

THE WYLAM GLOBE

Newsletter of Wylam Parish Council

Number 4

April 1974

NEW LOOK

The welcome which has been given to the "Globe" since its introduction last summer has encouraged us to carry out certain improvements – increasing the size, introducing photographs and modifying the general layout. This will enable us to extend the scope of the newsletter, including short articles about local societies, and about the history of the village which are features which several people have requested. We hope you like the "new look". Incidentally, our new title-illustration is the locomotive "Globe", designed by Timothy Hackworth for the Stockton and Darlington Railway in 1830, and built by Robert Stephenson and Co.

APRIL 1st

As well as being April Fools' Day, the 1st April was also the date when the new local authorities elected last Spring took over responsibility for local government services.

The new Northumberland is one of the few counties whose area, population and rateable value decline as compared with the old county. Thus its population drops from 510,000 to 280,000, its rateable value falls from £46 million to £26 million and its area reduced by 33,000 acres to 1.244 million.

This is as a result of the creation of the new Tyne and Wear County, which incorporates urban areas around Newcastle.

Northumberland is now the sixth largest County area in England, but will have the lowest population, except for the Isle of Wight County Council!

The 26 old District Councils are also being amalgamated to form six new Districts.

Wylam is in the Tynedale district which covers the whole of the west of the County, including the former urban districts of Hexham and Prudhoe, and the rural districts of Bellingham Haltwhistle and Hexham.

The new Tynedale District has a population of some 55,000 persons, in an area of 548,825 acres, i.e. a density of 1 person for every 10 acres!

As well as altering the boundaries of the local authority areas there has also been a redistribution of functions between the County and District Councils. This will have comparatively little direct impact as far as Wylam is concerned, the main change being that much of the town and county planning will now be done by the Tynedale District rather than through the County Council.

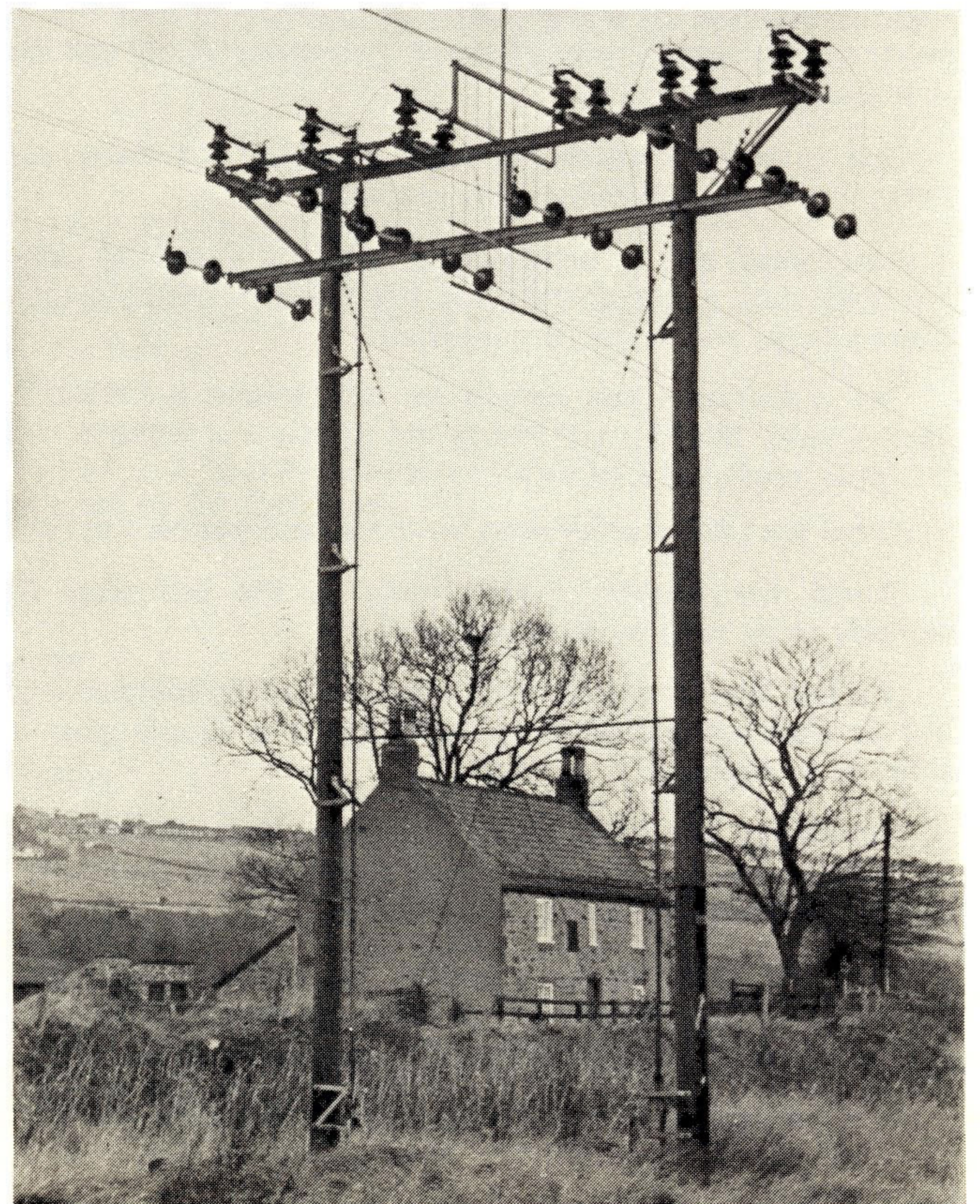
The new District Council will have a difficult job in co-ordinating and reconciling the interests of the various communities within its area – but we wish them luck (and success) in this task.

