



***Harefield Healthwalks***



The text in this document is merely an indication of what might be possible ... or what might have been possible at the time of researching (2024-25) or later revision. All walking routes are subject to change, but the pace of urban change is greater than in rural areas.

Each reader must assess whether each part of the route qualifies as suitable or safe for public access. The author does not warrant any point of legality or safety in any part of the description of the route.

Thanks are due to many people who have helped me with route-finding and with intelligence local to a number of areas traversed by the route. Their contributions enrich the route and the stories along it. Clearly, any mistakes and misinterpretations remain with the author.

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Front cover photograph:  
Fieldpath south of Breakspear House



*Harefield Health Centre*

## Harefield Healthwalks

Harefield, since it is surrounded by rural land and boasts the canal towpath along all of its western flank, has a huge capacity for local walking, with streets, fields and the towpath to offer variety. We know that walking can enhance health and wellbeing at little or no cost: this document aims to give villagers and visitors ideas on getting out and exploring Harefield. There is a range of lengths and exercise levels in the fourteen routes described, and the underfoot conditions also come in a range of options from tarmac to marsh.

The jewel in the local walker's crown, for the whole of the borough as well as for Harefield, must be the *Hillingdon Trail*, which takes an almost entirely green line for more than 30km between Cranford Country Park and the Grand Union Canal at the borough boundary to the north of Harefield — of all the trails I have researched throughout Britain which are either across a borough or which encircle a borough (a burgh, of course, in Scotland), the Hillingdon Trail is, to use the words of the late Brian Clough, “not necessarily the best, but it's definitely in the top one”. The distance should really be reckoned as being close to 35km between the nearest bus stops to each end,

The waymarked *London Loop*, *Colne Valley Trail* and *Grand Union Canal Walk* all pass through the area, each following its own route alongside the canal. The Loop also takes a route through fields and Bishop's Wood (which is just within Hertfordshire) to Batchworth Heath (the most convenient bus stop).

From the stable of my website **Lwalks.London** (see below for details of the site), the *Coal Tax Circuit* makes its own way from Batchworth Heath to the canal at Stocker's Lock and then follows it to Moorhall

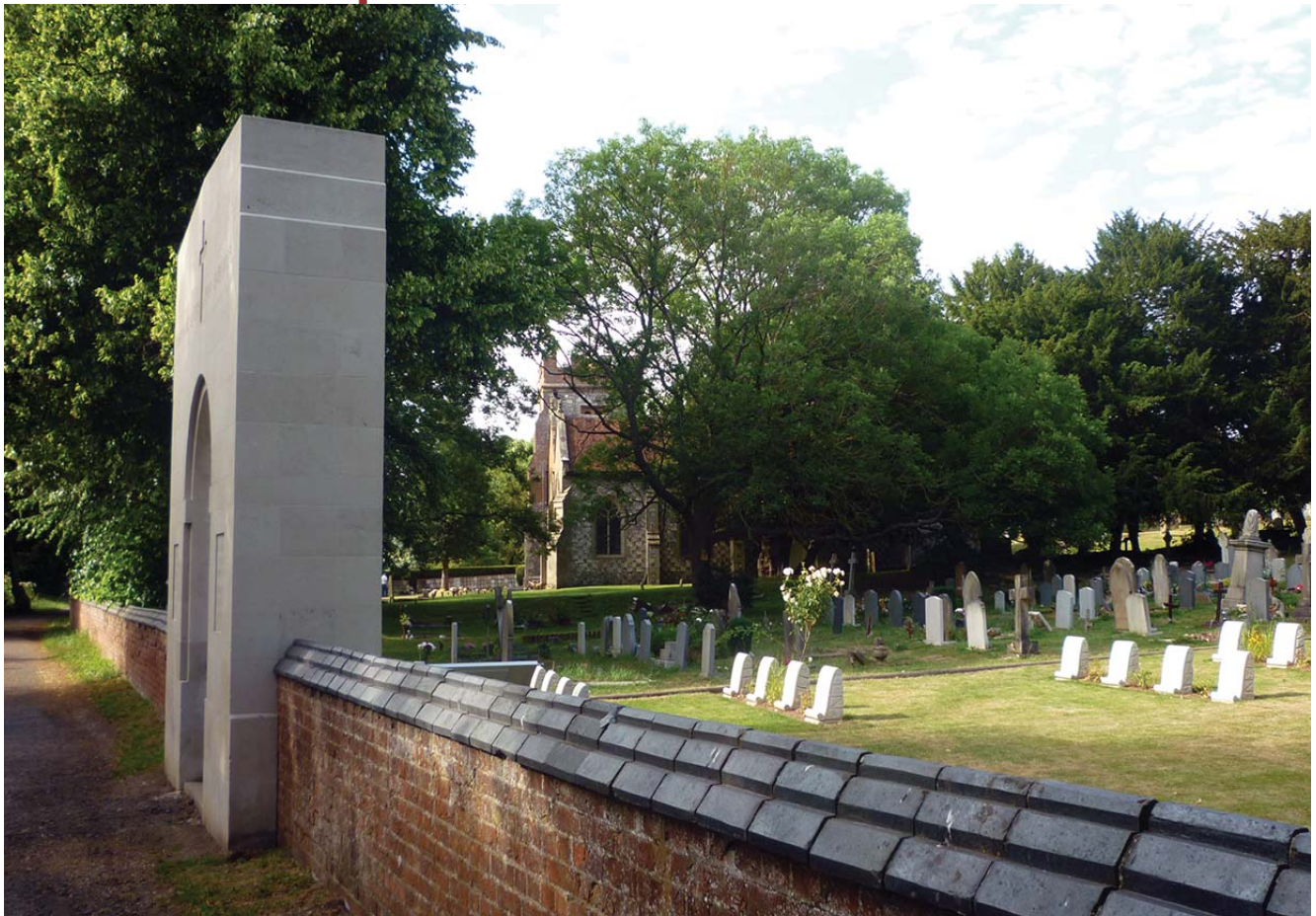
Road, and the *Ring around the Underground* comes through Bayhurst Woods (from West Ruislip) to the Australian Military Cemetery and South Harefield.

The sections of these longer routes within our area (with convenient bus connections at each end) are given below.

- **Coal Tax Circuit**  
Batchworth Heath to Moorhall Road — 15.3km
- **Colne Valley Trail**  
Springwell Lock to New Denham — 10.1km
- **Grand Union Canal Walk**  
New Denham to Harefield West — 7.5km
- **Hillingdon Trail**  
Ruislip Lido (Ducks Hill Road) to Harefield West — 10.6km, or 15.2km to include the northern terminus of the route
- **London Loop**  
New Denham to Batchworth Heath — 13.7km
- **Ring around the Underground**  
West Ruislip to Moorhall Road — 9.2km

There are, though, many other opportunities for shorter walks around Harefield. Of course, there are possibilities of constraints which may deter some people from some walks — the table at the start of each walk indicates the potential for stiles, gates and

*Australian Military Cemetery and church*





mud, and whether the walk is suitable for perambulators and the like (though instead of a perambulator, I should recommend the use of a backpack papoose which will allow little legs to be used as much as possible).

## Lwalks.London

For some years now, I have written up some of my walking routes and publishing them online. For the walks which I have devised, there are descriptive documents which you may download. All have my copyright, so you will not be able to re-publish them without my explicit consent, but of course you are welcome to share the web addresses of routes that interest you. There is no paywall on the site — I am not in this for financial gain, just to share the routes freely with others.

As you might expect from the site's name, much of the content of the site is London-based, but there are walks farther afield. There is, for instance, a set of walks which start at Trafalgar Square and move out in the eight main compass directions to places such as Guildford, Hatfield, Southend and Gravesend.

On the site, there is even a fully documented guide to a walk across Schleswig-Holstein in the north of Germany from the Baltic Sea to the North Sea, which I undertook during mid-March 2018, in the immediate aftermath of the extreme weather event called "The Beast from the East" — the photograph will give you an idea of the conditions I faced at the start of the route (-4°C and 100kph wind whipping off the sea). The route, which is on about the same scale as our London Loop in terms of national ranking, is called the *Nordostseewanderweg*, though my route took me in the reverse direction, walking from the Ostsee (*i.e.*, the Baltic Sea) towards the Nordsee.

- Site home page  
<https://lwalks.london/>
- Harefield Healthwalks home page  
<https://lwalks.london/hfhw/>



*Ice coats everything in the path of the blown Baltic sea-water: near the start of the Nordostseewanderweg at Bülk lighthouse*



*Church Field early on a  
January morning*

# The walks

The walks described below start and finish at bus stops, all of them, with the exception of West Ruislip station, on one (or both) of the two regular routes through the village, the 331 and U9. There are six short walks of less than 5km, six moderate walks of between 5km and 10km, and two longer walks which are a little over 15km in length, though one may be shortened to a shade over 10km.

The data panel for each walk indicates intermediate bus stops which may serve as break-points, and in several cases there are indications in the text of alternative and/or adjacent routes.

Walks are given in ascending order of distance. Each walk is presented starting on a new page so that it will be easier to print off the notes for a single walk. On most pages, there is space in the margin for your personal notes, such as bus times for your endpoint. You will find <https://tfl.gov.uk/> useful for bus timetables when using your desktop or notebook computer.



*Bird Lane*

URLs for maps take you to the OS Maps Online site. The best paper map to use is, of course, sheet 172, *Chiltern Hills East*, in the 1:25000 *Explorer* series, but paper maps are bulky and do not self-update. A subscription to OS Maps Online offers these and other maps for the UK, plus mapping for the rest of the world. You may thus print a full-colour map for your day's walk.

In order to make a convenient-to-carry map, I fold the printed maps in half once along the long axis of the paper, and fold it in half twice along the short axis to make eight panels: this results in a piece of paper the size of a credit card (the official size is A7). Printing double-sided is fine for cool dry days, but if the paper is likely to be softened by contact with rain or sweat, one-sided is to be preferred, so that you will walk the route before the page disintegrates. The page is re-folded whenever one walks off a panel, so that the current panel and the next one are outermost.

## Smartphone use

Smartphone apps for mapping are apparently very popular. However, they require battery-sapping location services to be switched on, whether or not you need such — apart from the battery issue, this also makes your device discoverable and diminishes its security. This also applies to the *TfL Go* app for bus and Tube timetables — use paper instead, as described above.



## Short walks — shorter than 5km

- The Green and the junior school (1.2km) may be found on page 9.
- The Green to Moorhall recreation ground (2.2km) may be found on page 11.
- The Green to Harefield West via Hill End Road (2.4km) may be found on page 17.
- *Colne Valley Trail* from Harefield West to Moorhall Road (3.0km) may be found on page 21.
- *Grand Union Canal Walk* from Moorhall Road to Harefield West (3.2km) may be found on page 25.
- The Green to Moorhall Road via Jack's Lock (3.5km) may be found on page 29.

## Moderate walks — between 5km and 10km

- *Grand Union Canal Walk* from South Harefield to Uxbridge (5.0km) may be found on page 33.
- Batchworth Heath to the Green via Fieldways Farm (5.5km) may be found on page 39.
- The Shrubs to Priory Avenue via Jackets Lane (5.6km) may be found on page 43.
- Moorhall Road to Ducks Hill Road via The Green (5.8km) may be found on page 49.
- *London Loop* from Moorhall Road to Batchworth Heath (8.9km) may be found on page 55.
- *Ring around the Underground* from West Ruislip to Moorhall Road (9.2km) may be found on page 61.

## Long walks — longer than 10km

- *Hillingdon Trail* from Ruislip Lido to Harefield West via Springwell Lock (15.2km) — or without the Springwell loop (10.6km) — may be found on page 69.
- *Coal Tax Circuit* from Batchworth Heath to Harefield West (15.3km) may be found on page 81.



# The Green and the junior school

Distance	1.2km
Stiles	None
Gates, etc	None
Wheels	Suitable (unless the Green is very wet)
Mud, etc	none (unless the Green is very wet)
Start	Globe on the Green — bus stops at The Green and Merle Avenue (331), and at Merle Avenue, Harefield Library, and New Park Road (U9)
Finish	Globe on the Green — bus stops at The Green and Merle Avenue (331), and at Merle Avenue, Harefield Library, and New Park Road (U9) Globe on the Green
Breakpoints	None
Map	<a href="https://explore.osmaps.com/route/23561091/">https://explore.osmaps.com/route/23561091/</a>

## Introduction

This is a short, easy and level walk in the centre of the village, and is suitable for perambulators. If the Green is wet, though, the circuit of the grass may be avoided by following the left-hand footways of Breakspear Road North, Northwood Road, Vernon Drive and Rickmansworth Road. This alternative route extends the total distance, but only to 1.6km.

The shops and cafés in the centre of the village are adjacent, so there is the possibility of some refreshment after your walk.

*Parsonage Path*

## Route

Start at the Globe on the Green, which celebrates the links between Harefield and Australia, and use two pedestrian crossings to reach the right-hand footway of High Street, crossing Rickmansworth Road and Park Lane in the process. Walk past the shops until you reach the entrance to the junior school on your right. Turn right to take an enclosed tarmac path with the school on your right.

This path is shown on the 1876 edition of the Ordnance Survey map as an access route to the Parsonage, which was immediately on the left, just about at the point where the path bends slightly to the left, and roughly where the photograph was taken. On the 1916 edition of the map, the junior school shows up in its present position, the school having moved





*Pond on the Green*

from a building on High Street (where the church hall is now). Over on the other side of High Street, opposite the school entrance, stands the Grade II listed eighteenth-century Harefield House, now converted into flats.

At the end of the path, turn right and follow the path (again, tarmac and still with the school property on your right) out onto Park Lane. Turn right and follow the right-hand footway past the library to

reach the roundabout.

Opposite the entrance to the library, there was in 1876 a brewery.

Turn left to cross Park Lane and then turn right to cross Rickmansworth Road, each by a pedestrian crossing and continue ahead along the side of the green parallel to Breakspear Road North to reach the pond. Turn left and advance to the war memorial, then continue along two sides of the Green to reach the play area. Turn left, keeping the play area on your right, to come to the fitness machinery.

*Globe on the Green*



If it is your bag, try out some of the machinery before returning to the Globe on the Green.

Across Rickmansworth Road, the King's Arms once had a smithy attached.



# The Green to Moorhall recreation ground

Distance	2.2km
Stiles	None
Gates, etc.	Traffic barrier at Peerless Drive entrance to Moorhall recreation ground
Wheels	Suitable in dry weather only
Gradient	All gently downhill
Mud, etc.	Leaf-litter behind almshouses, and mud possible between the church and the junction of Harvil Road, Church Hill and Priory Avenue
Start	Globe on the Green — bus stops at The Green and Merle Avenue (331), and at Merle Avenue, Harefield Library, and New Park Road (U9)
Finish	Moorhall Road — bus stops at Truesdale Drive (331), and at The Furrows (U9)
Breakpoints	Bus stops (U9/331) throughout
Map	<a href="https://explore.osmaps.com/route/23562871/">https://explore.osmaps.com/route/23562871/</a>

## Introduction

This walk descends from the Green via High Street and Church Hill, visits the Countess of Derby's Almshouses, the church and the Australian Military Cemetery, then takes Priory Avenue to the community centre and Moorhall recreation ground, ending at the Truesdale Drive bus stop for buses back up into the centre of the village.

The only section of the route which is an unmade path (and therefore liable to be muddy) is between the church and Harvil Road at Priory Avenue,. For perambulators, it is probably best to walk as far as the cemetery and then return to Church Hill, leaving the exploration of Moorhall recreation ground for another walk.

The footway behind the almshouses on Church Hill may be slippery from leaf-litter. It is also narrow, so a perambulator diversion (described below) may be advisable.

The shops and cafés in the centre of the village are adjacent to the start of the walk, so there is the possibility of some refreshment to prepare you for your walk. There is also a shop near the end of the walk.

## Route

The route starts at the Globe on the Green, which celebrates the links between Harefield and Australia, and uses two pedestrian crossings to reach the right-hand footway of High Street, crossing Rickmansworth Road and then Park Lane in the process.



*The Old Dairy and the church hall, High Street*

Walk past the shops until you reach the entrance to the junior school on your right.

On the 1916 edition of the map, the junior school shows up in its present position, the school having moved from a building on High Street (where the church hall is now). On the other side of High Street, opposite the school entrance, stands the Grade II listed eighteenth-century Harefield House, now converted into

flats.

Continue along the right-hand footway of High Street, passing some more shops, and crossing over the end of Merle Avenue.

Over on your left, the building which is right by the roadside (at 65 and 67 High Street) is listed Grade II.

Continue along the right-hand footway, crossing over the end of Dovedale Close and passing a bus stop, to reach and cross the end of Bird Lane on your right.

The Hillingdon Trail uses Bird Lane as part of the route between High Street and the canal.

Immediately beyond Bird Lane, there is a group of houses on the right (130 to 136 and 140 High Street) which are timber-framed and date from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. These houses are listed Grade II.

*The former White Horse Inn, Church Hill*



Continue ahead to reach and cross the end of Countess Close on your right.

The area on the right immediately beyond Countess Close was for many years occupied by the vicarage, which had moved from its previous location off High Street, just to the south of where the junior school is today, during the inter-war period.

Cross to the left-hand footway of Church Hill using the refuge, and turn right to continue downhill.

