



The walk from Southam to the Holy Well and on around the circular trail is very interesting and pleasant walk....

The paths that are followed originated long ago when people needed to travel from one area of the countryside to another. Not many would have the luxury of owning any form of transport - not even with four legs.

First records in 998 identify that Southam and its Halliwell (now the Holy Well) were granted to Earl Leofwynne (father in law of Lady Godiva) by King Ethelred. We have reason to believe, from certain historic finds both within and outside the area of the circular walk, that there were Anglo-Saxon and possibly Roman settlements even earlier than this.

Southam provided a welcome stopping place on the Drovers' Road from Wales to the markets of the Midlands and London. Welsh farmers drove thousands of sheep, cattle and geese along what is still known as the Welsh Road. Later Southam became an important stop on the main coaching routes from London to the Midlands and North. It becomes obvious that the footpaths around Southam were very important to people living in surrounding hamlets, farms and settlements and these paths were eventually acknowledged as official 'Rights of Way' which is why we can still enjoy the benefits of these lovely walks.

Southam developed on ground rising from the Stowe valley. Both fishing and watering holes for animals would have been available in the Rivers Stowe and Itchen, which flow together in the field known as Mill Pits. It was recognised that natural spring water at the Holy Well provided beneficial relief for certain eye problems and later the waters were used at an Eye and Ear Infirmary which was established by Mr Henry Lilley Smith on Warwick Road in 1818.

Southam appeared as Suham in the Domesday Book. In 1227 it was granted a Charter for a weekly market at which local produce and farm animals were sold. In 1257 it was granted another Charter for an annual fair which became a hiring fair or 'mop' which still takes place every year.

holy well history

welcome



(Photograph circa 2010)

Other Attractions

The British Motor Museum at Gaydon, battle site at Edgehill and Battle of Edgehill Museum at Radway, National Trust Properties of Upton House, Charlecote Park, Farnborough Hall, Canon's Ashby, the Marton Museum of Country Bygones, Chesterton Windmill, Burton Dassett Hills Country Park, Draycote Water, and castles at Warwick and Kenilworth.

Compton Verney house is a centre of arts and cultural events. The Dallas Burston Polo Club, Stoneleigh Abbey and the National Agricultural and Exhibition Centre are close by.

There are several country walks near to Southam, and interesting canal walks at Bascote, Long Itchington and Napton, with waterside pubs.

Eat, Drink & Stay

Southam has a large selection of food outlets, several pubs, coffee shops and tea rooms, offering a variety of meals and snacks. Several B&Bs and caravan and campsites are nearby.

Directions

Easy access is gained from the M6, M40, and M1. The town is located at the junction of the A423 between Coventry and Banbury and the A425 Leamington to Daventry.

Southam is ideally situated for discovering Shakespeare's Stratford, castles at Warwick and Kenilworth and Coventry with its impressive cathedral. It is also convenient for the spa town of Royal Leamington Spa with its extensive shopping facilities.

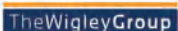
Information

For details of facilities, events, accommodation, the Southam Town Trail and other local walks, please visit the library in High Street (0300 555 8171) or see the town's community website www.southam.co.uk

Other local information can be obtained from the Southam Town Council office at The Grange Hall, Coventry Road, Southam CV47 1QA which is open from 9am to 1pm, Monday to Friday (01926 814004) www.southamcouncil-warks.gov.uk

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Southam

holy well walk



holy well walk

The Holy Well has been in existence for over one thousand years. This walk takes you around the Holy Well and along the paths of ancient history. Just follow the red route on the map opposite; you will find the red markers placed on key posts to help you along the way.

Duration - The circular walk takes about 90 minutes and is mainly along field paths that can be muddy in wet weather. Please keep to the paths and be aware of both livestock and crops within the fields.

Distance - The red route is around two and a half miles.

Car Park - There is a large public car park in Wood Street.

OS Map - Discover Southam on the Rugby OS map (Explorer Map 222).

Refreshments - Food & drink can be obtained in town. The Millstone Hare Bar & Restaurant is within the grounds of the Dallas Burston Polo Club (check opening times).

For more information on the town's interesting history, please refer to the Southam Town Trail leaflet.

④ Stoneythorpe Hall

Monks may well have lived on this site until the early 14th century.



