



## Ben Clifford

Ben Clifford, was almost stranded in Melbourne at the beginning of lockdown. He returned home to Croydon on almost the last flight leaving Australia. With time on his hands, he began mapping and walking the parish boundaries of this large outer London borough. Several weeks later, having walked hundreds of miles, Ben has traced out 8 interconnected walks and called his project "Beating the Bounds". Having walked the boundary of the London borough of Greenwich, Andrew Stuck was interested to find out what Ben had discovered. They meet on Conduit Lane, close to the start of the Vanguard Way, a long distance trail from Croydon to the south coast. 25'10" 11.8 MB

Notes from the podcast interview by **Andrew Stuck**: Recorded in June 2021 on walk along the Vanguard Way in Croydon, London and published in August 2021. <http://www.talkingwalking.net>

Beating the Bounds in Croydon - article by Ben Clifford that appeared on Inside Croydon: <https://insidecroydon.com/2021/04/25/eight-walks-to-encompass-croydons-boundaries-and-history/>  
Beating the Bounds, the 1180 Act and Tythe maps [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beating\\_the\\_bounds](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beating_the_bounds)

Ben is lecturer and researcher at University College London <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/bartlett/planning/dr-ben-clifford> and began a sabbatical at the University of Melbourne. Born and bred in Croydon, a London borough since 1965 with a boundary extending to over 45 miles. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Royal\\_Commission\\_on\\_Local\\_Government\\_in\\_Greater\\_London](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Royal_Commission_on_Local_Government_in_Greater_London)

After a walk in Selsdon Wood <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/features/selsdon-wood> during lockdown, Ben began mapping and walking the parish boundaries of the London Borough of Croydon

Vision of Britain is a website with details of historic parish boundaries (and a lot more) <https://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/>

1965 saw the formation of the Greater London Council [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greater\\_London\\_Council](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greater_London_Council) : Croydon then a county borough [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/County\\_Borough\\_of\\_Croydon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/County_Borough_of_Croydon) merged with Coulsdon and Purley Urban District [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coulsdon\\_and\\_Purley\\_Urban\\_District](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coulsdon_and_Purley_Urban_District)

Vicar's Oak at Crystal Palace <http://www.crystalpalaceparktrust.org/news/the-vicars-oak-where-four-boundaries-meet/> where the parishes of Camberwell, Croydon, Lambeth and Penge meet - Penge itself is a detached part of the former borough of Battersea [https://london.wikia.org/wiki/Penge\\_Urban\\_District](https://london.wikia.org/wiki/Penge_Urban_District) . This spot now marks the boundaries of the modern boroughs of Bromley, Croydon, Lambeth and Southwark.

The 'best bits' of his network is the borough's southern boundary with the county of Surrey, where the north Downs begins, including Coulsdon Common <https://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/things-to-do/green-spaces/coulsdon-common/visit-coulsdon-common> , Riddlesdown <https://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/things-to-do/green-spaces/riddlesdown/visit-riddlesdown> and Selsdon Woods. The western boundary, with the borough of Sutton [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/London\\_Borough\\_of\\_Sutton](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/London_Borough_of_Sutton) passes through dull industrial estates close to Purley Way [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Purley\\_Way](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Purley_Way) .

We reach Littleheath Woods <http://www.folw.co.uk/the-woods.php> , where the chalk of the North Downs appears beneath our feet.



The City of London Corporation are the owners of open spaces on Coulsdon Common, Riddlesdown and Kenley <https://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/things-to-do/green-spaces/kenley-common> , preserving the Metropolitan Green Belt [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metropolitan\\_Green\\_Belt](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metropolitan_Green_Belt)

In his research, Ben used Digi maps <https://digimap.edina.ac.uk/> and Ordnance Survey <https://osmaps.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/>

New Addington [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New\\_Addington](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Addington)

Ben has been walking the London LOOP <https://tfl.gov.uk/modes/walking/loop-walk> and intends to walk the South Downs Way [https://www.nationaltrail.co.uk/en\\_GB/trails/south-downs-way/](https://www.nationaltrail.co.uk/en_GB/trails/south-downs-way/) and the Thames Path [https://www.nationaltrail.co.uk/en\\_GB/trails/thames-path/](https://www.nationaltrail.co.uk/en_GB/trails/thames-path/), and he plans to devise walking route that link up the 170 historic listed buildings in the London borough of Croydon <https://britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/england/croydon>

**Ben recommends:**

1. The Vanguard Way to the Sussex coast via the Ashdown Forest <http://www.vanguardway.org.uk/>
2. Walk the boundaries of your neighbourhood