

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 Shinners 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



View of Totnes by Cliff Morley

of cattle along 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

Dart Valley Cycleway - Hood Manor to Ashprington via Totnes and Dartington

