

Sheet 2

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# OFFHAM

FULL CIRCUIT - Sheet 1  
(first and last sections)

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

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

## ROADS:

Significant roads

Others - on route

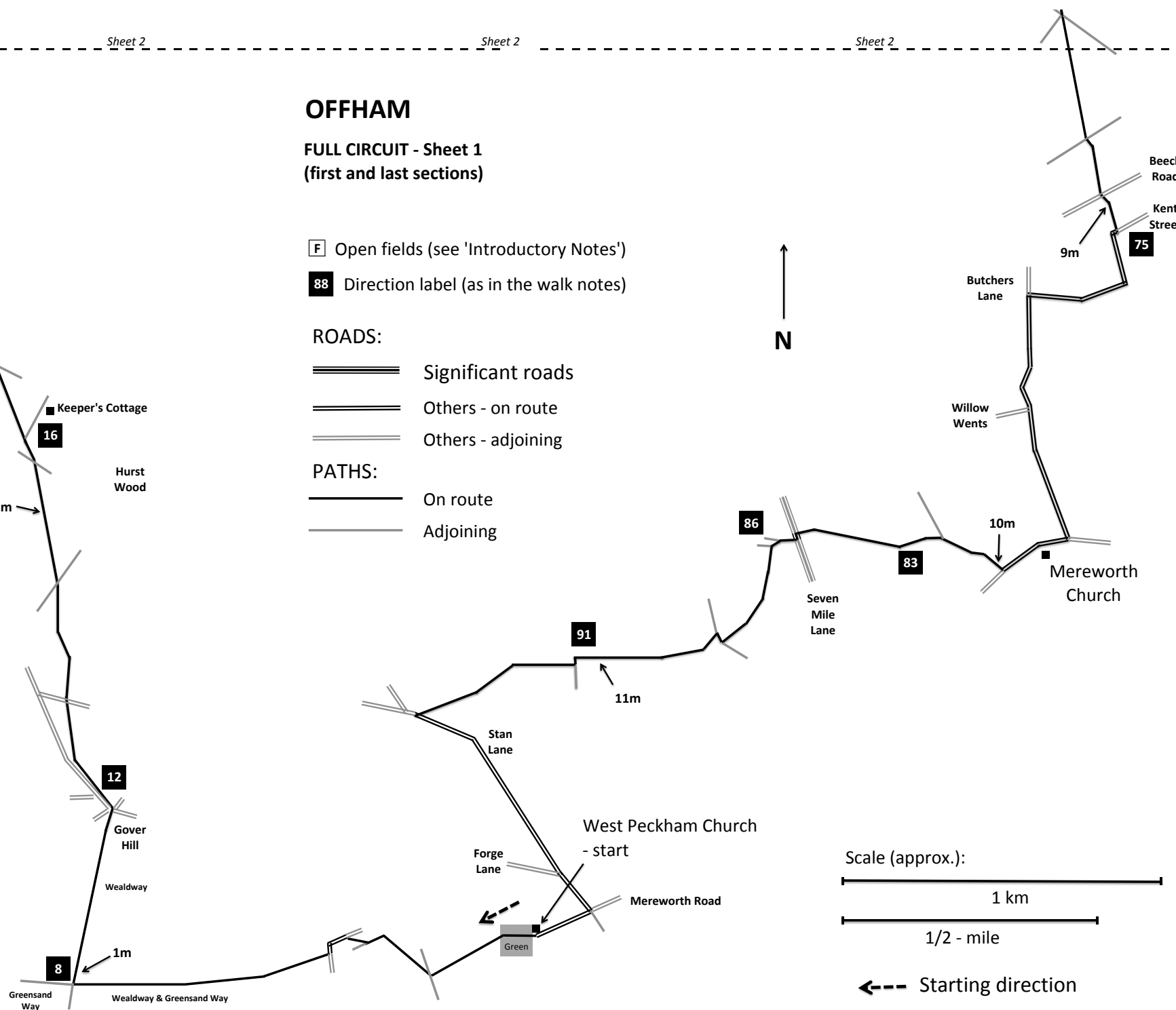
Others - adjoining

## PATHS:

On route

Adjoining

N

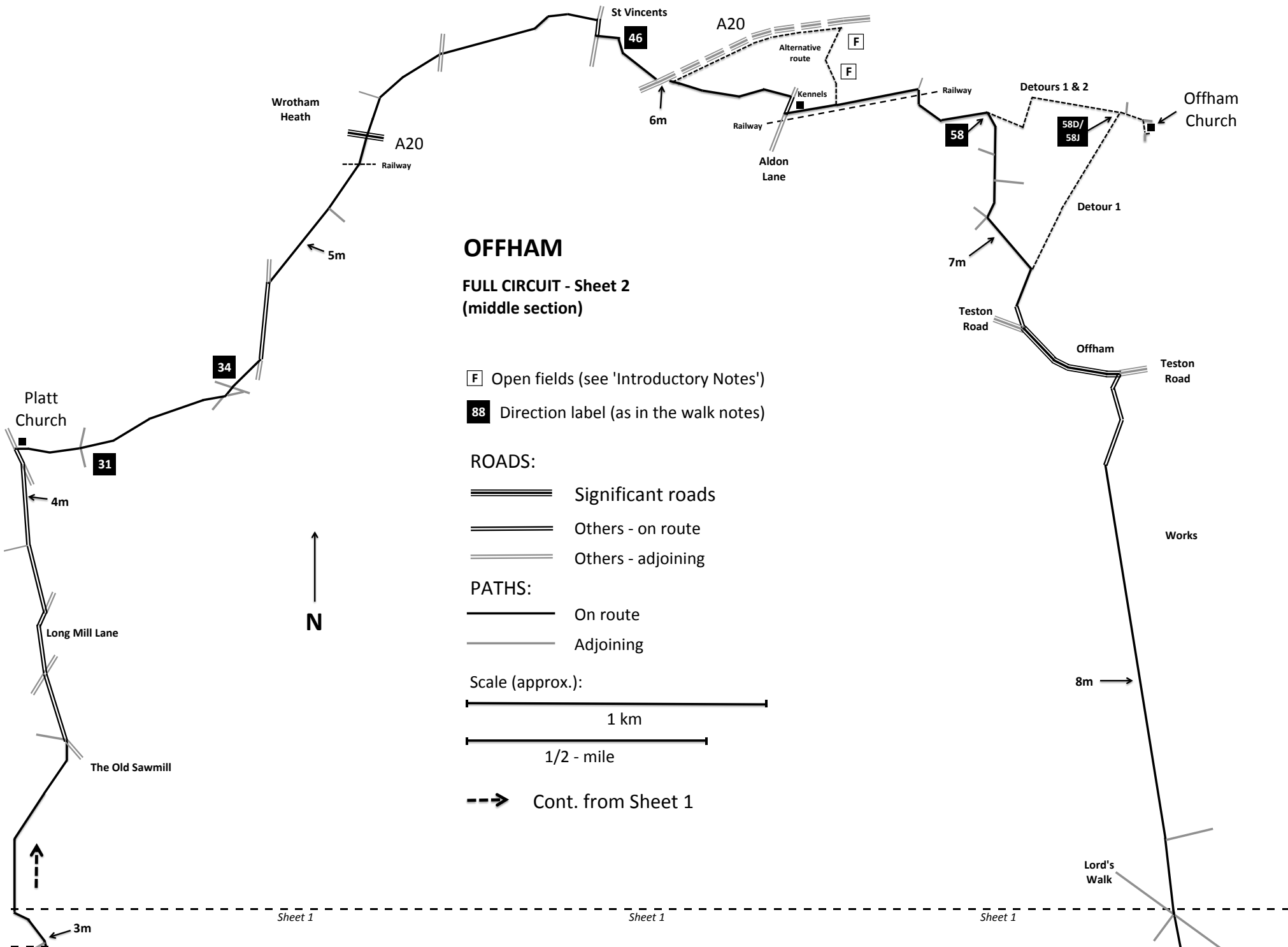


Scale (approx.):

