

## Some of the features along the trail

### Public Art

The trail also provides an opportunity to see a number of works of street art. They represent the work of several local artists who have interpreted the history and geography of the area in a form that can be enjoyed by passers by. Works can be seen in the High Street, Red House Gardens and King George V Memorial Gardens.

### People and Places

The heritage trails are a celebration of past and present landmarks, each one providing a marker for the events that have shaped the town and the people who inhabited it. Evidence of the past can often be found in the names given to buildings. The Edmund Tylney Public House in the High Street is named after the Master of the Revels to Queen Elizabeth I who lived in The Mansion nearby. Wesley House is named after the great religious revivalist and founder of Methodism, John Wesley. He preached his last sermon at Kingston House, a building that formerly occupied the site of Wesley House. Associations with other figures will become obvious along the trails.

### Following the Trail

The trails are easy to follow. In places the paths are flat and in other locations they can be steep. This makes the route difficult for disabled people. However, sections of the commercial centre of the town are in pedestrianised streets and the route along the river is an easy access trail suitable for wheelchairs. There are seats along the way on which to rest. Care will be needed where the route crosses busy roads.

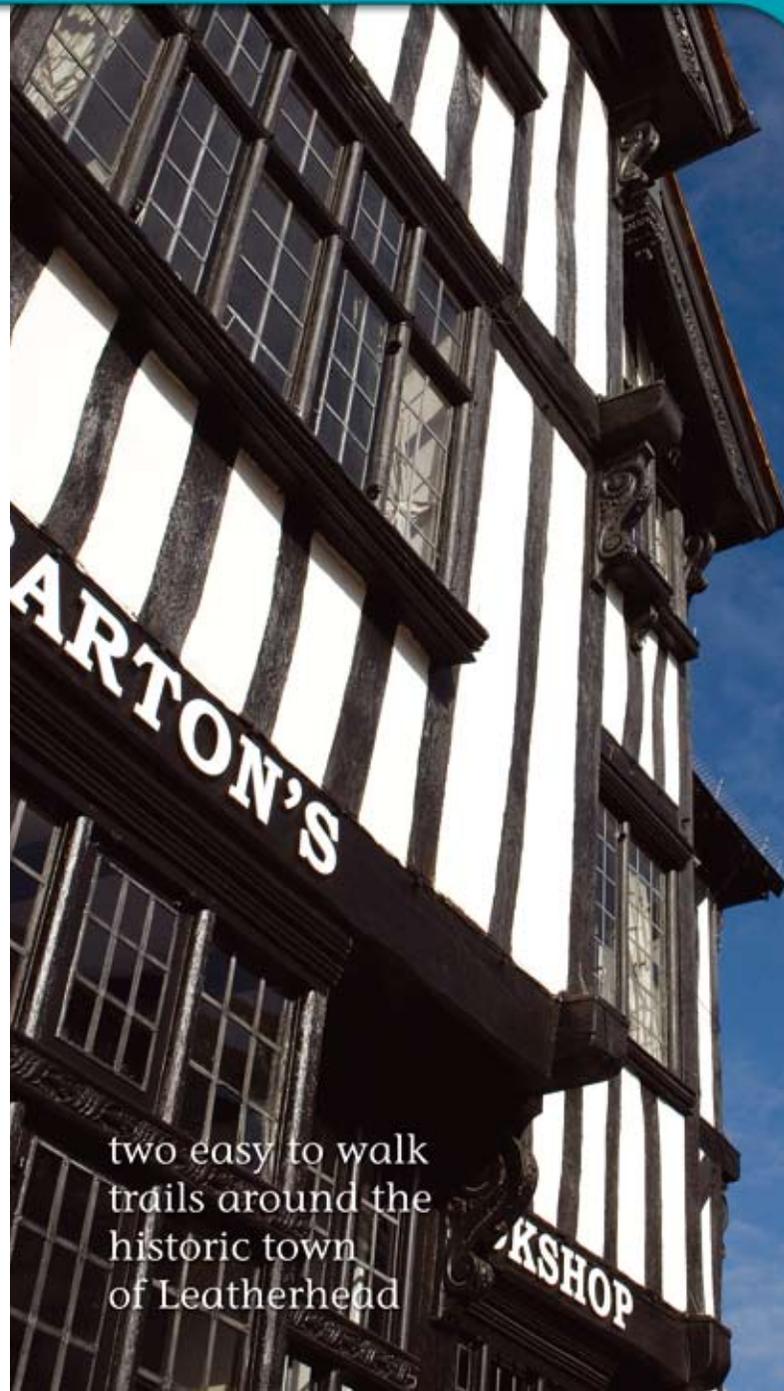
Each of the two trails will take between 45 minutes to an hour to complete, depending on how long you wish to linger. There is a variety of cafes and restaurants for refreshments and seats in quiet areas for peaceful rest and reflection. Particularly recommended are: the riverside path, Park Gardens and King George V Memorial Gardens.

