

# Tanfield Association

President: Ted Brabban



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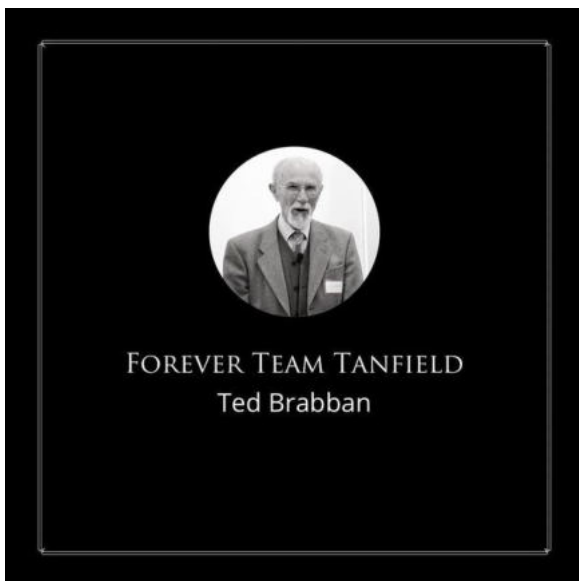
**Newsletter No. 55**

**Spring 2023**

The good news that we have to tell you has been overshadowed by the devastating news that we received on December 19<sup>th</sup> when our president, Ted Brabban, died.

Tributes have poured in from former friends, pupils and colleagues, members of the association and staff of Tanfield School. Those written by our members are included in this newsletter; all are available to read on the website. The phrases most often used in the tributes were "a lovely man", "a true gentleman", "a fantastic teacher."

They sum Ted up very well and show the respect and affection in which he was, and still is, held. Those of us who worked closely with him in the association know what an enormous gap he has left – one that is impossible to fill. God bless you, Ted. You were a great man and a good friend, and one who will be missed by us all.



Tanfield School Facebook tribute

Team Tanfield has sadly lost a legend today. Ted Brabban has been part of Tanfield School's history for the best part of 80 years. First as a student, then a member of staff and most recently as President of the Tanfield Association. He will be sorely missed by all of us. Our thoughts go out to Mavis and the rest of his family.

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## Ted Brabban: A Personal Appreciation

Ted and I first became friends at Tanfield School in the late 1940s through a shared interest in crafts, especially woodwork. In our sixth year, with Mr Harrison's (the craft master) permission, we spent many hours of our spare time in the woodwork room making items of furniture. I left school in 1950 to begin National Service in the RAF but Ted, whose birthday was later, had to wait another year and used the time to obtain a City and Guilds qualification in furniture design and construction.

In the years following the Second World War this country had a severe shortage of labour and appeals went out to older pupils at secondary schools to join work camps during summer vacations. A group of us went fruit picking in the Vale of Evesham to help gather the plum harvest. Ted and I found that plum trees are taller than is comfortable when viewed from high on a ladder picking the topmost fruit. Weekends were spent hitch hiking to Cotswold villages. We saw them in their "natural" state before tourism brought great changes.

On leaving school, Ted trained as a navigator in the RAF. Much of his training was in Canada and while there he again went hitch hiking, spending periods of leave travelling across the prairie provinces and states of Canada and the USA.

After completing teacher training in 1955 Ted taught technological subjects first at Shield Row School before moving to Tanfield. Work took me away from the NE, eventually to settle in Hertfordshire, but we remained in touch, visiting each other every year. We both married, he to Mavis who he had known since school days and me to Eileen whom I had met at college. Consequently, we had young families at the same time so, to provide interest for our children, we had seaside holidays together in Pembrokeshire. Then when the children



were older, leaving their parents free to follow their own ways, we began walking holidays in the UK or gite holidays in France. These were very happy times, enjoying new scenery and the unusual cuisine of rural France. Of course, the sun always shone.

The walking holidays prompted Ted to attempt some long distance treks. On one of his early forays he met three other men of about the same age and teamed up with them to do a number of long distance paths, including the

Coast to Coast Path and the Pennine Way. They continued with an annual walk for many years before age stopped any further long forays. At this time Ted took up angling as a hobby and for some time was a member of the River Browney Angling Club.

Ted had always been interested in the theatre. As he described recently in the Association's book celebrating the 110th anniversary of the school, the production of pantomimes by the school sixth form in the 1970s which Ted co-wrote and co-produced with Noel Dawson, constituted a high point in his teaching career. The pantomimes were

immediately very popular and became an eagerly anticipated event in the festive season in the Stanley area.

Being interested in art, Ted was intrigued by the designs used by early Celtic and Anglo Saxon illustrators. From the time when he was local secretary for the NASUWT Union he had been proficient in the use of computers and when graphics programmes became available he immediately developed his own style of graphic display employing aspects of Celtic art. Examples appeared in the Newsletter and other Association publications in recent years. This was just part of the effort he gave in the past two decades to ensuring the success of the Association.



