

TANFIELD ASSOCIATION

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NEWSLETTER No. 30

Winter 2014

Editorial

Issue 30 is a milestone for me. My first edition as editor was Issue 16, thus I have now edited and produced half of all the recorded publications. Perhaps I should write to myself; "Dear Sir, Is this a record?" (As a letter to the Times asked when CDs came out!)

This must be the last edition of 2014 as Tesco is full of Halloween and fireworks. The year has seen our Association change. We have become more involved with the school in both direct help and financial help. Some of us have been used as listening posts for pupils' reading, and we have been there to show the parents of prospective pupils what a tradition their child would be entering into, as well as becoming a pupil in a go-ahead educational establishment. The Association has become a small but relevant part of the ethos of the school. We are looking forward in 2015 to strengthening those ties and offering more support.

We have also added a new face to our top team. We welcome Howard Bott as our new Web-Master. He has made a good start in updating the site and it is well worth a visit. Details are inside.

We have just celebrated the 102nd birthday of the founding of the school, as you will read inside. However there is another aspect to the October birthday. It is the time that was chosen to be the annual date for the payment of subscriptions. So, your subs of £10 per annum are now due. Hopefully you pay by standing order, and you should see the deduction on your bank statement. If you don't subscribe in that way, now is the time to get your cheque in the post, if you haven't already done so.

The AGM at the Peacock, Tanfield Village

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Letters

The Cats who got the Cream

What did he say?

At the end of the calendar year I would like to record the thanks that we all owe to our Secretary, Elizabeth Hawkins. She is a prodigious worker on behalf of the Association, and a driving force in getting things done. In her we have a winner. Thank you Elizabeth.

Finally I will wish you all a Happy Family Xmas, and look forward to your continued support in 2015.

Ted Brabban

The A.G.M. at The Peacock, Tanfield Village

Serious businesses would laugh at what we call our AGM! We get together, have food, a laugh, meet old friends and along the way thank folks for what they have done and select those who will do what for the coming year. This year was no exception and our AGM was a very happy enjoyable occasion.

We met at The Peacock in Tanfield towards the end of September and had a good turnout. The serious business saw that the same team will run things for the coming year, (President Prof. Bob Harrison, Sec. Elizabeth Hawkins, Treas. Susan Donkin and Karen Scott, Assis. Sec. Amy Bilton, Newsletter, Ted Brabban and Web Manager, Howard Bott). We presented a cheque to the Chairman of the school governors (covering donations to help various aspects of school activities given over the year) and presented the Tanfield Glass to Ted Brabban for services rendered!

We had good food, a convivial atmosphere and a massive raffle. All in all as AGMs go this could not be beaten! Here are some images to illustrate the point.





A.G.M. Images continued:



The serious bit:

To avoid the occasion from becoming wordy, we ask the Officers to produce a report in writing. These are distributed and read, and may be questioned. Here are the reports:

PRESIDENT'S REPORT FOR 2014

2014 has been a year of crowded incident but no major landmarks. There have been a number of executive meeting and also planning meetings attended by the officers.

Then in no particular order we have:

- About 20 of us were given a beautifully served High Tea by pupils on 2.4.14.
- We assisted the school in presenting a photograph of A.J Dawson to Durham University Science Faculty.
- Members attended the school during second and third terms to hear pupils read in support of the Accelerated Reading Scheme.
- We funded a visit to a modern foreign languages conference for students. (£200)
- We funded a Rock-Climbing course for GCSE PE students. (£376)
- Members attended the Year 6 Parents' Afternoon, serving tea, coffee and cakes.
- Members filled bags of clothes for the North Air Ambulance, as part of the school's charity support following an accident on the school bus.
- We funded 25% of the transport costs for whole-school trip to Beamish Museum. (£450)
- Elizabeth accompanied the whole school end of year trip to Beamish Museum.
- A bequest from Dr Charles Atkinson was given to the Science Club. (£135)
- The association has agreed to fund 50% of the cost of aprons for cookery (£160) - a thank you for the high tea.
- We held a successful AGM at the Blue Bell with about 40 attendees.
- We held another successful Birthday party (the 101st) attended by about 80 members.
- We made awards to students in Engineering, Community Service as well as English Lang/ Lit (funded by Charlotte Stammers) and Girls in Engineering (funded by Joan Charlton)

I must also thank the other officers, Elizabeth, Amy, Ted, Susan and Karen and finally we must all thank Peter for all of his work, his energy and his unfailing loyalty to the association.

