

Robertsbridge Flood Defences

© Salehurst & Robertsbridge Parish Council

2008

Robertsbridge has suffered flooding on a number of occasions in the past but Thursday 12th October 2000 was to be the worse in living memory.

The pictures which follow give some idea of the visual effects of this flooding but cannot convey the distress and trauma of the people who suffered.



Thursday 12th October 2000 – Down came the rain!



.....and more!





The village hall!



Meanwhile in the centre of the village things were getting worse – note, the car is floating!!







**Four-page
special
on floods**

FLOODS SPECIAL OCTOBER 12, 2000



Villagers count the cost of flooding nightmare

ROBERTSBRIDGE resembled a war-zone this week as skips full of ruined furniture, carpets and other possessions lined the High Street.

Although by Tuesday life appeared to be getting back to nor-

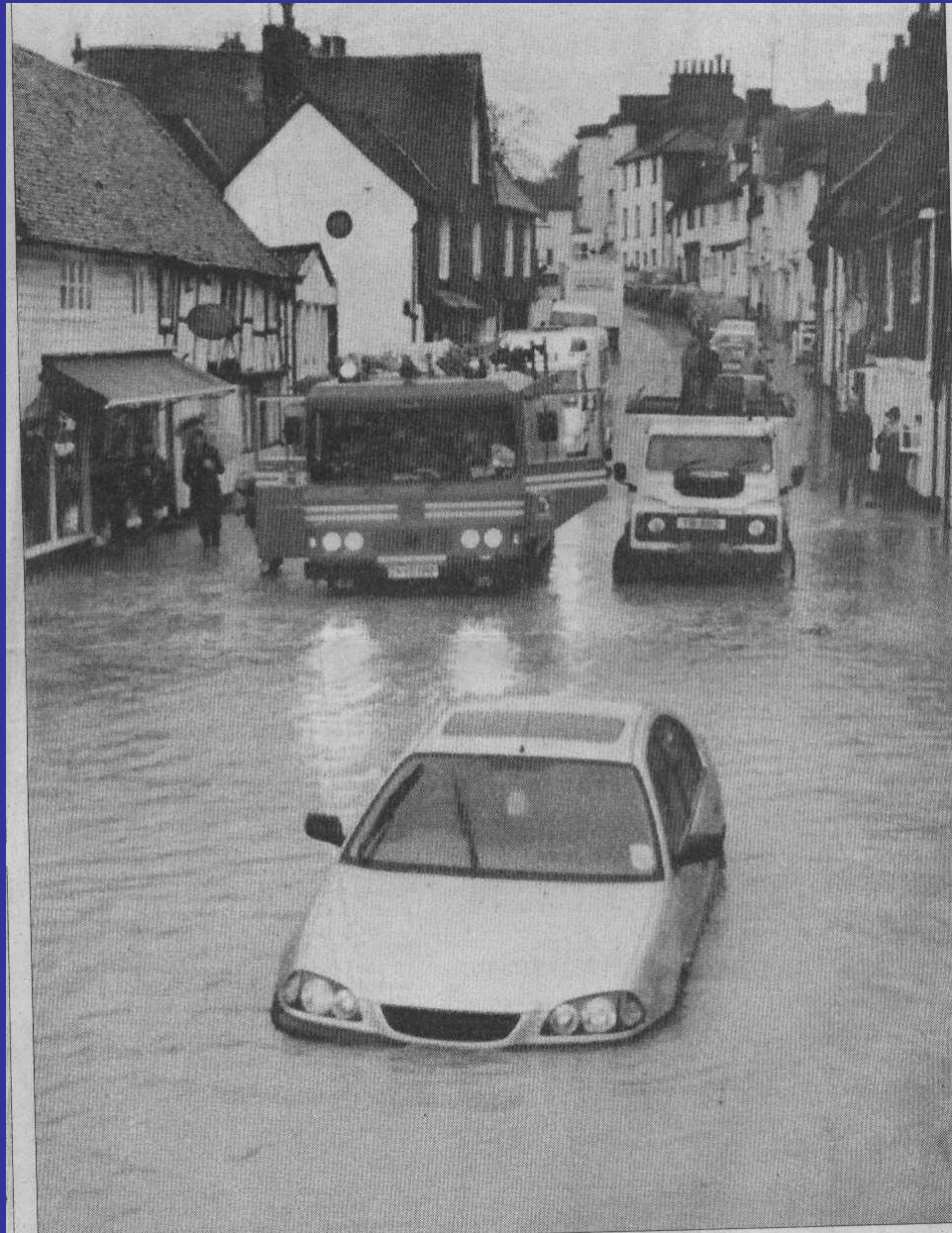
Report by
Dominic Ponsford

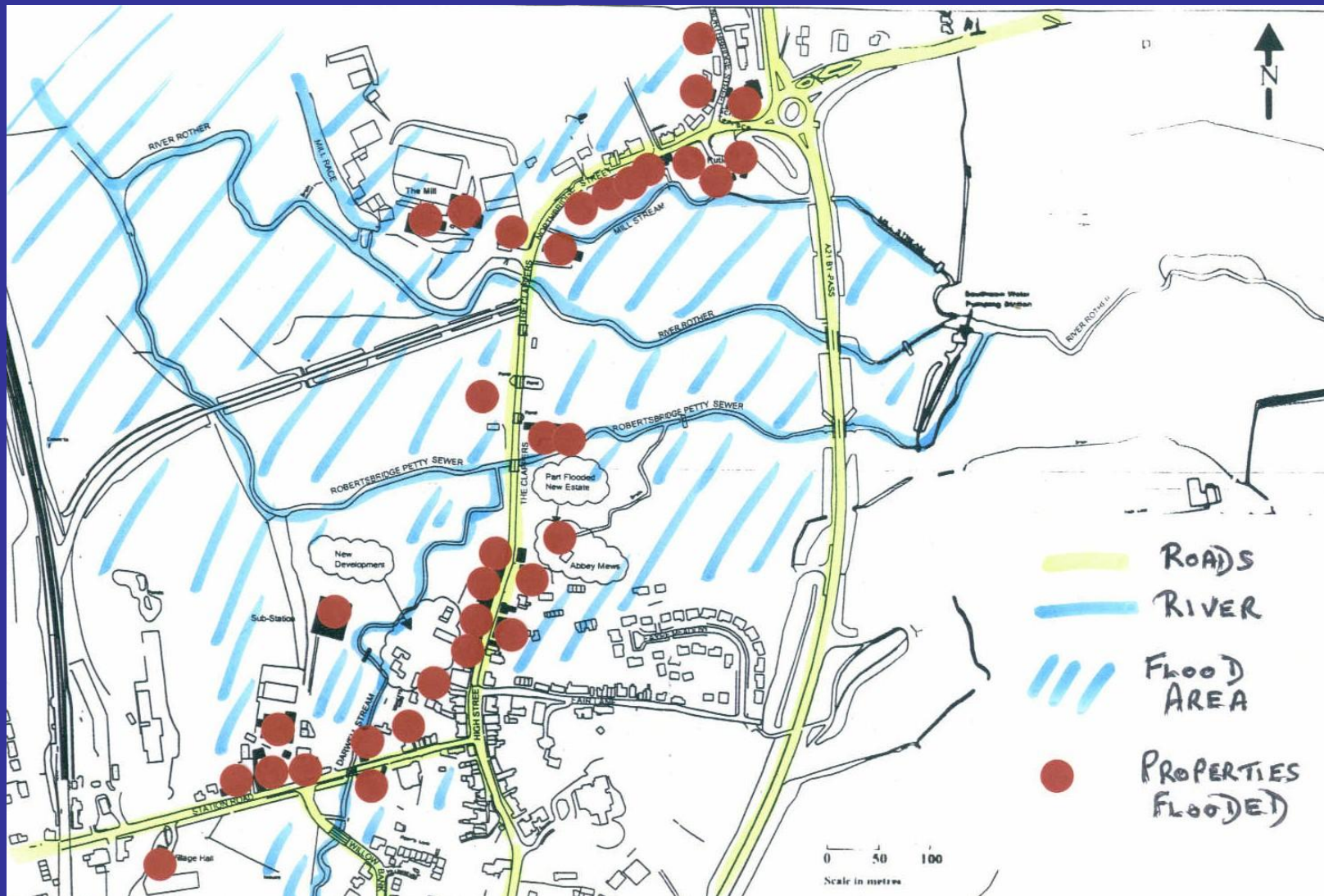
Pictures by
Justin Lycett

mal on Thursday after the main sub-station in Robertsbridge was submerged.

Seaboard flew in repair crews by helicopter and restored power to all but 70 of their customers by Friday morning.







Over 70 properties were flooded, mostly residential but some businesses too! Relatively, the number of properties flooded was greater than either Lewes or Uckfield which received much more media attention! Although, we had some!!

SALEHURST & ROBERTSBRIDGE PARISH COUNCIL

ROBERTSBRIDGE FLOOD APPEAL

