

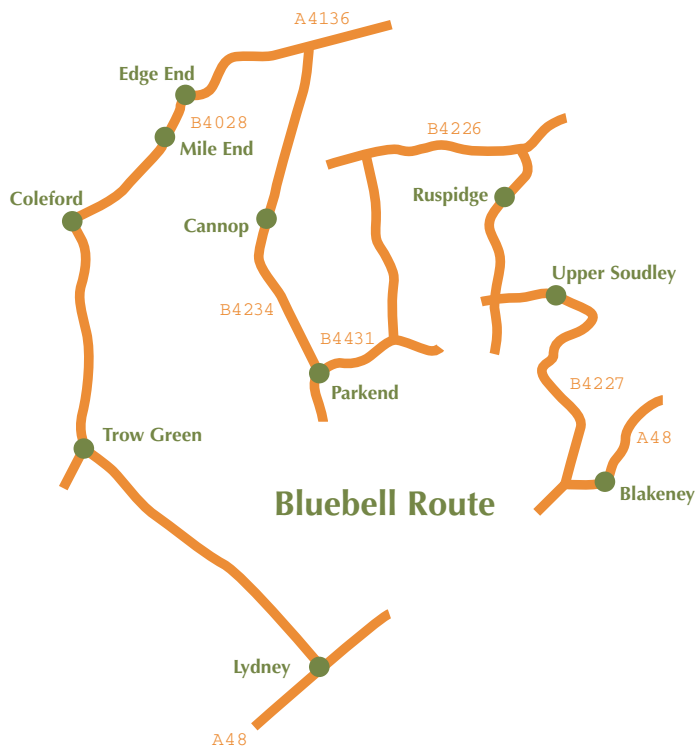
Forest of Dean Group Travel Driving Routes

Bluebell Driving Route

In May, parts of the ancient forest woodlands are transformed into a sea of bluebells which attract visitors from far and wide. Below is a suggested itinerary to follow highlighting the best parts where the bluebells can be viewed.

Duration 1 Day

From Cheltenham/Gloucester/South Wales



Leave the A48 (Gloucester to Chepstow road) and follow the brown and white signs 'Scenic Drive' and Dean Heritage Centre, heading towards Soudley (B4227).

The Dean Heritage Centre is worth a stop if time allows, providing the opportunity to look around the museum and refreshments are available if required.

From Dean Heritage Centre turn left out of Soudley towards Cinderford. Turn left along the B4226 and head towards the Speech House Hotel. At the Speech House turn left (signposted Yorkley/Blakeney), you will also pass the Cyril Hart Arboretum and New Fancy View – an opportunity to stop and admire the view! At the end of the road turn right on the B4431 signposted Parkend.

Turn right on to the B4234 signposted Lydbrook heading past Cannop Valley towards Lydbrook. (Straight over at crossroads with B4226, past Pygmy Pinetum).

At the end of the road turn left, joining the A4136 (signposted Monmouth) heading towards Coleford. At Edge End follow the road off to the left – signposted B4028 Coleford and take the B4028 into Coleford town.

Suggested stop – Coleford

There are many facilities at Coleford, restaurant, pubs and shops. Public conveniences are located in the main car park. There is a coach park at Capola Close.

Alternatively stop at one of the attractions just outside Coleford (please see attractions list).

From Coleford continue on B4228 towards Chepstow. Follow signs to Lydney/Chepstow, turn left onto the B4231 towards Bream and Lydney. The B4231 will bring you to a T-junction entering Lydney.

In Lydney there is an opportunity to visit Dean Forest Railway – turn left at the T-junction and follow brown and white signs.

If trains are not of interest to your group, turn right at T-junction and follow the road until it re-joins the A48.

Taurus Crafts is just off the A48 South of Lydney.

Royal Forest Route

The Forest as a whole conceals a history best unearthed at the 'Start Point East' of the circular tour, at the Dean Heritage Centre in Lower Soudley. An essential introduction to the Forest of Dean, the centre tells the story of the forest's culture and environment - and also introduces visitors to one of the oldest brands in Britain: the Dean navy hammer, used to mark selected trees for felling in the production of England's Tudor warships.

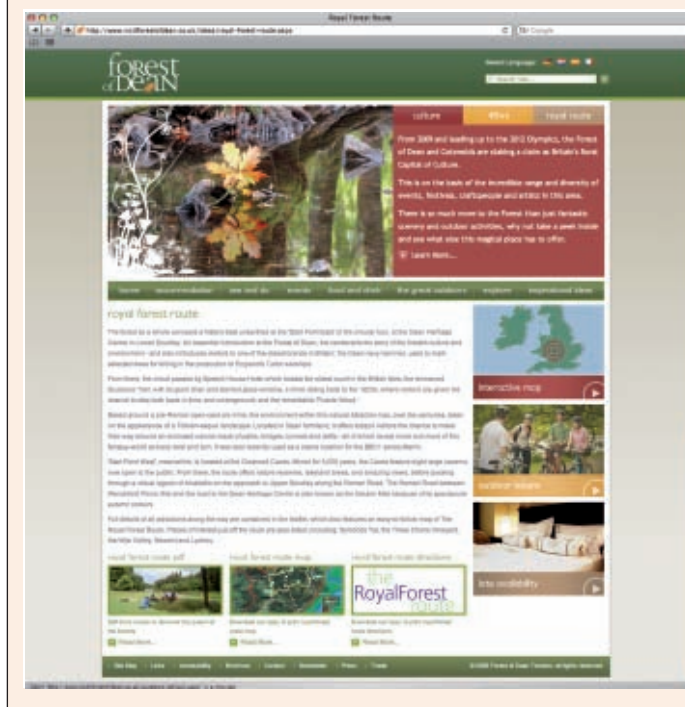


From there, the circuit passes by Speech House Hotel which boasts the oldest court in the British Isles; the renowned Sculpture Trail, with its giant chair and stained glass window; a mine dating back to the 1820s, where visitors are given the chance to step both back in time, and underground; and the remarkable 'Puzzle Wood.'

Based around a pre-Roman open-cast ore mine, the environment within this natural attraction has, over the centuries, taken on the appearance of a Tolkien-esque landscape. Located in Dean farmland, it offers today's visitors the chance to make their way around an enclosed natural maze of paths, bridges, tunnels and clefts - all of which reveal more and more of this fantasy-world at every twist and turn. It was also recently used as a scene location for the BBC1 series Merlin.

'Start Point West', meanwhile, is located at the Clearwell Caves. Mined for 3,000 years, the Caves feature eight large caverns now open to the public. From there, the route offers nature reserves, lakeland areas, and amazing views, before passing through a virtual lagoon of bluebells on the approach to Upper Soudley along the Roman Road. The Roman Road between Wenchford Picnic Site and the road to the Dean Heritage Centre is also known as the Golden Mile because of its spectacular autumn colours.

A pdf version of the Royal Forest Route is available to download from the website www.visitforestofdean.co.uk. You will also find an easy to print route map and directions



Full details of all attractions along the way are online at www.visitforestofdean.co.uk also featuring an easy-to-follow map of The Royal Forest Route.

