

Planning the future of Broomley and Stocksfield

NE43 news

Issue 58 Spring 2016

Amazon Rowers in the RECORD BOOK



Editor - it appears that many residents may not have received a letter about this herculean effort (or, like the Ed, mistook it for junk mail!) so the story is being included in this issue of NE43 News.

Stephen Harpin, the intrepid adventurer, has been rowing again, this time in a team of five, the whole length of the navigable Amazon River - a total of 2,077 miles, from Nauta in Peru to Macapa in Brazil. The real challenge was rowing in intense heat of 85 degrees F and over 90% humidity whilst interrupted by violent storms and excessive winds. Rowing 24 hours a day, in 2-hour shifts, there were severe navigation difficulties: running aground in the first half of the journey where the river was about 300 yards wide; and later where the river was 2 miles wide and very busy, avoiding 240-metre wide tankers travelling at 20 knots. Or perhaps more accurately, ensuring via their radio that, as a small rowing boat restricted in their ability to manoeuvre, they had been seen!

So what were the highlights?

- Four approaches at gunpoint, to examine their papers and search their boat for drugs and weapons, initially by aggressive Colombian militia and later, Brazilian militia who always turned out friendly. On one occasion the militia cooked them a meal, which made them ill for two days! What a strain on their only bucket!

- Two sets of pirates (also at gunpoint) identified by their neckerchiefs over their faces, looking for valuables! They soon left them alone when they saw their undies hanging over the side of the boat!
- Throwing sweets to the children living on the edge of the forest.
- Village groups of about 50 adults, showing great excitement at what they couldn't believe they were seeing!
- Rowing surrounded by dolphins wanting to feed on the fish attracted by the light on the boat.
- Resisting the temptation to cool off in the water because of the danger of anaconda snakes.
- Meeting the huge families living on tiny houseboats, full of chickens.
- Getting to the end, finding it difficult to walk, but elated at the adventure they had experienced.
- Beating the only one other boat to have rowed the whole river, by 4 days - and a future entry in the Guinness Book of Records!



The team were completely unsupported and self-financed, with the aim of raising funds for worthwhile charities and again Stephen is being sponsored to help raise funds for a replacement Scout hut. The roof of the present hut has had to be covered

with polythene as it is no longer waterproof and the need has become urgent. If you are not among those who have already helped (thank you to those who have), we would be most grateful for donations to:

- 1st Stocksfield Scout Group, delivered to 25, Cade Hill Road, into the letter box under the side porch or
- uk.virginmoneygiving.com/fund/rowtheamazon

Very many thanks from the Scout Executive Committee.

Annual Parish Meeting

The Parish Council holds an Annual Parish Meeting and this year's meeting will be held at 7.30pm on Monday 18 April at Stocksfield Community Centre. The Council usually invites a speaker to address the meeting on matters of interest to the local community and this year is delighted to welcome Dr Colin Doig from the Northumbria Healthcare NHS Trust. Colin is a consultant cardiologist and the Director for Clinical Support and Cancer Services Business Unit. He will talk about the most recent changes to emergency care and explain how they have affected Hexham hospital and the other hospitals in the area. The meeting also gives residents an opportunity to hear and ask questions about the work of the Parish Council over the previous 12 months and to raise any issues of concern or interest. Make sure you put the date in your diary.

Shelter

Proving that the Parish Council does respond to the ideas and needs of residents, in January the new bus shelter was installed on the A695 at Branch End. Passengers waiting for a bus in either direction now have the benefit of shelter from the wind and rain. It sits so unobtrusively at the side of the road that many have not even noticed its arrival and takes its place alongside the other shelters in the village which are all owned and maintained by the Parish Council. Just remember you'll need to keep a lookout for the bus and when you see it, walk the 15 or so metres down the road to the bus stop.



And then there was one... vacancy



Two new parish councillors (both pictured) have been co-opted onto the Council at recent meetings. Pete Newman, an Operations Manager for a national forestry company, attended his first meeting in February. He has lived in Stocksfield for 15 years and has coached Stocksfield under 10s and 11s boys' football teams until 2012. At the March meeting of the Parish Council, Judith Furniss was also co-opted onto the Council and will attend her first meeting as a councillor in April. Judith has lived in New Ridley for 29 years and previously worked within nursing and education. She has been active locally as a volunteer in schools and adult education centres and is secretary of Prudhoe Castle Bowling Club.

