

Dunkirk and Beeston Walk



Circular walk exploring Highfields Park, Beeston Sidings Nature Reserve, and Nottingham and Beeston Canal with fine views and peaceful surroundings with plenty of wildlife to see.

Walk No 11

DESCRIPTION

A circular walk, mainly flat with mostly surfaced paths. A chance to explore Highfields Park, Beeston Sidings Nature Reserve and Beeston canal with opportunities to see wildlife and industrial heritage along the route.

THE FACTS

Area	Dunkirk and Beeston
Distance	C 6km / 4 miles
Duration	2 – 3 hours
Maps	As leaflet, street map or OS Explorer 1:25000 Map 260
Travel Information	Free car parking, public transport bus and tram services to Lakeside Arts Centre (see www.nctx.co.uk ; www.thetram.net & www.traveleastmidlands.co.uk)
Terrain	Mainly surfaced paths, and 2 unsurfaced. Mainly flat. Some parts unsuitable for wheelchairs, mobility scooters and prams. Steps on canal bridge.
Start/ Finish	Lakeside Arts, University Park, Nottingham NG7 2RD
Refreshments/ Facilities	Public toilets and Café at Lakeside Arts Centre, see https://www.lakesidearts.org.uk/visit-us/eating-drinking.html for opening times
Shorter walk options: Circular walk around Dunkirk Pond (B) can be omitted from the walk. Tram can be caught from University Boulevard tram stop (H) to omit walk through Highfields Park	

Cover images: Highfields Park, university building and Chinese Stone Lion sculpture; Highfields Park with dinosaur sculpture bench; Dunkirk Pond; Heron on Nottingham and Beeston Canal

This walk showcases some of Nottingham’s rich industrial heritage. For further reading and historical images of the buildings visit the [Boots Heritage](#), [Imperial Tobacco Nottingham Science Park](#) and [Nottingham Post](#) websites.

THE ROUTE

- A. From the front of the University of Nottingham **Lakeside Arts Centre** take the large path towards the **University of Nottingham** tram stop passing the **Adventure Golf** on your right and play area on your left. At the end go through the green gateway sculpture by artist **Richard Janes**, based on the Original Art Deco design of the park. Carefully cross the tram lines and bear right to reach the pedestrian crossings. Use both crossings to safely cross the **A6005** and then turn left and walk along the pavement. Just before the bus stop turn right and walk across the **Science Park** board walk path which crosses Tottle Brook. Carefully cross the access road and continue straight ahead through the **Science Park** on the boardwalk path, passing colourful buildings on your left.
- B. At the end of the boardwalk is an information board for **Beeston Sidings Nature Reserve**. To do a circular walk around **Dunkirk Pond** take the path to the left of the board slightly downhill. Follow the path around the pond, keep the pond on your right and follow the path crossing the first footbridge and then turn right. Keep following the path through the trees keeping the pond on your right. At the path fork take the right path passing a life buoy and continuing over the second footbridge. Eventually you will return to the path you came down to reach the pond. Turn left, head slightly uphill to return to the information board. Now take the tarmac footpath which bears left, continue to the end of the path and pass through the metal pedestrian gates.
- C. Turn left and continue along the path going uphill. Cross over the **Dr Stewart Adams Bridge**. The path continues downhill passing a scrap metal yard on your left and the Boots site on your right. At the end of the path cross over the **Boots** entrance on **Harrimans Lane** using the Zebra Crossing. Continue straight ahead on the public footpath keeping the green metal fence on your right for just over 1km. Eventually you will see the **Nottingham and Beeston Canal**. The footpath now climbs slightly uphill, at the end turn left away from the **Boots** site along the pavement to cross the **canal**. Ignore the first pedestrian crossing, continue left and use the second pedestrian crossing to cross **Thane Road**.
- D. Take the signed path to '**Rylands**', part of the [Big Track](#) path to the right heading downhill to the canal towpath. Continue along the canal towpath for just under 1km until you reach '**Boots New Footbridge, No 18**'. Cross under the footbridge and then take the access path on the left which leads up to the footbridge.
- E. Cross over the canal on the footbridge and continue down the steps along a dirt footpath fenced on both sides. Eventually this path bends to the right, continue along the path until it ends at **Thane Road**. Turn left and walk along the pavement until you reach a roundabout (near Boots Beeston entrance) at the end.
- F. Bear left and use the pedestrian crossing before the Recycling Centre to cross **Lilac Grove**. Turn right and continue walking along the pavement, crossing over the railway line. Cross over **Humber Road South** and continue straight on. Use the pedestrian crossing to cross **Beacon Road** in front of **Templar Lodge**. Turn left, continue along the pavement crossing Templar Road.
- G. As you reach Queens Road East continue straight on along the shared foot/cycle path, crossing **Hassocks Lane** and **Tattershall Drive** and continue straight ahead. As the path bears right near **University Boulevard**, continue walking along the path to reach the **University Boulevard** tram stop. Carefully cross the tram lines and turn right walking along the footpath by the tram stop. Just before you reach the signs for the **Highfield Sports Ground** cross the **A6005** carefully using both pedestrian crossings, then continue straight ahead to enter **Highfields Park** via the green gates.
- H. After entering Highfields Park continue straight past the information board over the stone bridge. Now on your left is the newly created **Serenity Garden** which is a peaceful place to stop, sit and unwind. Continue along the path bearing right; at the forks take the path to right. Continue along the tree lined path passing the cascade and the stepping stones on your left and the **Tottle Brook** on your right. When the path reaches a bridge, don't cross it, but continue around to the right, keeping the lake on your left, with views to the **University building**. Pass two Chinese stone lion sculptures gifted by Nottingham's Chinese sister city of **Ningbo**. The path then follows the lake first bearing left and then right. Continue along the path passing the Boathouse on your right and then the boating lake hire kiosk on your left. Continue straight ahead past the **Adventure Golf** on your right to the **Lakeside Arts Centre** to return to the start of the walk.

