

The Ivanhoe Way

The Ivanhoe Way is a 35 mile walk around the north western area of Leicestershire. The circular walk can be done in several short stages. When the Ivanhoe Railway Line is opened, a short railway journey could be used to split the walk in two.

The southern section of the route, Bagworth to Shackerstone, follows the Leicestershire Round. The "Round" is a 100 mile walk around Leicestershire. Those following the Round can use the Ivanhoe Way as an addition to their walk, adding 30 miles to their journey. A book describing the 'Round' is available from the County Council.

The name "Ivanhoe" has been linked to the north west of Leicestershire since Sir Walter Scott wrote "Ivanhoe", the novel, in 1820. Scott chose the castle at Ashby de la Zouch and the surrounding countryside as the setting for his novel, having got to know the area whilst staying at nearby Coleorton Hall.

"Ivanhoe Country" is an area of contrasts, from the bustling market town of Ashby de la Zouch, through the wooded and rocky outcrops of Charnwood Forest, to the idyllic stretches of the Ashby Canal. The area was, and still is used for quarrying. Former mining areas are now being restored and reclaimed as part of the National Forest.

The Ivanhoe Way has been developed by the County Council, in conjunction with the Leicestershire Association of Parish and Local Councils, to celebrate the centenary of Parish Councils.



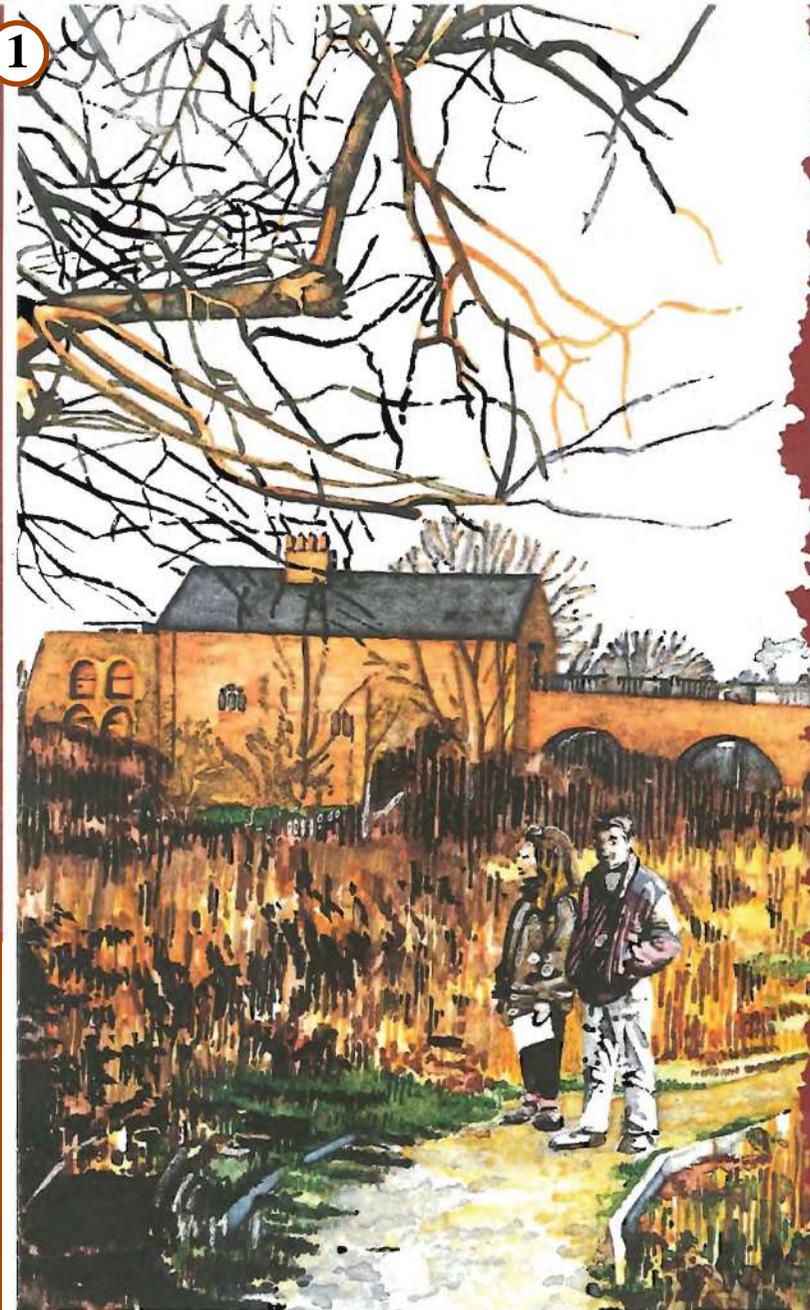
For **Ivanhoe Way**
Route Updates
look on the web at:
www.leics.gov.uk/ivanhoeway

For other walks publications go
to: www.leics.gov.uk/walking

Or to contact the **Countryside**
Service phone: 0116 305 8160
email: footpaths@leics.gov.uk



