

Map 2

Open Access at Butser Hill

Making the most of open access



Open access land offers walkers an exciting opportunity to explore some of the spectacular South Downs landscape from a much closer perspective than ever before!



This map will help you get more from a visit to **Butser Hill** whilst enjoying it in harmony with the site's wildlife and its management. There is a detailed map on the overleaf that shows the site, a self-guided walk, and additional information that will help you better enjoy what it has to offer. Please read the information on the back of this leaflet and most importantly, enjoy your visit!

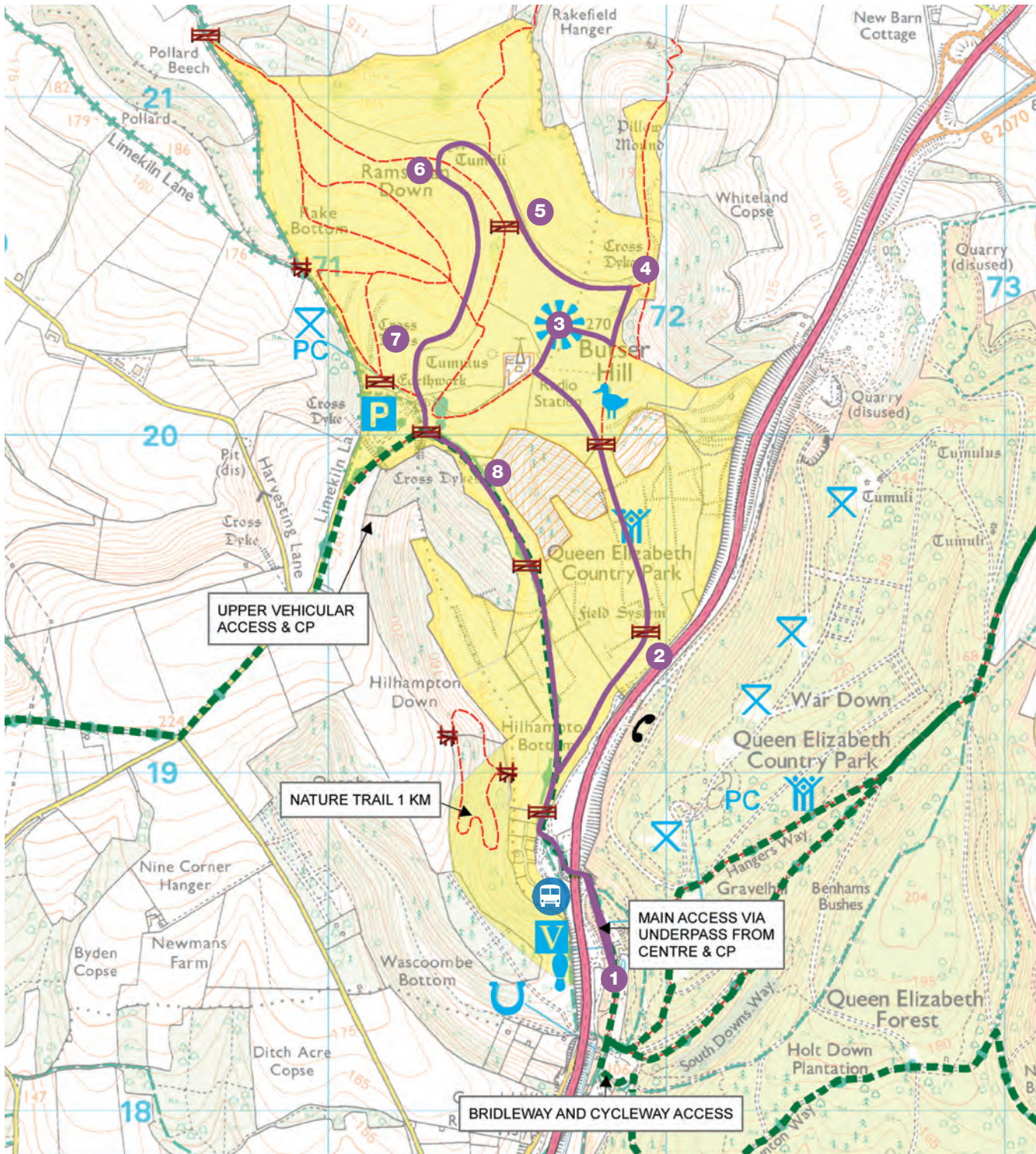
Spread over three hills, the 1400 acres of the Queen Elizabeth Country Park incorporates extensive woodlands to the east of the A3 road and a substantial area of chalk grass Downland to the west, highlighted on our map, rising to the 270 metre summit of Butser Hill, the highest point on the South Downs. Much of this open area is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest and a National Nature Reserve, sustaining a rich variety of wildlife including 30 species of butterfly.



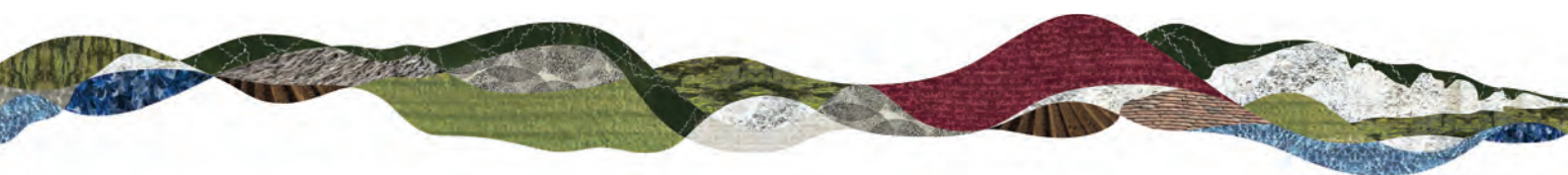
South Downs Society
Protecting the Beauty of the Downs

SOUTH DOWNS
NATIONAL PARK





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Route instructions



A circular walk from the Queen Elizabeth Country Park Visitors Centre up to and around the top of Butser Hill the highest point on the South Downs chalk ridge. There is one steepish climb and a steep descent mostly on grass. Majestic downland landscape with exceptional views. Sensible footwear recommended.

