

Porter Valley News

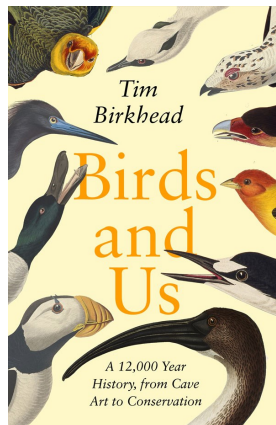


The newsletter of Friends of the Porter Valley - Registered Charity No. 1069865

Issue 106

July 2022

Birds and Us



A talk by Tim Birkhead
Wednesday 3rd August
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.

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Bingham Park

The basketball/netball court is now complete with surfacing and game lines and it was officially opened by the Lord Mayor and the Lady Mayoress on Sunday 10th July.

The court is very popular especially with young people.



Ecclesall Councillors organised two free basketball training sessions for the first week of the school Easter holiday, paid for out of the ward pot. Two excellent coaches, Ariel and Ollie, from Sheffield United's Community Foundation, provided the training. The sessions were to give young people a chance to enjoy free training on their doorstep, and highlight Bingham Park Community Group's (BPCG) work to improve facilities. The proceeds from the FOPV duck race, plus additional funding, will go toward further improvements. *Glyn Mansell*



Queen's Award for Voluntary Service to the environment charity Friends of the Porter Valley

None of you will have missed the wonderful news that we were selected (in competition with others) for this award, announced over the Platinum Jubilee weekend. An MBE equivalent for us! So I won't repeat what you have seen on posters, the blog, Facebook etc. You probably wonder what the assessors made of our many and varied efforts so here is a little piece about our volunteers who earned this award for us. I think we can be very proud of what we achieve and the QAVS assessors obviously thought the same:

There are over 200 people doing voluntary work of many sorts in the valley and do you know all the varied tasks they do?

You have seen photos of some of our 74 valiant conservation volunteers: they love nothing so much as getting muddy in the Forge Dam goit and clearing straying scrub from the woodland paths, but I think the Himalayan Balsam call out on the next four workdays in June and July will be a challenge...it always is, and how are they to get onto the island in Forge Dam now? It is already shooting up! Altogether maybe up to 600 hours if you include all the arranging and liaising with partners like the Cubs and the Scouts for their evening forays? Plus our lone Endcliffe devotee who spends hours a week cleaning and clearing the Porter Brook, the sluices, the drains...

Then there are the 29 volunteers (and partners too) who keep the Shepherd Wheel open every weekend and Bank Holiday throughout the year bar Christmas...600 hours perhaps?

Many volunteers cheerfully organise, create goods for, and staff our events...duck race, Christmas Fair, Heritage Fair stall, Fulwood Fete stall, and occasionally others...maybe 1000 hours? All the merchandise has to be made (including products from knitting circles, and cake bakers). And there are Christmas Card, Noticeboards, Calendar and publications producers; a solo duck food purveyor; some webshop handlers; others liaise with our partners in the Council, Wildlife Trust, cafes, schools, Sheffield Museums Trust; some sit on committees; some record birds for our nature mapping project; walks and talks need lead organisers; queries and complaints and Facebook and Twitter need handlers.

I must mention the committee: we are only nine strong with support teams behind us for specific tasks, but goodness we are busy! There is quite a chunk of behind the scenes admin in a proactive organisation like ours and some of us are doing 20 to 30 hours a week at times. But it is fun and worth while if anyone would like to join us!

So what next? No we will not be trooping down to Buckingham Palace to collect a medal. But the Lord Lieutenant of South Yorkshire will be presenting the award, on behalf of the Queen, later in the year. I hope the event can involve many of our volunteers. So watch this space.

Ann le Sage



Beaver scouts help out at Forge Dam

It's the height of a summer evening in mid-June and Beavers are spotted down at Forge Dam. No, not the furry kind, but Beaver Scouts and their leader Cath Ward from Fulwood Scouts, helped by several parents. It was Scout community week when each year the various Scout sections help out in the community. Once again, as in previous years, the Beavers offered to help FOPV weed the borders opposite the playground at Forge Dam and they made a very good job of it. Working away for the best part of an hour they first removed unwanted weeds and grass. Then they revealed an extensive array of attractive bedding plants they had generously brought along. These were then very carefully planted into the borders. This has been a splendid piece of work and has improved the border immensely adding more colour and variety. Well done to Cath, the Beaver Scouts and parents involved and thank you for supplying the new plants. All part of phase two of the improvements at

Forge Dam. You may notice the hemp rope in the picture. FOPV volunteers have installed wooden posts along this stretch of flower bed and topped them off with hemp rope. The idea of this is to try to keep dogs off the flowers and also to deter people from stepping on them.

So far this has worked well.

Dave Clegg and Peter Kennett

Forge Dam

Sanctus have now left site and the dam has been refilled, much to the delight of the ducks! There is one item left to complete being the installation of a control penstock on the millrace offtake. This is anticipated to be completed during July.

