

HERITAGE

STROLL THROUGH 2000 YEARS OF LOCAL HISTORY

UNCOVER
THE STORY TRAILS



The Story of Leicester
Want to discover more about Leicester's
2,000 year history? Look out for the
heritage panels all over the city.
Each chapter in the city's story is colour coded ▶

Background - Thomas Cook (22 November 1808 - 18 July 1892)

- ☐ Roman Leicester
- ☐ Medieval Leicester
- ☐ The Wigston Family and Leicester
- ☐ Elegant Town
- ☒ Thomas Cook's Victorian Leicester
- ☐ A Manufacturing Town
- ☐ Alice Hawkins' Edwardian Leicester
- ☐ Changing Posts

Leicester
visitleicester.info

WELCOME TO A NEW APPROACH IN TELLING OUR STORIES.


Leicester is an ancient city with 2,000 years of history. If walls could talk, Leicester's historic buildings could tell some fascinating stories. From Richard III writing letters at Leicester Castle to boards trodden by Shakespeare, shopping centres on the site of Roman market places, stages graced by the Beatles and Buzz Aldrin's underpants, history and heritage are at the heart of Leicester.

The remarkable story of Leicester, the people and the places that shaped its history, can be discovered on the city's streets on heritage panels. These panels are colour coded by theme to make it easier to form connections between the buildings and sites on the trail.



AREAS OF INTEREST

- Roman Leicester
- Medieval Leicester
- The Wigston Family and Leicester
- An Elegant Town
- A Manufacturing Town
- Thomas Cook's Victorian Leicester
- Alice Hawkins' Edwardian Leicester
- Leicester and the Great War
- Modern Leicester
- Changing Pasts
- Richard III's Medieval Leicester

 Pick up a copy of The Leicester Heritage Trail brochure at Visit Leicester Information Centre for a full directory of city centre and historic village panel locations.