POINTS OF INTEREST

Highfields Park is Grade II listed park providing 121 acres (49 ha) of public space, including a boating lake, childrens' play area and a pavilion with café. The cascade and the stepping stones at the western end are Grade II listed. To the south of the lake the Tottle Brook, a tributary of the River Trent, flows on the surface, this brook is culverted for much of its length. The core of the existing Highfields Park originates from the landscaping carried out by **Joseph Lowe** and his son **Alfred** in the late 18th and early 19th century. In 1920 the Highfields Estate was purchased by the founder of Boots and Co Ltd, **Sir Jesse Boot**, who gave the site for the foundation of the East Midlands University, now known as the University of Nottingham. Developments Jesse Boots funded included a new road system and parkland setting to the south adding to the landscaping already created.

Nottingham Science Park, completed in 2008, turned a contaminated site into one of the country's first environmentally sustainable business parks, responsive to the nature of the site in which it resides.

The **Serenity Garden** is located at the western end of Highfields Park. Officially opened in 2021 the garden has been developed as a peaceful location to visit. It is a garden of remembrance for families in Nottingham that have experience baby loss. The sculptures are unique to the garden and were created by Nottingham artist Rachel Carter. They will have babies' names added throughout the years as permanent point of remembrance that families and future generations can visit.

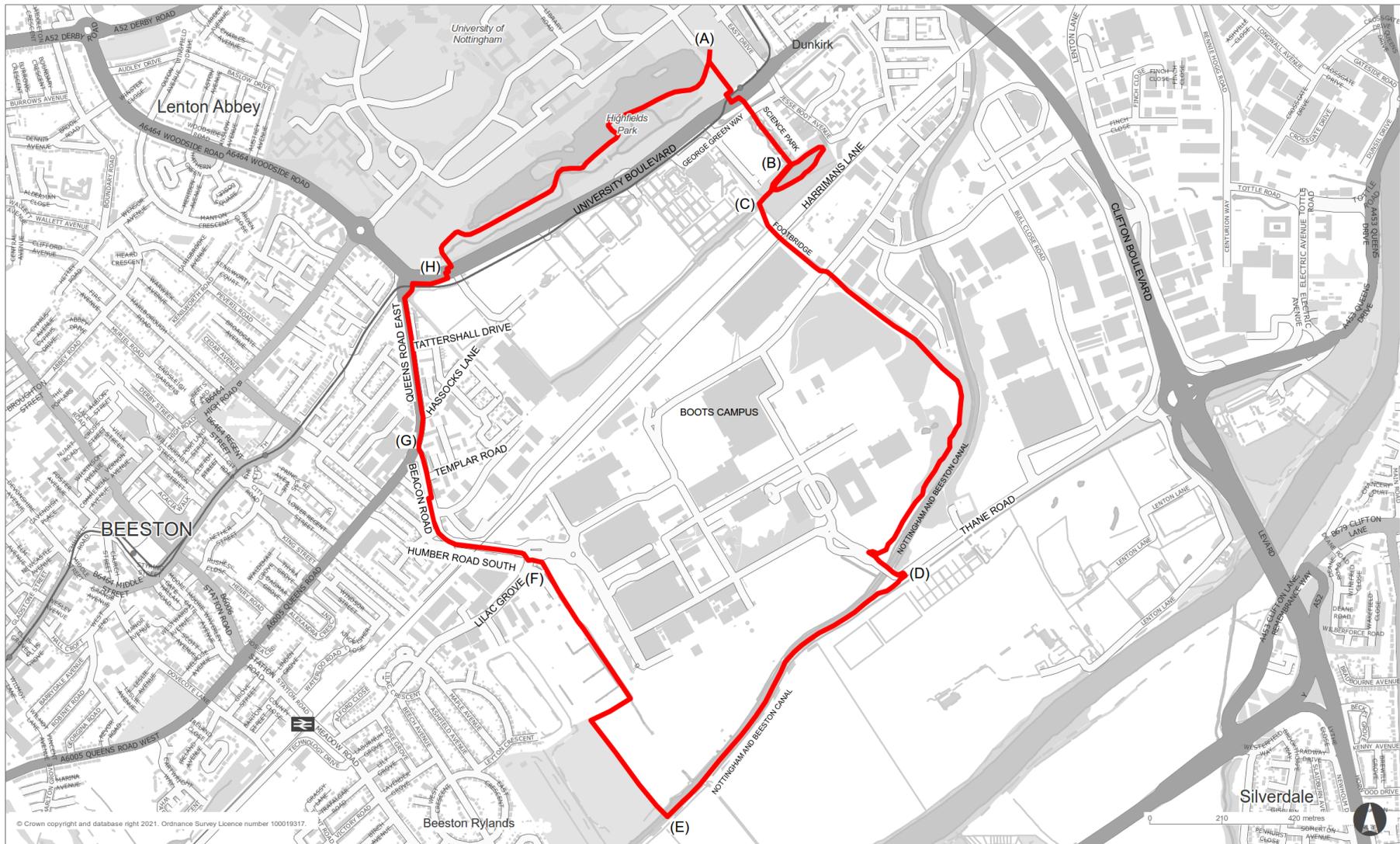
Beeston Sidings Nature Reserve: The mixture of open water, stream, woodland and grasslands provides a range of habitats for wildlife. Over 20 species of butterflies have been recorded at the site. Dunkirk Pond was excavated around 100 years ago to provide material for the construction of the sidings. Today the pond is home to 3 species of water lilies, reeds and marsh plants and provides home for fish, frogs, toads, dragonflies such as the southern hawkler and migrant hawkler. Swallows feed over the pond in summer and there are many species of waterfowl all year round.

The **Dr Stewart Adams Bridge** opened on 8th March 2019, named in recognition of the pioneering work undertaken by Boots scientist **Dr Adams**, that led to the discovery of ibuprofen. This bridge connects Boots to the University of Nottingham,

where Dr Adams first studied and later received his professorship. Stewart Adams had a highly successful career at Boots, working in the business for over 45 years. On 3rd February 1969, 16 years after Dr Adams began working on the project, Boots launched ibuprofen under the brand name Brufen, as a prescription anti-rheumatic product. By 1980, on average 2.5 million patients a day were receiving ibuprofen worldwide and Brufen became the UK's No.1 anti-inflammatory treatment. In the years following its launch ibuprofen was established as one of the most clinically effective and best-selling anti-rheumatics in the country and later became the first such drug to be available over the counter with the launch of Nurofen in 1984.

The 200 acre **Boots Beeston Site** was purchased in 1927 to expand manufacturing capability. Buildings visible from the walk include the **Grade 1 listed D10 "Wet Processes" Factory (1932) and D6 "Dry Processes" Factory (1938)**, both designed by architect engineer **Sir Evan Owen Williams** and recognised as significant icons of British Modernism. **Boots D90 West Headquarters (1966, Grade 2 listed)** and **Boots D105 Travel Outer warehouse (1983)** with a storage capacity of 30,000 pallets can also be seen. The 1960's **Imperial Tobacco (formerly Players) cigarette factory** stood nearby off Thane Road until 2018 when it was demolished.

The surviving part of the **Nottingham and Beeston Canal** was once part of a much longer route, which is now derelict. The present-day stretch remains a vital link for boaters, allowing them to bypass an unnavigable section of the River Trent. In the 1790s, the coalfields of Nottinghamshire brought great wealth, but transport by local roads was slow and expensive. A new waterway from Nottingham to Langley Mill was surveyed by **William Jessop** and **James Green**. It opened in 1796, 15 miles long with 20 locks, most of which were grouped into a flight at Wollaton. The geography of the waterways in central Nottingham was, and is, complex. The city was built on the River Trent, but river navigation immediately upstream of the city had always been difficult. While the Nottingham Canal was being constructed, the Trent Navigation Company built an artificial canal - the Beeston Cut - to bypass the river from Trent Lock to Lenton. There, it met with the Nottingham Canal, which therefore became part of the river through-route. Two hundred years later, this is the only part of the Nottingham Canal to survive. Where the Beeston Cut met the Nottingham Canal, a chain across the navigation prevented boats from passing without paying the toll. The junction is still known as Lenton Chain today.



 The Walk

1:10,000



Nottingham
City Council

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For other walks in this series see www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/localaccessforum