The Parish Council is co-ordinating an appeal to raise money to try to give some immediate assistance to those people in our village who were victims of the recent flooding disaster. The Parish Council has agreed a substantial contribution to the fund, but we need YOUR help NOW!.

Please send or give whatever you can afford to members of the Appeal Committee listed below or put donations in to the official collecting boxes in pubs and businesses around the village before

MONDAY 6th NOVEMBER

Cheques should be made payable to 'Salehurst & Robertsbridge Parish Council'

Please note that we are NOT authorising street or house-to-house collections!

Appeal Committee Members

Peter Seymour Eyles (Parish Clerk) 'Crossways', Knelle Road Robertsbridge, TN32 5DZ Tel: 882066	David Allen (Chairman) Lodge Farm House Brightling Road Robertsbridge, TN32 5DJ Tel: 881056	John Goldsmith (vice-Chairman) 3 Norman Villas Robertsbridge, TN32 5AG Tel: 880412
--	---	---

Connie Johnson
63a High Street
Robertsbridge TN32 5AN
Tel: 880606

Marilyn Faithfull
7 Northbridge Sreet
Robertsbridge TN32 5NY
Tel: 880937

The Parish Council launched an appeal to help the flood victims and this ultimately raised over £20,000 – mostly from within the parish, but with generous donations from individuals and organisations outside.

Distribution of the funds started on the 7th of November but before that, two further incidents of flooding occurred!

Whilst these were not as severe as that of the 12th October, for the victims they were doubly traumatic as they tried to put their lives back together.

THAT'S ENOUGH

