

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 3:

Sence Valley to Thornton Reservoir

Length: 7½ miles / 12 kilometres

About this stage

Start: Sence Valley Forest Park, Ibstock (LE67 6NW)

End: Thornton Reservoir, Thornton (LE67 1AR)

On this stage, the National Forest Way enters 'King Coal' country, where the famous 'black gold' was mined for centuries. Mining has played a significant role in shaping both the landscape and the heritage of the people who lived and worked in this part of the Forest.

The Way takes you through the ongoing transformation of this once-scarred landscape.

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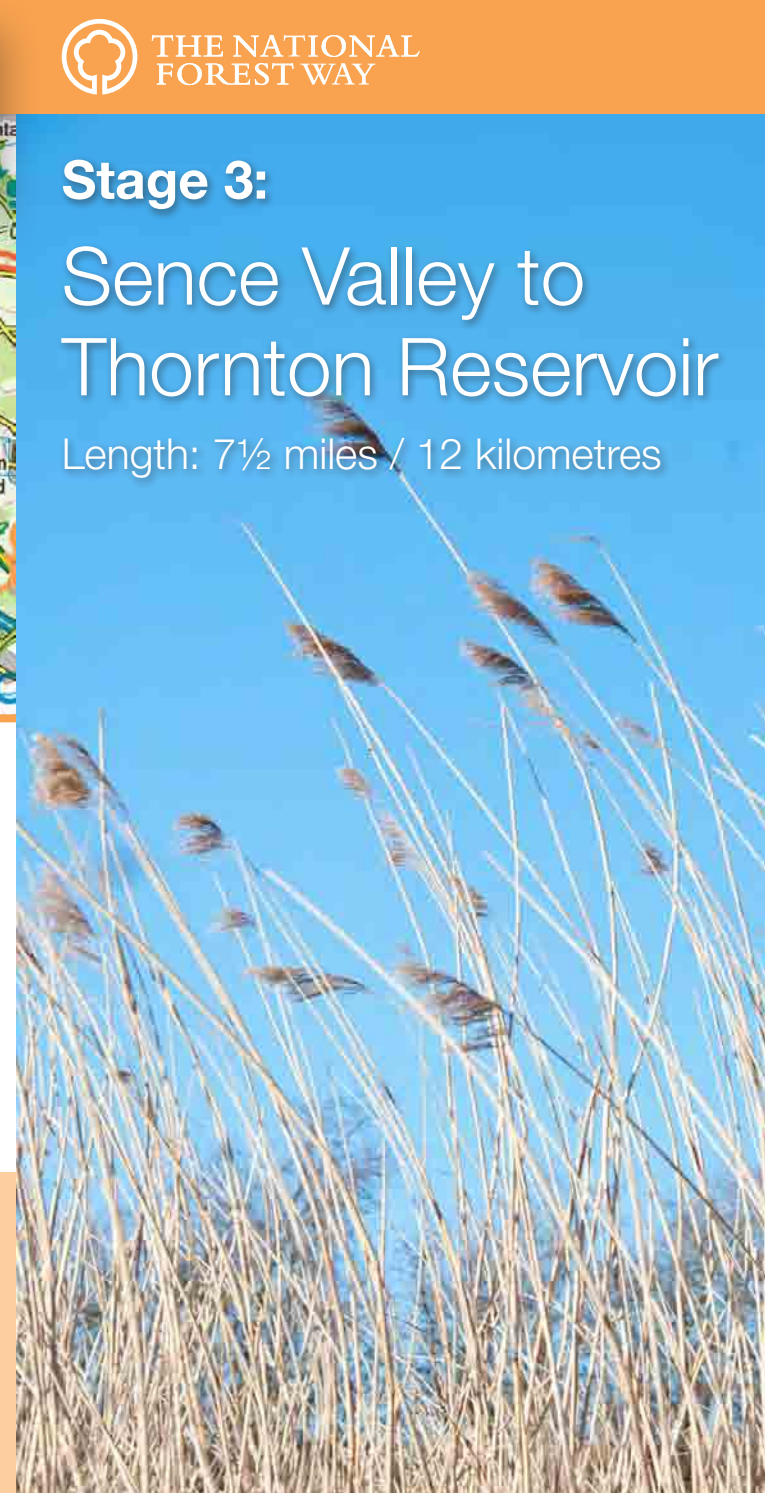
Website: www.nationalforest.org

