

Uckfield to Buxted (via Blackboys)			Alternative Start and Shortcut via Framfield		
1 <sup>st</sup> walk check	2 <sup>nd</sup> walk check	3 <sup>rd</sup> walk check	1 <sup>st</sup> walk check	2 <sup>nd</sup> walk check	3 <sup>rd</sup> walk check
26 <sup>th</sup> March 2016	05 <sup>th</sup> Nov. 2021	29 <sup>th</sup> August 2024	03 <sup>rd</sup> May 2023		
Current status	Document last updated Friday, 30 <sup>th</sup> August 2024				
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## Uckfield to Buxted

**Start:** Uckfield station

**Finish:** Buxted station

Uckfield station, map reference TQ 473 209, is 62 km south south east of Charing Cross, 12 km north east of Lewes and 19m above sea level; Buxted station, map reference TQ 496 233, is 3 km north east of Uckfield and 49m above sea level, both are in **East Sussex**.

**Length:** 21.6 km (13.4 mi), of which 7.3 km (4.6 mi) on tarmac or concrete.

**Cumulative ascent/descent:** 283/253m. For a shorter walk, see below **Walk Options**.

**Toughness:** 4 out of 10

**Time:** 5 hours walking time.

For the whole outing, including trains, sights and meals, allow at least 8 ½ hours.

**Transport:** Uckfield station is on the Uckfield branch of the Oxted Line from London Bridge. Journey times are 73 minutes Mon-Sat and 88 minutes Sun (hourly every day). Buxted station is one stop closer to London with a journey time from 74 minutes Mon-Sat (half-hourly) and 91 minutes Sun.

**Saturday Walkers' Club:** Take the train closest to 9.00 hours.

**OS Landranger Map:** 198 (Brighton & Lewes) & 199 (Eastbourne & Hastings)

**OS Explorer Map:** 135 (Ashdown Forest) & OL25 (Eastbourne & Beachy Head)

### Walk Notes:

This undulating amble through some varied scenery in the Low Weald Countryside provides ample South Downs views in the morning from the Uck Valley and on the way to and through the East Sussex National Golf Course, before turning north east through the High Cross estate, owned by property developer Nicholas van Hoogstraten, who was at the centre of various legal battles with The Ramblers after blocking or otherwise obstructing rights-of-ways across this estate.

You then pass a couple of manor houses, one with pretty ornamental lakes and ornate landscaped gardens, en route to lunch at the charming 14<sup>th</sup> century Blackboys Inn in Blackboys.

From lunch the route turns west along Vanguard Way and Wealdway for a long stretch through the tranquil valley of the Tickerage Stream, past Tickerage Mill, Vivien Leigh's abode in the final years of her life, and finishes through Buxted Park, an old deer park in Ashdown Forest parkland, past the very large, elegant Palladian Buxted House (now a hotel) in its hilltop position.

Most of the woods passed have impressive bluebell displays in season.

### Walk Options:

**Alternative Starts** up out of Uckfield to Boothland Wood and across the A22 through Horsted Green Country Park cut 1.6 km. The wood has plentiful bluebells in season and one of the two variants loops through the wood for longer.

It is possible to **shorten the walk** by routing **through Framfield** for lunch instead of through Blackboys. This cuts 3.5 km/2.2 mi and 24m ascent, and is rated **3/10**.

**Extension Loops through Horsted Green Park** of various length can be added, as two access points into the park are passed on the route (map-led).

**Bus 29** (Brighton – Uckfield – Tunbridge Wells) runs along the A26, crossed just after Horsted Green Country Park (with the nearest stop – Ridgewood, Hereford Way – a few hundred metres to the left, closer to Uckfield), with a roughly half-hourly service 6 days a week and hourly on Sundays.

**Bus 29A** (Brighton – Uckfield – Heathfield) runs through both lunch destinations Blackboys and Framfield, with a roughly hourly service 7 days a week.

### Lunch (details last updated 30/08/2024)

**The Halfway House** East Sussex National Hotel, *Little Horsted, Uckfield, East Sussex, TN22 5ES (07709 518 485)*. The Halfway House is located 6.5 km (4.1 mi) into the walk, to the side of the East National Hotel on their westerly championship golf course. Open 09.00-16.00 (shorter in winter).

**The Blackboys Inn** Blackboys, *Uckfield, East Sussex TN22 5LG (01825 890 283, <http://www.theblackboys.co.uk/>)*. The Blackboys Inn is a 14<sup>th</sup> century coaching inn, public house and restaurant located in Blackboys village, 14.1 km (8.8 mi) into the main walk. Open 16.00-19.00 Mon-Tue, all day Wed-Sat and 12.00-18.00 Sun. Food served 12.00-14.30 and 18.00-21.00 Wed-Thu, 12.00-15.00 and 18.00-21.00 Fri-Sat and 12.00-16.00 Sun. It is believed that the Inn was founded as an overnight resting place for drivers transporting charcoal from local woods to Lewes and the surrounding areas.

