

THE WYLAM GLOBE

Newsletter of Wylam Parish Council

Number 5

July 1974

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

The 90 residents who packed the Institute for the Annual Parish Meeting provoked lively discussion on several topics – and particularly the problems of the open spaces on the Dene Estate.

We hope that those who came enjoyed the meeting and perhaps learned something more about what is being done in the village and some of the issues which remain to be resolved.

Don't forget that the normal meetings of the Parish Council are open to the public and you're welcome to attend.

DENE ESTATE – OPEN SPACES

At the meeting following the Annual Parish Meeting, the Parish Council considered the various points of view which had been expressed about the use of the open spaces/landscaped areas on the Dene Estate.

It was felt that there would be little benefit in trying to limit the use of some areas by notices and/or bye-laws, which would be difficult to enforce.

Nevertheless, it is clear that where the open spaces are small and very close to the houses, they are not really suitable for any form of ball game.

Similarly, none of the areas within the estate is very suitable for use by children over the age of 8 years, with the exception of the general play area in the north-east corner of the estate (on the footpath to Rift Farm), and the area in Engine Dene.

In any high density development like the Dene Estate, it is particularly important that everyone adopts a reasonable attitude – whether it be in the use of the open spaces, the control of dogs, or the volume of noise from late-night activities!

At present the Parish Council feels, therefore, that rather than making laws and regulations, the best solution lies in:

1. Asking everyone to use the open spaces sensibly (i.e. not damaging the trees or neighbouring gardens, and not allowing dogs to foul these areas or the verges), and
2. In trying to provide better playing facilities for children in the village.

In an attempt to increase the number of official play areas, the Parish Council has written to the Director of Education asking if the County Council would be willing to lease the area of open space next to the old school once the temporary classrooms are removed. He has also been asked if the playing fields to be provided at the new school could be made available for general use, and whether it is possible to have a local play-leader during the holiday periods.

One of the most suitable play areas is the rough ground between the Dene and Jackson Road, next to the Dene Estate shops.

This land had been promised to the village by the late Mr. C. J. W. Blakett, but unfortunately this promise was never put into writing. The Parish Council recently wrote again to the Trustees of the Blakett estate asking if they would be willing to rent or lease this area, even if they weren't prepared to give it to the Parish, but this only resulted in their making an application for outline planning permission to build houses on the land! Not quite the reply we were hoping for, and one which would make the general problem much worse by reducing the areas of open land within the village, and increasing the numbers of houses and children – and the amount of traffic!

Needless to say, the Parish Council strongly opposes housing development on this land and has asked Tynedale District Council to refuse planning permission.

The Trustees are also seeking planning permission for housing on part of the rough land between Woodvale Gardens and Engine Dene, but the Parish Council has asked that this should, if possible, be left undeveloped.

LOCK-UP GARAGES IN HEDLEY ROAD

Work on building the new lock-up garages alongside the entrance to the childrens' playground is now almost complete.

The actual position of these garages has caused much comment, and, to put the record straight, this was NOT the site which the Parish Council had suggested to Hexham R.D.C., and indeed, the Parish Council had not been told that any garages were actually going to be built – let alone built on a site which has a number of disadvantages!

It was particularly regrettable that the tenant whose garden has been affected was not given any advance warning.

Clearly the errors were made by the former Hexham R.D.C., (not by the new Tynedale District Council who inherited the committed project) but in mitigation, it took place during the period immediately prior to local government reorganisation, when there were many other problems for the councils to deal with.

Nevertheless, the Parish Council has expressed its concern at this breakdown in communication and has asked the new District Council, Tynedale, to maintain close liaison on anything which affects the village and local people – so that this type of incident does not occur again.

COMMEMORATION OF WYLAM RAILWAY PIONEERS — A VILLAGE SIGN?

Next year, 1975, is the 150th anniversary of the opening of the Stockton and Darlington railway—the first public passenger steam railway in the world, and arrangements are already being made in the Stockton and Darlington areas to mark this special event.

Although Wylam is not directly associated with the Stockton - Darlington line, it does have very special and very close links with this famous railway, since three Wylam-born engineers were involved with the project. George Stephenson and Nicholas Wood were responsible for the design of the scheme, and Timothy Hackworth was the first resident engineer to the railway company.

