A good all-weather walk on well-surfaced paths; this lovely walk provides a scenic loop around many of the heritage buildings and the four Conservation Areas of Cobham and Downside. Key buildings are marked by letters on the map.

How to get there: Start at St Andrew’s Church on Church Street, in the centre of Cobham

Parking: Park in Hollyhedge car park, off Downside Bridge Road - just 1-2 minutes away

Length of the walk: Approx 1½ hour (4.2 miles / 6.8 kms), with an optional loop of ½ hour (1.3 miles / 2.1 kms) to Painshill Park

The Map

The Walk

1. Start at St Andrew’s Church (point A on map), which is a Grade 1 listed building, dating from the 12th century and preserving a Norman tower, although much altered and extended in the 19th century. Walk along Church Street which forms the ‘spine’ of Cobham’s first Conservation Area. Look out for some of Cobham’s best known old houses – Church Stile House (17th century and later), and across the road is Overbye (18th century and later). Further down Church Street is Lime House (18th century), Mole Cottage (17th century) and Phoenix (18th century village shop).
At the end of Church Street turn right and walk towards the river Mole, the Cobham Village Sign and Cobham Mill, passing The Cobham Ivy restaurant (15th century and later) and ‘Wildwood – The Old Bear’ pub (late 16th century) – originally a farmhouse. Set back from the road is Ham Manor, one of Surrey’s finest 18th century houses.

2. **The Cobham Mill (B)** and Riverhill is one of Cobham’s prettiest areas. Opposite the Mill is The Old Mill House (15th century) home of Cobham’s millers for many centuries, and a little further on is the newly renovated **Cedar House (C)** originally a timber framed open Hall, dating from the 15th century.

The River Mole rises in the North Downs and meanders along the edge of Box Hill before flowing through Cobham and out to the Thames at Molesey. Historically the Mole has been significant to the development of Cobham. There were many mills along its course including three in Cobham – two of which still survive. Cobham Mill (C. 1820) was restored to working order in 1993 and is open to the public on the second Sunday of each month, from April – October 2-5pm - see [www.cobhammill.org.uk](http://www.cobhammill.org.uk) for details.

3. Continue along the riverside path, passing over to the left the rounded grassy hump of a WWII air raid shelter. Fork right into Tilt Road, just past the Old Fire Station (1839). This was originally built as Cobham’s first purpose built school. Further along is the **Running Mare pub (D)**, a public house from at least 1756, and set on the edge of what remains of the Tilt Common. Looking back you can see an avenue of cherry trees, a memorial to Cobham men killed in World War II.

Prior to enclosure in the 18th century, the Tilt covered a much larger area. In the past there has been a racecourse here as well as a cricket green. **The Tilt** now forms Cobham’s **second Conservation Area** and there is a mix of 19th and 20th century houses and cottages here, alongside more established properties such as Woronoake (17th century), and Elm Farm (once home to Gerrard Winstanley), both on the right-hand side.

As you walk down the Tilt you will pass a footpath sign to Cobham cemetery on the right. Opened in 1885 the cemetery stands between the Tilt and the river Mole, and houses the McAlpine Mausoleum, built in 1934 by the McAlpine family to commemorate Sir Robert, the 1st Baronet McAlpine, who founded the McAlpine Construction & Engineering Firm that still operates today. Opposite look out for the nameplate on a new housing development marking the site of the Purefoy’s factory which made some of the parts for ‘Dambuster’ bombs. A little further on, on the right, are also Korea Cottages and the former Cobham Workhouse (late 18th century).

4. **Look out for Ashford Farm House (E)**, (15th century) on the corner where Tilt Road takes a sharp left-hand bend. Just before reaching this bend, turn right at a footpath sign to reach another entrance to the cemetery, where you then fork left onto a bridleway to cross the river Mole via Ashford Bridge, heading for Downside along a wide surfaced track. The land on either side belongs to the Cobham Park estate and retains a 19th century parkland appearance.
Keep following the track for approx. 850 metres and at a gate onto a road, turn right up the road. (NB The Downside Mill is located near the left of the gate. Once owned by Alexander Raby, it is a late 18th to early 19th century mill and industrial complex, and was operated as a metalworking site for almost 40 years. It is located on a private estate and now sadly hidden from public view).

