

# 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.



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](http://www.nationalforestway.co.uk)



## Stage 2:

# Bradgate Park to Thornton Reservoir

Length: 6 miles / 9¾ kilometres



## About this stage

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

Leaving Bradgate Park, this section of the Way takes you out of the ancient Forest of Charnwood and towards one of the largest continuous tracts of woodland in The National Forest. The route takes you through Martinshaw Wood, where coniferous woodland is being replaced with native species, and on through a variety of young and mature woodlands.

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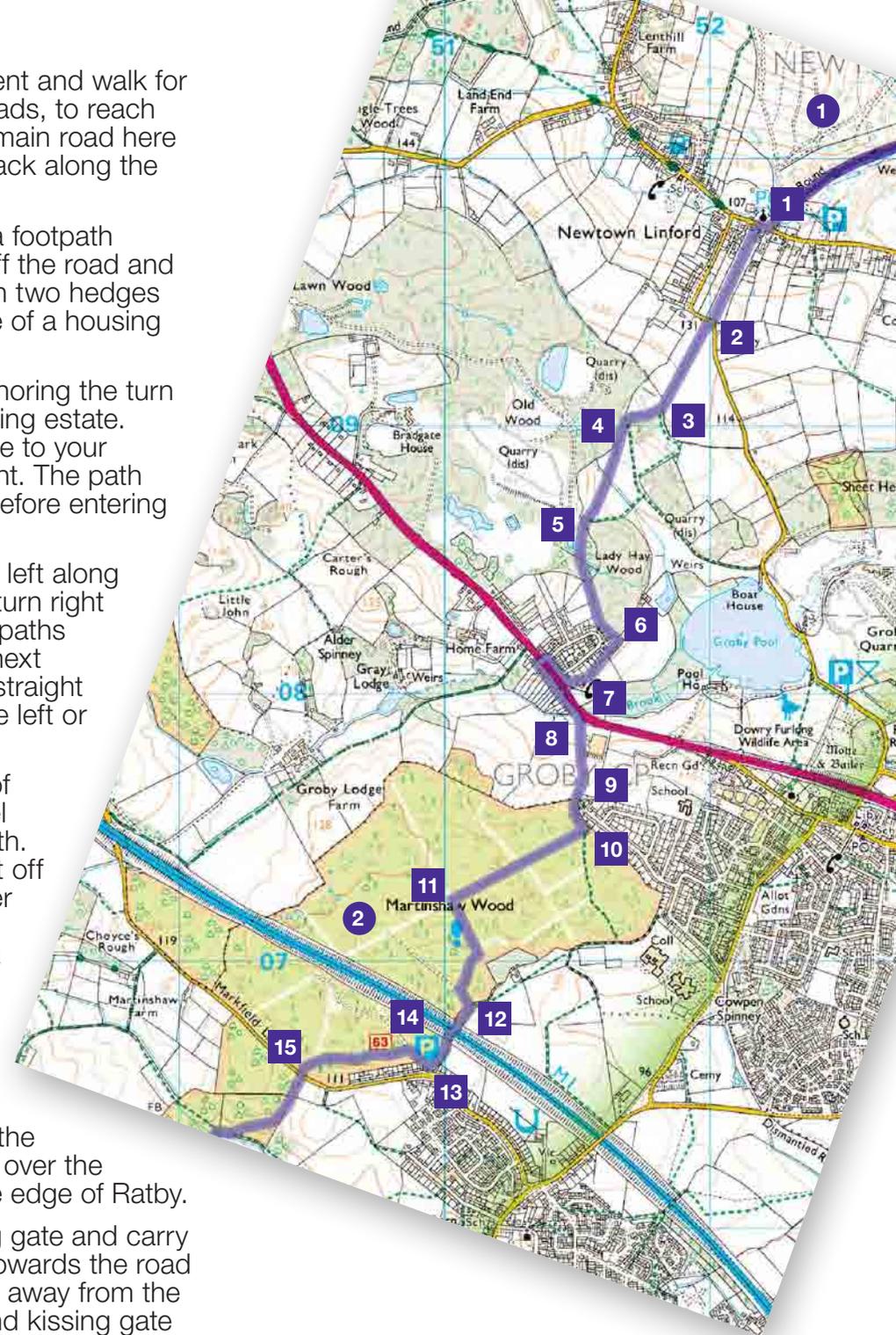


