

# Family cycle trail – 20 miles

## South Somerset Circular Route

THE NATIONAL TRUST

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Enjoy this fun cycle route with all the family, from the tranquillity and serenity of Barrington Court to the magnificent Montacute House. There are lovely views of open countryside, together with charming villages and hamlets to discover along the way. You'll also get the chance to spot a variety of wildlife, whatever the season.

**Start:** Barrington Court car park – grid ref: ST398183 – OS Explorer 128

### Getting there & local facilities...

**By bike:** National Cycle Network Route 33 passes within 1 mile of Barrington Court

**By train:** Crewkerne  7 miles

**By car:** A358 Ilminster–Taunton or A303, Hayes End roundabout

WCs and car park with adjacent café and picnic tables at Barrington Court. WCs at Montacute House. Contact us on 01460 241938 or [barringtoncourt@nationaltrust.org.uk](mailto:barringtoncourt@nationaltrust.org.uk)

### Things to look out for...

#### Orchards

Old style orchards are enduring features of the landscape, providing an insight into the history of the countryside. They are laid out like a grid system with ample space between each fruit tree. The orchards are home to an abundance of local wildlife and cider producers! The blossom in spring is a real delight.

#### River Parrett

Flowing down from the Dorset Hills, the River Parrett runs for 50 miles. The Parrett Trail runs alongside the river and is a very popular walk for both locals and visitors. Otters are common here and the best chance of spotting one is from Creedy Bridge.

#### Birds

South Somerset is home to a variety of migrant and native species including green woodpeckers, nightingales and buzzards. The nearby Somerset Levels provide a sanctuary for thriving populations of little grebe, swan, heron and lapwing species.

#### Animals and insects

Catch a glimpse of fox and roe deer in quiet spots along the route and a variety of bat species (daubenton's, natterer's and soprano pipistrelle to name but a few) come out at dusk. Dragonflies and damselflies can often be spotted at ponds and streams.



This cycle ride takes you along part of Sustrans National Cycle Network 33, from Chard to Ilminster, along a purpose built railway path. You can cycle further to Bridgwater on level, minor roads. The route covers 30 miles.

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Montacute House is a stunning Elizabethan mansion set in beautiful parkland. It is home to over 60 portraits from the National Portrait Gallery and filled with historic treasures. Fun trails and events make it appealing for the whole family.

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Look out for beautiful Somerset wildlife, including butterflies such as the yellow brimstone in early spring. The orchards and formal gardens at Barrington Court, pictured here, are also ideal places to spot wildlife.

