

TANFIELD ASSOCIATION

President: Prof. Bob Harrison



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. 33

Winter 2015

Editorial

The school is now 103 years old. I sometimes feel that I have grown old with it! We celebrated the birthday in style with our AGM at The Peacock in Tanfield Village. It was a good do, about 40 people turned out and had a seriously enjoyable lunch date! As usual we tried to combine business with pleasure. Knowing that an AGM can be as dull as ditchwater we attempt to short-circuit the dull part by having all the officer reports printed and distributed beforehand to reduce the wordiness. All those reports are printed inside so that you can all read how each aspect of the Association is faring.

We, who run the Association on your behalf, are in office from AGM to AGM. There was the usual rush to replace us all, as you will imagine. However we fought off all the opposition and the same team was re-elected to run affairs for another year. So we still have Elizabeth at the helm as secretary and doing a fantastic job for us, juggling all kinds of related business, and keeping on top of it all. Of course she is supported by a team who give their time and effort willingly to further the affairs of the Association, so thank you to them all from me.

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I hope that you have all had a look at the Association web-site. Howard has done a fantastic job in updating it and all kinds of information can be found there. In appreciation for what he has done for us, at the AGM he was presented with 'The Tanfield Glass' to be held for a year. A very worthy recipient.

He is always looking for help to improve things. Things like names for pupils on photos, missing editions of the School Magazine etc. Have a look at:

<http://tanfield-association.org>

and if there are ways that you can help get in touch with him.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT FOR 2015

2015 has been a year of activity 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

- Members attended the school during second and third terms to hear pupils read in support of the Accelerated Reading Scheme.
- We held another successful birthday party (the 102nd) attended by about 80 members in October 2014.
- 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)

We funded

- The Robotics club
- The Challenge Fund
- Books have been bought for the library

The web site has been developed and expanded through the efforts of Howard Bott, which has been greatly appreciated. Some excellent news letters have been produced and more books have been sold.

This has been a relatively quiet year; the main activities have been to support the school financially

I must also thank the other officers, Elizabeth, Amy, Ted, Susan and Karen.

Once again best wishes to you all
and kind regards,

Bob Harrison

President of the Tanfield Association
Oct 2015

SECRETARY'S REPORT

OCTOBER 2015

This year has been a much quieter one for the association, mainly because three committee members, including myself, have been struck down with various long-term ailments, which has led to fewer meetings and activities. However, there have been notable successes and it's good that these have helped to balance the lack of activity in other areas.

As you read through the other reports, you will see that Howard Bott, our Webmaster, has been doing a lot of work to improve the association's website. This is a great boost to what we can offer you, the members, as many more photos, school magazines and other memorabilia are now available for you to look through. We hope you will help Howard to name people on the photos; perhaps supply him with copies of the magazines that are missing; send copies of concert and Speech Day programmes, as all of this adds to the school information we can store. It's your website – enjoy it!

Ted has produced ever more interesting issues of the newsletter, and we have been pleased to receive not only reminiscences, photos and comments from members, but also news from the school that lets us know what is happening now. The comparison between school dinners then and now was certainly an eye-opener! I'm sure you have noted Ted's plea for more copy. Incidentally, your newsletters have been sent out this year by a dedicated small group of envelope-stuffers. Prior to this, Ted had heroically done the whole job himself.

Susan and Karen have kept track of our finances – not an easy job – and I'm happy to say that we have been able to give the school financial support in various ways.

- Following the success of pupils getting through to the national finals in a Robotics competition last year, we have been able to donate £500 to the school's Robotics Club so that they can build a better robotic vehicle for this year's competition. We wish them the best of luck.
- We set up the Challenge Fund to encourage members to make a donation towards upgrading the whole school computer system. Donations via the association and directly to the school have amounted to more than £1500 being raised. Thank you to all contributors
- To boost the school's focus on reading skills, we have donated £300 worth of books to the school library.
- We continue to reward success by the annual awards presented to Year 11. Five awards, three funded by the association and two by individual members, will be presented again at the end of October.
- Two of our members generously sponsored strips for the lower school football teams.

Amy has done sterling work as Minuting Secretary, keeping us all on track and up to date. Having done this job for another group, I know how difficult it can sometimes be.

I'd like to join Bob in thanking committee members and members of the Exec for all their hard work.

