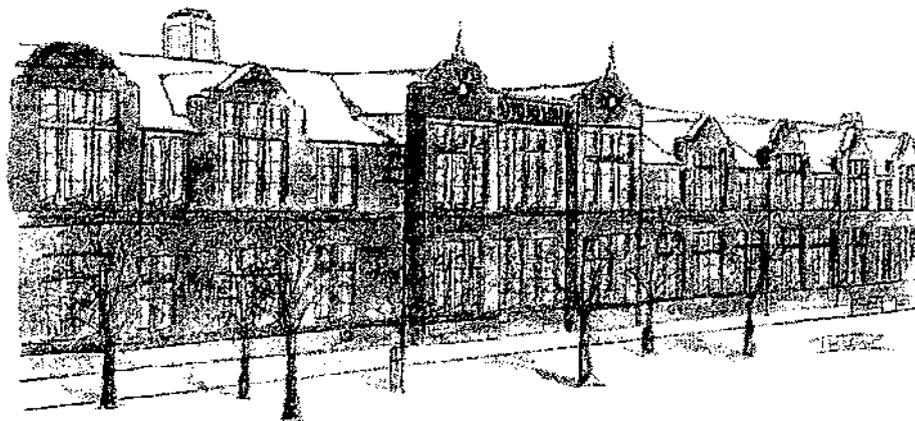


TANFIELD ASSOCIATION



c/o Tanfield School
Tanfield Lea Road
Stanley
Co Durham
DH9 8AY

e-mail tanfield@durhamlea.org.uk
Telephone 01207 232881
Fax 01207 232922

Secretary Mr Fred Westwater
20 Kitswell Raod
Lanchester
Co Durham
01207 520152

Issue No. 17

Newsletter Summer 09

Editorial and Contents

Here we go with the 17th issue of our Newsletter, and we hope still appreciated and going strong. Two events since the last publication are, in their own way, milestones in the history of Tanfield.

First is the sad news of the passing away of Dr. Sharp at the age of 98. Dr. Sharp was the 3rd Headmaster to captain the Tanfield ship, Following Mr Hardy and Mr. Carr. Many of our readers will have memories of him - perhaps bearing the brunt of his firm discipline, or experiencing his more gentle side, as my young daughters did when he played the piano so that they could dance around the school stage. Perhaps you would write to let us know of your contacts with Dr. Sharp.

The second event is the momentous news that, after tremendous campaigning by lots of people, Tanfield is to be exempt from the Academy plans for Stanley. The Head, the staff, the Governors, the parents and our members all played a part in the campaigning. In response to Fred's letter the Authority received objections from all parts of the UK and of the world! This will be covered inside too, but perhaps you would accept a very big thank you from us if you were one of the many who wrote. Thank You indeed.

The old photos appear to be popular with our readers so we'll include a new crop. It is always good to have your comments, and especially if you can supplement our knowledge of the people shown. So please put fingers to keyboard and send me an e-mail: ted.brabban@nasuwt.net - or pen a letter to Fred.

Speaking of old, overlooked copies of the book '90 Years On' were recently discovered at the school. These are available to first-comers for a payment to the School Fund of £10 which includes postage.

We have another Tanfield dynasty for you. Again if you have further suggestions you know my e-mail address.

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A knock on of the Academy news should be that we can look forward to 2012, not just for the Olympics, but for the school Centenary. Here's hoping.

Ted Brabban, Editor.

Our School at Tanfield is Saved

On Thursday 23rd April 2009 (very approximately St. Georges Day!) it was officially announced to the press and public that the Cabinet of Durham County Council, after examining all the evidence available, and the views of the interested parties and people during the consultation period, that Tanfield School would NOT be included in the proposed scheme, and that the new Stanley Academy would combine Stanley and Greencroft Secondary Schools. The announcement brought great relief to all concerned in the fight to "Save Our School". For those wishing to know who was in the fight, as well as our members, the following will be of interest.

In the consultation period of five months prior to the decision, Graeme Lloyd, the Head Teacher, declared for Tanfield not to be included in the proposed Academy. He was backed unanimously by the Tanfield Governing Body. The declaration was endorsed by the School Staff at their meeting with County officials and Academy sponsors in a unanimous vote against the proposal. Parents of Tanfield pupils gave the officials and sponsors a rather 'rough ride' in their meeting with another unanimous vote against the proposal. The final 'Open Public Meeting' for the whole community held in Stanley Civic Hall was also 100% against Tanfield being included. Kevan Jones M.P., our Honorary Vice President also made it known that he believed that Tanfield should not be included in the Stanley Academy proposal.

The County Council announced that of the written replies for the 3 schools, 88% were

against the proposal, although a breakdown of figures was not given. We suspect that most of the 88% came from Tanfield supporters.

Apart the very real contribution of the above, there is one person who played a significant part in the outcome for Tanfield School, and that is Labour County Councillor Joe Wilson. He, along with Independent County Councillor John Hunter, represents the Tanfield area. We were very pleased to have the whole-hearted support of John Hunter, but we also appreciate that the Labour Group is the majority at County level, and they have 'the say'. Councillor Wilson, (who is an Association member), by standing up for Tanfield was, at first, a lone voice in the Labour Group. He continued against strong opposition, including the other 5 County Councillors from the Stanley area. County Councillor Wilson met with Graeme Lloyd to verify that he had the relevant facts. He also consulted with our Secretary, Fred, and with other interested parties. Armed with all the over-whelming and positive evidence he persuaded the County Officials and the Labour Cabinet to change the plan and leave Tanfield out of the proposed Academy.

We would like to thank all who supported Tanfield, and especially Councillor Wilson for his perseverance and work on behalf of the school, enabling it to continue its very high performance providing Educational Excellence to the pupils of the Stanley area.



