



Circular Walk 7: Mannings Heath to Sedgwick and back (2)

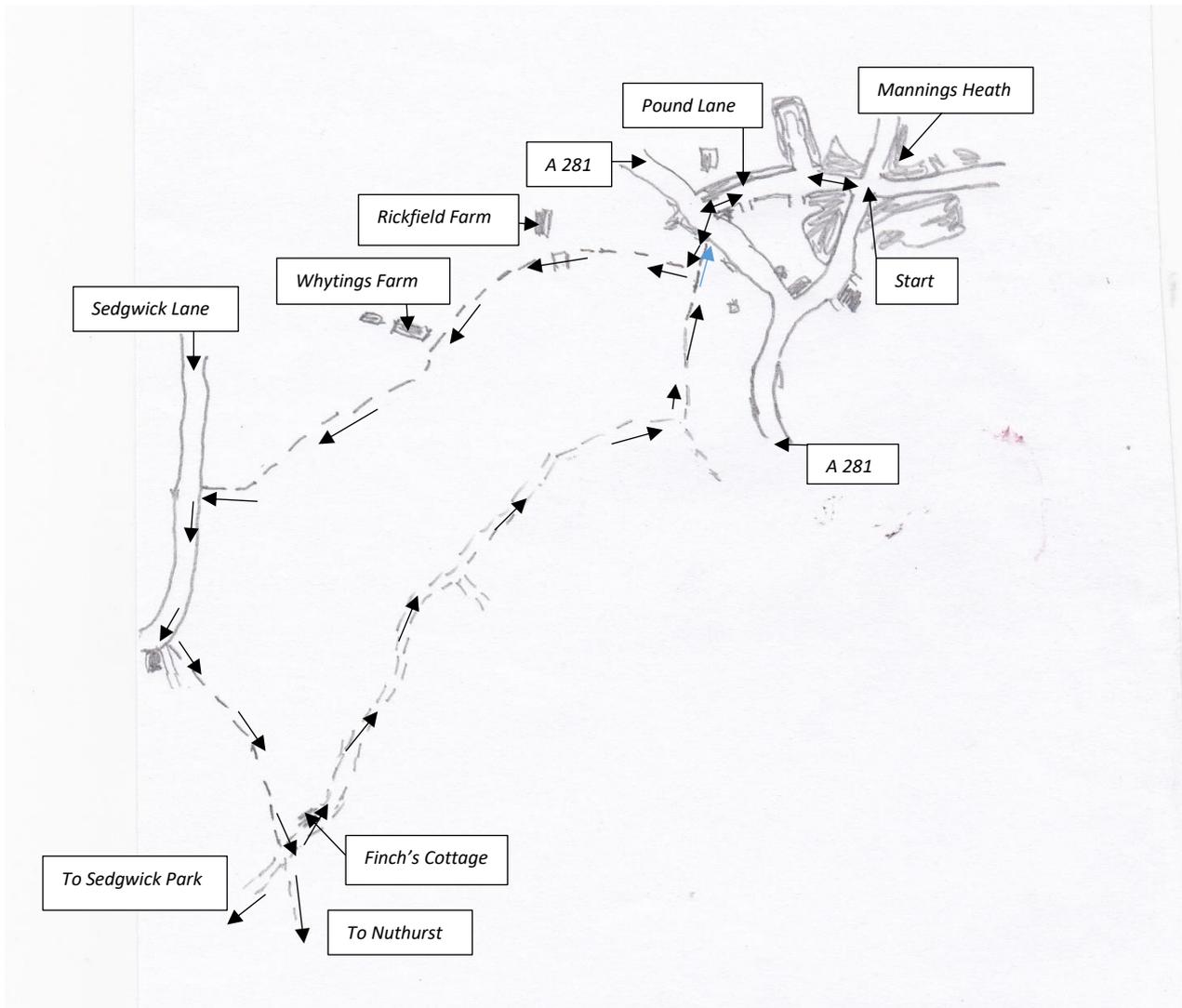
Distance: about 3.5 to 4.0 miles.

Time: about 2.0 hours.

Map: OS Explorer Map OL 34: Crawley and Horsham

Starting Point: Mannings Heath Village Shop

Grid Reference: 288 204



Fairly easy walk with some gentle slopes.

