



CONSTABLE

IMPRESSIONS OF LAND, SEA AND SKY

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY

John Constable biographical summary

This biographical summary provides an outline of key events in John Constable's life alongside some of the major events of the time, highlighted in red. We are indebted to the work of RB Beckett, editor of *John Constable's correspondence* (6 vols), London: Boydell Press, 1962–68; and for *The diary of Joseph Farington* (16 vols), to Kenneth Garlick and Angus Macintyre (eds vols I–VI) and Kathryn Cave (ed. vols VII–XVI), New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978–84; to Charles S Rhyne's *John Constable: toward a complete chronology*, Portland, Oregon: CS Rhyne, 1990; Leslie Parris and Ian Fleming-Williams's *Constable*, London: Tate Gallery, 1991; and Judy Crosby Ivy, *Constable and the Critics, 1802–37*, Woodbridge: Boydell Press in association with Suffolk Records Society, 1991.

Spellings used by Constable have been maintained: thus feilds rather than fields; Stoke-by-Neyland rather than Stoke-by-Nayland, etc.

- 1760 On 25 October George III succeeded to the British throne.
- 1768 The Royal Academy of Arts was founded by a group of prominent artists and architects, including Sir Joshua Reynolds and Sir William Chambers, who were determined to achieve professional standing for British art and architecture. The Academy was established through a direct act by George III, signed on 10 December, to provide a venue for exhibitions, which would be open to the public, and to establish a school of art through which the skills and knowledge of these prominent artists could be passed on to

future generations.

- 1769–70 During his first voyage of discovery in command of the *Endeavour*, James Cook charted 2 400 miles of the coastline of New Zealand. On 14 January 1770 he arrived at 'a very broad and deep bay or inlet', which he named Queen Charlotte's Sound, and took formal possession of the area for Britain. During this voyage Cook charted the eastern coast of Australia and on 22 August 1770 he claimed the land as a British possession, naming it New South Wales.
- 1773 During his second voyage of discovery in command of the *Resolution*, James Cook returned to New Zealand. The officially appointed artist on this voyage was William Hodges (1774–1797).
- 1776 John Constable was born in East Bergholt, Suffolk, on 11 June, the fourth child and second son of Golding Constable and his wife Ann (née Watts). Golding Constable was a prosperous mill owner, corn and coal merchant and barge operator.
- On 4 July thirteen States of America united to sign a Declaration of Independence from Britain.
- 1776–80 In July 1776 James Cook set sail on his third voyage of discovery around the Pacific in command of the *Resolution*. John Webber (1750–1793) was the officially appointed artist on the voyage and, along with William Ellis, surgeon's second mate, provided perhaps the most comprehensive visual record of any of

	Cook's voyages. Cook visited New Zealand again in 1777. On 14 February 1779 in Hawaii he was stabbed to death by Polynesian natives and the expedition returned to England, arriving there in October 1780. Constable's uncle John Watts, who was one of Cook's officers on this voyage, 'was tattoo'd all over his body by some Natives of the Islands he visited in the course of the Voyage' (<i>News Chronicle</i> , 1801, cit. Beckett I, p. 15).	1792	the Bastille, while in rural areas of France peasants attacked noble manors, and the French Revolution (1789–99) began.
1783	Constable attended school at Fordstreet near Dedham, Essex and then a boarding school at Lavenham, Suffolk. He later attended Dedham Grammar School as a dayboy.		Constable carved the outline of a windmill on a timber in his father's East Bergholt mill, inscribed 'John Constable, 1792'.
	The American War of Independence concluded on 3 September when Britain signed a treaty recognising the independence of the American colonies.		After leaving grammar school at Dedham Constable spent several years working in his father's milling business, where he learnt the importance of weather to an agricultural community and observed atmospheric phenomena with a disciplined eye. At the same time he privately pursued his ambition to be a painter.
1788	On 26 January the First Fleet, with Arthur Phillip in command, arrived at Sydney Cove and established the British penal colony of New South Wales.	1792	Constable's interest in art led him to become friends with John Dunthorne senior (1770–1844), a local amateur artist, and plumber and glazier by profession, who encouraged Constable to paint. They worked in the fields, each day painting one view for a certain time until the shadows changed.
1789	On 28 April aboard the <i>Bounty</i> in the South Pacific, Fletcher Christian staged a mutiny against the ship's captain, William Bligh, capturing the ship and setting Bligh and his supporters adrift in the ship's launch.	1793	On 21 September the French abolished the monarchy and established the First Republic.
	George Washington became the first President of the United States of America on 30 April.		On 15 January the first free settlers arrived in New South Wales on the merchant ship <i>Bellona</i> .
	On 14 July the citizens of Paris stormed		After being found guilty of treason and sentenced to death, Louis XVI of France was executed in the Place de la Révolution, Paris, on 21 January. His Queen, Marie Antoinette, was executed on 16 October.

