

Points of interest and notes

Railway Cottage (A)

The small house to the left was built as a railway crossing keeper's cottage. The railway line continued through the hillside via a tunnel, visible beyond the cottage.

Bradley Hill (E)

Herbert Howells, a lesser-known composer from nearby Lydney, spent his honeymoon at Bradley Hill and while here he wrote "Merry Eye" for the 1920 Proms. It is said to represent angels dancing in these woods.

Blakeney Hill Lodge (H)

The lintel visible between the right-hand windows gives a clue to the original purpose of the lodge. It was built by the crown in 1810 to house a 'keeper' - a person who looked after growing plantations of trees. The elevated position gave a fine view over the plantations. It was sold into private ownership in 1971.

Blakeney Hill (K)

Walk a few metres up and down the road to take in the fine views of the river Severn which flows from left to right. The tower of Gloucester Cathedral can be seen in the far distance to the left. The hills on the horizon are the Cotswolds. The hillside in front of you was originally settled by encroachment.

Wenchford and the Blackpool Brook (P)

This is now a popular picnic area with the attractive stream - the Blackpool Brook meandering over the flat grassy area. Researchers have found the sites of 10 charcoal hearths here where charcoal was made from local wood. The charcoal was used to produce iron from ore and slag, a by-product, can be found in the stream.

Forest of Dean Central Railway

The elevated section of the walk between (P) and (Q) uses the trackbed of the former Forest of Dean Central Railway. The fine stone bridge at (Q) carried the railway across the road. It was a mineral line and never carried passengers.

The Roman Road (Q)

On the left, just beyond the bridge is an exposed section of ancient road. This is known locally as "The Roman Road". Carbon 14 dating has cast doubts upon its Roman origin, but locals still stubbornly refer to it as the Roman Road.

Bluebells (R).

This is the most popular place in the area to view bluebells. They are usually at their best from the first week of May and are "over" by early June.

*Produced for Forest Barn Holidays by the Forest of Dean and Wye Valley Tour Guides:
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FOREST BARN HOLIDAYS

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Bradley Hill

Start: The walk starts at **Soudley**. Turn right from Sutton Baynham Farm and drive the 2.2km (1½ miles) to Soudley village. Turn left and park near the pond (W) or continue the short distance to the Dean Heritage Centre and park there (the small parking charge helps to fund the Heritage Centre).

Distance: 8.4 Km (5 miles) - allow 2½- 3 hours.

The walk uses woodland paths, forest tracks, quiet country roads and bridleways.

Shorter Route options: The route can easily be shortened by walking the short distance (250m) from (E) to (S).

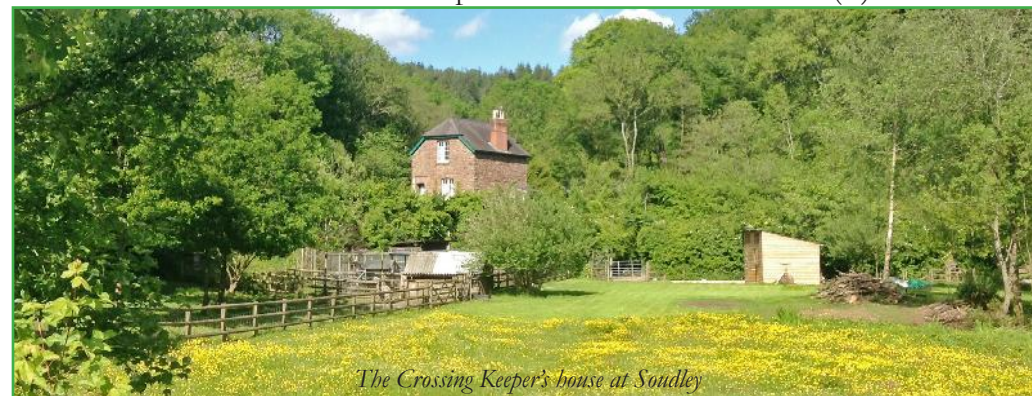
Difficulty and hazards: The walk has a 70m long gentle ascent up an open path near the start. Some surfaces will be uneven and may be muddy in places in wet weather. There are no stiles to cross on this walk.

Please be alert for the occasional vehicle that uses the roads.

Equipment: Boots or strong shoes are recommended. Nettles, brambles and thistles may be encountered, a stick can be useful to control them. The ponds are NOT suitable for swimming.

Other Notes: Mobile phone coverage will be "patchy". There is a cafe and toilets at the Dean Heritage Centre at Soudley very close to (W) and the White Horse pub is also nearby. In summer, there are toilets at Wenchford (P). Carry water and take a hat if hot weather is likely and waterproofs if rain is probable.