1. Walk down Pound Lane to the A 281 Brighton Road. Very carefully cross the busy A281 and then take the footpath almost opposite the Dun Horse Inn. On your left is a site allocated for development of 8 houses, including some semi-detached houses, in the Parish's Neighbourhood Plan. At the three way footpath sign, turn right over the stile into the field. Follow the well-worn path straight on keeping the hedge to your right. In the right hand corner of the field, go through a gap in the trees into another field.

2. Hug the right hand side of the field and go through the gap with the barns of Rickfield Farm on your left. Go over the wooden stile, cross a concrete track, keep the hedge on your right and after about 20 metres cross another wooden stile into a field. Keep the hedge on your right until it bends to the right. At this point go straight on and head for a stile just to the left of a large oak tree. Go over the wooden stile, cross the ditch and immediately go over another wooden stile into a field.

3. Head straight across the field towards a metal gate. Look to your right for views of the North Downs. Go through the metal gate, turn left between the barn and the midden and after about 50 metres take the footpath on the right (the footpath sign is hidden in the trees). Cross two wooden bridges over dry ditches and go through a metal gate into a small field with barns on your right. In the right hand corner of the field, go through a metal gate and after about 10 metres go through another metal gate into another field.

4. Head diagonally across the field for a stile in the far left hand corner. Go over the stile, cross the wooden bridge and after about 10 metres turn left through a 7 barred metal gate into another field. Go towards a metal gate about 20 metres from the right corner of the field, pass through the gate and cross a wooden bridge into an area of scrub. This provides an important habitat for birds, insects and small mammals. Continue along the path. Notice the hazel plantation on the right. This is coppiced for fencing and firewood. Keep the fence on your left and when you reach a large field, turn right.

5 Hug the right hand tree line and when you reach Sedgwick Lane, turn left and walk carefully along the Lane until you reach the main, north entrance to Sedgwick House and Park. Do not walk further down the Lane but note that further on, down Broadwater Lane, is the site of Sedgwick Castle. It is not open, but dates back to the 11th Century.

6. Left of entrance to Sedgwick Park is a hidden footpath. Take it and notice the Heritage Trail 2003 information post on right (Alice in Wonderland in Sedgwick Park), before climbing stile. If you have children with you, ask if the hedge on your left is old or new and how they know. Note the open field with large oak trees on the right.

7. Go over stile and little footbridge over stream into woodland (bluebells in the Spring). Notice the old coppicing of hazel where stems were cut at the bottom to yield stout posts for fences. Squirrels and dormice like hazel nuts (cob nuts).

8. Exit wood over stile. Walk through small triangular field and over another stile, by a stand of conifers. Walk through some mixed woodland. Keep going straight ahead to emerge onto a stoned trackway by a four way footpath sign. Turn left. (Straight ahead leads down to Nuthurst village and right leads to Sedgwick Park).

9. Walk past two white cottages on left. You are now on the ridge and entering Finches Wood. Through the trees on the right, on a clear day, you may glimpse the sea through Goring Gap. The wood is largely coniferous, which is not a native species and does not support the wealth of wildlife that an old mixed deciduous woodland will. There are many fir cones on the ground which are ideal for collecting to make Christmas decorations

10. Walk straight on and go round the little pond that has formed in the middle of the footpath. Ignore any little paths on the left and right. When you pass the electricity pylons, look to the right to see the South Downs. A little further on notice an elevated wooden structure on the right which is probably a hide for shooting. At a crossroads with a grassy track at the top of the hill, carry straight on down the hill. Notice the two ponds on the right and in the autumn the blackberries that have colonised the undergrowth.

11. As you leave the plantation, walk the planks over the ditch. At the three way footpath sign, turn left (right leads to Monks Gate) and go over two stiles into a field. Keep to the left hand side of the field and in the left hand corner go over another stile and walk between two wire fences. Note the stream on the left. Go over another stile and past several fields on the right. A house called Woolmers can just be glimpsed on your right. This was once an old medieval farmhouse, one of eleven medieval houses in the Parish.

12. Cross the wooden planks over the stream and through a wooden kissing gate. At the three way footpath sign, carry straight on. You are now back on the first footpath of the walk. When you reach the A281, turn left towards the Dun Horse. Carefully cross the A281 at the Dun Horse and retrace your steps along Pound Lane, back to Mannings Heath Village Shop.