

EDGE

NETHER EDGE NEIGHBOURHOOD NEWSLETTER www.netheredge.org.uk

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Individual views expressed are not necessarily those of the Group. March 2021

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This issue of **EDGE** was edited by Kath and Howard Fry. If you would like to edit or contribute to a future issue, or you wish to make comment on this one, please write to the EDGE Editorial Board - nengeditorialboard@gmail.com

Nether Edge Neighbourhood Group (NENG) was set up in 1973 with the following aims:

To improve the conditions of life, especially of those living or working in the areas of Brincliffe, Nether Edge and Sharrow inn Sheffield without distinction of sex or race or of political, religious or other opinions, by associating with Local Authorities, voluntary organisations and residents in a common effort to advance our education, to improve our environment and to provide facilities in the interest of social welfare for recreational and leisure time activities.

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NETHER EDGE NEIGHBOURHOOD GROUP – Application for Membership / renewal

I wish to join / continue to support* the Nether Edge Neighbourhood Group (NENG) and receive the “EDGE” magazine by hand delivery / by email* and enclose / have sent* my annual subscription of £ _____

*Please delete as appropriate

Name _____

Address _____ Postcode _____

Tel _____ email _____

Your contact details will only be used in connection with your EDGE subscriptions or NENG membership.

The annual subscription for EDGE is £10 per household, commencing on 1st April each year. Any additional donation to the work of NENG is welcomed.

Subscribers living outside our distribution area will only receive electronic copies of EDGE, or you can choose to receive EDGE by email by selecting this method above.

Cheques should be made payable to NENG, but please bear in mind that everyone in NENG is a volunteer, so we would far prefer to receive payment by Standing Order or by bank transfer (Sort code **30-97-51 A/C 36208368**), as this greatly reduces the administration burden on both your local EDGE distributor and on NENG itself. Copies of a Standing order form (you can alternatively set one up online) to send to your Bank are available from ken.lambert227@gmail.com whom you should advise when you have set up a standing order or made a bank transfer so that records can be updated.

Signature _____ Date _____

As a local resident/ supporter of NENG, I also wish to become a full Member of NENG, a company limited by guarantee, which entitles me to full voting rights at the AGM, receive regular copies of EDGE and fully participate in its activities. In the unlikely event that the Company has to be wound up, I agree to pay the sum of £1 towards its debts if asked to do so. I understand this liability will continue for one year after I cease to be a member of the company.

PLEASE NOTE: Should you prefer not to become a full member of NENG you still can be just an EDGE subscriber by deleting the section in italics above. This entitles you to receive copies of EDGE but no entitlement to vote. The annual subscription is the same.

Editorial

Subscription Reminder: Membership and subscription fees were raised last year from £8.00 per annum (£5.00 retired or unwaged) to a flat rate of £10 per household. This was necessary both to cover increased printing costs of EDGE and to make good some element of NENG income that we were unable to collect during the Coronavirus pandemic. These additional funds have helped NENG to both remain financially secure and to make ex gratia payments to local FoodBanks and other charities, for which we and the beneficiary charities are most grateful. It is probable that family hardship and deprivation within sections of our local community will remain with us for some years to come.

Many households now pay their subscriptions / membership fees by Standing Order (SO), for which we are most grateful, as paying in this manner saves us time and costs. A great many of those SOs have been set up to make payment to our bank account on 1st April each year and were probably established a number of years ago. Can we therefore ask members and subscribers to **please check the amount in your original SO and increase it to £10 for this April**, unless of course you have already done so. May we also thank those who have made additional donations.

NENG Website: As you may recall, Laura Fitzgerald was the NENG webmaster for many years and gave valiant service both on the NENG Committee as well as in the somewhat thankless task of administering our website. She has many other commitments and retired as our webmaster a couple of years ago, during which time www.netheredge.org.uk has not really received the attention it deserved. Fortunately Ken Lambert our esteemed Chair (and jack of all trades to boot), has stepped in to manage the website for the time being, which is great. But if any of our members (or friends or even casual acquaintances) have a burning desire to help him to administer the site, keeping it up-to-date and relevant, please give him a call. He would be more than willing to provide any necessary technical instruction.

New History Group Website: www.netheredgehistory.org.uk A new website for Nether Edge History Group is also under construction and should become available next month. The Local History Group is of course an integral part of NENG, but it was decided that it would be simpler to create a new site for its various resources and activities, rather than attempting to 'cobble' it onto the existing NENG site. Over recent years, the History Group have written and published a range of well reviewed and commercially successful and highly readable books and guides on our local history: Aspects of Nether Edge; People and Places and most recently Nether Edge in the Second World War as well as the ever-popular Walks Guides. The new site will provide links back to the main NENG site as does the Festival's netheredgefestival.co.uk. Keep an eye on that too, as the Festival are developing an exciting programme of events for 2021, having been somewhat thwarted by last year's lock-down.

Sadly, this again has to be a digital version of EDGE, but with any luck, we'll be back with proper printed issues in a month or so. as we know our greyhound-like deliverers are raring to go, once they get the go-ahead

NENG 2021 AGM

The NENG 2021 AGM was held as a Zoom meeting on Wednesday 24th February, and in most peoples estimation, it was a great success. A total of 51 members were present (virtually), which is many more than have turned up to recent 'real' meetings at the bowling club, so we were well over our target for a quorum. We will learn from this and probably hold more virtual meetings in the future.

