



East Stratton and Brown Candover

Distance: 10½ km=6¾ miles

easy walking

Region: Hampshire

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Refreshments: East Stratton (see end note)

Maps: Explorer 132 (Winchester) and 144 (Basingstoke)
but the map in this guide should be sufficient

Problems, changes? We depend on your feedback: feedback@fancyfreewalks.org

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Thatched village, easy field tracks, woodland, little surprises

In Brief

This walk takes you from the thatched village of East Stratton on a tour of fields and forests in a historic area close to Winchester. Along the way your route continually enters deep forest and emerges into the light to give you views across the county. Some little surprises await you unexpectedly to add to the day's charm. An especially enchanting time to do this walk is in early autumn when the sunflowers are at their best.



In the centre of the starting village, East Stratton, there is a small pub facing straight onto the large green (see at end) with a wide spread of tables and benches for enjoying the brews (to enquire at the *Northbrook Arms*, ring 01962-774499). The landlord has kindly invited you to use the off-road car park if you are a customer as well as a walker.



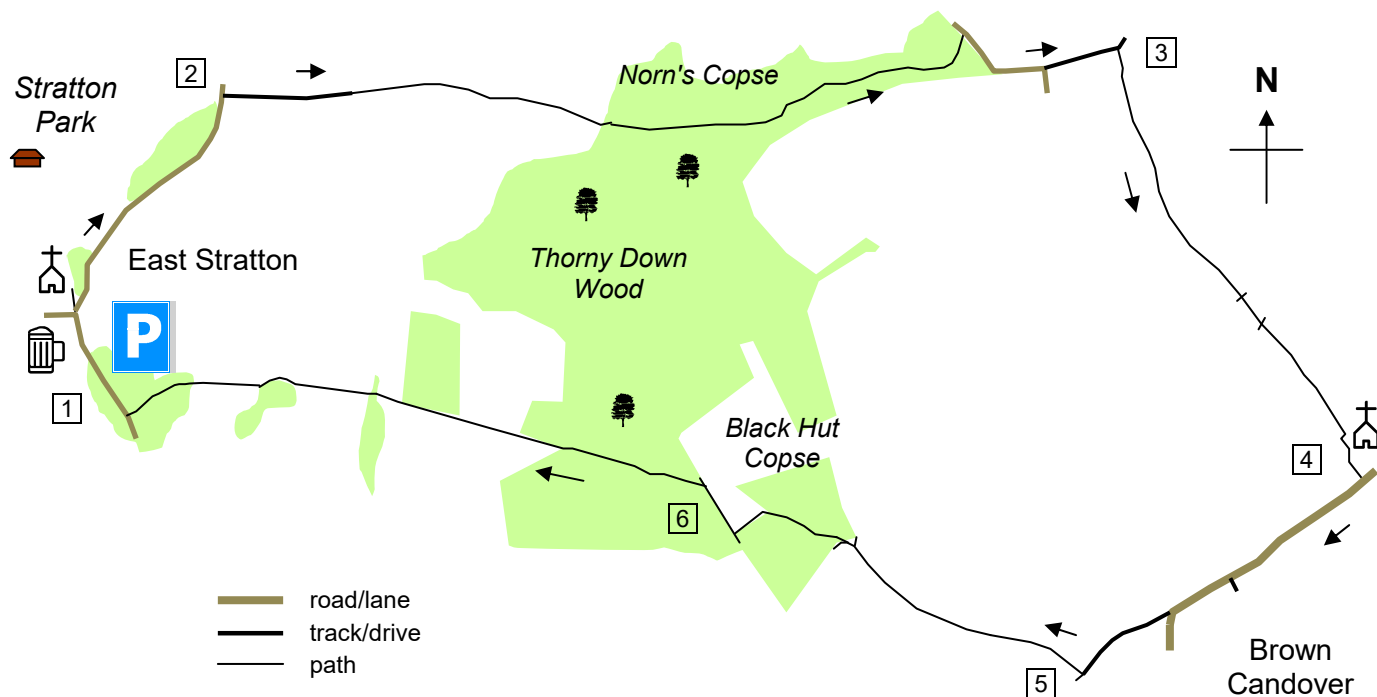
There are some sections with nettles and other undergrowth on this walk, so shorts are not advisable. Remarkably for such a typical rural neighbourhood, there are *no stiles* and no livestock. Paths are generally clear and relatively dry, so boots are not necessary, except possibly in very wet or wintry conditions. Your dog will enjoy this walk, but a good lead is needed for the walk through Brown Candover.



