

# TANFIELD ASSOCIATION

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## NEWSLETTER No. 34

Spring 2016

### Editorial

The daffodils are flowering and Tesco is brimming with chocolate eggs so Easter is just around the corner and we are looking forward to a bright future. I am hoping that that is echoed in our Association. We are active in our role as helper to our old school, we are busy socially in keeping local members in touch, and the Newsletter appears to be appreciated by those further afield. So, we are involved and healthy and confident in the future.

We are still helping with the School's Accelerated Reading Scheme: a few of us go into school weekly to hear pupils read. I recently found what I heard so interesting that I downloaded the book onto my Kindle and read it at home. Two way traffic!!

We also consider requests from school departments for financial help with various projects. Those we have helped in this way have been very grateful. Recently the school Robotics Group have been able to enter national competitions with the help we have given and have done well there. It is very satisfying.

Socially we are keeping those who live locally in contact by having monthly lunches together. We meet on the second Wednesday of each month in a local pub to eat. We have met three times since the AGM and have had a good turnout each time. The venue is chosen for the following month at

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each meeting - we spread our bounty around. If you are within travelling distance why not join us, and bring your partner too.

In our last Newsletter I reported on the Diamond Wedding of Norman and Sheila Jolly. Sadly Norman is no longer with us. Mavis and I attended his funeral in Whickham last week. Many of you will have good memories of Mr. Jolly from schooldays.

I was pleased to note that one of my readers remembers R. Singabout at school. See inside.

## Association Website

Many of you will have accessed the Association's website at <http://tanfield-association.org/> and your comments and suggestions on the content are always welcome.

If it has been a while since you last looked, re-visit the website because items are always being added and view first the option Latest News.

If you haven't had a look, I suggest you do and I'm sure you will find many items of interest. An obvious source of entertainment is via the Photographs option on the left hand side of the screen. The top section contains links to the galleries and, since a gallery may take a while to download, all of the photographs are available as thumbnails when you choose "Click **HERE** for Even More Pictures".

I also recommend the Tanfield Website Search option on the Start Page. See if you feature in any of the Magazines, Newsletters, photos etc. by keying in your name and hitting the search button. Any hits will be displayed on the results' screen and you will be able to view the relevant document - you may be surprised at what you discover! The Search Results screen also lets you specify other options such as Phrase search so you can carry on delving.

If you have something to contribute to the website (photos, memorabilia, suggestions etc.), please contact [webguru@tanfield-association.org](mailto:webguru@tanfield-association.org) and I will do my best to make it happen.

Thanks

Howard Bott

## A Joyful Occasion



Just before the end of last term, Bob Harrison, Ted Brabban, Fred Westwater, Amy Bilton and I had the great pleasure of going to school to present Joy Drake, the Head Teacher's PA, with an inscribed vase as a thank you for all of the work she has done for the association since its very beginning in 2001.

In this age of computers, it's easy to forget that when Fred conceived the idea of the Tanfield Association, he did all of his work by hand. Joy duly deciphered Fred's handwriting (no mean feat, according to Fred!), typed up letters, posters, all of the newsletters and anything else that was required. She was, and still is, involved in a lot of the business of the association and has always given her time cheerfully and efficiently.

Thankfully, computers make the job a lot easier these days, but Joy is still the one who designs and puts together the newsletter, keeps our lists up to date, produces the labels for our mailing list, forwards messages from people who contact the school about past matters, sends us invitations, produces the certificates for the winners of our awards - and goodness knows what else! What would we do without her?

By the time you read this, Joy will have read it already, whilst putting together the newsletter. So, just for you, Joy - Thanks a million!

Elizabeth Hawkins

PS The fizz was non-alcoholic

## From L BROXSON - Chair of Governors

Thank you for forwarding this edition of the Tanfield Association Newsletter. As always I have thoroughly enjoyed its content. I am especially touched by all the articles submitted by members as to their school memories which gives me an even greater insight in to the school's impact over time. What a brilliant school Tanfield is. As you know I am from Seaham, was schooled there and can relate to compare differences in those times. The article on corporal punishment also touched me. At my school every teacher had a cane and was not afraid to use it. We had a similar policy on snowballing and it's fair to say most of us felt the sting of the "Whip" as it was commonly called. Thanks again to all who have produced and contributed to the newsletter.

