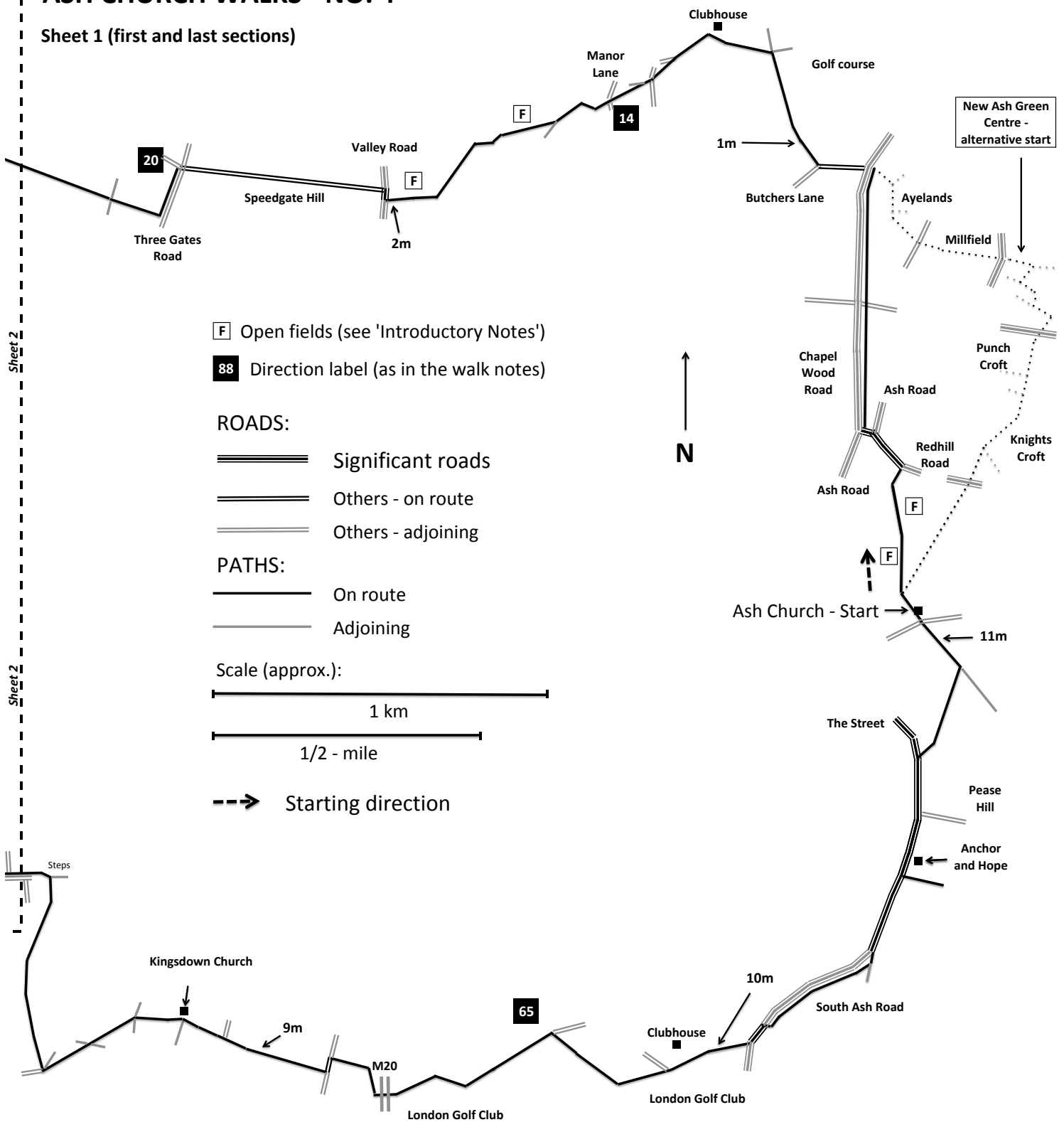


ASH CHURCH WALKS - NO. 4

Sheet 1 (first and last sections)

