

THE BRAMLEY APPLE TRAILS

Southwell Heritage Walks





THE BRAMLEY APPLE TRAILS

With grateful thanks to
Roger Merryweather for
his contributions.

Original artwork
by Michael Payne

Funded by Newark and
Sherwood District Council



HERITAGE WALK ONE





THE BRAMLEY APPLE TRAILS

HERITAGE WALK ONE

Distance: Approximate 3.1km/2 miles

Time: 45 minutes – 1 hour

Accessibility: Wheelchair/pushchair friendly and is mainly on pavements

Introduction

The Bramley Apple Story began in 1809 when a young Southwellian girl called Mary Ann Brailsford decided to help herself to the pips from the apples her mother was preparing in the kitchen and plant them in a flower pot. One of the pips germinated, grew well and was then planted in Mary's garden where it began to thrive. It was the tree which bore the unique Bramley apple which would become one of the most respected apples in the world and a nation's favourite.

Park your car in the car park opposite Southwell Minster on Church Street NG25 0HD (parking is free for the first 2 hours). As you walk out of the car park turn right and head towards the Saracen's Head Hotel. At the mini roundabout turn right and continue to walk up King Street crossing the road until you are outside the Bramley Centre which is also the Public Library. Continue down the little alley way down the side of the Bramley Centre which takes you to another car park.

Heritage Point One: The Bramley Centre

In the car park you will see a Bramley Tree which is over 80 years old and is cared for by Roger Merryweather who is the great grandson of Henry Merryweather. Henry was the first propagator of the Bramley Apple. The tree used to be in the garden of one of the houses which backs on to the car park and is now, by virtue of the conservation area status of Southwell, protected by law.

Head back through the alley way and turn left back onto King Street. Continue until the brow of the hill then take the road which veers left. En route look at the outstanding historical buildings lining what is known as the Burgage, continue on over Newark Road and along Station Road.

Heritage Point Two: The Old Station

Even though the old station is no longer in existence you will see some remains of the track furniture where its gates and fencing once existed. An old traditional station house still stands. Nearby is the Final Whistle pub, originally built as a hotel called the Newcastle Arms. Its original purpose was to accommodate travellers and today it still provides meals and refreshments. In 1860 the opening of the station played a major part in the history of the Bramley Apple by providing the means for Henry Merryweather to transport his produce on the regular passenger service to Nottingham. In 1871 the Southwell to Mansfield line opened. This gave Henry even greater opportunity to broaden his market across the country through this newly formed national transport network.



Turn right onto Riverside then immediately bear left. Follow the footpath which takes you along the river and through the newly planted Community Orchard up to the A612, Easthorpe. Here on Easthorpe Road you can see where the old railway line used to run.

Heritage Point Three: The Community Orchard

Three Bramley Apple trees were planted within the Orchard in 2009 to commemorate the bicentenary of the world famous apple. They were donated by Roger Merryweather and his brother, the last members of the family involved with running the Merryweather nursery.

From Easthorpe Road, look left where you can see the Old Workhouse.

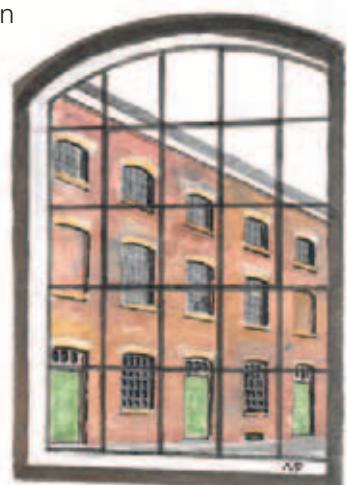


Heritage Point Four: The Southwell Workhouse

The impressive Southwell Workhouse is now owned by The National Trust. The unique building is the only ‘fully intact’ workhouse to survive from its period. You can see three large Bramley Apple trees in what used to be the main vegetable garden which it is assumed were planted to provide fresh fruit.

There are no records to show that Workhouse paupers ever ate Bramley Apples, but the trees would have supplied copious amounts each year to be sold on the market. It is believed the apple trees were purchased from Henry Merryweather & Son’s nursery c.1900.

