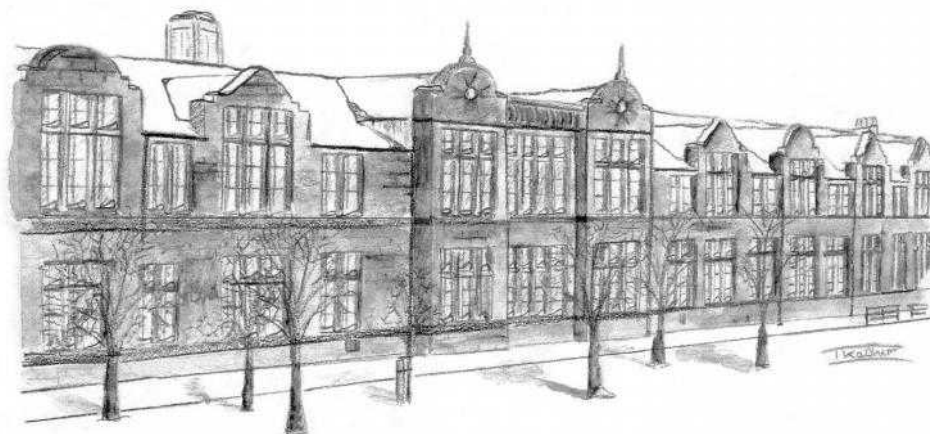


# TANFIELD ASSOCIATION



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Issue No. 10

## Newsletter Summer 2005

### Editorial

This issue is notable for its goodbyes.

Archie Howat moves on and gives us his thoughts on his time at Tanfield and Ted Brabham pays tribute to the life of Roland Proud who served the school well and will be fondly remembered by many former pupils. The school also says farewell to Elizabeth Hawkins who first joined the school as a pupil in 1958 and returned later to give great service as a teacher.

We also cover in this issue a report of the very successful evening commemorating the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of the Second World War.

And finally, thank you to all of you who have written letters and contributed articles. Please keep the letters flowing, in particular we still have some gaps in the Head Boy and Head Girl lists.

### Changes of Staff

As Secretary to the Tanfield Association I am pleased to welcome to the Newsletter team from June 05, - Editor, Tom Harpe of Durham; Assistant Editor and Responsibility for Articles, Elizabeth Loomer of Washington. June Todd of Chester Le Street, and Astrid Reeve will both continue as proof readers, and Joy Drake of the School Administrative Staff will continue to be responsible for printing.

We hope that members will continue to support the Newsletter by sending articles and letters to the School "for the attention of the Editor of the Tanfield Association Newsletter", or to the secretary at 10, Oxhill Villas, Stanley.

I would also take this opportunity to thank Alan Ramshaw who because of increasing pressure of school work, has resigned as Editor. Alan (pupil 1982-87) now a Coordinator of Learning at Tanfield, has over the past four years (since the formation of the new Association) been heavily involved in all aspects of the Association, but mainly with the Newsletter as Editor. We are grateful for all his work over this time. Alan has assured me that he will remain a committed member of the Association and he will be involved whenever possible in the future events and organisation work.

Fred Westwater.

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## Archie Howat

Archie Howat is retiring this year after twenty one years with the school, the last sixteen years as Head Teacher. We asked Archie about his time at the school, his first impressions; his achievements and his hopes for the future.

### First Impressions

In 1977 Stanley Grammar School amalgamated with Shield Row School. An amalgamation of the Area's foremost Grammar School and foremost Secondary Modern. In 1984 Archie joined a school which was still a Grammar School and a Secondary Modern under the same roof (and even that was in need of repair). The curriculum had been watered down to suit the needs of the less academic without any thought for the overall needs of all pupils. This, in turn, had resulted in a massive under-achievement by pupils at all levels. There was a clear divide of former Grammar School staff and Secondary Modern staff, which led to an unhappy and confrontational group of employees. The unhappy atmosphere was further exacerbated by the threat from the LEA to disband the sixth form. Even the old school had been badly neglected with the 1912 structure providing only inadequate cloak-rooms, an under stocked and under used Library and a badly maintained Art Block.

