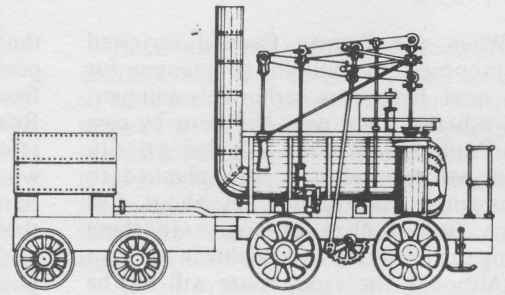


THE WYLAM GLOBE

Newsletter of Wylam Parish Council



Autumn 1981

Quarterly

Number 31

Institute needs your support—and Now!

Community Week this year will differ from previous years in at least three respects. Sadly it will be the first without Dr. Swindale—for so long a dominant figure in the running of the Institute. Secondly it is being held in the second week in November, 7th-14th rather than the first. Thirdly this will be the first Community Week in which a husband and wife—Fred and Lorraine Parker, have been treasurer and secretary.

Community Week 1981 is therefore bound to be different, but from the programme of events, it should prove as popular as ever—if not more so with events which will appeal to both individuals and families on most evenings. Programmes are being distributed, but here is a summary of what's on:

Saturday November 7th

The Great Jumble Sale begins at 2 p.m. in the Institute. In the evening the Bonfire, Fireworks Display and Barbecue will be held on the Village Playing Field, Jubilee Park starting at 7.30 p.m.

Sunday November 8th

Community Service will be held at the Methodist Church at 6 p.m.

Monday November 9th

Family Film Show starts at 6.45 p.m. in the Institute.

Tuesday November 10th

Exhibition of Floral Art in the Institute (entries from the entire village most welcome) and Coffee Morning at 10 a.m.

At 7.30 p.m. the Photographic Society presents their slide show 'Here and There and This and That'.

Wednesday November 11th

Specially to mark the Stephenson bicentenary 'Nostalgia of Old Railways', a lively show for the whole family, with film, slides, music and poetry, at 7.30 p.m. Photos of 'Stephenson 200' events will be on display here.

Thursday November 12th

The Coxlodge and District Choir provides a Choral Evening of light, popular, local and classical music.

Friday November 13th

A Community Concert of family entertainment starts at 7.30 p.m.

Saturday November 14th

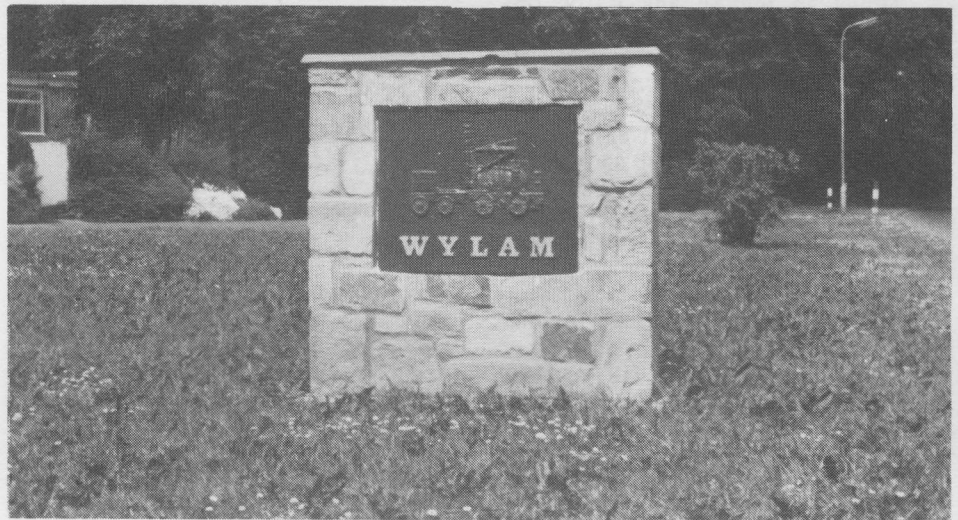
The Village Coffee Morning at 10.30 a.m., before the evening's Grand Finale Wine and Cheese-Race Night Entertainment at 9 p.m.

Whilst Community Week is organised for your enjoyment, it is also essential as a means of raising funds for running the Institute. As everyone knows the

as possible should be raised for the future of the Institute.

You can help to do this in the following ways:

1. Come to as many Community Week events as you can; encourage your friends to come, and give generously.
2. Become a member of the Institute Association. Even if you rarely use the Institute, it is a most important Community Centre for the village, and well worth your support.



