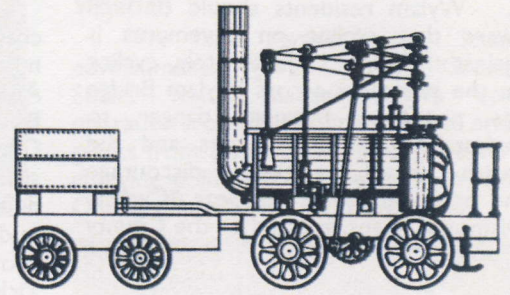


# THE WYLAM GLOBE

Newsletter of Wylam Parish Council



Autumn 2011

No. 102

## A New Lease of Life for Blakett Court

Following the long but unsuccessful campaign by many local people including the Parish Council to persuade Anchor Housing not to close their facility at Blakett Court, we were pleased to learn that the property was sold privately a few months ago to a Darlington businessman who intends to re-let the flats.

The new owner has commissioned a major refurbishment project which includes the replacement of all the kitchens and bathrooms and complete redecoration. As we go to press this work is nearing completion.

A letting agent has been appointed and it is expected that the flats will be advertised to private tenants within the very near future.

Anyone interested should contact the agent, Rook Matthews Sayer, on 01661 860228



### Garden of Remembrance

It is intended to plant daffodil bulbs in memory of relatives or friends in an area surrounding the existing Garden of Remembrance at St Oswin's Church. The bulbs are to be purchased in bulk but, for a small donation, anyone interested in sharing in this scheme is invited to do so and to contact either Kay Joures on 852743, Jean Heyes on 853138 or Judy Marr on 852573.

Planting will take place on Saturday 29 October from 2.00pm and those who wish to plant bulbs may join in themselves, or there will be people on hand to assist.

Only those bulbs supplied for the occasion may be planted and only in the specially designated areas.

Donations received will also be used for the maintenance of the Garden of Remembrance.

Anyone is invited to take part and it is hoped that the resulting "remembrance of daffodils" will be enjoyed by everyone from next spring.

### Tree Matters

*Peter Fisher writes:-*

I became the Parish Council's volunteer Tree Warden in March of this year. I have no formal qualifications but I am interested in woods and this allows me to learn more. The work so far has mainly been about trees that might pose a risk to the public. Fifteen 'crack' willows (when you break off a twig you hear a distinct 'crack'), on the riverbank, downstream from Points Bridge are affected by a fungus and shed branches. I surveyed the trees and the Parish Council decided that, in that

location, the risk would not justify the high cost of pollarding. Pollarding is a traditional practice where branches are pruned every few years to just above grazing height. Sadly two mature trees on the former slag heap beside the Jubilee Field have been burnt by vandals and need to be felled. On behalf of the Parish Council I also inspected the hedge which is interspersed with trees opposite Wylam Hills Farm. The hedge, which has been laid in the past and is mostly quite dense and overgrown, will be trimmed to eight feet high in the autumn, taking care to protect the trees.



## Cycling on Wylam Bridge

Wylam residents should be well aware that cycling on pavements is against the law. Unfortunately, cycling on the pavement across Wylam Bridge has posed a frequent danger to pedestrians for many years and the Parish Council has tried to discourage the practice, hence the clear "Cyclists Dismount" signs, erected by the County Council.

Regrettably the problem still exists. The Parish Council is aware that a recent case, in which two cyclists not only verbally abused a Wylam couple but also threatened them with physical violence, is not the only recent incident. In this particular case the couple, who were quite understandably badly shaken by the experience, contacted the County Council whose Community Safety Officer has suggested to them that anyone experiencing anything remotely similar should contact the local police team on 03456 043043 ext 69191. This will enable a log of such incidents to be made and for the police to take appropriate action.

Louise Stobbart, the County Council's Community Safety Officer, would also welcome being kept informed about this situation and she can be contacted on 01434 652383.

## Possible Transfer of Services

In the spring issue of the Wylam Globe we outlined the threat to a range of services that have been provided in the past by Northumberland County Council. This is essentially because the County is struggling to balance its books in the face of huge cuts in funding. We pointed out that several of these services in Wylam are already paid for by the Parish Council and that we were, for this reason, less exposed than many parish and town councils to major inroads into our own budget.

We were promised that a clear picture of what this might mean to this community would be made known by August 2011, but although there has been a meeting between representatives of the Parish and County Council and an exchange of correspondence, we are still waiting for final clarification.

The public toilets near the entrance to the Playing Field are a potentially contentious issue and we have made a case for them to be classed as "strategic" rather than "local", due to their extensive use by visitors to the village and those passing through. If the County Council accepts this argument, it is expected that the County will continue to pay for their upkeep and maintenance.

