

# 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 the end of 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 on 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 field ahead by a stile. Here, you



*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*



will 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 the end of 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 immediately on your left and follow the path (which becomes concrete a little way beyond the playground) 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



*Australian  
Military Cemetery*



*Path between Church  
Gardens and Harvil Road*



*Chapel crop-mark,  
Moorhall recreation ground*

Ambulance Service, which 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.