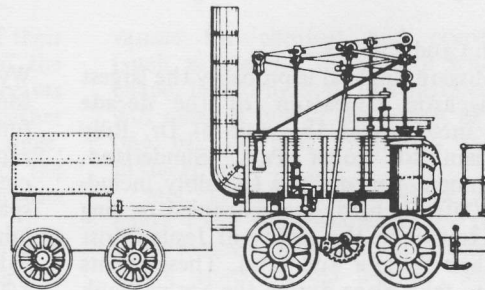


# THE WYLAM GLOBE

Newsletter of Wylam Parish Council



May 1984

Number 36

## 21st Birthday deserves a front page spread

What organisation was founded 42 years ago in Oxford, gave birth to a Wylam branch in 1963 which this year is celebrating its 21st birthday?

The answer is the best known of the relief organisations, OXFAM.

In 1942 six people gathered in Oxford Meeting House because they felt they must, somehow, get help to starving people in Greece—despite war and the blockade by the Allies they succeeded and they started one of the most remarkable voluntary movements of our time.

By coincidence during OXFAM's own 21st birthday year in 1963, a number of local residents got together to form a Wylam OXFAM group. Many of those who were instrumental in setting up the local branch have now left Wylam, including the popular Methodist minister at that time, the Rev. John Sigsworth who chaired the inaugural meeting in the Chapel schoolroom.

However Joan Taylor, that doyen (check the dictionary for that one) of the local OXFAM branch who has been an active member since its formation, outlined the way OXFAM works.

'When OXFAM Wylam started, medicines, tools and good second hand clothing were sent abroad wherever they were needed and OXFAM worked through organisations already on the ground, such as churches and local aid groups to reduce the costs of administration. It still works wherever possible through local organisations but in order to work more efficiently and to make sure that money isn't wasted, OXFAM has for several years appointed field directors in areas of the world needing help and sends money for specific projects, setting up where necessary local groups to provide and advise on such matters as clean water, sanitation, health care, food production and training. Similarly backing is given to producer groups whose goods are sold in OXFAM shops (there are 651 shops with a net income of some £6.76m) and by mail order.

OXFAM and all the international aid organisations had hoped that once emergencies were dealt with they would be able to concentrate on "helping

people to help themselves" but increasingly now emergencies, some (like earthquakes) of natural causes, but many man-made, are swallowing up more and more aid, with less being available for planned programmes of providing education and training'.

to this party is not by invitation but by ticket, obtainable from Joan Taylor or Muriel Money.

We're sure it will be a happy and successful event—but with a tinge of sadness as it will coincide with Joan



*Keen to get started—the scene in the old Station Yard, at the start of the litter clearance campaign.*

One activity organised by the local OXFAM group which has been going for many years is the Knitting Group which meets once a fortnight in a member's house. Their output of blankets (15 produced last year) is much appreciated by OXFAM for children's homes and hospitals.

The support which Wylam residents give OXFAM would be difficult to calculate but includes not only blankets knitted, Christmas cards sold, help given in running OXFAM shops, but quite substantial sums raised by several 'pledged gift' collectors, who collect monthly amounts from residents who support the work of OXFAM.

No self-respecting organisation which reaches the age of 21 could fail to have a special celebration, and the local OXFAM group is having a 21st birthday party on Thursday 7th June, which will include a 'musical interlude'. Entrance

Taylor's departure from the village, to live in Jesmond.

The future of the Wylam OXFAM Group is however in good hands, but nothing would be better as a 21st birthday present that an influx of new members and supporters.

The Group always welcomes new members, new pledged gift collectors and donors, and Muriel Money of 89 Dene Road (Tel. 2442) will be pleased to hear from anyone interested in helping.

### *Editor's Note:*

*Muriel tells us that she will be running in the Great North Run on 17th June on behalf of OXFAM and she would be grateful for as many sponsors as possible. If you'd like to sponsor her—and support OXFAM why not contact her direct, without waiting for her to approach you first! We wish her luck.*

## Billy Graham visit

John Caudle writes—

Mission England is probably the largest evangelistic endeavour of the decade and incorporates the visit of Dr. Billy Graham to Roker Park, Sunderland. Prominent personalities (possibly including Cliff Richard) are scheduled to sing and testify to the reality of Jesus Christ as their Saviour and Lord. These events are to take place during the Spring Bank Holiday Week — May 26th to June 2nd.

