

TANFIELD ASSOCIATION

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Spring 2022

If you have been counting on your fingers you will have worked out that 2022 is another milestone year for Tanfield School. Comes October it will be 110 years since the school first opened. It amazes me that for almost 80 of those years Tanfield has been part of my life, pupil, teacher, and part of the Tanfield Association. Little did I think when I entered the gates in 1944 that I would be still going in in 2022. What does the beer advert say? "The one you've got to come back for!" There must be something about the old place that stirs the cockles of my heart!

As you will realise, the event will not go unmarked! Elizabeth, our indefatigable secretary, is putting together another book about the school, its history and the major changes which have taken place since the Centenary book was penned. We are also hoping to have the school open on the weekend of the birthday to allow people to see first-hand how things have changed. There is more information inside, but be aware that things are still at the planning stage, so there are no firm arrangements to tell you yet. Watch this space!

Covid put-paid to the Association activities, but we are trying to get things going again. We have had a couple of lunches, but the number of participants is low, so howay folks come and join us. It's usually the second Wednesday of each month at 12 o'clock at a local hostelry which we always advertise. We have just been to the 3 Horseshoes at Maiden Law, and the Royal Oak at Medomsley and had excellent fare at both. We also go to The Shepherds at Beamish, and anywhere locally that is recommended. I hope to see some of you pick up where you left off, or to join us as a new venture.

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TIME TO CELEBRATE!

Tanfield will be 110 in October

On October 16th this year, Tanfield School will celebrate 110 years of serving the local community since the day it first opened its doors to pupils in 1912.

The association is planning to celebrate this anniversary with an Open Day in school on Saturday 15th October. **We must emphasise that plans for this are still a work in progress and that nothing is yet set in stone!** However, we are making you aware that things will be happening so that you can put the date in your diary.

Proposed plans include:

- Producing a book to celebrate 110 years of Tanfield. Work on this started some time ago and we hope to launch the book in school on October 15th.
- Holding an Open Day for people to come and visit their old school, wander round, hopefully meet old friends, perhaps see some of the people who taught them, look at whatever displays are decided on. We plan to have refreshments - either a buffet or tea/coffee/soft drinks and biscuits, buns etc.
- There will probably be a raffle – *in which case donations of prizes would be welcome* – but at the moment we are keeping things relatively simple. We'll keep you informed and give you more details in updates in the next newsletter and on the website and the Tanfield Association Facebook page.
- Parking will be available in the new staff car park, which is now on the other side of the Houghall Burn. A limited amount of parking for blue badge holders/visitors with mobility problems will be available in the bus park.



LIFE AFTER TANFIELD – What’s it all about?

Hi Everyone

You’ll find three pages in this issue that are all to do with life after Tanfield – of course!

The idea is to put together a file for display on the celebration day, letting people know what we got up to when we left school. If you think you’d like to share some of your life with us by telling us how Tanfield set you on the right path, and what you did afterwards, please fill out some details and send them back to me.

There is a **template** which will give you some guidance, a **blank form** which you can fill in and return to us if you wish, and a **consent form** which you should also sign and send back to us, to confirm that you agree to your photo/details being included in the folder and put on display. This is to keep us right with GDPR.

The school is always interested in what former pupils have done with their lives, just as we are interested in what our members did after they left school.

We’ll be very grateful for any contributions, so give those little grey memory cells a workout. Who knows – the file may run to more than one volume.

Elizabeth

✂

LIFE AFTER TANFIELD CONSENT FORM

Name

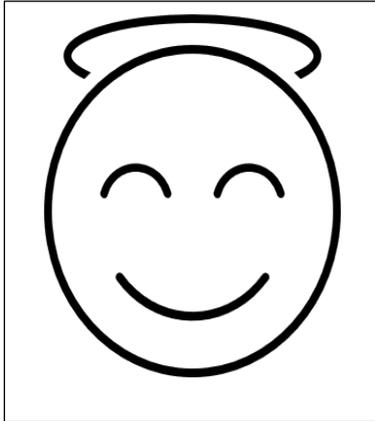
I give my permission for my ‘Life After Tanfield’ page to be included in the LIFE AFTER TANFIELD folder which will be on display to visitors at the Open Day and Evening Event celebrating the 110th anniversary of Tanfield School on October 15th 2022.

I acknowledge that when these events are over, a copy of the folder will be kept securely by the Tanfield Association and may be on display at future events which involve the association.

Signature

Date

LIFE AFTER TANFIELD



Photo

NAME

PUPIL AT TANFIELD FROM.....

