

TANFIELD ASSOCIATION

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November 2022

Tanfield's 110th Birthday

What a day!

Saturday 15th October became the day we celebrated the school's long history and wished it the very best for the future. 11am saw the official start of the celebration day, though some of us had already been there for up to two hours, finalizing preparations begun the day before.

Two hundred and thirty guests turned up, parking went smoothly, tours of the school were popular, the cake was cut, presentations were made, the buffet and snack lunches were well received, the displays were studied minutely to see if visitors could see themselves and old friends, the new mural of the school's timeline was much admired, the book was sold – and eventually, 3 o' clock arrived and it was time for most people to say goodbye. As soon as visitors left, working party members took down the displays and stored them away in our cupboard, then we tottered home for a well-earned rest! What a day, indeed.

It was good to see those of our members who made it to the school for the celebration. The following pages have some of the photos and comments on the day. Enjoy them!

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THANK YOU!

CELEBRATION DAY



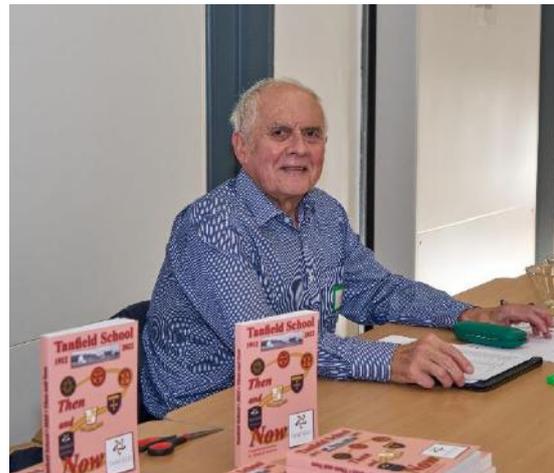
Mick Scholey, Karen Scott and Amy Bilton signing visitors in



The celebration cake, made by former pupil and member of staff Margaret Batty



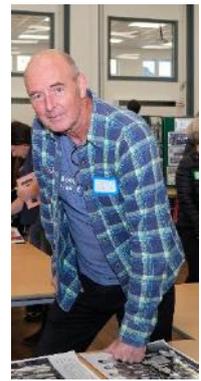
Head Teacher Steven Clough and our President Ted Brabban



Webmaster Howard Bott selling the book, 'Tanfield Then and Now'

A selection of the photos taken on the day are on the following pages. To see all the photos, please look at the association's website - www.tanfield-association.org









The school's 110th Birthday party on October 15th 2022 was a great success. We have received many photos taken on the day and they can be viewed here:

https://tanfield-association.org/W3/picture_index_new.php

If you have photos that you wish to add, please email them to:

webquru@tanfield-association.org

It would make your photos more interesting if you could identify the subjects so that I can add captions. Also, if you can add names to photos I already have, that would be appreciated.

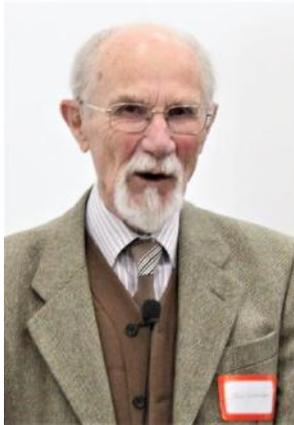
Howard Bott Webmaster



Head Teacher Steven Clough opened the proceedings with words of welcome for all the guests, followed by an outline of what the day would hold.

Our President, Ted Brabban, also welcomed visitors as follows:

Birthday Welcome



Welcome, and thank you for coming to share with us a memorable birthday.

Tanfield School was founded on the inspiration and ambition of a local councillor - Councillor H. Curry Wood, who was Chairman of Tanfield Urban District Council (when Tanfield was considered to be important enough to have a Council). He had the ambition to 'bring higher education to the children of the working man in Stanley.'

In his day, teenagers were still considered to be part of the workforce. The website of Tanfield Lea Margaret Pit list the names and ages of the men and boys who died there. Among them you will

find 13 and 14 year olds! Higher education would provide a route out for some of the youth. So the school was built, and opened in 1912 with the title of: Tanfield Lea Higher Elementary School and Pupil Teacher Centre. A name that just rolls off the tongue!!