It is proposed to run a FREE BUS from the village EVERY NIGHT of the campaign. A seat on the bus guarantees a seat in the stadium. If you are interested in going on one or more nights, then a place can be reserved by telephoning Wylam 3178 NOW. But don't come by yourself, bring a friend with you if you can.

## Want to rent a garage?

From time to time the District Council has vacant lock-up garages to let on Bell Road and Hedley Road. These can be rented by any local residents (not just by those renting a house from the District Council) and if you are interested—contact the Housing Department, Prospect House, Hexham (Tel. 4011) for details of what is available.

## Jubilee Park—major achievements by volunteers

New residents in the village might be interested in some of the background to the improvements which are now being made to the pavilion in Jubilee Park.

Prior to 1971 the field was owned by the Boys' Brigade, but in that year the Brigade indicated that it was no longer able to maintain the field effectively and a public meeting was called to discuss the situation. As a result the Wylam Playing Field Association was set up with the backing of the Parish Council, 'to . . . provide facilities . . . for recreation and leisure time occupation . . . for the inhabitants'.

The first major task that the Playing Field Association carried out was to reshape and level the field, which then sloped straight down from the pavilion to the footpath along the riverside.

Fund raising for this work, which cost £11,500 in 1975/76, was achieved by a combination of grants, covenants and a lot of 'special efforts' like jumble sales, sponsored walks, dances etc.

Since then all the play equipment, seats and litter bins on the field have been installed by the Association, mainly by using voluntary labour at weekends.

The current work on the pavilion involves the installation of showers and toilets. Water, power and main drainage connections have been provided in the last three years. The next stage of the improvement programme will be an extension on the west side to provide a committee/tea room. The cost of this work will be met by a combination of

## Tent target reached

In our last issue we reported that the Wylam Guides were embarking (with some trepidation!) on the task of raising funds to buy new tents for their summer camp. Well, they've now raised all the money required with several months to spare. The target was reached after the joint Guides, Scouts and Cubs Jumble Sale in February raised a total of over £400. The Guides share of this, together with grants from the District and Parish Councils, and money raised at other local events, has exceeded the £600 needed. Congratulations to all who helped—and thanks from the Guides for the support they have been given.

## New hairdresser soon

Conversion of the former Mill and Bakery into flats is now almost completed.

The Tyne View/West View area has seen more changes than most parts of the village, in the past 150 years—some for better, others for worse. This latest change is certainly an improvement in the appearance of the area.

The shop unit has been let to a ladies and gents hairdresser, providing a local service which the village has been lacking in the past year or two.

local fund raising events and grants from the local authorities and the Sports Council.

All routine maintenance work on the field (grass cutting, fertilising, spiking etc.) is carried out by Playing Fields Committee members on a rota basis with the help of an annual grant from the Parish Council.

The Playing Field Association Committee is always on the lookout for new members—if you are interested in making a practical contribution to maintaining and improving one of the village's main amenities, please contact either the Chairman, Brian Fulthorpe (Tel. 2892) or the Secretary, Brian Hamshere (Tel. 3462).

The Summer Fair this year will be held on Saturday 9th June. As usual this will be followed by a barbecue and dance so please make a note in your diary to be in the village on that day. Anyone wishing or willing to arrange a stall or provide any form of help is asked to contact the Chairman, Brian Fulthorpe at 9 Dene Road (Tel. 2892).

From a bequest of the late Mr. Curley of Woodcroft Road a new seat has been installed on the playing field. This has been fixed next to the play equipment for the benefit of parents whilst their children use the swings and slide.

With the balance of the bequest the Playing Field Association intends to provide a planted area of shrubs and bushes just inside the main gate as a permanent reminder of the kindness of Mr. Curley.

## Any offers of help?

Our plea in the last issue for individuals or local societies to help to maintain the few public 'garden' areas in the village has met with some (but not yet total) success.

Most welcome has been the offer by the Women's Institute to improve and look after the Institute garden, which has been a prominent problem in the centre of the village for several years. This generous action by the W.I. is much appreciated.

Much smaller, but similarly prominent is the flower bed around the village War Memorial, which Brian Furniss has kindly offered to look after.

