

How to get there A50 north to Markfield (Field Head roundabout) then left via Thornton and Bagworth The Square, Bagworth (SatNav – LE67 1DQ).

Car parking Street parking only. The Square, Bagworth.

Public transport [Service 26 \(hourly\) from Leicester](#) See <http://traveline.info/> or phone 0871 20022 33

Map [Explorer 233 Leicester and Hinckley](#)

Route Undulating ground over a mixture of meadow and arable land. The waymarking is good and the route not difficult to follow.

The outward and inward sections of the walk meet at a stile close to Thornton reservoir. At this point you could omit the (uphill) section to the motorway and shorten the walk to 2 and a half miles. The walk can also be varied by adding a very pleasant 2 mile walk round Thornton reservoir.

Refreshment Pubs in Thornton and Markfield.

Items of interest *Bagworth, a former mining village. Thornton reservoir. Ashley's Wood, recently planted with 3,000 poplar trees as part of the National Forest. Bagworth Park was the site of a great house planned to equal Kirby Muxloe and Ashby Castle, built for William Lord Hastings in the time of Richard III. Leicester to Swannington railway line, opened by Stephenson in 1832, the first public railway in the Midlands (and now re-opened as the Ivanhoe line.) The Bagworth Incline, where Stephenson's trains were pulled up the hill by an extra engine at the top is now a lovely, quiet, hedged track.*

The walk *From Main Street, The Square, in Bagworth cross into Church Hill. The little church is well hidden at the top of Church Hill. Keep to the right of the churchyard and walk close to the hedge on your left. Turn left when you are about halfway along the field. Cross the graveyard, passing the church over to your left. Make for the far right corner of the field and continue in the same direction, walking diagonally downhill (in a field planted by the Woodland Trust) to meet the road where it crosses under the pylon lines.*

Cross the road and continue on the wide green track (past the former site of Little Bagworth on your right). Thornton village lies on the hill ahead. The needle point church spire soon comes into view, slightly to your right. Keep the hedge on your left and follow the enclosed track. When you come to an open field (where hedges have been removed) continue in the same direction to the hedge opposite.

Once over the small ridge you can see stretching along the valley, the old railway line.

Cross into the corner of the field where the hedge juts out and walk downhill close to the hedge on your right. Cross up over the railway line and down to cross the farm road. Continue in the same direction, still with the hedge on your right. Turn right and walk close to the stream on your left. Cross the footbridge over the stream and the mill race and swing left to walk past Thornton Mill, over the cobbles and past the old millstones set in the lane. (The lane leads straight up to Main Street, Thornton, but our path turns off the lane after a few yards.) Turn right at the stile and cross the field going slightly left to enter a small spinney. Turn left through the spinney and then right. Ignore a roadway on your left and join Hawthorn Drive. Walk past the houses to meet Main Street, opposite Thornton primary school.

Our route goes straight ahead, but Thornton village is worth a stop. There are two pubs, both serving food, a shop and buses to Leicester and Coalville. The beautiful church lies to your right. A very small detour takes you past the church, where you can go down to the reservoir and turn left on the reservoir path.

You are now approaching the Charnwood Forest area, and the hills get steeper!

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From Thornton Main Street take the path by the school which leads straight down to the reservoir There are fine views here. To your left lies Stanton under Bardon and the half-quarried Bardon Hill. Ahead is the Charnwood Forest area, beyond the beautiful Thornton reservoir.

Turn left along the perimeter path and swing right, round the narrow end of the reservoir. Go through the kissing gate on your left and walk uphill with the hedge on your left at first. Cross into the corner of the field on your left and then go uphill to pass the wood on your right.

From the top of the hill Markfield church can be seen ahead, beside the rocky outcrops of Altar Rocks. The motorway which cuts through Charnwood lies ahead.

Go downhill towards the motorway, with the hedge on your right. Continue in the same direction downhill with the hedge on your left. Go uphill in the same direction. (Do not follow the track to the left!) Make for the big tree on the hill. Descend steeply through the spinney, cross the footbridge and go up to the far right arrow-head corner of the big field. (Look back to see Thornton reservoir in the valley.) Continue cutting across the corners of the next two fields. Turn left to walk beside the motorway on your right.

(TO PEACH MARKFIELD village turn right through the kissing gate and go under the motorway bridge. Follow the concrete farm road up into Markfield, emerging near the Bulls Head pub.)

IF YOU DO NOT WISH TO GO INTO MARKFIELD turn left when you reach the motorway bridge and go up a concrete road and over a stile. Walk close to the hedge on your right and cross into another field using a stile in a holly hedge. Keep close to the hedge on the right in this field and the next and exit via the right hand corner into a farm lane. Turn right and then left at a farm gate into the playing field of South Charnwood High School.

Follow the right hand hedge and cross the stile in the corner and continue with the hedge still on your right. Cross the (broken) stile and join the field road. Turn right and walk to Markfield Lane.

Turn left towards Thornton and after about 100m turn left into Ashley's Wood. Keep the hedge on your left and go through the gateway in the hedge. Turn right and walk to the end of the wood, keeping the hedge on your right. In the next field Thornton church can be clearly seen ahead. Aim for it, going downhill close to the right hand hedge. In the next field continue downhill to the far left corner. Turn left into one field and then right into another. The field path takes a line just to the right of Thornton church spire.

