



HAMPSHIRE
COUNTRYSIDE SERVICE

The Story of
The Dragon of Butser Hill



Story Trail

www.hants.gov.uk/storytrails



Hampshire
County Council

www.hants.gov.uk

Queen Elizabeth Country Park

Butser Hill National Nature Reserve lies within the Queen Elizabeth Country Park, and comprises 231 hectares of calcareous grassland, yew woodland, scattered scrub, semi-ancient broadleaved woodland and chalk heath. There have been sightings of over 30 species of butterflies in the area, and there is also an abundance of lichen and bryophytes in the chalk grassland with over 200 different species recorded.

Butser Hill dominates the area, being the highest point in the South Downs, and as the site is of great historical importance a large area is designated a Scheduled Ancient Monument. It was settled during Neolithic, Bronze age and Iron Age periods, with evidence of ancient field systems and Bronze age round barrows still present.

For more information about the Country Park and the many activities and events that take place there, call in at the main Visitor Centre (follow brown tourist signs from the A3) or visit www.hants.gov.uk/qecp.

Getting there:

Road: From A3 southbound, take the exit for Chalton and Butser Ancient Farm, then cross over A3 and follow signs for Butser Hill. From A3 northbound, follow signs for Butser Hill.

Site open: 8am – 8pm during British Summer Time, 8am – 6pm for rest of year

Parking: Large car park with 3 accessible parking bays near the Kiosk. Charges apply – £1/hour or £2/day. Free for Blue Badge holders.

Toilets: Accessible toilet in the Kiosk

Route length: 1.5 km or 1 mile

Surfaces: The trail is mainly on short grass – usually firm, but may be soft in wet weather.

Gradients: Mainly level, some gentle gradients.

Seating/rest points: Picnic tables and benches in the car park but no seating around the Trail.

Livestock: Butser Hill is grazed by cattle and sheep between September and Christmas and sheep from Christmas to March.

Please keep dogs on leads when stock are grazing the area and clear up after your pet at all times.

Look out for these symbols in the booklet:



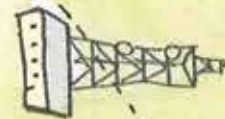
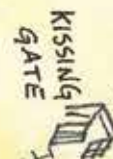
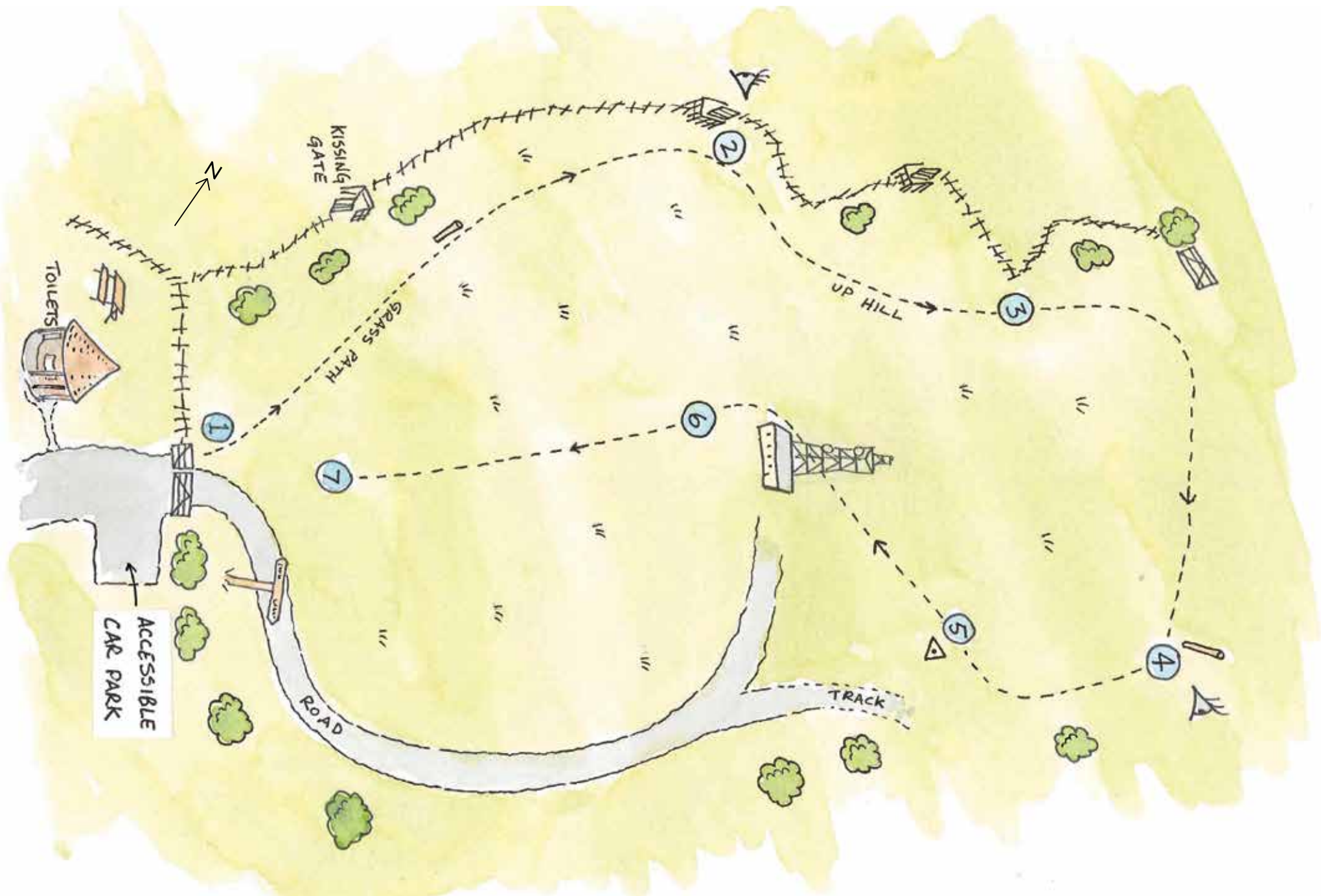
Follow the route