Ted was a talented artist and craftsman, an interesting conversationalist, good company, enterprising and always ready to help. His death leaves a large void in all our lives. We feel the deepest sympathy for Mavis and her family in their great loss.

**Alex Bainbridge**

(Left: a box made by Ted for Alex's 70<sup>th</sup> birthday)

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### **Acting President, Joyce Charlton**



We are pleased to announce that Joyce Charlton has agreed to be Acting President of the association until an election can be held at the AGM. Joyce has served the association well for many years as a member of the Working Exec; and, in her capacity as a local councillor, she has been able to do much to help Tanfield School. Our thanks go to Joyce for taking over at such short notice.

## The Birthday Gift

On December 15<sup>th</sup>, we were able to present the school with its 110<sup>th</sup> birthday gift. Once all the finances for the book and celebration day had been finalized, we were able to present the school with a cheque for £3400. £1400 of this will be used as a Support Fund (an idea suggested by two of our members and welcomed by Head Teacher Steven Clough) and the remainder will be used to improve the facilities for the students or to benefit them in some other way. Thanks to everyone who contributed to this gift.



President Ted Brabban presented Head Teacher Steven Clough with the cheque for £3400 at a Christmas lunch to which we had been invited.



Christmas lunch guests: Chair of Governors Christine McGough, Amy Bilton, Business Operations Manager Amanda Moralee, Elizabeth Hawkins, governor Alan Wallace, Ted Brabban, Mavis Brabban, Walter Peacock, Maureen Peacock.



Our host, Jonny Coates

Right: old habits won't let go! Maureen very kindly doing the washing up after we had enjoyed a turkey dinner, Christmas pudding and a very nice mug of tea or coffee to wash it all down. It was a very happy occasion.



## LIFE AFTER TANFIELD

### ALLAN PEARSON

#### Pupil from 1962 to 1969

In September 1969, I joined Britannia Royal Naval College, Dartmouth, as a General List Cadet Officer; I believe the first person to do so from Stanley Grammar School. I retired from the Royal Navy on January 30, 1993 with the rank of Lieutenant Commander.



As a Midshipman onboard HMS Aurora, Far East Fleet, I was loaned to HMS Triumph to assist with Bhola cyclone flood relief work in East Pakistan (present-day Bangladesh) in November '70. Served in Northern Ireland '74-'75. First met my future wife onboard HMS Bristol off Fishguard, Wales in '76 and then re-met her in Norfolk, VA in '77 while I was on HMS Hermes. Cathy was a serving United States Naval Officer.



Seconded to the Sultan of Oman's Navy from March '78 through October '79, I commanded the fast patrol boat SNV Al Jabbar (B7) primarily operating in the Straits of Hormuz. Married Cathy in October '79 in her home town of Houston Tx. Served onboard HMS Exeter, as a Principal Warfare Officer, during the Falkland's Campaign of '82. Qualified as a Navigation Specialist in '83. Met my son in Baltimore MD harbour, August '84 when he was 3 months old, he was born while I was in the South Atlantic with HMS Andromeda.



Completed the Advanced Navigation Sea Check November '84. I was present at my daughter's birth in January '87 but then sailed for a 3-month deployment, on HMS Bristol, 3 days later; I have never had problem with children not sleeping through the night! Worked in Swan Hunters shipbuilding yard from March '89, as the Executive Officer of HMS Chatham, during the final months of her build and was with her through all the sea trials and Commissioning Ceremony and left just before her basic operational sea training in January '91. Commanded HMS Dumbarton Castle from March '91 - March '92, brought her out of refit in Rosyth Dockyard, completed trials and operational sea training and then sailed south to the Falkland Islands, this included my 9<sup>th</sup> and final sea crossing of the Equator and paying homage to King Neptune. I remained with the ship for 7 months in the South Atlantic before I flew home not having seen my family for over 9 months.

My final position in the Navy was as the course officer for the Principal Warfare Officer Navigation Course; I spent the final two months of my service life on leave in Centreville, Virginia, USA with my wife and two children who had moved back to the States three years previously.

From November '94 through April '13, I was the Volunteer Training Coordinator for Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department, Virginia. I was responsible for the overall administration, recruiting and assigning highly qualified instructors, overall budgeting and supervision of more than 30 fire and emergency service programs annually to ensure all new operational volunteers were trained to the same certification standards required of the career recruit firefighters. While my children were growing up, I assisted with their youth sports in various capacities, football (American), baseball and softball which were not taught at SGS. We now enjoy watching our 3 grandchildren play those same sports.

After my second retirement I qualified as a Volunteer Master Gardener for Prince William County and worked part-time in the garden center of a major home improvement store for 8 years.

Unfortunately, Cathy suffered a major stroke in 2002 which left her with left side hemiplegia and forced her to retire from teaching. I have been her care provider and chauffeur ever since and it is only the last few years that we have employed home help to look after her to allow me to work on our garden and keep my Master Gardener certification.

We now live in Haymarket Virginia, our son and his family live in Round Hill Virginia and our daughter lives in Brooklyn NY. After nearly 30 years in America, I am still a resident alien and have only recently applied for American Citizenship.

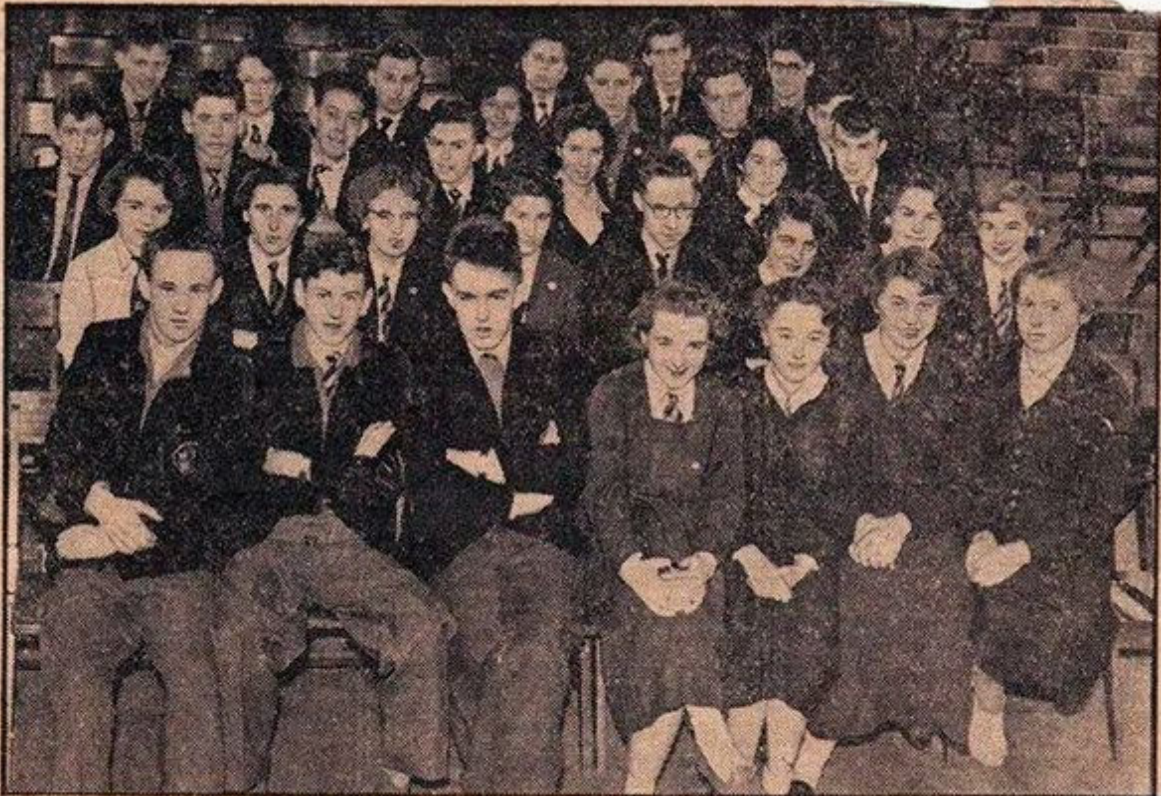
I can be contacted through the Tanfield Association.

## Prizewinners find time to relax



**C**OMPARING THEIR AWARDS after the presentation are (left to right) John Jackson, aged 15, Thomas Cooper and William Armstrong, both 16, and Malcolm Todd, aged 17.

Two photos from the Stanley News in 1955/6 showing SGS prizewinners. Tom Cooper's mum kept these newspaper cuttings for many years and they must surely bring back memories to some of our members! Let us know if you are on these photos, or if you recognise friends from way back then.



**H**ARD WORK was rewarded for this group of fifth and sixth formers, who received prizes at yesterday's speech day at Stanley Grammar School.

## Mavis McEwan's Tanfield Memories 1970 – 1977

I thought I'd like to share with you some memories of my seven years at Tanfield during the seventies. Looking back, I feel it was definitely a time of change with CSE's being introduced alongside the O level and the preparation for a move to a Comprehensive School.

In my first year I was in Mr Yockney's form 1d and Tanfield House. My main memories of Mr Yockney are how he always kept his hands buried up his suit sleeves and would nod off while playing classical music in our music lessons. However, I can still sing a song he wrote to the words of the William Wordsworth poem Daffodils and I bet it is still in the head of other pupils he taught!

