

Cycling Trails in Devon

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www.devon.gov.uk/cycling
www.discoverdevon.com

Devon
County Council 

Discover Devon for yourself!

Cycling is a great way to see Devon at its best and will provide you with easy access to some of the best of the county's natural heritage. Devon is renowned not only for its peace and unspoilt beauty but also for the wide range and superb network of cycle routes that are available.

Ranging in length and difficulty, there are routes to suit every level of cycling experience and ability, each with its own special attractions. You will discover exciting off road cycling, leisurely afternoon rides and challenging longdistance routes. There's wonderful scenery, unspoilt villages, urban routes - feel the sun on your back, the wind in your hair.

You will find over 150 miles of National Cycle Network in Devon. The 'Devon Coast to Coast' links Ilfracombe in the north with Plymouth in the south taking in breathtaking coastal, moorland and country views along the way. Part of the 'West Country Way' runs alongside the tranquil Grand Western Canal where wildlife abounds. You may even catch sight of a kingfisher or dragonflies.

You will be sure to build up an appetite. There are plenty of rural pubs, riverside taverns and tea shops along the routes. Take time to stop off, relax in the sun and enjoy the wide range of locally produced

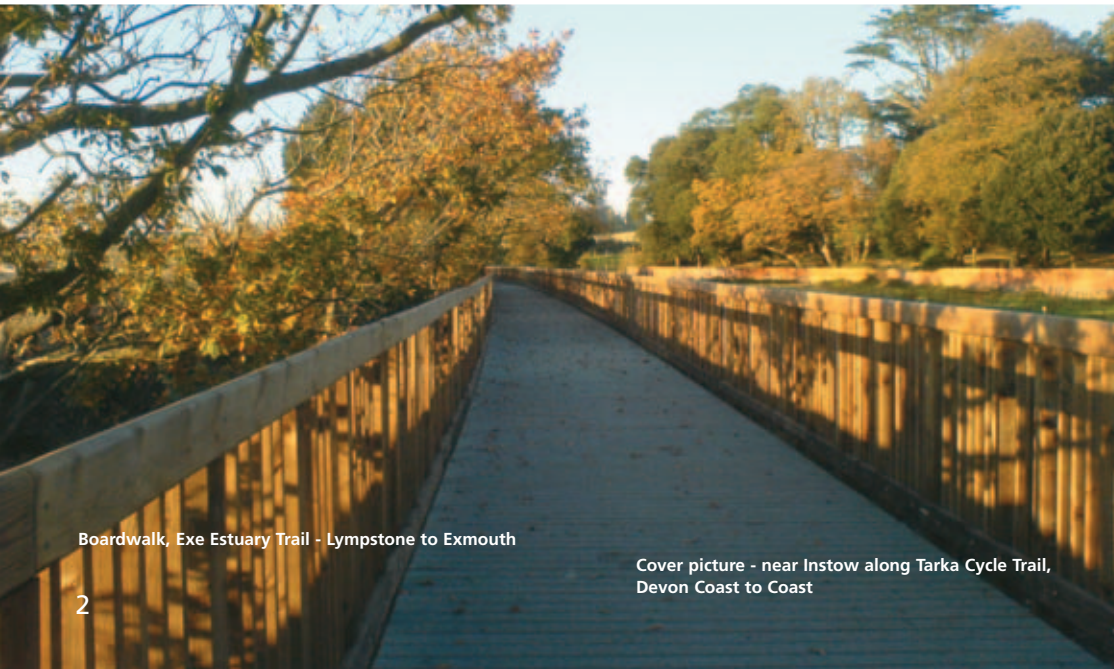


Town Cycle Maps (see page 24)

food available, from Devon pasties to fresh scallops, not forgetting the world famous Devon cream tea - you will most definitely be spoilt for choice ...

Do remember that some of the routes include some lengthy stretches where facilities are limited. So be sure to pack a picnic with tasty goodies from the local shop.

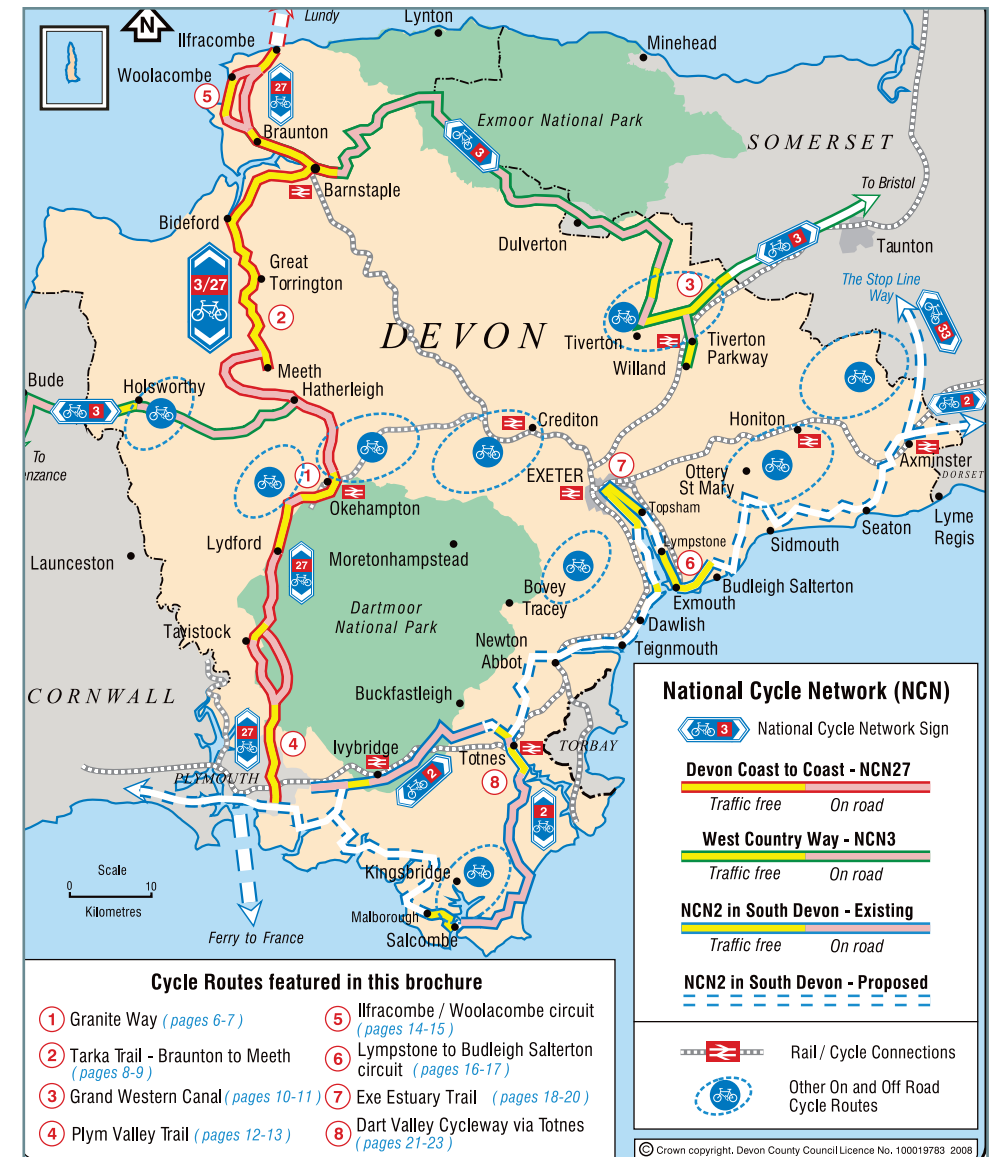
We hope you will enjoy this brochure. There are plenty of cycling routes to discover during a short break - with so many choices you may need to stay even longer!



Boardwalk, Exe Estuary Trail - Lymington to Exmouth

Cover picture - near Instow along Tarka Cycle Trail, Devon Coast to Coast

Devon - the cycling county of the South West



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National Cycle Network in Devon

(See Devon map on page 3)

Over 150 miles of the National Cycle Network (NCN) are in Devon; this 10,000 mile network is an initiative developed by Sustrans, working with local authorities and others. The routes are designed to be safe for novice cyclists, useful for local journeys and a memorable experience for visitors.

In Devon there are two NCN routes that are fully mapped, the 'Devon Coast to Coast' and the 'West Country Way'. A third, NCN2, the South Coast Route, is under development. Some sections are open. See map on page 3.

Devon Coast to Coast - NCN Route 27

The Devon Coast to Coast (NCN Route 27) links Ilfracombe on the north coast with Plymouth on the south coast for a distance of 102 miles/163 km. This is a classic route through the heart of Devon, which is traffic-free for extensive sections, often tracing the course of former railway lines. It passes through tunnels and across breathtaking viaducts and bridges, taking in spectacular views, the beaches and estuaries of north Devon, lush green river valleys, the moorlands of Dartmoor, market towns and the bustling city of Plymouth. The route runs via Branton, Barnstaple, Bideford, Great Torrington, Hatherleigh, Okehampton and around the edge of Dartmoor National Park to Tavistock and Plymouth.

