

NEW WALK

# TAKE A WALK WITH ROMANS, GEORGIANS AND DINOSAURS

UNCOVER  
THE STORY TRAILS

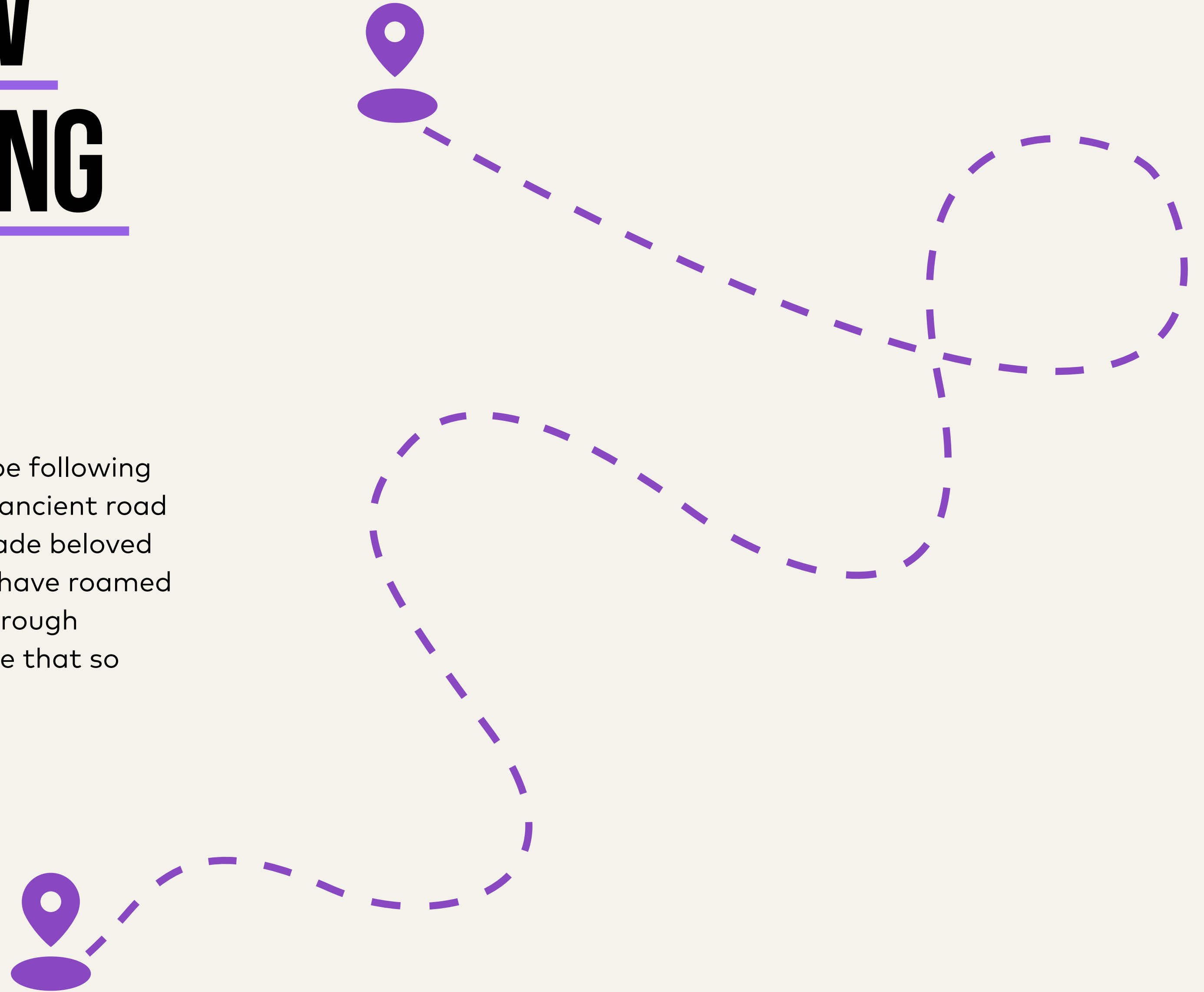
Leicester  
visitleicester.info



# **WELCOME TO A NEW APPROACH IN TELLING OUR STORIES.**

Take a stroll up Leicester's leafy New Walk today and you'll be following in some pretty impressive footsteps. You'll be walking on an ancient road used by Roman soldiers, and enjoying the tree-lined promenade beloved by Leicester's Georgians and Victorians. Dinosaurs may not have roamed the area, but young naturalist-in-the-making David Attenborough certainly would have as he made his way to the museum here that so inspired him.

