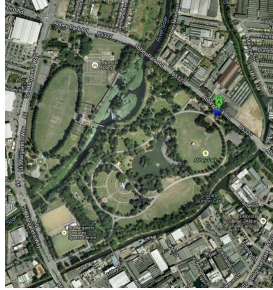


# A Walk Round Abbey Park

By Zack aged 8 (with help from dad).

Abbey Park is really nice, there are plenty of things to see and do and I hope you enjoy walking round. I think it's the best park in Leicester.

The walk starts from the main gate of the park. You will find it on Abbey Park Road. If you have come by car, there is one very close to the entrance. There are also buses that start from the city centre, with a bus stop at the main entrance. If you have parked in the car park near the main entrance, walk to the main entrance along the road.



Before you go through the entrance, take a look at the main gate from the outside. You can see how old the park is from the plaque you will find on one of the gate supports, with the date of 29<sup>th</sup> May 1882.

Go through the gate, and just after the lodges, both of which are grade II listed, turn left on to what is in fact one of the main paths of the park.

You will soon walk past a car park (where you may have parked if you came by car) on your left. On your right is a large expanse of grass, with a band stand in the centre of it.

The bandstand was designed by William Barron, who also designed a number of other features in the park, including some really nice gardens.

A little bit further on you will find some paving slabs on the left. On them is a chalk drawing by Julian Beever which remembers when the Olympic torch was carried through Leicester by lots of people in 2012. It was first drawn in the city centre, and later moved to a permanent site here.



Julian Beever does have a Leicestershire connection. Although he was born in Cheltenham, at the age of two his family moved to Melton Mowbray. He has worked in many countries throughout the world as a pavement artist, working on numerous commercial commissions. Julian pioneered the art of three dimensional pavement drawing.

Carry on following the path as it turns round to the right. There is now a lot of grass on your left. The path will shortly begin to start to turn to the left, and as it does so, you will find Abbey Park Boating Lake on your right.

This area of the lake is also the home of the Leicester and District Scale Model Boat Club. The club has been here at Abbey Park since nineteen seventy seven. The boats they have are all models of real boats. If they are there when you visit, you will find them a very friendly group who are good to talk to.

Carry on walking along the path. The grass is still on your left. You will see ahead of you a fork in the pathways. When you reach it, stay on the main path, which is to the left. You will still have the grass on your left and there are now some trees on your right.



As you walk, on the right, you will be able to see one of the really nice gardens from the man I said about earlier. Dad says they used to be rose gardens. There is also what used to be a café but now is an educational centre.



You will come to a path to your left. Turn left on to this path. A short way along, on your left, you will find a sign saying, 'This is an open space'. If you walk into the area you will find it a very natural uncultivated area.

Return to the path, and continue in the same direction as before. You are now approaching one of the park exits. Just before you reach the exit, turn right onto Cave's Walk. Just towards the other end of the walk you will find the station of the Abbey Park miniature railway.

The railway has been in Abbey Park for over fifty years, but the Leicester Society of Model Engineers has been going since 1909. They didn't set up a proper track until they moved to the park though. The railway is open most weekends during the summer.

Follow the path as it turns to the right, to walk by the river. When you reach the bridge, turn to the right and follow the path as it goes passed the weir, which will be on your left.



After a while you will find a path on your right which has a bollard at the entrance, it's the third path along. Turn right on to this path. There are trees on you left, and grass on your right, in the middle of which looks like a king's crown on a pole.

In fact, it isn't. Over the years there have been a number of pipes running through the park, mostly to do with water. Some of them are still in use. The 'crown' is in fact a vent from one of these pipes.

You will reach a T junction back with the main path. On your left is a tree carving

In fact, the carving is a memorial to Paul Heatherly who worked in the park. It was created by two of his co-workers by using chain saws. Paul was a wild-life lover, So Bill Gardner and Paul Day, who created the memorial, did so, on the theme of All Creatures Great and Small.

Also on your left is the home of Abbey Park Bowling Club.

The bowling club is over a hundred and forty years old. They say it is the oldest club in the city.

Turn left onto the main path, and you will shortly be back at the main entrance which is where you started the walk.

The walk is just over 1 mile