We must also mention briefly the new powers given to Parish Councils after 1st April. The most important are:—

1. The right to be notified of all planning applications affecting the parish, and to be told the result.
2. The abolition of many of the previous limitations on Parish Council expenditure.
3. Powers to provide off-street car parks and similar facilities.
4. Powers to provide local entertainments, encourage local arts, crafts and tourism.

OVERHEAD LINES – RIVERSIDE

Following the Parish Council's recent request to the N.E.E.B. that they should underground the unsightly overhead line which at present runs along the riverbank and in front of George Stephenson's cottage – the Board have stated that they are in the process of reviewing all existing overhead lines in the area. It is their intention to improve the electricity supply and to re-route or possibly underground some of the existing lines where these are unsightly. They have promised to give special consideration to the Riverside/Stephenson's Cottage locality.



ANNUAL PARISH MEETING— 25th APRIL

This year the Annual Parish Meeting will be on **Thursday 25th April** at 7.30 p.m. in the Institute (NOT the school as in previous years.)

All electors are entitled to attend and will be most welcome—the more the merrier!

This is an ideal opportunity to meet your Parish Councillors and to discuss anything concerning the village. Book the date now.

If you cannot come to the meeting but would like to comment on any local issues, please write to Mrs. Fairless, Clerk of the Parish Council, at 31 Falcon Terrace.

ESTIMATES 1974 -75

At its January meeting the Parish Council discussed what expenditure it should budget for during 1974 -75 and it was agreed that the likely expenditure by the Parish Council could be contained within the amount produced (£1773) by levying a one penny rate.

Part of this will be required to meet regular commitments, e.g. Clerk's salary, administrative expenses, postal and telephone charges, maintenance of open spaces, contribution to the Ovingham Burial Board, costs of certain footpath lighting etc.

New items for which some provision is being made this year include:—

- a. The Community Playing Field Project (estimated to cost £9000+)—Provision of a contribution of £500 from the Parish Council.
- b. Possible purchase of local fishing rights by Wylam Angling Club— Allocation of £250 towards the purchase price which could be several thousand pounds.

Small items e.g. Provision of improved notice boards, new public seats, and small improvements to the childrens' playground etc. are also proposed.

In addition some funds may be available towards the possible erection of a bus shelter at Charlie's Corner (i.e. the small open space on the corner of Ovingham Road, and next to Blckett Cottages.)

This is an idea which has been discussed for many years without ever being satisfactorily resolved.

Two years ago a proposal to build a block of toilets (incorporating a bus shelter) on this site was widely debated in the village, and eventually rejected.

The alternative site agreed for the toilets is in the old station yard, but this still leaves the question of whether a bus shelter is needed at Charlie's Corner.

