

# Porter Valley News



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

Issue 101

April 2021

## Flood alleviation and implications for the Porter Valley A possible plan for Endcliffe Park

The original options are still on the table, but other solutions are being assessed. This is a general update on the Sheffield Flood defence programme:

The Sheffield Waterways Strategy group, which FoPV attends, continues to discuss the South Yorkshire flood alleviation schemes. The government has announced £80 million investment for flood alleviation schemes across the region. This will help deliver up to 27 priority schemes, including natural flood management across the River Don catchment, Rotherham to Kilnhurst, schemes at Bentley, Fishlake, Conisbrough and Tickhill in Doncaster, the Upper Sheaf catchment and Blackburn Brook in Sheffield and Lundwood in Barnsley. However, South Yorkshire Mayor Dan Jarvis has said that a further £125 million is needed to fully protect South Yorkshire and it is expected that further lobbying of Government departments will take place in the coming months: <https://sheffieldcityregion.org.uk/mayor-responds-to-80m-funding-for-south-yorkshire-flood-defences/>

- Lower Loxley flood defences are well into the construction phase, including the section behind Towsure and Malin Bridge Park and Ride.
- SCC has submitted a bid to DEFRA for funding to expand work on 'nature-based solutions' including natural flood management in the Don catchment. The four South Yorkshire local Authorities have also put in a separate bid.
- There is some funding in the Environment Agency budget from April 2021 for investigations on using reservoirs in the Don catchment for flood risk management.
- A report is due soon from the consultant looking at how to provide the desired level of water retention for flood protection in the Sheaf and Porter valleys.
- The Sheaf and Porter Trust is actively looking at deculverting and flood management closer to the town centre and FoPV attends their meetings.

*Ann le Sage*



### A Skua in the Valley

We are fortunate in the fact that the valley attracts a wide range of birds throughout the year. However no-one could have predicted the arrival, in the second week of March, of a Long-tailed Skua to a field at the very top of Clough Lane. This is a sea going, pelagic bird which winters in the South Atlantic and is described as a scarce passage migrant to Western Europe in May to September. It is not unlike a black-headed gull but sleeker and with an impressive long tail. It feeds on lemmings, not currently available in the valley, fish and small birds, and is renowned for its piratical pursuit of other sea birds to persuade them to disgorge food in their crops which it catches in mid air.

There is an amazing network between birders and especially twitchers such that any unusual bird arrival anywhere in the British Isles is circulated widely and instantly. The system worked well for our Skua and crowds of watchers arrived the day after its identification, I spoke to one watcher from Devon, all intent on photographing the bird. At one stage on the second day I counted 30 watchers with impressive cameras (see page 2). It stayed for a week feeding on worms and occasionally flew short distances when disturbed by a grazing sheep.

*Chris Nicholson*

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## Working with Sheffield Lakeland Landscape Partnership (SLLP)

FoPV volunteers have been working over the past year between lockdowns to improve sightlines at Forge Dam in preparation for the desilting of the dam later this year. After all, we do need to see it in its new splendour from the benches above the dam. The bank overlooking the dam has been partially cleared and considerable maintenance work has been carried out in the Festival Woodland. This has resulted in many piles of brash and brush, far more than needed for wildlife habitats, and possibly a fire hazard. Through contacts with Sheffield and Rotherham Wildlife Trust (SRWT) we discussed our situation with Danny Hodgson who



*Danny and his team in woodland at Forge Dam*



*'Archaeology' at Forge Dam*

works for the SLLP, which is a partnership funded by the National Lottery and involving Sheffield City Council and several other local Councils and organisations. Danny very kindly offered to bring his tractor and chipper to Forge Dam early in March to help clear some of the piles of brash. We met him on probably the wettest day of the year and his team set to work in the pouring rain. We are very grateful to Danny, Becky and Jade who worked in appalling conditions assisted by several FoPV veterans till late afternoon. Thanks are due to

the Sheffield Lakeland Landscape Partnership. We are now into bird-nesting season and work in the woodlands has ceased for the time being. Hopefully the birds are taking full advantage of nesting opportunities in the valley provided by the vast area of scrub and trees that remain.

