



A View from the Bridge

for the Friends of the Union Chain
Bridge

Restoration Progress

Supplement – No 8 – June 2021

View the latest drone footage on:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RLVtM27Xwyw>

...with remarkable pictures of the extensive
preparations on both sides of the Bridge, for the
installation of the new anchors

Above: A new publicity banner unfurled by the Union Bridge
Project on the Scottish tower on June 15th.



The first concrete pour into the massive Scottish-side anchor block. *See following page.*



Previous page and left: **Work on the Scottish-side anchor block.** The huge pit (*previous page*) which features in this month's drone footage, measures 13m x 12m x 5m and straddles the approach road behind the Scottish tower. Some 1500m³ of spoil were excavated and removed off-site. The picture *left*, shows 72m³ of concrete being poured on the 14th June, to form the shear key. Beginning at 4am on 29th June, and probably continuing into the early hours of the 30th June, a shuttle fleet of ready-mix trucks from Gilbert Birdsall of Belford (17 miles south of the site) will transport 330m³ (which, with the first key pour, will total approximately 1000 tonnes) of concrete to form the new anchor block.

It had been hoped that the original 1820 2-ton anchor plates (5ft x 6ft x 2½in) might have been exposed and removed during the excavation but, as is clearly described in Prof Roland Paxton's and Dr Colin Stove's articles in our book *Spanning the Centuries*^{*} (pp 17,18 and 23-5) the iron plates are some 7m below the surface of the road and they were not revealed during the works, so they will remain in

place....perhaps until the next major restoration works?



Excavations for the English-side anchor block from the top of the temporary steel tower. *See following page.* The red Woodliner cable crane used for dismantling the Bridge superstructure awaits re-assembly duties in due course.

On the English side, solid rock capable of accommodating the new anchors was reached only after some four weeks' continuous digging by a mechanical pick/excavator situated on top of the temporary structure in front of the English tower (*previous page*). The operation was completed in mid-June and the digger was removed by crane (*below left*) just before the rebar cage was lifted on to the tower on the 17th June (*below right*). The casting of the concrete anchor is scheduled for the 24th June



June 17th 2021 – The English -side rebar reinforcing cage is delivered.



And what goes around, comes around: An eagle-eyed Friend and amateur commercial archaeologist spotted a curious 2021 link to Capt Brown and Brown Lenox & Co, who supplied the iron chain bars and supplementary ironwork in 1820. Friends are invited to spot the link in the photograph *left* and to email it to unionbridgefriends@gmail.com . The answer will be revealed in the next quarterly Newsletter, which we hope will be published in July.

The photograph shows a dump truck collecting, by means of a chute, the excavated debris from the cliff face behind the English tower before taking it to a temporary spoil heap across the road.

Updated Summary of Contract Programme

SEPTEMBER to DECEMBER 2020

Phase 1 - Preparation

JANUARY to APRIL 2021

Phase 2 - Dismantling

APRIL to AUGUST 2021

Phase 3 - Restoration

The following work will be undertaken during the restoration phase:

Refurbishment and restoration of Bridge components at the Chain Bridge Honey Farm compound, blasting the lead-coated paint and inspecting for defects and necessary repairs; treating with a new paint system. *Under way*

Works of restoration to the iconic Rose and Thistle plaques. *Under way*

Removal and reconstruction of the existing concrete anchorages...

...on the English side, from the top of the structural steel access platform where the top five courses of masonry will be carefully removed prior to cutting out the existing interceptor beam with specialist equipment; then lifting new reinforced steel into position; constructing a new interceptor beam and completing with new rock anchors to secure the beam to the rock face; *Under way; rock anchors to be installed in July – four weeks' drilling*

...on the Scottish side, after sheet piling operations to secure the site, the old anchorage will be excavated out before a new reinforced anchor block is cast, up to 6m below the road level *Under way; anchor block to be cast 29/30 June*

Refurbishment of the two towers using, wherever possible, sandstone matching the original geological characteristics and appearance of the stone and the same mortar

Installation of new suspension chain anchors on both sides of the Bridge *Under way*

Installation of restored Rose and Thistle crests on both towers *Pending*

AUGUST to DECEMBER 2021

Phase 4 – Reinstatement and Ancillary Works

The following work will be undertaken during the reinstatement ancillary works phase:

Re-installation of the refurbished and restored suspension chains.

Installation of new hanger rods

Installation of a full new timber road and footpath deck with steel substructure

Installation of new railings

Re-modelling of the English and Scottish approach roads with visitor parking

Removal of all temporary infrastructure and general reinstatement

Re-opening to traffic before 1st January 2022; final completion early in the New Year



Follow the progress of the works and the Project Partnership Learning and Outreach Team's initiatives, activities, programmes, talks and other events on unionchainbridge.org On **June 29th Sue Threader from the Rochester Bridge Trust** will share the trials, tribulations and triumphs of restoring historic bridges; join the talk by registering at <https://www.wegottickets.com/UnionChainBridge>

Door time 6.50pm Talk start time 7pm



A reminder that our planned Bicenentary Celebration Concert by *Concerto Caledonia* in July 2020, cancelled when Covid-19 forced the abandonment of last year's *Music at Paxton* Festival, is taking place at this year's Festival, sponsored by the Friends, on Sunday July 25th. Full details are on the Festival website – www.musicatpaxton.co.uk We have a small number of tickets for the evening Concert, at 7pm, at £22 each. If you are interested, please e-mail us at unionbridgefriends@gmail.com

The Project Team

The Spencer Group Northumberland County Council Scottish Borders Council Museums Northumberland The Friends of the Union Chain Bridge The National Lottery Heritage Fund

Supported by

Historic England Historic Environment Scotland BCCF Environmental Scottish Landfill Communities Trust Clyde Wind Farm/SSE Renewables Sustrans Roxburghe Estates Fallago Environment Fund EDF Renewables The Wolfson Foundation The Joicey Trust Fallago Community Fund The Catherine Cookson Charitable Trust Berwick Preservation Trust

The Friends of the Union Chain Bridge- registered as a Charity 1162867 (England) SC046208 (Scotland) – A Charitable Incorporated Organisation under the Charities Act 2011 – Chain Bridge House, Horncliffe, Berwick-upon-Tweed TD15 2XT – 01289 382541

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