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## Queen Elizabeth Park and Buriton

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Distance: 9 km=5½ miles

moderate-to-easy walking

Region: Hampshire

Date written: 19-may-2014

Author: Hautboy

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Refreshments:

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Buriton, Queen Elizabeth Park café

Map: Explorer 120 (Chichester) *but the map in this guide should be sufficient*

*Problems, changes? We depend on your feedback: [feedback@fancyfreewalks.org](mailto:feedback@fancyfreewalks.org)*

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*Woodland, hills, views, nature park, village*

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### In Brief

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Queen Elizabeth Country Park is a hugely popular forest in Hampshire beside the A3 road, covering 1600 acres (600 ha), swarming in summer with excited families. So vast are the woods that within minutes you will be on a secluded path, far from the hubbub and whirl of visitors, heading for the perfect little village of Buriton where there are two pubs and a chance to laze at the pond side watching ducks a-dabbling.

There are two opportunities to take refreshment on this walk: two inns in Buriton (to enquire at the *Nest Hotel*, ring 01730-233440; for the *Five Bells* it's 01730-263584) and the Visitor's Centre in the QE park. Note that the two inns in the village don't open before 12.00. **2019 until June(?): there's a temporary marquee at the QE park during refurbishment, but all the facilities seem to be there.**

**Most of this walk runs through Forestry Commission land and certain paths may be closed at short notice. But because there are so many options, you will be able to find alternative routes easily should this happen.**



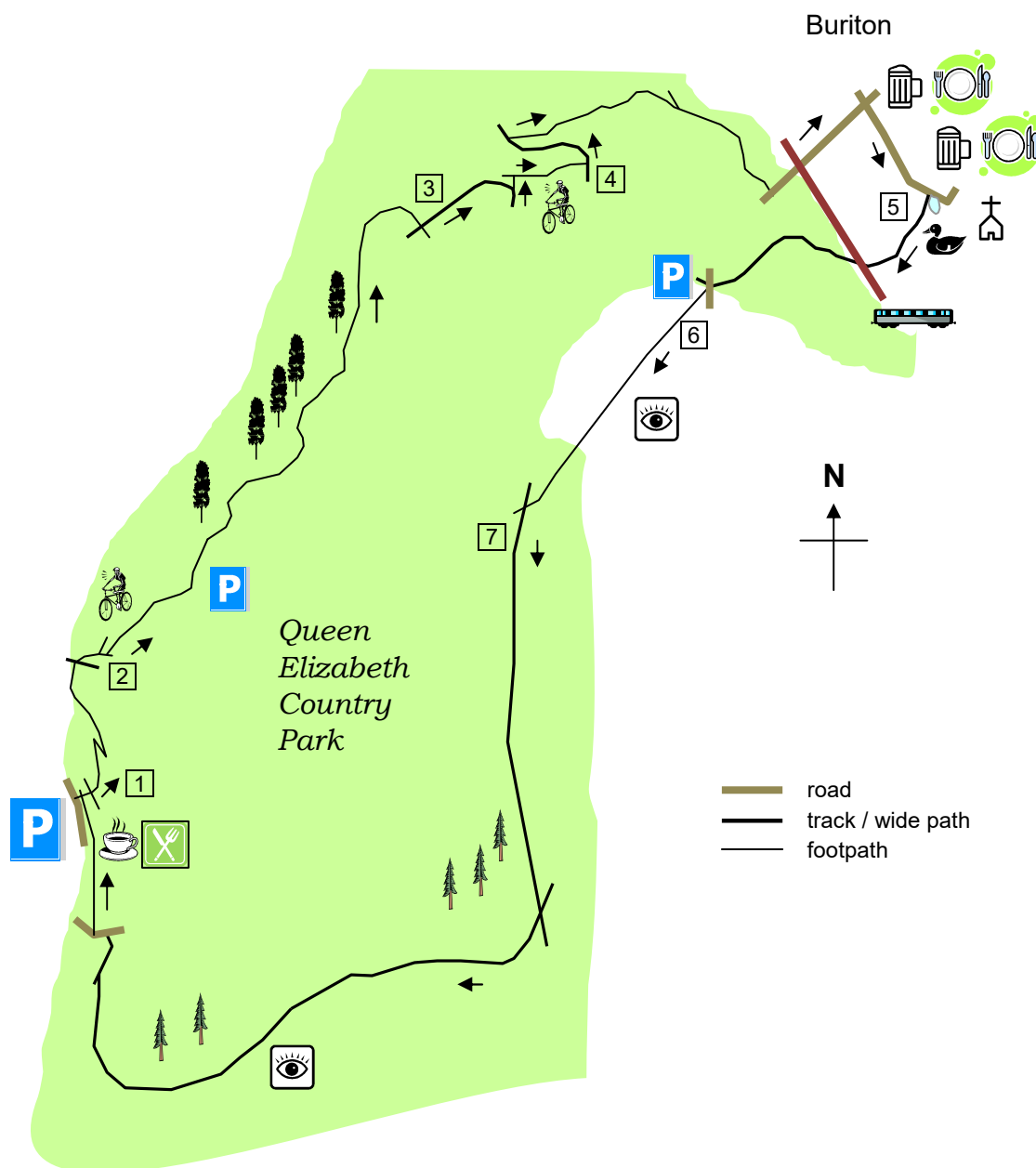
There are no nettles and **no stiles**. Any kind of strong footwear is fine. This walk is fine for your dog too. There is one short but *very steep* slope at the descent to the track before Buriton (see end of section [3](#)).

