

New
series

A dog lover's guide to: *Norfolk*

Your Dog access adviser
Stephen Jenkinson reveals
why Norfolk is so special.

As a child, I loved going to Norfolk with my dog, Smokey. Although I couldn't pin down exactly why, I just knew it was remarkably special.

Now, 40 years on, I can clearly understand what makes this county so memorable; it's not just its beautiful blend of coast and country, or the lovely people — what Norfolk excels at is being welcoming, accessible, and inclusive for all visitors, young and old, two legs and four. It is top of my list of dog-friendly destinations.

For a start, you don't need a car to enjoy the area. With its public transport network of buses (including the jaunty Coasthopper service), and the Bittern Line trains linking Norwich to Sheringham, you can easily leave your car and take the dog.

While these are not the fastest services in the country, the wonderful views from the windows mean you won't be in any hurry to get off. Plus, you can polish your green halo for doing your bit to protect the environment. Check out routes and details of the great-value day-long tickets at www.experiencenorfolk.uk

You can also use the steam and narrow-gauge railways with your dog; ride one way and walk back. Check out these heritage railways with nearby walks:

- **North Norfolk between Sheringham and Holt;** visit www.nnrailway.co.uk
- **Bure Valley at Hoveton in the Norfolk Broads** — a separate footpath runs alongside the tracks; visit www.bvrw.co.uk
- **Wells and Walsingham where dogs travel free;** visit www.wwlr.co.uk

Dog walks here are better protected and maintained due to Natural England's coast path project. In 2016, the Norfolk coast, from Hopton on Sea to Weybourne, was one of the first areas to benefit from a legal right of access to beaches, and better protection of the coast path alongside, even when the sea washes it away.

Such a stunning landscape is also, unsurprisingly, a great place for wildlife. So, to keep it special, it's vital you always keep your dog in sight and pick up everywhere.

Local signage will tell you the sensitive times and places where people are not allowed, or dogs need to be on a lead, but there's still plenty of options for off-lead exercise. ►



Stephen Jenkinson.



Discover the beautiful Norfolk countryside.

TOP TIP!

For the best way to have happy, healthy, and hassle-free dog walks in Norfolk, follow the dog walking code; visit www.dogwalkingcode.org.uk

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FIVE THINGS TO LOVE ABOUT NORFOLK

1 The Barking Bugle: There's no better example of how dog-friendly Norfolk is than its 52-page visitor magazine for dogs and their humans.

To find where to go, stay, eat, and emergency contacts, pick up a free copy at local tourist information centres or go to www.thebarkingbugle.co.uk

2 Coastal walks: The Norfolk Coast Path National Trail passes over 50 beaches along the county's coastline. Well maintained and signposted, it offers no end of dog-walking experiences, from bustling seaside towns to the peace of big-sky saltmarshes. Find out more at www.nationaltrail.co.uk

3 Seal viewing at Horsey: For a unique opportunity to see grey seals and their pups in the wild, visit www.friendsofhorseyseals.co.uk



The dog wash Wash 'n' Wag.

Image: Stephen Jenkinson.



See the seals at Horsey.

4 Holkham beach cafe: I know of no better dog-friendly cafe than this one at Wells-next-the-Sea. Soft beds are provided inside for well-behaved dogs, Bertie's Bark Up Bar provides water outside, and there's a dog wash, too. Find out more at www.holkham.co.uk

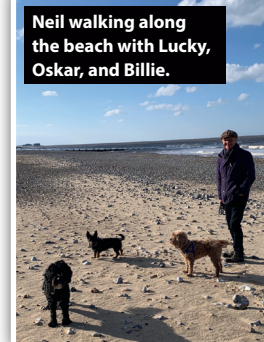
5 Shady forests for hot days: Inland there are plenty of public forests offering shaded walks on hot summer days, with well-maintained trails and dog-friendly facilities, especially around Thetford. Use the interactive map at www.forestryengland.uk

Image: Stephen Jenkinson.



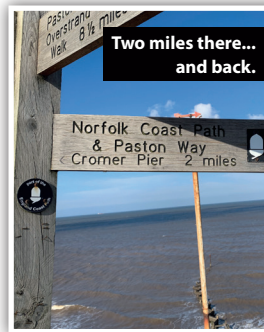
Bertie's Bark Up Bar provides water for dogs.

Our favourite walks



Neil walking along the beach with Lucky, Oskar, and Billie.

OVERSTRAND TO CROMER PIER AND BACK (FOUR MILES)
JUSTINE THOMPSON AND HER HUSBAND NEIL POPE ARE YOUR DOG READERS WHO LIVE NEAR CROMER IN NORFOLK. THEY HAVE SEVERAL LOVELY WALKS ON THEIR DOORSTEP, AND THIS IS ONE OF THEIR FAVOURITES...



