




WILMINGTON & SUTTON-AT-HONE

FULL CIRCUIT - Sheet 1
(first and last sections)



F Open fields (see 'Introductory Notes')

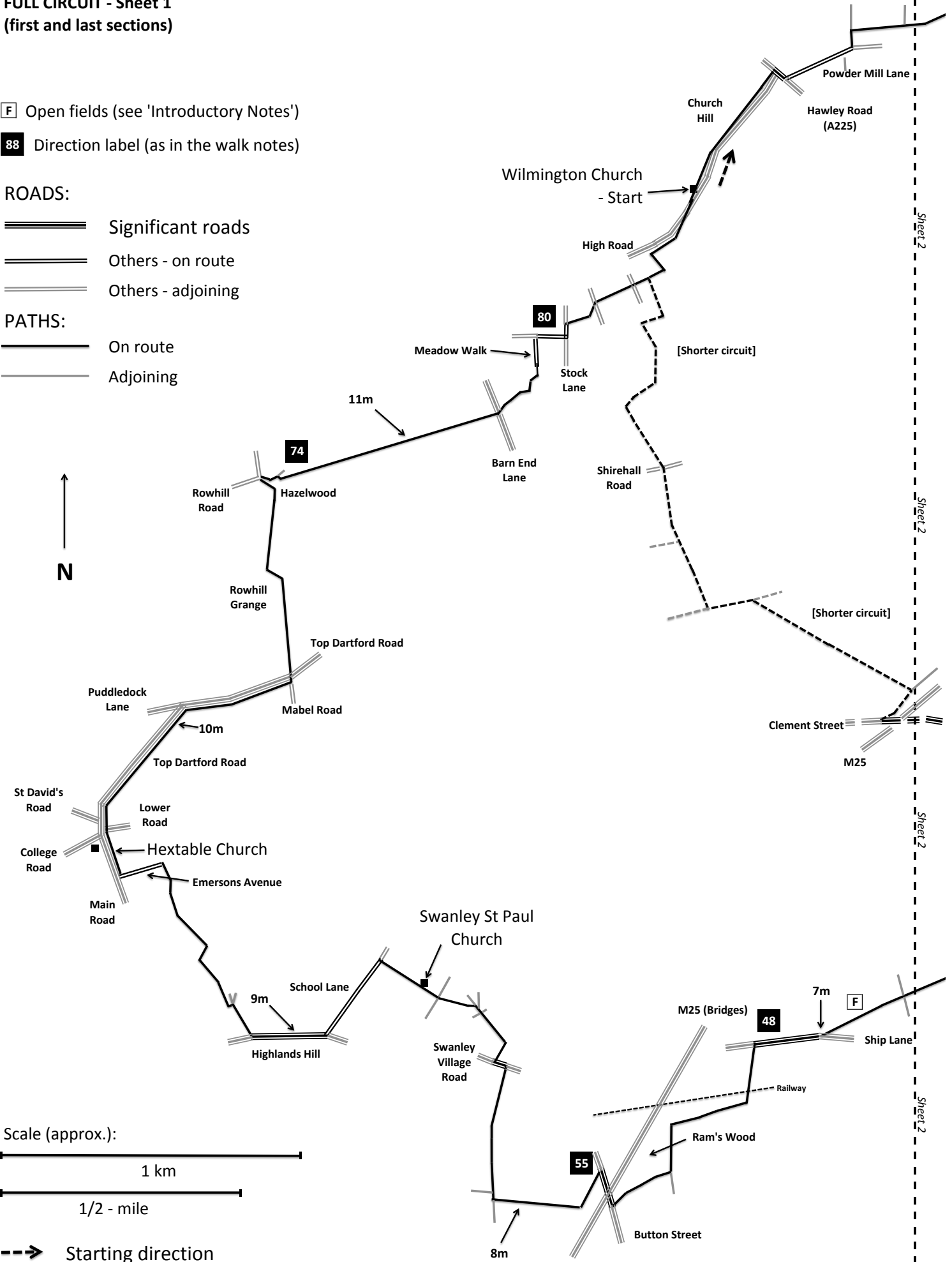
88 Direction label (as in the walk notes)

ROADS:

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

PATHS:

-  On route
-  Adjoining



Scale (approx.):



