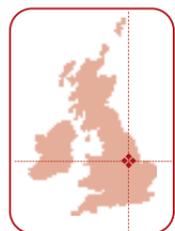




On track

It's off to Nottinghamshire this month for a walk that part follows an old railway line. **Jo Vaughan** leads the way



Ordnance Survey Landranger Map 120

SINCE YOU wouldn't want to be trudging across muddy fields and wet grass in December, this month I've picked a walk that predominantly follows lanes and tracks. Part of the route takes in a section of the Southwell Trail – a former railway line that is now a wide, open path suitable for wheelchair users or those with pushchairs. Although it's very straight and flat it does offer some lovely views, and you can continue along the trail all the way to Bilsthorpe if you wish.

Before you head home make sure you spend some time in Southwell, the unlikely location of a gorgeous Anglican cathedral. Technically the presence of a cathedral makes its home a city, although Southwell isn't recognised by the government as such. Once you've taken in this stunning building and the town too, I can recommend the Saracens Head for lunch.

As parking in Southwell is difficult, this walk starts in nearby Halam. However, if you are able to find a spot in the car park at Station Road in Southwell, at the head of the Southwell Trail, then simply skip to instruction 8 in the directions that follow.

DIRECTIONS

1 With your back to the Waggon and Horses pub, turn right along the main road until you reach the crossroads. Turn right (signposted 'Nottingham and Oxtun') along Radley Road. Continue until St Michael and the Archangel Church before

turning left through its gates, following a public footpath sign set within a hedge. **2** Walk through the churchyard to the kissing gate, then follow the yellow arrow diagonally right through the next field. Go through the kissing gate at the top right-hand corner of this field, then proceed through the small wood. At a T-junction, turn left (the path soon opens out into a field). Continue ahead, along the right side of the field. **3** At the corner of the field you'll see a kissing gate on the right-hand side, next to a public footpath sign with a green arrow. Follow this arrow along the path between a field on your right and a private garden on your left. **4** At the lane, turn right and continue until you reach the crossroads. Here, continue straight ahead down Leachcroft Hill. At a sharp left-hand bend in the road, turn right and immediately left down Bath Lane, continuing roughly in the same direction. Soon, as the road levels out, turn left through a kissing gate and follow the

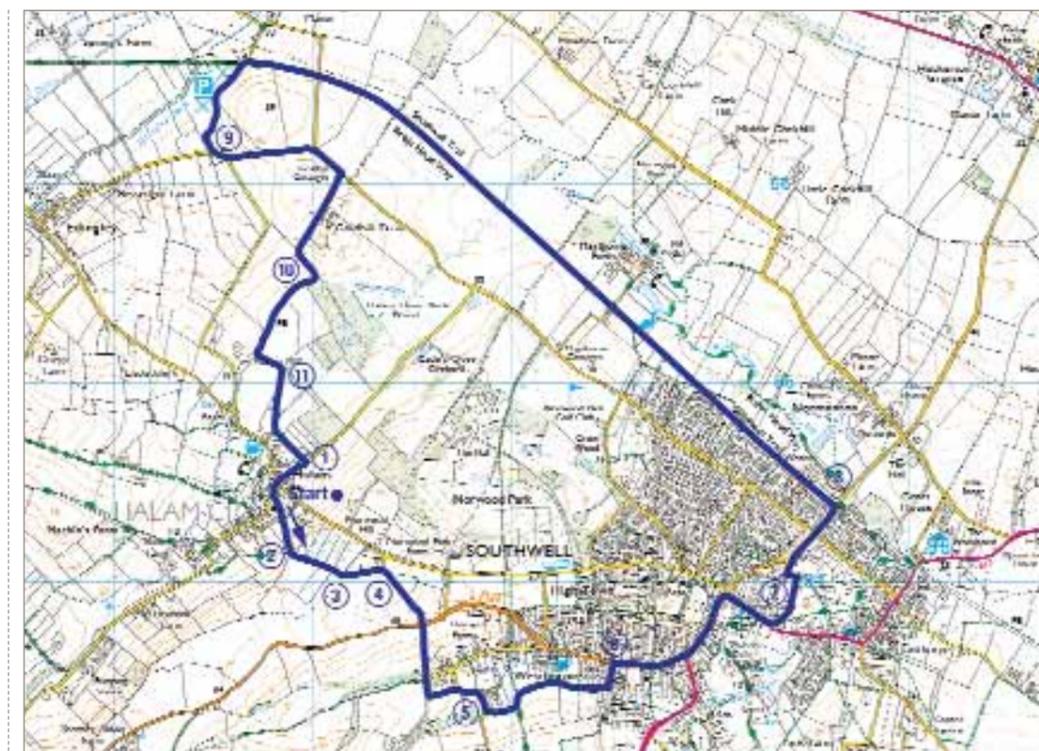
public footpath sign across the left side of the field. Go over the stile and then follow the yellow arrow to the right, along the lane.

