



# Newsletter Summer 2012

## Paul Morris, Isfield Lock Project Manager

Working members will already be aware of a great loss to the Trust, but others amongst you may not yet know. It is with much regret and sadness that I have to report that **Paul Morris**, the project manager and driving force behind the restoration at Isfield Lock, died on 1<sup>st</sup> February following a short illness. It is no exaggeration to say that without Paul's drive, practical skills, ingenuity and generous giving of his time, equipment and money, the restoration project would not have achieved the progress it has during the last six years.

The work at the lock will continue but all the volunteers know they are going to miss the wealth of knowledge and the quiet supervision the ever-present Paul brought to the restoration worksite. The contribution he made to the project should never be forgotten. The Sussex Ouse Restoration Trust has lost an enthusiastic project manager and good friend. Our condolences and thoughts go to Paul's wife Linda and his family during this difficult time.

## The 'Big Pour' at Sutton Hall (Isfield) Lock

SORT is fortunate indeed to have someone of the calibre of Ted Lintott to step into Paul's shoes and to continue to drive the work at Sutton Hall (Isfield) along at a smart pace. Ted's enthusiasm and competence mean that work here is continuing briskly during our 2012 working season.

Following an unexpectedly early start during a dry April, the rain during May and early June slowed the work down significantly. However brief breaks in the bad weather allowed steady preparation for the repair of the hole in the fore-bay of the lock chamber. This preparation involved extending the existing access ramp into the chamber closer to the offending area to allow machinery to drive down before the area surrounding the hole could be cleared and cleaned. The steel for the concrete reinforcement then needed to be placed across the bay and into recesses chased into the walls, adjusted and secured. Once that was achieved all that was required was a window in the weather and a turnout of a large enough workforce to enable the 3.6 cubic metres of concrete to be mixed and poured in one day.



*Before...*



Somehow a day was selected, during some of the most unsettled weather for years. The lock was regularly pumped dry leading up to the chosen day and on Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> June the 'big pour' was completed in a continuous seven hour operation involving most of the regular SORT workforce with some invaluable additional help from three members of the Kent and East Sussex Canal Restoration Group (KESCRG).

The success of the task rested heavily on Ted Lintott's shoulders and SORT do recognise the amount of work and planning he put into this one day, when the main restoration task for 2012 was completed. With that task complete, work can now continue with the demolition and restoration of the west chamber wall.

*(Text and photos courtesy of Terry Owen)*

*...and after*

### **The 'Second Front' - Iron Gate Lock**

Since the New Year a group of hardy and keen volunteers have ventured out to the remote Iron Gate Lock site, situated at the southern extremity of the land adjoining and belonging to the National Trust's Sheffield Park Gardens. Prior to the work the site was completely overgrown and hidden from view, but under the supervision of NT staff the working parties have cleared the site. Although there are no plans at this stage to continue this work as a full restoration project, it has enabled the NT, SORT and visitors to view what remains of the lock and to learn about and appreciate the history of the lock and the Ouse Navigation.



*The size of the tree problem at Iron Gate*



*Iron Gate lock after clearance*

To further this end the NT plan to allow supervised access to the site for visitors to Sheffield Park Gardens this summer and to provide a self-guided walk leaflet that includes the River Ouse and the lock. They also plan to provide an information board at the site. In addition SORT members will be conducting monthly guided walks, on behalf of the NT, through the park area to the lock site when some of the history of the Navigation and the work of SORT will be passed on.

*(Text and photos courtesy of Terry Owen)*

If you would like to join us as a work-party volunteer please contact our restoration manager Ted Lintott, via e-mail at [tedl@talktalk.net](mailto:tedl@talktalk.net), or by telephone on 01444 414413.

## **Fund Raising Successes (and Failure...)**

Following our acceptance as a Charitable Company by HMRC (as reported in the last Newsletter), we have now made our first claim to them in respect of a Gift Aid refund for all relevant subscriptions and donations going back to January 2008. This has been successful and a grand total of £2,571.91 was received at the end of June. This sets us up nicely for the restoration work planned for Sutton Hall lock in 2013.

Unfortunately, our first attempt to bank a Give As You Earn (GAYE) cheque with the Charities Aid Foundation (CAF) has not yet been honoured. However now that HMRC have accepted our first Gift Aid claim and our bona fides are thus proven, we will be pursuing this again with CAF.

