

# Tanfield Association Newsletter

Tanfield School

Volume 1, Issue 3  
Newsletter Date July 2002

## Editorial

Welcome to our third newsletter. Since our last instalment we have had what was hopefully the first of many memorable evenings. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the numerous members for their sterling efforts in making the evening such a resounding success, in particular I would like to thank Cecil Johnson our host for the evening.

We have another very significant date in the calendar namely the 90th Birthday celebration in October (tickets now on sale at £5 remember there

are limited numbers so order now to avoid disappointment.)

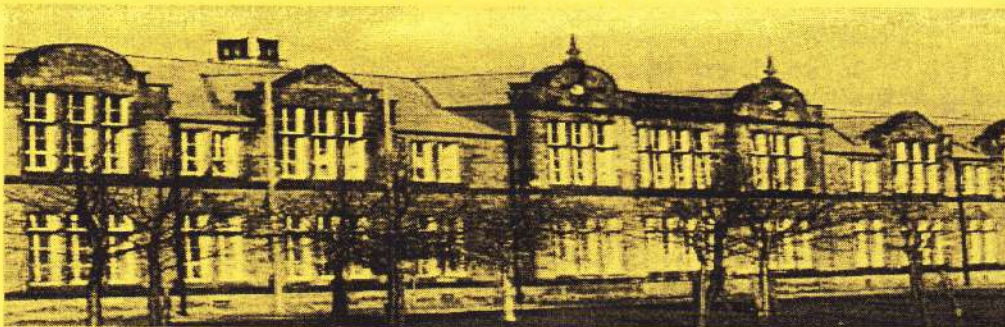
You will shortly receive information regarding becoming a Patron of the School, this briefly involves pledging a minimum of £100 to the school, this worthwhile scheme will hopefully provide the foundation for the continued success of our School, Joicey Craven and Gary Preston (interviewed in this edition) are two of the first Patrons of the School.

The Association is hoping to present a Burns Night Supper on January 25th, always a great

excuse for getting together with old friends and having a good time (like we need an excuse), I do hope you will all support this exciting event as you did the memorable evening.

To allow the newsletter to move forward and continue to be a good read (I hope?) please send in any articles of interest and any old photographs you wish others to see.

Until our next meeting, all the best and enjoy the summer sun.



## Join the Tanfield Association

Talking with old friends at a recent Tanfield Association meeting made me realise how far and wide our families are now scattered.

The days of the extended family all living locally are gone. In the not too distant past two of my uncles, Frank Brabban and Fred Ramsay were both pupils at the Alderman Wood School. The next generation of the Brabban – Ramsey families had during the 1950's and early 1960's at

least nine brothers, sisters or cousins all privileged to be educated at the then Stanley Grammar School.

Join the Tanfield Association. It brings back memories, makes you think and may take you on a voyage of discovery. I married a Hookergate Grammar School pupil whom I found out met Fred Westwater on Newcastle Central Station on 15<sup>th</sup> May 1952, the day they went off to do National Service in the Green

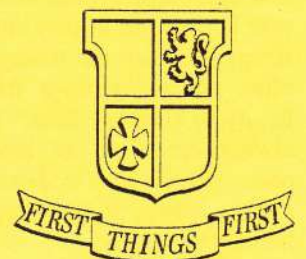
Howards.

Since writing this article it is with great sadness that I have to tell you that one of my above mentioned cousins Joan Harmon, (then Joan Ramsey) has died aged 64. I am sure there will be many of you will remember her as a school friend or perhaps a colleague during her teaching career.

Mary Storey. (Brabban)

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## Shopping habits

When I was a girl in the late forties and early fifties in Craghead, everyone shopped at the village Co-operative department store. It was in a very prominent position on the cross-roads corner and going up the hill, with grocery, hardware, shoe, haberdashery, clothing, meat and greengrocery departments. Upstairs was the Co-op Hall, which was used as a cinema. Behind was the Co-op yard, with stables for the horses.

Every family I knew was a member of the co-op, and even young children knew the family share number. Ours was 617, and when you were sent on an errand to the Co-op you were in trouble if you didn't bring back the 'check' or receipt. My mother kept all these checks on an old knitting needle, with a hooked end, stuck into a cork. It hung in the pantry, and a Quarter's End, mother would add up how much she had spent and work out how much dividend was due. Most families used their share account as a dividend savings scheme as they did not possess a Post Office or bank book.

