

Parking is available in the Swan Centre accessed from Leret Way

The Trail is about 2 ½ miles walking.

You might want to allow up to 2 hours to leave time for relaxed exploration at some points.

For centuries artists have been attracted to Leatherhead, including JMW Turner who painted this view of the Parish Church across the river Mole – much as it can be seen today.



Leatherhead from across the river Mole: JMW Turner

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W E L C O M E

This is your opportunity to discover the richness and diversity of the many aspects of the Arts to be seen around Leatherhead.

We start our walk at the Letherhead Institute at the top of the High Street.

(Note the original spelling.)



Abraham Dixon of Cherkley Court (now Beaverbrook) was a wealthy industrialist who became a significant benefactor to Leatherhead and its surrounds. His major contribution was the building of the Institute in 1892.

The Leatherhead Community Association continues to deliver Abraham's vision, providing educational, recreational and social activities for the townspeople.



The Arts Installation on the façade was designed and created at The Fire and Iron Gallery with local students.





Leatherhead Decorative & Fine Arts Society is the former name of The Arts Society Leatherhead.

Continue down the High Street; viewing features on the left and right.

The Edmund Tylney

Today a public house, named after the Master of Revels to Queen Elizabeth I and then to King James I. Edmund Tylney lived at The Mansion House. (More of Edmund Tylney later.)



King's Head Alley and Neate's Alley



The work at **King's Head Alley** is one of two public art works

created by the Fire and Iron Gallery, with Therfield and Woodville Schools in 2005. They were installed together to celebrate the historical significance of long-used pedestrian passages. The tree-like quality of the spandrel is repeated to provide a sinuous and naturalistic feel to the metal structure. The features of the arch have an almost cartoon-like character. King's Head Alley was named after an inn that once stood there. Legend has it that the inn once had a table reserved

for members of the clergy and this is reflected in the design of the King's Head arch which features churchwardens' pipes and ale tankards.

Neate's Alley takes its name from a 19th century family of grocers and butchers. In the Arch there are different kinds of dogs and a pig.

Pigs were slaughtered in a yard at the back of the shop and dogs were said to be attracted there in the hope of getting some left-overs.



Cradlers House, 33/35 High St



The art of the carpenter is evident in the many timber-framed houses and agricultural buildings from the medieval period that are spread

throughout Britain. In and around Leatherhead a large proportion of the 'listed' buildings are timber-framed. The pre-eminent timber for building was oak and the wet, clay lowlands of the area around the town and in the Weald immediately to the south, provided a reliable source of readily available oak for construction.

Cradlers House is one such timber-framed building that demonstrates very well the art of

carpentry. It has been referred to as the oldest building in Leatherhead, although the parish church and the Running Horse Public House in Bridge Street could probably make a claim to be older. It has been variously suggested that Cradlers House is 14th Century, 15th Century and 16th Century. Timber framed buildings can be very difficult to date and perhaps all these dates may be accurate for different phases of the construction.

35 Church Street consists of a 3-bay building at right angles to the

High Street. It has a jettied elevation, familiar in medieval buildings and yet one of the most mysterious forms of construction. Various theories have been put forward for the practice of constructing a projecting or jettied first floor. These theories include increasing the floorspace, providing a more rigid structure, or for defensive purposes. Another, and most likely, explanation is that it was a decorative feature. The jetty was usually on the most public face of the building, it provided

opportunities to demonstrate the craft of the carpenter, in the handling of a complicated jointing system, and the wealth of the owner. It is likely, therefore, that this was a high-status house in the centre of an expanding town. The construction of jetties in houses was most common in 16th Century houses and into the first half of the 17th Century. Not only is the jetty in Cradlers House a demonstration of the carpenters' skill but it also helps to suggest a date for the building.

Leatherhead at the Crossroads



Cast iron sculpture, designed by Fire and Iron Gallery in 2001

The railings and roundels at the junction of High Street with Bridge Street were designed as a pragmatic solution to the need to provide ramped access for pedestrians into High Street. Edwina Vardey's 'History of

Leatherhead' describes Leatherhead as a town at the crossroads. The town marked a suitable fording point across the River Mole for north-south travellers and it was one of a number of 'spring line' settlements strung east-west along the junction between the chalk of the North Downs and the London Clay. The art work celebrates some of the bridges that reflect this role as a crossroads settlement. A series of four roundels feature bridges that are part of the landscape in

and around Leatherhead: the 14-arch Town Bridge at the bottom of Bridge Street built in the late 18th century; the small ornamental Shell Bridge also built in the late 18th century as part of the landscaping to the grounds of Thorncroft Manor; the railway viaduct built in 1867 for the London, Brighton and South Coast Railway; and the pedestrian bridge across the M25 built at the end of the 20th century. The subjects for the roundels reflect the different structures of bridge building.

