

THE WYLAM GLOBE

Newsletter of Wylam Parish Council



Winter 2017

No. 127

Remembrance Sunday



Wylam's Remembrance Sunday parade was well attended by young and old, including soldiers of J (Sidi Rezegh) Battery, 3rd Regiment RHA from Albermarle Barracks and village organisations. The weather was kind with brilliant sunshine and blue skies. The 2 minutes silence was observed at 11am, followed by the trumpeter playing the 'Last Post'. Wreaths were laid by soldiers from 'A' Battery, Anne Francis and Councillor Karen Quinn on behalf of the Parish and County Councils, by Wylam uniformed organisations and the Royal British Legion. Following the parade, a service was held in St. Oswins church.

Riversdale Surgery Update

In the last Globe, we reported that the Parish Council had written to the Northumberland Clinical Commissioning Group, highlighting our concerns about the proposed closure of Riversdale Surgery and the absence of an effective process for the needs and concerns of the village to be heard. Our letter failed to secure the assurances we were seeking on behalf of the village. The Council remains unhappy with the situation and will be discussing the next steps at its meeting on 11th December. Our main concerns are about the impact on access to healthcare for elderly residents, disabled people, families with young or school age children, the extra cost of getting to the Oaklands Surgery at Prudhoe and the knock on effects on local health care suppliers.

Winter Spruce up

While out and about in our beautiful countryside, you may have noticed a lot of tree chopping, bush trimming and scrub clearances going on. It has been such a good summer that a lot of work was needed to cut back old growth, pull out the Himalayan Balsam and ensure the sunlight can reach the ground. The County Council's Countryside Management Team spent a couple of weeks from the 13th November working on the trees along the Waggonway from Stephenson's Cottage to Hagg Bank Bridge. It was well organised with the chipping being used locally on the allotments.

Down at the Haughs, Tom Martin and his team have been working on the track by the allotment, the paths through the Nature Reserve and the meadows. Upcoming work will tackle some trees that need pruning and cut back some of the brambles on the Tyne side of the Haughs. It is much appreciated by the rambling groups that wend that way.

Pothole Patching

The plethora of pothole patching proceeds apace (!) with the County Council and Cllr. Karen Quinn agreeing that the state of the roads around the village is pretty dire. The supposed summertime resurfacing of Main Road is delayed and we have yet to get the latest timetable, but we have been told that the Chapel Lane end by Stobos flower shop will be patched in the near future.

Litter Bins

During the Summer we have looked at new sites for litter and dog poo bins around the village (hurrah!). After getting permission where needed from NCC and taking note of your comments, there will now be three new bins in the local 'hot spots' these are:

- Main Road outside the Spar - on the little peninsula by the car parking slots.
- West End entrance to the Jubilee field on the tarmac track heading down to the allotments. This will be handy for folk using the playing fields, dog walkers and and maybe reduce sightings of UBBs in the trees (Unidentified Black Bags)!
- Engine Dene by the Algernon Terrace entrance

The bins are sturdy, hooded ground units and will be in addition to the post mounted ones that get filled up pretty quickly.

Riverside Path

As many residents and walkers are aware, the floods last year and earlier this year led to a big slide on the riverside path along the bank from Stephenson Terrace past Wylam Nurseries. NCC closed around 400m of the path, which is much used by walkers and fishermen, as a safety measure as the slip had affected both the path and the railings.

After discussions with the Parish Council, NCC brought in a Geotechnical team from Durham to do an initial survey following on from one carried out by the Coal Authority 5 years ago.



Damaged Riverside path below Tom and Joes

The survey found that the slip was not due to old workings as the nearest shaft is some 145m distant. The base sediments are river silts overlain with a lot of demolition rubble - mainly bricks - and it is this that has slipped, leaving a fairly steep 30 degree slope. Winter river flows and surges are eroding the 'toe' of the slope and this may continue.

