

Begin by walking away from the road, through a barrier in the L hand corner of the car park and turning immediately L along a forest track. After approx ½ mile, the route dips down and then turns sharp R into a grassy footpath to run up hill along the edge of the forest with open fields to the left. Continue uphill and turn R just before a house at the top. After 30 yards turn L along a main forest track, cross another track, and after approx 400 yards bear L at a junction to Blaize Bailey view point.

This was constructed by the Forestry Commission in the 1970's and provides panoramic views across the great horseshoe bend of the River Severn. Gloucester can be seen to the left, below is Newnham and across the river is the scarp of the Cotswolds.

Continue on from Blaize Bailey for approx. ½ mile until the route bears R up a smaller footpath through maturing conifers. Continue over the top and descend following the waymarks carefully, particularly where the path narrows over an uneven downhill grassy area, to arrive at lower Soudley Ponds*.

Over the road is the Dean Heritage Centre, where refreshments may be obtained. The Centre features displays of the history of the Forest and its people including mining, charcoal making and iron working, and is open most days, except Christmas Eve, Christmas Day and Boxing Day. (To check hours during the winter Tel 01594 822170).

To continue the walk, turn R by the ponds and follow the path on the R hand side of the ponds back to the car park.

Look out in the early summer for yellow iris by the ponds and bluebells carpeting the woods in the spring. At any time of the year you may see mandarin ducks on the water or perched in the low branches of trees over the ponds.

If you wish you can join two, or indeed, all three walks, into a pleasant hike of up to 10 miles.

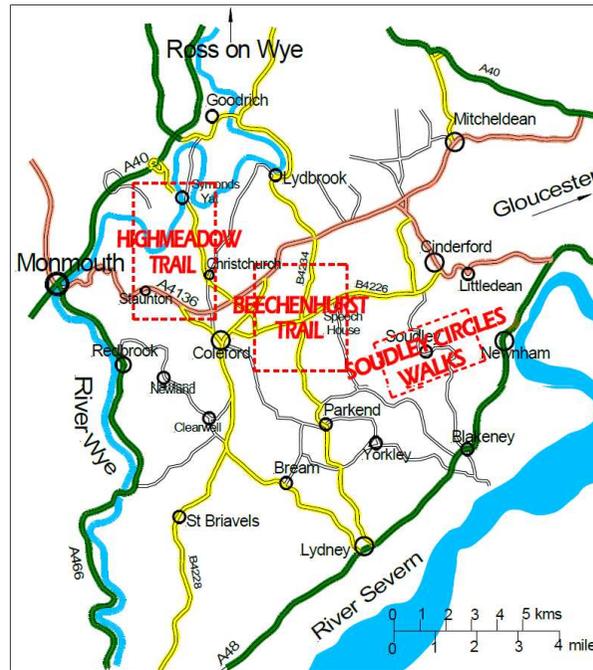
To link Routes 1 and 2, cross over the stile in the fence at Staple Edge Bungalows**.

To link Route 2 to 3, from Soudley Village Hall car park go towards the entrance and before the bridge turn R on a grassy lane with the stream on your L. Turn L at the end onto Tramway Road. Just before the main road go R on a footpath and then bear L to the Heritage Centre car park. Cross the road to the entrance to Lower Soudley Ponds* and follow the path on the right hand side of the ponds to the car park and the start of Walk 3.

To link Route 3 to 2, from Lower Soudley Ponds*, cross the road to the Heritage Museum car park, turn R, and follow the footpath alongside the road to turn L into Tramway Road. Go L at the 'T' junction and immediately after the bridge turn R onto a grassy lane and follow, with the stream on your R, to the Village Hall car park for the start of Walk 2.

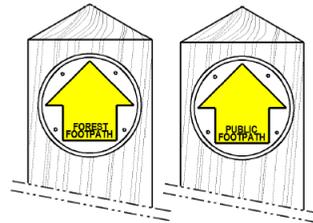
In either direction it's worth noting the old Forest Chapel, still in use, on the slope above Tramway Road.

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.

