

Noon Columns

In 2006, six mysterious pillars appeared in The National Forest. Known as Noon Columns, they were the work of world-renowned artist David Nash. Each of the 3-4m high columns was carved from sustainable English Oak, and each reflects the character of the landscape in which it is situated.

At the time, David Nash said "Each Column, its location and landscaping reflect some unique characteristic of its particular region within the Forest; from a charred column set in a ring of coal in the mining area of the Sence Valley to a burr oak trunk which will weather and be an insect habitat in the historical ancient woodland at Jackson's Bank."



Each column has a vertical slot through which the sun will shine for 3-4 minutes at 'true' noon every (sunny) day, creating a line of light in the shadow cast by the column. The beam of light shining in the shadow of the column will vary with the time of year. This cycle links the six sculptures to the passage of time – celebrating the past, present and future of the Forest.

The sculptures formed part of the National Forest **LANDshapes** project and were funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund.

The other five Noon Columns can be found at: **Bignall's Wood** and **Billa Barra** in Leicestershire, **Croxall Lakes** and **Jackson's Bank** in Staffordshire, and **Grangewood** in Derbyshire. Each sculpture is accompanied by an interpretation board, placing the piece in its context in the landscape and within The National Forest.

Why not visit them all?



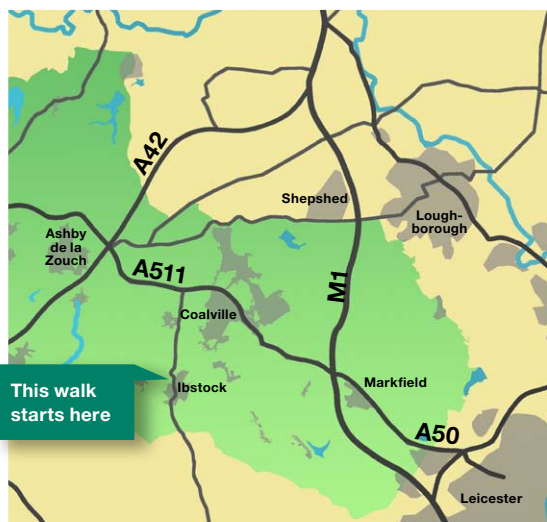
THE NATIONAL FOREST



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This leaflet can be used in conjunction with OS Explorer 245 (The National Forest) and Landranger number 128 (Derby and Burton upon Trent).



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The Birthday Walk

10 mile long walk



The Birthday Walk

- 1 Starting from **Sence Valley Forest Park's** lower car park, take the path along the left side of Horseshoe Lake to the T-junction in front of Goss Water. Turn left and follow the surfaced path around the lake to the corner of the Park.

Cross the concrete bridge, follow the track and enter the spinney alongside Pisca Lane. Turn right and walk into Heather. At the roundabout, cross onto Normanton Lane. After 150m, take the path left and then right to **Ludlam Wood**.

- 2 Follow the path and bear left on the bridleway. Continue along the bridleway, crossing Swepestone Road before passing through a sunken lane between holly hedges.

After half a mile, turn left onto a footpath and then diagonally right across the field. Where the footpath meets a track, turn left to enter **The Roughts/Church View Wood**.

- 3 Once in the wood, turn right and follow the path around the perimeter. Where the path forks beneath the overhead cables, take the left fork. Where the paths meet, turn left over the wooden bridge and follow the footpath over the field to the small brick building.

Follow the footpath along the hedge, before turning right onto the footpath before Heather Hall. Continue along the footpath, turning left over a bridge, then turn right at the T-junction of paths and walk to Newton Road. Cross the road into **Heather Wood**.

- 4 Follow the path downhill, taking the left fork, to the north-east corner of the wood. Cross the field and then join the access road to Heather Brickworks.

Turn right and follow the fenced path around the works, down and up some steps. Turn right over the stiles and continue along the hedge before veering diagonally left. Cross 3 stiles before entering **Heather Brickworks Wood**.

- 5 Turn left and follow the footpath to a T-junction of paths. Turn left into **Shepherd's Close** wood.