There are clearly arguments both for, and against the idea.

Unless the shelter is very close to the bus stop it is unlikely to be used by bus passengers.

If a bus shelter is provided, what sort of building should it be? A traditional-style stone building—or a simple glass and aluminium shelter?

Experience elsewhere seems to show that whatever type of building is put up, there are likely to be problems of vandalism, and subsequent maintenance.

This will certainly be a matter on which many of you will have strong views— if so now is the time to shout, before any decisions are taken.

Why not come to the Parish Meeting on 25th April, and air your views. Alternatively, drop a line to Mrs. Fairless, Clerk of the Parish Council, 31 Falcon Terrace.

DR. SWINDALE, C.B.E.

Many of you will already know that in August, Dr. Swindale will have completed 50 years in medical practice in and around Wylam.

It is felt that many people will wish to contribute towards a presentation to him, as a token of appreciation of his service to the village, and a meeting was held recently of representatives of most of the local organisations to consider how this might best be done.

It was agreed that it would be preferable to make one presentation from the whole village rather than making several separate presentations from individual organisations, and a small committee was set up to make arrangements for the collection of contributions and for the presentation itself.

The presentation (to which everyone is invited) will be on Saturday, July 6th, and will take place on the Boys Brigade field following the Playing Field Association Field Day which is being held the same afternoon.

If you would like to make a contribution to the presentation fund, this can be done either through any local society/organisation of which you are a member, or alternatively, you may prefer to send a contribution direct to the Treasurer of the Fund, Mr. A. R. Roberts, Tallard House, Wylam Wood Road, Wylam. (Phone Wylam 3100.)

Cheques and P.O.'s should be made payable to "Dr. Swindale's Presentation."

There will also be collection boxes at the Church, Institute, and various shops in the village for individual contributions.

All contributions, whatever size, will be gratefully received.

PLEASE WILL YOU HELP?

As mentioned in the last issue, we are hoping to improve several areas of rough ground, cleaning rubbish and overgrown footpaths etc. — and carry out similar tasks to make the village more attractive. Much of this can be done with voluntary help from you, the local residents.

Will you be willing to lend a hand for two or three hours perhaps once or twice during the spring and summer?

No special skills required— No age limit. (Children and O.A.P.'s welcome.) No sex discrimination. (i.e. equal rights for women!)

If YOU will help us, please contact any of the following:—

Philip Brooks, 114 Dene Road (Tel. 3520)
Ellen Jacobson, 14 Algernon Terrace (Tel. 3598)
Tony Hurd, 138 Dene Road (Tel. 2563)
Jim Robinson, "Haverbrack," Elm Bank Road (Tel. 2493)
or Harry Helm, 11 Hedley Road (Tel. 2548)

as soon as possible, please.

Volunteers will then be contacted and a discussion held about the work to be done etc.

GOODBYE — AND THANK-YOU

Very few people living in the village today will remember the formation of the County Council in 1889 or the setting up of the Hexham Rural District Council in 1894, but over the past 80 years or so Wylam has had fair treatment from both these authorities, and it is appropriate that we should thank all the local councillors and officials who have helped the village during this period.

In particular the late Joseph Lee (for many years a County and District Councillor), Lionel Taylor (formerly the County Councillor for this division) and the two retiring members on Hexham R.D.C., Dr. Tom Brown, C.B.E., and Tony Taylor— have all represented the interests of the village very ably in recent years.

In future Councillor Peter Bennett will look after our local interests on the Tynedale District Council, whilst Councillor C. D'Ambrumenil of Horsley will continue as our representative on the new County Council.

OLD WYLAM

The Local History Society have recently begun collecting old photographs of the village to show some of the changes which have occurred. Since several of those loaned to the Society might be of general interest, we are intending to reproduce some of them in future issues of the "Globe."

In addition a regular series of articles on the history of the village, compiled by Philip Brooks, are also being included.



This month's photograph was kindly lent by Miss C. Watson, of 3 Oakwood Cottages.

It shows the old Wylam cornmill following the disastrous fire on the night of August 8th - 9th 1931, when the premises were completely destroyed.

The former miller's house (used as an office and store at the time of the fire) is on the left and the mill chimney (which was demolished shortly after the fire) can just be seen on the right.

