

TANFIELD ASSOCIATION

President: Prof. Bob Harrison



Secretary: Elizabeth Hawkins 15 Thirlmere Vigo Chester le Street DH3 2JY secretary@tanfield-association.org

Editor: Ted Brabban, Suncroft, North Road, Hare Law, Stanley. DH9 9AY ted.brabban@nasuwt.net

Elizabeth: Tel. 01914103472

Ted: Tel. 01207 570447

NEWSLETTER No. 31

Easter 2015

Editorial

It is a bit late to wish you all 'A Happy New Year', but this is our first edition of 2015 so I'll do just that. What will the year bring us? Well a change of government no doubt, the 103rd birthday of our old school, and we hope another successful year for our Association.

I hope that you have all managed to have a look at the Association web site. Howard has done a cracking job of putting it all together and there is a wealth of information there, including copies of all past Newsletters. If you haven't yet looked, go to <http://tanfield-association.org> and indulge yourself. If you are not web wise, get your grandchild to show it to you, he/she will do it easily! Howard would like some feedback, so after you have had a good read, get writing too.

We have helped the school in one or two ways this last year, and that has been greatly appreciated. Like most schools at the moment budgets are extremely tight at Tanfield. At the same time capital expenditure is needed to keep facilities up to scratch. We have been asked if we can participate in a major project in the immediate future, so we are looking for possible school links to individuals or businesses that might help. Please read Elizabeth's piece inside and get in touch if you have connections.

I had some interesting feedback (very apt!) with regard to school dinners. I hope that you enjoy reading what folks remember. Now I would like some memories of 'Crime and Punishment' (or misdemeanours and payback!) at Tanfield. It may not have involved you, but I am sure that you will remember someone

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102nd

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who kicked over the traces and reaped a reward. Please tell me about it, either first or second hand. I'm hoping that you have stories to tell, but please don't name names without permission. We are not out to embarrass anyone, or to pay damages for defamation!

I expected more suggestions for the 'talk bubble' in the photograph from the last edition. I did get a couple which you will find inside.

You will realise that the above items are to generate copy. We cannot produce a Newsletter if there is nothing to go into it. As editor I am completely dependent upon you out there to give me something to work on. So, come on folks, process some words in my direction. There must be something to write about, even if it is just, "What happened to", "Does anyone else remember" or "Is anyone in touch with?" I need stuff to fill the pages,-please!

YOUR SCHOOL NEEDS YOU

I have been approached by the school recently to ask if the association can possibly help out in a major challenge this year. As you may know, school funding may sometimes appear to be a bit of a lucky dip. While academies, including the local one at Stanley, receive generous funding from outside agencies, schools like Tanfield rely on pupil numbers for their main source of revenue, and when rolls are falling, as they are now in many parts of the country, money for improvements can be in short supply.

Tanfield wishes to upgrade its computer facilities. There are four computer suites, each one of which needs to have its hardware upgraded. The cost of upgrading each suite will be £12000. The school is seeking sponsors, individual or commercial, to help with this project. There may be some of you who wish to make a personal donation towards the project, helping today's children to get as much benefit from their education as we all did from Tanfield. You may also have contacts in the business world who would be willing to help. The school will name a computer suite after the sponsor who enables the upgrades to take place. So, four big sponsors or a lot of little ones are needed.

If you wish to contribute to this challenge, please send your contribution to Susan Donkin, our treasurer, saying that you are contributing to the Challenge Fund. If you know of any business that would be prepared to help, please contact me so that I can coordinate contact with the school. Any donation, large or small, would be gratefully received. It's amazing sometimes how things can mount up.

Len Broxson, Tanfield's Chair of Governors, told the Executive Working Committee at our latest meeting that the school is very grateful for the help it receives from the association. He stressed that the children derive great benefit from the various things we do to help the school. It's nice to know we are making a difference.

Elizabeth Hawkins

Bill Armstrong

Ted
I received the Newsletter #30 and you did a wonderful job. Sending it in a PDF format works well for me and I take my time scrolling through the pages. It is good also to see the pictures and the only suggestion I have is if you could name the people in them. I know that is not possible for large groups but maybe when there are just two or three in the picture you could do it.

You ask for stories about the school lunches. By and large they were filling but not spectacular. A lot of shepherd's pie and mashed potatoes. The potatoes were in large metal bowls and the prefect at the head of the table dished out the servings to the students at his table. I remember one time a server dropped the bowl upright onto the floor and the potatoes flew up in the air and a large amount stuck to the ceiling. It may still be there. In physics class the next day Mr. Livesey, my favourite teacher, gave a lesson on elasticity and how the falling momentum had been transferred from the bowl to the potatoes and being conserved sending a portion skywards.

