

➤ Turn left and continue along until you reach The Croft on your right. Walk through the wooden gate and continue until it becomes Barwell Road. Continue along until you reach Church Road on your right. If you look at the building on the corner, there is a reminder of an earlier form of a 'Billboard' advert.

➤ Turn right and continue along Church Road until you reach Main Street then turn left.

The Free Church on the corner is not the original one. There is a stone tablet in the wall which details how the current Church was built to replace one that had been destroyed by bombing during World War II.

Until recently it was believed German bombers returning from raids in Coventry dumped their bombs over Kirby Muxloe in order to lighten the aircraft and increase their speed, and in doing this destroyed a large proportion of the village. However, thanks to extensive research by the Kirby Muxloe Local History Group, we now understand on the night that Leicester was heavily bombed, Luftwaffe bombers also attacked military targets in the area of Kirby Muxloe, narrowly missing the railway line near Western Park, but completely destroying Kirby's fine Free Church building, probably in an attempt to hit the nearby railway line in Kirby. The railway that runs through Kirby Muxloe would have been used to transport military armaments to/from local airfields at Desford and Braunstone. Fortunately, there were few serious injuries and only a handful of houses were destroyed, mostly after the event as a safety precaution.

➤ Continue along Oakcroft Avenue until you reach Main Street and turn left. As you walk along Main Street you will pass by St Bartholomew's Church.

There are some fascinating Gravestones on the right-hand side of the graveyard, including a set of five in a row. One of them is of particular interest. It dates back to 1763 and has some very detailed imagery and wording at the bottom. The person who carved must have been very talented.

➤ After visiting the Church, return to the Main Road and continue until you reach Station Road / Hedgerow Lane. Turn right then left into Gullet Lane and continue.

4 Leicester Forest West

➤ After crossing a bridge over the Railway line, take the footpath on the left which passes to the right of the gates to Kirby Muxloe Golf Course. Continue on this path past the golf course until you reach a wooden fence. Continue across the field following the footpath straight on and not the path that bears left. As the path reaches some buildings, cross the lawn, walk through an arch, cross another lawn and continue until it exits onto the B582 Leicester Lane.

➤ Cross the road and turn right then take the footpath on the left. Continue on the path until it exits onto the A47 Hinckley Road, opposite the 'Bulls Head' Public House. Cross the road (Caution, fast and busy Road) and turn right. A short distance along, take the footpath on your left. Follow the footpath across the fields until it exits back out onto the lane leading to Newhall Park Farm then return back into Thurlaston.



With Thanks to...

Our thanks to Eddie Smallwood and Michael Dix for creating the walking routes and uncovering the heritage stories. And to Graham Luker for the illustrations.

This series of heritage walks have been designed to inspire walking across the District – we hope that you enjoy them. We welcome feedback and you can get in touch with us by emailing leisure@blaby.gov.uk. The walk uses footpaths, bridleways, permissive paths and some roads. Please respect the landowner's property and stay on the indicated paths. Please follow the countryside code. Take care when walking on roads and follow the Highway Code for pedestrians. You are advised to use the route in conjunction with the OS map for the area. This guide has been created with funds from the European Regional Development Fund and HM Government.



Find this walk, all 12 heritage trails and more on the **GoJauntly app**. Simple photo guides help you navigate while nifty tips point out things of interest and places to eat.



For more information on this walk and for other walks in the series visit our website:
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Let's go!
Blaby
District

