

Porter Valley News



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

Issue 103

October 2021

Wire Mill Dam



Sandbags at the goit

Refilling the Dam Sept 2021

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Low water levels at Wire Mill Dam this year, the worst since my 60s childhood, have left fish gasping for air and dying. The Parks Department has installed an aerator to re-oxygenate the water but this is a temporary solution. The major cause has been the low rainfall this summer, with no water run-off from the fields to top up the water from the goit, coupled with low volume down Porter Brook.

Above Forge Dam Cafe there is a small grill through which water flows into the mill race. Any water flowing down here cannot reach Wire Mill. Sandbags have been placed over the grill by the Parks Department as a temporary measure to divert more water over the weir towards the goit entrance, instead of into the mill race. At the entrance to the head goit for Wire Mill Dam, there is a small weir to allow water to dam up and feed the goit. This is leaking. Conservation volunteers have placed sandbags in front of the weir to create a small dam, enabling water to flow into the goit.

The goit is badly silted up and in some places also leaking. The volunteers have dug out silt along the full length of the goit, but a mechanical solution is needed to de-silt it and restore full flow.

Conservation volunteers have also dug a channel to help direct water into the main Dam area. We continue to monitor the situation closely and liaise with the Parks Department to find a longer term solution.

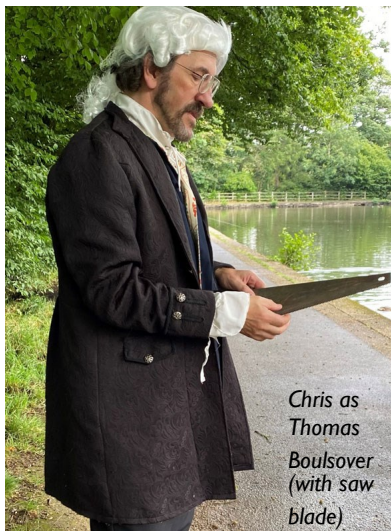
Lyndon Porter

Forge Dam Restoration I hope that you have all read Ann's member's update September 2021. Details of Sanctus' proposals were given and there was news also regarding DEFRA funding. At the time of writing the final preparations are being undertaken in order that the signing of the contract with Sanctus can take place by the end of September. Work will commence once final permissions and consents have been completed, as these include contributions from the Contractor.

Sanctus, Sheffield City Council and FoPV are keen to keep members and the public aware of progress on the works. There will inevitably be some impact on access and no doubt questions will arise. The works will be a messy business but the end result will be very beneficial to nature and the public. To this end we intend to have two site meetings in November and December for the public, subject to the current Covid recommendations.

David Young

Boulsover Country



*Chris as
Thomas
Boulsover
(with saw
blade)*

We had a brand new walk for August devised and delivered by Sheffield Museums Interactor Chris Bullivant to discover one of the great unsung inventors of Georgian Sheffield who changed the world, Thomas Boulsover. Chris had created two walks to run over the weekend, the first being a full two hour walk starting from Thomas's home of Whitely Wood Hall and the second a slightly shorter route aimed at families with children and also suitable for those with pushchairs and mobility scooters. He came suitably attired for the occasion dressed as Thomas Boulsover himself, in fine 18th century clothes!

Although Thomas Boulsover is famous in most people's eyes for his invention of Sheffield Plate, Chris was quick to inform us this was only a small part of his business and there was so much more to his achievements, particularly in the

Porter Valley. Thomas developed a way to roll cast steel which was used for the making of saw blades and probably built the world's first saw factory at Forge Dam. From the rolling process came the connection to shipbuilding in the city.

For the family walk, Chris brought along a bag full of homemade props to demonstrate the various industrial and manufacturing processes. A pasta roller machine with pastry was used to demonstrate the rolling of the steel for saw blades and an old butter tub with plastic gears of different sizes on a straw for an axle demonstrated how the larger diameter wheel produced greater torque, and further downstream Chris got in the Porter to demonstrate an undershot and overshot water wheel from his bag of tricks!



*Demonstrating
undershot wheel*

An altogether enjoyable as well as informative and educational couple of walks. Chris did however leave us with the controversial statement that there has not been any evidence discovered so far to support the general consensus that the building which we all refer to as the Button Factory ever made silver plated buttons there!

Lyndon Porter

Bat walk: The evening of 10 September saw a select four of us with four Council officers feeling our way in the dark all round Forge Dam in order to set a "baseline" for the species at Forge Dam. Past bat walks have been public events and attracted a big crowd but this was a proper ecology exploration with hand-held kit. For obvious reasons we have no photos to show! But we recorded four types of bat: Noctules, Daubentons and Pipistrelles and some sounds on the bat meters that might have been Brandts. There will be more ecology surveys to support the case for that DEFRA Recovery grant of £247000 and it would be good to hear from any members interested in joining the ecology team.

