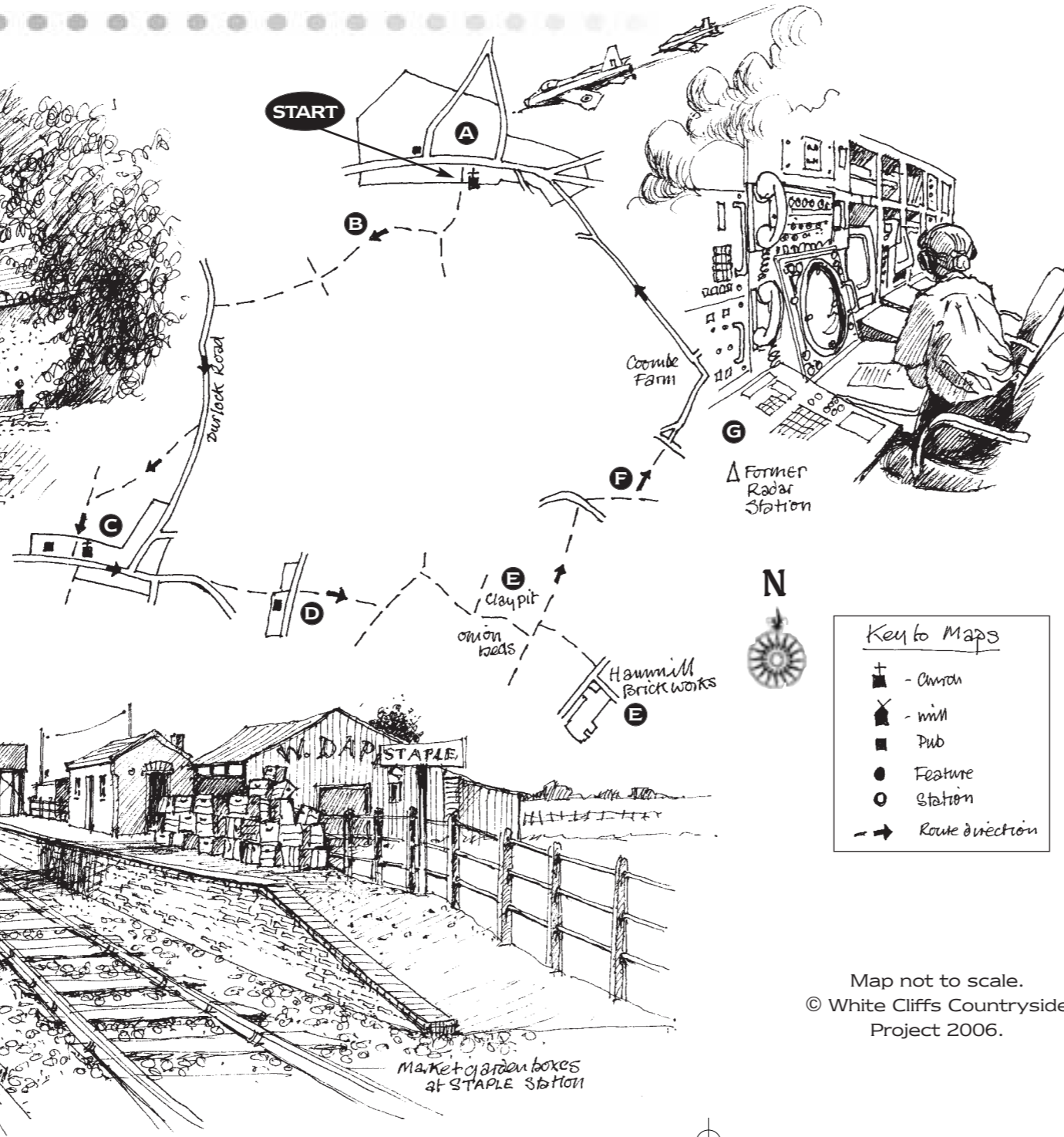
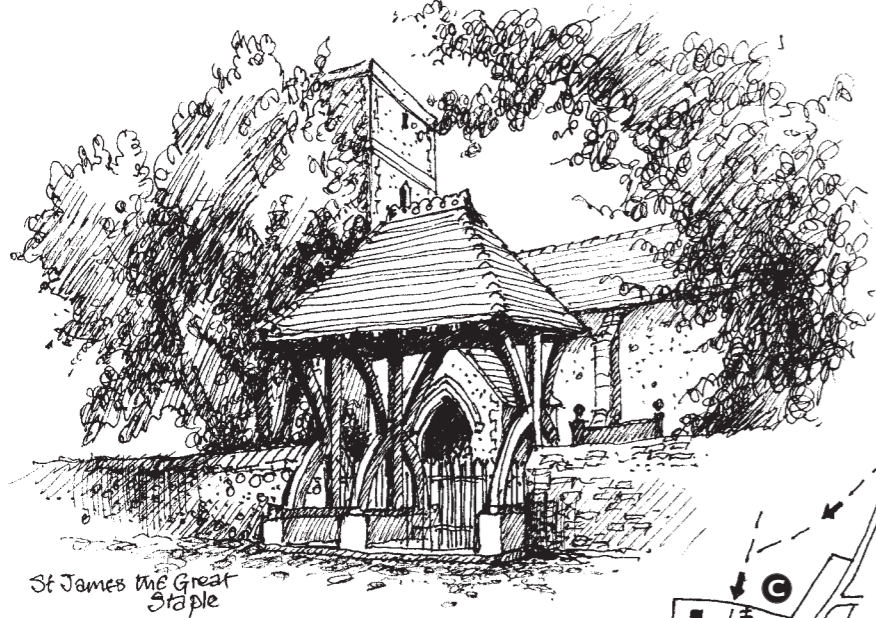