5 Continue down Cundy Hill but, just over the little brick-sided bridge, turn left, following the green arrow on the public footpath sign. Continue along the left edge of the field. Keep to the edge of the field as it bends left and then right, walking towards the church spire (ignore the small footpath that branches off to the left). Continue as the pathway leaves the field and enters an enclosed avenue, walking alongside a wire fence. Cross the stile and continue ahead. At the lane, turn left and then, at the T-junction, turn right along the main road.

6 Go past the entrance to Southwell Minster and then take the next right (signposted 'Newark Industrial Estate, A612'), next to the Crown Hotel. Walk past the Minster's other flank and continue along the road until you get to the buildings marked 'South Muskhams Pre Bend' and 'Normanton Pre Bend' (beside an old-fashioned lamppost). Walk between the two buildings and continue to the red dog-litter bin. Here there are two public footpath signs – keep left (signposted 'Workhouse via Heritage Trail').

7 At the end of the lane, turn left along the pavement. Almost immediately, head right down an unmarked road, following a tall brick wall. Pass the monument on your left, but keep right on the pavement bearing round to the right onto a more major street. At the crossroads, continue straight ahead (signposted 'Hockerton and Caunton') along Station Road. Go past the Newcastle Arms Pub, then turn left through Southwell Trail Car Park.

8 Walk past the green railing and continue along the tarmac trail. Go past two more cycling barriers and continue ahead, ignoring the crossroads. There's a children's play area on your left. Go past cycle barriers either side of a small lane, continuing ahead, and then ahead again at the path crossroads.



Continue until you end up beneath a second road bridge. Here, go past the cycle barrier and immediately turn right along the tarmac lane before turning right again to cross the same bridge.

9 Continue down the lane to the road junction where you turn left (ignoring the sign pointing to Halam on your right). Turn right at the T-junction, but be careful along this road as it's quite busy. Soon, at the brick-built house on your right, turn right following a public footpath sign along a tarmac lane that takes you past farm buildings and a pair of metal gates.

10 Follow the gravel track past the paddocks. Just before you enter a patch of woodland, turn right at an opening in the hedgerow (you'll see a yellow post on your right). Continue along the left edge of the field. As you approach the end, veer left over a small wooden bridge marked with a



yellow arrow that crosses the stream. Then turn right to walk along the right edge of the field. As the trodden path bends to the left, follow it around (yellow arrow).

11 Go straight ahead at the next signpost (yellow arrow) and then, at the end, keep to the field's edge to the right. Follow the yellow arrow ahead, past the metal gate (this section is a little overgrown and on your right is an electric fence). Go through the metal kissing gate and turn right along the right edge of the field to the corner, where there's another metal kissing gate that takes you back to Halam's main road. Turn left down the road and you'll be back at the Waggon and Horses pub where you started.

The Caravan Club Magazine recommends the use of Ordnance Survey maps – your ideal passport to navigating Britain



INFORMATION

Club site: Milestone Caravan Park, Great North Road (A1), Cromwell, Newark on Trent, Nottinghamshire NG23 6JE. Call 01636 821244. Open all year.

Distance: 6.25 miles/10km

Terrain: good paths and lanes in grass, gravel and tarmac, a short distance of overgrown path

Number of stiles: 2

Essential equipment: Ordnance Survey Explorer 270 – Sherwood Forest (shows 90% of the route) and Explorer 271 – Newark-on-Trent (covers eastern Southwell)

Level of difficulty: easy

Refreshments: Southwell

Parking: drive to the village of Halam, around two miles from the centre of Southwell. Park anywhere in the village but we start at the Waggon and Horses Pub on the main road.

Toilets: Southwell

