

TRANSPORTED THROUGH ASH



Easy Terrain

**8.5 km
Circular
2.5 hours**

250716



Access Notes

1. The walk is relatively flat, with just a few gentle slopes. The majority of the paths are surfaced but some of the woodland paths can get very muddy after wet weather.
2. There is one stile on route (which can be easily avoided if necessary) plus a flight of four shallow steps, some generous staggered barriers and generous squeeze gaps.
3. There is a stretch of about 0.6 miles along a country lane without pavements so take care of traffic here.
4. You will also need to cross the A323 dual carriageway at a designated but unsignalled crossing point, so extra care is needed at this point.

A 8.5km (5 mile) circular walk exploring the suburbs around the village of Ash, linking the history of transport in the Blackwater Valley from the old railway path to the canal towpath and riverside path.

This walk is part of the Explore Surrey collection, published through a collaboration between iFootpath and Surrey County Council.

There are a handful of options for refreshments on the way round. There is the Curzon Indian Restaurant (formerly The Nightingale pub) on Guildford Road (Waypoint 1), The Cricketers pub (bar snacks only) on Oxenden Road (just before Waypoint 3) plus The Vale Cafe and some shops in Ash towards the end of the walk. Ordnance Survey Map: Explorer 145 Guildford and Farnham. This walk follows public footpaths and bridleways which cross private and public land. Information is included for your interest, but please respect people's privacy, keep dogs under control and remember the Countryside Code.

Getting there

The walk starts and finishes from the Coronation Gardens car park on Ash Hill Road in Ash, opposite Victoria Hall (with its distinctive clock tower). The car park is free and has a 2m height restriction barrier.

Approximate post code **GU12 5DN**.

The Victoria Hall bus stops are directly alongside the car park and Ash rail station is just a short walk away. From Ash Station, turn left to follow Church Road to the roundabout, turn left into Ash Hill Road and you will reach Coronation Gardens on your right. For help with planning your journey by public transport please visit <http://journeys.travelsmartsurrey.info>.

Walk Sections



Start to Guildford Road

Stand in the car park, facing the road with Victoria Hall (with its distinctive clock tower) opposite. The hall was built in 1897 to celebrate Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee. The clock tower was added in 1900 and the brickwork has two inscriptions: 'Deeds not words prove

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man's worth' and 'Work wins'.

Turn left out of the car park to join the unmade path beside a vehicle barrier which leads you through the trees (with the road running across to your right). Continue directly ahead until you reach the junction with a side road. Keep directly ahead along this, passing the red brick youth and community centre on your left. Immediately afterwards, you will come to a fork in the track. Take the left-hand branch, passing alongside a vehicle barrier to enter the MOD training area. For your safety, please keep to the main tracks and follow any advice notices.

Stay with the wide stone track leading you gently uphill and continue just until you reach the first crossroads with another major vehicle track (with a gnarled oak tree on your right). Turn right here and follow the vehicle track gently downhill. At a major junction of six paths, keep straight ahead on the track (ignoring two paths to the left and two to the right). Follow this, continuing downhill.

Go straight on at the next crossroads and you will emerge to a small car park. Keep ahead down the access lane to reach the junction with Guildford Road, with Curzon Indian Restaurant on your left. This building was formerly The Nightingale pub, sitting on the parish boundary between Ash and Normandy, and used to be a stopping point on the main coach route to Alton.

1 → 2 Guildford Road to Old Railway Path



Cross over Guildford Road with care and cross over the stile ahead to enter the playing fields. There are gaps in the adjacent hedgerow if you need these for your dog. (NOTE: If you need to avoid this stile, turn right along the pavement and then take the first side road on the left, Harpers Road. Follow this past the car park for the recreation ground and then pick up the directions from there.)

Cross the playing field diagonally, heading towards the row of

white houses at the far side. Leave the field via the sleeper bridge alongside the vehicle barrier, turn right through the car park and you will emerge to the road, Harpers Road. Turn left along Harpers Road, taking care of any traffic.

Follow Harpers Road ahead, leading you past a property on your left and then a series of properties on your right which sit behind a pretty stream. Continue ahead beyond these properties, taking particular care as you approach the road junction on the bend. Turn right to cross the railway bridge and 60 metres later, ignore the signed byway on your left. Instead simply stay with the lane for about 300 metres then turn left into the small side road, Drovers Way. Follow this lane between properties and, about 20 metres beyond the last house on the left, turn right down the shallow steps to reach a T-junction with the old railway path.

