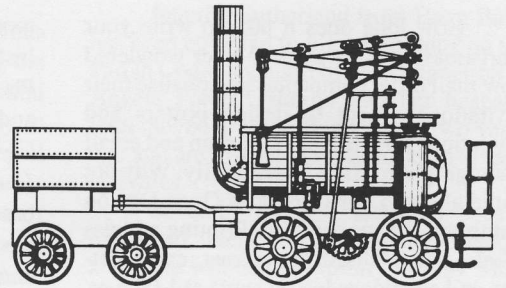


THE WYLAM GLOBE

Newsletter of Wylam Parish Council



Winter 2002

Number 72

Village questionnaire gets a good response

Response to one of the most comprehensive surveys of Wylam residents for a long time, perhaps ever, has been seen as very encouraging by the Steering Committee set up by the Parish Council to conduct the project.

By the slightly extended closing date of 7th October, 550 replies had been received from the 865 Wylam households, a return of 63.5%. To mention that the Committee had hoped for 70% sounds rather churlish now, because "experts" tell us that a return of 35% is usual with this type of survey!

We tried to give people the opportunity to include comments and suggestions rather than risk ending up just with a mass of statistics, which might not mean very much. The penalty for this is that the hard-working team of volunteers who are transferring the data onto the computer software purchased for the purpose, are finding it quite a slog.

So, how did this start and what's it all in aid of? The Government has provided a pot of money under the title "Vital Villages", aiming to encourage Parishes to look at the issues affecting their community. They gave responsibility to the Countryside Agency to administer the scheme. The intention is to offer grants, initially to help Parishes identify key issues, and in specific situations to grant aid the provision of community services, Local Transport and Rural Transport Partnerships. It doesn't necessarily stop there. Increasingly, other grant-awarding bodies are looking for evidence that applicant communities have researched people's wishes and can provide details of this.

It is interesting to note that at the launch of this scheme in 2001, it was stated that, nationally:

- 46% of Parishes had no post office
- 91% had no community internet facility
- 16% had no bus service at all
- 49% had no youth group or club
- 58% had no recreational clubs or activities for the retired or over 60s

We hope you will notice that Wylam is fortunate to be already blessed with all of these! However, we know from the range of issues raised at annual Parish Meetings and occasionally at other times, that in Wylam there are other things that exercise people's minds.

By the early part of next year it is hoped that all data and opinions from the questionnaires and the public meetings will have been collected and analysed. No doubt there are many people just curious to know where most households shop for their food, or even how many find this newsletter of



The scene on Ingham Terrace when the lime tree in front of Wormald House (centre background) was being felled by the County Council. Checks are being made on the condition of the other trees on the opposite side of the road.

Of course, there's more to the process than the questionnaire. A series of public meetings is about to be launched which all Wylam residents are welcome to attend. The first two of these are taking shape as this issue of the Wylam Globe goes to press. On Wednesday, 20th November one of the most frequently commented-upon issues, "Transport and Highways" will be the subject, and on 12th December it will be the turn of issues relating to "The Environment and Quality of Life". Both meetings will take place in the Swindale Room of Wylam Institute and will commence at 7.30 p.m. It is hoped that these meetings, together with others in the New Year covering other topics, will not so much encourage a repetition of comments made in the questionnaires, but will enable a greater exchange of ideas and enlargement on key points that concern you, as residents.

interest. Please be patient and all will be revealed! A full report is to be prepared together with a shorter summary, and we hope to be able to provide a copy of the latter for every household. To assist with this process, a Consultant, Sue Harley, who has experience of work of this kind, has been appointed on a part-time basis with Wylam resident, Jim Robertson providing local support and advice on a voluntary basis. Sue will be responsible for drafting the report stage, with our objective being to publish the final Report and Village Plan in April. It will subsequently be for the new Parish Council to progress action, following the Parish elections in May.

This is essentially a Parish Council initiative, but I would like to pay tribute to the great number of people, together representing a cross-section of our village

... continued over

Get more from computers this Christmas

How long does it take to write your Christmas card envelopes? Ever wondered how mail order companies personalise their invitations? Want to design posters and invitations for Christmas, or scan and email photographs to friends and family. Why not come along to our Christmas Open Day on Saturday, November 23rd. Printing address labels, personalised invitations, cards, letters and envelopes lesson starts at 1.00 p.m. Designing invitations and cards, scanning and emailing photographs, printing posters and all your other Christmas ideas - drop in between 2.00 and 5.00 p.m.

