

Churches trail: north from Beverley

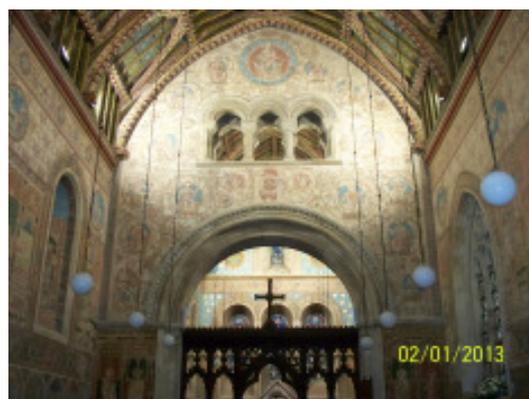
Sykes trail - part 1

A number of churches in East Yorkshire have collectively become known as 'Sykes Churches' because they have been endowed or extended by gifts from the Sykes' family over the last few centuries.

The Sykes family originally accumulated great wealth through developing new farming techniques after huge swathes of former common and public land were 'inclosed' in the 18th century. The family also diversified into industrial production and used part of their wealth to create model villages or to beautify 17 Anglican churches in East and North Yorkshire, using some of the finest architects and craftsman available nationally.

The family, which converted to Catholicism at the beginning of the 20th century, still occupy Sledmere House which boasts an oasis of beautiful landscape designed by Capability Brown among the windswept Wolds. Sledmere is an excellent place to break your tour with high quality catering and refreshments as well as a good shop. The grounds, house and family chapel are also well worth a visit in their own right.

Suggested route from Beverley. First stop: **St Mary's, Kirkburn**. Drive north from Hunter's Hall through North Bar and straight on over the first roundabout to the B1248, signed to York, Cherry Burton and Humber Bridge. At second roundabout veer right (signed to Bridlington & Driffield), continuing on B1248 via Etton and Lund until you join A614 at Bainton. Continue on A614, signed to Driffield and look for Kirkburn on left (signed to Norman Church), then take right hand turn (signed to Kirkburn). Church on left, park on verge. (14 miles). Excellent Norman tower and font.



Then to **St Michael's & All Angels, Garton**: continue same road to main road and turn left, then left again (signed to Norman Church) – 3 miles – and park on verge. Garton is an absolute gem – the walls are covered in Victorian recreations of mediaeval decorations with morality tales and biblical references. The work is of such significance that the Pevsner Trust decided to commemorate that diligent researcher and chronicler of wonderful architecture by paying for the walls to be cleaned as a symbol of all that he stood for.

Astounding church – the lights will come on automatically but take a few minutes to achieve full brightness. An absolute gem.

The next logical stop is **Sledmere** itself, home of the Tatton Sykes family and the parish church nearest their estate (but inaccessible from the estate itself). Continue on same road from Garton until junction: turn left, signed to Malton, then right on B1252 to Sledmere, passing enormous monument to Sir Tatton Sykes. After 5 miles you are at entrance to **Sledmere House** (highly recommended for visit to house and/or grounds). **The Triton Inn**, just before estate entrance, is highly recommended for lunches (12-2), as are tea rooms in Sledmere estate itself.



Entrance to **St Mary's** church is via large iron gates beyond estate entrance on left, opposite smaller Tatton Sykes monuments on right. Careful parking is required here to be clear of corner.



Continue on same road to Kirkby Grendalythe (2 miles) – turn right (signed for Bardale and Thixendale) and park in gravelled area on left by village pond. **St Mary's, Fimber** Church is on hilltop above you – steep walk along road and up to left to get to lych gate. Small but very tall church, somewhat overshadowed when trees are in leaf.

If you continue on this road and then turn right at next crossroads (signed) to **St Mary's, Thixendale** you travel along a highly scenic valley to another Sykes' diorama, with Church, vicarage and school forming a pleasing scene. Then follow signs to Fridaythorpe, Wetwang and Driffield (A166). **St Mary's, Fridaythorpe** and **St Nicholas', Wetwang** are also Sykes churches. Then at Wetwang you can follow signs (right) back to Beverley (15 miles) along a wonderful road for driving.