

TANFIELD ASSOCIATION



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NEWSLETTER No. 19

Summer 2010

Editorial

Perhaps we should have labelled this issue as the "World Cup Edition"!! As I write this it is dominating the media, and when you read it England will have won/not won the Jules Rimet trophy! We have already been through weeks of pre-election hype, the drama of a non result, the formation of a coalition government, and pledges to protect education. Ah - the stress of it all!

Now we are waiting to see just what will happen to the education budget, and how it will affect our school. The whole academy debate appears to have been re-opened. We shall see.

I'm pleased to say that, from your feedback, the last edition was well received. That very feedback has provided us with some interesting items for this issue. We are always pleased to have your comments, so keep them coming.

Also well received was the St. George's Day lunch at the Harperley Hotel. Sadly I had an alternative appointment with the Lake District, but I am told that I missed a treat. So much so that I understand that another will be arranged for the Autumn.

We are getting nearer to the magic year of 2012 and the school centennial. Another commemorative book is being assembled, edited by Elizabeth Hawkins. She is looking for items to include, and perhaps some sponsorship towards the cost of publication. If you can help with either please be forthcoming. Nothing definite has yet been arranged by our Executive Committee. We are waiting to see what the school is planning and hoping that we can seamlessly blend in with it. We are still looking for ideas.

We gave a financial helping hand to the creation of a school fenced garden, for which official funding was not available. There will be a feature in the next issue of the Newsletter.

There has been no response to the idea of a 'Tanfield Recipe Book'. Looks like a non-starter!

St George's Day Lunch

The AGM of the Association

100 Not Out

Patrons of Tanfield School

The Victor Ludorum

Memories of The Admirable Crichton

The Happiest Days of Your Life

George Fraser

School Uniform

Harvest Camps

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The Old Tower Block

Tommy Percival

Sandy Boggon Wrote:

Breaking News

Staff Photo 1956-ish

Barbara Davison Letters

Isobel Jenkins - Main Entrance

Some Names

Fred has just informed me that he is planning the next Harperley Hotel lunch for the 9th Sept. The A.G.M. is to be the 25th Sept. See the articles inside.

I still watch my mail with bated breath for items to put in the Newsletter. So, come on, make my day! Write about anything school related and you will probably see your name in print. What could be a better incentive?

Enjoy your summer.
Ted Brabban. Editor.

St George's Day Lunch

The 44 members who attended were greeted with a dazzling display of St George's flags and bunting. The Hotel staff had worked hard to ensure that the restaurant looked the part to fit the occasion. The host for lunch was Executive Member, John Hogg (Head Boy 1961). He gave some interesting and humorous words of welcome before ensuring that everyone was served at the Carvery without hassle or delay. A very appetising meal of soup, main course, dessert and coffee (accompanied by mouth-watering, irresistible light cream cakes) was served.

All the tables were place named to ensure that groups of family or friends were kept together. The largest group were pupils from 1950-57. They were June Todd (nee Pounder), Astrid Reeve (nee Ashburn), Maureen Charleton (neeDodds), Norma Rodham (nee Bellerby), Mary Storey (nee Brabban), and Eric Hunter. The most senior member was 92 year old Nancy Hall who was at the heart of all the fun and conversation the whole afternoon. Duncan Davis and Chris Morrison (62-69 and stars of Three Steps to Hebburn) must be mentioned. They came dressed for the occasion with old school tie and cap.



John Hogg



Duncan Davis and Chris Morrison with ladies!

Chris, along with Joyce Charlton (nee Hunter, 74-79) ran the raffle which raised £77 ensuring that the event ended 'in the black'!

Lunch ended about 3.30 with the overwhelming response that a good time had been had by all. Of the many comments, perhaps it could be summed up by that of Ivan Garnham (ex Head of Tanfield Lea Primary School) "I have really enjoyed this afternoon. I believe that it is the best event that the Association has arranged, and we must definitely do it again."

We must also thank the Hotel staff, and in particular Functions Manager Donna Wright for the layout and service - all plus good food and for only £6.00 per head!

Fred Westwater

The A.G.M. of the Association

This year the format of the AGM is to be changed. Rather than having a more formal week-night meeting in school, it is to be held at the Harperley Hotel on a Saturday afternoon. It is hoped that we will have a good mix of business and social enjoyment, without infringing on evening commitments or travelling in the dark..

