



# Ash to Brookwood Walk

## Ash Ranges and Brookwood Cemetery

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**Warning**

This walk goes through an Army Firing Range. It is best to check beforehand that it is open (generally over bank holiday weekends and from late afternoon each day). Alternatives are suggested if it is closed.

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**Length**

15.3 kilometres

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**OS Maps**

Explorer 145. Ash, map reference SU900508, is in Surrey, 10 km west of Guildford. Brookwood, map reference SU952569, is also in Surrey, 6 km west of Woking.

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**Toughness**

5 out of 10.

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**Features** The main walk begins by crossing the main ridge of the Ash firing ranges from South to North, and after lunch in Pirbright it visits the fascinating Brookwood civilian and military cemeteries. Note that dogs are not allowed in the cemeteries and photography is also not permitted.

Access to the ranges is only possible when they are not in use by the military – generally they are open over bank holiday weekends and from late afternoon each day. You can enquire about the opening times of the Ash Ranges by calling the Senior Ranges Officer in advance on [01252 325233](tel:01252325233). It is also not advisable to enter the Ash Ranges if the ground is obscured by snow as some of the paths are very stony in places.

If it is not possible to enter the firing ranges, two alternatives are described:

- Along the Basingstoke Canal to Ash Vale station, then a short train ride and a circular walk from Brookwood (total 13.6 kms).
- As above to Ash Vale station, then using the directions in Walk 136 (Ash Vale to Worplesdon), later reverting to this walk (22.1 kms)

Previous versions of this walk proposed using the Blackwater Valley Path, rather than the Basingstoke Canal, from Ash Wharf to Ash Vale. This is no longer recommended as the section of the Blackwater Valley Path immediately before North Camp station has been diverted to an unpleasant industrial road and no acceptable solution is in sight.

**Shortening the Walk** The main walk can be shortened by going directly from point 4 to point 8, which would mean not visiting either Pirbright or the cemeteries (11.3 kms). Long and short variations in Brookwood Cemetery are described.

Options for short walks are also suggested, drawing on the other walks.

## **Points of Interest** **Ash Ranges**

The [Ash Ranges](#) site has been owned and managed by the Ministry of Defence since 1854. It covers 977 hectares of lowland heathland, conifer and broad-leaved woodland, mire, scrub and acid grassland supporting a wide range of fauna and flora. The area is designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest and as a habitat for rare species it forms part of the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area.

Under a grazing agreement between the MOD and Surrey Wildlife Trust, 65 Belted Galloway cows have been introduced on to the ranges and 42 goats have been imported from North Wales and Devon. The cattle are able to roam freely across the heathland sites but the dangerous areas on the

ranges are restricted and are strictly off limits. Some of them have been fitted with Global Positioning System (GPS) collars which send text messages direct to the Trust's offices, to assist in tracking their movement across the site. The grazing is part of an overall strategy to preserve the habitat and it also helps to maintain a realistic training environment for the army. For more information see

- [Surrey Wildlife Trust - Ash Ranges](#)
- [Surrey Wildlife Trust - News](#)
- [MOD - Grazing Towards Sustainability](#)

The danger areas are used for live firing exercises and training. **Ash range danger area is closed only when the red flags or red lamps are displayed.** The ranges are open to the public 'when red flags come down at 4.30pm or firing stops for maintenance'. At all other times Ash range danger area is open to the public for access on foot.

### **St Michael and All Angels Church, Pirbright**

Sir Henry Morton Stanley's grave is in the churchyard with a large but simple granite memorial, bearing his African name 'Bula Matari' and the single word 'AFRICA'. Stanley requested to be buried next to Livingstone in Westminster Abbey but this was refused. He lived in Pirbright for his last few years. The interior of this beautifully maintained Georgian church (rebuilt 1784) has an inlaid brass plaque to Stanley on the wall opposite the entrance.

### **Brookwood Cemetery**

This is the largest cemetery in Britain and thought to be the largest in Western Europe - over 235,000 people have been buried at Brookwood, ranging from St Edward the Martyr (murdered 10<sup>th</sup> century King of England, formerly interred at Shaftesbury Abbey) to Charles Bradlaugh, the first atheist MP. Dodi Fayed was briefly interred there before being re-buried on the family estate. It is open from 7am to 7pm in summer, or to 5pm in winter. The cemetery is still in use and visitors are asked to be respectful of this when passing through - dogs are definitely not allowed, photographs should not be taken without prior permission and it would be best not to walk in a large group.

The state of London's overcrowded cemeteries and the associated public health risk had become critical with the cholera outbreak of 1848/49. In 1850 Parliament ordered the closure of several churchyards, and a search was commissioned for a new site of sufficient size and splendour to serve the burial needs of the Metropolis. Brookwood Cemetery was consecrated and opened in 1854. 500 acres of Surrey countryside were carefully

landscaped, a wealth of exotic trees and shrubs were planted and every effort was made to ensure that Brookwood was beautiful, spacious and tranquil.

A distinguishing feature was the [cemetery railway](#). The London & South Western Railway was engaged to convey coffins and mourners in custom-built hearse cars from a private station adjacent to Waterloo down into the Cemetery. At Brookwood there were two stations, North station for the Nonconformist sections and South station for the Anglican areas. The funeral trains stopped running after the private London terminus was bombed in 1941, which hastened the end of Brookwood's expansion. Vast as the cemetery seems today, much of the land which was originally part of the site has been sold off since the Second World War.

