



# TANFIELD ASSOCIATION



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## Newsletter Autumn 2003

### Editorial

What a momentous year this has been for our school at Tanfield! So many achievements! It has also been announced recently that the school has achieved "Investor in People Award". It is also pleasing that the support and work of the members of the Tanfield Association have been recognised, so it's "Well done everyone!"

The main birthday event of 'Brad and the Dads' was also part of our 'wonderful year'. Bradley Creswick (leader of the Northern Syphonia) and his talented group were everything that the write-up said about their musicianship and more.

We have a mission for each member - we would be grateful if everyone would recruit a friend (who was a pupil at Tanfield) and hopefully double our membership. For any further information please don't hesitate to use our contact numbers.

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Please continue to send in your letters and photographs. It is important that we hear from you.

The Tanfield Association Committee are still seeking any voluntary help with secretarial assistance and anyone with computer skills.

Hope the above is of some help.

Alan Ramshaw  
Editor

### Tanfield Association Profiles

The two following people, Eric Fisk and Susan Smith (née Turnbull) were chosen to be profiles because they are the two people who were invited by the Headteacher to spearhead the school in its bid for Specialist School status.

This involved more than a year of very hard work, effort and commitment on their behalf, to achieve the status of "Specialist School" in Engineering and Science. Because of their extremely important role in this work, it was

thought that the members of the Association may wish to know, who are these people? Where do they come from? What is their experience and history? And how are they linked to the Association?

The profiles are an attempt to answer some of these questions. We would wish to express our thanks to them for agreeing to be interviewed, giving up their time and being so patient with the prying and questioning interviews for the Newsletter

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## Eric Fisk - Deputy Headteacher

Eric Fisk was born in the Stanley area and lived in School Terrace, South Moor as a boy. He was the youngest of five children, the others being Bill, Bob, Margaret and Tom who all attended our school (then Stanley Grammar School). His father was a council foreman and his mother looked after the children. The family house overlooked Greenland School and backed on to Park Road Methodist Church both of which had a big influence on his early life.

Eric attended Greenland Infant and Junior schools and has fond memories of teachers there, including Miss Strong (the Infant Headteacher), Miss Handy (a Methodist local preacher), Mr. Durno (football), and Miss Skeen (11+ teacher who worked the children hard to ensure success in the scholarship exams).

The house in School Terrace was very close to the Tivoli cinema and one of Eric's memories is of his mother waking him in the middle of the night in 1958 to watch the fire which burned down the cinema.

At this time, Eric, like most young boys, was very interested in football and played for the school team. He was a keen Sunderland supporter and remembers going by himself, as a 10 year old, on the bus from South Moor to the home matches at Roker Park.

At this age he wanted to follow his brothers and sister by passing the exam for Tanfield. He can remember his mother sending him to Mould's paper shop in South Moor to buy The Journal which had in it the results of the 11+, and being delighted to read that he had been successful.

During this time the Fisk family had close ties with Park Road Methodist Church, where his mother had played the piano. The children all went to Sunday School and took part in other chapel activities.

Eric joined the Cubs and later the Boy Scouts 2<sup>nd</sup> Annfield Plain troop, where his brother Tom had been a Scout. His mother helped

with the Girl Guides 2<sup>nd</sup> Stanley Troop. Sister Margaret was also a guider. He can remember as a youngster meeting older guides who attended Tanfield - amongst them Margaret Livesey and Eleanor Arnold, who were then senior pupils. Eric enjoyed the Cubs and Scouts and has fond memories of their meetings, outings, camps and performing in the Gang Shows.

In September, 1961 he started Stanley Grammar School. He found the transition from Primary School quite easy because he knew his brothers' and sister's friends who had frequented the house in School Terrace. He remembers affectionately Miss Heslop (French), Miss Eggleston (Art), Miss Grieveson (English), Mr. Brabban (Woodwork), Mr. Alan Westwater (P.E.) and Mr. Dolman (Science). His particular friends at school included Gordon Hindson, Alan Corbett and Brian Kirkup. Eric played football for the school and thoroughly enjoyed overall his time as a pupil. He describes being very happy in the Stanley area and belonging to a close and supportive family.