Two other areas which would also benefit from a little extra care and attention are the shrub beds in front of Blckett Cottages and Swindale Cottages. Anyone willing to offer help—please contact the Clerk or any Parish Councillor.

## New Information Card

A new edition of the very popular Village Information Card (yellow this year) was distributed in February.

Everyone in the village should have one—if you haven't—please contact Maureen Gillis, the Parish Clerk (Tel. 2503) and she'll supply one. Please also tell Maureen of any changes necessary to the details on the card.

## NCR—150th Anniversary

Whilst mentioning the Parish Church centenary and the Timothy Hackworth bicentenary in 1986—we forgot to point out that March next year (1985) is the 150th anniversary of the opening of the first section of the Newcastle and Carlisle Railway—from Blydon, Wylam to Hexham.

Having received assurances that neither the Government nor B.R. have any intention of closing the line, the Parish Council hopes that with support from B.R. and other bodies, it will be possible to commemorate this important anniversary in a modest way.

Incidentally Miss Amy Johnson kindly reminded us that it was Mrs. Emily Clayton of Wylam Hall, not George Hedley, who laid the foundation stone of the Parish Church. The Hedley brothers of course financed the building of the church and the vicarage in memory of their parents.

## Plea to dog owners

Plea to dog owners—please do not allow your dog to foul footpaths and open areas, where people walk and children play. Try to train it to use places where its faeces will not be a public nuisance and potential hazard to health. It can be done—although it requires both a sensible dog and an intelligent owner!



## Changing ownership for fine Wylam houses

With the deaths in recent months of two well-known residents, Mr. Joseph M. S. Coates and Lady Rowell, two of the most attractive houses in the village will change ownership.

Mr. Coates' house 'Elmfield' at the corner of Station Road and Wylam Wood Road is almost certainly the finest house of its size in Wylam. The superb honey-coloured stonework and the fine design detail are of a quality rarely seen.

The Victorian development of South Wylam began exactly 100 years ago in 1884 with the construction of 'Stanley Vale', the first house on the south side of Wylam Wood Road, now the home of Mr. and Mrs. Houghton.

Elmfield was the second house, built two years later in 1886 for Dr. Philip Brown at one time the Medical Office of Health for Blaydon and Ryton.

she returned to the village to live in Elmfield.

It was following her death that Mr. Coates purchased Elmfield where he lived for 50 years until his own death last January. We hope that whoever becomes the new owner will maintain the grounds to the high standards which Mr. Coates achieved.

Little seems to be known of the early history of the Rowells' house, 'Wylam Cottage'. Its history is almost as well hidden as its position, immediately to the west of Wylam Hills farmyard, and it is not surprising that many people are unaware of its existence.

Its location so close to the farmyard is surprising for what is now clearly 'a desirable gentleman's residence'. It appears however to have been built by the Blacketts as two linked cottages probably



*Wylam Cottage—a view of the south front as it was c. 1900.*

In 1901 Mr. Joseph M. Slater was living there and by 1909 it was occupied by Mr. Robert Batey. Late in 1922 Elmfield had another owner—Mrs. Richard Clayton, widely acknowledged as one of the most popular and respected figures in Wylam for many years. The Claytons moved to Wylam in 1874. Mr. Richard Clayton died in 1903, but Mrs. Clayton continued to live at the Hall until 1909.

The village schoolmaster, Mr. Ralph Brady, recorded her departure and the marriage of her eldest son, in the school log-book. 'Oct. 21st 1909. Dismissed scholars earlier on account of the wedding of Mr. Clayton, Chairman of the school managers. Scholars and teachers presented Mr. Clayton with a folding table and Mrs. Richard Clayton who intends leaving Wylam, with a silver mirror. These gifts were made as a slight token of the many kindnesses shown to scholars and teachers by the Clayton family during the long period of 35 years'.

Apparently after such a long association with Wylam, Mrs. Clayton could not settle to live elsewhere and by 1922

in the early 1800's (and certainly before 1837) to which extensions were added later.

At the time of the 1851 census two spinster sisters of the Blackett family, Elizabeth and Dorothy Blackett, were living in the Cottage. Following their deaths there were short-term lessees of the property until 1878 when Musgrave Ridley, a Newcastle timber merchant, took a lease at £70 per year.

