

# Nine traffic-free bike rides in the South West



Suitable for all abilities

# Easy and enjoyable rides

As pioneers and guardians of the **National Cycle Network** we've put together some of our favourite traffic-free rides in the South West to inspire your next cycling adventure.

Pack a picnic, check your bike is in good working order and use our handy guide to help you enjoy the very best traffic-free sections on the National Cycle Network in the South West.

## Key to route maps:



Bike Hire



Pub



Café



Restaurant



# Routes Menu

Tap on a desired route below or scroll



Route one - Cornwall

**Camel Trail**



Route two - Cornwall

**Pentewan Valley Trail**



Route three - Devon

**The Granite Way**



Route four - Devon

**Willingcott to Ilfracombe**



Route five - Somerset

**Stop Line Way**



Route six - Somerset

**Two Tunnels Greenway**



Route seven - Dorset

**Dorchester to Weymouth**



Route eight - Dorset

**North Dorset Trailway**



Route nine - Wiltshire

**Kennet & Avon Canal**





# Route one

Camel Trail, Cornwall



# Camel Trail

One of the most popular recreational routes in the country, this section of the Camel Trail runs from the market town of Wadebridge alongside the picturesque Camel Estuary – a paradise for birdwatchers and perfect for a gentle family ride. Waterside picnic benches along the route are ideally situated for mid-ride picnics or follow the railway line all the way to the working port of Padstow. Here you can enjoy fish and chips on the harbourside watching the fishing boats.



### Key route information:

<b>Start:</b>	<b>Wadebridge</b>
<b>Finish:</b>	<b>Padstow</b>
<b>Time:</b>	<b>1 - 2 hours</b>
<b>Length of ride:</b>	<b>5.5 miles</b>



## Start

### Bridge Bike Hire

Eddystone Road,  
Wadebridge  
PL27 7AL

[GPS: 50.518667,  
-4.838167](#)

## Finish

### South Quay

Old Custom House,  
South Quay,  
Padstow PL28 8BL

[GPS: 50.538235,  
-4.935059](#)

## Terrain, gradients and access

A flat, easy and entirely traffic-free cycle ride from Wadebridge to Padstow. The route follows a disused railway line on tarmac path, fine gravel track and stony trail. There are several gates to pass through and the magnificent old railway bridge to cross shortly before you arrive into Padstow. The trail is also used by walkers, joggers and horse riders so be prepared to give way.

## Ideas for things to do:

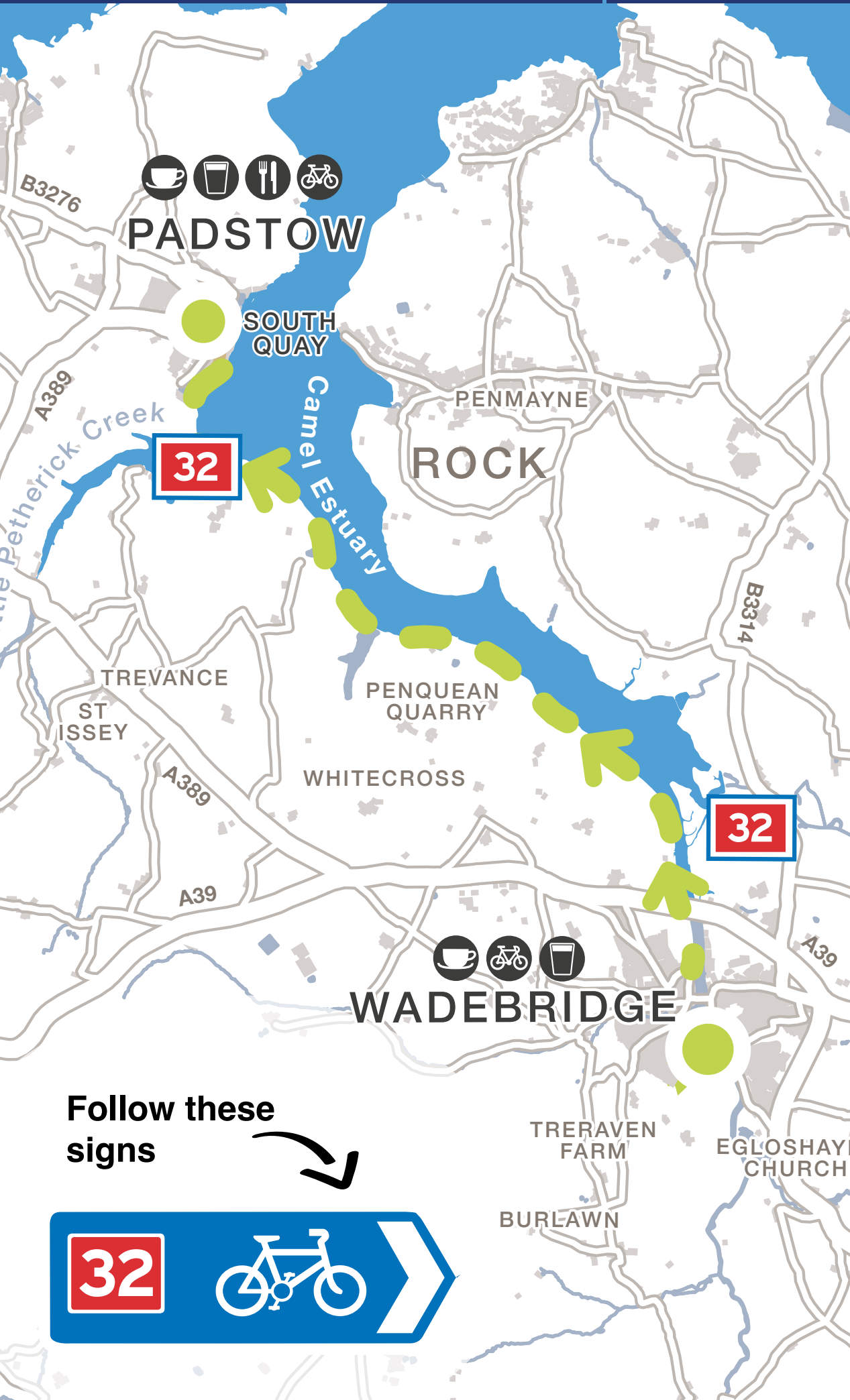
- Pack a picnic and enjoy the sea view on one of the many picnic benches en route
- Bring your binoculars and spot the estuary wildlife
- Enjoy fish and chips or a Cornish pasty while wandering the beautiful narrow streets of Padstow
- Capture that perfect Insta-shot on the beautiful Cornish coastline