We now have over 200 regular and occasional users of the computers, but we would like a lot more! Local businesses are taking advantage of the facilities for printing and laminating posters and local groups, including the Guides and The Gardeners' Society use it for research on the Internet and to produce posters and invitations. In addition to using the computers printers, laminator and digital camera, users drop in to have their questions answered and to find others in the village who can help them with their problems.

The volunteers entering the feedback from the village survey have put one of the computers to excellent use. Six volunteers have spent around 100 hours entering your answers ready for the Parish Council to undertake their analysis. Brian Japes, Chair of the Village Survey Steering Group says "With over 500 questionnaires returned the data entry needed to be shared - and the only possible way was by using a computer accessible to all the volunteers. A big thank you to Wylam Institute Computers."

As a result of feedback from our users we now offer training facilities. We've trained over 30 people on one or

more of the Taster Courses run in the Institute covering Word Processing, Digital Photography, Desk Top Publishing, email and the Internet. We are also a centre for a Government backed training organisation, *Learndirect*. *Learndirect* offer computer based training on over 750 courses in business, personal development and computer skills (many of them free!) and the great thing is that you can manage your own learning - using computers at home, work or in the Institute, fitting learning in with your other responsibilities. Local and *Learndirect* representatives are available Wednesday evenings to answer your questions, provide advice and sign you up for courses.

It's been a whole year since we've been up and running and to celebrate we invited local businesses and organisations to a *Way Forward* meeting. We've now got lots of ideas for projects for the New Year to help you get more from computers. Watch out for more information on our Surgeries - with topics to include Digital Photography and Web Page Design and our plans for a *Wylam Web Site* to include adverts for local businesses, information on groups and societies, historical information and news - an idea supported by many of you in the Village Survey.

If you would like any more information about Wylam Institute Computers or feel you have computer related skills (no matter how basic) to offer the village please drop in to the Institute on Wednesdays (10.00 a.m. to 12.00 noon and 6.30 to 8.30 p.m.) or contact Viv Smith

(smithvivien@hotmail.com
telephone 853713).

Village Questionnaire

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community, who have and are still giving an immense amount of help with this project. From members of the Steering Committee, people who took part in a "pilot" of the questionnaire, distributors of literature and data inputters, over 40 people have been involved so far. Without this sort of help, a project of this scale would not get very far. The opportunity will be taken to record our thanks more fully when things are concluded. However, it is to all of you reading this and who responded to the questionnaire that we owe the greatest thanks. With this level of response we can feel much more confident about the validity of any conclusions that are drawn. Please continue to give your support by coming along to the public meetings over the next few weeks, and to those that will take place in January.

Brian H. Japes
Chairman, Village Plan Steering
Committee

Dates for your Diary

The dates for the public meetings for the Village Plan consultation are as follows:

Wednesday, 20th November

'Transport & Highway' Issues

Thursday, 12th December

'Environment & Quality of Life' Issues

Wednesday, 15th January

'Health & Social Services' and

'Public Services & Shopping'

Thursday, 23rd January

'Housing & Community Information'

Tuesday, 28th January

'Sport & Leisure Provision' and

'Education & Learning'

and 'Employment'

All meetings will be in the Swindale Room at the Institute and will commence at 7.30 p.m. All Wylam residents are welcome to attend and participate in the discussions.

Items in brief...

In response to requests and complaints from the Parish Council and local residents, the County Council has agreed to carry out a study of parking and traffic problems within the village, as part of the Local Transport Plan for Tynedale. Details of exactly what this study will include have not yet been finalised, but concern about roads and traffic is one of the main worries of village residents.

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Thank you to Councillor Paul Kelly and the County Council Countryside Department for arranging to have the Country Park Car Park resurfaced with tarmac. A great improvement - partially funded by the income from the car park fees.

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The annual Christmas lunch will take place on Wednesday, 4th December in the Institute, and all Wylam residents who are aged 60 or over are cordially invited.

