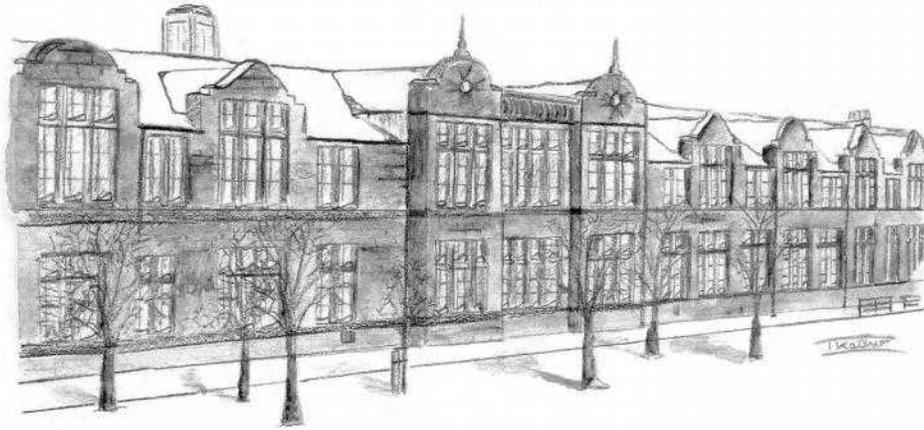


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Issue No. 12

Newsletter Summer 06

Editorial and Contents

This Editorial is probably the most difficult we have had to write to date, because we have to announce to members the unexpected death of Archie Howat, the recently retired Headteacher of Tanfield School. Archie was on holiday in Italy when he died. His funeral was held in Chester-le-Street Parish Church on Friday 12th May 2006.

Archie was held in high esteem by all who knew him and we will miss him greatly in the Tanfield Association.

There is a Book of Condolence at Tanfield School. Members of Tanfield Association are most welcome to visit the school and make an entry in the Book.

We would like to take the opportunity to encourage members who have not already done so, to fill in the Standing Order Mandate (enclosed) as it makes the collection of the £5.00 administration fee so much easier for our Treasurer/Membership Secretary.

We are privileged to have in our area one of the top male voice choirs in the North of England, the Annfield Plain Gleemen. It is wonderful to learn that there are Tanfield Association members in their rank, making a vital contribution to their performances today.

Looking at the curriculum of yesteryear, could any of our members tell us what "Manual Instruction (boys)" or "Housewifery (girls)" consisted of, or in fact any other part of this Curriculum? It was probably more or less unchanged right up until the Second World War. Please let us know your memories.

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We would recommend our Summer Spectacular of “Fiddlin Fantastic” to you. We guarantee they will give a fantastic performance, and together with the buffet prepared by South Moor Golf Club Catering, it will really be a most enjoyable evening. If you do not yet have your tickets yet please telephone secretary 01207 234548.

Finally may we remind members that letters and articles for the Newsletter are always welcome. We need your contributions and memories of the life and times when you attended – Alderman Wood, Stanley Grammar or Tanfield School. Articles can be sent to the Secretary of the Tanfield Association. c/o Tanfield School. The feedback from readers is very positive and on the whole members seem to enjoy having their memory jogged, and reminiscing about their schooldays.

Thank you once again for your support in the Association.
Editor

Archie Howat

The unexpected death at the age of 58 years of our recently retired Head Teacher has left everyone in total shock. Archie was held in such high esteem by all who know him, at school, in the education world, the Tanfield Association, and his wide circle of friends in the North East of England.

The readers of the Tanfield Association Newsletter were fortunate in having been able to read three quite in depth articles about Archie Howat.

The first article was in May 2003 when we were raising the £50,000 for the proposed Specialist School Status, and it was felt that members might be introduced to Archie Howat through the Newsletter and told something about his background, his philosophies, and his role of Head Teacher at Tanfield School.

The second was in June 2005, where Archie gave his first impressions of Tanfield. The article listed his achievements and in it he outlined his hopes for the future.

The third article was in October 2005, informing members of Archie’s retirement and in which we gave our thanks to Archie for his commitment and dedication in his successful career in school and also his very supportive role with the Tanfield Association.

As an Association we now feel fortunate that through the medium of the Newsletter we were able to return some of his caring concern and support and feel that in themselves the articles will become a lasting tribute to Archie Howat.

NB.

The articles mentioned above are available to Association Members, please ring secretary 01207 234548.



Message from Pat Henderson

'There are special people who touch our lives in certain ways and having known them we will never be the same'.

Archie was such a person. It was my privilege and pleasure to have been a very close friend to him for over 21 years.