Turn Left along Church Street



The Leatherhead Theatre is Grade II listed. Originally named after Dame Sybil Thorndike, the theatre was opened on 17 September 1969 by Princess Margaret.



It was designed by Roderick Ham, an architect who specialised in theatre design, for the Leatherhead Repertory Company, run by the talented director Hazel Vincent Wallace. The theatre was one of a large number of new theatres built across Britain during the 1960s and 1970s and was quickly recognised nationally and internationally as one of the best theatres of this time.

Tucked away behind the street, the extensive foyers come as a surprise to the newcomer, with

galleries and stairs rising through a top-lit space which was intended to be used all day, not just at performance times. The auditorium is located within the shell of an older cinema, but was reconstructed by Roderick Ham as a compact, focused space with a single rake of seating focused on the stage. There were originally extensive backstage areas which allowed the Repertory company to put together its own high-quality productions. Throughout, the design was carefully considered

and is functionally successful. It is carefully detailed, creating a sense of 'theatre' not through traditional ornament but instead through the handling of space, light, and materials such as concrete, timber, and brick.

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Leatherhead Museum Display of Ashtead Pottery



Leatherhead Museum is based at Hampton Cottage, built on glebe land between 1642 and 1682 and originally was home to the widow of a local falconer.

This tiny building is remarkable for the scale of items on show, with reminders of the district's ancient origins, right through to the agricultural, light industrial and modern residential characteristics of the last two centuries.

It houses a significant collection of Ashtead pottery. The factory was set up in 1923 to provide employment for disabled ex-servicemen from the Great War (1914-1918). Very few of the workers originated from Ashtead, most being recruited

from Labour Exchanges throughout the south of England. Hardly any had skills relevant to the pottery industry, although some had artistic or modelling experience. It was in business for 12 years until 1935.

The main driving force behind the creation of the company was Sir Lawrence Weaver, a highly influential man of the time. He received much assistance from Bertrand Clough Williams-Ellis (of Portmeirion fame) and Richard Stafford Cripps, a prominent politician of the time.

The company produced a vast array of wares, ranging from figures and commemoratives designed by leading artists of the day, including Phoebe Stabler (Poole and Royal Doulton) and Percy Metcalfe, through to everyday crockery in bold bright designs. The Ashted Potters exhibited at the Wembley “British Empire Exhibitions” of 1924 and 1925 having working stands where the potters showed off their skills and wares.

[Leatherhead & District Local History Society \(leatherheadhistory.org\)](http://leatherheadhistory.org)

The Mansion House



An earlier house stood on this site, which was the home of Edmund Tylney, Master of the Revels to Queen Elizabeth I, who dined here on 3 August 1591. Tylney was responsible for granting licences for the performance of plays, and as the

official censor he had unrivalled power over the spoken word at that time.

It is thought Shakespeare visited Leatherhead to consult Tylney over his work. The assistant officer of the watch Verges, in *Much Ado About Nothing*, may be named after local constable George Varges.

The present building dates from 1739 and for part of the 19th century it was The Mansion House Grammar School. It then reverted to a private house until

1950, when it became the Public Library.

It became a Register Office in the year 2000.

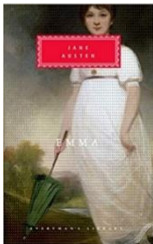
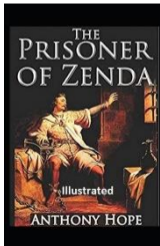


Public Library

Leatherhead has many literary connections.

Sir Anthony Hope, author of *The Prisoner of Zenda* was educated at St John's School and is buried in the Parish Churchyard.

Also, Jane Austen – we'll hear about her connections later.



Church of St Mary & St Nicholas

There is a wealth of artistic heritage to be explored in the 1,000-year-old Church. From the funeral helmet of Robert Gardiner of Thorncroft (died 1571), Sergeant of the Wine Cellar to Queen Elizabeth I to exquisite mediaeval glass.