Mr Hon Jim Knight MP
Minister of State for Schools and Learners

Sanctuary Buildings Great Smith Street Westminster London SW1P 3BT
tel: 0870 0012345 dcsfministers@dcsf.gov.uk

Headteacher
Tanfield School, Specialist College of Science and
Engineering
Tanfield Lea Road
Stanley
DH9 8AY

15 January 2009

Dear Headteacher

I am delighted to congratulate you and your school on the excellent performance you have demonstrated at Key Stage 4 in the 2008 Achievement and Attainment Tables published today.

The results for your school show that you are amongst the top performing schools this year based on sustained improvement in 5+ A*-C GCSEs (and equivalent) including English and mathematics GCSEs.

Nationally, schools have made great strides since 1997. Secondary school results are at their highest ever levels with substantial progress made in the number of pupils getting five or more good GCSEs or equivalent at grades A*-C with [64.6] per cent of pupils achieving the indicator. We continue to see improvements in the numbers of pupils performing well in the basics with record numbers of young people ready for further education and the world of work after getting the benchmark five good GCSEs (A*-C), including English and maths. The long-term trend is one of sustained improvement and the continued improvement in results is testament to the dedication of our teachers and hard work of pupils

Please pass on my thanks and congratulations to your pupils, staff and governors for their hard work and success, and I send my best wishes for sustained improvement in the year ahead.

I am sending a copy of this letter to your local Member of Parliament.

Jim Knight MP



department for
children, schools and families

Tanfield's Ofsted Success

School inspections are by their very nature stressful experiences for all those involved in the life of the school, particularly for the teachers and school leaders who bear the brunt of the scrutiny, cross-examination and observation. Everyone wants the school to be shown in the best possible light and is acutely aware of their personal responsibility for the final outcomes of the report.

I am delighted to say that our experience this time was a wholly positive one and that the inspectors were impressed with what they saw. School inspection judgements have four categories: inadequate (4), satisfactory (3), good (2) and outstanding (1). Inspectors judged Tanfield to be 'Good with outstanding features' an improvement on the 'satisfactory' judgement in 2006 and a measure of the progress we have made in all areas since then.

In feedback to the governors and senior leaders the lead inspector spoke of the 'palpable sense of aspiration' evident in the school, and of the excellent relationships between young people and adults. Inspectors judged the school to be outstanding in 11 of the 27 areas for which judgements are provided. These included the quality of care and guidance, especially for our most

vulnerable students, the breadth and range of the curriculum, our use of challenging targets to raise attainment and the effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation.

We are particularly pleased with the overall judgement that our capacity for further improvement is 'excellent'. All here at Tanfield believe this very strongly and with good reason as our coming examination results, I am confident, will demonstrate.

The hard work of the staff in preparing for the inspection was well worth it and we are already planning to move the school to 'outstanding' across the board. The success of the inspection, combined with the outcome of the academy consultation, give us all great hope for a bright future for the school. I am certain that there are exciting times ahead.

For the full Ofsted report, visit the Ofsted website - reports section.

Graeme Lloyd

"Outstanding care, guidance and support begin with the excellent relationships between staff and students"

"Students behave well in lessons and move around school in a safe and calm way to create a harmonious environment"

"The school exceeded its challenging targets"

"The school values diversity and welcomes all students"

"Students enjoy school and have excellent attitudes to learning"

"There is a significant proportion of outstanding teaching"

"Care, guidance and support are outstanding and make a significant contribution to the school's outstanding inclusion practices"

Ofsted
Good with outstanding features - 2009

"The school has excellent links with feeder primary schools"

"Learning moves at a rapid pace"

"Students' progress was in the top 6% of all schools nationally"

"By the time they leave, students are extremely well-prepared for the future"

"Governors and staff support wholeheartedly the headteacher's vision for a school where staff and students work together to reach the highest standards in all aspects of its work"

"The curriculum is outstanding"

"Help for people who need it is excellent"

Why Academies?

Many of our members were surprised and perplexed at the proposal, 'out of the blue', to include Tanfield in the plans for a proposed academy to be built somewhere in the Stanley area. How did this come about, and why Tanfield?

It all started in 2000 when national headlines and political mileage was made from the large number of secondary schools in England not meeting the National Mark at GCSE level, -i.e. a 30% pass rate of 5 passes at grades A to C. These schools were deemed to be 'failing schools'.

The Department for Education and Science came up with a brilliant suggestion to remedy the 'failing schools' at a stroke. All you had to do was combine them with a higher scoring school, and 'Hey Presto' the average would go up - problem solved! You could call the new schools 'Academies'. The Government of the day endorsed the idea, and the Academy Schools Initiative was born.

So, what are the advantages of an Academy? In many areas of England the 'failing schools' were run down and needed replacing. Outside funding would help with the cost. A new school building equipped with the latest technology, new equipment, new leadership and new ideas did give new impetus to many new academies. Up to the present there are 130 Academies across England out of a Government target of 400.

The Power of Protest

The Academy proposals to include Tanfield certainly did raise some hackles. After Fred had distributed his excellent letter of protest, many members of the Association followed his suit.

Of course our protesting was an adjunct to the protests made by the school, the staff, the governors, the parents, the local councillors and the local MP (Kevan Jones, our Hon Vice President). All in all it must have been a considerable outcry!

However a recent report on Academies from Price Waterhouse Cooper acknowledges that although many Academies have improved attainment at some levels, it concludes that there is 'insufficient evidence to make a definitive judgement about Academies as a model for school improvement'. Of the 36 oldest academies, 25% saw their GCSE results fall in 2003, a larger proportion than the comprehensives of the maintained sector.

In 2003 (the year that was chosen to be the identifying year) Stanley school had a pass rate of 24%, therefore a 'failing school'. Greencroft was 38%, and Tanfield was 42%. A report in 2004 suggested that Tanfield and Stanley could be merged. In 2006 an academy for the Stanley area was proposed to include all three schools. By this time, under new leadership, Stanley had attained a pass rate of 50%, Tanfield had 52% and Greencroft 44%. None of them were 'failing schools', but this was not the 2003 marker, and was ignored. The new Unitary County Council took up the proposal in 2009.

