

## River Leen from Source to the Trent: Section 5 – Lenton Lodge to River Trent/ Wilford

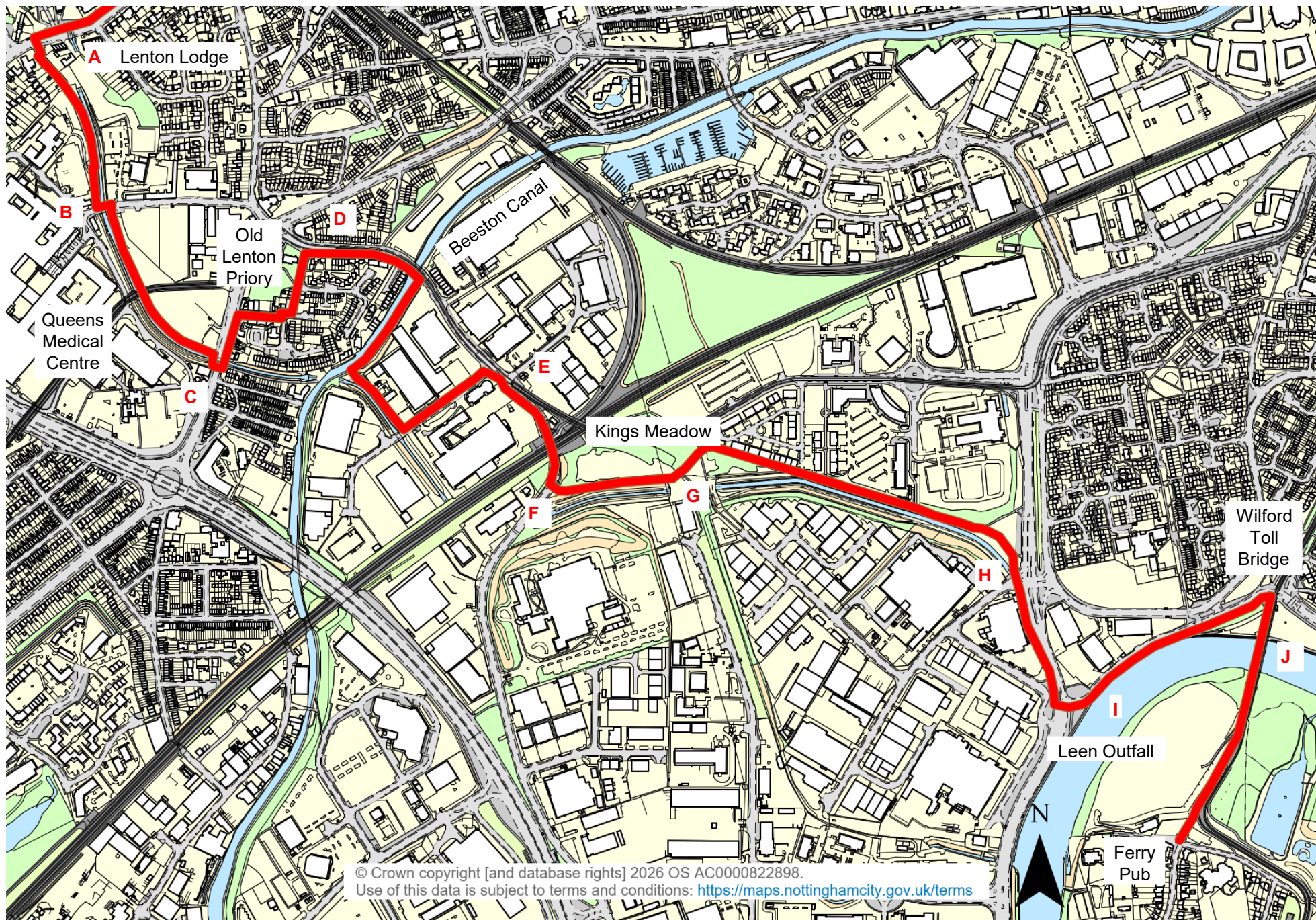


Linear walk following the River Leen from Lenton Lodge (former gatehouse to Wollaton Hall) to its outflow into the River Trent opposite Wilford. The walk passes Nottingham University Hospitals Queens Medical Centre and Lenton Priory, then crosses Beeston canal and the railway to reach Kings Meadow Nature Reserve, before following the Leen through business and industrial areas to reach the Trent. We cross Wilford Bridge to complete the walk at the Ferry Pub.

<b>Start</b>	Lenton Lodge, Derby Road (opposite Hillside)
<b>Finish</b>	Ferry Pub Wilford
<b>Distance</b>	C 2.5 miles/ 4km
<b>Time</b>	1.5 to 2 hours
<b>Terrain</b>	Mostly paths and pavements
<b>Travel Information</b>	Bus services on Derby Road and Queens Road; tram stops at Gregory Street, Meadows Embankment and Wilford
<b>Maps</b>	OS Explorer 260 Nottingham
<b>Facilities</b>	Shops on Derby Road and Abbey Road; café at Wilford Toll Bridge; Ferry Pub Wilford

**Pictures clockwise from top left:** Lenton Lodge; Leen near QMC; heron near QMC; outflow of Leen into River Trent; Leen near NG2 business area; Leen flowing under canal at Lenton; Lenton Priory Church.