Once again best wishes to you all and kind regards,

Bob Harrison

President of the Tanfield Association

SECRETARY'S REPORT 2014

When I became Secretary of the Tanfield Association a couple of years ago, I went back to the original paperwork to remind myself of why the association had been set up. Broadly speaking, its two main aims were:

- to bring together and maintain links between people who were connected with the school
- to support the school financially and in other ways

Over the past year, the Officers and the Working Executive have done their best to fulfil those two aims. The President's report gives details of everything that we have done to support the school. We have been able to give just over £1300 to school projects which not only enhance learning but also provide pupils with memorable moments to look back on with pleasure. We have made awards to pupils who did well in Science/Engineering and in Community Service. Two of our members, Charlotte Stammers and Joan Charlton, have financed awards of their own, to be presented to pupils who do well in English and Engineering respectively. A group of us has supported the school's Accelerated Reading programme by listening to pupils read and encouraging their efforts. We have attended parents' meetings, talking to parents about the school's proud history, mounting photo displays and even serving tea, coffee and cakes on one memorable occasion. We helped the school to promote a new link with the Science Faculty of Durham University by facilitating the

gift of a portrait of A J Dawson, who was partly responsible for the creation of both the school and the university department. Committee members distributed bags to help the school's drive to support the North Air Ambulance (Susan Donkin was particularly good at this, delivering to the school a car-load of bags of clothes collected from her neighbours!)

We have also benefited from this closer relationship. The Head Teacher, Graeme Lloyd, and the Chair of Governors, Len Broxson, have both thanked the association warmly for its contribution to school life. Members who live locally have received invitations to lunch and to afternoon tea prepared and served by pupils and staff. We have been given much-needed storage space in the school for our collections of photos and other memorabilia (our thanks to Len Broxson for backing our request for storage facilities). We will be able to advertise the association in school publications. Joy Drake, the Head Teacher's P.A., helps in the production of the newsletter and the school prints it out for us. No doubt other links will be forged in the future. The 'old school tie' is still strong.

Changes at committee level have meant that some of our aims have not got beyond the planning stage. The AGM and the school's birthday celebration are the two main opportunities for members to come together. We would like to increase the opportunities for social interaction and ideas will be publicised in the future. We realise, however, that many of our members cannot come to social events - their only contact is through the newsletter. We have therefore increased the number of newsletters to three per year instead of two.

Our best wishes to all of our members as we look forward to what we hope will be another successful year.

Elizabeth Hawkins (Hon. Sec., Tanfield Association)

Tanfield Association Accounts 4/4/2013 - 4/9/2014

Balance 4/4/2013 £2506 Credit

Balance 4/9/2014 £3505 Credit

Postage Costs	Award Payments to school	AGM/Birthday	Other Expenses	Total
130.96	£20 (Science & Engineering)	£390 AGM buffet	£86 Reframing costs for photo of A J Dawson	
137.40				
19.50	£20 (Service to Community)	£850 101 st Birthday (buffet, photo displays, celebration cake)		
119.55				
150.00				
4.60	£700 :		£60 Refund of fees T Brabban	
14.28	£200 for sending pupils to an MFL conference at Newcastle University.			
5.05	£376 to fund the rock-climbing course.			
71.70	£124 allocated as part of the Dr Charles Atkinson bequest to the school to promote Science.		£65.08 photo restoration fees	
			£38.16 Website Fee	
Outstanding postage chqs:	Outstanding payments:		£414.17 Upfront publishing (book reprint)	
161.76	£621:		£663.41	£3296.45
11.25	£450 donation for Beamish whole school trip			
15.59	£160 part payment towards cookery aprons			
	£11 remaining Charles Atkinson fund to school			
£653.04	£740	£1240		Payment total outstanding
(£826.05)	(£1361)			:
				£794.01
				Accounts 2013/2014

				(£4090.46)
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Statement Balance 4/4/13 £2506 credit Statement Balance 4/9/14 £ 3505 credit

(Comparable balance as at this time last year Balance 4/9/14 £3505 - £794=£2710credit)

Credits including £135 Charles Atkinson Bequest plus membership fees, book sales, life membership

Membership 247 paying

Standing order 236

Under payers 49

Life membership 28 (10 new lifers between 2012/2014)

Newsletter Report - 2014

What can I say? The Newsletter continues, and from what I hear it is much appreciated.

