

The National Forest Way

This leaflet can be used in conjunction with OS Explorer maps 233, 245 & 246

The National Forest Way takes walkers on a 75-mile journey through a transforming landscape, from the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire to Beacon Hill Country Park in Leicestershire.

On the way, you will discover the area's evolution from a rural landscape, through industrialisation and its decline, to the modern-day creation of a new forest, where 21st-century life is threaded through a mosaic of green spaces and settlements.

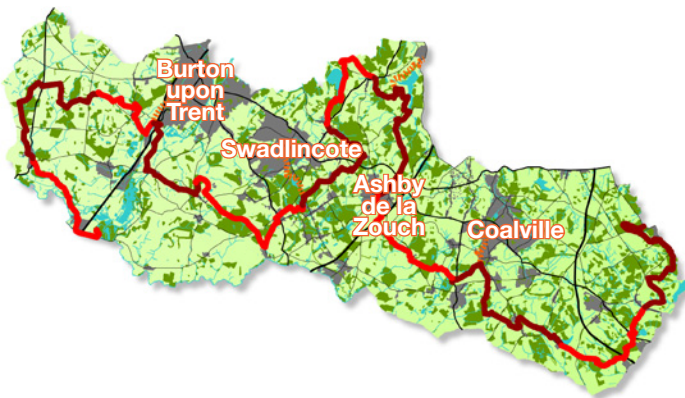
The trail leads through young and ancient woodlands, market towns and the industrial heritage of this changing landscape.



Stage 2:

Thornton Reservoir to Bradgate Park

Length: 6 miles / 9¾ kilometres



About this stage

Start: Thornton Reservoir, Thornton (LE67 1AR)
End: Bradgate Park, Newtown Linford (LE6 0HB)

This section of the National Forest Way takes you through an attractive stretch of maturing woodlands, one of the largest continuous tracts of woodland in The National Forest. The route crosses the M1 motorway to lead you towards Newtown Linford and Bradgate Park, gateway to Charnwood Forest.

The National Forest Way was created by a partnership of the National Forest Company, Derbyshire County Council, Leicestershire County Council and Staffordshire County Council, with the generous support of Fisher German.



To find out more, visit:
www.nationalforestway.co.uk

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Route directions: Eastbound

Thornton Reservoir to Bradgate Park

1 Leave the reservoir car park and turn right along Reservoir Road towards Thornton. At the junction with Merrylees Road, turn left and follow the road to the edge of the village. Immediately after the last house on your right, turn left to cross a stile in the hedge.

2 Bear diagonally right and follow this footpath for about 1,200m, crossing a wooden bridge and passing through five kissing gates until you reach a road.

3 Cross the road to a surfaced bridleway slightly to your right. Follow the surfaced track until it bends to the right, where you will find a footpath that continues straight ahead.

4 Take this footpath and follow it along the edge of the golf course for about 600m to a wooden kissing gate.

5 Go through the gate and follow the footpath straight ahead, ignoring a path branching off to your left, until you reach a bridleway.

6 Turn right and follow the bridleway for about 150m to where a footpath branches off to the left.

NOTE: RADAR gates on the next section may appear to be locked, but can be opened with a latch.

