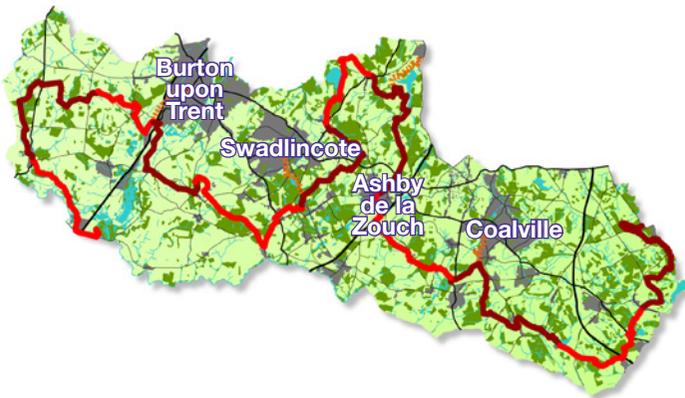


The National Forest Way takes walkers on a 75-mile journey through a transforming landscape, from the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire to Beacon Hill Country Park in Leicestershire.

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.

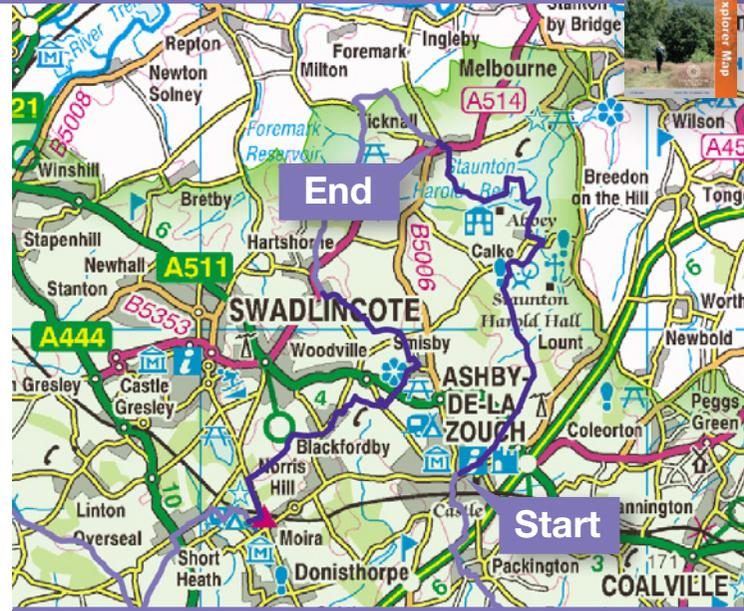
The trail leads through young and ancient woodlands, market towns and the industrial heritage of this changing landscape.



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.



