

THE WYLAM GLOBE

Newsletter of Wylam Parish Council

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Quarterly

October, 1975

"RAILWAY PIONEERS" BOOKLET

Enclosed with this newsletter is a free copy of the commemorative booklet "Wylam and its Railway Pioneers" recently published by the Parish Council to mark the important contribution which Wylam and its local engineers made to the development of locomotives. This is the first time that an attempt has been made to set out, in one publication, a fairly comprehensive statement of Wylam's links with railway history.

Thanks both to generous support from several local companies who contributed approximately one-third of the costs of publication, and successful sales of the book outside the village, the amount having to be provided from the Parish rates is less than the cost of producing two issues of this newsletter, or little more than the cost of supplying a single copy of the "Evening Chronicle" to each house in the village!

But in view of the demand for the booklet, it is being reprinted, and if all copies of the reprint can be sold, it might make a profit—notwithstanding 800 free copies being given out—one to every house in the village.

If anyone has bought a copy of the booklet without realising that each house would be getting one free—and doesn't want two copies—why not send one to a friend, to show them that Wylam has an important place in history?

Further copies of the booklet can be purchased (Price 45p) from Mrs. Fairless at 31 Falcon Terrace, or from the Post Office, or from the "Discover Northumbria" shop in Dene Terrace.

THE GREATEST SHOW ON EARTH?

Not quite—but the Stephenson Day Railway Carnival organised by the Wylam and District Round Table was almost certainly the biggest and most successful show Wylam has ever seen.

Few people realise the amount of time and effort involved in organising an event of that size, and the success of the widespread publicity and huge range of attractions, is measured by the fact that some 3,000 people attended.

The old Hetton Colliery locomotive built by Stephenson and Wood displayed outside Stephenson's Cottage was a popular feature—as were the excellent displays of "Railwayana" provided by various societies and organisations.

The show field was ideal for the occasion, with ample space for the side shows, stalls, marquees and the arena events, and the difficulties of vehicular access were overcome without too many problems by using temporary traffic lights.

The failure of the balloon to become airborne and the absence of helicopter rides didn't seem to worry anybody since there was plenty to see, with the Juvenile Jazz Bands, the Police Dog Display and the Vintage Car display.

After the Carnival the Tablers had to stick over 10,000 stamps on the special first-day covers they had produced and sold.

Their ability—as a team—to successfully organise and run this major event from start to finish, is a great credit to the

Round Table, and has proved their importance and value to Wylam and district.

Over £1500 was raised and this is being distributed to various local charities. The main beneficiaries will be the Tyndale Accident Unit and the Help-the-Aged Hostel in Wylam.

We offer our congratulations and thanks to the Tablers—and the Ladies Circle—for their efforts in arranging the carnival which will be remembered for many years. (You've six years to recover before the 200th anniversary of Stephenson's birth in 1981!)

The Round Table have also asked us to thank everyone in the village—and elsewhere—who helped in any way to make the day a great success. It was a fine community effort.

DELAYED SIGNS

Unfortunately, various difficulties have arisen about the siting of the proposed village boundary signs—(Whitehall has decreed that decorative village signs are not "official" signs and cannot be erected within part of the highway verge)—and this has prevented them being put up before now.

These difficulties are in the process of being resolved, and with luck the new signs should be up by Christmas.

One of the signs has recently been on show in the small shop in Cherry Tree Lane—by kind permission of Mr. Stobo.

The photograph below is included because it is a good picture of the sign—(not of the Editor!) for those who have not seen the one on display.



(Courtesy of Newcastle Chronicle and Journal Ltd.)

WELCOME TO WYLAM

At the time that the last "Globe" went to press, a new Headmaster for the local first school had not been appointed, but by now many residents will have met him or at least know his name.

Mr. Eric Ford has spent most of his life in the North East, having been educated at Dame Allan's Boys School, Newcastle and trained at Sunderland College of Education. Before coming to Wylam he was headmaster of Beaufront County Primary School (between Corbridge and Hexham.) He is married with two children and lives at Hexham.

Among his special interests are Athletics (he is Secretary of the Northumberland Schools Athletics Association) and Opera, as a member of the Hexham Operatic Society. Perhaps we shall yet see the five year olds performing "Madame Butterfly" or the eight year old training for the marathon!