*Dave Clegg*



*Bird Watchers in Action*

## Editorial

As this newsletter is prepared (wanted to write 'goes to press' but not sure that's how it works these days!), we are still selling knitted ducks and eggs at the cafes and greengrocers (Natures Way and Le Crunch) that have supported us over the years.

A special mention must also go to the supermarket staff who have generously donated the eggs that fit inside our fabulous ducks. We have not ventured so far this year to secure our freebie eggs—what constitutes essential shopping?—but in every shop we have approached the response has been friendly, curious and supportive. When there's a queue and some random shopper is asking if the manager is around and delivering a spiel about ducks, dams and asking for something for nothing, it would be understandable if there was a certain impatience but we have had nothing but kindness from staff of all ages. So, you know who you are - thank you.

And finally, a word of thanks must go to Ann Granville who has edited this newsletter for several years but who has finally decided to hang up her boots. Thanks for all your hard work Ann, and we'll try not to mess it up!

*Ann Greenwood*

## A rebuild of Whiteley Wood Hall's Grade II listed stable block and garden

Our friends at Girlguiding in the Porter Valley are asking for support. Their stable block is at the heart of Sheffield Whiteley Woods Outdoor Activity Centre. A recent roof survey by a Surveyor has found significant problems of woodworm and rot and the estimated costs to replace it are £300,000. Fund-raising has started. Interesting Porter Valley heritage here: the stables date back to late C18/early C19, with mid and late C20 alterations and the Hall was 'new' in 1663 but was in poor condition by 1929. A generous loan from JG Graves allowed Sheffield Girl Guides to purchase the 9-acre estate in 1935 for £3,000. The hall was eventually demolished in the early 1960s. Various parts of the stables and surrounding area are named after locally famous people and benefactors who enabled Girlguiding Sheffield to own such a unique place: Thomas Boulsover, the inventor of Sheffield plate, spent many years of his life there from 1760 with his family, an obvious link to the dams and his mills in the Porter Valley; Samuel Plimsoll MP for Derby who expedited the Merchant Shipping Act 1876 – the Plimsoll Line; and Thomas Robert Gainsford an Alderman and Conservative Councillor for Sheffield in the 1870's.

Currently providing residential facilities, wardens' cottages, storage and meeting areas, the stables are surrounded by nine acres of campsites and activity areas. Children and youth groups and their leaders and teachers are all welcome as both residential and day visitors to benefit from the adventurous outdoor activity experiences readily available on site and in nearby Sheffield and the Peak District. The centre is run by volunteers with support of three part time staff. They usually welcome more than 1500 young people each year and are looking forward to the busy again. Lock-down closure time has been well used to keep the site well maintained. Replacing the roof will allow them to continue to provide amazing adventures for young people for many years to come.

You can find out more on their website or follow social media pages for the latest news at:

Website: [Whiteleywoods.org.uk](http://Whiteleywoods.org.uk) Facebook: Facebook.com/whiteleywoodsoac

Twitter: @whiteleywoods Instagram: @whiteleywoodsoac

Bank details available from the Outdoor Activities Centre office

Ann le Sage



## New FoPV Leaflets

Just over a year ago, before all the 'excitement' of the pandemic, a group of us met to look at our publicity material and decided that a series of brief information leaflets would be a useful addition.

Rod and Caroline Egglestone, Sue Turner, and myself started the process of designing and producing eight new information leaflets that cover our part of the valley, from Endcliffe Park up to the 'Clough', and a new 'membership' leaflet to complete the set. I'm not sure any of us understood quite what we'd taken on as it proved to be a mammoth task. The first task was to create a layout that would be instantly recognisable and that we could replicate across all the leaflets – the different colours meant that they quickly became known as the rainbow leaflets. We then had to decide which areas we would concentrate on, what we would include, and whether we would find enough suitable

photographs to complement each leaflet. In fact as I type there is still one elusive shot to take that will complete one of the leaflets. In the end we found we had far too much information to fit on the four panels of each leaflet. Thanks to Rod and Caroline's efforts during the summer of 2020, we managed to come up with some great shots, along with some kindly donated images from our library.

