

The White Thorn Inn Shaugh Prior Village

There's a lovely outing to be had when you go to this country pub. It is out of our neighbourhood but the twenty-mile drive is a pleasant part of a worthwhile Dartmoor visit.

Once through Modbury town, the route takes you off-the-beaten-track and along the lanes that link Penquit, Ivybridge and Cornwood. It then passes an equestrian centre and Wotter before arriving at Shaugh Prior. (It is two miles from Bickleigh Military Base for the 42nd Commando, Royal Marines.) We parked in The White Thorn's ample car park and noticed that there *is* a hitching rail for horses!

We were soon seated at a shaded table on decking, next to a garden that sloped down away from us. We relaxed with scenic views, beyond, of farming on the Dartmoor Fringe and noticed, at the bottom of the White Thorn garden, a flag with skull-&-crossbones that marks a kiddie's play park. That 'Black Thorn' area is fenced to keep kids safe from wondering into the car park. As they played on a climbing frame, swing and slide, there were two goats grazing among them.

White Thorn Inn caters well for families and in an easy casual style it accommodates various social events. There's a welcome for walkers from Dartmoor. A walking group from Thurlestone, 'Tramps', who arrived without fore-warning after a lengthy mid-week hike, were provided with good soup, sandwiches and kebabs. At the time, the inn's staff were already occupied with a barbeque for a Funeral Wake.

My visit was on a sunny Saturday. The ambiance was quiet and the pace relaxed. Inside, there was a mood that could span decades with a dart board, chess board, and a TV for viewing sport. Walls displayed talented locals' art work and, a mounted stag's head and stuffed pheasant with glorious colouring, fitted in well with traditional dark furniture. There's good value for money here and live music of different genres is frequently programmed in – such as on their curry night.

Lunch choices include a Ploughman's, Soup, Jacket potatoes, Chicken wings and various sandwiches. All are moderately priced. A Carvery is a favourite choice from the popular dishes on the menu. We found their food to have a satisfyingly home-cooked touch. Their Barbeque, 'The Cuckoo's Nest', is for parties (and, sensibly, there is a gong to call diners to the grill). Generous portions of fruit crumble, sticky toffee pudding, and popular deserts like ice cream sundaes, complete your meal.

Locals know there is good humour and good ale in this inn and travellers get a warm welcome from friendly staff. We left with a feeling of well-being. As visitors from Thurlestone, we intend to call again at this inn on the west side of Dartmoor. We drove back through beautiful lanes, and were reminded of how privileged we are to be here... For more information call The White Thorn 01752 839245