Some twelve years before the opening of the Stockton - Darlington railway, William Hedley designed and built 'Puffing Billy' and 'Wylam Dilly' at Wylam, whilst he was the Colliery viewer (manager) to Christopher Blackett. These two engines are now among the oldest preserved locomotives in the world.

At present there is little in the village to mark its importance in the history of locomotive development and it has been suggested that something should be done to commemorate the early railway pioneers born locally, and that this might be arranged next year to coincide with the 150th anniversary.

In accepting this suggestion, the Parish Council has agreed in principle to the idea of having an attractive village sign designed — probably portraying an early locomotive as part of the design. This would be a permanent reminder both to residents and visitors, of the village's proud association with early railway history.

As a free-standing sign it will need to be sited somewhere in the centre of the village (Charlie's Corner, the Institute garden, the corner of Chapel Lane or near the War Memorial are all possible alternative sites) and it is important that it is well designed, durable, and worthy of the village and the men it will commemorate.

The Parish Council is obtaining the help of a specialist designer to advise on the design, suitable materials and costs.

"WELL DONE"

Congratulations to the local football and cricket teams who have been doing so well in recent months, and putting Wylam on the "sporting" map.

YOUTH CLUB

The Youth Club is now well established under the leadership of Michael Woodford, with a regular nucleus of 30-40 members. Its activities have included Table Tennis, dancing to records, board and card games and trips to the ice rink. The last meeting this summer is on Friday, 12th July.

Thanks are due to everyone who has helped and particularly Mrs. Edna Scott who has given regular unobtrusive and much-appreciated assistance.

The Club may like to increase its range of activities next term, taking advantage of the facilities available through the Youth Service and perhaps using the skills of voluntary helpers in Wylam.

Will anyone who can offer help with a particular activity please, in the first place, contact Mrs. Jacobson, (Tel. Wylam 3598) of 14 Algernon Terrace, secretary of the Supporters' Committee, as soon as possible, so that the club may know what help is available. If any youngsters would like instruction in any specific activity would they also please pass requests to Mrs. Jacobson.

FOOTPATH VOLUNTEERS

The first of the volunteer working parties to help improve the environment of the village by clearing footpaths and tidying waste ground was held on Saturday, May 4th. Although this unfortunately clashed with the Playgroup Pancake Race, 15 volunteers, in two groups, successfully cleared rubbish from part of the river bank between Stephenson Terrace and Stephenson's Cottage, and improved the footpath towards Rift Farm, burning rubbish, etc., from that area.

The next 'Working Party' has been fixed for Saturday morning 13th July. Please meet on the Boys Brigade playing field at 10 a.m. (approx.) Old clothes, boots and gloves recommended. Please bring pruners, bush saws, spades etc. if you possess them. (If not just a pair of willing hands will do!) Everyone welcome. We look forward to a good turnout. Your village needs you!

P.S. Thank you to everyone who helped last time — please come again on July 13th.

NORTHERN GAS CONSUMERS' COUNCIL

The Gas Consumers' Council has asked us to draw the attention of local residents to their existence. The Council state that they will be pleased to assist any gas consumer in resolving difficulties which they have been unable to resolve with Northern Gas. (**But don't contact the Consumers' Council until you have tried to settle the problem with Northern Gas.**)

Any representations should be made either to the Consumers' Council's offices at 18 Fawcett Street, Sunderland SR1 1RH (Tel. Sunderland 74272) or the local representative on the Consumers' Committee is Councillor S. Ralph, 6, Homedale Place, Prudhoe.

