

TANFIELD ASSOCIATION



Secretary: Elizabeth Hawkins, 15 Thirlmere, Vigo, Chester le Street. DH3 2JY Secretary@tanfield-association.org
Editor: Ted Brabban, Suncroft, North Road, Hare Law, Stanley. DH9 9AY ted.brabban@nasuwt.net
Elizabeth: Tel. 01914103472 Ted: Tel. 01207 570447

NEWSLETTER No. 27

Autumn 2013

Editorial - Autumn 2013

Just where did 2013 go? Here we are twelve months since we were celebrating the school having its 100th birthday, and in the blink of an eye it seems, we are back again to mark its 101st. Is it me, or are the sands of time running ever faster?

Our new team has settled in and business is rolling. The school too has seen changes as staff have left and others fill their place. We have made a big effort to get to know each other, and what we are about. Elizabeth, Bob, Peter and I have had working lunches with Graeme Lloyd, the Headmaster of Tanfield, and with our new staff contact Lynne Bell. Our message to Graeme was that we are not about influencing school matters, but are there to give support when we are able. With Lynne we discussed ways in which this might be achieved. It was all very constructive, and Lynne suggested ways in which we may be able to help. Financial support is always paramount, however so watch this space, as they say. We may be a bit more involved than previously, and in different ways.

We have just celebrated the School's 101st birthday by having an Open Day for members and friends on Saturday (19th October). We had a good turnout, and folks enjoyed tours of the school as it is today, followed by a free buffet lunch. Peter has opened a Facebook account, Friends of Tanfield School, which has over 800 subscribers. The event was advertised there and on Elizabeth's own Facebook site, as well as amongst yourselves,

Contents

Editorial

The 101st Birthday

Feedback from 101st Birthday

Tanfield Warriors

From Jeff Burdon

Tanfield Year 11 Awards Evening

A little bit of help

Follow up from issue 26

The 'Where are they Now' Photo

Post Script

and so we met people who had not been around previously and some of whom paid their dues and joined the Association. Facebook would appear to be a good way to keep in touch with the more recent pupils of the school who are markedly absent from our membership.

I have been disappointed at the lack of response to my photograph asking 'Where are they now'? I am sure that some of those shown are amongst our readers but only one has responded. Come on folks, help me out. On the other hand, the photo labelled '1952 I'm Guessing' had my phone ringing, and my email hot with responses. Maybe it is just that the retired generation have more time! Whatever, I am dependent upon you to keep the Newsletter alive and relevant. Without your input it will dry up, so, please help out. Send me a paragraph about something, or someone you remember to do with your schooldays. It all helps, and if it generates response, all the better. Photographs are welcome too, - provided you identify the subjects! (Prints will be scanned and returned. A jpg file to ted.brabban@nasuwt.net is good for me, the work is done!)

One of the benefits of having your Newsletter delivered by email was brought home rather forcibly with the last edition. I received the printed paper version for posting the same day that Peter received the computer files for sending out via email. I spent half of the day folding, enveloping and addressing my 240 or so and had them ready for stamping and posting the following day. Before breakfast the following morning I had on my computer a letter responding to one of the items in the Newsletter, and just after breakfast I had a phone call giving me information asked for in an item. I hadn't even got to the post office with the paper copies. If you have an email address your copy is with you immediately, and the photos are in colour! (From our viewpoint it is also free delivery, whereas the postal charges are quite hefty) If you haven't arranged an email delivery yet, contact Peter: webmaster@tanfield-association.org and do yourself and us a favour!

The 101st Birthday

October again and the first year of the next school century has passed. We wanted to mark it so Elizabeth set about arranging an Open Day. It was held on Saturday, 19th and really well attended. The weather was awful but it hadn't put off those who wanted to renew their acquaintance with the old place. I met one lady who had driven up through the rain from Hull to be there. Now there's dedication!