Can you answer the question?



Action



ACCESSIBLE
CAR PARK

ROAD

GRASS PATH

TRACK

UP HILL

TOILETS

KISSING
GATE

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

Follow the trail of the Dragon of Butser Hill



Hello everyone, I'm the Story Snail. Welcome to the story of The Dragon of Butser Hill!

I will be your guide as you move through the story. Stop at each of my markers and read that section of the story. Enjoy yourselves and don't forget to add your own ideas to make your story unique.



Go through the gate from the car park and pause at the other side.



The Gate

It is the year 845. A Knight rides this way on a huge white horse. The knight is tall and handsome and his name is Grendor. He carries a sword and a long lance and a shield with his Coat of Arms on it which shows a dragon surrounded by oak trees. Grendor peers across the land. He is looking for something. The knight is on a quest and his honour will be in tatters if he fails.



Would you like to be a knight? Would you go on a quest?
What would be on your Coat of Arms?

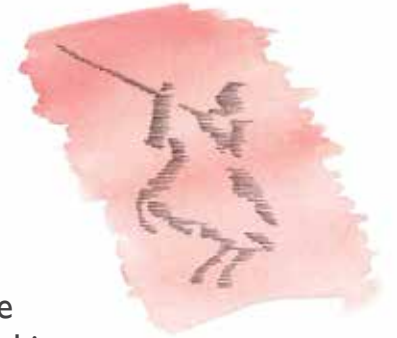


Follow the path, keeping the fence to the left.
Stop by the gate with the stile.



The Great View

Grendor the Knight pauses here and looks out across the Great View. He has travelled many miles in search of his quarry. The wind blows gently up the hill and the scent of the wild flowers and the grass fills his mind with memories of his home. He cannot return home until...



Suddenly, whoosh! There's a rushing of air and a powerful new aroma and the sun seems to go dark as a huge shape swoops up over the brow of the hill and screeches overhead. Grendor's horse rears and shies. The strong knight fights to regain his balance. He turns to see where the shape has gone but it has gone right across the other side of the field, almost out of sight.



What do you think it could be?
Look and listen. What can you see and hear?
What other things could be in the air?



Go along the path then follow the path that moves away from the fence.
Stop by the fenced-in area.