**The Hare & Hounds** The Street, *Framfield, Uckfield, East Sussex TN22 5NJ (01825 890 118, <https://hareandhounds.net/>)*. The Hare & Hounds is located 12.3 km (7.7 mi) into the short walk. Open all day Tue-Sat and 12.00-18.00 Sun. Food served 12.00-14.30 and 17.30-20.30 Tue-Sat and 12.00-15.00 Sun. The North East Sussex CAMRA POTY 2020, 2021 and 2022.

### Tea (details last updated 30/08/2024)

**The White Hart Country Dining & Free House** Station Road, *Buxted, Uckfield, East Sussex TN22 4DP (01825 732 068, <http://www.thewhitehartbuxted.co.uk/>)*. Open 12.00-15.00 and 18.00-23.00 Wed-Thu, 12.00-15.00 and 17.00-23.00 Fri, 12.00-23.00 Sat and 12.00-21.00 Sun. Food served 12.00-14.30 and 18.00-21.00 Wed-Sat and 12.00-19.30 Sun.

**The Buxted Inn** High Street, *Buxted, Uckfield, East Sussex TN22 4LA (01825 733 510, <http://thebuxtedinn.co.uk/>)*. Open all day every day. Food served 17.00-21.00 Tue-Thu, 12.00-21.00 Fri-Sat and 12.00-16.00 Sun.

## Notes:

### Uckfield

'Uckfield', first recorded in writing as 'Uckefeld' in 1220, is an Anglo-Saxon place name meaning 'open land of a man called Ucca'. It developed as a stopping-off point on the pilgrimage route between Canterbury, Lewes and Chichester. The settlement began to develop around the bridging point of the River Uck and the 15<sup>th</sup> century Bridge Cottage, a large Wealden hall house and the oldest house still standing in Uckfield, now a museum: <http://www.bridgecottageuckfield.co.uk/>.

### River Uck/Uck Valley

The river drains a catchment starting near Crowborough in the North, Hadlow Down to the East and Laughton Common to the South. It flows into the river Ouse about 5 km north of Lewes, and burst its banks in 2000, flooding much of Uckfield and the surrounding countryside. The signs indicating the name of the river have been subject to frequent vandalism, resulting in the council fitting specially shaped signs which reduce the ability of vandals to add the letter 'f' to the word 'Uck'.

### Ouse Valley Railway

The Ouse Valley Railway was to have been part of the London, Brighton & South Coast Railway (LBSCR). It was authorised by an Act of Parliament and construction of the 32 km (20 mi) long line was begun, but not completed. It never opened to traffic. Started to counter the threat of rival lines being built to Brighton and Eastbourne, the LBSCR proposed to build a railway linking Haywards Heath, Uckfield, and Hailsham (to the north of Eastbourne). It accepted that the line would not be profitable but it wanted to keep other companies out of its territory. One tactic to be employed by the LBSCR was to build the line as slowly as possible, delaying its opening to force other companies to look elsewhere to build their lines. Then the financing bank collapsed... Work stopped and was not resumed.

### Wealden Line

The Wealden Line is a partly abandoned double track railway that connected Lewes with Tunbridge Wells. The line is essentially composed of three sections: the southerly, from Lewes to Uckfield, closed in 1969; the northerly, from Eridge to Tunbridge Wells West, closed in 1985; in between, from Uckfield to Eridge, it remains open as part of the Oxted Line. The northern section has partly re-opened under the auspices of the Spa Valley Railway, whilst the Lavender Line has revived Isfield Station on the southern section. A 2008 study to have the whole line re-opened to passengers concluded that it would be "economically unviable".

### Horsted Place Hotel

Horsted Place is a Gothic Revival country house in Little Horsted. The current building dates to 1850, when it was built by Samuel Dawkes/George Myers for Francis Barchard, a successful merchant from London, though an earlier house evidently existed as it was documented in 1816. It is described as "A masterpiece of ornate Victorian Gothic, it has towers, tall brick chimneys and a great central Gallery running through its entire length." When the last private owner, Lord Rupert Nevill (whose wife was a personal childhood friend of Queen Elizabeth), died in 1982, Horsted Place was converted to a hotel. <http://www.horstedplace.co.uk/>

### Nicholas van Hoogstraten/High Cross

Property developer Nicholas van Hoogstraten acquired High Cross estate and started building a very large neoclassical mansion (Hamilton Palace) in 1985 (still unfinished though it is – at time of writing – after allegedly spending £40 million) and created national news for various scandals throughout his life, one being that he obstructed public rights-of-way across High Cross estate, partly by blocking them with razor wire and discarded refrigerators, partly by building over them. As East Sussex County Council claimed it could not afford to prosecute, the Ramblers Association took it upon them to take legal action, after he had described Ramblers "...and those types..." as "scavengers" and "the absolute scum of the earth" without "...a stake in society...". Ramblers won the legal case eventually and have created a walk across his land specifically to commemorate the battle. That walk has been the starting point for the walk you are on now. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/233644.stm>  
<http://www.theguardian.com/uk/2002/jul/25/ruralaffairs.stuartjeffries>  
[http://www.theargus.co.uk/news/9973615.Sussex\\_Ramblers\\_take\\_on\\_Nicholas\\_Hoogstraten\\_once\\_more/](http://www.theargus.co.uk/news/9973615.Sussex_Ramblers_take_on_Nicholas_Hoogstraten_once_more/)

### The Wealdway

...is a 130 km (81 mi) linear waymarked Long Distance Footpath that runs from Gravesend, Kent on the Thames estuary, to the A259 at Eastbourne, 3 km north of Beachy Head. It crosses the North Downs, Higher and Lower, Kentish and Sussex Weald.

