

## Ted needs your help.....

Or should I say S.O.R.T. needs your help.

The progress being made down at the Isfield Lock restoration site is due to the efforts of just a handful of S.O.R.T. members under the guidance of Project Manager **Ted Lintott**.

Every Thursday and Saturday for the last 8 years this example of a late 18th, early 19th century navigation structure has gradually been turned from being a hidden, forgotten, tree-root-riddled and collapsing structure to one that will last at least another two hundred years.

But extra pairs of hands are always welcome to not only ease the workload of Ted and his team but this year in particular to push forward the target of completing the rebuilding of the west wall of the lock.

So if you think you can help, and not all the work on the site has to be hard graft or heavy lifting, do get in touch with Ted and he will discuss how you can help complete the rebuilding of Isfield Lock.

Compared with better supported and financially secure Restoration Trusts the efforts of S.O.R.T. over the last 8 years has been commendable thanks to firstly Paul Morris in the early days and currently Ted and his team of volunteers

But of course S.O.R.T. do not overlook the fact that without you, the Members supporting the Trust with your membership, no restoration could have been achieved, so the Committee thank you all for that support and look forward to the day we can announce that the restoration of Isfield Lock is complete and that we are able to move on to the next lock structure restoration to be tackled.

More on pages 2 & 3



*Ted Lintott at the controls of the restoration but he now needs your help more than ever.*

### Your New Look Newsletter

A new-look Newsletter greets you this Autumn. Over the years we have offered up several different versions of the Newsletter and now it's my turn to present to you the latest news of activities and restoration work currently being undertaken by S.O.R.T.

So what do you think? Is there more we can do to bring the latest news to you?

Is there more we need to communicate?

Do you want more details from the Isfield Lock site, more history about the Navigation, the locks, the mills?

And could you contribute to the Newsletter with your letters or articles?

If you have anything to say please send any contribution to [newsletter@sxouse.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@sxouse.org.uk) and I will do my best to publish it or answer any query you have.

Or better still come along to our Autumn Meeting on 20th November and meet the Committee and fellow members (see inside for further details).

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### Diary Dates 2014

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#### Saturday

**13th September**

Iron Gate Lock walk

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#### Thursday

**20th November**

Autumn Meeting

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## ISFIELD LOCK

All of our focus through the summer of 2014 has been concentrated on pushing forward the restoration of the lock chamber down on the Ouse at Isfield Lock with the 'second front' of Iron Gate Lock at Sheffield Park being put on the backburner for the time being whilst we await the outcome of discussions with the National Trust.

In 2013 the restoration of the chamber walls was put on hold following the announcement by the Environment Agency (E.A.) that their Middle Ouse Restoration of Physical Habitat (MORPH) plans included reinstating the ox-bow to the west of the lock. Those plans necessitated the flooding of the upstream cut to the lock and installing a culvert beneath the present footpath into the ox-bow. In doing so this would have put the lock structure in danger from the waters that would flood the cut.

In 2013 the restoration of the chamber walls was therefore put on hold and work continued with the rebuilding of the wharf wall on the west bank of the cut upstream from the lock, installing stop planks at the upstream end of the lock, rebuilding the ground paddles and rebuilding the banks along the cut.

All this amount of work was achieved due to the efforts of the working parties throughout 2013 only to be informed by the E.A. that due to a lack of funds they were no longer in a position to carry out their intended work on the ox-bow and no date has yet been set for this work to be carried out.



**Ground Paddle**



**Restored upstream wharf wall (note the summer weed-growth in the cut)**

You might say that S.O.R.T. therefore unnecessarily diverted all their energies into work not scheduled for a year or two. But on the positive side it was work that would have been required in the near future so nothing lost in the long term. And so the rebuild of the west chamber wall began earlier in the year, probably about 18 months behind the original planned schedule of work.

The final 5m section of the west wall was always going to prove to be the toughest challenge to Ted and his team along with Roy Sutton, our Inland Waterways Association (I.W.A.) Engineering Consultant. This section required complete demolition of what was the original failed wall to the lock invert (bottom) and of course to enable that to be done much earth had to be removed. In fact a great deal of earth! This resulted in an enormous hole which in turn required an access ramp for our trusty little digger and dumper. Such a hole presents other problems especially after rain and that is slippage of earth and several gaps have opened up within the banks of the hole during the whole operation.

The spoil from all this digging has been spread along the banks of the cut and also used to raise the level of the public footpath alongside the lock, a messy task made all the more messy during the recent wet weather.

At the time of writing rebuilding has begun and already reached the height of 1.2m. This rebuilding requires very large amounts of concrete to be laid to form the foundations and to backfill the wall as it rises from the bottom of the lock. Each backfill is augmented with 'plums' or old half bricks and hard core to save on the amount of concrete required.