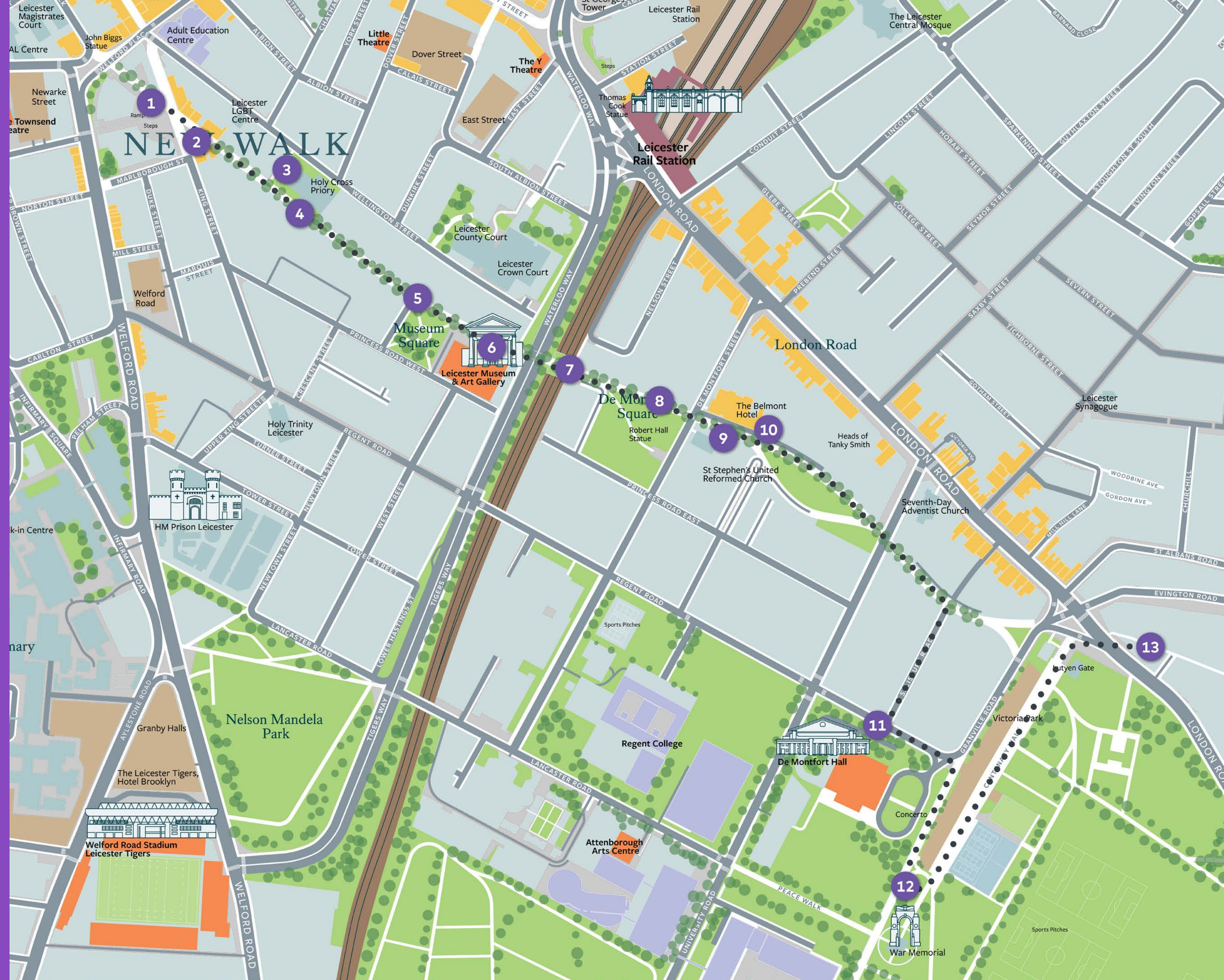
**JOIN US ON THIS FASCINATING  
TOUR TO FIND OUT MORE.**





# POINTS OF INTEREST

- 1. Writers' Pavement**  
Opposite Mattioli Woods, New Walk
- 2. The Albion Tepid Baths**  
5 New Walk
- 3. Holy Cross Priory**  
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- 4. The Clicker**  
New Walk
- 5. Residential Buildings**  
New Walk
- 6. Leicester Museum & Art Gallery**  
53 New Walk
- 7. The Clothier**  
New Walk
- 8. De Montfort Square**  
144 New Walk
- 9. St Stephen's United Reformed Church**  
De Montfort Street
- 10. Belmont Hotel**  
De Montfort Street
- 11. De Montfort Hall**  
Granville Road
- 12. Lutyens War Memorial**  
Victoria Park
- 13. Via Devana — Roman Road**  
New Walk