The walk is on publicly accessible paths and open spaces, most of which are rights of way; some paths are on private land where public access is by permission of the owner.



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# Route Description

- A. From outside the grand former Wollaton Hall Gatehouse, now **Lenton Lodge**, notice the former Nottingham canal channel to the right, then cross Derby Road at the pedestrian crossing and turn right to reach Hillside. There is an information board about the canal here. The canal used to flow under Derby Road here; the Leen still does. Walk down Hillside, following National Cycle Network route (NCN 6). To your left the former channel of the canal was filled in and was more recently the home of Porchester Shooting Club. Continue along Hillside with the Leen joining on your left, then pass through a car parking area to reach Leen Gate. On your right is access to **Queens Medical Centre**
- B. Cross **Leen Gate** at the pedestrian crossing then continue to follow a path by the River Leen, this time with the river on your right. Queens Medical Centre is also on your right; a building Leen Gate (also NHS) and the former **Bayley's Tannery** building (now residential) can be seen on your left. Continue following the river, passing underneath the tram bridge, and ignoring pedestrian bridge over the Leen, to reach Abbey Street.
- C. Bear slightly right to cross Abbey Street on pedestrian crossing on the road bridge over the Leen. On the other side you can look over the bridge to see the Leen continue and the **Leen Syphon** which collects debris from upstream. There is a sign about this on the path to the right, however there is no public access to the Leen here, so turn left from the crossing and pass shops and a pub to reach Priory Street. Turn right down Priory Street, passing the Boat Inn, then left along Old Church Street, via a path through grassed area, following signs to NG2 Business Park. Notice a pillar stone from **Lenton Priory** on your left and an owl mural on a house to your right. **Lenton Priory Church** is on your left, as you reach Gregory Street (the church and quiet garden can be explored).
- D. Turn right on Gregory Steet, passing tram stop. Continue ahead following tram lines, to go over **Beeston Canal**, then immediately take steps down to the right to join the canal tow path. Continue ahead on canal path (away from the city). As the canal bends, very soon take steps up on the left to see the Leen flowing out from under the canal. The Leen Syphon is just upstream on the Leen from the canal crossing. Follow the path by the Leen to reach Willow Road.
- E. Turn left on Willow Road to walk with Nottingham Textile Group building on your left and **Warhammer World/ Games Workhouse** on your right to reach Lenton Lane. (**Trent Vineyard Church** is on the opposite side). Turn right on Lenton Lane and continue with tram line on your left. Where tram lines veer away from the road, cross the road using pedestrian crossing to continue on the pavement side as road goes over railway bridge. The River Leen is culverted under the railway some way to your right.
- F. Where the road bends to the right we will turn left along Bird Cage Walk, but you can detour briefly ahead to see the Leen again as it flows out from near Siemens buildings. Following Bird Cage walk, **Kings Meadow Nature Reserve** is on your left and you soon join the River Leen again on your right.
- G. At a junction of paths continue ahead on the middle, grassed, path then cross another path and continue with the Leen still on your right. You pass Experian Way which is an entrance to **NG2 business area** on your left. **Queens Drive Industrial Estate**, previously site of Wilford Power Station, is behind the trees on the other side of the Leen to your right.
- H. On reaching Queens Drive, keep right to carefully cross Crowgate Drive. Notice the Leen culverted under the road here. Continue ahead at road junction until you reach pedestrian crossing. Cross Queens Drive here, then turn right to cross Riverside Way and continue straight ahead to reach the concrete flood Defence Wall of the River Trent. You can see **Wilford Church** on the other side of the Trent. Follow the path left towards **Wilford Toll Bridge**, soon noticing a sign which indicates the **outflow of the River Leen** into the Trent, opposite the rugby ground (home of Nottingham Moderns) on the other side of the Trent.
- I. We have completed our journey following the current course of the Leen! However, to finish this walk section continue towards Wilford Bridge. The path you are walking on is part of the **"Big Track"** cycle path. As you near Wilford Bridge, ignore path to your right which descends to the river, and keep left to reach the former Toll Building (now a café). Meadows Embankment tram stop is nearby.
- J. Turn right to walk over the bridge to reach Wilford Tram Stop and then the **Ferry Pub**. The walk ends here, but you can continue past the pub to explore **St Wilfrid's Church, Wilford**.

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## Additional Route Option - Former course of the River Leen near Nottingham Castle

For a circular walk which follows more closely the former course of the River Leen from Lenton towards the castle, see Nottingham Transport NET Walk 11 (Leen and Nottingham Canal) which also contains additional historical information [Walking - Transport Nottingham](#). (It also uses the same route we follow between Lenton and the Trent).