We know the outcome of the April decision. The sites of Stanley School and Greencroft School will be re-developed, as would that of Tanfield, including our historic building, and the playing fields donated by the first Head, Mr Hardy, had we been included.

We would be interested to know if any of our members have experience of academies anywhere in the country, and if so would love to hear their views of them.

Of the schools involved, Tanfield is the only one with almost a century of tradition and reputation. Durham authority can't help but have been impressed by the response they received, not from just the Stanley area, but from places throughout the UK, and from around the world.

Quite a few of our members sent copies of their correspondence to Fred, others just let him know that they had protested. Many made the same points each reinforcing the last, but they were expressed in different ways. There is not the space to reproduce in full all of the letters

that we have, and indeed some have asked not to be published. However perhaps I can give you a taste by printing some extracts:

' it is difficult to believe that a successful school like Tanfield would be discarded and its pupils thrown into the melting pot of an educational dubious venture. (The recent news from Carlisle should ring warning bells) It would appear that economics is more important than the education of the children of Derwentside because, no matter how it is dressed up in fine words, this is an exercise in economics.'

'...it is beyond beliefthat you are even thinking of including Tanfield in this hare brained scheme.don't destroy a college whose academic achievements are well above the national average.

This is an opportunity for those, like you, to think outside the box and remember that "If it ain't broke, don't fix it"

'Why destroy a school that is good, is working, and in which considerable investment has taken place?facilities are of course important, but it is the quality and dedication of the teaching staff, their interest in the pupils, the ethos of the school, and the support of parents that are of paramount importance. These qualities become more difficult to maintain as the size of the school increases.

I have grave misgivings about establishing very large schools in socially deprived areas.'

'The grant that enabled it to become a school with the emphasis on Science and Engineering seemed to be a progressive move. The dedication of the staff and the students has been reflected in the results that they have obtained and indicates that the school's programme has been well planned and implemented, appropriate and successful.

The decision to close and destroy a school that has served well its community for almost 100 years must be questioned.'

'I have been greatly cheered by the knowledge that the school maintains an ethos of academic excellence and continues to provide the stimulus and inspiration for the development of life skills and learning. I am deeply dismayed by a

proposal for Tanfield School to be amalgamated with two others to create an Academy in Stanley. It must be acknowledged that reorganisation on this scale will be followed inevitably by major disruption of the education of a cohort of youngsters, with no certain prospect of longer term benefits for them, or for those who follow.'

'I attended Alderman Wood School from 1936 to 1941.My Aunt, Miss Nichol, was appointed as English teacher in 1912 and retired in 1952 after 40 years service.

So you see that I have a very strong attachment with what is now Tanfield School. ..Tanfield has a long tradition of excellence in education and many pupils have attained senior posts in their chosen professions.

I am therefore strongly opposed to the demolition of Tanfield School.'

'Our emphatic rejection of the current proposal.... Is not based on sentiment.We suggest that there is no evidence that this change will be for the general good, and an overwhelming amount of evidence to the contrary.

Academies are an experiment.....Like experiments in the past, they will no doubt be quietly forgotten and phased out in a few years. Unfortunately the children who become guinea pigs in the experiment are unable to return to their childhood to relive the years that will be blighted.'

'....add my voice to the objections being raised to the proposal.it will create something that will be unmanageable. As a generation we should be ensuring that our children get the very best education possible, in small groups where they know and can respect the staff.don't break it up for yet another untried gimmick...'

These are some quotes from some of the very strong letters of objection which we know were sent to County Hall. Others sent e-mails. Each objector received an acknowledgement from Durham.

We will never know, but it is comforting to think that the strong objections which we made went some way towards having an effect on the final decision.

Memories of a Great Man

I was immensely saddened to hear of the death in April of Dr. Leonard E. Sharp, who was Headmaster of Stanley Grammar School (later Tanfield School), from 1953 to 1973. Dr Sharp was born in 1911 and by the age of twenty two he had gained a BSc. and a Ph.D. at Queen Mary College, University of London, and a Teaching Diploma at University of London Institute of Education. He came to the North East from Reading in 1933 to teach Mathematics at Hookergate Grammar School, which had just opened in 1932, and apart from five years of War Service (1941-1946), he was Senior Mathematics Master there from 1935 to 1953. He took lodgings with a local Colliery Manager whose daughter he married, and they settled in Rowlands Gill at first but later moved to Whickham. He was the devoted father of three sons and a daughter, and in time took pride in a large family of grandchildren and great grandchildren, now scattered around the world.

I first met Dr Sharp at Hookergate when I was eleven, and I was instantly struck by a feeling of awe, a feeling that never left me. At that time he was the definitive tall, dark, and handsome young man, inspiring schoolgirl crushes. Indeed he once posed, like a young Adonis, wearing P.E. kit, for an 'A' level Life Drawing exam, and caused many a female heart to flutter; but he also had a stern side, a formidable presence, commanding respect. It is that forbidding aspect that most pupils remember, and as he strode the corridors with his academic gown flying behind him, it was evident that he was a force to be reckoned with, and for my first two years in the school I made myself scarce whenever he swept into view.

Then I became part of an educational experiment which he instigated. Twenty pupils were selected to miss out the third year in order to proceed rapidly towards 'O' and 'A' levels, and consequently I was precipitated into the sixth form as a nervous fifteen year old, and for the first time was taught by 'the Doc', as he was affectionately known. Ever the optimist, he attempted to teach us Logic, and I vaguely remember that we had to prove obscure abstract theories, such as that the table in front of us did not exist, and that if one cow is brown then all

cows are brown, and so on. We struggled, unable to do our homework but afraid to leave it undone, and on one occasion we were driven to copy from the only pupil who had the answers - a teacher's daughter. I had heard that Dr Sharp worked in Military Intelligence during the war, and sure enough he saw straight through our subterfuge, guessed who had copied from whom, and even remembered the incident some eight years later when I applied for the post of Head of Art at Stanley Grammar School, where he was then Headmaster.

