

Features of the Walk

Symonds Yat Rock. The view is one of the most famous in Britain, taking in the horseshoe bend in the River Wye, Goodrich, with its castle, Ross-on-Wye, and the Herefordshire hills. A telescope, operated by the RSPB, focuses on peregrine falcons when nesting at Caldwell Rocks. Refreshments are available at the Log Cabin.

Symonds Yat Station was on the Ross & Monmouth Railway, which opened in 1873 and was absorbed into the Great Western Railway in 1922. Passenger services ended in 1959 and goods in 1964. Part of the route is now a cycle/walking track.

The **Ferry** operated by the Saracen's Head Inn takes the waymarked route across the river. It does not operate after dark or when the river is in flood: to check, ring 01600 890435.

New Weir Forge was probably built in 1684 to refine pig iron. It was powered by a water wheel and was abandoned in the early 19th century. Foundations and parts of the walls survive.

Iron Mines. Iron ore in Dean occurs in the Carboniferous Limestone. These workings were probably active before the 18th century and may have provided ore for the Roman iron-working settlement of Ariconium, near Ross.

Seven Sisters Rocks are outcrops of Carboniferous Limestone, which provide spectacular views of the Lower Wye Gorge. (Take great care if you approach them.)

King Arthur's Cave, in a limestone cliff, has produced bones of many Ice Age (Late Pleistocene) animals, including mammoth, hyena, woolly rhinoceros, cave lion, cave and brown bear, and Irish elk. Flint implements of Late Paleolithic to Neolithic age have also been found. The Arthurian connection is legendary speculation.

Biblins Bridge was extensively repaired in 1998, £1000 being contributed by the Ramblers Association.

Lady Park Wood National Nature Reserve is an important example of unmanaged (and undisturbed) woodland, with a variety of trees and smaller plants and a rich breeding-bird community. It is closed to the public.

Near Harkening Rock is an outcrop of Devonian quartz conglomerate, much more resistant to weathering than the underlying sandstone. It was laid down in a wide, arid coastal plain. The rock is said to have been used by gamekeepers listening out for poachers, and commands extensive views of the Black Mountains of Wales.

The **Suck Stone** is a large fallen block of quartz conglomerate, estimated to weigh several thousand tons.

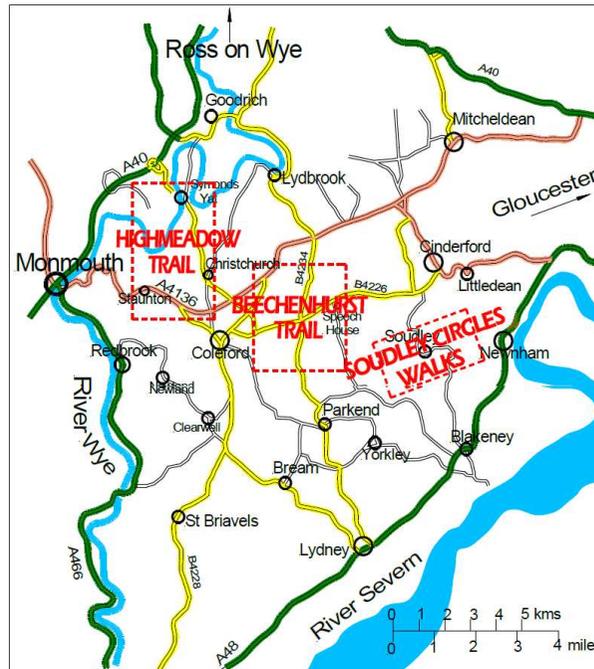
Staunton (the place of stones) is a pleasant village, with a 12–15th century church (with a spiral staircase to the pulpit), 14th century stone cross, and stone-walled animal pound.

The Buck Stone (more conglomerate) once bucked or rocked, but was dislodged by vandals in 1885. It is now fixed in place. The highest point on the trail (279 m, 915 ft), it has good views of the Welsh and Herefordshire hills.

The **Long Stone** probably dates back to the Bronze Age. Tradition has it that it will bleed if pricked at midnight on a certain night of the year.

