



## Circular Walk 9: Nuthurst to Monks Gate and back

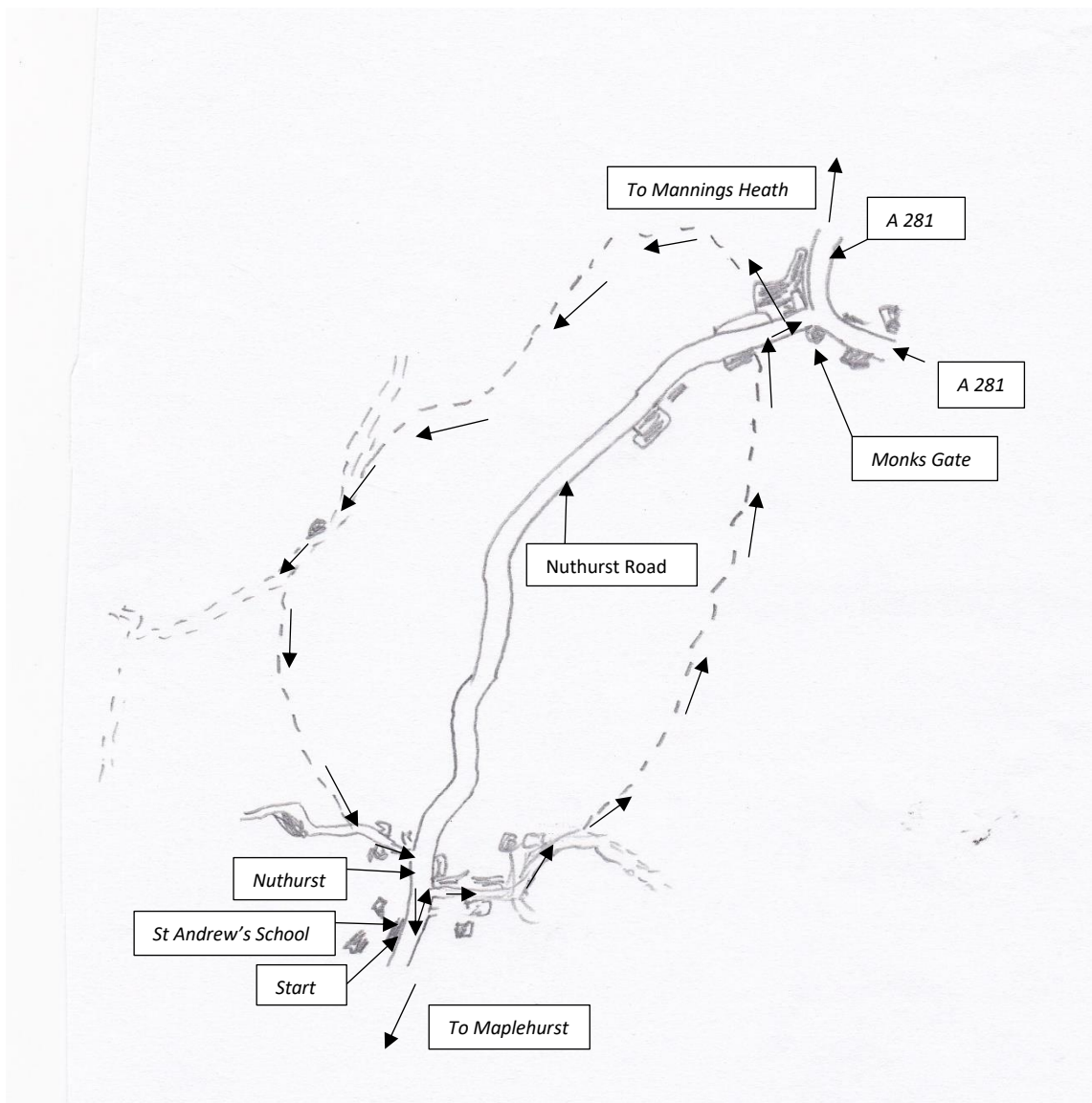
Distance: about 3.0 to 3.5 miles.

Time: about 2.0 hours.

Map: OS Explorer Map OL 34: Crawley and Horsham

Starting Point: Parking layby, St Andrew's School, Nuthurst

Grid Reference: 261 192



A fairly easy walk with some longish gentle slopes through fields and varied woods and along the ridgeway. Parts of the walk on the bridleways can be muddy after rain.

