

STAGE  
**8**

# Hesworth Common, Lord's Piece and Burton Park

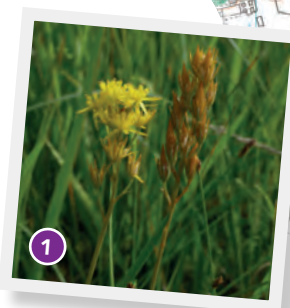
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**Hesworth Common, owned and managed by Fittleworth Parish Council, is home to 100 acres of woodland and pockets of heathland with beautiful views of the South Downs.**

In the wet area of heath at the south-eastern corner of the common, look out for the rare **bog asphodel** **1** with its yellow star-like flowers (June to August). Once thought to cause brittle bones in grazing livestock its Latin name *ossifragum* means 'bone-breaker', but this is really due to low calcium levels in the acidic soils where it grows. Wet heath like this can easily dry up, becoming dominated by scrub and purple moor grass, so scraping areas back to the soil and encouraging ground to remain boggy is very important for the bog asphodel and many other wet-loving species.

Turning south along the main road at the Swan Inn in **Lower Fittleworth** look out for a view of **Fittleworth Mill**, once the subject of a JMW Turner painting which can now be seen at the Tate Gallery. The Rother has many old water mills along the river, remnants of a more industrial past. Both bridges here are Grade II listed and are classified as multi-span bridges, designed to replace fords and used for pedestrians and other historical traffic to cross.

If you look over the bridge here it is possible to see sea trout as they return from the sea to the river where they hatched to spawn. Sea trout can enter the river at any time from April onwards, but most will arrive in the summer and early autumn (June to October) and wait in deep pools or in areas of the river with good overhead tree cover until it is time to spawn.



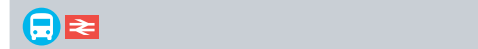
**1**



- Cattle grazing, check site signage.
- Ground-nesting birds: March to mid Sept.

**PUBLIC TRANSPORT**

- Start: Take Stagecoach Bus 1 from Worthing or Midhurst to Fittleworth, A283
- Compass Bus Flexible Route 99 must be booked for pick up at Heath End, A285 and onward travel to Petworth or Chichester. Call 01903 690025 [compass-travel.co.uk](http://compass-travel.co.uk)



Once the Serpent Trail crosses the Rother it gradually starts to head in a westerly direction again. To the south of the Trail, **Lord's Piece** is owned and managed by Barlavington Estate and home to a small population of the **field cricket** **2**, a rare and threatened invertebrate thought to be extinct in Britain but rediscovered here in the 1970s. This is one of only six populations in the UK and is now the subject of a "Back from the Brink" project led by the RSPB.

Continuing on the Trail you pass **Burton and Chingford Ponds** Local Nature Reserve. The reserve, managed by Sussex Wildlife Trust, has the perfect habitat for a variety of bats, dragonflies and wildfowl. Keep an eye out for the Emperor dragonfly and possibly even a bittern or woodcock. If you are really lucky you may see the migrant bird of prey the hobby catching a dragonfly on the wing – the original fast food.



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**2**