Another story is about Mr. Hall a math teacher. We were doing simultaneous equations and had lots of word problems of the type - a bag has some yellow jelly beans and red jelly beans and then some relationship between the numbers. That Christmas our class gave him a present of a bag of multicoloured Jelly Beans. After the holidays in the first class he wrote a problem on the blackboard. "A man has a bag with some gold rings and watches in it". We all had a good laugh.

That was a great picture of Claire and Peter. I have no idea what he was saying but it must have been a good joke. It reminded me of a situation I had when I was a principal. We had a fashion show and there was a delay so the student MC asked if anyone in the audience could tell some jokes. A grade 11 character jumped on the stage and told a bunch of jokes that had the students laughing and the staff cringing. Sexist, racist, scatological the whole range. Fortunately it did not go on too long. The next day I asked a teacher with a senior class to have them come up with a group of jokes that would be politically correct that we could use on a future situation if the need arose. The only joke they could give that avoided the sexist, racist, etc ban was: "Why is it in France for breakfast they will only serve you one egg. Because in France one egg is enough." Yes, a groaner.

I am sure that is not the joke that Peter was telling Claire and I look forward to seeing what people come up with. You also have to give us the correct answer. What was Peter saying to Claire?

Keep up the good work for the great newsletters and thanks again to you all.
Feel free to use, not use or edit any of this as you see fit

Cheers

Bill Armstrong
SGS 51-58

Editor: Thanks for the above. There are two reasons why names are not always included. 1.) I don't always know myself who they are, and 2.) I hope that someone might write and tell me, or to castigate me, both of which produce copy!

Some names from the past

Below are the transcripts taken from the Stanley News of the pupils who passed the School Certificate and the Higher School Certificate exams in the 1940s. These were the forerunners of the O Level and A Level exams. The O Level was the forerunner of the GCE and CSE exams which were later combined to produce the GCSE exams! Thanks to Gladys Frappell - Welsh for sending the original cuttings to us.

How many of the pupils below became the parents, or grandparents of recent Tanfield pupils?

Stanley News 1946

“Exam Success”

In Oxford examination, students at Stanley Grammar School did well, there being a 90% pass. Candidates who succeeded were:

Certificate: Alan Bell, Raymond Bland, James Boylan, Norman Collin, Ronald Corker, Malcolm Estell, James Golightly, Harry Graves, Kenneth Grimes, Alan Gurkin, Keith Hagar, Alan Hewison, Norman Hind, Albert Hunter, Sam Hunter, Basil Hutchinson, Jack Jeffrey, Lawrence Kingston, Alan Lowery, James Newstead, Kenneth Nicholson, Edgell Parnaby, Harry Pickerton, Francis Posselt, Arthur Richards, Mervyn Robson, Jim Sharp, Ian Stephenson, Harry Taylor, Dennis Towers, Fred Watson, Maureen Allsopp, Irene Benson, Maisie Coates, Maureen Dodds, Margaret Goldsborough, Patricia Green, Joan Hancock, Joan Harrison, Freda Henderson, Hazel Hill, Elizabeth Hogg, Marion Mallett, Mary Martin, Elizabeth Needham, Frances Ormston, Jean Pearson, Elizabeth Reed, Phyllis Rodham, Sheila Rose, Joan Scott, Marjorie Tinkler, Jean Tomlinson, Gladys Tonks, Joyce Ward, Lily Wright.

Higher Certificate: William Boggon, Kenneth Coulson, John Maughan, Joan Bidgood, Jean Carr, Rita Donnelly.

LIST OF PRIZE-WINNERS (1946)

FORM PRIZES

Form 1. 1 Joan Parnaby; 2 Eric Rainbow; Progress Edwina Rogerson .

Form 1a. 1 Mavis Pattison; 2 Joan Errington; Progress Eric Brown.

Form 1b. 1 Doris Clegg; 2 Audrey Goundry; Progress Margaret Curry.

Form 2. 1 Jean Ross; 2 John Greenwell; Progress Joan Hobbs.

Form 2a 1 Jean Jefferson; 2 Rita Scott; Progress Alan Jefferson.

Form 2b. 1 Kenneth Smith; 2 Alexander Bainbridge.

Form 3. 1 Stuart Reid; 2 Mary Anderson; Progress John Wilson, Audrey Hair

Form 3a 1 Robina Thompkins; 2 Sheila Peel ; Progress Ivy Newstead , John Appleton

Form 3b 1 Jean Tulloch; 2 William Pattison; Progress Rita Hunter.

Form 4 Language June Ross; Maths and Science Roger Simpson; Progress Marion Cain, Gordon Armstrong.

Form 4a. 1 Pamela Raine; 2 Eric Green; Progress Norman Taylor, Norma Culbert.

Form 4b. 1 Joan Reed; 2 Frederick Smith; Progress Betty McCord.

Form 4s. 1 Ivan Beckett; 2 Cynthia Fazackerley; Arts & Crafts Colin Posselt; Dom. & Needlework Mary Laybourne.