The AGM was chaired by Ken Lambert who gave an informative run-down on NENG's activities over the last 18 months (because the 2020 AGM had been delayed by Covid) and the financial challenges that had been overcome. Income from both the Farmers' Market and membership subs had temporarily fallen over the period, but the group had still made sizeable donations to local charities that support more needy sections of our community.

Demonstrating the increasing diversity of the organisation, annual reports were provided by the following sub-groups:

Farmer's Markets; Nether Edge Festival; the History Group; EDGE Editorial Board, Friends of Brincliffe Edge Woods; Kenwood Community Growers; Friends of Chelsea Gardens; Open Gardens and Nether Edge Art Group.

Once lock-down is over, expect a renewed flourish of activity in all parts!

Full minutes of the AGM will be available soon on the website.

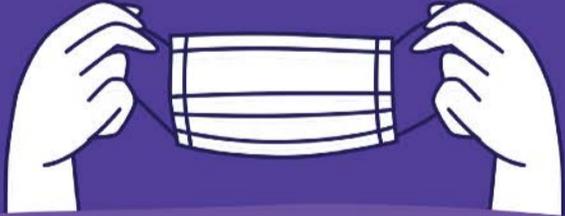
ERRATUM

The date for the June Farmers' Market has been fixed for Sunday 13th June (not 20th, as stated in the February Edge, as that will be the date for 2021 Open Gardens). The September market will be on 12th, while the Christmas Market is on Sunday 5th December



Bannerdale Osteopaths

Keeping Yourself & Others Safe Inside Our Clinic



Do's

- ✓ Wait outside the building until collected for your appointment.
- ✓ Ensure your face covering is on properly before entering.
- ✓ Thoroughly wash hands with the gel provided.
- ✓ Try not to touch anything on your way to the treatment room.

Bannerdale Osteopaths is a healthcare setting so you will NOT generate any contacts within the clinic. You will also not become a contact of ours for tracing purposes. This is because of the PPE we wear, the infection control measures we take and the training all of our Osteopaths have completed.

This means the risk of transmission is so low that if either yourself, your osteopath or another patient test positive following a visit to the clinic there is no need for anyone except the person testing positive to isolate.

We take our patients' & team's safety seriously and will never compromise on that. We hope you feel safe within our clinic.

Me and my Greenhouse

Kath Fry



Bess with St Roche and the lemon tree

I say my greenhouse, but really I am not a gardener and it was built by my lads. But I do love it and it is regarded as mine. In the summer I sit in my pyjamas as the sun comes up at the little table with coffee, a book and Bess (not a dog, but a life-size bust of Bess of Hardwick) and St Roche (not a dog either) looking over my shoulder and sniff in the delicious scent of the giant rose geranium and its offspring, In the winter it is a

gently heated haven for the garden pot plants that can't survive too much cold and I go in to do 'housework' on my little domain. And still it is filled with the scent of the plants.

The big citrus is a worry. It was bought as an anniversary present for my husband a few years ago so is special. It produces real lemons and flowers at the same time, whose perfume wafts into our bedroom every morning. The skin on the lemons was a bit thick for our G&Ts though. The year before last it had a dreadful attack of something and nearly all its leaves curled up and fell off. Nasty black sooty stuff covered the stems and remaining leaves. A good wash in washing up liquid, (I don't like chemical killers as they have been tested on animals), and reference to some books identified the culprits as tiny creatures you could hardly see attached to the underside of the leaves. I picked them all off by hand (*yuk*) and fed the plant with extremely expensive citrus food. It recovered well. It does now look as if it needs sun and summer again. A bit like me.

The lovely healthy looking bay I rescued from my son's allotment. It was just a skinny stem with half a dozen leaves poking out from under a paving slab. It was striving to live and I couldn't bear to leave it there. I only take a leaf very rarely as I want it to grow really tall.



The rescued Bay



Graptopetalum + Aeonium

Cobweb house leek + Sempervarium

Some of the House Leeks have rotted, but I have found a brilliant succulent website kat@thesucculentelectis.com that I am hoping will educate me for their care. I might even dare split some. I did split the Aloe Veras but the plants seem much happier when they and their fellows are squashed up together. I will be wary of doing that again.

I have taken a liking to succulents and their ability to breed like rabbits. Any leaf that tumbles to the floor sprouts and I can't bear to throw any away so there are umpteen shallow pots bursting with babies. My problem is that I have no idea of plant names and can't remember them even if I look them up so am reliant on the app "Picture This" to tell me what I have. My husband has fond memories of following his grandpa around in the garden and working with him in his greenhouse. I had no such horticultural education. We lived in a tiny social housing flat in Somers Town, next to Euston Station. If anything grew there it was a miracle. The nearest bit of green was Regent's Park.



This year's task is to replace the supposedly seedless but very seedy grape vine whose leaves went up the wall and roots went down through the greenhouse floor to the earth beneath. I shall get searching, but it must be something scented.

A peach is currently my favourite choice to replace the sour-tasting grape vine.

Inside Out

Sharrow Today Community Photography Project



Sharrow Today Newspaper is working with Kita Arts on a project to explore and share local peoples experiences and feelings about the changes that have taken place over the last year.

Many of us have had to change our outdoor lives and spend more time at home, or use outdoor spaces in different ways. We will be asking people about things they value inside their homes and outside, and how this has changed this past year. We want to share this, along with photographs, with the community through a special feature in the March edition of Sharrow Today, and an exhibition later in the year.