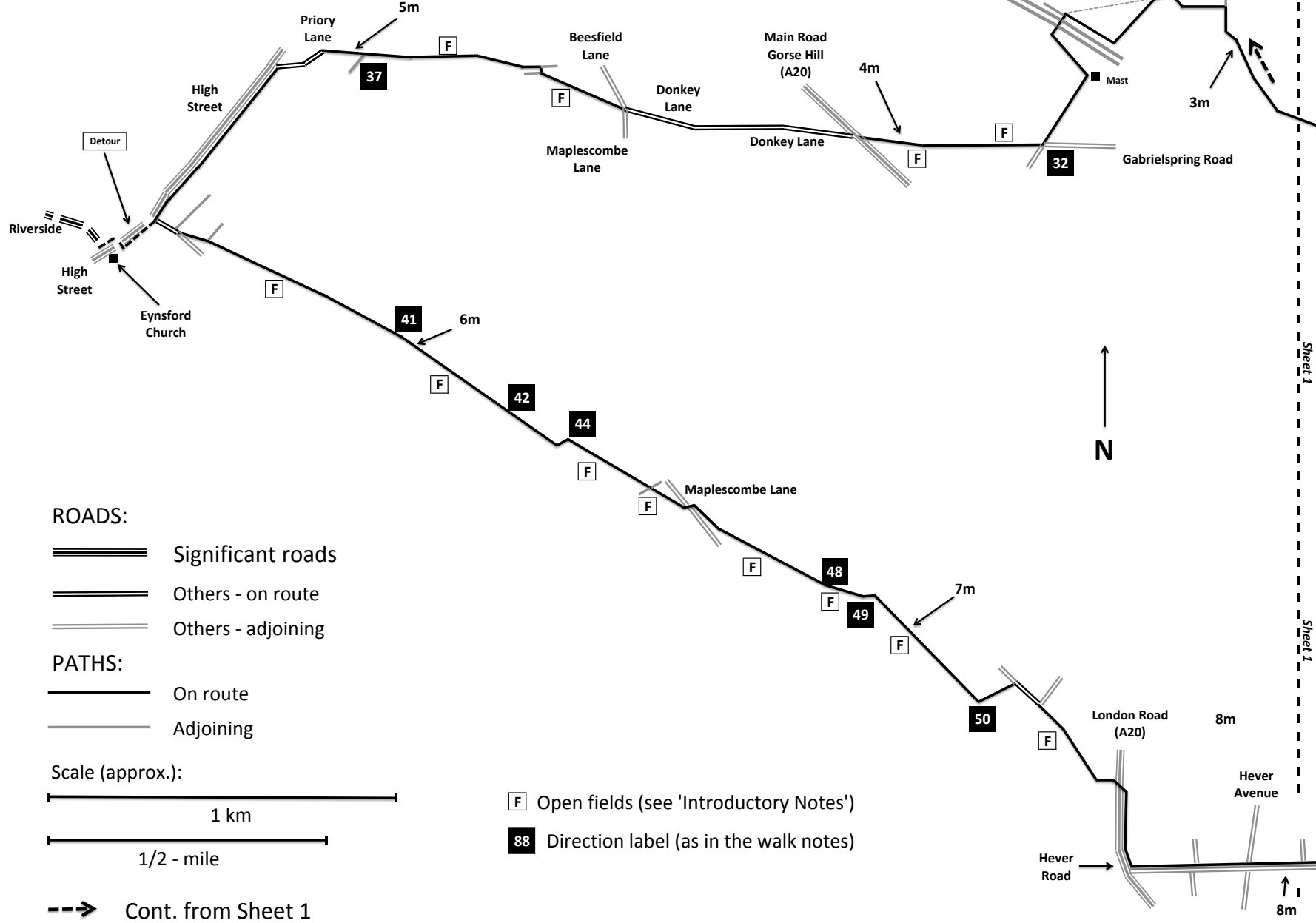


Sheet 2

Sheet 2

ASH CHURCH WALKS - NO. 4

Sheet 2 (middle section)



ASH CHURCH WALKS - No.4 (26 August 2013) - 11.47 miles (including detour) **(Ash - Fawkham - Eynsford - Kingsdown - South Ash - Ash)**

Some extended ups and downs: not dreadfully steep, but the climbs are long enough to deserve some respect. The reward is a number of fine views. Two golf courses; and scope for a riverside picnic in Eynsford if treated as an all-day walk on a fine day (as was the case for us).

Roads and hindrances:

The short stretch of road near the end (72-73) 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.

