

MICHELDEVER STATION

A Thriving Community

Micheldever Station existed only as clustered farm buildings at Warren Farm ① until the construction of the railway in 1840. The Victorian buildings along Andover Road and New Road were built to serve the railway community and more recent development has grown organically to meet the needs of the local population. The Warren Centre ② offers the community a modern facility for meetings, with a tea room overlooking the recreation ground. Despite the settlement's small size – or perhaps because of it – a tight-knit community spirit survives.

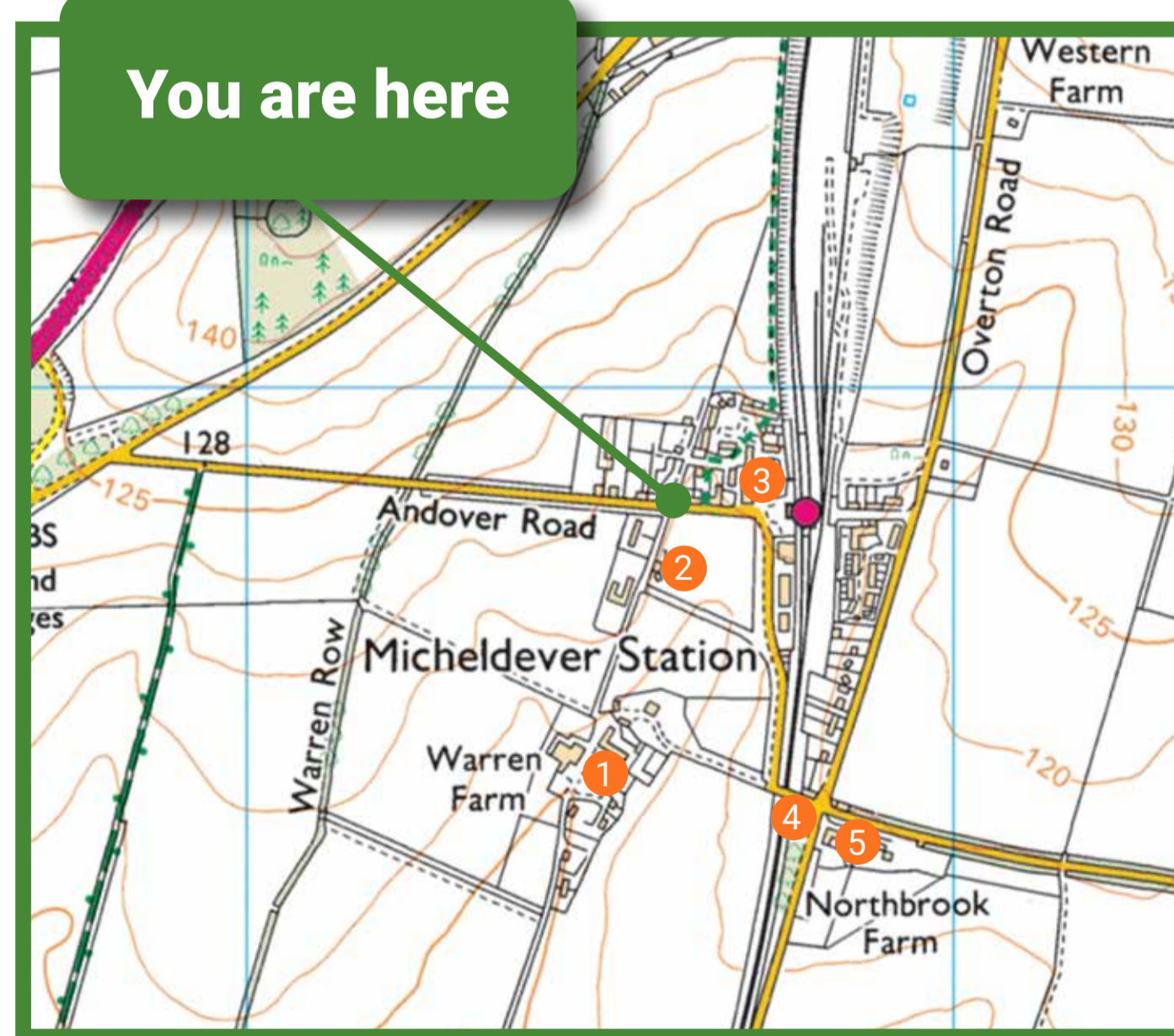
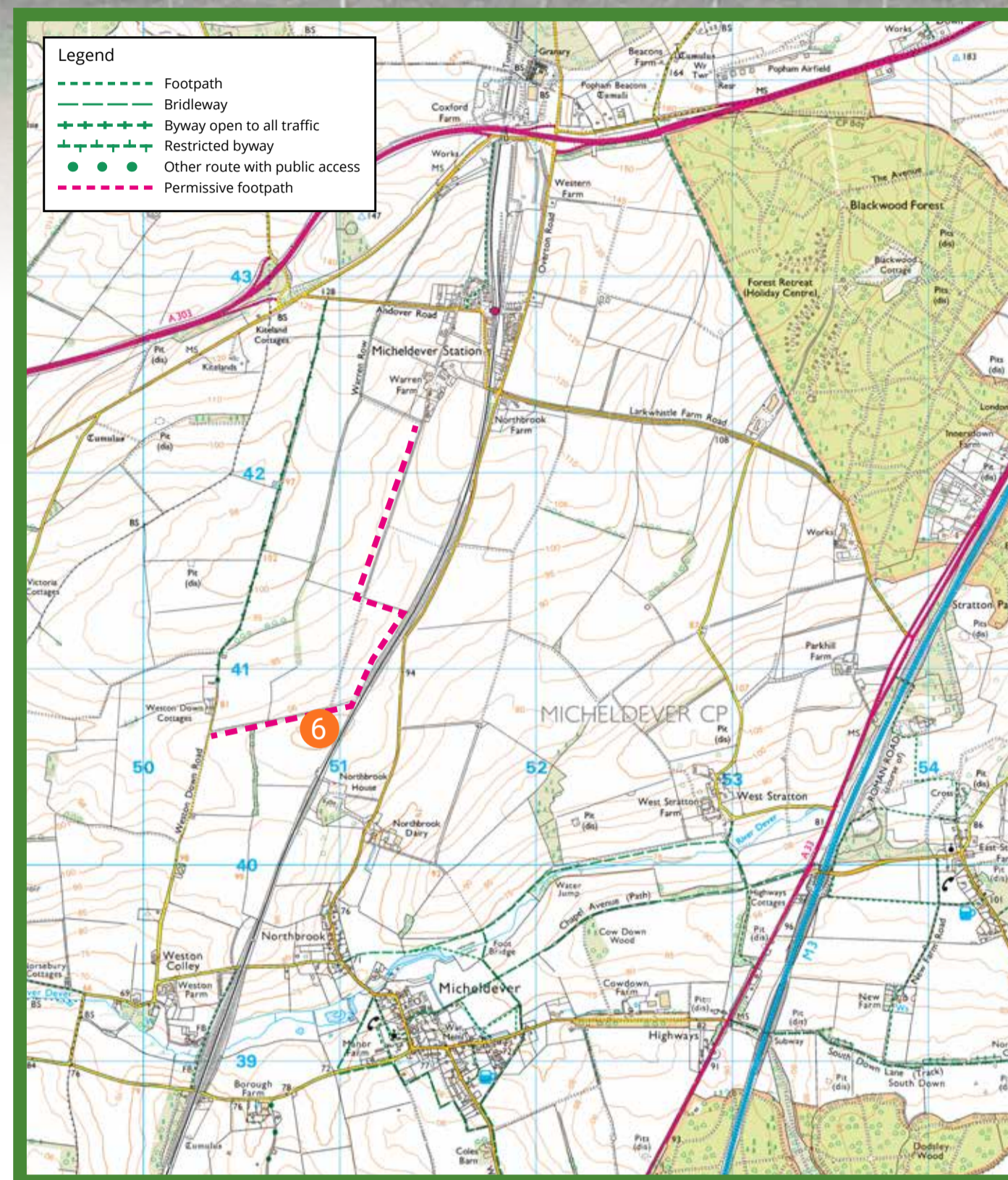


