

OFFHAM

SHORTENED 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

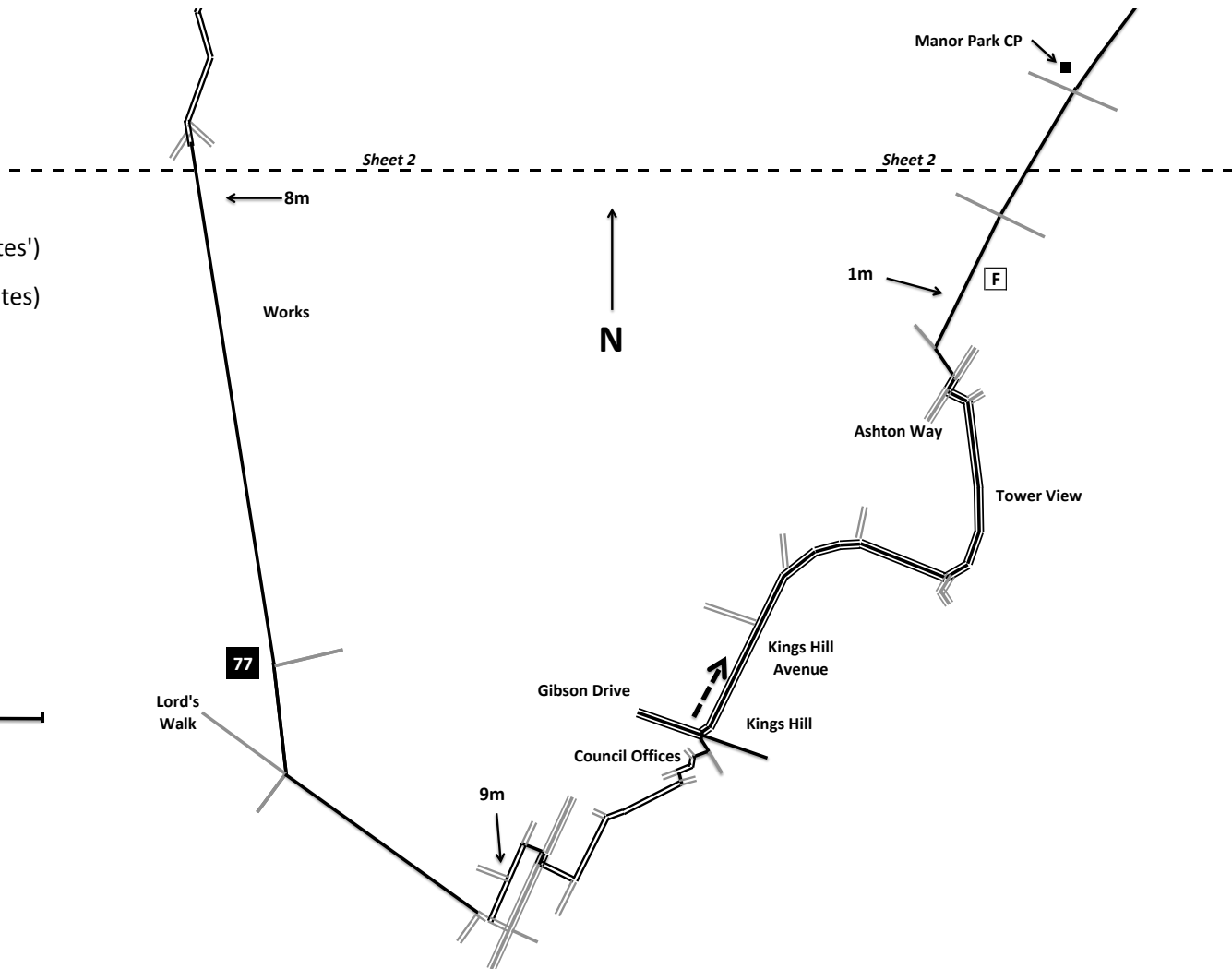
— Adjoining

Scale (approx.):