Another facility which was "reprieved" from cuts made a year or so ago is the library. This is almost certain to crop up again before long and we cannot underestimate the importance at a time like this of the maxim, "use it or lose it"!

## Spirit of Africa

Spirit of Africa is a children's charity with a focus on helping the vast number of orphaned children in South Africa. The charity is holding an Autumn Ball at Slaley Hall on Saturday 15 October, at 7.30pm. There will be a sparkling wine reception, three course dinner with coffee and dancing until 12 midnight. Entertainment is to be provided by singer Rachael Green. Tickets are £40 and special room rates are available if you want to stay for the night.

Contact Carol Tree on 07947139152 or 01661 835435 for tickets or if further information is required. More details about the charity can be found at [www.spiritofafrica.org.uk](http://www.spiritofafrica.org.uk)

## Salsa Returns to Wylam

Following on from the huge success of last year's Salsa Evening, and due to popular demand, the Wylam Playing Fields Committee is delighted to announce that they are doing it again, with fabulous Latin food and dancing in a candle-lit atmosphere! Friday 21 October is the night to keep free in your diary. Look out for posters in the village for ticket information.

Unfortunately the Salsa lessons last year were not too well attended. However, Hector is happy to run them again if people will sign up in advance. For more information please [email margaret@stamp.org.uk](mailto:margaret@stamp.org.uk)



## "ScoutRail" 2011

This year's ScoutRail, organised by and with all proceeds to Wylam Scouts, will take place from 10.00am to 4.00pm on Saturday 29 October in Wylam Institute.

There will be model railways, stalls, displays and a simulator and refreshments will be available all day. It promises to be fun for all the family!

For further information please contact Jane Kevan on 01661 852012.

## St Oswin's Church

As you will probably know, Rev David Cant retired in July as Priest in Charge at St Oswin's Church and it is likely to be some time before his successor is appointed.

For enquiries relating all general Parish Church matters until a new Parish Priest is installed, please contact one of the Church Wardens, Fiona Oomes (0191 413 2887) or David Monaghan (852096). For all pastoral matters, please contact either Rev Angus Palmer (853786) or the Area Dean, Rev David Hewlett (01434 632128).

## Is "Big Brother" Watching?



Mystery appears to surround the occasional appearance over the last few weeks of what is assumed to be a CCTV camera on a lamp post close to the level-crossing, which can be clearly seen in this picture.

Known opinions include a crafty police move to spot "mobile" criminals, a check on drivers trying to jump the descending crossing barriers, or could it simply be "Candid Camera"?

We will continue to pursue the truth. Meanwhile, your suggestions in a sealed envelope please!

## Community Orchard Open Day

The Wylam Community Orchard has had a successful first year. During the past year, about 60 trees, many of them rare varieties of apple, have been planted by volunteers on a lovely south-facing site at Wylam First School. A biodiversity survey has been carried out and future plans include planting soft fruit bushes.

To celebrate, the Community Orchard and Wylam First School would like to invite you to their first Wylam Orchard Open Day ("WOOD") on Saturday 24 September between 1.00 and 5.00pm at the school. Entry is FREE. There will be something for everyone including guided tours of the orchard, willow-weaving, music from the Apple Seeds Choir, the school choir and a local young band. Food and drink are to be available all afternoon, plus stalls with cakes and autumn preserves, plants etc. In the event of rain the Open Day will take place in the marquee and First School.

Please come and see for yourself!



## Summer Fair

Anne Francis writes:-

After months of meticulous planning, the organisers of this year's Summer Fair awoke to a morning of grey drizzle with the promise of brighter skies as the day progressed. In comparison to the previous Saturday's relentless downpour, this was considered a perfectly acceptable summer's day in the Tyne Valley.

Following the success of the event in 2010, almost 70 stallholders had requested pitches on the field and after elaborate planning and marking all were finally accommodated. There were many familiar faces from trade, charity and village organisations selling an assortment of jewellery, crafts, plants, vegetables, bags, toys and clothes. No Summer Fair would be complete without the burgers, hot dogs, ice cream, cakes, tea and coffee and this year alternatives were available in the form of Spanish tapas and vegetarian wraps.

Whilst many were happy to "potter" around the field there were those keen to show their sporting prowess. Young and old took part in fun runs of different distances and The Crossbar Challenge kept the footballers happy. Aspiring anglers were given the opportunity to cast their rods under direction of the Angling Club and the Tug of War competition displayed the muscle strength and agility of the Tynedale male.

Following tradition, Tynedale Community Band gave us two rousing sets of popular classics and the fire and police services provided youngsters with the chance of viewing a fire engine and police car. During the course of the afternoon there was viewing and judging of various exhibits including the best Lego model and the best male-made lemon drizzle cake.

