

The Severn Gorge lies within the heart of this World Heritage Site designated for its history, geology and cultural heritage

Walking in the Severn Gorge

Severn Gorge COUNTRYSIDE TRUST

Severn Gorge Countryside Trust manages most of the woodland, grassland and other countryside within the Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Site, around 260 hectares (700 acres) in all. The dramatic landscape of the Gorge is also a noted Conservation Area and includes a number of sites of national nature conservation importance.

Walking the Gorge

You are welcome to explore the historic landscape of the Severn Gorge along the network of paths and trails that thread their way through the Trust's landholdings. While many of these follow public footpaths and bridleways, many are new paths that have been established and waymarked by the Trust.

We have a continuous programme of upgrading the paths and if you encounter any difficulties while walking on our land, then please let us know by phoning the office on 01952 433 880. A number of routes are fully described in a series of high-quality books and leaflets, which are available from the tourist information centre, Museums or the Trust Office, at a small cost or which are free to download from our website.



Severn Gorge COUNTRYSIDE TRUST

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Heritage LOTTERY FUNDED REG. CHARITY NO. 1004508
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A woodland path in Dale Coppice



An overview of the Severn Gorge, showing the key sites managed by the Trust

The Severn Gorge Countryside Trust works to balance the conservation and enhancement of landscape, wildlife and public access, and also to reinforce the cultural importance of the special areas under its management.

All of our landholdings are open to the public to explore and enjoy, and a network of waymarked paths and trails have been established through the woods and meadows of Ironbridge, Coalbrookdale, Jackfield, Coalport, Madeley, Barrow and Broseley.



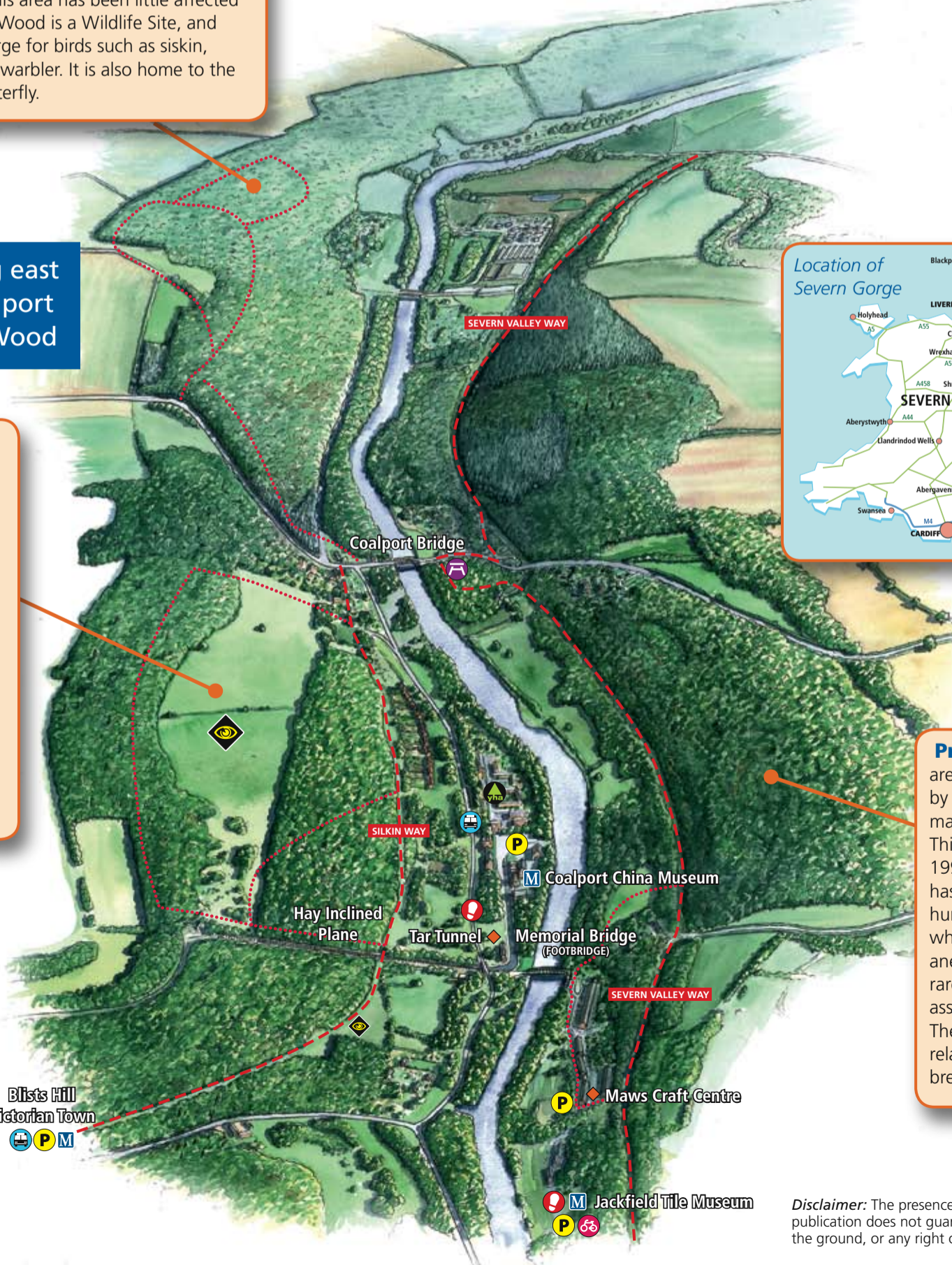
Enjoy a stroll with fabulous views on Haywood Pastures