We will meet at noon on the 25th September at the Harperley, in the Tudor Room. This is a self-contained room with its own bar. After 30 minutes of social 'get together' a free hot/cold buffet will be served.

Business will follow the lunch, with Officers elected for the coming year. The President's and Secretary's Reports will be pre printed and available on arrival. Our Honorary Vice President, Kevan Jones M.P. will present the Tanfield Glass to this year's recipient.

Kevan Jones is the Member for North Durham, i.e. Chester le Street and Stanley, including Tanfield School. However we are also to be joined by Pat Glass M.P. who serves the North West Durham constituency, including Tantobie and Burnopfield which are major catchment areas for the school. We hope that their attendance at our A.G.M. will be a way of expressing our thanks for their interest and concern for all that is happening at Tanfield.

We hope to air topics of general interest to receive members' views. For example what you would like to happen in 2012, the Centennial year.

We would be grateful to have donations towards a many prized raffle which we hope will help to defray the costs. Please! The Harperley has started the ball rolling by offering a Free Carvery Meal for Two.

We would like to put a finite time on the formal business so that those with other commitments can leave. However we hope that others will stay to enjoy chat, photographs and nostalgia in a relaxed atmosphere.

We are hoping that this style of meeting will meet with approval, and we need it to be a success to enable the Association to move forward. We earnestly request all who are within reasonable travelling distance to come and give their support. For your diary:

Saturday 25th September - Harperley Hotel - Tanfield Ass. A.G.M.

Fred Westwater, Secretary.

100 Not Out!

Tanfield, having recently fought off the threat of having to close its doors and see its students sent to a new academy, will soon be celebrating its 100th anniversary.

The school opened on October 16th 1912, and it seems fitting that, in 2012, its centenary should be celebrated by the publication of a book which highlights things that have happened over those 100 years.

So, we are calling on members of the Tanfield Association to help out. If you've seen copies of '80 Years On' or '90 Years On', you'll know what sort of format will be used for the new publication. We need your memories of Tanfield, your photographs, your memorabilia - anything that will help us to build up a picture of what Tanfield has achieved and what it has meant to its students and staff over those years. It would be wonderful if *every* member of the association could contribute in some way. Of course, the association will also be working closely with the school to cover its more recent history, so that we can get the full picture.

If you'd like to jot down a paragraph or two, or if you have photos or memorabilia that we can borrow and copy, please get in touch. And if you are in contact with anyone else who may be able to help, please spread the word as widely as possible. The more material we have, the better equipped we'll be to produce something worthy of a big occasion.

I'll be leading the editorial team who will put the book together. To contact me, send e-mails to hawkins_15@o2.co.uk or write to me at:

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I look forward to hearing from you *all*.
Elizabeth Hawkins

Patrons of Tanfield School

The following is an explanation, or reminder of the scheme which was launched eight years ago.

The scheme was started in 2002, shortly after the school's 90th birthday. The school was intending to apply for Specialist Status, and to do this had to raise £50,000 from outside sources to match a similar government sum. This had to be raised and the application completed in 12 months.

This enormous and complicated task was made the responsibility of the then Deputy Head Teacher, Eric Fisk (pupil 1961 -63), assisted by Assistant Head Teacher Susan Smith (pupil 1964 - 71). Their work involved many hours of meetings in school, and in London to prove to the Inspectorate that the school was both capable and worthy of being granted 'Specialist School' status.

Eric returned from an important meeting with Government Education Officials with the news that Tanfield would be allowed to bid, -but had to meet the intricate criteria as laid down by Government. Even more daunting was the fact that Eric, on behalf of the school, had said that the bid would involve not the usual single subject, but both Science and Engineering. We were told that very few schools in the UK were successful in bidding for dual subjects.

Executive of the Association knew that they would be of no help in preparing the bid, but they could perhaps help in raising some of the £50,000 needed to accompany the bid. One of the ideas for raising the money came from Susan Smith who suggested that if 100 members could be persuaded to each donate £100 that would raise £10,000. From this thought, the idea of Patrons of Tanfield School was born. Letters were sent to the 120 members at the time and over 40 signed up to be Patrons. Many pledged to give £100, others who could afford to, gave more. The Patrons raised over £6000. In total almost £17000 was raised through the Tanfield Association connections, through sponsorship, and through direct and indirect pledges.

We all know that the bid was successful, and that Tanfield School is a Specialist School in Science and Engineering.

