

## ASH CHURCH WALKS - NO. 15

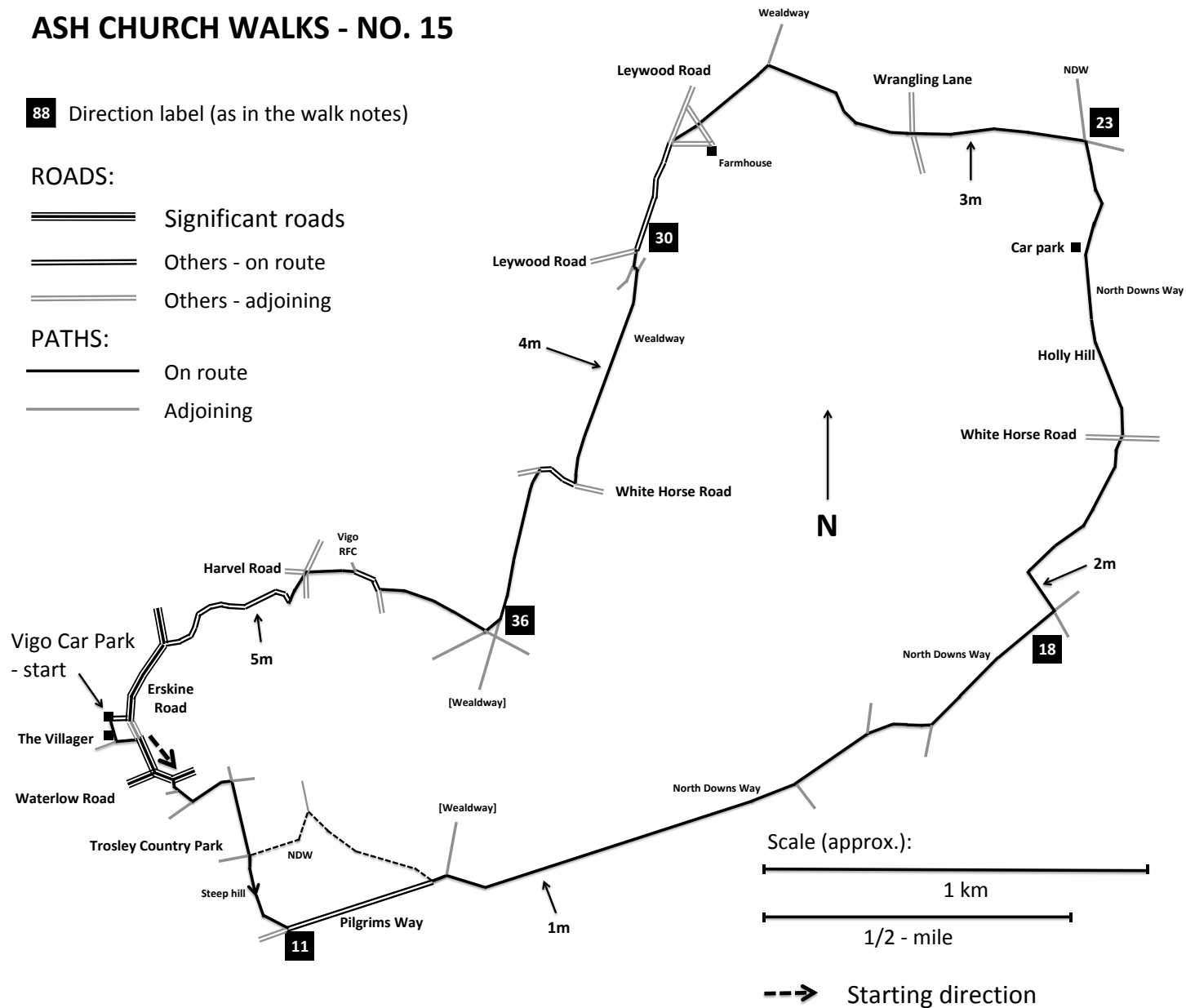
**88** Direction label (as in the walk notes)

### ROADS:

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

### PATHS:

- On route
- Adjoining



## **ASH CHURCH WALKS - No.15 (2 January 2017) - 5.35 miles** **(Vigo - Pilgrims Way - North Downs Way - Holly Hill - Wealdway - Vigo)**

Linking sections of the North Downs Way and the Wealdway, there are also two fine views: into the distance across the Weald (Direction 9); and later over the Medway as a reward for the climb on the approach to Holly Hill (20). The Villager proved a hospitable venue before and after the walk.

### **Roads and hindrances:**

Roads are not particularly an issue.

