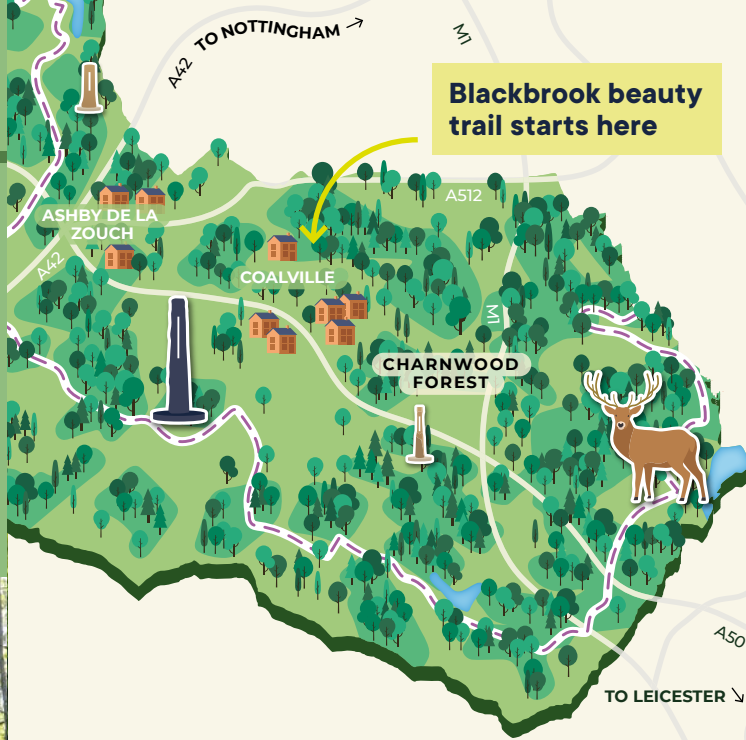
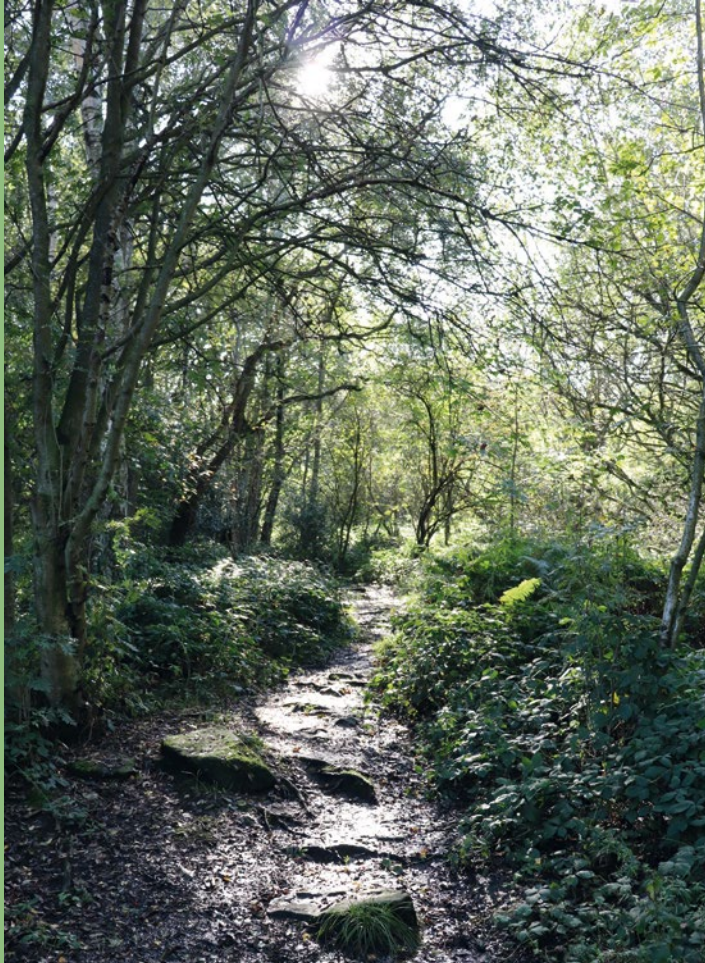