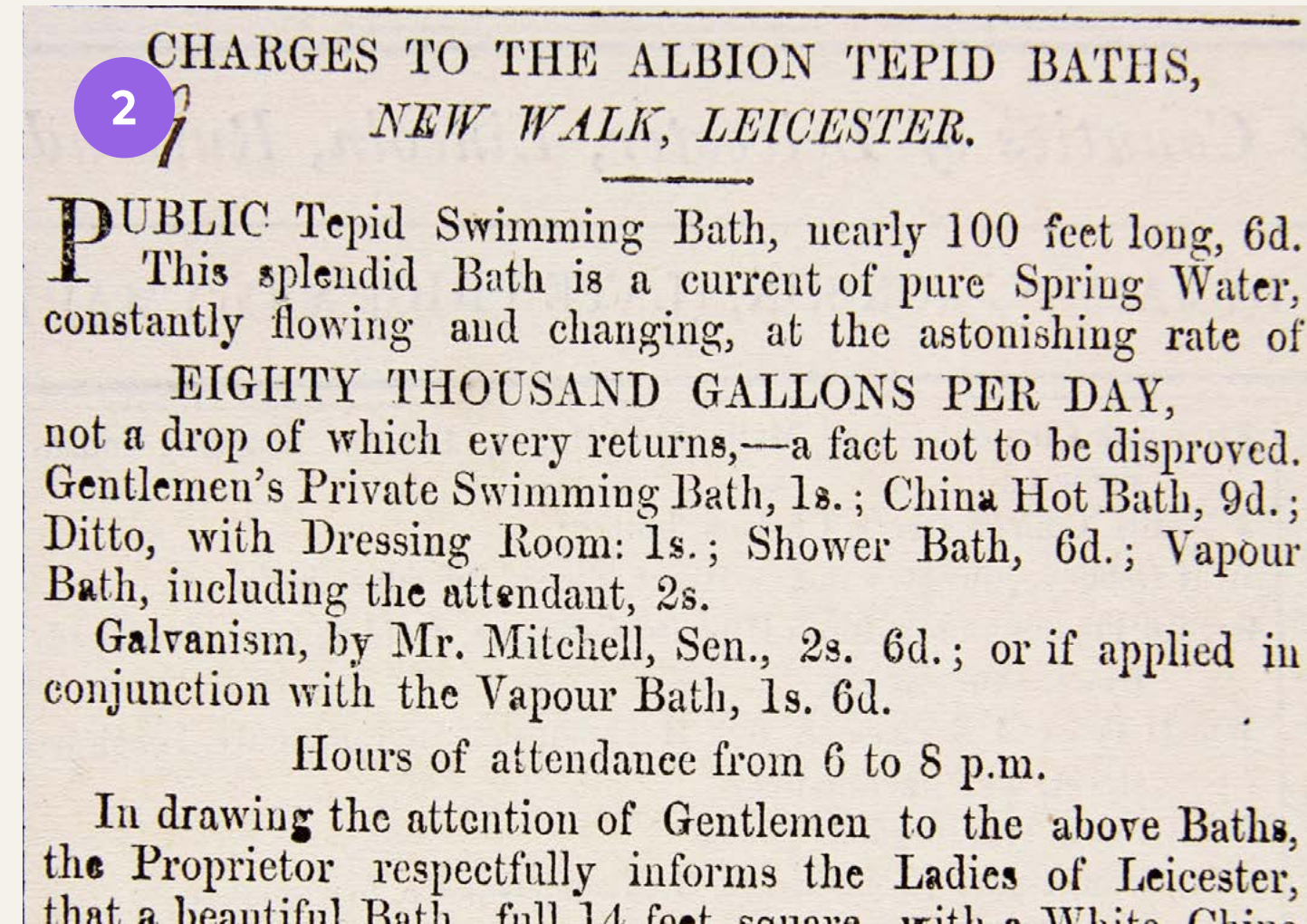




## WRITERS' PAVEMENT

Located on the northern end of New Walk outside Mattioli Woods, New Walk Square, the Writers' Pavement was designed by Colin Hargrave and Roy Webb, carved by Philip Langmead of Barham Stone Ltd and sponsored by Cambridge & Counties Bank Ltd. The art piece was commissioned by The Friends of New Walk to commemorate Leicester's contribution to the literary arts.

Leicester has a rich literary history with famous names such as Joe Orton, Phillip Larkin, Christopher Hibbert, Charles Percy Snow, E Phillips Oppenheim, Robert Burton, Sue Townend and Geoffrey Chaucer.



## THE ALBION TEPID BATHS

The Albion Tepid Baths at 5 New Walk were built in the 1840s and used warm water provided by a sewing cotton factory at No 32 King Street.

There were a variety of different bathing options offered from the large swimming bath the public could access for only one penny each which included a clean towel to private bathing facilities.

The Baths and Washhouses Act was passed in 1846 to encourage local authorities to build public baths and washhouses by enabling them to take out loans.