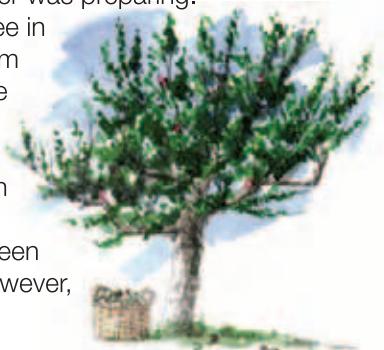
Please contact The Workhouse for details of opening times on **01636 817260** or www.nationaltrust.org.uk/theworkhouse



Facing away from the Workhouse, continue forward along Easthorpe (with care as this is a busy road) towards Fiskerton Road. Turn right at the Old Coach House and head towards Church Street and the town centre. After passing the Hearty Goodfellow pub on your right and about opposite Farthingate, is the former home of Mary Ann Brailsford.

Heritage Point Five: No.73 And The First Tree

No. 73 is the house where Mary Ann, the eldest daughter of the Brailsford family lived and first planted a pip from the apples her mother was preparing. These later germinated into the first Bramley apple tree in the 1830s. When Henry Merryweather took grafts from this tree and propagated the species the owner of the cottage at the time was Matthew Bramley who requested that the apple bore his name. The tree eventually became part of the garden of No. 75 which was purchased by Nottingham Trent University (NTU) in 2018. It is now over 200 years old and has sadly been infected by honey fungus which cannot be cured. However, NTU are ensuring it is kept alive as long as possible.



Grafts have been taken so that its original genes are preserved for the future.

If you look to the left hand side of the cottage you will see the Bramley Apple Pub which was originally called the George and Dragon back in the late 18th century when it first opened.

It was much later when the pub took on the famous name of the Southwellian fruit.

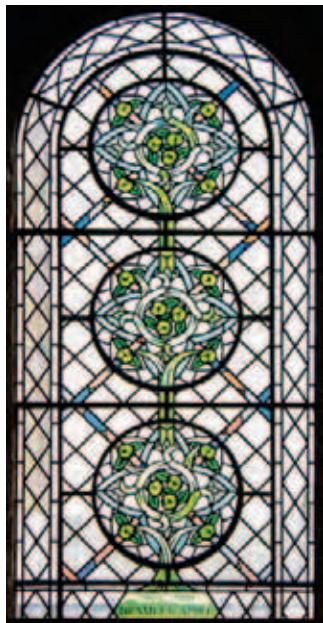


Continue on along Easthorpe and head back into Southwell town centre. Cross over the road to the Minster and take a few minutes to look around and even go inside.

Heritage Point Six: Southwell Minster

For nearly eight centuries the Minster has played a role within Nottinghamshire church hierarchy but it only became a cathedral for Nottinghamshire in 1884, as part of the newly formed diocese of Southwell. The Minster also serves as a Cathedral to 313 other parish churches in the diocese.

Take a close look at the stained glass windows in the north transept. One window has been sensitively designed and incorporated with the others in celebration of the 2009 bicentenary of Southwell's historic fruit.



THE BRAMLEY APPLE TRAILS



KEY



Start Point



Heritage Point



Trail Route

Parking

NORWOOD PARK



KIRKLETON ROAD



QUEEN STREET

HALAM ROAD

ALLENBY ROAD

WESTGATE

NOTTINGHAM ROAD

SOUTHWELL



LOWER KIRKLETON ROAD

THE ROPEWALK



HERITAGE WALK TWO





THE BRAMLEY APPLE TRAILS

HERITAGE WALK TWO

Distance: Approximate 10km/6 ¼ miles

Time: 2½ to 3 hours

Accessibility: This Heritage walk is along the Southwell Trail which is accessible for all, walkers, cyclists and horses. However the walk is unsuitable for pushchairs and wheelchairs as there are stiles to cross and the paths may be muddy in parts.

Introduction

The Bramley Apple which has become one of Southwell's most celebrated assets could well have gone unnoticed if not for a certain young man called Henry Merryweather, born in Carlton on Trent in 1839. He was named after his father, also called Henry Merryweather, who was employed as a gardener by Reverend John Drake Becher.

John Drake Becher became resident at Norwood Hall in 1840 and took Henry Merryweather Snr with him to look after the extensive gardens which supplied the needs of the house. Henry Jnr then became part of the gardening team at the age of 10. This allowed him to gain an extensive first class knowledge of horticulture, which had a particular emphasis on the many different fruits grown in the grounds of Norwood Hall and the walled kitchen garden.

As you follow this Heritage Trail, the history of Henry Merryweather and the Bramley Apple gradually unfolds, including other significant heritage points which have connections to the Bramley.