When Archie moved to Tanfield School he chose to live at Great Lumley, very close to my family home. As an ex Tanfield pupil I introduced myself to him and three days later he called at our house. This visit led to a very close and lasting friendship. My ex husband David was a secondary head teacher in County Durham, I am a primary head teacher, and we therefore shared with Archie initially Tanfield, and then over the years the rapidly changing world of education. We also shared music, concerts, theatre, holidays, walking and eating out together, especially on the last night of each term. Archie and our sons Alex and Mark formed a great friendship, he was special to them and we all shared many happy times together.

I recall so vividly accompanying Archie and his dear mother Annie to Durham Station in October 1986. Archie had promised his mother a holiday in Paris and though really poorly he insisted on going. We worried that week and the following Friday we received a call to say he was unwell in Paris and returning home. I could never have been prepared for the shock of seeing him on his return. I took him home and called the doctor, he was admitted immediately to hospital. That evening in Dryburn Hospital

Annie and I were told he would not live until morning. Having survived the following few days Archie was transferred to The Freeman Hospital.

There followed an immense battle on his behalf and with sheer determination he pulled through the problem, where a virus had attacked the walls of his heart. He strictly followed all that was asked of him. He took on a regime of regular exercise and he lost weight. His quality of life improved and he went on to have 20 wonderful years in the company of his delightful family and his wide group of friends locally, nationally and internationally.

He was known in our home simply as DBF, dear best friend for he was that to us all. Along with many people we will miss him so much, but our lives are richer for having known him.

The following piece by Joyce Grenfell is, I think, appropriate for it mentions music and singing. Along with theatre and walking these were his favourite pastimes.

If I should go before the rest of you
Break not a flower nor inscribe a stone,
Nor when I'm gone speak in a Sunday voice
But be the usual selves that I have known.
Weep if you must, parting is hell,
But life goes on, so sing as well.

May you rest in peace.

Pat Henderson (nee Pounder)

Dear Friends

I thought I could not let another Newsletter go by without taking the opportunity to express my heartfelt thanks to all those who have expressed their congratulations and best wishes to me on taking up the Headship at Tanfield. That there is a fund of goodwill towards Tanfield in the community it serves and beyond, means a great deal not only to me but to the staff and pupils of the school.

My thanks also go to Fred Westwater who has been good enough to pass on to me the messages from Association members.

Members, by now, will no doubt be aware of the tragic news of Archie Howat's death, suddenly from a heart attack whilst on a walking tour in Italy. Staff and pupils have

received the news with great sadness. There is still, two weeks after the event, a sense of disbelief in the school. We have received many tributes from ex-staff and pupils, as well as others who knew and worked with Archie over the years. Their kind words are not only about Archie's educational accomplishments but also about his warmth and kindness as a person. He touched many lives and made his mark in many ways on the world of education and beyond. On a personal note, I have much to thank Archie for. He was a role model and a mentor to me. Like all those who knew and admired him, I will miss him greatly.

Mr G Lloyd
Headteacher

Summer Spectacular

The next social event organised by the Tanfield Association is to be held on Saturday 10th June 2006, and we consider ourselves fortunate to have secured the booking of an exciting musical duo who perform under their professional name of "FIDDLIN FANTASTIC".

One of the main reasons we have named this event 'Spectacular' is because we can confidently predict that all who see them perform will appreciate how memorably spectacular their act is.

The two brothers Mike and Jonny were born and raised in the Consett area, their Mam and Dad although both engaged in music through education, have performed semi-professionally for many years through-out the North East of England. So it is no surprise that Mike and Jonny have musical blood in their veins, and now, (dare we say it), have far surpassed the performances of Mam and Dad.

Jonny's fantastic expertise on the fiddle, viola and mandolin is unbelievable. He is a graduate of the Royal Northern College of

Music, Manchester, and has gone on to develop a unique cabaret act that has to "be seen to be believed and appreciated". Mike also is extremely well qualified, his instruments being keyboard/piano and voice, and together they give an exciting, fantastic performance.

South Moor Golf Club Catering are again providing the hot and cold buffet with dessert, and we know from past experience that not only is the food top quality with plenty of variety, but there is always more than enough for everyone.

Bringing this event to your notice in the Newsletter has a two-fold purpose:

1. It keeps members informed of events organised at school by the Tanfield Association.
2. It could also give members a date to possibly plan a weekend in the North East. Alternatively, - if members themselves cannot attend, as this event is open to family and friends of members, they can arrange for their parents, family and friends to enjoy the

evening by telephoning secretary Fred Westwater for more details.

