

Higham
St Mary's Church

Sheet 2

2m

9

CLIFFE CIRCUIT

Sheet 1 (first and last sections)

Bull Lane

Sandhill Lane

Lower Rochester Road

White
Farm

9m

Hermitage Road

Higham
St John's Church - start

8m

Lillechurch Road

Lillechurch Farm

Town Road
(B2000)

Lower Rochester Road

N

Merryboys Road

Sheet 2

Cooling Common

Milton Avenue

View Road

CLIFFE WOODS

Tennyson Avenue

7m

View Road

88 Direction label (as in the walk notes)

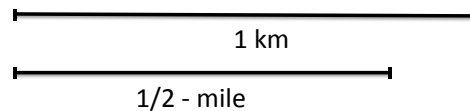
ROADS:

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

PATHS:

- On route
- Adjoining

Scale (approx.):



--> Starting direction

CLIFFE CIRCUIT

Sheet 2 (middle section)

F Open fields (see 'Introductory Notes')

88 Direction label (as in the walk notes)

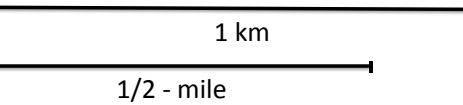
ROADS:

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

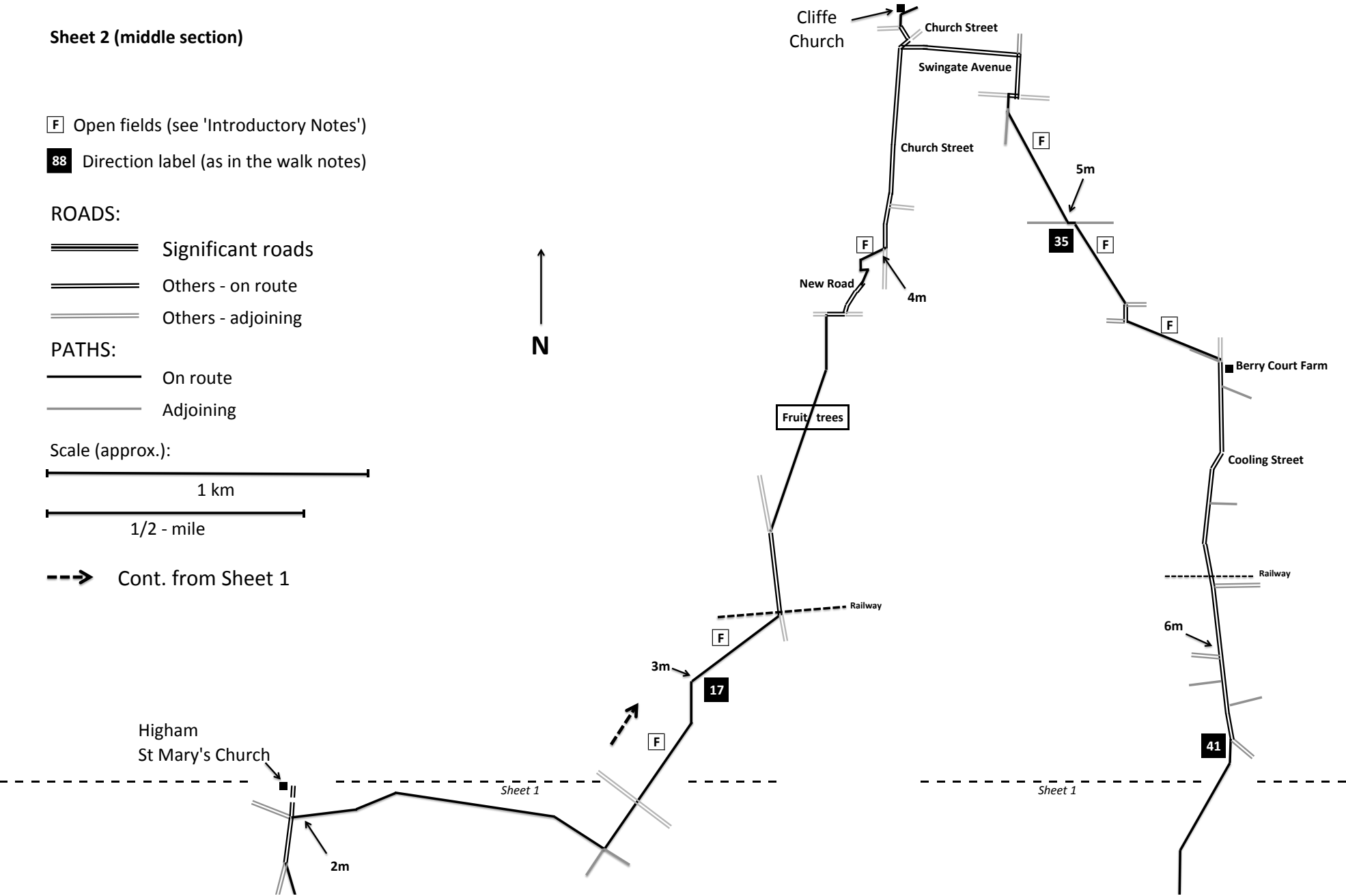
PATHS:

- On route
- Adjoining

Scale (approx.):



---> Cont. from Sheet 1



CLIFFE CIRCUIT - 9.58 miles

Churches in the circuit:

Higham St John (start and finish)

Higham St Mary (Direction 12)

Cliffe (30C: Detour – see Appendix))

Associated local circuit

- SN1: Shorne – Higham - Shorne

Walks on the Hoo Peninsula

Because of the greater distances between the churches I have adopted a compromise approach to developing the walks on the peninsula. In each of the five circuits (Cliffe, High Halstow and Hoo, Allhallows, Stoke and Grain, Kingsnorth) there is just one walk – not a ‘full’ or ‘shorter’ circuit, but mostly of a length in between (‘Stoke and Grain’ being a flexible exception!) – and there are also no ‘local’ circuits.

The continuity of the spine route nevertheless remains unbroken throughout.

This circuit

For the most part this is an ordinary but not unpleasant walk in the villages and countryside. The approach to Higham towards the end is the best landscape, fully compensating for the climb and the ordinariness of the other sections.

Roads and hindrances:

The walk through the fruit trees (Directions 19-21) is mainly a navigational challenge, though the underfoot unevenness also needs watching.

By far the worst bit is the mercifully short, and unavoidable, section along the B2000 away from Cliffe Woods (Direction 47): proper care will make this safe enough, but for four minutes or so it will remain decidedly unpleasant.

CLIFFE CIRCUIT

Higham – Cliffe – Cliffe Woods – Higham

Notes taken: June 2018

The start and finish is at Higham St John’s Church – Hermitage Road, ME3 7DB

			OS	Miles
1		From the south door of Higham St John’s Church , go over to the road (Hermitage Road) and turn left along it, eastwards.	713 715	

	Mins.*		OS	Miles
2	2	Turn left down the byway, after house no. 37.		
3	7	Just beyond the bottom of the dip turn half-right (ignoring the other two paths which go straight on and fully right).		
4	13	At the far end, join a metalled track, and follow it as it bends a little to the left, to keep to the left of the farm buildings, then follow the roadway towards the main road.		
5	21	Cross the road and continue along the minor road opposite.		1.04
6	23	At the T-junction at the end, turn right.		
7	26	Turn left along Bull Lane and follow it as it bends left, then right.		
8	29	As the road bends left again, instead turn right along the footpath next to house no. 59, and go ahead alongside the field.	717 733	
9	35	[Map point] At an intersection of tracks, fork slightly left, roughly towards the church spire visible in the middle distance.		
10	38	Join the road and turn right along it.		
11	39	START OF THE SPINE SECTION Pass the end of the lane on the left, and walk on a few yards further to the start of the footpath signposted on the right.		1.96
12		The lych-gate of Higham St Mary's Church is a few yards further ahead on the left. But to continue on the route turn right along the path (NS141).		
13	50	Go straight ahead, joining a roadway which comes in from the left.		
14	53	Just after the buildings of Oakleigh on the left, in the middle of the road's right-hand bend, turn left away from it as waymarked, up the left-hand side of a field.	727 740	
15	55	[!F!] Crossing a wider roadway, continue ahead on the other side, towards trees.		2.72
16	59	Enter the trees, going slightly to the left and along a grassy path.		
17	61	[Map point] At the end of the path go straight ahead through a gap, over a footbridge, and then [!F!] turn about 60 degrees right, to go diagonally across the field and under the power lines, towards the distant corner. (Bearing 055.)		
18	66	At that corner turn left along the road, over the railway bridge.		

