



Circular Walk 3: Around Monks Gate

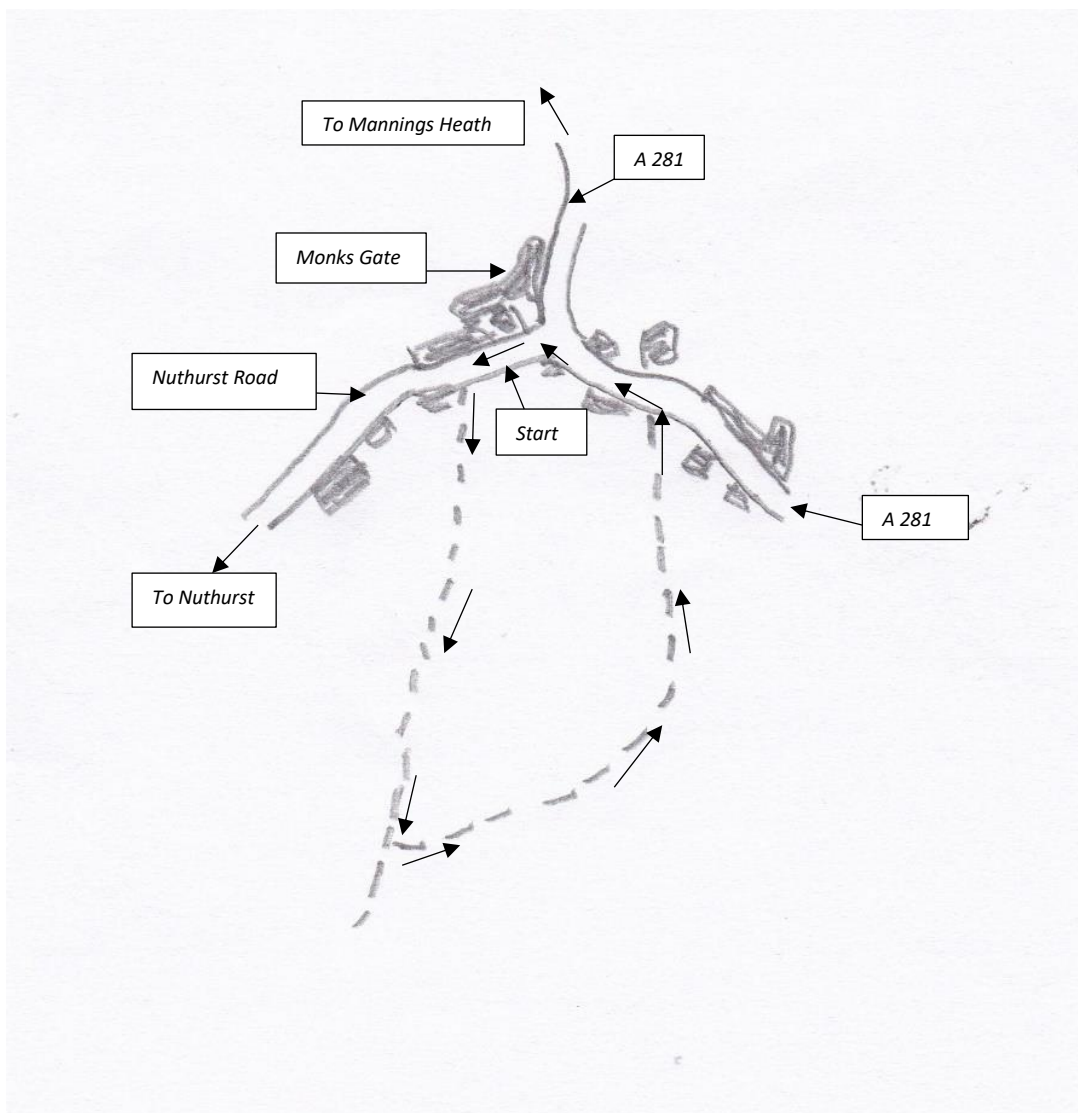
Distance: about 2.0 miles

Time: about 1 hour

Map: OS Explorer Map OL 34

Starting Point: Nuthurst Road, Monks Gate

Grid Reference: 275 203



A fairly easy walk with some gentle slopes through arable fields and woods. Parts of the walk can be muddy after rain.

- 1) From the A281 turn right in Monks Gate into Nuthurst Road. Park safely on Nuthurst Road near to, but not in, Fieldgate Close. Walk towards Nuthurst. After a short distance find a footpath sign on the left opposite "Leacroft". To the left of the footpath is a pond and surrounding area which is a nature reserve and "local green space" protected from development in the Parish Council's Neighbourhood Plan. A little further on to the left is a development site allocated in the Neighbourhood Plan for 10 new houses including some small semi-detached houses and bungalows.
- 2) Enter the large arable field and walk straight ahead, hugging the hedgerow and large oak and ash trees on the right. About halfway along the field walk straight on, ignoring the footpath sign on the right which goes in the same direction through the hedgerow and trees as this is pretty overgrown.
- 3) At the end of the field, turn right and after a short distance turn sharp left going downhill. On the right is some scrubland with bushes and many wildflowers. How many different flowers can you find? Enter the wood which is awash with bluebells in the Spring. At the foot of the hill cross the stream using the planks (careful: slippery when wet) and walk uphill. Keep going ahead and then walk downhill under a stand of dark holly trees.
- 4) At the footpath sign near the bottom of the hill, turn left and keep straight ahead, ignoring the path to the right. What purpose do the fallen dead trees and branches serve? Who or what depends on them? Note how the woodland has changed into coppiced hazel which was used for fencing and firewood in the past. Notice also the undergrowth of bracken. Towards the end of the wood, you can see the remains of children's wooden bivouac.
- 5) Leave the wood and enter a small field edged with blackberries (brambles). Enter a second field and go straight ahead. Look up for any buzzards. You may hear them mewing. Walk through a coniferous wood and straight across past a pile of limestone chippings. In the summer these chippings are being colonised by tall, yellow flowered mullein plants. In the past mullein had many uses – some medicinal for coughs and colds, but also as hair dye and rubbed onto the cheeks as rouge. Please don't be tempted to use it though.
- 6) Walk uphill with a large field on the left (cornfield in July 2017). Notice the huge oak trees bordering the field on the right. They support a large number of insects and birds and are very precious. Continue straight ahead, noticing the houses at Monks gate on the A281 to your right. On your left you can see the ridgeway, part of the Downs Link, between Monks Gate and Sedgwick House.
- 7) Enter the scrubland bordering the A281 and cross the high stile onto the pedestrian path alongside the A281. Turn left (take care as the A281 is very fast and busy) and walk about 150 yards, then turn left into Nuthurst Road and back to your car.