



The Wye Valley

3½ OR 6½ MILES
2 OR 4 HOURS
MODERATE (WITH STEEP SECTIONS)

1 START

From the Bell Inn, turn R before zebra crossing, past Lavender Cottage on R. Follow Offa's Dyke signpost up 67 shallow steps to lane at top. Cross straight over, continuing steeply uphill.

2 ¼ MILE

Ignoring Offa's Dyke signpost to L, follow lane to enter woodland where it begins to level out. After about 400m, track bends L and climbs past Highbury Fields on R. This is a long

thin meadow owned and managed by the Woodland Trust. The tree-lined avenue continues past Coxbury Grove on L, a steep grass field also owned by the Trust.

3 1 MILE

In wet weather, follow the track as it bends to L (ignoring gate into woodland to R). Go past driveway to house on R and follow scenic green lane for a further 400m. Continue on where Offa's Dyke footpath crosses lane until there is a footpath to R up a sunken lane, after exposed tree roots. Take care along first 10m that may be muddy. After 60m go over stile and follow waymarker post across field. Go through kissing gate to

L of farm and follow path past front of house. Climb over fence and, keeping derelict building on R, cross Offa's Dyke footpath to go down R side of field. (For shortcut, turn R at waymarker to rejoin main route back along Offa's Dyke footpath.) Pass through broken wall by large pollarded tree, go down to stile and continue down through trees. Turn L along track at waymarker post.

If it is relatively dry underfoot, bear R at five-bar gate and go through gap down into Cadora Grove (Woodland Trust). Continue on this steep downhill track until it levels out and eventually comes to a junction with a footpath to the L (waymarked).

4 2 MILES

For a shortcut, turn L up through wood and over stile. After 3 large pollarded trees, go through broken-down wall on R and up edge of field to waymarker. Turn L to rejoin main route back along Offa's Dyke.

Continue on track gently down into valley. Follow route, bending sharply R, and turn L on to track at bottom. Follow this route down and up through beautiful broadleaved woodland (carpeted with bluebells in spring). Take unmarked footpath to L 100m before Woodland Trust car park for Bigsweir Wood, go through squeeze gap, turn L and through next squeeze gap, following sign for Offa's Dyke footpath.

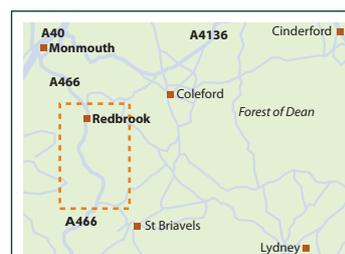
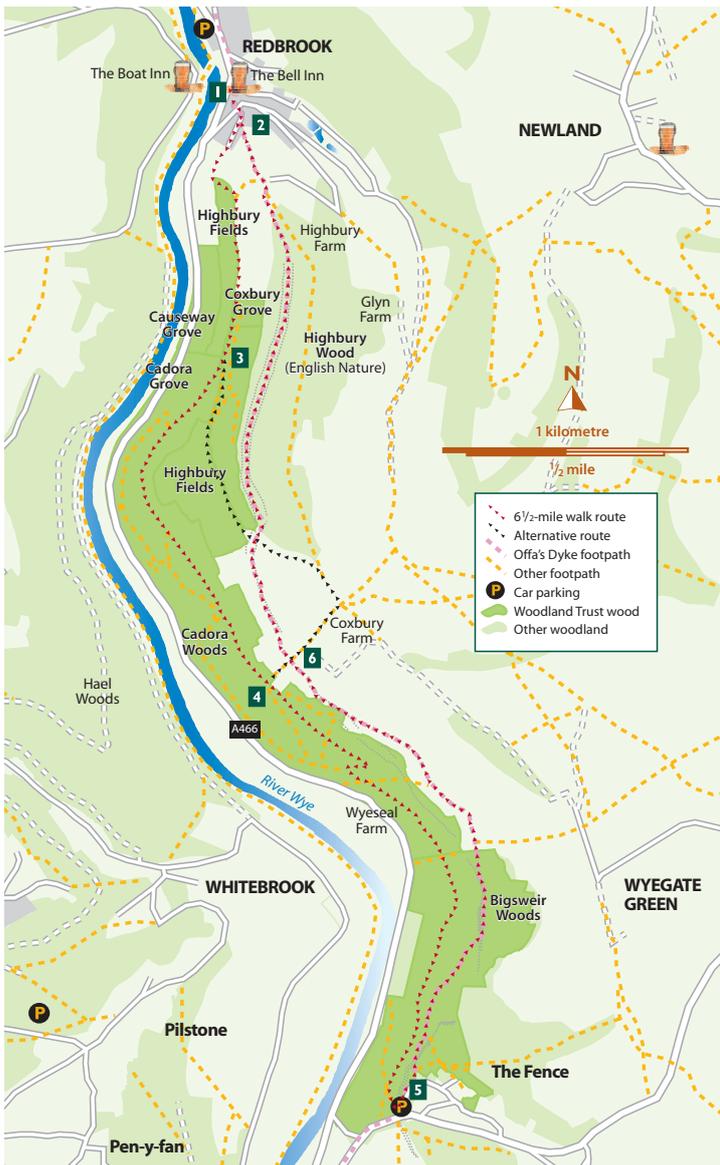
5 3½ MILES

