



Tanfield Association Newsletter

Tanfield School

Volume 1, Issue 5
Newsletter Date May 2003

Editorial

Thank you for all the contributions to this Newsletter.

We are hoping to include some memorable photographs in the next edition.

If any members feel that they may be of assistance with the Newsletter, any help would be greatly ap-

Fond Memories

Being asked to contribute an article for the Tanfield Association is indeed a great privilege. After some serious thought as to a theme and in finally being persuaded to write, I have decided to reminisce about some of the wonderful people I have met during my 33-year or so association with Tanfield School as man and boy.

30 years ago, this year, I left Tanfield School to become a teacher. I joined the teaching staff of Tanfield in 1977.

Looking back, I realise that much of what I have become and the way in which I interact with young people, has been greatly influenced by people I have met during my time at school, as a pupil and also by colleagues I have worked with as a teacher. I remember many of them with great affection and recall some of them for you.

Like many boys, the formative years of my school days were spent playing sport – a passion I still enjoy even now and one which has consumed my

preciated. We are desperate for members with computer skills, who have a small amount of time to give to the Association to relieve some of the pressure on staff involved.

Lastly, all members are still required to be recruiting agents. We invite for-

mer pupils and members of staff to join by sending their name, address, telephone number, dates at School and a £5.00 fee for administration purposes payable to Tanfield Association. To Mrs Susan Donkin, 19, Lindon Ave, Chester-Le-Street, DH33PP
See back page for Tel. Nos.

life. I transferred from Greenland County Junior Mixed School and my parents were very proud when I received a place at Stanley Grammar School with Dr Sharp as Head Teacher. I had played in a very successful Primary football team, having won the local league and cup. Alan Gurkin was the team manager.

At Tanfield, my interest in sport continued, representing school teams throughout in athletics, basketball, cricket and football. Bill Geddes was my first PE teacher. I remember him particularly and was very proud to meet him some years later when he was a PE Advisor, visiting a school where I was doing teaching practice. Our school gym seemed so big as a boy; cold too - freezing in my white shorts and Neville House vest. Formal gymnastics the way Bill Geddes taught, now seems such a thing of the past.

Taking part in sport took much of my time. Indeed, many of the teachers, during my time as a pupil,

would have said that too much of my time was spent playing sport and not enough time was spent on schoolwork!

Roland Proud was Deputy Head when I first started at the Grammar School. He didn't teach me until I was much older but from day one he knew my name and the names of everyone else! I would recommend this technique to any teacher!

I remember, Derek Barron – who has been a colleague now for 26 years! – arriving in 1969 and being in one of his first PE classes. Looking back, much of what I have brought to teaching PE was largely down to him – his minor games for 'large groups', when it's wet outside and handball – you won't find any of them in the National Curriculum!

Indeed, many of the mannerisms I use in my teaching are largely taken from staff who taught me and from those I have worked with.

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Archie Howat- Interview

The following interview is in response to many members of the Tanfield Association asking questions about Archie Howat, who of course, is Head teacher of our School. Some of the most popular questions are: - Who is he? Where does he come from? What is his background? What are his philosophies? Etc.

The result is and can only be a small part of the story, but we hope it will answer some of the questions.

A Yorkshire man born in Bradford to a Lancashire mother, a primary school teacher and a Scottish father serving in the Bradford Police Force, who rose to the very high rank of Chief Superintendent of Police. Archie has an older sister who is also a teacher, now retired and living in Cardiff and a younger brother living in York.

His childhood was settled, contented and happy. At the age of five he attended a Church of England Primary School until the age of eleven. During these years he was an enthusiastic Cub Scout and a member of the church choir where he discovered his love of music and singing. He continued in the Scouts until his late teens, taking part in all the activities that entails. He also continued with his choral singing at Church and later became a member of the Parochial Church Council. His love of music and singing led him to join The Bradford Gilbert and Sullivan Society where he took part in many performances with the Society. Archie passed the 11+ examinations in 1958 and attended Carlton Grammar School in Bradford, an 'all boys' school (as was often the rule in those times) following a very traditional form of education. He generally enjoyed school life and took part in many activities including being a member of the School Choir and a violinist in the School Orchestra. He was taught music by Tom Pratt who became Music Adviser for County Durham.

His enthusiasm for English was de-

veloped from Grammar School days, where he was a prominent member of the School Drama Society.

When asked if there were any lessons of life he could take to the future, from this time at Carlton Grammar School, Archie quoted memories of classroom incidents where he felt acutely inadequate and did not meet the 'expectations' of the teachers - and did not receive encouragement.

These remembered instances helped him to realise that young people should not be made to feel that they have failed in any particular area, but should be positively encouraged to develop. He believes that teachers are there to enthuse and to encourage, to open doors of new experiences and to give opportunity. He believes that many talents are never tapped. Archie also firmly believes that people can do a great deal more than we give them credit for, and that school is just the first step in 'Life-Long Learning'. He gives an example of this in his own studying of Italian at Evening Classes.

He went on to sixth form where he took History and English at 'A' level and during this time he also became Head Boy of Carlton Grammar School. Archie made many friends during his Grammar School years and he still communicates with them. He feels that these friendships are very important and appreciates how the Tanfield Association can provide an important link between people who attended our school at Tanfield.

