

Porter Valley News



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

Issue 86

July 2017

Much Ado About Mothing

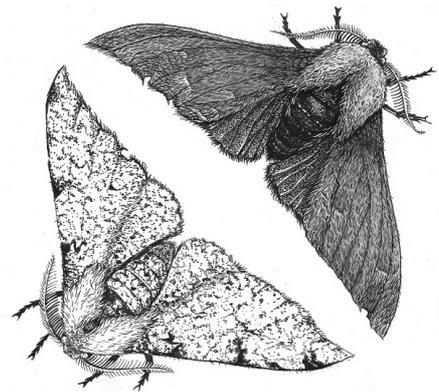
A talk by Ben Keywood

Wednesday 2nd August

7:30 - 9:30pm

Bents Green Methodist Church

Ringinglow Road



Peppered Moths

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 Tennis Courts

Sheffield City Council has been awarded a grant by the Lawn Tennis Association to restore two tennis courts in Bingham Park. These will then be run by Parks Tennis Community Interest Company (CIC) on a pay-to-play basis, bookable online. This system has been trialled successfully by Parks Tennis CIC in other Sheffield Parks, for example Hillsborough, Weston Park and Millhouses. Parks Tennis CIC are a not-for-profit organisation and fees will be up to £6 per court per hour, with generous concessions for under 18s and over 60s.

Section 106 (planning gain) monies will be used for remedial repairs to the popular Astroturf area, the remaining courts and access paths and steps. The current community fundraising by Ecclesall Co-op members has ratcheted up over £987 in two months for Bingham. Do please sign up for this scheme! The previous schemes were highly successful—the Fulwood and Ecclesall Co-ops to be commended. Bingham Park Community Group is fund-raising to re-purpose the remaining courts, starting with courts 1-3. The community would like free access to a range of flat, fenced and un-fenced hard surfaced areas for group sports (e.g. netball, mini-football, ultimate frisbee), informal games and activities (e.g. learning to ride bikes, scooters, dog training).



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Ros Tratt and Ann le Sage

Were they lying through their teeth?

In 1587 the somewhat vaguely named “Porter Wheel”, the forerunner of Shepherd Wheel, was cited in evidence to the Court of Exchequer Chamber in London. It was just one item in civil proceedings launched by George, the 6th Earl of Shrewsbury, to lay claim to the Manor of Ecclesall as part of his domain in Hallamshire.

The Porter, for much of its length, is an historic townships boundary. It separated and still separates Upper Hallam on the north bank from Ecclesall to the south. Shepherd Wheel’s dam and buildings on the north side of the river are clearly in Upper Hallam. Yet back in 1587 at the Exchequer Court part of the Earl’s relevant argument was that the Wheel “at the nether end of Graystone Clyffe” was in Ecclesall; the recorded testimonies of several local men in support of the Earl’s case raise two very interesting questions.

The first of these must be: Were the testators economical with the truth – deliberately mis-locating the Wheel? Therefore, the logical second question is: could it be that in 1587 the Wheel with its dam was in fact on the other side of the Porter as they testified? What was the true scenario? A redundant second weir by the Hangingwater Road bridge is possible circumstantial evidence that a very different dam and wheel layout might once have existed. Yet there is no record of such a radical change here or indeed elsewhere in Sheffield. On the other hand, firm support for the status quo comes from the coincidence of wording in a 16th century will and a 19th century map. In 1566 Roger Barnsley left “a Whele in Porters Feild [sic]” to his son Thomas. This may seem vague, but it is clear from Fairbank’s 1830 map of the site that the Upper Hallam area, now allotments adjacent to Shepherd, was variously labelled Low Porter Field, Middle Porter Field, Near Porter Field and Near Porter Field Bottom. Hence the weight of this documentary evidence is for the Wheel and dam to have been “in Porters Field” where they are now. If further support is needed, flawed court testimony was given for another Porter mill site: Little Sheffield Moor Wheel (long lost under Staples store and car park). It wasn’t in Ecclesall either!

