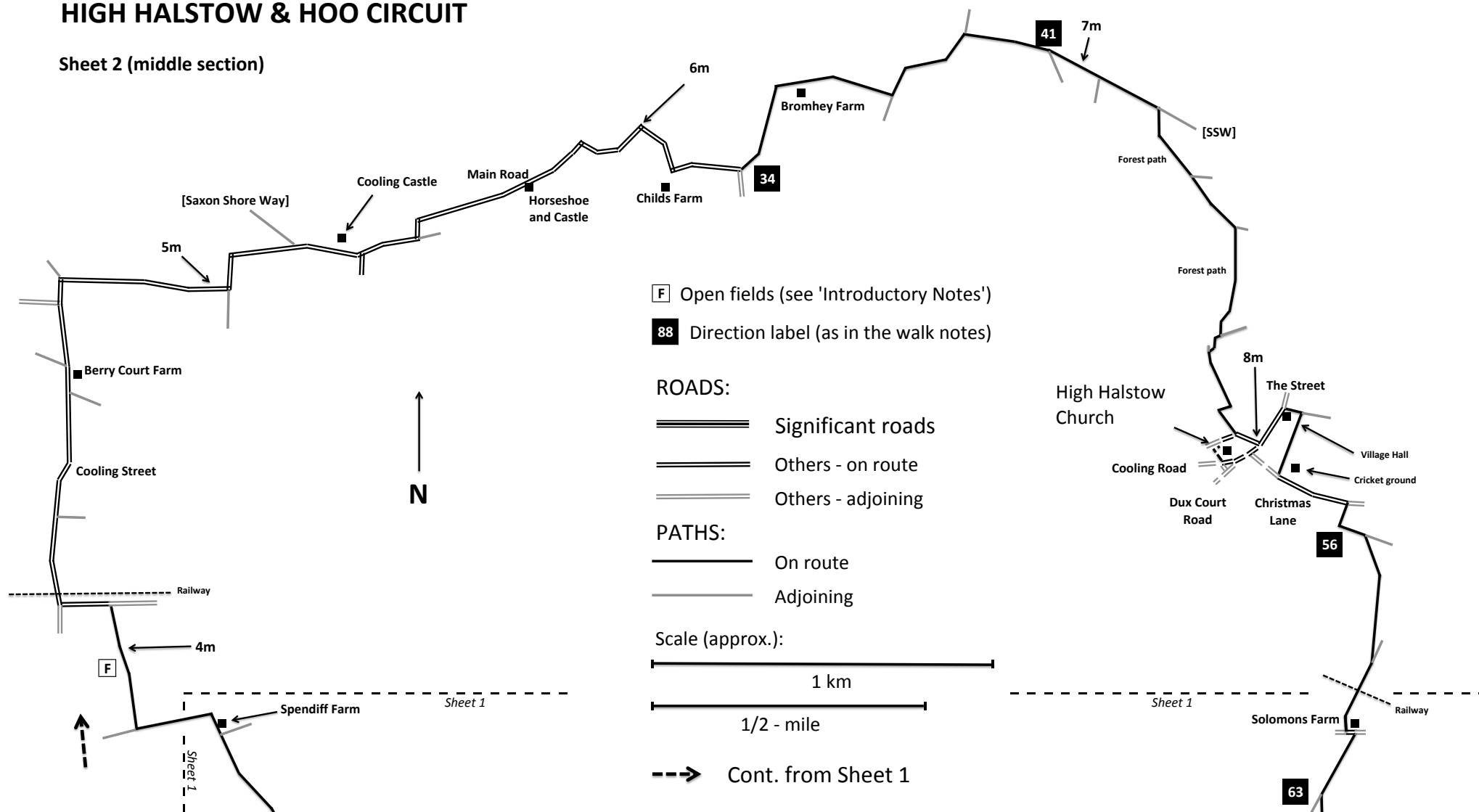


# HIGH HALSTOW & HOO CIRCUIT

Sheet 2 (middle section)



## **HIGH HALSTOW & HOO CIRCUIT - 10.66 miles**

### **Churches in the circuit:**

Hoo St Werburgh (Direction 2)

Chattenden (17)

High Halstow (49B: Detour – see Appendix)

### **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:**

It will not appeal to some that just over half the distance is on roads (though not unpleasant ones – the fact that 23% of the walk is noted as ‘busy road’ in the dog notes below merely reflects the ‘best-not-to-let-dog-off-lead’ criterion which I adopt in that section).

The landscape is mostly unremarkable, though there is a fine view from the climb towards Northward Hill (Direction 41), and the descent to Solomons Farm (57 and 58) is pleasant.

Northward Hill is also a popular nature reserve. And Cooling Castle has an interesting history, though it can only be viewed from outside.

### **Roads and hindrances:**

The roads are, without exception, perfectly manageable with ordinary care – including the two crossings of the A228 (Directions 15 and 66 – lights and dual carriageway respectively).

The climb to Northward Hill is respectable, but not unduly long!