On 1 February France declared war on Britain and the two countries remained at war until 1815. During the war British farmers benefited from increased prices for agricultural produce.

1795 Constable probably met the collector, patron and amateur artist Sir George Beaumont (1753–1827), whose mother lived at Dedham. Beaumont encouraged Constable in his art. He gave Constable the opportunity to view works by Claude Lorrain in his collection and may have introduced him to Richard Wilson's paintings. Beaumont also instilled in Constable the need to find a higher ideal and moral purpose in his art.

1796 While staying with his uncle Thomas Allen, at Edmonton in August, Constable met engraver and antiquarian John Thomas ('Antiquity') Smith (1766–1833) and painter John Cranch (1751–1821). Smith introduced Constable to the 'picturesque' mode of depicting local scenery, and under Smith's influence he made drawings of local cottages. Smith also advised Constable not to people his landscapes with imaginary figures but with those actually observed in the landscape, and to use varying shades of green when depicting vegetation. He introduced Constable to the work of Jacob van Ruisdael. Smith also taught Constable the rudiments of etching, and under his guidance Constable made two etchings, *The deserted cottage* c. 1797 and *The harvest field* c. 1797.

1798 In the summer Constable probably met for the first time Canon John Fisher (1748–1825),

later the Bishop of Salisbury, who became a supporter and patron. At this time he may also have met Fisher's nephew and namesake, the Reverend John Fisher (1788–1832), later Archdeacon of Berkshire, who became his closest friend. Constable's letters to Fisher provide insights into his world and his art, as well as many of his thoughts and feelings.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge and William Wordsworth anonymously published *Lyrical ballads*, including Coleridge's *The rime of the ancient mariner*. In his preface to *Lyrical ballads* Wordsworth praised unaffected language and professed his faith in the direct experience of nature. In a letter to John Fisher dated 17 December 1824 Constable described *The rime of the ancient mariner* as 'the very best modern poem' (Beckett VI, p. 186).

Mathew Flinders and George Bass circumnavigated Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania) – they departed Port Jackson (Sydney) on 7 October 1798 and returned on 12 January 1799.

1799 Constable moved to London in February resolved to become a professional artist, assisted by a small allowance from his father. With a letter of introduction he called on landscape painter, diarist and influential art politician Joseph Farington RA (1747–1821), who became an important mentor to him. Farington encouraged Constable to develop his style by copying the work of the Old Masters and to study nature – and seek the