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THE NATIONAL FOREST



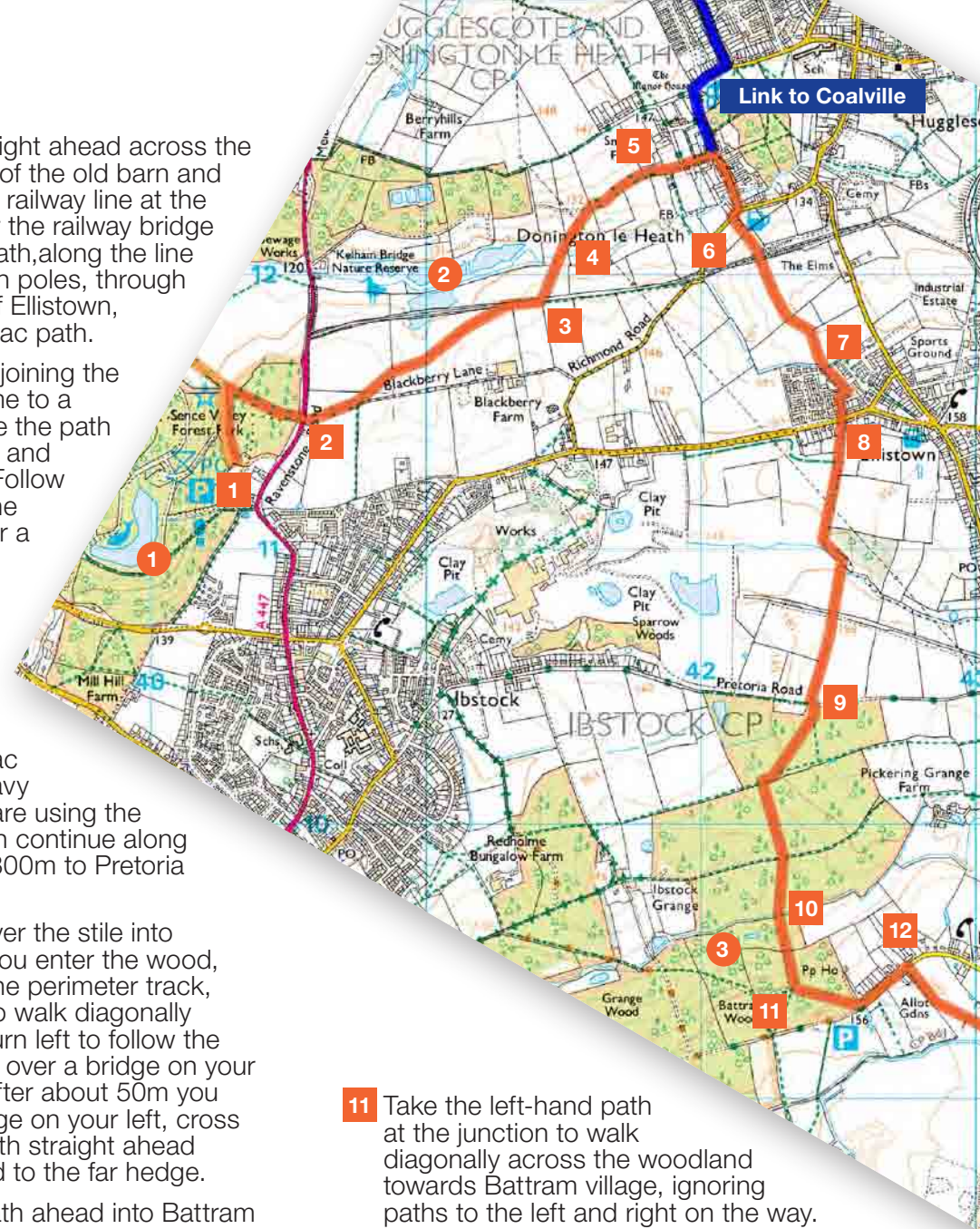
Route directions: Eastbound

Sence Valley to Thornton Reservoir

- 1** From the upper car park at Sence Valley, walk between the Noon Column and the toilet block to the internal access 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. Turn right here and follow the wide track until you reach the main road.
- 2** Carefully cross the road to the track on the other side. Follow the track for 200m to a waymarker on your right. Bear left off the track here and, using gaps in the hedges, go diagonally across the corners of two fields until you reach the edge of a large field. Pass through another gap and head downhill, aiming for the far left-hand corner of the field. Walk along the edge of the next field, keeping the hedge to your left, until you reach a gap in the hedge just before the end of the field.
- 3** Head through the gap in the hedge and walk diagonally right across the field to a set of steps leading down to a bridge over the river. Cross the bridge and walk across the next field, heading towards a marker post in the middle of the field. Turn right, keeping to the left of an old oak tree, heading for a stile in the hedge. Do not go uphill.
- 4** Cross the stile in the hedge and walk diagonally across the next field to join a farm track. Follow this track for 250m to the edge of Donington le Heath.
- 5** Continue straight ahead where the farm track becomes a road. Where Townsend Lane meets Manor Road, turn right and follow this road for 200m to the Corner Pin pub. Turn right onto Richmond Road and then almost immediately cross over the road to the public footpath going off to your left.

- 6** Go over the stile and straight ahead across the field, passing to the right of the old barn and continuing to the disused railway line at the top of the field. Walk over the railway bridge and then follow the footpath, along the line of what look like telegraph poles, through three fields to the edge of Ellistown, where you will join a tarmac path.
- 7** Almost immediately after joining the tarmac path, you will come to a junction. Turn right to take the path between two high fences and out onto Exmoor Close. Follow this road as it bends to the right and then look out for a footpath leading between two houses to your left. Take this path through to Ibstock Road.
- 8** Cross Ibstock Road to the footpath opposite and follow for it for 700m to where it meets a tarmac track. This is used by heavy vehicles, so cross with care using the gates on either side. Then continue along the footpath for another 300m to Pretoria Road.
