

Lubenham

This leaflet is one of a series produced to promote circular walking throughout the county. You can obtain others in the series by visiting your local library or Tourist Information Centre or download them from www.leics.gov.uk/paths



It is advisable to wear suitable footwear when walking.

Stout shoes or walking boots are recommended.

Some stretches of the route follow minor country roads. Beware of traffic approaching from both directions. If possible stay on the verge, if not walk in single file on the right hand side of the road.

Enjoy the walks, whilst observing the Countryside Code.

contact details:

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Lubenham Heritage Group

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www.leicestershirevillages.com/lubenham

The information in this leaflet is available in other formats on request.



Leicestershire
County Council



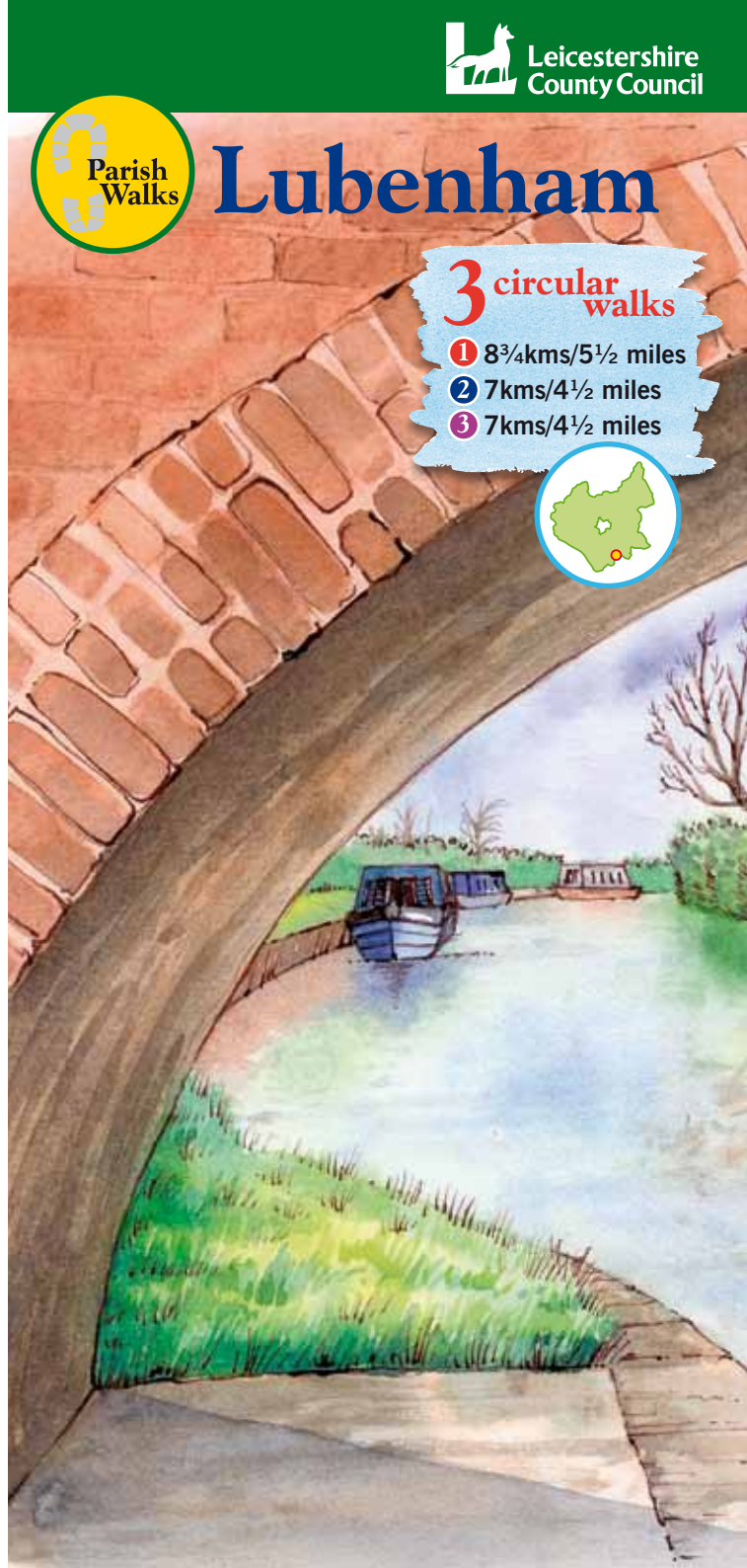
Lubenham

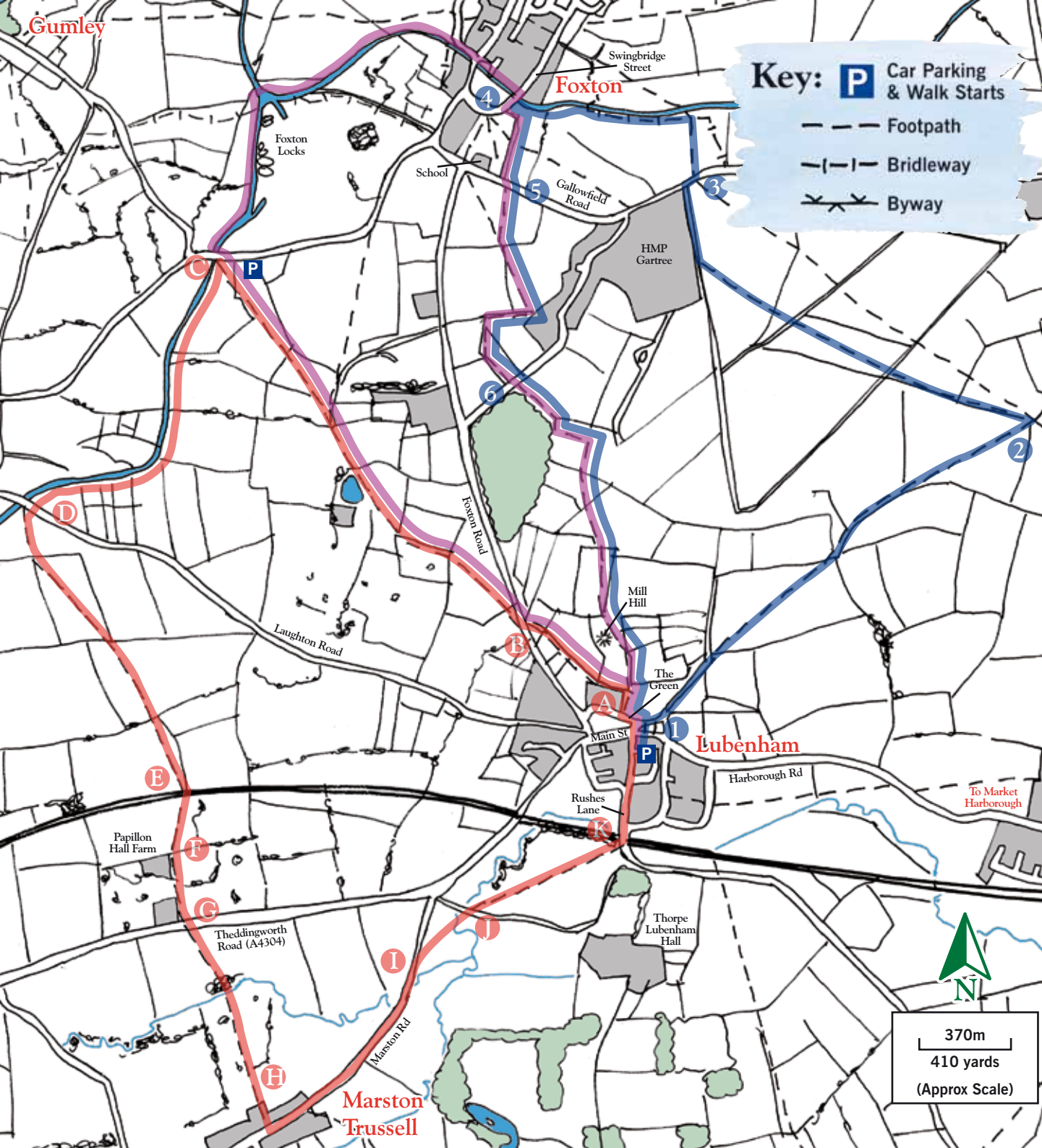
3 circular walks

① 8¾kms/5½ miles

② 7kms/4½ miles

③ 7kms/4½ miles





The village of Lubenham is situated 2 miles west of Market Harborough on the A4304 in the picturesque rolling countryside of South Leicestershire.

Market Harborough can be easily reached by bus and train and there is a regular bus service from the town centre to Lubenham. A free car park is available in the village in Connell Close, off Rushes Lane.

All walks start and end at the Green in the centre of the village. Please note, some parts of the walk can be muddy and involve using stiles and gates.

For more information on Lubenham village contact the Lubenham Heritage Group.

Walk 1: 8¾ km (5½ miles). Allow 3½ hours. Gently undulating across open countryside and canal towpath.

Leave the Village Green to the North and cross the playing field.

A Turn left and follow the path towards the farm barn on the Lubenham – Foxton road

B Cross the road. Follow the footpath towards Holmes Farm. The track now passes to the right of the fishing lake, through a cattle pen and across open grass fields to Foxton Locks car park.

Access to the canal towpath can be reached from the NW corner of the car park.

