

Combs Circular Walk – Number Two

[Circular Walk Number One](#) mentioned a couple of pubs that have been lost in the comparatively recent past. This 4.75 mile circular walk (short cuts available) around Combs goes further back in time and passes by the sites of a couple of village mills and takes in some of the highest and lowest points in the village.

There are no stiles and the walk is along generally quiet roads and field edges, which may be muddy at times after rain, and there is one short field crossing.



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.



**St Andrew's,
Great Finborough**

From the bus shelter, facing the road, turn left, and almost immediately go through the hedge at the fingerpost. Follow the path with fences on both sides before emerging in a vista with wide, distant horizons. There is the old familiar Great Finborough church spire to the west, Stowmarket church spire to the north and Combs church away to the east. Beyond Stowmarket you may be able to pick out the 1,000 ft tall mast at Mendlesham – although this is 7 miles away it often seems much nearer especially when the bright red safety lights are glowing in the gloom.

At a crossroad of paths go left, down a descending farm track with fields on either side and birds in the air. At the bottom, the lowest point on the circuit, turn left and then left again after 100 yards. After a few yards bear right with the Charcoal and Churches walk signpost on the bend.

As you go round a gentle left hand curve you will see Jack's Grove, a small wood, ahead of you. On the Ordnance Survey maps this has a "Mill Mound" marked but there is no written history of any mills here. Oral history, as recorded in Pevsner's 'Buildings of England, Suffolk', suggests that boats, at one time, were able to use the stream that you have just walked beside to get from the mill to the River Rat at Combs Ford. It seems hard to believe.

Look to the right and when you get level with a field hedge (a short way across the field on your right) pointing up to the roof tops at Boyton Hall, turn right. There is a broken off footpath sign here that you may see to help point the way. If you get as far as the power lines you have gone too far.

Head across one field then a three-sleeper bridge and follow a wide, grassy, steadily rising field edge to Boyton Hall. On reaching the concrete road, pause a moment to take in the open views from one of the highest points in the village.

Turn left. Just after passing under the power lines a footpath sign tempts you to go right along a reinstated footpath across the field to Great Finborough – this is not for today, but we do thank the farmers that maintain and reinstate the paths across their land. Also thanks to the farmers that allow Permissive Paths around their fields these do help greatly in being able to vary the length of any walk.

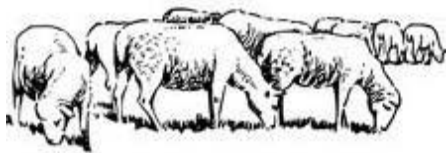
Continue ahead to meet Jack's Lane (who was Jack?), then left and right to the start of Jockey's Lane (who was the Jockey?). For a short walk (2.5 miles) follow Jack's Lane back to reach Park Road, very near to where your walk started.

Walk the full length of Jockey's Lane – almost a mile – with little for company except the birds flitting along the hedge or an occasional rabbit diving for the ditch. Emerge on to Bildeston Road by Kizimbani and turn left. For a shorter walk (3.75miles) follow Bildeston Road back into the village and the start point.



There is a footpath through Fir Tree Farm but this can be difficult so follow the road for 100 yards and turn right down a Permissive Path through a short wooden section then a field edge with a hedge on the right. A straight grassy stretch with a deep ditch on the right leads to Mill Lane.

Turn left here and follow this quiet lane past The Nursery, the footpath signs left and right on Circular Walk One, and reach the Old Mill House with a date board of 1769. There was a post mill here, known as Branstead Mill (or Brad Street Mill?), which was demolished in 1937.

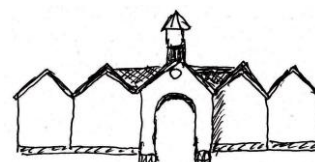


Continue ahead and turn right at a double, five-bar gate with the grounds of the Old Rectory hidden from view on the left and then there is the park with its grazing sheep for much of the year. On reaching Tannery Road turn left passing the Tannery buildings – now

home to several small firms (see elsewhere on website for details) – and the Virginia Creeper clad Tannery House.

Follow the Charcoal and Churches walk direction post up beside Webbs Close and continue ahead until you reach Park Road near to Model Farm. Turn left to return to the start point hopefully having enjoyed the highs and lows of Combs and the flora and fauna along the way.