1 km

1/2 - mile

← Starting direction



## **OFFHAM CIRCUIT**

### **Churches in the full circuit:**

West Peckham (start and finish)

Platt (Direction 28)

Offham (58G: Detour 1 - see Appendix)

Mereworth (79)

### **Associated local circuits**

- OF1: West Peckham – Mereworth – West Peckham
- AV3: Addington – Ryarsh – West Malling – Offham – Addington

**Full circuit:** Much of this walk will be enjoyed by those who like trees, especially the extended Wealdway section in the early stages. The view from the viewpoint at Direction 12 is worth the very short detour. And the start and finish of the walk at West Peckham offers all that a visitor could wish for in an English village: church, friendly pub, and village green incorporating cricket field.

The short detours near Offham cater, first for those who wish to visit Offham Church, and, second, for those who, having done so, nevertheless wish to maintain the continuity of the spine route (see 'Introductory Notes').

### **Roads and hindrances:**

The route crosses the A20 twice. At the first crossing (Direction 40) sightlines are excellent – with central refuge – and at the second (48) they are manageable. The main road at Offham (66) presents no special difficulties. Seven Mile Lane (85) can be busy, but again it is easy to see what is going on. The handful of other roads involved are generally quiet.

The current obstruction at 74 is no more than a nuisance; and the rough and generally unwelcoming track down through the trees in 86 does not amount to a significant problem.

In developing the route I was met, after turning off Aldon Lane at Direction 54, by a number of noisy, fierce-looking but kennelled dogs; and I was glad they were not loose. But then I was greeted by one which was! The dog let me go along my intended path, but escorted me away noisily and rather worryingly. Probably a case of bark-worse-than-bite. (There was no bite.) I shall in time revisit the scene to try to establish whether this was an isolated instance, so if dogs with attitude are a concern to you, look out for updates. Meanwhile I have added, in the appendix, an alternative route which avoids that place. It is only a few minutes longer, but sadly goes for a while alongside the busy and unlovely A20 and misses out a pretty stretch through gardens and fruit trees.

## **FULL CIRCUIT**

**West Peckham – Platt – Offham – Mereworth – West Peckham**

Notes taken: June and July 2015

The start and finish is at West Peckham Church (ME18 5JL).

	Mins.*		OS	Miles
1		With your back to the gate to <b>West Peckham Church</b> , facing south, turn right immediately and continue alongside the road for the few yards before it bends to the right. Then, cricket permitting – if there is cricket you will need to deviate slightly – abandon the road and carry straight on across the green towards the old kissing gate in its far-right-hand corner.	644 526	
2	1	Go through the gate and continue ahead (now on both the Wealdway and the Greensand Way) along a path enclosed by a hedge on the right and a fence on the left.		
3	4	Keep to the right of Pear Tree Cottage and its driveway, by turning half-right to go through a MKG. Then turn half-right again (so that in total you have carried out a right-turn) and carry on along the right-hand side of the field.		
4	7	Swing to the left to continue along the far edge of the same field.		
5	8	Follow the waymark to go away from the field, through a MKG and into trees.		
6	9	Merge with the road as it joins from the right, and follow it in a swing to the left.		
7	10	Take the broad footpath to the right (still WW/GSW).		
8	17	Map, signpost and waymark are at variance whether at this point to continue along the main track or to go parallel to it on the right of the trees (alongside an orchard). It makes no practical difference.		
9	22	<b>[Map point]</b> You reach the waymarks which signal the divergence of the Wealdway and the Greensand Way. (If you have taken the orchard-option above you achieve this by a slight bend to the left when forced.) At the junction stay with the Wealdway as it turns right, uphill – gently at first but more steeply later on – between a hedge and then a fence on the right and fruit trees over to the left.		
10	29	Ignore the farm track on the left and carry straight on ahead.		
11	30	Reach a complicated junction with minor roads. Go across half-left on a track uphill into trees, as waymarked 'WW', immediately to the right of the National Trust 'Gover Hill' sign.		1.36
12	31	<b>[Map point]</b> Indicated on the left is a tiny diversion to a view-point, complete with bench. But the route itself continues uphill.		
13	37	Go straight across the road and continue ahead.	629 533	
14	42	Go straight ahead at a junction of paths, as you will be doing on a consistent basis for the next mile or so, as you continue along the easy woodland path, northwards along the Wealdway. Always take the obvious path ahead.		
15	47	Keep ahead, ignoring minor paths to the side.		
16	48	<b>[Map point]</b> The only junction along this stretch which needs to be thought about: keep more or less straight on as waymarked (still 'WW'), instead of following the broad track as it forks right.	628 541	2.14
17	52	Still straight ahead.		