# Route one

Camel Trail, Cornwall



MENU



Follow these  
signs





# Route two

Pentewan Valley Trail,  
Cornwall



# Pentewan Valley Trail

Enjoy wild flowers, wooded countryside and fine views on this route which takes you along a flat, former railway line to the beach and harbour at Pentewan. Descend down between the steep slopes of the Pentewan Valley passing rolling green fields alongside the gently flowing St Austell River, known as White River because of the clay deposits washed along it. In the final stretch, cycle through a magical native English woodland rich with wildlife.



## Key route information:

<b>Start:</b>	<b>St Austell train station</b>
<b>Finish:</b>	<b>Pentewan beach</b>
<b>Time:</b>	<b>30 mins – 1 hour</b>
<b>Length of ride:</b>	<b>4 miles</b>



## Start

### St Austell train station

High Cross St,  
Saint Austell  
PL25 4LA

[GPS: 50.339489,  
-4.78946](#)

## Finish

### Pentewan beach

Pentewan,  
Saint Austell  
PL26 6BT

[GPS: 50.292259,  
-4.784101](#)

## Terrain, gradients and access

Tarmac path and stony trail with a short on road section from St Austell train station. Descending from your start point to the trail the route is then flat between St Austell and Pentewan.

## Ideas for things to do:

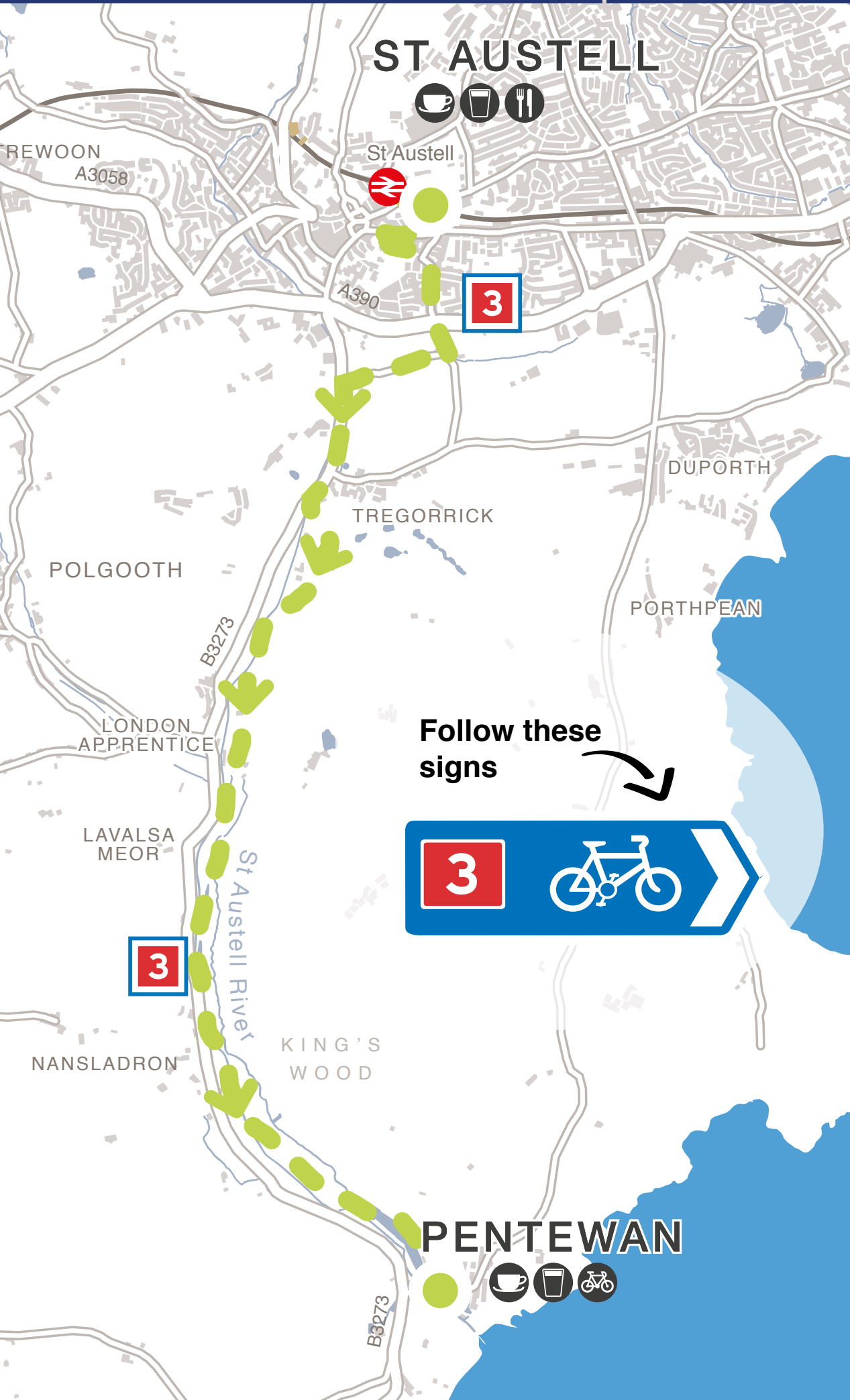
- Learn about the maritime history and China clay industry of the area at Charlestown's Shipwreck and Heritage Centre near St Austell
- Cycle the secluded woodland paths and try and spot the rare butterflies and moths species that make this a designated County Wildlife Site
- Enjoy a riverside picnic at Pentewan – or carry on to the sandy beach

# Route two

Pentewan Valley Trail, Cornwall



MENU





# Route three

## The Granite Way, Devon



# The Granite Way

Skirt the edge of Dartmoor National Park through some of England's most dramatic and ancient landscapes. Begin your route at Lydford Castle and ride past pretty cottages and gardens before joining the traffic-free trail into craggy moorland and rolling fields. There are two viaducts on this route which boast extraordinary views in every direction. On the final section of the ride, pass by Meldon Quarry and the tracks of the Dartmoor Railway to catch a glimpse of the ruins of Okehampton Castle.



