

Porter Valley News



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

Issue 105

April 2022

The Unseen Porter

A talk by Patrick Dickinson

Wednesday 4th May

7:30 - 9:00pm

Bents Green Methodist Church

Ringinglow Road



PRIOR ONLINE BOOKING ESSENTIAL (see page 4 Activities for more information)

Inside this issue:

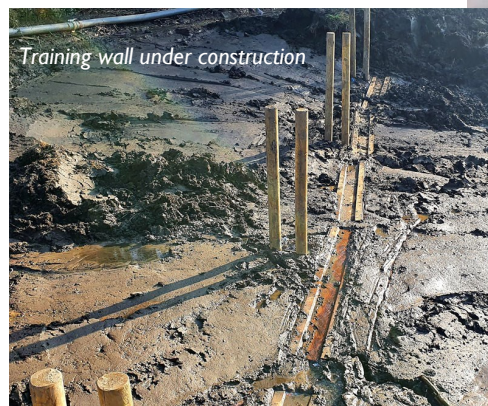
Festival Woodland 71 years old	2
Easter Duck Race preparations	2
Website	3
Drama at Shepherd Wheel	3
Porter Clough path restoration	3
Bingham Park	4
Heritage Fair	4
Whiteley Wood consultation	4
Contact details	4
Membership details	4
Committee members	4
Activities	4

Forge Dam Restoration

By mid-March, all the silt that was planned to be removed had been taken to the Beighton Tip—some 5,000 tonnes in all. The remaining material will be distributed to form a new bed profile. The training wall and associated channel is under construction from



After excavation of the silt



Training wall under construction

natural material on the south side of the Dam. An unexpected problem has been the collapse of part of the pathway on the north side of the dam. It slid into the pond, due to a void that had formed underneath, caused by a blocked land drain. Work to repair this damage will be undertaken later by another contractor. Meanwhile the pathway has to remain closed.

A new penstock (sluice) will be installed at the millrace offtake to enable control of the flow. We are all looking forward to the refilling of the dam in the near future, as I'm sure the wildlife is too! A further phase of the work is being planned to improve access, by repairs to footpaths around the dam.

David Young



Festival Woodland – 71 years old this year

In the September 2020 Newsletter I wrote that a small group of FOPV conservation volunteers were restoring the Festival woodland to something like its original condition. It had become badly neglected and overgrown over the years. We have now completed this work as far as is practical and hopefully it will complement the remodelled and desilted Forge Dam. Back in 1951 the main Festival of Britain site on the South Bank of the Thames in London was opened to the public. Many other cities, towns and villages joined in the celebrations and Sheffield was one of them. Part of Sheffield's celebrations was to open the newly planted Festival of Britain Woodland in Forge Dam Park. The Lord Mayor, Alderman Keeble Hawson carried out the opening ceremony on the 18th May 1951. Two plaques mounted on the pillars at the entrance to Forge Dam Park at the junction of Whiteley Lane and Quiet Lane mark the opening event. These are still visible. 71 years ago seems a long time but then it occurred to me that many of our conservation volunteers are older than this, myself included, and it is they who have restored Festival Woodland to something like its original condition to celebrate the 71th anniversary.



The paths have been cleared of overlapping brambles and nettles. Space has been made

around the benches and we have created sight lines down to the dam. This should provide a pleasanter view of the newly desilted and improved dam.

The woodland was originally planted with about 130 trees, some rather unusual. Very few trees were present in this area before that. However, the newly planted trees grew rapidly along with other unwanted vegetation. We have cleared a large amount of out-of-control vegetation and revealed the original trees. We identified the trees with the help of Sue Turner



from the Botanical Gardens. Our longstanding volunteer Peter Kennett has coordinated and contributed enormously to this project and has compiled maps and lists of the trees. We are planning to erect a display board in Festival Woodland which will map and identify the trees and provide other information, which will be mirrored on the FOPV website.

Dave Clegg



Easter Duck Race preparations

By the time you read this, I hope we will have run a successful Easter 2022 Duck Race. The results and experiences will be reported in the next newsletter or in a members update, but the preparations - after three fallow years- have been a challenge! Unearthing the awnings has been hard work but fun. Our duck

launchers have checked the condition of our 2500 competitors and pronounced them ready to swim.

Thanks are due to all our volunteers, both old hands and those new to the various roles. Because of the uncertainty since the 2019 race we are playing it safe and have curtailed some activities. Our popular knitted ducks have been on sale since mid-March – thanks to the knitters and the generous egg donors.

And those of you who bought ducks in 2020 will be pleased to hear that your ducks are all standing by ready to compete with the 2022 ducks in this year's race – may the best duck win!

Ann le Sage and Glynis Jones

Website

On Easter Monday 2012 I'd agreed to help run a stall at a Duck Race in Endcliffe Park. Although I'd heard of the Friends of the Porter Valley this was my first Duck Race. It was a wet day and the ground in the park was very muddy as I looked after several Scouts and their Splat the Rat stall. I got involved in a conversation about the FoPV website which needed updating. Having set up and run the local Scout Group website I somehow found the words 'I can do that' coming out of my mouth, This in itself wouldn't have been too problematic; however unknown to me, standing just over my shoulder was Ann Le Sage, who immediately signed me up! And so by the time you read this, I will have been involved with FoPV for 10 years with that rather grand title of Webmaster.

