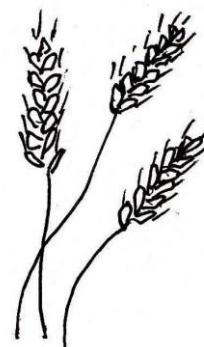


Combs Circular Walk – Number One

A 3.5 mile circular walk around Combs looking at the agriculture and architecture that has shaped the village. There are no stiles and the walk is along generally quiet roads and field edges with one cross field transit that may be muddy after rain.



As there is no convenient central parking point in the village this description starts at the bus shelter on Park Road but the route can be picked up at any point. If you are coming into the village by car please park carefully.

From the bus shelter, but only on a Wednesday and a Friday, you can catch the Galloway European service 462 (01449 766323 for timetable details) into Stowmarket for a couple of hours.

Across the road is one of Combs lost pubs. Now Bay Tree House this was until 1989 the Live and Let Live, a busy Greene King hostelry. Go right along Park Road, cross Jacks Lane on the right, and you will come to several cottages bearing the lettering L. W. C 1873. These were built by Lankester Webb the owner of Combs Tannery and more of his influence will be seen later in the walk.

Continue along Park Road to the junction with Bildeston Road and Mill Lane – Combs once had three mills – and pause here to look at the village sign erected in 1998 and depicting Model Farm, the park and the church. The sign is dedicated to Joan Saunders, Councillor and Parish Chairman 1973-1994.



Ebbs House

Follow Bildeston Road until you get to Ebbs House, which has connections with the Singing Postman, Allan Smethurst. Some of his very popular Norfolk dialect songs were recorded here in the 1960's.

Take the footpath opposite and follow the well worn path with hedges on either side to emerge on Mill Lane at Mattock's Barn. Cross the road and pause a while on the bench provided to take in the views across the rich agricultural fields.

Across the fields you can see some of the houses of Moats Tye and Little London, hamlets within the Combs parish boundary.

Cross the field in front, dogs on leads please, to the stream where you will find a "Linking Environment and Farming" poster board with details of the locally grown crops. Continue straight on and follow the field edge up to Moats Tye. Nearing the road you can see, off to the left, the expanding Cedars Park estate and the tall, thin spire of St Peter and St Mary church in Stowmarket peeping above the trees.

"A well-written walk featuring an attractive route. The historical facts and sketches enhance the narrative, along with a distinctive map."
Cyril Francis, author of several Suffolk walking books

Turn right towards the Gardeners Arms, which, although closed now, retains its name board in the tantalising hope that one day it may re-open. Turn left and head for Little London. On the left are the pavilion, nets and neatly manicured pitch of the [Battisford Cricket Club](#). This quiet tree lined road with high hedges hides many old established houses such as White House Farm, complete with pond.

Ignore the first road on the right (for today at least – other walks lead to Battisford and Badley from here) and take the second to Little London. Before the first house, look left and try to spot the tower of Great Finborough church – a landmark visible for miles around. Nearing Blue House Farm – an old fashioned farm with cats and chickens running free – look to the left and you can see the rooves of the Combs Tannery buildings, the source of Lankester Webb's wealth in the mid 19th century and now home to a number of small company units.

Carry on along this quiet country lane and in front you will see the quaintly named Halfpenny Cottage with Pennyplot House across the field to the right. When the road bends sharply right you need to go left up the field track for 150 yards. Before turning left there, look across to the right to see the Suffolk Wildlife trust managed Combs Wood, then further round to Sallow Grove and further round still, the top of Badley church is just visible.

Follow the path to the left between fields and head back into Combs village – more of the spire of Great Finborough church should now be visible just off to the right. Notice the Charcoal and Churches plaque on the fence as you pass the menagerie at Holyoak Farm. Details of the Charcoal and Churches walk in the Walks section of the Combs Village website.



St Mary's, Combs

Through a narrow green tunnel you emerge once again into the usual field landscape. Follow the field edge path until you reach a metal bridge across the stream. Turn left and follow the rising path to Tannery Road. At the top, stop and look behind to see Combs church in splendid isolation.

Turn right and at the junction with Park Road and Poplar Hill see the impressive Prospect House dating from 1854. Turn left up Park Road to pass the old Combs school from 1857 and then Model Farm erected by Lankester Webb in 1867. Continue along Park Road to complete the circuit.



Model Farm

You'll find a route map on the next page.

Walk planned and written by Bill Baldry

Map by Sara Waterer

We thank the Combs History Club for checking historical facts.

For more walks visit: www.combvillage.org.uk/walks.html

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