One of the new, and much admired, village boundary signs.

costs of maintaining a building like the Institute are enormous, and whilst the Committee have been able to keep the building running, the programme of re-decorating the interior has fallen behind. Recognising that it is essential to keep the premises attractive, the Institute Committee have agreed to have several of the rooms and the hall and staircase re-decorated.

The cost of this will be £1,949. The Parish Council has agreed to contribute £500 towards this but most will be financed from Institute balances. This will inevitably reduce the balances drastically, and the Institute Committee are most anxious that as much money

Annual subscription only costs £1 for individual membership, £2 for family membership.

An application form is included in the Institute programme; please complete it now.

3. Many people have already made special donations to the Institute Association in memory of the life and work of Dr. Swindale. If you would like to do so, please send your donation to Mr. F. Parker, Treasurer, Institute Community Association, The Haven, Elm Bank Road, Wylam.

Your help will ensure that the Institute has a secure future, and will serve future generations of Wylam residents.

Prudhoe by-pass—A start in 5 years?

When the County Council reviewed its proposed roadbuilding programme for the next five years earlier this summer, the scheme for a new Northern by-pass for Prudhoe was given a higher priority than before, and it is now planned to commence construction in about five years time—subject of course to there being sufficient funds available!

Although the exact route will not be fixed until detailed surveys have been completed, it is likely to follow approximately the line illustrated during the public exhibition held in January 1980.

At that time the Parish Council wrote to the County Council emphasising that it would be essential when designing

the by-pass to ensure that there was no possibility of traffic being able to get from the by-pass onto Wylam Wood Road and Eastwoods Road. The most effective method of preventing this would be for a bridge to be constructed to carry traffic on the minor road over the by-pass.

Now that the by-pass scheme has been given a higher priority the Parish Council have again written to the County Council pointing out that the village would be strenuously opposed to any scheme likely to encourage additional traffic to use Wylam Wood Road as a short cut on and off the by-pass.

Car park at Hagg Bank

Local residents in Hagg Bank have found themselves in something of a dilemma recently. They are anxious for the County Council to make traffic regulation orders preventing vehicles from passing along Front Street and parking in and around Hagg Bank, except for those requiring access.

However the County Highways Committee, (supported by Tynedale District Council, Prudhoe Town Council and the police), have stated that before they are willing to impose any traffic restrictions some alternative parking space must be provided for the fishermen and other visitors to the riverside.

To meet this requirement, the National Park Committee has sought planning permission to use an area in the dip, off the west side of Eastwoods Road, for a car park for 15 cars. However Hagg Bank residents are worried that this may encourage additional visitors, and cars into the area.

Local residents and the Parish Council have submitted views to the County Planning Committee who will consider this application. The Planning Committee's decision should be known early in November.

New County Councillor

Most residents will know that at the election in May, Timothy Kirkhope was elected as our new County Councillor, in a closely fought contest with Jean McCallum.

Whatever your politics, councillors on the county, district and parish councils are there to serve you, and if there are any matters concerning services which the County Council provides, which you wish to discuss, don't hesitate to contact Timothy, at Shadingfield, Elm Bank Road (Tel. 3573). The names and addresses of the local District and Parish Councillors are already on the village Information Card.

Christmas gifts here

Once again the annual Charity Coffee Morning is being held in the Institute on Saturday 21st November between 10 a.m. and 12 noon. Come along and choose at leisure your Christmas cards and gifts and enjoy a cup of coffee whilst supporting the following charities: Dr. Barnardo's, Shelter, N.C.H., Oxfam, Traidcraft, Tearcraft and M.I.N.D. The various Stephenson Bicentenary gifts will also be on sale.

Anyone wishing to take a stall to raise funds for their particular charity should contact Jane Tomlin (Tel. 3688).

Shelter say 'Thanks'

Jane Tomlin, Secretary of the Wylam Shelter Group, also writes:

The Wylam Shelter Group held a most successful Jumble Sale on 12th September when over £300 was raised for the National Housing Charity. The group would like to thank the many helpers who sorted the mountains of items on the night before and sold them on the day.

Remote as we are from London, it is often felt that money collected for charities provides little benefit locally. Contributors to Shelter may like to know that the Wylam Group stipulate that most of the group's annual income is channelled through Shelter's Head Office to the Tyneside Housing Aid Centre (THAC) in the Bigg Market. THAC is very active locally and has a number of refurbishment and improvement schemes in progress in the New-castle area.

The Wylam group's next events will be a Christmas card, gift and produce coffee morning with other local charity groups on 21st November and a Christmas Ceilidh with music by Stanley Accrington at Close House on December 4th. Tickets at £3.25 each will be available after November 1st from myself (Tel. 3688) or Clare Hurford (Tel. 2565).