The steep drop from the viewpoint (Direction 9) needs some care - it is rougher underfoot than it looks - but is quite manageable, especially over to the left where the grass is wilder and offers better grip. And (as below) there is an alternative (rather more humdrum) if you really want to avoid it.

The climb later on (19) is respectable, but eased by steps at the steepest point.

### **Notes taken: January 2017**

The start and finish is at the car park in Vigo, next to Vigo School (DA13 0RL). The car park is signposted off Erskine Road, and is bounded by the school, a colony of recycling containers and an enclosed basketball area.

	Mins.*		OS	Miles
1		Start from the Vigo car park, next to the vehicle entrance to Vigo School. First, walk away from the enclosed basketball court, and alongside the school premises, with their brick wall on your right.	644 617	
2	<b>1</b>	Reach the corner of the square and cross it diagonally to the far left hand corner. There go slightly right, up alongside The Villager on your right.		
3		Turn left along the access road.		
4	<b>2</b>	At the T-junction at the end, cross the road and turn right, along the grass. Follow the bend around to the left, ignoring Waterlow Road opposite.		
5	<b>3</b>	Opposite Admers Wood turn right along an unsignposted track into the trees of Trosley Country Park. Continue slightly left along the track as a path merges from the right.		
6	<b>4</b>	Turn left along a major path.		
7	<b>6</b>	Turn right on to the first significant path you meet, next to a dog-waste bin. Follow this path straight ahead, quite steeply downhill at the end (with steps) until you go across the wide track of the North Downs Way.		

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

	Mins.*		OS	Miles
8	8	<p>Cross the NDW and continue ahead, still quite steeply downhill (with more steps).</p> <p><i>The route now goes ahead to a magnificent viewpoint (Direction 9) followed by a steep descent, which we all managed without trouble. But it can in any case be avoided by an alternative (less enjoyable) described in the Appendix. The alternative begins here at Direction 8 by turning left along the NDW instead of just crossing it. In itself it is virtually identical in time and distance to the main route, but if you have gone down to the viewpoint and there decide that the steep hill is not for you you will need to retrace your steps back up from there, to turn right along the NDW, at the overall cost of a minute or two.</i></p>	648 614	
9	9	<p>[But to follow the main route ...]</p> <p>Admire the view at the MKG. Then carry on (carefully – it is not as smooth underfoot as it seems!) down the steep, grassy hill. The route goes nearly all the way to the bottom – but not quite, in that it heads towards the trees a little further left: this eliminates the very last bit of the descent; and it will also encourage you, if you wish, to go down the left-hand side of the main hill, where the grass is more tufty and offers better grip if conditions are slippery.</p>		
10	13	Reach those trees – the ones ahead on the left near the bottom, not those along the left-hand side – and look for a gap at their left-hand end. Go along a track there through the wood, and follow it as it winds gently to the right, towards a road.		
11	14	[Map point] Pass beside a redundant stile and turn left along the road.		
12	18	Ignore the right turn signposted for Coldrum and Longbarrow (the southward Wealdway, though this is not indicated).		
13		At the next junction a few yards later, next to the house 'Harpwood', the NDW (and with it the alternative route) comes down to join from the left. Continue straight ahead along it.	653 613	
14	19	And still ahead, passing the steps on the left which bring the Wealdway down from the north.		0.84
15	31	Ignore the steps which meander up on the left.		
16	34	Ignore the broad track coming in from the left.		
17	36	In the course of a right-left S-bend, ignore the track coming up to join from the right.		1.68
18	42	[Map point] At a cross paths (marked by a MKG on the right) turn left to go up alongside a sloping field, keeping to the right of a hedge consisting of a line of young trees.		
19	44	Approaching the top corner, keep over to the left so that you reach the corner in a little corridor, formed as a second hedge begins on the right. Follow the corridor as it turns right with the hedge at the corner itself, then go gently down, then along, and, finally, a little leftwards and increasingly steeply uphill, with the help of steps in the steepest section.		