Maggi Hunt, the Council's Chair, said, "In the shadow of next year's county and parish elections, it's great to see new residents coming forward and wanting to make a contribution towards the community." There is now one remaining vacancy and if anyone wants further information about the role of a parish councillor, please contact the clerk.

Who you gonna call?

What do you do when you see something that needs putting right? Whether it is overflowing litter bins, fly tipped rubbish, damaged pavements or a pothole, Northumberland County Council is very efficient at responding to issues that are reported either using its online system or by telephone. Accessible from the home page of the County Council's website www.northumberland.gov.uk, all manner of things can be quickly reported, from street lighting faults, dog waste and missed bin collections to problems with trees. Telephone reports can be made on 01661 520005.

The County Council also has ultimate responsibility for the network of public footpaths that cross the countryside and link areas within the village. However the Parish Council has, with funding from the County Council, taken over the general maintenance of the public footpaths within the village (not pavements beside the road though). Problems affecting these public footpaths can be directed to the Parish Council in the first instance, either by telephone or preferably by email. The contact details are on the last page.

Spotlight on:

The Rights of Way and Environment Advisory Group

The Parish Council is fortunate to have a long established group working to promote the rights of way, footpaths and general environment within Broomley and Stocksfield. The group, usually referred to as ROWE, is chaired by a Parish Councillor and is made up of local volunteers and a number of officers from County based organisations, such as the County Council's Area Countryside Officer. Without letting its members' egos inflate too much, the set-up here in Stocksfield is promoted by the County Council as best practice and is recognised for getting things done. Read on to uncover its main areas of activity and hopefully feel inspired.

Friends of Stocksfield Station -

are a group of volunteers (some pictured) who have been working to improve the area around the car park at Stocksfield station. The gravel area around the bollards has had fresh gravel laid and is kept weed free by regular spraying during the growing season.

The area adjacent to the ramp leading up to the platform (also pictured) is gradually being cultivated with a mixture of bulbs, shrubs, annual, perennial and wild flowers.



Prudhoe and Stocksfield Circular Walk -

is currently under development by members of the group and Prudhoe Pathforce, and will supplement new footpaths already created through their combined efforts. When the work is completed, leaflets will be available illustrating the walk and the information will also be accessible on the Parish Council's website. The walk, which will be about eight miles long in total, can also be

completed in two sections. Starting at Stocksfield Station, passing the new sculptured bench (pictured) located at the end of Guessburn, ascending to New Ridley, Mickley Grange farm, High Mickley and then descending to Tyne Valley Garden Centre in Mickley, where the bus can take walkers back to Stocksfield. Alternatively, walkers can start at the garden centre and walk down to Eltringham, along the river bank to Merryshields and then on to Stocksfield station to catch the bus back to Mickley. To facilitate the walk, Northumberland County Council is making improvements to the footpaths and signage along the route.



Invasive Plants -

are a serious threat to the local environment. Himalayan Balsam (pictured above) is a non-native plant growing up to 2m tall, often along river and stream banks. It shades out the native plants and as it's an annual it then leaves the banks bare and vulnerable to erosion in winter. You may have seen large areas on the banks of the Tyne. Volunteers from the group have been hand pulling the plants each summer along the Stocksfield burn to try and keep our native plants flourishing there. If you see any, they are easy to pull out by the root and squash, then leave on site to die. If the seeds ripen each plant can produce 800 seeds which are then spread up to 7m by explosion!

Members of the group also tackle Japanese Knotweed, a plant native to East Asia, and one of the world's worst invasive species. With a stem similar to bamboo, it impacts seriously on biodiversity and flood management and can damage property. It is illegal to grow. Training is required to ensure that the plant is not further distributed whilst being destroyed.

