

Forest and Arboretum Walk





Circular walk from the Forest Recreation Ground exploring green spaces in Nottingham City Centre. The route explores Corporation Oaks, The Arboretum, and Forest Recreation Ground. Easy walking route with fine views and peaceful surroundings with plenty to see and explore.

Walk No 19

DESCRIPTION

A gentle circular walk along surfaced paths suitable for families. The walk goes through three green spaces Corporation Oaks, The Arboretum and Forest Recreation Ground with further options to explore these green spaces.

THE FACTS

Area	Forest Recreation Ground, Nottingham City Centre
Distance	C 4km/ 2.5 miles
Duration	1 – 2 hours depending on time spent exploring green spaces and points of interest.
Maps	As leaflet, street map or OS Explorer 1:25000 Map 260
Travel Information	Some parking on nearby streets. Check any parking restrictions/signage for parking terms. Public transport bus and tram services to start point. (see www.nctx.co.uk ; www.thetram.net & www.traveleastmidlands.co.uk)
Terrain	Mainly surfaced paths. Mostly suitable for wheelchairs, mobility scooters and prams. Steps up at Corporation Oaks but can be avoided by following the alternative step free route in the route instructions.
Start/ Finish	Forest Lodge, NG5 2BU the large white building next to the Forest Recreation Ground Entrance by Mansfield Road (A60).
Refreshments/ Facilities	Cakes by Homemade in the Forest Lodge, The Arboretum Café, Homemade Café at Forest Recreation Ground Pavilion. See websites for opening times. Various places on Mansfield Road near The Arboretum.
	Find this walk and more on the GoJauntly app. Simple photo guides help you navigate while nifty tips point out things of interest and places to eat. Scan the QR code to get started. 
Cover images: clockwise from top left. Gate Piers at West Entrance to the Forest Recreation Ground, St Andrew's Church, Feergus O'Connor Statue in the Arboretum, RWS Almshouses on Chestnut Grove.	

THE ROUTE

- A. From the **Forest Lodge** cross **Mansfield Road** at the pedestrian crossing. After crossing turn left and then turn right to continue straight ahead along St Andrews Road. At the end of the road go up the footpath to the right of the Thorncliffe Road sign, which emerges on to Chestnut Grove. Turn right and continue along the pavement on Chestnut Grove. Notice the **RWS Almshouses** on the left, built 1910 at the bequest of Robert Wilkinson Smith, lace manufacturer. At the end of Chestnut Grove is **St Andrew's Church** (built 1869 of the local Bulwell stone).
- B. Cross Chestnut Grove and turn left along Mapperley Road. Continue along the pavement here, until you reach Elm Bank and the large white house (N37/ Malvern Court) on the left. We will cross Mapperley Road here, but you may wish to look at the attractive buildings at N39-41 (Malvern House and Coachman's Lodge first. After crossing take the steps up to Corporation Oaks. This is the site of the covered **Belle Vue Reservoir**, built in the 1840's by engineer Thomas Hawksley, responding to the city's need for clean water. *For a step free route cross Mapperley Road earlier at the junction of Cranmer Street and continue down Cranmer Street along the pavement until you reach the priority road crossing. Turn left through the gates and continue up hill to Corporation Oaks and walk clockwise around until you see the steps then continue walk from step C.*
- C. At the top of the steps turn left and walk clockwise around **Corporation Oaks**, enjoying the views between the trees. Continue around the reservoir ignoring the first left turn and taking the second left turn down Elm Avenue at the lamp post, numbered 9C317. Continue straight down **Elm Avenue**, crossing Cranmer Street and continuing straight ahead through the gate opposite. **Elm Avenue** is now planted with limes as Dutch Elm disease killed the elms in the 1980s.
- D. At the end of Elm Avenue use pedestrian crossings to cross **Huntingdon Road** and **Mansfield Road** (the old road from Nottingham to York). Turn left to head towards the City Centre and then take the first right into Chatham Street. Cross North Sherwood Street and enter the Arboretum.
- E. In **The Arboretum**, follow the path to the tunnel and walk through it. Turn left and follow the path round to the right passing the statue of Feargus O'Connor.