Anyone who would like to come should please contact Ursula Barker (Tel. 852621) so that a place can be reserved for you.

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Friends of Wylam wish to thank everyone who supported their Bazaar on 7th September. They were delighted to have raised £672 which will be used to fund future events.

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Congratulations to the village cricket teams who had an excellent summer season - and gave the village some good P.R.! The First XI won the West Tyne League for the second year running.

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Wylam Shelter Group is planning to organise a Village Garden Walk as a fundraiser in June 2003. If you would be willing to offer your garden for viewing at this time, or would like to discuss the idea, please contact Dorothy Eavis (Tel. 852188). Early offers of help or expressions of interest would be appreciated.

• • •

Repeating our regular requests to those with hedges or trees growing alongside roads or footpaths - please check that they are not obstructing anyone walking along the pavement/footpath. Now is a good time to cut back hedges, when there are no leaves on the bushes. Where overgrown hedges are a nuisance and their owners consistently fail to take action, the Parish Council will report the problem to the County Highways Department who have legal powers to deal with the matter.

• • •

Playing Field Association Jumble Sale on Saturday, 11th January.

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Burns Night Ceilidh will be held on Saturday, 25th January.

Improvements planned for Falcon Centre yard

The need for improved maintenance of the Falcon Centre (which houses the library, youth club, museum and playgroup) has been apparent for several years, but the County Council has never been able to find money to do the necessary work. An associated problem has been the misuse of the yard area by a small number of young people causing a nuisance to nearby residents.

In an effort to find a solution and achieve an improvement in the appearance of the premises, a working group comprising representatives of the county,

district and parish councils, and the various users of the centre has been examining the problems and possible solutions. Initial action - probably in the spring, is likely to include removal of the old damaged western cycle shed, resurfacing the lower yard area, improved fencing at the back of Swindale Cottages, better lighting and repainting of the exterior of the Falcon Centre building. These improvements and more regular weeding of the garden area should smarten the appearance of the premises.



Work in progress on resurfacing the remainder of the Country Park Car Park, which has improved the appearance of the area. Income from parking charges is being used towards the cost of such improvements.

Centenary appeal to restore church bells

The events arranged at the beginning of October to celebrate the Centenary of the formation of the Parish of St. Oswin, Wylam in 1902 were well supported. An exhibition of parish memorabilia and photographs showing a variety of personalities and events over the past century, and a special display prepared by the Local History Society which included detailed lists of local residents from the 1901 Census returns, with contemporary photographs of the village in late Victorian/early Edwardian times, proved very popular.

The Centenary Celebration concert in the church showed the all-age range of talents which the parish possesses and was thoroughly enjoyable. The church had been beautifully decorated for the centenary - and the offer of a glass of wine at the end of the concert was a bonus!

Perhaps the highlight of the celebrations was the visit by the Bishop of Newcastle on the 10th October for a special eucharist, followed by a splendid reception in the Institute.

Congratulations to everyone who has helped to make the celebrations so successful - all that now remains is to raise the money needed to repair and restore the

church bells and bell tower - a total of almost £22,000 is required, of which £7,200 has been raised so far.

Watch out for notices and leaflets advertising more fund-raising events, due out soon. Meanwhile donations to the Bell Fund can be sent to the Church Treasurer, Michael Gibbney at 2 Denecroft (tel: 853898).

Jubilee Memories

The last edition of this newsletter was published just before the Queen's Golden Jubilee, and although memories of village events to commemorate this occasion may be fading a little by now, we should like to thank all those who helped to organise the celebrations. Pam and David Johnson who planned and compered the very enjoyable evening's entertainment in the Institute report that over £420 was raised for the Institute funds. Well done.

The fine Jubilee seat kindly donated by the C.J.W. Blackett Villages Trust, fixed in position at the corner of the Orchard/Church Road, opposite the Vicarage, and next to the bus stop, has been much admired.

New Parish Councillor

Jennifer Sutherland from Hagg Bank has been co-opted to fill the vacancy on the Parish Council caused by the resignation of Angela Porter. Jennifer and her husband Paul moved to Hagg Bank nearly two years ago and are involving themselves in village activities.

