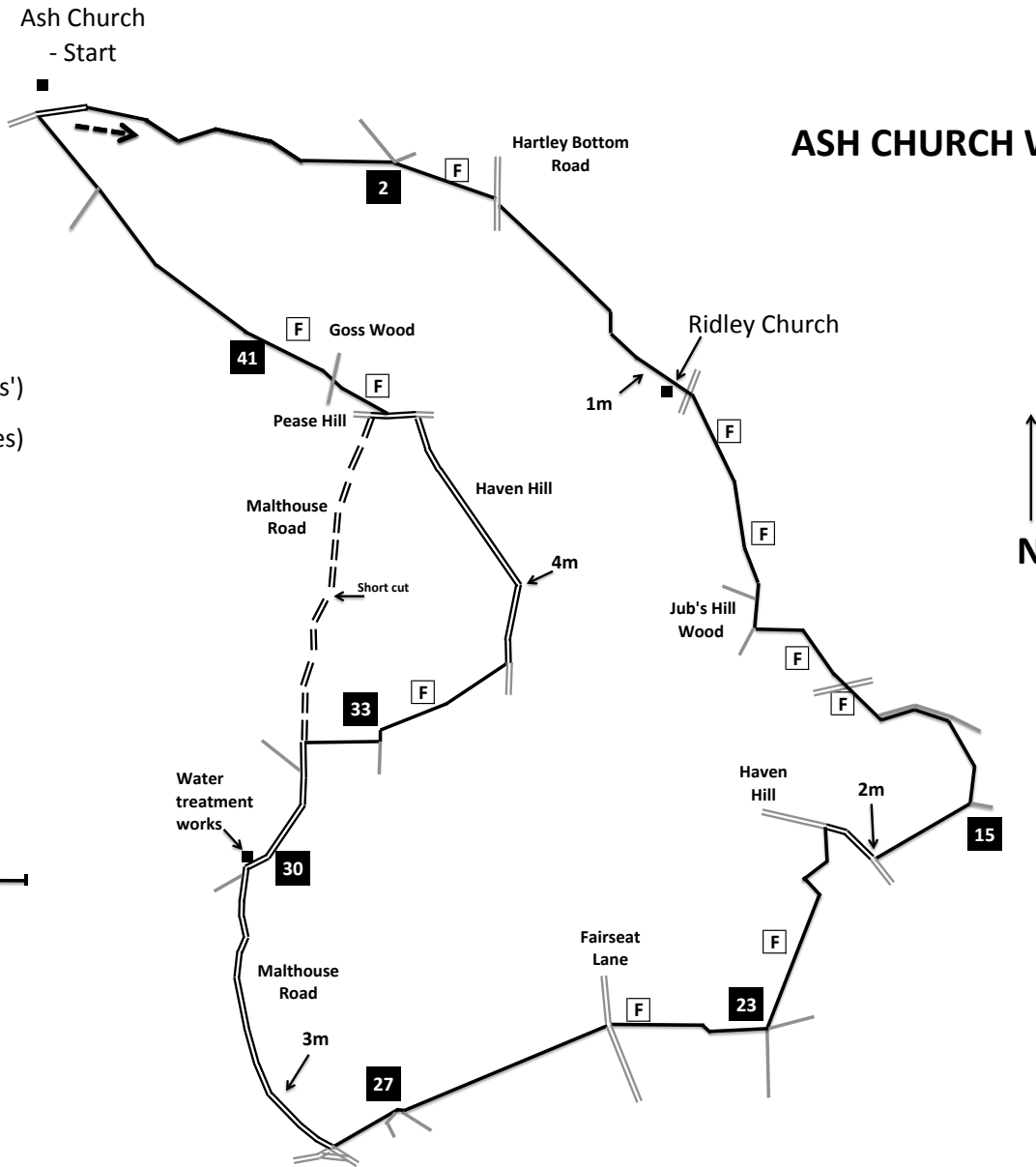


ASH CHURCH WALKS - NO. 21



F Open fields (see 'Introductory Notes')

88 Direction label (as in the walk notes)

ROADS:

==== Significant roads

==== Others - on route

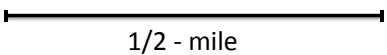
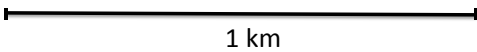
==== Others - adjoining

PATHS:

— On route

— Adjoining

Scale (approx.):



---> Starting direction



ASH CHURCH WALKS - No.21 (29 December 2018) - 4.96 miles (Ash - Ridley - Stansted - Berry's Maple - Ash)

A rather muddy winter walk on familiar local paths and roads, particularly featuring – not for the first time – the fine view of Stansted from above (Direction 27). The brief alternative later on, written up in the Appendix, was taken by some to ensure an easy finish in daylight: others ventured up and down the main route and caught up safely at the meeting point of the routes at Berry's Maple.

