



FOLLOW THE COUNTRY CODE

Be safe – plan ahead and follow any signs.

Leave gates and property as you find them.

Protect plants and animals
and take your litter home.

Keep dogs under close control.

Consider other people.

*For the full Countryside Code and information on
where to go and what to do, visit
www.countrysideaccess.gov.uk*

Always wear appropriate footwear and take care when walking in the town or countryside. No responsibility is accepted by the authors of this leaflet for the state or condition from time to time of the paths comprised in these walks.

Please use the car park behind the village hall if you have to drive to the parish to start your walk.

More information can be obtained from Compton Parish Council. See also 'The Story of Compton: a Berkshire Downland Village' by Linnet McMahon & David Mankin. Available from the Parish Council.



Compton Parish lies in the North Wessex Downs
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Compiled by Dick Greenaway
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PARISH PATHS
partnership
A COUNTRYSIDE COMMISSION INITIATIVE

West
Berkshire
COUNCIL

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COMPTON

Footpaths, Bridleways and Byways



COMPTON PARISH COUNCIL

COMPTON – FOOTPATHS BRIDLEWAYS AND BYWAYS

This leaflet gives descriptions of the footpaths, bridleways, byways and restricted byways in the parish of Compton, Berkshire.

Compton lies some ten miles (sixteen kilometres) north of Newbury and, like so much of West Berkshire, is in the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The village lies in a hollow in the Berkshire Downs in the upper valley of the River Pang. The parish is a mixture of large open fields, woods and coppices. The path network is very extensive with twenty six paths of various classifications and many links to other parish networks both in Berkshire and Oxfordshire. The paths offer walks and rides over differing terrains such as Ancient Woodlands, old coppices, across fields and along dry valleys.

For more information on the wider network you should use the Ordnance Survey Explorer maps 158 (Newbury and Hungerford) and 170 (Abingdon, Wantage & Vale of the White Horse). These maps show all Public Rights of Way. Similar leaflets to this have been produced by the Parish Councils of Frilsham, Yattendon, Basildon, Ashampstead and Hampstead Norreys. They illustrate the path network to the south of Compton.

Local parishioners wrote the route descriptions and production of the leaflet was funded by the Parish Paths Initiative. This scheme aims to encourage local people to become involved in looking after and promoting their path network. It provides local councils and groups with the necessary funding, help and advice to complete projects such as this.

THE HISTORY OF COMPTON

The name *Compton* comes from *cwm tun* which means *valley settlement* and describes the village site very well. The Parish of Compton was settled at a very early date. There is evidence of Stone Age, Bronze Age and Iron Age occupation and there are several Bronze Age burial mounds as well as Roman and Saxon sites. The Domesday Book records two estates or manors called Compton and the village is still divided into E and W Compton with the church situated between the two. Evidence of Bronze Age settlement is supplied by the Fox Barrow and of Iron Age settlement by the hill fort of Perborough Castle with the associated field system on Cow Down. The Pang valley and the downs are rich in Roman sites. In more recent times, Compton has been famous for its race horse training and the gallops can be seen from footpaths to the N of the village. The Ridgeway runs along the northern boundary and is claimed as Europe's oldest road, although the evidence for this is controversial!

NATURAL HISTORY

The underlying geology is chalk, overlain with soils ranging from calcareous to clays and flints on the higher ground and alluvial soils in the valley bottom. Many of the paths are bounded by hedges which include hawthorns, blackthorns, spindle, hazel and buckthorn.

There are few woods in the parish but some are ancient and appear on the earliest maps. They consist mainly of deciduous trees with beech, birch, oak and hazel coppices. Their flora is rich with bluebells, wood anemones, dog's mercury and other plants typical of ancient woodland. They are home to roe and muntjac deer, hares and increasing numbers of badgers.

Lapwings, larks, pheasants and buzzards can be seen together with the now commonly seen scavenging red kites.

WALK DESCRIPTIONS

Byway 1. The Ridgeway runs from E Ilsley parish boundary on Compton Downs to Aldworth parish boundary on Roden Downs. It is a broad chalk track with panoramic views including Lowbury Hill to the E and Didcot power station to the N. There is much wildlife including deer, hares, foxes, badgers, barn owls, curlews, lapwings and skylarks. At Churn Bridge it crosses the dismantled GWR line, closed in 1964, which ran from Didcot to Southampton Junction. To the east lies Lower Chance electricity sub station with a Thames Water bore hole to the south. Further east, Roden Farm lies to the south at Roden Down.

Byway 2. The Concrete Road runs from Churn Road NW to the E Ilsley Parish boundary on Compton Downs and is bordered by a wide grass verge and open farmland on both sides with extensive views. Red kites and buzzards are regularly seen.

Bridleway 3. Runs from Hockham Road N to the Ridgeway near the railway bridge. This is a pleasant path alongside the gallops with views across open downland.