Dr. Alfred Swindale

With the death of Dr. Alfred Swindale on 3rd September the village lost one of its best-known and best-loved inhabitants, admired and respected by natives and newcomers alike.

The son of a Hebburn chemist, he came to Wylam in 1924 to assist the late Dr. Bishop. Reputedly he was intended to stay only two weeks but went into partnership with Dr. Bishop and lived the rest of his life in the village, celebrating his 50th anniversary as a doctor here in 1974 before retiring from medical practice two years later, at the age of 76. His only absence was during his war service, spent in Burma and India, following which he was awarded the C.B.E.

He was as well known for the many other contributions he made to the life of the village. For more than twenty years he was a manager of Wylam School; he was for some years a member of the Parish Council; he formed and ran the local company of the Boys' Brigade; he was a Methodist lay preacher and active Freemason; and latterly served both as Treasurer and Chairman of the Institute. Just as important as these public duties, he was a friend and trusted adviser to many individuals—not only in Wylam, but also in the surrounding area.

Following completion of the new bungalows now being built on The Dene it is planned to arrange a short ceremony at which they will be officially named "Swindale Cottages". It is hoped that members of the Swindale family will be able to be present.

Races gallore!

Sunday 6th September saw the second annual Three Mile Race for the Swindale Trophy, children's races and the play-scheme reunion take place in the Jubilee Field.

The Swindale Trophy for the overall winner of the Three Mile Race was won this year by Alan Jones in 17 minutes 47 seconds, exactly the same time as last year's winner Andrew Soward. Altogether there were 10 medals presented to winners in different age groups from under 11 to Veteran Men of over 40!

Ten children's races were run this year ranging from 20 metres for pre-school age children to 80 metre sprints for mums and dads. Prizes of Royal Wedding Crowns or sweets were given to winners and contestants.

The Guides provided drinks and hot dogs whilst an inflatable added some bounce to the afternoon which was rounded off with the Playscheme Bonfire.

Many thanks to those who came along and particularly to the race organisers Bill Money and Derek Robson.

Library magazines

One amenity which the village library has lacked—but which bigger libraries possess, has been a selection of current periodicals. Unfortunately the County Council are not able to provide these in part-time libraries and following discussion with the Tynedale Area Librarian the Parish Council have agreed to pay for a selection of periodicals to be provided for an initial period of one year.

The magazines chosen reflect the known interests of various groups of library users, but the selection will be reviewed next Spring in the light of comments received from readers.

Several of the new periodicals are already in the library so why not call in and spend an hour (if you can spare it) reading the latest issue of "Motor", "Countryman", "Mother and Baby", "Amateur Photographer", or one of the others available. Back issues of these periodicals can be borrowed from the library.

Village Diary

NOVEMBER

7–14 COMMUNITY WEEK.

8th Remembrance Sunday Service, St. Oswin's Church, 11 a.m.

19th "Motive power from Atlantic to Deltic". Personal reminiscences of a practical railwayman Jack Blaine, 7.30 p.m., Institute.

21st Local Charities Coffee Morning, Card and Gift Sale, 10 a.m., Institute.

26th "George Stephenson's Method". A special talk by Michael Duffy of Sunderland Polytechnic, 7.30 p.m., Institute.

DECEMBER

3rd "The Railways of Tyne and Wear—a different view". Local and familiar lines from a novel angle. Les Paul, 7.30 p.m., Institute.

9th Friends of Wylam — Christmas Lunch.

10th "Transport Classics". A selection of films from the famous British Transport Collection, 7.30 p.m., Institute. Admission free.

15th Ovingham Middle School Carol Service, Hexham Abbey.

18th Wylam Cricket Club Ceilidh, Institute.

Want to join Cubs?

The Wylam Cub Scout Pack is now in full swing again, meeting in the Institute each Friday evening from 6.30 p.m. to 8 p.m. for boys aged 8-11 years. As a new Scout Troop has now been formed in the village the Cub Scout Pack has a few vacancies, so if you have a son in the 8-11 age group, why not bring him along to the Cub meetings, on Friday evenings, or ring Lorraine Parker (Akela) The Haven, Elm Bank Road, Wylam Tel. 2575, for further information.

Bythorne Farm appeal

Following the Public Inquiry into the application by Gross Park Properties to build houses on land between Bythorne Farm and Stephenson's Cottage, the Secretary of State announced in April that he had dismissed the appeal.

