

## Your details

We understand that you may want to keep some information private. However, by answering the following questions we can use it to improve services and support for specific groups.

**Are you male or female?** Male ☐ Female ☐

**How old are you?** 16-24 ☐ 25-34 ☐ 35-44 ☐  
45-54 ☐ 55-64 ☐ 65+ ☐

**What is your ethnic group?** White ☐  
Mixed (e.g. White and Asian) ☐ Asian or Asian British ☐  
Black or Black British ☐ Any Other Ethnic Group ☐

**Do you have any long-standing illness, disability or infirmity?** Yes ☐ / No ☐

If yes, does this limit your activities in any way? Yes ☐ / No ☐

**Would you like to receive information on physical activity sessions, walking and cycling in your area?** Yes ☐ / No ☐

## Your contact details:

Forename ..... Surname .....

Address .....

Postcode ..... Contact Number .....

Email Address .....

**Please return the completed form to:** Access Officer, Strolls on your doorstep, Environment and Transport Department, Leicestershire County Council, County Hall, Glenfield, Leics, LE3 8TE

*The free prize draw will take place at the end of July, October, January and April – winners will be notified shortly afterwards. All entries to the prize draw must be submitted by an adult over 18 years of age. The decision of Leicestershire County Council is final and no correspondence will be entered into. Members of the Countryside Service are not permitted to enter the prize draw. Personal data supplied will be held on computer and will be used in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 for statistical analysis, management, planning and in the provision of services by Leicestershire County Council and its partners.*

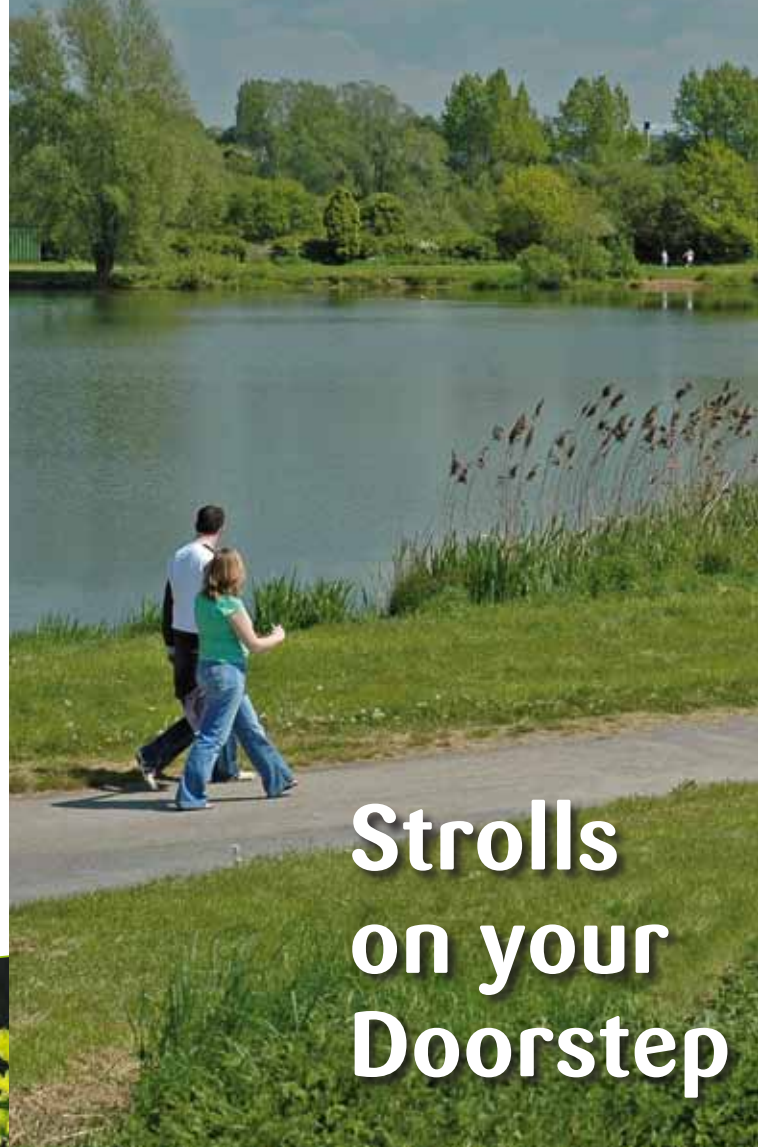
## When out and about please observe the Countryside Code

