

# RICHMOND Make a Day of it...

...there's more to it than meets the eye!



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green this was the first house built after Richmond was declared a town. A little further on as you turn the bend you will find the oldest building in Richmond delightful with its wooden picket fence stoep is P.J. van der Merwe's original farmstead on *Driefontein*, and like so many other buildings in Richmond, it is a national monument.



A further 100 metres on, Paul Street takes another curve to the left, and in the short stretch leading to its intersection with Louis Street, one can catch a little of the atmosphere that must have prevailed back in the 1850s when this was the bustling main street of the tiny village. Note, in particular, the wide water furrows on each side of the road and the simple *stoep* that line it.

Turn left at the intersection and proceed to the middle of the pedestrian bridge. For an idea of the scale of things in those early days, look to your left and notice Van der Merwe's house behind the trees, then to your right to the fisherman's-cottage-like home of his manager - and to the river between, where one of the three fountains still springs forth.

On Pienaar Street, 100 metres from its intersection with Spring Street, is the three-star Marina's Guest Lodge, and just 50 metres up Spring Street your car awaits.

**Before you go** Why not pop into BKB, the local cooperative store (diagonally across the road from Aloe Guest House) and check out their range of *veldskoene*, walking shoes and other country gear? A few paces away you'll find a small liquor store and just beyond this, the Wild Beast Butchery for the tastiest venison this side of Springbok - either fresh or frozen.

And before you finally depart this little haven of tranquility for the open road, settle down for a bite to eat at the thatch-roofed Ka-Ma Restaurant in the Caltex complex.

Now you'll know what we mean when we say: Richmond; not just a destination, but a way of life. Thank you for visiting, drive safely, and hope to see you at the next **Richmond Book Fair**, held annually over the last weekend in October.

#### Accommodation Establishments in Richmond

- Aandrus B&B**, 102 Loop Street Tel: 053 693 0133
- Aloe Guesthouse**, 5 Spring Street Tel: 053 693 0702
- An-Ra B&B**, 54 Loop Street Tel: 0833208055
- Ka-Ma Lodge**, 1 Spring Street Tel: 053 693 0138
- Marina's Guesthouse**, 141 Pienaar Street Tel: 053 693 0142
- Perdehoef Guesthuis**, 51 Loop Street Tel: 053 693 0212
- Richmond Lodge**, 18 Spring Street Tel: 053 693 0315
- Tom se Meule Guesthuis**, 260 Hoop Street Tel: 053 693 0351
- Victoria Guesthouse**, 125 Pienaar Street Tel: 053 693 0788

and a further 100 metres from there, Aandrus B&B. Opposite Perdehoef is a rambling Edwardian homestead painstakingly restored by its owners, Modern Art Projects and *A Look Away* magazine. AWAY, as the complex is known, is a guest house, studio and exhibition space for the exclusive use of painters, sculptors, designers, writers and musicians. For further information telephone 073 861 3497.



To see a party-line telephone exchange with manual switchboard still in operation, turn left under the shade of four giant gum trees, cross Pienaar Street, and follow the path between the cellphone tower and the face-brick Post Office building.

Return to Pienaar Street and just off the corner of Market Street is another magnificent old homestead, now the Victoria Guesthouse. Note the splendid front door with stained glass windows, the intricate cast-iron *broekie* lace on the verandah, the delightful rose garden, and the water furrow. Across the road is the village bottle store, if you feel the need to pop in for a refreshment.



Retrace your steps to Market Street and turn left in a southerly direction over the bridge that spans the picturesque Ongers River. To your right, and at the end of a winding avenue is the Richmond Country Club, with its 9-hole scrub-and-sand golf course, tennis courts, bowling greens and squash court. Open on weekends only, visitors are welcome.

Having crossed the bridge and after about 200 metres, you'll reach a large cemetery. Pass this and turn left at the next intersection into Paul Street, lined with its ancient wattle trees. About 50 metres on and to your right you'll notice the tumbledown entrance to another much smaller graveyard where the 16 townfolk and members of the British force who fell during the defence of Richmond on 20 June 1901 are laid to rest.



Continue along Paul Street for another 50 metres and look up Kerk Street towards the church for a glimpse back into the past, before reaching a bend in the road. This is where Richmond has its roots.

Sadly, many of the early dwellings have either been demolished or have had their original designs considerably altered: yet a sense of the 1850s lingers.



After roughly 150 metres you'll notice a handsome gabled house painted a garish

**An early history** In common with most Karoo towns, Richmond was founded to meet the religious needs of a growing farming community.

When official permission to establish a village was granted in 1843, community leaders met, and *Driefontein*, the farm of PJ van der Merwe was chosen as a suitable site. It lay on the banks of the picturesque Ongers River with its reliable source of fresh water from the three fountains from which the farm took its name.

Early in 1844 Sir Peregrine Maitland, Governor of the Cape Colony, was approached for permission to name the village in his honour. He declined, suggesting rather that it be named for his late father-in-law, Charles Lennox, the 4th Duke of Richmond. And thus in October 1845 was Richmond founded, the first plots being sold alongside the river. This explains Richmond's irregular street grid. Another peculiarity of the town's layout is that with its redevelopment at the turn of the nineteenth century, the tiny church and market square were both relocated, the result being that the two are a short distance apart.

