



Esh Leaves

Esh Parish Council newsletter for Esh, Langley Park, Quebec, Ushaw and Wilk's Hill

Submit articles for the March 2007 edition to:
The Editor, 8 Long Garth, Durham City, DH1 4HJ or email to editor@langley-park.org.uk
or leave at Esh or Langley Park Post Office by 31 January 2007

PARISH CLERK OBTAINS CERTIFICATE IN LOCAL COUNCIL ADMINISTRATION

We are delighted to report that Geoff Smith, the Parish Clerk, has, after several months of sheer hard work, been successful with his submission to the Society of Local Council Clerks for a Certificate in Local Council Administration. Geoff's paperwork filled two tightly packed lever arch files after many long hours of research in the Parish Room often followed by sleepless nights. Naturally he had hoped to recover from this weekly stint by watching his favourite club, Sunderland FC, but this only made matters worse until Roy Keane came along!

Geoff is only the 8th Parish Clerk out of over 150 Parish Clerks in County Durham to obtain this highly sought after certificate and indeed he is the first in Derwentside to do so. What is even more remarkable is that all but one of the other successful Clerks are employed by very large Town or Parish Councils with budgets 10 times the size of Esh Parish.

Geoff's achievement now gives the Parish Council the opportunity of applying for



Parish Clerk Geoff Smith hard at work in the Parish Room

Quality Parish Council status, and then discussing with both the District, and County Council, the possibility of some of their existing functions being devolved to the Parish Council. These are indeed interesting times!

Editor's note

After 37 years as a Durham District Council employee Geoff took early retirement in March 2005 and joined the Parish Council as Deputy Clerk and then as its Clerk in August 2005. Apart from getting to

grips with his new, and challenging workload, Geoff has dedicated many hours to obtain his Certificate and for this he deserves our special thanks.

Apart from Geoff's efforts the Parish Council Chairman, Alan Mollon, has also been taking a Chairman's course, through the North Eastern Regional Employers Organisation, and was recently awarded a certificate in Chairmanship skills.

What with Geoff and Alan's qualifications, and the backing of an IT Officer, the Parish Council could soon be discussing possible service level agreements with other Councils for some of their existing functions.

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Who are these happy trippers – see page 5 for more details



Police Report

Don't hand a Christmas gift to a thief this Christmas!

Christmas presents piled up under the tree with the lights shining through the open curtains are really attractive – but thieves think so too.

In fact historically, house burglaries often rise at this time of the year when houses are stacked full of presents, often easily visible through a window.

Once your beautifully wrapped presents have tempted offenders into your home of course they are then likely take anything they can easily find, and that often includes credit cards and cheque books, bags and car keys, which are very nice Christmas presents to a burglar.

"Everyone should have a happy and secure Christmas, so I would like to remind people of the simple security steps to ensure they keep their property safe at Christmas and afterwards.

It really is a time to be aware of your security, because the sad fact is that more than 30 per cent of all domestic burglaries happen because people do not lock their doors and shut their windows - the opportunist thief does not even have to use force to gain access.

Even if you are in the house you should still lock external doors and vacant rooms, especially those on the ground floor, should have their windows shut. And if the room is stacked full of presents, close the curtains!

And remember, when you're out for their last minute Christmas shopping make sure you keep your purse or wallet safe, preferably in a bag which is securely closed and with them at all times.

Christmas should be a happy and peaceful time of year but it is never the right time to let your security standards slip. Have a good time, but make sure your hard earned presents don't end up in someone else's hands.

Simple steps to keep your property safe at Christmas, and all year round, include:

- If you stack your Christmas presents under the tree, close your curtains when the lights are on.....
- It is a good idea to make sure there are lights on in your house when you are out during the dark winter days. Use a timer switch or leave a light on
- And after Christmas, do not put the empty boxes from electrical or other Christmas presents outside your home, keep them stored in a safe place until the refuse collectors are due to call

- Mark all new property with your house number or postcode

Free crime prevention advice and property marking is available by contacting the Crime Prevention Officer at your local police station.

The Real Hustle

If by the time you read this article you can still watch a weekly programme on BBC3 called 'The Real Hustle' then do so! It is a great show which shows the public the cons that tricksters use. It's a real eye opener and if people are aware of the tricks they'll be less likely to be caught out. For instance it shows the credit card cloning techniques which are scarily easy!

Accessibility

As the PCSO for Langley Park I wish to be as accessible as possible. I can be contacted on 0845 6060365 extension 664 4420, or by calling into my beat surgery (dates on poster in Housing Office), putting notes or comments (good or bad) into the Streetsafe box in the Housing Office or stop me on the street!

Reported Incident

We have had various reports about the youth congregating at the rear of the Community Transport Building, Doctors Surgery and surrounding area and running across resident's roofs in Church Street. There has been damage caused to lighting and the CCTV camera as a result. **The**

CCTV cameras DO work and as a result two youths have been identified and spoken to regarding this damage. We are increasing patrols in that area and will deal with any offences disclosed.

Local people tell me they're scared to call the police fearing reprisals if the police officer or police car is spotted outside their home. Please note when you call the police, you can do so **ANONYMOUSLY** - you don't have to give your name and no police officer will call at your home if you don't want them to. I ask residents to work with us and help make all our villages safer places.

PCSO 6654 Steve Brown
Lanchester Police Office

PC 1642 Christopher P. DOVER

As you may or may not be aware I have left the beat at Langley Park to transfer to Core Response, working from Chester le Street Police Office. I have greatly enjoyed my role as the Community 'Bobby' within Langley Park and more recently, within the entire Lanchester Section area (Burnhope, Lanchester, and Langley Park).

When I took the position in October 2004 I was immediately made aware of the main problems within Langley Park; drugs and youth annoyance. Several operations were put into place to tackle these issues.

Over the 2 year period I made 48 arrests for offences ranging from minor public order, to major offences such as Violent Disorder and Possession with intent to supply Class A drugs. Of these arrests several persons are serving or have served sentences at HMP. If we look at these sentences consecutively, they would amount to around 9 years. Even though I have moved on, I'm still investigating a male for possession with intent to supply drugs of Class A, B and C. These drugs have an approximate street value of £30,000. Reported anti-social behaviour is lower than it was 2 years ago.

The Parish Council has also been instrumental in reducing anti-social behaviour. They have worked together with the Police and partner agencies to provide activities for the youth of the village, for example running a soccer skills session during the summer.

The EQUaL partnership is also making significant inroads in obtaining the necessary funding and permission to implement the Sir Bobby Robson play park. I hope that all residents of the Parish will continue to support the excellent work that has been and will continue to be carried out.

PCSO Steve BROWN will continue to serve the community of Esh Parish and be assisted by a Constable when the vacancy is filled. He can be contacted via

telephone, 0845 60 60 365, or by visiting the once a fortnight beat surgery at the Housing Office on Thomas Street.

Regards

PC 1642 Christopher P.
DOVER
B Relief
Chester le Street Police
Office



Despite a quiet month in August with many people away on holidays substantial progress has been made with all of the projects we are currently involved in. We are also looking forward to a busy period with a raffle planned in the run up to Christmas, we are currently seeking prizes and raffle ticket sellers, volunteer events are to be arranged for the Old Recreation Ground and we are busy making applications for funds.

Karen's Quote

"Each month I get a long list of things I have to do, letters, bids, monitoring forms, photocopying, e-mails – but by far the best is being asked to contact people to explain what we are doing and get their support. For example that support can be voting for a playground design, selling raffle tickets, volunteering to help with a litter pick or providing funds. A big thank you to supporters is due as we're now getting funds from Esh Parish Council, i.e. a

letter of intent for £5,000 (towards the proposed Sir Bobby Robson Park), and under the Local Members (District Council) Initiative Fund District Councillor Wallace Tyrie £250, a pledge from Durham County Councillor Joe Armstrong for £1,000 over two years. We also received £200 each from District Councillors Gordon Coulson and Harry Guildford under the Local Members Initiative Fund in January 2006 and more recently a further £250 from each of them - so to all our other supporters – **THANK YOU.**”

Old Recreation Ground

There is a hidden nature reserve in Langley Park, which is a very special area of lowland heather; volunteers are needed to help with litter picking, work to remove non native plants, and eventually to plant more plants and put up bird boxes to increase biodiversity. Work also needs to be done on improving access and providing information boards about the nature reserve. A work programme is in process of being organised and we hope to get funding for the site next year.

However, although a lot of work needs to be done, this didn't stop Mr Stephenson, from South Shields and his party, including a Parish Priest from Australia, from enjoying a walk around the Parish. They stopped to talk to Alison Hiles, Chair of the EQUaL Partnership and Jane Morton from DEFRA. Alison is also on the Parish Council



From left to right, a friend, Jane Morton, Mr Stephenson, Alison Hiles and the Australian Priest.

and works for Durham Wildlife Trust. Esh Parish Councillors are also Trustees of the Charity owning the Old Recreation Ground

Sir Bobby Robson Park Putting the Park into Langley Park

Four possible designs of the first phase of Sir Bobby Robson's Park were on display outside the Methodist Hall in Langley Park on Saturday the 29th July, for children and other residents to pick their favourite and VOTE.



Voting for the Playground design

Jason Martin from EQUaL said “The Park will be used by the children and we are

very keen to get them, and the whole community, involved in the design and funding process. EQUaL want as many children to vote as possible for their park as we have applied to the People's Millions for funding and, if short

listed, the people in our ITV region will decide if our community will be awarded funds to help build this park.”

The voting was very close, but Wicksteeds design came in first and using this design we have now been able to apply for planning permission.

Young People

Working with interested parties, e.g. Esh Parish Council, Durham County Council, Councillors, Youth Workers, we are looking to arrange some training for young people in January to help them form a Young

Peoples Committee which will be able to take decisions on what facilities they would like to see in Esh Ward.

Miners Memorial

We are also very happy to be working with the Community, Esh Parish Council, and

with help from Durham County Council on a project which will celebrate the Mining Heritage of Langley

Park. In this initial period we need as much support from you so please contact Karen if you would like to get involved.

The EQUaL Partnership, is a community partnership covering the ward of Esh, Quebec, Ushaw and Langley Park. Please contact Karen for further information or if you would like to volunteer to help in any way with any of the above:

Karen Gibson, EQUaL's Community Capacity Worker, on 0787 943 5422, or by e-mail: karen.equal@indurham.org

SOUTH SHIELDS HERE WE COME!

It was a happy day, and a good time was had by all. But only a few months ago it was doubtful if the 'Goodwill Trip' would ever take place again.



Wendy and Mum, Esther Jones, in front the 'Goodwill Trip' coach number one before leaving for South Shields. © Terry T. Chilton

After the devastation of losing her husband Trevor, who was the previous organiser of the 'Goodwill Trip', Esther Jones naturally thought about the

future, and whether she should continue the enormous amount of work involved collecting the funds required to finance the 'Goodwill Trip'.

This was a difficult time for all the family, yet they bravely came together to talk things through. It was then decided the 'Goodwill Trip' should carry on, and with Esther as treasurer they would give her their continued support in the running of this very popular trip to the seaside for the elderly people of Langley Park.

It was also decided to lower the age of those qualifying for this free outing from 65 to 60 years old, but a bus would still be made available to people under 60 at a price of £3.50 for adults, and children at a

reduced rate.

