

Porter Valley News



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

Issue 90

July 2018

The State of Nature in Sheffield

A talk by Nicky Rivers

Wednesday 1st August

7:30 - 9:30pm

Bents Green Methodist Church

Ringinglow Road



Photo by Elliott Smith

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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Posted in the Valley!

You may have seen some posts appearing in our part of the Porter Valley, with the name of a water powered workshop on one face, and a short potted history of it on the other. Inspired by similar posts installed by our friends over in the Rivelin Valley, they are made from recycled plastic so won't rot, and are engraved with the name of each of the old water mills.

FoPV have had seven posts made to help visitors to this part of the valley discover some of the history which they may not be aware of, from identifying the fact a mill once stood there, to finding out when it was there and what it produced over those years. There are also details of FoPV so hopefully more people will get to know of us and the work we are doing.



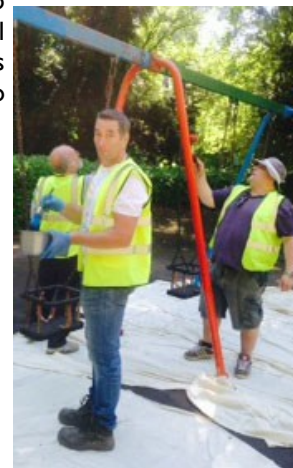
The posts have been installed by our own volunteers between Hunter's Bar and Forge Dam, and mark the locations of Endcliffe Wheel, Holme Wheel, Nether Spurgear Wheel, Ibbotson Wheel, Leather Wheel, Wire Mill, and of course The Forge. I hope you enjoy finding them, and whichever direction you decide to walk you will of course start and finish close to one of the cafes, which has to be good news.



Forge Dam Playground

In June the grubby equipment and dismal ground was pressure jetted and swept clear...well as clear as could be achieved! Then the swings were repainted on Friday 22 June and the central multi-play facility similarly on our usual workday Tuesday 26 June to restore them to their original bright primary colours. This has made a tremendous difference to

the appearance of the playground, and just shows what can be achieved with a bit of positive thinking and a short burst of hard work. We are particularly grateful to Stuart Walton for sorting out the pressure cleaning, and to Andy Phillips for supplying the necessary sandpaper, groundsheets and brilliant paint...and for providing the height needed to reach the crossbars! For those not quite so tall see the ladder work in the photos here! Virgin Media volunteers put in 2 hours work in the sunshine with some of our members on that extra Friday.



This is of course no substitute for the total rebuild which this heavily used playground deserves, but it is a good start and shows we mean business. The intention is still to use the existing designated funds from members of the public, Fulwood Coop fundraising (£1947.60), and the Fulwood Ward (£1213) to introduce a wide shallow circular swing, a sandpit and new ground surface material. But more fundamental improvements will require fundraising, so I am repeating the message from the last Newsletter: 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.

Ann le Sage

Forge Dam News

There has been a delay in the submission of the Planning Application as we have been told it will be necessary to submit an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and get approval from the Drainage Authority (DA) for the training wall first. We have the DA approval now but the EIA will take longer as we will have to appoint a suitable consultant. On a bright sunny day whilst out for a walk in the valley I was able to take stock of what we have achieved around Forge Dam in recent years:

- a channel has been cut in the silt to re-establish flow to the south of the island and protect nesting ducks. The excavated material has already become vegetated and is merging with the bank;
- trees and shrubs have been removed from the island to improve the habitat;
- two information boards have been erected;
- the trees on the dam embankment were removed to aid its stability and open up vistas;
- the grassy area at the base of the embankment has been reinforced to reduce wear and tear and is a useful extension to the cafe's outdoor space;
- a wall has been rebuilt on the left bank of the Brook by the spillway to retain the earth and make a safer place for the public.

I left the area with a warm feeling as I realised all our hard work through fundraising, our volunteer force and liaising with the Council has had a profound benefit to the area.