All was forgiven, however, because he was pleased to meet one of his protégés again. The job was mine, and he did everything in his power to help and encourage my efforts. On my first visit to the school he asked if I had brought my wellingtons as the Art room floor might be knee-deep in plaster, and I was shocked to discover that he was not joking. Furthermore the department was lacking in the most fundamental equipment, such as furniture. He corrected all these deficiencies, and gradually increased the Art requisition to fit an expanding department. He allowed me, with the help of Mr Brabban, to have the pupils' pictures framed and displayed throughout the school, and being a skilled draughtsman himself, always took an interest in the artistic creations, even to the extent of moving a ladder numerous times a day for a girl who was painting a mural of Durham Cathedral on one of the corridor arches. After several years a brand new Art department was built, with a view of fields and woods but not of an approaching Headmaster, and he used to enjoy visiting my classroom via the stock cupboard and materializing like Dracula behind me. To his amusement and the delight of the class, I would leap in the air and give an involuntary shriek, as if dancing the Highland fling.

Dr Sharp promoted an academic atmosphere, but he also believed in teaching social skills, the most useful and enjoyable being ballroom dancing, which he taught at Hookergate and organized at Stanley. He also encouraged a surprising number of clubs and societies, which flourished in lunch hours or after school, and he was as proud of pupils' achievements in sport as he was of the excellent dramatic productions

and the musical concerts. He was an accomplished pianist himself and played the organ in Whickham church for many years, but his prowess on the violin was a different story. He taught himself to play the instrument in one week, and performed, sounding like a tortured cat, in front of a group called the Music Makers. It said much for the standard of his discipline that no one dared laugh, or even smile. We just winced quietly. This musical group, formed by Dr Sharp, met once a fortnight and membership was voluntary, but I was soon informed that for me it was compulsory. I could never decide whether it was more nerve-racking to play or to listen, and I was relieved when most of the performers decided to hang up their recorders and disband.

After I was appointed Senior Mistress I came to know Dr Sharp better, and the more I knew him, the more I was impressed by him. Not only did he possess a remarkable intellect, but he was a man of high principles and great

integrity, rare qualities in today's world. He always accepted responsibility for everything that happened in his school, including the mistakes of others. He showed great compassion for the problems of both staff and pupils, most of whom respected and admired him and still speak of him with affection, even though he was strict. His mere appearance in the Assembly Hall produced instant silence, and he could clear a staffroom at the end of break in two seconds, simply by walking in. He made a lasting impression on the school and the area, and is still remembered when other headmasters have been forgotten.

My brother, who had the good fortune to be taught Maths by Doctor Sharp, always refers to him as 'the great man', and I think that is how most of us will always remember him - as one of the few great men we have had the privilege to know.

Georgina Jack



The Tregonings at Tanfield

The Tregoning family's connection with Tanfield (or Alderman Wood School, as it was then) began in the 1920s, when Reuben Tregoning became the first member to attend the school. Of his siblings – Sydney, Robert, Leslie, Gladys, Louis and Cyril – Leslie was to follow him there, and thirty years later, Gladys, Louis and Cyril would send their children to what had now become Stanley Grammar School.

Reuben was born in Sept 1911 and went to Tanfield in 1922. He had to leave before he sat his Certificate 9 (the equivalent of GCEs) as he was the second oldest in a family of 7 and had to start work. He was sent to Petersfield to work for the local vicar where he was taught to be a butler. This served him well, as during the war he worked his way home from Rhodesia on the Mauritania as a steward. This was followed by joining the ambulance service. When he eventually retired, he was superintendant of Consett Ambulance Station. He died of a heart attack in 1978.

Leslie went to Alderman Wood School in 1929. He later qualified as a PE teacher and taught PE for many years at Consett Grammar School before moving to teach at Harelaw Special School. He took early retirement from there in the mid-seventies and, sadly, died twelve years ago.

The second wave of Tregonings arrived at Tanfield in five successive years.

David, the son of Louis, arrived in 1958; Malcolm Bell, son of Gladys, in 1959; Laurie (David's brother) in 1960; Jean, daughter of Reuben, in 1961; and then Eileen, sister of David and Laurie, in 1962. A gap of several years followed before Eric, the son of Cyril, followed his cousins and became the last of the family to attend the school. The story of what they did afterwards is a remarkable tale of success.

Dr David Tregoning, MB, BS, MSc, FRCS (Eng), MFPHM, MBA, qualified in medicine and surgery before taking up the position of Surgeon and Medical Advisor in a hospital in

North Sumatra, Indonesia. This was followed by work in Primary care in the UK, during which time David had Dr Sharp as his patient in Whickham. Four more years in Indonesia, travelling extensively and advising on health matters, were followed by three years of specialist training in Public Health Medicine, culminating in appointment as Consultant in Public Health Medicine and Health Protection. In the three years before his retirement, he was Executive Director Of the 1000-bed Tertiary National Hospital of Tanzania. Besides this, and other projects, he has lectured and published widely.

Malcolm Bell also excelled in the sciences, taking a degree in mechanical engineering. Ken Cousins, who taught him chemistry, grumbled humorously that all the Tregonings leaned towards the sciences, and that Malcolm was the only left-handed, colour-blind chemist he knew. Malcolm is now retired and lives in Birmingham.

Laurie Tregoning, like his brother David, followed a career in medicine, qualifying and working as a pharmacist. He was working in Jersey when a sporting accident ended his career. An avid wind-surfer, he sustained injuries in a serious wind-surfing accident that ultimately led to his untimely death in 1989.

