



# LIFE AFTER TANFIELD

NAME ...Abigail Barker (now Yardimci) .....

PUPIL AT TANFIELD FROM ...1989.... TO .....1994.....

## MY LIFE AFTER LEAVING TANFIELD

I left Tanfield over 28 years ago so I scarcely know where to start!

All of my teachers will remember that I was very keen on arts and creativity, so it wouldn't surprise anyone to know that I left Tanfield to do A Levels in Theatre Studies, English Literature and Art at

Derwentside College in Consett. I honestly had the time of my life at the old college campus (now sadly demolished and replaced with flats!) and it really helped me to step into my passion, focusing on what I loved.



With my brother, Matty, in a Tanfield production of 'Oliver!'

After that, I was lucky enough to get a place at Manchester Metropolitan University where I spent three years studying Creative Arts. It was an incredibly exciting degree – very contemporary and pushing lots of boundaries in the creative world! I loved that I could combine my favourite art forms to create my own experience – it was a very exciting time for me as I discovered community theatre and the power of using the arts to help other people.



Embarrassing photo of me graduating in Creative Arts

Leaving uni was scary as finding a job in the arts isn't easy. However, I moved back to County Durham and managed to get a job as an Assistant Arts Development Officer for Middlesbrough Council. I got to work in schools and community settings, commissioning and managing some really fantastic arts projects including creativity festivals and a dance project in the Millennium Dome.

Working for a local authority just wasn't pushing it enough for me, so I started my own community arts organisation called Busy Ape Arts. I teamed up with some friends from uni and we spent ten years working with all kinds of people across the North East, using participatory arts to boost self-esteem, improve social skills and enhance mental health and wellbeing. I lived and breathed my business and thought I'd be doing it until the day I died. But, life had other plans .



Me doing a drama project in a local primary school

A severe bout of heartbreak and some serious soul-searching happened in 2006 when I closed Busy Ape Arts and went off on a life-changing trip round Turkey. I didn't plan it, but it was there that I met my husband and decided what I really needed to get back to was my love of writing.



It took ten years, two babies, one marriage, living in three different countries, several painting exhibitions and a hell of a lot of setbacks, but I finally did it. I wrote and published three novels called The Life Is Yours Trilogy and am proud to say they are now available to buy on Amazon. I have a devoted following of readers on social media and new people are discovering my own brand of uplifting fiction all the time. I also write a blog called 'Mum in the Moment' and paint abstract art to sell on my website. It's honestly a dream come true.



As well as working on my 4<sup>th</sup> book (coming in 2023!), I also work for a fantastic charity called Bluebell Care, supporting families where there are mental health challenges around the time of having a baby. Having had my own lived experience of postnatal depression, I'm so pleased that I now get to support mums who might be going through something similar. I even trained to be a mindfulness teacher so I could use mindfulness meditation in my role with families.

The Life Is Yours Trilogy is here!





I now live by the sea in South Devon with my Turkish husband and two boys aged 11 and 14. I love that I get to look out at the sea every single day and walking along the beaches and the harbour is my favourite thing to do. Right now, I just want to keep writing books and the stories that plant themselves in my mind. As my English teachers at Tanfield will remember, I can't be held back when it comes to writing stories!



Living by the sea is amazing!

If you'd like to read my books, you can search 'Life is Yours' on Amazon, or order a signed copy from my website: [www.abigailyardimci.com](http://www.abigailyardimci.com)

You can also find me on any of my social media platforms:

-  AbigailYardimci
-  @abigailyardimciauthor
-  @AbigailYardimci
-  @abigailyardimci\_author

*Psst! You can even get a digital copy of my first book, Life Is Yours for FREE by visiting my website's homepage and clicking the sign-up link – enjoy!*