Leicestershire
County Council



*a circular walk around the
north west of Leicestershire*

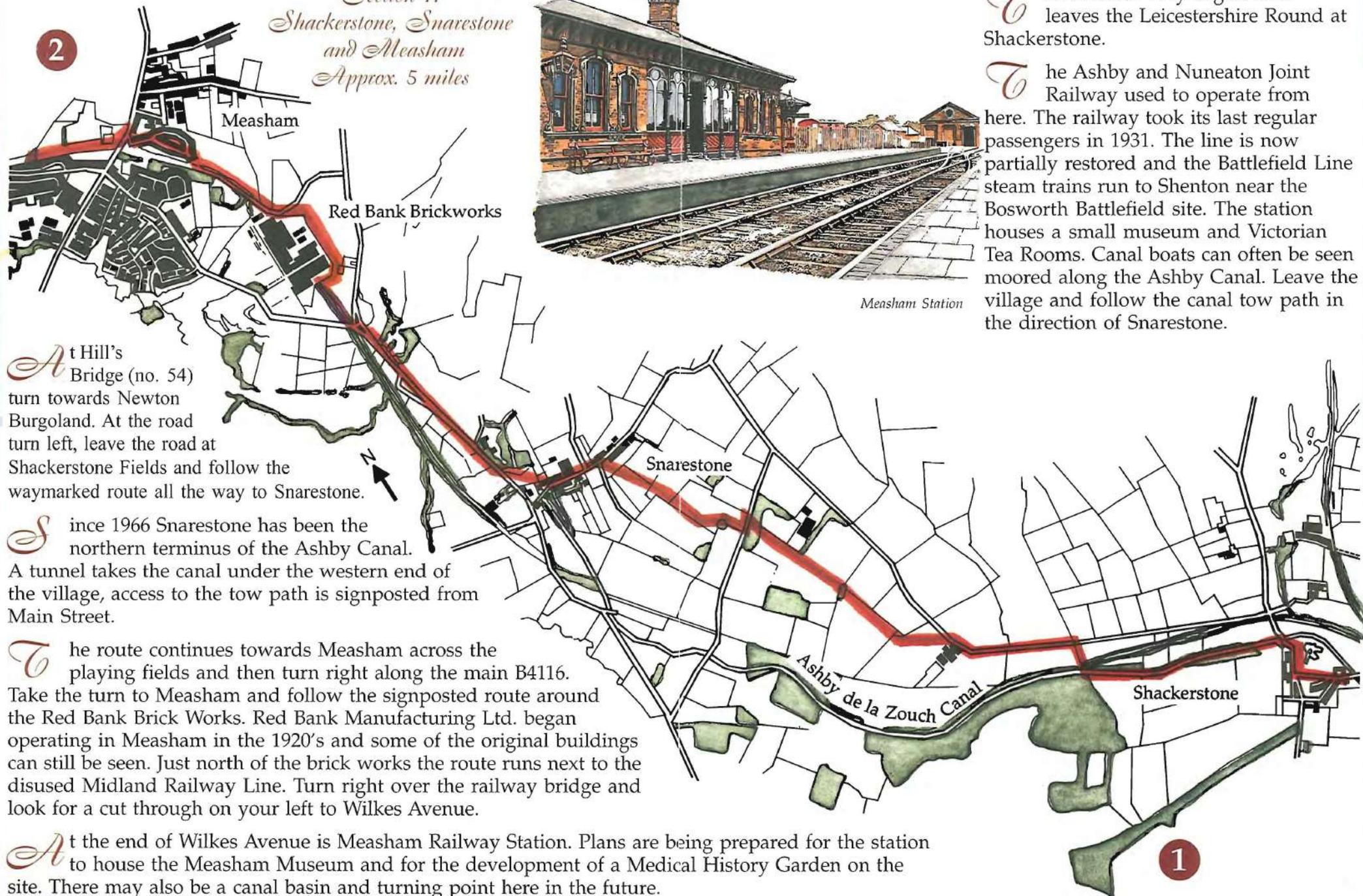
Section 1:
Shackerstone, Snarestone
and Measham
Approx. 5 miles



Measham Station

The Ivanhoe Way begins as it leaves the Leicestershire Round at Shackerstone.

The Ashby and Nuneaton Joint Railway used to operate from here. The railway took its last regular passengers in 1931. The line is now partially restored and the Battlefield Line steam trains run to Shenton near the Bosworth Battlefield site. The station houses a small museum and Victorian Tea Rooms. Canal boats can often be seen moored along the Ashby Canal. Leave the village and follow the canal tow path in the direction of Snarestone.



At Hill's Bridge (no. 54) turn towards Newton Burgoland. At the road turn left, leave the road at Shackerstone Fields and follow the waymarked route all the way to Snarestone.

Since 1966 Snarestone has been the northern terminus of the Ashby Canal. A tunnel takes the canal under the western end of the village, access to the tow path is signposted from Main Street.

The route continues towards Measham across the playing fields and then turn right along the main B4116. Take the turn to Measham and follow the signposted route around the Red Bank Brick Works. Red Bank Manufacturing Ltd. began operating in Measham in the 1920's and some of the original buildings can still be seen. Just north of the brick works the route runs next to the disused Midland Railway Line. Turn right over the railway bridge and look for a cut through on your left to Wilkes Avenue.

At the end of Wilkes Avenue is Measham Railway Station. Plans are being prepared for the station to house the Measham Museum and for the development of a Medical History Garden on the site. There may also be a canal basin and turning point here in the future.

