Archaeology along the Porter and Mayfield Brooks

October 2002

Friends of the Porter Valley
Registered Charity No. 1069865

Friends of the Porter Valley

Secretary
Flora Owen
42 School Green Lane
SHEFFIELD S10 4GQ
(0114) 230 1345

Contents

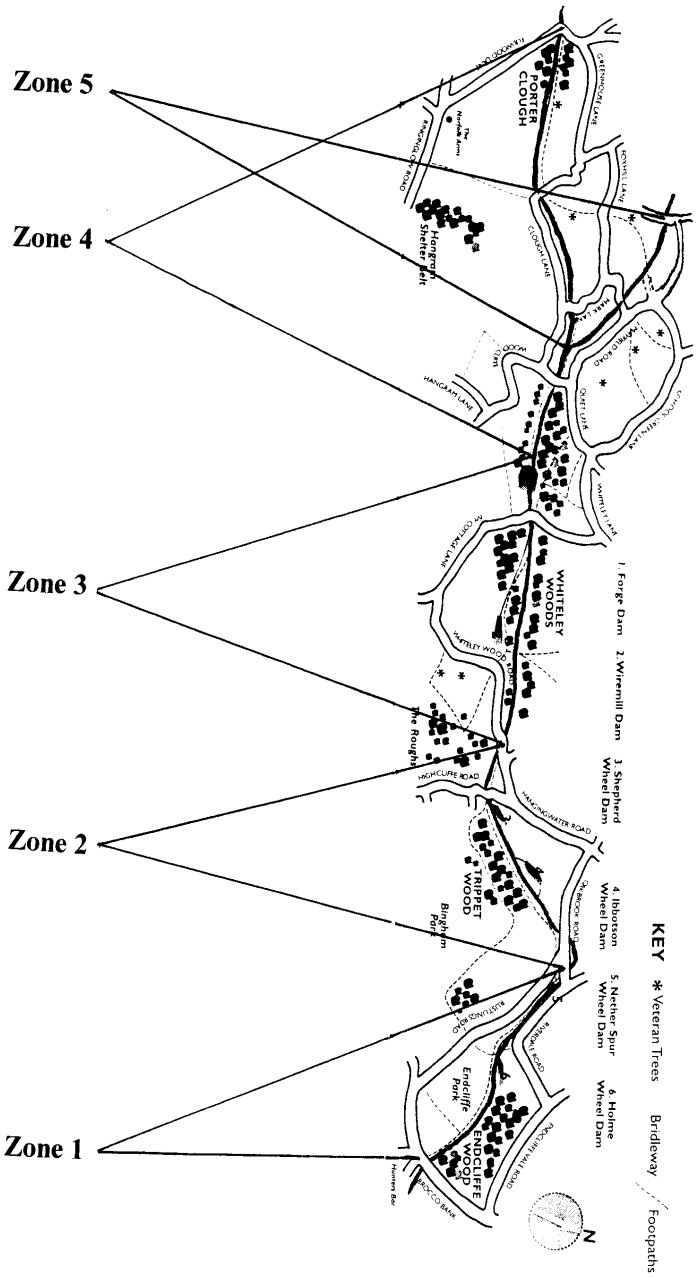
		Page
Preface		3
Map of the five zones		4
Introduction		5
Zone 1	Endcliffe Park	6-11
	Map	12-14
	Photographs	15-16
Zone 2	Oakbrook Road to Hangingwater Road (Bingham Park)	17-20
	Map	21-22
	Photographs	23-24
Zone 2 Cont.	Hangingwater Road (Porter Bridge) to Whiteley Wood Road Bridge	25-26
	Map	27
	Photographs	28-29
Zone 3	Whiteley Wood Road Bridge to Forge Dam	30-31
	Map	32-33
	Photographs	34
Zone 3 Cont.	Forge Dam	35
	Map	36
	Photographs	37
Zone 4	Forge Dam to Head of Porter Clough	38-39
	Map	40
	Photographs	41-42
Zone 5	Mayfield Brook up as far as Douse Croft Lane	43-44
	Map	45
	Photographs	46-47

Preface

This report describes archaeological features encountered when following the Porter Brook from Hunter's Bar to the head of Porter Clough, a distance of some 5 km. There is also a section covering its main tributary the Mayfield Brook. Survey work was carried out by 'The Friends of the Porter Valley' during 2002. The following volunteers were responsible for the sections indicated:

Mick and Jo Atha: Endcliffe Park
Eileen and Walter Fox: Bingham Park; Whiteley Wood Road to Carr Bridge
Shelagh McDonald and Ann le Sage: Hangingwater Road to Whiteley Wood Road
Oliver Gilbert: Carr Bridge to head of Porter Clough; Mayfield Valley; Editor.

Information is arranged in five sections, each representing a zone with a certain homogeneity. Zone accounts have not been standardised, so they reflect the competence and interests of the survey teams. Each has an introduction, a catalogue of its archaeological features, a map, and photographs. In total 309 items are described.



Map showing the survey area divided into the five zones used to describe the archaeological features

Introduction

The Porter Valley has a remarkable history most of which can be appreciated from a walk up the streamside path. In the days of water power it played an important role in the industrial success of Sheffield. Above Hunter's Bar eight mills, each with its own dam (millpond), had been erected by 1780. Most were concerned with the cutlery trade which required forging, rolling and grinding to manufacture the end product. By 1880 most were falling into disrepair as industry switched to steam power and moved to the Lower Don Valley. From 1885 the Local Authority started to acquire sections of this now quiet and idyllic valley to protect it from developers and open it up to the public. A well-known landscape architect, William Goldring, was hired to design the lower part as a Victorian park and given the brief to retain, as far as possible, its natural character.

Today the valley provides a delightful and varied experience. The lower part has many elements of a park, with horticultural and built features set against a background of an older industrial heritage. The middle stretch takes its character from the industrial past, though many of the specialities are now returning to nature, which gives them a peculiar charm. One of the mills, Shepherd Wheel, has been restored to working order. The upper valley, above Forge Dam, has an agricultural quality. The stream is used by farmers to water their stock, the banks are clothed with native wild flowers, there is an impressive waterfall, and a single arch packhorse bridge. Here management is limited to path maintenance and the provision of simple bridges. A tributary, the Mayfield Brook, has no streamside path but can be observed from bridges and field paths.

This report takes you in more detail through the different zones you will pass through in a walk up the valley and points out historical features to look out for.