

Good afternoon,

We are delighted to be sending you the first Rewley Road Swing Bridge e-update!

Since the start of work a little over two weeks ago, we have received a lot of positive feedback about the restoration, which has been wonderful to hear – thank you.

The site is now established, with temporary perimeter fencing, river edge protection, stone access ramp, and welfare provisions. Over the last week, the team have begun removing some of the deck components, for example the running rails, timber sleepers and railway chairs.



On Friday 4 December, the **High Sheriff of Oxfordshire**, Mrs Amanda Ponsonby, swapped her feather hat for a hard hat to visit the Bridge. She met with OPT Director Debbie Dance and the team on site to hear all about the project.



During the next fortnight, the timber hoarding will be installed, along with commencing the removal of defective metalwork, such as the deck plates, edge beams and parapets. The contractors will soon then be stopping for a well-deserved break over Christmas!

We would like to take this opportunity to thank **Historic England**, **Railway Heritage Trust**, **Network Rail** and our other funders, without whom this restoration would not be possible. If you would like to help support this project, please consider **donating** or **joining us**.

We look forward to emailing in the New Year,

Happy Christmas from the OPT Team

You can always find out more about the Bridge and Oxford's part in the construction of railways across Britain by visiting the [**OPT website**](#).

Happy New Year and welcome to the first Rewley Road Swing Bridge update of 2021!

The site itself may be quiet at the moment due to wet weather, but there is still plenty of restoration work going on behind the scenes – and we look forward to activity at Rewley Road ramping up again in early February.

Before signing off for Christmas, the project team removed defective metalwork and installed timber hoarding around the site. We are now thinking about how best to use this space to tell the story of the Swing Bridge and its restoration.

While offsite, monitoring flood alerts and the water table, the team are reviewing their plans to jack the bridge up by one metre. This will enable work on the mechanisms beneath. Samples have also been taken to Lisa Oestreicher at [Historic Paint](#) for a colour match.

Perhaps one of the most exciting developments has been the discovery of two of the missing windlass handles, which were reputedly thrown into the Sheepwash Channel after their last use!

They were found through magnet fishing by Tom Davies, an archaeology student at Southampton University, under the guidance of OPT Trustee Tom Hassall. The discovery will allow the remaining two handles to be faithfully reproduced.



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We look forward to updating you again next month,

Best wishes from the OPT team

With thanks to [The Morton Partnership](#), [Avon Construction](#) and [Oxford Archaeology](#).

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With thoughts of Spring and restrictions easing, we wanted to let you know what was happening at the Rewley Road Swing Bridge.



September 2020. We're looking forward to seeing those blue skies again!

At the beginning of the year, we had to come off site whilst the cold and wet weather persisted. Now as the weather warms, we are ready to go back on site – so expect to see more activity if you're passing by.

The work will recommence with the removal of defected metalwork, which will mean some necessary rivet busting. We want to let those of you who live nearby know that this can be noisy, but that it will only last a short time, so please do bear with us as it does need to happen.

Whilst we haven't been able to get on site, we haven't been idle. The team have been preparing site surveys and fabrication drawings, fabricating new metalwork components and analysing paint samples.

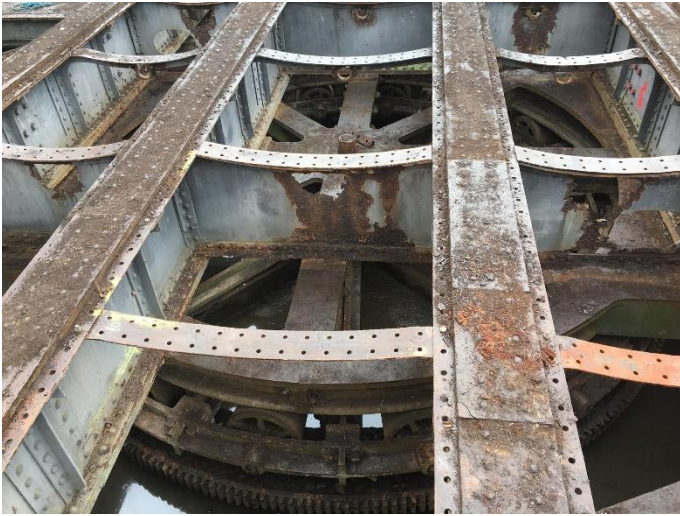
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Rewley Road Swing Bridge Restoration Update

We are now back on site, with everything in full swing and much progress being made.



March 2021. All the defective metalwork removed.

The eagle-eyed may have spotted that the Swing Bridge now sits 60cm higher than usual. Lifting the Bridge was a difficult but critical task, happening just before Easter to great excitement. It means that the team can now get access to the turning mechanism underneath.