Archie studied English and History at Lancaster University. He gained a BA. Degree and added to this a Master's Degree in Education from Leeds University. He was active in University societies including the Drama Society and its performances. He also greatly enjoyed walking in the North Lancashire Countryside. His time at University was in the mid-sixties, the time of 'flower power'; The Beatles; The Beach Boys; and the Swinging Sixties music; Archie describes this period as a 'good time'. He also claims there was a lot of hard work, but many happy memories.

His first teaching post was at a purpose built Comprehensive School in his home city of Bradford. The school had been newly built in 1964 and was only four years old when he began working there in 1968. The school had a student population of one thousand four hundred, aged from 11 years to 18 years, with examinations in CSE's, 'O' levels and 'A' levels. Archie taught English at all levels and to all ages. He describes how gratifying it is to see pupils start at 11 years of age and to on to achieve a 1st class Honours degree in English and to appreciate that one has played a part in the achievement.

He describes the staff as all newly appointed and all believers in comprehensive education. It was a young staff and they all felt a 'spirit of adventure'. This was an exciting time and there were lots of very good work recognised in the school.

Archie had many responsibilities in the school including Librarian, working with the P.T.A, Head of English, Head of Year (450 pupils in each year group), member of School Management Team, and Senior Teacher. When asked "What makes a successful teacher?" he replied "The ability to encourage young people to find out what they are good at and helping them to do it, 'caring', and taking them beyond their dreams - giving them confidence". Archie left Bradford in 1984 to become Deputy Head Teacher at Tanfield. There was a full HMI Inspection of the school in 1988 in which certain aspects of the school received high praise. In 1989 Archie Howat was appointed Head Teacher at Tanfield Comprehensive School. When asked about the role of a Head teacher he said that he "believed a Head teacher should lead from the front; set the example; expect hard work from staff; give opportunities to staff as well as pupils in their development; encourage a dynamic workforce; and to achieve the right balance of staff". When asked to name some of the more outstanding events at Tanfield, he gave the following three: The winning of the 'Technology School Initiative' in 1992, (the first school in County Durham to do so); The School Fire in 1997 - a

Specialist School – Engineering & Science

‘The Waiting Game’

Tanfield’s application for Specialist School status was hand-delivered to the DfES at Sanctuary Buildings, London, on 7th March. I quote from the DfES letter –

‘We welcome your interest and acknowledgement that a great deal of work has gone into preparing your application. Your application will be considered against the published criteria along with all others received for the March 2003 round. We anticipate that the Secretary of State will announce the decision by the end of June 2003.



You will appreciate that we can give no advance notice of indication of the outcome of applications until completion of the assessment process.’

- and so we await the verdict. We need to remember that the government has allocated a fixed sum of funds. Theoretically the bid could meet the criteria but still be unsuccessful!

Sponsorship

A huge “Thank you” to everybody who has contributed in any way towards raising sponsorship. We have almost reached our £50,000 target and I am confident that we will do so should our bid be successful in this bidding round.



	Cash	Pledged	Equipment	Total
	£	£	£	£
Industry and Business	1,300	13,200	11,000	25,500
Trades Union – Amicus	2,000	-	-	2,000
School activities	4,480	-	-	4,480
Tanfield Association	4,820	1,650	-	6,470
90 th Birthday	1,065	-	-	1,065
Partner Schools	-	2,000	-	2,000
Round Table	250	-	-	250
Specialist School Trust	-	5,000	-	<u>5,000</u>
				46,765

Tanfield Association – Former pupils have contributed generously to the sponsorship appeal.

These extracts from the many wonderful letters I have received sum up your thoughts – ‘I greatly appreciated the education and support that I received at SGS all those years ago and felt that I would like to contribute to the well-being of the new generation of children being educated there.’ G.F.

- ‘We have been following with keen interest the drive behind the Science/Engineering Specialist School application. We applaud the move.’ D.Y.

i) **The Patron Scheme** has benefited by 31 former pupils and staff making a contribution of at least £100. A list of Patrons is displayed in the school’s Conference Room and we are currently looking at ways of making more permanent our recognition of your generosity.

ii) **Events** Although it’s not the main purpose of the Association, I am delighted to thank the Committee, a hard-working band of former pupils, who have donated so generously of their time and effort to organise events and support the Specialist School bid. In particular, I must mention Fred Westwater for his tireless enthusiasm and for cajoling others into action!

School Activities Pupils and parents have worked with staff to raise sponsorship through Non-uniform Days, a Talent Show, a Prize Draw, and a Bag-Pack at Asda in Stanley. Thanks to former pupils, now teachers, Alan Ramshaw and Margaret Batty.



Business and Industry

i) Chair of Governors, Jim Brown, has been active raising sponsorship from Amicus (£2000) and Swan Hunter (£1000).

ii) Tom Harris has used his persuasive powers and contacts with local businesses to raise sponsorship, especially from Asda at Stanley who have pledged £4,000.

iii) Roy Stanley of Comeleon, Tanfield Lea Industrial Estate, has made a generous cash pledge as well as providing equipment to be used in Tanfield’s new Engineering facility which will provide an interesting and stimulating curriculum experience for pupils.

In mentioning some names, there is always a danger of omitting somebody and I apologise now if that is the case – again, thank you to everybody who has contributed – and the remaining £3,235 that we have to raise, all contributions are welcome!

EF

hard period for all in the school – the rebirth and a new environment, much more worthy for our young people; The Development of the ‘Resource Base’ in school and how it engenders ‘Care’ for individuals, and how important it is as a catalyst for the whole school.