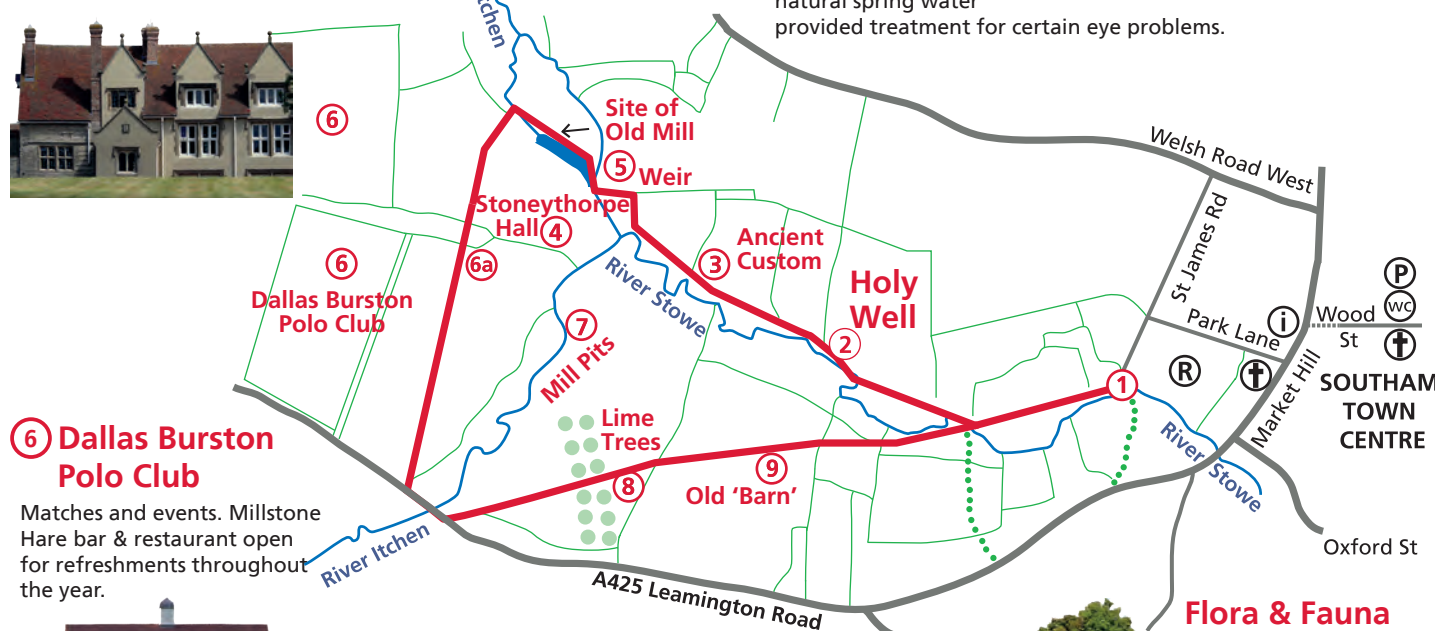
⑥ Dallas Burston Polo Club

Matches and events. Millstone Hare bar & restaurant open for refreshments throughout the year.



② The Holy Well

A Grade 2 Listed Building which was first recorded as part of the Manor of Southam in 998. The natural spring water provided treatment for certain eye problems.



Flora & Fauna

There is an abundance of wildlife here; trees and shrubs, flowers and grasses as well as birds, fish in the rivers and small mammals.



⑨ The Old Barn

Of medieval origin and built of Blue Lias stone this building, which may have been a chapel, is the second oldest building in Southam after St James' Church.



KEY

Church / Chapel
Car Parking
Public Toilets
Recreation Ground
Library & Information
Field Boundaries
Roads
Holy Well walk
River
Footpath

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holy well walk...

MONKS AILMENTS

& TRADITIONS



Follow the Country Code

Part of this walk is through a private estate. Please be aware of livestock, keep dogs on leads and clean up after them. Ensure all gates are closed behind you.



Watton's Lane (1)

The path to the Holy Well starts at the Information board at Watton's Lane. Follow the way-marked route and enter the field via the kissing gate. Then follow the path keeping the River Stowe on your left, until you reach the Holy Well.



The Holy Well (2)

Originally recorded in 998 as 'Halliwell', the Holy Well is a Scheduled Ancient Monument and Grade 2 Listed Building.

In 1761 the Holy Well was specifically excluded from the Enclosure Act with the proviso that it should be fenced with oak posts and rails and free access to the Well was to be provided for all Southam inhabitants.

The current stonework was probably built late 18th / early 19th C. with further repairs around 1926.

Following improvements in the water supply in 2004, sympathetic restoration was carried out in 2005/6 supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund. This water is exceptionally cold and comes from below the quarry area on the Coventry Road. The water was reputed to be very efficacious for many eye ailments.



Ancient Custom (3)

When the Squire William Tankerville Chamberlayne died at Stoneythorpe Hall in 1906, his coffin was carried along the footpath to St James' Church. According to ancient Warwickshire tradition once a corpse has been carried along a path or road that makes it a public right of way for 100 years. All the walk is along designated Public Rights of Way.



Stoneythorpe Hall (4)

From the fields near the weir are views of the Hall. The house was rebuilt, on medieval foundations, in 1623 and re-modernised in the 21st C. In its heyday there were extensive gardens with many trees. Tradition says Augustinian Black Canons lived there until the early 14th C. The property belonged to the Chamberlayne family from 1671-1997. The Hall & Polo Grounds are now separate estates.



Weir and site of Old Water Mill (5)

The weir was built to make a mill pond to supply power to Stoneythorpe Mill. The mill ruins were finally demolished in the 1960s. A mill may have been on this site since the Domesday Book was written. The last mill was built in the 18th C. on older foundations. It was still used to supply electricity to the Hall in the 1920s. Parts of the mill race walls can be seen where the water flows out of the pond.



Dallas Burston Polo Club (6)

The transformation by Dr Dallas Burston from farmland to polo ground began in 1998.

Under this field (6a) towards the north end of the footpath is the site of a medieval deserted settlement. Earthworks suggest it contained 10 crofts with probably stone pits or fish ponds.



Mill Pits and Quarried Area (7)

The Domesday Book mentions two mills in this area - one at the weir and the other which was laid waste in 1410 possibly on an island in the middle of the river about 200 metres north of Thorpe Bridge. This area was quarried for local limestone long ago. There are also signs of ancient ridge and furrow cultivation in the vicinity.



Avenue of Limes (8)

From the bottom of Woodbine Hill on the Leamington Road leading towards Stoneythorpe Hall, is an avenue of lime trees. This entrance drive, which you cross, was completed up to Stoneythorpe Hall in 2010.



Old 'Barn' (9)

Of medieval origin and built of local Lias stone, this building may have been a chapel and is the second oldest building in Southam after St James' Church.