

Circular Walks in the Parish of Nuthurst

Welcome to our Parish Walks

There are huge benefits from taking “time out” from our busy lives to walk.

- Getting to enjoy and find out more about our local landscape
- Keeping fit and relaxed

The Parish is still remarkably rural and attractive and has lots of ancient public footpaths and bridleways.

If you like map reading, then you can find these and our circular walks on **OS Explorer Map 134, Crawley and Horsham**.

If you don't, then these notes are detailed and should keep you on the right route. The notes also tell you a little bit about what you'll see on the way.

Please help our local farmers.

Take care to stay on the public paths, shut gates and keep dogs on a lead. Thank you.

Circular Walk 1 Mannings Heath, Sedgewick and back

There are two options, both start and finish at the Village Shop in Mannings Heath;

1a is the **shorter walk**. Distance 3 miles .Time about one and a half hours. No hills, just a gentle uphill stretch along Sedgewick Lane, some stiles.

1b is the **longer walk**. Distance 4 to 5 miles, with just gentle slopes. Scenery is more varied and it is worth the extra time and effort.

Route 1a the shorter walk

1. From shop, walk along Pound Lane to the A281 and cross just before the Elite Garage. Walk along the tarmac path towards Horsham.
2. Just beyond the entrance to Rickfield Farm, turn left down a public bridleway. *This passes through mixed woodland. The Parish largely sits on Wealden Clay, a poor soil and in times past, much of the landscape would have looked like this. Big trees, especially oaks, gave timber for buildings and ships, whilst under-cuttings kept people warm, or could be made into fences. Does this east west bridleway look like an early “road” , one that never got tarmacked? Most of our modern roads run north south.*
3. Cross a stream, en route for a gate that leads into a field. *This, like much of the land has been cleared of trees for pasture, not for growing crops. Look right. You will see St. Mary's Church, with its very appropriate wooden spire.*

4. Continue to hug the hedge and think how old it might be. *The oldest hedges have lots of different species. Look particularly to see nut bushes or trees in these hedges. They used to supply free pig food and animals would be brought from the coastal strip to fatten them up in Nuthurst.*
5. At the corner of the field, go through gate into a small finger of woodland. Cross another stream. Emerge onto stoned track. Walk to Sedgewick Lane
6. Turn left along Sedgewick Lane, past Whytings Stud Farm and Goldfinch Cottage on the right. Just past Bull's Farm, turn left at the footpath sign and cross a stile, into a field. Follow its left hand boundary.
7. Keep vigilant now! Approx half way along this boundary, find a hidden footpath sign on your left. Follow it, heading diagonally across field. *Again, notice the nut trees and look out for grazing deer.*
8. At far side of the field, cross one of the many streams that drain this terrain and go into the next field. Head diagonally, towards a wide metal gate. Immediately turn right to reach a stile. *If you look ahead you can see the North Downs.*
9. The next bit is tricky! Whytings Farm is on your left; walk towards its right hand barn. In the corner of the field is a gap in the hedgerow and a footpath sign!
10. Turn right for ten metres and cross another stile. Here, you will find another sign, pointing you left. Keep the barns on your left. Climb over one more stile and walk across two planks over a meandering stream. Immediately, there is another sign. Aim towards opposite hedge, where twenty metres away you will find yet another sign
11. Go through a metal gate. *Notice all the piles of wood. West Sussex is the most heavily wooded county in England.* Head diagonally across a field, almost in line with some chimney stacks.
12. Cross two stiles into the next field and head for the space between some barns and caravans. Climb another stile. Cross the track running from farm to barn. *Rickfield Farm, has stood here since medieval times and was once part of St. Leonards Forest.*
13. After crossing the track, climb another stile and head straight on. This can be a muddy section if the cows are about! Further on, under an oak tree follow sign. Ignore more obvious track made by sheep. Turn left after climbing stile and follow path until it meets the A281. Facing you are the Old Post House and Heath Cottage. *The latter reminds us that the Parish has some outcrops of Tunbridge Wells sandstone and this supported heathland in the past.*
14. Carefully cross the A218. Turn left towards the Dun Horse Pub. Enter Pound Lane, retracing your steps, past the modern Whytings, and back to the village shop where, if you wish, you can sit and enjoy a coffee and cake.

Route for the longer walk, 1b

1. Follow the route for walk 1a up to number 6 but continue walking along Sedgewick Lane until you reach Sedgewick Park's North entrance. *Do not walk further down the road but*

- further on, down Broadwater Lane is the site of Sedgewick Castle. It is not open, but dates back to the 11th. Century. (Thought! Did the pigs come from farms in Broadwater?)*
2. Left of entrance is a hidden footpath. Take it and notice Heritage Trail info post on right, before climbing stile. *If you have children with you, ask if the hedge on your left is old or new and how they know.*
 3. Go over stile and stream into woodland. *Notice the old coppicing where stems were cut at the bottom to yield stout posts for fences .*
 4. Exit wood over stile. Walk on and over another stile, by conifers. Walk through some mixed woodland. Go straight ahead to emerge onto a stoned trackway by a three pronged footpath sign. Turn left. (Straight ahead leads to Nuthurst village.)
 5. Walk past two white houses on left. *You are now on the ridge and in 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 woodland will.*
 6. Walk downhill and at the footpath sign with three fingers, turn left over two stiles and keep to the lefthand side of the field.
 7. Go over stile and along a fenced off path. *A house called Woolmers is on your right. This was once an old medieval farmhouse, one of eleven medieval houses in the Parish.*
 8. Pass through a kissing gate. *Note the big oak trees along this stretch. They are rich in wildlife and grow especially well on our Wealden clay.*
 9. Walk straight on but to your left is the stile leading to Rickfields Farm, another medieval building. You will come out onto the A281, opposite Heath Cottage, which reminds us why Mannings Heath is so named. *Part of the heathland was presumably here, on an outcrop of Tunbridge Wells sandstone.*
 10. Turn left towards the Dun Horse. Cross carefully and retrace your steps along Pound Lane, back to the Village Shop.

Submitted by Carol Hyde of Mannings Heath – 9th January, 2009