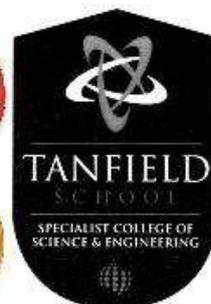


# TANFIELD ASSOCIATION

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NEWSLETTER No. 28

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## Editorial

Xmas is over, there are Easter Eggs in Tesco, so this must be a Spring Term edition, although looking outside, and watching the TV News it certainly doesn't look like Springtime!! However, looking on the bright-side, weather-wise, the best is yet to come.

The new team running our Association is now well in place. Elizabeth Hawkins now has the reins and is doing sterling work and keeping us all involved. One of the areas that we have been looking at is membership.

You will be aware from the letters that went out with the last Newsletter that we are attempting to formalise the payment of subscriptions. When we got down to it we realised that there were some members who were along for a free ride, whilst others were paying a reduced fare! All of us are without doubt aware that with costs of services rising the way that they have over the last few years everything we do will cost more. That is why we can no longer accept a 'laissez- faire' attitude to subscriptions. We just cannot afford to fulfil our function without adequate funds to do so. So, we are reminding those who need a reminder that the subs are £10 per person per annum, and that it is best all round if payment is made by a bank standing order. One of our outlays is the distribution of the Newsletter, which we would like to do each term. The time has probably come when we won't be able to include in the distribution list those who don't subscribe. Of course that is just house-keeping. We also exist to help financially with selected school projects. It is obvious that with reduced funds this

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Harvest Camp Photo

Some photos which have been sent to me

becomes difficult. We know that you all have an interest in your old school, and we would like to channel that interest to help the pupils of today, so please help us and check that your standing order is in place and to the correct amount.

We produce the Newsletter as a means of keeping members in touch with what is happening in school now, and to enjoy the reminiscences and news of past pupils and staff. The former we can do easily because we are here and in touch with the school. For the latter we rely on you. We are always looking for items to include and print. So, come on folks, you have all had a good education, write that letter or that article that you have been putting off and get it to me. My e-mail is on the cover. Photos are very welcome too. If you can, scan and send me a jpg, that is great, if you can't, send a print by post which I will scan and return. (I have been known to return a repaired and improved copy with the original!) I hope that I am snowed under by mail.

Did you get yours? If you were too late to get a copy of '100 - Not Out' I am pleased to be able to tell you that a reprint run has made more copies now available. Contact Elizabeth Hawkins, - details on the front cover.

Ted Brabban, Editor.

# Tanfield Association Subscription

Where does your £10 go?



Copying and mounting displays of photos taken over the years.



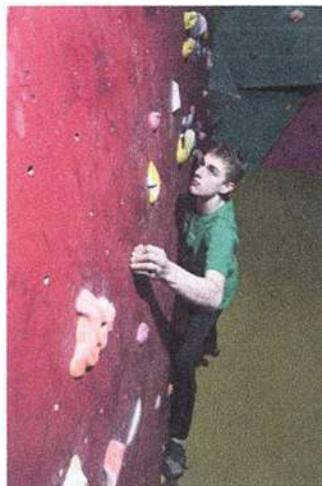
Production of the newsletter, postage and packaging, general stationery and admin.



Organising events including the annual birthday celebrations of the school.



We make annual awards to students.



We sent 10 students on a rock-climbing course for GCSE PE.

We would like to give financial support to provide 'memorable moments' for students and to help them further their studies and personal development



We funded 14 students' attendance at a Foreign Languages conference at Northumbria University.



Providing hospitality at the AGM and birthday celebration.



We funded the development of a garden by the Science Club members

?

Who knows what we'll support next?

## A Luncheon Date at School

Nineteen members of the association will have good cause to remember the 5<sup>th</sup> of November this year, as we were invited to lunch at school. The meal was planned, cooked and served by pupils who are studying catering and who have to prepare and serve a meal to invited guests as part of their course.