David Young

Other Forge Dam News: It may sound boring to talk about water and electricity supplies, but the restoration by the Parks Department of water outside the store shed by the playground, and lighting inside, has been a tremendous improvement to our lives. We can now fetch water easily for cleaning the playground, for providing good hygiene for the regular summer evening Beaver/Scouts and Guides conservation work sessions, or for making refreshments at events when the cafe is overstretched. And we can now see our duck race equipment and stock boxes and tools! No more fumbling in the dark. I have even managed to clean the store, though it was only a surface clean. Pressure jet inside needed next time.

Ann le Sage

Bingham Park

Booking on line, people are now using the new tennis courts 4 and 5 on a Pay to Play basis as at Hillsborough and Millhouses Parks. Grass is starting to cover the landscaped area next to court 5, and in the future benches and picnic tables will be provided, allowing space for children to run around. A new handrail is to be provided alongside the steps to the AstroTurf court and the paths leading down to the courts are to be resurfaced. As the retaining walls around areas 1, 2 and 3 (originally tennis courts) have been repaired with funds raised by Bingham Park Community Group (BPCG), plans are being made with Sheffield Parks Staff for the next stage to create multi-use play areas. An important part of creating a long term plan is the continued community involvement.

Funding is continuing with grants from the Graves Trust and Ecclesall Ward who gave us £2500 and £1070 towards Bingham Park restoration, and possibly from the Sheffield Town Trust. Success will also depend on other funding streams including Greystones Community involvement. The Friends of Porter the Valley have had two work sessions behind the courts clearing brambles. In total 16 black bags of litter and other stuff were removed.

BPCG are organising a Community Day with various activities on Sunday 21st October. A Memorial Bench is to be placed on a platform overlooking the Bowling Green and the valley. An English Oak Memorial Tree is to be planted at a nearby location agreed with BPCG.

Glyn Mansell (BPCG committee)

Geology students in the Porter Valley

The Sheffield Area Geology Trust (www.geologyatsheffield.co.uk/sagt) promotes the conservation of geological sites and their uses for research. The Porter Valley has been used in the education of students at all levels, and for last year and this, we have liaised with Derby University to enable some of their BSc students to carry out their personal mapping studies for their dissertations. Last year, one student worked the length of the valley from Brown Edge to Hunter's Bar, whilst another studied the outcrop of the Greenmoor Rock (aka Brincliffe Edge Rock), including the quarry face in the Omega car park. Both have been awarded 2:1 for their dissertations. This summer, another student has just started studying the Rough Rock outcrop, which will take him to Brown Edge too.



hand-held XRF in action

A new venture is for SAGT to team up with Keele University to guide an MSc student in investigating the origins of some of the major sandstone bodies in our area. He has been using a hand-held XRF (X-Ray Fluorescence) gadget to find out the various chemical elements which make up the rock. This may enable him to say where the ancient rivers flowed from, which deposited the sands in the first place, and hopefully might enable us to match the building stones in some of our city's buildings to the quarries from which they came. Again, the Omega quarry has featured – before it disappears beneath a lot of new housing!

So, the work of our conservation volunteers is helping advance the cause of science by keeping some of the sites from getting too overgrown.

Peter Kennett

May Dawn Chorus Walk

The FoPV walks are generally held on the first Saturday of the month and therefore the May Dawn Chorus Walk was planned months ahead. It was interesting to discover much later that this was the date chosen for a National Dawn Chorus Walk, and this may have influenced the most impressive turn out we have achieved for our 4.30am start. A total of 35 attended which surprisingly almost matched the number of species we encountered. It is especially pleasing to know that so many members (and a considerable number of non-members) are interested enough to rise so early to greet the dawn. However communication to such a large group does create problems and I was greatly helped by Duncan McLean who was able to guide those towards the back of the assembly. We were rewarded with a gorgeous sun rise and some excellent sightings of three types of Warbler, four types of Finch, and the common Tits. We had good views of Dipper and Great Spotted Woodpecker and even heard a Cuckoo! We also saw Greenfinches and Swifts, both of these species having been identified nationally as under pressure. If interest continues to grow we may have to consider issuing tickets next year and having a second walk on the Sunday.