The walk begins at the village of **East Stratton**, near Winchester, Hampshire, postcode **SO21 3DU**, www.w3w.co/powering.angry.cowboy. There are parking spaces immediately next to the green opposite the pub. For more details, see at the end of this text (→ **Getting There**).

The Walk

East Stratton is a village within the Stratton Park estate (see below). It gets its name from being on the Roman road (or "Street") that runs between Silchester and Winchester. The five pairs of thatched cottages next to the pub were built in the early 1800s. There are older cottages along the lane to Stratton Park. The church of All Saints is very "new", having been built in 1880 to replace an old Saxon church at a different location. East Stratton has its own brew but it's not served in the pub.



- 1 Walk down the main street of East Stratton, with the pub and the thatched houses and big East Stratton Farmhouse (the smartest in the village) on your left, towards the church. Shortly after, the road bends left past the church. Apart from a visit to the Church of All Saints, your route is straight ahead on a minor road, signed to *Woodmancott*, keeping **right** to avoid a cul-de-sac which leads to Stratton Park.

Stratton Park was originally a large country house before being demolished and replaced in 1963 by John Baring, descendent of Sir Francis Baring who bought the estate in 1801 and built the house. Only the classical portico still stands, regarded as a listed historical treasure. The new building was seen as a "carbuncle" and earned the late (d.6 Oct 2020) John Baring the soubriquet "Basher Baring". The Manor goes much further back, at least to the year 900, when it was part of the great medieval Benedictine monastery, Hyde Abbey, later dissolved under Henry VIII. The new owner was Sir Thomas Wriothesley (pronounced "Risley"). His daughter married Lord Russell who demolished half of the village to accommodate his deer park. And, yes, as you were wondering, the Barings were founders of that Bank, demolished by Nick Leeson in 1992.

Follow the lane uphill. On your left you can see the classical-style portico of Stratton Park. After some woodland on your left and a left bend, the lane descends. At the bottom, turn **right** on a wide drive, a restricted byway.

- 2 The path runs to the right of Whiteway Farm (at the time of writing having a major makeover). [Oct 2020: and there's a temporary diversion away from the path, round a field and, in 30m, back to the path: just follow the signs.] The "byway" is now an ash-shaded narrow path. Thorn bushes encircle the path, followed by a hazel coppice. 700m after the farm, the shady path enters a long woodland clearing in Norn's Copse, part of Thorny Down, and finally enters a wide corridor through the wood itself. An open area is followed by an oakwood [Sep 2020: with more fallen branches which you can step over or bypass on the right]. You come out finally to a tarmac lane. Turn **right** on the lane. In 300m, at a road junction, where the lane bends abruptly right uphill, keep straight on, on a rather rough tarmac drive marked as a cul-de-sac. In 250m you come to a junction by a large house, with the modest but fitting name *Lone Barn*. Turn **right** through the entrance, passing the house on your right.
- 3 The green grass here is a joy and a white metal seat seems to beckon the weary traveller (whether placed here out of kindness, as a gift to passing walkers, is not clear: the author used it discreetly). Continue through a large wooden gate on a fine hazel-shaded woodland path. *Note that you are on part of the Wayfarer's Walk, a 71-mile (114-km) long-distance path through Hampshire from Emsworth on the coast to Inkpen Beacon (see that walk in this series).* Ash trees dominate before you cross straight over two driveways between Church Lane Farm and two houses. Another 100m reveals another little gift* to walkers: a sturdy new swing, for a brief repose or a photo-opp. (* Actually a surprise birthday present for the two-year-old in the farm, so used with discretion.) A long gradually descending nettly path leads to St Peter's Church in Brown Candover. Your path bends right and left, discharging onto the cricket pitch from where you have access to the church.

St Peter's Church was built in 1845 to a design by James Wyatt, from funds provided by the same Barings who owned Stratton Park. It replaced a Saxon church which had stood on the other side of the village. Its sheer size shows the importance of the village in history, serving as it did about 200 farm labourers from the wide district. (* Though not as large as the huge church in the tiny neighbouring village of Northington.)*

Together with Preston Candover ("of the priests") and Chilton Candover ("of the young retainer"), Brown Candover ("of the Brune Family") forms an ancient group named from the Candover brook and the valley in which the River Itchen runs and meets several of its tributaries. The name "Candover" comes from the pre-Saxon British words "caniodubri", meaning "beautiful waters".