So, on Monday July 31st bang on the dot of 10.30 a.m. five 'Goodwill Trip' coaches left for South Shields. On

each coach was a member of Ether's family to make sure everything ran smoothly. In coach **No. 1**, (which left from the **Blue Star**) was Esther's daughter **Wendy**. In coach **No. 2** (which left from **Davis**



'Goodwill Trip' coaches 3, 4, and 5 come together outside the Co-op and make ready to leave in this happy convey to the coast. © Terry T. Chilton

Crescent) was **Esther** herself. In coach **No. 3** (which left from **Shortens Corner**) was Amanda's husband **Terry**. In coach **No. 4** (which left from the **Aged Miners Homes**) was Esther's daughter **Amanda**, and in coach **No. 5** (which left from the old **Co-op**) was Esther's daughter **Lesley**. Even Esther's granddaughter **Sarah** was involved, and sold raffle tickets on coach **No. 2**.

The day was a great success, and when coach No. 2 was almost back home the whole coach erupted into a round of applause for Esther. Choking with emotion she told me how much she appreciated their kindness, and very much hopes to continue this special 'Goodwill Trip' in the future.

Terry Chilton.

NEWS FROM THE COUNCILS

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

Service 52 and 725

A copy of the revised timetable is available for inspection in the Parish Room.

The reconfigured service will be run by the Scarlet Band Bus Company providing services through all our Villages to both Langley Park and Durham via Esh Village, Ushaw College and Bearpark. The 52 service will also stop outside the University College Hospital Durham (Dryburn).

Multi Use Games Area (MUGA), Esh

The lighting poles have now been erected and the electric power supply to the poles. The County Council is awaiting a slight adjustment to the light fittings.



Multi User Games Area

Library facilities, Langley Park

The temporary Library has had heating installed and the proposed new Library has undergone an extensive

survey and costings are being prepared

Library – Top 10

Top Ten List: Adult fiction

	Author	Title
1	Patterson, James	Mary, Mary
2	Koomson, Dorothy	My best friend's girl
3	Bourne, Sam	The righteous men
4	Kostova, Elizabeth	The historian
5	Hyde, Elisabeth	The abortionist's daughter

Top Ten List: Adult non-fiction

	Author	Title
1	Harris, Lyndsey	Betrayed
2	Wright, Barbie Probert-	Little girl lost
3	McKenna, Paul	Change your life in seven days
4	McKenna, Paul	Instant confidence!
5	Lewis, Susan	Just one more day

Top Ten List: Junior fiction

	Author	Title
1	Meadows, Daisy	Penny the pony fairy
2	Meadows, Daisy	Lauren the puppy fairy
3	Hunt, Roderick	Looking after Gran
4	Rider, Cynthia	Dad's birthday
5	Rider, Cynthia	Poor old rabbit!

Top Ten List: Junior non-fiction

	Author	Title
1	Handford, Martin	Where's Wally?
2		Stormbreaker
3	Horowitz, Anthony	Alex Rider
4	Deary, Terry	Ruthless Romans
5		Touch and feel baby animals

DERWENTSIDE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Hilltop View

Site has been marketed and it is hoped to confirm developer soon.



The Hilltop View site after demolition

Derwentside Homes

The Transfer of Derwentside District Council Houses to the new Housing Association of Derwentside Homes is expected to go ahead on 04.12.06. The management team has been appointed and the existing staff will transfer over to the new organisation. All tenants will be contacted, and kept fully informed, currently work is ongoing on future programmes of works to upgrading properties in line with the tenants requests which were received during the consultation process and hopefully this information will be made available to tenants

as soon as possible. Housing Stock in Langley Park Village, breakdown as of 31/08/06 (see table to the right).

Property Type	1 Bed Bungalow	2 Bed Bungalow	3Bed Bungalow	2 Bed House	3 Bed House	TOTAL
Number	14	61	11	102	61	249

The Council currently has over 320 people on waiting lists for these properties.

Langley Park Office

Is remaining open after the transfer date, and will continue to deal with Council Business as well as Derwentside Homes business

Making contact

If any prospective tenants of Derwentside Homes are in need of any information they should contact us and we will try our best to supply this, on a case by case basis

Alan Tubman
Temporary Neighbourhood Manager

Funding from Northern Rock Foundation

Northern Rock Foundation has announced a new raft of programmes from this September which may have relevance for community groups in Esh. To apply, your organisation must be constituted and engage in charitable work, although they do not have to be a registered charity. There are two levels of funding: under £20,000 and over £20,000.

The schemes are:

Money and Jobs

Helping disadvantaged people and communities to

increase their assets, income and economic activity.

Independence and Choice

Giving people with mental health problems, people with learning disabilities, older people and carers a choice of excellent services

Strong and Healthy Communities

Strengthening people's well being through community and physical activities, improving local environments and by helping them to eat healthily.

Building Positive Lives

Helping people who lack self-confidence have the individual support they need to lead more positive lives.

Safety and Justice

Reducing child and domestic abuse, sexual violence, prostitution and hate crimes by supporting victims.

Culture and Heritage

Projects that make the North East a better place for everyone to live and enjoy life.

Better buildings

Investing in improved buildings for voluntary and community groups.

Further information on all the schemes, guidelines and application forms are available from the Northern Rock Foundation's website: **www.nr-foundation.org.uk** or by telephoning 0191 284

8412. For guidance and advice on this and other funding issues, telephone Derwentside District Council's Funding Team on 01207 218217.

**Ken Bradshaw
Funding Support Officer**

Cinema listings

Empire Theatre, Consett
Fri 17th - Wed 22nd Nov
The History Boys (15) 110 mins

Sun 26th - Thurs 30th Nov
The Devil Wears Prada (PG)
109 mins

Saturday Movie Club
All Admissions 10.30 am
(Empire Theatre, Consett & Lamplight Arts Centre, Stanley)

Sat 18th Nov
ET: Monster House (PG)
LAC: Over the Hedge (U)

Sat 25th Nov
ET: Ant Bully (U)
LAC: Monster House (PG)

ESH PARISH COUNCIL

Christmas Decorations

The Parish Council is providing Christmas trees in Esh, Langley Park and Quebec. It is intended to install the trees and for pupils from the local Primary School, including Rosie Wright (**See page 24**), to turn on the lights on Thursday 23rd

November (Langley Park) and on Friday 24th November (Esh and Quebec).

Pupils from Langley Park Primary School will once again be painting seasonal murals to attach to the fencing around the Langley Park tree and Durham County Council, Olivers Tree Services and NJC Wrought Iron will be carrying out the works required to bring more light to the Parish.

We intend to say more decorations and our sponsors in the next edition.



The Christmas tree from December 2005

Pantomime

At the time of going to press arrangements are in hand for a Pantomime to be held in Langley Park.

Watch out for posters which should be displayed shortly.

Annual Audit

Esh Parish Council's accounts have now been approved by the External Auditor. No comments were raised by the auditor or any residents when given the

opportunity to inspect the accounts in the Summer.

Hanging Baskets

Another season over. More than 60 baskets provided and watered by Paul Snowdon and his team. Once again our thanks to the local shopkeepers for their co-operation in this matter and to Alan Wilkinson for maintaining the flower tubs on Esh Green.



Watering a Hanging Basket outside Langley Park Post Office

Parish Council Meetings

All Meetings commence at 7.00pm (excepting when following the Annual Assembly and the Annual General Meeting) in the Parish Room, Church Street Community Centre and at other locations. The choice of venue is subject to an annual review at the Annual General Meeting.

Members of the public are welcome to attend the non-confidential part of the Agenda and there is an opportunity to raise matters of interest at the end of this part of the Agenda.

Next Meetings

- 12th December 2006
- 9th January 2007
- 13th February 2007
- 13th March 2007

Seats at Kaysburn Road

Many residents will be wondering what happened to the Parish Council seats along Kaysburn Road.



The Panto Company perform Sleeping Beauty in the 2005 Pantomime



Vandalised seat at Kaysburn

Unfortunately as the result of mindless vandalism they were all but destroyed causing damage running into hundreds of pounds. So far no-one has been arrested in connection with this incident and anyone with any useful information on the matter should contact Durham Police on 0845 60 60 365.

The seats have all now been replaced/repaired and we have taken a photograph of a regular user of the footpath resting awhile on one of the seats.



A local resident tries out the repaired seat

Our thanks to NJC Wrought Iron for their work in reinstating these seats.

A Winter Walk

Once again the Parish Council will be organising a New Years Walk to get rid of those hangovers! This is a walk

of about four-and-a-half miles and should take a couple of hours or so. Mince pies will be provided in the Parish Rooms at the end of the walk! Remember that this is a winter walk, and some of the paths can be muddy, so stout footwear is recommended.



The 2006 Winter Walk getting underway

We will start from the railway path at the entrance to Langley Park at **12.45pm on Tuesday 2nd January 2007.** Local resident **Chris Bloor** will be our leader.

Esh Leaves

Editor

Mr M. G. Ackroyd

Production Assistant

Mr D. C. Rider

Regular Contributions by

Terry Chilton

John C. Foster

Pat Lawlor

And the winner of the competition on page 35!

**DURHAM CLASSIC
MOTORCYCLE CLUB
35th BEAMISH TROPHY
TRIAL 17th SEPTEMBER
2006**

Extract From The Club Secretary's Report

In total there were 98 starters on the day (10 more than last year) from a total entry of 114, with 13 either failing to turn up or withdrawing prior to the day. There were 91 finishers, 7 non-finishers, most of whom broke down & had to be recovered back to the start or make their own recovery arrangements. There were 24 entrants who hadn't previously taken part in

the event, which, once again, shows how popular the trial continues to be. This year we had an international entry, with entrants

travelling from around the world (yes, the world) to take part, with the farthest coming from Germany (and Essex in UK).

We were able to make awards in all classes this year bar two. No entrants, sadly, in these two classes - where are you 'microcars' & 'three-wheelers', please come back? We continue to operate an open door entry at present & anyone can gain an entry, no matter what they ride/drive or its age.

The start was shrouded in mist/fog, but this soon cleared as entrants headed up the valley into fine, sunny, warm conditions.

We had no major mishaps (none we are aware of) and everything ran much as we'd planned. Westgate Ford was less full than last year but slippery nonetheless. All bikes made it safely across. We altered the route to include a petrol station this year, extending into Alston, where petrol was available to those who needed it. I think the left turn in Nenthead caught out those entrants who know the route so well that they don't read the route sheets! I noted many entrants going the wrong way – it does pay to read the route sheet thoroughly before you set off, as there may be changes from one year to the next.

High House Lonnen (or as we call it 'Heart Attack Hill') proved testing once again, but was mostly passable for



No 9 Marion Morrison (driver), and L. el-Rashid (passenger) in a 1938 Austin 7, 747cc (One of 3 Austin 7's from Scotland in the trial)

entrants due to the fairly dry conditions. The angry 'person' who, last year, came down and made quite a fuss about not knowing we were coming through didn't appear this year – we took time this year to ensure that all local residents knew when the trial was passing through.

