

Laughton

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. You can also order them by phone or from our website.



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.

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

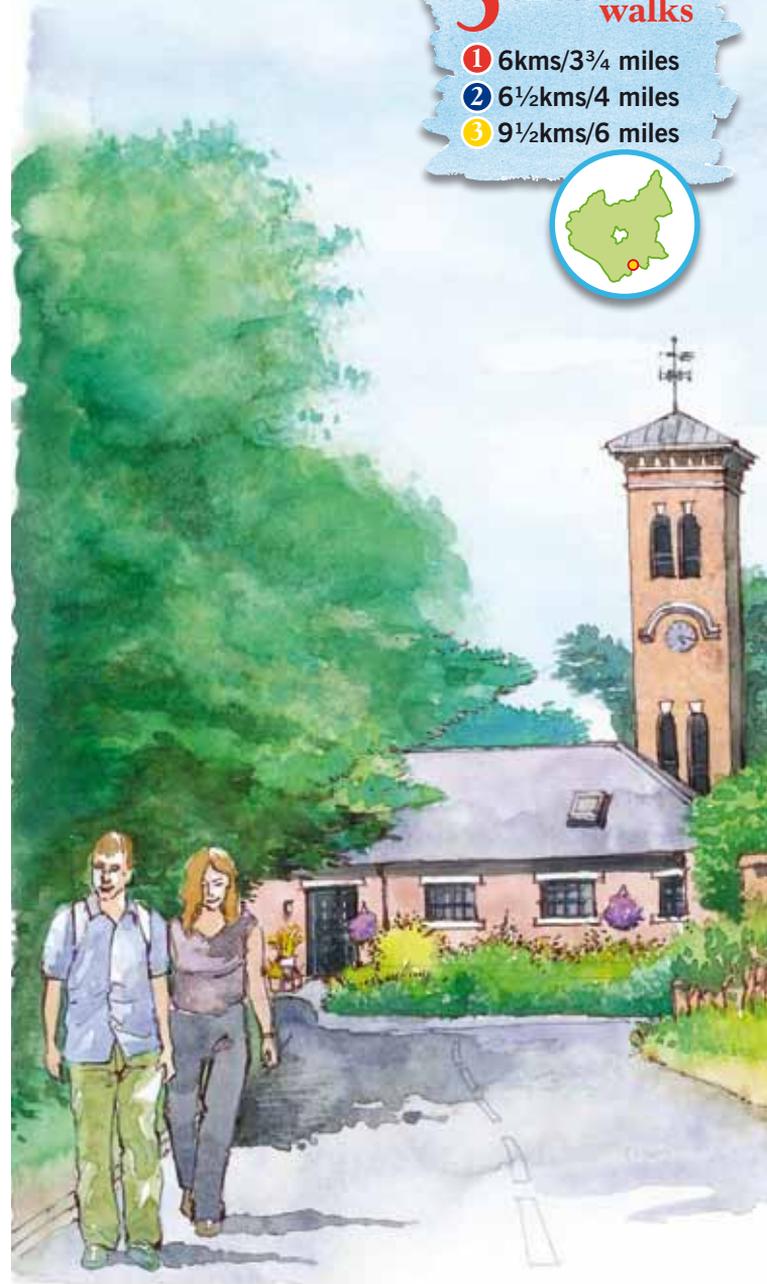
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Laughton

3 circular walks

- 1 6kms/3¾ miles
- 2 6½kms/4 miles
- 3 9½kms/6 miles





Key: P Car Parking & Walk Starts

--- Footpath

—|— Bridleway

—/— Byway

Most of Laughton Parish, including the villages of Laughton, Gumley and Saddington, is 500 ft above sea level, but the Laughton Hills, in the south, exceed 550 ft. These walks take you through this spectacular area of Leicestershire and the ancient villages of Laughton, Gumley and Saddington. Mentioned in the Domesday Book all three date back to at least 1086.

Walk 1:

Saddington to Gumley: 6 km (3¾ miles), allow 2 hours, gently undulating countryside with great views from Smeeton Hill.

P Street parking in the centre of Saddington

Gumley, in the 8th century was Godmundesleah, meaning the 'lea' or 'woodland clearing' of a man called Godmund. Located above a ridge, Gumley could have been easily fortified using natural terrain.

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There is evidence of a defensive ditch on the edge of the village, which is locally referred to as 'Offa's Dyke'.

Local historian Andrew Burbidge argues that Gumley was the location of the ancient Camelot. 'Cam' being pronounced 'Gum'. He regards the village as an important military site within the Mercian Kingdom, and proposes that the name derives from words meaning 'regal' or 'royal'

From the Queen's Head walk along Main Street, and follow the signed footpath down an alleyway on the right. Cross the fields then, after a footbridge, take the path off to the right which runs to the road running past Saddington Reservoir.

A Turn left and continue to Gumley Road. You will see a cricket pitch on your right. Go straight across, heading for Gumley, until you see a waymark post pointing left through the beautiful Gumley Woods. This path then brings you out at St. Helen's Church.

B Turn left following the path to the road, and continue across following the waymarks, keeping the hedge on the right.

