



Ash Vale Circular via North Downs Way walk

A circular walk starting and ending in the rarely visited Ash Ranges and including a section of the North Downs Way through the attractive village of Puttenham.

Length **Main Walk:** 25.8 km. Six hours 30 minutes walking time. For the whole excursion including trains, sights and meals, allow at least 11 hours.

Alternate ending if the Ash/Pirbright Firing Ranges are closed: 23.9 kms or six hours walking time.

OS Maps Explorer 145. Ash Vale, map reference SU892533, is in Surrey, 10 km west of Guildford.

Toughness 5 out of 10. This is generally a flat walk with two climbs to the A31 and a sting in the tail with the crossing of the Ash Ranges (the alternative route involves a short sharp climb). Several muddy sections – more of a summer walk.

Features The first 9 km (sections 1-5) takes you in a Southerly direction through the woods surrounding the Ash Ranges, along the Basingstoke Canal and a disused railway line, then across the busy Hog's Back (A31). You then follow the North Downs Way (NDW) eastward for 5 km (sections 6-7), from just East of Seale, through Puttenham Common and on to the Good Intent at Puttenham for lunch.

After lunch you stay on the NDW, which will be familiar from other Time Out book walks. For the last 12 km (sections 8-13) you head North or West, through fields leading back over the A31 and across Broadstreet and Normandy Commons. Finally you have a tough climb over the Ash Ranges, which should be open if you time your arrival for late afternoon (there is no official opening time, but you would be unlucky to find the Ranges still closed at 5pm). There is an alternate ending just in case the ranges are closed when you get there.

Warning

This walk goes through the Ash Ranges which are used for live firing exercises and training. They are open to the public for access on foot "when the red flags come down at 4.30pm or firing stops for maintenance". **Do not enter the danger areas when the red flags are flying or red lamps are displayed.**

The full walk is only available when the Ash/Pirbright firing ranges are open, usually on bank holiday weekends or by timing your arrival at point 10 for late afternoon (there is no official opening time).

Walk Options

Starting or finishing at Ash station

- You could start the walk from Ash station, joining the main route at point 3. This makes a walk of 22.5 km. See directions below.
- When the Firing Ranges are open, you could take an alternative route to Ash station from point 11, using the directions given. This makes a walk of 24.7 km. See directions below.

When the Firing Ranges are closed you could take the alternative route to Ash station, as set out in section 13.

Starting or finishing at Wanborough station

- From point 7 you could follow the [TOCW Book 1 Walk 2](#) directions in reverse to Wanborough station. This makes a walk of 16.3 km.
- Alternatively you could begin the walk at Wanborough, following the Book 1 directions to pick up the main route at point 7. This makes a walk of 16.0 km (9.9 miles).
- From point 9 you could walk to Wanborough station using the directions given below. This makes a walk of 20.2 km.

Finishing at Guildford station

- From point 8 (the A3) you could follow the [TOCW Book 2 Walk 12](#) directions to Guildford. This makes a walk of 19.9 km (12.4 miles).
- From point 8 (the A3) you could follow the North Downs Way and River Wey to Guildford. This makes a walk of 19.1 km. No directions given, waymarked.

Travel

Ash Vale and Ash stations are both in Surrey. South West Trains run direct from Waterloo to Alton via Ash Vale, every half hour on Saturday and every hour on Sunday (journey time 51 minutes), and also every hour on Saturday and every two hours on Sunday between Guildford and Ascot via Ash, Aldershot and Ash Vale.

For Ash it is necessary to change at Guildford. 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 half hour on Saturday and every hour on Sunday (journey time 10 minutes). Tickets to Ash (or North Camp) and Ash Vale should be interchangeable.

There are several options for catching a bus to Guildford if you do not wish to do the full walk:

- From Puttenham, Stagecoach bus X65 runs to Guildford hourly to 17.40 and at 18.25, Monday to Saturday.
- From Wood Street, Arriva bus 17 runs to Guildford hourly to 16.40, with several later services, Monday to Saturday.
- From the A323 (near Normandy village) Stagecoach bus 20 runs to Guildford every 20 minutes to 17.26 with several later services Monday to Saturday, and every 2 hours on Sundays (18 minutes past each even hour).

Suggested Train : Take the train nearest to **9.15** from **Waterloo to Ash Vale**.

Lunch

The recommended lunchtime pub is the **Good Intent**, 60 The Street, Puttenham. Tel (01483) 810387. Food served daily 12-2 pm, Tuesday to Saturday 7-9.30 pm. A popular low-beamed pub with inglenook fireplaces.