- Be safe – plan ahead and follow any signs
- Leave gates and property as you find them
- Protect plants and animals, and take your litter home
- Keep dogs under close control
- Consider other people

Published 2010

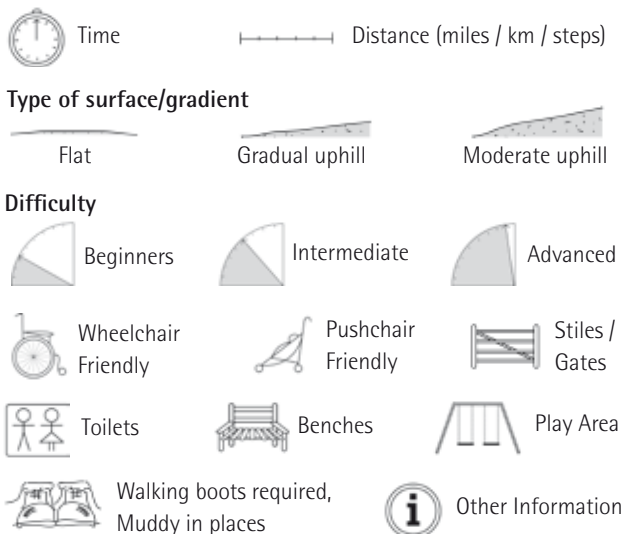
# Short walks North of Leicester

Syston • Thurmaston • Birstall  
Barkby • Cossington • Wanlip • Queniborough



# Strolls on your Doorstep

H1151



This booklet contains ten walks north of the city of Leicester within Charnwood Borough, designed to introduce local walking opportunities. The walks range from a fifteen minute stroll around a local park to a one hour thirty minute walk within Cossington Meadows.

There is information and grading for each walk to help you decide which is most suitable for you. The times given are for guidance only and may vary according to your ability and whether you stop en-route. The easiest and shortest walks are listed first. So if you fancy doing something different, the challenge is to complete all the walks, building up to over nearly 34,000 steps, over 14 miles in total.

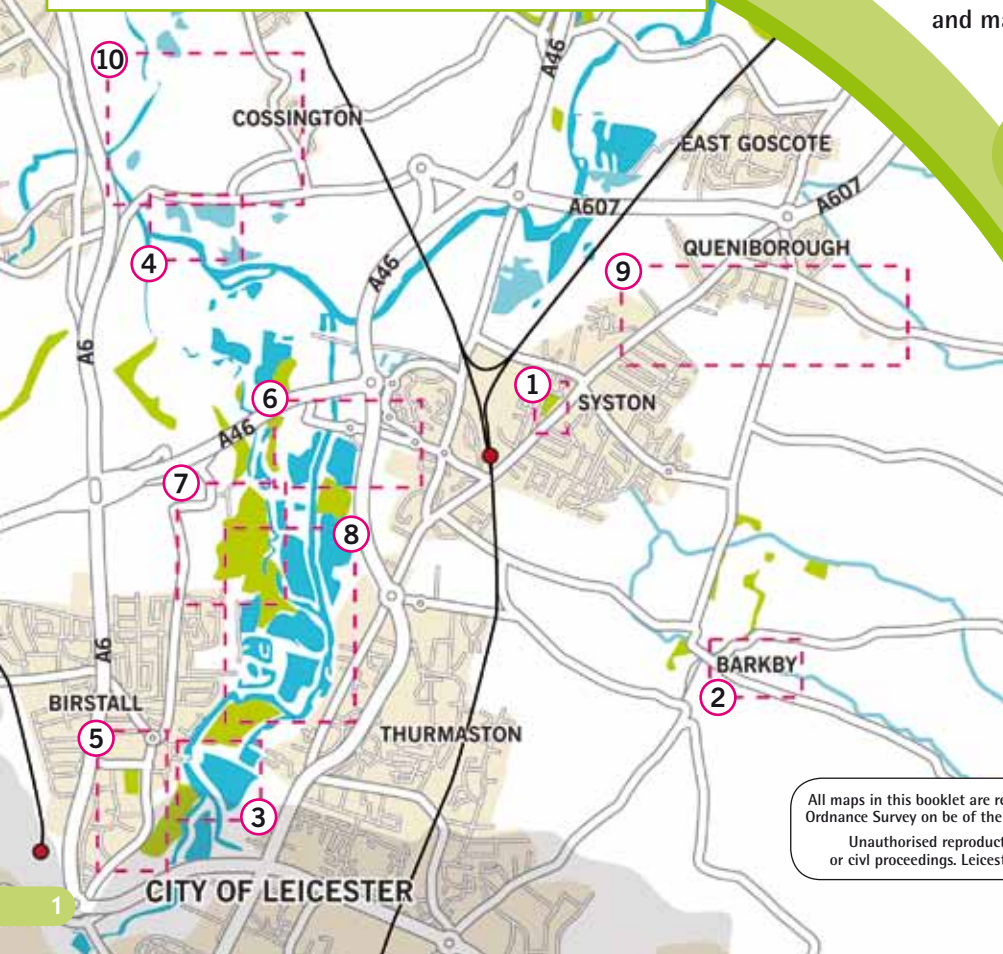
**Please note: some of the routes in this booklet require reasonable map reading skills.**

