



Sawley Circular, Sawley (between Pateley Bridge and Ripon)



Nidderdale
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Introduction

With a short or long option, this walk is a perfect opportunity to explore the eastern edge of the AONB. Starting and finishing in the picturesque village of Sawley, the route includes a number of historically interesting features including the World Heritage Site of Fountains Abbey. As you pass through woodland and country lanes look out for a host of wildflowers and enjoy the sweeping views of the surrounding countryside.

Map

OS Explorer 298:
Nidderdale

Distance/Time

Short loop: 2.5 miles (4km)
Long loop: 5.5 miles (8.5km)
2-3 hours

Starting Point

Sawley village hall (SE 248678).

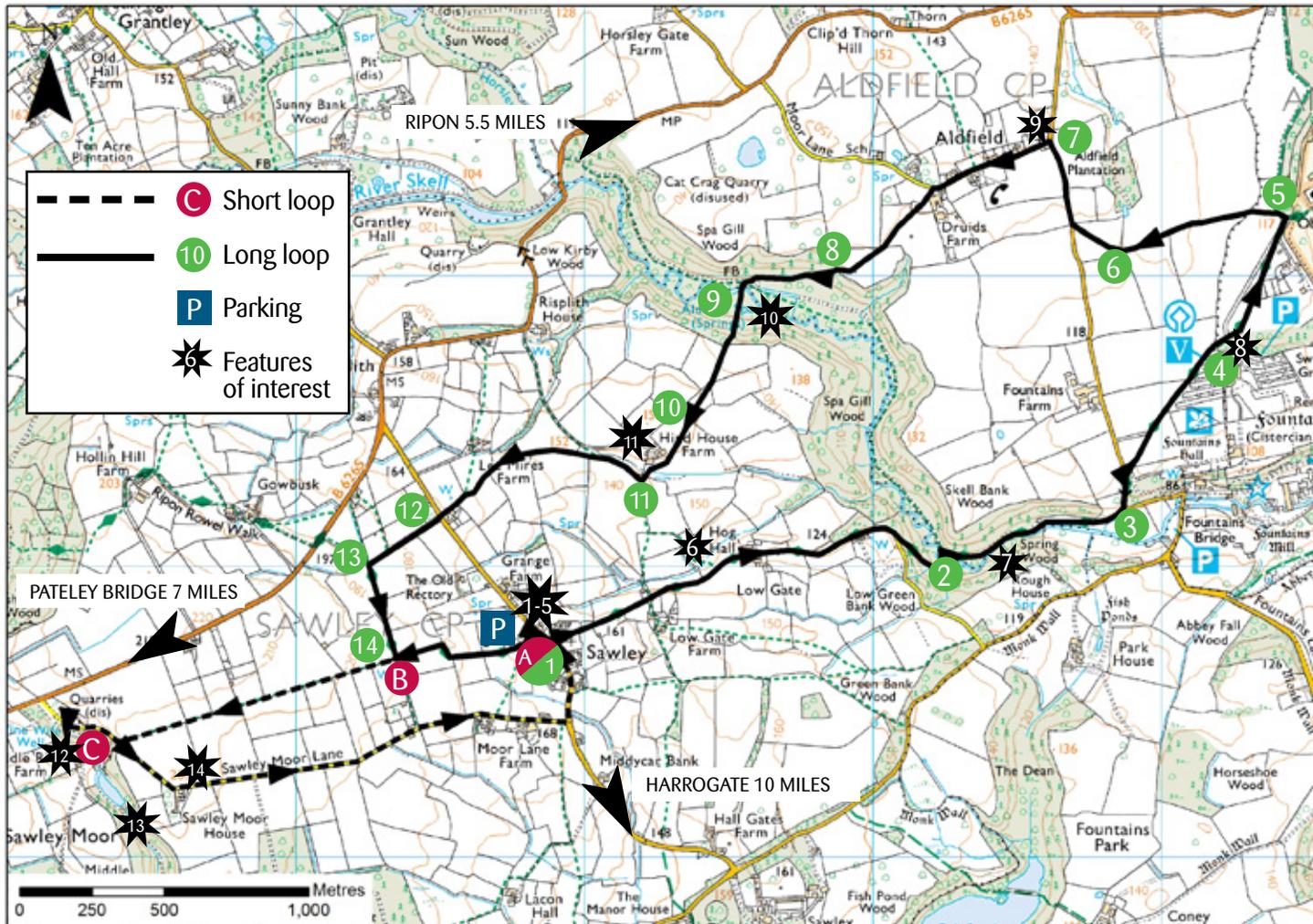
Terrain

Short loop: the route is level, but with a lot of stiles.
Long loop: the route is varied with a short, steep section.
Walking boots are recommended.

Useful Information

Car parking is available around the village green.

Refreshments: There is a pub in Sawley village. On the long loop a short diversion takes you to Fountains Abbey where there are toilets, café and a shop.



