

Start at any of the four churches. Parking should be possible in Winksley beside the church, Aldfield and Sawley Village Hall, beside the Green. There are National Trust car parks in Studley Royal Deer Park (pay and display), at Fountains Abbey Visitor Centre (free parking - closes late afternoon) and a small free car park near Fountains Bridge. There is an occasional bus from Ripon to Winksley, Fountains and Sawley bus no 139: <https://www.dalesbus.org/>

1 From Winksley Church:

Turn right out of the church to follow with care the country road down over the River Laver and up to a road junction. Find a right of way sign just to the left of the junction. Follow this footpath through woodland and fields, over stiles passing with North House on your left. Follow a line of trees across a field and go through the garden of Clip'd Thorn House to the B6265. At the road take very great care as you cross to a footpath sign on the opposite verge to your right. Continue South Easterly, crossing the first field towards a large tree to the left, and in the next field following the right edge of the field to a stile. Turn left to walk along the road to **Aldfield Church**.

2 From Aldfield Church:

Walk back along the road (passing the sign for the footpath you previously emerged from) round a bend and spot a footpath sign on your left. Follow the yellow signs through fields (through gates/over stiles) veering right to the bottom corner of the third field and into Spa Gill Wood. Continue downhill along the woodland path (can be rather overgrown) to a ruined building and the wide track in bottom of the valley of the River Skell. Turn right on the track and very shortly look on your left for a footpath sign to cross a footbridge over the river.

From the bottom of the valley the path goes steeply uphill through the wood to a stile. Continue through fields towards Hind House Farm which you pass on its left. Walk round below the farm buildings to a Skell Valley information board. Cross the stream below and go up to a gate and path junction. Follow the right of way directions straight ahead along the edge of the field to another gate. Follow subsequent right of way signs to a tarmacked lane. Turn right to visit **Sawley Church**. Sawley village has a pub and a village green with benches useful for a picnic stop.

3 From Sawley Church:

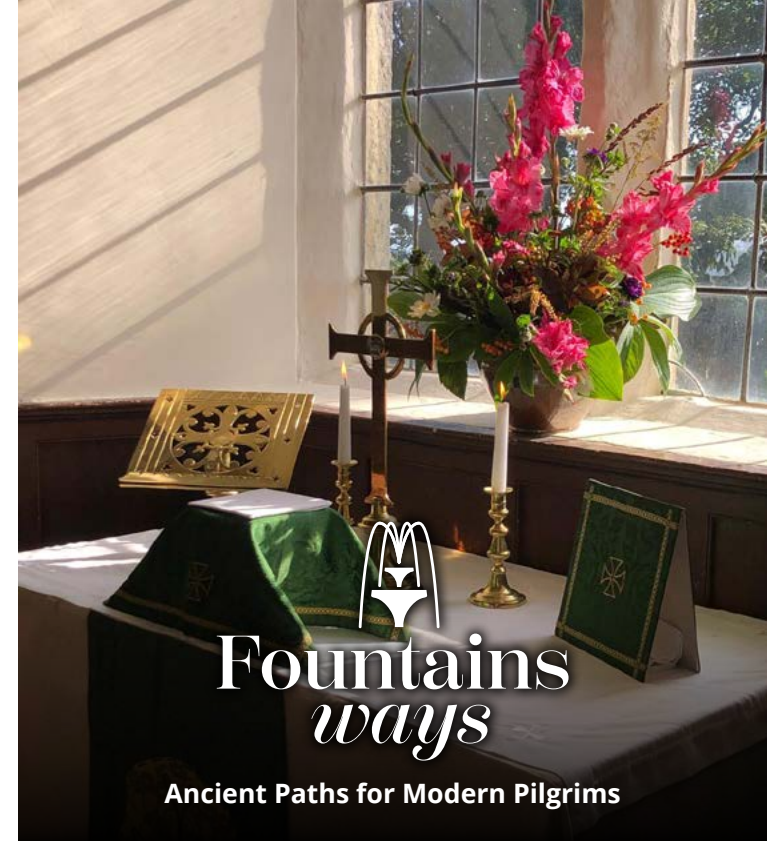
Turn right out of the lych gate, then immediate right down Low Gate Lane. Walk for about a kilometre until on a bend you will find a footpath sign and a rickety stile on your left. The path over the stile takes you down to a bridge over the River Skell. Turn right over the bridge and go along the wide track until you arrive (via a stile) at the tarmacked road near Fountain's Abbey. Walk left uphill for about 100m to take the signed track on the right. This takes you to the road leading to the Fountains Abbey Visitor Centre. There is a pedestrian walkway alongside on the left of the tarmac. Follow the path beyond a roundabout and cross over the road. Turn right to detour to the Visitor Centre (toilets and café) or left to continue the walk along the traffic free track through woodland parallel to the exit road towards Ripon. Just before the huge obelisk go through the pedestrian gate on your right into the Studley Royal Deer Park. **St Mary's Church** is immediately in front of you. (usually open from Easter to October 1:30pm – 3:30pm.)

To walk directly to **Aldfield Church** from here, follow the footpath opposite the obelisk and turn right at the road.

4 From St Mary's Church:

Walk down the tarmac road, past a building, with a view of Ripon Cathedral. Then take the first grass track on your left crossing the parkland diagonally to another vehicle road. Turn left before a large metal vehicle gate and follow the parkland wall to exit the park by a small green pedestrian gate (about 100m from the large gate).

Take care here crossing the B6265 road and walk up the tarmacked drive opposite which goes to High Lindrick. Where the drive bears left, continue straight ahead on the stony track, passing the various enterprises at High Lindrick, through to woodland. At the junction of tracks follow right-of-way signs – right and then left down to a stone bridge (Woodhouse Bridge). Over the bridge go left then uphill. Shortly after passing a house on your right go through a gate on your right. Follow the left hand edge of the field and then diagonally across to a gap in a hedge. Go straight across the next field to a stile and then towards some houses which you leave on your right. Following the fence around the houses will bring you through a gate to a lane. Turn left and then right and arrive at **Winksley Church**.



ABBOTS' WAY
WINKSLEY, ALDFIELD, SAWLEY AND STUDLEY ROYAL

All route descriptions are for anti-clockwise walking.

Timings allow a short time at each church.

Round walk, all churches: **9 miles (14km) 5-6 hrs**

Sawley/Aldfield/St Mary's: **5 miles (8km) 3.30 hrs**

Winksley/Aldfield/St Mary's: **5.5miles (9km) 3.30 hrs**

Fountains visitor centre/St Mary's/Aldfield and return:

3 miles (5km) 1.30-2 hrs



Hazards – Take great care on the occasional road sections especially when crossing the B6265 (at Clip'd Thorn and again exiting Studley Royal Deer Park). There may be livestock in some fields.



Accessibility:
Stiles and some steep sections.

ROUTES



The Church of St Cuthbert and St Oswald, Winksley



The Church of St Lawrence, Aldfield



The Church of St Michael and All Angels, Sawley



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Fountains ways

Ancient Paths for Modern Pilgrims

PILGRIMS' PRAYER

May the peace of Jesus fill us, at all times and in all places.

May his love surround us, especially in times of trial.

May his joy well up from deep within us, overflowing into the lives of those around us.

And, as we walk the path that lies before us each day, may we know ourselves perfectly loved, gently held, and graciously forgiven.

Amen



The Church of St Mary, Studley Royal