



## Walk 8. Around Combe Martin.

- 4.2 miles, ascents and descents of 300 metres. 1 hour 45 minutes constant walking, allow around 2½ hours.

Terrain: Roads, paths and fields, with some potentially slippery descents and muddy sections.

Access: Park in Combe Martin. There is a convenient car park near the sea front (SS 577 472, close to EX34 0DJ), but outside of the winter months it is cheaper to park in the Cormelles car park near the church (SS 586 464, EX35 0LG). A bus (301) runs from Ilfracombe and Barnstaple to Combe Martin.

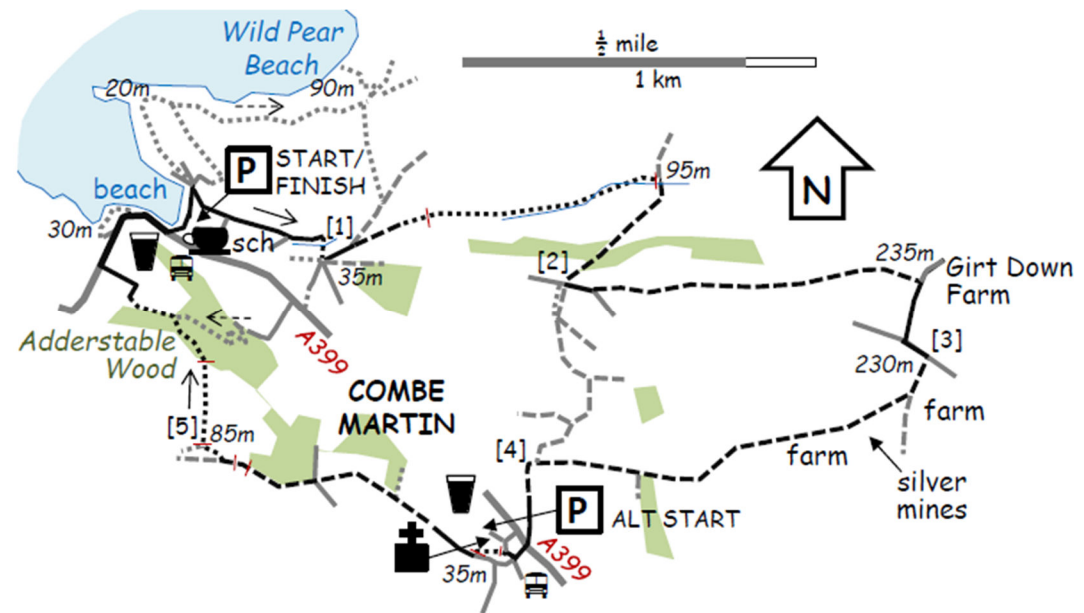
Maps: Croydecycle 05 Combe Martin and Hunter's Inn or OS Explorer OL9 Exmoor.

Refreshments: Several options in Combe Martin particularly at the beach end.

COMBE MARTIN WAS ONCE A CENTRE OF FRUIT AND VEGETABLE PRODUCTION and it still holds an annual strawberry fair. Silver mining was also carried out near the village intermittently between the thirteenth century and the end of the nineteenth. Nowadays Combe Martin is better known as a small seaside resort. Located in a narrow valley with the old village inland and the newer centre closer to the beach, it never extends very far from the long main street. This sometimes steep walk explores the coastal area and part of the old village around the church along with some of the countryside to either side.

Start at the large beach car park in Combe Martin. Walk up a short flight of steps at the back of the car park and turn right on a tarmac path or lane at the back of houses. Continue behind a school, then bear left to follow the lane alongside a stream. Just before it ends in a cul-de-sac turn right over a small footbridge and head up the path. Turn left at the top on to the road (8mins, [1])\* . Soon take a grassy track forking right, signposted to Great Hangman. This narrows to an enclosed path. Go through a gate and ascend gradually. The path crosses back and forth over a stream. Ignore a path on the left to West Challacombe, but soon afterwards go up some steps at a cascade. Turn right at the top to head upwards on a concrete farm track. Turn left when you meet a road (30mins, [2]). The walk can be shortened by continuing ahead on a footpath here (not the farm drive next to it); it meets a lane at a bend, continuing to the left of a white bungalow, and rejoins the main route by turning right at a T-junction (the 1hr10min point).

\* The lane isn't a right of way but there are no objections to walkers passing through. An alternative way to the same point is to head inland on the main A399 for five minutes or so. Look out for a sign for Saffron House on the left and ascend the steps next to it to join a tarmac footpath. This soon becomes a road, Slackhayes: turn left on the road at the T-junction at the top to continue the walk.



Pass a seat, then turn left on a rough track. This continues ascending, eventually becoming less steep. As it starts to level out there are views to the left over Little Hangman and the coast at Combe Martin. Turn right when you meet a concrete farm lane ('silver mines'; 55mins, [3]). Walk down to the road, turn left, then in about a minute take the first right, another broad farm track. Turn right at the first junction on a wide partly-surfaced track towards Silver Mines Farm; the remains of one of the local mines is just visible in the field on the left. The track descends for three-quarters of a mile. After the short-cut comes in from the right (1hr10mins, [4]) the track turns left and there is a steep and potentially very slippery section on concrete. This swings right and joins a surfaced road as it comes into houses, descending back to the A399.

Cross the main road into Church Street, bearing right to enter the churchyard. Leave through the lych gate and turn right on a lane signposted as a footpath. A little way after passing some houses the path becomes concrete, again possibly slippery. Go straight on at a crossing track, through two road gates, then turn right on a path under trees. In a minute or two turn right over a stile (1hr30mins, [5]) and head across the field towards a lime kiln (this may be fenced off for safety). Continue to a pedestrian gate and enter Adderstable Wood. Follow the main path, keeping left at a junction to walk beside a static caravan park (the path coming up from the right joins from the short walk described overleaf). Soon join a driveway; turn right then left between the houses and stroll down to the main road. Turn right here to arrive back in 'seaside' Combe Martin, walking around the beach to the main car park.

**Short walk: coastal Combe Martin** (● 1.8 miles, ascents and descents of 150 metres). This short walk is, like the main walk, steep in places. Start at the main sea front car park in Combe Martin. Walk uphill and along a closed-off coast road to a bandstand-style shelter, then head up some steps and uphill to a young oak tree with a seat beneath. Just beyond is a gap in the vegetation; go through to take a narrow, rocky path that ascends steeply. Turn left when it meets the official coast path. The path comes to a viewpoint where Little Hangman looms in front of you, and views open up across Combe Martin to the right. Soon after the viewpoint take either fork; the right-hand path has better views. Either way, soon come to a gate.

Turn right just before the gate and descend steeply. Go down some steps to join a lane, turn right and cross a small bridge. Keep straight ahead where a track on the left heads back towards Great Hangman. The road bends to the left; ignore the footpaths, but turn right on a minor road with houses on the right. This descends, via some steps at the end, back to the main street in Combe Martin. Turn right then immediately left into a residents' road (Barton Gate Lane) with a signed public footpath. The road bends around to the right and becomes a track; shortly afterwards take a footpath forking to the left, heading upwards into the woods. Follow the zigzag path, keeping always left and upwards; after a long straight section bear right to walk beside a static caravan park (the main walk joins from the left). Join a driveway; turn right then left between the houses and stroll down to the main road. Turn right here to arrive back in 'seaside' Combe Martin, walking around the beach to the main car park.



*Little Hangman and Combe Martin Bay*

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