SCHOOL CERTIFICATE: Form 5 Jack Jeffery, Francis Posselt, Joan Harrison, Freda Henderson, Hazel Hill, Jean Pearson, Marjorie Tinkler, Jean Tomlinson, Albert Hunter, Ian Stephenson, Fred Watson, Lily Wright, Ronald Corker, Kenneth Nicholson, Edgell Parnaby, Maureen Allsopp, Mary Martin, Phyllis Rodham, Sheila Rose, James Golightly, Dennis Towers, Maureen Dodds, Joan Hancock.

Form 5a Raymond Bland, Samuel Hunter, Harry Pinkerton, Elizabeth Needham, Gladys Tonks, Arthur Richards, Jim Sharp, Joyce ward, Alan Gurkin, Norman Hind, Basil Hutchinson, Margaret Goldsborough, Elizabeth Reed.

Form 5b Norman Collin, Joan Scott.

HIGHER SCHOOL CERTIFICATE ; Form 6 William Boggon, Kenneth Coulson, John Maughan, Joan Bidgood, Alice Boggon, Jean Carr, Rita Donnelly.

STANLEY GRAMMAR SCHOOL (1948 ?)

For many years Stanley Grammar School, under its former title of The Alderman Wood Secondary School, was prominent in all examinations in which its students competed. This year's results in the Higher Oxford Certificate examination have proved that the present pupils are no whit behind their predecessors in educational ability for they have achieved the proud record of 100% pass. While a little less success has been gained in the School Certificate, the return of 76 per cent is highly satisfactory and a credit to both school and students. Most gained a number of credits and the figures behind the names indicate the number obtained. Especially noteworthy is the record of June Ross, who not only gained a credit in the usual eight subjects taken, but in addition took Music and showed her all-round efficiency by gaining a credit in this also.

Higher Oxford Certificate.- John Garfoot, Peter Hughes, Ronald Nattrass, Arthur Naylor, Ronald Newton, Derek Robson, Marshall Strong and Ellen Nesbitt.

Oxford School Certificate.- Boys: Gordon Armstrong 8, Brian Patterson 8, William Young 8, Roger Simpson 8, Alan Chester 7, Robert Harrison 7, Robert Lindsley 7, Matthew Smith 7, Robert Stephenson 7, Eric Green 6, John Stephenson 6, Arthur Haste 5, John McKeever 5, Ronald Davison 4, Frank Pearson 4, Neil Dickinson 3, John Hall 3, Norman Taylor 3, Mervyn Robson 2, Joseph Harrison 1, James Newstead 1.
Girls: June Ross 9, Annie Douglas 8, Sheila Gracy 8, Ruth Watson 8, Margaret Dobson 7, Joan Fenwick 7, Pamela Raine 7, Joan Ross 7, Marion Cain 6, Joyce Taylor 6, Norma Culbert 5, Pamela Dixon 5, Margaret Farnsworth 5, Elizabeth Foster 5, Elizabeth Howie 5, Margaret Lindsay 5, Joyce Bayles 4, Elsie Tonks 4, Violet Miller 3, Maisie Coates 2, Ethel Garthwaite 2, Doreen Hogarth 2, Elizabeth Pomeroy 2, Jean Porter 2, Joyce Snell 2.

Prizewinners 1954

PRIZE WINNERS 1954



I am aware that this photograph has been shown previously, but as there is now a list of the pupils involved I thought it worth showing again.

FORM PRIZES

Form 1	H. Baxter	P. Atkinson	D. Crosby
1a	D. Portsmouth	J. March	G. Myers
1b	Margaret Robson	E. Ross	A. Usher
2	Cathleen Waggott	Cynthia Stoker	
	Margaret Icton	Isobel Harrison	
2a	Margaret Ashburn	G. Fraser	
	Ann English	Rosemary Brabban	
2b	Pamela Settre	Heather Robson	
	Anne Pendleton	Jenny Armstrong	
3	B. Logan	A. Ibbetson	
	G. Shield	Maureen Richardson	
3a	W. Johnson	D. Ridley	
	T. Fraser	W. Moore	
3b	B. Stephens	A. Egleton	
	N. Hope	Sheila Ellis	
4	Margaret Wanless	Jean Finlay	Annie Wilson
	G. Morton	Audrey Bell	
4a	Olive Jenkins	Joan Ramsay	Rhona Donaldson
	Beryl Hall	A. Smith	
4b	Sheila Ruddick	K. Blackburn	A. Draper
	Kathleen Bellerby	Verena Perry	

J.C. Forster Memorial History Prize: Margaret Greener
Physical Education L. Senior: N. Moore
Junior: H. Morton
Past Students' Prizes: Nova Williamson, R. Fisk
Vicar of Beamish Divinity Prize: Nova Williamson