Another new arrival, coming to take over an important job in the local community, is the Rev. Glynn Lister, recently appointed Methodist Minister for the Wylam area. Although he cannot claim any previous association with the North East, he has some railway blood in him, having been born in Swindon, (where his father was a railwayman) and that should stand him in good stead during his period in Wylam.

He trained as an accountant before entering the Ministry, and was previously at Porlock and Portishead, Somerset.

He and his wife, Margaret, and two young children, Gwyneth and Ewart, all claim to have settled in well and are enjoying the hospitality which local residents offer.

Welcome to Wylam, Mr. Ford and Mr. Lister—we are glad to have you and hope you enjoy your time here.

ALLOTMENTS

Several people have expressed interest in renting one of the allotments on the riverside which the Parish Council has now bought. However, it will take some time to try and sort out details of the various existing tenancies, rents and plot boundaries, and until this is done, it will not be possible to re-let any of the plots, or create new ones.

As far as the future management of the allotments is concerned, the Parish Council is now considering whether to manage them itself, or to employ an agent (as is done at present) or to suggest that an Allotment Holders Association be formed, which would lease the allotment area from the Council and be responsible for their day-to-day management.

It is intended to organise a meeting with all allotment holders shortly to discuss possible future arrangements.

CHARLIE'S CORNER

Now that work on the Aged Persons Flats at "Brewery Court" is nearing completion, the Parish Council is having to give further attention to the use of Charlie's Corner.

The Parish Council has been very tolerant (some would say too tolerant) in not taking action to stop this area being used for ball games, but this cannot be permitted to continue once the flats are occupied.

One sad feature which has resulted from the increased use of Charlie's Corner as a meeting place by some of the local youth has been the disgraceful vandalism and wanton damage to the seats and benches. These were repaired less than 12 months ago, but several have been so badly treated that they are not worth repairing again. The Parish Council will now have to decide whether to replace the damaged benches or remove them altogether (i.e. have no seats) or provide a few concrete blocks on which to sit.

Rumours which have been circulating that this open space is to become a garden belonging to the flats are totally untrue—it will remain a public garden available for quiet enjoyment.

Incidentally, some pruning and thinning of the row of trees and bushes immediately in front of the flats will be necessary, and after that has been done efforts will be made to make the garden more attractive again.

VILLAGE DIARY – WHAT'S ON

OCTOBER

16th, 17th & 18th Drama Society Play—Institute.
Saturday 25th Playgroup Coffee Morning—Institute.
Tuesday 28th "Silver and its hallmarks"—Talk. 7.30 p.m. Institute.

NOVEMBER

1st–8th COMMUNITY WEEK (A special programme will be circulated).
Saturday 15th Nursery School Coffee Morning – Institute.
Tuesday 25th "Northumbrian Heritage"—Film show. Institute. 7.30 p.m.
Friday 28th Tennis Club Dinner Dance.
Saturday 29th Children's Christmas Party—Institute.

DECEMBER

Wednesday 3rd Friends of Wylam Christmas Party.
Wednesday 3rd Bible Class Youth Rally.
Saturday 6th Oxfam Coffee Morning—Institute.
Wednesday 17th Carol Service, Old Schools, Woodcroft Road.

LAND NEXT TO THE OLD SCHOOL

Discussions are to take place shortly between the County Council and Tynedale District Council on the future of the land on the Dene next to the old school. The possibilities of using part for aged persons bungalows and part to provide improved access for servicing the old school buildings (when they become fully used as a library, youth centre, clinic and for other community activities) will be investigated.

SOCIETY NEWS

We welcome articles from societies and local organisations on what they are doing, future programmes, cries for help and new members, etc. etc.

Anyone who would like anything included in the next (January) issue is asked to send it to Mrs. Fairless not later than the beginning of December.

Remember it's free publicity for your society—and is delivered to every house in the village.

ANY PROBLEMS?

We don't claim to be able to solve all your intimate personal problems (even if you'd tell us about them) but if you have any complaints or suggestions about what is (or isn't) being done in the village, don't hesitate to contact any of your Parish Councillors who will do his or her best to help, or put you in contact with someone who can assist.

