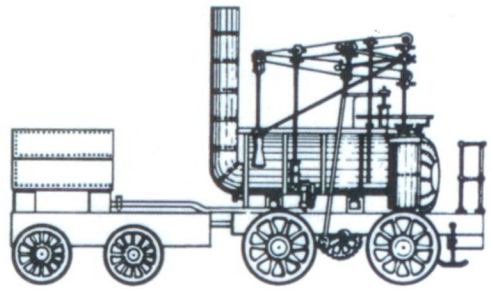


THE WYLAM GLOBE

Newsletter of Wylam Parish Council



Winter, 2005

Number 79

Troops Invade the Village!

Yes, but this was an invasion for which we are very grateful.

Some time ago, it came to the attention of the Parish Council that soldiers of the REME (Workshop) who are based at Albemarle Barracks as part of 39 Regiment Royal Artillery, were looking for projects to help build links with local communities.

We saw an opportunity to replace the dilapidated fence along the riverside road towards Ovingham, which was rapidly becoming an eyesore. After negotiations and site visits involving the County Council, who are responsible for the fence, agreement was finally reached, with County Councillor Paul Kelly agreeing to meet the cost of the materials from his County Councillor's budget allocation for local projects.



REME "Super-Troops" of 39 Regiment (RA)

Everything fell perfectly into place, as you would expect of a military operation. Or it did, until a section was reached where underlying road reinforcements or perhaps an earlier road made the going very tough! Increasingly heavy equipment had to be brought in to break up the ground and, through no fault of theirs, the army ran out of time before they had to hand over to County Council contractors, who were on-site and fortunately able to finish the job. The soldiers, all volunteers for this assignment, resumed more conventional duties, with some being deployed to operational duties in Iraq and others on exercise to Germany and Poland. Nevertheless, their part was crucial in getting the job done and we are certain that everyone who has seen the result will agree that it has made a big improvement to the appearance of that route into or from the village.

The project also served to bring experience of a different type to many of the soldiers, although it has to be said that blisters to the hands are probably no more acceptable than those to the feet, which they are perhaps more accustomed to! From the perspective of our own community, we hope that as you pass along the Ovingham Road in months and hopefully years to come, the fence will remind you of the very significant armed force that is based not far from our village, and perhaps we will remember them in a more personal way as they are regularly called to more serious duties all over the world.

We are particularly grateful to Lt Col Wordsworth (RA), the 39 Regiment's Commanding Officer at Albemarle and to Major Weller, Officer Commanding REME (Workshop) and Staff Sergeant Lamén. Without their respective approval and active support this project would not have been possible.



A section of the finished fence

Less Crime in Wylam

It is always dangerous to be complacent but we can be encouraged that reported crime in Wylam has decreased significantly in the past year.

Figures recently obtained from the police show that there have been 33 reported crimes, specifically in Wylam, between 1 January and mid-November this year. This compares with 76 crimes during the same period last year. In Northumberland as a whole the overall fall was only 9%, so we appear to be "doing well".

Perhaps the worrying thing is that the highest proportion of recent crimes have been assaults and criminal damage, whereas in the past, by far the greatest number were break-ins to garages and garden sheds, often resulting in the theft of bicycles and garden tools.

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The police attribute the fall in crime to one or two significant changes in their approach. Although they always have and will continue to investigate all incidents reported to them, they have carried out five specific "operations" in Wylam to target potential offenders. A frequent problem, particularly in the summer, has been caused by youths entering the village from the Newcastle direction using the Country Park "waggonway" or riverside. This summer, a number of arrests were made, leading to what the police describe as "positive outcomes"!

Another very significant change has been the establishment, about a year ago, of a Community Beat Team, comprising one Sergeant, four Constables and two Community Support Officers, all operating from Prudhoe Police Station. They have been able to re-visit the victims of crime and others in vulnerable situations and have, for example, been able to fit (free of charge) shed-bars and shed-alarms, where these are thought to be appropriate.

Our local (Wylam) Beat Officer is PC Charlie Cross, who would be pleased to help and advise anyone wishing to speak to him. He can be contacted through Prudhoe Police Station on 832204. Not only that but, from December this year, he will be available at Wylam Library on the first Saturday of every month, during the Library opening times. He would be happy to talk there to anyone, either about concerns they have or to advise about police matters. It is expected that, during next year, the Police Caravan will also be making occasional visits to Wylam and these will be widely advertised in advance.

We are all reminded that the police can only respond if we notify them of incidents we see or hear. Our eyes and ears are important "feelers" for them in the community.

