

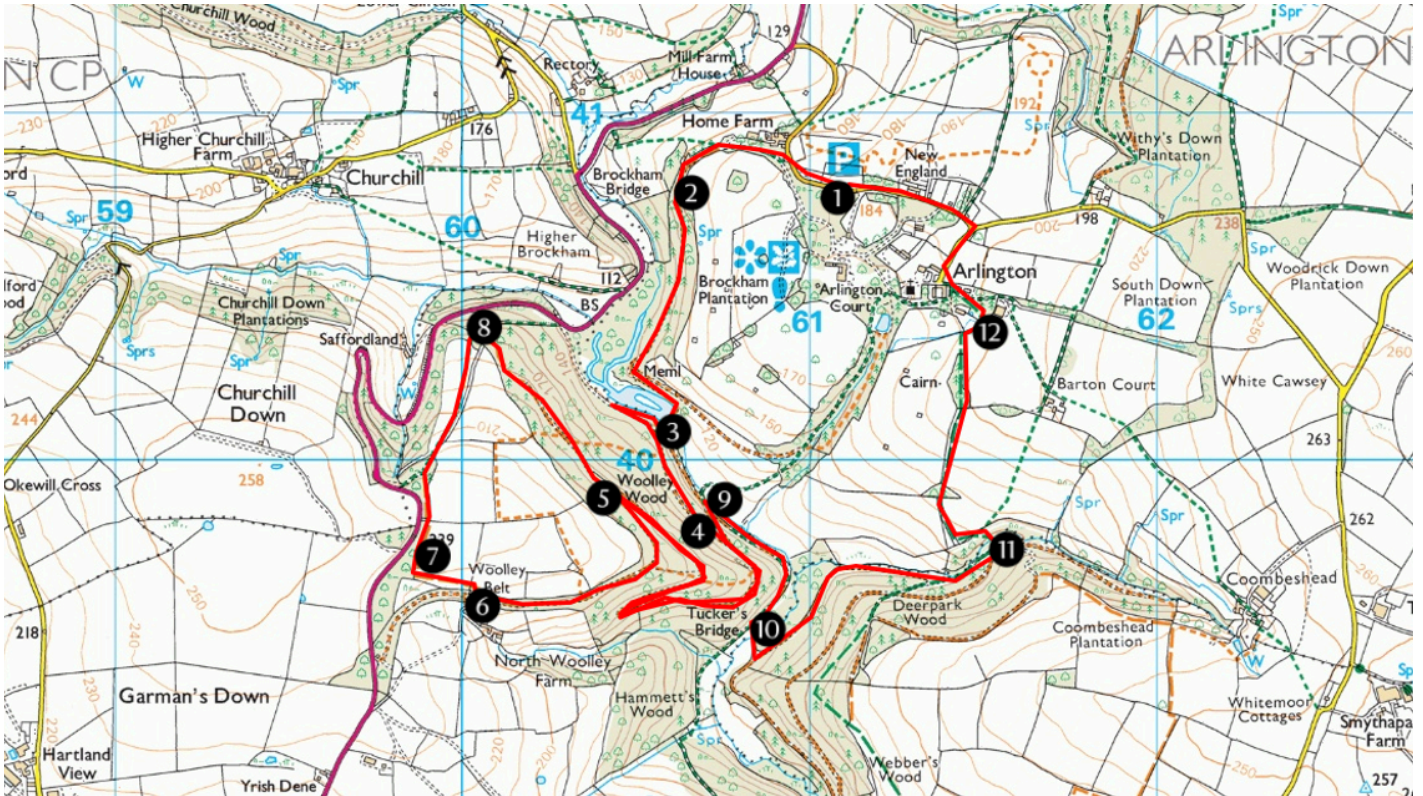
DEVON

Arlington cycle - Woolley Wood and Arlington Court loop 11km

This figure-of-eight shaped mountain-bike route takes in Monkey Puzzle Avenue, the Lake and a loop of Woolley Wood, before rolling along a riverside track and returning through Deer Park Wood. It involves some climbing, but you are well rewarded with sections of singletrack, several exciting descents and plenty of panoramic views.

i Please note

This route includes sections on minor roads at the user's own risk.



Information

Address: Arlington, near Barnstaple, Devon, EX31 4LP

Activity: Cycling

Challenging

Not suitable for dogs

Full trail: Miles: 7 miles (km: NaN)