The Ridleys remained for over 30 years until shortly before the First World War when the Wilkinsons moved into the Cottage. It was during their occupation that a major fire occurred on 6th June 1922.

Following the Wilkinsons, the Rowells came to Wylam Cottage in 1949, and their period of continued ownership has meant that only three different families have occupied the Cottage during the past century. Incidentally if anyone knows anything more about the early history of Wylam Cottage, please contact Philip Brooks (Tel. 3520).

## "Token-help" for elderly

You may have heard, or seen from press reports over recent months, that the Parish Council has been examining ways in which it might assist local pensioners. After considering various alternatives, the Parish Council unanimously agreed to offer an additional £5 worth of travel tokens this year to all Wylam residents who are eligible for the Concessionary Travel Token Scheme already run by Tynedale District Council.

The District Council itself debated whether or not to increase the £9 worth of tokens it offers, and eventually decided to leave the amount unchanged this year, but to review the whole Concessionary Travel Token Scheme during the year to see if improvements could be made for next year.

Incidentally by making special arrangements for the tokens to be distributed in the village, the Parish Council has been able to save local pensioners the cost of having to collect them from Prudhoe or Hexham.

All pensioners and disabled persons who wish to claim their tokens should have collected them by now—any who have not done so will have to collect their separate amounts from the District and Parish Councils direct.

## Revitalisation campaign

For two weeks at the end of March and early April a Christian Stewardship Campaign was conducted in the village on behalf of the Wylam Methodist Church by Mr. George Sanderson of the Methodist Stewardship Organisation.

Rev. Malcolm Adams explained, 'The aim of the campaign has been to revitalise the life of the church and make it a more effective centre of Christian service in the community, and we believe that it has succeeded in helping us to do this'.

One of the highlights of the campaign was the Family Meal held in the Institute and attended by over 100 people, including guests representing other denominations in the village, together with the Superintendent Minister of the Hexham Circuit, Rev. A. Wignall and his wife.

## Dates for your diary

### MAY

- 12— Wylam School P.T.A. 50/50 Dance.
- 12— Prudhoe High School Spring Fayre, 1.30 p.m.
- 17— Annual Parish Meeting, 7.30 p.m.
- 19— Prudhoe High School Endurance Walk.

### JUNE

- 7— Oxfam 21st Birthday Party.
- 9— Wylam Playing Field Association 'Field Day'.
- 30— St. Oswin's Summer Fayre, 2 p.m.



# Local Catholics benefitted from generosity of coalowner

Our occasional articles about local history almost always generate local interest and comment, although they don't always give us the information we are looking for!

In the article in our last issue about architect Archibald Dunn who built and lived at Castle Hill we asked if anyone knew of the existence of a portrait of Dunn and whether he had designed Prudhoe Hall when it was built in 1868-70. We still hope that our local contacts at Prudhoe Hospital and in the architectural profession will be able to help, although to date no one has provided an answer.

However more information has come to hand about the Liddell family who built the Hall, and the Catholic Chapel and School in Prudhoe.

Matthew Liddell was the son of Cuthbert Liddell of Benwell Hall, Newcastle; his wife Susanna Cuddon came from Suffolk.

Liddell was largely responsible for the rapid development of mining in the Prudhoe and Mickley area in the mid-19th century and he became manager and the main owner of Mickley Colliery.

The shortage of local labour to meet the expansion of heavy industries in the North East in the mid-Victorian era, and severe famine in Ireland during the period, resulted in large numbers of Irish labourers coming to the region, and many found employment in the expanding collieries at Prudhoe, with smaller numbers in the 1850's coming to the colliery and the Ironworks in Wylam.

At the time of this influx of Irish Catholics the only places where they could go to Mass were at Stella and Hexham and many would walk from Wylam and Prudhoe, to Stella and back.

The need for a separate Catholic mission to serve the growing population in Prudhoe, Crawcrook and Wylam was recognised in the 1860's and soon after, Matthew Liddell who had made his fortune out of Prudhoe coal, built his new mansion at Prudhoe Hall, and took on the role of generous Catholic benefactor and financier of the Catholic mission in East Tynedale.

His first act was to create a chapel from one of the large rooms in the Hall, and at the time of the 1871 census the Catholic priest was living as Chaplain in the Hall.

