

Porter Valley News



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

Issue 99

October 2020

FoPV Calendars ready!

The Calendars for 2021 have come back from our printer and can be bought at last year's price of £7. A big thank you to the photographers who took some amazing shots during this Covid-distanced summer. The virtual Easter Bonnet winner beams out from the April page, outdoors activities saved many a sad

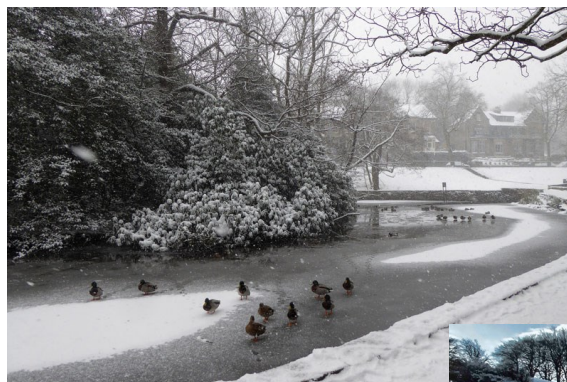


moment, the 2020 Mi Amigo flypast lightens the February page, and there are some chilly snow scenes to prepare you for the next two seasons. They can be bought on our Website using Paypal, or you can send requests to me on ann@lesage.org.uk or text 07790250087. With no "in-person" AGM possible, and no busy Christmas Fair in December, we need to find new

ways of selling and delivering. Nearer Christmas the Forge Dam Cafe will have a table out under the cafe awning so a big thank you to Nick and his lovely team. Some FoPV volunteers will also sell on conservation work days and possibly at some

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weekends at Forge Dam if the weather is good: just look out for us. We will still take cash but for preference would use a Sumup card machine which many of you will prefer I think. Social distancing will comply with Covid 19 requirements.



Christmas cards

The Christmas Cards are also ready and we intend to sell the 10-card packs at £6. We will get them to you in the way described above for the calendars. There are two photos from which to choose: again do purchase on Paypal or contact me on ann@lesage.org.uk or text 07790250087.

Ann le Sage

Birds in and out of the Valley

As we move into Autumn the birdlife in the valley changes once more. The swifts left some time ago and we have just seen the last of the swallows making their yearly amazing migration back to warmer climes. The warblers too have left, however there are still individual Blackcaps around some of which may decide to over-winter with us. This is always a bonus, a reminder of the summer occupants of the valley. However we have other seasonal events to look forward to, especially the arrival of the winter visitors. We are indeed fortunate that the valley appears to provide a compass bearing for the migration of the thrushes, redwing and field fare from distant Scandinavia and the east. On occasion I have seen flocks of literally many hundreds flying



up the valley and disappearing towards Stanage on their way to winter premises. Fortunately, some decide to stay with us in the valley feasting on the bountiful supply of berries which the valley supplies.

A major highlight for both local and national birders this summer has been the sighting of a lone Lammergeier or Bearded Vulture which some of us were able to see flying over Lady Bower. However another highlight actually in the valley has been the regular sighting of a pair of Little Owls close to the top of the valley. As you can see, this is a beautiful little bird which, unlike other owls, is active and easily viewable in the daytime. There is a strong possibility that the pair have bred, but this, at the time of writing, has not yet been confirmed.

Chris Nicholson

Forge Dam Project

Up until now we have been relying on the Heritage Lottery Fund to top up the money already raised for the Forge Dam Project. Our preliminary application for funds had been accepted to be developed further. However, we have been re-assessing our options as we understand that the Lottery Fund is likely to change their funding focus in the Covid-19 world. We have therefore started to look for other potential donors and at the same time look at our estimates for the work. This includes: up-dating the estimates previously provided by our consultants, looking at where savings could be made in the work programme and finding a location where the silt could be usefully deposited. We are very aware of the need to progress the project, especially to keep within the timescale of the planning permission. Watch this space for further news!