Haggs Bank provided good spectator value, once again, with 80 entrants attempting the section, 38 'cleans' (31 last year). I made it up the

bank to take photos & hopefully many of you should see yourselves on our Beamish website. If anyone would like a digital image of themselves from the day, I can send them via e-mail, just let me know.

Lunchtime saw the traditional stop at Allenheads, with everyone parking in the old mine yard, which we are grateful to the owners for allowing us to use yet again. Spectators enjoyed a good browse around the machines and the locals always look forward to us coming. I'm sure the proprietor at The Allenheads Inn welcomed many for a pint & some pub grub, they put a BBQ on for us, I sampled the burgers & they were ace. I didn't need to chase anyone out of here to restart this year!

The last section at Hary Hill was only run up the farm track this year – we decided that you don't need another tricky section right at the end of the run. A horse broke free from this area and galloped off from its rider when he closed a gate – he assured



No 48 John Redcliffe, on a 1946 Royal Enfield 350cc

us it was the creaking sound of the gate and not the bikes that scared it. One of our marshals drove off after the horse with its rider and they managed to capture it just above Diggerland, no harm done, thankfully.

The oldest combined age vehicle & rider to complete the trial was 140 years and the greatest distance travelling to trial under own power was 140 miles from Halifax (hero). We have to rely on your honesty for the latter as we can't check this out easily.

Once again, thanks to North Durham Motor Club, The Friends of Killhope Lead Mine and Lanchester Centurions Bike Club who provided marshals at Killhope, Haggs Bank, Velvet Path, Westgate Ford and High House Lonnen and did a fine job, yet again. Thanks also to the many members, partners and friends of our small club (we only have 50 members) who worked so hard prior to & on the day to enable all of the sections to be open & the event to be completed successfully. If you know anyone who wants to be a marshal, just let me know, we were quite stretched again this year.

We are also indebted to the owners & new (again) management at The New Board Inn at Hilltop, Esh, who allowed us to use the pub site for the start/finish again, the rear field for parking & the facilities at the pub for tea/coffee/meals/toilets. I'm sure you'll agree it's a fine

venue to conduct the start/finish from - the view over the valley is magnificent. We have also made good links with the local farmer Mr Mace, who allowed us to have the final section (Hary Hill) over his land again. We would also like to thank all of our trophy sponsors. A massive 'thank you' to all the landowners and users who allowed us access to their land and property once again.

The trial, as you know, is now a permanent part of our club event calendar every year, so keep your diary free next year, it's always the same corresponding weekend, the third Sunday in September, which will be the 16th in 2007.

Please take a look at our BTT website, where you can find 2006 results, info, facts, photos. It can be found at www.beamisht.com. We have upgraded the site recently so access for photographs should be much better.

There is no 'official' presentation evening but we hope to present trophies at a club meeting, probably in November (5th) or December (3rd).

Pete Robson
Club Secretary

More photographs from the Rally will be added to the Parish Council's website in due course.

DAYS OF HOPE

Do any of the readers of ESH LEAVES have a copy of the video of the BBC film Days of Hope which was filmed in Langley Park. The film starred Alun Armstrong, the Annfield Plain actor and was filmed in Railway Street, Langley Park around 1975.

Angela Shelton
Tel No **0191 3735650**
Email: ashelton603@aol.com



Scene from Days of Hope © BBC

SCHOOL NEWS

VERSES FROM ST MICHAEL'S RC PRIMARY SCHOOL, ESH LAUDE

**Three Poems Inspired by
our trip to Earl's Orchard
Field Studies Centre,
Richmond, North Yorkshire**

In a Land of Awe and Wonder

In a land of awe and wonder,
Richmond's where I mean;
A castle, a bridge, a village
lives there, and even a fast
river, clean.

A dinner is on the table top,
my favourite is to eat;
A lot of vegetable choices,
and some dishes of meat!

In this land of awe and wonder,
we climb the mountains high;
Questions questioning,
answers answering, marching
up to the sky.

We come back down exhausted,
I need another rest;
But still we all enjoyed it and
call this day the best!

In the land of awe and wonder,
we walk in streets and by walls;
Then appear at a Cliffside-top,
"Be careful, not to fall."

We listen to a story, it really
interests me;
All night long I'd remembered
it, and kept it in memory!

So this land of awe and wonder,
had been the best it could;
I'd seen an old castle fort-
entrance, I should come
back, I should.

I'd also seen a Georgian
theatre; made again now just
brand new;
But altogether my moral is:
"Dreams can always come
true!"

By Jake Stephens Age 10

Richmond

I saw the top of Calver Hill,
It felt to me a thrill.

Swale Dale's rams,
As they play with their lambs.
There was lots of heather

And good weather.
Four days not one
If I knew I would not have
gone.
The view was great
The third was the date.

Running down was fun
It was like a bullet from a gun.

By Conor Logan and Toni
Cowie Age 10

Hearing

We hear the mystical calling
of the trees,
And the buzzing of bumble
bees.

We hear the graceful birds of
prey,
And hear their echoing
throughout the day.

We hear the river's rippling
song,
The tunes always go on for
long.

We hear the long heather
burning,
And the sky's sweet churning.

We hear strange sounds
and the winds blazing,
We can't help but stand
there gazing.

We hear a huge
mountainous gust,
It blows loads and loads of
dust.

We hear the church bells
ringing,
And the sparrows sweet
singing.

By Nathan Yates Age 10.

Editor's note

Thank you the pupils of Esh
Laude Primary School. Do
any of our readers recognise
the building below which is
also in the Richmond area
and was visited by some of
the pupils from the School.
Answer on page 13



NEWS FROM LANGLEY PARK PRIMARY SCHOOL

Beat the Bullies

October has been an exciting
time at school. Everyone has
been taking part in
'Friendship week'. We have
had special assemblies about
how people can be good
friends. There has also been
advice about what to do if you
'fall out' with others at school.



We learned the difference
between this and real
bullying. There are buddies
on hand when we need
someone to talk to or play
with. These buddies are
children that have had
training on how to help.
Everyone knows that they
must 'tell' when there is a

bigger problem. The buddies have performed plays to give everyone this message.

Children also got prizes for designing anti-bullying posters.

Cycling Proficiency

The Year 6 children of Langley Park Primary School completed a cycling proficiency course in the summer. This involved a written test and a series of practical activities. The pupils had to prove their knowledge of cycle safety and considerable cycling ability to pass the tests. Successful pupils received badges and certificates. They also celebrated with a mass bike ride along the cycle track to Lanchester. When a secure storage area for bicycles is in place, these pupils will have the option of cycling to school.

Music and art from Ghana

In September, the pupils from Langley Park Primary School enjoyed a visit from a lady from Ghana. Her name was Misoshi. The older pupils did a kind of batik. Younger pupils tie-dyed cloth or did some block printing. The visit was rounded off with a special assembly where some teachers played the drums and shakers.

The answer to the School News question on page 12 is Easby Abbey



A pupil taking the cycling proficiency test at Langley Park Primary School

LANGLEY PARK SUMMER SPORTS COACHING SCHOOL

The second (hopefully annual) Summer Sports and Coaching school took place between the 8th and 12th August at the Sports and Social Club in Langley Park. The week was organised by the Langley Park Sunderland Supporters Branch on behalf of the Parish Council who sponsored the event. Coaching was again provided by Simply Sport.

The number of children who attended mostly from within the Esh Parish ward rose slightly from last year with 66 coming throughout the week. Split across ages and abilities the three groups spent each morning training and being coached. The younger group 4-7 year olds focussed more on developing hand-eye co-ordination, the medium group 8-10 were taught team work with the older groups focussing on tactics and individual skills. Afternoons were used to play a number of different types of games in

which their skills could be used and developed.

Although the weather for much of the week was fine Friday saw rain and cold weather (exactly as last year). Friday had been earmarked as a fun day with the inflatable goal and speed camera measuring accuracy and speed of taking penalty kicks. At 2.30 the week ended with each child presented with a summer school t-shirt and a number of children receiving medals as most improved in the group.

Arrangements had been made for Tim Carter goalkeeping coach at Sunderland to attend. Unfortunately that weekend saw Sunderland change ownership with Niall Quinn's consortium taking over and all staff at the club had to attend a meeting that afternoon. Tim did send his apologies but his duties were ably covered by the coaches from Simply Sport.

We look forward to running the event again next year and would like to thank the following for their help and support.

Esh Parish Council in particular Gordon Coulson and Harry Guilford, Langley Park Sports and Social Club for allowing us to use the facilities, Langley Park Sunderland Supporters.

Billy Horn and the coaches at Simply Sport for the coaching and helping to promote the event.

County Councillor Joe Armstrong for additional funding.

Don't forget that the Langley Park Branch Sunderland Supporters Association run their coaches to all Sunderland Home for the Rams Head leaving 12.30 on a Saturday. Membership this year is free with bus fair set at adults £4 and Children/OAP's £2.

For further details contact Harry Christian on 07713332763

LOOKING BACK

History of Langley Park Isolation Hospital

By Pat Lawlor

Built between 1886-1901, Langley Park Isolation Hospital was a typical late Victorian, early Edwardian infectious disease hospital situated geographically within North West Durham District and owned and managed by Durham Health District. It was



Shooting practice at the Summer Sports and Coaching school

a substantial brick-built, slate-roofed range of buildings, comprising of two wards with a total of 24 beds, one ward being divided into cubicles. Also on site was a mortuary, laundry and decontamination unit.

Staff at the hospital totalled 14 personnel, 13 of whom were voluntary, which included eight nursing staff, four porters and two domestics, one of which was a full time domestic assistant, employed and based at the hospital. She was the only member of staff who was offered alternative employment when the hospital closed as the remaining staff were all in full time employment at other hospitals.

Hospital records indicate there were five smallpox admissions to the hospital during its lifetime, the last recorded admission being in January 1972. However, that particular case was described as modified smallpox, but the DHSS, as it was then, decided that on balance, the case was probably not one of smallpox. A further ruling

states that the other four cases were definitely not smallpox, therefore Langley Park Isolation Hospital has never accepted a case of confirmed smallpox.

In April 1982, due to progress made by the World Health Organisation in eliminating smallpox internationally, the DHSS commissioned Catherine de Barnes Hospital, Solihull in the West Midlands as the sole national centre for hospital provision for smallpox covering England and Wales. As a consequence of this, Langley Park Isolation Hospital needed no longer to be retained as a reserved smallpox hospital and therefore faced closure.

An interesting piece of news I found whilst searching the archives, I came across a memo dated 10 June 1982 from Jim Owens, the then Sector Administrator for Durham Area Health Authority, and who incidentally is now one of the non executive directors of Derwentside Primary Care Trust, in his memo (no dreaded emails in those days!) Mr Owens writes:

referring to minute number 110 of the management team meeting, would I be correct in thinking that the Catherine de Barnes hospital would in future be accepting smallpox cases which previously would have been admitted to Langley Park Hospital? The reason I raise this is simply to ask whether or not we should continue to pay the **one pound per week** retention payment to those members of the district staff who volunteered their services to staff Langley Park Hospital if and when required..... how times have changed!

With Durham Health District and the Regional Health Authority having no wish to retain the hospital for future use, following a formal public consultation and requests from several organisations, including the Society of St Vincent de Paul, for use as a convalescent home, Langley Park Hospital ceased to be NHS property on Friday 23 May 1986 and was sold to a Mrs E D Mitchell of North End Nursing Home in Durham for £64,246.49.