Two miles there... and back.



A spectacular view.

"We have three dogs: Lucky, a black Cockerpoo, Oskar, who is a Cavapoo, and Billie, who is a three-year-old Lancashire Heeler," said Justine. "One of our favourite walks is from Overstrand, starting at Paul's Lane car park, to Cromer Pier (which has become famous after being featured in the BBC Christmas adverts last year) and then back again. The walk covers two miles each leg, so it is four miles in total."

"The idea is to look at tide times (www.tidetimes.org.uk/cromer-tide-times) and do one leg along the beach

at low tide and the other leg along the cliff top, which runs alongside the beautiful Royal Cromer Golf Course, with great views across the coastline."

"There are dog-friendly cafes at both ends of the walk, the Cliff Top Cafe in Overstrand, and the North Lodge Park Tea Rooms in Cromer, which have lots of outside space, and where staff will often bring your dog a biscuit! There are public toilets nearby, and plenty of other dog-friendly cafes in Cromer as well, making this a great walk for everyone."

PLACES TO EAT & STAY

NORFOLK



Typical Norfolk cottages.

● **East Ruston Cottages** — for information on a wide range of dog-friendly East Ruston Cottages, where dogs are allowed to go free, and there is a very flexible approach to numbers, visit www.eastrustoncottages.co.uk

● **Coach Cottage, Southrepps, Norfolk** — offers dog-friendly self-catering accommodation and is owned by Kathryn Moore. She said: "The eastern end of North Norfolk has many dog-friendly eateries."

● **"The Gunton Arms, Walpole Arms, and Vernon Arms** are especially good," advised Kathryn "and I also recommend..."

● **"Mundesley Beach Hut Cafe & Ice Cream Parlour** — their halloumi bites and sweet potato fries are to die for! They also do a brilliant cooked breakfast with fresh mushrooms, tomatoes, and fried bread."

For more information, visit www.coachcottageandnorfolk.co.uk/EatingOut.html

● You will find lots of dog-friendly cottages and barn conversions in Norfolk on the National Trust website. They make a perfect base for exploring the glorious coastline and woodlands of this beautiful county. For more information, visit www.nationaltrust.org.uk

Norfolk DOG-FRIENDLY ATTRACTIONS

Norfolk is one of the larger counties in England.

HILLSIDE SHIRE HORSE SANCTUARY

Based in West Runton, this sanctuary is always worth a visit, as well as Hillside Animal Sanctuary at Frettenham, near Norwich, which has open days throughout the summer, with lots to do and see, and rescue dogs to support.

● For more information, visit www.hillside.org.uk

DOG SHOW AND FAMILY FUN DAY

July 14, 2019: 10am – 4pm, at Holkham Hall, Wells-next-the-Sea, in aid of

Wells Community Hospital Trust.

Lots of fun classes and activities for your dog to enter, together with a huge array of children's entertainment, including circus acts, a climbing wall, funfair stalls, craft stalls, food and trade stands. Free entry; parking £3 per car.

● For more information, visit www.wellshospital.org.uk/event.php?event=1071

ALL ABOUT DOGS

August 25 – 26, 2019: Norfolk Showground.

Two days of exciting arena displays, shopping, and have-a-go activities.

● For more information, visit www.allaboutdogsshow.co.uk/norfolk/

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FAMILY WALK FOR BRAIN TUMOURS

October 6, 2019: Holkham Hall Estate.

The Thirteenth Norfolk Family Walk for Brain Tumours is being held at Holkham Hall Estate, near Wells-next-the-Sea, Norfolk NR23 1RH, from 10am to 4pm.

There are no hills to climb, and dogs on leads are welcome. Choose from a one, three, or 10-mile walk.

● For more information and to register, visit www.astrofund.org.uk/norfolk-family-walk-2019.php

WALK IN THE PARK

Norfolk has some stunning stately homes, and many of them have wonderful parkland where you can walk your dog. There may be restrictions due to cattle or deer grazing, so be prepared to walk on-lead, or check with the venue before setting off. Blickling Hall, Felbrigg Hall, and Sandringham House all have beautiful woodland to explore, while Houghton Hall and Holkham Hall have deer parks.

● For more ideas, visit www.explorenorfolkuk.co.uk

Blickling Hall.



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Our favourite walks

Sue with her dogs.



HORSEY MERE AND BEACH DUNES (APPROXIMATELY 2½ MILES)
SUE ALLEN, OWNER OF DOG-FRIENDLY HOLIDAY BUSINESS EAST RUSTON COTTAGES, SHARES TWO WALKS, WHICH SHE LOVES TO EXPLORE WITH HER DOGS, TESS AND SONNY.

