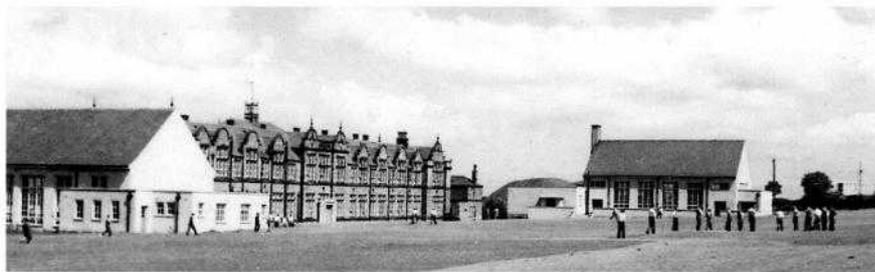


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NEWSLETTER No. 23

Spring 2012

Editorial

2012 - and a Happy Year to all of our readers. The magic year has arrived and in October our school will be 100 years old. If I live to that age I hope that I look so well, and still have the life and vibrancy that is evident when you visit. As in most, if not all, lives there have been ups and downs, and times of stress when all might have been lost. However Tanfield has survived intact, and is looking into the future with great hope and expectation. There is still turbulence in the waters: the new Academy in Stanley is under construction, and it will be interesting to see what the effect of that institution will be but the current 'Skipper', Graeme Lloyd, has a firm hand on the tiller and a good crew behind him to steer us through to a settled future.

We are all anticipating the birthday celebrations. As I currently understand it, a 'do' of some kind is being planned for Saturday, 13th October, and then, events continuing through the following week, 15th - 19th. I know that some of you are itching to book up to be here for the celebrations so I hope that having the dates will help. When we know more of what the school is planning we will be sure to let you all know.

Elizabeth Hawkins is working her fingers to the bone, and burning the midnight oil to compile the '100 - Not Out' book. If you were contemplating writing something it is not too late, but the clock is ticking! Your piece should reach to her before the end of April, and it doesn't have to be a long article. Elizabeth is doing a page of memories, i.e. one liners. e.g. Ted Brabban 44-51 (nee Brabban) remembers the glue pot boiling in the woodwork room.

We are pleased to say that people have been very generous with donations to dedicate a page of the book, and also we have had quite a number of pre-orders for the book. We are much happier now about paying the pre-publication costs than we feared we might be. £10 is the magic figure - both to pre-order a copy, and the base price to dedicate a page. For your money you will get a hard-back book full of historical

Contents:

Editorial

Copies of 90 Years on

A.G.M.

That was then, this is now

Miss Browning and other
Memories

From Margaret Leighton

From Pat Henderson

The Government Inspector -
April 1974

Do you know these people?

From Graham Kirtley

From George Fraser

From Bill Anderson

interest and with a selection of coloured photographs. What great value! It is not too late to pre-order through our Treasurer, Susan Donkin.(19 Lindom Ave. Chester le Street, DH3 3PP)

It seems to be a long while since we had our version of an A.G.M. We met early in September at our new venue, the Blue Bell at Kip Hill to have lunch and deal with the business. It was really well attended and saw the inauguration of our new President, Professor Bob Harrison. We were graced by the presence of our two local M.P.s, Pat Glass and Kevan Jones. It was a really good occasion and hopefully set the pattern for the years to come. More inside.

There have also been some sad times. We recently attended the funeral of Barbara Churcher (died aged 95) who has been a very active supporter of the Association until infirmity prevented it. Many of you will have memories of Barbara. Mine is of her 'Toasting the Ladies' on a Burns Night that we organised, and describing men dancing as 'Looking like frogs in a blender'.

A new development with the advent of the web-site is that you can now pay your dues by Pay Pal. As postage costs are due to rise once again, we would like to know who would accept future Newsletters by e-mail. We currently have about 70 e-mail addresses. If you are interested in electronic delivery let Peter Brown know at peterwbrown@tiscali.co.uk

Copies of '90 Years On'

Joy Drake (P.A. to the Headmaster) has found several copies of '90 Years On' at the back of the school office. Contact her at school if you're interested in buying a copy. The price when I last heard was £10, but Joy will no doubt advise on that. P&P charges will apply as well, I should think.

Incidentally, I heard that a copy of '80 Years On' was for sale at Barter Books in Alnwick priced at £26. You could be sitting on a gold mine! (Or, investing in one when you buy the new book!!)

A.G.M.

On the 10th Sept we held our own version of an Annual General Meeting. A turnout of about 60 members arrived for lunch at the Blue Bell Inn at Kip Hill. Our school catchment area is served by two M.P.s, Pat Glass and Kevan Jones, and both were present.