We will be calling on people over the next few weeks to ask them if they would like to take part. Covid safety guidelines will be observed and there is no obligation to take part.

If you would like to find out more please call Sharrow Community Forum on 0114 2508384 or email maria@sharrowcf.org.uk




Spring is sprung, the grass is ris
wonder where the boidies is?

Music is Flourishing

What you missed at last year's Festival...
but can now watch on YouTube!

Last September's 'Pop-Up' Nether Edge Festival featured a number of firsts, including two very different concerts.

One was a 'double first'. Sheffield-based international concert pianist Kaoru Bingham was due to play live at St Andrew's Psalter Lane Church (SAPLC) in September but it looked like the concert could not happen. Determined the show would go on, organiser Jean Allen came up with the idea of filming Kaoru playing behind closed doors at SAPLC and the recital then being made available online. 'I've made audio recordings for my CDs in the past', said Kaoru, 'but this will be a first for me too. I haven't been able to play in public this year so it will be really nice to do so again.'

For the Festival recital, Kaoru played Bach's Partita No 1 in B flat Major, Mozart's Piano Sonata K457 in C Minor and Debussy's 'Images' Book 1. It was a beautiful concert, with an unforgettable atmosphere. Over 1,000 people worldwide have enjoyed the concert, and it is available to listen and watch via this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ri-5GwelSWk>

The other 'first' was a live-streamed concert given by Emily Bowden and Simon Dumpleton, two thirds of the Balfolk trio Emily and the Simons (the other Simon was unable to travel from Belgium due to the pandemic).

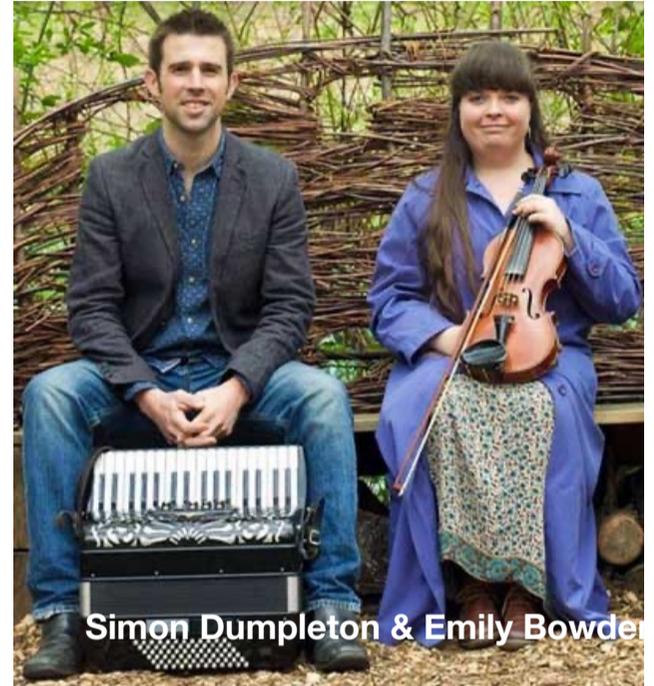
Their music is centred around Emily's compositions, drawing inspiration from life's encounters and the energy of the dance-floor. Highly expressive and with an improvisatory style, it is a performance full of passion, tenderness and playfulness. Drawing on a wide repertoire of folk dance music, it transports the imagination, stirs the feet and uplifts the spirit.

The concert featured recent compositions and tracks from Emily & The Simons' debut album: "Firelight". It too has

been enjoyed by over 1,000 people worldwide https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EimnDW_Fm8I

If you haven't yet experienced these concerts, please do. After their success, organisers are keen to put more on during the Nether Edge Festival next year, as well as concerts with an audience if possible. Music will find a way!

Jean Allen



Simon Dumpleton & Emily Bowden



Kaoru Bingham

Hidden spaces of Broomhall

David Levine

This is the fourth in a series describing circular walks to follow during the pandemic, when Government advice is to exercise locally. The route is just over 5 miles via the General Cemetery and Sunnybank nature reserve in Broomhall to the University of Sheffield, visiting Weston Park and Crookes Valley Park before returning via Lynwood Gardens Community Nature Reserve and Collegiate Crescent. (The route can easily be shortened to 3 miles by continuing up Broomspring Lane after Holberry Gardens Allotments (6) then going left along Dorset Street to Lynwood Gardens (11))



KEY

1. Start at Nether Edge Crossroads
2. Meadowbank Avenue
3. Toad Walk
4. Sunnybank Nature reserve
5. Broom Hall
6. Holberry Garden Allotments (formerly Havelock Square)
7. Boundary Post, Brook Hill (near Firth Hall)
8. Weston Park
9. Old Dam, Crookes Valley Park
10. Crookes Valley Park / Ponderosa
11. Lynwood Gardens Community Nature Reserve
12. General Cemetery

The walk starts (1) and finishes at Nether Edge Crossroads. Take Edge Bank on to **Meadow Bank Avenue** (2) turning right at the top on to **Cherry Tree Road**. Cross **Psalter Lane** and walk down Bagshot Street then cross **Sharrow Vale Road** to reach **Toad Walk** (3) where a mask can be used if necessary, for safety).

At the bottom of Toad Walk, enter the **General Cemetery** taking the lower path, leading down steps to join the Porter

Brook path to meet **Pear Street**. Walk to **Ecclesall Road** and cross using the pedestrian lights to enter **Sunnybank Nature Reserve** (4) (other routes to the nature reserve are possible).

