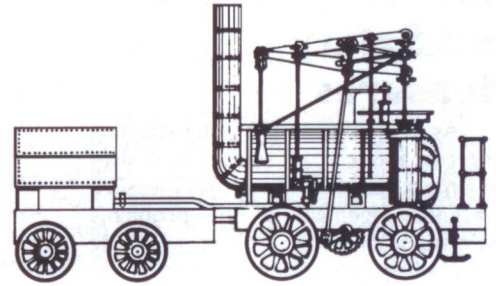


# THE WYLAM GLOBE

Newsletter of Wylam Parish Council



Autmn, 2007

Number 86

## Bridge Closure Causes a Storm

It was a shock to the Parish Council, just as it was to everyone else, when the County Council announced in early July that Wylam Bridge would have to be closed to traffic during the work which is now in progress. The County Council had intended to keep the bridge open to one-way traffic but this was ruled out following an assessment of the safety issues affecting both the workforce and pedestrians.

There followed a period during which an Action Group was formed whose members fought hard to reverse this decision and there were some heated exchanges of views, particularly about the lack of prior consultation.

It is not the wish here to rake over the embers of this dispute but we take this opportunity to clarify one or two points that have been raised with the Parish Council.

Following the serious accident on the bridge in 2006, Wylam Parish Council, partly in response to strongly expressed local views, pressed the County Council to do something that would prevent anything similar happening again. Contrary to some comments, the County Council did not make a "knee-jerk" reaction but carried out a safety assessment of several similar bridges within Northumberland and concluded that all fell below modern standards of safety and decided that Wylam Bridge was the highest priority for action.

At a crowded meeting of the Parish Council in October 2006, a range of options under consideration for the bridge were described by officers of the County Council and many local people present made it clear that minor cosmetic changes would not be enough. This encouraged the Parish Council to continue its own support for this approach.

Since more details of the work were published in the last issue of "The Globe", the fact that the bridge is to be slightly widened has led some to express concern about why this is necessary. Please be assured that there is no wish to encourage greater speed. The reason for widening the bridge is to make it possible for larger vehicles to pass without one running onto the pavement, a safety issue that local people have expressed over many years.

Finally, in case it is not clear by the time you read this, there never has been any intention to replace the present railings with solid panels that will hide the river from view. The new barriers, embedded into a new and reinforced edge to the bridge deck, will comprise galvanised steel posts carrying four horizontal rails with the lower part covered in steel mesh, not unlike at present.



Work getting started on Wylam Bridge

### Any Problems?

For the duration of work on the bridge a small Liaison Group has been established including representatives of the Parish Council and the community. This group is meeting regularly with representatives of the County Council and the contractor to discuss progress and any problems that arise affecting the public. If you have a complaint or concern, please bring this to the attention of the Group, either through the Parish Council Office (contact details at the foot of back page) or through the County Council's Highways Contact Centre (freephone) 0808 100 8910. Urgent issues can be raised on-site with Ken Bruce, the County Council's Senior Resident Engineer, but we are all asked to leave staff as far as possible to get on with their work.

### How we can ALL help

There is no doubt that we will all be inconvenienced to a greater or lesser extent during the closure of the bridge. However, it is the traders and other businesses that will undoubtedly suffer the most due to access problems and the potential loss of passing trade.

This is where we can all help. **WHY NOT MAKE A POINT OF BUYING MORE OF YOUR REQUIREMENTS WITHIN THE VILLAGE?** We are fortunate for a village of our size to have an excellent selection of retail businesses, pubs and restaurants. Now is the time for us to show that we value them and to fight to ease their burden with a bit of "Dunkirk Spirit".

At the time of our Village Survey in 2002, less than 15% of households did their main grocery shopping within Wylam and we have recently learned that the Wylam postcode is the most frequent destination for Tesco deliveries of on-line orders. Come on everyone - let's shop locally and really try to make a difference!



## Additional Work and Safety Measures

As a result of the long-standing concerns about road safety in Wylam and almost certainly in no small measure in acknowledgement of the problems that temporary bridge closure will bring to the village, the County Council has agreed to pay for the installation of a traffic-activated speed warning sign. A few months ago the Parish Council deferred a decision to purchase a system of this kind, at least this year, because there was insufficient money in the budget. The sign will not be like those at Horsley, which are fixed. What we expect is a single sign that will be moved, probably every six to eight weeks, between three or four fixed posts at key locations which are yet to be confirmed. We hope that it will display "30 Slow Down". Research shows that this type of movable sign can be more effective and is less likely to lead to complacency amongst passing drivers.