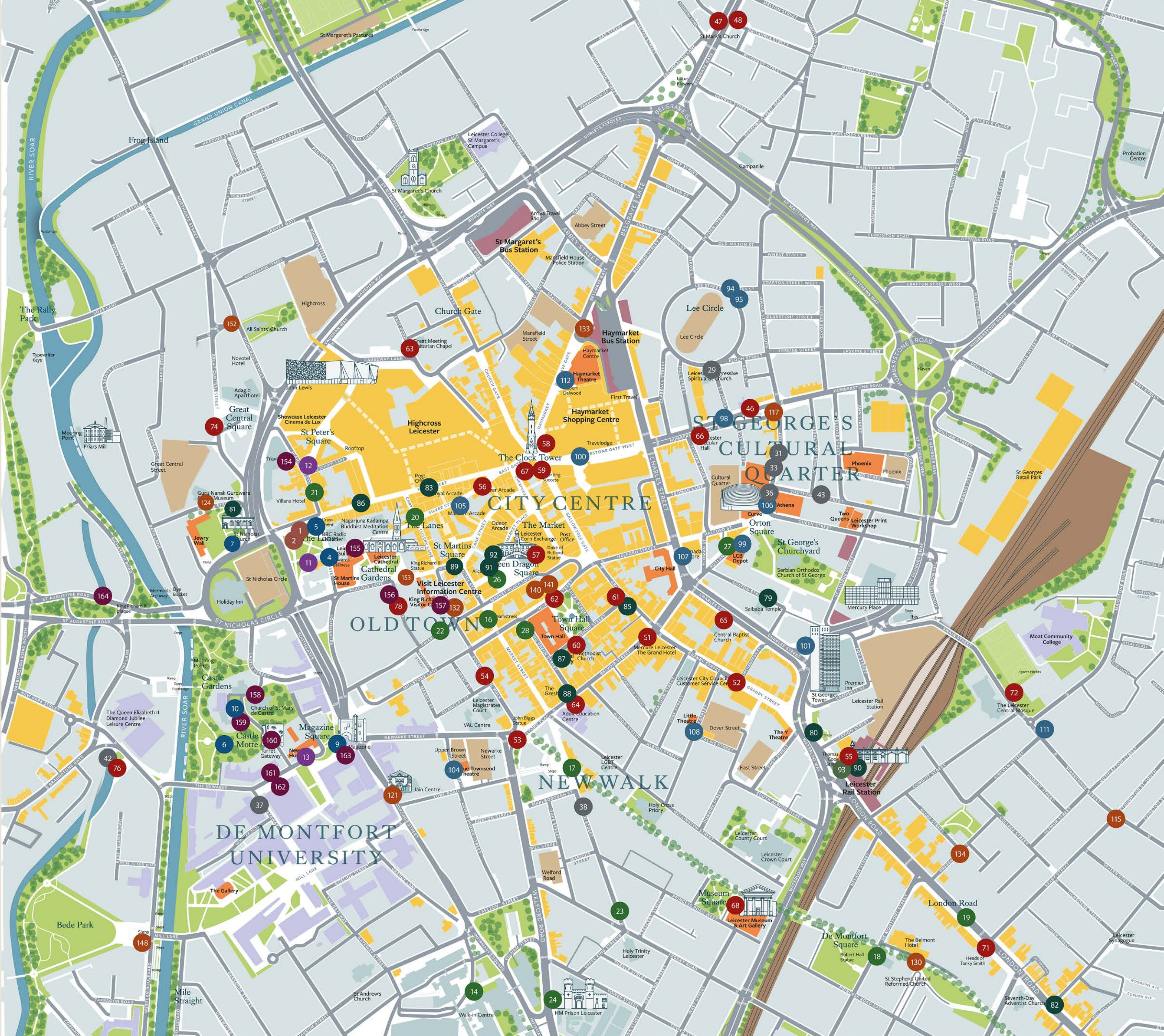




Image on panel © Mike Codd — University of Leicester Archaeological Society

ROMAN LEICESTER

Under the Romans, Leicester really prospered, developing into an important town known as Ratae Corieltavorum. It lay where the Fosse Way, running from Exeter to Lincoln, met the Via Devana running from Colchester to Chester. Ratae had a forum surrounded by shops, a basilica as its administrative centre, a market hall, impressive townhouses, villas and temples. The remains of a very large public bath complex are still visible at Jewry Wall.

Jewry Wall is one of the tallest surviving pieces of Roman masonry in the country. The Jewry Wall Museum and old Vaughan College complex is currently undergoing a major refurbishment to create a new visitor centre. Overlooking the historic site of the baths, the stunning exhibition will use immersive technology to bring to life the stories of everyday Roman Leicester.

There are **three Heritage Panels** dedicated to telling the story of Roman Leicester.



MEDIEVAL LEICESTER

Medieval Leicester lay within the old Roman walls. The early years of the Medieval period was one of unrest with Saxon, Danes and Norman invaders having their influences over the town. Later, of course, came Richard III and the final battle of the Wars of the Roses, which was fought on Leicester's doorstep.

Today the area around Guildhall Lane, Loseby Lane and St Martins East and West gives a good impression of what medieval Leicester might have looked like with its densely built-up narrow streets. The medieval High Street (now Highcross Street and Applegate) was the town's main trading area and was lined with the houses of the wealthy and the more important inns.

There are **seven Heritage Panels** dedicated to telling the story of Medieval Leicester.



THE WIGSTON FAMILY AND LEICESTER

The Wigstons were a rich and important local family headed by Roger Wigston — a former mayor and MP for Leicester as well as one of the town's leading wool merchants. His nephew, William, is one of the figures depicted on the city's landmark Clock Tower.

The timber hall of Wygston's House dates from around 1490, making this medieval house the oldest dwelling in the city.

There are **three Heritage Panels** dedicated to telling the story of The Wigston Family and Leicester.



AN ELEGANT TOWN

Georgian Leicester was a time of prosperity for the city. The knitting industry had become well established and Leicester was fast becoming the centre of hosiery manufacture in Britain. This was reflected throughout the town with broader, paved streets lined with elegant brick buildings and genteel residences.

New Walk is rare example of a Georgian pedestrian promenade. The Assembly Rooms opened in time for the annual gathering of aristocracy and gentry at Leicester Races in September 1800.

