

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 3:

# Thornton Reservoir to Sence Valley

Length: 7½ miles / 12 kilometres



## About this stage

**Start:** Thornton Reservoir, Thornton (LE67 1AR)  
**End:** Sence Valley Forest Park, Ibstock (LE67 6NW)

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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THE NATIONAL FOREST

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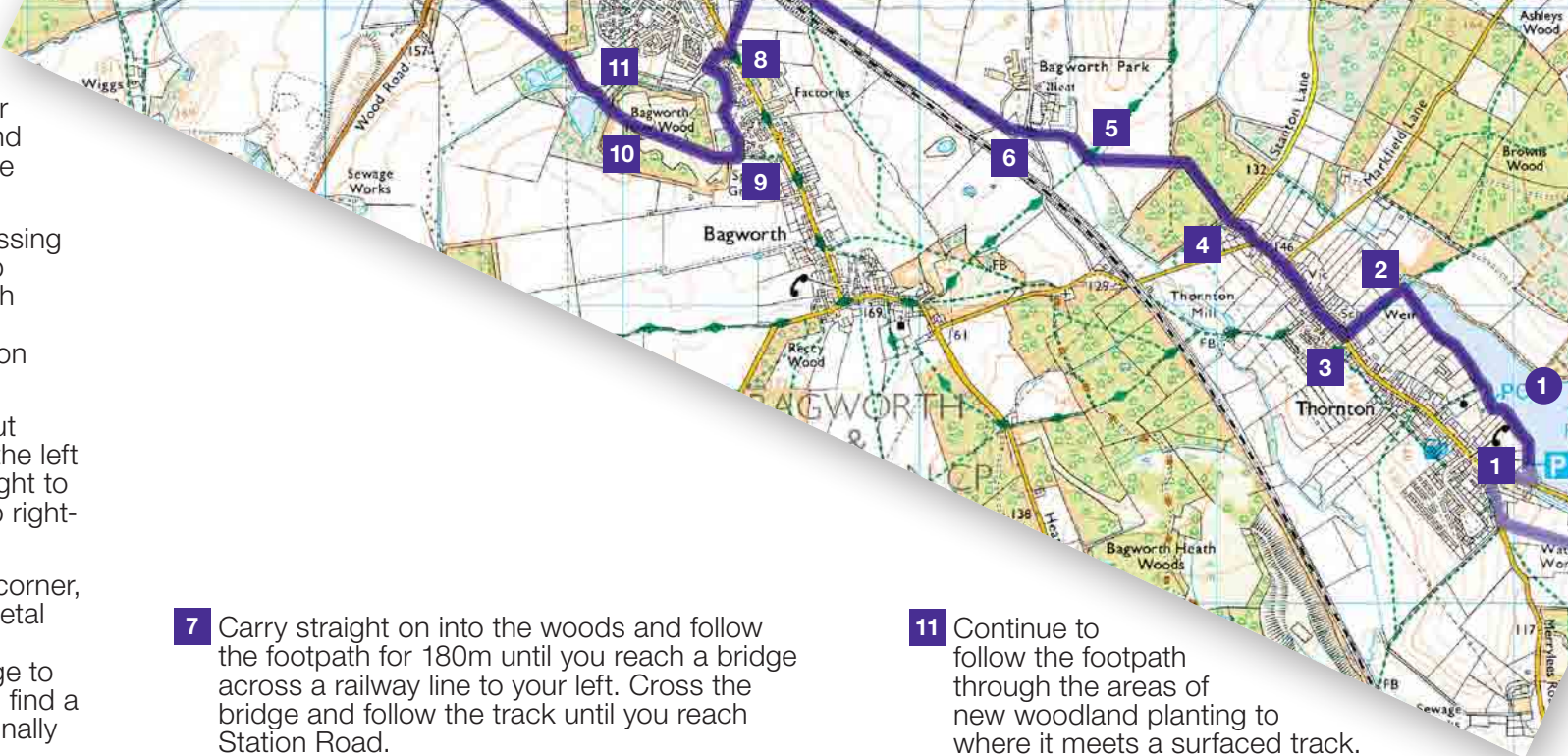
Photo: Jacqui Rock

