

A gently undulating walk with a couple of short, steep sections & wall steps to Combe and Blenheim Great Park before returning to Stonesfield.

Distance: 11.7km / 7.25 miles with an up and down of 172m / 564ft. (Option to extend by A 2.5 miles or B 2.8 miles).

Time: 3.5 hours (main route)

Start: Village centre, near rear entrance to churchyard. Few car parking spaces. SP394171

Refreshments: Cock Inn, Combe OX29 8NT

Route:

Start in the village centre and walk through the churchyard. At the road turn left and then right into Brook Lane. Carry on until you reach the river **1**.

For extension 1

After crossing the river, continue straight ahead to the far side of the field. Go right through a gate. The footpath soon follows the River Evenlode, under a railway bridge and through Whitehill Wood until you reach a road junction at Ashford Bridge.

Turn left at the cross roads and continue for about 100m and take the bridleway off left. At Holly Court Farm take the uphill track on the left and follow the route across fields to East End. At the road turn left and right at the Roman Villa sign to rejoin the main route at point **2**.

For the main route

Continue straight ahead. The path becomes a track, passing the entrance for Lower Riding Farm. Keep straight ahead, crossing Whitehill Bridge and take the footpath on the left to North Leigh Roman Villa **2**.



Go through the gate, left of the villa entrance. Turn right to follow the footpath to the river and railway. Turn left, go under the railway bridge to the river bridge. Turn right up a slight incline and walk to a gate. Follow the track past farm buildings to Combe.

As you approach Combe ignore any turnings off the lane. At the green on your left carry on along the footpath between some houses. This brings you out onto Park Road **3**.

For extension 2

Take the footpath through Combe churchyard. Turn diagonally right as you leave to go through a gap in the hedge. Follow this direction across several fields until you reach a narrow lane.

Turn left and walk up the lane, then right at the junction. You soon reach the entrance into Blenheim Park on your left.

Once through the gates, go left at the first junction and then follow the public footpath signs, along the Blenheim Estate road. At a route junction take the left hand estate road to Park Farm. At the entrance bear left and look out for an information board by a fence and gate. Go through the gates towards the clump of trees in front of you. Just after the trees, the path goes off left across a field. When you reach an estate track turn right. Almost immediately turn left to rejoin the main route **4**.

Main route

Continue along Park Road past the cricket ground and at the 30mph speed limit sign look out for a footpath sign on your left.

This path takes you to the walls of the Blenheim Estate. Turn left to go over the wall steps and turn left to follow the downhill track through woods to arrive at a grassy area. Go up the track on the far side into the woodland. Now you follow a clearly defined track **4**.

After 1km/0.6 miles take the public footpath on your left, (easy to miss) following the path until you reach the track by the estate wall. Turn right onto the track and, after approx 200m, turn left and climb the wooden steps over the estate wall. Continue straight ahead, following the field edge to the road. Cross the road following the signs for 'Oxfordshire Way'. At the gates **5** through Bagg's Bottom continue straight ahead, until you are back at the River Evenlode.

With the river on your left look for the footpaths ahead of you and take the path on the right. At the far end go through a gateway, turn left and then right. Follow this road all the way back to Stonesfield.

Turn right and right again into Well Lane (signed Oxfordshire Way). At the top of the lane, by the Methodist Church, you reach a cross roads. Go straight on, up the High Street to reach the start point.