2 → 3 Old Railway Path to Blackwater Valley Path



Turn right to join the old railway path and follow it for its full length, about 1.3 miles. The path follows the route of the London and South Western Railway line, which ran from Southampton to Waterloo. The line was opened in 1849, but then was closed to passengers in 1937 and closed to freight in 1960. The path is owned and managed by Guildford Borough Council as a footpath and bridleway. Some of the original railway sleepers have been used to construct benches along the path.

At the end of the railway, follow the main tarmac path as it swings right and then keep right on the path to reach a junction with a quiet lane. Turn left along this lane and follow it to the T-junction at the end. Cross over and turn left to reach a second T-junction. Turn right here and soon you are forced to swap to the left-hand pavement, passing The Cricketers pub on your left.

Immediately after the pub, turn left into the gravel access drive called The Moors. Follow this ahead, ignoring the footpath into the bowling green on your right. Pass through the squeeze gap to join the tarmac path and follow it through the underpass beneath the dual carriageway. At the far side, pass alongside the black vehicle barrier and, immediately afterwards, turn right through the staggered barrier to join the Blackwater Valley Path.

3 → 4 Blackwater Valley Path to Basingstoke Canal

Follow this stone path winding ahead with the River Blackwater on your left and the dual carriageway running to your right. Further along, you will emerge out to a junction with a side road.



Turn left for a few paces to reach the T-junction with the A323 dual carriageway within an industrial area. Turn right (crossing over the side road) and 40 metres later (just before the roundabout) you will come to the official (but unsignalled) pedestrian crossing point for the A323.

Cross with extreme care, waiting for a suitable gap in the traffic. Keep ahead, passing through the gap alongside the wide metal gate to rejoin the Blackwater Valley Path. Stay with the path as it follows the line of the river and industrial units on your left.

Stay with the tarmac riverside path for some distance. Along the way you will be forced left over a wooden footbridge to join the left-hand river bank and, soon afterwards, back right over another footbridge to continue on the right-hand river bank once again. Eventually the path will lead you under a large bridge with blue railings and a curved base. This is the aqueduct which carries the Basingstoke Canal overhead. Pass under this, follow the path left over a footbridge and up a long slope to reach the Basingstoke Canal.

4 ➔ 5 Basingstoke Canal to End



Turn left along the towpath, following it over the aqueduct. Continue on the towpath with the canal running on your right. Through the trees on the opposite bank, you will have glimpses of the large Willow Park Lake, whilst through the trees on your left are the lakes of Lakeside Park Nature Reserve.

Construction of the Basingstoke Canal began in 1778. The 37 miles of canal from the Thames at Weybridge to Basingstoke took eight years to construct and included the building of 29 locks, 69 bridges plus two tunnels.

Stay with the canal towpath as it leads you under the rail bridge and continue to the next bridge. Pass under this and turn immediately left, up the tarmac slope to reach the junction with Vale Road. Turn left over the bridge and you will come to the mini-roundabout. Across to the left there is a parade of shops,

including The Vale Cafe. Go straight ahead at the mini-roundabout and follow the pavement uphill, passing Ash Centre on your left. Further along you will reach the car park where the walk began on your left.

This walk is part of the Explore Surrey collection, published through a collaboration between iFootpath and Surrey County Council.

