

LIFE AFTER TANFIELD

Graeme Hall

PUPIL AT TANFIELD FROM 1986 TO 1991



MY LIFE AFTER LEAVING TANFIELD

I was born at Shotley Bridge hospital and was brought up in Shield Row.

I really enjoyed my time at Tanfield School. In common with a lot of boys of my age I thought I knew best about most things and enjoyed playing sports and having a good laugh with my friends. I was always in top set but didn't pay as much attention to schoolwork as I should have done. School life was different in the 80's and there wasn't the focus and pressure on kids in the way there is now. I did however know that I wanted to get on in life and from an early age I was confident that I could progress well in a job in the future, even if at that stage I didn't know what that job would be.

After leaving school I spent two years at Derwentside College studying A levels in Biology, Accountancy and Geography. Studies took a similar path to school in that I adopted a "just enough" mentality and I very nearly came a cropper when my A level results were not as I hoped. After some soul searching and job hunting I decided to go through clearing and attend University. My girlfriend's grandfather seemed well off (he had a Mercedes) and I established he was a Quantity Surveyor. I looked into the profession, and it seemed to offer a range of activities which I was interested in. Only later did I find out the money for the Mercedes came from property development.

In Sept 1993 I moved to Preston to start a three-year BSc Hons degree course in Quantity Surveying at the University of Central Lancashire. It was a daunting experience moving to a new place, knowing absolutely no-one, but it turned out to be a great three years. At the end of the course, I graduated with a 2:1 BSc. Hons degree.

I then moved back home to Shield Row and after a few months job hunting secured an Assistant QS role at Bellway Homes. I worked at their head office in Ponteland for around 18 months but as their work was focused only on housing, I needed a wider breadth of projects in order to progress to becoming a Chartered Surveyor.

I joined Henry Riley's Newcastle office in July 1997. I worked primarily on the Sainsbury's Supermarkets workstream and acted as QS on a number of new build superstores.

In Oct 1999 I made the bold move (for a lad from Shield Row) to relocate to Cambridge. My future wife had been offered a relocation package to move to the area with her work, so we thought we would give Cambridge a try.

I left Henry Riley and joined another QS firm (Northcroft) where I worked on a wider range of projects which helped me build my experience for becoming a Chartered Surveyor. In 1999 I sat the Assessment of Professional Competence and passed (at the second attempt) meaning I was now a Chartered Quantity Surveyor.

After 18 months with Northcroft, Henry Riley approached me and asked if I would return and join their Cambridge office. The Partners in the Cambridge office were getting towards the end of their careers and although Henry Riley was much smaller than Northcroft in terms of the Cambridge market, I could see the opportunity for progression.

I re-joined Henry Riley in 2001 and didn't look back. By 2007 I was a Salaried Partner and in 2009 became an Equity Partner. I have now been an Equity Partner for 13 years and with the help of some excellent staff have quadrupled the size of the office in terms of staff numbers and turnover. The business employs around 200 people and has a turnover of £18m.