BRACKSPEAR

PUB TRAILS

THE REFORMATION
GALLOWSTREE COMMON, READING
BERKSHIRE

3 CIRCULAR WALKS
2.8, 5 & 6.5 MILES
We're delighted to present three circular walks all starting and ending at The Reformation. The Brakspear Pub Trails are a series of circular walks.

We thought the idea of a variety of circular country walks all starting and ending at our pubs was a guaranteed winner. We have fantastic pubs nestled in the countryside, and we hope our maps are a great way for you to get out and enjoy some fresh air and a gentle walk, with a guaranteed drink at the end – perfect!

Our pubs have always welcomed walkers (and almost all of them welcome dogs too), so we’re making it even easier with plenty of free maps. You can pick up copies in the pubs taking part or go to brakspearaletrails.co.uk to download them. We’re planning to add new pubs onto them, so the best place to check for the latest maps available is always our website.

We absolutely recommend you book a table so that when you finish your walk you can enjoy a much needed bite to eat too. At the weekend, please book in advance, as this is often a busier time, especially our smaller pubs.

And finally, do send us your photos of you out and about on your walk. We really do love getting them.

Brakspear would like to thank the Trust for Oxfordshire’s Environment and the volunteers who helped make these walks possible. As a result of these walks, Brakspear has invested in TOE2 to help maintain and improve Oxfordshire’s footpaths.

Reg. charity no. 1140563

Respect – Protect – Enjoy

Respect other people:
• Consider the local community and other people enjoying the outdoors
• Leave gates and property as you find them and follow paths unless wider access is available

Protect the natural environment:
• Leave no trace of your visit and take your litter home
• Keep dogs under effective control

Enjoy the outdoors:
• Plan ahead and be prepared
• Follow advice and local signs

For more info visit: www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-countryside-code

How to get there

Driving: Postcode is RG4 9BP with a car park for customers.

Nearest station: Reading station is 5.9 miles away.

Local bus services: The number 25 bus from Reading Buses.
Brakspear recommends that all walkers bring a copy of the Chilterns Hills West Ordnance Survey map. You can borrow one from the pub for a refundable £10 deposit.
Route 1

Directions

1. With your back to the front of the Reformation Pub turn left along Horsepond Road and after 100m take the first left into The Hamlet.
2. After about 100m where the road bears left, turn right and enter the woods through a hole in the hedge.
3. Here you will see three paths – take the left hand path and walk on up the hill through the mixed woodland.
4. After about 600m the path turns sharp left through a gap in the fence (see white arrow on tree) and continues close to the top of a field until you reach Kate's Cottage. Close by Kate's Cottage is the site of the gallows tree that gave Gallowstree Common its name.
5. A few metres north of Kate's Cottage are the well preserved remains of an Iron Age hill fort.

Did you know?
The gallows tree which gave Gallowstree Common its name was a solitary oak standing apart from woodland. It is said that the last hanging, for sheep stealing, occurred in 1825. The stump was removed at the time of the Enclosure Acts but for some time the gibbet and chains were left on a post nearby.

Did you know?
Wyfold Castle is a plateau fort of an irregular oval shape covering some 5 acres. The site is just north of Kate's Cottage but you might have to negotiate a holly thicket to access the site. The earthwork remains are probably half as deep and the ramparts half as high as they were when in use, but they are still impressive. The ramparts are partly damaged on the SE side but are in the best condition on the West. The remains of the causeway entrance are on the SW side. The northern part of the fort is heavily overgrown, probably due to existence of the spring.

Did you know?
Wyfold Grange is probably linked to the original grange belonging to Thame Abbey and is now a Victorian house surrounded by a major earthwork. The earthwork may be Iron Age in date, or it could possibly represent later defensive works. The former seems more likely.

6. Turn right and walk along the road past Kate's Cottage for about 600m then turn right along the bridleway through the woods in a north easterly direction for 300m. Turn right and walk along the road for some 500m, through the hamlet of Wyfold, and immediately after Wyfold Grange, turn right on to a signed footpath.

7. Walk on through the field for about 400m; at this point the footpath enters a magical tunnel of laurel and continues through it for some 400m. It's very easy to miss the entrance!
8. Pass through the gate and re-enter the woods of New Copse.
9. After walking 30m in a southerly direction you will see a fork in the path; walk straight on in a southerly direction (the other path forks off to the left in a north easterly direction).
10. After 600m the path arrives at the exit to The Hamlet. Turn right and enjoy the many interesting styles of houses – old and new. The Haystacks is particularly interesting, with an odd shape and thatched roof.
11. At the end of The Hamlet turn left on the main road to reach The Reformation after 200m for a well deserved pint.