We were delighted when Mrs Lynne Bell, who is responsible for the school's links with the community, issued the invitation. We duly turned up at 2pm to be greeted by Mrs Bell and then by Mr Lloyd, who had been slightly delayed by a call from Ofsted to say that they were coming to inspect the school the next day!

This news in no way affected our appetites (though some of us who used to teach did shudder in sympathy) and we sat down, eagerly anticipating the treat in store.

And it really was a treat. The 'Healthy Heart' menu began with creamy tomato soup, served with crème fraîche and parmesan croutons. It was delicious. The waiters who served and cleared were smartly dressed and unfailingly polite as they went about their duties.

The main course was 'Cheat's Chicken Kiev' (so called because of the low fat ingredients used). This was served with winter crunch salad, roasted vine tomatoes and new potatoes. The same high standard of cooking and serving had been maintained and everyone really enjoyed it.

By now we knew that we could look forward to the dessert with confidence and we were right. The pear and blackberry crumble, served with ice cream, was as delicious as the rest. Tea and coffee rounded off the meal very nicely.

The cooks were called from the kitchen, the waiters were assembled and we gave them all a well-deserved round of applause. The wide smiles on their faces said it all.

Our thanks go to Lynne Bell; to Louise Keen and Melissa Butler, the two members of staff who supervised the preparation and serving of the meal, who had obviously taught the students so well, and, of course, to the students themselves. They did themselves proud.

Postscript: We heard later that the Ofsted inspection went really well!





A Luncheon Date at School



## Conclusions of the Ofsted team that inspected Tanfield in November 2013.

### **This is a good school.**

- This is a good and improving school where students achieve well because of effective teaching.
- Teaching is good in the majority of lessons and some is outstanding.
- Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good and students enjoy coming to school.
- The school has a strong ethos of care whereby teachers know, value and support students well. Students say they feel safe and cared for by teachers.
- The curriculum is well planned to meet students' needs and prepares them well for the next stages of their education.
- Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school and a key factor in students emerging as responsible young adults.
- The head teacher, well supported by a determined leadership team, has brought about sustained improvements in teaching, achievement and behaviour since the previous inspection.

### **100 – Not Out**

Because the original print run sold out, a second, smaller print run has been made. This means that there are copies available for those who missed out the first time, or for those who wish to add to their collection. The price remains the same at £12.50. To order you need to contact Elizabeth, our secretary, Her contact details are on the front cover.

Strike while the iron is hot, the ink is still wet, and there are still copies on the shelf. This will become a collector's item and not to be missed. Make sure that you have yours.

### **Amy Bilton:**

Yesterday, during a visit to Stoneleigh care home in Annfield Plain, I was privileged to meet Nora Brown. This beautiful lady with smooth pink cheeks, bright eyes and thick white curls, has reached the incredible age of 107. Her memory is truly amazing; she remembered my parents, Annabell & Jim Seccombe, knew mother's sister & her husband, and remembered my Dad's siblings, Harold, Ellen, Lilian & Ivy. (Some people might remember her daughter Ivy Robinson from the 40s and her son Tony, from the 50s).

"I was in the same form as Ivy at the Grammar School" she said, "and you look a bit like her". This is true. Then she told me she is the oldest ex-pupil of Tanfield School, and that her daughter, Joyce, now aged 77years, also attended the school.

"Have you got the centenary book?" she asked. "I'm on page 12"

Of course the first thing I did when I arrived home was to read her article. What a super lady.

I forgot to add that Norah is the second oldest person in the country.

## Amy Bilton

I enclose some interesting old photos, -three from Cousin Nigel and one from Cousin Ivy Clarence (nee Robinson).

Cousin Ivy (1946 – 1951) has lived in Lichfield for many years. Knowing that she'd be interested I sent her copies of the three commemorative Tanfield books, together with bits of information. However it was only recently that she had told her sister, Sylvia, that there was a badge missing from the selection on a letter that I had sent. She told her the name, 'Tanfield Lea Higher Elementary School and Pupil Teacher Centre. Those initials were on a small badge which had belonged to her mother, Ivy Seccombe before marriage – and they still had it!