There are **15 Heritage Panels** dedicated to telling the story of An Elegant Town.



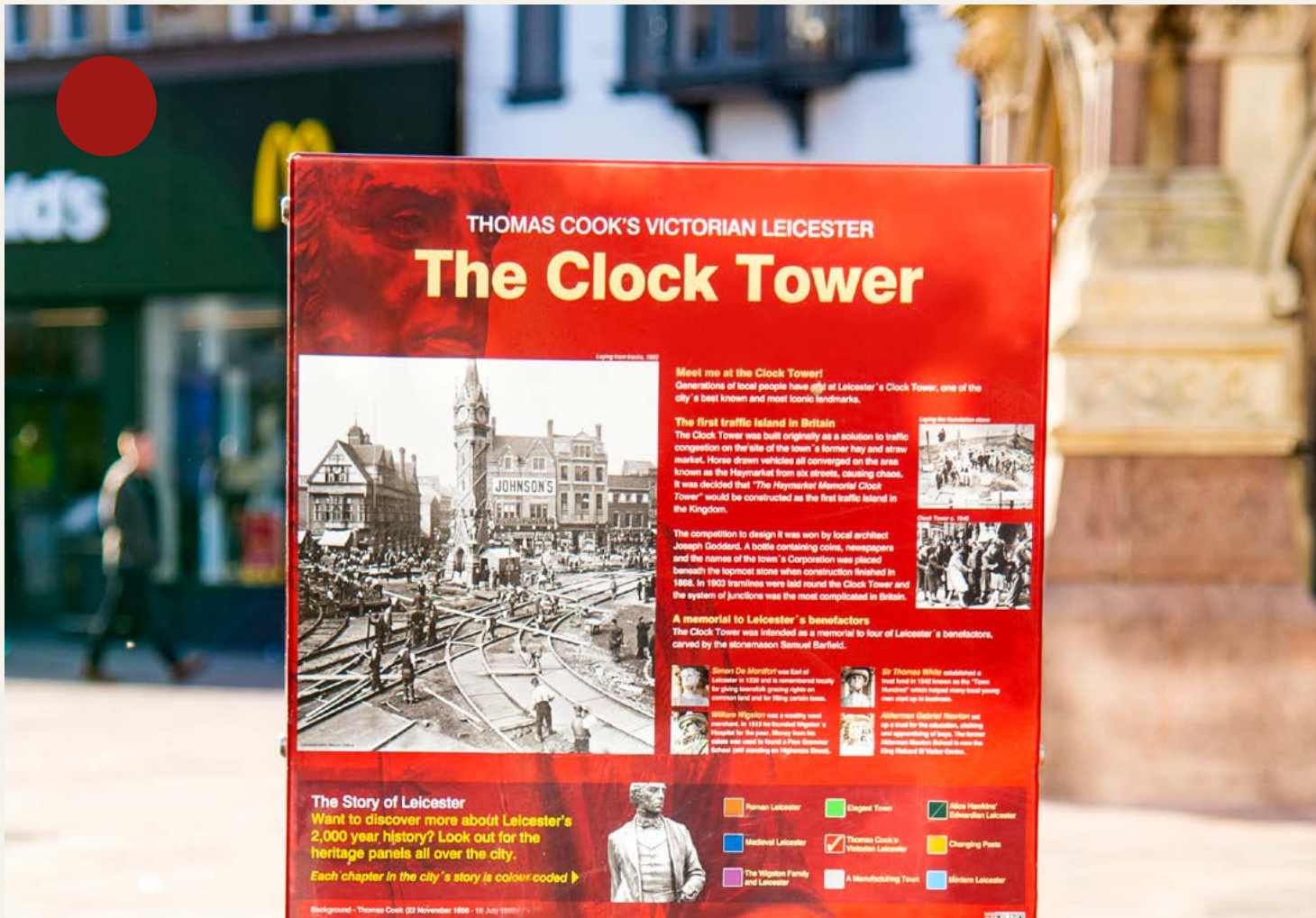
Picture reproduced with kind permission of the Leicester Mercury

A MANUFACTURING TOWN

The most obvious visual evidence of industry in the city comes from the mid-19th century onwards in the form of factories and warehouses. The success of its hosiery and footwear industries, and the growth of textile giants such as Wolsey and Byford, led to the claim that Leicester "clothes the world" by the middle years of the 20th Century. By 1936 the city was recognised as the second richest in Europe thanks to its booming textile industry.

