

# *Saving more than just money*

By Jeff Wilson

I had always considered that the major building work would eventually end at Lower Gill, and life would settle into a more sedate routine of maintenance, repair and enhancement.

For a while it seemed that we had reached that stage, but about eighteen months ago we ran out of gas. At first this became a problem of sourcing suitable heaters, until the gas could be delivered, but given further thought we realised that there were other more demanding problems associated with the immediate lack of gas.

In simple terms Lower Gill was consuming large quantities of LPG. The gas was expensive and added to the overall environmental burden of the site. We also realised that the customers' consumption of gas was somewhat erratic, which had led to us running out in the first place. We sat down and considered the alternatives. Back in 2000 when we embarked on this venture we had looked into using a solid fuel, bio mass, boiler.

## **Bowling News**

Tosside & District Indoor Bowling Club finished its summer season with two new competitions, a singles match and a doubles knockout. The former was played for The Pendle Witch Summer Trophy, a prize donated by Amy Bell and named after a horse once owned by her. This trophy was won by Harry Moon after beating Alan Stoney in the final. At the evening session on Thursday 13th, September 16 members entered the Doubles Knockout. Partners names were drawn from a hat to ensure that the varying skills were well balanced. A tense final ensued between Olive Holgate partnered by Harry Moon and Ann Groves with Alan Stoney. The score with only three ends left was nine all. Harry and Olive proved to be formidable opponents winning the new Summer Doubles Trophy.

Our thanks go to Betty Peel for organising a very enjoyable summer season and to Maurice Lund, our Fixtures Secretary, for arranging the two new competitions. Our new bowling season started in September when the Tuesday night games resumed in addition to the Thursday sessions.

We look forward to welcoming new members for our 13th. year of bowling. Membership remains at £15 with a £1 sessional fee to cover refreshments.



*Jeff and Trish Wilson pictured by the new wood chip boiler which now provides heating and hot water for the whole Lower Gill holiday complex.*

At the time the technology was new and lacked the automation we required. For example the boiler had to be manually ignited. So we discounted it and opted for the only viable system at the time. Five years later the technology had moved on, and bio mass boilers were a realistic alternative.

These new boilers were efficient, easy to use and were powered by wood chips. Over the next year we researched, investigated and planned the change over from gas to bio mass. Replacing the heating system to the whole complex was a complicated job and, involved considerable capital investment. But our research revealed that the cost of fuel would be reduced by approximately eighty percent. The carbon load of the complex would be reduced by 25 tonnes per year.

The new system would cope better with the range of heating demands made by our guests. The new fuel had an easier supply chain with much of the material available either on site or from local sources.

From a finance point of view, The Carbon Trust would agree to an interest free loan if we could meet their environmental criteria. Following

discussions with their representative we realised that changing the boiler was not, in itself, going to meet those criteria.

They suggested we look at other ways of reducing the environmental impact of Lower Gill, and mentioned that light bulbs may be worth considering. Paul sat down and used his expertise to calculate the energy saving we could achieve, by switching to low energy bulbs. The power saving was so surprising, I asked Paul to check his figures. Together the boiler and bulb change would meet the criteria and we qualified for the loan. All we had to do now was find a supplier and organise the excavations necessary to run the new pipe-work.

We turned to Mercia Energy of Rugby for the supply of the new boiler. Their staff seemed to really understand our needs, they were keen to explore what could be done rather than what could not. Their practical and helpful service eased the planning along and, eventually, we set a date for the change over. The work would last for three weeks starting mid May.

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## Major heating innovation at Lower Gill

**I didn't realise at the time how stressful those three weeks would turn out to be.**

The pressure started even before the boiler was delivered. Apparently the delivery driver had to brake suddenly for a low bridge. The boiler fell over on the back of the truck and was badly damaged. A replacement was despatched, but this time the delivery truck broke down. Fortunately Arthur Taylor came to the rescue, and used his tractor to tow the delivery vehicle the last part of its journey.

We were aware that three weeks was an adequate but not generous time-scale for the work. However the setbacks had left us desperately short of time. So short, in fact, that on the last day we had guests arriving at two thirty and at twelve the new boiler still had not been fired up!

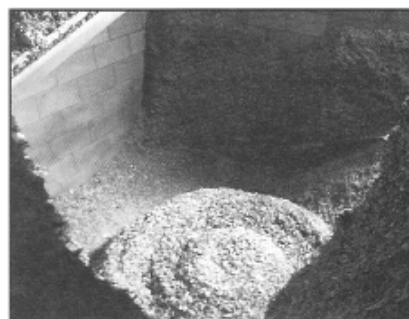
We stood in anticipation, staring at the



The hot water system, powered by the wood chip boiler, covers the entire Lower Gill site, including the swimming pool. Pictured left, Paul Wilson helps dig the hundreds of metres of trenches for the new pipes. Below, the large gravity-fed Wood Chip Store which has an automatic system with rotating arms to drag the fuel towards the boiler.

boiler, like the crowds in St Peters Square waiting for the smoke to herald the election of a new Pontiff. Finally the boiler was fired up. Leaving just enough time for the final checks to be made and the system to come up to working temperature, before the guests arrived.

So was all the time, effort, money and stress worth it? Only time will tell. The early indications are that we will meet the levels of saving we expected, we've made a considerable impact on the



carbon emissions of Lower Gill and overall the system seems easier to manage and maintain.

## Local Archive needs help to identify old pictures

**This old picture and another on the back page were kindly brought in to the Slaidburn Archive by Mrs. Margaret Branchley, Nee Pitman, who before her marriage lived in the Slaidburn area. She has asked if anyone has any background information to them, as she believes they are both Tosside photographs.**

The Tosside School photo is thought to have been taken before 1914 and was maybe some kind of fancy dress or play that was staged. It was taken by A. Horner of New Street, Settle, presumably a photographer of that time. Margaret recognises her father, Frank Pitman, as a small boy. He is on the third row from the front, third child from the left. Perhaps someone else may recognise a child's face as being one of their family members.

The gentleman in this photo is said to be Ben Ayrton. Little is known of the



Ayrton family, but research shows a Benjamin and Mary Ann Ayrton living at Northfield, Gisburn Forest with their children, Joseph, 8, Henry, 7, William, 5 and Elizabeth, 2, on the 1881 census. Also, they are shown to have baptised some of their children around this time in the Mount Zion Chapel Registers.

(Incidentally, readers may recall that most of the stone used to build the present Community Hall came from Northfield Farm). Another interesting entry appears in the Houghton Chapel Registers - now known as St. Bartholomew's, Church, Tosside. In 1797 and again in 1800 a family by the name of Harrison baptised their children and are listed as living at "Ayrton's, Tossett". Was this a property named after Ben Ayrton's family, (many properties of that time were named after their residents) and now no longer exists, or did it simply have its name changed to something we recognise today?

If you can help us in any way, please contact us at Tosside News or the Slaidburn Archive - tel 01200 446161 on a Wednesday or Friday.

**Helen Wallbank.**