

## Points of interest and notes

### Abbots Wood

Monks at nearby Flaxley Abbey made iron in their forges using charcoal from local trees as fuel. However, due to over-felling they had to be curtailed and became limited to use of the woodland -to the left between (A) and (B) - Abbots Wood.

### Quartz Conglomerate Rocks

The large boulders that you see at (B) are examples of Quartz Conglomerate rock. This can be found around the edge of the Forest of Dean coalfield and Wye Valley - where it is hard enough to make millstones. A well know example is the Buckstone near Staunton - which used to rock to-and-fro when pushed.

### Soudley (J).

Soudley once had an ironworks on the site of the Dean Heritage Centre - 150m along the road to the left. Later a full size railway passed through here. The Haie Hill tunnel (just beyond the centre) was the longest in the world when it was built.

### Dean Heritage Centre (R)

The Dean Heritage Centre contains many objects and artefacts that illustrate the heritage of the Forest of Dean from the bronze age to the present. There are also usually themed trails and exhibitions. The shop, cafe and toilets can be visited without entering the Centre.

### Soudley Ponds (K).

This series of ponds were unusually, constructed for recreation purposes with swimming galas being held here. Today they are the preserve of wildlife and it is unsafe to swim in them. You may notice an abandoned dam as you pass the ponds.

### Blaize Bailey Viewpoint

The viewpoint here was built by the Forestry Commission, The site was selected by raising a man in a JCB bucket to select the position with the best view. Ahead is the horseshoe bend in the river Severn with the escarpment of the Cotswold Hills beyond. The river flows from Gloucester to the left towards Chepstow to the right.



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## Soudley Walk

**Distance:** 6.4 Km (4 miles) - allow 2 - 3 hours.

The walk starts at **Sutton Baynham Farm** and uses woodland paths, forest tracks, quiet country roads and bridleways.

**Shorter Route options:** The route can easily be shortened at points (E) after 2.1Km and (J) or (L) after 3.5Km. In each case take the road back to Sutton Baynham Farm -turning left at (E) or right at (J) or (L).

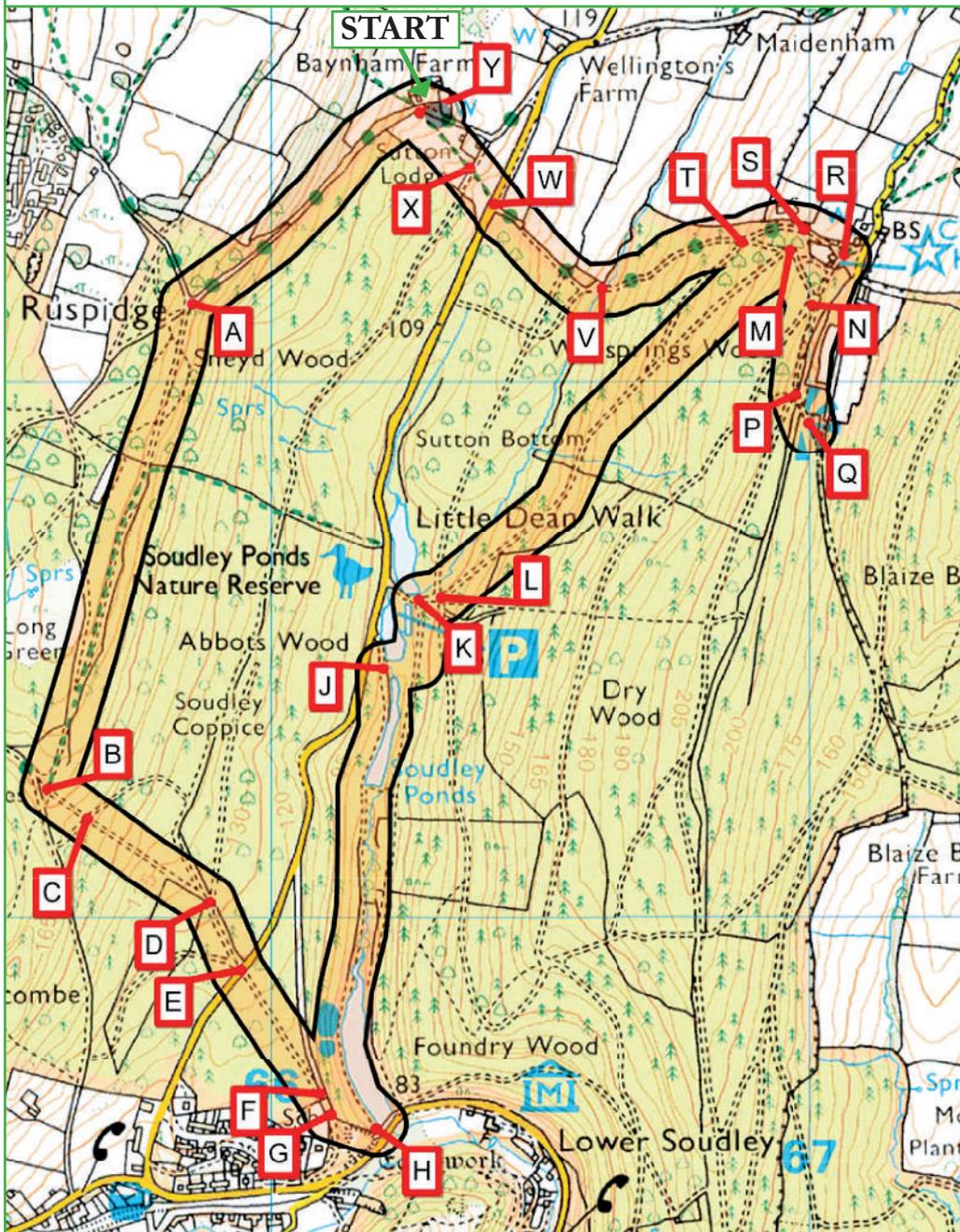
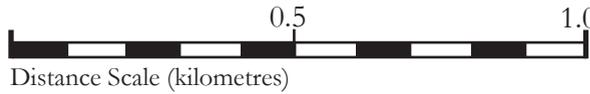
**Difficulty and hazards:** The walk has two 600m long gentle ascents up forest tracks. Some surfaces will be uneven and may be muddy in places in wet weather. There are 2 stiles and 2 fields to cross on this walk - but these can easily be avoided by using the road. Please be alert for the occasional 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 (H) and the White Horse pub is also nearby. 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-1000m) means that B is 1000m from the last point mentioned - in this case (A)