Distance: 4.6km (2.8 miles) Time: 1hr
Route 2

Directions

01 With your back to the front of the Reformation Pub turn left along Horsepond Road and after 100m take the first left into The Hamlet.

02 After about 100m where the road bears left, turn right and enter the woods through a hole in the hedge.

03 Here you will see three paths – take the left hand path and walk on up the hill through the mixed woodland.

04 After about 600m the path turns sharp left through a gap in the fence (see white arrow on tree) and continues close to the top of a field until you reach Kate’s Cottage. Close by Kate’s Cottage is the site of the gallows tree that gave Gallowstree Common its name.

05 Cross the road here to the path signed to Cane End, pass through the kissing gate and proceed straight ahead through the wood.

06 Follow the way-marked route (white arrows on trees) taking care to take the left fork at a V junction and continue to follow the arrows.

07 Keep on straight ahead past an open swampy area, past a wooden signpost which reads Wyfold in the reverse direction and Cane End in the forward direction.

08 Go straight ahead in the Cane End direction and arrive at the end of the wood.

09 Ignoring a path coming in from the left, go through a metal gate; proceed in a diagonally left direction across paddocks behind a house, through two more metal gates to a road. Turn left and walk along the road for a short distance to a green kissing gate on the right.

10 Go through this gate, follow the path diagonally across the field to another green kissing gate and continue straight ahead past two arable fields, with a hedge to the right, to a wooden kissing gate.

11 Keep straight ahead past rabbit/badger holes until a stile/bar is reached, go over or through this. Continue straight ahead through open fields with pleasant views to the right, past a rather attractive copse to the right and arrive at a bridleway.

12 Turn right here past a cottage and continue straight ahead across a lane (Park Lane). Follow the bridleway through woods across another lane and through more woods to reach Wyfold lane.

13 Turn right and walk through the hamlet of Wyfold past a row of cottages, Wyfold Farm, and a post-box set in a wall.

14 Immediately after the entrance to Wyfold Grange you will see a footpath on the right signposted to Gallowstree Common.

15 Take this path and walk straight ahead down the hill with an arable field to the left, through a path enclosed by trees and hedges.

16 At the end of this path continue straight ahead past an old wooden five barred gate and through a gap in a wooden fence. Ignore a path going to the left and continue straight on through Wyfold wood, ignoring paths to the left and right until you arrive back at the path which leads into The Hamlet.

17 Turn left, walk down to Horsepond Road and turn right to arrive back at the Reformation.

Distance: 8.1km (5 miles) Time: 1.75hrs

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Did you know?

Ash Trees in New Corpse woodland

© Graham Horn, Wikimedia Commons
Route 3

A long walk with some uphill sections.

Directions

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03 After about 600m the path turns sharp left through a gap in the fence (see white arrow on tree) and continues close to the top of a field until you reach Kate’s Cottage. Close by Kate’s Cottage is the site of the gallows tree that gave Gallowstree Common its name.

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04 A few metres North of Kate’s Cottage are the well preserved remains of an Iron Age hill fort.

Did you know?

Wyfold Castle is a plateau fort of an irregular oval shape covering some 5 acres. Access to the site is just north from Kate’s Cottage but you will need to negotiate a holly thicket. The earthwork remains are probably half as deep and the ramparts half as high as they were when in use, but they are still impressive. The ramparts are partly damaged on the SE side but are in the best condition on the West. The remains of the causeway entrance are on the SW side. The northern part of the fort is heavily overgrown, probably due to existence of the spring.

05 Turn right and walk along the road past Kate’s Cottage for about 600m then turn left at the bridleway sign and follow the bridleway along the edge of the woods in a south westerly direction for about 1km.

06 When you reach a lane (Park Lane) cross to the bridleway opposite and continue through the fields.

07 After roughly 600m you will walk between two houses and just after this turn right past a small garden pond on to another bridleway.

08 Continue up the slope for 500m to Hook End. As you approach Hook End Manor the path turns sharply to the right and passes through a delightful tunnel of laurel trees to emerge at Park Lane in front of Hook End Farm.

09 When you reach Park Lane, turn left and walk along the road for roughly 400m past Hook End Manor.

Did you know?

Many famous rock stars have lived and worked here at Hook End Manor including Dave Gilmour of Pink Floyd and more recently Trevor Horn. It is considered by some in the business as probably England’s most luxurious recording studio.

10 After passing Lower Farm and The Old Barn House take a right turn onto a bridleway and continue along this path through fields and then beech woods for about 600m when you should see some houses in the woods.
11 Just before you reach the houses turn right at the junction of paths and walk on along this path keeping to the left at a junction, then past Beech Wood Farm, which is of course surrounded by Scots Pine trees.

