

Walk of the month

EASBY ABBEY:
Notable for its
roof-height refectory

Richmond and Easby Abbey

THE WALK: A 3½-mile (5.8km) circular walk starting from Richmond Market Place and proceeding to Easby Abbey along a scenic riverside path before returning to Richmond along part of the Coast-to-Coast walk.

Difficulty Rating: Easy. You will need OS Landranger No.92 (Barnard Castle) & Explorer 304 (Darlington & Richmond) Grid Reference: NZ 1750 0104.

Parking: Parking is available in various car parks in Richmond Town Centre and also at the swimming baths.

Public transport: Richmond is well served by public transport. There are regular bus services into Richmond from Catterick, Northallerton, Leyburn, Ripon, Barnard Castle and Darlington. Please check times by visiting www.northyorks.gov.uk/businfo or by telephoning Traveline on 0871 200 22 33.



Calls from landlines cost 10p per minute

Leave Richmond Market Place from the bottom left hand corner onto Frenchgate and proceed right onto Station Road. Follow the road down to the river past St Mary's Church and take the lane to the left before reaching Mercury Bridge. *The bridge was built in 1846 but partly collapsed in 2000 after very heavy rainfall and required major rebuilding.*

1. Proceed along Lombards Wynd and at the junction turn R and follow the lane until it turns into a rough track. Follow the way mark arrow along a narrow path which runs alongside a playing field or, alternatively, take the lower path to the River Swale until reaching steps to a kissing gate. From

here, diagonally cross a field to a stile, head up a slight slope to join a broad track. Bear R to a road junction, and there turn R and walk down to Easby Abbey. *In the fields around the abbey you can see many bumps and hollows showing where other buildings once stood, and you can spot fragments of medieval stonework in some of the houses and barns.*

2. Continue past the car park following the surfaced lane along the bottom edge of light woodland until reaching some large boulders. Turn R over the bridge. Here, proceed along the track bed of a former railway. This leads to the old railway station which is being rejuvenated for leisure and other uses. *Before reaching the station on the left there are the ruins of St Martin's Priory, founded in about 1100 and dissolved by Henry VIII in 1539. It was a dependant of St Mary's Abbey in York, and had nine monks when it began. About 250m south of the priory, a bank crosses the field up to the road. This is part of Scot's Dyke, a 6th/7th century territorial boundary which ran from south of Richmond almost up to the River Tees.*

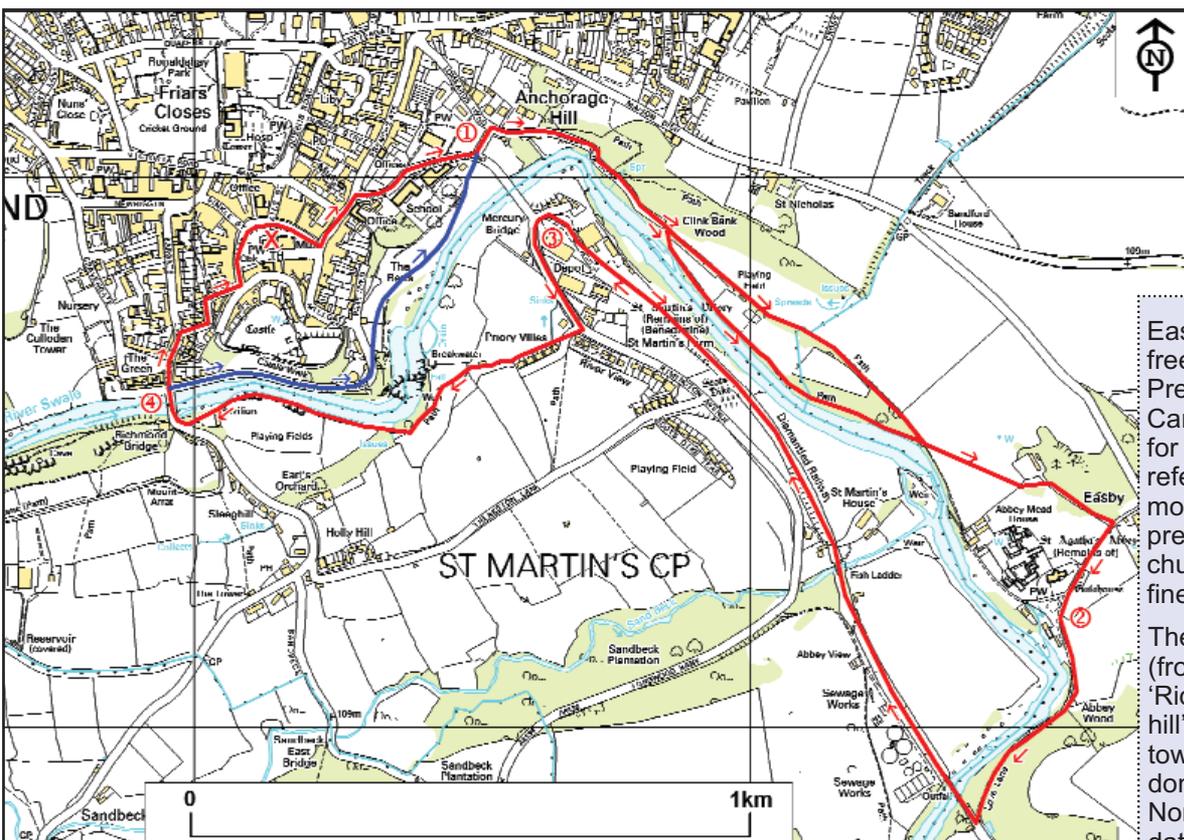
3. Turn L out of the station car park and proceed along the main road until reaching a turning into Priory Villas on the R. The Coast to Coast walk is signposted from here. Pass through a gate at the end of a row of houses and carry straight on. *The area to the right leading down to the river is a local*

wildlife site (otherwise known as a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation or SINC). This site comprises a gently sloping grassland containing important species including pignut, birdsfoot trefoil, yellow rattle and meadow saxifage. Follow the path into woodland which slopes down to the river and continue until it emerges onto Earls Orchard playing field. Bear R along the edge of the field until it reaches the road by Richmond Bridge. This bridge dates back to 1788. It was rebuilt on a site of a medieval bridge by John Carr of York.

4. After crossing Richmond Bridge either carry straight on (shown red on the map) onto Bridge Street then turning R to continue up the rather steep Cornforth Hill. *Here you will notice a stone archway, the Bar Gate dating to 1312. It is one of the gates in the original town wall. At the T-junction turn R again onto New Road which then leads back into the Market Place. From here there is access to the castle, and the castle walk. The walk is now complete.*

Alternatively turn R after Richmond Bridge onto Riverside Road (shown blue on the map), this is a more gentle walk and eventually reaches the waterfalls which, after heavy rainfall, are very

impressive. From here proceed onto "The Batts", a local area for recreation. This route is ideal when parking at the swimming baths as the route emerges by Mercury Bridge, and the walk is complete.



Easby Abbey (English Heritage, free entry, open daily) was a Premonstratensian or White Canons house, now notable for its lavish roof-height refectory of c.1300 and other monastic buildings. Within the precinct is the still-active parish church of St Agatha, displaying fine 13th century wall paintings.

The market town of Richmond (from the Norman French 'Riche Monte' meaning 'strong hill') is one of the great historic towns of England and is dominated by the impressive Norman castle which, in parts, dates back to the 11th century.



Picture courtesy Richmondshire District Council