

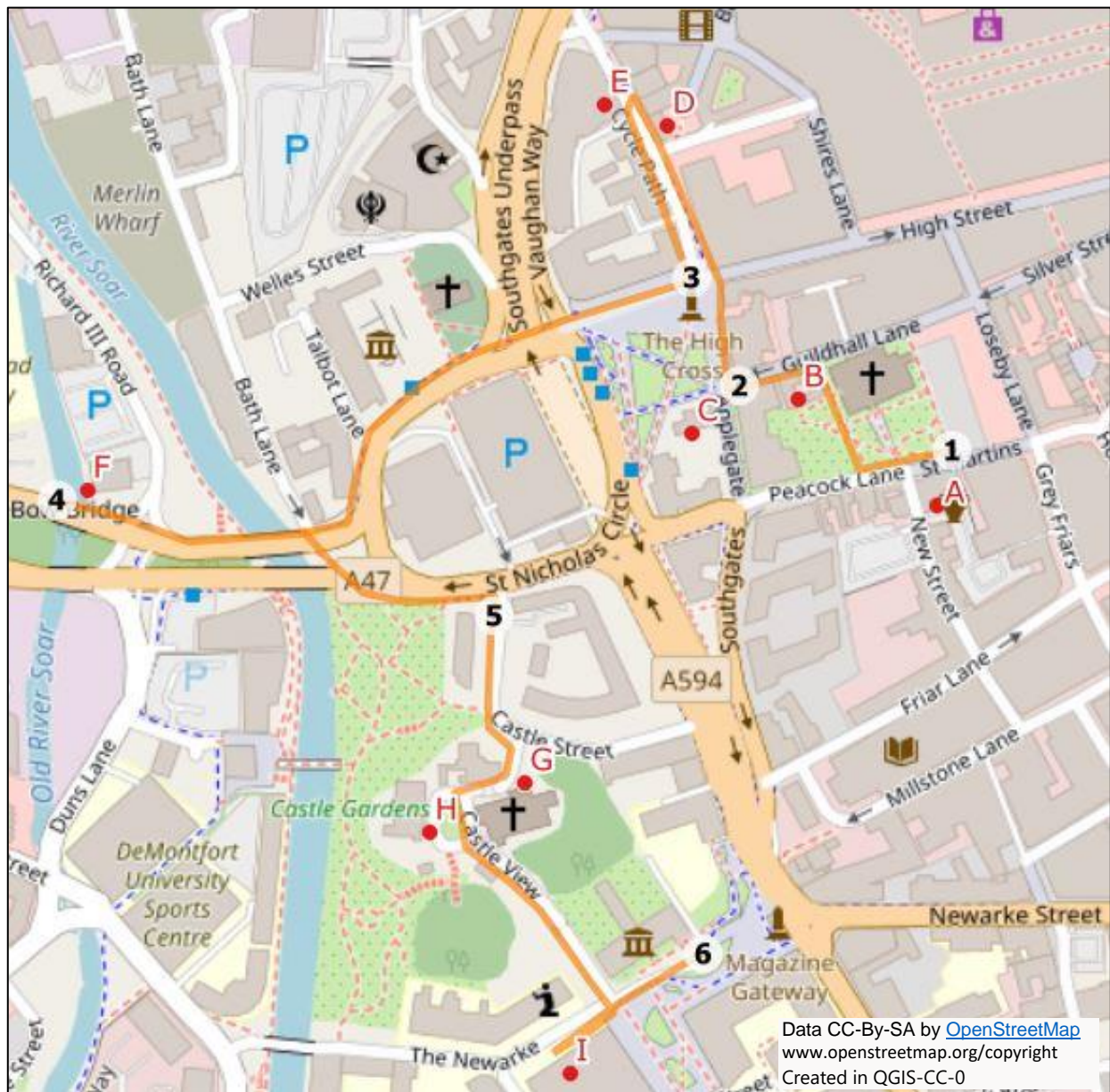
# A short stroll through Leicester's Past

**Start location:** King Richard III statue, St Martins, Leicester LE1 5DE

**Finish location:** Magazine Square, The Newarke, LE1 5XZ.

**Time taken:** 30 minutes (approximately, steady pace); **Distance:** 1 miles 1.6 km **Linear Description:**

A short walk through the city centre past places associated with historic figures, associated with myth or legend, or places reputed to be haunted. This route is designed to accompany our virtual walk video of the same name to enable walkers to lead their own self-guided walk. Take in the information panels along way to discover the history and find answers to the questions.



- Main route
- Alternative route
- 1 Stage / waypoint
- A Point of interest

\*Time is calculated at a steady pace of 2mph

This route was developed by staff and volunteers for Leicester City Council:  
[www.choosehowyoumove.co.uk/walks](http://www.choosehowyoumove.co.uk/walks)



**Walk starts:** Richard III statue, St Martins, Leicester LE1 5DE

**Finish location:** Magazine square, The Newarke.

To help plan your journey visit: [www.choosehowyoumove.co.uk](http://www.choosehowyoumove.co.uk)

**Safety tips:**

- Take care crossing roads - use the pedestrian crossings where present. St Nicholas Circle and St Augustine Road are very busy.
- Watch for cyclists throughout the city centre, including temporary cycle lanes.
- The route uses firm paths but some sections are uneven, including the cobble stones on St Martins West and on Castle View / Castle Yard.
- Narrow pavement on New Street.
- Remember to observe the guidance on social distancing.

**Route directions:**

**1.** From the King Richard III statue you may wish to detour a short distance to New Street for the information board about Grey Friars, the burial and the more recent rediscovery of Richard III.