Sunnybank Nature Reserve was established in 1985 following the (compulsory) demolition of the Victorian houses on Ecclesall Road and is one of the smallest of the 15 nature reserves managed by Sheffield & Rotherham Wildlife Trust. It is a mixture of meadow and woodland containing several mature trees that are over 150 years old and grew in the gardens of the demolished homes.

<https://www.wildsheffield.com/reserves/sunnybank/>

Walk up hill alongside the cycle path and then turn right leaving the cycle path at the nature reserve sign on to a footpath to the wildlife pond. At the pond walk uphill on the (grassy) meadow to meet a path turning left and then right to the exit between **Broomhill Place** and **Sunny Bank**. Cross an open space to reach the (pedestrianised) **Clinton Walk**. Turn left onto **Broomhall St.** to meet the junction with **Broomhall Rd.** Carry on 150m along Broomhall Rd to the entrance to **Broom Hall** (5).

Broom Hall, which gives its name to the surrounding district, is a grade II listed building and was the medieval home of the de Wickersleys. It was gradually extended and passed through several families including the Jessops and the vicar of Sheffield, James Wilkinson. At the rear is a timber framed house dating to 1498. Broom Hall was the home and workshop of the cutlery designer David Mellor from 1973 to 1990 before he moved to Hathersage. It is now occupied by the firm Peak Architects.



Figure 2 Broom Hall

Retrace your steps back to the junction of **Broomhall St** with Broomhall Rd and turn left on to **Wharnccliffe St** and then up on to Brunswick St. Turn left on to **Holberry Gardens** passing the allotments on the left before turning right on to **Havelock Street** to reach **Broomspring Lane**.

Continue on the longer route by turning right on to Broomspring Lane and then left to rejoin Brunswick St. *(For the 3 mile route turn left on to Broomspring Lane and then take a left on to Dorset Street.)*

Holberry Garden allotments (6) is one of the smallest of the Sheffield council allotments sites consisting of just 21 small plots. It was created in the 70's when the houses on the then Havelock Square were demolished (changed to Holberry Gardens in the early 80's). Prior to the late 19th century, when the square was built, the area contained allotment gardens.

Continue along **Brunswick St** crossing over **Glossop Road** onto **Leavy Greave** and up some steps on the left by the Cycle Hub to the **University of Sheffield** campus (during the pandemic this normally bustling area was very quiet). Go under **Brook Hill** and take the wide steps on the left going up to **Firth Court**. At the top of the steps turn left and left again to see the boundary post on the pavement of **Brook Hill (7)**.

From medieval times, the ancient parish of Sheffield was divided into 6 civil townships until 1843 when the whole parish was incorporated into the borough of Sheffield. The Boundary Post marks the boundary between the townships of Sheffield and Nether Hallam (the other 4 townships were Upper Hallam, Ecclesall, Brightside and Attercliffe cum Darnell)



EDGE

Do an about turn and walk up past **Firth Court**, the oldest part of the **University of Sheffield** (there is an informative plaque about its founder Mark Firth at the entrance), and enter **Weston Park (7)**.

In **Weston Park** follow the signs to **Crookes Valley Park (10)** and the Ponderosa. In Weston Park there are several plaques about the Park and notable Sheffielders. Take the exit diagonally opposite and cross **Mushroom Lane** into **Crookes Valley Park**.

Crookes Valley Park contains the "The Old Great Dam" built in 1785, the last remaining reservoir of 10 in the area built in the 18th century. During the lockdowns more use has made of the reservoir by open water swimmers, including enthusiasts from Nether Edge.

Walk anti-clockwise around the reservoir (9) and exit up the steps in the corner behind Weston Park Museum to reach the other end of Mushroom Lane. Walk round to Weston Bank and cross over the pedestrian lights by the Children's Hospital. Carry on walking past the Royal Hallamshire and cross Glossop Road onto **Broomspring Lane**.



Old Dam

Take the first right on to Dorset Street (the description of the shorter route resumes here) and go into the Dorset Street Local Open Space at the end of the street. The footpath leads past an open air children's nursery into **Lynwood Gardens Community Nature Reserve (11)**. Follow the footpath until just before the open grassy space and take a left downhill (see photo) towards a gap in the wall. Turn right at the gap and through a gate to join **Park Crescent**.

Lynwood Gardens Community Nature Reserve was originally the garden of Broombank House (now the Francis Newton pub) built in 1820 for the cutlery manufacturer and owner of the Portobello Works Francis Newton who was elected as the Master Cutler in 1844.

Turn left at the junction of **Park Crescent** and **Park Lane** and then right on to **Collegiate Crescent** to reach **Collegiate Campus**. During the pandemic this normally busy campus was very quiet and paths on the campus can be followed to **Ecclesall Road**.



Lynwood Gardens

There are several ways back to Nether Edge. The route shown on the sketch map goes through the main entrance of the **General Cemetery (12)** up to the exit on Cemetery Road, down **Grange Crescent Road** and then right on to Grange Crescent to reach **Sharrow Lane**. Crossing Sharrow Lane take **Sharrow View** to the roundabout with **Kenwood Road** passing the hotel to **Cherry Tree Road** and retrace your steps back to the start.

