

EAST STRATTON

History

East Stratton is one of the finest examples of a rural estate village in Hampshire and is uniquely well-preserved due to being owned by just three eminent families since 1546: Wriothesley, Russell and Baring. Originally the manor was part of King Alfred the Great's vast estate, bequeathed in 903 to Winchester's New Minster (later Hyde Abbey).

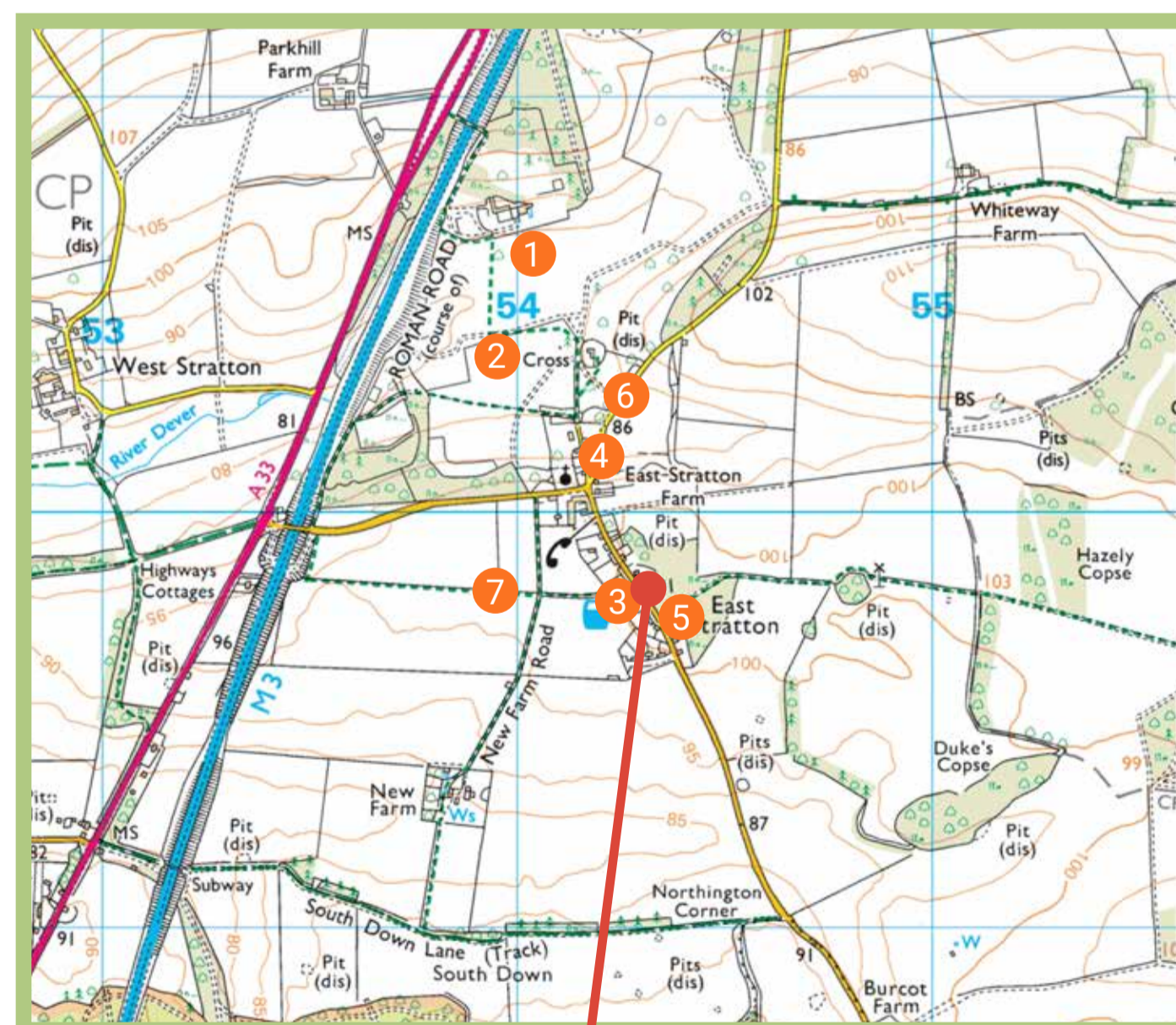
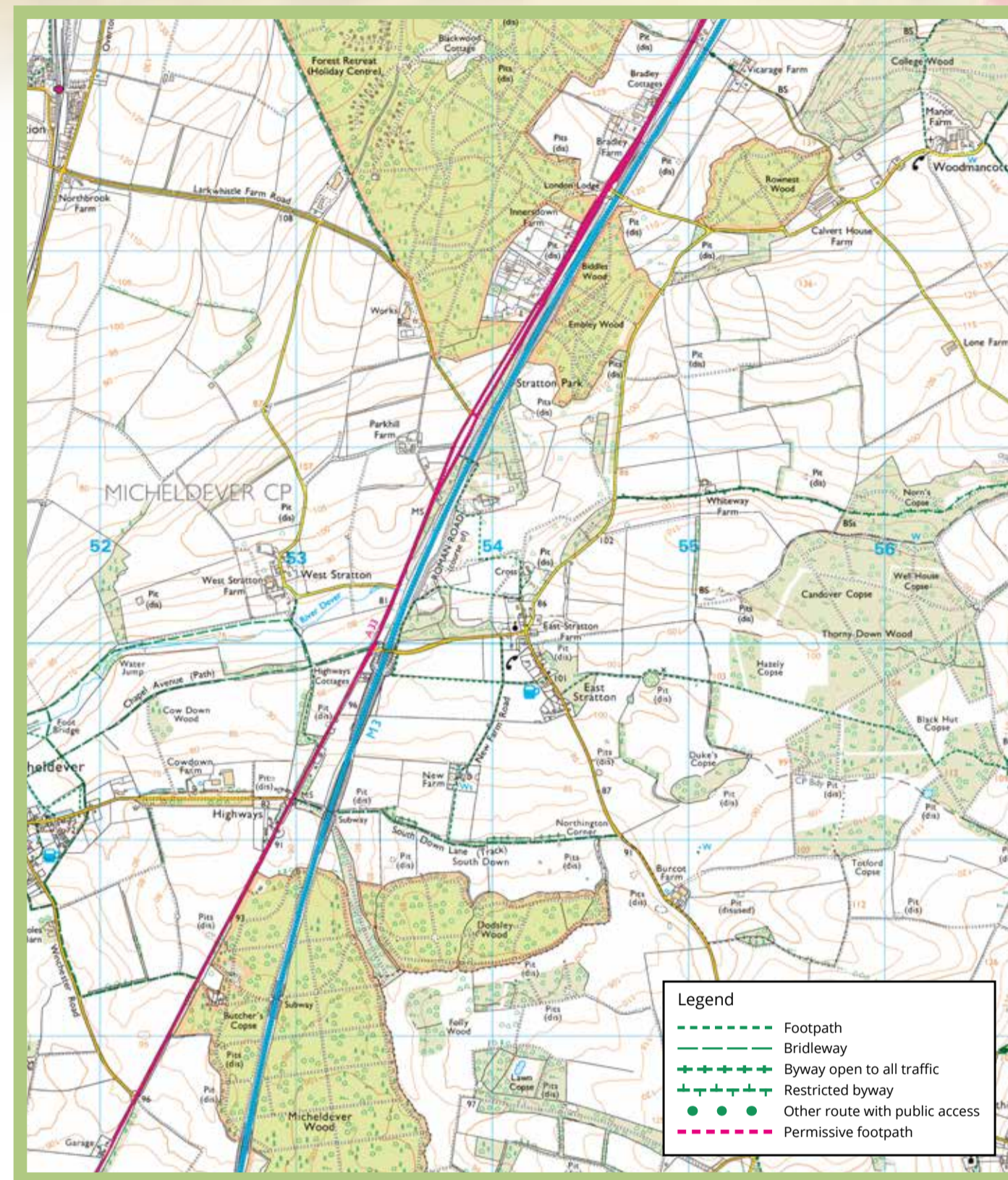
- 1538: Hyde Abbey was dissolved and the manor became King Henry VIII's Crown property.
- 1546: the manor was purchased by Thomas Wriothesley, 1st Earl of Southampton.
- 1669: the Russell family acquired the manor through marriage.
- 1801: Francis Russell, 5th Duke of Bedford, sold the manor to Sir Francis Baring.

The land surrounding East Stratton is currently (2020) owned by Francis Thomas Baring, 6th Baron Northbrook.

