



April 2008

BRITAIN'S ONLY BLOSSOM TRAIL CELEBRATES SILVER JUBILEE

Forty-five miles of stunning pink and white apple, pear, plum, damson and cherry blossom will burst into flower over the coming weeks and Britain's only Blossom Trail - just one of five in the entire world - will come to life for less than a month.

Worcestershire's Vale of Evesham - often referred to as the Garden of England - has been famous for its fruit since Medieval times. Its beautiful, blossom-filled orchards and hedgerows were supposedly the inspiration for Shakespeare's famous "I know a bank where the wild thyme blows" speech given by Oberon in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

The trail began 25 years ago almost by chance. Countryman Geoff Perks had worked on the fruit farms all his life. He died at 84 after seeing the blossom come into flower one last time - his final wish was to have his coffin drawn eight miles along the blossom trail. It became a local tradition to walk the trail in his memory. Today, the trail extends to 45 miles taking in the Cotswold village of Broadway at its most southern point, Pershore to the west and charmingly named places such as Wyre Piddle en route.

As well as AA signposts for those that wish to drive the trail, there are Blossom Walks and the famous Blossom Bikeaway which, this year, takes place on **Sunday April 13th** - an annual charity bike ride attended by hundreds in aid of St John Ambulance. For the less mobile,

there are the Spring Blossom Coach tours which go live from 2nd April with pick-up points in Worcester and Pershore.

Steeped in tradition and despite its delicate appearance, blossom is regarded as a sign of strength, hope and renewal. People from across the UK visit in their droves and many are following the tradition of Japanese Hanami parties - picnics under the spreading blossom branches to celebrate the start of spring.

The rich scent of the Blossom Trail is also thought to spring clean the mind and resolutions made along the Blossom Trail are meant to have more chance of succeeding than those made around new year. To find out more, visit www.blossom-trail.org.uk

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For further information, images or to arrange a tour of the Blossom Trail, please contact Sara Stewart on 07789 374174 or Sara Lawrance on 07970 658532.

Free Colour brochure available, Bikeaway and Coach Tour information call 01386 565373