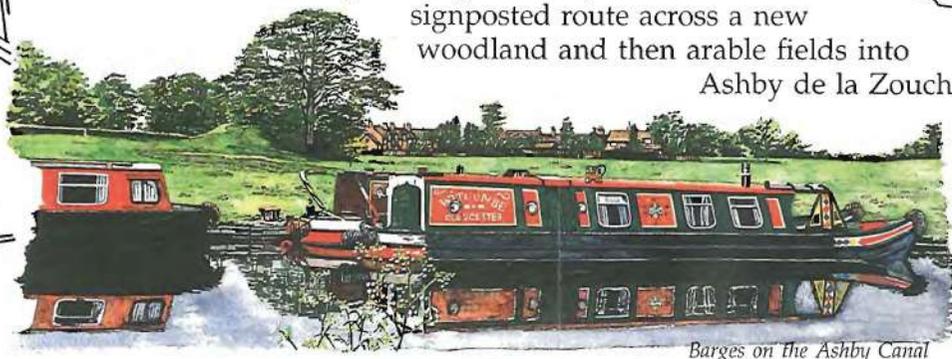
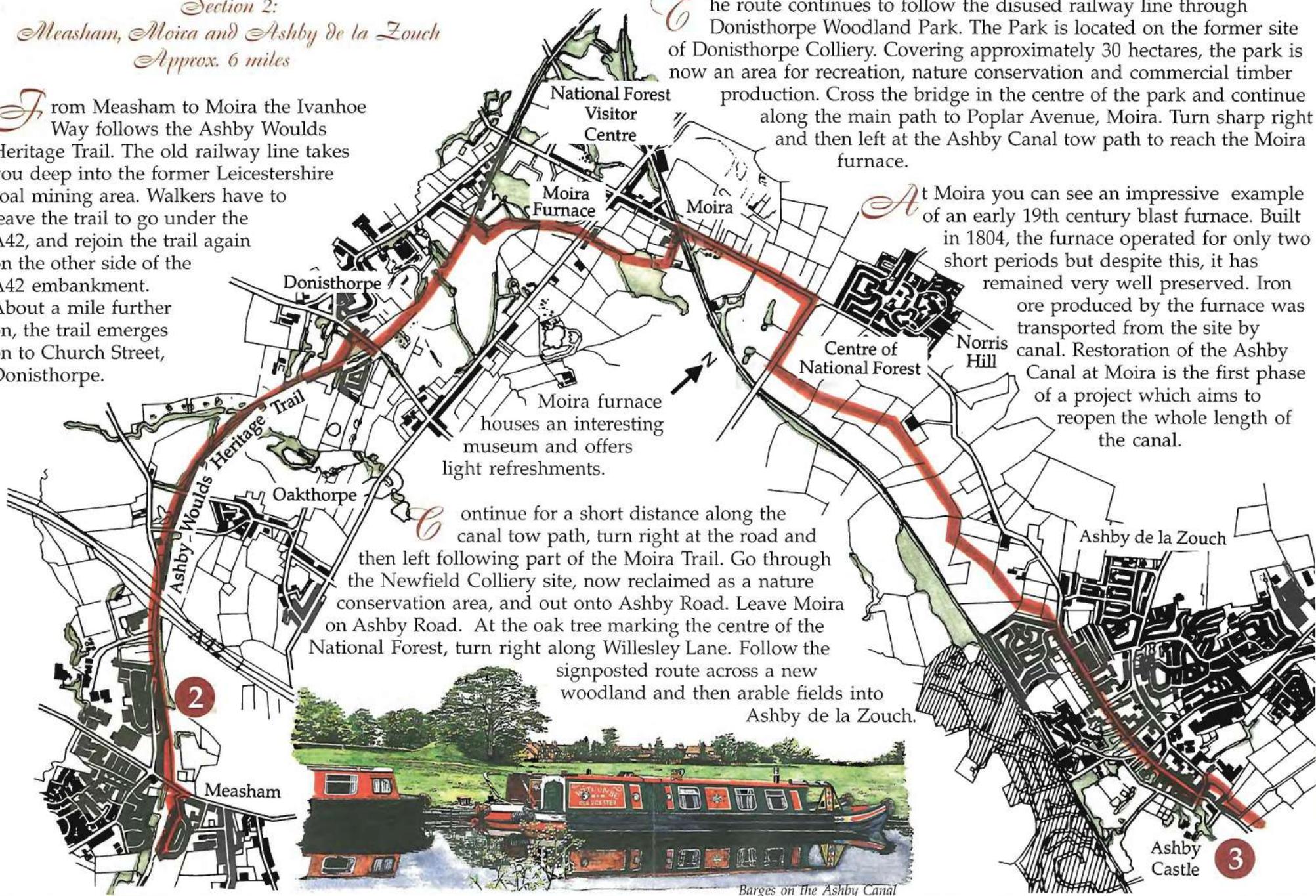
Section 2:
Measham, Moira and Ashby de la Zouch
Approx. 6 miles

From Measham to Moira the Ivanhoe Way follows the Ashby Wolds Heritage Trail. The old railway line takes you deep into the former Leicestershire coal mining area. Walkers have to leave the trail to go under the A42, and rejoin the trail again on the other side of the A42 embankment. About a mile further on, the trail emerges on to Church Street, Donisthorpe.

The route continues to follow the disused railway line through Donisthorpe Woodland Park. The Park is located on the former site of Donisthorpe Colliery. Covering approximately 30 hectares, the park is now an area for recreation, nature conservation and commercial timber production. Cross the bridge in the centre of the park and continue along the main path to Poplar Avenue, Moira. Turn sharp right and then left at the Ashby Canal tow path to reach the Moira furnace.

At Moira you can see an impressive example of an early 19th century blast furnace. Built in 1804, the furnace operated for only two short periods but despite this, it has remained very well preserved. Iron ore produced by the furnace was transported from the site by canal. Restoration of the Ashby Canal at Moira is the first phase of a project which aims to reopen the whole length of the canal.

Continue for a short distance along the canal tow path, turn right at the road and then left following part of the Moira Trail. Go through the Newfield Colliery site, now reclaimed as a nature conservation area, and out onto Ashby Road. Leave Moira on Ashby Road. At the oak tree marking the centre of the National Forest, turn right along Willesley Lane. Follow the signposted route across a new woodland and then arable fields into Ashby de la Zouch.



