



In this second membership update you'll see how we've been getting on with our continuing work to restore Sutton Hall (Isfield) Lock; work you valuably support.

We've had a busy summer and really cracked on with some restoration tasks. The best summer since 2006 allowed us to make good progress on one of the top ground paddles, the wharf wall, the top cill repair and the tow path on the east side of the lock. We've also trained more volunteers to drive diggers and dumpers and had stands at two national waterway festivals. Looking forward, we're planning a (short) walk and lock survey next March to which you are all invited.

Admin News

AGM – This was held on 27 June and Derek Wright and Ted Lintott were elected as directors, joining Bob Draper, Terry Owen, Julie Draper and Hazel Lintott (company secretary) on the Board.

Membership – Since the end of 2012 membership numbers have dropped a little. Obviously we'd like more members so please see if you can get some of your friends and family to sign up. Many of you have changed to making subscription payments by automatic standing order, for which we thank you, but it would really help Julie and Terry if all subs could be paid this way.

Finances – Currently we have about £2,500 in the bank for restoration work. We'll need this and more next year for a lot of mortar and concrete to finish the west wall, and, to complete the stop-plank grooves and get the planks to go in the grooves.

Dates for your diary

14 November 2013 – SORT / IWAKES joint autumn meeting.

Our annual joint meeting has been set for Thursday 14 November and will again be held from 19:00 at Upper Room, Perrymount Methodist Church, Perrymount Road, Haywards Heath, RH16 3DN. A National Trust volunteer Alan Williams from Dapdune Wharf on the River Wey in Surrey will give a talk: "The Wey Navigation - a historic and pictorial journey". More details and a map showing the very short walk from Haywards Heath railway station can be seen on our website – www.sxouse.org.uk.

April 2014 – A walk to Hamsey Lock

We are planning to hold a walk from Barcombe to the lock at Hamsey. Hamsey Lock is the first lock on the navigation but is in such a poor state of repair that the remains of the structure can only be seen at low tide. SORT is planning to update our information on all the locks on the navigation and this, appropriately perhaps, will be the first. We thought members might like to join in. It's about two miles each way and not too arduous. Two Saturdays in April offer suitable low tide times, the 12th and the 26th, so it will probably be one of those two dates. Pencil it into your 2014 diary now, if you have one! Dig out those old walking boots from the dark corner of your shed and put some dubbin on them so they're nice and soft, ready for this stroll!

Festivals

National Trailboat Festival 2013 – Bodiam Castle, East Sussex

This festival from 25-27 May was organised jointly by the National Trust and the Inland Waterways Association's Kent and East Sussex branch (IWAKES). SORT shared the IWAKES tent and had a display that attracted a good deal of interest. Our stand was manned each day by a couple of members whose efforts have been rewarded by a donation from the organisers that will soon be made to SORT.



2013 IWA National Festival

This took place from 19-21 July on the Grand Union Canal at Cassiobury Park, Watford. We again put up our display, courtesy of the IWAKES tent. Unfortunately we did not attract new members or volunteers but we have struck up a potentially very useful relationship with Toby Ombler and his company in Ringmer – the Riveted Narrowboat Company – who were also exhibiting at the festival. It looks like Toby and his team will be able to help us with the metalwork we'll be needing on the paddles, gates, etc. Toby and the Riveted Narrowboat Company can be found at The Boat Shed, Unit 3, Caburn Enterprise Park, The Broyle, Ringmer, East Sussex BN8 5NP; tel: 01273 735 169; www.rivetednarrowboatcompany.com.

It would be much better if SORT had its own tent. We wouldn't be dependent on the generosity of others and we'd be able to publicise ourselves better at events and, perhaps, do more events. Does anyone have a pop-up gazebo or small marquee that could be lent or donated to us? If anyone can help, please let me know.

A Bit of Local History!

The Upper Ouse Navigation Act 1790 allowed the Proprietors of the Upper Ouse Navigation to get building and the lock at Isfield was completed in 1792, measuring 52' 6" x 12' 6". A weir was built upstream from the lock to create the head of water required. It remains a good example of such a structure and was designed, as was the lock, by William Jessop, who was possibly the greatest canal engineer of all.