Distance: 6 km/3¾ miles

Time: 2¾ hrs

Total ascent: 215m/705 ft

Highest point: 270m/886 ft

Map: OS Explorer 120

Start: The Queen Elizabeth Country Park Visitors Centre
SU 718185 or PO8 0QE

Stiles: 0

How to get there: Stagecoach bus 37 hourly between
Petersfield and Havant Pay and display car park at
visitors centre

Public toilets: Visitors centre

Refreshments: Visitors centre at start/finish.

- 1 From the visitors centre walk northwards through the car park and under the road bridge until you reach a South Downs Way finger post on your right. Cross the road and follow the path until you descend a short slope between trees. Go through the gate and keep right to walk parallel to the fence line making towards another gate in the distance.
- 2 Go through the gate and follow the grassy track up the hill spur. Watch out for 2 or 3 obvious breaks of slope (short steeper bits) on the path. These mark the boundaries of a patchwork of small parcels of land comprising a Celtic field system dating back over 2000 years. Go through a gate and make towards the radio tower. In front of the tower turn right aiming for the concrete triangulation pillar.
- 3 These were set up by the government from 1935 to aid in the production of more accurate maps. The metal plate in the top is for attaching a theodolite or reflector. Modern technology now replaces this system.

This is the highest point on the South Downs chalk ridge at 270m. On approaching the pillar turn right and follow a wide grassy track with the escarpment of the South Downs stretching away in front of you. The steeper scarp slope faces north across the Weald while the gentle dip slope falls away to the coastal plain and the sea beyond. Cross another track and turn left at the T-junction. Bear right at a fork and right again down a slope to reach a water trough
- 4 Before turning left here admire the view. The steep slopes opposite are the Hangers which overlook Petersfield at the head of the Western Weald. On the horizon at about 2 o'clock is the outline of Black Down the highest point in the National Park at 280m or 919 ft., the second highest hill in SE England. Follow the grassy track west along the edge of the escarpment until you reach a wooden gate.
- 5 Beyond the gate go downhill keeping the high ground to your left and the view across the Western Weald to your right. At a fork go right on a narrower path towards the fence and a wooden post marked with a red band. Do not cross the stile but turn left along a narrow path to reach a similar post. Looking uphill to the left you will see a series of 'humps'. These are the remains of Bronze Age burial mounds created some 3,000 to 4,000 years ago. Take the rough path uphill just past the end of the burial mounds to the next post hiding in the gorse.
- 6 At the top of the ridge cross the main track to find a narrow pathway running along the edge of a deep dry valley. Away to your right lies East Meon church and spread before you in the middle distance is the upper valley of the River Meon. This small stream flows north before turning west at East Meon and then south at West Meon. Turn left and follow carefully this well worn valley-side path until you reach the head of the dry valley known locally as Grandfather's Bottom. This impressive valley cuts into the chalk escarpment. It has a V-shaped profile with unusually steep slopes. It may well have been dry for 10,000 years having been formed by high snow-melt runoff over permafrost during the brief summers of the last ice age. Once past the head of the dry valley fork left uphill to a gateway.
- 7 Pass through the gate keeping to the right and then cross a tarmac drive. Refreshments may be available at the 'conical' hut. Once across the drive follow the grassy track, initially close to the fence but bear slightly left aiming for the blue topped post some 100m distant.
- 8 This marks the South Downs Way which you now follow downhill and back to the visitors centre about 1.5km away. The prominent hill ahead is Windmill Hill and in front is the busy A3 snaking its way towards Portsmouth, The Solent and the Isle of Wight. The stretches of water either side of the hill are Langstone Harbour (right) and Chichester Harbour (left).

Open access

Open access land gives you the right to explore interesting features within that parcel of land – you can choose your own route and you don't have to stick to the path!



What you can do:

- Walk
- Sightsee
- Picnic
- Bird watch
- Run
- Fly a kite

Please remember that with these rights come responsibilities. You have the legal right to explore access land but please remember that most of the areas are privately owned; they are also the home and place of work for many people. A number of sites are also nationally important because of some of the plants and animals found there. If rights of way (like footpaths or bridleways) cross the land, the legal rights still apply.

Access Land is good for dog walkers too but the South Downs landscape is also important for ground nesting birds and many important conservation grazing projects. Unless otherwise stated, dogs must be kept on a fixed lead (2 metres or less) when livestock are present and on all access land sites between March 1st and July 31st.

What you can't do:

- Cycle or horse ride (unless on an appropriate right of way)
- Drive a vehicle (unless on an appropriate right of way)
- Camp
- Light a fire
- Hang-glide or paraglide
- Use a metal detector

Please follow the Countryside Code at all times:

- Be safe plan ahead and follow any signs
- Leave gates and property as you find them
- Protect plants and animals, and take your litter home
- Keep dogs under close control
- Consider other people.

Please see www.hants.gov.uk/qecp for more information about what you can do at the Queen Elizabeth Country Park

*Walk devised and surveyed by volunteers from the **South Downs Society***

Getting there via public transport

Butser Hill. An hourly Mon to Sat bus service (Stagecoach 37) runs to Queen Elizabeth Country Park connecting to Railway stations at Havant and Petersfield. There is a 2 hourly service going into the Park Centre during summer Sundays. Please visit www.traveline.info or 0871 200 22 33

Find out more about visiting the South Downs
www.southdowns.gov.uk/gettingaround

