

## HARD WORKING Stour

Today we go to the river to relax on a day off. Three hundred years ago people went to the River Stour to work, so it was a busy place.



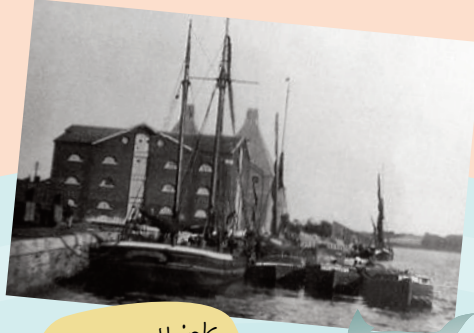
Lighters were crewed by a man and a boy and pulled along by a horse. Sometimes the tow path was on one side of the river bank and sometimes on the other. When it changed sides the horse had to step across the lighter to cross the river!

Navigation on the river greatly improved with the introduction of locks. From 1713 Lighters (flat bottomed barges) could ferry cargoes of bricks, grain, flour and hay down the river to Mistley Quay and return with manure from London stables and coal shipped to Mistley from the north east.



A lighter barge has been restored for river trips. For more information see [www.riverstourtrust.org](http://www.riverstourtrust.org)

Do you think we should use the river to transport goods again?



## Plan some HERITAGE DAYS OUT

### MEDIEVAL STOUR

Plan a day out exploring the medieval wool towns of the Stour Valley. Clare, Long Melford, Lavenham and Hadleigh all have many fine timber framed buildings and magnificent churches.



### TUDOR STOUR

Visit Long Melford church on Melford Green and the nearby Tudor house of Melford Hall (National Trust). Walk along the old railway line to Lavenham to see the Guildhall (National Trust). [www.nationaltrust.org.uk/lavenham-guildhall](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/lavenham-guildhall)



### INDUSTRIAL STOUR

Flatford Mill once belonged to the father of the artist John Constable and wheat was milled here until about 100 years ago. You can visit the mill and the dry dock where lighters were built. For more information, see [www.nationaltrust.org.uk/flatford](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/flatford)



# STOUR VALLEY Discovery Fact Sheet



# HERITAGE

## LIVING IN THE STOUR VALLEY

People have lived in this area for thousands of years, crops grow well on the rich river valley soil; there are trees for building and a river for water and transport.

### STONE AGE Stour

This Stone Age flint hand axe was found near Bures and is between 10,000 and 6,000 years old.



What do you think it was used for?

Flint tools left by hunters and gatherers show us that people have lived in the Stour Valley since the end of the last Ice Age.

## Uncovering ROMAN Stour

In 1947 farmer Harold Cooper discovered some unusual red tiles in one of his fields near Gestingthorpe...



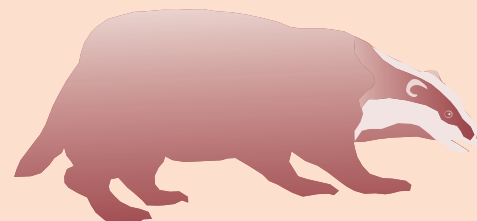
This was the remains of a Roman villa and he spent the next 28 years excavating it at weekends. Gradually he uncovered a picture of life in Roman Gestingthorpe; there were craft workshops and a farmyard centred around a large villa with a heated main room, a bath block, glazed windows and decorated walls.

Gestingthorpe Roman Villa at Hill Farm

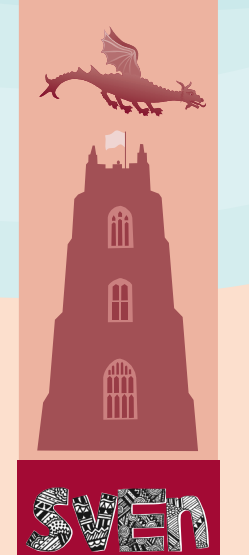
Finds include this pot from the third or fourth century, what do you think it was used for?



Pre booked tours of the site and finds by appointment with Ashley Cooper 01787 460641 Stour Valley Community Archaeology run archaeological activities in the Stour Valley [stourarch.wordpress.com](http://stourarch.wordpress.com) For membership information email [stourvalleyarchaeology@gmail.com](mailto:stourvalleyarchaeology@gmail.com)



STOUR VALLEY EDUCATION NETWORK





# JOURNEYING DOWN THE RIVER...

## NORMAN ruins by the Stour

After their conquest of England in 1066 the Normans built strongly defended castles to help them control their new kingdom.

In Clare you can see the remains of the castle. Climb the steep motte to see the remains of the stone keep. In Victorian times a railway station was built within the inner bailey.



The castle is in a Country Park with walks, a café, a playground and special events. Go to [clarecastlecountrypark.co.uk](http://clarecastlecountrypark.co.uk) to find out whats on.

Clare Castle Country Park

## POWERFUL Stour

In the past water was a valuable source of power. Over 30 water mills on the Stour were used for grinding wheat and fulling (the cleaning and thickening of wool.)



Some mills survive today, although none are still used for making flour. Some are houses, Sudbury Mill is a hotel and Flatford Mill is a field studies centre

## MEDIEVAL Stour

In the Middle Ages East Anglia was famous for its wool. At first it was exported to Flanders where it was woven by expert Flemish weavers, but later on it was woven in the Stour Valley.

Rich wool merchants paid for churches to be built. In 1531 the people of East Bergholt ran out of money to build a church bell tower so they put the bells on the ground. Maybe that's just as well; they are the heaviest set of bells still being rung in England.



To hear the famous bells of East Bergholt church, look up [www.eastbergholt-bells.org.uk](http://www.eastbergholt-bells.org.uk)

Do you know anyone with these family names: Weaver, Dyer, Fuller, Tucket, Webb or Webster? Their ancestors would once have been involved in the wool industry.



# ...things to see and do

## DANGEROUS Stour - Do you believe in dragons?

King Richard the Lion Heart (1189-1199) was said to have been given an egg when he went to the Holy Land. It hatched into a dragon so fierce it had to be kept in the Tower of London.



It escaped to live under the bridge at Wormingford. Sir George from Layer de la Haye came to fight it. The dragon tried to bite his leg, but hurt its teeth on his armour and fled to the safe waters of Wormingford Mere. Today strange bubbles sometimes appear on the surface of the mere. Maybe it's still there...

Wormingford church window

It is not possible to visit the mere as it is on private property, but you can take a Dragon walk on footpaths. Download a walking guide to this and other Stour Valley walks from the publications on the Dedham Vale AONB website [www.dedhamvalestourvalley.org](http://www.dedhamvalestourvalley.org)

## TOWNS of the Stour

Towns are found where there are good places to cross the river and good agricultural land to produce food to feed the people living there.



If a town was allowed to have a market more people came to live there and it became more prosperous. Sudbury had a market from 1009 and still has one every Thursday and Saturday close to the site of the medieval market.

## INDUSTRIOUS Stour

After the end of the wool industry, silk weaving moved into the Sudbury area from London.

There are still silk weaving factories in Sudbury. The first weavers worked in their own cottages using looms on the first floor, huge windows were built to let the daylight in.

Knitting and crochet are cheap, and relaxing hobbies. Plus, you can make useful gifts. Why not give it a try?

