

TANFIELD ASSOCIATION

PRESIDENT: JOYCE CHARLTON



ASSOCIATION SECRETARY AND NEWSLETTER EDITOR

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Newsletter No. 57

Autumn 2023

Hello again. Since the last issue quite a few things have been happening, the most important of which was the celebration of the school's 111th birthday on October 16th, the day of the AGM. The AGM saw the election or re-election of the association's officers, who keep things running. The AGM also saw the presentation of the Tanfield Star (replacement for the Tanfield Glass, which sadly met its end when the ceiling of Jonny Coates' office came down and smashed it!)



The Star, like the former Glass, will be presented annually to the person or persons who are deemed by the members of the Working Exec to have contributed the most towards either the association or the school. This year the Star was presented to Steven Clough as leader of Team Tanfield (teaching staff, students, business and non-teaching staff) for their excellent work in raising standards in all areas of the school's life and enhancing the school's reputation. Presentations of a cheque and a well-deserved retirement gift were also made at the AGM, as you will see when you read on.

Happy reading!

Editorial

Nova Watson

Learning and Resource
Centre

Achievements to be Proud
Of - Ross and Noah

AGM:
Officers' Reports for 2022/3

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- Webmaster's report
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The AGM and Tour of the
School (by Alastair
McEwan)

Summary of the main
business of the AGM
Photos of the AGM

A Memory from Les
Johnson

Letters

Nova Watson (Williamson)



Nova Williamson was a pupil at Stanley Grammar School from 1946 – 53, after which she went to Leeds University to study English. Following her graduation, she taught for a short while at a school in Leeds before returning to live in Stanley in 1962 and to teach English at SGS. Pupils described her as ‘a breath of fresh air’ and her lessons were enjoyed by many. When Derek Watson came to the school to teach Physics, he and Nova became friends and were married three years later. Nova left Tanfield in 1969 to have the first of their two sons.

As well as being an inspirational teacher, she had also encouraged pupils to take part in dramatic productions and debates. She was also a very keen badminton player and some of us will remember her playing badminton after school with members of the Sixth Form. Nova loved Majorca and, following her retirement from teaching, went to live there for some years before returning to the UK.



Nova can be seen (back row, 3rd from left) taking part in this school production when she was a pupil. Do any more of our members recognise themselves on this photo? Write and let us know.



The New Library and Resource Centre

Following the opening of the new Music Block in February this year, plans were made to turn the original Music Room into a Library and Resource Centre. Former student Daryl Smith was appointed to run the centre and work began to set up the new facilities. Joyce Charlton, in her role as County Councillor, was able to obtain funds for the purchase of new shelving units for the library books, and work began on the processing of the hundreds of books waiting to go on those shelves. The association was able to help out with volunteers to assist with the work – Amy Bilton, Maureen Peacock and Elizabeth Hawkins, all of whom had library experience, helped with the momentous task of sorting all of the books and putting them firstly on the computerised system and then on the shelves. These sessions took place at the end of the Summer term and the end of the Summer holidays and helped towards getting the library up and running.



Maureen putting barcodes into hundreds of books



Elizabeth logging books onto the computer



Daryl and Amy barcoding, sorting and putting hundreds of books on shelves

A welcome reward for all the hard work – Daryl, Sam, Maureen and Elizabeth enjoying a free ice cream on the last day of term, when all students and staff were given this treat.



Achievements to be proud of



Former Tanfield student Ross Henderson (professional name Ross Adams) is an actor, scriptwriter and film maker. He used to be in 'Emmerdale' and can be seen currently in 'Hollyoaks', for which he wrote the script for one of the recent episodes. His short documentary film, 'Love, Dad and Daddy' recently won the 'Best Short film – Documentary' prize at the North East International Film Festival.

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Below: Ross at the British Soap Awards with Jane McDonald



Current Year 9 student, Noah, this summer trialed for the Eagles U14 Basketball Academy and was successful in gaining a spot on the roster for the Newcastle Eagles Academy U14 Conference team playing in the England National Basketball League (NBL). This is viewed as a prestigious programme and the next step in the performance pathway towards further elite programmes.

Noah has been with Whickham Royals Basketball Club which is part of the wider Newcastle Eagles Basketball Community Foundation for just under 2 years. During this time, he has been playing in the foundation's Central Venue League Competition and has worked hard to also gain the opportunity to take part in advanced development group training programmes with the Eagles foundation.

In such a short space of time, Noah has worked incredibly hard, honed his skills and showed great determination in order to achieve his goal of making the academy team. The team recently travelled to Grimsby for their first game of the season and were successful with a 82-72 win.

Officers' Reports for 2022-3

The officers' reports were presented at the AGM on Monday 16th October

PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2022-23

Hi everyone,

Well, this has been another worthwhile year for the Association.

We've had a few changes to the Executive Committee starting with the sad and sudden passing of our beloved Ted. I still can't believe that he is no longer with us.

I was quite overwhelmed when I was asked to step up as president as I knew that Ted was an amazing advocate for our school and the Association. After speaking to Mavis, who I see every week, I was a little more at ease with accepting the position. I realised that NO ONE could or can follow Ted in his unique dedication, I just need to do my best and with the amazing Team of exec members. We just have to 'KEEP CALM AND CARRY ON'.

Bob Harrison who has also been an integral part of the association has also had to stand down after many years of dedication to the group due to ill health. I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to Bob for all of his hard work.

Here are some of the year's highlights:

The 110th celebrations were a great success with superb attendance.

There was a 3 day event for years 7&8 'Tanfield Through Time' held earlier this year. A quiz ran alongside the event and Elizabeth and I attended school to present the prizes to the students who I have to say scored more than me !!!!

The school has been given £3,400 from the association to date this year and the money has gone towards paying for the mural and to put much needed funds into the school Discretionary Fund which can be used to help students attend the 'out of hours' exam ready tuition sessions that the amazing staff run in their own time!

Through funding that I was able to access from my DCC Neighbourhood budget (as my role of county councillor) the school purchased new equipment to setup a new library in the old music room. 3 of our wonderful members went along and assisted with setting up the new facility. A HUGE THANK YOU.

The monthly lunches have resumed which gives members a chance to catch up and simply get together in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere.

In closing I would like to say a huge thank you to all of the members for their dedication and hard work in keeping the association going.

Joyce

JOYCE CHARLTON

TREASURER'S REPORT

Tanfield Association Accounts 4/4/22 TO 4/9/23

Balance 4/4/22 £4185.49 Credit

Balance 4/9/23 £ 3957.40 Credit

CHEQUES DEBITED TO ACCOUNT

100248	50.00	H BOTT WEB FEE
100249	73.53	E HAWKINS TANFIELD STAR TROPHY
100250	126.00	E HAWKINS EXPENSES BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS/BOOKS
100251	12.45	E HAWKINS STATIONERY EXPENSES
100252	1000.00	E HAWKINS BOOK DEPOSIT (PRINT ME IT)
100253	1119.41	E HAWKINS BOOK BALANCE PLUS STATIONERY EXPENSES
100254	50.00	M BATTY 110 TH BIRTHDAY CAKE
100255	117.03	H BOTT STATIONERY EXPENSES
100256	504.40	TANFIELD SCHOOL BUFFET
100257	17.73	E HAWKINS STATIONERY EXPENSES
100258	3400.00	TANFIELD SCHOOL 110TH BIRTHDAY DONATION
100259	64.70	E HAWKINS STATIONERY EXPENSES
100260	30.00	A.BILTON RE J COATES LEAVING GIFT
100261	71.50	A.BILTON RE GIFT FOR AMANDA MORALEE
100262	142.42	E HAWKINS POSTAGE
	47.88	DIRECT DEBIT WEB SITE MIGRATION FEE
	9.90	DIRECT DEBIT WEB SITE DOMAIN NAME TRANSFER
100263	116.00	PRESIDENTS RETIREMENT GIFT
	2.00	DOMAIN TEST

DEBIT TOTAL £ 6954.95

CREDITS

MEMBERSHIP DONATIONS	902.00
BOOK SALES	3487.00
DONATIONS/SPONSORSHIP/BUFFET	1337.86
DCC GRANT	1000.00

TOTAL CREDITS £ 6726.86

138 MEMBERS

Balance 4/4/22 £4185.49 Credit

Balance 4/9/23 £ 3957.40 Credit

Date Accounts Confirmed 25/9/2023

S Donkin Treasurer S Donkin.....

E Hawkins Secretary

Elizabeth Hawkins

Webmaster's Report October 2023

I provided PayPal with documentation to verify that Tanfield Association was a "Not for profit" organisation.

With the 110th Birthday Celebrations in mind, this meant we paid much lower transaction fees for the online sale of books, buffet tickets and donations.

The website was updated to allow people to pay for goods/services online via PayPal.

Nearly £800 was taken via this system so the reduction in PayPal fees was very beneficial.

22 books raised £297, £280 for buffet tickets, £210 in donations.

