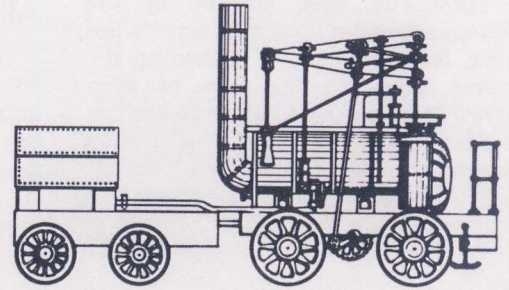


THE WYLAM GLOBE

Newsletter of Wylam Parish Council



Autumn 2012

No. 106

Grass Cutting Issues

Parish Councillors have, without any doubt, received more complaints about the frequency and standard of grass cutting of public areas around the village this summer than any other single issue.

To avoid misunderstanding it is worth stating that two organisations have responsibility for this work in Wylam. ISOS Housing is the body responsible for the management and maintenance of the social housing areas in the village, and it employs contractors to cut the grass in the vicinity of Blackett Cottages, Swindale Cottages and Hedley Road Playground.

Northumberland County Council (NCC) is responsible for the other public areas. Understandably, the exceptional weather this year has contributed to the problem but we do not believe that this alone is a

satisfactory explanation, with conflicting answers being given by different NCC Officers.

ISOS Housing admitted to problems with its appointed contractor and, when these were sorted, some improvement became evident, although the standard of work still leaves a lot to be desired.

The Parish Council continues to press the County Council for an improvement in its service and we are aware that many residents have also reported their dissatisfaction with the present situation. Some areas appear to be overlooked completely for long periods and, when they are cut, the length of grass means it cannot be cut short enough and a mass of dead grass is left to rot on the surface, merely adding to further problems.

We are very grateful to staff from Riverside Nurseries who, since these

problems arose, have cut the grass in close proximity to the village War Memorial in an attempt to keep it respectfully tidy. We are also grateful to those residents and businesses that have made many areas look particularly attractive with hanging baskets (in addition to those provided by the Parish Council), and window boxes.

The County Council is also responsible for cutting rural roadside verges and, although this is always a little more contentious with some people wishing to encourage the survival of wild flowers, cutting this year has been almost non-existent apart from where sight-lines at junctions are impaired. As a result, particularly after rain, long grass is hanging over the road in many places, effectively narrowing the carriageway and also obstructing drains.

Wylam's Own Olympic Hero



We don't believe there were any medal winners from Wylam at London 2012 but we do know of one young man who, quite literally, carried the flame for us.

13 year old Sam Smith who lives on Holeyn Hall Road and suffers from Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy, was chosen to carry the Olympic Flame in Ashington on 15 June.

Sam is not only a great fan of many sports, particularly cricket, but also an ambassador for the Youth Sport Trust. Through his own participation in several disability sports, notably powerchair football, combined with his convivial nature, Sam has been an inspiration to many others, both able-bodied and disabled.

As we prepared this issue of the "Globe" Sam was setting off to watch the Paralympics in London. Where else would he be at this time?

Sam has just moved on from Ovingham Middle to Prudhoe High School and we wish him well. We will be looking out for you Sam in future Paralympics!



A Post Office Update

We reported in the last "Globe" how the purchase of the Post Office by Wylam Parish Council had been made possible by a very generous donation from the Reece Foundation.

The final transfer of ownership took a little longer than expected but Fred and Rosa Voase were finally able to start their long-awaited retirement from the Post Office at the end of July, shortly after moving into their new home. We are very grateful to Fred and Rosa for keeping the business going until this point.

Post Office Ltd appointed Chris Roger as temporary Sub-Postmaster from the beginning of August, since when the full-time post has been widely advertised and we can confirm that there has been considerable interest in the position, both locally and from people further afield. We very much hope that an appointment of a new Sub-Postmaster, who will also reside in the house, will soon be possible. We can also confirm that when that appointment commences, the Post Office will resume the full opening hours that were enjoyed previously.

Carpet Bowls

Have you been inspired by the Olympics to take up a new activity but don't like the idea of pounding the streets, going to the gym or even leaving Wylam? Then why not use this 'Golden' opportunity to give an indoor game of skill and tactics a go? Carpet Bowls could be the answer you are looking for.