In 2004 my husband David and I went to live in Doha, Qatar. David was working full time so I, along with most of the ex-pat wives, had to find things to do to fill our time and so I joined various groups and over time learned two new skills - how to play Mah Jong and how to quilt.

I had always enjoyed sewing but hadn't done anything like this before and I was lucky enough to be taught by a lovely Irish lady, an experienced quilter who became a great friend and was also an excellent teacher. So, what follows are the basic elements of quilting, for anyone wanting to have a go.

Buying fabric in Doha was great fun. There was a whole souq devoted to fabrics of all descriptions and haggling over the price was part of the deal, even though it was very cheap in the first place. I came back from Doha fifteen years ago, with boxes of fabrics and am still using many of those I brought back with me.

Quilts are made up of blocks, which can vary in size. I usually make quite big quilts so the blocks I make are 12 inches square (quilting is measured in imperial). The blocks are made up of small pieces of fabric, cut to a chosen pattern and sewn together to form the block.

Quilters' equipment - cutting pads, cutting wheels and rulers are necessary as the finished appearance of the quilt depends on the accurate cutting of the fabric in the first place. One hundred percent cotton is the best fabric to use and there are thousands of patterns to choose from.

After completing all the blocks needed for the quilt, these are then sewn together. Then a backing has to be chosen and this can be as simple or complicated as you like. For example, a length of plain or complimentary patterned fabric or even made up of all the different fabrics in the blocks.

Between the top and base layers is the wadding and again there are plenty of choices - thick, medium, thin, man-made fibres or wool or cotton. The layers are then sewn together - I find this part difficult and it takes me ages. This part of the quilting can be done by hand or machine - I can quilt by hand but it is very time consuming so I mainly machine stitch mine.



Now, some photos of a few of my completed quilts - the design possibilities are endless and there are many great books on the subject - I regularly refer to my copy of "The Quilter's Blocks Bible" by Celia Eddy, for inspiration.



Kath and Howard taking delivery of the beautiful quilt that Jude made for them a few years ago

During our time in Doha I became a reasonably competent quilter and, knowing that it would be at least a year before we came back to Sheffield for a holiday, I resolved to make five big (ish) quilts - one for each of my sisters, one for my daughter and one for my son's girl friend - I'm pleased to say that "I did It "

I still really enjoy making quilts and it has been a great hobby to have over the past year. **Give it a try!**

The view from my bay window

My grandson at four years old asked me. "Do you like living in a forest?" When viewed from Norfolk Park estate, where I worked for thirty years, his opinion is understandable. It looks like a forest with roofs and the occasional spire poking out of the leafy canopy. In reply I said, "Yes I do. Though it can be dark under the trees when the leaves are all out. Winter time makes



Goldfinch

seeing thing easier."

As I sat in our bay window yesterday, I watched Goldfinches picking over the moss on the tiles of the roof opposite. Behaving as though they were Chaffinches on the ground. Blackbirds were disputing who had pecking rights on the grass verge. Two males being bossed by a female. Too wet for them to be bothered by a cat.

Coal Tits came to our feeder. A squirrel proofed affair as I don't want any



Sparrowhawk

more of them than we must have. Great, Long tailed and Blue Tits in the trees in a mixed flock. There was a Nuthatch working along the branches making an irregular rain of bits of bark, lichen and moss. The different shades of green in the lichen have to be seen to be believed.

The larger branches have a coat of moss especially on the horizontal areas

All this epiphytic growth must support insects that the birds feed on. Does it make our "forest" qualify as "rain forest"? A Treecreeper carefully and erratically made its way up the London Plane tree. Going out of sight onto the northern aspect where the bark is rougher and more irregular. Then reappearing as it got higher up near where the Thrush nested the year we moved in. (Queen's Silver Jubilee year)

We very rarely see thrushes now. The Magpies robbed that nest. It was very exposed. Magpies were the only Corvid we saw in those days. Then the Jays arrived on Brincliffe Edge 20 years ago and much more recently Cheryl and Russell have taken up a regular perch on the Silver Birch near the top of Union Rd. Crows now predate on the Magpies. I have seen them pull apart Magpie nests causing much alarm with both families of birds adding to the racket. The Crows try to drive away Sparrowhawks and passing Buzzards. They are fearful of the Peregrine who I have only seen once around here. The Buzzard struggles to cope with the harassment whereas the Sparrowhawk is a much better aeronaut, dips a wing, goes left of right then ferry-glides on the wind along the Edge giving them the slip. Then there are the wood pigeons. Six of them in the tree opposite as I opened the curtains this morning. Given the size of what lands on the car, sometimes I think they have cross bread with cows.

There are more of them too these days. But they are handsome. These are the winter versions of why I like living in the forest in Nether Edge.

Bill Atherton



Russell?

Home cooking in lock-down

Whilst I have lived well in the days before covid struck, I have never spent much time or energy in producing food for myself or my family. Indeed a recent attempt at Bakewell Tart was marred by an unnecessary (and unintentional) addition of salt to the recipe, as a result of which my family, - for whom it was cooked, -were forced to tell lies and smile wanly, when I enquired whether they had enjoyed it.

Determined to do better I decided on cordon bleu parsnips, (which I planned to try out myself before offering to others). How carefully I allowed them to steam, until, when slightly soft, I transferred them to a baking tray, delicately brushed them with oil and herbs, and put them in my Aga. I planned to recover and eat them some forty minutes later.

It's not often that I find enough on tele to keep me interested for long. However on the evening in which Chelsea Road's answer to Gordon Ramsay planned to make his first appearance, there just happened to be several hours of good telly.