Ted and Mavis Brabban with
Pat Glass MP
NB the Prefect's Badge!
(Lenore Hewitt behind Mavis)

After a very pleasant and plentiful meal we got down to business. Our long standing President, Prof. Warren Pescod has hung up his boots to hand over the Chair to a younger man, the younger man in this case being Prof. Robert Harrison, whose family links with the school are second to none!

Bob thanked Warren for his long service and dedication. His next task was to present The Tanfield Glass. (This is a beautiful vase engraved with the various school badges by Claire Humpherson, which is presented annually to a person who has given selfless work to the Association.) The recipient this year, agreed unanimously by the Committee, is Susan Donkin our Treasurer.



Susan with the Tanfield Glass.

The event was kept at a very informal level, and Prof Harrison kept us amused as we completed the agenda, leaving time for mixing, meeting old acquaintances and gossiping.

We were graced by some 'very much in the past' pupils:



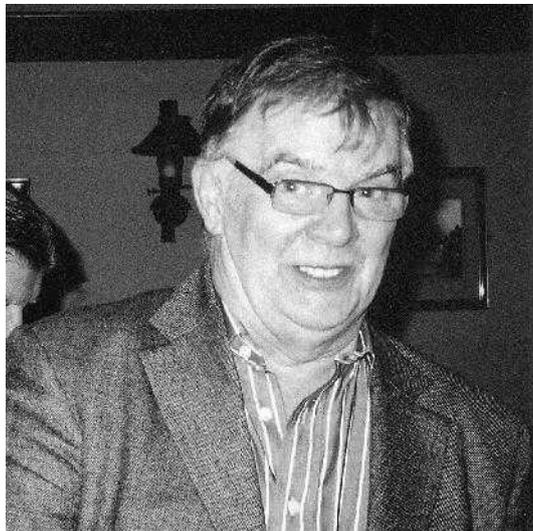
Sylvia Cheeseman (Craven) aged 95,



Nancy Hall aged 94 with her niece Claire.

Peter Brown took the opportunity to introduce the idea of an Association web-site. When fully up and running this will be a main portal to the Association. Those who use the internet will be able to join the Association through it, renew through it, and access a host of archive written articles and photographs too. (e.g. past Newsletters!!) Details of individual members will not be accessible because of legislation. However there will be the usual ways and means of renewing acquaintanceships.

It will bring the Association right into the 21st Century, and we owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to Peter Brown for the time and work that he has put into building the site.



Peter looking as if 'caught in the act'

We are indebted to Betty Watson (Needham) for the photographs taken at the event. Thank you Betty.

We must mention the Landlord of the Blue Bell. He made our party most welcome, provided a very good buffet lunch (at a discount to the Association) and was very generous in purchasing a multitude of raffle tickets to boot. Our grateful thanks.

All in all the event was a very happy occasion, boring business kept to a minimum, and with plenty of time and opportunity for social mixing. It was our own special version of an Annual General Meeting that was well received by all who attended. I am sure that it has set the pattern for future events.

Ted Brabban

“That was then, this is now.”

As I sit writing this I am looking at a lead chess set that I made in Mr. Binks, art class in the second form. We melted the lead in an old aluminum pan on a small gas ring burner. This was poured into two moulds and allowed to cool. After taking the pieces from the moulds we had to file off the flashing and work on the bases so that the pieces would stand upright and not topple over. My set is painted black and a very dark red, probability with a lead based paint. From time to time if the lead got too hot fumes would rise up.

I remember in science class playing with spilled mercury, breaking it up into little blobs, then seeing them join together again. A mercury spill today would close the lab until the HazMat team had cleaned it up. All of the heat pads and gloves were asbestos based. I remember Mr. Scott showing us an experiment with phosphorous and saying not to think of stealing any as one boy had and burned a hole in his pocket and all through his leg. I don't know if the story was true but none of us ever tried to take any of it. In all of this we never had any masks or protective glasses. When I retired in 1996 none of the science or art classes had any of the materials just mentioned and any teacher doing any experiment without all of the proper protective masks and glasses would have been in serious trouble. We once closed an entire wing of the school because it was thought that there may be some asbestos based tiling in the ceilings.