On the right, you will pass a large white building. It was for over 300 years the White Horse



pub, and on one occasion even hosted a murder trial, and the cool cellars served, from time to time, as a morgue. The pub closed for business in 2010 and the building was sold: it has now been converted into two dwellings. The frame of the pub sign remains as a ghostly reminder of the house's former life. The building is listed Grade II.



*Countess of Derby's Almshouses*

Just beyond the former pub, you will come to the Countess of Derby's Almshouses, where the footway bends to the left and takes a route away from the road. The footway then takes a dog-leg to the right to pass behind the almshouses, returning to Church Hill a short way down the hill.

This section of the footway is narrow and is often covered by leaf-litter, making the path slippery. If these underfoot conditions concern you, keep to the right-hand footway of Church Hill and cross the road at the point where the left-hand footway returns to the roadside.

The establishment of these almshouses "for six poor women of the parish" was laid out in the terms of the will of Alice, Countess of Derby after she died in 1637. She was Lady of the Manor at Harefield Place, which was situated just to the south of the church. The almshouses are listed Grade II\*.

*The Southern Cross flies from the church tower on ANZAC Day*

After regaining Church Hill, take the access road to the church on the left, and follow it downhill. Pass the church on the left and advance to reach the Australian Military Cemetery, also on your left. The church is listed Grade I, while the cemetery gateway and the war memorial are each listed Grade II.

The cemetery contains the graves of over a hundred soldiers and other war workers, including a nurse, who died in the Australian military hospital which was given to the forces during the Great War. That hospital became the Harefield Hospital we know today. The scroll design of the headstones is unique among military graves of the Great War.

The cemetery is the site of a most poignant commemoration every year on ANZAC Day (25 April), when children from the junior school lay posies on each grave in the presence of







*Australian Military  
Cemetery on ANZAC Day*

*Chapel crop-mark,  
Moorhall recreation ground*



military and political dignitaries from Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom.

In the churchyard, there are the graves of two of Harefield's three recipients of the Victoria Cross. Brevet Major (later Lieutenant-General) Gerald Goodlake was awarded the VC during the Inkerman campaign of the Crimean War, and Private (later Sergeant) Robert Edward Ryder's award came at Thiepval on the Somme in 1916 during the Great War. Private Cecil John Kinross VC was born in Harefield but emigrated with his family to Alberta and is buried there: his award was gained in 1918 at Passchendaele during the Great War.

Beyond the cemetery, the road surface becomes rougher, and gives out entirely at the gate to Church Gardens, just beyond the site of Harefield Place. At this point, turn right to follow an unmade path which, despite the deterrent notices which sometimes appear, is indeed a public footpath. This leads out onto Harvil Road opposite Priory Avenue.

**The bus stops here offer a break-point: the stop for the centre of the village is on the opposite side of the road.**

Turn right to pass the Uxbridge-bound bus stop, then cross the road using the refuge. Turn left to reach the end of Priory Avenue, with the Harefield-bound bus stop ahead. Turn right to take the right-hand footway of Priory Avenue, downhill. At the junction with Priory Gardens, turn left, cross Priory Avenue, and take the access road to the community centre in front of you.

Do not go through the gate into the community centre, but take the path on its right which runs alongside the centre's car park. This leads past tennis courts on the left to reach the corner of Moorhall

recreation ground at the third of three side-paths which run between the houses of Peerless Drive on the right, and just beyond a diagonal barrier squeeze-point.

Peerless Drive is laid out on the former site of Peerless Fence, a manufacturer of chain-link fencing. The houses were built in 1983.

Turn left along a tarmac path to keep a children's playground on your left out to the road. As



you approach Moorhall Road, you will cross the site of Moorhall Farm, with the site of Moorhall Chapel in the middle of the grassy area on your right.

By 1333, the Knights Hospitallers (in full, the Order of Knights of the Hospital of Saint John of Jerusalem) had established a cell on Harefield Moor, probably no more than a tiny chapel and some farm buildings. The farm was destroyed by fire in 1922 and the chapel fell into disrepair.

The chapel was refurbished as a Sunday School in 1926, but by the late 1940s was once again derelict. Despite a campaign (which rose to the level of questions being asked in Parliament) to save one of only three surviving chapels in England which had been set up by the Knights Hospitallers, Uxbridge council demolished the building in 1960. During the drought of August 2022, the outline of the chapel became visible as a yellower crop-mark in the grass.

Continue out to Moorhall Road and turn left onto the left-hand footway. Cross the end of Truesdale Drive to reach the bus stop for the 331 service towards the centre of Harefield (and on to Northwood and Ruislip).

There are shops over to your right, taking the corner, and there is a bus stop on the U9 route on Harvil Road beyond the shops.





# The Green to Harefield West via Hill End

Distance	2.4km
Stiles	None
Gates, etc.	Traffic barrier at the exit from Hill End Road
Wheels	Unsuitable
Gradient	Steep downhill from Hill End Road
Mud, etc.	On the descent from Hill End Road
Start	Globe on the Green — bus stops at The Green and Merle Avenue (331), and at Merle Avenue, Harefield Library, and New Park Road (U9)
Finish	Harefield West — Bus stop at Shelley Lane (U9)
Breakpoints	None
Map	<a href="https://explore.osmaps.com/route/23581046/">https://explore.osmaps.com/route/23581046/</a>

## Introduction

The route leaves the Green on Rickmansworth Road before turning to pass the entrance to Harefield Hospital on Hill End Road. At the allotment gardens, the route turns left and descends towards the Colne Valley, before turning left onto Summerhouse Lane. At Park Lane, the route turns left to reach the U9 turning circle at Shelley Lane.

The descent from Hill End to Bellevue Terrace is unmade and steep, and is unsuitable for any wheeled vehicle. It is likely to be muddy for some days after rain or snowmelt.

## Route

From the Globe on the Green, cross Rickmansworth Road using the pedestrian crossing and turn right along the left-hand footway, passing the entrance to the Harefield Health Centre on the left. At the junction with Hill End Road, cross the end of the road using the refuge and turn left to follow the right-hand footway, passing the entrance to Harefield Hospital on the left.

The hospital came into being in 1915 when the Billyard-Leake family estate was made available to the Australian government as a hospital for wounded servicemen

*Harefield Hospital*



from Australia and New Zealand, the “No 1 Australian Auxiliary Hospital” treating some fifty thousand patients. Of that number, 120 who died there were buried in the Australian Military Cemetery next to the parish church.

After the war, the estate was formally made over to the then Middlesex County Council (which was dissolved in 1965) as a sanatorium. Harefield had the freshest air in the county, and this made the site ideal for the treatment of tuberculosis using the “open-air” principles which were then in fashion.

During the Second World War, the hospital took on more general duties as a centre for the treatment of war casualties from London north of the River Thames. It was here that Sir Alexander Fleming undertook some of his research on the effects of penicillin.

After the war, of course, the hospital was transferred into the National Health Service as a general hospital, but soon began to specialise in chest, lung and heart treatment. Over the succeeding decades, its reputation for innovation was built up, and in 1973, its first heart transplant operation was carried out by the team led by Sir Magdi Yacoub. Innovation continues to this day, the facilities so different from the wooden shacks which were erected on the estate in 1915.

Continue along the right-hand footway of Hill End Road, passing the entrance to Taylor’s Meadow on the right. This is an area for active recreation: it is owned by the hospital. Pass the access road to Whiteheath Farm, then look out for a dog-waste bin on the left-hand side of the road, just before the entrance to the Hill End allotment gardens. Cross the road and pass through the metal barrier onto an enclosed lane.

*Descent from Hill End Road  
to Bellevue Terrace*



You are now following the southbound Hillingdon Trail.

This lane descends steeply in places, and is likely to be muddy for some days after any significant rainfall or snowmelt, or slippery in frosty conditions. It is therefore only suitable for walkers with a sureness of step and with good (though not new) trainers or (preferably) lightweight walking boots. Some may find a stick helpful.

Follow the path past the allotment gardens on the right, and begin the descent. About 700m after leaving Hill End Road, the path emerges onto Bellevue Terrace, with houses on the right. Continue ahead along the roadway — there is no footway until one appears on the left-hand side of the road at the junction with Barrington Drive. Continue on that footway to reach the junction with Summerhouse Lane.



With the Grand Union Canal ahead of you, cross Summerhouse Lane and turn left to follow the right-hand footway.

The Colne Valley Trail joins from the right at the bottom of Bellevue Terrace, joining the Hillingdon Trail.

Pass on your right a succession of premises which were once industrial but which have been converted into canalside houses. When you reach Park Lane, turn left to cross Summerhouse Lane and follow the left-hand footway of Park Lane uphill. Cross over the end of Barrington Drive to reach the turning circle and bus stop for the U9 service.

There is a bench which you may find useful if your arrival does not coincide with that of the bus (the standard service frequency is every twenty minutes, though the Sunday service is only hourly). The Green is 1km ahead with a further 35m of ascent.



*Bellevue Terrace, the last outpost of canalside Harefield*

*The bus turning circle at Harefield West. on a day not conducive to sitting around waiting for a U9 to appear*







# Colne Valley Trail: Harefield West to Moorhall Road

Distance	3.0km
Stiles	None
Gates, etc.	None
Wheels	Suitable in dry weather only
Gradient	none
Mud, etc.	The towpath may be muddy after rain or frost-thaw
Start	Harefield West — Bus stop at Shelley Lane (U9)
Finish	Moorhall Road — bus stops at Truesdale Drive and Broadwater Lock (331), and at The Furrows (U9)
Breakpoints	None
Map	<a href="https://explore.osmaps.com/route/23584683/">https://explore.osmaps.com/route/23584683/</a>

## Introduction

The walk begins at the turning circle for the U9 buses at the end of Shelley Lane, and descends towards the canal, where it joins the Trail. It then follows Jack's Lane to Jack's Mill, and is completed southbound along the towpath of the canal.

The Colne Valley Trail homepage is at <https://www.colnevalleypark.org.uk/things-to-do-2/walks/#colnevalleytrail>

The route is only suitable for walkers. There is a descent across fields from Merle Avenue to Jack's Mill. Inconsiderate cyclists on the towpath may be a deterrent for walkers. Mud may be expected on the canal towpath except during a prolonged dry spell.

## Route

From the turning circle of the U9 bus service at the end of Shelley Lane, descend Park Lane on the right-hand footway as far as a refuge, where cross to the left-hand footway. Turn left onto Jack's Lane, with a postbox just beyond the junction ahead on the left-hand side of Park Lane.

You are now following the southbound route of both the Colne Valley Trail and the Hillingdon Trail.

Continue to the end of Jack's Lane. Follow the right-hand footway (where there is one) past modern housing on the right, and where the houses end, continue along the unmetalled lane ahead. After a further 360m, by which point the lane is once again suitable for motor traffic, you will come to a T-junction, with one lane continuing ahead and another one turning to your right, crossing over the canal.

At the junction, the Hillingdon Trail leaves this route, continuing along the lane ahead.



*Jack's Lane*

*Left — with canalside housing on the right*

*Right — unmade track beyond the housing*



*Jack's Lock and Mill, with the lock about to be pressed into service*



Turn right and follow the lane over the canal bridge and arrive at Jack's Lock. Turn right to descend to the towpath of the Grand Union Canal.

The building on your left is Jack's Mill, a former flour mill. At this point, the London Loop and the Grand Union Canal Walk each follow the towpath to the north, while the Colne Valley Trail, Grand Union Canal Walk, and London Loop all follow our route southbound along the towpath, as does the Coal Tax Circuit.

Turn sharp right to follow the canal towpath beneath the bridge. Continue along the towpath for a further 1.1km. The land on your left was in the past a lime quarry, the entrance to which may still be seen on Church Hill opposite the church access road. You will now

reach the next bridge, which formerly carried Broadwater Lane across the canal to reach Harefield Moor, which has disappeared into the lakes formed by extensive gravel extraction.

At the bridge, you will see a prime example of the effect of years of tow-rope friction. The horses pulling the barges had to follow the towpath, and where the canal narrowed at a bridge, the ropes rubbed against the bridge, eroding the



stonework or brickwork. The canal company duly put the iron stanchions in place to stop the erosion of the stone but, albeit more slowly than before, the ropes bit into the iron, leaving the deep grooves we see today.

Beyond the bridge, continue along the towpath, with the houses of Peerless Drive soon appearing on the far side of the canal.

Peerless Drive is laid out on the former site of Peerless Fence, a manufacturer of chain-link fencing. The houses were built in 1983.

Continue past Widewater Lock and, just before you reach the road bridge, turn right. If you are making for Moorhall recreation ground or the shops at the top of Moorhall Road, turn left up a flight of steps and turn left, otherwise continue out past a gate to reach Moorhall Road at a bus stop.

The stop on your right is served by the 331 route towards the centre of the village.

There is a pub on the other side of the road.



*Broadwater Lane Bridge,  
with rope-eroded iron*

*Widewater Lock*







# Grand Union Canal Walk: Moorhall Road to Harefield West

Distance	3.2km
Stiles	None
Gates, etc.	None
Wheels	Suitable in dry weather only
Gradient	None
Mud, etc.	Towpath after rain
Start	Moorhall Road — bus stops at Truesdale Drive and Broadwater Lock (331), and at The Furrows (U9)
Finish	Harefield West — Bus stop at Shelley Lane (U9)
Breakpoints	None
Map	<a href="https://explore.osmaps.com/route/23584597/">https://explore.osmaps.com/route/23584597/</a>

## Introduction

A simple level walk along the towpath, though the possibility of mud on the towpath may be a deterrent for wheeled vehicles ... and equally, inconsiderate cyclists may be a deterrent for walkers.

Mud may be expected on the canal towpath except during a prolonged dry spell.

## Route

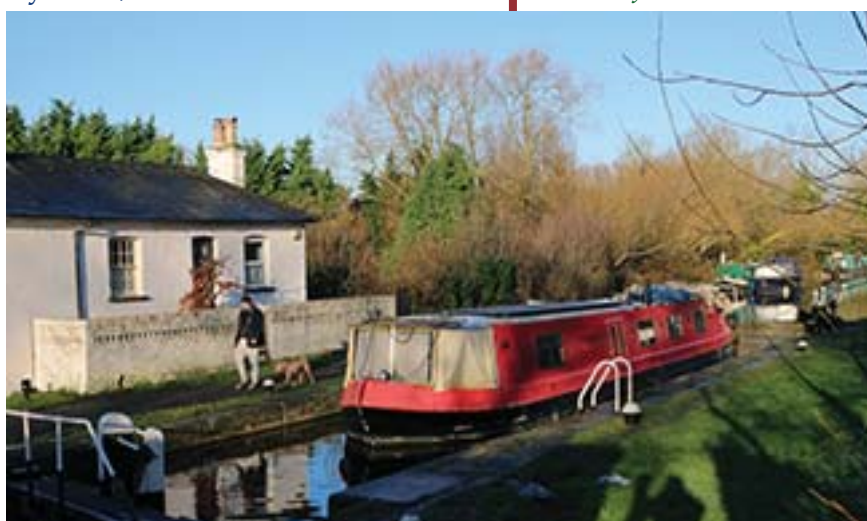
From the bus stop called *Grand Union Canal / Broadwater Lock* (even though the lock is called Widewater Lock), make your way back along Moorhall Road past the pub to reach the canal. Before you reach the bridge, however, turn right to take a flight of steps down to the towpath, and turn left to pass beneath the road.

If you have arrived from Uxbridge or Denham, pass to the right of a gate on the left-hand side of Moorhall Road at the bus stop to reach the towpath, and turn left.

You are following the Colne Valley Trail, Grand Union Canal Walk and London Loop, and also the Coal Tax Circuit.

Pass the lock with the water on your right and continue ahead, with an access road to industrial premises running parallel to the canal behind the trees on your left. Beyond the houses of Peerless Drive across the canal, pass beneath a bridge, which is now disused but formerly carried Broadwater Lane from

*Widewater Lock  
from Moorhall Road*





*Broadwater Lane Bridge,  
with rope-eroded iron*

Church Hill onto the wilds of Harefield Moor in the days before extensive gravel extraction in the Colne valley created the lakes we see today.

Peerless Drive is laid out on the former site of Peerless Fence, a manufacturer of chain-link fencing. The houses were built in 1983.

At the bridge, you will see a prime example of the effect of years of tow-rope friction. The horses pulling the barges had to follow the towpath, and where the canal narrowed at a bridge, the ropes rubbed against the bridge, eroding the stonework or brickwork. The canal company duly put the iron stanchions in place to stop the erosion of the stone but, albeit more slowly than before, the ropes bit into the iron, leaving the deep grooves we see today.

Continue along the towpath for a further 1.1km. The land on your right was in the past a lime quarry, the entrance (without public access) to which may still be seen on Church Hill opposite the church access road. You will now reach the next bridge, passing beneath the road and rising to Jack's Lock, which boasted alongside a flour mill powered by the River Colne.

At the bridge, the Colne Valley Trail heads off across the canal, where it meets the Hillingdon Trail.

About 350m beyond the lock, there is an elegant weir on your left, regulating the water level of the canal and returning the excess into the River Colne — this is known as Horse Shoe Bay. Beyond the weir, the path rises to cross a side-arm, then passes some buildings. Rise to meet Coppermill Lane at the traffic lights.

*Weir north of Jack's Lock —  
Horse Shoe Bay*



From this point, the Grand Union Canal keeps going all the way to Birmingham (and indeed, you may follow canals all the way to Leeds and Lancaster), but local walkers will generally be relieved that our route turns right and follows Coppermill Lane across to the eastern side of the canal.

