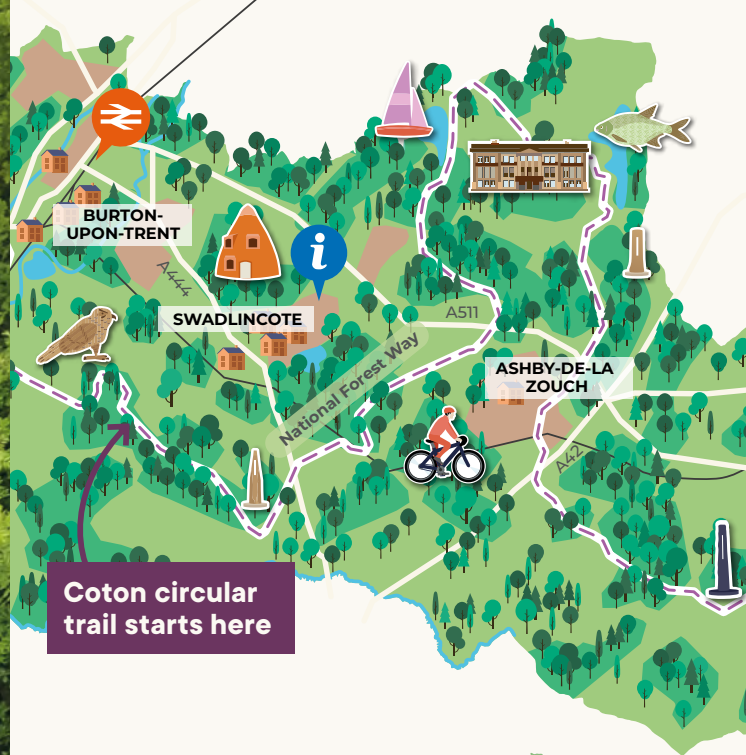


# Exploring the National Forest

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](http://nationalforest.org)

 @NatForestCo

 @the.national.forest

 @NatForestCo

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11/25

The National Forest Company  
Charity No. 1166563

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



THE NATIONAL  
FOREST



Medium  
5.5 miles  
(9km)

## Coton circular

A gentle walk around young woodlands in the Mease lowlands.





# 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



### Coton Wood

An interesting feature of the wood are the old hedgerows which pre-date the planting of the existing wood. The footpaths also have historical relevance, used as far back as the Black Death for moving plague victims. Before Coton-in-the-Elms had its own church, bodies were carried a mile and a half along the coffin trail (known locally as Procession Way) to Lullington for burial. The mourners passed under a curve of tree boughs known as the Devil's Arches on their journey.



### Top Wood

Owned and managed by the Woodland Trust, this land was originally made up of a mix of agricultural uses, numerous ponds and some small copses. Look closely and you may find the remains of a former mineral railway line and signs of medieval ridge and furrow. The woodland acts as an important buffer for the surrounding ancient woodland of Grange Wood. The planted trees are helping to facilitate the gradual movement of ancient woodland species.

## 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 Mease Valley Noon Column just off route, found in an open glade within Grangewood.



## Off route highlight

Rosliston Forestry Centre offers a range of activities for great days out; from quiet walks to action-packed family fun. The mix of woodland and meadow, ponds and play areas offer the perfect playground for visitors of all ages and physical abilities, all year round. Spot the wildlife, join a guided walk or enjoy a short break in one of the lodges.