Cross the stile onto the Leicestershire Round footpath and turn right and immediately right again to go over the stile onto a farm track and on to Markfield Lane. Turn left and then cross the stile on your right. Cross the field keeping close to the brook. (The waymarks are on the right of the brook.). Cross a series of stiles to Stanton Lane. Turn left and walk uphill to the north end of Thornton. At the top of the hill, just before the road turns left, turn right onto the footpath. Follow this path round the left edge of the field to reach a waymark post.

At this point Bagworth village is visible on the hill ahead.

Cross the stile into the next field and walk diagonally downhill to the waymark post. Continue in the same direction into the plantation for about 20 paces to the stile. Two paths cross here. Take the left path and go towards a railway arch. Pass through the arch and turn right immediately to go through the kissing gate. Head uphill towards a clump of trees hiding Bagworth church. Cross the stile and continue uphill. When the slope eases go towards the wrought iron kissing gate and then into Bagworth village. Turn right to reach The Square, where the walk began.

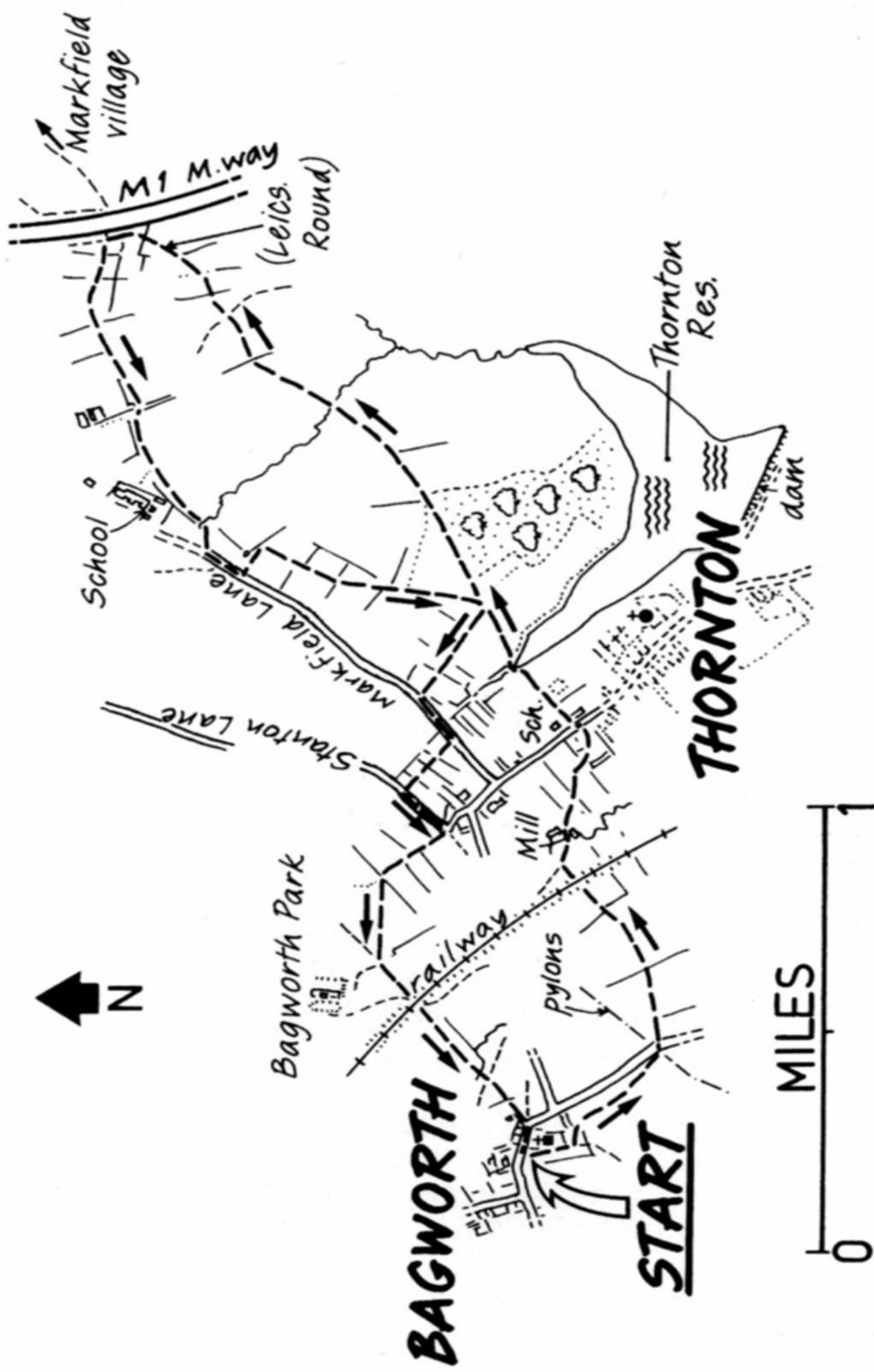
Clive Fennell: "Perhaps a word of warning is called for! There are about 20 stiles, some in need of repair. Some fields may be ploughed. Near the M1 hollow the traffic fumes could be very irritating to sensitive nostrils."

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