### Building Plaques

The trails are marked with wall mounted plaques that tell the story of individual places or buildings. The plaques can be identified by their cream background and the crest which is dominated by a swan. The swan is a feature of the town's coat of arms and it is a reminder of the former Swan Inn, as well as the River Mole.

# LEATHERHEAD

## Heritage Trails



## Leatherhead – Heritage Trails

The Leatherhead Heritage Trail described in this leaflet consists of two trails that can be linked together or walked separately. They provide a guide to the layers of history that make Leatherhead the special place it is today. The places along the route have provided the backdrop for trade and commerce and for the ordinary and sometimes extraordinary dramas of life in this small Surrey market town.

### What's In A Name?

The town benefited from its position at a natural crossing point on the River Mole. This natural advantage probably accounts for the name of the town, 'Leoda ride', the Anglo Saxon word for a public ford. The name has been corrupted down the ages before arriving at the present-day spelling. A royal grant of a weekly market in 1248 marks the official beginning of a role the town still plays today: that of a focus for local trade and leisure.

## Variety and Contrast

For a small town, the heritage of Leatherhead is remarkably varied. Both the trails described in this leaflet illustrate the contrasts in its architecture, from grand public statement to modest cottage and from medieval to modern. They also take visitors through the contrasts of atmosphere from the busy town High Street to the tranquil riverside and from residential streets to public parks. Whether grand or humble, open space or enclosed cul-de-sac, each part of the town makes its own special contribution to the heritage of Leatherhead.

Variety and contrast can also be seen in the application of building materials, reflecting the geological diversity of the District of Mole Valley. Many locally available building materials were very suitable for construction purposes and, used in combination or decoratively, they add character to many places in the town. Buildings of all types can be seen on the trails, from the medieval timber framed buildings, such as Cradlers House in the High Street, to the modern brick, concrete and steel frame construction of The Leatherhead Theatre.



### About this Guide

This guide has been produced by Mole Valley District Council with support from the Leatherhead and District Local History Society and Leatherhead Town Centre Management

For a complete guide to Leatherhead visit the town website:  
[www.visitleatherhead.com](http://www.visitleatherhead.com)

### Other Information

There are several guided walk leaflets for Leatherhead and its surroundings. These and other local information can be obtained from the Help Shop, 25-29 High Street, Leatherhead and from the Leatherhead Museum.

# Town and River Trail

## About the route

This route is shown on the map with a **dashed line**. It starts in the heart of the town and follows Bridge Street downhill to the river, over the old town bridge and turns left along the riverside path to the **Thorncroft Bridge**. Here the trail turns up **Dorking Road** back towards the town centre. At the parish church the trail turns right through the churchyard to the **White House**, then turns left along **Church Road**. At the end of this road the route turns left up the **High Street** to return to the start.

## Places of Interest Along the Trail

The trail begins close to the site of the former **Swan Hotel** (Plaque 1) below the replica swan above the **Travelodge Hotel**. It is difficult to imagine that this crossroads was open to traffic until 1981. Until the 17th century there was a **Market House** in the middle of the crossroads and this may explain the odd shape where the roads meet. Beside the **Market House** were the stocks, incorporating a lock-up for offenders. On the left side, marked by a recessed area (7-9 Bridge Street), is the site of the old saddlers run by the **Ragge** and **Lloyd** families for over 200 years. The buildings in Bridge Street are a real mixture. They include an elegant terrace of early 19th century buildings (28-34) and the **Running Horse** public house. Information on the side of the pub closest to the river explains its history.

The **town bridge** (plaque 2) is a good place to view other bridges over the **River Mole**. There has been a bridge on the site of the **Town Bridge** since the 13th century. The other means of crossing was by

a ford immediately upstream of the bridge which was probably still in use until the bridge was widened in 1824.

Two railway bridges can be seen beyond the modern road bridge. The 4-arched bridge built in 1867 by the **London, Brighton and South Coast Railway** is to an elaborate design insisted upon by **Thomas Grissell**, then owner of **Norbury Park**, as a condition of allowing the railway through his land. Downstream is the **London and South Western Railway** bridge built in 1885 when the line was extended to **Bookham** and **Effingham**.

The other major structure here is the reinforced concrete water **pumping station** erected in 1935 and 1940. Further along the riverside path is **Thorncroft Manor**, glimpsed through trees. The present building dates from 1772 by **Robert Taylor**, architect to the **Bank of England**.