Angry villagers demand action after more flooding

by
Dominic Ponsford

ROBERTSBRIDGE is a village living in fear - dreading every time the heavens open.

As many flood-hit residents mopped up for the fourth time in less than a year despair was turning into anger, with many saying: "We've had enough".

Over a dozen properties barely dry from the last deluge three weeks ago suffered another flooding on Monday when the Rother burst its banks sending a filthy tide pouring into homes.

Villagers did everything they could but many were powerless to stop the inevitable.

"People are angry, a lot are still shocked and fairly traumatised," said parish council chairman David Allen.

Along with district councillor Sue Prochak he wants a meeting with the Environment Agency, but not immediately because feelings are running too high.

Cllr Prochak said: "I could see the anxiety on people's faces. It's not like a fire when afterwards you can rebuild, now every time it rains people are thinking is it going to happen again?"

A flood defence wall plan to protect Northbridge Street was discarded by the Kent Flood Defence Committee in 1998 on the grounds that at £270,000 the expenditure would not justify the benefit. At the time the risk of serious flooding in Robertsbridge was estimated at once every 30 years.

Cllr Prochak is now lobbying hard for a meeting with the Environment Agency within the next few weeks. She wants better dredging of the river, more culverts to let water drain away through the by-pass and the reinstatement of the scrapped flood defence scheme.