The American inventor Hidalgo Moya arrived in Leicester in 1902 with his handmade typewriter. He formed the Imperial Typewriter Company and over the next sixty years Imperial became a leading typewriter manufacturer.

There are **17 Heritage Panels** dedicated to telling the story of A Manufacturing Town.



THOMAS COOK'S VICTORIAN LEICESTER

The industrial revolution had a huge effect on Leicester, resulting in the population growing from 40,000 to 212,000 during this period. Many of Leicester's most iconic buildings were erected during this time as wealthy Victorians made their mark on the town.

Thomas Cook was the pioneer of popular tourism and founder of the international travel company Thomas Cook and Son. In 1841 Cook organised a Temperance excursion from Leicester to Loughborough on the recently opened Midland Counties Railway. European tours began in the 1850s and in the early 1870s Cook himself conducted the first "round the world" tour.

There are **33 Heritage Panels** dedicated to telling the story of Thomas Cook's Victorian Leicester.



Images © Leicestershire Record Office

Alice Hawkins' Edwardian Leicester

Edwardian Leicester saw electric trams come to the streets of the city and increased literacy among the citizens leading to many becoming politicised. The famous 1905 "March of the Unemployed to London" left from Leicester market when 30,000 people came to witness the historic event.

One of the local suffragettes who campaigned in Market Place was Alice Hawkins. Born in 1863 she came from a working-class family, leaving school at 13 to work in the shoe and boot trade. She was a member of the Independent Labour Party and Women's Social and Political Union, campaigning tirelessly for women's right to vote.

There are **14 Heritage Panels** dedicated to telling the story of Alice Hawkins' Edwardian Leicester.



MODERN LEICESTER

Industry was still thriving in the city during the 1970s, with the work opportunities attracting many immigrants from all over the world. While industry has declined in recent years, excellent transport links have made Leicester an attractive centre for many businesses. The city now has much to be proud of including its sporting achievements and the richness of its cultural heritage and diversity.

The story of the Golden Mile is one of resilience and enterprise. In the 1960s and '70s Belgrave was in decline. The incoming Asian community set up small and efficient businesses, applying their previous trading experience. The road is also famous for its Diwali celebrations.

There are **19 Heritage Panels** dedicated to telling the story of Modern Leicester.



CHANGING PASTS

Leicester's history may span over 2,000 years, but its glory days are far from over. Changing Pasts Heritage Panels celebrate the places and stories that have contributed to the city's development. From community buildings to places of worship and sports teams, these buildings and places have played an important role in shaping the identity of the Leicester we know and love today.

The Abbey Park Buildings are one of these places. Landscape designer William Barron created Abbey Park which was officially opened in 1882 by the Prince and Princess of Wales. Development of buildings in the park has been ongoing and include a new pavilion added after World War I and the Band Stand being moved from Victoria Park to Abbey Park a year later.

There are **41 Heritage Panels** dedicated to telling the story of Leicester's Changing Pasts.



RICHARD III'S MEDIEVAL LEICESTER

In August 2012, during an archaeological excavation in a Leicester City Council car park a remarkable discovery was made: the skeletal remains of King Richard III. The blend of dark historical deeds and modern detective work captured peoples' imaginations around the world and re-wrote the history of a controversial monarch whose grave had been lost for over 500 years.

There is an enduring interest in King Richard III, who reigned from 1483–1485. He is probably England's most controversial medieval monarch; he was the last king of the House of York and the Plantagenet dynasty (which ruled England for over 300 years); and the last English king to be killed in battle.

There are **11 Heritage Panels** dedicated to telling the story of Richard III Medieval Leicester.