WYLAM BROWNIES

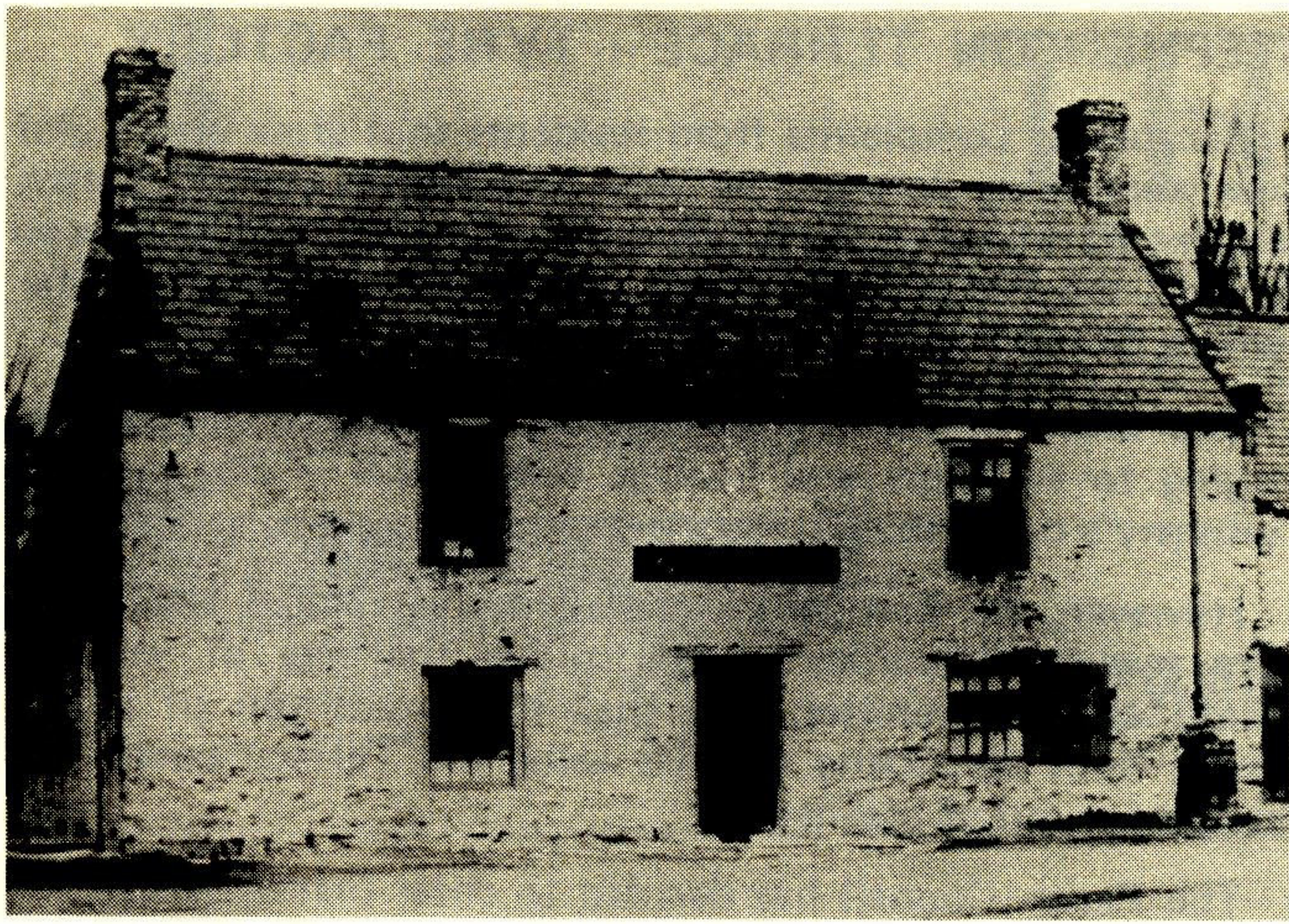
1974 is the Diamond Jubilee of the Brownie Movement and in a national competition, the Wylam pack of 28 — led by Mrs. Pam Douglas — represented Northumberland in the finals at York. Although the eventual winners were a pack from Humberside, the Wylam pack had previously won heats at Hexham and Ashington. Their entry was based on the theme of Friendship and included the making of uniforms of different nations, visiting pensioners and entertaining friends and relations.



Also this year to commemorate the 13th Century of Hexham Abbey, the pack took part in a pageant. Incidentally, both the Wylam Guides and Boys' Brigade were among those lining the route for the Queen's visit to Hexham on July 1st.

The pack is frequently larger than the official figure of 24 and usually has a waiting list. Mrs. Douglas attributes its success to the enthusiasm of the members, but much credit must surely go to "Brown Owl" herself.

Note: Short articles about other local organisations will be included in future.



