

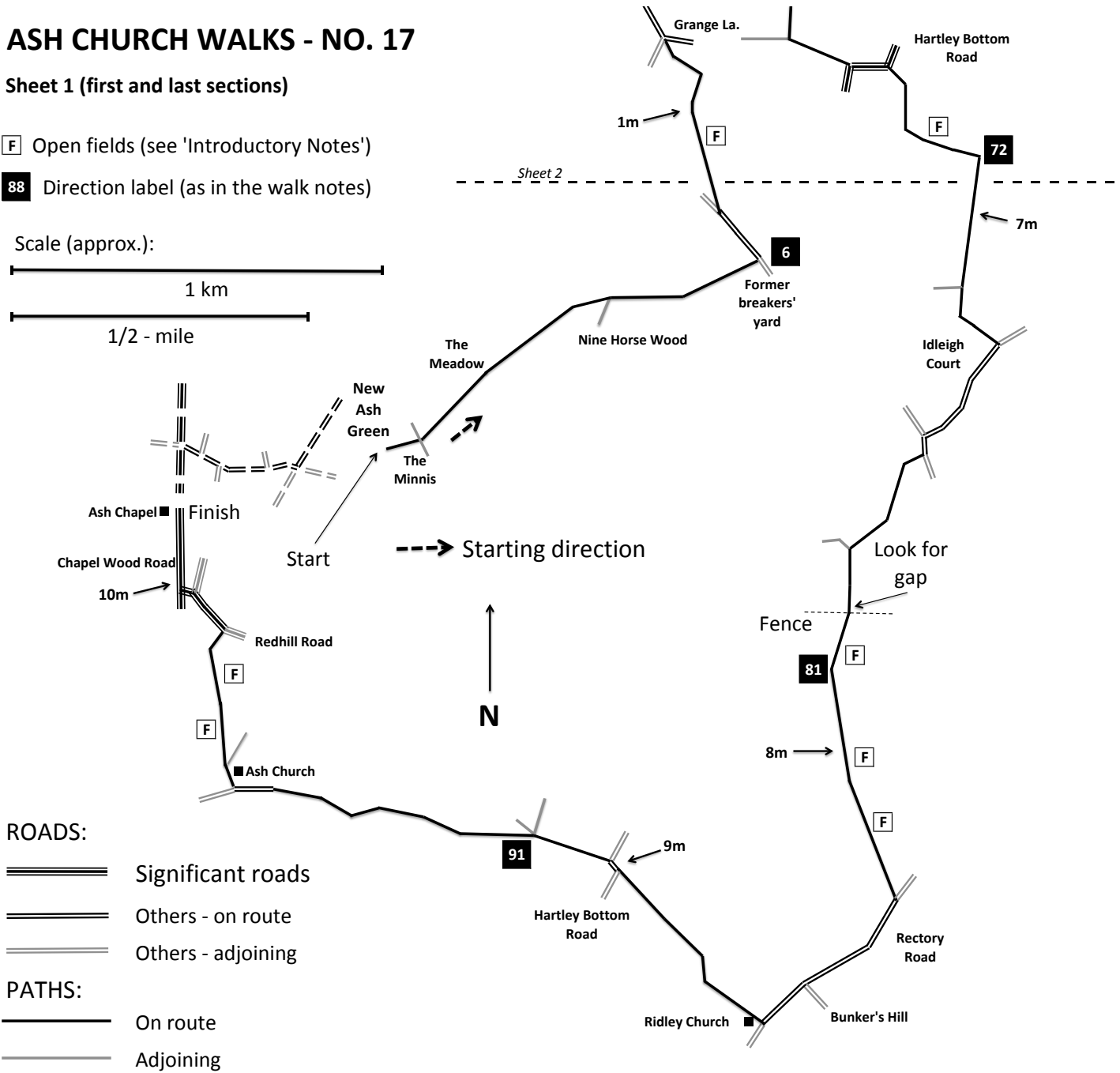
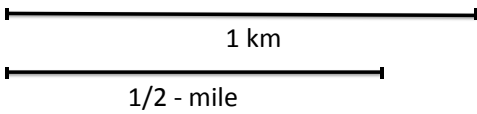
ASH CHURCH WALKS - NO. 17

Sheet 1 (first and last sections)

F Open fields (see 'Introductory Notes')

88 Direction label (as in the walk notes)

Scale (approx.):



ASH CHURCH WALKS - NO. 17

Sheet 2 (middle section)

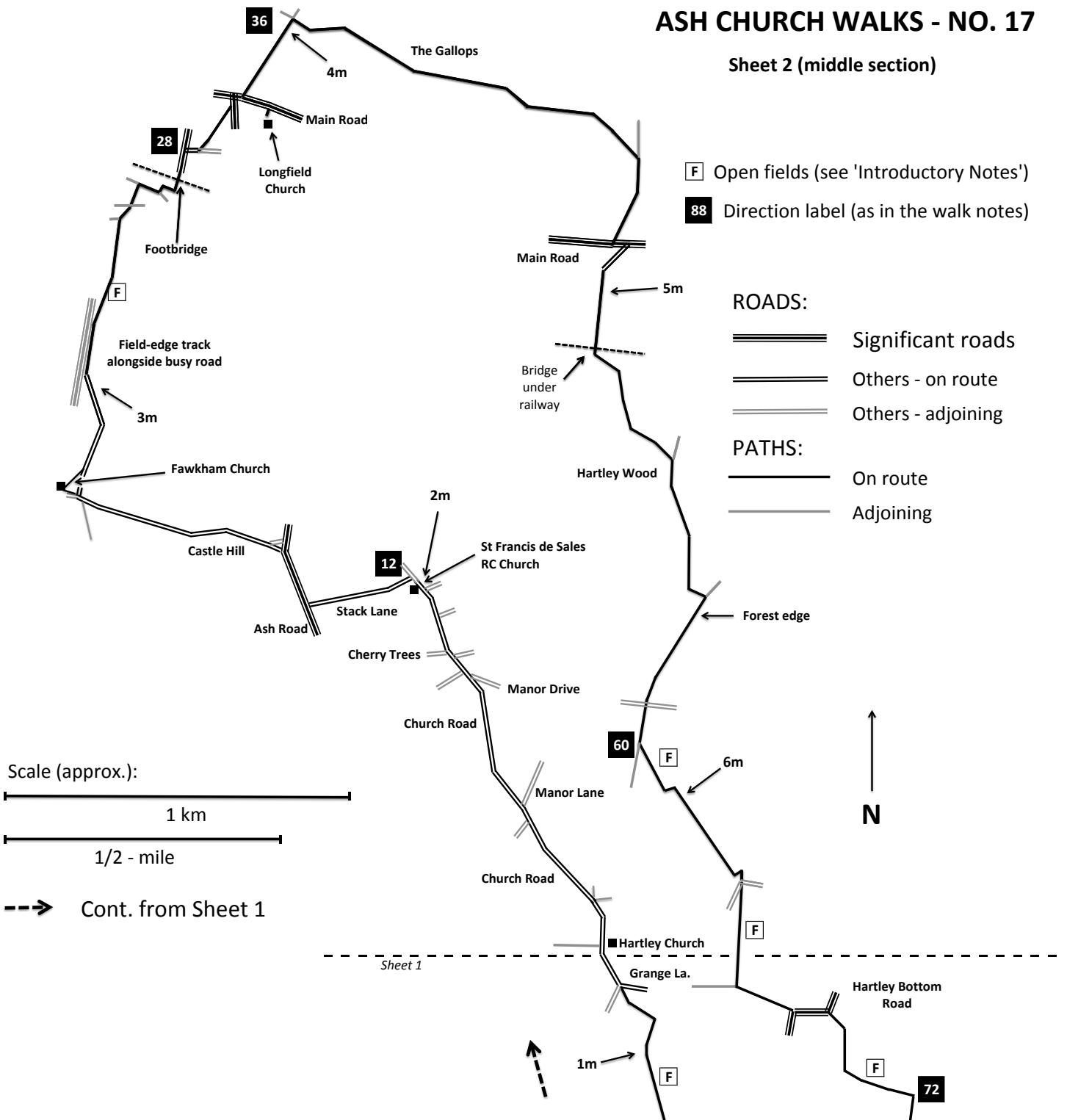
- F Open fields (see 'Introductory Notes')
- 88 Direction label (as in the walk notes)

ROADS:

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

PATHS:

- On route
- Adjoining



Scale (approx.):



1 km



1/2 - mile

Cont. from Sheet 1

**ASH CHURCH WALKS - No.17 (9 September 2017) - 10.10 miles
(New Ash Green - Hartley - Fawkham - Longfield - Ridley - Ash - New Ash Green)**

An untypical walk, in that the route was dictated by its being part of the 'Ride and Stride' sponsored event, the objective being to visit as many places of worship as possible. So we took in the Church of England churches of Hartley, Fawkham, Longfield, Ridley and Ash, and St Francis de Sales Roman Catholic Church and Ash Chapel.

