



SOUTH

(Map 1 of 3)

Aylestone Meadows ~ Glen Parva



ST MARY'S MILLS LOCK ~ KING'S LOCK



St Mary's Mills

Just over a mile from the City centre Riverside becomes a broad green wedge of accessible countryside. You can explore along the meandering canal, or the more direct Great Central Way, to Leicester's largest and richest nature reserve at Aylestone Meadows.

Aylestone Meadows Local Nature Reserve

The Reserve stretches for a mile and a half along the canal and Great Central Way. A wealth of wildlife can be seen by exploring the Reserve's extensive network of paths. The higher land between the canal and the River Biam was a municipal tip until the 1960s. The west side of the Reserve runs along the valley of the River Biam - a landscape of small meadows and hedgerows. 'Pebble Beach' ❶ is a popular riverside picnic area named after the gravelly bed of the river. Nearby an extensive recycled plastic board walk ❷ allows access across wildlife rich wetland. The board walk is designed by the City Council's Riverside Rangers, and built by them with teams of volunteers.

"Goose Island" and Aylestone Mill Lock "Goose Island" ❸ is easily identified from Aylestone Road by its resident flock of geese. The island is formed by the old mill race as it loops round from the river at Aylestone Mill Lock. The area around the lock is a popular place to visit - and includes the "Aylestone Globe" public art work.

Aylestone Village

The old village ❹ retains much of its charm and identity. The gardens at Aylestone Hall are worth a visit. The Hall itself, recently converted into two houses, dates back to the

early 14th Century. This makes it one of Leicester's oldest surviving secular buildings. Charles I was said to have stayed here during the siege of Leicester.

Pack Horse Bridge

This 15th century stone bridge ❺ was one of the original river crossings outside old Leicester. Pack horses carrying coal crossed here on their way from Swannington into the city. The bridge has 'passing points' all the way along it. Local people remember the mature willows alongside the canal here starting life as fence-posts.

Which King at King's Lock?

Charles I may have stayed at Aylestone Hall, but a King actually lived at King's Lock cottage. The lock is named after George King, who was the lock keeper in the 19th Century. King's Lock has the only remaining lock keeper's cottage in the City. There were originally two others - one at Freeman's Lock and the other at Belgrave. Each lock keeper looked after three locks, in George's case it was Bluebank, King's and Aylestone Mill. Distinctive stripes of ancient "ridge and furrow" farming can still be seen in this area.

KING'S LOCK ~ LEICESTER ROAD BRIDGE



Enjoying the Great Central Way

The southern end of Leicester's Riverside is particularly rural as the canal snakes alongside the attractive flood plain formed by the Rivers Soar, Sence and Biam.

Bluebank Lock

Bluebank Lock was named after the blue/grey Lias Clay from which it was cut. Other places along the Riverside named after local geology are Red Hill (red marl) and Pebble Beach (gravel).

The Great Central Way - onward to the Channel!

The Great Central Way follows the line of the Great Central Railway; once one of the most important main lines in Britain. Its visionary founder, Sir Edward Watkin, also founded the original Channel tunnel company 100 years ahead of its completion! He built the London to Manchester "Great Central" railway in 1899 hoping that it would eventually link to France. The railway closed in 1963, but in the 1980s this section found a new lease of life as a cycle/ foot way. By the turn of the 20th century this in turn became part of the UK's most widespread Millennium project – the 10,000 mile National Cycle Network. So you can now reach the Channel by bike! The Great Central Way is on Route 6 which goes from Derby to Oxford.

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 2294249) 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

Mucky work at Gees Lock!

Look out for some humps in the ground to the east of the lock - these were piles of spoil left by 'navigators' (known as 'navvies') searching for puddling clay. The clay was trampled by foot to make the water-proof lining for the canal.

Glen Parva - an industrial village?

When Pickfords moved their haulage business from horse and cart to the new canals, one of their major depots was in Glen Parva (northwest of Leicester Road bridge). Bricks for the local canal bridges and lock chambers, were also produced at Glen Parva brick works, which was founded by the Union Canal Company.

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
-  Boardwalk
-  Great Central Way
-  National Cycle Route
-  View point
-  Parking
-  Toilets
-  Disabled Toilets
-  Bus Stop
-  Bus Route
-  Nature Reserve
-  Public House
-  Shops
-  Food
-  Church
-  Historical Site
-  Museum
-  Children's Play Area
-  Telephone Call Box



Twelve Arches



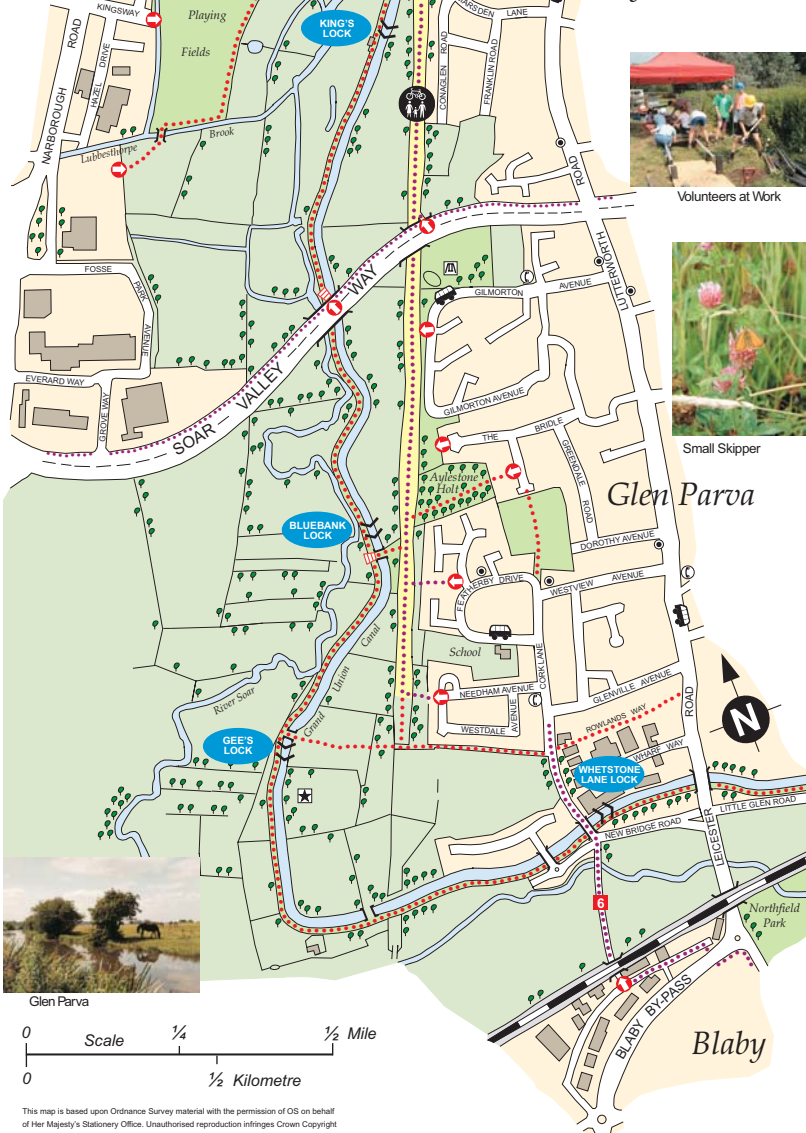
Aylestone Mill Lock

Braunstone



Near Middleton St.

Aylestone



This map is based upon Ordnance Survey material with the permission of OS on behalf of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Leicester City Council LA078417, 2004