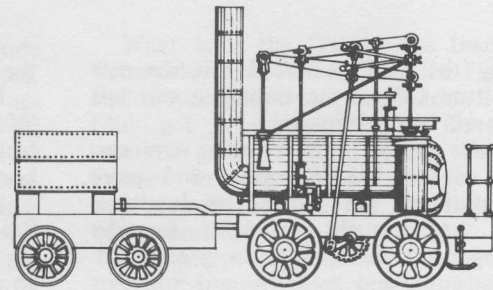


THE WYLAM GLOBE

Newsletter of Wylam Parish Council



Autumn 1987

Number 43

Changes planned at Stephenson's Cottage

Wylam's main claim to fame in the history books is always going to be as the birthplace of railways — and especially of George Stephenson 'The Father of Railways' whose qualities of determination and self-help are so much admired today, as they were in Victorian times.

Over recent years the Parish Council has taken positive action to make local residents and visitors more aware of Wylam's important contribution to railway history, aiming to put the village on the national map.

Although the cottage where Stephenson was born was acquired and gifted to the National Trust by the North East Coast Institution of Engineers and Ship-builders in 1948 (the centenary of Stephenson's death), it was not until 30 years later, when the Amos family vacated the cottage, that the Trust decided to open it to the public.

Various improvements were then carried out, including alterations to the downstairs room where the Stephenson family had lived in the 1780s and which was opened to visitors for the first time.

Reservations were expressed at the time about the replacement of the old Victorian range with a later fireplace, and some doubts raised about the style of furnishings introduced which gave visitors a misleading impression of what conditions were like during Stephenson's childhood.

Public comments, together with an increasing awareness by the National Trust's Regional staff that some changes are necessary, coincided with an approach by the Parish Council to the Trust earlier this year suggesting that the potential of the cottage as an important part of our national heritage had not been reached, and also suggesting that an attempt should be made to return the character of the room nearer to what it would have been like during Stephenson's time in the North East.

A strict reconstruction back to the 1780's would be very difficult but simpler furnishings — of the type which a poor collier's family would probably have

had when living in one room, as the Stepsons did, would give visitors a much more realistic impression of conditions in Stephenson's childhood.

The Trust has now agreed to carry out a number of changes along these

that the idea of establishing a 'Friends of Stephenson's Birthplace' group to assist in fundraising etc. might be considered.

The response by Oliver Maurice, Regional Director of the National Trust and his staff to the Parish Council's



The oldest known photograph of the interior of George Stephenson's birthplace taken in 1881 to commemorate the Centenary of his birth. The National Trust are now hoping to alter the present layout of the room to make it resemble more closely what it would probably have been like in Stephenson's lifetime.

lines next year and also to provide some illustrated folding panels telling visitors something about Stephenson and his achievements.

One of the inherent problems at the cottage is the restriction on space, and another is the fact that the National Trust funds are limited; income through admissions on such a small property is always likely to be modest. However, the Parish Council has suggested that there are various organisations and companies both nationally and locally who would be willing to contribute towards the costs of improving the cottage, and

approach has been very encouraging, and he concluded his letter, 'At a time when there is a general upsurge in interest in industrial archaeology and local history, we (the National Trust) wish to do our share in promoting Wylam's very important historical heritage'.

Next June is the 150th anniversary of the opening of the full length of the Newcastle and Carlisle Railway and special celebrations are being planned, which could result in extra visitors to Wylam — perhaps some of these improvements to the cottage might be completed by then.

New Institute Office opens for bookings and business

By the time you read this the new 'Institute Office' mentioned in our last issue will be open for use.

Since major improvements were carried out in 1982/83 more and more organisations are using the Institute. This has brought problems for the Management Committee in general administration and security, and not least a constant stream of telephone calls to Edna Beattie's home, with people wanting to make bookings or with general enquiries about the Institute.

The new office is in the former Committee Room (on the right as you enter) and will be open from 9.30 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. Monday to Friday, and all bookings and enquiries about the Institute should be made there in future. You can call in person – or telephone,

the new office number is 2498.

It is hoped in the long run to provide information about organisations using the Institute and other services likely to be of benefit to the village.

