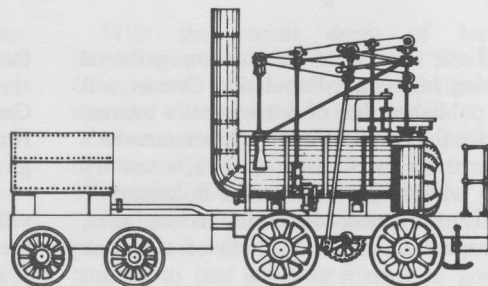


THE WYLAM GLOBE

Newsletter of Wylam Parish Council



Summer 1992

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Popular Summer Fair deserves your support

Sticking to its regular date – the 4th Saturday in June, the ever-popular Summer Fair will be held on the Jubilee Playing Field on 27 June.

For those who like to sit and relax watching other people working – the R. and A. Young Brass Band, the Benfieldside Morrismen, and Punch and Judy will be performing during the afternoon.

For the more energetic there will be opportunity to take part in the annual Three-mile Run, kindly sponsored this year by Muircroft Homes. New entrants, as well as older stalwarts will be most welcome.

A wide variety of stalls and side-shows have been promised, and should all help to ensure a great afternoon's entertainment. Gates open at 1.30 p.m.

Entry this year will be 60p for adults (by programme), and by wearing the Wylam Summer Fair Badge schoolchildren will be able to get in for 30p – with free-entry for pre-school age children.

Don't forget to get your badge early and wear it all week!

Entertainment doesn't finish at the end of the afternoon – but continues in the evening with the Annual "Meat Charring" or B.B.Q. Music will be provided by the Queen Elizabeth High School Swing Band, supported by the Geoff High Disco. Tickets are only £5 each.

Weather has been good for the Summer Fair in recent years, and Playing Field Association Chairman, David Lamb, promises that sunshine has been ordered again this year!

On a less happy note, the recent burglaries of the garage on the field, resulted in the theft of the Still Strimmer and Flymo, as well as several other smaller items of equipment. In particular the

helmet and visor, harness, pouring petrol cans and a grease gun will need to be replaced. If anyone has any suitable equipment which they are willing to donate or offer at a reasonable price, David Lamb (852688) would be pleased to hear from you.

We hope that as many of you as possible will support the Summer Fair, and the Playing Field Association, on 27 June.



Work on the £8.5m Prudhoe by-pass is ahead of schedule and should be completed by the end of December. This picture shows progress on the bridge which will take traffic over the wooded valley of the Stanley Burn, near Bradley Hall Farm.

Exceptional rainfall causes unexpected flooding problems

Continuous heavy rain at the end of March and beginning of April caused the worst flooding in the County for more than 30 years.

North of Wylam the volume of water flowing down the Oakwood Burn was so great that the burn overflowed its banks on the evening of 1 April. Instead of turning westwards, along its normal course under Holeyne Hall Road and across to Howdene Burn at Horsley, the water cascaded straight down Dayhole Dene, behind the houses at the end of Acomb Drive, across Blue Bell Lane, and over the bottom of the

new housing site creating a lake on the open space in Engine Dene. The volume of water was such that it poured down from the end of the Dene flooding gardens of Nos. 21 and 22 The Dene, before running down the roadway, and onto the old railway track near the Fox and Hounds.

Without the help of residents who worked late in the evening to divert the flood water, worse damage would have been caused.

Although this recent rainfall was exceptional the Parish Council, and both our District Councillors have expressed

serious concern to the District and County Councils, emphasising the necessity of taking all practicable action to prevent Engine Dene being flooded in this way again.

Tynedale Council has already been discussing with the landowners concerned the need to clear the course of the Oakwood Burn, and strengthen its banks. Steps are also being taken to improve the drainage from Blue Bell Lane and channel water directly into the large pipe which runs under Engine Dene and down to the river.

