

Dunster Forest

Situated in West Somerset in the north eastern part of the Exmoor National Park and overlooking the Bristol Channel, The Crown Estate's Dunster Forest surrounds the picturesque and historic medieval village of Dunster. Managed to produce high quality timber and to protect and enhance the rich wildlife of Exmoor and its cultural and natural heritage, the Dunster Forest is home to a wide variety of unusual and sometime rare plants and animals. A wealth of historic sites, archaeological remains and protected habitats add to the diversity of the woodlands and surrounding rolling moorlands, while the nearby attractions of Dunster add to the range of places to explore.



To help visitors discover and enjoy this fascinating and attractive landscape The Crown Estate has developed an extensive variety of waymarked paths and trails throughout the forest.

This leaflet is your guide to the long distance routes, public paths, cycling trails and brideways which criss-cross the Dunster Forest and surrounding areas. Information about the key sites of interest you may wish to visit is included together with details about forest management and the wildlife that can be found in this remarkable area.

Visitors are welcome to explore on foot, horse or cycle but are asked to respect other users, follow the Country Code and to take great care not to disturb forest or farm management activities.

The waymarked trails vary from 2 miles to 9 miles in length and mostly start at Nutcombe Bottom car park, where a children's play area and picnic site are also available.

We hope you enjoy exploring Dunster Forest and look forward to your return.

ABOUT DUNSTER ESTATE

The Dunster Estate extends to over 4,000 hectares (9,900 acres) and has largely belonged to The Crown Estate since the 1950's.

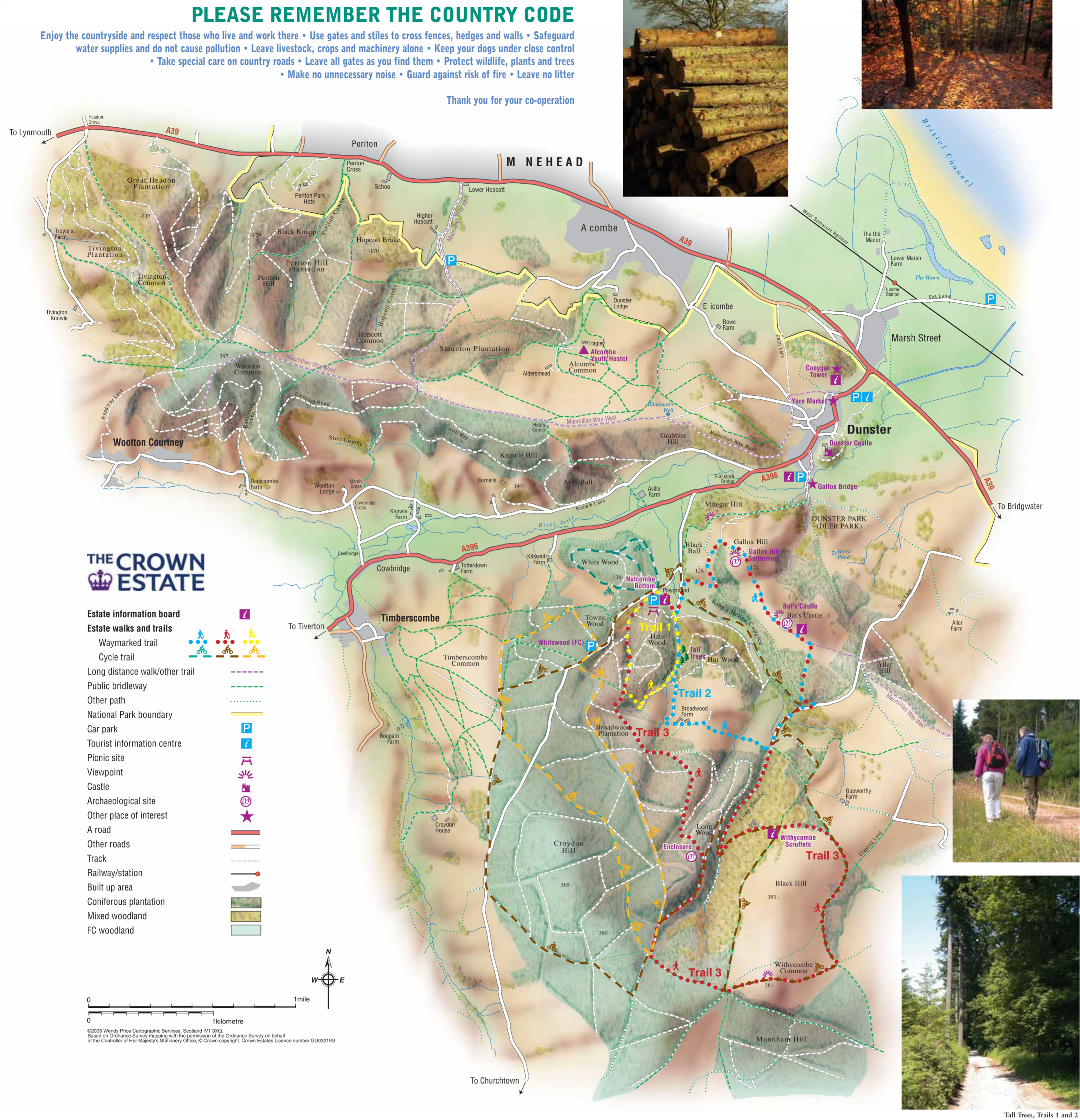
Dunster Castle is not part of The Crown Estate and has been managed by The National Trust since 1976.