When he had spent only three years at Tanfield, the Fisk family moved - firstly to Hexham and then Cheshire - as his father had obtained better jobs. Eric feels that he never really identified with these areas and always regarded Stanley as home.

When he was eighteen, Eric went to Leicester where he obtained his B.Ed. His first teaching post was in Leicester at a multi-racial boys Secondary Modern school, where he taught History and Geography. In 1973 he moved to a mixed Comprehensive - Bydales School in Marske, North Yorkshire, where he taught for three years. Eric then obtained a post at Rutherford School in Newcastle as Head of Year. He remained at this school for fifteen years, during which time he was promoted to Senior Teacher. In 1991, he was delighted to return to Tanfield as Deputy Headteacher.

Although admitting to loving Tanfield with a passion, Eric was extremely disappointed on his return to see the condition of the school

buildings, which had suffered neglect from under-funding. Most of the teaching took place in a new block of classrooms while the old 1912 building was relegated to mainly office and storage use because the rooms were not large enough to accommodate classes being taught with modern methods.

In May 1998, there was a fire in the Tower Block and the school lost 15 classrooms and 6 laboratories along with important coursework belonging to the pupils. The remaining rooms in the Tower Block could not be accessed because of the spread of asbestos dust through the ducted air system. As a consequence, the pupils were taught in demountable classrooms sited on the school field. During this time Eric had been working with the LEA on a reduction of surplus places in the school but now he took the additional responsibility of liaising with the architects and building contractors to oversee the planning and construction of new buildings and the refurbishment of the 1912 Building.

Out of adversity arose a tremendous opportunity to provide the school with wonderful facilities and to convert the old building back to classroom use. To do this, interior walls were removed and what had formerly been three rooms became two, giving teachers more flexibility for classroom organisation. The school now has five new science labs. and very modern I.C.T. and Technology facilities. Although the original building is old, it is now one of the best equipped, attractive and stimulating teaching blocks in the County.

Eric regards one of his major successes was working with Sue Smith to gain specialist school status for Tanfield as a Science and Engineering College. This involved the school raising £50000 through sponsorship from ex-pupils, the local community and employers in the area. He compiled the bid, a blue-print for Tanfield's development over the next five years. The bid was successful at the first attempt - a really outstanding achievement

considering Tanfield became only the third school in the country to gain specialist status in science and engineering - no mean feat for an 11-16 school, as most schools applying for this award have Sixth Forms. Mr. Fisk is very grateful to past pupils and the Tanfield Association who raised £7000 towards the target. As a result the school has received a further £100000 of Government funds to spend on computers, machinery, interactive whiteboards and related equipment, and will receive a further £45000 each year for four years.

Eric also considers it a real privilege to have worked with the Tanfield Association towards its celebration of the school's ninetieth birthday which was a wonderful occasion that has led to other highly successful reunion events.

A major interest for Eric is his work with the National Association of Headteachers, where he represents Heads and Deputies from Durham and Teesside. He is Chair of the NAHT's National Secondary Committee and Vice-Chair of the Finance Committee. Again he is following in the footsteps of brother Bob, who is a former National President of the NAHT.

In 1991, Eric married Marilyn, who subsequently came to work in the Tanfield School office and whom he describes as "a wonderful wife". He has three grown-up step-children and the couple live in Rothbury, Northumberland. After his father's death, his mother moved back to live in the area and his brothers, Bob and Tom, continue to live in the North East.

Eric expressed a strong affinity for Tanfield School and the Stanley area, where he is content to pursue his career. After thirty two years teaching he is still enthusiastic and firmly believes that Tanfield School has an excellent staff, both teaching and non-teaching, and together they will ensure the continuing success of the school.

## Susan Smith

Susan was born on 10<sup>th</sup> July 1953 in the famous 'Richard Murray' maternity hospital, Consett to Jenny and Jim Turnbull of Annfield Plain, who had both attended Alderman Wood School at Tanfield from 1934 to 1939.

