

# Porter Valley News



The newsletter of Friends of the Porter Valley - Registered Charity No. 1069865

Issue 89

April 2018

## Artistry in Stone, Wood and Bronze: Frank Tory & Sons of Ecclesall Rd.



**Duck sets new  
Sheffield record!**  
(see page 2)

### Inside this issue:

10th Annual Easter Duck Race	2
Nature Counts	2
Walking the Porter Valley	2
Commemorative Monuments	3
Forge Dam Project	3
Bingham Park Sports Facilities	3
Just how old is Shepherd Wheel?	3
General Data Pro- tection Regulation	4
Forge Dam Playground	4
Winter Fairs	4
Contact details	4
Membership details	4
Committee members	4
Activities	4

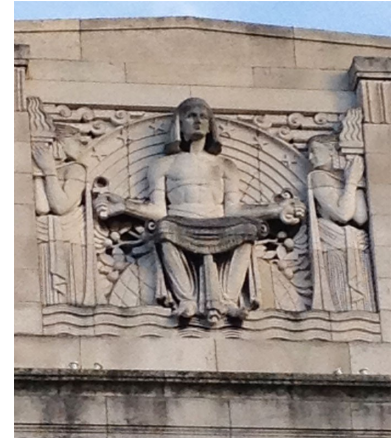
A talk by Sylvia Dunkley

Wednesday 2nd May

7:30 - 9:30pm

Bents Green Methodist Church

Ringinglow Road



Before the talk we will have our Open Meeting.  
After the talk, tea and biscuits, and a chance to chat with the committee  
and other members.

### Conservation Volunteers at Forge Dam: the next instalment

As previously reported we decided to begin a limited intensive work programme at Forge Dam aimed at the island which was looking very untidy and overgrown. Work started before Christmas and has continued up until the beginning of March. We try to avoid disruptive work such as tree and shrub pruning from the middle of March until October. This year the cold weather has delayed these processes. We have worked from the beginning



of December until the first week in March through cold weather, snow and ice to improve the island. I think you will agree that the results are very encouraging. The sight lines through the island are enormously improved and it looks very tidy. Large numbers of self sets have been removed. Rotting and fallen timber has been cut and stacked along with heaps of brush to make wild life refuges. We are confident that island wild life will now begin to thrive.

We were also concerned that the flow of the river along the south bank has been halted by a further build up of silt. In consultation with the Council and their contractors we have cleared self sets and trees growing out of the stone walls on the south bank. A JCB digger removed about 200 cubic metres of silt from the channel. This has improved matters but further work is needed. The temporary geo textile barrier, which you may have seen, was erected by our volunteers and our Council Ranger, Chris, to retain the silt and allow water to drain back into the dam. Further work is now suspended during the summer/early autumn. If you haven't seen Forge Dam recently the pictures will give you an idea of what has been going on. The Council contractor rebuilt the retaining wall at the bottom of the slipway. Yet another welcome improvement.



Well what's next? We cleared the river of fallen branches and litter in preparation for the Duck Race. Then in April it's off to Bingham Park and Shepherd Wheel. There is definitely no shortage of work. Please join us if you can. Details of work days are on the website.

David Clegg

## 10th Annual Easter Duck Race



First there was snow, then there were floods but the Great Easter Duck Race in Endcliffe Park went ahead as planned with the ducks being launched this year by the founder of the race, Mrs. Sue Spence (pictured in the red coat and grey bobble hat)



ably assisted by Harry, Tom and Zak from Nether Green School. It was great that so many folk turned out to watch the race, and it was particularly impressive to see the fine collection of Easter Bonnets on parade under the shelter of one of the awnings.




Glynis Jones

Happy first prize winner Leo Dal-Molin



Bonnets, bonnets, bonnets



 Duck 2281 first entered the race in 2010 having failed to qualify in 2009 when numbers were limited to 1350. S(he) has raced in all 9 subsequent races, finally romping home in 2018 in 6mins 26secs, smashing the 2016 record of 8mins 35secs.