Roads and hindrances:

The roads are no particular problem.

The stile at **6** could be a hindrance for a dog – but see in the dog-walkers' notes for a short walk-round.

The path in **13** can be exceptionally muddy (at any time of year!). If it looks uninviting at the start the alternative suggested works well enough, but involves dealing with a rather rickety stile to rejoin the parallel route.

Notes taken: March 2019

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

	Mins.*		OS	Miles
1		Coming out of Ash Church, at the end of the church path turn left along the metalled road. Go along this, and onward as it becomes a track. Keep to the main path as it goes downhill through trees after a while, swinging first right, then left.	601 645	
2	10	[Map point] As the track swings further left, instead turn right to go through a spring gate (next to a bigger one), immediately followed by a stile, [!!F!!] on to a downward track across a large field. (Straight down, using the most direct line to the road.)		0.51
3	13	You reach the road at a MKG. Go through it, turn right along the road, then left up a footpath.	612 643	
4	14	Go over a stile and carry on up the left-hand side of a field.		
5	16	You reach a big, awkwardly fastened gate. Go through it into trees, and on along a path more or less parallel to the left-hand edge of the wood; then into the open as Ridley Church comes into view.	614 642	
6	22	Pass the church on your right, go ahead to a road and go over the stile opposite.		1.05
7		[!!F!!] Go across the field from the signpost. The line might not be very clear: it is more or less straight across as signposted, passing about 50 yds. to the right of the nearest telegraph pole.		
8	26	The path goes a little to the right when it reaches a fence at the field edge; [!!F!!] then slightly left towards a MKG visible across the field at the start of trees.		
9	29	Go through the MKG and up into the wood.	618 635	

* "**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
10	31	Turn left at the top of a fairly steep climb. (There is a blue waymark.)	618 634	
11	33	!!!F!!! At the next gate turn about 60 degrees right across the field. There used to be a fence across the middle of this field, but it is no more (March 2019).		
12	35	!!!F!!! In the right-hand edge, go through two little gates either side of a concrete farm road. After the second of these go slightly further left towards a MKG in the left-hand corner of the field.		1.52
13	37	Go half-left through this MKG and then along the narrow path ahead, between a fence on the left and trees on the right. <i>(The path can often be very muddy. An alternative would be to walk along the field-edge on the left of the fence (after a second MKG at the start), crossing it by way of an old stile on the right.)</i>	620 632	
14	39	Passing the stile mentioned in the above alternative, continue along a winding woodland path.		
15	42	[Map point] After the path swings right, abandon it (when it turns left again) by instead going straight ahead through a MKG, and on along the right-hand edge of a field.		
16	44	Go through a hedge and continue ahead.		
17	46	At the end go through a MKG and turn right along the road.		
18	47	Turn left away from the road (path SD252), passing through a metal gate and across a short patch of woodland towards another one.		2.04
19	48	Go through the second gate and turn right following the edge of the field beyond (a slight re-routing of the right of way, instead of the former direct line past the house.)		
20	49	Still following the field-edge, turn left at the fence at the end.		
21	50	Go through the MKG on the right, and turn half-left to go diagonally down across the field to another MKG ahead.	619 628	
22	52	!!!F!!! Go through this second MKG and maintain much the same direction, down across the grass to the corner of the woodland at the bottom.		
23	55	[Map point] At the bottom, turn rightwards, up the right-hand edge of those fenced-off trees.		
24	56	At the top, go through a metal gate, and beyond turn right for a few yards, then swing left towards a gap in the fence.		
25	57	!!!F!!! Go through the gap, and across the middle of the field to a MKG in the middle distance.		
26	58	Cross the road and a (currently damaged but adequate) stile and go ahead along the footpath between barbed-wire fences.		2.54
27	64	[Map point] At the end of the field go slightly left into trees - but only slightly left, along the narrower, upper of the two possible tracks, keeping the fence immediately on your right. This leads very soon to a stile, and then into the open for the descent to the war memorial at Stansted, visible ahead.		
28	68	At the bottom go over a stile next to a wooden gate, and turn right along the road.		2.95

