

FOODIE AT HOME

Brockham

Crowned Surrey Village of the Year 2011, Brockham is famous for its busy green, thriving community and sense of winter fun

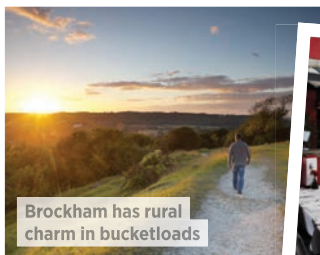
GET YOUR BEARINGS Lying in the Mole Valley below Box Hill, just over two miles east of Dorking and almost five miles west of Reigate, Brockham sits just off the A25.

WHY VISIT? You don't win Surrey Village of the Year for nothing and for a picture-perfect slice of rural charm, you can't beat Brockham. The beautiful green is the hub of village life, from fundraising 'teas on the green' to the famous Bonfire Night display involving tons of explosives. In December, the quaint village is decorated in fittingly traditional Yuletide style. A smattering of pubs, cottages, mansions and a Victorian church sit amid farmland and open countryside, making Brockham a perfect base for a winter ramble.

HISTORY The village name stems from the Anglo Saxon for 'river meadow by the brook' and can be traced back to 1241. Starting life as a watering hole for travellers between Dorking and Reigate, the village was mainly a farming community until the late 1800s when the Brockham Brick Company began mining for chalk and hearthstone in the nearby hills. Victorian cricketing legend WG Grace is said to have played a game or two on the village green. In 1959, Brockham hit the headlines as the home of a medical breakthrough,



Even the community shop has won awards



Brockham has rural charm in bucketloads



WHERE TO WALK?

The Four Weddings And A Windmill AA walk is a 3.7-mile, medium-difficulty hike, starting from Brockham Green and following the Greensand

Way to Reigate Heath (theaa.com/walk-and-bike-ride). The route takes you over the river Mole and through St Michael's churchyard in Betchworth. If the church here looks familiar, it's because it featured in the film *Four Weddings And A Funeral*. Following fields, bridleways and grassy tracks takes you to Reigate Heath golf course and finally to a windmill dating from around 1765 and famous for the small church in its roundhouse.

FOR THE KIDS Nearby Box Hill has lots to offer families, including walking, cycling or exploring the wildlife in the wonderful woods. The views from the top towards the South Downs can be stunning. Kids will love the interactive discovery zone at the National Trust shop on Box Hill Road (01306 885502), where they can watch a film featuring stories about the area, come face to face with giant model honey bees and have a go at a touchy-feely table that brings the hill to life.

when Beecham Research Laboratories made a crucial discovery during research into penicillin that lead to the creation of important medicines.

WHERE TO EAT? Formerly the Duke's Head, the Inn on the Green (01737 845101, thegrumpymole.co.uk) serves good-value meals in cosy and stylish surroundings. The pub's Grumpy Mole restaurant features a wide range of favourites, from homemade pies to red Thai curry, while afternoon tea at linen-covered tables with china cake stands laden with goodies is a popular treat. There's also a delicious festive menu in December.

The Shop at Strood Green is less than a mile from Brockham (01737 843965, theshopatstroodgreen.co.uk). The award-winning community shop is run by locals and sells a wonderful range of local products such as jam, cheese, ice cream, sausages, seasonal vegetables and homemade cakes from more than 20 suppliers. Pop into the little café at the back for a treat.



The Grumpy Mole



Winter fun is easy to come by