

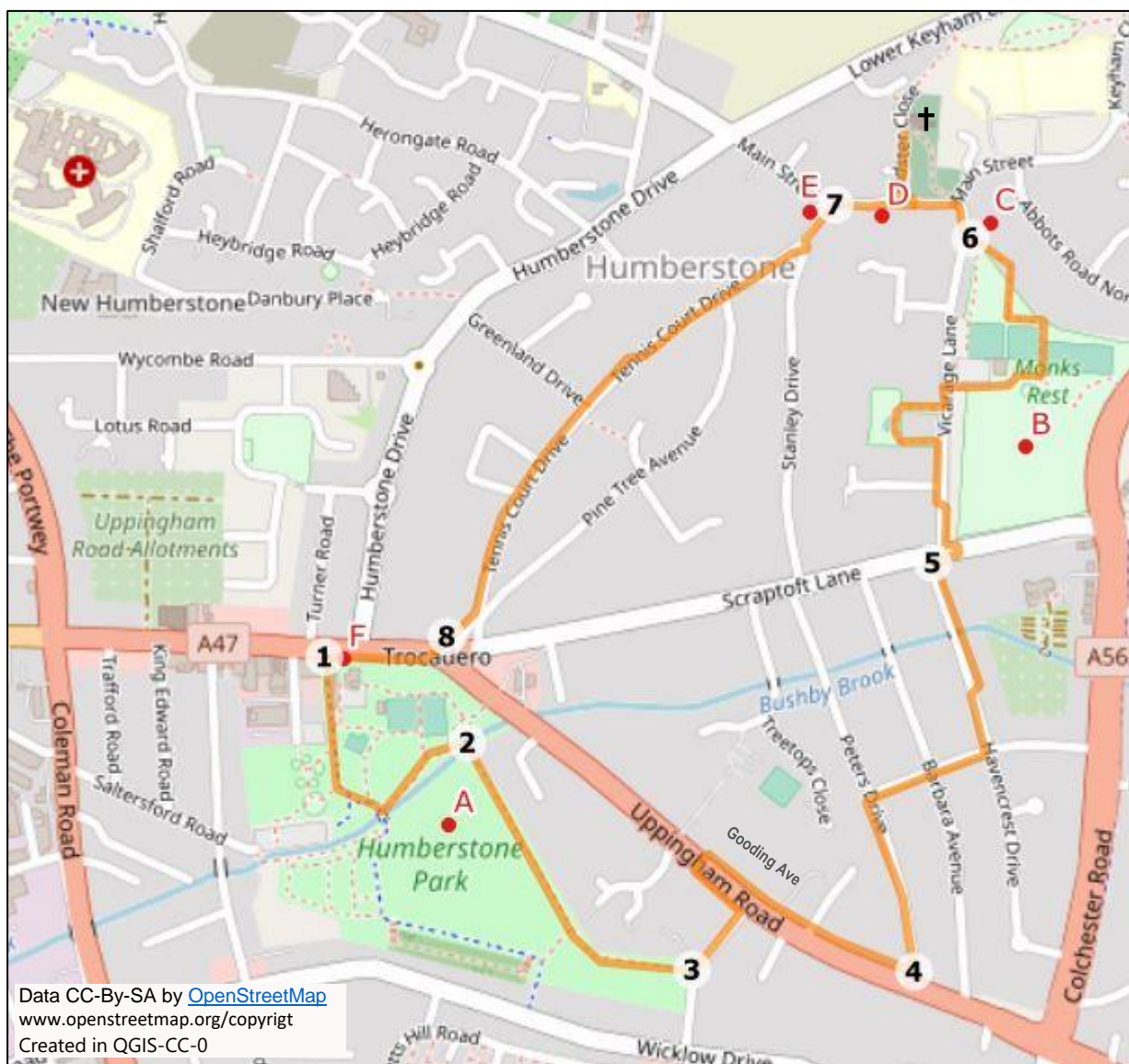
Humberstone Park to Monks Rest and Old Humberstone, Leicester

Start location: Old tram shelter outside Humberstone Park, Uppingham Road, Leicester, LE5 4DA

Time taken: 1 hour 15 minutes (steady, pace)* **Distance:** 2.5 miles 4km **Circular route**
 1 hour (medium pace)

Description:

This walk takes in the pleasant green spaces of Humberstone Park and Monks Rest Gardens via modern residential streets as well as old Humberstone Village. Note: There are some uneven, narrow and unsurfaced paths along this route which make it unsuitable for wheelchair users.