As Editor, I have tried to produce a communication that is both nostalgic and informative. As such I rely quite heavily upon contributions from members for the interesting bits. I have been fortunate in this respect because the few times that I have felt that there wasn't sufficient copy for publication, out of the blue someone has filled the bill. The informative bit is our channel to let the membership know what is happening, or going to happen. I am aware that this is not foolproof!

Receiving the Newsletter by e-mail is a great saving to the Association, but I know that there have been problems. One such is that the Newsletter comes out as a .pdf format. To view this you need Adobe Reader on your machine. It is free to load. I know that some have been unable to open the e-mail because they haven't got it. Another problem is that it is twelve or so pages long, and some don't like reading all that on the screen. Our hope was that members would download and print the Newsletter themselves, thus avoiding the screen read. 'One can't win them all', as is said!

We rely completely upon the school for the printing and the 'binding' of the Newsletters, and we are truly grateful for their generosity of time and the materials involved. They came up with a lovely surprise when they printed the last two editions with colour photos. What a difference that makes. So, thank you to the office staff.

We are attempting to produce an edition each school term. Whether or not we succeed is up to the readership. Without your input we might have 'nowt to say'! So, howay folks, pick up your pens, get out your rough book and formulate that essay that you always intended to write. Better still, open up 'Word' and send me a .doc file!

Anyone like to take over?

Ted Brabban.

ted.brabban@nasuwt.net

Tel. 01207 570447

Tanfield at 102

On Saturday 18th October the Association arranged a celebration to mark the 102 years since the school opened. This involved having the school buildings open to visitors, a display of photographs old and new, lots of chat with past acquaintances, and the inevitable feast.

We had a good turnout for the event with folks from recent history to those from way back! Our secretary, Elizabeth Hawkins, had worked her socks off to set it all up and organise the food, and it was appreciated all round. We are lucky indeed to have such a workhorse!

We did various tours of the school during the day. These always produce nostalgia and provoke memories of what happened where. My impression was that people seeing the school as it is now were really impressed. The place is alive with displays of aspects of school life, it is well maintained and decorated, and far from showing its age is radiating with contemporary innovation.

We had lots of very positive feed-back:

Facebook etc. Feedback

Lynn Riley: Great memories.

Annmarie Hall: Had a lovely day attending Tanfield Comprehensive's 102nd birthday :) Thank you very much to the head governor for his kind comment thinking I was thirty two years of age, you have made my day...I enjoyed our chat. My eleven year old son thought the school was brilliant. Also a big thank you to staff for all their hard efforts arranging this brilliant day. Well done :)

Claire Humpherson: Well organised as ever.

Sally Jones-Mackie: Lovely afternoon, thank you.

Pamela Wilkinson: Lovely afternoon, really enjoyed the tour around the school. Although my children have been and I have one that still attends the school, all I get to see is the hall, so it was nice to take a trip down memory lane, thanks.

Tom Cooper: It was great to meet so many old friends. Well done [Elizabeth Hawkins](#) and all the others who made this a success.

David Cook: Nice to see Karen, she did an excellent job with our reunion in 2000.

Jeanne Lott: Looks great. Sorry didn't make it. My daughter is loving Year 7 in Tanfield. Couldn't ask for a better school.

Rebecca Muncaster: It was perfect, thank you very much. Can't wait for next year's party. Gorgeous cake as well.

Emma Ward: It was really nice seeing everyone at the 102nd birthday reunion, even though it has been eleven years since I last attended the school I can say that the school hasn't changed, it's still the same as the day I left. I hope to attend more to come and catch up with more teachers and other pupils past and present. Thanks again.

At the get together we asked those who attended for their comments on the various Headmasters, the various Senior Mistresses and the Tower Block.