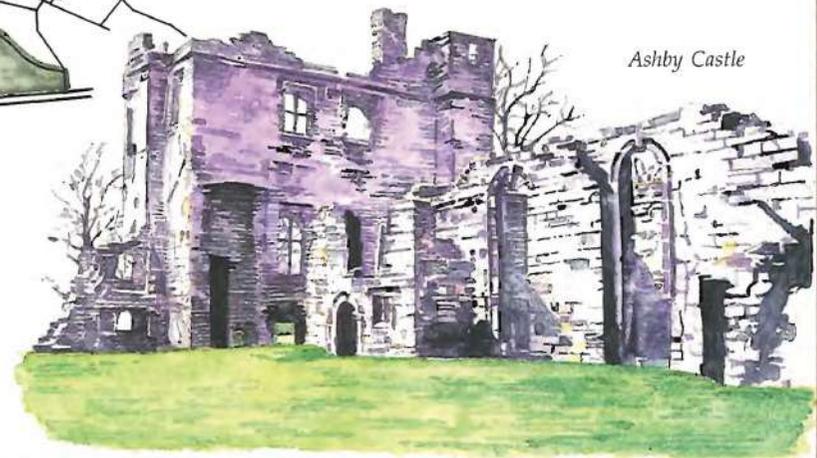
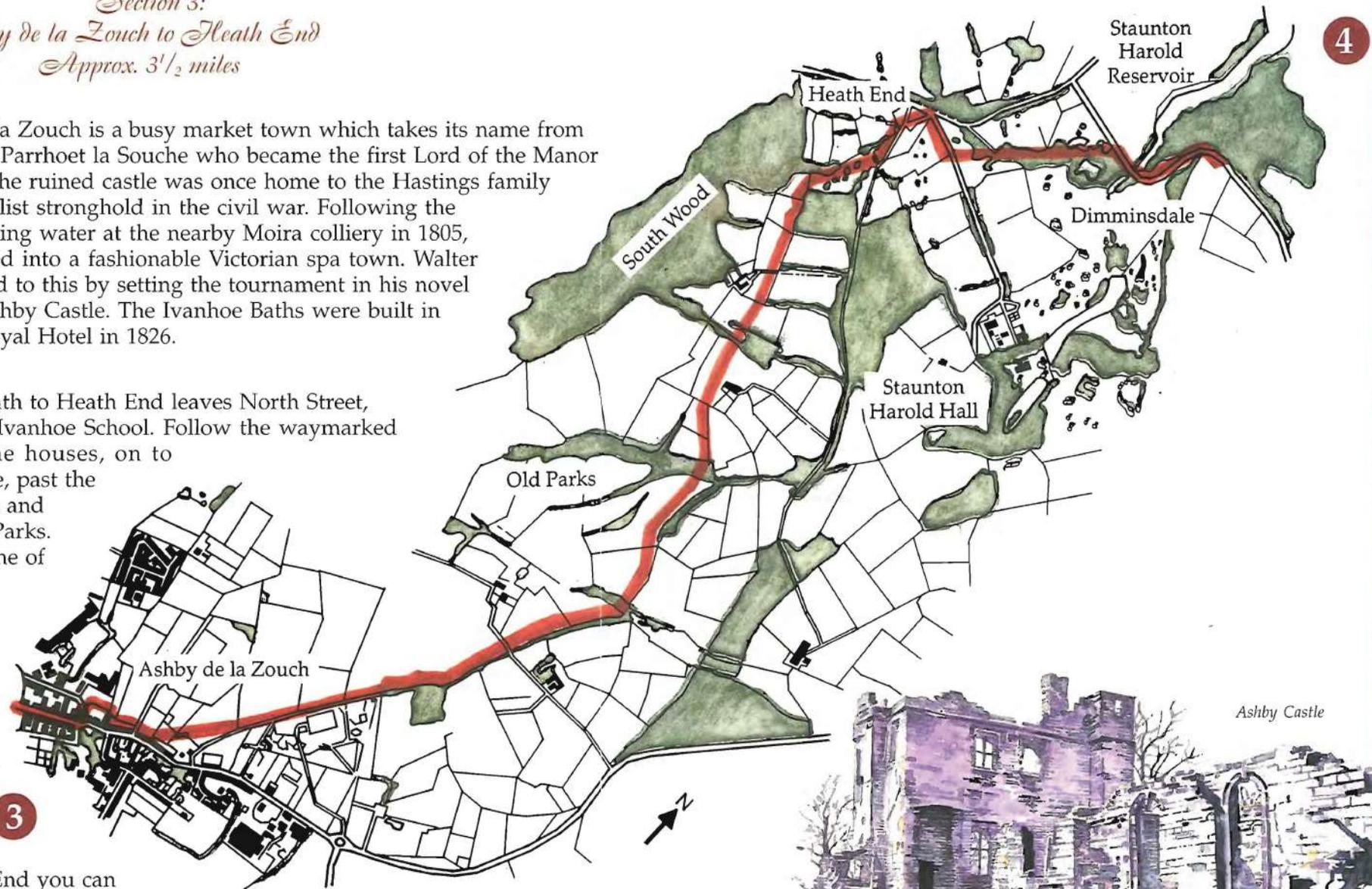
Barges on the Ashby Canal

*Section 3:
Ashby de la Zouch to Heath End
Approx. 3½ miles*

Ashby de la Zouch is a busy market town which takes its name from Alain de Parrhoet la Souche who became the first Lord of the Manor in about 1160. The ruined castle was once home to the Hastings family and was a Royalist stronghold in the civil war. Following the discovery of spring water at the nearby Moira colliery in 1805, Ashby developed into a fashionable Victorian spa town. Walter Scott contributed to this by setting the tournament in his novel "Ivanhoe" at Ashby Castle. The Ivanhoe Baths were built in 1822 and the Royal Hotel in 1826.

The footpath to Heath End leaves North Street, near the Ivanhoe School. Follow the waymarked path behind the houses, on to Featherbed Lane, past the industrial estate and beyond to Old Parks. This area was one of three medieval parks once surrounding Ashby. Continue straight on following the waymarked path to Heath End.

At Heath End you can seek refreshments at the Saracen's Head or make a detour from the Ivanhoe Way to Staunton Harold Hall. A picturesque lake, a permissive path, craft workshops, nursery and tea shops make Staunton Harold an attractive tourist spot!