- 9** Cross the road and go over the stile into Common Hill Wood. As you enter the wood, the path forks. Ignoring the perimeter track, take the right hand fork to walk diagonally through the woodland. Turn left to follow the hedge to a gap and pass over a bridge on your right into the next field. After about 50m you will come to another bridge on your left, cross this and follow the footpath straight ahead through Workmans Wood to the far hedge.
- 10** Keep following the footpath ahead into Battram Wood. Where the surfaced track bends to the right, continue straight ahead on the grassy path to reach a junction by a bench and information board describing the Millennium Circle.

- 11** Take the left-hand path at the junction to walk diagonally across the woodland towards Battram village, ignoring paths to the left and right on the way. At the edge of the woodland planting, you will join a byway leading into the village. Take this byway onto Battram Road and follow it for 200m to a kissing gate after the houses on your right.



12 Head through the kissing gate and follow the footpath along the edge of the field for about 175m before bearing diagonally left across the field to a gap in the trees on the far side. Pass through this gap, bear slightly right across another path, down the slope and over a bridge into another field. Cross this field to the road.

13 Go over the stile and cross the road with care. Walk through the belt of trees by the roadside, then through the metal kissing gate and gap in the hedge and straight ahead across a field. At the waymarker post, carry on towards the opposite corner of the next field.

14 At the far side of this field, cross a farm track to where there is an information board for Callings Wood and Clay Quarry Wood. Turn right here to take a narrow path between a fence and hedge. Go through the metal kissing gate and then bear slightly left, following the wide path between fenced areas.

15 Where the path widens out, take the signed public footpath off to the right, between fences. Cross over a bridge and then follow the footpath round to the left. Go over the next stile and continue straight ahead uphill across the field, aiming to the left of the trees on the hill. After climbing another stile at the top of the hill, bear left along a wide path towards the beacon.

16 Walk to the right of the beacon and follow the footpath until you reach a metal kissing gate. Pass through this and continue ahead along the track for 30m to a path that heads left before the houses.

17 Follow the path past the children's play area and on past the rear of a line of houses to a metal squeeze barrier. Go through this and turn right onto Almond Way and up to the main road.

18 Cross the road aiming diagonally left to the surfaced track opposite, which is also part of the Ivanhoe Way. Follow this track over the railway bridge, into Bagworth Wood and around to the right, ignoring paths off to the left.

