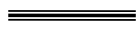




# ASH CHURCH WALKS - NO. 1



**F** Open fields (see 'Introductory Notes')

**88** Direction label (as in the walk notes)

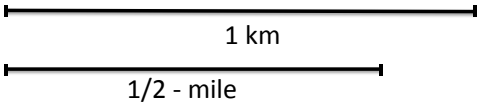
## ROADS:

-  Significant roads
-  Others - on route
-  Others - adjoining

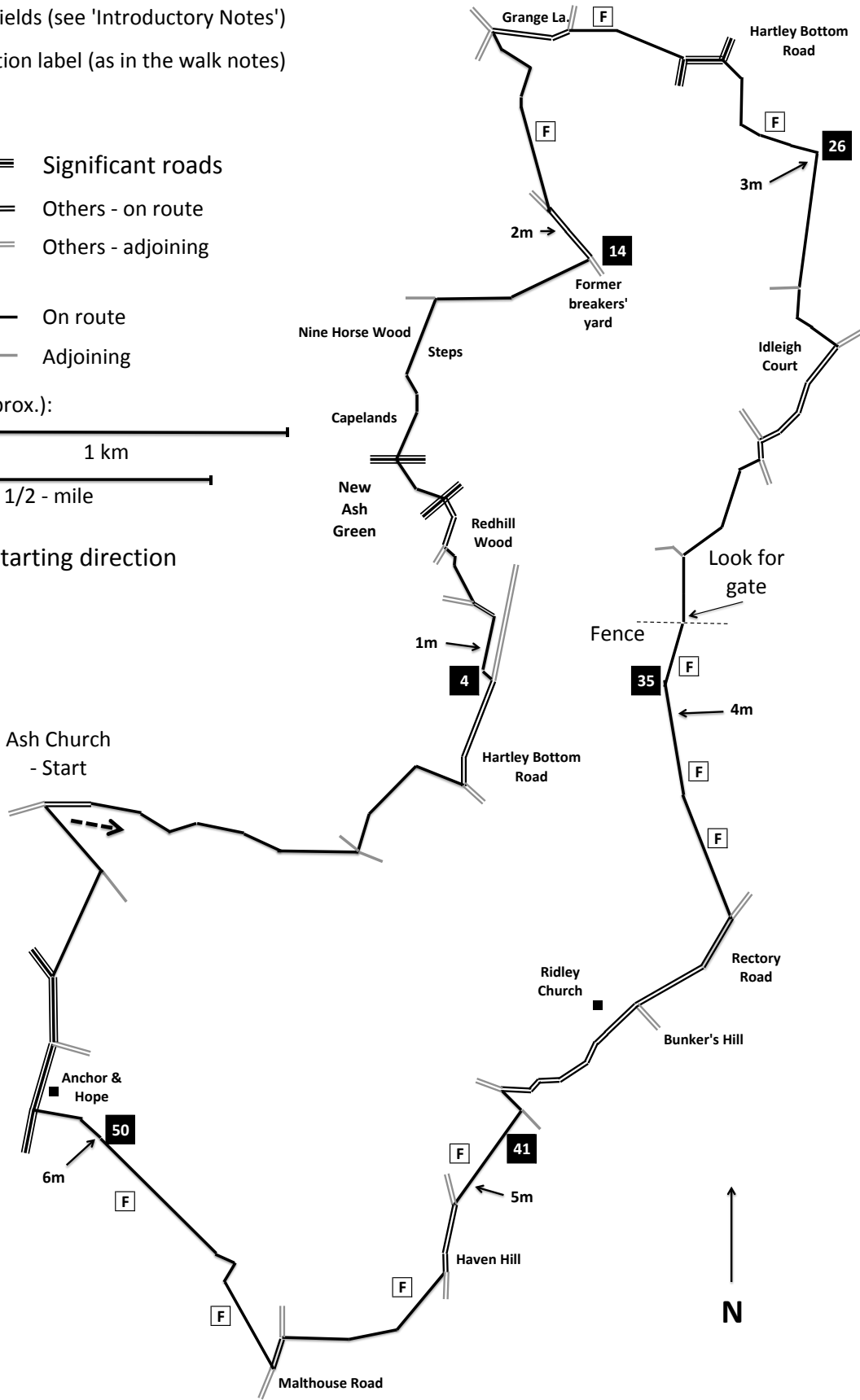
## PATHS:

-  On route
-  Adjoining

Scale (approx.):



 Starting direction



## **ASH CHURCH WALKS - No.1 (7 April 2013)**

### **(Ash - Hartley Hill - Idleigh - Ridley - Malthouse Road - South Ash - Ash)**

Some fine views across the valley towards Hartley Hill, Redhill Wood and beyond. Refreshment available near the end (Anchor and Hope).

Fairly easy walking, though some places tend to get overgrown in the summer.

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

The short stretch of road near the end (52-53) 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.

The other road sections are relatively harmless. The short section at 21 and the bend at 42 need a little care, but no more than routine common sense.

There are no significant hindrances, though at some times of year the route across the fields at 48 is ploughed and impassable, dictating a short detour from the right of way.

Notes taken: March 2013 and June 2014

The start and finish is at **Ash Church** (TN15 7HD).

	Mins.*		OS	Miles
1		Coming out of Ash Church, turn left 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	
2	10	Ignore the spring gate, and the stile immediately behind it, on the right.		
3	15	After a final swing down to the right the path reaches Hartley Bottom Road. Turn left along it.	612 646	0.76
4	19	[Map point] About 50 yds. after the entrance to the South East Water plant, climb up the little embankment to the left, then go immediately right along a grassy avenue, parallel to the road.		
5	20	After a little dip, swing left to join the end of a road.		
6	21	Take the left fork uphill for a few yards, then go up the signposted path to the right, up steps (past house number 45 on the left, though the number is hidden until you are beyond it). Continue along the path as it winds uphill between houses.		
7	24	When you reach the road at the top, turn right along it; then follow it as it swings to the left towards the main road (Redhill Road).		
8	25	Cross the road and go up the track which is opposite and slightly to the right (directly opposite the bus stop).		

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

	Mins.*		OS	Miles
9	<b>26</b>	At a T-junction of paths, next to house number 54, turn right, then swing round to the left with the path.		
10	<b>27</b>	After crossing the Spring Cross access road, fork right to cross the major road, and follow the path opposite (SD321).		
11	<b>30</b>	After a gradual left swing, turn right into the trees (opposite house number 68) and follow the main track ahead, gently downhill.		
12	<b>31</b>	Go down some steps, still straight ahead; then on, still downhill in the same direction, to the bottom.		
13	<b>33</b>	Turn right at the T-junction of paths. The track soon leads out of the trees and follows the bottom, left-hand edge of a sloping field; then becomes a narrow alley alongside the corrugated boundary of the former car breakers' yard, finally dropping down towards gates at the road ahead.		
14	<b>38</b>	<b>[Map point]</b> Turn left up the road (Hartley Hill).		
15	<b>41</b>	Look out for a gate on the right (opposite 'Hillside'), and go through it. <b>!!!F!!!</b> This represents roughly a 45° right-turn along a track which is often barely visible. You are cutting off the left-hand corner of the field, and heading for a tiny gap, perhaps just visible, about two-thirds of the way down the hedge along its left-hand side.		
16	<b>43</b>	At the gap there is a stile. <b>!!!F!!!</b> Cross it and go diagonally to cross another one, cutting off the right-hand corner of this new field; then on to a cross a third stile, very near, and go ahead briefly along the top, left-hand edge of a sloping field.		
17	<b>45</b>	Look out almost immediately for a hidden gap in the hedge on the left, and turn up into it. Follow the track uphill through the wood, winding repeatedly right and left: generally if in doubt go to the left except where this would be entering clearly private property. Much of this track goes alongside fencing to the left, and there are a couple of helpful waymarks at points where there might be doubt.		
18	<b>49</b>	Emerge at a road junction at the top and turn right, down Grange Lane.	613 665	2.33
19	<b>51</b>	At the end of the road's left swing, go off to the right, through a gate next to a house and drive. <b>!!!F!!!</b> Head down across the field to a gap between trees at the bottom.		
20	<b>53</b>	At the gap go virtually straight on (very slightly right) and uphill, to the left of a container towards houses up ahead.		
21	<b>56</b>	Reach the road after passing to the left of the houses. Turn left and follow the road as it bends up to the right. (A little care is needed here: traffic sometimes takes the bends at optimistic speeds.)		