Here are some of the responses:

Headmasters:

Mr Carr was a lovely Quaker. He lived at Clough Dene and often walked to school with me.

Mr Carr's birthday was the 3rd January. (How would anyone know that - and remember it? Ed.)

Dr Sharp known as 'The Doc' or 'The Len'. Scared us all!

Dr Sharp - Very scary but a driving force. Always seemed to get people to do what he had in mind without their remembering having 'volunteered'!

Mr McKie with his 'bat-cape'

Mr McKie - I was called to his office several times, avoided the cane, but not detention!

Mr McKie accused me of leading a pupil revolt in not leaving the sports fields before 12.45 lunch. Missed my lunch and had a stern ticking off.

Mr Howat - A gentle giant, so kind and helpful.

Mr Howat - Was amazing - cared greatly for all his pupils and staff. I miss him and so will all who were here when I was.

Senior Mistresses

Miss Nicol - Excellent very strict teacher. Her Scottish dialect quite alien to us 'geordies'.

Miss Nicol - used to love scaring the class by acting out the witches from Macbeth

Miss Nicol - called me a 'retiring violet' because I sat at the back

Miss Allison - very ladylike and occasionally stern, but mostly very kind.

Miss Thornton - the most inspirational history teacher ever.

Mrs Jack - took me home when I broke my foot vaulting a gate.

The Tower Block

I remember the top corridor that you weren't supposed to go through, but everyone did.

I taught in Room 15 for fifteen years. I could always hear the lesson next door through the gaps.

I hated teaching in the noisy, draughty Tower Block, with doors opening in the breeze!

I taught on the top floor. The roof leaked and I had a dozen metal waste bins catching the drips when it rained. It sounded like having a steel band in the classroom.

Sitting and hiding under the stairs on the ground floor.

I remember the top corridor, and the phosphorous smoke emergency in my first year circa 1975.

Editor: *The above memories were recorded from those at the 102nd birthday event. Now it is your turn. I would like some memories from you. In each edition of the Newsletter I will refer to a different aspect of school life and hope to receive comments about it, either succinct or lengthy.*

*For starters **'School Dinners'**. For the next edition let me have your memories around the practice of lunching at school. Perhaps the Welsh would say "Aggie, Aggie, Aggie!" (Some old timers will know what I mean!) Ted.*

Here are some memories of the 102nd Birthday :





Is this seeing both sides of the serious discussion!



102nd Birthday

Did someone get the date wrong?



Miss Nicol



Miss Alice Ann Nicol left Aberdeen University in 1910 with an M.A. She subsequently studied for a Teachers' Certificate before being appointed to teach at Old Meldrum Public School. In 1912, she was appointed to teach French, English and History at Tanfield Lea Higher Elementary School and Pupil Teachers' Centre.

The school was newly-built and Miss Nicol was there on the first day of term, September 1st 1912. She found that "the building had subsided owing to pitfalls and workmen were still repairing the damage inside the

school. We had to clamber over rubble to gain admittance to the building. Of course, the opening was postponed for several weeks.” On October 16th the first pupils were admitted, and so began Miss Nicol’s long and illustrious career at the school.

In 1915 she became Head of the English Department. Promotion to the post of Senior Mistress followed in 1918, and Miss Nicol was now in charge of all matters relating to the girls, including discipline. She still taught English and French, but History was dropped when she took on extra responsibilities.

The words of those she taught give the truest picture of how she approached her work, both in the classroom and out of it.

.....

Miss Nicol taught me English. She frightened the boys a bit – they would play around till she appeared, at which point they would all rush to their seats. She was a good teacher, especially of poetry.

Charlotte Stammers (Lottie Brown 1925-32)

Miss Nicol taught me from the first to the fifth Year. We liked her very much as she was a good teacher – inspiring. I liked poetry and she used to read Scottish ballads and ‘The Ryme of the Ancient Mariner’. She would sit at her desk, her blue eyes twinkling over her half-glasses. She would give a big cough before reading aloud in her Scottish accent.

She was very tall. She had no problems with discipline as her lessons were so interesting. The boys were naughty with other teachers but not with her. She, together with Miss Allison, took us to the theatre at Bensham to see Shakespeare plays. She also took us to Germany not long before the outbreak of the Second World War. We were accompanied also by Miss Lumsden and by Mrs Boggon, Miss Nicol’s sister.

