

The attractive and historic little town on the N1 one lies more or less half way between Cape Town, Gauteng and Kwazulu-Natal. It was established in 1854 at the base of some rocky hills on the farm Petrusvallei, which was bought from Gert Gous. Gous requested that the town be called Hanover, after his great grandfather's town in Germany.

When declared magisterial district in 1876, the town was very fortunate to be appointed with a far seeing magistrate, Richard Beere. He insisted that trees be planted so that residents' descendants would have shade. Due to the increase in water consumption caused by the increase in residents, the spring that Hanover was built around, dried up, and the number of trees seen in the town today is far less than 100 years ago. Beere loved the Karoo and spent a lot of time on the summit of Trappieskop, where a stone pyramid honouring his contribution to the town was erected when he died.

The older houses were all built right on the road edge - as per authority's instructions at the time - and when, in later years, home owners built on verandas, they had to pay a one shilling tax for this privilege. Today, they are still paying this tax, which is now R 17.00. Hanover was home to Olive Schreiner - well known South African author - who lived in Hanover from 1900 to 1906 and referred to it as "The prettiest little village I have ever seen". Her husband, Cron, was an agent in town and today his offices are used as a small guesthouse. Like many small Karoo towns, most of the streets are not tarred and the residential areas are very quiet. However, behind garden walls and front doors, there is plenty of activity going on as the industrious residents carry out their daily business.

The town is home to a variety of artists and craftspeople, as well as having several restaurants, delightful bookshop, coffee shop and a museum. There is interesting Karoo architecture to be seen and many gardens have a wind pump standing sentinel in one corner. Surrounding farms are principally Merino sheep, with many of the country's best breeders operating in the Hanover district.

Lesser Kestrels, from Europe and Central Asia, come to nest in trees around town, and can be seen gliding in the dawn and dusk sky from late October to the end of summer.