Susan commenced her schooling at Catchgate Infants School, under Head teacher Miss Forster, in 1958. She continued through Catchgate Junior School until 1964 when she passed her 11-plus examination and went to Stanley Grammar School at Tanfield. During her time at Catchgate she became close friends with Christine Herdman, (now Christine Affleck), and their friendship continues right through their Tanfield days, and after teacher training, in their teaching careers.

Outstanding in the happy memories of Susan's Junior School days, were as an enthusiastic member of the Girls' Friendly Society at St. Aidan's Church, Annfield Plain, and the influence it has had on her life. The leaders were Mrs Jean Oliver, Mrs Violet Sowden, Mrs Joan Thomas and Mrs Lily Smith. Susan also joined St. Aidan's Badminton Club and Youth Club.

The Badminton Club at Tanfield under Mr. Harold Robertson was also very popular. Other keen players being Maureen Mowatt, Ken Hall and Jimmy Errington. Some of the other friendships at Stanley Grammar School, included Susan Carr, Janet Keskeys and Janis Rooney.

Teachers and subjects that made an impact on her at Tanfield were: history with Mr Norman Williams and Miss Thornton who probably had the greatest influence on her during her time at Tanfield. She gave Susan outstanding guidance and direction. Other teachers were Mr. Alf Hewitt, Religious Education; English with Mr Wood and Mrs Hassall; Chemistry with the young Mr. Walter Peacock; Maths with Mr Proud and Mr Hector Hall.

In the Lower Sixth form she and Susan Carr were selected as Post Girls by the Head teacher Dr Sharp. The Sixth Form period is remembered as a very happy time with many

good friends. Susan went to Ripon College from 1971 to 1974 for teacher training, taking history as her main subject. Most of her teaching practice was in North Yorkshire, but she also spent some time at the Hare Law Special School, with (Headteacher Mr. Parkin), which made a lasting impression on her and which possibly had an influence on her teaching career in later years.

Teaching life for Susan started in September 1974 at Shield Row Secondary School, (Headteacher Mr. Syd Davies), teaching History and PE. She went on to become involved in teaching ROSLA pupils (Raising of the School Leaving Age): this was when the leaving age was raised from 15yrs to 16yrs. She taught with Bill Coe, Harry Jeffery, Maggie Saxton, Mary Westgarth, Christine McGough, John Hall, Norman Conkleton, Jack Tron and Claire Murray.

Shield Row Secondary merged with Tanfield Secondary to become Tanfield Comprehensive School in 1977, under Head teacher Alban McKie (he succeeded Dr Sharp). Susan, along with Pat Barker and Alan Johnston, joined the Special Needs team under Harry Jeffery, until 1982. After two children (Gregory and Lydia) and a variety of teaching posts, Susan was promoted to Head of Special Needs at Tanfield in 1995. In 1997 Tanfield became a resourced mainstream school for Special Educational Needs and Susan was appointed as Head of the Resource Base. She also joined the School Senior Management Team at this time. In the year 2000, she was appointed Curriculum Manager and played a part in Tanfield being the only school in the county to offer GCSE in Engineering in 2001.

On interviewing Susan, one is left with the distinct impression that teaching at Tanfield is not just a job, but is a definite belief in the worth of the school and the pupils. She was confident from the start that we would raise the £50,000 and it was from her enthusiastic thoughts that the concept of "The Patrons of Tanfield School" came. Some of the reasons that she believes that Tanfield deserves the

Specialist School status, are that the school is a Centre of Excellence; it is Fully Inclusive; the building environment is superb for our pupils; and the staff, both teaching and non-teaching, are very committed people.

Susan is a keen and active member of the Tanfield Association. She thought the 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebration last October was a wonderful occasion, bringing hundreds of people together from down the years. She also believes that the Tanfield Association

*Photograph* **Eric Fisk (Deputy Head teacher)**  
**Susan Smith (Senior Manager)**

members should be kept up-to-date with happenings in the school today, and the present-day pupils should be kept informed of the Tanfield Association Members, and the wonderful foundations that have been laid for them.



