

Exploring the National Forest

Located right in the heart of the country, the National Forest embraces 200 square miles of the Midlands. It spans parts of Derbyshire, Leicestershire and Staffordshire, and aims to link the two ancient forests of Charnwood and Needwood.

After centuries of coal mining and clay extraction, the closure of the pits in the 1980s left a scarred and derelict landscape. Now, more than a quarter of a century later, millions of trees have been planted, breathing life into the landscape and its communities – turning a landscape from black to green. This bold regeneration shows how trees can transform not only the landscape, but also, vitally, people's lives and the local economy.



To find out more about the National Forest and how you can get involved, visit:

nationalforest.org

 @NatForestCo

 @the.national.forest

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The National Forest Company
Charity No. 1166563

National Forest Company, Enterprise
Glade, Bath Yard, Moira, Swadlincote,
Derbyshire, DE12 6BA



THE NATIONAL
FOREST



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Long
11 miles
(17.5km)

Birthday walk

A rural walk linking 10 woodlands created in the first decade of the National Forest.





Walking in the National Forest

There are hundreds of miles of paths and trails to explore in the National Forest, and plenty of places accessible for all ages and abilities. Grab your walking boots, your trainers or your dog and head out into the woods for a walk or a run, or try your hand at orienteering or geocaching.

Follow gentle trails through vibrant young woodlands and nature-rich ancient forests. Discover more about the area's heritage or just let a canal towpath take you to the nearest pub lunch.

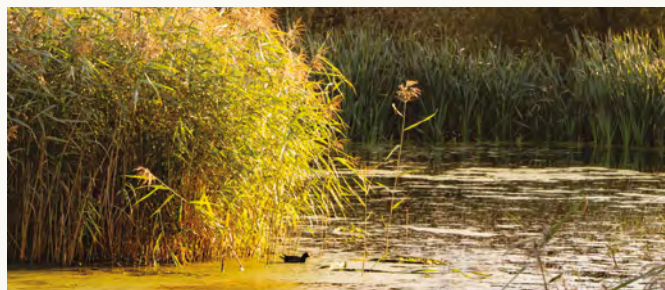


Walking highlights



Sence Valley Forest Park

From 1982 to 1996 this site was part of an extensive opencast coal mine called Coalfield North. During this time, 8 million tonnes of coal were extracted from the ground. Following the completion of mining, the site was restored in 1998 to create a new forest park, part of the then new National Forest. It includes wildflower meadows, woodlands and three lakes linking to the River Sence. A community orchard and a new woodland have recently been planted to celebrate Forestry England's centenary.



Kelham Bridge Nature Reserve

As part of the development of the site the highly modified channel of the River Sence has been diverted in places to form more natural meanders and bends. Small areas for flooding have been created along the river margins to extend the floodplain habitats. The reedbeds provide habitats for invertebrates, birds, small mammals and amphibians. The pools attract water birds and wading birds, which can be viewed from two bird hides.

Noon Column

See the light at the six Noon Columns dotted around the Forest. Slots cut into these 3-metre-tall oak sculptures, designed by internationally renowned artist David Nash, allow rays of sunlight through at true noon each day. Find the Coalfields column in the top car park at Sence Valley.



Off route highlight

Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Wood is an impressive woodland planted by the Woodland Trust in 2012 to celebrate Her Majesty's The Queen's Diamond Jubilee. It has over 300,000 trees, a lake with bird hide, and is home to a wide variety of wildlife. There is good accessibility for all abilities, and many features to enjoy throughout the site. See more at the visitor barn, a short walk from the car park.



