



## *Cossington Park*

### **PLACES OF INTEREST TO VISIT**

Please also see the file of places of interest and local tourist information in the Library at Cossington Park.

#### **Animal Farm Adventure Park**

Berrow, Burnham on Sea; Tel: 01278 751628

This is a rare breeds farm with an all-weather play barn, shop and café. Established in 1984, the park is set in 23 acres on the Somerset levels behind Brean Sands, between the Mindips and Brent Knoll.

#### **Bath**

Too much to describe here, but always a highly enjoyable day out, combining both sight-seeing and shopping. We recommend the park-and-ride at the city outskirts. A must for first-time visitors are the Roman baths.

#### **Bishops Palace, Wells**

More than simply an historic house and garden, this splendid medieval palace has been the home of the bishops of Bath and Wells for 800 years. There are 14 acres of gardens including the springs from which the city takes its name. Visitors can see the Bishop's private Chapel, ruined Great Hall and the Gatehouse with portcullis and drawbridge beside which the mute swans ring a bell for food. If you take a picnic, you can easily spend a day or half-day here.

#### **Brean Leisure Park**

Coast Road, Brean Sands, Somerset, TA8 2QY; Tel: 01278 751595

The fun fair at Brean Leisure Park has over 30 rides and attractions including roundabouts, waltzers, dodgems and roller coasters. The *shock wave super looper* is the largest roller coaster in the South-west. There is also *Canoe River*, *Laser Quest*, *Pony Adventure* and *Terror Castle*.

**COSSINGTON PARK, COSSINGTON, NR. BRIDGWATER, SOMERSET TA7 8LH**  
**TEL: 0800 043 3468 (BOOKING) 01278 722210 (GUESTS)**  
**EMAIL: [INFO@COSSINGTONPARK.COM](mailto:INFO@COSSINGTONPARK.COM) WEB: [WWW.COSSINGTONPARK.COM](http://WWW.COSSINGTONPARK.COM)**

## **Butlins**

Minehead; Tel: 0870 145 0045

Large range of facilities including go-karting, football, aqua-aerobics, ten-pin bowling, crazy golf, basketball, netball, fencing, rounders, volleyball, archery, table tennis, 'kwik cricket', snooker and much more. There's also a funfair and games zone for the less sporty types. Smaller children have storybook theatre and soft play areas to keep them amused. Meet Billy Bear and Bob the Builder.

## **Bristol**

Another worthwhile day out combining shopping and attractions.

## **Cheddar Caves and Gorge**

Cheddar; Tel: 01934 742343

A major tourist attraction for over 200 years, with plenty to do above and below ground. An area of outstanding natural beauty, where you'll find many rare species. The constant underground temperature is ideal for maturing Cheese and you can still see this practice in operation. It is also possible to see cheese being made at the Gorge Cheddar Cheese complex and sample many of the excellent varieties.

The Cathedral-like Caves and Britain's biggest Gorge are the result of million year old Ice Age river beds. See the world famous Cheddar Man, Britain's oldest complete skeleton.

There are walks to enjoy, caves to explore, open top bus rides through the gorge, cream teas and lots more. You could try climbing Jacob's Ladder - all 274 steps take you to a stunning 360° view of the surrounding area. If you fancy trying your hand at caving or climbing contact Rock Sport (details below) who will organize an adventure for you with all equipment supplied.

## **Churches**

See Section 3.

## **Coleridge Cottage**

35 Lime Street, Nether Stowey, Bridgwater TA5 1NQ; Tel: 732662

In December 1796 the young Samuel Taylor Coleridge moved into this little cottage in Nether Stowey with his wife and infant son. In those days the cottage was much smaller, with a thatched rather than tiled roof. The family lived at the cottage for three years and here Coleridge wrote some of his finest poems including: *Fears in Solitude*, *This Lime Tree Bower My Prison*, *The Nightingale*, *Frost at Midnight*, the first part of *Christabel* and *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, which contains references to neighbouring places. It was

also where Coleridge began to set down the opium-inspired *Kubla Khan* which came to him in his sleep.

In 1797 William Wordsworth and his sister Dorothy came to live at Alfoxden and they often came over to Nether Stowey to visit Coleridge and his family. Coleridge and Wordsworth would often go on nocturnal walks together, taking notebooks and camp stools. This rather eccentric behaviour, together with the strangers' northern accents and Dorothy Wordsworth's dark complexion, led to the rumour that they were French spies. The Home Office duly sent an investigator to Nether Stowey but he was able to conclude that the poets were simply 'harmless cranks'.

In the nineteenth century the cottage was greatly altered and only four rooms remain that existed in Coleridge's day. Today mementos of the poet are displayed here including his massive inkstand, locks of his hair and correspondence in his distinctive handwriting.