Sinister happenings in Hospital Road

Long before the Hospital closure in 1982, something more sinister happened on the road up to the hospital. The year was 1935, which saw the silver jubilee of King George V, there were a number of celebrations going on throughout the country, and Langley Park was no exception, one such celebration was the lighting of



Langley Park Isolation Hospital 1920s

a large bonfire, on the night of Monday 6th May.

On Sunday 5th May, the day before, Marjorie G. and her young man, William M., were enjoying an ice-cream in a local parlour when they were joined by another couple, Amanda S. and George H.

Twenty year old Amanda and George had been seeing each other since Christmas 1934, and George assumed that he would be accompanying Amanda to the celebrations the following night. However, when the subject was mentioned, Amanda, a nurse at the hospital, told George that the matron had forbidden them to go with their young men.

Immediately Marjorie interrupted and said that this was not true. She was going with William and saw no reason why Amanda could not go with George. Amanda remained firm. She did not intend going to the bonfire with George.

On the night of Monday 6th

May, Amanda went to the lighting of the bonfire with Hannah C. and other friends. She did see George H. briefly, when they returned home at around 8.30pm but he did not go into her house in Langley Park, and Amanda prepared to go back on duty at the hospital.

There were a number of nurses walking to work on the road up to the hospital that night. At 10.55pm, Elizabeth Ann H. arrived and noticed George H. standing on the right hand-side of the road, about half way down, 15 minutes later at 11.10pm, Ellen G. walked up the drive and saw a man step out of the hedge. He startled her and apologised. She would later identify him as H.

It was 11.30pm by the time Amanda and another nurse, Mary J., arrived for work. H. jumped out of the bushes and announced that he wanted a word with Amanda. She agreed to talk to him and told Mary to go on without her. Mary walked on but after

a few steps, turned to see if Amanda was ok and to Mary's horror, both Amanda and George were lying on the ground, he on top of her. Mary ran back, pushed George off and helped Amanda to her feet, only to find that Amanda's throat had been cut.

Amanda was assisted to the hospital and given medical attention, but within minutes died of her injuries. By the time the police arrived, there was no sign of H. but he was arrested at his home in Langley Park, thirty minutes after midnight.

At the trial in Durham on 28th - 29th June 1935, there was an attempt to say that H. had been insane. There was a history of insanity in his family. A cousin was a patient in Durham County Mental Hospital. An aunt died in a similar establishment in Yorkshire and his elder brother, John W. H., had killed himself near Sheffield. Unfortunately for 23 year old George H., his defence failed and he was ordered by Mister Justice de Parcq to be executed. George H. was hanged by Thomas Pierrepoint on Tuesday, 16th July, 1935.

Today the site of Langley Park Hospital is home to a gated property development consisting of five executive style homes.



New bigger and stronger health trust to deliver better health care to local people.



Lady Ann Calman and Yasmin Chaudhry

A new primary care trust for County Durham had been created on Sunday 1 October 2006.

The new County Durham Primary Care Trust will serve a population of around 497,000 across the county of Durham. This will mean that the PCT is co-terminous with Durham County Council.

The new organisation replaces the five previous primary care trusts which served County Durham since April 2002 which included Derwentside PCT.

This merger will result in at least 15% savings on management costs which will be reinvested in frontline NHS services and investment in areas such as new cancer drugs.

The PCT's role will be to:

- engage with local people to improve health and well-being, and reduce health inequalities

- ensure that patients have access to and choice of a range of high quality health services by commissioning services, within allocated resources
- directly provide high quality responsive and efficient services where this gives best value.

Staff of the County Durham PCT are currently based across five main sites, one in each of the areas of the former PCTs, as well as many health centres, clinics, community hospitals and GP surgeries. The interim headquarters of the PCT will be at John Snow House, Durham University Science Park, Durham City.

Lady Ann Calman has been appointed as chair. The chair's role will be to lead the organisation in commissioning in the very best health services for local people, that are shaped around the needs of patients and deliver the very best

value for money for taxpayers. This includes overseeing the commissioning of hospital, community and family health services, including those provided by GPs, dentists, pharmacists and optometrists.

She will work with other executive and non-executive directors of the PCT to guide change and ensure local health care is high quality, provided effectively and efficiently, and that services are convenient and accessible for patients.

One of the region's top NHS managers Yasmin Chaudhry has been appointed as chief executive of the new PCT. Yasmin has worked in the NHS for 25 years and has held various executive level posts in primary care, mental health trusts and at strategic health authority level.

The new PCT will be better organised to commission services that best suit the needs of its population, and GPs and other frontline NHS staff will have a greater say on how services can be delivered around the needs of their patients

Residents of County Durham who are most at risk are urged to get a free flu jab

Autumn has begun, the cold weather's coming... and so, unfortunately, is the flu.

More and more people over 65 will be taking precautions this year from the

complications flu can bring but worrying new figures show that less than half (48%) of those who are most 'at risk', under the age of 65, were vaccinated last year.

County Durham Primary Care Trust is urging people aged 65 and over and those who are 'at risk' to get their free flu jab to protect themselves this winter.

Flu is of course an unpleasant experience for anybody, but to those who are at risk (anyone with asthma, diabetes, a serious heart, chest or kidney condition and the over 65s) flu can be a major health concern. If you, members of your family, friends or neighbours are in this group, then there is more of a likelihood that the flu virus will lead on to an even more serious illness such as bronchitis or pneumonia, and potentially hospitalisation or in some cases, death.

The flu virus moves quickly, spreading from person to person in no time at all. The average sneeze travels at around 80 miles per hour, and can cover distances of up to 30 feet. In order to avoid infection, you need to move quickly too.

The flu jab is currently the best way to protect yourself against flu. The good news is that if you are at risk you are entitled to a flu vaccination free of charge. The best time to get vaccinated is in the autumn each year. So, book a flu jab during October. Don't let flu get the better of you, or

your family this winter. Getting the jab is safe, quick and effective, and available FREE from your local GP for people aged 65 and over and those 'at risk'.

To find out about getting a flu jab talk to your GP, practice nurse or pharmacist.



'Know your Numbers' for a healthier life

By Pat Lawlor, NHS Health Correspondent

To mark the 2006 national blood pressure week (11-17 September) 'Know your Numbers' campaign Derwentside Primary Care Trust attended an event at ASDA shopping centre in Stanley to encourage as many people as possible to have their blood pressure checked regularly so that they know their blood pressure numbers in the same way as they do their height and weight.

Know your Numbers! week is the nation's biggest annual blood pressure testing and awareness event. One in three adults in the UK has high blood pressure, the major cause of stroke, heart attack and heart disease, yet

a third don't even know they have it.

The event gave local people the opportunity to come along and have their blood pressure checked and to talk to members of the Primary Care Trust's cardiac team about any concerns they may have about their blood pressure. This year's campaign theme is 'Bring a Man!' Although high blood pressure can affect anyone, men are notorious for not thinking about their health and avoiding the doctor.

Research from the Blood Pressure Association (BPA) has shown that fewer men than women have their blood pressure checked during 'Know your Numbers' week. Yet many men suffer from heart attacks and strokes by not getting a simple, painless blood pressure check and taking the right action to lower it. To help put an end to this, the BPA encouraged women and men in their lives - whether it be a partner, husband, father or friend - to get tested during 'Know your Numbers' week. As well as blood pressure checks, the event gave people the opportunity to have checks on, Pulse, Cholesterol and Body Mass Index (BMI).

Blood pressure is the pressure of blood in your arteries. The higher your blood pressure the greater your risk of developing narrowed arteries, which can lead to heart problems, kidney disease and strokes. The good news is that if your blood pressure is high, it can

be lowered by making changes to your lifestyle, for example changing your diet, exercising and losing weight, and when needed, with tablets. This will reduce the risk of developing heart and brain problems that might otherwise occur if your blood pressure is not treated.

Nancye Carr, cardio-vascular nurse co-ordinator for Derwentside PCT said: "National Blood Pressure week is a great opportunity for people to get their blood pressure measured. Keeping blood pressure at a healthy level is one of the most important things anyone can do to reduce these major causes of death and disability and this can only be done if everyone gets tested to know their blood pressure numbers.



Sphygmomanometer machine for checking Blood Pressure

"All adults should have their blood pressure checked regularly and more often as they get older, as the incidence of high blood pressure increases with being older. From year to year your

blood pressure may rise, and the only way to know this is to have it checked regularly. If you see that your blood pressure is rising you can make changes to your lifestyle that will help to lower it."

High blood pressure can be treated and sometimes prevented and there are a number of key steps people can take to help keep your blood pressure down:

- Know your numbers (get your blood pressure checked regularly)
- Eat less salt (no more than 6g a day)
- Eat more fruit and vegetables (at least 5 portions a day)
- Be as active as you can (aim for 30 minutes five times a week) Cycling, Swimming or Walking
- Drink alcohol in moderation
- Keep to a healthy weight (lose weight if you have to).

Everyone should know what their blood pressure is. Think of it as part of the body's MOT and a number you know, in the same way you know how much you weigh or how tall you are. In other words, **Know Your Numbers!**

Even if your blood pressure is 'normal', ie, below 130/80mmHg, it is still important to know your numbers, so that you can keep track of your blood pressure and follow the

guidelines for a healthy lifestyle. By doing this you may be able to prevent high blood pressure.

If you are concerned about your blood pressure, free tests are available throughout the year at GP surgeries, health centres, and many high street and supermarket pharmacies.

If you require further information, please contact Pat Lawlor, Communications Assistant on 0191 333 3003.

New Stop Smoking Service offered in Ante-natal Clinics across County Durham

By Pat Lawlor, NHS Health Correspondent

Two PCTs in County Durham are offering a new stop smoking support service for pregnant women in ante-natal clinics across County Durham. The stop smoking services run by both Derwentside and Durham and Chester-le-Street Primary Care Trusts have set up the new support service, which offers pregnant women who attend ante-natal clinics at the University Hospital of North Durham and Shotley Bridge Community Hospital the opportunity to discuss the support available to help them give up smoking. The clinics for pregnant women and their partners/families are being offered free of charge, an appointment is not always necessary and will take place on the following days:

Monday 9.30am - 12 noon
Shotley Bridge Community Hospital
Wednesday 9.00am - 11.30am
University Hospital of North Durham

The service is being organised and run by Chris Lockey, a specialist pregnancy advisor who has been working with the stop smoking services across the Derwentside and Durham and Chester-le-Street area since May 2004 and has already helped well over 50 mums-to-be to stop smoking and has been set up to make it easier for pregnant women and their partners or families to see a pregnancy stop smoking specialist as soon as possible in their pregnancy. They could ask for an antenatal appointment on one of the days the stop smoking clinic is held and save time booking two separate appointments. The initial assessment process and follow-up support were all previously undertaken during a home visit and was time consuming, especially if the client was undecided about quitting.

The consultation at the clinic will include an assessment of their nicotine dependence and a baseline carbon monoxide reading. For women attending the antenatal clinic who may be unable to wait the short time it may take for a stop smoking advisor to see them, contact details will be taken to arrange a convenient appointment at a later date. Referral rates from the maternity service show an average of approximately 54

per quarter, but not all of those referred are motivated to stop smoking.