I remember that she lodged at Tyne Road in South Stanley with Mrs McGregor, the Headmistress of South Moor Infants’ School. When it was cold, she would wear thick, Scottish woollen scarves.

Olga Reay (née Hyde 1931-37)

Those who knew her well have a vivid memory of a remarkable lady who made an immense contribution to the success of what in my day was the Alderman Wood Secondary School (“Tanfield” in later times) – but how to describe her to those less fortunate? As the senior woman teacher she was largely responsible for the discipline and welfare of the girls’ affairs, as well as heading the English Department. Her natural authority was beyond question, but it was exerted so fairly and calmly that there was room also for kindness and humour – a dry and unsentimental humour. The keen eye had a twinkle!

As a teacher she had the rare ability to communicate her own scholarly delight in literature and to rouse an eager response; she loved a good argument, but was quick to pounce on inaccuracies or sloppy thinking. She made us think – and gave us confidence to judge for ourselves, in life as well as in literary criticism. We enjoyed the challenge of the lessons, but it is only long afterwards that I can see how much we learned.

Joan Charlton

A Rather Nice 'Thank you'.

Thank you so much for the donation to our Science Club, we really appreciate it. We are going to use the money to carry out a project on cars of the future. The kit we are buying helps us to look at forward-looking technologies of driverless vehicles and we will learn about the new technologies employed in them including laser detectors, GPS navigation, radar systems and on-board computers. We have attached a photograph for you. With the remaining money we are going to obtain some laboratory coats as they ensure our safety when carrying out practicals.

Kindest regards

Pupils of Tanfield School:

Ben Kelly

Sophie Merrigan

Leander Lawson

Leon Snailham

Michael Turnbull

James Pinnington

Sponsorship Appeal

The P.E. department at Tanfield is in need of replacing strips for their football teams. It is appealing for financial support to enable them to do so. When the strips are supplied they will feature the name of the sponsor, as well as the usual team number etc. Thus they will provide a degree of publicity across the County.

Our executive will discuss their appeal when next we meet, but there is no appeal for us in publicity for the TA. However if any of our readers has a business which would benefit from some county-wide publicity and would be willing to give some financial support to the teams, the school would be most interested to hear from you. Here's hoping!

Nellie Woods

Isn't it amazing what turns up? We were sent the accompanying testimonial that had turned up among family papers. A real blast from the past harking back to the first Headmaster, Mr Hardy.

Dear Ted,

I was sorting through some old papers and found a reference my mother was given by John B Hardy when she left in 1920. She was very proud of her attendance there. Her name was Nellie Milburn. She attended from 1916 to 1920.

Alan Milburn.