Finally, as Nick Ross of "Crime-watch" would probably say, the number of people affected directly by crime is very small, particularly in Wylam - so don't have nightmares, do sleep well!

Mystery Solved!

It was not really any surprise that it was Connie Smith, from Falcon Terrace, who came up with the explanation for the names found scratched into the lead around the Institute chimney and dated 1918, (see the Autumn issue of the "Wylam Globe").

The words are "W Smith" and "R S Pigg. Lyncroft" and Connie tells us that William Smith was actually her husband, Jack's, father and the village plumber. He and his wife lived in Algernon Terrace. The R S Pigg was "Reggie" Pigg, the younger son of Adam Pigg. The father and two sons were all joiners and their workshop was the old blacksmith's shop beside what is now Wylam Garage. The Pigg family lived at Blckett House and also had a newspaper business there.

"Reggie" Pigg married Betty Irwin, whose father farmed Wylam Hills Farm until 1923, when the Graham family arrived. The "Lyncroft" in the inscription is the bungalow almost opposite the Fox and Hounds, which the young couple built. Connie tells us that Reggie also had a haulage business and used to transport the Boys Brigade Old Boys football team to their away matches - no cars in those days!

The two families became further linked in 1951, when William Smith's younger son, Harry, married the Pigg's daughter, Peggy. They lived in Horncastle in Lincolnshire, where Harry died just last year, aged 85.

Thank you for this story Connie, another wonderful piece of "living history"!

Hat Trick of Success for Wylam Cricketers

Ken John, Chairman of Wylam Cricket Club writes:-

"The village Cricket Club enjoyed a good season in 2005, at all levels. A report on the First Eleven, written in school-style, would probably read "could have done better!" At full-strength and playing to their potential, the team was capable of challenging for the league title. Nevertheless, the side still finished in a respectable halfway position.

The major achievement for the First Eleven, however, was to lift the West Tyneside League Cup for the third year in succession, a rare event in the history of the league. In addition, Pete Smith, whose concentration and technique are models for young and not so young players in the Club, won the league trophy for the best batting record, with a total of 550 runs and an astonishing average of 61!

The Second Eleven came second in their Division and played solidly all season. The Ladies, despite a number of injuries to key players, finished in a creditable third position in the Northumberland Women's Cricket Association League.

The future of the Club depends upon our commitment to provide and support opportunities for junior cricket. We ran teams at Under-Thirteen and Under-Fifteen who performed well in their respective leagues, punching their weight on a number of occasions against powerful opposition. Next summer we shall have teams at Under-Eleven and Under-Seventeen. Peter Drake's work with his Under-Nine squad has been superb.

Finally, we should like to express our thanks to our Vice-Presidents for their support and to our generous sponsors, Wylam Garage, Spar Wylam and Wylam Wine Lodge. We should also thank the Parish Council and the Playing Field Association for all their hard work behind the scenes."

Remembered with Gratitude

Anyone doubting a willingness to sustain the way our nation remembers those who have given their lives for their country, would have been reassured on Remembrance Sunday, which this year saw St Oswin's Church filled and overflowing for a moving united service, led by Rev David Cant. There were many veterans of our armed services present, together with representatives of the Royal Artillery from Albemarle Barracks and the many uniformed youth organisations from our own village.

The service was followed by a procession from the church to the War Memorial, where still more joined the crowd in the autumn sunshine to pay their respects in the traditional Act of Remembrance. Flags were lowered and the clear trumpet tones of "The Last Post", played by young Richard Webster, broke the silence, after which wreaths were laid by representatives of the Parish Council, The Royal British Legion, 39 Regiment Royal Artillery, the Women's Institute and the several uniformed youth organisations present.

We are fortunate in Wylam to have a beautiful War Memorial that stands in such an attractive and prominent position in the village. This is complemented by the attractive flowers, planted twice each year around the base by Tom and Joe's, Riverside Nursery, on behalf of the Parish Council.

Pavilion Cover-up!

Water leaking through the roof of the Playing Field Pavilion caused problems with the ceiling last winter. The roof over the changing rooms has now been re-felted and the ceiling repaired.

Further problems were discovered in the shower rooms, where water had been finding its way into the wooden floor and rotting it. The 'home' changing room showers have been re-built and made waterproof again and the 'visitor' showers will be repaired in the near future.

The Playing Field Association is also exploring the possibility of building a couple of store rooms on to the west end of the pavilion, to accommodate the ever-increasing quantities of kit used by the cricket and football teams. It is hoped to progress this during 2006.