They're a great group to work with.

Elizabeth Hawkins Hon Sec of the Tanfield Association 2015

Tanfield Association Accounts 4/9/2014 - 4/9/15

Balance 4/9/2014 £3502 Credit

Balance 4/9/2015 £3819 credit (1/10/2015 £4425.22 credit)

Web Fees Postage Costs Award Payments to school AGM/Birthday Debit Total

£38.15	59.88	20 Award to pupil		£529.05
	99.62	20 Award to pupil		
	15.81			
	70.82	100.81 Books		
	70.15	33.80 J B Hardy Award		
	£316.08	Engraving		
		£174.61		

Credit in total 4/9/14- 4/8/15 £ 846.74

With further £645 in from 1/10/2015 plus possible further £500 around 16/10/15 re subs

Challenge Fund Balance £440 (16 donations)

Membership 247 regularly paying

Standing order around 130

Life membership 29

Webmaster Report

It's exactly a year since I made the brave decision to take over the Association Website from Peter Brown. I've learned a lot of new tricks – even for an old dog!

My major contributions to the website over the year have been the following:

- 1) A search facility based on the Sphider software. Initially, this could only search in a few on-line documents but I've converted all of the old School Magazines and Association Newsletters to be searchable. This does not produce 100% accuracy of text conversion because of the way some documents were scanned initially but it has worked remarkably well and is well worth visiting.
- 2) All of the photographs (over 500) that were originally held in albums have been duplicated in an area that allows for a thumbnail list so that individual photos can be viewed quickly and easily. Captions have been updated and can be searched.
- 3) Most of the photos submitted for the 100 Years magazine have been made available from thumbnails – over 700 photos! Where possible, they have meaningful captions and can be searched.
- 4) Some photos have been tagged so that a name is revealed when the mouse hovers over a face.
- 5) Some VHS videos from school trips to France were converted to clips that can be viewed in YouTube fashion.
- 6) Various items were added to the Memorabilia page.
- 7) A Latest News page was added and updated regularly.

The website went live in November 2014 though some features were added later.

Howard Bott

30.08.2015

SCHOOL UPDATE

I was delighted when I was asked to provide an update on the progress and standing of Tanfield School. The academic year 2014-15 has been a year of radical change and focus on ever increasing scrutiny, compliance and results. The year has drawn to a close and we have started the 2015-16 year with increased drive and determination. Our results have many outstanding areas and I will point out some of the highlights by subject area. All are GCSE unless otherwise stated and relate to A*-C passes.

1. Mathematics	81%
2. Biology	85%
3. Chemistry	88%
4. Physics	100%
5. French	85%
6. History	83%
7. Graphic Design	79%
8. Engineering	80%
9. Electronics	75%
10. ICT (BTEC)	94%

In addition to the above headlines 14% of the entire cohort achieved 3 or more A*-A grades and 35% of the cohort achieved 1 or more A*-A grades.

The situation in respect of the English subjects is a little more unclear. You will all be aware of the concerns in relation to the IGCSE results in English subjects. These results are still subject to remarking procedures and legal challenge in relation to the last minute changes of the marking criteria. The published results are those prior to the remarking and challenge procedures being finalised.

We also acknowledge there are areas that require additional support and strategies have been instigated to strengthen these areas.

The school has also hosted an open evening for year 5-6 students and their parents. The event was a huge success and well attended by an estimated 500 students and parents. These numbers are by far the largest we have experienced. The focus of the evening was an overview of the school and its curriculum and facilities available to help them in making their school choices. In addition to the above there appears to be a growing trend of mid-term transfer applications to Tanfield School.

The school staff and governors continue working with external agencies and groups in many forums too numerous to list independently but all of which have an important impact in school.

I sum up by reflecting on the past and looking forward to the future. Through all the changes to the school, educational developments, financial constraints and legislative changes from its inception to date, one constant remains firm. The resolve of the Head Teacher, the staff both teaching and support, the Governors, the agencies and external groups, who have all remained firm in the provision of the best education possible for the students of Tanfield. Students who in themselves rise to the challenge and strive with the school to reach their highest level of achievement and develop the all important life skills. To this aim we continue to work as a team with all stakeholders and have come to know and respect this unison of support for all as "THE TANFIELD WAY"

Len Broxson
 Chair of Governors
 Tanfield School Specialist College of Science and Engineering.