Throughout the day and evening, those predisposed to a taste of alcohol were able to purchase local beers and wines and this year saw the introduction of a popular Pimm's tent within the very busy bar area.

By 6 o'clock, volunteers transformed the field into our own mini Glastonbury (thankfully without the mud), musical entertainment varied from a relaxed saxophone duo to a rousing rock band accompanied by young and old on the dance floor. As the evening finished the music died away and fortunately, the field gradually cleared shortly after midnight.



Some of the crowd enjoying the Summer Fair

### Was it worth the effort?

As a committee we were aware that 2010 had set very high standards but we are delighted to report that this year's profit has exceeded all expectations at more than £11,000 which will give us the opportunity to continue with ongoing field and equipment maintenance and provide a sure footing for new developments.

Financial considerations aside, the Summer Fair provides a great example of community endeavour and hopefully a memorable day for all those who attended. Many worked very hard to make the day such a great success and again we would like to extend our thanks to all those who supported and contributed and to all who came along on 25 June.



'Wimbledon', by Craig and Anna Little, won the Scarecrow Competition

### Care for the Carers

Do you look after someone because of illness, disability or frailty? There are an estimated 34,000 carers living in Northumberland and so it would be very unlikely for there to be none in Wylam. In fact we can probably all think of people we know in the village who are looking after a husband, wife, partner, child, parent, some other relative or even a close neighbour or friend.

Carers Northumberland is a registered charity dedicated to improving the lives of carers by responding to their specific needs, informing them of their rights and entitlements, supporting carers to access support for the person they care for and reducing the social exclusion that carers so often feel.

If you are a carer or know someone who is and who might appreciate help, the charity can be contacted by telephone on 0844 800 7354 or at [info@carersnorthumberland.org.uk](mailto:info@carersnorthumberland.org.uk)

## Electric Car Charging Comes to Wylam

We are grateful to local environmental group Wylam Green Street which managed, with co-operation from the County Council and grants from three sources, to get a car charging point installed recently in the Country Park Car Park, shown here.



Two cars can be charged simultaneously and the electricity is provided free by "Good Energy". And no, you don't have to pay to park your car while the vehicle is charging!

We hope that as electric vehicles become more widely used this facility will prove to be a valuable community resource.

## Inspired by the Olympics

### A call to arms!!

"Let's take advantage of this fantastic opportunity to celebrate our region and the fantastic community organisations within it and to inspire people to become involved in events and have some fun."

This is the message from a group of like-minded people who are endeavouring to develop a programme of events throughout next year to do just that. Based around East Tynedale (the area from Heddon-on-the-Wall to Corbridge, and Horsley across to Shotley Low Quarter), they are trying to organise inter-village competitions during the summer of 2012 in sports such as football, tennis, tug-of-war and "wellie throwing"; in gardening, arts and crafts, and even a torch relay through the area!

There are people involved from each of the parishes and towns and they hope to include everyone in doing something, not just the sporty ones!

The group would love to hear from anyone who would like to get involved or who has something already planned.

Contact Tom Martin on 852025 or e-mail to [tommartin1963@sky.com](mailto:tommartin1963@sky.com).

## Village Road Safety

A concern about road safety within the village, particularly for pedestrians, has been an issue for many years and the fact that the road through Wylam serves as a link between 'A' roads to both the north and south inevitably gives rise to a disproportionate volume of traffic, especially at peak times.

Following recent approaches from a group of residents, chiefly worried about the dangers posed to children, the Parish Council pressed the County Council to take another look at the issues raised by this group and at several related points.

A representative from the County Council Highways Section met with members of the Parish Council for a detailed site visit in June and, although some of the wider investigations that were promised are still on-going, we can report on some initial conclusions.

Observations of children crossing the road to access transport to schools were conducted in early July, when fewer children than expected were seen. The officer involved has accepted the Parish Council's view that this was not perhaps a typical time of year and further studies are promised.

The County Council has observed that the majority of people, adults and children, cross the road directly between the Spar and the Post Office, the same conclusion as when last surveyed in June 2005. As at that time, the possibility of providing any type of formal pedestrian crossing is countered by what would be the loss of all nearby parking spaces and the stopping of delivery vehicles near that location, inadequate sight-lines and the problem of joining traffic from Chapel Lane. This is why the present "safe refuge promontory" was created outside the Spar in 2007 rather than a "proper" crossing, which many would have preferred.

In response to adverse comments about speeding traffic on Dene Road and The Dene, the County Council has agreed to carry out a speed survey in this area. It is several years since previous speed checks were conducted here and so it may be worth reminding people that, at that time, the County offered to install "sleeping police-men" (road humps). However, a survey of residents living in that part of the village showed that a significant majority were against the proposal and the idea was dropped!