It is my firm belief that the Patron of Tanfield School scheme is a tangible expression of faith in the future of our school at Tanfield. It can be seen as an act of putting something back in return for a period in our formative years which has had a positive effect on our adult lives. It can also be seen as an expression of one's personal belief in helping to continue the very fine educational future of our school.

Our membership has grown over the years to over 350, and I feel that the scheme could be updated. I am hoping that sometime soon the Executive committee will have it on the agenda for discussion. There are a number of suggestions that could be discussed:

- a) Maintain the current Roll of Patrons, but let the scheme rest.
- b) Revive and promote the scheme of Patrons for school funding.
- c) Revive and promote the scheme of Patrons with money banked separately and used for 'extra special' schemes.

It would be good to have some feedback from members. Do you think that the scheme should be revived? If you do, to what ends? Maybe you have ideas and suggestions of your own. We really do need your views on this before it is discussed further. Please send your views to me, Fred Westwater. They will be put to the relevant meeting to help the Executive Committee in their deliberations.

Fred Westwater, Secretary.

The Victor Ludorum

School Sports Day, as you will remember, was a very important day on the school calendar. The much esteemed trophies, the Victor Ludorum cup, or the Victrix Ludorum cup were won by the boy or girl who amassed most points across various events on the day.

Our photo shows Dennis Hall, proudly if rather shyly, holding the trophy that he won in 1943.



Dennis was a keen sportsman. He was captain of Tanfield House, with Mr Elliot as Housemaster. On Sports Day he won the 440 yds race, beating Ossie Barrass into 2nd place. He was second in the 100yds, 2nd or 3rd in the half mile (880 yds) race, and his team won the Inter House relay.

His family is another school dynasty. In 1943 his sister Nancy (1932 -35) was a young teacher at Dunston Primary School. His brother Bill (1931 - 36) was in India with the RAF. After the war Bill became the much respected Captain of the Oxhill Boys' Brigade. Another brother, Jack, (1933 - 38) was in the army, and another sister Marjorie was a nurse. They lived in Oxhill, where his grandmother had a general dealers shop. The premises is currently a hairdresser business.

1943 was a busy time for Dennis. He was active in the Boys' Brigade, but was also recruited to be an A.R.P. (Air Raid Precautions) Messenger Boy, reporting for duty two nights a week. It was also the year when he started work as a Trainee Surveyor at the local colliery. However before embarking into the adult world, he with three other Tanfield boys had two weeks Youth Hostelling in the Lakes. It was organised by Ken Stout, who was in the Upper Sixth, and waiting for his 'call-up' papers. The other two were in Dennis's year group, Tom Beckham and Ken Harrison.

Dennis now lives in Nuneaton, and is still very active, his sporting acumen being used mainly, and enthusiastically on the golf course. We are told that the 19th hole is a firm favourite.

Do you remember Dennis or any of the family at Tanfield? Were you a Victor/Victrix Ludorum? Have you any stories about Sports Day, or the Victors? It would be great to hear from you in any of these categories. We have no Sporting Records so your contributions would be of great help. E-mail to: ted.brabban@nasuwt.net

Fred Westwater

Memories of ‘The Admirable Crichton’

Last summer while in Perthshire I had the opportunity to visit 9 Brechin Road, Kirriemuir the birthplace of J M Barrie. I was particularly curious to learn more about Barrie’s life because in March 1962 I had taken the part of Lady Mary in his play ‘The Admirable Crichton’ at Stanley Grammar School. As we toured Barrie’s childhood home my poor husband listened patiently while I reminisced about Stanley Grammar School Dramatic Society, the rehearsals and performances of ‘The Admirable Crichton’.

Imagine my delight, therefore, when I opened the winter newsletter to find a fascinating article by Pat Henderson (Pounder) on the performance of that very play all those years ago. The producer, Nova Williamson, was my English teacher. I liked English and admired Miss Williamson so when at the end of a morning lesson she asked me to attend a play reading in the hall in the lunch hour I did not hesitate to comply. Twenty minutes later I discovered that I had been chosen to take the lead female role. I was flattered but apprehensive. I need not have worried as both the staff and students were extremely friendly and we had a lot of fun in rehearsals.



