

UNCOVER HISTORIC LEICESTERSHIRE



UNCOVER
THE STORY TRAILS

Leicester
visitleicester.info

WELCOME TO A NEW APPROACH IN TELLING OUR STORIES.

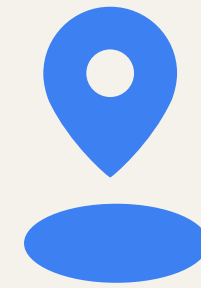
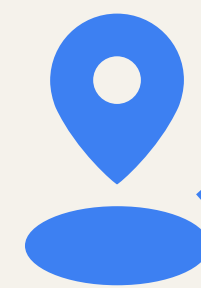
Historic treasures are scattered throughout Leicestershire, in its city, its towns and its villages.

Uncover the stories of castles left in ruins by Wars of the Roses and Civil War soldiers, and manor houses with links to witchcraft and the Victorian Arts and Crafts movement.

Stand on ground where an iconic battle brought the Middle Ages to an end, explore ancient forests, and walk in the footsteps of Georgians on a rare surviving promenade of the time.

Even when you eat and drink, indulge in a spot of shopping or head off on a bike ride, you can do it in destinations steeped in centuries of history.

JOIN US ON THIS FASCINATING TOUR TO FIND OUT MORE.

