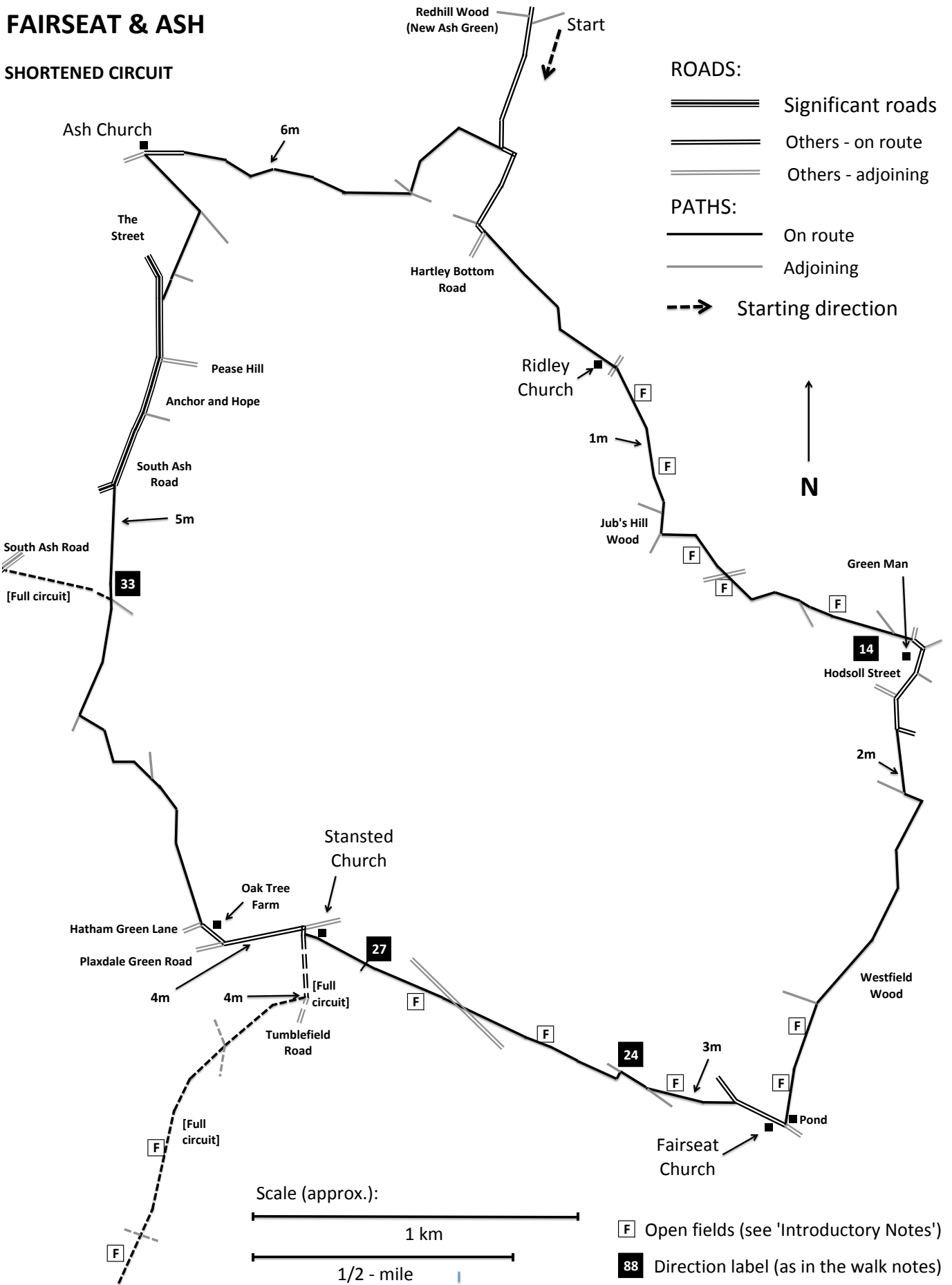


FAIRSEAT & ASH

SHORTENED CIRCUIT



FAIRSEAT & ASH CIRCUIT

Churches in the shortened circuit

Ridley (Direction 5)

Fairseat (21)

Stansted (28)

Ash (37)

Associated local circuits

- FA1: Ash - Ridley - Stansted - Ash
- FA2: Ash - Stansted - Kingsdown - Ash
- FA3: Kingsdown - Fairseat - Stansted - Kingsdown
- FA4: Stansted - Fairseat - Vigo - Stansted

Shortened circuit: On the short side. Nothing dramatic, but pleasant throughout.

Roads and hindrances:

There is a quarter-mile stretch of road in Stansted, neither busy nor unduly troublesome.

The 7-minute stretch of road near the end (34-35) is borderline acceptable, I think. Here there will at most times be the tedious necessity to take account of oncoming traffic, and having to think about this will not allow much energy for enjoyment. At least it is reasonably safe, in that there is plenty of scope to stop and snuggle up to the right-hand hedge. The trouble is, you may need to do this rather more often than you would like.