The walk begins at the car park of the **Queen Elizabeth Country Park**, Hampshire, [www.w3w.co/riverside.mice.garden](http://www.w3w.co/riverside.mice.garden), postcode **PO8 0QE** (numberplate recognition, £9 for the whole day in summer). If the main car park is full, you can park on the huge grassy space beyond the Visitor Centre or continue further to one of the additional car parks. You can also park in Buriton (also signed off the A3) either near the village pond or in the free **Halls Hill car park**, [www.w3w.co/possibly.airbrush.coffee](http://www.w3w.co/possibly.airbrush.coffee), nearest post-code **GU31 5SH**, placing your refreshment break in the café of the QE Park.

## The Walk



Before you set off, it is worth noting that the Visitor Centre has a loo and, open after 10 am, a café with displays of information on the other walks and facilities available here.



- 1 From the main car park, facing the Visitor Centre, turn **left** towards the woods (the Visitor Reception hut is on your left). Go straight ahead here, steeply uphill, curving left, with a wooden rail on your right. You will be following white chevrons and purple “footprints” for a while. Your path soon rises beside a rail on your left and hairpins right and left. After a climb, you reach a wide crossing path: continue straight over upwards with a short wooden rail on your right. In 30m, ignore a cycle trail on your left and continue upwards towards another “footprint”. Just *before* this sign, veer **left** on a clear path. You will be following this secluded woodland rider’s path for about 1½ km. It is marked most of the way by red-topped posts showing a horseshoe symbol.

2 Shortly, you pass on your right an open area with the Juniper car park. There are adventure areas left and right. Continue following the winding path straight ahead, a fraction uphill. *Since the time of writing, walkers report you have to be alert in this section as waymarkers are scarce.* Just after the last wooden hut, ignore a right fork that leads into another grassy space and stay on the level horse path, possibly marked by hoof prints. You enter an area of tall young beeches. Your path descends a little with more tall beeches and a steep drop on your left. The path rises and zigzags left-right down through more woods. It now rises to meet a wide diagonal crossing path: cross straight over on an uphill path still following the red-topped horseshoe posts. The path curves left and levels out. There is evidence of old forestry work here and, where the foliage permits, Butser Hill is visible on your left (*see the "Butser Hill" walk in this series*). Your path curves right along the contour and finally meets a wide crossing path. *On your right you will see an open space known as Brow Barrows, site of ancient burials.*

3 Turn **left** on this wide crossing path. After nearly 150m, ignore a path and a bench seat sharp right and stay on the main path as it curves right along the contour. After another 60m, the path bends right again, this time at a more definite bend. A fraction *before* the bend, **leave** the wide path by turning **left** on a very narrow path. In 10m fork **left** on a very indistinct path leading in another 10m down to a T-junction with a much clearer path. Turn **right** on this narrow but well-defined path. *Note: there is a very short steep slope at the end. (The alternative - used by some walkers - is to stay on the wide path for 500m to the next junction, turn very sharp left and go another 500m to meet the junction at the bottom of the slope.) This path is **not** part of a cycle route but you need to watch out for bikes.* The path descends gradually. Where it splits temporarily, take the **right** fork to avoid the wider loop carved out by cycles. After 200m, you come down a very short but *steep* slope onto a wide track. *It is best to shift to the left where the chunky chalk offers some natural steps. If anyone of the party is old or restricted, it might be advisable for someone to stand below and give support.* Turn **left** on the track.