Sutton Wood is the Trust's most easterly parcel of land. Unlike the Trust's other woods, this area has been little affected by past industrial activity. Sutton Wood is a Wildlife Site, and one of the richest sites in the Gorge for birds such as siskin, redpoll, whitethroat, and garden warbler. It is also home to the scarce white-letter hairstreak butterfly.

A View looking east towards Coalport and Sutton Wood

Haywood and Pastures is a complex of woodland and grassland above Coalport. The area has a south-facing aspect, and walks across the open grassland can be glorious in the sunshine. Most of this site was originally farmland, partially planted as woodland by Telford Development Corporation as recently as 30-40 years ago. In the 18C and 19C it was owned by the industrialist Darby family, where hundreds of horses were reared for use in industrial enterprises in the Gorge at the time.

Coalport was very much the inspiration of the ironmaster William Reynolds and the key to its development lay in the canal/river interchange which he instigated in the late 18th century, helping its development as a seat of the china industry. In 1792 an astonishing engineering construction was developed called the Hay Incline Plane, still considered one of Britain's foremost industrial monuments.



Preenshead is the only area of land actually owned by the Trust, the others being managed on a 999 year lease. This wood was purchased in 1997. Records show there has been woodland here for hundreds of years, clues to which are wild garlic, wood anemones, bluebell and the rare wood barley, all species associated with old woodland. The area is also home to a relatively high population of breeding bullfinch.

Getting involved

The Severn Gorge Countryside Trust's volunteering project has been developed to involve local people in the woodlands and other countryside of the Ironbridge Gorge, but visitors are also welcome to take part.

The project offers opportunities for people to volunteer year-round and to get involved in all aspects of the Trust's work, including tree planting, hedgelaying and repairing gates and steps. As well as tools, equipment and transport, the Trust offers free training including NVQs. All the activities are free, so join us for a different day out, have fun, learn new skills and contribute to the management of this very special area. Contact us for a free programme or download it from our website www.severngorge.org.uk

Geology and landscape

Shropshire has perhaps the richest geology of any county in Britain, and the Ironbridge Gorge is no exception. While it is better known as the 'Birthplace of Industry', this would not have happened here without a quirk of nature that exposed all of the necessary rocks and minerals in one, accessible place.

At the end of the last Ice Age, weaknesses in the limestone provided an escape route for water trapped beneath an ice sheet. Under very high pressure, the water carved out the steep-sided gorge we see today, and in the process, exposed limestone, ironstone, sandstone, coal and clay. This process changed the course of the River Severn forever; previously, it had flowed north, now it flows south to Bristol.

Disclaimer: The presence of a marked route or feature in this publication does not guarantee the existence or serviceability on the ground, or any right of public access

Lydebrook Dingle. Much of the woodland associated with Lydebrook has been undisturbed for a long time, and has the feel of the original 'wildwood' about it. *Lydebrook has difficult access due to its steepness.*

B View looking north – Coalbrookdale and Jiggers Bank

C View looking east towards Jackfield and Coalport

Ropewalk and Wilderness Meadows are small but wonderful examples of traditional hay meadows – an area that has possibly never seen artificial seeding or fertilisers. The soil's low fertility actually ensures a wide biodiversity, with well over a hundred different plant species regularly being recorded. Here in summer, in Ropewalk Meadow, come ploughman's spikenard, adders tongue fern and twayblade orchid, all of which are considered uncommon in Shropshire. It is also home to an abundance of common spotted orchids, whilst small heath butterflies thrive in the meadow.

Coalbrookdale which lies in a beautiful wooded valley is where Abraham Darby I revolutionised the smelting of iron using coke from coal in 1709, which means the area can lay claim to being one key seat of the industrial revolution which changed the world.