1 km

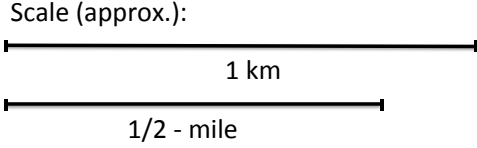


1/2 - mile

 Starting direction

WILMINGTON & SUTTON-AT-HONE

FULL CIRCUIT - Sheet 2 (middle section)



---> Cont. from Sheet 1

F Open fields (see 'Introductory Notes')

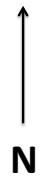
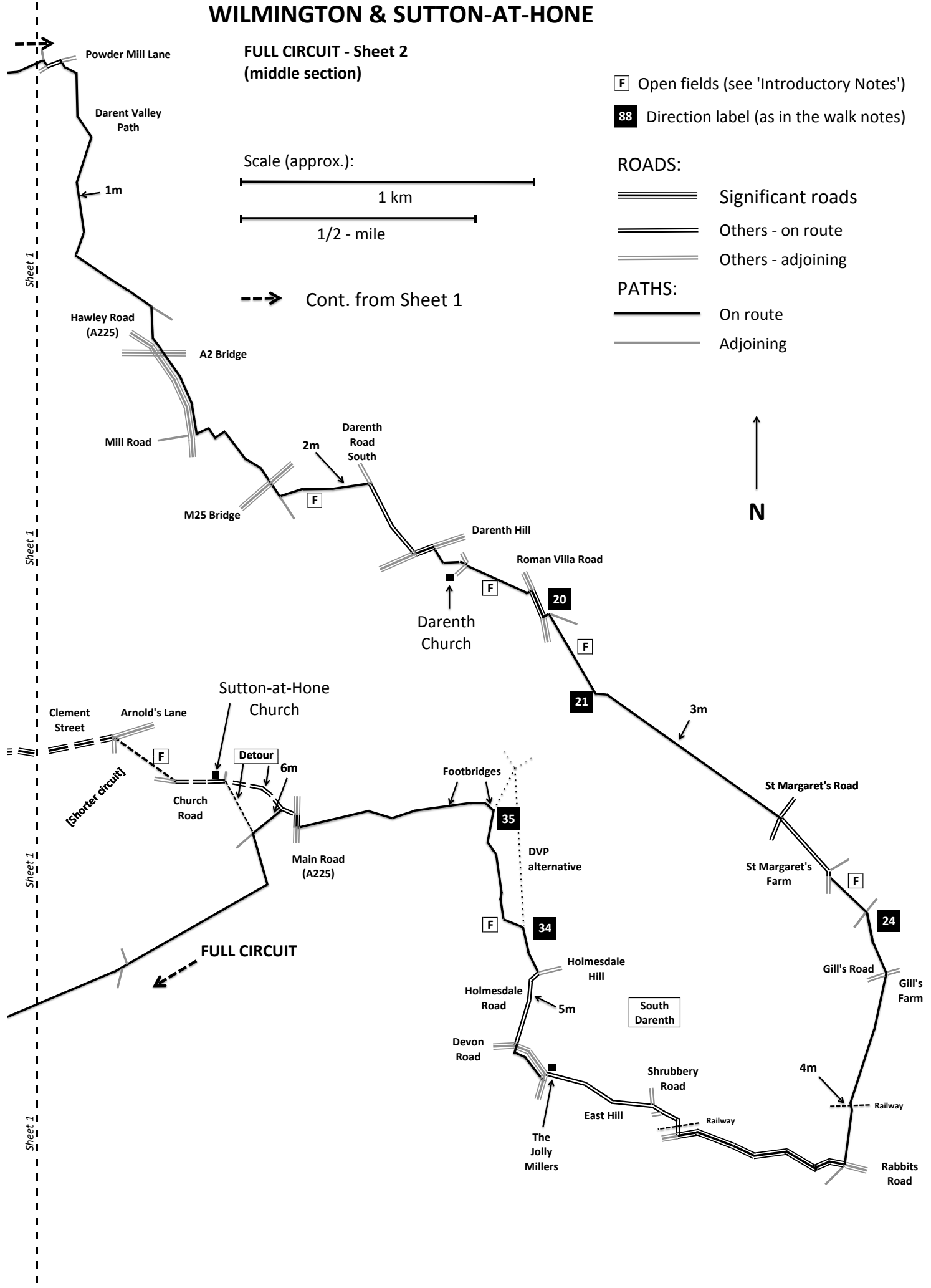
88 Direction label (as in the walk notes)