### Blackboys

The name of this East Sussex village is thought to either relate to the soot deposited in the woods of the area by local charcoal burning, or to the colour of the charcoal burners when they emerged from the woods. The majority of the charcoal was likely used by the nearby Buxted Foundry, where it is believed that the first iron cannon in England was made in 1543. The charcoal business lasted until the 1800's when the iron industry moved to the Midlands with their large coal deposits.

### **The Vanguard Way**

...is a 106 Km (66 mi) linear waymarked Long Distance Footpath 'from the suburbs to the sea' (from East Croydon to Newhaven on the south coast), via the North Downs, Ashdown Forest, South Downs National Park and the Cuckmere valley. It was originated by the Vanguards Rambling Club, named so after an occasion when they returned from a walk travelling in the guard's van of a crowded train.

<http://www.vanguardway.org.uk/>

### **Tickerage Mill**

A 97 acres Country estate with a Grade II listed five-bedroom mansion house, cottage, Sussex barn, walled garden, ancient bluebell wood, and mill and pond on the Tickerage Stream, set in Blackboys, East Sussex. Famous for being the last home of actress Vivien Leigh (of *Gone with the Wind*-fame) from 1961-1967, acquired after her divorce from Laurence Olivier. Another famous owner of the property had been artist Richard Wyndham, who purchased the property in the 1920s.

### **Buxted Park**

...is a Grade II-listed elegant Palladian house in East Sussex set in 126 hectares of Ashdown Forest parkland. The site is an old deer park, which consists of large amounts of unimproved grassland, and considerable parts of it have been declared a Site of Special Scientific Interest in 1989, as the acidic grassland east of the River Uck is of a type very scarce in south east England.

Built in 1722 by Sir Thomas Medley, the house has played host to movers and shakers including William Wordsworth, Winston Churchill and Marlon Brando, and is now a country house hotel owned and operated by Hand Picked Hotels: <https://www.handpickedhotels.co.uk/buxtedpark>.

### **Framfield**

It is likely that Framfield came into existence in the 9<sup>th</sup> century. Saxon invaders established many settlements along the Weald: the final *-field* in its name means a clearing in the forest to build such a place. The village is mentioned in the Domesday Book as 'Framelle' and part of the church has Norman stonework. Framfield was involved in the Wealden iron industry, using ironstone from various clay beds, fuelled by charcoal made from trees in the then heavily wooded landscape.

### **Wealden Walks**

Wealden District Council has established the Wealden Walks, using over 240 km of the existing public rights of way network, as a means of viewing and understanding Wealden's natural and historic landscapes. There are 20 Wealden Walks in total varying from 6 to 18 km in length, with at least one passing through every parish.

## WALK DIRECTIONS

Alight from the train in **Uckfield** on the single platform and leave the station in the direction of travel to cross a road carefully.

### Here you have a choice:

**For a shorter start**, uphill to Boothland Woods and into Horsted Green Country Park, *turn left* along the pavement and pick up the directions at the end of this text under **Alternative Starts**.

**For the Main Walk**, *turn right* along the pavement and cross the **River Uck** on a road bridge and *turn left* immediately after the bridge along a narrow path between the **Bridge Cottage Heritage Centre** on the left and a red bricked shopping centre (**Bell Walk House**) on the right. In 75m *turn right* just before a car park and in 20m *turn left* to pass a small red brick building to its left. Walk past a few bus stops and in 60m cross a road at a T-junction and *turn right* along its opposite pavement. In 30m cross a road to the left of a roundabout and *turn left* along the opposite pavement (signposted 'Out Of Town' and 'B2102') past a **Fire Station**. In 140m *turn right* with the tarmac shared cycle-/footpath away from the road and in 40m *turn left* at a staggered 4-way path junction to continue parallel to the main road, but shielded from it by a high earth bank.

In 200m *veer left* at a bend with the shared cycle-/footpath and in 140m *veer left* to stay on the shared path. In 100m cross a driveway to **Meads Medical Centre** and in 40m **[!]** continue in the same direction along a narrow path, ignoring a left turn to the main road. You then cross a brook and *turn left* with the now fenced path, which you follow around right in another 20m. In 110m – at a T-junction with **Batchelor Way** – you *turn left* to the main road and *turn right* along its grassy verge. Cross the road at a convenient point and in 150m *turn left* along the grassy verge at a large roundabout, signposted 'Eastbourne A22, Lewes (A26)'. In 50m, by a footpath signpost pointing backwards, **[!]** *turn right* to cross the road and follow a footpath signpost into a field. Cross the field half-left (235°) and in 110m leave it over a stile to the right of a metal field gate and *turn left* along a field's left-hand boundary trees.