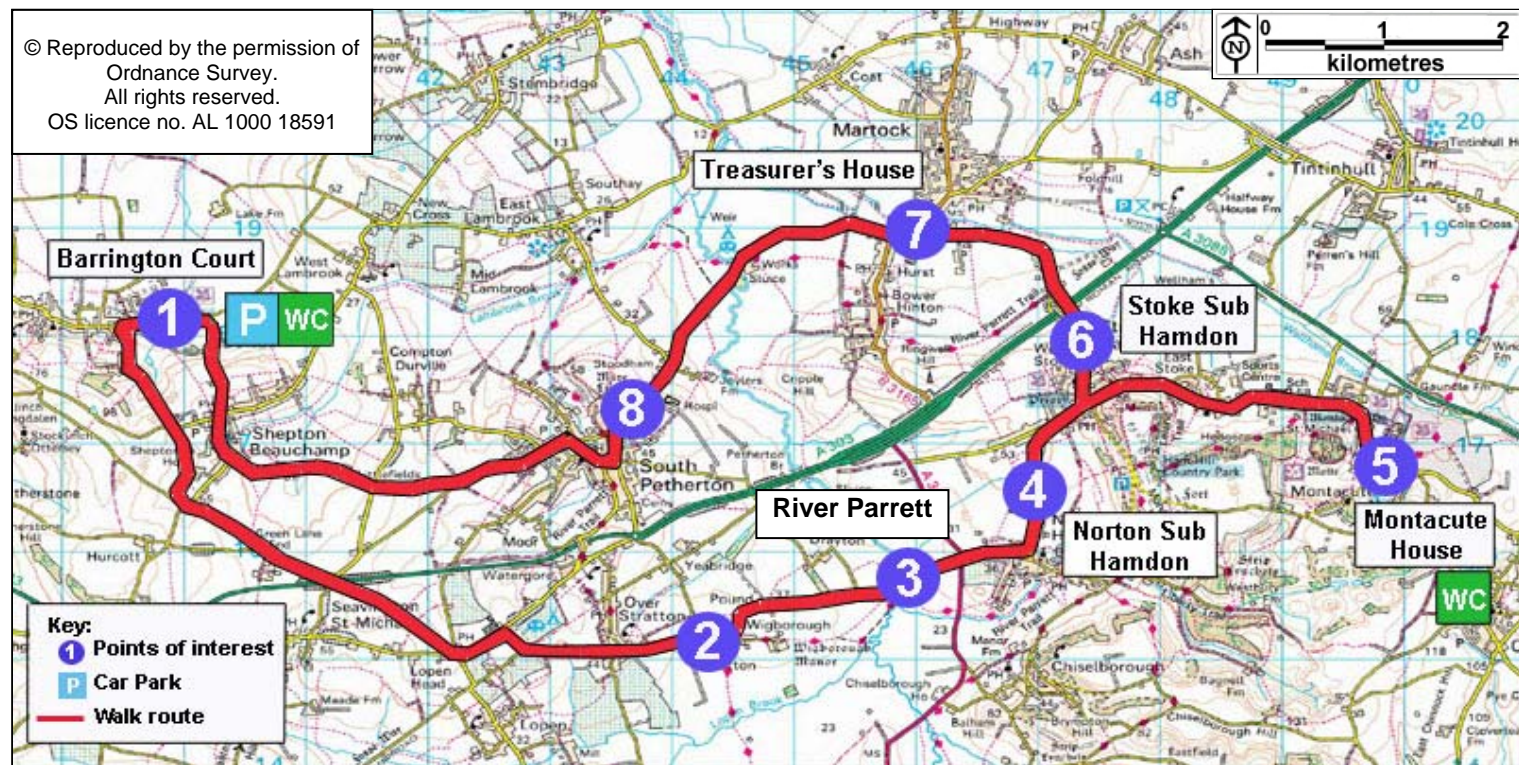
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**“A truly inspirational area for cyclists. I love it because there are hills (but not too many!), interspersed with lots of gentle cycling”**

*Matthew Applegate, Visitor Services Manager*

## Route and directions...

1. Leave the main car park at Barrington Court and turn left, heading uphill. Cycle for 1½ miles, crossing over the A303. Turn left at the T-junction and then straight over at the roundabout. Just after the Trading Post café turn right down a small dirt track.
2. Follow the track round until you meet a T-junction. Turn left and follow signs for Norton Sub Hamdon.
3. Proceed, pausing to look down onto the surrounding countryside and magnificent views of the Quantock Hills, the Blackdowns and Somerset Levels. Cross over the River Parrett and go straight over at the crossroads. Beware of heavy traffic!
4. As you approach Norton Sub Hamdon, turn left noting the wonderful views of Ham Hill to your right. Turn right at the T-junction and continue heading towards Montacute.
5. Cycle about 1½ miles keeping on the same road and passing through Stoke Sub Hamdon. On your right, you pass the entrance to Ham Hill Country Park, the largest Iron Age hill fort in Britain.
6. To return, go back through the village until you reach Stoke Sub Hamdon. Take a sharp right turn signed Martock. Stoke sub Hamdon Priory is on your left, follow the road down over the A303 for 2½ miles.



7. As you approach Martock you can turn right at the T-junction to visit Treasurer's House. Alternatively, turn left at the T-junction to continue back to Barrington.
- After turning left, follow signs for Parrett Works and cycle the flat terrain alongside the River Parrett. Head uphill towards South Pertherton, joining the National Cycle Network Route 33.
8. Bear left at the bottom of the hill. Turn right at the T-junction, follow the road through the town and continue along Palmer Street, heading uphill. Go straight over at the crossroads and right at the T-junction in Shepton Beauchamp. Turn left at the 'Duke of York' pub and follow signs for Barrington and then the brown signs for Barrington Court.

### Cycle distance, terrain and accessibility...

20 mile (32 km) circular route along well maintained, mostly quiet roads. Surfaces are generally flat with a couple of steep hills. It can be muddy after wet weather.

As a charity, independent of government, the National Trust relies on the generosity of its supporters to continue caring for our countryside and wildlife, so that everyone can enjoy the beauty of the outdoors for generations to come.

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