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The Dove Inn ③ was originally named Western Road Hotel when it was built next to the station as a coaching inn, providing a rest stop for travellers along the turnpike road to Andover. Take a look at the interesting old coach house beside the pub, which is of traditional cob-walled construction. The Dove is the welcoming heart of the community, providing residents with a place to host events and set the world to rights over a pint.

Some of the houses along Andover Road show signs of their former purpose – see if you can spot the Post Office and the Old Stores (the latter, and adjacent Victoria Cottages, were designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens). Trains carried the mail from the mid 19th century, so the Post Office was a busy sorting office for delivery as far away as Whitchurch. There was also a garage and a Primitive Methodist chapel. The pretty flint-and-brick school ④, which closed in 1947, lies just across the railway bridge.

'The First Sunday of the Month Walk' is a long-standing tradition that binds the parish and wider communities together in exploring and learning more about our local countryside. Look out for flyers on noticeboards or in The Dove to find out more.



Water Tower, Windpump and Warren Farm

Northbrook Farm lies south-east of the crossroads just over the railway bridge, where a water tower ⑤ was located for distributing water to local residents. Water was pumped over a kilometre to the tower's reservoir from the windpump ⑥ that stood on the brow of a low hill south of Warren Farm.



Warren Farm is the oldest part of Micheldever Station; its listed buildings (Warren Farm House and Old Cottages) date to c. 1775 but the farm was there before then. The long barn at its centre is now converted into modern offices, which has preserved the building while bringing new economic life into the hamlet. The other barn (which you pass on the track towards Warren Farm) was brought here from a few kilometres away in 1989.