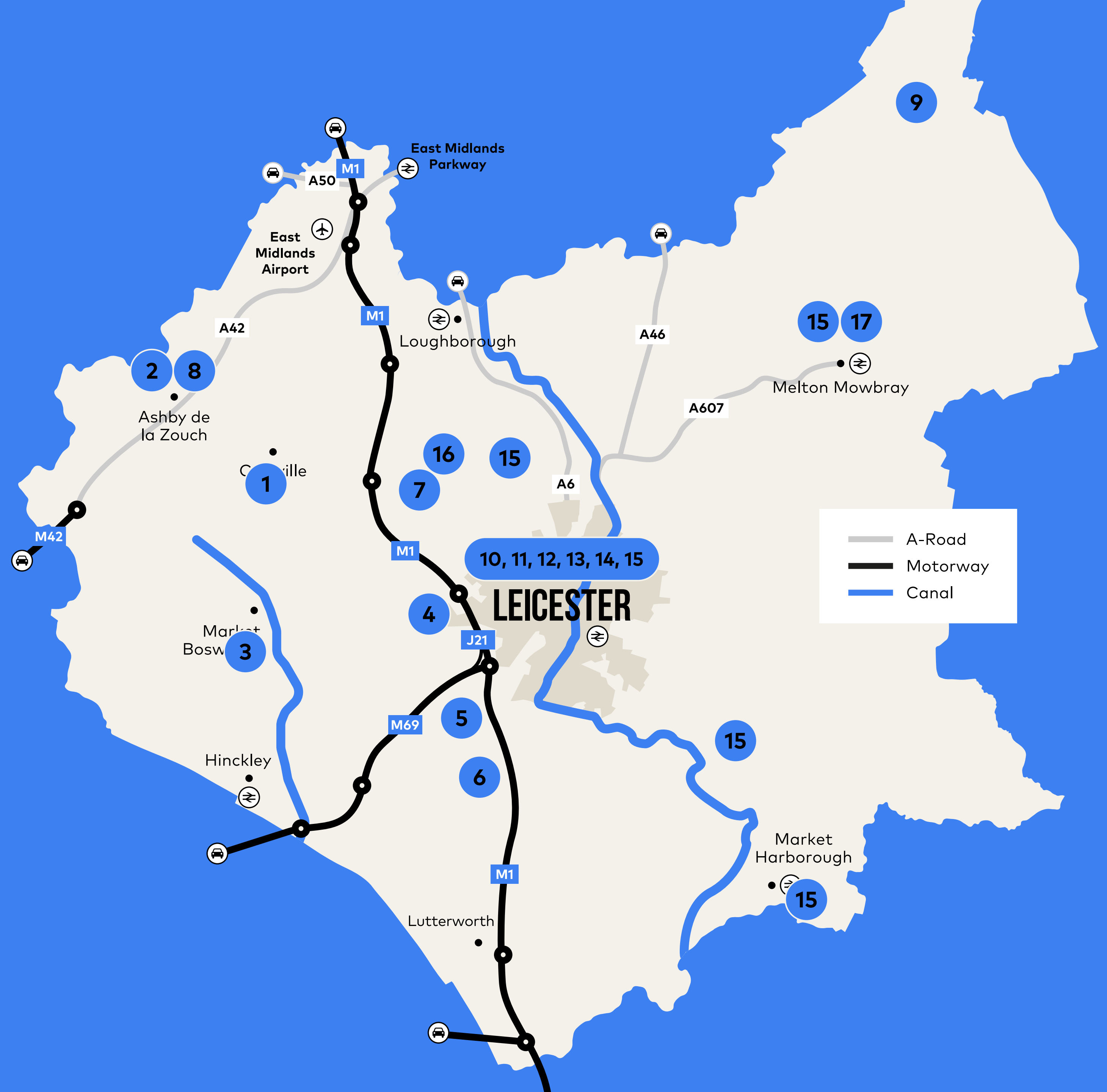


Uncover more about
the attractions featured at
visitleicester.info/uncoverthestory

POINTS OF INTEREST

1. **1620s House & Garden**
Manor Road,
Donington le Heath LE67 2FW
2. **Ashby Castle**
South Street,
Ashby de la Zouch LE65 1BR
3. **Bosworth Battlefield**
Ambion Lane,
Sutton Cheney CV13 0AD
4. **Kirby Muxloe Castle**
Off Oakcroft Avenue,
Kirby Muxloe LE9 2DH
5. **Narborough Hall**
19 Coventry Road,
Narborough LE19 2GD
6. **Tithe Barn**
Main Street, Cosby LE9 1UW
7. **Stoneywell**
Whitcrofts Lane,
Ulverscroft LE67 9QE
8. **Staunton Harold Estate**
Staunton Harold,
Ashby de la Zouch LE65 1RT
9. **Belvoir Castle**
Vale of Belvoir NG32 1PE

10. **New Walk**
New Walk, Leicester LE1 7EA
11. **Leicester Guildhall**
Guildhall Lane,
Leicester LE1 5FQ
12. **The Newarke**
The Newarke,
Leicester LE2 7BY
13. **Leicester's Old Town Restaurants**
Leicester
14. **King Richard III Visitor Centre**
4A St Martins,
Leicester LE1 5DB
15. **Historic Pubs and Inns**
Leicester,
Market Harborough,
Melton Mowbray,
Woodhouse Eaves,
Quorn, Kibworth Harcourt
16. **The Charnwood Forest**
17. **Royal Melton**
Melton Mowbray,
Vale of Belvoir





1620s HOUSE & GARDEN

One of the oldest dwellings in Leicestershire, the 1620s House actually dates back to around 1290. In the hands of the church until the Dissolution of the Monasteries, a 17th century revamp brought the stone-built manor house up to date, and since then time has almost stood still.

The Digby family, which included Gunpowder Plotter Sir Everard Digby, called it home for more than 200 years. Its style reflects the end of their tenure and showcases family life as the Elizabethan era came to a close.

Costumed volunteers give tours, period furniture includes a bed said to have been used by Richard III, and graffiti in the stone and timber tells tales of superstition and the gruesome practice of witch-hunting.



ASHBY CASTLE

Although left in ruins, a grand future awaited the 12th century manor house destined to become Ashby Castle.

William, Lord Hastings was a powerhouse of late 15th century politics, and as a favourite of King Edward IV, the building was granted to him in 1462. He embarked upon an ambitious yet never finished transformation, which included a centrepiece tower, at the time one of the largest structures in Britain.

Remaining accessible despite extensive damage caused by Civil War soldiers, the 97-step climb offers immense views, while an attached passage leads underground to the kitchen tower. An audio tour reels off an impressive roll call of royal visitors and also tells how a ruthless Richard, Duke of Gloucester orchestrated Hastings' execution.



BOSWORTH BATTLEFIELD

When Henry VII defeated Richard III at Bosworth Battlefield, the course of English history changed forever, with Tudor monarchs reigning for the next 118 years. Strange then, that despite the battle's importance, its exact location was not noted at the time.

In more recent years this topic was the subject of much debate, and in 2005 the Bosworth Battlefield Survey formed, and the search for evidence began in earnest. Found in the shape of medieval cannon balls, metalwork and the silver gilt Bosworth boar badge on idyllic South West Leicestershire countryside, there is now no doubt where this decisive battle took place. Uncover its history for yourself at the Bosworth Battlefield Heritage Centre or on a weekend guided walk.



KIRBY MUXLOE CASTLE

Built for William, Lord Hastings, who was shockingly executed by ruthless king-in-waiting Richard, Duke of Gloucester, Kirby Muxloe Castle was never finished.

