

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	https://explore.osmaps.com/route/23627565/

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 making 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 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.

On Summerhouse Lane, the route is joined by the Colne Valley Trail, which now continues ahead towards Springwell Lock.

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).



Fieldways Farm

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

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.

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

Rose and Crown Inn





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

