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## Dorking to Reigate

### Betchworth and the Mole Valley

**Length** 12.5 km (7.8 miles). 3 hours 15 minutes. For the whole outing including trains and meals allow 7.5 hours.

**OS Landranger Map** No 187. **Explorer Map** No 146. Dorking Mainline, map reference TQ 171504 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 9m 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 **10:00 am** (before or after) from Victoria Station to **Dorking Mainline**. Journey time 49 minutes. It is also possible to start the walk from **Dorking Deepdene** station which is few minutes' walk from **Dorking Mainline** but you will need to change at **Redhill**. Whichever way you go out, your return ticket needs to be valid via Redhill. Trains back from **Reigate** run once an hour, 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 Monty Bojangles at 57 High Street tel. 01737 242344. There are many alternatives including Café Rouge 17 Church Street Reigate tel. 01737 223700 and The Vintage Tea House, 17 Church Street Reigate tel. 01737 226561. The station is a 15-minute walk from Monty Bojangles.

## WALK DIRECTIONS

### Dorking to Brockham

1. Coming off the London train at Dorking Mainline go down under the subway and come out through the ticket hall. Turn immediately left through a car park with the railway on your left and an office building on your right, your direction 135 degrees. *[If you came to Dorking Deepdene station from Redhill take the steps down to the main road and turn right under the railway and follow the signs to the mainline station.]* In 150m you come to a road where you turn left under the railway bridge.
2. Immediately after the bridge turn sharp left your direction 20 degrees. Where the road enters an office car park, take the footpath on the right between fences for 200m with the office 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.
3. Follow the road for 400m and just after passing under the railway turn half left into Leslie Road. In 100m bear left onto a footpath your direction 110 degrees. In 200m ignore a footpath on your right and bear left to cross the river Mole on a footbridge.
4. 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 400m you reach the corner of a tarred road where you turn sharp right down a broad track.
5. In 150m where the track bears right take the footpath over the metal footbridge. Pass a garden centre on your left and in 150m you reach the main A25. Cross with care. There is a traffic island a little to the left which makes crossing on this bend much easier. Follow the driveway towards Betchworth Golf Club your direction 150 degrees.
6. In 200m 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 900m by an anglers' pond ignore a footpath joining from the right and stay on the main track as it broadens into an unmade road.
7. In 400m you emerge onto a tarred road where you turn left and cross a bridge and in 200m 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 Grumpy Mole restaurant on the far side of the green.
8. On reaching the restaurant, carry on along the road, your direction 80 degrees, and in 100m you will see a walled pound formerly used to hold stray animals.

### Brockham to Betchworth

9. At the animal pound turn sharp left down a footpath, your direction north and in 100m bear half right and after a further 100m cross the River Mole on a footbridge. Having crossed the footbridge turn right and follow a broad track slightly uphill, your direction 60 degrees.
10. In 130m 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 200m cross a footbridge and in a further 400m ignore a footpath on the left-hand side and go through a metal gate, your direction 100 degrees.
11. Continue for 350m 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.
12. *If you want to see the lych-gate used in Four Weddings and a Funeral you need to bear left and go around to the north side of the church, otherwise carry straight on past the main entrance to the Church and in 100m leave the churchyard through an arch in a*

stone wall and cross the road where you will find the Dolphin Inn, the suggested lunch stop. There is a forge opposite the pub open most Saturday mornings.