Whether you are planning a long weekend trip across Devon or an easy day's cycling from Plymouth, Okehampton or Barnstaple, this route is the way to explore the varied countryside without using the car. There are also many links and spurs to explore and enjoy, such as the Sticklepath Cycle Route from Okehampton or from Clearbrook to the Bere Peninsular cycle route.



Devon Coast to Coast route, Instow

Devon Coast to Coast



Traffic free sections include:

- Ilfracombe to Willingcot Cross - 4miles / 6.5km (Ilfracombe/Woolacombe Circuit - page 18)
- Branton to Meeth - 32miles/52km (Tarka Cycle Trail - page 8)
- Okehampton to Lydford - 11miles/18km (Granite Way - page 6)
- Clearbrook to Plymouth - 7miles/11kms (Plym Valley Trail - page 16)

West Country Way - NCN Route 3

The West Country Way (NCN Route 3) from Bristol to Padstow, crosses Devon for 105 miles/168km from the Somerset border near Tiverton to the Cornwall border near Holsworthy. It runs alongside the tranquil Grand Western Canal, before crossing Exmoor, followed by a section through Barnstaple, Bideford and Great Torrington which it shares with the Devon Coast to Coast cycle route. It then heads west to Holsworthy, and onto Bude and Padstow in Cornwall. The route encompasses a great variety of scenery from the commanding heights of Exmoor to the flatness of the Taw-Torridge estuary and lush river valleys, passing along quiet canal towpaths, through idyllic rural villages, all of which typify Devon's beautiful countryside. It also offers sections that will suit all cyclists. Families, even those with young children, can enjoy a half-day trip along the traffic-free sections; dedicated touring cyclists will enjoy the

challenge of the majestic landscape of Exmoor and the superb views of Dartmoor between Hatherleigh and Tavistock, as part of a long-distance touring holiday.

West Country Way



Traffic free sections

- Tiverton to Sampford Peverell 4miles/7km (Grand Western Canal - page 10)
- Tiverton Parkway to Willand 3miles/5km (Grand Western Canal - page 10)
- Barnstaple to Petrockstowe Old Station via Bideford and Torrington 24miles/38km (Tarka Cycle Trail - page 8)

West of Petrockstowe towards Bude in Cornwall continual improvements are being made to increase the lengths of traffic free paths often along disused railway lines and over impressive viaducts towards the sea.

South Coast - NCN Route 2

This route will run from Plymouth to the Dorset border via Exeter. It is under development but there are a number of very attractive mainly traffic free sections already constructed.



Double Locks Exeter Canal

South Coast Route



Traffic free sections include

- Totnes to Dartington 21/2miles/4km (Totnes Cycle Tours - page 12)
- Totnes to Ashprington 3miles/5km (Totnes Cycle Tours - page 12)
- Lymington to Budleigh Salterton 2miles/3.5km (Exmouth to Budleigh Cycle Tour - page 14)
- Exeter St Davids Station to Turf Lock/Topsham (Exeter Quay, Topsham & Turf Lock - pages 20-22)

Other routes not featured in brochure

- Dawlish to Dawlish Warren (via Ladies Mile)
- Exe Estuary Trail (see 'Exminster/Exwick to Exeter City Centre' leaflet)



Granite Way by Lake Viaduct

1 The Granite Way

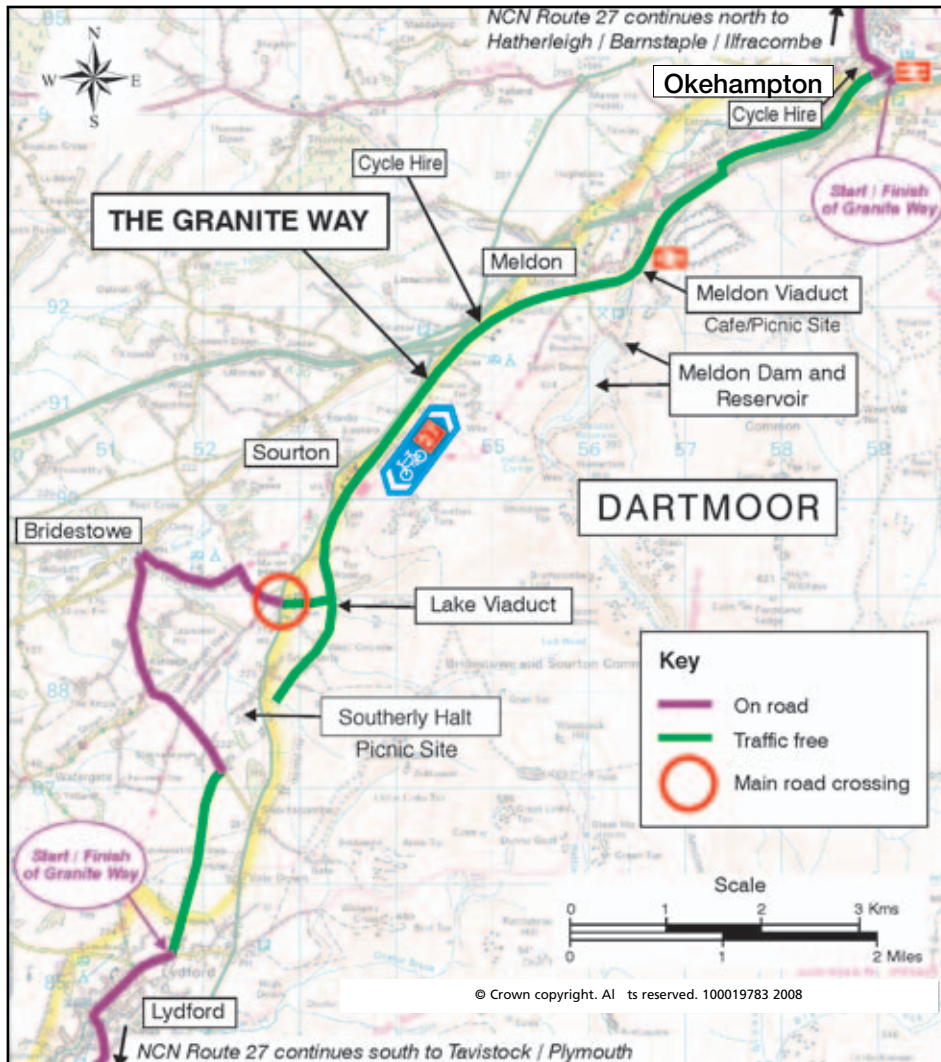


This is a truly spectacular and mostly traffic free cycle route through rural Devon with fantastic views of Dartmoor and the surrounding countryside. The route is part of the National Cycle Network 'Devon Coast to Coast' Route 27.

Okehampton to Lydford

Starting points:

- Okehampton Station. Car Park at the station under the rail bridge by the Youth Hostel.
- Lydford. Car Park opposite Castle Inn.



From Okehampton Station, the route leads you along level purpose built paths to Meldon Viaduct. On leaving Okehampton you will see Okehampton Castle and breathtaking views over Dartmoor and the local countryside. Okehampton Castle is one of the most extensive castle ruins in Devon, with a Norman motte, added to in the 11th and 14th century. Owned by the Earl of Devon, it was destroyed in 1539 by Henry VIII who executed the Earl for treason.

At Meldon there are wonderful views of Meldon Dam and Dartmoor beyond. Below the viaduct you will see remains of fascinating man-made workings that remind you how much Dartmoor has been shaped by man's activities over the centuries. (The Museum of Dartmoor Life in Okehampton has much information about this.)

A Visitor Centre and station at Meldon is served by steam trains in summer and certain other times. Further west heading towards Lydford you will cross the great stone viaduct of Lake with even more stunning views of Dartmoor. Here the route divides: either, follow quiet lanes via Bridestowe village to the former Bridestowe Station, and then continue off-road for another 1 mile/2.5km to Lydford; or continue straight on for a further mile west along the traffic free path to Southerly Halt picnic site.

At Lydford the Castle is well worth a visit. It has an imposing keep which was a former gaol and the scene of many hangings!

An interesting variation on the route is to take the Dartmoor Pony steam train service from Okehampton to Meldon. The train runs alongside the new cycle path, so you could cycle one way then make the return journey using this train, on which cycles are carried free of charge.



