

### Ham Hill Country Park



### Burrow Mump



### Bridgwater Docks



## Places to explore along the River Parrett Trail

**Beautiful Villages** – all the villages along the route are worth a little exploration. There are superbly located churches built from the warm looking local hamstone and many other historic buildings, quaint thatched cottages and traditional village greens.

**East Lambrook Manor Gardens** – famous award winning gardens created by Margery Fish. Internationally recognized as the home of English country gardening and open to the public.

**Ham Hill Country Park** – offers superb views of the Somerset Levels and Moors, Exmoor and the Mendip Hills. There are a number of short circular walks exploring the iron age hillfort, a deserted medieval village and the history of local quarrying in the area – details from the local ranger office on site.

**Muchelney** – famous for its Benedictine Abbey founded in AD 939. It is now largely ruined apart from the abbot’s lodging and barns and managed by English Heritage. There is also a fine Parish Church and the Priest’s House, a late medieval hall house managed by the National Trust, with limited opening hours.

**Burrow Mump, Burrowbridge** – an outcrop with a ruined chapel standing at a strategic point where the River Tone joins the River Parrett. Climb the Mump for superb views across the Levels and Moors. Owned by the National Trust with parking at base of Mump.

**Bridgwater** – large market town world famous for its fair and illuminated Guy Fawkes carnival. There are fine buildings alongside the river, in Castle Street and Kings Square in the heart of the town. The Blake Museum illustrates Bridgwater’s mercantile and marine past.

**Bridgwater Bay National Nature Reserve** – located at the end of the walk at Stert Point. An internationally important feeding ground for waterfowl and wading birds. A car park, circular walk and 4 bird hides ensure you can get great views of the area.



View north from Dorset/Somerset border



Bridgwater & Taunton Canal

## Practical Information

### The Route

The route is waymarked with distinctive River Parrett Trail signs and can be followed using the detailed written guides and maps which can be found on the website: [www.somerset.gov.uk/rightsofway](http://www.somerset.gov.uk/rightsofway)

- Ordnance Survey maps covering this route are:
- Explorer 116 – Lyme Regis & Bridport
  - Explorer 129 - Yeovil & Sherborne
  - Explorer 140 - Quantock Hills & Bridgwater

By its nature the River Parrett Trail can be wet and muddy and waterproof walking boots are essential, particularly near its source. You should have appropriate clothing and maps with you at all times. Many fields along the route may have livestock so please take care especially if you have dogs with you.

Please exercise extreme care when crossing main roads and walking along country lanes.

### Countryside Code

Be safe, plan ahead and follow any signs. Leave gates and property as you find them. Protect plants and animals and take your litter home. Keep dogs under close control. Consider other people [www.countrysideaccess.gov.uk/countryside\\_code/](http://www.countrysideaccess.gov.uk/countryside_code/)

### Dogs

Please remember that dogs should be kept under close control. It is an offence to allow a dog to attack or chase livestock.

### Further Information

For further information on the route, accommodation and public transport visit the website: [www.visitsomerset.net](http://www.visitsomerset.net) or call Somerset Visitor Centre on 01984 750833 email: [somersetvisitorcentre@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:somersetvisitorcentre@somerset.gov.uk)

Rights of Way Service, Somerset County Council, County Hall, Taunton, TA1 4DY. email: [rightsofway@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:rightsofway@somerset.gov.uk) [www.somerset.gov.uk/rightsofway](http://www.somerset.gov.uk/rightsofway) Tel: 0845 3459155

**To request this document in an alternative format please contact us on 01823 356728**

## How to get to the River Parrett Trail

You can reach the area from the M5 motorway exiting at junction 24 (Bridgwater) or 25 (Taunton), or from the A303 or A30. The start of the trail is in Chedington, Dorset, just off the A356, 4 miles south east of Crewkerne.

Regional trains run to Crewkerne near the start of the walk and Bridgwater towards the end.

See [www.thetrainline.com](http://www.thetrainline.com) or [www.traveline.org.uk](http://www.traveline.org.uk)

Local bus services connect the larger towns and villages. Up to date timetables are available from Libraries and Tourist Information Offices.



# River Parrett Trail

## Follow the River from Source to Mouth



# The River Parrett Trail

If you like walking through beautiful countryside with lots of opportunities to stop off and explore market towns and villages then the River Parrett Trail is for you.

The route follows the river for 48 miles from its source near Chedington in the Dorset hills, through tranquil Somerset countryside to its mouth at Stert Point on the Bristol Channel.