Councillor Wood was honoured for his work and was made an 'Alderman'. Subsequently the name of the school was changed to Alderman Wood School to further his honour.

Thus when I, as a boy, entered the gates in 1944, the badge glowing on my new blazer said AWS, I was starting at Alderman Wood School.

That date got me thinking! Of the school's 110 years, I have had links to it, as a pupil, a teacher, and latterly as part of the Association for almost 80 of them!

As I said, I started as a pupil in 1944, the year of D-Day and the Normandy landings, and a year before the end of WW2. When I later returned as a teacher it was to Stanley Grammar School. I stayed with the old girl through the remainder of my teaching career, and saw various name changes, and through good times and through sad.

It was in a good period in the early 60's when I made 'The Tanfield Chair'. It was made for the Headmaster, Dr Sharp, to use in school assemblies. During his tenure, his were the only buttocks to ever grace the seat!

It wasn't many years after that, that system changes began, and although we didn't realise it at the time, a long downhill commenced. The school suffered under political controversy, there was financial starvation, we amalgamated with Shield Row School and were overcrowded, and as all this happened the fabric of the building reflected it all and was deteriorating. It was all reflected in the school results which were sadly declining.

Eventually, came the 'Death Threats'! i.e. the school was threatened with closure.

That galvanised everyone. The School Governors put up a spirited opposition, local Councillors did likewise, and we in the Association alerted our members, resulting in County Hall receiving letters from past pupils all over the world telling them what a bad idea it was, and objecting to the closure.

Gladly, the school was reprieved, but it was still in dire straits. It needed a miracle. Two things happened. The school became an Academy when DCC said it could no longer service its debts, and onto the scene came the superheroes. Gotham City had its Batman and Robin, but Tanfield too had its Dynamic Duo in Clough and Coates. Mr Clough the Headteacher, and his Business and Finance Manager, Mr Coates. They took the situation in hand and wrought the miracle that was needed. As you look around today you will see a school transformed. As there are no pupils in today you won't observe the improved behaviour and change in attitude. There has been a rebirth. School results this year are better than ever, and the school is oversubscribed as parents want their children to be here. What an all-round change.

To finish I'll tell you a true story.

Before Covid scuppered it all, Mr Clough invited some of us old timers into school to talk to the new intake. We told them of the school's history, and its heritage, and how they had become part of it and future generations would look back to what they had achieved, etc. By chance, in the room we were using stood the Tanfield Chair, and inevitably someone said that Mr Brabban over there had made it. A small discussion ensued.

As the children were lined up and leaving to resume their lessons, one young lad left the lines, came over and asked if he could shake my hand. I did, and then asked him why he'd asked. He told me, "Because I want to be able to tell my grandchildren that I shook hands with the man who made the Tanfield Chair". I was amused, and then I realised that this young man was looking two generations ahead to a Tanfield and a Chair going strong.

On that note of hope and confidence I'll end, and wish our old school:

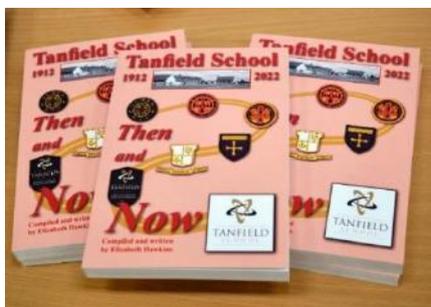
"Many, Many Happy Returns Tanfield"

Ted Brabban.

Pupil, Teacher, President of the Tanfield Association.