3 Hide

Grendor rides quickly on. He leaps from his horse and, drawing his sword, hides behind a tree (there were more trees here then).

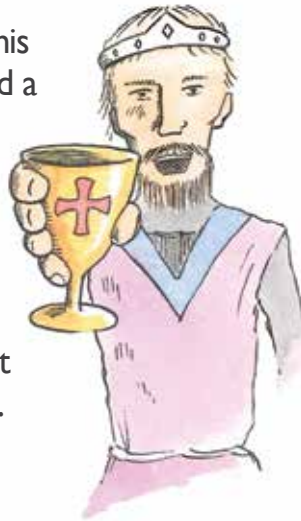
“The Beast! The Dragon!” he snarls.

It’s the creature he’s been following for almost a year. Grendor thinks back to the time in the Winchester Royal Court when King Aethelwulf had announced that there was only one dragon left in England.

“Anyone who can slay the dragon will be rewarded with a huge sum of money and vast swathes of the land of Wessex.”

The courtiers had cheered and raised their goblets in a toast and many knights had set off in pursuit of the beast.

Grendor is now the only knight left on the quest. He, the only knight and his foe, the only dragon.



4 The Tower

Now, hang on, let’s not get ahead of ourselves... The knight has tracked the dragon to this hill and he’s right to have done so because this is where the dragon lives, but there are a couple more characters who live around here. Can you see the tower in the middle of the field? This is where a great stone tower used to stand, the hunting lodge of Peter the Giant.



Peter the Giant stands eight metres tall and his hands are the size of a dining table. He lives further down the hill to the left of the tower, where the Queen Elizabeth Country Park Visitor centre now stands. Peter is a gentle giant. He is peaceful and only wants to be left alone to live quietly and to hunt for his food. Recently though, there have been great disturbances here in the realm of Peter’s Field.

A knight has been raging around the land in pursuit of the dragon who dwells in the valley, the peaceful dragon who has done no harm, and when one human comes, more will follow. Peter feels he must do something to help the dragon. There is only one person Peter cares for, Lucinda Bonham, the young noble woman who sometimes walks in the woods. She is beautiful and gentle and pure of spirit.

One day, Peter hears a scream and he runs down the hill to the woods. There he finds Lucinda surrounded by wolves. She is terrified. Peter lumbers in and chases the wolves away.

“Oh, thank you Peter, you saved my life.” Lucinda cries. “How can I repay you?”

“There is one thing you could do, my lady.” Peter says. “You could help me with my plan...”



There were big trees here back then. Get into pairs. One of you can be the tree, the other one can be the knight hiding.



Which way do you think the dragon has gone? Do you think it’s a good idea to kill the last of a species? What do you think happened to the other knights?



Move along and stop near the end of the field.





What do you think his plan could be?



Turn right and follow the path keeping the tower to your right.



Grendor's Hopes

Grendor the Knight looks out over the town. He knows that the Bonham family live here and if he can slay the dragon surely he will be held in high regard and will be able to marry the beautiful Lucinda.

"I will be the greatest knight in all the land and everyone will want to know me." Grendor smiles to himself and holds his sword aloft as he imagines the locals cheering their saviour. The ground suddenly shakes as the dragon lands on the other side of the tower. The dragon hasn't noticed Grendor. He can take the beast by surprise. Grendor digs his heels into his horse's flanks. The horse bellows, rears up and charges towards the huge creature.



Hold your sword up high and CHARGE!



Stop by the trig point.



Charge!

The dragon only notices the knight as he rushes past and swipes at its legs with his sharp sword. The dragon cries out in pain and everywhere its blood drips onto the ground, cute little rabbits appear; such is the magical purity of the animal.

The knight turns and is coming back. The dragon manages to swing its tail and knocks the knight off his horse before finding the strength to lift its wings and take off to safety.



Can you see any signs of rabbits in the area?
Would you like to have a great stone tower to live in?



Move along the path in front of the tower.



Grendor follows the trail of rabbits and is ready to fight the dragon once more. Suddenly he hears a maiden's cries.

"Help! Help! Somebody help me!"

Grendor quickly follows the sound to find the beautiful Lucinda tied to the tower.

Behind the tower, Grendor can see the dragon.