\* *"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
22	<b>57</b>	As the road swings left, go off it to the right, just after '1 & 2 White Cottages' - up the three or four steps immediately to the left of the driveway - and go up the winding path into the trees (SD239).		
23	<b>59</b>	<b>!!!F!!!</b> Cross a small stile, and go slightly to the left, diagonally up across the field, aiming at the end of the line of trees on your left.		
24	<b>60</b>	Swing leftwards, up along the edge of the trees.		
25	<b>61</b>	Go through a gap between trees, and now follow the edge of the trees on your right as it swings rightwards.		
26	<b>63</b>	<b>[Map point]</b> The path straightens, and takes you ahead towards buildings in the middle distance, turning to concrete halfway along.	622 662	
27	<b>67</b>	Find a way past the gate at the end (where the houses begin). This should be possible via a stile to the left, but it is currently - June 2014 - impossibly overgrown. Alternatives are climbing over or squeezing past.		
28	<b>69</b>	Turn right at the road.		3.30
29	<b>71</b>	About 30 yds. after passing (on the right) Idleigh Court Stables, you have the option of escaping the road on to a parallel track up alongside to the left. However, the road is fairly quiet with good visibility, and the track slopes steeply from side to side (and ends by going down steep steps), so only use the alternative if you are seriously averse to tarmac.		
30	<b>73</b>	At the end of the road, at the T-junction, turn left. Then, after passing the driveway marked 'Court View' turn off the road rightwards, opposite a second driveway. Go through the kissing gate (SD305) and keep to the left along the top, left-hand edge of the sloping field.		
31	<b>75</b>	Use one of the various gaps and gates to cross to the other side of the hedge, but continue to follow it (now on your right) down into trees.		
32	<b>76</b>	Go ahead through the MKG.		
33	<b>78</b>	Look out for another MKG in the fence on the right, but do not go through it. Instead turn left, away from it, away from fence, and into the middle of the trees. Maintain this direction as far as possible across this strip of trees.		
34	<b>80</b>	Emerge on the other side at a MKG in a fence. (The tracks through the trees vary considerably depending on seasons and weather: if you reach the fence other than at the MKG, investigate to right and left. The likelihood is that you have gone a bit too far down - to the right.) <b>!!!F!!!</b> Go through the MKG and down ahead to another one at the valley bottom.	619 650	

