

The route you will be following is the old tow path of the Melton Mowbray Navigation as far as Rhubarb Island, and back home across the fields. It is roughly two miles, and takes about an hour at a gentle pace.

1. The Boat Inn

Cross Burton Street from the Boat Inn, and follow the service road into the Play Close. Near this new road ran the canal tow path beside part of the wall of the New Wharf. This was taken down when the new Council Office was built.

The Boat Inn is on the left hand side of Burton Street looking down. It is the old canal basin pub. The Oakham Canal joined the Melton Mowbray Navigation at Burton End. In 1877 the Canal Company was wound up. The canal basin and the bed of this part of the canal were filled in. The double row of chestnut trees was planted to show the line of the canal. There is a model lock gate with a descriptive map at the end of the avenue.

2. First Canal Bridge

Carry on past the Leisure Pools with the canal on your right to Leicester Road.

This part of the waterway is the first length of the original canal-cut left in water. Barges would have left Melton Mowbray along here on their way to the Junction and the Grand Union.

3. Leicester Road Bridge

Cross the Leicester Rd and follow the footpath sign through the kissing gate on to the tow path on the left of the canal.

This bridge was made of cast iron by Cooke and Sons of Melton Mowbray in 1884. It replaced the arched brick canal bridge when the road was widened. At the same time, the tow path was removed from underneath it.

4. Egerton Park

Follow the canal until you reach the junction with the River Eye. Because the owners of Egerton Lodge did not want barges with their rough crews passing their formal gardens, the canal was diverted. It now follows a separate course until the junction.

5. The Junction of the Canal and the River Eye
Carry on into the next field. Cross the stile a few yards from the river.

6. The Old Northern Railways Line Bridge
Follow the path under the bridge. It can be very muddy, so care is needed.

The river now swings gently to the left. There are two wooden stiles and two narrow metal gates to pass through, and a footbridge across a small stream.

Until quite recently this bridge was a brick built canal bridge on the canal tow path. Longfield High School is to the left of the path.

8. Rhubarb Island

Cross the iron footbridge.

This is the Eye Kettleby Lock island with the weir on side, and the lock on the other. The lock chamber, filled at the moment, is in good condition, and it is intended that the amount of water flowing down the river. If you walk to the wooden footbridge at the other end of the island, you can see the Eye Kettleby canal bridge to your left.

At this point you can either retrace your steps, or continue past Sysonby Church, and cross the field back into town you can cross the canal bridge and railway, through grounds of Mill House, to join the footpath to Kirby Bellars at the A607.

9. Sewage Works

If you would like to complete the circuit, cross the wooden footbridge over lock chamber and turn right, and then left the lane past the sewage works on the left.

10. Sysonby Grange Lane

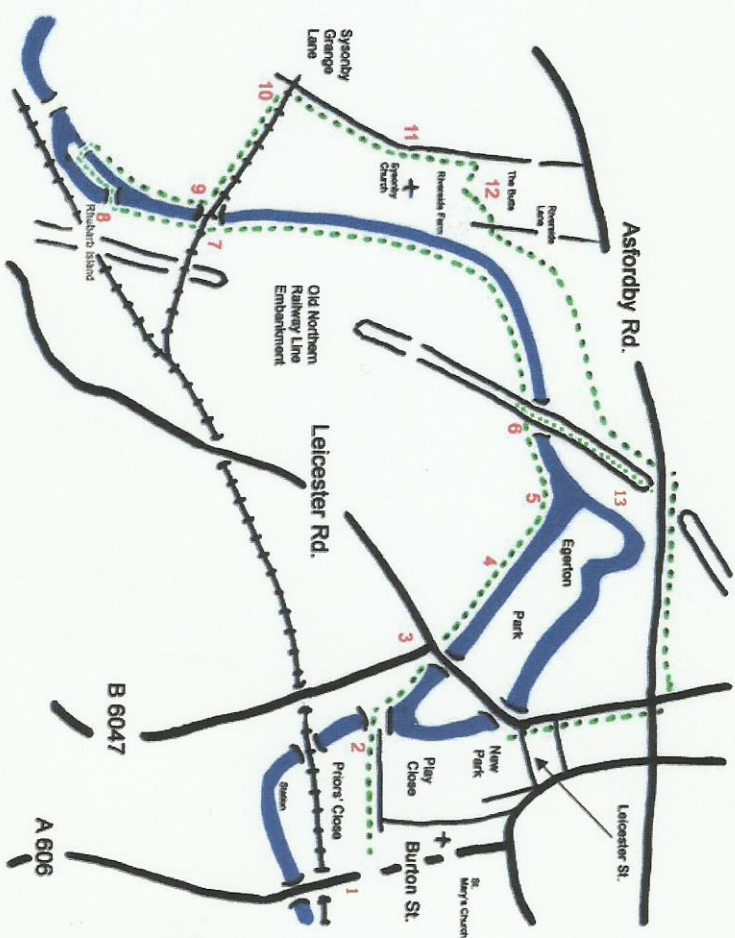
Turn right into the lane across the railway bridge. Carry on up the lane to second gate into the churchyard.

11. Sysonby Church

Follow the gravel path on the left of church to the stile at the far end.

12. The Butts

Follow the path to Riverside Lane opposite the Butts on your left and River Farm on your right. Cross the lane and stile to the path through the field past Sysonby Knoll Hotel on your left. The narrow, with gardens on your left, paddocks and outbuildings on the right between you and the river. Continue over stile and straight on through a small housing estate. Turn at the old railway embankment and follow the narrow beside the old railway cottages until you reach Asfordby Road. Turn right and follow the road back into town or the next path to the right (13) along the top of embankment, to cross the river and re-join the outwalk at (6).



7. The Old Nottingham Railway Line

Follow the footpath under the bridge. As you go under this bridge you will see that the tow path of the old canal is still under the arch next to the river. This railway line is now used as a test track.