Curiously the mill that gave the name to Mill Road in Battsford was, due to a very convoluted parish boundary, technically within the parish of Combs. This mill, known as Upper Mill, dated from the mid-18c and was demolished in the late 1920s.



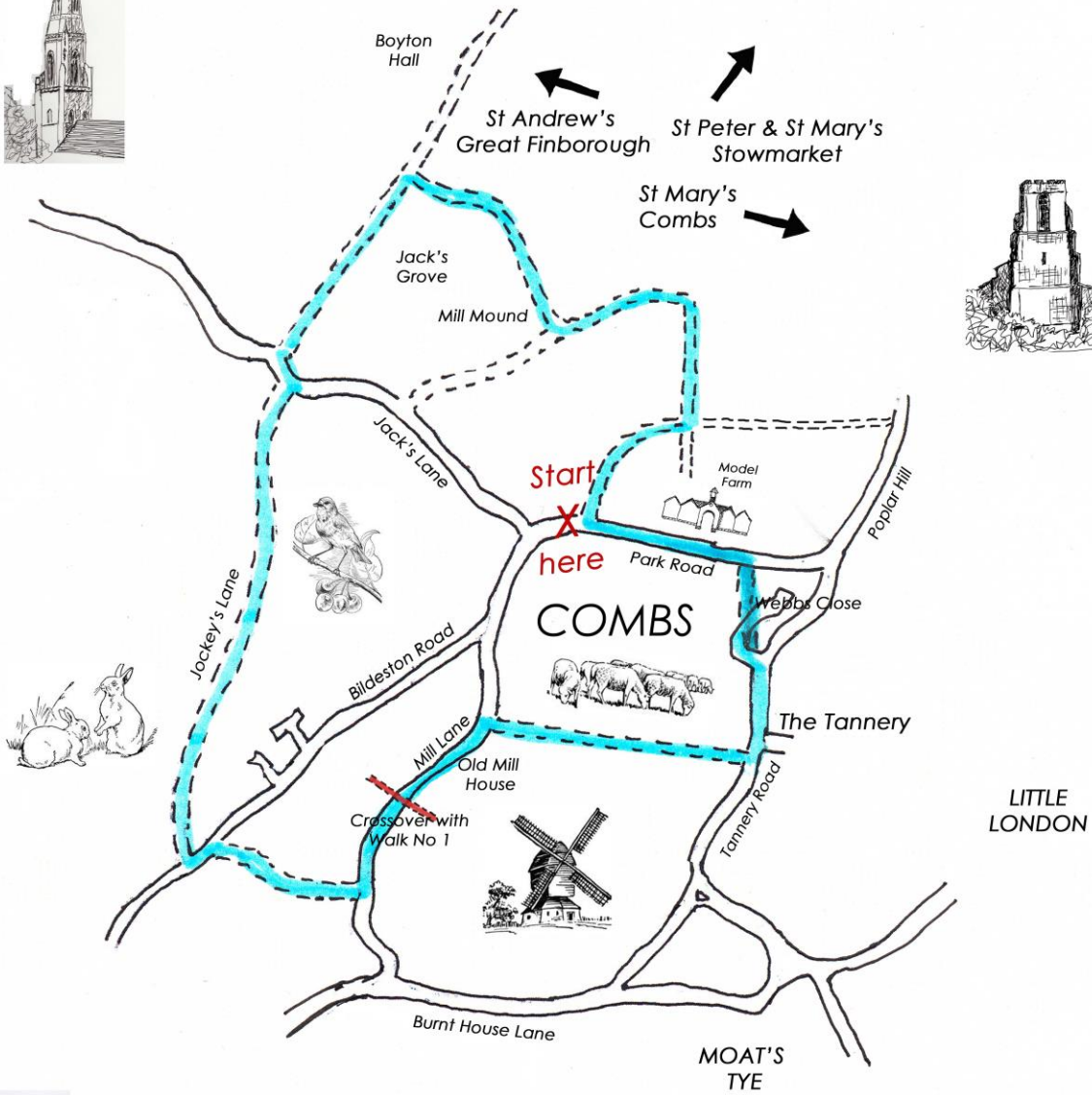
Model Farm




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

Walk planned and written by Bill Baldry
Map by Sara Waterer
Historical facts checked by Combs History Club

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

**Combs Circular Walk
Number Two
4.75 miles (shortcuts available)**



-  Road
-  Footpath
-  Route (Circular Walk Two)

NOT TO SCALE