Archie also believes very much that the school is an extremely important part of the community and although Tanfield has had many successful achievements to date, he believes there is still much more work to be done in many areas of Community Education Development.

He is optimistic that the ‘Specialist School Status’ applied for by the school, will be the most significant part of the school’s future over the next five years. It will enhance Tanfield’s record of good examination results and enable a continuance of Excellence and Quality to all we serve. When asked about difficult times at Tanfield, he said “The aftermath of the school fire in 1997 – It was a very difficult time to manage the structure of the school, being there for all who had lost so much, for staff who had lost all their books and work, for pupils who had lost important examination coursework, and Parents who were concerned for their children’s educational future”. When asked about the function of a Head teacher he said “The job is

about spinning plates”, there are so many different aspects to consider. It’s about leading from the front; identifying where there are any difficulties, particularly people difficulties; it’s about working with different bodies e.g. Local Education Authority School Governors, Parents etc. who often have different expectations and are not always in harmony with each other. In other words ‘Delicate Balancing of Demands’, and to an outsider it may sometimes seem to be an impossible job. However, at all times it has to be a conscious decision that children remain the central focus.

In time away from school, he believes in leading a balanced life, pursuing learning and enjoying music, theatre and opera. He is a keen traveller and has visited many parts of the USA, China, India, and most European countries of which his favourite is probably Italy.

This world-wide travel has given him, he believes, an invaluable understanding of cultures and people. He also enjoys reading, gardening and enjoys walking in the British countryside. He is a trustee of the Charity ‘Changemakers North East’, which develops student-led projects, and he has been Chair of the ‘National Association of Pastoral Care’.

Archie Howat is an enthusiastic supporter of the Tanfield Association and believes that the traditions of the school are important. While he knows that

members of the Tanfield Association are aware of “what was then, is not what is now”, he firmly believes that the Heart and Values of the school through the years have been retained. Visible traditional links are still to be seen through badges, motto, music, and should be thought of as “the past supporting the future”. Archie would like the Tanfield Association to provide opportunities for members to see the school as a place to use and develop skills, to come into school and support through mentoring, talking to pupils, and working with staff. He would also like to think that one or two members of the Tanfield Association would become Governors of the school.

The above interview was conducted through un-seen questions and although the opportunity was given to say if any questions were felt to be inappropriate, all the questions were answered by Archie.

We thank him for his honesty and openness and also his valuable time in giving the opportunities through the Newsletter for a small insight into the life of Archie Howat, Head Teacher of Tanfield School.

Some Burns Night Thoughts.

A very welcoming reception greeted fellow members of the association and their guests.

It was most warming to witness the sheer delight on so many faces as old friends and colleagues greeted one another.

The dining area was quite resplendent, the tables being tastefully decorated with the national colours of Scotland, all high-lighted in the table centres. Obviously much thought and care had been given to illuminating the event.

I thought, even the large dividing curtains embracing the scene had a tartan pattern!

Our resplendent Piper (Scott Inglis-Kedger) fulfilled the occasion when

he escorted the Haggis for the traditional ceremony.

Those of us who were sometimes wary of the Haggis, had excellent alternatives for choice.

The wine flowed and the evening was set in a succession of toasts and replies. Barbara, didn’t you do well with your reply on behalf of the ladies!!

Songs to delight the ear were presented by Jane Westwater accompanied by June Todd and of course our Piper featured from time to time.

I can never interpret ‘GLASWEGIAN’ and Burns’ use of the dialect as in TAM O’ SHANTER left me cold, but full of admiration for the chairman’s rendering all from memory!!

My memory fails me constantly!!

Wasn’t it memorable to finish the evening in one large circle, locked hand in hand for AULD LANG SYNE?

Well done the organisers and hard working committee.

My two guests, who travelled from MID YORKSHIRE aim to come back next year.

One observation:

We ‘oldies’ felt a little cold – the venue does take some heating. A similar temperature will favour the dancers, March 8th Rock n Roll night which I am sure will be well supported.

Joicey Craven

Burns Night Supper - The report

He would have been surprised, amused and amazed at the parties that are held to celebrate his birthday 207 years after he died. Our Tanfield party was one of many on Saturday that was his actual birthday, and what a night we had. As well as remembering Burns and some of his writings, we had a very accomplished young piper to give atmosphere, some very entertaining presentations and even a small battle of the sexes to keep us amused. All this plus a very good dinner. You should feel sorry for yourselves if you missed it.

Tartan was very much in evidence as the party gathered, most folks having incorporated some plaid item into their dress for the evening. Alan Ramshaw had gone the whole hog and was in full Highland dress. I hope that word doesn't get out in school that he goes to Saturday parties in a skirt.

The piper, Scott Inglis-Kedger, also in full Highland dress, set the mood and started proceedings. Very good he was too. Cecil Johnson acted as MC and bade us welcome. The Selkirk Grace was given by Rev. Sheila MacInally and we were off into the food prepared by Mel's Catering. At the appropriate time the Haggis was piped into the room and paraded, and then addressed by Chris Morrison. All I can say is 'Kenneth Brannagh move over!' What a performance. He must be up for an Oscar. (Of course I didn't understand a word that he said!)