- 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: Old tram shelter outside Humberstone Park, Uppingham Road, Leicester,

Uppingham Road is served by buses and there is a bus stop nearby. If making your journey by public transport, check out the journey planner at www.choosehowyoumove.co.uk. Humberstone Park has a small car park accessible from Uppingham Road and a larger one off Saltersford Road (check time restrictions on parking). Toilets are available in Humberstone Park.

Safety tips:

- Monks Rest Gardens can feel isolated. Walkers may prefer to visit in company and during peak times of day.
- Take care crossing roads. Where available, use pedestrian crossings and traffic islands to cross safely. In the village cross Main Street with care; it may look quiet but buses are frequent.
- Watch for cyclists using shared pedestrian/cycle paths in Humberstone Park.
- Paths are cracked or uneven in places. Some soft paths in Humberstone Community Garden.
- Narrow pavements on Scraftoft Lane, Vicarage Lane, Lidster Close and Main Street.

Route directions:

1. From the old tram shelter on Uppingham Road enter Humberstone Park via the gate. Take the main path ahead past the car park and skate park to the left and children's play park to the right. Pass the outdoor gym and path to the car park on the right. Continue until you reach the path junction just before the footbridge. Here turn left beside the Bushby Brook and continue. Fork right just before the tennis courts. Continue to the footbridge.

(A) Humberstone Park

The land here was once part of the Paget family estate but sold in 1919 and purchased by the City Council. In the 1920s Leicester's suburbs were rapidly becoming more built-up and the council wanted a major park within easy reach of each emerging suburban district. Humberstone Park opened in 1925 and was one of six parks created in Leicester at that time. The Bushby Brook flows through the park. Refreshments are available at Humberstone Park Café (limited opening times).

The park includes 'The Rally Bank', a section of old railway embankment on a branch of the Great Northern Railway. This line started from Leicester's Belgrave Road Station (since demolished) and went to Grantham and Peterborough. In summer there were special services to Skegness and Mablethorpe. The line was in operation from the early 1880s until 1962. During that time it was used by thousands of people to travel to Skegness for their summer holidays. The railway line closed in 1962 and is now abandoned, and a haven for wildlife.

2. Cross the footbridge over the brook and continue along the edge of the park beside the trees (watch for cyclists). At the path junction by the litter bin, keep left. Exit the park via the gate to reach Ambassador Road.
3. Turn left on Ambassador Road and continue to the main road. Turn left a short distance along Uppingham Road to use the zebra crossing. On the far side turn right and continue to Peters Drive.
4. Turn left into Peters Drive. Cross to the right hand side when safe to do so and continue. Turn right on The Parkway. (On Peters Drive notice the houses with the unusual semi-circular windows. The

small parade of shops on The Parkway also has this feature). Cross ahead over Barbara Avenue and continue. Turn left on Havenscrest Drive. Cross over when safe and continue on the right-hand side. Continue ahead to reach busy Scraftoft Lane.

5. At Scraftoft Lane use the pedestrian traffic island (a short distance to the right) to carefully cross this busy road. On the far side walk around the corner to enter Vicarage Lane, passing the sign for Monks Rest Gardens and the rock for 'Humberstone Village'. The pavement ends but you can continue ahead on the grass verge. When you are clear of the junction (and when it is safe to do so) cross to the opposite side of Vicarage Lane to continue along the pavement. Shortly you'll reach the gates to Humberstone Community Garden on the left. If open, you can take a short diversion through the gardens (where there is a pond) and exit a little further up Vicarage Lane. After the community garden, continue a short distance on Vicarage Lane then cross to the opposite side to enter Monks Rest Gardens via the car park (with care). Continue past the bowls club. At the path junction with the children's play area to the right, turn left on a narrow path past the tennis courts and bowling greens. The path turns sharply then passes through the green before Monks Rest House. Continue on past the house to reach the road.

(B) Monks Rest Gardens

Humberstone Village lies on the route pilgrims once took from Leicester to Launde Abbey (14 miles to the east of Leicester). In medieval times the monks would travel on foot and stop here for rest and refreshment. This area became a public park around the late 1950s / early 1960s.

Monks Rest House

This attractive building is a replica of the late-18th century vicarage for St Mary's Church. The original fell into poor structural repair and special permission was granted in the mid-1980s to replace it. The property is now residential flats.

6. Exit on Vicarage Lane. Cross to the opposite side with care and continue on the narrow pavement past terraced houses, until you reach the junction opposite St Mary's churchyard. Turn left on Main Street. You are in old Humberstone Village.

