

Route 3. Ups and Downs

Route overview

This is the 30 mile version of the Petersfield Ups And Downs charity cycle (<http://www.puad.co.uk/>), a friendly, well-marshalled ride with five routes held early in July. A shorter, 20 miler is available. Both include a tough but rewarding climb up Butser Hill, one of only a few 'Marilyn's' in the south east of England.

Distance	30 miles on road
Time	3 hours
Level/ Terrain	Strenuous in places
Elevation:	1985 ft climbs. 1287 calories
Start & Finish Point	Petersfield railway station

Route description:

1. From the station (down-line side), cycle into town down Lavant Street, turn right at the end on to Chapel Street, curve round into the square with its sunny coffee shops and Wednesday and Saturday morning markets. Take St Peter's Road between two of these coffee shops, follow it round and turn right and south on the Causeway out of town. You'll see Butser Hill on the horizon, the highest point on the South Downs – you'll be climbing it in around an hour's time, so keep something in reserve.
2. In about a mile, at a small roundabout, take the third exit under the A3, then first right and within a few yards, immediately left. Keep on this high-hedged lane. You'll pass a small fishing pond, a converted water tower, and after another mile a tight left bend, followed by an equally tight right bend. Keep going to the end of this road, over the infant River Meon (you're less than half a mile from its source here), and turn right towards East Meon.
3. In the village, follow the road round towards the church and turn left heading for West Meon. This is an open ride following the river – I've seen Barn Owls quartering the ground here in broad daylight. Don't go all the way into West Meon (though if you do, the Thomas Lord pub is worth a look in – named after the founder of Lord's Cricket Ground, who lived in the village and is buried in the churchyard). Instead take the left lane signposted to West Meon Fisheries.
4. After a short, steep climb, the lane hugs woodland on the left with an open vista across fields to the right, past the fly fishery on your right, and then after another mile you have two options: a long climb straight ahead to the top; or a shorter, but more painful climb to your right: they both end up on the exposed ridge, where you'll be turning left. Amazing views north across the hills and south, towards the sea, justify the pain. Almost.
5. Now you're heading towards the Sustainability Centre – there's a tap for filling depleted water bottles there and a café.

6. You now have a welcome descent, gentle at first, with a sharp left turn after about half a mile. Take care as you meet this road, and follow it down back to the spot where you turned right for East Meon earlier. Turn right now.
7. Follow this lane until, at a thatched house on a crossroads, you turn right. Follow this road, which after a mile or so starts to climb steeply up towards Butser Hill. Nice as they are, you won't be admiring the views as you schlepp up this one: you've done well if you manage the whole climb without walking.
8. At the top, turn left for a detour to the summit (where the hang-gliding episode in *Only Fools and Horses* was filmed). Otherwise continue right, following the road as it curves left and down to a junction. Turn left here then after a few yards go right up to a small roundabout and then left over the A3. Take the right turn signposted to Butser Ancient Farm and continue along this road into the village of Chalton. [Butser Ancient Farm](#) is well worth a visit, by the way, with its authentic reconstructions of Anglo Saxon and Roman buildings.
9. Continue the ride through Chalton (ignore turnings to the left) and follow the road down into Finchdean, where you're going to turn left, pass under the rail bridge, and follow the railway line back up north. You'll pass the lovely 11th century 'little church in the field' at Idsworth after a few easy miles.
10. Keep on this road, taking care on a gravelly left turn over the railway line (the road straight ahead takes you up to Ditcham Park school). You'll be relieved to know that you won't be climbing the hill ahead but turning off right within 50 metres to again follow the rail line. This is New Barn Lane, and it will take you past Queen Elizabeth Country Park on your left and into Buriton village – a distance of about five miles.
11. There's a steep descent into the village, from the point where the road crosses the South Downs Way (you'll see a small parking area on your left, with a trail up into the park). Take it easy. It passes under the rail bridge to a quiet road junction, with Buriton village church and picturesque pond down to your right.
12. Cross over here and go straight ahead, past the Village Inn on your left, along a road that is banned to motorised through traffic. You follow this to another, short and steep descent to the old A3 back into Petersfield (to your right). Retrace your route now to the station.

Route map (GPX file): https://gb.mapometer.com/cycling/route_4726474.html