Incidentally, if you thought Edna Beattie was actually retiring from working for the Institute you were wrong! It's an essential part of her life, and she and Mrs. Carole Davis are the new Institute administrators, and one or the other will be in the office every weekday morning doing the paperwork and bookings, to ensure that the Institute will function even more effectively as the village Community Centre.

Both Edna and Carole seem ideal personalities for the job and we hope they enjoy it.

With the new office now being open,

few people have any excuse for not paying their membership fee and helping to support the Institute. So, if you have not yet joined – please call in soon and do so. The membership fees are as follows (and not as quoted in the Community Week programme):—

Single membership £2.00

Family membership £3.00

Patrons £5.00

(P.S. By the way, about 25 'Newcastle China' cups and saucers belonging to the Institute have been missing since July – if you have borrowed them, or know where they are, please return them – no questions asked).



*Mr. William Hedley requests the
pleasure of the company of*

*at the opening service of St. Oswin's Church
at Wylam upon Tyne, on Monday morning
the 1st of November, at 11 o'clock and afterwards
to Luncheon.*

*Burnbyreside Hall,
Lanchester,
Durham.*

It will be necessary to present this.

This invitation card was one of several items of ephemera which there was not space to include in the published Centenary history of the Parish Church.

Christmas cards and gifts

This year's Annual Christmas Card and Gift Sale will be held in the Institute on Saturday 14th November. Many national and local charities will be displaying selections of cards and potential Christmas presents, so please don't buy all your cards and gifts before then.

St. Oswin's Centenary souvenirs and the various local gifts which the Parish Council has commissioned in recent years will also be on sale.

This will be a good opportunity to buy your Christmas gifts – and stock up with a few items for birthday presents for 1988!

Guides seeking help

Are you interested and willing to be involved with the running of Wylam Guides? If so, please contact Lucy Monroe on 2657. The existing Guide leaders are resigning next summer and are asking now for volunteers to become involved with the Unit during the summer term and then take it over completely from September 1988.

Unfortunately, if no one comes forward the future of the Guide Unit will be in jeopardy. This is a genuine and sincere appeal for help – please consider very carefully whether you are able to respond.

Its such a useful card

A new issue of the much appreciated Village Information Card is about to be printed, but its distribution will be delayed until British Telecom have changed the local telephone numbers. The new Information Card (pink this year) will probably now be distributed at the end of November. When you receive the new card please destroy the previous issue (blue).

Incidentally, if you leave the village please don't take the Information Card with you, but leave it for the next occupants of your house, who may find it helpful.

Praise where it's due

Few national newspapers ever compliment each other – they're too busy fighting the 'circulation war' – but we're happy to congratulate Jean Huxley on her recent issues as editor of the Parish magazine. She clearly enjoys this job, and by including some snippets of 'social and personal' interest she is broadening the community appeal of the magazine and hopefully increasing its sales and circulation. Well done Jean.

Phone number changes

British Telecom advised all local telephone subscribers earlier this year that the Wylam telephone numbers would be changed in the Autumn by having 85 put in front of the existing numbers – e.g. Wylam 3520 will now be Wylam 853520. The Wylam STD code will also be altered from 06614 to 0661.

This change is likely to take place in mid-November, but British Telecom will inform subscribers of the exact date.

British Telecom are undertaking work to try and solve some of the phone problems on the Dene Estate, but the new card-only kiosk in the centre of the village is still giving cause for many complaints. The Parish Council are pressing B.T. for some answers.

Congratulations TJRK M.P.

News of Timothy Kirkhope's election to the House of Commons as the new MP for Leeds came just too late for inclusion in our last issue, but we hope we are not too late to congratulate him on his achievement for which he has worked hard over many years. We thank him, Caroline and the boys for their contribution to the life of the village during the 17 years they have lived here, and wish them all success and happiness in the future.

As far as we know, Timothy is the only Wylam resident to become a Member of Parliament since John F. B. Blackett, Squire of Wylam, was elected a Liberal MP for Newcastle in 1852 at the age of 33 — polling the largest number of votes ever recorded for a candidate in Newcastle up to that time.

Another former Wylam resident, Dr. Joseph Leech, who lived at Wylam Hall for several years in the mid-1920s, later became a Conservative MP for West Newcastle, some years after he had moved from Wylam.

Another friends record

Another record was broken at the Friends of Wylam Jumble Sale on 26th September, when the remarkable sum of £730 was raised — the best ever!