I created a shared membership database using Google Drive so everyone who needed access had the latest information.

I tidied all the records, corrected errors and updated postcodes and email addresses.

The more email addresses we have, the cheaper it is to distribute our newsletters.

I added photos of the recent school improvements and 60+ photos from the 110th Birthday Celebrations. More recently, I have uploaded memories of Ted in the form of collages created by Elizabeth.

On the website, there are links to Ted's brief autobiography as well as many tributes paid to Ted by supporters old and young.

Sadly, I have had to create obituaries to several people with connections to the school – for example, Alan Westwater, Kath Kelly, Olga Reay, Marjorie Whalley and Nova Williamson.

It's well worth reading these tributes and memories at:

<https://tanfield-association.org/W3/obituaries.php>

I have added Newsletters 54 to 56 to the website.

In April 2023, I migrated the Association's Website & Email to a new supplier, MilesWeb.

This has reduced our hosting costs considerably and made administration much easier.

The transfer of the domain was seamless.

The performance of the new service has been excellent.

I have added an "Open Source" photo search feature called Plogger. It allows for the searching of the captions of our photo database. Here are the details of how to use the facility:

The Tanfield Association website contains nearly 2000 photos from 1912 to the present day.

Many have captions containing names/places/events/years and it is possible to search for specific

or general fields e.g. football, "Elizabeth Hawkins" etc.

Also, it is possible to create a slideshow from a photo collection or searched results.

Search field must be more than 4 alphanumeric characters.

Upper and lower case letters are treated the same.

Only alphanumerics are allowed - all special characters are removed.

The number of hits is limited to 20.

A simple list of words searches for ANY of the supplied words.
football cricket hockey = Finds any photo captions containing football OR cricket OR hockey
A plus sign (+) at the beginning means ALL words must be present.
+football cricket = Finds any photo captions containing both football AND cricket
If the words are enclosed in double quotes, the EXACT PHRASE must be present
"ted brabban" = Finds any photo captions with the exact PHRASE "Ted Brabban" (ignoring case)

To access the photo search go to:

<https://tanfield-association.org/plogger/index.php>

Feel free to submit comments on any photo – use the form at the foot of each displayed photo
. Any comments are subject to approval.

Along with Elizabeth, I have maintained our popular Facebook site at:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/2010037882556025>

This is an excellent way of involving “younger” supporters and generates a great deal of interest.

The website is also tablet & phone friendly reflecting the modern way of working.

Howard Bott

Webmaster

I'd like to hear from you, email any comments or suggestions to:

webguru@tanfield-association.org

Secretary's Report
2022-2023
(and looking back as far as 2019 and Covid)

Fulfilling our twin aims of supporting the school and bringing our members together became impossible during the pandemic. We were able to keep in touch with a lot of members via the website and Facebook page, and for most of the time, Ted made a heroic effort to keep the termly newsletter going. When things began to ease, we viewed the relaxing of restrictions with relief!

It wasn't until September 2021 that we were able to accept an invitation from the school to do a tour of the buildings and grounds to see the progress that had been made, largely when the school had been closed to students. We were all very impressed, not only with the improvements to the environment but also with the appearance and behaviour of the students. We were also treated to lunch – altogether a very enjoyable visit!

2022 was the busiest year we have had since the centenary, as it marked the school's 110th anniversary. The association was asked by the school to produce another book and, working with the school, plans were made for a day of celebration in October. The year was therefore taken up with planning and completing tasks: contacting members, sourcing photos, asking members and current staff and students to contribute their reminiscences to the book, writing the book, publicising and organising the celebrations, making enough displays to fill the Assembly Hall, sorting the parking, the buffet etc etc. The termly newsletters and website

reported on the progress of the preparations and kept members informed, as well as enabling book and ticket sales and receiving donations towards a 'birthday present' for the school. Webmaster Howard Bott and Treasurer Susan Donkin deserve our thanks for the hard work they did to make everything run smoothly. The Working Exec members were a great team, gradually bringing everything together, and we all enjoyed a well-attended celebration day on Saturday October 15th. A mural of the school's history was unveiled on the day and was a popular stopping point during tours of the school. President Ted Brabban made an excellent speech tracing the ups and downs of the school's history, concluding that Tanfield today is definitely on the up and up! Ted Brabban and Elizabeth Hawkins were presented with Lifetime Service Awards by the school, and we all admired the newly-installed permanent mural outlining Tanfield's history and celebrating its 110 years.