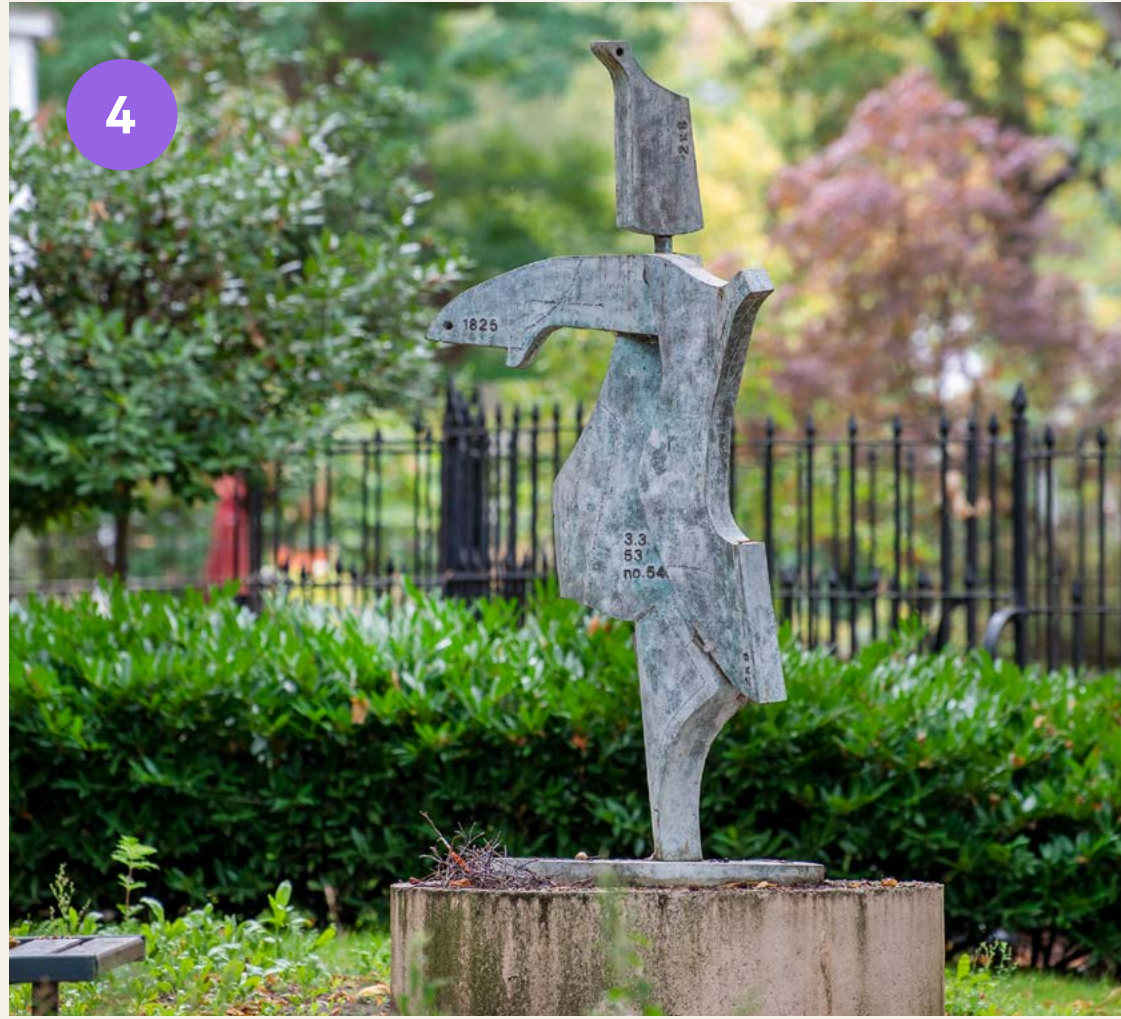
## HOLY CROSS PRIORY

The first public building on New Walk was a Roman Catholic chapel (1819) on the site of what is now Holy Cross Priory.

Holy Cross was established as a priory in 1882. However, by 1929 the church proved too small for the congregation and a famous preacher, Friar Vincent McNabb O.P set about raising money for a larger church. Its foundation stone was laid in 1929, the choir and transepts opened and the high altar was consecrated in 1931. The church was finally completed and consecrated in 1958.

There have been two church organs at the priory. The first built by Leicester company, J Porritt & Son in 1861. It was replaced in 1880 by a new, larger organ built by William Ebenezer Richardson from Lancashire.





## THE CLICKER

The Clicker bronze sculpture by John Atkin was commissioned by The Friends of New Walk to commemorate the legacy of the Footwear Industry in the city and county of Leicester. The name Clicker comes from the name of the operative who cut the skin leather against the brass edges of the shoe patterns.

In 1853 Thomas Crick invented the process of riveting soles to uppers and revolutionised the trade. In 1918 Leicester became the national and world centre for shoe technology and design. The British United Shoe Machinery Company and the British Shoe Corporation employed thousands and were well known nationally and internationally.



## RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS

Houses built at the lower end of New Walk in the 1820s were the first on the walkway and were designed as "genteel residences" for the families and servants of businessmen and professionals. Development was controlled to protect the public's enjoyment of the walkway. Houses had to be at least ten yards from the Walk, fenced off by iron railings and there was no access for carriages onto New Walk itself.

The houses around central New Walk date from 1850s and 1860s and would have been homes of merchants, manufacturers and professionals.

Last to be developed were the large Victorian houses of its upper section dating from the 1880s. Many were designed by the architect Stockdale Harrison reflecting the growing prosperity of Leicester's business and professional classes.



## LEICESTER MUSEUM & ART GALLERY

Designed in 1836 by Joseph Hansom, investor of the horse drawn cab, this building started life as a Nonconformist Proprietary school.

In 1848 the school was bought by the Leicester Corporation with the idea of converting it to a public museum, one of the first council-run museums to be established in the country. It opened as a museum in 1849 and the initiative was keenly supported by the town's Literary and Philosophical Society who donated its own collection of 10,000 objects to the project.

