

WALK 1

The Old Town

DISTANCE = APPROX. 3.5 – 4 KM

This walk explores the old town of Richmond from the Castle with an option to visit Anchorage Hill

In the 11th – 13th Centuries, towns were very compact with many narrow roads and pedestrian alleyways called “Wynds”. Once built, castles not only provided a place of safety during attack but also became administrative centres for law and a place for small religious communities to become established. Needless to say there were many opportunities for employment ranging from tradesmen, open air markets, shops and taverns. Richmond was no exception.

The route

From the Castle entrance **TR** into **Tower Street**. Tower Street follows the line of the castle wall of which you catch glimpses on the right as well as the Keep. Go down the steps at the end and **TR** and **R** again onto **Castle Terrace**. (For a more access friendly route walk down Castle Wynd onto Millgate **TR** until you come to Castle Terrace). Here there are sweeping views up and down Swaledale making it easy to see why Richmond Castle was built on this site. Note the height of the castle walls and

building materials which are a mixture of dressed sandstone blocks and large, smooth boulders from the river. Continue around until you meet **New Rd**.

At New Rd turn sharp **L** along a narrow cobbled street called **The Bar (IP 1)**. Continue along this lane under the Bar and down **Cornforth Hill** - a short, steep descent.



At the bottom of Cornforth Hill, **TL** towards the **Green (IP 2)**. You then have a choice of routes, either

a. **TL** before Richmond Bridge to walk along Riverside Rd to the Falls, through the Batts to Station Rd. This route is access friendly.

Or

b. Walk cross **Richmond Bridge (IP 3)** stopping to look at the Castle. **TL** through the car park for Richmond Town Football Club (**IP 4**) and follow the Coast to Coast footpath signs to Station Rd. This route can be very muddy after rain. On meeting Station Rd, **TL** towards town and cross the main road using the pedestrian

crossing, **TR** into the grounds of **St Mary’s Church. (IP 5)**

Exit the church grounds via **Church Wynd** into **Frenchgate. (IP 6)**. Walk up to the Green Howard’s Memorial at the top of Frenchgate where there is a good view of the Castle and Keep.

You now have the option to walk up to **Anchorage Hill (IP 7)** which may be the site of Hindrelac / Hindrelag at the junction of Darlington Rd and Maison Dieu. *Be aware that this junction can be quite busy.* **TR** onto the Darlington Rd



and cross at the junction with Maison Dieu. Staying on the Darlington Rd, walk towards the petrol station to the **Bowes Hospital** approx. 200m

Retrace your steps to Green Howard’s Monument and **Frenchgate**. Walk 100m



or so down Frenchgate to a narrow wynd on the right named **Flints Terrace**. Take this wynd through to the main road.

TL and at the first roundabout by the Library, cross the road and enter **Friary Gardens (IP 8)**.

Exit Friary Gardens onto **Victoria Rd**, walk past the Georgian Theatre and turn