We met new and younger faces on the afternoon because Elizabeth had advertised the event on Facebook and so a wider audience was reached. We had a terrific display of old photos - the collection keeps on growing! Peter has contacts who bring back photos from the dead and so we have decent large prints to look at. The photos are always very popular amongst our visitors.

The team who did tours of the school at the 100th birthday were on hand again to take groups around the school. This is no mean feat as it takes about one hour to get around , try to explain and to answer questions. Those who hadn't seen the school since its updating were totally impressed with what is available in this day and age. No one wished to start again however!!



A buffet lunch was provided and enjoyed. The team from the Blue Bell did us proud again with hot and cold dishes and drinks. Elizabeth had organised a School Birthday Cake to mark the occasion, and it was delicious!



There was some very complimentary feedback, which is always appreciated.



FEEDBACK ON FACEBOOK FROM THE 101st

Rebecca Muncaster: Had a fantastic time at the 101 birthday at Tanfield School. Can't wait till next year.

Sally Jones-Mackie: Loving time looking back at my final school years at Tanfield 101 anniversary today. It was lovely to catch up with Mrs Hawkins and Mrs Bilton.

Annmarie Hall: It was fantastic to celebrate Tanfield Comprehensive's 101st birthday. Loved every minute, thank you. Lovely seeing all the old teachers and students :-)

Sarah Donnelly: Thank you for organising!

Emma Jane Morey: Thanks to you too! My brother & I really enjoyed the tour!

Ange Foster: Well done for all the organising! Well put together :-)

Sue Marshall: Wonderful day! Really enjoyed it! Worth driving up for! Look forward to the next one :-)

Kathryn Goodchild: Thank you for organising.

Diane Armstrong: Thank you, enjoyed the tour.

Angela Logan: So disappointed couldn't be there as my mum was ill and just out of hospital.

Michaela Hamilton: We enjoyed seeing the old photos. Lots of laughs. Thank you for organising it!

Tracy Graham: It was great, well done.

Mark Hodgson: Well done, shame I missed it flying all over North Durham on nightshift and up in Northumberland tonight.

Lisa Carhart-Harris: Thank you! We had great time, brought back some fond memories. Had a fab afternoon visiting my old Comprehensive School for 101st Birthday Celebrations with Emma, lots of old photos to chuckle at and loads of great memories, some classrooms exactly the same, thank you for organising.

Tom Cooper: I really enjoyed it. Thanks.

Shauna Rose: Wish I could have come but I was at work :-)

Lynne Margaret Davison: We had a great time. Thanks again. It was lovely looking back and hearing different people's stories.

Tony Wilson: I didn't make it (too ill). Next time hopefully. Hope everyone had a great time.

Claire Mitcheson: We had a lovely time. Wasn't too sure about some of those photos though!

Pam Dinning: Thank you for your hard work. We really enjoyed the afternoon.

Anne Clasper: Pleased it went well for all the hard work you all put in to it. Tanfield would be lost without you.

Claire Humpherson: Well done you! All seemed to go very well.

On behalf of Hazel and myself I should like to express grateful thanks for the illuminating, informative tour of the school yesterday. We were both amazingly impressed by the educational changes over the past 65 years.

Personally, I find it difficult to comprehend that there are students, despite all the educational aids at their disposal, who wish to opt out of education. I know because my grandson, James, was one who consequently found it extremely difficult to find employment.

Having said that, I suppose all the IT gadgets in the world are worthless unless accompanied by a dedicated staff and recent results would indicate that the school has no shortage.

Kindest regards and best wishes; Harry & Hazel Taylor.

Subject: Tanfield Association

Elizabeth,

It was good to hear from you and I hope you're keeping well. Thank you for asking me to come along to this afternoon's get-together. It would be good to meet up with some former colleagues but this afternoon is unfortunately not a convenient date.

Maybe there will be another opportunity to meet up. Hope you all enjoy this afternoon and I will be grateful if you could pass on my best wishes to former colleagues.