One of the changes that occurred after my first year was that we weren't streamed as a year group but remained in our original form groups until the 4<sup>th</sup> year, so no Latin taught to the streamed A class. We didn't do Latin at all; however, it could be chosen in as an option for O level.

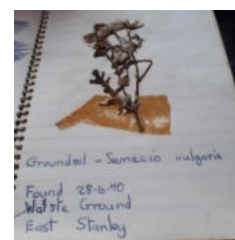
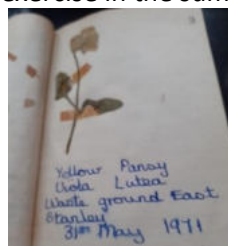
My favourite lesson was Chemistry with Mr Peacock. I think we were also the first year to follow Nuffield chemistry up until O level options. I still remember doing loads of experiments, learning chemical processes without the rigours of balancing chemical equations, and using chemical symbols, it was just fun! Near the end of the lesson, we'd gather round Mr Peacock's Lab desk, and he'd explain what should have happened in our inaccurate experiments and what conclusion we should have drawn from this. I remember one day a rumour began to circulate that the world would end at three o'clock that day, this so happened to be while my class 2d were being taught chemistry; some girls were weeping and wailing, surprisingly the world didn't end but goodness knows what poor Mr Peacock made of it all.

In my first year, for a short time I was taught French by Miss Thompson until her illness that year.

Once again, we were the first year to be taught a bit differently. Each lesson Mrs Thompson would use a reel-to-reel tape recorder and we'd listen to short conversations about the Thibault family. I think there was also a slide show so we could visualise what we were hearing in French. Miss Thompson never spoke in English throughout the lesson. After the sentence we'd then repeat it as a class over and over. I still remember one sentence to this day, 'Donne-moi un morceau de sucre s'il te plaît Françoise', with M. Thibault sitting at the breakfast table with his wife and two children. We also never wrote any French until well into the course, only speaking.

Dr Sharp was Headmaster when I started Tanfield, a very imposing man rumoured to be an interrogator during the war, to tell you the truth he was that scary! Occasionally we would see him walk down the school corridors and there would be a weird silence as pupils stopped any conversation as he walked by, what power! He once did a fill in extra assembly when heavy snow had obviously stopped many teachers and pupils from arriving on time. In the assembly he spoke about his first impressions of our area when he moved here possibly from the South. It wasn't particularly flattering if I remember correctly and giving us all a warning that our accents were not going to be particularly helpful in our future ambitions, I suppose it was the 70's! In 1975 Dr Sharp retired and I started my sixth form with a new Headmaster Mr McKie.

I have vivid memories of many wonderful teachers during my seven years, I'd like to mention a few who probably taught me over several years. For my O level maths in 4A we were taught by Mr Gee, he was so patient and gentle, he retired at the end of our 5<sup>th</sup> year, and I remember our class bought him a watch. Mr Robertson taught me biology for most of my time at Tanfield. Clear memories of him demonstrating, with his arms waving and a sort of body wiggle how a bee does a dance to tell the rest of the hive where to find pollen. I still have a small notebook containing pressed flowers completed as a homework exercise in the summer term of the first year, (photos included).



Outside the classroom, breaks and lunch times were spent in the girls' area by the staff carpark or the field. We didn't mix with the boys at all. The dining room for girls was quite a civilised affair, with the sixth formers in charge of the food distributed to your table. In contrast my brother Alastair McEwan and husband Kevin Stoker have very different memories of lunch times, with a definite hierarchy between the older and younger boys, very little food making its way down the table after the older boys had taken their share. In fact, Kev describes his lunchtime experience as something out of a Dickens novel! I wonder if anyone can remember the day the stew resembled hair? Goodness knows what happened to it during the cooking!

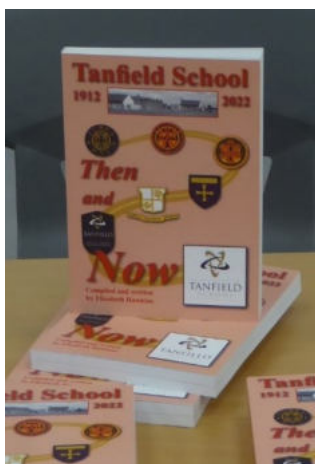
During my time we never had a sports day, I don't remember any competition in fact linked to the three Houses. However, the sixth form ran a volleyball tournament at lunchtimes for several years. My friends and I always entered a team, one year we called ourselves 'Eno's Everything', a pun on a member of our favourite band at the time, Roxy Music. On the last day of summer term all through my time at Tanfield the whole school would spend the afternoon out on the field. I think there was a cricket match on the big field, and on the smaller field up from the carpark the lower sixth girls would have a rounders match against the teachers. Summer exams were over and the joyous anticipation of a six-week summer holiday in front of us all, including the teachers!