Eynsford – if you venture into it - is a busy village with a fair amount of fairly civilised traffic. The bridge alongside the ford is narrow, but any traffic crossing it is likely to be very slow.

The crossing of Chapel Wood Road (7) needs a little care. The A20 is crossed twice, but on both occasions with excellent sightlines. The other road sections are relatively harmless.

Navigation at 27-28 needs a bit of thought, and the paths at 44-45 and 51-53 can disappear at some times of year: if so the grid references should help. The wooden footbridge at 35 required more respect than I gave it (though it is probably fine when dry). The stiles, particularly on the return leg, though manageable with reasonable care, are not the best.

In reviewing the Eynsford-Kingsdown section (September 2014) I found it desperately overgrown in some places – but that simply reflected conditions as they were generally that summer: it was tiresome rather than a serious impediment (and – January 2017 – it is now much better).

Notes taken: mainly August 2013; partially reviewed (Eynsford-Kingsdown) September 2014; and fully reviewed in January and February 2017

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

** *But in the event we modified the early stages to enable people to join us in New Ash Green. If NAG locals want to do this, they simply have to ensure that they reach Chapel Wood Road ('the by-pass') opposite Butchers Lane (Direction 7 - this point is next to 67 Ayelands). This takes about 10 minutes from the village centre, through the south (left) side of Millfield, then, after crossing Ayelands Lane, basically a rightward (north-westerly) diagonal across Ayelands.*

	Mins.*		OS	Miles
1		From Church Road, near Ash Church, go along the path towards the main door of the church itself. Follow the path around the west (left) end of the church, and go ahead into and through the Parish Council's burial ground to a MKG.	601 645	
2	1	!!!F!!! Here go a little to the left, to a wooden gate on the other side of the field, about halfway along the length of the fence. Go through the gate, and on towards a MKG in the far left-hand corner.		
3	3	!!!F!!! Go through the MKG and continue across the width of a large field towards the wall of trees on the far side.		

* *"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
4	5	Cross a stile and go into the trees, and continue along a narrow path between fences. Then go through a MKG, across a wide track and on, over a little hump, to a road (Redhill Road).		
5	6	Turn left along the road, and cross it when convenient.		
6	8	You reach a complex road junction, at which your objective is to turn right along the second of the two roads. To achieve this (assuming you are by now approaching on the right-hand side of Redhill Road) cross the first road, then, after going left for a few yards, swing to the right – first on grass, then on a footway alongside a sign which confirms that you setting out along Chapel Wood Road. Go ahead along this footway, past the fire station, across the Coltstead access road and past the Royal Oak.		
7	17	Cross the road and turn left down Butchers Lane. (Sightlines are not particularly good - as the road bends at this point - but probably just about adequate. If you are uncomfortable about visibility, there are straight stretches both before and after, but both bring into play the other side of the road where there is no footway. Either way, you need to finish up walking down Butchers Lane.)	600 658	
8	18	Just before the road bends to the left, turn off it to the right along a narrow, partially hidden track. This is immediately after a much larger gateway (currently 'Go Bananas') and before the entrance to Olivers Farm and a few yards after the entrance to Johnsons Farm opposite). Go along this track, through trees.		
9	20	Emerge from the trees at a MKG, and go straight ahead along the left-hand edge of the golf course.		
10	23	At a junction of paths (several waymarks, with clubhouse visible up to the left) turn left and go past the 1st tee, the lake, and the (presumably 18th) green, and up past the left-hand side of the clubhouse.	598 662	
11	25	In the car park follow the metalled driveway leftwards towards the exit.		1.26
12	27	Save a few yards by cutting across the grass, as waymarked (about 15 yds. to the left of a big tree).		
13	28	At another waymark post, rejoin and go straight across the driveway, taking the narrow roadway which goes very slightly to your right - not the double (i.e. soon forking) buggy track further to the right, which heads towards the 9 th tee). Go ahead to the road beyond the golf-club grounds.		
14	29	[Map point] Cross the road (at its junction with the Fawkham Hospital entrance drive) and continue opposite through an unusual red-brown metal gate, along a narrow enclosed path.		
15	31	A long, fairly narrow field opens out to the right. !!!F!!! At the end of the fence on the right, go diagonally across this field and head for the far right-hand corner.	591 660	
16	34	At the corner go slightly left, then (not immediately, but after about 10 yds.) turn right, down through trees.		