Useful information can be found on the Tyne Rivers Trust website and on www.nonnativespecies.org

River Watch -

involves a variety of activity around the natural watercourses in the village. A monthly monitoring of river fly larvae in Stocksfield burn continues and the number of volunteers able to assist has grown. In addition to the monthly kick testing (essentially disturbing the bed of the burn, then examining what has been disturbed to identify the species present), there is also an electro-fishing survey carried out by trained members of the group and volunteers in conjunction with the Tyne Rivers Trust. This is of particular interest, as the group was instrumental in installing the fish easement at the lower ford to allow migratory fish to reach potentially suitable spawning areas above both fords.

Monitoring Footpaths and Bridleways -

is an important aspect of the ROWE group whose members are often active walkers (some more than others) and are in regular contact with the county Area Countryside Officer, identifying the need for maintenance of a path or stiles for example.

Residents of Stocksfield, many without knowing it, are indebted to the group for their contribution to keeping the village and surrounding countryside to the standard we see and enjoy. They complement the work of the Parish Groundsman whose contract covers most of the planted areas around the village and the play areas. The ROWE group is always in need of volunteers, anyone who would like to help with balsam bashing in particular, or even less active members who can use their expertise to assist the group. If you want to help or have a project you think the group can help with, please contact the group's Chair, Jim Roy, jim.roy@stocksfieldpc.org.uk



Flooding update

December and January saw extensive flood damage to buildings, roads, bridges, culverts, public rights of way and drainage including several large landslips. The County Council's damage priorities include Ovingham Bridge and the Bywell Road and it has put a £24 million bid into the Department for Transport for repairs to infrastructure.

Locally there was flooding in Riding Mill in December when three houses were evacuated. There was flood damage to some houses in Stocksfield in January and one house was evacuated in Mickley.

Cllr Dale is working with those residents affected and the County Council to ensure that applications for grants are lodged. Work continues with the Environment Agency, Northumbrian Water and the County Council's Highways officers to investigate all elements of flooding to ensure that preventative measures are put in place.

In Stocksfield, old gullies are still being found covered over. Please check around your property, for example under your hedgerows, and let Cllr Dale know if you find any hidden gullies. It is vital that all gullies are kept clear to prevent future flooding. Cllr Dale is working with the County Council to review the risk based service for gully clearance in the area.

The commitment of the County Council's Local Services team and the Fire Brigade was outstanding and was recognised by the Parish Council at their February meeting. Cllr Dale would also like to thank all those residents who helped. If you have any queries or uncover any gullies, please contact Cllr Dale by email: anne.dale@northumberland.gov.uk or telephone 01434 673326

Scammers: Watch Out!

So you think you could never be caught out by a 'scam'? Well, members of Stocksfield Tuesday Club - who meet at the Community Centre every Tuesday - will now be better able to avoid becoming a victim of those criminals attempting to defraud older people following a session taken by Christina Owen from DAWN Advice. Christina's talk, on 1st March 2016, focussed particularly on recognising common financial scams and helping people recognise the things that genuine institutions will never do. The session was very well received by all those present - including the volunteer cooks!

The project, called 'MoneyGoRound', is provided by Age UK Northumberland and DAWN Advice with further funding from Comic Relief, and sessions can be tailored to meet the specific needs of both groups and individuals. If you are involved in or organise groups of older residents, please get in touch with David Taggart for more information: David.Taggart@dawnadvice.org.uk or on 01670 501285.

- Lock all windows and doors - even if you're at home
- Keep keys and valuables away from doors and windows
- Don't let cold callers into your house
- Look out for suspicious activity
- Report it to the police using 101 or, if a crime is in progress, dial 999



New Logo & Website for Stocksfield Community Association



Stocksfield Community Association now has a new logo and vastly improved website - created by Stocksfield-based company 2B Graphics. The site is at

www.stocksfieldca.org.uk and the new email address for the Community Association office is: admin@stocksfieldca.org.uk

The new website can be used to find out about room hire including information about the various rooms available. Information is also available on the many affiliated groups and other regular users of the Community Centre as well as links to other community organisations.

The Community Association Board are grateful for financial support from the North East Business Support Fund and from Stocksfield Plants & Gardens Society.

Renewable Energy at the Community Centre

The Community Association Board is delighted to have secured a grant of £5000 from the County Durham Community Foundation (EDF Renewables Fund) to fit solar panels on to the roof of the hall. The Board has committed a similar sum of money so that a 32 panel 8kW system has now been installed. The system includes a device which will increase the efficiency of the energy conversion by approximately 20%. Despite the recent massive cut in the Feed in Tariff this will still prove both a good long term investment and reduce our carbon footprint as we switch to using renewable energy.

Whittonstall Action Group and future opencast mining proposals

Although UK Coal has withdrawn its planning application, Whittonstall Action Group (WAG), nonetheless remains vigilant and ready to take up cudgels against any future planning applications for the mining of coal in and around Whittonstall.

In late November 2015, WAG submitted a response to the draft Northumberland County Council Local Plan: Core Strategy. As part of its response, WAG argued the need for greater scrutiny and tighter regulatory controls in respect of restoration bonds, and a more effective policing of restoration processes. WAG members remain in regular contact with each other ready to launch, if necessary, a vigorous campaign against any future coal mining proposals.

Beetle Drive



Do you fancy a night of fun, friends and fundraising?

To mark what would have been our dear friend, Marion Little's 60th Birthday, Ann Outterside, Liz Hartley, and Anne Davison are organising a Reunion of Playgroup Mums, and an open invitation to all, to a good old-fashioned Beetle Drive!

Thursday 7th April at 7.00pm

Tickets £5, to include cheese & nibbles, are available from: Ann Outterside - 844337 Liz Hartley - 843518 Anne Davison - 843400 Contributions towards a raffle would be gratefully received.

All proceeds will go to the charity Target Ovarian Cancer in memory of our special women, Marion Little and Frances Hughes, whose courage, cheerfulness, love of life, faith and dignity, were inspirational.

Carpet Bowls

at the Community Centre

For some time now the numbers playing carpet bowls on Tuesday mornings have been declining so that some weeks there are too few people to play at all. Although most of those playing stay for lunch at Tuesday Club this activity is open to anyone not just Tuesday Club regulars.

We start at about 10.30am - play until 12 noon - and pay £2 each towards the cost of heating and lighting the hall. There are two excellent mats available and enough equipment for 16 players. Carpet bowls is a little different from 'Indoor Bowls' as the mats provide a much smaller playing area than the surface you see when the World Indoor Bowls championship is televised.

So why not come along and give it a try - you will get a warm welcome and a hot drink!

Are you over sixty years of age?

citizens advice

Do you know what benefits you can get? Attendance Allowance, Personal Independence Payment, Housing Benefit and Council Tax

Reduction, Pension Credit etc. We can help you find out and help you apply.

Which Benefit?

Attendance Allowance is for people who are 65 or over and need help with personal care or supervision to keep them safe. There are two rates; £82.30 per week for people who need help day and night or £55.10 for people who need help either day or night.

Personal Independence Payment is for people under 65 who need help looking after themselves or who find it difficult to walk or get around. It is paid at a range of rates from £21.80 to £139.75 weekly.

Carer's Allowance is for people who care (for 35 hours or more per week) for someone who gets Attendance Allowance or certain components of Personal Independence Payment. Carer's allowance is paid at the rate of £62.10 per week.

Pension Credit is for people who are over 60 and on a low income. It makes their weekly income up to £151.20 for a single person and £230.85 for a couple (but this can be more in certain circumstances). Savings don't always prevent you from getting the benefit, but it may affect the amount you can receive. There may be an extra amount for those 65 or over with modest savings or income.

Housing Benefit helps people pay their rent and **Council Tax Reduction** helps people pay their Council Tax.

Never assume you are not entitled to benefit! We can help you find out what you are entitled to. Amounts are correct as at March 2016.

Contact your local Citizens Advice on 03444 111 444 to discuss or call into Hexham office on Monday, Wednesday & Friday 10am to 2pm or Prudhoe office on Tuesday & Thursday 10am to 2pm.

'Ho, ho, ho - thanks' says Santa

Christmas may be a distant memory but Tynedale Lions Club was delighted with the response to their Santa's Sleigh Collection over the festive period. A total of £657.14 was collected over two evenings in Stocksfield and Mickley.

Got no central heating?

Government funding is available to install central heating systems into qualifying properties. This may be a once in a lifetime opportunity for qualifying residents. If the funds are not used they will go back to Central Government. Community Action is working with Warm Up North to identify residents who may qualify. More details are given below along with contact details.

CENTRAL HEATING FUND

Warm Up North, a partnership between nine North East local authorities and British Gas, has been awarded government funding to install free central heating systems into qualifying properties in the North East of England.

You may qualify for free central heating if:

- You are a private homeowner, or rent your home from a private landlord
- You live in one of the nine Warm Up North areas (including Northumberland)
- Your home does not have, and never has had, a central heating system or you have solid fuel central heating which does not cover all the rooms in your house and
- Installing a new central heating system will improve the energy rating of your house.

If you think you may be eligible for help under this scheme you can contact Warm Up North to arrange for an energy assessor to come out and survey your home, check eligibility and work out the best type of heating system for your property. The surveyor will then discuss these options in detail with you and explain what system could be installed.

To find out if you qualify and to arrange to have your home surveyed you can contact

Warm Up North: Tel: 0800 294 8073, (use option 3)

Website: www.warmupnorth.com/chf

Homeless Tents!

The Scouts are planning to demolish their old hut in May, beginning the construction of the replacement. They are looking for a place to store their equipment temporarily (tents, stoves, poles, etc.) from May to August. Stocksfield's Group Scout Leader, Dr Malcolm Murray said, 'If you have a dry, secure garage or shed that is sitting empty it would be a great help to us to know that our equipment is safely out of the way of the building work. Even if you couldn't make it available for the whole period, please get in touch - we are happy to move it around as needed'. Malcolm can be contacted by email: malcolm.murray@gmail.com or phone: 01661 842146.



Bywell Arts Festival

Friday 24th - Sunday 26th June 2016

The ancient Bywell churches of St. Peter's and St. Andrew's once again provide the venue for this popular annual exhibition of paintings and other craftworks by local artists and designers. St Andrew's Church, now in the care of the Churches Conservation Trust, is rarely open to visitors and well worth a visit in its own right.

Well established as an exhibition for original works, the Festival also includes the sale of numbered prints, which has proved to be very successful in recent years, creating a more affordable option and appeal to a wider range of buyers.

In addition to the visual art on display, there will be musical entertainment during the weekend, the highlight of which is the Saturday night concert in St Peter's Church. Details of this will be on the website: www.bmscofe.org.uk

During the exhibition hours there are excellent refreshments available, including delicious cream teas, served in a marquee next to St Peter's church. There are also cakes and plants for sale and a variety of stalls. Everyone is welcome to enjoy the art and relax in this idyllic and peaceful rural setting.

Opening hours:

Friday	24th June	7.00pm - 9.00pm
Saturday	25th June	10.00am - 4.30pm
Sunday	26th June	10.30am - 4.30pm

Free parking and toilet facilities close to the churches.



St Andrew's Church, normally inaccessible to the public will be open during the festival.

Churches Together in Stocksfield and Mickley

Easter Holy Week On March 25th, all are warmly invited to join us on the Good Friday Walk of Witness through the village, beginning with short meditation at The Quaker Meeting House at 9.45am, walk commences at 10am, down towards the station, ending with a brief service at The Methodist Church on Mount View Terrace at 10.45am, followed by tea/coffee.

Pentecost, Sunday May 15th May. Bring and share tea at Methodist Church at 5pm, followed by United Service at 6.30pm. All welcome.

ADVANCE DATES FOR DIARIES

County Show, Monday May 30th. There will be a Churches Together presence and volunteers are needed - please speak to your Church leaders.

Holiday Club to be held at the Baptist Church July 25th - 29th. A very popular fun week at the start of the school holidays. Details to follow but let friends and family know the dates for their children.

Exercise to Music with Mary Huggin

Stocksfield Community Centre

For more information ring
Community Centre 01661 842346

Mondays 6.30 - 7.45pm
Low Impact Aerobics/Body Toning

Tuesdays 6.00 - 7.00pm
Step Aerobics

Thursdays 6.45 - 7.45pm
Pilates Using Stability balls

Fridays 9.30 - 10.30am
*Low Impact Aerobics/Legs,
Bums & Tums*

Stocksfield Retired Men's Association

Meets in the Baptist Hall at 10.30am

New members and visitors are always welcome - more information David Guy 01661 843390.

17 March *Scottish Soldier* - Wendy Stafford

7 April *Bismark* - Mr John Gibson

21 April *Hollywood's English Gentleman*
- Prof. John Derry

5 May *History of the Four Columns*
- Mr Alistair Sinton

19 May *Water of Tyne*
- Steve and Carol Robson

Bywell St. Peter's Church

Community ventures (held in a marquee) to raise money for charities.

All residents in Stocksfield, Tynedale & beyond are invited to these Special Events

Tables reserved for parties of 4 or more excellent food & enjoyable afternoons guaranteed!

Home-made Tea / Stroll around the Garden

Aston Greys, 25, Cade Hill Road
Stocksfield, NE43 7PT

3rd Sundays in June, July & August,
3.00 - 6.00pm; last serving 5.15pm

Sunday, June 19, in aid of Mind

Sunday, July 19

in aid of Tynedale Hospice at Home

Sunday, August 21

in aid of Macmillan Cancer Support

Tickets in advance: £5 adults, £3
(children under 16)

Please phone Philippa Harpin, 01661 842302 -
or on the gate: £6 & £4

Do come - first rate teas are a very enjoyable activity!

'Sit down' Meal/Stroll around the Garden

25, Cade Hill Road, Stocksfield, NE43 7PT

Sunday, July 31, 1.00pm.

Menu: Extensive selection of meat & salads, vegetarian quiches; home-made desserts; cheese & biscuits; coffee.

Tickets in advance in aid of major repairs to Parish Church.

Please phone Philippa Harpin, 01661 842302
£12 adults; £6 (children under 16) includes free glass of wine/fresh orange

Donation Bar & Raffle

Important Notice

This attractive marquee venue, which seats approx. 80 & includes all colour co-ordinated tableware & linen, is available free-of-charge for summer fundraising & charitable events. Please take up this offer - come & see for yourself. Philippa Harpin.
Tel: 01661 842302

Stocksfield Local History Society

Meet at 7.30pm at the Methodist Church, Mount View Terrace. Visitors are welcome.

Next meeting:

14th April - Anthony Atkinson

Admiral Lord Collingwood - Hero of Trafalgar

Stocksfield WI

Meetings held in the Community Centre at 7.30pm

6 April *Sons of the Desert* - Freda Thompson

4 May *Annual Meeting and Resolutions*

Stocksfield Plants and Gardens Society 2016

15th March: Trevor Jones

- The Making of the Alnwick Garden

Trevor has been Head Gardener at Alnwick Garden since February 2008. He will be talking about the creation of the garden and subsequent developments.

19th April: James Howard and Chris Johnson
- Restoration work at Allen Banks

Susan Davidson, the owner of Allen Banks in the 1800s, created all the paths, making it into a wilderness garden, with exotic plants and stunning views across the valley. James and Chris, Rangers for the National Trust reserve at Allen Banks and Staward Gorge will be explaining the work that is currently being undertaken to restore the woodlands to Susan Davidson's original design.

17th May: Heather McFall

- The Joy of Latin Plant names

Are you confused about plant names? Heather will be explaining why we need them and what they mean.

Saturday 28th May - Annual Plant Sale, Stocksfield Community Centre 10.30am

Meetings are at 7.30pm in the Community Centre. Guests welcome.

For further information, please contact Val Guy, Programme Secretary on 01661 843390.

Broomley & Stocksfield Parish Council

The Parish Council meets in the Community Centre at 7.30pm. The agenda and minutes of the meetings are posted on the notice boards and on the website (www.stocksfieldpc.org.uk).

Next Parish Council Meetings in 2016:

Parish Council Meeting 4th April

Annual Parish Meeting 18th April

Parish Council Meeting 9th May

Members of the public are welcome to attend any meeting of the Parish Council. Residents always have the opportunity to raise issues of concern during a public participation section at the start of the meeting.

Contact the Parish Council at:

Broomley & Stocksfield Parish Council,
at Stocksfield Community Centre,
Mount View Terrace, Stocksfield
NE43 7HL. Telephone: 01661 844667
Email: clerk@stocksfieldpc.org.uk
Website: www.stocksfieldpc.org.uk