Other pubs close to the route are as follows:

- The Swan, 2 Hutton Road, Ash Vale (canal side pub with large garden and excellent food, but very close to the start and end of walk). Tel (01252) 325212.
- The Lion Brewery, 104 Guildford Road, Ash (above average local). Tel (01252) 650486.
- The Jolly Farmers, Hook Lane, Puttenham (Harvester Restaurant). Tel (01483) 810374. Food served daily 12-10 pm.
- The Royal Oak, 89 Oak Hill, Wood Street (off the route, means detouring along a stretch of main road).
- The White Hart, White Hart Lane, Wood Street (off the route, possible late lunch stop, rumoured to be not walker friendly).
- The Old Ford, Lynchford Road, North Camp (at North Camp station with large garden and adjoining dentist! - off the route but possible end of walk refreshments option).

Tea

Ash Vale station has a small buffet with very limited opening hours.

Carriages Café, 321 Ash Vale Road. Tel: [01252 333234](tel:01252333234). Turn left from Station Road at Ash Vale station. Convenient, but not open Saturday afternoons or Sundays.

If you have the energy, The Swan at Ash Vale is worth a (second) visit (reached more easily via the canal towpath).

Finally you could cross Ash Vale Road, take Lysons Road opposite and make for the Old Ford at North Camp from where you can catch a train to Guildford.

Points of interest

- **Basingstoke Canal**. Built in 1794 and restored in 1991, this now runs for 32 miles from the collapsed tunnel at Greywell to near West Byfleet, where it links to the River Wey.
- **Ash Wharf**. In 1900 this would have been busy with pleasure boats operating from a boathouse on the site now occupied by a parade of shops.
- **Ash Green to Tongham railway**. The London & South Western Railway opened a double track line from Guildford to Farnham in 1849, later linking it with the main line to Southampton. The line had its heyday in the 1850s when it was used to transport materials in the development of Aldershot Camp. In 1898 a short branch was opened from Tongham to Aldershot Gas Works. The passenger service to Tongham and Ash Green ceased in 1937, but the line remained open for goods and to serve the gas works until 1960; the track was lifted the following year and it has been developed as a recreational route.

- **Puttenham Common** is of high archaeological interest. Substantial finds have been recorded from every period except Saxon. The main feature is the Hill Fort at Hillbury which is a Scheduled Ancient Monument, probably dating back to the Iron Age, but with greater evidence of occupation during Roman times. The common is now a large area of heath filled with heather, an acid-loving plant in this area of chalk. Oak and Scots Pine are also in abundance. There are two ponds containing a good range of aquatic plants and invertebrates and there is a strong bird population including great crested grebes, green woodpecker, and grey heron.
- **St John the Baptist, Puttenham.** This church was built in several stages. The oldest part is late Saxon and in 1160 Norman pillars were built by creating a north aisle. The Lady Chapel was added in the 13th Century but was left derelict following a fire in the 18th Century only to be restored to the church in the 20th Century. The tower of the church was only built in the 15th Century. The church has an old well that was rediscovered in the 1970s – it was used by the people of the village until 1750. Inside the church is one medieval tile which is the only remains of the original flooring.
- **Broadstreet Common** is the remains of what was once a large area of lowland heath. Its diversity is a direct reflection of the range of uses the land had in the years after the First World War. Used as traditional foraging in parts, other areas were clear felled for timber, ploughed for wheat and potatoes, or left for recreational use. Today the landscape is a mixture of semi-mature birch and oak woodlands, with poor acidic grassland between. Heathland shrubs such as ling, bell heather, and gorse remain in the more open areas.
- **Ash/Pirbright Ranges.** The range danger areas cover 2000 hectares, made up of a mixture of lowland heathland, conifer and broad-leaved woodland, mire, scrub and acid grassland supporting a wide range of fauna and flora. The majority of the area is designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest and forms part of the European designated Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area. Both range danger areas are used for live firing exercises and training. **Pirbright range danger area is closed at all times with no permitted access, due to unexploded ordnance risk. Ash range danger area is closed only when the red flags or red lamps are displayed.** At all other times Ash range danger area is open to the public for access on foot.