Footpath 4. Runs from Churn Road to Cow Lane.

Footpath 5. Starts east of the disused railway station and runs ESE to join Byway 11 This path runs through the garden of the station house, now a private dwelling. It descends by steep steps along the edge of a field. A kissing gate opens onto the site of a Deserted Medieval Village (a Scheduled Ancient Monument). Cross the churchyard to join the Aldworth Road and Footpath 10. Please keep dogs on a lead in the churchyard. Straight ahead at the kissing gate is Footpath 22.

Bridleway 6. Runs from Byway 3 to Churn Road. Footpath 25 runs alongside the path.

Bridleway 7. At Wallingford Road railway bridge take the left path towards the Ridgeway and Byway 11. This wide, hedge lined track undulates towards the open downland. Near the Ridgeway it becomes a wide grassy expanse where stonechats, deer, buzzards and red kites are often seen. Good views to the NW.

Bridleway 8. This path rises quite steeply but there are wide views across the Pang Valley and of Perborough Castle. Coombe Gibbet can be seen in the distance. Look for mistlethrushes.

Bridleway 9. (Also known as the Hitches). At Wallingford Road railway bridge take the right hand path NE towards Crows Foot and Byway 11. There is a steep rise under a green canopy past the sites of Windmill Farm and the old windmill (c.1742). The views to the south include E Compton, the Church, High Elms (the old vicarage) and the Pang valley. A species rich hedgerow flanks much of this path with spindle, blackthorn, hawthorn, buckthorn, dog rose, ivy and much more. Flowers include violets, milk wort, hare bells and cow parsley.

Footpath 10. This path crosses open farmland with pleasant views of E Compton. It continues through a narrow wooded area alongside the sewage treatment works - look out for the resident buzzard. Cross the track into a small copse and paddock beyond following the stream, where you may see watercress growing.

Byway 11. This is a well defined road which is crossed by Footpath 22 after a few yards. Starveall Lower farm is to the E and Grey Ladies Lodge to the W. Foinavon, the 1967 Grand National winner was trained and is buried here. The road becomes chalk lined with ancient hedgerows. From The Crows Foot there are views to Lowbury Hill. Look for masses of cowslips from early May followed by fields of other wild flowers. Watch out for goldfinchs all year round.

Byway 12. This pleasant track, with its ancient hedgerows, trees, shrubs and wildlife, can easily be incorporated into a circular walk. Splendid views of Lowbury Hill and open downland.

Restricted Byway 13. This short track can also be combined with Byway 11, Byway 12 and the Ridgeway to make a delightful circular walk. Starts under a dense canopy of ancient hedgerow and opens out to give views over open downland and Lowbury Hill to the N.

Footpath 14. Runs from Station Road to Wallingford Road, through paddocks where there are some splendid horse chestnut trees. There are good views of the village. There may be horses and foals in the paddocks.

Footpath 15. Runs from Burrell Road - to the W of the Coronation Hall - to the High Street.

Footpath 16. Runs from School Road to the SW of the Primary School, along the edge of the recreation ground to Burrell Road to join 16a.

Footpath 16a Runs from Burrell Road between properties 48 and 50 across the school playing field to the Hampstead Norreys road past the Downlands sports centre. Please keep dogs on a lead.

Byway 17. This path includes moderate to steep slopes. It is regularly used by farm traffic and livestock and is deeply rutted in places. It can be water logged in wet weather. From the NE end there is a wide view of the Compton valley including most of the village. It then runs between mature hedges. To the south lies Cheseridge Farm which is on the site of a much older farm. To the NW lies Hill Barn. The path junction with a track linking Hill Barn and Cheseridge makes Four Elms Cross Roads. The original four elm trees have gone but there are many mature oak and ash trees. Ashridge Wood lies to the W.

Restricted Byway 18. This path includes moderate slopes and low lying parts of the path can be water logged in prolonged wet spells. The path runs between dense, well established hedges that in many places obscure the views of rolling hills and woodland.

There is evidence of an ancient field system to the W of the path towards Ashridge wood. There are many very old oak and beech trees in the western hedge. Rabbits, weasels, stoats, buzzards and red kites are a common sight and barn owls can often be spotted in the evenings.

Footpath 19. Runs from Cheap Street, through a small estate to Hockham Road.

Footpath 20. Runs from Warnhams Lane S of Cheseridge Farm SSW to Green Hams Lane.

Bridleway 21. Runs from School Road, opposite the Primary School up Shepherd's Hill. Note interesting cottages with Lady Wantage windows. The path rises steeply to a road with views over E Compton and the Pang Valley towards Hampstead Norreys and the old railway track. Look out for muntjac, roe and Sika deer, woodpeckers, sparrowhawks. Join Hampstead Norreys Road or link with Footpath 23.