Regards

Len

## VEX Robotics

We were delighted to receive the following mail from Mr Carr at school, the teacher leading the school robotics team. Obviously our donation has been well spent!

“Just a quick email to say thank you very much for the kind donation of £500 to the VEX Robotics team.

The money was used to purchase a range of VEX kit and registration into the 2015-2016 competition 'Nothing But Net'.

On Friday 26th February the two teams of Y11 and Y8 students took part in the North East regional tournament. After an intense day's competition, the two teams formed an alliance for the knock out stages. They won every match together ending the day as tournament champions.

They now go on to compete in the UK nationals in Birmingham on the 18th and 19th March.

More work now needed to fund raise for next year to build on this success and to help with the costs of going to Birmingham.

Many thanks again

Paul Carr

## School Awards



Early this year the school made presentations and awards to those pupils who had fared well in their final exams last Summer. As the Association makes two awards and two of our members make individual awards, we are always invited along.

Elizabeth and I attended, Prof. Bob Harrison being unwell at the time. In my role as Vice President I was invited to present our two awards. The Association Award for Science and Engineering went to Joshua Green, and the Association Award for Work in the Community went to Keiran Frame.

Our oldest member, Charlotte Stammers, who is 101 years old, presents a silver plate and a cheque for outstanding work in English Literature. She was present to award the prize to Sophie Leigh Lockey. The J B Hardy Award for girls in engineering (donated by Joan Charlton) went to

Terri Stuart.

Ted Brabban & Joshua Green



Sophie Leigh Lockey & Charlotte Stammers



Graeme Lloyd & Sophie Leigh Lockey

## Lunch Dates

The Association has been attempting to bring local members together in a social atmosphere. To do this we have been having monthly lunch dates. We meet on the second Wednesday of each month at a pub venue decided at the latest lunch meeting. We have lunched at the Miners' Arms in Medomsley, the Shepherd and Shepherdess in Beamish and at the Kings Head in Lanchester. In a couple of weeks, we will be lunching at the Anchor Inn at Whittonstall. The events seem to be popular as we have had over twenty members turn out to each occasion. It is an open invitation, and partners are not excluded, so just come along. You will need to contact Elizabeth to determine where the next lunch is being taken, but this also gives us (and the landlord) an indication of numbers. Some landlords like to know in advance what menu choices people make too.

The photographs were taken at different lunches. I am not going to attempt to name names, but if you are curious you can always e-mail me and I will make an identity check for you.



## Susan Donkin Remembers

I have recently added Lilian Flint to our members list.

This brought back happy memories for me as she was my Domestic Science teacher in the late 1970s. Happy memories of sitting in the DS block sewing and baking. I loved the “cooking basket” with the plastic hood that we just had to have!

I was proud to receive an A in my O Level for needlework for the nightdress that I made, and my mother was especially relieved as the broderie anglaise material that I just had to have must have cost an absolute fortune back then!

Even though the sleeves were a touch on the snug side, and the yoke with buttons a bit stretched across the chest, I wore it with pride for many years.

Leaving school at 16 and having my first job interview with the very prim and proper HR manager of Barclay's Bank, she was impressed (and I am sure that I nailed the interview because of it!) that I was wearing a skirt and blouse combo made by my own fair hand. She obviously thought that this was a girl with nimble fingers who would count money quickly and keep the queues of customers to a minimum!

To be frank, they were the only smart clothes that I owned, other than my school uniform !! Times have indeed changed.

Georgina Jack provided a memorable experience of my schooldays. She was the Senior Mistress of the school. After a particularly bad gate-vault in a PE lesson, by lunchtime my foot was swollen like a pudding. Mrs Jack took me home in her car! WOW ! It was like being driven by the Queen! I'm not sure what my pinny clad Gran thought when she answered the door to Mrs Jack, Bless her.

Needless to say, with a broken foot in plaster, I remained absent from school for six weeks. The 'Tower Block Rush' was very definitely a no-go area, - but I had been in a car with royalty!!

