



Medium  
6.8 miles  
(11 km)

# Blackbrook beauty

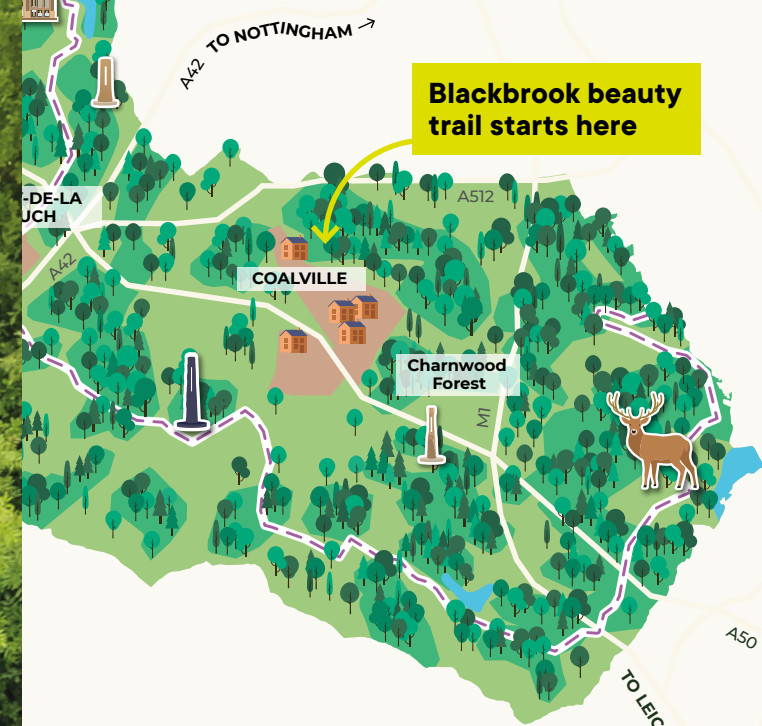
A charming circular walk around west Charnwood.



# 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, millions of 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.



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

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

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THE NATIONAL  
FOREST



# 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.



### Blackbrook Reservoir

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

### Swannymote Rock

A Swainmote (also known as Swanmoot, 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 highlight

**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, please 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 beauty

 **Medium length**

**Distance:** 6.3 mile (10km)

**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		Waypoint
	Bridleway		Parking
	Permissive path		Bus stop
	Road		Pub
	Woodlands		Café
	Rivers and reservoirs		Shop
	Buildings		Public toilets
	Trig point		



**1** From the car park walk down the drive and out onto Oaks Road. Cross with care, and turn right for 150m to a footpath on your left. Go through the gap in the wall and descend on the footpath through a woodland until you reach a kissing gate with a track crossing your path.

**2** Cross the track, go through a second kissing gate and follow this path (can be muddy!) into a field with views down onto Blackbrook reservoir. Walk straight down the hill, to go through a gate in the far right-hand corner of the field. Walk along the path (often very wet and muddy in winter) and follow as it bears left.

**3** You are now on One Barrow viaduct with views across the water to both sides. Keep walking along the footpath, through a gate and up a track onto Charley Road. **CAUTION - busy road.**

**4** Turn left and keep ahead (no pavement) for approx 1km. Pass Fenney Mill and take the side road to the left after 100m. Follow it round and turn left to meet the footpath on Sandhole Lane.

**5** Go through the kissing gate and walk along the lane 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.

**6** Go through the gate, turn left to a gap in the hedge and turn right. Follow the footpath with the hedge on your right. As you reach a large gap in the hedge in front of you, turn left to keep the hedge on your right hand side. Follow the footpath along the edge of the field until you reach a wooden gate and a tarmac drive. Turn right here and walk up to the junction with Swannymote Road. Cross with care here and go straight ahead onto Warren Lane for 750m.

**7** 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 (rest and enjoy the view!) and then go through the gap in the wall. 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 diagonally to your left, across the grass field heading for a plantation. Keeping the trees on your left, go through a gateway in the stone wall and continue along the path, bearing left along the edge of the plantation. The large rocky outcrop in the field beyond is Swannymote Rock. Keep ahead right path and head for the gate in the far corner of the field, to exit onto Swannymote Road. **CAUTION - fast cars.**

**8** Turn right and walk up the hill (no pavement). At the junction with Loughborough Road, carefully 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**.

**9** Take the path to your right, diagonally across the field heading for the wood. Follow the track as it skirts the edge of the wood, and turn left as you enter the next field. Walk uphill, past a bench and through the community orchard and keep straight ahead into another plantation. Follow the path along the grassy ride, eventually meeting a footpath in front of you (Ivanhoe Way).

**10** Turn right and follow the yellow-topped marker posts, until you reach a junction of paths. Turn left and walk through the woodland until you reach a metal kissing gate. Go through the gate and onto the permissive path through the older woodland, following this until you reach a T-junction with a track by a stone wall.

**11** Turn left here and wind your way along the path ignoring any turnings off to the right. Walk steadily uphill with the disused quarry to your right, and Ratchet Hill with its rocky outcrops on your left. You eventually reach a T-junction of paths, with views across fields to the Abbey.

**12** Turn right and keep ahead, walking up a short but steep hill. Turn left at the top and walk along the ridge. Stay on this path and follow the footpath as it bears left, to keep the stone wall on your left. Climb up through the woods and continue ahead.

**13** The path ends at a stone wall by a house. Go left through the gap in the wall and down the stony path to meet a wide farm track. Turn left and walk down the track until you reach the Monastery car park and the end of the walk. *Do take time to walk around the Abbey and gardens before leaving.*

 This walk links to Mill, mines and railways