The earliest indications of settlements in the Dunster area date back to around 350 BC and there is much evidence of the Bronze and Iron Ages as well as Roman civilisation. However, in terms of the development of the estate as it exists today, the first key date is 1066 when William de Mohun arrived and built Dunster Castle as the administrative centre for the 69 estates granted to him by William the Conqueror.

The de Mohuns were succeeded on the estate some 300 years later in 1376 by the Luttrell family. The Luttrells were one of the most prominent families in the history of Dunster and, over the following centuries, played an important part in shaping the landscape. Of note was the building of Dunster Yarn Market in 1609 by George Luttrell as a vital part of a thriving wool industry that continued well into the 1900s. The Yarn Market was rebuilt in 1647 by his grandson, also called George, following damage during the English Civil War. It can still be seen today in the heart of Dunster village.

Another important contributor was Henry Fownes Luttrell who created Dunster Deer Park in 1755, now a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), and built Conygar Tower in 1775, a folly that took its name from the medieval word 'coney-garth', meaning rabbit warren. Conygar Tower still stands today as an important local landmark and viewpoint and a programme of extensive restoration has ensured improved public access for the future.

The forests and woodlands within the Dunster Estate extend to some 1,427 hectares (3,526 acres) and consist of a mixture of native trees such as oak and beech and other species including pines and cedars. In addition, Douglas firs, a tree native to western North America, can also be found and among these is a 57 metre high tree (see map), once recorded as the tallest in England and in the Guinness Book of Records in 1993. Storm damage has reduced the height of the tree by several metres and it is now questionable as to this being the tallest specimen in the country. Although much used for recreational purposes, the woodland is also managed for commercial timber production and there are local moorland conservation areas at Gallox Hill, Withycombe Common and Black Hill. The diversity of the forest landscape, including open moorland, woodland glades and streams, supports a wealth of habitats in which a wide variety of both animals and plants can prosper.