### Key route information:

**Start:** Lydford Castle

**Finish:** Okehampton train station

**Time:** 1 – 2 hours

**Length of ride:** 8.5 miles



## Start

### Lydford Castle

Lydford,  
Okehampton  
EX20 4BH

GPS: 50.643429,  
-4.109197

## Finish

### Okehampton train station

Okehampton,  
Devon  
EX20 1EJ.

GPS: 50.732494,  
-3.995763

## Terrain, gradients and access

Tarmac path with a very short unsurfaced section near Sourton. A short and quiet on-road section leaving Lydford and a road crossing at Okehampton.

## Ideas for things to do:

- Have a picnic lunch on the grassy banks of the Sourton village church
- Follow the signed link path down to the steep shores of Meldon Reservoir from the route
- Enjoy the views from not one, but two impressive viaducts en route
- Take a small detour and descend down Lydford Gorge to see the 90 foot-high White Lady Waterfall

# Route three

The Granite Way, Devon



MENU



OKEHAMPTON



MELDON



LYDFORD

Follow these signs





# Route four

Willingcott to Ilfracombe,  
Devon



# Willingcott to Ilfracombe

This short ride follows an old railway path through lush green countryside to the beautiful north Devon coast. There are plenty of viewpoints to stop and admire the steep valley slopes staggered with Victorian villas and striking scarlet flowers. It is an area known locally as 'Fuschia Valley' for the vivid colourful abundance of these hedgerow shrubs.



Key route information:

<b>Start:</b>	<b>Willingcott</b>
<b>Finish:</b>	<b>Ilfracombe</b>
<b>Time:</b>	<b>30 mins – 1 hour</b>
<b>Length of ride:</b>	<b>5 miles</b>



## Start

### Willingcott Valley Golf Course

Willingcott Hill,  
Woolacombe  
EX34 7HN

GPS: 51.167488,  
-4.167855

## Finish

### Ilfracombe Pier

The Quay,  
Ilfracombe  
EX34 9EQ

GPS: 51.21085,  
-4.111351

## Terrain, gradients and access

Tarmac path descending steeply in parts. Some road crossing and on-road riding into Ilfracombe, and steep steps as the route passes through the yard of Holy Trinity church at Ilfracombe.

## Ideas for things to do:

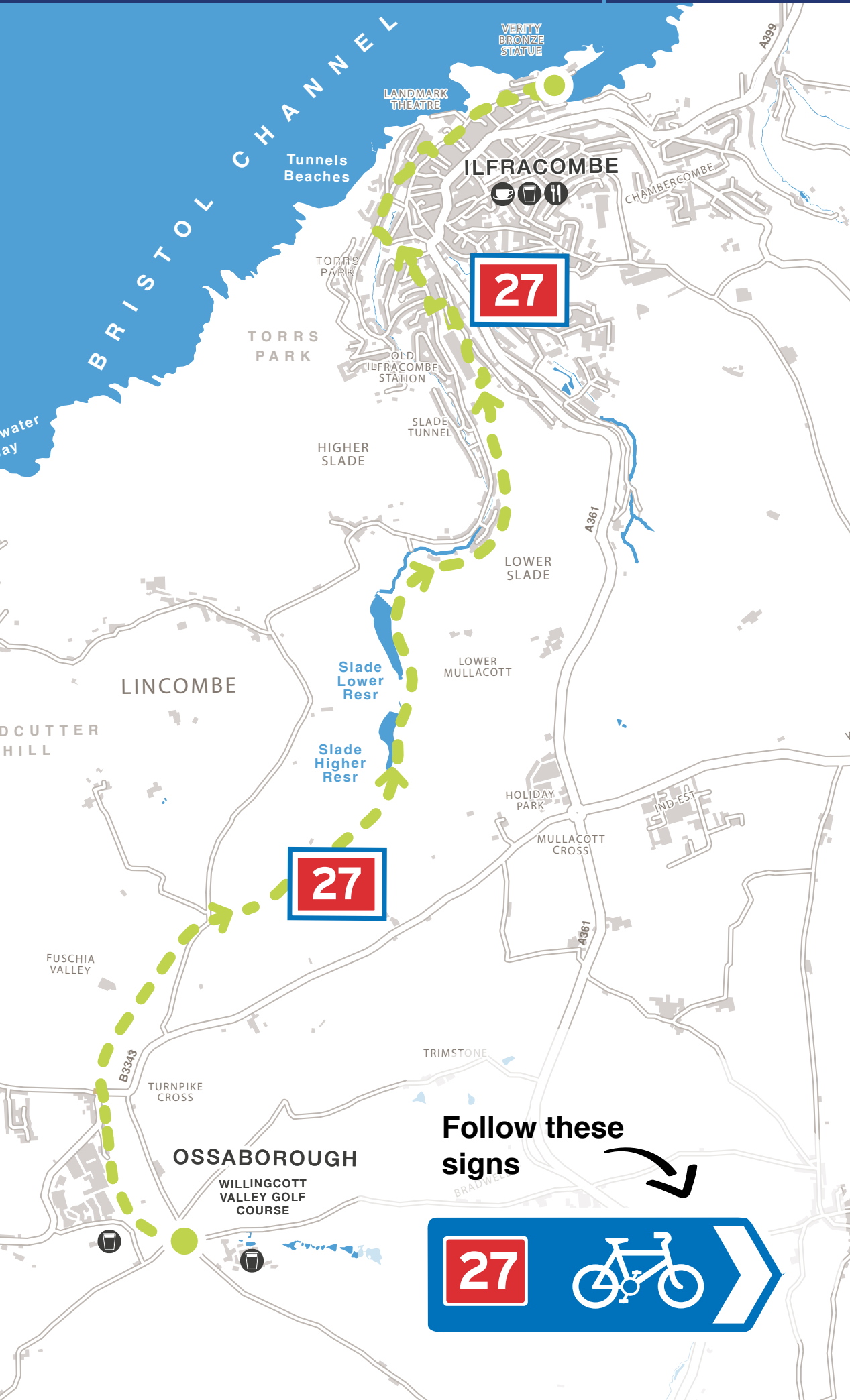
- Admire the formidable, sword wielding bronze statue of 'Verity' by artist Damien Hirst on Ilfracombe pier
- Enjoy a picnic at the old Ilfracombe train station on the disused railway path
- Book onto a ferry from Ilfracombe pier and take a boat trip to the granite outcrop of Lundy Island in the Bristol Channel