There is a lot of evidence to suggest that giving up smoking in pregnancy has enormous benefits for both mother and baby. Statistics show that infant mortality, the death of the baby either at birth or through a miscarriage, is 50 percent higher when the mother smokes. That means non-smokers experience half as many infant mortalities. Children of smokers are also 2½ times more likely to die of sudden infant death syndrome, or cot death.

The good news is that if you stop smoking by the fourth month of pregnancy, you can significantly reduce these dangers. Carbon monoxide in particular is eliminated from the body within 24 hours of stopping smoking so the benefits to mother and baby are immediate. This is extremely important as carbon monoxide cuts down on the amount of oxygen reaching the baby. This can contribute to the baby having a low birthweight, which is known to have a negative effect on the baby's health.

Quitting smoking completely is really the only safe option as there is no safe level of smoking. However, our findings demonstrate that women who have failed to quit could still benefit from receiving support from the Stop Smoking Service.

By showing women that their carbon monoxide levels are reduced they don't give up

trying to quit, their self esteem improves and they keep trying. Just because you fail at the first hurdle doesn't mean you won't be successful next time or the time after that. The more quit attempts you make means you are more likely to be successful for good next time, perhaps because individuals keep learning more about what works best for them and how to avoid lapsing.

The NHS offers plenty of free help and support for people who want to give up smoking. If you feel the time is right for you to give up smoking and you would like some advice, contact your GP surgery or register your interest for the Stop Smoking Clinics by contacting 0191 374 4121 or 374 4109 (Durham and Chester-le-Street) or 01207 523600 (Derwentside).

Anyone wanting to learn more about the Pregnancy Smoking Cessation Service or wanting more information on the ante-natal clinics mentioned above can contact Chris Lockey on 0191 374 4121.

If you require further information, please contact Pat Lawlor, Communications Assistant on 0191 333 3003.

LANGLEY PARK CRICKET CLUB

Although both first and second teams finished in the bottom half of the table, the season had highs for both senior teams, with both reaching a cup final. The first team reached the Ray Clish



Langley Park First Team (Ray Clish Memorial Trophy)
 Back row D Gladstone P Caulfield D Wilkinson N Ellison J Winn S Gray
 Front row H Cusack(pro) J Lee S Huscroft(Capt.) A Dinsdale S Moralee.

Memorial Trophy, which ended in a nail biting finish with Langley Park beaten by one run off the last ball of the game against Esh Winning.

The second team were also beaten in their final against Sacriston. This was the first time both teams had reached a cup final in the same season. Happily our junior teams finished the season a lot higher in their leagues. The under 18s finished second by 5 points, the under 15s finished sixth, and the under 13s finished second by four points. Our junior teams had five players chosen to play in the Just Sport Inter League Trophy representing our league, the Durham County Cricket League, they were under 13s D. Stebbings, C. Winn, D. Cook, under 15s R. Hiles, and under 18s J. Brennan. All except J. Brennan who was unable to play, played in their matches, unfortunately only the under

18s won a trophy. Anyone who would be interested in playing either senior or junior please contact T. Huscroft on 0191 3733033. As in other years we hope to start training in January at Fyndoune School on one evening a week up to the end of March.

CHRISTMAS POSTAGE

As you may be aware there has been a change in the way mail is priced. It is now based on size as well as weight.

When posting your Christmas cards for the UK please be aware of the differences between the sizes of the various types of letters and cards.

Anything longer than 9¼ inches or wider than 6½ inches has to be charged as a large letter, equally anything thicker than 5mm is classed the same. This

means that any padded cards, cards with badges, or hand-made type cards will all be classed as large letters. The price for a second class large letter is 37p, the price for a small card stays at 23p.

If you are unsure please bring your cards to us to be checked. These changes only affect UK mail, any cards going overseas continue to be priced the way they always have been.

PS

The money off vouchers for cards which were contained in our advert in a recent issue of Esh Leaves have now expired and cannot be used.

Thank you

Stuart & Moira Harris

JOHN FOSTER'S HALL OF FAME

Last November the local branch of the Royal British Legion was featured and as Remembrance Sunday this year is November 12th the experiences of one of the many Langley Park servicemen during the Second World War are featured.

ALBERT PRESTON

Albert Preston was born in Langley Park in 1922. Son of Thomas Henry Preston and his wife Ethel (Hugal) He had two brothers Leslie and Sydney and a sister Gladys. Young Albert left school at the age of fourteen and began work at Langley Park

Colliery as an apprentice joiner. In 1937 having a strong desire to 'see the world' he joined the Royal Navy as a cadet training on H.M. Ganges at Rosyth. On becoming an Able Seaman he was posted to the newly commissioned destroyer H.M.S. Bedouin.

With the outbreak of the Second World War he was soon to see active service. Albert and 'The Bedouin's' first taste of action was to be part of the 'Russian Convoys' where he experienced arctic conditions. One of his daily tasks, along with the rest of the crew, was to remove ice from all parts of the ship in order that it remained afloat. In his letters he commented on the thickness of the ice and the terrible cold weather in which they had to work. The 'Bedouin' was subsequently sent to the Mediterranean for the purpose of 'Operation Harpoon/Vigorous' a double convoy to Malta. 'The Bedouin' was at the forefront of operations and she was the first lead destroyer to supply the besieged island of Malta and despite the dangerous mission always managed to complete its assignment until in June 1942 the destroyer was completely disabled by a German U-boat. Towed by 'H.M.S. Partridge' The Bedouin was eventually sunk by German and Italian aircraft on 15th June 1942.

Albert's parents received news that he had been reported missing presumed dead but in July of that year it

was confirmed that he was a prisoner of war. He had, along with other survivors, been picked up by the Italian Red Cross and taken to Pantellaria then to Sicily and eventually to Genoa and a prisoner of war camp. He spent fourteen months there and when our troops landed in Italy he was to be transported to Germany. With two others he jumped from the train on which they were travelling and made his escape. On two occasions the three attempted to reach the British Lines and failed. They trekked for four days and four nights. After crossing the Alps, receiving help and shelter from local people who put their own lives at risk, Albert was found by the Red Crescent and was eventually taken to St. Gallen in Switzerland. The Swiss authorities held the escapees there from 1 February 1943 until October 1944 when the Americans reached the frontier and they were released. Soon afterwards Albert was happily reunited with his family.

In December 1944 at Trinity Methodist Church in Langley Park, in a service conducted by the Rev. J.W. Kennedy, Albert married Jean Geddes of Witton Gilbert. The pair had known each other since schooldays. Albert returned to Langley Park Colliery as a joiner and remained there until the colliery closed. He was then employed as a gardener at Dryburn Hospital and looked after the boilers at the Isolation Hospital, Langley Park. Mr. and Mrs

Preston had one son and one daughter.

Leslie Preston, Albert's brother who played football for Langley Park Juniors and worked at the colliery was enlisted into the Durham Light Infantry at the outbreak of the war and in October 1942 it was reported that he was missing during service in the Middle East. Posted abroad in 1942 he had been involved in the Dunkirk evacuation. He too was a prisoner of war and it was not until June 1945 that the two brothers were reunited. After the war Leslie married and he moved to Manchester to work for the L.N.E.R. maintaining railways and eventually came to South Shields to work in a similar capacity. He and his wife had three sons and his family still live in South Shields. Leslie died in February 1997.

For his military service Albert was honoured with the Russian Medal and, for his work on the convoys, The Malta Medal. When he died in October 1997 he was cremated and his ashes were scattered in the waters at Malta by his son Malcolm accompanied by Albert's widow and Malcolm's wife Anthea.

On Remembrance Sunday and at other times of quiet reflection Albert Preston always quoted: 'Amid rejoicing let us pause for those who are left on foreign shores and those the mighty ocean kept. And remember those who wept'.

Langley Park during the Second World War is



Albert Preston (left) and his brother Leslie photographed in later life.

DUE OUT DECEMBER 2006

LOOKING AT LANGLEY PARK

MEMORIES OF A VILLAGE

COMPILED BY JOHN C. FOSTER



A random collection of memories mainly covering the period 1930s to 1960s with some recollections of earlier and later days.

Over 170 pages. 81 categories including: Living in Langley Park: 1939-1945 war, The British Legion, School, Transport, Doctors, Friends of the Hospitals, Entertainment, Recreation Ground, Band, Public Houses, Drama, Churches, Women's Organisations, Aged Peoples Treat, Over 60s, Shops, Post Office, Sport, People. Illustrated with photographs of people and locations.

£15. Price includes a £2 donation to Langley Park Branch of the Friends of Durham Hospitals.

Enquiries: 0191 373 4223. E-mail john.foster@thetute.co.uk

LOOK OUT FOR POSTERS AROUND LANGLEY PARK FOR FURTHER DETAILS

Win a Copy of John's Book – See Page 35 for Details

included in the book 'Looking At Langley Park' out soon.

***Copyright: John C. Foster
November 2006***

IT @ The Tute

Mon. 2-4pm
Wed. 2-4pm
Fri. 5-7pm

**WILDLIFE CORNER
AUTUMN 2006**

Having only ever previously seen a jay twice in my life, I have seen two in the last month. The first caused a great scuffle in the garden behind my house,

unsuccessfully trying to land in a tree on a branch that was far too small for it. The second was in a much more expectable place, on a juniper tree in a field near Wolsingham. Jays love eating juniper berries, though the trees are now extremely rare and so are protected. The natural way of spreading the seeds is by the berries being eaten by birds, such as the jay and blackbird, and so being dropped away from the tree, complete with their own little bit of fertiliser. People, of course, make use of juniper berries in flavouring gin. Gin can also be flavoured with sloes (the fruit of the common, thorny, hedge plant blackthorn), which are around in abundance this year.

Do you believe that there will be a hard winter this year because of the masses of autumn fruit? Or do you believe that this is a result of a) no late frost to stop the fruit setting, b) a warm spring and early summer, followed by c) a lot of rain just when the fruit was swelling? I wish that I believed that 'nature provides' but I rather think that populations change in numbers to suit the food supply and so lots of birds should survive this winter – but what happens to that big population if there are late frosts next spring and no fruit sets? A good reason for keeping your bird feeders well supplied!

The huge numbers of starlings that we used to see have disappeared largely, I believe, because of the



Photograph of a Jay © Cliff Buckton

advent of 'anti-starling' paint. Hundreds of thousands of the birds used to take advantage of the warm ledges on our city centre buildings for night-time perching and made a great nuisance of themselves with their noise and droppings. Now most urban areas are protected from them, they are reduced to going back to more natural habitats in reedbeds and other marshy areas, which are themselves in decline due to drainage, and are much more vulnerable to predators and the weather.

The common house sparrow isn't common any more. This is mainly because we've sealed up the eaves on our houses in an effort to conserve heat. For many generations, sparrows have been nesting in the eaves in friendly little colonies and they now have nowhere to go. You can help them by putting up special sparrow nest boxes which have three to five nest areas all together so they can still be neighbourly! A sparrow terrace under the eaves of

your house or garage could work wonders for them.