IN PRAISE OF SCHOOL DINNERS

A tribute to Miss Cairns and the other cooks

Bob Harrison 55-62

Whenever school dinners are mentioned everyone always goes URRGH!!! how horrible. Well I have a secret which I have been nervously guarding for all these years - **I LIKED SCHOOL DINNERS.** I liked the whole thing -the dining hall, the tables and chairs - I liked being waiter because the gods who dished out the food gave you a bigger portion sometime. I liked the rumble of the trollies; it was all a comradely hurly burly. I think the tables were mixed with pupils from all years but with senior boys (I cannot speak for the girls arrangements because Dr Sharp's rigidly imposed purdah was in operation) at the head of the table to serve out the meals with a strict impartiality(?) .There were periodic inspections to ensure that this was observed! I can't remember who pushed the trollies but I think some of the waiters did, does anyone remember? Also did we drink our milk at dinner time or did we go into the dining hall at break for that?

But the main thing is I liked the meals -there were three dishes I particularly remember. One was mince with sort of leek flavoured cake, I have never seen it again. Another was, later on, we started to get fried fish on Fridays (it was always fish on Friday) which caused a sensation. Then there was braised liver and onions -this was cordon bleu. It is still one my favourite meals although I could never get my kids to eat it. One which I struggled with was boiled fish, complaints about this ie, returns, I think prompted the fried fish.

Finally there were the puddings -Steamed pudding and custard, semolina, tapioca all served with rose-hip syrup-ambrosia.

It was all good post war stodge high in calories to fuel adolescent bodies and reluctant brains and I am sure it would be frowned upon in today's age of Jamie Oliver and healthy eating. Miss Cairns was greatly reviled, unjustly in my view because she worked wonders with what must have been a very limited budget.

Someone else must have some fond memories as well as some URRGH memories lets have them all.

Memories of school dinners

At the start of my time at Tanfield it was still a Grammar School. At this time pupils ended up on tables of eight with sixth formers at the head along with a fifth former, with the ages going down towards the end till there were spaces where the first years filled in the empty spaces. My fifth former was Ian Forster whom I later played cricket with for Beamish and East Tanfield Cricket Club u-18s when he was captain. Lunch was pushed out on trollies with the different selections. Occasionally there would be some tins with a little extra portion on top (As boys' sitting was second). This resulted in a rush by the heads of the table to try and grab these. Variety was quite good but I was not keen on custard; as I was the youngest on my table I always ended up with the skin (hated the skin). This process was replaced the following year when some years amalgamated from Shield Row Secondary School to form Tanfield Comprehensive School. Individual tables were replaced with queuing at the hatches for their dinners.

Most memorable dinners were the steak pie topped with a suet type pie topping..... favourite pudding was ginger pudding and custard (mixed it well with the lumpy custard), flapjack and later they introduced tangy orange yoghurt served with a biscuit.

Mark Hodgson

School Dinners

As a 1st Year in 1940, if you wished to take sandwiches from home, for the princely sum of two-pence a day a ticket (brown) could be purchased which entitled the bearer to a cup of tea or cocoa poured from big metal teapots and a seat at one of the tables placed on the stage of the dining-hall. Otherwise, a six-pence ticket (blue) meant being placed at one of the tables in the main part of the dining-hall and partaking of a two-course meal made fresh daily in the kitchens at the bottom end of the hall. The tables seated nine pupils, four on each side with a single exalted 5th or 6th year in charge at the top. 1st and 2nd years were placed at the bottom and when the trollies bearing the plates and dishes of food were rolled down the centre of the hall, it was their job to collect them and place them in front of the person at the top of the table who then divided the food into nine portions to be passed round - it gave the person at the top great opportunity for either self-denial or self indulgence! For dessert, jam roly-poly was a great favourite and treat but, sad to say, many first years sitting at the bottom of the table, suffered a year of pastry ends with no jam.

At first I opted for the sandwich lunch but soon changed my mind because while we were ready to leave after about ten minutes, we had an agonising wait for about another half an hour when we were all dismissed together. A group of nine of us of the same mind - friends and neighbours, including one girl in the 5th year - got together in the hope that we would be able to have a table together, but how to set about it? Somehow, we got to know that Miss Lumsden (we always called her "Ganny") not only had a full time-table teaching Domestic Science but was also in charge of the kitchens especially the menus and, no doubt, making the best use of the scarce food available, so she was approached and agreed to our little plan. All our mothers were delighted - the whole seven years we were under very strict rationing restrictions - so now they did not have the difficulty of finding food for sandwiches, knew that we were having one substantial meal a day and perhaps there was a little extra food to use at home.

As for the food itself, it was freshly cooked, hot, wholesome and appetising - of course there were grumbles - but most plates were clean and empty when placed back on the trollies. No such things as pizzas and spaghetti appeared (most of us would never have heard of them anyway!) and rice came only in the form of rice pudding! The meals were well balanced and similar to the kind we were used to at home - always two or three vegetables, mince and dumplings, stew - sometimes a hearty Scotch Broth or meat pie and all followed by a pudding - differently flavoured steamed puddings and custard, milk puddings - rice, semolina (not my favourite!) tapioca (always known as "frogspawn") and the afore mentioned jam roly-poly. Looking back now, as an adult, I do not know how Ganny Lumsden managed it - perhaps rather than "Ganny" her title should have been "Dame"!!