MY LIFE AFTER LEAVING TANFIELD

Use the rest of the page to say what you've done after leaving school – education, job, travel, family, training – whatever you like. Add photos as well, if you wish.

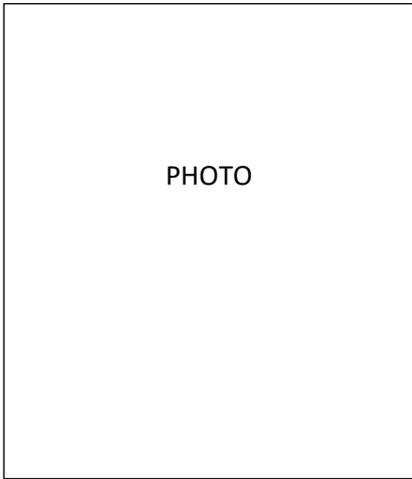
Remember that this page will be on display in a folder at the school's 110th anniversary celebration day on Saturday October 15th and will afterwards be kept securely in the association's filing cabinet in school.

Only submit a page for the folder if you agree to it being seen by a lot of people.

If you leave contact details, they may be seen by many people. If you want to invite people to contact you via the Tanfield Association, please give your contact details to the association only. The association will notify you if anyone wants you to contact them.

By submitting a page for inclusion in the folder, you are giving your permission for it to be used as stated above. A consent form is included for your use. Please return it to the association, signed and dated, with your page.

LIFE AFTER TANFIELD



NAME

PUPIL AT TANFIELD FROM **TO**

MY LIFE AFTER LEAVING TANFIELD

Academisation. A governor's perspective

When I became Chair of Governors in January 2017 one of the first conversations I had with the Local Authority was about the sustainability of the school. How could we increase numbers? To be a viable institution we should aim to have an intake of 700 pupils.

A new Headteacher Steven Clough was appointed to begin in September 2017 and it became clear there was much work to do in order to match the vision of the Headteacher and the governors.

After the OFSTED inspection of November 2019 an Academy order was made. This is an order for the purpose of enabling the school to be converted into an Academy.

As governors, the process was taken out of our hands. It was a very uncertain time for everyone.

When such an order is given, a shortlist of what is considered 'suitable' sponsors is created and discussions develop from there. One problem was the school building required considerable renovation. Would potential sponsors be prepared to pay for this?

We were concerned that we might become part of a large multi academy trust and that the school would lose its identity.

It was a very complex situation and there were many long, hard conversations.

The DfE looked at the school intake numbers and thought an easy solution would be to close the school and send the pupils elsewhere. However, Jim Murray, Head of Education, was able to present a solid case which forecast pupil numbers for the next few years. This led to the decision not to close the school.

Kevin Brennan, the CEO of the Eden Learning Trust came forward as a potential sponsor. Through his tenacity, the DfE agreed to award the school £500,000 to pay for repairs. E.g. replacement windows.

The Head teacher and the governors felt joining the Eden Trust was the right fit for us. We were reassured that we were entering in to a partnership. Schools in the trust retain their identity and ways of working. "Collaboration and intra- school support are our mantra, working collectively for the best interests of our students."

Tanfield became part of the Eden Trust on 1st May, 2020 – during lockdown.

The school has made much progress. We have a beautifully renovated building. Pupil numbers have increased – in fact we are over subscribed for September 2022.

We remain very much 'Tanfield School' and are excited for what the future holds.

Christine McGough

The Girls' Brown Uniform

Elizabeth informs me that this is the only colour photo she has showing girls in the old brown outfit. Do you have a better one in your collection of nostalgia? If you do, we would love to have a copy.

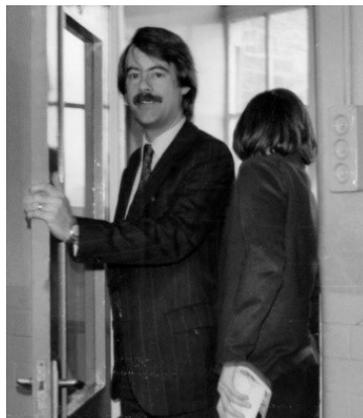


Plea for Photographs





At this year's celebration we will be mounting displays of photographs and would love to have some new ones. If you have any photos squirreled away somewhere that you can share with us, please send us copies, preferably with some details of dates and names. The photos will later be added to the growing collection on our website. If you send us original photos in the post, we will be sure to post them back to you as soon as we've made copies. See what you can find!