It is recommended that before the walk you visit the cemetery website and print out a map of the cemetery: <http://www.brookwoodcemetery.com> . The Brookwood Cemetery Society's website is also useful: <http://www.tbcs.org.uk> , as is the website of the Saint Edward Brotherhood: <http://www.saintedwardbrotherhood.org> .

All quotes related to the cemetery are taken from John M Clarke's 'London's Necropolis: A Guide to Brookwood Cemetery'. Also worth reading are 'The Brookwood Necropolis Railway' by the same author, and in complete contrast 'The Necropolis Railway', a murder mystery by Andrew Martin based on the funeral trains.

### **Brookwood Military Cemetery**

The gates of Brookwood Military Cemetery are open between 8am and 7.30pm daily in summer or 4 in winter (or 'dusk' if earlier than this). In 1917 an area of land was set aside for the burial of First World War casualties from throughout the Commonwealth, mainly those who had died from war wounds in London hospitals. Later the burial ground was extended to accommodate casualties from the Second World War, including sections for American, Polish, Czechoslovakian, Belgian and Free French soldiers, as well as German and Italian prisoners of war. All Commonwealth and European sections are the responsibility of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (the American section is separately managed). Their website has a useful information sheet and a guide to Brookwood Military Cemetery: <http://www.cwgc.org> .

### **Blackwater Valley Path**

This runs for 37 kilometres from the source of the River Blackwater near Aldershot, to its confluence with the River Loddon near Swallowfield in Berkshire.

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**Travel**

Take the train nearest to **10.00** from **Waterloo** to **Guildford**, changing for **Ash**. South West Trains from Waterloo to Guildford via Woking take a minimum of 34 minutes (trains via Effingham Junction take much longer). First Great Western run from Guildford to Reading via Ash every hour on Saturday and every two hours on Sunday (journey time 10 minutes). South West Trains run every half hour on Saturday and every hour on Sunday between Guildford and Ascot via Ash.

South West Trains run direct from Alton and Basingstoke to Waterloo via Brookwood, four times an hour on Saturday and twice an hour on Sunday (minimum journey time 39 minutes). Tickets to Ash are normally accepted to both Brookwood and Ash Vale, but it may be safer (and only marginally more expensive) to buy a return ticket to Aldershot.

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**Lunch**

**White Hart** , The Green, Pirbright. Tel: (01483) 799715. Recommended lunch stop for the main walk, reached after 8.4 kms. Food served all day Monday to Saturday 12 noon to 10pm, Sundays 12 noon to 9.30pm. Fixed price menu every lunch time except Sundays, £6.95 for one course or £8.95 for two courses.

**Cricketers on The Green** , The Green, Pirbright. An alternative lunch stop, particularly useful if the White Hart is busy. Reports from 2021 suggest that it has gone more upmarket, so may be a good choice

**The Swan**, 2 Hutton Road, Ash Vale. Tel (01252) 325212. Recommended early lunch stop (4.6 kms) if following the alternative directions. Canal side pub with large garden and excellent food.

**Napiers**, 72 Vale Road, Ash Vale. Tel (01252) 314212. Also on the alternative route (3.7 kms). Reached from the Basingstoke Canal – see directions within text. Serves affordable food from 12 to 9 on Saturdays and to 6 on Sundays, including Sunday roast for £4.95.

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**Tea**

The Brookwood Hotel has been turned in to a firm of chartered accountants. When you reach Connaught Road you could try the **Bakers Dozen** shop to your left, but this is not open on Saturday afternoons or Sundays. The taxi firm to the right on Connaught Road has a hot drinks machine!

Alternatively you could stay on the canal towpath for a further 700 metres (rather than taking the bridge at Sheets Heath Lane), then turn left at the next road bridge on to Bagshot Road. In 200 metres you will reach the **Hunter's Lodge** pub on the left hand side.

**Help Us!** After the walk, please leave a [comment](#), it really helps. Thanks!

You can also upload photos to the [SWC Group on Flickr](#) ([upload your photos](#)) and [videos to Youtube](#). This walk's tags are:

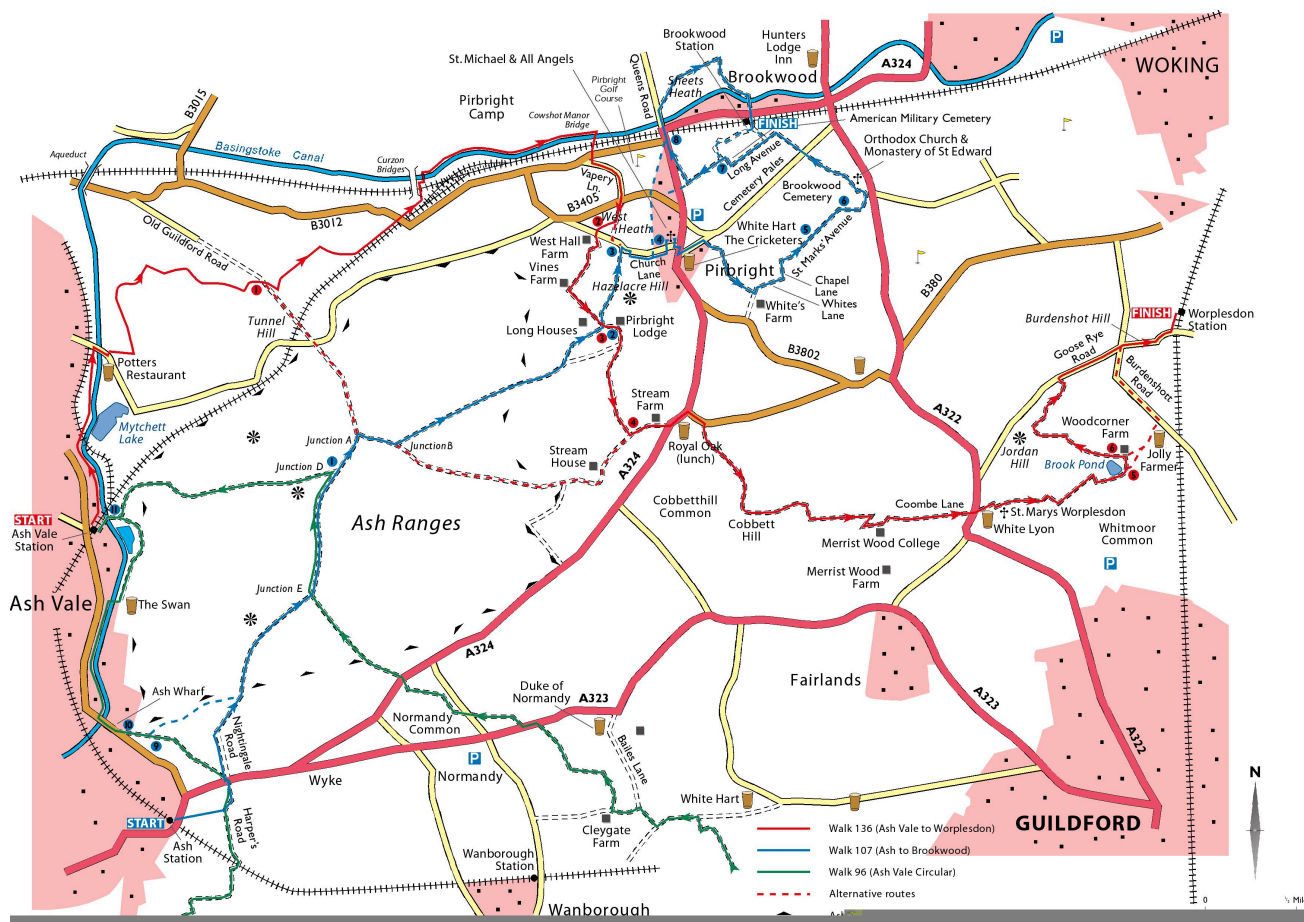
**By Car**      **Start**      **Finish**

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## Walk Directions



Map kindly prepared by Simon Vandelt (01981 540789, [simonvandelt06 AT aol.com](mailto:simonvandelt06@comcast.net))

- 1) Ash station to Ash firing ranges (1.8 kms)
2. At Ash station leave the train from Guildford on platform 2 and cross the line by the level crossing, on to the A323 (Guildford Road). After 40 metres turn right on to a



path marked by a green 'public footpath' sign on a lamp post, crossing a stone bridge with wooden railings in 20 metres. Initially you have a green wire fence on your left, later the path is enclosed by residential hedges on both sides. This comes out after 400 metres on Harper's Road, which you cross.

3. Take the path opposite in to a recreation ground and continue ahead with a scout hut and wire fence on your right for 80 metres. Cross a small bridge with white railings on your left (leaving the public footpath which continues ahead between fields) and follow the right hand side of the recreation ground for 130 metres to a stile which takes you back on to the A323. Cross the main road with the Lion Brewery pub and garden visible to your left and take Nightingale Road ahead (Indian restaurant on your right) in to a small car park on your left in 80 metres. (!) Take the faint (right hand) path which climbs steadily from the top of the car park, just to the right of the yellow danger signs, and continue parallel with the road, crossing another path in 250 metres. In 100 metres when the houses on your right end you enter a densely wooded area and climb very steeply at the right hand edge of the trees.
4. In 100 metres the climb levels out; you cross a path and maintain a Northerly direction through the trees to emerge at an open area. In 150 metres follow a clearer partly paved path to the right. In 400 metres **if the red flags are not flying** go through the metal gate in to the Firing Ranges. See below for alternative options if the red flags are flying.

## 5. 2) Ash firing ranges (4.4 kms)

6. Take the obvious vehicle wide path ahead, gradually uphill past a wire fenced enclosure on your left. The track takes you along the ridge with spectacular views of Guildford and the North Downs to your right.
7. In 1.2 kms you reach a junction with a path on the right, marked by a large letter E on a round stone pillar. Continue ahead (10°), now following the Ash Vale Circular (Walk 96). In a further 950 metres you reach a second junction marked by a letter D on a stone pillar (Point 1). Leave Walk 96 at this junction and continue ahead (North) along the main ridge. In 350 metres you reach the next junction, marked by another stone pillar with the letter A. Turn right here and descend steeply with a wood to your left. In 500 metres you reach a fourth stone pillar marked B and take the path to the left. Descend steadily on the main path, ignoring all unmarked ways off, to reach the perimeter fence in 1.4 kms.