Walk up a slight incline, then take a signed bridle-path off to the left through a gate where a track leads across a field, emerging in Downside, alongside St Michael’s Chapel (F). [If a slightly shorter walk is desired, you can alternatively continue on the road all the way to Downside Road, omitting Downside village]

5. St Michael’s Chapel was originally a bakehouse. Next to it is the pump donated by Harvey Combe to his tenants at Downside.

Much of Downside village, situated around its large common, forms the third Conservation Area. Downside largely owes its appearance to the Combe family who built many of the cottages here in the 19th century for their estate workers. Stroll across the common towards the far end, where you can enjoy refreshments at The Cricketers (G), which has stood on this site since at least 1598 and which has been a pub since the 1830’s.

Return back across the common, following the edge of a line of trees, to a small pond, opposite which are Elm Tree Cottage (16th century) and the tiny cottages of Tinman’s Row (H) – an important group of early 19th century industrial cottages built by Alexander Raby for the workers at Downside Mill.

At the end of the common, turn left along Downside Common Road and then left again at a T Junction into Cobham Park Road, a peaceful leafy lane that runs alongside Cobham Park. Along here is Cobham Lodge built by the architect J. B Papworth in 1804.

At the junction with the busier Downside Road is a small half-hidden dried up pond – Curtain Pond, which will be the subject of a new renovation project for the Cobham Heritage Trust.

6. Turn right here in the direction of Cobham, passing on the left Cobham Stud, Challenge Fencing (previously the site of the Waggon and Horses Ale House) and The Medicine Garden. Built around 1845, the Medicine Garden was once a walled garden dedicated to growing fruit for Cobham Park, the estate owned by the Combe family.

The entrance to Cobham Park (now private apartments) is on the right-hand side of the road. The present house, built in 1870 by Charles Combe – a descendant of Harvey Christian Combe, brewer and Lord Mayor of London, replaces an important one built in the 1730s which was almost certainly designed by the noted architect Roger Morris. The Combe family has been major landowners in the Cobham area since 1806. Dominic Combe still lives in the area today and retains ownership of much of the original land.
Cobham’s fourth Conservation Area, Plough Corner, includes Cobham Park and the buildings around the junction of Plough Lane and Downside Road. These include The Medicine Garden, the Plough Inn (I) - a pub since 1746; and a selection of cottages including Plough Corner Cottage (late 16th century).

Continue along Downside Road. On the left are Plough Meadows which can be crossed by a footpath leading from the stile here. Next is Downside Bridge, rebuilt after the severe floods of 1968. The old manor house, Cobham Court is in the distance on the left.

At a road corner just by our start point at St Andrew’s Church is a small drive on the right that leads to Church Cottage and Church Gate House both of which date from the 18th century. In the churchyard you will see the mausoleum of the Combe family who owned Cobham Park.

Optional loop to Painshill

Continue on from St Andrew’s along the Downside Bridge Road, past Pyports on the left, and St Andrew’s Walk on the right, to a marked footpath on the left.

Pyports dates from the late 16th century and takes the name from the Pyport family who had a house on this site in the 14th century. This house has seen a series of notable residents pass through its doors, including Admiral Huste (protégé of Nelson) and the Lushington family whose visitors included Matthew Arnold, William Holman Hunt, Sir Hubert Parry, Ralph Vaughan Williams and Virginia Wolfe. Part of the estate is now used by Tozers Seeds.

Take this footpath that runs between Pyports on the left and the allotments on the right, and which continues past the Cobham Community Garden. At a footpath junction at a telephone mast, turn right and continue on a footpath between a line of trees on the left, and shrubbery bordering the Leg O’ Mutton field on the right. The Leg O’ Mutton field is an important open space and the last surviving remnant of the Church Field, one of the common fields in medieval times. It was this field which kept the communities of Church Cobham and Street Cobham apart.

Continue along this tree-lined path until you reach the car park and entrance to Painshill Park (J), one of the 18th century’s great landscape parks. You can take time out of the walk to visit Painshill, open daily, or come back another time.

Continuing the walk, leave Painshill through the car park and continue along the footpath on the right of the entrance road, to the main road at Between Streets. Here you stand on the edge of what was once known as Street Cobham. Turn right along the pavement and then immediately fork right along a surfaced footpath that leads across a small residential road and on towards the football pitches and back to the Leg O’ Mutton field. Cross the road and return back to the Hollyhedge car park and St Andrew’s church.