# Soudley Walk



## DIRECTIONS

From **Sutton Baynham Farm** take the track uphill. Pass the wooden pole barrier and keep left at the junction on the crest of the forest track (**A**-600m). Continue ahead and stay on the forest track when it goes downhill. At a track junction, just after you pass some boulders on the left (**B**-1,000m), walk down the footpath between a large boulder on the right and rocks on the left. Cross the forest track (**C**-100m) and continue on the footpath to join the next forest track (**D**-270m). Walk to the right down the forest track past the metal barrier to the road (**E**-140m). Cross the road, continue ahead down the footpath beyond the wooden barrier. Continue ahead keeping trees on your left. Keep to the left of the stone wall as you approach houses ahead to the right. (**F**-280m) Walk the short distance to the wooden pole barrier (**G**-45m) and take the small footpath through the trees on your left, downhill to the pond (**H**-100m). You have now reached the village of Soudley. *The Dean Heritage Centre is 50m down the road to the left and the White Horse pub is 500m along the same road but to your right.* Take the path to the left side of the pond. Keep to the left past the second pond and cross a wooden footbridge on the right just before the third pond (**J**-900m). Continue to the forest track, turn left and walk to the car park (**K**-225m). Turn right at the car park, pass the barrier and take the middle of the 3 tracks up the hill (**L**-40m). Continue uphill and keep to the right when you approach the top. At this point a house will be visible ahead (**M**-950m). Keep right (**N**-200m) - do not turn towards the houses but continue to the triangle of tracks at (**P**-150m). Go left at the triangle and walk the viewpoint (**Q**-70m). Retrace your steps to (**N**-220m) then continue to the right towards the house beyond the barrier (**R**-100m). Turn left at the house (Blaize Bailey Cottage) then walk downhill across the grass to a footpath. *You will now keep to the right for 750m until you reach the road.* First keep to the side of the hedge. You will pass a marker post **S**-90m). At the next junction keep right - just after another post on your left (**T**-130m). Continue downhill on the path until you cross the stream (**V**-300m) then continue uphill keeping right at the fork to walk along the side of the field. Stay on the path over the small hill continuing downhill to the road (**W**-250m). Cross the road and stile and walk uphill, passing through the gate (**X**-90m). After the gate walk up the field to the final stile back at Sutton Baynham Farm (**Y**-100m) for a well earned rest!