Plans for the rebuilding of this moated fortified mansion, now in the hands of English Heritage, were ambitious. Four corner towers, three side towers and a large gatehouse were to be constructed in the fashionable red brick of the day.

The project was never completed, and although the Hastings family occupied parts of the castle, the buildings were eventually abandoned and left to ruin. Those ruins comprise the imposing gatehouse and the west tower, with decorative stone and brick details including Hastings' initials.



NARBOROUGH HALL

The elegant pink granite manor house that sits on Coventry Road in Narborough has been a village landmark since Elizabethan times. Built in 1596 by landowner James Meade, his family called it home for more than 400 years, until financial ruin forced them out.

Very much still a family home, parts of Grade II-listed Narborough Hall are open to the public, but not as you might imagine as a museum or stately home, but instead as a unique gift shop.

Saved from demolition in the 1970s, five rooms of the house make up More Than Just a Gift, where treats for him, her, the home and garden sit alongside 18th century stained-glass windows and an original carved wooden fireplace.



TITHE BARN

In the Middle Ages, a type of barn was built for the specific purpose of storing tithes – a sort of tax paid to the church by farmers in the form of produce. Cosby's tithe barn dates back to around 1450 and was part of Church Farm until well into the 20th century.

Now fully restored, the barn and its courtyard garden sit within the heart of the village's conservation area in the shadow of a magnificent 14th century parish church. No longer a medieval grain store, this timber-framed thatched building has been given a new lease of life as a charming café and delicatessen serving delicious food in historic surroundings.

7



STONEYWELL

A key figure in the Arts and Crafts movement, Ernest Gimson built a stone cottage in Stoneywell as a picturesque reaction against the Victorian era's ethos of mass production and industrialisation.

Embracing the use of natural materials, Leicestershire's only National Trust-owned house, which remained in the Gimson family for over 100 years, is unique.

Its walls were built using stones from what is now its garden, blending it beautifully into its Charnwood Forest setting. Inside, the craftsmanship of Gimson and fellow furniture designers the Barnsley brothers is on display in each of the 11 quirky rooms, which remain largely unchanged.

8



STAUNTON HAROLD ESTATE

The Staunton Harold Estate wraps around an elegant Georgian mansion and adjacent gothic-style church. Although the house – Staunton Harold Hall – is a private residence, the more than 2,000 acres of parkland that surround it, reflected within a scenic lake, offer a beautiful and history-laden backdrop for walkers and cyclists.

The church, or Chapel of the Holy Trinity, was built by Royalist Sir Robert Shirley in opposition to Commonwealth rules of the day that saw fewer churches built and demands to make them look less extravagant.

A short stroll away, the estate's former stable block operates as the Ferrers Centre for Arts and Crafts, offering an attractive range of stores, galleries and workshops.

9



BELVOIR CASTLE

Reshaped and remodelled, ruined and reconstructed, a castle has stood on the site of Belvoir Castle for almost 1,000 years.

The ancestral home of the Duke and Duchess of Rutland, it's been in the family the whole time, since Robert de Todei built the first castle in 1067. William the Conqueror's Standard Bearer at the Battle of Hastings, he was gifted the land for his service, and his body lies in the current castle's chapel.

A target of Wars of the Roses and English Civil War soldiers, it lay in ruins twice before rising Phoenix-like from the ashes. Visitors can book tours of the castle to view its opulent rooms or explore the estate and its formal gardens.

10



NEW WALK

Originally named 'Queen's Walk' after King George III's consort, Queen Charlotte, Leicester's New Walk is a rare survivor of the Georgian period.

This tree-lined promenade, home to Leicester Museum & Art Gallery, winds its way almost a mile to Victoria Park.

Victorian architects regarded it as the ideal spot to build grand homes for the well-heeled of the day. Fortunately, development was strictly controlled, with the houses set back from the path and enclosed by iron railings. This ensured the walkway was accessible to the public so they could enjoy what was, and remains, one of the city's most picturesque spaces.

11



LEICESTER GUILDHALL

The Guildhall is one of Leicester's most historic and beautiful buildings. Its Great Hall dates back to 1390, when the town's most influential businessmen and members of the gentry would use it as a meeting place as the Guild of Corpus Christi.

During the centuries that followed, it remained an important building, where celebrations were held to mark significant events. Goblets were raised here when the Spanish Armada was defeated and when Cromwell's army were victorious at the Battle of Naseby. Shakespeare is even said to have trod its boards, and today as a Grade-I listed treasure, it stages all kinds of shows, and opens as a fascinating museum.