Century-old census reveals fascinating details of Wylam

Later this year information gathered during last year's Population Census will be published, but of much greater interest to local historians were the enumerator's returns for the Census of 1891, a century ago, which were made public in January.

These returns contain the names, ages, occupations, places of birth of everyone living in Britain near the end of Queen Victoria's reign. These details remain confidential for 100 years after the census, so it will be 2091, before the personal details of those living in 1891 are made public.

The 1891 Census for Wylam reveals fascinating details of the village in the late Victorian period. 1003 people were recorded then (514 males and 489 females) compared with some 2300 today. We think that our present population is highly mobile (not living in same community for very long) but in 1891 only about 250 residents, one quarter of the population had lived in the village for more than 10 years, including 43 who had been here for more than 30 years. How does that compare with our present population?

Coal mining was still the main occupation of local men and boys, with 150 being employed as miners, or in similar occupations at local collieries. The youngest coal miner was 12 year old Robert Blackburn who lived in Station Row.

The area between the "Fox and Hounds" and the bridge was known as Low Wylam and most of the cottages here were occupied by miners and their families. These included almost all the 20 houses in "The Square" (where River House and the Toll House are now), and the 24 cottages in Station Row and Water Row where Stephenson Terrace was later built.

The Square and Water Row were slum properties with only two occupiable rooms and in very poor condition. Seven of the two room cottages in The Square were occupied by miners families with five or six children! These squalid buildings were demolished within a few years.

In the centre of the village Burgoyne and Laburnum Terrace were both newly built, and almost all occupied by miners.

One major change over the past century has been the reduction in the number of large families – in 1891 there were over 50 families with more than 4 children, including 11 with six children, 5 with seven, 1 with eight and 1 with nine!

The largest belonged to farmer Thomas Johnson and his wife, who lived with their nine children at Horsley Marsh, near the Holeyn Hall crossroads. The family with 8 children were 36 year old village schoolmaster, Ralph Brady and his wife Ellen. The two local gamekeepers William Middleton at Holeyn Hall Cottage and William Ritson at Ivy Cottage at Hagg Bank were also quite prolific with seven and six children respectively.

Wylam Stationmaster, Durham-born Thomas Wright, a widower at 40, lived in

the Station House with his mother and his six children. The North Eastern Railway Company raised the roof of the Station House to provide extra rooms for this growing family!

Among the wealthier families in the village were the Claytons at Wylam Hall, the Cooksons at Oakwood and the Woods at Holeyn Hall.

Banker Richard Clayton and his wife Emily were renowned for their hospitality and on Census night they had six visitors, with two servants staying. The Claytons also had 11 servants of their own living in the Hall and a gardener and his family occupying the newly built (now demolished) Lodge on the entrance drive to the Hall, opposite the church.

At Oakwood the Cookson family were all away, and only their 7 female servants were in the house. Other servants lived in Oxclose (now Oakwood) Cottages. Their coachman Ralph Thompson (with his wife and 7 children) was in No. 1 and 4 young bachelor gardeners occupied No. 2. 31 year old Edwin Mordue and his wife Sarah lived in No. 3. He was described as an "Electrician and House Joiner". An electrician was probably still a new and unusual occupation in 1891. No. 4 was another large household with agricultural worker Robert Rutherford, his wife Mary and their 7 children.

Compared with the serious overcrowding in many of the cottages Holeyn Hall was underoccupied with only Colonel Matthew Woods and his 26 year old daughter Lucy, and their six servants, in residence. Within three years, Colonel Woods had died and Holeyn Hall was bought by Charles Parsons who became world-famous as the inventor of the turbine.

Although not quite able to live on the grand scale of the three families who occupied Wylam's "big" houses, the two doctors living in the village had been able to build themselves elegant new stone houses. Dr. Philip Brown built "Elmfield" on Station Road and Dr. Robert Foulis built "The Brow", now Dr. Aitchison's house on Woodcroft Road.