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

	Mins.*		OS	Miles
18	56	And still the obvious path ahead, ignoring tracks to the right.		
19	58	And again the main path, more or less straight ahead		
20	62	Go straight ahead, into a narrower passageway with a fence on the left.		
21	66	Through a wooden gate and still straight ahead.		
22	71	Keep straight on, ignoring the right-turn.		
23	77	Turn left into a minor road 'The Old Sawmill'		3.49
24	80	At a crossroads go straight across (Long Mill Lane, continuing northwards).	623 563	
25	83	Fork left with the major road (at this point departing from the Wealdway, though you will rejoin it later).		
26	86	Pass (and ignore) a bridleway on the left.		
27	89	Merge left into another road.		
28	90	Turn up the steps to the west door of <b>Platt Church</b> . Turn right at the top to go along the south side of the church. Then, just after the south door, go a little to the right to go up the path which goes more or less along the right-hand edge of the graveyard.		4.10
29	92	Go through a gap on the right, into trees and up alongside a fence on the right.		
30	93	Continue uphill with the help of steps.		
31	94	[Map point] Carry straight on uphill, past a bench and a notice board with a plan of the woods. Keep with the main path, ignoring trails through the trees to right and left.		
32	96	At a junction of paths, go to the left.		
33	97	Pass a bench on the left.		
34	102	[Map point] Carry straight on as the Wealdway rejoins from the right, and about 20 yds. later turn left. Pass a bench on the left, and go almost straight ahead at another cross-paths (slightly right, in fact) to start out along a narrow shaded pathway between wooden fences.	629 572	
35	104	Merge leftwards into a roadway.		
36	105	Ignore a footpath and site entrance on the right.		
37	107	Fork right, off the road, down a woodland track.		
38	113	Leave the woods and go under the railway bridge.		
39	114	Pass a restaurant car park on the right and the entrance to Railway Cottage on the left.		
40	115	Cross the A20 (good sightlines and a refuge). Turn right towards the bus shelter, but just before it turn left into the trees (signposted, still 'WW').		5.19
41	117	Follow the right-hand fence around to the right (ignoring the more visible of the waymarks, which would have you turning left).		
42	120	Cross the road and continue ahead, between hedges at first.	636 583	
43	128	Go ahead through a MKG.		
44	129	<b>START OF THE SPINE SECTION</b> Turn right along the road.		
45	130	After about 50 yds., turn left off the road and into trees over a small footbridge.		