# Points of Interest

**Wollaton Park Gatehouse (now Lenton Lodge):** Henry 6<sup>th</sup> Lord Middleton, of Wollaton Hall decided that the main entrance to an enlarged Wollaton Park should have an imposing gatehouse that would echo the style of Wollaton Hall. He engaged Sir Jeffry Wyattville to design and oversee the construction which took place in the 1820's. Wollaton Hall, Park and Gatehouse were sold to Nottingham Corporation in 1924, and the new municipal park opened to the public in 1926. The building has been grade II listed since 1952. During the 1970's the gatehouse and adjacent Lenton Lodge were largely unoccupied and in a state of disrepair. In 1981, the city council gave a ninety-nine year lease on the building to Lawrie Williamson. Since then, the building has had both residential and office use. For more information [Lenton Times Magazine - Lenton Lodge](#)

**Queens Medical Centre** In 1964 Nottingham was selected by parliament for a new teaching hospital and medical school. Building work commenced in 1971 and the hospital was officially opened by Queen Elizabeth II on 28<sup>th</sup> July 1977, although building work did not complete until the 1980's. Until 2012, when it was surpassed by the Royal London Hospital, it was the largest hospital in the UK. It remains the largest trauma centre in England. It is managed by Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust.

**Leen Gate.** The factory building here was formerly **Bayley's Tannery Buildings**. The building was later occupied by the Bell Fruit Company, but was sold and converted to apartments in the 1980's. For more information see [Lenton Times Magazine - Leen Gate - Old Lenton](#)

**Priory Church of St Anthony, Lenton.** Lenton Priory was a Cluniac house founded by William Peverel before 1108. The present church is not referenced prior to the dissolution of Lenton Priory in 1538, but it appears to have been associated with a chapel in the Hospital of St Anthony at Lenton Priory, a secular alms house for men. Parts of the church, especially the chancel walls, are thought to date back to the 12<sup>th</sup> century and be formed from the walls of the old chapel of St Anthony, with a new and wider nave added later. The church, originally dedicated to the Holy Trinity, served as a parish church in Lenton until the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century when a new church was built between Old and New Lenton. It now forms part of the benefice of Lenton, alongside Holy Trinity, Lenton. More information from Southwell and Nottingham Church History Project [Lenton St Anthony – History](#)

**Trent Vineyard Church.** A modern church based in a warehouse on Lenton Lane with “Trent Compassion” projects aiming to reach out and support people across the city. [www.trentvineyard.org](http://www.trentvineyard.org).

**Nottingham Canal and the changing course of the River Leen.** Nottingham canal originally ran from Nottingham City to Langley Mill and was opened in 1796. At Lenton it merged with the Beeston Canal and ran alongside the Leen between Lenton and the city/ castle. The Leen was diverted East of Lenton to run beneath the castle in the late eleventh or early twelfth centuries to provide water for the city, before flowing into the Trent near Trent Bridge. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century the Leen was diverted to flow into the canal to allow for the building of Lenton (now castle) Boulevard. The Leen south of Derby Road was diverted to its current channel from Lenton to the Meadows in the 1960s as part of a flood risk reduction scheme. For more information on changing courses of the River Leen see <https://watnallhall.blogspot.com/2024/10/the-river-leen-and-its-many-old-routes.html>

**Games Workshop/ Warhammer World.** Nottingham has been home to the headquarters of Games Workshop since 1997. Founded in 1975, it was originally a manufacturer of wooden boards for games. It later became an importer of the role-playing game Dungeons and Dragons and in 2001 started promoting games associated with the Lord of the Rings Film Trilogy. It is most famous for Warhammer World.

**Kings Meadow Nature Reserve.** This area originally belonged to Nottingham Castle and was known as King's Meadow. The site has a high diversity of habitat in a compact area and is home to a variety of rare orchid flowers which were originally transplanted from the old Wilford Power Station site before it was redeveloped. The Meadows area is also famous for Nottingham Crocus. [The Meadows Nottingham – The Lost Crocus Fields – Nottingham Civic Society](#)

**Wilford Toll Bridge.** A ferry crossing at this point on the river was given royal approval by King Edward III with ferry tolls going to the upkeep of Trent Bridge further downstream. The ferry crossing was hazardous and after an act of parliament in 1862 a temporary wooden bridge was erected. In 1870 this was replaced by a brick and cast-iron toll bridge to transport workers and goods to the new Clifton Colliery. The bridge closed to traffic in 1974. It reopened to cycle and pedestrian traffic in 1981 and in 2012 to the NET tramline. [This Is Wilford | Heritage Trail | Ferry Crossing](#)

**Wilford. St Wilfrid's Church** dates back at least to the 13<sup>th</sup> century. St Wilfrid was a bishop of York in the 7<sup>th</sup> century and is reputed to have undertaken baptisms beside the Trent near where the church now stands. See: [This Is Wilford | Heritage Trail | Church Green](#). **The Ferry Inn** began as medieval farmhouses and was converted to a place of refreshment in the 14<sup>th</sup> century with the introduction of the ferry service. It was The Wilford Coffee House and Tea Gardens in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries and then became known as the Punch Bowl. See: [This Is Wilford | Heritage Trail | Ferry Crossing](#)