## **Clarks Village**

See Local Service, Facilities & Leisure.

## **Craft Shops**

See Local Service, Facilities & Leisure.

## **Dunster Castle**

Dunster, nr Minehead, Somerset TA24 6SL; Tel: 01643 821314

An ancient castle with fine interiors and subtropical gardens to be found in a dramatic hilltop location with sweeping views over Exmoor and the Bristol Channel; set in the picturesque village of Dunster the village itself is well worth a visit where you will find many tea shops, restaurants and shops in which to browse.

## **Ebbor Gorge**

Ebbor Gorge is now a nature reserve protected by English Nature. It includes three trails which wander through the woodlands, one of them going up the limestone gorge itself. There are a few mounds at the top of the gorge, and some of the caves in the area were occupied by Neolithic people; it is easy to imagine ancient people here. The view over mid-Somerset from the craggy rock at the top of the gorge path is inspiring. Located off the Wells to Priddy road, just past Wookey Hole. A car park is available. There are various grades of walk and an all access route for the disabled.

## **Gardens**

This part of the country is blessed with many beautiful gardens to visit. For a full list, please see separate downloadable list.

## **Glastonbury**

Glastonbury is reputed to have had the oldest Christian Church in England and has a long history as a place of pilgrimage. The 'White & Red Springs' are believed to have healing powers and have always attracted visitors. In more recent years there has been a revival of interest in Glastonbury as a centre of alternative beliefs. The town has lots of interesting shops selling books, charms, furniture, clothes and crystals.

## **Glastonbury Abbey**

The Abbey Gatehouse, Magdalene St., Glastonbury BA6 9EL; Tel: 01458 832267

The Abbey is set in 37 acres of beautifully peaceful parkland in the centre of the ancient market town of Glastonbury. It is traditionally the first Christian sanctuary in Great Britain, visited, so legend has it, by Joseph of Arimathea and Saints David and Patrick. Many believe that the Holy Thorn tree that can be seen in the grounds originated from Joseph of Arimathea's staff and others are convinced that King Arthur was buried in the Abbey beside his lovely wife Queen Guinevere. Whatever one believes the facts are that the ruins are unique and the grounds provide a spot of peace and tranquillity in an otherwise hectic world; and if the weather is poor there is the new Visitor's Centre with award winning Museum which includes a model of the Abbey as it might have looked in 1539, together with a display of the Town, a children's display and the magnificent 16<sup>th</sup> century Othery Cope.

## **Glastonbury Tor**

Open all year and no admission charge. Park and ride from the town centre of Glastonbury; Tel: 01985 843600

The Tor is a prominent hill overlooking the Isle of Avalon, Glastonbury and the Somerset Levels. This is one of Somerset's most renowned landmarks and the site of many legends and myths. It is reputed to be King Arthur's birthplace. There is a fantastic 360° view from the summit of the Tor and renovated paths provide easier access for the less ambulant.

## **Hestercombe Gardens**

Cheddon Fitzpaine, Taunton, Somerset TA2 8LG; Tel: 01823 413923

Hestercombe is a unique collection of three gardens spanning three centuries of garden history and design. All have undergone acclaimed restoration works and today provide important examples of gardens in contrasting styles that continue to grow and develop. The Formal Gardens were designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens with informal planting by Gertrude Jekyll.

Hestercombe offers a great destination for an exciting short stop or a wonderful leisurely day out. Don't forget to visit their Bat Roost with its hi-tech viewing room!

Just 5 minutes/5 miles from Junction 25 of the M5 and 2.5 miles from Taunton Railways - follow the brown daisy signs to Cheddon Road and Cheddon Fitzpaine. This venue is dog friendly.

## **Longleat**

Warminster, Wiltshire BSA12 7NW. Tel: 01985 844400

A bit further to drive but a wonderful day out; set within 900 acres of Capability Brown landscaped parkland, Longleat House is widely regarded as one of the best examples of high Elizabethan architecture in Britain and one of the most beautiful stately homes open to the public.

Longleat now encompasses a wide range of attractions to suit visitors of all ages: Longleat Hedge Maze; Safari Boats for a sea-lion escorted cruise; Longleat Railway; Adventure Castle.

## **Maunsel Canal Centre**

North Newton, Nr Bridgwater TA7 0DH

Visit the lock, stroll along the Canal; take a canal cruise (by appointment only). Walk to the next lock at Higher Maunsel a distance of approx 500 meters and see a model of the sun, part of the 'Somerset Space Walk'. Tea Garden for light refreshments and souvenirs.

Canal Cruises: 451523 or 01823 or 444630; Maunsel Canal: 663160  
Check opening times before planning your trip. Length of stay can be between a half to two and a half hours (if taking cruise).