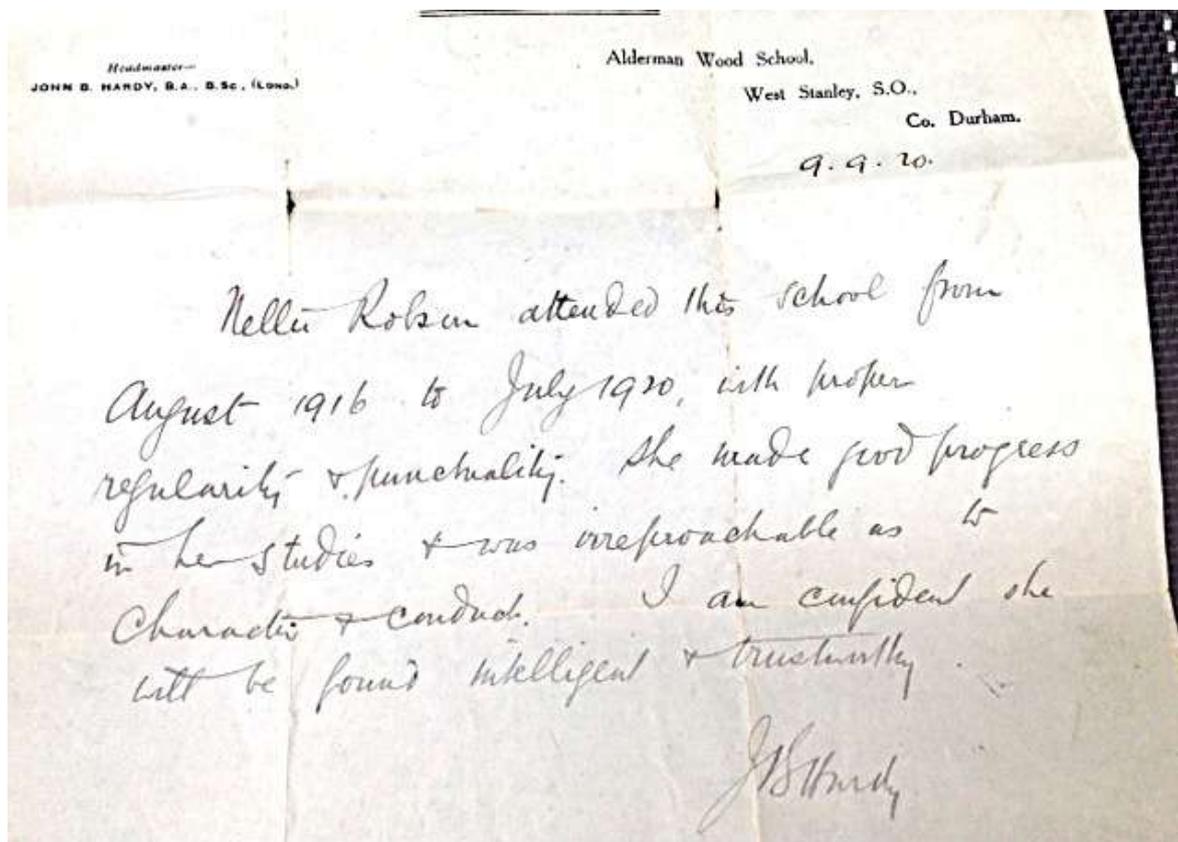
Ted,

Thank you for your interest. I am sure my mother would be happy for you to use the letter. Sadly she passed away in 1961. The letter is very faded but I will see what I can do.

My mother was offered a clerical job at the Coop on the strength of her education when she left school but her mother told them she couldn't take it as she was the youngest daughter and had to stay at home to do the housework. She never quite got over this.

Alan

Nellie must have been the forth intake into the new school in 1916.



Web-Master

We have a new web-master for the Association web site.



Mr Howard Bott (Seen here in his new school blazer!) offered his services to us and we gratefully accepted his offer.

He has reviewed and updated the site, and it is well worth having a decko. The site is still undergoing final tweaking. You will find details of making contact on the Home Page.

You will find the web site at:

tanfield-association.org

Geography – Tanfield Beyond and Below.

Whilst talking one day about coal, my great nephew asked, "What is coal?" I was very surprised as one would expect anyone living in this area to know about coal. This set me thinking about geography.

I loved geography at school, but the reaction when I mention the subject is often "Ugh!!" My teachers at Tanfield were Miss Richardson, Miss Nixon, and Mr Brown, but perhaps it was my father who initially began my interest in the subject. We went walking frequently, and he would often say, "We'll just see what is over the next hill." Of course over the hill was another hill, as living in the Stanley area is often the case. My interest in hills continued beyond and below. One of the first library books I read at Tanfield was the account of Mallory and Irving's attempt on Everest - I was hooked! I joined the Geographical Society.

We went on a visit to East Tanfield colliery and were taken underground in a cage. The cage carried eight people and you couldn't stand upright as they were designed to carry coal tubs. We had no hard hats and only lamps to carry as we wended our way through low dark and damp tunnels until we reached the coal face. We were allowed to dig out our very own piece of coal from the face. The men chaffed us about the windows being too dirty to see out, and we could help by cleaning them, and being told to ask the pie lady to send a pie along from her stall. After I left school, I went down the Louisa Colliery with the Stanley Youth Club. This was a totally different type of pit. Below was more spacious and warmer, and the trucks and machines on a grander scale compared to Tanfield.

Many years later I found myself in high heels and full skirt climbing a fence to take photos of a drilling operation at Marley Hill. (For possible open-cast? Editor) The men were very helpful to me and showed me their core samples. Unfortunately they found only a worked out coal seam. The pictures that I took came out well though and were very useful to me.