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The Route

Directions: short loop

A. From the village hall car park, walk up the track turning right over a stone stile before the Parish Room. Walk up the hill keeping to the right of the field. At a metal gate, cross over the stile and carry on up the next field to a stile in the corner. Cross over the stile and turn right along a sunken track. Pass over the next stile, turning left and heading up the field keeping to the left hand side of the field. At the top of the field cross the stile and go over a small wooden bridge.

B. Cross the track and climb over a stile to your right. Carry on up the hill keeping the hedge to your left. Follow the hedgerow in a dead straight line passing through several fields until you reach a road.

C. Once on the road turn right to reach the Wine Wife Well. To view the well, follow the road until you reach a track leading away to the left. Walk a short way down the track until you can see the well to your right. To return to Sawley, retrace your steps along the road and then continue along Sawley Moor Lane, staying on the road until you are in the outskirts of the village. Turn left at the end of the road to get back to the village hall. Alternatively, retrace your steps along the fields to the village.

Directions: long loop

1. Begin at the Sawley village hall car park. Walk past Sawley village wildlife garden and the parish room and turn right out of the entrance to Sawley village hall, turning left down Low Gate Lane (opposite the Sawley Arms pub). This is a single-track road that passes beside the Church.

Continue for approximately 1 km, passing Hog Hall on your left. Turn left off Low Gate Lane following the wooden way marker. Follow the track downhill through Spring Wood.

2. Cross the stone footbridge over the River Skell and turn right onto a well-defined track, following the course of the river. At the end of the woodland, cross over a stile into a field and continue along the track, gradually bearing away from the river and climbing gently uphill.

3. Go over the stile, carefully cross the road and turn left, uphill. At the hilltop, turn right onto a well-defined public bridleway.

4. At the end of the bridleway, cross over the road and follow the path on the left-hand side of the road that runs between two hedges. Follow this path between the hedges until past the entrance to the Fountains Abbey Visitor Centre (refreshment stop). A break in the corner of the hedge leads to the road. Cross over the road and follow the well-surfaced footpath.

5. Continue along this footpath until a set of wooden posts and a gate in the wall of Fountains Abbey. Cross over the road, over a stile and follow the footpath straight ahead to the opposite side of the field.

6. Follow the track that leads from the first field until you encounter a wooden fence in the field to your right. Just after this fence in the hedgerow, is a concealed stile. Cross the stile and walk straight over the field to a set of gates underneath a large tree. Pass through the gate and turn right onto the road.

7. Keeping to the right-hand side of the narrow road, carefully follow the road until you reach the village of Aldfield. Turn left into the village, walking past the Church of St. Lawrence the Martyr and follow the road through the village. Pass by Druids Farm and turn left through an iron gate, located at the end of the hedgerow opposite Yew Tree House. Cross the field to a large metal gate. Once through this, bear slightly right over the field to a second metal gate. Pass through and again bearing slightly right head towards the edge of the wood, through a group of trees.

8. Cross over the stile and follow the path downhill through the wood. Follow a discrete path alongside a low fence until you reach a derelict building. Walk left around the side of the building until you join a track. Turn right along the track and bear left through dense vegetation to a wooden footbridge.

9. Cross the footbridge and bear left. Head straight towards the trees over some marshy ground. Walk through the trees and along the side of some high fencing, towards the wooded slope of the valley side. Turn left at the corner, following the fence for about 20 paces. At this point, turn right up a steep bank, bearing slightly right and following a discrete path. Follow this path towards the fence to cross a stile at the top of a gully.

10. Cross the stile and head straight over the field towards a gate with a view of Hind House Farm and the hedgerow on your right-hand side. Go through the gate and walk around the left hand edge of the farm buildings following a very rough track. Follow this track until in front of the

farmhouse, then turn left, following the track over the marshy area. After crossing this, bear right to a stile underneath a tree in the field corner.

11. Cross the stile and immediately turn right following the hedgerow to your right. After a short distance, take a small track downhill to the right through a gate and walk alongside the hedge. Cross through the gate in the left hand corner of the field and continue following the path alongside the hedgerow to your left.

12. Follow the hedgerow through two gates and pass by Hill Top Farm to reach a small gateway at the top of the field. Carefully cross the road to the start of the footpath opposite. Pass through the gate and walk alongside the hedgerow.

13. Pass through the gate at the top of the field and continue alongside the hedgerow until reaching the top of the field, turn left and follow the hedge to the corner, next to an animal water trough. Pass through the gate and bear left alongside the field boundary until reaching the next gateway. Immediately turn left and cross the stile located over a small bridge, before the Old Pump House. Follow the hedgerow to the bottom corner of the field and cross the stile.

14. Once over the stile, follow a narrow, sunken track and then cross a second stile at the top. Head straight, following the path to the corner of the next field and cross another stile. Follow the undulating path to the bottom left corner of the field and cross over a stone stile by the parish room to reach Sawley village green. Turn left to the village hall car park.