12 Carry on for about 600m crossing a minor path on the way (white arrow straight on). The path takes a sudden turn to the left and runs along a plantation of magnificent Douglas fir trees.

13 Keep to the right where the path bends and after 200m this path joins a track – turn right and after a further 200m the path reaches a minor road (between Stoke Row and Gallowstree Common).

14 Turn left towards Stoke Row, and then almost immediately turn right onto a small signposted path (to Stoke Row) leading up a steep hill with Scots pine and Fir trees to the right and mixed woodland to the left.

15 Near the top of the hill you pass through a kissing gate leading into the Wyfold Court Estate.

16 The path becomes rather indistinct at this point, due to forestry operations, but follow the white arrows on trees and after about 100m take a sharp right turn up to the top of the hill, where you should see the main road running through the estate.

17 Cross the road, turning to the right with the stables on the left, then bear left on to a path and follow the arrows through the woods.

18 Continue along the path for about 200m then turn left where another path joins from the right. Continue along the path for a further 400m and as houses become visible you will come to a bridleway.

19 Turn right along the bridleway until it re-joins the main road running through the estate. At this point you will see Wyfold Court to the right, one of the few places from which it can be seen from a public right of way. The house has been converted into upmarket flats, but it retains its elegant exterior.

DID YOU KNOW! Wyfold Court a Grade II* listed mansion in the French Gothic style built between 1872 and 1878 by the architect, George Somers Clarke, for Edward Hermon, a wealthy Lancastrian cotton master, MP for Preston and a lavish patron of contemporary artists. George Somers Clarke was a pupil of Sir Charles Barry who is best known for his design of the Palace of Westminster. Later the mansion became Borocourt Hospital, but more recently has been converted to luxury private apartments.

20 After viewing the house, turn left onto the main drive and continue past the turning for Hazel Grove until you soon reach a bridleway. Turn left on the bridleway towards Kingwood.

21 Continue to the last house on the left and the path bends right passing between stout wooden posts, then after a short
walk you will reach the main road between Stoke Row and Sonning Common, turn right and walk along the road with care.

After about 70m note a left turn with a post box and a house that was once The Grouse and Claret public house. Keep on the main road for a further 30 metres. There is a footpath signpost (to Gallowstree Common) on the right which you must take. It’s easy to miss this turn.

The path starts off to the left along the track of an overhead power line then forks to the right – this is halfway between the first two wooden supports for the power line and marked by a small post and yellow arrow. You can see the power line from the path for most of the way but it gradually diverges. After 400m cross the main drive from Wyfold Court bearing slightly to the right and straight on through the woods for a further 100m to a kissing gate.

Walk across the fields of Kingwood Farm towards Wyfold keeping the boundary hedge on the right. The hamlet is accessed through a kissing gate and on along a short road, which leads to a public road.

Cross the road and continue past Wyfold Grange, which must be the site of an early medieval fortified house, as it still has the bank and ditch defences clearly visible (from the public road).

Walk slightly downhill through the field for about 400m, at the field boundary follow the path into a magical tunnel of laurel, it’s very easy to miss this entrance but it is marked by a partially obscured waymark post.

After another 400m pass by a wooden gate and enter the woods of New Copse, then after a short distance go through a gap in a wooden fence and continue straight on in a southerly direction (ignoring another path that forks off to the left – North East).

Carry straight on and across another path and after 600m the path arrives at the exit to The Hamlet.

Turn right and enjoy the many interesting styles of houses – old and new. The Haystacks is particularly interesting, with an odd shape and thatched roof.

At the end of The Hamlet turn left on the main road to reach The Reformation after 200m for a well deserved pint.
The Reformation
Opening Hours:
Monday: Closed
Tuesday–Friday: 12pm–3pm & 5.30pm–11pm
Saturday: 12pm–4pm & 6pm–11pm
Sunday: 12pm–5pm

Kitchen Open:
Monday: Closed
Tuesday–Friday: 12pm–2.30pm & 6pm–9pm
Saturday: 12pm–3pm & 6pm–9pm
Sunday: 12pm–4pm

• Dog Friendly • Family Friendly • Garden/Patio
• Park the Car • WiFi Access

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Download the App
To follow Brakspear Pub Trails on your smartphone, simply download the free ViewRanger app from the Apple App Store or Google Play, then visit www.viewranger.com/brakspear to find the full collection of walks. Pick your favourite route, download it in the app, then follow it using ViewRanger’s offline GPS navigation.

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This info was correct at the time of going to print. Printed September 2017 v1