[Heritage - Leatherhead Parish Church](#)



**Continue down Gimcrack Hill
(Dorking Road) and turn right
onto Thorncroft Drive to
cross Thorncroft Bridge.**



Thorncroft Manor



The Manor of Thorncroft was one of the two feudal manors of Leatherhead from Norman times and held by Merton College, Oxford from the 13th to the early 20th Century. The building you see today was built in 1772 by Sir

Robert Taylor (architect of many prestigious buildings including Admiralty House, London), for Henry Crabb Boulton.

Artistically, the building was the subject of a debate in the mid-1970s when proposals to extend the Neo-classical manor house to form additional office space were submitted to the sceptical local planning authority by architects Michael Manser and Partners. Manser proposed a steel frame clad in mirror glass to reflect its surroundings, including the Taylor manor house. Change of

such magnitude, especially involving a radically different architectural form attached to the Grade 2* listed building, fuelled a discussion amongst conservationists concerning the approach to extending and retaining the integrity of an important historic building. In the end Manser won the day and you can judge for yourself how successful he was by walking to the back of the property along Thorncroft Drive to view his extension. The Royal Institute of British Architects

presented his practice with a commendation in 1977 and the extension is included in the list description for Thorncroft Manor as being of special interest along with the manor house.

Thorncroft Manor - Jane Austen connection



The Manor belonged to the Boultons, close friends of the Austen family. For many years it has been mooted that the house has connections with Jane Austen and her novel 'Emma'.

Thorncroft Manor was familiar to Jane Austen; she almost certainly visited with Eliza de Feuillide her cousin/ later sister-in-law, who had a close friendship with Sophia Boulton.

Recently two local heritage artists, Lucy Quinnell and Cathy Brett, have built on Lucy's earlier

university research into Austen's links with the area, identifying and illustrating many references in 'Emma' which confirm that the seemingly fictitious village of 'Highbury' is, in fact, modelled on a very real Leatherhead as it was in the early 1800s.

In the book, 'Randalls' is an estate near Highbury, owned by Mr Weston. At the start of the 19th century, when Jane Austen was writing 'Emma', there was an estate called Randalls a short walk downstream along the River

Mole from Thorncroft Manor. As you follow today's River Walk, you can think you are stepping in the footsteps of Jane's 'Emma' – and Jane herself.

www.fireandiron.co.uk

www.cathybrett.co.uk



Photos Lucy Quinnell/The LiterARTY Collective



Continuing along the Riverside walk you will see the Shell Bridge, which connects two of the islands in the River Mole. It is thought to be later 18th Century in date, within what had been extensive parkland providing the setting to Thorncroft Manor. The public face of the bridge is faced in flint with rusticated voussoirs

(the wedge-shaped stone use to construct the arch). A large, inverted scallop shell forms the keystone and this gives the bridge its name. The non-public side of the bridge is faced with more utilitarian brick. The bridge was designed to be viewed from the manor house as part of a designed landscape.

Who designed the landscape is a matter of conjecture. It has long been attributed to Lancelot 'Capability' Brown, the great 18th Century landscape designer, but without any evidence being

provided for this assertion. The evidence has been recently reviewed by the Surrey Gardens Trust but no link to Brown has been established. The landscape around Thorncroft, that includes the Shell Bridge, appears to have been the subject of modest changes from the mid-18th Century to the mid-19th Century, with no suggestion that Brown was involved.

The bridge can be admired nevertheless for its picturesque qualities within what is now a more natural and wilder

landscape designated a Local Nature Reserve.



Follow the riverside pathway to the road, then turn right to cross the Town Bridge.



The Town Bridge

The elegant Town Bridge across the River Mole is both functional and beautifully designed. It was designed by George Gwilt, the County Surveyor, at the end of the 18th Century. There is a date of 1784 on the south side of the bridge. The bridge is a Grade 2 listed building.

It consists of no less than 14 low, round-headed or 'segmental' arches supporting the road surface above. Between each arch is a triangular cutwater capped with a half-pyramidal top dressed in stone. Between each arch, on each spandrel, is a moulded circular roundel in brick. The brick courses are formed in Flemish bond consisting of alternate bricks laid lengthways (a 'stretcher') and end on (a 'header'), which always gives a pleasing appearance. Flemish bond became the chosen

style of laying bricks in England from the mid- 17th Century for more refined buildings.

The parapets were rebuilt in 1988 with the new bricks and the bond chosen to match as closely as possible the existing brickwork. Within the parapets are four semi-circular refuges. Cantilevered over the river, they provide viewing platforms from which to enjoy the river upstream and downstream, as well as allowing pedestrians to pass one another along the narrow footways. The stone

copings to the parapets and the horizontal banding above the arches add to the elegance of the structure. The Town Bridge represents a wonderful blending of form and function.