In our fifth form my friend Martin Pickard's father took David Forsyth, John Jackson and me down the Morrison Busty pit. We saw the pit ponies, then went through the various tunnels until we were at the entrance to the eighteen inch high working coal face. This we crawled along. My quote on that trip was "Mr. Pickard I think that I am stuck". His reply was "turn you helmet sideways and wriggle a bit more". That I did and we worked our way out to the other end of the face and back out of the mine. Mr. P's final words were, "Well you b*****s can either get a good education or come and work with me in the pit here". We all heeded his words and went on to become teachers. I wonder how many of today's students have been down a mine and seen a working coal face or even know what a pit heap is. Who would even think of exposing to days students to such extreme working conditions?

Whilst at S.G.S. many of us were in the 2nd Annfield Plain Boy Scouts troop. Some other students were Alex Smith, whose father was "Skip" our Scout Master, Alec Patterson, Denis Hinds and Bill Moore.

Ex students, Colin Armstrong and Brian Armstrong, no relation, were Assistant Leaders. We had weekly meetings, a cup of hot OXO for a penny, socials and dances, but the best activity of all was the camping. An empty coal lorry would be washed out and on a Saturday morning we would load it with our tents, camping gear and personal rucksacks and kitbags, cover them with tarps, and then all of us would sit on top. If it rained, we had our personal ponchos or ground sheets to cover us while we huddled together. We had camping trips to the Lake District, the Peak district, Yorkshire and many local sites. While riding we would sing songs, wave to other motorists and make sure those wide brimmed Scout Hats did not fly away. Any idea of seats let alone seatbelts was not even thought of. Can you imagine seeing a sight like that nowadays?

As you can see, in one generation, things have changed greatly.

Bill Armstrong, S.G.S. 51-58

Miss Browning and other Memories

Newsletter No 22 has just arrived ! It was read with pleasure and nostalgia, and so, inspired by others, I am going to add a contribution to the SGS story.

I also remember the happy afternoons spent at South Moor Tennis Club with many school friends and recollect that Ritchie Chambers and his wife visited us in Calgary on their way home from Vancouver in 1960. I then recalled a most recent meeting, September 2011, with Nova Watson (Williamson) in Deia, Majorca. By the end of our four hour lunch we had delightfully caught up with news of many old Tanfield pupils!

Between 1960 and 2011 there has been a long chain of chance events which resulted in getting together with many others both here in Canada and in the UK. It is amazing how time recedes and how much enjoyment these social, and often humorous meetings give David and me. We have been lucky that many, now retired, have visited Vancouver during their journey to Alaska via the Rockies.

Duncan Davies' "Crime and Punishment" made me cringe, but the article gave us a good laugh as well. However reading about Dr Sharp again did not recall much pleasure for me. It was only a short spell of six months that I knew him as headmaster, but I remember well the summer of 1953 after A levels. We had taken to the tennis court area for some well deserved free time, only to be summoned back to the classroom to explain our behaviour and endure a long lesson in Religious Instruction! A rather tame consequence compared to some other punishments!

Forgetting Dr S. and R.I. my thoughts turned to my first enjoyable days at SGS and my home room teacher (Form teacher I think she means - Ted) Miss Elizabeth Browning (later Mrs Pearson). She too was a newcomer to the school, young and active, and I loved her name! Unlike the older, serious teachers that I had experienced at Craghead Junior School, Miss Browning treated us with understanding, used modern teaching methods, and gave each of us a mapping pen on our birthdays. She organised extra curricula events such as seeing classic films , like Henry V, and going to Durham to sketch some medieval

architectural relief details of the Cathedral. Our field trips were never compulsory, although a fair sized group always turned up to meet her at Stanley.

I admired above all Miss Browning's love of sport, and I thank her for all the coaching and skills which she passed on to me, along with a love of an active life-style. After emigrating I continued to play hockey in Calgary and Vancouver with ladies teams and also in a mixed (and rather wild!) league!

Although those days are long gone, David and I still enjoy golfing and also taking 'Cycling for Softies' holidays.

Best wishes to all, and a Happy School Centenary.

Jean York. (Hetherington) 1946 - 1953

From Margaret Leighton (or is that Pat Railton?)

Ted,

Thank you for printing my article and photograph. I wonder, however, why you have omitted to add the names of the people in the photograph, as I think that I did write the names that I could remember. I do enjoy receiving the magazine and wallow in nostalgia for some time after. I suppose that my years at SGS were not as rosy as I recall but I do have some good memories of those days. God willing, I hope to be able to attend some part of the centenary celebrations. Carry on with the good work.

Margaret Leighton (Pat Railton)

Hello Margaret,

Thanks for getting in touch.

The reason that there were no names is simply that by omitting them I hope to generate some correspondence, - who is...?, that is etc. You did prompt correspondence by saying that you couldn't remember them all. That surely is a lure to someone to prove that they have a better memory! We always need copy for the next Issue.

