

The Ferry Boat Inn, Dittisham

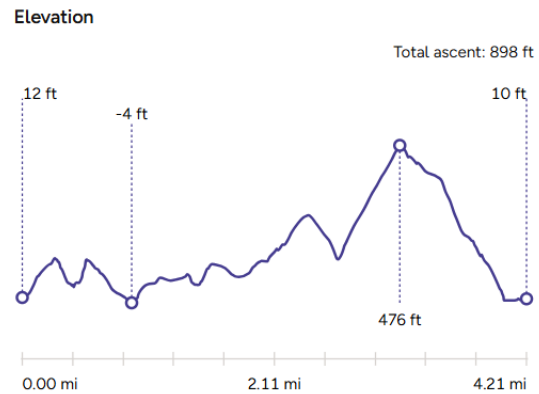
Circular Walk around Dittisham above the River Dart, 4 miles

OVERVIEW

This circular route explores the landscape that makes Dittisham and the middle sections of the River Dart so special. It climbs above the village into quiet countryside, revealing a different perspective on this beautiful river valley before returning to the Ferry Boat Inn. The route follows sections of three long-distance paths—the Dart Valley Trail, the South Hams Way and the John Musgrave Heritage Trail—so you'll often find several waymarkers comically sharing the same posts. It begins through the historic heart of Dittisham, passing St George's Church, whose position above the village reflects centuries of life shaped by the river below.

From here the route descends towards Dittisham Mill Creek before climbing through woodland and farmland above the village. Along the way you'll pass close to the slopes where Alexandre Liwentaal carried out his pioneering aviation experiments in 1894, one of Britain's earliest recorded attempts to leave the ground.

The final return through Dittisham is a highlight in itself. After exploring the countryside above the village, the gradual descent through its lanes brings you back towards the river and the welcome sight of The Ferry Boat Inn waiting below.



Start/Finish	The walk starts at The Ham car park, a small level site down Ham Lane beside the River Dart.		
Parking	As above, use the car park at The Ham. There is some street parking on Riverside Road, just past the Church, before you drop down Ham Lane to the car park.		
Grid Reference	SX 865 551		
What3Words	///paradise.online.users		
Distance	4.2 miles / 6.7 km	Time	2 hrs
		Ascent	900 ft / 275 m
Paths/Terrain	Pavements, quiet country lanes, fields, farm tracks. Option for walk along edge of creek.		
Difficulty	Moderate. The walk is not technically difficult, but there are several steady climbs, some uneven paths and a short section that can become muddy after wet weather. Shoreline routes are available that can be affected by high tides, in which case the alternative routes are suggested to provide an easy detour.		

Public Transport

Bus services to Dartmouth, Totnes, Newton Abbott and Torquay are available, though the frequency is limited. Check the link here [Bus Services | Dittisham Parish Council](#)

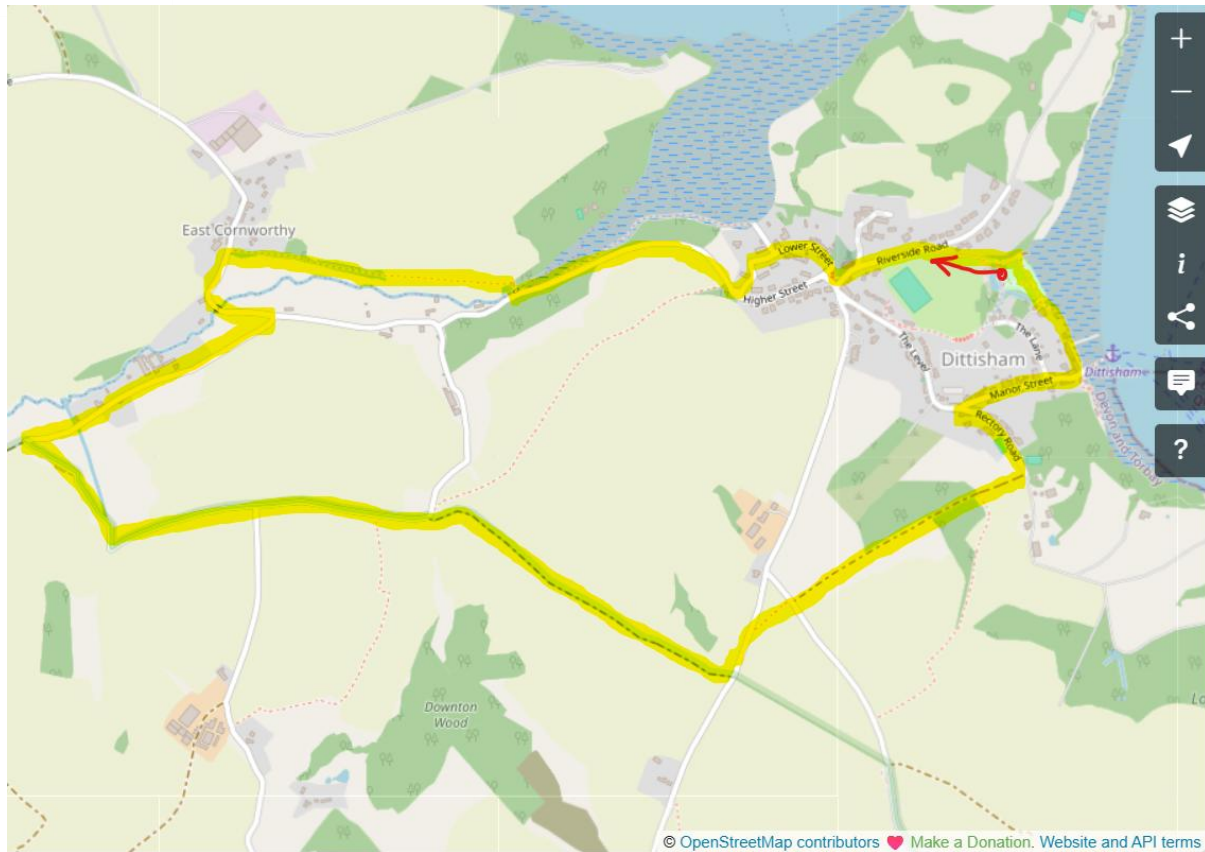
Toilets

Public toilets at The Ham car park, as well as at The Ferry Boat Inn.