Medium  
6.8 miles  
(11 km)


# Blackbrook beauty


A charming circular walk around west Charnwood




To find out more about the National Forest and how you can get involved, visit:

[nationalforest.org](http://nationalforest.org)

 @NatForestCo

 @the.national.forest

 @NatForestCo



The National Forest Company  
Charity No. 1166563

National Forest Company, Enterprise Glade, Bath Yard, Moira, Swadlincote, Derbyshire, DE12 6BA



# Exploring the National Forest

Located right in the heart of the country, the National Forest embraces 200 square miles of the Midlands. It spans parts of Derbyshire, Leicestershire and Staffordshire, and aims to link the two ancient forests of Charnwood and Needwood.

After centuries of coal mining and clay extraction, the closure of the pits in the 1980s left a scarred and derelict landscape. Now, more than a quarter of a century later, nine million trees have been planted, breathing life into the landscape and its communities – turning a landscape from black to green. This bold regeneration shows how trees can transform not only the landscape, but also, vitally, people's lives and the local economy.

## Walking in the National Forest

There are hundreds of miles of paths and trails to explore in the National Forest, and plenty of places accessible for all ages and abilities. Grab your walking boots, your trainers or your dog and head out into the woods for a walk or a run, or try your hand at orienteering or geocaching.

Follow gentle trails through vibrant young woodlands and nature-rich ancient forests. Discover more about the area's heritage or just let a canal towpath take you to the nearest pub lunch.

### Walking highlights



#### Mount St. Bernard Abbey

The abbey was founded in 1835 on land provided by Ambrose de Lisle, who was eager to re-introduce monastic life into this country. Gothic Revivalist architect Augustus Pugin (designer of the New Palace of Westminster) offered his services for free and, in 1844, the new monastery was opened on the site where it stands today.

### Swannymote Rock

A Swainmote (also known as Swanimoot, Swannymote or even Swienmote) was a local forest court responsible for judicial and administrative regulation of the forest. Offenders were tried before a jury of swains, or freemen of the forest. This rocky outcrop is thought to have been the Swainmote for this area.



### Off route highlights

**Grace Dieu Priory** was an independent Augustinian priory, founded c.1239 by Roesia de Verdon. In the 14th Century, it was home to 16 nuns and had an attached hospital. It was dissolved in October 1538, and the ruins are reputed to be home to the White Lady ghost.



## Be a responsible visitor to the National Forest



To get the most out of your visit, follow some simple rules:

**Respect other people** · Consider other people enjoying the outdoors · Leave gates and property as you find them and follow marked paths

**Protect the natural environment** · Leave no trace of your visit and take your litter home · Keep dogs under effective control

**Enjoy the outdoors** · Plan ahead and be prepared · Follow advice and local signs



#### Blackbrook Reservoir

Constructed in 1796 in order to feed the Charnwood Forest canal, the original dam was an earthworks one. It failed on 20 February 1799, emptying the reservoir within eleven minutes and flooding much of Shepshed and nearby Loughborough.



# Blackbrook beauty



Medium length

**Distance:** 6.8 miles (11km)

**Time:** Allow 3.5 hours

**Path type:** Unsurfaced paths, muddy tracks, some rocky sections and tarmacked pavements. No stiles. Sturdy footwear recommended.