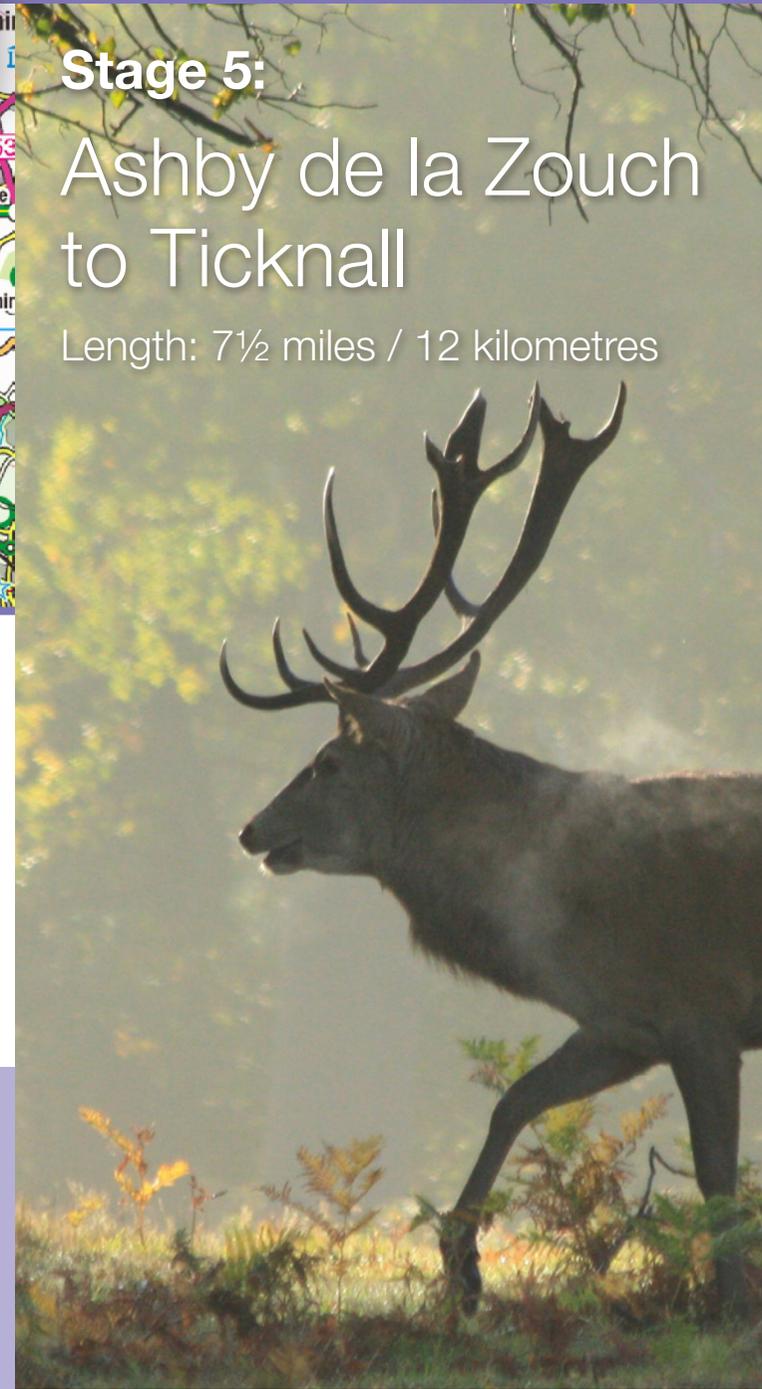
To find out more, visit:
www.nationalforestway.co.uk



Stage 5:

Ashby de la Zouch to Ticknall

Length: 7½ miles / 12 kilometres



About this stage

Start: Bath Street, Ashby de la Zouch (LE65 2FH)
End: Ticknall Village Hall (DE73 7JW)

Leaving Ashby de la Zouch towards Calke Abbey, distant woodlands frame the start of this section of the Way. Look out for glorious views across Staunton Harold Reservoir before entering the undulating Calke Uplands where parkland, wooded country estates and large arable fields are prominent in the landscape.