1) Park in the layby outside St Andrew's School, Nuthurst Street, Nuthurst. Walk on the pedestrian path towards Monks Gate, past St Andrew's Church and carefully cross Nuthurst Street at the Rectory and take the tarmac public bridleway past the disused Architectural Plants site. Note the wide variety of exotic plants and trees along this part of the walk.

2) Continue to follow the tarmac bridleway, ignore a footpath on the right and at the fork in the bridleway take the right hand branch past some old outbuildings. Immediately past these buildings, leave the bridleway and take the footpath on the left with a wood on the right and an open field on the left.

3) At the junction of footpaths, go straight on along the edge of the mixed wood. Notice the coppiced beech, birch and hazel. Here if you are lucky you may see a great spotted woodpecker. In the autumn look out for a variety of fungi growing in the ground and on dead wood – but please do not touch them. At the next junction of tracks, bear left and after about 10 metres take the right fork through the woods. At the next 3 way footpath junction, keep straight on up a gentle incline through a stand of holly bushes and oak trees and then mainly birch trees.

4) At the next footpath sign go straight ahead (do not turn left) and follow the path downhill and use the plank bridge to cross a little stream. Notice the holes in the bank of the stream – who do you think lives there? Bear right up a gentle incline. Look out for deer foot prints on the path and for deer roaming in the woods. Continue past some scrub on the left which is an important foraging spot birds and insects.

5) Continue up the hill and at the point where a track crosses, ignore the footpath straight ahead as it is likely to be overgrown. Instead turn right and then immediately left along the edge of the field. Look out for buzzards circling in the sky. When you reach the end of the field carry straight on. On the right there is another field on the edge on Monks Gate which is included as a development site for 10 houses, including some small semi-detached houses and bungalows, in the Parish's Neighbourhood Plan. Then just before you reach Nuthurst Road on the left, there is a pond and surrounding area which is protected as a nature reserve and green space in the Neighbourhood plan.

6) When you reach Nuthurst Road, carefully cross the road and turn right and then just after the white house on the left, turn left down the shingle track. Look out for butterflies on the buddleia. At the end of the track turn right through a metal gate and follow the bridleway through a stand of mixed trees and shrubbery. Take care you don't trip on the exposed tree roots. Notice the ditch on the left which is an indication that this was an ancient routeway.

7) Continue gently uphill and at the footpath sign, turn left (the footpath on the right leads to Mannings Heath) and walk the planks over the ditch. Continue gently uphill through the stand of trees with fields right and left and then enter the non-native coniferous plantation. Notice the two small ponds on the left and in the autumn the blackberries in the undergrowth. There are many fir cones on the ground which are ideal for collecting to make Christmas decorations. Then notice how the sycamore saplings are beginning to colonise the undergrowth.

8) At a crossroads with a grassy track at the top of the hill, go straight ahead. On the left, notice an elevated wooden structure which is probably a hide for shooting. When you pass under the

electricity wires, look to the left to see the South Downs. Keep going straight on, ignoring any little paths. Notice how the hazel is now colonising the undergrowth. Go round a little pond that has formed in the bridleway and as you come out of the conifer plantation, carry straight on through a deciduous wood towards a pair of cottages. Look at the tile patterns on the roofs and walls and the matching patterns on the new extension to the first cottage.

9) About 100 metres past the cottages, take the footpath on the left towards Nuthurst (the bridleway going straight on leads to Sedgwick Park). Walk through the woodland. Note the undergrowth can be a bit overgrown in the autumn and take care with exposed tree roots. Cross a track and continue straight ahead. Hug the edge of the field keeping the barbed wire fence on your left. Look to the left – how many thousand trees can you see in the distance? Continue through a wooden kissing gate and then straight ahead through a 6 barred metal gate into another field.

10) Walk downhill on the right hand side of the field and notice the South Downs in the distance on the right. In the right hand corner of the field, go through another 6 barred metal gate into another field. Can you spot the spire of St Andrew's Church ahead? Again continue down the right side of the field and through a wooden kissing gate in the corner. Hug the right hand side of the next field and near the corner go through a gap in the trees/hedge into the next field.

11) Again keep to the right hand side and in the right hand corner go through a kissing gate onto a tarmac track. Turn left and follow the track to Nuthurst Road opposite the "Black Horse" Inn. Turn right and walk along Nuthurst Road. Take care until you reach the pavement as the road can be quite busy. Walk past St. Andrew's Church on the right and notice under the lych gate, the names of all the parishioners who served and died during the two world wars. Walk back to the layby where your car is parked.