**Use with map OS Explorer 245 The National Forest**

**Start at:** Mount St Bernard Abbey, Oaks Road, Whitwick LE67 5UL

**OS Grid Ref:** SK 458162

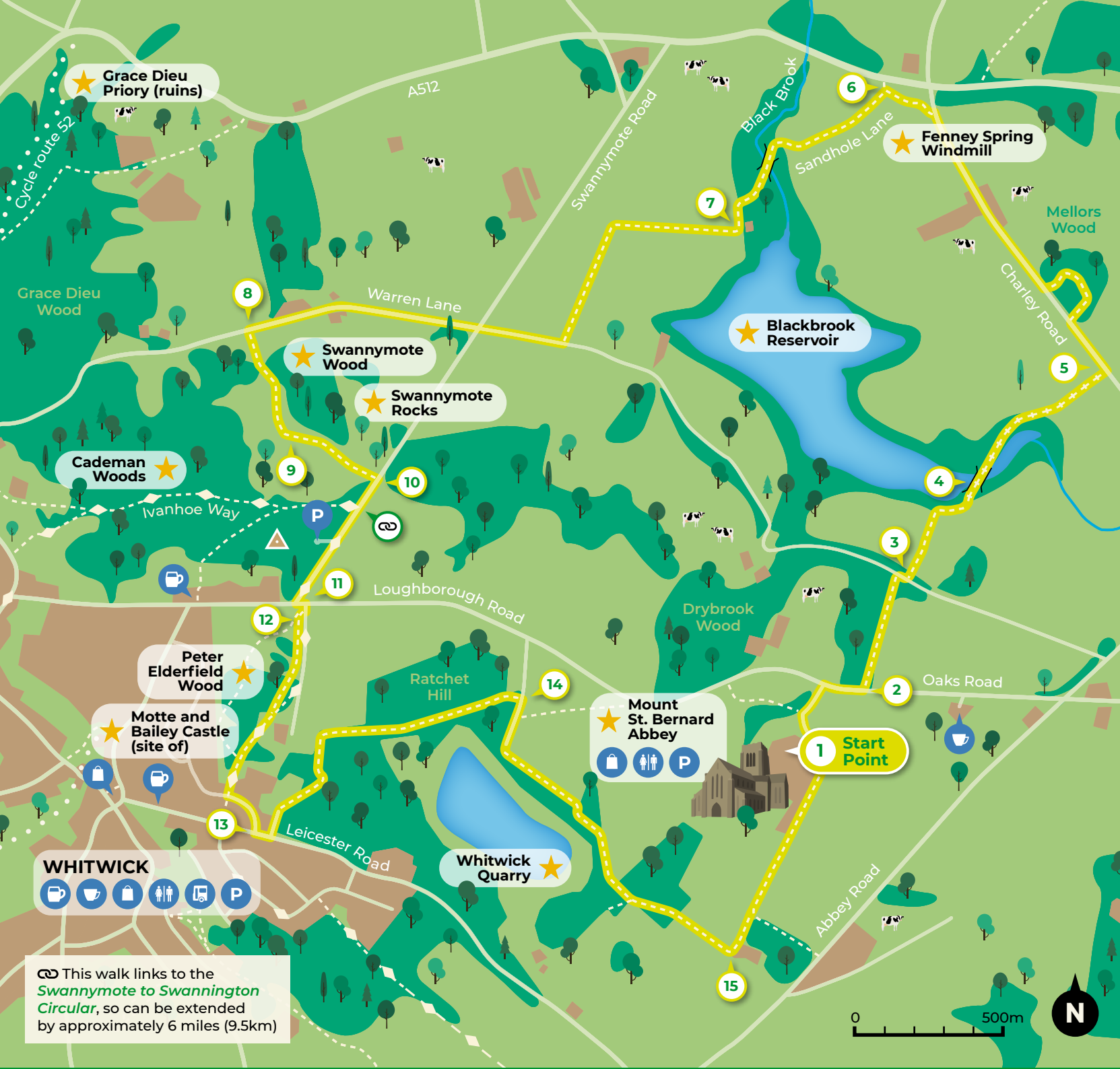
**Latitude:** 52.742357

**Longitude:** -1.322633

**what3words:** ///liability.dragons.seemingly

## Map Key

	Trail route		Point of interest
	Footpath		Route marker
	Bridleway		Parking
	Road		Bus stop
	Woodlands		Pub
	Rivers and reservoirs		Café
	Buildings		Shopping
	Trig point		Public toilets



This walk links to the *Swannymote to Swannington Circular*, so can be extended by approximately 6 miles (9.5km)

**1** From the car park of Mount St. Bernard Abbey, walk down the drive to Oaks Road. Cross and turn right for 150m to a footpath on your left.