OLD WYLAM

Our photograph of the Mill fire, reproduced in the last issue interested many people; this month's photograph (kindly lent by Mr. T. Pattinson of Wylam Wood) shows a building which no longer exists. Can you identify it and say where it stood?

The answer is given at the bottom of the back page.

Many of you will have old photographs which could be of interest to other local residents — if so, we'd very much like to borrow them and include them in the "Globe."

Please let Mrs. Fairless (Clerk of the Parish Council) at 31 Falcon Terrace, have any photographs (which will be carefully copied and then returned) and will appear in future issues of this newsletter.

NEW SCHOOL — OLD SCHOOL

The new primary school is now in use — for which everyone locally will be thankful! Moving into the school building this term will enable most of the teething troubles to be sorted out before the new school year starts in September.

Although it was a struggle to get a new school built in the village, it is now a reality and we are appreciative of the efforts of all those people involved in promoting and carrying out the project.

We wish Mr. McKie and his staff and pupils every success in the new school.

One potential problem is the lack of car parking and turning space for parents bringing or collecting their children in cars. The Parish Council is still pressing the County Council to make some provision for this, and our County Councillor is making strong efforts to get a turning and parking area provided. Whatever happens there is likely to be only limited space for parents' cars, and the best, and probably the safest solution is to collect or deliver by car only when really necessary.

What about the old school building? A small part will continue to be used temporarily by the school, but it is intended to adapt the building to accommodate a variety of uses, including a new library, and Youth and Further Education facilities. Other activities for which part can probably be used include the clinic and playgroup.

Fortunately the expenditure necessary to convert the old building to its new uses should not be excessive, and it is hoped that the County Council will carry out what is needed to accommodate the new library early next year.

The need for improved local library facilities has been stressed for many years, and our local County Councillor, Christopher D'Ambrumenil, is being asked to try to press for this work to be begun as soon as possible, so that the old school building is put to good use — and not allowed to remain empty for long.

VILLAGE DIARY — WHAT'S ON

JULY

- Saturday 6th C.P.F.A. Field Day starts at 2 p.m. followed by presentation to Dr. Swindale at 4.30 p.m.
- Saturday 13th (a.m.) Volunteer Working Party — clearing Footpaths, etc. Meet on the B.B. field at 10 a.m. (approx.).
- Saturday 13th (p.m.) Conservative Garden Fete at Southlands, Wylam Wood Road.

AUGUST

Nothing special recorded in the Village Diary for this month.

SEPTEMBER

- Friday 6th Pop Night — Church Hall — 8 to 9.30 p.m.
- Saturday 28th Friends of Wylam Jumble Sale at 2.30 p.m. in the Institute.

For further information about the Village Diary telephone Mrs. Hurd at Wylam 2563

NEW MIDDLE SCHOOL

Shortly after his newsletter had been printed, but before the "Globe" went to press, Councillor D'Ambrumenil notified us that the Department of Education and Science had now given approval to the tender for the building of the new Middle School at Ovingham. Work will begin almost immediately, with the aim of completing it by September, 1975.

DON'T DUMP IT!

As part of the volunteer clearance project, more than a dozen sacks of scrap iron, bottles, cans, polythene bags, etc., and plenty of garden rubbish were removed from the riverside and we appeal to all residents, and particularly to those living near the river, NOT to dump garden rubbish (or any other type of refuse) on the river banks.

The Tynedale District Council has agreed to collect almost any type of rubbish which is put out in the dustbins or in sacks, boxes etc.

The District Council is also considering the idea of providing a large metal skip (container) in a convenient location in the larger villages (like Wylam) so that residents can dump any very large items of rubbish which couldn't be taken away in the normal refuse wagon, but most rubbish can be taken in the regular weekly collection.

There are, therefore, no excuses for anyone dumping any rubbish on the riverside, in the roadside verges, the old station yard or any of the areas of rough ground in the village. (Those who are dumping in the railway cutting at the back of Woodcroft Road, on the river banks, along Bluebell Lane, in Engine Dene, in the children's playground and elsewhere — please note.)

As the various areas of derelict land and waste ground are improved, the "convenient" areas for dumping will be reduced — so now is the time to stop those bad and illegal habits, and put your own rubbish in your own dustbin. (Why not buy a second — or third dustbin if you need it?)

