

FOUNTAINS ABBEY WALK

Deer Park and the Seven Bridges Valley

Visit my website for full details: <https://www.paulbeal.com/fountains-abbey-walk>

Introduction to the Walk

This circular Fountains Abbey walk explores the historic landscape of Studley Royal, combining open deer park, peaceful woodland, riverside paths and the picturesque Seven Bridges Valley. Starting from the visitor centre, the route passes Studley Lake before following the River Skell through the valley and continuing to Studley Roger. The return crosses the deer park, where deer may be seen grazing among magnificent old trees, before passing Chorister's House and St Mary's Church.

Highlights of the Walk

One of the most memorable sections is the Seven Bridges Valley, where the River Skell winds through a steep-sided landscape beneath a succession of attractive stone bridges. Studley Lake, the fishing tabernacles and the historic parkland provide further interest, while Plumpton Hall and the quiet village of Studley Roger add variety to the route.

The return through Studley Royal Deer Park is another highlight, with broad grassy paths, mature parkland trees and the chance to see red, fallow and sika deer. The walk also passes the impressive Studley Royal House, the distinctive Chorister's House and St Mary's Church, whose tall spire forms a striking landmark across the estate.

Additional Information

Distance: 4½ miles (7¼ kilometres)

Duration: Approximately 2 hours (excluding stops and breaks)

Difficulty: Easy. The route is relatively short and follows generally straightforward paths through the deer park, woodland, farmland and the Seven Bridges Valley, with no major climbs.

Trail Conditions: A mixture of grassy paths, surfaced tracks, stone paths, woodland trails and short sections of road through Studley Roger. Much of the route is easy underfoot, although surfaces vary throughout the walk.

Recommended Map: OS Explorer 298 Nidderdale

Parking: Free parking is available in car parks A and B at the Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal Visitor Centre. Car park A is closest to the visitor centre.

- **Google Maps Link:** <https://maps.app.goo.gl/kA1kV4Yu5qK6ktg49>
- **What3Words:** ///ladder.intruded.employ

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STEP-BY-STEP DIRECTIONS

Start your Fountains Abbey walk from the Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal Visitor Centre. There are two large free car parks to choose from, car park A and car park B, both reached from the roundabout on the Fountains Abbey access road near the visitor centre. Car park A is the closer of the two to the visitor centre, where the walk begins. Fountains Abbey can get very busy, but both car parks are large and car park A has an even larger overflow area alongside it. You'll also find electric vehicle charging at the car parks. Do bear in mind that both are locked at 6 pm according to the signs.

After parking, make your way to the entrance of the Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal Visitor Centre. On the **grassy picnic area in front of the entrance (1)** you'll notice a signpost, and you should follow the route for St Mary's Church and Studley Royal Deer Park. A further sign directs you along a surfaced stone path signposted to St Mary's Church and Studley Royal Water Garden via Deer Park. Follow this path for about a third of a mile with woodland on your left and a large hedgerow on your right, running parallel to the Fountains Abbey access road.

At the wooden gates, turn right to enter **Studley Royal Deer Park (2)**, again signposted to St Mary's Church and Studley Royal Water Garden via Deer Park. Immediately on entering the park, turn right along a grassy path signposted to the Studley Royal Entrance and Studley Royal Water Garden. Keep to the main path and follow it downhill to the **car park above Studley Lake (3)**.

At the car park, take the second road on the left down to Studley Lake, signposted to the Seven Bridges Valley. Walk around the edge of Studley Lake and **cross the footbridge beside the weir (4)**, then turn left and take the stony track signposted to the Seven Bridges Valley. Follow it for approximately half a mile through the valley, crossing the arched stone bridges over the River Skell as you go. The valley takes its name from an original seven bridges, though only five remain today.

You'll reach the metal gates (5) that lead out of Studley Royal Deer Park and into Chinese Wood. Follow the path through the woods, ignoring the right turn across the footbridge and the ford across the River Skell that also lies to your right. Leave the woodland behind, coming out into open arable farmland, and continue north along the stony track for about two-thirds of a mile, passing **Plumpton Hall (6)** on the way. Plumpton Hall marks roughly the halfway point of this Fountains Abbey walk.

You'll come to a bungalow called **Studley Lodge (7)** on your right, with the gated entrance to Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal on your left. Continue straight ahead towards the village of Studley Roger and walk along the road through it.

After passing the **Old Post House (8)** about halfway through the village, turn left onto a public footpath and follow it directly ahead between the fields. **Walk through a metal gate (9)** to enter Studley Royal Deer Park, where a large interpretation board shows a map of the area.

Instead of following the grassy path straight ahead, turn right in the direction of Studley Hall Stables and the site of the lost Studley Hall. The map on the interpretation board makes a useful guide, as it shows the main grassy paths and hard-surfaced lanes across the deer park. Continue along the main grassy path until it splits at a fork, and take the left-hand path. A little further on you'll reach a **T-junction with another path (10)**. Turn right here and follow the path down to a bridge with parapets built from very large stone blocks. Cross the bridge and you'll soon reach a **hard-surfaced lane (11)**. Turn left and follow it towards Studley Royal House, which sits on your right.

At the **driveway leading to Studley Royal House (12)**, rather than carrying straight on along the hard-surfaced lane, take the grassy path on your right that heads diagonally across the fields. Halfway across, the path splits at a fork, and you should take the right-hand fork. When you reach the hard-surfaced lane near Chorister's House, turn right. Walk past the front of the National Trust holiday cottage called Chorister's House and then past **St Mary's Church (13)**, following the hard-surfaced lane to the gates that lead out of the deer park. Turn left and follow the path for about a third of a mile all the way back to the visitor centre and car park to finish your Fountains Abbey walk.

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THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

The map displays the Lindrick with Studley Royal CP area, centered around Studley Royal Park. A prominent red dashed line with numbered blue squares (1-13) traces a path through the park. Key landmarks include The Lake, Banqueting Hall, Temple of Piety, Octagon Tower, and the Obelisk. The map also shows the surrounding area of Mackerishaw, including the Mackerishaw Trough and the Chinese Wall. Other features include the Deer Park, Studley Royal, and the Plumptre Hall. The map includes contour lines and various symbols for buildings, water, and other geographical features.