Ann le Sage

Shepherd Wheel

The Wheel continues to be very popular with visitors to the valley. There is now access to the smaller hull and the many new visitors are fascinated by the processes. It remains to be seen when the larger hull will be open but there is a clear view across the machinery from the open windows. The engineers will be joined by a new relief colleague, John, which will ease their workload.

It's nearly back to normal!

Maggie Marsh

Fulwood Fete on the green off Whiteley Lane and in the Fulwood Chapel, went with a real swing on 5 September and the few of us that caught up with this barely advertised event have at last realised the importance of social media. This is a new world for me! The Fete committee used all the local Facebook groups and there were lots of interesting stalls and happy families enjoying the sunshine. And we were lucky beneficiaries ... a donation and proceeds from our little table came to £700 for Forge Dam. Can I borrow someone's grandchild soon please to learn how to exploit social media?!!!!

Ann le Sage

Bingham Park

Success! We have now raised £30k to fund the Netball/Basketball court. The contractors, Lightmain Co., are due on site and will be managed by Sheffield Parks Department. Work will involve ground work, new fencing, basketball/netball combination posts and court painting/sports line marking (the latter probably next April due to weather issues). The court will be for dedicated groups and open to all users. Funders include JG Graves and Town Trusts, Henry Boot Co, Ecclesall Rd Co-op and other local shops and businesses. Thanks to all who contributed. Crowdfunding was very successful, not just for funding; the accompanying good wishes were heartfelt and encouraging.

Bingham Park Community Group (BPCG) is part of, and supported by, FoPV. We have also received help from Sheffield Parks Dept., Sheffield Telegraph and Star, to publicize our efforts, and England Netball and Basketball England. We are grateful to them, to individuals who have contributed, and to the Greystones community. Next steps will be work on the two old tennis courts. Sheffield City Council have completed an online survey and consultation with the local community is ongoing. *Glyn Mansell*



The Chinese have theirs, ditto Hadrian and even Pink Floyd - and now FoPV Conservation Volunteers have their own - **A WALL!**

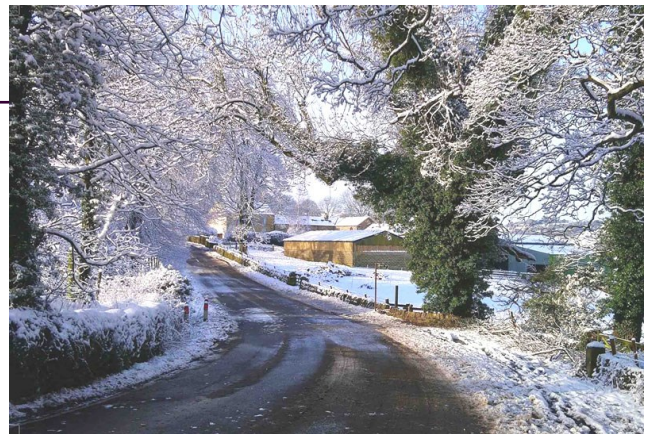
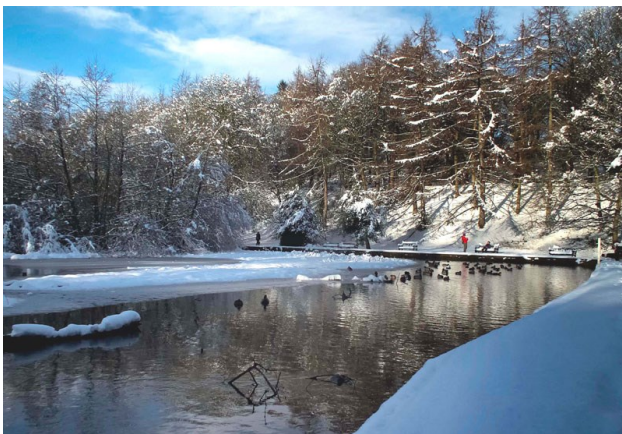
Under the guidance of Matt, our Park Ranger, the first task was to dismantle to ground level the temporary repairs from 2019 which were unstable. Matt taught us the basics of dry stone walling. First we were instructed to create the correct 'batter'; no, not Yorkshire pudding, pancakes or cricketers. This 'batter' refers to the angle of the wall sloping inwards towards the top. We drove steel stakes into the ground to create a slant, against which to build the face of the wall. String tied between the stakes created a horizontal line which would be the level of the top of the stones we were laying. The string was moved up the stakes as each layer was formed.