We haven't started to hold regular "Elector's Surgeries" in the village because most people seem quite able to, and willing, to contact a local councillor themselves if they have a problem. However, if anyone thinks it would be of benefit to hold a "surgery" in the Institute on a Saturday morning—say once a month—when members of the Parish/District/County Council were present to discuss problems, please let Mrs. Fairless know and we will discuss the idea with our local District and County Councillors.

In case you've lost your yellow "Information Card", the names of the Parish Councillors are set out below:—

P. R. B. Brooks, 114 Dene Road. (Tel. 3520)
Dr. T. W. F. Brown, C.B.E., Dumbreck, Station Road. (Tel 2228)
H. J. Helm, B.E.M., J.P., 11 Hedley Road. (Tel. 2548)
A. J. Hurd, 138 Dene Road. (Tel. 2563)
Mrs. E. Jacobson, 14 Algernon Terrace (Tel. 3598)
J. B. Robinson, Haverbreck, Elm Bank Road. (Tel. 2493)
J. S. Stephenson, West Mews, Ovingham Road. (Tel. 2197) ,
Chairman
Mrs. J. I. Taylor, Thornwood, Elm Bank Road. (Tel. 3194)

A LIBRARY SOON . . .

The present economic situation and Government restrictions on local authority expenditure, which is almost certain to mean a reduction in the standard of some local services, means that the complete, permanent conversion of the former Primary School in Falcon Terrace into a variety of community facilities, is unlikely to be able to proceed immediately.

However, the Amenities Committee of the County Council (who are responsible for libraries) recognise the present unsatisfactory mobile library service available in the village and are proposing to equip (at a minimal cost) part of the old school as a library from early next year when the building ceases to be used by the Middle School pupils. However this will depend on being able to make economies elsewhere in the County Library service, to cover the limited additional expenditure required for Wylam.

We hope that in 1976 we have a local library service which is of similar standard to that already available in most other villages the size of Wylam elsewhere in the county. Even if initially the conversion work is of a temporary nature and the library is not fully equipped—it ought to be an improvement on the present mobile library service.

PROGRESS ON THE PLAYING FIELD

Following completion of the levelling of the field, land drains have been laid, and cultivation recently carried out.

Excellent progress has been made on this project, but it is most important that when seeding has been completed, the surface of the field be left undisturbed until the grass has become established.

DIRTIEST VILLAGE?

No one could truthfully describe Wylam as a tidy village. Some of the more neglected areas are gradually being improved, but there is no excuse for the amount of litter and general rubbish which is carelessly dropped or deliberately dumped on the streets or open spaces.

New and larger litter bins have recently been fixed in strategic positions in the centre of the village—so please use them, and don't drop litter about.

As part of the weekly refuse collection service, the dustbin men will take away garden rubbish (provided it is put into boxes, sacks or bins), so again—please don't dump it—NOT on the riverbank—NOT on the roadside verges—NOT in Engine Dene—NOT on the waste ground in Jackson Road—NOT in the children's playground—NOT behind the garages on Bell Road—NOT by the tennis courts—nor anywhere else in the village. Sooner or later someone will be prosecuted.