Being so low in the lock chamber every working day is necessarily preceded with a lengthy pump out of water that accumulates in the lock after rainfall or through natural seepage.

This whole rebuild is very labour intensive and a long slow process. It follows therefore that the more volunteers Ted can get down to the site on a regular basis (as requested on page 1) the easier it would be for all concerned and the more progress made. Completion of this section of the chamber this year depends upon the workforce available and the weather between now and the early winter months.

One thing for certain is that a certain height in the wall has to be reached before the winter to stop the flood waters encroaching into the hole and beyond potentially ruining the work so far achieved.



(above) The 5m section of the chamber wall under restoration and (right) the completed west bottom end of the lock with the hole in the background.

What tasks could you get involved in on the site? I'm afraid none are very glamorous, all probably involve a little dust or mud but all are important to the overall progress of the restoration.

You could be helping to mix the enormous amount of concrete required, shifting bricks and hardcore from the store to the site, cleaning bricks for reuse or maybe just helping to keep the site clear of scrub and encroaching vegetation.

Give **Ted Lintott** a call on **01444-414413** or e-mail him on [tedl@talktalk.net](mailto:tedl@talktalk.net).

### Our Trusty Little Digger

Since restoration began back in 2006 one worker has been a constant presence down at the lock, working every day and occasionally performing tasks way beyond its capability.....our little 1 tonne Kubota 360 deg Excavator, or digger.

The digger came to the lock restoration site with our original Project Manager, Paul Morris, who sadly passed away nearly three years ago. It is safe to say that without Paul the restoration would probably not have progressed as it has and certainly without the digger the work carried out in those early days, involving tree stump removal, building the ramp into the chamber and removal of all of the silt from the chamber could not have been done.

The machine has suffered many misfortunes, several lost caterpillar tracks, various hydraulic problems and occasionally getting stranded in the mud.

But the little digger continues to work on a daily basis and remains fundamental to most of the work carried out on the site. We would be lost without it.

We were therefore very grateful indeed when earlier this year Paul's widow, Linda, decided to officially hand over ownership of 'our trusty little Digger' to S.O.R.T.

Thank you Linda, we promise to look after the machine and I am convinced it will be on parade the day work is completed at Isfield Lock. Paul would be proud of his little digger.



Our Digger at work



Taking a well-earned rest

## Lock Walks

A series of short walks are planned to visit each of the locks and lock sites on the Ouse Navigation. The first took place in April this year when about a dozen of us walked between Pike's Bridge and the two Barcombe Mills locks to Hamsey lock. Choosing to reach Hamsey at low tide ensured the best view of what remains of the former lock.



*S.O.R.T. Members at Hamsey Lock*



*Hamsey Lock remains exposed*

The next walk, a much shorter and easier walk, will take place on **Saturday 13th September**. Starting at **2pm** we will walk across the lower parkland at Sheffield Park to the Ouse and look at Iron Gate lock and see for ourselves the work so far achieved in clearing the site in preparation for a possible future restoration project. We will meet in the main car park at **Sheffield Park**. A coffee or tea and maybe a piece of cake can be enjoyed in the N.T. cafe upon our return which we anticipate will be no later than 4pm.

### A.G.M.

The Annual General Meeting took place on 29th July at the Royal Oak p.h. in Barcombe followed by a hour or so playing skittles in the skittle alley the pub is privileged to have.

Prior to that, the bi-monthly Committee Meeting had taken place and we are pleased to announce that Steve Linehan, a valued regular down at Isfield Lock site has agreed to join the Committee. Welcome aboard Steve, we know you will be an asset to the Committee with your knowledge of the restoration work currently taking place.

### I.W.A. Raffle Tickets

The IWA Waterways Restoration raffle this year is aiming to benefit restoration projects run by IWA Corporate Members with all the profits from the raffle being distributed between nominated restoration projects depending upon the percentage of nominations received.

So make sure you enter S.O.R.T. as your nominated restoration project when you enter the raffle.

Tickets can be obtained from the IWA or on line at [www.waterways.org.uk/raffle](http://www.waterways.org.uk/raffle). Tickets are £2 each and the 1st prize is a two week canal boat holiday worth £1700.

### AUTUMN MEETING

The joint Autumn Meeting this year with IWAKES will be held on **Thursday 20th November 7pm for 7-30pm** at the **Upper Room, Perrymount Methodist Church, Perrymount Road, Haywards heath, RH16 3DN**.

Our speaker this year will be Colin Smith, joint author of "Sussex watermills", who will talk about mills on the River Ouse. Should be an interesting evening. Members will also have an opportunity to talk to Committee Members and those directly involved in the restoration of Isfield Lock and catch up with the latest news and photographs of the project.



*My first encounter with Isfield Lock 2002*

### CONTACT DETAILS

[www.sxouse.org.uk](http://www.sxouse.org.uk)

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