Ivy agreed to send me the badge together with a class photo taken in 1920, as well as a prospectus. How thrilled I was to receive that super badge, and in perfect condition. It is 1¼ inches square and probably from a hat. The class photo must have been taken on a special occasion, perhaps a party as all the pupils are dressed in their best. Their teacher, Mr Ingram, is in the front row.

I wondered if Nora Brown, at 107 our oldest ex-pupil, who lives in the Stoneleigh Care Home in Annfield Plain, might be able to name some of the pupils. From previous conversations I knew that she remembered Ivy Seccombe very well. I visited and showed her the photographs.



She immediately spotted herself, ringlets, back row, with Ivy in front of her and a Robin Rowe next to her. Mr Ingram, she said, was their physics teacher, and then she recognised Edith Hall next to him and 2<sup>nd</sup> from the left. (I knew Jean Rowe a year or two younger than I was at Tanfield, who looked just like Robin Rowe! I wonder?)

I gave Nora a copy of the photo which pleased her, and she showed me a stack of beautiful cards from the Queen on her 100<sup>th</sup> and subsequent birthdays. She is a super lady who is still sharp as a knife at 107.

Nora told me about her cousin's son Thornton Davison, a former pupil now in his late 60s, who went to Cambridge and is now a Doctor – but not of medicine. A researcher she said, to do with biology. What a coincidence as he was my brother's friend and lived near to us in Stanley. Such a small world.

Isn't it a shame, Ted, that we didn't have the badge for the Centenary? However, better late than never.

Photos from Cousin Nigel. Annie Morris was his mother.



2<sup>nd</sup> Years



Party Time.



A Senior Group.

Annie was born in 1904, and subsequently became a teacher.

Amy.

P.S.

Nora Gwendoline Brown passed away on January 27<sup>th</sup>, only a month before her 108<sup>th</sup> birthday. Stoneleigh, Annfield Plain had been her home since last August, and she was loved and respected there. In fact, it was said she was the queen bee of the care home !

We said goodbye to Nora on Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> February; it was a lovely service, with " Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring" for the cortege entering Mountsett.

Surprisingly, I recognised Nora's daughter, Joyce, from Tanfield in the 50s.

Nora had a wonderfully long life and will be sadly missed.

### **Innocents Abroad**

In 1963 or thereabouts, during the Easter holidays, a school trip to Belgium and Holland was organised. We visited Keukenhof Gardens to see the wonderful display of tulips, though we were told that the display was disappointing because winter had gone on for so long that the flowers hadn't come on as they should. We also visited Bruges.

Besides myself, there were four other members of staff - Hector Hall, Gina Eggleston, Ann Petersen and Corinna Simpson. We took turns to have an evening off. One evening, Hector and I were off duty, having a leisurely look around, when we realised we were being followed by a crocodile of the girls. They had found the local boys 'a bit too forward'. We ended up chaperoning them for the evening.

For me, the high point of the trip was a request from some of the girls to attend church. We had gone to church in Holland, but found it impossible to follow the service. We were coming back via Bruges and would actually be travelling on Good Friday. So, on Thursday evening, we managed to find an English vicar who was delighted to hold a service for us. Ann Petersen played the organ and Hector read the lesson. It was all really enjoyable.

It's a pleasure to look back on that holiday. It was a lovely opportunity to talk to the pupils socially and their behaviour was exemplary.

Ced Dolman



Diane Pickering, Shirley Douglas, Angela Peart, Janice Black, Elizabeth Carter, and Sheila Hamilton, 7 of the 'Innocents Abroad'.

From Florence Darby (Hutchinson)

Thank you for Newsletter 27 – always very welcome! It is good that so many of the late 40's and early 50's are mentioned. It brings back many memories.

An update on those that I have kept in touch with. Wendy Herdman and Margaret Little are still very close and we meet regularly.



Wendy lives near to me in Wolverhampton, so we are in close contact. Margaret, who married old boy Maurice Robinson, lived in Watford for many years before moving to Market Harborough in Leicestershire. She comes to stay often, and we enjoy playing Scrabble. The photo of the three of us was taken a short while ago.

