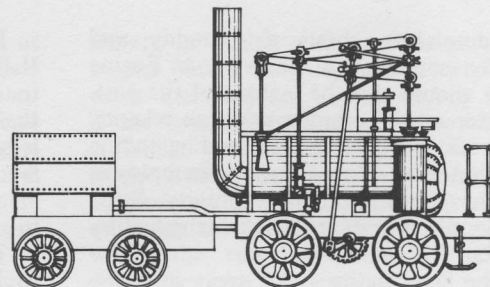


# THE WYLAM GLOBE

Newsletter of Wylam Parish Council



Autumn 1986

Number 41

## Battle grows over B.R. plans for crossing

British Rail's plans to do away with the full-width barriers at the level crossing next to the station have met with total opposition from the Parish Council and local residents.

The proposal which involves the introduction of half-width barriers was given advance publicity in the local press last month by District Councillor, Philip Brooks.

Although no scheme has yet been submitted to the Parish Council for its comments it is understood that B.R. are considering the replacement of the full-width barriers (which are manually operated by the signalman in the signal box) by barriers which only extend across half the road, and are automatically controlled by trains as they approach the crossing.

The main reason why B.R. are planning this change is to cut costs—by withdrawing the signalman and closing the signal box, although the anticipated 'savings' have not yet been made public.

But whatever savings the accountants might show in the running-costs of the crossing, the standard of safety at the barriers will fall dramatically.

Half-barriers, as the name implies, only protect the left hand side of the road, in front of vehicular traffic, and whilst this may provide an acceptable level of safety in isolated rural areas, where there is little traffic and few pedestrians, such an arrangement would create severe hazards in Wylam and is totally unacceptable. Wylam station is the second busiest on the line between Newcastle and Carlisle, and with the railway dividing the village there is a constant movement of pedestrians using the level crossing from south to north Wylam and vice-versa.

With half-barriers there would be no protection at all for pedestrians waiting to cross from the south to north side including of course any passengers who have got off the train from Newcastle.

It seems there would be no barrier (as there is now) to stop those pedestrians from walking across in front of a train, and the risks would be that much greater with children.

There is also the possibility that idiot motorists (and there are some) might try to avoid the half barriers and cross the line, even when half barriers are down.

The risk of accidents must inevitably be much greater with half-barriers than

son House, York, urging B.R. to reconsider their proposals and retain the existing full-width barriers and the signalman.

If B.R. are unwilling to do this, and insist on going ahead with the half-



*Do British Rail seriously believe that this type of automatic half-barrier would be safe and suitable for use at Wylam? If you've not seen one in use, go to Stella (between Ryton and Blaydon) where this crossing is on the road to Newburn bridge. Needless to say there are few pedestrians (adults or children) who use this crossing.*

with the existing full width barriers and the reduction in safety standards which this would create at the Wylam crossing is totally unacceptable.

The hazards resulting from the scheme are clearly the main reasons for the widespread opposition, but the withdrawal of the signalman could also result in an increase in the incidence of theft and vandalism on station premises.

All local residents will echo the excellent editorial in the 'Hexham Courant' of 5th September which concluded with the words, 'Come on B.R., think again'.

The Parish Council has since written to Mr. D. Rayner, the General Manager of British Rail (Eastern Region) at Hud-

baked half-barrier scheme, there will almost certainly be a public inquiry, in view of the opposition.

The Parish Council will ensure that residents are kept informed about developments on this important issue. Our local County and District Councillors have pledged their help in opposing this scheme.

In the meantime everyone worried about the hazards of this proposal is urged to write (just a few paragraphs will do) direct to Mr. Rayner at Hudson House, York and also to local M.P. Geoffrey Rippon at the House of Commons, London.

Now is the time to let B.R. know that the village is totally against this scheme

## Path improvements

Complaints about the muddy and uneven condition of paths across Engine Dene should now be a thing of the past.

Over recent months work on relaying these paths and the path leading to the Rift has been carried out by unemployed people recruited by Community Rural Aid – the cost of materials being met by the Parish Council.

The new paths are a great improvement and with the extra street lamp on Woodvale Gardens should make things easier and safer for the many residents who use them.



*Disappearing landmarks – the two concrete silos at Robert Graham's farm under demolition in July.*

## Replanting hopes

Thanks to action by local residents, the Parish Council and other landowners, most of the diseased elms in prominent positions within the village have been felled.