Route directions: Westbound

# Bradgate Park to Thornton Reservoir

- 1** From the Bradgate Park car park at Newtown Linford, head out past the church and onto Bradgate Road. Cross the road and turn right. After about 50m, just before the village shop, you will find a footpath heading off to the left. Follow this, through a kissing gate, and along the left-hand side of a field.
- 2** At the top of the field, cross the stile onto the road. Turn right and walk for about 20m until you are opposite a farm track with a metal kissing gate. Cross the road with care and go through the kissing gate onto the farm track along the edge of a field.
- 3** Follow the track for about 300m to a stile sited next to a gate. Cross the stile and keep following the track as it bears right downhill, ignoring the footpath to your left. At the bottom of the slope, the track bends sharply to the left. Ignore this and, instead, take the footpath that leaves the track to the right and continues downhill.
- 4** Follow the footpath through the wood and then bear diagonally right across the next field towards the gate. Once through the gate and over a bridge, bear left across the field, up a slight incline.
- 5** Bear right when the footpath re-enters the woods, ignoring the path that heads off to the left along the edge of the wood. The path leaves the wood over a stile and then runs along the edge of the wood. You will soon come across garden fences on your right. Continue to follow the footpath along the edge of the housing estate.
- 6** At the corner of the housing estate, the path turns right. Continue to follow it along a track until you reach the main road (the A50 dual carriageway).

- 7** Turn right along the pavement and walk for 125m, crossing two side roads, to reach the traffic lights. Cross the main road here and then turn left to walk back along the other side of the road.
- 8** After 250m, you will reach a footpath heading to the right. Turn off the road and follow this footpath between two hedges for about 300m to the edge of a housing estate.
- 9** Continue along the path, ignoring the turn off to your left into the housing estate. Follow the path, with a fence to your left and a hedge to your right. The path crosses a wooden bridge before entering Martinshaw Wood.
- 10** At the fork in the path, bear left along a woodland path and then turn right onto a wide track, ignoring paths straight on and left. At the next crossroads of paths, carry straight on, ignoring the paths to the left or right.
- 11** At the second crossroads of paths, turn left off the gravel path onto a wide grassy path. After about 325m, turn right off the main path onto a smaller path. At the bottom of the hill, where the path meets a track, turn left and follow the path to a kissing gate on the edge of the wood.
- 12** Pass through the gate and out onto the concrete track. Turn right and follow the track as it crosses a bridge over the M1 motorway and on to the edge of Ratby.
- 13** Go through the next kissing gate and carry straight on for about 20m towards the road before turning sharply right, away from the road. Pass through a second kissing gate and onto a surfaced path.



**14** Ignore the gate to your right and continue straight on. At the fork in the path, take the left-hand fork along the more obvious path. Bear left at the next junction, ignoring the path on your right, keeping to the surfaced path until you reach a gate leading back out onto the road.

**15** Cross straight over the road and enter Pear Tree Wood on a surfaced track that heads downhill. After about 400m, bear right after a group of trees, keeping to the surfaced path and ignoring the gate and footpath heading to the right.

**16** Cross a small bridge over a stream and continue to follow the surfaced path slightly uphill. At the end of the path, cross the stile before turning right and walking along the road for about 20m to the entrance to a car park.

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

**17** Turn right when you see the car park entrance and barrier, go through the kissing gate bearing left into Burroughs Wood. You soon enter an open glade.

**18** Bear left across the open area towards a gap in the trees opposite. At the waymarker, head straight on into the woods and keep following the path for 250m to its junction with a bridleway.