Finding the best stone to fit snugly from the many available was challenging; many had to be discarded. The space around the tree trunk was filled with rubble, willingly provided by Dave Clegg from his old patio. Finally the coping stones were mortared into place. A new flower bed has been filled with soil and the slope made ready for FoPV gardening volunteers to plant.

Hopefully our wall will last as long as Hadrian's and China's though, a sad footnote, the magnificent mature tree around which the wall has been built is now showing sign of ash die-back disease and will need to be felled within a couple of years.

Lyndon Porter

Christmas Cards (£6 for a pack of 10 or £4 for a pack of 5) & **calendars** (£7 each) on sale now at Endcliffe Park Café, Forge Dam Café, Le Crunch (Bents Green), and online (for collection) at fopv.org.uk



Secretary:

Glynis Jones
25 Endcliffe Rise Road
S11 8RUTel 2668332
secretary@fopv.org.uk**Annual Membership:****Single: £10****Family: £15****Concession: £5**Membership forms
available from
David Young
(tel. 2307909)
or on our website

As there will be no Xmas Fair this year, our knitters are concentrating on producing the previously much sought after little Christmas stockings/boots (they answer to both!) which, filled with a chocolate, sell well in our usual outlets.

We welcome new knitters to meet us or just join our circulation list. Contact Ann Greenwood 2630776 for wool supplies or Caroline Egglestone 2304545 for patterns and creative inspiration!

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

Lyndon Porter

Conservation / walks

Flora Owen: At the AGM on Nov 3, we will also thank Flora for her wonderful contribution to FoPV as she formally retires from the committee. Many of us have worked with Flora for nearly two decades and even though she has used a wheelchair in recent years, she has continued to support FoPV, arranging speakers and venues, proofreading the newsletter, contributing to calendar and Christmas card production and acting as an infallible memory of past achievements - and missteps! We will miss her.

Ann le Sage

AGM and other activities: We are going to have a real meeting in Bents Green Chapel. After months of Zoom meetings this will be such a pleasure! But of course there are Covid precautions. You will find details about booking a place on the website so that we do not exceed 50 attendees in the hall at one metre distancing. There will also be a presentation about Forge Dam restoration and a Q/A, but we are well aware that many members may not manage to get a seat and will want another chance to hear what is going on. We will be running separate meetings on site to make sure no-one feels left out.

Please look at the AGM papers for more detail!

Preparation for
wreath-making

If you look at the website now you will see a lot of new events through to 2022. There will be wreath and other Christmas goods sales tables in December; walks in November and December which will concentrate on Forge Dam; and pop up tables at Forge Dam with displays about the restoration on various dates in October, November and December. Lots going on! Pray for clement weather as we creep into winter!

Ann le Sage

Activities for October to February

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

When and Where	What and Who
Tuesday 26 th October, 10am	Conservation work morning Prior booking essential – see below
Wednesday 3 rd November, 7.30pm Bents Green Methodist Church Hall	AGM and Open Meeting
Saturday 6 th November, 10am Forge Dam	<i>Discovering the restoration of Forge Dam*</i> A walk led by David Young
Thursday 11 th November, 10am	Conservation work morning Prior booking essential – see below
Saturday 13 th November, 10am Endcliffe Park	<i>Tiptoe through the toadstools*</i> A walk led by Michael 'Ziggy' Senkans
Tuesday 23 rd November, 10am	Conservation work morning Prior booking essential – see below
Saturday 4 th December, 10am Forge Dam 12 noon	<i>Discovering the restoration of Forge Dam*</i> A walk led by David Young Christmas pop-up table
Thursday 9 th December, 9.45am	Conservation work morning Prior booking essential – see below
Saturday 8 th January 2022, 10am Endcliffe Park	<i>Discovering Endcliffe Park again*</i> A walk led by Sue Turner
Thursday 13 th January, 9.45am	Conservation work morning Prior booking essential – see below
Tuesday 25 th January, 9.45am	Conservation work morning Prior booking essential – see below
Saturday 5 th February, 10am Bingham Park	<i>Recent changes in Bingham Park*</i> A walk led by Glyn Mansell - TBC
Wednesday 9 th February, 7.30pm Bents Green Methodist Church Hall	Open meeting and talk - TBC

Conservation work mornings: prior booking essential – for details and booking, please contact Dave Clegg orielclegg@aol.com or Lyndon Porter lyndon@the-porters.me.uk or via our website FOPV.org.uk

*Walks: These are ticket events – for details and registration, visit our website walks page FOPV.org.uk
Registration opens two weeks before the walk.