Fortunately, in the court case justice prevailed; the Earl lost his claim. So, returning to the title question - clearly the testators must have lied and probably under oath. In the transcripts their words do sound rehearsed. What was their motive? Were they paid or coerced to fabricate the story and by whom? Probably we may never know! For those wanting more detail, JR Wigfull’s transcripts of the case are to be found in Volume 4 of the *Transactions of the Hunter Archaeological Society* in the Local Studies Library, Surrey Street.

Neville Flavell

Shepherd Wheel and Sheffield Industrial Museums Trust



In mid-July Helen Featherstone started as Director at SIMT, taking over from John Hamshere. We hope she will soon visit Shepherd Wheel so we can show her what a triumph the restoration has been and how effective the partnership between SIMT and Friends of the Porter Valley. Our popular mill has a great story to tell her about attracting people: upwards of 28,000 visitors a year flow through the weekends, and unique events draw people in. Equally unique have been our attempts to clear out the weed and algae in the dam this summer: look at the

picture of the Chris's Nicholson and Souster dragging mucky green strands out with the aid of a dinghy and Duncan Edwards' special rake.

Also at the Wheel, Sheffield University Drama Society, and our volunteer Jack, have put on seven performances of their new playlet about rivalry between Sheffield grinders. The excellent shows have raised £230 for Shepherd Wheel funds in one weekend - thank you to all for this magnificent effort!

Ann le Sage and Maggie Marsh

Scout Community Week in the Valley

Every year the Scout Association encourages its young people to help out in their local communities. This year Fulwood Scout Group came down to Forge Dam and carried out some very useful tasks. The Beaver Colonies, Cub Packs and Scouts were all involved, so boys and girls from 6 to 14 years old all took part in various useful tasks. The Beavers replanted the wooden tubs outside the café and in the flower beds with a range of annual and perennial flowers. They also washed down the playground equipment. The Cubs litter-picked on the footpaths from Forge Dam to Wire Mill Dam and filled several black bags with rubbish.



The Scouts removed rubbish and many dead branches from the banks of the river and Forge Dam. Well done to all the young people who took part. Some parents came along too and donated many plants and loaned trowels and other tools. We are grateful for their support. All members of the Scout Association enjoy outdoor activities and there are long waiting lists to join most Scout Groups. If you have a young child it is well worth contacting your local Scout Group and putting their name on the waiting list. You can also volunteer to help out in Beavers, Cubs, Scouts or Explorers on an occasional or regular basis.



FoPV encourage young people to take part in its many activities. Sometimes school and college pupils attend our conservation work days. Recently we welcomed a party of youngsters from Sheaf College who showed great enthusiasm and were a pleasure to work with.

Dave Clegg

Cycling in the Porter Valley

Barney age 10¾ and Seb nearly 8 set off cycling with Granddad on a drizzly day in April from Fulwood to Endcliffe Park. Barney riding on the road, Seb on the pavement. After a short time Seb “I can ride on the road Granddad” O.K. but stay with me. Forge Dam Café, Hot Chocolate 2 cups with a mountain of whipped cream and chunks of marshmallow, one normal Hot Chocolate. A discussion about Bridle Paths and Footpaths and off again. Seb is fearless and fast, Barney is confident and considerate about other people. The Bridle Path is good fun and quite challenging at times. At the stepping stones, Seb “Can we ride through the Porter River Granddad?” no we will do that in the summer maybe! So over the stepping stones. Bingham Park cycle path fast and fun. In Endcliffe Park Seb falls off his bike, a hug to a bruised Grandson and he is off again.

Granddad (Glyn Mansell)

Hunter’s Bar Entrance

Ann le Sage

Endcliffe Park deserves a better entrance and we have planned to use the Co-op money to spend on improvements. Watch out for new benches and signage in the next month or so. But more immediately go and admire the results of some gritty demolition work by our conservation volunteers on 27 June. The unusable, gloomy and dry flower bed lurking under the superb weeping beech has been removed and the rubble used to build a retaining wall on the brook embankment. Brilliant work and exhausting for FoPV and DWP volunteers and our Parks officers Andy Phillips and Darron Lingard.



