



**BERKSHIRE A DOG WALKER'S
GUIDE**
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WALK 10: *Ufton Court & Ufton Woods*

Dogs love a trip to the woods, there are always interesting things to sniff and investigate, without worrying about suddenly running into a field of sheep. This walk starts with Scots pine in woods that are used for logging. Further into the walk, the woods become deciduous, with mature beech and oak trees. In spring, the woodland ground is carpeted with bluebells, while white campion thrive on the banks by the footpath. The Englefield Estate, which manages these woods, has been in the stewardship of the Benyon family for more than 250 years. Richard Benyon was elected as MP for Newbury in 2005. He lives with his family in the heart of the estate in Englefield House. The Elizabethan Ufton Court was home to the Roman Catholic Perkins family in the 16th century and has priest holes, a secret chapel in the roof and the remains of an escape tunnel leading into the surrounding woodland. The manor house is now owned by an educational trust and is used by local schools for educational visits, when visiting children dress up in Tudor clothes and experience a Tudor banquet and dancing. Ufton Court is also a popular wedding venue, and in the spring and summer you can often see a wedding party posing for photos in the grounds. St Kenhelm's church, with its Jacobean woodwork and stone monuments, is an absolute gem.

TERRAIN: Wide gravel paths, fields and woodland paths. The woods can be muddy and some of the paths are also used by loggers' trucks and horses. There is also a short stretch of road walking without a pavement, but on a very quiet country lane.

WHERE TO PARK: Free parking in the car park at the southern end of Silver Lane (GR SU628655). OS map: Explorer 159 Reading Wokingham and Pangbourne.

HOW TO GET THERE: Follow the signs for Ufton Nervet from the A4. Cross a railway track, then drive through the village. Continue heading south through woods for a mile. At a T junction, turn right heading towards Padworth Common. Silver Lane is half a mile along this road on the right, and the car park is almost immediately on your right.

NEAREST REFRESHMENTS: You don't pass any pubs on the actual walk, but the village of Mortimer is only

a mile to the west, and the Horse and Groom opposite the fairground welcomes dogs inside the bar, has a beer garden and serves food. (Telephone 0118 9332813 / RG7 3RD). The Winning Hand is on the A4, next to the turning for Ufton Nervet. This large pub serves good food and has a large outside terrace and beer garden. (Telephone 0118 930 2472 / RG7 5JB).

DOG FACTORS

DISTANCE: 4 miles.

Road walking: Half mile along Silver Lane at the end of the walk. There are no pavements, but you will meet barely any traffic and it has grassy verges.

LIVESTOCK: Passes a dairy farm and there are horses in some of the fields.

STILES: None.

NEAREST VETS: O'Gorman Slater Main and Partners, Tadley.

THE WALK

1. From the car park, turn left and walk a short distance to the end of Silver Lane and the start of the footpath. On your left, follow the wide public footpath that leads you diagonally across Roundoak Piece. Keep your dog under close control when you get to the end of this path as it meets the road into Ufton Nervet. On your left there are two paths, take the left of these two paths, which leads you away from the road along a wide rutted path, and into Park Piece. Continue until you come to a junction of tracks with the road visible on your right. Continue ahead to cross the first track which leads directly to the road. After about 20 yards, there is a 'No Dogs' sign, so turn right and follow the wide grassy track, which leads first

to the road, then turns left to walk with the road on your right and the woods on your left. This leads you to the





junction with Green Lane.

2 There is a sign pointing to Ufton Court on your left. Follow the public footpath sign, walking next to a barrier and walk a few yards along this path. Then turn right as the footpath leads you away from the woods and through a kissing gate into a large meadow. Follow the path diagonally across the meadow, heading west.

3 At the other side of the field, go through the kissing gate and follow the public footpath sign to the right, passing three red brick houses, then Ufton Court itself. You can see the next public footpath sign ahead of you in front of a metal farm gate. Walk up to the sign, passing a large oak tree in the corner of Ufton Court's gardens, then follow the footpath to the left, beside a wooden barrier and heading west. It is safe to have your dog off lead in these woods. Walk with Ufton Court's grounds and medieval fish ponds on your left, then woods, and cross a small brick bridge over a stream. The path narrows and begins to lead you uphill, with hedgerows either side and fields beyond the hedges. As you get to the top of the path, click your dog back on its lead as the path ends by the farmyard of Old Farm, passing a shed full of curious cows.

4 Walk through the metal farm gates then turn left by the farm and walk a short distance down Silver Lane, looking out for a footpath sign on the right, just past a large detached brick house on your left. There are more farm gates here. Follow the footpath sign diagonally across a large paddock, the horses are fenced off from the path but you will have to keep your dog on a lead. At the end of the field, turn right and walk to the corner of the field. There is a gap by the side of the stile and at the road turn left and walk a few yards to a public brideway sign, also on your left. Follow this path until you come to the banks of Grim's Bank on your left. Here you leave the brideway and turn left to follow the public footpath with Grim's Bank on your left and mixed native woodland on your right. The path comes out at Silver Lane, where you turn right and walk downhill for half a mile, back to the car park.

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