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	Mins.*		OS	Miles
20	<b>53</b>	Pass a gap on the right (or go a few yards through it to enjoy the view).		
21		A few yards further on go through a MKG at a roadside, and cross over to go ahead up Holly Hill.	671 624	
22	<b>59</b>	Pass the entrance to the Holly Hill car park.		2.63
23	<b>63</b>	<b>[Map point]</b> Soon after Holly Hill Cottage and its grounds, turn left, leaving the NDW, through a MKG and a few yards further on through another metal gate. Then continue along the right-hand edge of a large field as it gradually starts to descend.		
24	<b>67</b>	Next to a pole, faced by a pair of gates either side of a fence, go through the left-hand gate (a MKG) and on - at first down a narrow, enclosed track, then on to the bottom as a field opens out on the right.		
25	<b>70</b>	Go through the squeeze gate at the bottom, across the road, and on up the path opposite. This climbs along the left-hand edge of another field, bending, further up, right and left with its edge.		
26	<b>75</b>	Ignore the gap on the left and continue ahead uphill.		
27	<b>77</b>	At the top left-hand corner, faced by a gate, swing to the left as the Wealdway merges from the right and start along an enclosed path.	662 634	
28	<b>80</b>	At the end go straight on past the wooden barrier, cross the road and beyond it go through an exceptionally tight wooden kissing gate. Then cross the small field diagonally towards its far left-hand corner.		3.52
29	<b>81</b>	About 20 yds. to the right of that corner, cross a stile and turn left along the road beyond.		
30	<b>85</b>	<b>[Map point]</b> As the road bends away to the right, instead go straight on, past a redundant stile, and along the left-hand edge of a field.		
31	<b>86</b>	After about 100 yds. use a gap to slip across to the left. Then go a little to the right across a rough open area to continue ahead in more or less the original direction, keeping alongside the right-hand edge.		
32	<b>88</b>	Go through a gate and on along the right-hand edge of a field which slopes down to the side. Head for the corrugated farm buildings in the middle distance ahead.		
33	<b>92</b>	Keep to the right alongside the buildings, and ahead over a stile and along a narrow path.		
34	<b>93</b>	At the end, after a brief left-right pair of turns, reach a road and turn right along it.	656 623	
35	<b>94</b>	Just before the road bends to the left, turn left away from it into the trees, past a redundant stile.		4.21
36	<b>100</b>	<b>[Map point]</b> At a crosspaths the Wealdway goes straight on (waymarks just about visible behind a tree) but instead turn right, away from it.		
37		Very soon turn about 60 degrees right again, along a narrow path, easily missed.		
38	<b>104</b>	At the end turn right along a broad track.		

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	Mins.*		OS	Miles
39	<b>(104)</b>	Ignore the stile on the right as you swing gently leftwards at the corner of Vigo Rugby Club. Continue along the track (with the rugby field on the right beyond the trees).	652 621	
40	<b>107</b>	At the end go beside the gate to emerge at a road junction. Cross diagonally to the left, and climb over a mound in the angle between the two roads, into a garage court.		4.86
41	<b>108</b>	Near its far right-hand corner, leave the garage court and go through into a parking area. There move across leftwards, then keep right to walk along the right-hand side of the roadway (High View), starting out with number 134 on your right. The road curves a number of times from side to side: follow it all the way to the end.		
42	<b>113</b>	At the T-junction at the bottom, go over the crossing road (Erskine Road) and turn left along its right-hand pavement.	646 619	
43	<b>116</b>	Turn right at the signpost for the car park.		
44	<b>117</b>	Reach the car park – the starting point of the walk.	644 617	5.35

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## APPENDIX

### Alternative descent to ‘Harpwood’ (avoiding the steep hill)

	Mins.*		OS	Miles
8A	<b>0</b>	[See the note at Direction 8.]  To follow the alternative and avoid the steep drop, turn left along the eastward North Downs Way instead of crossing it, following the track when in due course it bends leftwards, uphill.		0.00
8B	<b>3</b>	At the top of the rise, after going through a kissing gate next to a barrier, turn sharp right, down an awkwardly rough track (still NDW).		
8C	<b>10</b>	At the bottom, rejoin the main route by turning left next to the entrance to the house ‘Harpwood’, continuing along the NDW.  <b>There is no significant difference from the main route in either time or distance.</b>	653 613	0.37

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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!

<b>ASH CHURCH WALKS - 15</b>	<b>Direction numbers</b>	<b>% of walk</b>
Busy road	4, 34, 42	5
Quiet road \$\$	3, 11-12, 21-22, 29, 41, 43	24
Open field with livestock		0
Edge of field with livestock	23	3
Field (or edge) without livestock **	9, 18, 24b-26, 28, 30-32	15
Path (hedged, or otherwise forced)	1-2, 13-14a, 16-17, 19b, 24a, 27, 33, 40	19
Woods	5-8, 10, 14b-15, 19a, 19c-20, 35-39	35

\*\* 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 (2)** – Details noted in January 2017, but **subject to frequent change**:

The stile at Direction **29** has easy gaps (and a dog-gate).

The one in **33** also has easy gaps.