Granite Way leaflet (see page 24)

Facts & Features

Route Distance: 11miles/18km

Information: (Unless otherwise stated, see page 24 to order)

- The Devon Coast to Coast route map (DP72)
- The Granite Way leaflet (DP91)
- The Ultimate Devon Coast to Coast Guide £5.95 from www.sustrans.org.uk

O.S. Maps:

- Explorer (1:25,000) No. 113 Okehampton
- OL28 Dartmoor
- Landranger (1:50,000) No. 191 Okehampton and North Dartmoor

Places to Visit:

- Museum of Dartmoor Life, Okehampton
- Okehampton Castle (English Heritage)
- Okehampton Station
- Meldon Visitor Centre
- Lydford Gorge (National Trust – reduced entry for those arriving by bicycle)
- Lydford Castle (English Heritage)

Facilities:

- Refreshments available at Okehampton, Meldon and Lydford
- Cycle hire and shop at North Road, Okehampton
- Cycle hire at YHA Okehampton station
- Cycle hire at Okehampton station
- Cycle hire at Prewley, nr Sourton



Meldon Viaduct, Granite Way

2 Tarka Cycle Trail Braunton to Meeth



Stretching over 32miles/52km from Braunton to Barnstaple, then to Instow, Bideford, Great Torrington and on to Meeth. Entirely traffic free, this section of the 'Devon Coast to Coast' is known as the Tarka Cycle Trail as it follows the journey of Tarka the Otter in the classic tale written by Henry Williamson. The route can be broken up into easily managed sections for shorter rides. Part of the National Cycle Network (NCN) 'Devon Coast to Coast' Route 27, the complete 102 mile route runs between Ilfracombe on the north Devon coast to Plymouth on the south coast.

2) Barnstaple to Bideford

You can join this section at Barnstaple railway station and head out westwards on this popular traffic free path towards Bideford. This route gives you superb views across the mouth of the Taw estuary and there are some interesting sculptures to peruse along the way before you reach Fremington Quay. Here, along with cycles for hire, there is a café, teashop and scenic spots for picnics before heading on to Bideford East-the-Water via Instow.

Sections

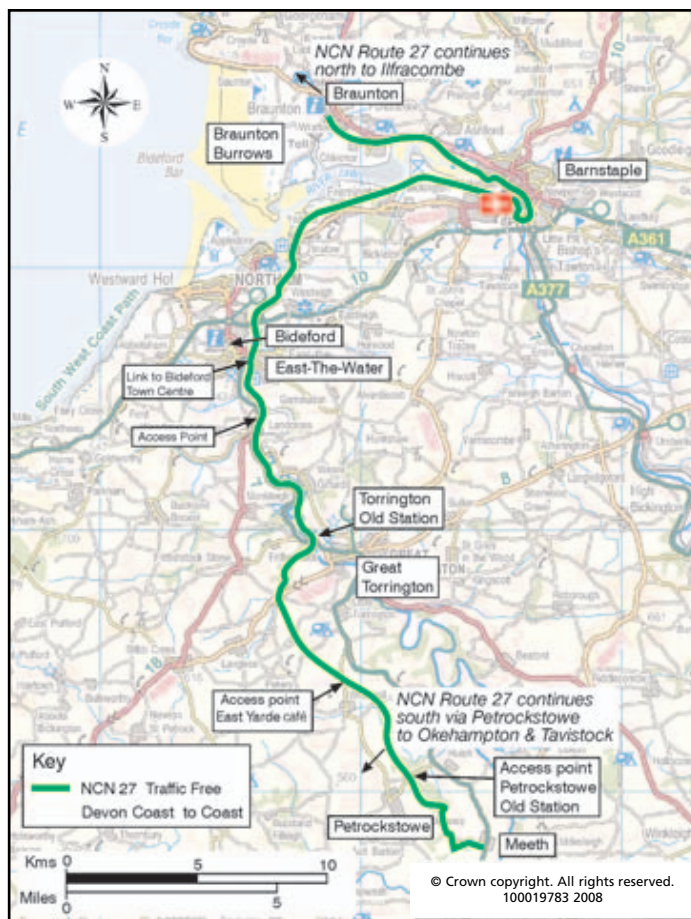
1) Braunton to Barnstaple

Easy, flat, traffic-free, family off-road route along the banks of the Rivers Taw and Torridge, with scenic views across the estuary and tidal creeks towards Instow and Appledore.

The route is signposted (NCN 27) from the Tourist Information Centre in Braunton and from the new Yeo Bridge in Barnstaple.

Close by is the UNESCO Braunton Burrows Biosphere Reserve, a wildlife haven, near this section of the Tarka Trail. The Braunton Burrows Dune System is an active dune system, known for its exceptional diversity of flora and fauna including marram grass and rare species of flowers, birds and insects.

The Trail also takes you near to Crow Point, where you can enjoy watching swans, ducks and moorhens in the drainage channels of the Taw-Torridge estuary.



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Tarka Trail sculpture

The restored Instow Signal Box, built in 1873, is worth a stop. You may also like a short diversion off the route to paddle along the sandy shore at Instow and wander amongst the shoreline shops.

From the buffet carriage at the former railway station at Bideford East-the-Water, it's a short crossing over the Bideford Bridge to Bideford Quay. On the Quay there's plenty to do and see at this attractive riverside coastal town.

3) Bideford to Great Torrington

This section (again entirely traffic free) takes you up the Torridge estuary. With the river on your left, the path continues on the old railway bed that once carried clay from the quarries at Meeth to Bideford Quay. You pass along causeways and through cuttings, through tunnels and across bridges; if you are lucky you may catch a glimpse of an otter or spot the turquoise flash of a Kingfisher whilst taking in the fresh country air on one of the many bridges across the Torridge.

4) Great Torrington to Petrockstowe/Meeth

This is the least well known but most peaceful and tranquil part of the Tarka Trail. It's a really wonderful quiet and scenic stretch that heads south on the old railway path through East Yarde towards Petrockstowe and Meeth. Ahead of you, there are some great views of Dartmoor National Park, as you sail through wooded and remote countryside leading to the clay workings.



Tarka Trail Cycle leaflet
(see page 24)

The last section from Petrockstowe Old Station to Meeth is a real treat, winding as it does through the edge of mixed woodland. Again it's all level – only for the last few metres up to Meeth Halt will you really earn that drink at the 16th century inn in Meeth itself! Take care when leaving the Trail at Meeth Halt where you turn left and head the 200 metres up the main road to the village square.

Facts & Features

Route Distances:

Braunton to Barnstaple 6miles/10km
Barnstaple to Bideford 9miles/14km
Bideford to Great Torrington 6miles/10km
Great Torrington to Meeth 11miles/18km

Information: (Unless otherwise stated, see page 24 to order)

- The Devon Coast to Coast route map (DP72)
- Tarka Cycle Trail (free)
- The West Country Way route map (DP73)
- The Ultimate Devon Coast to Coast Guide
- £5.95 from www.sustrans.org.uk

O.S. Maps:

- Explorer (1:25,000)
No. 139 Bideford, Ilfracombe and Barnstaple
No. 126 Clovelly and Hartland
No. 113 Okehampton
- Landranger (1:50,000)
No. 180 Barnstaple
No. 191 Okehampton and North Dartmoor

Places to Visit:

- Barnstaple Heritage Centre
- UNESCO Braunton Burrows Biosphere Reserve
- Dartington Crystal, Torrington
- Torrington 1646
- RHS Garden Rosemoor, Torrington

Facilities:

- Refreshments available at Braunton, Barnstaple, Fremington, Instow, Bideford, Great Torrington, East Yarde, Meeth
- Cycle hire in Braunton, Barnstaple Station, Fremington, Bideford, Torrington Old Station

3 Grand Western Canal



This is a lovely peaceful cycle route, often along the towpath, beside this tranquil stretch of waterway through the heart of Devon between Tiverton and the Somerset border. The Grand Western Canal forms part of the West Country Way Cycle Route (NCN3) which runs from Padstow in Cornwall to Bristol.

This is a flat, easy, mainly off-road section of NCN3, and ideal for families with children. There are open views of superb landscape on the way, varying between sheltered woodland and sweeping views of the Blackdown Hills.

The Devon section of the Canal was completed in 1814, and rather than using locks, the engineer, John Rennie, felt it was more efficient commercially to follow contours and construct embankments and cuttings to make it as flat as possible. This makes it ideal cycling territory. The Canal was closed as a commercial waterway in 1925, as the railways took over transport. Restored as a Country Park in 1971, it is now enjoyed by walkers, anglers, cyclists and passengers on boats and a horse-drawn barge run by the Grand Western Horseboat Company. There are picnic areas and pubs along the way.

The Route

The directions describe a circular route following the Canal towpath from Tiverton Parkway station, near Sampford Peverell to Tiverton and then NCN3 on and off the towpath back to Tiverton Parkway. The route can be amended to start in Tiverton or Willand rather than Tiverton Parkway.

From Tiverton Parkway Station, leave the station along the access road. At the main road turn right and after 30 metres turn left along a track that leads to the Link Road Bridge and a boat-launching slipway. Turn left and follow the towpath through Sampford Peverell, taking particular care to give way to pedestrians in this pretty village. The stretch of Canal from Sampford Peverell to Halberton has excellent views across to the Blackdown Hills, and during late spring and summer is home to important populations of Reed Warblers and Sedge Warblers.

Just before Rock Bridge is Rock House, built at the same time as the Canal for Captain John Twisden – the engineer who succeeded James Green in extending the Canal to Taunton. The name 'Rock' relates to the fact that the bedrock is very close to the surface at this point, and it was a remarkable achievement for a cutting to be chiselled out by hand by the navvies. Equally impressive is the beautiful oak tree on the offside of the Canal near Rock House that has grown to a tremendous size with its roots sprawling over the bedrock.