Newsletter Report

You may not have noticed but we have raised our production. To begin with we put together two issues per year, a Winter and a Summer edition. With the influx of more material we have raised this by a whopping 50%, and now put together an edition each school term. I am pleased to report that, so far, this has proved to be successful, i.e. with regard to volume of content. The decision with regard to value of content is up to the readers. The feedback that I get, (sadly this is about 1%), is very positive. I suppose that the corollary of this is that I don't get masses of negative feedback! As editor I feel that we must be on the right track.

We are of the opinion that this is your Newsletter. Yes, we do use it as a vehicle to disseminate items of organisational information, and to let you know how the old school is faring, but we hope that the bulk of the Newsletter is your news. Where are you now, what have you done, what are you doing, who have you met, what photos have turned up and what memories do they stir, and all of that kind of gossip. It is the personal stuff that makes an issue sing.

This leads me to my annual plea - send me your stuff!! Without your input the Newsletter will fade. In this age of e-mail it is really easy to communicate written items or photographs without the need for envelope, stamp, or a walk to the post box. If you are into it you have no excuse. I still receive the occasional hand written item and photographs, so some people do make the effort and I am grateful. (If you send me photos I will copy them and return them. I have been known to return the original plus a manipulated improved print.)

I am also interested to have some ideas for improving your Newsletter, or subjects of items we might try to run. My own last two ideas have worked like a chocolate fire guard, so I am obviously not in the right groove. I need help.

I always wonder if I will have copy for the next edition. So far it has worked. To date I have 'next to nowt' for Issue 33. Has my luck run out?

ted.brabban@nasuwt.net

RESULTS 2015

14%	STUDENTS ATTAINED 3 OR MORE A*/A GRADES
35%	STUDENTS ATTAINED 1 OR MORE A*/A GRADES
43%	5 + A* - C INCLUDING ENGLISH AND MATHS
62%	5 + A* - C ACROSS ALL SUBJECTS
81%	MATHEMATICS GCSE A* - C
48%	ENGLISH LANGUAGE GCSE A* - C
56%	ENGLISH LITERATURE GCSE A* - C
85%	BIOLOGY GCSE A* - C
88%	CHEMISTRY A* - C
100%	PHYSICS A* - C
48%	ADDITIONAL SCIENCE A* - C
55%	GEOGRAPHY GCSE A* - C
85%	FRENCH GCSE A* - C
45%	GERMAN GCSE A* - C
83%	HISTORY GCSE A* - C
79%	GRAPHIC DESIGN GCSE A* - C
55%	SPORTS STUDIES GCSE A* - C
67%	HOSPITALITY GCSE A* - C
80%	ENGINEERING GCSE A* - C
75%	ELECTRONICS GCSE A* - C
30%	APPLIED SCIENCE BTEC A* - C (EQUIV)
63%	ART AND DESIGN BTEC A* - C (EQUIV)
52%	ENGINEERING BTEC A* - C (EQUIV)
53%	HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE BTEC A* - C (EQUIV)
94%	ICT BTEC A* - C (EQUIV)
42%	MUSIC BTEC A* - C (EQUIV)

(EQUIV) EQUIVALENT GRADES.

BTEC AWARDS DISTINCTION PLUS, DISTINCTION, MERIT AND PASS.

Some images from the AGM.

Photos from different people of our meeting at The Peacock.



Prof. Bob Harrison opens the meeting.



Chairman of the Governors with Elizabeth.



Howard Bott receives the Tanfield Glass.



Susan symbolically demonstrates our help!!



Library books presented to school.



Min. Sec., Amy Bilton with Euan Ross



Audrey Drake and Alan Hindhaugh



Betty Watson and Alan Drake



Margaret Warwick, Lenore Ewart, Susan, Marj Whalley



Margaret Jones, Jean Stoddart and Nicole Thompson



Jack and Jill Jeffery

Ted and Mavis Brabban

Margaret and Tony Bray

Mary Storey and Joan Allaker

Lynne Bell and Lorraine Hall (Staff)

Howard and Lestryne Bott

June Todd, Margaret Jones, Margaret Warwick and Lenore Ewart

Chris Morrison and Denis Kelly

Hi Ted,

In the last newsletter, we printed a photo of the football strip sponsored by Irene Cros. Here's a photo of the other strip, sponsored by Nicole Thompson.