On the plus side again, though, SORT was accepted by staff partners at the Waitrose store in Lewes for inclusion in their "Community Matters" fundraising scheme, whereby shoppers at the store "vote" for three competing local charities each month by placing a green token into a voting box each time they shop. We took our turn in May, up against Macmillan Nurses and a dog rescue centre in Seaford. I'm afraid that we couldn't compete with the former, but we came a good second and will be benefitting to the tune of £252, so a big thank you to the Waitrose staff in Lewes for selecting us and to all the happy shoppers there for their votes.

## **Dust Off Your Walking Boots**

Terry Owen, SORT member and co-creator of the Sussex Ouse Valley Way, will be leading a number of walks over the Summer months. As mentioned above, there will be guided walks to the Iron Gate lock site at Sheffield Park on Fridays 27<sup>th</sup> July, 31<sup>st</sup> August and 28<sup>th</sup> September, departing at 10:30 from the Visitor Centre. They will be about 2 miles in length and be of no more than 2 hours in duration. These walks are restricted in numbers and must be pre-booked with the National Trust via 01825 791264, or e-mail [sheffieldpark@nationaltrust.org.uk](mailto:sheffieldpark@nationaltrust.org.uk).

Terry's own 'Discovering Sussex' walk will be on 30th September starting at 10am from Barcombe Mills car park (grid ref: TQ 304247) about 1 mile west of the A26. It is a 9 mile walk entitled "The Ouse - Looking Good at Isfield Lock". All welcome, no pre-booking, bring a snack and a drink and please be capable of walking 9 miles!! (A small contribution to the Leader's expenses is always welcome).

## **Annual General Meeting**

The Annual General Meeting of the Sussex Ouse Restoration Trust will take place on **Thursday 31<sup>st</sup> July** – the formal notice should be enclosed with this Newsletter or received as a separate e-mail attachment as appropriate. Please get in touch if you do not receive yours (contact details at the bottom of this page).

### **Summer Gathering**

SORT are planning a Summer social event at Isfield Lock, all members and guests welcome to view what has been achieved to date. This will take place on Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> August from 3pm to 7pm. Cars can be parked in the yard at Sutton Hall, by kind permission of Sutton Hall Estate. This will require a short walk through the Estate and across fields to reach the lock. Tea, coffee and soft drinks will be available, bring your own bottle and picnic, or a barbecue will be available. It would greatly help SORT if you are planning to attend to telephone in advance when further information can be obtained and directions given. Please contact Terry Owen on 01342-315786.

### **Autumn Public Meeting**

The Autumn 2012 Meeting of SORT will take place on **Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> November**, 7:00 for 7:30pm, in the **Upper Room, Haywards Heath Methodist Church**, Perrymount Road, Haywards Heath, RH16 3DN (near the railway station, about 200yds up from the Clair Hall).

Andrew Richardson, Chairman of the Trustees of the River Stour Trust, will give a presentation on the trials and tribulations they face in restoring the Suffolk Stour, a similar project to the Sussex Ouse. This will be a joint meeting with Solent & Arun Branch and Kent & East Sussex Branch of the IWA.

Please put the date in your diaries now, look forward to seeing you there.

### **More on MORPH (Middle Ouse Restoration of Physical Habitats)**

Members of the SORT management committee Bob Draper, Roy Sutton, Terry Owen and Hazel Lintott have met with the EA and their consultants Royal Haskoning on three more occasions since our last Newsletter. We continue to appraise, critique and hopefully influence their plans for the 10 sites on the River Ouse where the EA wishes to improve the river habitat or water quality through improvements, renovation or removal of various structures in the river, in particular fish passes, sewage outfalls, weirs and so on. We continue to push for what the EA refer to as "no regrets" solutions on each site where all interested parties are catered for in the adopted design and works undertaken.

### **We Need a New Memb. Sec.!**

Sadly, our Membership Secretary has decided to relinquish his post so we are forced to seek a replacement. If you think that you have the necessary persuasive and computer skills to handle this role, please get in touch (contact details at the bottom of the page).

He had also taken on the role of Fund Raiser but there is no reason why these two roles need to be tied together so if anyone within the membership fancies having a go at fund raising for SORT please get in touch.