# A HOP AROUND THE GARDEN! Walk 5



Key to Maps

- ✚ - Church
- ⌘ - mill
- - Pub
- - Feature
- - Station
- > - Route direction

Map not to scale.  
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## ROUTE DIRECTIONS

### 1. ASH TO STAPLE

Start at the car park, New Street, Ash **A**. Walk on to New Street, turn right and walk up the road towards Ash Church. After about 20m turn right on to Pudding Lane, follow the lane right to the bottom and bear left, looking for a field gate and kissing gate. The Ash Town EKR halt was situated just South of here **B**. Pass through the kissing gate and continue straight ahead towards a wooden waymarking post, at the post bear right across a culvert and head towards another field gate/kissing gate combination by a road. Pass through the gate across the road and through the gate on the other side. Continue straight on for 400m through two more gates and past a pond on your right until you come to the last gate out on to a road with arable fields beyond. Cross the road and look for a path on your right atop the bank carrying on across the arable field. Follow this path for 200m until you reach Dunlock Road. Take care stepping out on to the road, turn left and follow the road for about 400m ignoring any footpaths off it until you reach a path on your right running diagonally across the field towards Staple Church. Follow this path for about 300m until you reach a hedge behind a small holding. Look for the path running between the boundary of the house and an old orchard. Follow this path through to Staple Church and village **C** and the road.

### 2. STAPLE TO CLAYPITS

From Staple Church turn left and follow the road past the houses until it bends to the left. Carefully cross the road and head straight on up The Street, following the signs for Barnsole and the Village Hall. After about 50m the road forks, follow the left hand fork, Mill Lane. Continue along the road past several houses and ignoring any other paths, until you reach the village hall on your right and several recycling bins on your left. Straight ahead of you is a stile into a horse paddock, cross this stile and head diagonally across the paddock aiming for a second stile opposite. Once across the second stile bear to your left and follow the path under a series of arbours for about 150m until you reach the road and Black Pig pub at Barnsole **D**. Carefully cross the road and head up the path opposite

between the houses and up to an arable field. Continue straight on across the field aiming for the bank in front of you. Once on the bank, continue on the same heading across the field to the end of the hedge. As the hedge turns left, carry straight on for about 150m towards Claypits. Take care around the open excavations and be aware of any warning signs which may be posted. Follow the path through the claypits looking for a path on your right which runs down the side of a house for about 30m before bearing left and heading towards a barrier and hut which guard the pits. To your right you should be able to see a track running down towards the road and Hammill brickworks **E** and ahead of you should be a track running past a large heap of manure and rotting vegetables.

### 3. CLAYPITS TO COOMBE

Follow this path for about 400m towards the farm buildings and road. Once you reach the road there should be a house immediately opposite you and to the right of the house is a path running diagonally across the field, carefully cross the road and take this path. After about 250m, look for a path off to your left running up the hill towards the hedge and boundary of Ringleton Manor **F**. Take this path up the hill until you reach an old metal kissing gate in the boundary hedge. Pass through this gate and head straight across the lawn of Ringleton Manor for 50m up a slope and across a stile onto another path. Turn left and follow this path for 150m across another stile and past a chicken coup on your left and a house on your right. Follow the path as it bears left and becomes a drive for the house down to the road. On the slope above you is Coombe and Ash Radar Station **G**.

