

# National Forest National Mapping Programme project

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The National Forest National Mapping Programme (NMP) project mapped and recorded archaeology from aerial photographs and rapid walk-over survey. This was done prior to creation of the National Forest, extending across Derbyshire, Leicestershire and Staffordshire. The survey was used to enhance the archaeological record, aid planning and help conserve the area's heritage. Archaeology recorded ranged from prehistoric settlement and monuments associated with 'ritual' contexts to 19th and 20th century industrial remains.

The National Forest extends across a number of different geographical regions and landscapes. These include the centres of two ancient forests, low-lying rural landscapes and part of the Midland Coalfield. Aerial survey mapping was undertaken as part of the National Mapping Programme in 1993.



A double-ditched barrow and enclosures with a pit alignment, at King's Bromley, photographed on 08-JUL-2005 (NMR 20337/28). © Historic England

## Funerary and ceremonial monuments

Extensive groups of barrows survive along the River Trent and Tame floodplains as soilmarks and cropmarks. Most are considered Bronze Age in date, but the form and context of some funerary monuments may suggest Neolithic origins. At Alrewas, a triple-ditched feature with a central pit lies close to a Neolithic cursus and two causewayed enclosures. The feature may be a barrow or ceremonial monument of either Neolithic or Bronze Age date.



Triple-ditched barrow or ceremonial monument at Alrewas photographed on 13-JUL-1984 (NMR 2167/1181). © Crown copyright. HE

## Medieval castles and formal gardens

Ashby de la Zouch castle began as a fortified manor house in the 12th century and achieved castle status in the 15th century. The remains include an impressive tower, which allows fine views over the 16th century formal gardens. Originally thought to be ornamental ponds, later archaeological investigations suggested the elaborately shaped 'ponds' are sunken formal garden features.



Ashby de la Zouch castle and sunken formal gardens photographed on 17-JUL-2000 (NMR 17464/14) © Historic England

## Second World War munitions explosion

The impact of post medieval into 20th century mining and quarrying is clear across the National Forest landscape. However, an event during the Second World War had a similarly huge impact that has scarred the landscape. The Royal Air Force (RAF) used some disused gypsum workings at Fauld as an underground storage depot. On 27 November 1944 an accident led to the detonation of 3,670 tons of explosives. The explosion killed 70 people and left a crater 300 metres across and more than 30 metres deep.



War-time photograph taken on 04-DEC-1944 showing the crater resulting from the vast explosion of the RAF munitions store in the Fauld Gypsum Mine (RAF/106G/LA/69 1009). Historic England RAF photography.

The site remained a considerable scar on the landscape for many decades and is still visible today.



The crater from the Fauld Gypsum Mine explosion photographed on 09-FEB-1994 (NMR 12454/36). © Crown copyright.HE