**Many of these walks are located on floodplain and may be water logged after rain.**

Please remember when walking to follow the countryside code and to wear appropriate clothing and footwear.

## Routes

- 1 Central Park Loop, Syston
- 2 Barkby Brook
- 3 Birstall into Watermead
- 4 Cossington Locks
- 5 Birstall Loop
- 6 John Merricks' Lake, Syston
- 7 Wanlip and Watermead
- 8 Explore Watermead from Thurmaston
- 9 Queniborough to Syston and back
- 10 Cossington Meadows



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# Route 1

## Syston

## Central Park Loop, Syston

A pleasant walk around the perimeter of this local park

Starting on **Melton Road** follow the surfaced path into **Central Park** and turn right towards the brook and children's play area. Continuing around the Parks perimeter path, turn left alongside the brook towards **St. Peter's Street**, then left again on the path adjacent to the road. With the bowling green on your left, turn left following the **public footpath** to the **war memorial**. Turn left following the path back to the start.



### Route Information



15 minutes

0.4miles / 0.6km / 857steps



Wheelchair Friendly



Pushchair Friendly



Flat tarmac with slight incline in and out of the park



Beginners



Benches throughout the route



Play Area

# Route 2

## Barkby

## Barkby Brook

A short walk in the picturesque village of Barkby

Starting on **Vicarage Lane** follow the road as it bears left and becomes **Brookside**. Continue along the road past Brookside Public House and onto a **public footpath** with the brook on your right. Once past **73 Brook Cottage** turn right over a footbridge, then right again with the brook still on your right. On reaching **Barkby Holt Lane** turn right and follow the road as far as **Vicarage Lane**. Turn right to return to your starting point. Take care on the lanes as they do not have dedicated footways.



### Route Information



25 minutes

0.8miles / 1.3km / 1857steps



Flat surfaced (some uneven sections)



Beginners



Pushchair Friendly



# Route 3

Birstall

## Birstall into Watermead

Look out for the mammoth on the hill

Starting at the **White Horse public house** on **White Horse Lane** go to the end of the road and turn right over a **bridge**. Follow the **River Soar** then cross over a **canal lock bridge** and a **footbridge** to reach a surfaced path beside the lake. Turn right, and walk with the lake on your left. When the path splits take the left path beside the lake, passing "**The Mammoth**" on your right. *Remains of Ice Age animals including a Woolly Mammoth were discovered whilst extracting gravel from this area.* Keep following the path beside the lake, then beyond the **car park** you will reach a junction with a **bridleway**. Turn left and with the lake still on your left continue for some distance as it bears left, along a section of **boardwalk**, until you get back to the **bridge** you crossed at the beginning. Cross the bridge and retrace your steps to the pub.