Lenore Ewart

School Dinners

My friends and I usually consumed whatever was in front of us because we were at an age where we always seemed to be hungry. So, lumpy mashed potatoes, crunchy steeped peas and tough meat disappeared anyway. The sponge puddings were always wonderful, as I'm sure most people remember, but there was one dessert that always sticks in my mind. I think it must have been a sort of trifle with fondant icing on the top, but the jelly was always liquid, the sponge very scanty and the icing rather chewy. I remember we dubbed it 'custard and slop with pink and white cement.'

Happy days!
Elizabeth Hawkins

School Dinners

I remember the dinner ladies being so friendly. I was never brought up as a fussy eater as a child, and I always remember enjoying the surprise of what was going to be on the menu that day!

To this day, I've never managed to achieve a super thick custard like they used to at school! Brilliant!

Sue Davies

School dinners – how I loved them (apart from the dreaded semolina, of course)!

My absolute favourite was liver & onions, something I'd never had at home as my parents hated it, but which soon became such a treat when I saw it at school. I often got more than my fair share, because so many other people also hated it, which I've never understood. I love it still, even though I can never make it myself because I can't stand handling the slimy raw liver. And then of course there was the twice (or was it once)-yearly treat of chips. I remember how, as we girls left the dining-hall and the boys were lined up outside, we always gleefully informed them "It's chips!!"

In my 4th year, I was chosen to be one of eight 'trolley girls'. This involved hauling four laden trolleys out of the kitchen, parking them in the middle aisle and delivering the dishes of food and plates to the prefects at the head of our assigned tables. We then had to eat our dinners as quickly as we could, stack the dirty dishes, plates and cutlery on the trolleys (many a mishap occurred at this point) and return them to the kitchen. Here they were unloaded by the kitchen staff and reloaded with pudding and plates and finally returned to the kitchen, when our job was done. This task was deemed to be quite an honour, the greatest of which was to be on number 1 trolley, whose girls had to climb the stage steps to the teachers' tables, where sat the dreaded Doc Sharp. My friend Lestryne Briggs (now Bott) and I handled trolley number 2.

When I became a prefect, I had my own table and took on the responsibility of dishing out the meat and pudding to the other girls – they certainly had to behave, in order to get their fair share.

I also remember that when I was in the 2nd or 3rd year, I sat at one of the tables nearest the stage. One day, for some unfathomable reason, I decided it would be fun to play the xylophone with a spoon on the half-empty milk bottles on our table. My friends and I thought it screamingly funny, but I later discovered, during a particularly painful interview with the Doc, that he had taken an extremely dim view of it!

Sheila Parkes (née Wrightson)

SGS 1959-66

Dear Ted,



Irene Hardy's letter about pen-friends in Issue 30 prompted me to write about a similar experience. When I was in the 3rd Year (1960), Mr Scott asked if anyone wanted a pen-friend in Norway and several of us said yes. I began writing to Evelyn Lillestol and am still in regular contact with her today, 54 years later. Thankfully, Norway is a lot nearer than Australia, so we have been able to visit each other several times. The attached photo shows us in August 2014 on a trek to see a waterfall.

Since I was shy and not particularly good at Chemistry, I found Mr Scott a terrifying man, but I'll always be grateful to him for giving me such a good friend.

I wonder if any of the others who were given pen-friends are still in touch with them today?

Elizabeth

Bits and Bobs

(garnered from Facebook)

Caretaking 2000 - I am sweeping the grounds outside the canteen when all of a sudden I see firemen around me!

"This is urgent, you have a fire!"

"Oh no, is this a joke?" I think.

"No, the tower block is on fire - quick, show me the tower block area!"

I tell them the tower block burnt down years ago. The fire fighters look at me, I look at them - we all burst out laughing. A few minutes later, after checking the fire alarm system we found out there was a problem - a fuse. I made them all a cuppa but really I thought all my birthdays had come at once.

Anne Clasper

Mr Armstrong was a great history teacher. He never left out any gory bits, always entertaining!

I also remember cross country very clearly. It was very muddy and the scary dogs at Pea Farm wore muzzles. When Miss Steven wasn't there and Mrs Smith was covering, I remember taking a short cut. Better than kids in my brother's year, who used to go around to one of their houses near Good Street and watch Neighbours. Oh, and cross country was suspended for a little while because a flasher had been spotted in the woods!

Rosie Mountain (Webb)

I remember Mr Norman and Mr Atkinson carrying me from the new block to the 1912 on my first day, after I fell and broke my ankle. It would have been a little better if they were the same height.