Several members of Wylam Carpet Bowls Club were very disappointed at the recent sad decision to officially close the Club and they have decided to continue to play together and to make an effort to recruit new players.

All the equipment remains at the Institute waiting to be used but there will be a limit as to how long it can be stored there if not used and without players this facility could be lost to the village for good.

The club will meet on Mondays 7.00 – 9.00pm at Wylam Institute and so, if you are interested or would like more information, please contact Viv Smith on 853713 or by email at smithvivien@hotmail.com. Alternatively contact Wylam Institute on 852498 and leave your details.

Double Success for Wylam First School

Earlier this year, the "Journal" and Teesside's "Evening Gazette", in association with Northumbrian Water, launched a competition to find the best schools in the region in four separate project categories. The categories were Active Community Award, Sustainable School Award, School Newspaper, and Healthy School Award.

Wylam First School submitted a highly creative entry for the Active Community Award, emphasising the School's exciting links to the Community Orchard Project and in June we were thrilled to learn that the School had been chosen as one of the three finalists in the category. In fact, the School was the only Northumberland School to reach the final in any of the categories.

On the 5 July, three pupils, Jayne Bell, Ben Haslam and Sophie Walsh represented the School at the finals for all the categories held at Sunderland FC's "Stadium of Light", supported by the Head Teacher and Chair of Governors. Although the School finished as runners up, their delightful presentation was highly praised on all sides. The pupils were in no way fazed by the competition in the final from two large secondary schools.

Towards the end of the Summer Term, the School took part in a Swimming Gala for all the seven First Schools in the "Prudhoe Pyramid".

Wylam emerged as the winners, with a number of pupils putting in star quality performances. Definitely some future Olympians there!

Flooding of Allotments

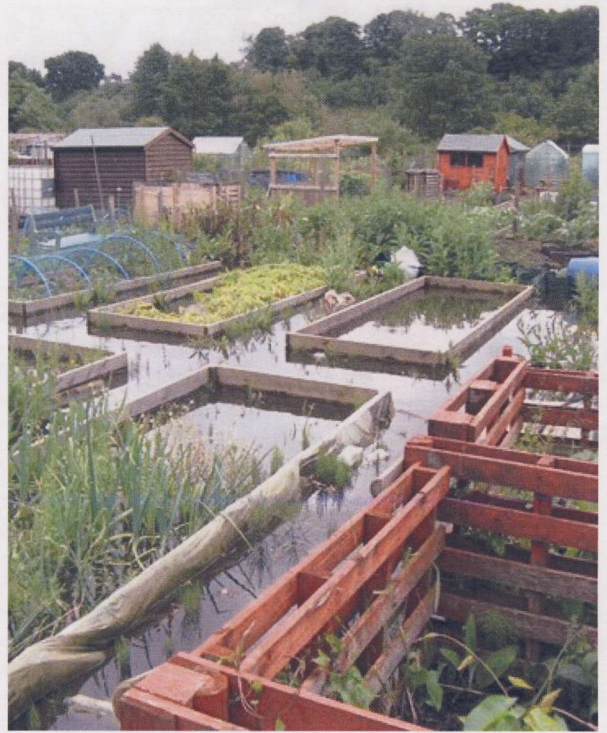
Elsewhere in this issue we have published information about rainfall this year and on one day in particular.

Nowhere has the wetter extreme been noticed more than on the allotments, where nine allotment plots were recently severely flooded, along with the adjacent approach to the Nature Reserve, as this picture shows.

As owners of both these areas, Wylam Parish Council, together with representatives of the Allotment Association, has met with Northumbria Water to try to resolve this issue, which has plagued the area from time to time ever

since Northumbria Water installed a new main drain through the site several years ago. It is argued locally that this work blocked a drain which crosses the site and which used to pick up water from a main drain in Woodcroft Road during periods of heavy or persistent rain. This water now appears to overflow down the embankment, creating the floods seen here.

Northumbria Water has at last acknowledged that there is a problem and has promised to investigate further in the hope of finding a permanent solution.