In 150m you go over a stile and continue in the same direction through a wooded strip with a pond on your right (can be dry). In 30m go over a plank bridge and continue along a row of fence posts with the wires missing. In 230m the path turns right and in 70m you ignore wooden field gates left and right and in 40m go over a stile into a wooded area and *turn left*, soon passing the remnants of a buttressed red brick bridge on your right (part of the never finished **Ouse Valley Railway**). In 40m *turn right* with a footpath marker on a gate post on the left and in 30m *turn left* through a couple of fence posts, ignoring the onwards path uphill between trees, to continue along a grassy field boundary with a ditch and hedge on the right. In 220m walk through a wide hedge gap and *turn left* at an unmarked four-way footpath junction along a grassy field boundary. In 60m leave the field through a hedge gap and continue in the same direction along a usually clear path through another arable field (130°).

In 150m you go over a stile in the opposite fence and continue in the same direction through a grassy area and in 60m walk over a two-railed plank bridge across **The Uck**. *Turn right* along a grassy field boundary with a footpath marker and in 80m ignore a track turning right over a concrete bridge back across the river to continue in the same direction along a car wide track between fields. In 100m leave the fields through a boundary growth gap and in 30m cross a track (the long dismantled Uckfield to Lewes section of the **Wealden Line** railway) a little to the right. In 10m you go over a stile and continue uphill towards a wood, which you enter in 90m over a stile. Continue in the same direction through the wood and leave it over a set of stiles 20m apart to



continue in the same direction through a pasture, still uphill, towards the right-hand corner of a small wooded area. In 160m continue along the side of the wood and in 15m walk through a metal field gate and *turn right* along a tarmac lane. You pass a large poultry farm and get views (if and when the hedge is cut to an agreeable height) on the left to **Ridgewood** and **Uckfield**, and to the distant **South Downs** on the right.

In 400m an unmarked public footpath joins from the left through some farm buildings (**College Farm** on the OS map). This is the first of several access points to Wealden's latest Country Park – **Horsted Green Park** (opened in 2019). You could have a pleasant loop through it and re-join the route by the main car park further along this lane (map-led). In 120m you *turn left* with the lane by **Stroodland Barn**. You then walk through **Horsted Green** hamlet and 150m after that ignore a footpath turning right and then pass the car park on the left for the Country Park.

\*) The turreted building seen on the right on a hill between trees is **Horsted Place Hotel**, in a Gothic Revival country house. Eventually you reach a T-junction with the **A26** and *turn left* along its pavement. In 50m [!] *turn right* to cross the road and continue with a bridleway signpost between wooden bollards into a wood along a stony path. The path turns right and left again and in 210m you *turn right* at a three-way footpath signpost (although is a bridleway/footpath crossing on the OS map) across a plank bridge and continue along a right-hand grassy field boundary with the wood now on the right (fine bluebell displays in season). In 220m walk under a large HV line, in 40m pass a two-way footpath signpost and enter a golf course (**East Sussex National Golf Club**). Continue to the right of a green and to the left of a tee and in 50m continue along a tarmac path to the left of a fairway and a large pond.

In 100m you *veer left* off the path (which turns right behind the green), cross a fairway (played from the right) and head to the right of a tree clump (190°). At the trees you cross a tarmac path and continue in the same direction with a footpath signpost along a grassy path to the left of a row of trees. In 50m go through a metal gate to the right of a green metal field gate and continue in the same direction down a tarmac lane, past a school on the right. In 110m *turn left* through a car park, where the lane turns right (this is an unmarked four-way footpath junction) and in 35m go through a metal kissing gate to the left of a metal field gate back into the golf course. Head downhill, initially with trees on the left, to cross a couple of fairways (the first is played from the left, the second from the right) – with a tarmac path and a two-way footpath signpost in between – and in 200m enter a wood through a gap in a wooden fence to continue in the same direction along a dipping gravel path, with fine bluebell and some wild garlic evidence in season.

In 90m exit the wood through a gap in a wooden fence and continue uphill towards the sizeable club house and hotel. The onwards path around the **East Sussex National Hotel** on its right-hand side is marked differently from what the OS map shows: in 90m continue in the same direction along a tarmac path where another path joins from the left, in 25m *fork right* with the path, in 100m continue in the same direction away from the club house. Follow the tarmac path curving left to re-gain the main path along the club house in 260m by a three-way signpost on the left ('Private' to the left) and by **The Halfway House** (refreshments, hot drinks, some seats, far views, welcoming to walkers). *Turn right* along the tarmac path and continue in the same direction through a dip past a footpath signpost and a driving range. In 100m you follow the path round to the right and in another 110m round to the left, in each case with yellow markers on a white pole, soon walking between a green on the right and a tee on the left. In 65m leave the golf course over a stile to the right of a green metal field gate.

Continue along a tarmac lane and in 130m cross a road at a T-junction to continue in the same direction with a signpost through the yard of **Bradford's Farm** along its right-

hand boundary. In 40m walk with a yellow marker along a gap between a high wooden fence and a hedge and in 40m at the end of the fence turn left with a yellow marker. In 10m turn right with another marker along an initially clear track. For 125m follow mown grass paths to a rusty metal field gate with a signpost, and [!] in 30m – where the grassy track bends to the right – you *veer ever so slightly to the left* (120°) along a faint path through the mud-prone grassy slope. In 80m go over a set of stiles either side of an un-railed plank bridge at the bottom of the field across a stream. Continue in the same direction through trees up a bank then along a bumpy grassy track through **Bentley Solar Farm** stretching out to the left and right.