Kindest regards, Eric Fisk

Hi Elizabeth

Thank you for the invitation to the 101st birthday. It is a long journey from Hampshire for such a short time. Therefore I regret that I will not be attending

Best wishes, Jack Stephens

TANFIELD WARRIORS

Just as you turn the corner to go up the steps into the dining room in school, you will pass a brass plaque placed unobtrusively at knee height and very easy to miss. It shows the names of the old boys of the school who fought and died in the First World War. Nine names. The youngest was just nineteen when he died; the oldest, twenty five.

I must admit that I had forgotten the plaque's existence until I received a request for help from Lesley Wood, Head of Art at Tanfield. She told me that to mark the centenary of the outbreak of war in 1914, Durham County Council are promoting an art exhibition which will go on display at the DLI Museum early in 2015. Pupils from schools around the county will work on their contributions to the exhibition during the remainder of this year and all of next year. Tanfield's pupils will honour those ex-pupils and members of staff who fought for their country by taking them as the theme for their art work. Hence the request to the Tanfield Association to research anyone from the school who went to war.

From the school's log book, it appears that seven members of staff joined up in 1915, but no names are given. The staff register is more forthcoming: four male members of staff are shown as having volunteered for military service: John Ingram, Allan M. Sutherland, John Samuel Melville and Harry Tillott. They all returned safely and took up their teaching posts again. The plaque honouring the old boys who died gives the names and the units in which they served. It reads:

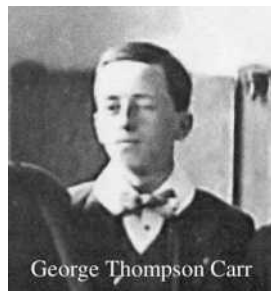
**IN MEMORY OF
THE OLD BOYS WHO DIED FOR THEIR COUNTRY
IN THE GREAT WAR 1914 - 1918**

**GEORGE THOMPSON CARR
JOHN WILLIAM DAGLISH
JOSEPH DAVISON
INGRAM THOMAS ELSDON
PETER GILLESPIE
CALLEY PATTINSON
HAROLD THOMAS PEADON
WILLIAM EDWARD RICHARDSON
FREDERICK SEED**

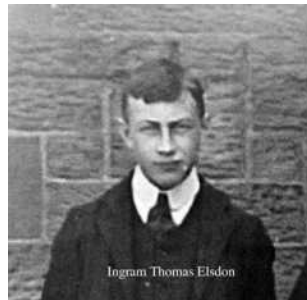
**RAF
22ND DLI
1ST NORTHUMBERLAND FUSILIERS
2/5 WEST YORKS
TRAINING RESERVES
12TH ROYAL SCOTS
4TH WELSH REGIMENT
14TH LONDON SCOTTISH
RNVR**



Calley Pattinson



George Thompson Carr



Ingram Thomas Elsdon



Joseph Davison

We have no way of knowing how many old boys served their country and survived, but there were enough of them to pay for the plaque which honoured the dead.

Mrs Wood would welcome help from anyone with an interest in the project. My thanks go already to Keith Hagar, former pupil of AWS and military historian, who is currently trawling through records, already with some success, seeking information on the four staff members. I have started to look for information on the old boys who died. I looked first at the class photos that were taken in the school's opening years, and, sure enough, there were photographs of four of them as children. It is so sad to think that they were barely more than children when they died.

If anyone is interested in helping with research, could you please contact me? I don't know if the families still live locally but they may do, and you may be acquainted with some of them. Photographs of any Tanfield men in uniform would be of enormous value to the project. Keith tells me that the Durham County Records Office holds a microfiche collection of editions of the Stanley News from mid-1914.

Local History groups may be able to help. If you have any ideas or any useful contacts, please let me know. Together, we may be able to do these lads proud.

Elizabeth

From Jeff Burdon (1957-1962)

Elizabeth/Ted,

I am writing my biography for my grandchildren, and I wondered if an extract would be of interest for the Newsletter. It's written in a somewhat tongue in cheek style. I tried to capture my confusion, excitement and a clear sense of inadequacy that I'm sure we all felt during our first year at SGS. If it is of some interest, please feel free to edit as you see fit.