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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
17	35	Emerge from the wood and follow the path as it goes leftwards along its edge, and then straight ahead into another bit of woodland, continuing downward and slightly to the right.		
18	37	Pass what was once a stile on your right to leave the trees. !!!F!!! Ignore the waymark pointing to the left. (You need SD225, not SD224.) In front of you is a field, very long from left to right, but narrow ahead. It is across this width, ahead and about 20-30 yds. to the left of straight, that the footpath goes, heading for a gap which is initially quite invisible. I also found (in winter) little indication on the ground of the correct line; but it is easy enough to find the gap as you approach the far side. When you have done so, go through, and down a steep slope (taking special care if wet) and go on between fences to a stile and, via some steps, to the main road beyond.	588 658	
19	40	Turn right along the road for a few yards, then left up Speedgate Hill, for a few minutes' road-walking, steeply uphill.		
20	49	[Map point] At the top you reach the junction with Three Gates Road. Turn left, not along the road itself but through a MKG on to the footpath alongside the road and to the right of it, the other side of the fence.	580 659	2.40
21	51	After two fields' widths, go through into a third and immediately turn right, to go alongside the fence on your right.		
22	54	Through a metal gate and straight across the road to a broad track opposite.		
23	58	After a big barn (on the left) keep ahead along the main track, under power lines, with the fence on your left.		
24	62	Stay on the main track, bending slightly to the right, as it enters the wood.		
25	63	After about 100 yds. turn left into the trees. There used to be a waymark here, but currently (January 2017) the only indication is an orange horseshoe.	572 662	
26	64	Emerge from the trees and follow the path as it goes downhill, with a scrubby piece of land to the left and a fine view to the right.		
27	65	<i>As the route climbs from the bottom, the realistic route (described here) to the far side of the huge field above and the footbridge over the M20 now seems to diverge a little from the strict right-of-way line by going round the field's left-hand edge and not – the track we followed – directly across it (a line which used to be cleared and waymarked but – January 2017 – is no longer).</i> Reaching the bottom, turn a little to the left along the field-edge and follow it uphill, bending slightly to the right.		
28	68	Turn right at the corner at the end, and then look out for the gap and waymark to your left leading towards a stile and a footbridge beyond it.		
29	70	Go through the gap, leaving the field behind you, and, via the stile, towards and over the footbridge.	568 662	

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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
30	72	After the footbridge turn left, along the left-hand side of a field.		3.48
31	74	Turn right at the mast, along the other edge of the same field.		
32	77	[Map point] After a house on the left, just before reaching a road, look out for a gate ahead and on the left. (It is simplest - though perhaps not strictly correct - to avoid the gate by continuing along the field-edge for the last 20 yds. or so ahead of the coming right turn, rather than reaching it slightly further left via gate and stile!) !!!F!!! Level with the gate, strike out to the right away from it (about a 60-degree turn) along a path across the field. The path may be barely visible, but aim about 80 yds. to the right of the large round tree - the biggest in the line opposite.		
33	81	!!!F!!! Go through that line of trees and continue down along the same diagonal line, aiming slightly to the left of a distant red-brick building (only its chimneys visible in summer - note these at the outset as they will disappear!). Be careful over this field: it can be very rough underfoot, despite appearances.	564 658	
34	84	Find and go down steep steps, a good 100 yds. to the left of the field corner, to reach the A20. Cross it and go down Donkey Lane opposite. (The A20 is fast and busy, but the crossing perfectly feasible, with care, as the sightlines are excellent.)		
35	92	At the end of Donkey Lane, at the junction with Maplescombe Lane and Beesfield Lane, go straight across the green triangle, across the road, through the undergrowth, and over a wooden footbridge (to the left of the footpath indicator post, and dangerously slippery when wet). Then cross an old but sound stile, and turn diagonally right in the field. !!!F!!! Head for the funnel at the top right-hand corner.		4.50
36	96	Do not go through the gate at the top, but just before it cross a stile on the right. This leads down to a broad track a few yards below. !!!F!!! Turn left to follow this track as it goes, only slightly uphill, across the field (not further left still along the field-edge).	553 660	
37	104	[Map point] Now descending, you reach a mast. <i>Earlier versions of these notes reflect what we actually did on the walk, which was to turn left at the mast and follow the field edge to reach a playing field next to Bower Lane, beyond which we had to decide whether to turn left to continue on the route, or detour to the right (as we did) to break for lunch around Eynsford's Riverside. But the left turn at the mast is now ruled out by a sign clearly establishing that path as private. So what follows is a slight variant along a legitimate route.</i> At the mast, now instead of turning left, go straight on past it.		
38	106	Follow the path as it becomes a metalled road and swings left between houses.		
39	107	Past an inviting bench, swing right with the road down to the main road ahead.		