Several other residents have expressed interest in joining the Council, and there will be opportunity in May when the next Parish Council elections are held.

If you are interested and would like information on how you could be considered for the Parish Council next year, please give your name and address to Karen Webster, Clerk to the Parish Council now, and she will arrange to let you have details when they are published next March.

Fast and furious farce

Wylam Amateur Dramatic Society's next offering is "Funny Money", by Ray Cooney, author of "Run for your Wife". As the title implies, it is a fast and furious farce, just a touch risqué perhaps, involving briefcases (oh, how it involves briefcases!), various sorts of policemen and many attempts to get to Barcelona. The production is at the Institute at 7.30 p.m. on Thursday 28th, Friday 29th and Saturday 30th November. Tickets available from the Teashop, Vera Walton at Rose Cottage, any member of the Society, or at the door. Price £4, concessions £3.

Guides need help now

Alison Malcolm, the local District Commissioner for the Guides is renewing her plea for helpers to assist with running the Wylam Guides. She has sent this letter to several organisations within the village, and if anyone would be willing to offer any help however little, please contact Alison at 12 Dene Road (Tel. 853328).

"I am writing on behalf of Wylam Guides and other units in Tynedale East Division. We are in need of help in this unit and others. At present Marilyn Harding is running Wylam Guides on her own with a parent helper on a rota basis. In an ideal world we would have at least two warranted leaders. Alas, we do recognise that this is not always possible but often there are little jobs that individuals can do for the unit without going through the formalities of the Adult Leadership Scheme. Many people have skills that they can offer the girls from crafts and household skills to the outdoors and drama. If anyone feels they can offer any time at all we would be very grateful. The Guide programme is extremely diverse opening up many opportunities for girls.

We also require assistance outside the units with fundraising, book-keeping/accounts, public relations etc. If you feel you would like to help keep Guiding alive in our area please contact me for a chat. All time and skills given will be very appreciated."

Lottery fund gives green light to play area

The Playing Fields Association has recently been awarded an amazing £34,000 by the Community Fund (Lottery) towards its Playing Field project. With the money already raised this makes up the full £46,000 needed to start the scheme. We are very excited that it will now be possible to create a new play area on Wylam Jubilee Field that many local children will enjoy.

The plan is to add a tower climbing unit for older children, a pedal roundabout and two more swings. The adventure trail and bouncer will be updated. All the tiles will be replaced by continuous safety surfacing. We are keeping the popular suspension bridge and toddler slide. There will also be three benches around the play area.

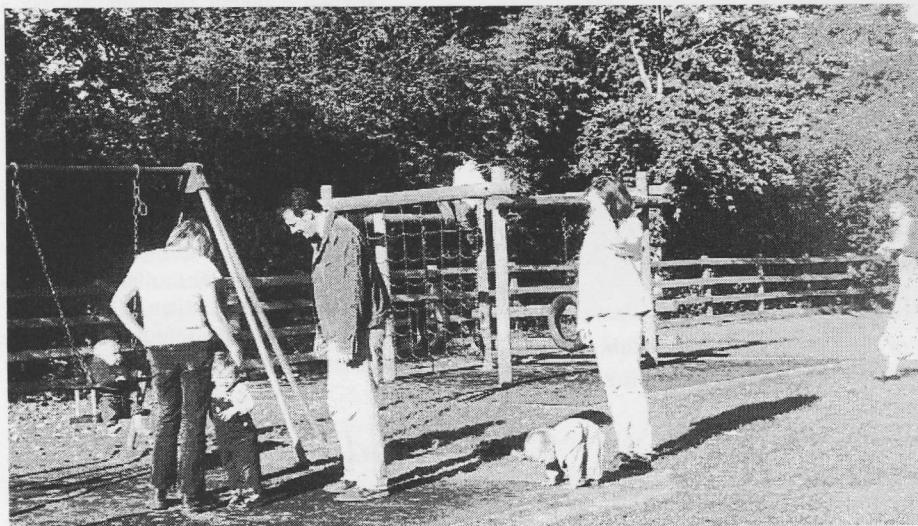
One reason we won the grant, was our proposal to site a youth shelter beyond the pavilion. This was first suggested by young

people who felt that there is nothing for them on the field. The shelter is metal with three sides, rather like a small bus stop. We are hoping that by providing somewhere separate, the play area will no longer be used as a shelter.