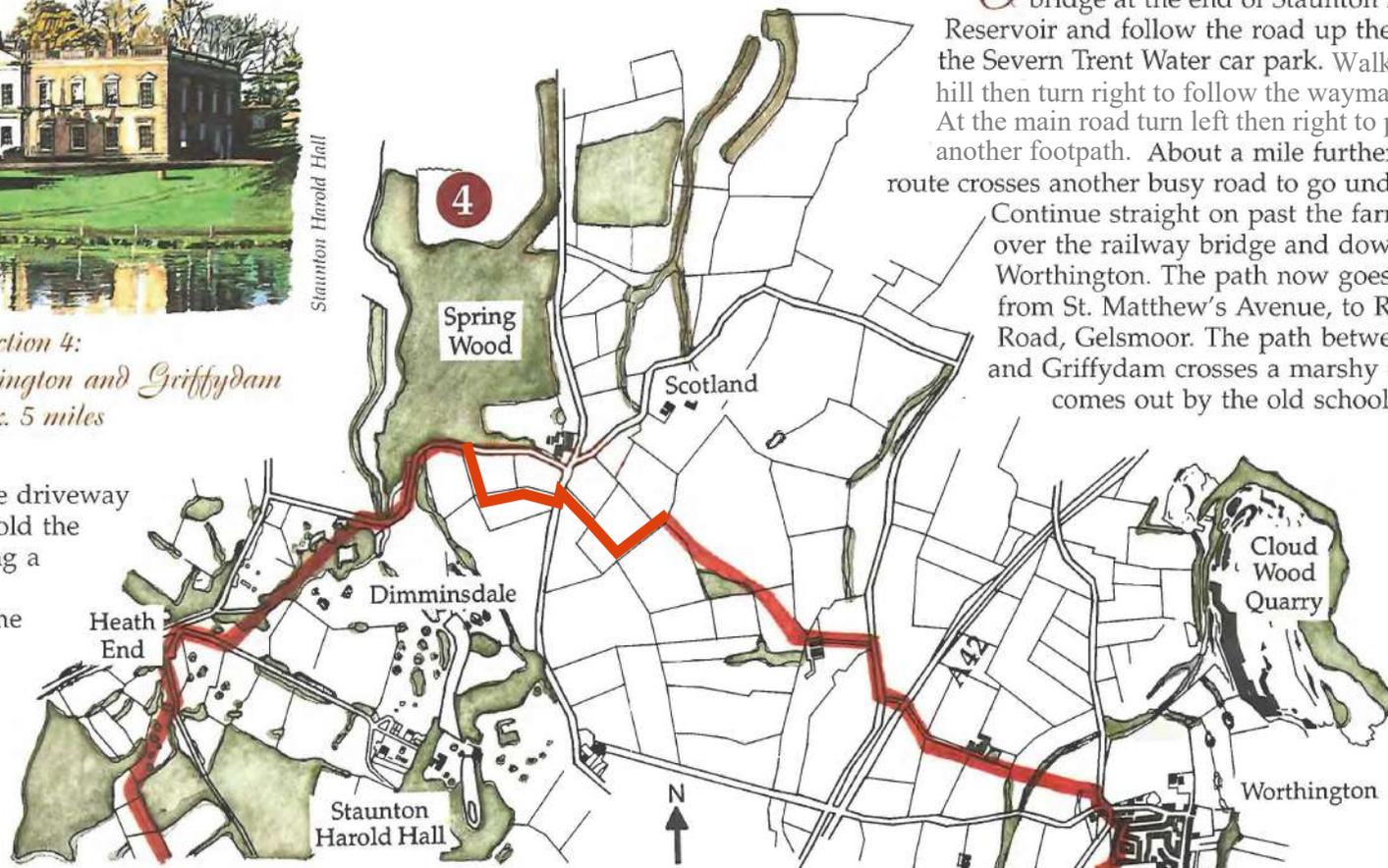
Ashby Castle



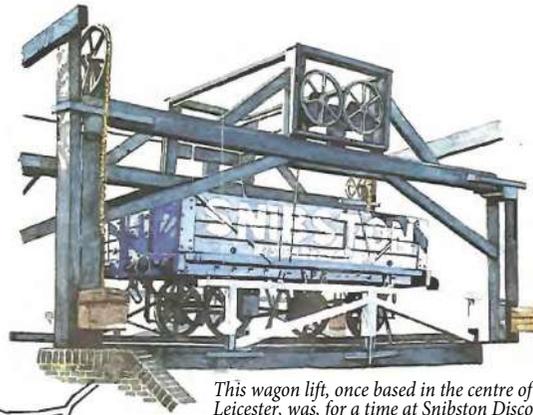
Staunton Harold Hall

*Section 4:
Heath End, Worthington and Griffydam
Approx. 5 miles*

A few yards up the driveway to Staunton Harold the footpath continues along a grassy track to Dimminsdale Wood. The Wood belongs to the Leicestershire and Rutland Trust for Nature Conservation. Limestone was quarried here until about 1870, since then the quarries have filled with water. Quicklime was produced in kilns on the site and distributed via the Ticknall to Ashby tramline.