"People don't want a witch hunt, they just want assurances that something



RUTLEY Close has now flooded four times in the last 10 months. Resident Graham Matthews (pictured) puts at least some of the blame firmly on the Robertsbridge by-pass, built ten years ago. He said: "This close didn't flood until they built the by-pass - if you build a dam through a flood plain it's going to hold up water." More flood pictures and reports pages 4, 5 & 6. *Picture by Justin Lycett* *Above: 44567*

Sunday/Monday.

Rainfall for October was measured as twice the normal average at the Hastings weather station and around three times average in places further inland.

tour Robertsbridge.

Cross-party support is expected expected at Rother District Council for a motion calling for the formation of a Flood Recovery Co-ordinating Group

nation should send a cheque, made out for Robertsbridge and Salehurst Parish Council, to Crossways, Knelle Road, Robertsbridge, TN32 5DZ.

On Thursday morning the Rother

Elderly couple's raid terror - see page 3

SHOP Local BUY Local
RYE HIRE
1 Cyprus Place, Rye
01797 223033



Attractive, Comfortable, Easy to use

LIFT and RISE RECLINERS - EIGHT IN STOCK FROM LA-Z-BOY SHERBORNE CINTIQUE CELEBRITY AND ROYAMS

VAT FREE for qualifying customers - ask for details

HOME DEMONSTRATION SERVICE

Working in partnership with District and County Councillors and the local MP the Parish Council tried to raise the profile of the problems in Robertsbridge to see if some long term remedial plan could be devised.

Numerous meetings with Environment Agency staff were held and two visits to London to see the Minister responsible, Elliott Morley, were arranged by the local MP.

EA staff were of the opinion that a 'stand alone' scheme could be devised for Robertsbridge which would not have strategic effects on other villages.

The Minister authorised a Pre-feasibility study (computer based) and this was completed in May 2001 (amazingly fast!).

The results were encouraging and a full study was authorised by the Minister.



The full study was completed by May 2002 and the scheme funded and officially launched by the Minister on 4th September 2002

The scheme was to comprise a series of earth bunds, walls and steel gates across the roads and also the re-alignment of a small stream.

Later, the sliding gates were replaced by demountable 'stop log' barriers as these were quicker to install and easier to maintain.

There was inevitably much disruption to the village during construction but the EA and the Consulting Engineers and Contractors worked closely with the Parish Council to minimise this and to deal promptly with any problems.

Several public meetings and exhibitions were held to explain the scheme and regular newsletters and reports on the parish web site kept residents up to date with progress.



Building flood defences and diverting the stream





Building the earth bund to protect the village hall



Checking the operation of one of the flood gates



Installing one of the demountable 'stop log' barriers



Building the earth bund to protect the main part of the village



Where space was limited, steel walls instead of earth bunds

New flood defences pass the test

THE new flood defences at Robertsbridge dealt with their first test after three days of heavy rain over the weekend and more on Wednesday.

Villagers looked on anxiously as the rain poured down on Friday, Saturday and Sunday, but the defences, which are almost finished, held firm.

David Allen, chairman of the parish council, said: "It was a bit worrying but the river level is still well down and didn't get near the top. We are pleased and relieved the defences are in place."

Resurfacing work was done this week to repair roads that have been damaged by the installation of the new flood defences.

A short stretch of Station Road was closed on Tuesday and The Clappers on Wednesday so workers could complete resurfacing of the road on either side of the tracks supporting the new floodgates.

For both closures, access for pedestrians was unaffected and road traffic access was not seriously affected, but was limited at times.

Essentially, the work was completed before Christmas 2003 apart from minor adjustments etc..... Just in time, as in November and December heavy rain caused much concern in the village.



The scheme was officially declared complete on 22nd February 2004 by the Chairman of East Sussex County Council.

After nearly a year and a good growing season, the landscaping of the works area is starting to blend the defences into the landscape.



Earth bund protecting the village hall



Earth bund protecting main part of village



Brick and concrete enclosure for sliding steel gates