## Specialist School at Tanfield

By now most people will be aware of the wonderful news of our school at Tanfield achieving Specialist School status in Science and Engineering. It is the only Education Centre in the United Kingdom for this September to be awarded the combined specialist status, and only the third, up to the present time, in the UK.

To quote the Northern Echo: "Tanfield School is at the forefront of preparing the region's next generation of scientists and engineers".

Deputy Head teacher, Eric Fisk who assembled Tanfield's bid along with School Senior Manager Susan Smith, said "This is going to have a tremendous impact on the development of the school and the Local Community as a whole, and it is most appropriate that this be celebrated in the school's 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary year". Both Eric Fisk and Susan Smith are former pupils of the school.

Head teacher Archie Howat paid tribute to the members of the Tanfield Association for all their help and support over the past year, including Tom Harris of Oxhill, for his efforts in helping to raise money from industry and business, as well as Professor Warren Pescod and Ken Dixon who represent the Tanfield

Association on the Specialist School Steering Committee.

Question: How will the Specialist Status affect the School?

Answer: Financially the £50,000 raised by the school will bring a government grant of £100,000 plus an extra £45,000 a year for the next four years.

Question: How will this money be used and will it benefit all pupils?

Answer: All pupils will benefit in future plans, and in the short term part of the money will be used to redevelop one of the schools ICT Suites and transform two Technology Rooms into Design Studios. New equipment will be installed in the new Design Studios, which will give pupils a chance to experience using computer-aided design machines.

Question: When is this due to commence?

Answer: Work on converting the workshops to a state-of-the-art Auto CAD Centre will commence during the October half-term holiday.

All of this means there will be more for the Tanfield Association Members to come and see, and for them to be proud of being part of taking the school into a new phase of its distinguished history.

## Tanfield School Today

As reported in our last Newsletter, it was decided to keep Members of the Association up-to-date with recent happenings in our school.

At the end of the Summer Term one of the major changes in the teaching staff of the school happened, when five teachers retired with a combined total of 158 years of teaching at Tanfield.

The teachers are:-

**Mr. Derek Barron**

Physical Education, Maths, Head of Year, 34 years service, Derek was also a pupil of the school for 7 years from 1956 to 1963.

**Mrs Amy Bilton (née Secombe)**

French, Head of Modern Languages, 31 years service, Amy was also a pupil of the school for 7 years from 1952 to 1959.

**Mr. Les Graham**

Science, 32 years service.

**Mrs Lilian Flint**

Food Studies, Head of Year, 26 years service.

**Miss Mary Westgarth**

History, Head of Careers, Senior Management, 35 years service.

An evening function was held at the end of term, to recognise the long service of the above teachers and this was also attended by many

teachers who had worked with them over the past twenty to thirty years.

The school has also recruited many very talented new staff, including a Humanities Director of Learning (History, Geography, RE); Teacher of Geography; Director of Learning, Modern Languages (French, German); Teacher of RE; Teacher of Science; Teacher of Food Studies; Teacher of Mathematics; Coordinator and Teacher for ICT.

It is also expected that, now that Tanfield has achieved the Specialist School status, further additions may be in the pipe-line.

The examination results this year have been declared "the best ever", with more As and A\*s than ever before at GCSE level, with 46% passes at A - C grade, making Tanfield the top school in Derwentside (Consett and Stanley Areas). We are told that action plans are being developed to ensure that the present Year 11 (fifth year) cohort will build on the achievements of 2003.

The school is now over subscribed and the intake for September 2003 was 150 pupils. While other schools are suffering from falling pupil numbers, Tanfield has the reverse problem in that more parents than ever wish to send their children to Tanfield School.

## The Day the Media Came to Tanfield

Founded 91 years ago our school at Tanfield, having gone through six different names, now has pupils being taught with the aid of the latest technology.

To mark this 91<sup>st</sup> Birthday on Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> October 2003, ten former pupils ranging from the 1920s to 1950s, together with Sophie Dunn our youngest member, who only left school in September 02, came into school to compare "Then and Now", and to record this event the media were invited into school.