C On reaching the towpath at bridge 60, turn left and walk to bridge 57. *To your left, there are extensive views across the Welland Valley towards Lubenham, Theddingworth and Farndon. On the right, you pass Lubenham Lodge, originally a farmhouse, later refurbished in the Queen Anne style.*

D Pass under bridge 57 and immediately turn left onto the Laughton-Lubenham road. Turn right along the road for about 10m to the footpath sign on the right. Follow the directions across open fields noting the fine views of the surprisingly steep Laughton Hills to your right.

E The path now crosses the disused Rugby to Stamford railway line. *Opened in 1850, this was*

the first railway line through Market Harborough. It closed in 1966.

F The land rises to Papillon Hall Farm from where there are extensive views over the surrounding countryside. *You are now at the site of the mysterious Papillon Hall, built in 1622-1624 and extensively redesigned by Sir Edwin Lutyens in 1903 with a Gertrude Jekyll garden. Little remains of the Hall which was demolished in the early 1950s but tales of hauntings and ghosts still abound, the most famous story being that of the curse of the Spanish slippers. Ill luck would fall on anyone who removed them! More details of the mysteries of Papillon Hall can be found in Market Harborough Museum, Pen Lloyd library or from Lubenham Heritage Group.*

G Walk down the farm drive between high Holly hedges and cross the A4304 Market Harborough to Lutterworth road. The footpath passes to the side of a splendid avenue of lime trees and crosses the River Welland near the site of St Mary's Well, *the water of*

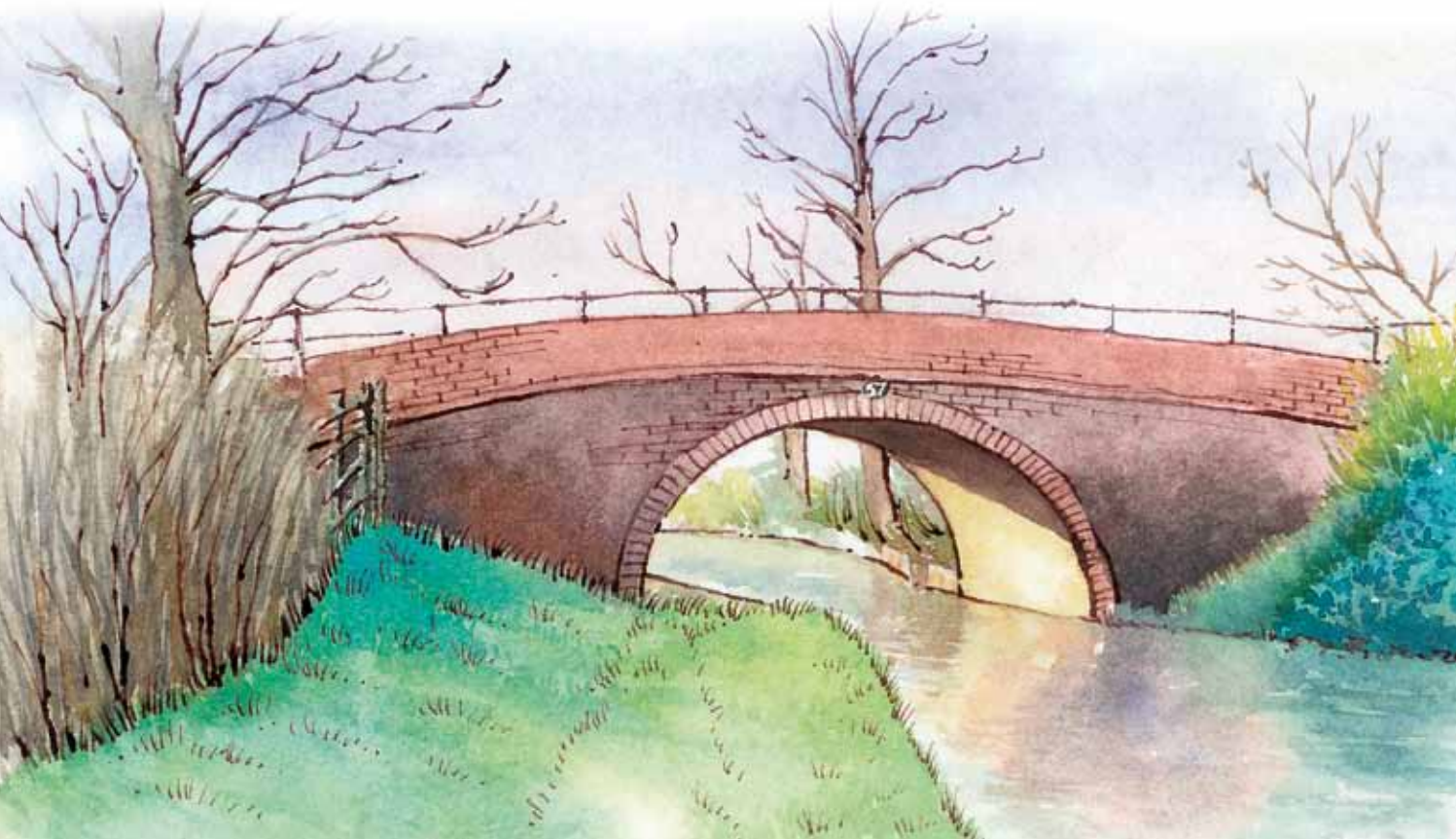
which was supposed to have therapeutic qualities.