However my theory is not working, - I have had no takers so far, so I may have to put some names in a later edition!

Ted.

Thank you for your explanation about the photograph that I sent and also the extra copy. I would also like my details mentioned in the "reunited" section, if possible. They are as follows:- Margaret Leighton (known as Pat Railton while at SGS.) There were a lot of Margarets that year so we either had a nickname or, as in my case, used a second name.

I lived then in Wylam Street, Craghead but now live at 41,Huntley Avenue, Penrith, Cumbria. CA11 8NU. Email address is mpleighton@btinternet.com and I would like to hear from anyone who remembers me.

My sister would also like to hear from anyone in her year. She is Jean Bennet (Railton) and her address is:- PO Box 1481, Port Hardy, British Columbia, Canada, VON 2PO. Her Email address is jeanr@telus.net

Thank you for all the work you do to keep the memories of SGS alive.

Margaret

Hello Ted,

Forgive me for bombarding you with Emails but I forgot to add some details for the "Reunited" section. I attended SGS from 1948 to 53 and my sister was there from 1950 to 56.

I also have a claim to fame in that my aunt and uncle lived next door to the Chambers family in Elm Street, South Moor and when I visited my aunt we would often go next door to chat with Mrs. Chambers. I don't expect the eminent professor to remember that, though as I was some years younger and as they say today, I would be below his radar !!

Margaret

From Pat Henderson

Dear Ted,

I have some information for you further to the article in Newsletter 22, 'Can you help?'

As a child I remember my parents talking about Rev Jack Wanless who I understand died in The Far East as a prisoner of war. We knew the Wanless Family well through the Methodist Church, although, they were members of Craghead Wesleyan Chapel and we were members of Craghead Primitive Methodist Chapel. Amazing to think that Craghead in those days had two thriving chapels and a Church of England too.

I have spoken to my Auntie Hannah and Uncle Tom Lawson (brother of Fenwick Lawson) and they have given me the following information.

Tom Johnson the nephew of Jack Wanless lives at East Stanley. I understand Tom is not in good health. His wife is called Doreen.

Betty Needham (her maiden name as auntie and uncle cannot remember her married name) the niece of Jack Wanless lives at Ouston . I hope this is of help to the person seeking information.

Many thanks to you and all the people involved in The Newsletter. I enjoy reading it so much.
Sincerely,

Pat Henderson (nee Pounder, sister of June Todd)

P.S. Uncle Tom has called again to say that Barbara Churcher (nee Bott) will have information relating to Jack Wanless. Apparently the Wanless Family and The Bott family were close friends. Also Barbara's brother was in the Methodist Ministry and Uncle Tom thinks he and Jack knew one another well.

Sincerely,
Pat

(Betty Needham is now Betty Watson. Ted.)

The Government Inspector - April 1974

Tanfield Secondary School Dramatic Society
presents

The Government Inspector

by Nikolai Gogol
IN THE SCHOOL HALL

Thursday

4th APRIL, 1974, at 7.00 p.m.

Admission: Adults 20p, Children and O.A.P. 10p

All Seats Bookable

Tickets available from Scholars.

810

Sorting through some stuff recently I came across the ticket shown alongside, plus two others obviously for my family. Being 1974, I suppose that I must have been involved in the production, but I have no recollection of it.

Someone out there must have 'the knowledge', so please enlighten me. Who produced it and who were the 'stars', and so on?

It is interesting to note that, from the ticket, the school was designated as a secondary school by then. However we still had a Dramatic Society, and moreover we still had Scholars. Nowadays the young ones are either pupils or students. When

did that change happen?

I could get in for 10p now!

Ted Brabban

Do you know these people?

Below are some of the nick-names used by pupils for their Tanfield teachers- (so I'm told!). Some are new to me, but of course I was on the wrong end of the stick of chalk for most of the time. I won't reveal the identities until the Issue 24, but in the meantime I would be interested to hear how many you are able to identify, and I'll give a mention to whoever gets most. Perhaps there are some you know that are not listed, if so let me know.

Here we go:

Pongo	Charlie	Titch
Froggy	Spud	Fifi
Nick	Spike	Abdul (or the Bull)
Little Ell	Fat Alf	Pip
Ganny	Pete	Jennie (or Auntie Jenny)
Hitler	Skitty	Len (or the Doc)
Acker	Bob (or Dettol Dick)	Old Ma
Jezebel	Kenny	Ratty (could be one of two)
Rastus	Fuzzy	the Red Baron
Bart	Slasher	Tebs

Aren't the young'ns inventive? The names and obviously the teachers range from the 40s/50s right up to the 90s or even later perhaps, so you won't know them all.