After the food the toasts. Toasting

Congratulations

To Gary and Rachael Clarkson of Nottingham - a boy born on 1st January 03 weighing 8lbs 4ozs. He is named after his granddad 'Harry' who was a very well known musician and band leader in the Stanley/Consett area. Dad Gary was Head Boy at Tanfield 1977/78.

the Immortal Memory was the job of Duncan Davis. His immortal memory was of Burns at school. With the aid of Robbie himself, or was it Chris again in disguise, we were given a rendering, with translation, of 'Willie's Wife'. Literature classes must have changed since my time!

Then war broke out! It was time to Toast the Lassies. It was Tom Harpe who raised his glass, and raised much laughter as he rehearsed the attributes of the ladies. After so many previous toasts to the Ladies he compared himself to Elizabeth Taylor's 8th husband. He knew what to do, but didn't know if he could make it interesting. His worries were unnecessary and his back handed toast kept us all chortling. Of course it was not all one sided. Barbara Churcher reversed the charges as she replied for the Ladies. She gave as good as she got. Quote - 'Men dancing - they are like frogs in a blender!' In the end it was agreed that we all need each other, and a temporary truce was declared in the War of the Sexes.

Of course it was Burns that we were there to honour, and the later part of the programme was given over to some presentations of his work. Jane Westwater, accompanied by June Todd sang two of his poems put to music, and Ken Roxburgh recited 'the Banks o' Doone' for us. Then we had the epic of Tam o' Shanter from Cecil Johnston, all recited in Double Dutch, and mostly from memory. Next year I am going to propose that we have computer generated sub-titles. Well, if they can do

To Michael and Tanya Green of South Moor, Stanley - a girl born on 19th January 03 weighing 9lb 4ozs. Morgan is the sister of Jack aged two years (see newsletter issue 2) and Joe aged eight years. Mam and Dad were both pupils at Tanfield 1975 - 1981.

it in opera.....

The Piper brought us to the end of a very enjoyable evening, which must have taken a lot of 'putting together'. There were many references to people being 'arm twisted' over the phone by Fred Westwater (this report being no exception!), but we must owe him a tremendous debt of gratitude for the time and effort that he put into the organisation of it all. Also, who prepared the Hall? We sat down at tables with place names, flowers and candles, all beautifully laid reflecting Scotland's national colours. Thank you to the 'volunteers' who did all that, and to those who decorated the Hall for the evening. (Archie had even organised tartan curtains!) We paid our money and turned up to have a great night out, so I must thank everyone who made it possible for us to do just that.

Before we left Chris Morrison reminded us that the next event will be a 'Rock and Roll Evening' on March 8th. (Another opportunity for me to impersonate a frog in a blender!) Nostalgia plus a good laugh, you can't afford to miss it.

'Should auld acquaintance be forgot.....'

Ted Brabban

We are very pleased to announce the births of Harry and Morgan to members of the Tanfield Association and we are also happy to report that Mums are very well and babies are thriving.

Tom Harpe

In our last newsletter we promised a more in-depth study of that young boy who entered Stanley Grammar School in September 1958 and what became of him after leaving Tanfield (Stanley Grammar School – a different view). When Tom was first asked for an interview his reaction was “Why me? There is nothing special about my life”. However, we insisted because we feel it would probably make very interesting reading – the achievements of this local lad who did not reach the lofty heights of the “A” stream of Stanley Grammar School.

Tom Harpe was born in 1946 at Pine Street, South Moor, an only child in a loving family who were very much involved with the South Moor Methodist Church.

Tom attended South Moor Greenland Infants and Junior School, where he was captain of the Football and Cricket teams. He joined the junior section of the Boys’ Brigade or Life Boys as they were then called in 1956. He took part in a wide range of BB activities and sports, and he was a keen member of the Boys’ Brigade until he left in 1963.

Tom says that there were many factors that affected his early years (or growing up), but claims that the Boys’ Brigade was certainly a major factor in the shaping of his life. It was there he was given guidance and taught ideals mainly by his BB captain, Bill Hall. He has vivid memories of BB weekend camps at Croxdale by the River Wear and ten days camps at Keswick and Skegness. Time spent camping with the BB was a totally different kind of time from that at school or home. It meant living in a bell tent with up to eight other boys, learning life skills. He has unforgettable memories of peeling potatoes, outdoor sporting activities and the camaraderie of Officers and boys, and again the example of Captain Bill Hall (a man for whom Tom has the greatest respect) who, incidentally, was a pupil at Tanfield 1931 – 1936.

Tom passed his 11+ and began attending Stanley Grammar School in September 1958. He played football for the school team. He remembers a school holiday/visit to the Low Countries (this was the first overseas trip arranged by SGS after the second World War) with the teachers Mr Hector Hall and Miss Simpson, who both taught mathematics. It was remembered as an enjoyable trip. He

also recalls the very strict dress code of the school at this time: not wearing a uniform was never an option. When asked about his academic life at school Tom claims he was “all right” at most subjects. In Tom’s view the strength of the mediocre is that they are always at their best. Mr. Ted Robson was one of his first form teachers and also one of his first English teachers. He liked Mr. Robson who gave him a good grounding in English and this was built on by Mr. Wood who gave Tom a lasting love of literature and how best to use language. Mr. Wood had an interesting approach and teaching style that broke down barriers and appealed to students. Tom feels that it was a pity this style wasn’t available in some other subjects. He left Stanley Grammar School in 1963 after gaining seven “O” levels, the maximum number he was allowed to take. He was also presented with his only prize (Book) at Stanley Grammar, for passing all seven “O” levels. On leaving school Tom became a Clerical Officer at the Department for National Savings, which had just moved its Head Office from London to Durham. Tom also used this time to take and pass “A” levels. In 1971 he moved on promotion to DNS Glasgow and in 1976 further promotion saw him join the Manpower Services Commission (MSC) in London. When the MSC Head Office moved to Sheffield, Tom moved to nearby Chesterfield where he and his family lived very happily until he returned to the North East in 1999 (incidentally Tom still considers himself to be a Chesterfeldian).