## **Montacute House**

Montacute, Nr Yeovil, Somerset TA15 6XP; Tel: 01935 823289

Owned by the National Trust, Montacute House is one of the best preserved Elizabethan mansions in Britain. It was built at the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century for Sir Edward Phelips; he was a lawyer who became Speaker of the House of Commons and Master of the Rolls and in the trial of Guy Fawkes opened for the prosecution.

The symmetrical, H-shaped house was constructed of Ham Hill stone. The interior is as impressive as the exterior and has many Renaissance features including decorated ceilings, ornate fireplaces, wood panelling and heraldic glass.

Open: Apr-Oct Wed-Mon 11:00-17:00

House: April to 1st week Nov, daily except Tue, 12-5:30pm.

Garden: March-1st week Nov, daily except Tue, 11am-5:30pm; 1st week Nov-end Feb, 11:30am-4pm.

## **Peat Moors Centre**

Shapwick Road, Westhay, Glastonbury BA6 9TT; Tel: 01458 860697

A chance to see an 'ancient landscape' and the wildlife of the Avalon Marshes; three full size reconstructions of Iron Age roundhouses give an insight into living conditions at the unique 'Glastonbury Lake Village'.

Digging peat-turf for fuel formed the backbone of the local economy from the Middle Ages until the Second World War. During the last century, hand digging 'black gold' gave way to machines and this era of change is reflected in a display that celebrates this peat cutting heritage with examples of folk art and tools.

The Peat Moors Centre lies on the road between Shapwick and Westhay; turn off the A39 between Bridgwater and Glastonbury.

## **Rich's Farmhouse Cider**

Mill Farm, Watchfield, Highbridge TA9 4RD; Tel: 783651

Cider has been produced at Rich's Cider Farm for over 50 years. The production is still traditional. In the autumn the air is filled with the wonderfully heady aroma of crushed apples as the oak vats are filled with Somerset's 'amber nectar'.

Rich's has always been a family business. Jan took over the cider farm when sadly Gordon passed away in May 1998. With the help of her husband Brian, cousin Martin Rich, Russell Salway and Jan's sisters and their families the farm has been brought up-to-date.

Rich's Cider offers farmhouse cider, cider products, hampers, visits and much more. The Cider Press Restaurant is also available for meals throughout the day. Lorraine reports that they offer a nice all day breakfast! Veggie Breakfasts available too.

## **Secret World Wildlife Rescue**

New Road, East Huntspill, Highbridge; Tel: 01278 783250

Specialises in the rescue, rehabilitation and eventual release of orphaned and injured wild creatures. Each year approximately 3,000 wild animals are cared for from the tiniest harvest mice and bats to badgers, swans, foxes, deer and otters. It is run entirely on donations and runs the only 24 hours wildlife rescue service in the South-west. Open on selected days only.

## **Sedgemoor, Battle of**

See Westonzoyland below.

## Selworthy and Bossington

The charming village of Selworthy lies in the heart of the Holnicote estate in a magnificent setting on the northern fringes of Exmoor on the A39 between Minehead and Porlock. The estate of 12,443 acres is the National Trust's main property on Exmoor.

At first glance the cream-washed stone, thatched cottages seem typical of many ancient settlements in this area. However, Selworthy was rebuilt in 1828 by Sir Thomas Acland of Killerton for the aged and infirm of the Holnicote estate. He used traditional designs and materials to create a deliberately old-fashioned village. Located on the wooded slopes of Selworthy Combe, the village is laid out loosely round a long green and climbs the hill to the 15<sup>th</sup> century church of All Saints.

Selworthy's Periwinkle Cottage Tea Rooms provide wonderful cream teas. Alternatively Kitnor's Tea Rooms at Bossington is excellent. Bossington which has attractive thatched cottages, is just half a mile from the beach and is an excellent centre for walking.

### Special events

- Cheddar Festive Night  
Around the first Saturday in December  
Cheddar Gorge and Village dressed up for Christmas: carols, bands; Christmas and farmers' market; craft fair; candlelit tours of Gough's Cave; shops, cafes and pubs open late  
Cheddar Tourist Information Centre, Tel: 01934 744071
- Dunster by Candlelight  
The first Friday and Saturday in December  
Streets lit by candlelight; Lantern Lighting Procession; stiltwalkers, musicians, entertainers, morris men and magicians
- Bridgwater Carnival and Squibs  
The Friday after the first Thursday in November (nearest Friday to Nov. 5<sup>th</sup>).  
Bridgwater is known country-wide for its annual Guy Fawkes Carnival which attracts 150,000 visitors; over 100 carnival floats up to 100 feet long; follows a 2.5 mile route for 2 to 3 hours; large fireworks display outside the town hall (known locally as 'squibbing').  
Tel: 01278 421795 for Information
- Bridgwater Arts Fair  
Bridgwater Arts Centre, 11-13 Castle St, Bridgwater TA6 3DD; Tel: 01278 422700/1  
During the first weekend of July, the annual 'Somerfest' arts festival is held in Bridgwater; includes programme of rock, jazz and classical music, dance, drama and visual arts with national and local participants.