The mill began production of copper in 1803, having been converted from an existing paper mill, but the metal production lasted for no more



than sixty years, when the mill reverted to turning out sheets of paper.

There has been milling on the River Colne in Harefield since the eleventh century: these were grain mills until paper milling came along during the 1670s. There is a full account of the history of milling in and around Harefield on the *British History Online* website; the relevant URL is <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/middx/vol3/p247>

Be particularly careful as you cross the bridge. The road is only one car wide, and there is no recognised footway. Keep to the right and watch the traffic carefully. Groups should cross in twos or threes, and re-group beyond the traffic lights at the far end of the bridge.

Cross over the entrance to Salamander Quay and make your way up the right-hand footway of Park Lane. Cross over the end of Jack's Lane and pass the end of Barrington Drive on your left. Cross to the left-hand footway of Park Lane and continue uphill to reach the turning circle and bus stop for the U9 service.

There is a bench which you may find useful if your arrival does not coincide with that of the bus (the standard service frequency is every twenty minutes, though the Sunday service is only hourly). The Green is 1km ahead with a further 35m of ascent.

*The bus turning circle at Harefield West. on a day not conducive to sitting around waiting for a U9 to appear*







# The Green to Moorhall Road via Jack's Lock

Distance	3.5km
Stiles	On descent to the canal
Gates, etc.	Kissing-gates on descent to the canal
Wheels	Unsuitable
Gradient	Descent from Merle Avenue
Mud, etc.	Fieldpaths from Merle Avenue to the canal; the towpath may be muddy after rain or frost-thaw
Start	Globe on the Green — bus stops at The Green and Merle Avenue (331), and at Merle Avenue, Harefield Library, and New Park Road (U9)
Finish	Moorhall Road — bus stops at Truesdale Drive and Broadwater Lock (331), and at The Furrows (U9)
Breakpoints	None
Map	<a href="https://explore.osmaps.com/route/23584540/">https://explore.osmaps.com/route/23584540/</a>

## Introduction

This route follows High Street from the Globe on the Green, then takes Merle Avenue to its end. It descends to Jack's Lock, then follows the canal towpath southwards to Moorhall Road.

Mud may be expected beyond Merle Avenue in the fields and on the canal towpath except during a prolonged dry spell.

## Route

Start at the Globe on the Green, which celebrates the links between Harefield and Australia, and use two pedestrian crossings to reach the right-hand footway of High Street, crossing Rickmansworth Road and Park Lane in the process.

Walk past the shops until you reach the entrance to the junior school on your right.

The shops and cafés in the centre of the village are adjacent, so there is the possibility of some refreshment after your walk.

On the 1916 edition of the map, the junior school shows up in its present position, the school having moved from a building on High Street (where the church hall is now). On the other side of High Street, opposite the school entrance, stands the Grade II listed

*Where once the school stood,  
there is a simple hall: on the  
right, the old dairy*



eighteenth-century Harefield House, now converted into a block of flats.

Continue along the right-hand footway of High Street, passing some more shops, and turn right onto Merle Avenue. Follow the right-hand footway for the full length of the street to its end, where turn half-right onto a path which slips between 46 and 48 Merle Avenue.

Keep a line of trees on your right and follow the path ahead to reach a path junction, where the Hillingdon Trail joins from the left. Continue downhill ahead for 220m, keeping a fence on your right, and turn right to cross a stile into the next field. Descend the field by the path ahead to reach a stile and kissing-gate (you have a choice). Pass through and follow the lane ahead to a T-junction, with one lane continuing ahead and another one turning to your left.

At the junction, the Colne Valley Trail joins this route, coming along the lane ahead.

Turn left to follow the lane over the canal and arrive at Jack's Lock. Turn right to descend to the towpath of the Grand Union Canal.

The building on your left is Jack's Mill, a former flour mill. At this point, the London Loop and the Grand Union Canal Walk follow the towpath to the north, while these two and the Colne Valley Trail follows our route southbound along the towpath, as does the Coal Tax Circuit.

*Broadwater Lane Bridge,  
with rope-eroded iron*



Turn sharp right to follow the canal towpath beneath the bridge, with the water on your left. Continue along the towpath for a further 1.1km. The land on your left was in the past a lime quarry, the entrance to which may still be seen on Church Hill opposite the church access road. You will now reach the next bridge, which formerly carried Broadwater Lane across the canal to reach Harefield Moor, which has disappeared into the lakes formed by extensive gravel extraction.

At the bridge, you will see a prime example of the effect of years of tow-rope friction. The horses pulling the barges had to follow the towpath, and where the canal narrowed at a bridge, the ropes rubbed against the bridge, eroding the stonework or brickwork. The canal company duly put the iron stanchions in place to stop the erosion of the stone but, albeit more slowly than before, the ropes bit into the iron, leaving the deep grooves we see today.

Once you have passed beyond the bridge, continue along the towpath. On the far side of



the canal, you will see first some allotment gardens and then the houses of Peerless Drive.

Peerless Drive is laid out on the former site of Peerless Fence, a manufacturer of chain-link fencing. The houses were built in 1983.

Continue past Widewater Lock and, just before you reach the road bridge, turn right. If you are making for Moorhall recreation ground or the shops at the top of Moorhall Road, turn left up a flight of steps and turn left, otherwise continue out past a gate to reach Moorhall Road at a bus stop.

The stop on your right is served by the 331 route towards the centre of the village.

There is a pub on the other side of the road.

*Widewater Lock and  
Moorhall Road*







# Grand Union Canal Walk: Moorhall Road to Uxbridge

Distance	5.0km
Stiles	None
Gates, etc.	None
Wheels	Suitable in dry weather only
Gradient	none
Mud, etc.	Towpath after rain or frost/snowmelt.
Start	Moorhall Road — bus stops at Truesdale Drive and Broadwater Lock (331), and at The Furrows (U9)
Finish	Uxbridge station — bus stop on 331 and U9 routes
Breakpoints	None
Map	<a href="https://explore.osmaps.com/route/23592893/">https://explore.osmaps.com/route/23592893/</a>

## Introduction

This is a simple walk along the towpath from Moorhall Road to Oxford Road, then by High Street to Uxbridge station, passing close to the Colne Valley Regional Park's visitor centre.

Mud may be expected on the towpath except during a prolonged dry spell.

*Colne Valley Viaduct*

## Route

### Moorhall Road to Denham Lock 2.5km

From the bus stop called *Grand Union Canal / Broadwater Lock* (even though the lock is called Widewater Lock), make your way back along Moorhall Road towards the canal, passing the pub. Just before you reach the bridge, turn right to take a flight of steps down to the towpath, and turn right.

If you have arrived from Uxbridge or Denham, pass to the right of a gate on the left-hand side of Moorhall Road at the bus stop to reach the towpath, and turn right to pass beneath the road.

It should be no surprise that you are following the Grand Union Canal Walk.

The way ahead is obvious: keep the canal on your left. Pass beneath the new Colne Valley Viaduct, then continue ahead to pass beneath





*Denham Lock*

the Chiltern railway line, which uses a much older viaduct.

There were proposals during the 1930s to extend the Central Line from West Ruislip to Denham, but the Second World War intervened before any work could be started. After the war, the project was shelved quietly. It would have been a major undertaking at great cost to widen or to duplicate the viaduct.

Continue ahead along the towpath, passing a bridge (where the London Loop and the Colne Valley Trail cross the canal to continue on our route) to reach Denham Lock

Denham Lock is the deepest lock (3.37m) on the Grand Union Canal. Just above the lock, the Frays River (a tributary of the River Colne, cut in the eighteenth century to ensure power to the mills in Uxbridge) passes beneath the canal.

There is a part-time café at the lock, and just beyond, a path leads off to the right into Colne Valley Regional Park, where there is a simple café and somewhat penitential toilets in the Visitor Centre, 600m distant from the canal.

The Colne Valley Regional Park was established in 1967, and covers the corridor along the river between Rickmansworth and what we now ought to refer to as Staines-upon-Thames.

The valley is the first real countryside area to the west of London, and its conservation is important for the local residents. The area has been subjected to much gravel extraction, and the resulting waterscapes form an important aspect of the character of the Park. The building of the M25 (completed in 1986) intensified the need for considerate conservation of the area of the Park, and a thorough review was commissioned for the Park's fiftieth birthday.

*A40 crossing*



The Colne Valley Trail/Way (the designation changes part-way along) traverses the Park from Rickmansworth to the river's end at Staines-upon-Thames.

## **Denham Lock to Uxbridge station 2.5km**

Continue ahead along the towpath (turning right if you



are coming from the Visitor Centre), with the canal still on your left. The A40 (Western Avenue) begins to loom up ahead, and just before it is reached, the towpath moves to the other side of the canal using a crossover bridge. Turn to the right to keep to the towpath, ignoring a path which continues ahead from the descent off the bridge.

Pass beneath the busy and very noisy road, and continue along the towpath as the canal approaches Uxbridge and New Denham, the latter being really part of the Uxbridge conurbation, but is administratively in Buckinghamshire.

A little way beyond the A40, a branch of the River Colne enters the canal from the other side, the water diverted at a weir to the west. This gives the waterflow some force.

About 700m from the A40 crossing, you will see the need for this flow, as a channel breaks off to the right. This channel powered the King's Mill: there was a mill on this site since Saxon times (the channel clearly predates the canal, which borrowed the route), and it gave its name to a popular brand of bread. The area has now been converted to housing — it is to be regretted that the new buildings are of negligible architectural interest.

Continue along the towpath to another crossover bridge, beyond which there is a large pub car park (for the Swan and Bottle Inn, which was formed by the merger of two adjacent

*Above right — approach to Uxbridge Lock Bridge*

*Right — Swan and Bottle Inn*



*Willowbank in early morning spring sunshine*







*Looking north along the canal from Oxford Road*

pubs — guess their names!) adjacent to the towpath.

As well as canal trade, these pubs would have enjoyed trade from the main road between Oxford and London, which ran here until the opening of Western Avenue in 1943.

At this point, you will leave the four named routes, though you will follow the signposts of the London Loop Link Route to Uxbridge station.

Leave the towpath and walk through the car park to reach Oxford Road. Turn left to cross the canal, and follow the

left-hand footway to reach and cross Sanderson Road using the three light-controlled pedestrian crossings.

During the Civil War: there was an abortive attempt to end the hostilities by concluding a treaty at Uxbridge — the Crown and Treaty pub opposite the end of Sanderson Road is said to be the location. As we now know, the talks failed, and King Charles galloped off through Uxbridge and Hillingdon.

Continue ahead onto the left-hand footway of High Street and cross the River Frays. Across the street is the rather forbiddin g brick structure of Fountains Mill.

Fountains Mill was one of many mills on the Frays River, which was dug as a distributary of the River Colne with the precise aim of powering mills in and around Uxbridge. The Frays River flows out of the River Colne to pass beneath the canal immediately to

*Fountains Mill*



the north of Denham Lock, and rejoins its parent river just to the north-east of the M4/M25 junction. Fountains Mill served for a time as a youth centre, but that purpose has now ended. The building was declared surplus to borough requirements in 2024.

From the River Frays, rise on the left-hand footway of High Street to reach the junction with Harefield Road, with the magistrates' court on your left. Cross the road using the pedestrian crossing and

continue along High Street to the junction with Belmont Road. Use the light-controlled pedestrian crossing to reach the pedestrianised part of High Street and continue ahead to reach the forecourt of Uxbridge station. Enter the station and, just in front of the ticketing gates, exit on your left to reach Uxbridge bus station, conveniently just at the stop for the 331 and U9 services.

Uxbridge was an important stage post on the coach road to Oxford (which became the original line of the A40 when road numbering was instituted in 1921): the evidence is still present in the many (former) stable yards along the street, and in the Three Tuns, a coaching inn which has survived almost unchanged since the sixteenth century (it is listed Grade II). The market hall opposite the station dates from 1789 — there is no market there today, although there are a few stalls in the “square” within the Pavilions mall, plus a few which encroach upon the pedestrianised area of High Street. The area between the Tube station and Belmont Road is often filled with travelling markets.

The current station is Uxbridge’s second Tube terminus: opened in 1938, it replaced a station on Belmont Road, on the site where the large supermarket now stands. The station’s airy, high-vaulted concourse was designed to echo the station at Cockfosters, at the other end of the extended Piccadilly Line (which had taken over District Line services from Acton Town). The station is listed Grade II.

The overall station design is by Charles Holden (1875-1960). It takes its place in the long list of his London Underground commissions. Most of his station buildings may be seen in the 1930s extensions of the Piccadilly Line and the Northern Line.

Holden was born in Bolton, and his early work included local commissions from William Hesketh Lever (later ennobled as Lord Leverhulme) for Port Sunlight, his Merseyside company village on the Wirral. He was responsible for important works in Bristol too, but his best-known work is in London.

Apart from stations, he designed the block (built on top

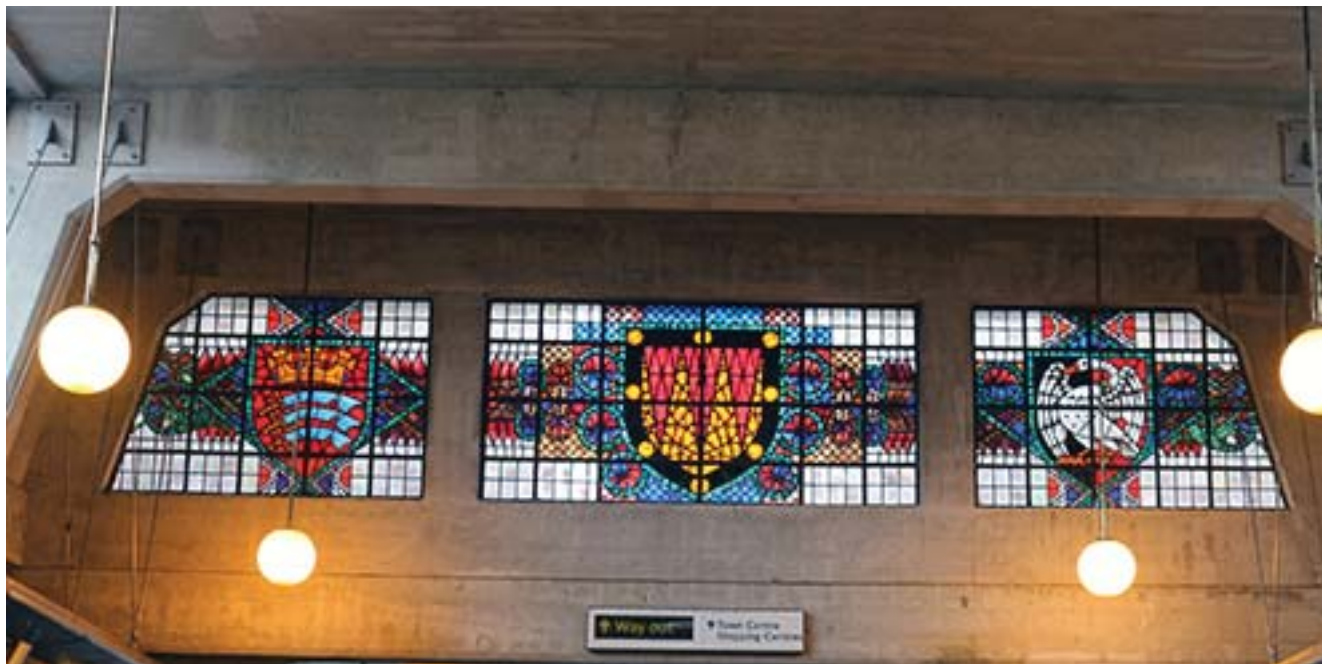


*Uxbridge Market Hall*



*Uxbridge station forecourt*





*Bossányi stained glass,  
Uxbridge station*

of St James's Park station) at 55 Broadway for London Transport; he was also in charge of the design brief for the Senate House and library (often known fondly as the London Lubyanka) of the University of London in Bloomsbury.

The pair of "winged wheel" sculptures above the entrance are by Joseph Armitage (1880-1945). The semi-circular forecourt allowed the building to incorporate a turning circle for the trolleybuses which ran the line between Shepherd's Bush and Uxbridge. The route number was retained by the buses until 2023, when it was changed to SL8, as part of the Superloop branding, even though the route does not form part of the orbital Superloop.

The stained glass windows, seen when exiting the station onto High Street, are by Ervin Bossányi, an Austro-Hungarian emigré (via Germany): the designs incorporate the heraldry of Buckinghamshire (the swan), and of the pair of long-defunct local government entities that were Middlesex County Council and Uxbridge Urban District Council. Bossányi also designed glass found in Canterbury Cathedral, the Tate Gallery, the University of London's Senate House, and in the Woodrow Wilson Memorial Chapel of the National Cathedral in Washington DC.



# Batchworth Heath to the Green via Fieldways Farm

Distance	5.5km
Stiles	Throughout
Gates, etc.	None
Wheels	Unsuitable
Gradient	Hills up and down between the Rose and Crown pub and Hill End Road
Mud, etc.	Plentiful in Bishop's Wood; potential to Hill End
Start	Batchworth Heath — bus stops on 331 route
Finish	Globe on the Green — bus stops at The Green and Merle Avenue (331), and at Merle Avenue, Harefield Library, and New Park Road (U9)
Breakpoints	None
Map	<a href="https://explore.osmaps.com/route/23595341/">https://explore.osmaps.com/route/23595341/</a>

## Introduction

From Batchworth Heath, the route goes through Bishop's Wood and Park Wood to reach the Rose and Crown Inn, then follows fieldpaths past Fieldways Farm to Hill End, ending at the Green via Hill End Road and Rickmansworth Road. At 108m above sea level, Batchworth Heath is the highest point of all the Harefield Healthwalks routes.