Apart from reducing the risks of accidents, it also improves the appearance of the village.

A few still remain on private land close to roads or buildings—we hope the owners will arrange to have them felled before they become more dangerous.

Fortunately in most of the woodlands around the village the appearance of a small number of dead elms is camouflaged by other trees, but in Bluebell Wood, on Bluebell Lane, once an attractive beauty spot, almost half the trees are dead or dying elms.

Because of its prominence as a local amenity on the outskirts of the village the Parish Council have asked the owners if they would be willing to fell the dead trees, and those in poor condition, and undertake a replanting scheme—for which grants are available from the Forestry Commission.

## Voltage problems

Residents of Acomb Drive and Holeyn Hall Road have complained to NEEB for several years, about problems with their electricity supply. NEEB acknowledge the problems but claim that they are having difficulties in obtaining a suitable site on which to erect the new sub-station which is apparently needed.

The Parish Council have now written to NEEB asking them to try and make progress in resolving the situation to improve the supply to residents of Acomb Drive and Holeyn Hall Road.

## Thanks for your help

Our thanks to the following individuals for the help they have given to the village in various ways.

- To Dora Leathard who is retiring after an exceptional period of more than 50 years devoted work first with Dr. Bishop and Dr. Swindale, and in recent years with the present doctors at Riversdale. Everyone in the village will wish her a long and happy retirement.
- To Mrs. Annie Dixon of Woodcroft Road for her fine work in teaching many generations of children to play the piano.
- To Mrs. Joy Brown, the Tynedale Area Librarian who retired at the end of August. She was Area Librarian when Wylam Library was opened.
- To Enid Jones who has taken early retirement from her postal duties to concentrate on other responsibilities.
- To Rev. David Wood, who left the village in September after serving as Vicar for three lively years.
- To Tony Mitcham, who has recently retired after three years as Chairman of the Prudhoe High School P.T.A.
- To Eddie Hodgson for agreeing to fix the new seat and litter bin at the end of Acomb Drive.
- To Mike Helm for help in laying paving stones at the Hagg Bank Play Area.

## Goats to the rescue?

The problems of looking after the cemetery at Ovingham, which serves the parishes of Horsley, Ovington, Ovingham and Wylam are a constant headache to the four Parish Councils which have to pay for its maintenance.

Many Wylam residents will not know that the cemetery exists—or where it is. In fact it is on the northern side of Ovingham, with access along the road past the side of the petrol filling station.

The Burial Board (which includes Felicity Reed and Judith Furniss from Wylam P.C.) is constantly wrestling with the problem of how to keep the grass short—and the burial ground tidy. The latest idea is to employ a few goats to keep the long grass in the unused areas short!

## Missing an oboe?

Terry Morgan who lives in Woodcroft Road, and runs the Wylam Craft Music Shop in St. Mary's Chare, Hexham, is trying to trace a Wylam man (name unknown) who left an oboe in his shop for repair about twelve months ago and has never returned to collect it. If you think the oboe is yours please contact Terry as soon as possible.

## Hackworth anniversary

Arrangements are being made for Timothy Hackworth's great-great grand daughter, Jane Hackworth-Young to unveil a commemorative plaque on Wormald House, (the nearest building to the site of Hackworth's birthplace) on 22nd December, the actual 200th anniversary of his birth in 1786.

Benham's, the philatelic dealers, are producing a commemorative philatelic cover to mark this anniversary and this will be available from 22nd December, with a special handstamp. The price of this is not yet known but they can be ordered through Maureen Gillis.

Copies of the book 'Timothy Hackworth and the Locomotive' which details the life and work of Hackworth, are still available, together with the souvenir glasses and tankards produced specially for this anniversary.

## New school governor

Mr. S. T. Graham of 91 Dene Road has been appointed a Governor of the village First School, replacing Mr. Fred Green of South Wylam who has left the village.

# The new telephone kiosk—coinbox or phonecard? Wait and see!

Will the public telephone kiosk near the Post Office be replaced by one of the new-style coin-operated boxes, or one for which you need a phone card? The answer still seems to be in doubt.

The information given to several Parish Councils by British Telecom, has been that where there are a number of telephone kiosks in a parish it was likely that some would be retained as coin-boxes, and others would be of the type which require a phone card, but if there was only one kiosk in a village (as there

is in Wylam) they would be kept as coin-operated.