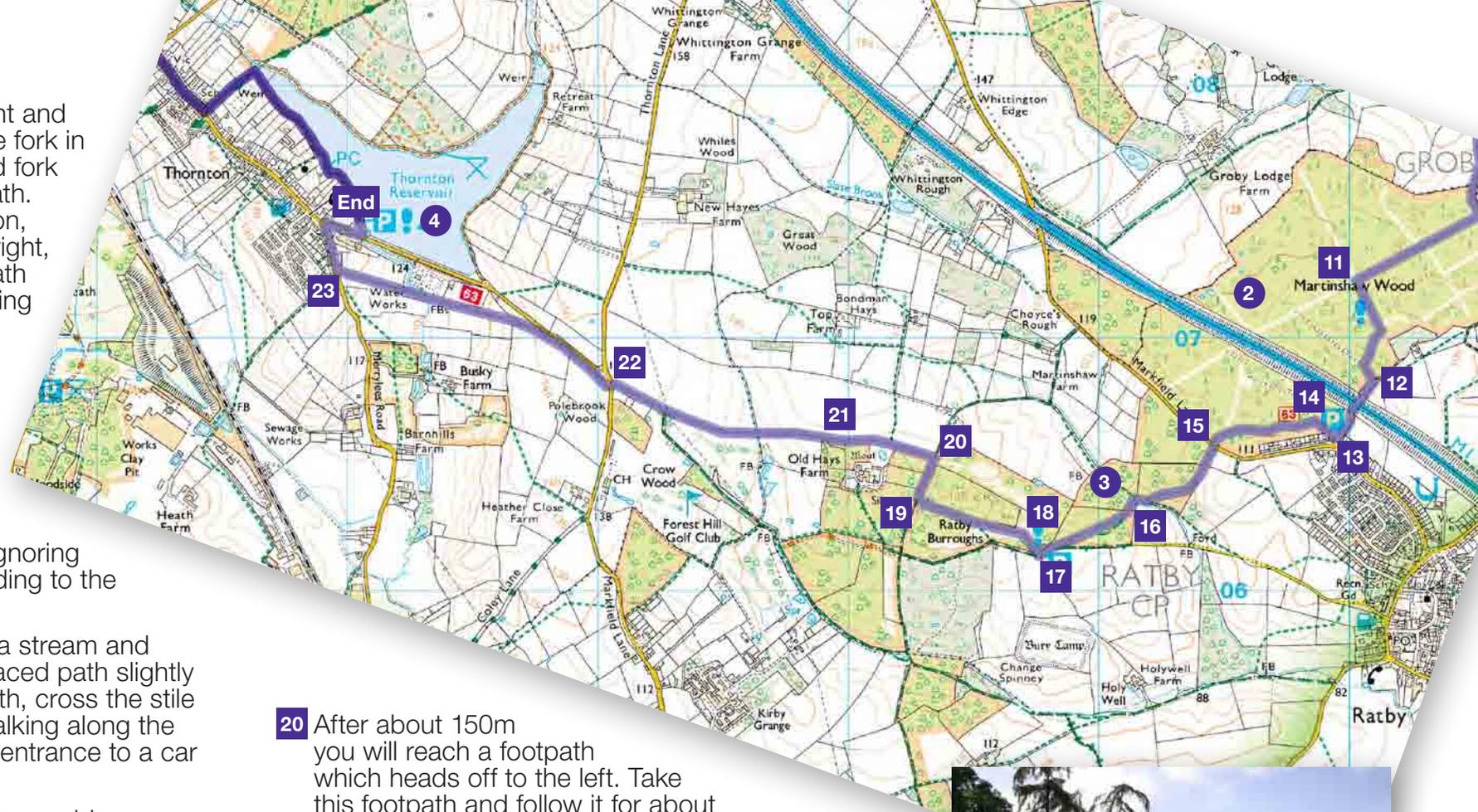
**19** At the junction, go through the kissing gate and then turn right on the bridleway. Follow the bridleway, with mature woodland to your right and new woodland planting to your left.

**20** After about 150m you will reach a footpath which heads off to the left. Take this footpath and follow it for about 450m, ignoring a footpath branching to your right, to kissing gate at the corner of a golf course.

**21** Go through the kissing gate and continue on the footpath along the edge of the golf course for about 650m. Where the footpath joins a tarmac path, continue straight on along the path to the road.

**22** Cross the road, bearing slightly left to a kissing gate in the hedge. Go through the gate and turn right to follow the footpath along the edge of the field. Continue along this footpath for about 1,200m. You will pass through four more kissing gates and over a wooden bridge before crossing a stile in a hedge onto the road at the edge of Thornton.

**23** Turn right and follow Merrylees Road into the village. At the junction with Reservoir Road, turn right and walk downhill for about 100m to the entrance to the Thornton Reservoir car park. Turn left into the car park, which marks 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 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.



## 2 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.



## 3 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.



## 4 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.



# 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.