The brave Tanfield Association Members who came into school were:-

Barbara Churcher	1928 - 35
Jennie Turnbull	1934 - 40
Ted Brabban	1944 - 51
Richard Chambers	1946 - 53
Ken Bolam	1947 - 54
Robert Roxborough	1948 - 55
June Todd (nee Pounder)	1950 - 57
Astrid Reeve (nee Ashburn)	1950 - 57
Rosemary Black (nee Brabban)	1951 - 58
Edward Carrington	1953 - 58

The event commenced at 1.00pm on the Thursday afternoon (although the BBC TV people had been eating sandwiches and biscuits and drinking coffee and tea from 12.15pm.) The above former pupils were

marshalled by school Senior Manager Susan Smith into two groups, Science and English Lessons. After this session, lessons were exchanged, but not before coffee and biscuits being served in the Conference Room, and individually being interviewed by the TV team. The Northern Echo and Advertiser reporters and photographers were also in attendance.

After one and a half hours of experiencing lessons, being photographed, filmed and interviewed, our valiant former pupils left school for home, but not before some of them had been grabbed to give their written comments of the comparisons between their school days and their impression of school today.

Space does not allow the printing of their writings in full, but some of their comments were:- "The interactive white board was technological magic"; "How much quieter the school now is than when I attended here, it is probably the carpets which are fitted throughout. Such luxury!"; "The school is very much cleaner and brighter than it was in my day"; "bright, cheerful décor, a complete contrast to the ubiquitous brown - dull and gloomy in our day (50s)"; "There is no blackboard (with accompanying chalk dust), but a white board worked by touch"; "The whole atmosphere was disciplined but informal and very friendly, a rare happening in my day"; "The aims of the lesson were set out at the beginning, something unknown to us, and checked at the end to see if these aims had been achieved"; "the content of the lesson was much more varied than ours ever was, and taken at quite a pace".

A final quote from Astrid Reeve (née Ashburn) "I didn't check to see if the girls still wore brown knickers".

For the last half hour of the school day Ken (Dr.) Bolam and Bob (Ex Maths Teacher) Roxborough sat in on a Maths Lesson, and Jennie Turnbull went to a music lesson to experience a drum lesson to Year 8x (2<sup>nd</sup> years).

BBC Look North showed the results (although it was only about four minutes long) at 6.30pm that same evening.

The Northern Echo also published a very good photograph of one of the 'stars', Professor Dick Chambers in the science lesson, discussing an issue with four pupils.

The 91<sup>st</sup> Birthday afternoon event was felt to be very successful and worthwhile, with all the following aims fulfilled:-

1. To celebrate the birthday of the school in a different way.
2. An exercise to compare 'Then and Now'.
3. To give some of the present day pupils the opportunity of meeting and working with the Tanfield Association Members.
4. To gain publicity for the school and the Tanfield Association, through Television, Radio and Newspapers.

For the success of the occasion, thanks are due to Archie Howat our Head teacher for allowing this event to go ahead; Assistant Head teacher Graeme Lloyd for his help with organisation; Senior Management Teacher Andrew Peak for his keeping a watching eye on the exercise; Susan Smith for her patience and organising the afternoon's programme; to the office staff under Philippa for providing hospitality above and beyond the call of duty; Senior Management Teacher John Richardson for his skill and patience in taking photographs with the digital camera; and last but definitely not least, the ten former pupils who were all given a tick and a gold star for their excellent work, who because of their willingness and co-operation, made this afternoon possible.

## Student Innovation Challenge - Grand Final 1 July 2003

The wonderful news of Tanfield School gaining Specialist School status in Science and Engineering may have hidden or put into the background other notable achievements of pupils and teaching staff.

The 'Student Innovation Challenge' had been issued to all 11 - 19 schools in the North East of England. The general idea behind the Challenge was in 'developing the next generation of innovative minds'. (Quote from Challenge document). Tanfield won the County Durham area heat, which was held at Durham University, where the competing teams were all presented with a problem, which they had to solve.

The team from Tanfield then went on to the Grand Final, held in the very large Gateshead City Leisure Centre, Blaydon. The other seven finalists were: Burnside Community High School, Wallsend; the Kind Edward VI School, Morpeth; Prudhoe Community High School; West Redcar Community School; Bedlingtonshire Community High School; Lindisfarne Middle School, Northumberland; Kenton School, Newcastle.