David Young

Shepherd Wheel

You might remember that it was hoped that the Wheel would reopen in September, but if you've walked past recently, obviously it's not! It's a tricky site to make Covid-19 safe, but plans are afoot to re-open as soon as restrictions permit, although the visitors and volunteers' experience will be different. It's also planned to be open one day of the weekend.

If you're wanting your Shepherd Wheel visit again, please watch FoPV's and/or SIMT's websites for details.

Maggie Marsh



FoPV Conservation Volunteers Tackle Festival Woodland



The Festival Woodlands in Forge Dam Park were created in 1951 as part of the national series of events which celebrated the Festival of Britain. The entrance is on the corner of Whiteley Lane and Quiet Lane. It is marked by a sign and brass plaque stating that it was opened by the Lord Mayor on May 18th in 1951. It was planted with a range of trees and



shrubs such as rhododendrons separated by grasslands. Some of the trees were unusual and it was intended as a celebratory show piece. For many years it was carefully maintained by parks staff but in recent straightened times it has been neglected. The woodlands have been invaded by nettles, brambles, self sets and all manner of species that have created an untidy out of control woodland. As part of the FoPV Forge Dam desilting and improvement project and bearing in mind that 2021 marks the 70th anniversary of its creation, FoPV conservation volunteers have embarked on an initiative to clear and improve the woodland and to try to return it to something like its state when it was created in 1951. It's an arduous but satisfying project which we hope will improve the Forge Dam environment.

Dave Clegg, FoPV work morning organiser

Ash dieback tree felling: Endcliffe Park

We have received the news we were expecting: ash tree felling will start in October in Endcliffe Park, then Bingham Park, and so on up the valley including some at Forge Dam. The felling is a massive programme and will carry on through November and into December. All the trees have been double checked to avoid any misdiagnosis. Sad but inevitable. Some of the trees will be left as standing stems to provide a valuable wildlife habitat, and there will be some replanting next year.

Ann le Sage

Secretary:
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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
Catering
Mike Halliwell
Website / membership
Glyn Mansell
Bingham Park
Maggie Marsh
Shepherd Wheel open days
Chris Nicholson
Walks
Flora Owen
Talks

Volunteers in the Valley

In these difficult times it is heartening to find that we can assemble an impressive number of volunteers on our twice monthly Work Mornings. Even sticking to the current (at the time of writing) government ruling limiting groups to six workers we were able to field four teams on a recent Work Morning. All have to register



following the request for volunteers emailed by the committee organiser. Most volunteer very swiftly stating their preference for venue, Forge Dam, Endcliffe Park etc. and also their preference for light or heavy work. The faster the response makes easier it is for the organiser to plan how many teams can be appointed to the many sites where the need for work has been identified. We always work in close collaboration with the park authorities.

As many of our volunteers have retired from full time work, much of which could have involved paperwork, the chance of doing something physical and seeing the result of that work making a visible change within the valley must be why most will volunteer. Physical change was not achieved on a recent morning at Shepherd Wheel. When after two and a half hours of hard weed dragging by a team of six, noting especially David Manley living up to his name, deeply immersed almost over the top of his waders, there appeared to be just as much weed on the dam surface afterwards.

It is always gratifying to receive such appreciative comments from the passing public. These make it all worthwhile.

Chris Nicholson

A virtual AGM

In mid October members will receive all the usual AGM papers and advice on voting. For 4 November we will hold the AGM on Zoom which may not be possible for many. But members can still raise questions and comment on what FoPV is doing, by email. There will be formal replies and they will all be recorded and sent with the AGM minutes next year.

Ann le Sage

Nearer Christmas sales

We will be making the usual door wreaths and assembling kits for families to try their hand at home. Look out for a weekend table at Forge Dam selling these, as well as Christmas cards and calendars, walking booklets, knitted decorations and other FoPV goods in December.

Helping hands: if any of you would like to help selling or assembling calendar and card packs please put your hands up!

Ann le Sage