- 6 Follow the footpath to the houses and then take Church View to meet the main road. Turn right, crossing the road to the Crown pub. Follow High Street to the cemetery and turn right onto Overton Road. After about 400m, turn left onto the byway and on to Grange Wood.
- 7 At the end of the byway, pass through the metal gate and through the farmyard of Ibstock Grange to join the footpath into Workman's Wood.
- 8 Bear diagonally left along the grassy path through the trees to the edge of Common Hill Wood.
- 9 Take the footpath right and then diagonally left across the site to Pretoria Road. Follow the footpath north to Ellistown. Cross Ibstock Road and take the footpath between the houses to Sherwood Close. Turn right and then left to the end of the cul-de-sac. Follow the footpath between the houses and on for another half mile to Donington le Heath. Turn right on Richmond Road and then left by the Corner Pin pub onto Manor Road. Take Townsend Land to the left and follow the track into Kelham Bridge Nature Reserve.
- 10 Carefully follow the path to avoid disturbing the wildlife. When you reach the A447, cross the road and join the footpath opposite. Go down the steps and follow the waymarked footpath straight ahead. Where this joins a byway, turn left and follow the path back to Sence Valley.



The Birthday Walk

In 2005, the National Forest Company had its 10th anniversary and the Birthday Walk was launched as part of the celebrations. The route covers 10 miles and was designed to link 10 sites created in the first decade of the Company.

1 Sence Valley Forest Park

From 1982 to 1996 this site was part of a huge opencast coal mine called Coalfield North. During this time, 8 million tonnes of coal were extracted from the ground. Following the completion of mining, the site was restored to create a new forest park. Now managed by the Forestry Commission, the park was opened in 1998 and, by 2005, it had developed into one of the jewels of The National Forest. It includes areas of conifers for future income, broadleaf woodland, three lakes linking to the River Sence and wildlife meadows.



Before

Coalfield North opencast mine



After

Sence Valley Forest Park (2005)

2 Ludlam Wood

Planted in 2004, this woodland covers four separate areas. Large areas of open ground have been left unplanted to protect features of archaeological interest. Wetland scrapes and ponds, bat boxes, management of mature streamside trees and hedging all contribute to the site's nature conservation interest.

3 The Roughs / Church View Wood

This wood was planted in 2000 as a commercial poplar wood with some native black poplar and willows.

4 Heather Wood

This site comprises a mixture of new woodland planting, open ground and existing woodland. The yew woodland was planted by National Forest Company staff to celebrate the Millennium and two former Company chairmen each have an area named after them.

5 Heather Brickworks Wood

Planted in 2004 by Hanson Building Products Ltd, the wood consists of oak, ash, birch and willow with an area of grassland. Wetland areas, a new hedge and bird and bat boxes further enhance the biodiversity of the site.

6 Shepherd's Close

This site has been a focus for the local community. Local people put forward their ideas for the design, named the woodland and helped with the planting. An open area of grassland serves as an events area and a community orchard has been planted in one corner.

7 Grange Wood

Planted in 2000, this woodland mixes commercial forestry, multi-user access and heritage features. An 18th Century water ram, which originally irrigated the land, has been restored and reedbeds and wetlands for wildlife are part fed by this system.

8 Workman's Wood

This wood was planted in 2000 by the Poplar Tree Company with different varieties of fast growing poplars.

"The National Forest is a beacon of hope and a pioneering initiative for the UK as a whole."

Jonathon Porritt Chairman of the UK Sustainable Development Commission

"There is no project more important country-wide than the creation of The National Forest. I'm all for it!"

Alan Titchmarsh

9 Common Hill Wood

This site was planted in 2004 with mixed broadleaves, widely spaced poplars and conifers. Wildlife conservation and improvement includes the creation of a large wetland area which is fed by an underground stream.



Before

Clearing old sewage works (1995)



After

Kelham Bridge nature reserve (2005)

10 Kelham Bridge

In partnership with Severn Trent Water, Leicestershire Wildlife Trust, the Environment Agency and Leicestershire County Council, the National Forest Company has developed this site as a nature reserve. Open water, reedbeds, scrapes and the realigned river channel provide habitats for birds and dragonflies especially. Two bird hides enable you to stop and rest while you watch the wildlife.