Wynnes, Vane Coppice and Jiggers Bank include ancient semi-natural woodland dominated by oak as well as areas of more recent planting established on pasture in the 60s/70s. The history of the site included phases of woodland management, farming and industry, the evidence of which can be found at The Old Wynd inclined plane in eastern Vane Coppice.

Lloyds Coppice went through a period of intense industrial activity with the focus here on ironstone mining and clay extraction. The woodland contains a pond, a rare wetland habitat in a woodland setting. This supports a population of great-crested newts, a species of European-wide conservation importance.

Sunnside Deer Park is a small, enclosed area of formal park laid out by the Darby family in the late-1700s. Much of the evidence of the park has now gone (including the deer), although a few veteran beech and limes survive, as does a boundary brick wall to the west of the Ropewalk Meadow.

Oilhouse Coppice and Pastures encompasses woodland and flower-rich pasture. It also adjoins Rough Park, a landscaped area formerly of open-cast clay workings. The grassland of Oilhouse pastures is particularly important in supporting a wide variety of flora, typical of old hay meadows. Sweet-vern grass, cowslips and yellow rattle all thrive here.

Loamhole Dingle is of national conservation importance, primarily because it supports specialist insects associated with the stream that flows through the ancient woodland.

Jackfield is a fascinating area made up of a series of very ancient neighbourhoods with wonderful names like The Tuckies, Salthouses and The Werps, reflecting its long working past from fishing, pottery, iron making and clay industries of brick, roof tiling and decorative tiles.

Captain's Coppice was probably traditionally coppiced in part for industrial and domestic purposes. In spring, the woodland floor is carpeted with the bright green foliage of wild garlic, a carpet which later turns white as the plant pushes up its many spiked flowers. Today the lower area of the wood is leased to the Green Wood Centre, and is being coppiced once again to provide small-diameter material for a variety of traditional crafts and courses run by the Centre, such as hedgelaying and hurdle-making.

Dale Coppice has seen woodland cover since at least the 13C when it was part of the estates of Wenlock Priory. Dale Coppice also became noted for its early public walks, the Sabbath Walks, laid out by the Quaker ironmaster and philanthropist Richard Reynolds in the 1780s. The Trust reinstated many of the paths in 2003, working with local groups to add wooden seats at convenient resting points. Dale Coppice is ancient semi-natural woodland, where today sessile oak and beech dominate.

Ladywood has an industrial past which has left a legacy of collapsed shafts, spoil heaps, mounds and tracks. Some of the stone quarried from Ladywood is believed to have been used for the abutments on the southern side of the Iron Bridge at the time of its construction in the late-1700s. *Ladywood has difficult access due to its industrial past.*