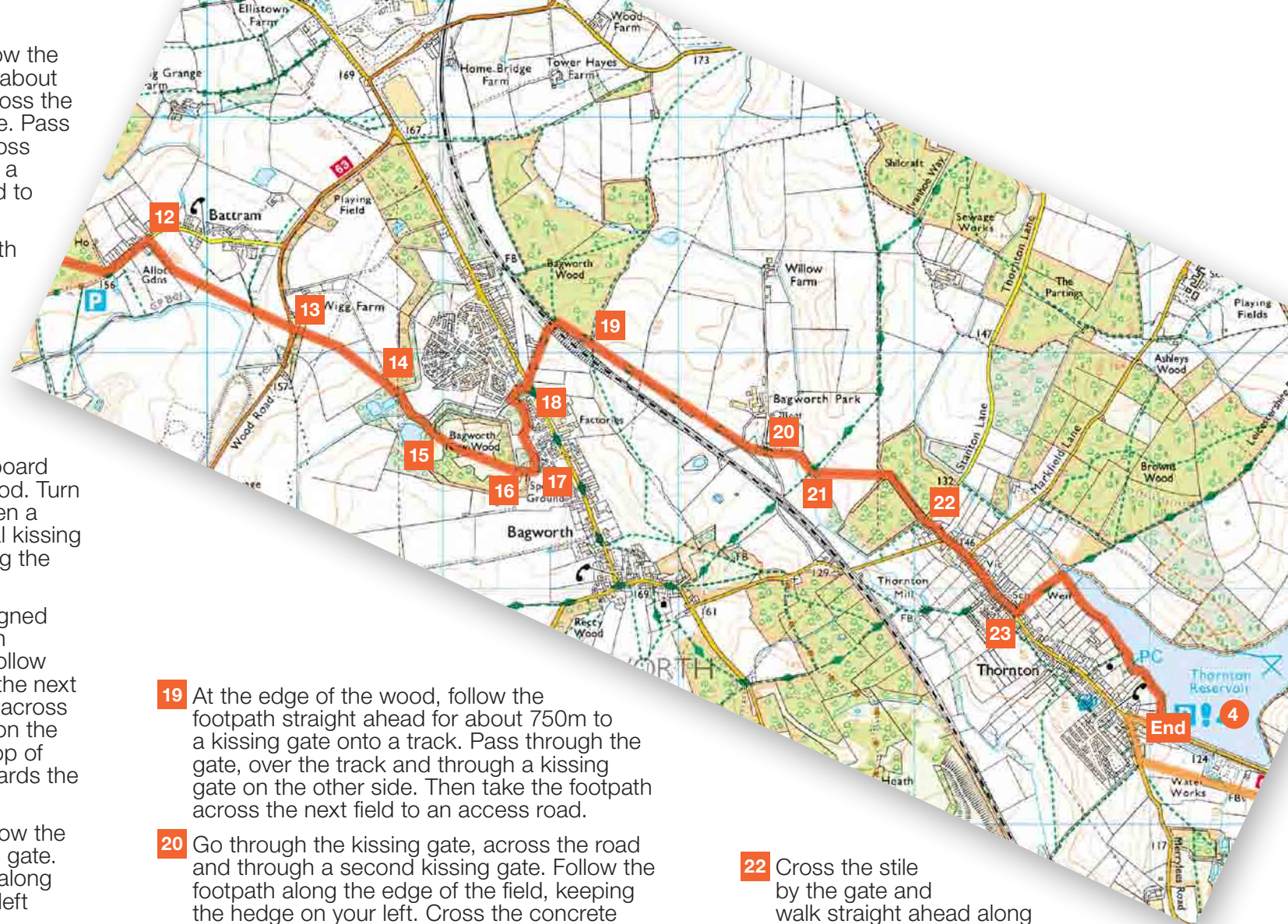
19 At the edge of the wood, follow the footpath straight ahead for about 750m to a kissing gate onto a track. Pass through the gate, over the track and through a kissing gate on the other side. Then take the footpath across the next field to an access road.

20 Go through the kissing gate, across the road and through a second kissing gate. Follow the footpath along the edge of the field, keeping the hedge on your left. Cross the concrete bridge at the end of the first field and then follow the edge of the second field, again with the hedge to your left.

