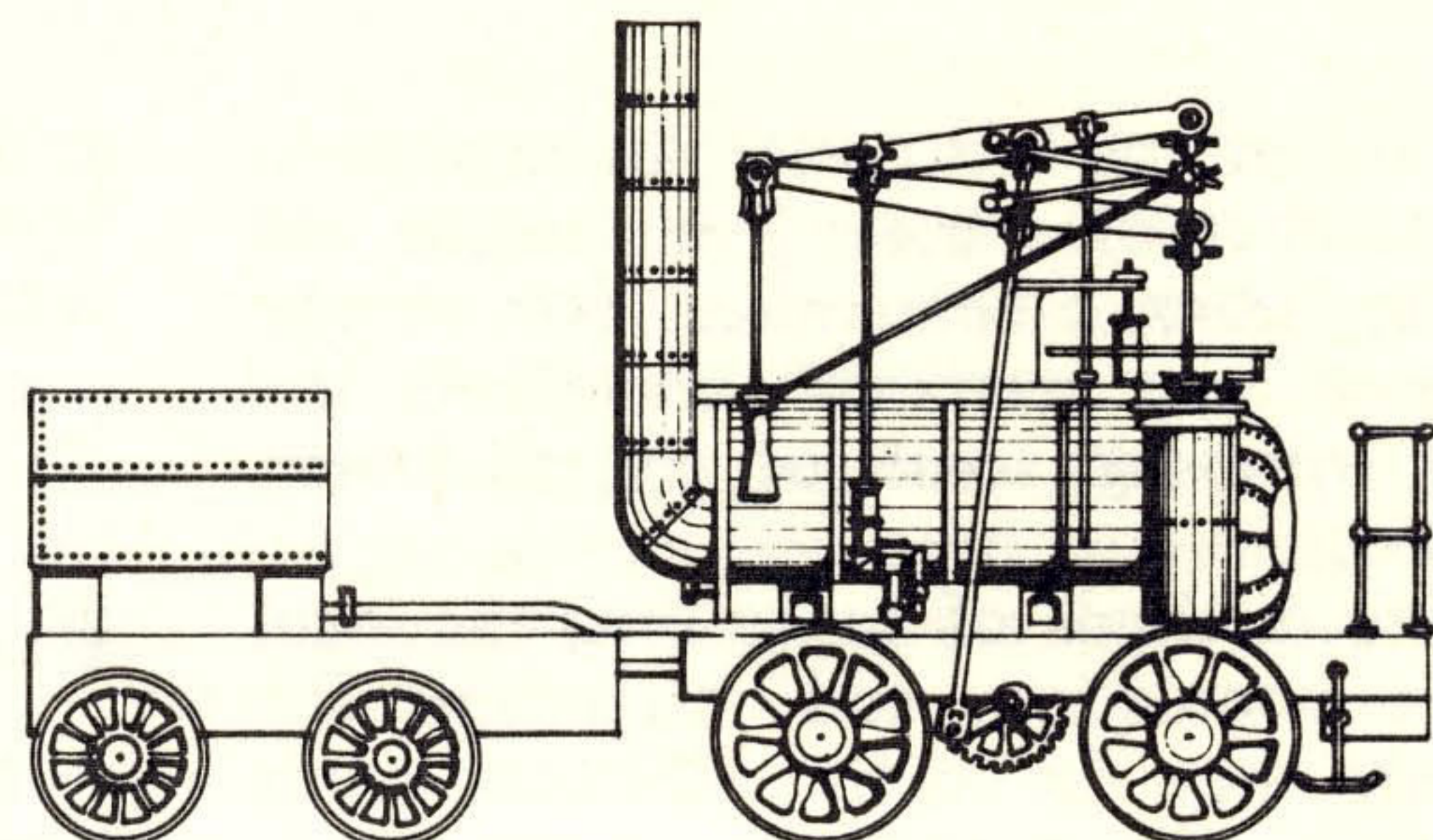


# THE WYLAM GLOBE

Newsletter of Wylam Parish Council



Summer 1979

Quarterly

Number 25

## Scheme for re-opening the riverside road deferred

Since landslips forced the County Council to close the Ovingham Road, there has been mixed reaction from local residents. Some have felt that it has been a blessing in disguise, reducing the amount of traffic through the village, with little serious inconvenience to anyone. Those would be quite happy for the road to remain permanently closed.

Others, especially those with children at Ovingham Middle School, have found the detour via Horsley something of an inconvenience. If the estimated cost of £¼ million for re-opening the road had proved to be realistic, permanent closure of the road would have been seriously considered.