Cheers,

Elizabeth

Invite someone to come and join us!

Please contact anyone you know who has had or still has an association with Tanfield School. We are eager to recruit new members. Being a member of the association can help you to keep in contact with old friends and colleagues, as well as finding out a bit of what is going on in our old school today.

Please use the following contacts for details of membership and subscriptions.

Elizabeth Hawkins (secretary) - all contact details are on the front page of this newsletter.

Susan Donkin (treasurer) Email address: srdonkin@yahoo.co.uk

Ethel Armstrong nee Garthwaite

Born 1930

I wanted to talk about Ethel Armstrong. She has been a great friend to our family for many many years.

She attended Alderman Wood Grammar School from 1941.

She has an almost incredible 68 years of service to the NHS.

In July, Ethel was appointed as a second Patron of the NHS Retirement Fellowship. This unprecedented honour recognised her unstinting work over that huge period.

She retired from the NHS in 1989 and joined the Durham branch of the NHS Fellowship, was elected as an officer in 1992 and then chairman in 1994, became the regional representative for the north east, Vice Chairman of the Fellowship in 2009 and National Chairman two years later. She was elected President in 2013 and her term of office ended this summer.

Ethel was invited to Buckingham Palace two years ago and was presented to the Queen.

Last year and this year, she was a guest of honour at the Cavell Nurses Scholarship Awards at Fishmonger Hall, London – meeting, in her capacity as National President and also Chairman of the Benevolent fund, with their President, HRH Princess Royal.

In May this year, just before the general election, Ethel had a 45 minute meeting with Andy Burnham, the Shadow Health Minister. Not bad for what she is proud to call a “no cot lass” from South Moor – when she was born, she was placed inside the bottom drawer of the rosewood tallboy, and blames that for only making it to 4`10”.

At 85, she has inevitably had some health and mobility issues but hasn't allowed them to slow her down. She spent her term as President of the NHS Retirement Fellowship touring many of the 200 branches around the country, aiming to meet as many of the 20,000 members as possible. When she had to travel to London, she usually arrived before the rush hour. Her glass has always been half full.

My association with Ethel is via her longstanding friendship with my mother's sister - my mother is Elizabeth Tregoning, nee Payne, who went to Alderman Wood just ahead of Ethel, and her sister is Joyce Davison. Ethel and Joyce have known each other for 70 years. Ethel and her husband Harry were great friends with Joyce and her husband, who was also called Harry. Ethel and Harry lived for many years in Southport, also in Sutton Coldfield, Buxton and other distant locations, and when they came back to visit Joyce and Harry, it would be a long journey at the end of the working day, so they'd commonly arrive in the early hours; Joyce would leave her door unlocked for them to slip quietly in, then they'd meet for breakfast the next morning. That seems remarkable to me, something from a bygone age, but maybe I've just forgotten how friendly large parts of the north east are. My mum always told me there was no crime in the north, which was worrying because it meant the government was maintaining the north-eastern court circuit unnecessarily. But there is a friendliness in the north that's missing in the south.

Ethel's massive energy and enthusiasm has been a joy in the good times and a great help whenever the going got tough. She's a remarkable person.

Mary Barkley (Snaith)

I well recall my first day at Stanley Grammar School wearing a brown tunic, cream blouse and a stripy school tie. I was in class 1B, along with a number of my friends from Stanley Board School. Joan Simpson, Joyce Brown, Marjorie Parker, Colin Herd, Barry Cornforth, Tom Gracey, Jack Marshall, Bobby Tarn and others. I was so happy to be there. Our form teacher was a Miss Smith (French) and Mr Ratcliffe (Science) Mr Seed (Geog) Mr Proud (Maths) were some of our teachers. Miss Smith left at the end of our first year. Mr Ratcliffe also moved to Penrith Grammar School I believe.

A new boy Hugh Barkley joined our class at the start of the 4th year. He had moved to Stanley from Hookergate Grammar School and he was very quiet.

I later found out that he had missed the 3rd year at Hookergate going straight into the Lower 4th from the 2nd year which was a quick stream for Uni. giving 3 years in the 6th form. Mr Carr, the head, at Stanley hadn't really read his Report Book and so placed him in with us at 4B. (Later we were to marry but I didn't know that then.)