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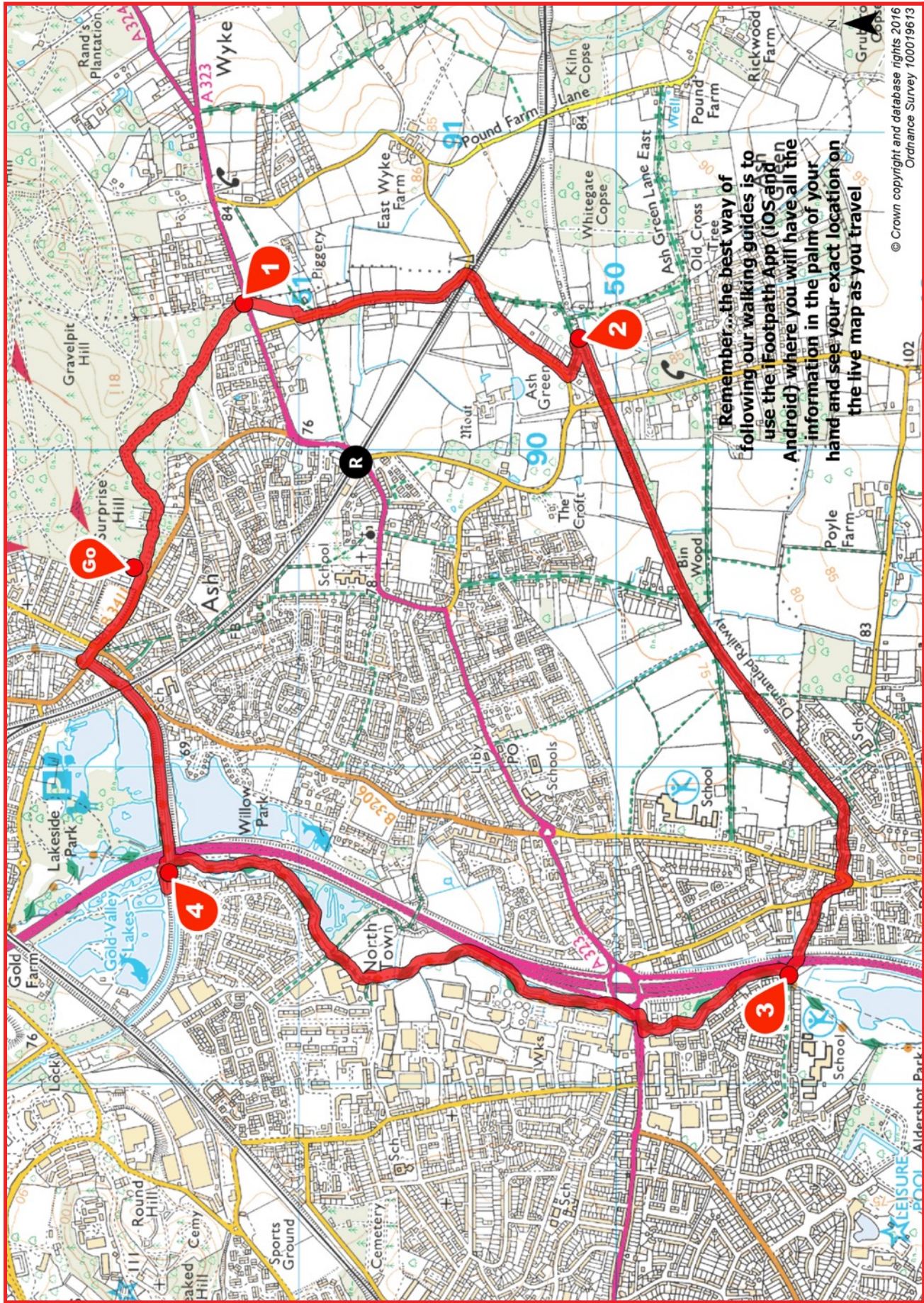
www.surreycc.gov.uk/explore

Disclaimer

This walking route was walked and checked at the time of writing. We have taken care to make sure all our walks are safe for walkers of a reasonable level of experience and fitness. However, like all outdoor activities, walking carries a degree of risk and we accept no responsibility for any loss or damage to personal effects, personal accident, injury or public liability whilst following this walk. We cannot be held responsible for any inaccuracies that result from changes to the routes that occur over time. Please let us know of any changes to the routes so that we can correct the information.

Walking Safety

For your safety and comfort we recommend that you take the following with you on your walk: bottled water, snacks, a waterproof jacket, waterproof/sturdy boots, a woolly hat and fleece (in winter and cold weather), a fully-charged mobile phone, a whistle, a compass and an Ordnance Survey map of the area. Check the weather forecast before you leave, carry appropriate clothing and do not set out in fog or mist as these conditions can seriously affect your ability to navigate the route. Take particular care on cliff/mountain paths where steep drops can present a particular hazard. Some routes include sections along roads – take care to avoid any traffic at these points. Around farmland take care with children and dogs, particularly around machinery and livestock. If you are walking on the coast make sure you check the tide times before you set out.



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- R** Rail station
- B** Bus stop
-  Walking route
-  Start point
- 1** Waypoint