

## LIFE AFTER TANFIELD

*NAME: Bill (Slip) Mahoney*

*PUPIL AT TANFIELD FROM 1958 TO 1963*

*MY LIFE AFTER LEAVING TANFIELD*



I passed my 11+ in 1958 at Tanfield Lea Junior School. At that time I lived at Catchgate so getting to school was a trip on 2 buses. Stanley Grammar as it was then had a dress code, we had to wear shorts with a gold braided blazer so to be honest, we looked right prats. I was commonly known as Slip, a carryover from a character from the Bowery Boys, Saturday entertainment at the local Tantobie fleapit.

My main friends at school were Stan Maughan and Jim Affleck. I remember a Margaret Jennings, a Christine Heavyside. There was also a good athlete called Alan Wilson.

Dr. Sharp was a very imposing and scary headmaster. But to be honest, all the staff were great and I really enjoyed school, even the dinners. And don't think I missed any time in the 5 years. My favourite teachers were Mr. Livesey (Physics) and Mr. Curry (Chemistry). I developed a love of Maths and Science which interest me still until this day.

I had a few intimate sessions with the cane of Dr Sharp; you didn't want to be in the corridor after being sent out from class, minimum 3 strokes. The worst was one snowy day when we 5<sup>th</sup> formers corralled a few captive 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> formers in the tennis courts after a snowball fight. We lined them up as a firing squad and threw snowballs, a kid complained and 120 of us were sent to the Doc's study. He decided that the firing squad would get 6 strokes and the others 3 but as we were split into 2 groups of 5 he compromised and offered to only cane the firing squad with 3 strokes and give a warning to the others, an offer duly accepted.

I had wanted to stay on and do 'A' levels but my Dad had arranged an interview at Consett Iron Co. where he worked and I started a technical apprenticeship in metallurgy that September after leaving. I worked in all areas of the plant whilst studying part time at Consett Tech. and Rutherford Tech in Newcastle to get an HNC in Metallurgy. When I was 18, I met my wife at a local dancehall, married in 1968 and still together after 55 years. I spent 2 yrs. In London sponsored by the now British Steel to get my degree in Metallurgy and came back to become a Shift manager in the Steelplant.

I left the area in 1975, 9 mths. after the birth of our daughter as prospects in Consett looked dim. I stayed working in the metals industries in senior managerial positions, Lead Refining (3Y) and Copper Alloy Tube making (20Y) until that plant closed in 1997. By that time I could have retired as I had a good pension and severance package from IMI but I took on a couple of short term employments with engineering firms Nr. Doncaster.

I settled down to what I thought would be early retirement but soon was bored and my wife arranged an interview wither boss at a Local Government Housing Authority in Wakefield , I was the Business Development Manager and after 5 years I moved to Leeds Council in a similar role, finally retiring in 2010 at the age of 64, or so I thought. Within 3 months I was bored so applied to a school in the area for the P/T position of a stats person monitoring the kids' progress from 11 through 16. It was only for a year and brought my thoughts about teachers in to a whole new ballpark. The problems that a few disruptive kids cause is quite considerable and we would never have got away with it with Dr. Sharp.

I was able to travel extensively from 1997 onwards, travelling to Hawaii, Canada and a few areas in the USA and Mexico. We have enjoyed a number of cruises throughout the Caribbean and became very interested in photography especially wildlife. In 2007 I took my first trip to the Kruger Park in South Africa and was blown away with the atmosphere and how close you can get to the animals. We have since gone back a further 15 times spending about 3 wks. self - driving and I now have an extensive library of photos(>70K) of the many mammals and birds found in the park. I joined a couple of local camera clubs local to where I now live in Yorkshire and am a Judge and speaker on the Yorkshire Photographic Union list.

It was not until 2015 that I first visited the Farne Islands and I now make regular trips up there Covid and Bird Flu excepting. All my close family from the Stanley area have now either passed or moved away so I don't get up there as often as I would like. I still look at posts on Facebook from the groups on Stanley and Consett.

I hope there are a few still around from my era, it was an interesting and enjoyable 5 years, I just wish I had paid as much attention in the first 2 years as I did in my last when I eventually got top place on the class report which I still have.

Wedding Pic August 68 (Age 21)

Social Pic December 19 (Age 72)