Take the next left to walk around the Chinese Bell Tower. Bare left and follow the path downhill towards Waverley Street and **The Arboretum Café**. Do not exit, but go past the Samuel Morley statue and take the path to the left. Continue going uphill with the pond on your right ignoring any paths to your right. Eventually you will reach The Arboretum exit on the corner of **Waverley Street** and **Arboretum Street**.

- F. Carefully cross **Waverley Street** and continue along the pavement into Arthur Street. At the end of Arthur Street turn left and continue along pavement down Gedling Grove. At the road end turn right down Burns Street. At the end carefully cross Forest Road West and continue ahead down Southey Street for a short distance, crossing Lawson Street, until you reach **Waterloo Road** (marked by stone pillars and black bollards). Turn right and proceed along the footpath between the houses passing the central circular fenced trees continuing towards **The Forest Recreation Ground** and the large stone pillars. Carefully cross **Mount Hooton Road** and enter the Forest Recreation Ground.
- G. Continue straight ahead along the footpath. At the first bench take the footpath directly behind the bench continuing straight ahead ignoring any paths off to the left or right. The path heads slightly uphill and bends round to the right, heading towards Forest Road East. Take a moment to look back at Birkin's 'Forest Ville.' You will see the Birkin Lace Factories on the skyline, the rows of terraced houses to the left, Forest Fields Primary School building and Djanogly City Academy bordering Gregory Boulevard. At the top, note the information board, then bear left to follow the tree lined path downhill with Church (Rock) Cemetery on your right. As you walk along this path look out for circular indents which represent site of former windmills. The 1845 **Inclosure Act** meant the mills had to be removed. Keep ahead with the cemetery on your right. After the cemetery you will see the Forest Recreation Ground Community Garden on your right and a raised crossing marked by black bollards. Cross the access road here and head over to the green **Inclosure Oak** information board. You are now back at the Start/End point of the walk. If desired turn left from the **Inclosure Oak** and head down the main tree lined walkway with its elegant lamp posts to the **Forest Pavilion** built in 1928. This beautiful building at the centre of the Forest contains a café and toilets.

POINTS OF INTEREST

St Andrew's Church was built as a daughter church to St. Ann's Church, Nottingham between 1869 and 1871 by William Knight, and extended by Sidney Roberts Stevenson in 1884. The Church was built from rock-faced Bulwell stone with wrought Ancaster stone and blue lias dressings for doorways and windows. Cruciform in plan, the church consists of a chancel, side chapels, vestry, transepts, clerestoried nave, low aisles, a western baptistery, porches and a crossing tower, measuring one hundred and fifty feet, with large bell openings, shafts, tourelles and a broach spire with two tiers of lucarnes.

Belle Vue Reservoir. The first reservoir opened in May 1851 to meet the demand for water storage facilities for a growing city. It was designed by Thomas Hawksley (1807-1893) of the Trent Waterworks company. Hawksley was born at Arnot Hill House (in Arnold) and has been described as "the greatest water engineer of the age". The Inclosure Commission forced a reluctant Ichabod Wright of Mapperley Hall to sell the land on top of what was then known as Toad Hill, a popular beauty spot. A second, larger, reservoir designed by T.C. Hine was opened in June 1864. Water was pumped to the reservoirs from the Park waterworks on the Ropewalk, and later from the Bagthorpe works on Haydn Road and eventually connected to Mapperley Reservoir on Porchester Road. Outlet pipes spread "octopus like" from Belle Vue to the rest of the city. The reservoirs still serve the city today.