	atmosphere and general effect of nature. With a recommendation from Farington Constable entered the Royal Academy Schools as a probationer on 4 March. He made copies of works by Ruisdael, Wilson and Jan Wynants. That year he was in the Antique School where he learnt to draw plaster casts of antiques. For a short time he became a friend of Ramsay Richard Reinagle (1775–1862) and shared accommodation with him. That year Reinagle also visited Constable in East Bergholt.		
1800	<p>On 19 February, Constable was elevated to the Life School of the Royal Academy Schools, where he learnt to draw the nude model, and attended anatomy lessons. He continued to copy works by earlier artists: Annibale Carracci, Ruisdael, Wilson and Claude's <i>Hagar and the Angel</i> 1646 (National Gallery, London).</p> <p>In the summer Constable sketched in Helmingham Hall, the Suffolk estate of the Earl of Dysart.</p> <p>On 21 June Constable received his official card of admission to the Royal Academy Schools.</p>		
1801	<p>Constable visited Sir George Beaumont's London house to study his collection, where he preferred 'the little wood scene of Claude to all others' (Farington, <i>Diary</i> IV, p. 1527).</p> <p>John Reade, then owner of Old Hall, East Bergholt, gave Constable his first significant commission: a view of Old Hall.</p>		
		1802	<p>Constable exhibited at the Royal Academy for the first time in an unidentified 'Landscape', which Farington considered to have 'a great deal of merit but [to be] rather too cold'. Farington told Constable to 'study nature' more, and work from '<i>particular</i> art less' (Farington, <i>Diary</i> V, p. 1764).</p> <p>Constable considered taking a job teaching drawing, but Farington advised him against it.</p> <p>After viewing the works on display at the Royal Academy, Constable wrote to his East Bergholt friend John Dunthorne: 'I am returned with a deep conviction of the truth of Sir Joshua Reynolds's observation that "there is no easy way of becoming a good painter"', and that 'Nature is the fountain's head, the source from whence all originally must spring'; and he expressed his intention to return to East Bergholt to make 'laborious studies from nature' and to get a 'pure and unaffected representation of the scenes'.</p> <p>When he returned to East Bergholt in June, Constable purchased a small property opposite the family home to use as a studio, which he used on his visits there over the next fourteen years.</p>
		1803	<p>In April Constable made a brief voyage</p>

	from London to Deal in Kent, in the East Indiaman ship, <i>Coutts</i> . He was on board for about a month, making drawings of shipping influenced by the marine paintings of Willem van de Velde the younger.		moisture-laden atmosphere of the area. In these works Constable showed for the first time his interest in atmospheric phenomena and noted on the back of a number of them the time of day and weather conditions.
1804	Constable devoted much of his time to painting portraits commissioned by farmers and their families in the East Bergholt area, charging two or three guineas apiece. In the afternoons he painted landscapes.		While in the Lake District Constable met poets Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772–1832), Robert Southey (1774–1823) and William Wordsworth (1770–1850).
1805	Constable painted the altarpiece <i>Christ blessing the children</i> for Brantham Church in Essex.	1807	Constable spent most of the year in London, where he attended the Life Class at the Royal Academy every evening.
	On 21 October the Royal Navy, led by Admiral Horatio Nelson, defeated the combined French and Spanish fleets in the Battle of Trafalgar, off the coast of Spain. Nelson was killed by a sniper's bullet.		William Wordsworth published <i>The daffodils</i> in his <i>Poems in two volumes</i> .
1806	At the Royal Academy Constable exhibited a watercolour celebrating the Battle of Trafalgar, <i>His Majesty's Ship 'Victory', Capt. E. Harvey, in the Memorable Battle of Trafalgar between two French Ships of the Line</i> (Victoria & Albert Museum, London).	1808	Between 1808 and 1816 (the year of his marriage), Constable spent most of the summers and early autumns at East Bergholt, painting directly from nature, sketching in the fields and the surrounding countryside. He returned to London to get his works ready for exhibition at the Royal Academy in the following May.
	Encouraged and financed by his uncle David Pike Watts, a wealthy wine merchant, Constable made a seven-week sketching tour of the Lake District, from 1 September to 19 October. He painted around Kendal, Brathay, Skelwith, Thirlmere, Windermere and spent at least three weeks in the Borrowdale area. He made almost one hundred drawings and watercolours, in which he captured the	1809	In July and August Constable visited Malvern Hall, Solihull, Warwickshire, as a guest of Henry Greswolde Lewis, brother of the Dowager Countess of Dysart. His main purpose was to paint portraits of his host and of Mary Freer, Lewis's thirteen-year-old ward.
			At East Bergholt in the autumn Constable fell in love with Maria Bicknell (1788–1828), the daughter of Charles Bicknell, solicitor to the Prince Regent and to the Admiralty. Maria was

