

# In the Heart of The Somerset Levels



Credit: James Thurtle

**The unique, evocative Somerset Levels and moors are characterised by miles of ditches known as 'rhynes' which criss-cross open grasslands. Willows grace the banks, herds of dairy cows graze on rich pastures and an abundance of wildlife thrives in this gentle landscape. Natural England have designated it a National Character Area in recognition of its special nature.**

This itinerary would comfortably suit a couple of days in the area or if you're short of time and don't want to linger too long you can do it in a day.

Start your day at **East Lambrook Manor Gardens**. Designed by Margery Fish this small, beautiful garden combines old-fashioned and contemporary planting and attracts visitors from all over the world. You can buy plants at the specialist nursery and enjoy a delicious snack at their Malthouse Café.

A drive through narrow, winding lanes will take you to the **Somerset Cider Brandy Company & Burrow Hill Cider**. Book a tour or just turn up and enjoy a walk through the orchards. Take a look at the production in old oak vats, barrels and copper stills whilst sampling cider brandies!

From there head for lunch to local smokery, **Brown and Forrest**. Sample their finest smoked eel and salmon as well as a delicious range of other smoked foods including chicken, duck, lamb and trout. There are over 40 products available in the shop to take home!





A short distance away lies one of the Levels landmarks, **Muchelney Abbey**, with clearly visible abbey foundations to explore.

Marvel at the magnificent architecture of the intact 16th century Abbot's House before having a look at the picturesque church of **Saint Peter and Saint Paul**.

A little way out of the village is the studio of celebrated potter, John Leach, **Muchelney Pottery and Gallery**. Muchelney hand-thrown stoneware kitchen pots are used in kitchens around the world. In fact you would have seen some adorning the Abbot's House.

John Leach, who ran Muchelney Pottery for over 50 years, sadly passed away in August 2021.

Mr Leach was the latest in a line of Leach family members to take charge of the pottery business they ran, having trained with his grandfather Bernard, and his father David.







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A 5-minute drive will take you to **Langport** 'The Heart of the Levels'. Historically a busy river port, this ancient market town is noted for the hanging chapel in the old town wall. With a fantastic selection of cafes, pubs, markets, arts and crafts and artisan shops there is a real buzz here.

Don't miss **Shakspeare Glass** nestled on the bank of the River Parrett. Will Shakspeare, one of the country's best known glass blowers set up Shakspeare Glass over 25 years ago and has supplied many galleries and well-known stores in that time. You can see his wide range of glass on display in the gallery as well as work from selected other British makers, including jewellery. Enjoy refreshments overlooking the river at Shakspeare Glass, **The Kitchen at the Wharf** or **The Bridge Bakery & Canteen**.

While away the hours by taking a stroll along the beautiful River Parrett from the town car park – a relaxing way to watch wildlife such as otters, kingfishers, herons, swans and even great cranes. If you're feeling more energetic, you could launch a paddleboard, kayak or canoe and take a paddle the Parrett (check local licensing). Or take a lovely scenic river cruise on the **Duchess of Cocklemoor**.

Alternatively, a great way to explore the levels is on two wheels and you can follow one of the circular cycle rides detailed in '**Peddalling the Scenic Route**', available to download free from [www.visitsouthsomerset.com](http://www.visitsouthsomerset.com) and available at Parrett Trail Bikes. All routes described are along quiet country roads and range from easy to medium levels of ability. Call in at Langport's Local Information Centre in the Library for more tips and ideas.

If you're staying a bit longer and have the time, we also recommend a visit to nearby **Somerton**, just a short drive from Langport. There are many delights within the town including an old market place with a lovely Buttercross which is floodlit at night. Around and in the Market Place you can find the old Town Hall, which is now a gallery and workshop venue managed by **ACEarts**, the old courthouse and almshouses. There are also many wonderful churches some of which date back to the 15th century.



## Useful Information

East Lambrook Manor Gardens, Silver Street, East Lambrook, South Petherton TA13 5HH  
T: 01460 240328  
[www.eastlambrookmanor.com](http://www.eastlambrookmanor.com)

Somerset Cider Brandy Company & Burrow Hill Cider, Pass Vale Farm, Burrow Hill,  
Kingsbury Episcopi, Martock TA12 6BU  
T: 01460 240782  
[www.somersetciderbrandy.com](http://www.somersetciderbrandy.com)

Brown & Forrest, Bowdens Farm, Hambridge, near Langport TA10 0BP  
T: 01458 250875  
[www.brownandforrest.co.uk](http://www.brownandforrest.co.uk)

Muchelney Abbey (EH), Muchelney, Langport TA10 0DQ  
T: 0370 333 1181  
[www.english-heritage.org.uk/muchelney](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/muchelney)

Muchelney Pottery & John Leach Gallery, Muchelney Pottery, Muchelney TA10 0DW  
T: 01458 250324  
[www.johnleachpottery.co.uk](http://www.johnleachpottery.co.uk)

Shakspeare Glass & Arts, Westover, Langport TA10 9RB  
T: 01458 252477  
[www.shakspeareglass.co.uk](http://www.shakspeareglass.co.uk)

The Kitchen at the Wharf, Great Bow Wharf, Bow Street, Langport TA10 9PN  
T: 01458 254354  
[www.kitchenlangport.co.uk](http://www.kitchenlangport.co.uk)

The Bridge Bakery & Canteen, Westover Trading Estate, Langport TA10 9RB  
T: 01458 897100  
[www.thebridgelangport.co.uk](http://www.thebridgelangport.co.uk)

Duchess of Cocklemoor, Langport  
[www.duchessofcocklemoor.co.uk](http://www.duchessofcocklemoor.co.uk)

Parrett Trail Bikes, The Bridge, Westover Trading Estate, Langport TA10 9RB  
T: 01458 253626/07510 053746  
[www.parretttrailbikes.co.uk](http://www.parretttrailbikes.co.uk)

Langport Local Information Centre  
Langport Library, Whatley, Langport TA10 9RA  
E: [infocentre@langport.life](mailto:infocentre@langport.life)  
[www.langport.life](http://www.langport.life)

ACEarts, The Old Town Hall, Market Place, Somerton TA11 7NB  
T: 01458 273008  
[www.acearts.co.uk](http://www.acearts.co.uk)

**Disclaimer: Please check individual places for latest opening times and guidelines.**

