



Walk 2A. 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 and muddy sections.

Access: Park in Combe Martin near the sea front (SS577472, close to EX34 0DJ). A bus (301) runs from Ilfracombe and Barnstaple to Combe Martin.

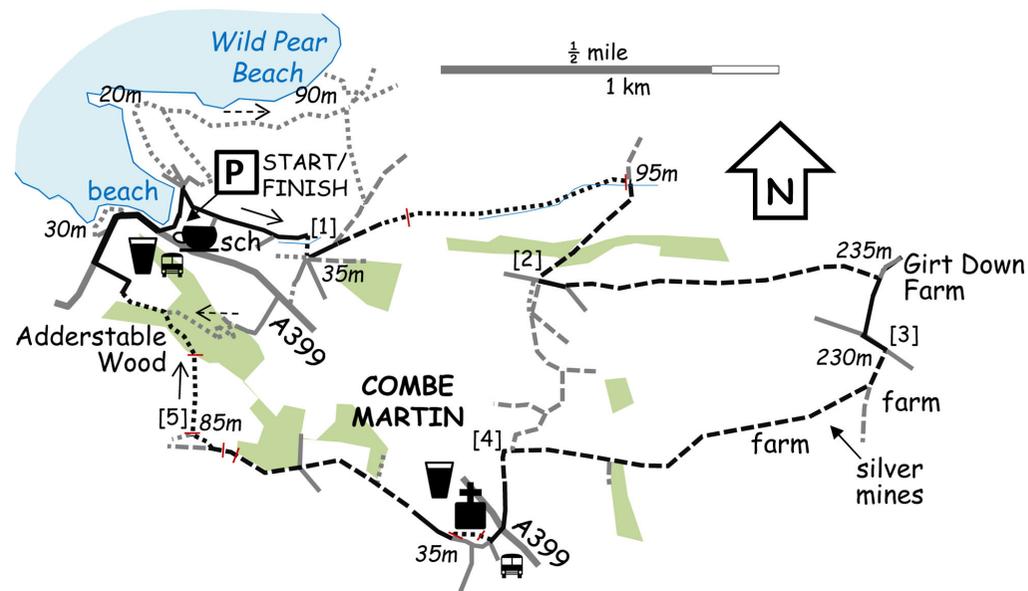
Maps: Croydecycle 05 Combe Martin and Hunter's Inn or OS Explorer OL9 Exmoor.

Refreshments: Several options in Combe Martin, more 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 1890. Nowadays Combe Martin is better known as a small seaside resort. Located in a narrow valley with the old village inland and newer part next 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 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 past a school, then follow the lane alongside a stream. Just before it ends in a private drive, turn right over a small footbridge and head up the path. Turn left at the top on to the road (7½mins, [1]). Come to a fork, and bear right on a grassy track signposted to Great Hangman. The path narrows to the left. Go through a gate and ascend gradually. Come to a footbridge, bearing right to walk beside the stream. Go up some steps at a cascade and turn right and 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).

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 (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 silver mines is hidden 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]) there is a steep and potentially slippery section on a concrete path. This soon joins a surfaced road as it comes into the village.

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. 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 clump of scrub and small trees hiding a lime kiln. Continue to a pedestrian gate and enter a wood. Follow the 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). 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 sea front area and 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. Take the road out of the car park upwards and to the left; ignore the track to the right for the Coast Path, but head across the grass and past some seats to follow a vague path upwards along the field edge, next to the greenery. The path will bring you to a young oak tree with a seat beneath, with views back over Combe Martin and its narrow bay. Just beyond is a gap in the vegetation; go through to take a narrow, rocky path that ascends steeply, and turn left where 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. After the viewpoint the path descends 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 sea front area and the main car park.



Little Hangman and Combe Martin Bay

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