

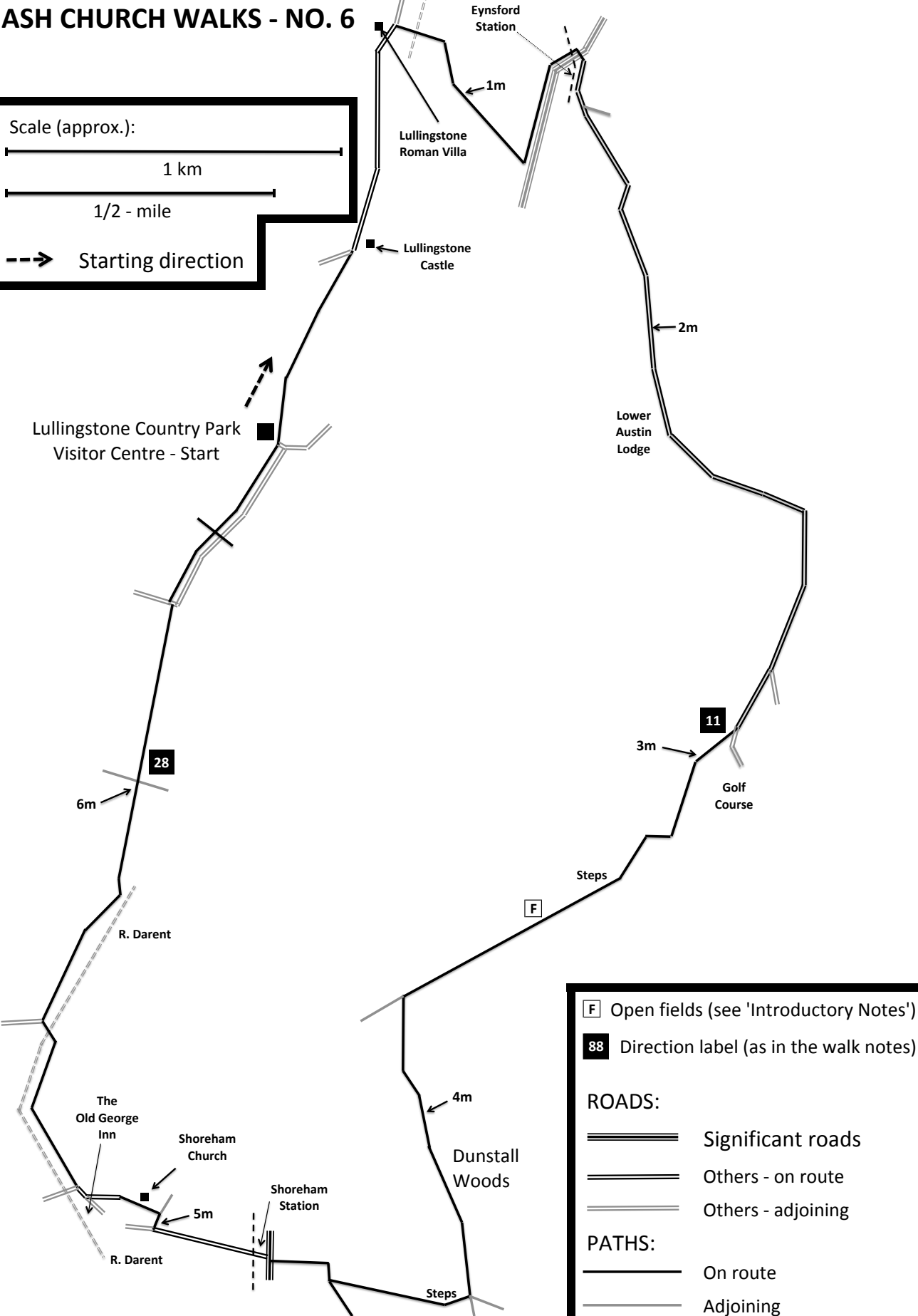
# ASH CHURCH WALKS - NO. 6

Scale (approx.):

1 km

1/2 - mile

Starting direction



## **ASH CHURCH WALKS - No.6 (6 July 2014)**

### **(Lullingstone - Eynsford - Upper Austin Lodge - Shoreham - Lullingstone)**

Riverside walking at start and finish (Darent Valley Path). The walk then varies between open country in the valleys (complete with golf course, briefly) and woods in between. One significant but brief climb through trees (up about 50 metres) and a corresponding descent. Refreshment available near the end (pubs in Shoreham). Rather tarmac-heavy, but not unpleasantly so.

#### **Roads and hindrances:**

The A225 features briefly and needs to be crossed, and later re-crossed, both times with reasonable sightlines. There is also a 4/5-minute stretch alongside it, but on a safe pathway.