# Route four

Willingcott to Ilfracombe, Devon



MENU



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signs





# Route five

Stop Line Way, Somerset



# Stop Line Way

This route between Chard and Ilminster is part of the Stop Line Way, so-called as it follows part of the Taunton Stop Line, a system of defences against invasion built during World War II. From your start point at Chard Reservoir, there is a short section of quiet road before joining the old track of the Great Western Railway. The woodland and meadows that surround the path are abuzz with wildlife. Look out for roe deer, butterflies and badgers at Donyatt Cutting.



### Key route information:

<b>Start:</b>	<b>Chard Reservoir</b>
<b>Finish:</b>	<b>The Minster</b>
<b>Time:</b>	<b>30 mins – 1 hour</b>
<b>Length of ride:</b>	<b>4 miles</b>



# Start

## Chard Reservoir

Angler's car park,  
Chard Reservoir  
TA20 1HR

GPS: 50.888374,  
-2.937653

# Finish

## The Minster

Court Barton,  
Ilminster  
TA19 0DU

GPS: 50.926842,  
-2.912244

## Terrain, gradients and access

Flat tarmac path and fine gravel track. Some road crossings and on-road sections at Chard Reservoir, Peasmarsh and Ilminster.

## Ideas for things to do:

- Take a short detour to the thatched village of Donyatt for a yummy pub lunch
- During the ride look out for anti-tank obstacles, gun emplacements and pillboxes visible from the path
- Walk to the lovely colonnaded Market House in Ilminster town square near the end of our ride

# Stop Line Way, Somerset





# Route six

Two Tunnels Greenway,  
Somerset



# Two Tunnels Greenway

The iconic Bath Two Tunnels takes you through the tranquil Somerset countryside, through two reopened railway tunnels and over the impressive Tucking Mill Viaduct. The highlight of the ride is without doubt the 1,632-metre long Combe Down Tunnel with its motion activated musical and light installations. The route continues to the city of Bath along a quiet tree-lined path. Stop on the bridge here to admire the view over the famous Royal Crescent before following the river into the city centre.



### Key route information:

**Start:** Midford

**Finish:** Bath

**Time:** 30 mins – 1 hour

**Length of ride:** 5 miles



## Start

### Hope and Anchor pub

Midford, Bath  
BA2 7DD

GPS: 51.344407,  
-2.344694

## Finish

### Bath

Upper Borough Walls,  
Bath  
BA1 1RG

GPS: 51.382835,  
-2.359409

## Terrain, gradients and access

Flat tarmac path with some road crossings and quiet, on-road sections at Bath. Take care riding through the Combe Down and Devonshire tunnels.

## Ideas for things to do:

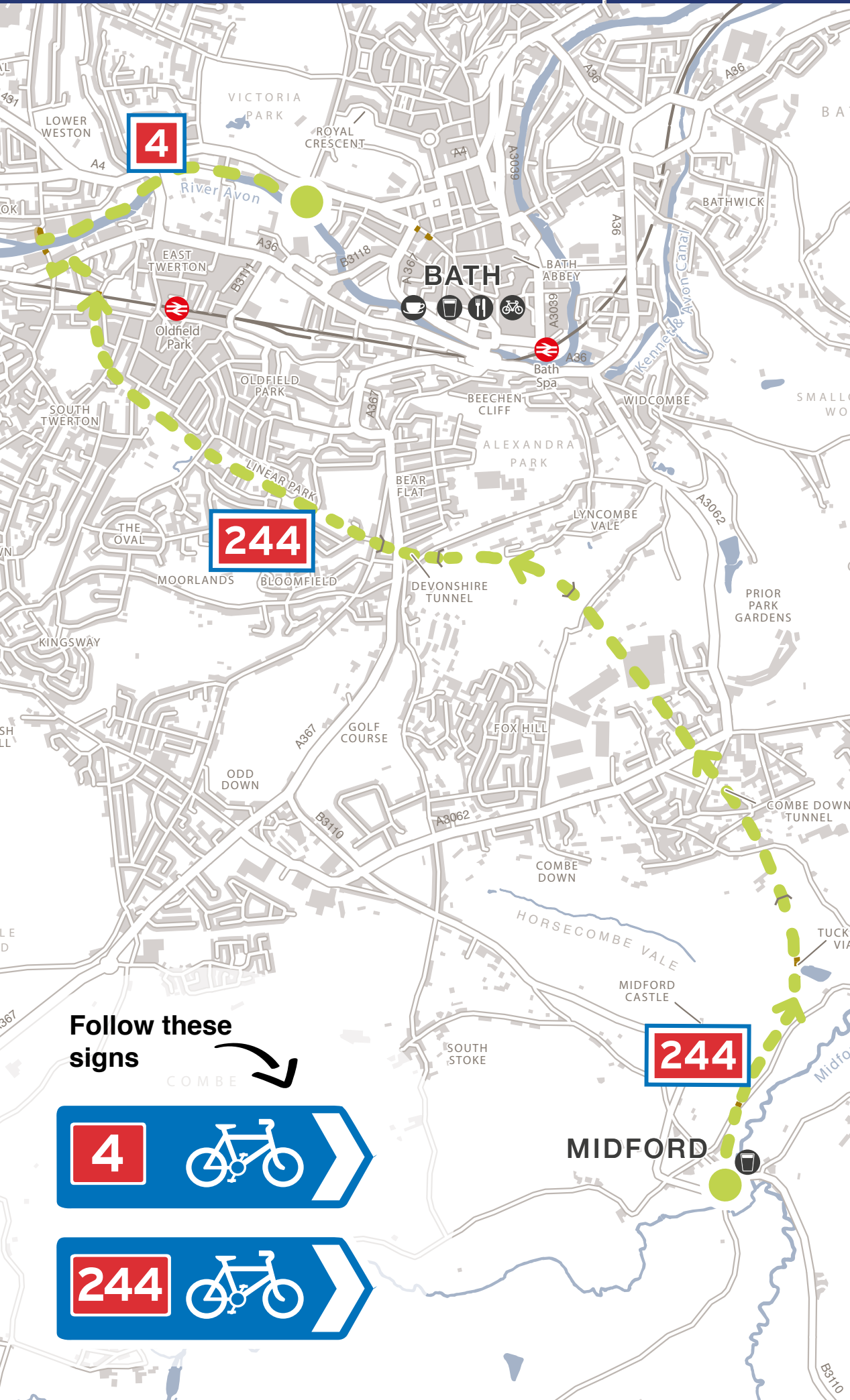
- Experience the extraordinary audio-visual installation in the mile-long Combe Down Tunnel
- Visit the fascinating and historic site of the Roman Baths
- Begin your ride with a pub lunch at the Hope and Anchor pub – parts of the building date back to the 17th century