12



THE NEWARKE

Leicester's history is woven into the buildings, pathways and gardens surrounding The Newarke. Its medieval entrance, Magazine Gateway, took on a new role as a munitions store during the English Civil War, and the gardens of Newarke Houses Museum bear scars from those battles.

This ancient quarter also houses remnants of the Church of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary – where the body of Richard III was displayed after defeat at the Battle of Bosworth. Turret Gateway, under which the monarch is sure to have passed, is just steps away. Still passable, this stone arch leads to the site of Leicester Castle's Great hall, St Mary de Castro Church and a mound of earth once a Saxon castle.



LEICESTER'S OLD TOWN RESTAURANTS

Eating out in Leicester's Old Town puts history on the menu alongside styles of cooking from all over the globe. The Globe, in fact, is one of the city's oldest pubs, serving ale since the 18th century.

Diners can invest in a meal at Middletons Steakhouse & Grill or Latin American restaurant Sonrisa, both housed in grand Victorian banks, or pack in gourmet cuisine at former luggage factory The Case.

Local wool merchant William Wigston is linked to 1573 Bar & Grill, a grammar school that counted on him as a benefactor, and Wygston's House, his former home. Nearby is Cosy Club, which some centuries later flourished as a knitwear factory, and now does a roaring trade in tapas.



KING RICHARD III VISITOR CENTRE

In August 2012, Leicester was thrust into the international spotlight when the long-lost remains of King Richard III were discovered in a car park. DNA tested and reinterred in Leicester Cathedral in a ceremony seen across the globe, the city couldn't wait to share all the fascinating details.

Just two years later, the King Richard III Visitor Centre opened to do just that in the form of interactive displays, an award-winning exhibition and awe-inspiring reconstructions. Visitors follow in the footsteps of the historians and archaeologists who found the last Plantagenet King of England, ending their journey too at the foot of his original grave.



HISTORIC PUBS AND INNS

Not only places to enjoy a sociable drink, some of Leicestershire pubs are simply soaked in history.

Sit and sip where Leicester's most famous hosiery business, Corah, was formed (The Globe), in the city's oldest standing dwelling (Wygston's House), or in what's said to be the country's oldest school building (1573 Bar & Grill).

Relax in the former haunt of Charnwood slate miners in Woodhouse Eaves (The Wheatsheaf), or head to former coaching inns that still offer hospitality to this day (The Quorndon Fox in Quorn, The Coach & Horses in Kibworth Harcourt, The Three Swans Hotel in Market Harborough). Melton Mowbray even has a pub given in a divorce settlement by Henry VIII (The Anne of Cleves, Melton Mowbray).

16



THE CHARNWOOD FOREST

One of the most historic places for exploration and adventure in Leicestershire is Charnwood Forest, whose craggy landscape is home to some of England's oldest rocks.

This is where a fossil found in the 1950s changed our outlook on the evolution of complex life on Earth, and where a young David Attenborough discovered his love of the natural world.

Clamber up Precambrian rocks jutting out of the ground, and try to imagine what life was like when the gnarled oaks surrounding you, some hundreds of years old, first took root. Even when you head into one of Charnwood's villages for tea and cake or a riverside pint, slate and stone-clad buildings reflect the history of this ancient forest.

17



ROYAL MELTON

The Great North Road ran through Melton Mowbray for 300 years, and 11 of the 15 kings that reigned from 1194-1487 travelled the highway. First was Richard the Lionheart, accompanied by King William of Scotland, who tried unsuccessfully to persuade him to return counties lost to the English. A Blue Plaque marks the road's eastern boundary, and another can be seen on The Anne of Cleves pub. This former priory was gifted to Henry VIII's fourth wife when their marriage ended.

Royal links continued when Melton became a fashionable fox-hunting resort. Regular visitors included Edward VIII, who met divorcee Wallis Simpson here – a liaison which led to the King's abdication after just 325 days on the throne.

OTHER COUNTY TOURS

ROYAL MELTON

INDUSTRIAL PAST

HISTORIC LEICESTERSHIRE

MARKET TOWNS

FAMILY FUN

GARDENS AND LANDSCAPES

DISCOVER LEICESTERSHIRE

Uncover the Story of our county at visitleicester.info/uncoverthestory

Visit Leicester Information Centre
4A St Martins, Leicester, LE1 5DB
T: +44 (0)116 299 4444
visitleicester.info

**UNCOVER
THE STORY** **TRAILS**

 /visitleicester

 @visitleicester

 @visit_leicester

 @visitleicester


Leicester
visitleicester.info