

South Downs Way Challenge...Virtually

Week 2 – Exton to Queen Elizabeth Country Park and Buriton... 11.5 miles.

Leaving the lovely village of Exton behind, cross the River Meon, then the disused railway, and start the ascent of Old Winchester Hill. It's a bit of a climb!



At the top enjoy the views from the remains of the old Iron Age fort (An hour's walk and you've already covered 2.2 miles).

After a bit of gentle hill top walking, descend following farm tracks and then up again, following quiet Bridlepaths, over Small Down.

After 4 miles or so, you reach Mercury Park, (formerly HMS Mercury). Have a breather and a coffee at the Sustainability Centre. In fact, if you don't know about it already, have a virtual look around when you get back from your exercise! www.sustainability-centre.org/ "We are a learning and study centre, a beacon for sustainability, based in the heart of Hampshire's South Downs National Park in the UK. We are an authentic model of sustainability. We share practical solutions to inspire and enable people to become the planet protectors and change makers that our world needs. We offer an immersive, practical and creative approach to education. We inspire and support change-makers."

At the cross roads at Hyden Cross you'll have great views to the North , then follow this ridge through woodlands ,then fields, to Butser Hill. Ancient earthworks and a tumuli abound this site.

From here descend the sweeping grass slopes, pass under the busy A3, and reach another rest stop at the Queen Elizabeth Country Park . To this point, you will have clocked up a further 3.4 miles.



South Downs Way Challenge...Virtually



Now time to enjoy the delights of the QE2 Country Park, but you will have to earn it, as we have a stiff ascent up a long rising valley . This will get you breathing. Now a final stroll to the car park at Buriton.

If you want to explore the QE2 Country Park from the comfort of your sofa, then follow this link to whet your appetite for the real thing!

www.hants.gov.uk/thingstodo/countryparks/qecp

To get here you have covered another 11.5 miles , so approx 24 in total thus far...

Next Week - Buriton to Cocking Hill...11 miles. Your total will then be 35.9 miles !!