With apologies to Tom the following is a shortened version of his professional life in the Civil Service. After various local management and marketing jobs Tom spent the last twenty years of his Civil Service career working as a Senior Internal Consultant advising Senior Civil Servants and Government Ministers on manpower policy and control, target and performance setting. Although he had a wide remit across several Government Departments his most enjoyable time was spent as a Senior Consultant with HM Treasury. At the Treasury he had responsibility for Manpower Control across the whole

of the Civil Service. His time at the Treasury also coincided with the IRA cease-fire, and Tom was involved in a lot of work in Northern Ireland, advising the Northern Ireland Office on restructuring and performance setting in the first underpinning of the move towards a Northern Ireland Assembly.

At the Treasury he was also called upon to lecture at the Civil Service College. His other somewhat disparate duties ranged from advising the management at Kew Gardens to advising the Met Office; from setting bonus schemes for industrial workers in Devonport Dockyard to determining the salary level of the rather eminent (in his eyes anyway) Director of the V & A. from working with the Ministry of Defence in Germany (bringing about the demise of the NAAFI along the way) to advising DSS at Longbenton. Whilst working alongside DSS Tom led the first major review and overhaul of the Benefit System which became the blue print for closer working links between the Benefits Agency and Employment Service and became the forerunner for the Department of Works and Pensions. He was involved with the drafting of the Freedom of Information Act. Working in HM Treasury was every Civil Servant’s dream: power without responsibility.

In 1995 Tom was asked to design and implement a structure to provide the first “joining up of Government Departments” by linking the field networks of DTI, DfEE, Department of Transport and Department of Environment. All went well until the Government decided that the new Department needed an independent pay structure. This led to Tom, the miner’s son from Stanley, negotiating a pay policy on behalf of a Conservative Government, whilst the other side was led by a negotiator who had been educated at one of our top public schools. Tom and his adversary got on very well and he hopes that his father would have forgiven him. In 1997 after the newly-

Continued overleaf

Tom Harpe (Continued)

lected Prime Minister's famous "Education, education, education" speech Tom was asked by the Department of Education and Employment, to review the Schools' Directorate. While the rest of the world was preparing for the Millennium, Schools Directorate was living in a time warp sometime about 1937. For the first and only time in his life Tom felt some sympathy for teachers. After working with the Cabinet Office to design the Prime Minister's Sure Start initiative, Tom took early retirement from the Civil Service in November 1999. He was then 53 and had been in the Civil Service for 36 years. During his Civil Service career Tom and his wife Pauline were lucky enough to attend Downing Street receptions, at the House of Lords and a Buckingham Palace Garden Party.

Just three days into his retirement Tom was contacted by both HM Treasury and the Cabinet Office to give advice on various manpower issues. He was also asked if he would continue his role as lecturer at the Civil Service College. In retirement Tom is an Associate Lecturer with the Civil Service College, retained as an adviser by the Cabinet Office; advises the Crown Prosecution Service,

English Heritage, DVLA and Inland Revenue on restructuring and manpower issues. He is also helping the Home Office to design the structure required to underpin the new criminal justice system.

During his consultancy career Tom has attained professional qualifications and is a Fellow of the Institute of Management Services (FMS); a member of the European Institute of Industrial Engineers (Euro IE) and a member of the Institute of Administrative Management (IAM). The above is only a selection of the high profile positions that Tom filled and is still involved in, and although he retired and came to live in Durham City three years ago, he is still regularly called upon as a lecturer (at least once a month) and has a full consultancy diary (at the time of writing this article he is working with DVLA in Swansea trying to help them meet their performance targets).

On the home front, Tom and Pauline have four grown up children, three daughters and one son and four grandchildren. Among all his other activities we are pleased that Tom

has recently become an active member of the Tanfield Executive Working Committee. He believes the Association is an excellent way of meeting up again with people with whom you may have lost touch. He was also relieved to hear that any past shortcomings experienced by Tanfield have disappeared.

Tom believes that a large part of the future programme of the Association is to continue to forge links with ex-pupils and to continue to support the school in all that it is seeking to achieve.

Tanfield Today

It has been suggested that an article on what is happening in our school at the present time may be of interest to those members who have had no recent contact with the school.

Tanfield School continues to benefit from the fine learning environment and up-to-date facilities completed last year. The Head reported to the School Governors in February 03 "that the applications for places in September 03 have now risen above our present standard number" (educational jargon for "maximum number of new pupils"). This means that some young people (and their parents) wishing to attend Tanfield will not be able to do so.

Staffing

After 13 years at Tanfield, Ann Nelson has resigned her post as Head of Art to take up a position as "Associate Inspector for Citizenship and Personal, Social and Health Education" with Durham

County. Ann has been responsible for some very good work at Tanfield in the areas of Citizenship and PSHE, and this has been recognised by the appointment to her new job.

