

CUT OUT  
& KEEP

Field crickets, once thought to be extinct, have been found at Lord's Piece seen here from the car park



Photo: Ian Lancaster

# Walk on the wild side

Take a circular stroll through the heathland of Lord's Piece to Burton Park, Barlavington and Sutton and you may be lucky enough to hear the chirping of field crickets brought back from the brink of extinction

WORDS: Ian Lancaster, walks coordinator, Friends of The South Downs



Ian Lancaster

'We are blessed with several areas of rare ancient lowland heaths in Surrey and West Sussex, and I love walking on them. Lord's Piece – a hidden walk near the South Downs

Way in the hamlet of Coates in Fittleworth – is one my favourites. The views across it to the South Downs in the distance are simply stunning in the early morning light of a sunny day. It was purchased by the Barlavington Estate in the 1950s, restored by clearing the World War II conifer plantation, and opened up as access land for the public to enjoy.

'Previously thought to be extinct, the field cricket was later discovered on the site and has since been reintroduced to other heathlands through a project

led by the RSPB. However, this 2cm long flightless insect still remains one of our rarest invertebrates. They over-winter in sandy burrows and in May one may be lucky enough to hear the sound males calling to attract a mate.'



Photo: Graham Jeffery

The Flightless Cricket Club

## Brought to you by Friends of The South Downs

Membership starts from £15 per person, and grants you access to a comprehensive programme of guided walks and strolls. Non-members can take part in taster sessions. 01798 875073 (Monday to Wednesday 9am to 1pm). [friendsofthesouthdowns.org.uk](http://friendsofthesouthdowns.org.uk)



COMPASS POINTS

**Location:** Area between Fittleworth and Duncton, West Sussex.

**Distance:** 6.7 miles

**Terrain:** Mostly level ground with two climbs of 30m. Bridleways may be muddy in winter. Ascent 651ft.

**Where to park:** Lord's Piece lower car park GR: SU992170

**Sat nav:** RH20 1PZ, will take you to the other car park on the northwest side of the common.

**What3Words:** cans.develop.consults

**Map:** OS Explorer OL10, Arundel & Pulborough

**Dog-friendly:** Yes - on leads through reserves.

**Refreshments:** White Horse pub in Sutton.



THE WALK

**1** Exit by the notice board and take the path to the right of the sycamore towards the ridge. Soon after it bends left towards the valley, turn right at a crossing path to climb to the ridge top and another crossing path. Turn left past a huge log, taking a moment to admire the view towards the Downs.

**2** Leave the common through a gate and take the track half left slightly downhill that soon merges onto a lane. 50m after a church on your left, turn left to pass Coates house (the finger post is hidden in the hedge). Keep left at a metal gate and go round the bottom of a grassy knoll, heading for a telegraph pole at the edge of a wood. Do not enter the wood but turn half right to follow a wide track.

**3** In 500m, a finger post points down into a wood. After climbing out of the wood, turn left just beyond power lines. The path winds its way across a field to a road. Turn right to a nearby junction and continue towards Duncton past a large pond. On the far side, turn left to follow a firm track through a nature reserve.

**4** Emerging from the wood by an ancient chestnut tree, keep ahead along a drive. Ignore other paths as it bears left after a small church, but where it turns right again go straight ahead through an iron gate by a pond. Cross a field and head uphill with a wood on the right.

**5** Turn left at the top and pause on reaching a road beyond metal gate. On the left is a gap in the hedge with a stile. Cross the field diagonally to the near corner of a wood and follow its edge to cross a narrow lane and a stream, soon emerging onto a drive which then joins a road leading to Barlavington church.

**6** The path goes through the churchyard which is a good place to have refreshments while admiring the view of the nearby Downs. Exit the churchyard at the far corner and walk around the right-hand side of some barns. Turn right in front of the last one and, where that track bears left, continue ahead down a slope. After the path goes through a gap in the hedge aim just to the right of an overgrown pond to cross a stream.

**7** The path climbs to reach a large open field. Turn left towards a house soon reaching a road. This is the village of Sutton. Turn right onto the road and then left by a red telephone box. After a few metres, emerge into a field and follow the path across two fields, heading for a ruined oak tree in a third. Go through the hedge and turn left onto a bridleway that runs for about 1,500m before reaching another road.

**8** Turn left and either walk back to the car park directly or make your way across the common by turning right in just a few metres. The path winds its way uphill to a crossing track where you go left. The car park soon comes into view. ♦

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