### Vision

Archie set about his task, first as Deputy, then as Head with the following aim uppermost in his mind - to try to manage a change that would bring about his vision. Firstly, a curriculum that would provide both quality provision and quality class-rooms to meet the needs of all children. A culture where everyone respected everyone else and which recognised that all pupils have skills be they academic, sporting or social. An environment where children were not labelled and never rejected because of academic weakness. To be Head of a school whose aim was to provide a happy and settled environment where children would achieve to their full potential. And, above all, where everyone felt included.

### Achievements

Everyone connected with Tanfield School over the past few years, knows that Archie has achieved and exceeded all of these aims with

hard work, clear vision, the support of a first class teaching staff and co-operation from parents and pupils. Tanfield School now boasts some of the best school buildings in North East England; provides Academic results which are above the National average and above all turns out well balanced, motivated and happy young adults.

If you ask Archie what his greatest achievement has been he will return to his inclusive doctrine. Since 1977 Tanfield School has pioneered a scheme which includes involving youngsters with learning difficulties in mainstream activities. These children have progressed and achieved academically and socially because they have been made to feel that they could progress. Tanfield School is now recognised as a school that includes and enables all youngsters, with Archie in demand to speak at educational forums throughout the North East and even as far afield as Leeds.

### What Next

So what of the future? Well Archie will leave to his successor a school with a fine foundation on which to build - build on the special Science and Engineering status; build on the 14-16 Modern Apprentice Scheme; continue links with Higher Education and Employers to build on the life long learning ethos instilled in the pupils to help them reach their potential; continue to provide the infrastructure that delivers strong academic results and continue as a happy school with motivated and talented staff.

For his own future Archie intends to spend more time on life management. Walks on the moors, manage his health, travel frequently and thankfully still be located in the Stanley area. Archie is grateful for the support given by the Tanfield Association and hopes that we can provide the same support to his successor. For our part he leaves not only with our very best wishes for the future but an unreserved thanks for, and appreciation of, his work over the past twenty one years. Leaving school to those who follow, .....Trusting.

As a footnote to the article, readers may be interested to read what County Hall thinks of

### Letter from Keith Mitchell

**Dear Archie**

Thanks for your note confirming the arrangements for your Awards Evening, which I'm privileged to be asked to do.

I was about to write to you in any case to thank you for the opportunity to visit the other day, which was, I must say, a tremendously satisfying experience from my point of view. The environment, climate and ethos were exemplary and it was a pleasure to be part of that community, even for so short a time. Your strategy of continuous improvement across the whole school on an inclusive basis has produced what can only be described as a transformation in processes and outcomes which is all the more secure because of the comprehensive nature of your vision. You must be proud to be near the point of handing on a school at a peak of achievement and at the top of its game where all your colleagues in the school - older and younger - are fully

Archie's achievements. The following is a letter for the Director of Education.

playing into that success. For my part, I'm proud on behalf of the LEA that the young people in Tanfield are getting such an excellent education and that the life chances and aspirations being given to them through the education process are so clear and effective.

Thanks again for making it possible for me to visit. I would be most grateful if you could pass on my huge congratulations and best wishes to all your colleagues, not least your students, on what has been and is being achieved at Tanfield.

Yours sincerely

**Keith Mitchell**

**Director of Education**

Best wishes - thanks for everything you've achieved, with your team, in Tanfield.

### In The Spotlight

In this edition we are once again featuring the life and times of an ex pupil and Tanfield Association member by turning the spotlight on Esmee Slattery who was a pupil from 1943 to 1949 and who went on to achieve extraordinary success in what was very much a male dominated profession.

Esmee was born in Catchgate in 1932, the youngest of three daughters. She first attended Dipton St. Pat's Infant School and completed her primary education at St. Mary's Hustledown after the family moved to South Moor.

After passing her 11 plus in 1943 she went to Stanley Grammar School where she was a conscientious student, excelling in English and History but rather less keen on sport - so much so that she sold her hockey stick when still in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Form!

The Headmaster at the time was Mr Carr who Esmee remembers as a very gentle man who abhorred corporal punishment, unlike some of his staff who were known on odd occasions, to fling a blackboard rubber at inattentive pupils!"