* **"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.

[CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE]

	Mins.*		OS	Miles
19	70	<p>Reaching the road junction (Rectory Road), cross the stile in the angle over on the right.</p> <p><i>The next section of the route involves navigating an unsignposted diagonal path among the fruit trees. This leads 'against the grain' of the straight lines formed by the trees themselves. The trick is to look out for gaps between the trees and their supporting posts: for the most part they are closely spaced, but your path crosses each line at a point where the gap is significantly bigger. (Go by the tree-posts and ignore sporadic undergrowth growing up in your gaps. And generally be a little wary of the undergrowth and the potentially ankle-twisting unevenness it conceals.)</i></p> <p>Start, once over the stile and inside the orchard, by walking along the left-hand edge for about 25 yds., and then turning about 30 degrees to the right through the first of those bigger gaps, to begin the diagonal progress across the lines.</p>		3.38
20	73	Reaching the end of this diagonal walk on parallel to the lines for about 15 yds. to move ahead through a gap (slightly to the right) into a new field. There first move one row across to the right. Then go ahead and again look for the first bigger gap on the right, about 30 yds. along, to start you off on a diagonal much like the previous one, in the direction of a large white house in the middle distance.		
21	77	At the end of this diagonal, walk parallel to the lines, as before, for about 25 yds., then cross to start (a little over to the right) along the right-hand edge of a final field.		
22	78	Look out for a surprising waymark on the right. This appears to point into a private garden, but instead the path immediately turns left again to go parallel to the field-edge, but now separated from it by a thick hedge on your left.	734 755	
23	80	At the end turn right along the road.		
24	81	Turn left along New Road.		
25	82	At the end go half-right along a marked, enclosed footpath, and follow it as it turns very briefly left, and then right, when it emerges to go along a field-edge.		
26	83	!!!F!!! When the right-hand border soon comes to an end, turn about 60 degrees to the right across the field to cut off its right-hand corner, heading towards the road beyond a small embankment, at a point in line with the 'Bowls Club' sign on the other side. (The is a 'footpath' sign there pointing back along your route, but it is not very visible from the field.)		
27	84	Reach the road and cross it next to the Bowls Club. Turn left along the road on its right-hand pavement.		
28	87	Cross Millcroft Road and continue ahead.		4.09
29	91	Cross St Helens Road and continue ahead.		
30	93	<p>To visit Cliffe Church, now divert instead to the Detour in the Appendix.</p> <p>Main route: Turn right along Swingate Avenue (Saxon Shore Way, briefly).</p>		