Five hours after my parsnips first saw the inside of my oven, I remembered them. Bird's Eye Carbon Fingers was the only way they could fairly be described, when I opened the oven door!! I gave some thought about the next step.

I assumed that, whilst my Carbon Fingers may be unfit for human consumption, they probably remained nutritious. This being so I thought that hungry birds might be grateful for them. So I carried tray and Carbon Fingers out to my back lawn and left them. Then it snowed.

Neither wandering crow nor blackbird showed any interest

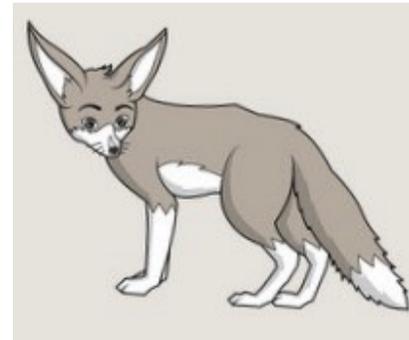
At noon the following day, whilst sitting supping a midday coffee, I espied Reynard the fox, strolling nonchalantly across my lawn. He sniffed at my offering and with his long snout, moved away the snow covering the goodies. For a moment he surveyed what was revealed. He was clearly unimpressed. Then he was not even as polite as my family when they faced my salty Bakewell Tart.

Can you believe it; he tossed back his head, turned away, raised his bushy tail high in the air, manoeuvred his bum above the Carbon Fingers. Then he dropped upon them the biggest FOX POO ever seen around here!

Turning up one's nose at food offered by another, I know, does happen. I would dearly like to know whether any reader has observed any similar behaviour anywhere and can explain the reason for it.

My next attempt will be Arroz con Pollo,which should be a doddle!

Adam Pemberton



Smithsonian

Book Club – but not as we know it A personal view by Richard Taylor

It's been an interesting year for book clubs. Nether Edge has a number of well-established clubs and I am informed that despite the setbacks they have in general managed to meet up monthly online. In the summer there may have been the odd opportunity to meet up in somebody's garden but by October the bad weather and Covid 19 had soon put a stop to that.

So this is my attempt to inform you about the hottest books during this period of lockdown

“Death and the Penguin” by Andrey Kurkov

A really interesting, often amusing short tale about a guy who keeps a penguin in his apartment in the Ukraine. He is asked to write obituaries about citizens who have yet to die. This sounds strange and it is!

8 out of 10

“Hamnet” by Maggie O ‘Farrell

Soon to be released in paperback this is the story set in the 1580s about a lady named Agnes, married to William Shakespeare who is said to possess unusual powers. Hamnet is her son who dies tragically at the age of eleven.

7 out of 10

“Once Upon a River” by Diane Setterfield

I loved this simple tale of life and intrigue concerning the disappearance and re appearance of a young girl all set by the upper reaches of the River Thames River around Radcot. Based around the local pub where people met to tell tales about ghosts and strange occurrences.

9 out of 10

“Where the Crawdads Sing” by Delia Owens.

This was my favourite book of 2020 and tells the amazing story of a young girl who from an early age manages to bring herself up in the marshlands of North Carolina after her mother and father both leave.

10 out of 10

“The Plague” by Albert Camus

This was a re-read of an old classic. Very poignant and relevant in this strange time in our lives.

7 out of 10

“A Theatre for Dreams” by Polly Samson

I watched a presentation of this novel by Polly Sampson at the virtual Hay-on-Wye festival. Polly is married to Dave Gilmour of Pink Floyd fame and this novel is about life on the Greek island of Hydra in the sixties. For those of you who love singer-songwriter Leonard Cohen this is a must read.

7 out of ten

“Americanah” by Chimamanda Ngozi Adiche

This book was the winner of the 2014 Baileys Women's Prize for Fiction.

The author is a charming lady from Nigeria and tells the life history of a “young and in love” boy and girl and their separate experiences in America and England. Quite a heavy read but well worth the perseverance.

6 out of 10

“Gentleman in Moscow” by Amor Towles

A really great read about a man who was ordered to spend the rest of his life in a luxury hotel in Moscow. In 1922 in Bolshevik Russia Count Alexander Rostov was given this order and the stories unfold...

9 out of 10

You will notice that I have scored them out of ten. These scores are purely my own judgement and not the feelings of the groups. I would be interested in your comments.

I hope this whistle-stop tour may have persuaded you to pick one of these books maybe from the free lending /swapping stations set around Nether Edge.

Feeling down during this difficult year?

So many of us are struggling right now



Our friendly team at the Sheffield Mental Health Guide are here to help you find out more about support services and activities in our city.

Give us a call, send us an email, or visit the website where there's also a live 'chat' function, and we can talk through your options.

Meet some friendly faces online (and eventually in person too)

We're all missing other people, which is why we are running free activities every weekday during lockdown. They're fun activities, from art to singing to music, and anyone is welcome. To find out more please get in touch.

0114 273 7009

info@sheffieldflourish.co.uk

www.sheffieldmentalhealth.co.uk – a guide to services and support in the city

<https://sheffieldflourish.co.uk/news/the-lowdown-on-our-lockdown-zooms> - free weekly online activities during lockdown

Even the smallest front gardens

are an opportunity to make our street and our bit of the world look brighter and more colourful. Lift the soul every time we go in the front door. Like the clothes we wear, front gardens make a statement to passers-by about us as individuals, whereas our back gardens are usually more private and we wear whatever we like. Now the snow is clearing, we can see buds of green poking through the earth - unless I've been in lock-down for too long and I'm just imagining it. Either way, now is a good time to start planting up the front garden and looking forward to summer.