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Heritage Walks

Route Five

9.5 miles
15 km

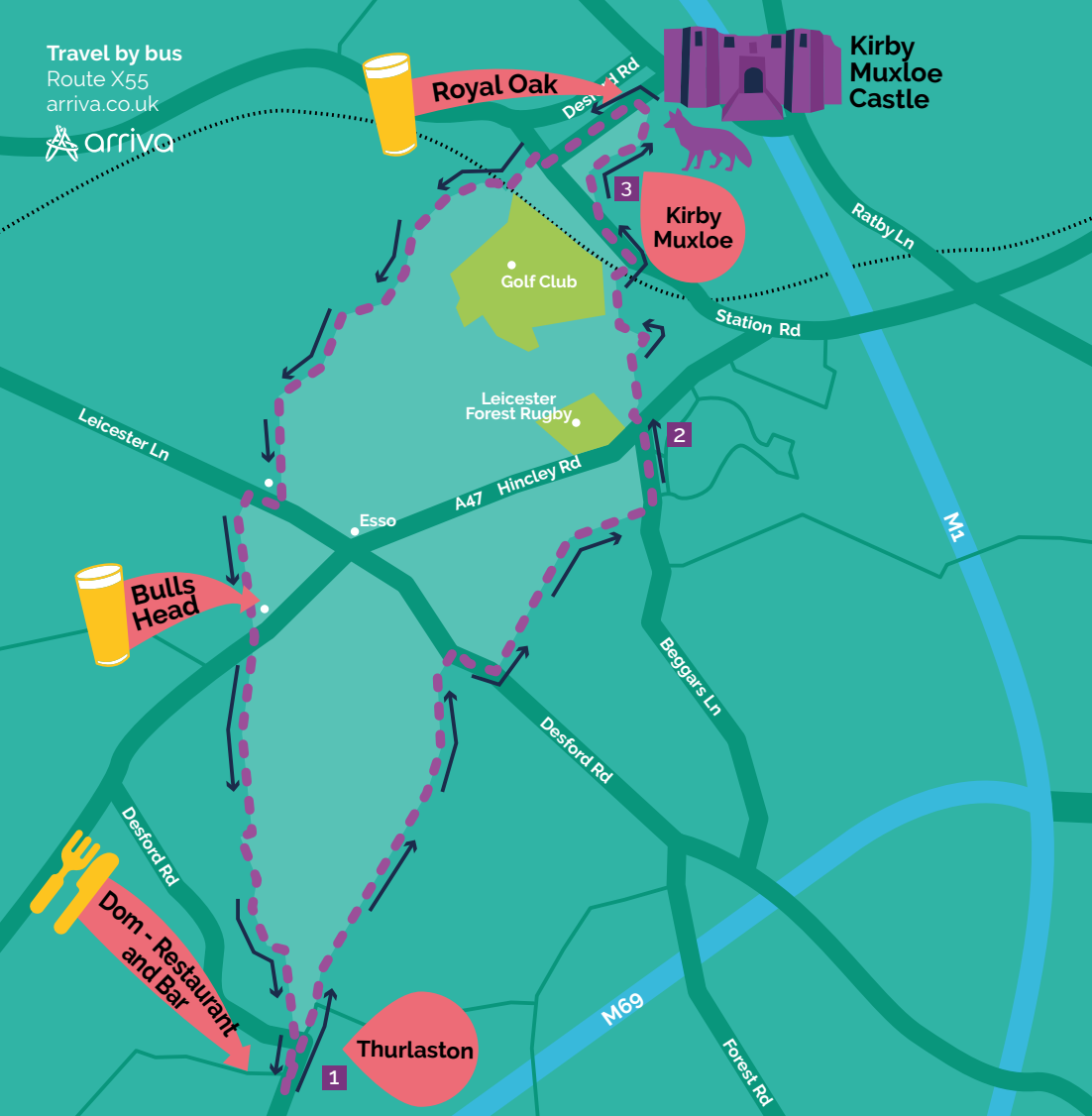
This walk is one of a series of 12 heritage trails plus a long distance perimeter route around the whole District, see the website visitblaby.org.uk for more information.

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- ◆ Leicester Forest West
- ◆ Leicester Forest East
- ◆ Kirby Muxloe



Supported by Welcome Back Funding





1 Thurlaston

➤ Start your walk on Croft Road, Thurlaston.

