



The Tyne Valley Community Rail Partnership Community Rail Partnership

PRESS RELEASE

March 2017

Residents in Wylam have viewed the village's 'hidden spaces' thanks to sponsorship from the Tyne Valley Community Rail Partnership.

Last Autumn, Wylam Winter Tales, a community based art festival approached TVCRP with an idea to base a photographic exhibition, entitled 'Hidden Wylam' on Wylam's iconic signal box and station building.

'The signal box sits high above the railway line' said Mary Bythell from Wylam Winter Tales 'As villagers, our journeys through the village are punctuated by sitting at the level crossing waiting for trains to pass. We look up at the signal box and wonder what's happening inside, what the view is like and about the people that occupy it. So the idea for a photographic exhibition which could answer those questions was born'.

Wylam, to those who know their railway history, resonates with importance. It was here in 1781 that George Stephenson was born. He pioneered the locomotive railway. Wylam is proud of this railway heritage, and its 1897 "over the line" signal box. When the railway station opened in 1835 it was on Britain's first cross- country railway line.

Wylam Winter Tales was born in 2016 when two artists from the village, Gareth Davies-Jones and Simon Hackett wondered why nothing happened in the depths of the winter to draw the community together 'We want the festival to be interdisciplinary celebration of arts, culture and heritage. We're grateful to Tyne Valley Community Rail Partnership for sponsoring our photographic exhibition of Wylam's 'hidden spaces' where we, along with photographer Mariya Chughtai, explored the inside the Signal Box and Station House. We are thrilled with the photographs as well as the photos submitted to our interactive online

exhibit where people shared their own hidden spaces and captured moments in our village (www.flickr.com/groups/wylamwintertales/)' explained Mary.

Fiona Forsythe, Officer for Tyne Valley Community Rail Partnership said 'We were delighted to sponsor the images. They have helped to get the village talking about their railway station and have sparked the necessary conversations about station adoption, and how we can ensure that the railway station reflects the rich heritage of the village. A big thank you too to Network Rail who were very supportive.'

The framed images will be on display at the Wylam Railway Museum which is located in Wylam Library and other venues along the Newcastle to Carlisle railway line. The eight images are also available for loan and enquiries should be made to Fiona at Fiona@tvcrp.org.uk. A commemorative set of ten postcards limited to 25 copies are available for £8. Please contact wylamwintertales@gmail.com to purchase.

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NOTES FOR EDITORS

The Tyne Valley Community Rail Partnership is a not for profit limited company and part of The Association of Community Rail Partnerships (ACoRP).

The Tyne Valley Community Rail Partnership was designated by The Department of Transport as a Community Rail line in 2014.

Relevant urls are:

TVCRP www.tvcrp.org.uk The Chair of TVCRP is Malcolm Chainey and he may be contacted on malcolm@chainey.org.uk

Fiona Forsythe fiona@fionnconsultancy.co.uk or 07810 885 223

Wylam Winter Tales will be back in January 2018. More information on the background and nature of the festival can be found at <http://wylamwintertales.org.uk/>

One image is attached – others may be available please contact Fiona Forsythe.