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

The Committee:

Ann le Sage
Chair / conservation
David Young
Treasurer
Glynis Jones
Secretary / newsletter
Dave Clegg
Conservation / planning
Les Greenwood
Mike Halliwell
Website / membership
Glyn Mansell
Maggie Marsh
Shepherd Wheel open days
Chris Nicholson
Walks
Flora Owen
Talks
Ros Tratt

2018 Calendar

Well, now it's July, our thoughts naturally turn to the 2018 calendar. I need images submitted by the end of the month so we have copies for sale at the Autumn Fair in September. As ever, I'm looking for photos taken in the valley. Landscapes, skyscapes, people, architecture, artefacts, allotments, farm animals, wild animals and birds, fungi, flowers - and from all around the valley (Hunters Bar to Porter Clough, Hangingwater allotments to the Roughts and Common Lane Open Space). As we haven't had much snow in recent winters, perhaps you have some old snowy photos? If you only have prints (and so not good enough resolution to enlarge to A4), I could perhaps do a montage of several images. Landscape-orientation images, please, to fit the calendar. rosinsheffield@gmail.com

Flood protection Sheffield

We still have no detail about Endcliffe Park water storage proposals but expect more consultation later in the summer. A Flood Storage Area there would be closer to "at risk" areas than the proposed Mayfield one, and would hold 61 Olympic swimming pools, so clearly this proposal is going to run in some shape or form. We need sharp eyes on the issues here, so any members willing to support us in discussions please contact me on ann@lesage.org.uk. Gen up with a look at www.floodprotectionssheffield.com, and the Sheffield Flood Risk Management Strategy.

Murky water in the brook

Several queries have come in about the state of the Porter in recent wet weeks. The experts have said in the past that murky flows are due to mud being stirred up, and adding to the silt washing down from the upper reaches. It also explains the silting of Forge Dam. So, it was nothing sinister!

Activities for July to November

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

When and Where	What and Who
Thursday 13 th July, 10am Forge Dam	Conservation work day. Contact Ann le Sage on 07790250087 or ann@lesage.org.uk or fopv.org.uk
Tuesday 25 th July, 10am Endcliffe Park	Conservation work day. Contact Ann le Sage on 07790250087 or ann@lesage.org.uk or fopv.org.uk
Wednesday 2 nd August, 7.30pm Bents Green Methodist Church Hall	"Much ado about nothing" Open meeting and a talk (on moths!) by Ben Keywood
Saturday 5 th August, 10am Endcliffe Park, Hunter's Bar entrance	Porter Valley's Woodland Heritage A walk led by Ruth Morgan
Thursday 10 th August, 10am Bingham Park	Conservation work day. Contact Ann le Sage on 07790250087 or ann@lesage.org.uk or fopv.org.uk
Tuesday 22 nd August, 10am Whiteley Woods to Forge Dam	Conservation work day. Contact Ann le Sage on 07790250087 or ann@lesage.org.uk or fopv.org.uk
Saturday 2 nd September, 19:30 Forge Dam cafe	Evening moth walk Led by Ben Keywood
Thursday 14 th September, 10am Forge Dam	Conservation work day. Contact Ann le Sage on 07790250087 or ann@lesage.org.uk or fopv.org.uk
Saturday 16 th September, 10am-5pm Forge Dam Café	Autumn Fair [Note change of date]
Tuesday 26 th September, 10am Endcliffe Park	Conservation work day. Contact Ann le Sage on 07790250087 or ann@lesage.org.uk or fopv.org.uk
Saturday 7 th October, 6.15pm Forge Dam Café	Bat walk Led by Dr. Nicky Rivers
Thursday 12 th October, 10am Common Lane Open Space	Conservation work day. Contact Ann le Sage on 07790250087 or ann@lesage.org.uk or fopv.org.uk
Tuesday 24 th October, 10am Bingham Park	Conservation work day. Contact Ann le Sage on 07790250087 or ann@lesage.org.uk or fopv.org.uk
Wednesday 1 st November, 7pm Bents Green Methodist Church Hall	"Our work on Burbage and the Eastern Moors" AGM and a talk by Danny Udall