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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
40	108	Turn left into Eynsford High Street. Stay on the left-hand pavement.		
41	114	[For <i>Eynsford riverside</i> , now divert instead to the <i>Detour</i> in the Appendix.] Turn left up Bower Lane.		5.50
42	115	About 10 yds. after the entrance to a playing field, fork left along footpath SD172, and after a few more yards go past a gate.		
43	116	!!!F!!! As the main track swings to the left, instead strike out diagonally to the right of it, quite steeply uphill through the field. (If the direction is unclear, the point you are aiming at is a little to the right of the highest point in the rolling hill up ahead. It looks like a gap between tall trees to either side: in fact there are trees there – just smaller ones.)		
44	127	[Map point] !!!F!!! At the top, at a waymark, step up through a gap and continue in virtually the same direction across the next field. It is tempting to get drawn towards the trees on the left, as the straight line seems to be going nowhere; but this line is correct, as becomes clear at the top of the rise.		
45	132	[Map point] The line of trees on the left juts out to meet you, at a waymark post. Continue downwards alongside the trees, at the left-hand edge of the sloping field.	552 651	
46	134	At the far left-hand corner continue ahead into trees.		
47	135	[Map point] !!!F!!! Emerging from the trees, turn towards the right - about 60 degrees. <i>(At this point the next stage of the walk lies open before you. You will be going diagonally down to the road below, and following much the same line up the other side of the valley, making a small dog-leg left and right to go through the gap clearly visible in the vertical line of trees.)</i> Start by dropping down to the road, aiming roughly towards the nearest of the houses away to the right at the bottom.		
48	138	!!!F!!! Cross a wide track and continue ahead.		
49	140	Reaching the road, go down a few steps to cross it, and up to cross the stile immediately opposite (still SD172, as marked). Then turn right to walk quite close to the roadside hedge on the right (aiming at the left of the first house, visible ahead).		6.58
50	143	Reaching the red-brick wall at the side of the house, cross the stile to the left of it. !!!F!!! Then head steeply uphill, on a half-left diagonal, aiming at the gap a little more than halfway up the vertical line of trees ahead.		
51	149	[Map point] !!!F!!! Go through the gap and on, slightly further to the right. To establish the line, look at the line of trees up to the left, and aim at first at the furthest right of those you can see.	56118 64535	

* *"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
52	152	[Map point] !!!F!!! The line of trees in fact continues further than originally visible. In its extension find and cross a stile. Then follow a winding path rightwards up through a few trees, crossing another stile at the top, and emerging from them go on and upwards a little to the left. Aim first towards the end of the line of trees immediately visible, and when that line bends away look for a stile about 100 yds. further on in another row of trees beyond.	56214 64478	
53	159	[Map point] Cross that stile. (This is the end of the long climb!) Then go ahead along the left-hand side of a field, with trees on your left.	56540 64207	7.23
54	161	At the end go over the stile and turn right along the roadway.		
55	163	!!!F!!! As the road swings left, instead go straight ahead over a stile, and straight on across the field, following the power lines and heading towards a large green warehouse in the middle distance.		
56	167	At the far side of the field, next to the green warehouse, cross a stile, go ahead a few yards, then turn left along a narrow path between security fences.		
57	168	Reach the A20 and turn right alongside it. Cross when convenient.		
58	172	About 100 yds. after the Oasis Café, turn left along Hever Road. Follow it along its whole length, beyond the point at which it becomes a cul-de-sac for vehicles.		7.76
59	179	Keep ahead down the steps, and at the bottom turn right along the bottom right-hand edge of a sloping field.		
60	180	At the corner go ahead into the trees, past the railings and on along the broad path. Ignore paths on the left, and continue parallel to the back-garden fences on the right.		
61	187	Turn left at the end to stay in the trees. Then ignore, straight away, the broad track forking away to the left and soon afterwards what looks, deceptively, like a right fork. Keep going straight ahead.	576 631	
62	190	Continue ahead at the cross-paths.		
63	192	After the path swings a little to the right, go straight on at the cross-paths, stepping over a log-barrier.		
64	193	Pass Kingsdown Church on your left.		
65	195	At the road turn right, then immediately left. After a MKG go ahead along a broad, rough avenue, continuing directly below the power lines until you reach another road.	581 632	8.91
66	199	Turn left along the road, and then immediately right, alongside (not into!) the entrance to Eagles Farm. This takes you over speed ramps alongside some industrial units before swinging right at the end.	584 632	
67	202	The path turns left under the M20, and on to London Golf Club land. Go straight on along the clear path across the course.		