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Route directions: Westbound



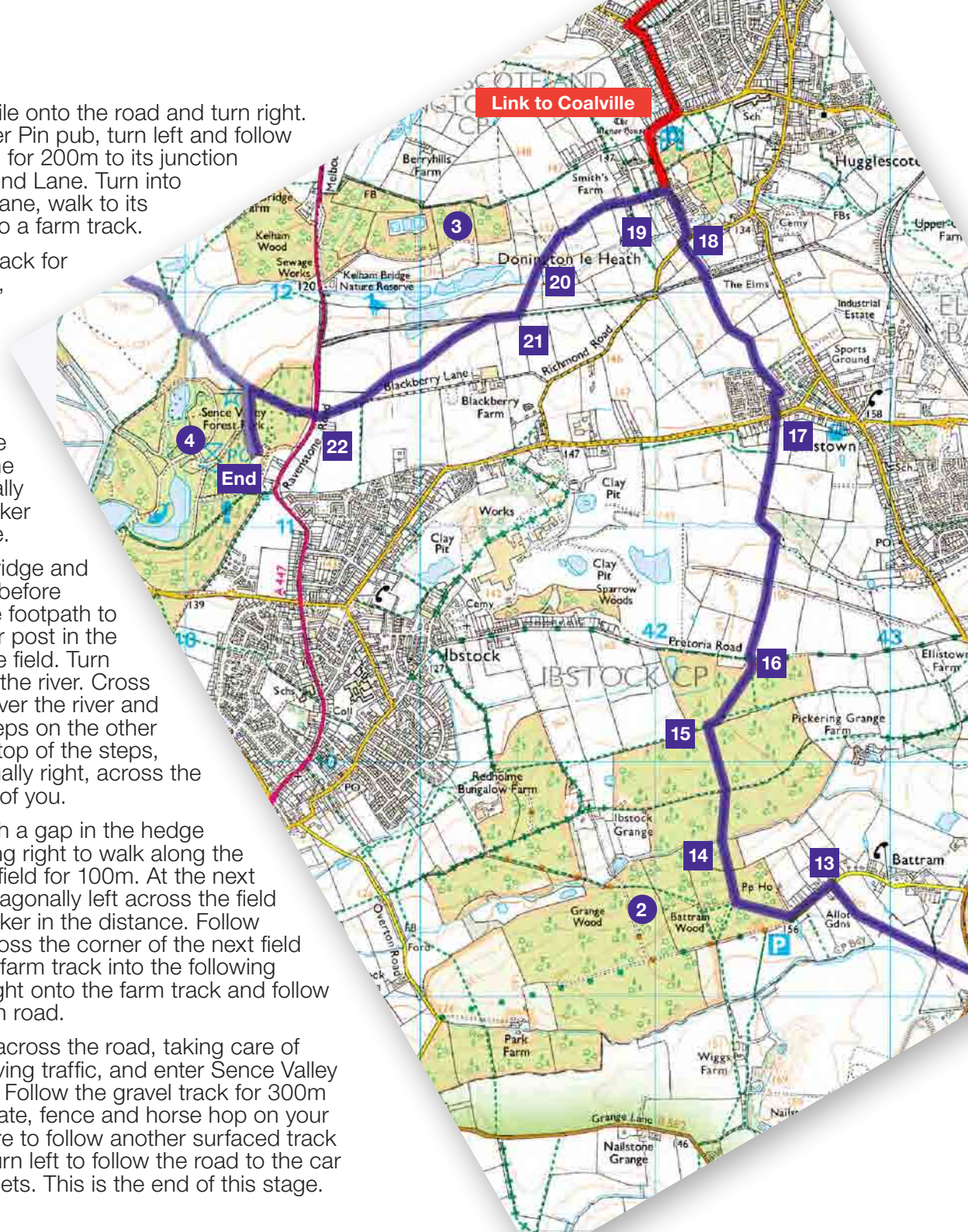
# Thornton Reservoir to Sence Valley

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- 1 Facing away from the road, take the left-hand path out of the reservoir car park so that the water is to your right. Follow this path alongside the water for about 750m, past the fishing lodge and towards the end of the western arm of the reservoir.
  - 2 At the T-junction of footpaths, take the kissing gate to the left and follow the footpath up a slight hill. This path will take you through a small woodland, across a playing field and on to join Main Street next to Thornton Community Primary School.
  - 3 Turn right and follow Main Street for about 450m to where it makes a sharp turn to the left at the junction with Stanton Lane. Turn right to follow Stanton Lane, which takes a sharp right-hand turn after about 100m.
  - 4 Instead of following the road around the corner, go straight ahead over a stile next to a metal gate into Thornton Plantation. Follow the footpath that runs to the right of the hedge to the edge of the plantation, where you will find a stile. Cross this and head downhill, diagonally across the field.
  - 5 At the end of the field, head right at the post into the trees, before bearing left to a kissing gate. Go through the kissing gate and turn right to follow the footpath around the edge of the field to a footbridge. Cross this and follow the hedge along the edge of the next field to a surfaced access road.
  - 6 Go through the wooden gate onto the road and cross to the gate opposite. Pass through this gate and follow the footpath across the field to some metal gates. Go straight on through the first gate, across a grass track and then through second set of gates and onto a green lane between two hedges. Follow this green lane for about 750m to the edge of Bagworth Wood.