Jean Tregoning, now Jean Carter, remembers that as a first year pupil, she was taught physics and chemistry by Mr Livesy and Mr Scott, who had also taught her father. She also studied sciences at 'O' Level. She was Head Girl in 1967-68, and went on to higher education where she qualified as a teacher. She became an advisory teacher for dyslexia and is now retired.

Eileen Tregoning, now Eileen Audet, went to Tanfield from 1962 until 1969, four years behind her brother David and one year behind her cousin Jean. She went to Birmingham School of Speech Therapy and worked in Smethwick for the health department. She returned to the North East and attended Sunderland Polytechnic and obtained a Certificate in Education. In the years following, she worked for Newcastle and then

Northumberland education departments in language units, before going to work as a speech therapist in a school district in Canada. She worked in Germany for the Canadian Department of Defence, eventually settling in British Columbia. Here, she worked mainly with pre-school children, ending her career working with families who had pre-school special needs children. She and her husband, whom she met

during her first time in Canada, still live in British Columbia. They have one son who is at University.

Eric Tregoning went to Tanfield from 1970 to 1977. After leaving school he went to Newcastle University, where he qualified as a dentist. For many years now he has had his own dental practice in Stanley.

Tanfield Prize Giving - A Celebration of Success



On Thursday 23rd April 2009 in the main hall of the school, a very impressive event took place, when over 170 students, parents, school staff, and special guests gathered for the Annual Prize Giving Ceremony.

A warm welcome was given by Mr Len Broxson, Chairman of the Governors, to all attending the evening. He was impressed by the turnout of

people who obviously appreciated the value of such an event.

The students were the leaving year of 2008 (Year 11). Mrs Margaret Batty, former Head of Year, presented the GCSE Certificates. There were also Subject Awards and last, but certainly not least there were Special Awards for Outstanding Achievement.

The Special Awards were:

Les Graham Science Award	to John Paul Telford
Angela Hughes Physical Education Award	to Katie Elcoat
Archie Howat Award for Personal Achievement	to Lee Gilbert
Simon Shattock Personal Achievement Award	to Lewis Moody
Governors' Award for Outstanding Academic Achievement	to Laura Henderson
Governors' Award for Outstanding Progress	to Anna Callaghan
Tanfield Association Specialist College Award In Science and Engineering	to Richard Hind
Tanfield Association Specialist College Award For Outstanding Contribution in the Community	to Yves Benfold
Governors' Award for Outstanding Contribution In the School Community	to Christopher Alexander
Errington Award for Mathematics	to Rebecca Sloan
Comer/Farmer History Award	to Kelly Foster
Harry Carr Award for Physical Education	to John Paul Telford
Amy Thompson Award for French	to Laura Pollard
Derwentside College Young Apprentice In Engineering Award	to David Robinson
Patterson Award for Geography	to Jessica Scott
Rotary Salver for Academic Achievement (Boy)	to John Paul Telford
Rotary Salver for Academic Achievement (Girl)	to Laura Henderson

A bouquet was presented to Mrs Batty from the students.

Graeme Lloyd, Head Teacher thanked the students for their dedication and hard work. He praised them for their achievement in obtaining a 70% + GCSE pass rate, quoting the high performance as one of the reasons for exempting Tanfield from the proposed

Academy and being allowed to continue its policy of 'Excellence in Education'.

It was a pleasure to see these young men and women mixing easily and sociably with teachers, guests and fellow students at the buffet which followed. It was a truly notable evening very much in keeping with the rich heritage of our school at Tanfield.

Fred Westwater.

Two Talented People - Bill and Margaret Wilson - A True Love Story

These two met at S.G.S. in Sept 1947. Bill came to the school from 'The Uppers' to do a science sixth form. Finding his way around, he was met by a pretty 6th form girl, Margaret Dobson, who showed him the library and its system. At the time this had no significance for Margaret, but Bill remembered it well, and would recount it in later years.

The two did different 6th form courses and so further school contact was minimal. Margaret gave much of her time to music and apart from his science studies, Bill was into sport, - football, cricket, and athletics where he became an accomplished javelin thrower.

Margaret came to SGS from Dipton Juniors, and at Tanfield she became immersed in what

became her passion in life - music. She sang in the choirs organised by the inspirational Mr. Dobbs. He performed musical wonders with his four-part choirs and madrigals. Margaret sang in many local church and chapel concerts given by the choir, and on one memorable occasion the school choir stayed at the Edmondbyers Youth Hostel and gave a Christmas Concert at Edmondbyers Church.

Margaret's musical talent was quickly recognised by Jack Dobbs, and he encouraged her to apply for a place at The Royal College of Music in London. After tough and exacting auditions she was accepted there in 1948. As far as we know she is the only Tanfield pupil to have studied there. Her singing voice was trained and developed alongside academic studies. She graduated in 1951.

A year later she was 'invited' (we would now say 'Head Hunted') to join the D'Oyly Carte Opera Company, and to tour with them. She sang with them around the UK, Ireland, Canada, and the U.S.A.

On leaving SGS in 1949 Bill did two years National Service in the RAF. He then attended the Sunderland School of Pharmacy (then a part of Durham University). He qualified in 1954 and worked with Bill Barrow at his pharmacy in Annfield Plain.

After a year with Bill Barrow, fate stepped in! Bill was asked to manage the Co-op pharmacy in Framwellgate Moor, where Margaret's family lived and her father managed the Co-op Grocery Department. The two managers became very good friends. Margaret was at the time touring, but her mother's letters often mentioned the likeable young pharmacist who often visited them and was well liked by them.

On a brief visit home Margaret popped into the pharmacy, and came face to face with Bill, - a complete surprise on both sides. Bill remembered the pretty 6th former from his school days. They did not see much of each other as Margaret was touring, but when she did have a break at home Bill would join with family and friends for outings.

