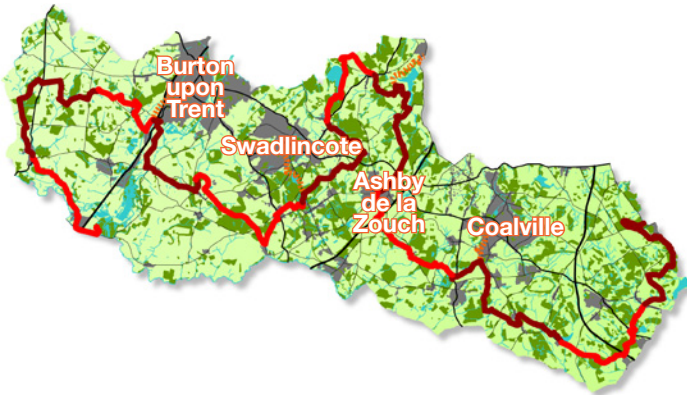


The National Forest Way takes walkers on a 75-mile journey through a transforming landscape, from the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire to Beacon Hill Country Park in Leicestershire.

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 1:

Bradgate Park to Beacon Hill

Length: 7¼ miles / 11¾ kilometres

About this stage

Start: Bradgate Park, Newtown Linford (LE6 0HB)
End: Beacon Hill, Woodhouse Eaves (LE12 8TA)

On this final eastbound section, the National Forest Way leads you through the craggy uplands of Charnwood. En route you will go through ancient woodlands and pass some of the oldest rocks in Britain. Heathland characterises the open summits affording stunning views of the surrounding countryside and, in the distance, the city of Leicester.

The National Forest Company

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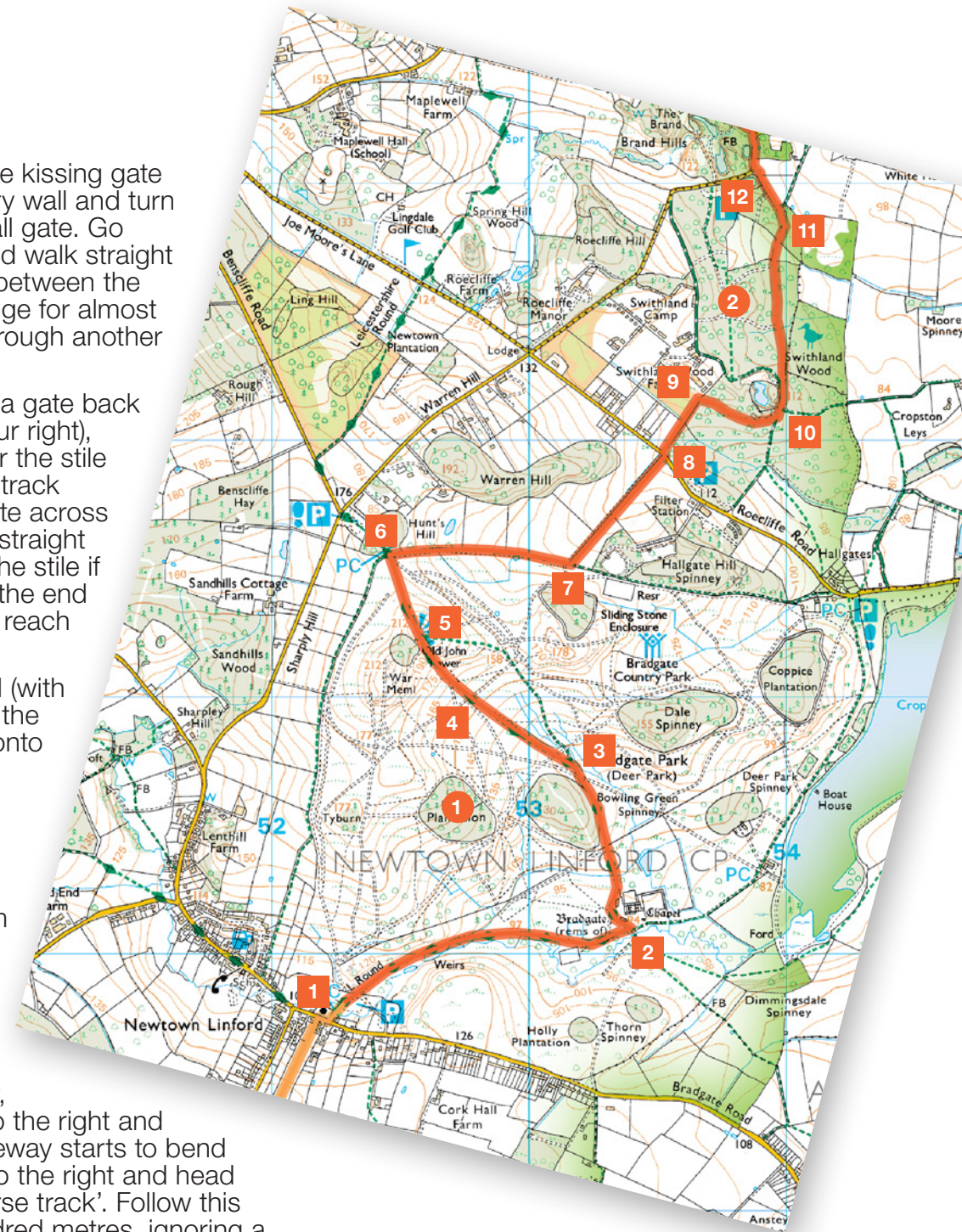


Route directions: Eastbound

Bradgate Park to Beacon Hill

- 1** Starting from the Newtown Linford car park, go through the large ornate metal gates into Bradgate Park and walk along the tarmac lane for about 1,000m, until you approach the ruins of Bradgate House.
- 2** At the waymark post, turn left off the tarmac lane and on to a loose stone surfaced path, which leads to the gate in the walls around the ruins. Just before you get to the entrance gate to the ruins, turn left onto a grassy path and walk along it, with the wall on your right, towards a gap between this wall and another one coming from your left. After going through the gap, go straight ahead on the grassy path, passing the walled wood on your left.
- 3** At the junction of paths by a waymark post, keep walking straight ahead. Another path goes across signed 'Horse track'. Ignore this and carry on ahead.
- 4** When the path splits, take the left fork towards Old John Tower, visible on the hill in front of you. Follow this path past a small copse of trees and keep heading for the tower. When another well-marked path goes across your path, carry on straight ahead towards Old John, following the grassy path as it goes uphill sharply to the tower.
- 5** When you get to Old John Tower take time to admire the views (a viewpoint disc tells you what you can see from there) before heading straight down the other of the hill towards a large gate in the park boundary wall. If you find the rocks a bit steep, bear right and pick up another path that ends up in the same place.

- 6** Go through the large kissing gate in the park boundary wall and turn right towards a small gate. Go through the gate and walk straight ahead on the path between the park wall and a hedge for almost 1,000m, passing through another gate on the way.
- 7** When you come to a gate back into the park (on your right), turn left and go over the stile and walk down the track until you reach a gate across the track. Carry on straight ahead, going over the stile if the gate is shut. At the end of the track you will reach Roecliffe Road.
- 8** Cross over the road (with care) to go through the gate opposite and onto the bridleway.
- 9** After about 200m, turn right onto the main bridleway into Swithland Wood. Follow this for 350m until you reach a clear junction of bridleways.
- 10** At the junction, turn left and follow the bridleway, ignoring paths off to the right and left. When the bridleway starts to bend to the left, turn off to the right and head downhill on the 'horse track'. Follow this track for a few hundred metres, ignoring a path off to your right.



- 11 After passing an open area with a picnic table, ignore the first left turn by a stream and take the second left towards a gate and a wall. Follow the path with the wall on your right. When the path forks, take the right fork onto the well-used 'horse track' and follow it to the road.
- 12 Go through the gap next to the gate, carefully cross the road and then turn right. Take care here, as initially there is no footway next to the road.
- 13 After about 100m you will reach a road junction. Take the road to the left, signposted to Woodhouse.
- 14 At the next road junction, turn left onto Brand Hill. Walk along the footway for 800m until you pass a sign saying 'Church Hill' and come to a bus stop.
- 15 Turn left here and go through a small chicane onto a tarmac footpath between houses.
- 16 At the end of the path, turn right and walk down Victoria Road to the end, where it meets Maplewell Road. Turn left and follow the Maplewell Road for about 150m until you come to the entrance to Broombriggs Farm on your right.
- 17 Go through the gate into Broombriggs Farm and follow the footpath straight ahead. Carry on along the footpath through the next gate and along the edge of the field, keeping the hedge on your left. Follow this path round a bend to the right, still keeping the hedge on your left.
- 18 When you come to the end of the second field, there are two gates on your left. Go through the gate and the metal kissing gate and then head diagonally right across the field. At the edge of the field, go through the metal gate and then turn right along the tarmac drive and walk to the end where it meets a road.



- 19 Cross the road with care and go through the chicane on the other side. Go straight across the track on the other side of the chicane and carry on until you come to a T-junction in the paths. Turn left here and head up the woodland path. Keep following this main path up the hill, ignoring a smaller path off to the right by a carved wooden head.
- 20 When the path curves right, you are approaching the top of Beacon Hill, carry straight on towards the metal gate, ignoring the path to the car park on your left.
NOTE: If you turn right at this point, you will reach a car park with public toilets.
- 21 Go through the smaller pedestrian gate and continue straight ahead along the track past the top of Beacon Hill. Keep following the main path for about 700m as it bends right, ignoring a path off to the left opposite the information board.

- 22 Go through the next gate and carry on straight ahead downhill for 700m. Ignore paths off to your right and left. At the end of the path, go through the gap next to the barrier and into the car park.
You have now reached the eastern end of the National Forest Way.

Parking

Car parking is available at Beacon Hill and Bradgate Park.

Please note that there is a charge for parking at both sites and also be aware of car park closing times before setting off.

Public transport

Woodhouse Eaves is on the 154 Newtown Linford is on the 120 Coalville-Leicester bus route (Mon-Sat).

Loughborough-Leicester bus route (Mon-Fri) and 123 Loughborough-Leicester (Sat only).

Change at Anstey to travel between the start and finish of the stage.

For detailed information on timetables, 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.

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.

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 Swithland Wood

Swithland Wood is an attractive and atmospheric area of ancient woodland, a remnant of the original Charnwood Forest oak woods. Designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest, Swithland Wood is an important habitat for a wide range of plant and animal species including bluebell and wood anemone.



3 Broombriggs Farm

Broombriggs provides a fascinating insight into the workings of a typical Charnwood arable and livestock farm. Follow the circular way-marked trail around the farm and then take in the views across the Soar Valley from the remains of the former windmill.



4 Beacon Hill Country Park

Rising to a height of 245 metres, Beacon Hill is the second highest point in Leicestershire. Look out for the unusual rock formation, which has been dubbed the 'Old Man of Beacon Hill'. The Country Park has won awards for its management, most visible in the grazing sheep, cattle and alpaca that are moved around the site to graze the grassland and heathland.



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.