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

	Mins.*		OS	Miles
35	<b>82</b>	[Map point] <b>!!!F!!!</b> Go through this MKG, and uphill about 30 degrees to the left. You are aiming at another MKG at a point in the row of trees ahead which is quite invisible for now. To start with, look at those trees: there is a single one taller than the rest over to left. Your target is about 70 yds. to the right of it.		
36	<b>87</b>	When you find it, go through the MKG and briefly ahead to another one. <b>!!!F!!!</b> Then go diagonally left across the field, with buildings over to your left. Look at the left-hand end of the line of trees ahead, and aim at a gap about 30 yds. to the right of that point.		
37	<b>91</b>	Find the gap, and go through a MKG into trees.		
38	<b>92</b>	Go through another MKG at a road, and turn right along it.		4.36
39	<b>97</b>	Pass Ridley Church and continue along the road, downhill before long.		
40	<b>101</b>	Turn sharp left down a broad track.		
41	<b>102</b>	[Map point] Turn right. The start of this path is well hidden. It begins with a spring gate followed by a little stile. <b>!!!F!!!</b> It then turns into a broad track, down and up across the middle of a large field. Carry straight on, even if (as currently) the field ceases to be cultivated and turns into scrub.	614 637	
42	<b>106</b>	Go through the remnants of a MKG and turn left at the road.		
43	<b>110</b>	<b>!!!F!!!</b> Next to Haven Manor go up a few steps slightly to the right (SD246, as displayed on the other side of the post!) and go ahead towards the right-hand corner of a clump of trees.		
44	<b>113</b>	<b>!!!F!!!</b> At this corner turn about 45 degrees to the right.		
45	<b>114</b>	<b>!!!F!!!</b> And soon follow the track as it turns a little further to the right, in the direction of a house in the valley, the edge of which is just visible beyond the trees and bushes in between. Converge on the line of trees to your left.		
46	<b>115</b>	You meet those trees at a MKG. Turn left through it, then immediately right, down the right-hand side of a field towards the valley road (Malthouse Road).	610 631	
47	<b>118</b>	Go through the MKG and turn left along the road.		5.49
48	<b>119</b>	Before long turn off the road up a few steps to the right, to a stile. <b>!!!F!!!</b> Cross the stile and turn diagonally right to go up to the top right-hand corner of the field, then continue briefly uphill to a gate.		
49	<b>124</b>	<b>!!!F!!!</b> Go through the gate and slightly to the left, towards the brow of the hill. The angle is about 30 degrees to the right of the field's edge. (There are times when this track is very indistinct. If in doubt press on along this angle until the roof of a building (the Anchor and Hope) comes into view ahead. Aim to the left of this, but decidedly to the right of a lone pylon in the far distance.)		

\* "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
50	<b>130</b>	[Map point] Find a spring gate in the hedge ahead. <b>!!!F!!</b> Go through it, and on in the same direction.	603 637	
51	<b>132</b>	Go straight on through a MKG, with a fence to the left and a hedge to the right.		
52	<b>133</b>	Turn right along the main road (South Ash Road), and pass (or stop at) the Anchor and Hope on the right.		6.14
53	<b>137</b>	After 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.		
54	<b>142</b>	Continue along the right-hand edge of the cricket field.		
55	<b>144</b>	Go over a lift-and-drop stile. Ash Church is ahead of you.	601 645	6.67

\* "*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.

## 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!

<b>ASH CHURCH WALKS - 1</b>	<b>Direction numbers</b>	<b>% of walk</b>
Busy road	21, 52	4
Quiet road \$\$	3, 5, 14, 18, 28-30a, 38-39, 42, 47	20
Open field with livestock	35	3
Edge of field with livestock	16a, 30b, 53b	4
Field (or edge) without livestock **	13b, 15, 16b-17a, 19-20, 23-26, 34, 36, 41, 43-46, 48-50, 53a, 54	39
Path (hedged, or otherwise forced)	1-2, 4, 6-10, 13c, 22, 27, 40, 51	23
Woods	11-13a, 17b, 31-33, 37	7

\*\* 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 three stiles in Direction **16** all have easy gaps, and the one in **23** has a large gap next to it to walk through.

The one in **27** hardly exists any longer, and if the surrounding undergrowth is too difficult the adjacent gate has easy gaps.

**41** is wired down to ground level, and the step is thin (but firm); but it is not high (climbs of about 1.5 ft. each). **48**, though new and sturdy, could be a problem: it is a double stile, again wired to ground, with climbs of about 1.5 ft., 6 ins. and 2 ft. - 4 ft. in all. **55** has easy gaps.