Esmee also remembers English teachers, Miss Nicol and Miss Allison and the opportunities they and the school gave her to attend performances at The People's Theatre and the City Hall in Newcastle, something which would have been otherwise unavailable to a miner's daughter in the 1940's. Indeed the interest in literature and theatre nurtured during her time at school remains a passion to this day.

SGS days were a very happy time for Esmee; she made lifelong friends, including Christable Harkness and Margaret Garfoot both of whom she still sees regularly. Last year she joined Margaret and Jack (also an ex pupil) at their Golden Wedding Anniversary celebrations, having officiated as a bridesmaid 50 years earlier.

When she left school in 1949, Esmee opted for a career in the Civil Service rather than go to university and started work with the Inland Revenue in Newcastle. She was clearly a "rising star" and was promoted to Inspector of Taxes at a time when female Inspectors were fairly thin on the ground. During her years in

the Revenue she moved around the country, spending time in Liverpool, Cumbria, Chester and Northampton. However she was still a Geordie lass at heart and in 1962 decided to leave the Inland Revenue in order to return to the north east.

At this point she became a gamekeeper turned poacher and went to work for a leading accountancy firm, Price Waterhouse, as a Corporate Tax consultant.

In 1974 she was offered a partnership and had she accepted, she would have been the female partner in the UK. However the offer was conditional on a move to London and Esmee preferred to stay in the north east, and so she declined. In 1984 she did become a partner in the Newcastle office but even then there were relatively few women partners at Price Waterhouse.

During her time at Price Waterhouse, Esmee travelled abroad extensively with clients and to speak at conferences. For several years she provided commentary on the Budget for the BBC's Look North programme and recalls

one year in particular when the BBC decided to cover the budget with an outside broadcast beside Grey's Monument in a snow storm!

Esmee retired from Price Waterhouse in 1991 but continued to work with the Citizens Advice Bureau and Newcastle University Career and Guidance Advisory Board as well as being a trustee of the Northern Rock Foundation and a non - executive director of Reg Vardy plc.

She was also a member of the Governing board of Sunderland University from 1991 - 99 and, having eschewed a university education back in the 1940's, it was a memorable day when Esmee received an Honorary Fellowship at the same time as her great-niece received her degree from Sunderland University.

These days life is a little less hectic with more time for theatre and concerts (she's already a regular at the Sage in Gateshead) and meeting up with old school friends both privately and via the association; she was very disappointed to be away on holiday and miss the recent World War II "event". In the meantime, if we need any tax advice we know who to call!!

## **Tanfield Today**

In our last newsletter the students, parents and teaching staff were congratulated on achieving the best GCSE results ever, (54% of students achieving 5 A\* to C grades) which placed Tanfield as the top school in Derwentside. One of the many subjects involved in the GCSE results that often fails to make the media headlines is Religious Education, but we are pleased to be able to quote from a letter sent to the school. Perhaps we may reverse this media trend

**“Dear Mr Howat,**

On behalf of the Standing Council for Religious Education (S.A.C.R.E) I am delighted to commend the RE department for the students' overall performance in this year's GCSE examinations both in terms of numbers entered and quality of results. Please pass on the congratulations of S.A.C.R.E. to all three involved.

Yours sincerely

John Kidd, Chair of S.A.C.R.E”

### **Staff News**

Of course the most momentous news is that Graeme Lloyd is taking up the post of Headteacher as from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2005, and The Tanfield Association members wish him every success. Catherine Hanson who is always a valuable helper at any event organised by Tanfield Association has moved from her post as Learning Support Assistant to a Pupil Mentoring responsibility. Keith Alder, another valued worker for the Association gained a management point in the Design and Technology Department to forward some of the Specialist School work.

### **Monitoring**

The Leadership Team (senior teaching staff) have been spending considerable time formulating the School's strategy, in preparation for the next Ofsted. Christine McGough as Assistant Head is masterminding the process.

### **Cultural Hubs**

The school has been invited by the DfES (Government Education Department) and

Arts Council England to be involved in a project entitled 'Cultural Hubs'. The project will develop cultural aspects of our curriculum, linked with our Specialist School Status, and our Artsmark Award, and the work done by our partner primary school, Tanfield Lea. It sounds an exciting venture - more information in the near future to be reported.

