

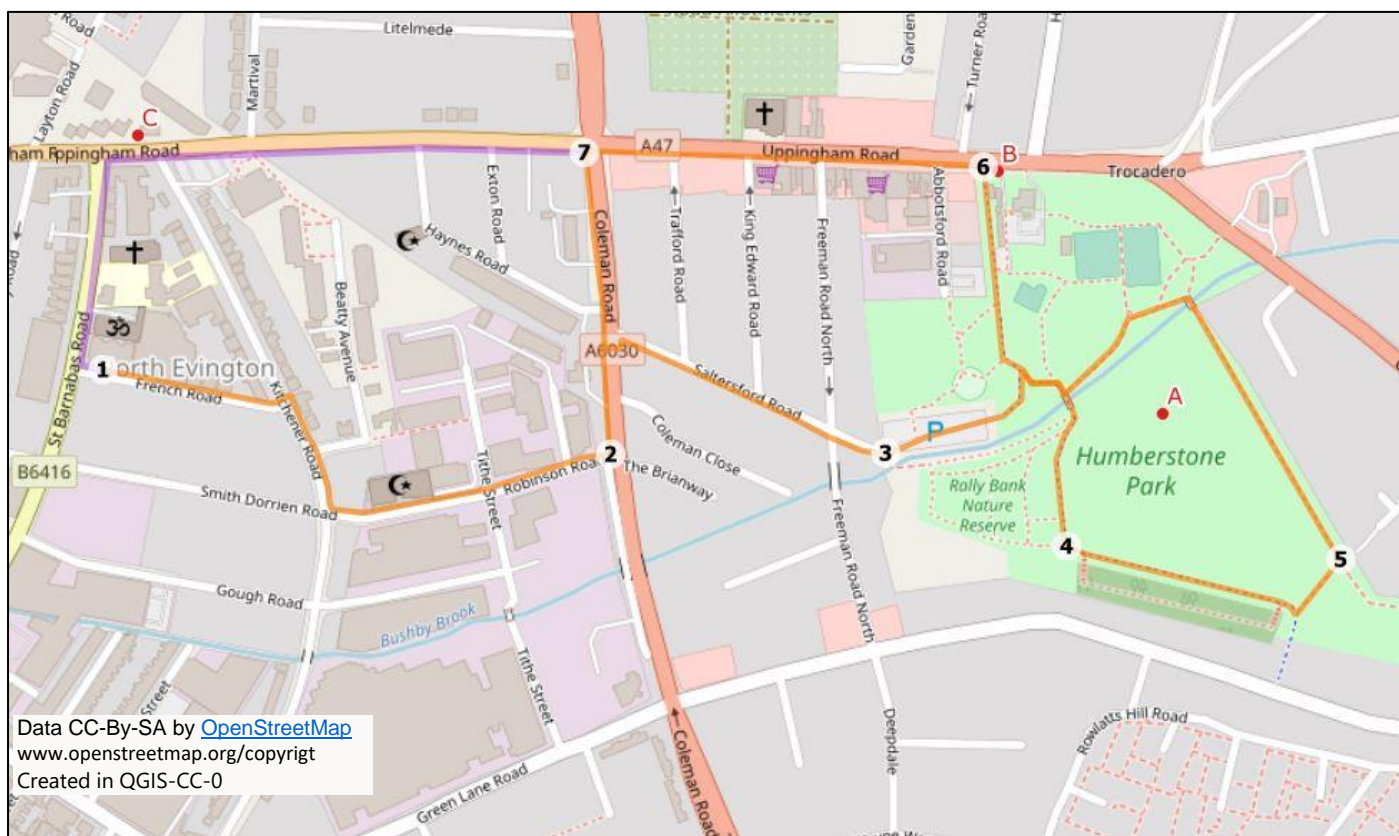
St Barnabas Library to Humberstone Park, Leicester

Start location: Outside St Barnabas Library, 2 French Road, Leicester LE5 4AH

Time taken: 1 hour (steady, pace)*
50 minutes (medium pace) **Distance:** 2 miles 3.2 km **Circular route**

Description:

This walk heads from St Barnabas Library to attractive Humberstone Park taking in residential streets along the way. Discover a little history about the park and also the old tram and train lines which once connected this area to the city centre or to locations further afield.



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

*Time is calculated at a steady pace of 2mph, if walked without stopping. Allow extra time to look at points of interest and read the information.

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



Walk starts:

Outside Humberstone Library, 2 French Road, Leicester LE5 4AH.

Safety tips:

- Take care crossing roads. Use pedestrian crossings where present, especially at the major junctions.
- Watch for cyclists in Humberstone Park – a popular cycle route.
- In places along the route, some paths are narrow, cracked or uneven, so tread carefully.
- Route passes an industrial area. Be aware of vehicles entering/exiting industrial units. The footway is narrow in places due to pavement parking.
- Remember to observe the guidance on social distancing.

Route directions:

1. From St Barnabas Library turn left along French Road. At the mini roundabout cross ahead and turn right along Kitchener Road. Soon turn left onto Smith Dorrien Road (caution: possible industrial traffic and narrow footway) and pass the Masjid Ali Mosque on your left. Cross Tithe Street and continue ahead on Robinson Road to reach busy Coleman Road.