Quite a lot has changed in these 10 years with the website. For a while it was a simple set of pages, but then it expanded into having a sister presence on Facebook where members and followers could add their own pictures and comment about events and activities in the Valley. Twitter has proved useful in publicising our events. In my time looking after the website it has had four updates, partly to keep up with the ever increasing security demands and change in devices used to view it, but mainly to add features such as a shop, a blog, and, more recently, ticketed events. It has also allowed people to become paid up members much more easily at the touch of a button, increasing our membership from a steady 500 to nearly 800 as I write. In a similar way it also made it much easier for people to buy racing ducks for the duck races, including people from abroad like Canada and several countries in Europe.

I'm pleased to say there are always ideas about how the website can be used for the benefit of the FoPV and this year I'm very pleased to be able to welcome two helpers, Lyndon and Rob. Lyndon already manages the walks and the ticketing arrangements and Rob who is a familiar face at work mornings has a similar interest in the subject so hopefully the three of us will be able to take the FoPV website forward.

Mike Halliwell

Drama at Shepherd Wheel

Sheffield University Drama Studio will return after the enforced COVID break to give us their interpretation of the grinders' history. They will be performing on two weekends in May, so check for details on the website and posters later in April.

Ann le Sage



Before

Porter Clough path restoration

Regular walkers to the top of Porter Clough may have noticed an improvement on the footpaths as the conservation volunteers have been, over recent weeks, working on drainage and realigning paths. Many of the drainage ditches and culverts had been neglected for years and had become filled with soil and debris, causing water to flow over the paths, eroding them and also creating pools of mud. Walkers, avoiding the muddy areas, have inadvertently widened paths and created more erosion.

The volunteers initially dug out the ditches to restore the original drainage channels. Mud was removed from paths which uncovered the original hard core. This will hopefully encourage walkers to avoid the soft grass areas on the sides of the realigned paths. The line of large stones in the middle of the path was the south (river side) edge of the original path. The north (field side) had become covered with soil and turf with walkers again creating an extended section towards the river. There is still further work to be done on this section, including adding more hardcore to replace that which has been eroded.

Lyndon Porter



After

Secretary:

Glynis Jones
25 Endcliffe Rise Road
S11 8RU

Tel 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

Bingham Park: The dual-purpose basketball/netball court is now constantly used, mainly by young people. The posts rotate according to which game is being played. A system is being discussed by the Bingham Park Committee which will enable either game to be played on request. The game lines are to be repainted in the warmer weather. The funds for this facility were raised by Bingham Community Group.

Any additional funding will be allocated to Stage 2, which includes plans to create a mini-activity area on the remaining old courts. The FoPV Committee has decided that money raised by the Duck Race will go to this project. Another picnic table will soon be installed with money from the Ecclesall Ward pot. Thanks to all our supporters! *Glyn Mansell*

Heritage Fair: FoPV staffed a table with two display boards and lots of material to interest visitors. Forge Dam (by then the excavators had started their synchronized working), Shepherd Wheel with new volunteers, and Bingham Park with enhanced facilities for games and picnics, provided plenty of scope for discussion with the public. Thanks to all who helped set up the display and covered the shifts for two days in January. *Ann le Sage*

Bingham Park/Whiteley Wood consultation: Sadly, it has all gone quiet on the consultation about the proposed facilities on the main path from Rustlings Road up to Shepherd Wheel. We understand the range of options (including mention of evening facilities, cycle support and confusion about the exact location) may have raised alarm and led to the suggested development being seen as too difficult. *Ann le Sage*

Activities for May to August

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

When and Where	What and Who
Wednesday 4 th May, 7.30 pm Bents Green Methodist Church Hall	The Unseen Porter* Open Meeting and talk by Patrick Dickinson
Sat 7 th May, 4.30 am	Dawn Chorus* A walk led by Chris Nicholson
Thursday 12 th May, 10 am	Conservation work morning Prior booking essential – see below
Saturday/Sunday 14/15 May, 11-3pm Shepherd Wheel	Sheffield University Drama Studio performance
Saturday/Sunday 21/22 May, 11-3 pm Shepherd Wheel	Sheffield University Drama Studio performance
Tuesday 24 th May, 9.45am	Conservation work morning Prior booking essential – see below
Thursday-Sunday 2 nd -5 th June, 10am-4pm Shepherd Wheel	Wheel open for Platinum Jubilee weekend
Saturday 4 th June, 10 am	FoPV Walk* details tba
Thursday 9 th June, 9.45 am	Conservation work morning Prior booking essential – see below
Sunday 12 th June, 1 pm Top Green near Chapel on Whiteley Lane	Fulwood Fete, including FoPV stall
Tuesday 28 th June, 9.45 am	Conservation work morning Prior booking essential – see below
Saturday 2 nd July, 10 am	Wild Plants of the Porter Valley* A walk led by Ken Balkow
Thursday 14 th July, 9.45 am	Conservation work morning Prior booking essential – see below
Tuesday 26 th July, 9.45 am	Conservation work morning Prior booking essential – see below
Wednesday 3 rd August, 7.30 pm Bents Green Methodist Church Hall	Birds and Us* Open Meeting and talk by Prof Tim Birkhead

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 and talks: These are ticket events – for details and registration, visit our website walks page or read the email to members “FOPV Open Meeting”. Registration opens two weeks before the walk/talk.

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

Lyndon Porter

Conservation / walks