The National Forest Company

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Photo: Lesley Hextall

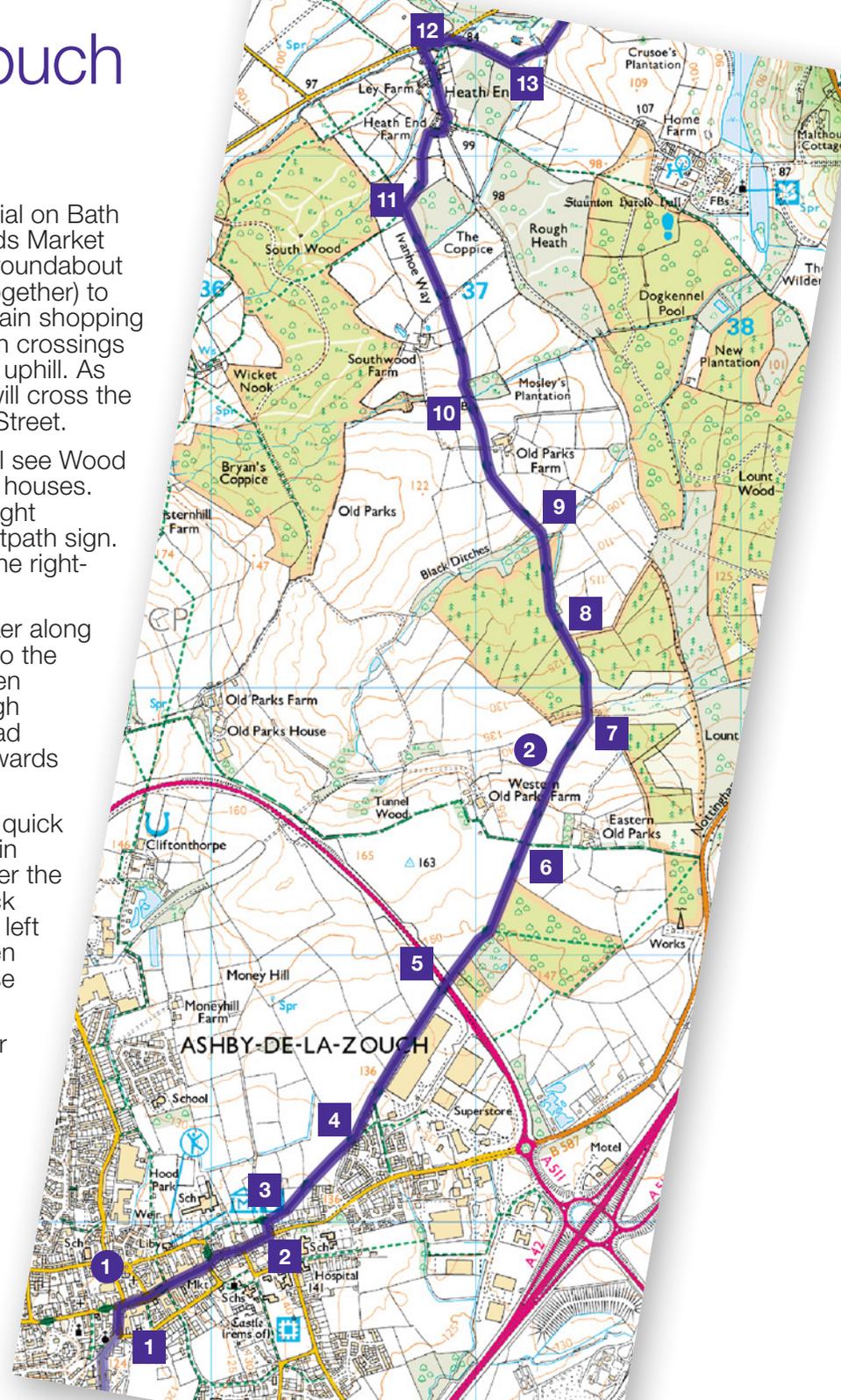


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Route directions: Westbound

Ashby de la Zouch to Ticknall

- 1 Starting from the Loudoun Memorial on Bath Street, walk past the shops towards Market Street. Turn right at the next mini-roundabout (actually two roundabouts close together) to head up Market Street, Ashby's main shopping street. Use one of the three pelican crossings to cross the road and continue on uphill. As you leave the shops behind, you will cross the staggered crossroads with North Street.
- 2 About 200m further ahead you will see Wood Street – a small lane between two houses. Turn left down the lane and then right through the kissing gate at the footpath sign. Walk across the field, keeping to the right-hand side.
- 3 When you reach another waymarker along the way, bear left across the field to the corner where you will find a wooden bridge. Cross this and pass through the kissing gate that follows it. Head diagonally across the next field towards the post in the corner.
- 4 At the post, turn right and then, in quick succession, turn left and right again across a wooden bridge. Once over the bridge, turn left and follow the track past a cul-de-sac of houses. Bear left to keep following the track between hedges, passing a large warehouse on your right to reach the A511.
- 5 Follow the track as it passes under the main road. When you see the sign for Old Parks Farm, keep heading straight on, ignoring the path off to your right.
- 6 When you reach a small lane, go straight across and over the stile. Keep to the right of the next field and then carry on straight ahead over the next three stiles. Where the fields are open, keep to the right-hand side.