The Book

Tanfield School 1912-2022 Then and Now

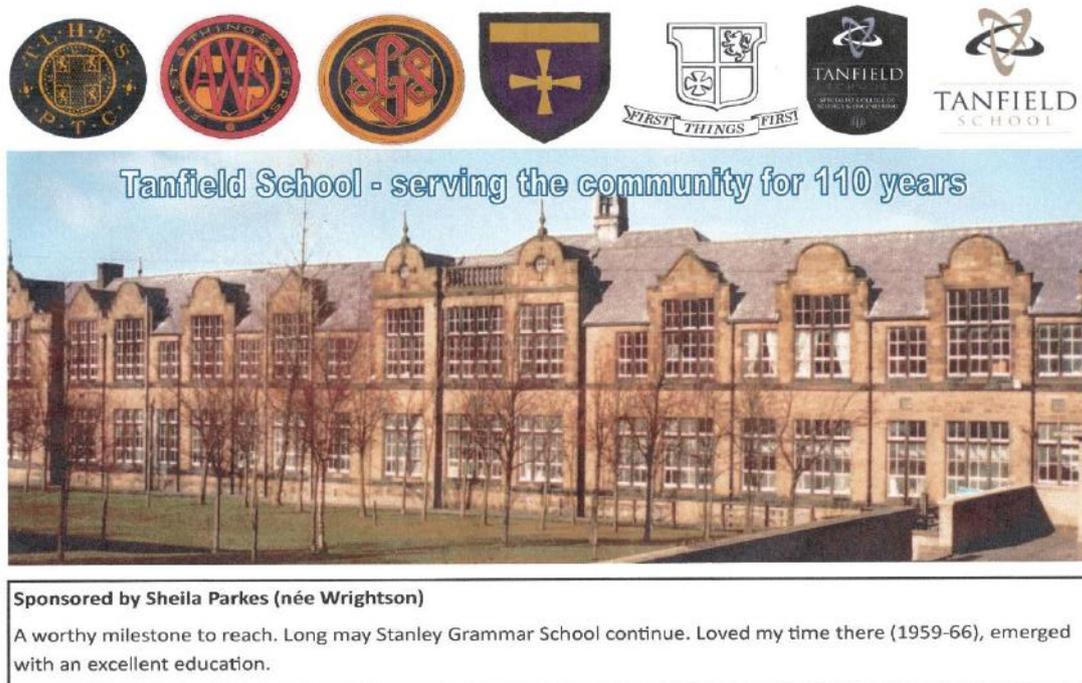


Following eight months of hard slog putting the book together, it was launched at the Celebration Day, at the end of which 162 copies had been sold to visitors and to the school, who wish to distribute copies to all members of staff. Since then, Howard Bott has been busy posting yet more copies, with the result that there are only about 20 left. So, if you want to buy one, don't delay. Details are still on the website, or you can contact Elizabeth (see contact details at the top of the newsletter's cover page).

The price is £10 if you wish to pick up a copy from school, £13.50 if you want it to be posted to you (in this country, that is! Postage to the US, Canada and Australia is nearly £17!) Many, many thanks to all of the people who made a contribution to the book, with articles, photos, maps, research, putting it all together (Elizabeth), proof-reading (Amy and Ted), selling and posting (Howard and Lestryne), and sorting the money (Susan). It was a wonderful team effort!

The Sponsorship Scheme

We're glad to be able to announce that the sponsorship scheme has raised £1337.22. This includes the £244.22 which was dropped into the collection buckets on the day. Those of you who were there will have seen the display of sponsorship pages, one of which is reproduced here:

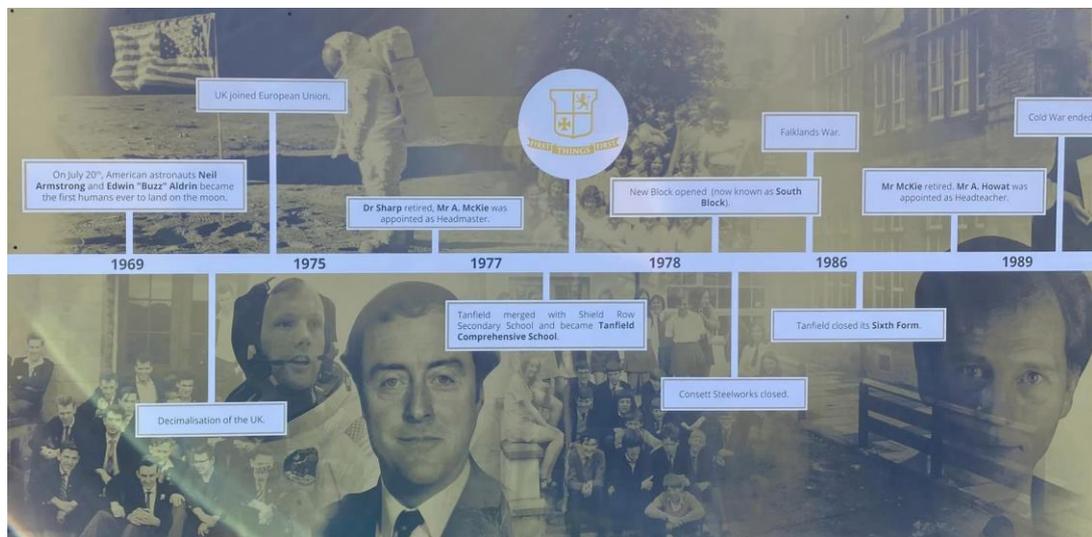
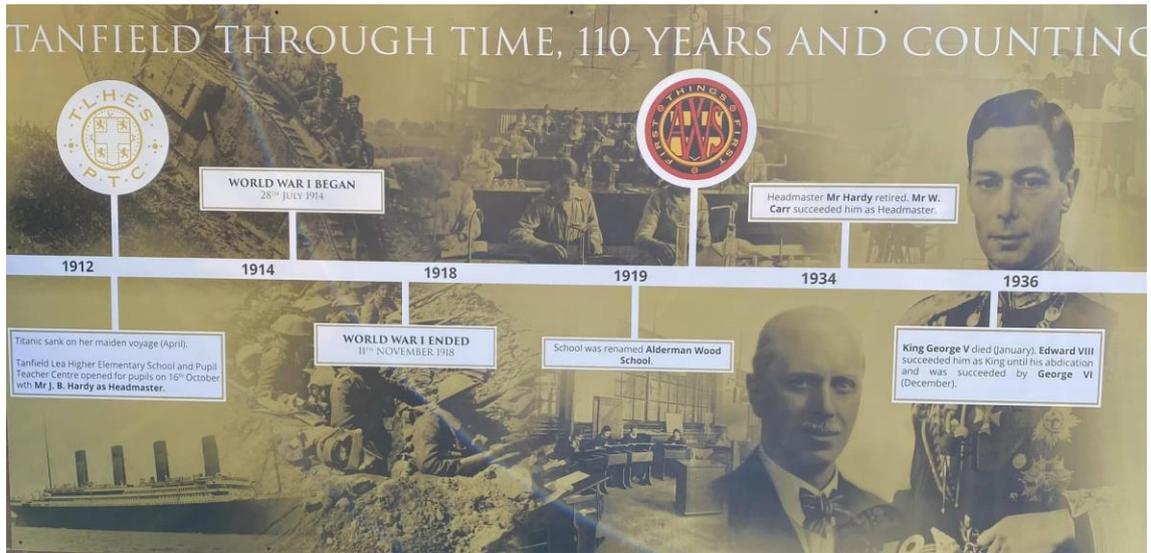


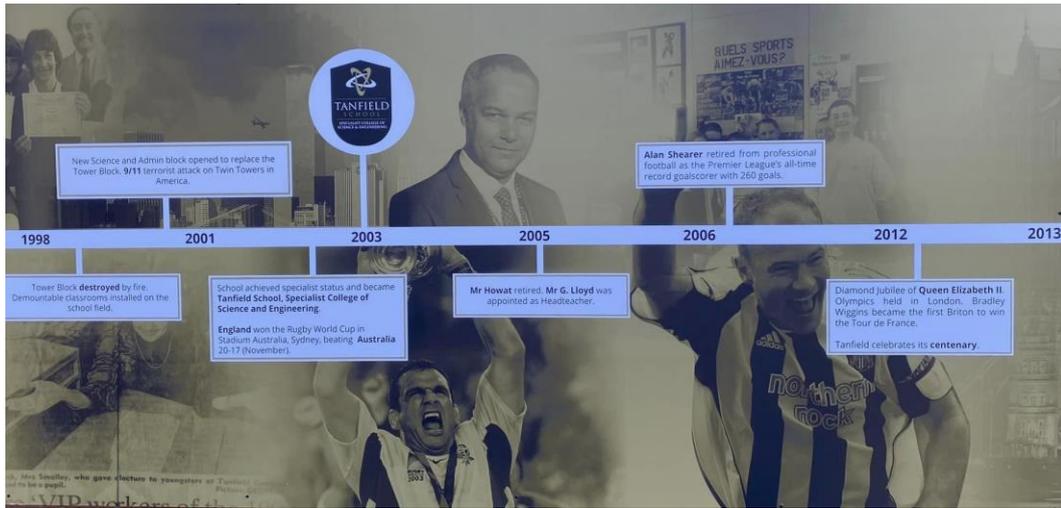
Thank you to all of our members who took part in the scheme.