OTHER TOURS

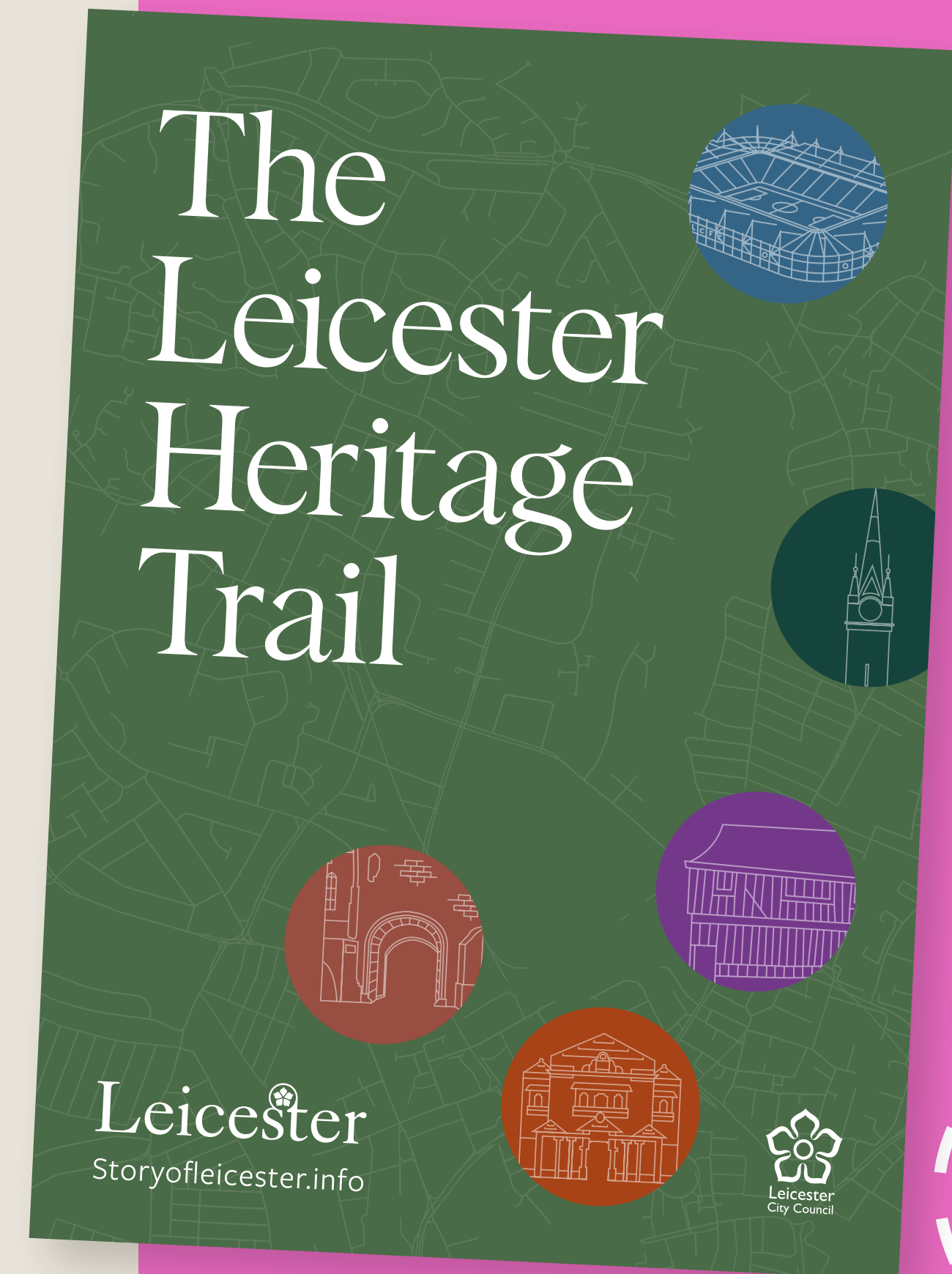
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DISCOVER LEICESTER

Discover more about Leicester's 2000 years of history, visit storyofleicester.info

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

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