*Ye Olde Greene Manne,  
Batchworth Heath*

## Route

### Batchworth Heath to Rose and Crown Inn 2.4km

Start from the bus stop (for Northwood-bound buses) on the 331 route and, with your back to Ye Olde Greene Manne pub, take direction from the London Loop waymark just at the traffic bollards a few metres south of the bus stop (that is to say, farther from the pub) This leads you on a path parallel to White Hill. Pass a pylon where the overhead power lines make a turn. About 300m farther on, the path parts company with the power lines, and bears off



to the right. After a further 300m, turn right (north) and follow the path through woodland.

This path is often wet and boggy: lightweight walking boots will be required.

After about 400m of pressing through the woodland, the path comes to a T-junction.

The path to the left will bring you out to Bishop's Wood car park, with the Shrubs Road bus stop along the road to the right.

Turn right with the London Loop and make your way through Park Wood. When you emerge from the woodland, turn left to follow the left-hand edge of the field past a gap in the trees on your left. At the end of the field, cross the stile and bear slightly right, moving away from the edge of the field in a westerly direction.

Follow the path across fields to emerge onto Harefield Road. Cross the road and turn left for a few metres to reach and enter the car park for the Rose and Crown Inn.

The pub opens at 1100 and closes at 2300 (1800 on Sundays), and offers food at lunchtime and in the early evening.

There is a bus stop opposite the pub with occasional services to The Green, but these are too infrequent for normal consideration as a breakpoint.

## **Rose and Crown Inn to The Green**

### **3.1km**

Make your way to the right-hand side of the car park and, to the left of a wooden fence, pass into a field. Follow a refuge path along the right-hand side of two fields.

This refuge path has been provided by the landowner to keep walkers off Harefield Road and away from its attendant dangers.

At the end of the second field, turn left to follow the London Loop,

passing Fieldways Farm on your right. Beyond the farm buildings, cross a stile ahead and descend the right-hand edge of a field to cross a small stream by a footbridge with a step half-way across.

Continue ahead, uphill, along the right-hand edge of two fields, passing between them by means of a stile. At the end of the second field, cross the stile and continue straight ahead into the far right-hand corner of the next field.

*Rose and Crown Inn*





Cross a stile on your right, and turn left onto Plough Lane. Follow the road to its end at Hill End Road.

Turn left and follow the right-hand side of Hill End Road as far as the entrance to the Hill End allotment gardens, where switch to join the left-hand footway.

At this point, the London Loop turns right onto an enclosed path just beyond the allotment gardens, making for the canal (and on to Erith).

Pass the entrance to Taylor's Meadow on the left — this is an area for active recreation owned by Harefield Hospital, the main entrance of which you will soon pass on your right.

The hospital came into being in 1915 when the Billyard-Leake family estate was made available to the Australian government as a hospital for wounded servicemen from Australia and New Zealand, the "No 1 Australian Auxiliary Hospital" treating some fifty thousand patients. Of that number, 112 who died there were buried in the Australian Military Cemetery next to the parish church, as was a female nurse.

After the war, the estate was formally made over to the then Middlesex County Council (which was dissolved in 1965) as a sanatorium. Harefield had the freshest air in the county, and this made the site ideal for the treatment of tuberculosis using the "open-air" principles which were then in fashion.

During the Second World War, the hospital took on more general duties as a centre for the treatment of war casualties from London north of the River Thames. It was here that Sir Alexander Fleming undertook some of his research on the effects of penicillin.

*Looking over the Colne Valley and Rickmansworth from Fieldways Farm*

*Harefield Hospital*





After the war, of course, the hospital was transferred into the National Health Service as a general hospital, but soon began to specialise in chest, lung and heart treatment. Over the succeeding decades, its reputation for innovation was built up, and in 1973, its first heart transplant operation was carried out by the team led by Sir Magdi Yacoub. Innovation continues to this day, the facilities so different from the wooden shacks which were erected on the estate in 1915.

At the end of Hill End Road, turn right to cross the road using the refuge, and follow the right-hand footway of Rickmansworth Road to the roundabout. Use the pedestrian crossing on the left to reach the end of the route at the Globe on the Green.

The shops and cafés in the centre of the village are adjacent, so there is the possibility of some refreshment after your walk.

# The Shrubs to Moorhall Road via Jackets Lane

Distance	5.6km
Stiles	Multiple stiles (and one kissing-gate) between Jackets Lane and Northwood Road, and south from Breakspear House
Gates, etc.	Kissing-gate on Breakspear Road North, and traffic barrier at the end of the route
Wheels	Wholly unsuitable
Gradient	Ascent and descent as far as Northwood Road; ascent then descent from Breakspear House.
Mud, etc.	Possible throughout, except between Northwood Road and Breakspear House
Start	The Shrubs — bus stops at Shrubs Road (331)
Finish	Moorhall Road — bus stops on 331 and U9 routes
Breakpoints	Harefield Academy (331) at 2.5km; Priory Avenue (U9/331) at 4.9km
Map	<a href="https://explore.osmaps.com/route/23594542/">https://explore.osmaps.com/route/23594542/</a>

## Introduction

The route starts at the Shrubs Road bus stop on the 331 route between Harefield and Northwood and takes Jackets Lane from Battlers Wells Farm before following a fieldpath to Northwood Road. It then makes its way through the eastern side of Harefield to Breakspear Road North, and at the entrance to Breakspear House takes a path to the church, before following out past the Australian Military Cemetery to Harvil Road at Priory Avenue. The route is completed by passing through Moorhall recreation ground to Moorhall Road.

This walk should only be attempted by walkers wearing lightweight boots — it is totally unsuitable for wheeled transport. Mud may be expected throughout, except during the section which passes through the village streets between Northwood Road and Breakspear House. The height of a dry summer is the best time to attempt this route.

## Route

### The Shrubs to the Old Workhouse 3.1km

From the Shrubs Road bus stop, cross to the right-hand footway, turn left, and follow the footway round the bend, passing the covered reservoir on your right. If you are arriving from Northwood, just walk back along the footway. Where the road turns left at Battlers

Wells Farm to make for Batchworth Heath (as White Hill), continue ahead onto Jackets Lane.

Jackets Lane may well have its name derived from *jaggers*, itinerant pedlars. Certainly, it forms part of a very old trading route linking the Chess Valley with Harrow and London.

On the left at the junction, Coal Tax Post 56 was erected, but it has been gone for many years, possibly stolen for the value of the scrap iron.

Directly beneath the power lines, just before Jackets Lane swings off to the left, and before the entry to an encampment on the right, turn right to cross a stile (which is situated over standing water most of the time and is therefore likely to be very muddy) and bear left to follow the left-hand edge of two fields, with the encampment on your left. The path crosses a pair of stiles and, on the other side, follows the right-hand side of the field over the summit and down to a side valley.

Pass a pond on your right, then cross two tracks. Continue ahead, rising with woodland (Furzefield) now on your left. At the top, cross through the hedge using a stile to the right of a collapsed gate to continue in the same direction



*Top left — the junction between White Hill (behind) and Jackets Lane (foreground)*

*Above — rising past Furzefield*

*Bottom left — stile at the departure from Jackets Lane*



on the right-hand side of the next field. The path then eases to the right to become an enclosed path, and comes out, over a stile, onto Northwood Road.

On Ordnance Survey maps up to the 1912 edition, the road which is now Northwood Road is named as Tosses Lane.

Turn left to follow the left-hand footway of Northwood Road, crossing over Ash Grove.

The Harefield Academy bus stop (on the 331 route) offers a stopping-point.

Continue along the left-hand footway of Northwood Road, then cross over the other end of Ash Grove. Turn left and follow the right-hand footway of Ash Grove to the junction with Gilbert Road, where turn right.

There is a convenience shop on the left-hand side of Gilbert Road.

Follow the right-hand footway of Gilbert Road to its end at Breakspear Road North. Turn right to follow the right-hand footway of Breakspear Road North for a few metres: the three-storey building on the right was in former days the Harefield Workhouse.

The workhouse building appears to date from the beginning of the eighteenth century (though it may have become a workhouse later in that century), and is listed Grade II. It ceased to function as a workhouse in 1839, with the inmates being transferred to the Uxbridge Workhouse, on the site where Hillingdon Hospital now stands.

The Green is 400m ahead, via the right-hand footway of Breakspear Road North.

## **The Old Workhouse to Moorhall Road 2.5km**

Turn around to return along Breakspear Road North following the left-hand footway, crossing over the end of Gilbert Road. At the entrance (on the left) to Knightcote Farm), cross the road to continue on the right-hand footway.

Just before you would reach the entrance (on the right) to Breakspear House, turn right and pass through a metal kissing-gate. Follow the right-hand edge of a field before crossing into the next



*Old Workhouse,  
Breakspear Road North*



*Stile at the point of joining the Hillingdon Trail, looking towards Breakspear House*

*The Southern Cross flies from the church tower on ANZAC Day*



field ahead by a stile to join the northbound Hillingdon Trail (here pointing westwards).

Turn right and follow the Hillingdon Trail (here named as *Breakspear Path* on old Ordnance Survey maps — it was clearly a churching path from Breakspear House. The path bends left to descend through woodland to the church. Turn left to pass the gateway of the Australian Military Cemetery, with the obelisk of the Australian war memorial surrounded by the graves. The church is listed Grade I, while the cemetery gateway and the war memorial are each listed Grade II.

The cemetery contains the graves of over a hundred soldiers and other war workers, including a nurse, who died in the Australian military hospital which was given to the forces during the Great War. That hospital became the Harefield Hospital we know today. The scroll

design of the headstones is unique among military graves of the Great War, and was designed by staff and patients at the hospital.

The cemetery is the site of a most poignant commemoration on Anzac Day (25 April), when children from the junior school lay posies on each grave in the presence of military and political dignitaries from Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom.

In the main body of the churchyard, there are the graves of two of Harefield's three recipients of the Victoria Cross. Brevet Major (later Lieutenant-General) Gerald Goodlake was awarded the VC during the Inkerman campaign of the Crimean War, and Private (later Sergeant) Robert Edward Ryder's award came at Thiepval on the Somme in 1916 during the Great War.

Private Cecil John Kinross VC was born in Harefield but emigrated with his family to Alberta and is buried there: his award was gained in 1918 at Passchendaele during the Great War.

Beyond the cemetery, the road surface becomes rougher, and gives out entirely at the gate to Church Gardens, just beyond the site of Harefield Place. At this point, turn right to follow an unmade path which, despite the deterrent notices which sometimes appear, is indeed a public footpath. This leads out onto Harvil Road opposite Priory Avenue.

The bus stops here offer a break-point, albeit very close to the end of the route: the stop for



the centre of the village is on the opposite side of the road.

Turn right to pass the Uxbridge-bound bus stop, then cross the road using the refuge. Turn left to reach the end of Priory Avenue, with the Harefield-bound bus stop ahead. Turn right to take the right-hand footway of Priory Avenue, downhill. At the junction with Priory Gardens, turn left and cross Priory Avenue.

Take the access road to the community centre in front of you. Do not go through the gate into the centre, but take the path on its right which runs alongside the centre's car park, then passes tennis courts on the left. This leads to the corner of Moorhall recreation ground at the third of three side-paths which run between the houses of Peerless Drive on the right, and just beyond a diagonal barrier squeeze-point.

Peerless Drive is laid out on the former site of Peerless Fence, a manufacturer of chain-link fencing. The houses were built in 1983.

Turn left along a tarmac path to keep a children's playground on your left and follow the path as it bends round to the right. As you approach Moorhall Road, you will cross the site of Moorhall Farm, with the site of Moorhall Chapel in the middle of the grassy area on your right.

By 1333, the Knights Hospitallers (in full, the Order of Knights of the Hospital of Saint John of Jerusalem) had established a cell on Harefield Moor, probably no more than a tiny chapel and some farm buildings. The farm was destroyed by fire in 1922 and the chapel fell into disrepair.

The chapel was refurbished as a Sunday School in 1926, but by the late 1940s was once again derelict. Despite a campaign (which rose to the level of questions being asked in Parliament) to save one of only three surviving chapels in England which had been set up by the Knights Hospitallers, Uxbridge council demolished the building in 1960. During the drought of August 2022, the outline of the chapel became visible as a yellower crop-mark in the grass.

The Knights Hospitallers have come down to us today, mainly known for the St John Ambulance Service, which



*Australian  
Military Cemetery*



*Path between Church  
Gardens and Harvil Road*





*Chapel crop-mark,  
Moorhall recreation ground*

volunteers first aid and other services at many events.

Continue out to Moorhall Road and turn left onto the left-hand footway. Cross the end of Truesdale Drive to reach the bus stop for the 331 service towards the centre of Harefield (and on to Northwood and Ruislip). This point marks the conclusion of this route.

There are shops over to your right, taking the corner, and there is a bus stop on the U9

route on Harvil Road beyond the shops.

# Moorhall Road to Ducks Hill Road via The Green

Distance	5.8km
Stiles	None
Gates, etc.	Traffic barrier at Peerless Drive
Wheels	Suitable
Gradient	Steady climb throughout as far as The Shrubs, then dip and climb to Ducks Hill Road
Mud, etc.	None through the village as far as Battlers Wells: possible thereafter
Start	Moorhall Road — bus stops at Truesdale Drive (331), and at The Furrows (U9)
Finish	Ducks Hill Road at Jackets Lane bus stop (331)
Breakpoints	All bus stops between St Mary's Road and Shrubs Road on the 331 service; all bus stops between St Mary's Road and Merle Avenue on the U9 service
Map	<a href="https://explore.osmaps.com/route/23713244/">https://explore.osmaps.com/route/23713244/</a>

## Introduction

The route starts at the Truesdale Drive bus stop on the 331 route between Harefield and Denham. It passes through Moorhall recreation ground and reaches The Green by Priory Gardens, St Mary's Road and Church Hill. From The Green, it reaches Northwood Road via Rickmansworth Road and Newdigate Road. The route then follows Northwood Road is taken to Battlers Wells past the Shrubs Road bus stop on the 331 route between Northwood and Harefield. Finally, Jackets Lane is taken to Ducks Hill Road at the 331 bus stop (Northwood-bound).

## Route

### Moorhall Road to The Green 2.2km

If you have arrived on the U9 bus, turn left at the mini-roundabout and walk down the left-hand footway until you reach Moorhall recreation ground on the right.

Follow the path along the right-hand edge of the recreation ground, with the site of Moorhall Chapel in the middle of the grassy area on your left.

By 1333, the Knights Hospitallers (in full, the Order of Knights of the Hospital of Saint John of Jerusalem) had established a cell on Harefield Moor, probably no more than a tiny chapel and some





*Crop-mark indicating the site of Moorhall Chapel, on the recreation ground*

*Path between Moorhall recreation ground and Priory Avenue*



farm buildings. The farm was destroyed by fire in 1922 and the chapel fell into disrepair.

The chapel was refurbished as a Sunday School in 1926, but by the late 1940s was once again derelict. Despite a campaign (which rose to the level of questions being asked in Parliament) to save one of only three surviving chapels in England which had been set up by the Knights Hospitallers, Uxbridge council demolished

the building in 1960. During the drought of August 2022, the outline of the chapel became visible as a yellower crop-mark in the grass.

The Knights Hospitallers have come down to us today, mainly known for the St John Ambulance Service, which volunteers first aid and other services at many events.

Pass a play area on your right, then turn right to pass through the traffic barrier onto an enclosed path, with the houses of Peerless Drive on your left and tennis courts on your right.

Peerless Drive is laid out on the former site of Peerless Fence, a manufacturer of chain-link fencing. The houses were built in 1983.

At the end of the path, having passed the community centre on your right, advance to Priory Avenue and then, with a quick right-and-left double turn, follow the left-hand footway of Priory Gardens to its end. Continue ahead on a footpath to reach Broadwater Gardens, and follow its right-hand footpath as far as the junction with Broadwater Lane.

Turn right and follow the right-hand footway almost to the junction with Church Hill, then turn left to cross Broadwater Lane and follow the left-hand footway of the service road to its end, easing to the right to reach Church Hill, meanwhile passing the St Mary's Road bus stops (331 and U9 services) on your right. Turn left to follow the left-hand footway of Church Hill uphill.

Immediately on the left, next to the last house in the block, there is access (but without legal public access) to an area of former chalk workings, a small part of which forms a Site of Special Scientific Interest for the geological remains.



Continue up the hill to reach the Countess of Derby's Almshouses on the right.

The establishment of these almshouses "for six poor women of the parish" was laid out in the terms of the will of Alice, Countess of Derby after she died in 1637. She was Lady of the Manor at Harefield Place, which was situated just to the south of the church. The almshouses are listed Grade II\*.

Beyond the almshouses, you will pass on your left a fine old building, dated 1523, painted white.

For over 300 years, this building was the White Horse Inn, and on one occasion the inn even hosted a murder trial, and the cool cellars served, from time to time, as a morgue. The pub closed for business in 2010 and the building was sold: it has now been converted into two dwellings. The frame of the pub sign remains as a ghostly reminder of the house's former life. The building is listed Grade II.