ROADS:

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

PATHS:

- On route
- Adjoining



Sheet 1

WILMINGTON & SUTTON-AT-HONE CIRCUIT - 12.00 miles

Churches in the full circuit:

Wilmington (start and finish)

Darenth (Direction 17)

Sutton-at-Hone (41A: Detour - see Appendix)

Swanley St Paul (61)

Hextable (70)

Associated local circuits

- HF1: Horton Kirby - Sutton-at-Hone - Darenth - Horton Kirby
- WS1: Wilmington - Swanley St Paul - Hextable - Wilmington

Full circuit: Put aside any prejudices about this being a built-up area. Much of this walk is in delightful countryside: magnificently across expansive fields after Sutton-at-Hone and again before Wilmington. And before that there is a pleasant 1.7-mile section of the Darent Valley Path.

Roads and hindrances:

There is a little road walking, mostly quite pleasant. The exception is Highlands Hill (64) which is a bit too busy for comfort, but not unduly dangerous and quite short.

Navigation at 20 needs a bit of thought.

(The railings at 36 - noted as a problem in earlier versions - have now disappeared.)

FULL CIRCUIT - Wilmington - Darenth - Sutton-at-Hone - Swanley St Paul - Hextable - Wilmington

Notes taken: January 2012; revised October 2014. Updated December 2016.

The start and finish is at Wilmington Church (DA2 7EH).

	Mins.*		OS	Miles
1		Start by turning left coming out of the church grounds, north-eastwards along the left-hand side of the B258 (Church Hill).	539 725	
2	5	At the junction at the bottom of the hill (A225, Hawley Road), go across and ahead along the sealed-off road which is a little to the right. At first anonymous, it is in fact Powder Mill Lane. It leads down past some new housing on the right towards an industrial estate.		
3	6	Go ahead past the entrance to the water treatment works.		

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

	Mins.*		OS	Miles
4	8	As soon as an open space (currently a building site) opens out to the right, with big industrial buildings beyond it, turn left along a short path. This leads before long to a sign-board, 'Brooklands Lakes'. Go to this board and turn right alongside the water. Keep straight on along the main path next to the railings on the right (not leftwards down to the water's edge).		
5	10	Carry straight on past another sign-board.		
6	12	START OF THE SPINE SECTION At the end of the path, in front of railings, turn right.		0.66
7	13	Reaching the road, turn left along it over bridges (Darent Valley Path), then right (still DVP) along the footpath immediately beyond them, alongside the river.		
8	16	At a fork, stay alongside the river to your right.		
9	24	Cross the river. A field then opens out to the right which you need to cross (to return to the A225 and go under the A2 bridge which looms above). Do this by cutting across the field at its narrowest point, starting about halfway along its left-hand edge: this short cut, along a bit of a track, is a very temporary departure from the waymarked DVP.		
10	26	Leave the field over a stile, and turn left alongside the A225 and under the bridge. Stay on the left-hand side of the road, passing the water treatment works and then Hawley Mill on the left.	550 721	
11	31	Turn left along the footpath opposite Mill Road, then follow the path right, and then left over the footbridge.		
12	32	Turn right again, so that once again you are alongside the river to your right.		
13	35	Go under the motorway bridge.		
14	36	!!!F!!! About 50 yds. after going under the motorway, use the first opportunity to swing leftwards with the path, slightly uphill, keeping to the left of a tributary of the river. Head towards the red-brick building in the middle distance.		
15	40	Turn right at the top, after a wooden kissing gate, along a road.	558 716	
16	44	After passing The Chequers, turn left up Darent Hill, next to the fruit distribution depot.		2.26
17	45	Soon after the road starts to climb, turn right towards Darent Church (St Margaret's, signposted).	560 713	
18	46	In the churchyard, after about 60 yds. follow the waymark which directs you diagonally leftwards towards the far corner. There go out through the gate, and continue, keeping the same line, across a roadway and alongside a little green, over another roadway, and then, still in the same general direction, into a wide field !!!F!!! angling upwards across it. (If there is no marked path, aim at a point about 60 yds. to the left of the right-hand end of the line of trees up ahead. There is some yellow marking at this target point.)		
19	51	Go up some steps and turn right along Roman Villa Road at the top.		