### Route Information



35 minutes



1.17miles / 1.9km / 2714steps



Flat apart from short section of hill on White Horse Lane, most of the route surfaced



Beginners



Pushchair Friendly



Benches within Watermead



## Route Information



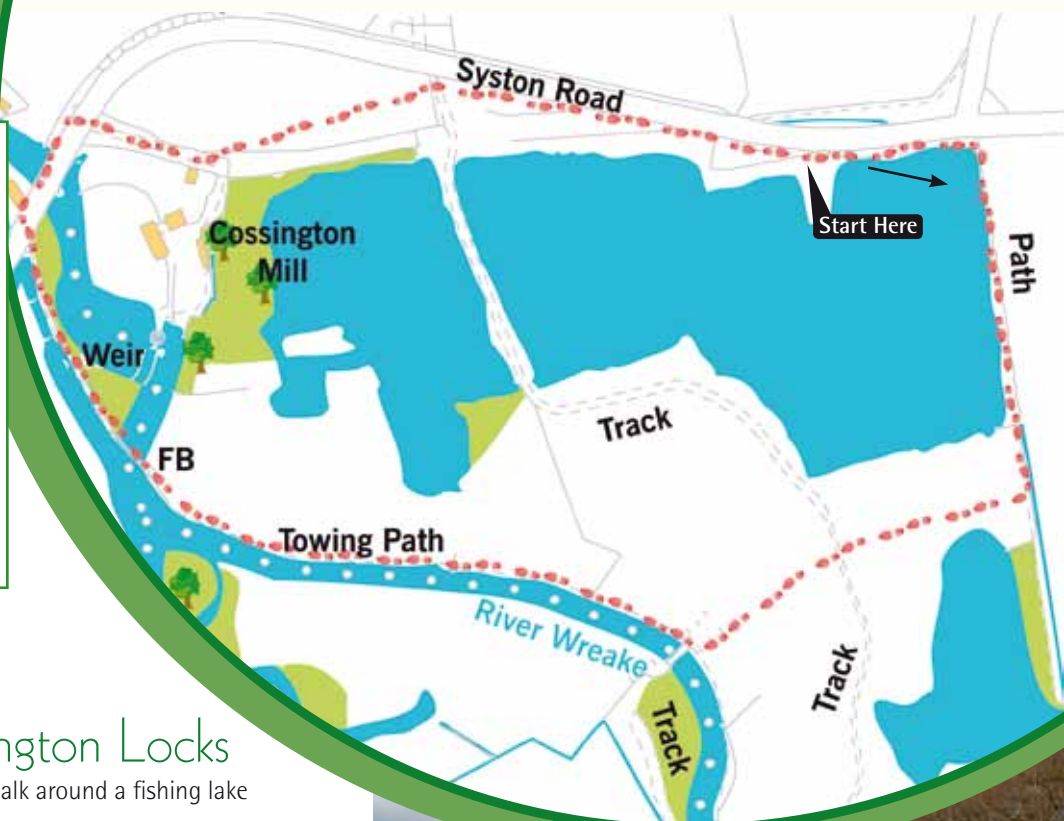
35 minutes

1.17 miles / 1.9km /  
2714 stepsMainly flat  
un-surfaced

Beginners/intermediate



Stiles / Gates

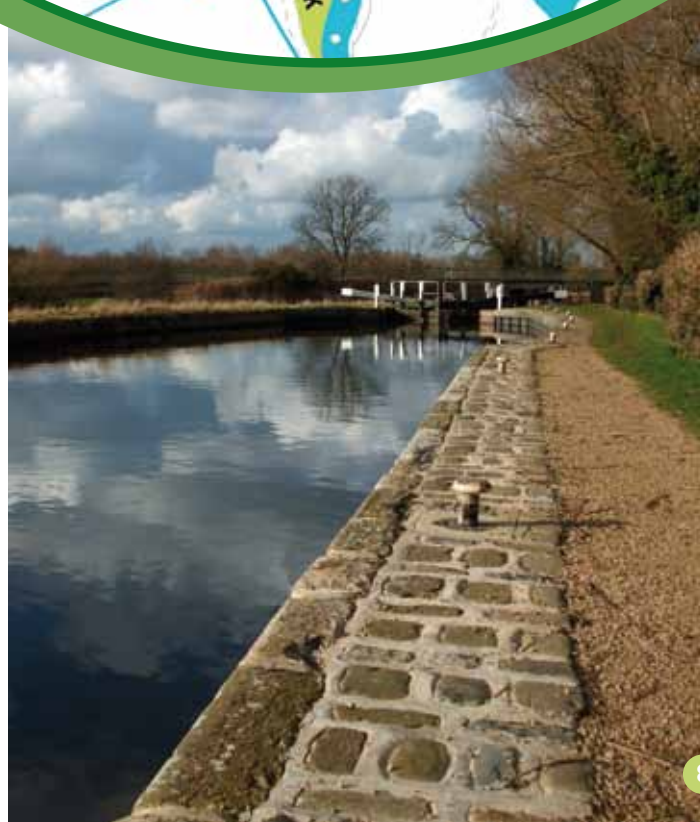
Walking boots required,  
Muddy in placesRoute  
4  
Cossington