Continue ahead along the left-hand footway of Church Hill to reach and cross Countess Close.

The area on the left immediately before you reach Countess Close was for many years occupied by the vicarage, which had moved from its previous location off High Street, just to the south of where the junior school is today, during the inter-war period.

Across the road, opposite Countess Close, stands Manor Court, previously Conduit Farm.

Continue uphill on the left-hand footway as far as Bird Lane on the left.

*Top — entrance to site of chalk pits*

*Middle — Countess of Derby's almshouses*

*Bottom — the building formerly occupied by the White Horse Inn*







*Top — Manor Court*

*Above — Bird Lane*

Immediately before you reach Bird Lane, there is a group of houses on the right (130 to 136 and 140 High Street) which are timber-framed and date from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. These houses (but not the newer 138 High Street) are listed Grade II.

At Bird Lane, the road flattens out and Church Hill becomes High Street. Pass Dovedale Close on your left, and continue ahead to the junction with Merle Avenue.

There are bus stops on both the U9 and 331 routes at Dovedale Close and Merle Avenue.

Over on your left, the building which is right by the roadside (at 65 and 67 High Street) is listed Grade II.

Cross Merle Avenue, and continue past the shops to the roundabout at the end of High Street.

On your right, the church hall has been built on the site formerly occupied by the primary school: the building on its right was once the village dairy.

Cross Park Lane on your left by the pedestrian crossing, then turn right to cross Rickmansworth Road by its pedestrian crossing, to reach the Globe on the Green.

The shops and cafés in the centre of the village are adjacent, so there is the possibility of some refreshment after your walk.

There are bus stops at The Green for the 331 service. For the U9 service towards Uxbridge, the bus stop is just beyond the green, ahead on Rickmansworth Road.



## The Green to The Shrubs

### 2.1km

Turn left to follow the right-hand footway of Rickmansworth Road, with the Green (and its fitness equipment) on your right, Cross over the end of Vernon Drive, and pass the U9 bus stop. Cross over the end of New Park Road, and continue to the junction with Newdigate Road. Turn right and follow the right-hand footway to the point where the road swings round to the left. Do not take the bend, but continue ahead on an enclosed tarmac path which will bring you out onto Northwood Road at the corner of Northwood Way.

Turn left to follow the left-hand footway of Northwood Road as far as the school, where cross the road using the pedestrian crossing.

There is a bus stop at the school, and three further stops (all on the 331 service) *en route* to Shrubs Road.

Turn left to follow the right-hand footway of Northwood Road to reach the driveway of Shepherds Hill House on the right.

Shepherds Hill House was built in 1790, and was a family home until the 1930s. After the Second World War, it became a home for nurses working at Harefield Hospital. Later, it reverted to a private residence (with, we are told, the first car in the village). In 1986, the house became a residential field studies centre for primary schoolchildren from inner London. It is now a children's nursery.

Continue uphill on the right-hand footway of Northwood Road, passing houses on the right. At the top of the hill, pass an equestrian centre on the right and continue to The Shrubs, at the junction with Shrubs Road. The boundary between Hillingdon and Hertfordshire passes behind the houses of The Shrubs.

There are bus stops at this point on the 331 route: the stop for Harefield is on the right-hand side of the road as you approach the junction.

## The Shrubs to Ducks Hill Road

### 1.5km

From the Shrubs Road bus stop, set off through the junction and round to the right, following the right-hand footway, passing the houses of The Shrubs on your left and the covered reservoir on your right. Where the road turns left at Battlers Wells Farm to make for Batchworth Heath (becoming White Hill in the process), continue ahead onto Jackets Lane.

Jackets Lane may well be derived from *jaggers*, itinerant pedlars. Certainly, it forms part of a very old route linking the Chess Valley with Harrow and London.

On the left at the junction, Coal Tax Post 56 used to stand, but it has been gone for many years, possibly stolen for the value of the scrap iron.



*End of Jackets Lane  
at Ducks Hill Road*

Directly beneath the power lines, just before Jackets Lane swings off to the left, and before the entry to an encampment on the right, you will see a footpath which leads off to the right across a stile. Beyond the encampment entry, a second footpath continues ahead while Jackets Lane bends to the left.

This second footpath, across fields, provides an alternative route which cuts less than 200m off the total distance, but is not particularly recommended: it will take more energy and brings a greater chance of mud.

Take the left-hand bend and follow Jackets Lane through two well-defined right-hand bends, then ascend the lane. Just at the point where the lane begins to trend leftwards, the "short-cut" footpath comes in from the right. Continue ahead, passing a traffic-barring bollard, to reach some houses, and follow the lane out to its end at the junction with Ducks Hill Road.

The bus stop for Harefield (331) is just to your left.

*The junction between  
White Hill (behind) and  
Jackets Lane (foreground)*





# London Loop: Moorhall Road to Batchworth Heath

Distance	8.9km
Stiles	North of Hill End Road
Gates, etc.	Gate by-pass on north side of Moorhall Road; barrier at Hill End Road
Wheels	Unsuitable
Gradient	Steep ascent from Bellevue Terrace
Mud, etc.	Potential throughout; assured between the Rose and Crown pub and Batchworth Heath
Start	Moorhall Road — bus stops at Truesdale Drive and Broadwater Lock (331), and at The Furrows (U9)
Finish	Batchworth Heath — bus stops on 331 route
Breakpoint	Harefield West (U9) at 3.0km
Map	<a href="https://explore.osmaps.com/route/23627565/">https://explore.osmaps.com/route/23627565/</a>

## Introduction

This route starts with a simple level walk along the towpath, then follows Summerhouse Lane before rising to Hill End. It then reaches Batchworth Heath via Fieldways Farm, the Rose and Crown pub, and Bishop's Wood. At 108m above sea level, Batchworth Heath is the highest point of all the Harefield Healthwalks routes.

Mud may be expected anywhere other than the short road sections, except during a prolonged dry spell, but it is to be expected at any time in Bishop's Wood.

The homepage for the entire London Loop route may be found at <https://tfl.gov.uk/modes/walking/loop-walk/> — the entire distance is 242km, and with very few exceptions, regular public transport is always to hand.

## Route

### Moorhall Road to Summerhouse Lane 3.0km

From the bus stop called *Grand Union Canal / Broadwater Lock* (even though the lock is called Widewater Lock), make your way back along Moorhall Road to the canal. Turn right to take a flight of steps down to the towpath, and turn left to pass beneath the road.

If you have arrived from Uxbridge or Denham, pass to the right of a gate on the left-hand side of Moorhall Road to reach the towpath, and turn left.

You are following the Colne Valley Trail, Grand Union Canal Walk and London Loop, and also the Coal Tax Circuit.



Pass the lock with the water on your right and continue ahead, with an access road to industrial premises running parallel to the canal behind the trees on your left. Beyond the houses of Peerless Drive across the canal, pass beneath a bridge, which is now disused but formerly carried Broadwater Lane onto Harefield Moor before the days of gravel extraction in the Colne valley.

Peerless Drive is laid out on the former site of Peerless Fence, a manufacturer of chain-link fencing. The houses were built in 1983.

At Broadwater Bridge, you will see a prime example of the effect of years of tow-rope friction. The horses pulling the barges had to follow the towpath, and where the canal narrowed at a bridge, the ropes rubbed against the bridge, eroding the stonework or brickwork. The canal company duly put the iron stanchions in place to stop the erosion of the stone but, albeit more slowly than had been happening with the stonework, the ropes bit into the iron, leaving the deep grooves we see today.

Continue along the towpath for a further 1.1km. The land on your right was in the past a

*Top — Widewater Lock (in use), seen from Moorhall Road*

*Above — grooves in the iron from tow-rope erosion, Broadwater Bridge*



chalk pit, the entrance (but not sanctioned for public access) to which may still be seen on Church Hill opposite the church access road. You will continue ahead to reach the next bridge, passing beneath the road and rising to Jack's Lock, which boasted alongside a flour mill fed by the River Colne.

At the bridge, the Colne Valley Trail heads off across the canal, where it meets the Hillingdon Trail.

About 350m beyond the lock, there is an elegant weir (called Horse Shoe Bay) on your left, regulating the water level of the canal and returning the excess into the River Colne. Beyond the weir, the path rises to cross a side-arm, then passes some buildings. Rise to meet Coppermill Lane at the traffic lights.

From here, the canal keeps going all the way to Birmingham (and indeed, you may follow canals all the way to Leeds and Lancaster, but local walkers will generally be relieved that our route turns right and follows Coppermill Lane across to the eastern side of the canal.

The copper mill began production in 1803, having been converted from a paper mill, but it only lasted sixty years, when the mill reverted to being a paper mill.

There has been milling on the River Colne in Harefield since the eleventh century: these were grain mills until paper milling came along during the 1670s. There is a full account of the history of milling in Harefield at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/middx/vol3/p247> on the website of *British History Online*.

Be particularly careful as you cross the canal by the road bridge. The road is only one car wide, and there is no recognised footway.



Top — Jack's Mill  
Above — run-off weir

Keep to the right-hand side of the road, watch the traffic carefully, and do not waste time — cross quickly and purposefully. Groups should cross in twos or threes, and should re-group beyond the traffic lights at the far end of the bridge.

Cross Park Lane and turn left to take the left-hand footway of Summerhouse Lane ahead,

The turning circle for the U9 bus service is less than 200m up the left-hand footway of Park Lane.

## **Summerhouse Lane to Hill End Road**

### **1.3km**

Pass former industrial premises which have been renovated into houses. At the junction with Bellevue Terrace, turn right.

For the length of Summerhouse Lane, the route is joined by the Colne Valley Trail, which now continues ahead.

Turn right to follow the right-hand footway of Bellevue Terrace to the junction with Barrington Drive, then continue ahead on Bellevue Terrace without the benefit of a footway. Pass three blocks of terraced houses on the left, then ease to the left off Bellevue Terrace to take up an enclosed path, initially running parallel to Bellevue Terrace — look out for the London Loop sign for guidance.

The path climbs steadily (and potentially muddily) for about 500m, then levels off as it passes Hill End allotment gardens and reaches Hill End Road.

To the right, the Harefield Hospital terminus of the U9 bus service is 600m distant. The Green is just less than 1km distant from Hill End Road in the same direction.

*Looking back down the path  
towards Bellevue Terrace  
from near Hill End Road*



## **Hill End Road to Rose and Crown Inn**

### **2.1km**

Cross over Hill End Road and turn left to follow the right-hand side of the road, at first with a footway and then without, as far as the junction with Plough Lane on the right. Turn right onto Plough Lane and follow it to its end. Cross a stile (which is situated between a house-gate and a hydrant sign) and turn left to pick up a path which starts with a hedge on the left, but soon continues across a field in a north-north-easterly direction.

Cross a stile and follow the left-hand edge of two fields, descending to a small stream. Cross the stream on a footbridge and climb up the left-hand edge of the next field (now heading east-north-east).





At the top, cross a stile (into Hertfordshire) and continue past Fieldways Farm on your left.

*Fieldways Farm*

Continue past the farm buildings almost as far as Harefield Road, where turn right onto a refuge path which keeps to the left-hand side of two fields (and keeps you off Harefield Road). At the end of this path, you will reach the car park of the Rose and Crown Inn. Bear left to exit the car park.

The pub opens at 1100 and closes at 2300 (1800 on Sundays), and offers food at lunchtime and in the early evening.

There is a bus stop opposite the pub with occasional services to The Green, but these are too infrequent for normal consideration as a breakpoint.

## **Rose and Crown Inn to Batchworth Heath**

### **2.5km**

Cross the road carefully, listening for traffic invisible round the bend on your right, and turn left. After a few metres, turn right onto an unmade path — there is a Public Footpath signpost to help you. Keep ahead on a straight eastbound line across fields until you reach woodland ahead, then bear slightly left to keep the woodland on the right, through a slight bend to the right at a gap in the trees (where a footpath continues ahead). At a London Loop waymark, turn right to enter Park Wood.

*Rose and Crown Inn*

The rest of the route is often a sea of ankle-deep mud, and on the rare occasions when the mud has dried, the surface is very uneven, and just right for the breaking of an ankle unless you are watching each step carefully.

Follow the path through the woodland for about 650m to







*Path between Bishop's Wood and Batchworth Heath*

reach a T-junction, where turn left, still with the Loop.

The path ahead will bring you out to Bishop's Wood car park, with the Shrubs Road bus stop (331) along the road to the right. That route is marginally the drier option.

Follow the path, which is quite sinuous here, until you reach the power lines, where turn left. Follow the path beneath the power lines to pass beneath the next pylon (where the

power lines continue off to the right) and continue ahead out onto Batchworth Heath beside the Northwood-bound bus stop. Advance to the road junction and turn right to cross over the end of White Hill to reach the bus stop for the 331 service to Harefield.

The standard service on the 331 route is every twenty minutes, and half-hourly on Sundays.

Ahead, you will see a chain pub called Ye Olde Greene Manne, which provides food and drink during opening hours, the food from a standard menu (hatched in Birmingham) of the sort found in such establishments.

*Ye Olde Greene Manne Inn, Batchworth Heath*





# Ring around the Underground: West Ruislip to Moorhall Road

Distance	9.2km
Stiles	Yes, in several places
Gates, etc.	Yes, in several places
Wheels	Unsuitable
Gradient	Moderate ascents and descents throughout
Mud, etc.	Potential, pretty much throughout
Start	West Ruislip station — bus stops on U1 and 278 routes, or use Midcroft stop (331) and walk to the route at Clack Lane, adding 0.6km to the distance
Finish	Moorhall Road — bus stops at Truesdale Drive and Broadwater Lock (331), and at The Furrows (U9)
Breakpoints	Ladygate Lane (331) at 1.9km; Reservoir Road (331) at 2.9km; Priory Avenue (U9/331) at 8.6km
Map	<a href="https://explore.osmaps.com/route/23620462/">https://explore.osmaps.com/route/23620462/</a>

## Introduction

This extract from the *Ring around the Underground* route begins at West Ruislip station and ends at the Moorhall recreation ground. The route is mainly rural, with just short lengths of streets.

For a time during the 1930s, West Ruislip looked as if it would lose its terminal status, as plans were laid for the Central Line to be extended to Denham, with an intermediate station at the old bridge on Harvil Road. The Second World War intervened, and the plans were not resuscitated after the end of hostilities. In any case, the widening or doubling of the Colne viaduct would have been extremely expensive. More recently there have been calls for the Central Line to be diverted to end in Uxbridge along current tracks, or (more ambitiously) at Heathrow Terminal 4, with intermediate stops at Ickenham, Hillingdon, Uxbridge St Andrews, Brunel, West Drayton and Heathrow Terminal 5.

HS2 works have brought about changes (improvements, really) to the original line of this route, which now takes in the church and the military cemetery at Harefield. The works themselves are very close to the route at West Ruislip.

The premise of the 342km *Ring around the Underground* route is to link the outer termini of the Tube lines, and makes a point of not crossing the Tube routes which carry the public.

Full details of the complete route are to be found at

<https://lwalks.london/london/personal/tubering/>

where there are links to maps and to the route directions. The route is described clockwise from Upminster, but of course any point may be chosen for the start/finish.

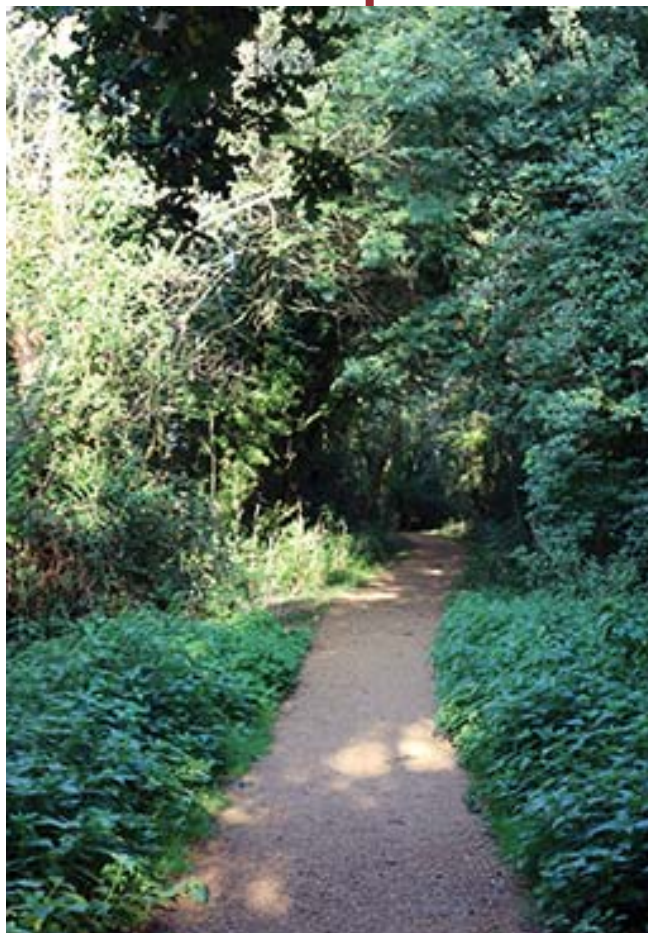


*West Ruislip station*

## Route

### West Ruislip station to Ruislip Lido 3.2km

*Clack Lane*



Cross to the left-hand footway of Ickenham High Road at West Ruislip station using the divided light-controlled pedestrian crossing, and turn right to descend off the bridge. Take the first road — Hill Lane — on the left (just before you would reach a filling station on the right) with the HS2 works immediately on your left. After 85m, the roadway ends. Take the metalled path straight ahead, passing a metal traffic barrier.