However the County Surveyor and his Senior Engineers have produced a scheme which they are confident will remove the dangers—at a cost of £100,000 and the County Highways Committee have agreed to this scheme.

Wylam resident Bill Money is one of the Senior Engineers in the County Highways Department involved with this scheme.

The scheme will include major re-grading—(reducing the steepness of the slope) of the bank overhanging the road, along two stretches where the worst falls have occurred. These are near the east (Wylam) end and about two thirds of the way along towards Howdene Burn bridge.

Wherever possible existing trees and shrubs are being preserved, since these play an important part in helping to bind and stabilise the soil on the slope.

Nevertheless trees have had to be felled on those areas where regrading is to be done, and very regrettably this will spoil the appearance of parts of the scar for many years until the new trees which will be planted on the exposed slopes can grow to maturity.

The scheme is a particularly difficult one to undertake because of the height of the scar, its almost vertical slope in places and the confined area in which to work. After considering various alternatives, the method selected for removing shale, rock and soil from the face of the scar is by means of a huge

dragline situated in the edge of the field at the top of the scar itself. The excavated material will be dropped into a shute down to road level and then taken away by wagon to a tipping site to the west of the old waterworks.

As part of the 'clearing-up' to be done when the main work is completed, the County Surveyor has promised to tidy the bankside between the road and the river, removing much of the material which was dumped there after the landslide last winter.

### Late News

*It had been hoped to carry out work this summer to enable the road to be re-opened later this year, but because of the difficulties in obtaining access over farmland to the top of the scar, and the recent cut-back in local authority expenditure imposed by the Government, a start on the scheme is now having to be delayed until next Spring at the earliest.*

*In the meantime more people are questioning whether it really is necessary to re-open the road, or whether it would be preferable to close it permanently.*

*If you have strong views on this, please let the Parish Council know.*



*A sad sight—several of the fine trees which have had to be felled on the top of Wylam Scar before work can begin on making the riverside road safe.*

## Not yet a Best-Kept Village competitor

Although invited to enter the Best Kept Village Competition this summer, the Parish Council felt that there had been insufficient time to publicise the idea throughout the village, and organise working parties of residents willing to put in a special effort to keep the village tidy.

The task of trying to keep villages looking attractive is becoming increasingly difficult—since the services provided by the County and District Councils in collecting litter and cutting grass are less frequent—and because few people seem

willing to carry their empty drink can or cigarette packet home or put it in the nearest litter bin.

However if there is sufficient active support for the idea the Parish Council will consider entering the competition next year—but help will be needed from residents willing to spare a few hours, to clear some of the notoriously untidy corners of the village and ensure that they are kept tidy.

We'll remind you again next Spring to see what support there is for entering the competition in 1980.



## Should allotment rabbits be controlled?

When are rabbits pests? An increase in the number of rabbits living in the old railway track embankment and in the riverside area near the allotments has been worrying some of the allotment holders.

Safe methods of controlling the local rabbit population, and minimising the damage they do to the allotment crops are to be discussed between the Allotment Association, the Parish Council and the National Park Department who control the disused railway track/walkway. This may mean authorising someone to shoot rabbits to keep the numbers down but on a strictly controlled basis to avoid the risk of an accident.

Several people have already been reported as shooting rabbits on the old railway track and on the allotments. It must be emphasised that at the present time no one has permission to shoot rabbits here or on any other land owned

by the County or Parish Councils in Wylam and anyone doing so is liable to prosecution in the courts.

## Playground improvements

New tarmac has been laid around the base of the roundabout in the Hedley Road playground, and also underneath the swings where water has collected in the past and made them unusable. Expenditure on this work was necessary to improve the playground.

Other expenditure required to repair damage done by vandals to the roundabout (removing timber slats) and the swings (smashing one of the seats) could be avoided. In future the Parish Council will not hesitate to take action against anyone reported deliberately damaging equipment in this playground.

## Land to be landscaped

Continuing its policy in recent years of trying to ensure that areas of open space within the village are adequately maintained, the Parish Council are acquiring from the County Council, the small area of rough ground lying next to Bradley Burn footbridge, between Wylam Wood Road and Bradley Burn. This area was purchased by the County Council when the Station Road/Bradley Burn Bridge road scheme was carried out in 1974, but has never been satisfactorily maintained.

Following purchase by the Parish Council Mr. J. M. S. Coates of "Elmfield" has very generously agreed to make arrangements for the area alongside the burn to be levelled and grassed, with shrubs and bulbs planted on the sloping bankside.

Mr. Coates has previously planted the fine daffodils in the open space on the opposite corner of Wylam Wood Road.