- 7 At the post at the end of the field, head straight on through the hedge, then turn left at the track towards the next post. Turn right by the tall fencing for Park Pale Woods. Do not go through the gate, but walk to the right of the fencing instead. Keep following this path, ignoring the first gate into the woods on your left.
- 8 Go through the next gate on your left and keep walking in the same direction. Carry straight on through the tall gates at the end of the woods, across a lane, and into the opposite woodland. Follow this path as it becomes a boardwalk in places and crosses a gorge by way of a footbridge. Cross the stile at the edge of the woodland and bear left towards a kissing gate.
- 9 Go through this kissing gate and then follow the path for about 900m, through three more kissing gates, a farm track and a fourth kissing gate, until you reach a bridge.
- 10 Once you have crossed the bridge, head through the gate ahead of you and go straight on uphill, passing the woods on your right. Follow this path for another 750m, crossing another bridge and two stiles. When you reach a second woodland, keep heading straight on when you see two stiles either side of a wooden footbridge.
- 11 At the end of the woodland, turn right and walk across the parkland, heading towards the large houses you can see. Bear right across the stile when you reach it, then head left along a grassy path. At the end of the path, turn left off the path and onto a wider lane that ends at a road.
- 12 Turn right at the end of the lane, onto the road. Take care and use the verges where possible. After 100m turn right off the road and follow the driveway for Staunton Harold Hall, using the gate beside the cattle grid.

13 When you see a waymarker on the left (after about 200m) leave the driveway and bear diagonally left across the field towards the hedge, passing another waymarker along the way. When you reach the path beside the hedge, continue to follow it keeping the hedge and fence on your right. Go through a gate and continue to a squeeze stile.

14 Pass through the squeeze stile at the entrance to Dimminsdale Nature Reserve, and turn left down some steps. At the bottom of the steps, ignore the squeeze stile on your left and keep bearing right to follow the path. Follow the path until you see some steps on your left and a pond on your right. Go up the steps and carry on following the path, which becomes a boardwalk at times.

15 Leave the nature reserve by way of a squeeze stile and turn left to walk up the road, taking care in case there is any traffic. At the top of the hill, the road bends sharply to the left with a turn-off to the right.

16 Take this turn-off into Calke village and follow the road towards Staunton Harold Reservoir. Carry straight on through the open gateway towards the reservoir, passing the car park on your left.

17 Go through the gap in the stone wall and walk down the path towards the reservoir. Follow the path as it turns left just in front of the reservoir. Continue along it as it turns into a boardwalk, to go along the edge of the reservoir. It will cross a footbridge then start to go uphill where you will notice high deer fencing on your right.

18 Follow the path as it turns left at the top of the hill as you are walking around the perimeter of the deer fencing. Keep following this path until you reach a gate.

19 Go through the gateway and turn left, to keep following the deer fencing downhill (with the fence on your left and woodland on the right). At the bottom of the hill, go through a gate and cross the river, then turn right to follow the path alongside the river.

20 At the path junction, keep going straight on alongside the river. Keep going straight on when you reach a gate across the path where a weir is being renovated. Follow the path which runs adjacent to the river.

NOTE: If you wish to visit Calke Abbey itself and its toilets/ refreshments, take the steps on the left up to the car park. To rejoin the main route walk to the other end of the car park and take the path going downhill on your right. You will rejoin the route at Point **21**.

21 At the end of Mere Pond is a fence with three gates. Take the right hand gate and follow the path with Betty's Pond now on your left. When you reach a fork in the path, keep to the left and carry on following the path. You will cross another path and pass through some woodland.

22 When you come through the woodland to the open parkland, head diagonally left. Cross over the main drive to the Abbey and aim to walk between two trees that stand alone on the edge of a wooded shelterbelt. Look for a stile on the edge of the woodland and cross it into the wood. After a short walk through the trees you will reach another stile.

23 Cross this stile and turn right to walk up the edge of the field towards another gate and stile. Pass over the stile and bear diagonally left across the open parkland. Aim to the left of the copse of trees that lie in front of you and then follow an obvious path, keeping the hedge to your left.

24 Ignore the stile to your left and keep following the path you are on. Cross over the next two stiles, passing a pond on your right. Keep following the path straight on, ignoring any paths going off left and right. Carry on through a gap between two fences into an open field. Bear diagonally left across the field aiming for the gate in the corner near the houses on the edge of the village.

25 Go through the gate and down Bantons Lane to Main Street. Turn left and follow the road to the Wheel Inn. Turn right, opposite the pub, and onto Ingleby Lane. Follow signs for the Village Hall, turning left just after Rose Lane. This is the end of this stage.