### 3. COOMBE TO ASH

Follow the road straight on from the drive back towards Ash for about 500m past the Ash Coombe Vineyard and ignoring any paths you pass until the road bends sharply to the left and down hill. There should be a house in front of you and a footpath to your right running down the side of a horse paddock. Follow this path for 150m until you arrive at some brick steps down a bank and on to the road. Turn left and follow the road back into Ash village.

## PLACES OF INTEREST

### A ASH

The lovely village of Ash sits among some of the richest arable and grazing agricultural land in Kent and has a long and fascinating history. Nearby is Richborough Roman fort and a Jutish cemetery was discovered at Gilton on the edge of the village in the 1700s. Ash was given to the See of Canterbury in the 9th Century by King Athelstan, it subsequently became part of the Royal Manor of Wingham before becoming a separate parish in 1282. The Church of St. Nicholas, with its tall tower and spire, has been a significant land mark for centuries and is still famed for the number of monumental brasses and effigies it contains. The village centre still has many old medieval and timber buildings (including the Chequer Inn opposite the car park), as well as many period homes.

This area has been important for market gardening since the 16th Century, when Dutch immigrants arriving in Sandwich began a tradition which has carried on to this day. The rich fertile soils around Ash have supported a wide range of vegetable growing along with hops, soft fruit, apple orchards and more recently flower nurseries and vineyards.



During the early twentieth century, this part of East Kent was being transformed by the discovery of coal. Test pits were sunk throughout the area including one near Wingham and another near Ash. The Ash boring was sunk at Fleet Farm in 1913 and, although coal was discovered at a depth of 1,089 feet, digging ceased after only a few months.

### B EAST KENT LIGHT RAILWAY

The East Kent Railway arrived in Ash in 1913 and the remains of the track bed can still be seen running across this site. Originally it was hoped the railway would service the new Ash colliery but it ended up being more important for local market gardeners. Ash town halt was just south of Pudding Lane, Staple station was situated near Durlock Road; Moat Farm and Poulton Farm had their own sidings. The station at Staple handled so much produce from the market gardens that it handled ten times the freight of any other EKLR station.

During the Second World War, two 12" railway-mounted howitzer guns were situated at Poulton and Staple. The railway stayed in use until the end of 1948, by that time very few passengers used the line.

### C STAPLE

There is some debate over the origin and meaning of the name of this tiny little village. In Old English it means a post or boundary marker or place of execution (Stapol) or it may be a corruption of a later French name Estaple meaning a place where Royal Charters guarantee trading rights to certain merchants. Considering the importance of this area for agriculture, particularly sheep

rearing, this may be a possibility and there are records of a merchant court (The Court of the Mayor of Staple) in existence from the medieval period. The Church of St. James dates mainly from the 15th Century with some earlier Norman and Saxon features. It is particularly renowned for the ornate octagonal font dating from the late 1400s and the lovely 17th Century lychgate.

St. James lends its name to the wine produced at the Staple vineyard which can be found opposite the church. This part of Kent has relatively low rainfall, fertile soils and, being fairly coastal, is protected from the worst frosts. This makes it ideal for growing vines.

### D BARNSOLE

Barnsole comes from the Old English *bern sol*, meaning a pool by a barn. The Black Pig pub sits at the centre of the hamlet, originally a brewery and dating from the late 1400s, it is a lovely timber framed building. Barnsole is also home to a vineyard, established in 1993 and particularly specialising in white wines.

### E CLAY PITS AND HAMMILL COLLIERY

The clay pits here are excavated for use in brick making. This is done at the the Hammill brick works, visible to the east at the bottom of the slope on the road to Eastry. The buildings you can see are the original Hammill (Woodnesborough) colliery buildings constructed between 1910 – 1914 by Arthur Burr. The colliery was taken over by Pearson and Dorman Long in 1923 and subsequently sold to the Hammill brick company.

### F RINGLETON

Ringleton and Ringlemere have their origins in the Saxon period, when they would have been the property of a Saxon lady called Hringwynns. Ringleton would have been the farmstead and Ringlemere a pool or pond. This area has been important for farming for centuries thanks to the rich soils.