NCC and the Parish Council agreed in July 2017 that NCC would approach private contractors for solutions to this problem, unfortunately none of those approached were interested in tendering. NCC are now seeing if their own engineers can come up with an initial design solution.

As you can imagine, such works are expensive and may be impractical and we must think about the best way forward. In the meantime please follow the signs and divert along the Waggonway until clear of the damaged path.

Wylam Community Orchard

Hazel Makepeace (Northumberland Bat Group) slipped into the batmobile to carry out the annual inspection of our bat boxes. The great news is that Hazel's team reported that they had found a breeding colony (one male and three females) of soprano pipistrelle bats in one of our bat boxes. This is the first time they have bred here which is an indication of a healthy habitat as they tend not to travel too far from a good spot.

These bats have been declining across Britain in recent years, although it is thought that this may now be levelling out as we become more aware of the need to protect this local species and

avoid disturbing them with noise and demolition of older buildings. The small bat boxes are ready built 'starter' homes for them and we hope the colony will grow and we may expect to see up to 30 bats flitting around like butterflies at dusk as they set out to feed.



New residents in Wylam - Soprano Pipistrelle

The tiny Pipistrelles (the weight of 5 paperclips!) are called 'Sopranos' because their squeak is the highest of the bunch at 55 KHz with each blip lasting for 5 ms as they echolocate obstacles and hunt for food. Favourite snacks are small moths and flies - yummy!

This is only one of the natural history surveys we undertake each year on the site. Dave Stebbings (Northumberland Wildlife Trust) runs six sessions during the spring, summer and early autumn and teaches us about butterflies and moths. Louise Hislop does a thorough survey of the bees and wasps and Alison Fisher keeps an eye on the beautiful wildflowers that are found and attract so much wildlife. We are extremely grateful to the volunteers who turn up no matter what the weather and put in the hard work that has made this community project such a success. Thank you.

Sharing our village spaces: your views wanted!

Wylam has some wonderful public areas to enjoy and exercise ourselves and our pets in. We want everyone to be able to enjoy these spaces, and see our role as encouraging people to use them in ways that are respectful of others.

Since our last issue, we have received a number of complaints, focusing mainly on the Waggonway, namely: inconsiderate behaviour by a few cyclists not slowing down for walkers and being abusive when people have not got out of the way quick enough and a minority of dog owners who cannot control their pets and do not clear up after them or leave poo bags decorating tree branches. So far, we have taken the following steps:

- We have asked to work with Northumberland County Council to improve the signage, reminding users that it is a shared space, not just a cycle way or footpath, and highlight the need to respect other users.
- Over the summer, we allowed a local trainer to run dog training classes at Charlie's Corner to help owners and reinforce the importance of cleaning up dog waste. The training sessions were done over three Saturdays in July and August - a total of six hours in all and well attended.



They were regarded as a success by those who took part. The response from the general public was, however, more mixed and the Council received five comments: two supporting the initiative, two against allowing dogs on Charlie's Corner at any time, and one asking for free access for dogs on Charlie's Corner.



Waiting for class

So, we need some help on this and would like to hear your views on this approach, in particular whether we should:

1. Support this kind of training on Parish land;
2. Allow a few hours a year for formal, supervised training;
3. Allow more widespread or free access.

If you have strong views on the use of Charlie's Corner, please write and let us know (contact details on page 4)

Wylam anglers use their local knowledge to find the salmon 'holding' pools and then the fly is whipped out to try and get the salmon to take it even though they are not active feeders once in the river. The skill taken to entice them to 'strike' is one reason why the sport is held in high esteem. The main thing of course is to have a good dose of luck on your side - being lucky in discovering the art of fly fishing and lucky enough to have the rejuvenated Tyne on your doorstep.