# Route six

Two Tunnels Greenway, Somerset



MENU



Follow these  
signs





# Route seven

Dorchester to Weymouth,  
Dorset



# Dorchester to Weymouth

This delightful ride crosses the stunning South Dorset ridgeway to reach one of the country's original seaside resorts on the Jurassic Coast. The ride begins with a slow gentle climb but the sweeping views and scenic half-mile descent through the Dorset country lanes makes the effort more than worthwhile. The ancient history of the area is apparent throughout the ride – look out for prehistoric earthworks or 'barrows' and for the ramparts of Maiden Castle, the biggest Iron Age hill fort in England.



### Key route information:

<b>Start:</b>	<b>Dorchester train station</b>
<b>Finish:</b>	<b>The Esplanade</b>
<b>Time:</b>	<b>1 – 2 hours</b>
<b>Length of ride:</b>	<b>8.5 miles</b>



## Start

### Dorchester Train Station

Dorchester West train station, Dorchester  
DT1 2LB

[GPS: 50.710796, -2.442378](#)

## Finish

### The Minster

The Esplanade,  
Weymouth  
DT4 8DQ

[GPS: 50.614017, -2.452947](#)

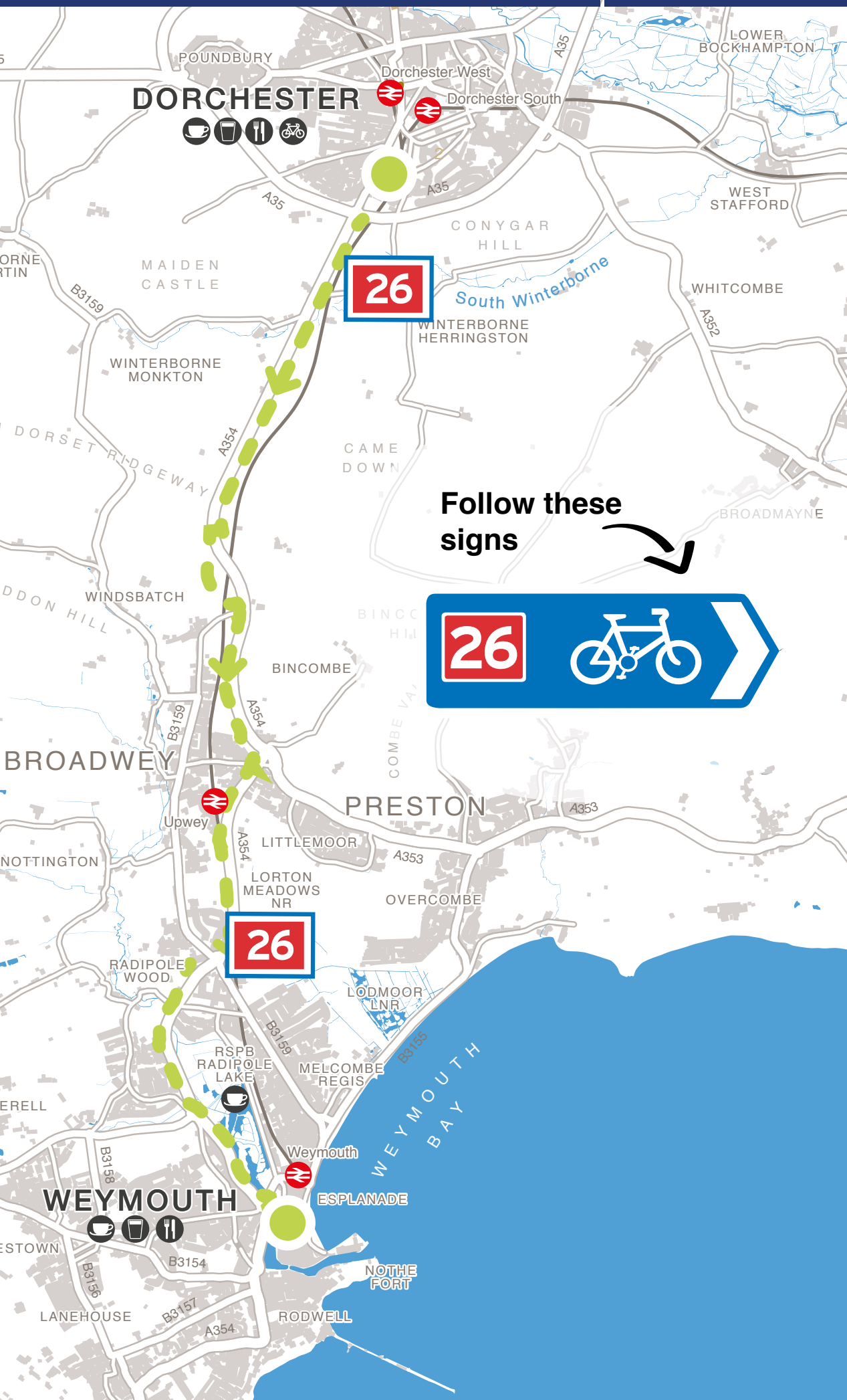
## Terrain, gradients and access

Tarmac path with some road crossings and short, on-road sections at Dorchester and Weymouth. Take particular care crossing Stadium Roundabout in Dorchester which can be busy. To avoid this roundabout, follow the NCN 2 and 26 alternative route via Sawmills Lane.