	then staying with her maternal grandfather, Dr Durand Rhudde, Rector of East Bergholt. They married after a prolonged courtship of seven years.		Gothic and sentimental novels that had long been fashionable, to represent the ordinary world of men and women, demonstrating her understanding of human nature.
1810	Constable painted the altarpiece <i>Christ blessing the bread and wine</i> for Nayland Church in Suffolk.		In Nottingham, in March, the English workers (Luddites) of northern and midland England protested against the textile factories and the changes introduced as a result of the Industrial Revolution that, they claimed, threatened their jobs.
	Lord Dysart purchased one of Constable's landscapes at the Royal Academy for thirty guineas.		
	George III was declared insane. The following year his son, George, Prince of Wales, became Prince Regent.	1812	Constable met with Wordsworth when he came to London to stay with Sir George Beaumont from 23 April to 8 June.
1811	Constable visited East Bergholt for three weeks in May, 'painting from nature'.		In June Constable viewed the landscapes by Thomas Gainsborough in Lord Dysart's collection.
	During three weeks in September he visited Salisbury for the first time, as a guest of Bishop Dr John Fisher, and met with the Bishop's nephew, John Fisher. He made drawings of Salisbury Cathedral and Old Sarum. Over the following years Constable continued to visit Salisbury, where he painted important images of the Cathedral and the surrounding countryside.		Constable read the works of William Cowper (1731–1800), one of the most popular poets of his time, who changed the direction of eighteenth-century nature poetry by writing of everyday life and scenes of the English countryside. Constable wrote to Maria: 'I have Cowper's works on my table – I read his letters most. He is an author I prefer to almost any other' (Beckett II, p. 76).
	In October Constable finally received Maria Bicknell's father's permission to write to her, but their engagement lasted a further five years owing to the opposition of Maria's grandfather, Dr Rhudde.	1813	Through the patronage of his uncle David Pike Watts, Constable attended the commemorative exhibition of the art of Sir Joshua Reynolds (1723–1792) at the British Institution, as well as the opening banquet on 8 May.
	Jane Austen published her first novel, <i>Sense and sensibility</i> , in which she broke with the		Constable wrote to Maria in June that he was

	<p>painting portraits for fifteen guineas a head and that 'I am now leaving London for the only time in my life with pockets full of money. I am entirely free from debt ... and I have required no assistance from my father for some time' (Beckett II, pp. 108–09).</p> <p>Constable spent the summer and early autumn in Suffolk, sketching in the open air and making drawings in a small pocket sketchbook, which provided the source for a number of paintings in future years.</p> <p>In September Constable visited Major-General Francis Slater-Rebow at Wivenhoe Park, near Colchester, to paint a portrait of his daughter.</p> <p>Jane Austen published <i>Pride and prejudice</i>.</p>		<p>collector, purchased <i>A ploughing scene in Suffolk (A summerland)</i> 1814 from the exhibition at the British Institution.</p> <p>Constable spent time at East Bergholt in May and for most of the second part of the year.</p> <p>Constable's father became seriously ill in December.</p> <p>Jane Austen published <i>Emma</i>.</p> <p>On 18 June the Duke of Wellington and the British army defeated Napoleon Bonaparte and the French army at the Battle of Waterloo, which brought a conclusion to the Napoleonic wars.</p>
1814	<p>Constable exhibited <i>A ploughing scene in Suffolk (A summerland)</i> at the Royal Academy.</p> <p>In the summer and early autumn in Suffolk Constable made sketchbook drawings and painted directly from nature.</p> <p>Jane Austen published <i>Mansfield Park</i>, in which she not only described 'genteel' rural English society but also alluded to the outside world of the slave trade and contemporary debates about slavery.</p>	1816	<p>Constable spent most of the first three months of the year at East Bergholt.</p> <p>He exhibited <i>The wheatfield</i> at the Royal Academy.</p> <p>Constable's father died on 14 May. In the summer Constable returned to East Bergholt.</p> <p>Constable visited Wivenhoe, Essex, in July and August–September, where he was commissioned to paint the house and grounds of Major-General Francis Slater-Rebow.</p> <p>An inheritance of £400 per annum from his father gave Constable a degree of financial independence and enabled him finally to marry Maria Bicknell at St Martin-in-the-Fields, London, on 2 October, with the younger John</p>
1815	<p>Constable's mother died on 29 March after becoming ill while gardening at the beginning of the month. Maria Bicknell's mother died on 12 May.</p> <p>John Allnutt, a Clapham wine merchant and</p>		