The grand final consisted of a presentation to a panel of judges, and a large audience of parents, teachers, pupils and business representatives, as well as official representatives from Foresight North East, Government for the North East, and One North East.

Without going into the fine detail of all the work leading up to the final presentations, it should be said that it represented many hours of extra work (because it could not interfere with normal class lessons), for a team of six pupils aged 13/14 years: Martin Gladden, Carol Routledge, Vicki Hayward, Victoria Glendinning, Laura Athey and Kevin Beck. The dedicated teaching staff responsible for the whole enterprise were Mr. Andrew Peak, Head of Technology and Engineering (and also on the School Management Team) and Mr. Keith Alder teacher of Technology and Engineering. Mr. Peak organised the whole programme of responding to the Challenge,

and arranged for speakers and expertise to come into school to help develop the pupils' ideas. Mr. Peak and Mr. Alder taught, encouraged and tutored the team of pupils, but 'at the end of the day' at the grand final, it was the six pupils who had to give the presentation to everyone.

The judges had to decide who had won after considering all the evidence leading up to the grand final presentation, and they were required to give marks in the following way:-

1. Innovative/Creative Solution to Client Problem (30%)
2. Evidence of Research (15%)
3. Demonstration of Practical Ability (20%)
4. Good Team Work (15%)
5. Entertaining and Informative Presentation/Delivery (20%)

At 6 pm on the evening of the Presentation Day (as everyone waited with bated breath) the judges announced that Tanfield had won the grand final of the Challenge, beating some educational establishments represented by much older pupils (sixth formers). To say that the Tanfield Team and their supporters were delighted would be a major, major understatement. The whole Tanfield contingent, led by Headteacher, Chair of Governors and other Governors, parents and families, and pupils, 'nearly lifted the roof'.

The main prizes were monetary ones of £1,000 for winning the Durham Area Heat, and a further £1,500 for winning the Grand Final (to spend on technology in the school). The cheques were presented to the pupils, who unanimously decided it should go towards the Specialist School Bid of raising £50,000 from the school. The pupils' team also won a helicopter flight over Tyneside and each pupil was allowed to fly (with the assistance of the pilot) the helicopter.

With this kind of pupil and teacher material, one could possibly ask, "Was it any wonder our school at Tanfield was awarded Specialist School status?"

## Youth Activities

How did you spend your out-of-school time (apart from homework) when not at Alderman Wood School, Stanley Grammar School, or Tanfield Comprehensive? Was it with one of the many youth organisations in the Stanley area?

The school has now a number of photographs and letters regarding Scout activities, and they have created a great deal of interest among many people, so we hope the letters will continue to be sent in. However, we are aware that other organisations were attended by pupils from Tanfield, and we have attempted to draw up a list of these, and hope that it will stir memories that you can share with us through the Newsletter.

### Scouts

1<sup>st</sup> Annfield Plain Troop  
2<sup>nd</sup> Annfield Plain Troop  
South Moor (St George's) Troop  
Stanley (St Andrews) Troop  
Dipton (St John's) Troop

### Boys' Brigade

1<sup>st</sup> Annfield Plain Company  
3<sup>rd</sup> White-le-Head Company  
4<sup>th</sup> East Stanley Company  
7<sup>th</sup> Annfield Plain Company  
8<sup>th</sup> Kyo Laws Company  
9<sup>th</sup> Greencroft Company  
11<sup>th</sup> Oxhill Company  
13<sup>th</sup> Burnopfield Company

### Dear Fred

We are pleased to hear that Tanfield has achieved Specialist School status - Congratulations to you all.

**Audrey Drake Née Lawson (1946-51), Newton Aycliffe.**

### Dear Fred

As promised. I'm off to Brittany in a couple of weeks.

### Church Lads' Brigade

Tanfield St Margaret's Company

### Guides

1<sup>st</sup> Stanley St Andrew's South Moor St George's  
2<sup>nd</sup> Stanley Oxhill

### Girls' Brigade

These companies were attached to many Methodist Churches in the Stanley area.