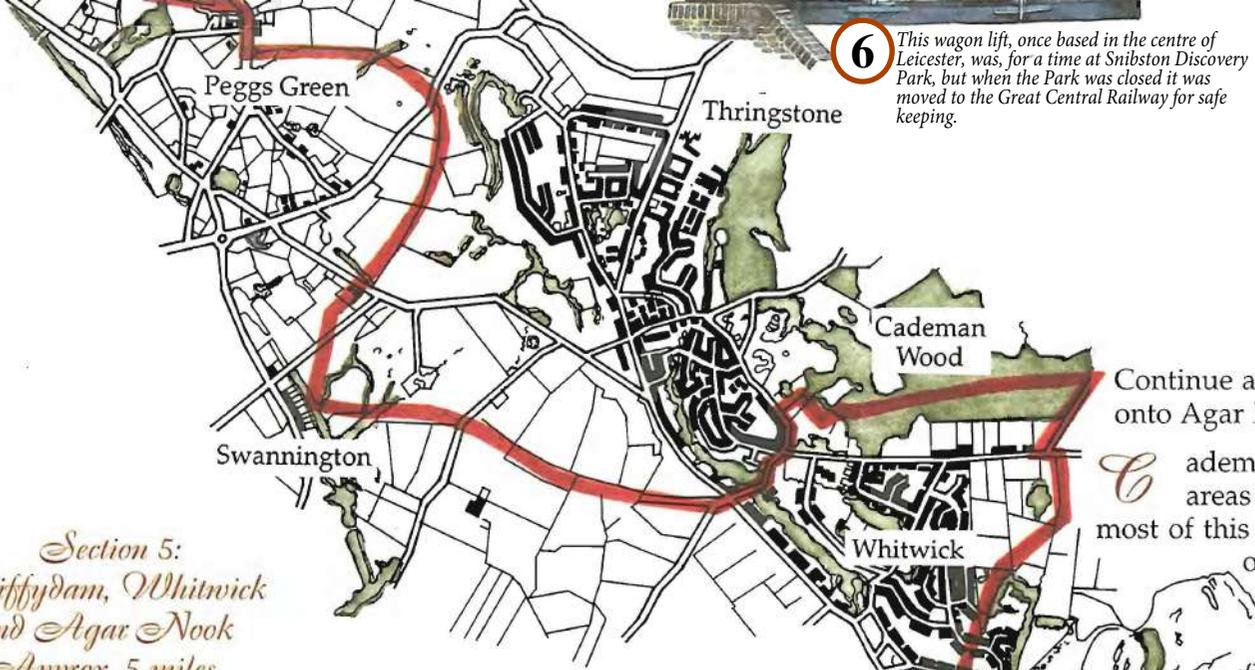


On leaving the nature reserve, cross the bridge at the end of Staunton Harold Reservoir and follow the road up the hill, past the Severn Trent Water car park. Walk up the hill then turn right to follow the waymarked path. At the main road turn left then right to pick up another footpath. About a mile further on the route crosses another busy road to go under the A42. Continue straight on past the farm house, over the railway bridge and down into Worthington. The path now goes due south, from St. Matthew's Avenue, to Rempstone Road, Gelsmoor. The path between Gelsmoor and Griffydam crosses a marshy area and comes out by the old school.



This wagon lift, once based in the centre of Leicester, was, for a time at Snibston Discovery Park, but when the Park was closed it was moved to the Great Central Railway for safe keeping.





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*Section 5:
Griffydam, Whitwick
and Agar Nook
Approx. 5 miles*

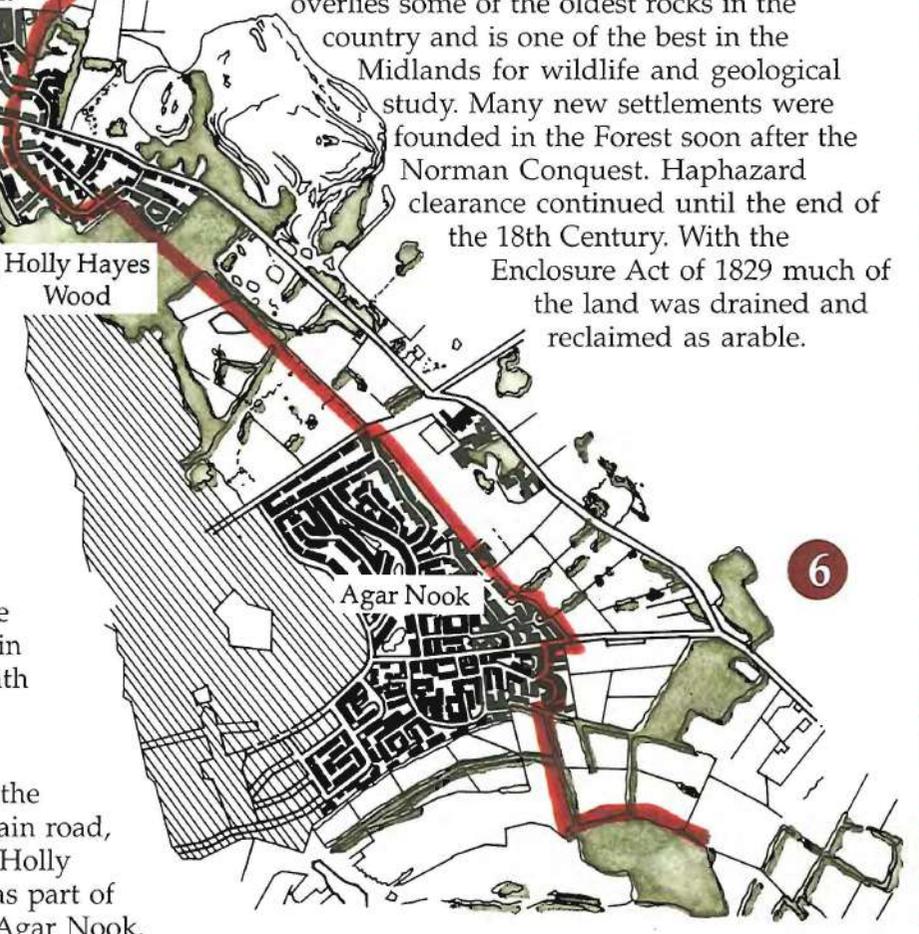
At Nottingham Road, Griffydam, turn right and take the next footpath about 100metres down the road on the left. Beyond the houses, the route is waymarked across arable and pasture land through an area which has been a centre for coal mining for nearly a thousand years. Having crossed Jeffcoats Lane, the footpath takes you up to the Leicester and Swannington Railway. This section of the line is a public footpath and you can climb the embankment to take a look. The Railway was built by Robert Stephenson to serve the coal fields of Whitwick. The first train was pulled along the line by the Comet in July of 1832. A branch line was constructed in 1833 to the Snibston Colliery, then owned by George Stephenson and now the Snibston Discovery Park where you can explore Leicestershire's industrial heritage.

Turn your back on the railway line and continue westwards towards Whitwick. You will pass another reminder of the area's past : the old engine house (1877) which serviced the mines in the area until Whitwick Colliery closed in 1986. In Whitwick follow Dumps Road and The City of Three Waters to the footpath beside the allotments, leading to Cademan Wood.

At the road beyond High Cademan, turn right, at the "T" junction cross the road and take the track skirting Ratchet Hill where you get fine views over the Whitwick area. Follow the footpath down to Leicester Road. Straight across the main road, follow Bernard's Road to the Ivanhoe Way signpost and the footpath leading into Holly Hayes Wood. Holly Hayes Wood is an area of ancient woodland and is managed as part of the Grace Dieu Valley Project. A clear, well surfaced path leads to Meadow Lane, Agar Nook.

Continue along the edge of the playing field and bear left onto Agar Nook Lane, to come out onto Greenhill Road.