This thoroughfare is listed as Clack Lane on the Ordnance Survey map, but also appears as Clacks Lane or Clack's Lane elsewhere). It is an ancient highway, and is rich in flora and fauna.

During the research for this part of the route, a wren kept up a barrage of scolding as I moved through its territory in the hedgerow.

After 150m, Hill Lane goes off to the right, taking the metalled path (and the horses, and the cyclists) with it. Continue ahead to the left of a building on a crushed stone path for 400m, where the path forks. You are by this point



following the original route of the Hillingdon Trail .

Take the right fork (away from the golf course), and after 80m, turn left to cross the River Pinn and enter a long field with an electrical power cable overhead the length of the field. To the left of this long field, there is an enclosed lane — another section of the ancient highway which you have followed as Clack Lane. When the path reaches the hedge on the left,

you will find an exit onto the enclosed lane, where turn right to follow the lane between the hedges.

Here, the diversity of the hedgerow is at its peak. Ash, blackthorn (sloe), hawthorn and wild rose proliferate.

The lane comes out to the end of Tile Kiln Lane, with Old Clack Farm on your right. There is a postbox set into the wall in front of the house.

Continue ahead to cross a stile (still following the Hillingdon Trail) into a field. Bear right to follow the right-hand edge of the field. A few metres beyond a broad plank bridge which leads into the field on the right, turn right onto an enclosed path. At first, there are house-backs on your left, then after a left-hand bend, there are house-backs on both sides. Follow this path out between schools to Ladygate Lane.

Turn left onto Ladygate Lane, crossing to the right-hand footway at the pedestrian crossing. Pass the bowling club on your right, then Westwood Close on your left.

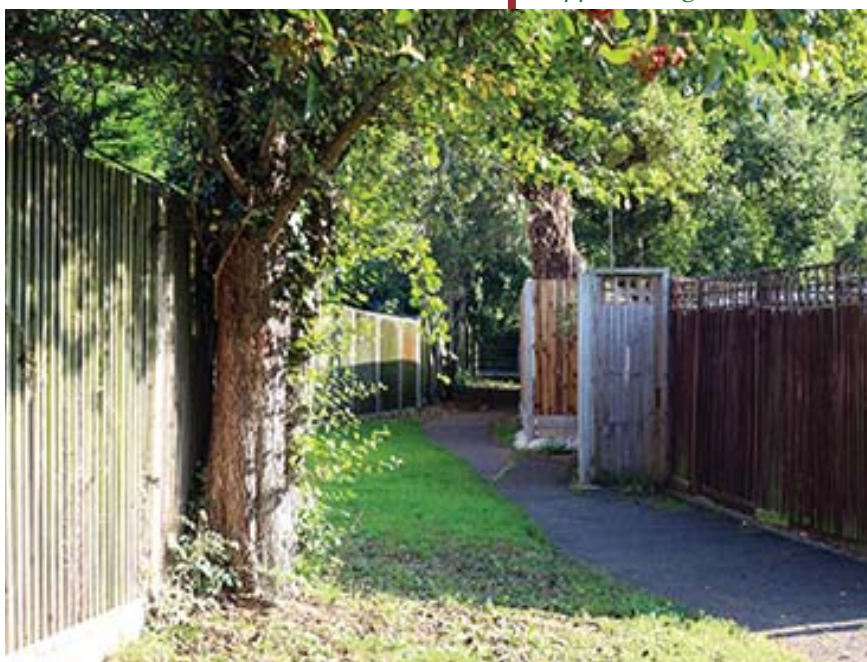
Turn right onto a footpath (R142) and follow it through to Wheelers Drive, then ahead on Wallington Close. At the end of this road, continue on a path to reach and cross Howletts Lane.

Over to the left, there is a small cluster of shops, with a newsagent, convenience shop, and pharmacy.

Continue along the Hillingdon Trail across the green to reach the corner of Breakspear Road and Bury Street at a mini-roundabout.



*River Pinn crossing,  
Clack Lane*



*Approaching Howletts Lane*

The bus stops on Breakspear Road (just on your left at the roundabout) are served by the 331 bus: on the left (next to the green) towards Ruislip, and across the road (at the end of Withy Lane) to Northwood, Harefield and Uxbridge. The bus stop on the far side of Bury Street (to your right) is served by the H13 route to Ruislip. The other stop on Bury Road serves the Lido only.

The filling station on the roundabout has the usual kind of shop found with such businesses.

Keep the filling station, then the fire station, on your left as you begin to ascend Bury Street, and turn right onto Reservoir Road, using the refuge just beyond the junction to reach it and crossing to use the right-hand footway of Reservoir Road. Pass the Ruislip Lido dam on your right, and continue along Reservoir Road to a pub on the right.

As well as the pub (which serves standard chain-pub fare), there are public toilets and the terminus of the H13 bus (for Ruislip) here. At the dam, there is a kiosk, but its hours seem to be variable. There is a miniature railway which goes round the lake to Woody Bay, the sandy beach you may see across the lake (where there is a café and some toilets).

The reservoir was built by John Rennie in 1811 to be a feeder for the Grand Junction (later, the Grand Union) Canal, in part following Uxbridgemillers' unease at the extraction of water from the River Colne. In 1933, the area was developed as a lido, one of many built around that time across the country. Jon Pertwee (a future Dr Who) was a founding member of a water-skiing club which was established at the lido. Like so many others, the lido fell into disrepair as people found warmer options for waterborne activity, but it has recently been revamped by the London Borough of Hillingdon, and is very popular with locals and visitors alike.

*Ruislip Lido, pub and play area seen from the dam (off-route)*





The miniature railway has been running round the lake since 1945. It is the longest such railway of its gauge in the country, and attracts many visitors from near and far.

## **Ruislip Lido to Bayhurst Wood**

### **2.6km**

From the dam wall path, go past the toilets, the pub, and the H13 bus terminus. Pass a mini-roundabout on your left, and use the pedestrian crossing to cross the access road to the public car park. Turn right to pass through a barrier onto an asphalt footpath.

Between this point and Bayhurst Woods, Hillingdon Trail signage is not internally consistent: the brown metal fingerposts, thick square wooden stumps, and orange waymarks do not agree.

Follow the path ahead almost to its summit, where a path goes off at right angles, leftwards.

This area of unimproved heathland is Poor's Field, which has been grazed in common for more than 700 years. There is a seat at the summit ahead, off-route, with a fine view to the north.

The path leads into Copse Wood, one of the parcels which make up the ancient Ruislip Woods. Climb to the summit, and carry on ahead until you reach Ducks Hill Road: the crossing (with controls for pedestrians and equestrians) is a few metres to the left.

Go to the far left-hand corner of the car park opposite, and descend on a path which trends left. On reaching the main track through these woods, turn right, soon passing a simple bench on the left.

Continue along this track through Mad Bess Wood (named after a gamekeeper's wife who considered poachers to be her game of choice) to the fourth main crossing track, where turn left to descend to a small brook at a pipe-bridge. Cross the brook, and rise to emerge onto Breakspear Road North. Cross the road to reach the access road for the car park at Bayhurst Wood.

## **Bayhurst Wood**

### **to Australian military cemetery**

### **2.4km**

Follow the access road upwards, and turn right into the car park. Follow the obvious path from the far end of the car park, keeping just inside the woodland. About 400m from the car park, the Hillingdon Trail joins from the left, and its signpost confirms the way straight ahead.

*Tree in Mad Bess Wood*





*Breakspear Path junction*

Follow the Hillingdon Trail, descending to become a hedged lane, then rising to a path junction where the southern driveway to Breakspear House joins from the left. Do not take the driveway, but cross a stile ahead to continue with the Hillingdon Trail. When you reach the top of the slope, bear right along the ridge, then strike left to reach a path junction at a stile.

Across the stile, the path leads out onto Breakspear Road North.

Turn left again at a path junction to descend past a few lakes to reach the perimeter of Harefield church.

There is a mention of a priest here in the Domesday Book (1086), and the current building was erected in the late eighteenth century. There are fine monuments inside, particularly

that of Alice, Dowager Countess of Derby, whose husband was the victim of a political murder in 1594.

The church has been used for location filming, notably in *The Ruling Class* (1972), with Peter O'Toole, Arthur Lowe, William Mervyn and others.

Turn left to pass the church on the left and advance to the Australian Military Cemetery, also on your left. The church is listed Grade I, while the cemetery gateway and the war memorial are each listed Grade II.

The cemetery contains the graves of over a hundred soldiers and other war workers, including a nurse, who died in the Australian military hospital which was given to the forces during the Great War. That hospital became the Harefield Hospital we know today. The scroll design of the headstones is unique among military graves of the Great War.

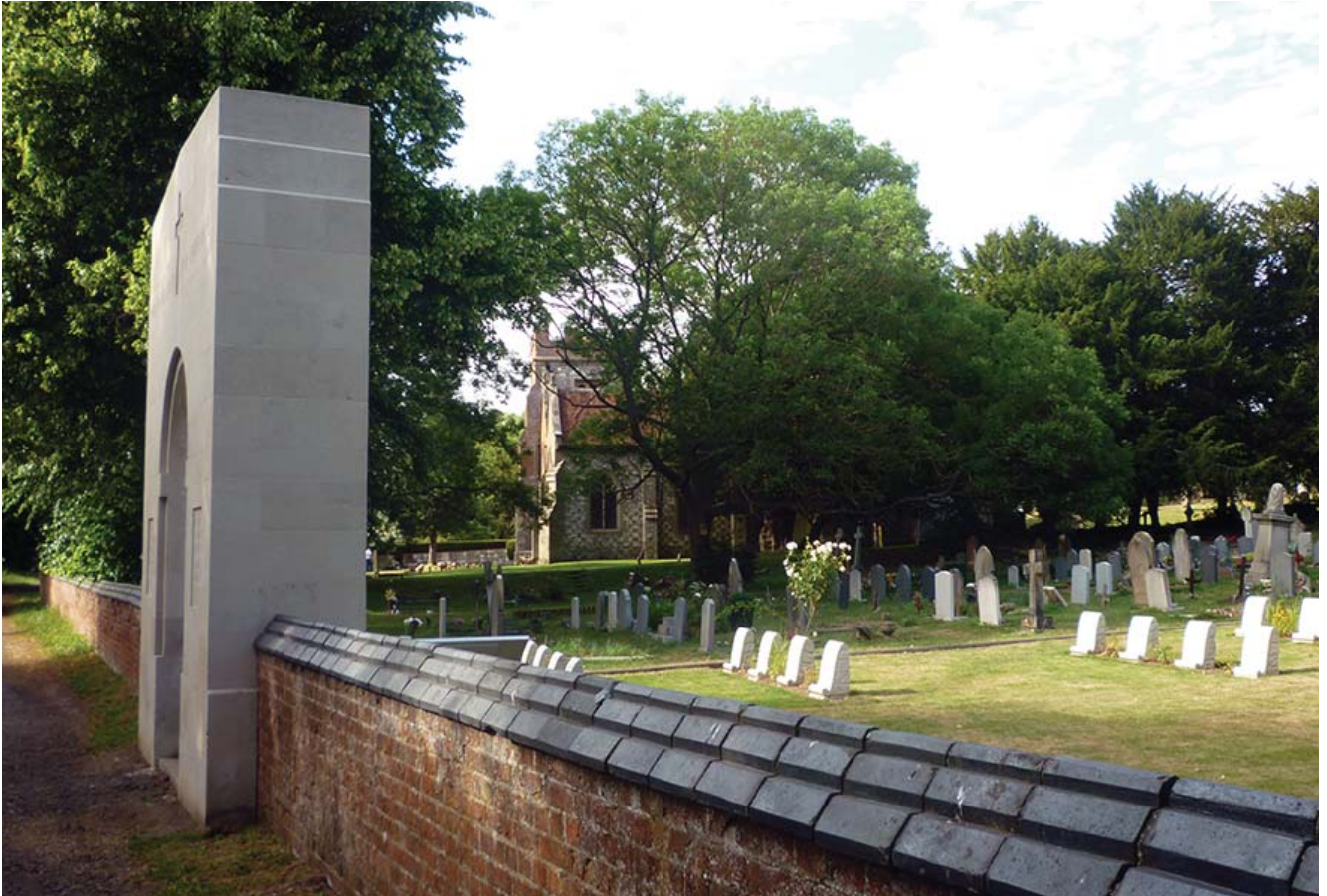
The cemetery is the site of a most poignant commemoration on Anzac Day (25 April), when children from the junior school lay posies on each grave in the presence of military and political dignitaries from Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom.

In the churchyard, there are the graves of two of Harefield's three recipients of the Victoria Cross. Brevet Major (later Lieutenant-General) Gerald Goodlake was awarded the VC during the Inkerman campaign of the Crimean War,

*Harefield church flies the Southern Cross each year on ANZAC Day*







*Australian Military Cemetery and church*

and Private (later Sergeant) Robert Edward Ryder's award came at Thiepval on the Somme in 1916 during the Great War. Private Cecil John Kinross VC was born in Harefield but emigrated with his family to Alberta and is buried there: his award was gained in 1918 at Passchendaele during the Great War.

## **Australian military cemetery to Moorhall Road 1.0km**

Beyond the cemetery, the road surface becomes rougher, and gives out entirely at the gate to Church Gardens, just beyond the site of Harefield Place. At this point, turn right to follow an unmade path which, despite the deterrent notices, is indeed a public footpath. This leads out onto Harvil Road opposite Priory Avenue.

**The bus stops here offer a stopping-point: the stop for the centre of the village is on the opposite side of the road.**

Turn right to pass the Uxbridge-bound bus stop, then cross the road using the refuge. Turn left to reach the end of Priory Avenue, with the Harefield-bound bus stop ahead. Turn right to take the right-hand footway of Priory Avenue, downhill. At the junction with Priory Gardens, turn left, cross Priory Avenue, and take the access road to the community centre in front of you.

Do not go through the gate into the centre, but take the path on its right which runs alongside the centre's car park, and then passes tennis courts on your left. This leads to the corner of Moorhall recreation ground at the third of three side-paths which run between



*Path between Church Gardens and Harvil Road*

the houses of Peerless Drive on the right, and just beyond a diagonal barrier squeeze-point.

Peerless Drive is laid out on the former site of Peerless Fence, a manufacturer of chain-link fencing. The houses were built in 1983.

Turn left along a tarmac path to keep a children's playground on your left and follow the path as it bends round to the right. As you approach Moorhall Road, you will cross the site of

Moorhall Farm, with the site of Moorhall Chapel in the middle of the grassy area on your right.

By 1333, the Knights Hospitallers (in full, the Order of Knights of the Hospital of Saint John of Jerusalem) had established a cell on Harefield Moor, probably no more than a tiny chapel and some farm buildings. The farm was destroyed by fire in 1922 and the chapel fell into disrepair. The chapel was refurbished as a Sunday School in 1926, but by the late 1940s was once again derelict. Despite a campaign (which rose to the level of questions being asked in Parliament) to save one of only three surviving chapels in England which had been set up by the Knights Hospitallers, Uxbridge council demolished the building in 1960. During the drought of August 2022, the outline of the chapel became visible as a yellower crop-mark in the grass.

Continue out to Moorhall Road and turn left onto the left-hand footway. Cross the end of Truesdale Drive to reach the bus stop for the 331 service towards the centre of Harefield (and on to Northwood and Ruislip).

*Crop-mark on Moorhall recreation ground, showing site of Moorhall Chapel*



There are shops over to your right, taking the corner, and there is a bus stop on the U9 route on Harvil Road beyond the shops.



# Hillingdon Trail: Ruislip Lido to Harefield West

Distance	15.2km including the Springwell loop 10.6km without the Springwell loop
Stiles	Throughout
Gates, etc.	Throughout
Wheels	Unsuitable
Gradient	Moderate ascents and descents throughout; steep ascent and descent on the Springwell loop
Mud, etc.	Potential throughout
Start	Ruislip Lido — bus stops at Reservoir Road on Ducks Hill Road (331)
Finish	Harefield West — Bus stop at Shelley Lane (U9)
Breakpoints	Lovett Road (U9/331) at 6.6km; Harefield West (U9) at 10.3km
Map	<a href="https://explore.osmaps.com/route/23629912/">https://explore.osmaps.com/route/23629912/</a>

## Introduction

The Hillingdon Trail is a 31km route (35km counting the distances from the closest bus stops to each end) across the borough between Cranford and Springwell Lock. It is one of the finest borough-level trails (whether transit or boundary-loop) in the country, having a minimal usage of streets along its length, and is managed by the borough council. I heartily recommend following the entire route in stages — <https://www.hillingdon.gov.uk/article/4888/Hillingdon-Trail/> is a good launchpad for maps and guidance.

The most convenient bus stops for the start and finish of the route are Craneswater in Cranford (on the 222 route between Uxbridge and Hounslow) and Harefield West turning circle (on the U9 route between Uxbridge and Harefield Hospital). I recommend walking the Hillingdon Trail northbound — you keep the sun on your back and the hillier sections are left to the end. Some would counsel walking “downhill” southbound, but the total ascent northbound is only 22m more than the southbound total, so there is no real advantage in terms of ease of walking.

