.3)
Limekiln Farm includes a converted former oast house. There was a brickyard here in the 18th century, run by the Guy family of Chiddingly. Note the inscription under the gable end of the house: 'DUM SPIRO SPERO' (literally 'While I breathe, I hope'; or more loosely 'Where there's life, there's hope'). A popular family motto, it was apparently added in the year 2000 as it appears below 'MM'.

C(8.1)
Golden Cross is a small settlement that developed around (and is named after) the former pub on the A22 London to Eastbourne road, which sadly closed in 2015 and was converted into flats. The former pub is a Grade II listed building, and the smart pub signs that dominate the walls cannot be removed – no doubt much to the chagrin of the residents and confusion of passers-by!

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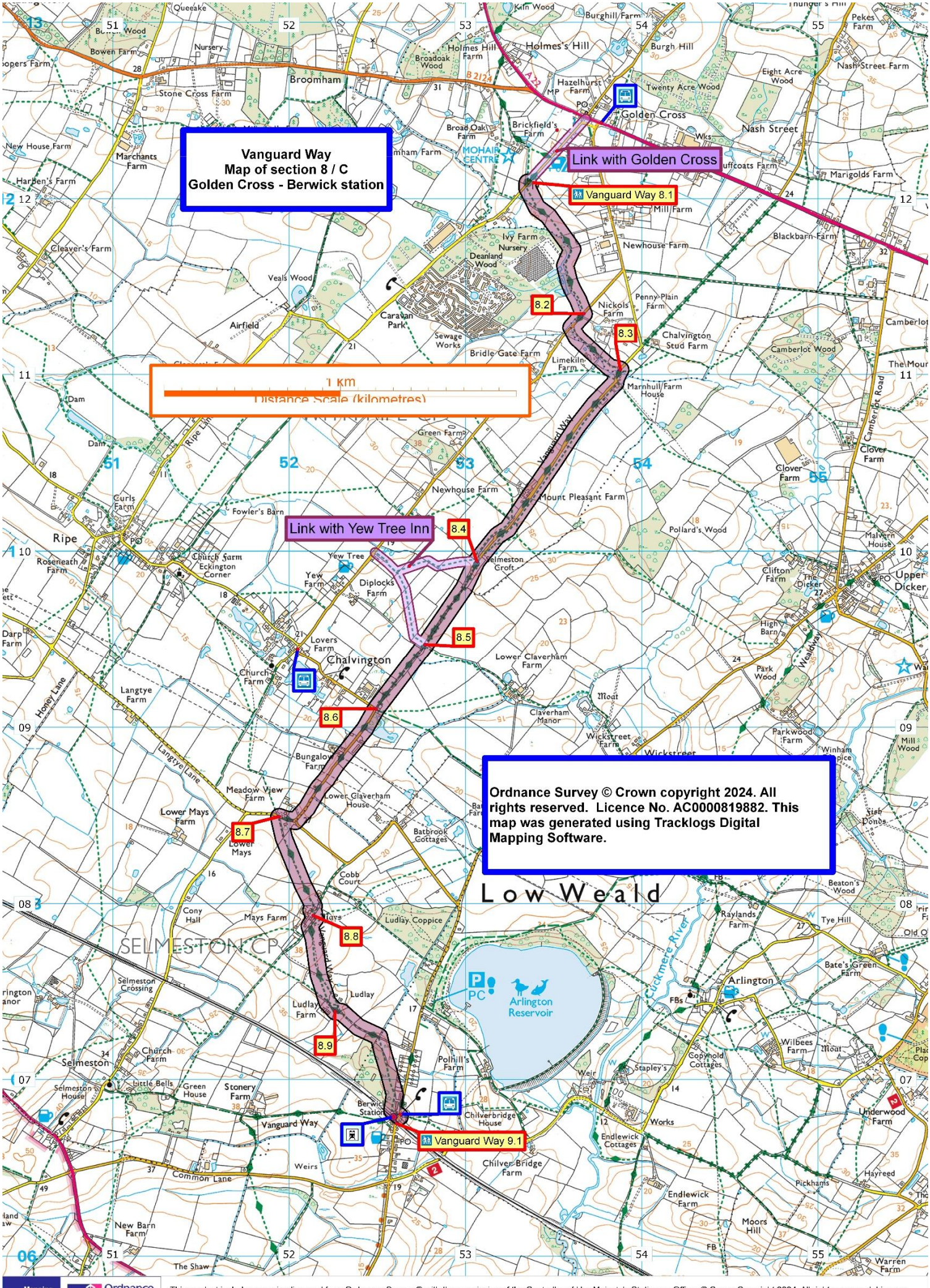

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