However following an approach from the Parish Council, British Telecom have said that because of the number of thefts from the Wylam kiosk, which have put it out of action for long periods, they are intending to replace it with a phone-card only kiosk.

British Telecom claims that this type of kiosk should be less prone to vandalism—but the Parish Council remains worried that some people, especially the

elderly or young who need to make an urgent phone call may not carry phone cards—and may not be able to buy them if the local shops and pubs are closed.

Whilst phone-cards may be the thing of the future, there are clearly conflicting opinions as to whether their advantages outweigh their disadvantages. Meanwhile watch the verge near the Post Office which is where the new kiosk will appear.

## Lest we forget

Remembrance Sunday this year is on 9th November and will be marked with a service in St. Oswin's at 10 a.m. followed by one at 10.50 a.m. at the War Memorial where wreaths will be laid in memory of the fallen.

## Charity cards and gifts

This year's Annual Christmas Card and Gift Sale will be held in the Institute on 15th November and will provide you with a wide selection of Christmas cards and presents from various charities, so don't buy all your cards and gifts before then!

## Keep your speed down

Concern has been expressed at the speed with which some motorists drive down the Dene. Several pets have been killed on this section of road and there is the risk that a child might be injured, or even killed. Please take care on this length of road, and keep your speed down!



Full barriers down at the Wylam level-crossing on a quiet Sunday afternoon, safely and effectively preventing access onto the railway. Compare this with the photograph elsewhere of the crossing at Stella which only has half-barriers.

## Special commemorative service opens St. Oswin's centenary year

Don Harrison writes—

The St. Oswin's Centenary Celebrations will begin on Sunday 2nd November, with the opening commemorative service at 6 p.m. led by the Bishop of Newcastle. Unfortunately as the seating capacity of the church is very restricted, the churchwardens have, with great regret, decided that admission to this service must be by invitation or advance booking only.

The special range of centenary souvenirs — pottery, stationery, tea towels, postcards etc. will be on sale at the Christmas Fair (Saturday 22nd November 10 a.m.—3.30 p.m. in the Institute) together with crafts, jams, cakes, flowers and other items 'too numerous to mention'.

So please make sure you support the Fair—you will be able to buy many of your Christmas presents there, as well as enjoying a cup of coffee—or even a Ploughman's Lunch between 12 and 2 p.m. (save the washing up that day?)

In the New Year a large party from the village is looking forward to a family

weekend in the country at Scargill House, Kettlewell in Upper Wharfedale, from Friday evening 20th February to Sunday 22nd.

A few places are still available. You could spend the weekend fellwalking in magnificent hill scenery or try out an adventure course, follow a nature trail, use the games room or just relax in a very comfortable house. For those wishing to explore the Christian Faith there will be opportunities at study sessions and in discussions. Anyone is welcome whatever your age and whether you profess any religion—or none!

The cost: Adult £24.50, teenagers £18.40, children £14.70, under 6's free.

There is a maximum charge of £80 for a family group, and for parties of guides, scouts etc. the cost is £15 each. If you are interested in joining this special weekend please contact Michael Wheelwright (Tel. 2508) for more information.

Arrangements are now going ahead for more centenary events throughout 1987—more details in the next 'Globe'.

### EDITOR'S NOTE

The unexpected resignation of the Vicar, the Rev. David Wood, comes at a particularly difficult time — and the church will need the help and support of all the people in the Parish. Hopefully the Parish will respond to this challenge and make the centenary celebrations a success, and a means of binding and strengthening the church during this period before a new Vicar is inducted.

It had been our intention (as mentioned in the last issue) to print a special centenary supplement concerning the history of St. Oswin's and including several early photographs etc. However it is now hoped that these can be incorporated in the history of the church and parish which churchwarden and historian Colin Tyson is producing, and which should be published next spring.

Colin hopes to make his centenary history as comprehensive as possible, but whether all his research can be published will depend on the extent of financial backing and support which is given to the project.

# Bus services running to new timetables—use them or lose them

New bus services came into operation on 26th October and on balance Wylam seems not to have suffered too badly although there is an overall reduction in the levels of service, and there is a severe risk that there could be cutbacks again at the end of January, if the new services do not prove profitable to the operators.

The services to Newcastle and Ovington (684) are now being run by OK Motor Services at hourly intervals through most of the day, but the evening service is reduced and there is no Sunday service.

