

Walk No 1

Discovering Dale Coppice

Starting from the **Coke Hearth**, this historic walk winds through woodland, taking in sections of the **Sabbath Walks** or Workmen's Walks, laid out by the 18C ironmaster and philanthropist, Richard Reynolds. The walk passes by the sites of the former '*Cottage in The Woods*' and *Doric Temple*, edifices once associated with the Sabbath Walks. A later contrasting section of the walk includes the open landscape of **Rough Park** with some fine views, before returning to Dale Coppice and another part of the Sabbath Walks.

 **Accessibility:** Somewhat uneven with muddy surfaces in places all year round. Boots recommended. There are moderately steep climbs in one or two places, and kissing gates at key points along the walk. Walk includes short road sections – *care needed and supervision of children*.

 **Key Features:** Historical/Cultural interest with viewpoints.

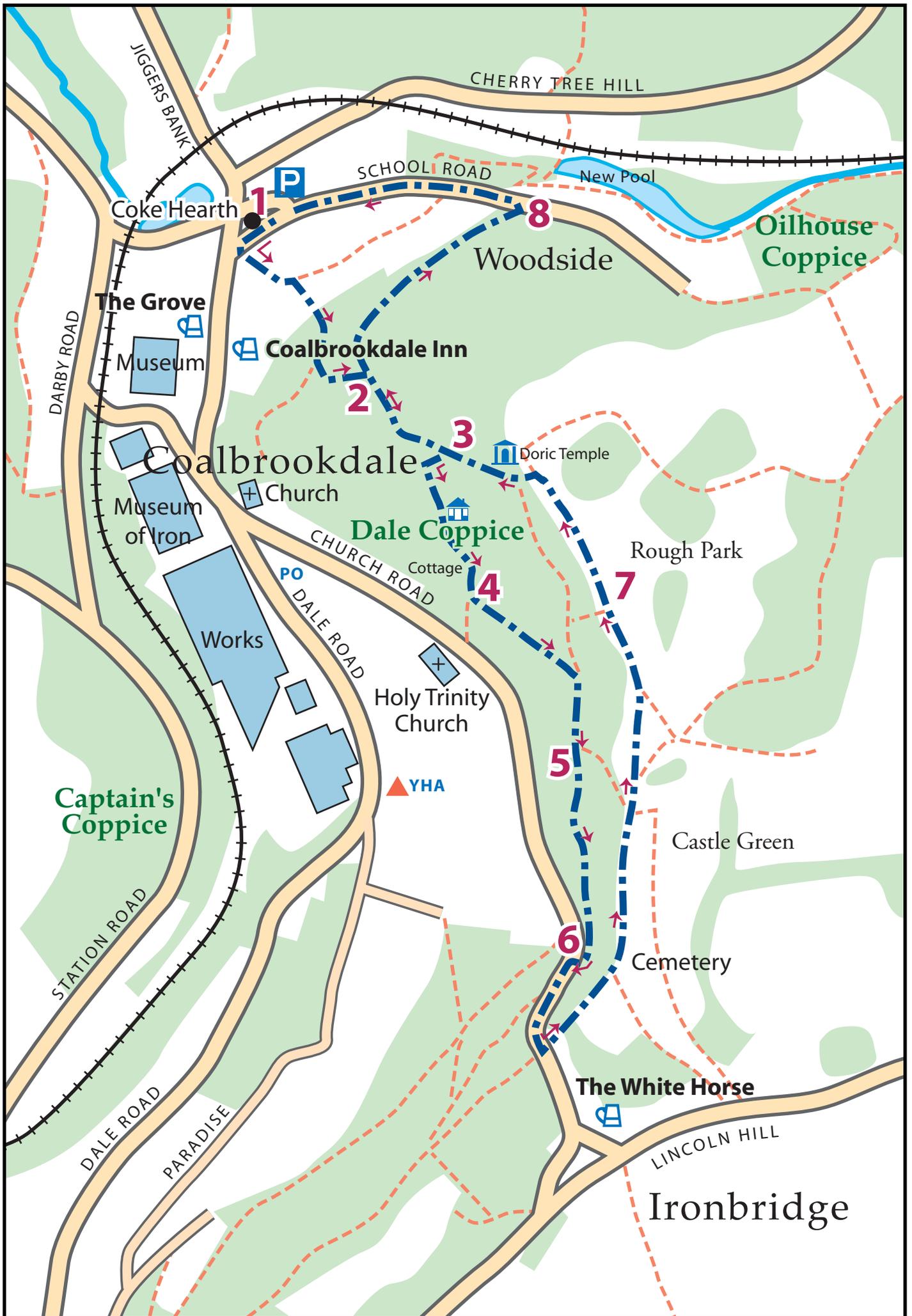
 **Length & Time:** About 3 km: 1½ hours

