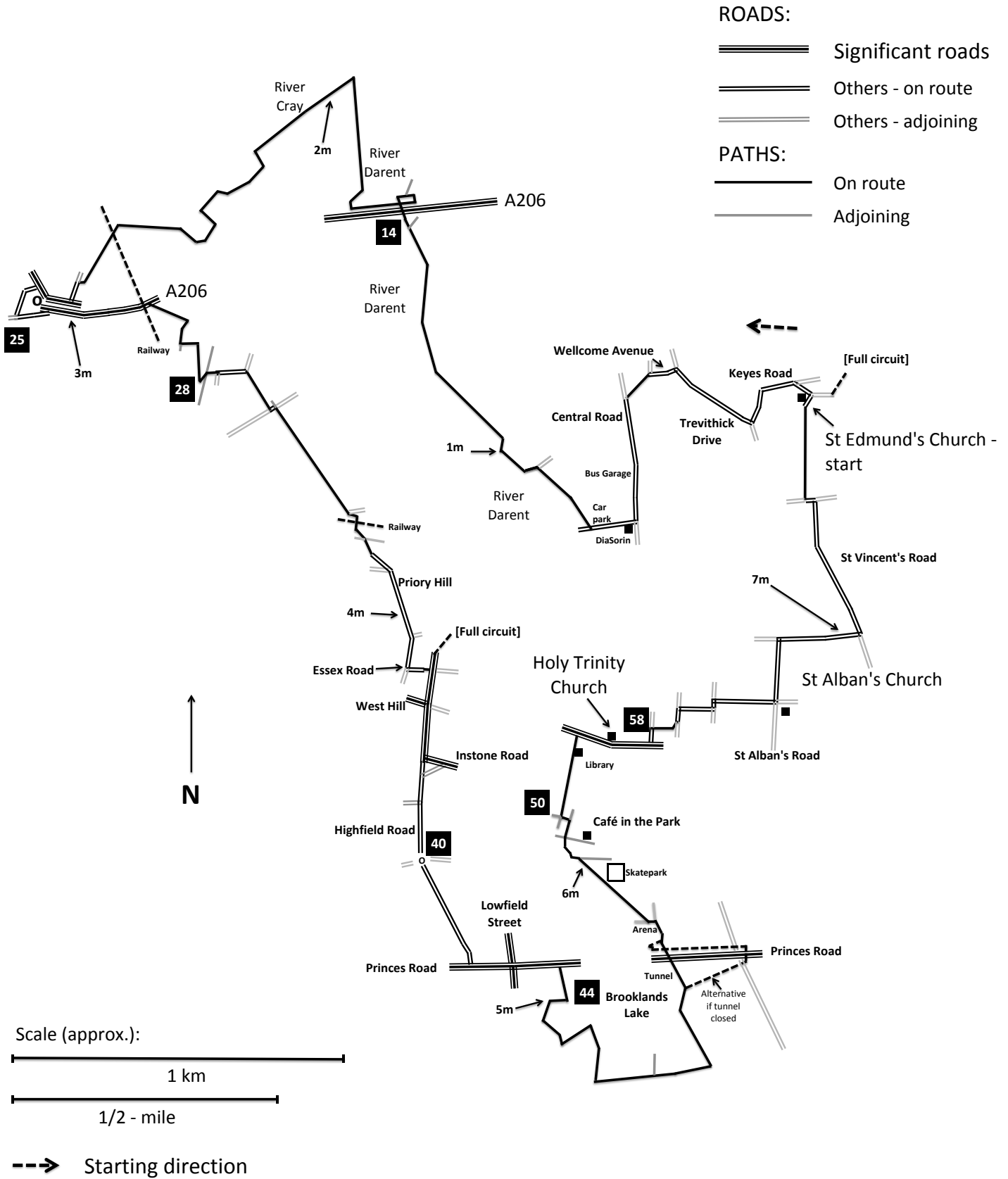


DARTFORD

SHORTER CIRCUIT



DARTFORD CIRCUIT - shorter: 7.51 miles

Churches in the shorter circuit:

Dartford St Edmund's (start and finish)

Holy Trinity Dartford (55)

Dartford St Alban's (63)

Associated local circuits

- DA1: Dartford – Christ Church – Brooklands - Dartford

Shorter circuit: Mostly urban and suburban, but the walk along the Darent, Brooklands Lakes and Dartford's Central Park provide variety.

Roads and hindrances:

There is a very short section (Direction 15) alongside the busy A206 dual carriageway, well protected by a crash barrier.

Directions 22-25 represent a hairpin to cross back over the dual carriageway (otherwise very difficult) enabled by two sets of lights.

The crossing of Princes Road (47) is through a tunnel (with recorded music if lucky). But if the Darent alongside is running too high the tunnel is closed, and an alternative (as described in the Appendix) is necessary, involving a sequence of road crossings – 47C-D – to get safely over Princes Road.

SHORTER CIRCUIT

Dartford - Darent Valley Path - Barnes Cray - circuit of Dartford

Notes taken: January to May 2020

The start and finish is at St Edmund's Church, St Edmund's Road, Dartford (DA1 5ND).