Susan

## Intermediate Football 1952



We were given some grubby old photos of the school football intermediate team in 1952. After a bit of scrubbing up they look half decent! Bill Ardle tells me that this was an invincible team. In the 51 – 52 season they won the Murray Cup and the league too. Most of the team signed ‘en-bloc’ for Dipton Junior team and became a backbone there. Howay the lads, tell us all about it!



## Form Photo 1956

Not our usual quality! However, this is a newspaper cutting that came our way. It was probably from the Stanley News and shows Mr Hector Hall with his form - I would guess they are 4<sup>th</sup> years.

If David Morrison is out there perhaps he can tell us more, or, if you know the faces let us know.



Stanley Grammar School, 1956, sent in by David Morrison, of Leadgate, Consett.



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

3A in 1957 - Mr. Gledhill's Form

Back row - third from left David Harker

Centre row - L to R - Gordon Bryant (?), John Gordon,  
 Edna Wilson, Marie Bretton, Geraldine Rogers,  
 Vivian Hodgson, Elaine Rowstron, Evelyn Wilson,  
 Margaret Ewart, Brian Hunter, - -

Front Row, on left from left, Kathleen Hodgson

Margaret Warwick (Ewart)

To: Ted the Ed.

Ref. Newsletter No 33 Winter 2005  
p. 21 photo — for checking purposes.

3a S.G.S. 1957

Neil Urrin	Kenneth Duglar	David Harber	Harold Collier	Joseph Fradman	Alan Johnson	Alan Mills	John Hogg	Kerry Dunham			
Gordon Bragan	John Cordner	Edna Wilson	Duffie Bulmer	Georgina Robinson	Krisana Bodgson	Flaine Armstrong	Erleina Wilson	Margaret Ewart	Brian Hunt	Geoffrey Bentley	Billy Wigham
Janis Jefferson	John Whalley	Marion Burn	Sean Kest	Kathleen Hedgson	Mr. M. Glenning	Eileen Walker	Caroline Bott	John Curry	Ann Copleman	Joyce Bodd	

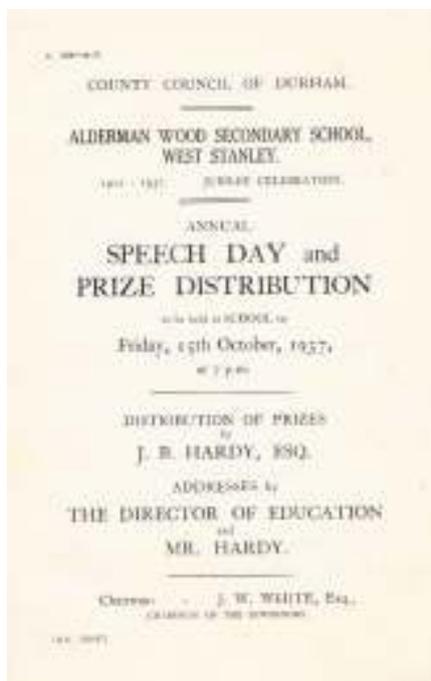
'Leonard's Ghost?'

## Fenwick Lawson

We have previously recalled the work of Fen, one of our illustrious past pupils. This is an update from a newspaper of what is happening to one of his works on display until recently in a Durham square.

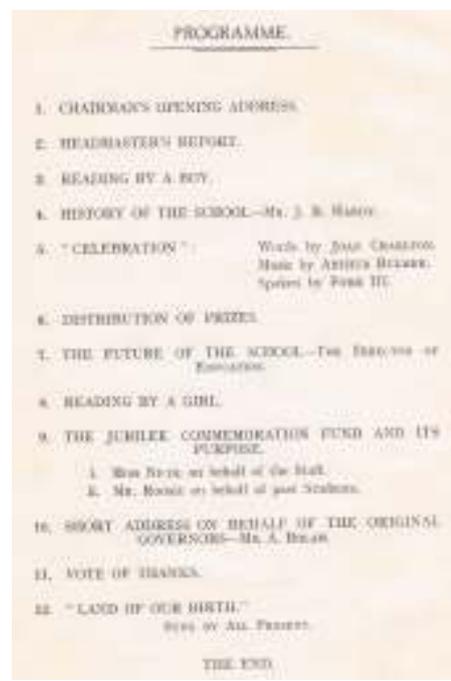


■ Artist Fenwick Lawson, right, with some of his work at Durham Cathedral. Inset, his statue The Journey, which tells the story of St Cuthbert. The sculpture is to be moved to the grounds of the cathedral from the city's Millennium Place, where it has been regularly drilled, urinated on and vomited on by drunk revellers.