### Other Youth Organisations

Cadets; Girl Guilds; Girls' Friendly Society; Junior Christian Endeavour; Choirs; Music Group; Sporting Clubs; and many Youth Clubs from the large, purpose built Stanley Youth Centre, to the smallest Church Youth Club.

Did you belong to any of the above or have we missed out your organisation? Please write to us and tell us about your organisation. a) where it was situated b) name of the organisation c) who ran it and d) what were the activities you took part in.

We would also be grateful to be informed of fellow pupils from Tanfield who shared experiences with you, (please give dates and places if you can) We would also welcome any photographs (which we could photo-copy and return) or memorabilia (particularly written memorabilia) concerning your organisation and Tanfield.

## Letters

If anyone from SGS or Tanfield ever mentions France, please put them in touch with me. The house is big enough for lots of visitors and even the good wine is cheap. (address supplied on request).

When there are events which coincide with my visits to see my mother, I promise to do my best to visit and meet all my old friends. The 'do' last year was superb.

A recent coincidence was that I moved to a new house in Consett just before I decided to

retire. My next door neighbour was Alistair Coulson (son of Mavis Coulson, who was secretary at Tanfield for many years). I saw Mavis a couple of times every week when she visited her grandchild. Tanfield never goes far away!

Best wishes

**To Eric Fisk Deputy Headteacher  
Tanfield School**

Dear Eric

Having received the news that you have been successful in your bid for the school to achieve combined Specialist School status in Science and Engineering, and that you are one of only three in the country, I write, as a former pupil (1946-53), to congratulate yourself and Mrs Sue Smith on the effort and rewards. I recall with many happy memories my own time at the school and my introduction to maths and science with Mssrs Alan Gee, John Scott, Arther Ratcliffe and Mr Livesey, who was Deputy Head in 1953.

Their example and guidance led me through 'O' levels, sixth form, and 'A' levels, in 1953, to go on to University to take an honours degree in Civil Engineering. The foundations from Stanley Grammar School took me on a career path, which had, for me, opportunities to work in many parts of the world, Fiji, West, Central and Southern Africa, Caribbean, South America, parts of Europe and Hong Kong as well as on to promotion to Executive Director of a major international Civil Engineering Contractor until my retirement a few years ago. I sincerely hope that the

**Alan Arkless (1959-66)**

(Editor's note - Alan recently took early retirement from the Headship of Tynedale Primary School, Newcastle. He really is sincere when he says he would like friends from Tanfield to visit him in France).

foundations you will be able to lay with present pupils in the new School Status will give them as much satisfaction in their chosen careers as mine did for me.

It has been interesting to read about the scout experiences, with tales from Cliff Beecroft, Dick Rose, and to be able to remember David York. David and myself were privileged to go to the Scout World Jamboree (in 1952?) and then to remember Jack Makkison, as well as Warren Pescod. We were all in the 1<sup>st</sup> Annfield Plain Troop at the same time and my own first major scout camp was to the first one in Glencoe. The Troop went to Glencoe twice at least. The social evenings at Catchgate village hall (no longer at the crossroads) gave many of the boys their first chance to walk one of the girls home. If you were lucky she lived a good walk from one of the bus stops!!!! When you start to think about it the memories come flooding back.

All the very best to the school and staff for the future.

Yours sincerely  
**FRED TURNER (pupil 1946-53)**

**On a Sadder Note**

It is with regret and sadness that we have just heard of the death of Norma Hunter (née Suddick), pupil 1943-50 of Victoria, Canada, on the morning of 28<sup>th</sup> October 2003, after a

valiant battle with bone marrow cancer. Our sincere thoughts and prayers go to husband Sam and all her family.

## Snippets from the Grammarian

The newsletter team would greatly appreciate any member who has copies of the Grammarian, from any year, allowing us to photo-copy them and return the originals. (The Editor has stated in front of witnesses that he is willing to give a genuine autograph as a Then You! to everyone who would help us in this way)

### Christmas Term 1965

A report is given by Jean Siddle (VIu), of twenty five pupil students and four teachers, (the names are not given) of their eventful and memorable trip to Paris, France. (Were you in this party? Please write and let us know).