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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
20	52	[Map point] Turn off the road up steps to the left. [!!F!!] At the top follow the waymark which goes decisively to the right (i.e. to start with almost parallel to the road you have just left). <i>If there is no marked path this can be a difficult direction to find. Try this: Having gone up the steps, turn to the right and survey the scene. Ahead across the skyline is a modest row of trees running from left to right. The crossing point of these trees is your next target. To your right is Roman Villa Road which you have just crossed. A little way down alongside the road is a pole, possibly slightly masked by a tree. Diagonally to your left and further away is another pole, which might be camouflaged against a cluster of trees. Imagine a line joining these two poles. You need to cross that line about three-quarters of the way from its left to its right. Following that direction you can persuade yourself that there is a bit of a gap in the distant row of trees - as indeed there is: immediately to the left of the one which is (allowing for its lower ground level) probably the tallest of them. Make for this gap, which is at 56606 70843.</i>		
21	57	[Map point] Go between the trees. Follow the path beyond (essentially straight, though at first slightly left, then right, to reach the top of the little rise ahead) and pass the left-hand end of the line of tall trees coming in at right-angles ahead.	566 708	
22	66	Cross the road at St Margaret's Farm, and go ahead along the track opposite and through the farmyard at the end.		3.26
23	70	[!!F!!] Beyond the farmyard start out along the obvious track, but after about 20 yds., as the track goes a little to the right, follow instead a much lesser one (unsigned) diagonally to the left. You are aiming at a waymark post across the field, next to the last (right-hand) of a row of tall trees.		
24	72	[Map point] Turn half-right at this post, along a clear path heading towards white buildings in the middle distance.		
25	75	Cross a road and continue ahead through the farmyard and then along a track.		
26	78	After passing a barrier, continue straight ahead, ignoring the track which goes away to the right.		
27	81	Go slightly left over the railway bridge, then correct back slightly rightwards to the original direction.		
28	83	END OF THE SPINE SECTION Turn right along Rabbits Road.	574 692	4.11
29	90	At the crossroads, turn right over the railway bridge. Follow the main road as it swings down to the left of the grass area. Go downhill alongside this road, using the parallel walkway to the right of it, which then becomes an ordinary pavement.		
30	96	Turn right along the road at the junction by the Jolly Millers.		
31	98	Ignoring the bridge to your left, again continue along the major road as it swings to the right. Keep the stream to your left alongside.		
32	100	The road swings to the right again. Immediately afterwards turn left along the signposted path (Darent Valley Path).		

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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
33	101	After a short path between hedges and fences, take a right fork, immediately after Garden House, over a small stile and along a narrow path (not towards the more obvious big gate ahead).		
34	103	[Map point] [!F!] At the end of this path, as it opens out into a large field, ignore the waymark and instead turn left along the edge of the field. <i>[This path is not recognised as a right of way on the OS map, but seems harmless enough. And I came across several people routinely walking it. To stay on marked rights of way, go straight ahead with the DVP waymark after all, then double back sharply left to reach the bridge mentioned below: but it seems an unnecessary diversion.]</i> Follow the path along the left of the field, turning right with the field-edge, then swing back and forth, alongside the stream on your left.		
35	109	[Map point] Look out on the left for a waymarked path (easily missed) leading immediately to a footbridge. Cross over the bridge into trees and then follow the path as it winds around through them: the line is generally a little to the left relative to the original direction of the footbridge.	562 704	
36	111	Cross another footbridge and go through the MKG beyond. The route carries on straight ahead: strictly speaking it is along the narrow path between fences, though sometimes the farmer invites you to go the other side of the right-hand fence (temporarily, to avoid mud: he says he often does this).		
37	113	After a metal gate and a very brief right-left, go straight ahead on the main path, which then bends slightly to the right.		
38	115	You can choose between two bridges over the water.		
39	117	Go through a wooden kissing gate on to a driveway, and ahead towards the main road.		
40	118	Turn right along the road, cross at the lights and carry on; then left along Church Road.		5.90
41	119	<i>[To visit <u>Sutton-at-Hone Church</u>, now divert instead to the <u>Detour</u> in the Appendix.]</i> Main route: When the road goes uphill to the right, instead go straight ahead alongside a field, with a line of trees to your left.		
42	121	At the cross-paths, when the line of trees comes to an end, turn left, uphill with small trees to your left.	554 704	
43	124	Turn right at the cross-paths at the top. This path now goes straight ahead for a good while, gradually angling towards the motorway on the right.		
44	131	Straight ahead at the junction of paths.		
45	134	And again.		
46	137	[!F!] Carry straight on ahead in the same direction (or perhaps very slightly left), though the path becomes less obvious. You can perhaps just make out a signpost you are heading for where the track reaches the distant road ahead. The signpost is at the right-hand end of a row of bushes at the roadside.		
47	141	Turn right along the road.	543 696	