If you would like to add a donation to those we've already received, please refer to the association website, **or** send your donation and message for the school to: The Tanfield Association, c/o Mrs S. Donkin, 19 Lindom Avenue, Chester-le-Street, Co Durham DH3 3PP. A sponsorship page like this one will be printed out and will be on display at the AGM later this year. All donations will be added to what we have already received, plus profits from the sale of the book, to be given to the school as a 'birthday gift', hopefully at the AGM. Part of the money raised will go towards the cost of the '**Tanfield Timeline**' mural which was installed in time for the Celebration Day, and which includes an honourable mention of Ted and Elizabeth.

The rest of the money will go to swell a **Support Fund**, which was suggested by two of our members and added to by several others. The school has embraced the idea and will see that the money raised will go to help those students whose families are struggling with today's rising prices. Things which have been suggested as being needed are Revision Packages (materials which will help students to prepare thoroughly for exams, over and above the materials supplied by the school), items of uniform and the opportunity to take part in school days out. The school already has its own schemes for helping needy students and this fund will supplement them. It is, without doubt, a very worthy cause.

The Tanfield Timeline





Responses to the Day

What an amazing book and to read how the school has changed and what difficulties it faced. I'm so pleased I sent Maisie to Tanfield School, wouldn't have had her go anywhere else. Well done Elizabeth Hawkins for the amazing book. **Laura Hogarth**

Got your book today. Can't wait to read it. **Diane Armstrong**

Many thanks – the book has arrived safe & sound. Having been a pupil from 1960-1965 I look forward to reading about the progress of the school in more recent days. **Ann Galliard**

What a lush couple of hours at school today!!! Celebrating 110 years. Loved seeing so many faces I knew, I definitely think our HK form group had the most people there. Well done, Tanfield Association! See you again in 2032. **Amy Jackson**



1970 version of Ted Brabban! He was our fabulous form teacher and remembered us clubbing together to buy him a pair of slippers for Christmas! I remember going to Doggarts, where my mum worked, to buy them! Happy days! **Rosalind Le Quesne (Caine)**

Dear Elizabeth,

I was really impressed by my visit to the school. It looked so bright and welcoming and even though it was a Saturday, it felt "alive". I thought that all is being done to encourage the pupils to achieve their potential and be ready to face "Life after Tanfield".

Just one little criticism, I didn't like the look of the windows on the outside of the old building. Being white they stood out from the building itself.

Best wishes,

Margaret Leighton (Pat Railton)

Dear Amy,

Supposed to be doing other things – but couldn't put down the book! Reading about Whitmarsh (*French text book*) brought back some bad moments – those wretched irregular verb charts at the back! The book is an amazing publication – a massive document. You must all be exhausted after publication. From **Dickson Pope**

Dear Elizabeth,

My congratulations to you and all who organised the event, which turned out to be a great success, in my opinion. **Chris Morrison**

It was great to go back to Tanfield School today to celebrate the 110th anniversary! There were some great photos on display and I got to sit in my seat back in the old form classroom! **James Ward**

Dear Elizabeth,

We are both so grateful to you, Ted and the other volunteers for producing such a well-oiled event. I know how much you put into it. I normally sit on my own at functions but everyone was so friendly. The photographic display was an excellent idea because it gave me the opportunity to walk up to

people who were looking lost, ask them what years they were there, then I asked if they had seen any photographs of themselves. Without fail, they showed me photographs of themselves and commented on the hard work everyone had put in. I didn't see anyone from my year but I was able to match a friend of mine with another couple who had been in the same year group. I was circulating like the Queen, chatting to complete strangers (not like me at all!), then did a tour with two brilliant students, Lucy and Brandon. We love the book! **Maureen Peacock**

Many thanks to you and all the committee for all that was done to make the Celebration Day such a success. Best wishes for the future, from **Neil and Doreen (Baggett)**

First of all, a big "thank you" to everyone who helped organise the hugely enjoyable event, with a special thank you to pupils Lucy and Brandon who gave Maureen and I a personalised tour of the "new" school. Their enthusiasm and obvious pride in their school shone through. What a transformation! It has truly earned the "new" description.