Fisher officiating.

For six weeks of their ten-week honeymoon Constable and Maria stayed with John and Mary Fisher at their vicarage in Osmington, near Weymouth, Dorset, with Constable and Fisher spending time sketching in the vicinity of Weymouth Bay and visiting Salisbury.

Following their honeymoon Constable and Maria settled in London.

The enclosure of the common lands was introduced into East Bergholt, together with more mercenary practices of farming. Enclosure meant that the landless who had once been able to graze animals on common land or gather fuel there were no longer able to do so. Constable wrote to Maria Bicknell on 14 January: 'the village has been quite in a bustle about the division of our Common, which is now being divided ... I hope it will end amicably but where so many interests are brought together, some may peradventure clash. We have little to do with it, though I have an allotment about the size of this room which I shall give to my brother Golding – it will be near the windmill. Some amongst us have shown such extreme greediness and rapacity to "lay feild to feild" as to make themselves obnoxious. That thank God is not our case' (Beckett II, p. 167). Around this time farmers also began to prevent the poor from gleaning left-over ears of wheat in their fields, as they made sure that the harvest droppings were raked up to add in to the rest of their crop. The introduction of these practices was destructive to elements of rural society

1817

and changed the way of life in the farming community.

By June Constable and Maria had established themselves at 1 Keppel Street, in the Bloomsbury area of London. Like other artists of this time Constable's house was also his studio. He kept a gallery at the front where potential purchasers could view works.

Constable and Maria enjoyed a ten-week holiday in Suffolk in August–October, when Constable made many sketches and drawings.

The Constables' first child, John Charles, was born on 4 December, and Dr Rhudde informed them that he would leave 'it something'.

About this time Constable met Charles Robert Leslie (1794–1859), his future biographer.

1818

Constable exhibited *A cottage in a cornfield* at the British Institution in March.

In May he was elected a Director of the Artists' General Benevolent Institution – of which Turner was also a Director – and attended his first meeting in December.

Constable visited East Bergholt briefly in July and October to settle family affairs.

1819

Constable exhibited *Weymouth Bay* at the British Institution.

He visited East Bergholt in May and October

in connection with sales of family property.

Royal Academy on 1 November.

Maria's grandfather, Dr Rhudde, died on 6 May, leaving the Constables a legacy of £120 a year.

Constable exhibited the first of his six-foot paintings, *A scene on the River Stour (The white horse)* (The Frick Collection, New York), at the Royal Academy. He received good notices and sold the painting to his friend John Fisher for 100 guineas. This was the first of a number of large paintings of scenes around the Stour Valley that Constable exhibited at the Academy between 1819 and 1825. These included *Landscape: noon (The haywain)* 1821 (National Gallery, London) and *The lock* 1824 (Carmen Thyssen-Bornemisza Collection on loan to Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid).

Constable and Maria's second child, Maria Louisa (Minna), was born on 19 July.

For several months during summer Constable rented Albion Cottage, Upper Heath, Hampstead, and he began to paint images of labourers at work on Hampstead Heath. Hampstead was then a small village in fairly rural surroundings, high above the smog and noise of London, and it provided clean, fresh air, which was beneficial to the health of Maria and the children. They continued to rent accommodation at Hampstead during most summers until settling there more permanently in 1827.