On the subject of speed, calls for a 20mph limit through the centre of the village have in the past been rejected on the basis that such limits are only normally allowed in the vicinity of a school. However, Government guidelines have changed recently and, in some circumstances such a limit can be applied more widely. This possibility is currently being investigated.

Concern about the junction with the Main Road at the "Fox and Hounds" is another issue that has been raised many times before. On this occasion the County Council confirms that the volume of traffic is well below anything that could justify any form of traffic-light control and they will not support the idea of a mirror on the basis that these can distort the image and are known, when installed privately, to often lead to an increase in accidents.

## Winter Snow Clearing

With memories of successive winters with heavy and sometimes persistent snowfalls still fresh in the memory and with pundits predicting yet another hard winter to come, it seems appropriate to inform residents that the Parish Council is currently reviewing one aspect that frequently arises.

Almost every time it snows heavily, at least one person suggests to the Parish Council that it should do more to keep the village pavements clear.

You will know that basic maintenance of the roads and pavements is the responsibility of Northumberland County Council. They put enormous resources into keeping roads open during and after snowfalls although they have to prioritise this activity according to the perceived importance of the route. Sure, we all think that they should have done "our" road earlier but most people probably agree that they do a reasonable job, often in very difficult conditions.

Clearing pavements is a more contentious issue. Last winter, when packed snow turned to ice in many places, the County Council did send a team into Wylam on several days to clear pavements by hand near to the shops and bus stops.

The Parish Council expects to make a final decision in the next few weeks but it is unlikely that with the limited resources which it has available, any effective input will be possible.

Meanwhile it is perhaps worth mentioning that, where practicable, the owners of private and business premises are encouraged to clear snow from their own frontage. It is a myth, we are assured, that you are liable for damages if anyone should subsequently fall.

## Does Wylam Have a Weather Buff?

It has come to our minds that, if there is someone in Wylam with the interest and facility to record details of local weather, it might be interesting to include an occasional report in this publication.

Perhaps a table of highest and lowest temperatures, monthly rainfall figures and a note of any other significant meteorological events is what we have in mind.

If you are such a person and would like to discuss the idea, do please get in touch. Contact details as usual at the bottom of this page.

## He's Still Around!

Having announced in our Autumn 2010 issue that Bob Brotherton, who has emptied the litter bins in Wylam for many years, was retiring, we feel we should explain that Bob was persuaded by the County Council to continue working for a time. Bob tells us that this time he is definitely going at the end of September - he has it in writing! Happy retirement Bob.

## Forthcoming Events

The following events will take place in Wylam Institute, unless indicated otherwise.

Other events, possibly with more detail, can be seen in the Diary Section of the Parish Council's website:-

[www.wylamparishcouncil.org](http://www.wylamparishcouncil.org)

### Sat 17 Sept

Friends of Wylam Bazaar 10.00am to 12 noon.

Film Club "The Social Network" at 7.30pm

### Wed 21 Sept

Quiz & Supper at "Fox & Hounds" in aid of East Africa Appeal 7.30pm

### Sat 24 Sept

Cricket Club all day sports and evening disco.

Domino Night. St Oswin's Church Hall 7.30pm

### Sun 25 Sept

Wylam & District Churches Harvest Festival. St Oswin's Church at 11.00am followed by Soup Lunch in aid of East Africa Appeal

### Mon 10 Oct

Parish Council Meeting 7.00pm

### Fri 14 Oct

Concert by Gareth Davies-Jones and guest artist. Methodist Church 8.00pm

### Fri 21 Oct

Salsa Night in aid of Playing Field Association 7.30pm

### Sat 22 Oct

Film Club "The Illusionist" 7.30pm

### Sat 29 Oct

"ScoutRail" 2011. 10.00am to 4.00pm

### Sat 5 Nov

Wylam Housing Group Christmas Fair 10.00am to 12.30pm

### Wed 9 Nov

Institute Coffee Morning 10.30am to 12 noon

### Sat 12 Nov

Film Club 7.30pm

### Sun 13 Nov

Remembrance Sunday, St Oswin's Church 10.00am, War Memorial 11.00am

### Mon 14 Nov

Parish Council Meeting 7.00pm

### Wed 30 Nov to Fri 2 Dec

Drama Society Production 7.30pm

### Sat 10 Dec

Film Club 7.30pm

### Mon 12 Dec

Parish Council Meeting 7.00pm

Wed 14 Dec Institute Coffee Morning 10.30am to 12 noon

Sun 18 Dec Village Carol Service, Methodist Church 6.30pm

**Deadline for material for the next "Wylam Globe" Friday 4 November 2011**

Correspondence relating to this Newsletter should be addressed to:

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**The Clerk to the Parish Council**

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**Wylam NE41 8AP**

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