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

	Mins.*		OS	Miles
46	131	<b>[Map point]</b> Emerge from the wood and turn half-right across the golf course. Aim initially for the highest point on the gentle ridge up in that direction.		
47	132	Go just to the left of a green, and cross the track which would lead (over to the right) to both levels of the 5 <sup>th</sup> tee. Now head a little further to the left, towards the boundary wall of the golf course, darkly hidden amid the trees and undergrowth ahead. The angle, as you cross a fairway, is roughly towards a point near a pole carrying power cables. Following this line you will be converging on the boundary wall to your right: look for a small gap in it, beyond the undergrowth, probably (depending on the exact angle you have taken) a little further to the left.  <i>If you get close to buildings and golf-course roadways to the left you have gone (quite a bit) too far: come back in the undergrowth within sight of the wall, until you spot the gap.</i>		
48	134	Go through the gap, and cross the main road. The sightline to the left is excellent, but to improve visibility to the right it might be best to go carefully to the left along the narrow verge alongside the road. If you do this for about 40 yds. before crossing, your sightline will be reasonable, and you will cross directly to the point on the other side where the route will diverge from the road.	644 582	
49	135	<i>[To avoid the Aldon Lane kennels (see 'Roads and Hindrances' on the first page), now divert instead to the alternative route in the Appendix.]</i>  <b>Main route:</b> Turn away from the road to the right, as signposted. There is no sign of a path, but simply carry on across beautifully kept estate grounds, at an angle of about 30 degrees to the right of the road you have left (in effect as far to the left as seems sensible).		6.02
50	136	After passing apple trees on the left, go through a gate, and ahead, as waymarked, in the same direction.		
51	137	Go through a gap and straight on along an enclosed path.		
52	139	Cross a stile and go ahead.		
53	140	Turn right along a road.	648 582	
54	141	Turn left, just before the railway bridge, along an enclosed path.		
55	142	Go over a stile, and on down the right-hand side of a field.		
56	145	Go through a MKG, and onward, alongside the railway above.		
57	147	Turn right to go under the railway bridge. Then swing gradually leftwards to go around the right-hand edge of a field.		
58	151	<i>[To visit <b>Offham Church</b>, now divert instead to <b>Detour 1</b> in the Appendix.]</i>  <b>Main route:</b> <b>[Map point]</b> At the end of a slight curve to the right along the field-edge, turn right into the trees. The path is waymarked but well concealed and easily missed. Once in the wood, climb a gentle ridge and follow the path as it swings left, then right.	654 581	6.74
59	153	Ignore the path on the right and continue ahead.		

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

	Mins.*		OS	Miles
60	154	Ignore the path on the left and continue ahead.		
61	156	Turn left at the cross-paths		
62	159	Merge right into another path next to a dog-litter bin.	656 576	
63	160	When you reach the roadway, continue ahead.		
64	161	At the end of Pepinstraw Close, turn left along the main road, staying on the left-hand side.		
65	164	Pass the green opposite, and continue ahead		
66	166	Cross the road and take the right turn along Tower Hill.		
67	170	Having followed the road down and up, keep straight on when it forks, then follow it slightly to the left towards a brown gate and adjacent stile.		
68	171	Cross the stile (at the entrance to Kentfield Farm) and continue ahead.		7.69
69	178	Go through a gate, and go ahead along the broad track, with a field to your right and the quarry boundary to your left.		
70	186	As the broad track turns away to the left, abandon it and continue straight on, at the left edge of the field, even though, as you progress, it looks unlikely that there is a way out.		
71	190	At the last moment a gap appears in the far-left corner. <b>END OF THE SPINE SECTION</b> Go through it, and then at a junction of paths go ahead in the same direction into trees, ignoring paths to the side.	661 555	8.60
72	196	At a cross-path at the bottom of a dip, go straight ahead.		
73	199	Pass gates on both sides and continue ahead along a short enclosed avenue.		
74	200	Cross the road and follow the signposted path MR286. <i>Described here is what I found in June 2015. The path goes ahead, as signposted, after the road, to the left of, and in principle parallel to, the hedge. Although at the far end the roadside signpost (for those coming in the reverse direction) is, correctly, in the very far-right-hand corner of the field, the undergrowth makes an exit there quite impossible, so you have to go past a locked double gate about 20 yds. further to the left.</i>		
75	202	<b>[Map point]</b> Squeeze past the big double gate and turn right on to the road. Follow it as immediately it turns to the left.		
76	204	Follow the road as it swings to the right.		
77	207	Turn left down Butchers Lane.		
78	217	Turn right at the T-junction into the main road at Mereworth.		
79	218	Pass the gate of <b>Mereworth Church</b> opposite, and continue along the right-hand side of the road.		9.90
80	219	Cross Torrington Close and keep ahead.		
81	220	Turn right along a rough roadway, and go past a small shop. Then keep to the right of the forecourt of house number 99.		
82	223	Take the left fork.	657 538	
83	224	<b>[Map point]</b> At the corner go slightly right, then left, and set off along the broad unmetalled roadway, gently uphill between fruit fields.		
84	228	At the junction go left, then immediately right, heading towards the road visible ahead.		