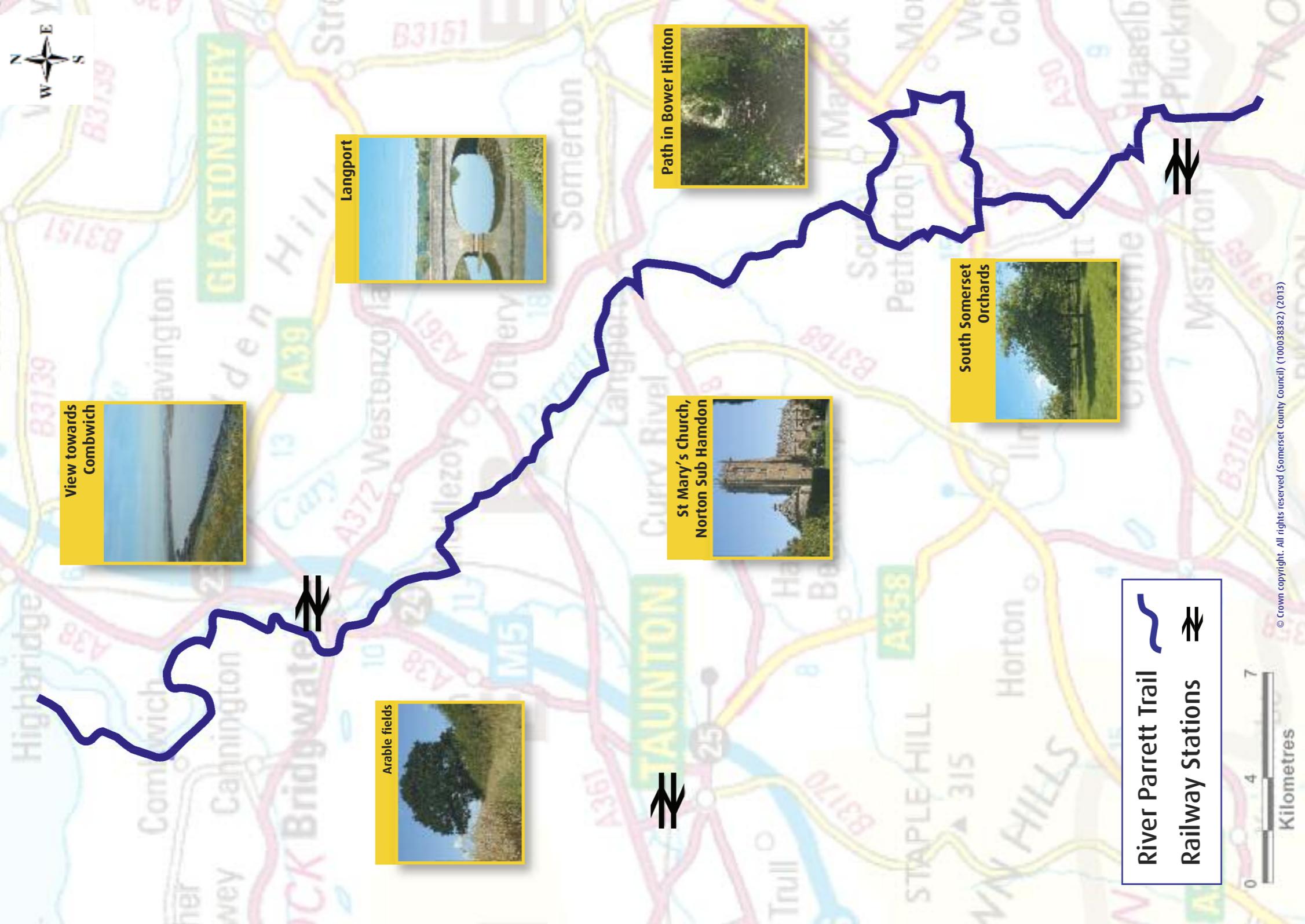
This is relatively easy walking through the gentle hills of the Dorset and Somerset borders and across the wetlands of the Somerset Levels and Moors. It is a fascinating journey through rolling hills, meadows, orchards and the elaborate pattern of the rhyndes and water courses of the lowland. It passes through beautiful hamstone villages, market towns and the ancient historic sites of Ham Hill, Muchelney and Burrow Mump.

It can be enjoyed over 4 or 5 days staying in local accommodation or as a series of shorter walks, taking advantage of the many welcoming pubs and other facilities along the route to enjoy local food and drink.

To extend your break the River Parrett Trail links up with the West Somerset Coast Path, the Coleridge Way and the South West Coast Path, allowing you to explore more of the beautiful Somerset countryside. You can also walk from coast to coast by following the Brit Valley walk from West Bay in Dorset to the source of the River Parrett. Other walks join with the River Parrett Trail at Ham Hill – the Leland Trail and the Liberty Trail.



Map of Trail at Winyards Gap



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Bird Hide at Stert

## Undiscovered Landscapes

The River Parrett rises as several springs at Chedington, winds amongst hills of woods, meadows, orchards and arable fields until it opens out at Ham Hill to reveal the wide expanse of flat land – the Somerset Levels and Moors.

This is a landscape that until 6500 years ago was permanently underwater. The name Somerset derives from 'Sumer Saeta' meaning land of the summer people as most of it would have been inaccessible except in summer months. The landscape would have appeared as a series of islands with Muchelney, the home of the Benedictine Abbey being the Great Island. This area still floods but the flooding is now controlled by the geometric manmade landscape of rhyndes, pumps, drains, locks and clyces. When this area floods it becomes a feeding ground for thousands of migrating birds.

Ham Hill, an Iron Age hill fort, offers superb views of the Somerset Levels and Moors and onward to Exmoor and the Mendip Hills. Its geology is unique with its warm golden hamstone that has been quarried for centuries. Most of the villages along the first half of the River Parrett Trail are built of this special stone and it gives the area its unique character.

From Langport, about half way along the route, the river widens out, and passes through historic Bridgwater via its canal on its journey to the sea at Stert Point on the Bristol Channel.