Easter 2021. Jacked up by 60cm.



April 2021. The turning mechanism underneath.

And now the blasting works are set to begin. This is an absolutely necessary part of the project, as it will smooth out any rough surfaces and prepare the Bridge for painting. Those of you who live nearby may notice an increase in noise whilst this takes place and OPT are hugely grateful to the residents of Rewley Park for your understanding.

Thanks go to [Historic England](#), [Network Rail](#), the [Railway Heritage Trust](#) and our other sponsors, without whom this restoration would not be possible; and to [The Morton Partnership](#), [Avon Construction](#) and [Oxford Archaeology](#) for their fantastic work.

We look forward to sending you more updates soon.

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Exciting developments at the Rewley Road Swing Bridge – April 2021 Update

See the thrilling moment when the gears were turned again at Rewley Road - we know the Swing Bridge was last used in the 1980s, so that's over 40 years ago. Catch the video of all the action:

<https://youtu.be/KftWxz59PW4>



Passersby will have also noticed some big changes on site, with the installation of a massive white tent. This is the safe environment needed for the blasting works, which will take off rough surfaces and jagged edges before any protective coating or paint can be applied.

What colour do you think the Bridge was painted originally? You'll have to wait to find out, but please do send us your guesses! Find us on [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#).

In other news, following the jacking up of the Bridge, the turning pit has been thoroughly cleared out ready for inspection and, offsite, new metalwork components are being fabricated.



Thanks go to [Historic England](#), [Network Rail](#), the [Railway Heritage Trust](#) and our other sponsors, without whom this restoration would not be possible; and to [The Morton Partnership](#), [Avon Construction](#) and [Oxford Archaeology](#) for their amazing work.

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We look forward to updating you again soon.

Best wishes from the OPT Team

There is a lot going on inside the big white tent this month, as the metalwork is blasted clean. All this has been done in a controlled environment and, once it is completed, all the waste material must be removed and disposed of in a safe way – not least because the site sits alongside the Sheepwash Channel, which flows into the Thames.

It felt more like the set of a sci-fi film than a heritage site when we visited this week with [Historic England](#) and [Network Rail](#). Dressed head to toe in protective clothing, this was the first time they had seen the work happening. The photographs give some idea of the sheer scale of the bridge, but also of the success of the cleaning – what wonderful engineers the Victorians were!



Offsite has been busy too, fabricating parts and sourcing the right reclaimed materials, like these rails – now stored at a Network Rail materials recycling plant with OPT's name clearly stenciled to make sure everyone knows they are taken.



Thanks go to the [Railway Heritage Trust](#) and our other sponsors for helping to save this rare piece of Oxford's industrial past. You too can be a part of the story by [donating](#) or [joining us](#). We would love for you to get involved!

Thanks also go to [The Morton Partnership](#), [Avon Construction](#) and [Oxford Archaeology](#) for their fantastic work.

We look forward to updating you again soon.

Best wishes from the OPT Team.

Progress continues inside the big white tent! The blasting works are now complete, and the damage that this revealed has been mended, with a first protective, primer coat applied ready for the painting to start.

We are now putting back all the cleaned and conserved metalwork and any new is currently being installed on the bridge deck. All the deck plates are now on, with just the edge beams and parapet posts to go.



You might remember that a little while ago, the team jacked up the bridge deck by about half a meter. Well, they have now been below the deck, in the turning pit, raising up the lower part of the mechanism (the lower wheel beam) by 50mm. This has enabled them to free up any seized components and to get them moving. So that is one step closer to getting the bridge to turn again!

Looking ahead, the blasters and painters will soon return to prepare those lower mechanisms, undertake primer repairs caused during metalwork installation and continue with the mid and top coats of the painting.

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Work at the Rewley Road Swing Bridge revealed just in time for Oxford Open Doors.

It has been a busy few weeks as with the repair work and cleaning of the bridge deck completed the painting could begin. This is a hands-on job as over 80% of the painting had to be done with brush in hand with thanks to Stephan and his team. And with amazing timing, the paint has dried just in time for the dismantling of the white tent and scaffolding which has shrouded the structure from the public gaze since the beginning of the year prior to the Oxford Open Doors weekend 11/12 September.



Don't miss the chance to get your first glimpse of the stunning workmanship, together with some sense of just how much we have achieved so far with the restoration. Thanks to Tom Hassall and David Mather who will be on hand to share some of their knowledge of the Swing Bridge and Oxford's railway heritage past Saturday 11th and Sunday 12th 2-4pm. And whilst on site, don't forget to look out for the Railway Heritage Trust Plaque which was recently unveiled by Chairman of Network Rail Sir Peter Hendy, and RHT Chair Jim Cornell.