### there's more.....

The County Council has also promised to initiate an independent study to identify other possible improvements that could contribute to village road safety. There is no guarantee that these would all be immediately funded but we hope to hear more about this in the near future.

### and more....

While the bridge is closed it is also intended to re-surface Station Road and Main Road on the north side from the bridge to Charlie's Corner.

## Drama Society

Wylam Drama Society will be performing Alan Ayckbourn's "Improbable Fiction" at the Institute on Thursday, Friday and Saturday 29th & 30th November and 1st December. Tickets £5 (£4 concessions) available from Wylam Tea Shop, members or on the night.

## Co-options to Parish Council

We are delighted to report that the two unfilled seats on the Parish Council following the May elections have now both been filled by co-option.

We welcome Melanie Dunnett and Caroline Shepherd to the Parish Council and look forward to the contribution with a younger perspective which they will no doubt be able to bring.

Melanie can be contacted at 19 Woodvale Gardens (Tel: 852106) and Caroline at 7 Dene Terrace East (Tel: 852889)

## Wylam in Bloom!

These pictures go a little way to remind us of the many parts of the village where flowers have helped to brighten things over the last few months. They also provide an opportunity to express our thanks to some of those involved.

The lovely flowers throughout the year around the War Memorial are not only provided at a modest cost but also planted and maintained free of charge by Wylam Nurseries. They also provide the plants for the various tubs that are so kindly planted and maintained by members of the Wylam Gardeners Society. Fourteen of the hanging baskets, mostly on premises along the main road, are provided by Tynedale Council but hung and maintained by Wylam Parish Council. (See "A Handy Man!", right).

We are very grateful to all those who contribute to the attractiveness of our village, not forgetting those businesses and individuals who take steps to ensure that passers-by can enjoy the experience.



Flowers at the War Memorial looking at their best

## "Welcome Christmas"

Thankfully there are still a lot of shopping days before Christmas but this is the time to put Wednesday 12 December in your diary - the date when the Westoe Colliery Band will be giving another concert in the Institute, in aid of Institute funds. For this year's concert there is a promise of "fewer words but much more joyous music, with carol singing for all".

## A Handy Man!



Matthew Hadden attends to a frequent summer task

The picture above shows Matthew Hadden, who has been employed by the Parish Council on a casual basis as "Village Handyman" for the past five years.

Matthew is seen performing one of his regular summer tasks, watering the hanging baskets, but he is mostly to be seen throughout the year with his brush and shovel keeping the village clean and tidy. The routine road and occasional pavement sweeping by Tynedale Council fails to adequately remove all the litter, weeds and other detritus that accumulate so quickly in a village with many trees and shrubs around, and this is where Matthew's contribution is so important.

Matthew's work is directed by the Parish Council and he is unable to respond directly to requests from the public but, if you notice an area of the village that particularly needs attention, please contact the Parish Council Office.

## Coming to a PC near you ....

The Wylam Parish Council website is on the way! At the Parish Council meeting on 3 September, members agreed to employ Alnwick-based company Tagish Ltd to develop a website for the Council. The website will initially include information about Wylam and its Parish Council, Agendas and Minutes of Council meetings, with pages for the Nature Reserve and the Railway Museum and a directory of Local Organisations. Development of a Village Events Diary is also planned. If your organisation would like to have a page on the website, or would like a link to an already established website, then please let us know. The website should be up and running by mid-October. In the meantime, all suggestions and ideas for site content would be most welcome.



## Options for Future Development Sites in Wylam

Tynedale Council has recently embarked upon a long process which will identify appropriate sites for future development throughout the District. At the end of the process, which is not expected until 2010, the sites finally chosen will become part of the Local Development Framework, previously known as the Local Development Plan.

Preliminary sites could be proposed by almost anyone, including the site owners, developers, District and Parish Councils or individuals and five sites were nominated within Wylam.

These sites have been widely publicised and identified by official notices at each site and members of the public have been invited to send comments to Tynedale.