After passing over Swing embankment with its wonderful views, you pass under Swing Bridge. This is an 'accommodation bridge' built to link up land that was split by the construction of the Canal. Further on through a large cutting is Greenway Bridge. A little way up the hill along the road that passes over the bridge is a car park and Abbotshood Cycle Hire.

For the next mile, the Canal sweeps out on a large loop called the 'Swan's Neck' which keeps the Canal on a level contour above Halberton. Beside Milestone 3 are Tiverton Road Car Park and the Dudley Weatherley Jubilee Bridge. This lift bridge was built in 2002, the Queen's 50th jubilee year, and is named after a well-known local artist who was prominent in the campaign to save the Canal back in the 1960's and early 1970's. Sadly Dudley died in 2004, but this elegant lift bridge will help to keep his memory alive for generations to come.

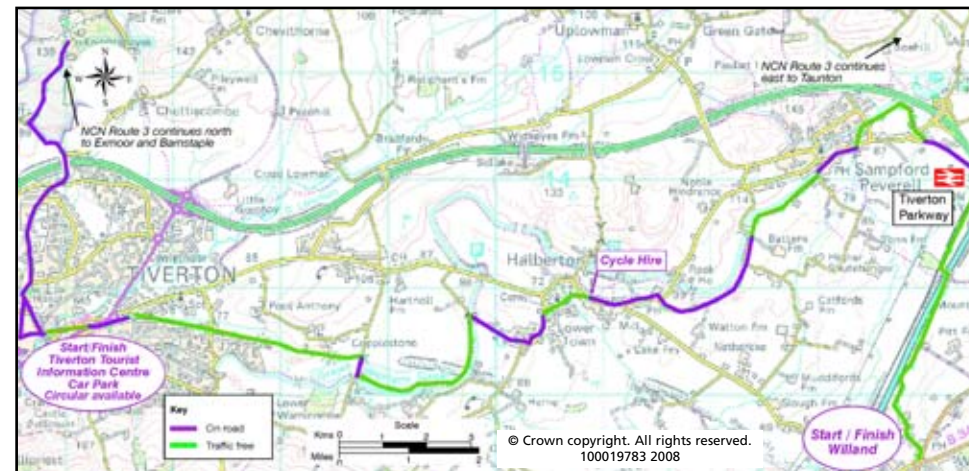
At Crownhill Bridge (also known as Changepath) the towpath crosses the bridge and continues on the opposite side. The towpath crosses over an Aqueduct that was built in 1847 as part of the construction of the Bristol and Exeter Railway branch from Tiverton Parkway to Tiverton. Two arches were built to allow for future expansion, but only one line was ever used and this closed in 1967.

The section from East Manley Bridge to the Basin in Tiverton is where the horse drawn passenger barge operates twice daily from Easter until the end of October (Tel. 01884 253345), and so extra care is needed. It is particularly important to dismount and wait for the horse to pass, should you meet it.

For the last mile of the Canal, the route passes through a residential area before arriving in the Tiverton Basin where you will find the Tea Gardens, a visitor centre a floating shop and café and public toilets. When busy in the basin it is advisable to dismount and walk.



Views from the West Country Way



From the Basin the route follows Canal Hill down to a mini roundabout and then right, to Great Western Way. The return route along NCN3 bears right along to Blundell's roundabout where the cycle path cuts across the adjacent green and follows the disused railway line. However, if you turn left onto Great Western Way and then right onto Station Lane, this will lead you into Tiverton town centre where you will find a large array of shops, services and parking. A little way along the pedestrianised Fore Street is Phoenix Lane, at the bottom of which you will find the Tourist Information Centre.

Switching back to the return route along the disused railway line, this eventually ends at Manley Lane. Turn right along the road until you reach Manley Bridge, where you turn left onto the towpath. At Crownhill Bridge follow the road to the right, NCN 3 signs will lead you through the pretty village of Halberton.

The route rejoins the Canal at Battens Bridge, before leaving the towpath again at Chains Road on the edge of Sampford Peverell. Follow the road through the village until you reach the turn off for Tiverton Parkway on the right.

An extension to the route from Tiverton Parkway to Willand follows a purpose-built cycle path which crosses the M5 and terminates at The Halfway House PH. Another possible extension or alternative route from the Link Road Bridge at Sampford Peverell would be a 10 mile return trip out along the towpath to the northern end of the Canal at Lowdswells Lock, near Holcombe Rogus, and back. This is a quiet, scenic route passing a number of fascinating historic structures including a 14th Century Chapel, and wharves and limekilns dating back to when the Canal was built.



Tiverton & Culm Valley leaflet (see page 24)

Facts & Features

The Route

Tiverton is served by regular buses from Exeter as well as services from North Devon. Furthermore, for those wishing to arrive by train, Tiverton Parkway is a main stop on the Exeter – London Paddington railway line. For timetable details call National Rail Enquiries on 08457 484950 or visit Traveline at www.traveline.org.uk.

Route Length: Tiverton Parkway to Tiverton town centre is 14.5 miles. Tiverton parkway to Willand is 3 miles (one-way), mostly traffic free.

From the centre of Tiverton it is a short distance further on this route (NCN3) to Knightshayes Court (National Trust - reduced entry for those arriving by bicycle) and Tiverton Castle. It is a flat, east, mainly off-road route, and ideal for families with children.

Facilities:

Car parking and refreshments are available in Willand, Tiverton Parkway station, Sampford Peverell, Halberton and Tiverton. Cycle hire is available at Abbotshood Cycle Hire beside Greenway Bridge in Halberton (Tel. 01884 820728) and the owner is happy to deliver or collect cycles to any point along the Canal with prior notice. Cycle shop at Tiverton.

Maps:

'West Country Way' –published by Sustrans (available from Devon County Council price £3.99) Tiverton and Culm valley cycle routes (free)

OS maps:

Explorer (1:25,000) No. 114 Exeter and the Exe Valley; No. 128 Taunton, Blackdown Hills. Landranger (1:50,000) No. 181 Minehead and the Brendon Hills; No. 192 Exeter, Sidmouth.

4 Plym Valley Trail



This route, part of Devon Coast to Coast NCN Route 27, takes you along the scenic former railway path that leads from the city of Plymouth to the wild expanses of Dartmoor. The path has recently been extensively resurfaced for significant stretches and as such offers a leisurely pleasurable ride in either direction.

You can start at any of the access points on the route shown on the map; such as Coypool, Bickleigh or Clearbrook. For a whole route experience, many people choose to start from Plymouth Hoe which has direct traffic free cycle links from Plymouth Railway Station.

From the historic Hoe follow the National Cycle Network signs for the Devon Coast to Coast Route 27. This takes you, much of it traffic free, around the

Barbican and past the Mayflower steps, and across Laira Bridge and through to the National Trust grounds of Saltram House (featured in the film Sense and Sensibility) then, under the A38 bridges, to Coypool.

You may want to enjoy the sights of the steam railway workings at Coypool before setting off on the former railway path towards Bickleigh and Clearbrook. Being a former railway track - it was the line to Princetown decades ago - the gradient is not sharp. Although slightly uphill you are rewarded with superb viaducts and tunnels of trees and then glimpses of Dartmoor as you head northwards. In the nesting season there is a good chance of seeing the Peregrine Falcons from one of the many splendid railway viaducts that offer great views from the route alongside the River Plym.

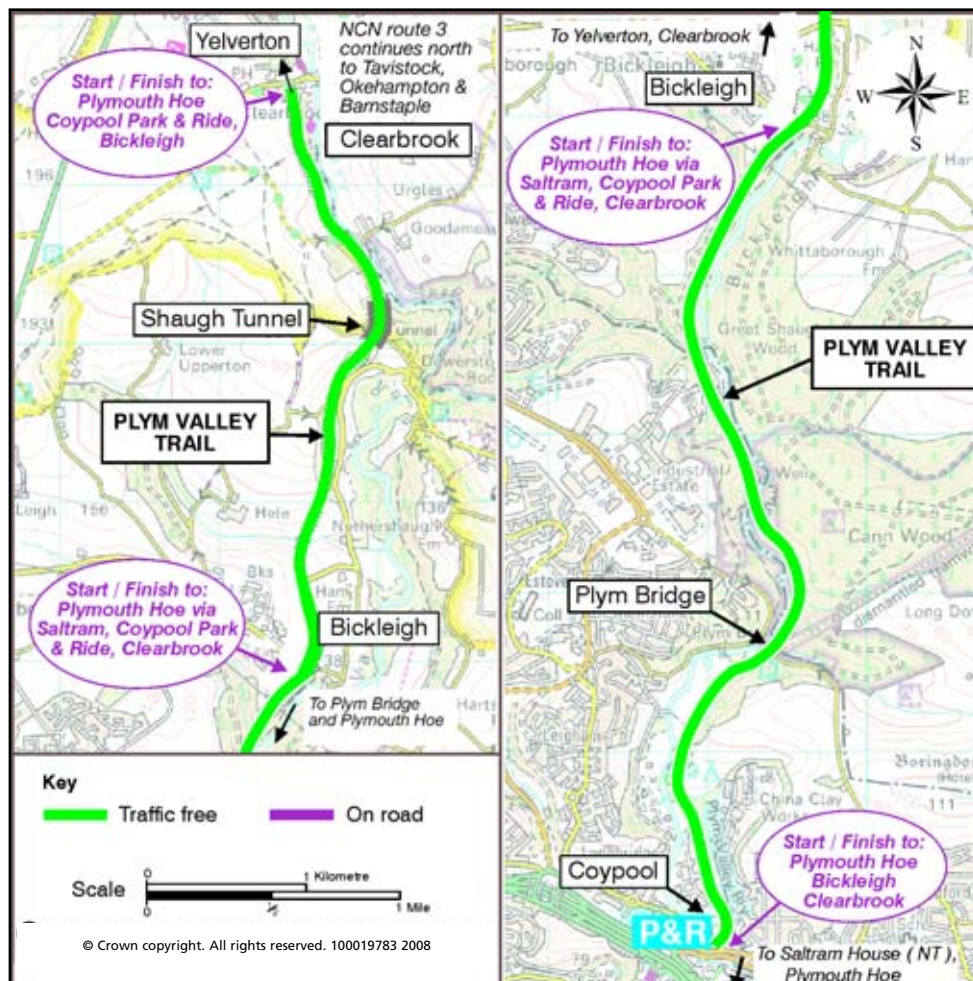
From Bickleigh there are more great views before reaching Shaugh Tunnel. Until recently this railway tunnel was completely unlit and cyclists and walkers entered at their own peril! Upon reaching the middle of the tunnel the curve prevents sight of daylight at either end! Recently installed 'bat friendly' lighting allows you to see your way in daylight hours without disturbing the colony of roosting bats. However, please note that the lights go off at dusk and do not switch on again until dawn. So, you will need some cycle lights or a torch if returning through the tunnel after dark.