A planning application was subsequently submitted on behalf of Mr. Dawson to retain the open storage/sales area for secondhand timber at the farm. The Parish Council and local residents have continuously opposed this activity which has never had planning permission and is inappropriate in such a prominent position, within the Green Belt. Tynedale District Council refused permission, giving Mr. Dawson until next April to clear the site. He has now appealed against their decision.

The decision of the Secretary of State on this appeal should be announced by the end of the year.

A plea to horseriders

Several instances of horse-riders using pavements in the village have been reported.

This is illegal, and dangerous for pedestrians, particularly on narrow pavements. Horse-riders please note, and use the highways and official bridle-paths, but not footpaths.

Anyone for school?

The parents of children who will be five years old between 1st September 1982 and 31st August 1983 and would like their child to attend Wylam First School should contact the school by phone (Tel. 2771) or letter, as soon as possible, giving the name, date of birth and home address of the child.

Double-issue Globe

Rather than trying to rush out a summer issue of the Globe after the festivities in June and before the summer holidays, it was decided to make this autumn issue, a double, twice the normal size—using the extra space for a photographic souvenir of the main events of the Stephenson celebrations.

Overhanging trees?

If there are trees, bushes or hedges in your garden which overhang the footpath—please trim them back, so that they don't obstruct pedestrians.

Ideal Christmas gifts

Local souvenirs continue to be in great demand and the Parish Council seems to have produced more souvenirs to commemorate Stephenson than any other organisation in the UK! Perhaps that is as it should be: in any event requests for souvenirs from all over the world have kept the Parish Clerk busy. All the souvenirs have sold well.

At the present time limited quantities of the following are still available:

Stephenson Cottage
plaques £3.95 and £2.10
Commemorative stoneware mugs . . £1.30
Special Bicentenary covers with
'Rocket' stamp and unique
Wylam handstamp, 9 June. 80p
Coloured prints of 'Puffing Billy'
at Wylam 80p
Real leather Wylam key fobs 45p
Stephenson leather bookmarks. . . . 45p
*'Where Railways were Born' book. . 80p
*'Country Walks in East
Tynedale' guide. 70p
*William Hedley book 45p
*Special coloured Stephenson
postcards 12p
*Sets of 8 different Local
History cards 55p
*Necklets with miniature
miner's lamp. £1.25
*Necklets with miniature
locomotive. £1.25
*Stephenson 'Locomotion' badges . . 65p
Wylam car stickers. 25p

All these unique souvenirs will make ideal gifts, for your family and friends wherever they live!

We hope that every car in Wylam will carry a 'Wylam—Where Railways were Born' car sticker—and be proud of it.

By the way a few strong boxes are available (price 10p) for anyone who wants to send a Stephenson mug by post.

All of these items can be obtained from the Clerk to the Parish Council at 27 Dene Road (Tel. 2503). Those marked * can also be purchased at the Post Office.

Incidentally although the aim of the Parish Council was just to try and break even on the purchase and sales of the special souvenirs, it now looks as though we might make a small profit by the end of the year.

This in spite of the fact that the prices charged have been generally below those charged commercially.

Information available

Copies of the Information Card produced by the Parish Council last October (1980) are still available, and anyone who has moved into the village since then and has not yet had a copy can obtain one from Mrs. Maureen Gillis, the Parish Clerk at 27 Dene Road, or from any member of the Parish Council.

Village boundary signs much admired

The design and appearance of the new village boundary signs which were erected on sites on Holeyn Hall Road, Ovingham Road and Station Road at the beginning of June have been widely appreciated by both local residents and visitors.

The locomotive depicted on these signs is of course "Puffing Billy", designed by William Hedley and built at the Wylam Colliery workshops for use on the colliery waggonway.

Although Stephenson had no involvement with the Wylam locomotives he has an indirect link with these signs since

much of the stone used in the plinths was either salvaged when his birthplace was modernised three years ago, or comes from former outbuildings behind the cottage, which were demolished earlier this year.

Dick Southwick of Horsley built two of the plinths and made an excellent job of them. He also constructed the new extension to Robert Graham's dairy at Wylam Hills. Sadly, the firm who stove-enamelled the signs, Ernest Hutchinson Ltd. of Gosforth, are to cease trading—victims of the recession.



Mr. T. Waller of Rushmere, Elm Bank Road, took this photograph of the Toll House in 1906. Two of his children, Gwen and Jack, are in the mail cart, and the old gentleman is Edward Waugh, the Bridge Toll Keeper from the early 1890's until just before the First World War. He was succeeded by Edward Jones and then William Weddle who was Toll Keeper when the bridge was freed from tolls in 1936.