The Parish Council has also discussed the options and sent in comments shortly after the Public Meeting on 10 September, called to hear more from officers from Tynedale Planning Department and to listen to the views of local people. In case you were unable to attend this meeting, it should be stressed that there are no current planning applications for these sites. Tynedale will analyse all the comments received and make a detailed assessment of each site in relation to previously agreed policies. A list of preferred sites will then be published in February 2008 at which time there will be further consultation before the final list is submitted to the Secretary of State.

The local sites proposed are as follows:-

1. Bythorne Farm (1.06ha) for housing.
2. Wylam Hills Farm (0.79ha) for housing and/or affordable housing.
3. As 2 above but including farm house and garden (1.05ha) for housing and/or affordable housing.
4. Wylam Hall (grounds) (1.80ha) for housing.
5. Part of field to east of Holeyn Hall Road (1.64ha) for affordable housing.

It should be stressed that the total number of nominated sites in Tynedale far exceeds the area required to meet predicted housing needs and it is extremely unlikely that all, if any, of the Wylam sites will end up on the final list.

Plans showing details of the above sites can be seen at the Parish Council Office, the Library or on Tynedale Council's website. Tynedale Planning Department has also extended until November the time during which the public may submit comments.

## An Experience of Kenya

*20 year old Jenny Armstrong, from South Wylam, raised sufficient money, which included a small grant from the Parish Council, to enable her to travel to Kenya as a project volunteer. Jenny writes:-*

I recently returned from a six-week trip to Kenya with a company called Camps International. The aim of the trip was to carry out voluntary work at a primary school in the village of Muhaka in Mombasa and provide support to the local community. We helped to build and paint new classrooms for the school and made tables and desks for the children.

We also talked to the Head Teacher and managed to organise a sports day using equipment that we had taken out for them. This was really beneficial for the children who ranged from age 6 to 18, because everyone could get involved and enjoy new experiences. Personally the trip was really valuable, as it allowed me first-hand experience of a completely different culture and provided the opportunity to make a difference in a place that really needs help.



*Jenny Armstrong (third left at back) with fellow volunteers and Kenyan friends*

## Fair Weather for the Fair

The Playing Field Summer Fair managed to do it again - arrange for excellent weather on a day that started distinctly damp! This boosted attendance and helped the total raised for the Association to reach £3,000. Thanks are due to the various organisations that participated, in particular the Methodist Church which ran the Bookstall and contributed half of their profit of £2,000.

Many thanks to all who helped and everyone who came.

Work planned in the near future includes improvement of the drainage at the west end of the field at a cost of around £2,000 and it is hoped to start work on the pavilion extension in 2008. The AGM will take place in the Institute on Monday 5 November at 7.30pm, when all are welcome to come along.



*Winners of the Summer Fair 'Fun Run' with representatives of the sponsors, Wylam Spar*



## Costumes with History

Lynne Petrie writes:-

On Tuesday 2 October at 7.30pm, Alan Graham, formerly of the Costume Department at Beamish, will be returning to the Institute to show the treasure trove of clothes and artefacts that he found after the death of his great aunt. Anyone who has heard Alan talk before will remember just how entertaining he is. Tickets, at £5 (including a glass of wine), are available now from The Wine Lodge, Tea Shop and members of the Committee and all profit will go to "Shelter" for local projects in the north east.

## Scout Rail Rolls into Wylam

It's coming to Wylam! First Wylam (St Oswin's) Scout Group is organising a Railway Exhibition to take place on Saturday 27 October, in the Village Institute. A first of its kind in Northumberland!

We are expecting to have stands devoted to modellers, Railway Societies, books relating to railways for young people and adults, games and working models for all to enjoy. There will also be an auction of railway memorabilia; we have an interesting collection of items already. We hope that the exhibition will perhaps provide an opportunity to find early Christmas presents.

If anyone has any interesting railway related material of any kind that they would be willing to donate for potential sale or just to display, do please let either Steve Loveday (853076) or Ken John (853355) know. We would also be grateful to hear from anyone who might be prepared to help in any way.

Please support the event which has two objectives, both to provide an enjoyable day and to raise funds to enable the Scout Group to purchase new equipment. As well as Scouts and Cubs sections, we now have a highly successful Beaver Colony of children aged six to eight years and twenty two keen youngsters.