SHORTENED CIRCUIT

(Hartley Bottom -) Ridley - Fairseat - Stansted - Ash (- Hartley Bottom)

Not quite a genuine circle! The short stretch at Direction 1 (retraced at 38) is a spur to and from the circle, serving as the link between spine sections (picking up from the spine section on the Longfield & Hartley circuit).

Notes taken: Mainly October 2011 with additions March-May 2012. Revised November 2014.

The start and finish is on Hartley Bottom Road, by the path from Redhill Wood (New Ash Green, near DA3 8QP).

	Mins.*		OS	Miles
1		START OF THE SPINE SECTION With the Redhill Wood path on your right, go ahead (southwards) along the road.	614 650	
2	9	Turn left up a footpath.	612 643	
3	10	Go over a stile and carry on up the left-hand side of a field.		

* *"Mins." is very approximate! See 'Introductory Notes' for an explanation of how this column is used.*

	Mins.*		OS	Miles
4	12	You reach a big, awkwardly fastened gate. Go through it into trees, and on along a path more or less parallel to the left-hand edge of the wood; then into the open as Ridley Church comes into view.	614 642	
5	18	Pass the church on your right, go ahead to a road and go over the stile opposite.		0.84
6		!!F!! Go across the field from the signpost. The line might not be very clear: it is more or less straight across as signposted, passing about 50 yds. to the right of the nearest telegraph pole.		
7	22	The path goes a little to the right when it reaches a fence at the field edge; !!F!! then slightly left towards a MKG visible across the field at the start of trees.		
8	25	Go through the MKG and up into the wood.	618 635	
9	27	Turn left at the top of a fairly steep climb. (There is a blue waymark.)	618 634	
10	29	!!F!! At the next gate turn about 60 degrees right across the field to a gate in the middle distance.		
11	31	!!F!! Go through that gate and turn slightly further right to go through two little gates either side of a concrete farm road. After the second of these go slightly further left towards a MKG in the left-hand corner of the field.		
12	33	Go half-left through this MKG and another immediately next to it, then go down along the right-hand edge of the field (ignoring the stile which appears before long in the fence on your right).	620 632	
13	36	!!F!! Cross the stile at the bottom right-hand corner of the field, and follow the line shown by the waymark (a little away from the right-hand field edge) towards two large trees in the middle distance.		
14	39	[Map point] Next to the right-hand of those trees, go through the wooden gate and slightly rightwards along a track which immediately becomes a metalled roadway. END OF THE SPINE SECTION		
15	41	Turn right at the angled T-junction, and continue along this road as it passes the Green Man and then goes once again a little to the right.		
16	43	At the next angled T-junction merge left into a slightly wider road.		
17	44	As the road swings left, turn right instead along the signposted byway.	625 628	
18	47	After ignoring big gates to right and left, go through the one straight ahead (in front of buildings) and turn left straight away. Keep left, go straight ahead through a gate, then immediately right over a stile. Walk ahead along the left-hand side of a field, with a hedge and trees to your left.	625 626	2.04
19	55	At the end of this stretch go straight on into trees.		

* "*Mins.*" is *very approximate!* See 'Introductory Notes' for an explanation of how this column is used.

!!F!! : *Field crossing might be unmarked.* See 'Open Fields' in 'Introductory Notes' for some thoughts about dealing with this.

	Mins.*		OS	Miles
20	57	Look out for a MKG slightly to your left at the edge of an open field. [!!F!!] Go through it and slightly left across the field towards a small gap in the line of trees ahead; then beyond it on the same line towards a MKG; then slightly left towards a gate.		
21	64	Go through the MKG to the right of the gate, and on to the road at Fairseat, next to a pond. Turn right along the road and pass Fairseat Church on your left.	622 615	
22	67	As the road swings right, look for a concealed stile on your left (just before 'The Dairy Farm' opposite). [!!F!!] Go over the stile, and slightly right across the field towards and over another stile. Enjoy the view to the right.		2.94
23	70	The path goes a little to the right when it reaches a fence at the field edge.		
24	72	[Map point] Turn off to the left over a stile. This turning is very well hidden, and looks very unpromising, but after a few seconds opens out at a MKG. Here turn to the right and see the whole of the next stage of the walk as far as Stansted Church. [!!F!!] Now maintain, more or less, a straight line all the way to Stansted: start by moving down and gradually away from the right-hand field-edge, aiming to the left of the farm buildings in the middle distance.	616 617	
25	77	Go through a well-concealed gate in the hedge (currently next to a large metal container which looks like a permanent feature), [!!F!!] and carry on without changing the line. <i>However, although the right of way follows this straight line the track all the way to Stansted can raise ploughed-field issues and is not always easy to negotiate. If you choose to compromise by going along the right-hand field edges there seems little harm you can do to the margins; but first identify the gate at Direction 27 as your eventual target.</i>		
26	80	Cross (and ignore) the broad track which leads to the farm to the right.		
27	84	[Map point] Go ahead over a stile next to a gate - the point you need to reach whatever steps you have taken to deal with ploughed fields - and then along the left-hand (top) field-edge.	608 620	
28	86	Go through a MKG into the churchyard of Stansted Church . Still keep along the left-hand edge.		
29	87	Go out through the gate and turn right down the road and immediately left at the T-junction along Plaxdale Green Road. Follow this down the hill, and most of the way up the other side.	606 621	3.87
30	91	A little before the top turn right on to Hatham Green Lane.		
31	92	As the road swings to the left, after the entrance to Hatham Green Cottage, go instead along the footpath more or less straight ahead (MR200), past the front of Oak Tree Farm. It goes along through trees, then down and somewhat to the left.		