For most of our overseas members and members in the UK whose living distance from Stanley means they are unable to attend, there is another meaningful way in which you can join with us in spirit! It would be so pleasing to all at the 'Summer

Spectacular' to hear your greetings from a far distance and overseas. If anyone wishes to take part in this idea please send your greetings by telephone or write to secretary Fred Westwater or email the school. All greetings will be read out on the night by MC Ted Brabban, saying who you are, where from, and the greetings message.

Whatever happened to Ray Newton?

It was in that wonderful letter from Christabel Harkness (née Greenwell) in a Newsletter of over a year ago about the School Madrigal Society originated by Norma Hunter (née Suddick) that the rather sad little paragraph at the end of the letter noted that Ray Newton was missing from the Madrigal Society photograph because he had been called up to do his National Service.

Perhaps it should be mentioned at this point for the benefit of our younger members who may read this article, that conscription into the Armed Services (National Service) was still in place for some years after the Second World War ended in 1945. At first young men of 18 years of age were called up to serve 18 months and later this was extended to two years.

To get back to Ray Newton! What happened to him? And did he continue with his singing? Ray had gone into the Sixth Form as an Intending Teacher and on reaching the age of 18 years, which was in the early months of his last year at Tanfield, he was "called up" to serve in the Royal Air Force. On Friday he was a pupil in the Sixth Form at Stanley Grammar School and on the following Monday he was Airman Newton "Reporting for Duty Sir". However, National Service as another story, and we wish to know about his singing.

After completing his service in the RAF Ray went to college for teacher training and

alongside his studies took part in a number of events with the College Opera Society. After three years' teaching, in 1959 at the tender age of 26 years, he took his place in the ranks of the Annfield Plain Gleemen.

It was this snippet of information about Ray Newton with Annfield Plain Gleemen that led to further questions.

Who are these people who call themselves 'Gleemen'?

Where do they come from?

Are there any other ex-pupils of Tanfield in their midst?

Annfield Plain Gleemen

In 1903, nine years before Tanfield Higher Elementary School and Pupil Teacher Centre was founded, a concert was given at Dipton Wesleyan Chapel by Annfield Plain Methodist Chapel Choir, and after this concert a dozen of the male choristers decided to form a concert party, and they called themselves "The Kyo Warblers". As a Male Voice Concert Party they were very successful and more men joined them. For their practice room they moved into the "Oddfellows Hall" in Annfield Plain, (Yes! It is a curious name) and changed their name from that wonderful title of "The Kyo Warblers" to the more serious but more professional name of "The Annfield Plain Gleemen". An official badge and motto were

adopted which still appears on the Gleemen uniform today. 'VITA SINE CONCORDIA MORS EST' which as all our ex Grammar School Latin scholars will know means 'Life without Harmony is Death'.

Over the Gleemen's 103 years history, existing through two world wars, a world depression, and despite the often difficult times of a mining community, not only did they survive but they experienced many highlights, including outstanding success in many music festivals around the UK, appearing in the opera "William Tell" at the Theatre Royal, Newcastle and at Saddlers Wells Theatre, London; a concert tour in Germany; being selected to sing before Prince Andrew at County Hall, Durham; many performances on radio and television; and over the last few years a series of concerts for SAGA Holiday tourists staying in Durham and Newcastle Universities during the summer months.

Well, that is a little of the history of the Gleemen, but what about the part that ex-pupils from Tanfield may have played?

First of all, Ray Newton who joined the Gleemen forty six years ago in 1959, is still a member of the tenor section and has shared in the success of the above occasions. During his singing years he found time to marry Heather, buy a new house at Oxhill, and eventually become Head Teacher of Beamish Primary School in 1974, where he remained until his retirement, after which he could concentrate on his bowling for Annfield Plain in the park, and his singing with the Gleemen now that he was freed from the distractions of 'Earning a Penny'.

Were there any other ex Grammar School pupils singing alongside Ray in the Gleemen? Our intrepid researcher for the Newsletter discovered that the ex-pupils from Tanfield have played a major role in the continuing success of Annfield Plain Gleemen. The

present renowned conductor Norman Taylor joined the Gleemen as a chorister in 1953 and sang with the choir until 1970 when he was appointed conductor. Norman attended SGS at Tanfield from 1942 to 1947, and in his after school time was a keen member of White-le-Head Boys Brigade. On leaving school he joined the National Coal Board, where his expertise at mathematics was in much demand. Norman was also conscripted to serve two years in the RAF from 1949 to 1951 and then returned to the NCB, resuming his often very demanding office work. In 1961 he successfully applied for teacher training at Bede College, Durham University. His teaching career began at Burnopfield Junior School and in his spare time was organist at the Methodist Churches of Hobson and Burnopfield. His musical talents which had been highlighted at college, became much sought-after. He moved into secondary education in 1973 to teach music at Annfield Plain Secondary (Upper Standards), which became part of Greencroft Comprehensive. He was then appointed Head of Music at Whickham Comprehensive School where he achieved many successes in the world of educational music. He retired from Whickham in 1990. During his 36 years as conductor with Annfield Plain Gleemen he has guided and led them to be one of the top choirs in the North of England. Norman in his time as conductor has also managed the guest appearances of many famous artists who have appeared in concert with the Gleemen, the most recent being the internationally famous Graeme Danby of English National Opera who has accepted the role of Vice President of Annfield Plain Gleemen. It was announced at the Annual Celebrity concert in May 2004 that this was Norman Taylor's 500th Concert - quite a record for that young man who went to school at Tanfield.

