

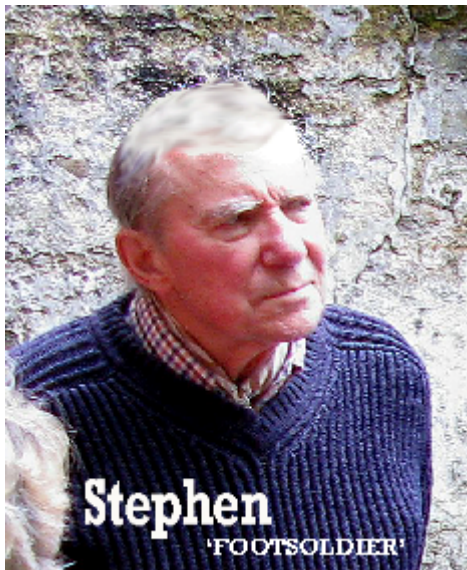
# Porter Valley News



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

Issue 58

July 2010



## Footsoldier

It is with great sadness that we have to report that Footsoldier, alias Stephen Allan, passed away in the middle of May. Stephen died peacefully in the Hallamshire Hospital following an illness of some years, an illness which he referred to in his Footsoldier reminiscences as his 'rusty breast-plate'.

Stephen had been a true friend of the Porter Valley since its inception in 1994. Stephen and his dogs would walk here every day. As a result he was very much the man on the ground, noticing what was happening in all parts of the valley. As a FoPV committee member, he was an ideal person to meet on a regular basis with the Council Officers to discuss possible maintenance work in the area.

I first met him on a FoPV volunteering afternoon when we were pulling Indian Balsam (or perhaps Japanese Knotweed) beside the paths around Forge Dam in 1995. We teamed up

in 2003 to help with an archaeological survey of the valley. Our allotted area covered the Whiteley Wood estate and the Middle Valley which covered Priest Hill Farm and the fields to the east of Hangram Lane and north of Ringinglow Road.

We had to log field boundaries, gate stoops, hollow-ways and any other interesting features we found. Stephen was very good at talking with people and knew many of the farmers and occupiers of the valley's houses and properties which all helped when completing this survey.

Stephen had a great sense of humour so it was always fun to work with him. He was considerate, with impeccable manners. He will be missed by the many people he came in contact with. His legacy, in part, is the contribution he made to the preservation of the Porter Valley. There passes one of life's true Gentlemen.

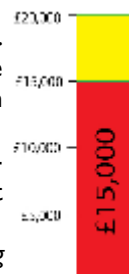
*Penny Jewitt*

## Shepherd Wheel Restoration Project

As you will all have noticed the millpond is now filled with water, as the contractor for that element of the Project has completed his work. This is a major milestone and now there is a bit of a lull whilst we await work to commence on the buildings and machinery restoration. These elements are currently out for quotations from specialist contractors. The millpond area looks somewhat stark at present as the landscaping work will not begin until next spring, in association with the work for the education facility. This element is at the design stage with input from English Heritage, but has been somewhat delayed. The anticipated completion of the whole Project is now Autumn 2011.

Some members have wondered why the footpath alongside the dam (millpond) is still closed. This is due to the fact that the legal process to close a footpath is long and expensive so we are saving money by keeping it closed under the same closure order until further work commences in this Autumn. Sorry for the inconvenience but it saves on the financial resources.

Fundraising carries on apace and FoPV's total contribution is now over £35 000. We were unsuccessful with BRELMS but have received a donation from Town Trust for £10 000 and we await news from Pilgrim Trust in July.



*David Young*

## Benches, benches, benches and Forge Dam Improvements

While we wait for the management plan for the future of the Forge Dam area to be written by the Council's Parks and Countryside Department, it seemed a good idea to do some practical voluntary work to clean up the area around the dam and café. On Tuesday 22nd June, we sanded down and applied teak oil to 8 benches: 3 on the green in front of the Café and 5 more along the edge of the Dam. Council's grateful thanks go to Nigel Hopkins, David Young, Walter and Eileen Fox, Flora Owen (and me!) for this work, and to the same crew plus Hilary French for the 9 wooden benches we sorted out in Endcliffe Park on the same day. Hot, grubby but worthwhile work... go and look at the results and sit on them! There are still several more plain wooden benches needing the same treatment, and at least 20 to 30 painted ones must be given a shiny new green coat. Anyone who wants to join the team please call me on 07790250087 or drop me an e-mail : [ann@lesage.org.uk](mailto:ann@lesage.org.uk). We made a real difference with this work.



The South West Community Assembly provided the money for all the repair materials we used, and also funded 3 brand new benches for the area right outside the café. **Look at the picture of the grand inauguration on 1<sup>st</sup> July!** The Council will be renovating the playground at Forge Café soon; and tree cutting and improvements to the café will start in July - ready for the school holiday? At last we can see some improvements in this much used and appreciated area.

Also look out for the Council doing essential storm damage repairs, from Wire Mill down to Endcliffe Park, over the summer.

*Ann le Sage*

## Shepherd Wheel Oral History Project

Do you or someone you know remember when Shepherd Wheel was being used to sharpen knives? Perhaps one of your relatives used to tell you stories about their experiences of Shepherd Wheel or maybe even worked there? If you have any interesting stories about Shepherd Wheel we would like to hear from you.

We are trying to collect information about Shepherd Wheel and the people associated with it. We are carrying out an oral history project to get a real sense of what it was like to work at Shepherd Wheel. We hope to share the information that we collect with visitors in the future, once the site is opened as a visitor attraction, to help them understand the history of the site. Please contact Tom Newman, Project Ranger on 0114 2686196 or by email at [tom.newman@sheffield.gov.uk](mailto:tom.newman@sheffield.gov.uk) if you would like to contribute.

## The Great London Swim

As usual (I think I can use that word now I've done 3 Great Swims), I started off in sheer panic, and the only thing that kept me going was the greater fear of the embarrassment of giving up, especially with my brother and sister-in-law there to cheer me on. I soon relaxed, though, and as I got into my "stride" I found myself overtaking some of the other swimmers, which cheered me up, and I actually started to enjoy myself. Finally, with the end in sight, I put on an extra spurt, kicking my legs hard – which worked a treat. This time I could actually stand up and walk, if not run, to the finish line - the kicking had got enough oxygen to my leg muscles. So much more dignified than having to hold on to either a barrier or a helper!

My only problem this time was that my wet suit rubbed the back of my neck. I may have to wear a scarf next year! Talking of wetsuits, I thought I could hang mine up after the 2012 swim, as I'd have done all four, but there are now FIVE Great Swims, so I still have Strathclyde and Salford to do. And, no doubt, more will be added and I may never be able to stop.

To add to my joy at overcoming my fears and being able to walk at the end, I did beat my previous times. This year I did it in 47mins 55secs! I came 18<sup>th</sup> out of 34 in my age/gender group (which sounds much better than 2,608<sup>th</sup> out of 3,143 overall).

I'd like to thank everyone who's sponsored me - my current total is £877.50. But it's not too late – you can sponsor me retrospectively! And perhaps we can still beat last year's incredibly generous total of £1,065. Just email me ([ros.hancock@care4free.net](mailto:ros.hancock@care4free.net)) or phone (230 2247), or see me at the Open Meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> August, where I'll be wearing my medal, but not my wetsuit!

*Ros Hancock*