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

	Mins.*		OS	Miles
85	229	Cross the main road (Seven Mile Lane - good sightlines) and go down the driveway opposite, about 10 yds. to the left. There is a signpost but it is currently very well hidden.	652 538	10.45
86	230	[Map point] Twice in quick succession fork left, eventually on to a slatted wooden walkway. Both these turns are waymarked, but again not very visibly. Keep to the main path, such as it is, as it winds its way through the trees (and mud in places).		
87	233	Emerge to go ahead along a grassy avenue between fields.		
88	236	Among buildings, turn right up a stony path.		
89	237	Fork left, uphill, between fences on both sides.		
90	240	Carry straight on at the cross-paths.		
91	244	[Map point] At another cross-paths after a house on the left, go effectively straight ahead, uphill (in fact left then immediately right, keeping to the right of an apparently redundant pole).	646 534	
92	247	Keep ahead on the main track as it bends a little to the left, and the field-edge disappears behind a screen of trees on the left.		
93	252	Turn left into the road (Stan Lane).		11.37
94	261	At the road junction and the green triangle, keep to the left.		
95	263	Turn right at the next road junction, into West Peckham.		
96	265	Use the walkway which rises on the right of the road.		
97	266	Arrive back at the starting point at <b>West Peckham Church</b> .	644 526	12.02

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

## APPENDIX to Full Circuit

### Detour 1 to Offham Church

	Mins.*		OS	Miles
58A	0	Continue ahead, ignoring the track into the woods on the right.	654 581	
58B	2	When the main track turns right, instead turn left towards the railway.		
58C	3	Turn right along a broad track towards farm buildings and the church in the middle distance.		
58D	7	Continue ahead between the buildings.	659 581	
58E	8	Bear right, just before a grassed area, aiming to the right of the church.		
58F		Turn left on a narrow path along the south side of the church.		
58G	9	Reach the south door of <b>Offham Church</b> . Then retrace your steps along the narrow path back towards the farm buildings.		
58H		Turn right to go between the farm buildings.		
58I	10	Bear left.		
58J	11	[To rejoin the spine route where you left it (and follow it strictly), now divert instead to <b>Detour 2</b> .]  <b>Continuation of Detour 1 (short cut to rejoin the main route):</b> Turn left along a roadway alongside the last of the buildings.	659 581	

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

	Mins.*		OS	Miles
58K	13	Go ahead as the roadway become a path between fields.		
58L	14	Ignore, for now, any minor short-cuts towards the trees on the right.		
58M	17	At the far right-hand corner of the field go into the trees on the right, and immediately turn left so that you are going in more or less the original direction.		
58N	20	Rejoin the main route at Direction 62, by merging left into the path next to a dog-litter bin.  <b>Add 12 minutes to subsequent total times and 0.58 miles to cumulative distances.</b>	656 576	

