

# Dorking to Reigate

## Betchworth and the Mole Valley

**Length** 12.5 km (7.8 miles) 3 hours 45 minutes. For the whole outing including trains and meals allow 8 hours.

**OS Landranger Map** No 187. **Explorer Map** No 146. Dorking Deepdene, map reference TQ 171502 is in Surrey, 7 km south of Leatherhead. Reigate is in Surrey near Redhill.

**Toughness** 3 out of 10

**Features** This mainly level walk follows the river Mole upstream from the foot of Box Hill through the picturesque villages of Brockham, Betchworth and Skimmington, ending in the grounds of Reigate Priory. Part of the route follows the Greensand Way long-distance footpath along the sandstone rock stratum that separates the chalk downland of the North Downs from the more varied soils of the Low Weald.

**Shortening the walk** There is an hourly bus service from Betchworth (the lunchtime village) to Reigate. The bus goes from outside Betchworth post office on the Old Reigate Road 1 km northwest of the Church.

**History** The earliest accounts of **Brockham** concern **Betchworth Castle** to the northwest of the village green. It is believed to have been built by Richard FitzGilbert after 1066 on land granted to him by William the Conqueror. In exchange for this land Richard promised to provide William with sixty knights. Physical historical records indicate that it dates to at least 1377, when Sir John Fitzalan, 1st Baron Maltravers and Marshall of England (c 1349 - 1379), was granted a licence to crenellate his residence there. It is a ruin today but some walls reach 9 metres high. **St Michael's Church Betchworth** was one of the three churches used for the film *Four Weddings and a Funeral* and dates from 1080. It contains old manorial maps and an old wooden chest said to have been made from timber growing at the time Christ was on earth. **Reigate Priory**, a Grade I listed building, is set in 65 acres of open parkland, with gardens, a lake with waterfowl and playing fields. The Priory was originally founded before 1200 and was converted to a mansion in Tudor times following the Dissolution of the Monasteries. In June 1541 Henry VIII granted the Manor and Priory of Reigate to Lord William Howard, uncle of Catherine Howard, Henry's fifth wife. Today the buildings contain a school and a small museum open Easter to October 2.00–4.30 pm Wednesday and Saturday.

**Saturday Walkers Club** Take the train nearest to **9.20 am** (before or after) from Victoria Station to **Dorking Deepdene** changing at **Redhill**. Journey time 53 minutes. It is also possible to start the walk from **Dorking Mainline** station but it's just as quick to go via Redhill and your return ticket needs to be valid via Redhill. Trains back from **Reigate** run once an hour, again changing at **Redhill**. Journey time 43 minutes.

**Lunch** The suggested lunchtime stop is the Dolphin Inn just beyond the Church in Betchworth (tel 01737 842288) offering good home cooking. It serves food from 12.00 to 2.30 pm on Monday to Saturdays and 12.00 to 17.00 on Sundays. Groups of more than 10 should phone to book. The pub is named after the Dauphin who was a regular visitor during the French revolution.

**Tea** The suggested tea place is Café Puccino's 65 High Street Reigate tel 01737 249000. There are many alternatives including Café Rouge. The station is a 15-minute walk from the town centre.

## **WALK DIRECTIONS**

### **Dorking to Brockham**

[1] [Numbers refer to the map.] Coming off the Redhill train at Dorking Deepdene take the steps down to the main road and turn right under the railway. In 20 metres turn right on the footpath, your direction 70 degrees. Follow the footpath for 200 metres and emerge on a broad track where you turn right to pass under a railway bridge. *[If you came to Dorking Mainline station you can join the walk at this point by turning slightly left out of the station ticket office towards the main road and then turning left along Lincoln Road.]* Immediately after the bridge turn sharp left your direction 20 degrees. Follow the footpath for 200 metres with a car park on your left and then bear right alongside a stream. Cross over the stream with a waterfall on your left and walk round the left-hand side of Pixham Mill and out onto Pixham Lane, where you turn right, your direction 130 degrees. Follow the road for 400 metres and just after passing under the railway turn half left into Leslie Road. In 100 metres bear left onto a footpath your direction 110 degrees. In 200 metres ignore a footpath on your right and bear left to cross the river Mole on a footbridge. Once over the footbridge you enter the National Trust Box Hill farm. Head for the stile your direction 50 degrees, cross the stile into the next field and in 400 metres you reach the corner of a tarred road where you turn sharp right down a broad track. In 150 metres where the track bears right take the footpath over the metal footbridge. Pass a garden centre on your left and in 150 metres you reach the main A25. [2] Cross with care. There is a traffic island a little to the left which makes crossing on this bend much easier and follow the driveway towards Betchworth Golf Club your direction 150 degrees. In 200 metres where the driveway bears right by a two-armed signpost carry straight on along a broad tarred track between the greens your direction 140 degrees. In a further 900 metres by an anglers' pond ignore a footpath joining from the right and stay on the main track as it broadens into an unmade road. In 400 metres you emerge onto a tarred road where you turn left and cross a bridge and in 200 metres you reach Brockham village green. Walk across the green towards the old village pump, your direction 80 degrees, cross over the main road and passing The Royal Oak pub on the left hand side of the green aim for The Duke's Head pub on the far side of the green. On reaching the pub carry on along the road, your direction 80 degrees, and in 100 metres you will see a walled pound formerly used to hold stray animals.