## Cossington Locks

A circular walk around a fishing lake

Starting at the lay-by on **Syston Road**, with your back to the road go through the gate on the left and follow the **footpath** around the lake side. After going through a gate turn right to follow the **public footpath** through the middle of the grassland between the two lakes until you reach the **River Wreake**. Turn right along the edge of the river. Eventually you will come to a stile onto a **large footbridge** over the **River Soar**, cross this with care as the slope is quite steep, and continue along the towpath past Cossington Lock and out onto **Cossington Lane**. Turn right along the road, over a bridge and \*take the lane on the right leading to **Cossington Mill**. Carry straight on, on the **footpath** to eventually reach the road and starting point.

\*Note; if the route from Cossington Mill is flooded please follow Syston Road back to the start point.



Route 5  
Birstall

## Birstall Loop

A mainly urban walk with  
a short field section

Starting from the car park next to the Sibson Road roundabout cross the road to take **Front Street** past the shops as it bears round to the right, with the **Earl of Stamford** pub to the left on the opposite side of the road. Continue on **Front Street** turning to the right, the road then bears round to the right and becomes **Church Hill**. Just before you reach **St James the Great church**, cross the road and go along **Nether Hall Lane**. At the end go over a stile and take the footpath diagonally across the field and through a gate out onto **Birstall Road**. Turn left along the footway, then cross to follow **Kilby Avenue** as it heads uphill. Turn right at the junction with **Curzon Avenue**, then at the T junction with **School Lane** turn right. After a short distance turn left into the recreation ground and bear right around the children's play area. Take the path across the middle of the recreation ground, and at the far side follow the path right to return to the start.

## Route Information



40 minutes



1.55miles / 2.5km / 3571steps



Some gradients but mainly  
footway and surfaced routes



Intermediate



Stiles / Gates



Walking boots required,  
Muddy in places



# John Merrick's Lake, Syston

Named in honour of an aspiring Olympic sailor who first learned to sail here

Starting at the end of **Gorse Lane** take the path to the left of house **number 23** and out onto **Wanlip Road**. Turn right and walk along the pavement, crossing two roundabouts. Once over **Wanlip Canal bridge** next to the Hope and Anchor pub, turn left to cross the road and follow the **public footpath** along the canal towpath. After a short distance go through a **wooden kissing gate** on your right and turn left following the path all the way around the lake. Keep the lake on your right at all times until you eventually reach the car park and boat yard. Walk past the boats on your left to meet up with the **public footpath** which you came in on.

Go through the **kissing gate**, turn left and retrace your steps up to **Wanlip Road**, turn right and return to the starting point.



## Route Information



55 minutes — 1.7 miles / 2.8km / 4000 steps



Mainly flat surfaced



Intermediate



Benches around John Merricks' Lake



kissing gates



Toilets south end of John Merricks' Lake



Walking boots required, Muddy in places

## Wanlip and Watermead

Wanlip village is dominated by a medieval church (1393) just north of this route

From the junction of **Church Road** and **Rectory Road**, walk along **Church Road** and turn right following a track to its end. Go through the squeeze stile on the left and onto a **public footpath**. Follow the **yellow topped waymark posts** to **Watermead Country Park**. As you enter the country park onto a surfaced path do not cross the bridge, instead, turn immediately right and walk past a **lake** on your left. Bear left around the lake edge and then take the path on the right signed towards **Worcester Drive**. On reaching the road, cross over and follow **Newton Drive** to its end, then follow a path ahead, between houses **21** and **28**. As you emerge onto **Allington Drive** cross over and go along **Dalby Avenue** to **Wanlip Lane** and turn right. As you reach the schools and college grounds on the left hand side turn right and cross a **stile** onto the **public footpath**. Follow the **yellow topped waymark posts** along the field edges back to **Rectory Road, Wanlip**. Turn right to return to the start.



