

Walk 3

CHAFFEIGH, SHEDRICK & THE STRAWBERRY FIELDS

Distance: 5km/3.11 miles

[TVT Walk 3 Map](#)

This walk takes you along the course of the Synderford River to the ruins of Thorncombe's water mills at Chaffeigh and Shedrick. It returns to Thorncombe via Forde Abbey's fruit farm. Whatever the time of year, parts of this walk tends to be muddy, so wellingtons are recommended.

Part of the walk follows The Jubilee Trail. For more information go to:

<http://www.dorset-ramblers.org.uk/jubileeguide1.shtml>



Shedrick Bridge, Wheel House Lane

1. With the church behind you turn right and walk down Chard Street past the village hall on your left. On your right is opposite Gribb View is a grassy track called Blind Lane. It dates back to medieval times. Follow it, ignoring the gates on your right until you reach a gate directly ahead of you.
2. Pass through the gate and keeping the hedge on your right go through the next two fields. To your left is the ghostly presence of Chitmoor Farm, which disappeared around the end of 19th century. Below you in the Synderford Valley. According to a document dated 1767, local people used to supplement their diet with the eels and trout which swam here. The footpath runs down the centre of the field. Ahead of you is a wooden footbridge. Cross it and there you will find the ruin of Chaffeigh Mill, one of Thorncombe's three mills. (See also [Thorncombe's Industrial Relics](#)) By 1889 the mill had been decommissioned and was a residence. Retrace your steps. Go back over the bridge and turn right.

3. Follow the course of the river and cross the next footbridge over a brook which trickles into the Synderford River. Still keeping the river to your right follow the path and cross the next footbridge on your right. Follow the track. You are following the old road to Winsham and heading for Shedrick. It is mentioned in Forde Abbey's 13th century records. During the 18th and 19th century Chaffeigh and Shedrick, both of which were water mills, processed local wool and wove the narrow cloth used to for cheap coats and jackets. They may later have been used for processing flax. Remnants of leats, waterworks relating to the operation of the Shedrick, can be seen in the undergrowth to the left of the path. Following closure during the middle of the 19th century the mill was used as a brick works. A rapidly disintegrating ruin you pass its wheel house on your left.
4. Go through the gate ahead. Wheel House Road was turnpiked as part of the Winsham to Drimpton line in 1827. Cross the bridge, turn left and follow the road to Forde Abbey Fruit Farm. Here during the summer you can PYO strawberries, raspberries and other soft fruit. To the left of the gate leading into the fruit farm is another gate with a footpath sign. Go through this gate and walk across the centre of the field towards two gates next to each other.
5. Go through the left hand gate. Keeping the hedge to your left follow the path and go through another gate. This part of the walk is punctuated by a series of metal kissing gates. Turn right on to a track. Keeping the hedge to your right follow the track until you reach another gate on your right. Go through it and keeping the hedge to your left follow the path until you reach another gate. Go through it and keeping the hedge to your left follow the path until you reach a stile.
6. Climb over the stile, and keeping the hedge to your right walk down the middle of the field to the right hand corner where you will find stepping stones crossing a brook. Cross it and go through the gate. Turn left and go through the next gate. You are now on Chitmoor, aptly named as the ground is usually very waterlogged and muddy.
7. Climb up the hill, turn right and retrace your footsteps back along Blind Lane.

*EVE HIGGS
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