In Issue 27, in the photo from 1952, the person in front of David York is Wendy.

Eric Rainbow mentions Jack Wilson in his letter. I am in regular touch with Jack, who lives in Hertfordshire with his wife Rosemary. Yes they did have six children, and now have many grandchildren.

I love hearing from Pearl Mitchison, Jean Hetherington and others who were in the Sixth Form 1951 -1953.

My brother lived in Whickham, and on one occasion I was invited with him for lunch with Dr. and Mrs Sharp. They were excellent hosts, and we had a really interesting visit.

Another precious memory is my contact with Jack Dobbs (J.P.B. Dobbs – Music teacher 1946 ish) We exchanged letters in the year before he died, which I still enjoy reading. (Miss Allison would not approve of the split infinitive!)

My good wishes to all who remember me.

Florence.

### **Squadron Leader John Thirlwell Wanless**



Jack Wanless was born in 1904 and went to Tanfield Lea higher Elementary School (later Alderman Wood School) in 1915. He worked at Craghead Collieries after leaving school, but, having become a lay preacher, he decided to become a Minister.

Jack studied for the Ministry at Hartley College, Manchester and was ordained in 1931. He served in various parishes in Scotland and England, aided by his wife, but shortly after the outbreak of war, he decided to join the RAF Voluntary Reserve as a chaplain. He saw it as his duty to support those who were fighting the war. He was commissioned with the rank of Squadron Leader in early 1940.

He was posted to Singapore in November 1941, barely a month before it was taken by the Japanese army. He managed to escape to Java but was taken prisoner there and spent time in a number of Prisoner of War

camps. He also spent some time in gaol, having refused to carry out orders from his captors that were contrary to his beliefs.

When a large number of British and Australian men were to be transferred to Sandakan PoW camp in the jungles of Borneo, he asked to go with them. He was the only chaplain in the whole of the camp. Shortly after he arrived, an epidemic broke out, and survivors of the camp testified to Jack's care of the men: "He never spared himself to ease the sufferings of the lads." Religious services were forbidden but on many occasions he held a short funeral service at midnight, by the light of a candle, to give the dead a Christian burial. He was highly esteemed by members of all denominations. A Consett officer who survived the hell-hole of Sandakan came to Craghead to tell Jack's family how 'the Padre' was everyone's friend and that his work amongst the men would never be forgotten.

When Borneo was attacked by the Allies in late 1944, the camp was abandoned and the prisoners forced to march to another camp 250 miles inland at Ranau. They were too useful as slave labour, carriers and draught horses to leave behind. Of the 1000-plus men who started what would become known as the Death Marches, a pitiful few survived the horrific conditions. Jack Wanless made it to the camp at Ranau but, weakened by starvation and disease, died on June 30<sup>th</sup> 1945.

Betty Watson, Jack's niece, remembers sending him a message via the Red Cross when it was known he had been taken prisoner. It said, "Our thoughts and prayers are continually with you." These words must have brought comfort to him even as he was striving to bring comfort to the men who were suffering with him.

In October 1946, Jack was mentioned in despatches by the King, in recognition of "gallant and distinguished service whilst a prisoner of war".

[Thanks go to Betty Watson (née Needham) for making the file on the Reverend Wanless available.

**Dear Elizabeth**

I have some sad news. My Dad, Charles Atkinson passed away yesterday, 28th December 2013 at the age of 90.

He was delighted that the money that he sent was going to be used to promote science, a subject he was passionate about to the end, as was his thirst for knowledge and an inquisitive interest in where people he met had gone to school and their qualifications.

He remembered his school days and subsequent time at Durham with great affection and was proud to be associated with the school that encouraged him to study.

Kind regards

Helen Brook

## Duncan Davies

My sister has just sent me this picture of the County Sports in 1961. She was at the Upper Standards but they must have been part of the Stanley section. She is 2 rows in front of John Caine.



I bet there are a lot of names can be put to the picture.

I enjoyed the school dinner the other week but got a lot of complaints about stinking of garlic!