21 When you come to a kissing gate on your left, go through it and bear diagonally right through the trees. As you come out of the trees, head diagonally right across the field, towards a pylon at the far corner. At the edge of the field, go over a stile and then straight along a grassy path between the trees/hedges of Thornton Plantation. After 250m, you will reach a gate onto a road.

22 Cross the stile by the gate and walk straight ahead along Stanton Lane towards Thornton. At the junction with Main Street, turn left to follow it into the village to the Primary School.

23 Turn left down the footpath immediately after the school, through the kissing gate and straight ahead downhill across the recreation ground. Follow the path to the kissing gate and turn right onto the track that runs alongside Thornton Reservoir. Follow this track for 750m, past the boat house and into the car park, where this stage ends.

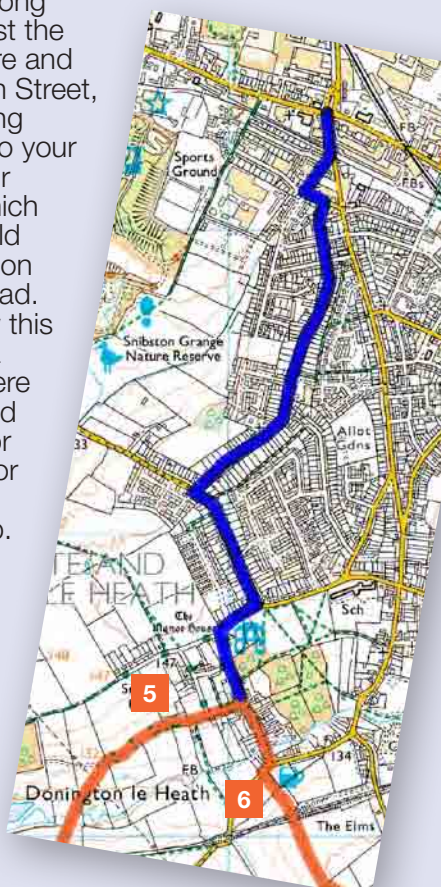


Link to Coalville

To visit the nearby town of Coalville, which has a range of shops, pubs and things to do, follow the 1½ mile link below.

To Coalville: From Point **4**, where Townsend Lane meets Manor Road, turn left instead of right to head towards Coalville. After about 400m and a right hand bend, you will reach a T-junction. Turn left onto Ashburton Road and follow it for 450m before turning right onto Highfield Street. Follow this for 1,000m (during which it becomes Gutteridge Street) to a T-junction. Turn left onto Owen Street, then almost immediately right onto Jackson Street and, after 150m, turn left where it meets Belvoir Road, which takes you to Memorial Square in the heart of Coalville.

From Coalville: From Memorial Square, head south on Belvoir Road for 150m before turning left onto Jackson Street. Continue along Jackson Street past the Marlborough Centre and turn left onto Owen Street, before quickly taking Gutteridge Street to your right. Follow this for 1,000m (during which it becomes Highfield Street) to a T-junction with Ashburton Road. Turn left and follow this road for 450m to a left hand bend where there is a right-hand junction with Manor Road. Follow Manor Road for 650m to the Corner Pin pub. Turn right onto Richmond Road and cross over the road to the footpath, where you will re-join the National Forest Way at Point **5**.



Points of interest along this stage

1 Sence Valley Forest Park

Sence Valley Forest Park was once part of a large opencast 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 Kelham Bridge Nature Reserve

Created on the site of a former sewage works, Kelham Bridge Nature Reserve is dominated by the River Sence and its floodplain habitats. Pools attract wintering and migrant birds and osprey, merlin and peregrine falcon have all been seen here.

3 Battram Wood

The Royal Forestry Society's Battram Wood is intended to demonstrate how to manage woodland for different uses including leisure and recreation and commercial timber. In time, cricket bat willows and poplar will be harvested ensuring a sustainable income for the woodland.

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.

Useful Information

Parking

Parking is available at Sence Valley Forest Park and Thornton Reservoir. Please be aware of car park closing times before setting off.

Public transport

Thornton is on the 26 Coalville-Leicester bus route (Mon-Sat), the bus stops are on Main Street. Ibstock, 5 minutes' walk from Sence Valley, is on the 15 Ibstock-Coalville and 159 Hinckley-Coalville bus routes (Mon-Sat). Change at Ellistown 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.