The lack of a proper Catholic school to serve the growing community of Prudhoe was also causing problems and again the Liddells met the need by providing a school. Dedicated to St. Matthew (after its founder) it was opened in 1876 and continued in use until 1982. The first teacher received an annual salary of £42.

All Catholics in Wylam at that time went to Prudhoe to school or to worship and the first marriage in the Prudhoe chapel on 25th June 1877 was of a Wylam man, Thomas Kennett, and a Maria Ragan.

The Liddells had no children of their own surviving, and at the time of the 1881 census there were ten servants living in the Hall with them, together with a coachman in the East Lodge, a gardener and undergrounder in the West Lodge and the Priest and his housekeeper in the Priest's House.

Matthew Liddell died in October 1881 aged 72 but his wife continued to live at the Hall and act as local Catholic benefactor.

By 1889 the Chapel of Prudhoe Hall was too small for the Catholic congregation and Mrs. Liddell decided to build a new larger church at the Hall. Designed by Archibald Dunn, and constructed on the foundations of the former chapel, the new church was opened on 16th July 1891.

The Newcastle Daily Chronicle reported the event on the following day and stated that 'The Hall itself is also undergoing extensive alterations and additions and is being fitted up throughout with all the most modern contri-

vances for comfort and convenience (such as electric light, with which the chapel is also lighted) in a manner which will make it one of the largest as well as one of the best appointed mansions in the country'.

Mrs. Liddell had but three years to enjoy these improvements, for she died in November 1894, and the Prudhoe Hall estate passed to her nephew, Mr. John Liddell of Benwell Hall. He lived at Prudhoe Hall for ten years and shortly before selling the estate in 1904, he had the Church transferred from the Hall grounds and rebuilt in its present position off Highfield Lane in Prudhoe.

Colonel Henry Swan, one of the Managing Directors of Armstrong, Whitworth and Co. became the last private owner of Prudhoe Hall estate in 1904, and ten years later it was acquired by the 'Guardians of the Northern Counties', the forerunners of the present owners, the Health Authority who this year is celebrating the Hospital's 70th anniversary.



*Prudhoe Hall in 1900, before the Catholic chapel (on right) was taken down and rebuilt in Prudhoe town by Mr. John Liddell.*

## More litter—or less?

Despite having to be postponed once due to bad weather, the Annual Litter Clearance Campaign held on 7th April was one of the best attended ever. Our special thanks to all the local organisations and individuals who took part, and to the National Park Department staff for their co-operation and assistance.

Unfortunately villages in the county could in future have more litter lying about for longer. In its efforts to reduce spending to avoid Government penalties, the County Council is cutting back on street sweeping which would have meant that the already inadequate service in villages like Wylam was reduced still further.

Fortunately however the District Council has since agreed to maintain the present level of service, in place of the County Council.

The costs of employing anyone locally to carry out extra sweeping and litter collection regularly would be prohibitive but in an effort to try and improve the situation at modest cost the Parish Council has ordered some more litter bins—please use them.

## New service at library

To assist anyone looking for employment, a 'Jobs Vacant' board advertising vacancies in the region is now on display in the library.

Other services offered at our local library include a comprehensive range of novels, non-fiction, books on local history and a collection tracing the history and development of railways. Books provided for children start with those suitable for the pre-school child and continue through to a special collection for teenagers. Homework can be done, using the junior reference library, at the study tables provided.

Periodicals and magazines are available to read in the library or to take home. Books or information not immediately available can be obtained through the extensive, countrywide network of libraries; just ask the staff who will be pleased to help.

Opening hours:  
Tuesday 2.00—4.00; 5.30—7.30 p.m.  
Thursday 2.00—4.00; 5.30—7.30 p.m.  
Saturday 10.00—12 noon.

Why not enrol the whole family?

## Planting should benefit Wylam in year 2000

Well timed to follow some of the worst gales for years in which many local trees were blown down, several hundred small trees (and some not so small) were planted throughout the village in March, as the first phase of the Parish Council's tree planting scheme.

Intended to improve the appearance of parts of the village, and to replace some of many trees which have died or are dying from disease (especially elms) or old age, as well as those blown down, the new planting has been done on land in the Parish Council ownership along the riverbank or in highway verges on the roads leading into the village, where space permits.