### Admission Limit 2005/6

Once again future pupils and their parents are voting with their feet. It was announced at Easter that the admission limit of 138 for September 2005 had been reached. (*Note*)?

Last year 2004, a further ten pupils were admitted, over the limit after an appeal to the Governing Body.

### Headteacher's Report to Governors

Archie Howat gave his final Headteacher's report (his 48<sup>th</sup>) this term to the Governors, in which he thanked the Governors for the quality of support he has received from them in his sixteen years as Headteacher in his stewardship of Tanfield. In particular he thanked Jim Brown (Chair of Governors) for his work and personal support to him as Head.

### Head Boy and Head Girl

The following lists of Head Boys and Deputy Head Boys - Head Girls and Deputy Head Girls are still not complete and we are requesting members to get in touch with us to fill in these gaps. We would be grateful if members could also let us know the area of Stanley in which the Head Boy/Girl lived

Head Boy			Deputy Head Boy	
1937/38	George D Bolam	Tanfield Lea		
1945/46	William Boggon	Stanley		
1946/47	Roger Simpson	Craghead		
1949/50	Stuart Reed	Stanley		
1950/51	Ken Smith	Greencroft		
1951/52	John Wilson	South Moor		
1952/53	Jim Nicholson			
1953/54	Kenneth Bolam	Tanfield Lea		
1954/55	Tom Thompson			
1955/56	George Morton	South Moor		
1956/57	Brian Logan	South Moor		
1957/58	Fred Smailes			
1958/59	David Portsmouth	Leadgate		
1959/60	Alan Taylor		Alan Waggot	East Stanley
1960/61	John Hogg	Annfield Plain		
1961/62	Bob Harrison			
1962/63	Terrance Hooper			
1963/64	David Proud	Tanfield Lea		
1964/65	Peter Carr	Pelton		
1965/66	Kenneth Reed	South Moor		
1966/67				
1967/68	Christopher Burdon	Stanley		
1968/69	Tony Brown	Annfield Plain		
1969/70	Tom Ayer	Annfield Plain	David Harris	Annfield Plain
1970/71	Colin Kennedy		Gavin Watt	Annfield Plain
1971/72	Richard Whitfield			
1972/73	David Dickinson	Oxhill		
1973/74				
1974/75	Keith Smith		David Nunn	Tanfield Lea
1975/76				
1976/77	Eric Tregoning	Stanley	Brian Cameron	Stanley
1977/78	Clinton Blackburn	Stanley		
1978/79	Gary Clarkson	Stanley	Stephen Hetherington	Tanfield Lea

Head Girl			Deputy Head Girl	
1934/35	Margery Dixon	Stanley		
1939/40	Jean Dixon			
1943/44	Jean Anderson			
1944/45	Margaret Seymour		Joan Coulson	
1945/46	Alice Boggon	Stanley		
1948/49	June Ross	Dipton		
1949/50	Mary Anderson			
1950/51	Jean Ross			
1951/52	Joan Parnaby	South Moor		
1952/53	Jean Hetherington			
1953/54	Doreen Ash	Tanfield Lea		
1954/55	Hilary Atkinson			
1955/56	Anne Wilson			
1956/57	Margaret Fisk	South Moor		
1957/58	Cynthia Stoker	Amfield Plain		
1958/59				
1959/60	Jean Rowe		Claire Flowers	
1960/61	Vivien Hodgson			
1961/62	Margaret Liversey		Eleanor Arnold	Pelton
1962/63	Jean Stephenson			
1963/64	Janic Black			
1964/65	Joan Phillips	Stanley		
1965/66				
1966/67	Janice Toal	South Moor		
1967/68	Jean Tregoning	Stanley		
1968/69	Allison Brown	Stanley		
1969/70	Anne Cole	Amfield Plain	Mary Harrison	Amfield Plain
1970/71	Linda Hurst	East Stanley		
1971/72	Karen Clark			
1972/73	Susan Handy			
1973/74				
1974/75	Linda Hughff	Sunniside	Helen Barrass	Stanley
1975/76	Anne Marie Duffy		Jean Tate	Stanley
1976/77	Arlene Bainbridge	Stanley	Karen Amos	Burnopfield
1977/78	Sharon Lawson		Michelle Cooper	
1978/79	Shelley Jefferson	Stanley	Anne Cousins	Burnopfield

## A TRIBUTE TO THE LIFE OF ROLAND PROUD

It is over a year since Mr Proud died, and there will be many past pupils who feel, as I do, a debt of gratitude to the man.

