

## **The John Constable Lighter**

120 years ago a Stour lighter was built at Flatford and plied its trade from Manningtree to Sudbury along the 300 year old navigation that is the River Stour. All those years later, on 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2010 that same lighter was lifted gently from the silt near Great Cornard Lock to begin the next stage of its life.

The River Stour Trust, working together with the Managing a Masterpiece team, have contracted the Pioneer Sailing Trust based at Brightlingsea to restore the lighter to its former glory. The John Constable is on the Historic Ship's Register as being of regional historical interest and when restored will once again be used on the River Stour.

Much preparation was undertaken by Rupert Marks of the Pioneer Sailing Trust to ensure that today's lift, carried out with the assistance of Quinto Crane & Plant Ltd, went smoothly. Rupert who, was present throughout the lifting procedure was delighted that things went so well and said, 'We are looking forward to working on the lighter but after getting it to our yard, we are going to let it dry out before taking many measurements to ensure we use as much information as possible from the timbers that remain'.

Martin Lees, the new Chairman of Council for the River Stour Trust, was also enthusiastic about the restoration and pleased that the Pioneer Sailing Trust was going to oversee this work, saying, 'The Pioneer Sailing Trust has considerable boat building experience and we are extremely pleased that the money received from the Heritage Lottery Fund includes an amount to train an apprentice in boat building skills. So not only will an historic vessel be restored, but the associated skills learnt, will be used again in the future'.

**- ENDS -**

Photographs supplied by River Stour Trust: Various images of the John Constable Lighter being craned out

## Notes for editors

For more information, please contact:

- River Stour Trust on 01787 313199
- Managing a Masterpiece on 01473 264 263

### River Stour Trust

- River Stour Trust (RST) is a registered charity (No. 257806), led by volunteers who are dedicated to the restoration and conservation of the River Stour Navigation
- River Stour Trust seeks to restore through navigation, a distance of 24.5 miles/37km from Sudbury to the sea, for the benefit and enjoyment of the public
- More information about RST events and activities is available at [www.riverstourtrust.org](http://www.riverstourtrust.org)

### Managing a Masterpiece

- Managing a Masterpiece is a three year programme, comprising 14 projects covering archaeology, biodiversity, and conservation of historic features; to understand, conserve and celebrate the landscape of the Stour Valley
- The Heritage Lottery Fund's (HLF) Landscape Partnership Scheme has awarded a grant of £925,000, and a further £67,000 development funding grant, to the Stour Valley Landscape Partnership for Managing a Masterpiece. A further £100,000 is being contributed by the partners, which together with in-kind contributions from volunteers, brings the funding to £1.1m
- Simon Amstutz, Operations Manager for the Dedham Vale AONB and Stour Valley Project, and chief architect of the bid to the HLF, says, "This is the first Landscape Partnership award in the East of England, and will be of enormous benefit to those who live and work in the Stour Valley."
- Robyn Llewellyn, Head of HLF East of England, says, "Thanks to the Heritage Lottery Fund's support, local communities and groups will be able to work together on a wide range of activities helping to sustain the unique distinctiveness of our natural heritage. Through partnership and collaboration, our funding will have a long-lasting impact on this remarkable and beautiful historic landscape."
- More information is available at [www.dedhamvalestourvalley.org](http://www.dedhamvalestourvalley.org)