Workers' Educational Association (WEA)

The Wylam Branch of the WEA supports three courses in the area.

1. Ornithology

A course running since the 1970s under tutor, Bryan Galloway, each of two terms (September–December and January–March/April) normally consist of seven evening classes on Wednesdays (19.30 – 21.30) and three outdoor classes on Sundays. Apart from Bird Identification, major issues such as the Effect of Environmental Change and Migration are discussed. Fieldwork in general is encouraged.

2. Ecology

This course, running since 1998 with tutor Jane Young, takes place on Mondays (19.30 – 21.30). There may be an additional term to the ones outlined under Ornithology. This course is also a mixture of evening classes and weekend outdoor sessions. The current course looks at Ponds and Bogs and the variety of wildlife to be found there. Previous courses have included "Life on the Seashore", "Getting to know Trees", "Plants of the Pennines", "Hedgerow Wildlife", "Mammals" and others.

Both the above courses are held in the Wylam Methodist Church Centre.

3. Literature

This course starts again in January 2006 under tutor Gordon Phillips. The course runs on Mondays from 14.00–16.00 but is held in PRUDHOE Library. The title for study next term is "An Introduction to Irish Literature Through Themes of Irishness".

New members are welcome on any of the courses. Further information and details of costs are available from the Branch Secretary, Bob Doughty, on 853398.

Anyone Out There?

Several people were kind enough to express appreciation of the last edition of the "Wylam Globe", the first in its more colourful format and under a new editorial team. More news, views and comments (even if they're critical), would still be welcome. We wish this quarterly publication to be, not only a vehicle for Parish Council material, but a source of information about the things that are likely to interest you and others within our community.

The Parish Council are currently preparing to publish an updated Village Information Card. If you have not yet been asked to confirm the contact details for a club or village organisation for which you are responsible, please pass details to the Parish Council Clerk as soon as possible.

The Parish Council Clerk, Diana Carney, is in the office within Wylam Institute on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Her hours are flexible but between 12.30 and 4.00pm, she will be there!

As mentioned in the last edition, we plan to publish a "Wylam Globe" in September, December, March and June each year. If there is something you would like to be considered for publication, please assume the following deadlines for the issues due in 2006:

10 February for March
19 May for June
25 August for September
10 November for December

As far as possible we will try to include details of forthcoming village events, although limited space may require us to restrict this to essential information.

Village Plan

You may remember the appraisal and consultations, carried out towards the end of 2002, culminating in 2003, with the publication of the "Wylam Village Plan". It is pleasing to know that our Plan has been widely recognised as a good example of its type and we still hear of villages throughout the North East that have been provided with a copy to illustrate what can be done.

If you have moved into Wylam within the last two or three years and have not seen a copy, they are still available, free of charge for Wylam residents. Just call in to the Parish Office or leave a message on the phone and you can receive a copy.

Following publication of the Village Plan, three Working Groups were established to try to push a range of ideas forward. These have now been consolidated into two, namely "Environment" and "Highways and Transport". In some respects significant progress has been made although, as we warned, some aspects are outside the direct control of the Parish Council and some of these are taking longer to achieve. Nevertheless, you can be assured that efforts continue. Within the next couple of years the Parish Council will probably be looking at ways to evaluate what has been achieved and how we can best update our Village Plan in order that it will continue to meet needs in the future. If you have any suggestions as to how this might best be done, do please let us know.

Lights on - Lights Off!

By the time you are reading this the Christmas lights, provided by the Parish Council, should be decorating the trees below the Institute. We hope you are enjoying them. It's also a time when faulty street lights often come to our attention. Remember you can report these direct to the County Council Street Lighting Department (giving the reference number on the lamp) on Freephone 0800 085 0029.

Call of the Youth Club

More than 40 young people between the ages of 13 and 19 are currently registered with Wylam Youth Club, which meets at the Falcon Centre on Monday and Wednesday evenings between 7.00 and 9.30pm. Sessions are supervised by Youth Workers from Prudhoe Youth Association, a Department of Prudhoe Community High School.

A varied programme of activities is on offer, including pool, table tennis, quizzes, issues-based sessions, pizza nights, trips out, fitness and healthy living sessions. Much of the input comes from the young people themselves.

A typical recent quote from one of the young people is; "At 'the Bloc' we play pool, table tennis, air hockey, draw, talk to our mates and to Kirsty and Ed, the Youth Workers. Sometimes we go on trips and do quizzes. It's a good laugh and we have a place to go. It's fun".

