

A View from the Bridge



The Newsletter of the Friends of the Union Chain Bridge

The oldest iron suspension bridge in the world still used by vehicular traffic

September 2017

The Friends of the Union Chain Bridge is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation constituted under the Charities Act 2011
Registered as a Charity in England (No 1162687) and Scotland (No SC046208) Supported by over 600 individual members and
Chain Bridge Honey Farm - Cheviot Trees - Paxton South Mains Farm - Hutton Stone - J H Greenwood - The Paxton Trust
R C Reed and Simpsons Malt - Affiliated to SUSTRANS
www.unionbridgefriends.com

What? Where? Why? When?

Friends and visitors walking near the Bridge may – or may not! – have come across this strange object – a solid steel tube or pin set in hemispherical concrete. What is it; where is it; why is it there; and when was it



constructed? Answers at the foot of the next column!

Project 2020. Did we speak too soon?...

The positive Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) bid news in our July Newsletter proved sadly to be too optimistic. Just days after announcing that the much-delayed HLF stage 1 bid would be submitted by the end of August, Northumberland County Council, leading the bid, undertook a basic review of the project and appointed a new dedicated team, with a firm commitment to lodge the bid by the beginning of December. This further unwelcome delay could put the target of completion for the 2020 bicentenary at risk. The Friends remain determined to achieve that important target, and we will continue to press the local and national authorities to get the job done for 2020. We share all Friends' disappointment at this turn of events but assure them that their *continuing support* in our campaign to have the Bridge properly repaired and restored is more vital than ever. *Vis Unita Fortior!*

Your online help is sought.....

In order to give the Heritage Lottery Fund application the best chance of success, the County Council would like to hear your views on the Bridge. We need to show HLF the high level of support the Friends provide for the Bridge and how important it is to the local community, so please spend 10 minutes answering a few questions - it will make a big difference. Just go to www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/UCB-FRIENDS - Friends without an online facility who would like to complete the survey (and who have not received a hard copy) should ring 01289 382541 for one.. Thank you for your time, which is much appreciated....and.do you have an hour or so to spare in September?

As part of the HLF application the County Council would

like to collect some data about how many people visit the Bridge and why. They have compiled a short survey and are looking for volunteers to spend some time on the Bridge approaching visitors to answer questions - it is a simple survey which takes around 3 minutes. If you could spare an hour or two on the 8th 9th or 10th Sept, we would be very grateful. Surveys and clipboards would be provided, please ring 01289 382541 if you are willing to take part. We will have a presence on the Bridge anyway on the 9th and 10th Sept, as part of the annual Heritage Open Days scheme; and we'd be pleased to see Friends and their friends.

The 2nd Two Nations Run and Fun Run

were held on July 26th when 111 runners took part in a challenging 7km run over the Bridge and back again, and a 1.7k family run through Paxton House's bosky glades! First home in the 7k run was Graham Simpson of Alnwick



Harriers (27.10) and in the 1.8k, Gregor Collins of Gala Harriers (8.03). Several of the runners in both events were visitors who, paying their first visit to the Bridge, were impressed by the splendour of the setting! Next year's Runs are on Wed July 25th 2018.

Welcome to a new corporate sponsor

We welcome as new corporate sponsors Paxton South Mains Farm, whose generous support for the project is greatly appreciated.

Donation to Friends' Photographic Archive

Berwick photographer, author and historian, Jim Walker, has very kindly donated six full and half plate glass photographic plates of the Bridge to the Friends' archives. The plates represent some of the very earliest photographic images of the Bridge and three of them will be in Gordon Miller and Stephen K Jones' book, *Samuel Brown and the Union Chain Bridge*.

What? Where? Why? When? The mystery object at GR93295100, on the Scottish side of the river, opposite Bridge House (the former Berwickshire Turnpike tollhouse, but not involved with Bridge tolls), and a few yards north, is apparently a Browning machine gun base. Watch for traffic if searching for it! The gun would have been mounted on the pin, trained on the Bridge and fired remotely by means of a bowden cable from a firing point anything up to 100yds away, the location of which we haven't yet discovered. We hasten to add that it is almost certainly a WWII installation and pre-dates both the Indyref and Brexit debates - and that we don't, at this stage, intend to reinstate it.