## Guides 40th Anniversary

2007 marks the 40th Anniversary of the continuous existence of Wylam Guides. The unit was originally set up in 1921 and closed in 1943. It was reopened in 1950 but closed again in 1956. The Unit was registered again in 1967 and has been running ever since.

To celebrate this anniversary, the current Wylam Guides will be holding a Coffee Morning in St Oswin's Church Hall on Saturday 8 December between 10.00am and 12 noon to which all are invited, especially any former Guides, Brownies and Leaders.

If anyone has photos, uniforms, badges or just memories that the Guides could use to make a display as part of their "Traditions of Guiding" Badge, please contact Marilyn Harding (852618) or Jane Pearson (853387).

## Nature Notes

Peter Clarke writes:-

The confused and confusing weather we have experienced lately has probably had a greater effect on wildlife than on humans. Whether or not the confusion can be held to be an effect of global warming, it has provided an interesting period of activity for naturalists going out into the field.

I had the great pleasure of accompanying Sheila and June on their survey of the Reserve at the end of August and, in the space of a couple of hours, observed 36 flower species and 14 birds, together with 8 fruits and several other items of interest. Small mammals put in an appearance though sometimes so briefly as to make it difficult to identify them. However, there was no doubt about rabbits and moles present, together with a likely vole crossing a footpath.

Birds have recently included a dipper singing from a rock and a nuthatch several times. It has been a real treat to find that a pair of red kites have not only nested but raised young here this summer. Let us hope they remain.

In the last few warm and sunny days, peacock, red admiral and cabbage white butterflies have been about.

## An Award for Wylam!

Several months ago the Parish Council submitted an entry to the Calor "Northumberland Village of the Year" competition, organised by Community Action Northumberland. The competition focuses on People, Environment, Business and Communications.

We were delighted that our entry was one of three short-listed and Sue Nicholson, Chairman of Wylam Institute Community Association and Brian Japes, Parish Council Chairman, gave a presentation a few weeks ago to a panel of judges in Morpeth.

The winning village was Acklington but, in the words of the organisers; "because the judges were so impressed with the high standard of Wylam's case, they have decided to award you a 'Highly Commended' Certificate".

## Churches Youth Worker Moves on

Aileen Johnson, from Rowlands Gill, has been an inspirational part-time Youth Worker, employed by the Wylam and District Churches for the past four years. Sadly, Aileen is now moving on to a full-time post at Heaton.

Aileen will be missed, not only by the churches but by the many youngsters who have enjoyed her energy and infectious enthusiasm through events such as the Village Holiday Club, weekly "BLT" sessions at the First School and many other activities within local schools and the wider community.

We take this opportunity to wish Aileen well in both her new job and her forthcoming marriage in October.

The Wylam and District Churches have advertised for a replacement and hope that someone will soon be found to continue this work.

## Forthcoming Events

"Costumes with History" in aid of "Shelter". Institute. 7.30pm, Tues 2 Oct.

**Men at Home**, Methodist Centre "Nuclear Power" (speaker, John Carr), 10.15am Wed. 10 Oct.

**Scouts' Railway Exhibition**, Institute. Sat. 27 Oct.

**Annual Christmas Charity Card & Gift Fair**, Institute, Sat 3 Nov from 10am to 12.30pm.

**Playing Field Association. AGM**, Institute. 7.30pm Mon 5 Nov.

**Men at Home**, Methodist Centre "The Islamic Way of Life" (speaker, Malik Chaudhry) 10.15am Wed. 14 Nov.

**Guides' 40th Anniversary**, St Oswin's Hall, 10am till 12, Sat 8 Dec.

**Men at Home**, Methodist Centre, "What the Heck is a Virus?" (speaker Richard Madeley), 10.15am Wed 12 Dec.

**Westoe Colliery Band**, Institute, Wed 12 Dec. (in aid of Institute)

## Future Deadlines

We welcome brief articles for the "Wylam Globe", including those of local interest, reports of events or dates of those coming up. Photographs can sometimes be included where space allows. Please submit material to the Parish Council Office either by hand or email, at the latest by the following dates for future issues:-

**Winter 07 (Dec)** 3 November

**Spring 08 (March)** 2 February

**Summer 08 (June)** 9 May

**Autumn 08 (Sept)** 15 August

Correspondence relating to this Newsletter should be addressed to:

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