On the return from Clearbrook there is slightly less need to pedal as the gradient is taking you downhill towards the sea. Your speed may increase so please remember to keep left and avoid walkers and cyclists heading towards you.

To extend your ride, continue north on NCN Route 27 along quiet minor roads from Clearbrook to the former stannary town of Tavistock. This is a little hillier but the rewards of superb moorland countryside are well worth the effort.



Plym Valley Trail



Facts & Features

Route Distances:

Plymouth Coypool to Clearbrook
7 miles / 11km.
Plymouth Hoe to Plymouth Coypool
3 miles / 15km

Information: (Unless otherwise stated, see page 24 to order)

- Devon Coast to Coast route map (DP72)
- The Ultimate Devon Coast to Coast Guide £5.95 from www.sustrans.org.uk

O.S. Maps:

- Explorer (1:25,000)
No. OL 20 South Devon
No. OL28 Dartmoor
- Landranger (1:50,000) No. 201 Plymouth and Launceston

Places to Visit:

- National Marine Aquarium, Plymouth
- Smeaton's Tower, Plymouth
- Barbican and Plymouth Hoe
- Saltram House (National Trust – reduced entry for those arriving by bicycle)

Facilities:

- Refreshments and shops in Plymouth; pub at Hooe Meavy, Clearbrook
- Cycle hire and shops in Plymouth



Plymouth Hoe

5 Ilfracombe/Woolacombe Circuit



This is a wonderfully scenic circular route on the north Devon coast with a link that allows a start and finish in Ilfracombe. Much of this route is part of the National Cycle Network, Devon Coast to Coast Route 27, and takes in two superb traffic free sections, the National Trust coast route beside the sea at Woolacombe Sands and the former railway path from Ilfracombe to Willingcott Cross. The remainder is along attractive minor roads through quiet villages and rolling Devon farmland.

From Ilfracombe start at the Quay and follow the National Cycle Network (NCN) 'Devon Coast to Coast' Route 27 southbound out of the town. Cycle past the splendid Landmark Theatre on the shoreline and around the edge of the town centre. Although initially there are one or two short climbs you soon join the former railway path heading out of town. The gradients are cycle friendly and this excellent traffic free path leads to Willingcott Cross (21/2miles/ 4kms). Your return will of course be a gentle downhill!



View towards Croyde Bay

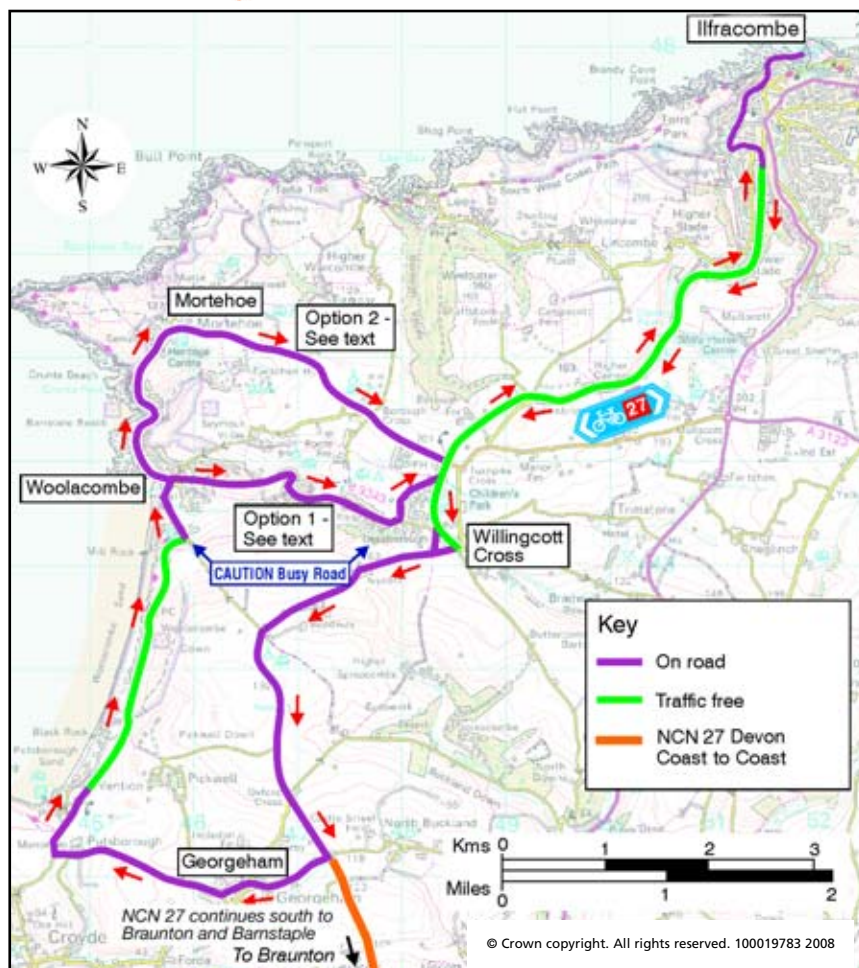
On reaching Willingcott Cross follow the NCN27 signs and route map towards Georgeham along the ridge road with great views of the surrounding farmland; this is real Devon countryside.

There are no large settlements until you reach Georgeham so you may want to stock up with drinks (and a snack if you think you'll need it). Georgeham, where Henry Williamson lived whilst he wrote Tarka the Otter, provides a useful halfway point before you head for the coast, again down those traditionally attractive Devon lanes.

The on-road route from Georgeham to Woolacombe takes you along a winding narrow country lane to the sea, which can be busy in summer. It follows the NCN Route which is signed to the coast and along the path on National Trust land to Woolacombe. The path is not standard NCN width in places but can be ridden comfortably by all types of bicycle. The views over Woolacombe Sands are superb and only those in a real hurry will not want to stop here and enjoy this endless stretch of golden sand, renowned for its warm water, good surf and consistent winning of the coveted European Blue Flag Award.

From Woolacombe head back choosing one of two on-road routes. Option 1 uses the more direct but busier B3243 to Willingcott Cross. Option 2 takes the longer but quieter minor road via the ancient village of Morteohoe, mentioned in the Domesday Book. Both these roads have some hills to climb before picking up the traffic free disused railway path back down to Ilfracombe. If you choose Option 1 you will need to fork right after about 11/2 miles/2.5 km on the minor road to Hartnolls and then left after a further 1/2 mile/1km to Willingcott Cross where you can rejoin the traffic free cycleway to Ilfracombe. Option 2 takes you along the NCN route following the signs to Morteohoe and then uphill towards Turnpike Cross. At Turnpike Cross you can rejoin the cycleway and head

back to Ilfracombe. You are sure to have enjoyed a great day out in spectacular north Devon.