## **HIGH HALSTOW & HOO CIRCUIT**

**Hoo St Werburgh – Chattenden – Cooling – High Halstow – Hoo St Werburgh**

Notes taken: September 2018

The start and finish is at the Five Bells pub, at the main crossroads at the centre of Hoo St Werburgh ME3 9BE).

			OS	Miles
1		From the Five Bells head for the church, by crossing the road and starting opposite (southwards) along Church Street.	783 721	

	Mins.*		OS	Miles
2	3	At <b>Hoo St Werburgh Church</b> , turn half-right at its west end, along the diagonal path across the churchyard.		
3	4	At the corner, turn half-right again, along a short passageway.		
4	5	At the end, faced by a field, turn left.		
5		Very soon turn right along a broad roadway.		
6	11	Soon after Cockham Cottage go beside a gate, and on ahead.		
7	16	A little before the farm buildings, pass another barrier (uncomfortably straddling the road, though most will have little difficulty passing either under or, somehow, around).		
8	18	Continue effectively in the same direction, by turning right, then, immediately at the pole, left.		0.92
9	25	Bend left, with the main path.		
10	27	Pass another gate, and carry on ahead along an enclosed passageway.		
11	28	As the roadway turns right, instead continue ahead along a narrow path.		
12	29	Cross an access roadway and go ahead along a narrow path between fences.		
13	31	Cross another roadway and continue ahead between fences (as the Saxon Shore Way turns away to the left).		
14	35	At the T-junction at the end, turn right, down a narrow passageway with a brick building on your left.	760 717	
15	36	Reach and cross the busy dual carriageway and turn left along its far side.		1.79
16	37	Swing right along Chattenden Lane, passing the school on the left.		
17	39	Pass <b>Chattenden Church</b> on the left, and continue along the length of Chattenden Lane.		
18	53	[Map point] Near the top, fork right, away from the barrier down to the left.		
19	57	At the bottom of the dip, stay with the main road as it swings a little to the right, now gently uphill again.		2.85
20	60	At the end of the main MoD site, continue ahead.		
21	64	[Map point] Where paths cross, take the least likely-looking of the alternatives, going straight ahead across a stile, and on, down a narrow woodland path.		
22	69	Go over a footbridge and out of the woods, still straight ahead along a grassy path between fields, towards houses in the middle distance.		
23	73	Continue in the same direction, though making brief turns to left and right to go round the corner of the farm property.		
24	75	At a pole, soon after the farm entrance, turn left along a gravel path between fields.		3.71
25	78	[!!F!!] Turn right, away from this path, along a border between fields. This rough path (not signposted or waymarked from this end) heads about 40 yds. to the right of a pair of pylons ahead.	748 745	
26	81	Go through a metal gate, and straight on ahead, on a broad path between fences.		

\* ***"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
27	<b>83</b>	After another metal gate, turn left along the road.		
28	<b>85</b>	At the road junction turn right, immediately going under the railway bridge and on. <b>THE SPINE SECTION starts about 700 yds. (8/9 minutes) further on, at Berry Court Farm (at the sign on the right for Merryboys Stables).</b>		
29	<b>96</b>	At the road junction go straight on, joining the major road.		4.74
30	<b>97</b>	At a second junction turn right, still with the major road. This is the start of a 1.5-mile section in which the route simply follows this winding road.	746 758	
31	<b>113</b>	Pass toilets on the right – currently open but closing at 6 p.m.		
32	<b>116</b>	Pass the Horseshoe and Castle on the right.		5.76
33	<b>123</b>	A final left-turn, at the entrance to Child’s Farm on the right.		
34	<b>125</b>	[Map point] Just before the road swings to the right, at the ‘Lipwell Hill’ sign, instead turn left along the broad rough roadway, SSW-signposted.		
35	<b>129</b>	At crosspaths, turn right with the main roadway, towards a big corrugated-metal barn.		6.40
36	<b>130</b>	Keep to the left of the barn, and continue straight on between more buildings.		
37	<b>133</b>	As the main roadway turns right, instead turn left (still SSW).		
38	<b>134</b>	At a rough open area, follow the roadway as it turns right.		
39	<b>137</b>	Reaching a gateway, do not go through it, but turn right before it, along a grassy path.		
40	<b>139</b>	Follow the path, now gravel to start with, as it bends into trees, crosses a footbridge, and continues beyond.		
41	<b>141</b>	[Map point] Ignore the first paths on the right and go straight on, increasingly uphill, with the option of steps just beyond the viewpoint.		
42	<b>147</b>	About 120 yds. after the top of the steps, at a point where the path has almost levelled off (just after a bench and a signpost back to the car park), finally leave the main SSW and follow the winding path down through the woods, marked by the occasional wooden post with a red band.	778 763	
43	<b>150</b>	Keep right at a junction next to a bench.		7.34
44	<b>153</b>	At the bottom swing right with the main track.		
45	<b>158</b>	At a T-junction of paths, turn right.		
46	<b>159</b>	Bend rightwards up some steps, following the path as it winds upwards through the undergrowth.		
47	<b>162</b>	Make a final turn to the right, about 20 yds. short of fencing at the back of a house. Follow along the right-hand side of the fence to its far corner, then follow it as it goes up to the left.	780 754	
48	<b>163</b>	Go through a MKG, still alongside the fence.		
49	<b>164</b>	Meet a road as it bends through a right-angle.  [To visit <u>High Halstow Church</u> , now divert instead to the <u>Detour</u> in the Appendix.]  <b>Main route:</b> Continue straight ahead along the road.		
50	<b>165</b>	At the end, turn left along the road, going over to the right at the zebra crossing.		

