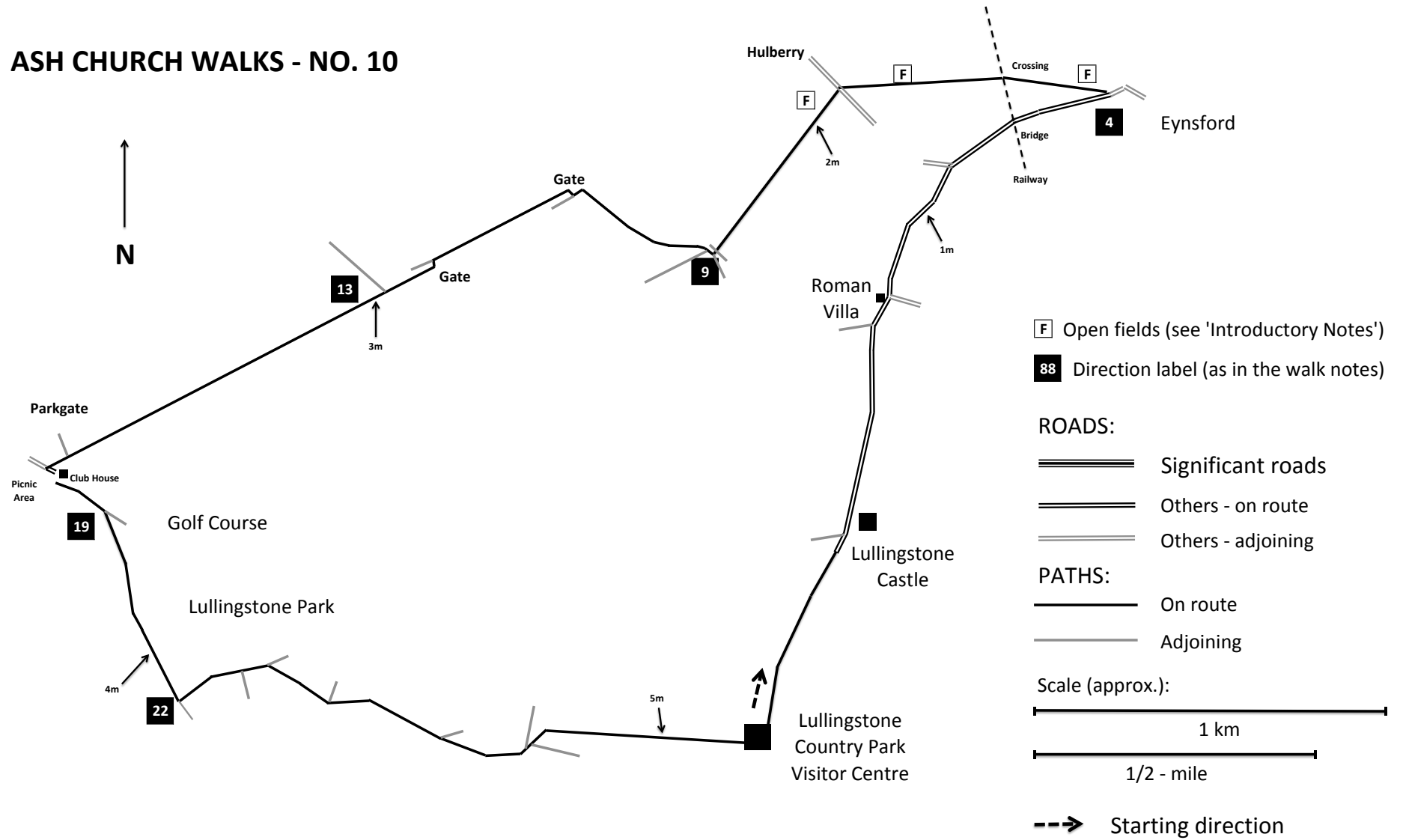


ASH CHURCH WALKS - NO. 10



ASH CHURCH WALKS - No.10 (3 May 2015) **(Lullingstone - Eynsford - Hulberry - Parkgate - Lullingstone)**

Riverside walking at the start; then under the imposing railway bridge, before a gentle climb rewarded by fine views of the Darent valley. The return through Lullingstone Park begins with a picnic area, shares space with the golf course, goes up and down through woods, and ends with a splendid descent back to the Visitor Centre.

Roads and hindrances:

The road section near the start (Directions 2-3) is very quiet.

There is a railway crossing, protected by stiles (Direction 5): nothing more than ordinary common sense, and an appreciation of the speed of trains, required

Notes taken: April and May 2015

The start and finish is at **Lullingstone Country Park Visitor Centre** (DA4 0JF). N.B. This is not Lullingstone Castle or Lullingstone Roman Villa, though the walk passes them both.