So, now you've put the food out for them, you've put up bird boxes and made sure that they can be sociable, with their friends around, so all they need from you is a source of water (especially when it's icy). Now there's no reason at all why you shouldn't have a garden full of birds, give or take a cat or two. People's gardens are, after all, a huge nature reserve, probably only second to the motorway verges!

Alison

Next time you're out for a walk, why not try collecting things for tree dressing?

Tree dressing used to mean putting decorations on a tree outside – either in the garden or on the village green or in a park. These days we usually 'dress' the Christmas tree but there is nothing to stop us dressing an outdoor tree or a branch as well.

Some suggestions are

- fir cones or
- pine cones (of course!),
- holly leaves and berries,
- ivy,
- other dried leaves of various shapes and sizes,
- feathers,
- pretty stones etc. etc.
- Think what other ideas you might have –
- and then keep your eyes open on your walk to see if there is anything else.

When you get home, you need things like

- egg boxes (they make excellent bells),
- washed milk bottle tops,
- shiny sweet wrappers,
- silver foil,
- silver and gold spray paint,
- coloured paper and card,
- washed yoghurt pots etc.

What else can you think of that you might re-use instead of throwing it straight away?

CHURCH NEWS

CHRISTMAS SERVICES

All Saints Langley Park

Friday 22nd December 6pm
Children's Christingle Service
Christmas Eve 8pm
Christmas Communion with Carols

St. Michael & All Angels, Esh

Friday 22nd December 7pm
Carols and Poems

Christmas Eve 8pm
Christmas Communion with Carols
Christmas Day 10am Family Eucharist with Carols

St. John the Baptist, Hamsteels

Sunday 17th December 6pm
Carol Service
Christmas Eve 11.30pm
Midnight Communion

All Saints Churchyard, Langley Park

Works by Derwentside District Council are now well underway in All Saints Churchyard.

The grass had been cut, sunken graves have been levelled and dangerous headstones are being made safe. In addition the tarmac path leading to All Saints Church from the road has been repaired. Council Workers who started work on this project towards the end of September estimated that it would take six weeks to complete. Once this has been done regular grasscutting will begin again. Big thanks go once again to Maurice Saville and Chris Buck for keeping the front portion of the churchyard neat and tidy since grasscutting stopped for reasons of Health and Safety.

**A HAPPY CHRISTMAS
TO ALL OUR READERS
AND SUPPORTERS**

ROSIE WRIGHT

We are delighted to report that three year old Rosie Wright is making good progress following the dreadful injuries suffered during a visit to Dreamspace at Chester-le-Street, in July. Rosie is now back at home in Langley Park and attending



Lee Wright with Rosie, brother Jack, the charity night performers and Club Chairman Ken Chapman on the right.
Photograph by Keith Taylor

the local Nursery School. A few weeks ago a charity night was staged at the Workingmen's Club to raise funds to send Rosie, and her family, on a Disneyland holiday to Florida. Tickets were snapped up immediately with raffle prizes and donations coming in from many different sources. The four main acts all gave their services for free and indeed there were many others also keen to volunteer their time such was the interest in supporting the family. For the record the main acts were the trio Federation, Tony Washington, and Fayler and Gaynor Murray.

Ken Chapman, Club Chairman said "the night was an outstanding success and

raised well over £1700 towards the special trust fund being set up for the family. He added however that "it might be a couple of years before the trip as Rosie is still very young although she was able to grab the mike at the charity event and say a few words to her many supporters".

Apart from the many donations received in the village members of Lee Wright's cricket club (Kimblesworth) have also raised money which Lee intends to put into Rosie's trust fund.

Editor's note

We hope to have a progress report on Rosie in the March 2007 edition of Esh Leaves but in the meantime if any reader would like to make a donation towards Rosie's trust they should contact Ken Chapman on 0191 3732031. We hope to have Rosie switching on the Christmas lights in Langley Park (**See page 7**).

We would like to wish Rosie all the very best and that she continues to make good progress with her recovery.

SPACE QUIZ

1. The name of the prize for this quiz is Space Shuttle Story but can you name the first Shuttle to fly on April 12th 1981?
2. Most people know that Neil Armstrong was the first man to walk on the Moon but can you name the last man on



The Space Shuttle lifts off for the first time on April 12th 1981 but what was the name of the vehicle? © NASA

- the Moon in December 1972?
3. The first person to perform a Space Walk was a Russian Cosmonaut. Can you name him?
4. Who was the first of the original 7 NASA astronauts to fly in Space?
5. Name the crew of Apollo 13 who were almost lost in space.
6. Which Mercury Astronaut also flew a Shuttle Mission?
7. Name the only Astronaut to fly Mercury, Gemini and Apollo missions.
8. Name the Russian Space Station launched in 1986.
9. Who was the first British Astronaut.
10. Name the unmanned NASA space probe which flew through the

tail of comet Wild 2, collecting dust samples which were returned to Earth in January 2006.

Answers to either the Editor, 8 Long Garth, Whitesmocks, DURHAM CITY, DH1 4HJ in a suitably endorsed envelope by FRIDAY 15th DECEMBER 2006 or they can be left at the Langley Park Post Office or at Cape Canaveral (ask for D. Rider at Reception and they will redirect you to secret address in Langley Park).

The prize for the most correct answers is a copy of the book Space Shuttle Story.

KEEP CLEAR

Readers will have noticed the new Keep Clear markings around the side road next the Langley Park Post Office. Stuart and Moira have asked us to make it clear (that word

again) that this does not mean residents should keep clear of their Post Office – far from it – just don't park on the white lines as it can make access to the side street difficult.

Some readers might well ask if the markings should have gone round the other Post Office recently visited by Stuart and Moira – see photo on page 27.



Keep clear of the sidestreet but not the Post Office

WALLNOOK FISH PASS

In the previous edition we reported on the work being undertaken by the Environment Agency, in partnership with the Mineral Valleys Project 'Working on the Wear, on a fish pass at Wall Nook Dam, Langley Park, County Durham, to allow sea trout, salmon, eels and lamprey to swim upstream. Some funding for the work was obtained through The Heritage Lottery Fund.

Work was carried out by a local construction company Lumsden & Carroll Construction and was completed during August 2006.



The Fish Pass during the construction phase and inset after completion

The fish pass built was a 'Denil' fish pass which incorporates a series of baffles, placed within a concrete channel, that reduce the velocity of water to a level that salmon, sea trout and brown trout can swim through. There is also a separate lamprey and elver pass next to the Denil pass to allow these important and threatened species access upstream.

The Working on the Wear Project is part of the wider Mineral Valleys Project. It aims to improve watercourses on the river Wear through habitat, access and educational work. The project partners include Environment Agency, River Wear Environmental Trust and English Nature.

For more information on Working on the Wear visit the Mineral Valleys Project website on www.mvp.org.uk

Visit the Parish Council website at
www.eshparishcouncil.gov.uk
 or
www.langley-park.org.uk

KRAFT KLUB 4 KIDS

The normal Saturday meetings of the club did not take place during the summer holidays as the Summer Scheme at the community centre took over, where all the kids could attend for three days each week from 10am to 3pm. These days found a variety of activities laid on to keep the kids occupied and help parents fill the long holiday days with something new at no cost. However Pauline thought it would be a challenge and fun to attempt a project over the 6 weeks with a positive result to show for it.

The project was to produce a memorial to the memory of the miners of Langley Park and the village in general in the form of a mural, but with a difference. Instead of just painting one why not produce it in tiles. A local artist Helen College produced the designs on 3 large boards for the kids to cover. A lady only known as Liz, from Stanley Adult Learning Centre, came on

each Monday and Wednesday to oversee the production as well as the supply of hundreds of tiles of numerous colours at no cost to the club. The kids broke up the tiles, selected the colours to be used, and set about the task.

Over the next 6 weeks on any day any number from 4 to 15 kids were to be found huddled around the project in deep concentration fitting in all sorts of shapes and sizes of tile. On each day the kids were assisted by Pauline, Joyce Cassidy, and Ann Cain. The grouting and other material used was donated by Langley Hardware. The result of all the hard work is a 3 panel mosaic. The centre panel measures 4ft by 4ft and depicts miners returning home after a shift, with the colliery in the background. The 2 side panels each 4ft by 2ft depict a pit pony and handler on one, and the Community centre on the other.

Considering that the bulk of the work was carried out by kids aged from 4 years to 14, it really is a fantastic piece of artwork with a difference, and really captures the impression of Langley Park's past as a mining village. At present the mural is on display at Woodview Community Centre, and I strongly suggest if any of your children were involved in its production that you go and see it, it will make you feel very proud of them. Many thanks to all involved for such a lovely reminder and memorial of Langley Park.



The Kraft Club at work on the Mural

CONTRIBUTIONS TO ESH LEAVES

Stuart Harris, of Langley Park Post Office, has kindly offered to have a box in the Post Office for residents to leave articles and photographs for Esh Leaves, plus entries for our competitions. Please use it as we always welcome good news items!

Stuart is waiting right now for your articles.

“UP THE POLE!”

Following a complaint from a local resident, that an NEDL pole had been erected in the middle of the footpath adjacent to Esh Terrace, it is understood that the pole has now been removed and the cables installed underground.

STUARTS PHOTO FROM HELL

On a recent holiday in the Cayman Islands, our local postmaster couldn't resist

being photographed beside this genuine Post Office. There appears to be a Post Office everywhere!



Editor's note

Readers are invited to write their own caption and hand it in at the Heavenly PO Langley Park. No prizes I'm afraid – this just for fun.

See front page heading for instructions on submitting an article for publication.

Contributors should check for any possible copyright infringement before submitting their articles.

OLD WORLD CHARM

I'm not what you might call a regular kind of drinker, but I do appreciate the mellow atmosphere of a grand old village Inn or pub, and one of my favourites is the **Cross Keys** in old Esh village.

You can almost feel the atmosphere when you drive up to it. That kind of warm and welcoming feeling I imagine the old-fashioned country Inn would have been like during the days of the horse and coach. But, if you think it looks good in the wintertime you should definitely see it in the summer, when the front is transformed into a blaze of colour with one of the best floral displays I have seen.

Window boxes, hanging baskets and floor standing containers are crammed full of beautiful flowers that are a joy to behold, and as you walk through the front door



The Cross Keys in old Esh village. © Terry T. Chilton

into the lounge it loses none of its old world charm. The timbered ceiling, old fireplace and wall lighting give you that immediate cosy feeling as you make your way to a table and scan the food menu. There is only one problem here, with so many lovely homemade dishes to choose from it's difficult to know what to have. One mouth-watering dish I thoroughly enjoyed was the homemade Durham Lamb

Pie, and if you like chips with your meal I can honestly say they make the best chips I have ever tasted.

But, there is more to the Cross Keys than meets the eye, for it has a long and interesting history. Writings mention a Cross Keys Inn on that site as far back as the 1700's, and it has been said to go back even further. At that time it was stated to be a lengthy and low picturesque structure with whitewashed walls, steeply sloping thatched roof and tall chimneys. The thatch was so thick the upper floor windows were almost hidden under the dark eaves. Attached to the eastern end of the building was a weaver's workshop, and to the western end was a blacksmith's shop where, in the 1700's, a John Marley, practiced his craft as the village smithy in addition to being landlord of the Inn. This John Marley was the second of three John Marleys' at the Cross Keys Inn who took on both duties of smithy and landlord.



Edwin Pickersgill in the Cross Keys bar demonstrating that professional touch required to deliver a perfect pint. © Terry T. Chilton.

Bordering the road to the east of the Inn was an unfenced area of grassland where cattle drovers rested their cattle overnight before being driven to distant parts of the country. The drovers stayed overnight at the Cross Keys Inn, and one of John Marley's jobs was to attach flat iron plates to the hoofs of the drovers' cattle. I should imagine the drovers' would have many a story to tell enjoying a jug of ale around a blazing log fire in the old Cross Keys Inn.

When this worthy Cross Keys landlord died on February 2nd, 1796 at the age of 76 years, his widow, Mrs. Jane Marley took over the running of the Inn. In those days, just like today, it was customary for villagers to indulge in various unusual sports on Shrove Tuesday. The village of Esh was no exception, but their recreation took on the form of cock fighting, which took place in a cock-pit to the rear of the Cross Keys. This was an annual event up to the death of Mrs. Jane Marley on December 20th, 1819, in her ninety-second year.

The Cross Keys has seen many changes throughout its long history, and though no accommodation is provided today, people are well served with its excellent food and drink. The present proprietors are Edwin Pickersgill and his wife Devina. Mind you, Edwin doesn't shoe any horses or cattle these days, but he is a dab hand at pulling a perfect pint of beer.



An artist's impression of the old Cross Keys Inn found in the garage attic of the present Cross Keys, and is thought to be the 'sepia sketch taken in 1794' mentioned by Mr. W. R. Wigen on page 12 of his 'Esh Leaves' book, published in 1914.

During a chat he told me he was born in Cornsay Colliery, and at the age of five he and his family moved to Esh Winning. As a young man he worked in the building trade, travelling Europe in search of work, but he longed to have a settled job in England to spend more time with his wife and family. His thoughts then turned to running a village pub, and in 1983 Edwin and Devina took over the Royal Oak at Cornsay Colliery. They gained valuable experience in the licensed trade, and in 1992 they moved to the Cross Keys, taking over from the previous proprietor Robert Plews.

The village of Esh is also known to have a long and interesting history. During the 1800's it is said to have been the centre of illicit 'still' operations. One colourful character involved in such a practice was a man called 'Whiskey Jack' who lodged at Bleach Green. His real pot 'still' whiskey was said to be a very powerful brew, tempting fieldworkers to pay him a visit

during their dinner break. Harvest time in those days involved the hiring of many hand reapers, and one day the reapers returned to work in such a befuddled state the farm bailiff had to order the yoking of two long carts to take the helpless workers back home. But 'Whiskey Jack' could never relax. Always trying to keep one step ahead of the Excise men, his 'still' was constantly on the move from one forest to the next.

Yet, in that very same area today there is a place where you **can** relax and enjoy the purest whiskey along with many other refreshing drinks, and partake of an enjoyable meal in the mellow and friendly atmosphere created by Edwin and Devina.

Terry Chilton.

Editors' Note.

Can any reader help in identifying the artist, believed to be T. N. Liddle. We have tried to find out some

information on this artist via the internet, but without success.

LANGLEY PARK COUPLE CELEBRATE 70 YEARS OF MARRIAGE

George and Elizabeth Hoggart, who married at All Saints Church Langley Park in 1936, celebrate their 70th wedding anniversary on Saturday 4th November.

Both have lived in Langley Park all of their lives and have three sons Jack, Ken and Alan. Two of the Sons still reside in the village with one now living at Willington. They have five grandchildren and ten great grandchildren.

George still resides in his own home in Langley Park, Elizabeth has been a resident at Redwell hills nursing home for the past three years. Both have been associated with All Saints Church for most of their lives. George having been Sidesman and churchwarden for many years and Elizabeth a long time member of the Mothers Union.

George worked at the Co-op for over 40 years as manager of the greengrocery department and after retirement worked at Durham School part-time until over 70 years of age. After the children grew up Elizabeth worked at Dryburn hospital as an auxiliary nurse.

Congratulations from all of your family and your many friends within the Parish.



George and Elizabeth Hoggart

All Car Owners - Essential Winter Check! .

Tyres: Tread depth, pressure, sidewall damage. Don't forget spare!

Lights: Side lights, headlamps, brake lights, fog lights, reverse lights, indicators

Wipers: Check wiper blades, front and rear for splitting

Washers: Check water levels, add washer fluid to stop water freezing

Battery: Check terminals for corrosion, check battery level

Cooling system: Check for leaks, check anti-freeze strength and top up

Fan belt: Check for cracks, check tension

Be smart - don't bother checking these yourself, have it done FREE and without obligation by the professionals **FTL Fastfit Tyres Langley**



Phone 0191 3733501 for your FREE, no obligation check.

TESTING TIMES AHEAD FOR LOCAL TYRE CHIEF

When Bill Johnson took over a building at Woodside Farm in 1988, to set up a business specialising in tyre replacement, car servicing, repairs and MOT preparation, little did he realise that he

would eventually have his own MOT test centre.

Bill moved from the Farm, to his existing premises in Hedley Terrace, in 1991 and despite a serious setback from an arson attack in 2001 Bill bounced back with a refurbished garage and an even stronger determination

to have his own MOT test centre one day.

Well Bill's dream is almost here and after a great deal of work over recent months, involving the installation of a rolling road break tester, gas analyser, hoist and beam setter, Bill is almost at the point of opening his own test centre for Class 4 vehicles (cars and light vans).

Currently some 400 vehicles annually are prepared for an MOT, at the Hedley Terrace premises, and then driven miles away for the big test. However Bill, and his 3 mechanics, are hoping that quite soon they will be able to carry out the work right on their own doorstep to the considerable benefit of both Bill and his customers.

Bill looks forward to providing customers old and new with both a local MOT pre and actual test service. Bill can be contacted on 01913733501

**FATHER BRYAN
MIDDLEBROOK**

***Extract from the Parish
Priests newsletter***

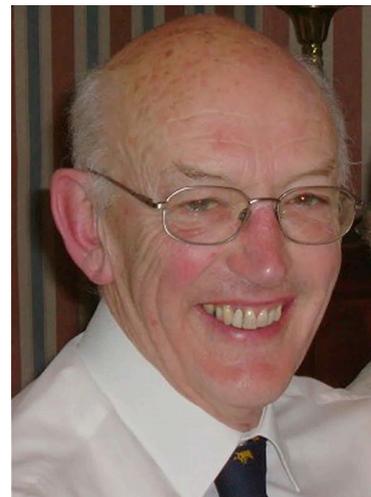
It was with great sadness that we learnt of the death of Rev. Bryan Middlebrook in the early hours of Monday morning (*October 16th*). Many people had seen and spoken to him on Friday night at Eating with a Purpose and then again at the Coffee Morning in the Methodist Hall in Langley Park on Saturday morning. In fact he was helping to run the coffee morning that day, as it was the clergy and their wives

turn. So it was completely unexpected and many people found the news hard to believe. We will very much miss his friendship and companionship along the Christian way.

Bryan had been working across our four parishes since he started helping out at Waterhouses during their interregnum. Prior to that he had been for 11 years the NSM Priest at St. Cuthbert's in Durham and still helped out in the Durham North Team from time to time. He used the many gifts and skills that he had to great effect in his ministry. His warmth, love, care and humour touched very many lives during the six years that I have been privileged to work with him. He was involved in all aspects of parish life; bible studies; family services; confirmation classes; pastoral visiting; funerals; baptisms; weddings; staff meetings; articles for the magazine; the Sunday Club in Esh (*with help from Dulcie*), just to name but a few. He was extremely supportive and we always found Thursday morning's at Langley Park invaluable as a means of exchanging important information that we both needed to know.

At a personal level I will never forget Bryan's offer of help when Wendy, Matthew and myself first arrived here in March 2000. When you are new to a parish and diocese it is always difficult to know who you can call on when you need help for Sunday services. The lists of clergy in

the Diocesan Directory are just that, lists of clergy. So for that first six months until Trevor's arrival his help was invaluable not just for celebrating a Eucharist but also for letting me know who might be a good person to contact when in those early days before the times of the services were changed we needed rather more people than we had.



Rev. Bryan Middlebrook

Of course not all of his gifts and skills were related to his work as a priest. We would for instance take deliveries of strawberries, rhubarb and courgettes at the Vicarage at regular intervals during the summer months and in 2003 he became a Godfather to our daughter Ruth.

So we remember Dulcie and the rest of Bryan's family in our prayers

Michael

Editor's note

Bryan was born near Walsall, in the Midlands, and following graduation from Durham University in 1955, and a career in teaching, he went

on to train others in the profession as a lecturer at the Sunderland College of Education in the 1970's and 80's. He was ordained in 1988 at the age of 55 becoming a non-stipendiary priest in north Durham, first serving as a curate at the Parish of St. Cuthbert's in Durham and more recently as an associate priest in the parishes of Esh, Hamsteels, Langley Park and Waterhouses.

Bryan served as a volunteer in the Durham and Chester-le-Street branch of the Alzheimer's Society for several years and will be greatly missed by them.

I knew Bryan for many years and he always had time for a word and a progress report on the family. I too would like to extend my sympathies to Dulcie and her family.

BOBBY ROBSON ON THE ROAD TO RECOVERY

Sir Bobby Robson is now back at home after undergoing surgery to remove a small brain tumour.

We hear that Sir Bobby is making good progress and hoping to resume work with the Republic of Ireland international football team in the near future.

QUEBEC HOMING SOCIETY

Following the death of my Father and his Brothers (all Wilsons born in Langley Park) I seem to have acquired a Trophy which is

engraved "Quebec Homing Society - Presented by B J Johnson 1900". I wondered if the Society (or similar) was still in existence as I would love to return the Cup to them as part of their historical records. If not, I think my next call may be Beamish Museum to see if they would like it. I look forward to hearing from you.

Ruth Oliver

THE TRAIN NOW ARRIVING AT ... WITTON GILBERT

By Pat Lawlor

Witton Gilbert Station was opened by North Eastern Railways on 1st September 1862. The station was situated on the west side of a track running south from Wallnook Lane.

The station closed to passengers on 1st May 1939 and completely closed on 30th September 1963 when it was

then run by British Railways (North Eastern Region).

After the Consett Ironworks were first established in 1841, by the 1860's Consett needed better access to the iron town of Middlesbrough and the neighbouring Ironstone of the Cleveland Hills. There were some rail links between the two towns but a direct route was needed. The Browney valley provided the ideal setting for such a line, so in February 1861 construction of the North Eastern Railway's Lanchester Branch commenced and it officially opened the following year. It was initially a single-track line with stations at Consett, Knitsley, Lanchester and Witton Gilbert.

The Lanchester Branch opened up mining possibilities along the Browney Valley and in 1870, Lord Lambton who owned land in the valley accepted an application to search for coal and the following year coal was found. The North Eastern Railway doubled its track in



Witton Gilbert Station as it was

anticipation of colliery demand and collieries soon opened along the line at Bearpark, Malton, Lanchester and Langley Park. In 1874, the Consett Iron Co began to open out its coal royalty at Langley Park beside the railway near Witton Gilbert Station. A coke works was also established.

