



April
2007

friends Newsletter

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0008

The turn of the screw

At the end of last year, a decision had to be made whether or not to go ahead and order the first of our Archimedean Screw turbines. We found ourselves in a bit of a cleft stick: on the one hand, our funding from *Clear Skies* to pay for the turbine was about to expire, having already received an extension from September 2006 to the end of February 2007. The main delay up to this point had been waiting for the Environment Agency to grant our Abstraction Licence (the legal permission needed to pass water through machinery in the river) - however, we had been led to believe that once this had been granted, the planning permission for the screw could just be added as an amendment to our building planning permission as all the usual necessary consultation would be implicit through the granting of the Abstraction Licence. Is this making sense so far?



On this basis, the Trustees decided that as there was a three-month lead-time on delivering the equipment, rather than waste £40,000 worth of funding by not acting, we should proceed and place the order for the Archimedean Screw. We received our Abstraction Licence at the beginning of November 2006 and our planning application was submitted shortly after; the Screw was due to be delivered in mid-January leaving plenty of time to commission it within the *Clear Skies* deadline - all seemed to be going to plan.

What's the old adage about counting chickens? Within a very short period of time, the planning department decided that they could not make a decision without going back out to all the consultees and a decision would not be made until March; we were informed that owing to problems at the factory in Germany, there would be a delay in the delivery of the Screw, and as if this wasn't enough, there was a particularly wet spell and the river rose so high that no foundation work could be done in the sluice. We were suddenly facing the very real possibility that in spite of our best efforts, the turbine would not be commissioned in time to meet the funding deadline, and that the Trust would end up with £40,000 worth of equipment with no means of paying for it.

What began as a process organised with military precision ended up as a mad last-minute scramble. The Screw finally arrived from Germany on 19 February on the dot of midday; the crane from



Photographs © Tony Bartholomew

Harrogate arrived late, and with darkness gathering, the 7 tonne turbine (which actually turned out to weigh 9.5 tonnes) swung from the lorry and onto the pontoon in a matter of seconds. The entire assembled company held their breath as the crane hook was released and the pontoon took the full load - witnessing £40,000 worth of steel disappearing to the bottom of the River Derwent would not have been a great start to the year.



Happily, all the detailed calculations proved correct; the Screw sat on the pontoon overnight and was pulled up-river the following morning with only the aid of a small electric outboard motor, a rope and a huge amount of elbow-grease. I must take this opportunity to extend particular thanks to our Patron, Sir Frederic Strickland-Constable for allowing us access to the river across his field;



to our PICOLO (Person In Charge Of Lifting Operation) Austin Lloyd whose calm expertise ensured that the whole complicated operation passed off without incident, and above all to our core of volunteers who undertook back-breaking work in horrendous conditions to ensure that all the preparations were completed on time.

I am delighted to be able to report that the turbine is now in position; our funding from *Clear Skies* is winging its way to the Trust's bank account and we will be able to start generating on site in the next few weeks. Planning permission allowing, of course.





The craftsman at work rebuilding the wheelchamber arch.

Pictures by Tim & Jane Nicholl



Poacher turned gamekeeper

It was a happy day for the project the day that John Adams introduced himself on the phone as "a former vandal" and asked how he could get involved in the restoration of Howsham Mill. He recalled how in his youth, fishing trips to the island often culminated in hijinks in the deserted mill; decades later he has returned as a master builder and stonemason to help re-build it. We all know how difficult it can be to find a builder that we trust implicitly - lucky for us then that we have found in John not only unquestionable craftsmanship, but a genuine passion for the project stemming from a lifetime's association with the mill.



Spotlight on...

William Brown
Volunteer



William is one of our longest serving volunteers, having worked his socks off on site for the past three years. No mean feat when you consider that he is now only 10 years old.

Whether it is gathering wood and tending the fire, shifting bricks, excavating the mill race or appearing on national television, William can always be found in the thick of it. As if this wasn't enough, he has now taken on the role of 'Chief of Sweet Provisions', spending the whole day prior to an Open Day baking a huge array of cakes and biscuits for his fellow workers. I am reliably informed that such is his dedication to the project that the timing of his family holiday is now dictated by mill Open Days.

To William - thank you for all your energy and enthusiasm; I wish we could bottle it.

To William's parents - apologies for the quantity of washing created by it!

Longstanding supporter - new Trustee



At the Annual General Meeting of the RHT in January this year, Val Hood kindly agreed to become the 10th member of

the Board of Trustees.

Val stumbled across the project by accident, drawn to the island by one of our Woodland Craft Workshops, and has been a keen supporter ever since. You may recognise her from a previous newsletter as the brave soul who stood up and spoke for us at the planning committee meeting

to such great effect.

Her career as a physics teacher at The Mount School, York, her eloquence and her obvious enthusiasm for the project will make her an invaluable member of the team.

At the same meeting, Trustee Eileen Barker took on the role of Treasurer, Phil Kershaw the role of Secretary, and Mo MacLeod remains Chair for one more year.

Thanks to everyone who attended.



Phil Kershaw

Eileen Barker



Working his wood magic

Geoff Norton of Yorkshire Hurdles (pictured above) has been hard at work creating an 'Information Station' out of local oak, in keeping with the rustic gorgeousness that is the footbridge he built in 2005. A panel describing the project and displaying a map of the island has been ordered to go inside, and in the fullness of time we also hope to have a noticeboard and a leaflet container. Once complete, there will be no excuse for anyone leaving the site without full comprehension of what we are doing!



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On the last Open Day, Geoff also led the first of our current series of Green Woodworking workshops, as a result of which the first table for our picnic area is now under construction. The next workshop is scheduled for Sunday 1 April - to check availability of places for this and future workshops, please call Geoff or Angela on 01653 618892.

Howsham Mill postcards for sale!

Featuring a sketch by David Horne, these black and white postcards are available at a cost of 25p each or 5 for £1.

They are on sale at Open Days, or you can send a cheque made payable to 'Renewable Heritage Trust' to Eileen Barker, Hamilton House, Scrayingham, N Yorks YO41 1JD. [Please enclose a stamped addressed envelope]. All proceeds will of course go to the restoration project.



Howsham Mill Ruins, Howsham, North Yorkshire