As well as salmon, the Tyne at Wylam also holds a whole raft of fish such as sea trout, wild and stocked 'brownies' and coarse fish such as dace, roach and chub. Other wildlife that can be



Heron waiting for lunch below Wylam Bridge

Generous Donation to WCPFA

Wylam Community Playing Fields Association would like to thank the Northumberland Masons for an incredible donation of £7000 towards new climbing equipment. This award is part of their 2017 Tercentenary Celebrations charitable donations totalling £300,000 in Northumberland. We are most grateful to Wylam Vindolanda Lodge for our nomination. Trish Mytton and Dominic Robinson were invited to the St James Park celebrations in July to receive the donation.



"We are excitedly planning the installation of the new equipment, watch this space!"

Fishermen's Tales

Salmon were once found in huge numbers in the river Tyne at Wylam, surviving 150 years of heavy coal mining and iron work. The anglers and commercial nets coexisted alongside each other until the Tyne runs collapsed in the 1920's. The rebirth came in the 80's with the controlling of the river flows as Kielder was built plus the hatchery at Birkbeck and the Tyne is now the most productive salmon river in England.

Fly fishing for salmon is thought to be the most sporting method, with the 'shrimp' styles imitating the krill found in their north Atlantic feeding grounds. The rods are 12 - 15' long and use a weighted line and fly with no added lead.

spotted whilst wading include the kingfishers by Hagg Bank and families of otters hunting the stretch from the weir downstream.

There is no better way to experience Wylam hospitality than spend a day by the river followed by a visit to one of the local pubs or restaurants. If you need any advice, Wylam Angling Club has a keen group of members with a wealth of experience in the black arts of rigging, tying flies and selecting the best pools. They are especially keen to help any young anglers looking to get started in the sport.

George Stephenson's Birthplace

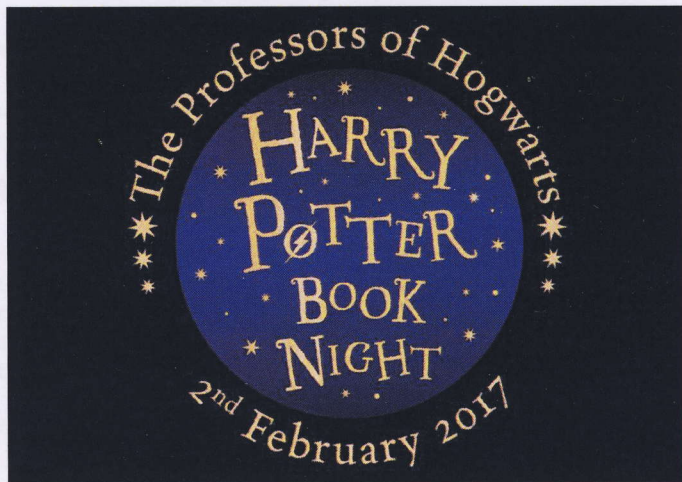
George Stephenson's birthplace, High Street House, lies just east of Wylam. It was closed by the National Trust in January this year, due to "rising costs and a decline in visitor numbers". The Parish Council has tried to press the Trust to come back to the community with ideas about the building's future, with some success.

Trust representatives attended the Council's Annual Meeting on 26 April and gave hints of the way forward. Parish Council members met the Trust again in July for more updates. Reopening of the building was not on the immediate horizon, but the Trust indicated that, as and when it opened, the emphasis of any displays would be on George Stephenson as a child, his family and what Wylam was like in the short time he lived here, not his or the railways subsequent history.

They hoped that research into his family history could be commissioned shortly and they would also be looking at what potential visitors might find attractive in a reworked attraction. Meanwhile, they were planning on promoting better information-giving and interpretation of the building and its context (including of course the village) through guided walks and other means. A further public meeting with the Trust is planned once they have some of this work underway.

Wylam Winter Tales Festival 2018

The dulcet tones, rapid rhymes and comic genius of the Bard of Barnsley Ian McMillan, the beguiling story of Mermarella (Cinderella of the Sea) as acted out by Indigo Moon Puppet Theatre, the epic encounters of Beowulf as told by the renowned UK story teller, Hugh Lupton, and the lush Americana harmonies of award winning new country trio Ashton Lane featuring the mesmerising guitar playing of the lead guitarist of WetWetWet! Graeme Duffin - just a few of the 'not-to be missed' highlights from Wylam Winter Tales 2018.



