

FAIRFIELD OLD GIRLS' ASSOCIATION

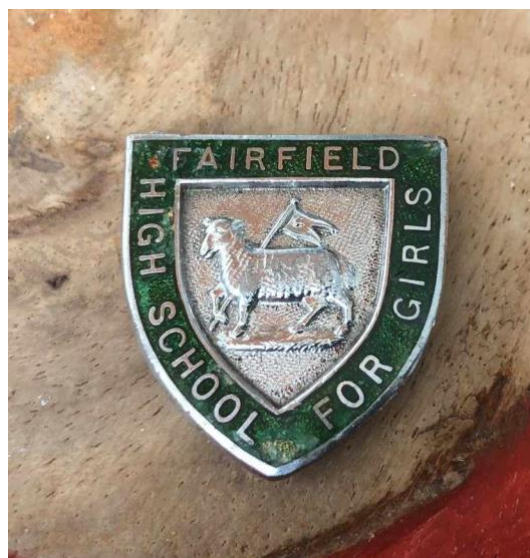
NEWSLETTER 2025

Hello Ladies

Lots of changes have happened to the school over the last year, all very exciting!

Both the AGM and the Autumn Reunion were very well attended, with lots more Old Girls joining the Association.

Thank you everyone for your subscriptions and for the amazing support from you all.



Members and Staff we have lost

Sheila Wagstaff (Dugdale) 1944-49

Wyn May wrote to me informing us that Sheila had passed away prior to the Christmas of 2023. She received the news from Robert Wagstaff, Sheilas husband, who still lives in Formby.

Doreen “Midge” Morton (Midgley) 1942-49

Midges niece Helen Carey posted that Midge had passed away in our Facebook Group. Helen wrote:

I am very sad to let FOGA members know that my aunt Doreen “Midge” Morton (Midgley) passed away on Friday 31st January, peacefully in hospital at the age of 92.

I don't have her exact years at Fairfield – my estimate would be 1943/4 – 1950. Doreen was the second Midgley girl to go to Fairfield following her aunt Eunice Betts (Midgley) in the 1920s and before her sister, my late mother Barbara Fletcher (Midgley) who went to Fairfield (approx. 1950-1957) just as Midge finished, followed some year later by myself Helen Carey (Fletcher) (1973-1980).

Whilst many in this group will not have known either Midge or Barbara during their school years, both were active members of FOGA from the 1980's right up to Mum's death in 2016. As the archivists for at least decade up to 2016, they were instrumental in getting permission for the permanent display that now exists in the school at the end of the science corridor. Much effort went into trips into school during the holidays twice a year to change the displays and to check they were looking good for the FOGA meetings.

Midge had a long career teaching in Tameside and always took a great delight when she knew of someone (pupil, daughter and then grand-daughters) who got a place at Fairfield.

She will be greatly missed not only by her family, but all who knew her. No funeral details are available yet but I will update when available.

Helen Asquith 1950-2025

English Teacher, 1984 – 2005

Helen grew up across many different parts of the country, including London and Oxford. When her family settled in Bramhall, Stockport, she finished her secondary education at Manchester High School for Girls, and she gained a university place at Newnham College, Cambridge. Whilst studying there she met Les and got married before graduating in Classical Studies in 1972, a degree which encompassed many of her favourite subjects including Greek and Latin, classical literature and ancient history. She gained her Cert Ed in '73, and her Masters was awarded in 1982.

Her first teaching job was at Loreto college where she taught Classics to nuns, but she took a break to look after her girls and returned to teaching in the 1980s, working across different schools in Tameside. As an English teacher, she joined Fairfield in 1984, a school she was so proud to work at and where she was a much-loved and highly popular teacher. She became deputy department head of English, working closely with Helen Weston and Kathy Quinn.

Daughters Emily and Abby who attended Fairfield remember how they were known by many other pupils simply as “Mrs Asquith's daughters”, rather than their names!

In her spare time, Helen was an avid reader, sometimes getting through multiple novels a week. She also loved watching her beloved Manchester United, and gardening.

She decided to join her husband in early retirement in 2005. Together they spent the following years enjoying time at home and holidaying around England and the Mediterranean, but she was a keen member of the “Ladies that Lunch” club, and she remained close friends with a number of her ex-Fairfield colleagues.

Helen passed away in January in Tameside hospital and is sadly missed.