## 8. 3) Ash firing ranges to Pirbright (2.2 kms)

9. Go through the gate and continue ahead on a broad track, away from the perimeter fence. In 190 metres you pass a yellow barrier on your right and in 110 metres at a path junction you follow the main track round to the left, as marked by a yellow arrow. In 400 metres you pass the first of a row of houses (Long Houses) on your left. 150 metres later, turn sharp left onto a lane, almost doubling back. In 30

metres this divides and you take the fork to the right (a sign for Little Cutt Farm is to the left of your path). (!) In 10 metres (Point 2) you take a steeply rising path marked by a public footpath sign through woods to your right, keeping close to the old fence which is intermittently on your right. In 200 metres, go over a stile at the top of the climb (Hazelacre Hill).

10. Continue ahead, possibly with electric fences on both sides and through the remains of several boundaries where there used to be gates, then start to descend the hill. In 135 metres a metal gate takes you in to a field. Keep ahead across the field, still downhill. Leave the field by another wooden gate in 150 metres and turn left. Follow the path round to the right in 30 metres and go over a bridge to reach Church Lane in 150 metres (Point 3). Turn right for 50 metres, then immediately after an isolated house on the right (Appletree Cottage) go through a wooden gate and take the signposted public footpath on your right, which runs parallel with the road along the left hand edge of a field.
11. In 200 metres you leave the field through a wooden gate and turn right along the road. Ignore a path on the left in 60 metres (Point 4), *but note that if you do not wish to visit Pirbright for lunch or Brookwood Cemetery, you can take this path over a small footbridge and between fields for 400 metres, then cross School Lane and take the path opposite through the wood for 500 metres to reach a busy road junction, resuming the main walk at Point 8 (the railway bridge) below.*
12. In a further 30 metres, go through the lychgate of St Michael and All Angels Church, Pirbright. Follow the graveyard path to the right, parallel with the road. In 50 metres you reach the granite memorial marking the grave of Stanley on your left. Leave the churchyard by the gate on the right in 20 metres and turn left, back on to Church Lane. In 100 metres keep right at a road junction (still on Church Lane), with Pirbright village green on your left. Cross the A324 in 100 metres to reach the White Hart, the recommended lunch time pub.

### 13. 4) Pirbright to Brookwood Cemetery (1.3 kms)

14. Turn right from the White Hart, passing the Cherrywood Children's Nursery. In 100 metres, immediately after The Cricketers pub (an alternative lunch time stop), take the tarmac drive to the right, passing Cricketers Cottage on your right. Go through a gate on the left of the path in 110 metres, and around another gate in 50 metres. In 40 metres you turn right along a signposted path in to a wood. In 300 metres the path goes over a bridge, then a stile and leaves the wood. You veer half right across a field, making for the far right hand corner, to the left of a building made of brick and wood. Go over a stile in 120 metres and turn left on a drive in 30 metres, with White's Farm to your right. In 100 metres take a path to your right marked by a yellow arrow, over a cattle grid.
15. In 150 metres you reach a minor road (Whites Lane) and continue ahead past a house called Brownhatch on your left. In 50 metres you turn left on a road (Chapel Lane) and in 45 metres ignore a parking area and a barrier to your right opposite a



house called Wyndrush. (!) In a further 55 metres, go right on to a signposted public byway. In 40 metres turn left by a metal barrier; you then cross another path ahead and go through a gap in the trees, which you reach in 40 metres. Go straight on past a deep wet ditch on either side of the path to reach St Marks' Avenue in 60 metres.

## 16. 5) Brookwood Cemetery (2.8 kms)

17. In 90 metres you have the option of taking a crude path to the left (Point 5), with a line of trees on your right, and following the long route round Brookwood Cemetery, as described in section 8 below. In any event you may want to make the short detour to the impressive Colquhoun Mausoleum.
18. For the main walk, continue on St Mark's Avenue for a further 460 metres, passing the area named as Gillian's Meadow on your left, then turn right on to St George's Avenue (later St Chad's Avenue) at Point 6. In 400 metres you pass the Serbian Orthodox cemetery (which is usually locked) on your right. In 200 metres on your right is the Orthodox Church and Monastery of St Edward, home to a small Orthodox monastic community which maintains the shrine and church dedicated to St Edward the Martyr, whose relics were brought to the site in 1984. The church was formerly used for Anglican funeral services. To the left of the rear building you can see the platform of the old South station.
19. Turn left in front of the church, then in 20 metres take St Andrew's Avenue on the right. In 90 metres, just after passing a distinctive Gothic style mausoleum (Keith) on your left and before the junction with All Souls Avenue, turn left onto a wide grass
20. path along the route of the former cemetery railway. The path is tree lined on both sides and the slightly raised trackbed is to your left. In 250 metres you pass through a pentangular shelter, with the Ismaeli Cemetery on your right, after which the path is paved. In 50 metres you step through a gate within a gate and turn left. In 40 metres turn right on to St Cyprian's Avenue. Cross the busy main road (Cemetery Pales) in 50 metres, then go through an open gate in to the other part of the cemetery (originally the non-conformist plots).
21. Go round a barrier directly ahead on to Railway Avenue (between the two tarmac paths). Shortly you will see the brick remains of the surviving platform of the old North station, up against the wire fence on your right. These are enclosed within the Najmee Baag (Muslim burial ground), which also includes the former non-conformist chapel (set on a small hill). In 300 metres turn left on to Long Avenue (if you wish to go straight to Brookwood station take the next right, Pine Avenue, but you can see more of the cemetery by taking the short cut from Point 7 below). Pass Oak Avenue (the former Roman Catholic chapel, which is now the interdenominational cemetery chapel, is to your left here) and Western Avenue on the left.

