

a remarkable town

It is surrounded by the Surrey Hills a nationally important landscape.



To the north, visible down many of the town centre streets, are the chalk hills of the North Downs. To the south, the Greensand Hills provided a prestigious location for the Victorian and Edwardian expansion of Dorking.

This picturesque setting and the varied architecture, streets and public spaces, reflecting the history of Dorking from Roman times to the present day, provide the raw material for the Dorking Heritage Trail.

A walk around Dorking is an opportunity to step back in time and explore the rich and eventful past of this historic market town.



FIND OUT MORE

For more information on Dorking and surrounding areas visit these websites:



visitdorking.com

Dorking's official website, packed with information on Dorking and its surrounding villages and countryside.

visitleatherhead.com

The official website for Dorking's sister town to the north, connected by the Mole Gap Trail.

surreyhills.org

The official website for the Surrey Hills AONB (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty).

nationaltrail.co.uk

Go to the North Downs Way section to discover information about this famous trail running from Farnham to Dover, through Dorking.

visitsurrey.com

The official website for Surrey Tourism. Contains information of the whole of Surrey and has an accredited accommodation listing.

getting online in Dorking

You can access all these websites for free either at the internet access stations situated at Hasketts Tea Room in South Street or the Intermission Café in Dorking Halls, adjacent to the Visitor Information Centre. (see map)



DORKING Heritage Trail

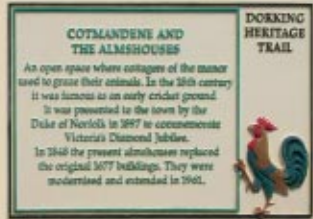


two easy to walk
trails around the historic
market town of Dorking

DORKING... a town with traditions



Those taking the trails today are following in the footsteps of generations of earlier visitors attracted to the qualities of Dorking.



A Market Town

A glance at the map of Dorking shows the principal streets of High Street, South Street and West Street forming the backbone of the town and of this Heritage Trail. For generations these streets have been the centre of trade and commerce.

As you walk along them it is possible to imagine street markets with cattle tied to the railings that still line the High Street today and traders clinching deals in the public houses.

Imagine also the farm labourer riots that took place in High Street in 1830 when crowds fought with police and cavalry, or the Fair Day when horses were raced up and down the street.

A tradition dating from the early 19th century, until it was suppressed in 1902, was the Shrove Tuesday football matches. These games were played in the streets of the town disrupting it to such an extent that the shops had to be boarded up.

Passing along South Street, picture in your mind the coaching days of the 18th century when travellers between the south coast and London broke their journey and dined in the Bulls Head. Tucked behind these main streets were the breweries, a tanner's yard and a foundry.

The Town Today

Dorking today is still the focus for local business and commerce. As well as many High Street names the town has a large number of independent retailers offering an individual selection of goods and services. Hospitality is still as important to the town's economy as it was in times gone by.

With over a dozen town centre public houses and a fine selection of restaurants and cafés, both local people and visitors enjoy a wide range of food and drink. Although no longer in the High Street, the town holds a bustling Friday market. The sales cries of the modern traders hark back to the sounds heard over 700 years ago when the town's market was granted a Royal Charter.

The Heritage Trail provides an opportunity to see how Dorking has evolved from a mediæval village to the busy and vibrant town it is today. For further information on the history of the town there is the Visitor Information Centre in the Dorking Halls, Reigate Road, and the Dorking and District Museum and its Library in West Street.

The museum is open on Wednesday and Thursday between 2pm & 5pm and on Saturday between 10am & 5pm.



Dorking's reputation for fine scenery, an attractive town and good local food has been a winning combination for many generations. First as a staging post between London and the south coast and then as a resort town, visitors have sung its praises with enthusiasm.

For some it is the landscape setting *'...most beautifully surrounded with wooded heights and picturesque commons.'*

For others it is the *'air fresh and breezy'*. Yet others enjoyed the *'...unmatched number and variety of pleasant rambles it offers by any other town within the same distance of London'*.

Yet others came for its reputation for food, most famously *'The Dorking'* a breed of fowl that took its name from the town.

In this special corner of England, the reasons that brought poets, musicians, writers and philosophers or just ordinary people to Dorking over the centuries are still relevant today.