Around 1809 the proprietors of the navigation sold two acres of land alongside the lock at Isfield to a Lewes company that established a paper mill there.

The Parish Plan of Isfield, surveyed and drawn by William Figg in 1820, shows the mill and two associated buildings. Interestingly, the land around and between the buildings was in Barcombe Parish as the parish boundary followed the river, it still does, but the making of the cut for the lock cast part of Barcombe adrift!

	<p>The lock was not marked on Figg's plan but would have been in the cut passing the large building marked in area 207. The large building would have been the paper mill and the adjacent small one is believed to have been the foreman's cottage. The long thin building in area 208 is believed to have been a row of workers' cottages.</p>
<p>This plan from 1828 is broadly similar to Figg's. It shows the lock gates but not the straight stretch of river from the weir which Figg has detailed. This does show that the workers had a land route to the mill. Perhaps the mill's access to the water in the oxbows had been built between 1820 and 1828. There are two culverts in the wharf wall, one or both of which might have served the mill.</p> <p>The lock would have been known as Isfield Lock at this time because Sutton Hall had not been built then. Sutton Hurst, as the estate was formerly called, was built around 1836.</p>	

Work so far in 2013 at Isfield Lock

	<p>Top Cill</p> <p>The top cill had to be extended in order to add strength to the entrance to the lock and allow for the insertion of stop-plank grooves.</p> <p>Firstly, the clay and debris had to be excavated. The debris included a couple of aged, rotting oak posts, which had been driven several feet into the ground. Their purpose remains a bit of a mystery.</p>
	<p>After the excavating, reinforced concrete was inserted to extend the cill, the stop plank channels were cut in the walls and an oak beam placed just slightly into the concrete base, on which the line of stop-planks will rest to hold back the water whenever work in the completed lock is required in the future.</p>

Ground Paddle

The top right (east) paddle and framework has been completely rebuilt and is now working. (It has been painted since this photo.) The sluice channel into the lock chamber had to be cleared of silt, wood, etc that had built up over many decades. Then the oak framework had to be cut to size and fitted, followed by the making of the paddle and jack post and the fitting of the ironwork. Steve and Ted, who did much of the work, can be seen inspecting work in the early stages and working out what to do next.

	
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Tow Path

The east-side towpath to the north of the lock was undulating and eaten away in places. You can just make out some wooden profiles in this photo, which show where the path should be and the shape of the banking.



This lower photo shows the flat smooth path it is now up through the trees. A lot of digger and dumper work was required, with the expert finishing touches being applied by Terry Spiller, who is a bit of an artist with a digger as you can see. Terry usually digs with the Wey and Arun but found some extra time to help us. Thanks, Terry.

Wharf Wall

The upper photo shows the wall with all the compromised brickwork removed and just about ready for rebuilding. One of the culverts was built in the left side of the wall and we had to strip the bricks out to its lower level, which is why it has temporarily disappeared!



The wharf wall is now almost completed with just coping stones to be placed at the right edge of the wall. The excavated ground behind the wall has been filled with chalk which was kindly donated and delivered by Sutton Hall Estate. Chalk was deemed to be the best filler because it will let water seep through and gradually fuse together. Without a properly anchored concrete 'lump' there might have been a chance of it slipping on top of the clay. To have properly anchored the concrete would have meant removing all of the wall and starting again. Using chalk is a perfectly satisfactory option and avoided unnecessary cost, effort and time. We're not sure of the purposes of the culverts, which were not part of the original build, but they would somehow have served the paper mill and a hydraulic ram that pumped water up to the main house.

Iron Gate Lock

We have not forgotten about this work in Sheffield Park. We remain in regular contact with the National Trust but their intentions are being rethought a little because the Environment Agency EU-funded project called MORPH (Middle Ouse Restoration of Physical Habitat) is subject to delay. Restoration of the lock has to be synchronised to a certain extent with MORPH and NT's own plans in that area of the estate. This is mainly to ensure time, effort and funding is co-ordinated so best efficiency and value for money are obtained.