This photograph should bring back memories to residents who lived in the village at that time — particularly those in the Tyne View, West View and Ingham Row area.

PLAYING FIELD PROJECT

We invited Alasdair Kemp, Secretary of the C.P.F.A. to give (briefly) the answers to some questions about this project.

"The Playing Field Association very much regrets that it has still been unable to make any solid progress towards acquiring the Boys Brigade field; due to another legal difficulty. However, we still hope for a reasonably early resolution of the matter which will we hope enable work to be started. Please continue to give us the encouragement of your support.

With regard to the question of what facilities are to be offered — the answer is simply "as much as possible." There will be a football and a cricket pitch, and a hard play area.

The aim is not however to make a sports field, but rather a general recreation area, including swings and a sandpit for younger children and seats for their parents and grandparents.

We would of course like to have a larger area and have enquired about the field to the west of the pit heap and allotments, but the owners (Trustees of the Blackett estate) have no plans to sell it, and in any case access to that area is very poor."

Many people have strong views about this scheme and what should be done, and it is sure to be raised at the Annual Parish Meeting on the 25th April, so why not come and let us know what you think of it?

It is hoped to have sketch plans of a suggested layout for the field on display at the meeting.

ALLOTMENTS

Several people have enquired whether there are any allotments controlled by the Parish Council. The answer is "No" — but there are two quite large areas of private allotments, one area by the riverside and the other at Hagg Bank. The respective agents for the owners are T. Pattinson and Sons, Estate Offices, Crawcrook and Alnwick Estates, The Castle, Alnwick, to whom any enquiries regarding the possibility of renting allotments on these sites should be made.

VILLAGE DIARY — WHAT'S ON

APRIL	Monday 15th	"5-a-side" Football Competition — C.P.F.A. — Boys Brigade Field
	Tuesday 23rd	Local History Talk, "Thomas Bewick the Engraver" 8 p.m. Institute
	Tuesday 23rd	Friends of Wylam — "Over-60's Show of Handiwork" Morning Coffee, Institute
	Thursday 25th	Annual Parish Meeting — 7.30 p.m. Institute
	Friday 26th	C.P.F.A. Dance at Close House, 8.30 p.m.
	Saturday 27th	"Shelter" Jumble Sale — Institute
	Saturday 27th	Concert — Shiney Row Male Voice Choir — 7.30 p.m. Chapel
Sunday 28th	Chapel Anniversary — Services conducted by Dr. Swindale	
MAY	Saturday 4th	Playgroup Pancake Race, 10.30 a.m.
	Saturday 4th	Mothers' Union Outing
	Tuesday 7th	Wylam Ladies' Choir Concert — Chapel
	Monday 20th	Friends of Wylam — All day Outing
JUNE	Wednesday 5th	Methodist Ladies' Circle Summer Outing
	Saturday 8th	Tennis Club Jumble Sale 2.30 p.m. Institute
	Monday 10th	Friends of Wylam — Half day Outing
	Saturday 15th	Garden Fete — St. Oswin's
	Saturday 22nd	Oxfam Garden Fete
Saturday 29th	Tennis Club Summer Dance — Close House	
JULY	Saturday 6th	C.P.F.A. Field Day starts at 2 p.m. followed by presentation to Dr. Swindale at about 4.30 p.m.
	Saturday 13th	Conservative Garden Fete, Southlands, Wylam Wood Road

WYLAM – ORIGINS AND EARLY HISTORY

The origins of the name Wylam are difficult to identify, but the Oxford Dictionary of Place Names defines "Wylum" as being derived from Old English "Wil" meaning a trick or contrivance, indicating the existence of a mechanical contrivance such as a watermill or fish trap. Wylam = "the village with a wile."

There have been many variations in the spelling of the name over the centuries, including Wylum (1120), Wilham (1203), Wilom (1326), Wylome (1380) and Wileham (1663).

The first records of Wylam show that it belonged to the Priory of Tynemouth, which was founded in 1085 by Robert de Mowbray. It had probably been part of the Barony of Baliol, and given by Guy de Baliol, lord of Bywell, to the Priory at about the time of its foundation.

