

LIFE AFTER TANFIELD



NAME **CAROLINE HOBBS**

PUPIL AT TANFIELD FROM 1976 TO 1982

MY LIFE AFTER LEAVING TANFIELD

I left Tanfield in 1982 after 7 years as a pupil and the first chapter of life after Tanfield began at Manchester University where I studied History and German.

University was not like school at all, however, the grounding gained at Tanfield of thinking for yourself helped negotiate studying and having some fun at the same time. I spent a term in Germany to enjoy the German way of life and improve my German. I was very fortunate also to have as my history tutor, an expert on Hitler, Sir Ian Kershaw – I still even now read history books.

An arts degree does not lend itself to a particular career and after going through the university “milk round” of prospective employers, insurance found me. I started work in Newcastle as a graduate trainee with an insurance company in the Cloth Market, however, after 6 months, my personal life took me to London to begin work in the reinsurance industry in The City of London where I have worked ever since. Thank you, Mrs Stoddart for teaching me to understand mathematics!

Reinsurance is like laying off a bet, with really large numbers and although it sounds like something nasty in The City, it is something insurers cannot do without. I work in legacy insurance and reinsurance business, mainly from Europe and North America and it has luckily allowed me to travel to meet with customers and colleagues. I am very fortunate to work with such a great bunch of people of all ages who are friendly, fun-loving and sociable. I still enjoy my work at nearly 59 years of age and still learn something new every day.

Away from work, I like to socialise, go to live gigs when I can get tickets and always have a book nearby. I follow Newcastle United from a distance and travel up to the North East to visit family as much as possible. Tanfield School still looks the same, albeit without the notorious tower block, when I go past or watch repeats of “Vera”. As I’m so far away, I like to follow school friends and their antics on Facebook. I am fortunate enough to still be healthy, when school friends who were such lovely people are no longer with us and sadly missed.

I live in south-east London, not far from the river and on a common, with my long-term partner. I was never lucky enough to have my own children, but I have a ready-made, grown-up stepdaughter. Our house is a bit of a United Kingdom – one English, one Welsh and one Scottish but we don’t fall out over sport.

One thing I learned from history is that life is like a winding path. It is not a straight line, and you never know what is around the next corner. My late, beloved parents gave me the very best gift of independence, but school also gave me the confidence building blocks, to learn to learn and to go round that corner and to have some fun on the way.