

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	https://explore.osmaps.com/route/23562871/

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 those with 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, which has now been

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 timber-framed houses which date from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries on the right (130 to 136 and 140 High Street, but not the more modern infill building at 138 High Street). These houses are listed Grade II.

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 dated 1523. It was for over 300 years



The former White Horse Inn, Church Hill

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





*Australian Military
Cemetery on ANZAC Day*

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, 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 path leads out

onto Harvil Road opposite the end of 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 (whose houses were built in 1983) is on the former site of Peerless Fence, a manufacturer of chain-link fencing.

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.



*Chapel crop-mark,
Moorhall recreation ground*