Ducks on their way home to be recorded

## Nature Counts

Our February Walk was led by Paul Richards who has been closely involved in a project for the Wildlife Trust aimed at increasing public participation in biological recording across the city. Only by capturing data about the various species can we know if something is expanding its range or is struggling to survive due to habitat loss or invasion by an alien species. Paul's specific area of expertise concerned invertebrates so we proceeded up the valley leaving no stone unturned in our search for tiny millipedes, snails, molluscs and crustaceans. Not only was Paul able to identify all manner of creepy-crawly but he also knew their Latin names. Each finding was then fed into Paul's smart phone using an app appropriately called iRecord. The data required for the National record has to include WHAT was the species, WHO made the observation, WHEN was it seen, and WHERE was it seen. Records have to be verified by national experts and it was impressive to note that Paul's data, he being an acknowledged expert, was accepted even as we grovelled looking for more.

The day after our walk Paul forwarded to me the official record of the invertebrates we had unearthed. The degree of detail was truly amazing, with GPS accurately locating the smallest invertebrates we had had to use magnifying glasses to identify.

Chris Nicholson

**Walking the Porter Valley:** Our new book is on sale at £8.99 at the 2 May Open Meeting!



**Hunter's Bar entrance.** We now have new seating and notice board there. Look out for the cleaned up Queen Victoria statue, the great triangular commemoration stone by the green space, and the Me Amigo memorial in the woodland. It looks a more fitting entry to our valley now, but maybe there is more to do. We are grateful to our Council colleagues Judi Siddall and Andy Phillips for cracking on with these improvements.



*Ann le Sage*

**Forge Dam commemorative boulders.** Did you know the Forge Dam area was a Graves gift to the city? The expert cleaning the Hunter's Bar monuments will now clean the great stone at Carr Bridge, the smaller one on the bridle path above the dam, and the smallest stone marking the entry from Brookhouse Hill into Festival Woodland. All 3 stones are going to receive this care thanks to the Graves Trust, and so celebrate 1930s community spirit.

## Forge Dam Project

We recently appointed Urban & Environmental Design to prepare a formal application for Planning Permission for the Forge Dam Desilting Project. The application has been prepared in draft with a view to submitting to Sheffield City Council shortly. The Planning Permission is vital in being able to apply for further monies from major donors to add to the £210,000 already raised. To be able to carry out the work to re-establish the river channel to the south of the island (see page 1), we have had to obtain permission from the Environment Agency. These works will also help to stop access by humans and animals during the up-coming nesting season, and improve the ecology and appearance of the existing island.

*David Young*



## Bingham Park sports facilities

Courts 4 and 5 were fully renovated by the Council before Easter with funds from the LTA and section 106 funding. The walls to the area occupied previously by courts 1, 2 and 3 have been made safe with funds raised by the Bingham Community Group, a donation of £1070 from Ecclesall Ward and a Co-op donation of £3482.08; this space will soon be available for flexible outdoor family play. The area occupied previously by courts 6 to 9 has been landscaped for picnics, strolls with a view, and more family play: we are just waiting for the mud bath to subside to permit grass seeding in the spring. Our volunteers will be clearing scrub and invasive brambles in April. All this effort should really perk up this attractive but neglected area, and now all we have to do is raise funds for outdoor table tennis, new netting, some attractive flower beds on the borders, anything else the community can suggest for families.

*Ann le Sage*

## Just How Old is Shepherd Wheel?

From evidence revealed in my piece "Were they lying through their teeth?" in July 2017 Porter Valley News it was confirmed that the "whele in Porters Feild" (the subject of a will proved 2<sup>nd</sup> May 1566) was indeed the forerunner of Shepherd Wheel. Clearly this information predates by nearly two decades the year commonly cited from another will (William Beighton 1584) previously thought to be a firmer first source.

Just how early is the wheel if it was bequeathed by Roger Barnsley to his son Thomas in 1566 as an *already working* water mill? Can testators Thomas Creswick aged c70 and Richard Roberts aged c40 who lied about its location in the 1587 Exchequer Court case be trusted for the earlier history? They testified that appropriate rents had been paid to the then present earl's father (Francis, died 1560) and grandfather (George, died 1538). If correct, that would take the working site back some three more decades.

This additional "evidence" could, of course, easily be dismissed in view of the location lie. But the same testators used similar phrases with reference to Little Sheffield Moor wheel for which a will of 1542 (Robert Greenwood of Dore) does indeed provide genuine confirmation for that site.

So do we believe them for Porter [Shepherd] Wheel as well? Until further reliable primary sources are found the answer is on hold.