Be a responsible visitor to the National Forest

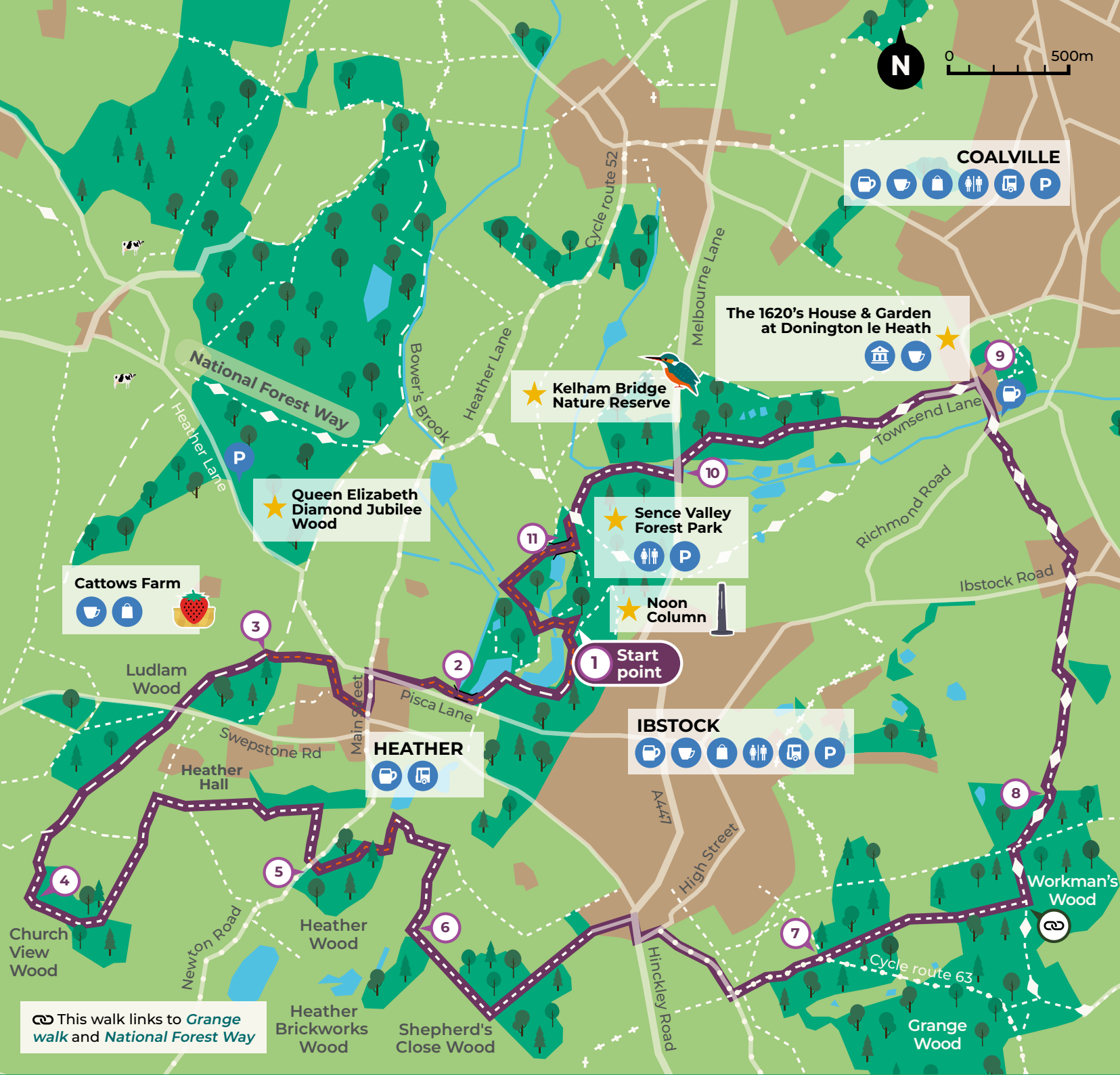


To get the most out of your visit, please follow some simple rules:

Respect other people • Consider other people enjoying the outdoors • Leave gates and property as you find them and follow marked paths

Protect the natural environment • Leave no trace of your visit and take your litter home • Keep dogs under effective control

Enjoy the outdoors • Plan ahead and be prepared • Follow advice and local signs



Birthday walk

Long length

Distance: 11 miles (17.5km)

Time: Allow 5 hours

Path type: Unsurfaced paths, tracks, woodland trails and farmland. Stiles. Sturdy footwear recommended.