Footpath 22. Runs from Footpath 5 behind Church Farm then across a cultivated field to Footpath 11.

Footpath 23. Runs from Footpath 21 along a field edge and through Hawk Croft Copse. Look for wood anemones, bluebells, primroses, celandine and honeysuckle.

Byway 24. This path follows a clearly defined track used by farm traffic. To the SE the view takes in Roden Down which was the site of Roman burials.

Footpath 25. This path runs beside Bridleway 6 and separates walkers from riders.

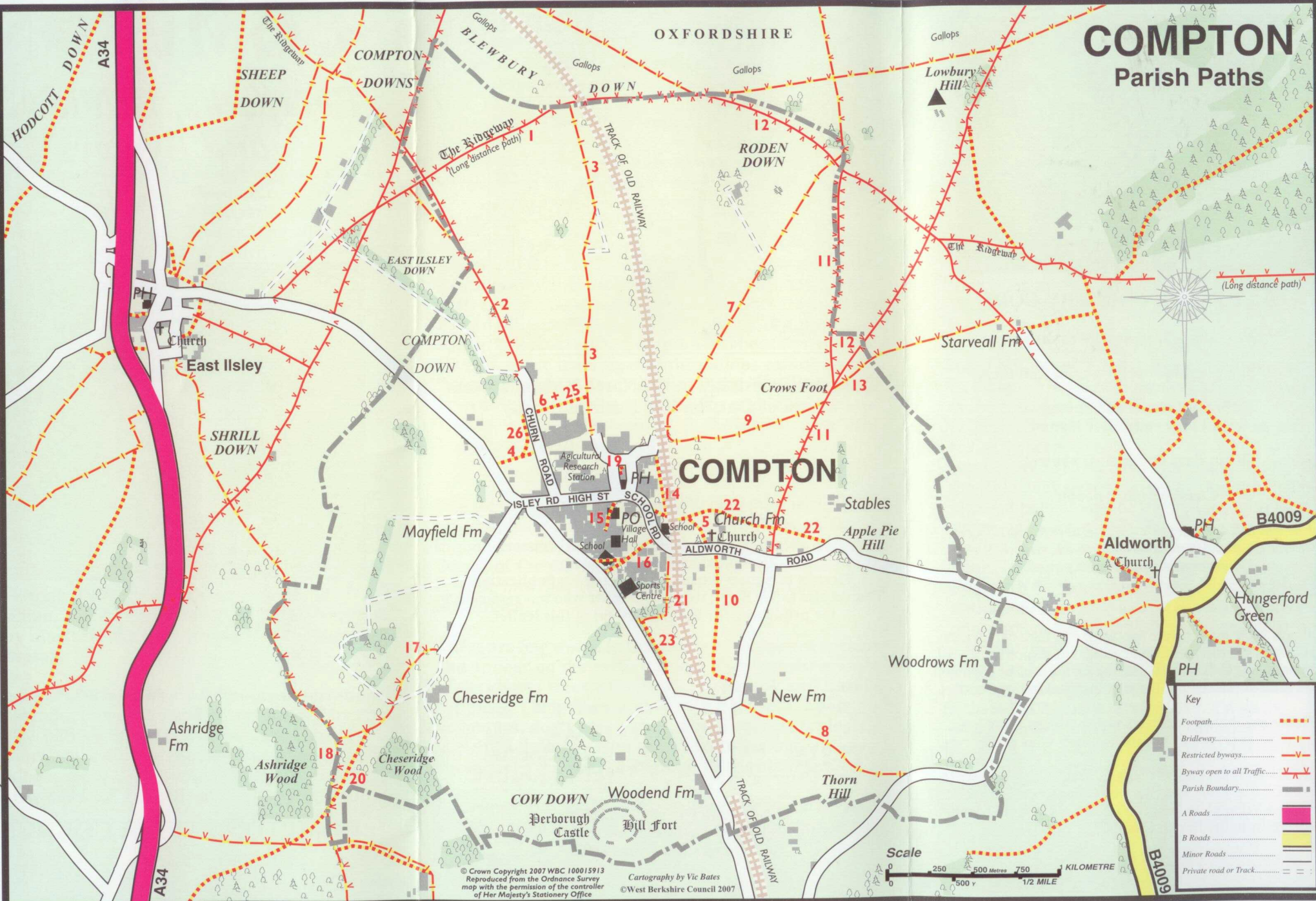
Footpath 26. Runs from the W side of Churn Road to Footpath 4. It passes along a field edge and past a small wooded area. There are splendid views towards E Ilsley.

To OXFORD

To Farnborough

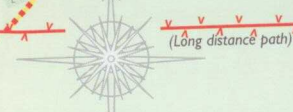
To Stanmore

To Stanmore



COMPTON Parish Paths

OXFORDSHIRE



COMPTON

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To Beedon

To NEWBURY

To Hermitage

To Hermitage

To Goring