New School Governors appointed

As a result of the Education Act 1980 local education authorities have been required to change the size and composition of school governing bodies and to include elected representatives of parents, as well as nominations from the education authority, the district or parish council, and representatives of the school teaching staff.

The new governors of Wylam First School are

Appointed by the Local Education Authority (the County Council)

T. J. R. Kirkhope, Elm Bank Road.
F. Green, Moncrieff, The Crescent.
Mrs. H. Broomfield, 18 Bluebell Close.
Mrs. C. Wilson, Wingrove, Wylam Wood Road.

Appointed by the Parish Council

Mrs. L. Petrie, 8 Stephenson Terrace.
B. Reed, 11 Front Street, Hagg Bank.

Elected by parents

R. Turner, 21 The Dene.
Mrs. C. John, Bowmont, Ovingham Road.

Appointed by the School staff

Mrs. A. Wall, Wylam School.

Wylam residents who are local school governors are:

Ovingham Middle School

Parent Representatives

J. Priestley, 9 Holeyn Hall Road.
M. Mowbray, 49 Woodcroft Road.

Appointed by the L.E.A.

T. J. R. Kirkhope, Elm Bank Road.

Prudhoe High School

Parent Representative

Mrs. E. Jones, 19 Tynedale Close.

Appointed by the L.E.A.

Mrs. T. Rumball, 2 Dene Road.
T. J. R. Kirkhope, Elm Bank Road.

Our thanks go to all retiring governors and in particular to Jean McCallum who has long been a governor of Wylam School and its chairman in recent years. Her valuable contributions will be greatly missed.

Problems on play areas

There have been several incidents in recent months regarding the use of Engine Dene and the Square in front of the Town Houses on Dene Estate.

To prevent future misunderstandings the following is the position. The whole of Engine Dene is available as a Play Area for informal ball games by children of whatever age. There's plenty of space, so there shouldn't be difficulty about children obstructing each other's games. Activities such as throwing the javelin or similar sports are quite unsuitable on this play area in Engine Dene and are not permitted.

The Square is primarily intended as a landscaped amenity area but is also for use by smaller children for informal play. "Small" means up to the end of First School age; after that children should use Engine Dene, because it is bigger and more suitable for ball games, and further from neighbouring gardens.

The best area for games for older children is still the Jubilee Field.

It would be appreciated if parents could ensure that their children know these guidelines.

Popular with women?

Provisional results from the Census taken in April, show that the population of the village increased by 76 persons (3.6%) between 1971 and 1981. There are now 1023 males (19 more than in 1971) and 1160 females (57 more than in 1971) living in Wylam. The village seems to be becoming more attractive to women! For comparison the population 100 years ago (1881) was 959—an increase of some 25% over the ten years before, 1871. In 1871 the village was only just starting to recover from the mass exodus of miners and their families to West Wylam which occurred as a result of the closure of Wylam Colliery in 1868 and the opening of West Wylam Colliery the following year.

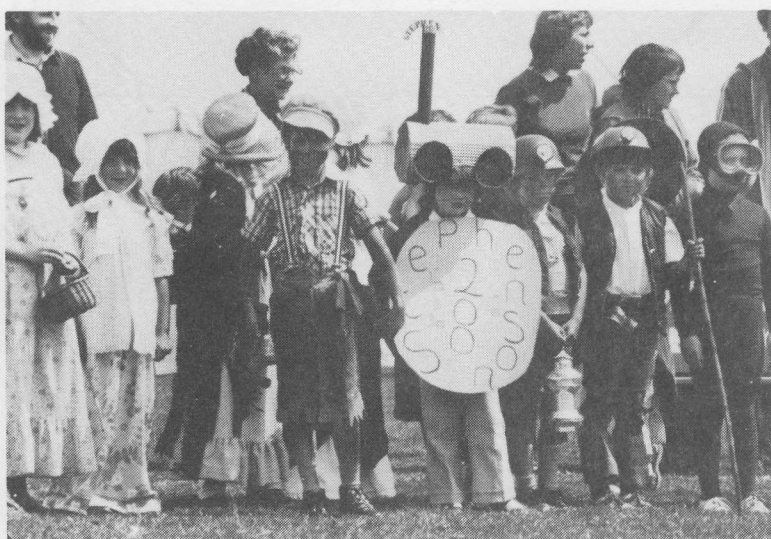
Village Christmas Tree

This year we may have our own village Christmas tree—thanks to the Round Table. The Tablers have offered to provide one on the open space at Charlie's Corner, and the Parish Council have welcomed this idea.