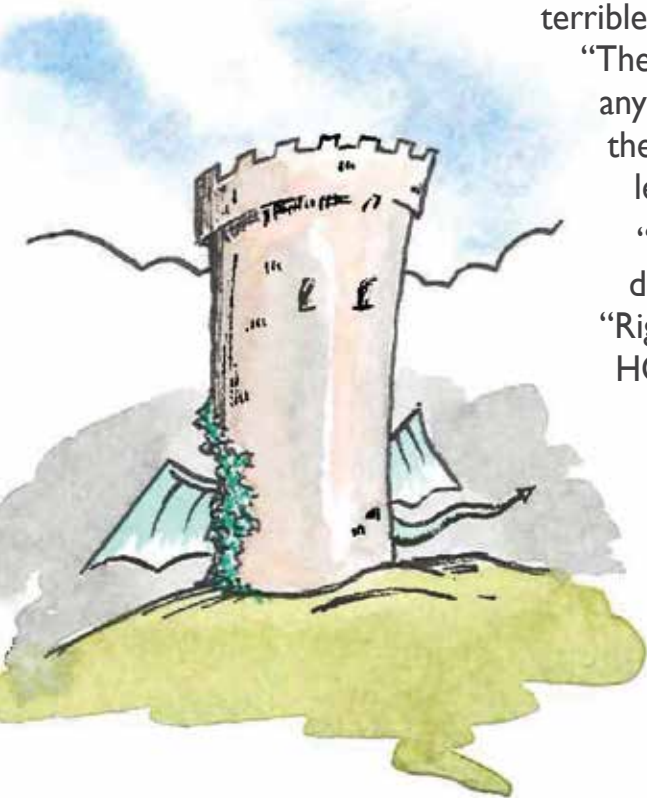
"Leave the fair maiden alone you monster. Come and fight!" He shouts.

"Oh, brave Knight. Save me from this terrible beast." Lucinda cries.

"The local legend says that any knight who can howl like the wolves in the woods will leave the dragon dead."

"Is that all I have to do? Said Grendor.

"Right, here goes... HOOOOWWWLLL!"



Can you howl like a wolf?



Stop by the trig point.

At once, the dragon lets out a blood-curdling cry and falls down dead.



Carry on and stop near the start point.



Surprise!

"I am victorious. Lady Lucinda, let me untie you and then you can tell me how wonderful, brave and handsome I am and then I will let you be my wife. You are a lucky lady to get me."

Grendor steps forward to untie Lucinda and Peter the Giant, who is hiding in the tower, leans out of the window and drops a huge net over him.

"We've got you now, you big-headed old poop!" laughs Lucinda. "I wouldn't marry you if you were the last man alive. Dragon, do your stuff!"



Grendor watches in disbelief as the dragon gets up, stomps over and picks up the trembling knight. He flies up and drops Grendor onto the top of the tower.



“That’s where you can stay, you rotten old trouble-maker!” shouts Peter the Giant.

“No! Please let me down, let me go, good Sir, good Sir,” pleads Grendor.

“Don’t you ‘good sir’ me!” laughs Peter as he and the dragon and Lucinda walk away.

“But Sir, But Sir...” begs Grendor.

As far as I know Grendor stayed on top of the tower until the end of his days and from that day the hill has been known as ‘But Sir Hill’.



I hope you’ve enjoyed the Story of the Dragon of Butser Hill.

Please join me for more Story Trails in other parts of Hampshire; details can be found on:

www.hants.gov.uk/storytrails.htm

839	Aethelwulf succeeds his father Egbert as King of Wessex.
841	Vikings raid Kent and East Anglia, and establish a settlement at Dublin.
842	Many die in London and Rochester during Viking raids.
844	Kenneth MacAlpine, King of the Scots, conquers the Picts; founds a unified Scotland.
845	Vikings are defeated by a Saxon force at the River Parrett.
851	Vikings forces enter Thames estuary and march on Canterbury.
855	Aethelwulf goes on a pilgrimage to Rome accompanied by his son Alfred.
858	Aethelwulf returns but finds his son Aethelbald has taken control of Wessex.
858	Aethelwulf dies at Steyning in Sussex. His son Aethelbald becomes king.