There is free parking in the Bishop's Drive car park that is signposted from the A612 opposite Jubilee House. Then follow the footpath which runs along the edge of the field there, leading up to the Minster.

Heritage Point One: Southwell Minster

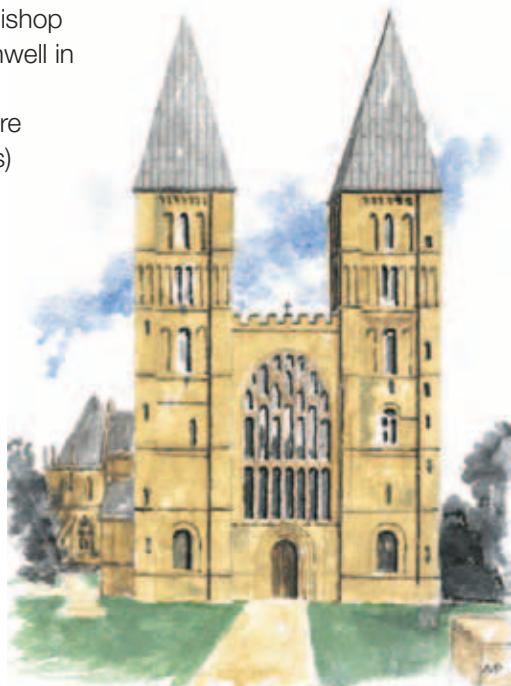
One of the main focal points of Southwell is the Minster which bears the famous status as Nottinghamshire's Cathedral. Southwell Minster has unusual 'pepperpot roofs' and beautiful stained glass windows.

It was recorded that a missionary archbishop from York named Paulinus visited Southwell in Saxon times and founded a church.

The Normans rebuilt the original structure (as they were great builders of churches) and created Southwell Minster as an independent church within the diocese of York.

During the Civil War (1642-46) the building was considerably damaged by the occupation of the Parliamentary forces, but was saved by Mr Edward Cludd, a resident at Norwood Park. It was not until the mid-19th century that extensive improvements were undertaken to repair and restore the damaged church thus making it the Cathedral of Nottinghamshire in 1884.

In celebration of the Bramley Apple and to signify unison between the church and the town, both of whom recognise the apple as a symbol of life and its importance in the history of Southwell, a stained glass window has been placed in the North transept.



Starting at the Minster, walk along Church Street towards the Saracen's Head, turn right in front of the pub and then immediately left to go up Queen Street. Continue along Queen Street and over the Ropewalk to go out of the town. Leaving town, along Halam Road, you will notice an executive housing estate. This is the site where H. Merryweather & Sons Nursery used to be and where the Bramley Apple was first cultivated and then eventually commercialised.

Heritage Point Two: **H. Merryweather & Sons Nursery**

The cultivating of the Bramley Apple had very humble beginnings at H. Merryweather & Sons Nursery in Southwell.

After working at Norwood Park for five years, Henry and his father decided to buy two acres of land along Halam Road in 1854. The Merryweathers had decided that two acres were sufficient to set up their own nurseries and start their business concentrating on cultivating and selling fruit, in particular strawberries.

The Merryweathers demonstrated great foresight when purchasing the land for their new business. At around the same time the railway enabled people to travel further and the penny post also allowed greater opportunities for the marketing of their fruit.

Walk past the former Site of Merryweather & Sons Nursery and continue along Halam Road, then turn right along the signposted footpath. This footpath takes you up through Norwood Park, through the golf course and on in the direction of Maythorne.

Heritage Point Three: Norwood Park

Norwood (meaning 'north wood') Park has a special significance within the Bramley Apple Trail. It is here that Henry Merryweather had worked alongside his father as a gardener.

Throughout this work he acquired detailed knowledge about the cultivation of plants and the skills needed to be a top class nurseryman.



Henry Jnr worked alongside his father in 1849 after finishing his education at Bucklow's School in Queen Street. By this time John Drake Becher had moved to Hill House in the centre of Southwell. Lord Arthur Edwin Hill MP had taken up residence of the Norwood Estate.

After walking through Norwood Park, cross over Lower Kirklington Road and head down Maythorne Lane. Just before reaching the small hamlet of Maythorne, turn right onto the Southwell Trail. Continue along the Southwell trail until you get to Station Road.

Heritage Point Four: Southwell Trail

The Southwell Trail which is 7 ½ miles long was once a busy railway line. It covers the length of the old track between Farnsfield and Rolleston Junction and is the longest stretch of continuous lost railway to be fully open to the public on foot, bicycle or horseback.