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By Car **Start** GU12 5LP

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Walk Directions

1. Ash Vale to Ash Wharf via Basingstoke Canal (2.1 kms)

Trains from Waterloo arrive at Ash Vale station (**1**) on platform 2. Descend two flights of steps, turn left and make for the top left hand corner of the car park. *In wet underfoot conditions or if time is short, consider taking the Basingstoke Canal towpath to your right, in which case you pick up the directions for the full walk after going under Heathvale Bridge Road below.*

After 90 metres cross over the Basingstoke Canal by a combined rail and foot bridge and (!) in a further 40 metres take a rough unmarked path to your right (if you reach the point where the main path divides, you have missed this turning and need to turn around). Note that none of the paths in the woods surrounding the Ash/Pirbright firing ranges are marked. The path briefly climbs away from the canal but then drops and runs generally level with a wide section of the canal called Greatbottom Flash, visible through the trees just to your right. Eventually it leads away from the water and crosses a small wooden bridge after 300 metres. It veers further to the left and meets the perimeter fence in 80 metres. Follow the fence round to the right, past a group of huts on your left, now directly alongside the canal. You follow the fence for 230 metres in total as it leads away from the canal by a pale green corrugated building, then (!) opposite a yellow 'danger' sign you turn right on to another rough path, which runs parallel with the canal, with trees obscuring the view on both sides.

The path joins a wooden paling fence on your left and in 220 metres it leads to Heathvale Bridge Road, with The Swan pub opposite. Turn right to cross the Basingstoke Canal after 65 metres, then descend the steps on your left and turn right to follow the canal towpath South for 1.1 kms.

2. Ash Wharf to A323 (1.4 kms)

Leave the canal at the next bridge and take Ash Hill Road (B3411) to your left for 180 metres, over the canal at Ash Wharf and across a roundabout (on your left are Wharf Road and Budgens supermarket). Immediately after the former Standard of England pub on the left, you enter a recreation ground. Cross the recreation ground half left to climb a grass bank diagonally opposite after 120 metres and go through a metal barrier on your left, then take the path to your right, through another metal barrier. Pass to the left of tennis courts, then a wire fenced enclosure. Keep left at the next path junction after 250 metres and stay on this ascending path for another 150 metres until you reach a path crossroads (there are three low level plastic signs on your right, marking underground cabling). (!) Turn right and follow the main path downhill all the way to the A323. It veers left to reach a junction of some seven unmarked paths after 300 metres (2). (!) Make a mental note of this junction, as if you are unable to enter the Ash Ranges, later in the day you will be descending the path which is immediately to your left and taking the level path which is to your right. For now, you continue ahead, passing an indistinct path, a house, then a clearer path, all on your right. Stay on your path as it narrows and drops to the right with houses on your left to reach a small car park after 330 metres. Continue ahead to come out at the junction of Nightingale Road and the A323 in 80 metres (Indian restaurant on your left).

3. A323 to Ash Green/Tongham railway (2.3 kms)

Cross the main road with the Lion Brewery pub and garden visible to your right. Take a stile in to a recreation ground and continue along the left hand side for 130 metres to cross a small bridge with white railings. Now turn right with a wire fence and scout hut (now used as a nursery school) on your left for 80 metres, making for a gap ahead.

If Starting the walk at Ash station : Leave the train on platform 2 and cross the line by the level crossing, on to the A323 (Church Road). After 40 metres, after a new property called White Rose, turn right on to a path marked by a green 'public footpath' sign, 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 (3), where you turn right.

You come out on Harper's Road (3) and turn left (South), passing the 16th century York House (a former pub and brewery) on your left. Follow Harper's Road for 500 metres, initially downhill, with fields on your left and houses on your right. Later the road climbs and at the first junction, where Harper's Road turns left, you take the road to the right (Ash Green Road) over the railway line. After 150 metres, take a much improved gravel path on your left (190 degrees), signposted as a public byway, with the house Little Orchard shortly on your right. In 230 metres this comes out on a drive, which you follow for 70 metres. Turn left for 30 metres, and immediately after crossing a bridge, you drop down a steep path to your right for 20 metres, then turn left to follow the line of the old Ash Green-Tongham railway. The grassy path shortly becomes a cycle path and in 250 metres you go under a bridge (the house to the right was once Ash Green station).

From here you have two options, the original route, described as (a) below, which is about 100 metres longer but suitable in all weather conditions, or the new route, described as (b) below, which is more direct and more challenging, but also crosses a field which may be waterlogged in winter.

(a) original route: Follow the railway path for another 700 metres to a wooden barrier. Pass through the barrier and turn sharp left (South-East then East) on to another cycle path, with woods on your left (Bin Wood). In 160 metres the original and new routes come together at a grand new signpost, where you turn right through a gate on to a public footpath.