Although this walk goes across large open fields, past golf courses, through housing estates and across farmland, if you were to do the walk back at the time of the Domesday Book in 1086, the whole of the walk would be in forest. Leicester forest was listed as being four leagues long and one league across. This would convert to it being approximately three to four miles wide by almost fourteen miles long although a league was not an accurate distance, it was meant to be how far a person would walk in one hour, it still means that the forest covered a huge area.

Sadly, the forest could not be sustained and in 1628 King Charles sanctioned the disafforestation of the area, it was split into lots and sold off to wealthy landowners who cleared most of it of the trees.

The process of disafforestation caused riots among those affected by loss of rights to pasture and resources.

According to the census returns of 1871, the areas of Leicester Forest East and West were sparsely populated. Leicester Forest East had a population of 89 living in 19 houses and Leicester Forest West only had 34 people living in 8 houses. How things have changed.

- From Croft Road outside the Church turn left and walk along Enderby Road until you reach a right-hand bend. Take the path to the left and walk towards Newhall Park Farm. Continue on this path until you reach a footpath on the right. Follow the footpath as it passes Newhall Park Farm on the left and on towards Hoefields Farm. Continue on the path until it exits onto the B582 Desford Road.
- Turn right and walk towards Enderby. (Caution, very fast busy road) Continue until you reach a right-hand bend in the road with some



Brick Round Pillar, Kirby Muxloe



Fosse Fox at Kirby Muxloe Castle



Dom - Restaurant and Bar



St Bartholomew's Church

houses on the left. Just past the bend take the footpath on the left and cross the fields. Follow the footpath markers across the fields until you pass a farm on your right. Continue on the marked path until it exits onto Beggars Lane. Cross the road and turn left.

2 Leicester Forest East

- (Caution, busy road). Continue on Beggars Lane until you reach Forest House Lane on your right. Turn into it then turn left into Warren Lane and continue until you turn right into Woodpecker Drive.
- Take the surfaced path on the left and continue on this, crossing Teal Close and Warren Lane. Continue on the path until it exits onto the A47 Hincley Road. Cross the road (Caution, very busy fast road). Turn right then in a short distance take the 'No Cycling' path on the left. Continue along the path until it exits onto Cherrytree Avenue. Turn left then turn right onto Maytree Drive then turn right onto Barry Drive.
- From Barry Drive turn left onto Barry Close and take the footpath on the right just before the last bungalow. This path opens out onto a surfaced path that passes to the right of some new housing. Follow the path until it becomes Station Drive and continue towards the railway line. Cross the railway line (Caution, check crossing instructions before crossing) and continue until it exits onto Station Road, next to some lovely brick round pillars.

3 Kirby Muxloe

- Turn left onto Station Road and continue. As you get towards Wentworth Green on your left, take the entrance on the right into an area of open ground. Take the surfaced path and you will pass a small circular area with a large stone that has a plaque on it relating to the burial of a 'Time Capsule'.
- Continue along the path with a brook on your left and past some sports pitches. At the end of the surfaced path continue on the dirt path towards a wooded area. There is a bench and another large stone block with a plaque relating to planting trees. The path continues until you reach where the path forks left and right. Take the path to the right and continue until you reach a path that runs left to right. Turn left and continue until the path exits onto Oakcroft Avenue opposite Garfit Road.

Worth a detour

If you wish you can turn right on Oakcroft Avenue and continue towards Kirby Muxloe Castle where you can take a walk around the unfinished remains and there is one of the Fosse Foxes.

The story of the Castle takes us back in time to the War of the Roses. When William, Lord Hastings, began rebuilding his family's seat in Kirby Muxloe in 1480 in lavish style with this grand red brick and stone design, he must have felt comfortable with his position of power close to Edward IV.

William couldn't have known that just 3 years later, Edward IV would be dead and himself dragged into the Tower of London and executed without trial by the soon-to-be Richard III.

In Kirby Muxloe, his grand design would remain unfinished, a permanent memorial to the ruthlessness of England's 32-year civil war that shaped this country's future for generations to come.