One of the earliest tales relating to the village took place in 1175 when Odinel de Umfreville, owner of Prudhoe Castle, tried to force the men of Wylam to help in repairing damage to the castle which had occurred during a Scottish raid two years earlier.

However, since the men of Wylam were in the service of the Priory at Tynemouth, they were freed by charter from the duties of castle building or any feudal service except for the Prior, and despite threats of further action from Odinel the men of Wylam held to their charter.

The stubbornness of the men infuriated Odinel, who used his influence to persuade one of the King's officers from Corbridge (a man who it is said, neither feared God nor revered St. Oswin, the patron saint of Tynemouth) to come to Wylam and to drive off any cattle he found grazing on the common land.

When he arrived there was a red-headed youth in charge of the herd and, reputedly, the officer was temporarily blinded so that he was unable to see the cattle, and left empty-handed; indeed at the County Court in Newcastle several days later he swore that he had not seen any cattle!

His miraculous short-sightedness apparently became the talk of the county, and shortly afterwards he entered into the service of the Priory at Tynemouth!

The Prior had a house in Wylam which was used occasionally for holding the Manor Court, and in January 1264 Abbot Norton of St. Albans (which was the "Mother" house of Tynemouth Priory) held a court in the village when several of the tenants paid homage. It was probable quite a regal affair! In later years, however the tenants went to the Prior's Courts at Tynemouth.

As well as paying rents, the villagers had various duties and responsibilities to the Prior and these are recorded in the Tynemouth Cartulary (the records of the Priory).

Amongst the entries for c.1295, are the following, "Robert Long holds 8 acres, rent 3s. He shall reap in the autumn as much as shall be necessary for the Prior's food once a day. He shall hoe once in the Summer. He shall make the hay. He shall do days work at the mill when necessary.

Dolfin pays for his house 12d yearly and 5 work days in autumn. He shall make the hay and shall be with his neighbours at the mill as often as is necessary. He shall hoe for one work day."

As well as owning the mill, the Priory also received rentals at this time from a brewhouse and coal mine in the village.

In a survey of the lands at Wylam made in Christmas 1295 when Adam de Tewyng was Prior, the Priory held just over 91 acres and among the surnames of the bond tenants were several which still occur locally, e.g. "Nicholas Belle, Geoffry Miller, Ady Patessone, Robert Jonesson, Geoffry Baroun, Henry Wylleson, Gilbert Fysshere, Thomas Payn, Richard Colier."

The size of their holdings varied between 1½ - 20 acres with 8 acres and 5½ acres being the most common sizes.

Shortly after this survey was completed the period of Scottish attacks on Northumberland began. In 1297, the year after the destruction of Hexham Priory, Wylam was "laid waste" by the Scots under the command of William Wallace, and in the early years of the 14th century there were renewed Scottish raids, and the countryside was plundered by bands of robbers who terrorised the Prior's tenants in the village. A truce was agreed in 1319, but during that year William de Ellerington and some companions cut down trees and stole goods to the value of £200.

There were other problems too, apart from the Scots, for in the Rental of 1378 it states, "The (water) mill is totally dry, and built twice at great expense, and again the water is dry, nor till now has it been rebuilt, and it pays nothing. The coal mine is destroyed on account of the abundance of water. . . ." (It seems the water was in the wrong place – in the mine instead of at the mill! The problem of flooding in the collieries proved to be a recurring one).

During one of these early raids by the Scots the Monks House had been destroyed, and it lay in ruins until Prior Whethamstead began to repair the damage done to the Priory possessions and rebuilt the house at Wylam in 1405.

A 14th century tunnel-vaulted chamber and fragments of this early medieval house, which came to be known as the Sporting House, from its use by the Prior and monks for hunting and recreation, are incorporated in Wylam Hall.

Early in the 16th century the Sporting House (Wylam Hall) was leased by John Swinburne of Chopwell, whose father, Thomas, had land at Nafferton, north-west of Wylam. But shortly after this, between 1536-39, Henry VIII began the suppression of the monasteries as part of the Reformation, and the period of almost 500 years during which the monks of Tynemouth had possessed land and property in Wylam, came to an abrupt end.



SEVENTEENTH CENTURY DOORWAY, WYLAM HALL