For further information, contact the Prudhoe East Youth Centre on 832343.

Bird Notes

Peter Clarke writes:-

"The Nature Reserve is very quiet at the moment, but the bird feeding station has been re-opened since the first sharp frost. This was soon discovered by a robin that couldn't wait, quickly followed by all of our old friends from last winter. Anyone willing to provide food, especially table scraps, will be most welcome, but will need to be shown a new way into the feeding station".

"A particular pleasure", "has been the presence in the last few weeks of several birds of prey not far from the Reserve. Between the village and a little east of Stephenson's Cottage, it is possible that you will spot two buzzards, a sparrowhawk and even a merlin. A sparrowhawk has also been seen over the Nature Reserve. All of these, in addition to the fairly frequently seen red kites.

Keep walking and reporting, it gives much pleasure to many people. (You can contact Peter on 852297)."

What's Cooking in Wylam?

Wylam First School has collected favourite recipes from pupils, parents, grandparents and staff and compiled them into an attractive keepsake cook book. The book is available for sale from Friday 9 December, making it an ideal Christmas gift. It may be purchased from Wylam First School Office or from J.A. Stobo & Son. The cost is £5 and all proceeds will go to the School. The book contains well-loved recipes including soups and starters, main meals, desserts and many more. An excellent stocking-filler!

What an Improvement

Residents of Hackworth Gardens will be appreciating the major improvements recently carried out to that road and its pavements by the County Council. OK, so we all think it should have been "our" road first, but Hackworth Gardens has suffered from major subsidence for a long time, possibly the result of water found running beneath the carriageway, which has now been rectified.

Every year the Parish Council is invited to submit a list of highway and footpath faults to the County Council.

You can imagine the list from our own locality, never mind the enormous list that this must generate across the whole county. However, we do take every opportunity to press the local case. The Hackworth Gardens work is an example, along with Bluebell Lane, parts of Dene Road, the pavements of Woodvale Gardens and dropped kerbs along the Main Road - all areas that we have been highlighting since our appraisal and Village Plan, published in 2003, which have all received attention within the last 12 months or so.



Work in progress in Hackworth Gardens

Beavers Need Eager Leader

The Scout Group in Wylam are keen to establish a Beaver Colony (nothing, we hasten to add, to do with the release of beavers into the countryside!) The Colony would probably operate as an after-school club.

Beavers are in the age-group six to eight, at which latter age they move into the Cubs. Beavers are similar in many respects to the Rainbows, the pre-Brownie group.

Critically, a volunteer is needed to run the Colony. The Scout Group would be delighted to hear from anyone who would be interested. More than one expression of interest and we would be ecstatic! Inevitably, in these days of increased child protection, the usual (nowadays) clearance has to be observed and there would be some training requirements, which are not onerous.

If anyone is interested, please contact Ken John on 853355.

Like to be a Parish Councillor?

From time to time a vacancy occurs on the Parish Council between elections. In this situation the Council is normally able to co-opt someone to fill the gap and it is helpful to know in advance of people who might be interested. If you would like to be considered for such a situation, please contact the Parish Council Clerk, who will be able to provide more information about what the position would entail.

*Wylam Parish Council
wishes all of our
readers a very
Happy Christmas and
New Year*

Disappearing Paperboys!

For the past 40 years we have had the option of home delivery of the morning papers. Not for much longer! Regrettably the SPAR is having to end this service.

Doug Bergstrand explained; "A combination of the earlier time of the school bus and lack of interest in a part-time job, as well as the increasing weight of weekend papers, has made it impossible to recruit staff and continue deliveries."

Newspapers can still be reserved for collection and some villagers are already collecting them for elderly neighbours who find it difficult to get to the shop. This could be the opportunity to exercise a little and walk down to pick up your favourite read!

What's On?

Wylam Community Playing Field Association:

Jumble Sale:

Sat. 14 Jan. 2006

Burns' Night:

Sat. 28 Jan. (tickets 853328)

"Men at Home"

Meetings (all Wednesdays at 10.15am for coffee/tea, start at 10.30am) in the Methodist Church Centre:

11 January

Brian Cave - "The Great North Air Ambulance"

8 February

Anthony Coon - "Traffic in Towns"

8 March

David Stainsby - "The Foot"

Annual Village Litter Pick

Saturday 18th March from 10.00 a.m. - book the date!

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*Printed for Wylam Parish Council by
The Gilpin Press,
Houghton-le-Spring DH4 4BA.*