Sarah Cockburn

Mr Barron, our Head of Year, had a favourite saying: 'If the cap fits, wear it'.

Richard Waugh

One of the best things about 6th form was that everyone had an 18th party - usually at the Hibernian, but we can't have everything, can we!

Pauline Raffle (Nicholson)

Mr Atkinson - liked a cigar in the cupboard and was none too impressed when he saw someone nicking his XR2 out of the window one lesson. Mr Sheldon - nice guy but always liked to be the best at the sports. We did rugby only once in five years as he got flattened. Mr Wilson - what a character! Miss Westgarth - very nice teacher who encouraged us to take things a bit more seriously. I could go on and on and on....

Graeme Hall

I can remember when I fell asleep in Hawkeye's class and she stuck a sticker to my back saying "Do not disturb". Ha ha, complete legend.

Curtis Coombes

Hi. I used to be Joanne Bourguet and my brother Andrew and I both went to Tanfield. I also did some teaching experience there. I married Wayne Jenkinson from the same year as me. The 1912 block brings back memories! I spent a year down that bottom corridor due to the pins in my ankle and not being able to go to lessons.

Joanne Jenkinson

MEMORIES OF THE WOODWORK ROOM

Bob Harrison 55-62

So many emotional responses are triggered by memories of smells, it is the same with me and the woodwork room. The mixed smell of the timbers – pitch pine and Japanese oaks with the smell of the hot glue pot melting Croyd glue made from horrible concoctions of the rendering yard and the tannery takes me back to the time when I was a small boy. In the long summer holidays my father and I would go down to school and he would turn the timber so that it stayed reasonably flat over the six weeks of the holidays. The dressed timber was delivered from Fitchett and Woolacott some time in July or August and was laid out carefully on the floor of the woodwork room with thin spacers between the boards, but if it wasn't turned it would cup and make it hard to use. My dad worked steadily at the turning while I ran around the room – not on the timber – nothing had to spoil the timber that was sacred. It was beautiful wood; the soft wood had a strong light and dark grain and smelled of resin. The hard woods had a beautiful figure, the Japanese oak was particularly fine; its hard to understand that Japan had any timber resource left to export after the resource privations of the war in the Far East. Perhaps it did not come from the home islands but somewhere else on the Asian mainland. At the end of the holidays the timber was stacked in the small timber store at the back of the room waiting to be used by the boys in their jobs during the year.

After basic techniques were mastered – mortice and tenon joints – the junior boys moved on to making seagrass stools. These must have been a struggle for some because they had sixteen joints all cut by hand. The seagrass had another very delicate smell. My dad used to say the rule was that the boys had to pay for the wood if they were to take their finished work home. I am sure this must have been a very basic charge but it was beyond some families and the unclaimed jobs could be taken by teachers and others in the school if they paid for the wood. I still have an oak hall set – mirror and hat pegs which we obtained in that way and we had a beautiful oak gate legged table which I think my sister now has. I don't remember a mountain of unclaimed stools so perhaps other things were made – book ends and things like that. Does anyone else remember? The designs were all of the Arts and Crafts School with pleasing proportions and simple but attractive features – no modernist brutal.

Later when I was a pupil in the school I remember going into the room at break and dinner time to work on jobs. I was keen on wood carving and made some pieces which haven't stood the test of time thank goodness!

The woodwork room was the meeting place for the non-academic teachers so Mr Chapman (PE) and Mr Binks (Art) used to go there for their tea which my father made.

My memories fade in middle and later school. I think I dropped wood work after second year so I didn't follow in my father's footsteps. But I retained the interest all through my life and have made household furniture, tables, beds, cabinets, book cases and also some wood carvings and have derived great pleasure and satisfaction from it.

The woodwork room is still there and used for design and technology but it has lost its old charm.

Editor:

I remember well the aroma of the woodwork room. Every morning I would walk in and fill my lungs. I felt that it was a privilege to be in such an environment to spend my working day.

Memories too of the old fashioned glue kettle. Top up the water and light the gas ring first thing so that it boiled and melted the glue ready for the day. Then the inevitable, as it got to be overlooked, and the smell of scorched glue would pervade. Fortunately that was not a regular occurrence.

Do you remember the urgency of putting frames together and cramping them before the glue cooled and began to set? Later pupils missed all that fun with the advent of PVA glues.

When I succeeded Bob's Dad as woodwork teacher the old room still had a coal burning stove to heat it. That was the attraction at lunch time! A few staff would sit around it and enjoy our packed lunches. In my day they were Hector Hall, Ced Dolman, Norman Jolly, Bill Geddes, Derek Watson, and Gordon Robson. Joe Binks was there initially until he retired. Lunch wasn't always sedate, but perhaps more of that another time!

Another of my responsibilities was the sale of 'Gamester balls' from the woodwork room door. Do you remember those in the yard?