## Ideas for things to do:

- Leave the route and take a few minutes detour to picnic amongst the flowers and butterflies of the peaceful grassland that is Lorton Meadows
- Plan a stop at RSPB Radipole Lake and venture into one of the viewing hides for some plentiful bird spotting
- Divert to Maiden Castle and explore one of Europe's largest Iron Age hillforts – the size of 50 football pitches

# Dorchester to Weymouth, Dorset





# Route eight

North Dorset Trailway,  
Dorset



# North Dorset Trailway

A scenic ride through the Stour Valley and across the edges of the Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The ride begins at the market town of Blandford Forum on the banks of the River Stour. It is well worth an exploration on foot before you begin your picturesque ride to Sturminster Newton. The route passes through several charming villages and has wonderful views of Dorset's lush green countryside, quaint thatched roofs and iconic ancient sites.



### Key route information:

<b>Start:</b>	<b>Blandford Forum</b>
<b>Finish:</b>	<b>Sturminster Newton</b>
<b>Time:</b>	<b>1 – 2 hours</b>
<b>Length of ride:</b>	<b>9.5 miles</b>



## Start

### Blandford Forum

Station Court car park,  
Blandford Forum  
DT11 7QN

GPS: 50.859114,  
-2.160538

## Finish

### Sturminster Newton

Station car park,  
Sturminster Newton  
DT10 1FJ

GPS: 50.92701,  
-2.303788

## Terrain, gradients and access

Mostly flat tarmac path and fine gravel track with some road crossings and a short, quiet on-road section at Stourpaine.

## Ideas for things to do:

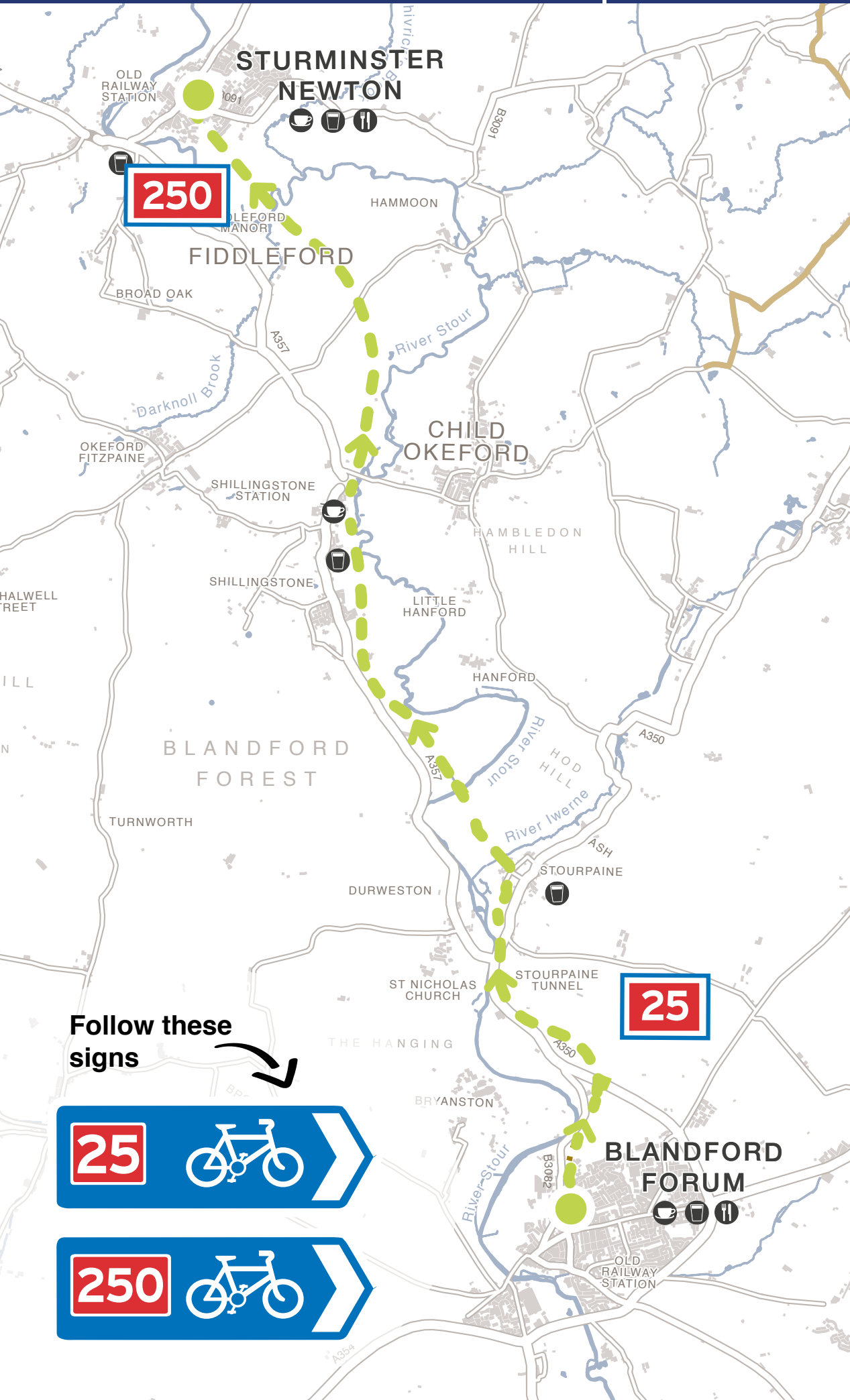
- Pause for a tea stop at the old Shillingstone railway station which has been tenderly restored to its 1950s glory days
- Take a short detour at Fiddleford to the medieval Fiddleford Manor
- Step back in time with a visit to the red flour mill at Sturminster Newton.