"PLANT A BULB"—OR TWO

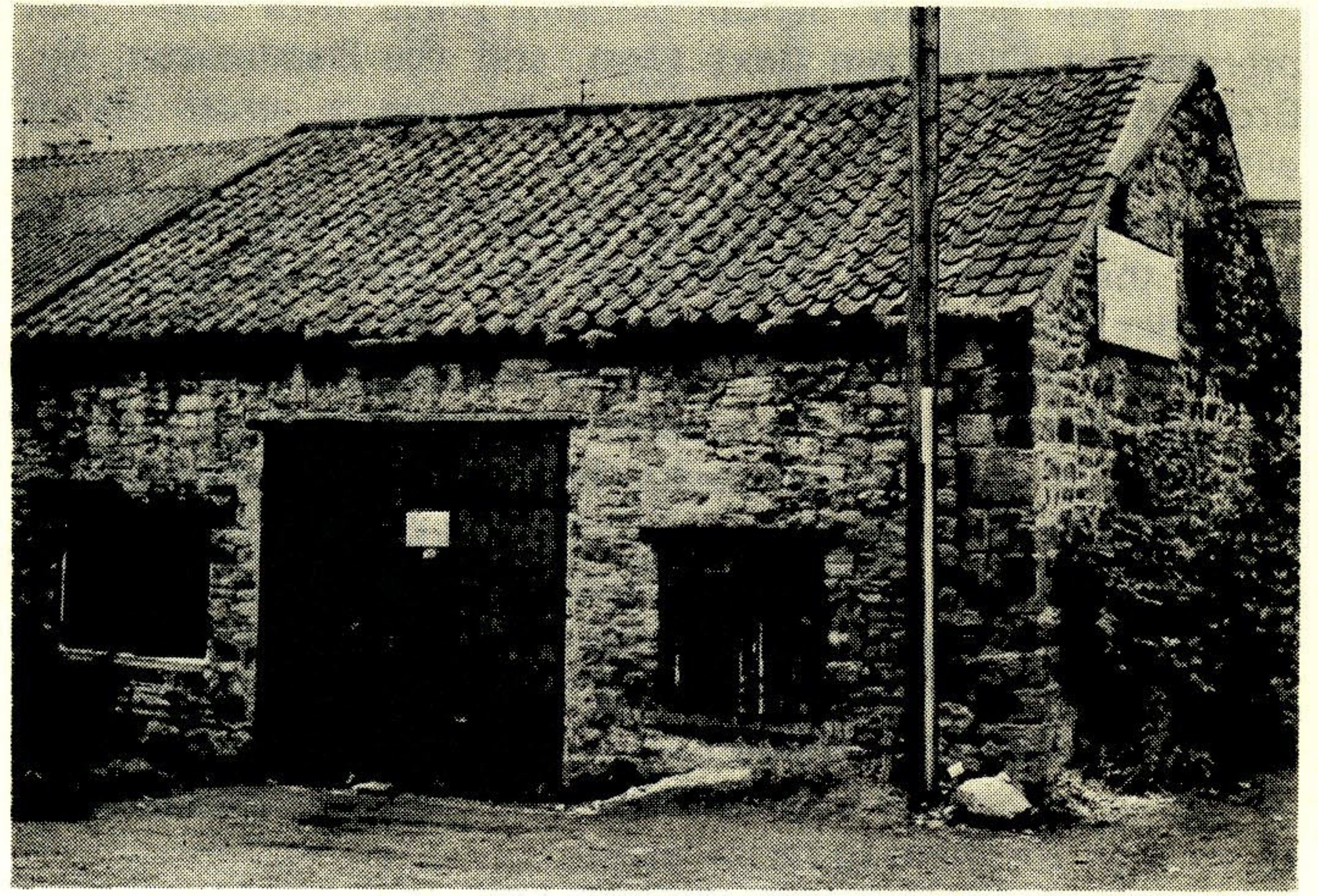
Our suggestion in the April issue of the "Globe" that individual local residents or societies might like to support the idea of brightening the village by planting spring bulbs in some of the open spaces and verges has produced an encouraging response.

The Housewives Discussion Group has collected contributions from its members and is to plant daffodils and narcissi on the grass bank at the corner of Falcon Terrace and the Dene (opposite the side of the Fox and Hounds Inn.) This is a prominent spot—ideally suited for planting.

Another welcome offer has come from Mr. J. M. S. Coates of "Elmfield," Station Road, who has generously offered to plant a large number of bulbs in the wide grass verges at the corner of Station Road and Wylam Wood Road. This is one of the main approach roads into the village—which should be made more attractive with the mass planting of daffodils proposed by Mr. Coates.

There are several other areas within the village which could be improved by planting—perhaps around the base of trees, or in the bottom of hedges fronting on to roads (e.g. Holeyn Hall Road.) More offers of gifts of bulbs, money or practical help in planting would be welcome. Please contact John Stephenson, Chairman of the Parish Council (Tel. 2197) or Mrs. Fairless, Clerk of the Parish Council (Tel. 2538.)

OLD BLACKSMITH'S FORGE



In our April issue we included a photograph taken outside the old village smithy about 50 years ago.

Built early in the 19th century, the smithy is reputed to have been in use when the early locomotives were working at Wylam Colliery.