I also visited Consett Iron Company and saw the process of making steel. I watched the molten metal being poured from huge containers into channels to become, if I remember correctly, railway lines. The areas where we had to walk heated the soles of our shoes to almost burning point it felt! It was a terrifying scene and I have always remembered it as a true picture of Hell.

I have never forgotten these visits as they are part of our industrial heritage, and a part of our geography. As a subject, I always felt that geography encompassed most of the other school subjects, English, art, history, maths, the sciences, crafts, and other topics. We have a wonderful wealth of knowledge on our doorstep and around us. I hope that our young people, in their turn, have the satisfaction and experience to know what is around them and can take advantage of it. I also hope that they never forget the people, the places and the often untold story of our very own 'GEOGRAPHY'.

Gladys M. Frappell-Welsh. B.A.

Mr Dolman

Former pupils of Tanfield who were taught Physics by Mr Dolman always remember him with gratitude and pleasure. I came across these photos of him when he retired, and the send-off the Sixth Form gave him:



So, who are the gang who wrapped his car in toilet rolls? Where are they now?

Sadly Mr Dolman no longer has a car, his failing eyesight precludes him from driving. He is still the sincere, jovial cheeky chappy that he always was. If you would like to get in touch with him, do it through me and I will pass on what you send.

Ted

Dear Ted,

At some point during my first year at S.G.S. (1950-1951), our geography teacher (Miss Richardson?) asked the class if anyone would like a pen-friend - I decided that I would and was given the address of Joan Thornton who lived near Perth in Western Australia, and that was the start of a life-long friendship. Now, more than sixty years later we still keep in touch regularly and we have each visited the other twice. At first, we corresponded by "snail-mail" (and I really mean "snail-mail" as letters took six weeks to make the journey), then we progressed to aerogrammes which eventually became too small as our letters got longer and we then sent our long letters by air-mail. More recently we began using email, but I still miss the posties' deliveries. When my boys were little they used to enjoy talking through who and what was involved in bringing Joan's letters from W.A. to us.

The first time I visited W.A. was in 1992 - I had tried for months to persuade my husband Tom to go with me; he wasn't an adventurous traveller and declined but said that he was quite happy to become a "house husband" and look after the boys while I went as he knew how much I was looking forward to meeting Joan, her husband Brian and their family. My mother, on the other hand, was quite horrified at the idea - I think she thought that I would end up on a banana-boat or something! However, plans were made and flights were booked, then, the week before I was going, someone asked me, "What happens if Joan and you don't get on?" I thought, "Thanks for that, that's all I need at this stage of the game!" But I decided that having gone through school, exams, college, weddings, babies, etc. we must know something about each other and, I have to say that for all of my six-weeks stay, I never felt anything other than part of the family. I met and was befriended by a number of Joan and Brian's friends who have since stayed with us when they've been touring in the U.K. Joan and I did a fair bit of travelling together - I cuddled a koala, came (almost) face to face with emus, kangaroos and pelicans and paddled in the sea with dolphins up at Monkey Mia. We stayed a couple of days with farming friends at Cuballing where we watched sheep shearing and then watched the farmer's wife as she spun the wool from the fleeces and admired some of the sweaters which she'd knitted with the yarn. We also had an aerial tour of their area in the farmer's little aeroplane. We visited Rottnest Island which, I think I'm right in saying, is the only home of some little creatures called "Quokkas", and we did a "mystery flight", a means of putting "bums on seats", when for the equivalent of about £45 you didn't know where your flight was going until you turned up at the airport - we went across to Sydney (a 4-hour flight) where because of the time differences, we had about 10 hours to spend. I rounded off my holiday with a conducted tour of the W.A.C.A. - as I was told by my sons, "You can't go all the way to Perth and not visit the W.A.C.A."

My second visit to Australia was in 2000 when Joan and I flew across to Sydney to start a two-weeks coach holiday up the east coast to Cairns. But that's another story!

Keep up the good work with the newsletters. Please feel free to "doctor" the above if it's too long.