Generous gifts came from throughout the village, including several families from the Council estate, where central heating is being installed, and who took the opportunity to replace some of their furnishings — and kindly gave their old items to the Friends of Wylam.

The Friends Committee are most grateful to everyone who helped to make the event such a success.

Are fireworks a waste?

Until his death some seven years ago the late Dr. Swindale as founder of Community Week and long-time President of the Institute, personally bought the fireworks for the village bonfire.

Following his death the Institute funds were used to buy them, but in recent years the Parish Council has agreed to purchase them, instead of making a direct annual contribution to the Institute funds.

However the costs of buying fireworks each year are now quite substantial (£500—£600) and several people have suggested that we should abandon the provision of the fireworks and the money saved by the Parish Council should be given as a direct contribution towards the costs of running the Institute.

The Parish Council has not yet considered the matter for next year, but if you have any views on this suggestion or other ideas, please let the Parish Council know.

An era ends....

It has not been our policy to include a 'hatched, matched and despatched' column in the Globe — for fear of upsetting people if their own personal news is not included. However, the death of that popular local character, Jack Donkey at the beginning of September, marks the end of an era. Jack was for 20 years a member of the McCallum family and, since they left, the Hendricks have looked after him.

A great friend of many Wylam residents, both young and old, and an active participant in numerous village events, the paddock on Ovingham road will never be quite the same again.



The late Jack Donkey, as many will like to remember him in his hey-day giving rides at a Wylam Field Day. This one in 1972. The young jockey recently took her 'O' levels! Dr. Ian Macallum (now CBE) is on the right.

Oaks for the future

During the next few weeks, all the dead elms and many of the other mature trees in Bluebell Wood on Blue Bell Lane, will be felled and young oak trees planted to replace them.

This woodland planting scheme has been approved by the County Council and the Forestry Commission and will be carried out by the Trustees of the late John Bell, who own the wood. Several of the younger trees growing close to the road frontage will be preserved as an amenity, but it will be Wylam residents of the 21st century who are going to appreciate the newly planted oaks.

Grant-aid available

What have the Guides, the Institute Committee, the Tennis Club, the Playing Fields Association and the Indoor Bowls Club got in common? They have all received grants from Tynedale District Council in recent years to help with improvement schemes or the purchase of equipment.

Voluntary organisations wanting a capital or equipment grant next year must submit an application by no later than 11th December, and for a running cost grant applications must be made by 29th January.

Any local group needing more information or advice should contact Mr. Leslie Carr at Tynedale District Council (Tel. 0434 4011). Coun. Philip Brooks is currently Vice Chairman of the Recreation and Amenities Committee and is happy to assist any local organisation needing help.

Secretaries or Treasurers of groups wanting to submit grant applications, please make sure you do so before the closing dates — there is not likely to be much left for latecomers!

Spectacular Support

Congratulations to Ann Ewart and her family, friends and everyone who supported the Autumn Fair held at 'Elmfield' on 19th September to raise money for the Brain Lazer Appeal.

It must be a long time since so many people walked around the house and grounds — some we suspect were curious to see what it was like!

The spectacular sum of nearly £6000 has been raised locally towards this very worthwhile project, and Ann thanks everyone who helped to make the fund raising so successful. Well done!

Thank you Charles

Another local politician leaving the village shortly is Charles Heslop, currently a member of the Parish Council and a former District Councillor.

Charles is moving to a larger house in Broomhaugh (Riding Mill). We wish him happiness in his new home and thank him for the work he has done as a local Councillor and in other ways while he has lived in Wylam.

We will remember them

Remembrance Day this year is on Sunday, 8th 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 poppy wreaths will be laid in memory of the fallen. Everyone is welcome to join the services.

Great support for new history of St. Oswin's

We were pleased to be able to give prominent advance publicity in our last issue to the Flower and Garden Festival arranged as part of St. Oswin's Centenary celebrations, and the event proved to be a most enjoyable and profitable success.

Publicised at the same time was Colin Tyson's 'History of the Church and Parish of St. Oswin's, Wylam'. Thanks to tremendous support, with more than 100 individuals or families agreeing to becoming subscribers, the Parochial Church Council was able to go ahead

with publication in the confident knowledge that they had already raised almost half of the printer's bill from subscribers.