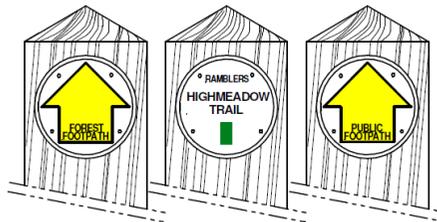
Highmeadow Woods, acquired by the Crown in 1817, are one of the most attractive areas of woodland in the country, particularly in the bluebell season and in the autumn. They are mostly ancient, semi-natural woodland (oak, ash, beech, lime, etc.), historically managed through coppicing and timber growing. Unlike most of the Forest of Dean, there is no sheep grazing, but deer or even boar may be seen.

WALK LOCATOR MAP



Stout walking footwear is essential and it is advised to have a copy of OS Explorer Map OL14

All walks routes are waymarked by square posts with yellow arrow discs at all path junctions which state; 'FOREST or PUBLIC FOOTPATH'.



GPX file available from fodramblers.org.uk

This walk leaflet was produced by the Forest of Dean Group of the Ramblers' with the willing co-operation of Forest Enterprise.

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The Ramblers' promotes rambling, protects rights of way and campaigns for access to open countryside. Registered Charity number 1093577

The Forest of Dean is a working forest and walkers are reminded to take care near any felling operations and to observe warning notices.

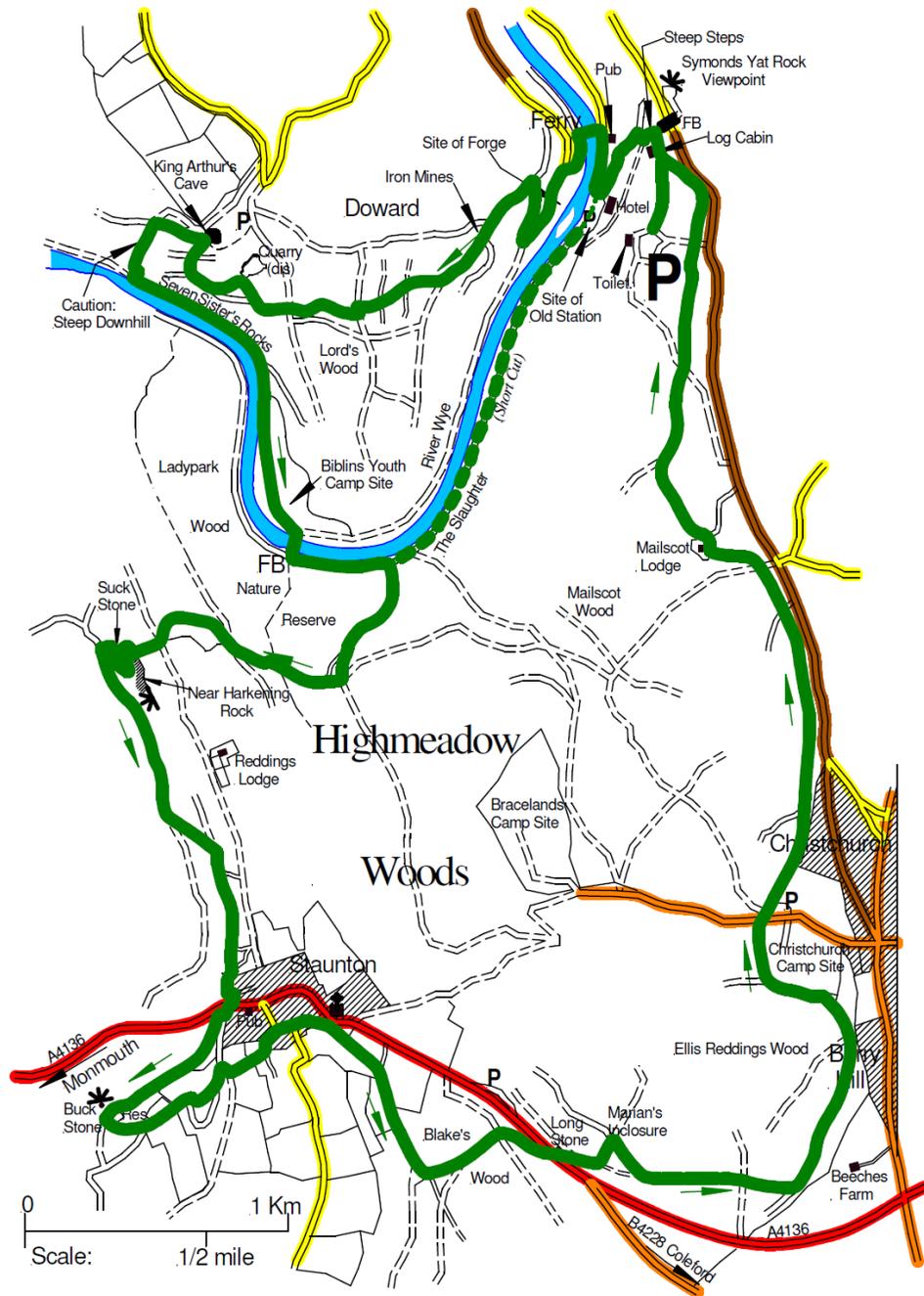
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Forest of Dean Ramblers WAYMARKED WALKS



