



## CENTRAL

(Map 2 of 3)

Belgrave ~ City Centre



### BELGRAVE LOCK ~ NORTH LOCK



Abbey Park

The River and canal run their separate courses through this area and reunite at Swan's Nest Weir. The River flows through Abbey Park - the City's finest Victorian park - and past the National Space Centre. Once the heart of Leicester's canal-side industry, the area is becoming a popular setting for waterside development.

#### Belgrave Lock and Swan's Nest Weir.

A lovely spot near to the National Space

Centre, where swans can still be seen and herons fish in the shallows.

#### National Space Centre ①

An awe-inspiring journey of discovery awaits you at Britain's multi-million pound National Space Centre. With real rockets and satellites, interactive challenges and one of the most advanced space theatres in the world, you are guaranteed to be taken where you've never been before! (Tel: 0116 261 0261 for opening times and special events).

#### A setting for Regeneration ...

The Riverside area north of Abbey Park Road is set for some big changes. A high specification Science and Technology Park and family housing should make the most of a beautiful Riverside setting, and bring life and vitality into an area of industrial decline.

#### Textiles, leather and lime

Leicester's industry used to rely on the River and canal to transport raw materials and manufactured products. Many of the textile factories and mills still stand, and other clues to the canal's industrial past can be spotted. South of Belgrave Lock you can still see the "Leather bank" ②, where part of the canal's east bank is made of leather off-cuts from a shoe works. Limekiln Lock is named after the kilns at this site, where boats brought in coal, and took away lime.

#### Belgrave Road - for silks, saris and samosas

Belgrave Road is well known as the heart of Leicester's Asian community. It is worth a visit for jewellery, clothes and food shops, and a fantastic range of restaurants. Belgrave is the home of the Country's biggest Diwali festival which takes place in the Autumn. A large supermarket next to Belgrave Circle (east of Limekiln Lock) is particularly handy for boaters renewing provisions.

#### Abbey Park - the 'Green Jewel'

This fine Victorian park is one of Leicester's favourite places. Discover the remains of the 12th century Leicester Abbey, a Chinese Garden, and the riverside café. There is also a boating lake, a bandstand, sports facilities and toilets (including RADAR toilets for disabled people). Events, festivals and fairs provide year-round activity in this beautiful setting.

## NORTH LOCK ~ ST MARY'S MILLS LOCK



Friar's Mills

An area of change for all to enjoy. This is where Leicester grew up from a small pre-Roman settlement on the bank of a marshy river. Today development is being encouraged to make the most of the Riverside setting, and connect the City Centre with its waterfront.

### From Steam to Pedal Power

The river and canal part company at Soar Island ①, which was once a hub of industrial

activity. Mills and goods yards in the area were serviced by the canal and the Swannington railway (known as the 'Rally'). West Bridge and Great Central Stations were nearby. To the south of Soar Island is the 18<sup>th</sup> Century Friar's Mills ②, crowned with a golden ibex. Both railway lines are now cycleways, (the Great Central Way heads southwards and The Forest Way to the west), and the Rally is a park.

### The West Bridge and Castle Park

The main entrance to the City for centuries. The bridge stands on the site of the old Roman ford. King Richard III passed this way to and from the Battle of Bosworth. His bones were reputedly thrown from Bow Bridge ③ into the River Soar. Look out for the plaque which recounts what was foretold. The Castle ④ (with its Motte, Courtyard and Great Hall), St. Mary de Castro Church, the Roman Jewry Wall and Museum and St. Nicholas' Church (Leicester's oldest church), are all less than five minutes walk from the river. At the centre of this fascinating area is Castle Gardens - a beautiful little park on the banks of the Mile Straight, with moorings for visiting boats.

### The Mile Straight

A fine stretch of water near to the City

Centre, the Mile Straight was created as part of a flood prevention scheme in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century. The Straight is the venue for boating regattas and rallies, and the annual Riverside Festival. The area has seen some big changes since the 1990s when huge scrap yards on Bede Island were transformed into housing and offices, and Bede Park, with its excellent children's play area.

### Freemen's Lock and Weir

The river here widens into a broad weir basin. This refreshing watery space is rich in wildlife, with islands forming from silt providing a safe haven for birds. On the east bank Leicester City Football Club's Walkers Stadium ⑤ overlooks the River, and its water front is protected as a nature reserve. An enormous power station once stood on this site, and the hot water it spewed out made the Mile Straight one of the best fisheries in the country. New housing development is transforming an old timber yard site opposite the Stadium. Beyond Twelve Arches ⑥ the canal meanders through the Aylestone Meadows Local Nature Reserve - Leicester's largest and richest wildlife reserve.

Leicester's Riverside stretches through and beyond the City along the River Soar and Grand Union Canal. It boasts many of the City's most important wildlife sites, is rich in historic and architectural interest, and is the focus for regeneration and investment.