Miss Thornton (History) was new and she became our form mistress. She was strict, and although we were all a bit of a handful for her, and everyone else. Strangely we were not a horrid bunch – just ready for fun - but she could cope. We loved her.

Dear Miss Nichol was our English teacher – a dear lady- and often near the end of the lesson, - before she could deal out any homework – we would request her to say her poem-we think was her favourite. Off she would go-

Grey's 'Elegy in a Country Churchyard.'

“The curfew tolls the knell of parting day,
The lowing herd wind slowly o'er the lea,
The plough-man homeward plods his weary way,
And leaves the world to darkness and to me.”

Ring-ring-ring. End of lesson. Tommy Manley would open the door for her and off she went – up the corridor still reciting the poem. No English homework tonight folks.

We used to laugh such a lot.

There was a boy in our class– Ralph Ord. His parents were disabled, deaf and unable to speak, and so he taught everyone the sign language he used at home. We could all converse at quiet times with each other, unknown to the teacher. Ralph was often absent from school.

Everyone knew he would be helping his parents. At home he kept pigeons. One day he came to school with two young pigeons which were learning to fly distances. (A well - known

North Eastern pastime for men.) We wondered how he was going to look after them but he had it all organised. The pigeons were placed on the classroom floor under upturned straw waste paper baskets, (so they could breathe.) During the morning, the baskets could be seen slowly, moving across the floor- every now and then emitting gentle coo-coo-cooing noises. The class just giggled quietly and nothing was said until the first break- time when the teacher left the room and Ralph was able to let his pigeons fly home releasing them through the open windows. We assumed they did get home.

There were two boys. Mick and Mack (names Kenneth Bell and Thomas Manley.) They were always together getting into silly mischief - always having fun making us all laugh.

Tommy was a lovely open- faced boy with curly dark hair, always smiling, always full of fun. Now in 1952, times were hard in the North East and one day – he came to school in a suit! Something not many, if any, could afford. In the summer, after lunch time, a lot of the boys left the school field to play in the adjoining wood, getting into mischief I expect. One hot Friday afternoon, at lunch time, some had gone to swing over the brook. I don't know what it is like now – but then there were shallow streams of red or brown water from the mines meandering through. Mack and Mick liked to swing across the stream using the old bit of rope which hung from a nearby tree. The inevitable thing happened and Mack, wearing his lovely suit-felt the rope break and of course- fell in. He was soaked, covered in reddish brown water and mud, he staggered back to lessons wet and smelly.

As the afternoon wore on – the warmth of the room became somewhat distasteful and soon a space around Tommy developed until he sat alone, in as wide a space as possible to give us all a distance from the smell. Poor Tommy just sat and grinned. I wonder how long his mum cried when she saw him? Hugh and I often repeat this story to our grandchildren and other folk we can entice into our house. Memories, sweet memories.

We also remember Mr Scott. He was our Chemistry teacher and as we used to line up outside the laboratory, waiting to be let in. He would always come past deliberately standing on the toes of the girls ,(which made everyone stand on tiptoe against the wall,)and knocking each boy on the head with his knuckle. If anyone tried to dodge this by putting their hands over their head, then he would grab that boy's finger and twist it, sometimes making the boy kneel on the floor. Happy days!!

We have lived away from the North East for the majority of our 58years of married life and often recall our happy times there, wondering if anyone who knew us is still alive.

We have lived in 'The Forest' for 40years now but we are instantly known because of our accents. Our sons have grown and married and now we grow old. Sometime ago, I went on to 'Friends Reunited' and found a message from a name I did not recognise. When I answered – I found it was Marjorie Parker's daughter. Marjorie had worked for the Foreign Office in Cheltenham and had met and married a man and had two girls. Sadly, I found out that Marjorie, who hadn't lived more than 30 miles away from us, had died with breast cancer and I didn't know. If I had only known this, I may have been able to see her and make her laugh with all the daft things we had seen and done at school. With two small boys and teaching

sometimes, it was difficult to keep in touch with friends as Hugh's work with the BBC kept us on the move.

