

Access Opportunities on the Defence Estate

Elstead Common Surrey



MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

Circular and linear walks through pleasant woodland and across open heathland in Surrey.

Walk 1: Circular/linear walk

Option 1: Starting/finishing at the Moat including an extension to Royal Common

Distance: Approximately 4 miles (6.4km)

Duration: 2-3 hours

Grade: ▲▲

Option 2: Circular route starting and finishing at the Moat

Distance: Approximately 2 miles (3.2km)

Duration: 1 hour

Grade: ▲▲

Walk 2: Easy-going Trail (starting/finishing at Royal Common)

Distance: 1-2 miles (1.6-3.2km)

Duration: 1 hour

Grade: ▲

OS map sheet(s)

OS Landranger Sheet 186 (1:50,000)

OS Explorer Sheet 145 (1:25,000)

Starting Grid Reference:

Walk 1: GR 899 415 **Walk 2:** GR 921 433

Site description / history

The Longmoor Training Area is situated on the boundary of Surrey and Hampshire between the towns of Bordon, Liphook, Farnham and Guildford. It is divided into three main areas: Hankley and Elstead Commons; Bramshott Common; and the main block around Longmoor Training Camp. The Training Area is used for logistics and minor infantry manoeuvre exercises.

Elstead, Ockley and Royal Commons are part of a Site of Special Scientific Interest, Special Protection Area and Special Area of Conservation designated due to the Dry Heathland Habitat and the associated flora and fauna. The commons are covered with heather, bracken and woodlands of birch and Scots Pine. In 1996, the whole of the Training Area was given a 'Forest of Excellence' award by the Forest Authority, which reflects the exceptional management of the landscape, wildlife, conservation, timber production and public access in the area.

Walk description - Walk 1

The walk starts at the Moat car park **A** (GR 899 416). From the car park walk northeasterly following a sandy track across the heathland, keeping the Moat on your right. At **B** (GR 902 416) you will come to a fork in the path where you will see a sign displaying the byelaws for the Training Area. At this point bear to the left, and continue northwards. A bridleway is clear on the ground. However, during the winter and spring months when particularly wet, it may not be possible to continue along this bridleway, as ground conditions are too wet or boggy. It is therefore necessary to deviate slightly to the left of the bridleway, along a footpath, across the heathland, following closely the western boundary of the Training Area. This path weaves its way through a wooded area which may be boggy in places, but passable. This is a permissive horse ride route. Continue along this path, until the path meets up with the bridleway **C** (GR 903 422). (When conditions are dry it may be possible to walk directly from **B** to **C** following the bridleway and not the path described through the woodland). Continue northwards on this bridleway, following the line of electricity pylons, until you meet a gravel track running perpendicular to the bridleway **D** (GR 904 423). Turn right and continue eastwards on this track through



Access Opportunities on the Defence Estate

Elstead Common Surrey



Circular and linear routes through pleasant woodland and across open heathland in Surrey.

the pine woodland. At **E** (GR 910 423), the woodland opens up and becomes open heathland with some trees. At this point there are two options for completing the route. (See **Options 1** and **2** below)

Options to finishing the route

Option 1

From **E** (GR 910 423) continue walking along the track, heading southeasterly. At **F** (GR 914 420) there is a junction in the path. Turn left and continue northeastwards along a well defined track. Continue along this track, across a small bridge where the track bends slightly **G** (GR 917 423). Some parts of this track may be liable to be slightly muddy and wet. Continue along the track which shortly after the bridge becomes a metalled track taking you through mixed woodland. Walking towards Royal Common, there is a pond on the left **H** (GR 922 424).

This pond is used for military training and is strictly out of bounds. Head northwards along the track to the exit/entrance to the Training Area on the B3001 **I** (GR 921 433).

The walk can end here or it is possible to retrace the route from **I** back to **A**. From **E** (GR 910 423) an alternative route can be taken. (See **Option 2** below)

Option 2

At **E** (GR 910 423) follows the bridleway which heads southwestwards through the woodland. In wet conditions, it may be necessary to deviate slightly to the right of this bridleway and weave through the woodland on a small path. At **J** (GR 908 420) you will meet a junction with another bridleway. Continue southwestwardly on the same bridleway. When wet the bridleway may be impassable and so it will be necessary to deviate slightly to the right of the bridleway. At **K** (GR 908 418) the path becomes sandy; continue along this path. You will see Pudmore Pond on your left, which is part of the National Nature Reserve on Thursley Common to the south. Continue along this track, over a boardwalk, until you reach a fork in the path. Take the right hand path which takes you back to the Moat car park **A**.

Walk description - Walk 2

Easy-going Trail

This route starts at the parking area at Royal Common **I** (GR 921 433) and is suitable for wheelchair and pushchair users. Follow the metalled track southwards across Royal Common to the pond at **H** (GR 922 424). From **H** it is possible to extend the walk to **F** (GR 914 420), although when conditions are wet, the section between **G** and **F** may be slightly muddy and harder for wheelchair access. Return to the parking area at Royal Common **I** along the same route.



Points of interest

- There is a rich diversity of flora and fauna to be found on the Training Area including nightjar, dartford warbler, woodlark, sand lizard, smooth snake, natterjack toad, roe & muntjac deer and silver studded blue butterflies. Hobbies can be seen around Elstead Common. A free leaflet is available at the English Nature National Nature Reserve sign due south of point **B**.
- The area is known to have formed part of a larger expanse of heathland which once covered much of Surrey. The Moat Pond supports several rare spider, water beetle and dragonfly species.

Restrictions / access times

Access is permitted at all times but is strictly controlled under the terms of the local Military Byelaws. These Byelaws are displayed at all major access points to the Training Area. Please be sure to read these before walking.

Access Opportunities on the Defence Estate Elstead Common Surrey



Circular and linear routes through pleasant woodland and across open heathland in Surrey.

Safety

- Visitors are asked to comply at all times with the instructions and byelaws on the Warning Noticeboards.
- Please do not approach or pick up any metal objects.
- Please note that no camping or fires are allowed.
- Keep to the designated path. Where there are boardwalks these must be used and walkers must not walk on the surrounding ground.
- Please keep dogs under proper control.
- The pond on Royal Common is strictly out of bounds.

- Some sections of the route may be boggy and very wet, and be impassable during certain seasons of the year. Care should be taken when walking and slight deviations from the route may be necessary.

How to get there

For information on local public transport, call traveline on 0870 608 2608 (local call rate) or www.traveline.org.uk

Local facilities

There are parking facilities at the Moat **A** and at the entrance to Royal Common **I**. There are also picnic facilities at the Moat.

Useful contact details

For information on access to the Training Area call 01420 483331.

