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# Bustling Boroughbridge



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Saturday morning and Boroughbridge High Street is bustling with people buying, selling and passing the time of a glorious Yorkshire day.

A 12th century Norman 'new town', this is an historic place, where characterful residential properties neighbour independent retailers, and both nestle beneath a cluster of giant oaks at one end of the main high street. A charming, cobbled square with fairy-lit trees occupies the other end and provides just the sort of welcome-home needed on a cold, dark night.

## Location, Location, Location.

Perhaps one of the best things about Boroughbridge is its location. Interestingly, it is exactly halfway between London and Edinburgh and has long since been a favourite stop-off for travellers. Indeed, the Great North Road, which was the main coaching road between Scotland and England since medieval times, passed through Boroughbridge. Whilst it remains a convenient stop-off for UK-wide journeys today, it is Boroughbridge's location from a county perspective that makes it a true gem in our golden triangle.

Harrogate and York are pretty much equidistant from Boroughbridge and easily accessible via the A1 and A59. Ripon, Thirsk, Knaresborough and Wetherby are all just 15 minutes away by car - all four vibrant market towns (or city in Ripon's case) in their own right with plenty to offer. Despite the commerce and activity, moments out of Boroughbridge will find you in the heart of rural, farming communities with peaceful country walks and traditional pubs aplenty. The



picturesque villages of Aldborough, Minskip, Marton-cum-Grafton and Roecliffe are all popular places to live, providing idyllic community life whilst being conveniently located for all the amenities of the town.

Boroughbridge is also a doable 30 minutes drive away from the best landscapes that the county has to offer: a trip through Ripon gets you into Pateley Bridge and AONB Nidderdale, or you can head to Calendar Girls' Richmond and Swaledale via Bedale. Sutton Bank and Herriot's 'finest view in Yorkshire' is also only half an hour away - ten minutes further than that and you'll find another jewel in North Yorkshire's crown - Helmsley.

For the Howarian Hills and North Yorkshire Moors, the route cross-country via Helperby, Easingwold and Crayke towards Malton, Pickering and the East coast is breath-taking and the sort of drive that will make you consider a career presenting Top Gear!

## Café Culture

There are several great cafés to choose from in Boroughbridge and most include outdoor seating. Popular with dog-walkers and cyclists alike, Chez Nous has a charming courtyard area where you can enjoy your flat white with a delicious croque monsieur in a beautiful setting. At the other end of the high street, Bean serves up an impressive array of home-made cakes in a super cosy building with an interiors and gifts shop. Plenty and Bowe and Co also do great coffee and sandwiches and The Dining Room, which was the best foodie restaurant in town, has now diversified into provide a tempting daytime menu, also making full use of their courtyard.





## Farm shops

A little further out of town, just over the bridge, is Langthorpe Farm Shop. Here you can not only buy fresh produce and gifts, but pick up hot and cold sandwiches, home-made pies, quiches and all sorts of cakes and pastries. There's an area to sit, inside and out, and once a month a farmers market takes over the field out the back and always attracts large crowds.

Yolk (technically in Minskip but just past Morrison's in Boroughbridge) is a working farm with a well-stocked farm shop and a fantastic café in one of the barns. Its ample space and well-designed interior make it an extremely comfortable place to be, and if you like eggs, this is the place for you. Open seven days a week, their breakfast/brunch menu is extensive and delicious - think truffle infused mushrooms, finest quality sausages and poached eggs that their very own hens laid that morning!

## Retail

Boroughbridge offers an impressively diverse range of independent retailers outside of hospitality. For clothes shopping there's Espada and The Wardrobe, or you can pick up a pre-loved piece at The Closet Porter. There's a thriving newsagent's (which doubles up as a toy shop) opposite the ever-tasteful Issima gift shop. Fink, the delicatessen/grocer's is just next door and, further down the high street, you'll find a specialist wine shop and a busy florist. Appleton's butchers and three bakeries in the form of Cooplands, Gilchris and Havenhands means you won't need to go a far to find a hot sausage roll.

For home improvements Boroughbridge Hardware is a cornucopia of anything you

could possibly need for your kitchen and toolbox. For more things house and home, recent additions to the high street include In House Kitchens and Pinterest-worthy interior design practice, Caroline Parker, which The Telegraph listed as of the top 20 interior designer houses in the UK.

The Post Office in Boroughbridge is worth a visit even just to look at the building. Think Larkrise to Candleford - it's the sort of Post Office that would appear in a Carlsberg advert as in 'Carlsberg don't do Post Offices, but if they did...' Not only do they provide a fantastic service for all things postal, they also stock hundreds and hundreds of quality greetings cards. People queue to get in and don't mind, that's how good it is!

## Services and Community

The services in Boroughbridge are exceptional and pack a mighty punch for a small town. Church Lane Doctors' Surgery is an outstanding practice, supported by a very reliable pharmacy on the high street. There's an optician's, a chiropodist, and several hairdressers and beauty salons. True Beauty is my personal favourite. It has a down to earth, girls-together feel about it and three friendly and skilled therapists. The volunteer run community library and resource centre opposite is open six days a

week and holds a free children's story time for pre-schoolers that is very popular with local parents as is the play gym, The Laughing Giraffe, in Roccliffe.

There's a lot going on in Boroughbridge for older children too: a football club, a tennis club and many swimming classes held at The Crown Inn pool. Beavers and Cubs meet at Coronation Hall and Boroughbridge High School hosts Ripon Gymnastics Association three times a week, providing a variety of gymnastics training and pathways. Generation Dance in nearby Roccliffe is a favourite with tiny to teen dancers offering Ballet, Tap, Jazz, Acro and Musical Theatre classes in an inclusive, friendly environment.

A relatively recent addition to the Boroughbridge community is Black Wolf Fitness, which focuses on functional fitness and combines cross-fit with 'sweat' classes and Olympic weightlifting. This is hands down the best fitness experience I've had in a long time. Its tagline 'Be Part of The Pack' says everything about the BWF approach. There are no mirrors, so no posing and no cliques here, just an awful lot of hard graft, positivity and a happy, friendly group of people - which is the general vibe in Boroughbridge actually - so whether you're passing through or thinking of something more permanent, it's well worth a look.



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