Accio Instituto Pronto !

The local Festival that brings light through the Arts at the darkest time of year returns from Friday 26th January to Friday 2nd February 2018. The week-long programme features Opera, Mining Art, Shadow Puppet Theatre, Folk, Poetry and Film. There will also be a programme of free events including a font design workshop for kids, a special story telling afternoon for the under 5's and a cake decorating masterclass. As ever the Festival thrives on the support of local people buying tickets and volunteering to help with stewarding, the Festival Cafe and venue set up. If you're interested in being involved as a volunteer then please email the organisers at wylamwintertales@gmail.com.

The full schedule and details are on the Festival website www.wylamwintertales.org.uk. Tickets for all the events will be on sale from Monday 4th December via Steve's Emporium, the festival website and the Queen's Hall in Hexham. The organisers tell us they make great Christmas presents !

Ruth Creighton:

Ruth, who served as a Wylam Parish Councillor sadly died on 22nd November. Ruth, her husband Peter and their children had lived in the village since 1980. On retiring from the Civil Service in 2012, Ruth wanted to offer her skills and time to support the local community. She was elected as a Parish Councillor in July 2013 but did not stand for re-election in 2017 due to ill health.

Her diminutive stature belied her big heart and conscience and she actively contributed to Council business. Following the diagnosis of her illness in the summer of 2016, Ruth's presence at meetings became limited but when able she continued to offer valued opinions and advice on Parish Council matters. She was under no illusions as to the seriousness of her illness and faced her treatment with incredible equanimity and courage. Our thoughts are with her family at this time.

Forthcoming Events

Wylam Institute 2017/18 major dates – all events at the Institute unless otherwise stated

DECEMBER 2017

- Sat 9th Christmas Coffee Morning at the Methodist Centre. 10am-12 noon
Film Club 'Edward Scissorhands', 7.30pm
- Mon 11th Wylam Parish Council Meeting, 7pm
- Thurs 14th Wylam Discussion Group: Christmas Get-together, Zaria, Elm Bank Rd. 2.30 - 4pm
- Sun 17th Wylam Village Carol Service, 6pm at Wylam Methodist Church
- Tues 19th Wylam Bird Club Walk, Methodist car park, 9am
Friends of Wylam Coffee Morning, 10am - Noon
- Wed 20th Wylam Bird Club Indoors, Methodist Centre, 7.30 - 9pm
- Fri 22nd Wylam Christmas Celebration
Wylam First School sing carols round the Christmas Tree, Charlies Corner - 10am
- Sun 24th Crib Service, St. Oswins, 4pm
- Wed 27th Institute Coffee Morning, 10.30am - Noon

JANUARY 2018

- Tues 2nd Friends of Wylam Coffee Morning, 10am - Noon
- Mon 8th Wylam Parish Council Meeting, 7pm
- Thur 11th Wylam Discussion Group Lunch at the White Swan, Ovingham, 12.30 - 2pm
- Sat 13th WCPFA Jumble Sale, 1 - 3pm
- Mon 15th Wylam WI talk, 'Secrets of the Human Brain' by Bob Pullen, 7.30 - 9pm
- Tue 16th Wylam Bird Club Walk, Methodist car park, 9am - 12 Noon
Friends of Wylam Coffee Morning 10 - Noon
- Wed 17th Wylam Bird Club Indoors, Methodist Centre, 7.30 - 9pm
- Fri 19th WCPFA Alternative Burns Night Ceilidh, 7.30pm
- Wed 24th Coffee Morning in aid of Wylam Institute, 10.30 - Noon
- Fri 26th Burns Night
- Tue 30th Friends of Wylam Coffee Morning, 10am - Noon

FROM YOUR PARISH COUNCIL



Articles for next issue by
January 15th please!

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