**(A) Grey Friars.** Site of the former Grey Friars friary and burial place of Richard III after his death at the Battle of Bosworth in August 1485.

Head along St Martins West (beside the Cathedral) towards the Guildhall.

**(B) Leicester Guildhall.** Leicester's oldest Civic Building. It has performed several functions including holding local court sessions, hosting events, a town hall, public library and the town's first police station. It is reputed to be one of Leicester's most haunted buildings. Ghosts are said to include the White Lady (or a grey monk), a Civil War Cavalier, a policeman, a dog and a cat!

*Q. It was built in 1390 as a meeting place for which Guild? .....*

Turn left along Guildhall Lane to reach Applegate and Wygston's House.

**(C) Wygston's House.** Leicester's oldest house. The timber hall dates from around 1490, the brick building from 1796. There is a later Victorian wing. The house has been a private residence then more recently an antiques emporium, a museum and now a bar and restaurant. Its age and history have attracted ghost hunters in recent years. There is an information panel about the house on the railings facing Jubilee Square and another information board nearby on Applegate about Medieval Leicester.

*Q. Which member of the Wygston family may have been the first to own this house?.....*

*Q. Applegate. What was this road once called?.....*

**2.** Leave Applegate and walk along the edge of Jubilee Square towards the High Cross monument, then continue ahead into Highcross Street until you reach the former grammar school on the right.

**(D) Free Grammar School of 1573.** Queen Elizabeth I gave permission to demolish a nearby church, to use the materials to build the grammar school. The Royal coat of arms is displayed above the school entrance. The school closed in 1841.

*Q. What was the name of the church that was demolished?.....*

On the opposite side of Highcross Street, a little further along is a modern hotel. It stands on the former site of the Blue Boar Inn. There is an information panel there.

**(E) The Blue Boar Inn.** In August 1485, Richard III stayed at the inn the night before riding out towards Bosworth. Legend tells how the inn was formerly called the White Boar to reflect King Richard's emblem. But after his defeat at the Battle of Bosworth the landlord changed the sign to a blue boar.

**Q. The blue boar featured on whose emblem?.....**

**4.** Retrace your steps towards Jubilee Square. Then turn right to reach St Nicholas Circle and cross with care at the multiple pedestrian crossings. On the far side, pass St Nicholas Church and the Roman Jewry Wall and continue onwards to reach St Augustine Road. Cross the bridge (West Bridge) over the River Soar and carefully cross King Richard's Road (watch for traffic entering at speed from the busy dual carriageway) to reach the Bow Bridge (F).

**(F) The Bow Bridge.** Nearby there is evidence of two popular stories about Richard III. A plaque commemorates a legend – now officially discredited – that Richard's remains were exhumed from Grey Friars and thrown into the River Soar. On the Bow Bridge are two more plaques. Richard III crossed the original Bow Bridge as he rode out towards the Battle of Bosworth. A legend tells how as Richard rode across, he struck his spur against the bridge... and that an old woman prophesied he would hit his head on the same spot upon his return.

**Q. In what year was this 'new' Bow Bridge built? .....**

Retrace your steps along St Augustine Road as far as West Bridge. Cross St Augustine Road via the pedestrian crossings towards Castle Gardens (watch for cyclists - cycle lane on the pavement beside Castle Gardens). As you pass, notice the faces carved in the stone turrets of West Bridge. Turn left to pass the gardens.

**5.** Turn right to enter Castle Street. Turn right into Castle View.

**(G) St Mary de Castro church.** Built as the chapel for Leicester Castle. It is thought that the English poet and author Geoffrey Chaucer was married here in the 1360s. The decorative turrets of West Bridge feature characters from Chaucer's 'The Canterbury Tales'.

Continue past the church and beneath the timber framed building to enter Castle Yard (care – no pavement, watch for oncoming traffic). The Great Hall is ahead.

**(H) The Great Hall.** Leicester Castle was a residence for nobility – for earls then later dukes. It became a royal residence in the late 14th century, although royalty did not stay there very often. It eventually fell into disrepair. For centuries the Assize Courts were held at the castle. In 1821 the Great Hall was divided into a civil court and a criminal Court. There is an information board beside the road, to the left of the hall. Read about the castle's history and Richard III.

**Q. In what year was the Great Hall built?.....**

In English folklore, the castle features in some stories of 'Black Annis'. Tales describe Annis as a blue, monstrous flesh-eating old woman or witch, who lived in a cave in the Dane Hills area of Leicester. In one variation of the story, a tunnel connects Annis' cave with the cellars of Leicester castle. Stories say she still haunts the area of the church and castle. Perhaps those areas entering the vicinity should be wary!

Continue along Castle View, passing beneath the Turret Gateway to leave the castle area behind. Exit onto The Newarke and cross over. This area was once a medieval religious precinct just outside the Castle. Turn right a short distance to De Montfort University's Hawthorn Building.

**(I)The Church of Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary.** This church once stood on this site. It is thought that after his death in battle, the body of Richard III was brought here for public display. The Grey Friars then collected the body for burial at their friary.

**Q. When was the church demolished?.....**

Retrace your steps along the Newark. This walk finishes in sight of the historic Magazine or Newarke Gateway.

We hope you've enjoyed this short walk through Leicester. There are many more historic locations throughout the city centre accompanied by information panels. You can also read more of Leicester's history on the Story of Leicester website.

You can download more walking routes at: [www.choosehowyoumove.co.uk/walking](http://www.choosehowyoumove.co.uk/walking)

**Route information:**

Story of Leicester website: <https://storyofleicester.info/>

Books:

Wright, A J (2005), *Haunted Leicester*, Tempus Publishing Ltd.