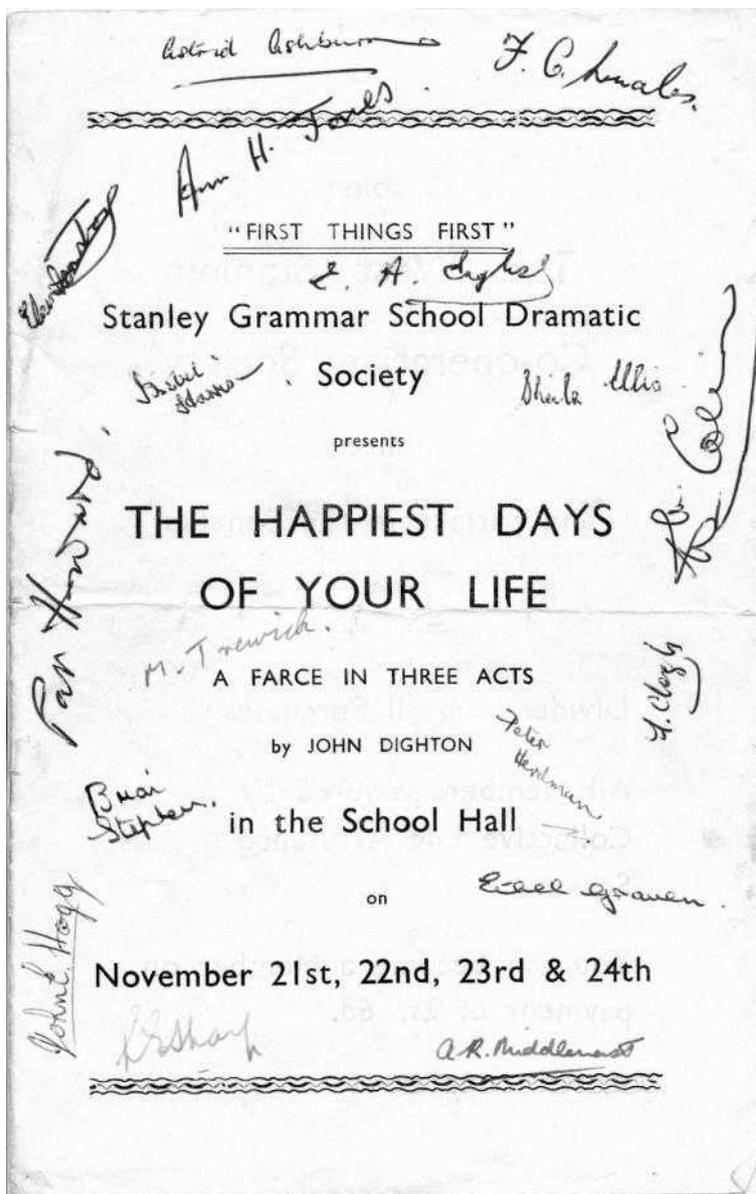
Like Pat, I remember Miss Halkier being in charge of costumes. I went a couple of times to the needlework room for fittings and recall the emerald green satin dress with the black velvet belt which I wore in Act I. I still have three black and white photos, a programme and a newspaper cutting to remind me of the play. After reading Pat’s article I went up into the loft to retrieve them and there in the newspaper cutting is Pat, not in her posh yellow gown trimmed with fur but in the ragged clothes we wore on the island in Act II. We are all smiling.

I hope that at some school reunion in the future I might meet 'my sister' Lady Agatha Lasenby (Pat Henderson) and other members of the cast of 1962.

Audrey Sharp (Atkinson)

The Happiest Days of Your Life

Who will write and recall the show, and of course the 'Happiest Days of Your Life'!



And the year was ?
N.B. The signature of Dr Sharp.

Dear Mr Brabban,

Thank you for the winter copy of the newsletter which was full of interesting articles.

You might be interested in including the following three anecdotes in a future issue.

"In 1951 when I started at SGS, I was unusual in that I had lived in Wiltshire before starting school and all my mother's relatives still lived there. These three anecdotes arose from that link.

At a geography class exam, Mrs Pritchard gave us a section of an OS map with a series of items of interest to identify. Imagine my amazement when I realised the map covered the area where my family had lived

and where we went each year for our summer holiday. I completed the exam and handed in the paper after about ten minutes. Mrs Pritchard was very angry saying “that I could not possibly have done the exam and that I was trying to make a fool of her”. Needless to say, most of the answers were correct but I never told her about my luck.

In chemistry, Mr Scott mentioned that he went to Marlborough each year during the summer. When I described the main street (as it happens, the widest in England) including the hotel in which he stayed, his jaw dropped. Several discussions ensued on the area.