Most of these places lie directly on the route, but for Fawkham and Longfield we made very short detours, which are written up here. If visiting the churches themselves is not an objective, the direct routes by-passing them are added in the Appendix.

Also untypically, this walk was not quite a complete circuit, as we went our separate ways on arriving back at the outskirts of New Ash Green. For those wishing to return to the starting point at The Badger, the way back is not difficult at the cost of an extra half-mile or so (and is outlined at the end, and on the map).

Roads and hindrances:

The few main roads involved are perfectly manageable with ordinary care. A little extra attention would be wise at Direction 67.

The alley alongside the old breakers' yard (Direction 5) has become rather narrow - unpleasant rather than hazardous, though.

Notes taken: At various times from 2015, but largely updated September 2017

The start is outside **The Badger, New Ash Green** (DA3 8JB).

	Mins.*		OS	Miles
1		Starting with your back to the main entrance to The Badger, at the bottom of the village centre, turn left and then immediately left again, to go down alongside the 'Minnis' open space on your right, with The Badger's restaurant ('Jay's) on your left.	606 655	
2	1	At the bottom, at the corner of the Minnis, go straight ahead past the information board, along a woodchip path into trees.		
3	3	At the end of the path, go ahead along the bottom, right-hand edge of the huge meadow.		
4	7	At the far right-hand corner, turn slightly right through a gap into more trees, then leftwards to the original direction along this broad woodland path.		
5	10	When the track leads out of the trees, follow it along the bottom, left-hand edge of a sloping field; and then continue ahead along a narrow alley alongside the corrugated boundary of the former car breakers' yard, before finally dropping down towards gates at the road ahead.		
6	14	[Map point] Turn left up the road (Hartley Hill).		

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

	Mins.*		OS	Miles
7	17	Look out for a gate on the right (opposite 'Hillside'), and go through it. !!!F!!! This represents roughly a 45° right-turn along a track which is often barely visible. You are cutting off the left-hand corner of the field, and heading for a tiny gap, perhaps just visible, about two-thirds of the way down the hedge along its left-hand side.		0.84
8	19	At the gap there is a stile. !!!F!!! Cross it and go diagonally to cross another one, cutting off the right-hand corner of this new field; then on to a cross a third stile, very near, and go ahead briefly along the top, left-hand edge of a sloping field.		
9	21	Look out almost immediately for a hidden gap in the hedge on the left, and turn up into it. Follow the track uphill through the wood, winding repeatedly right and left: generally if in doubt go to the left except where this would be entering clearly private property. Much of this track goes alongside fencing on the left, and there are a couple of helpful waymarks at points where there might be doubt.		
10	25	Cross the top of Grange Lane and follow it as it merges rightwards into the major road at the top.	614 665	
11	27	Pass Hartley Church on the right, and continue along the road, crossing to the pavement on the left when it begins.		1.24
12	42	[Map point] Almost opposite Woodland Avenue, reach St Francis de Sales RC church on the left, and immediately beyond it turn left along Stack Lane.		2.04
13	46	At the end turn right along the main road, crossing when convenient.		
14	48	Turn left down Castle Hill.		
15	56	<i>[Fawkham Church was visited as part of the 'Ride and Stride' event. If you wish to by-pass it, slightly shortening the walk, now follow Short cut 1 in the Appendix.]</i> At the road junction go through the gate on the right to the top corner of Church Field, and go down across the field to Fawkham Church.		
16	58	Reach the south porch of the church. Then double back, upwards to the top of the field, aiming at a point in the middle of the top hedge, just to the left of the furthest-left bench.		2.78
17	60	Go through the gate at that point and turn left along the road.		
18	63	Reaching the main road at the bottom, turn right to go alongside it, but then immediately step up to the right to walk along the embankment, or, if necessary, the field edge, parallel to the road. <i>(Not strictly speaking a right of way, but seemingly accepted as sensible traffic-avoidance.)</i>	598 683	
19	65	!!!F!!! At a footpath sign, rejoin the right of way by angling away from the road, about 30 degrees rightwards, across the field. Aim (bearing 025) at a gap barely visible, in the trees beyond, near the third pole from the left (including the one at the road).		