(b) new route: after going under the railway bridge, immediately take the flight of steps up to your left. At the top of the steps in 20 metres, turn right to follow a path which runs along the top of the old railway embankment. In 200 metres, fork left on to a path which gradually descends from the embankment (if you miss this path, the embankment path drops to rejoin the railway path, so you may as well rejoin the original route). In 120 metres, turn right to follow the edge of a large field. In 150 metres, at the corner of the field, turn left, now with Bin Wood on your right. This section can be very wet. At the next corner of the field in 180 metres, leave it through a new metal gate and footbridge. Turn right on a public byway. The original and new routes come together at a grand new signpost in 120 metres, where you turn left through a gate on to a public footpath.

4. Ash Green/Tongham railway to A31 (1.6 kms)

Shortly you have a fence on your left. In 200 metres at the corner of the field, turn left (East) through a metal gate and continue with a barbed wire and wooden fence on your left. Opposite a metal gate on your left in 50 metres, turn right with barbed wire fences on both sides. In 280 metres turn left on Poyle Road, opposite the Coach House (the former home of two Lord Mayors of London).

Turn left for 170 metres, then take a signposted public footpath set back from the road on the right opposite a farm gate. The path through a gate and traverses a small copse between fields for 280 metres. You emerge in the open field, and continue to follow the right hand boundary. The official path crosses a wooden bridge to the right then turns left through more trees, but it is easier to follow the field boundary, making for the woods ahead. You enter the woods after 370 metres, then immediately follow the path round to the left, following the edge of the wood, then to the right and uphill. After 120 metres turn right on White Lane, which you follow to the junction with the A31 (Hog's Back) in 150 metres.

5. A31 to Hampton Estate (North Downs Way) (1.2 kms)

Cross the A31 with care and attention and turn left. After 70 metres at a gap in the railings take an unmarked tarmac path to the right, which after 75 metres goes through a vehicle barrier and continues steeply downhill following a public footpath sign (ignore the meadow on your left). The path turns left and right and goes over a stile in to the open meadow after 280 metres, with a wire fence on your right. Leave the meadow through a gate on your right in 60 metres and re-enter the woods. In 80 metres you ascend wooden steps with a fence on your left. After 180 metres you descend and cross a bridge with a private lake on your right. In 50 metres you go through a gate to reach Puttenham Road, where you turn right.

Pass a farm gate saying East End, then after 100 metres on the road take an unmarked path to your left opposite another East End sign on a fence, through a rusty metal gate (there is a notice about 'DEFRA conservation walks' to the right of the path). At an unmarked fork in the path, keep straight ahead. The path climbs through woods and you go over a stile in 100 metres. Continue uphill, now with a fence on your right, in an open meadow. On reaching the North Downs Way in 170 metres **(4)**, you turn left heading towards woodland (Old Warren).

6. Hampton Estate to Puttenham (Good Intent) by North Downs Way (2.7 kms)

You follow the North Downs Way for 5.1 kms, but in more detail....

Pass through a wooden gate in 90 metres and cross a gravel drive after 210 metres. Continue among pine trees with a conifer plantation to your left. The sunken path descends gently through Totford Wood between steep banks, and after 480 metres you turn left on to a lane (Totford Lane).

Turn right opposite a red-brick bungalow after 10 metres between paling fences, to reach a small car park by a stream after 50 metres. Keep straight ahead on a stony uphill path across Puttenham Common. In 500 metres the path levels out and gently undulates through heathland on both sides. You ignore a fork to the right then pass a meadow on your right, with fine views to your left. It becomes narrower as it approaches the first house on the left after 560 metres. In 50 metres you ignore another path to the right and your path becomes a tarmac road going downhill. After 300 metres you are joined by the Guildford-Farnham route in reverse (book 2, walk 12) at the junction with Highfield Lane on your right **(5)**. Follow the North Downs Way (Lapscombe Lane) for a further 100 metres; this then becomes the main road (The Street) through the trim village of Puttenham, passing pleasant houses and cottages to arrive in 350 metres at the recommended lunch stop, the Good Intent, on your left **(6)**.

7. Puttenham to A3 by North Downs Way (2.4 kms)

You pass St John the Baptist church on the right in 150 metres and after another 200 metres turn right on to the B3000 (Hook Lane). After 160 metres cross the main road and turn left opposite the Jolly Farmer, still following the North Downs Way on a vehicle wide gravel lane, climbing at first, then levelling out.