The other most important person in the Gleemen is without any doubt the ‘pianist’ who accompanies the “Stout Hearted Men”, and although there have been a number of very fine accompanists over 103 years, the longest serving and probably the finest is the present incumbent Mrs Patricia Stobbs. Yes! Would you believe it, a woman is the vital member of the gleemen. As the saying goes “Behind every group of males who perform well, there is always a very good woman to guide them”, and this perhaps is the proof of the pudding. Pat (Green) attended Tanfield from 1940 to 1948, before going to St. Hild’s College for her teacher training. During her time at Grammar School, Pat’s musical abilities came to the fore and her talents in piano and voice were recognised by Mr Jack Dobbs, SGS Music Maestro and Mr Norman Williams for choral and musical work both in school and in the wider community. She was appointed to teach at Annfield Plain Junior School in September 1950, and most of Pat’s teaching service was there until she retired, and many, many ex pupils of Annfield Plain Junior School have happy memories of her and her musical ability.

Pat commenced playing for Annfield Plain Gleemen in 1945 at the age of 15 years while still at Tanfield, and is now acknowledged, without any doubt, over the years to have developed into one of the top accompanists in the North East of England. Apart from her accomplished piano playing, Pat is also

well known as a very fine soprano in her own right.

Another prominent member of the ‘Gleemen’ is Brian Charlton (pupil 1944-51) who is often called upon for tenor solos. Brian also served in the RAF at the end of his 6th Form at Tanfield, he also took teacher training, and after many years of teaching he eventually retired as Headteacher of Burnopfield Primary School. Brian served as a local councillor for Burnopfield for many years and was chair of Derwentside District Council in 1984. he is at present a member of the governing body of our Tanfield School. He recalls that his most memorable times at School was singing in the 6th Form Choir under Mr Norman Williams.

Another leading member of Annfield Plain Gleemen who also remembers singing in the school choir under the leadership of Norman Williams is Tom Ayer (pupil 1963-70/Head Boy 1969-70). Apart from singing in the 6th Form choir, Tom has also sung in Annfield Plain Methodist Church Choir; Stanley Civic Choral Society, and Stanley Men’s Forum Gospel Choir, of which he is presently Choir Secretary. Tom joined the Annfield Plain Gleemen in 1974 and is a valued member of the bass section. We have only mentioned a few of the “Annfield Plain Gleemen”, as time and space restrict the mention of any more, but we can say that our school at Tanfield has played a vital part in producing the wonderful music that still gives a great deal of pleasure to many people in the North.

PERPETUAL MOTION.

Throughout our time at school we were obsessed with playing football.

The traditional, school initiation rites for eleven year olds were hectic. As vulnerable “first formers” we spent at least the first couple of days running a lot. However, we survived and then got down to the more serious and lasting business of playing totally “non- structured” football.

The westerly of the two school yards was conveniently bounded by buildings on all four sides. The result was a cosy quadrangle formed sequentially by the dining room, the boys toilets, the high east wing of the main school and the domestic science room; all of the buildings had a considerable number of windows. The easterly yard in comparison was larger but more open sided, more sloping and therefore not as popular.

It seemed that we played football from morning till night; first thing in the morning before school, at mid morning recess, after lunch, (usually on the school field, weather permitting,) during afternoon recess and finally after school while we ignored the departure of the school buses and therefore faced a long walk home. Our energetic programme was only inconveniently interrupted by classes and lunch time.

Several of us preferred to set off very early from home and walk to school rather than get the school buses. That allowed us the luxury of an extra 20 minutes to half an hour to play in an uncrowded environment in the yard. As the buses arrived before nine o'clock, the boys piled into the space and automatically joined sides. There could be two teams from each class or alternatively one class versus another and, since there was a minimum of fifteen classes, other than the sixth forms, then imagine the scene. To the casual observer it would have appeared noisy

pandemonium but in fact it was all simply self-disciplined, controlled harmony.