A special carol service will be held outside—weather permitting, on the Sunday before Christmas. Further details will be publicised later.

Correspondence relating to this Newsletter should be addressed to Mrs. M. Gillis, The Clerk to the Parish Council, 27 Dene Road, Wylam. (Tel.: 2503).
Printed for Wylam Parish Council by The Gilpin Press, Houghton-le-Spring, Tyne & Wear.

Chairman of the Parish Council, Philip Brooks, presenting B. R. Divisional Manager John Thomson with a picture of Stephenson's birthplace shortly before flagging the "Birthday Special" train away, on 6th June.
(Photograph by courtesy of the Northern Echo).



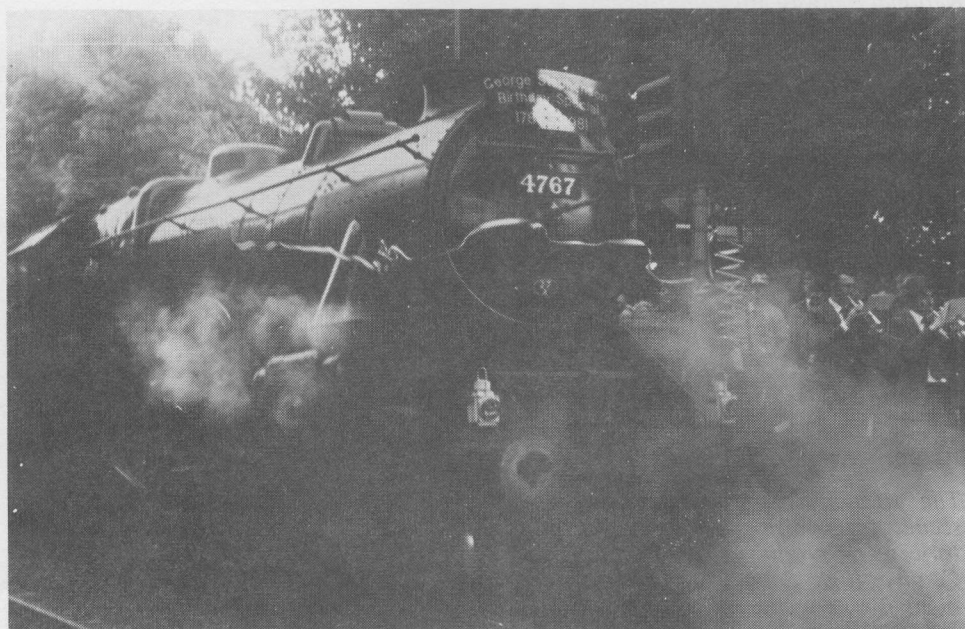
The many children who took part in the fancy dress parade included some with very ingenious outfits!

George Stephenson Bicentenary 1781–1981

A photographic record
of celebrations in Wylam

June 1981

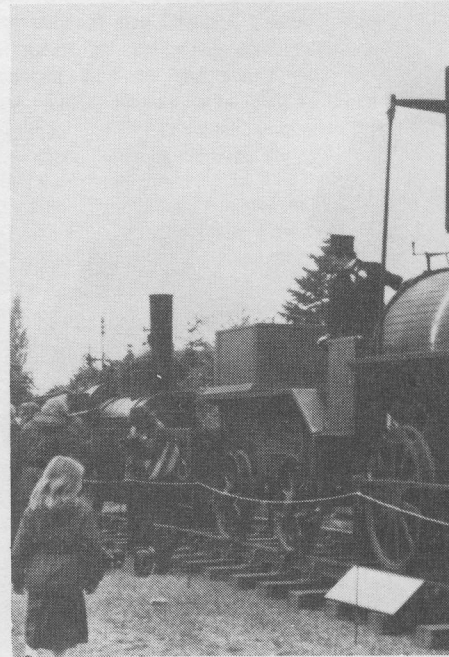
Former L.M.S. locomotive "George Stephenson" hauling the "Birthday Special" breaks the tape to mark the opening of the Stephenson 200 Carnival.
(A fine photograph by 11 year old Philip Haigh).



Prof. Karl Schober of East Germany, a direct descendant of George Stephenson's mother, came to Wylam specially for the bi-centenary celebrations. He is seen here with pupils of Ovingham Middle School and their fine model of "Rocket" at the opening of the museum.



Dr. John Coiley, Keeper of the National Railway Museum officially opening the Wylam Museum on 9th June.