1 km

1/2 - mile

---> Starting direction



OFFHAM CIRCUIT

Churches in the shortened circuit:

West Malling (Direction 11B: Detour 1 - see Appendix)

Ryarsh (21)

Addington (36)

Offham (Direction 65G: Detour 2 - see Appendix)

Associated local circuits

- AV3: Addington – Ryarsh – West Malling – Offham – Addington
- AV2: Addington – Trottiscliffe – Ryarsh – Addington

Shortened circuit: A varied ramble through fields, heathland, golf courses, and townscapes old and new (and alongside a quarry). As the distance is a little longer than most of the shortened circuits, there are also, written up under separate links, two still shorter ones ('A' and 'B' in the list of walks) between them covering the spine section (which, as usual, figures in full in this version).

Roads and hindrances:

The route crosses the A20 twice. At the first crossing (Direction 17) sightlines are good, and at the second (55) they are manageable. The central refuges in 3 and 82 make the crossings of the A228 tolerable. The roads within Kings Hill (1-3) and West Malling (11-12) are reasonably civilised, and the main roads at Addington (34) and Offham (73) present no special difficulties. The handful of other roads involved are generally quiet. Look out for trains on the level crossing and balls on the golf courses.

In developing the route I was met, after turning off Aldon Lane at Direction 61, 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.

SHORTENED CIRCUIT

(Kings Hill -) West Malling – Ryarsh – Addington - Offham (- Kings Hill)

Notes taken: June and July 2015

The start and finish is in Kings Hill, at the roundabout where Gibson Drive meets Kings Hill Avenue (nearby postcode: ME19 4LJ).