**2** Go through the gate and walk along the path, descending through a woodland (bluebells in spring) until you reach a kissing gate with a track crossing your path.

**3** Cross this track (can be muddy) and through a gate into the field, looking onto Blackbrook Reservoir. Walk down the hill, following the footpath to go through a gate in the far right-hand corner of the field. Go along the track (this can be **very** wet and muddy in winter) and up the rocky steps.

**4** You are now on One Barrow viaduct. Keep walking along the footpath, through a gate and up a track onto Charley Road **CAUTION – busy road.**

**5** Turn left and walk along the verge towards the windmill. For added interest, cross the road and take the path through Mellor's Wood. Back on the road, pass Fenney Mill (a private house) and take the side road to the left after 100m, and follow round to the left through a gate to meet Sandhole Lane.

**6** Walk along this private road to reach a pretty wooded valley. Just after a stone bridge over the Black Brook, the footpath forks right, up a steep track between stone walls. Keep on this track, climbing until you reach a wooden gate.

**7** Go through the gate, turn left to a gap in the hedge and turn right on the footpath. Follow the field edge until you reach a wooden gate and a tarmac drive. Turn right here and walk up the tarmac drive to the junction with Swannymote Road. Cross here and go straight ahead onto Warren Lane for 750m.

**8** At a small layby on the left, go through a gap in the fence next to a metal gate, into Swannymote Wood. Follow the main path uphill to a bench and information board. Pause here to rest, read and admire the view – on a clear day you can see as far as the Peak District.

**9** There are numerous paths from this point, and you can take any of them to explore the woods further. For the direct route, take the path straight up the hill, to a gap between 2 copses of trees, and through a gap in the stone wall.

**10** Continue along the path, bearing left along the edge of a plantation. The outcrop in the field beyond is Swannymote Rock. Take the right fork and head for the gate in the far corner of the field by the road, to exit onto Swannymote Road. **CAUTION – fast cars.**

*At this point, you are at the start of the **Swannymote to Swannington** walk and can extend this walk by a further six miles, by taking the footpath on the right signed "Ivanhoe Way" off Swannymote Road.*

**11** Turn right and walk up the hill. At the junction with Loughborough Road, cross and turn left, taking the track immediately to your right, at the corner of the stone wall. Go through the metal kissing gate into Peter Elderfield Memorial Wood.

**12** Keeping the stone wall on your left, follow the path up the grass field. Keep straight, following the yellow-topped marker posts until you reach a metal kissing gate at the end of the woods. Go through the gate, down the track and turn left at Hogarth road, continuing downhill until you reach Leicester Road.

**13** Turn left and walk to the end of the houses, taking the public footpath on the left. Follow the track, staying to the right of the green fence, and wind your way along the path ignoring any turnings off to either side. Walk steadily uphill with the disused quarry to your right, and the rocky outcrops of Ratchet Hill to your left.

**14** You reach a T-junction of paths, with views across the fields to the Abbey. Turn right and keep ahead, walking up a short but steep hill. Turning left at the top and walk along the ridge. Stay on this path, take the footpath bearing left, to keep a stone wall to your left. Climb up through the woods and continue ahead.

**15** The path ends at a stone wall by a house. Go left through the gap in the wall and down the stony path, turning left as it meets a wide farm track. Continue down the track until you reach the Abbey, and the end of the walk.