

Combs Valley Views Circular Walk

This 2.6 mile walk takes about 50 minutes and has a few vantage points from which our rolling landscape can be viewed. The walk is mostly along quiet roads and footpaths.

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.

Across the road from the bus shelter is one of Combs lost pubs. It is now Bay Tree House but until 1989 it was the Live and Let Live, a busy Greene King hostelry. Go right and turn right into Jack's Lane which is a single track road with a few twists and turns and although it isn't generally busy do keep your eyes and ears open for traffic.

The road bends around a water reservoir and to the right a gap on the hedge affords splendid views across the fields to Stowmarket. The field falls away to a valley on the left and on the opposite hill Boyton Hall can be seen.

Continue along the Lane and follow it downhill. At the bottom, a signpost on the left hand side directs you across a small footbridge and onto a path which follows the field drainage ditch to the left and a small copse on the right. After a small left-right dogleg, continue until the path reaches a wide field straight ahead with a pylon close by. Turn left here and follow the path uphill, keeping the hedge to your left. At the top, turn around to take in the view – a great vantage point from which to take in a big Suffolk sky!

Continue to the main road and turn right for 20 or so yards. On the left hand side there's a footpath sign on the edge of a house bounded by a wooden fence. Take this path and follow it to its end and emerge onto Mill Lane. Opposite and slightly to the right there's a gap in the hedge with a view across the other valley of Combs up to Moats Tye – you may just be able to make out the Cricket Ground. There's also a seat there on which weary bones can be rested.

Turning back to Mill Lane, turn right and walk along it with Mattocks Farm on your left and, shortly, Old Mill House and then West End Farm on the right. Follow Mill Lane downwards and where it curves around to the left take the footpath on the right, bounded by a drainage ditch on the left and a wire fence on the right. This short walkway opens up onto a splendid view across the valley towards Moats Tye and Little London and at the right time of year you may see a golden expanse of wheat or barley under a big Suffolk sky.

The hedge on the left is full of blossom in Spring and berry in Autumn; haws, hips, blackthorn, elder. Across the hedge are splendid views of the expansive parkland; grazing sheep (with lambs in the springtime) and a selection of varied trees, some very old.

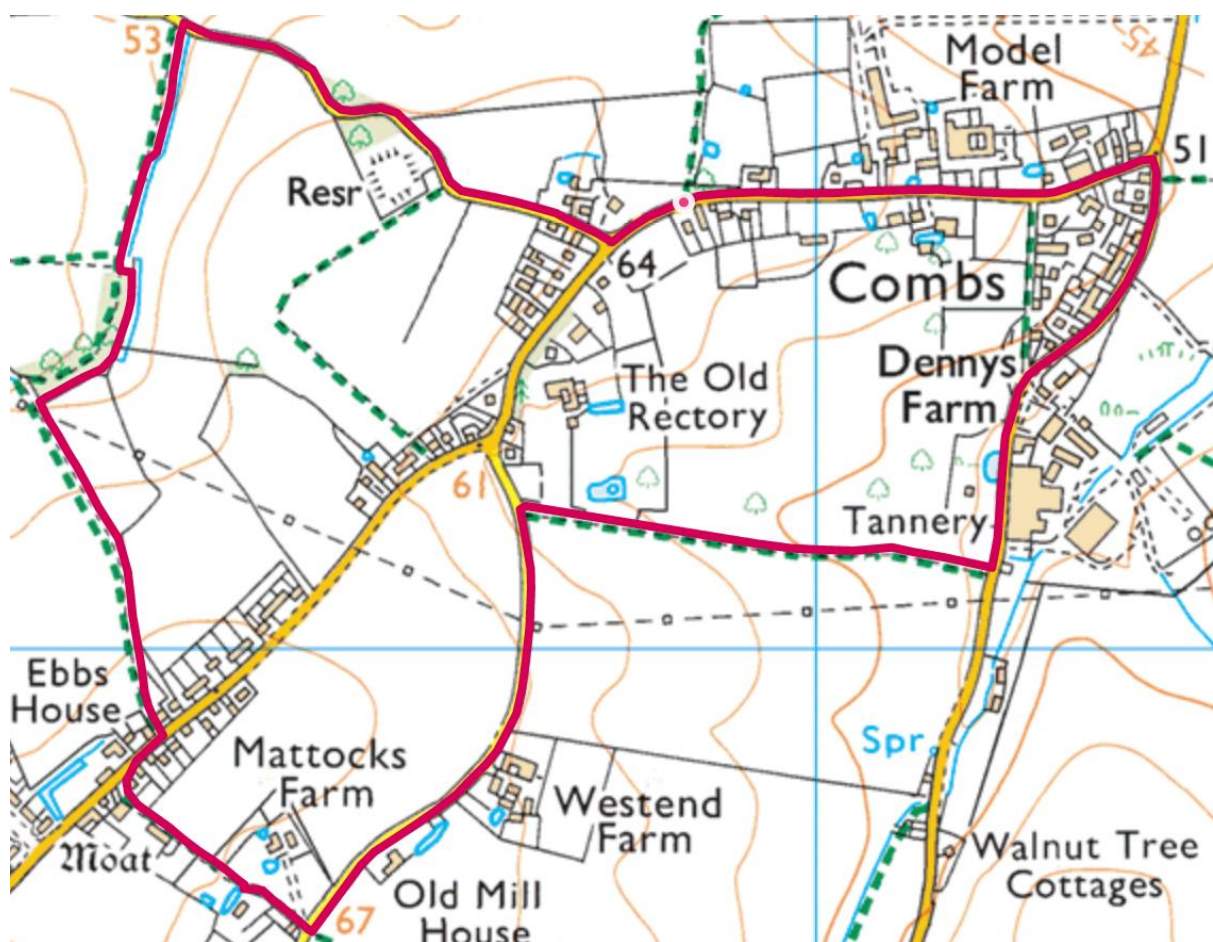
Continue down the path and exit left onto Tannery Road. Walk up the hill with the Tannery buildings on your right and a pond on your left - you may see ducks or moorhens – and the Virginia creeper-covered office buildings which are glorious in the Autumn. See also the enormous redwood tree at the back of the lawn past the pond, estimated to have been planted in the mid-19th century and still growing!

On reaching Webb's Close, take the path on the right which cuts the bend in the road. This path – part of the Charcoal and Churches Walk which can be found on the Parish website – was originally made to allow easy access for the Tannery's resident fire tender to the old Combs School which

dates from 1857 and closed in 1970. It was known as the Tan Path as it used to be laid over with the bark from the tanning process.

Continue to the end of the path (the fields on the left are often home to new-born lambs in the Spring) and enter back on Park Road, crossing it and turning left. On the right is Model Farm, erected by Lankester Webb in 1867 and is one of Combs's 51 listed buildings. See if you can spot the electric light fitting now embedded into one of the trees at the entrance. Continue along Park Road to complete the circuit.

Walk planned and written by Tony Kitson building on earlier work by Bill Baldry. We thank the Combs History Club for checking historical facts. For more walks visit: www.combsvillage.org.uk/walks.html



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