	Mins.*		OS	Miles
1		From the entrance to St Edmund's Church , turn left along the road to reach Keyes Road, and left again to walk along it.	550 750	
2		And left again, following the road as it bends.		
3	1	At the T-junction at the end of the grass on the right, turn right down Trevithick Road, crossing it as soon as convenient. After house no.43, use the short-cut walkway on the left.		
4	4	Turn left along Wellcome Avenue.		
5	5	Where the road bends to the right, instead turn half-left across the field, heading towards the far-left corner.		
6	6	There turn left along the road.		

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

	Mins.*		OS	Miles
7	8	At the junction, continue ahead along Central Road, crossing to the right-hand side when convenient.		
8	11	Turn right alongside the DiaSorin building.		0.69
9	12	Reach a car park, and go diagonally right across it to the opposite corner.		
10		There start along the waymarked footpath alongside the river, soon passing the back of the bus garage.		
11	15	On the left go through a squeeze gate on to a newly constructed walkway to go ahead alongside the river. (The signpost at this point is currently misleading, with the Darent Valley Path arrow pointing in the wrong direction. Ignore it, and turn on to the walkway alongside the river.)		
12	16	At the end move back over to the right, and resume the walk along the riverside path.		
13	19	Keep left, up on to the embankment, when it begins.		1.12
14	28	[Map point] Approaching the bridge which carries the main road over the Darent, go straight ahead under it (ignoring the path going up to the right). Then follow the enclosed path as it swings to the right, and continue ahead briefly, parallel to the main road above, looking out for a MKG up on the right giving access to it.		
15	30	After going through the MKG, reach the road, and turn right over the bridge.		
16	32	A few yards after the bridge, very nearly opposite the lane-indicator signpost for the traffic, and next to a large concrete block, turn sharp right through a MKG along the signposted footpath, then swinging leftwards along a broad path, and following it along the left bank of the Darent.	536 756	
17	38	Turn left to follow the line of the River Cray as it winds from side to side.		1.96
18	40	Ignore the left fork: follow the level path straight on.		
19	48	At the junction of paths, at the corner of industrial buildings, continue ahead past the barrier, still alongside the Cray.		
20	52	After a left-hand bend, continue ahead under the railway.		
21	54	At the end of the path go through an unusual kissing gate and bear left, joining a short access road.		
22		Turn right along the busy main road (A206). [In a few minutes the route will be going in the opposite direction on the other side of the road, so trying to cross and turn left straightaway might be tempting. But the volume of traffic may well be prohibitive.]		2.77
23	55	Go over an access road and follow the pavement round to the right, towards lights.		
24	57	Cross the road leftwards at the light-controlled crossing, and on the other side turn left again. A few yards later bear right along a short roadway towards another set of lights.	527 754	
25	58	[Map point] Cross at these lights and on the other side turn left to go back, passing the roundabout on the left, now walking along the right-hand side of the A206.		

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	Mins.*		OS	Miles
26	62	Immediately after going under the railway bridge, fork right along the signposted footpath.		
27	66	After winding from side to side, do not go ahead through the gates, but instead turn left just before them, then after about 40 yds. right, along a winding, unbelievably narrow, path which soon goes alongside, and then across, the stream.		
28	68	[Map point] Go straight across a rough roadway, as signposted, and join the dead end of a cul-de-sac, going past some houses.		
29	70	At the end of the houses on the right, where the roadway swings left, instead follow the tarmac path leading half-right away from it.		3.45
30	72	Reach a road, cross it, and, about 10 yds. on the left, take the path which goes ahead in the same direction.	534 750	
31	77	After passing a school and a playground on the right, go up the tarmac path leading to the railway footbridge, and cross it.		
32	78	Over the bridge go almost straight on (slightly left) along a metalled passageway.		
33	79	Carry on as the passageway becomes a minor road.		
34	80	At the end turn half-left, then immediately follow the road right, down Priory Hill.		
35	82	At the bottom keep right, ignoring Priory Place on the left.		
36	84	Turn left down what turns out to be Essex Road, and at the end follow it down a few steps to the main road.		
37	85	Turn right along the main road, staying on its right-hand pavement.		
38	86	START OF THE SPINE SECTION Reach the major junction with West Hill, and use the lights to go across and ahead in the same direction, along the right-hand side of Highfield Road.		4.20
39	89	Continue ahead, ignoring the main road as it goes down to the left.		
40	92	[Map point] Go straight ahead at the roundabout (Highfield Road South).		
41	97	Follow the walkway on the left to turn left alongside Princes Road.		
42	98	Reach the major crossroads with Lowfield Street, and use the lights to cross to the diagonally opposite corner of the junction. Then continue ahead along the right-hand side of Princes Road.		
43	100	Immediately after Homebase, turn right through a gap into the car park, and head towards the hedge on its far side, diverging about 40 yds. from the side of the Homebase building and aiming at a Brooklands Lakes information board at that point.		4.89
44	101	[Map point] There turn right to start on an anti-clockwise circuit of the main lake, following wild swings as the path hugs its shore.		
45	108	Turn left to go, still next to the water, along a straighter path with new industrial buildings now on your right. Keep straight on along the main path (not leftwards down to the water's edge).		

