

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 4:

Sence Valley to Ashby de la Zouch

Length: 5¾ miles / 9 kilometres



About this stage

Start: Sence Valley Forest Park, Ibstock (LE67 6NW)
End: Bath Street, Ashby de la Zouch (LE65 2FH)

On this stage, the National Forest Way travels through open farmland and attractive villages between Sence Valley Forest Park and the historic market town of Ashby de la Zouch. On the way, you will pass through the Woodland Trust's flagship Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Wood and arrive on the edge of 'King Coal' country.

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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Sence Valley to Ashby de la Zouch

- 1** From the upper car park at Sence Valley, walk between the Noon Column and the toilet block to the internal road. Follow the road downhill to where it curves sharply left and leave the road via the gate on your right. Take this track and walk for 150m to a gate, fence and horse hop.
- 2** Turn left and walk along a wide track for about 1,000m to where it meets Heather Lane, ignoring any paths to the left or right.
- 3** At the end of the track, turn left to walk along Heather Lane taking care to use the verge. After about 350m and ignoring the right-hand bridleway, as the road starts to slope uphill, turn right at a gateway and follow the footpath along the edge of the field. Continue through the hedge and across the next field. This will bring you to the Woodland Trust's Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Wood.
- 4** Cross the stile into the Diamond Jubilee Wood and follow the footpath straight ahead through the site. This path follows the line of the Via Devana, a Roman Road linking Colchester and Chester. After about 1,000m, the footpath leaves the Jubilee Wood and re-joins the road outside of Normanton le Heath.
- 5** Cross the stile onto the road and turn right. Almost immediately, the road forks. Take the left-hand fork into Normanton le Heath and follow The Hollow for 350m to its T-junction with Main Street. Turn right and, after about 100m, take the footpath to the left after a row of houses.