* **"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
20	67	Go through the gap and along the narrow path through the trees.		
21	69	Continue ahead across the grass, passing the nursing home down on the left.		
22	70	Cross the road, and continue ahead along the walkway opposite, alongside number 33 on your right.		
23	71	Reaching another roadway, turn right along it.		
24		Turn left along the grassy gap next to number 10, and then immediately right again, alongside a fence and towards garages ahead.		
25	72	Reaching the garage court, look across to the left to find the steps of the railway footbridge. Cross the bridge.		
26	73	Coming down from the footbridge, double back for a few yards, then, ignoring the entrance to the station car park, follow the main road as it turns right, down between shops.		3.53
27	74	Go ahead, crossing the roadway at the corner of Waitrose.		
28	75	[Map point] Turn right along the roadway towards the 'in' way to the Waitrose car park.		
29		But after a few seconds, well before reaching the car park, turn left down a narrow, bleak passageway between fences, and then across a little open area, used as a parking space.		
30	76	Continue ahead, angling across another driveway and on down an equally shady passage, turning right with it after a while.		
31	77	<i>[Longfield Church was visited as part of the 'Ride and Stride' event. If you wish to by-pass it, slightly shortening the walk, now follow Short cut 2 in the Appendix.]</i> Turn left alongside the road, crossing it when convenient.		
32	78	At the junction ahead, next to the mini-roundabout, turn right ('Main Road').		
33	79	Reach Longfield Church on the right. Then retrace your steps along Main Road, this time crossing it as soon as possible.		
34	80	About 30 yds. short of the mini-roundabout turn right, away from Main Road, up the driveway, signposted as a footpath.	603 691	
35		Go straight on through the remains of a redundant MKG and up between the fields.		
36	83	[Map point] Next to the pole at the top, turn right to go alongside the hedge. Choose either side, depending which view you prefer.		4.02
37	96	But approaching the end walk on the right of the hedge, and follow the path as it bends gradually to the right.		
38	99	Merge rightwards into the metalled path which leads down to the main road.		
39	102	Turn left along the main road, crossing as soon as possible. <i>(If volume of traffic makes it necessary, make a detour of a few yards to use the nearby light-controlled crossing.)</i>		
40		Turn right along Gorsewood Road following it through its gentle leftward swing, and ahead as it becomes a rough roadway.		4.90
41	106	At a gateway go straight ahead and under the railway bridge.		

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

	Mins.*		OS	Miles
42	107	Beyond the bridge, turn left to go parallel to the railway.		
43	108	Just after the end of the fence on the right, turn right along a broad path (SD295). <i>It is very easy to get lost in the woods from this point: hence the very detailed descriptions and the ten-figure grid references!</i>	61340 68322	
44	109	Follow the main path as it turn up leftwards.		
45		Ignore the little path which goes rightwards alongside the fence.	61345 68261	
46		Merge right into a major path.	61351 68242	
47	110	Take the left fork, uphill.	61354 68233	
48	111	Ignore the path which crosses from both sides at an angle.		
49	112	Merge with a slightly narrower path which joins from the right.	61436 68157	
50		Fork right along a narrow path.	61459 68154	
51	113	Merge right into a much broader path.	61479 68135	
52	114	Meeting an equally broad crossing path, turn right along it.	61511 68064	
53	116	At a crosspaths go straight ahead along the left-hand side of a wooden fence.	61532 67928	
54	118	Just after the path and the fence have swung slightly to the left, continue straight on, now abandoning the fence as it turns away to the right.	61560 67703	
55	119	Once again, meeting an equally broad crossing path, turn right along it.	61601 67668	
56	120	Reach the gate leading out into a large field. To find the direction across it, be guided by the trees. Ignoring those at the distant edge, you will see on your right three in a line quite close by; and further away in the middle of the field, and a bit further to the left, a fourth one (and a fifth one, about 60 yds. further left still). Aim initially at that fourth tree.	61589 67625	5.69
57	122	At that tree, if you were to carry on along the same line as the one you have followed from the gate, you would reach a clearly visible MKG. <u>But this is not your exit!</u> Instead aim at a point along the line of trees about 100 yds. to the left of that MKG, and head for a wooden kissing gate (hardly visible at first) at that point.		
58	123	Go ahead through the kissing gate along a narrow passage (SD215).	615 674	
59	125	At the end cross the roadway and continue almost directly ahead, through an old-fashioned MKG, and along another enclosed passage.		