### G ASH RADAR STATION

Ash was an important radar site for nearby RAF Manston and was part of the chain including the Swingate masts at Dover and ROTOR station at RAF Sandwich. Originally built in the 1950s it consisted of a deep, two storey bunker, to which two further bunkers were added in the 1980s. From the mid 1960s the site was under the control of the Civilian Aviation Authority before returning to RAF control in 1981. The whole underground complex was built to withstand the worst effects of a nuclear strike and formed an important part of the nuclear early warning system. The RAF withdrew from the site in the late 1990s and it was subsequently sold to a company who specialise in high security internet provision. There is no public access to the site. Interestingly during the sale process the MOD released the running costs of the site, including rates of £50,000 and a Powergen bill of over £150,000!



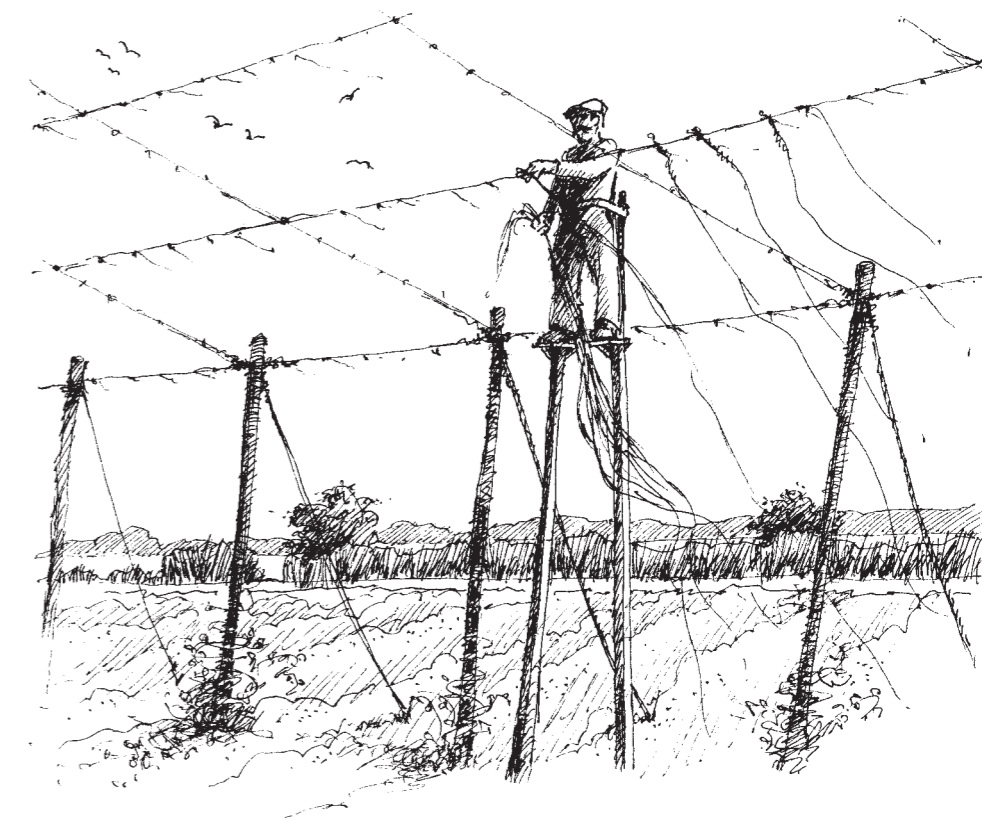
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## A HOP AROUND THE GARDEN!

A Circular Walk around Ash, Staple, Barnsole and Coombe, including two vineyards and exploring part of the Miner's Way Trail.

Walk no  
**5**  
of nine



### ABOUT THIS WALK

This walk is fairly easy and about 5 miles long (allow 2-3 hours). There are car parks in Ash (New Street and at the village hall). Please park considerately in the village. There are public toilets in the New Street car park. There is a post office and two pubs in Ash and a pub at Staple (The Black Pig). The walk is generally flat, with three stiles and a long but gentle slope at Ringleton. Some of the paths run across arable fields and may be muddy in the winter time. There are several roads to cross where care must be taken. The Ordnance Survey Explorer Map No 150 (Canterbury and Thanet) may help you enjoy this walk.

**DISTANCE 9 KMS (5 MILES)**

**ALLOW 3 HOURS**