Chris Nicholson

Shepherd Wheel News: Thankfully the Wheel continues to turn smoothly, although it's to be hoped there won't be a drought. Spiteful vandalism resulted in a part rotten shutter being forced open and glass panes in the window behind shattered. However, speedy repairs from Sheffield City Council had all restored and looking good as new.

Maggie Marsh

Secretary:
Glynis Jones
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secretary@fopv.org.uk

Annual Membership:

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

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

The Committee:

Ann le Sage
Chair
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
Keith Smith

General Data Protection Regulations and FoPV

We have to ensure we follow the regulations and keep your data safe, and that we don't keep it when we no longer have a need for it. In the lead up to the introduction of General Data Protection Regulations this May, we spent a few lengthy committee meetings discussing GDPR to ensure that FoPV were compliant with its requirements. As a result we have completed a full assessment of the data we hold, how we store it, and how we use it. This is all explained in our new Privacy Policy, which is available on our website (membership page). It's probably not the best bedtime reading available, but if you would like a paper copy please get in touch and we can arrange to get one to you.

Mike Halliwell

Walking the Porter Valley

Our new book is selling well particularly with walking groups, Rotarians, and visitors to the valley but there are plenty more in stock! You can buy them on the website; there are stocks at Shepherd Wheel and both the Cafes as well as various points in town. People have said how very much they like them, and the first walk was featured in a late June edition of the Sheffield Telegraph. Copies will be on sale at £8.99 at the August Open Meeting!

Ann le Sage

Malicious Damage and Vandalism

Sadly it is not all good news... if you spot damage and especially the perpetrators, do please report immediately to 101, FoPV or the Council. Don't engage with the hooligans; they have used very considerable force to destroy items at Bingham Park, the Bingham bowling facility, Shepherd Wheel, Hangingwater allotments and Endcliffe Park. All very recent and all very localised.

Ann le Sage

Activities for August to November

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

When and Where	What and Who
Wednesday 1 st August, 7.30 pm Bents Green Methodist Church Hall	"The State of Nature in Sheffield" Open meeting and talk by Nicky Rivers Sheffield and Rotherham Wildlife Trust
Saturday 4 th August 10am-12noon Entrance to Bingham Park, Oakbrook Rd	"The Porter Valley's Woodland Heritage" A walk led by Ruth Morgan
Thursday 9 th August 10 am	Conservation work day. Contact Dave Clegg orielclegg@aol.com or fopv.org.uk for details
Tuesday 28 th August 10 am	Conservation work day. Contact Dave Clegg orielclegg@aol.com or fopv.org.uk for details
Saturday 1 st September	Walk – details TBA at fopv.org.uk
Thursday 13 th September 10 am	Conservation work day. Contact Dave Clegg orielclegg@aol.com or fopv.org.uk for details
Tuesday 25 th September, 10 am	Conservation work day. Contact Dave Clegg orielclegg@aol.com or fopv.org.uk for details
Saturday 6 th October	Walk – details TBA at fopv.org.uk
Thursday 11 th October, 10 am	Conservation work day. Contact Dave Clegg orielclegg@aol.com or fopv.org.uk for details
Sunday 21 st October, 1-4 pm Bowling green/activity area	Bingham Park Community Day
Tuesday 23 rd October, 10 am	Conservation work day. Contact Dave Clegg orielclegg@aol.com or fopv.org.uk for details
Saturday 3 rd November	Walk – details TBA at fopv.org.uk
Wednesday 8 th November, 7.30 pm Bents Green Methodist Church Hall	"Sheffield's Trees and Woodlands" AGM and a talk by Dave Aspinall Woodlands Manager