In the centre of the village the Post Office was run as a family affair: the Postmistress was 65 year old Elizabeth Davison. She had lived in Wylam for more than 40 years, had had five children and been widowed since she was 39. She had been the local postmistress for more than 20 years. Her 15 year old grandson John was now employed as postmessenger and his 14 years old sister Florence was the telegraphist. Postman, Thomas Brigham and his family lived next door.

Mrs Davison also ran a grocery and drapers business with the Post Office and there were two other grocers in the village, George Lamb at Laburnum House, and George Greener at Blackett house.

Although there were few shops in Wylam in 1891 there was no shortage of Inns.

Four of the six Innkeepers, were also doing other jobs as well. At the Stephenson's Arms, Michael Lynch was described as a beerhousekeeper and general dealer, at the Fox and Hounds Robert Johnson was also a miner, John Phillips at the Bird Inn was a grocer and at the Ship Inn Edward Hawkins also worked as a bootmaker as well as the Innkeeper.

By 1891 the task of clearing many of the old slum cottages was well-advanced, with only those in The Square, Water Row, Station Row and School Row still standing. New terraces were replacing them, Burgoyne, and Laburnum Terraces and Tyne View were new and Ingham Row was under construction at the time of the Census. At Hagg Bank, the last cottages, on Front Street were also being built in 1891 and in South Wylam the first two houses on Elm Bank had also been started.

The reputation which Wylam had in the 1870's of being one of the worst pit villages in Northumberland had certainly started to change by 1891. By the turn of the 20th century, the village had cleared its slums and was becoming a desirable place in which to live.

Stephenson's Cottage

Following Bill Jackson's departure, a young Wylam couple Sarah Craggs and Robert Buckle are the new tenants of Stephenson's Cottage. Sarah is the new custodian, opening the cottage to visitors, and thoroughly enjoying the job.

With the acquisition of Thomas Bewick's birthplace at Cherryburn last year the National Trust now have two properties in close proximity in eastern Tynedale, and this has increased the number of visitors coming to Wylam to see Stephenson's Cottage and the Railway Museum. Sarah could have a busy season!

Colliery corrections

A number of local people have queried the captions on two or three photographs in the booklet recently published by F. C. Moffatt, on former collieries in the Tyne Valley. Not for the first time confusion has arisen between Wylam and West Wylam.

For those who have bought the booklet the pictures on Pages 28 and 38 are of West Wylam Colliery (not Wylam) and the central picture on Page 30 is of the Haugh Pit at Wylam (not West Wylam).

New Souvenir mugs

Several people were disappointed last year when the potter who produced the distinctive Wylam pottery sold in the library/museum, ceased production. However a new potter is now supplying another attractive range of pottery with a different design, ideal "Presents from Wylam", for residents and tourists. These can be seen in the library entrance.

More recycling news

A new issue of the Parish Recycling Leaflet was produced and distributed to all houses in the village at the end of last year. This gave details of waste-items that can be recycled, and where you can take these locally. If anyone has not got a copy of the leaflet and would like one they are available on request at the library, the Post Office or from the Parish Clerk.

Incidentally the Parish Council received a useful £120 for the glass collected in the Wylam bottle bank last year. The more bottles you save – the more money that is given back to the village.

As the monthly trailer for waste-paper provided by the Rangers behind the Church Hall has caused a few problems, the Parish Council have (with the agreement of the Rangers) now arranged for wheelie-bins to be provided in the North Wylam car park by the War memorial.

One of these bins is for clean newspapers only (not magazines). The other bin is for other types of paper, magazines, light card etc.

However attractive magazines with plenty of pictures are still enjoyed by patients at Prudhoe Hospital. Please take magazines of this type to Brenda Robinson, Haverbrack, Elm Bank Road.

Mens shoes, socks and underwear are always needed by the Cyrenians. Please phone Christine Hammill (Home 852553 or work 091 226 0046) and she will be happy to collect from you.

What unusual litter!