### **Betchworth to Ricebridge**

13. Coming out of the Dolphin Inn turn left and take the road past the phone box, your direction 170 degrees. In 250m 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.
14. In 300m, the main path enters a wood, continuing downhill across a wooden bridge and then uphill for 80m to emerge through a metal kissing gate into an open field. Then by a two-armed signpost bear slightly left on an indistinct path your direction south towards a gap in the trees on the horizon.
15. Continue for 120m until you reach a metal kissing gate leading onto a road. Do not cross the metal kissing gate but turn right and walk alongside the hedge for 200m until you join the road. Continue along the road in the same direction for 50m and then turn left on to a wide grassy track with fences on both sides, your direction 110 degrees.
16. Follow the track along the side of a wood and in 300m at the end of the wood follow the track as it bends right then left. In 150m having passed a farmhouse on the left cross over a road and enter a field through a gate a little to the left. Aim for the metal kissing gate in the corner of the field, your direction 60 degrees.
17. Go through the metal kissing gate and walk to the right of a line of oak trees your direction 80 degrees, for 250m until you reach a two-armed signpost. At the post bear right in the direction indicated by the sign and in 200m the path enters a wood. Follow the path downhill through the trees and in 150m cross the Mole on a concrete footbridge called Rice Bridge on the map.
18. ***After heavy rain Rice Bridge can become flooded. If you are unable to cross take the footpath just before the bridge and head south west for 1.2km to reach Flanchford Road. Turn left on the road and in 300m cross the river on the road bridge and in a further 300m turn left signposted Betchworth. In 1km bear right at the fork and in 100m where Trumpets Hill Rd joins from the left you are back on the main route at [23] below.***

### **Rice Bridge to Skimmington**

19. Having crossed the river continue forward in a gully for 50m [!] where you turn half left on to a narrow path through the trees, your direction 30 degrees. In 150m the path widens out to become a gravel track where you bear right to pass round to the right of Ricebridge Farm.
20. Follow the gravel track for 200m 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.
21. After 50m cross a stile to enter a patch of wood and continue in the same direction for 10m to come out into a field where you turn left to follow the edge of the field for 250m with trees and a fence on your left-hand side to emerge onto the driveway of a large house.
22. Continue in the same direction to the road where you turn right. In 200m 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.
23. In 150m turn half right up three wooden steps to a narrow footpath [!], which is easily missed. Follow this path between fences for 450m, emerging onto a small green with a house on your left-hand side. Keep straight on to cross over a driveway to a single

post with a yellow footpath sign. Follow the indistinct path through the wood with a fence on your right your direction 80 degrees.

24. In 150m you come out to a small group of houses with a gabled house with blue shutters in front of you. Immediately in front of this 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 220m emerge at the Skimmington Castle pub, a possible alternative late lunch stop.

### **Skimmington to Reigate**

25. 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 250m emerge on a broad farm road.
26. Turn left on to the road and cross over a stream. In 250m ignore a footpath on the right-hand side and in a further 50m ignore another footpath on the left-hand side. The road continues uphill for a further 200m to a T-junction where you cross over the road to go up some steps and then take the steep Greensand Way path up through the wood to the top of Reigate Park Hill, your direction due east.
27. Once you emerge from the wood at the top of the hill continue in the same direction on a broad green ridge for 700m passing a trig point and monument on your left with seats and inscription to Mr & Mrs Randal Vogan who donated the land to the town.
28. Immediately after the monument continue in the same direction and enter the wood following the Greensand Way as it descends steeply down and curves to the right. After 130m, at the bottom of the hill just before an exit to a road, turn left off the track (your direction north) to take a broad earth path down through more open woods for 400m to emerge onto playing fields.
29. Cross the playing fields aiming for the left-hand side of the Priory which is now a school and museum, continue ahead with the Pistachios in the Park café on your right and a children's play area on your left. Continue past the tennis courts and skate-board area to the tarmac drive-way and turn left. In 300m leave the park turn right and in further 50m turn right at the traffic lights on the High Street.
30. The recommended tea stop, Monty Bojangles at 57 High Street is 60m along the High Street on the right-hand side. It is about 800m (0.6 miles) to the station from the tea room, so allow 15 minutes to catch your train
31. Coming out of Monty Bojangles turn right and continue along the High Street for 200m to pass the 18<sup>th</sup> Century Old Town Hall and Market House. In a further 50m turn left into Tunnel Street with Café Rouge on your right-hand side. Go through the pedestrian tunnel under the grounds of Reigate Castle.
32. 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.
33. 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 30m along Holmesdale Road. Take the first train towards Redhill. You might need to change at Redhill for Victoria or London Bridge.