

## Points of Interest on this route (see map overleaf for locations)

**A Coombe Bissett Nature Reserve** is managed by Wiltshire Wildlife Trust. More information can be found at: [www.wiltshirewildlife.org/coombe-bissett-down](http://www.wiltshirewildlife.org/coombe-bissett-down)  
Its sweeping views, swooping curves and steep slopes are patterned by medieval terraces called strip lynchets, which were cut into the slopes to create arable fields for farming.

The reserve contains fields that used to be sown with crops but have been restored to downland for the benefit of birds, butterflies, bees and other invertebrates. Wildflowers such as the pyramidal orchid are returning and in summer months the slopes are alive with flowers - from the cowslips in April, through to September when they are a purple haze of devil's bit scabious. The peak of the reserve's flower power is in late May and early June.



**B St Michael and All Angels Church** is built of stone and flint, its earliest features dating from the 12th century. It lies close to the old turnpike road leading to Woodyates.

**C Coombe Bissett** has a rich history dating back thousands of years. The website, [www.coombebissett.com](http://www.coombebissett.com), provides a history of the parish, compiled by Jennifer Acornley.

Human habitation in Coombe Bissett goes back to the Neolithic Age, 4000 to 2500 BC. Neolithic, Bronze Age, Iron Age and Roman artefacts have been uncovered around the area. Anglo Saxon finds from the 7th century AD have been made and the first documents relating to this area are two 10th century charters for land in Coombe Bissett.

The Domesday Book of 1086 includes 'Coombe', which was held by King William. Gytha, who held it before 1066, was almost certainly Countess Gytha, the mother of King Harold.

Jennifer Acornley's history also provides information about the Manor of Coombe Bissett, dating from about 1160.



Field Scabious



Pyramidal Orchid

A gentle stroll around Coombe Bissett Nature Reserve and into the historic village of Coombe Bissett

**Start:** Either: The Coombe Bissett Nature Reserve Car Park, or St Michael and All Angels Church in Coombe Bissett. Ordnance Survey Outdoor Leisure Series Map 130 (Salisbury and Stonehenge). Nature Reserve: OS Grid Reference SU 111256 | W3W [elbowed.wildfires.crowd.com](https://www.wildfires.crowd.com)  
Church (Lych Gate on Thorne Close): OS Grid Reference SU 108263 W3W [failed.assets.treat.com](https://www.failed.assets.treat.com)

**Parking:** Nature reserve car park, or roadside near the church in the village (please park with consideration for others and do not block driveways).

**Terrain:** Fields and wildflower meadows, village lanes (which can be busy). Moderately steep hillside paths and lanes.

**Length:** Nature Reserve up to 2 miles (3.2km), extension to explore the village a further 1.75 miles (2.8km)

**Approximate time:** Allow 3 hours.

**Dogs:** Sections of the nature reserve are grazed by cattle, so keep dogs on leads here and also in other fields where livestock are present.

**Good to know:** The nature reserve car park is small so if it is busy please consider parking in the village.

**Refreshments:** Coombe Bissett Village Stores and the Fox and Goose pub.

*The information is only intended as a general guide. Please check local arrangements.*



Respect everyone  
Protect the environment  
Enjoy the outdoors  
Follow advice and local signs

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[cranbornechase.org.uk](http://cranbornechase.org.uk)

## Coombe Bissett Village and Nature Reserve

A Summertime Paradise of Wildflowers and Butterflies

WALK #  
**W16**



## Directions

There are two possible starting points for this walk, either at the Nature Reserve car park on Pennings Drove (Point 1 on the map) or at the church of St Michael and All Angels in the village (Point 5 on the map). These directions commence at and return to Point 1.

- 1 Enter the nature reserve by the kissing gate at the corner of the car park. Please note that the yellow route line within the area of the reserve as marked on the map is indicative only. Notice boards next to the gate contain a map of the nature reserve with suggested routes by which to explore it, so you are free to choose whichever of these that you wish to. The land coloured pink on the map between Gypsy Lane and Blandford Road is also part of the reserve and can be accessed through a gate off Gypsy Lane near Point 2 on the map.
- 2 When you are ready to leave the nature reserve and extend your walk down into and around the village, go through the gate in the corner of the reserve below the car park, where there is another set of notice boards. Turn left to go downhill on the public bridleway, known as Shutts Lane, which leads into a tarmac road into the village.
- 3 When you reach the village, turn left at the T-junction into Homington Road and continue downhill.
- 4 You will pass the village shop and the village notice board on your right before reaching the church of St Michael and All Angels and the junction of Homington Road and the A354.
- 5 Shortly before the church and the A354, a short footpath to the right cuts the corner, crossing a footbridge over the River Ebble. (If you have chosen to explore the village before visiting the nature reserve, this path will be the starting point for your walk). Follow the path over the bridge, to meet the A354. Keep to the right along the path beside the road, to pass the Fox and Goose pub. Beyond the pub, the path crosses the grass verge and then becomes very narrow alongside the road so take great care along this short section before turning right into the public bridleway (the sign may be partially hidden by the hedge) along Marsh Lane.
- 6 Once past the houses to your right, continue along Marsh Lane. Across the fields to the left stands the large and imposing Homington House. Just before the lane reaches a gate marked "private - keep out", fork left along the path uphill into the woods, with views through the trees to the right of the watercress beds below. At the end of the wood, cross the grass towards the house ahead and continue along the narrow path to the left of and beside the house wall, through two gates to reach open fields, from where there are lovely views of the surrounding countryside.
- 7 Turn right, downhill across the field, to a gate and footbridge over the stream, then straight across the next field and through another gate into Stocksbridge Lane. Keep straight ahead on the footpath along the lane to cross the footbridge over the River Ebble, then uphill between the houses to meet the T-junction with Homington Road.
- 8 Turn right through the village, passing Pennings Drove on the left (although you can if you wish follow Pennings Drove up the hill and back to the nature reserve car park).
- 9 At the junction of Homington Road and Shutts Lane, turn left to return along Shutts Lane, uphill to the gate into the nature reserve, then uphill across the reserve to the car park. If you started your walk in the village, Shutts Lane will take you to the gate into the nature reserve, from where you can explore the reserve in your own time before returning back along Shutts Lane to Homington Road. Turn left, downhill through the village and past the village shop on your right, back to the church.