Constable was elected an Associate of the

	Théodore Géricault visited England where he admired Constable's work.		George IV attempted to divorce her but failed. Caroline lost public support and died shortly after her impolitic attempts to force an entrance to Westminster Abbey at George IV's coronation.
	The Factory Act of 1819 was passed in Parliament, making it illegal for children under nine years of age to work in factories, and illegal for older children to work more than twelve hours a day. However, there were no inspectors to enforce the law and people could easily lie about the age of children.	1821	The Constables' third child, Charles Golding, was born on 29 March.
1820	<p>Constable exhibited one of his versions of <i>Harwich Lighthouse</i> at the Royal Academy.</p> <p>With Maria and their two children, Constable visited John and Mary Fisher in Salisbury during July and August, where he made numerous drawings and some oil sketches of the Cathedral and its surroundings, including the sketch for <i>Salisbury Cathedral from the Bishop's Grounds</i>.</p> <p>Constable rented a house at Hampstead in September–October, where he painted his first known dated oil sketch at Hampstead in which he recorded weather effects, <i>Sketch at Hampstead, stormy sunset</i> (Victoria & Albert Museum, London).</p> <p>Constable stayed briefly with Henry Greswolde Lewis at Malvern Hall, Solihull, Warwickshire in September, where he painted <i>Malvern Hall, the entrance front</i>.</p> <p>On 29 January George III died, and George IV succeeded to the British throne. His estranged wife Caroline returned to England to claim her rights as Queen Consort.</p>		<p>Constable exhibited <i>The haywain</i> at the Royal Academy, and Robert Hunt wrote in <i>The Examiner</i> that it was a picture 'which we think approaches nearer to the actual look of rural nature than any modern landscape whatever'. Other reviewers commented on its 'sparkles' and 'spottiness'. Géricault and the French critic Charles Nodier visited the Academy and singled out the painting. Nodier wrote: 'the palm of the exhibition belongs to a very large landscape by Constable with which the ancient or modern masters have very few masterpieces that could be put in opposition ... It is water, air, and sky' (cit. Ivy 1991, pp. 93–4).</p> <p>Constable rented a house at 2 Lower Terrace, Hampstead, located close to the western edge of the Heath, for this, and for the succeeding year. He converted a small shed in the garden into a workshop and began his 'skying', his systematic series of oil studies of changing skies at Hampstead Heath.</p> <p>Constable's friend and mentor, Joseph Farington, died on 30 December.</p>

1822	<p>In April Constable met French dealer John Arrowsmith, who expressed interest in <i>The haywain</i>.</p> <p>Constable exhibited <i>Malvern Hall, the entrance front</i> at the Royal Academy. He painted <i>The risen Christ</i> for St Michael's, Manningtree.</p> <p>In July Constable recommenced painting cloud studies at Hampstead. In October he wrote to Fisher that he had painted 'about 50 carefull studies of <i>skies</i> tolerably large' (Beckett VI, p. 98). In these sky studies Constable captured unique atmospheric effects, inscribing the works with the time of day, date, wind direction and weather conditions under which they were painted.</p> <p>The Constables' fourth child, Isabel, was born on 23 August.</p> <p>In October they moved to Farington's former house at 35 Charlotte Street. This became Constable's central London home until his death.</p>	<p>For nearly six weeks in October–November Constable visited Sir George Beaumont at his country home, Coleorton Hall, Leicestershire.</p>
	<p>1824</p> <p>In April Constable sold <i>The haywain</i> and <i>A view on the Stour near Dedham</i> 1822 (Henry E Huntington Library and Art Gallery, San Marino) and a small cabinet picture to John Arrowsmith for £250. Arrowsmith exhibited his acquisitions at the Paris Salon in August, where Constable was awarded a gold medal. The paintings created a sensation in Paris even before they had been exhibited at the Salon, and were acclaimed by French artists who were stimulated by the innovative character of Constable's work.</p>	
	<p>1825</p> <p>Constable exhibited his fifth large Stour Valley scene, his upright version of <i>A boat passing a lock</i> at the Royal Academy, and the following year at the British Institution (as <i>The lock</i>), where it was purchased on the opening day by James Morrison, a wealthy merchant (now Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum of Art, Madrid).</p> <p>Constable took his family to Brighton in May for the sake of his wife's health, hoping that the sea air would restore her. They took lodgings in Western Place on the edge of the town, near the sea. Constable returned to London, but visited Brighton for a week in June and again from July to October. At the start he was critical of Brighton, describing it as 'Piccadilly ... by the sea-side' (ibid., p. 171). But in spite of this unflattering description, Constable found a new stimulus there. He painted a number of oil sketches that reflect his enthusiastic response to the</p>	
1823	<p>Constable exhibited <i>Salisbury Cathedral from the Bishop's Grounds</i> at the Royal Academy, and the following year at the British Institution.</p> <p>From June to November Constable rented Stamford Lodge, Hampstead.</p> <p>Bishop Fisher commissioned a second smaller version of <i>Salisbury Cathedral</i> as a wedding present for his daughter, Elizabeth.</p>	