Irene Hardy (Stansfield)

S.G.S. 1950-1955

Dear Ted,

Thank you for your reply to my first written contact with you. I have never seen anything written by you that even remotely contains 'the ramblings of an old man!' Quite the opposite; who else in the world knows anything at all about that oak display unit made by Bob Harrison, but we two! - and it all happened a long time ago! I am looking forward to seeing the remains of it at the next reunion coming soon - and, I hope, making

contact with you there. Last year was my first reunion, and I found it mildly annoying that I was not able to identify anyone there by their (greatly changed!) appearances. Why not ask people to wear a name-tag, with the dates they were in school? A sticky label stuck somewhere on the outside would be cheap, harmless and painless!

I see that you did include my last note in the recent newsletter. I hope that at least it gave Rosemary a smile for a second! I do enjoy reading those newsletter items, especially those that overlap with our time at SGS. I take it that the last piece, featuring a bit of graphic design (surely one of your skills), and some rather puzzling remarks and questions, was your piece of work? I'd like to know more! What was the Lindisfarne Gospels statement about? There were remarks about a Joe Binks and a Pongo. Could this be the two we knew at school - the doyen of the 'salle des beaux arts' , and the lovely gentle head, Bill Carr? Please do tell!

The newsletter did contain a plea for more copy to be submitted. I have tons of happy memories of my time at school, with which I could jog some memories. I could write something about it if you think it appropriate. I had some personal contact with a number of staff from school who lived in Whickham, like me, long after leaving! That could be interesting! For example, your e-mail address suggests your contact with the NASUWT. Did you know that William 'Abdul' Wood, who lived here, was my local Union representative (AMMA)!?

I hope you can find time to write back. I am very curious about those Gospels! Don't tell me YOU wrote them!

Keep up the good work!

Brian E. Thompson

Here is a 'Blast from the Past'

The photos were taken when the staff gave a retirement do for Mr Pattison. The top picture is of the English Department. I'll need to ask him the year.

However, how many of the old staff can you name?

Great North Air Ambulance

Since this service was most helpful when a Tanfield scholars' bus was involved in a traffic accident, the school has been raising money to support the service by collecting filled charity bags of unwanted clothing etc. Our Treasurer, Susan, has been doing her bit to help.

Car loaded and ready for drop off at school.

Ten bags from my neighbours in Chester Le Street.

Thought you may like to add it to next Association Newsletter - us showing more support for the school.

Susan

Hello Ted

I've just heard some success stories about two former Tanfield pupils, Andrew and Fiona Lightburn.

Andrew (1985 - 90) is a solicitor, specialising in employment law.

He's marrying Joanne, also a solicitor, in York in October. We wish them every happiness.

Andrew's sister Fiona (1987 - 92) lives in San Francisco, but has a flat in Bow; ideal for London trips. Fiona is the global head of management and recruitment for Apple.

Isn't it good to hear how well our former pupils are doing in life.

Kind regards

Amy Bilton.

Dear Ted

A friend tells me that there was an article in the latest TA newsletter from **Marjorie Murray (nee Smith)**, hoping to contact people from her time at SGS 1960-67. She was in my class during that time and I do recall her.

There were apparently no contact details for Marjorie, so perhaps you might put her in touch with me at alan.b.hutchinson@gmail.com or 0784-9402359, and/or direct her to my website at <http://www.alanbhutchinson.webspace.virginmedia.com/> and in particular <http://www.alanbhutchinson.webspace.virginmedia.com/Schooldays.html> .

Many thanks,

Alan Hutchinson

Dear Elizabeth,

Sorry but not this time but I hope 2014 birthday is a great success.

Born in 1950, I well remember the 1962 anniversary, including a school magazine with a shiny gold (silver?) cover. There was a foreword by the illustrious Dr Sharp in which he compared a school to the human body because it is said that all our cells completely renew themselves every seven years. Happy days!

Best Wishes,

John Cameron

The Cats who got the Cream?

Just how do I caption this photo of Amy Bilton and Elizabeth Hawkins?

Ted.

(They are selling buns to parents to raise cash for the School Fund!)

What did he say?

There will be a magnificent prize for the person who tells me what outrageous thing the Rev. Peter Atkinson has said to Claire Humpherson at the 102nd Birthday event.

What could be more prestigious than a mention in the next Newsletter?