	Mins.*		OS	Miles
1		From the roundabout go north along Kings Hill Avenue, and follow it as it swings round to the right: make your own decision whether to cut the distance by crossing the road to the right-hand side (the inside). If you do you will need to cross back before the end, but that is not likely to be troublesome.	671 555	
2	10	Turn left at the roundabout into Tower View.		
3	15	Reach another roundabout, and skirt around its left-hand side, crossing Ashton Way via a central refuge.		
4	16	After passing the first lamp-post on your clockwise progress round the roundabout, turn left, away from the road, down a narrow metalled path. After a few yards ignore a footpath on the right and continue gently downhill along a track enclosed by trees on either side.		
5	17	!!!F!!! Turn right between trees, through a narrow gap which is well hidden and marked only by a ground-level stone. Emerge at the edge of a huge field and set out ahead across it. If the path is not clear, aim along a line slightly to the right of West Malling Church visible in the distance, and very slightly to the left of the row of trees in the middle distance.		0.90
6	26	Go through a spring gate, and ahead as waymarked.		
7	27	Pass the buildings of Manor Park Country Park over to the left beyond the overflow car park (or go across to make use of the restaurant and toilets).		
8	28	Emerge into a big open field and go across, slightly to the right. Aim just to the right of a litter bin which itself is just to the right of a picnic table.		
9	31	Go through the kissing gate, and be guided through the next field, slightly leftwards, by the line of trees on your left.		
10	34	[Map point] Reach the bottom, far left-hand, corner, go through the gates, and turn left on to the road (Water Lane).		
11		<i>[To visit West Malling Church, now divert instead to Detour 1 in the Appendix.]</i>		
	38	Main route: Turn right into West Malling's High Street.		1.83
12	41	[Map point] As the High Street narrows, just after the bus stop outside Arundel House, leave it, by means of a left fork (King Street), to go parallel to it (past toilets on the left, currently open).		
13	43	Turn left along Ryarsh Lane.	681 579	
14	45	Go ahead as the metalled road becomes a rough track.		
15	48	Turn half-right at the end to cross the railway, with stiles before and after the crossing. After the second stile follow the waymarked footpath which goes straight ahead.		
16	52	At the end turn right into Brickfields.		
17	53	Cross the main road, and follow the path opposite (between The Wheatsheaf on the left and a field gate on the right).		
18	54	Follow the path, guided by railings, as it swings to the left after the first of a series of footbridges, and continue ahead along a woodland path with a stream 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
19	61	After a final footbridge, followed by a wooden swing-gate, cross the Leybourne Chase access road on to the driveway opposite. After a few yards along this go a little to the left, and then ahead along an enclosed footpath.	675 590	
20	63	Go ahead through a wooden kissing gate and along a narrow metalled footpath.		
21	65	Turn left through the gate into the churchyard of Ryarsh Church . Then follow the path to the other side of the churchyard, go out of the gate there, and turn half-right along the roadway.		3.10
22	67	[Map point] Follow the road as it swings leftwards and a path joins from the right.		
23	71	Cross the road and continue ahead along the footpath opposite.		
24	72	Go through the kissing gate and continue ahead along the left-hand edge of a field.		
25	74	[!!F!!] At the far corner, go through the MKG and embark on the crossing of a stretch of open heathland, guided, if it is visible, by a faint track. To begin with head across very slightly to the right, not quite parallel to the fence on the right but edging towards it (though it will turn away before you reach it).		
26	76	[!!F!!] At the top of the ridge, such as it is, merge with another faint track, to go slightly further to the right. (If this track is not visible, take your direction from a newly appeared fence on the right. On this occasion you will be converging on this, just to the right of a clump of trees ahead.)		
27	77	Continue ahead through the right-hand fringe of those trees, and finally converge on the fence to the right, at a MKG.	663 592	
28	78	Go through the MKG and across the golf course (more or less parallel to the motorway on the right), aiming about 50 yds. to right of a dark brown building with a red-tiled roof.		
29	82	Passing the building, leave the golf course through a gap in the undergrowth, alongside a fence to left.		
30	83	Turn briefly right along a road, then immediately left along a footpath by a marker-stone.		
31	85	Turn half-left through a wooden kissing gate.		
32	87	Turn right with the path at an angled T-junction.		
33	88	Turn left up a metalled roadway.		
34	90	After passing The Angel on the left, cross the main road and go straight on opposite along Park Road.		
35	91	Turn left along the quiet roadway to the church, keeping alongside the brick wall on the right.	655 591	
36	94	Arrive at the gate of Addington Church , then turn right and go down the narrow track. When you reach a metalled driveway, continue straight across it.		4.48
37	96	Reach the cricket field and turn left to walk, clockwise, around it.		
38	97	Ignore the footbridge on the left and continue around the cricket boundary.		

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	Mins.*		OS	Miles
39	99	Go left away from the cricket boundary, keeping the Village Hall (and beyond it the cricket pavilion) to your right and a store building to your left, pass a green gate, and continue along the left-hand edge of the car park towards the road.		
40	100	Cross the road and take the footpath immediately opposite. (There is a warning sign which implies that you should not, but it is presumably aimed not at you, but at people who might behave irresponsibly around the works ahead: the path, though sometimes overgrown and tricky, is clearly a signposted right of way.)		
41	101	Go straight on, towards the motorway, along a narrow path with a barbed-wire fence on your right.		
42	103	Continue ahead as the works access road comes in from the left.		
43	104	About 40 yds. before the motorway, turn left, briefly up a steep bank (now Wealdway), and continue ahead along the track, at first parallel to the motorway, then diverging from it a little.		
44	109	Carry on ahead, still with a fence to your left, as woodland opens out to the right.		
45	112	Follow the path as it swings to the left in front of a house.		
46	113	Pass a redundant stile and turn left on to a quiet road.		
47	114	Turn off to the right on a waymarked path through woodland.		
48	115	[Map point] Turn right on to the road.	645 588	
49	119	Continue along the road as it swings to the left.		
50	121	Cross a stream over a bridge.		
51	122	START OF THE SPINE SECTION Passing a tudor-style house on the right, carry straight on along the road (as the Wealdway turns away, up steps to the right).		5.75
52	123	After about 50 yds., turn left off the road and into trees over a small footbridge.		
53	124	[Map point] 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.		
54	125	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 th 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>		