The small 'shell' bridge linking two of the river islands is a remnant of the

landscaped grounds that provided a picturesque setting for the manor house. From the 17th century to the early 20th century the river had a reputation for excellent fishing, especially trout.

Behind a wall on the **Dorking Road** is **The Priory** which consists of a 17th century timber framed cottage. It was bought by **Henry Cotton** in 1823 a scholar and antiquarian who transformed the house into a substantial gentleman's house

**The Church of St Mary and St Nicholas** (plaque 3) is set in the beautiful **Park Gardens**. The church is normally open to visitors on weekdays between 11.00 and 14.00. At the end of the path through the churchyard is the grave of **Anthony Hope Hawkins**, author of the 'Prisoner of Zenda'. **The White House** with weather-boarded finish is an early 18th century building.

Across the road is **Skeet House** where a plaque (plaque 4) celebrates the work of the **Leatherhead United Charities**. Church

Road is almost the only road in the town centre that is virtually unchanged since Victorian times. On the left is **Mount Zion Chapel**, built in 1869. A little further on is the **Wesley Memorial Chapel** and there are several commemorative plaques to the left of the entrance door.

From **Church Road** to **High Street**, the **Leatherhead Institute** dominates (plaque 5). The **High Street** contains a number of interesting buildings. On the right is the **Duke's Head** (plaque 6) and **Cradlers House** (plaque 7). At the entrance to both **Neates Alley** and **Kings Head Alley** are decorative arches designed by the **Fire and Iron Gallery**. **Stephen Neate** opened a butcher's shop in 1862 providing service as a grocer and pork butcher. The alley was then known as 'Dog Alley'; pigs were kept in a yard at the back of the shop and they attracted stray dogs and small boys who would beg for the animals' bladders to use in their footballs.

**Kings Head Alley** was named after a public house of the same name. The pub had a table reserved for the clergy, hence the churchwardens' pipes that feature on the arch. Halfway down the **High Street** on the right are two terracotta panels on the first floor which originated from the old **Swan Brewery** office.

At the bottom of the **High Street** is another **Fire and Iron Gallery** commission illustrating the bridges that are a feature of this crossroads town.

# Parks and Places Trail

## About the route

This route is marked as a **dashed line** on the map. The route leads first to **Wesley House** via **Gravel Hill**, through the **King George V Memorial Gardens**, before heading south along **Middle Street** back through **The Swan** shopping centre to the **High Street**. It then leads further south along **Church Street** before turning right down to the **River Mole**. It then follows the river downstream to meet with an information board describing the river. At this point the route turns right, up **Emlyn Lane**, to join with **Station Road**. A right turn will lead back to **North Street** and **High Street**.

## Places of Interest Along the Trail

The trail again begins at the **High Street/Bridge Street/North Street** crossroads. It then leads along **North Street** and right, up **Gravel Hill**. This steep, narrow street is the home to some attractive buildings, none more so than **Sweech House** (plaque 1). On the left is the war memorial built in 1921 with a striking 11 bay arcaded front and terraced garden. At the top of **Gravel Hill** the route crosses **Leret Way** towards **Wesley House** (plaque 2). Around to the left of **Wesley House**, following **Bull Hill**, there is an entrance to the

**King George V Memorial Gardens**. The Gardens are decorated with a series of works by **Utopia Forge**, taking as their inspiration the **Art Nouveau** movement and photographs of plants taken by **Karl Blossfeldt**. At the top of the Gardens, the trail then turns left along **Upper Fairfield** before turning right along the narrow pedestrian path of **Middle Road**.

This road contains a delightful mix of cottages clad in a variety of different materials. After crossing **Leret Way**, the trail follows straight ahead through the **Swan** shopping centre, which was built in the early 1980s, and out into the **High Street**. Here there is a left turn into **Church Street**. On the left (plaque 3) is **The Leatherhead Theatre**, the centre of the town's cultural life. A grade 2 listed building, the interior is worthy of inspection. Following **Church Street**, past the museum at **Hampton Cottage** (plaque 4), there is a right turn just beyond the imposing **18th century Mansion** (plaque 5) that leads down **Vicarage Lane**, an unmade and uneven path.

A right turn through an opening in a high brick wall takes the trail into **Mansion Gardens** and down to the **River Mole**.

The trail turns right following the river to the **Town Bridge** (plaque 6) across the end of **Bridge Street** and along the bank of the river. Two mill stones were only recently pulled from the river bed here and are now displayed in the museum. An information board on the bank of the river marks the point where

the trail turns right up **Emlyn Lane** to **Station Road**. A right turn here brings the trail past the former **post office** (plaque 7), the former **Congregational church** (there is a small plaque here) and the magnificent neo-Tudor building on the corner of **Bridge Street** and **North Street**, built in 1928.