Thank you to everyone who took part in the Annual "Litter Pick" on 11 April. As always the village looked brighter and cleaner for this Spring Clean. It's well worth the morning's effort, and most people quite enjoy the occasion especially when (as this year) the weather is fine.

This year's unusual finds included three car seats thrown down the embankment near the Tennis Club, underwear on the riverbank below the station car park, and an ex-library copy of a Victorian history of Northallerton dumped near Stanley Burn Bridge!

Ideas for Information?

A new edition of the very popular Village Information card will be prepared in September. This will be the 10th edition and the information included has been slightly modified over the years of publication to make each new edition more useful than the last. If you have any suggestions as to how it could be further improved, please drop a line to Lorraine Parker, the Clerk to the Parish Council.

Incidentally any new residents who have not got a copy of the current (green) card, can obtain one from the Clerk to the Parish Council, or from the Post Office or the library, on request.

Travel tokens soon

All pensioners in the village who received travel tokens last year will have had a letter and questionnaire from Tynedale Council seeking views on the idea of having a half-fare pass, as an alternative to travel tokens in the future. We hope that everyone locally completed the short questionnaire and returned it to the District Council.

Whatever is decided for the future, travel tokens will continue to be available this year and will be issued in Wylam in early July.

A date has not yet been fixed but once it has been, it will be publicised in the village.

As in previous years the Parish Council will issue the combined tokens on behalf of the District Council (£17) and the Parish Council (£5).

John Stephenson

With the recent death of John Stephenson of West Mews the Parish Council lost a past chairman and former member who served the village well.

Moving to Wylam in 1957, John joined the Parish Council in 1969 and served until 1979, being Chairman from 1973-76.

He had a keen interest in the village – its past, present and future. In his position as a prominent and respected solicitor on Tyneside, his advice and opinion was valued. His help in the early 1970's when the Council was negotiating to buy several areas of land in the village, from the Blackett Estate, for use as open spaces and allotments, was invaluable.

We offer our sympathy to his wife April, and family.



Wylam's "Recycling Centre" in the War Memorial car park. The bottle bank with the three bins, waiting to receive all your bottles, cans, newspapers and other waste paper. Please save these items from your rubbish

Tennis coaching offered

After a successful recruitment campaign last year the Tennis Club are emphasising practice and coaching this summer. Coaching is available to suit most needs – from beginners to those with experience. Courses for seniors are held on Friday evenings and Thursday mornings. Juniors are coached on Saturday mornings and early weekday evenings.

If you would like more information about the courses and becoming a member of the Club please contact the Club Secretary, Kate Speed (Tel: 833700) or Membership Secretary, Jean Firth (Tel: 852569).

The Club have various events arranged over the next few weeks, including an Open Day (7 June), Jumble Sale (13 June), Evening Treasure Hunt (20 June), Games night (4 July) and Championship Finals (12 July).

School parking plea

Space for parking or for turning vehicles at the ends of Bell Road and Parsons Road is very restricted, so a plea to parents of First School pupils – please take care when parking and try to avoid inconveniencing residents and other road users.

Rent-free allotments

Would you like to grow your own vegetables – or just want a patch of ground where you can escape and relax? An allotment is just what you need. New allotment holders are given the first year rent-free. Clearly a great bargain. Interested? Then why not contact the Allotment Association Secretary, Ted Gordon, 6 Woodcroft Road. Tel: 853531.

All dog-owners asked to follow "Good Dog Campaign" advice

Now that summer is almost here, and more children are playing outside on the open spaces would all dog owners please remember Wylam's Good Dog Campaign, and follow the advice and recommendations given in the Campaign leaflet which was issued to all households in 1989. (If you'd like a copy please contact the Parish Clerk or call at the library).

Dogs should be wormed every 6 months (or every 3 months if they are in close contact with young children). The strongest treatment is obtainable from a vet, but worming tablets can be purchased from chemists and pet shops. Incidentally cats should also be wormed every 3 months.