22. Go through a gate in to the military cemetery in 380 metres and stay on the tarmac, passing the RAF Shelter and the Belgian, Polish and Czechoslovakian memorials on your left and the main British and Commonwealth section on your right. In 160 metres, enter the American Military Cemetery on your right with the American Memorial Chapel ahead of you. On reaching the central area with flagpole in 110 metres, turn left past the reception building to reach Lincoln Avenue in 60 metres (Point 7).
23. Turn left, then turn right in 20 metres (on to St Lawrence Avenue). You pass on your left the round Brookwood Memorial (1958) which commemorates 3500 Second World War service men and women with no known grave, and the Canadian area on your right. In 130 metres, leave the cemetery by a gate.
24. For the short cut turn right on Lincoln Avenue at Point 7 and follow the directions in section 7 below.

## 25. 6) Brookwood Cemetery to Brookwood (2.8 kms)

26. Continue on the drive for 80 metres with a fine avenue of fir trees on either side, then go through the first wooden gate on the right. The path continues parallel with the drive for 70 metres, then turns right to run parallel with the road ahead, with a wire fence on the left and an area of gorse on the right. In 300 metres you go through a wooden gate on the left and turn right on the A324 (Dawney Hill). In 80 metres walk under the railway bridge ahead (Point 8), then cross Connaught Road to your right and in 100 metres go over the Basingstoke Canal at Lock 15 . *If you are short of time, the quickest way to Brookwood station is to turn right along the canal towpath, and cross back over at the next bridge.*
27. Continue ahead on Queens Road for another 100 metres. Just after two driveways, where the road bends to the left, there is a signpost on your right pointing to two footpaths and you take the one to the right, a narrow muddy path (parallel to a house fence), which will lead you through a pair of wooden gates in 120 metres. The path takes you uphill and in 200 metres it merges with another path from the left. In 180 metres you cross a tarmac lane and go between two wooden posts (the remains of a barrier) opposite.
28. Follow a wide track across Sheets Heath, ignoring any side paths. (!) In 500 metres you take an unmarked muddy path to the right through the heather towards a row of trees. Go under a line of telegraph poles and through a wooden gate in 100 metres. In 20 metres you turn right onto a wide track with houses on your left. In 60 metres you turn right and then immediately left at a staggered four-way junction on to a road, with a telegraph pole on the right. Pass Sheets Cottage on the left in 80 metres. The road descends and then climbs slightly to reach the canal towpath in a further 370 metres, and you follow the canal to the left.
29. Cross the canal by the bridge in 200 metres (unless you are going to Hunter's Lodge for tea), stay on the tarmac lane (Sheets Heath Lane) and in 200 metres you cross

the main road (Connaught Road) through the village of Brookwood and take the road opposite. You reach Brookwood station on your left in 80 metres. Trains for London depart from the near side (platform 1).

### 30. 7) Alternative short route from Brookwood cemetery (total distance of 13 kms)

31. On leaving the American Military Cemetery at Point 7, turn right on Lincoln Avenue with the Canadian area on your left. In 75 metres go through a gate which takes you from the military cemetery back to the civilian cemetery (you need to pull the gate to the left of the main gate) . At a triangular junction in 25 metres turn right and follow the drive (Pine Avenue) that runs parallel with the modern railway past the the Parsee (Zoroastrian) Burial Ground, the only plot at Brookwood (as opposed to individual monuments) which was proposed for statutory listing, including the massive trio of Tata family mausoleums. Next on the left is the Turkish airmen's area, then behind the fence on your right you can glimpse the main British and Commonwealth Military Cemetery with its distinctive Cross of Sacrifice.
32. In 420 metres leave the cemetery through a metal gate on your left. Pass through the station subway in 50 metres for trains for London, which depart from platform 1.

### 33. 8) Alternative long route through Brookwood cemetery (total distance of 16.7 kms)

34. This route is primarily suggested as an alternative for those with an interest in Brookwood Cemetery, but be warned that it does include a short section (highlighted in bold below) through a neglected part of the cemetery where progress is uncomfortable.
35. At Point 5 (!) take the crude path to the left, with a line of trees on your right. *If you reach the area named Gillian's Meadow, you have gone too far.* In 75 metres you will see the Colquhoun family mausoleum (probably the earliest and 'the most architecturally distinguished mausoleum in the cemetery' with intricate carved figures), which is hidden in the trees to the right of the path and enclosed by a metal fence. Stay on your path for 15 metres, until it loops round to the left. (!) There is no longer a recognisable onward path, but you need to continue in a Northerly direction, making your way through the woods. **Great care should be taken when walking across this section as there are unmarked pauper burial graves and the ground is very uneven.** In 100 metres you reach a wide track and turn right (80°). **If this takes you out of the woods and in to the open, you have veered too far to the right - retrace your steps and take the first track which is now on your right.** Otherwise, you pass an isolated headstone to your left (Norman) and in 120 metres you turn left on another wide track (350°), passing another isolated headstone on your left (Hughes).