* **"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
29	77	Continue along the road at a gentle right-hand bend, where a footpath comes down from the left to join at a stile.		
30	78	[Map point] Pass the water treatment works on the left.		
31	80	Ignore the signposted footpath joining on the left by way of a tall stile.	607 630	
32	81	Turn right off the road through a MKG, and go up the path on the left-hand side of the field. <i>[At this point some of our group instead took the simpler and shorter alternative described in the appendix.]</i>		3.58
33	84	[!!F!!] At the top turn left, go through a MKG after a few yards, and then [Map point] follow the rather improbable direction, diagonally up to the right over the field, indicated by the waymark. (This is another re-routing, though the reason for it is mysterious.) Aim for the left-hand edge of the trees which in due course come into view.		
34	87	At that corner of the trees, go slightly further left, still diagonally across the field, towards its far left-hand corner.		
35	90	At that corner of the field, go down steps to join the road and merge leftwards down along it, all the way to the T-junction at the bottom, ignoring footpaths on the right.	612 633	
36	98	At the bottom, turn left along the road.		4.28
37	99	[!!F!!] At the MKG on the right, go through, and diagonally up the track towards the trees.		
38	101	Reach the trees and continue ahead, up more steeply.		
39	102	Continue ahead over a crossing roadway.		
40	103	[!!F!!] At the top go through a spring gate and ahead across the field, heading towards the left-hand edge of the thick group of trees.		
41	106	[Map point] Keeping those trees on your right, walk along the right-hand edge of the large field, down, right, left and up.		
42	113	At top of the main rise, go ahead through the MKG, and along the right-hand edge of the field beyond.	603 643	
43	114	Continue along the right-hand edge of the cricket field.		
44	116	Go over a lift-and-drop stile and reach Ash Church, the start of the walk.	601 645	4.96

* ***“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 21

Detour – Short cut to the end of Malthouse Road

	Mins.*		OS	Miles
32A	0	For a shorter and easier continuation of the route instead of Direction 32, do not leave the road, but instead carry on ahead.		0.00
32B	10	At the T-junction at the end, turn right for about 25 yds. [!!F!!] Then join the main route at Direction 37 by turning sharp-left through the MKG and up the track towards the trees. Deduct 8 minutes from subsequent total times and 0.27 miles from cumulative distances.		0.48

* ***“Mins.” is very approximate!*** See ‘Introductory Notes’ for an explanation of how this column is used.

FOR THOSE WHO WALK WITH THEIR DOGS

I do not venture to give advice about walking with your dog. As well as the joys, you will be well aware of the issues involved, and particularly that relationships between dogs and other countryside animals potentially involve mutual suspicion, or worse.

But what this footnote does try to do, in response to requests, is to give some indication of the nature of the walk from a dog's point of view, to enable you to decide whether it is suitable.

The percentage distances on the right should be self-explanatory.

The information in the middle column may look a bit cluttered, but I think it should enable you (if the detail is of interest) to mark up within a few minutes a print-out of the walk notes, so that you have some idea what might be round the next corner.

The risk in all this is that **things change so quickly** in the agricultural working world; and what I describe might become misleading after subsequent changes. I have done my best, but there is no guarantee that you will find the information up to date!

ASH CHURCH WALKS - No.21	Direction numbers	% of walk
Busy road		0
Quiet road \$\$	17, 28-31, 35-36	22
Open field with livestock	11-12, 21-22	7
Edge of field with livestock	4, 23, 42	4
Field (or edge) without livestock **	2, 7-8, 15-16, 19-20, 24-25, 32-34, 37, 40-41, 43	33
Path (hedged, or otherwise forced)	1, 3, 5b-6, 10, 13, 26	22
Woods	5a, 9, 14, 18, 27, 38-39	11

** 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.

For **stiles** see the next page.

STILES (7) – Details noted in March 2019, but **subject to frequent change**:

The stile in Direction **2** has a dog-gate.

The one in **4** has easy gaps.

The one in **6** may prove virtually impossible: it is a double stile, quite narrow, wired down to the ground, with three climbs each of about 1 ft. (If this stile proves impossible, a slightly longer alternative would be to turn right, down along the road, and then after about 4 minutes turn sharp left along a wide track. Follow the main path down and along through various windings, and after 7 or 8 more minutes rejoin the main route (just after Direction 9) by turning right, uphill.)

The stiles in **26** and **27** are wired to ground and are quite tall, but in each good gaps have been burrowed out to one side. **28** could be tricky: quite high (2 ft. climb, then 1 ft.), but a 6-in. gap under the gate to the side might be helpful.

The stile in **44** has easy gaps.