After white houses on R, bear L, passing seat. Follow this ancient undulating path and go over stile to leave woodland and follow edge of meadow (spot the cowslips in spring). Follow path up through scrub at end and over stile. Continue on, crossing 3 more stiles, to enter Woodland Trust property at the edge of Cadora Woods. Leave this recently thinned woodland via the kissing gate and cross top edge of field, heading towards farmhouse. At waymarker, continue straight on.

6 5 MILES

As views of wooded valley open up, head for top corner of field (may be muddy in wet weather). Continue along top field edge and pass through kissing gate. Follow path up to L to next kissing gate, cross track and go over stile into English Nature's Highbury Wood National Nature Reserve. Follow path through this coppiced woodland, known for its dormice and lime kilns. After about 1.2km path starts to descend steeply to a stile and lane. Turn L and walk down lane for approximately 100m before turning L to follow Offa's Dyke footpath, admiring views of the Wye Valley stretching out below. Follow the path steeply downhill to a stile. Turn R down lane and cross over at bottom to take steps back to main road.

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and Hereford to the north. For details, call National Rail Enquiries on 0845 748 4950. National Express runs coaches to and from Chepstow and Monmouth. For further information, call 0870 580 8080.

REFRESHMENTS

The Bell Inn (grid reference SO537097; telephone 01600 713612).

The Boat Inn, over the river via the footbridge (grid reference SO536098; telephone 01600 712615).

ACCOMMODATION AND TOURIST INFORMATION

Monmouth Tourist Information Centre (telephone 01600 713899). There are useful websites at www.wyevallytourism.co.uk and www.visitwyevally.com

The Bell Inn offers accommodation and the nearest youth hostel is St Briavels Castle (telephone 0870 770 6040).

MAPS

Ordnance Survey Explorer 14, Landranger 162 (visit www.woodland-trust.org.uk/woods to buy on-line).

OTHER WOODS TO VISIT

See the Our Woods section on the Trust's website at www.woodland-trust.org.uk or the *Exploring Woodland* guide for the Chilterns to the Welsh Borders, due to be published next spring.

TERRAIN

Steep ascent out of Redbrook on shallow steps and surfaced lane. Route through woodland on clear wide tracks; rutted stretches will be muddy in wet weather. Descent to village is down steep grassy bank. 8 stiles on main route.

PARKING

Large car park on right as you enter Redbrook from Monmouth on the A466 (grid reference SO536100). Take footpath between football pitch and river to enter Redbrook Millennium Green. Follow path to main gates and cross road by zebra crossing to start.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

The number 69 bus operates between Chepstow and Monmouth, stopping at the Bell Inn in Redbrook. For timetable enquiries, call National Traveline on 0870 608 2608. The two nearest rail stations are Chepstow to the south