## 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

# Coton circular

 **Medium length**

**Distance:** 5.5 miles (9km)

**Time:** Allow 2.5 hours

**Path type:** Unsurfaced paths, tracks, farmland and tarmacked sections. Stiles. Sturdy footwear recommended.

**Use with map OS Explorer 245 The National Forest**

**Start at:** Coton Wood, Lullington Road, Coton-in-the-Elms, DE12 8EP

**OS Grid Ref:** SK245148

**Latitude:** 52.731025

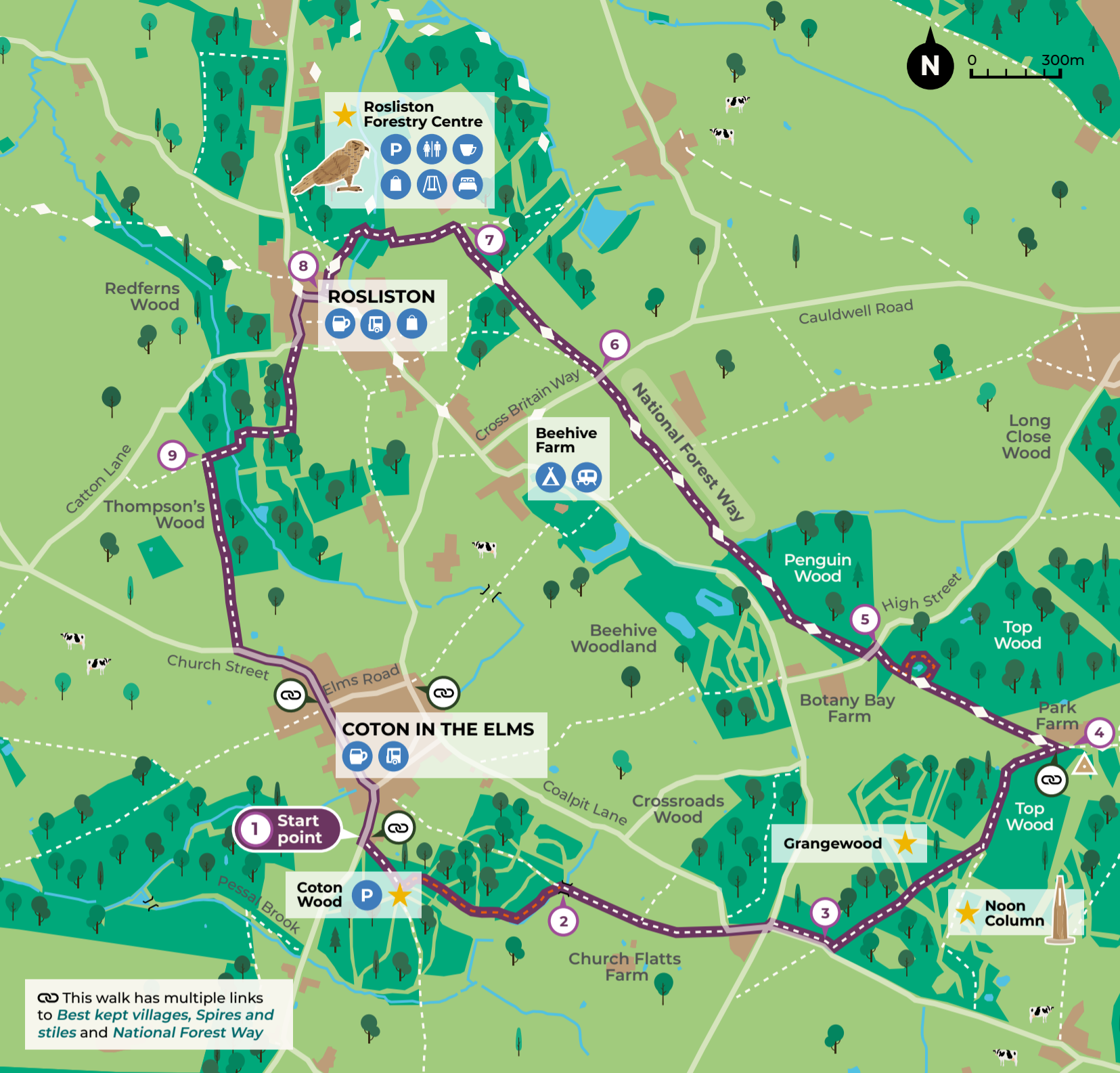
**Longitude:** -1.6385923

**what3words:**

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## Map Key

	Trail route		Point of interest
	Footpath		Parking
	Bridleway		Bus stop
	Road		Pub
	Permissive path		Shop
	Woodlands		Public toilets
	Rivers and lakes		Camping
	Buildings		Cafe
	Trig point		Play area
	Waypoint		Accommodation



**1** Starting at **Coton Wood**, take the gate opposite the car park entrance and walk straight ahead along the well-defined central path, ignoring the first left fork. Where the path divides, keep left. Ignore the next track on the left and walk on to the T-junction, where you turn left. After 20m, turn right where the tracks cross and follow this path around the perimeter of the wood, keeping the hedge on your right until you reach a stile at the edge of the wood.