In view of its age and special historic and industrial interest, this small stone building which stands behind Wylam Garage and at the back of the houses in Tyne View and West View, has recently been given special protection by the Department of the Environment.

It has been officially listed as a building of special architectural and historic interest. This means that it cannot be altered without specific permission from the Department of the Environment and the Local Planning Authority.

This should provide sufficient legal protection to ensure that it is not indiscriminately altered or damaged without permission.

Other "listed" buildings in the village which are similarly protected include Holeyn Hall, Oakwood House, Stephenson's Cottage and the Railway Station buildings.

FRIENDS—IT'S A RECORD!

Congratulations to the Friends of Wylam who raised £250 at their recent Jumble Sale. This is a "best-ever" result, and the committee wish to thank everyone who helped to achieve this—By giving, buying or organising!

A TALE OF TWO BRIDGES

Work on repairing and repainting the former railway bridge (the "Birdcage" bridge) over the river at Hagg Bank began several weeks ago—and this month the bridge will celebrate its 99th birthday!

As far as we know, no one has ever been killed falling off this bridge—yet—but if (as has been seen recently) youngsters try and climb on it, someone may get seriously hurt. Remember it is only two years since a boy was killed trying to climb along the underside of Wylam Bridge. Be warned!

The other bridge on which repair work is due to start shortly is the less elegant accommodation bridge linking Woodcroft Road to the Playing Field and allotments.

A BURNING PROBLEM

One of Wylam's most important annual events—the Guy Fawkes night bonfire and fireworks display—is in danger of extinction because of difficulties in finding a suitable site.

The Traditional site on the Boys Brigade Field cannot be used in future now that it has been levelled and cultivated, and the search is on for a suitable alternative site.

The requirements are that the site must not be too close to houses or trees, but at the same time it must be sufficiently convenient to encourage people to walk to it.

Any suggestions please—direct to Ron Calvert, (Secretary of the Institute) 12 Woodvale Gardens (Tel. 3325.)

BOOKS WANTED

The new Middle School should move into their new premises at Ovingham next term, and the Headmaster, Mr. Browell, is anxious to begin establishing a small library within the school as soon as possible.

Unfortunately in the present difficult economic situation when the Education Committee have other, more urgent priorities, there is no money available for buying books in individual school libraries. Because of this Mr. Browell and his staff are appealing to parents and local residents for help and gifts of secondhand books—fact or fiction, paperback or hardback, likely to be suitable for children over the age of nine.

Anyone who has any books which they are willing to give to the Middle School for their library, is invited to take them to the former Primary School in Falcon Terrace (where Mr. Browell is at present based.)

If you are unable to deliver them Mr. Browell will be happy to arrange for them to be collected.

Giving books to the school now will enable you to make a little more space in your bookshelves and cupboards for any new books which you are given at Christmas!

FAULTY STREET LAMPS

Until very recently the Electricity Board has carried out the routine inspection of all street lamps and replaced them where necessary, but in view of the increasing costs charged by NEEB for patrolling and inspecting lamps in rural areas; the County Council (which is responsible for most street lighting) has now decided to cut out routine patrols and instead rely on local residents to report faulty lamps.

Special pre-paid postcards by which to notify the County Surveyor of street lamp failures will be made available from local Post Offices and Parish Council Clerks.

Alternatively, just write to the County Surveyor at Phoenix House, Queen Street, Newcastle, or telephone Newcastle 25672 and ask for the Lighting Engineer. (DO NOT CONTACT NEEB.)

Remember it is essential to give clear details of the location of faulty lamps which you report. The Parish Council has suggested all lamps be numbered to aid identification.

REPORT FROM THE YOUTH CLUB

COMMITTEE OFFICIALS:—

Chairman: Susan Slowther. *Secretary:* Lesley Wilson.

Treasurer: Simon Carmichael.

"We have opened with a good attendance of over thirty members and elected our own committee. Our plans are made for some near-future events and we are all set to establish ourselves as a working section of the village, as well as looking to our own entertainment.

One of our first ventures has been a film night at which fellow-villagers of the "Friends of Wylam" group were entertained.

We would also like to ask for help from parents and other interested people on various matters including fund-raising projects during the next year.