"This open and easy walk takes in the beauty of the Broads and the sandy coast and dunes," said Sue. "There are several places to start this walk, but I recommend the National Trust car park at Horsey Mere and Mill.

"Begin the walk by crossing the very quiet road to the obvious gated access on the other side, and from here walk alongside the dyke towards the coast. If livestock are grazing, you will obviously need to keep your dogs on-lead, but if not they can go safely off-lead.

"The walk is well signposted and easy to follow, along flat paths and rough tracks. Throughout the walk you will be able to see the dunes at Horsey on the horizon, which is where you are heading. When you reach the track that runs along the back of the dunes in either direction you have several lovely choices. To make the walk longer, turn right, and walk along the track or up onto the dunes for a view over the beach, or go down onto the beach itself and then back along any of these routes to the original point. Alternatively, turn left and walk along the track, or on the dunes or the beach.

"This beautiful area of coastline is where the seal colony give birth to pups in the

winter. At this time, the beach is off-limits to dogs, but the view down onto the mums and babies from the dunes is wonderful and well signposted. There are also volunteer wardens who can answer any questions.

"The dunes area is huge, and lovely for off-lead running, and the track at the back of the dunes is safe and easy for off-lead walking, too."

TEA AND CAKE

At the end of this track is the car park for the beach. Turn left here and go down the access track towards the road. If you are ready for a cuppa and a rather lovely cake, go straight on to the fabulous Poppylands — a very popular and brilliantly well done, war-time themed cafe, which welcomes dogs inside and out.

Find out more at www.rosemaryandporkbelly.co.uk/poppylands-horsey-norfolk/

"If you decide against tea and cake, turn right along the quiet road and walk a short way until you spot a footpath sign

on the left, heading between fields. Like so many in Norfolk, these fields are arable, so no livestock to worry about. Follow this path past the beautiful Horsey Church, set quietly away off the road. From here, you come back out onto the road and cross over again onto the field edge path, which takes you easily back to Horsey Mill.

"Now is a very good time to enjoy that pint at the Nelson Head (see below), or coffee at Poppylands! Be assured of good food at both and a very warm welcome for your dogs. In the winter, both have wood-burners and, in the summer, there is lovely outside seating."

PLACES TO VISIT EN ROUTE

● Horsey Mere and Mill has a little cafe/shop, which is ideal for National Trust members. For more information, visit www.nationaltrust.org.uk/horsey-windpump

● Before or after the walk, you can look around the beautifully restored, old mill, and stroll by the river, which leads off Horsey Mere. Several wildlife-watching boat trips start from here. For more information, visit www.wildlife-boat-trips.co.uk/

● Early on in the walk you can take a left turn to walk the short distance to the very dog-friendly Nelson Head pub, but you may prefer to have a well-earned pint here at the end of your walk! Check out www.thenelsonhead.com/



Horsey Mill.



"The Weavers Way is an old railway line and is flat, easy to walk, and very quiet."

Enjoy a different pace of life in Norfolk.



Into the woods...

For more ideas on dog-friendly places to stay in Norfolk, turn to the magazine's classified advertising section.

NORTH WALSHAM AND DILHAM CANAL (APPROXIMATELY 2½ MILES)

"This walk can be a bit soggy in wet weather, but really is worth it to be able to enjoy miles of deep countryside," said Sue. "The Weavers Way is an old railway line and is flat, easy to walk, and very quiet. The path alongside the old canal (now only really navigable by canoe) is rich with wildlife, wooded in areas, and passes through open fields, too. If you take a map, you can add on extra miles using the wonderful network of footpaths, bridleways, quiet lanes, and permissive paths in this area.

"The best place to start the walk is in the small car park just off the Weavers Way in East Ruston on Chapel Road (map ref. TG346272). You can let your dogs off-lead straight away, and turn right onto the well-signposted Weavers Way, continuing to the first gates by the old station house.

"Turn left on the other side of the gates, and walk down the track past a couple of houses, through the gate and onto a marshland field, with a dyke running alongside.

Cattle occasionally graze here, so be alert and pop your dog on his lead if necessary, but the fields are usually empty. The track runs along between fields and over a stile, which is the only one you

should have to navigate, and there is room either side and under for small to medium dogs to squeeze through. Agile jumpers may be able to pop over, but larger, less mobile dogs may be a bit more of a problem.

"Once over the stile, follow the track, which bears right across fields to the edge of the North Walsham and Dilham Canal. There are some lovely spots to let your dog go for a swim here! Follow the canal on your right until you get to the little brick bridge. Cross over the bridge, admiring the canalside house and mill next to it, and then turn right to follow the stream/canal on your right. This field has been recently set up as a glamping pod field so you may have to keep your dog on-lead. From here, just keep following the canal.

