

Circular Walks in the Parish Number 3

Around Nuthurst (approx 3 miles)

This walk follows bridleways and can be muddy after rain. However, it is a lovely walk in the spring when the wild daffodils are out and later, when bluebells carpet the woods.

1. Drive through the village of Nuthurst towards Maplehurst, past St Andrews School on the right and up the hill. At the top there is a parking place on your right, opposite Woodlands Farm, but please do not block the gate into the field.
2. Walk back down the hill and just before the white cottage, turn left onto a bridleway. Follow the well worn path that hugs the right hand side of the field. *Listen to the sounds around you. I heard a lot of birdsong in March.*
3. Go through the gate and follow the path to the left. In May, this wood should be covered with bluebells. *If you've read the notes for walk 2, you'll know that the bulbs used to be boiled into glue and used to stick feathers into arrows. Look at the coppicing of trees to your right. Nearby, you'll find a notice explaining it.*
4. Bear left through the gate into a field for a very short way, then go through another gate to re-enter the wood. Turn left and cross a stream into another field. Hug the right hand side, go through a gate and when you come to a three way junction, go straight ahead.
5. Follow the right hand side of the field. *Look at the dark green conifer trees to your left. They are probably a hundred years old and planted when Gaveston Hall was built. It was one of several large houses fashionably built within parklands in the parish, towards the end of the Victorian era. Later, it became a school and is now an outdoors activity centre. Always look at telephone wires to see if there's a bird of prey, such as a kestrel, sitting surveying the field for small mammals for lunch or tea. There are an increasing number of buzzards around. These are big birds, often soaring high on the thermals. Up there, they can see prey in the fields over a distance of three miles. They can be mercilessly mobbed by crows and will usually give up and go! It is interesting to watch.*
6. Bear right and go through another gate into a field. Hug the right hand edge, go through another gate and cross a stream. *You could play*

pooh sticks here. Follow the path onwards and cross the racing gallops, heading towards the farm.

7. Turn right along a tarmac path, passing the stables and a small pond. *In March, small wild daffodils, called Lenten Lilies up north, were flowering in various places along this walk. They seem much nicer than the large King Alfreds I planted at home! On your right, there are a number of fine oak trees in the field. These are precious trees as they support a myriad of insects and birds. In the woodpiles, look out for rabbits! I've never seen any hares but you may be luckier. Did you know that only the females " box" ?*
8. Cross the gallop and go straight ahead, despite the sign post not being immediately apparent. Enter the woodland. *Can you spot lichens and moss here and do you know the differences between them? I'm afraid I only know that lichens are a sign of good air quality and a healthy environment! Go over the bridge and up the hill. You might look out to see if the farmer has planted a field of blue flax around here.*
9. At the crossroad, turn right and admire the views of the Downs to your right. *Can you imagine what it must have been like as an Iron Age tribesman living up there in winter, hunkered up against Chanctonbury Ring?*
10. Go over the stile and hug the left hand side of the field. On entering woodland, turn right downhill and use the footbridge to cross the stream. *These streams provide a valuable function, draining the fields of surplus water but also providing drinking water for the deer and badgers and other creatures who live in this part of our parish.*
11. Walk uphill, across a field and turn right towards the Church of St. Andrew. Go over another stream and out into the graveyard. *This site has been sacred for a thousand years but a cornerstone in the building tells you this Church is Victorian. Pause under the lych gate to see the names of the servicemen who died in the First World War. It is a distressing number. The lych gate was used at burials to shelter the coffin before the clergyman arrived and the name is derived from the Old English word "lic", which means" body "*
12. Turn right and walk past the church school and up the hill to your parked car. Please take care as there is only a limited pavement and the road can be very busy in term time just before school opens and closes to pupils.