



i Our walking trails can be very popular. Please park considerately, and maintain social distancing on your walk. Find directions and booking info where relevant on the property web page.

Start: Manningtree Station, grid ref: TM093322

- 1 Leave Manningtree station exit and descend ramp to the right. The footpath starts from the end of the ramp in the car park. After leaving the car park, turn right along a track, then right again under a railway bridge. Follow path until you reach the river and turn left along a stream-side path taking you through the Cattawade Marshes.

Cattawade Marshes

The Cattawade Marshes is where the freshwater of the Stour meets the tidal estuary and is a great place to spot waterfowl and waders. Look out for the little egret which can be seen fishing in streams and ditches downstream of Flatford.

- 2 Walk behind Fifty-six Gates, and follow the path on the bank to the hamlet of Flatford.

Fifty-six Gates

The banks are protected from very high tides by a new barrier further downstream. Fifty-six Gates is the original flood defence designed to stop salt water inundating the low-lying Dedham Vale.

Walking in the footsteps of Constable

Walking trail

Explore the picturesque Stour Valley and Dedham Vale on this relaxing walk with the National Trust, visiting the area made famous by the 18th-century paintings of John Constable, England's foremost landscape artist of the time. See Flatford Mill, Willy Lott's House, the site of The Hay Wain painting, and visit the Village of Dedham, where Constable used to go to school.

In partnership with



Flatford, Suffolk

Moderate

2 hours 30 mins - 3 hours 45 mins

4 - 7 miles (6.4 - 11.2 km)

Landranger 168; Explorer 196

Dog friendly

- 3 You can take a short detour to see Flatford Mill, Willy Lott's House and the site of The Hay Wain painting. You can then return to Manningtree by the same route or continue on to Dedham.

Flatford and Willy Lott's house

The little riverside hamlet of Flatford is the setting for some of Constable's most famous paintings, such as the well-known 'The Hay Wain'. Bridge Cottage is now home to a National Trust tea-room and shop and a small exhibition on Constable. Flatford Mill and Willy Lott's house are owned by the National Trust but leased to the Field Studies Council which runs arts-based courses there.

- 4 Leave Flatford by walking from Bridge Cottage towards the RSPB wildlife garden. Go up the steps on your left and follow the path to the car park. Turn left at the top of the car park and after 110yd (100m) take the footpath running parallel to the road.

- 5 Turn left into Fen Lane.

Panoramic views

The panoramic views in this picture are captured in Dedham Vale morn; look out for the landscape which inspired 'The Cornfield' when walking along Fen Lane towards Dedham.

- 6 Shortly after crossing a bridge, turn right along a tree-lined footpath. Cross riverside meadows, until you reach a bridge at Dedham.

Dedham

From his home in East Bergholt, a mile or so to the north, Constable used to walk across the riverside meadows to Dedham every day on his way to school. Dedham is a pretty village with Church of St Mary the Virgin, home to an original Constable painting, The Ascension. This is the best of his three religious works. It was painted in 1821, the same year as the Hay Wain.

- 7 Leave the village on a footpath after the drive leading to Dedham Hall. Follow the path to Flatford, bearing left at a National Trust sign to Dedham Hall Farm.

Dedham Hall

Dating back to A.D. 1400, the hall itself is listed as an Historic House of Special Interest and is located at the edge of the village of Dedham. Apart from a historic hotel and restaurant, it hosts regular art courses.

- 8 The river leads back to Bridge Cottage across water meadows. A kissing gate marks the site of an old stile featured in another Constable painting, 'The Leaping Horse'. Now retrace your path back to Manningtree Station.

End: Manningtree Station, grid ref: TM093322