Whilst the upgraded buildings and surroundings are very impressive, we also very much enjoyed chatting to many ex-pupils from various stages in the school's history and they all spoke with fondness of their old school. We left with a feeling that Tanfield was in safe hands and well placed to provide an excellent education for many years to come. **Walter Peacock**

Dear Elizabeth,

We just wanted to thank you all for making 15th October such a special, memorable and interesting occasion.

So much hard work by so many staff, former pupils and smart young guides to make the 110th school anniversary such a success.

We are now thoroughly enjoying your wonderful book and wondering how you managed to compile so many interesting articles with Ted et al.

Many thanks,

Anne, Rita, Tony and Margaret

On 15th October, when I walked along the corridor of the 1912 block – now the North Block, I was struck by how perfect it all looked: and the school badges displayed there - well, that was a stroke of genius. In fact, the whole school looked beautiful.

There was a lovely atmosphere everywhere and it must be said that the event was a huge success. Every credit due to the staff and pupils who devoted their Saturday to the celebration day.

Amy Bilton

16th October 2022

Dear Ted,

As Chairman of Tanfield Association, I am addressing this letter to you but it is for all members of Tanfield Association.

I want to thank you for such an excellent day yesterday at Tanfield School, to celebrate its 110th anniversary of existence.

I thoroughly enjoyed the event and marvelled at all the very hard work which made it possible. Everything was so well organized and the day flowed perfectly. Every member of the association was so very welcoming and courteous, and your speech, Ted, at the beginning of proceedings was excellent and absolutely apt for the occasion.

It was such a good experience looking at all the displays of photographs. What memories they brought back, and all of them happy ones. The displays were worthy of all the effort which had gone into them and the comments about them were all complimentary.

Tanfield Association must be very proud of organizing such a successful event and your contribution to this esteemed school is inestimable.

The school has changed so much since I retired in 1998. It is now a very rich environment where pupils can learn and grow, and it is obvious in looking round the school that every penny spent on the building has been inspired with great discernment so that every pupil is fully equipped for their education at school and in future years.

The 'whole' child and their development, spiritually, physically, intellectually and socially is of paramount importance in this school – and that makes my heart sing!!

Thank you again,

From **Brenda (Craddock)**



After the cutting of the celebration cake, Ted and Elizabeth were presented with gifts and lifetime service awards by Head Teacher Steven Clough. This came as a surprise to both, and I think it can safely be said that they were both overwhelmed by the honour, which was a testament to the school's appreciation of the Tanfield Association and its support of the school community. Tanfield is held in great affection and respect by many of its former students and staff. Long may this continue!

Thank you!

One last big THANK YOU to all the people from school and from the association who contributed to the success of the day: Steven Clough, Ted & Mavis Brabban, Amy Bilton, Jonny Coates, Howard & Lestryne Bott, Amanda Moralee, Christine McGough, Elizabeth & Rodney Hawkins, Jean Stoddart, Margaret Jones, Karen Scott, Mick Scholey, Clive Smith, Margaret Batty, Warren Pescod, Susan Donkin, Joy Drake, Joyce Charlton, Kerry Moralee, Nisha Stephenson, Sarah Johnson, Catherine Quigley, Chris Morrison, Chris Jones, Jeff Allan, Simon the chef and his team, Caroline Dixon, Keith Shepherd, Jon McSorley, Maureen and Walter Peacock and all of the 13 very smart, polite and helpful students who volunteered their services as tour guides, book sellers etc: Tammy, Rosie (Yr 11), Liam (Yr 10), Lily, Kimberley, Kaylym, Emily, Harry, Izabella Jayden (Yr 9), Myah, Lucy, Brandon (Yr 8).

WHAT A TEAM!