

## A Walk along the River and Canal

Leicester has many points of interest to look at, many historic, and some which look to the future. During the course of the walk you will have the opportunity to visit examples of both and see a number of others.



The walk starts from another interesting location, Abbey Park. The main entrance to the park can be found on Abbey Park Road. If you are coming by car, there is a car park close by or some parking is available on the road. There are a number of buses which stop at the entrance, from the city centre. There will be an opportunity for you to explore some of the park at the end of the walk.

If you face the road at the entrance, turn left and walk along Abbey Park Road, with the park on your left. Walk over the bridge which goes over the River Soar.

The River Soar is 24.1 miles (38.8 km) long with 18 locks. It is the principle river of Leicester and it was not until the 19th century that it was joined into the Grand Union Canal, which extends into the South and eventually into London. During the 18th century, the River Soar was made navigable and the source of the river is midway between Hinckley and Lutterworth, going through North Leicester. The River is the main tributary of the River Trent. The river goes through Soar Valley, the through Loughborough and Kegworth.

Just after the bridge cross over to the other side of the road by using the pedestrian crossing. Once over walk straight ahead down a slight slope, following the cycle path sign. You will now be walking alongside the river, which will be on your right. Keep following the path until you reach the National Space Centre. You can reach the entrance of the building by walking by the side.



The National Space Centre is located opposite the Abbey Pumping Station, on the River Soar, and is one of the UK's top attractions. It is a museum of astronomy and space science. It was established in 2001, opening to the public on June 30th 2001, built and designed by Nicholas



Grimshaw, with the tower being 42 metres tall and the cost of construction being £52 million. The National Space Centre has 6 main galleries including space flight, cosmology, astronomy and a planetarium. The centre has the only known Soyuz Spacecraft in Western Europe, the other known to be in the United States. In 2007, the Space Centre celebrated the 50th anniversary of the first satellite.

Next door to the centre is the Abbey Pumping Station.

The Abbey Pumping Station is now an industrial museum showing us about technology through the years. It originally pumped sewage onto the Beaumont Leys estate in 1891 up to 1964. The Victorian building was designed by Stockdale Harrison, a well known Victorian architect. The Abbey Pumping Station was opened as a museum in 1972.



Return to the riverside walk, and turn left to continue along the pathway in the same direction as before. Bear to the right, and head towards the pedestrian bridge you will see ahead of you. When you reach the bridge, cross to the other side of the river. To the left is T.S. Tiger

The T.S tiger sea cadets are part of the UK's largest youth maritime charity. The cadet nights are held on Tuesday and Thursday from 19:15 until 21:30. The first ever brigade of cadets was established in 1854 with royal recognition by 1899. In 2004 the Marine Society merged with the Sea Cadet Association to form what were the Marine Time and Sea Cadets. By 2010, there were over 100 Sea Cadet units across the UK.



On the far side of the bridge turn right and walk down the slope to once again walk by the side of the river. You will pass Belgrave lock

For the technically minded, the lock is a broad lock with a brick lined chamber and wing walls with stone coping. The lock comprises two pairs of timber and metal mitred gates, with concrete balance beams, metal hand rails and rack and pinion paddle gear on the

top gate and hydraulic gears on the tail gate.

The sluice has a cast iron frame and paddle operated by a double rack and pinion mechanism, supported on stone piers, partly rebuilt with brick.

Carry on past the lock, to the bridge you can see in front of you. Cross over to the other side on the water. This is where the Grand Union Canal joins the River Soar, after dividing from it in the south of Leicester. The area in between the river and the canal has always been known as Frog Island/



Frog Island is north of the centre of Leicester and is located between the Soar Navigation, which is a continuation of the Grand Union Canal, and the River Soar. Frog Island is adjacent to the Woodgate area and the Northgate area. In the late 18th century, the Island was created under the completion of the Soar Navigation between Loughborough and Leicester.

Turn left to walk alongside the canal, which will be on your left hand side.

The Grand Union Canal is 137 miles (220 km) long with 166 locks. The Canal starts in London and terminates at Birmingham, passing through Leicester, Aylesbury and Northampton. The canal has several lines, one of which running through Leicester, including going through Belgrave lock and Abbey park, as well as passing Aylestone road and going by the Leicester City Football Club. One of the main features on this line is Foxton Locks. The canal then continues passes Husbands Bosworth, Market Harborough and Ratcliffe-on-Soar.

After you have been walking for a while, you will see what was the Wolsley building across on the other side of the canal. There are still some signs on the building.

Wolsey is a textile manufacturer that has always been associated with Leicester, and over the years have had a number of factories in the city. The company was started in the city by Henry and Ann Wood and their sons in 1755. The company's heritage has always been on design and quality.

At the far end of the building you will go under a bridge, the road you are going under is Abbey Park Road.

Carry on along the pathway, the next lock you come to is Lime Kilm Lock

The assumption has to be that there was a Lime kilns company in the area at some point, but we cannot find any reference to it.

Carry on walking along the path. You will still have the water on the left hand side, and to the right is Abbey Park.

When you reach another bridge, this one is for taking pedestrians across the canal, Turn to the right, and you will be able to climb away from the canal. You are now at an entrance of the park. Go through the gate and enter the park.



Walk along the path. After a short distance you will reach a T junction, with a triangular island in the centre of the road. If you want to explore the park turn left, this will take you to the centre of the park. Look for the old stone bridge on you left.

If on the other hand you just wish to go back to your starting point turn right, and follow the road as it bears round to the left, passing the modal boat club, and eventually back to the main gate.

The walk is 2.5 miles