

Future of the historic Union Chain Bridge secured

19/09/2019



The oldest operational suspension bridge in the world will be preserved after a £3.14million National Lottery grant.

For 200 years the Union Chain Bridge has crossed the River Tweed, connecting Fishwick in Scotland to Horncliffe in England. Thanks to National Lottery funding, crucial repair works beginning early next year will ensure this link continues.

To celebrate the cross-border project, His Royal Highness The Duke of Gloucester visited the Grade I/Category A Listed bridge on Wednesday 18 September.



The Duke of Gloucester (centre) visits the Union Chain Bridge. Credit: Scottish Borders Council

Community focus

David Renwick, our Director of England, North, said: “Not only have National Lottery players secured the future of the iconic structure that is the Union Chain Bridge, but the money they have raised will also strengthen connections between communities in Northumberland and the Scottish Borders.”

Community groups and schools on both sides of the bridge will come together to celebrate its historical and engineering importance. Hands-on learning will inspire students to consider a career in the STEM fields – science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

Among a wide range of activities, the public will be able to take part in guided walks and view new exhibitions and a documentary.

International importance

Robert Hunter, Chair of the Friends of the Union Chain Bridge, said: “We are all thrilled that The National Lottery Heritage Fund has made such a substantial grant to save this much-loved and iconic piece of our engineering history. When it was completed in 1820, the Union Chain Bridge was the world’s longest suspension bridge and it provided the catalyst for huge innovation in bridge

design.”

The bridge and the engineer behind it – Captain Samuel Brown – were hugely influential in the global development of suspension bridges. They helped to establish the UK at the forefront of bridge-building in the early 19th century.

When it opened, it was the first suspension bridge in Europe to carry wheeled traffic and remains the oldest still in use worldwide.

Watch drone footage of the Union Chain Bridge (Northumberland County Council/Northumberland TV):



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