The planting scheme has been designed by the County Council Landscape staff, with the co-operation of the County Surveyor, and the Parish Council has received generous grants from the Countryside Commission and the District Council towards the costs of the work.

The trees planted have included oak, maple, beech, ash, whitebeam, horsechestnuts, lime, silver birch and rowan. No one can expect that all the trees planted will survive to maturity but we hope that in 15-20 years time some of them will be helping to make the approaches into the village and the riverside area more attractive.



To help you identify your Parish Councillors—from left to right (front row): Judith Furniss, Carol Moore, Lynne Petrie and Anne Thomson. (Back row): Clive Morphet, Philip Brooks, Maureen Gillis (Clerk) and Alan Jones. The member missing from the picture is Felicity Reed.

## Well worth preserving—it's the finest in Wylam

The longest and finest wall in Wylam, the boundary wall which runs along the main road leading into the village enclosing the parkland of Holeyn Hall is now in need of repair.

Built in the 1850's, when the Holeyn Hall estate was developed by Newcastle lead merchant Edward James, the wall, as well as the hall is listed as being of special architectural and historic interest.

The attractive facing stone used for the hall, the cottages and stables, as well as the boundary wall, almost certainly came from one of the local quarries—perhaps Heddon or Rudchester, with some probably from the now disused quarry behind the former Gamekeepers Cottage (now Burn Cottage) on the Holeyn Hall estate itself.

Although small repairs have been carried out in the past, the volume of heavy traffic using the road—together with a deterioration of the mortar with age, is loosening some of the coping stones, and the wall needs repointing—particularly on the inside, and some stones re-set.

It is an attractive and historic feature in the village which most residents would want to be preserved but the costs of labour on repairing such an extensive wall will clearly be high, and Miss Bolam of Garden Cottage who owns the wall would welcome any offers of help.

## Warden service wanted

Residents of Blackett Cottages have recently asked the District Council if it would be possible to provide them with a warden service.

Whilst the most realistic arrangement would involve extending the present warden and alarm system from the flats in Blackett Court, even if Anchor Housing Association agrees, there could be significant costs involved. With hindsight it is a great pity that in 1974 when Blackett Court was being built, and the opportunity existed to provide a combined warden service cheaply for both the flats and the cottages, the tenants of the cottages at that time didn't want a warden service.

## Want to dance—or bowl?

Do you think there is a need for more social activities in Wylam, such as ballroom dancing and carpet bowls?

It is hoped that this notice will inspire your reaction to discover if it is sufficiently enthusiastic to justify taking the preliminary steps to get something off the ground.

If you would be interested to join a club and give support to bring one or both of these activities into being, don't just think about it—get in touch with one of the following who have volunteered their services to sound this out: E. Jacobson (Tel. 3598); P. Buckle (Tel. 2421); J. Furniss (Tel. 2341); C. Moore (Tel. 3590); C. Morphet (Tel. 2392); F. Reed (Tel. 2662).

## Scheme may go ahead

A scheme to carry out limited widening of 'Bulls Bank' outside Mr. and Mrs. Phillips' house on the Ovingham Road has now been agreed and it is hoped to start the work this year. Our thanks to the Phillips for their co-operation, to our County Councillor Timothy Kirkhope for his efforts and to the County Surveyor and Highways Committee for giving the scheme some priority.

## Book this date now

Your chance to moan at — (or praise) the Parish Council, and other organisations will be at the 'Annual Parish Meeting' — fixed for Thursday 17th May at the Institute.

Even when there is nothing very controversial happening in the village, Wylam always has higher attendances at its Parish Meetings than other villages in the County.

Why not come and air your grievances (as well as yourself) — you'll be welcome provided you don't mention dogs or litter — and you might get a cup of coffee to sustain you.

Don't forget, 7.30 p.m. Thursday 17th May in the Institute — everyone welcome — the more the merrier.

## Silver foil needs home

Linda Richardson of 17 Dene Road, who has been Wylam's main 'silver foil collector' for several years, would like to retire and hand this job to someone else.

Is anyone willing to take on this job from Linda? We hope that someone will act as 'receiver' for foil, helping local charities to make money. Please phone her on Wylam 2578 if you can help. Our special thanks to Linda for her past work.