The book was duly launched at a very pleasant ceremony at the Vicarage (appropriately on St. Oswin's day), and Colin Tyson has been widely, and rightly, complimented on his excellent work.

Everyone with an interest in the village (whether or not you ever go to church) will find it of great interest. It would be an ideal Christmas present and copies can still be obtained, price £2.50 each, from Don Harrison, 22 Falcon Terrace, (Tel. 3271), or from the Vicarage.

Ideas on speeding?

The speed of traffic down Holeyn Hall Road and the recent fatal accident has prompted the Parish Council and local residents to write again to the Chief Constable and the County Surveyor urging that action should be taken to try and bring drivers to their senses.

More speed traps are likely but there appears to be little prospect of any permanent solution to this problem. Anyone with any new, and practical ideas is welcome to write to the Parish Council.



A fine photograph by 'Hexham Courant' photographer Tony Iley, taken at the launch of Colin Tyson's new book, showing Colin receiving the congratulations of the Vicar, Stephen Huxley and Evie Tyson displaying the framed map and the bouquet presented to them to mark the occasion. - Courtesy - Hexham Courant.

Go out and enjoy yourself—it's Community Week

It's very rarely that newcomers to the village have any difficulty in settling in and becoming involved in local activities if they want to be. But if you have moved here during the last twelve months and feel you haven't been able to meet as many people as you would have liked, then the Annual Community Week (31st October to 7th November) will be an ideal opportunity to meet other local residents socially.

Founded in 1961, Community Week is now a highlight of village life during the Autumn with many societies and groups arranging activities for your enjoyment and at the same time helping to raise money to look after the Institute.

On the first day (Saturday, 31st), three events are planned, starting with a Craft Fair - (always worth a visit) which will be open from 10.30 a.m., with ploughman's lunches available and a creche if you need it, organised by the Institute Committee and the Nursery School mothers.

After tea (you'll have to have that at home!), you can then experience a Hallowe'en Spook Garden between 5.30-7 p.m. in the paddock (late Jack Donkey's field) of Sycamore, Ovingham Road, courtesy of the Hendricks family. Organised by the Junior Badminton Club, this event was a great success last year.

From there, you can go straight to the Bonfire and Firework Display on the Jubilee Field. Contributions of wood and help to build the bonfire would be welcome on Saturday morning. The fireworks are provided by the Parish Council, but doubts have been expressed as to whether fireworks are worth the high cost. (See separate article - let us know your views).

The Community Week Service this year will be held in the Methodist Church at 6 p.m. on Sunday evening - everyone is welcome.

A Fashion Show and Catalogue Clothes Sale is planned for Monday evening (2nd) organised by the Dramatic Society. Remember to take some ready money with you so that you can buy on the night.

Tuesday has its traditional mix with the Friends of Wylam Coffee Morning and a Photographic Society Slide Show in the evening, this year featuring the 'Austrian Lakes'.

Wendy Howe will be giving a Microwave Cookery Demonstration on Wednesday evening. Although some of the products can be tasted, you'll probably need to have your evening meal beforehand!

On Thursday night those very popular favourites - the Prudhoe Gleemen (including several stalwarts from Wylam) will be giving a Grand Concert at

7.30 p.m. Tickets from W.I. members.

Each year the Institute Committee comes up with something new - this year provides the opportunity to skate on synthetic ice in the Institute. It's probably the first time the Institute has ever been used as a skating rink. Open from 4 - 10 p.m. on Friday evening, it will give everyone interested a chance to try their skill (skates provided).

Whilst some will be skating downstairs, others will have the chance to join a sponsored workout from 8 - 9 p.m. upstairs in the Institute. Suitable for all abilities.

The final Saturday (7th) includes the popular Coffee Morning organised by the Horticultural Society, with a bring and buy and produce stall - and the week ends with a Party Night organised by that dynamic duo, Pam and David Johnson - who will ensure that you enjoy yourselves!

The wide range of entertainment during the week should provide something of interest for everyone - please support as many events as you can - you'll enjoy them and the Institute will benefit.

Correspondence relating to this Newsletter should be addressed to Mrs. S. Vincent, The Clerk to the Parish Council, Briardene, Wylam Wood Road. (Tel. 2457). Printed for Wylam Parish Council by The Gilpin Press, Houghton-le-Spring DH4 4BA