In 1957 Margaret's father died suddenly and Margaret came home to be with her mother who had been devastated by the loss. Through his support at this time, Bill became a true friend to the family. It took a long time for her mother to improve, by which time the friendship of Bill and Margaret had moved to something much deeper. Margaret never did return to London and she and Bill were married later in 1957. They enjoyed family happiness, eventually with three daughters, at their home in Neville's Cross. Bill had played cricket for the school team, and for Annfield Plain C.C. However, being a working pharmacist restricted his sporting activities to tennis and golf when they could be fitted in. As well as running a home and bringing up three daughters, Margaret continued her involvement with music. She sang in the Cathedral, she sang with the Palatine Opera and performed oratorios in many of the County's

churches. For the BBC, from Leeds she broadcast a series of International Music Classics.

Feeling that she should 'give something back', she trained to become a teacher at Neville's Cross College, qualifying in 1974. She taught at Langley Moor Primary, and at the Blue Coat School in Durham. Recognising her value, her classroom teaching became secondary to her teaching of music throughout the school. She inspired many pupils, as she had been inspired by Mr Dobbs. She also taught piano - one boy persuading his parents to buy a piano so that he could take lessons with Margaret! She retired in 1989, but continued to do supply work, and of course piano teaching. Lessons were enjoyed by both parties, - a 30 minute session would sometimes stretch to 90 minutes! It is without doubt that many have appreciated Margaret's talents and her desire to 'give something back'. She herself has obtained much satisfaction from her singing and music making, and has undoubtedly given as much satisfaction to others.

Bill and Margaret were a devoted couple, doing everything together be it gardening, shopping or enjoying leisure time, and of course, bringing up their daughters Janet, Beverley and Deborah. Bill kept in touch with his sixth form pals, Norman Collin, Jim Bell and Harry Taylor and played golf with them at Consett Golf Club. They gave much support to the Association when it was founded in 2001 and attended many Association events. Sadly Bill died in July 2006. Margaret described Bill as "a dearly loved and loving husband and father, as well as being my best friend."

When hearing the outlines of this story, one of our 'editorial team' commented that it was the sort of love story, with destiny thrown in, from which operas are created. How true! Two talented people who met at Tanfield, were inspired there, and then later thrown together by fate to enjoy a happy and satisfying life together, and to give inspiration to others.

Thank you Margaret for allowing us to tell the story of your life, and of the happiness that you found with Bill.

M.P.s' Expenses

Amid the scandal of M.P.'s expenses it is pleasing to see that the North Durham MP (Stanley and Chester le Street), Kevan Jones, stands out as a beacon of honesty and integrity. As he is our Honorary Vice President we welcome his wish to reveal all his expense accounts over the past four years by inviting the press to examine every detail of his claims, saying, "The public should see it all, -it's their money.I thought that it was important that my constituents and the general public should see all my expense claims"

The press report says that the Armed Forces Minister may disappoint anyone sniffing for scandal because he claimed less than he paid.

The 'Northern Echo' of the 12th May said "Complete transparency is the only way forward if we are to avoid every MP being tarred with the same brush. Those who are confident that they have nothing to hide should therefore follow the example of North Durham MP, Kevan Jones, and allow their expense claims to be put under the spotlight without delay."

We are fortunate in The Tanfield Association in having Kevan Jones MP as our Honorary Vice President. We wish him well, and also give him our thanks for all his work, and in particular for his support and backing of Tanfield School in the campaign to avoid becoming part of an Academy.

Elected by the Community

On the 1st April 2009 the new Unitary County Council of Durham came into being. It replaces the old Durham County Council and the 7 District Councils, including Derwentside D.C. The change means that instead of electing 55 District Councillors and 11 County Councillors we will now be represented by 22 Unitary County Councillors. Local Parish Councils still exist, as does Stanley Town Council (the equivalent of a Parish Council). These could play a more prominent part in local affairs. It

may seem confusing but we are to assume that it will be an improvement for the population of the Stanley area.

In dealing with the issues of Councils and elected Councillors, the thought arose of the number of past pupils of Tanfield who, down through the years have given service to the Community as elected representatives at either District or County level. The following is a list as far as we know it:

Alan Atkinson a pupil 1941-46-
Brian Charlton a pupil 1944-51-

Ossie Johnson a pupil 1962-65-

Dennis Lavin a pupil 1953-58-
Keith Murray-Hetherington 72-79-

Walter Peacock a pupil 1955-62-

Leslie Vaux a pupil 1970-75-

Alan Westwater a pupil 1950-57-
Fred Westwater -Staff 1977-98-
Joe Wilson -Governor and Parent-

Annfield Plain Councillor for Derwentside 1992-2009
Burnopfield Councillor for Derwentside 1973-1991
Council Chairman 1984-85

Lanchester Councillor for Derwentside 1995-2009
Council Chairman 2000-2001

Durham County Councillor 2008 -
Lanchester Parish Councillor for many years to present day

Annfield Plain Councillor for Derwentside 1999-2009
Stanley Councillor for Derwentside 1987-99
Council Chairman 1991-92 (Youngest ever Chairman)

Stanley Councillor to Durham C.C. -1999-2004
Oxhill Councillor for Derwentside 1979-87
(On staff 1966-97)

South Moor Councillor for Derwentside 1995-2003
Council Chairman 2001-02

Stanley County Councillor 2004-06
Oxhill Councillor for Derwentside 1979-87

Durham County Councillor 1969 -74
Tanfield Lea Councillor for Derwentside 2001-09
Durham County Council 2008 -

Cecil Johnson a pupil 1945-52-

Stanley Urban District Councillor 1967-74

Colin Carr a pupil 1963-65-

Collierley Councillor for Derwentside 1974-76

Lumley Councillor for Chester le Street D.C. 1999-2009

Durham County Councillor 2008-

Joyce Charlton (nee Hunter) 72-79-

Stanley Town Councillor 2008-

Of interest:

Joe Wilson is Secretary of the 'Tommy Armstrong Society' whose aim is to keep alive the memory of Poety Armstrong, Tanfield Lea's 'Pitman Poet'.