### Route Information



55 minutes



1.8 miles / 2.9 km /  
4143 steps



Mostly flat, mainly un-surfaced  
field paths



Intermediate /  
Advanced



Squeeze stiles,  
Gates and Stiles



Walking boots required, Muddy in places



# Route 8

Thurmaston

## Explore Watermead from Thurmaston

Surfaced paths within Watermead Country Park

Starting from the car park at the end of **Mill Lane**, take the public footpath next to the **boat yard** leading into **Watermead Country Park**. Go over a **footbridge**, cross a **second bridge**, then turn right and go over a **third bridge**. Once across turn immediately right and follow the surfaced **towpath** alongside the **Grand Union Canal**. Continue on this for sometime until you eventually cross a **bridge**. *(\*short route: immediately after crossing the bridge take the path on the left, keeping the River Soar on your left. Rejoin the main route at the next bridge on the left).* To continue the longer route, after crossing the **bridge**, bear left then right to walk the path between the canal and **King Lear's Lake**. After passing the '**dinosaur remains**' and crossing a bridge the path will begin to bear left around the edge of **King Lear's Lake**; continue along this, ignoring the paths leading off to the right. Follow the path around the opposite side of the **lake**. Look out for the floating statue of the last scene in Shakespeare's **King Lear**. Cross the next large **footbridge** on the right. *(the short route rejoins at this point).* Once over the **bridge** turn right and follow the surfaced path around the **lake**. When you reach a **field gate** and **kissing gate** near a car park bear round to the left then take the next left towards **Mill Lane**. Continue straight on between lakes until you reach the **bridge** which you crossed at the start of the walk. Retrace your steps over the **three bridges** back to the car park. **\*\*There is plenty to see and do in the park so why not try varying your route?**

### Route Information



**Short:** 45 minutes

**Long:** 1 hour



**Short:** 1.5 miles / 2.4km / 3429 steps

**Long:** 2.04 miles / 3.3km / 4714 steps

Flat surfaced routes



Intermediate/  
Advanced



Pushchair  
Friendly



Benches  
throughout  
Watermead



# Route 9

Queniborough


## Queniborough to Syston and back

A link between two villages mentioned in the Domesday Book.

Start opposite **St Marys Church** and walk along **Main Street** into Queniborough, passing the local pubs and crossing **Mere Lane** and **School Lane**, until you reach **The Banks**. Turn left in the direction of the **footpath sign** then when the road comes to an end, bear right to continue on the **public footpath** in front of houses **numbered 6 and 10**. On reaching **Glebe Road** turn right, then at the junction with **Barkby Road** cross over and turn left. Turn right into **Avenue Road** then take the footpath on the left between houses **numbered 71 and 73**. Follow the **public footpath** which goes diagonally across three fields to **Millstone Lane**. At this point take a breath, then turn around and retrace the route back to the start.