4 The track curves left under trees. After around 200m you reach a distinct crosspaths. Turn **right** here, then immediately **left** at a fork (*don't miss this turn: the path is obscure!*). Stay on this chalky descending path (*care! slippery in winter*) for around 400m until you reach a T-junction. Turn **right** here and stay on this wide path for around one km, avoiding, after around 350m, a distinct path on your left that leads downhill. Finally the path runs between high banks and comes down through a wooden barrier to a tarmac lane opposite a house. Turn **left** on the lane, going under a railway bridge. The lane leads into the village of Buriton. At the cross roads, opposite you is the *Nest Hotel and Restaurant*. *The Nest is spacious inside and serves good food, plus "coffee and cakes", usually with extras written up on a chalkboard; it welcomes ramblers and pets; it is also a B&B.* Turn **right** along the road, soon passing another pub, the *Five Bells*. *The Five Bells (H&W) is more of a typical quaint country pub, also with good food, with a pretty garden at the back where al fresco eating is a delight.* Continue further along the road to the pond and the church. *For more information on the village of Buriton, see the other walk in this series "Buriton and the South Downs".*

5 After a welcome break in this pretty village turn **right**, just before the pond, onto South Lane. After a right-hand bend the lane runs between a row of thatches and a cemetery, becomes a dirt track, goes under the railway and runs uphill. *On the left and later on the right there are paths leading to the old lime works; there is a Quarry Walk that takes you around the area which also*



played an important role in WW2 for probing enemy mines. It's about one km long. Soon, on the left is some sculpture with a reference to the Shipwrights Way that runs from Alice Holt Forest to Portsmouth (see the walk "Alice Holt Forest" in this series). You come up to a tarmac lane by a junction: cross straight over into the Halls Hill car park (an alternative start).



6

Turn **left** in the car park through a wooden swing-gate and across a small meadow. Another wooden swing-gate leads you on a path across a larger meadow, finally free of the bikes. At the other side, a metal kissing-gate



leads up the right-hand side of a narrow meadow with terrific views across the valley. You go through another kissing-gate into woods. In 150m you come up to a wide crossing path. [There are several ways to return to the main car park: the route chosen here is easy and gives you a broad introduction to the Park.](#) Turn **left** on the crossing path, ignoring the signed footpath ahead, thus leaving the Hangers Way.

7

Stay on the main path, avoiding *all* paths leading off and, including a signed branch-off for the South Downs Way and the Hangers Way. In 1 km you come down to an oblique very obvious wide crossing path. (This is about 200m after a bench seat; there is a purple "footprint" just *before* the junction.) Veer **right** on this wide crossing path uphill, thus leaving the signposted footpath. You pass a bench, one of several, and a series of timber stacks. Keep straight on all the time past several junctions. *On the left through the trees you can see Windmill Hill.* Your track takes you through magnificent mixed and pine woods. On your left soon is the site of a Roman villa, graced by an appropriate piece of *Shipwrights Way* sculpture. You pass a green path on your left as your track bends right downhill. *Butser Hill comes into view again.* Another track joins from the left. Ignore a fingerpost on your left shortly after and continue ahead through a metal barrier. Veer **left** on a tarmac drive, taking a parallel path on your right which leads back to the Visitor Centre and the car park where the walk began.

## Getting there

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By car: the Queen Elizabeth Country Park is clearly signed off the **A3 road**, about 3 miles south of Petersfield or 5 miles north of Waterlooville.

By bus/train: bus 94 comes from Petersfield to Buriton every 2 hours, bus 37 comes from Petersfield and Alton on Sundays; it also stops at the QE Country Park. Check the timetables.

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