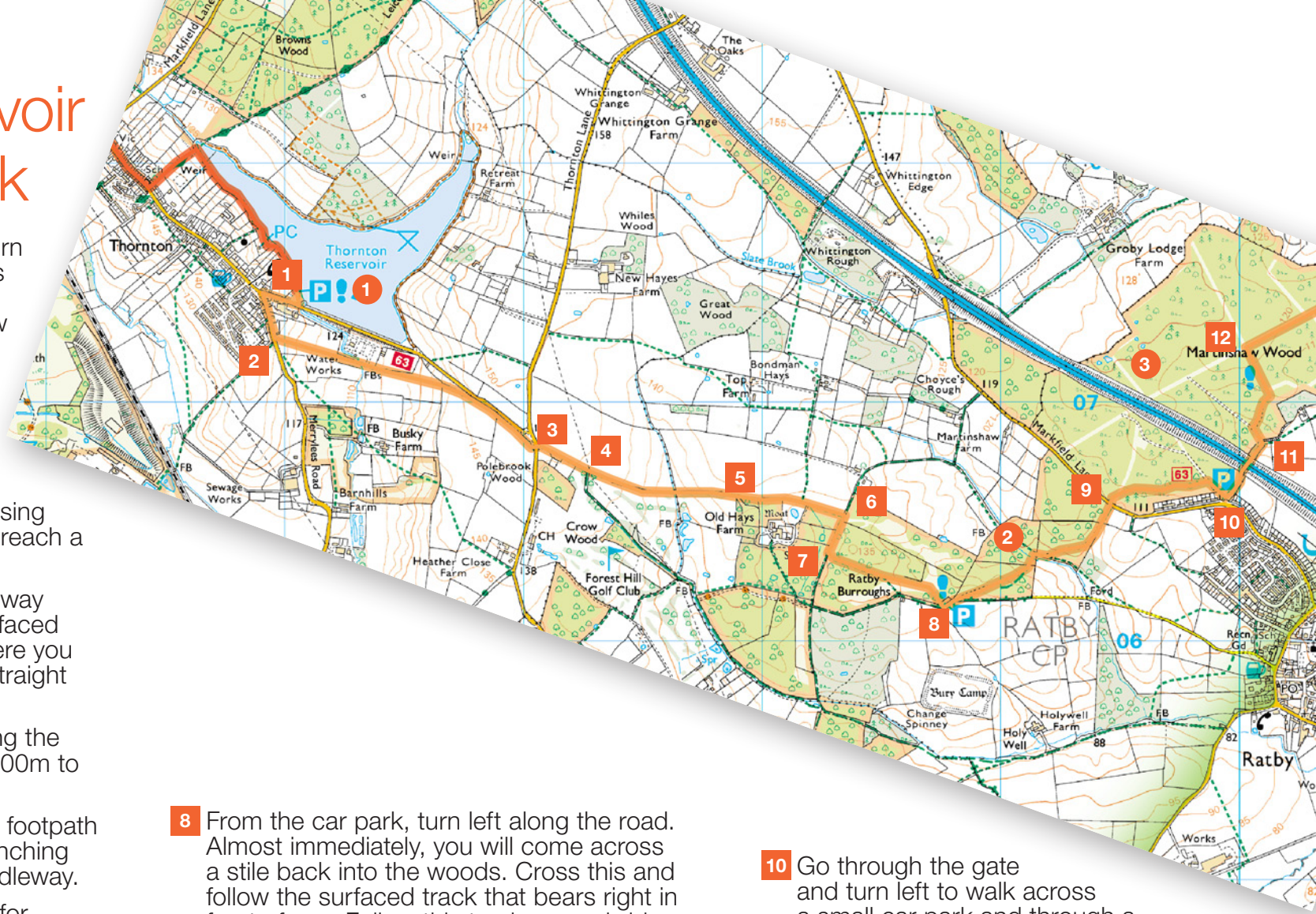
7 Go through kissing gate and follow this footpath through the woods for about 250m until it opens out into a grass field. Head straight ahead, across the field and bear left along a well-walked path through a kissing gate and into a car park.

8 From the car park, turn left along the road. Almost immediately, you will come across a stile back into the woods. Cross this and follow the surfaced track that bears right in front of you. Follow this track over a bridge, around a right-hand bend before curving left and ending at a kissing gate leading onto a road.

9 Cross the road and pass through the kissing gate on the far side into Martinshaw Wood. Follow the surfaced path, initially curving right, through the wood to a T-junction, where you continue to follow the surfaced path round to the right until it reaches a kissing gate onto the road on the edge of Ratby.