Some of the second sixth form declined active participation. To us, these individuals all seemed very tall, extremely mature and deliberately languid. They preferred to cram three or four to a single toilet cubicle. The wooden doors were always slammed shut and the occupants whiled away their time by standing smoking cigarettes, even the occasional pipe, and chatting inches away from one another's noses. Since the cubicles were open-topped it looked as if there was a raging bon-fire in each.

During days of heavy rain we were somewhat at a loose end. Popular alternative and challenging activities included ad-hoc gymnastics and circus acts performed not in the gym, but by using the horizontal, steel tie-bars of the roof trusses running across the width of the washroom.

On days like these it was it was not unknown for a stink bomb to be slipped under a closed door of the previously mentioned toilets by some lesser but daring mortal and then for the culprit and his pals to innocently observe from a safe distance the evacuation and general stampede.

Teacher supervision was distant, paternal and effortless. Since both the men teachers' upper floor staff room and the headmaster's main floor study fronted onto the yard then it required simply an occasional, casual glance over the rim of a tea cup for any of the above mentioned to gratefully confirm that, although habitual, apparent mayhem was in full sway there were no immediate bodily falls, collisions or concussions to attend to.

One physical, built-in hazard for the players was the uneven settlement of the rectangular, paving stones set in the yard. Many a time a slightly misplaced, hard kick of the ball would result in a very sore ankle, a

pronounced limp for the day and most likely a loose, flapping leather sole. The balls used were tennis sized and where they came from remains a mystery since they were not then available in the immediate- post- war shops.

Although there were windows galore with some even located in the width of the goal mouths which were marked by piles of school bags, window breakage was strangely and extremely rare. There must have been a permanent awareness of the physical surroundings and the associated dread of possible repercussions if shots went wild.

The dining room was fronted with French doors, fully glazed in fairly small panes. On one occasion, following a shoulder charge, one boy partially penetrated a door but luckily only one pane of glass was broken and there was no injury. Amazingly nothing was said to either of the boys by the staff or the maintenance man and, as if by a miracle, the window was repaired quickly and quietly the next day. As was the case in those days with effective common sense, society-type justice, boy A was subsequently given a severe telling-

off by the father of boy B at a convenient time and location and that was the end of that.

Often we played in a drizzle. Following those particular games we would then go to our designated classroom or lab, get our breaths and emit clouds of steam from hair and clothing in the warm rooms, like flocks of newly dipped sheep.

Considering all the hours spent and the degree of energy expended, it would be reasonable to assume that we should have produced a talented generation of early professionals sufficient to have filled whole teams of a Premiership League.

That, we did not achieve. However we were granted happy recollections to add to the total collage of school-day memories and vivid enough to bring smiles, regardless of the passage of time.

David York. 1945-52.

Tanfield of Yesterday

It may be interesting to compare the Curriculum of 1914 with the Curriculum of 2006. (See Tanfield Today). The following is extracted from the Prospectus of "Tanfield Lea Higher Elementary School and Pupil Teacher Centre".

Subjects of Instruction include:

Bible Teaching
English Language
Mathematics
Physical Exercises
Domestic Science (Girls)
Laundry Work (Girls)
Manual Instruction (Boys)
History
English Literature
Physics
Singing

Cookery (Girls)
Housewifery (Girls)
Practical Geometry (Boys)
Geography
French
Chemistry
Art
Needlework (Girls)

A garden is included in the school grounds and boys have systematic instruction in gardening.

Other subjects may be covered should a genuine demand be shown for them.

The school hours are:

Morning 8.40am to 12.00 noon
Afternoon 1.10pm to 3.45pm

Tanfield Today 2006

Curriculum 2005-2006

Art
Business Studies
Drama
German
English
English Literature
French
Geography
History
Health & Social Care
Information and Communication
Technology
Leisure & Tourism
Mathematics
Media Studies

Music
Performing Arts (Dance)
Physical Education
PSHECC (Personal, Social and Health
Education, Careers and Citizenship)
Religious Education
Science
Engineering (Technology)
Construction (Technology)
Young Apprentice (Technology)
Food Technology (Technology)
Product Design (Technology)
Graphic Products (Technology)
Construction & the Built Environment
(Technology)
Electronic Products (Technology)
Learn to Learn

The Reverend John Maughan

One of our recent newsletters carried an account of the Second World War Memorial Plaque Dedication Service. The service was conducted with great dignity by the Reverend John Maughan. Having met with John and discussed his background, we felt that he would make a very interesting subject for 'In The Spotlight' in the newsletter.