One event that took place every year was the school play. I remember seeing *The Importance of Being Earnest* and *An Inspector Calls*. In my Upper Sixth we put on a Pantomime for the rest of the school. Mr Dawson directed it. I have no idea what the theme of the show was but remember Trudi Proud and Lydia (can't recall her second name) singing 'All Around My Hat' by Steeleye Span, plus Andrew Nicholson singing the David Essex song 'Hold Me Close'. My role in the show was very small, performing a group Gavotte dance in a pair of Levi jeans and a school blazer, no idea why?

In my last year at Tanfield 1976 – 77 works had begun on the old part of the school with the first floor closed off. The Upper Sixth common room moved into the new building, built on the small field near the carpark. Even at seventeen my impression of the building was basically, 'what a rubbish job!' It looked like it was made from cream plastic panelling on the inside. I ask myself is it still there after nearly fifty years? [Answer – Yes! Ed.]

The Seventies were an exciting time to be a teenager, a culture of social change was happening with young people rebelling against norms and expectations society placed upon them. Tanfield at that time was part of that change. After leaving in 1977 I went to Anstey College Birmingham to train as a PE teacher. I qualified in 1980 and began teaching at South Bromsgrove High School. I taught there for 33 years and retired in 2013. Kevin and I will celebrate our 43<sup>rd</sup> wedding anniversary this July. Thank you, Tanfield Secondary School!

Mavis Stoker (née McEwan)



## Tanfield School Then and Now

More than 240 copies of the book have been sold, but there are ten left if anyone still wants one.

The cost is £10 for the book, plus £3.50 postage and packing. Payment can be made by cheque or by bank transfer. Please contact me if you want to use the bank transfer method and I'll send you the details. Cheques can be made out to Tanfield Association and posted to me. My address is at the foot of the Letters Page. **All details are also on the association website and you can order a book directly from there.** The books are currently held at Reception

in school. If you would like to pick up a book from there, for £10, please telephone the school first, to make sure that books are still available. The school's phone number is 01207 232881.





### **Goodbye to Our Three Friends**

Kerry Moralee, Jonny Coates, Amanda Moralee

Tanfield School owes much to Director of Business and Finance Jonny Coates (subsequently Chief Operating Officer for Eden Learning Trust), and to Kerry Moralee, who came to Tanfield as an IT technician in 2008, and rose to be Business Services Manager for the Eden Learning Trust. Both played an important role in the vast improvements made to the school environment and are now moving on to other projects elsewhere. Amanda Moralee, Business Operations Manager, was of great help to the association in the organising of the 110<sup>th</sup> Celebration Day. She too is moving on to pastures new. We wish them all great success in their new jobs.

### **Goodbye and Thank You**

As I reflect on almost 4 years at Tanfield School, the overriding emotion is pride. Having initially worked with the school in an advisory capacity in late 2018 I was intrigued by the place from the outset, with its 1912 building steeped in history and it genuinely felt like the potential was there - a sleeping giant if you will. When the role of Business Manager became available in early 2019, I was keen to plunge into the unknown; a school with a deficit budget, deemed Inadequate by Ofsted, an Academy Order and a raft of issues with the buildings.

It soon became clear what we needed to do was seek significant investment, persuade people that it was sustainable if they could see the potential we could and that the school would rise again. Eden Learning Trust, through CEO Kevin Brennan, paved the way for all of this to become reality as they believed in the leadership of the school and that the risk, whilst not insignificant, could be outweighed by the rewards. This was the start of regeneration of Tanfield. From repurposing, remodelling or refurbishing every internal space, brand new windows, lighting, toilets, bringing back the yard and addressing many health and safety issues and seeing student performance improvements off the scale, everyone involved can be so proud of the achievements.

Tanfield's values are Hard work, Trust and Fairness.

It's really important that I stress that none of the things that we've achieved as a team would have happened without the HARD WORK of everyone - past and present members of staff.

To Steven Clough, Senior Leadership colleagues and Governors for TRUSTING my ambitious plans - such as the road that leads to new staff car park, moving the main entrance and a purpose-built Music building.

All the staff for being FAIR with me, accepting big changes, putting up with all of the disruption and together helping to rebuild the school for the benefit of the students for the next generation.

It was really all about Team Tanfield, there's something special about the place. In the words of Sir Bobby Robson 'it's the noise, the passion, the feeling of belonging, the pride in

your city'. Much of this resonates and with a few tweaks to the words it could easily be Tanfield we are talking about.

The final word should go to the school's biggest supporter, Tanfield Association. An incredible group of individuals led by the late Ted Brabban, Elizabeth Hawkins and Amy Bilton, incredibly passionate individuals providing unwavering support and generous donations, I will be forever grateful to have been able to learn from you all. I've met many other members of the Association and it's been wonderful to share the memories and how much Tanfield means to you all. I've really enjoyed my time with you and was so proud to have been part of the 110th Anniversary celebrations. I have no doubt that there really is no place like Team Tanfield.