The Arboretum. On 11th May 1852, thousands of people attended the official opening of the city's first public park by the Lord Mayor and the Sheriff of the Borough. In his speech the mayor talked about the significance of the Arboretum as a place for healthy recreation for the people of Nottingham. It was the centrepiece of the parks, gardens, public walks and cemeteries formed under the Nottingham Inclosure Act of 1845. Today the layout of the park is relatively unchanged, providing a key asset to Nottingham's Victorian heritage.

The park was designed by Samuel Curtis (1779-1860), a nurseryman, botanical publisher and landscape gardener. Curtis had managed a nursery in Surrey, was a Land Agent at Clumber Park and worked on the layout of Victoria Park, London before laying out the Arboretum. He retired to La Chaire, Jersey, and kept developing its Tropical Gardens.

The Arboretum is Grade II listed on the Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England and contains nine Grade II Listed structures within its 17 acres. In 2002 Heritage Lottery funded major improvements at the Arboretum including the restoration of the Bandstand, Circular Aviary and Chinese Bell Tower. The [Arboretum Tree Trail](#) takes around an hour to complete and allows you to fully explore the park.

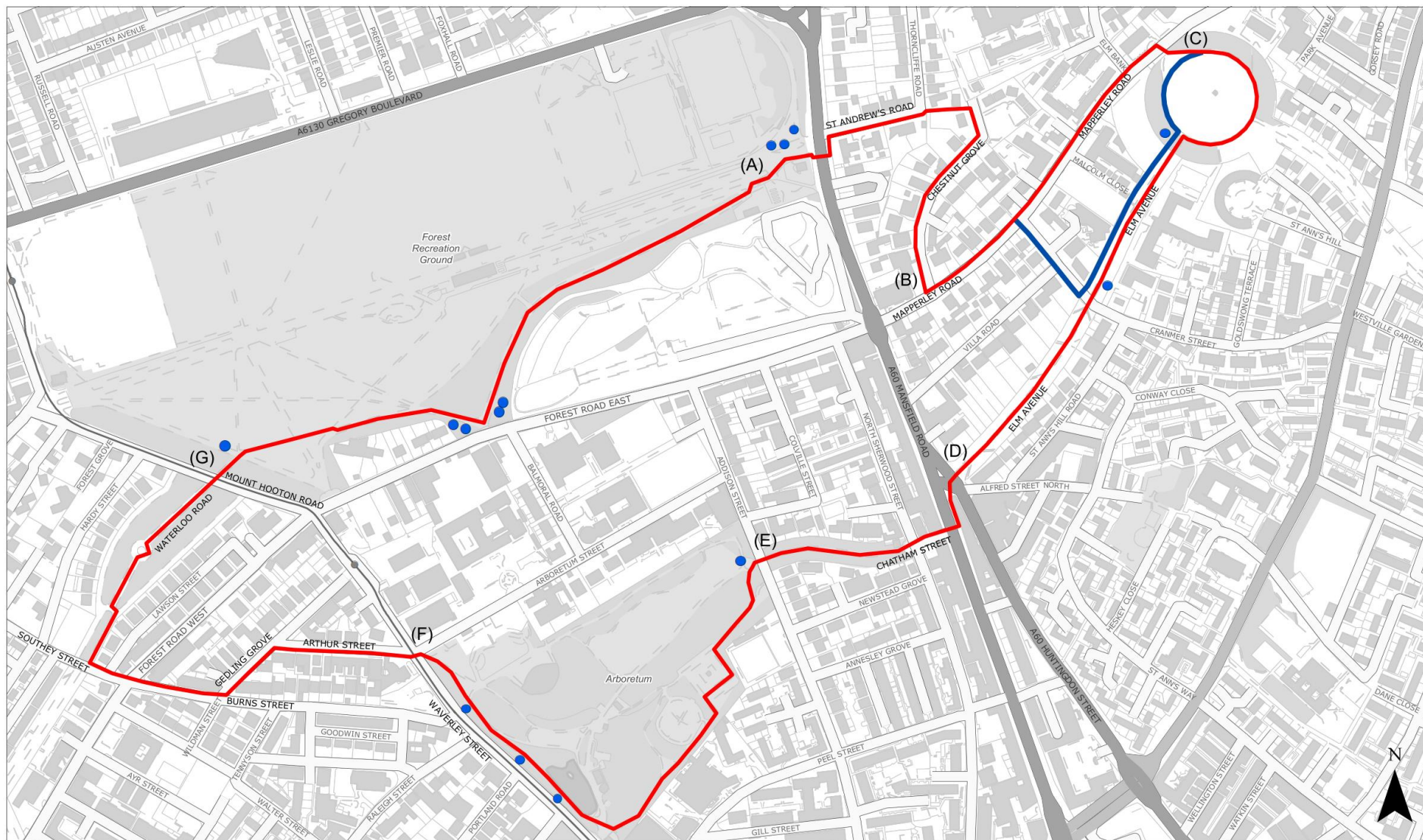
Waterloo Road in Nottingham gained prominence through its connection to the Nottingham Inclosure Act of 1845, which led to the creation of public spaces like Waterloo Promenade. The road's history is interwoven with the development of these recreational areas. Entrances to the promenade, including piers, screen walls, and railings, are Grade II listed, reflecting their historical significance. While the original railings were removed during World War II, modern replacements have been installed, maintaining the visual integrity of the promenade.