Use with map OS Explorer 245 The National Forest

Start at: Lower car park, Sence Valley Forest Park, Ravenstone Road, Ibstock, LE67 6NW

OS Grid Ref: SK400112

Latitude: 52.697687

Longitude: -1.4088705

what3words:

/// behind.goose.spouse

Map Key

	Trail route		Point of interest
	Footpath		Parking
	Bridleway		Bus stop
	Permissive path		Pub
	Road		Café
	Woodlands		Shop
	Rivers and ponds		Public toilets
	Buildings		Museum
	Waypoint		

1 Starting from the lower car park take the path along the left side of Horseshoe lake to the T-junction in front of Goss Water. Turn left and follow the surfaced path around the lake to the corner of the park.

2 Cross the concrete bridge, follow the track and enter the spinney alongside Pisca Lane. Turn right and walk into Heather village. At the roundabout, turn left onto Main Street. After 150m, turn right up the footpath through the churchyard and past the play area. At the houses, take the footpath to your right, between fences and across the field. Turn left to join the permissive path into **Ludlam Wood**.

3 Follow the path and turn right onto the bridleway. Continue along the bridleway, crossing Swebstone Road to walk along a sunken lane between holly hedges. After half a mile, turn left through a gap in the hedge onto a public footpath and then diagonally right across the field. Where the footpath meets a track, turn left to enter **Church View Wood**.

4 Once in the wood, turn right and follow the path around the perimeter. Where the path forks beneath the overhead cables, take the left fork. At the next junction of paths, turn left over the wooden bridge and leave the wood to take the footpath over the field. Pass a small brick building and follow the footpath along the hedge, before turning right onto a footpath in front of Heather Hall. Continue ahead, along the field edge. Turn left over the second bridge, then walk through the meadow. Turn right at the hedge and follow the footpath to Newton Road. Cross the road into **Heather Wood**.

5 Follow the path downhill, turning right at the hedge, to the far corner of the wood. Cross the bridge, go across the field and then join the disused access road to Heather Brickworks. Turn right and follow the fence around the works. Turn right at the top of the steps, go through the gate and continue along the metal fence before veering diagonally left. Follow the footpath through three more gates before crossing a stile, turning right and entering **Heather Brickworks Wood**.

6 Turn left and follow the footpath to a T-junction of paths. Turn left into **Shepherd's Close Wood**, follow the footpath to the houses and then take Church View to meet the main road. Turn right and cross the road to go left onto High Street, proceed to the cemetery and turn right onto Overton Road. After about 400m, turn left onto the byway and on to **Grange Wood**.

7 At the end of the byway, pass through the metal gate and through the farmyard of Ibstock Grange to join the footpath into **Workman's Wood**. Follow the footpath until a crossing of paths, take the left turn (also the **National Forest Way**) and keep following this path through the plantations until you exit the woods.

8 Follow the **National Forest Way** north to Ellistown. Cross Ibstock Road and take the footpath between the houses to Sherwood Close. Turn right and then left to the end of the cul-de-sac. Follow the **National Forest Way** between the houses and on for another half mile to Donington le Heath. Turn right on Richmond Road and then left by the Donington Arms onto Manor Road and head up the hill.

9 Turn left into Townsend Lane (soon leaving the **National Forest Way**) and follow the permissive path ahead into **Kelham Bridge Nature Reserve**. Follow the path straight ahead and walk through the reserve (*perhaps detouring to the ponds and bird hides below to your left*). When you reach the A447 (**CAUTION - busy road**), carefully cross over, turn left and walk for 100m before taking the public footpath on the right.

10 Go down the steps and follow the waymarked footpath into **Sence Valley Forest Park**. Turn right and follow the surfaced path along the River Sence until you eventually reach a T-junction. Cross to the left and go through a gap in the hedge in front of you, and follow the grass path over the meadow to meet a stone path by a bridge.

11 Turn right, cross the bridge to pass a lake and follow the surfaced path for 300m. Keep on the main path as it bears left and follow the path straight ahead to reach a T-junction. Turn left here, cross the stone bridge and take the first path on the right, back to the car park.

This walk was created to mark the 10th birthday of the National Forest. Two decades on, the National Forest contains over 400 woodlands, new and old, wonderful places on the doorsteps of those who live here. The Forest continues to develop, and transforms lives and the landscape where people live, work and visit.

Find out more: nationalforest.org