The 607 service to Crawcrook and Greenside is being run by Go-ahead Northern, but is reduced to three journeys per day Monday to Friday.

The 687 service to Corbridge and Hexham provided by Northumbria Motor Services is now cut back to one return journey each day (except Sundays). However they have introduced a new service (674) which provides one return journey per day from Ovingham, Wylam and Crawcrook to the new Metro Centre at Gateshead. Both the 687 and 674 services will allow between 2–3 hours

shopping at Hexham or the Metro Centre.

The 685 service Newcastle-Hexham-Carlisle still runs at hourly intervals, calling at Holeyn Hall crossroads.

Rowell's bus which takes the children to Prudhoe High School can now also be used by fare-paying passengers (if you can find a seat!)

Full details of the new timetables are displayed in the library, the Institute and the Post Office.

Don't forget these services will operate until the end of January next year, after which further changes may be made.

In the meantime if you want to keep local bus services, please make use of them. If the operators cannot make some profit, they will not want to run the services — and will either withdraw them, or ask the County Council for a subsidy.



*Changing landscape — work on the new Stephenson Court flats is now completed.*

## Community Week celebrating its Silver Jubilee in fine style

Twenty-five years ago—in 1961, the first Community Week was held. The brainchild of the late Dr. Swindale, the event has developed as a highlight of community life in the village during the autumn.

This year's 'Jubilee Programme' retains many of the traditional and popular activities, but with a few new ones introduced as well.

Indeed the first event of the week—on Friday 31st October—is new, a Halloween Spook Garden—which can be experienced in the Hendrick's garden on Ovingham Road (but don't frighten Jack Donkey!) and is organised by the Junior Badminton Group.

The popular 50-50 auction sale is re-introduced on Saturday afternoon, 1st November. Run by the Drama Society and Institute Committee members, this has proved profitable and successful in the past; you get half the amount raised in the sale of your items, so it will be well worth putting useful items (not jumble) into the auction.

The traditional Bonfire and Firework display will take place on the Saturday evening. Contributions of wood (a chance to burn your dead elms? etc.) and help to build the bonfire on the Saturday morning would be welcome.

The Centenary Service at St. Oswin's

will take place on the Sunday evening when the Bishop of Newcastle will be preaching. Space in the church is very restricted and anyone wishing to attend should contact Penelope Phillips, Wylam Lodge, Ovingham Road in advance to ensure a seat will be available, i.e. advance booking essential.

On Monday evening you should be able to get some expert advice on your antiques and 'objets d'art' if you take them to the Institute at 8 p.m. The W.I. is organising an 'Antiques Roadshow'—so bring some of your family heirlooms—you might learn something new about them.

The traditional Friends of Wylam Coffee Morning and Bring and Buy Sale is on Tuesday morning (4th) and in the evening the Photographic Society is presenting a Magic Lantern Show (with modern equipment), of slides showing Wylam 'as it was' compared with 'as it is' using slides of old photographs and modern pictures of the same scene. It will show us how parts of the village have changed.

If you've never played carpet bowls—and would like to see what the game is all about—you will have your opportunity on Wednesday evening when the Bowls Club is planning a tournament at 7 p.m. Later that same evening the Dance

## Great entertainment

The Amateur Dramatic Society are staging a production of 'Toad of Toad Hall', a highly entertaining and amusing musical, on Friday evening 28th November and two performances on Saturday 29th November, in the Institute.

Tickets (£1.50 or 80p for OAP's and children) are available from Pat Buckle, 36 Woodvale Gardens.

The Society promises that this will be excellent entertainment for adults and children alike.

Night group are organising a Wine and Cheese Party (tickets from Freda Ferguson or Busy Bees).

Those who will be at home during the day on Thursday will have opportunity to see an exhibition of work by members of the Embroidery Class, and at the same time have a Ploughman's Lunch, organised by the Nursery School mothers.

Last year's successful Craft/Hobby Workshop is being repeated again on Thursday evening (contact Georgina Peel for details on 3278).

The ever-popular Junior Disco will be held on Friday evening, the Coffee Morning and Bring and Buy Stall on Saturday with a Race Night session on the Saturday evening. (Race cards available from Pam and David Johnson, or Busy Bees).

All houses in the village should have received a copy of the full programme for the week.

Please support as many events as you can, enjoy yourselves and make this year's Jubilee Community Week even more successful than usual.

*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 DH4 4BA*