	<p>moods of the sky and the effects of light on the sea, at times using a small palette knife instead of a brush. In January 1825 he lent Fisher 'a dozen of my Brighton oil sketches', remarking that they were 'done in the lid of my box on my knees as usual' (ibid., p. 189).</p> <p>In May John Dunthorne junior joined Constable temporarily to work as his assistant.</p> <p>The National Gallery, London, was founded on 2 April.</p>		<p>In November Constable quarrelled with Arrowsmith and stopped providing him with paintings to sell to France.</p>
1825	<p>The Constables' fifth child, Emily, was born on 29 March.</p> <p>Constable's patron, the Bishop of Salisbury, died on 8 May.</p> <p>In May Constable received a letter from the Parisian dealer, Claude Schroth, in which Schroth informed him of the very favourable reception of his pictures in Paris.</p> <p>In August Constable noted that although he had received pressing invitations to go to Paris, he could not speak the language, he loved England and his own home, and he would rather be a poor man in England than a rich man abroad.</p> <p>Maria and the children visited Brighton from August to the following January. Constable joined them from time to time, including a fortnight over Christmas.</p>	1826	<p>Constable spent most of the year in London, apart from short excursions to Brighton and a brief visit to Suffolk in the spring.</p> <p>The Constables rented a house at 2 Langham Place, Hampstead, during the summer of 1826 and the spring of 1827.</p> <p>Their sixth child, Alfred Abram, was born on 14 November.</p>
		1827	<p>Constable's patron, Sir George Beaumont, died on 7 February.</p> <p>Constable exhibited <i>The Glebe Farm</i> at the British Institution.</p> <p><i>The Times</i> of 11 May noted that Constable was 'unquestionably the first landscape painter of the day, and yet we are told his pictures do not sell' (cit. Ivy 1991, p. 122).</p> <p>Constable and his family moved permanently to Hampstead, leasing a house in Well Walk.</p>
		1828	<p>The Constables' seventh child, Lionel Bicknell, was born on 2 January.</p> <p>On the death of her father on 9 March, Maria Constable inherited about £20 000.</p> <p>Constable exhibited <i>The Vale of Dedham</i> (as <i>Landscape</i>) at the Royal Academy.</p>