Work on this big project will begin in the New Year, once Northumbrian Water have finished pipelaying. Volunteers are going to level the area and remove old equipment before everything is put in. We aim to have it finished by Easter 2003, ready for opening at next year's Summer Fair.

If you would like to help with preparing the site or have any questions, please contact Jennifer Power on 852834.

**COMMUNITY
FUND**
LOTTERY FUNDED



By next spring the popular play area on the Jubilee Field should be transformed with new equipment and safety surfacing. A special shelter for young people is also being provided to the west of the pavilion.

More people tracing their Wylam ancestors

People's growing interest in tracing their family roots is resulting in more requests to the Parish Council, local clergymen, the History Society and others for information about families who lived in the village in past times.

In recent months these have included the former M.P. Sir David Mitchell, who has Blackett ancestors; a grandson of Gerald Paget who lived at Talland House on Wylam Wood Road, served in the Royal Flying Corps and was killed in the First World War (his name appears on the village War Memorial); and the daughter of Vera Pollard, who was a maid at Holeyn Hall for a short time in the early 1930s when the Thompson family (of Red Stamp Stores fame) lived there. The Pollards believe that the Thompsons had a daughter, who is still alive and lives in Northumberland or Durham: does anyone know whether this is true and if so where she lives? Any help

would be much appreciated. If so please contact Philip Brooks (Tel. 853520) or Karen Webster (Tel. 853619).

The Pollards would also like to contact anyone who worked at Holeyn Hall, or had relatives who worked there in the 1930s.

Inspection by experts

The condition of an attractive row of trees which have been a feature in the centre of the village for the past 100 years is due to be thoroughly checked by an expert.

The row of lime trees growing in the verge on Ingham Terrace are being inspected following the necessity to fell a similar tree on the opposite side of the road, in front of Wylam Garage/Wormald House.

Because of the importance of these trees to the village scene, the Parish Council has agreed to ask an expert arboriculturalist to examine the trees and report on their condition, and any action that is needed.

New sewer disruption

Northumbrian Water apologise for the disruption caused by the need to lay a new main pipe on top of the existing pipe which runs between the sewage pumping station in the corner of the playing field, past the old pit heap, the allotments and the nature reserve, across to the Ovingham Road and up the scar, west of Wylam Hall grounds.

Due to weight restrictions on the Bumbler Box bridge off Woodcroft Road, excavators and vehicles delivering the pipes and removing spoil have had to use the main entrance to the playing field and cross the play area. Safety procedures will operate when vehicles come onto the field.

The work should be completed by Christmas or early January, and full reinstatement of any damage caused has been promised.

In the meantime anyone using the playing field, the allotments, nature reserve or riverside area over the next two months is advised to be careful.

Christmas Concert

Get your Christmas off to a rousing start by joining the Ovington Tynedale Brass Band for a grand Christmas Concert on Friday, 13th December at 7.30 p.m. in the Institute. As well as listening to the band and singing carols, you can hear words of seasonal wit and wisdom and sparkling contributions from the JEMMS Performance Company.

Tickets, price £4, concessions £3, includes a glass of mulled wine and a mince pie. Tickets available from either the Institute office or the Tea Shop.

Appeal to dog-owners

Most dog owners now recognise the importance of clearing up after their pets, and use poop-scoop bags, putting the used bags into the nearest litter bin, or taking it home and putting it in their own wheelie bin.

However, although the number of local complaints received by either the Parish Council or Tynedale Council, about dog fouling in the village has reduced in recent years, there are some owners who still fail to use poop-scoop bags (free from shops in the village) or else leave the used bags as litter on the ground.

Neither of these is acceptable behaviour - and could result in prosecution if seen and reported.

There are sufficient litter bins convenient to most dog walking routes or dog exercise areas, but if you think there are places where additional litter bins are needed, please let the Parish Council know.

Correspondence relating to this Newsletter should be addressed to

Mrs. K. Webster, The Clerk to the Parish Council, Wylam Institute, Church Road, Wylam NE41 8AP.

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