I loved the '100 not out' publication, thanks so much for helping me acquire a copy. Also enjoyed seeing the photos of the reunion event.

I haven't been back to the North East in quite a few years, and my UK trips are much less frequent these days. Next year, who knows?

Take Care

Jeff Burdon
Orlando, Florida

Stanley Grammar School? Never heard of it. That was my reaction when the Dunston Junior School headmistress announced in morning assembly the names of those who had passed their 11-plus. Why did they indulge in such public humiliation in those days? As soon as she was past your name in the alphabet, you knew you'd failed, your life was over. She was well into the middle of the alphabet before I realized that I was not, after all, going to attend Blaydon Grammar School (located just three miles from my home), my older brother's Alma Mater. I'd failed. How did that happen? Mum and Dad were definitely not going to be pleased. Then I hear through the gloom "and Jeffrey Burdon will be going to Stanley Grammar School". Where? Why me? All my mates are going to BGS and I am going where? That's the price we baby boomers paid. It seems that there were so many of us that some sort of school zoning was in order - and I was being zoned off to SGS.

My SGS uniform was acquired from a seedy looking department store in Stanley, at considerable cost I might add. The school blazer came with badge and yellow piping. And a daft cap. And a really bad tie. I looked like an emaciated Billy Bunter! I summoned all the stiff upper lip an eleven year old can manage and on my first day, rode the No. 2 bus for what seemed an eternity. I was somewhat reassured by the fact that all the other new boys looked as pathetic as I felt. Except that a few of them looked very grown up - long pants! My exposed knees screamed "cover me" but given what my Mum and Dad must have paid for them, those short trousers and knees would be visible for some time yet.

Segregated by last name, I was placed in the "A through H" form. My classmates all looked quite normal and friendly. Until, that is, someone asked me which team I supported. As a lifelong Magpie, I told them with some pride "Newcastle, of course". Big mistake. No-one warned me that this was Mackem country. Fortunately for me, it was assembly time so off we marched, a very orderly single-file, down to the main hall. I've been back to SGS since then and either I've grown a lot or they've demolished a good bit of the hall. It seemed cavernous in

1958. A hush fell over the hall, and this terrifying figure appeared center stage, all in black complete with flowing cape, looking like Christopher Lee playing Dracula. It was, someone whispered, Dr Sharp. I am a firm believer in first impressions, and Dr Sharp did not disappoint. But more of that later.

After a brief/stern/terse welcome, we were then informed that we would be segregated once more, this time by house. For my time at SGS I was to be in Tanfield House, and green would be my colour. A quick burst of the school song (once heard, never forgotten) and we were heading back to our classrooms. And then the final act of segregation. Girls seated down the left of the class and boys down the right. No hanky-panky at this school. Desks were paired and I fortunately got a desk next to Davy who became a close friend during my five years at SGS.

Those first few traumatic weeks soon turned into months, I was getting the hang of this. Short pants quickly grew into long trousers (goodbye knees), the daft cap accidentally flew out of the bus window one day but the absurd blazer piping stayed for a while though. My allegiance to the Toon never became an issue as I was a decent player. Especially in the school yard. They made us play with small plastic balls, a bit bigger than a tennis ball and full of holes, we called them “pills”. Weighed about as much as a table-tennis ball. It flew straight and hard for about three feet and then wind resistance took over. That particular physics problem was soon solved - we were grammar school boys after all. Split the pill and insert another pill inside. Repeat once more and voila (first form French) you have a ball that maintains direction and velocity. It also could (and did) break windows. Split pills were confiscated if found. Tant Pis (more first form French - thank you Mr Jolly).

I had lots of questions that first year, including “who is that pretty blonde girl in 1C?” I was clearly confused. She didn’t play football, probably couldn’t play cricket so why the attraction? Ah, the joys of puberty.

