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RICHARD WILLIAMSON: Country Walk: Lodsworth and Bexleyhill Commons



This walk is nearly four miles (6km) of woods, meadows, and lanes, with wonderful views.

Limited parking roadside by gritting box at SU927240, Leggat Hill, on road between Lodsworth and Lickfold.

Cross road west following power cables into meadow, with Blackdown Hill to the north, to Snapelands Copse, a sweet chestnut coppice with a rich ground flora of bluebells and stitchwort. Keep right-handed through little iron gate, noting badger soil pits and holes made in the wire netting. Listen for great spotted woodpecker – drumming on my visit. A nuthatch also cursed me, while a great tit sang his simple see-saw song. Enjoy the fine view south down the distant Arun valley with Amberley Mount on the left and Arundel's hills to the right.

The bridleway enters the woods. Sadly the lake of bluebells that were there on my visit will almost certainly be over by the time of yours. After 150 yards turn right, downhill, into a dark wood of holly trees and rhododendrons, towering beeches, birches, alders, oaks, and seeping mires. This is Bexley Hill Common.

At the bottom, two houses – enjoy the calls of both raven and buzzard.

A fingerpost points the bridleway right, where you pass a broken old oak with one arm missing, and, leaving the Serpent Trail, continue on downhill. Another spring seeps out, making the path squishy, but then you come to a strong scent of turpentine because the path passes through a [plantation](#) of Douglas firs being felled.

Ignore the left turn to Knights' Copse but soon turn right on blue arrow eastward back to the Lickfold road. Turn left along it for 150 yards, then dive right on fingerpost into meadow. This is the meadow which when I was there was a cloth of gold buttercups with the heraldic white horse standing patiently waiting, as my photograph shows.

Skirt Close copse, now an old plantation of Turkey oaks and bird cherries.

The footpath crosses a footbridge and a stile and then turns left along a hawthorn hedge, reaching the wood again, oddly called Dirty Bridge Field.

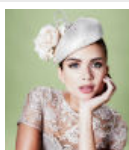
Turn right down track, reaching a very clean little bridge over a stream. Stay south-westward through meadow ringed by great oaks, a wonderful sight. When you come to the road again, turn left. Make a circling diversion at Brickyard Cottages by turning left into the woods. On my visit I found here the footprints of [muntjac](#) deer and a few plants of celery-leaved buttercup.

As I left this southern fragment of Lodsworth Common open access woodland, I thought a return visit in late July should reveal sightings of the white admiral butterfly which ought to be flying in the shades, having been reared on all the honeysuckle growing in these woods.

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