Facts & Features

Route Distance: 15miles/24km
(Traffic free sections 51/2miles/9km;
on-road sections 91/2miles/15km)

Information: (Unless otherwise stated, see page 24 to order)
Devon Coast to Coast route map (DP72)
The Ultimate Devon Coast to Coast Guide £5.95
from www.sustrans.org.uk



Maps

O.S. Maps:

- Explorer (1:25,000)
No. 139 Bideford, Ilfracombe and Barnstaple
- Landranger (1:50,000)
No. 180 Barnstaple and Ilfracombe
- Tarka Trail Cycle Map

Places to Visit:

- Ilfracombe Quay
- Tunnels Beaches, Ilfracombe
- Landmark Theatre, Ilfracombe
- Willingcott Children's Park
- Woolacombe Sands
- South West Coast Path

Facilities:

- Refreshments and shops at Ilfracombe,
- Georgeham, Woolacombe and Morteohoe
- Cycle shop at Ilfracombe
- Tarka Trail Cycle Map

6 Exmouth to Budleigh and Lympstone



Lympstone to Budleigh Salterton via Exmouth (10 miles/17km)

This is a lovely relaxing cycle route taking in the coast and the rural hinterland between the East Devon seaside towns of Exmouth and Budleigh Salterton and the lovely quiet Exe estuary village of Lympstone. Exmouth lies at the western gateway to the Jurassic Coast – England's first natural World Heritage Site . . . and the coast ? . . . well, this is Devon and the coast is superb!!

Start/Finish

There are three possible starting points: Exmouth or Lympstone railway stations or Budleigh Salterton sea front.

Alternatively you can cycle the whole route from Lympstone or Budleigh Salterton both via Exmouth.

This description assumes you start at Exmouth station from where you can cycle on two routes, north to Lympstone or east to Budleigh Salterton.

Exmouth to Lympstone

From Exmouth station head north alongside Marine Way on a new cycleway. After a couple of hundred metres fork left off the Marine Way path and through the gates and ride past the sports field. You emerge on a quiet residential road, turn left here and keeping left follow this lane where very soon join a path towards Halsdon Farm almost immediately another left fork before the farm gate entrance takes you beside the railway on the brand new superb first section of the Exe Estuary Trail with the railway and the estuary itself on your left.

From the cycleway there are fabulous panoramic views across the estuary with benches along the way from which to pause and enjoy them as you head north to Lympstone.

At the end of the path turn left under the railway arch and ride along the quiet lane into Lympstone. A short distance along the lane on the first bend you'll see on your left a beach and a chance to dally and even paddle awhile or just take in the view. A gentle slope in the lane takes you up and over to the village itself –take care as the road is narrow. On the way through the village you'll pass picturesque cottages –there's even a pub or two and tea rooms to encourage you to stay awhile. To return you can ride through to the railway station and catch a train back



Exmouth - Exe Estuary

to Exmouth or on to Topsham or Exeter and beyond or simply return the way you came and enjoy new views and we hope the sun in your face as you head south back to Exmouth.

Exmouth to Budleigh Salterton

As with the route above turn sharp left out of Exmouth station and follow beside Marine Way. With the sports field on your left the path leads past a row of residential houses and then across Marine Way at the cycle signals and into Lyndhurst Road -this is a residential road with many driveways so please cycle with care. At the end of Lyndhurst Road turn right into Withycombe Road and at the cycle/ pedestrian signals, turn right towards Phear Park. Follow the traffic calmed road through the park marked NCN2. Cross the pitch and putt on the cycle path and leave at the corner of the park.

You are now on the largely traffic free signed path that passes through the residential edge of Exmouth and soon you will be out into wonderful open countryside. Being a former railway, the route is level as you pass through serene open and wooded countryside.

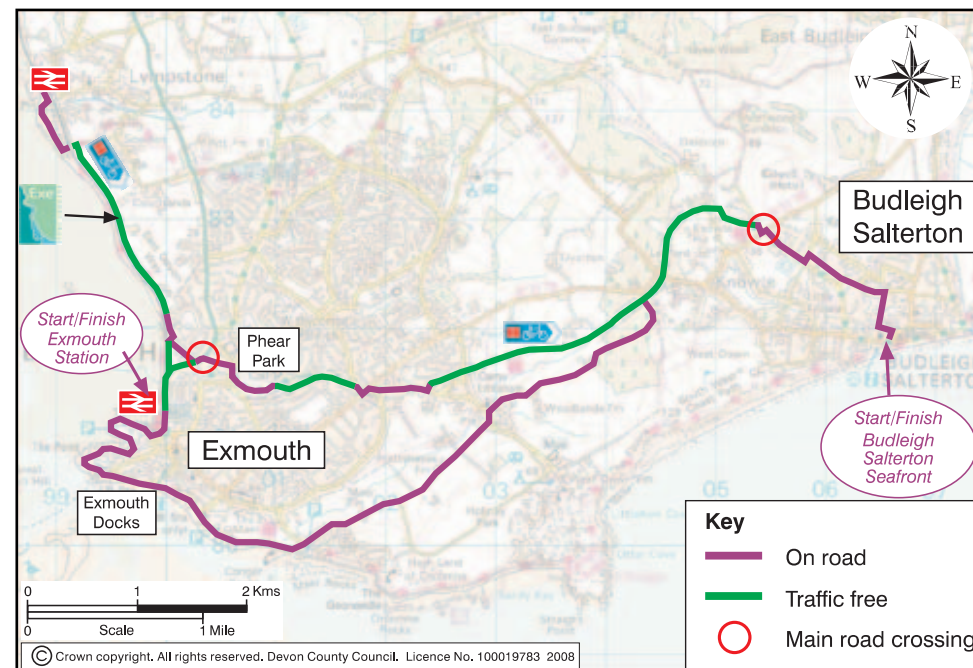
If you wish you can shorten your route by turning around at the end of the traffic free section and leave Budleigh Salterton for another day. Most will probably prefer to reach the promenade by the sea and take advantage of the pebble beach. You emerge from the railway path turning right into Bear Lane.

To Budleigh Salterton seafront

At the end of Bear Lane cross the busy B3178, turn immediately right into Bedlands Lane, right then first left in Moor Lane, third left into the High Street (its quite busy and narrow here) which runs into Fore Street and leads to the seafront.



Exmouth Town Cycle map (see page 24)



Budleigh Salterton to Exmouth Esplanade

To return to Exmouth you can either retrace your route or preferably turn off the railway path for signs to Castle Lane on the minor road towards Littleham (it's the second railway) bridge you pass under when leaving Budleigh Salterton). The delightful Castle

Lane takes you to Littleham. At the main road junction turn left and then almost immediately right into Maer Lane and follow this quiet lane down to Exmouth seafront. Once here turn right along the Esplanade where you can enjoy the sandy beach that extends for two miles. If you have time to spare,



Exmouth docks

enjoy a trip on the Stuart Line Cruises that will give you a very different view of the World Heritage Coast or the Exe.

Facts & Features

Route Distance: 6 miles / 9km

O.S. Maps:

- Explorer (1:25,000) No. 30 Exmouth and Sidmouth
- Landranger (1:50,000) No. 192 Exeter, Sidmouth
- Exmouth town cycle map

Places to Visit:

- Stuart Line Cruises, Exmouth
- Exmouth Museum
- The World of Country Life, Exmouth
- Fairlynch Arts Centre and Museum, Budleigh Salterton

Facilities:

- Refreshments and shops at Exmouth, Lympstone, Littleham and Budleigh Salterton
- Cycle hire and shops in Exmouth



7 Exeter Quay, Topsham & Turf Locks



This Exeter based cycle ride offers an almost entirely traffic free, wonderfully level route taking in part of the newly constructed Exe Estuary Trail. The route takes in the National Cycle Network route 2 (NCN2) on both sides of the head of the Exe estuary. Exeter itself has a fine cathedral at its heart and this is easy to access from

the cycle route described below using the Exeter central station route. Once on the main route it will take you to the ancient seafaring port of Topsham, past RSPB reserves and beside the Exeter canal and several well known locks. The Exe estuary is of international importance for wintering waders and wildfowl, supporting 1000s of birds. The two RSPB reserves offer some of the best opportunities to view the wildlife of the estuary.

There are a number of options for a starting point.

If traveling to Exeter by train you can start at either Exeter St Davids, or Exeter Central or Topsham rail stations. All three have a very short on-road section before joining the main traffic free route. Both the routes from the Exeter rail stations take you past or across the new cycle/pedestrian bridge known as Millers Crossing - well worth a look. Another good starting point is Exeter Quay by the Cricklepit bridge that crosses the river Exe adjacent Haven Road.