It also sounds as though we didn't use our time at school to the best advantage. Well, I have had a very happy life, teaching everywhere we have lived. Hugh went into the RAF and then began to study again, getting his institute I.E.R.E and then worked with the BBC around the country. He entered St Luke' College, Exeter, to do his education time to teach Physics, Maths and Engineering at our local grammar school. He then worked towards an Open University degree and even when he retired, did an A level in Art History. I taught in most places where we lived. In Northern Ireland, Hugh says there are young people there who read with a Geordie accent because of me. In return I picked up a sweet Irish accent with people wondering where I had been born – was it in Southern Ireland??

All in all, our education was very important. Learning doesn't stop. We have even written Art History essays towards an Art degree from Newport Uni. and even now, I'm attending Art History classes and paying for them too. ! I had a very happy time at Stanley Grammar School, meeting a smashing husband and laughing a lot.

Mary Barkley
(nee Snaith)

**Beaten by the
Elliot's**

Anon

(I was so impressed with the presentation that I thought that you should see it! Editor.)

Elizabeth Tregoning

Hi,

You kindly published a piece I wrote about my mum, Elizabeth Tregoning. I mentioned there that she'd been given a tennis racquet in recognition of passing the 11+ and getting into the grammar school. I have now found the photograph. She is standing in the garden of her parents' home in Tweed Terrace, South Stanley, 76 years ago. As today (3rd Sept.) is the day war broke out, as I believe Tommy Handley used to say, that was mum's first day at school so the photograph must be almost exactly 76 years old.

I found a second photograph which I don't recall seeing previously – she's wearing her blazer, so I thought it may be of interest.

This short exchange seems awfully self-centred, talking about one person who is important to me but may only be known to a very few of your readers, so please feel free to disregard it completely.

Best wishes

Paul Tregoning

A Very Real Blast from the Past

Below is an old Stanley News photo from 1939 that Elizabeth discovered somewhere on the World Wide Web.

It is a wee bit before my time, (I would be 6!) and most likely yours too, but if there are any 'old stagers' out there who may remember something about it we would be pleased to hear it.

The Jollys and More

Many will remember Mr and Mrs Jolly from their schooldays, and probably the lessons in ballroom dancing that they gave to 6th Form pupils. Some may remember Sheila Rose, the pupil and then the teacher at Tanfield. Many will remember Norman as the formidable teacher of French. Norman continued his love affair with France until fairly recently when he could no longer drive the distance.

They get a mention because in August they celebrated their Diamond Wedding. 60 years wed is a noteworthy achievement. We send them our congratulations and our very best wishes.

Writing the above made me wonder how many couples owe their being together because of the "Tanfield Matrimonial Agency". For a start there is Mavis and myself who met as pupils about 15-16 years old and here we are 66 years later still going out together!! I can bring to mind one or two other couples who were our contemporaries who are still together, but I am sure that there are others, who were not in our time-span, who met at Tanfield and are still together.

It would be very interesting to hear from you if you are in that category, or if you know people who fit the bill, and how long they have been together.

Sadly, I think that the world has changed and that not many couples of today will be couples of tomorrow. Who knows?! Will Golden and Diamond weddings become things of the past?

John Cameron

Ted

Many thanks for the interesting item by John Caine.

When I was in the first year (1961-1962) John must have been either a 4th or 5th year. Because I wasn't fond of school dinners, I used to save the five shillings and spend lunch hours reading my home readers (a list of the SGS home reader would astonish the present English Department!), on wet days at the Roma Cafe and in better weather in among the pit-heaps and rosebay willow herb over the road from the school. I used to see John running amongst the pit-heaps and occasionally he used to spot me smoking a cigarette and reading my books.

An anecdote which I have used over the years must have taken place in that school year 1961-1962. Doubtless an annoying small boy, I must have vexed John because he laid one of the netball posts on the ground, put me in the ring then hauled it back up so I was dangling in mid-air. All good schoolboy fun.

I never knew that John had originally been a cyclist in Stanley Road Club but I remember there were two keen club cyclists at that time at SGS - Peart and Bennett (I forget their first names). They must have been beginners because one had a Lincoln Imp bike, not the marque of bike you'd race on. I recall Peart changing a punctured tubular tyre, which amazed me, having only known heavy old steel wheels with thick inner tubes.