Once I have that final picture, we hope to have them printed and available in both cafes and other outlets by late May or early June, when you will be able to read brief histories of Endcliffe Park, Bingham Park, and Shepherd Wheel, and a bit about the habitat of the Lower and Upper Whiteley Woods. Finally, leaflets about Forge Dam and The Clough provide some details of the heritage and surroundings. As you can see in this picture, they will hopefully stand out in the cafes.

With the exception of the membership leaflet which will be free, we have decided to set a charge of 20p per leaflet. Although the original plan was to issue these as free items, we felt that a small charge would reduce the chance of them becoming litter.

Mike Halliwell

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### Annual Membership:

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

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

### Fulwood Fair

On Sunday 27 June there will be an afternoon fair around Whiteley Lane's Fulwood Chapel and on the opposite green space above Forge Dam. A FoPV sales and publicity table space has been booked. More details to come from the Fulwood Fete Committee so watch the FoPV website.

### The Committee:

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

## Bingham Park

In 2020 Bingham Park had an increasing number of visitors due to Covid19 restrictions; the main cycle trail and walking route from the main entrance on Rustlings Road passing Shepherd Wheel is always very busy. In 2020 a leaflet '50 things to do in Bingham Park' encouraged visitors to explore other areas of the park. The trail passed the bowling green with its pavilion, also the dilapidated tennis courts still used as activity areas for ball games and bike riding. Bingham Park Community Group (part of Friends of Porter Valley) was set up in 2016 to recreate this activity space for the community. BPCG, FoPV and Sheffield Parks have improved this area with essential repairs, resurfacing and the addition of two pay-to-play tennis courts. A picnic table will be installed in the near future. BPCG are now fundraising for the next development "Make Bingham Park Brilliant" a Crowdfunder appeal.



<https://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/make-bingham-park-brilliant-for-everone>  
The Sheffield Telegraph (18 March) front page and pages 6 and 7 featured our Crowdfunding Campaign to raise £20,000; it is expected that to achieve all our current plans we need to raise a total of £50,000. The community have asked for a basketball/netball court, a mini skateboard park and a children's scooter and cycle track. As I write we have 165 supporters contributing to our appeal. Please support this or donate via the FoPV website.

### Comments and Messages from our supporters:

Netball court YaY! Wonderful asset to the community. Basketball would be great.  
We made bird boxes with my Dad and raised some money. Cameo of Mum and Baby.  
The Park has been a godsend in the lockdown.  
Amazing work team. Worthwhile cause. *Glyn Mansell, committee member BPCG*

## Shepherd Wheel

It will have been more than a year since the Wheel has been open and we hope that the site will be ready for visitors after May 17<sup>th</sup>. Well, not quite ready—one of the drums needs total replacement and an engineer is busy designing it. However, work cannot start till the site is open, so machinery will not be operating, though work in progress will be visible. Hopefully, it won't be too long before the Wheel is turning again. *Maggie Marsh*



It's nice to think that so many people have discovered the Porter and Mayfield Valleys during the recent lockdowns, and that may also have resulted in a welcome increase in our membership at the same time which I'm pleased to say is now just over 700.

Sadly, not every new visitor is welcome and we have also seen an increase in fly-tipping in the Valley. Although we have been working with the council over the years to help with various solutions, particularly at the sites which tend to be a regular place for this, we rely on members to help report this activity. The quicker this can be reported the better and one very effective way to do this is by using FixMyStreet on a mobile phone or on your computer ([www.fixmystreet.com](http://www.fixmystreet.com)).

By downloading the FixMyStreet App onto a smartphone it's possible to report issues such as fly-tipping direct to the council, which identifies exactly where the problem is so that they can react quickly. You can also include photographs to help describe the nature of the fly-tipping. The app is available via Google Play and Apple App Store.

Thank you to all the members who have already used this to report fly-tipping, your actions have been very much appreciated. *Mike Halliwell*

I want to say thank you to Council Parks staff, local residents and the police for the difficult daily task of cleaning up the parks (especially Endcliffe and Bingham) during the first sunny days before Easter, and the prompt action on fly-tipping further up the valley.  
THANK YOU ALL. *Ann le Sage*