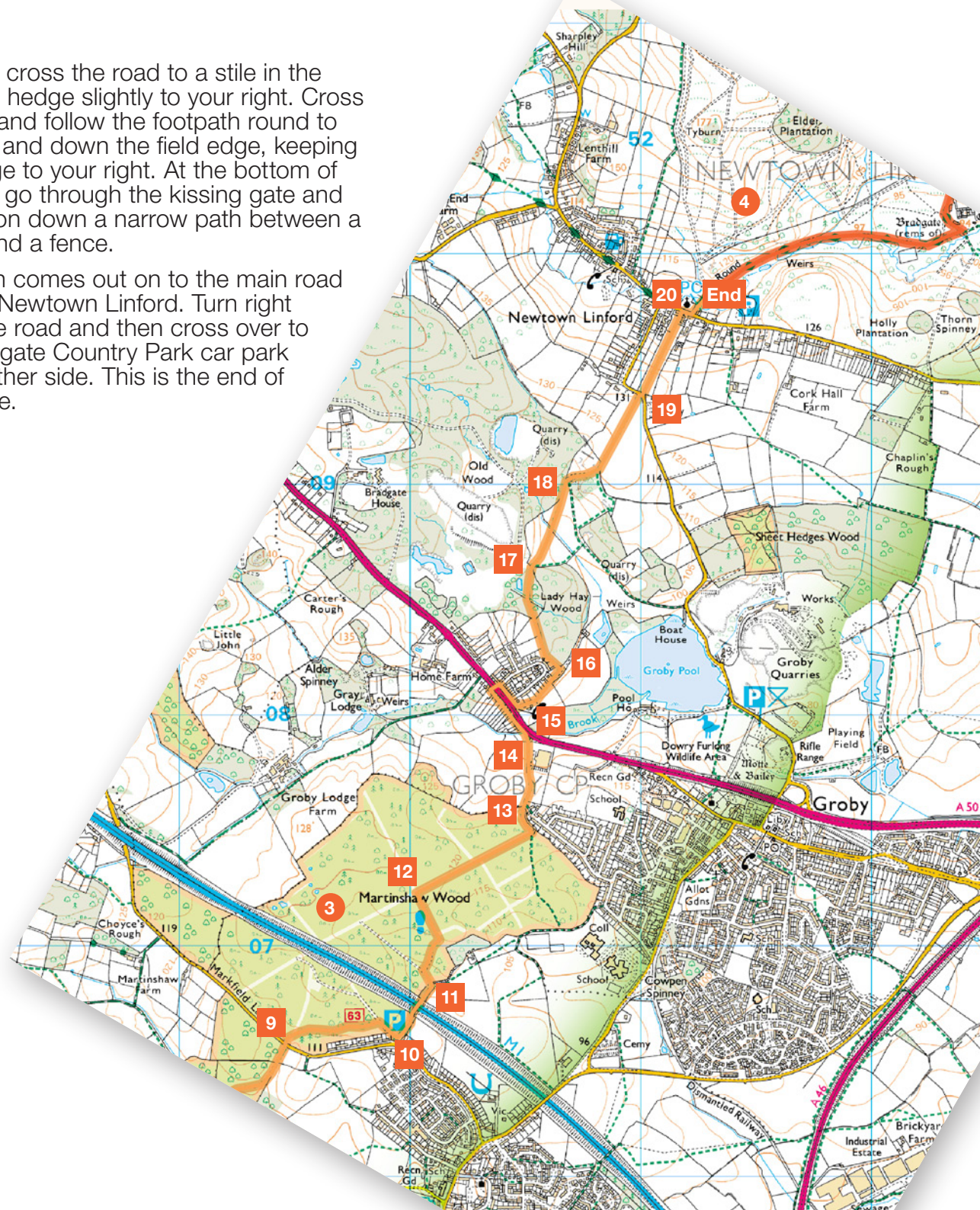
10 Go through the gate and turn left to walk across a small car park and through a second kissing gate. Follow the concrete track as it crosses a bridge over the M1. After crossing the motorway, the concrete track bears right by some gates.

11 Go through the kissing gate and down a surfaced path back into the woods. After about 75m, as the track straightens up, take the smaller path that leads off to the right. At the next junction of paths, go left along the straight wide grassy path until you reach a crossroads of paths.