The Highmeadow Trail

The Highmeadow Trail



The Highmeadow Trail is an 11 mile (8 mile with shortcuts), circular forest walk in the west of the Forest of Dean with stunning views, a ferry crossing and a footbridge over the River Wye. It is a demanding but rewarding walk with steep ascents and descents. It may be muddy in places and is followed in an anti-clockwise direction. It is not suitable for wheelchairs. Parking is recommended at Symonds Yat Rock Car park, (Pay and Display), although other parking sites can be found around the route. (*Note: Spur trails are not now included*)

ROUTE DESCRIPTION

From the car park, follow the footpath (signed) to the Log Cabin (and **Rock**). Bear L after Cabin (signed to River Wye) and go down steps. Cross over track, go L at next junction, and continue steeply downhill to river, near former **station site**. Turn R to take **ferry** across river by Saracen's Head. (*For a short cut, or if the ferry is not operating, turn L and follow the riverside track (the old railway track bed) downstream for about a mile. Some 400 yds before reaching Biblins Bridge, turn L up the second of two small valleys to rejoin the waymarked route.*)

From ferry, turn L along road. At sharp RH bend, turn L into lane (towards Biblins), passing above site of **New Weir Forge**. After 300 yds, turn sharp R to climb steeply uphill. Turn L at next junction, then keep ahead past caves and **old iron mines**, ignoring side tracks, to join wide forest road. After 150 yds, turn R onto footpath. Keep ahead over several cross paths, before bearing L to cross forest road. The path continues downhill, bending sharp L at an old limestone quarry. Turn R at T-junction, passing **Seven Sisters Rocks** on L (*view point with care*). Keep ahead and a descend rocky outcrop (*take care in wet*), and at base turn R at T-junction. Just before reaching **King Arthur's Cave** turn L, and then L again to descend steeply down to River Wye. Turn L and follow river bank into Biblins Youth Camp Site. Go over **Biblins Bridge** and turn L.

Follow river for about 400 yds, then turn R onto track up small valley. Ignore the first path on R, then turn R onto another footpath climbing steeply uphill. Keep ahead, with fence of **Lady Park Wood** on R. At top fence corner turn R on forest track, which soon bends L. Just beyond a track junction, turn R on path to **Near Harkening Rock**. Take the steep downhill path just R of the rocks. This zig-zags down past the **Suck Stone** to a forest road, where you turn L. After 1/2 mile turn L on path going diagonally uphill, bear R, and keep ahead, eventually passing St John's Well and emerging onto main road in **Staunton**.

(*For a short cut, turn L along main road to the church, cross main road into lane opposite and*

Cross road and take lane opposite. At gate turn R up bank and, keeping wall on R, climb to **Buck Stone**. Turn L on grassy track, which bends L to join tarmac road. At crest of sharp RH bend, take path on L which soon rejoins road. Turn L, go R at junction, then L following road. Ignore lane & FP sign at LH bend, then bear R at junction and stay on road through village, (note old animal pound on R). Just before main road junction by church, turn R onto track.

Ignoring side tracks go uphill to forest road. Turn L, go L again at junction and continue down to T-junction, taking footpath ahead. Cross main road and continue on same line along path past the **Long Stone**. Turn L, then R on forest road, keeping ahead at cross track. Go L at T-junction, then keep ahead, ignoring side paths, eventually onto forest road. Just past a barrier immediately turn L to follow path just to L of camp site. Cross road, pass barrier, and bear R along wide path through **Highmeadow Woods**. Keep ahead over several cross tracks, pass to R of Mailscot Lodge, and cross two tarmac roads. Pass L of house and keep ahead to signpost. Turn L to return to car park (or R to Rock and Log Cabin).