- 4 Keep **right** on the gravel path, out to the road, and turn **right** on it, passing a milestone for the Wayfarer's Walk. *Opposite, just to your left is the historic timbered Moth Farm and Granary. Candover Park, on your left, is a large agricultural and sporting estate.* The people of Candover seem to drive everywhere and there is no footway, but a grass bank on the left is a useful refuge. Ignore a signed byway on the left. Finally, where the road bends left at the end of the village, keep straight on, on a yew-shaded lane, Bryces Lane, marked as a cul-de-sac. You pass several isolated houses until, after 350m, at the last house, the tarmac ends. Turn **right** here, thus leaving the Wayfarer's Walk.
- 5 The surface turns to grass and your path runs gently uphill between hedges. In 300m, continue ahead on a shingle drive coming from a small quarry. Your path runs under trees and, nearly ½ km from the quarry, suddenly emerges to give you fine views across the fields. Ignore a private



path into a field on the right shortly and, where the drive bends left, **leave** the drive by keeping straight on, as directed by a 2-way fingerpost, onto a track in a wood of tall ash and beech trees. Keep a wired pheasant enclosure just to your left and stay on the main path where it veers a fraction right away from the fence. After 300m in the wood, you come out into a large wild flowery meadow. Turn **left** along the edge and, in the corner, turn **right** at a fingerpost, staying on the edge of the meadow. In 180m, about half way along the edge, fork **left** at a 2-way fingerpost into the woods.

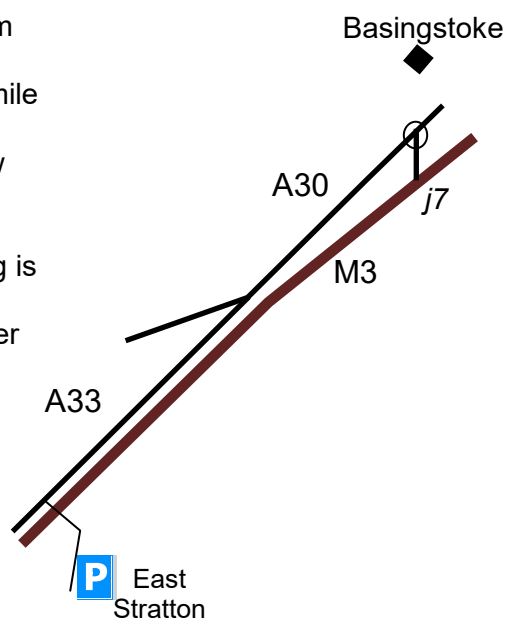
- 6 You are on a lovely clear path through mixed woodland. In 300m or so you come out into another green meadow. Keep to the left-hand edge and, as you emerge into a larger crop field, keep straight ahead along the right-hand edge. Follow the gravel path, soon changing to grass, for ½ km into the corner where you meet a junction of fields. Keep straight ahead here along the right-hand side of the next crop field. **In late summer, the far corner contains another crop of smiley sunflowers.** Your path veers into the adjoining field, this time along the left-hand edge. It now elbows left and right and runs along the right-hand side of another colourful field. with a hardcore surface. In the corner, keep straight ahead along a woodland path. After a brief section under tall trees, your path leads out to the road in East Stratton, near the Northbrook Arms, where the walk began.



The 19th-century Northbrook Arms (previously “The Plough”) has become partly an outdoor pub, thanks to the big green opposite, with its wide and generous scattering of tables and benches. There is also a covered seating area at the back. They usually serve one local ale, notably Red Cat from Winchester. There is a small room on the side where you can purchase pizzas and sandwiches, but not on Thursdays or Sundays (bring a picnic). But major renovation is afoot, with plans for B&B accommodation plus a spa and indoor pool.

Getting there

By car: East Stratton is close to the M3. If arriving from the London or M25 area, come off at junction 7, the second exit for *Basingstoke*. Follow the A30 for ⅓ mile to the next roundabout and turn sharp **left** onto the A30. In 2 miles, avoid the right fork to Andover, now on the A33. East Stratton is signed **left** in 4 miles. Turn right after the church and park alongside the green. In case you arrive early, please note: parking is on the opposite side of the road from the pub, i.e. *immediately next to the green*. When you return after the walk, the entire length of the green will be crammed with parked cars. (But see Page 1 for the kind offer from the pub landlord.)



By bus/train: Bus 95 and 96 from Winchester to East Stratton. Cresta Coaches from Basingstoke to Brown Candover, Wed and Fri. Check for details.

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