John Maughan was born on New Year's Day 1928 at Blackhouse, the elder of two children, to a very loving family. John's father was a miner at Craghead colliery and also a keen, and very senior member of St. John's Ambulance Brigade. He had also a keen interest in football and managed to combine both interests by becoming the trainer, (I think we now call them Club Physios), of Blackhouse Football Team. Young John in turn became the mascot for the team and learned, very early on, the fierce sporting rivalry between villages in North West Durham. The experience also not only gave him an insight into sports



psychology but engendered a great determination and a play-to-win mentality. Above all, it started John's great interest in football and indeed in sport in general.

John's first school was Edmondsley Infants, which involved walking from Blackhouse to Edmondsley four times a day. When the family moved to Bloemfontein John became a pupil at Bloemfontein Junior School, where he remembers fondly his scholarship teacher Steve Hetherington (another former SGS pupil) who gave young John great encouragement. After attaining his scholarship John began attending Stanley Grammar School in September 1939 an occasion somewhat overshadowed by events elsewhere in Europe. His time at Stanley Grammar School was enjoyable and he excelled both academically and sportingly, (our words not John's). His academic progress was overseen by dedicated and hard-working teachers, and although he liked and respected all the staff, John was strongly influenced by Miss Allison and Mr (Pop) Foster. His sporting prowess was overseen and encouraged by the PE Master Mr Bob Chapman. Although in those days Stanley Grammar School football team did not play in a league, the school did play 'friendly' matches against other usually grammar schools within County Durham. His competitive sporting needs were also met by a lively and competitive House sporting system. He asks: "Why can't Houses be revived? Dedicated teachers, and a group of good friends, including the Boggons, Sheila Webb, Margaret Dobson, Joan Bidgood, Tubby Brogan, Colin Luke, David How, June Rogers, Ella Bailey and Ken Coulson, all these made school days the more enjoyable and worthwhile.

A typical Saturday for John would be to play football for the school in the morning, rush home change then go to play football for Quaking Houses Juniors in the afternoon. Quaking Houses Juniors was a side that produced a number of good professional footballers, many of whom played alongside John, who could well have played professionally himself, had not other callings got in the way.

The other great love in John's life was the church. He and his parents were all regular churchgoers and also happened to live next door to the vicarage. Consequently John became great friends with his local vicar, the Rev. PGM Dennis. From the age of twelve, John knew that he wanted to become, and would become, a priest. In his words "no blinding light - no road to Damascus" moment, he just knew that this was his calling; he never questioned it, has still never questioned it, and knows that he made the correct choice. If Saturdays were busy with two football matches then school days were equally as busy. Sometimes John assisted the Rev. Dennis with a full Latin Mass at 7.30 am before going off to attend school. Indeed not only did his local vicar play a role in his spiritual upbringing, it was he who persuaded John that perhaps he should apply to Oxford. Not the usual university choice for a lad from Craghead, but apply he did and accepted he was, by Keble College, Oxford. John also recognises the work of Miss Arkless, a Latin teacher at SGS who suggested that in order to "keep her hand in at Greek"; she would teach him the subject.

After leaving school in 1946 however, events of the day intervened and instead of strolling the lanes of Oxford or punting on the Isis. John found himself more tropically ensconced on the banks of the Suez Canal serving His Majesty as a national service conscript. Much of his time in Egypt was spent in GHQ and again, because of his sporting ability, representing GHQ at football and athletics. He once famously won the javelin event by out-throwing a Zulu. The only downside to National Service was that he was unable to read serious books - there simply weren't any to read. The great lesson learned from National Service was, if you lose your kit, always 'borrow' someone else's. (Not sure if John in later years passed this tip on to his parishioners).

When John was eventually demobbed he was able to take up his place at Keble College in September 1948. It was an Oxford of formal dining halls, privilege and, fortunately for John, a high level of sporting achievement, where he was able to pursue his sporting interests. Firstly he played football for Keble College, before being selected to play for Oxford University, not easy when many members came from the soccer playing public schools and were already known to the selectors. Then came the ultimate accolade, representing Oxford in the varsity match against Cambridge and gaining an Oxford Blue., an honour achieved by few. One of John's opponents in the Cambridge team was the future England Cricket Captain, Peter May. (He soon realised that Peter did not appreciate hard tackles, especially if the cricket season was near).

It was during John's time at Oxford that a certain Professor H W Thompson, an eminent nuclear physicist and football supporter, wished to revive soccer at colleges: rugby was definitely the main sport at this time, particularly at Oxford and Cambridge. He then formed a side made up of the best players from both universities to play in the Amateur Cup. The team was Pegasus; they won the FA Amateur Cup, beating Bishop Auckland in front of 100,000 spectators at Wembley in 1951. John was left full-back for Pegasus - the picture shows John (in white) about to share some Craghead leather with his opponent.