* **"Mins."** is **very approximate!** See 'Introductory Notes' for an explanation of how this column is used.

[!!F!!] : Field crossing might be unmarked. See 'Open Fields' in 'Introductory Notes' for some thoughts about dealing with this.

	Mins.*		OS	Miles
32	104	After following this winding path through the trees, downwards to the left, then upwards to the right, turn right at a T-junction of paths (just after a clearing in the trees).		
33	109	[Map point] Go ahead, ignoring signposted and waymarked alternatives to left and right.	600 632	4.89
34	113	Emerge on to the road again, and turn right.		
35	120	(After passing the Anchor and Hope and crossing Pease Hill) look for a MKG on the right just after the '30' speed-limit sign. Go through the MKG, then swing left alongside the hedge: at first the road runs parallel beyond it. Later at a junction of tracks turn left through a MKG, and go along the right-hand edge of the field to another MKG.		
36	125	Continue along the right-hand edge of the cricket field.		
37	127	Go over a lift-and-drop stile. Ash Church is ahead of you. Turn right along the metalled road. Go along this, and onward as it becomes a track. Keep to the main path as it goes downhill through trees after a while, swinging first right, then left.	601 645	5.76
38	142	After a final swing down to the right the path reaches Hartley Bottom Road, completing the circle of the walk. To return to the starting point turn left along the road.	612 646	6.52
39	147	You reach the starting point, by the path from Redhill Wood.	614 650	6.78

* *"Mins." is very approximate! See 'Introductory Notes' for an explanation of how this column is used.*

FOR THOSE WHO WALK WITH THEIR DOGS

I do not venture to give advice about walking with your dog. As well as the joys, you will be well aware of the issues involved, and particularly that relationships between dogs and other countryside animals potentially involve mutual suspicion, or worse.

But what this footnote does try to do, in response to requests, is to give some indication of the nature of the walk from a dog's point of view, to enable you to decide whether it is suitable.

The percentage distances on the right should be self-explanatory.

The information in the middle column may look a bit cluttered, but I think it should enable you (if the detail is of interest) to mark up within a few minutes a print-out of the walk notes, so that you have some idea what might be round the next corner.

The risk in all this is that **things change so quickly** in the agricultural working world; and what I describe might become misleading after subsequent changes. I have done my best, but there is no guarantee that you will find the information up to date!

FAIRSEAT & ASH - SHORTENED CIRCUIT	Direction numbers	% of walk
Busy road	34	6
Quiet road \$\$	1, 14-16, 21, 29-30, 38	20
Open field with livestock	10-11, 13, 20, 22a, 24	12
Edge of field with livestock	3, 27, 35b,	4
Field (or edge) without livestock **	6-7, 12, 18, 22b-23, 25-26, 35a, 36	23
Path (hedged, or otherwise forced)	2, 4b-5, 9, 17, 28, 31-33, 37	31
Woods	4a, 8, 19,	4

** This is not a promise, just a statement of fact - that, having walked these sections perhaps two or three times, I have found no animals or any sign of them.

\$\$ Again, not a promise that there will be no traffic to worry about. Just a personal judgement of conditions as I have found them.

STILES (8) - Details noted in April 2015, but **subject to frequent change:**

The stile in Direction **3** has easy gaps. The one in **5** may prove virtually impossible: it is a double stile, quite narrow, wired down to the ground, with three climbs each of about 1 ft. (If this stile proves impossible, a slightly longer alternative would be to turn right, down along the road, and then after about 4 minutes turn sharp left along a wide track. Follow the main path down and along through various windings, then after 7 or 8 minutes join the main route (just after Direction 8) by turning right, uphill.)

The stile in **13** has easy gaps.

The one in **18** is also wired down: a double stile with climbs of 1 ft., 1 ft. and 2 ft.

The two in **22** will be tricky. They are both double stiles, wired down to the ground and quite high: the first is about 4ft. high in all, with highest climb about 1.5 ft.; the second a little taller with highest climb about 2 ft. **24** (wired down) is about 3 ft. high with two climbs of about 1.5 ft. each. In **27** the climbs are about 1.5 and 2 ft.: it too is wired down, but there is a gap of about 6 ins. underneath the adjacent gate.