* *"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
48	144	[Map point] Still before the motorway bridge, turn left along a footpath, heading away from the road towards the railway.		7.14
49	146	Cross the railway with due care. To your right are the first of the trees which will provide navigational excitement for the next ten minutes or so. <i>(There are numerous alternative ways through them, of which the one I describe seems to me the best: but there is not much scope to go far wrong. The general line is first up parallel to - and ideally about 50 yds. to the left of - the railway, then a left swing at the top, then a meander diagonally down to the right towards the motorway which has crossed the railway more or less at right-angles. If in doubt tend to the right as you will not be able to stray beyond first the railway and then the motorway, which between them form a protective corner.)</i> After the railway crossing, go ahead and then follow the edge of the trees round to the right.		
50	147	About 50 yds. after this right-swing go through a gap in the trees to your right, and adjust leftwards to join a clear path going uphill roughly parallel to the edge of the wood.		
51	151	The forest-edge swings to the left at the top, and your path follows it, through what amounts to approximately a right-angle.		
52	153	At 53760 69161 fork down to the right, away from the forest-edge path, to the right of a big holly bush. Follow the clearest path diagonally downhill. You are heading towards a grassy field beyond the trees, largely obscured as you approach it by a clump of holly bushes.	538 692	
53	155	Pass to the right of the clump and go ahead to emerge from the wood. Cross the field towards a stile and dark green gate ahead to the right as you converge on the motorway.		
54	157	Turn right along the road and go under the motorway bridge. Stay on the right-hand pavement if the road is busy.	536 690	
55	158	[Map point] Cross and, next to a big metal gate, turn sharp left on to a broad track (unsignposted) which doubles back parallel to the motorway above to the left.		
56	160	Follow the path as it swings to the right.		
57	164	Turn right along a rough road.		
58	167	Go over the railway bridge.		
59	170	Turn left on to the road by The Lamb, then about 60 yds. later turn right, next to 'Old College'. Go down the track and at the bottom follow it as it swings to the left.		
60	173	Keep to the left of a concrete wall, then alongside it go half-left up a narrow path, just to the left of a red-brick building. On your right are allotments and to the right, after a while, is Orchard Cottage. Depending on the season there may be occasional glimpses of the church (ahead and slightly to the right).		
61	175	Through an old metal gate into the churchyard, and straight ahead past Swanley St Paul Church , then alongside a playing field on your right.		