# I remember, I remember—Memories of Wartime Wylam

Some random reminiscences of wartime Wylam, 1939-45 by Miss Frances J. Foster of 5 Blakett Court.

On Friday 1st September 1939, frequent trainloads of schoolchildren and some mothers evacuated from Newcastle and Tyneside areas considered likely targets for German bombers, travelled to country destinations further west, via North Wylam Station.

A contingent of evacuees destined for Wylam came from the shipyard area of Walker. Centres were set up for the collection and several people from the Church, Chapel and W.I. and other organisations took charge of them, and allocated them to their new "homes", complete with gas masks and "iron rations".

I had two evacuees—a girl and a boy.

Two days later on 3rd September war was declared and immediately the siren sounded, warning of approaching enemy aircraft. However this was a false alarm and just lasted a short while, so our peaceful Sunday was soon restored to normal.

From then onwards things were pretty quiet on the war front as far as Wylam was concerned and we called it "the phoney war".

Long before Christmas, 1939 the evacuees began to drift back home. Most of them, especially the mothers, never quite fitted in to the village. It seemed remote to them in contrast to Walker's way of life. Many of the children were strangers to country life and indeed many had never seen a cow before!

At the beginning of 1940 a regiment of the Northumberland Fusiliers was billeted in the village and a canteen was set up for them in the Methodist Chapel Hut. Several of us were on a rota each evening at the canteen to supply the troops with refreshments. It was a most

arctic spell of weather in the January and February of 1940 and we were often knee deep in snow.

In the summer of 1940, after the shambles of Dunkirk, there was a further evacuation of children to Wylam. This time I had two girls billeted with me. Their family came from Kent and found lodgings in Wallsend to be near the father, whose ship was in the shipyard for repairs. There were four children in the family, so they allowed the two eldest to be evacuated to a somewhat safer place (Wylam).

I learnt, very much later, that this ship was the "Kelly" under the command of Lord Louis Mountbatten. This was all very hush hush at the time and although the family visited me, no mention was ever made about this eventful ship.

Several of us were in the W.R.V.S., and did various jobs as War Savings Stamp Collectors, canteen service and knitting comforts for the Forces, meeting in the Masonic Hall.

Men exempt from war service by age or employment reasons, volunteered for Home Guard duties or as Air Raid Precaution (A.R.P.) wardens. Windows had to be blacked out after lighting-up time in the dark nights, and a sharp warning was given by these men, for the least chink of light showing anywhere.

As far as bombing was concerned, the North East was considered rather "hot" for the enemy. We could see the network of barrage balloons in the sky over Newcastle, looking like large inflated elephants.

The nearest bombs dropped around Wylam that we heard of, were at Blaydon Station, Spillers Factory near Newcastle Central Station, and a string of small ones on the hillside south of Wylam. Shrapnel was at times found locally.

We had a searchlight situated in the field just beyond where Bluebell Close

is now. I think the foundation and pill box it still there.

I remember wooden huts being put up on land between the church and the Institute (where Russell's house "Stonecutters" now stands) for German and Italian prisoners of war. The POW's were employed to do jobs on farms in the district. Local volunteers had to do stints of preparing breakfast for them and I remember that I had to opt out because I found it too hectic for me!

The German POW's built a very beautiful castle, on part of the land now occupied by Blakett's Cottages.

With the end of the war in 1945 there were great celebrations in Jubilee Park on May 8th. Never had it been known for so many Wylam people to congregate en masse!

Shortly after the war, and before they were repatriated, German officer POW's billeted at Featherstone Park, near Haltwhistle came to Wylam to give a most marvellous concert in the Institute. What I remember very vividly was their hand-made puppets, each resembling members of their choir, and absolutely realistic. I have still got the programme for this concert and regret very much that I did not have the presence of mind to have it autographed!

I cannot remember the air raid warning gong, near the war memorial, which you showed on the Winter issue of the "Globe". I certainly never heard it in use. The children then can't have been the same as today's children, or they most surely would have tried it out!

*Thank you Miss Foster for these most interesting recollections of "wartime Wylam" and for taking the trouble to set them down. We are always very pleased to include any interesting memories of Wylam in the past, or views of Wylam as it is today.*

*Editor.*



## Institute bookings

Following the departure of Mr. and Mrs. Harrison, the Institute caretakers, several people have enquired what the arrangements are for booking rooms in the Institute.

During the next few months the Secretary of the Institute Committee, Mrs. Edna Beattie of 24 Woodvale Gardens (Tel. 2311) will be dealing with booking (a job she has done well previously!) and individuals and society secretaries wishing to book rooms should contact her.