When exercising your dog please take it whenever possible to one of the areas in and around the village where the grass is long and rough and where it can enjoy its exercise without causing a nuisance.

Never take your dog (whether on or off the lead) onto an area intended for childrens play – **especially not** the play areas at Hedley Road, Hagg Bank, Jackson Road ("The Chinese Field") or Jubilee Playing Field. (The Community Playing Field Association have already banned dogs from the playing field which they control).

Try to avoid your dog fouling those open spaces where the grass is regularly cut

which are intended for public enjoyment (eg the open spaces on the Dene Estate and parts of Engine Dene). If your dog does foul these areas, please clear it up.

Never let you dog out unaccompanied – it should always be under your control.

Dogs make great pets and are important to the lives of many people, but if they are not properly trained and controlled they can become a real pest.

Please make sure that your dog does not create a health hazard, and is not a nuisance to other local residents.

"Green" volunteers

The Parish Council is most grateful to Sarah and Olwyn Fittes, Peter Clarke, John Sykes, Tom and Joe for their continuing voluntary work in helping to look after trees, flower beds and open spaces around the village. The new hanging baskets and tubs add extra colour to parts of the village.

After several unsuccessful attempts to establish a row of trees in the verge opposite Wylam Hills Farm, a small team of volunteers organised by Peter Clarke and John Sykes planted a new hedge in the Spring. Several other species of shrub and tree are being added, and a mixture of wild-flower seeds will be sown in the verge. The hedge is having to be protected from the attention of Robert Graham's milking herd until it is well established. In a few years time it should create a more attractive approach into the village.

Thank you, Stephen & Jean

News that the Vicar, Canon Stephen Huxley would be retiring early at the end of June has been greeted with sorrow by many residents. He and his wife Jean came to Wylam in 1987 midway through the St Oswin's Centenary Celebrations.

Both have made significant contributions to the life of the village over the past five years. In thanking them for their service we hope that the operations and treatment needed on Stephen's hips will be successful, enabling them to have a long and happy retirement in their attractive home in the lovely village of Norham on Tweed.

Back Lane improvements

Work on extending and improving the Ship Inn started in early May, and once this has been completed, it is hoped that resurfacing of the back lane can be commenced. A scheme is currently being discussed between the Brewery Company and the Parish Council.



Some of the volunteers who very kindly helped with planting the new hedge on Holeyn Hall Road (opposite Wylam Hills Farm) under the supervision of Peter Clarke and John Sykes.

Guides need leaders

Wylam Guides are looking for new Leaders. Brenda Rutherford and Jane Thicknes who have served as leaders for several years, will be leaving the Guides at the end of the summer and are looking for volunteers to take their place.

The Wylam Guide unit has about 24 girls and covers a range of activities associated with Guiding. They meet every Tuesday at 7.30 p.m. in St. Oswin's Church Hall, and anyone who thinks they might be interested in becoming a Leader is welcome to attend.

The work offers a very rewarding challenge and Brenda and Jane would be happy to discuss with anyone interested what the job involves. Parents of present Brownies might particularly like to consider whether they could help. Please contact Brenda (Tel: 852010) or Jane (Tel: 852219).

It is most important that new Leaders are found to enable the Unit to continue.

Books wanted please

Many local people now rely on the Secondhand Bookstall held at the Summer Fair (27 June) to provide them with a good choice of reading for their summer holidays or perhaps for their normal bedtime reading.

Demand for all types of books last year was so great that the stock was seriously reduced and there is now a great need for some new stock this year.

Please turn out your cupboards and bookshelves and see if you can find some books (all types) which you could give for the bookstall.

It would be most helpful if you could deliver them to the Methodist Church Centre on any Saturday morning between 10-11.30 a.m. where they will be gratefully received.

However if you cannot manage to do this please contact Brian Japes (Tel: 852151) or Philip Brooks (Tel: 853520) who will be happy to arrange to collect them from you over the next few weeks.