



The hand ferry at Symonds Yat is operated on request by the staff of the Saracens Head. In 1800 there were 25 similar hand ferries between Ross and Chepstow.



The footbridge at Biblins was built in the 1950s by the Forestry Commission, and refurbished in the 1990s. A sign advises that no more than six people should cross at once.

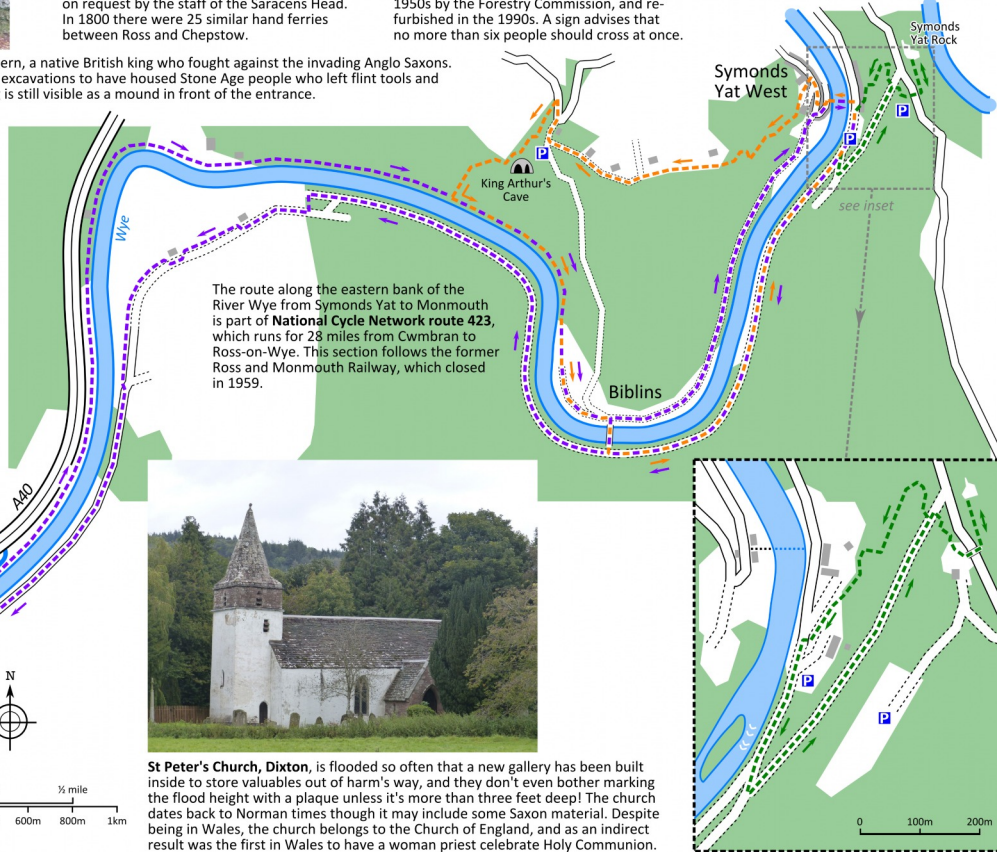


The view from Symonds Yat Rock.

King Arthur's Cave is also linked in legend with King Vortigern, a native British king who fought against the invading Anglo Saxons. More convincingly, the cave is known from archaeological excavations to have housed Stone Age people who left flint tools and mammoth bones behind. Material removed during the dig is still visible as a mound in front of the entrance.



Wye Bridge, Monmouth, carries the A466 over the river. The bridge was built in about 1615, and the original narrow arches can be seen beneath the wider arches and parapet added in the 19th century.



St Peter's Church, Dixon, is flooded so often that a new gallery has been built inside to store valuables out of harm's way, and they don't even bother marking the flood height with a plaque unless it's more than three feet deep! The church dates back to Norman times though it may include some Saxon material. Despite being in Wales, the church belongs to the Church of England, and as an indirect result was the first in Wales to have a woman priest celebrate Holy Communion.