Cademan Wood is one of the few remaining wooded areas of the ancient Charnwood Forest although most of this wood is semi-natural and recent. The area overlies some of the oldest rocks in the country and is one of the best in the Midlands for wildlife and geological study. Many new settlements were founded in the Forest soon after the Norman Conquest. Haphazard clearance continued until the end of the 18th Century. With the Enclosure Act of 1829 much of the land was drained and reclaimed as arable.

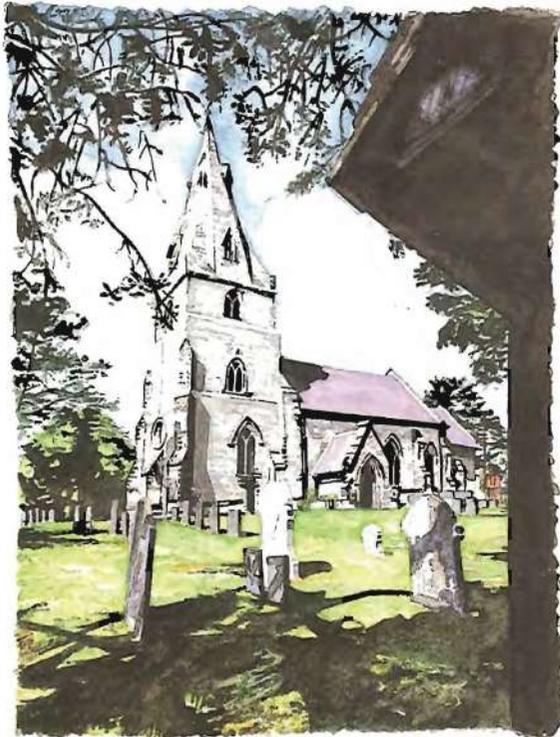


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Section 6:
Agar Nook, Bardon, Bagworth and Nailstone
 Approx. 5½ miles

The Ivanhoe Way is signposted off Greenhill Road, Agar Nook, to Bardon Hill. On reaching the woods, turn left. A few yards further on you can either continue around the bottom of the hill, or take the path climbing up to the summit. Bardon Hill is 912 feet high, the highest point in the County. On a clear day it is said that you can see as far as the Shropshire and Derbyshire hills. Be careful to keep to the waymarked paths through the active parts of the Quarry. After crossing the haul road continue generally south east, past Old Rise Rocks and Rise Rocks Farm, across some pleasant Charnwood Scenery, typified by rocky outcrops and dry stone walls. The surfaced drive to Rise Rocks Farm leads you out onto the main A511.

To continue, turn left, cross the A511 and the footpath continues to Stanton under Bardon beyond the roundabout. The name of this next village means, "settlement on stony ground," appropriate with the quarries surrounding it! The route passes a riding school, crosses Stanton Lane and a dismantled tramway and then skirts the village taking you straight on to the path to Bagworth.



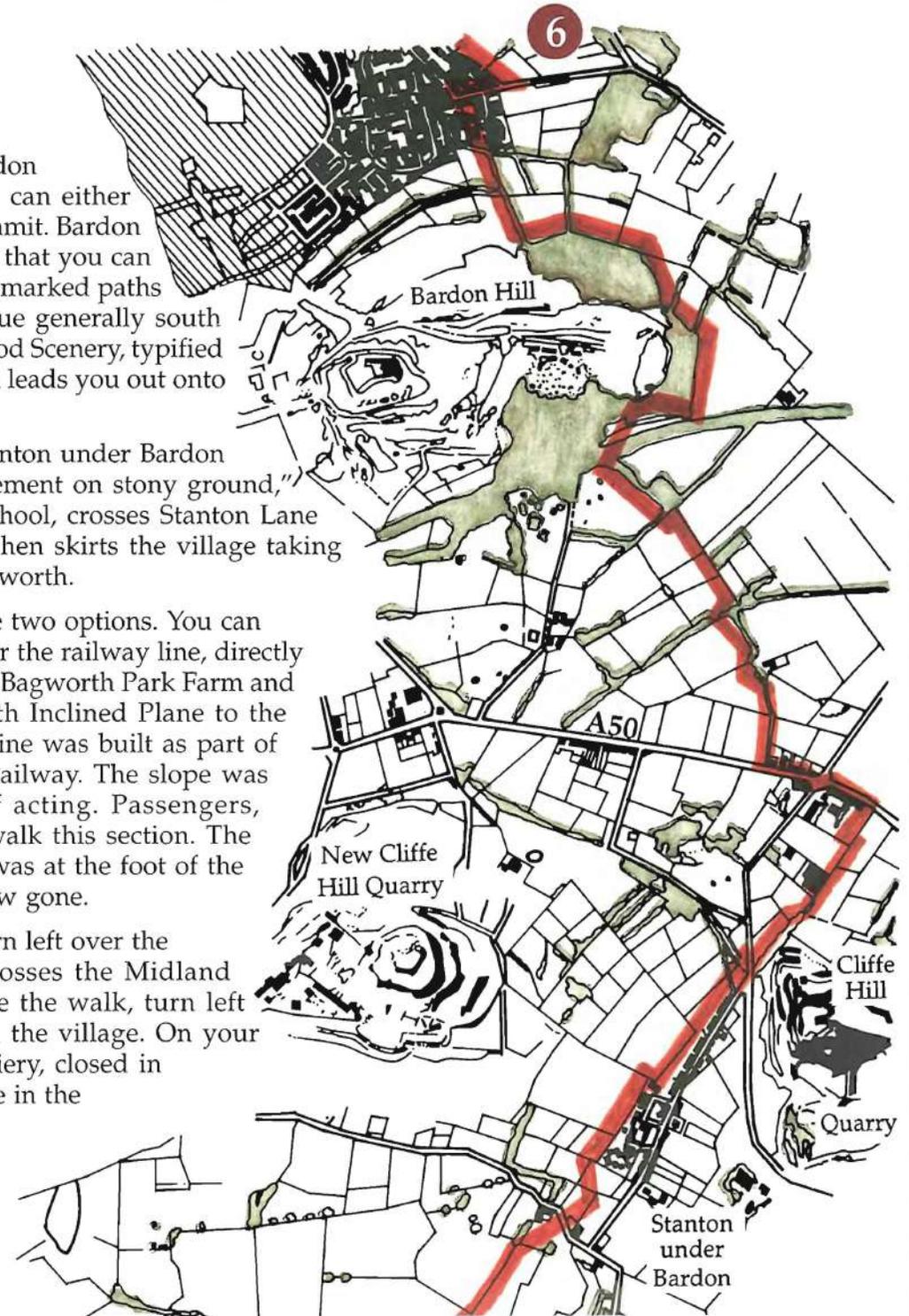
All Saints' Church, Nailstone

From Bagworth through to Shackerstone, the Ivanhoe Way follows part of the Leicestershire Round - a 100 mile route around Leicestershire. The route is signposted and waymarked with distinctive arrows.