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	Mins.*		OS	Miles
46	111	At the end of the path, in front of railings, turn left, still alongside the lake. END OF THE SPINE SECTION	547 730	
47	114	<i>The route described here relies on the tunnel under Princes Road being open – not always the case, depending on the river level. If it is closed, use the detour in the Appendix instead.</i> At a fork swing left at first, and then half-right at an angled junction to go down a concrete path and then through the tunnel under the main road.	546 732	
48	116	After emerging from the tunnel, turn right at an information board and follow the path as it bends to the left to go alongside an athletics arena.		5.74
49	118	Passing the corner of the arena, turn left briefly alongside it, then after about 25 yds. turn half-right to go diagonally across the big grass area. Aim, first, 20 yds. to the left of the corner of hedged skatepark. Then, approaching the tarmac path which borders the field at its far side (about 100 yds. short of the Café in the Park), join it at the furthest left point you can see. There follow it rightwards past fitness equipment.		
50	122	[Map point] After a final bend to the right, go ahead over the crossing path, keeping the bandstand about 70 yds. away over on the left.		
51	123	At the end follow the main path left, ignoring the one which goes straight ahead.		
52		Then, at the signpost for 'Town Centre', turn right, away from the bandstand, and go straight ahead towards the red-brick Dartford Library building, visible ahead.		
53	125	Pass the library entrance and continue ahead to the main road.	543 739	
54		Cross the main road, and go ahead along a short roadway ('Market Place'), along the left-hand side of the 'Iceland' store.		
55	126	At the end turn right along the pedestrian roadway, and go ahead, as the main road joins from the right, to pass Holy Trinity Church on the left.		
56	128	Go straight ahead, taking on, with the help of the lights, the double crossing of the busy road junction, and go briefly up the left-hand side of the road ahead (East Hill).		6.38
57	129	Turn left up Mount Pleasant Road.		
58	130	[Map point] Turn right up the footpath. This consists of very steep steps, particularly difficult as they are of irregular height!		
59	132	Just below the top, cut off the corner by taking the left fork.		
60		At the top, merge leftwards into the road.		
61	133	Turn right, at the top of the gentle rise, into Tufnail Road.		
62	135	At the end, continue in the same direction, by turning left, then immediately right, along Colney Road.		
63	137	At the first crossroads, St Alban's Church is over at the far right-hand corner. But to continue the walk turn left (St Alban's Road).		
64	139	At the end turn right (Fulwich Road).		6.89

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	Mins.*		OS	Miles
65	142	Reaching the major road at the end (St Vincent's Road), turn left along it and cross to its right-hand side as soon as convenient.		
66	147	At the end go over the crossing road, with the help of the island, and turn briefly left along its far side. Then, after a few yards, turn right along the signposted footpath, leading alongside the school to the church at the end.		
67	151	Reach St Edmund's Church , the starting point of the walk.	550 750	7.51

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APPENDIX to Shorter Circuit

Detour, if Princes Road tunnel is closed

	Mins.*		OS	Miles
47A	0	At the fork in Direction 47, keep right, then turn right to cross a bridge, take the obvious left fork over a second bridge and carry on upwards, up steps to start with.	546 732	0.00
47B	1	Continue up the hill, ignoring the path on the left.		
47C	3	After a final bend to the right, emerge at the top at a junction. Here Darenth Road meets the busy A225 (Princes Road), which you need to cross. For the safest crossing go around anti-clockwise with the help of lights, first crossing the minor Darenth Road to reach them.		
47D		Then cross, in turn, the three sections of the main road, and, once over, turn left to cross, finally, the northern section of Darenth Road (beware traffic coming from both sides) and the bus lane.		
47E	4	And go ahead along the right-hand side of Princes Road.		0.16
47F	6	Go through the gap on the right, signposted for the Darent Valley Path, and descend the steep hairpin path towards the river below.		
47G	8	At the bottom, where the path from the tunnel joins from the right, continue straight ahead next to the information boards, and follow the path as it bends to the left to go alongside an athletics arena. Add 6 minutes to subsequent total times and 0.24 miles to cumulative distances.		0.32

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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!

DARTFORD - SHORTER CIRCUIT	Direction numbers	% of walk
Busy road	3, 6-7, 15, 22-25, 37-42, 54, 55b-56, 65	27
Quiet road \$\$	1-2, 4, 8, 21, 28, 33-36a, 53, 57, 60-64, 66c	17
Open field with livestock		0
Edge of field with livestock		0
Field (or edge) without livestock **	5, 12-13a, 13c, 29, 48-52, 66b	17
Path (hedged, or otherwise forced)	9-11, 13b, 13d-14, 16-20, 26-27, 30-32, 36b, 43-47, 55a, 58-59, 66a	39
Woods		0

** 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: There are currently no stiles on this walk.