Ted.

From Graham Kirtley

Hi Ted,

Thanks very much for Newsletters 21 and 22. I very much enjoyed reading them, revisiting some of the names and characters from my time at Tanfield Secondary School as it was called during my time there between 1970 and 1976. My Dad also recalled memories from some of the articles which referred to a period some 25 years earlier.

I very much look forward to hearing about whatever is decided to mark the schools 100th birthday and will be talking to a number of my contemporaries over our regular Christmas reunion where conversation always somehow quickly turns to time spent at Tanfield.

Best wishes,

Graham Kirtley ('Average at best' Woodwork student 1970/71)

From George Fraser

Dear Mr Brabban,

Thank you for the latest newsletter which I greatly enjoyed reading.

My reason for writing is to clarify the data relating to the Mr Livesey photograph below the "Edna Shields- Other Photos" caption. The photograph is the year 1951-52 prizewinners: I am the "shrimp" 3rd from left on the front row.

As you know, Mr Carr retired at Xmas in 1952 so it may be that Mr Livesey deputised since the photo must have been taken during the 1952-53 school year.

Yours faithfully,

George Fraser.

PRIZE WINNERS 1954



FORM PRIZES

Form 1	H. Baxter	P. Atkinson	D. Crosby
1a	D. Portsmouth	J. March	G. Myers
1b	Margaret Robson	E. Ross	A. Usher
2	Cathleen Waggott	Cynthia Stoker	
	Margaret Icton	Isobel Harrison	
2a	Margaret Ashburn	G. Fraser	
	Ann English	Rosemary Brabban	
2b	Pamela Settrey	Heather Robson	
	Anne Pendleton	Jenny Armstrong	
3	B. Logan	A. Ibbetson	
	G. Shield	Maureen Richardson	
3a	W. Johnson	D. Ridley	
	T. Fraser	W. Moore	
3b	B. Stephens	A. Egleton	
	N. Hope	Sheila Ellis	
4	Margaret Wanless	Jean Finlay	Annie Wilson
	G. Morton	Audrey Bell	
4a	Olive Jenkins	Joan Ramsay	Rhona Donaldson
	Beryl Hall	A. Smith	
4b	Sheila Ruddick	K. Blackburn	A. Draper
	Kathleen Bellerby	Verena Perry	

J.C. Forster Memorial History Prize:	Margaret Greener
Physical Education L	Senior: N. Moore
	Junior: H. Morton
Past Students' Prizes:	Nova Williamson, R. Fisk
Vicar of Beamish Divinity Prize:	Nova Williamson

From Bill Anderson

Hi Ted

Attached is a copy of the cast of Life with Father

The programme shows that we performed it Nov 20, 21, 22, 23 in I think 1957. For some reason it does not state the year

The young boys in the front of the picture are Ernest M. Robinson and Wilfred Howe

I was wrong, there were four maids played by: Ann Davidson, Betty Anderson, Susan Rodham and Patricia Mitchell

I am sorry I am not sure who this one is in the picture. If any of the girls (ladies I should say) live near to you they may be able to help

Good luck and cheers

Bill

(Isn't it amazing what people have kept ? Ted.)

Editors note: picture referred to appeared in Issue 22.

CHARACTERS

in order of appearance

Annie (a maid)	...	Ann Davidson
Mother (Vinnie)	...	Margaret E. Icceton
Clarence	...	David T. Forsyth
John	...	Harry Baxter
Whitney	...	Ernest M. Robinson
Harlan	...	Wilfred Howe
Father	...	Martin Pickard
Margaret (the cook)	...	Anne Pendleton
Cousin Cora	...	Ann English
Mary Skinner	...	Sheena Armstrong
The Rev. Dr. Lloyd	...	Frederick C. Smales
Delia (a maid)	...	Betty Anderson
Nora (a maid)	...	Susan Rodham
Dr. Humphreys	...	William Armstrong
Dr. Somers	...	John S. Jackson
Maggie (a maid)	...	Patricia Mitchell

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

ACT ONE

Scene 1. Breakfast time.
A Spring morning.

Scene 2. Tea time.
The same day.

Ten minute interval

ACT TWO

Scene 1. Sunday, right after church.
A week later.

Scene 2. Breakfast time.
Two days later.

(During the second scene the curtain is closed to denote the lapse of three hours.)

Ten minute interval

ACT THREE

Scene 1. Mid-afternoon.
A month later.

Scene 2. Breakfast time.
The next morning.

THE QUEEN