Joyce Charlton with friends formed the Tantobie Charities and from 1995 until 2005 raised over £30,000 for Senior Citizen events and other local charities.

The Jollys and the Harrisons :

Isobel Jenkins (51-58), Jane Cole (61-63) , and Professor Robert Harrison (55-62)

The above are past pupils with extremely well known and respected parents and grandparents. They are the family of Jane (Jenny) and Robert (Bob) Harrison who were both elected to Stanley Urban District Council, and both served as Governors of Stanley Grammar School. Bob is also remembered as the well-liked and respected Woodwork Master before he became a County Inspector. Jenny was elected to

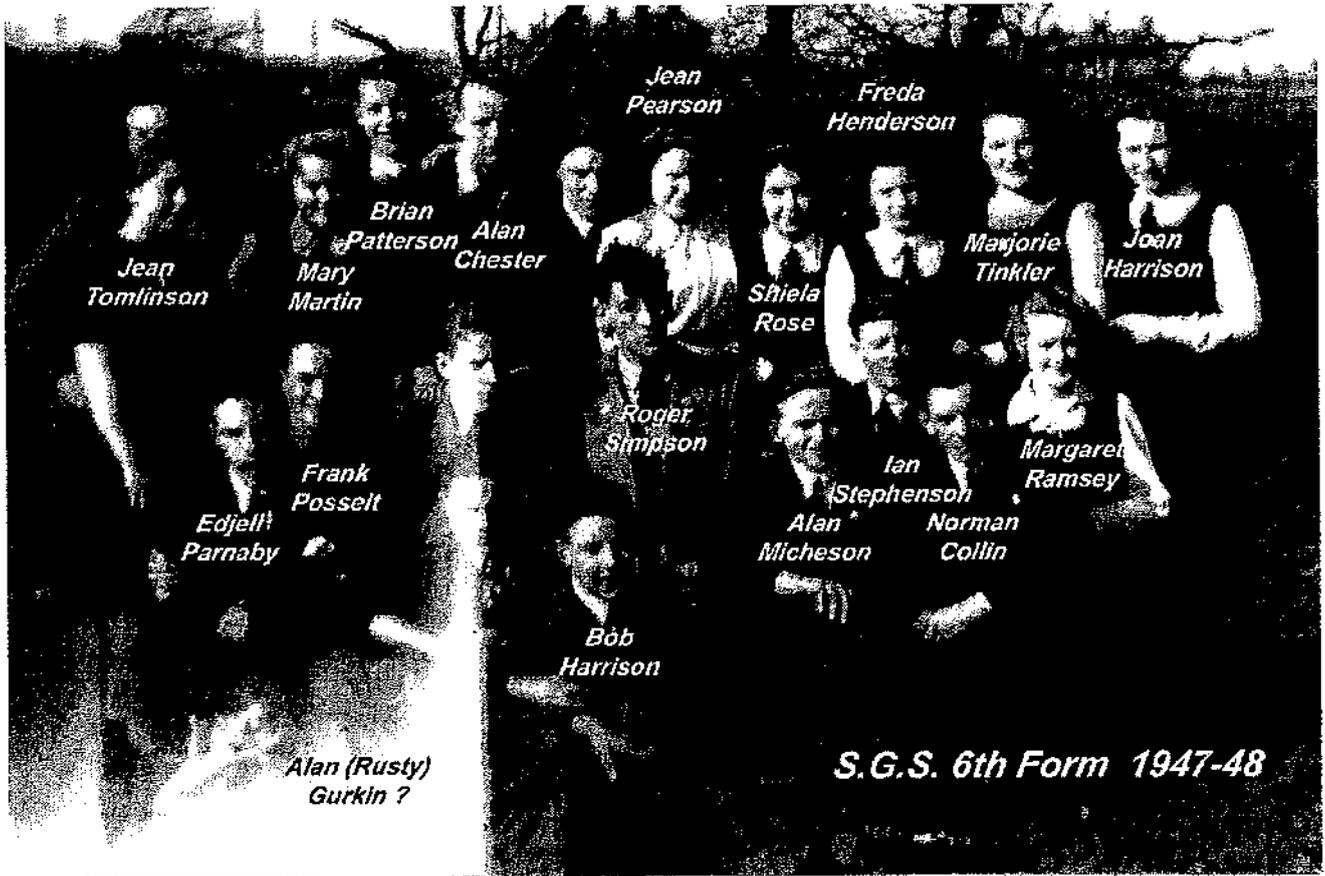
Durham County Council. Their Grandparents were Mr and Mrs Jolly, who served on Stanley Urban District Council for many years and also for many years on the Governing bodies of Alderman Wood and Stanley Grammar School. Mrs Jolly was also elected to Durham County Council. For her long public service in caring for her community Mrs Jolly was made an Alderman of the County in 1974.

Whilst compiling the list above we wondered if there were any other Tanfield Association members who have been elected to serve the community in which they live. Please let us know of any of which you have knowledge. We wish to place on record how ex-pupils or staff have played a role in Local (or National) Government in other parts of the world as well as in the school area.

Photos

AWS Team 34





Form 3A 1956-57. Mr Glendenning form teacher, Alan Mills and John Hogg back row, but who else?



County Championships 1961. Alan Mills hands baton to John Hogg



Senior Team 1958 - 59



Form 5A 1978 - Alan Mills is Form Master. Names please?

Memories

When the Editorial Staff (doesn't that sound grand!!), well, when a few of us were discussing the contents of this edition, we got around to comparing notes on our thoughts of some of the staff who had taught us. (No one mentioned being bludgeoned with a 4 x 2 by the woodwork teacher!) Then we realised that you folks would have lots of thoughts and memories of your own. Why not share them? Our little chat started with Joe Binks. Now there was a character. I am sure that you all have your own take on Mr Binks who taught art, who melted lead, who made 'death masks'

who wore a large signet ring!!!) and who occasionally referred to his unruly charges with rude words. For our next edition we would like to do something about 'Remembering Joe Binks', but it would only be based upon your contributions. So let us have your thoughts and memories please. The more the better, but remember that this will be an affectionate spotlight!