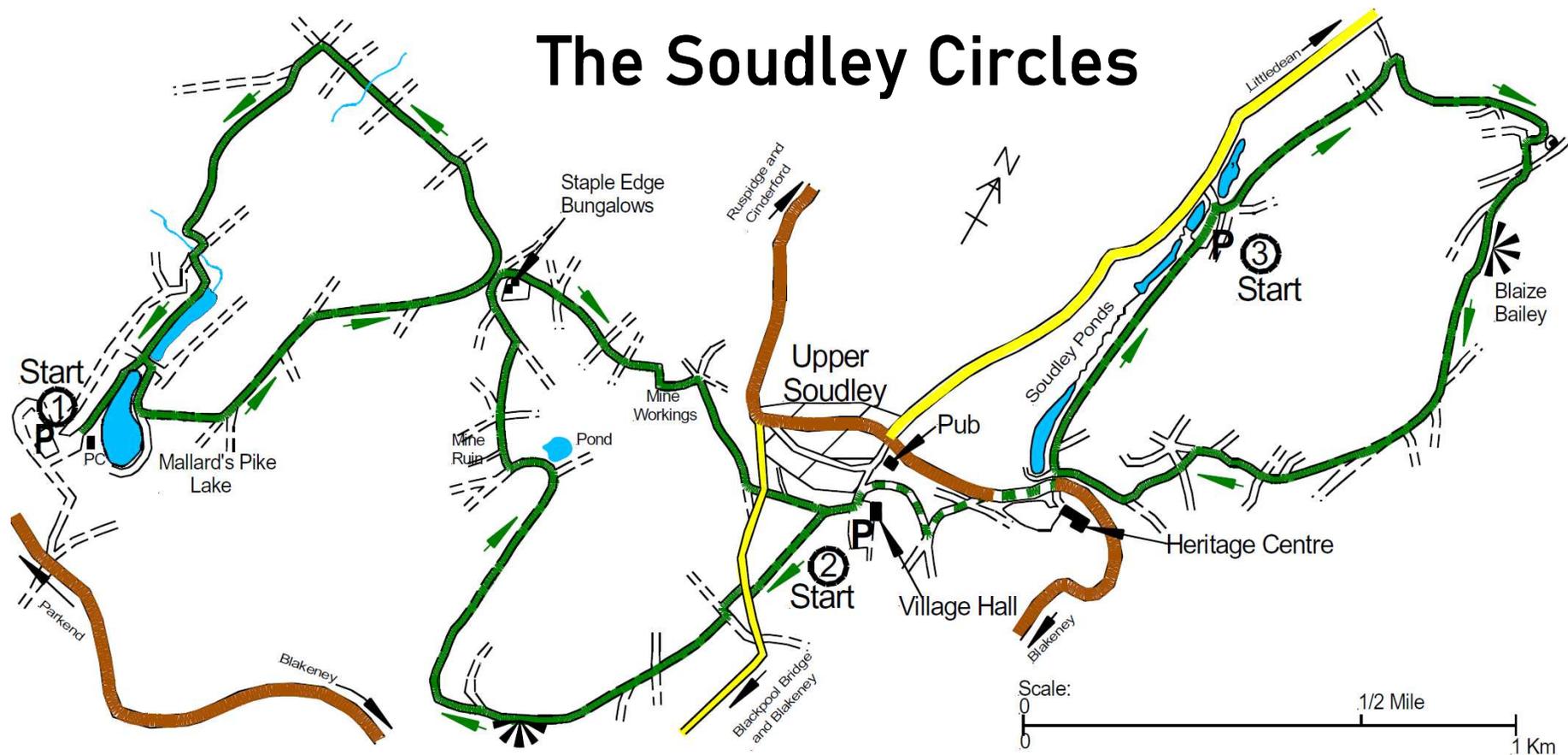
Members of the public are permitted to enter Forest Enterprise land and buildings entirely at their own risk and on the condition that they will have no claim whatsoever against Forest Enterprise for any loss, damage or injury however suffered or caused.

Forest of Dean Ramblers WAYMARKED WALKS



The Soudley Circles Walks

The Soudley Circles



Above are three circular walks approximately 3 miles each and all include uphill sections and are not wheelchair friendly.

With a variety of views to admire en route, please allow about two hours for each loop.

DESCRIPTION of WALK ROUTE 1 (Anti-Clockwise)

Park at Mallard's Pike Lake off the Blakeney to Parkend road, There are public toilets here and in the summer months there may well be a refreshment and ice cream van.

Leave the car park walking towards the lake and taking the path to the L follow the edge of the water. At the end of the water turn R over the causeway between the two lakes, and immediately turn R again to follow the path on the other side of the lake. After approx 120 yards turn L uphill through the trees to a wide forest track. Turn L along the track, ignoring another track going off to the R, and after approx 1/4 mile turn R again going steeply uphill along a wide grassy path all the way to the Staple Edge bungalows**. Stay on the L of the fence, and bearing L, go downhill following the waymarked posts.

In the spring and summer the woodland here is full of bluebells and foxgloves.

Cross three forest tracks. It can be muddy in this section. Over the third track go up a short climb and turn L at the top. After approx 200 yards bear L onto a small path through the trees. Upon reaching a stream go L and, keeping the stream on your R, continue to a wide forest track and turn R. After 100yds turn L onto a small path and follow the edge of the lake back to the car park. Be careful over this section as some of the roots can be very slippery.

On returning to the main lake look in the reed bed near the picnic area for the sculpture of a large leaping frog with a mermaid on its back.

DESCRIPTION of WALK ROUTE 2: (Clockwise)

Park for this walk at Soudley Village Hall which is a few hundred yards down a lane at the side of the White Horse Inn. With your back to the Hall, walk to the path opposite; cross the stile going straight ahead for a few yards and then bear L continuing uphill. Turn R when crossing a road and almost immediately turn L to a stile. Take the main track bearing L going past a view point across adjoining valleys. Continue on the track going uphill, bearing L at the crest. After 1/3 mile, look for a small pond on the R of a sharp L hand bend. This small pond has been designated a site of special botanical interest by Gloucestershire Trust for Nature Conservancy.

A few yards past the pond turn R up a steep grassy path. On the left of this path you will pass the ruins of a typical drift coal mine.

Continue uphill and immediately after crossing another track bear R through trees until you reach a stile. Over this stile turn L and walk to an open area with Staple Edge** bungalows on your R. Continue past the bungalows and immediately turn R going down a grassy path and crossing three tracks. Keep zigzagging down hill passing old mine workings, then turn R on a level track, (the main road can be seen through the trees on your L). Just before the next barrier, turn L, cross over the road, and keep down hill to return to the car park at the village hall

DESCRIPTION of WALK ROUTE 3 (Clockwise)

Park for this walk at Soudley Ponds car park located approx 1/2 mile along Littledean Road from it's junction with the Blakeney to Cinderford road.

On entering the car park there is a Nature Reserve on the left where you may see herons, waterfowl and the occasional kingfisher.