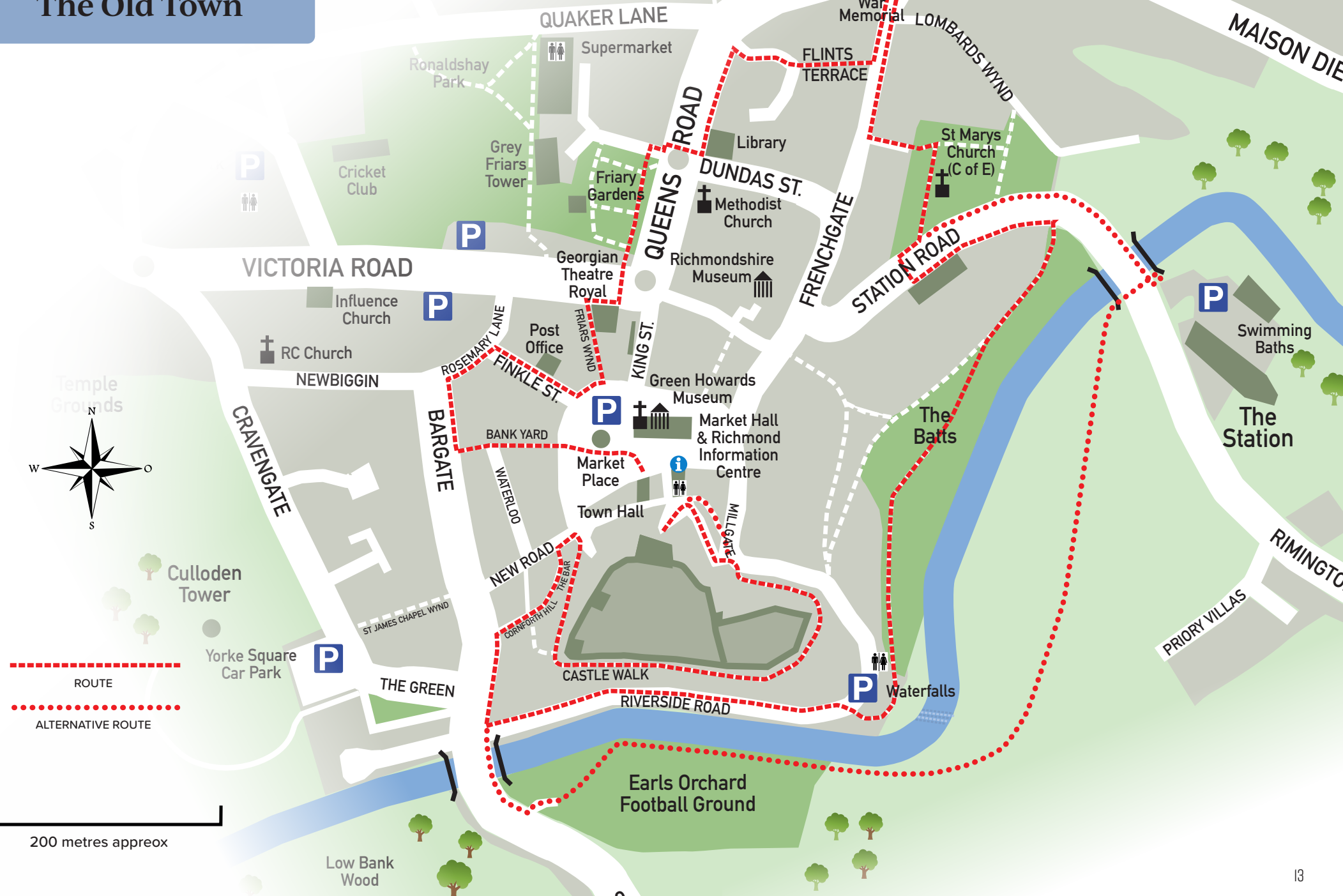
immediate **L** into **Friar’s Wynd. (IP 9)**. On your right is the Fleece Hotel. When renovated in 2017, evidence of a town ditch was found in the cellars.

Walk through into the **Market Place**, **TR** and **R** again into **Finkle Street**.

This narrow, enclosed street still has a medieval feel to it. (**IP10**) At the end of Finkle Street, **TL** into **Rosemary Lane** and then **R** into **Newbiggin (IP 11)**. If you wish, stroll along Newbiggin and back. On the left side there are interesting views of alleyways with houses tucked away. From Newbiggin, **TL** into **Bargate**. Walk down the hill approx. **70m** and **TL** into a narrow, cobbled lane called **Thornhill**. Take this lane which leads into **Bank Yard** and the **Market Place (IP 12)**.

Walk across to the obelisk which marks the site of the Medieval cross, note the Castle Keep. From the obelisk walk across the Market Place towards the Town Hall. On your left is Holy Trinity Church now home of The Green Howards Regimental Museum. (**IP 13**)

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Points of Information

1 The Bar: Bar means gateway. Built in 1311, The Bar is the only remaining of 3 postern (pedestrian) gates into the old town. Notice the remains of the town wall and the ramparts (wall /& ditch) making it a good defensive site.

2 The Green: This was an important industrial area for leather tanning, production of woollen cloth, corn mills and blacksmiths using water and power from the Swale.

3 Richmond Bridge: Until Station (Mercury) Bridge was built in 1846 to access the railway station, Richmond Bridge was the main crossing point of the Swale for traffic from Wensleydale. After crossing the bridge, traffic would have entered the town via Bargate and Finkle Street Bar.

4 Earls Orchard: Now the grounds of Richmond Town Football club, in Medieval times this may have been where knights practised their jousting and horsemanship skills.

5 St Mary's Church: established in 1125 as the Parish Church for Richmond. Although renovated in Victorian times, medieval glass, tombstones and two Norman arches can be seen.