And all of a sudden, it was April and year-end exams loomed. I got my act together, forgot the pretty blonde from 1C and studied hard - a trait I was unable to sustain past year one. Never mind, my endeavours enabled me to claw my way up to third place in form 1A. As if that wasn’t reward enough, I was to receive a book prize. I was handed a letter for my parents, informing them that I could choose a book of my choice in Newcastle’s largest book store. It wasn’t necessary to browse the shelves, there was only one book for me, “Golden Goals” by Jackie Milburn. Just prior to prize-giving, I can vividly remember being told by a clearly disappointed Dr Sharpe that if I were ever to be so fortunate as to receive another award, I should perhaps select a somewhat more academic book. First impressions are never wrong. Regardless, I’d obviously peaked at 11 years old, no more prizes in store for me.

Tanfield Year 11 Awards Evening

Members of the Tanfield Association were pleased to be invited to the annual Awards Evening for Year 11 (Fifth Years) on October 24th. The hall was packed with pupils, parents and invited guests as Tanfield’s best ever examination results were celebrated and certificates given out. Mr Lloyd was delighted to welcome back the year group in which 72% of pupils had achieved five or more GCSEs at grade C or above.

After the exam certificates, the special prizes were awarded for excellence in particular areas. These included the Tanfield Association awards for Science & Engineering and for Outstanding Contribution in the Community. As well as these, the Charlotte Stammers Award

for English (donated by Charlotte, who is a member of the association) was given to the pupil who had achieved the highest results in English Language / Literature.

Bob Harrison was asked to present the Tanfield Association awards to Connor Milne (Science and Engineering) and Emily Hindson (Community). Christine McGough, formerly Head of English and Assistant Head Teacher, presented the Charlotte Stammers Award to Chelsea Winter.



Afterwards, Bob, Ted and I were able to chat to the award winners as they assembled for the obligatory photo-shoot. Connor, we found out, received his award for achieving two Bs and a C in Science, and a Distinction in Engineering. He is now studying for an International Baccalaureat at Newcastle. Emily received her award for her involvement with St John's Ambulance Brigade. She is now at New College, Durham, Studying Health and Social Care. Chelsea achieved A* in English Lang/Lit and is now studying A Level Language and Literature at Durham Sixth Form Centre.

We wish them every success in the future.

It really made us proud to hear that Tanfield is achieving such excellent results. It is one of the top achievers in the county. As well as this, Tanfield is *the* top school in the county for "value added" ie the amount of academic progress made by individual pupils from their arrival in the school in Year 7 to their departure for pastures new five years later. This is a significant achievement for the school, and I'm sure all members of the association will join us in saying 'Well Done!' to Mr Lloyd, the staff and the pupil.

Elizabeth



A Little Bit of Help

We see our role as being there to help when we can. Recently the school held an evening meeting for the parents of prospective pupils, and we were there. Recruitment of pupils is very important in education these days. The old times of catchment areas and allocation of pupils has gone. In this day and age the open market prevails, and if you can't fill your school, it dies! In Stanley we have the new, technically up to date, massively funded Academy now open. They have been

recruiting quite vigorously, and we have heard rumours that the school at Pelton is suffering and likely to close. We don't want that to happen at Tanfield. The current school exam results speak for themselves, and the Headmaster and staff were explaining all of that side to the parents. We tried to do our bit by showing the age, the heritage and the achievements of the school. Elizabeth and I set up shop and talked to parents as they came in. In many cases we were talking to the converted, but we hoped that our enthusiasm for the old place may have rubbed off and helped some make up their minds to send their offspring to continue the tradition.

Follow - Up from Issue 26

From the photo - '1952 - I'm Guessing':

Dear Ted,

Catching up with past issues of Tanfield Association Newsletters, I found this photograph and felt able to identify some of the characters whose names I have written in. The others I can recognise by appearance but cannot remember their names. Sorry for being so late in sending this but better late than never!

Kind Regards,

Don Chapman

(Bob's son)



A phone call from Cecil Johnson confirmed the names on the 1952 photo - apart from the 'debated girl' - Freda Henderson, Wendy Herdman, or Florence Hutchinson. Will the owner of the face please come forward!