Humberstone Village

Old Humberstone is one of Leicester's village suburbs and dates back to at least Anglo-Saxon times. In the Domesday records of 1086, the village is first recorded as *Humerstan*. How did the village get its name? There are several suggestions. One popular explanation is that it was named after a large rock located in the area – a large piece of Mountsorrel granite, possibly a glacial deposit from the last Ice Age. Today we refer to it as the Humber Stone, but sources suggest that in Old English the stone was named *Hunbeorht's stan*. The first part is someone's name and 'stan' means a stone or rock. Another suggestion is that the name comes from the Danish *Hubba's Ton*, which refers to Hubba's village or settlement. One final suggestion is that the name derives from *Humberd*, the place of a bard's worship.

Humberstone was for centuries a rural community. People made their living from farming, labouring and in local trades. Then in the early years of the 18th century framework knitters (or 'stockingers') established themselves in the village. Hosiery production became an important industry in Leicester and included many outworkers who produced garments from their home or the workshop of a master hosier using the non-powered knitting frame. (Factory production came later). In the early 20th century the rural village setting slowly gave way to residential as more houses were built and Leicester's suburbs grew. By 1935 the village was flanked by new residential developments. The old village became part of the Corporation of Leicester.

Pass the parade of shops. Here you may like to take a short detour for a closer look at St Mary's Church. If so, take care crossing Main Street – it may look quiet but this is a bus route. You can access the churchyard via the blue wrought-iron gate in the wall or alternatively view the church from Lidster Close.

St Mary's Church

There have been two earlier churches here. Parts of this current building date back to the 13th century when the Abbot of Leicester Abbey had the church rebuilt in the early English style. Only the tower and part of the chancel remain from this time as the church was substantially rebuilt in 1858. It is Grade I listed.

If you took a detour, retrace your steps to Main Street and carefully cross back over the road. Resume your journey past more shops, noting the white house (D) as you pass. Pause at the grass verge on the corner near the Royal British Legion club to look at the small thatched house opposite (E). The information panel near the club provides information about the history of the village.

(D) Police House

An attractive white 19th century house can be found on Main Street. It was formerly the police house and has a symmetrical façade, half dormer gables and a pitched roof porch. It has also features 'Paget's Pots' (see below) on top of its tall chimney. In more recent years it was an Italian restaurant.

(E) Oldest house in Humberstone Village

On the right as you enter Tennis Court Drive is a thatched and cruck-framed cottage dating from around the 17th century. The tall twisted chimneys are distinctive to the area and are known as Paget Pots after the influential Paget family who installed these on the properties belonging to their estate.

Opposite the cottage, partly hidden behind high walls are red-brick buildings which date from the 17th century, but with later alterations. These are Little Warren, The Warren and Warren Stables, all of which are Grade II listed.

The Paget family

The Paget family began to acquire land in Humberstone in the early 19th century. They were successful bankers and involved in local politics (as Liberals). Thomas Paget senior (1778-1862) set up the Paget's and Kirby bank in 1825. It was later known as Paget's Bank and subsequently purchased by Lloyds. His son Thomas Tertius Paget (1807 – 1892) extended the estate and renamed his father's house 'Humberstone Hall'. It was the family home for several generations but the estate was sold in 1919 and the house demolished in 1928. The land was quickly developed for housing. The residential roads we are about to walk down were once part of the Paget family estate. Tennis Court Drive, Stanley Drive and Pine Tree Avenue are on the land which once surrounded Humberstone Hall.

7. Bear left into Tennis Court Drive, shortly crossing Stanley Drive and continuing on Tennis Court Drive. Cross the right hand side when safe to do so. Follow this road all the way to the junction with Uppingham Road.
8. Bear right on Uppingham Road and cross at the pedestrian traffic lights. Turn right to return to the tram shelter where you started.

Old Tram shelter, Uppingham Road

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 of their employees using Leicester's tram system to travel to work. Rowley paid for the shelters so that people could shelter from the elements whilst waiting for a tramcar.

Also note the Paget Pots on *Meadow House* (c.1850-60) which is now the café and nursery and on *Ivy Cottage* (1876) which is now called the Lodge.

Acknowledgements

Route developed by staff and volunteers for Leicester City Council.

References

Humberstone Park

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How Humberstone village was named:

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<https://www.leicester.gov.uk/leisure-and-culture/parks-and-open-spaces/our-parks/humberstone-park/>

<https://www.visitleicester.info/explore/neighbourhoods/humberstone>

Leicester City Council's Conservation Area Statement – Old Humberstone:

<https://www.leicester.gov.uk/planning-and-building/conservation/heritage-conservation/conservation-areas/old-humberstone/>

Tram Shelter

Leicester Chronicle, The History Behind Leicester's Art Deco Tram Shelters:

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

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