36. Go straight on at the next path junction in 100 metres, to enter the Glades of Remembrance, which were landscaped after the Second World War to offer a simple but permanent form of commemoration for cremated remains (plans to build an incinerating crematorium at Brookwood were never implemented). In 80 metres turn right on to Fern Glade (not marked on the ground) and follow it round to the left. On reaching the lake (the Pool of Serenity) in 90 metres, follow it anti-clockwise, over the small bridge. In 70 metres, turn right on St Barnabas Avenue, leaving the Glades of Remembrance.
37. In 360 metres, at the end of St Barnabas Avenue, turn right on St Cyprian's Avenue, the main tarmac drive, which you follow for 450 metres. Opposite St Martha's Avenue, note the Pelham-Clinton memorial on your left (a bronze sculpture on a marble pedestal of a man, a dying woman and an angel, in memory of Lord and Lady Pelham-Clinton, members of Queen Victoria's personal household, which is 'probably the most important memorial in the cemetery').
38. *If you are suffering from 'cemetery fatigue' you can turn left here and pick up the main walk from the Orthodox Church and Monastery of St Edward (directly in front of you), which will reduce the walk by 1km . Otherwise, take the next path on your right, St David's Avenue, passing the Columbarium (defined as 'a public place for the storage of urns holding a deceased's cremated remains'), the largest mausoleum at Brookwood, on the right. In 100 metres turn right in to St Margaret's Avenue and in 80 metres right again in to St Pancras' Avenue.*
39. In 75 metres turn left, to follow the circular tarmac drive (St George's Avenue) anti-clockwise. You will see the Drake Family Mausoleum ('arguably the most attractive mausoleum in the cemetery', in an Italianate style) to your left and in 140 metres you cross St Mark's Avenue at Point 6 to re-join the main walk.

## Alternative directions if the firing ranges are closed

1. **If the red flags are flying** you have two main options:
  - A two part walk follows the Basingstoke Canal to Ash Vale station, then involves a short train ride and a circular walk from Brookwood (13.6 kms in total)
2. · A longer walk, which again takes you along the Basingstoke Canal to Ash Vale from where you follow the directions for Walk 136 (Ash Vale to Worplesdon), later reverting to the directions for the main walk above (22.1 kms)
3. In either case, at the end of Section 1 you retrace your steps for 70 metres and take the path lined by tall trees which is now on your right, leading steeply downhill and parallel with the perimeter fence.
4. In 300 metres fork left, away from the perimeter fence and in 420 metres cross an obvious path and take the narrow path which is half left ahead. In 250 metres turn right on a clear path heading downhill (Point 9), now following Walk 96 (Ash Vale Circular) in reverse. You pass to the right of a wire fenced enclosure, then tennis courts. In 280 metres you go round a metal barrier, then another metal barrier to

- your left. Drop down a grass bank and cross a recreation ground half left to the opposite corner (there are public toilets to your right).
5. In 120 metres, turn right on Ash Hill Road (B3411), passing the former Standard of England pub on your right, then cross a roundabout (to your right are Wharf Road and Budgens supermarket). In 180 metres you cross the Basingstoke Canal at Ash Wharf (Point 10).
  6. After crossing the bridge, drop to the canal towpath then continue ahead, with the canal on your right. For Napiers pub, in 300 metres take a path at a gap in the wooden fence on your left, cross a road and continue ahead on a drive; Napiers is on your right as you reach the main road (B3411). Otherwise, follow the canal towpath North for another 800 metres. Climb the steps to your left at the next road bridge and turn right on Heathvale Bridge Road over the canal to pass the Swan at Ash Vale in 50 metres.
  7. Continue on the road and in 15 metres take a rough path to your left with a paling fence and a white building to your right. In 40 metres take the left fork, away from the paling fence. Note that none of the paths in the woods surrounding the Ash/Pirbright firing ranges are marked. The path runs parallel with the canal, with trees obscuring the view on both sides. In 250 metres it emerges opposite a pale green corrugated building, and a yellow 'danger' sign marking the boundary of the Ash Ranges. Follow the perimeter fence to your left, directly alongside the canal, then to the right past a group of huts and away from the canal.
  8. Follow the fence for 230 metres in total, over a wooden plank bridge and past another danger sign, after which the rough path turns to the left, away from the perimeter fence. You cross a small wooden bridge in 80 metres. Stay on the path for a further 300 metres as it heads back to the water and runs generally level with a wide section of the canal called Greatbottom Flash, visible through the trees just to your left. The path briefly climbs away from the canal but then drops to reach a tarmac path (Point 11). Turn left for 90 metres to go through a barrier and over a combined rail/foot bridge. This is where the long walk avoiding the restricted area and the two part walk diverge.
  9. Two part walk, ending at Brookwood station (total 13.6 kms)
  10. Cross the station car park to reach Ash Vale station in 80 metres, catch the next train from platform 2 to Brookwood/London (8 minutes) and follow the Brookwood circular walk directions below. You should reach Pirbright for lunch after a total of 9.9 kms (plus the train ride).
  11. **A4) Ash to Brookwood avoiding the restricted area (total 22.1 kms)**
  12. Drop to your left to go under the bridge, with the canal on your right.