Small front gardens sometimes look a bit drab because old concrete paving becomes cracked, grey and dreary. Hacking up the paving and replacing it can be costly and if we simply bung some gravel on top, the chances are that it will get walked into the house or onto the street, but there is lots more we can do. Sadly, the soil in small front gardens is also likely to be of poor quality, so not much good for colourful plant-growing without digging holes and importing new soil. A hedge may be desirable to give privacy and stop passers by from gawking into the front room, but on the other hand we don't want to make the house seem dark. There are many alternatives to big hedges.

Guelder Rose (*Viburnum Opulus*), is a deciduous upright shrub that has lovely white spring blossom, autumn colour and red berries. This makes a much more interesting hedge than boring old privet. It is deciduous though, so it needs to be mixed with some evergreen hedging, perhaps **Yew** or **Holly** if privacy is an issue. Mixed planting, even in a smallest space will also do much to encourage wildlife, birds and bees, all of which helps to save the planet and keeps the kids happy.

Lots of big plant-pots are a cost effective way of introducing structure and colour while hiding old concrete paving in a small front garden. Just fill them up, Monty Don-style, with some peat-free compost and a bit of grit. It's probably a bit late for planting daffodils or tulips, but we can do that next year. Meanwhile we can grow an array of summer and autumn -flowering shrubs and bulbs, perhaps with some perennials mixed in, that can be moved around to suit your fancy.



Garden centres are always delighted to give free advice on what to grow and where. Even in even a small space, a single small tree or large shrub will make all the difference and most can be grown in a large container. Big grasses are another great option in a sunny front garden. They have a long season of interest and many keep their form all winter. **Miscanthus** (decorative grass) is the ideal height to provide a soft screen for the window behind it, creating a little privacy indoors. Container grown evergreen ferns, such as **Asplenium Scolopendrium** a British native, or **Himalayan Maidenhair** are a good choice in shady front gardens and can break up an otherwise harsh junction between a wall and a concrete path. In most front gardens, shrubs in pots (the bigger the pot the better, but make sure they are frost proof), will look after themselves, so long as we remember to water them. Drying-out is always a risk for potted plants, so try to give them a few inches of mulch, grit or broken slate on top of the compost to protect the soil from the drying effect of the sun.



Plants in pots don't just have to be decorative and add form but can also be culinary. If the front garden is in a sunny spot, why not grow some herbs or even tomatoes? They also like growing in pots (ideally quite deep ones, as their roots like to branch quite high up the stem), and one can have fun building a trellis screen for them to climb up, which could become a feature of any garden

Vegetables are a bit greedy and will need to be watered and fed regularly with fertiliser to grow a decent crop. They are a bit like small children, but make less noise and they're always worth the effort in the end. I used to be big a fan of 'The Good Life' on TV - and not just to see Felicity Kendal. Cabbages and broccoli with the sweet peas in the front garden show a degree of style.

What about parking in the front garden?



One can understand the temptation to park a car in the front garden if space is restricted on the road outside and there's nowhere else to park, but it won't be easy. Planning Consent will almost certainly be required and this may well be refused within Nether Edge Conservation Area or if access is considered dangerous. Local Authority Highways consent will also be needed for any pavement cross-over. Of course, your neighbours may be less than delighted with the idea of a large camper van plonked next to their living room window all day, which is a good reason for not using the garden as a parking lot. Please also bear in mind that gateposts and boundary walls are also an important element of the streetscape, so they need to be respected.



If parking is permitted, or already exists in your garden, but the entrance area simply needs tidying up, one should try to ensure that all hard surfaces, including the driveway are water-permeable (block paving laid on sand or gravel, not tarmac or concrete), so that rain-water can seep through to the ground below, which reduces flooding risks. Rather than re-surfacing the entire front garden in the same material, which could look severe and uninviting, why not include sections with different hard landscape materials and/or ground cover planting? **Thyme, Sedum, Creeping Jenny** or **Bugle** grown in gravel pockets are hardy. The **RHS website** is a mine of information, so for example, one could search out **Erodium x variable 'Roseum'** (Storksbill), which is a close cousin of hardy geraniums. It is a true gravel lover, enjoying good drainage and plenty of sun, it has neat evergreen foliage and bright pink flowers in spring and summer. This is also an ideal plant to squeeze into a wide crack between slabs from which its stems will radiate. It also has the added benefit that bees love them. Such plants are hardy and don't much mind being driven over now and then.



Consider edge treatments as well. Low growing conifers or other shrubs will soften the look of paving close to the house or a boundary. If you have space, planting a new native tree or two. **Silver Birch** or **Rowan** look great if they are planted in groups of two or three. They are tough and reasonably fast growing, but not so big as to dominate the house or the street. You could even consider digging a wildlife pond in your front garden. There are some cracking examples to be found around Sheffield and what better way to create a 'Wow' factor.

What to do with wheelie bins is always a problem for gardeners. Hiding them is the obvious answer but that's easier said than done, particularly in a small front garden. One could (possibly) knock up a simple screen, which would reduce the ugliness a bit or maybe conceal them behind some pots of bamboo. Decorative screens made from simple, painted sawn timber sections can look surprisingly effective. They don't have to conceal the bins completely, just divert the eye from them. Right is a screen with a sedum roof, which looks adventurous!