The School Yard



How good it is to visit our old school and see the school yard being used again for its original purpose – a recreation area for the pupils (or students, as we must now call them). As you can see, goalposts have been installed, picnic tables have been put in place at either end of the space so that the kids can relax and talk to friends comfortably, have their lunch out of doors if they wish, and (hopefully!) enjoy the sunshine. The association contributed towards the purchase of footballs, netballs etc for use during breaks and lunchtimes – *real* footballs and netballs – not just the sort of hollow plastic balls with holes in that Ted used to sell for use in the yard without the windows being broken. And another change – girls as well as boys can use the yard. Welcome progress!

Elizabeth

Editor : I remember this space marked out as an organised car-park. The space was given to the staff rather than the pupils. It's nice to see the reversal. Staff now park across the burn on what was the redundant tennis courts.

A Century + Link

Way back, in 1912, when Tanfield School was built, the physics lab, being ‘up to date,’ was furnished with teak topped benches. I remember them well, and chasing globules of mercury round on them, because it was a fun thing to do! However, I’m still here!

The years and decades passed and many pupils rested their elbows, arranged apparatus for experimentation, and probably chased globules of mercury around on the benches over the years. Then I think it would be in the 1970’s when the Tower Block was erected, (and that contained new laboratories) the old ‘chemi’ and physics labs were decommissioned. They were destined to serve new purposes, -and that did not include teak topped benches.

I was aware that valuable teak was being ‘skipped’, and so I was able to rescue one of the tops for personal use. Over the years since then I have used the wood for various projects. I have now been left with only a small amount remaining. It occurred to me that as the 110th birthday of the school approached, it would be a shame not to use what I have to create a link spanning all those years. Although an old man now, I have retained some of the skill that I have been blessed with, and I still have a workshop where I enjoy working wood. The result is that I have made two boxes from the remaining teak, one for our Secretary, and another for the Headmaster to keep on his desk as a link to years gone by.



This is Elizabeth’s box. It is quite small, about 6” x 4”, large enough to hold her Tanfield Association memory sticks!



Headmaster, Steven Clough, with a teak box, made from a 1912 physics lab. bench top.
This is a link from the 1912 Tanfield Lea Higher Elementary School, through to the 2022 Tanfield School Academy.

Ted Brabban

52ers Xmas Lunch Dec 2021

The 52ers met for a festive meal at the newly refurbished King's Head in Lanchester on 7th December. The food was very good, the service was excellent and the decor was attractive. Despite our numbers being rather depleted due to health reasons and bad weather forecast (there were fourteen of us instead of the usual twenty plus) we enjoyed meeting up and exchanging news.



Amy Bilton

Memories of SGS

I look back on the two headmasters of SGS with very different memories. At school I was not aware that Mr Carr was a Quaker or that Dr Sharp had served in MI5. Now all my prejudices are reinforced!

David Portsmouth's letter (Newsletter, Winter 2010) described Dr Sharp as "creepy" and Mr Carr as "a comfortable and outstanding model for pupils and teachers alike". Georgina Jack's recollection of Dr Sharp (Summer '09): "materializing like Dracula behind me" and "clearing the staffroom at the end of break in two seconds." John Cameron (Winter 2010) "Eyes like Lord Kitchener's – enigmatic and unfathomable" and Jean Hetherington (Spring 2012) after 'A' Levels in 1953 being ordered from the tennis court during free time and being given a long lecture on Religious Education. My own Experience reflects the summary justice recalled by Duncan Davies (Winter 2011) - "A brief hearing of the case by way of justice" followed by six heavy strokes to one's bottom.

Our class was in Mr Yockney's Music Room, the member of staff was late for the lesson and we were gently rioting. Dr Sharp appeared in the doorway, selected me at random and gave me six of his best. Fair enough – I understand that he had to take some action and it was just my unlucky day. I returned to the classroom (the teacher had still not arrived), everyone was keen to know what had happened, and feeling fortunate that they had not been selected for the treatment. I was demonstrating on one of my friends what Dr Sharp had done to me when he reappeared, curled his finger in invitation and

repeated the treatment. It hurt me physically and mentally. This was 67 years ago. At the time I was probably not aware of the term 'sadism' but this event has never been forgotten (or to my shame forgiven) and during my time at the chalkface I hope that I have been Mr Carr rather than Dr Sharp.

Please keep the newsletters coming. They bring back (mostly) happy memories of my youth.

During my time at school, Newcastle won the F.A. Cup three times. It didn't get better than that. All I hope for now is that they avoid relegation!