Cross the Town Bridge and walk up Bridge Street.

The Running Horse



The story of The Running Horse dates back to 1403, when the pub was built on land belonging to the church. Known once as Rummyings House, it served 'nopy ale' by the infamous Elynour Rummying, who featured in a poem 'The Tunning of Elynour Rummying' by John Skelton, Henry VIII's Poet Laureate.

The poem was printed by Richard Lant some time in 1550 and presents what many would consider disgusting images of rural drinking and drunkenness.



The Bluesette Club



A plaque marks the site of the Bluesette Club - a much-loved music venue which played host to musicians like Cat Stevens, Jethro Tull and Ronnie Wood and guitar legend Jimi Hendrix

Originally called the Chuck Wagon, this notable gig-venue was renamed the Bluesette Club around March 1966. *John's Children*, the group that once included Marc Bolan, owned the club at one point and performed there regularly, initially under the name The Silence.



No 2 Bridge Street



One of the more striking and prominent pieces of architecture in Leatherhead is this vernacular revival building on the corner of Bridge Street and North Street.

The structure provides an impressive backdrop to the activities taking place in High Street. The architect is unknown, but the design beautifully handles the difficult architectural feat of turning the corner.

Visually dominant this three-storey building might be, but it still manages to fit comfortably within the Leatherhead townscape and make a positive statement itself. The building is Grade II listed and one of the rainwater heads is dated 1928.

The design owes something to the Arts and Crafts Movement of late 19th – early 20th Century which placed an emphasis on craftsmanship and the use of traditional materials. It also reflects Elizabethan and Jacobean influences from the middle of the 16th Century through to the first quarter of the 17th Century. The term coined by John Betjeman for this fusion of Elizabethan and Jacobean styles was 'Jacobethan'. **Turn left along North Street and cross the road.**

The Garden of Remembrance
commemorates the fallen during
the First World War (1914-1918)
and the Second World War
(1939-1945).



The Garden is normally locked for security reasons, but can be accessed by prior appointment with Mole Valley Council Parks Department on 01306 879285, or by visiting the Help Shop, which is currently in Leatherhead Library.

The Cross of Sacrifice was designed in 1918 by Sir Reginald Blomfield for the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. It is present in Commonwealth war cemeteries throughout the world, containing 40 or more graves.

Wesley House



Built in 1935 as offices for the Leatherhead Urban District Council, Wesley House is a Grade II listed building, situated in a prominent position on a hill in the Leatherhead townscape.

The architects were C H Rose and H R Gardner.

The building is a successful and unusual blending of architectural styles, with the main elevation of nine bays in a classical composition. Topping this is a pantile roof with chimney stacks at either end and a central, copper flèche in a Scandinavian style. Inside, the building retains many features and furnishings with simple, sleek, stylized shapes of the Art Deco period.

Today it is serviced offices and not accessible to the public. It is named after the reforming preacher and founder of Methodism, who preached his last sermon at Kingston House, originally on this site.



Continue along Leret Way and the entrance to the Swan Centre is on your right.

Swan Centre

Maybe take the opportunity for a break and visit one of the many restaurants and coffee houses in the Town Centre.



Literary Leatherhead Mosaics



Rebecca Newnham MA(RCA)FRSS

The glass was hand painted with glass enamels, fired, cut and then assembled as a mosaic onto timber panels. There are more panels in the stair wells on other levels of the car park.

The panels illustrate botanical imagery inspired by writers connected to Leatherhead. Other mosaic panels in the stairwells of the car park depict close-up sections of leaves, nuts, fruit blossom and flowers. Each panel includes a quote from one of five writers, who have been selected because of their Leatherhead connections. All illustrated vegetation can be found locally.

Samuel Pepys' (1633 – 1703) connection was that he often visited his cousin's house at

Ashtead, not far from the Present Ashtead House. He mentions the area several times in his diaries. In 1663 and 1667, he mentions walking in the vicinity of the house and grounds and dining in The Swan Hotel at Leatherhead on 'Trout from the River Mole'. He refers to a hazel tree wood near Ashtead Church, behind his cousin's house where he and a companion go lost. (Volume 4, page 247.)