## An Old Speech Day Programme

Amy Bilton passed on to me this Speech Day programme from 1937. It was discovered amongst papers left by Amy Thompson - a.k.a. 'Fifi'



## CELEBRATION.

Men seek their godhead in the growth of Man.

We have a dwelling, and a law  
Ordained that we should learn  
In wise humility the power of Being  
And knowledge of the patterned ways of Life.

The years bring changes in the shape of stones,  
And from our human earth new stone is hewn ;  
Along the arches of the figured path  
We reach to clutch the keystone of the skies.

There shall be Gladness  
When, in the stress  
Of life's despairing weariness,  
We turn again to all that once has been ;  
Like a pure missal speak the memories  
Of rede and counsel given long ago.

And even as the silver years have seen  
The many in these halls who knew  
The strength bought by community  
Of mind and spirit, pay their toil and pass,  
Yet shall their work endure, secure and good,  
Richer than tomb or monument of brass.

There shall be Peace,  
In after days  
We, also knowing, will return,  
And build with our own wisdom  
For our children's sons  
The age-strong glad inheritance of School.

Words by JOAN CHARLTON.

Music by ARTHUR BULMER.

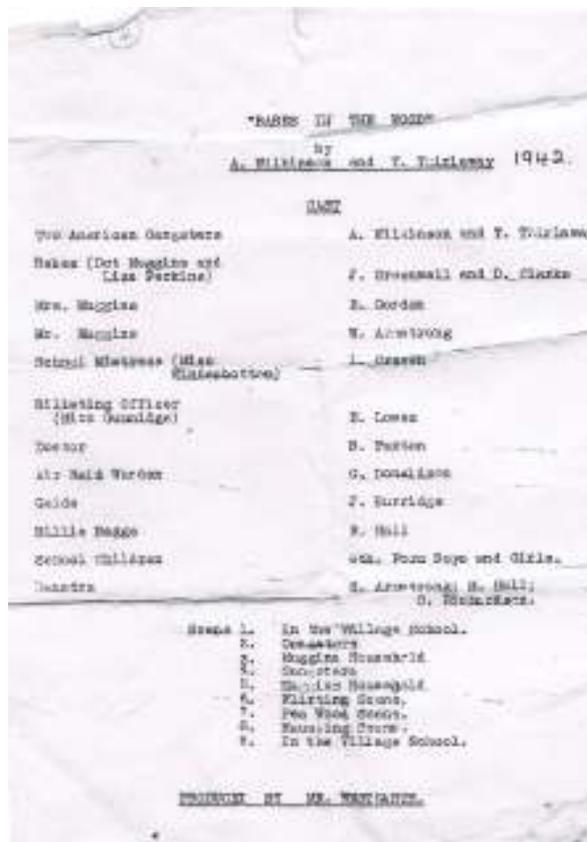
N.B. Item 5 - 'Celebration'

Did Joan Charlton ever become  
Poet Laureate?

Arthur Bulmer was a well-known  
piano teacher from Tanfield Lea.  
Did he have any connection to  
Tanfield School?

## School Play - 1942

The attached programme was recently unearthed. It comes from before my time (yes, indeed!). Does anyone out there have any memories of the production or the people involved?



## Nostalgia - Ted Brabban



Looking back into the old woodwork room of 1950. The most notable change is the mystery of the vanishing hair. Look at that quiff, and look at me now. Oh vanity I have felt your sting!