John Bowes (1949 – 56)

The Perfect School (A Tanfield Dream!)

Perfect pupils showed the light of knowledge shining from their eyes and they sometimes asked intelligent questions, which delighted their teachers. Inspectors, hands on brow, strained to detect the slightest whiff of weakness, but always went away baffled. Had the pupils marked the exams themselves? It was often difficult to persuade pupils to return home. "Just a few more bars of Beethoven," they would say. No trivialities were allowed to divert the staff from putting First Things First.

It took many years for the headteacher to reach this perfect state. He avoided pomposity. Teachers who flattered him and told him he had good ideas, were to be discouraged. After an after-school performance of the Ballet Rambert, he had pirouetted along the corridor with a dedicated smile with such expertise that the beholders developed a lifelong love of ballet.

The speaker at the school speech day, wearing a sober suit, sober tie and shoes, both of the same colour, presented prizes to the most earnest pupils. Some had worked diligently for seven years, learning whole Shakespeare plays off by heart, and even Gray's letters. With smiles he emphasized that, in fact, courage was a major factor.

Perfect pupils once used their gymnastic success to dangle from the high cross bar of the classroom to the amazement of the teacher who shot down for the headmaster to share this amazing sight. Unfortunately, normality had been restored and a pregnant silence reigned. The class was intent on translating difficult Latin or was it French? With smug satisfaction, the Head left. He perhaps did not know about another headmaster who insisted on recalcitrant pupils joining him on their knees, praying for their salvation. Nobody ever faltered. It isn't surprising that Tanfield Village achieved a first - in 1760 Tanfield Hall's outhouses were used as a Grammar School. In 1799 one of the country's first police forces was inaugurated at the Peacock Inn. So, tradition continues inexorably.

Jean Simpson

1962 – when Tanfield was 50!



Mr Jolly's Form – including our esteemed Webmaster! Do you recognise anyone else?



Sports Day – with some of the ladies strolling round the field in the sunshine, including two of our current members. You may recognise Gina Jack, still Miss Eggleston at that point, with Miss Grieveson and Miss Heslop. In the next photo are Nova Williamson and Miss Petersen. Gina taught Art, Misses Grieveson and Heslop taught French, Nova taught English and Miss Petersen taught History. Did any of them teach you? ‘Spud’ Glendenning, who taught Latin, is sitting on the wall with Miss Grieveson, and Mr Ted Robson, who taught German (nickname – ‘Hitler’) is next to them.



LOOKING BACK

As we prepare to celebrate our school's 110th anniversary, I've been looking back at the school magazine published in 1962, the year of the 50th. The magazine was embellished with a 'gold' cover – now sadly tarnished. So much has changed in our world and in the school since then. However, one thing does not change – we love looking back to our time at Tanfield. I hope Joan Suddes's article reminds you of happy times gone by. EH

1962 FIRST THINGS FIRST

This year our school celebrates its Golden Jubilee. It opened in 1912 as the Tanfield Lea Higher Education Centre. My grandmother was one of the first pupils, followed by other members of her family. The name was changed to Alderman Wood Secondary School. In the Silver Jubilee year, 1937, my mother was a pupil. Later the name was changed to Stanley Grammar School.

At the end of my first year I am only on the threshold of grammar school life—still settling down among new faces, in new surroundings. There are new studies, not to mention the various out of school activities. Through three terms of lessons, homework and exams, brightened by the Christmas Party, the school play and Sports' Day, my first year has been a very happy one.

If all the scholars who have passed through the school in fifty years were to assemble together at a great reunion what a variety of careers, occupations and professions would be represented in the crowd! Past scholars will still recognise the old main building of the school, but there have been many alterations and additions. The uniform too has changed in colour and design. The name of the school has also changed but the pattern of school life is unchanged. To pass for the Grammar School is an honour and the ambition of most eleven plus scholars in the area.

With great patience the teachers instruct us in the arts, sciences and languages. By their rules and example the prefects try to shape us into well-behaved, responsible scholars. In six years the results of our hard work and their persuasion and determination will be known.

JOAN SUDDES (2B).

To Make You Think:

When a man opens a car door for his wife, it's either a new car, or a new wife.
Prince Philip

Wood burns faster when you cut it yourself!
Harrison Ford

We are here on earth to do good unto others. What the others are here for I have no idea!
W H Auden

As I hurtled through space, one thought kept crossing my mind – every part of the rocket was supplied to the lowest tender.
John Glenn

I suffer from kleptomania, but when it gets bad I take something for it.
Robert Benchley