We are at the old red brick school building on Falcon Terrace on Mondays and Thursdays 7–9 p.m. Our leader is John Gorman (Tel. 998-32998.)"

CARS AND MOTORCYCLES PROHIBITED

In the last issue we stated that it was illegal to ride motorcycles on the former railway track between Hagg Bank and Newburn. It should hardly be necessary to mention that it is also illegal to drive a car along the track!

The fact that one of the bollards across the track has been broken off or removed does not permit anyone to drive along the track—unless authorised to do so. At least one local motorist has already been reported to the police for this offence.

There is no vehicular access to Stephenson's Cottage or Street Houses along the old railway track.

Councillor d'Ambrumenil has asked us to give his apology for a printing error in his October news-letter. Para. 2 line 22 should read "the excess would be disallowed" NOT "allowed."

SUMMER PLAY SCHEME REPORT

"This year the Play Scheme was even more successful than last. Many more children took part in a greater variety of activities, and the age range catered for was extended to include children from 4½ to 13 years. There were roughly 750 attendances by about 200 different children. We had help from over 40 mothers, fathers and even grandmothers. The scheme ran for four days a week during the middle four weeks of the school holidays. On Mondays a bus took children, with three mothers as escorts, to the baths at Blaydon. On Tuesdays Wylam primary school was open for two hours for craft, drama and other activities. Football was also available, but because of the very hot weather was not very popular. The exception was the first week, when 25 children played. On Wednesdays older children went for an all-day trip to places of special interest to them. There were two trips to Whitley Bay Ice Rink followed by lunch at Tynemouth and time to play on the beach afterwards. There was a trip to Wallington Hall Nature Trail, with a visit to Steng Cross and Otterburn Hall grounds afterwards; and finally a visit to the Hareshaw Linn Nature Trail near Bellingham.

While the older children were away, the little ones had a session of art, craft and storytelling in Wylam School. On Thursdays there was an art and craft session at Wylam School and tuition in chess provided by three fathers. Other board games were also available and for the first time the County Library Service provided 350 books for us so that the children could browse and borrow books. Sixty five children borrowed 109 books and we were particularly grateful for this new facility as at present Wylam is only served by a mobile library. (Not for much longer we hope!) Our last activity was a bonfire in the donkey's field the night before school began, with hot dogs, potatoes cooked in the ashes, a Northumbrian piper and a bit of singing and football. It was a beautiful evening and the 130 children enjoyed the freedom of racing around and shouting as they played.

All of these activities involved some intense organisation beforehand, and we would like to put on record that we had the utmost co-operation from statutory bodies and from the many volunteers involved. We are learning from experience, and another year may try to have a more varied programme for the little ones, and separate trips for the older children. Particular appreciation of the scheme has been voiced by families who did not get away for a holiday, and by working mothers, and by residents of the Dene Estate where play facilities are limited.

We are grateful to the parents who supervised all activities. The Play Scheme in fact made a profit, and we are grateful to Tynedale District Council and Wylam Parish Council for their grants of £25 each to cover insurance, craft materials and operating costs. Thanks also to Northumberland Education Department for the use of Wylam School and to Prudhoe Further Education and Youth Department for help, advice and clerical assistance. The Caretaker at Wylam School was very helpful, though it meant a great deal of extra disturbance for him. Mrs. Waiyaki of the County Library Service was eager to help us in every way she could. Mr. Hamis at Close House allowed the boys to play football there because the field at Wylam is dug up; and Mr. Anderson at Close House took the trouble to show the children where to go. Mr. Watters was a very popular referee. Mr. McKie, then Headmaster at Wylam School, helped us to distribute leaflets and provide craft materials, as did Miss Kingston. Mr. Bell allowed the children to play at Otterburn Hall, the bus company (Bell's) was co-operative and we had an anonymous donation of £5. Colin Price played the pipes.

A good year, and thank you all!"

Congratulations once again to the Play Scheme Committee and to everyone who helped in any way to make the Scheme such a great success and so worthwhile. Ed.

All correspondence relating to this Newsletter should be addressed to Mrs. D. Fairless, The Clerk of the Parish Council, 31, Falcon Terrace, Wylam.