Other Pubs Nearby

This area is served by some excellent pubs that would appreciate support: The Hunters Lodge pub in Cornworthy village; The Maltsters in Tuckenhay and The Waterman's Arms a few hundred yards further on along the lane. Both are superb pubs in idyllic locations. Then in the village of Ashprington is The Durant Arms, another excellent village pub and a reasonable goal for a Dart Valley out and back walk from Totnes. Note that The Red Lion in Dittisham is currently being refurbished, but still functions as the community run village shop and post office.

DIRECTIONS



There are numerous excellent linear and circular footpaths along the valley of the beautiful River Dart, as well as around the picturesque Devon villages and towns along its route. This suggested route explores Dittisham and some of the hills above the village, with views of the River along the way. Dittisham, three miles up the River Dart from Dartmouth, has a rich history dating back to the Saxon era, with significant maritime and agricultural heritage. The route uses some of the waymarked paths such as The Dart Valley Trail, The South Hams Way, and The John Musgrave Trail. You'll see markers for these trails along the route, sometimes all of them at the same time! In Dittisham, a ferry service from Dittisham Jetty takes you across the River Dart to Greenway Quay on the other side, from where you can take a short walk uphill to visit what was Agatha Christie's home at Greenway House, now a National Trust property. Ferry services to Dartmouth also serve Greenway Quay. There are plenty of walk options both around Dittisham, or to Dartmouth and Kingswear using the ferry service for a return journey if preferred.

1. From the Ham car park, head back up the way you came, towards St George's Church. The church has stood watch over this bend of the Dart for the better part of seven centuries — parts of it date to 1328–33 — positioned deliberately to be visible both up and downstream. Cromwell's men did their usual damage here, burning the rectory and destroying the early parish registers, but the 15th-century carved wineglass pulpit survived, along with the red sandstone font, reputedly buried to keep it safe.

2. Go through the churchyard, round to the tower, and take the metal gate that's at the end of the path opposite the tower door.
3. You'll emerge onto Lower Street with Craig Cottage ahead of you. Turn right, downhill through the village.
4. Past a thatched longhouse, look for a footpath down to Dittisham Mill Creek, between Heronsgate and Seal House. At low tide you can follow the shore round to the left in the direction of Dittisham Mill, avoiding the lane above — flatter, and rather nicer underfoot.
5. If the tide's in, or you'd rather stay on tarmac, continue past Seal House as the road curves steeply past village houses up to a junction. Turn right and follow the lane until Dittisham Mill comes into view, where the low-tide route rejoins from the creek on your right.
6. Fifty metres on, before the mill, take the path on your right over a footbridge, across the private wooded drive of 'Dinah's Side', and up steps into a field. Follow the field left on a level if uneven path, with the old waterwheel at Dittisham Mill coming into view below you to the left. The slopes around you now are where Alexandre Liwentaal took to the air in 1894 — a 40-foot-wingspan machine, inspired by watching the local seabirds, that got six or seven feet off the ground for several yards before a gust flipped it onto its back. Undeterred, he had another go from the slopes above Bozomzeal and put it straight into a hedge instead.
7. The path enters woodland and comes out on a narrow road just outside East Cornworthy. (The Hunters Lodge pub in Cornworthy village is about 1.5 miles further along the lane, to the right, if you fancy a detour.)
8. Head downhill to the left, over a small bridge — the same Dittisham-to-Cornworthy lane you crossed earlier.
9. After the bridge, round a bend and proceed steeply uphill to a junction signposted for Combe. Turn right.
10. The lanes from here are properly quiet, passing Combe Farm Studio and Fingals — a cluster of quirky self-catered lets — before curving left to pass Barberry Farm.
11. Some uphill work now, rising to the junction at Kingston Cross — roughly the ground Liwentaal was trying to get airborne over. Continue downhill, signposted Dittisham, to a bend where you turn right onto an unmetalled farm track between hedges, with a gate to your right as you head uphill.
12. The track is narrow and can be genuinely tricky in the wet, with overgrown grass and fern verges folding in after rain.

13. At the top, the track meets the main Dartmouth road into Dittisham — take care here. Turn left, follow it downhill for about 50 metres towards Bozomzeal Cross, and pick up the footpath opposite into a field through a gate.
14. Cross the field on a clear path to a gate on the far side. You're above Dittisham now, with the village laid out along the river, visible in both directions.
15. Through the gate, drop straight down onto a quiet road, cross carefully, and pick up what looks like a gravel drive opposite. Follow it its full length — level at first, then down into Lower Dittisham — arriving in front of The Old Rectory.
16. Bear left onto Rectory Road through the upper village, then right at the junction by The White House to begin the final descent to the pub via Manor Street — one of the loveliest few hundred yards in Devon.
17. As you drop towards the river, note "The Lane" on your left — your route back if the tide's in.
18. Arrive at the Ferry Boat Inn. If the tide's in, this is about as good as waterside pub locations get in England. The passenger ferry from the jetty still runs across to Greenway Quay for Agatha Christie's house, with connections on to Dartmouth in season.
19. From the Ferry Boat Inn, walk back to the car park along the shore, under the pub's famous window — or back up Manor Street to The Lane to reach the Ham car park from there.