The **Forest Recreation Ground** was the home of Nottingham Races and Nottingham Forest F.C. and is still a popular leisure area. The recreation ground is the oldest of its type in the city and covers 27.5 hectares north of the city centre. Horse Racing was held here over two centuries until 1890, when the races moved to Colwick. It was on the Recreation Ground that Nottingham Forest F. C. played its first matches. The Forest Sports Zone with football pitches is located near the playground. Look up at the ridge enclosing the Forest Site (Forest Road East). Along this ridge stood a row of thirteen windmills c.1800. The 'Forest' remains a centre for leisure activity. The annual Goose Fair held during the first weekend in October moved to the 'Forest' in 1927 from its previous position in the Market Square.

Forest Lodge adjacent to Mansfield Road was built in 1857 for the keeper of the grounds of the Forest Site and the race course. The architect was the Borough Surveyor, Henry Moses Wood. At the time of its erection, the Lodge caused quite a stir: "...then to view Moses Wood's latest absurdity. It is a cruciform Grecian Temple built of brick and will be all columns and stucco. The town council ought to be ashamed of spending the town's money in such a manner." - Samuel Collison (1812-1890) writing in 1857. The Lodge was last occupied by a superintendent of the Forest Site in 1969.

The **Inclosure Oak.** In 1851 a number of people from the Nottingham Corporation visited the Great Exhibition and Windsor Great Park and returned with some acorns from the park. The Oak tree marked with the plaque was planted by Edmund Patchitt in 1865 to commemorate the 1845 Inclosure Act was grown from one of these acorns. The second Oak tree to the right of this tree was planted by Kate Ashbrook of the Open Spaces Society in 2015 to celebrate these unique parks was grown from an acorn from the Major Oak in Sherwood Forest.

The **Inclosure Act** of 1845 gave 130 acres of Recreation Ground to the people of Nottingham, forever. There were 3 miles of Walks and 5 Parks, (now 4), totalling 5 miles, round what was then the edge of the town, now part of the inner city. For more information about the **Inclosure Act** and The Inclosure Walk which the Forest Recreation Ground is part of see the [Inclosure walk leaflet](#).



- Walk
- Step Free Option
- Benches / rest points

© Crown copyright [and database rights] 2025 OS AC0000822898
 Use of this data is subject to terms and conditions: <https://maps.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/terms>.

1:4,000



Nottingham
 City Council

Produced by the Nottingham Local Access Forum with the support of Nottingham City Council. October 2025

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