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

	Mins.*		OS	Miles
51	<b>166</b>	<b>END OF THE SPINE SECTION</b> Next to the bus shelter, turn right along a metalled path.		
52	<b>167</b>	Turn right, up away from the path, to go alongside the back of the Village Hall. (Beyond it there are toilets, currently open.) Then continue along the right-hand edge of the playing field.		
53	<b>168</b>	Pass the corner of the cricket field and continue alongside it towards the road ahead.		
54	<b>169</b>	Reach the road and turn left along it.		8.18
55	<b>172</b>	Turn right between houses (signposted RS47).		
56	<b>173</b>	<b>[Map point]</b> Turn left, to go alongside the backs of houses, along the top edge of a large field.		
57	<b>174</b>	Diverge from this path, turning about 40 degrees to the right, across the field. The line is signposted, but not always visible on the ground. It goes directly towards a solitary tree in the field. (I understand from the landowner that the tree was left when others were removed, precisely to serve as a navigation aid for walkers.)		
58	<b>176</b>	Pass to the left of the tree and continue ahead on much the same diagonal line down across the field, aiming to reach its far side about 80-100 yds. above the railway bridge to its right.		
59	<b>180</b>	Reach the far side and head down towards the bridge.		
60	<b>181</b>	Cross the bridge and continue ahead between buildings.		
61		Reach a farmyard, and cross it diagonally to the exit at the far left-hand corner.		
62	<b>182</b>	Leave the farmyard along the wide road, then immediately turn right to go under power lines.		8.78
63	<b>184</b>	<b>[Map point]</b> About 30 yds. beyond its waymark, turn left up between fields.		
64	<b>187</b>	Near the top, at a junction of paths, turn slightly left, keeping the field on your left.		
65	<b>188</b>	Carry straight on into a new field, still keeping along the right-hand edge.		
66	<b>191</b>	Reach a road alongside the A228 roundabout. Go ahead to the roundabout and, to the right, anti-clockwise round it, crossing the dual carriageway main road.	786 739	
67	<b>192</b>	Turn right to start down Ropers Lane.		
68	<b>200</b>	Opposite Ropers Green Lane, turn right along a metalled roadway between fields.		9.68
69	<b>205</b>	At the T-junction at the end turn left for about 40 yds., then right, along a signposted path between fields, towards houses.		
70	<b>209</b>	At the end, turn left alongside the hedge for about 50 yds.		
71	<b>210</b>	Then turn right through a gap, and go over a footbridge, through a MKG, and straight ahead along a path.	785 728	
72	<b>211</b>	Cross a road, and carry on ahead, with a children's playground on your left.		
73	<b>213</b>	At the end continue straight on, along a narrow passageway.		
74	<b>214</b>	<b>[Map point]</b> After going through a squeeze gate and emerging at the corner of the car park, go on to the road ahead and turn left down it.		

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

	Mins.*		OS	Miles
75	<b>219</b>	Reach the crossroads at the Five Bells, the starting point of the walk.	783 721	10.66

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

## **APPENDIX**

### **Detour to High Halstow Church**

	Mins.*		OS	Miles
49A	<b>0</b>	For the detour to <b>High Halstow Church</b> : Instead of going straight on at Direction 49, turn right along the road.		0.00
49B	<b>1</b>	Turn left through the gate into the churchyard, and go anti-clockwise round the western end of the church.		
49C		After visiting the church, go through the lych-gate on to the road, and turn left along it.		
49D	<b>2</b>	Continue ahead past the Red Dog on the left and the end of Christmas Lane on the right.		
49E	<b>3</b>	Rejoin the main route at Direction 50, continuing straight ahead as Forge Lane joins from left, and then going over to the right at the zebra crossing.  <b>Add 2 minutes to subsequent total times and 0.11 miles to cumulative distances.</b>		0.16

\* **"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!

<b>HIGH HALSTOW &amp; HOO CIRCUIT</b>	<b>Direction numbers</b>	<b>% of walk</b>
Busy road	15, 29-33, 50, 54, 67, 74b	23
Quiet road \$\$	1, 5, 16-20, 27-28, 34-38, 49, 66, 68, 72b	31
Open field with livestock		
Edge of field with livestock		
Field (or edge) without livestock **	4, 6-9, 22-26, 52, 56-58, 62-65, 69-72a	25
Path (hedged, or otherwise forced)	2-3, 10, 12-14, 39, 47-48, 51, 53, 55, 59-61, 73-74a	9
Woods	11, 21, 40-46	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.

**STILES (1) - Detail noted in Spring 2019, but subject to frequent change:**

The stile in Direction **21** has easy gaps.