View from Exeter cycle network



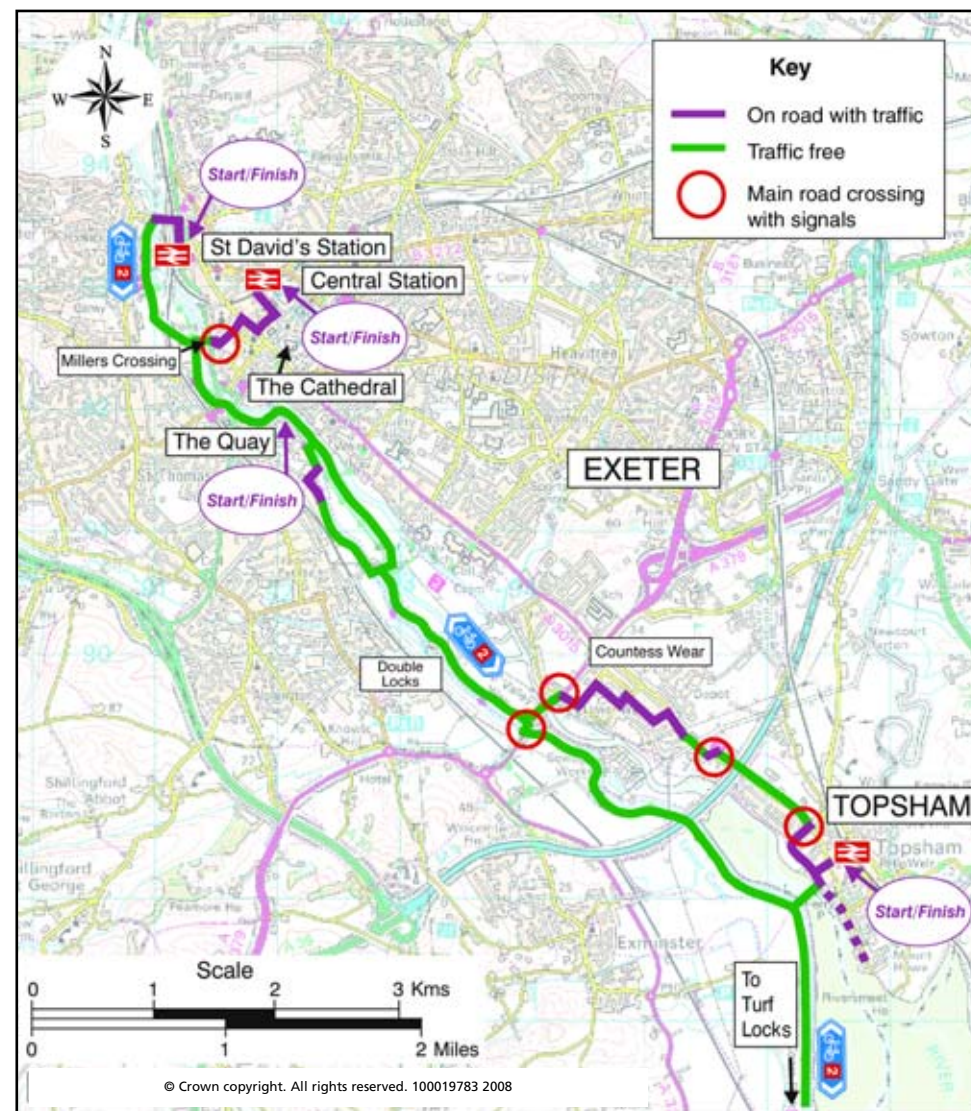
Turf Locks

Exeter Quay was certainly in use in medieval times, when Exeter was an important port, and may go back to Roman times. Notice especially the Custom House, built in 1681 as the first brick building in Exeter, and the high warehouses of the 1830's. Next to the river is the canopy of the late 19th century fish market. The Quay's old-world appearance led to the filming of the television series "The Onedin Line" here in the 1970's.

Once on the route and at the Quay, head south away from the city centre towards Salmonpool and Double locks following the NCN2 signs (pictured on the map). After passing the Double Locks you will be riding alongside the canal and its worth looking out for herons and the flash of the kingfisher.

At the junction in the route take the left fork to Countess Wear and Topsham which soon brings you to the signalled crossing of the busy Bridge Road. Follow the NCN2 signs for a brief period on minor roads through Countess Wear before emerging on the traffic free shared use path on Exeter Road to Topsham. Where the path ends at the signals, cross and turn right along Ashford Road and follow this road turning left at the end into Ferry Road and Topsham quayside. Famed for its shipbuilding and maritime history, Topsham on the Exe Estuary was once a larger port than Exeter itself. Now still delightfully self-contained, with its shops, Dutch houses, quay and open spaces, it offers many attractions to the summer or winter visitor.

At the southern end of Topsham is Bowling Green Marsh. This is the main high tide roost for the north of the estuary. Large numbers of waders and wildfowl



gather here as the tide rises and covers the mudflats, especially in the winter. High numbers of black-tailed godwits can be seen and many widgeon graze on the Marsh.

To continue your ride head back to the foot and cycle ferry in Ferry Road. From the landing stage the ferry crosses to the west side of the Exe and the swing bridge on the other side. If you plan to visit the Turf Locks turn left after the swing bridge. Alternatively turn right to head back towards Exeter Quay.

If visiting the Turf Lock you will be riding along the newly constructed cycle/walkway, part of the developing Exe Estuary Trail which will allow you to cycle around the whole of the estuary. At Turf Locks there are magnificent views of the Exe estuary.

On the way back you will pass the Old Sludge Beds. This reserve, part of the Exe Estuary Site of Special Scientific Interest, covers an area of land sandwiched between the River Exe and the Exeter Canal. Until the construction of a new water works in 1969 the Old

7 Exeter Quay, Topsham & Turf Locks (cont)

Sludge Beds were the final breakdown site for treated sewage sediment. The abandoned settling lagoons were dug out to create small ponds, now with established reedbeds, which provide a great location for wildlife, especially birds. Follow the paths and boardwalks around the site or sit at the viewing platform to watch the bird life.

Further on to your left are Exminster Marshes - an area of wet grassland drained by dykes and ditches, the Marshes are an important breeding ground for lapwings and redshanks. Ducks, including shovelers and teals, also breed here.

In winter, the marshes provide roosting and feeding areas for waders such as curlews and black-tailed godwits, and brent geese graze the drier areas.

The ditches have a good dragonfly fauna, including the rare hairy dragonfly.



Exeter Cycling Guide and Map (see page 24)



Andy Hay, RSPB Images



Photograph courtesy of Craig Dixon

Facts & Features

Route Distance: 15miles/23km (approx.) if you take the whole route to Turf Locks. Almost all traffic free.



Information:

www.devon.gov.uk/cycling
www.discoverdevon.com
 Discover Devon holiday line 0870 608 5531

O.S. Maps:

- Explorer 114 - Exeter and Exe Valley
- Explorer 115 - Exmouth and Sidmouth
- Explorer 110 - Dawlish

Places to Visit:

- Exeter Quay
- Topsham
- Turf Locks
- Double Locks
- Woolacombe Sands
- South West Coast Path

Facilities available at:

- Turf Locks
- Double Locks
- Topsham
- Exeter Quay
- Countess Wear

8 Dart Valley Cycleway via Totnes



Totnes, the historic market town that's full of fascination and interest, offers this wonderful leisure route which can be split into two distinct rides. This route forms part of the South Coast NCN2

Ride 1. Totnes to Hood Manor via Dartington (4 miles/7km)

Start: Totnes railway station or Borough Park/Leisure Centre (the description below starts at Totnes Borough Park by the Leisure Centre). This route is traffic free and runs along the edge of Borough Park to Totnes Station. On reaching the railway turn sharp right and follow the path that goes under the railway beside the picturesque banks of the River Dart. Take the left fork heading for Dartington. (The right fork takes you across the steel bridge over the River Dart to the South Devon steam railway - well worth a visit and a train ride to Buckfastleigh). This level route takes you to the Dartington Cider Press Centre at Shinnars Bridge, through some idyllic riverside scenes past weirs, water meadow marshland and quiet woods. Once at the Cider Press Centre there are some quality shops selling local crafts, kitchenware, clothes and toys plus a restaurant, a café, a

fascinating lime kiln and pottery and much more. You can follow the NCN2 signs through the Cider Press Centre up a very short hill past the car parks to the roundabout. Here you cross on your right to a traffic free path that takes you to the Parish Church at Parsonage Cross. Cross the lane from Week on your left and you soon enter the brand new cycle path that glides around a lovely copse past open fields and an old barn to Huxhams Cross where you pass beside the road for 10 metres on a separate path before heading up a lane for a few more metres. You then enter on your right another traffic free path with extensive and excellent views towards Dartmoor and in the near distance the steam railway carriages near Staverton. This path takes you to Hood Manor where there is a school and the traffic free path ends. The whole route from Totnes is wheelchair accessible, it is narrow in places so please take care. Keep to the left and enjoy the stimulating ride.

To return, follow the path back past the church and through Cider Press Centre and the woods.



View from Sharpham Drive

8 Dart Valley Cycleway via Totnes (cont)

Ride 2. Totnes to Ashprington via Sharpham Drive (5 miles/8km)

Start: Totnes railway station/Borough Park or Ashprington village centre (the description below starts at Totnes railway station).

This second route starts at the station car park, take a right turn at the river end of the station car park and bus turning circle alongside Borough Park with views of Totnes Norman castle to your right. You pass alongside a Health Centre car park, across the main road at the lights, past the supermarket entrance and the TIC in Coronation Road –this is all traffic free except for the last part into the area known as the Plains, by the historic Totnes Bridge over the Dart. The Plains is a lively bustling area with a good selection of shops close by and a park beside the river. With the river Dart on your left, as the Plains narrows and where the 'All through Traffic' road sign directs motor vehicles to turn right, continue straight on into New Walk and cycle on the road which runs parallel to the river until you reach the Steam Packet Inn on the banks of the River Dart. Here a sharp right turn leads you up a short stretch of Moat Hill until, on your left, you see the gates of the start of Sharpham Drive. Although moderately strenuous at times, from this recently resurfaced former Carriage Drive you will not only see great views of the river but also pass mature trees and woodlands and unfenced pasture. So, do not be surprised if you see flocks of sheep and a herd

of friendly cattle along the way; being accustomed to cyclists and walkers they often wander across the path which is unfenced most of the way. There is a short sharp climb along a footpath towards the end that takes you into a wood and it is necessary to push your bicycle through the wood. A new cycle path through the wood is being developed by Devon County Council. The views on this route are well worth the occasional ups and downs. The Vineyard is open to the public at Sharpham Manor and offers a fascinating insight into the Estate you have just cycled through. The Sharpham Estate produces quality wines and cheeses, available nationally. The return is back the way you came; you will find there is more downhill and the views are very different and just as rewarding.