Thank you and best wishes for the future.

Jonny Coates

<b>PRIZES.</b>			
1a	Alistair M. Russell	Jennie Magee	
1b	Jean Milburn	Beatrice A. Ridley	
1c	Anthony J. Brown	Barbara Draper	
2a	Neil J. Tweddle	Veronica Stobbart	Alan S. Jeary
2b	Cynthia Beck	Thomas P. Henderson	Barry Lowther
2 Beta	Elizabeth Handy	Alan Jackson	James A. Thompson
3a	Janice Toal	Elizabeth R. Draper	Marian Towers
3b	Ivor Maughan	Christopher P. S. Lambert	Ronald Carr
3 Beta	David Liddell	Alan Scott	Ronald E. Cushing
4a	Kenneth Reed	Maureen Harvey	James Bainbridge
4b	Ann Daglish	Jennifer Buglass	Kathleen Field
4 Beta	Shirley Harrison	Frederick Humphrey	Joan Heaviside.
<b>GENERAL CERTIFICATE OF EDUCATION.</b>			
<b>Ordinary Level.</b>			
	John Storey	Ruth Puckering	Edith Heaviside
	Gordon Bennett	Sandra C. Siddoway	Diane B. Pickering
	Peter S. Carr	Peter Gales	Jennifer M. Raw
	David Marshall	John D. Henderson	Susan E. Reynolds
	David J. Robinson	William W. Hutton	Elizabeth Thirlaway
	Jeffery Thwaites	Eric Sanders	Cynthia Tooke
	Jean Barker	David Tregoning	William Mahoney
	Vivien Chennells	John H. Wright	Maureen Shield
	Marcia G. D. Cornforth	Audrey Atkinson	Eileen Vitty
	Lesley F. Evans	Jennifer M. Carr	Thomas B. Harpe
	Judith Gales	Valerie Corker	Margaret Jennings
	Marilyn Hunt	Sheila C. Hamilton	
<b>Advanced Level.</b>			
	Derek Wanless	Kenneth Jackson	Marion Foster
	Frederick A. Baggett	Derek Macpherson	Iris T. McNeill
	Colin Bewley	Keith Parker	Sheila A. Phelan
	Keith M. Bolam	John Shield	Pauline Rainbow
	Paul Brown	Geoffrey D. Slater	Kathleen Rowe
	Thornton F. Davison	Linda Appleby	Joan Slater
	David Gill	Patricia Barrass	Jean Stephenson
	Terence Hooper	Valerie Baxter	Margaret Swinburne
	Michael Huggins	Lily Foster	Anne C. Toomer
<b>SPECIAL PRIZES.</b>			
J. C. Forster Memorial History Prize—Shirley Douglas.			
Albert Armstrong Memorial Prize for Geography—Ann Ridley.			
Ettie Robson Memorial Prize for Religious Knowledge—Pat Smiles.			
Rotary Club Jubilee Prizes—Peter S. Carr, Ruth Puckering.			
Past Students Prizes—Head Boy—David Proud.			
Head Girl—Janice Black.			

### Speech Day Programme 1964

You may well recognise some of the names on the back cover of the 1964 Speech Day programme. Some of our members will certainly recognise their own names and probably those of quite a few friends and classmates. Enjoy!

## 'First Things First'



What's in a name? Our school has always been known as 'Tanfield' but that is not its official name – and that name has had several changes. The school to which I went – some 90 years ago – was formally called 'Alderman Wood Secondary School', commemorating two remarkable, even radical, Government decisions, to make advanced education freely available to all children in England (even girls!) and to give responsibility for education to *local* government. The Governors of the new Secondary School were determined that 'working class' children should have as good an education as those privileged to attend private 'Public' schools, and while the curriculum was weighted towards Mathematics and Science rather than Greek and Latin, the social organisation reflected much of the 'Public School' pattern, with 'Houses' and 'House Masters' (and Mistresses), Prefects, team games, rituals and even traditions – so there should be a school motto – so 'First Things First'. We were puzzled – but not much concerned – form and House activities were much more important. Looking back, however, I can see how appropriate it was.