Sport Success:

The Year 10 football team are unbeaten in their last 11 league games winning the Derwentside League and League Cup for the second time in as many years, the Year 7 and 8 have also won their League Cups and the Girls U14 footballers are in the Semi-final of the County cup.

The Year 8 Boys rugby team won the Derwentside District Competition and the Year 9 and 10 were runners up in their competitions.

Girls Netball teams representing the school in both year 8 and 9 have won their respective leagues in Derwentside and the Year 8 girls also won

the Derwentside Tournament, another outstanding achievement.

Dance in Tanfield is very strong due to the work put in by Miss Whittle and the talent and effort of the pupils. This was demonstrated at the Talent show held earlier this year. This was a sell out event and performances were very professional.

The School will be hosting it's annual Sports Awards Presentation Evening on the 10th July 2003. Do come along and help celebrate our achievement.

Another Scouts tale

Reading Clifford Beecroft's article on 'A Scouts Tale' in the fourth issue of the newsletter brought back memories of the many enjoyable hours I spent with fellow students at Tanfield who were also scouts in the 1st Annfield Plain Troop. Many of us travelled from the outposts of the catchment area to share the extension of our association from school to scouting. Harry Jackson and I made up the Craghead arm of the Troop but my memory of others is not as good as Clifford's. His listing of some of the scouts assisted my recall and it was good to see the letter from David York in the Newsletter (in which he mentioned Bob Patterson, now in Bermuda). Ken Smith's letter in the Newsletter reminds me that he was in the 2nd Annfield Plain Troop.

The scout socials that Clifford remembers were held in a hall at Catchgate and attracted many girls from the school. Dancing was to the accompaniment of records on a turntable, the equivalent of today's Discos. The hall floor was not terribly smooth and restricted the twinkle toe movements of those more accustomed to the Stanley Palais or Castles. Nevertheless, these occasions seemed to be popular and gave us the opportunity to mix with

Tanfield girls, who then led quite sheltered lives (or so I was led to believe).

Jack Mackieson was a fine troop leader and will be remembered for his benevolent and tolerant attitude to scouts with ambitious ideas, especially during the periods when we were camping. I attended camps in Worcestershire and Glencoe and was less than fastidious in cleaning the dixies with soil and water which Jack did not appreciate. Bean topping, picking and eating loom large in my memories of camping by the river near Pershore and the thick ear Harry Blackburn received after trying to explain why we were long overdue in returning a motorboat to its owner (the engine had failed) is also prominent in my memory.

The camp at Glencoe has stuck in my mind all these years and that experience was rekindled last autumn when my wife and I spent a few days in the area. No more under canvas, we stayed at the very comfortable Isles of Glencoe Hotel on the edge of Loch Leven with a wonderful view

of the loch and the Pap of Glencoe. We walked through the village and drove along the road to where the camp had been located. A trip to Kinlochleven reminded me of a climb when we carried an ill person from the dam on the mountain down the penstock path to the aluminium works, now abandoned but occupied by a local brewery. Our lack of experience of climbing and lack of proper equipment did not deter us from attacking quite high mountains.

I believe that scouting developed character, initiative and confidence in us and, no doubt, contributed to the success in life which many of us have enjoyed. The time we spent together at Stanley Grammar School was, clearly, not enough to satisfy our desire for interaction and the scouts enabled us to enjoy each other's company and repartee on a broader scale. I shall look forward to looking at the photographs that Clifford has made available and to hearing more anecdotes of those times, should others be motivated to respond.

Warren Pescod
Pupil 1944-51

Churchill's Bodyguard

Edmund Murray 1917 – 199?

I was Churchill's Bodyguard 1987.

This is the title and the author of a book that I have recently re-discovered.

Edmund Murray was born 1917 in a small pit village, Friarside, Burnopfield, where I have relatives. He spent about four years in Alderman Wood School under Dr. Hardy and left of necessity to work. After several small jobs, he joined the French Foreign Legion, travelled widely in Africa, joined the Resistance movement against Japan, later the Metro-Police and Special Branch and became bodyguard to Mr Churchill in 1950, where he stayed until Churchill died in 1965.

Throughout this varied career he kept in touch with Miss Sellers (Geog). Miss Baxter (Latin). Marvellous rapport with Joe Binks (therefore Churchill) (Art). Mentions Mr Fewster (Maths) Miss Butters and Miss Boyd (French), Miss Lewis

(Music) Mr Livesey and Dr. Davies (Physics) Miss Ritchie (Eng) and Miss Nichol (Eng) who wrote to him in 1965 after Churchill's death.

He retired in 1982 to the Bath area and I wrote to his wife because I had been so moved by his story. Unfortunately he had died 199? and I did not keep his letter.

Perhaps you can use some of this story.

Note

The education I received at West Stanley has proved most useful in the life I have led since, and I humbly express, whenever possible my feelings of gratitude to my teachers of those far off days. Marvellous.

Myself

I was born Marion Barker 1927 at Catchgate. My father was well known as a fruit and vegetable man. I was at Alderman Wood 1938 – 44 under Mr W Carr. I qualified as a dental surgeon in 1949 and worked in NHS until my husband was very ill with a slipped disc.

We came to South Shields in 1965 and worked in the school dental service until 1987. I value my education at Alderman Wood as does Edmund Murray. I have a very worn even rebound dictionary awarded for school certificate 1944 and Palgraves Golden Treasury – both well loved – and signed Wm. Carr

Marion Clarkson
135 Bamburgh Ave
South Shields
NE34 7SZ

Winter 1947

One Sunday evening in the early months of 1947 our family had been visiting our grandparents. On the way home to our house in Craghead, I was very tired and asked dad if he would give me a 'piggy-back'. This was quite a laugh as I was seven years old at the time, and it was a family joke that I did not like to walk anywhere. However, I really did have a very sore throat and felt quite ill.