In December, once the finances of book sales and generous donations from members had been finalised, we were able to present a cheque for £3400 to the school, part of which went towards paying for the mural, and the rest contributing to a support fund for disadvantaged students. The team were entertained to lunch.

Sadly, the week following the presentation saw the passing of President Ted Brabban, who had been the mainstay of the association. His contribution in so many ways over the years could never be surpassed. He had served the school until the very end. Many members attended his funeral and the celebration of his life in January.

Joyce Charlton, a long-serving member of the Working Exec and supporter of the school, took over as Acting President.

Work began in January to prepare the school history quiz, 'Tanfield Through Time', which was to be presented to both Years 7 and 8.

In February 2023, the school's new Music building was opened and members were invited to tour the new facilities. Amy Bilton, Jean Stoddart, Margaret Jones and myself admired the large classroom and six practice rooms.

In March, we were in school for two days presenting 'Tanfield Through Time' to Years 7 and 8. This was very well received and the students enjoyed completing the quiz on the 110 years of the school's history. We were impressed by their behaviour and their enthusiasm. In the following week, President Joyce Charlton presented prizes to students who achieved the highest score in each class.

Our monthly meetings for lunch continue and we have enjoyed good eating and 'a good natter' on the second Wednesday of every month. We would welcome anyone who would like to come along.

The Tanfield Star was received last year by Hon. Sec. Elizabeth Hawkins for work on the book and will be presented this year to Head Teacher Steven Clough, on behalf of Team Tanfield, to show appreciation for the work the whole staff have done to raise the standards to the heights they are now.

At the AGM, a cheque for £1000 will be presented to Mr Clough in support of Year 11 Exam Revision. Students who remain after school for extra tuition or who attend revision sessions during the holidays will be fed and watered and will receive support with transport costs. A huge thank you once again to all of our members and volunteers for what they have done for our old school. It's a great way of saying thank you for what the school did for us.

Elizabeth Hawkins Hon. Sec.

The AGM and Tour of the School



L-R: Warren Pescod, Tom Cooper, Claire Humpherson, Mary Evans, Howard Bott, Jean McCullough, Elizabeth Hawkins, Lestryne Bott, Chris Morrison, Steven Harris, Alastair McEwan, Alan Tully, Judith Baker-Smith, Les Johnson.

Given the amount of rain over the last few weeks we were fortunate to have a fine day for the annual meeting of the Tanfield Association. This was preceded by a tour of the school and quite a few of us took the opportunity to see the old and familiar parts of the school along with some new developments. Our tour group spanned the 1940s to the 1970s and we had a nice time sharing our experiences. Two ladies from Chester-le-Street, who attended during the 1950s, reminded us that the SGS catchment was quite large in those days.

The main entrance to the school faces the former Boys' playground next to what was the Metal/Wood Work & Tech Drawing area in the 1960/70s. After signing in and receiving our printed IDs on lanyards (all very secure these days) we entered the old building and found ourselves next to the old Music room (Mr Yockney's 1D class in the late 60s). As we moved to the end of the corridor, we reached the old French classroom and we recalled some of our teachers. The old building is in great shape and it was nice to see the referencing of the past and the present.

We moved outside to the 'new' building that opened in 1977. This is where the French classroom is now located and it certainly looked like the vibrant tradition of French teaching at the school is continuing. We also saw the new library that had been opened earlier in the morning before stopping for a photograph in front of the very fine timeline of the school in its various forms. We continued through some familiar territory – kitchens seemed the same, although food is likely very different, as is the dining room & assembly hall. As many will recall, Dr Sharp's office was located just outside the dining room and passing this room prompted stories of encounters with the Doc. The current Head, Mr Clough, does not use this room. We really enjoyed talking to him and the staff that accompanied us for the tour; they are clearly very proud of what they are achieving.

The highlight of the tour was a visit to the Music room. This houses an extraordinary range of instruments: about 20 keyboards, enough brass instruments to support a Big Band, strings, electric guitars, and 9 drum kits! Everyone remarked that this was rather different from music with Mr Yockney! The new Music room highlighted the way in which the school is progressing through investment in quality buildings (the whole school looks great) and through the dedication and creativity of its staff. I think that it is fair to say that the tour was quite uplifting – so do take the chance to visit.

After the tour most of us went to the Tanfield Community Hall for the annual meeting. You can read about this elsewhere in the Newsletter but after the formalities we had a nice lunch of meat pie and mushy peas followed by cake. It's always a pleasure to meet Mrs Hawkins again but we were joined by another favourite from the 1970s, Mrs Stoddart. The afternoon was rounded off with a few games (dominoes on our table) and a raffle, with Christopher Morrison being particularly successful! Overall, a memorable day.