Cecil also confirmed that the French teacher giving an outdoor lesson was indeed Miss Hakin, and the boys either side of him are Eric Brown and John Wilson.

Re. the 1952 black and white photograph in the Spring 2013 Newsletter.

From left to right, our memories are as follows,

Cecil Snell (Watling), Jean Hetherington (Tanfield) Pearl Mitchison (Dunelm), Alex Porter (Dunelm),

Jack Wilson (Head Boy), Dick Rose (Tanfield), Joan Parnaby (Head Girl), David York (Neville),

Marjorie Henderson, ? and not sure about the last young lady.

Perhaps other readers have already filled in the blanks ?

They were all in either first or second sixth.

With best regards.

David and Jean York.

Dear Ted,

I was delighted to receive a visit this morning from Martin and Pearl (formerly Mitcheson) Reay. Besides picking up a copy of '100 - Not Out', Pearl was able to name all of the people on the photo captioned '1952 I'm Guessing' in the last newsletter. From left to right, the names are: Cecil Snell, Jean Hetherington, Pearl Mitcheson, Alec or Alex Porter(?), John Wilson, Richard Rose, Joan Parnaby, David York, Wendy Herdman and Sylvia Peart. The photo was probably taken in 1952 though there's a slight chance that it may have been taken in '53.

The good news is that Pearl has more school photos that she is going to hunt out for inclusion in the newsletter or on the website. Martin has already supplied one of the 1946 football team with Mr Chapman. No doubt we'll see them in a newsletter sometime this year.

Best wishes,
Elizabeth

From Eric Rainbow

Hi Ted

Doing a bit of late night work so might get some of the names on the photograph in the Newsletter 26 photograph to you before David York - though its still daytime in Vancouver. Thought Mavis or you would have recognised them anyway.

From the left:

Cecil Snell, Jean Hetherington(now York), Pearl Mitchison (I think), Alex Porter, Jack Wilson, Dick Rose (married Sheila Young) (both deceased), Joan Parnaby (married Brian Price) (both deceased), David York, Freda Henderson (I think), Sylvia Peart (I think).

Its probably a mixture of Upper and Lower Sixth and probably 1952 but can't think of the occasion.

Hope you're both well. Have not seen or heard of Jack Wilson since I met him at Barnard Castle School where my sons were and he was bringing his only son (after I think five girls) to board; that was about 40 years ago

Regards

Eric

Editor: Yes Eric, Mavis and I could have supplied the names, but that wouldn't have generated folks like yourself to contact us. Keep in touch. Best wishes, Ted.

The 'Where are they now' photo:

Dear Elizabeth,

Thank you for the invitation to the 101st birthday open afternoon. Unfortunately, I will be out of the area that weekend and so regret being unable to attend.

I noticed recently in the Spring Newsletter Ted asks where are they now? You probably have these already but, top left, of course, Mr Cameron (Science), third left Andrew Simpson, now as I understand a consultant at North Tees Hospital. Next to Ted (front) one of the Scott boys? (Stanley Coaches etc.-transport firm). The man on the right is not Giles Radice MP so who?



I enclose a small donation to assist with Association funds.

Best wishes, Alban McKie

Editor : Peter Brown put a name to the M.P. He is Mr David Watkins who represented Consett from '66 until '83. Ted

Postscript :

After the 101st we cleared up, but there was still some birthday cake remaining. Elizabeth put aside three pieces to take home for family, and I cut a slice to take home to keep two old pensioners topped up with carbohydrates. Sadly it was not to be.



When Elizabeth went to collect her things, 2 of her 3 pieces had been eaten. Her family got short rations that day.

I proceeded to my car carrying various items for storage with the cake slice, on a plate, balanced on top. Having negotiated various doorways and steps, and within spitting distance of the car, the cake slice slipped off the top. There it lay on the rain soaked tarmac, and all my dreams of having boundless energy lay shattered with it.

What a sad end to a lovely party.