New Face at St Oswin's



New Priest in Charge at St Oswin's, Rev Canon Robert McLean and his wife Susan, came in with something of a bang on 28 June, when the special service of welcome and installation for Robert coincided with the day of the severe thunderstorm, referred to elsewhere in this issue.

Although attendance at this service was affected by travel problems for some, the welcome was no less warm and we join that welcome ourselves, trusting that Robert and Susan will be very happy as part of the Wylam community.

On the family side they have a total of four grown up daughters and a son, two granddaughters and three grandsons.

Robert comes to Wylam after serving as Rector of Morpeth for the past 12 years.

Macmillan Coffee Morning

Friday 28 September

After 11 years and having raised a total of £15,000 for Macmillan Nurses (Macmillan Cancer Support), Sue and David Monaghan have finally decided to call it a day. Last year the giant coffee morning, which is held all over the UK, raised more than £10 million for this vital cause and Wylam is not giving up yet! Edna Beattie has kindly taken over and has formed a small group to hold this year's coffee morning on Friday 28 September at Wylam Institute between 10.00am and 12.30pm. Please put the date in your diary and come along on the day - or if you feel you have time to help, ring the Institute (852498) and speak to Fiona.



Other "New" St Oswin's Faces



We assume that most people have noticed the two lovely bright repainted blue and gold clock faces on the St Oswin's Church Tower, one of which we show here.

The opportunity to carry out this task was taken recently while scaffolding was in place for major repairs to be carried out to the roof of the tower, which has been leaking.

Car Park Charges

You will remember that, a few months ago, Northumberland County Council lifted charges from the Country Park Car Park in the village. We were advised that this was on a trial basis until the end of September and the Parish Council has been pressing the Local Authority since, as it has for years, to remove the charges permanently.

To make certain that people, especially visitors, were aware of the free parking, the Parish Council erected signs at several places where motorists had frequently parked to avoid the charges, and we hope that this made some difference.

Very recently the County Council has said that it is still gathering information on the impact of the suspension of charges but, as there are budget implications, the final decision will be made by senior officers with input from County Councillors.

We have been promised that the Parish Council's views will be taken into consideration and so we will maintain our efforts to convince the County that the suspension of charges has provided all-round benefits to this community.



Work Planned for Station Footbridge

Most of the buildings and related structures at Wylam Station, including the footbridge, are listed as either Grade II or Grade II* in the National Heritage Listing.

Anyone that has looked at the footbridge recently will realise that it's in a very poor condition and Network Rail has applied to the

County Council for "Listed Building Consent" in order to carry out the very necessary repair and refurbishment work.

This will include repairing and re-securing many of the cast and wrought iron components, repairing parts of the concrete and brickwork bases, renewing the anti-slip coating and warning paint on the stone steps and completely renewing the timber deck and steps to the footbridge. The whole structure will finally be cleaned and re-painted.

At this stage we do not know exactly when the work will be carried out but, when it is, the footbridge will be out of use throughout the work.

The poor illumination on the north side of the footbridge is thought to have contributed to at least one serious accident, for which Network Rail has admitted liability. The Parish Council has been pressing Network Rail to improve the lighting on that side of the footbridge for some time, and this effort will be renewed in the hope that this can be included in the forthcoming work.



"Thunder Thursday"

"Where were you when the storm struck?" This was a common question after events of 28 June when Wylam, along with so many places over a wide area of the north east, was struck by a very severe thunderstorm.