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

	Mins.*		OS	Miles
62	178	Turn left along the road.		8.74
63	182	Turn right at the T-junction along Highlands Hill.		
64	183	Carry on down the rather unpleasant road, ignoring the right turn at Tudor House and Anthony's Lane.		
65	185	Turn right at the main (second) entrance to Highlands Farm. (There is no signpost, but there is an SD reference (SD67) on the Highways notice.) Keep to the left past the farm buildings. There is then a fierce sign saying that there is no public footpath. I think this refers to the path up to the right, or possibly to the one which goes straight ahead. Best anyway to do a quick left-right just after this notice to continue in more or less the same direction. This takes you on to a path along the top, right-hand edge of a big field. Walk the length of this path.	523 696	
66	189	At the end, just before the houses, swing right, then left (with the field to your right), so that you are going alongside the houses on your left.		
67	190	Go straight ahead (even if, at some times of the year, an inviting path turns away to the right), and keep the back gardens of the houses on your left.		
68	193	After passing tennis courts and a playing field on your right, turn left down Emersons Avenue, next to number 28.		
69	195	At the T-junction at the bottom turn right along Main Road.		
70	197	Hextable Church is the modern building (currently - January 2017 - hidden behind works and their green boarding) on the left-hand side of Main Road at the crossroads (the junction with College Road). But the walk continues on the right-hand side of Main Road - it becomes Top Dartford Road after you negotiate the crossroads - and goes up slightly to right, to the left of an attractive open space.		9.71
71	203	Stay with the main road as it swings a bit further to the right (as Puddledock Lane comes in from the left).		
72	208	Cross the road and leave it by turning left, opposite Mabel Road, up a narrow footpath between fences on both sides. Follow this path gently uphill into trees. Continue to follow the obvious path as it wanders right and left among trees and fences.	524 708	
73	217	After passing a big house on the left, you reach a road. Turn right, not along the road itself, but on the sharper right turn on to a footpath.	524 715	10.69
74	218	[Map point] This path emerges from the trees into a field (by way of a little kick to right, then left) and sets out across it towards Wilmington, visible in the distance.		
75	227	When you reach the main road, cross it, turn left, then after about 20 yds. (next to New Barn Cottages) turn right along the footpath. Then start working your way through a small residential estate. The prevailing direction is diagonally leftwards.		

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

	Mins.*		OS	Miles
76	228	First go ahead and slightly left across the garage court and a small parking area. Go between numbers 34 and 35, and then diagonally across another parking area beyond, aiming at the far left-hand corner, to the left of six parking spaces. Go slightly left along an alleyway. This then turns right between the sides of houses.		
77	230	At the end of this short path, turn left at a T-junction of paths, and go along with numbers 28 and 26 on the left. The path leads to the end of a cul-de-sac. Continue straight on along this road, which turns out to be Meadow Walk.		
78	231	At the end turn right.	533 719	
79	232	At the end turn left along Stock Lane (towards The Laurels).		
80	233	[Map point] Turn right, opposite 'Kanderboden', at the first lamp post, along footpath DR110. Though indicated this turning could easily be missed.		
81	235	Go straight ahead across a private driveway, past the front doors of houses.		
82	236	Go straight across a road and continue along the footpath opposite.		
83	237	[The shorter circuit joins from the right.]		11.72
84	238	Follow the path as it turns left between fences.		
85	239	When you reach the main road, turn right.		
86	244	After crossing the A2 on a bridge, you arrive back at the starting point, Wilmington Church .	539 725	12.00

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

APPENDIX to Full Circuit

Detour to Sutton-at-Hone Church

	Mins.*		OS	Miles
41A	0	For the detour to Sutton-at-Hone Church : At Direction 41, follow Church Road uphill to the right instead of going straight ahead alongside the field.		
41B	3	The church is on the right, with the path to continue the walk opposite on the left. Go down this field-path to rejoin the main route at the cross-paths below.		
41C	5	At the cross-paths go straight ahead. (This is the point at which the main route has had to turn left, at Direction 42.) Add 4 minutes to subsequent total times and 0.20 miles to cumulative distances.	554 704	

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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!

WILMINGTON & SUTTON -AT-HONE - FULL CIRCUIT	Direction numbers	% of walk
Busy road	1, 10, 16, 19, 40, 63-64, 69-71, 85	14
Quiet road \$\$	2-3, 15, 28-31, 39, 47, 54, 57-59, 62, 68, 77b-79	20
Open field with livestock		0
Edge of field with livestock		0
Field (or edge) without livestock **	9, 14, 18b, 20-21, 23-24, 25b-27, 34, 41-46, 48-49, 53, 55-56, 65b-66, 74	36
Path (hedged, or otherwise forced)	4-8, 11-13, 17-18a, 22, 25a, 32-33, 36-38, 60-61, 65a, 67, 72, 75-77a, 80-84	26
Woods	35, 50-52, 73	4

** 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 (5) - Details noted in December 2016, but **subject to frequent change**:

The stiles in Directions **10** and **52** have easy gaps; and the one in **33** is low, with rises of about 9 ins. and 9 ins.

The railway crossing in **49** is protected by stiles on both sides. The one on the far side has easy gaps. The one on the near side is a double stile, wired down to the ground, with gaps of 6 ins., 1 ft. and 1 ft. There are also gaps 1 ft. high and 6 ins. wide a little above ground level.