Hope to see you soon  
Duncan

This was the Stanley contingent at the 'March Past' marking the beginning of the 11<sup>th</sup> Annual County Championship held at Houghton le Spring on June 17<sup>th</sup> in 1961. The photo was shown in the Stanley News.



Editor: I think that this is the Tanfield section that I have enlarged. I can see John Caine, Geof Carr, Margaret Livesey, and other faces that I remember but can't name. Please help me out.

Dear Ted

Gladys Welsh gave me a box full of her old exercise books and exam papers from the war. I've been looking through some of them this morning and have attached a couple of extracts from her Domestic Science book. The daily housework load is an eye-opener, especially the amount to be done before breakfast!  
Cheers,

Elizabeth

NOTES

Wartime Pastry

Feb 2nd.

1oz flour,  $\frac{1}{2}$ oz shortening,  $\frac{1}{4}$ teasp. salt,  $\frac{1}{4}$ teasp. B.P.  
2 or 3 mashed, cooked potatoes.

Rub shortening into flour, add salt and B. Powder then mashed potatoes. No water will be needed as to mix it together. Roll out and use as required. It is best eaten hot.

## J P B Dobbs

I was recently reading 'Durham Sings!', a book about County Durham's contribution to hymn-writing over the last 1000 years, when I came across a reference to Jack Dobbs, as follows:

"Jack P B Dobbs (b 1922) was born in Gloucester and studied music at the University of Wales. He moved to County Durham in 1944 to take up a post as music specialist at Stanley Grammar School; moved in 1947 to become County Music Advisor and in 1952 to join the staff of Durham University. He guided players in the Consett Steelworks Band. Two of his hymn tunes were published in *Congregational Praise*: TEILO SANT was composed for the hymn 'Eternal Light', a difficult text to set to music. The tune was named after the sixth century Celtic saint and was described as "strong, flowing, melodic, persuasive, which brings out the adoration and joy which are expressed in (some of the) verses." DURSLEY TABERNACLE which was named for the church where he served as organist 1936-1940, was composed for "We sing of life, God's glorious gift to man", which has an unusual metre."

Of course, we remember Jack as an outstanding music teacher and as the writer of the music for 'First Things First', the school song.

Text from 'Durham Sings' reproduced by kind permission from the author, Canon Rosalind Brown, of Durham Cathedral.

Elizabeth

## Ted and Elizabeth

I've put out my feelers to find info about the photo in 'Where are they now'. The picture of the girl front left is Kim Sayers (still waiting to hear from her about what she's up to but she still lives in Stanley). The boy to the left of Mr Mckie is Mark Suddes (I played football with him). I've messaged Pauline Raffle, nee Nicholson, who is good friends still with his sister Christine who {lives in Whickham and is now a teacher}

As Mr Mckie correctly mentions Andrew is a Consultant but I think he is at Hartlepool General (although things change that quickly in the NHS). He was recently interviewed about the downgrading of Hartlepool casualty department on 'Look North'

*regards*

*Mark Hodgson*

*Bsc. SR Para*

## Harvest Camp Photo (See Overleaf)

I am putting names to the photo where remembered and n/r next to those I can't remember.

Front row left to right n/r, Keith Hagar wearing hat, Kenneth Grimes. Lawrence Kingston. Thomas Larvin, Harry Pinkerton, standing from the right- Mr Elliot, James Golightly, Basil Hutchinson, Ronnie Natrass. The bulk of the lads behind the front row were 6th form and not so well known to me, however, extreme left and cut in half is Ossie Barass and sixth to his left is Jimmy Clennel( one of the very best soccer players to attend Tanfield - He should have been a professional). I think we did about four camps including one to Worcester where we celebrated V-J Day 1945.

Best Wishes,

Keith Hagar

**Some Photographs I have been sent:**

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Mr. Glendenning with his form, and below with Mr Hall. Also Mr Jolly at Sports Day.

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Miss Allison with Sixth Form Girls.

If you have names for any of the pupils in the above photographs I would be pleased to know. You might even get a mention in the next issue. Fame awaits!