Traffic had grown to such an extent in the early 1870's that it was decided to double part of the Lanchester line and two double track bridges were built across the river Browney just south east of Witton Gilbert. As a result of the widening of the line, Witton Gilbert station received a second platform at an estimated cost of £262. An additional station was also added at Aldin Grange in 1883 (renamed Bearpark in 1927).

Passenger numbers were always light and the Lanchester Branch was an early closure with the last passenger trains running in 1939. After 1939, the stations along the route were

occasionally used by Miners' Gala excursion trains, the last recorded excursion being 17th July 1954. Goods traffic continued until 1965 when Lanchester Station was the last on the line to lose its goods service. The branch closed entirely in 1966 when minerals were diverted to road transport.

Today the line at Witton Station which runs along the front of the station building is part of the 12 mile long Lanchester Valley railway path and cycle way running from Lydgetts Junction just south of Consett to the Broompark picnic area near Stonebridge.

The east bound platform and station building still survives and is a privately owned residence of Barbara and James Bell.

As part of my research into Witton Gilbert Station, I spoke to James and Barbara Bell, who showed me around their beautifully restored home. James, a railway enthusiast himself, gave me a letter from a lady whose grandfather was station master at Witton Station until his retirement in 1923. Her mother and aunt were also born there.

I recently spoke to the lady, her name is Doreen Howe, who is now living in Bishop

Auckland. Doreen spent many happy times at the Station House in Witton.

Doreen's Story

"For many years my grandfather was station master at Witton Gilbert. My mother was born there in 1905 and my Aunt Elsie was also born there in 1912.

My aunt spent the first 11 years of her life at Witton Station before moving to the village of Witton Gilbert when my grandfather retired from the station in 1923. She lived in the house at Witton my grandfather moved to on his retirement for the rest of her life, until she died last year in her 90's.

I was brought up on tales of life at Witton Station. They had lived in the station house, actually on the station platform, grandfather Thompson being station master lived there first as a single man with his mother, then later as a married man when he married my grandma, he being 45 and my grandma, a young lady of 19 years.

She had taken up post as housekeeper when his mother died and despite the disparity in their ages, they made a very handsome couple and went on to have a family of four.

From stories mam told me about their childhood and the tales I still heard from my aunt Elsie, I have a picture of an idyllic childhood, living in a large comfortable house with indoor plumbing and a



The Station House in 2006 with James and Barbara Bell sitting outside

bathroom, still a rarity in those days.

Grandfather had the job of delivering the coal to the miners who worked at Bearpark Colliery. This would be taken from the station by horse and cart to the miner's homes, so a man would be hired from the hirings in Yorkshire to lodge locally and do this job.

My mam who was not keen on horses, especially cart horses, which were twice her size, sometimes got the job of taking the horse to the blacksmith to be shoed. She would lead him along the lane at one end of the longest rope she could find and break out in a trot at the sound of his heavy footsteps behind her, of course the faster she went, so did the horse. It was a pretty close thing by the time the blacksmiths was reached, with mam close to tears and a rather puzzled horse in tow.

There were plenty of places to play, woods and water, fields, a garden filled with fruit bushes, fresh peas to pick and a very popular Victoria Plum tree, well known to the pit lads who passed by at night on their way to work – who could blame them, certainly not my kind-hearted grandma.

Despite this freedom of riches, of course the greatest place, to the boys in particular, was the one forbidden under threat of eternal damnation, was of course the railway itself.

Grandpa would haul young Stanley into the house to my grandma spluttering "This boys been on the line again" and leave her to deal out the justice, but it didn't do much good, my uncle Stan was every a loveable chap.

My aunty Elsie as a toddler remembers the army camping in the woods behind the station in the first world war. They were under canvas and came to the back of the house into the cellar where there was a kitchen range they used to cook meals. Of course, as a bonny sociable little girl, she was soon the forces favourite and entertained by standing on the corn bin singing 'Gleat blig bloots and blisters on yer fleet' a favourite of the day.

It is my aunt who remembers another exciting event, the day they came in white coats to cart the porter away. He has been going 'off it' for some time, sitting on the station platform, laughing to himself whilst grandma ran up and down the train closing doors, announcing 'Witton Gilbert', not wanting the man to lose his job.

The first motor buses ran



Witton Gilbert Station by local resident Didier Cauchy

from the station to Durham station and mam used them to travel to Durham when she started Durham Grammar School, it was a more convenient timetable but she still had to hike down from Durham station. Still, Witton Station was used for most goods carried to nearby Langley Park and of course was the route to and from Consett with its heavy industry and the nearby pits with coal to transport. Road transport soon took over the business, shortly after grandpa retired, the station was closed.

Life change when the family moved to Witton village, new council houses were being built and grandpa bought an old Watson wagon and learned to drive it, no easy task for a man of sixty plus, who was more used to steam engines!

He would lead goods to the building site and kept himself employed whilst grandma with a young family to think of, started off a family business in a fish shop.

Mam was working as a teacher by day and helped in the shop by night until she married. Elsie was co-opted in other ways too, it was the custom in the village when a small baby died, for the child to be carried to the cemetery in its little white coffin by a young girl, so Elsie very reluctantly did

this job, 'someone

has to do it' she was told. Can you image any sixteen year old doing this today?

At an even earlier age, she was persuaded to accompany grandpa at some unearthly hour to Darlington on the huge Watson wagon to collect ice from the ice factory! She would leave a nice warm bed to go out into the wintry night, climb up to sit beside the driver, no heater of course, as they chugged along in the dark. She recalls seeing all the pitmen sitting on the front steps of their houses smoking, waiting to go to work. Then sitting outside the ice factory in the wagon, surrounded by tramps warming themselves beside the factory walls, while grandpa went inside to pay for the ice and load up the wagon. Then the long trail to deliver ice all over County Durham, mostly to ice cream shops, no refrigeration then! All this didn't seem to do her any harm, she lived well into her 90's and was still very active, went to dances and drove her own car when she was still in her late 80's.

My dad was a carpenter, a skilled tradesman, one of five boys, all trained and time served. Between them they had every skills needed for house building, unfortunately they were not needed, it was the time of the 1926 general strike, the year mam and dad were married. Married women were not allowed to teach and as dad said, 'skilled men could not buy a job!!'. With a little help from grandma, mam and dad

moved to Bishop Auckland and rented a very run down shop. As grandma said 'with a fish shop at least you can eat'. They 'mucked it out', painted and scrubbed and with the loan of five shillings from grandma for the till, they opened the following week. I don't think either of them thought it would be permanent.

In the second world war, dad was sent to work on air raid damage on the coast, so it was my time to step in to help in the shop.

Elsie had married, and returned home to Witton when grandma died, she took care of grandpa and Wilf, the youngest brother. He was called up into the army at 18 and served for six years, abroad all the time. Grandpa lived to be 83.

Witton Station house still stands at the edge of the platform, very smart too, I have seen the many improvements the current owners have made to the house and surroundings, it is nice to see the care that has been taken. The railway line is now a public walkway and very popular with walkers and bikers."

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JIGWORD

Stuart Harris, of Langley Park Post Office. has kindly prepared the following puzzle. Find the Football teams in the following grid. Each letter appears in order and the first one is already completed for you. Answers in next edition.

N	E	W	C	C	H	E	L	S	E	A	S	U	N
L	T	S	A	S	O	U	T	H	A	M	R	E	D
E	M	A	N	C	H	E	N	O	T	P	L	A	N
I	N	U	R	E	T	S	E	V	E	V	I	L	D
T	E	D	F	M	I	D	R	E	R	P	O	O	L
A	H	L	U	E	L	D	T	O	A	R	S	B	O
S	A	M	N	S	B	R	O	N	A	N	E	T	L
T	A	M	O	R	H	G	U	C	L	R	T	O	N
O	L	A	W	W	H	H	A	R	P	O	S	H	T
N	L	N	E	I	C	C	L	Y	P	A	M	O	U
V	I	C	S	T	B	I	B	S	L	L	A	L	D
S	E	H	Y	T	R	W	I	T	A	A	S	R	E
T	E	R	C	I	O	M	O	N	E	C	H	O	T

COMPETITION TIME

Win a copy of John Foster's

LOOKING AT LANGLEY PARK MEMORIES OF A VILLAGE

All you have to do is write a short article, around 400

words (say 2 columns in Esh Leaves), on your particular memories of Langley Park, Esh, Quebec, Ushaw or Wilks Hill.

It can be about people, places, events etc and cover any period since the 1900's. A photograph with the article would be acceptable and will be returned to the entrant(s).

It is intended to publish the winning article in the March 2007 edition of Esh Leaves.

It is also possible that we may use some of the other articles in later editions of our newsletter.

Entries can be handwritten, or sent by email, to the Editor using one of the addresses shown at the top of our front page.

Entries will be judged by someone with journalistic experience.

Closing date for entries Friday 12th January 2007. The Editor's decision will be final.

So if you have any memories that you would like to share with other readers then now is your chance with a fascinating book on offer to the winner!

THE PUCKERING FAMILY

Are you a Puckering or are you descended from a line of Puckerings in and around Esh? If so, I would very much appreciate getting in touch with you, as I am looking into my family tree.

My grandfather, Harry Puckering, was born in Front Street, Esh, in 1912, but moved to London in 1926. His father was Henry Puckering, and his mother's maiden name was Sarah-Ann Blenkinsopp. Sarah-Ann died in 1926, and Henry subsequently married twice more. He moved to Lanchester, where he died when he was in his early 80s. Harry's siblings were Ernest (who was a miner at Horden Colliery), Fred (who was a miner at Blackhall Colliery and played for Blackhall Colliery Welfare Cricket Team for 20 years, Vera, Edie and May.

I would love to hear from anyone who has any information at all.

My e-mail address is janine.puckering@worthing.gov.uk

Thank you very much.

Janine Puckering

STOP PRESS ITEMS

Litter Pick

A litter pick organised by EQUaL is to take place at the Recreation Ground, Langley Park on Saturday 18th November 2006.

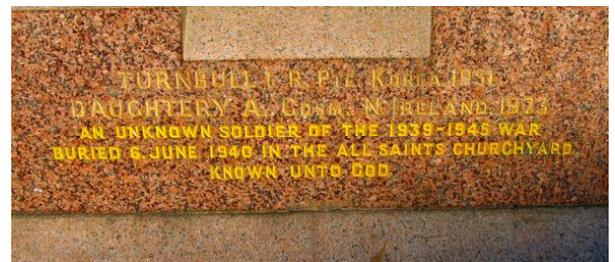
Gloves, Litter Pickers and Sacks will be provided.

For more information contact Karen Gibson (see page 5 for contact information).

The grave of the Unknown Soldier (Langley Park)

For a long time local resident, Esther Hayton, has been asking for an inscription to be engraved on the Langley Park War Memorial to mark the grave of the unknown soldier of the 1939 - 1945 war buried, on 6th June 1940, in the All Saints Churchyard.

Shortly before this year's Remembrance Day Service Esther's wish came true.



The new Unknown Soldier inscription on Langley Park War Memorial.

The inscription reads:

An Unknown Soldier of the 1939-1945 War buried 6 June 1940 in the All Saints Churchyard. Known unto God

CHRISTMAS POSTING DATES FOR 2006

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