13. You now follow the directions for Walk 136 (Ash Vale to Worplesdon) as far as Point 2 of that walk. On reaching the house Shepherd's Well, continue along the road (West Heath) for 200 metres. At the T-junction, turn left in to Church Lane. After 150 metres, you reach Point 3 above and resume the directions for the main walk, initially continuing along the road.
14. There are lunch options in Mytchett after 7.5 kms (see Walk 136) and you reach the White Hart at Pirbright after 15.2 kms.

## Brookwood Circular walk (8 kms)

1. This walk follows the route taken by the main walk through Brookwood Cemetery and on to Pirbright but in reverse (from Point 7 to Point 4).
2. Exit from platform 2 by turning right at the foot of the stairs (if arriving from Ash Vale on platform 1, go through the subway). In 50 metres go through the metal gate ahead directly in to Brookwood Cemetery (open until 7pm in summer), turn right and follow the drive (Pine Avenue) that runs parallel with the modern railway past the graves of Turkish airmen and Parsees/Zoroastrians (on your right). In 400 metres turn left at a triangular junction. In 45 metres go through a gate, which takes you from the civilian cemetery to the military cemetery, on to Lincoln Avenue.
3. In 75 metres (at Point 7) turn left past the reception building to enter the American Military Cemetery. On reaching the central area with flagpole in 60 metres, turn right with the American Memorial Chapel to your left. In 110 metres turn left on to Long Avenue, passing the main British and Commonwealth section on your left and the Czechoslovakian, Polish and Belgian memorials and the RAF shelter all on your right. In 160 metres go through a gate back in to the civilian cemetery and stay on the tarmac.
4. Pass Western Avenue and Oak Avenue on the right and Pine Avenue on the left. In 380 metres turn right on to Railway Avenue, following the route of the former cemetery railway. On your left is the Najmee Baag (Muslim burial ground), which includes the former non-conformist chapel, and the brick remains of the surviving platform of the old North station. In 300 metres cross the busy main road (Cemetery Pales), then go through an open gate in to the other part of the cemetery (originally the Anglican plots) on to St Cyprian's Avenue ahead.
5. In 50 metres turn left and in 40 metres you step through a gate within a gate on the right on to a paved path. In 50 metres you pass through a pentagonal shelter, to the left of which is the Ismaeli Cemetery. Follow a wide grass path, still on the route of the former cemetery railway. The path is tree lined on both sides and the slightly raised trackbed is to your right. In 250 metres you turn right on St Andrew's Avenue. In 90 metres, turn left.
6. In 20 metres you reach on your left the Orthodox Church and Monastery of St Edward, home to a small Orthodox monastic community which maintains the shrine and church dedicated to St Edward the Martyr, whose relics were brought to the site



in 1984. The church was formerly used for Anglican funeral services. To the left of the rear building you can see the platform of the old South station. Follow the circular tarmac drive (St Chad's Avenue, later St George's Avenue) clockwise. In 200 metres you pass the Serbian Orthodox cemetery on your left.

7. In 400 metres turn left on St Mark's Avenue (Point 6), which you follow for 550 metres. Go straight on past a deep wet ditch on either side of the path. In 60 metres you go through a gap in the trees, just to the left of a red 'No dogs' sign, high up on a tree. Cross another path ahead, pass a metal barrier to the right in 40 metres and turn left on a road in 40 metres. In 100 metres turn right on a minor road (Whites Lane) and continue ahead past a house called Brownhatch on your right. In 50 metres take a path to the right and in 150 metres turn left on a drive. Go over a cattlegrid and in 100 metres, just before White's Farm, take a path to your right.
8. Go over a stile in 30 metres and follow the path half right across a field, with a building made of brick and wood to your left. In 120 metres you enter a wood and go over a bridge. In 300 metres take the path to your left. Go around a gate in 40 metres, and through another gate on the right of the path in 50 metres. Continue on the tarmac drive, passing Cricketers Cottage on your left, to reach the A324 in 110 metres, with Pirbright village green ahead. Turn left past The Cricketers pub and the Cherrywood Children's Nursery, to reach the White Hart in 100 metres.
9. Cross the main road and take Church Lane, keeping the village green on your right. At a road junction in 100 metres, stay on Church Lane to the left. In 100 metres take a gate to your right in to the graveyard of St Michael and All Angels Church, Pirbright. In 20 metres you reach the granite memorial marking the grave of Stanley on your right. Stay on the graveyard path, and in 50 metres go through the lychgate to your left.
10. In 30 metres take the path on your right (Point 4), over a small footbridge and between fields for 400 metres to reach School Lane. Take the path opposite following a green signpost through the wood, with holly bushes to both sides of the path. In 350 metres you cross another path, marked by yellow arrows, and in a further 150 metres you reach a busy road junction. Cross Gole Road with care and walk under the railway bridge ahead (Point 8).
11. Follow the main walk directions from Point 8.