**2** Cross the stile and wooden bridge, and follow the footpath across the field to a stile in the middle of the hedge. Cross this, a farm track and another stile to continue on the footpath across two fields. Where the footpath meets the road, turn right and walk on towards the crossroads. Turn left (signposted Botany Bay) and immediately cross the road to go through the gap in the hedge, marked by a footpath marker, into the **Grangewood** site.

**3** Turn right and follow the footpath along the inside of the roadside hedge, until you reach a stone track. Turn left and walk along the track, ignoring any paths off to either side. Keep straight ahead following the footpath markers and fenceline, eventually reaching two mature Oak trees. Follow the footpath round to a gap in the hedge and into **Top Wood**, welcomed by a Woodland Trust sign. Take the footpath uphill alongside the hedge and cross the stile to leave the wood. Bear right and follow the path along the edge of the wood. Go over a series of stiles through paddocks until you meet a farm track by Park Farm. You have now joined the **National Forest Way**.

**4** Turn left and continue down the track for 200m before turning right to enter another section of **Top Wood**. Turn left and follow the path that runs parallel to the track, veering away briefly to pass an old field pond before exiting the wood at a kissing gate where the track joins the road. *(NOTE: in wet weather/winter, stay on the main drive as the woods can get wet!)* Turn left along the road and after a few metres, turn right to enter **Penguin Wood** through a gap in the hedge by a field gate.

**5** Follow the footpath through **Penguin Wood**, across the meadow to a gap in the hedge. Turn left, then immediately right onto a grass ride. Follow this path between trees to a wooden bridge, cross and enter the large field. Continue straight ahead, passing the solitary oak trees and cross the whole field to reach a gap in the hedge at Linton Road. Cross the road with care and go onto the surfaced farm track opposite.

**6** Follow the farm track, go past some houses and ahead into a field. Walk along the field edge, through a gap in the hedge at the field corner and continue ahead. As you near the farm buildings, take the waymarked footpath to your left (as the **National Forest Way** goes right) and into the next field.

**7** Walk along the field edge and enter **Rosliston Wood and Forestry Centre**. Bear right and follow the path until you meet a stone path. Turn left then bear left, taking the path signposted Rosliston Village. Walk through the woods and leave the forestry centre on the path, along the field edge and turn left down the footpath beside the church onto Main Street.

**8** Turn right along the road, then turn left down Cotton Lane. Walk down the road, past Vicarage Walk and take the footpath on the left (just before the bench) as you leave the village. Go through gap to the right-hand side of the field gate and turn right to follow the footpath through a wooden gate into **Betts Wood**. Turn left after the gate, past a wooden sign, and follow the path along the edge of the wood. The path veers right through a gap in the hedge (before an overhead power line). Take the path in front of you, to the left-hand side of the hedge, parallel with the power line. Keep straight ahead, ignoring paths to either side, and follow the path as it bends left then right, to a wooden gate. Go through the gate, over the footbridge and continue along the path, crossing a second footbridge into a field.

**9** Turn left and follow the path along the field edge and continue ahead as the path becomes a grass track between hedges. Continue out into another field and walk straight ahead to meet the road. Turn left and walk down into Coton in the Elms village along the road – take care, no footway. As you enter the village there is a pavement on one then the other side so you may need to keep crossing the road. Walk down the hill past the church to the road junction and bus stop. Keep ahead, taking the road signposted Lullington and Edingale. Continue on, leaving the village and Coton Wood car park will be on your left, just before the ‘national speed limit’ road signs.