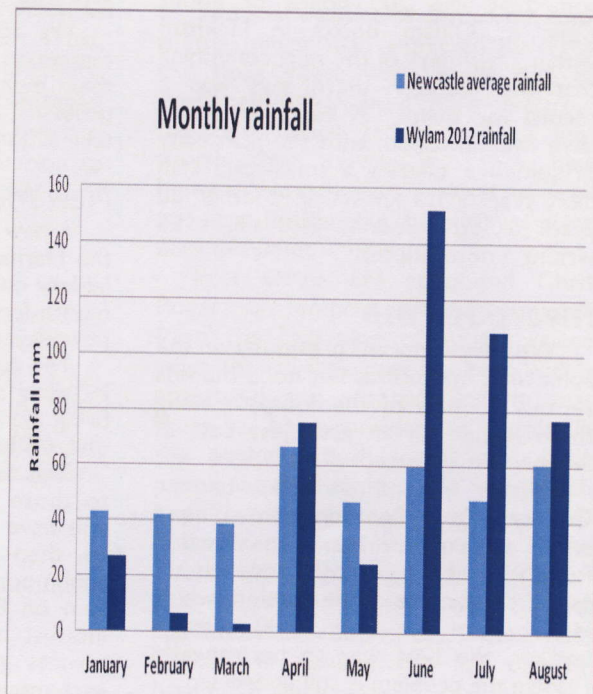
Although there are several reports of localised flooding throughout the village, there's no doubt that we were luckier than many places. However, Wylam was practically cut off for a short time, with floods closing the Crawcrook and Ovingham roads and deep water at the foot of Holeyn Hall Road.

Although nothing could have entirely prevented the effects of the downpour, there's no doubt that the many blocked drain gullies around the village did not help, which is another issue the Parish Council is constantly raising with the County Council!

We are very grateful to Alan French from Wylam Wood Road, who has his own mini-weather station, and who has provided the interesting data we reproduce right:-

Alan points out that we are told that weather patterns are changing and

that to date, this year's figures for Wylam appear to confirm this. Following a very dry start to the year, with precipitation nearly 60% lower than the average, June recorded 152mm of rain, which was more than the total for the preceding five months. On what we are calling "Thunder Thursday", 26mm (approximately one inch) of rain actually fell in a matter of minutes, equivalent to an astounding rainfall rate of 281mm per hour!



Book Stall Reaches a Charitable End

The final big Second-hand Bookstall, held as part of Wylam Summer Fair for over 30 years, came to an end in June with record takings of £2816.

Brian Japes, who has organised the Bookstall for many years says; "It's interesting to look back and see how things developed. 30 years ago, a few of the older lads from the Boys Brigade used to knock on doors on the evening before the Summer Fair, asking for books. Over the years, storage of the ever-increasing "surplus" and getting them back to the Jubilee Field the following year became a serious problem and, on years when it was wet, we ended up with masses of plastic sheets to keep the books dry. In the early days we expected to make about £50 to £100. When the Playing Fields Association started making a charge for a stall rather than asking stallholders to split their takings, we chose to continue a "half and half" split with the 'WPFA', a practice we have followed ever since, the other half going towards the work carried out by the Wylam and District Churches with children and young people.

A move into the Methodist Church Hall in 1998 enabled the whole event to grow, with more time to set up displays and classify the books. This was the first year that takings reached £1000.

Records are only available since 1988, but a total of £28,016 has been raised from the sale of books since that year.

We are extremely grateful to the residents of Wylam, and even a few from further afield, who have given books over the years. It is really to you that any thanks are due.

Attempts to find a buyer for the stock that remained after the 2012 Fair, or an auction house prepared to sell them, all came to nothing and so something like 200 boxes of books went to Oxfam Books in Hexham within a few days of the sale, something that the manager there says was a record for them! A very few boxes have been retained, with the possibility of someone offering a small-scale stall next year. Who knows, in another 30 years or so someone else might be writing a note like this!"

Riverside Path

We have reported previously on the somewhat mysterious but none the less serious erosion of the footpath along the riverside, in an area just east of Stephenson Terrace.

Further recent enquiries to the County Council's Footpath Officer reveal that money has been allocated for work to be done at this location but as the exact cause of the erosion (which is not from the river itself) remains unclear, the best way to permanently resolve the problem is still undecided.

Footpath Officers continue to closely monitor the path, which they acknowledge is close to being considered too dangerous to remain open to the public. However, at present the balance favours keeping the path open, something which Footpath Officers, and we are sure local residents and visitors, would wish.

We trust that some progress to resolving this will soon be made before things get too bad.

Tetrapak Beverage Containers

It is with regret that the Wylam Institute Committee has decided to discontinue the informal facility for collection of tetrapak cartons at the Institute. Cartons have often been left dirty, creating smell and encouraging the arrival of wasps and flies and many cartons were not flattened. In view of the fact that there are now bins for these items in two places in Prudhoe, (the Household Waste Recovery Centre on Broomhouse Road and the Oaklands Car Park), the decision has been made not to continue with the local collection.