Some may have noted that the area where Sanctus transferred the silt near the inlet bridge has not been restored. This is because the area will be utilised by two more contractors, one to repair the northern footpath where the land slip occurred and the other to resurface the footpaths. The first element of work is anticipated to be carried out before the school summer holidays and the latter in September. The footpath restoration will also include final surfacing of the bridleway.

David Young



Frosty morning in April

A tale of two bird walks

For those of us who are not “early birds” and prefer a lie in under the duvet, marshalling two bird walks in Spring brings a certain amount of trepidation!

This year, as well as the usual Dawn Chorus walk in May, led by Chris Nicholson, we had the offer of an additional walk from Duncan McLean in April, which being a month earlier

meant we did not need to start until 5:30am! Duncan had designed this walk for April before the migratory birds arrived after comments from people with little experience of birdsong on previous walks who had found the number of different songs confusing.

On the walk morning there was a severe frost which had no effect on the birds for as soon as we started off, with the sun just starting to rise, the machine-gun rattle of a wren was heard, followed by robins, the repeating phrases of the song thrushes, mistle thrushes and many more.

For Chris’s walk we had to assemble at 4:30am and with a beautiful dawn just breaking, a cacophony of noise from the birds started, quite different from the walk a month earlier. The green woodpeckers were heard higher up the valley, hares were seen in the fields and, to top it all, a greater spotted woodpecker gave us a special drumming performance directly above our heads on the bridle path above Forge Dam!



Greater Spotted Woodpecker in May

Lyndon Porter

Bird Survey of the Valley

The Survey is progressing well with over 1000 records having been made by some 57 recorders.

The number of species recorded has now increased to 61 as we have welcomed the swallows, swifts and various species of warbler back to the valley.

We are currently discussing with the Wildlife Trust how the records can be analysed and are looking into ways of ensuring that all our sites are being surveyed regularly. The data from our nine sites will always be the basis of our study, but we are also considering how records could be made of our casual walks through the valley. Thus we shall no longer have the frustration of knowing that a special hearing or sighting is not being recorded because it is outside one of our nine site areas.

Chris Nicholson

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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 Fete

Once again the sun shone on the Fulwood Fete, celebrated on the green opposite the Unitarian Chapel on School Green Lane on June 12th.

The sunshine certainly attracted the visitors as evidenced by cars on all the adjacent roads. FoPV had a stall offering information leaflets. A small but steady stream of visitors asked about our current work and future plans!

It was encouraging that several of the callers at the stall said thanks to FoPV for the group's efforts, a vindication of the time spent setting up and staffing the stall with no fund-raising spin-off but good PR!

Les and Ann Greenwood

A look back in time...

Sheffield Parkour Movement (an extract from the July 2014 newsletter)

"You may have noticed the new structure in Endcliffe Park, between the café and the obelisk. Congratulations are due to the young men and women who campaigned so effectively and tirelessly to have this 'free-running' equipment installed in Sheffield – one of the first such in South Yorkshire. They never gave up as the years passed, and the Friends were pleased to be able to give them support. At a time when the government is encouraging children and young people to become more active, Endcliffe Park is doing its bit. My only regret is a personal one for I can only stand and marvel at their determination and skill."

I was privileged to be the FoPV representative for the group, supported by Bob Pullin, who tackled the council to get this equipment. It seemed to go on forever, but all credit to the young men, they never lost faith in their project. It has become one of the best used pieces of park equipment.

Ann Granville

Activities for August to November

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

When and Where	What and Who
Wednesday 3 rd August, 7.30 pm Bents Green Methodist Church Hall	Birds and Us Open Meeting and talk by Professor Tim Birkhead
Friday 5 th August, 7.30 pm	Looking for moths and other insects* An evening walk led by Ben Keywood
Thursday 11 th August, 9.45 am	Conservation work morning Prior booking essential - see below
Tuesday 23 rd August, 9.45 am	Conservation work morning Prior booking essential - see below
Saturday 3 rd September, 7.30 pm	Bat walk* A walk led by Faye Durkin
Thursday 8 th September, 9.45 am	Conservation work morning Prior booking essential - see below
Tuesday 27 th September, 9.45 am	Conservation work morning Prior booking essential - see below
Saturday 8 th October, 10 am	Bell pits, bomb holes and quarries* A walk led by Peter Kennett
Thursday 13 th October, 9.45 am	Conservation work morning Prior booking essential - see below
Tuesday 25 th October, 9.45 am	Conservation work morning Prior booking essential - see below
Wednesday 2 nd November, 7.30 pm Bents Green Methodist Church Hall	AGM and Open Meeting
Saturday 12 th November, 10 am	Tiptoe through the Toadstools* A walk led by Michael 'Ziggy' Senkans

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. Registration opens two weeks before the walk.

The Committee:

Ann le Sage
Chair / talks
David Young
Treasurer
Glynis Jones
Secretary / newsletter
Dave Clegg
Conservation / planning
Les Greenwood
Newsletter
Mike Halliwell
Website / membership
Glyn Mansell
Bingham Park
Chris Nicholson
Nature recording
Rob Peck
Conservation / safety
Lyndon Porter
Conservation / walks