



# SUFFOLK DOG WALKS

Jayne Lindill enjoys a stroll with her Labrador, Harry



## Hide 'n' stick

A quiet country walk at Trimley near Felixstowe provides fun off the lead any time of year

It's always wonderful to find a walk that lets Harry roam off the lead (usual road safety and Countryside Code rules apply, of course), and when it's practically on the doorstep it has to be one of our favourites. This lovely country stroll is about four miles (or eight Harry miles) around the Trimley Estate, easy walking, with superb views and excellent chances of spotting some interesting wildlife, even with a bouncy Lab for company.

To find it, make your way to Trimley St Mary, just outside Felixstowe. As you go through the village along the main road, turn into Station Road (right if

you're coming from all directions other than Felixstowe), go over the railway crossing at Trimley Station and follow the road (Cordy's Lane) for about half a mile until you get to Searsons Farm. This is the car park for visiting Trimley Marshes Reserve (another three miles on foot) which is managed by Suffolk Wildlife Trust.

It's a pleasant, early summer morning when we jump out of the car and begin the walk, taking the track right in front of us with the farm and barns (business park) on our left.

We follow our nose along the track, remembering to put our

**ABOVE:** Old woodlands provide year round shelter and shade

**RIGHT:** The giant cranes of ThePort of Felixstowe pop up into view every now and then

heads up now and then for a grand view of the surrounding countryside sweeping down to the River Orwell, with glimpses of the river itself in the far distance and the giant cranes of the Port of Felixstowe. Man and nature in harmony, at least.

The Trimley Estate is farmed by local growers and those from further afield, and it's always interesting to see the ever-changing menu of crops in the huge fields, many of which find their way to our supermarkets. This year there is the usual barley, wheat and sugar beet, but there are also potatoes, peas, aromatic onions

and emerald parsley. Talk about five a day. After about a third of a mile we find a public footpath waymarker (and a red dog-waste bin) on the right and follow it along the field edge for about 500 feet.

One of the many advantages of this walk is that there are several options for making it longer or shorter, depending on your stamina and your dog. Walk a little further and you'll pick up the route to Trimley Marshes which forms a longer circular walk. Suffolk Wildlife Trust requests that dogs are on a lead as you pass through the actual reserve, to protect resident and migrating birds, so Harry and I stick to the shorter route in the interests of freedom and maximum exercise.

Harry puts his nose to the ground and scampers ahead, enjoying the whiff of the wildlife and, no doubt, countless other canines who have been this way recently. We reach the next public footpath sign and follow it round to the right, taking the path between two fields. Essentially, we're doubling back on ourselves but it's all part of a circular walk and anyway, like most dogs, Harry's good at running around in circles, retracing his steps. From here, over to the left, I can see sailing boats on the Orwell, little white triangles that look, for all the world, like they're tacking through distant fields.

The path takes us up to some woods, through a gap and around a metal barrier, where we follow the route up to Keeper's Cottage. Harry does his best

imitation of the gundog he purports to be, his head in the undergrowth every few yards, in the hope of flushing a pheasant or two. Overhead, I hear a mewling cry that tells me buzzards have arrived and, sure enough, there is a pair soaring right above me. It's a wonderful sight that I never tire of watching.

We press on, climbing gently as we pass a huge reservoir on our left, a fairly new feature in this landscape. Constructed in 2016 to provide much needed irrigation for the abundant arable crops in this sandy location, it's also proving an attraction for a variety of birds. Sort of overspill for the Trimley Marshes Reserve.

We reach Keeper's Cottage, this time of year secluded behind a lush, verdant screen of lilac and buddleja. The path goes to the left and into the woods, where Harry immediately begins his search for the perfect stick. The woods are shady and cool in summer, and provide shelter from the worst of the weather in winter. Year round they are alive with birds (including pheasants) and squirrels, and you're likely to spot muntjac and fallow deer browsing the undergrowth.