However, if a volunteer is willing to empty the bin on a regular, not less than weekly, basis this decision may be overturned. Speak to Fiona Oomes at the Institute, (852493).

Please Cut Back!

Not another request for greater financial constraint but a repeat of a plea we tried to avoid this year, but now feel we must make.

If you have a hedge, trees or shrubs that overgrow or overhang a pavement or path outside your property, you are responsible for keeping these cut back. Please remember that although you may be 5 feet tall in your stocking feet, or less, there are people that are more than 6 feet and, particularly in wet weather, overhanging vegetation can be very unpleasant to have to negotiate. Safety can also be compromised when paths are narrowed.

We sometimes get the impression that some people must never walk past their own garden to realise there's a problem. Please do a quick check, and take action if necessary.

New Mah-Jong Group

A new Mah-Jong Group is meeting in the Heritage Room at Wylam Institute, initially on the second Monday of every month from September, at 7.30pm, and new players are invited.

The cost is £2 per two-hour session, including biscuits, tea and coffee. Please bring along a mah-jong set if you have one, it's better to have too many!

This invitation is directed specifically to those who are experienced but, if you have never played and would like to, then please email Ann Moore at annmoore53@gmail.com or telephone Ann on 843221. If there is sufficient interest it may be possible to start a novices group on the fourth Monday each month.

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

Sat 22 Sept

Friends of Wylam Bazaar 10.00am to 12 noon

Fri 28 Sept

Macmillan Coffee Morning 10.00am to 12.30pm

Sat 29 Sept

Film Club, 7.30pm, "Midnight in Paris"

Mon 8 Oct

Wylam Parish Council Meeting 7.00pm

Wed 8 Oct

Men at Home. Bill Bland speaking about "Crystal Palace" 10.15 for 10.30am in Methodist Church Centre

Sat 13 Oct

Ceillidh in aid of "Water Aid" 7.00pm

Sat 20 Oct

Jumble Sale 2.00 -4.00pm

Film Club, 7.30pm, "The Well Digger's Daughter"

Sat 3 Nov

Wylam Housing Group Christmas Fair 10.00am to 12.30pm

Sun 11 Nov

Remembrance Sunday. Service at Methodist Church at 10.00am followed by Act of Remembrance at the War Memorial at 11.00am.

Mon 12 Nov

Wylam Parish Council Meeting 7.00pm

Wed 14 Nov

Men at Home. John Charlton talks about "Slavery and the North East". 10.15 for 10.30am in Methodist Church Centre

Sat 17 Nov

Cricket Club "Dining In Night"

Mon 19 Nov

Blood Donor Session (Please note change of date)

Sat 24 Nov Film Club, 7.30pm, "Carnage".

Wed to Fri 28 to 30 Nov

Dramatic Society Production, 7.30pm. "Comfort and Joy", a hilarious comedy by Mike Harding.

Wed 12 Dec

Men at Home. Geoff Hughes, "Songs & Stories of Christmas". 10.15 for 10.30am in Methodist Church Centre

Sat 15 Dec

Film Club, 7.30pm, "Meet me in St Louis".

Sun 16 Dec

Annual Village Carol Service, 6.30pm at St Oswin's Church.

Please note: In addition to the above events, Coffee Mornings in aid of Wylam Institute are held on the 2nd Wednesday of every month, 10.30am to 12 noon, and "Friends of Wylam" Coffee Mornings are fortnightly on Tuesday mornings from 10.00am (from 25 September on this programme.)

Deadline for material for the next "Wylam Globe" Monday 6 November

Correspondence relating to this Newsletter should be addressed to:

Mrs. D. Carney,
The Clerk to the Parish Council
Wylam Institute, Church Road,
Wylam NE41 8AP
Tel: (01661) 852498
e.mail: wylampc@btinternet.com

Printed for Wylam Parish Council by the
Gilpin Press, Houghton-le-Spring DH4 4BA.
E.mail gilpin.press@btconnect.com