[The walk could also be started from **Eynsford**, by crossing the bridge by the ford, following the road upwards (beyond the junction with Sparepenny Lane on the right) and joining the circuit at Direction 4 below, forking up to the right (Darent Valley Path) just after a significant left-swing in the road. The distance from the ford to this point is 0.25 miles (about 6 mins.)]

	Mins.*		OS	Miles
1		To leave the Visitor Centre car park, look out for the sign 'Riverside path and castle' along from the building, at the far end from the car entrance. Follow this; then cut down leftwards across rough ground to the clearly visible river, and turn left along its bank.	527 639	
2	7	Go straight ahead on to a metalled lane, then soon pass Lullingstone Castle on the right.		
3	16	At the roundabout opposite Lullingstone Roman Villa, continue ahead along the quiet road, and follow it alongside the winding river. The road takes you gently to the right and under the railway bridge (and would lead to Eynsford if you were to continue along it instead of following Direction 4).		0.83
4	27	[!!F!!] Just after the '30' speed limit sign and a slight left turn in the road (but before its more significant swing to the right), turn sharp left, uphill, along the footpath (Darent Valley Path).	537 657	1.42
5	31	[!!F!!] Cross the railway and the stiles which guard it, and continue walking upwards between the fields..		
6	36	[!!F!!] Continue upwards in the same direction through a gap in the hedge.		
7	37	[!!F!!] Cross the road and go ahead along the path opposite.		1.92

* **"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
8	41	Go ahead alongside the hedge which has now appeared on the right.		
9	44	Go through the row of trees (abandoning the Darent Valley Path), and beyond immediately turn right alongside them, uphill. <i>(Not strictly correct this side of the trees for a minute or two, but harmless and uncontroversial, I think; and a better view!)</i>		
10	46	Do not swing left with main path, but keep straight ahead, upwards, alongside the trees on the right. <i>(Legitimate again, now!)</i>		
11	51	Turn left at the corner of the field. Then after about 30 yds. turn right through a gap in the trees, then left to go alongside them on your left. The gap is through a gate, but currently the fence to the side of it has collapsed, offering a way through hindered only by a bit of a trip hazard.	522 654	2.54
12	56	Go through another gate on the left, to continue in much the same direction within a corridor of trees.		
13	58	Ignore the footpath joining from the right and continue ahead, now along the right-hand edge of a big field, with trees on your right.		
14	64	Continue along the track, towards the buildings ahead.		
15	66	Pass the buildings and continue ahead.		
16	70	Ignore the footpath joining through railings from the right.		
17	71	Go through a kissing gate next to a larger gate, and turn left along the entrance roadway into Lullingstone Park and the golf course. The facilities in the clubhouse, down to the left, include toilets, as advertised, if you are prepared to seek them out assertively. But the walk instead goes a little to the right across the car park, towards a display board, beyond which begins a broad path down into the golf course. To the right of this path is a large picnic area (though with a notice discouraging dogs).		
18	73	Start down this path.	507 646	3.64
19	75	At the first (only faintly legible) signpost turn to the right off the main path, and aim to the right of the green which now faces you. After a gentle anti-clockwise arc to keep off the green itself, go into the trees ahead, through the clearly visible gap.	508 645	
20	78	The track leads down out of the trees and across a fairway. Look out for drives from the tee to the right.		
21	79	At the gap immediately opposite at the bottom, go back into more trees and start uphill along a winding woodland track. (This is now the route waymarked with black arrows – black on white, not white on black! Where these waymarks exist you can rely on them though at times they are missing where you might expect them.)		

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

	Mins.*		OS	Miles
22	83	Turn left at the cross-paths at the top, at another barely legible signpost.		4.07
23	86	Keep to the right, ignoring the left-fork.	512 641	
24	90	At the bottom of a fairly steep descent, ignore the blue waymark pointing to the left and instead go slightly to the right, uphill. Continue along the main track, as straight as its windings allow.		
25	97	In particular avoid a narrow path leading steeply down to the right, but carry on to come out into the open at the top of a splendid grassy expanse. Despite a waymark pointing into the group of trees which are ahead and down to the right, keep to the left of them, and follow, rightwards, around their edge.	520 638	
26	99	As you swing to the right around the trees the Visitor Centre comes into view. Go straight down towards it, but be aware that the field is a little more uneven underfoot than it looks.		
27	108	Arrive back at the Visitor Centre.	527 639	5.16

* *"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 (on the next page) 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!

ASH CHURCH WALKS - No.10	Direction numbers	% of walk
Busy road		0
Quiet road \$\$	2-3, 17	21
Open field with livestock		0
Edge of field with livestock		0
Field (or edge) without livestock **	4-11, 13, 26	39
Path (hedged, or otherwise forced)	1, 12, 14-16, 18-19a, 20	22
Woods	19b, 21-25	18

** 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 (3) - Details noted in May 2015, but **subject to frequent change**:

The only stiles are those guarding the level crossing (Direction 5), all with easy gaps.