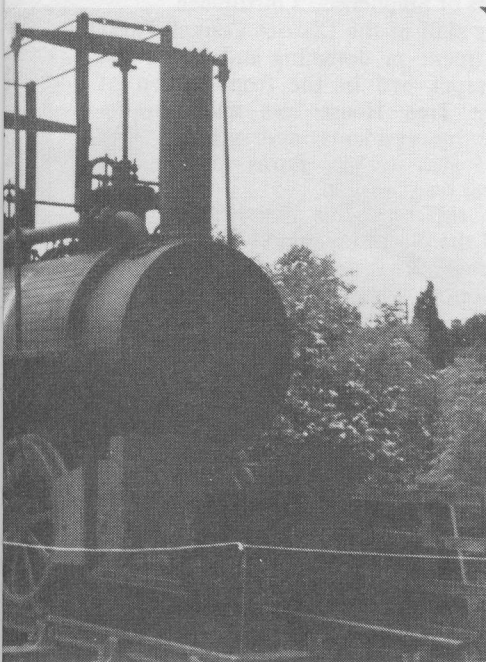
Former Killingworth locomotive "Billy". The driver, in period costume, is Gordon.



The attractive paintings depicting scenes from Wylam's railway history were produced by Prudhoe County High School Art Department for permanent display in the Falcon Centre.



The "Birthday Special", leaving Wylam on one of its runs between Hexham and Newcastle on 6th June, passes Stephenson's birthplace on the opposite bank of the Tyne.
(Photograph by David Petrie).



It built in 1830, was on display at the Carnival of Stocksfield.



Councillor Bennie Abrahams, Lord Mayor of Newcastle, was one of several local civic leaders who planted oak trees near Stephenson's birthplace on 9th June, to commemorate the bicentenary.



Wylam Round Table Chairman Neville Gray and his wife (left) with the Parish Council Chairman, Philip Brooks, leading the procession from the Station to the Jubilee Field, at the opening of the Carnival.

The special events arranged to mark the Stephenson bicentenary are continuing during the autumn with the programme of illustrated talks, sponsored jointly by the Parish Council, the Hexham Rolling Stock Group, and the Stephenson Locomotive Society, now in full swing—with help from the Institute Committee. Talks have already been given by Philip Brooks, Bill Horseman and Leslie Clark, and these will continue at 7.30 p.m. in the Institute each Thursday evening until 10th December (except 12th November). Copies of the programme were distributed in September, and are available from the Library.

It is hard to believe that it is six months since the main Stephenson Celebrations were held—between 6th and 9th June. Some people have only recently recovered from their exertions that weekend—and of the weeks leading up to it! However those who helped will have had the satisfaction of knowing how successful their efforts proved.

The village achieved excellent publicity on T.V., radio and in the press, and everyone—both visitors and local residents—seem to have enjoyed themselves celebrating this very special anniversary.

The “Stephenson Birthday Special” trains hauled by former LMS steam locomotive 4767 “George Stephenson”, which British Rail ran on Saturday 6th June between Newcastle, Wylam and Hexham were themselves a marvellous start to our weekend celebrations. Special thanks are due to John Thomson, the Divisional Manager and to all his staff who helped in organising these steam-specials, and to Ian Storey of Hepscott, the owner of the locomotive.

The idea of using the locomotive to open the carnival was a stroke of genius which attracted widespread publicity, and was followed by the procession with the Marching Band and Fancy Dress competitors from the Station to the Jubilee Field.

The Carnival itself offered on both the Saturday and Sunday an excellent variety of events ranging from spectacular action with the stunt diving by Don Lindbergh and Marlboro Pitts Aerobatic Display, to the Keepfit Display, sports events and the special musical concert by disabled children, and many other attractions.

A genuine ‘Stephenson’ flavour was provided by the presence of two early historic locomotives. The Hetton Colliery locomotive originally built in 1822 by George Stephenson and Nicholas Wood, (also Wylam born), and the “Billy” built for use at Killingworth Colliery in 1830.

Village societies provided a wide range of stalls and side show attractions and one of the large marquees housed a display on the life and work of Stephenson and stalls from numerous railway preservation societies, with a fine model railway layout by Beatties. The most valuable model on view in the marquee was a solid silver scale model of Stephenson’s “Locomotion” loaned by the Queen Mother, and worth £25,000.

The effort put into organising the Stephenson 200 Carnival was tremendous, and the village is most appreciative of the work done by the Round Table, the Community Playing Fields Association and the many other village organisations and individuals who helped to make the carnival so enjoyable.

The Round Table recently announced the financial results of the weekend carnival and dance. £2800 was raised, which together with £700 from their Community Service Fund, is being distributed as follows:

£2,000 to the Tynedale Disabled Sports Appeal—a fund to provide a specialist sports facility in the Tyne Valley area for disabled people of all kinds.