On 31 March 1859, not fifteen years after the town's founding, possibly Richmond's most celebrated citizen was born. Son of a local doctor, Emil Hoffa later studied and researched medicine in Germany, and is today credited with being the founder of modern orthopedics.

During the Anglo-Boer War numerous skirmishes took place in the district, the most notable being in June 1901 when a Boer commando led by General Wynand Malan attacked Richmond. In anticipation of such a raid, a detachment of British troops had been stationed here, and the well-preserved remains of the fort these men built can still be seen on private property overlooking the town.

So, take some time out to discover this pretty little Bo-Karoo *dorp* with its invigorating climate, laid-back ambience and quirky denizens. There are some fascinating places to visit, three licensed restaurants, a sports bar in the making, two coffee shops, no fewer than six bookshops, and a number of good yet affordable guest houses. Then, of course, there's The Richmond Ramble, a leisurely stroll taking in most of the town's historic attractions. All good reasons to make a day of it.

**The Richmond Ramble** From the Caltex Service Station travel south along Spring Street where to your left you will notice Flat Stanley's, a small art gallery. Continue along this road until it intersects with Loop Street. You are now in Booktown Richmond, the first and only Booktown on the African continent! Park your car be-



hind Richmond Lodge to your left. (Although Richmond is relatively crime-free, be sure not to leave any valuables on your car seats.)

Facing the car park is a rundown old building with grey roof and faded sky-blue woodwork. Originally the *Driefontein* farm manager's cottage, it is one of the town's oldest buildings.

Cross Spring Street into Loop Street and to your left is the red-roofed *Huis van Licht en Schaduw*, a charming little home which has been transformed into Richmond Books & Prints, a fine collectable book, music and coffee shop. Alongside this are a further two bookshops - Diesel & Dust and Books on 20 Loop Street - and Springbok Huis, an atmospheric pub in-the-making, jam-packed with sporting memorabilia, artefacts and books.

Roughly 50 metres down Loop Street, you'll come across the high-roofed Richmond Museum, a fascinating walk back in time and home to a rare collection of equine artifacts. The museum is only opened on request, so please phone 053 693 0178 or 053 693 0595 if you wish to view this little gem. The building in which the museum is housed was the town's first school, and the hall adjacent to this, a dormitory.



The next building to your right, with verandah colonnade probably added in the 1920s or '30s, has undergone a major revamp and a section of this is already trading as a themed self-catering complex ideal for families, groups and hunting parties.

Across the road is Percy se Plek, the town's only supermarket; open Monday to Friday from 8.00am to 5.30pm and 8.00am to 12.30pm on Saturday with extended weekday trading over December. Barely 40 metres further on, you'll notice the striking peach-coloured façade of Die Richmond Supper Klub, an intimate restaurant with bar and book-lined smoking lounge; all three rooms having fireplaces.



Originally the *dorphaais* of a wealthy sheep farmer, it later served as a boarding house to the school across the road. Die Richmond Supper Klub, which is rapidly gaining a reputation for its deliciously inventive cuisine and which from time to time offers live evening entertainment, is open Tuesday to Saturday for lunch and dinner. Phone 053 693

0622 for reservations.

Next door is Richmond Gallery, home to KarooZing Kitch 'n Crafts, BookarooZ Bookshop and the Book Orphanage. The shop is open seven days a week from early in the morning – just how early depends on how cold or otherwise the previous night's Castles were – until at least 7.00pm (depending on just how cold or otherwise the Castles are). Phone 053 693 0665 to check out the status quo.

Across from the intersection of Loop and Kerk streets is the imposing NG Kerk. Consecrated as a fairly simple structure in 1847, a tower and two wings were added in 1906. The pulpit, reputed to be the tallest of its kind in the country, was hand-carved by LF Anhuysse, who was also responsible for that in the Groote Kerk in Cape Town. For a tour of this immaculately maintained church telephone 053 693 0015.

In a side street just up from the church is the double-storied Tom se Meule Gastehuis. It occupies the lower southern slope of *Vegkop* on the summit of which is the fort built by the Town Guard during the Anglo-Boer War. For permission to visit the fort, please telephone 053 693 0665.

Cross over Loop Street past the small library and you'll come upon The Blue Lantern, a cozy little restaurant, coffee shop and pub renowned for their Karoo lamb cutlets. The Blue Lantern is open from Monday to Saturday for lunch and dinner with extended daytime hours over the festive season. Telephone 053 693 0142 to book your table.



A further 50 metres on and to your right is the ever-popular An-Ra Guest House.

Traverse Mark Street and you'll arrive at what was the second market square and subsequently the town square. Although closed to the public, the old town bell and a memorial to those townspeople who fell in WWI and WWII are both clearly visible from the road. Not so easily detectable are the few mountain tortoises brought here to recover from injuries suffered on the roads.



Facing the garden is the municipal building erected in 1935 with its impressive columned entrance and magnificently carved doors.

Overlooking the intersection of Loop and Plein streets is Perdehoef Gastehuis, whilst about 200 metres down Loop Street from here is Vet Muis Plaaskombuis, a quaint little coffee shop, Telephone:053-693-0313