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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
31	97	Turn right along Thatchers Lane - no longer SSW.		
32	100	Start along the signposted byway, slightly over to the right.	739 763	
33		!!!F!!! Emerge at the corner of a field. From this point the route goes diagonally leftwards across the field, though there is little indication of it. (Bearing 155.)		
34	101	Go straight ahead at the field edge, on to another, clearer, path.		4.83
35	105	[Map point] At the end there is a wide crossing path and (currently amid apparently impenetrable crops) the way ahead seems not to exist. !!!F!!! But it does, starting about 2 yds. across to the left from where the previous path emerged, at 74115 75942. It leads tenuously, slightly leftwards, across the diagonal of the field, as mapped, passing about 25 yds. to the right of a big marker tyre.	74115 75942	
36	108	Reaching the corner, leave the field through a gap in the trees and reach a road as it makes an S-bend. Turn right, briefly, along the road.		
37	109	As the road completes its S-bend by turning right, instead turn left away from it, through undergrowth. (It may be necessary to make a little detour around the signpost.) !!!F!!! Cross the field, heading directly for a gold-on-dark-blue sign in the middle distance.	743 756	
38	114	END OF THE SPINE SECTION Reaching the sign ('Berry Court Farm'), turn right along the road.		5.44
39	123	Continue ahead under the railway bridge.		
40	126	Continue ahead, ignoring Perry Hill on the right.		
41	129	[Map point] As the road bends somewhat to the left, instead go straight ahead along a path between fields.		6.18
42	130	At a waymark post and a footbridge turn slightly further to the right, still on a broad path between crops.		
43	134	Turn slightly left through a metal gate and walk along the right-hand edge of fields with two further gates.		
44	137	Go through a final gate and turn right along the road.	745 738	
45	139	Continue ahead, passing (the other end of) Perry Hill on the right.		
46	142	Turn left along View Road. Follow this through its bends - right, then left, then right - all the way to the main road.		6.79
47	155	Turn left at the T-junction at the end. Cross the road for the better visibility, though the verge is not good.		7.47
48	159	Escape the busy road by turning right along Lillechurch Road.		
49	165	About 80 yds. after Lillechurch Farm on the left, turn left along the signposted byway, and continue ahead, gently uphill.		
50	176	Reach a road and cross it, and continue along the path ahead, still gently uphill.	725 724	8.39
51	180	Continue straight ahead, ignoring the broad track on the right.		
52	181	Bend slightly right to keep walking along the right-hand edge of the field, now ignoring the narrow track on the left.		

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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
53	185	Despite the waymark, do not go through the gate on the left, but continue ahead up the path along the left-hand edge of the field.		
54	189	Keep left to go along a narrow passageway, down steps, to a road.		9.00
55		Turn right along the road (Hermitage Road).		
56**	198	Reaching a byway on the right, at the corner of house no. 37: either, to continue the circuit (if not visiting, or finishing at, St John's Church), carry on from Direction 2, by going down the byway;		9.48
** or 56A	198	... or, to detour to, or finish at, St John's Church , continue along Hermitage Road.		
56B	200	(Minding the step, as instructed) enter the churchyard of Higham St John's Church .	713 715	9.58
56C		If returning to the circuit having visited the church, resume from Direction 1.		

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APPENDIX

Detour to Cliffe Church

	Mins.*		OS	Miles
30A		To reach Cliffe Church , instead of turning right at Direction 30, continue straight ahead along the road.		0.00
30B		About 30 yds. further along keep left of the Six Bells, and then stay between the car park on the left and St Helens House on the right, heading towards the gates of the church.		
30C	1	Reach the gateway to the church ahead. After visiting the church retrace your steps to the junction in Direction 30.		0.06
30D	2	Reaching the junction, rejoin the main route by turning left along Swingate Avenue (where you would have turned right at Direction 30). Add 2 minutes to subsequent total times and 0.12 miles to cumulative distances.		0.12

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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!

CLIFFE CIRCUIT	Direction numbers	% of walk
Busy road	6, 18, 27-29, 47	9
Quiet road \$\$	1, 4b-5, 7, 10-11, 23-24, 30-31, 36, 38-40, 44-46, 48, 55	40
Open field with livestock		0
Edge of field with livestock	43a	1
Field (or edge) without livestock **	2-4a, 8-9, 12-15, 17, 25b-26, 33-35, 37, 41-42, 43b, 49-53	44
Path (hedged, or otherwise forced)	19-22, 25a, 32, 54	5
Woods	16	1

** 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 (1) – Detail noted in June 2018, but subject to frequent change:

The stile in Direction **19** has easy gaps.