

This walk description is from happyhiker.co.uk

Egglestone Abbey to Whorlton

Starting point and OS Grid reference	Free car park at Egglestone Abbey (NZ 062151)
Ordnance Survey map	OL31 North Pennines – Teesdale and Weardale & OS Explorer 304 Darlington and Richmond
Distance	6.4 miles
Date of Walk	6 October 2014
Traffic light rating	

Introduction: This Teesdale walk to Whorlton Village takes you along an attractive section of the River Tees. It passes Mortham Tower, a Grade I listed, medieval house with a pele tower, supposedly built during the reign of Henry VIII and one of the oldest inhabited houses in the north. It is privately owned. It is close to Greta Bridge where the waters of the rivers Greta and Tees meet in a dramatic setting.

En route, you will see a number of unusual, cast iron parish boundary markers.

The walk starts from a free car park at Egglestone Abbey. The abbey was founded in the 12th century and was occupied by Cistercian “White Monks”, a reference to the white choir robes they wore over their habits (as opposed to the Benedictines who wore black). They were not a wealthy order, relying on self sufficiency – agriculture, brewing etc. Later, education and academic activities predominated. Like most monasteries, it suffered from Dissolution in 1538, under Henry VIII and fell into disrepair, although the east range evidently was occupied by estate workers until the late 1800s.

As you approach the abbey, it looks quite complete and impressive and only when you get closer does its fragmented nature become apparent. However as it is an unmanned English heritage site and so “free,” it is worth a look.

Whorlton is a charming and classy village, with a large green, church and a good pub (Bridge Inn). Whorlton is approached by means of an attractive suspension bridge, still supported by its original chains. This was built to replace an earlier bridge swept away by floodwaters in 1829 and opened in 1832. To stand on it as a car crosses is quite strange! Alongside is the old toll house.

The OS map still shows “Whorlton Lido”, which at one time was a popular tourist spot with natural swimming pools in the river and even a miniature railway. However as far as I can gather, the area was bought by a local and shut down. It is now private land and there is no access and nothing to see.

Refreshment opportunities are available at the Bridge Inn in Whorlton (check opening times) and one or two picnic spots along the way.

The walk starts from Egglestone Abbey car park. To get there, take the B6277 south from Barnard Castle and about half a mile after the river bridge, turn left along Abbey

Lane, signposted "Egglestone Abbey 1¼ miles". The lane to the abbey is on the right after a mile.

Start: From the abbey car park (NZ 062151), walk back down the road and turn right at the road junction.

At the traffic light controlled bridge, look out for the footpath to the right of the bridge, **before** crossing the bridge. Turn right along this footpath to follow the Teesdale Way fingerpost (NZ 066149).

After 50 yards or so, the path zig-zags back on itself, to follow the riverbank more closely.

After crossing a stream via a couple of stepping stones, the path climbs some steep steps to a field. Turn left here.

Follow the path to a tarmac drive to houses. Turn left along this, again following a Teesdale Way sign. At NZ 085145, described as Meeting of The Waters on a notice, the River Greta flows into the Tees. Cross Greta Bridge (NZ 085144) and shortly after, you enter the estate of Mortham Tower. Follow the drive and, as it turns right to the house, turn left to follow the yellow arrow denoting the Teesdale Way.

The path now follows the banking at the top of a field, for some way, with good views across the valley. As you leave the Mortham Tower estate via a stile, turn left and follow the field boundary.

When you get to the opening into the field beyond, do not go through it but turn right, keeping the wall on your left. Pass the ruin of a farm and keep straight ahead. A yellow arrow directs you to follow the right hand boundary of the next field.

Through the next gate, the path bears slightly left. Follow the line of the power poles and when the ground dips to the left, you will be able to see the road. Aim for the stile by the "road bends" sign and turn left along the road and over the suspension bridge (NZ 107145).

As the road bends, just to the right of the old toll house, there is a short steep footpath which brings you out at the village of Whorlton, by a continuation of the Teesdale Way, which is your onward route. However, it is worth having a look round the village, with its attractive St Mary's Church and village green and perhaps taking sustenance at the Bridge Inn pub, before continuing.

Return to the Teesdale way and follow what is to start with a very clearly defined and fenced footpath. It is at a high level above the river, with good views. The path opens into a field via a walkers' gate. Follow the left hand boundary. The route is clearly arrowed. This is quite a good spot for a picnic.

After a brief spell through some woods, go straight ahead, through a metal gate following the Teesdale Way signs. Follow the top of the banking as it curves to the left and descends to a walkers' gate. Go through the gate and follow the edge of the trees for quite a way, crossing a stream via a narrow footbridge, with the now familiar steel marker posts.

You leave the edge of the trees (NZ 084146), going through a walkers' gate into a large field. This has two distinct levels. Keep straight ahead on the higher level. Head for the right hand corner, where there is a walkers' gate. Go straight ahead, indicated by the Teesdale way arrow.

Half way across the field, there is a ditch (NZ 080147) and a piece of fencing, around a water trough. From here, bear slightly left. As you get closer to the wall, you should see the stone step stile. Cross this and head left, for the diagonally opposite corner of the field.

Cross the stile here and follow the edge of the trees (NZ 077146).

Over a couple of fields, then after going over a stile, look out for a not easily spotted path on the left, into the woods. Go through the walkers' gate, set back a little from the field and turn right, indicated by a Teesdale way arrow.

The path descends through the woods. At a 'T' junction, turn right. You are now close to the river. The path arrives at the bridge where you began the walk. Retrace your steps to the abbey car park.