Sir David Attenborough was a regular visitor in his childhood having grown up nearby. The museum has been expanded several times and has remained free to visit since 1849.

When it opened in 1849 Thomas Cook thought it would become "an instructive lounge for the lovers of science" and his son donated specimens from his travels.

[leicestermuseums.org](http://leicestermuseums.org)





## THE CLOTHIER

From the early 19th century to the end of the 20th century the main industries in Leicester were hosiery, footwear and engineering.

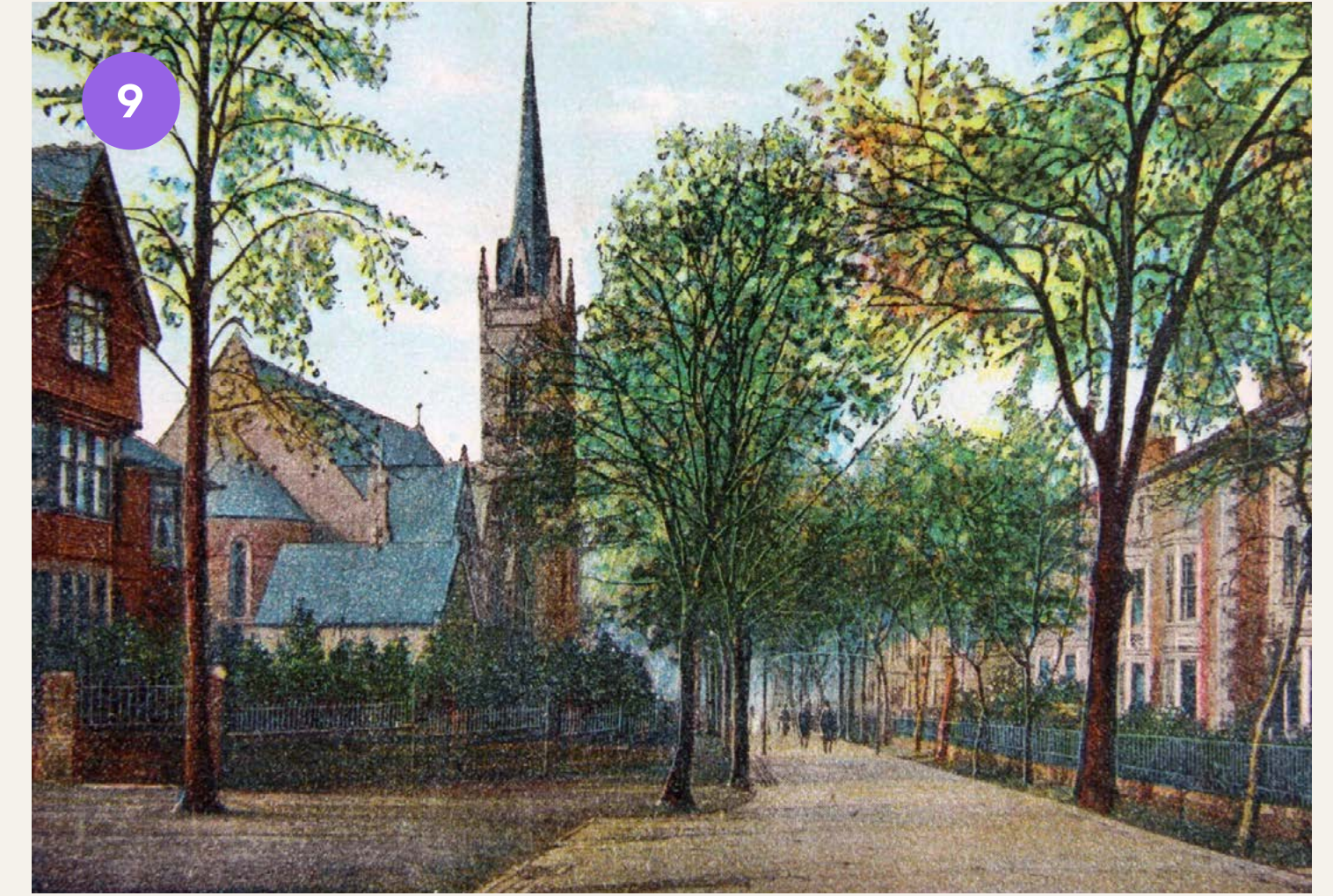
The Clothier is a marble statue by John Atkin commissioned by The Friends of New Walk in 2010 to commemorate the legacy of the clothing industry. The development of steam-powered knitting machines revolutionised the textile industry and created employment in large firms such as Corah. The Corah hosiery factory in St Margaret's was the largest in Europe. Bentley Engineering and Stibbes companies were highly successful in manufacturing textile machinery.