- 12** Turn right at the crossroads onto a straight surfaced path. Follow this path for about 550m before taking a narrower path to the left before you reach the houses at the edge of Martinshaw Wood. Where this path forks, take the right-hand path, which takes you round a sharp bend to the right to a metal kissing gate.
- 13** Go through the kissing gate and over the small bridge then follow the path between a fence and a hedge, ignoring the path off to the right into the housing estate. The path ends at the A50 dual-carriageway.
- 14** Turn left along the pavement and follow it for about 250m to a pedestrian crossing. Cross the A50 and turn right to retrace your steps on the opposite pavement for about 125m to a footpath heading off to the left.
- 15** Follow this footpath, past the rear of some houses, until you come to some large metal gates, where a narrow public footpath goes off to the left.
- 16** Take this narrower path and follow it around the edge of the housing estate, keeping alongside the tall fence to your left, even when the path splits. Where the houses end, continue on the path with the fields to your left. Continue on the path as it goes over a stile and through some woodland.
- 17** As you come out of the woodland and into a field, take the path that goes straight ahead across the field, ignoring the one to your right. At the edge of this first field, go across a bridge then through a metal gate before bearing diagonally left across the next field.
- 18** Continue in the same direction as the path goes into another woodland. At the end of this woodland, the path joins a track. Follow this track as it winds up the hill. Continue along the track, through a metal gate, until you reach the road.

- 19** Carefully cross the road to a stile in the opposite hedge slightly to your right. Cross the stile and follow the footpath round to the right and down the field edge, keeping the hedge to your right. At the bottom of the field, go through the kissing gate and straight on down a narrow path between a hedge and a fence.
- 20** This path comes out on to the main road through Newtown Linford. Turn right along the road and then cross over to the Bradgate Country Park car park on the other side. This is the end of this stage.



Useful Information

Parking

Parking is available at Bradgate Park and Thornton Reservoir.

Please note that there is a charge for parking at Bradgate Park and also be aware of car park closing times before setting off.

Public transport

Newtown Linford is on the 120 Coalville-Leicester bus route (Mon-Sat).

Thornton is on the 26 Coalville-Leicester bus route (Mon-Sat), the bus stops are on Main Street.

Change at Glenfield to travel between the start and finish of the stage.

For detailed information on bus routes and times, call **Traveline** on 0871 200 22 33 (charges apply).

Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this information at the time of publication. However, the National Forest Company cannot be held responsible for any error, omission or subsequent changes.

Points of interest along this stage

1 Thornton Reservoir

This attractive and tranquil expanse of water is a delightful spot to pause along the Way. If you chose to take the three-mile surfaced path around the reservoir, don't miss the sculpture trail hidden amongst the mature woodland.



2 Pear Tree Wood

Pear Tree Wood was created in 1997 to connect Ratby Boroughs and Martinshaw Wood. Although planted with essentially a mix of native broadleaf trees, conifer species in the northern section blend into those at Martinshaw Wood, to encourage the movement of pine-loving wildlife, particularly moths.



3 Martinshaw Wood

Originally ancient woodland, Martinshaw Wood is cut in two by the M1 motorway. Home to 36 different tree species, the site was replanted with commercial conifers in the 1950s. The selective felling of many of the conifers to favour oak, beech, birch and other broadleaf species will restore some of the woodland's original character.



4 Bradgate Park

Bradgate Park is an historic medieval deer park in the heart of the ancient Charnwood Forest. It retains much of its original wild and rugged landscape with dramatic rocky outcrops and gnarled oak trees, many of which are well over 500 years old. Herds of red and fallow deer still roam amongst the bracken.



How to use this leaflet

The maps in this leaflet are based upon the Ordnance Survey's 1:25,000 scale Explorer maps and are presented at the correct scale if printed on A4 paper.

- 1 Square symbols on the maps link with the route directions that are provided alongside the map.
- 1 Circular symbols represent key points of interest along the route of the trail.

About The National Forest

The National Forest is one of Britain's boldest environmentally-led regeneration projects: the creation of a new forest across 200 square miles of parts of Derbyshire, Leicestershire and Staffordshire, linking the ancient forests of Needwood and Charnwood.

Over the last twenty years, The National Forest has trebled forest cover within its boundary, creating habitats for wildlife, a woodland economy and a beautiful landscape for everyone to enjoy.