The untidy appearance of the Institute garden has been the subject of criticism, but hopefully this should have been improved by the time you read this newsletter.

## Use of open spaces

Several years ago there was some dispute about the use (and in some cases misuse) of the open spaces on the Dene Estate by older children. As a result of this a set of guidelines was published in the *Globe*, Nos. 5 and 13, which seem generally to have been observed.

The green spaces were provided for the enjoyment of all residents, whether young or old, and with common sense this can be achieved.

To this end parents might like to point out to older children that there is much more unobstructed space on the Jubilee Field and Engine Dene for games than anywhere else, where they can play freely with less risk of damaging trees, or neighbouring gardens.

## Fair successes

The Methodist Summer Fayre and St. Oswin's Garden Party both proved popular and enjoyable events. Although the weather smiled more kindly on the Methodists than the Anglicans on this occasion, useful funds were raised at both and at least as important was the fact that they were family occasions with plenty for children to enjoy at little or no cost.

## Village Diary

### SEPTEMBER

Saturday 8th— Shelter Jumble Sale in Institute.

Thursday 13th— Conservative Party Quiz between Wylam and Corbridge in the Institute.

Saturday 22nd— Wylam First School Autumn Fayre at the School.

Saturday 29th— Friends of Wylam Jumble Sale in Institute.

Saturday 29th— Book Group Swop Shop 11 a.m. in the Church Hall.

### OCTOBER

18, 19, 20— Amateur Dramatic Society Autumn Production.

## Scheme for new bus shelter to go ahead

Of the various jobs in the village which it had hoped could be carried out by Task Force North, the organisation providing Community based employment for young people and supported by the Manpower Services Commission, only one (construction of the Bus Shelter at Charlie's Corner) has been approved.

However whilst this is disappointing news for the local Churches, the Institute and the Parish Council, for whom the work was to be undertaken, in another sense it is encouraging since the reason the organisers have given for not being able to do these schemes is that there are not enough suitable unemployed young people in this area at present to do it.

Construction of the bus shelter at Charlie's Corner should begin during the

next few months. The bus shelter will be similar in general design to those erected at Horsley, and now being built at Ovington. Work on setting back the boundary wall at Charlie's Corner to provide an improved pavement will be undertaken at about the same time.

## Sign theft prevented

Thanks to public spirited action by Mr. Booker of Acomb Drive, a recent attempt by two youths to steal the Wylam locomotive sign on Holeyn Hall Road was foiled. The youths were later detained by the Police, and will appear in court.

## These are the Parish Councillors you elected



At the time of the Parish election several residents said they would have liked photographs of the candidates. Although it's too late now, here is one of those you elected as your new Parish Council. Left to right: (Back row) Harry Helm, Glynn Lister, Alasdair Kemp, Alan Jones, Bruce Reed. (Front row) Lynne Petrie, Philip Brooks, Joan Taylor, Maureen Gillis (Clerk).

The turnout of 35% (556 electors) in the Parish Council elections held on 25th May, was greater in Wylam than for other villages of similar size. Although the Parish Council had hoped for a higher poll, no one could complain that they didn't know the election was being held since publicity was given in the last issue of the "Globe" and by means of "Reminder" cards which were delivered on polling day.

We thank all the candidates who stood for election, and those elected as Parish Councillors now pledge themselves to do their best in the interests of the village.

At the first meeting of the new Parish Council Philip Brooks was elected Chairman, with Harry Helm as Vice Chairman.

Alan Jones and Lynne Petrie were appointed as Parish Council nominees to the Wylam School Managers, and Glynn Lister and Bruce Reed will serve on the Joint Burial Board. Alasdair Kemp and Joan Taylor will represent the Parish Council on the Playing Field Association and the Prudhoe Area Youth Committee respectively.

The addresses of the newly elected Parish Council are as follows (you may like to amend the details on the Village Information Card)

### Chairman

Philip R. B. Brooks, 20 Bluebell Close (Tel. 3520)

### Vice-Chairman

Harry J. Helm, B.E.M., J.P., 11 Hedley Road (Tel. 2548)

Alan W. Jones, 19 Tynedale Close (Tel. 2556)

D. Alasdair Kemp, 18 Dene Road (Tel. 3274)

A. Glynn Lister, 17 Stephenson Terrace (Tel. 2143)

Lynne B. Petrie, 24 Dene Road (Tel. 2577)

Bruce S. Reed, 11 Front Street, Hagg Bank (Tel. 2662)

Joan I. Taylor, Thornwood, Elm Bank Road (Tel. 3194)

Don't hesitate to contact any member of the Council (or the Clerk Mrs. Gillis, Tel. 2503) if you have any suggestion or complaints, or just want information about the village.