In 165m ignore wooden field gates on both sides and in 130m *turn left* with the hedge on the left. In 80m walk through a gap with a yellow marker (a missing metal field gate) and in 25m continue along an earth path between trees (this can be very muddy for the first 150m or so: you can continue in the field to the left for some distance and then re-join the path further along). There are some fine patches of bluebells along this path in season. In 700m walk through a wooden gate to the right of a metal field gate and continue along a gravel lane to the right of **Crockstead Green Farmhouse**. In 110m *turn left* along the **A22** at a T-junction and in 165m *turn right* down a tarmac lane, signed for various small companies (mostly on the site of the former '**Crockstead Farm Hotel**'). In 210m you continue along the left of two driveways to follow it around a pond to and through a car park and in 100m ascend some steps with a footpath marker.

The next stretch is unmarked and a bit wild: continue in the same direction along a garden fence and then cross a gravel lane to *bear right* through a small car park with first views on a hill half-left ahead of the grotesquely outsized and awkwardly tacky **Hamilton Palace**, owned by **Nicholas van Hoogstraaten**, (in) famous for trying all legal and many illegal means to block the rights-of-way around his **High Cross** estate, including the one you are walking on (see notes for more details). Keep to the right-hand side of the car park (with multi-year building works for new National Grid substations on the left) and in 30m continue a little to the right between two high earth banks. In 50m [!] *veer left* along an indistinct path on the level and cross an rough open area diagonally and downhill to a footbridge over a stream (this is out of sight due to being in trees, but the bridge is 30m to the left of a new concrete drainage outlet into the stream at the bottom of the drop).

In 80m you cross the bridge and in 30m go over a stile into a large pasture and follow its right-hand boundary. In 220m a footpath joins up from a metal gate and footbridge on the right below. [!] *Turn half* left up the slope of the field to a stile to the left of a metal field gate (340°). In 140m you go over the stile and continue in the same direction in the next pasture to another stile in a fence line 110m away. Over the stile continue in the same direction and in 75m enter a wood for 100m and in 130m go through a gap (a missing stile). In 80m go through a wooden kissing gate and *turn right* along a road at a T-junction, opposite **Palehouse Farm**. In 230m *turn left* along a tarmac driveway to **Arches Manor** with a footpath signpost on the left, just before a village sign – on the right – for **Palehouse Common**. In 25m go over an unusual metal stile to the left of a metal car gate and follow the driveway downhill. In 450m continue in the same direction along a grassy path to the left of a tall beech hedge, where the driveway turns right to the manor house (Grade II-listed, 16<sup>th</sup> century, timber-framed) and in 100m cross a stream on an earth bridge. *Turn right* with a yellow marker and in 40m go over a stile into a large pasture.

**Here you have a choice:**

**For the shortcut** via **Framfield** continue uphill along the left-hand field edge and pick up the directions at the end of this text under **Framfield Shortcut**.

**For the main walk** via **Blackboys**, *turn right* along the lower field boundary. In 220m go over a stile in a field corner into a narrow, wooded strip and across a ditch to leave it over another (broken) stile to the right onto a grassy path by a pond, where you *turn left* (i.e.: continue in the previous direction). In 235m walk through a hedge gap and a grassy area to then continue in the same direction at a farm track bend (the track leads up to **Arches Farm**, on the OS map). In 60m *turn left* over a stile in an electric fence – where the farm track veers right to cross a stream – and cross a pasture towards a plank bridge 100m away, 30m to the left of the bottom corner of the field. In the next field continue in the same direction towards its far-right corner and in 230m leave it through a gap to the right of a metal field gate and walk through a grassy area with a tarmac lane to the left. In 35m you reach a three-way signposted path-junction with **The Wealdway**, with a tarmac driveway leading left off the road on the left into the grounds of **Newplace Farm**.

*Turn left* along the driveway and in 20m pass the interesting cascading outflow of some lakes on the right. In 150m you walk through some entrance portals and in 60m *turn right* with the main driveway and a footpath sign on a brick wall on the left and along a high hedge on the right. In 50m continue to the right of some birch trees on a green along a car wide track and in 40m continue in the same direction with a low marker post along a gravel car wide track with an overgrown red brick wall on the right, where the concrete driveway turns left towards some barns. Pass a memorial plaque for the WWI **Blackboys Airfield** on the wall and – when it turns right – you get views of the landscaped gardens and the ornamental lakes down in the valley on the right. The track curves to the left (with **Newplace Wood** about 100m on the right across a dip) and in 40m [!] you continue in the same direction along a less prominent car wide track with another low marker post where the track turns right towards the wood.