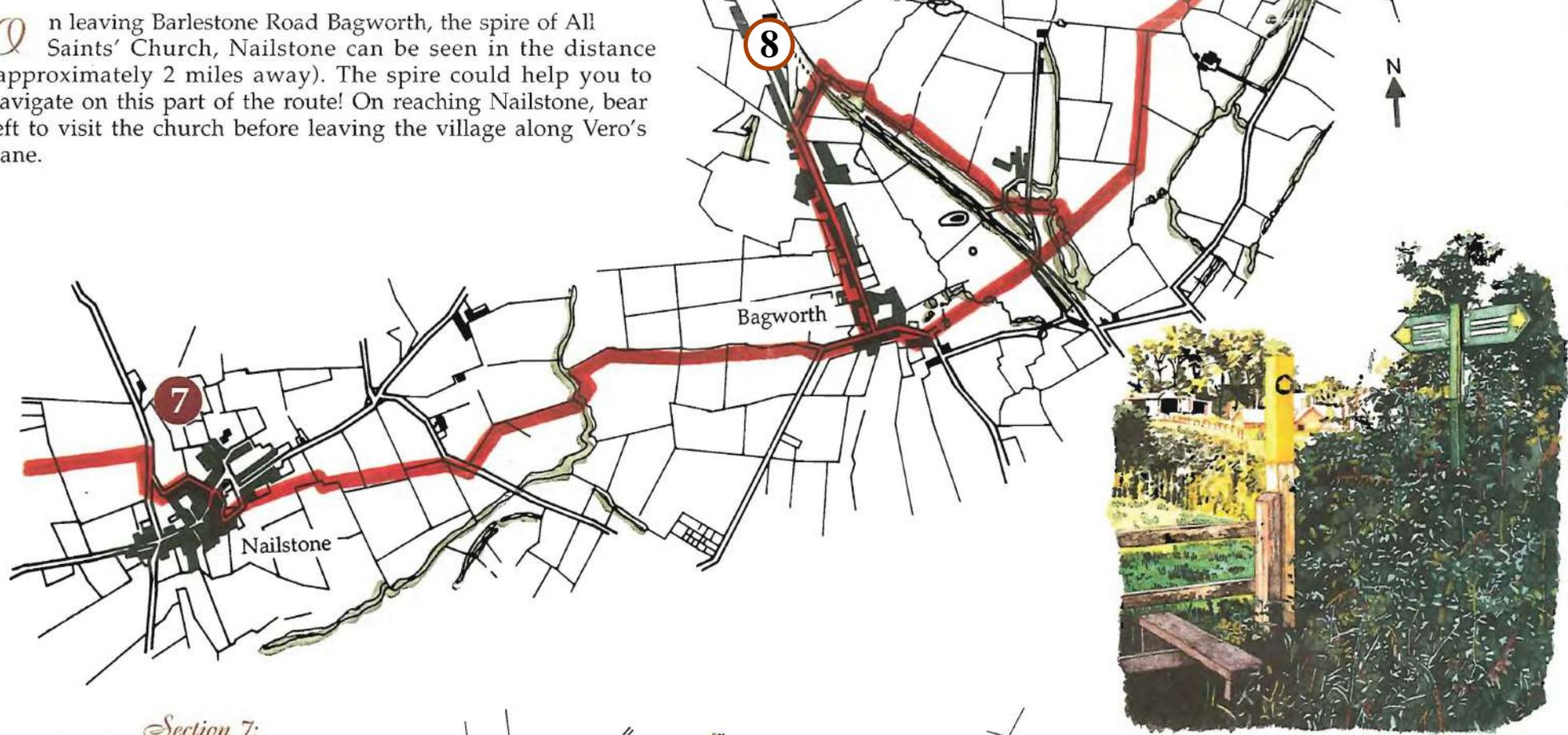
At Bagworth Park you have two options. You can continue straight on, under the railway line, directly into Bagworth. Or, turn right, past Bagworth Park Farm and follow the course of the Bagworth Inclined Plane to the site of Bagworth Station. The Incline was built as part of the Leicester and Swannington Railway. The slope was originally 1 in 29 and was self acting. Passengers, however, had to dismount and walk this section. The original Bagworth Station (1832) was at the foot of the incline but all traces of it have now gone.

At the top of the incline, turn left over the railway bridge which crosses the Midland Railway line of 1848. To continue the walk, turn left and follow Station Road through the village. On your right is the site of Bagworth Colliery, closed in 1991, the last deep mine to operate in the Leicestershire coalfield.

From Bagworth through to Shackerstone, the Ivanhoe Way follows part



Q n leaving Barlestone Road Bagworth, the spire of All Saints' Church, Nailstone can be seen in the distance (approximately 2 miles away). The spire could help you to navigate on this part of the route! On reaching Nailstone, bear left to visit the church before leaving the village along Vero's Lane.



*Section 7:
Nailstone to Shackerstone
Approx. 4 miles*

Leave Nailstone by crossing the A447, Ibstock to Hinckley Road, opposite the end of Vero's Lane. Continuing along the Leicestershire Round, the route crosses arable fields to reach the tiny settlement of Odstone. Turn left, passing Ivy House Farm. The route then becomes a field road from which you can see the front of Odstone Hall. Continue south west, eventually going under the railway line, taking you back to the Ashby Canal at Shackerstone where the walk started.