## DE MONTFORT SQUARE

The western side of New Walk was reserved for gardens and squares. These are Museum Square, The Oval and De Montfort Square. The Oval surrounded by ornate iron railings was traditionally popular with children's nannies.

De Montfort Square is named after Simon De Montfort, Earl of Leicester, and is home to the statue of Robert Hall, a 19th Century Baptist Minister. Designed by John Birnie Philip and unveiled in 1871, the 9 feet statue made of white Sicilian marble stands on a 12 feet pedestal of polished granite. Hall was a great public speaker who campaigned for better conditions for local hosiery workers.



## ST. STEPHEN'S UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

This 19th century church on the corner of De Montfort Street and overlooking De Montfort Square was originally built where Leicester Railway Station now stands. The building was designed by architect James Tait. When the present building replaced the earlier Campbell Street Station in 1891, the church was moved stone by stone to its New Walk location.

St Stephens was a Presbyterian church and became United Reform when the Presbyterians merged with the Congregationals.





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## **BELMONT HOTEL**

Architect William Rushin designed 4 Belmont Villas which was built between 1862–1865. The property was bought by Josiah Gimson, owner of the Leicester engineering company, Gimson & Co., who moved in with his family in 1870 and lived there until his death in 1883.

His son, Ernest Gimson became a renowned designer, architect and craftsman. He was an important part of the Arts and Crafts design movement.

4 Belmont Villas was sold in 1960 and is now part of the Belmont Hotel. The blue plaque, celebrating Ernest, was unveiled by his great nephew, Donald on 21 December 2009.

[belmonthotel.co.uk](http://belmonthotel.co.uk)



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## **DE MONTFORT HALL**

Named after the sixth Earl of Leicester, Simon de Montfort, De Montfort Hall was the first purpose-built concert hall in Leicester. It was designed by local architect Mr Shirley Harrison and opened in July 1913.

The Hall comprises a flexible auditorium that can be laid out in different ways with a 400 to 2,200 capacity. The Hall also houses an historic organ, donated by the industrialist Mr Alfred Corah and is the only surviving example of a large concert organ constructed by Leicester organ builders Stephen Taylor and Son Ltd.

Notable artists who have appeared at De Montfort Hall include Louis Armstrong, Frank Sinatra, The Beatles, The Rolling Stones, Bob Dylan, David Bowie and Genesis.

[demontforhall.co.uk/whats-on](http://demontforhall.co.uk/whats-on)



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## **LUTYENS WAR MEMORIAL**

Renowned architect Sir Edwin Lutyens designed the striking Arch of Remembrance in Victoria Park. It was built as a memorial to those who died during the Great War and was orientated to view the sunrise between the arches on the 11th of November each year.

The cost of the Arch was £27,000, of which £10,000 was provided by the people of Leicester. The Arch was officially unveiled by two war widows on 3 July 1925 at a large and well-attended ceremony.





## VIA DEVANA

New Walk is a rare example of a Georgian pedestrian promenade. Laid out by the Corporation of Leicester in 1785, the walkway was intended to connect Welford Place with the racecourse (now Victoria Park) and is said to follow the line of a Roman trackway, the Via Devana.

Originally named "Queen's Walk" after Queen Charlotte, consort of George III, it was eventually the popular name of the "New Walk" that survived. Almost a mile long, New Walk has been a Conservation Area since 1969, ensuring its unique character is protected.

OTHER TOURS

**HERITAGE**

**THE NEWARKE**

**OLD TOWN**

**NEW WALK**

**KING RICHARD III**

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