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

	Mins.*		OS	Miles
60	126	[Map point] [!!F!!] Coming out into the open, fork left (now SD299), diagonally across the field, about 50 degrees to the left of the right-hand field-edge. (Bearing 145.) <i>It is simplest to continue on this diagonal all the way to the trees, though at some times of year there are, on the left, short-cuts to the woodland path beyond, saving just a few yards.</i>		
61	128	Go straight ahead into the woods.		
62		After about 20 yds. turn left along a short, narrow path.		
63		Soon turn right along a broad, often muddy and waterlogged woodland path, leading deeper into the wood.		
64	132	At the end you would wish to go straight ahead to the road, but, for the correct path and avoiding the barrier, take a little left-fork about 15 yds. before it. Reaching the road at its right-angle bend, cross it, going towards the nearby MKG beyond.		
65		[!!F!!] Go through the MKG and start on the signposted footpath, about 30 degrees to the left of the road you have just crossed. (Bearing 180). This path angles down towards the trees at the bottom (left-hand) edge of this large field, where there is a wide gap, rather more than 100 yds. short of the field's far corner.		
66	136	At the gap turn half-left to go through it, and head uphill, to the left of a green structure (no doubt related to the nearby water board operation) towards houses up ahead.	617 666	
67	139	Reach the road after passing to the left of the houses. Turn left and follow the road as it bends up to the right. (A little care is needed here: traffic sometimes takes the bends at optimistic speeds.)		6.59
68	140	As the road swings left, go off it to the right, just after '1 & 2 White Cottages' - up the three or four steps immediately to the left of the driveway - and go up the winding path into the trees (SD239).		
69	142	[!!F!!] Cross a small stile, and go slightly to the left, diagonally up across the field, aiming at the end of the line of trees on your left.		
70	143	Swing leftwards, up along the edge of the trees.		
71	144	Go through a gap between trees, and now follow the edge of the trees on your right as it swings rightwards.		
72	146	[Map point] The path straightens, and takes you ahead towards buildings in the middle distance, turning to concrete halfway along.	622 662	
73	150	Find a way past the gate at the end (where the houses begin). This should be possible via a stile to the left, but it can get impossibly overgrown. Alternatives are climbing over or squeezing past.		
74	152	Go ahead and at the end turn right along the road.		

* "**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
75	154	About 30 yds. after passing (on the right) Idleigh Court Stables, you have the option of escaping the road on to a parallel track up alongside to the left. However, the road is fairly quiet with good visibility, and the track slopes steeply from side to side (and ends by going down steep steps), so only use the alternative if you are seriously averse to tarmac.		
76	156	At the end of the road, at the T-junction, turn left. Then, after passing the driveway marked 'Court View' turn off the road rightwards, opposite a second driveway. Go through the kissing gate (SD305) and keep to the left along the top, left-hand edge of the sloping field.		7.44
77	158	Use one of the various gaps and gates to cross to the other side of the hedge, but continue to follow it (now on your right) down into trees.		
78	159	Go ahead through the MKG.		
79	161	Look out for another MKG in the fence on the right, but do not go through it. Instead turn left, away from it, away from fence, and into the middle of the trees. Maintain this direction as far as possible across this strip of trees.		
80	163	Emerge on the other side at a gap in the far fence. (The tracks through the trees vary considerably depending on seasons and weather: if you reach the fence other than at the gap, investigate to right and left. The likelihood is that you have gone a bit too far down - to the right.) !!!F!!! Go through the gap and down ahead to another one at the valley bottom.	619 650	
81	165	[Map point] !!!F!!! Go through this MKG, and uphill about 30 degrees to the left. You are aiming at another MKG at a point in the row of trees ahead which is quite invisible for now. To start with, look at those trees: there is a single one taller than the rest over to left. Your target is about 70 yds. to the right of it.		
82	170	When you find it, go through the MKG and briefly ahead to another one. !!!F!!! Then go diagonally left across the field, with buildings over to your left. Look at the left-hand end of the line of trees ahead, and aim at a gap about 30 yds. to the right of that point.		
83	174	Find the gap, and go through a MKG into trees.		
84	175	Go through another MKG at a road, and turn right along it.		8.29
85	180	Reaching Ridley Church turn right along the rough roadway immediately before it.		
86	181	After a slight swing to the right, abandon the main track as it goes more decisively to the right, and instead continue ahead along a grassy path		
87	182	Follow the path straight ahead as it enters the trees, always following the main path.		
88	185	At the end go through the gate and on down the right-hand edge of the field.		
89	188	At the bottom cross a stile and follow the path to the road.		