- Maria's health was rapidly declining and Constable took her on a last visit to Brighton from May to July. She died of pulmonary tuberculosis in Hampstead on 23 November. Constable wrote to his brother Golding on 19 December: 'Hourly do I feel the loss of my departed Angel ... Nothing can supply the loss of such a devoted, sensible, industrious, religious mother, who was all affection ... I shall never feel again as I have felt, the face of the world is totally changed to me' (Beckett I, p. 252).
- 1829 Constable was finally elected a Royal Academician on 10 February, and Turner visited him to congratulate him. Constable presented his horizontal version of *A boat passing a lock* as his Diploma painting.
- Constable paid his last two visits to Fisher at Salisbury in July and November.
- In August Constable engaged David Lucas to engrave a series of mezzotints after a selection of his paintings and oil sketches: *English landscape*. The mezzotints capture Constable's varied and painterly sketching style and demonstrate his belief that chiaroscuro, or the contrast between light and dark, is a fundamental principle of nature as well as of landscape art (Beckett, *Discourses*, p. 11).
- 1830 The first number of Constable's *English landscape* was published in June, comprising the prints *Spring; A dell, Helmingham Park, Suffolk; A mill; and Weymouth Bay*, with lines from Wordsworth as a preface.
- 1831 The second number of Constable's *English landscape* was published in January, comprising the prints *Noon; A sea beach; Old Sarum* (first plate); and *Stoke-by-Neyland, Suffolk*.
- The third number of Constable's *English landscape* was published in September, comprising the prints *Summer morning; Summer evening; A heath; and Mill stream*.
- The fourth number of Constable's *English landscape* was published in November, comprising the prints *River Stour, Suffolk; A lock on the Stour, Suffolk; A summerland; and Summer, afternoon – after a sunshower*.
- Towards the end of October Constable became ill and depressed, disabled by rheumatism. He told Leslie that 'my left side & arm prevented me from work' (ibid., p. 53).
- On 27 December Charles Darwin began his five-year journey on board the *Beagle*, collecting biological data that he later used to develop his theory of evolution.
- 1832 The fifth number of Constable's *English landscape* was published in July, including the prints *Frontispiece: East Bergholt, Suffolk; Autumnal sun set, Yarmouth, Norfolk; The Glebe Farm; Hadleigh Castle near the Nore; and Vignette: Hampstead Heath, Middlesex*.
- Constable's closest friend, John Fisher, died of cholera in Boulogne on 25 August.
- The 'Representation of the People Act', or

	the Reform Act, was passed by Parliament, extending the voting rights and redistributing Parliamentary seats. 'Rotten' boroughs such as Old Sarum, which had formed unrepresentative constituencies, were abolished and seats were redistributed on a more equitable basis in the counties.		as if it were a major theatrical event. Some commentators viewed it as divine retribution for the recent parliamentary reforms
1833	In June Constable gave his first lecture 'An outline of the history of landscape painting' to the Literary and Scientific Society at Hampstead.	1835	On 22 June Constable delivered a second lecture to the Literary and Scientific Society at Hampstead. He lectured in Worcester on 6, 8 and 9 October.
	The Slavery Abolition Act was passed in Parliament granting all slaves in the British colonies their freedom.		In May the British settlement at Port Phillip Bay and Yarra River (Melbourne) was established by a group of free settlers led by John Batman and John Pascoe Fawkner.
1834	In January Constable was so depressed that he was hardly able to paint anything, and in February he was confined to bed with rheumatic fever.		In October the Official British Resident in New Zealand, James Busby, gathered thirty-four northern Maori chiefs at Waitangi, believing that Maori need a central governing body. A Declaration of Independence was signed, in which Maori declared their country to be an independent state and asked the British king to be their protector.
	Constable exhibited the watercolour <i>Old Sarum</i> at the Royal Academy.		On 21 December Charles Darwin visited New Zealand on the <i>Beagle</i> for around ten days.
	On 18 March six Dorset farm labourers, the Tolpuddle Martyrs, were sentenced to transportation to Australia for seven years because they had taken an illegal oath to a labourers' union. The public reaction to the sentence added fuel to the movement for social reform.	1836	in May and June Constable presented a series of lectures on the history of landscape painting at the Royal Institution. In these he showed his respect for tradition, and also professed his interest in a 'scientific' approach to painting. He suggested that 'painting is a science, and should be pursued as an inquiry into the laws of nature'. He also cited passages from the poetry of John Milton and James Thomson in which they identified their feelings with nature. The British scientist, Michael Faraday, attended and was pleased with the lectures (Beckett, <i>Discourses</i> , pp. 69–74).
	On 16 October a fire accidentally broke out in the Houses of Parliament and quickly took hold, burning throughout the night. Constable took his two older sons to view the scene. Thousands of spectators watched the blaze from Westminster Bridge and in the streets, on both banks of the Thames and from boats on the river. Journalists reported the fire		