  - 7 Carry straight on into the woods and follow the footpath for 180m until you reach a bridge across a railway line to your left. Cross the bridge and follow the track until you reach Station Road.
  - 8 Cross the road into Almond Way. At the end of the road, there is a gate on your left, pass through the metal squeeze-post next to the gate and follow the footpath as it goes slightly uphill past a children's play area on your left.
  - 9 At the end of the path, turn right onto the gravel path. After about 50m, go straight on through the kissing gate, heading slightly uphill keeping the hedge to your right. At the top of the hill you will reach the Millennium Beacon, after which there is a stile in the hedge to your right. Cross this and bear left downhill through the next field, keeping the trees on your left.
  - 10 At the bottom of the hill, go straight on over the stile and into the woods. Follow the footpath, bearing right over a bridge when you reach it.
  - 11 Continue to follow the footpath through the areas of new woodland planting to where it meets a surfaced track. Turn right and follow the track for about 60m to where the footpath leaves the track to your left. Take the path diagonally across the field, through a gap in the hedge and across a second field. At the end of the field, carry straight on through a short length of scrub and through a gate onto the road.
  - 12 Cross the road and take the stile on the other side. Follow the footpath across the next field aiming for a post to the right of a gateway in the hedge. Head over the bridge and follow the path up a small incline, crossing two tracks before bearing left downhill towards a field in front of you. Walk across this field to the opposite hedgerow and follow the path as it turns right to follow the hedge up to Battram Road.