"This path is not as flat and easy as the Weavers Way, but the views, and the variety of wildlife you can spot, make it very worthwhile. We

have seen kingfishers and otters on this peaceful stretch of water, plus barn owls hunting, and numerous hare and deer.

"You will negotiate a couple of narrow footbridges and gates before

Follow the Weavers Way.

coming out into open fields, although always check for livestock before letting dogs off-lead.

Follow the river, and go through another gate/bridge before eventually emerging by the old lock gates. This is a really peaceful place to sit for a while and enjoy a picnic, while your dog has a swim. Afterwards, simply head away from the lock and back onto the Weavers Way, then turn right to follow the path all the way back to the parking."

PLACES TO VISIT NEARBY

● "For a refreshing post-walk pint and a pub meal, head to the Butchers Arms, in East Ruston, where dogs are very welcome in the bar," said Sue. "Alternatively, a mile further along there is the Dilham Cross Keys (www.crosskeysdilham.co.uk) and the Smallburgh Crown (both very dog friendly).

● "For a lovely coffee and cake, head into nearby Stalham to the Cafe Charlotte; visit www.cafecharlotte.co.uk/ Alternatively, go further up the coast to nearby Walcott and visit the Kingfisher Cafe, or the Sugar and Spice Cafe at Bacton."

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The Norfolk and Norwich Terriers



The Norfolk Terrier.

When you visit Norfolk, keep an eye out for these two charming East Anglian Terriers.

Originally, there was no distinction between these two breeds and they were both considered simple farm dogs. It wasn't until 1932 that the Norwich Terrier was recognised by the Kennel Club, with two varieties registered. In 1964, the two varieties were split into two separate breeds; the prick-eared Norwich, and the drop-eared Norfolk.



Bertie as a puppy.

These short-legged terriers, with their compact bodies and jaunty tails, are the smallest of the working terrier breeds, and were developed as ratters, to catch vermin in their native East Anglia.

Looking a little like fluffy teddy bears, it is easy to forget that they are still very much terriers through and through.

Despite their small size (10in at the withers), they are generally regarded as fearless little dogs.

Your Dog editor Sarah Wright is the owner of Albert, a seven-year-old Norfolk, and is a huge fan of the breed.

"Once you've had a Norfolk, there's no going back; you're stuck for life," she said.

"Bertie is our second Norfolk. His predecessor, Montgomery, was very independent and more of a hunter and adventurer, but Bertie is quite different, a little bit of a lapdog, and very affectionate.

"What they both share is that great Norfolk character. They are such game little dogs, and full of spirit. They can be exasperating and stubborn, and our experience has been that they have no road sense whatsoever, so you do need to be careful around traffic (always on a lead) — but they are good fun, have a great love of life, and a terrific sense of humour."



The Norwich Terrier.

Get geared up!

Useful doggy products for dog owners and their pets on the move.



KEEP HIM COOL

● **Product:** Cooling vest from Orvis.

If you're exploring the Norfolk countryside this summer, how about investing in this cooling vest to protect your dog from overheating when the temperature climbs? Simply dip the vest in cold water, then wring dry, and pop it on your dog; it is designed specifically to cool off the heart and chest region.

Take it with you during walks, training sessions, and when attending dog shows. Made from 100 per cent polyester, it is washable, and available in sizes small, medium, large, and extra large.

● **Price:** £26.99 – £31.99.

● **Available from:** www.orvis.co.uk

MAKE A SPLASH!

● **Product:** RinseKit Portable Dog Shower.

Perfect for getting your dog clean after a muddy romp in the forest, or a sandy scamper on the beach, the RinseKit delivers a pressurised spray for up to three minutes, offering seven different settings, from jet stream to soaking.

And the RinseKit's versatility means it can also be used to rinse off outdoor equipment, mud from your car, boots, and even people! The kit includes the base unit, spray nozzle, 6ft hose, hose bib adaptor, and quick connect. The tank can be filled from any outside spigot or sink (with an adaptor, sold separately).

● **Price:** £89.99.

● **Available from:** www.orvis.co.uk



SIX FUN FACTS ABOUT NORFOLK

1 Norfolk is the fifth largest county in England.

2 The Norfolk coastline stretches for 100 miles, from Hopton on Sea to the Wash.

3 When early man settled in Norfolk 1.2 million years ago, it was connected by

a land bridge to mainland Europe.

4 The highest point in Norfolk is Beacon Hill near West Runton, and it stands at 338ft above sea level.

5 Thetford Forest, which welcomes dogs, is the largest lowland forest in Britain and it

covers an area of 80 square miles.

For more information, visit www.forestryengland.uk/thetford-forest

6 Howard Carter, the archaeologist who famously discovered the tomb of Tutankhamun in Egypt in 1922, originally grew up in Swaffham, Norfolk.