Duration: 1 hour

Total stages: 12

Start point: Arlington Court car park, grid ref: SS611408

1. From the visitor's car park, opposite the main entrance to the estate, turn right and ride down the quiet country road for 50 metres before entering the estate left through a gateway with posts topped by stone herons holding eels in their beaks (an emblem of Arlington). Once through, bear right and cruise along a broad track, lined with monkey-puzzle trees. Go past a public footpath pointer and follow a fingerpost along permitted bridleway, gently descending with valley views on your right, until you reach a wide gate, which is typically closed.
2. Go through the gate, pass a large map of the estate and continue freewheeling downhill, following a 'Lake Walk' pointer. Stay on the main track, ignoring a small turning on the right that takes walkers and runners along an alternative (and steep) path to the lake. Ride straight through a junction where a track forks right (to the Bird Hide) and an acute left turn leads to the Wilderness, and continue around a left bend, following Lake Walk arrows. Glancing towards the lake, which appears on your right, you will see a large urn positioned between two monkey puzzle trees – a memorial to Miss Rosalie Chichester, who donated the estate to the National Trust. The track traces the water's edge, before bending right by a wooden horse sculpture and crossing the dam.
3. Leave the main track and follow a fingerpost pointing right, for the Centenary Path. Ride along a narrow trail with the lake on your right, go past the turning for the Centenary Path and then, just before a gate, arc sharp left around a switchback and start to climb a broad track into Woolley Wood. The ground is soft here, and the initial ascent is quite steep, so get in a low gear before taking the turn. Keep climbing the track, passing turnings for the Centenary Path, which crosses your route. As the track levels out you ride past a picnic place with great views.

4. A track joins from the left, but ignore this (for now) and continue straight, tracing a contour around the side of the hill. Pass a set of steps on your right and keep following the wide track as it curves around a broad right bend and continues to ascend along a fairly forgiving gradient. Near the top of the hill, the track turns sharp right, around a switchback. Cycle past another intersection with the Centenary Path and continue along the trail for the last part of the climb.
5. Meeting a T-junction you will see signs for the North Woolley Loop pointing both ways. Turn sharp left and ride along the broad track as it snakes around a wide right bend, passing the top of the Centenary Path on your left. Go through a wide gate (typically open), pass yet another turning for Centenary Path on the right and keep riding along a fast flat section of track, with the valley dropping away dramatically on your left.
6. Just before meeting a wide wooden gate, look out for a fingerpost on the right of the track, pointing left, down a narrow trail. Turn acute left and follow this down a steep but short descent. Pass a sign asking horse riders to 'dismount before going through the tunnel' (and a set of steps to assist them). Cyclists have to briefly dismount too, in order to follow a fingerpost pointing left through a wide wooden gate, which is kept closed. Remount and cycle up a broad rocky trail between two moss-cloaked stone walls, before passing through a tunnel that goes beneath the track you just rode along. If you can't stay in the saddle through the tunnel, don't worry, because there's another gate to negotiate on the far side. After that, turn sharp left, go through a second gate and ride uphill through a field, keeping the fence on your left
7. Pass through a small wooden gate and follow the trail as it arcs right, riding along a sublime section of narrow trail as it snakes through the woods. By a gate, do a dogleg (left then immediate right) following North Woolley Loop signage, before descending a sensation section of twisty singletrack that flows through the trees. When this ends, go through a small wooden gate into a field and follow a path that sends you plunging past an orchard of young cherry trees. Go through another small wooden gate at the bottom of the field and turn right, following a North Woolley Loop fingerpost.
8. . Ignore logging tracks dropping to the left and go directly ahead, along the broad stony track, which undulates through North Woolley Woods. Another track cuts across your trail but continue straight, descending through trees. Pass an intersection with the Centenary Path and keep going, as the track starts ascending. At the brow of the small climb you will meet a 3-way fingerpost, turn left here, following the arm pointing towards Arlington court. Enjoy the descent, drinking in valley views on the left before looping back around the hairpin bend. This time, just after passing the steps on your left, go right at the fork and drop down the steep trail leading to the River Yeo.
9. Just before the water, opposite Smallacombe Bridge, turn right and cycle along a lovely wide track that hugs the riverside, following the flow of the Yeo until you reach attractive Tucker's Bridge. Cross the river here, following the fingerpost for Loxhore and Deer Park Wood
10. On the far side of the bridge, turn left and follow a fingerpost for Arlington Court and Loxhore, pedalling along a track that undulates (but mostly ascends) through Deer Park Wood. Ignore an acute right turn and keep going straight, climbing through the trees. After a small pinch climb you meet a major junction with tracks leading off in several directions. Go straight across and then bear slightly left, following a fingerpost for Arlington Court.
11. The trail arcs around a left bend, crosses a stream and climbs steeply (but mercifully briefly). Pass another fingerpost and keep going towards Arlington Court. The bridleway drops and then elbows right and starts ascending again, gently at first, but then a bit more breathtakingly, with fields opening up on either side of the gravel trail. As you crest the climb and pass between two metal gates, look left to see a stone obelisk (Jubilee Cairn) and score a great view of Arlington House beyond. Pass the sign for the cairn and continue along the bridleway. Descend to a wide gate, go through and turn right, riding up a track beside a field.
12. At the top, go left through another gate and cycle through small clump of woods, passing a pretty cottage on your left. Emerge opposite the Sawmill (now an National Trust rangers' office) and turn left along the lane. To visit the cafe and/or the toilets, turn left, ride past the front of the Carriage Museum and St James's church and follow signs; otherwise bear right and cycle along the lane that passes behind the museum and church. At the T-junction, turn left and the car park is 500 metres along the road.

End point: Arlington Court car park, grid ref: SS611408