What Next

For the rest of 2013 we'll be rebuilding the other top ground paddle. Also, completion of the wharf wall and more work on the tow paths will take place. Work around Isfield Lock by MORPH looks like it will not now happen until 2015 instead of 2014 which gives us more time to complete and install the stop-plank channels and buy the planks.



Summer 2014's main task will be to complete the restoration of the west chamber wall at Isfield Lock. Both ends have been done and now we'll do the central section. Preparation for this work will be made over the coming autumn and winter. We'll need to dig out more of the dirt behind the wall – down to invert level, so another six or seven feet or so. Could be dirty work!

Over the winter we'll design and change the access-scaffolding so that we'll have safe work platforms and access routes for the volunteers, bricks and mortar. We really need more scaffold tube, which is very expensive for a small trust like SORT.

You can guess what's coming!

If anyone can lend or donate scaffold tube, or knows someone who would, please get in touch with me. A dozen twenty one feet tubes would be brilliant. If a commercial company were to lend it to us, we would happily hang their sign on it to give them due credit.

Closing Note

Thanks for your continued support and if anyone could magic up a gazebo or some scaffolding, that would be magnificent and help us enormously.

Hopefully, a good number of you will be able to come to the joint meeting with IWAKES on 14 November and / or our walk to Hamsey Lock next spring.

Hope to see you at Isfield Lock or another location soon.

David Evans

Stop Press – *Just heard that White Bridge (across the Ouse at Isfield), which has been closed for about a year, should be re-opened by the end of October 2013 as East Sussex County Council are close to completing its rebuilding. We have seen very few walkers using the footpath alongside Isfield Lock, which comes up along the river from White Bridge and further south. We should soon see more people stopping to look at our work and chat about the lock and its history.*

Key Contacts at SORT

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Chairman	Bob Draper	sxouse@btinternet.com	07710 016 796
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Volunteer Co-ordinator	Ted Lintott	tedl@talktalk.net	01444 414 413 07765 510 305
Members' Bulletin Health + Safety	David Evans	david.evans@aptkabul.com	01732 838 870 07771 930 546
Correspondence	Sussex Ouse Restoration Trust, 4 Farm Cottages, Parkfield Way, Bolnore, Haywards Heath, RH16 4TB		

Associated Organisations

Inland Waterways Association (IWA)

www.waterways.org.uk

- 01494 783 453

IWA Kent and East Sussex Branch (IWAKES)

https://www.waterways.org.uk/kent/kent_east_sussex

- Roy Sutton, Branch Secretary, 79, St Leonards Park, East Grinstead RH19 1EG;
tel: 01342 317 569.

Waterway Recovery Group (WRG)

<https://www.waterways.org.uk/wrg/>

- 01494 783 453

Canal and River Trust (CRT) – formerly British Waterways – 03030 40 40 40

www.canalrivertrust.org.uk

And finally....

Ouse – origin of the name

Citizendia.org refers to our Ouse, saying it is unlike the other British rivers called the Ouse, because their name comes from a Scandinavian root cognate with 'oose'. The Sussex Ouse name may come from a corruption of the French 'Rivière de Lewes'. (DE comment: *Some people still pronounce Lewes as Lose!*) The river was originally known as the River Mid-Wynd.

Wikipedia has: Ouse is a very common name for rivers in England (eg: the Ouse in Yorkshire), stemming from a Celtic word for water. They reference this from thefreedictionary.com (FDO).

FDO has: The English name for the river derives from its Celtic name Usa, from udso (water), which derives from the Indo-European root 'wed', (wet, water); the same root from which we derive water and wet. Thus the Ouse River, etymologically, is the Water River or the Wet River. Of course, the English who borrowed the name from the Celts did not know the meaning of the word, as is rather frequently the case when foreign topographical terms are borrowed.

Clear as mud!