The other road sections are quiet, and should only trouble those who dislike walking on metalled roads as a matter of principle.

There are no significant hindrances, with the possible exception of a brief stretch of thorns and nettles (Direction 18) which would benefit from clearing at some times of year. And there is not a single stile.

Notes taken: June and July 2014

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.

	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, turn right, cross the footbridge and carry on away from the river.		0.83
4	23	Turn left along the main road. Stay, for now, on the footpath on the left of the road.		
5	27	Immediately after the railway bridge, cross the road (choose the place with the best sightlines in both directions) and turn sharp right along the right-hand side of Station Road, almost doubling back on your original direction. Go ahead after the station, past the 'No through road' sign.		1.46
6	29	Continue along Upper Austin Lodge Road, ignoring the footpath on the left.		
7	42	Pass Lower Austin Lodge Farm on the right and continue ahead past the sign for golf club, etc.		2.25
8	47	Continue along the road as it swings to the right (passing an old stone marker 'Austin' on the ground to the left).		

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

	Mins.*		OS	Miles
9	<b>52</b>	When the road forks, go to the right (for 'Golf Club').	541 632	2.83
10	<b>53</b>	Go under power lines.		
11	<b>54</b>	[Map point] Find a footpath leaving the road slightly to the right, and follow it along the bottom left-hand edge of a sloping field. A waymark a little way along, and over to the left, soon confirms you have the right path.	540 630	
12	<b>56</b>	The exit at the far left-hand corner of the field is only visible at the last moment, but go ahead through it and cross an open field looking out for golfers practising their drives from the top of the hill to the left.		
13	<b>60</b>	When you reach a strip of woodland at the far side, go up to the right, amongst the trees.	539 627	3.19
14	<b>62</b>	Swing left with the path.		
15	<b>64</b>	Go up the steep steps.		
16	<b>66</b>	!!!F!! Emerge from the trees and continue ahead across a field.		
17	<b>69</b>	After going back into trees, soon take the left fork and follow the main track as it winds through the wood.		
18	<b>75</b>	Ignore the 'turn right' waymark, and instead keep left, along a path which winds amongst or alongside trees.  <i>(The waymarked path also works, but involves an awkwardly steep descent. The alternative given here will go down with equal steepness, but with the benefit of steps. This first section (18) is not marked as a right of way, but is a clear path and using it seems harmless enough.)</i>	531 622	3.80
19	<b>88</b>	Look out for steps down to the right; and use them to help with the steep descent.  <i>(Now back on a marked right of way.)</i>	533 613	4.41
20	<b>96</b>	Merge right into another path.		
21	<b>98</b>	Reaching the road, go about 30 yds. to the right to cross it (reasonable sightlines); then down Station Road opposite.		
22	<b>103</b>	Opposite the entrance to Shoreham Place turn right, then very soon left through a gate in the wall. Go through the churchyard, and out through the lych-gate.		
23	<b>105</b>	Rejoin the road and pass, or pause at, the Old George Inn on the left. (An alternative is the King's Arms, just over the bridge if you turn off left a couple of minutes later.)		5.16
24	<b>107</b>	When the main road swings left over the bridge, instead go right along Darenth Way (with the war memorial and river on your left). Then go ahead, to the left of Water House.		
25	<b>108</b>	And also keep to the left of the entrance to Meadow House.		
26	<b>112</b>	Go left over the footbridge, then right.		

\* "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
27	<b>113</b>	Turn off the road along the footpath to the right. Continue along the Darent Valley Path, winding slightly as it goes ahead, punctuated by a few gates.		5.60
28	<b>122</b>	<b>[Map point]</b> Carry on in the same direction, over an access lane and gently uphill.		
29	<b>128</b>	Reach a road as it bends. Although it would lead to the finish you do not need to go along it. Instead look for the steps slightly to the left. Go up them and continue along the path in much the same direction as before.		6.42
30	<b>134</b>	Turn left up the signposted driveway into the car park.		
31	<b>135</b>	Arrive back at the starting point at the Visitor Centre.	527 639	6.77

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## FOR THOSE WHO WALK WITH THEIR DOGS

See footnote on next page.

## 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!

<b>ASH CHURCH WALKS - No.6</b>	<b>Direction numbers</b>	<b>% of walk</b>
Busy road	4, 21a	4
Quiet road \$\$	2-3, 5-10, 21b, 23, 30	39
Open field with livestock		0
Edge of field with livestock		0
Field (or edge) without livestock **	11, 16, 27b-29	16
Path (hedged, or otherwise forced)	1, 12, 18a, 20, 22, 24-27a	26
Woods	13-15, 17, 18b-19	16

\*\* 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:** There are currently no stiles on this walk.