

The Classic Walk

Main Features of the Walk

- A riverside walk with views across the water meadows
- Avoids the tedious drive from Dedham to Flatford
- A chance to see the Fen Bridge, Bridge Cottage (with a small, free Constable exhibition) the dry dock, Flatford Mill and Willy Lott's cottage.

Outline Route

The route starts in the centre of Dedham Village and follows the footpath that runs eastwards along the south bank of the River Stour to Flatford Mill. At Flatford a choice exists either to retrace steps to Dedham Village, or to continue to Judas Gap, and return to Dedham along the original course of the Stour.

Approximate Distance Up to 3 3/4 miles

Approx. Completion Time About 2 hours

Toilet Provisions There are public toilets in Dedham and at Flatford.

Suggested Car Parking In the Dedham public car park

Eating and Drinking In Dedham and/or at Flatford tea room (summer months only).

Shortcuts

The "Directions" listed below relate to the route that is shown on the map in **yellow** highlight. If you want a slightly shorter walk than is suggested, return to Dedham directly from Flatford, perhaps for variety crossing the river by means of the Fen Bridge and using the footpath on the north side of the river.



Directions

The walk starts from outside St. Mary's church in the centre of Dedham. *Dis. from start (miles)*

Walk eastwards along the High Street, with the Marlborough Head on your left and the War Memorial on the right.

At the point where the road bends sharply to the right, go straight on along the footpath, which soon veers to the left. 0.1

Pass Dedham Hall Business Park on the left, and after 1/2 mile reach the River Stour. 0.6

Turn right (east) and follow the footpath along the river bank. Otters are sometimes seen here (reputedly!).

Pass the Fen Bridge. (This is a replica of the one that would have been used by John Constable on his way to and from school, and was lifted into place by a Chinook helicopter in 1985.) 0.8



St. Mary's Church, Dedham



The Fen Bridge

Continue to Flatford. Cross over the hump-back bridge and turn right to see a small Constable exhibition in Bridge Cottage, the dry dock (which was capable of being drained into the old course of the river on the other side of the flood plain), Flatford Mill and also a familiar view of Willy Lott's Cottage.

1.4



Willy Lott's Cottage as Constable saw it in "The Hay Wain"

John Constable, 1821. Photo © The National Gallery, London



Willy Lott's Cottage as you will see it



The dry dock as Constable saw it in "Boatbuilding near Flatford Mill"

John Constable, 1815. Photo © The Victoria & Albert Museum, London



The dry dock as you will see it

Cross back over the hump-back bridge. If you prefer a short walk, retrace your steps to Dedham (perhaps crossing the river by means of the Fen Bridge and using the footpath on the north side of the river). For a longer walk continue eastwards along the riverside path on the south bank of the river.

1.8



The hump back bridge, with Bridge Cottage in the background

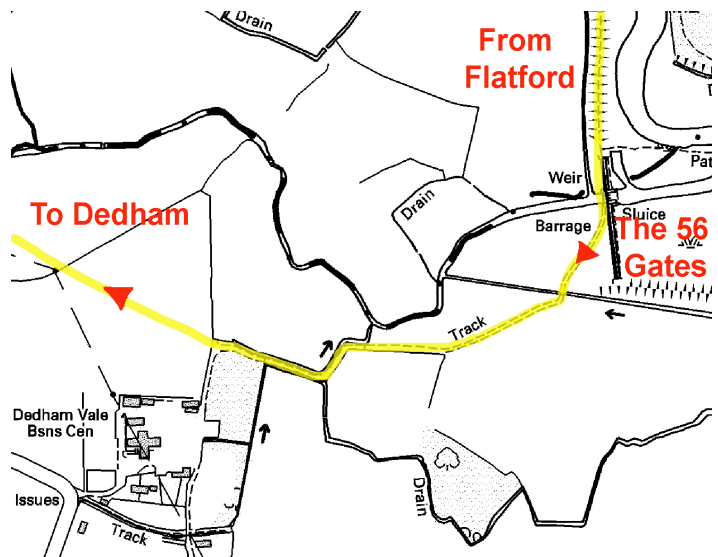
At the "56 Gates" (concrete sluice gates built in 1947 to prevent flooding) cross a bridge over the original course of the River Stour, and follow the path south-westwards (i.e. 2.2 slightly to the right) through a field gate and then across a field that often contains cattle, until a concrete farm road is reached.



The "56 Gates"

Turn right onto the concrete road and follow this for 1/4 mile, until it takes a sharp bend to the left.

At this point follow the footpath that is virtually opposite you, and return to Dedham.



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Total mileage for this walk 3.7