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

## Detour 2 (to return from Offham Church to the spine route where you left it, and follow it strictly)

	Mins.*		OS	Miles
58O	11	Continue to retrace your steps by going straight on along the broad path.		
58P	15	Turn left.		
58Q	16	Turn right, directly alongside the trees		
58R	18	Rejoin the main route at Direction 58 by turning left into the trees on the path you earlier ignored at Direction 58A.  <b>For Detours 1 and 2, add 18 minutes to subsequent total times and 0.88 miles to cumulative distances.</b>	654 581	

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

## Alternative route to avoid the Aldon Lane kennels (see 'Roads and Hindrances' on the first page)

	Mins.*		OS	Miles
49A	0	After crossing the main road continue alongside it on the walkway.		
49B	5	Cross Aldon Lane and continue ahead.		
49C	8	After the road starts to go downhill, but just before it does so more steeply, look out for a MKG on the right and go through it. Then turn half-right. (A blue and grey building across the dip in the middle distance, which you will be passing near to, gives a general idea of where you are aiming.) The ideal would now be to go alongside the fence which is on your left, but the untamed undergrowth makes this impossible. Instead go down over the clearer ground in that general direction for a couple of minutes, keeping the fence in sight as far as possible.	650 584	
49D	10	<b>!!!F!!!</b> Find a MKG in the fence to your left and go through, across the field towards another MKG.	64939 58311	
49E	12	<b>!!!F!!!</b> Go through, and ahead across the next field, turning left at the far side to go along the top of the field alongside the railway above.		

\* "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
49F	15	You have now rejoined the main route, going through the MKG at Direction 56.  <b>Add 5 minutes to subsequent total times and 0.25 miles to cumulative distances.</b>		

\* *"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!

<b>OFFHAM - FULL CIRCUIT without detours etc. (see next page for these)</b>	<b>Direction numbers</b>	<b>% of walk</b>
Busy road	48, 64-65, 77-80	8
Quiet road \$\$	6, 23-27, 35-36, 44, 53, 63, 66-68, 75-76, 83, 93-96	21
Open field with livestock		0
Edge of field with livestock	55	1
Field (or edge) without livestock **	3-4, 57, 69-70, 74, 87, 91	11
Path (hedged, or otherwise forced)	1-2, 5, 7-10, 20-22, 28, 34b, 38-39, 42-43, 46-47, 49-52, 54, 62, 73, 81-82, 84-85, 88-90, 92	31
Woods	11-19, 29-34a, 37, 40-41, 45, 56, 58-61, 71-72, 86	28

\*\* 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 June and July 2015, but **subject to frequent change**:

The stile at Direction 52 has climbs of 1 ft. and 2 ft. The gaps between are narrow (no more than 6 ins.)

The other stiles (at 55 and 68) have easy gaps.

*At some times of year you are asked to keep your dog on a lead for nearly a mile (Directions 68-70), because of game-birds being reared.*

For those using the detours, or the alternative at Direction 49, the numbers in the table on the previous page change a little, as follows:

OFFHAM - FULL CIRCUIT via Detours 1 and 2	Direction numbers (not on the main route)	% of whole walk	
		Detour 1 only	Detours 1 and 2
Busy road		7	7
Quiet road \$\$	58J	21	20
Open field with livestock		0	0
Edge of field with livestock		1	1
Field (or edge) without livestock **	58A-C, 58K-L, 58O-Q	14	15
Path (hedged, or otherwise forced)	58D-I	32	31
Woods	58M	25	26

OFFHAM - FULL CIRCUIT via alternative in Direction 49	Direction numbers (not on the main route)	% of whole walk		
		No other detour	Detour 1 only	Detours 1 and 2
Busy road	49A-B	11	10	10
Quiet road \$\$	(58J)	21	20	19
Open field with livestock	49D-Ea	1	1	1
Edge of field with livestock	49Eb	1	1	1
Field (or edge) without livestock **	49C (58A-C, 58K-L, 58O-Q)	11	14	15
Path (hedged, or otherwise forced)	(58D-I)	29	29	28
Woods	(58M)	27	25	26