I was the 3rd woodwork teacher at Tanfield. Mr. Mabon, Mr Harrison, and then me. That was from 1912! By the time that I took early retirement in 1988 the department had grown from just the one room to a suite of rooms, the stove was long gone, Gamesters were a thing of the past, like the glue pot, and in fact everything was different. Andrew Peak took over as Head of Department, but the world had changed.

I am sure that there are still some sea-grass stools out there, as well as other artefacts from woodworking days. I'd be very interested to know what you have, with a photo if you can.

Ted.

Our Youngest and our Oldest Members

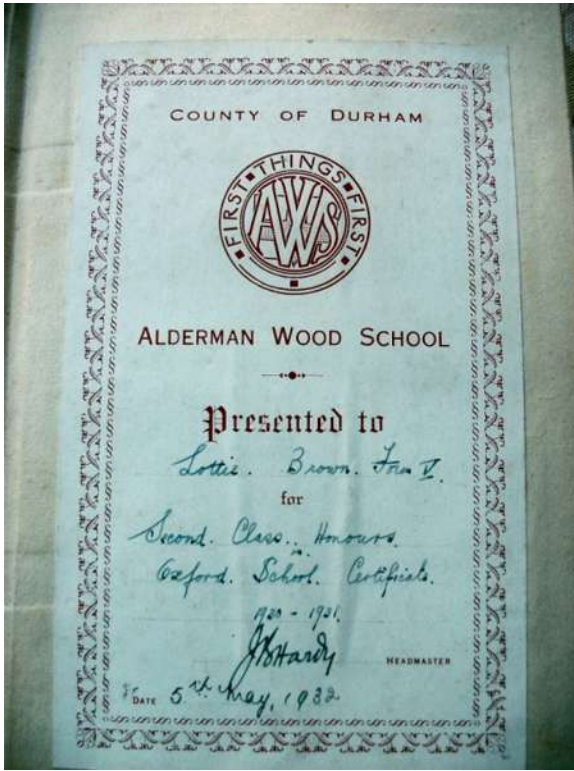


Above left is a photo of our youngest member, Susan Marshall, on her wedding to Owain Davies.



Above right is Charlotte Stammers, our oldest member, celebrating her 100th birthday with a card from the Queen.

Charlotte has rediscovered Tanfield since becoming a member of the Association. She has dedicated a prize for work in English literature with a silver salver to be awarded annually.



Lottie Brown is the lady we know as Charlotte Stammers. This is her School Certificate awarded in 1932.

Thoughts from Olga Reay (Hyde)

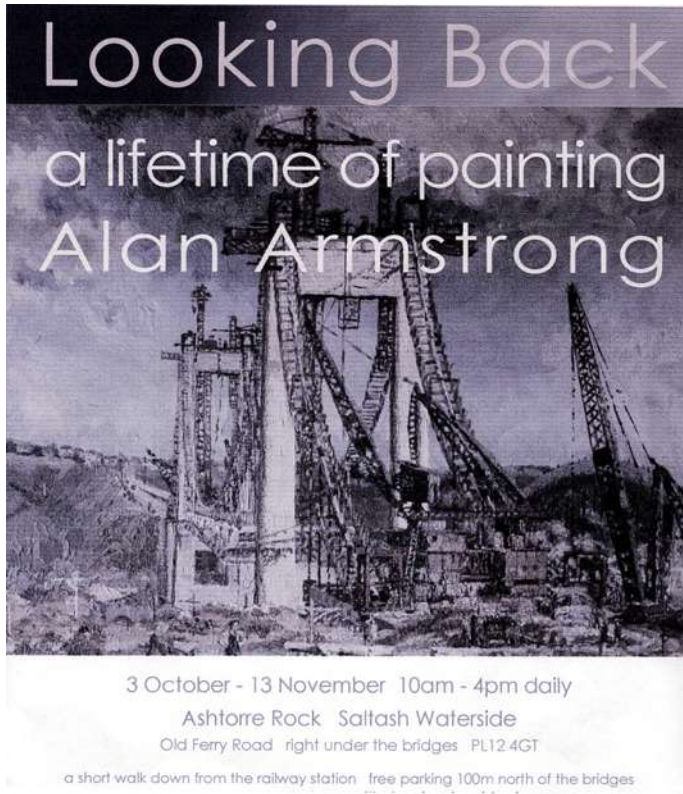
I liked all of the teachers except Mr Scott. I liked Miss Nicol and Mr Westgarth, who took us for modern poetry – very enjoyable. I recognised Miss Thompson (Fifi) when I went to Tanfield because her father used to teach me when I was in the Scholarship class at South Moor school, and during her holidays she would come in and stand behind his desk. I spent one year in the sixth, which was a bit of a waste of time for the teachers as I subsequently took a commercial course with book-keeping, Spanish, German and shorthand.

My future husband, Arthur Reay, was in the VI form when I was a first year. His name is the second one down on one of the Honours Boards. He specialised in Woodwork with Mr Mabon.