An Oxford Blue, an FA Amateurs Cup Winning medal and, oh yes, the little side issue of an MA Honours Degree in Modern History. The young lad who had walked from Blackhouse to Edmondsley every day had a reasonable three years at Oxford.

After Oxford, it was on to Theological College at Lincoln. The next two years training to be a priest also put an end to John's sporting career. It was made plain to

him by his tutors, and also his mentor the Rev. Dennis, that he could either be a priest or a footballer, not both, and although by this time John was strongly tipped to be capped by the England FA Amateur Eleven his choice of vocation made at the age of twelve did not alter. The priesthood was his first choice. Co-incidentally, whilst he was studying at Lincoln, the Lincoln City centre-forward was Andy Graver who had been a team mate of John's at Quaking Houses Juniors. When the two met up at Lincoln, Andy was less than impressed by the Spartan conditions at the Theological College. Also rather interestingly one of John's fellow students at Lincoln, with whom John struck up a friendship, was David Jenkins who later became Bishop of Durham. The pair remain friends to this day.

In 1952 John was made a Deacon by Bishop Michael Ramsay and was ordained as a priest in 1954. From then until 1993 when he retired John was parish priest in four different parishes within his beloved County Durham :

1953 - 1956 Heworth St Mary's

1956 - 1959 St Barnabas, Rowlands Gill -
New church built

1959 - 1972 All Saints, Penshaw - Mining
subsidence

1972 - 1993 St Marks, Cleadon Park

Incidentally, St Mark's church hall was burned down by vandals soon after John was appointed and to his horror John found that the church was under-insured so for the next few years John was not only parish priest but also insurance negotiator and building co-ordinator, not to mention dealing with mining subsidence and other such problems.

In his own words, John was deliriously happy dealing with the 'nuts and bolts' of parish life. The choice he made at twelve has never been questioned. The closeness and the privilege

of being able to share people's joy, and comforting people's sorrows and promoting the Christian life gave John the life he had always hoped for.

Sadly John's wife, Kathleen, died in the year 2000. They have two children, Michael and Judith, and five grandchildren. One of them, Christopher Alexander, is a pupil at Tanfield. He is a promising swimmer and represents his club, Derwentside. He took part in the

Memorial Service. Mark the eldest grandson, is presently doing a gap year in Honduras and goes up to Cambridge in October.

John officially retired in 1993 but soldiers on, helping wherever he can. A priest's work never ends: "Sacerdos es in aeternum". The battle to advance the Christian life, and protect the good goes on. A priest is forever.

Members Letters

It is always interesting to hear from Association members, near and far. This time round we have had letters from Lancashire, Cornwall and Australia!

Joan Putz writes from Lytham St Annes:

31st January 2006

Dear Fred

It was good to have your surprise phone call and I have now sent my £5 subscription to Susan Donkin.

Looking back on those war years at Alderman Wood School I realise how fortunate we all were to receive such a fine education in such a happy and well ordered environment. The staff were of a very high calibre and I especially remember, with gratitude for their inspiration, Miss Allison, Mr Forster, Miss Nichol, Mr Elliot, Miss Mortimer and Mr Livesey.

After leaving school in 1948, I went to Durham University and on graduating joined the staff of York college for Girls where I taught RI, Latin and English. It was in York where I met my Austrian husband, Johannes and we were married in Durham in 1958. We moved to London for 2 years where I was Head of RI at a new comprehensive school in Wandsworth. This was followed by a period in Middlesbrough teaching English in secondary school.

Our only child, Catherine, was born in 1963 after which I taught part-time in a grammar school in Chepstow until we eventually moved to Lytham where my husband and I both taught at Queen Mary School. Sadly, my husband died in 1983 and I retired in 1990.

Over the years I have kept in touch with some of my old classmates - Hazel Hill, Jean Clifford (née Pearson), Freda Stephenson (née Henderson), as well as Joan Charlton who was several years ahead of me at school and who won a scholarship to Cambridge in 1939. (Was she the first from our school to do so?)

Joan was headmistress at Queen Mary School when I was appointed there and we have remained close friends since. Coincidentally, our fathers were colleagues at the South Derwent Coal company in Stanley.

Yet another coincidence led me to the Tanfield Association - my brother, Geoffrey, who spent only a year at Stanley Grammar before the family moved to Crook, met John Bowes while playing golf near Salcombe and it was he who put me in touch with you - what a small world!