- **Bridgwater Fun Fair**

The Fair is held annually for four days beginning on the last Wednesday of September. The fair takes place on St Matthew's Field, known locally as the Fair Field, and is ranked as the second largest in England after the Nottingham Goose Fair. It originated in 1249 as a horse and cattle fair, lasting for eight days. 30 main rides, 15 children's rides and 50 traditional side stalls.

## **Wells**

Wells is the smallest city in England, with its famous cathedral and school at the centre of the town. The area around the cathedral is one of the largest medieval ecclesiastical precincts. The cathedral is a must with its famous 'scissor' arches and medieval clock with figures that joust on the hour – purported to be the oldest working clock in the world with its original face. Next door is the Bishops Palace (see separate entry above).

There are lots of old buildings to look at as you wander around, including the tithe barn and 15<sup>th</sup> century parish church. The town also has a cheese shop - Somerset cheese is made locally and there is a wonderful patisserie called Goodfellows facing the market square.

There is a lively market on Wednesday and Saturday mornings where all sorts of local delicacies may be purchased. Lorraine recommends the stall selling olives and other delicacies and the mushroom stall is also worth a look. The air is filled with the smell of fresh bread and sizzling sausages cooked by the award-winning butcher who fries them in the biggest pan you have ever seen. There are lots of organic vegetables and homemade cakes. Why not sit outside one of the coffee shops on the edge of the market square and watch the world go by as buskers ply their trade in an a place where time seems to have stood still.

## **West Somerset Steam Railway**

Bishops Lydeard to Minehead – this genuine country branch line of the old Great Western Railway is full of fascination whether you are looking for a nostalgic ride back in time through lovely countryside or to study the railway and industrial heritage which the line preserves.

The historic steam locomotives, coaches and wagons, and the buildings of the ten unique stations linked by a twenty-mile scenic journey will repay hours of exploration.

On route you can see: the gently rolling Quantock hills; distant Exmoor; unspoilt villages and farms; the cliffs and coast of the Bristol Channel with views of distant South-Wales; church towers; Dunster Castle; and Minehead's seaside charm.

Trains run throughout the year. Space is limited but you can book your seats in advance on 01643 700384.

## **Westonzoyland**

This village on the Somerset Levels, a few miles from Bridgwater, is close to the site of the Battle of Sedgemoor, which was fought on 6<sup>th</sup> July 1685 between the troops of the Rebel James Scott, 1<sup>st</sup> Duke of Monmouth, and James II of England. It was an attempt to seize the English throne, the 'Monmouth Rebellion' - James II had succeeded to the throne on the death of his brother Charles II; James Scott was Charles' illegitimate son.

After landing from the Netherlands at Lyme Regis in Dorset, the Duke eventually led his untrained and ill-equipped troops on a night-time attack on the King's position on the site of Bussex Farm outside the village of Westonzoyland. The element of surprise was lost when a musket was accidentally discharged, and the Battle of Sedgemoor resulted in defeat for the Duke by the royal army under Lord Churchill and Lord Feversham. Monmouth escaped the battlefield, but was captured near Ringwood, Hampshire. He was taken to the Tower of London in London where he was, after several blows of the axe, finally beheaded.

It is said that other rebels were hanged from a huge tree that used to stand just outside Cossington Park. The tree gave its name to Great Tree Farm, the entrance to which lies opposite. A concrete plinth marks the spot at the junction of Bell Lane and Middle Road.

Westonzoyland is also home to Somerset's earliest steam-powered pumping station. Built in 1830, this now houses a small museum displaying stationary steam engines and exhibits of land drainage history. Pride of place goes to the station's pumping engine, the Easton and Amos. Small snack bar.

## **Willows and Wetlands Visitor Centre**

Meare Green Court, Stoke St Gregory, Taunton TA3 6HY. Tel: 01823 490249

A family run business established in 1819, based on the unique Somerset levels, growing and supplying willow and producing high quality handcrafted willow products such as baskets, furniture, garden accessories, artists' charcoal etc.

The visitor centre has exhibitions, displays, a museum with unusual artefacts and walks onto the levels to experience the landscape and environment. Guided tours are also available to see first hand, from withy bed to basket, this most traditional and unique Somerset industry and craft.

## **Wookey Hole Caves**

Like Cheddar, Wookey Hole has caves to explore, together with a working linen paper mill and an old penny arcade. You can find discount tickets for Wookey Hole Caves in the Cossington Park information pack.