Alastair Mc Ewan

1969-76

(Who came over from Brisbane to join us!)

The AGM

The main business of the AGM was as follows:

- Election of Officers. Results:
President – Joyce Charlton elected unopposed.
Vice President – Steven Harris elected unopposed.
Treasurer – Susan Donkin re-elected unopposed.
Secretary – Elizabeth Hawkins re-elected unopposed.
Webmaster – Howard Bott re-elected unopposed.
Minuting Secretary – Amy Bilton re-elected unopposed.
- Presentation of the Tanfield Star to Steven Clough and Team Tanfield for their splendid work in raising standards in the school.
- Presentation of a cheque for £1000 for the school's discretionary Fund, to support Year 11 students who attend revision and exam preparation sessions put on voluntarily by staff during the school holidays.
- Presentation of a retirement gift to former President and Vice President Bob Harrison.

The AGM was held in Tanfield Lea Community Centre, where, following the business of the day, newly-elected President Joyce Charlton immediately got to work on providing us with lunch – pie and peas followed by jam sponge and custard, cakes, (including birthday cake), biscuits, tea and coffee. Fortunately, Joyce had help, mainly from former Tanfield pupil Pauline Wright, and from members of the association.

Susan Donkin was in charge of the raffle (prizes kindly donated by members), then time for socialising (and playing dominoes!) ended the day. Old friends met again, former pupils reminisced with their former teachers, and I think we can safely say a good time was had by all.

Photos from the AGM are on the two pages following.



Top left: Joyce opening the meeting

Top right: Susan Donkin organised the raffle

Middle left: Diane Hall, Joan Vincenti, Chris Morrison, Alastair McEwan, Steven Harris

Middle right: Jean Stoddart, Alan Tully, Judith Baker-Smith

Bottom left: Tom Cooper, Margaret Jones

Bottom right: Bob Harrison, Pauline Harrison, Warren Pescod, Howard and Lestryne Bott



Left: Head Teacher Steven Clough receiving the Tanfield Star on behalf of Team Tanfield.
Above: Business Manager Christine Hewitson receiving a cheque for £1000 in support of Year 11 Revision and Exam Preparation.



President Joyce Charlton cutting the celebration cake



Former president Bob Harrison receiving a gift to thank him for his years of service to the TA



Cheryl Nicholson and Mr Clough



Jean Mc Cullough, Mary Evans, Christine McGough

A Memory from Les Johnson

I'm not sure who will remember but around 1979, Tyne Tees Television approached the school and Ted Brabban about making a TV show. Well, I and some friends made a documentary for 'You Can Make It'. Ironically, it was on the subject of 'Should Miners Retire at 55?' - and I ended working for part of the NCB!

Another teacher, Mr Cameron, also helped in making it. It even won a silver award at the Chicago Film Festival. I have just had the VHS put onto a memory stick. Quite interesting to see after all these years!

Les Johnson

[Can anyone remember the making of this video? If you were involved, please let us know! EH]

Letters

Dear Elizabeth,
 Newsletter 56: Congratulations on an excellent read over a variety of topics!
 Euan Ross.

Dear Elizabeth,

Bob Patterson, Bermuda

Bob died at home, very quietly, on August 9th. He became delusional three months earlier, and our doctor said he was dying, so it wasn't a surprise, but a relief. According to his wishes he was cremated and his ashes scattered into the sea off his favourite beaches.

The arrival of a Tanfield Association newsletter was always a great joy to him.

Best regards,

Helle Patterson

Dear Elizabeth,

I received the invitation to the function on October 16th whilst in Canada this past month with my family. I intended to come along.

Sadly my Uncle Andrew Martin age 97 (past pupil 1937 to 1942) died whilst I was there and his funeral is at midday on October 16th at Birtley Crematorium. I do wish you all a special day and I hope to attend any forthcoming events. Sincere thanks for the work you do on behalf of the association.

Pat (Pounder) Pickersgill

Hi Elizabeth,

I actually never attended Tanfield school, but Pat Gillespie my grandad did and so did his siblings.

Pat was born in 1911 so I think he would have attended in 1923-1927 when he was 12-16.

My grandad had a photo album with a few photos of the school and that's how I got interested.

Kind regards,

Mariela Gillespie



This and other photos sent by Mariela will appear in the next issue of the newsletter.

[Please send contributions for the newsletter to Elizabeth (address on front cover) or email to secretaire@tanfield-association.org]