The figure in the foreground left is the late Brian Charlton who became headmaster at Burnopfield Primary School. Against the light on the right I believe is Bill Smith who became headmaster at Whickham Comprehensive School. The lad under my chin could be Billy Gill (?), I don't know what became of him. Someone out there may know.

## From John Caine

**Dear Elizabeth**

Many thanks for the newsletter.

You have no idea what fun my kids have had with the little piece about me sticking the 1st former in the netball goal and hoisting him vertically.

I'd mentioned it years ago and I think they thought I was romancing the yarn.

Never in my wildest dreams did I think that half a century later the "victim" would resurface to haunt me !

Marvellous

Regards & best wishes

John

## Congratulations



Many congratulations to our youngest member Sue (Susan Marshall at school) and her husband Owain Davies on the birth of their beautiful daughter. The baby arrived on the 18<sup>th</sup> Feb. and will be called Cerys Eira Davies (meaning 'Love Snow in welsh).

Both are doing well.

## More Congratulations



Sue Davies may have a rival! Can Marjorie Whalley really be our most youthful member?

Marjorie was born on February 29<sup>th</sup>, and thus can only celebrate her true birthday every four years. This year she celebrated her 22<sup>nd</sup> birthday. We hope that she had a lovely day.

## Eric Rainbow



Just had a good read of the recent newsletter. Will have a look at the website later. I was frustrated by the 1952 staff photograph. I can recognise most of the men but only Miss Thompson of the ladies with certainty and possibly Miss Allison. I would have expected to see Miss Nichol, who dragged me from the academic floor of mock School Cert Eng Lit, and Miss Mortimer, who never taught me but with whom I had some close encounters of the disciplinary kind – but I did not spot

them. I have had a problem all my life. If a woman changes her hair style, she's someone else! Look forward to the next issue when hopefully all names will be revealed.

Interested about the longevity of marriages of ex-Tanfield people. Apart from Ted and Mavis, the only couple of my time in the sixth form who I know are still with us is Jean and David York; I am waiting for their Christmas news from Vancouver. The other two couples who I remained in contact with have sadly passed away. I am now approaching 57 years of marriage – but not to a Tanfield girl.

Keep up the good work.

*Editor:*

*Back Row: Harrison, Forster, Yockney, Wood, Gee, Conroy.*

*Middle Row: Binks, Scott, Richardson, Nichol, Livesey, Proud, Robinson.*

*Front Row: Thompson, Allison, Jeffrey, Carr, Elliot, Browning, Arkless, Speed.*

*Sitting: Seed*

*Chapman*

## Tanfield Association

Once again many thanks for the latest Newsletter which is always very welcome to receive. I notice that there was even a photo of me in this latest edition.

Wishing you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New year.

Kind regards

Ray Cairns

## Two poems by Betty Watson

### **Fridays.**

Domestic Science room,  
Golden bread buns on the fender.  
Perfectly formed  
lunch tray

### **My Gran**

Chapel services.  
stove.  
I snuggled in  
To her warm, plump arm.

### **Dulcie, My Art teacher**

She committed suicide.  
The world was not sensitive to her voice.

### **Two young girls preparing the staff tea.**

Me, lifting a boiling hot kettle off the  
“Elizabeth dear,  
Don’t you know the rule?  
Always lift the tea pot to the kettle.”  
Words I still remember.  
Let alone the water,  
Steam burns.

## Catching Up

Have you ever seen a more conspiratorial look? This picture of our oldest member, Charlotte Stammers, sharing gossip with Betty Watson was taken at one of our lunch venues.



It is said that every picture tells a story!!

## A response to a sad story

Dear Ted,

I enjoyed reading Issue 33 of the newsletter – it really brought back memories! I was particularly interested in the letter from R. Singabout. I well remember R. Singabout in class. A lively lad! In particular, it reminded me of an incident in the Chem Lab when we were learning about the properties of bromine. One drop was spilled but it was enough to fill the lab with fumes and we had to evacuate. I remember Mr Scott bellowing through the resultant fog, "R. Singabout caused this!" Exciting times!

Sincerely,

*Rosalind Ursula Sirius*

R U Sirius (née Kidding)

Editor : Thank you 'Rosalind'. At least one of my readers has their wits about them!!