*Neville Flavell*

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### Annual Membership:

**Single: £10**  
**Family: £15**  
**Concession: £5**

Membership forms  
available from  
David Young  
(tel. 2307909)  
or on our website

**General Data Protection Regulation:** This legislation, which governs how organisations (including a charity like the Friends of the Porter Valley) store and use personal details, comes into force on 25 May 2018. We are currently reviewing our policy and procedures on data protection to ensure that we comply with this regulation. More information will be available on our website in due course.

## Forge Dam Playground

In May the grubby equipment and dismal ground will be pressure jetted: then in June the swings will be repositioned to permit the introduction of a wide shallow circular swing, and new ground surface material. All this is possible thanks to Fulwood Coop fundraising (£1947.60), donations from the community, and the Fulwood Ward (£1213). FoPV and community volunteers will then repaint the jaded equipment to give it all a new lease of life. But that is not good enough for this much loved space: the plan is to fundraise and replace some of the equipment, extend the fences to enclose the dead area currently used as an occasional and informal parking lot, and install a modern sandpit. PLEASE if any members are able to volunteer ideas and time, get in touch with me or Nick Dunn's team at the Cafe. We need an active user group to drive forward the recreation of this playground. Telephone/text 07790250087 or email [ann@lesage.org.uk](mailto:ann@lesage.org.uk).

Ann le Sage

**AUTUMN FAIR** We have reluctantly decided not to run a September community event at Forge Dam. Last year we had so many members away on holiday that it was really difficult to cover all the tasks and we lost some regular exhibitors too. But mark your diaries for 15 December Christmas Fair.

## Activities for May to August

Any changes in the following details will be available on the website

When and Where	What and Who
Wednesday 2 <sup>nd</sup> May, 7.30 pm Bents Green Methodist Church Hall	"Artistry in Stone, Wood and Bronze: Frank Tory and Sons of Ecclesall Road" Open meeting and talk by Sylvia Dunkley
Saturday 5 <sup>th</sup> May, 4:30 am Wire Mill Dam car park	Dawn chorus walk led by Chris Nicholson
Thursday 10 <sup>th</sup> May, 10 am Forge Dam	Conservation work day. Contact David Clegg on 2305371 or <a href="mailto:orielclegg@aol.com">orielclegg@aol.com</a> or fopv.org.uk
Tuesday 22 <sup>nd</sup> May, 10 am	Conservation work day. Contact David Clegg on 2305371 or <a href="mailto:orielclegg@aol.com">orielclegg@aol.com</a> or fopv.org.uk
Saturday 2 <sup>nd</sup> June, 10.30 am Forge Dam Café	Butterfly walk led by Ros Hancock
Thursday 14 <sup>th</sup> June, 10 am	Conservation work day. Contact David Clegg on 2305371 or <a href="mailto:orielclegg@aol.com">orielclegg@aol.com</a> or fopv.org.uk
Tuesday 26 <sup>th</sup> June, 10 am	Conservation work day. Contact David Clegg on 2305371 or <a href="mailto:orielclegg@aol.com">orielclegg@aol.com</a> or fopv.org.uk
Saturday 7 <sup>th</sup> July, 10 am Forge Dam Café	"Wild plants of the Porter Valley" A walk led by Ken Balkow
Thursday 12 <sup>th</sup> July, 10 am	Conservation work day. Contact David Clegg on 2305371 or <a href="mailto:orielclegg@aol.com">orielclegg@aol.com</a> or fopv.org.uk
Tuesday 24 <sup>th</sup> July, 10 am	Conservation work day. Contact David Clegg on 2305371 or <a href="mailto:orielclegg@aol.com">orielclegg@aol.com</a> or fopv.org.uk
Wednesday 1 <sup>st</sup> August, 7.30 pm Bents Green Methodist Church Hall	"Habitat enhancement & biodiversity in the Porter Valley" Open meeting and talk
Saturday 4 <sup>th</sup> August, 10 am Bingham Park, Rustlings Rd. entrance	"The Porter Valley's Woodland Heritage" A walk led by Ruth Morgan

The Committee:

Ann le Sage  
*Chair / conservation*  
David Young  
*Treasurer*  
Glynis Jones  
*Secretary / newsletter*  
Dave Clegg  
*Conservation work days*  
Les Greenwood  
Mike Halliwell  
*Website / membership*  
Glyn Mansell  
*Bingham Park*  
Maggie Marsh  
*Shepherd Wheel open days*  
Chris Nicholson  
*Walks*  
Flora Owen  
*Talks*