In 150m *turn right* at a signposted three-way footpath junction, leaving The Wealdway, and in 40m enter the wood on the track. In 150m you emerge from the wood over a cattle grid and *turn left* along the wood's boundary with a signpost. In 70m (at the corner of the wood) continue along a grassy strip (can be overgrown) between arable fields. In 165m *bear left* across a field corner with a signpost and in 30m continue in the same direction through a boundary hedge gap to follow a right-hand field boundary. In 120m go down some steps in the field corner to then *turn left* up a tarmac lane at a T-junction. In 170m *turn right* along a gravel driveway ('Duckings') (there is a gap to the right of the car gate, should that be closed) and follow this – with the occasional footpath marker post – for 450m where you *turn up left* along the pavement of a road at a T-junction. In 130m you reach the lunch stop **The Blackboys Inn** (for a **picnic spot**: 350m further along the route is a bench on a small green by the B2102).

After lunch, you *turn left* along a minor road (**School Lane**) to the right of a pond through **Blackboys** village. Ignore all ways off (although for a stretch you can walk along a higher tarmac path a little away from the road) and in 350m cross the **B2102** road (with a **bus stop for services to Uckfield** on the left) to continue downhill along **Gun Road**. In 110m – by the village hall – *turn left* with a footpath signpost in the trees on the left and a **Vanguard Way** (VGW) marker on the hall sign's post on the right through a wooden field gate into a car park. *Fork left* and in 30m walk through a gap to the right of a wooden field gate and continue along a car wide track through some allotments. In 100m *turn right* with the VGW at a three-way signpost and in 80m *turn left* at a T-junction with a gravel track. In 40m *turn right* with the VGW between hedges and in 75m continue through a dip along a narrower path with a fence on the left and a valley a little further on the right (with the **Tickerage Stream** at the bottom).

In 200m the path *veers left* through trees as you have the back of **Tickerage Mill** on the right, the last home of **Vivien Leigh** (her ashes were scattered in the millpond, it is alleged). In 80m *turn right* at a signposted junction with a forest track, where a



bridleway joins from the left. In 40m **The Wealdway** joins from the left down through **Tickerage Wood**. In 50m you pass an elaborate welded iron gate on the right, belonging to Tickerage Mill, and continue along a driveway, in 25m cross the millpond outflow (the **Tickerage Stream**) and in 60m *turn left* over a stile with **The Wealdway**, leaving the **Vanguard Way**, which continues uphill through a wooden field gate.

You now follow the **Tickerage Stream** valley for 1.2 km. **In more detail:** walk along the lower field boundary with an interesting large tiled building on the right on the hilltop. In 120m leave the field through a wooden gate, cross a ditch over a plank bridge and continue along a fenced-in path with a hedge and a ditch on the right. In 210m continue in the same direction where the wooded fence on the left bends left, also ignoring a metal gate on the right. You soon pass **Tickerage Castle** (a 17<sup>th</sup> century Grade II-listed house that has never been a castle) up on your right and then stay to the right of a pond with an islet in it. Eventually leave the meadow over a stile and cross **Pound Lane** (on the OS map) to continue over a stile to the left of a wooden field gate and then along another grassy field boundary. In 220m you walk through a wooden gate and continue in the same direction along a fenced-in grassy strip. In 270m you walk through a wooden gate with the interesting thatched **Mill Farm** conversion on the right and cross a tarmac lane a little to the right.

Go over a stile to the left of a metal field gate and walk along a fenced-in grassy path. In 150m walk through a metal gate and in 30m *turn left* at an unmarked four-way footpath junction to cross the stream on a two-railed plank bridge with metal gates on either end and *turn right* on the other side to continue along a right-hand meadow boundary, with the stream now on your right. **Gatehouse Green Farm** is over your shoulder on the left and a lovely hanging wood stretches away on the left into the near distance. In 200m you go over a stile and continue in the same direction. In 220m there is a diversionary route along the stream bank on the right through some trees, in case this meadow is flooded and in 80m a footpath joins from the left across the meadow out of the hanging wood by a three-way signpost. This is the Shortcut.

**\*\*)** Continue in the same direction with the bank on your right and the **Tickerage Stream** behind it. In 60m a gap in the trees on the right gives an opportunity to circumvent an often flooded area by walking on the bank. In 60m go over a set of stiles either side of a plank bridge with **Wealden Walks** markers and continue along the Tickerage Stream on the right-hand side of a pasture, with some fine patches of wild garlic on the opposite bank in season. In 140m you go over a stile onto a tarmac lane and *turn up left* along it. In 550m at the top of the rise – and with first views of **Buxted Park Hotel** on the right and with **Highlands Wood** on the left – you pass a car park on the left (Isfield & District Angling Club) and then an extra-wide double metal field gate on the right. In 40m **[!]** *turn right* with a footpath signpost along a narrow path into a narrow strip of trees with **Wealdway** and **Wealden Walks** markers (310°).

In 70m *veer right* further through the trees where a now disused footpath used to turn left and in 40m continue along a car wide farm track with a barbed wire fence on the right (and with some fine bluebell displays on the left in season) and in 275m *veer left* away from the right-turning track to go over a stile in a fence in 25m. Descend some very steep steps into the **Hempstead Cutting** to then cross the **single-track Uckfield line** and re-ascend on the other side. Continue in the same direction in a large pasture (with views on the left to the northerly parts of Uckfield, with the South Downs in the distance) along a new wire fence and some very young trees on the left, in 120m *bear to the left* with the fence and in 100m go through a metal field gate at a track junction. In 20m walk through a high metal kissing gate in a deer fence to enter **Buxted Park**.