Jane Austen (1775 – 1817) has local connections; her godfather

was The Rev Samuel Cooke and she visited him at the Rectory. Her novel, *Emma* was set in the imaginary *Highbury*, which is believed to be based on Leatherhead and its surrounds. It is the right distance from Box Hill, Cobham and Kingston and there was a *Randalls House* in Leatherhead and a curate called *Mr Knightly*. Jane Austen refers to 'espalier apple trees' in Chapter 23 of *Emma*.

Edward Lear's (1812 – 1888) married sister lived in Church

Street in Leatherhead and Lear often visited her. They corresponded regularly and Lear once wrote from India that the cool of the Ootacamund Hills reminded him of Leatherhead. Lear makes several horticultural references; two are in a 'nonsense alphabet':

N was a nut that grew
High up in a tree
Papa who could not reach it, said
"That's much too high for me!"

N was a nut
So smooth and so brown
And when it was ripe
It fell rumble-dum-down.
N nice little nut

George Meredith (1828 – 1909).

Novelist and Poet, George Meredith, and his second wife settled in 1867 in Flint Cottage, facing Box Hill and remained there until his death. Meredith makes frequent references to gardens, plants and trees. Two such references are made in his poems *Violets* and *The Death of Winter*.

Beverley Nichols (1898 – 1983). After the Second World War, Nichols came to live in Merry Hall, Ashted and wrote a book about the house and garden. It was published in 1951 and was a best seller. He refers to pear blossom.

Other writers with local connections include C S Lewis and R B Sheridan.



Bindi Dreamer was sculpted by Jilly Sutton in Olive stone cast from wood

Commissioned by the architects of the Swan Centre in 2000, this serene sculpture of a female face with closed eyes belies the context in which it is set: a busy confluence of shops and shoppers. The title 'Bindi Dreamer' gives a spiritual quality to the piece. Bindi is a Sanskrit word meaning point or dot and it refers to the Hindu practice of women wearing a dot on their forehead. A red dot is generally

worn by married women and signifies true love and prosperity. In Hindu culture the dot is seen as a third eye placed on one of the six energy points of the body, seeing things of a more spiritual nature and connecting with God. The face and the adjacent seating provide a place of rest and contemplation within the Swan Shopping Centre.

Go through to the High Street, turn left and you're back at the Letherhead Institute.

**We hope you enjoyed this
Discover Leatherhead
Arts Trail created by
The Arts Society Leatherhead**
www.theartsocietyleatherhead.co.uk



**THE ARTS
SOCIETY
TRAILS OF
DISCOVERY**



If you have spare time, or on another visit, there's even more to discover.

Walk up Epsom Road and turn left into Garlands Road – along to the Catholic Church of Our Lady and St Peter. Around the walls starting on the north side by the Lady Chapel, are the 14 Stations of the Cross designed by Eric Gill, which are similar to those in Westminster Cathedral. The stained windows in the Church are works by the artist Paul Woodroffe and featured in the Royal Mail Christmas issue stamps in 1992.

and further afield ...

George V Memorial Gardens

The Gardens are decorated with a series of ironworks, created by Utopia Forge of Ringwood in Hampshire. The stylish entrance and decorative hand rails with their sinuous curves of plants and flowers, take the Art Nouveau movement as their inspiration.



Leatherhead Railway Station



A Grade II listed building, opened in 1885. It was designed by Charles Driver, a leading British architect of the Victorian era, with a reputation for pioneering use of ornamental iron work, for which he was seen

as a leading authority. It is designed in a Neo-Romanesque style and constructed in red brick with stone and polychrome brick dressings, and red tile roofs.

The buildings include the station master's house with Italianate tower. This is now in use as the Archive and Library of The Railway Correspondence & Travel Society.

Fire and Iron Gallery and Forge



Along the town trail, you'll have seen many iron artworks, the creations of the [Fire and Iron Gallery](#). In the beautiful outbuildings of the Grade II Listed 'Rowhurst', delicate jewellery is created alongside larger-than-life steel animals and public art installations. Lucy Quinnell owns and manages Fire and Iron. She has iron in her

blood; Lucy's family has been involved in English ironworking since the 1500s.

Today the Gallery is a lively exhibition space where leading artists and makers display and sell their work. It is open to visitors to see, enjoy, purchase and commission great metalwork.





THE ARTS
SOCIETY
LEATHERHEAD

This Trail was curated by Volunteers from The Arts Society Leatherhead with the support of The Arts Society East Surrey Area and Mole Valley District Council.

www.theartssocietyleatherhead.co.uk