### **Brockham to Betchworth**

[3] At the animal pound turn sharp left down a footpath, your direction north and in 100 metres bear half right and after a further 100 metres cross the River Mole on a footbridge. Having crossed the footbridge turn right and follow a broad track slightly uphill, your direction 60 degrees. In 130 metres where the track bears left turn right by a four-armed signpost onto a narrow path with houses on your left hand side and the river Mole visible on the right. In 200 metres cross a footbridge and in a further 400 metres ignore a footpath on the left-hand side and go through a metal gate, your direction 100 degrees. Continue for 350 metres with trees on your right and a field on the left. Ignore a track to the left and carry straight on through a double wooden gate into St Michael's churchyard. If you want to see the lych-gate used in Four Weddings and a Funeral you need to bear left and go round to the north side of the church, otherwise carry straight on past the main entrance to the Church and in 100 metres leave the churchyard through an arch in a stone wall and cross the road where

you will find the Dolphin Inn, the suggested lunchtime stop. There is a forge opposite the pub open most Saturday mornings.

### **Betchworth to Ricebridge**

[4] Coming out of the Dolphin Inn turn left and take the road past the phone box, your direction 170 degrees. In 250 metres cross the River Mole on the road bridge. Just after the bridge and the road name Snowerhill Road turn right through a metal kissing gate on to a footpath, your direction 170 degrees. In 300 metres cross over a stile and carry straight on through a wood. In 80 metres emerge from the wood into a field and [!] by a two-armed signpost bear slightly left on an indistinct path your direction south towards a gap in the trees on the horizon. Continue for 120 metres until you reach a stile leading onto a road. Do not cross the stile but turn right and walk alongside the hedge for 200 metres until you join the road. Continue along the road in the same direction for 100 metres and then turn left on to a wide grassy track with fences on both sides, your direction 110 degrees. Follow the track along the side of a wood and in 300 metres at the end of the wood follow the track as it bends right then left. In 150 metres having passed a farm house on the left cross over a road and enter a field through a gate a little to the left. Aim for the stile in the corner of the field, your direction 60 degrees. Cross the stile and walk to the right of a line of oak trees your direction 80 degrees, for 250 metres until you reach a one-armed signpost. At the post bear right in the direction indicated by the sign and in 200 metres the path enters a wood. Follow the path downhill through the trees and in 150 metres cross the Mole yet again on a concrete footbridge called Rice Bridge on the map.

### **Rice Bridge to Skimmington**

[5] Having crossed the river continue forward in a gully for 50 metres [!] where you turn half left on to a narrow path through the trees, your direction 30 degrees. In 150 metres the path widens out to become a gravel track where you bear right to pass round to the right of Ricebridge Farm. Follow the gravel track for 200 metres to a T-junction with a bridleway your direction 40 degrees, cross straight over the bridleway and over a stile into a field on a footpath your direction 60 degrees. After 50 metres cross a stile and continue in the same direction for 250 metres with trees and a fence on your left-hand side to emerge onto the driveway of a large house. Continue in the same direction to the road where you turn right. In 200 metres take the left fork and pass Garden Cottage and Millers Cottage on your left-hand side. Walk up to the major road and turn left ignoring a footpath immediately opposite the junction. In 150 metres turn half right up three wooden steps to a narrow footpath [!], which is easily missed. Follow this path between fences for 450 metres, emerging onto a small green with a house on your left-hand side. Turn half left onto the driveway and in 70 metres turn right at a T-junction your direction 130 degrees. In 100 metres just before a cottage turn left towards a gabled house with blue shutters. Immediately in front of the house ignore a signposted path to the left and turn right down a narrow unsigned path, your direction initially south and immediately bear left with the path. In 220 metres emerge at the Skimmington Castle pub, a possible alternative late lunch stop.