This Harefield Healthwalks section of the Hillingdon Trail is accessible at the start via the 331 bus route, and at the end by the U9 bus route. The section of the route to the north of Park Lane forms a loop in order to take in the northern terminus of the Hillingdon Trail, returning more directly (and more easily) via the Grand Union Canal towpath. If you omit this loop, the distance from Ruislip Lido will be 10.3km. The loop from the U9 turning circle includes the climb (of not much short of 50m) to Hill End and the descent back to canal level, and would make a fine walk of just under 5km. Walking that loop in reverse gives a less steep ascent.



*Ruislip Lido, pub and play area seen from the dam (off-route)*

## Route

### **Ruislip Lido to Bayhurst Wood car park 3.3km**

From the Reservoir Road bus stop on the 331 route (coming from Harefield), walk downhill and turn left onto Reservoir Road. Follow the right-hand footway across the ends of Dell Farm Road and Abercorn Grove as far as the path across the dam wall on your right.

It is worth a short detour along the dam wall to view the reservoir. There is a café at the far end, should the complete there-and-back route interest you, and there is a part-time kiosk at the Reservoir Road end of the wall.

The reservoir was built by John Rennie in 1811 to be a feeder for the Grand Junction (later, the Grand Union) Canal. In 1933, the area was developed as a lido, one of many built around that time across the country. Jon Pertwee (Dr Who) was a founding member of a water-skiing club based at the lido. Like so many others, the lido fell into disrepair as people found warmer options for waterborne activity, but it has recently been revamped by the London Borough of Hillingdon, and is very popular with locals and visitors alike.

The miniature railway has been running round the lake since 1945. It is the longest such railway of its gauge in the country, and attracts many visitors from near and far.

There is a scale model representing the Solar System, with indicators on the dam wall.

Before reaching the car park, you will pass toilets on the right-hand side of the road.





*Copse Wood, looking back  
towards Poor's Field*

From the dam wall path, go past the toilets, the pub, and the H13 bus terminus. Pass a mini-roundabout on your left, and use the pedestrian crossing to cross the access road to the public car park. Turn right to pass through a barrier onto a footpath.

After 200m, a signpost pointing half-left indicates the former route of the Hillingdon Trail, which has been amended to give a safer crossing of Ducks Hill Road ahead. Nearby, there is another indicator (a red dot) guiding a path off to the right (this is a local circular walk). Ignore both, striding out towards the upslope on the clear (if sometimes muddy) path straight ahead.

Here, you are walking across an area called Poor's Field. The earliest documentation indicates that this area has been grazed as common land since 1295, but it cannot be doubted that the practice of common grazing goes back well before the date of that document. This is an important piece of pastoral history, and must be preserved in memory.

Just before you reach the summit of Poor's Field, turn left along a path which rises steadily through Copse Wood and crosses another path before coming out at Ducks Hill Road. Turn left to follow the path parallel to the road for a few metres, then cross the road using the light-controlled pedestrian crossing (with the equestrian crossing beside it). Turn right to follow the footway to the entrance to a car park, where turn left.

Make for the far left-hand corner of the car park and continue ahead in a south-westerly direction on a path which descends to a crossing path.

The former route of the Hillingdon Trail — it is still marked as such on the Ordnance Survey map — comes in from the left, having crossed Ducks Hill Road at a much more dangerous location, without the aid of pedestrian control.



*Tree in Mad Bess Wood*

*Junction of Breakspear Path  
with Hillingdon Trail*



Turn right and follow this track through Mad Bess Wood (named after a gamekeeper's wife who considered poachers to be her game of choice) to the fourth main crossing track, where turn left to descend to a small brook at a pipe-bridge. Cross the brook, and rise to emerge onto Breakspear Road North. Cross the road to reach the access road for the car park at Bayhurst Wood.

### **Bayhurst Wood car park to Middle Lodge 1.9km**

Cross Breakspear Road North to follow the access road to Bayhurst Wood car park. Do not enter the car park, but continue ahead over the summit of the hill and down the other side to reach a T-junction of tracks.

Turn right and walk along this track for 130m, then turn right onto a track which traverses the western side of the summit and comes down to a T-junction with the path which follows the northern perimeter of the wood.

At this point, you are less than 500m from the car park, which is off to your right. For those with car transport (and walking boots), this offers a 2km circuit through the woods.

Turn left to follow the Hillingdon Trail, descending to become a hedged lane, then rising to a path junction where the southern driveway to Breakspear House joins from the left.

### **Middle Lodge to Bird Lane 1.7km**

Do not take the driveway, but cross a stile ahead to continue with the Hillingdon Trail. When you reach the top of the slope, bear right along the ridge, then strike left. Turn left again at a path junction, ignoring the stile, to descend past a few lakes to reach the perimeter of Harefield church.

Old maps show this path as *Breakspear Path*. It was clearly a churching path from Breakspear House and farther afield.

There is a mention of a priest here in the Domesday Book (1086), and the current building was erected in the late eighteenth century. There are fine monuments inside,



particularly that of Alice, Dowager Countess of Derby, whose husband was the victim of a political murder in 1594.

The church has been used for location filming, notably in *The Ruling Class* (1972), with Peter O'Toole, Arthur Lowe, William Mervyn and others.

Here, you may divert to the left past the church to visit the Australian Military Cemetery on your left.

The church is listed Grade I, while the cemetery gateway and the war memorial are each listed Grade II.

The cemetery contains the graves of over a hundred soldiers and other war workers, including a nurse, who died in the Australian military hospital which was given to the forces during the Great War. That hospital became the Harefield Hospital we know today. The scroll design of the headstones is unique among military graves of the Great War.

The cemetery is the site of a most poignant commemoration on Anzac Day (25 April), when children from the junior school lay posies on each grave in the presence of military and political dignitaries from Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom.

Turn right, or continue ahead if you have come from the cemetery, and climb the church access road to reach Church Hill. Turn right and follow the right-hand footway which diverts away from the roadside to pass behind the Countess of Derby's Almshouses.

This section of the footway is narrow and is often covered by leaf-litter, making the path slippery. If these underfoot conditions concern you, cross Church Hill and turn right to ascend the hill on the left-hand footway.

The establishment of these almshouses "for six poor women of the parish" was laid out in the terms of the will of Alice, Dowager Countess of Derby after she died in 1637. She was Lady of the Manor at Harefield Place, which was situated just to the south of the church. The almshouses are listed Grade II\*.

On regaining Church Hill, you will pass on your left a fine old building painted white.



*Harefield church flies the Southern Cross on ANZAC Day each year*



*Countess of Derby's almshouses*



*The building formerly occupied by the White Horse Inn*

The date on the wall is 1523, and for over 300 years, this building was the White Horse pub, which on one occasion even hosted a murder trial. The pub closed for business in 2010 and the building was sold: it has now been converted into two dwellings. The frame of the pub sign remains as a ghostly reminder of the house's former life. The building is listed Grade II.

Continue ahead to reach a refuge, where cross to the left-hand footway to reach and cross Countess Close.

The area on the right immediately before Countess Close was for many years occupied by the vicarage, which had moved from its previous location off High Street, just to the south of where the junior school is today, during the inter-war period. Across the road, opposite Countess Close, stands Manor Court, which is listed Grade II

Continue uphill on the left-hand footway as far as the junction with Bird Lane on the left.

Immediately before you reach Bird Lane, there is a group of houses on the right (130 to 136 and 140 High Street) which are timber-framed and date from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. These houses are listed Grade II.

There are bus stops on both the 331 and the U9 routes ahead at Dovedale Close.

*Manor Court*





## Bird Lane to Summerhouse Lane 1.9km

Turn left onto Bird Lane, as indicated by the Hillingdon Trail signpost. Pass the houses on the right, then pass allotment gardens, also on the right. Continue ahead along the left-hand edge of a field, and turn left at the end of the field.

Continue downhill ahead for 220m, keeping a fence on your right, and turn right to cross a stile into the next field. Descend the field by the path ahead to reach a stile and kissing-gate (you have a choice). Follow the lane ahead to a T-junction, with one lane continuing ahead and another one turning to your left to cross the canal at Jack's Lock.

The southbound Colne Valley Trail takes the bridge to reach Jack's Lock. We join the northbound Colne Valley Trail at this point.

The building on the other side of the canal at the lock is Jack's Mill, a former flour mill which was powered by the River Colne.

Continue ahead on Jack's Lane. There is a section of footpath (without motor vehicles) before the road-metal returns at some houses. From here, keep to the left-hand footway, and follow the lane out to its end on Park Lane. Cross the road ahead.

The turning circle for the U9 bus is up the hill on your right, 150m distant. This is a key decision point, whether to break the journey here or continue ahead for an hour or longer to take in the northern terminus of the Hillingdon Trail and return to this point.



*Bird Lane*

## Summerhouse Lane to Hill End Road 1.2km

Turn left along the right-hand footway. Turn right onto Summerhouse Lane, and follow the left-hand pavement as far as the junction with Bellevue Terrace.

Turn right to follow the right-hand footway of Bellevue Terrace to the junction with Barrington Drive, then



*Jack's Lock and Mill  
from Jack's Lane*





*Looking back down the path towards Bellevue Terrace from the top of the climb near Hill End Road*

*Hillingdon Trail post at Maracus Cottag*



continue ahead on Bellevue Terrace without the benefit of a footway. Pass three blocks of terraced houses on the left, then ease to the left off Bellevue Terrace to take up an enclosed path, initially running parallel to Bellevue Terrace — look out for the London Loop sign on the left, next to the last house on the left, for guidance.

The path climbs steadily (and probably muddily) for about 500m, then levels off. Pass allotment gardens to reach Hill End Road.

To the right, the terminus of the U9 bus service at Harefield Hospital is 600m distant. The Green is just less than 1km distant from Hill End Road in the same direction.

## **Hill End Road to Springwell obelisk 2.4km**

Turn left to follow the right-hand side of Hill End Road, at first with a footway and then without, to the junction with Plough Lane on the right.

The London Loop takes Plough Lane, heading for Batchworth Heath (and, eventually, Purfleet).

Continue along the right-hand side of Hill End Road (sometimes with a footway, sometimes without) until, just after the last house on the right, the road takes a bend to the right. Here, follow the footpath signage onto the access road for Maracus Cottage. Where the road bends to the left, continue ahead along the left-hand edge of a field. Continue in the same north-westerly direction across the next field and out onto Springwell Lane.

Turn left onto Springwell Lane and follow it for 110m to reach the driveway of Springwell Farm. Turn left and pass through a gate to the right of the main gate which spans the driveway. Continue ahead past the buildings to reach the far left-hand corner of a field. Turn right in the corner and follow a track downhill.

At the bottom of the hill, the northbound Colne Valley Trail joins from the left.

Turn right and continue past Springwell Barn on your left. Re-join Springwell Lane, where turn left and follow the lane across the canal at Springwell Lock. Turn right onto the canal towpath and follow it with the water on your right until you reach the Coal Tax obelisk



which marks the boundary with Hertfordshire and the end of the Hillingdon Trail.

If you continue along the towpath to Rickmansworth, you may continue through the town centre, with all its facilities for food, drink and other shopping, to the railway station. Pass a supermarket on the right, and cross the River Colne. Turn left to cross another watercourse and continue ahead to reach Riverside Drive. Turn right along the right-hand footway, and cross Riverside Drive using the light-controlled pedestrian crossing and continue along the left-hand footway onto the roundabout. After crossing a watercourse, turn left along a path which leads past the church on your right to Church Street, where turn left and follow Church Street to the junction with High Street. Turn left along High Street, then turn right along Station Road to pass beneath the railway. Turn left to reach the railway station. The total distance from the obelisk is just under 3km.

If you leave the canal towpath at Stocker's Lock and follow the Colne Valley Trail, you will come, after 850m, to the visitor centre (with café and toilets) for the Aquadrome. Beyond the café, turn left with Bury Lake on your left, then bear right to keep Batchworth Lake on the right. After a right-hand bend, turn left to cross the River Colne and reach Ebury Roundabout. make your way round the right-hand side of the roundabout, crossing Riverside Drive and Wensum Way, and follow the right-hand footway of Rectory Road (the town centre by-pass) to pass beneath the railway and reach the station. The distance from the café to the railway station is 1.5km.

### **Springwell obelisk to Harefield West 2.4km**

To return to Harefield, turn through 180° and return along the canal towpath towards Springwell Lock with the water now on your left. About 150m from the obelisk, there is the remaining framework of the Harefield



*Springwell Lock*

*Obelisk at the northern end  
of the Hillingdon Trail*







*Harefield Limeworks frame,  
with hanging monkey*

Limeworks building on the far side of the canal, complete with a hanging monkey.

The limeworks ceased production over a century ago, but the building was never completely demolished. The monkey and sundry other unauthorised extras are the work of trespassers onto the site.

Follow the towpath past Springwell Lock. Beyond the lock, you will pass the Springwell Reedbed Nature Reserve on your right. Pass beneath a pipe which crosses the canal at a sewage works (also on your right).

Continue along the towpath until you reach a cluster of buildings on each side at the approach to Harefield Lock. There is the unexpected view of a traffic light ahead, but this is to regulate the flow over the canal bridge, which is only wide enough for one vehicle. Rise to road level at the traffic lights, and turn left to cross the canal by the bridge.

*Harefield Lock from the  
north, with Coppermill Lane  
bridge in the background*

There is a canalside pub at the bridge, which may, (if you time your arrival well) provide a celebratory end to this route, or indeed to





mark the completion of the entire Hillingdon Trail, if you have decided to undertake that walk from Cranford.

Be particularly careful as you cross the canal by the road bridge — the road is only one car wide, and there is no recognised footway. Keep to the right and watch the traffic carefully. Groups should cross in twos or threes, with children sandwiched between adults, and should regroup beyond the traffic lights at the far end of the bridge.

The copper mill over to your left began production in 1803, having been converted from a paper mill, but it only lasted sixty years, when the mill reverted to being a paper mill.

There has been milling on the River Colne in Harefield since the eleventh century: these were grain mills until paper milling came along during the 1670s. There is a full account of the history of milling in and around Harefield on the *British History Online* website; the relevant URL is <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/middx/vol3/p247>

Make your way up the right-hand footway of Park Lane. Cross over the end of Summerhouse Lane and then cross over the end of Barrington Drive on your left. Continue uphill to reach the turning circle and bus stop for the U9 service.

There is a bench which you may find useful if your arrival does not coincide with that of the bus (the standard service frequency is every twenty minutes, though the Sunday service is only hourly). The Green is 1km ahead with a further 35m of ascent.

There is an alternative route between Springwell Lock and Park Lane, and that is to follow the Colne Valley Trail. Cross the canal by the bridge at the lock, and retrace your steps up Springwell Lane and past Springwell Barn. The route is well waymarked to the end of Summerhouse Lane. This alternative offers more shade than the canal towpath.

*The bus turning circle at Harefield West. on a day conducive to sitting around waiting for a U9 to appear*







## Coal Tax Circuit: Mount Vernon to Moorhall Road

Distance	15.3km
Stiles	Between Batchworth Heath and Stocker's Lock
Gates, etc.	None
Wheels	Unsuitable
Gradient	Ascents and descents from the Rose and Crown pub to the canal
Mud, etc.	Plentiful between Batchworth Heath and the canal: potential at any point along the canal towpath
Start	Mount Vernon Hospital — bus stops on 331 route
Finish	Moorhall Road — bus stops at Broadwater Lock (331), and at The Furrows (U9)
Breakpoint	Harefield West (U9) at 11.9km
Map	<a href="https://explore.osmaps.com/route/23633141/">https://explore.osmaps.com/route/23633141/</a>

### Introduction

This section of the Coal Tax Circuit sees the route descend from Batchworth Heath to the Colne Valley and the Grand Union Canal, with a short there-and-back to collect a post. The canal towpath is then followed all the way to Widewater Lock at Moorhall Road (and indeed may be followed all the way to the Colne Bridge on Oxford Road, New Denham. The Coal Tax Circuit links up more than 200 of the markers which denote the point at which coal or wine coming into London was subject to a levy by the Corporation of the City of London.

The actual purpose of the markers is less clear — there was a clear pay-as-you-go accounting system for companies bringing coal in by canal or by rail, and these forms of transport had virtually extinguished the trade using roads and paths. Perhaps it was a form of breast-beating by the Corporation as “London” spread well beyond their jurisdiction within the Square Mile, and all the markers were simply advertisements for the Corporation.

Full details of the 315km *Coal Tax Circuit* route are to be found at <https://lwalks.london/london/personal/coaltax/> — there are maps and directions linked there. The post numbers quoted in the text below follow those at <http://www.coaldutyposts.org.uk/today/fulllist.html> — an excellent reference and as definitive a list of the markers as may be found.

This walk has some very muddy areas, particularly between Batchworth Heath (at 108m, the highest point on any of the Harefield Healthwalks) and Battler's Wells: count on taking twice as long as you might estimate for that stretch, and consider waiting for a high and dry summer's day (or else, start the walk at the Shrubs Road bus stop).



*Post 55, Batchworth Heath*

## Route

### Mount Vernon Hospital to Rose and Crown Inn 3.5km

Start from the bus stop on the 331 route at the main entrance to Mount Vernon Hospital.

**Note** — this is **not** the stop known as *Mount Vernon / Bishop's Wood Hospitals* on the 331 route between stops at Shrubs Road and Batchworth Heath, but is the interchange stop with services on the 282 route to Ealing Hospital and the H11 route to Harrow.