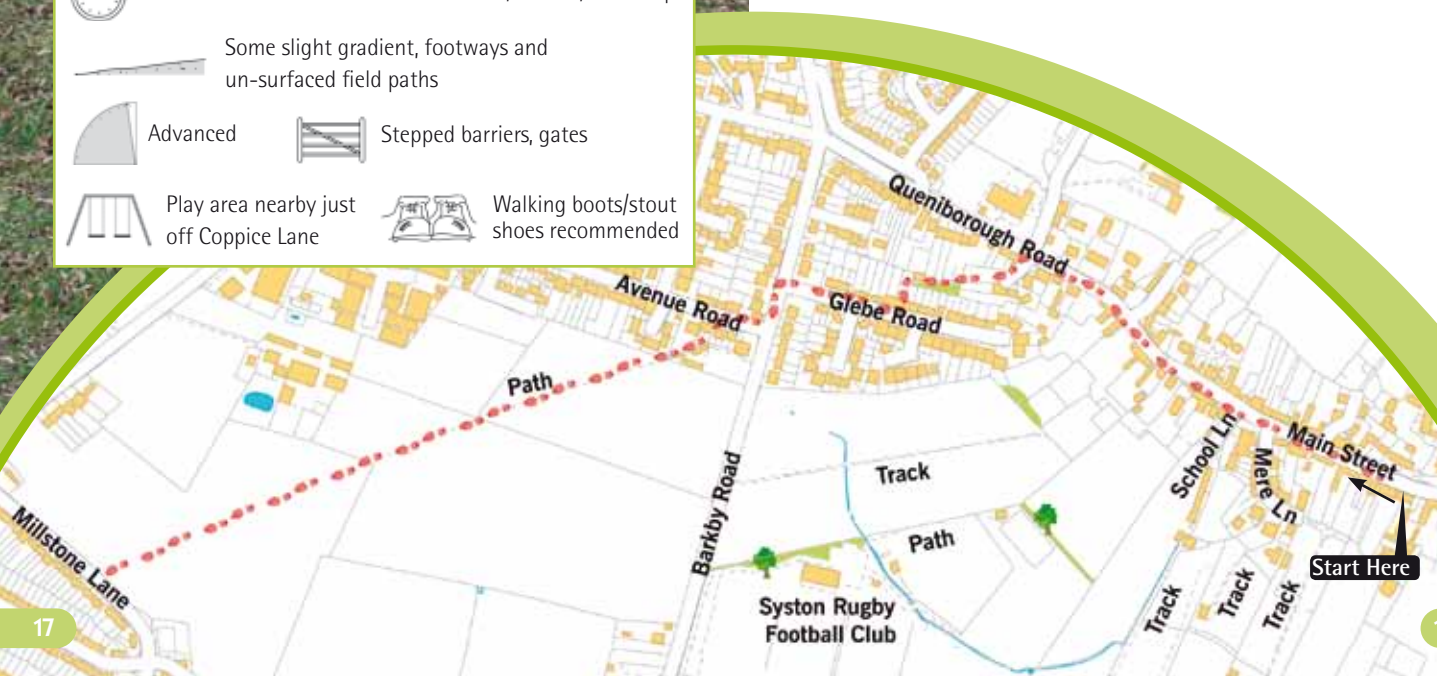
### Route Information

 1 hour 15 minutes  2.3miles / 3.6km / 5143steps

 Some slight gradient, footways and un-surfaced field paths

 Advanced  Stepped barriers, gates

 Play area nearby just off Coppice Lane  Walking boots/stout shoes recommended





## Cossington Meadows

A circular walk from Cossington Church taking in part of the Leicestershire Round, and Cossington Meadows.

With the **All Saints Church**, Cossington on your left, take the **public footpath** leading away from the village. At a plantation of trees you will come to a **junction of paths**, walk the path to the right following **waymark arrows** that contain the **circular arrow sticker** (indicating this is part of the **Leicestershire Round**, the long distance path around Leicestershire). Follow the **footpath** along the right hand side of two fields and then bear left. After a short distance you will come to a **junction of paths** (\*to follow the shorter route turn left down the track). Continue straight ahead along the **Leicestershire Round**, to the left of the hedges ignoring a path which heads off right. On reaching the **River Soar** turn left, leaving the Leicestershire Round, and follow the **river**

**bank**. As you get close to **Syston Road** take the left hand path which runs parallel to the road. Then at the track (where the shorter route rejoins from the left) turn right to go out onto Syston Road. Turn left along the road verge for a short distance then, turn left onto a **public footpath**. Continue adjacent to a fence on the left, following the **yellow-topped waymark posts** until coming out onto **Platts Lane** and turn left.

**Dry Weather Route** – Walk along **Platts Lane** for a short distance and when opposite the **pavilion** turn left onto a **public footpath**. Follow this path which passes to the left of a **moat** and joins the path which you began on. Turn right at the **path junction** to return to the start.