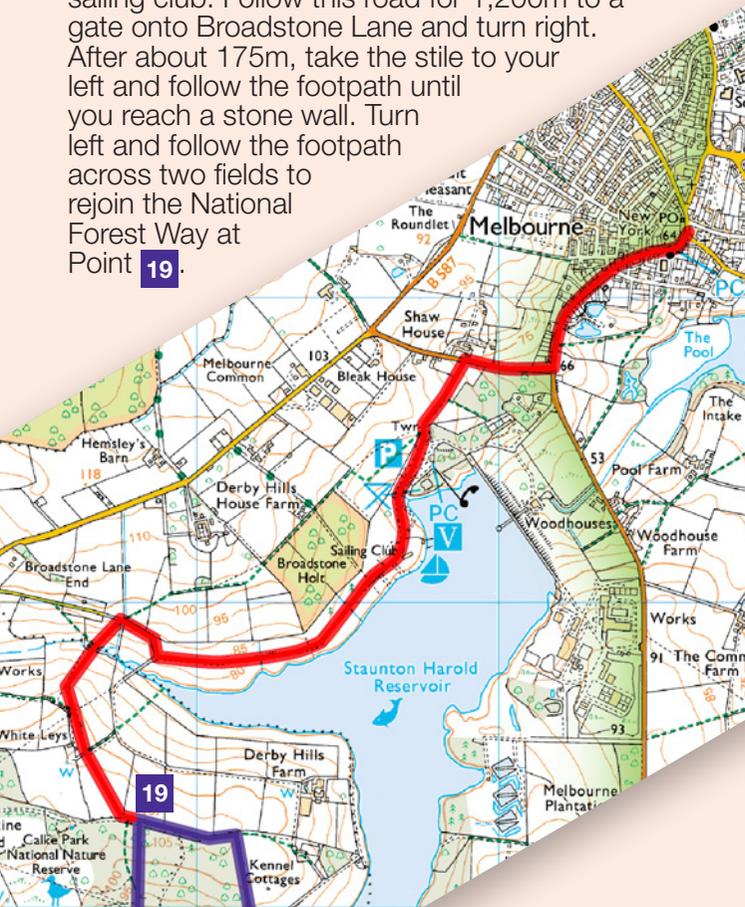


Link to Melbourne

To visit the nearby town of Melbourne, the first in Derbyshire to be awarded **Walkers are Welcome** status, follow the 2-mile link below.

To Melbourne: From Point 19, follow the path straight ahead. When the path forks, take the right fork and follow the path to Broadstone Lane. Turn right and, after about 175m, go through the gate on your left. Follow the road alongside the reservoir until you reach the car park. Cross the car park to the derelict tower and follow the footpath on to Robinsons Hill. Turn right and then left at the next junction to take Ashby Road into Melbourne.

From Melbourne: Head south along Ashby Road, turning right after the Melbourne Arms pub. After about 275m, take the footpath off to the left. At the derelict tower, turn left into the car park. Walk through the car park and onto the road to the sailing club. Follow this road for 1,200m to a gate onto Broadstone Lane and turn right. After about 175m, take the stile to your left and follow the footpath until you reach a stone wall. Turn left and follow the footpath across two fields to rejoin the National Forest Way at Point 19.



Points of interest along this stage

1 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.

2 Ivanhoe Way

Along this stretch, the Way follows the route of the Ivanhoe Way – so called in tribute to Sir Walter Scott and his novel *Ivanhoe*, set around Ashby de la Zouch castle and the surrounding countryside. Enjoy distant views across connected young Forest plantations including Alistair's, Bignall's and Jaguar Lount Woods.

3 Dimminsdale Nature Reserve

A history of mineral working accounts for the 'hobbitesque' appearance of Dimminsdale Nature Reserve. When limestone and lead mining ceased, the quarries flooded to create pools and brooks. Each spring, parts of the reserve are carpeted with a spectacular display of snowdrops.

4 Calke Abbey

With peeling paintwork and overgrown courtyards, the National Trust's Calke Abbey tells the dramatic story of the country house estate in decline. Calke Park, part of which is designated a National Nature Reserve, features an ancient deer park and gnarly thousand-year-old oak trees, remnants of a vast forest that historically covered much of this area.

Useful Information

Parking

Parking is available in Ticknall and Ashby de la Zouch.

Please be aware of car park closing times before setting off.

Public transport

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

Ticknall is on the 61 Derby-Swadlincote bus route (Mon-Sun). Change at Swadlincote 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).

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.

To find out more, visit:

www.nationalforestway.co.uk

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.