There is a café and toilets on the ground floor of the hospital building.

Follow the bus exit route, crossing the car park entrance and turning left along a service road and then turning right to reach Rickmansworth Road.

Turn left onto the left-hand footway and follow it to the gated entrance, on the left, to Carlton Place. Cross to the right-hand footway using the refuge, and continue for a little over 200m to reach a public footpath (in fact, the London Loop) which arrives from the right. Across the road to your left, you will see a small white cast-iron pillar — Coal Tax Post 55.

The footpath on the right follows the Hillingdon boundary for 3km as far as Potter Street Hill, the highest point in the borough. For much of its length, it is an enclosed path between house-backs. There are Coal Tax markers at Potter Street Hill and at intermediate points along the route.

This boundary path (all of which forms part of the London Loop) offers two possible extensions to the route.

By starting at Northwood station (331 bus), you could add a modest 1.25km to the route by taking Eastbury Road (opposite Station Approach and picking up a path which leaves the roadside on the left just beyond the office building, and turning left onto the London Loop at a footbridge over the railway — there is a curious metal Coal Tax marker here — and following the Loop out to Rickmansworth Road.

By starting at Northwood Hills station (change from the 331 bus to the 282 at Mount Vernon Hospital), you may take Potters Street and Potter Street Hill to the end of the street and turn left to follow the Loop all the way to Rickmansworth Road, adding 4.5km to the route length. The walk to the hospital (or, indeed, to Batchworth Heath) from Northwood Hills via the boundary



path and Rickmansworth Road makes a neat 5km option for walkers, almost traffic-free.

Turn right to follow the right-hand footway of Rickmansworth Road as it bends to the left. Cross over the two carriageways of the end of Batchworth Lane via its triangular refuge. Advance across the heath on the right-hand side of the road to the corner of a car park, opposite a wooden bus shelter and at the junction with White Hill (a road).

Buses on the 331 route run from the shelter to Harefield and Uxbridge; from the stop just round the corner on White Hill, they run to Northwood and Ruislip. The standard service is every twenty minutes, and half-hourly on Sundays.

Ahead, you will see a chain pub called Ye Olde Greene Manne, which provides food and drink during opening hours, the food from a standard menu (hatched in Birmingham) of the sort found in such establishments.

The path ahead is often wet and boggy: lightweight walking boots will be required, and waterproof gaiters and/or overtrousers would be helpful too.

Turn left and, with your back to Ye Olde Greene Manne pub, cross the road, keeping White Hill on your left. Pass the bus stop (without a shelter) and continue for a few metres to reach some traffic bollards at a former exit from White Hill. turn right to pass through the barrier and turn left to take your direction from the London Loop waymark into the marsh and mire.

This leads you on a path which sets out on a course parallel to White Hill. Pass beneath a pylon where the overhead power lines make a turn. About 300m farther on, the path parts company with the power lines, and turns to the right. After a further 300m, at a signposted T-junction of paths, turn left (to the south, and here leaving the London Loop) and follow the path through woodland.

*Below — Batchworth Heath, Ye Olde Greene Manne Inn*

*Bottom — the muddy path south of Batchworth Heath*





The path eases to the south-west and then back to the south to reach the Bishop's Wood car park. Cross the car park on the diagonal to pick up a path which keeps close to a fence on your right (protecting a radio mast) and leads out onto White Hill.



A quick look at the map would suggest that an alternative route between Batchworth Heath and Jackets Lane would be simply to follow White Hill. A quick look at the reality, though, will show that this is, in fact, a very bad idea. The road is busy, carries heavy traffic such as lorries and buses, is susceptible to flooding, and has neither footway nor verge. **Do not even think of attempting it.**

Exit onto White Hill, and turn right along the roadside. Ahead, you will come to the junction with Jackets Lane.

On the left at the junction, Post 56 used to stand, but it has been gone for many years, possibly stolen for the value of the scrap iron.

*Left — Junction between White Hill (background) and Jackets Lane (foreground) at the site of Post 56*

*Below left — Shrubs Road*

*Below right — Post 57*





Jackets Lane may well derive its name from *jaggers*, itinerant pedlars. Certainly, it forms part of a very old route linking the Chess Valley with Harrow and London.

Cross White Hill with care to reach Battlers Wells Farm. Turn right to follow the left-hand footway, passing the covered reservoir on your left, and advance to the next road junction, where there are some houses on the right. This little area is known as The Shrubs.



*Rose and Crown Inn*

Ahead, there are bus stops on the 331 route: on the left for Harefield and Uxbridge, and on the right for Northwood and Ruislip.

Turn right onto Shrubs Road where, beyond the houses, the left-hand hedge defines the boundary between London and Hertfordshire. Where the road bends (and where the boundary continues straight ahead in the original direction), you will find Post 57 on the left.

Continue along what is now called Woodcock Hill to reach a road junction by the Rose and Crown Inn.

This ancient inn stands half-way between Harefield and Rickmansworth, and advertises itself as a dining pub. It is open from 1100 to 2300 (1800 on Sundays) and serves food at lunchtimes and in the early evenings.

*Post 58*



## Rose and Crown Inn to Stocker's Lock

### 4.0km

Turn left across the frontage of the Rose and Crown Inn, and follow the right-hand side of Rickmansworth Road for 300m (there is no footway, so take care) to reach Post 58 on the left-hand side of the road, with the borough boundary sign ahead.

Across the road from the post, but before the boundary sign, a signpost indicates a footpath which crosses a field. When you get into the field, aim diagonally to the right. At the bottom, pass through a gap and turn left into another field. Cross this field diagonally (or, if indicated by signs, turn right and follow two sides of the field along its right-hand edge) to reach the entrance to Fieldways Farm at Harefield Road.

Turn left down the right-hand side of Harefield Road: there is no footway. Where the road makes a bend to the left at a road sign: carry straight on into a field, and follow the footpath up onto Juniper Hill. There is a golf course on the right, keep ahead either on the edge of the course or through woodland.

Eventually, you will see garden fences on the left, and a path will veer off the caddy track to the left. This path descends to Sherfield Avenue. Turn left, and walk out to return to Harefield Road. Cross the road ahead, turn right, and descend the left-hand footway as far as the next road on the left, Stockers Farm Road.

If you continue along Harefield Road to the White Bear pub and turn left, you will reach the centre of Rickmansworth. Take the second exit off the roundabout, and follow the road to the junction with High Street. Turn left along High Street for all the town facilities. Station Road is off to the right at the other end of the shopping street, and leads to the Metropolitan Line station. Buses (not Oyster-valid) here connect with Watford, Uxbridge, Amersham

and Hemel Hempstead ... and even with Heathrow Airport for more distant connections. The distance between Stockers Farm Road and Rickmansworth station is 1.75km.

If you are starting from the station, turn right, then turn right to pass beneath the tracks into Station Road. At the foot of Station Road, turn left along High Street, then turn right onto Church Street, keeping to the left-hand footway. Pass the church to reach a roundabout: continue ahead, crossing to the right-hand footway at a

*Stocker's Farm*





pedestrian crossing. Turn right at the White Bear public house, and follow Harefield Road through three bends to reach Stockers Farm Road.

Walk westwards along Stockers Farm Road, passing a school and a waterworks on the left. Pass a gate and follow the farm access road towards another gate, which gives access to the farm. Before reaching this gate, turn left to follow the right-hand edge of a field as it climbs from the road. Bear right, then turn to the left to pick up the ascending lane running southwards.

After about 70m, turn right to keep a hedge-line on your right, and follow it as the field edge curves to the left. Continue to the edge of a wood, where Post 59 will be found on the left-hand side.

The boundary crosses here, with the London Borough of Hillingdon ahead. This is an ancient path which leads out of the Colne valley and up to Harefield. It was much used for centuries by travellers and traders (including the jagers who are noted at The Shrubs above), and possibly by armies which (via the word *hær*, which is still the Danish word for 'army') gave Harefield its name — no furry animals are involved in naming the village!

The rising path ahead continues in the same direction, passing the crested face of Post 59 on the left, for about 100m before turning to the right. After a further 750m, it comes out onto Springwell Lane at Cripps House Farm, where a left turn will lead you to the U9 terminus at the hospital. The distance from Post 59 to the bus terminus is 2.1km.

Return to the farm access road the way you came, and continue ahead until you are clear of the buildings on the left, passing on your right the lane which you used to reach this point from Harefield Road. There may well be horse transport parked in the vicinity, and there may be horses and riders.



*Post 59*

*On the return from  
collecting Post 59*





*Left — Grand Union Canal  
at Stocker's Lock*



*Right — Post 60 on the  
canal towpath*

Keep the building on your left as you turn left, then turn right to leave the farm by its northern access road.

Cross the canal by the bridge, then corkscrew down to your right to join the towpath at Stocker's Lock and pass beneath the bridge.

If, instead of dropping to the towpath, you continue along the lane to a Y-junction and turn right, you will reach the café and toilets of the Rickmansworth Aquadrome. The café is about 600m distant from Stocker's Lock.

At this point, you will join the Grand Union Canal Walk for the rest of the route, with the exception of the there-and-back-again detours off the towpath along the Coal Tax Circuit route to visit the site of Post 61, and the surviving Post 62.

### **Stocker's Lock to Springwell Lock 3.2km**

Follow the towpath with the canal on your left. Approximately 600m after emerging from beneath the bridge, you will come to Post 60, in the "canal obelisk" style. Note the bench-mark at the foot of the obelisk.

Continue ahead on the towpath. There is a path on your right, with a streamlet (which is usually almost dry) between the towpath and this path. Look out for a gap which allows you to cross to the other path (using brushwood to help you ford the streamlet), and continue westwards on this path, which is within the Stocker's Lake Nature Reserve. The path gradually drifts away from the canal, bending right then left to keep a lake close by on the right.



This is indeed Stocker's Lake, and you will probably see a fair number of birdwatchers, with their binoculars and cameras trained on the lake. At certain times of the year, the lake is home to a large flock of terns. The lake, along with others in the area to the west of Rickmansworth, was created after the valley floor was dug for gravel, starting in the early years of the twentieth century. The gravel was used for the concrete which went



*Stocker's Lake Weir*

to construct the buildings for the 1924 British Empire Exhibition (including the former football stadium).

You will emerge into a clearing beside a handsome weir, which lets the River Colne descend slightly in a managed fashion, with a bridge across the water above the weir.

Do not cross the bridge, but continue with the river on your left (as you travel upstream — Stocker's Lake is still on your right. Walk about 500m, by which time you will be travelling in an easterly direction, until there is a bank of trees on your right, obscuring the lake.

*Post 62*

At this point, Post 61 was erected on the other side of the river, at the foot of the Shire Ditch.

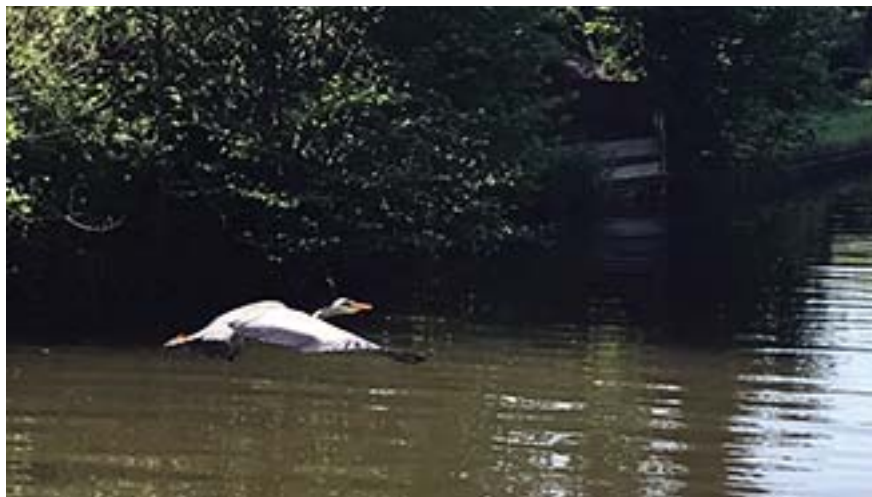
At the time that the canal was dug, there was considerable anxiety over river levels from millers who needed sufficient waterflow, and this post became a water gauge to monitor the draw-off of water from the River Colne to feed the canal.

Return to the weir by the same route in reverse, and turn right to cross the wooden footbridge. After crossing the bridge, turn to the left, now walking in the direction of flow of the River Colne with the river on your left. After about 120m, you will make out a road ahead, through the hedge.

The path bends to the right here, running between the road and Inns Lake. It emerges onto the road opposite a car park. Turn right along the road to reach a bridge. on the left, before the bridge, is Post 62.

Continue out to the main road for buses (on which Oystercards and other TfL facilities are





*Heron in flight along the Grand Union Canal*

not valid) to Rickmansworth, or to Denham and Uxbridge (724): the bus stops are just off to the left.

Return along the road, but do not rejoin the path opposite the car park. Take the road as far as the canal, and gain the towpath at the first opportunity, next to Springwell Lock.

About 150m off to the left, there is the remaining framework

of the Harefield Limeworks on the far side of the canal, complete with a hanging monkey (see photograph on page 78). The works ceased production over a century ago, but the building was never completely demolished. The monkey and other extras are the work of trespassers.

## **Springwell Lock to Harefield West**

### **1.8km**

Turn right onto the towpath (or continue ahead if you are returning from a detour to see the hanging monkey at the former limeworks), with the canal on your left-hand side. Follow the towpath past the Springwell Reedbed Nature Reserve on your right, then pass beneath a pipe which crosses the canal at a sewage works (also over to your right).

Continue along the towpath until you reach a cluster of buildings on each side of the canal at the approach to Harefield Lock. There is the unexpected view of a traffic light ahead, but this is to regulate the road traffic flow over the canal bridge, which is only wide enough for one vehicle.

Immediately before the bridge, the former mill race pours into the canal, and a canoe slalom course has been set up in the “rapids”.

The U9 bus stop for Harefield and Uxbridge is along the road across the canal.

## **Harefield West to Moorhall Road**

### **2.7km**

Pass beneath the road, irrespective of the phase of the lights. Beyond the bridge, the towpath continues. You will rise to cross an old wharf entrance, then again to negotiate a meeting with the River Colne, where an elegant rectangular weir helps it on its downward course. Soon after the weir, you will arrive at Jack’s Mill and Lock. The mill was a flour mill.





*Harefield Lock*

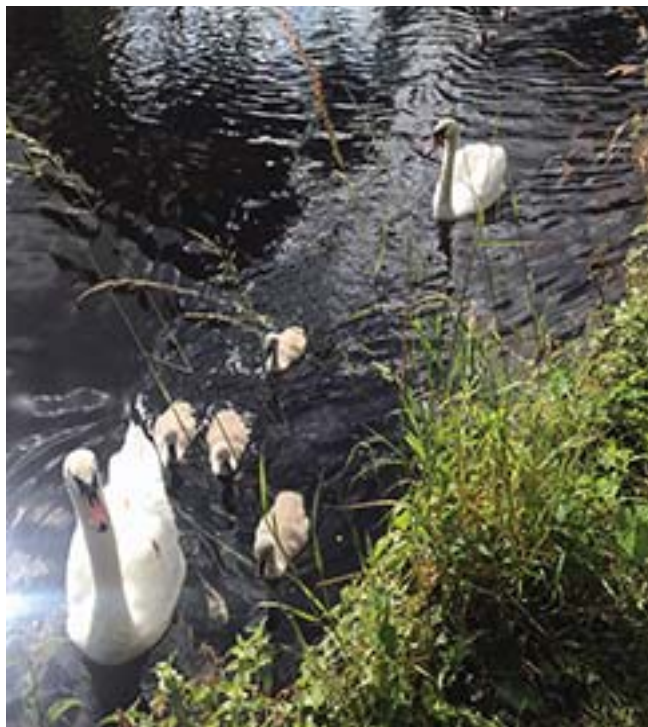
As you drop down at the lock to pass beneath the access road to the mill building, notice the date set into the downstream lock wall, indicating the rebuilding of the lock in 1870.

Continue along the towpath for a further 1.1km. The land on your left was in the past a lime quarry, the entrance to which may still be seen on Church Hill opposite the church access road. You will now reach the next bridge, which formerly carried Broadwater Lane across the canal to the floodplain meadows of Harefield Moor,

*Approach to Jack's Lock*







*Family outing on the canal  
near Peerless Drive*

before the days of gravel extraction from the Colne Valley (here, since the 1960s) created the lakes we see today.

At Broadwater Bridge (now disused), there is a prime example of the effect of years of tow-rope friction. The horses pulling the barges had to follow the towpath, and where the canal narrowed at a bridge, the ropes eroded the bridge. In the end, the bridge was strengthened with iron, but the tow-ropes ate the iron too.

Beyond the bridge, continue along the towpath, with the houses of Peerless Drive soon appearing on the far side of the canal.

Peerless Drive is laid out on the former site of Peerless Fence, a manufacturer of chain-link fencing. The houses were built in 1983.

Continue past Widewater Lock. Just before you reach the road bridge, turn right. Continue out past a gate to reach Moorhall Road at a bus stop.

The stop on your right is served by the 331 route towards Harefield, while the stop on the other side of the road is for buses to Uxbridge.

There is a pub on the other side of the road.

*Widewater Lock and  
Moorhall Road*















*Grand Union Canal near the A40*