After 200 metres you pass the club house of a golf course on your right. Continue downwards, passing a cricket field and the golf course on your right. On your left you pass a sign for a vineyard in 500 metres and you reach houses in a further 520 metres, where you are joined by the Wanborough-Godalming route (book 1, walk 2) on your left **(7)** (Junction with [TOCW1 Walk 4](#) from Wanborough Station). At path junctions after 100 metres and again in 30 metres you continue straight ahead and downhill, ignoring paths to the right. On the left you pass a house called Questors after 40 metres, then you go through woods, towards the noise of traffic from the A3.

(!) After 550 metres you cross a lane and take the path ahead marked by a yellow arrow, continuing alongside the A3 (leaving the two other book walks and the North Downs Way **(8)**, which all go under the road bridge.

8. A3 to A31 (0.8 kms)

After 130 metres the path goes over a stile and in 60 metres you go through a dilapidated metal gate in to a field, then maintain a direction of 350 degrees all the way to the A31. In 100 metres you cross a stile in to another field and the path climbs more steeply for 250 metres to the stile in to the next field. In 75 metres you cross a farm road (Monkshatch), with stiles on either side. Continue climbing across another field, then go up a flight of steps to the left of a brick building after 120 metres. Go over a stile to reach the A31 in 100 metres.

9. A31 to Broadstreet Common (railway crossing) (2.1 kms)

Cross both lanes of the main road with care and take a tarmac drive opposite (slightly to your right), signed to Chalk Pit Cottages. After 500 metres the drive ends at farm buildings. Take the path straight ahead (following the blue arrow to the left of the farm), which comes out on the right hand side of a large field, next to an intermittent row of trees. Continue between more fields, then across the middle of a third field. You ignore the path signed to the right after 650 metres, then take the potentially muddy path which follows the left hand side of a large field, with woods on your left (5 degrees). After 520 metres you leave the field at the far corner and turn left (310 degrees), ignoring the bridleway to the right. In 140 metres you take the path to the right at the next path junction, marked by a yellow arrow (350 degrees). After 200 metres you go through a black metal gate, with farm buildings on your right (Wildfields Farm), to cross the railway line with care through two gates in 120 metres.

10. Broadstreet Common to Bailes Lane (2.1 kms)

Take the gravel lane straight ahead (Pound Lane), and in 130 metres, just after a metal gate, take the path to the left heading West (the lane leads to the village green in Wood Street and the White Hart to the left, or for the Royal Oak turn right along the main road). You are now following the Christmaspie route, a marked off-road cycling trail (named after a local hamlet). Stay on the main path, which twists and turns through the most westerly part of Broadstreet Common. The path comes out alongside the railway line, but after 700 metres from Pound Lane by a bridge it turns sharp right, away from the railway line (320 degrees). In 500 metres, after passing a cricket field on your right and continuing ahead at the next path crossroads, you take a path to your left (still following the Christmaspie route) for 400 metres. You go over a wooden bridge and shortly after ignoring a path to your left marked by a blue arrow, the path forks (unmarked). You take the faint horse byway to the right and in 330 metres you reach the end of a minor road (Bailes Lane). If you miss the path junction or in wet conditions, stay on the Christmaspie route until reaching the lane, where you turn right.

11. Bailes Lane to A323 (1.3 kms)

Cross Bailes Lane and take the private road opposite, signed to Cleygate Farm. After 300 metres take a path to your right marked by a white arrow, immediately before Cleygate Farm (9), initially due North through a makeshift wooden gate after 130 metres. The path veers left through the next field following a line of wooden posts, crossing a stream after 300 metres. The path follows the right hand edge of a field with trees to the side. (!) In 160 metres follow the path to the right (unmarked) in front of a corrugated barn through a very muddy area, then over a stile to emerge on a stony track (320 degrees). 450 metres from the barn, you reach the A323.

To finish at Wanborough Station: Stay on the path past Cleygate Farm (9) for 400 metres. It becomes a gravel lane after Strawberry Farm on your left. Turn left and immediately right for 200 metres to reach a road (Glaziers Lane), where you turn left. After 500 metres you reach Wanborough station on your right.