* *"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
68	211	At a choice of road or track, it is probably best to use the latter. (They come together again very soon.) Opposite the clubhouse complex use the raised walkway parallel to the road. Then keep going straight, even at the end, where you cross a golf-course road and the way ahead looks unpromising. It soon emerges (after swinging to the right of a white house) through a MKG to a road.		
69	218	<i>At this point the old route which we followed is no longer available. For the record, it involved turning left along the road and after 100 yds. or so leaving it to cross the field over to the right; then at the far side turning left along the rough track called Wise's Lane, to reach the road as at Direction 70. What follows here is the new route – actually a little quicker – to the end of Wise's Lane.</i> Cross the road and, after passing the end of the hedge, turn left along the new bridleway, following it as it swings gently right, parallel to the road on your left.	597 632	10.05
70	224	After turning left at a T-junction (into the end of Wise's Lane) rejoin the road and turn right along it.		
71	227	Pass the 'Anchor and Hope' on the right.		
72	231	(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.		
73	236	Continue along the right-hand edge of the cricket field.		
74	238	Go over a lift-and-drop stile. Ash Church is ahead of you.	601 645	11.03

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

[If returning to a start in New Ash Green, continue as at Direction 1, but at Direction 2 stay alongside the right-hand hedge towards a MKG. Then carry straight on, finally reaching and crossing Redhill Road and going over the embankment on to the sports field, with Knights Croft and Punch Croft over to the right, and the village centre invisible beyond them.]

APPENDIX

Detour to Eynsford riverside

	Mins.*		OS	Miles
41A	0	Instead of turning left up Bower Lane at Direction 41, continue straight ahead.		
41B	3	Eynsford Church is on the left. Here use the zebra crossing and go down the road opposite the church towards the bridge next to the ford.	540 655	

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

	Mins.*		OS	Miles
41C	5	Cross the bridge and enjoy the space between the road and the river to your left. Then retrace your steps to the point where you diverged from the main route (at 41A).		0.22
41D	10	Rejoin the main route by a right turn up Bower Lane and continue from Direction 41. Add 10 minutes to subsequent total times and 0.44 miles to cumulative distances.		0.44

* *"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 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!

ASH CHURCH WALKS - No.4	Direction numbers	% of walk
Busy road	5-6, 19a, 40, 57, 70-71	14
Quiet road \$\$	7, 11, 13, 19b, 29, 34, 38-39, 41, 54, 58, 64, 66	17
Open field with livestock	50-51	2
Edge of field with livestock	20-21, 72b	2
Field (or edge) without livestock **	2-3, 9, 18a, 26-28, 30-33, 35-36, 42-45, 47-49, 52b-53, 55, 72a, 73	33
Path (hedged, or otherwise forced)	1, 10, 12, 14, 18b, 22-23, 37, 56, 59, 65, 67-69	20
Woods	4, 8, 15-17, 24-25, 46, 52a, 60-63	12

** 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 (14) - Details updated in January and February 2017, but **subject to frequent change**:

The stile in Direction **4** has a dog gate.

Nearly all the other stiles have easy gaps: those in **18, 29, 36, 50, 52** (both), **53, 54, 55, 56** and **76**.

Exceptions are those in **35** (climbs of 12 ins. and 2 ft., with a gap of 6 ins. below) and **49** - a double stile with climbs of 1 ft., 9 ins., and 30 ins..