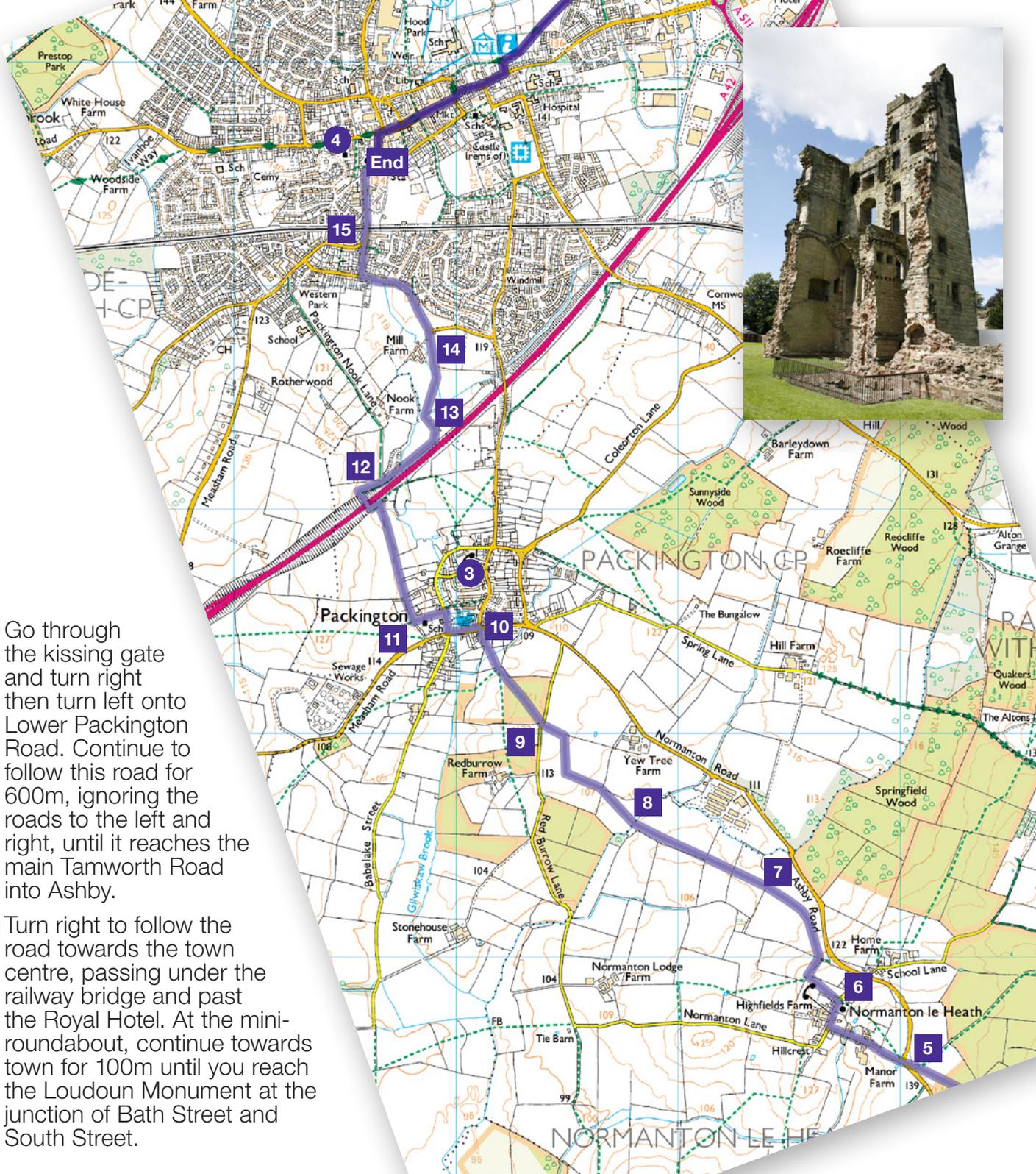


- 6** Take the footpath diagonally across the first field to a gate in its corner. Turn right through the gate and follow the footpath along the edge of the next field. At the end of this field, ignore the large gate on your right and, instead, take the smaller gate more or less straight ahead before bearing diagonally left across the field. Please keep to the path to avoid damaging any crops.



- 7** Cross the bridge at the end of this field and go through the gate to walk straight on across the next two fields, passing through another gate along the way.
- 8** Take the bridge over the stream and continue ahead over the next field. At the corner of the field, pass through the gate and then across the next field to Redburrow Lane.
- 9** Go over the stile onto the road and cross to a gateway to your right. Follow the footpath straight ahead, ignoring two paths that join from the left, until you reach the edge of Packington. Cross the stile and walk along the path beside the houses to Bridge Street.
- 10** Turn left along Bridge Street and, after crossing the stream, turn right to follow Mill Street for 100m. At the far end of the village school, turn left through the metal gates to take the footpath past the school to the churchyard. Follow the path through the churchyard and out onto Vicarage Lane.
- 11** Turn right and follow the lane as it becomes a drive and then, at a set of large metal gates, a farm track. After about 500m, the lane will bend sharply to the left before crossing the A42 on a bridge. After the bridge, the track slopes downhill before turning left into a field. Ignore this turn and, instead, take the footpath straight ahead.
- 12** Go through the wooden gate ahead of you and follow the footpath as it runs parallel to the A42. Cross a bridge and, at the end of the path, cross a stile to follow the footpath around the next field to a wooden sleeper bridge.
- 13** Cross this bridge and bear diagonally right to cross another field. Pass through the gate, over another bridge and through a second gate to follow the footpath along the edge of the final field. At the end of the field, you will reach the edge of Ashby de la Zouch.

- 14** Go through the kissing gate and turn right then turn left onto Lower Packington Road. Continue to follow this road for 600m, ignoring the roads to the left and right, until it reaches the main Tamworth Road into Ashby.
- 15** Turn right to follow the road towards the town centre, passing under the railway bridge and past the Royal Hotel. At the mini-roundabout, continue towards town for 100m until you reach the Loudoun Monument at the junction of Bath Street and South Street.



Useful Information

Parking

Parking is available at Sence Valley Forest Park and in Ashby de la Zouch.

Please note that there may be a charge for parking in Ashby and also be aware of car park closing times before setting off.

Public transport

Ibstock, 5 minutes' walk from Sence Valley, is on the 15 Ibstock-Coalville and 159 Hinckley-Coalville bus routes (Mon-Sat).

Ashby de la Zouch is on the 9/9A/9E Coalville-Burton bus route (Mon-Sun).

Change at Coalville 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 Sence Valley Forest Park

Sence Valley Forest Park was once part of a large open-cast coal mine. Nearly 100,000 trees, planted in 1998, have softened a black, scarred moonscape into a lush green bowl, surrounding three lakes and a river, where swans, coots, ducks and even otters have made their home.



2 Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Wood

This extensive site is the centrepiece of a national celebration by the Woodland Trust to mark the 2012 Diamond Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II. Over 300,000 native trees have been planted across the site, which features a lake, bird hide and trails.



3 Packington

The attractive village of Packington has one of five 18th-century lock-ups to be found across North West Leicestershire and South Derbyshire. Also known as round houses, cages, watch houses, blind houses and clinks, these tiny brick buildings were temporary holding places for offenders being brought before the magistrate.



4 Ashby de la Zouch

Ashby's fascinating 15th-century castle was mostly destroyed during the Civil War and is now a captivating ruin. Elsewhere in the town, browse the farmers' market and independent shops, and visit the intriguing museum to discover where the name 'de la Zouch' came from.



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.