The trail also played a significant role within the Bramley Apple story. As a newly developing railway network it enabled H. Merryweather & Sons to reach a larger audience for their fruit and gardening products.

At the end of the Southwell Trail, cross over Station Road, turn onto Riverside and then almost immediately bear left. This footpath leads along the river and through the Community Orchard where you will see three Bramley Apple trees. As you continue walking up to the A612, to reach Easthorpe. As you stand on Easthorpe after coming through the Community Orchard, you can now see where the old railway line used to run. From here look left and you can see the Workhouse.

Heritage Point Five: The Southwell Workhouse

Now in the ownership of the National Trust, the Southwell Workhouse is the only workhouse to fully survive ‘fully intact’ from its period, making it a unique building.

Three large Bramley Apple trees can be seen in what used to be the main vegetable garden. These trees were presumably planted to provide fresh fruit which could be used and kept all year round. There are no records that the paupers who lived at the Workhouse ever had Bramley Apples included in their diet. It was more likely that this fruit was only made available to the staff and guardians or possibly sold on the market.

There is not much known about the trees here but it is believed they may have been purchased from the nursery of H. Merryweather & Sons c.1900.

The Workhouse can be contacted for details of their opening times on telephone number **01636 817260** or web address www.nationaltrust.org.uk/workhouse-southwell



With the Workhouse behind you, walk with care along Easthorpe as this is a busy road, and on towards Fiskerton Road. Cross over the road at Metcalfe Close to follow the footpath through the bungalows. This footpath leads through two small paddock fields and then out onto Fiskerton Road, just up from the Garden Centre. Walk up to Brinkley Hall Farm and then follow the footpath/bridleway.

Heritage Point Six: Merryweather's Orchard

The Heritage Orchard consists of apple varieties previously grown by H. Merryweather & Sons which ceased trading in 2004. The Orchard holds more than 30 varieties of apple and a number of other fruits, including the Merryweather Damson, Victoria Plum, Quince and Nottingham Medlar.

A shelter belt of Birch, Liquidamber and Acer have also been planted.



Follow the footpath from the Heritage Orchard, cross over Pollards Lane and Crink Lane then through a small block of woodland. Follow this footpath which cuts the corner off the field before going through a small enclosed alley leading through the bungalow estate. When reaching the road, bear left and carry on along the road until you see another enclosed alley way which is signposted to lead you through the bungalows. This path takes you to the old Minster School playing fields. Follow this footpath to the far right hand corner of the field which then joins the Potwell Dyke footpath, and bringing you out on Church Street.

Heritage Point Seven: Church Street, Easthorpe

For centuries the village of Easthorpe was very much on its own with a few shops, several farms, a school and many small industries connected either to framework knitting, agriculture or malting.

No. 73 Easthorpe is where the Brailsford family lived when Mary Ann, their eldest daughter, planted the pip that germinated and produced the first Bramley Apples in the 1830s. The original tree still grows and produces fruit each year, although it now stands in the garden of No. 75.

The tree can still be clearly seen from the car park of the Hearty Goodfellow pub which stands adjacent to No. 75. Matthew Bramley was the owner of the cottage at No. 73 at the time when Henry Merryweather took grafts from the tree and propagated the species, so this is where the name 'Bramley' originated from.

On the left hand side of Bramley cottage is the Bramley Apple pub, which was originally called the George and Dragon when it first opened its doors in the late 18th century.

Walk past the Hearty Goodfellow Public House and then turn left up Shady Lane. Continue following this path to where it joins Burgage Lane and then turn left. Walk a little way up and turn left down Becher's Walk.

Heritage Point Eight: Becher's Hill House

John Thomas Becher lived at Hill House and was most famous for his connections with the Southwell Workhouse and the House of Correction. He was also the father of Reverend John Drake Becher who brought his gardener, Henry Merryweather Snr, to work for him when he took up residence at Norwood Hall. This marked the introduction of the Merryweather family to Southwell and the beginning of the Bramley Apple story.



A separate leaflet – Heritage Trail 1 - telling the story of John Thomas Becher can be found at the Southwell Tourist Information Centre next to the Minster.

The bottom of Becher's Walk footpath brings you out right opposite the Minster and almost back around to your starting point. Cross back over the road to Southwell Minster, go through the first set of gates leading through the church yard and keep to the footpath on the left. Follow this path along as it takes you back to Bishop's Drive car park.