As the path snakes its way towards Grimstone Hall, Harry enjoys his usual game of hide 'n' stick. This involves him dropping the stick in a not always convenient spot (ouch, those nettles), hiding in the undergrowth and waiting until I throw said stick as far ahead as possible, at which point he races to retrieve

## HOW FAR?

**Distance:** Approx 4 miles/6.5km

**Time:** About 90 minutes

**Parking:** Searson's Farm, Cordy's Lane, Trimley, IP11 0UD

**Map:** [google.com/maps/@51.9763418,1.3119465,17.75z](https://www.google.com/maps/@51.9763418,1.3119465,17.75z)

Trimley Marshes walk  
suffolkwildlifetrust.org/sites/default/files/2018-08/Trimley%20circular%20walk%20Leaflet.pdf

**Terrain:** Tracks, field edges, public footpaths, fairly flat

**Local vet:** Whitworth Station Rd, Trimley St Mary, IP11 0UB  
T: 01394 271112

**Ts and Ps:** Dog friendly pubs, The Mariners in Trimley St Mary, Half Moon in Walton.





Cooling off...

it. Life is so simple, when you're a dog.

Past a pond, we emerge onto the track that wends its way around Grimstone Hall, taking care to watch out for very occasional local traffic as we briefly join Grimstone Hall track. Here I'm treated to a dazzling display of swallows, and swifts, swooping and soaring above the barley, grazing on the wing.

There have been a few changes to this walk in recent months, as work has been carried out to dual the railway line between Trimley and Levington, providing greater capacity for traffic to and from the Port of Felixstowe. Most of the crossings have now been closed and now we find ourselves on a new, temporary path alongside the line as we head back in the direction of Trimley Station.

There's a lively thicket of trees to our right, where hundreds of rabbits have constructed an enormous warren, and evidence of badgers tunnelling close to the railway line, blissfully unaware of the machinery laying new rail tracks above them. I'm always amazed at nature's ability to adapt to, and even ignore, the changes we humans foist upon it.

At the, now closed, Gaymer's Lane crossing the path turns sharp right alongside Keeper's Lane. It's lined with blackberry bushes and wild flowers, busy with bees, butterflies and chasers. I give Harry a drink of water but he abandons it to respond to the klaxon call of a pheasant. He's hard-wired.

We arrive, once again, at Keeper's Cottage, follow the path in front of it and continue straight ahead as Keeper's Track becomes a cool, tree-lined tunnel. Harry slows to a casual trot, realising that walkies have almost come to end.

Reaching Cordy's Lane, I put him back on the lead for the few yards to the car park, for safety and to avoid an unscheduled dip in the, er, fragrant farm pond. Another lovely walk with my best friend – and one we'll soon be back to do, all over again. ♦



## IN ASSOCIATION WITH LEATHERINGHAM MILL COTTAGES



Letheringham Mill

We're very excited about dog walks in the Suffolk magazine. In fact, here at Letheringham Mill we're mad about all things dog and are looking forward to sharing with you the places (mostly dog friendly) and things we love about Suffolk.

Historic Letheringham Mill, near Framlingham and Woodbridge, offers four self-catering, pet friendly holiday cottages, all five-star gold awarded. As winners of the Visit England Dog Friendly Business of the Year, we ensure our guests have a luxurious, extremely dog friendly stay.

Living with us at The Mill are



Amber and Ted invite you to stay at Letheringham Mill

our own dogs, Teddy and Amber, and this year Amber's daughter, Lola joined our pack. Amber and Lola are Australian Labradoodles who attract attention and hugs from people wherever they go.

When guests arrive at The Mill we always point them in the direction of our fabulous local pub, Easton White Horse, and suggest walks using our newly designed cottage handbooks, with a complete A-Z of places we recommend. We love to keep guests (many of whom return again and again) up to date with things happening in the county and places we love. This month, we're suggesting they head off to Sizewell Beach, a dog-friendly beach at this time of year, and reward themselves after a walk with something delicious from the Sizewell beach café. Heading back we also suggest an afternoon in Framlingham, a visit to the castle and a spot of gift shopping at Ruby Tyger.

**See you soon!**

**Jacqui Fairey and Richard Gooding**

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