I am proud to say that I was a friend of Mr Proud. We first met after the war (WW2) when I was a pupil at Stanley Grammar School and he became a teacher there after leaving the Royal Navy. His wartime experiences had been quite horrendous as he had been on the Russian supply convoys, and his descriptions of winter sailing conditions were horrific. He could often be diverted from his planned lesson to enthral us with his stories - but always on the understanding there would be more homework. It was always worth it. Later, when I reached the sixth form, he became my Form Teacher, in charge of those of us who intended to teach and quite subtly his 'management' changed. We were treated more as adults and encouraged to make our own 'value judgements' with regard to the importance that we gave to events. It was only a long while afterwards, when I was teaching myself, that it occurred to me that that had happened.

He persuaded our sixth form group that it would be good for us to do some drama. Thus many of us stood before an audience for the first time. I think that we produced three plays over the two years that he was in charge. Personally I always look back on that with gratitude because this young lad from Sleepy Valley was afterwards rarely nervous, about standing and speaking before a class or an audience. He made our years as prefects enjoyable as well as fruitful. In later years when I too was involved in school drama, I realised how much time he had personally dedicated to us and to our activities.

I returned to Stanley Grammar to teach, and that was when our friendship, built on those earlier years, developed. He eventually became Deputy Headteacher of the school. Although he performed his duties well, he told me that he did not greatly enjoy the responsibility, and missed the pupils and the classroom teaching. He was a man I greatly respected, and I think that one of the best compliments that I've had in my life was when

he told me in later years how pleased he had been that all of his family had been taught in my classes.

Conversation with Roland was never dull. He was well read and well informed, and he would put you 'on the spot' very easily. At the end of his life he was a member of the Stanley Men's Thursday Group, a discussion group with visiting speakers. A member described to me how misled many of the speakers were by this 'poorly dressed old man' sitting with a scrap of paper making notes. At question time he would frequently have the speaker squirming at the perspicacity of his questioning.

Of course he was eccentric and liked to be considered so. His dress at school (before he took on the Deputy Headship) could often be 'makeshift'. String or elastic could be put to various uses! After he retired he gave free reign to his eccentricity. He always wore a Tyrolean style hat, and it rarely left his head. By the time of his death it was moulded to shape by sweat and whatever! His clothes were never 'haute couture' and his car just got along somehow. The latter was always old - and was just kept going by hook or by crook. He had no colour television until a couple of years before he died. He claimed that colour was unnecessary and was just a distraction. Anyone seeing him shopping at Netto or similar would think that he was down and just about out. But not so - it was all a front.

When he retired we chatted about his 'finances' and he was very concerned because he was still supporting his family through medical school. That was when his interest in the Stock Market developed, and became an over-riding factor in his life. He was very canny and very skilful, and for him it must have worked. Shortly before he died he said to me, "You know when you've made it, it's when the back manager comes to you!" Yet this is the man who on his Golden Wedding outing had his jacket fastened with a rubber band around the button, and at the time he died was having an 'odd' wheel that he had acquired fitted to his old car. What a man.

He was a man with a lifelong devotion to his wife, Stella, and he was immensely proud of what his family had achieved. He once told me that he saw his responsibility as taking his children as far through the education system as they could manage, and after that it was up to them how they used it. Three doctors and a dentist! No wonder he was proud of them.

Roland was not a particularly social animal. He wasn't bothered about 'going out', or going on holiday, or socialising. He was very content to be at his home in Harperley and to potter.

In this context it makes me feel even more privileged that I knew him and he considered me a friend who was always welcome. (with sarcastic comments about 'shiny new cars'!!!)

I think that life without Stella was just too lonely, and Roland died in January 2004, at the age of 92, just three months after she did.