I left SGS in my third year and moved to Teesside where I became a keen amateur cyclist on road and track in late 1960s, riding for Teesside Clarion. Two nights a week we used to train in a big fifty-rider 'chain-gang' on the North York Moors. Sid Barrass was by far the best amongst us. There were three tracks in the NE in those days - Clairville at Middlesbrough, Gypsies Green at South Shields and the Gateshead Redheugh Stadium (before John took over in mid-1970s when the cycle track was removed). These stadiums all had a running track inside the banked cycle track and occasionally big track meetings included both athletics and cycling so I'd see John running, though as a mere teenage amateur track cyclist I don't think I ever spoke to him.

While at Newcastle University in late 1960s and early 1970s my cycle road-racing and training was in South Northumberland. I seem to remember out on a January bike ride watching the Morpeth to Newcastle race with John Caine taking part in the era of Jim Alder but memory isn't reliable.

I much enjoyed John's account of his career, both at school and afterwards. Many thanks.

John Cameron

(PS Ted - feel free to remove the netball post story if you think it libellous!)

John Cameron 2

Ted

I mentioned the 'home readers' that we were given in my first and second year (1961-1963). I think we were told to read four every term. The way it worked was that a few copies of each title were distributed amongst the class then when you finished one book you found someone who had a book that you hadn't read and swapped books. The list of titles probably depended on SGS's stock of books rather than what the English Teacher (Nova Williamson) would have wanted us to read. Very little other than 19th century. Some bizarre titles included the lengthy and tedious

The Cloister and the Hearth by Charles Reade

Prester John by John Buchan

She King Solomon's Mines by H Rider Haggard

The Black Tulip by Alexandre Dumas

Tom Brown's Schooldays by Thomas Hughes

Kim by Rudyard Kipling

Under the Greenwood Tree by Thomas Hardy

20,000 Leagues Under the Sea by Jules Verne

Kipps by HG Wells

Dickens by Walter Scott

Silas Marner Mill on the Floss by George Eliot

Jock of the Bushveldt by Fitzpatrick

Youth & Gaspar Ruiz by Joseph Conrad

Travels with a Donkey in the Cevennes by RL Stevenson etc

John Cameron

P.S.

Just chatting with my 94yr old mother who tells me that she still uses as a footstool the seagrass stool that I made at SGS. In her house on Teesside there is also a wooden table-lamp and a wooden free-standing picture frame which were also made in your woodwork class in about 1962 or 1963. My brother in Hertford has my 'magnum opus' woodwork bench, designed and made in your after-school Woodwork Club. The top was made from a thick beech plank from a Newcastle quayside timber yard plus a thinner piece of solid oak (?) which you gave me. I think it came from old bench tops following the refurbishment of school science labs. If so, the oak probably dated from 1912 and is still in good condition. My brother used the bench when he was building a wooden boat that he used to sail in Norfolk.

Best wishes,

John Cameron (SGS 1961-1964)

52ers Lunch

On June 19th a group of 52ers met to have lunch and catch up at the Three Horse Shoes at Maiden Law. Joining us from Canada was Joan Olund (Nee Wanless) the lady in yellow. Joan was over visiting relatives.

We had a super meal and enjoyed hearing Joan's news.
Bilton.

Amy

Corporal Punishment

I had no direct reply to my invitation to tell me stories of misdemeanours and retribution. Then in a casual way comments were made about personal experiences that I thought might be worth putting together.

The beautifully written account by one of our members of her treatment at the hands of Little Ell (Mr Elliot) were an eye opener. Even in my time I had thought that that kind of thing didn't happen. I know from personal experience that Little Ell was a volatile and vicious person. At my advanced age I remember well the anger that I felt having been unfairly smacked across the face by the man. I must have been about 4th year, lined up to leave the dining hall with Little Ell on duty next to us. There must have been too much chatter noise for his liking so he turned around, and I happened to be nearest and I was struck across the face as an example. The chatter stopped, but I never forgot the injustice and the indignity and never forgave the man. I even use his nick-name in this article with distaste because in my mind he is always 'Little ...' He must have been among the last of a dying breed, before common assault charges killed them off!

It happened to younger children too, if in a less drastic way. I had a letter from Betty Watson who mentioned her young days at Bloemfontein Junior School. She wrote about memorising verses of poetry in lessons. If they couldn't be recited the following day it meant that the pupils were caned across the palm of the hand. What a fine way to improve your memory.