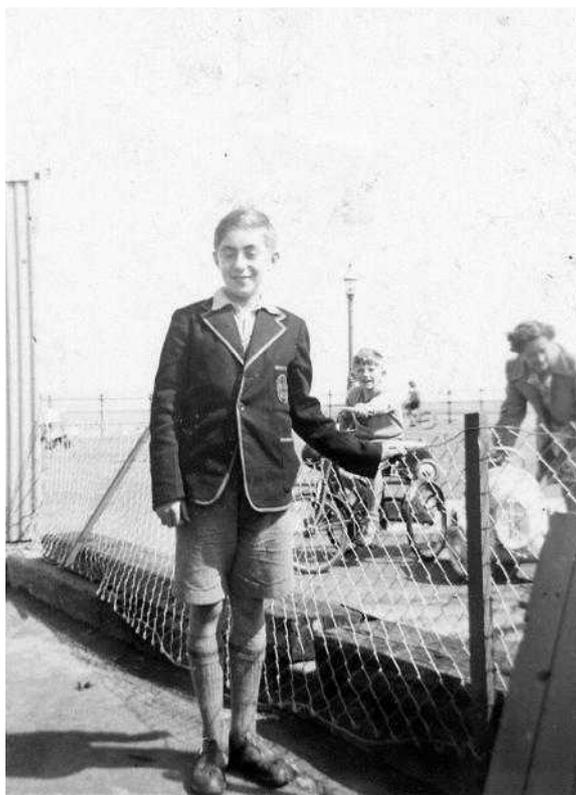
I had to go to Dr Sharp’s study for punishment. Out came the cane (not for the first time!). However, before using it, he asked me if everything was alright at home. It so happened that my mother and brother had been in Wiltshire for several weeks looking after my sick grandparents and that I was being looked after by my father and paternal grandmother. On hearing this, the cane was put away (thankfully without being used) and I was told that I must come to see him if he could be of any help. My respect for him increased from that moment.

I now live in Wiltshire just a few miles from the earlier home.”

George Fraser
1951-58

School Uniform

Do you remember hearing that you had passed the 11+ and would be going to “Tanfield”? Perhaps soon afterwards you thought of the school uniform that you would wear.



The photograph above is dated August 1950, it shows 11year old Alan Westwater in his new uniform bought from Shimelds in Stanley Front Street. N.B. young Alan is still in short trousers, not unusual for that era.

This is the only photo that we have which shows the black blazer with the yellow (sorry – gold) braid around the edges and the school badge on the breast pocket. They were very useful for making goal posts! The girls, of course, wore brown, and probably didn’t make goal posts!

Does anyone remember Alan looking like this? Did you look like this? Do you still have a blazer badge? Did you have a cap? Do you have any photos? We would be pleased to have your recollections, and if you do have any photos either scan them and e-mail the file, or send them to Ted, who will scan them and send them back. (He could also scan a blazer badge!)

Harvest Camps

Fred recently asked me if I knew anything about the school, just after WW2, being involved in collecting the harvest at organised Harvest Camps. I told him "Yes", that I had been on one near Pershore in the Vale of Evesham. When he pressed me for details I realised that I knew nothing (or had forgotten!) about the organisation of them, I just remember a bunch of 6th formers, including Bob Patterson and Lawrence Campbell, being together in ex RAF huts, and going out each day to help whichever farmer needed hands. We picked pea-pods, soft fruit, and potatoes, anything that was being cropped on a day by day basis. We must have been paid, but I don't remember how much!

This was at a time when following the war, manpower was in short supply. I presume, again, that this was a government initiative to help solve the situation, but I don't know.

I think that it must have been 1950, and probably that we were among the last to go. There must be others amongst you who went to these camps in the years previously who will remember much more than my meagre knowledge. We would love to hear from you, as this is a little bit of school history, like 'fire-watching', that has been forgotten and is destined, at the moment, to disappear. So, please, help us out and let us put it on record before it is too late.

(I know that there were earlier camps because the person who mentioned it to Fred also told him that Joe Binks was with them, and that he showed them how to roll cigarettes!! Apparently they were in tents!)