Articles were also written by D. Davis and P Adamson (IVb) on bell ringing; Alan Banks (VIu) and Joan Phillips (VIu) (Head Girl) on scientific experiments on animals; and from Neville Baugourd (VIL) on Science from the point of view of an Arts student.

### Advance Notice for St. George's Day 2004

The Executive Committee considered holding another 'Burns Night Supper' in January 2004, because of the excellent event held last January. However, they agreed with the 'Events Organising Committee', that (reluctantly) we should rest this year and aim for 'Burns Night' 2005. (Don't the years fly by?) The Committee did agree, however, to accept the recommendation that we should book "Three Steps to Hebburn", for a St George's Day event on Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> April 2004. This follows their tremendous success in March of this year, when they performed to over two hundred members and their friends, many of whom afterwards made very strong requests for the return of this very popular and entertaining band. Although this date is in six months time, we would urge members to mark it in their new 2004 diaries, and request tickets as soon as possible.

### Christmas Term 1949

Some very good photographs from this edition, one of which is the Honours Board from 1924 to 1932, and one of the many names is '1931 C Travena' who gained his Oxford Higher School Certificate. (Members may recall that Kit (Christopher) Travena, along with Delsey Neville, cut the 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday cake last year on behalf of the membership). Another good photograph is of the school prefects (48 in all). Some of the names are Warren Pescod, Lawrence Campbell, Kathleen Lawson, Chris Greenwell, and Bill Pattison.

Editor's Note - if you come into school to see the growing display of photographs, you may recognise yourself or others who have not yet been identified, from this photograph.

Which leads nicely to the next points 'TICKETS'. Many members and friends who obtained tickets for 'Brad and the Dads', have remarked on the small size of the ticket, but also how practical they had found this "credit card size" ticket to be. The credit for this unusual idea goes to Alan Ramshaw (Editor of the Newsletter and member of the Organising Committee) who produced this small ticket. His thoughts which led to the design, were, that a ticket of this size would fit more easily into a purse or wallet and would be much easier to handle than the large bulkier normal size, and therefore much more accessible.

So, it's well done Alan, for producing another bright ideal for the Tanfield Association!

## Calling all past students!

Where were you on Saturday October 11th 2003? We, the lucky ones, were at Tanfield School for a most enjoyable evening. As always we were afforded a kind welcome from the very hardworking committee members and Head teacher, Archie Howat, and Deputy Head teacher, Eric Fisk.

On walking into the hall one of the first people I saw was MY HERO, Ken Dixon. Let me explain Ken was in Upper Sixth when I started S.G.S. I thought he was wonderful. It is 47 years since we last met and my memory served me correctly.

I was also delighted to meet again with Caroline and Howard Bott who had made lengthy journeys to be there for the evening with their aunt, Barbara Churcher.

The displayed photographs of years past are a source of amusement and much discussion. According to the decade attributed to one photograph I was a pupil at S.G.S. when I was 5 years old!! genius never!!

The entertainment from Brad and the Dad's was outstanding. They are a group of professional musicians led by Bradley Creswick Leader of The Northern Sinfonia Orchestra. How lucky we were to have them

entertain us for they meet only three or four times a year as Brad and the Dad's, due to their demanding personal schedules. They entertained us with popular light classical music, folk music and blue grass music. We were brilliantly serenaded by Brad on violin playing from The Gypsy Queen.

Many thanks to the group.

In the interval we enjoyed a buffet and more reminiscing. The second part of the concert went far too quickly and needless to say there was an encore. No one was in any hurry to go home and more stories were exchanged. Many thanks to Eric Fisk for his patience in waiting to lock up the school premises.

The next social is in April, please try to be there.

Good wishes to you all. Pat Henderson née Pounder 1956=1963

## The Office Staff





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Marilyn Fisk *Headteacher's PA*



Joy Drake *Secretary*  
(responsible for the production of the Tanfield Association Newsletter)



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