# Route eight

North Dorset Trailway, Dorset



MENU



Follow these  
signs





# Route nine

Kennet and Avon Canal,  
Wiltshire





# Kennet & Avon Canal

An uncomplicated and effortless ride into the Cotswolds along the towpath of the Kennet and Avon Canal. There is a steep descent past the impressive Caen Hill locks – the longest continuous flight of locks in the UK with a total of 29 spread over two miles. The rest of the ride is a gentle meander alongside calm canal waters through the Wiltshire countryside.



### Key route information:

**Start:**

**Devizes**

**Finish:**

**Bradford-on-Avon Wharf**

**Time:**

**1 - 2 hours**

**Length of ride:**

**12 miles**



## Start

### The Wharf Centre

Couch Lane,  
Devizes  
SN10 1EB

GPS: 51.355167,  
-1.995326

## Finish

### Bradford-on-Avon Wharf

15 Frome Road,  
Bradford-on-Avon  
BA15 1LE

GPS: 51.340988,  
-2.251617

## Terrain, gradients and access

Mostly flat, stony towpath with a steep descent past Caen Locks near the start. Several gates, some road crossings and short, on-road section at Bradford-on-Avon.

## Ideas for things to do:

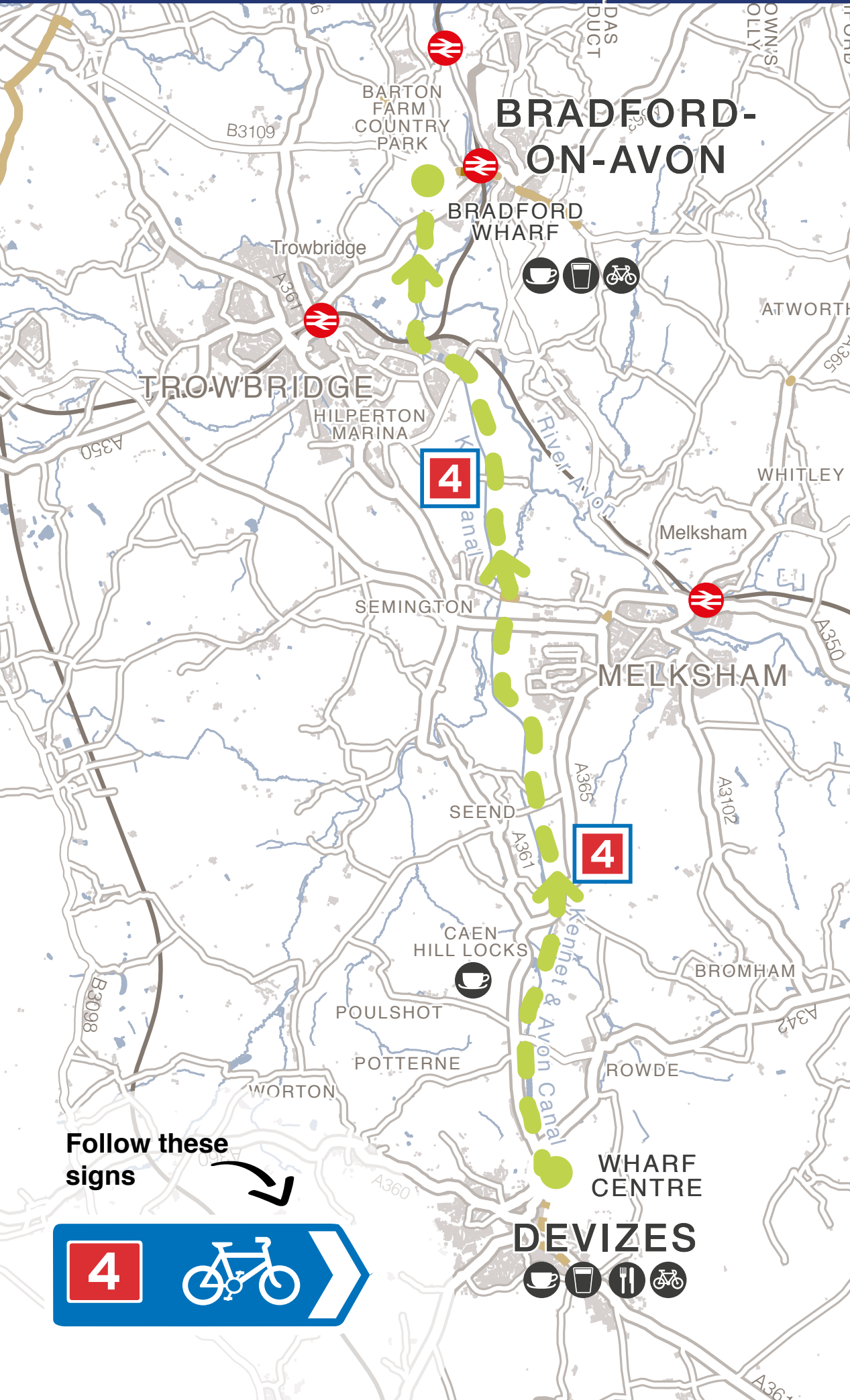
- Celebrate the completion of your ride in the tearooms at Bradford-on-Avon Wharf
- Picnic next to the Caen Locks, the longest and arguably most impressive flight of locks in the UK
- Take the one-mile link route from the towpath into Trowbridge, Wiltshire's county town

# Route nine

Kennet and Avon Canal, Wiltshire



MENU



**BRADFORD-  
ON-AVON**

BRADFORD  
WHARF

Trowbridge

**TROWBRIDGE**

HILBERTON  
MARINA

SEMINGTON

**MELKSHAM**

SEEND

CAEN  
HILL LOCKS

POULSHOT

POTTERNE

WORTON

BROMHAM

ROWDE

WHARF  
CENTRE

**DEVIZES**

Follow these  
signs





## Bike ride checklist

You don't need special or expensive equipment to enjoy a short bike ride but here are some items you'll certainly find useful.