- 13 Go through the kissing gate and turn left along Battram Road to the entrance to Battram Wood. On entering the wood, turn right between two boulders and then walk diagonally across the site. Ignore the paths that come in from the left and right, instead walk on for about 250m to where several paths meet at the Millennium Circle, marked by a bench and interpretation board. Take the footpath to the right, which heads downhill to join a surfaced track.
- 14 Follow the track and continue straight on, ignoring paths to the left and right. Carry straight on when you reach a gap in a fence, after which the footpath goes slightly uphill. Continue following the footpath straight on for 250m before crossing a wooden bridge and track.
- 15 Turn right after the fence and follow the footpath for 50m to cross the next bridge. Take the path to the left, ignoring the stile on your right and the path straight ahead. Follow the path through a plantation of trees for about 250m until you reach Pretoria Road.
- 16 Cross the road to take the bridleway on the other side. Follow this bridleway for 300m to a tarmac track. This is used by heavy vehicles, so cross with care using the gates on either side, before continuing to follow the bridleway across a field. The bridleway turns left after passing through a gap in a hedge and then turns right after another 100m. Follow the bridleway until it takes a sharp left-hand turn at its junction with a footpath, which continues straight ahead. Take the footpath into Ellistown.
- 17 Cross the Ibstock Road and take the footpath between the houses opposite. Turn right when you reach a second road and follow it as it bears to the left. At the end of the road, take the surfaced footpath between two high fences. When the tarmac path runs out, turn right to follow the footpath into a field and then walk for 500m, across three fields, to a tree-lined disused railway line. Cross the railway bridge and follow the path across another field to a road.

- 18 Cross the stile onto the road and turn right. At the Corner Pin pub, turn left and follow Manor Road for 200m to its junction with Townsend Lane. Turn into Townsend Lane, walk to its end and onto a farm track.
- 19 Follow the track for about 250m, until you see a footpath sign and stile on your left. Take the stile and cross the field diagonally to a waymarker and a bridge.
- 20 Cross the bridge and double stile before following the footpath to a waymarker post in the middle of the field. Turn left towards the river. Cross the bridge over the river and climb the steps on the other side. At the top of the steps, head diagonally right, across the field in front of you.
- 21 Pass through a gap in the hedge before turning right to walk along the edge of the field for 100m. At the next field, bear diagonally left across the field to a waymarker in the distance. Follow the path across the corner of the next field and join the farm track into the following field. Turn right onto the farm track and follow it to the main road.
- 22 Go straight across the road, taking care of any fast-moving traffic, and enter Sence Valley Forest Park. Follow the gravel track for 300m to reach a gate, fence and horse hop on your left. Turn here to follow another surfaced track to a road. Turn left to follow the road to the car park and toilets. This is the end of this stage.

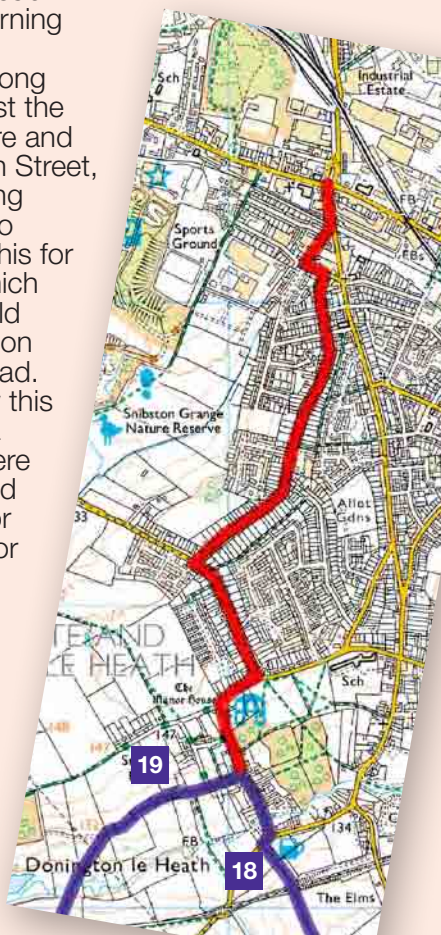




To visit the nearby town of Coalville, which has a range of shops, pubs and things to do, follow the 1½ mile link below.

**To Coalville:** From Point **18**, instead of turning onto Townsend Lane, continue ahead on Manor Road 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 400m to the junction with Townsend Lane. Turn right onto Townsend Lane and walk to its end, where you will re-join the National Forest Way at Point **19**.



## 1 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.

## 2 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.

## 3 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.

## 4 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.

## 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](http://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.*