C At Smeeton Gorse turn left to reach the top of Smeeton Hill and a memorial bench with spectacular sweeping views North and West.

From here follow the footpath back towards Saddington and retrace the path through the alleyway to Main Street.

Walk 2:

Laughton to Gumley: 6½km (4 miles), allow 2 hours, easy walking through arable and pasture land **P** Centre of Laughton

Old buildings dominate Laughton with currently only

two modern buildings situated in the village. There is a row of cottages opposite the church that has parts dating back to medieval times. The church itself dates back to the C13th and had a major renovation in 1879.

From Laughton head south on the road out of the village and after 200m turn left following the yellow waymarkers through four fields.

1 The path then runs alongside a stream and you will see a large linear copse high on your left. Follow the stream until the path reaches a fork.

2 Take the left fork up the hill towards Gumley. At the start of the third field the path climbs quite steeply uphill. Keep to the right of the large trees on the way up and carry on straight through the gate at the top of the field, then follow the markers into Gumley.

For refreshments at the Bell Inn turn right at the road.



3 To continue the walk exit the village along the same path, but as you reach the open field head left across and down to the end of the first field.

4 Cross a brook, turn right and walk alongside the brook. Continue over a small ditch and through a gap in the trees. At the path end, turn left to go past the newly restored Gumley Lodge.

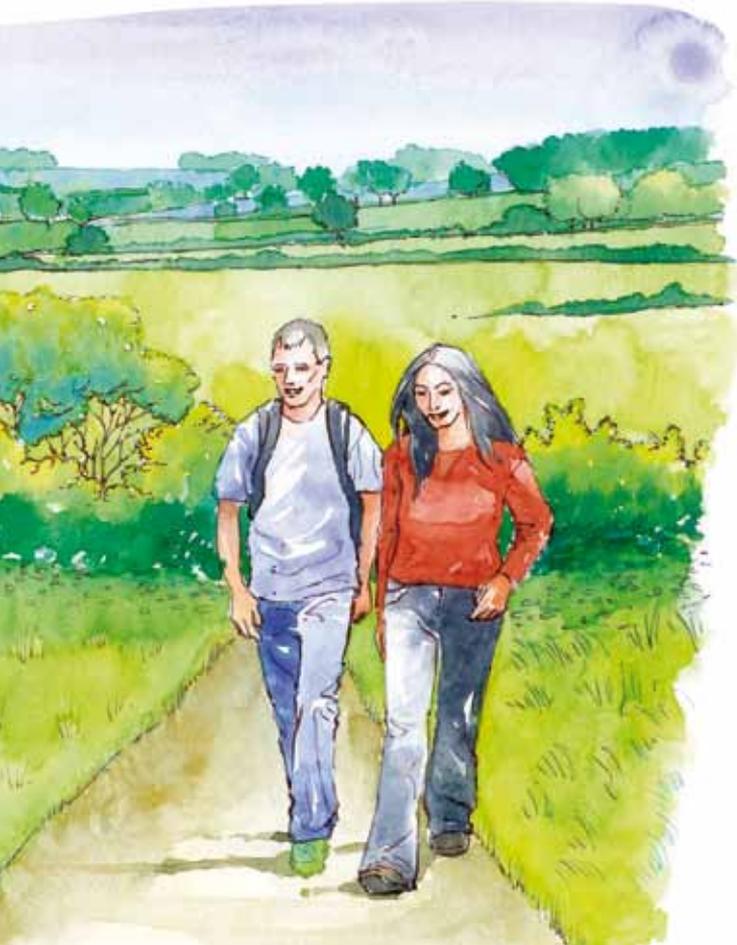
5 As you climb the hill past the lodge, bear to the left of the small copse. Follow the waymarks until the walk veers left to reach the road.

6 At the road, turn right to return to Laughton.

Walk 3: **Saddington – Laughton – Gumley Circular Route:** 9½ km (6 miles), allow 2½

hours **P** Street parking in the centre of Saddington

Saddington Reservoir was originally built to supply the canal with water, now it is valued for its diverse



wildlife, including dragonflies and damselflies

Starting at Manor Farm Riding School head along the track to Mowsley Road. Cross and follow the yellow markers down to and across Saddington Brook. Once over the bridge turn right and continue with the Brook on the right until taking a path running uphill to the left to Jacqui's Tea Rooms. *From here there are fine views back across the valley to Saddington and the East.*

i Turn right along Mowsley Road, then left along a rough track. Follow it over Laughton Brook, where the path then crosses over open farmland. As you walk uphill the track becomes less defined. At this point turn left onto an old road. This road will then take you to the edge of Laughton.

ii Before entering Laughton take the rough track on the right, which leads behind the village church. Turn left at the lane, then left again at the end.

Bear right along this road and then right again to follow the direction for the start of the [Laughton to Gumley walk](#).

Once at Gumley turn left and follow directions for the [Gumley to Saddington walk from point B](#) to return to Laughton.

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:

By car: Saddington and Laughton can both be reached from Leicester via the A5199

Buses: Service 44 Fleckney to Foxton via Market Harborough (Mon-Sat) stops in Saddington.

Refreshments: Queens Head, Saddington; Bell Inn, Gumley; Staff of Life, Mowsley.