

PONTEFRACT THE DISTRICT

Pontefract is a West Yorkshire market town (Population is c 32.000) ideally situated for access to the motorway network (A1/M62 junction). The town also boasts 3 railway stations, all located within walking distance of the town centre. It is home to the famous racecourse and Richard II died in the town's Norman castle. A liquorice confection called "pomfret cakes" has been made here for centuries, although the liquorice is no longer grown here. A Liquorice Festival takes place at the end of July and has grown in size, importance and popularity over the years.

There are some good 18th and 19th century buildings here. The Town Hall of 1785 faces the pedestrianised Market Place where there is also a 1734 butter cross, a round-arched, hipped-roof arcaded stone shelter. The red bricked Red Lion Hotel was re-modelled in 1776 and St Giles' Church, which originated in the 14th century, became the parish church in 1789. Pontefract's Museum, which opened in Salter Row in 1978, houses a 1625 painting of the castle before its destruction. Below the hospital in Southgate is the 14th century Hermitage carved out of stone by Brother Adam de Laythorpe. It has two chambers and an underground spring.

There is good shopping in Pontefract, including the twice weekly open market and the Junction 32 Shopping Outlet situated just outside the town in Glasshoughton. This is also home to Xscape - an indoor snow ski slope, rock climbing walls, indoor skateboard park, laserzone, multiplex cinemas, bowling and entertainment complex as well as restaurants and bars.

The suburbs of Pontefract include several rural villages, varying in size and character. There is good quality housing across a wide price range and currently due to the good transport links staff travel to school from as far afield as Halifax, Huddersfield, Tadcaster, York, Leeds, Sheffield, Doncaster and Wakefield.

Education in Pontefract

There is one other 11-16 school in the town and a highly regarded Post 16 college (NEW College) offering a wide range of A level and some Vocational Post 16 courses. This is now well complemented by a new State of the Art Skills XChange focusing on Vocational/Occupational Education mainly 16+ but also with some 14-16 provision which opened in 2009.