 **Car Parking:** Coke Hearth or Museum of Iron Car Park, Coalbrookdale

 **Public Transport:** Buses stop near to local shop

 **Refreshments:** Coalbrookdale Inn & The Grove Inn (Wellington Rd, Coalbrookdale) and The White Horse (top of Lincoln Hill); Café at the Museum of Iron (near Coke Hearth)

 **WCs:** At the Museum of Iron



1 From the Coke Hearth walk to the local shop and take the steep path to the left, cross a road at the top and enter another path on the right, passing through a kissing gate. After about 50m you enter the woodland proper with a dense understorey of holly. Continue uphill, keeping to the wide path. At the signpost, take the left fork signed to Church Road and in a little while turn right up a steep flight of steps.

2 Soon the steps will tend to the left. Divert for a moment through a gap in the holly on the right and enter a grove of beech trees. At the edge of the grove selective felling has allowed a clear view out of the wood to the south west across to Strethill with the Power Station chimney a prominent feature and Tickwood in the background.

3 Return now to the steep steps and continue up, taking the right fork as you near the top of the wood. At the signpost take the sharp right – still signed to Church Road – and descend a gentle slope through more open woodland. [If you find you have reached a gate onto the open Rough Park, you have gone too far!]. After 100m you will come to a simple wooden bench and two marker posts nearby, indicating the site of Hannah Mary Reynolds' 'rustic cottage' and the garden.

4 From the cottage site continue along the path, turning right at the marker down a flight of steps until you reach a wooden signpost. Take the left fork signed to the Rotunda. The path now continues along the face of the hill, soon reaching a series of broad, gravelled steps. Near the top you will see on your left a series of stone-filled gabions used to shore up land that in recent years was subject to landslip, effectively destroying that section of one of the upper walks that Reynolds laid out.

5 50m along the now widened and stone-surfaced path you can pause to look back down into Coalbrookdale where a fine view of the church tower and the sweep of the valley beyond is allowed by the wayleave opened up for the power lines.

Continue on the stoned path, ignoring a turn to the left, and eventually come to a gate and squeeze stile onto Church Road.

6 Pass through the gate and onto the road, taking particular care and supervision of children because of the blind bend behind you. It is best to keep on the left, walking up the road for a few metres before turning left through a five-barred gate onto a broad track which soon runs parallel to Castle Green cemetery on the right.

Continue on the path, passing through a gateway into the open land of Rough Park, keeping to the left hand track. 50m beyond the gateway, divert for a moment off to the left where you will find a simple wooden bench and fine views across the Coalbrookdale valley to the Wrekin and the countryside beyond, opened up by the power lines.

Resume the path, once again turning left at the next junction, keeping the woodland fringe of Dale Coppice on your left. Continue along the straight path for about 200m where at the end you will find a gate and entrance on the left.

7 Pass through the gate back into Dale Coppice and descend the main path. About 50m on, you will see a wooden name post on the right of the path indicating the site of the former Doric Temple associated with the Sabbath Walks.

Continue straight down until you meet a fairly steep flight of steps which you may recognise as those you came up at the beginning of the walk. At the bottom of the steps, continue more or less straight on, along the track signed to Woodside, Coalbrookdale. It can be muddy and very uneven here but soon leads behind a terrace of houses to your left. This stretch of the walk is believed to be part of the original northernmost extremity of the Sabbath Walks. Eventually you will come to a narrow gateway.

8 Pass through the gateway and turn left down a tarmacked road, taking the right hand at the fork. The road leads back down to the starting point at the Coke Hearth but before you arrive there notice a fine late 18C terrace of workers cottages on your left known as Engine Row [opposite the old School House].