# Pedals, ferries, pubs and perfect places, along the Exmouth Estuary and route 2 cycle route via Topsham ferry

Guest article by written by Rebecca Haywood of Bikelands shop and hire, Exmouth

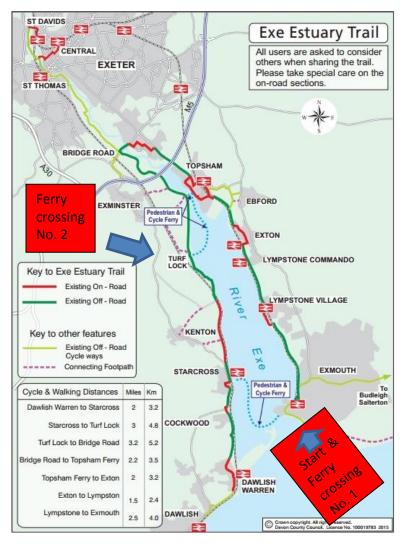
#### Introduction

Exmouth is lucky to be surrounded by beautiful cycle paths. Simply cycling up the Exe Estuary is a total joy, but for a special treat this is a wonderful day out.

#### A short detour ride along the sandy beach with tea and cake cafe

To begin we recommend going left before going right, to cycle along Exmouth Beach. From <u>Bikelands</u> bicycle hire shop and Bike emporium on The Strand it is just a minute's ride away. On route is <u>Bumble & Bee</u> with cool interiors, award winning cakes and surrounded by lush gardens.

The sandy beach is two miles from town to UNESCO's Jurassic Coast – if the tide is out, you can lock up and go for a mooch beyond the red cliffs at Orcombe Point and find yourself on a little hidden beach. But keep an eye on those tides!





Spot seals on the sand banks

# Start the ride from Exmouth along the estuary with a crossing on the Starcross Ferry

After exploring the beach, cycle back to Exmouth Quay, where you catch the Passenger and cycle Ferry Boat to Starcross (check link for times). You often see seals bobbing up and down or sunbathing on the sandbanks. You will need a little muscle to get the bikes off the boat and over the bridge that crosses the railway line. Sustrans Route 2 is at the bottom of the steps, head towards Exeter with Estuary on your right. You'll pass the picturesque Powderham Castle and its deer park whilst cycling along pancake flat paths.

#### Turf Lock Pub on the waterside

First stop is Turf Locks, to add to the mystique, you can only reach the delightful pub, The Turf Lock by boat, foot or pedal power. How romantic! You'll find fish dishes, roasts, a simple BBQ (ideal to feed the little ones without fuss). They also have accommodation if you wish to stay over night.

While you may want to stretch out on the grassy banks here, it's time to move on. The route continues nestled between the River Exe and Exeter Canal.



#### Across on the Ferry to Topsham

When you reach the Lock Keepers Cottages, you can catch an inexpensive *little* Topsham to Turf ferry (I would recommend calling ahead, click the link for details) that crosses this short stretch of river. You're now in the village of Topsham. Steeped in history and crammed with antique shops, boutiques and delightful cafes. Once a major seaport - the clue is in the Dutch gabled buildings.

#### The Passage House Inn in Topsham



If you're in need of refreshments, you'll pass The Passage House Inn. Apparently frequented by one particularly famous punter – Prince Harry! (The Royal Marine base is just down the road and even Princes need a pint). This is a great place to watch the sun go down with views across the Estuary to the Haldon Hills. The area is RSPB protected due to the many wading and migrating birds. Bring your binoculars!

Why else would the pretty branch line that hugs this side of the Estuary be called the Avocet Line?

## The Puffing Billy pub, Exton

Once you've had an amble through Topsham follow 'Route 2' back to Exmouth. The eastern (right) side of the Estuary is stunning and takes you through the leafy village of Exton. There's a playground if the kids are in need of a fun respite (opposite is <a href="The Puffing Billy">The Puffing Billy</a> for the grownups). Once you're all done continue along Route 2, it follows the river providing wonderful views, whether tide is in or out, sun or cloud.

You'll whiz past the Marine Base (you may even catch the Marines doing their exercise training) until you arrive at the next village. Lympstone is a proper Devon village, with chocolate box cottages and a number of



cycle friendly pubs (do you spot a theme here?). <u>The Redwing</u> is our favourite for its friendly staff and good food. But <u>The Swan</u> is very cycle friendly too.

#### **View of Peters Tower from Lympstone**



#### One last push and you are near the end at Exmouth

There aren't many hills on this route, but you do have to tackle one heading out of Lympstone, it's short and sharp. So just peddle fast and go for it! Soon you'll be back on the path and arrive in Exmouth within 15 minutes.

The whole route with boats and cycling should take two and half hours, but you could easily take a whole day to really enjoy the views and appreciate the simple joy of cycling. Don't forget your bell – ding ding!!

#### After the cycle ride....an evening of music and food in Exmouth

If you're staying in Exmouth, then I highly recommend <u>El Olivo</u> for delectable tapas and <u>The Chronicle</u> for super British food.

For a great night out, <u>The Grapevine</u> is renowned for its fantastic live music. Get ready to stamp your feet!



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The Grapevine, bistro pub and music

### Further Information for the 2 ferries:

#### **Exmouth to Starcross**

www.exe2sea.co.uk For Boats Exmouth to Starcross.

Single: £4.50 per adult. £3.50 per child.\*

Day Return: £5.50 per adult. £4.00 per child\*

Bikes £1 extra\*

#### **Topsham Ferry and Water Taxi**

Ferry from The Passage to Turf Lock. **Summer:** Apr-Sep, 9.30am-5.30pm. Closed Tuesdays. **Winter:** weekends and Bank Holidays, 10.00am-5.00pm. Subject to tides and conditions. Ring 07801 203338 (also for evening water taxi)\*

\*Correct at the time of writing (June 2015)

## **Bike Hire:**



- Bikelands: 46 The Strand, Exmouth, Devon, EX8 IAL <u>www.bikelands.co.uk</u>
- Exmouth Cycles: I Victoria Rd, Exmouth EX8 ID <u>www.exmouthcycles.com</u>

## **Estuary Trail map**

https://www.cycledevon.info/files/2015/05/Exe-Estuary-Trail-map-with-Share-Space-180515.pdf

# **Exe Explorer information leaflet**

 $\frac{\text{https://www.exe-estuary.org/documents/172437/176896/Exe+Explorer+lssue+9+Nov+2013.pdf/c41ddc2f-cc5f-47ac-a92a-3aa44ce80eca}$ 

We hope you enjoy cycling in East Devon, written for East Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.