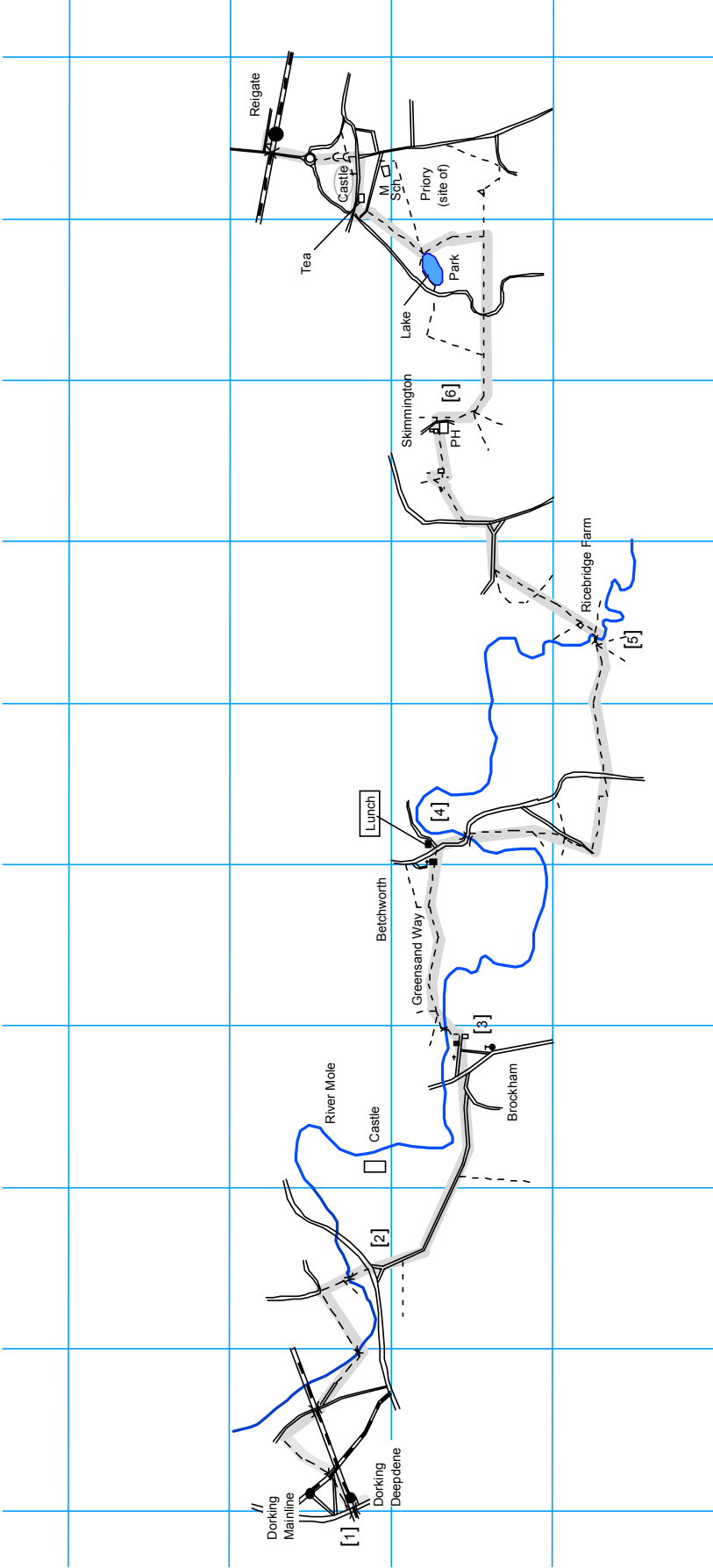
### **Skimmington to Reigate**

[6] Cross directly in front of the pub and continue in the same direction to a four-armed signpost where you turn right on a bridleway with a Greensand Way sign, your direction initially 170 degrees. Climb up the hill and down the other side and in 250 metres emerge on a broad farm road. Turn left on to the road and cross over a stream. In 250 metres ignore a footpath on the right hand side and in a further 50 metres ignore another footpath on the left-hand side. Ascend to the T junction and in 200 metres cross over the road and take the steep

path opposite up through the wood to the top of Reigate Park Hill, your direction due east. Once you emerge from the wood at the top of the hill continue in the same direction on a broad green ridge for 400 metres. Where there is a slight dip in the ridge turn left off the ridge down a steep unsigned path to the woods below. Continue down crossing another path until you reach the playing fields. Once in the open turn half left towards the pond, your direction 300 degrees. Once you have fed the ducks turn right and walk across the grass towards the town and a large yellow vehicle barrier at the edge of the park. At the barrier turn left and follow the driveway out of the park passing between two tall brick pillars with stone pineapples on top. Follow the road round to the right and walk uphill towards the main road. At the main road turn right and a few doors along come to Café Puccino's on your right-hand side at 65 High Street, the suggested afternoon tea stop.

It is about 800m (0.5 miles) to the station so allow 15 minutes to catch your train. Coming out of the café turn right and walk down the high street towards the Old Town Hall built 1729 in the middle of the high street. Just beyond the Old Town Hall turn left by Café Rouge and go through the pedestrian tunnel under the grounds of Reigate Castle. Continue towards the roundabout and cross over two pedestrian crossings past Dame Margot Fonteyn's statue to continue north towards the rail station. Ignore the path to the right just before the railway line and cross over the level crossing then turn right into Holmesdale Road. To get onto the Redhill for London platform, do not go up to the ticket office (which is usually closed) but turn right through a gate 30 metres along Holmesdale Road.

Take the first train towards Redhill and change at Redhill for London Victoria or London Bridge.



## Dorking to Reigate