Four circular walks from



The Royal Lodge

Symonds Yat East

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Symonds Yat Rock
 1¼ miles: Moderate
 A short but energetic climb to a stunning viewpoint over the Wye Valley.

King Arthur's Cave
 3¾ miles: Moderate
 A walk through the woods to a local landmark, returning along the Wye Riverbank.

Biblins, Monmouth and the Wye
 2¾ or 10¼ miles: Easy/fairly easy
 A choice of short or long walks along the River Wye towards Monmouth.

The Royal Lodge

Symonds Yat East, South Herefordshire HR9 6JL

Tel 01600 890238

Website www.rhhotels.co.uk

Email info@rhhotels.co.uk

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Symonds Yat Rock (1¼ miles: Moderate)

Allow 1 hour. The descent is steep and uneven: the way up is more gentle, and could be reversed to provide an easier return.

1 From the front door, facing the river, turn left and walk to the end of the car park. **2** Join the wide track beyond the barrier and follow it parallel to the river. **3** At a fork after about 100 yards, take the left-hand track. **4** After a further 100 yards or so, turn sharp left onto a path that doubles back up the hillside. **5** Climb the hill until a path crosses, just short of a barrier and the road. **6** Turn right up the stepped path. **7** Bear right past a cave when the path approaches the road again, and climb more steps to emerge in a picnic area near the Forestry Commission café. **8** Cross the grass to a footbridge over the road. **9** Beyond the road, follow the boardwalk to the left to reach the viewpoint on Symonds Yat Rock. **10** Retrace your steps to the picnic area, and descent the path you came up, past the cave. **11** When you reach the track below the barrier, cross over and follow the path steeply down through the woods. **12** At a wooden fence, bear left (still heading downhill). **13** The path eventually emerges between gardens at the car park by the Royal Lodge.

King Arthur's Cave (3¾ miles: Moderate)

Allow 2–2½ hours. Uses the Saracens Arms hand ferry (fee payable) across the Wye on the outward journey, and the mildly unnerving Biblins footbridge on the return. Some steep ground in the first half.

1 Turn right out of the car park and walk to the Saracens Head. **2** Take the hand ferry across the River Wye. **3** Once across, climb the steps and turn left. **4** Beyond a white-painted cottage on the right, and opposite Wyeseide Cottage on the left, turn right up a narrow path signposted through the hedge. **5** This steep stony path cuts a corner in the road. When you regain the lane, turn right. **6** Opposite a turning place on the right, turn left into a narrow path beside a telegraph pole. **7** This path winds uphill between premises to meet a larger path in front of a cliff face, with a Woodland Trust sign at its left-hand end. Turn left and follow the path as it bears right. **8** At a path junction where the path ahead starts to descend, turn right (uphill). **9** Pass between a partly fenced-off cliff face with a cave on the right, and a rocky pinnacle on the left. **10** Again, before the path starts to descend, turn sharp right, to the right of a fenced-off pit. **11** At a further Woodland Trust sign, bear left, keeping the fence on your left. **12** Pass a small stone ruin on your right and then a mineshaft within a circular fence on your left. **13** Follow a generally level track along the top of the wood, with gardens and properties to your right. **14** At a junction of tracks, go straight ahead along a driveway to reach a house called Woodview. Follow the metalled lane beyond. **15** When you meet a junction of byways with a small car park and interpretation panel to your left, turn right. **16** At a road junction just beyond the entrance to Doward Park Campsite, turn left. **17** After about 100 yards, turn sharp left onto a signposted public footpath that cuts back downhill. Pass the remains of various small quarry buildings. **18** When you emerge

in a disused quarry, bear right back into the trees. **19** Pass a shallow cave with a rock pillar and continue past further cliffs and caves until you reach the larger King Arthur's Cave, with its mound of spoil in front of the entrances. **20** Keep right and pick up a path along the woodland edge. **21** At the bottom corner of the field on your right, follow the path to a Highmeadow Trail waymark where you turn left (marked "Forest Footpath"). **22** This path descends into what becomes a rocky V-shaped notch in the wooded hillside, which you follow steeply downhill. Towards the bottom, the path becomes rather indistinct, but if you continue to pick your way down you will inevitably meet the obvious riverside path. Turn left (upstream). **23** Follow the path for a few hundred yards until you enter the Biblins campsite. **24** Cross the campsite then turn right to cross the River Wye via the suspension footbridge. **25** On the opposite bank, turn left and follow the river for a little over a mile back to Symonds Yat East, using either of the main tracks or the path closer to the river.

Biblins, Monmouth and the Wye

2¾ or 10¼ miles: Easy/fairly easy

Allow 1–2 hours for the shorter walk and 4–5 for the longer (more if you plan to look round Monmouth). Both routes use the hand ferry (fee payable) to cross the Wye on the return (you are advised to check that it is running before setting off) and the shorter route crosses the mildly unnerving Biblins footbridge. Riverside paths may be muddy in places after rain. The outward route as far as Monmouth is accessible to cyclists (returning the same way).

1 From the front door, facing the river, turn left and walk to the end of the car park. **2** Join the wide track beyond the barrier and follow it parallel to the river. **3** Follow either of the tracks, or the bankside path, for a little over a mile, until you reach the Biblins footbridge. *For the shorter walk, cross over, turn right and skip to step 20.* **4** For the longer walk, continue along the track without crossing the river. **5** At a fork, keep right (following the National Cycle Network route 423 sign) then follow the trail left and right (by a sign for Highmeadow Woods). **6** Beyond a house, follow the path to the right of the drive, before rejoining it to pass a second house, then leaving it again to follow another parallel path in similar fashion. **7** Beyond the old station, keep on along the cycle-track until it meets a road. **8** Follow the road, close to the river, through trees and then farmland for a mile, until you reach an industrial estate. **9** Follow the road as it bends to the left, away from the river and through the industrial estate, to a mini-roundabout. **10** Turn right and walk alongside the main road, passing another mini-roundabout to cross Wye Bridge and reach Monmouth. **11** Before the A40, turn right down a ramp past the subway entrance (if visiting Monmouth town centre, use the subway to pass under the road). **12** Walk upstream along the riverside, in front of the rowing club. **13** After a series of fields separated by gates, the path passes St Peter's Church, Dixton (detour highly recommended). **14** Continuing along the riverside path via further gates and footbridges, you leave the Wye briefly to cross Malley Brook, before

resuming the riverside path. **15** After a series of fields, the path enters woodland and then passes to the right of a house and garden. **16** Ignore a path off to the left, keeping to the riverbank as it leaves the wood and passes through a field. **17** Beyond Kennels Cottage the path returns to the woods, passing a ruined building and an old metal gate. **18** After about a mile (keeping right at a fork with the Highmeadow Trail) the path emerges onto the campsite at Biblins. **19** Cross the field and follow the main track past the various buildings to the footbridge. **20** Continue through the camping fields and pass the canoe launching area. **21** Ignore a path to the left as you approach Symonds Yat West and pass the site of New Weir Forge. **22** The track eventually climbs a little and emerges between houses. **23** On reaching the road, turn right and follow the narrow lane round to the left. **24** Just beyond a white-painted cottage on your left, turn right down the steps to the hand ferry. **25** Hail the ferry and cross the river back to Symonds Yat East.

Welcome to the Royal Lodge

- Our Award-Winning Restaurant serves fresh locally sourced produce daily.
- We offer 4* Guest Accommodation with 25 en-suite rooms with riverside and woodland views.
- Nestled in an idyllic location in the Wye Valley, this is the perfect wedding venue.

We hope these carefully chosen circular walks will help you appreciate our beautiful surroundings and we look forward to quenching your thirst and satisfying your appetite on your return to the Royal Lodge.



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