

John Lawes part funded the ⑩ **Park Hall**, which opened as a school in 1850. Note the deep scratches in the north-facing wall where children sharpened their slate pencils.

🚶 Continue on the footpath alongside the road, walking away from the town centre, past the former Rothamsted Directors' House on the right, until you reach the front of Rothamsted.

⑪ **Rothamsted Russell Building (built 1911-1918)**: The large Shap granite boulder commemorates the 50th anniversary (1893) of the famous long-term field experiments. Across the lawn to the left is an oak tree commemorating the 150th anniversary.

🚶 Walk up Rothamsted's main access road back to the start point at the Rothamsted Restaurant and Cafe (open to the public on weekdays).

Adapted from the trail booklet compiled by Stephen Moss.




Rothamsted Heritage Trail


The achievements of a far-sighted Victorian philanthropist, an impressive old manor house and some cutting-edge science add interest to this short parkland trail.




Start: The public car park by the restaurant at Rothamsted Research.

 With restaurant on your right, Walk 30m north to the junction with main site access road. The curved Centenary Building is ahead to your right, with an old cider mill in front.

Dating from 1843, ① **Rothamsted Research** is the world's oldest agricultural research institution. The 57-year partnership of founder John Bennet Lawes, the owner of the Rothamsted Estate, and Dr Joseph Henry Gilbert, a chemist, established the principles of crop nutrition and today's scientific agriculture. The current site has an extensive range of modern laboratories and 400 hectares of experimental farmland. Pyrethroid insecticides were first synthesised at Rothamsted in the 1970s, derived from compounds in the pyrethrum daisy, grown here around the old cider-apple mill.


 Turn left, slightly uphill and continue up through the site, past sports facilities, until you reach the avenue of lime trees, where you turn left to reach a display board.

Across the sports field are two chimney-like insect suction traps that supply regular data for the ② **Rothamsted Insect Survey** and just to the right is a pylon-like structure which is part of the meteorological station.


 Continue for another 135m to the next display board.

A world first when it was built in 2015, the ③ **Field Phenotyping Platform** is clearly visible in the adjacent field. This automated device continuously monitors crops using an array of sensors to measure growth.




 Continue to a T junction. Turn right here and then, after 100m, bear left and pass through the black metal gates into the grounds of Rothamsted Manor. Follow the drive, bearing left after 50m, and walk to the far end of the lawn where there is a display board.


John Bennet Lawes was born in ④ **Rothamsted Manor** in 1814. Here he developed a process for producing phosphate fertilisers, the income from which enabled him to fund the research at Rothamsted.

 Turn left, past the wooden gate, and follow the path until you see display boards on the left, in front of an open field.


⑤ **Park Grass**, started in 1856, is the oldest ecological experiment in the world, providing important information on the impact of environmental and climatic changes on plants.

 Turn right, following the path into the woods, then bear left and continue to a metal gate. Go through and turn right down the track. Pass through another kissing gate and continue until you reach a farm road at a bend.


The narrow band of woodland immediately ahead is ⑥ **Broadbalk Wilderness**. It was part of the main wheat field until 1882 when, as an experiment, it was fenced off and left allowing the trees to take over.

 Turn right and follow the road. Where the left-hand hedge ends, there are display boards by a large oak tree.


⑦ **The Broadbalk field experiment** is the oldest continuous arable experiment in the world. Parts of the site have been sown with nothing but wheat every year since 1843. The different strips running up the field receive different fertiliser treatments, impacting crop yields.

 Continue along the main farm road towards brick outbuildings, but after 60 m bear left on a footpath. Where the path meets an asphalt access road, turn left past a pair of brick cottages, signposted to Rothamstead (sic) Park. Follow the gravel track to an avenue of lime trees. Turn left to reach a metal gate.

⑧ **Rothamsted Park** was formerly part of Rothamsted estate but was bought by Harpenden Council in 1938.

 Turn half left across the grass of Rothamsted Park. Head for the right hand corner of the new leisure complex. Follow a path between the leisure centre and arts/cultural complex, passing the car park to your left, then turn right downhill towards the Oddfellows Arms pub. Just past the pub turn left, cross the green and continue along Leyton Road heading towards St Nicholas's Church and enter the churchyard.

By the path curving up to your left, you can find the grave of ⑨ **Sir Joseph Henry Gilbert**. From here, a few paces towards the church is the grave of **Sir John Lawes**. At the far side of churchyard is the grave of **Katherine Warrington**, a botanist who worked at Rothamsted for 36 years, marked by a Celtic cross.

 From the church entrance, walk towards the war memorial. Turn right along Harpenden High Street until you reach Pizza Express where you turn right again to reach a drinking fountain, gifted by John Bennet Lawes in 1890. Continue, crossing the road and follow left along Leyton Road to reach the Park Hall.



- Roads & Tracks
- - - - - Walking Trail
- ⊕ Church
- P Parking
- ⚡ Harpenden Station
- ☺ Rothamsted Restaurant and Café

