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Iron Bridge Restoration Project

## **NEWS RELEASE**

### **Iron men walk to save Iron Bridge**

Marple men Mark Whittaker and Peter Clarke will depart on a sponsored walk from the Iron Bridge in Brabyns Park, Marple, to the world famous Iron Bridge in Telford, Shropshire at 10.00 AM on Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> May 2004.

The pair, who run Marple's local community web site, will be endeavouring to complete the walk, which they are calling a '90-mile stroll', to raise money for the next phase of the Iron Bridge Restoration Project.

The Iron Bridge Restoration Project is a joint venture between The Marple Website, Marple Local History Society and Stockport Council to restore the historic Georgian cast iron bridge in Brabyns Park, which was built in 1813 by the Salford Iron Works for estate owner Nathaniel Wright.



**Peter, left, and Mark plot their route.**

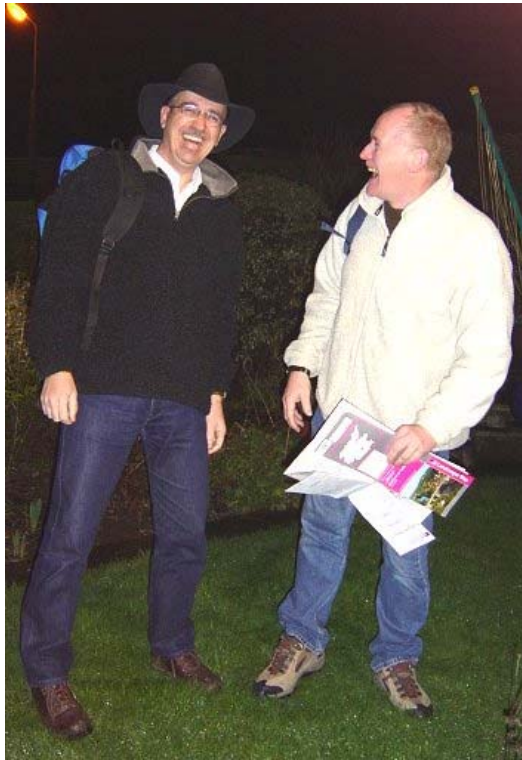
The Group has already received a Project Planning Grant of over £30,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund for the first phase of work, which is currently underway. This involves a survey of the bridge, an access plan and assessment of the options available for restoration. The grant is also to help to pay for detailed design of the scheme finally chosen, so that firm prices can be obtained by tender to enable the Group to prepare a grant application to the HLF for the second phase. If this application is successful, the Group hope to be awarded a grant of up to 90% of the restoration costs by the HLF, which would leave them having to find at least 10% of the money needed from alternative sources.

The Group has already raised more than £5,800 from within the local community, of which £3,400 will be spent during the first phase. 'Provisional estimates for the second phase of the restoration indicate that it will cost in the region of £150,000' said Peter, 'this means we'll need to raise around £15,000 by other means and we hope that the sponsored walk will contribute to this and also raise the profile of our efforts.'

'The support we received from the local community when we started campaigning and raising money for the first phase was fantastic,' said Mark, 'and we're hoping that local people will get behind us again, now that we have an idea of what our final target needs to be.'

'People have already responded to our appeals for help' said Peter, 'when we asked on the web site and in local newspapers if anyone could lend us a campervan to stay in overnight, local man Andy Glossop came forward with an offer of a superb vehicle. 'We also have a friend, John Connor, who has agreed to drive it during the six days that the trip is expected to take.' 'We're also very grateful to the Marple Co-Op, who are allowing

us to collect sponsorship in the store on Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> April and Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> May,' added Mark, 'and we hope people will sponsor us for as much or as little as they can afford.'



As well as trying to raise sponsorship directly, Mark and Peter have appealed to visitors to The Marple Website to help them too. 'We've added a page about the sponsored walk on the web site' said Peter, 'and visitors can download sponsorship and Gift Aid forms. We hope that they'll raise money on our behalf at work, school, at their club, or even at their local pub!'

The Group have a diary on the Marple Website charting the progress of the campaign from its beginnings in June 2001 up to the present. 'We're hoping to be able to keep this up to date with photographs and reports on our progress each day while we're away' said Mark, 'so long as we can beg or borrow the technology we need!'

The pair are obviously keeping their fingers crossed for good weather on their trip, most of which will be via canal tow paths, and hope that lots of people will turn up to see them off from the Iron Bridge in Marple at 10.00 AM on Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> May!

For more information on the Iron Bridge Restoration Project please visit: [www.marple-uk.com/ironbridge](http://www.marple-uk.com/ironbridge)

The Iron Bridge Restoration Project Group is grateful to the following organisations and individuals for the help and support they've provided, or offered, so far:

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