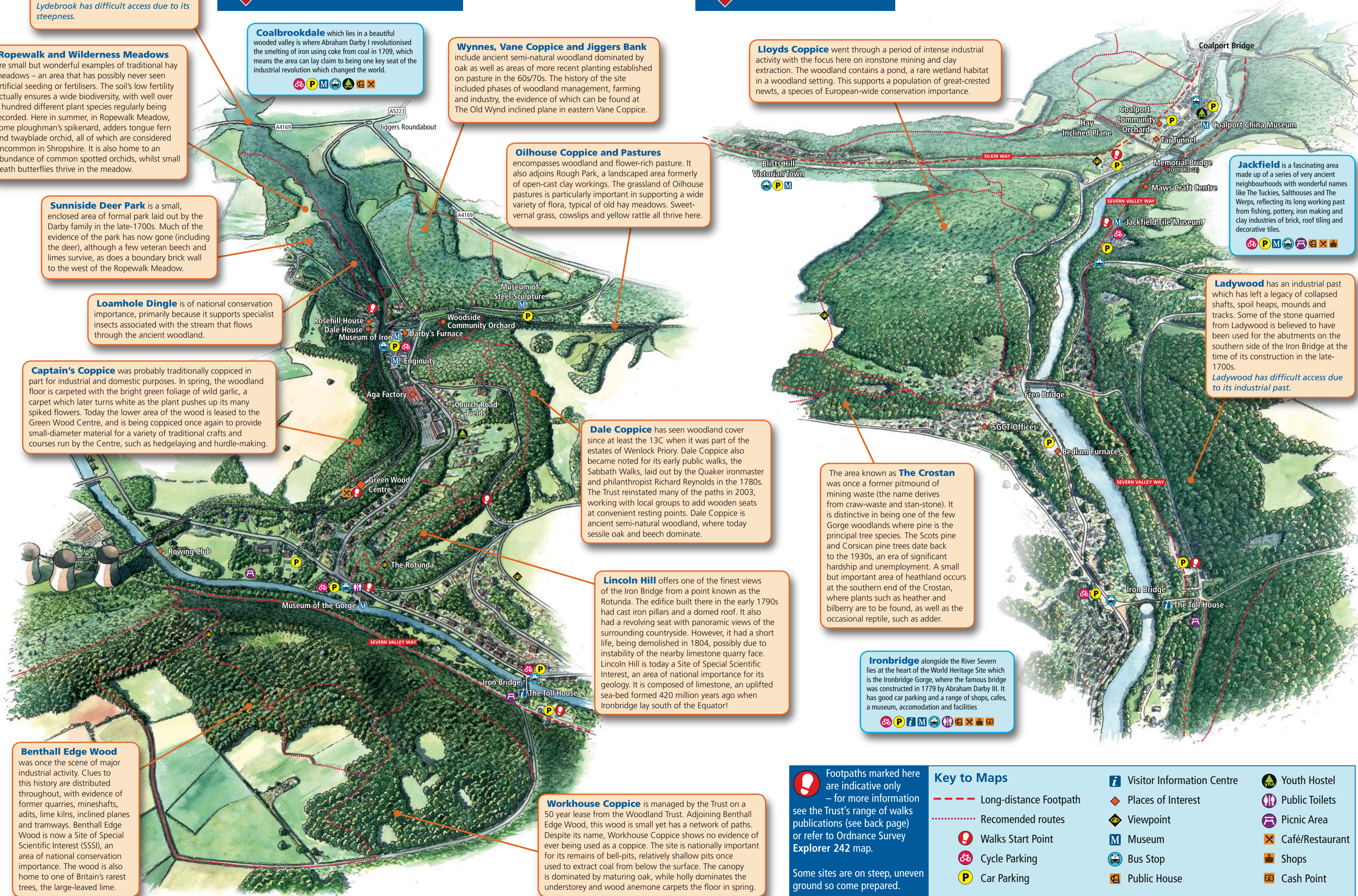
The area known as **The Crostan** was once a former pitmound of mining waste (the name derives from crawl-waste and stan-stone). It is distinctive in being one of the few Gorge woodlands where pine is the principal tree species. The Scots pine and Corsican pine trees date back to the 1930s, an era of significant hardship and unemployment. A small but important area of heathland occurs at the southern end of the Crostan, where plants such as heather and bilberry are to be found, as well as the occasional reptile, such as adder.

Lincoln Hill offers one of the finest views of the Iron Bridge from a point known as the Rotunda. The edifice built there in the early 1790s had cast iron pillars and a domed roof. It also had a revolving seat with panoramic views of the surrounding countryside. However, it had a short life, being demolished in 1804, possibly due to instability of the nearby limestone quarry face. Lincoln Hill is today a Site of Special Scientific Interest, an area of national importance for its geology. It is composed of limestone, an uplifted sea-bed formed 420 million years ago when Ironbridge lay south of the Equator!

Ironbridge alongside the River Severn lies at the heart of the World Heritage Site which is the Ironbridge Gorge, where the famous bridge was constructed in 1779 by Abraham Darby III. It has good car parking and a range of shops, cafes, a museum, accommodation and facilities

Benthall Edge Wood was once the scene of major industrial activity. Clues to this history are distributed throughout, with evidence of former quarries, mineshafes, adits, lime kilns, inclined planes and tramways. Benthall Edge Wood is now a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), an area of national conservation importance. The wood is also home to one of Britain's rarest trees, the large-leaved lime.

Workhouse Coppice is managed by the Trust on a 50 year lease from the Woodland Trust. Adjoining Benthall Edge Wood, this wood is small yet has a network of paths. Despite its name, Workhouse Coppice shows no evidence of ever being used as a coppice. The site is nationally important for its remains of bell-pits, relatively shallow pits once used to extract coal from below the surface. The canopy is dominated by maturing oak, while holly dominates the understorey and wood anemone carpets the floor in spring.



Footpaths marked here are indicative only – for more information see the Trust's range of walks publications (see back page) or refer to Ordnance Survey Explorer 242 map.

Some sites are on steep, uneven ground so come prepared.

Key to Maps	
	Long-distance Footpath
	Recommended routes
	Walks Start Point
	Cycle Parking
	Car Parking
	Visitor Information Centre
	Places of Interest
	Viewpoint
	Museum
	Bus Stop
	Public House
	Youth Hostel
	Public Toilets
	Picnic Area
	Café/Restaurant
	Shops
	Cash Point