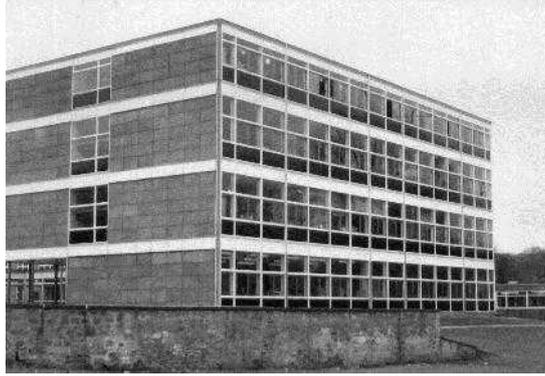
Ted Brabban.

Some Former 3rd Years

Here is another 'Blast from the Past'! Who are they and where are they now?



The Old Tower Block



What is the history of this building?

Who will write and give us the low-down on what it was like to teach or be taught in the Tower Block, now thankfully long gone. There must be many memories of those days! Share them with us.

Tommy Percival

The unknown man on the back page of the last Newsletter is Tommy Percival. He was married to my best friend Marjorie Tinkler (Tanfield 41-48). He was several years older than Marjorie.

Tommy served during the war as an officer in the Merchant Navy. He was captured during the Greek Campaign in the Mediterranean and spent some years in prison camp in Germany. After release he obtained a degree and teaching certificate at Durham University. He taught for a number of years at Whinney Hill School in Durham, and then moved to Tanfield School when Dr Sharp was Headmaster. His stay at Tanfield was quite short as he was absent for several months following a coronary thrombosis. This could account for the lack of recognition. From Tanfield he moved to Sunderland Training College. He and Marjorie have been dead for a number of years.

Jean Clifford (nee Pearson)



Tom Percival



Marjorie (nee Tinkler)

My thanks Jean. I'm pleased that the photo had some significance as I wondered if it was just an odd inclusion with some others. Tom was at Tanfield during my time, but being different Departments our paths rarely crossed.

Ted.

Sandy Boggon wrote:

Dear Mr Brabban,

It was good of you to note in the Winter Edition that Tibby (my sister) had been moved to a Residential Care Home. I am very sorry to tell you that Tibby died on the 3rd October. The last time my wife and I saw Tibby was in March when we went to visit David, our youngest son. He took us to the Care Home in Lincolnshire where she was being very well looked after.

A little about Tibby. She was born on 7th August 1927 – Alice Joan Hopper Boggon, but called Tibby for as long as I can remember. Incidentally she was called Alice after our aunt, Miss Alice Nicol who was Senior Mistress of Tanfield until she retired. Tibby and her brother Bill were in the same class and came to the school in 1939. In their sixth year, in 1945, they were Head Boy and Head Girl, a unique combination for the school.

Tibby then went to Manchester University where she graduated in English and the Classics. She did a postgraduate course at Cambridge University where she met her husband James Goode. They married in 1954 and settled in Lincolnshire. Jim was a partner in a law firm and Tibby was Head of English and also taught Latin and Greek in a private girls' school in Peterborough. Her husband died in 1995.

I hope that this might be of interest to those who were pupils around her time.

Yours sincerely,
Sandy Boggon.

Breaking News

We have an author amongst our membership. Gina Jack, ex Senior Mistress, has just had confirmation from a publishing house that her book has been selected for publication. It should hit the shelves around the end of the year. Watch this space, as they say.

Staff photo circa 1956

Dear Ted

Another year and as we all get older we remember our school with affection. Your recent Tanfield Association Newsletter inspired me to look out some of the photographs I have (I am the Harrison archivist) Here is a photo of staff before my dad ,Bob Harrison, left the school. It must be around the time I was in the 6th form 1956-58. or a little later before dad left. Do you have this one in the archive?

I can't remember the names all of the younger staff, but someone may.

Back row from left

Mr Glendinning, Mr Gee, Mr Scott, Mr Wood, Mr Yockney , Is this Mr Bell? first German teacher since before war, Mr Hall, Mr Dolman second row from left Mr Seed , Mr Proud, Mr Chapman, Mrs Pritchard, Miss Thompson, Miss Coulson? Mr Harrison. Mr Robertson. Mr Binks. Mr Jolly Front row Miss Humble,?.?. Miss Simpson, Miss Thornton, Dr Sharp, Mr Livesey, Miss Allison, Mrs Jones, Miss Rose, ?.

I hear that my brother Robert -- also Bob to non family--- is now a member of the committee...