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	Mins.*		OS	Miles
55	127	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 main route will diverge from the road.	644 582	
56	128	<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> Main route: 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).		
57	129	After passing apple trees on the left, go through a gate, and ahead, as waymarked, in the same direction.		
58	130	Go through a gap and straight on along an enclosed path.		
59	132	Cross a stile and go ahead.		
60	133	Turn right along a road.		
61	134	Turn left, just before the railway bridge, along an enclosed path.		
62	135	Go over a stile, and on down the right-hand side of a field.		
63	138	Go through a MKG, and onward, alongside the railway above.		
64	140	Turn right to go under the railway bridge. Then swing gradually leftwards to go around the right-hand edge of a field.		
65	144	<i>[To visit Offham Church, now divert instead to Detour 2 in the Appendix.]</i> Main route: [Map point] 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	6.69
66	146	Ignore the path on the right and continue ahead.		
67	147	Ignore the path on the left and continue ahead.		
68	149	Turn left at the cross-paths.		
69	152	Merge right into another path next to a dog-litter bin.	656 576	
70	153	When you reach the roadway, continue ahead.		
71	154	At the end of Pepinstraw Close, turn left along the main road, staying on the left-hand side.		
72	157	Pass the green opposite, and continue ahead.		
73	159	Cross the road and take the right turn along Tower Hill.		7.40
74	163	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.		
75	164	Cross the stile (at the entrance to Kentfield Farm) and continue ahead.		
76	171	Go through a gate, and go ahead along the broad track, with a field to your right and the quarry boundary to your left.		

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	Mins.*		OS	Miles
77	179	[Map point] 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.		
78	183	At the last moment a gap appears in the far-left corner. END OF THE SPINE SECTION Go through the gap and turn half-left along the crossing path.		8.55
79	189	Emerge on to Beaufighter Road and go straight ahead.		
80	190	Just before reaching the main road, turn left along Mosquito Road parallel to it.	666 551	
81	191	Cross the end of Javelin Road and continue ahead.		
82	192	Turn right through a gap in the fencing, just before the post box. Beyond the grass verge use the central refuge to cross the main road, and then turn right to go alongside it for about 15 yds.		
83	193	Turn left into Typhoon Road.		
84	194	Turn left into Meteor Road.		
85	196	At the end swing right with the walkway and start along Lancaster Way.		
86	198	About 50 yds. before the end of the road turn left through a gate (open from 6.30 a.m. to 10 p.m., except on Christmas Day). Go between the railings and turn right, and continue to the right along the roadway alongside the council offices towards the 'No Entry' sign (for traffic).		
87	199	As the roadway swings to the left, instead turn right through a gap, then left alongside a road, towards a roundabout.		
88	200	Reach the roundabout, the starting point of the walk.	671 555	9.45

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APPENDIX to Shortened Circuit

Detour 1 to West Malling Church

	Mins.*		OS	Miles
11A	0	Where the main route turns right into West Malling's High Street at Direction 11, instead turn left uphill.		
11B	2	At the top turn right into the churchyard of West Malling Church . To return to the main route simply retrace your steps.		0.09
11C	4	Rejoin the main route at the junction with Water Lane. Go straight on down the High Street and follow the directions of the main walk from 12. Add 4 minutes to subsequent total times and 0.18 miles to cumulative distances.		0.18