Warren Farm is no longer a single working farm, although the land and workers' cottages are part of the Sutton Scotney Estate and still let out. Surrounded by arable fields on thin chalk soils, this is land that has been worked hard by multiple generations of local tenant farming families. Blackberries, sloes and damsons grow wild, and chickens run free around the stables. Rabbits, hares and deer can often be spotted in the fields, as well as the occasional polecat. Woodpeckers drumming during the day, and owls hooting at night, compete with the rumble of passing trains.

You can walk southwards through the farm, to the end of the track, and follow a permissive footpath that passes the site of the old windpump; please keep to the field edges. Yellowhammers and blackcaps swoop along the hedge tops here, and you can hear the busy 'cheep' of wrens hopping from twig to twig. Come out onto the Weston Down Lane public footpath, an old drove road, to continue south towards Weston Colley or back north towards Andover Road. When you reach the top, turn around – the view is spectacular.

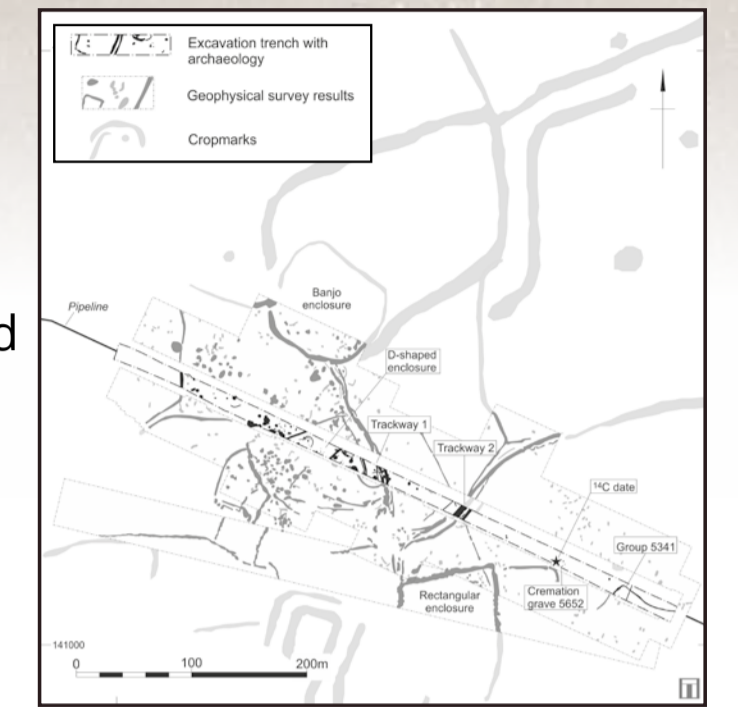


Threat of extensive development has hung over Micheldever Station for decades. If granted, it would destroy swathes of precious downland habitat and further erode the rural buffer between London and Southampton. In 2017 the Sutton Scotney Estate was purchased by the Magnier family, who submitted plans for a major development across this ecologically and historically important landscape. The Dever Society opposes this threat and continues to conserve, protect and celebrate this rural heartland. Further details are available at www.deversociety.org.



The Iron Age Landscape

Archaeologists have identified Iron Age settlements south-west of Warren Farm, connecting communities here with Norsebury Ring hillfort and other Iron Age sites around Micheldever. Excavations near Weston Down Cottages revealed burials, numerous storage pits and roundhouses dating from the 6th to 2nd centuries BC, associated with trackways and field systems. One enclosure was of the 'banjo' type (named after its shape): a heritage asset of national importance. They are generally rare but a high number are found in Micheldever parish.



© Wessex Archaeology

Wildlife

A public footpath leads north from just behind The Dove, running parallel with the railway track up to the A30. There are spoil heaps north of here (not publicly accessible) that were formed by the chalk quarried to construct the railway tunnels. These have been colonised by over 150 species of wildflowers over time, including many rare orchids, making it a Site of Special Scientific Interest.

In summer, butterflies and moths rise up as you walk along Weston Down Lane, and crickets chirp in the fields. Trees and scrub at the sides of the fields provide vital wildlife corridors that birds and other creatures rely upon for their survival – dormice are still found here despite being nationally endangered. Such corridors link the hamlet to Black Wood, which contains many majestic yew trees and pockets of ancient woodland to its eastern boundary.

Around the recreation ground, snowdrops in spring are followed by wild garlic, dog's mercury and bluebells. The hedgerow along the track to Warren Farm contains an extensive range of woody plants: hawthorn, blackthorn, spindle, crab apple, hazel, and wayfaring tree, intertwined with roses and brambles. White helleborine (a kind of orchid) is declining nationally but abundant in this area. If you spot any unusual wildlife, the Dever Society would love to hear from you on admin@deversociety.org.



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Find out more about Micheldever parish at:

