

# Wylam Colliery – March 18<sup>th</sup>, 1850 – Rules of a Band

*Gavin Holman – June 2019*

The band was founded in 1850 and was supported by the colliery owners, the Blckett family, and also by subscription. It was administered by a committee comprising the colliery viewer (manager), the master of the band and a nominee of 'the subscribers of five shillings and upwards per annum'. The band met at 8 p.m. each Saturday evening for practice (when it was formed it rehearsed twice a week on Mondays and Thursdays). It performed in the village square on the first Thursday in the month. The band was still active in 1863. The following rules have been transcribed from the original handwritten 1850 manuscript.



*Wylam Colliery*

## *Rules of the Wylam Band*

We whose names are herewith subscribed being members of the Wylam Band of Music, do pledge ourselves to observe and abide by the following rules:

1<sup>st</sup> – The instruments to be considered as attached or belonging to the Colliery under the care and direction of Trustees, whose superintendence shall at all times be considered on any contemplated adoption or alteration; and that each member relinquishes the use of and gives up the same as soon as he ceases to be a performer.

2<sup>nd</sup> – Each member shall be answerable for the safety and good order of his respective instrument. It being intended that whenever any instrument is wilfully or negligently injured or damaged, the holder of such instrument shall be at the expense of repairing and making good the same. But should any instrument be damaged or injured, accidentally, at any meeting of the Band, such instrument shall be repaired, or made good, by the funds of the Society, or at the joint expense of the members thereof.

3<sup>rd</sup> – Each and every member of the said Band shall subscribe a contribution of \_\_\_\_\_ a week, to be appropriated in a Fund for the purpose of remunerating their Instructor, and

any member being in arrears to the amount of one shilling and sixpence, subjects himself to a fine of one shilling over and above the aforesaid weekly contributions. But if the arrears of any member amount to the sum of three shillings, such member shall forfeit and pay the sum of two shillings over and above the aforesaid stipulated contribution, or be expelled as a majority of the whole members may think proper.

4<sup>th</sup> – The said members agree to meet regularly in the practice room every Monday and Thursday evenings, except prevented by some sufficient & unavoidable cause, at the hours of ½ past 6 o'clock and practice until ½ past eight.

5<sup>th</sup> – Every member who shall not appear in the practice room at ½ past six o'clock on the evenings aforesaid shall forfeit and pay one penny for every fifteen minutes he may be absent from the above mentioned hours to eight o'clock, unless a sufficient cause can be assigned for being absent to the satisfaction of a majority of the members present.

6<sup>th</sup> – Every member who shall neglect to bring his book or any other book or books belonging to the said Band which he may have charge of, shall forfeit and pay a fine of one penny for every fifteen minutes he may detain such book or books from the practice room after ½ past six o'clock, until eight on the evenings appointed for the said band practices. But should any member so neglect when the Band is required or engaged to play elsewhere, then, and in every such case, each and every member shall forfeit and pay a fine of two shillings and sixpence, and if any member be found guilty of telling a lie regarding his absence, such member shall be fined the above sum.

7<sup>th</sup> – Every member who shall be found guilty of taking up any other instrument other than his own during the time of practice and attempting to play thereon without the consent of the owner of such instrument, shall pay a fine of threepence for each offence.

8<sup>th</sup> – Every member found guilty of lending the books or instruments of the Band without the consent thereof, shall be liable to pay a fine of five shillings and more particularly so when it may affect the interest of the said Band.

9<sup>th</sup> – Every member attending the practice in a state of intoxication and confirmed by a majority of members present, shall forfeit and pay a fine of sixpence. And every member who shall be detected swearing by any of the other members present, during the time of the practice, shall pay a fine of one penny for each offence.

10<sup>th</sup> – Every member found guilty of introducing any improper subject during the time of practice, or entering into any argument which may tend to disquiet the proceedings thereof, or making use of any obscure language whatever, shall be adjudged to suffer such penalty (according to the nature of the offence) as a majority of members may think proper.

11<sup>th</sup> – Every member who shall conduct himself in a deficient or unbecoming manner whence so the Band may be assembled to play on any occasion whatever, or getting intoxicated so as to be incapable of doing his duty as a musician, before the business of playing be totally done, shall forfeit all or any part of his share of money that may be given or agreed for, and shall also pay such as fine as a majority of the members may think fit, to improve according to the nature and degree of the offence.

12<sup>th</sup> – Every subject discussed at the time of practice and every other circumstance that may occur at any other time in which the Band may feel interested, or which may touch the slightest degree the respectability thereof, shall be kept entirely amongst themselves, and it

is hereby agreed that any member or members found guilty of offending therein shall be liable to pay a fine of \_\_\_\_\_ for each offence.

13<sup>th</sup> – Any member or other person defacing or otherwise destroying the Schedule of the Rules, or any of the Music Books etc. belonging the said Band, shall be immediately fined the sum of five shillings.

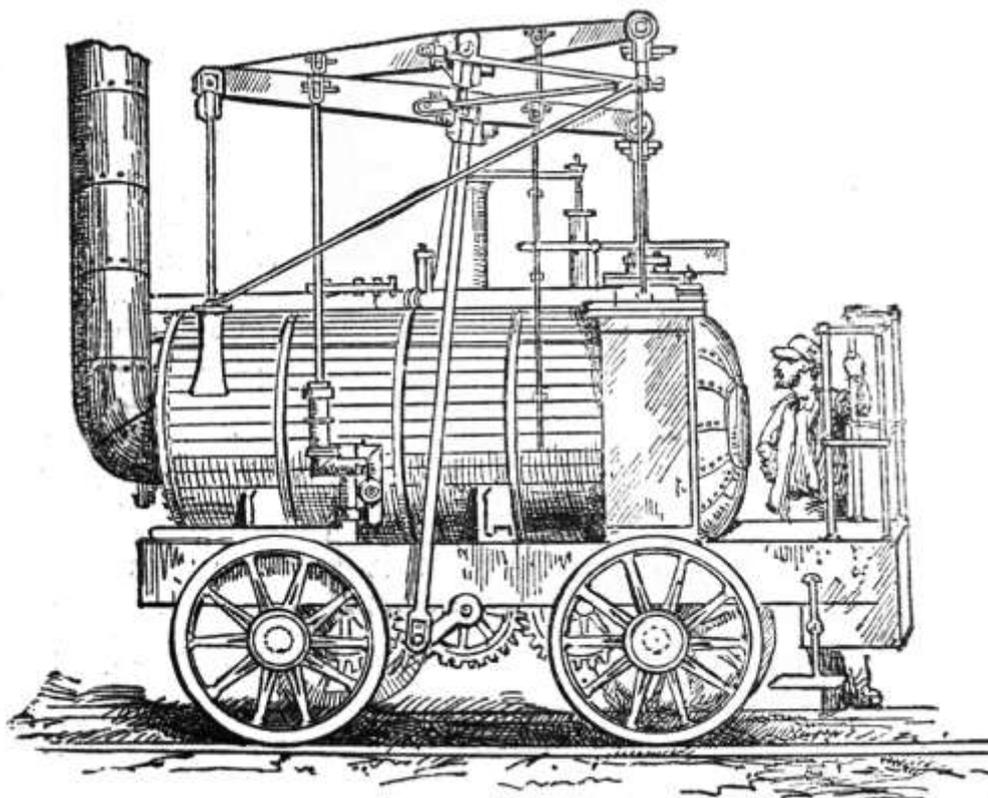
14<sup>th</sup> – Every member present shall give his vote on every subject that is proper to be decided by majorities, or in default thereof shall pay a fine of sixpence.

15<sup>th</sup> – All forfeitures and fines whatever shall be appropriated to the liquidating the debts of the Band, or any other useful purposes as a majority of the members may think proper.

16<sup>th</sup> – There shall be a Treasurer and Secretary elected every half year from among the members of the said Band, according to the order of the Rolls or list of names constituting the said Band. And a book shall be kept by the Secretary (for the time being) in which shall be regularly returned all forfeitures and fines whatever.

And if at any time the funds of the said Band should be deficient to meet the demands, thereupon each member shall contribute over and above his stipulated contributions according to the decision of a Committee who shall declare in what manner the deficiency shall be made up.

And any matter or thing not herein provided for shall be submitted to the said Committee which shall also be determined according to the decision thereof.



*Puffing Billy - the world's oldest surviving steam locomotive, which was built in 1813 for Christopher Blackett, the owner of Wylam Colliery. It was used to haul coal wagons from the mine at Wylam to the docks at Lemington-on-Tyne*