If this gets you thinking of other teachers, then let us have your thoughts on them too. If there is enough response, we might run a series of characters.

Other Articles.

As you will appreciate we are always looking for a means to pad out between the Newsletter covers!! We would love to have some contributions to print. So come on, there is a Charles Dickens inside you. Let him out and

give him access to your keyboard and send the result to: ted.brabban@nasuwt.net We don't pay, but think of the kudos of seeing your name in print!

Correspondence

Uckfield, East Sussex

Dear Fred,

As I have thoroughly enjoyed the old photographs that you have featured in recent editions of the Association News, I thought that you might be interested in the enclosed. Do with them as you will, and maybe they will find a spot in the Tanfield Archives.

Thank you for all the good work that you and your dedicated team do. Hopefully there will be

an amicable solution to the threatened changes proposed by Durham County Council in the Stanley area. The destruction of Tanfield School sounds dreadful and very sad.

Thank you again for all your efforts - they are much appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

Freda Stephenson (nee Henderson)

Leeds

Dear Mr Westwater,

I would be grateful if you would send me information about membership of the Tanfield Association.

I am a former pupil of SGS (1951-58). I was Isobel Harrison - my father was Bob Harrison, Woodwork Teacher for 20 years, and himself a former pupil. My brother Robert and my sister Jane also attended the school.

I am in touch with other former pupils who live in Leeds. Two of these ladies are members of the Tanfield Association - I have been very remiss up to now!

I have heard that the old building at Tanfield is under threat and would be grateful to have information about that issue.

All good wishes,
Isobel Jenkins.

Bermuda, Feb 09

Dear Ted,

Just received the latest newsletter and Fred Westwater's appeal for objections to County Hall's latest madness. I have duly registered my strong objections by e-mail and have already had an acknowledgement.

Corbridge, Northumberland.

Dear Fred,

Thank you for your letter.....I fully intend to convey my feelings to Adam Williams. (Cont.)

On a pleasanter note, it was good to read the correspondence from Mary Snaith (as I have always known her) and to scrutinise the photographs. That taken on board the 'Campania' with Mary as the main subject also shows in the background, in the huddle, from left to right, Nova Williamson, Margaret Greener, Elaine Atkinson, Valerie Slater (?) June Mounter, and Doreen Ash. (Doreen married Neil Baggett and moved to America - has anyone heard from them?) Looking over

Editor - Sorry Don, but you have just promoted me! Between the 2 ladies is Ted Brabban! Very young, and without beard, but it's me. The two ladies are Nova Williamson (later Watson) on the right, and on the left is Miss Simpson.

We also had fun people spotting on the Campania photo. Those in the background are

I was glad to have an update on Fenwick Lawson, plus the website. I now have a much better appreciation of his sculpture than previously.

Bob Patterson.

Mary's shoulder is Tom Bolam, and with his back showing over her left shoulder is Albert Toal, I think. I cannot identify the group photographer.

In the staff photo of 'The Admirable Crichton' from left to right there are a first person with no face (Miss Eggleston, later Mrs Jack -Editor), then Mr Robertson(Biology) Miss Thornton (History), Mr Seed (Geography) Mr Proud (Maths), and in between the two ladies is Dr Sharp, the Headmaster.

There are other familiar faces but their names escape me. Well done in reproducing these evocative pictures.

Yours sincerely,

Don Chapman.

my era. At the top of the steps we can see Sheila Lyons and June Ross. Behind them is Mr Seed, and way behind could that be Mr Yockney? We wonder if the group photographer is the girl who became Mrs Ted Brabban - Mavis Pattison!!

Association Membership Administration Fees 2009/2010

Membership Secretary Susan Donkin and Joint Treasurer with Karen Scott extend their thanks to members for their loyal support and also to the growing numbers who pay their annual fee by 'Standing Order'.

This method of paying, apart from members not having to remember to pay each year, involves much less work in administration for them. (Of course standing orders can be cancelled at any time with just a 'phone call to the bank.)

The £5 administration fee is due each year on the 6th October, the birthday of the school! Members joining after 31st March don't pay any fee for the current year.

For those not yet paying by Standing Order, and wishing to do so, a form is reproduced at the end of this Newsletter to complete and hand in at your bank

STANDING ORDER MANDATE

to Barclays Bank Plc

Branch

PLEASE TICK RELEVANT BOX:-

NEW INSTRUCTION

PLEASE AMEND PREVIOUS STANDING ORDER
QUOTING REFERENCE/BENEFICIARY

ACCOUNT TO BE DEBITED

BENEFICIARY DETAILS

PORT CODE

ACCOUNT NUMBER

ACCOUNT NAME

BANK

BRANCH DETAILS

SORT CODE

ACCOUNT NUMBER

BENEFICIARY NAME

REFERENCE

PAYMENT DETAILS

AMOUNT OF FIRST PAYMENT **£** DATE OF FIRST PAYMENT

AMOUNT OF USUAL PAYMENT **£**

AMOUNT OF USUAL PAYMENT IN WORDS

WHEN PAID (WEEKLY, MONTHLY, ANNUALLY, ETC) DATE OF USUAL PAYMENT

COMPLETE EITHER AMOUNT OF LAST PAYMENT **£** AND DATE OF LAST PAYMENT

OR PLEASE CONTINUE PAYMENTS UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE YES

CUSTOMER SIGNATURE(S) DATE

CUSTOMER CONTACT TELEPHONE NUMBER

**ALL WHITE BOXES MUST BE COMPLETED
IN ORDER FOR THE STANDING ORDER TO BE PROCESSED**