Best wishes,
Isobel



Barbara Davison wrote:

Hi,

I am writing in response to the note from Irene Hardy (Stansfield). I am the sister of Elisabeth Dawson, and the names mentioned as being in the photograph, Vivian Hodgson and Elaine Armstrong, were people who were in the same year as me. My sister was at that time in the 5th Form.

I went to Catchgate School with Vivian, and to Sunday School with Elaine. Being born the same year we all went to Stanley Grammar at the same time,- 1954. (Elisabeth was there from 1952 -59)

I lived in Calgary, Alberta for 28 years, and now live in Strathmore, a small town 50 miles East of Calgary, on the Trans Canada. Elisabeth lives in West Vancouver and has done so for many years.

I enjoy reading your Newsletter which keeps me up to date with the activities of the school and also information of people who have left.

Yours sincerely,

Barbara Davison (nee Dawson)

Dear Ted

Thanks for.....

I mentioned my sister Elisabeth Dawson in my e-mail as someone who has done very well since S.G.S. days. Elisabeth was the Canadian representative on the International Baccalaureate programme and also the recipient of the Canadian Prime Minister's Award for Teaching Excellence. Now retired she is in the Chair of the Vancouver Opera Guild. She has other accomplishments too numerous to mention. I am very proud of my family, my sister being an example to us all.

Yours sincerely,

Barbara Davison

Isobel Jenkins wrote:

Dear Ted

Re the photograph of staff C 1960 in the current issue of Tanfield Association Newsletter. The question is asked, when was the main entrance in the centre of the school created and when did it go?

I have a run of school magazines from the 1950s and find in the editorial to the Grammarian Christmas 1952 number 16 written by Wendy Herdman:

"The new school buildings have at last been completed. The gymnasium, with its changing rooms and showers, the assembly hall and the biology laboratory have now been in use for some time, while an imposing new entrance has been added to the main building and the old school hall has been converted into three new rooms..... The new buildings were officially opened by Mrs Jolley JP on 31st October"

The editor also pays tribute to Mr Carr who was about to retire.

Best wishes

Isobel Jenkins (Harrison)

Hi Isobel,

Thanks for the info. Until I saw the photo I had forgotten that there had been a Grand Entrance. Unfortunately it would be just hidden on the published photo of the buildings about 195?. Now I need to find out when it was 'taken out'!

I see that Grandma gets a mention in the Editorial which you quote.

How many old school mags do you have and what period do they cover?

Thanks again,
Ted.

Dear Ted

I was really surprised the main entrance was created as early as 1952. I certainly remember the classrooms that were removed . I also remember the old school hall in the centre of the building. I am pretty sure that we had our first year Christmas party in the old hall Christmas 1951. The main entrance was fairly useless as I don't remember anyone being allowed to use it in my time (1951-58.)

When I look at the magazines I have they are not a complete run but are 1950,1952,1953,1955 1956, 1957,1959, 1962 (50 year edition in 'gold') 1964.1965. Rob and Jane were both at the school when Dad and I left – and my mother kept these.

Yes my Grandma -- was devoted to the school .She saw it as providing the kinds of opportunities which she and Grandad never had. They were self educated through WEA classes. These days they would be academics- they read VERY serious stuff. (She was not keen on comprehensive-isation) I was grateful to Fred for his little article about them- I have done very little research on their public life and was in the middle of a local history project with a deadline when Fred rang me about his work on the Jolleys so didn't have time to help him.

Best wishes,
Isobel

Some Names

Thanks to Joan Armstrong from Norton, we have some names to add to the photos that we published in the last edition:

I can spot Elsie Firstbrook and Joyce Snell, Sheila Rose and Hazel Hill, but I am sure that you can tell me who the others are. Who are the 'voyeurs' in the background?



Sheila Rose

Hazel Hill

Mary Paxton

Ella Bailey

Marjorie Tinkler

~~Elsie Firstbrook~~ Joyce Snell

Senior Girls with Miss Nichol

Margaret Strong

Doris Jeffries

Please put some names to these lovely girls!



1946

Eveline Bell

Jean Carr

Joan Bidgood

Alice (Tibby) Beggon

Leonore Hewitt

Rita Donnelly

Mavis, the past School Secretary, gave me some names too. Left is Margaret Severs, then Mary Paxton. Also Hilda Travena, Joan Barratt, Rita Donnelly, Leonore Hewitt, and Cynthia Harrison. Thanks Mavis.