12. A323 to A324 via Normandy Common (1.4 kms)

Turn left along the pavement for 180 metres, then cross the road and just past the first bus stop, follow the signpost and yellow arrow pointing to a grassy path, which leads initially to the left and then turns right with a small pond (Normandy Pond) to the left. Cross a wooden footbridge in 80 metres and continue ahead, leaving the pond behind. After 60 metres you almost come out on a gravel lane to the right, but your path goes sharply to the left, as marked by a grand new public footpath signpost. In a further 75 metres the path divides at a tall holly tree (unmarked) and you take the left fork (due West) between more holly bushes, not the descending right fork. You emerge after 80 metres facing the drive to the left of a house called Normandy Hill House.

Cross the drive and take the path opposite, to the right of the house. After 20 metres this divides and you take the right fork (at 280 degrees) which in 80 metres brings you out on a grass verge. Continue straight ahead (due West) with Manor House to your right and cross Hunts Hill Road in 60 metres.

Take the signposted paved path opposite, with tennis courts on your left, in to Normandy Common. In 50 metres this leads to a football field on your right, which you walk diagonally across for 130 metres (unless a game is in play), leaving at the opposite corner. Take a path to the right leading to a cricket field. Follow the boundary to your left, and after 70 metres you follow a footpath marked by a yellow arrow leading to your left, away from the cricket field. This leads in 15 metres to a gravel path which you follow to the right (290 degrees) for 100 metres to a flight of steps. Climb the steps and follow the boundary of a second cricket field to the left for 200 metres. Leave the cricket field immediately to the right of two wooden seats in the far left hand corner. (!) Turn immediately left, taking an indistinct path at 310 degrees through the trees, heading for a low level footpath sign which is hard to spot, but which you reach in 60 metres. The path then turns to the right and shortly it becomes clearer and begins to climb by steps which are initially widely spaced. After 100 metres you reach Pirbright Road (A324).

13. A324 to Ash Vale via Ash Ranges (4.4 kms)

Cross the road and take the lane opposite with a sign for Dolleys Hill Park to your right. Follow the vehicle drive for 100 metres. (!) Directly opposite a house sign for Summer Place, take a rough path in to the woods. In 20 metres turn right on to a more obvious wide path.

In 180 metres, on nearing the perimeter fence of the Ash/Pirbright Firing Ranges (10), look ahead to see **if the red flags are flying**. Note again that all paths in the Firing Ranges and surrounding woods are unmarked.

If the red flags are flying - NB Note that these directions lead to Ash station, which is on a different line to Ash Vale : Take the clear path to your left. The path rises at first, then drops with an enclosure to your left, climbs more gently and then levels out with a scrap yard and farm buildings visible to your left. Ignore all paths to both left and right. Eventually the path climbs very steeply; after 1.4 km from the perimeter fence you reach the top of the climb and cross a path. Continue ahead to reach a small pond after 30 metres. Keep the pond on your left to emerge at an open area after 150 metres, on a clearer partly paved path which you follow left and downhill. 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 (point 2 above), which you passed in section 2 of the walk. You now take the second path 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 former Dover Arms and junction with the A323 on your left to reach the level crossing at Ash station. Trains for Guildford depart from platform 1, on the near side.

If there are no red flags flying, enter the Firing Ranges by a metal gate and continue ahead, climbing steeply on a vehicle wide track (direction North West). Look behind you for an extensive panorama of Guildford and the North Downs. At the top of the climb in 700 metres you reach a path junction with another vehicle wide track, marked by a large letter E on a round stone pillar (**11**).

To take the alternate route through the ranges : If you turn left at point 11, the track takes you along the ridge with spectacular views to your left, then gradually downhill past a wire fenced enclosure on your right to go through a metal gate exit from the Firing Ranges after 1.2km. If you stay on this partly paved path you reach an open area on your left after 400 metres, where you join the alternative "red flags flying" route to Ash station shortly before point 2. (2 paragraph above)

For the main route, turn right at the junction marked E (10 degrees) and follow the ridge through the barren landscape of the Ash Ranges for 950 metres until you reach a second junction marked by a letter D on a stone pillar. Turn left on to another clear track descending gradually (260 degrees). It is briefly joined by a wire fence on the left, and later it veers right and then left with another wire fenced enclosure on the left. You finally turn right again to reach a paved vehicle drive, 1.7kms from 'junction D'.

Turn right and follow the drive round to the left, then squeeze through or over a metal gate after 100 metres. Continue on a tree lined footpath, with a railway bridge visible shortly on your right, after which the path is paved. After 450 metres you reach a paved drive and turn right for 200 metres, taking the rail/footbridge back over the Basingstoke Canal then crossing the car park to Ash Vale station. Trains for Waterloo leave from platform 1.

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