Follow a meandering path through bracken, then in 60m go to the right of an electricity pole and continue through grass, and in 150m cross a two-railed wooden plank bridge

across a **tributary of the River Uck** (fed – amongst others – by the **Tickerage Stream** that you followed earlier). Continue in the same direction through a pasture and in 125m *turn left* at a three-way signpost with a **Wealden Walks** marker. In 35m you cross **The Uck** on a car wide two-railed bridge and continue with fishing ponds on both sides, now with better views of **Buxted Park Hotel** on the hill ahead. In 50m you cross a bridge and reach a T-junction of paths.

**Here you have a choice:**

**For the direct route to Buxted Station** *turn right* past yet more fishing ponds, in 440m pass a rather **large black brick pillbox** and in 80m the recommended route joins from the left at a three-way signpost. Pick up the directions at the last paragraph.

**For the recommended route up to and around the hotel and a 13<sup>th</sup> century church**, *turn left* with some more fishing ponds on the left (initially along an engineered gravel path) and in 100m with a walled garden on the right. In 100m leave **Buxted Park** through a high metal kissing gate to the left of a metal field gate and *turn up right* at a path-junction. In 40m walk past a redundant wooden kissing gate with Wealden Walks and Wealdway markers and continue uphill in an open grassy area along a wire fence on the right. In 110m you continue in the same direction at the fence corner on the right (with a Wealdway signpost) and in 60m enter trees. In 30m you walk through a wooden gate and start descending through the wood. In 40m – at the bottom of the drop – *turn right [!]* just before an elaborate, bending two-railed plank bridge over a stream and some boggy ground and walk up along a wire fence on your left and with carpets of bluebells in season on either side. In 90m you leave the wood through a wooden gate and continue in the same direction across an open grassy area. In 120m you continue between fences and young trees (with a partial side view of **Buxted Park Hotel** on the right) and in 150m you continue in the same direction along a tarmac lane past the hotel (ignore a left forking earthen path).

In 300m *turn right* through a wooden gate into the churchyard of **St. Margaret the Queen, Buxted** (13<sup>th</sup> century, Grade I-listed, but often shut). Follow a tarmac path to the right of the church and past a very old Yew tree ('pre-dating the birth of Christ', as a plaque on the other side used to proudly announce) and leave the churchyard through a wooden gate in the stone wall into an open grassy area. You continue in the same direction with remnants of a wire fence line on your right, downhill into the **Uck Valley** – again with a side view of the hotel – through **Buxted Park** (Buxted village can be seen straight ahead on the other side of the valley). Ignore all ways off, in 500m *turn left* just before a **large black brick pillbox** and in 80m *turn right* through a gap in the trees on the right to then *turn left* at an unmarked three-way footpath junction (the direct route joins from the right). In 50m leave the park through a high metal kissing gate and *veer right* along a garden fence to the right of a tree. In 20m cross the **A272** carefully and *turn right* along its opposite tarmac pavement into **Buxted**. In 200m cross **The Uck** for a last time on a road bridge and ascend into the village, immediately passing **The White Hart** Country Dining & Free House. In 240m walk underneath the railway bridge and in 50m *turn left* to **Buxted Station** and its single platform. A further tea option is situated 55m further along the A road: **The Buxted Inn**.

## Alternative Starts (cut 1.6 km)

You pass **The Station** pub and a bus stop and commence the ascent out of the **Uck Valley**. In 100m, at a four-way junction with a set of lights, continue uphill. In 180m, near the top of the rise and with a church visible to the right ahead, a residential road turns steeply up to the right, signed **Victoria Pleasure Ground**.

**Here you have a choice:**

**For the variant through the pleasure ground and a longer loop through Boothland Wood along permissive paths**, *turn right* steeply up the side road. Ignore a left turning road and a tarmac path to the right, and in 120m you emerge in an L-shaped car park on the corner of the **Victoria Pleasure Ground**, 'the home of sports in Uckfield'. *Turn left* towards the sports centre but pick up a concrete footpath starting on the right amongst the parked cars that leads down and to the right of it, then continue across the grass to the left of some sports fields. You have fine views of the **South Downs** away to the right. In 100m you pass a beacon on the right and continue along a tarmac path emerging from the yard of the sports centre. In 75m *turn left* with the path across a stream (ignore a gap into a field on the right) and *turn right* downhill with the path along the stream on the right, with a skate park on the left.

In 70m enter a lightly wooded strip and in another 30m **Boothland Wood** proper. There are an info panel and a map of the permissive paths through the wood 40m away to the left, but you continue in the same direction close to the right-hand fringe of the wood, crossing a few streams and streamlets along the way, using a few boardwalk sections and passing a couple of benches. In 340m – near the far end of the wood – curve to the left with the path. In 50m another path joins from the left along the left-hand edge of the wood and you leave through a gap in the boundary growth onto a concrete path and *turn left* along it, uphill. In 120m, by a wide hedge gap on the left with an arable field beyond and with a three-way footpath signpost hidden in the corner of the hedge on the right, you *turn right* through the hedge gap past the signpost and along a left-hand field boundary and pick up the directions below at the asterisk \*).