Last, but not least, why not install a bench seat in the front garden? If it's a particularly attractive one (a present to yourself maybe), it's probably sensible to anchor it down to stop anyone pinching it, but that's easily done. I really enjoy saying "Hello" to complete strangers when out on these interminable Covid Walks round local streets. They may not all be strangers of course, and I may just have forgotten their names. Cats welcome random strokes, but are less receptive to topical conversation. What better way to get the most out of your front garden than chatting to passers-by (should you choose to do so and in a socially distanced way), with a cup of tea whilst sitting comfortably on your bench in the morning sunshine.

Howard Fry

Last but not least, The Sheaf and Porter Rivers Trust are pleased to share our Missing Links version of the River Sheaf Walk map with EDGE readers and look forward to taking you through each of the Missing Links in future issue

RIVER SHEAF WALK



Updated January 2021



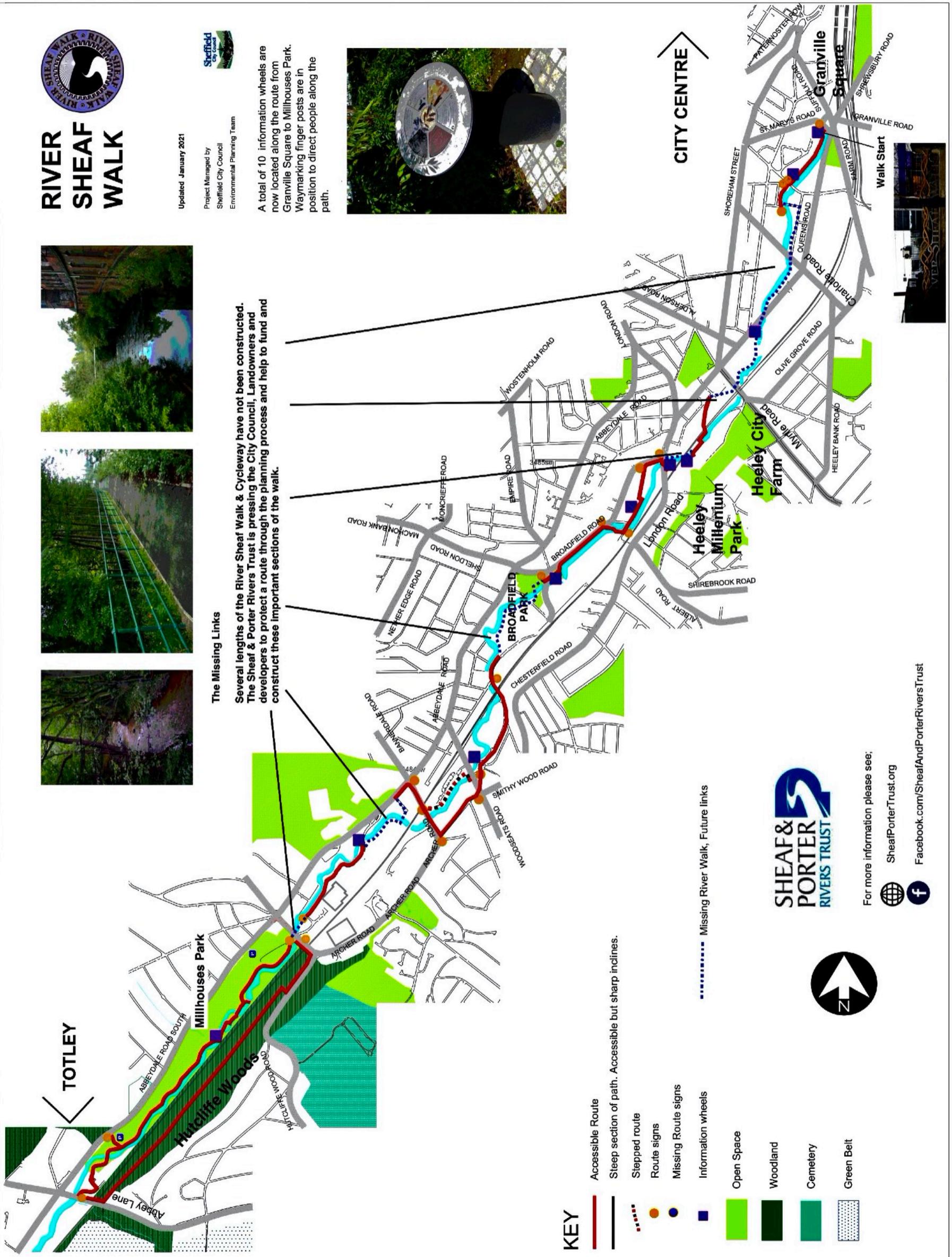
Project Managed by
Sheffield City Council
Environmental Planning Team

A total of 10 information wheels are now located along the route from Granville Square to Millhouses Park. Waymarking finger posts are in position to direct people along the path.



The Missing Links

Several lengths of the River Sheaf Walk & Cycleway have not been constructed. The Sheaf & Porter Rivers Trust is pressing the City Council, Landowners and developers to protect a route through the planning process and help to fund and construct these important sections of the walk.



For more information please see:

SheffieldPorterTrust.org

Facebook.com/SheafAndPorterRiversTrust