I started teaching in 1939 and taught for 23 years, starting at Dipton School (Seniors) and spending the last seven years of my teaching career at Langley Park Infants' School.

Alan Armstrong

Alan was a pupil at Tanfield during the 1940s. He was a very good sportsman.



He became a teacher and taught all his life in Cornwall. Although art was not his teaching subject he always painted, and indeed did teach art as well as geography.

Long retired, he has continued to paint, and at the end of last year was invited to exhibit a selection of his work. The highlight, shown on the poster, is the building of the Tamar road bridge that linked Devon to Cornwall. This stands alongside the distinctive Brunel rail bridge.

Our past pupils shine in all kinds of ways. If you have a story of 'one of ours', please let me know. Ted

P.S. This Alan is not the reknowned actor (Alun) who went to Blackfynne School in Consett.

Plaque

The plaque shown below is now on show in the school hall adjacent to the curtains which your generosity gave to the school as a Centenary present.



It's good to be recognised and recorded.

Bryan Tait

As a general rule we don't publish obituaries, but I am making an exception for Bryan Tait.

November 1, 2014

Concert honours late brass maestro

THE children of a renowned cornet player have organised a charity concert in his memory.

Bryan Tait, who was principal cornet with what is now the Reg Vardy Band for 29 years and also an acclaimed conductor, died of cancer on Monday, July 7, aged 53.

He was one of the most highly respected players in the north of England, performed many times on television and won numerous awards.

Now his children Phillip, 22, and Charlotte, 19, have organised the Brass Off Cancer concert to raise money for Macmillan Cancer Support.

Featuring the Reg Vardy Band, NASUWT Riverside Band and the Gibside Singers, it will be held at Stanley Civic Hall, County Durham, on Saturday.

Phillip Tait, who has succeeded his father as Reg Vardy Band's principal cornet player, said: "My sister and I wanted to organise a concert to celebrate our dad's musical achievements and this was actually originally a tribute concert for dad while he was alive, which has turned out to be a memorial event since he passed away. He was not only a great father and husband but also a brilliant musician."

Bryan had really made his mark in the world of the brass band, and died before his time! Remembering him as a pupil, I always took an interest in his musical career and often heard him play.

I am sure that many of you will remember Bryan and will be as sad as I am to hear of his dying so young.

You may also remember Bryan's sister who taught domestic science at Tanfield. You would know her as Mrs Grant. She too was musical and could 'rattle the ivories' as well as being a whizz at the oven.

Can you name the musician?

You may remember this person in a different guise. She has learned to play and has joined her local brass band .

No prizes I'm afraid, but it would be nice to hear some memories.





I can recognise Mr Dawson and my favourite English teacher Mary Saunders and Mr Tron ; bottom photo I recognise Mr Eccles Mrs Harrison, Mr Peacock and at the back I think it's Andrew Peak with the dishcloth

Mark Hodgson

Well done Mark

TopLeft : (L to R) Mr Dawson, Mrs Saunders Miss McGough, Mrs Dawson, Mr Pattison, Mr Tron, Mrs Pattison, Mr Howat.

Top Right (R to L) ?, Mr Eccles, ?, Mrs Harrison, Mr Peacock, Mr Whittingham, Mr Peak, Mr. Norman, ?, ?, Mr Armstrong

I apologise for memory loss, but it could be worse! Help me out if you can!

102nd

At Betty Watson's request, we forwarded photos that she had taken at the 102nd to appropriate members of the association. One of the replies we received is below. A big THANK YOU to Betty Watson for her generosity.

What a pleasant surprise! I enjoyed the day at Tanfield in October. Clearly there wasn't a large turn out but that had its advantages. It meant we could have long conversations with those who were there. I was particularly pleased to be able to spend time with Richard Chambers. I have seen him at one or two Durham Castle reunions but never had the opportunity of spending time with him.

Thank you once again.

With every good wish,
Peter Atkinson

From The Reverend Peter Atkinson

Hello Ted,

Thank you for the highly entertaining copy of the Tanfield Association Newsletter. I feel quite privileged to be featured on the back page with Claire but I am stuck so far for an appropriate comment with which to fill the speech bubble. It's an excellent picture and invites comment. I don't recall being photographed at that moment.

Maybe I didn't say anything. It's just the effect I have on people!

I hope you get some interesting and entertaining responses. I will give the matter further thought.

Very best wishes.
Peter.



Hello Ted,
I have given the matter further thought and can suggest two possibilities for "What did he say?"
One is: "I told you I was a bit of a loose canon."

The other is: "Somebody once asked me if I approved of sex before marriage. I replied; "Not if it holds up the ceremony."

If I think of anything else I will let you know but I am sure you will get better suggestions from other readers.

Best wishes.
Peter

Just for fun!

These two photos came my way recently. They show the same person on the right in both photos but at different ages. Can you tell me who that person is?



All will be revealed in Issue 32