## Another successful Summer Fair

Once again Wylam was lucky to have much better weather for the Summer Fair on 6th July than the weather-men had forecast,

The programme of events this year, followed the successful mixture adopted in recent years. One new attraction which proved popular was a demonstration by the Riding Mill Junior Gymnastic Club.

The fair was certainly a success financially, with over £450 being raised at the Fair and at the barbecue, and at least as important, it proved its worth as the main social event in the village

during the summer, with "something for everyone".

Considerable time and effort was spent in organising the Fair and ensuring that everything ran smoothly on the day.

Everyone who enjoyed the Fair owes a debt of gratitude to many people; to the members of the Playing Field Committee; to those who organised and participated in the events or ran stalls and sideshows; and to those who provided teas or helped in any way to make the afternoon a great success. Thanks to you all.



Some of the stalls doing good business during the Summer Fair on 7th July.

## Cut obstructing trees

Several years ago we drew attention to the problem in parts of the village, and particularly the Dene Estate, of trees and bushes being allowed to grow and overhang pavements and paths, causing a nuisance.

If you have trees, bushes or hedges in your garden, next to a road, please check that the branches do not project across a pavement where they might obstruct anyone walking past. If they do, please cut them back to a height of about 7 feet above the path.

Further approaches to individuals may be required if this request does not produce the necessary action.

## For your litter

As a result of local requests, a litter basket is being provided in the car park in the old North Wylam Station Yard and another one at the end of the "doctor's cut" in the corner of Woodcroft Road.

## Toilets in progress

Construction of the new public toilets, being built by the District Council in the Jubilee Field, is in progress and should be completed by early Autumn.

## Old school photograph

The village school photograph dating from 1920, which was included in the last issue, showed at least four "children" who still live in Wylam, according to Miss Amy Johnson of Ingham Terrace.

She identified Mrs. Gwen Bird (Blackett Cottages), Mrs. Masson (Falcon Terrace) and Mr. Jack Campbell, as well as herself. The teachers in the photograph were Mr. Brady (Headmaster for over 40 years) and Miss Hedley.

## Crossroads lighting

Holeyn Hall crossroads, the scene of various accidents in the past, now has the benefit of lighting.

Requests for lights at this junction were made several years ago when the new Horsley-Heddon by-pass was opened, and the County Council have recently been able to include this work in their programme of street lighting.

## A good Collection

The house to house collection taken during General Election week raised an encouraging £64.85 for the Save the Children Fund.

The organisers thank all who contributed and those who helped.

## Plea to dog owners

Greg Smith writes,

The old controversy about dogs on children's play areas is coming to the fore again. Two children's organisations in the village have written to the Playing Fields Association to ask that something be done about the mess dogs are making on or near the children's play equipment—particularly that designed for toddlers. Individual mothers have made similar requests.

This problem is a difficult one to deal with, but the Playing Fields Committee has every sympathy for mothers faced with having to clean up young children in this situation. Because dog owners have been seen to bring their animals onto the field to allow them to relieve themselves as well as give them exercise, the Committee has decided, in the first instance, to post notices around the field indicating that fouling by dogs is prohibited. If by the end of this summer the problem remains as bad as ever, then the Committee will have no option but to ban dogs from the field entirely.

If you have an interest in the way the field is run, or suggestions to make on extra facilities needed, then mark up Tuesday October 9th in your diary. This is the date of the Playing Fields Association A.G.M., in the Institute at 8 p.m. Especially welcome will be people who would like to join the Committee, and help plan and run this important village facility.

## Please park with care

Cars parked along the northmost stretch of Dene Road and at its corners have created difficulties again. Whilst accepting that parking facilities are strictly limited, it seems to happen occasionally that residents on both sides of the road have a lot of visitors at the same time resulting in cars being parked on each side of the road. Although this may effectively slow down those motorists who speed along Dene Road, it also creates difficulties—so residents and guests please park off the road whenever possible.

## Information available

Copies of the Village Information Card published last October, and giving details of local services, societies and organisations, are still available. Most residents—new and old—have found these Information Cards most useful.

If you have just moved into the village and would like one, please contact the Clerk to the Parish Council Mrs. Maureen Gills at 27 Dene Road (Tel. 2503).

*Correspondence relating to this Newsletter should be addressed to Mrs. M. Gills, The Clerk of the Parish Council, 27 Dene Road, Wylam. (Tel.: 2503).*  
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