Facts & Features

Route Distance:

Totnes to Hood Manor 4 miles/7km

Totnes to Ashprington 3miles/5km

O.S. Maps:

- Explorer (1:25,000) No. OL20 South Devon
- Landranger (1:50,000) No. 202 Torbay and South Dartmoor

Places to Visit:

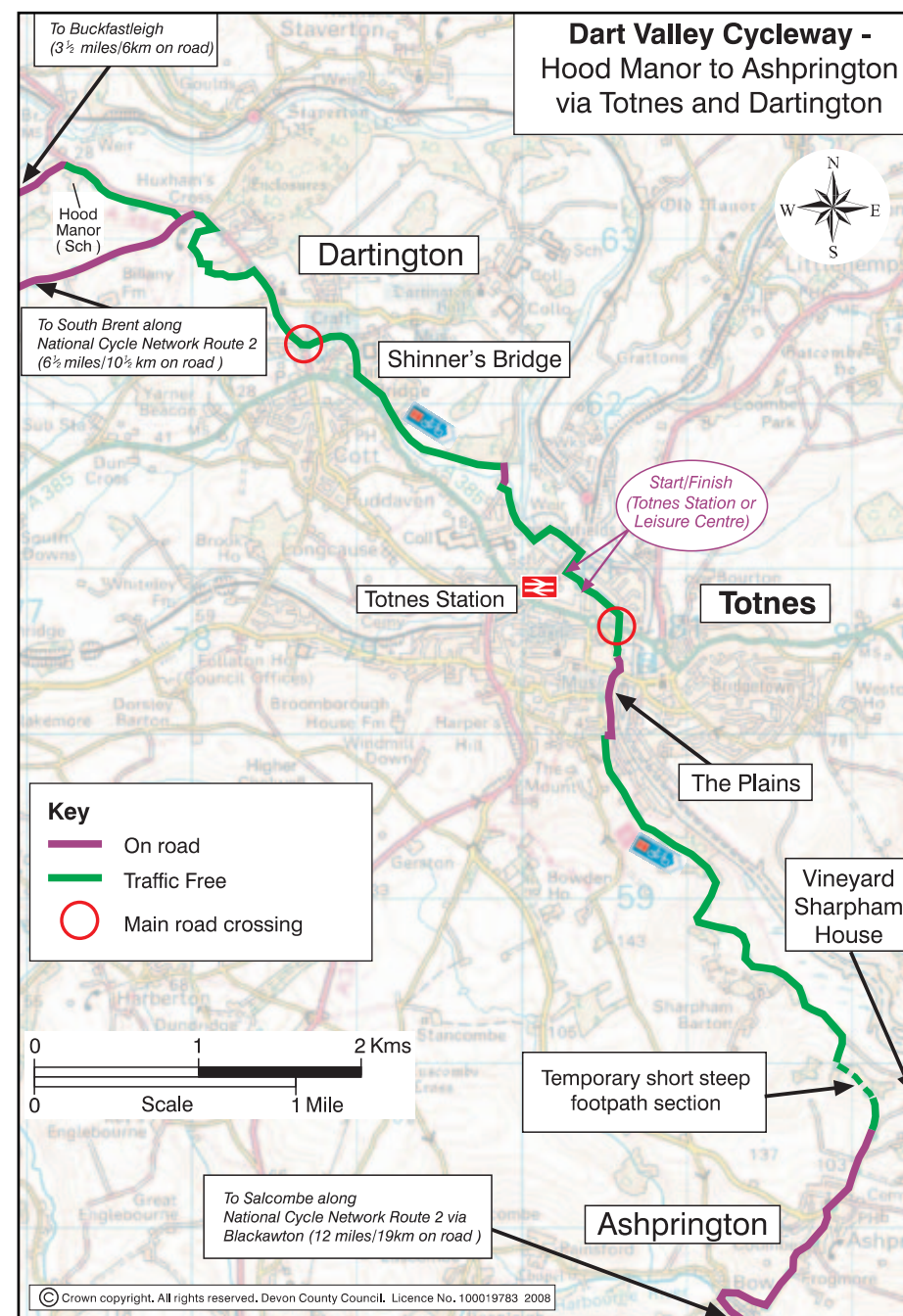
- Dartington Cider Press Centre
- Dartington Hall Estate
- South Devon Railway, Buckfastleigh
- Totnes Castle (English Heritage)
- Totnes Guildhall
- Museums in Totnes
- Sharpham Vineyard

Facilities:

- Refreshments at Totnes, Dartington and Ashprington
- Cycle hire and shop in Totnes - off Babbage Road



View of Totnes by Cliff Morley



How to Order

Leisure route maps



Tarka Cycle Trail
DP116
Free



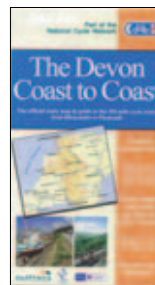
The Granite Way
DP91
Free



Tiverton & Culm
Valley Cycle
Map
DP115
Free



Tavistock Cycle Map
Free
DP72

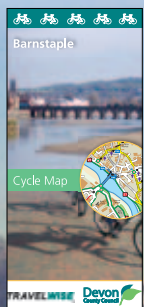


The Devon Coast
to Coast
DP72
£3.99



The West Country
Way
DP73
£6.95

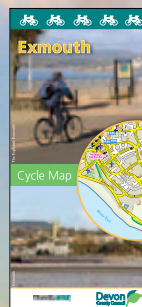
Town Cycle Maps



Barnstaple Cycle
Map
DP72
Free



Exeter Cycle Guide
DP60
Free



Exmouth Cycle
Map
DP113
Free



Newton Abbot
Cycle Map
DP114
Free

To enable you to plan your cycle ride in advance, you will find a range of publications on the opposite page.

Once you have selected which publications you would like to order, you may do so via one of the following options:

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- Call the Discover Devon Holiday Line **0870 608 5531** (calls charged at national rate) with your requirements and have your VISA or MASTERCARD credit card to hand. Please ensure that you quote the correct brochure reference number e.g. DP/06
- Visit www.discoverdevon.com and click on the Brochure Request button for information about free and saleable literature.

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Tarka
Cycle Trail | <input type="checkbox"/> DP91 (Free)
The Granite
Way | <input type="checkbox"/> DP115 (Free)
Tiverton & Culm
Valley Cycle Map | <input type="checkbox"/> DP72 (Free)
Tavistock
Cycle Map |
| <input type="checkbox"/> DP72 (£3.99)
The Devon Coast
to Coast | <input type="checkbox"/> DP73 (£6.95)
The Westcountry
Way | <input type="checkbox"/> DP72 (Free)
Barnstaple Cycle
Map | <input type="checkbox"/> DP60 (Free)
Exeter
Cycle Guide |
| <input type="checkbox"/> DP113 (Free)
Exmouth
Cycle Map | <input type="checkbox"/> DP114 (Free)
Newton Abbot
Cycle Map | | |

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tourism@devon.gov.uk or visit the website
www.discoverdevon.com

Visit the web sites below for further information on visitor attractions and details on cycle routes, cycle hire outlets and cycle shops.

Devon County Council

www.devon.gov.uk/cycling

www.discoverdevon.com

Sustrans*

Tel. 0117 926 8893 www.sustrans.org.uk

(*Sustrans, which stands for Sustainable Transport, is the UK national charity which won a Millennium Lottery award to lead the development of the National Cycle Network)

CTC (Cyclists' Touring Club)

Tel. 0870 873 0060

www.ctc.org.uk

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The **summer** lingers for longer in Devon. It can be well into September before any misty mornings herald the start of **autumn**, a season which also lends itself to discovering the countryside on horseback. Rich autumnal colours give a golden glow to the landscape and the upper moorland areas become clothed in flowering heathers.

Winter can be an appealing season to explore Devon's countryside too. Riders and walkers can wrap up warm and take leisurely lunch stops relaxing in front of a warming log fire!

Visit Devon's cycling websites

You will find more information by visiting

www.devon.gov.uk/cycling

www.discoverdevon.com and

www.devon.gov.uk/cyclexeter

On these websites, you can search for a variety of short and long distance rides, routes and general information.



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1. Do not disturb any livestock, keep your dog under close control and fasten all gates.
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3. Do not disturb wild animals, birds or flowers.
4. Whether you are walking, cycling or driving, take special care on country roads.
5. If possible, leave your car at home and take the bus or train.
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