Sometimes roads are named on a common theme. In this area Smith Dorrien Road, Kitchener Road, French Road, Beatty Avenue and Gough Road are all named after Generals from the First World War.

2. Turn left along Coleman Road to reach the pedestrian lights. Cross here and on the far side turn left then shortly turn right down Saltersford Road. Cross side roads with care as you continue to the junction with Freeman Road North. Cross straight ahead to reach the entrance of Humberstone Park.
3. Continue through the car park to the end and continue onto a path which curves left. Soon turn right and take the bridge over Bushby Brook. On the far side, take the path to the right to walk around the edge of Humberstone Park.

(A) Humberstone Park

Humberstone Park opened in 1925 and was one of six parks created in Leicester at that time. In the 1920s Leicester's suburbs were rapidly becoming more built-up, so the City Council took steps to ensure there was a major park within easy reach of each emerging suburban district. The Bushby Brook, which flows through the park was at one time dammed and used as a boating lake by local people. Since the 1950s it has been straightened and the banks are now planted with willow, birch and hazel. When it is open, refreshments are available at Humberstone Park Cafe.

The Rally Bank: If you leave the main path just after **4.** there is a path with steps up to the old railway embankment of a branch of the Great Northern Railway. This line started from Leicester's Belgrave Road Station (since demolished) to Grantham and Peterborough. There were special summer services to Skegness and Mablethorpe. During the years of its operation from the early 1880s until 1962, thousands of people used this line to travel to Skegness for their summer holidays. Now abandoned, the bank is a haven for wild plants and animals. The adjacent nature reserve was created from a former allotment site and as well as wild plants such as hawthorn and bramble some original allotment species can still be found.

4. The main path continues around the edge of the park, until you reach a path junction. Here turn left.

5. At the next junction turn left along the edge of the park. Continue ahead to cross the brook via the footbridge. Once across, turn left and keep on the path closest to the brook, ignoring junctions until you reach the junction by the next footbridge. Here, take the main path (away from the bridge), which shortly does some sharp turns. Ignore the path to the left which leads to the carpark (by which you entered). Instead continue on the main path past the play area to the left, then the skate park to the right and pass the house to exit the park on Uppingham Road.
6. Emerge from the park by the old tram shelter.

(B) Tram Shelter

The Art Deco style tram shelter bears a plaque which reads: '1934 - Presented to the city by Robert Rowley J P'. This is one of five tram shelters gifted to the city by wealthy industrialist Robert Rowley, whose company was based on Queen Street in the city centre. Robert Rowley & Co. was one of the big hosiery and knitwear manufactures, with many employees using Leicester's tram system to travel to work. Robert Rowley paid for the shelters so that people could shelter from the elements whilst waiting for a tramcar. The other tram shelters are located on Hinckley Road (by Western Park), Narborough Road, Western Boulevard and Fosse Road North. Leicester's trams system began in 1874 with horse-drawn tramcars and the network was converted to electric trams in 1904. However the Uppingham Road section of the network was one of the later extensions, sometime around the late 1920s. However from 1933 the motor bus service began to replace trams. The last tramline in Leicester closed in 1949.

Turn left on Uppingham Road, passing the shops. Cross side roads with care. Reach Coleman Road.

Alternative route

If you prefer, at this point you may prefer to return to the library by a different (although busier) route. Cross Coleman Road at the traffic lights then continue ahead on Uppingham Road, crossing side roads with care until you reach St Barnabas Road. Here turn left and continue to French Road to return to the library.

(C) Former site of Humberstone Station

Humberstone station once stood opposite the junction of Uppingham Road and St Barnabas Road, where there is now a convenience store. The station was the second stop on the Great Northern Railway line (mentioned earlier), which ran along the edge of Humberstone Park and out towards the east coast. The station opened in 1882 and closed for regular services in 1953, but opened in summer for special services to Skegness until 1962.

7. Cross Coleman Road at the traffic lights and turn left along it. Cross Haynes Road and continue. Turn right into Robinson Road and retrace your steps to St Barnabas Library.

Acknowledgements

Route researched and developed by staff and volunteers for Leicester City Council.

References:

Great Northern Railway Line

Leicester Belgrave Road Station:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leicester_Belgrave_Road_railway_station

Humberstone Station:

Page 3.

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

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Humberstone_railway_station

Leicester Mercury article and old photo:

<https://www.leicestermercury.co.uk/news/history/railway-station-gateway-east-coast-2556571>

(Note: Humberstone Station is not to be confused with Humberstone Road Station, which was closer to the city and on a different railway line, the Midland Railway).

Robert Rowley - tram shelters

Leicester Chronicle: The History behind Leicester's Art Deco Tram Shelters:

<https://leicesterchronicle.co.uk/tram-shelters-2>

Leicester Corporation tramways

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leicester_Corporation_Tramways#:~:text=Leicester%20Corporation%20took%20over%20the,place%20from%201915%20to%201927.