Features of interest

1. Sawley Village

The village dates back to Saxon times and moved to its current location to join up with an old Norse and Tudor settlement in Lowgate Lane. Sawley appears in the Domesday Book record of 1085-1086 with the first recorded landowner at Sawley being the Archbishop of York. The primary landowners from the 17th century were the Nortons and Lord Grantley. During the 16th century, John Norton granted permission to the Abbot of Fountains Abbey for the Abbey to obtain stone for any work or building of the monastery.

2. Sawley Village Hall (The old school)

The provision of education in Sawley began with teaching offered by curates in their own homes, supported with money from endowments invested in the church. The earliest records of this date from around 1745. A schoolhouse in Sawley was provided in 1854 and by 1888, about 60 children attended the village school. The schoolhouse closed in 1989 and is now the village hall.

3. Sawley Wildlife Garden

The Wildlife Garden, adjacent to the car park at the village hall, was created in 1997 by the villagers. It is a tranquil haven providing an important habitat for birds, wildlife and plants. Take time to explore the garden, discover the pond, the laid hedgerow and woven willow arbour.

4. The Parish Room

The Parish Room situated on the village green was built in 1900 as a library, reading room and meeting space for the villagers. During the second world war the name 'Sawley'

was removed from the stone plaque on the front of the Parish Room, so invaders would have no knowledge of the village they were entering. The Parish Room originally served as a library, reading room and was also a space for recreational activities. Village records were also stored here. It is now a private house, retaining all its original features.

5. Village Pump

The village pump on the green, was installed during the summer of 1909. This came 4 years after the Parish Council rejected the offer by the Harrogate Corporation to provide a bulk water supply to the village. It wasn't until 1963 that the people of Sawley benefited from a mains water supply.

6. Hog Hall

Originally a hall built between two gabled wings, one of which remains to this day, Hog Hall (above) has been owned both by the Grantley and Studley estates. From 1934 to 1968 Hog Hall was the home of Dorothy Caine, famous for painting farmyard scenes with her identical twin Elizabeth.

7. Spring Wood

This woodland (above) is well known locally for its spectacular display of spring flowers. A mass of delicate snowdrops emerge first in the shady areas of the woodland normally between February and March. In April and May the woodland is carpeted with a mass of bluebells - the sight and scent is truly one of the wonders of the English countryside.

8. Fountains Abbey

Fountains Abbey, Britain's largest monastic ruin, was founded in 1132 by 13 Benedictine monks seeking

a simpler life. They later became Cistercian monks. The Fountains Estate was declared a World Heritage site in 1987. Today, managed by the National Trust, the Fountains Estate includes the Abbey, the Victorian-era St. Mary's Church, Fountains Hall, the deer park and Studley Royal Water Gardens.

9. The Church of St. Lawrence the Martyr Aldfield

Alan de Aldefield was granted permission to construct the first church at Aldfield in the 13th century. This church was likely to have been built from wood and was probably destroyed by raiding Scots. The building that stands today was rebuilt around 1782 in a Georgian- Gothic style after many years of neglect. Of particular note inside the church is the three-decker pulpit and box pews. The font is identical to the 13th century marble holy water stoop that now stands in the museum at Fountains Abbey.

10. Aldfield Spa Spring

In the early 1800's Aldfield was celebrated for its valuable mineral springs which are situated on the south side of the vale beneath. Sulphur water had been discovered in the area at the end of the 17th century. The spa is mentioned in the diaries of Henry Steel Thirlway (1820-1902) who lived and worked in Ripon and often took the waters at Aldfield. Close to the spa, you can still smell the pungent, sulphurous aromas.

11. Hind House Farm

Hind House dates from 1586 and was extended in the 18th century using stone from a local quarry. The roof slates originate from Sawley, and slate from the old church at Sawley was used to roof a new cow house at the

farm.

12. Wine Wife Well

This is a spring fed cistern formed of dressed stone. Its history is something of a mystery! The Parish Council has restored the land around the Well to create a beautiful picnic area.

13. Picking Gill

Picking Gill Nature Reserve This nature reserve is owned by Grantley, Sawley, Skelding and Eavestone Parish Council. Despite its relatively small size it contains a surprising variety of habitats, including several ponds (created by the Barran family during the 1900's), fern heath, rock face, unimproved grassland and a wooded valley. Consequently an astonishing variety of insects, amphibians, mammals and bird life can be found here. There is an interpretation board at the entrance with more details.

14. Sawley Moor Lane

This enclosure road dates from the 1780's. During the enclosure period, farmland was brought into private management instead of being communal. Meadows and pasture land were divided up using fences and walls which may account for the straightness of this road and of the surrounding field boundaries. During the summer the verge side along the lane is awash with wildflowers like meadow cranesbill, cowslips and lady's mantle. The verges are important habitats for wildlife and insects and support a wide variety of threatened or declining plant species.