Riverside is a complex patchwork of parks and open spaces, nature reserves, wetlands, farmland, industry, employment areas, housing areas, and development sites. These are connected by an extensive network of footpaths and cycleways. Riverside is a good place to visit on the national waterway and cycleway networks, and is the setting for a range of visitor attractions.

This leaflet is one of a set of three you can use to explore the entire length of Leicester's Riverside. For further information on attractions in the City, please contact the Tourist Information Centre (Tel. 0906 294 1113), or the organisations listed below.

### Riverside Contacts

There are many people involved in Leicester's Riverside. The following are the main contacts who may put you in touch with somebody to help you.

#### Leicester City Council

Riverside Rangers and Riverside Development Officer (Tel. 0116 229 4249) work closely with other agencies, user groups and volunteers to develop

Riverside's potential. You may well see the Rangers out and about on site helping to:

- increase awareness and involvement,
- ensure Riverside's positive management and development,
- minimising anti-social use.

The Rangers manage a programme of volunteer activities, including the award winning Greenlife boat project. This involves local people in clearing rubbish from the waterway. The Rangers work closely with BTCV, and Voluntary Action Leicester.

#### Voluntary Action Leicester

VAL supports the Riverside Rangers' work with volunteers, and takes bookings for the activities (Tel. 0116 255 3333).

#### Leicestershire County Council

Watermead Country Park (North) Ranger Service (Tel. 0116 267 1944) manages the Country Park between Wanlip Road and Birstall Lock (Northern Section of the Riverside).

#### British Waterways

Maintains and promotes the navigation and the waterway's environment. BW also owns much of the towing path which is maintained by the City Council (Tel. 01636 704481, or in emergencies: 0800 4799947).

#### Environment Agency

Responsible for pollution control, water

quality, flood prevention, and conserving the water environment. 24 hour free emergency telephone line. (Tel. 0800 807060)

### Getting to and around Riverside

Riverside is best explored by foot, cycle or boat, and is easily reached by bus. Phone *traveline* 0870 608 2 608 for details of bus services.

Riverside is used and enjoyed in many different ways - please be considerate to other users.

Cycle routes (which are also for pedestrians) are shown on the leaflets and marked on site by blue and white stripes. National Cycle Route 6 is marked on site by a cycle symbol with a **6**. Please use your bell and be considerate to non-cyclists.























Wheelchair access is steadily improving. We have not shown specific routes on these leaflets because of this changing situation. Please contact the Riverside Rangers for the latest details.

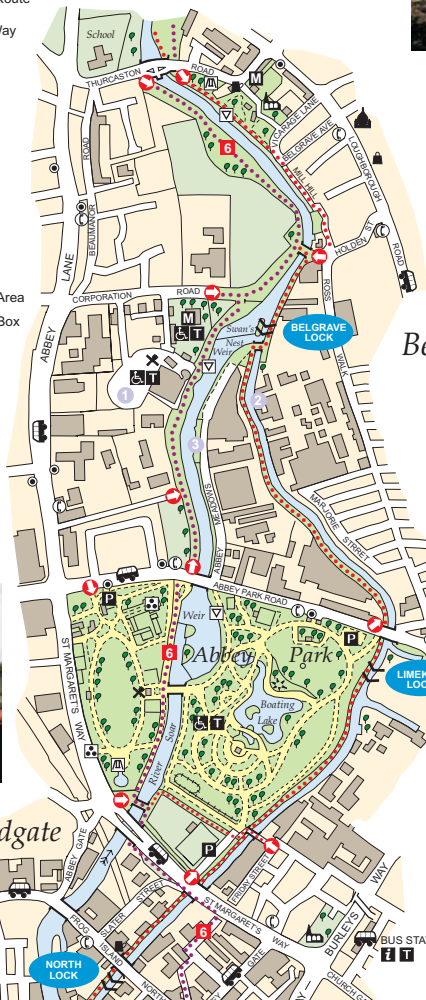
*We strongly advise you to check the availability and opening times of any attractions you intend to visit before you set out.*



**Leicester**  
City Council

# Key

-  Access Point
-  Cycleway/Footpath
-  Footpath
-  Steps
-  National Cycle Route
-  Great Central Way
-  Parking
-  Toilets
-  Disabled Toilets
-  Bus Stop
-  Bus Route
-  Public House
-  Shops
-  Food
-  Church
-  Mosque/Temple
-  Historical Site
-  Museum
-  Children's Play Area
-  Telephone Call Box
-  Moorings
-  Landing Stage



Belgrave Gardens



Canal, near Abbey Park

## Belgrave



National Space Centre



Memory Lane Wharf



Weir at Abbey Park

## Woodgate