## Other short walk options

1. **S1) Brookwood to Ash (9.1 kms)**
2. This walk takes the most direct route via the Ash Ranges and although it explores part of Brookwood Cemetery it does not visit Pirbright.
3. Exit from platform 2 by turning right at the foot of the stairs. In 50 metres go through the metal gate ahead directly in to Brookwood Cemetery (open until 7pm in

summer), turn right and follow the directions above for the Brookwood Circular Walk to Point 7.

4. At Point 7, turn right. You pass the Brookwood Memorial to the missing in action on your left and the Canadian area on your right. In 130 metres, leave the cemetery by a gate. Continue on the drive for 180 metres with pine trees on either side. Cross the main road on to a public footpath signposted opposite, which is tarmac at first. In 75 metres cross a drive and take the narrow path which is half right ahead. In 60 metres you reach Dawneys Road and turn left, then in 50 metres turn right on School Lane. In 40 metres take a path to the left between fields for 400 metres over a small footbridge and emerge at Point 4, to the right of Pirbright Church.
5. Turn right on Church Lane and follow the main walk directions *in reverse* across the Ash Ranges to Point 1 and on to the exit from the firing ranges.
6. In more detail (from Point 4):
7. In 60 metres go through a wooden gate in to a field on your left. Take the signposted public footpath which runs parallel with the road along the right hand edge of the field (not the path straight ahead). In 200 metres go through a wooden gate and turn left back on to Church Lane, with an isolated house on the left (Appletree Cottage). In 50 metres take a path to the left (Point 3). Go over a bridge and in 150 metres follow the path round to the left. In 30 metres go through a wooden gate to enter a field.
8. Climb half right across the field and in 150 metres go through a metal gate. Continue uphill and go through a wooden gate in 80 metres, then through a metal kissing gate in 40 metres and a second in 25 metres, with electric fences on both sides. In 75 metres go over a stile at the top of the climb (Hazelacre Hill).
9. Descend steeply through woods, keeping close to the old fence which is intermittently on your left. In 200 metres turn left on to a lane (Point 2) and in 10 metres you merge with a path on your right (a sign for Little Cutt is also to your right). (!) In 30 metres take the lane which is sharply to your right (almost doubling back). In 150 metres you pass the last of a row of houses (Long Houses) on your right. In 400 metres follow the main track round to the right, as marked by a yellow arrow. In 110 metres you pass a yellow barrier on your left and in 190 metres **if the red flags are not flying** go through the gate in to the Ash Ranges.
10. Climb steadily on the main path, ignoring all unmarked ways off, to reach a round stone pillar marked by a large letter B in 1.4 kms. Turn right and climb steeply with a wood to your right. In 500 metres you reach the next junction marked by another stone pillar with the letter A and turn left along the main ridge (South). In 350 metres you reach a junction with a path to the right, marked by the letter D on a stone pillar (Point 1). Continue ahead (190°), now following the Ash Vale Circular (Route 96) in reverse. In a further 950 metres you reach a junction with a path on the left, marked by the letter E on a stone pillar. Leave Walk 96 here and continue ahead on the obvious vehicle wide path along the ridge with spectacular views of

Guildford and the North Downs to your left, then gradually downhill past a wire fenced enclosure on your right. In 1.2 kms leave the Ash Ranges through a metal gate.

11. Continue ahead on a clear partly paved path to reach an open area on your left after 400 metres. At the next path junction after 60 metres the main path turns right, but you maintain the same direction, on a rough path, now steeply downhill. This brings you after 150 metres to a junction of seven paths, where you take the fifth path on your left (or the second on your right). Follow this generally level path, passing a tall wooden pole structure, for 150 metres. When the path ends you take an indistinct path which drops to your left and after 60 metres you emerge at the junction of Fox Hill Lane and Ash Hill Road (B3411). Cross the main road and follow it downhill to the left for 400 metres, past the junction with the A323 on your left to reach the level crossing at Ash station.

## 12. S2) Brookwood to Ash Vale (8.2 kms)

13. As above but at Point 1 turn right to follow the directions in section 13 of Walk 96 (Ash Vale Circular).

## Circular walk from Ash Vale station

1. C1) Basingstoke Canal and Ash Ranges (8.4 kms)
2. Head left out of the station buildings through the car park. After 90 metres cross over the Basingstoke Canal by the combined rail and foot bridge and in a further 50 metres (Point 11) take a rough unmarked path to your right and follow section 1 of Walk 96 (Ash Vale Circular).
3. **As you pass the buildings by the perimeter fence, check if a red flag is flying as this will indicate whether you will be able to enter the firing ranges.** After Ash Wharf follow Section 2 of Walk 96 across the recreation ground. Go through a metal barrier on your left, then take the path to your right, through another metal barrier. (!) In 280 metres, after ascending to the left of tennis courts, then a wire fenced enclosure, take a faint path to the left (Point 9 of this walk), leaving Walk 96. In 250 metres cross an obvious path, and take the path opposite (slightly to the left). In 420 metres you merge with a path to the left and continue climbing steeply on a path lined with tall trees, parallel with the perimeter fence to your left. In 300 metres take the path to the left and in 70 metres **if the red flags are not flying** go through a metal gate in to the Ash Ranges.
4. Follow section 2 of the main walk directions to Point 1, then turn left to follow section 13 of Walk 96 back to Ash Vale station.

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