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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
90	189	At the road turn right for about 20 yds., then turn left away from it, past a redundant MKG, on a footpath (SD233) leading across the field and up the hill.	612 643	8.99
91	193	[Map point] At the top, cross the stile and go through the spring gate, and then turn left along the broad track, continuing along it, gently uphill.		
92	202	Next to houses the track becomes a quiet road. Continue ahead.		
93	204	Turn right along the approach path to Ash Church. Follow it around the west (left) end of the church, and go ahead into and through the Parish Council's burial ground to a MKG.		9.65
94	205	!!!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.		
95	207	!!!F!!! Go through the MKG and continue across the width of a large field towards the wall of trees on the far side.		
96	209	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).		
97	210	Turn left along the road, and cross it when convenient.		
98	212	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.		
99	214	Reach Ash Chapel on the left-hand side of the road. <i>The walk dispersed here rather than completing the circuit. To return to New Ash Green centre (about 10 more minutes), continue ahead to the crossroads, turn right, and then left at the next crossroads at the end.</i>	600 653	10.10

* **"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.

APPENDIX to Ash Church Walk No. 17

Direct route by-passing Fawkham Church (Short cut 1)

	Mins.*		OS	Miles
15A	0	If not visiting Fawkham Church: Instead of going through the gate at Direction 15, turn right along the road.		0.00
15B	1	The main route soon joins through a gate on the left: continue along the road.		
15C	5	Continue from Direction 18, reaching the main road at the bottom. Deduct 2 minutes from subsequent total times and 0.11 miles from cumulative distances.		0.33

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

Direct route by-passing Longfield Church (Short cut 2)

	Mins.*		OS	Miles
31A	0	If not visiting Longfield Church: After turning left along the main road in Direction 31, instead of crossing it turn left alongside it.		0.00
31B		At the end, next to the mini-roundabout, go ahead over the crossing main road ('Main Road'!) and turn right along its far side. <i>(If crossing is troublesome, a little detour to the left, perhaps even as far as the lights, will help.)</i>		
31C	1	About 30 yds. along from the roundabout, rejoin the main route at Direction 34 by turning left, away from Main Road, up the driveway, signposted as a footpath. Deduct 2 minutes from subsequent total times and 0.11 miles from cumulative distances.		0.05

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

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!

ASH CHURCH WALKS - 17	Direction numbers	% of walk
Busy road	13-14, 26-28, 31-33, 39, 67, 97-98	10
Quiet road \$\$	6, 10-12, 17, 64, 74-76a, 84, 92	20
Open field with livestock	81, 82b	4
Edge of field with livestock	8a, 76b, 88	3
Field (or edge) without livestock **	1, 3, 5a, 7, 8b-9a, 15-16, 18-19, 34-37, 56-57, 60, 65-66, 69-72, 80, 90, 94-95	32
Path (hedged, or otherwise forced)	5b, 20-25, 29-30, 38, 40-42, 58-59, 68, 73, 82a, 85-86, 89, 91, 93	18
Woods	2, 4, 9b, 43-55, 61-63, 77-79, 83, 87, 96	14

** This is not a promise, just a statement of fact - that, having walked these sections perhaps two or three times, I have found no animals or any sign of them.

\$\$ Again, not a promise that there will be no traffic to worry about. Just a personal judgement of conditions as I have found them.

STILES (8) - Details noted at various times from April 2015, and **subject to frequent change**:

The three stiles in Direction **8** all have easy gaps, and the one in **69** has a large gap next to it to walk through.

The one in **73** hardly exists any longer, and if the surrounding undergrowth is too difficult the adjacent gate has easy gaps.

The stile in **89** has easy gaps, and those in **91** and **96** have dog-gates.