**Ted Brabban**  
**(Pupil 1944-51**  
**Teacher 1959 - 1988)**





## WORLD WAR TWO NIGHT

11<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2005

What a wonderful sight met our eyes as we walked along the corridor to the hall - Union Jack flags and bunting everywhere. Then the hall itself - white tables each with stands of small Union Jacks and a very comprehensive display of World War two memorabilia. One whole side of the hall was devoted to newspapers from the war years and wartime posters. There were books about the war, identity cards, ration books, badges and many other interesting objects. Photographs of Tanfield School and its pupils in the 1940's was a feature of great interest. One photograph was particularly so as it showed the 1912 building with air raid shelters in front on the school field. In pride of place, just inside the doorway, was the newly dedicated plaque bearing the names of the Tanfield boys who died for their country in World War Two. The scene was set for a memorable evening.

Alan Johnson, a long serving teacher at Tanfield School, was Master of Ceremonies for the evening. The programme began with a presentation to the head teacher, Archie Howat, who is to retire at the end of the school year. Barbara Churcher and Joicey Craven, two of the oldest members of the Tanfield Association both made excellent speeches expressing the warm gratitude felt for Archie, who has been an outstanding head teacher of the school - seeing Tanfield through some difficult times, including a fire and the resulting huge programme of building work. The school has emerged, with excellent exam results and the status of Specialist School of Science and Engineering under his leadership. Archie was then presented with a watercolour picture and a watch by Susan Smith and June Todd. He replied with a very moving response,

explaining how he now identified himself completely with the north east, although he is really from Yorkshire. He said that this area is now his home, and that he will remain here during his retirement. He had enjoyed his work with the children, whom he described as the best he had encountered in his career and he paid tribute to his supportive and hard working staff. His speech was followed by a spontaneous chorus of "For he's a jolly good fellow" and warm applause.

Then it was time to eat and the tables were groaning with the amount of hot and cold food prepared for us by South Moor Golf Club. People were urged to have second helpings and still there was food left.

The entertainment for the evening began with Jane Westwater singing beautifully three songs from the 1940's, with the audience being urged to sing along. It was then community singing of wartime songs led by Ken Dixon and everyone joined in with gusto. A lively and delightful interlude followed when Chris Morrison became George Formby, playing his ukulele and singing to us, accompanied on guitar by Dave Cramond in full army uniform. The evening was rounded off by Jane singing 'Land of Hope and Glory' with much flag waving by the audience. The programme concluded with everyone singing 'We'll meet again'

It had been a marvellous evening with everyone being urged to take some food home with them, but nevertheless a mountain still remained. Once again, our grateful thanks go to Fred Westwater and his team for organising such an entertaining and memorable evening.

## Members' Letters

In response to the appeal for school memorabilia, the following letter was received from Harry Taylor.

### Dear Fred

It gives me great pleasure to enclose two items for the school archives:

An inaugural copy of the school magazine published in 1945.

My school "colours" awarded for my established presence in the football team.

Whilst I was not a member of the football team in 1945, I made the left back position my own during the 1946 and 1947 seasons.

My football career was terminated prematurely following an injury which resulted in the loss of my left kidney, long before kidney transplants were even pipe dreams.

Prior to my accident I played for the school team on Saturday mornings and then for Dipton Juniors in the afternoon. Saturday evenings were however reserved for a visit to the local cinema in the company of the girlfriend of the day and as a result of the exertions of the day, I invariably suffered cramp in both legs – a valid reason for sitting in the back row!!

Yours sincerely

**Harry Taylor**  
Pupil 1944-48

**Response** Thank you very much Harry for the memorabilia which were on display at the recent World War Two Night. Also, an interesting insight into the cinema going habits of 1940's Stanley!

We regularly receive letters from members living out of the area expressing appreciation for the newsletters (keep them coming!) and the following was received recently from Freda Stephenson (nee Henderson) who now lives in Uckfield, East Sussex:

### Dear Susan

I have a feeling my subscription is due – apologies if it is late.

Please keep sending the very enjoyable newsletters, I look forward to receiving them. Being so far away I have to miss out on the various association activities and I'm particularly sorry not to be able to be at the "Second World War" evening.

I have lots of memories of school during the war years – one vivid one is of the school dinners produced by Miss Lumsden the cookery teacher and Miss Cairns the school cook!

I hope you all have a good evening on the 11<sup>th</sup> and a fitting occasion to mark the Head's retirement after an excellent period of service to the school.

Best wishes,

**Freda Stephenson**