'First things' meant above everything a high standard of academic achievement. We were there to learn – and even as children we could appreciate the scholarly attitude and high quality of our teachers. Of course, we grumbled – "Too much homework!" – but schoolwork was taken seriously and academic achievement was respected. Compared with the 'public school' tradition, discipline was light and there was no corporal punishment (though the idle and inattentive were sometimes roused in unorthodox ways - Miss Mortimer's aim with a piece of chalk was legendary!) So much for 'First things' – but 'First' implies a 'Second'. Tanfield was never just an Exam Results factory. Though a small institution with limited resources, in a small town of 'the desolate North East' during the post-war Depression years, Tanfield gave us much more than a good academic training. Time and resources were found for art and music – even for handicrafts and expeditions. Productions of Gilbert and Sullivan operettas were a major interest; there might be a dinner-hour showing of a film (crowded into the Physics Lab), senior Arts students were taken to performances at the People's Theatre in Newcastle. Periodically the main corridor provided space for prints from the Council's art collection (I remember furious arguments over a group of pictures by Salvador Dali) – and above all there was the Library! Whoever was responsible for selecting books for the Senior Library had a gift for opening doors to a wide, exciting world ranging from Dostoevsky's 'Crime and Punishment' to Leonard Woolley's 'Ur of the Chaldees' – with daily newspapers as an extra – and in the senior years we were free to explore its riches. Tanfield gave us a lifelong treasure of 'second things' as well as the discipline of the 'first things'.

Perhaps the most memorable of all was a tradition which I never met elsewhere. As usually happens, our routine textbooks were provided by the school, lent for a time (and woe betide anyone who returned a copy in damaged condition!) but at the start of the third year, one English text book – 'Palgrave's English Verse' – was given to us. We used it for the rest of our schooldays – and I still do, for it was not a loan. It was *given* to us! For many Tanfield students it was probably the first book they had ever actually owned; for all of us it was a demonstration that care for the 'first things' could include the 'second things' that enrich our life, even when we have learned to put 'First Things First'!

**Joan Charlton** (pupil 1932-39)

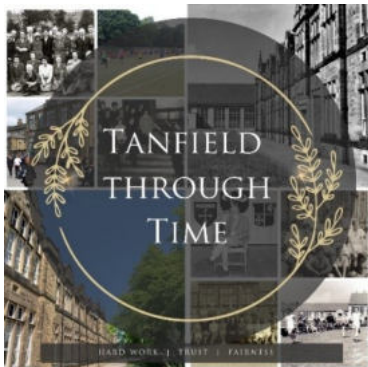
**Joan celebrated her 102<sup>nd</sup> birthday on January 25<sup>th</sup>. She was in care after a serious illness, but enjoyed her birthday with a cake, ginger wine, cards and beautiful flowers, a nostalgic chat (she still had vivid memories of Tanfield) and readings from 'Tanfield Then and Now'. We wished her all the best on behalf of association members and she sent her thanks. A grand old lady! [Sadly, Joan died on Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> February, peacefully, in the care home.]**

## TANFIELD THROUGH TIME

A few years ago, we held a quiz with Year 7 to introduce them to the school's history. Display boards of information and photos were arranged in the Conference Room and all of the Yr 7 classes came in throughout the day to answer as many questions as they could. Prizes were presented in assembly once all the quiz sheets were marked and the top scorers identified. This became an enjoyable annual event.

Thanks to Covid, this did not happen for the past two years, so we were pleased to organise the quiz for both Year 7 and Year 8 students this year. Displays were dusted down, repaired here and there, added to, and a group of us put them up in the Conference Room at the beginning of March. There followed two whole days of introducing 13 classes to their school's history and guiding them through the quiz. The students were all very well-behaved and enthusiastic about finding all the answers – as well as looking for parents and relatives on the photo displays! Class teachers were equally keen to look at the photos and some found pictures of their parents when they, too, were at Tanfield. All in all, a successful and enjoyable enterprise! A big 'Thank you!' to all the volunteers and to the school for providing us with tea, coffee and lunch.

Prizes and certificates were presented in assembly the following week to 22 winners – Joyce Charlton's first official duty as Acting President.



## Letters

### Ted



Ted and Mavis Brabban at Tanfield's centenary celebration in 2012

Dear Elizabeth,

I am shocked and deeply affected by the news of Ted's passing. As a contemporary of his throughout our time at Tanfield I have known him for 78 years. He was always a modest, generous and kind-hearted person and I know how deeply respected he was by all who came in contact with him.

He was always willing to take on responsibility when invited to do so and had incredible inventiveness and talent. His home bears witness to his artistic and artisanal ability.

He was always a strong supporter of Tanfield School and a memorable member and Chairman of the Tanfield Association, which he served with distinction. I shall miss him as a friend and, more recently, as a colleague on the Association's Executive Committee.

My heart goes out to his devoted and loving wife, Mavis, and their family at this sad time.

With deepest sadness,

**Warren Pescod**

How sad I was to hear of Ted Brabban's death and felt a great sympathy for Mavis, appreciated by me from pre-school days, nearly 85 years. School has fostered many partnerships but none more successful than Mavis and Ted's. What a wealth of joy there must have been in shared background, aspirations and contribution to the community. How many treasured wooden treasures have pride of place in homes everywhere and how many children have grown in stature through their influence. Yes, Mavis, it takes two to tango, even in the wider "Palais de Danse". Treasured memories. Very best wishes and thinking of you.