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Detour 2 to Offham Church

	Mins.*		OS	Miles
65A	0	Continue ahead, ignoring the track into the woods on the right.	654 581	
65B	2	When the main track turns right, instead turn left towards the railway.		
65C	3	Turn right along a broad track towards farm buildings and the church in the middle distance.		
65D	7	[Map point] Continue ahead between the buildings.	659 581	
65E	8	Bear right, just before a grassed area, aiming to the right of the church.		
65F		Turn left on a narrow path along the south side of the church.		
65G	9	Reach the south door of Offham Church . Then retrace your steps along the narrow path back towards the farm buildings.		
65H		Turn right to go between the farm buildings.		
65I	10	Bear left.		
65J	11	<i>[To rejoin the spine route where you left it (and follow it strictly), now divert instead to Detour 3.]</i> Continuation of Detour 2 (short cut to rejoin the main route): [Map point] Turn left along a roadway alongside the last of the buildings.	659 581	
65K	13	Go ahead as the roadway becomes a path between fields.		
65L	14	Ignore, for now, any minor short-cuts towards the trees on the right.		
65M	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.		
65N	20	Rejoin the main route at Direction 69, by merging left into the path next to a dog-litter bin. Add 12 minutes to subsequent total times and 0.58 miles to cumulative distances.	656 576	

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

	Mins.*		OS	Miles
65O	11	Continue to retrace your steps by going straight on along the broad path.		
65P	15	Turn left.		
65Q	16	Turn right, directly alongside the trees		
65R	18	Rejoin the main route at Direction 65 by turning left into the trees on the path you earlier ignored at Direction 65A. For Detours 1 and 2, add 18 minutes to subsequent total times and 0.88 miles to cumulative distances.	654 581	

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

	Mins.*		OS	Miles
56A	0	After crossing the main road continue alongside it on the walkway.		
56B	5	Cross Aldon Lane and continue ahead.		
56C	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	
56D	10	!!!F!!! Find a MKG in the fence to your left and go through, across the field towards another MKG.	64939 58311	
56E	12	!!!F!!! 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.		
56F	15	You have now rejoined the main route, going through the MKG at Direction 63. Add 5 minutes to subsequent total times and 0.25 miles to cumulative distances.		

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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!

OFFHAM - SHORTENED CIRCUIT without detours etc. (see next page for these)	Direction numbers	% of walk
Busy road	1-3, 10-11, 55, 71-72, 82	15
Quiet road \$\$	12-13, 16, 21b-22, 33-35, 46, 48-51, 60, 70, 73-75, 79-81, 83-87	25
Open field with livestock		0
Edge of field with livestock	24, 62	2
Field (or edge) without livestock **	5, 8-9, 25-26, 64, 76-77	17
Path (hedged, or otherwise forced)	4, 14-15, 17, 19-21a, 23, 28-32, 36-43, 45, 53-54, 56-59, 61, 69	24
Woods	6-7, 18, 27, 44, 47, 52, 63, 65-68, 78	16

STILES (5) – Details noted in June and July 2015, but **subject to frequent change**:

The stile at Direction 59 has climbs of 1 ft. and 2 ft. The gaps between are narrow (no more than 6 ins.)

The other stiles (the two in 15, and those at 62 and 75) have easy gaps.

At some times of year you are asked to keep your dog on a lead for nearly a mile (Directions 75-77), because of game-birds being reared.

For those using the detours, or the alternative at Direction 56, the numbers in the table on the previous page change a little, as follows:

OFFHAM - SHORTENED 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		15	14
Quiet road \$\$	65J	24	23
Open field with livestock		0	0
Edge of field with livestock		2	2
Field (or edge) without livestock **	65A-C, 65K-L, 65O-Q	21	22
Path (hedged, or otherwise forced)	65D-I	25	24
Woods	65M	13	15

OFFHAM - SHORTENED CIRCUIT via alternative in Direction 56	Direction numbers (not on the main route)	% of whole walk		
		No other detour	Detour 1 only	Detours 1 and 2
Busy road	56A-B	19	18	17
Quiet road \$\$	(65J)	24	23	22
Open field with livestock	56D-Ea	1	1	1
Edge of field with livestock	56Eb	2	2	2
Field (or edge) without livestock **	56C (65A-C, 65K-L, 65O-Q)	18	21	22
Path (hedged, or otherwise forced)	(65D-I)	21	22	21
Woods	(65M)	16	13	14