### For you:

- A hat and suncream if it's sunny
- Waterproofs and extra layers of clothing
- Bike helmet – it's not compulsory to wear one in the UK but a well-fitted helmet is especially recommended for children
- Snacks and drinks to keep energy levels up
- Mobile phone and money

### For your bike:

- Water bottle
- Puncture repair kit and pump
- Tyre levers, a bike 'multi-tool' or allen keys and adjustable spanner
- Spare inner-tubes (saves you having to repair a puncture immediately)
- Bike lights
- Bike lock
- Bike bell – when on a shared used path a friendly tinkle will let people know you're approaching.



## Keep it safe and fun

Here are some tips to keep in mind when out on your ride:

- Let the slowest rider in your group set the pace for your ride.
- Ride in line on busy paths with any children in the middle of the adults. If there's only one adult, ride at the rear so you can keep an eye on everyone in front.
- Take extra care along any on-road sections and at road crossings. You may prefer to push your bike, especially with younger children or less experienced riders.

## Plan your route



The routes in this guide are signed and easy to follow – just look out for the National Cycle Network blue signs with red number patches. You can also check out your route in detail on our online map.

## Check your bike



Before you set off on your ride, check your bike is in good condition. We've put together a guide to help you safety check your bike in 11 easy steps.

## Fix a puncture



Thankfully, punctures don't happen often and are easy to fix yourself. All you need is a pump, puncture repair kit and a set of tyre levers. Watch our video to learn how to repair a puncture.



## Please be aware that routes in this guide may not be accessible to everyone.

One of our top priorities is making the National Cycle Network accessible to everyone.

But not everyone can easily access the Network.

We work hand in hand with communities to find the best ways to remove and redesign barriers.

This is to help everyone experience the benefits of walking, wheeling and cycling in their local area.

### Improving accessibility



As custodians of the National Cycle Network, we're committed to making it safe and accessible for everyone.

We deal with restrictive barriers at a local level, working with communities, local groups and landowners to design alternative solutions together.

### How we remove barriers



Find out how our team go about removing barriers.

# Enjoyed your ride on the National Cycle Network?

## Donate to Sustrans



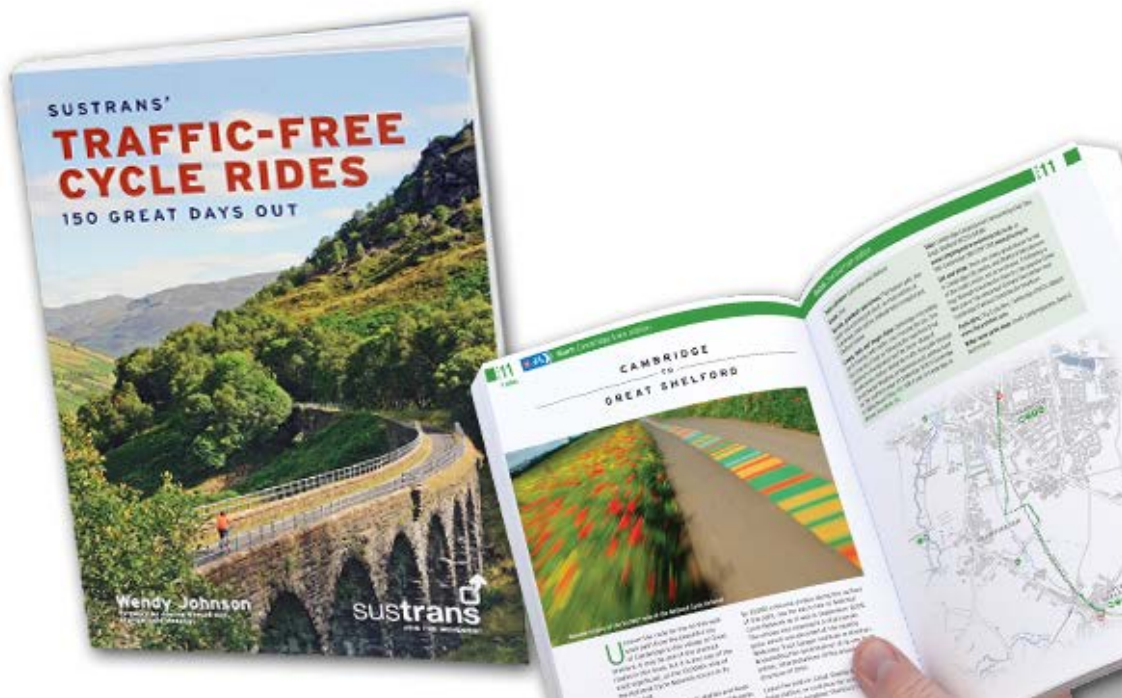
Please help us to look after and improve the National Cycle Network for everyone to enjoy.

## Buy the guide



For more inspiring bike ride ideas buy our Traffic Free Cycle Rides guidebook. It includes 150 hand-picked routes across the UK to help you plan the perfect day out.

Our guide offers a unique glimpse into the UK's remarkable landscapes, history, culture and architecture. The rides range from the wild and ethereal mountain tracks of Snowdonia, to fairy tale woodland trails through the Forest of Dean, and elegant city centre paths linking London's Royal Parks and palaces.



**Sustrans is the charity making it easier for people to walk and cycle.**

**We connect people and places, create liveable neighbourhoods, transform the school run and deliver a happier, healthier commute.**

**Find out more at**  
**[www.sustrans.org.uk](http://www.sustrans.org.uk)**

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The rides in this guide have been suggested by Sustrans to help you enjoy traffic-free routes on the National Cycle Network. Cycle routes change over time, which may affect this collection of rides. Weather conditions may also affect path surfaces. Please use your own judgement when using the routes based upon the weather and the ability, experience and confidence levels of riders in your group.

Sustrans accepts no responsibility for any accidents or injury resulting from following these routes.

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