When I first went back to Tanfield to teach in 1959 corporal punishment was still an option, but it was administered by Dr Sharp. (I suppose that the girls were caned by the Senior Mistress). There was the story of Dr Sharp making his mark with the snowballing incident in his first winter at Tanfield. An order was issued that there would be no snowballing in the yard because of all the surrounding windows. As you would gather a lot of lads ignored the instruction and couldn't resist the temptation. The offenders were rounded up and all subsequently caned by Dr Sharp for disobeying his rule. His reputation was made for all time! It happened before my return to the school, but it was well known. Were you a snowballer, were you caned? I'd like to hear your story.

3A in 1957 – Mr Glendenning's Form

Do you know any of these pupils? (Back row, 2nd and 3rd from right John Hogg and Alan Mills –Editor) Now it is your turn to 'name that face'!

School Staff about 1952

I'm sure that this photo has been published previously. However it is quite nostalgic for a lot of our readers, so I don't mind showing it again.

This is the staff from my pupil days and I think I can name all of them. Can you do the same? I am interested to know of the ones that you can't remember! I know that 'Morty' has left by then, but she is perhaps the most mentioned member of staff from past pupils. Now let us see who is the least remembered!!



Can anyone recognise the cheeky pupil looking out of the window top left?

Malcolm Bell

Let's see if I can name people on Miss Williamson's photograph from Newsletter, Issue 18, and 1960' photographs section. I confirm that it is 3B!



One or two gaps/uncertainties but here goes:

L - R looking at subjects:

Front row, Anne (Mary?) Collins, Christine Hall, Joyce Jacques, Ann (E?) Daghish, Nova Williamson, Christine McKeag, Kathryn Longstaff, Sheila May, (Wendy Dunbar?)

Middle row, Malcolm Bell, Raymond Cairns, Gerald Huggins, Jean Toft, Kathleen? Harrison?, Jennifer (Tait?), Barbara Knox?, Bill Shaw?, Jim Tait, Alan Arkless

Back row, Brian Hopkins, Kevin? Churchill, ? Temple/Templar?, Keith Kirtley, Kenneth Clough, ? Downing, Michael Healey, Stewart? Jefferson, Cecil? ?, Trevor Lowther.

Hope this helps and apologies in advance if I've slipped up a bit after 50 years! It will be interesting to know how good my memory is if anyone else can confirm.

A Wartime Wedding



This photo, taken in 1942, shows a former pupil of AWS, Frank Taylor, and his bride. Does anyone recognise the young bridesmaid? She is a member of the association and recently attended the AGM. Gladys Frappell-Welsh and Keith Hagar can probably remember her when she looked like this. Who is it?

Euan Ross

I surely did enjoy reading Newsletter 32 – meatier than some through being filled with articulate testimony from a cluster of dimly remembered people warmly illuminated. Well-done, newsletter team!

Best wishes,
Euan.

Eric Rainbow – Newsletter 32

Glad to see news of some near contemporaries – Florence Hutchinson, Wendy Herdman, Sandy Newton and that the Annfield Plain Gleemen are still thriving (my brother in law sang with them in the 40s/50s). I looked for a Gleemen website without success to see if I could find what was in their repertoire – just some other references on local sites.

Good wishes

Eric

Dear Ted,

You may remember me; I was in the year below you at the Grammar. A group of us who left in 1952 have kept in touch and meet twice a year for an evening together. I am a widower of several years.

At our last get together I decided that I was going to end my loneliness and pop the question to one of the ladies that I had admired for quite a time, but had been too shy to take things further. After a couple of glasses of wine, I had sufficient courage to whisper in her ear, "Will you marry me?" She was delighted to reply "Of course I will my dear, I thought that you'd never ask!". I was so pleased with myself.

Sadly, the following morning my memory let me down as it has been doing recently. I could remember asking – but I couldn't remember the reply. Screwing up my courage again I phoned her. After beating around the bush and mentioning my memory lapses, I finally asked if her answer had been yes or no. She told me that her answer had been an enthusiastic "Yes". My euphoria was rather dented when she followed up by saying, "I'm so glad you called, I couldn't remember who had asked me!"

R. Singabout, 1945 -1952

Too good to leave out!

A fine photo of Betty Watson at the AGM.