**For the route further along the road and then along public footpaths**, continue uphill past the church and in 230m *fork right* along a rising tarmac path and in 20m *turn right* with a metal public footpath sign with the tarmac path into a residential area. In 25m *turn left* along a residential road and in 100m *turn right* at a T-junction. In 40m *turn right* along a tarmac path between garden hedges with a metal footpath signpost to in 30m *turn left* in some sports fields with another signpost. In 90m follow a signpost in to the right along the edge of **Boothland Wood** and in 40m *turn left* into the wood with a signpost by an info panel and a map of some permissive paths across a stream and through the wood. In 50m *bear right* with a two-way wooden signpost along a wide track inside the wood and in 60m *turn left* along one of several paths to a nearby corner of the wood and leave it in 25m through a fence gap (a missing gate) with a yellow marker, into an arable field. Follow the right-hand field boundary and in 120m, at the corner of the wood, *bear right* (235°) across the field through a shallow dip to a gap in the opposite boundary growth (difficult to spot initially). In 130m leave the field through the gap and cross a concrete path a little to the left to go through a gap into another field. There is a three-way footpath signpost in the hedge, potentially overgrown.

\*) [The route now follows a **temporary footpath diversion** through the construction site of a housing estate.] You have fine views of the **South Downs** away to the right and in 40m *turn left* through a hedge gap and continue along a wire fence on the right. The noisy **A22** is visible in the valley to the right. In 40m you cross a track on the path and in 25m continue ahead gently downhill, where the fence turns to the right. In 220m you are level with a subway under the A road away to the right; this will be your means

of crossing the road. In 130m you have a fenced area of new tree plantings to the right and *turn hard right* with the fence and in 20m *turn right* again to walk back on yourself towards the subway, with the **Ridgewood Stream** on the left. In 150m *turn left* over a bridge across the stream and through the subway, where a gravel path joins from ahead. The path runs along a raised boardwalk, as the subway is also a flood channel.

On the far side, you curve to the left uphill with the boardwalk and in 70m cross a gravel path by a map of the **Horsted Green Country Park** and continue uphill along another gravel path with yellow and blue arrows on a post. The meadows on both sides are seeded with wildflowers. In 50m ignore a right turn leading to an **amphitheatre** and in 130m *turn left* along a circular path around the sunken **Place View Pond**. In 50m cross a path and in another 15m *turn hard left* along another gravel path, leaving the circular path. The path curves to the right and to the left and in 250m you *turn right* through a kissing gate into a car park. Go through it to a road 50m away and *turn left* along it. Pick up the directions in the main text above at the asterisk \*).

### **Framfield Shortcut (cut 3.5 km/2.2 mi and 24 m ascent/descent)**

In 140m you cross a car wide concrete track with electric fencing on either side (there is a plastic handle for an easier crossing about 80m to the right) and in 120m step over another electric fence (there is a stile for a different footpath 80m to the right). In 140m go through a squeeze stile 20m to the right of the top-left field corner and *turn left* on a car wide track. In 100m **[!]** *turn right* through a metal gate with a footpath marker into **Little Arches Wood** (lots of bluebells in season) and follow a clear mud-prone path downhill, for a short bit on a boardwalk. In 150m cross a stream over a railed plank bridge and ascend on the other side along an often muddy path. In 220m you go over a (currently missing) stile and continue through trees. In another 220m walk through a metal kissing gate into a churchyard. *Veer left* and in 70m – by **The Vicarage** on the left – *turn right* to pass **St. Thomas à Becket, Framfield** and in 60m leave the churchyard through a gap to the left of the lychgate. Continue along a minor road with some pretty timber-framed cottages on the left and in 30m you reach a four-way junction of roads in the centre of **Framfield**, with **The Hare & Hounds** opposite.

*Turn right* along the pavement of **The Street** and in 110m you pass a bus stop for services to Etchingham or Heathfield on the left and in 30m the **bus stop for services to Uckfield** on the right. In 80m *turn left* with a footpath signpost through a small car park and walk through a gap beside a wooden field gate to continue along a driveway to the left of some sports fields. In 100m go over a stile into a large pasture and *turn right* through it, staying to the right of a long and narrow fenced wooded area protruding into the field (10°). In 230m in the corner of this part of the field walk through a gap on the left into the still larger part of the field and continue in the same direction towards a large house. In 150m go over a stile in a fence and in 90m over another stile to the left of a metal field gate and *turn left* along **Sandy Lane**.

In 80m *turn right* off the lane at a small triangular green along a gravel driveway with a footpath signpost. In 35m walk through a gap to the side of a metal field gate and continue along a car wide gravel track. In 80m go through a usually open metal field gate (with a broken stile on the left) and *veer left* in a steeply descending grass field (30°). In 100m you have a fence on the left and in 115m enter a wood over a stile (bluebells and wild garlic in season). After 150 steep metres go over a plank bridge into a scenic meadow in the valley of the **Tickerage Stream** and continue in the same direction towards a three-way wooden signpost 60m away at a T-junction with **The Wealdway**. The path from the right is the Main Walk. *Turn left* and pick up the directions in the Main Walk at the double asterisk \*\*).