6 Frenchgate: In Norman times Frenchgate was a suburb beyond the Castle's outer bailey. It derived its name from Franci (French) and the word "gate" being Danish for street. This area developed to house those civilian French for whom there was no room at the castle. The housing is mainly Georgian built on the footprint of medieval burgage plots.

7 Anchorage Hill: Named after late-medieval anchoresses. An anchoress

(ancess) was a religious woman who lived in a small chapel as a hermit. They didn't belong to any specific religious order. The chapel at Anchorage Hill was dedicated to St Edmund after Edmund, King of East Anglia. He died in 868 following a raid by the Danes. He is laid to rest at Bury St Edmunds. In 1607 the chapel became the Bowes Hospital providing housing for three widows. The chapel styled building is still one of Richmond's almshouses but now only for one person.

8 Greyfriars and Friary Gardens: The site of a Franciscan Friary (Greyfriars) founded in 1258. See interpretation plaque. There were several springs in the grounds which provided drinking water for the people of Richmond.

9 Friar's Wynd: One of two postern gates the other being The Bar. Friar's Wynd enabled townsfolk to access clean water from Greyfriars.

10 Finkle Street and Bar: Finkle means crooked. About half way along there is a noticeable kink which marks the place of Finkle Bar. Look for a small rectangular plaque on the right hand side just above head height. The Bar was demolished in 1777 to make room for traffic. Traffic from Swaledale would come down Hurgill Road and into Richmond via Rosemary Lane and Finkle Street Bar.

11 Newbiggin: The name means new buildings. This area was the second suburb outside the Castle bailey and was the site of Richmond's first market place mentioned in Charters from 1100's onwards.

12 The Market Place: In Norman times this was the Outer Bailey for the castle so was a

military area until the 14th Century. The town's various open air markets located here after that date. It is incorrect to refer to it as the Market Square as its shape is more like a horseshoe due to it once being the Outer Bailey. It is the largest cobbled area in England and the round; smooth cobbles came from the River Swale.

13 Holy Trinity Chapel: Serving the Outer Bailey this was one of four chapels built within the grounds of the Castle, the other three being in the Inner Bailey. Holy Trinity was restored in Victorian times.

14 Burgage plots: These were long and narrow plots of land with a house, shop or outbuildings fronting a road. Burgage is a medieval land term used in Great Britain and Ireland, well established by the 13th century. A burgage was a town ("borough" or "burgh") rental property (to use modern terms), owned by a king or lord. Over the centuries many burgage plots have been infilled with housing.

15 The Channel: Site of defensive gate where Frenchgate and The Channel meet. Traffic travelling from east via the Great North Road and Northallerton would have entered the town here.

16 The Drummer Boy Stone: Legend has it that some centuries ago soldiers found a narrow tunnel underneath Richmond Castle. A small drummer boy entered the tunnel and was told to keep beating his drum. When he got to this spot the drumming stopped and the boy was never seen again.

17 Easby Abbey: founded by Roald, Constable of Richmond Castle around 1152. It belonged to Premonstratensians order or White Canons. The grounds are open to the public and are free of charge.

18 St Agatha's Church: has well preserved 13th Century wall paintings and a replica of an 8th century carved stone cross. The original Easby Cross is now on display at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London. It is the only original cross they have.

19 St Nicholas House: Founded in 1171 as a medieval hospital. It was run by a religious community who cared for people who were elderly, poor or in ill health. It is now a private residence. Artefacts found in the grounds are on display at Richmondshire Museum and St Mary's Church.

20 St James Chapel Wynd: In the 12th Century St James was a popular medieval saint whose Shrine at Santiago de Compostela in northern Spain was the third most important Christian site for pilgrimage after Jerusalem and Rome.

21 Culloden Tower: Built in 1746 as a folly to commemorate the Battle of Culloden. It is on the site of the old Hudswell Pele Tower. Peel towers (also spelt pele) were small fortified keeps or tower house.

22 Westfield: One of three areas of open pasture, Gallowfields and Eastfield being the other two. The open field system gave individual peasants land in the form of strips scattered among the different fields. Crops such as rye, barley and vegetables would have been grown using a system of crop rotation. Cattle would also have been grazed. Westfield is south facing and has several springs so farming could take place throughout the year.

23 Sleegill: At some time in this area there was a leper chapel dedicated to St Thomas but its location is unknown.