The next morning I was covered in a red rash and so the doctor was called. To my mother's horror I was diagnosed as having scarlet fever – a highly infectious disease – and so was taken by ambulance to Maiden Law Isolation Hospital, despite my mother's protests that she would look after me at home. This was not allowed and even more so the house had to be fumigated after my departure.

My parents were really worried for me, as they knew my stay in hospital would be lengthy and that they would not be allowed to come near me. (In fact they could not even enter the hospital.) I had never been away from home before and they were concerned that my small sister, aged two, would catch the disease.

Whilst I was in hospital, my parents came twice a week, Wednesdays and Saturdays, by bus to Maiden Law, hav-

Letter

Re Cliff Beecroft's letter in the Dec Newsletter –

For some reason Jack Makkison left with me, some time ago, various odds and ends concerned with the 1st Annfield Plain Scout Troop – reason presumably when the Scout Hut was condemned and the Troop finally wound up. Amongst the material is a written History of the Troop together with various details of activities, records photographs etc. One paragraph reads:

In 1941 the Troop was taken over by J Makkison.....At this period the Troop consisted of about 35-40 boys ranging in age from 16-18 years and coming entirely from Stanley GS. This state of affairs has existed up to the present day....I would (my words now) assume present day to be the middle to late 50's and certainly mentions the names – and many others appearing in Clifford's letter,

ing to change at Stanley. They stood at the railings beside the road and waved to me across the hospital garden. I was fortunate to have a window which overlooked the garden and sometimes a nurse would open it and then my parents would shout messages to me and I could wave back.

After I had been in hospital for a week or so, the snow became so deep that the bus only ran to Stanley, thereby forcing my parents – complete with parcels containing their sweet rations, colouring books etc. – to walk from South Moor Arch to Maiden Law through the snow, simply to see me and wave to me, after handing in the parcels to the hospital office. By the third week, the snow was so bad that no buses were running, but my parents and aunt still trekked from Craghead to Maiden Law in the deep snow just to see me. They always wrote me letters too, and after a couple of weeks I was allowed to write back.

All these years later, I can still visualise my hospital visitors standing beside the railings in about two feet of snow, all wrapped up, and the flakes falling around them. When

they left, I was sorry and imagined the long trudge home.

I was in hospital for a whole month, but it wasn't too bad; because, a few days after my admission I was joined by Jean Simpson who sat next to me at school and then, little by little, about half the class ended up in Maiden Law Hospital, so we had some fun together.

When the day came to go home, my parents' great worry was that the ambulance would not be able to get up the steep gradient leading to our house. However, all the neighbours turned out with their shovels and ashes from their grates to make the road passable for the ambulance. A very kind act, but one which certainly spoiled the sledging track!

It was good to return home after what seemed a lifetime to a seven year old and to have my first normal conversation with my parents in weeks. And how my little sister seemed to have grown!

June Todd (nee Pounder)
Pupil 1951 - 1958

Scouting activities tended to be very vigorous. With Jack in charge one learned e.g. the art of camping in pouring rain in Western Scotland the hard way. Records of work done at meetings show that we did get down to serious scouting for maybe half of the time. Refreshments followed and then some fairly violent games. British Bulldog rings a bell here somewhere!!

Jack's writing style is worth following – I quote from Dec 22nd 1951 Extremely successful social – between 150 – 180 present. There were some objections that the final issue of lemonade was dirty water. Actually it was extremely pure, no foreign matter in the way of cordial being added....I told the Seniors that we had applied for 9 of the 4 places allocated to the Consett Scouts Assoc. for the World Jamboree.

In such ways funds were raised and in fact two of the Troop – David York and Fred Turner did attend the Austrian Jamboree.

So, the document lives at the above address if anyone is interested. Jack, by the way is still with us, I got a Christmas card as usual in December. Many happy memories.

Yours,

Dick Rose
SGS 1945 - 52

Letters

Letter from Canada David York

Dear Fred

Having faxed you about ten hours ago, the requested The Tanfield Association News Letter Volume 1, Issue 4 was pushed through the letter box a few minutes ago; what incredible service. Many thanks

David York

Dear Fred

I have just read the letter to Mrs Donkin under the title Recruiting p 9. Unfortunately there is no signature but Susan Donkin could perhaps pass on my fax *604 987 4190 and address to the sender.

Thank you sincerely

Jean York nee Hetherington.

Editor's note

Our apologies for missing off the name from the article; the sender of the letter is Florence Darby (nee Hutchinson) pupil 1946 – 53.

Letter

Somehow, someone has joined me up in the Tanfield Association – hence I am receiving the Newsletter. Can I join properly and assuming its £5 pa the cheque is enclosed.

Yours faithfully

Dick Rose 1945 – 52

Secretary's note

Thank you Dick for your letter, and what a lovely thing for some-one to do.

It could be that others may wish to follow this kind action, by joining a friend or relative.

All one has to do, is to send the name, (and maiden name for married ladies) and address, telephone number, and the dates they were connected with school to Susan Donkin, 19 Lindon Avenue, Chester-le-Street, Co Durham, DH3 3PP, together with a cheque made payable to The Tanfield Association, for £5.