Remember that under the Civic Amenities Act, the fine for dumping rubbish is up to £100. This law applies everywhere — INCLUDING WYLAM.

Perhaps one day it might be worth entering the best kept village competition!

SCENIC WALKWAY

At their meeting in May, the County Planning Committee approved details of the scheme to reclaim the disused railway track between Hagg Bank and Blayne Row, Newburn, to provide an attractive walkway.

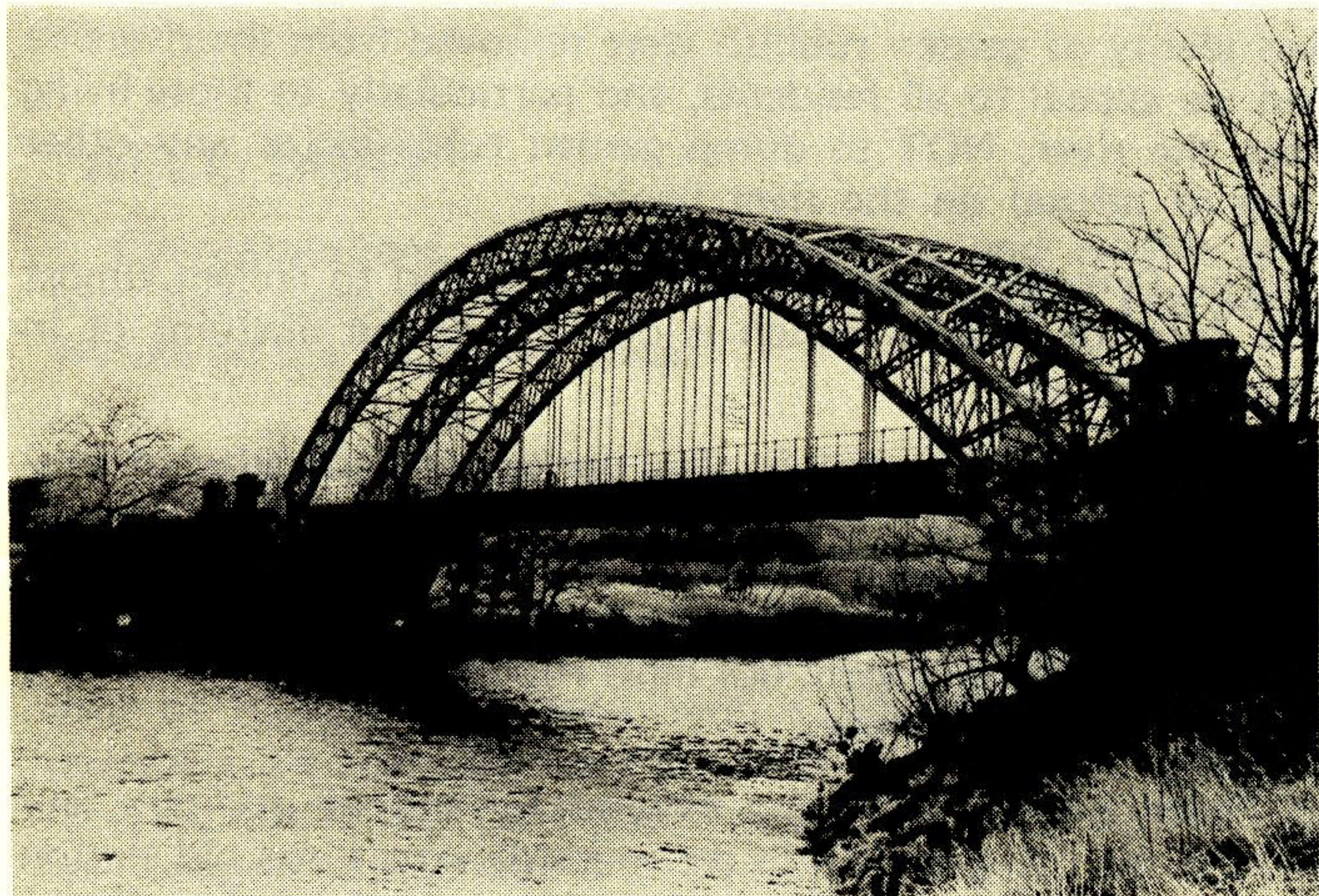
The plans were on public display in the Institute for a week, early in June, and have been considered by the Parish Council, who strongly support the project.