Why not follow one of our downloadable self-guided Heritage Green Walks which will take you down to the site, pointing out some of the interesting things to see along the way. To download Hidden Heritage: Walk 1 – Jericho or Hidden Heritage: Walk 4 – Oxford Waterways, visit our website:
<https://www.oxfordpreservation.org.uk/content/hidden-heritage-walks>

Thanks go to [Historic England](#), [Network Rail](#), the [Railway Heritage Trust](#) and our other sponsors for their considerable help in allowing us to save this rare piece of Oxford's industrial past, and to [The Morton Partnership](#), [Avon Construction](#) and [Oxford Archaeology](#) for their expert work.

We hope you will want to be part of the Rewley Road Swing Bridge story by joining OPT or making a donation.

Best wishes from the OPT Team.

Work to bring the bridge back together has begun!

With the metalwork repairs completed and new pieces cut, the job of putting the bridge deck back together has started. Like the most complicated of jigsaws, it has required great skill and dedication from our expert team to put together the deck plates, edge beams, and now the new parapet posts and linking mesh. And remember those 5000 rivets that were removed back at the beginning, when the bridge was taken apart? Well, they are now back in place too – essential in holding the whole structure together.



Now that the top of the bridge is complete, the blasters can return to do their final surface clean before the painters come to tidy up the undercoat and start the painting in earnest. Each of the elements has to be painted to create a safe surface to help prevent against future corrosion and, with so many different elements, including all those rivets, it will take four to five weeks to complete this work.

Looking ahead, the longitudinal timbers, reclaimed running rails and newly forged gear head will soon be delivered to site. We also hope that works will start on the north abutment, to complete the work on this side of the stream.

There will be no newsletter in August, as we prepare for **Oxford Open Doors** – when there will be a chance to find out more about our work to the bridge, so do make sure to put Saturday 11th and Sunday 12th September in your diary.

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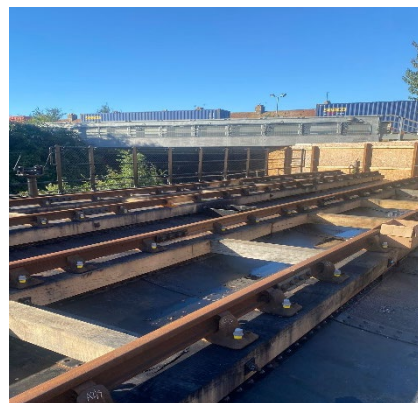
What a difference: Rewley Road Swing Bridge



It's been all hands to the deck over the past few weeks, and as the final painting is completed, we have begun to piece everything back together, placing the longitudinal and lateral timbers on top held together by the tie bars onto which are bolted the metal chairs into which the 95lb bull head rails sit.



(Swing bridge, 2018)



(Swing bridge, October 2021)

And with the work to the bridge nearly complete we will move on to repair the north abutment and are delighted to receive promise of a grant from the FCC Communities Foundation with the support of Lucy Group Ltd and the Cooper Charitable Trust which is crucial to our ability to landscape the area.

Finally, thank you to David Mather and Tom Hassall for their help over the Oxford Open Doors weekend in September seeing nearly 200 visitors in four hours.

Our special thanks go to [Historic England](#), [Network Rail](#), the [Railway Heritage Trust](#) and our other sponsors for making this restoration possible, and to [The Morton Partnership](#), [Avon Construction](#) and [Oxford Archaeology](#) for their expert work.

Be part of the Rewley Road Swing Bridge story join us today and donate.

Best wishes from the OPT Team.

We hope you are looking forward to Christmas whatever it brings...

As we head towards the end of the year, we are delighted to report that we have successfully completed Phase I of the Swing Bridge restoration work.



What was described in 2018 as an abandoned industrial gem “rotting with indignity” is, today, transformed, on its new journey to its rightful place at the heart of the story of Oxford’s railway heritage.

But this is just the tip of the iceberg. We are now busy restoring the north abutment, and are looking at plans for landscaping and interpretation which will start in 2022 for which we have been lucky enough to secure 50% funding from FCC Communities Foundation. We are going to need some help to find the remaining funding and then to think about the south abutment.

For now, we simply want to wish you a very **Happy Christmas** and to thank our partners the Railway Heritage Trust, Network Rail, Historic England, Oxford Archaeology, Avon Construction, Ian Walker Associates and the TMP Partnership for making this happen.

And if you would like to give OPT a Christmas present and help us to complete the work, please visit our website to donate [HERE](#).

Best wishes from the OPT Team.