Nutcomb Bottom Picnic Site and Play Area



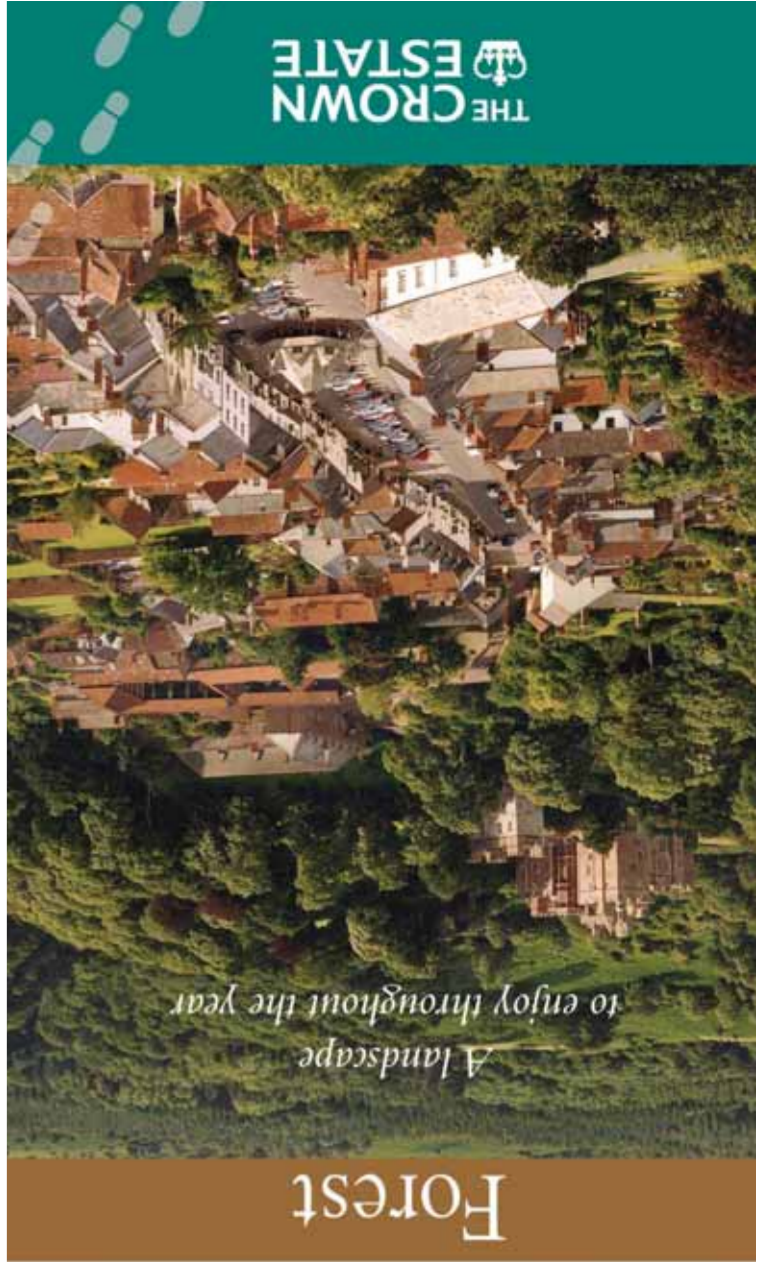
Trail 3

Dunster Forest Management

The Crown Estate adopts sustainable forest management practices in the management of Dunster Forest. As with all the woodlands under The Crown Estate ownership throughout the UK the woodlands are independently audited and certified under the UK Woodland Assurance Standard (UKWAS). These standards ensure that forests are managed to meet a wide range of commercial, social, environmental and recreational benefits, according to best practice.

At Dunster this involves management for the maintenance of this very special landscape, growing timber in environmentally sound ways, providing access for the public and creating benefits for wildlife.

Most of the afforested area was planted between the years 1951 – 1970 and it is the policy of The Crown Estate to operate a 'continuous cover' system of forest management that avoids extensive clear-fells which can have major impacts on landscape and wildlife. This system ensures that the middle and lower slopes of the hills will always be covered by trees and the visual and environmental impact of thinning and felling activities is minimised.



to enjoy throughout the year

Forest

Walk and Explore

Dunster

Dunster Forest



The Crown Estate

There is no organisation in the world quite like The Crown Estate. With a property portfolio encompassing many of the UK's cityscapes, ancient forests, farms, parkland, coastline and communities, The Crown Estate's role as employer, influencer, manager, guardian, facilitator and revenue creator is unique. We have two main objectives: to benefit the taxpayer by paying the revenue from our assets directly to the exchequer; and to enhance the value of the estate and the income it generates.

Our portfolio demands the utmost in professionalism and efficiency from our staff and management to create added value for everyone – the people, businesses and communities who deal with us, and the nation as a whole. The estate extends throughout Britain – from beef farms in the north of Scotland to Portland stone mining in Dorset, from offices and affordable homes in London to parkland and ancient forests at Windsor and woodlands and farmland here in Dunster.

For further information please visit our website at www.thecrownestate.co.uk

LOCAL INFORMATION & SERVICES

Tourist Information: Exmoor National Park Centre, Dunster. Tel: 01643 821835 Open daily 10am to 5pm.
Doctors: 3 Park Street, Dunster. Tel: 01643 821224
Casualty: The Avenue, Minehead. Tel: 01643 707251
Police: 32 Townsend Road, Minehead. Tel: 0845 4567000
Garage Services: various in Minehead.
Post Office: Dunster High Street
Banks: various in Minehead.
Youth Hostel: Hagley, Manor Road, Alcombe. Tel: 01643 702595
Accommodation: Selection in Dunster and Minehead, email mineheadtic@visit.org.uk or Tel: 0845 3452465

FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information please contact a member of the forestry staff located at:
The Crown Estate Office, Loxhole Sawmill, Dunster Minehead, Somerset TA24 6NY
Tel: 01643 821309
Email: alvin.houchen@thecrownestate.co.uk or graham.smith@thecrownestate.co.uk

The forestry staff can usually be contacted on weekdays, although the office is not continually manned and staff may be absent at any time. If you would like to know more about the trails, places of interest, wildlife and forestry management please phone in advance.

We hope you enjoy your visit to Dunster Forest.