With very good wishes

Joan Putz

Letter from Neville Bougourd

To correct the original attribution, this is a photograph of Form 2 Beta with their form master Harry Robertson who was a biology teacher; he was a strict disciplinarian but he was very popular as he made Biology seem fun. He always wore tweeds and tartan ties although he had no obvious Scottish accent! This picture was taken in September 1961 and the pupils shown had just come up from Form 1 Beta (Form teacher was Miss Heslop who taught French)

The photograph was taken just before the erection of the demountable classrooms (known as The Ranches), which were built parallel to the main school building and on this very spot.

The people I can identify are as follows:

Back Row

David Liddell, Colin Crispin, Myles Handy, Ronnie Cushing, Alan Scott, David Heath,

John Burrell, Neville Bougourd, Graham Comer, Paul Railston, Michael Neary.

Middle Row

Joe Lumsden, Colin Pattison, Heather Mowbray, Greta Carlyon, Eugenia Gill (known as Gaynia), Margaret Rutherford, Christine Gowland, ????????, ???????, Malcolm Barkess (known as Spike because of his spiky hair), Colin Parkin.

Front Row

Evelyn Rockett, Margaret Wilde, ????????, Sandra Sheavils, Harry Robertson, ????????, Carol Chapman, ????????, Sheila Stokoe.

I hope this is helpful and I'm sorry but I just can't remember the other names.

Neville Bougourd
Pupil 1960-66



With happy memories of my years as Music Master - Alderman Wood Secondary School and Stanley Grammar School - 60 years ago! before moving to Music Adviser for Durham County.

Every good wish to Mr Graeme Lloyd the new Head Teacher and all the Staff and Pupils of the school.

Jack PB Dobbs
Newton Abbot
Devon

Editors Note

The secretary has received a number of good wishes as above, by telephone and letter, may we take this opportunity to acknowledge them and to say how much we appreciate your communicating your thoughts to us. Please keep them coming.

The letter from Jack Dobbs will be greatly appreciated by many former pupils who remember Mr Dobbs, that outstanding Music Master and composer of the music for the School Song "First Things First", along with Tibby Boggon who wrote the words.

Do any members have memories concerning these two people? Please write and tell us!

To the Ends of the Earth

During a recent holiday down under, I had arranged to meet up with an old (as in former, not age!) schoolmate in Christchurch, New Zealand where he now lives and works at the University of Canterbury.

I had first met Bill Davison when he arrived at Annfield Plain Junior School in about 1961, having moved to live in New Kyo, and our friendship subsequently continued through our years at Stanley Grammar School. It was good to spend the day with Bill and his wife Carol, coincidently on his birthday 10th February.

But this is not the point of writing this piece. I was already aware of a remarkable coincidence that linked the University of Canterbury with, of all places, New Kyo! Not only was associate Professor Bill Davison of the Biology Department brought up in Catherine Terrace, but Professor David Thorns of the Sociology Department was born while his family lived in the big house on the opposite side of the main road not

100 yards away. As this house was the Methodist Manse and his father the minister, David spent only the first 2 years of his life here, (returning some 20 years later to act as Best Man for another Tanfield old-boy, John Hogg (1954-1961), whom he had met at university in Sheffield!), but it is still a remarkable claim for such an unremarkable place to have produced two professors for the same university so far away!

However, this is not the end of the "Christchurch coincidences". While talking with Bill, he told me of the occasion when he was asked to give a presentation at the university which was attended by the new Vice Chancellor. After his presentation, Bill was approached by the Vice Chancellor who asked him which part of the North- East of England he came from - obviously his accent is not completely hidden! Bill of course replied, "Stanley, Co Durham." The next questions were more of a surprise:

"Which school did you go to?"
"Stanley Grammar School, as it then was."

“Who was the headmaster?”

“Dr. Leonard Sharp.”

At this, the Vice Chancellor smiled and said,

“He is my father.”

Professor Roy Sharp is Vice Chancellor of the University of Canterbury in Christchurch,

New Zealand and Bill’s reaction to this revelation can only be imagined!

Tom Ayer (1963-1970)

Annfield Plain

Co Durham

We received a letter all the way from Killaroo in Western Australia from Ernest Miller. Ernest writes only to enclose the annual Association subscription for himself and his wife June but we’d love to hear more from you, Ernest. So how about filling us in on your life since leaving school, especially how you came to be in Australia?

Keep the letters coming and if anyone would like to get in touch with Joan, Keith or Ernest, please contact Fred Westwater.

Administration Fee

To help us improve the collection of the £5.00 administration fee, we would respectfully invite members who are not already doing so, to make future payment by Standing Order.

Please sign and pass on to your bank the enclosed Standing Order Mandate Form, which is being sent out well in time for October, the start of our financial year.

Our treasurer has asked us to express her thanks for your help in this matter, and of course if ever the time comes, a simple telephone call will stop the Standing Order.