



PUB WALKS with Darcy

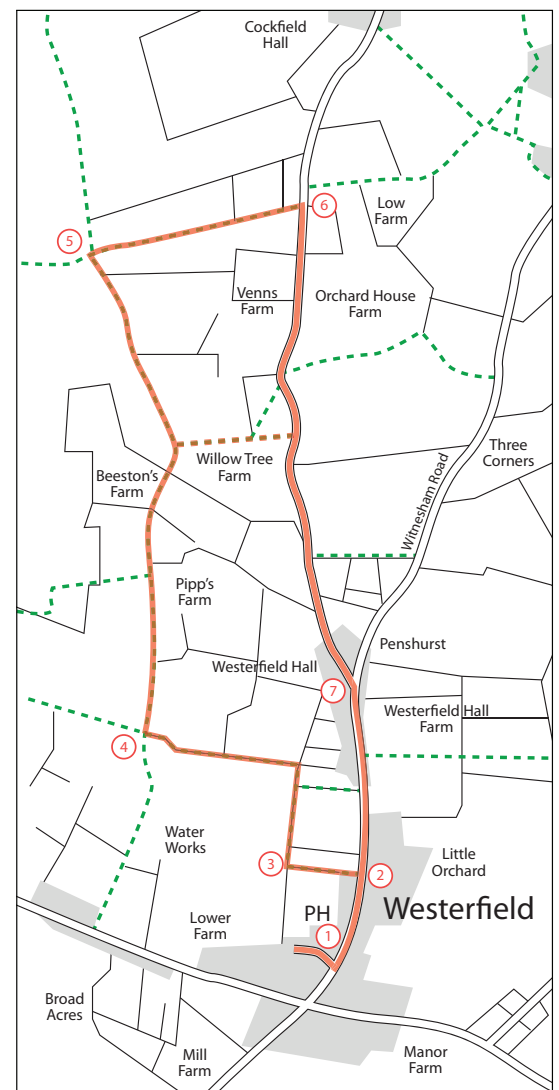


This month's walk starts and finishes at the dog friendly Swan at Westerfield just a ten minute drive from the centre of Ipswich and the latest pub to join the Deben Inns group

This summer we watched the amazing Essex Dog Display Team, led by Roy Dyer, at the Suffolk Dog Day at Helmingham Hall. Watching the dogs perform spell binding feats of control and understanding with their handlers it was easy to think that these canny canines really understood the English language and somehow had bridged the gap between man and his mutt. Roy however is adamant, and who am I to argue with such an expert, that dogs do not even know their own name and respond only to tone, repetition and reward. I recall this moment as without question or shame I am fully aware that we project human qualities onto Darcy and while we know she is a dog (she'll be devastated if she ever finds out) she does often behave in ways that seem human like to us.

Never is this more apparent than when I take her on a new walk for the magazine.

We are now approaching our 30th Pub Walks with Darcy route and each month we have a well-oiled routine as I devise the route and write the instructions. These are later tested by family and friends, often with Darcy in tow, before we publish but what is very clear is that she seems to instinctively understand when a new walk is in the offing. From the moment we get in the car, a regular occurrence – not just restricted to new walks – Darcy is alert and while normally quite passive on the lead as soon as we start the new walk she strains and pulls eager it seems to explore. We also believe that we can genuinely tell how much she has enjoyed a walk and although a simple route this month, taking in beautiful open rural expanses and quiet road walking, we saw all the indications that this one had really hit the mark. Once she reads this copy and passes it for publication I'll know for certain... ■



THE WALK

Distance: Approx. 3 miles (alternative route 2 miles)

Time: Approx. 1 hour depending on your pace (main route)

Terrain: Field paths, quiet lanes. 1 stile (with gate to side)

Stops: The Westerfield Swan

Ordinance Survey Map: Explorer 197

Start Point OS reference: 176 478 (The Swan Car Park)

As always please keep your dog under close control and follow any advisory signs. For a printable version of this and previous walks go to: www.placesandfaces.co.uk/dog-walks

1. From the Swan car park turn left and pass in front of the pub. Walk up the hill for approx. 250 yds until you reach a footpath (FP) sign on your left.
2. Turn left at the FP sign and pass through the metal gate. Continue through the field to the next metal gate.
3. Having passed through the second gate turn right. The path follows the edge of the field turning left along the top hedgerow after reaching a section of green chain link fencing.
4. At the end of the hedgerow you will meet another path with a four finger signpost. Turn right following the bridleway. Follow this path past Pipp's Farm and past Beeston's Farm. Having passed Beeston's Farm continue on this path for approximately another five minutes until you reach the end of the next field. At this point the path continues straight ahead passing between two hedges.
5. Having taken the path between the hedges keep your eyes sharply peeled for a FP sign which is mostly buried in the hedge of your right after approx. 20yds. After another 10 yds pass through the gap in the hedge and walk across the field with the house and farm building opposite as your target. Cross the stile to the left of the metal gate. (Darcy was easily able to bar between the bars of the gate) Keep to the right of the field and head for the next metal gate. Pass through the next field and exit via the wooden gate opposite Low Farm.
6. Turn right and walk down the quiet lane until you meet the main road. This will take 10-15 minutes depending on your pace.
7. At the main road turn right. Initially there is no pavement but a substantial grass verge that will keep you out of the path of oncoming traffic. After approximately five minutes you will reach the Westerfield village sign and pavement. Continue straight ahead which after a short walk will bring you back to The Swan.

Alternative route: For those wanting a slightly shorter walk take the footpath to the right immediately after Beeston's Farm. Follow the path and keep to the left of the hedge. Cross a small wooden bridge and then a stile. Continue straight ahead until the path meets the quiet lane detailed in point six. Turn right and follow instructions as per point seven above.

The Swan

Westerfield



The Swan at Westerfield on the outskirts of Ipswich has just undergone a major refurbishment and is the ideal location to enjoy our excellent range of wines, ales and delicious food in a great atmosphere with or without your dog.

Our menu offers a wonderful selection of dishes prepared with love from the best local ingredients where practical. The menu include honest 'pub grub' alongside more contemporary dishes, all freshly prepared and presented by friendly, efficient staff.

There will always be seasonal specials which you can discover on our blackboards on the day.

You're now able to make an online reservation request. We'll get back to you either by email or phone to confirm your booking or to arrange an available time.

Christmas bookings are now being taken.

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