New Members

Janice	Wilson	Maher	1961-68
Gwynne	Lever	Mellor	1965-72
Diane	Fairclough	Pearce	1976-81
Lisa	Kennedy	Prendergast	1977-82
Dominique	Paton	Shiels	1977-82
Franceasa	Jones-Ball	Jones	1980-85
Gail	Norris	Brown	1976-81
Alison	Sullivan	Messham	1976-81
Hilary	Cain		1976-81
Gail	Robinson	Aitken	1976-81
Sharon	Thompson	Parry	1981-86
Michelle	Gordon	Parry	1979-84
Jeanette	Seavers	Evans	1965-72
Barbara	Nelson	Scott	1958-63
Linda	Fraser	Hollingworth	1962-67
Jill	Lomas		1978-83
Deborah	Baird		1978-83
Jill	Miller	Clifford	1978-83
Andrea	Wood	McDonald	1978-83
Suzanne	Martin	Lawrence	1967-72
Alison	Price	Roberts	1967-72
Elaine	Smith		1965-72
Wendy	Quinn		1971-76
Jayne	Buxton	Green	1981-86
Christine	Denny	Robson	1964-70
Haylee	Keyworth	Adams	1999-2004
Lesley	Adams	Clough	1972-77
Elaine	Howe	Hackney	1965-70
Pauline	Williams	Broomhead	1961-68
Helen	Hardy	Charlesworth	1981-86
Tracy	Holt		1981-86
Sandra	Spooner	Houfe	1961-66
Judith	Johnson	Stewart	1968-75
Helen	Dowdswell	Dowdeswell	1968-73

I am sorry to say that there are a few members who we have not heard from in a few years. They were stalwart members and paid their subs religiously, which worries me when I say we haven't heard from them. If anyone is in contact with them can you please let us know the situation.

Mary Bracken (Hamer) 1945-1953

Last heard from 2021, she was living in Buckinghamshire.

Betty Busby (Hyde) 1945-50

Last heard from 2020, she was living in Woodley, Stockport.

News about what has been happening in and around School

It has been an incredibly busy term and a half at Fairfield. I thought I'd share with you some of what we've been working towards and doing since the FOGA event at the end of September.

Successful Learners, Confident Individuals, Responsible Citizens

This is our vision, we want our pupils to continue to be successful learners, confident individuals and responsible citizens. Collectively as staff we have worked very hard over the last few years in developing our pedagogy and practice to deliver strong lessons that get excellent results. We had another set of outstanding results for cohort 2024 which led to a Progress 8 score of +0.53. Whilst we must continue to push forward with this and must never be complacent, a core focus this year has been to develop our pupils as confident individuals. In September we launched the Confident Individual Programme to develop this area of school life; we want our pupils to be happy, resilient and independent. It's about belonging and our pupils feeling part of the Fairfield community. Whilst pupils have continued to work hard across the curriculum, they have also enjoyed our extra curricular and enrichment offer. Over the last term and a half, the Confident Individual Programme has included such activities as:

- Fairfield Star Spotlight, a fortnightly event to allow pupils an opportunity to share work they are proud of with senior staff. We've had amazing examples of Home Learning, beautiful artwork and evidence of effort and application across the curriculum.
- The Young Green Briton Challenge as a year group (a team response to sustainability and climate issues), a small number of pupils presented their ideas to a 'Dragon's Den' panel event on 14th February and are through to the next round in Liverpool.
- Fairfield committees Fairfest Committee, Eco-Committee, EAL Ambassadors and a pupil-led newsletter are all up and running. The applications to join committees were of the highest standard and reflected the dedication and aspiration of our pupils.
- Fairfield Forum is our pupil voice panel which involves pupils from across all form groups who continue to share their ideas and opinions to drive school improvement.
- Interform competition programme which has included half termly challenges; everything from a pumpkin carving competition and interform Thriller dance off challenge.
- Year 6 Open Evening was a huge success and pupils were a true credit to the school. Around 200 pupils helped in subject areas, acted as guides or spoke with parents/carers and future pupils.
- Year 11 pupils had a Resilience Day mid-October. An external company delivered sessions providing strategies, advice and support around cultivating a growth mindset and managing wellbeing in preparation for their mock exams in November. Responsible Citizens: Kind, Inclusive, Respectful
- We had another hugely successful Heritage Day on Friday 13th December, as I said in the press release: "Heritage Day is a true reflection of our values as a school. It's wonderful to see our pupils and staff embracing and celebrating their cultures, stirring curiosity and learning from one another whilst strengthening our ethos of respect and inclusivity. This year's event has been another huge success, it has been an exceptional day."
- 7 large bags of clothing were sent to the social action group 'Don't Walk Past' and another 7 large bags of children's clothing were delivered to 'End Result' for children in need. We collected a

huge quantity of food which was given to the Salvation Army in Openshaw and the new Roundhouse Food Pantry.

□ Our Year 9 pupils were able to participate in a range of exciting and interesting workshops as part of their Personal Development and World Mental Health Day on Thursday 10th October. The workshops included first aid skills, E-Safety, mindfulness, self-esteem, African drumming and yoga.

□ To celebrate Black History Month, we encouraged pupils to select books from our physical and online library which celebrate diversity. A competition was hosted in the library for pupils to be entered into a prize draw if they contributed to our BHM tree of knowledge display.

□ Year 10 Drama pupils went on a trip to Ashton Sixth Form to meet with our ex pupil, Isabelle Smith. Isabelle was recently awarded 'Best Newcomer' at the Inside Soap Awards 2024.

□ 127 pupils auditioned for the production of Mary Poppins. The show involved around 78 pupils and was a huge success.

□ The Modern Languages Faculty led Languages Week which included: A special French breakfast for all year 7 dressed in the flag colours of the language they study. A whole school staff Duo lingo competition, encouraged by pupils to spread a love of language learning. Our annual Great Languages Bake Off which included a spectacular array of themed cakes to celebrate other cultures, countries and Languages. Successful learners: Aspirational, Inquisitive, Hard working

□ Successful learners: Aspirational, Inquisitive, Hard working Pupils have worked hard across the curriculum, building their knowledge, understanding and skills, alongside positive successful learner habits.

□ Year 11 pupils completed their mock examinations, attended a Mock Results Assembly were given feedback to support next steps as we look to the spring term.

□ Period 6 sessions for Year 11 continued this term (extra lesson at the end of the day).

□ Across years 7 – 9, pupils have completed Knowledge and Skills Assessments (KSAs) and completed feedback logs in their Planners.

□ The Senior Leadership team have been shown some outstanding examples of pupil work through the fortnightly Fairfield Star Spotlight.

□ During the first half of the spring term there were examinations for Year 10 and we started the Year 9 Progression process to guide and support pupils and families as option choices are made.

□ Year 7 watched a play called 'Blindside' and completed a workshop with a theatre company on the theme of violence against women and girls.

□ Year 11 pupils attended a Blood Brothers production to support their Drama studies and a group of Year 9 pupils saw Miracle on 34th Street prior to Christmas. A number of our Year 9 pupils went on a trip to Warner Brothers Studio – the home of Harry Potter

Sporting achievements:

□ All year group football and netball teams have completed their first two rounds of borough competitions. The year 7, 8 and KS4 netball team finished first place over all, and the year 9 team finished second. All teams are now through to the first round of the cup competitions.

□ We competed in the Tameside Cross Country championships on 3rd December where we finished 4th overall out of 16 competing schools. We had a number of pupils who finished in the top 20 positions of their race who have now been invited to the Greater Manchester Championships in February.

This is by no means the full picture of current life at Fairfield, but I hope it gives you some insight into the great work and commitment of both pupils and staff

**from Miss Fee Lealman
Headteacher|**



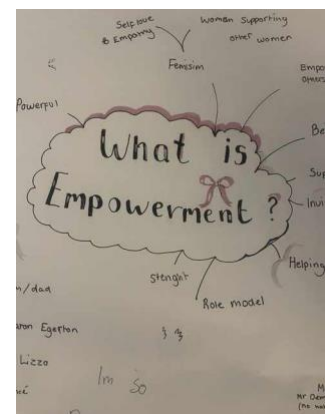
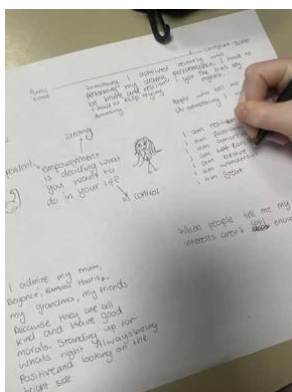
Cast of Mary Poppins



Dragons Den



World Heritage and Culture Day



Building self confidence

**You can see all these pictures and more on the New
Fairfield High School Facebook Group.**

Take a look it is very interesting.

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News from members

I had this lovely email from

Jean Maddox (Butterworth) 1952 -1957.

Jean was happy enough to let me share it.

Thanks for the newsletter and most particularly the little piece about Olive Harper. I've often wondered what happened to her as I knew she'd gone to study at Cambridge but know nothing after that.

I remember Olive well because she was in the Upper Sixth when I first joined Fairfield in the Third Form and she was our Table Prefect in the Dining Room! She sat at the head of the table of 6 or 8 girls (can't quite remember how many) and doled out the meat or main courses to us all and we then helped ourselves to vegetables, etc. I was quite in awe of her at the time as she was at the end of her time at Fairfield and I was at the beginning. I remember particularly, her serving out apple pie one lunchtime and then asking who wanted 'sauce.' Well, the only sauce I'd ever heard of was H.P. sauce and I wondered why they were serving that with a sweet, and so refused. When I realised it was custard I was annoyed to have refused as I liked custard but, as they say, you learn something every minute!

Winifred May (Clarke) 1944-49

Wyn wrote to me to tell us about the passing of her lovely friend Sheila, in doing so she re kindled her membership.

A few years ago, Wyn wrote to let me know that she would be moving from Cornwall back up north, and would send her new address as soon as she was settled. When I heard nothing from her, (I think she forgot!) I archived her, but now we have her back

Welcome back Wyn X

Wyn sent me another letter in December informing me of another of her school pals passing, Sheila Ann Atkinson (Garner) 1944-49, Whilst Sheila was not a member, maybe a few will remember her. Wyn writes saying that she met Sheila in the lower fourth, and remained life long friends. Her daughter telephoned Wyn after receiving a Christmas and Birthday Cards. Wyn writes that Sheila was her last remaining School chum.

We are so sorry for your sad loss Wyn, please remember we are all school chums in FOGA X

Elsie Taylor (Barber) 1940-45

I received a lovely letter from Elsie at the beginning of July.

Elsie explained that she would not be able to attend any further meetings as she no longer had transport of her own, and the friend who had been bringing her along, now only feels able to drive locally. I feel very sad about this, but it is quite understandable. Elsie sends her regards to everyone, and says she will miss seeing the old school.

I have asked Elsie to keep writing to us, as I am sure she has lots of memories of her time at Fairfield.

Joan Parker 1956-61

I graduated in 1961 and recently found your website. I am almost 80 years old and the website brought back memories of my school experience. I thought you might be interested to know how I fared. I have been recording some of my history for my grandchildren.

I left at 16 after taking the GCE. Instead of staying for the sixth form I did a year at a secretarial college and spent my working career as a secretary, which sounds boring, but was the opposite.

At 21 I went to work for the United Nations in Geneva for two years. I bumped into two old classmates, Gail Cooper and Pauline (?), who were working for the World Health Organization. I was in a division called Trade and Development, where I supported diplomats from all over the world and learned a lot about sugar and palm oil! I also spent many hours sitting in large rooms where they spent days debating where to put a comma.

Towards the end of my two years I attended a conference on Trade and Development-UNCTAD II in New Delhi. I was there about six weeks and was able to do a number of trips-Agra, Jaipur, Varanasi (formerly Benares), and Bombay. There was a shortage of rice and restaurants had to have one day a week when they didn't serve rice. There was a booklet listing all the restaurants and showing their rice-free day so customers would know.

For our return to Geneva we were allowed to pick our own route, so a friend and I chose to spend a week in Beirut. It's heartbreaking to see what is happening to such a beautiful place. At the time (1968) there were only three or four cedars left and probably they are now all gone. We took some tours, including one to Tyre and Sidon, which are being bombed at this moment.

Four years later I went to Santiago, Chile, for UNCTAD III. It was a very unhappy time for the people. There were shortages of petrol and beef among other things, and an empty bottle had to be returned in order to buy a new one. The inhabitants were told to give us what we wanted, e.g. taxi rides, which made us very uncomfortable. For our return my friend and I opted to spend a week at Copacabana, Rio de Janeiro, since Easter Island was too far away and it seemed that Machu Picchu would be overwhelmed by all the delegates from the conference.

I continued to work for the UN on short conferences in Geneva and around the world, including three months in Paris with the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development en.wikipedia.org/wiki/OECD and six months in Helsinki. Helsinki was made up of short conferences culminating in the signing of the Helsinki Agreement - Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. [//www.osce.org/helsinki-final-act](https://www.osce.org/helsinki-final-act). I was able to fly different routes to get to Helsinki with stopovers in Amsterdam and Copenhagen. For the final conference my friend offered to take her car. She lived in Newcastle, so we took the ferry to Finland and spent a few days touring the country before heading to Helsinki. After the conference we took a couple of weeks to see Sweden and Norway, taking ferries where necessary, to reach Bergen, Norway and the ferry to Newcastle.

In 1969 I was hired as a Relief Assistant Purser for two cruise ships of the British India Steam Navigation Company. The Nevasa and Uganda had originally been built as troop carriers, with dormitory-style accommodation. They were being used for 1,000-plus school children aged from 12 to 18. Each school group had teachers to give lessons on the ship, but they spent a lot of time counting heads on and off buses. There were two decks of cabins for the teachers and about 300 passengers. There was a Headmaster and two Deputy Heads, who gave lectures on the countries being visited. One headmaster said some children said they hadn't enjoyed their trip, but were still talking about it years later. P.E. was given by two young women from a P.E. college.

We departed from various ports, but the one departure I remember most was from Belfast. We sailed into Belfast on a Saturday morning and the passengers started coming onboard at lunchtime. I was having lunch and thought I recognised one of the teachers at a nearby table. We eventually worked out that we'd met in the UN cafeteria in Geneva when she was visiting a friend! We talked during the cruise and she told me that on the Friday night before the start of the cruise, a young girl's policeman father had been shot. He had insisted that she still come on the cruise. It was the beginning of The Troubles. When we returned two weeks later there was a curfew and soldiers were patrolling the streets.

One of the many trivia questions I used in the ship's paper was "where did the word posh originate?" Answer: When people used to go to India they would ask to be on the shady side of the ship going out and coming back. The ticket would be marked with the letters PO and SH-Port Out and Starboard Home.

One evening I was talking to another Assistant Purser and the subject of Beirut came up. I mentioned that my hotel had overlooked a bar that was rumoured to be a meeting place for spies. He said it was true and he had been there with his father-Kim Philby!

In-between the UN conferences and cruises I did temporary work in the newsroom of the BBC for the programme "Look North". Besides preparing news items, Stuart Hall would dictate replies to his fans. One evening there was some problem and they asked me to sit in the studio to operate the tee- prompter. I had typed up the script for the teleprompter but had never seen it. I was given a moments instruction and then we were on the air. For news items the presenters spoke at three words a minute, but this wasn't the news. I had the words scrolling up and down. Needless to say, I was never asked to do that again.

In 1977 I went to work for the oil company Aramco in Saudi Arabia. I had a wonderful time and stayed for seven years, instead of the original one year I had planned.

I met my husband in Saudi Arabia and moved to California with him. I worked for Hughes Aircraft, which was founded by Howard Hughes. I retired from Hughes and have enjoyed life in El Segundo, which is a beach city and has a breeze every day, so we don't get the heat like the rest of the State. I have two stepdaughters, six granddaughters and one new great-grandson. I am very proud of them all. The elder stepdaughter has a company to provide disaster relief when called on by the Federal Energy Management Association FEMA. She is currently in Asheville, North Carolina providing help following Hurricane Helene with trailers designed for showers, laundry and restrooms. (www.fema.gov).

I only had one negative experience at school and I hope things have changed. I dreaded the first day of the new year. The teacher would do a register for school lunches. The last question would be for anyone having a free lunch. My father died when I was 11 and I was always the only person in my class to respond. I had to go to the front to talk to the teacher and was very self-conscious.

What an amazing career, I have asked Joan to let me see the finished memoirs.

Corinne Boyce (Stiff) 1954-60

Corinne and her hubby Philip celebrated their 60th Wedding Anniversary on the 20th February.



Look what they got through the post.



Please keep writing to us with your news and memories, without you there would be nothing to share.

Charitable Donations

Our Gift to School

FOGA have helped to fund seating areas around school. These areas enable the girls who don't have school lunch to sit with their friends at lunch and break times. The girls use these benches every day.



These are just a few of the benches, there are others scattered around the grounds.

Individual Donations have also been made by our members in the past, one particularly generous one enabled the school to utilise the old tennis courts into a MUGA (Multi Use Games Area) in 2022. The area was opened by the Olympic Gold Medal Winner, Georgia Taylor Brown, also an old girl.



A while ago Stephanie Bateman (Retired Head Teacher) forwarded this letter to me which I should have been in the last newsletter.

Andy Sharrocks
341 Fleetwood Rd
Thornton Cleveleys
FY5 1NG

Mrs Stephanie Bateman
Fairfield High School For Girls
Latrobe Street
Droylsden
M/c
M43 6AE
13/12/23

Dear Mrs Bateman,

Please find enclosed a cheque for one hundred pounds. Let me explain;

I am the executor of Mrs Jean Thompson will. Jean left us 17th August after twelve weeks in hospital after a stroke, at the age of 85.

When Jean was much younger, she attended your school as a pupil and the memories never left her. She was always talking about what a wonderful time she had at the school, and how the teachers instilled in her a real thirst for knowledge, including languages.

She went on to university eventually, and this was the 1950's, so not a common thing for girls to do in the day. She obtained a BA Honours degree in German and German translation. I think she may have studied German, French and Latin at your school, as she had to have a top mark in Latin before being accepted into Uni.

Jean went on to live in Germany for twenty years, as a translator and interpreter, and was always saying she wouldn't have got there without attending your school.

I enclose a small photograph of Jean and some school friends taken outside the school.

Although not a large sum, Jean wanted to give a little back, and wanted it to go toward a musical instrument possibly. She remembers the music lessons fondly and grew up with a lifelong love of classical music.

So there we have it. I hope it can help in a small way, and Jean will be very pleased wherever she is.

Yours sincerely



Andy Sharrocks

*Although Jean was not a member of FOGA, she still donated to the school.
How fabulous is that?*

Guide dogs

In 2023 we sponsored 3 Puppies for 2 years, and since then have had some fabulous feedback. Our Pups have now completed their training and have gone out to their new homes.

Albus



Hello, it's Gordon here, Albus' owner.

A little about me

I was born in Zimbabwe, and at the age of 22, I packed up and headed for England. I'd completed a course training as a chef, and I wanted to go out and get more experience before going back home to settle down. Although, that plan went out the window when I met my wife! We've now got three incredible children, two cats, and, of course, the wonderful Albus.

For the last 18 years, I've worked for a German manufacturing company in customer service and technical support of products. They're a big company so no two days are the same – which I really enjoy.

Visual impairment is something I was born with, as, unfortunately, my mother caught rubella when she was pregnant with me. I was diagnosed with coloboma in both eyes, which is really rare. This means that some of the tissues in my eyes didn't grow, leaving me with no vision in one eye and 20 per cent vision in the other.

Guide Dogs is a charity I've always known about, but it was my wife who encouraged me to enquire. I didn't realise how much easier things could be until I asked for help. The team who helped me were incredible. They encouraged me to push myself out of my comfort zone and gave me confidence when using my white cane. The day I got the call from Maddie, my Guide Dog Mobility Specialist, to say she'd found me a match was the most incredible day. It felt huge, like my world was about to open up.

Our household is a busy one. I do the school runs each day and take my youngest daughter, Willow, to after-school clubs such as swimming and horse riding. Albus is amazing at helping us to get there safely. He also gets on well with our two cats, Luna and Pedro. Luna keeps lying close to him like she's asking him to play – it's really sweet.

Recently, Willow told me she had a serious question; she couldn't figure out who she loved more, Albus or Luna! It's safe to say he's settled in well with us.

As a family, we love taking Albus to our favourite parks. He loves running around and playing with other dogs. Albus absolutely adores playing in water. If there's a puddle to play in, he'll find it – even if it's the driest day, he'll always manage to find water somewhere!

I'm a huge cricket fan. I played blind cricket once, but in my first match, I dived and landed badly. It's safe to say I'm better at watching than playing. Luckily, my son enjoyed playing, so I used to attend all his games.

Thank you

Life with Albus is amazing! We're a quirky family, and he fits right in. He encourages me to slow down and not rush, which helps my anxiety.

Thank you for sponsoring Albus. Without your support and that of the team at Guide Dogs, I wouldn't have this incredible life changer.



MOOSE



Hello, it's Derek here, Moose's partner.

Life with Moose

Since your last Pupdate, we've enjoyed lots of family activities bonding together. Moose settled in really well with my wife Anita, my retired guide dog Zelda, and me, and our bond has grown from strength to strength. Before I had Moose, I had a long list of tasks I wanted to complete and places I wanted to go, which I couldn't do without support. Now we're together, I'm always busy making my way through my now shrinking list.

Zelda and Moose have built a lovely friendship, and it's been wonderful to witness. As Zelda is a lot older, Moose plays gently with her. He's great at reading her cues and when she's had enough, he lets her rest. Although he usually tries to entice her to chase him around the garden one more time! One of my hobbies is to go on walks. Where I live is quite rural and I'm lucky to have so many public walks through peaceful, beautiful countryside and farmland. One of my favourite walks is 5 miles long, and it's been so wonderful to be able to do this again with Moose after Zelda retired. Before my sight loss, I really enjoyed participating in motor sports. Although I'm not able to drive anymore, I still have the passion. With Moose and Anita I was able to rejoin a motoring group to enjoy a popular motorcycle route, the North Coast 500! There were 8 cars on a 4-day trip and we

had the best time. Moose was great at travelling in the car. The staff in the hotel we stayed in loved him and couldn't believe how quickly he learnt the way to our room.

I really enjoy STEP (standardised training for excellent partnerships), which is the name of the training that is used for all guide dogs. It champions positive reinforcement throughout the training. Before I lost my sight, I used to train dogs in agility so this awoke my desire to get involved in training again.

My Guide Dog Mobility Specialist, Nicola, arranged for me to join guide dogs training sessions with their professional trainers. These sessions were really beneficial for both me and Moose. I was able to learn more about the STEP training structure and what I could do with Moose to keep improving upon his incredible guiding skills.

One skill I learnt was how to help Moose when he encounters something new and is a little unsure. I'm now able to give Moose the confidence to overcome these situations and build a positive association with unusual experiences. We were able to put this into practice when Moose spotted a stag through the hotel window in Scotland during our holiday. Initially he was nervous and gave one big deep bark, as if to warn the stag, and then he watched it wandering around the grounds. I gave him lots of praise whenever he displayed calm and confident behaviour so the next time we encounter one, he'll be less wary.

Another skill I'm working on with both Moose and Zelda is having them walk calmly and close by me when off lead. This can be quite a challenge with lots of distractions, especially when Moose wants to play with Zelda. But it will give me the confidence to know where they both are when Anita and I are out on family walks. So far this is going well, but I'll continue to work on it.

Our future

I'm looking forward to finding out what the future holds for us both and planning our next adventures together as a family.

Without your support I wouldn't have got my independence back, so thank you!

Derek with Moose and Zelda





Moose guiding Derek

Grace



Hello, it's Clare here, Grace's owner.

My sight loss journey began in 2016, when I was diagnosed with a hereditary neurological disease after having surgery. After the surgery, I lost a lot of weight, which, alongside my hereditary disease, caused my sight loss.

I have some residual vision, but everything looks pixelated, so I trip over things really easily. I can only see things in front of me if there's lots of contrast – if there was a bollard in the middle of the road, then I'd probably not realise it was there.

I've always lived in a rural area, so having a car was my lifeline. But since losing my sight, I'm not able to drive anymore. I felt like everything in my life was coming to a standstill; I'd lost all control.

I was referred to a local sensory needs team, and the lovely lady there taught me how to get out and about again. I was really reluctant to use a cane at first because I didn't want people to know that I couldn't see properly. But I knew I had to get out because I was feeling more and more isolated. With my kids at school and my partner at work all day, I felt so lonely.

Meeting Grace

The lady from the sensory needs team told me that her father had a visual impairment and that he'd previously had several guide dogs. She suggested I apply as she thought a guide dog could change my life, so I applied.

I started training with my first guide dog, Blae, but the partnership didn't work out. He's a lovely, playful boy, but he didn't want to guide, so I lost a little bit of hope. Then Grace walked into my life, and it was like a miracle. I couldn't believe how well we worked together, it just seemed perfect. I had to pinch myself!

Amazing Grace

Every day with her has been amazing. She's just so sweet! Each morning, she's so excited to see me that she presents me with her teddy. She won't let me have it, but she'll always bring it to me and then run off with it to play.

Grace is not just a guide though, we're a real team. Sometimes I get very fatigued, and I have to lie down and close my eyes. I guarantee when I open them that Grace has laid down on the floor next to me. She never leaves my side

Our life together

Life is so different now. I can just put Grace's harness on, and we can walk out and go wherever we need to go. It's wonderful! One of the biggest differences about walking with Grace is how smooth it is. With a cane, if there's uneven pavement, you end up with a bruise because if it hits something, it jars and it can hurt. Grace keeps me safe and already seems to know our routes. And when we go to cafés, she'll sit on my feet there too! We've bonded very well together, and it's a pleasure to catch up with our Guide Dog Mobility Specialist, Ben, during aftercare appointments.

Thank you so much for sponsoring Grace. I can't believe how perfectly suited we are to each other, and how she's changed my life.



You can follow all our puppies more closely online by following the links below:

WWW.guidedogs.org.uk/puppy-albus

WWW.guidedogs.org.uk/puppy-grace

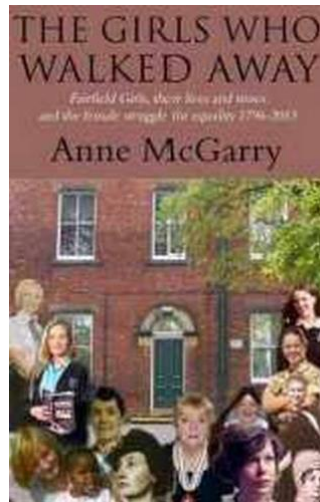
WWW.guidedogs.org.uk/puppy-moose

**Through your regular subscriptions and
donations,
We helped to make this happen!**

Well done Fairfield Ladies!

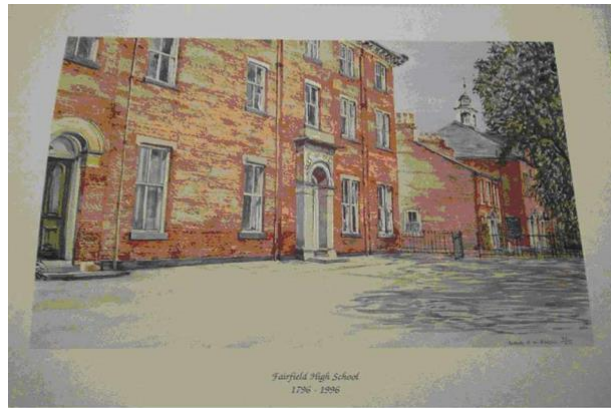
We still have copies of Anne McGarry's book for anyone who wishes to buy one. It really is an eye opener!
These books are now exclusive to us, and all profits go back into FOGA. Thanks to the generosity of Anne McGarry.

The cost is £10.00 each plus P&P.
UK delivery with packing is approx £4.00 per book.



Also

Copies of the painting by Brenda Wilkinson are still available.
They are £10 each, plus relevant postage and package charges



Displays



Our displays are kept updated by our fab team of volunteers, We usually change them twice a year and they are always refreshed before a meeting/reunion.

Committee Members

Helen Weston, Deb Ives, Pru Slater, Beverley Moores, Joyce Eves, Julia Eves, Denise Fitzmaurice, Margaret Wilson and our newest recruit Diane Bottoms.

Welcome Diane

Nominees for the committee are always welcome.

Facebook

Our Facebook Group is still growing, and even more old girls are using it to make contact with us and their school friends.

We now have excess of 2,500 worldwide members, who have shared hundreds of photographs and memories.

Please note that this group is not officially FOGA. (Fairfield Old Girls Association)

It is open to all Old Girls and members of staff past and present.

We have a small group of admins/moderators running it and have very strict policies, taking no arguments.

If the rules are not respected then out and blocked!

We try to keep it a safe and happy place for everyone.

If you do not have access to Facebook but maybe a son or daughter does, then they are welcome to join on your behalf. Please remember to tell them to let us know that they are joining on your behalf.

Here is the link to the Fairfield Memories group:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/981264985322246>

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Subscriptions are £5.00 a year.

There are a few of our members still sending in £3.00, if possible can you change your regular payment to the new amount.

This would be much appreciated.

We are also aware a lot of our members do send in donations too, for which we are extremely grateful.

It would be really helpful if all members could pay their subs by Bank Transfer or Direct Debit before the end of December of each year in order for the financial statement to be ready for the AGM.

Bank Details are as follows:

Bank: Lloyds Bank

Account Name: Fairfield High School Old Girls Association

Branch Sort Code: 30-96-26

Account number: 00116704

Cheques are also acceptable and should be made payable to:

Fairfield High School Old Girls Association

Sent to:

Mrs P. Slater, 25 Penshurst Road, Brinnington, Stockport, SK5 8HL
or
Mrs D. Ives, 13 Sutton Drive, Droylsden, Manchester, M43 7RX

Thank you, you are all stars

AGM/ Reunion

Our AGM will be held in school

**Saturday 26th April 2025
2.00pm**

Please let me know if you will be attending as soon as you can, as we need numbers for catering purposes.

Also the last few meetings have been so well attended we may need to request further seating.

Contact Details

Mrs D. Ives,
13 Sutton Drive
Droylsden,

Manchester. M43 7RX

Telephone or text:

07913 945602

or
email

fairfieldoga@gmail.com