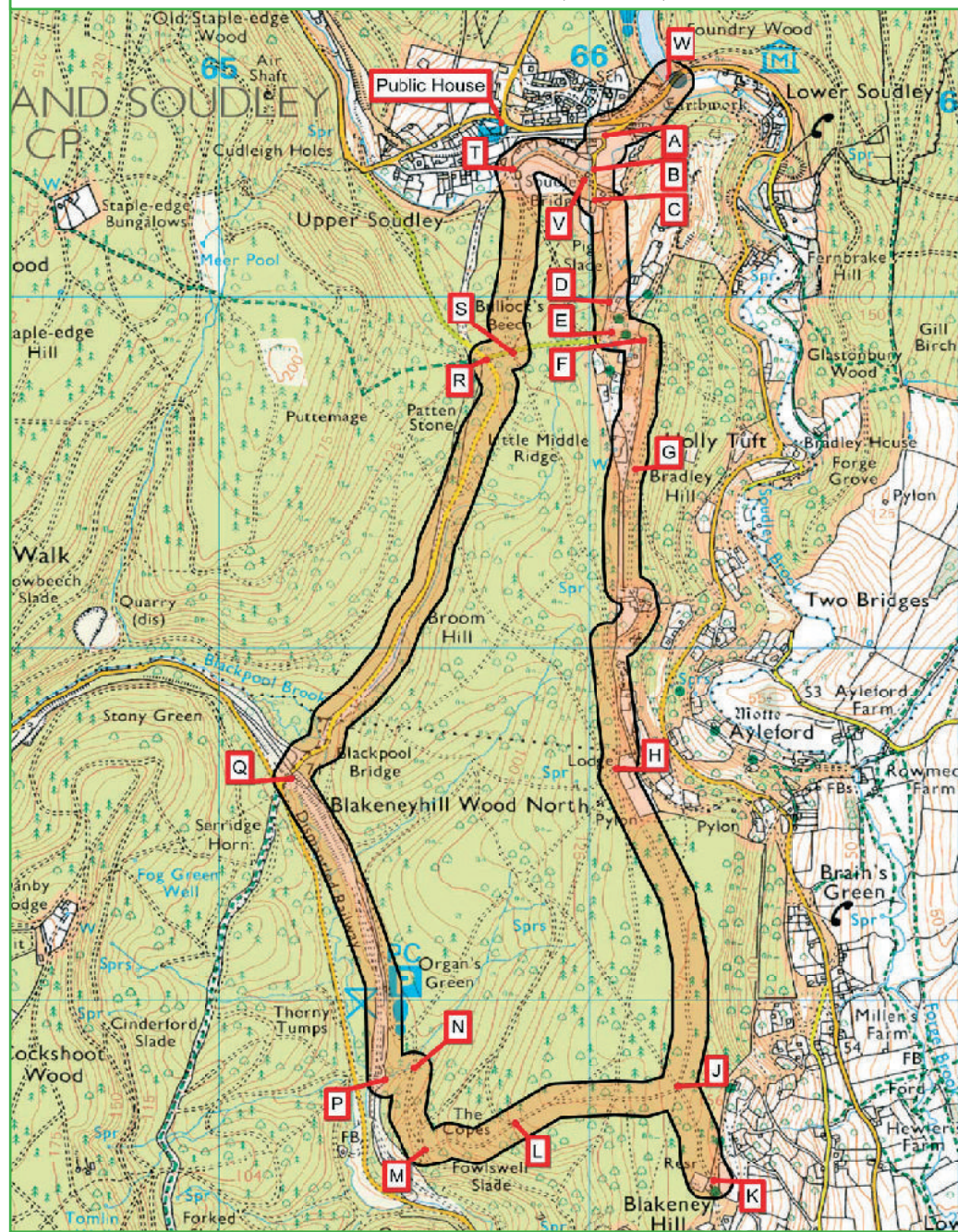
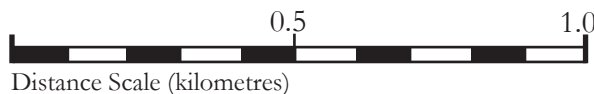
Navigation: The main changes of direction and stiles are marked on the map by a letter. In the directions, the distance from the previous letter is given e.g. (B-125m) means that B is 125m from the last point mentioned - in this case (A)



The Crossing Keeper's house at Soudley

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Bradley Hill



DIRECTIONS

Facing away from the pond walk along the pavement to the right. Turn left after the school sign down Tramway Rd (A-250m).

Continue straight ahead downhill. Keep left at the bottom of the hill then cross the bridge (B-125m).

Continue past the turn to the chapel on the left and walk left along the side of a cottage when the tarmac ends (C-75m) and continue on the track which soon becomes a grass footpath.

Walk uphill following the power lines passing Rock House at the top of the hill (D-300m). Be sure to look back at the view over Soudley

Continue ahead along the tarmac road. Take the left hand turn uphill towards the white house (E-100m)

Pass White House and turn right along the gravelled forest track (F-100m). Follow the power lines.

Keep left at Woodside House and walk uphill past Bradley Hill Farm. Ignore the track ahead to the left and continue on the right hand track - rejoining the power lines (G-350m).

Leave the power lines at Blakeney Hill Lodge (H-900m). Walk ahead on the gravel track past the pole barrier.

Continue until the track turns to the right at a junction with 2 paths (J-1000m).

Take the left hand path and walk ahead to a road (K-300m). Take in the views across the river Severn then retrace your steps to (J-300m).

Continue left down the gravel track. Leave the gravel track at a right hand bend and walk straight ahead down a path (L-900m)

After a steep downhill section, turn right onto a another gravel track (M-300m) and walk downhill under the power cables.

At the bottom of the hill, (N-200m) turn left towards a metal barrier.

Turn right before the road into the car park (P-100m).

Walk past the toilet block. The Blackpool Brook and Wenchford picnic area is on your left. Continue ahead, following the sign towards Mallards Pike. Ignore the path to the right and continue until you reach a road just past a metal barrier (Q-1000m).

Turn right along the road, under the bridge noting the exposed ancient road on the left and continue on the road to the top of the hill (R-1300m).

Turn right along the road then take the first left down a path (S-100m).

Continue past Soudley Village Hall (T-500m) then turn right along the path.

Rejoin the tarmac road at (V-200m) turning left and retracing your steps back to the pond (W-400m).