The main features (insofar as it affects Wylam) are:—

1. The levelling and improvement of parts of the track surface (including the removal of the rough clinker and the seeding of the side of the track) to make it convenient and attractive as a walkway. The boundary fences will be repaired or replaced as necessary.
2. The construction of a short length of new public footpath between the river bridge and Hagg Bank, which will complete a link in the public footpath system and provide an attractive walk from the village to the south side of the river via Hagg Bank.
3. The old railway bridge over the river at Hagg Bank is to be repaired, repainted and made safe for use as a footbridge.
4. The "Bumbler Box" bridge off Woodcroft Road, which provides access to the allotments and riverside area will be re-decked and repaired.
5. The disused concrete footbridge and derelict platforms in the old station yard will be cleared away. The western part of this yard will be used as a car park and the remainder landscaped with grass and trees. The existing footpath across the station yard between the War Memorial and Falcon Terrace is to be improved.

The estimated cost of the whole scheme is £42,920—of which about £16,500 will be for repairing the two bridges. The Government pay 85% of the total costs.

The County Council is hoping to start work on the project in late July, and most of it should be completed next spring. The sooner this major eyesore in the centre of the village is reclaimed, the better.



This former railway bridge has been acquired by the County Council and is to be repaired and used as a footbridge on the new walkway.

As part of the old Scotswood — Newburn — Wylam railway, this single span wrought iron bridge was built in 1876 at a cost of £16,000, and is possibly the first arch rib bridge to support a suspended railway track.

CONCESSIONARY FARES

The County Council has notified the Parish Council that it is not able to make any concessionary tickets available for O.A.P.s this year, but that a county scheme may be considered in the future.

STEPHENSON TERRACE — TYRE FACTORY

Because of complaints from residents that grass verges and trees were being damaged by very large lorries and articulated vehicles travelling to the tyre factory at the end of Stephenson Terrace, the Parish Council has met representatives from the owners, Dunlop Ltd. in an attempt to reduce these problems.

The chief offenders seem to be articulated vehicles belonging to suppliers and haulage contractors — and not the Company's own vehicles.

However, the Company's representatives stated that there were severe difficulties in controlling the size of vehicles calling at the premises, but that the imposition of a low weight limit restricting vehicles using the Terrace could put the factory out of business.

The Parish Council has decided to defer immediate action about imposing a weight restriction, but has advised the Tyre Company of the strong local feeling regarding the damage done by vehicles, and requested that the Company must try and make urgent arrangements with suppliers, etc., to avoid using articulated vehicles when delivering to the factory.

If this fails it may be necessary to press for a more drastic solution.

In the meantime residents in Stephenson Terrace may wish to continue keeping a record of the registration numbers and names of owners of any large vehicles which damage the trees or the verges, and to let the Clerk of the Parish Council have details of these offenders so that Dunlop Ltd. can be notified.

LOW PLATFORM — WYLAM STATION

Following complaints about the low platforms at the station, an approach has been made to British Rail requesting that they raise the platform height.

British Rail have replied that in view of their limited funds, and the high cost of such work, they are unable to raise the platforms at present, but they have promised in the meantime, to provide a set of portable steps at the station so that passengers can request the Guard of the train to use these to help them. (The possibility of obtaining funds to carry out permanent work on raising the platforms in the future is also being discussed with the County Council).

OLD WYLAM (Answer)

This early photograph shows the Old Institute which stood on the open space now known as Charlie's Corner — next to Brewery House and facing south down Woodcroft Road. One half of the building was used as the Institute and the other half as a cottage.

The new (present) Institute is in the background on the right of the photograph.

Can anyone please tell us when the old building was demolished? We think it was pulled down between 1914-1920, but can anyone confirm (or deny) this?, and give us a more exact date. What was it used for after the new Institute was opened and who is the man propping up the doorway?

All correspondence relating to this Newsletter should be addressed to Mrs. D. Fairless, The Clerk of the Parish Council, 31, Falcon Terrace, Wylam.