**Jean Simpson**

I am privileged to have known Ted for more than 60 years since he first taught me woodwork at SGS. He was a gentle man and I never heard him raise his voice in spite of being tested by recalcitrant pupils. I'm so pleased that Lestryne and myself were able to attend the school's 110<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebration and see Ted in his element. What a wonderful legacy Ted has left us, not least his "chair" (or more accurately "throne") but also his easy way of mixing with pupils past and present. He will be a great loss to Tanfield Association. **Howard & Lestryne Bott**

I can't imagine the Tanfield Association without him. Such a gentle kind man, full of the best qualities of humankind. Thinking of Mavis and the family at this sad time. **Margaret Jones**

He was such a kind-hearted willing man and will be such a miss to all of us. My heart goes out to Mavis and her family. **Jean Stoddart**

He will be sadly missed by everyone who knew him. **Maureen and Walter Peacock.**

I, like many many others am shocked and deeply saddened by the news of the death of Ted. My condolences go to all his family at this time, and I know that all those who knew him will remember him with profound affection. **Christopher Morrison.**

Ted was a gentleman through and through. A guide to so many and a wonderful friend.  
**Joyce Charlton**

So sad. Such a lovely man. A life well lived. **Lynne Breen**

Dear Elizabeth,  
You are all so important to the school past and present, there is not one other school I know of that is like Tanfield. That is all down to the association's continued work and dedication. I wanted to ensure the anniversary was marked with something tangible and am absolutely delighted with the mural and that Ted is named on there – rightly so. Ted was such a gentleman and it was an honour to know him. Please keep me posted and if I can do anything to assist the family I am available to do so. **Jonny Coates**

Great teacher – won't ever forget what he taught me. **Bill Graves**

Ted was my woodwork and technical drawing teacher 1961-1963 and over the past ten years we have exchanged reminiscences of those happy times. His teaching was enthusiastic, gentle and helpful, yet somehow he effortlessly maintained order and safety in his woodwork room with its sharp-edged tools and boiling wood glue.

Ted ran an after-school woodwork club where we could use the facilities to carry out our own projects – when I said I wanted to build a full-scale woodwork bench he encouraged me without pointing out any of the difficulties and even gave me some of the timber required. In 2020 he was pleased to see a photo of the bench (still used by my brother) and wrote me an enthusiastic account of some of his own recent projects.

Condolences to Ted's family. Best wishes, **John Cameron (SGS 61-65)**

A big-hearted man who touched the lives of so many people. R.I.P. **Ann Galliard**

I remember Ted working with Bob Harrison in the Woodwork Department. I was very glad that the class I was in did Woodwork rather than Latin. I also knew Mavis from Dipton Tennis Club where she was one of the grandees when I was an aspiring ball boy. My sincere condolences to mavis and the family. **John Bowes**

How very sad. Ted taught when I was a pupil and was very welcoming when I went back to teach at SGS. A lovely man! **Claire Humpherson**

His contributions to the newsletter were immense and in my view impossible to follow. He taught me in the early '70s and was an excellent teacher, his commitment to the school unquestioned and a thoroughly decent human being.

Thank you for passing this sad information on and may I pass my sympathy to all Ted's family and many genuine friends. **Graham Kirtley**

A message from **Mary Storey**, Ted's sister:

Please pass on my good wishes to all the school staff, association committee and members for all the kind words they have spoken about my wonderful brother Ted.

### Other matters

Hello Elizabeth,

I have read the book and enjoyed it. I was surprised that there have been so many momentous and threatening events affecting the school in the decades since I was there. It makes an interesting story. It is good to read that its future now looks more bright and assured.

Can I add my thanks to those you will have received already for the time and effort you and your team gave to compiling this anniversary edition.

Kind regards,

**Alex Bainbridge**

Hi Elizabeth, Hope you are keeping well.

I wanted to let you know that my sister, Margaret Fisk, former Head Girl, passed away on 01/02/2023. Kind regards, Eric Fisk.

### Emails to the Secretary

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An update about my email address: it used to be [secretary@tanfield-association.org](mailto:secretary@tanfield-association.org), but we had a bit of trouble with unwanted mail, so Howard gave it a French twist and it is now [secretaire@tanfield-association.org](mailto:secretaire@tanfield-association.org) . Just to be sure, I'll always put it at the foot of the Letters Page in future.

**Please** send contributions to the **next newsletter** to: [secretaire@tanfield-association.org](mailto:secretaire@tanfield-association.org) or to: Tanfield Association, c/o Mrs E Hawkins, 15 Thirlmere, Birtley, Chester-le-Street, Co. Durham, DH3 2JY



### **Latest News**

Tanfield has a brand new purpose-built Music Department, adjacent to the school yard and visitor car park. John Stephenson, Head of Music, was delighted to move in in early February. More details in next term's newsletter.