**Wet Weather Route** – As this area is prone to flooding, during wet weather an alternative route from this point would be to continue along **Platts Lane** then, turn left into **Main Street**. At the **War Memorial** turn left to return to the start.

## Route Information



**Short:** 1 hour / **Long:** 1 hour 30 minutes



**Short:** 1.8 miles / 3.0 km / 4286 steps

**Long:** 2.4 miles / 3.9 km / 5571 steps



Undulating, tarmac and surfaced and unsurfaced



Advanced



Gates and stiles



Small play area just off the route on Platts Lane



Walking boots/stout shoes recommended



## Walking is Wonderful

There are many benefits from taking a purposeful, brisk walk on a regular basis. It can:

- Give you more energy and help you feel good
- Reduce stress and help you sleep better
- Keep your heart 'strong' and reduce blood pressure
- Help build and maintain healthy bones, muscles and joints
- Help to manage your weight

Plus:

- Almost everyone can do it, anywhere and any time
- It's a chance to meet and make new friends
- Its free and you don't need special equipment
- You can start slowly and build up gently

To obtain other Strolls on your Doorstep booklets, and further information on walking in Leicestershire please contact Access Officer, Environment and Transport, Leicestershire County Council, County Hall, Glenfield, Leicester, LE3 8TE.

Tel: **0116 305 0001**, Fax: **0116 305 7965**, Minicom:

**0116 305 7334**, Email: [customerservices@leics.gov.uk](mailto:customerservices@leics.gov.uk)

Website: [www.leics.gov.uk/paths](http://www.leics.gov.uk/paths)

## The NEW Countryside Guide

Packed with details about Leicestershire's country parks, walking, cycling and horse riding routes and more, this **FREE** guide is a 'Must Have' to help you explore this beautiful county. Available spring 2010 from libraries, Service Shops, country parks and local Tourist Information Centres, phone: **0116 305 0001** or email: [customerservices@leics.gov.uk](mailto:customerservices@leics.gov.uk).



**Active Together** is a county-wide programme across Leicestershire that aims to encourage adults, aged 16+ to become more active more often.

To find out what's happening in the **North of Leicester** area, and to be regularly updated on activity sessions, please contact the local Physical Activity Development Officer, Charnwood Borough Council, Council Offices, Southfield Road, Loughborough, LE11 2TX, tel: **01509 634 673** or visit the website [www.lrsport.org.uk/active](http://www.lrsport.org.uk/active).

**Natural England's Walking for Health** encourages you to enjoy your local spaces and benefit your health by taking part in health walks. Find your local Walking for Health scheme at [www.wfh.naturalengland.org.uk/walkfinder](http://www.wfh.naturalengland.org.uk/walkfinder)



Win  
£25 of Blacks  
Vouchers

Have you found this walking guide useful?

# Tell us what you think.

Help us improve future walking information by telling us what you think of this guide and you will be entered into our free prize draw to **WIN £25 of Blacks Vouchers**. We value your comments and feedback.

How many of the 10 walks have you completed? .....

Which route did you most enjoy? Number .....

Were the directions easy to follow? Yes ☐ / No ☐

Comments: .....

Could the routes be improved? Yes ☐ / No ☐

If yes, how .....

Do you think other information is needed? Yes ☐ / No ☐

If yes, what .....

Where did you obtain this booklet?

Direct from Leicestershire County Council ☐

Leisure Centre ☐ Library/ Museum/ Service Shop ☐

Council Offices ☐ On a Health Walk ☐

Other ☐ .....

Do you currently partake in activities organised by Active

Together or Walking for Health? Yes ☐ / No ☐

If yes, please specify .....

If no, have you been encouraged to walk regularly? Yes ☐ / No ☐

Have you visited our website for walking information,

[www.leics.gov.uk/paths](http://www.leics.gov.uk/paths)

Over the past four weeks, how many days a week, on average have you taken part in 30 minutes or more of moderate intensity physical exercise?

*In this instance moderate intensity physical activity includes all types of activity that makes your breathing and heartbeat faster and makes you feel warmer. It includes all sports and recreation including recreational walking and cycling, but does not include gardening, housework, DIY or physical activity which is part of your work or travelling to work. It can be built up of 10 minute bursts and does not have to be done all at once.*

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐

Please continue overleaf