£750 to the Playing Fields Association, as a donation towards their pavilion extension fund.

£750 to the Grange Centre, Throckley.

The Grange Centre have started a fund to provide a specially adapted ambulance for disabled people in the area.

In congratulating the Tablers in their success, our thanks are also due to the firms who helped by sponsoring events and expenditure at the Carnival; without their support, the money available to support these worthy projects would have been much less.

Following the carnival weekend, the opening of the Railway Museum in the Falcon Centre, and the commemorative tree planting at Stephenson’s Cottage took place most successfully on 9th June, the actual 200th anniversary of Stephenson’s birth.

The Museum (which had been opened over the weekend, and attracted a large number of visitors), was officially opened by Dr. John Coiley, Director of the National Railway Museum. The Museum itself attracted much favourable comment—as did the attractive mural panels painted by art pupils at Prudhoe High School, under Mr. Birtley Aris, and the fine model of “Rocket” made by boys at Ovingham Middle School, with help from Mr. Browell.

The opening of the Museum was followed by a visit to Stephenson’s birthplace, where five oak trees were planted by the Lord Mayor of Newcastle, and the Chairmen of the County Council, Tynedale District Council, the Parish Council and the Northumbria Region of the National Trust. Hopefully one of these trees will survive to 2081 together with the existing oak tree at the back of the cottage, which was planted by the then Lord Mayor of Newcastle on 9th June, 1881.

Among guests invited to these celebrations were Prof. Karl Schober of East Germany, a descendant of George Stephenson’s mother, and Mr. R. S. Roper of Rochdale who is descended from John Stephenson—one of George’s brothers. Descendants of the other famous railway pioneers, Timothy Hackworth, Jonathan Forster, Nicholas Wood and John Blenkinsop were also present.

Special painting, model making and poetry competitions to commemorate the bicentenary were organised in conjunction with the Wylam First School and

Ovingham Middle School. Prizewinners at the Middle School were (First Prizes) Lucy Gardiner, Stuart Lee and Paul Irwin; (Second Prizes) Mark Harding, Jonathan Caudle and Jason Bennett; (Runner-up) Rebecca Brooks, Neil Humphries, Susan Blackburn, Matthew Wedderburn, David Roddam, Jason Lowes, Mark Swift, Philip Cram and Andrew Jewitt.

Wylam School prizewinners included Stuart Graham, James Broomfield, Marc Robson, Jamie Elliot, Melanie Wood, Graeme McDonald, David Vincent, Stephen Morphet, Juliet Taylor, Elliot Milburn, Alison Turner, Paul Featonby, Rachel Potter, Christopher Carrick, Laura Burn, Andrew Phillips, Fiona Kelly, Fiona Robson, Samantha Burnish, Kathryn Heyes and Rachel Haddon.

The Tennis Club held a very successful match with teams from neighbouring clubs in the Tyne Valley, and appropriately presented the winners with plaques of Stephenson’s birthplace.

The skill of the District Council Parks Department in designing and laying out the carpet bed in the front garden of Cherry Tree House was much appreciated by residents and visitors. Our thanks also to Mrs. Burns for allowing it in her front garden.

By the time this newsletter is published the Northumberland Theatre Company will have performed their new production “Happy Birthday Geordie Stephenson” in the village. Although the idea for this play was promoted by the Parish Council—the Council was not responsible for its content! We thank the Theatre Company for adopting our suggestion and hope that the play has proved popular and successful.

B.B.C. Television filmed extensively in the village during the Bicentenary celebrations in early June, and much of this was included in a film “The Other Stephenson” shown on the 16th October, which told the story of the life and work of George’s famous son, Robert. An excellent programme which we hope will be repeated.

Many people have contributed to ensuring that our local celebrations to mark the Stephenson Bicentenary have been worthy of the man himself and of the village, but none has done more than the Parish Clerk, Maureen Gillis, to whom the Parish Council has recently presented an inscribed brass miner’s lamp (the modern equivalent of Stephenson’s Geordie lamp) in appreciation of her work.

A final thanks to everyone who has helped in any way to make the Bicentenary celebrations such a memorable success.

Unless otherwise stated, the photographs of the Bicentenary celebrations were taken by Peter McGuinness.

LATE NEWS

The Round Table have very generously agreed to make a donation of £200 towards the Railway Museum project in addition to their donations to other local schemes.

*Published by Wylam Parish Council
October 1981
Printed by
The Gilpin Press, Houghton-le-Spring.*