Quarter End could be a time of great worry in the village. The Co-op had a credit scheme and people were allowed to buy non-perishable goods 'on account', and pay for them at the end of the three month period (The Quarter). As the fateful Quarter's End approached much anxiety hung over households as they attempted to scrape together the essential funds, often borrowing from friends and family to clear the debt. There was always the terror of having your name put on public display in the store window, if you were an extremely bad payer.

The shopping week started when the Co-op order man came to our house on a Thursday to take the grocery order, which would be delivered the following Tuesday. He had a printed list in his order book and he ticked off 'tea, sugar, green soap' at my mother's request. He always stayed for a cup of tea, sharing news and local gossip. I wonder how he ever

managed to finish his round! He sold the pink milk discs which had to be left out at night, inside empty bottles for the Co-op milkman. Sometimes we children were allowed to rinse out the milk bottles, but they had to be pristine clean and shiny to be put on the front step. "More people come past the house than come in" was my mother's watchword, and so windows, net curtains, doorsteps, sinks and even pavements had to be immaculate.

On Tuesday, when the groceries arrived in cardboard boxes, there was the excitement of something different for tea. The Co-op delivered bread daily and meat twice a week by van, but the Co-op greengrocer did his deliveries with horse and cart. To a young girl, the horse was massive with huge hindquarters and a cropped short tail. Its hooves were enormous, and we had to hold Mam's hand when we went to the cart, so that we could keep well away from them. My sister and I took a crust of bread out to the cart but we had to ask the greengrocer to give it to the horse, because we weren't allowed near. If the horse left any droppings there was always a rush for the bucket to claim them for manure for the garden.

If we ran out of food during the week, we children were sent to the Co-op Branch store, which was near our house, but it still meant walking past privately owned shops on the way. We weren't allowed to go to them, because of the need to build up the 'divi'.

On a Thursday my father brought his pay note home from work, and on a Friday while he was at work, my mother went to the colliery office to collect his pay. If we were on holiday from school we had to go with her – a distance of about three-quarters of a mile. If it was wet, we walked around the road, or even caught a bus, but if it was fine we walked over the fields, along a well worn track used by miners to get to the pit. On the way, as a means of encouraging us, mam would tell us to look out for things.

As we passed the side of a small wood, it was the tree where the owl sat or the place where the fox had run out in front

of dad going on night shift. Across the open fields we picked our way through sheep, cows or horses, then it was past the farm where we could see the chickens or piglets. Next it was along the bottom of Uncle Will's allotment. If he was in the right shift, and working his garden, he might give us a cabbage or turnip to take home. At last we reached the other side of the village, walked past the pit yard, down the side of the colliery railway (counting the coal wagons) until we reached the Pay Office. Often the queue there was enormous and we had to wait for ages with mam chatting to other miners' wives until it was our turn. We meanwhile met up with other children and played games jumping up and down the office steps.

When we got the pay, it was back to the Co-op to pay the bill for Tuesday's deliveries and to get fresh supplies for the weekend. We helped mam to carry things back, and as soon as we got home, it was on with the kettle, whilst she divided up the pay. Money in the sideboard drawer for dad's pocket money, rent money in the coffee jug, insurance money in the vase and money in her big purse for housekeeping. Then a rummage through the shopping for something nice to go with the cup of tea.

Now, the pit is closed, the Co-op is demolished and a whole way of life has gone. The village remains, looking towards a new community spirit. I still shop at the Co-op, but it is the hypermarket in a nearby town. I get the car out once a week and stock up my fridge and freezer with goods from all parts of the world – irrespective of season. Amazingly this Co-op is giving dividend again – what memories came flooding back!

June Todd  
(Nee pounder)



## The Joicey Craven Story.

Joicey was born on 8<sup>th</sup> September 1920 at Orchard House, Tantobie. This was his grandfather's house and butchers shop. The Craven family were very well known in County Durham as builders, and cinema owners, at one time owning up to seven cinemas including the Albert Hall and Pavilion at Stanley, the Kings at Annfield Plain and other cinemas at Birtley, Washington, and Felling. He went to Junior School at Tanfield Lea (Headteacher Mrs. Bell) and he remembers Mr Pemberton as a first class teacher. He passed the 11+ examination and went to Alderman Wood School at Tanfield from 1932 – 1937.

Joicey excelled in sport particularly football where he was house captain for five years. However, a greater effort went into sport than his academic work. In those days to get the School Certificate, you had to matriculate in five subjects, and Joicey failed in French. He then went to Skerrys Commercial School at Newcastle, and from there he passed the "Bank Common Entrance examination". He started Lloyds Bank at Spennymoor on 20<sup>th</sup> March 1939, boarding at Spennymoor five nights and home for weekends.

While Joicey attended Junior School and Alderman Wood School he became an accomplished Bell Ringer at St Margaret's Church, and it was during this period that he met Olive who some years later became his wife. When he was 11 years old and Olive was 9 years, he saw her for the first time at church, and in his words "I was absolutely stricken with love" and this love for Olive never left him. In those days it was all very innocent, walking home from Church or School together. Olive Robinson as she was then went to the Upper Standards School, and then joined Martins Bank, but during the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War she served in the A.T.S. (Air Training Service), and after the War she worked at Martins Bank at Annfield Plain.

While Joicey was working at Spennymoor he joined the Territorial Army (TA) in 1939, and in January 1940 was recommended for a commission, and became Second Lieutenant Craven, Royal Artillery. He was posted to the

Suffolk Coastline (facing the German Army in France) where he had six miles of coast under his command. Joicey says, "If Hitler had invaded, I would have been the first person he would have met". Fortunately for Hitler, Joicey was promoted to Lieutenant and posted to India, where he had many wonderful adventures; he was then posted to Rangoon, Burma, just in time to meet the Japanese invasion. Joicey was wounded, and in the fighting at this time his unit suffered 50% casualties. Lieutenant Craven then joined the Military Police and came back to England. He was promoted to Captain and made the Assistant Provost Marshal for Blackpool area. He also worked under Major General Erskine, and came to Gosforth, Newcastle. He was discharged at the end of the War, and started with Lloyds Bank again in 1945, at St Margaret's Church, Tanfield, they were given a military guard of honour, and afterwards honeymooned in Edinburgh. In 1946 Joicey joined the Royal Air Force Voluntary Reserve (RAF Police) and was offered a commission, he eventually became a Flight Lieutenant. 1947 saw the birth of Clive, Olive and Joicey's only child, who after many successful years in business, is now an Estate Manager in Wiltshire.

About 1950, Joicey and Olive bought the house and land at Clough Dene, Tantobie, and Joicey started his great love in breeding and keeping Welsh Ponies and Cobs. He had many achievements and honours in this work, including being made Life Member of the Pony and Cob Society and also the Scottish and Northern Welsh Pony and Cob Association; he was also National President for two years. Joicey has also been a Committee Member of Durham County Show since 1972 and also Lanchester Show since 1972 to date. Just to fill in some short time from 1946 to 1955, Joicey and Olive (in Olive's name of course) because Joicey had become a Bank Manager at Lloyds. They wholesaled and distributed Sunday Newspapers to most

of Northern Durham, serviced cigarette machines for the same area, and made and organised the retailing of Mr Softee Ice Cream for the area. Always a keen follower of football, he has been a season Ticket Holder at Newcastle since 1950. On his retirement from Lloyds Bank in 1980, Joicey moved to South Shields where he is now, he had a Heart Bypass (five part) in 1999, but says he is now as fit as he ever was.

Sadly Olive passed away in November 2001, and this has left a tremendous void in Joicey's life and cannot describe the loss he feels, however he is a very positive person and with the support of Clive, family and friends he is facing the future, but he says Olives presence is with him always.

In a follow-up interview, Joicey was asked about Schooldays at Tanfield, he said he remembered Mr Forster who made history come alive, and gave him a life-long love of history, and someone who was different and who appealed to him was Mr Joe Binks, who encouraged Joicey in his Art. Mr Hardy was Head when he first came to Tanfield, but during the first year. Mr Carr became Head Teacher and his nickname was 'Pongo'

Joicey says he has had a lot of pleasure through joining the Tanfield Association, looking back, and meeting and talking to people from all years at Tanfield. On being asked for a message to students of today, he said "don't be like me at school, work hard, make the most of your time at school, it makes life easier in years to come".

This storey is a very brief outline of Joicey Craven's life to date, a book could be written of his many adventures, exploits, and experiences, which space has restricted our telling. Our interviewer was extremely impressed with Joicey's sincerity, enthusiasm and genuine love of life and we feel he is a wonderful example to hold up to any student of Tanfield today.



## Memories are made of this

Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> June 2002

The evening started with an informal get together while people looked at old photographs, tried to identify themselves or old friends, and remade old acquaintances. The 70 or more people who managed to attend enjoyed an entertaining evening.

Cecil Johnson, former head of Stanley Comprehensive School gave a brief introduction after which we all settled back to be delighted by the musical talents of soprano Jane Westwater and baritone Ken Dixon, accompanied by another former head teacher, June Todd on the piano. (Did a stray memory surface of Miss Richards enthusiastic playing of the school song "First Things First" in the former assembly hall?).

We were treated to a wide range of songs from musical shows. Ken, who regularly sings with Felling Male Voice Choir started with the nostalgic

"Grenada" and "Shine through my Dreams". Jane took us back to "The Merry Widow" with "Waltz of my Heart" and then gave us her "Sound of Music" medley. Our appetites were whetted with Ken singing "The Impossible Dream" and the 'West Side Story' "Somewhere".

Everyone then made a civilised dash for the food, which lived up to the advertised promise of a tremendous choice and taste, all of it excellently prepared and presented by Mel Sumersall of Lanchester.

Once we had all had seconds and people were persuaded to part from the desserts, we settled down to more excellent show songs. Jane set the mood with "Summertime" and "Fish Gotta Swim".

Ken then gave us "Once in a Lifetime" and "What Kind of Fool am I" from Anthony Newley's 'Stop the World I want to get off'. The finale by Jane

was the 'Les Miserables' classic "Bring Him Home". Superlatives do not do justice to describe her interpretation.

This song is normally sung by the lead tenor in the show. If you have never heard it sung by a soprano then persuade, beg, wheedle, agitate, cajole or beat the organisers over the head until they bring Jane back to sing it again at the next Tanfield Association get together.

The organisers of the evening did a marvellous job in bringing together these excellent talents to feed our minds and stomachs.

We were promised on the tickets that there would be great food, excellent music and good company, we had it all and more.

Ed Carrington  
Hexham



Dennis and Marian Hinds, Tom and Judith Stokel with Rodney and Elizabeth Hawkins.

Eric (Deputy Head) and Marilyn Fisk



## Snippets

Snippets from Grammarian Christmas 1965

School Geography Society – In October Mr Jack Jarman The International Youth Exchange Officer for County Durham, gave an interesting and illustrated talk on a recent exchange visit to Denmark which included a number

of young people from the School.

(Editors note:- Were you one of these pupils on the exchange to Denmark? If you were or you know of someone who was. Please let us know)



## Where are they now, Gary Preston?

It was suggested by Ivan Garnham, ex Head Teacher of Tanfield Lea Junior School, that the Tanfield Association members may like to read about former friends at Tanfield and what has happened to them. So it was Ivan Garnham's quote "Where are they Now", that we adopted for the Newsletter. Gary Preston was born on 12<sup>th</sup> March 1965, to Anne and Sid Preston of Tanfield Village, and it was in Tanfield and area that Gary spent his formative years. His primary schooling was at the local village school of Tanfield Lea, and he remembers his Head Teacher, Mr Garnham very well. Gary has many good and happy memories of Junior school, and many of his friends from those days are still friends of his today.

Gary came to Tanfield School in September 1976 when it was still a Selective School, but then called Tanfield Secondary School under the Headship of Dr Sharpe. The school name changed the following year in 1977 to Tanfield Comprehensive School and Mr Alban McKie was appointed as the new Head Teacher.

## Snippets

Snippets from Grammarian Easter 1950

The School Music Society – was very active during the term including some of the following activities:-

"A very good, if fatiguing nights dancing" on February 4<sup>th</sup>; A Welsh Night on

The first outstanding memory that Gary has of his early days at Tanfield is of his performance in the Christmas Show in his first year. He was also a keen member of the school Badminton Club, run by Miss Mary Westgarth and Mr Gerry Barker, every Wednesday after school. Gary went on his first Skiing trip with the school in 1981, and has been a number of times since, both as a pupil and ex-pupil helper. Over the years he has become an accomplished skier and went to Italy in January 2002, with the school trip as an assistant and helper to Mr John Richardson and Mrs Margaret Batty the Teacher Organiser.

Two teachers are particularly remembered from Gary's time at Tanfield, the first was Mr Ted Brabham (Technology) whom Gary describes as an "outstanding teacher" the second was Mr Alan Johnston (PE) whom Gary says was not only a good teacher, "but had lots of time for pupils, and cared about them". Other teachers he remembers are Mr J Tron, Mr K Cousins, Mr N Conkleton, Mr R Norman, Mr A Peak, Mr D Barron,

St Davids Night with WH Davies poems and some hearty singing of Welsh hymns; A visit to Durham Cathedral Music Library on Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> March; On 13<sup>th</sup> May Mr Yockney gave his nocturne programme and reported as being very enjoyable; Norma Suddick gave a talk on the "Life and Music of Grieg" on 20<sup>th</sup>

and Mr A Mills, also Mr R Whittingham who enabled Gary and others to pass his O level Mathematics by giving extra lessons at lunch time. Gary achieved Four O levels and six CSEs at grade one and two, but he felt he was capable of doing better than he did. Gary went into the Sixth Form, but after three months he felt it was not for him. He left school. For a number of years Gary had acquired an interest in cycling, so when Mr Norman Dunn offered him employment in his well known shop in Stanley, Gary jumped at the chance. Gary remained with Dunn's Cycles at Stanley until 1985 when the business closed. During this time Gary had taken up cycle racing, and he has a number of achievements to his credit. From 1985 to 1988 Gary's time was occupied in a number of ways including working for Derwentside District Council, and spending three months cycling around France and Spain.

In 1988 Gary and his Mam and Dad re acquired the Bakery at Sandyford, Newcastle they had previously sold in 1973. After three years Anne and Sid, Gary's

May; and in June a large party from School went to the International Ballet in Newcastle to see "Swan Lake".

(Editors Note – How times have changed!!)

sold in 1973. After three years Anne and Sid, Gary's mam and dad, retired and left Gary to run the business. He now employs six staff who cater for the retailing of sandwiches made to order and it is a business which is rapidly expanding.

In 1993 Gary went into the property business and bought his first flat in Newcastle. His tenants are mainly students, and he now has over twenty tenants in a number of flats and houses. He is regarded by his student tenants as a good and fair landlord.

Gary is still involved with cycling but he is out of racing now. He is chairman of the Tyne VELO Club one of the oldest cycling clubs in the North. He still does 80 to 100 miles every Sunday with the cycling club but now as well as general fitness benefits he enjoys the social side of the meetings.

When asked about his future Gary said that he hoped to retire to do other things by the time he is 40 years old.

When asked what advice would he give to students at Tanfield today he said "Stick in at school" You only spend a short period of time there, but it can affect your whole life ahead of you". He also said that young people of today should be taught to take opportunities when they arise and they should be shown the importance of leaving school with qualifications.

Gary says he has been blessed with good luck, but one can see when talking to him, that hard work plays a very important part of his life, and he is very much a 'hands on person' both in his Bakery business and with his properties.

On looking back to his days at school at Tanfield, he says "They were very happy times and I enjoyed every day of it".



Tanfield School  
Good street  
Tanfield Lea  
Stanley  
Co.Durham

Phone: (01207) 232881

Join us today.

**Tanfield Association**

**We're on the web at  
WWW.  
Tanfieldassociation.  
com**

## Come and join us!

Please contact anyone you know who has had or has an association with Tanfield School. We are eager to recruit new members. The Association is an ideal way to see old friends and colleagues and find out a little of what is happening now at school. Please use the following contacts for membership details and subscriptions.

Fred Westwater (01207) 234548

Ken Dixon (01207) 283584

Karen Scott (01207) 529374

Please send any articles to Alan Ramshaw via the school.

## Snippets

Snippets from Grammarian  
Summer 1949

This issue of the Magazine contains some very good photographs, one of these is of the Head (Mr Carr) and Governors, and one is struck with the thought that curiously, in that male dominated society of 1949 there were only six men Governors as against nine women Governors who included the redoubtable Councillor Mrs Jolly. Her whole life was given to fighting for the advancement of working people and the society around her. The governing body also included the fearsome Councillor Mrs McClennon who was afraid of no one.

Another of the photographs is the School Senior Cricket Team of 1949, and amazingly an original photograph has recently been handed in to be photocopied, by John Hall of Maiden Law, also on the photograph is team captain Richard Rose.

In the report from the Sports Day of 1949, we picked out the winners of the Third year girls 3 legged race –Freda Barton and Sally Fullerton. The victor that year was Bill Pattison of Neville House, and the Victrix Ludorum was Denise Gowland also of Neville House.



Archie and June enjoying the entertainment at the memo-