H On reaching the small village of Marston Trussell, turn left and take the road towards Lubenham for about 750m (1/2 mile).

I Approximately 20m after re-crossing the river follow the sign to the right through a hand gate and cross the meadow until you reach the drive of Thorpe Lubenham Hall.

J Turn right over the picturesque stone bridge and go immediately left over the stile into the parkland belonging to the Hall. *Thorpe Lubenham Hall, now only half its original size, was built in the Queen Anne style in around 1800. It has been home to the Cunard family, Sir Harold and Lady Zia Wernher and Lord and Lady Kemsley. The Queen and her family were frequent guests during the 1950s.*

K Follow the path and emerge at the disused railway bridge on the Lubenham to East Farndon road. Turn left along Rushes Lane to the Green.





Walk 2: 7km (4½ miles) Allow 2½-3 hours. Short walk uphill at the start, otherwise undulating countryside and canal towpath.

① Leave Village Green to the east and turn left following Undle Lane. *The Undle is believed to be an ancient trackway and was used by horse drawn wagons to access the windmill on Mill Hill.*

At the top of the hill, as the track passes into open fields, there are extensive views to the right across the Welland Valley towards East Farndon and Market Harborough. The path now goes diagonally across the fields to join two other footpaths

② *The track directly ahead crosses the canal at Wooden Bridge and follows the towpath into Market Harborough.* However, you need to turn left over the expanse of the former World War II airfield. Head towards Gartree Prison until you reach the concrete road alongside the prison wall. Turn right follow this track to Gallowfield Road. *The airfield, opened in 1943, was used for training purposes, mainly Wellington bombers, and occasionally as an emergency landing site when eastern aerodromes*

were fog bound. The remains of several runways can still be seen.

③ Cross Gallowfield Road and walk to the canal towpath. Turn left until you reach the Swingbridge in Foxton

④ Leaving the towpath, turn left onto Swingbridge Street and immediately left onto the tarmac path alongside Foxton Primary School.

⑤ Re-cross Gallowfield Road and follow the track towards Mill Hill. The route now skirts around the edge of HMP Gartree. *Opened in 1966 and once a high security establishment housing some of the country's most notorious prisoners, Gartree has had a turbulent history with 2 major riots and a famous helicopter escape.*

⑥ From the prison the path crosses the road for the Gartree estate and follows a hedgerow before crossing open fields to Mill Hill. From here there are magnificent views over Lubenham and beyond. *The stanchion of the old windmill, which burnt down in the 1880s, is still visible. It is claimed that on a clear day the towers or steeples of at least 9 churches can be seen from this hill.*

Continue downhill, through the playing field to the Village Green.



Walk 3: 7km (4½ miles), allow 2½-3 hours. This route follows parts of Walk 1 and Walk 2, taking in undulating countryside and views from Mill Hill as well as Foxton Locks and the canal basin.

Follow the instructions for Walk 1 from the Village Green to the canal towpath at Bridge 60 **C**

Turn right along the towpath to Foxton Locks. From this direction, there is a spectacular view of the staircase of 10 locks, started in 1810, which drop down 75ft. *The canal arm to your right leads to the top of the famous Inclined Plane.*

This mechanical lift, comprising 2 tanks or caissons each capable of carrying two narrow boats at a time, was constructed in 1900 to reduce the considerable waiting time incurred when passing through the locks. Unfortunately it proved uneconomic and closed in 1911. It was dismantled in 1927. Parts are now being restored with the help of grants and fundraising. More details can be obtained from the Inclined Plane Trust Museum on the site.

At the bottom lock follow the arm towards Leicester and cross the footbridge. Turn right towards Foxton. Continue along the canal until you reach the swingbridge **point 4 on Walk 2**. From here continue using directions of Walk 2.

The routes are clearly marked with bold, yellow topped waymarker posts and waymarker discs with the Parish Walks symbol.



Walking - Be fit and well

Walking is a form of exercise that is suitable and enjoyable for all ages. It's a free and fun way for families and friends to get fit together. Just 30 minutes of brisk walking on a daily basis can benefit your health and quality of life.

useful information:

Refreshments: the Coach and Horses Pub on Main Street, Lubenham and café, shop and pub at Foxton Locks and pubs in Foxton village.

Special thanks go to Lubenham Heritage Group who compiled the information in this leaflet.