Letter

Thank you for your kind letter of 18th November 2002, enclosing details of the Patron of Tanfield School scheme.

I return the form, clearly signed, together with my cheque for £100.

I wish the scheme every success in the future to enable Tanfield School to achieve Specialist School status

and I look forward to learning more about the activities, in due course.

With kind regards

Yours sincerely

Peter Ardron

Three Steps?

Saturday March 8th.

Recipe for a good night out.

Step 1

Get yourself a good venue.

Step 2

Hire a talented bunch of musicians.

Step 3

Attract an enthusiastic crowd who are up for a good night.

Using this formula the association create a fantastic night of entertainment.

Tanfield School hall the venue.

The Band 3 Steps to Heburn, an extremely multi talented bunch of musicians provided excellent entertainment with a spectrum of songs from the Blues Brothers to Elvis. The music and singing enhanced by a Rock and Rolling trio of dancers.

The crowd quickly got into the spirit of things (in more ways than one) and danced the night away.

A brilliant must repeat night was had by all.

Snippets from the Grammarian

A garden seat in plain wood – a legacy from Miss Lumsden – has been delivered to the school. It has a metal plate on which is recorded her years of service, and a quotation from a letter of Mr Hardy "So her memory will live on".

(Editor's Note – the seat is still on display in the school and still greatly treasured)

It was reported that the School's chess club finished the season in third place in the Durham County Schools League. Regular players for the school were

R Simpson (VI) H Young, H Jackson, K Smith
R Simpson (V) W. Pescod, J Nicholson, T Welsh
K Lynn, C Milburn, S Reid, F Pearson
House Captains 1948/1949
NEVILLE – Brian Patterson, Denise Gowland
DUNELM – Colin Posselt, Chris Greenwell
WATLING – R R Harrison, Norma Suddick
TANFIELD – Mervyn Robson, Margaret Ramsey

Tanfield School
Good street
Tanfield Lea
Stanley
Co.Durham

Phone: (01207) 232881



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.

Fond Memories (Continued from front page).

I have fond memories of Derek Watson. Derek worked tirelessly for Schoolboy Football and I am privileged to have played in teams that he managed. I remember some of the ways in which he encouraged me in football - those that 'rubbed off' I have attempted to use on others since. Little did I know that I would follow in his footsteps onto the English Schools' Football Association National Council some 15 years later!

Bill Wood has a special place in my memory, not as a PE teacher but as a teacher of English and extra-curricular activities. I remember him once saying to my class that Chaucer's Nun's Priest's Tale was short enough to remember by heart! I particularly remember him though as a teacher who spent many hours passing on his skill and expertise in athletics (hammer throwing), enthusing everyone. Quality free time spent with young people in Sport is a priceless commodity and I have always remembered that. I once met Bill after leaving school, at an English Schools' Athletics Association National Championship - shortly before breaking the wind gauge! - and was welcomed by: "Hello Johnston, what are you doing here?" I think I still referred to him as "Sir" but was pleased that he still recognised me.

Vladimir Ramjit also sticks in my mind. He taught Maths and managed a football team. I played in the same cricket team as he did at South

Moor and never really could call him by his first name, despite being told to do so! However, when we spoke some years later I did eventually refer to him as Vlad during the conversation.

I remember Alan Gee with his pointing, snapping fingers and calming command of "settle", to many a noisy group.

Perhaps the teacher whom I remember most fondly was Angus Robinson. I had failed my O level English Literature first time round and re-sat. O level English Literature in the Lower VIth - Angus was my English teacher. His approach seemed very different - calm, caring and he gave the feeling that he really enjoyed being with young people and that teaching wasn't just a job, he enjoyed being there! - Something that I have always tried to remember myself.

Brenda Harrison (Biology and incidentally my first form teacher in 1966 - with the red MGA), Norman Williams (History and the Choir), David Wilson (Geography), Alf Hewitt (RE), Bill Reece (Latin & English) and Harold Robinson (Biology) were all very kind to me when I first started teaching. Alan Mills gave me his football team - my first one in 1977.

Such characters as Norman Congleton, Jack Tron, John Hall, Bill Coe and Harry Jeffery influenced my early days as a teacher too - teachers who were the 'salt of the earth' - with sound common sense, fair and firm and teachers who valued everyone. I later took over as Head of Special Needs from Harry and

learned much from him during the time we worked together.

Mary Westgarth too, influenced me and I benefited from her experience of young people when I worked as her deputy in the Lower School and later in the Pastoral Office as Head of Year.

Finally, there was Fred - Fred Westwater. We both started teaching at Tanfield at the same time. We used to pretend to the pupils at school that I was a year older than Fred was because he had started College a year after me. That was our story! Fred always seemed to be able to put everything into context. Nothing phased him. The master of the 'wooden spoon' and someone that 'wild horses' wouldn't hurry. Infact, I once heard it said, in relation to Fred's time keeping that the next time he would arrive on time would be the first! I wonder? With strong, passionate feelings about many things he would occasionally upset some people with his honest opinions. Fred was always there for help and support, always there to listen to. There aren't many left like this now.

Nevertheless, I hope that in reading this brief journey through some of my personal memories that you too will have had your memory jogged as to the characters I have mentioned. Maybe they influenced you too?

Alan Johnston
Pupil 1966 - 1973
Teacher 1977 - present day