Stratton Park



1 Stratton Park was one of the chief seats of the three manorial families and was the site of the old village before it was relocated to its current site. One notable resident was Lady Rachel Wriothesley, who inherited her father's estate at East Stratton in 1667. She married William, Lord Russell, son of the 5th Earl of Bedford. They extended the house and park, clearing half the village to create a deer park. In 1683 William Russell met an untimely end as one of the conspirators in the failed Rye House Plot to depose Charles II, and was beheaded. He was posthumously pardoned in 1694 and his father was created the 1st Duke of Bedford. Lady Rachel continued to manage the Stratton estate until her death in 1723, and lived to see her son become the 2nd Duke and grandson the 3rd Duke.



You are here

In 1801 Sir Francis Baring bought the manor and remodelled the 5th Duke's house in the ancient Greek style, designed by George Dance. Humphrey Repton landscaped the park, clearing the old village in the process. In 1955 John Baring, later 7th Baron Ashburton, bought the house, demolished it, and built a modern house on the site in 1965. Of Dance's house, only the Greek Doric portico remains.

2 The stone cross in Stratton Park, erected in 1890, marks the site of the old church, first recorded in 1308. Lady Rachel and Lord William Russell demolished the medieval chapel, replacing it with one in the Gothic style. Sir Francis Baring remodelled this chapel in 1810, later demolished when the new church was built in 1888.

East of the cross lies the first school in the parish, built (1814) for Thomas Baring and rebuilt (1846) in the Elizabethan picturesque style. Now a private dwelling, it closed in 1965. Stratton Park is the source of the River Dever, which rises just east of the M3 and meanders along the Dever valley until it reaches the River Test at Wherwell.

The Village



3 The early 19th century Northbrook Arms is at the heart of Sir Francis Baring's 'model village', which once boasted a brewhouse, bakery, grocer's shop and general store. North of the pub are five pairs of thatched estate workers' cottages, designed by George Dance (c. 1806).

4 The War Memorial stands at the village crossroads and commemorates the 19 men from East and West Stratton who died during the First and Second World Wars. Clustered around the War Memorial are 17th and 18th century thatched cottages and the buildings of East Stratton Farm, now private dwellings. To the west is the new Church of All Saints (1888), designed by Thomas Jackson for Francis Baring, 1st Earl of Northbrook.



Wildlife

East Stratton nestles in rolling chalk downland surrounded by open fields and mixed evergreen and deciduous woods. Pheasant and partridge are in abundance. Roe and muntjac deer venture out from the shelter of the woods to graze, accompanied by the hammering of greater spotted woodpeckers or the 'laughing' call of the green woodpecker in flight. Goldfinches, bullfinches and warblers frequent the hedgerows. As winter approaches, flocks of fieldfares and redwings plunder hedges for blackberries and remaining fruits to fuel their journey south. You may be rewarded with the sight of a red kite circling above or kestrels hovering over potential prey. Buzzards may also be seen overhead; even if out of sight, their distinctive 'mewing' calls can be heard.

Wildflowers such as campanula, harebell and knapweed are common to the area. The pyramidal orchid is far rarer but has been seen in June and July in the verges to the south side of Church Bank Road. If you spot any unusual wildlife, the Dever Society would love to hear from you on admin@deversociety.org.



Walks

Heading north, past the War Memorial and down the lane into Stratton Park, is a journey back in time. Here, along the footpath, you will find the original site of the old village and church, as well as the school and manor house that still remain. Walk to the south-west corner of the park where a huge 20-foot wall still stands, a relic of the walled kitchen garden, where exotic produce once grew in glasshouses destined for the manor house. The footpath south of the green 5 takes you through wooded areas and fields towards Totford or the Candovers.

6 The lane to the east of the War Memorial will take you past Embley Wood and Rownest Wood to the hamlet of Woodmancott. The Church of St James here was completely rebuilt after being burnt down on Easter Day in 1854.

7 Follow the footpath behind The Northbrook Arms, west over the M3 and across the A33, to the statuesque row of beech trees known as 'Coffin Walk'. Known as 'the Burying Road' in the 18th century, the deceased from East and West Stratton were conveyed on horse drawn wagons, carts and other carriages for burial at Micheldever.

Find out more about Micheldever parish at:

