

8. Jackdaw Quarry to Woodchester Mansion and Coaley Peak Picnic Site

Distance 7.5 miles, time about 5 hours, steep slopes, mud in wet weather, some stiles are not dog-friendly.

I came to this area in 1976 and conservation work in the park has made this route better and better.

From the car parking on the B4066 near “**Jackdaw Quarry**” cross the road and take the lane for **Bown Hill**. At the T-junction find a stile into the fields. Follow the edge of the field to another stile and turn left downhill. There are springs here so it may be wet underfoot. There are fine views eastwards across Bownhill Farm. In the corner of this field is the next stile. Cross it and continue along the field boundary. At the corner, bear right and after a few yards look for another stile over the wall. Continue across the middle of the field past a telegraph pole to the bottom corner of the field. Cross another stile and continue downhill to the field corner by the wood. Cross a stile and descend to the **Inchbrook road**.

Turn right and follow the track into **Woodchester Park**. The National Trust provides leaflets on the Park with many colour-coded walks, which will fill a day. It is worth diverting to the kennels for a picnic, or to see the boathouse, the icehouse, and the views from the tower area. Wildflower meadows are being extended and the woods are especially rewarding when bluebells are in flower. The NT organises tours of the mansion and bat surveys.

Follow the route uphill past the mansion and through the park. Look for steps and a ramp up to the car park as the main gates are not used normally. Follow the vehicle track to the road.

Either turn left for **Nymphsfield** and “the Rose & Crown”. Test the strength of the fine local Uley brew and then check the ceiling of the dining-room.

or turn right for the B4066 and the picnic site. There is no path, but part of the way is on the grass verge.

At the T-junction with the **B4066** cross and turn left for the **Coaley Peak Picnic Site**. The topograph is interesting. In summer the car park often has a van selling Winstones locally made ice-cream, probably best taken after you have sampled the hang-gliding.

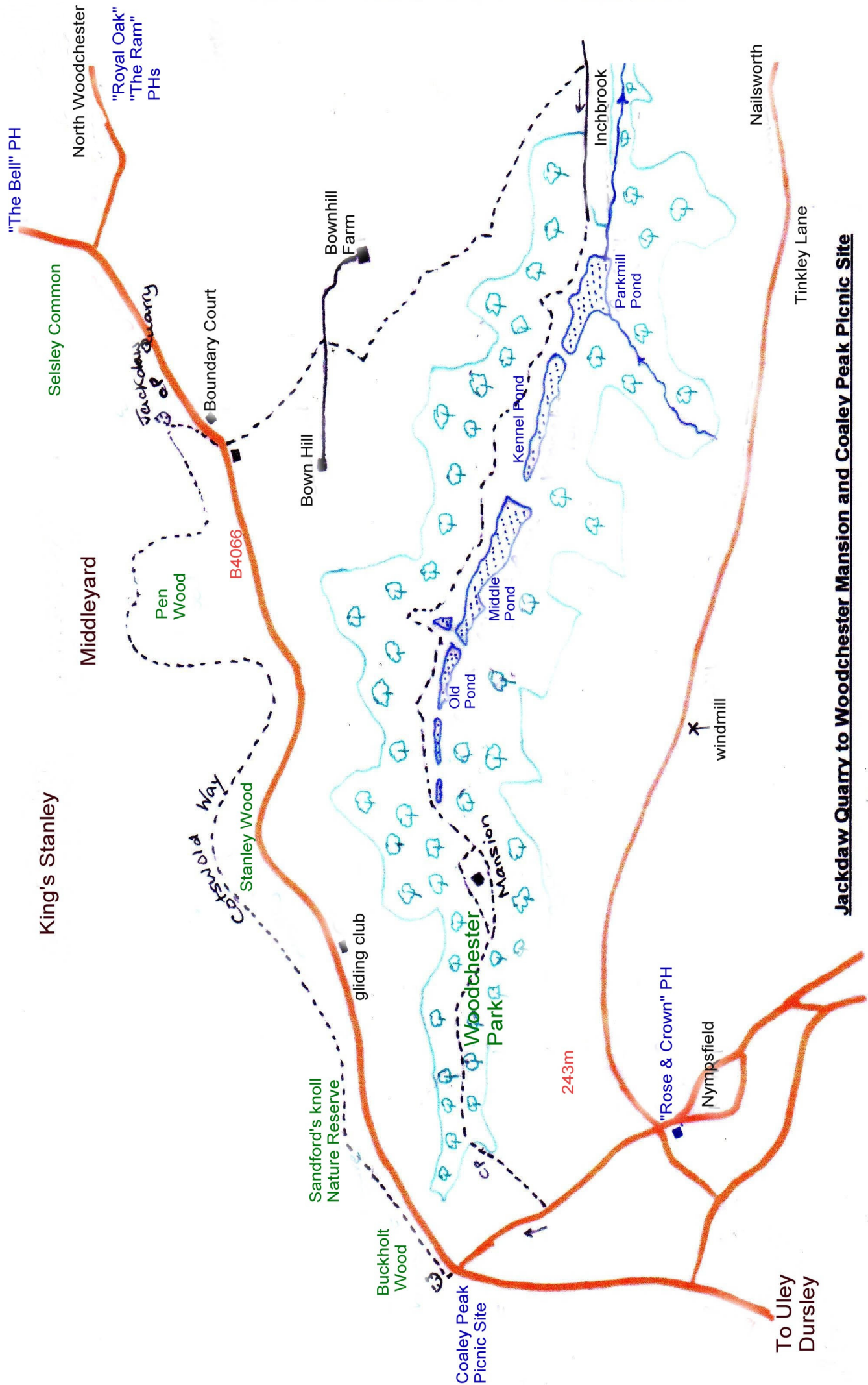
Exit the CPPS north-east towards Stroud, going down steps by a quarry, and then decide:

Either, If weary it is easier to stay close to the road and follow **the permissive bridle path**, which will take you all the way back to Selsley Common with only slight slopes and no stiles. You will also pass the gliding club, which has a café.

Or, follow the signs for the **Cotswold Way**, which is more interesting, but has several slopes and stiles. The C.W. will bring you to a kissing gate at the edge of the wood, above Blackbird Cottage and Woodside Lane. Look right for **steps** up a steep slope from the kissing gate. There is now another choice:

- 1)** Continue through the kissing gate for the **Cotswolds Way**. This section may be muddy in wet weather, but has fine views. Cross a cow pasture and over a step-over stile into the **Stanley Woods**.
- 2)** An alternative is to continue up to the top of the steps, then left onto a track running through the woods, parallel to the Cotswolds Way. This track is above the spring line so it is always dry. There are bluebells along this track in spring and it will rejoin the Cotswolds Way in about 500 metres.
- 3)** Another alternative from the top of the steps is to bear right up a steep slope to the permissive bridle path and turn left, past the gliding club, which has a café.

Follow your chosen route towards **Selsley Common**. It is well signposted. There are several paths with stiles downhill to King’s Stanley if you want to shorten the walk.



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Car park CP

N

E

S

W

To Uley
Dursley