

TRAILBLAZERS:

World War One's Inspirational Women

Location: Hastings

Occupation: Entrepreneur, Magazine Editor, Motivational Speaker

Why are they a Trailblazer?

Leaving school at 16 with six 'O' Levels, Jo Fairley went on to become the UK's youngest ever magazine editor at only 23. In 1991 she co-founded Green & Black's Chocolate company. In 1994 the company was awarded the Worldaware Business Award for good business practice as well as the UK's first Fairtrade mark. The company is now approaching a £100m per year brand. The success of Green & Black's enabled Jo to become a serial entrepreneur and she has run an award-winning organic and natural food store, 'Judge's Bakery', and, a nine-room wellbeing centre, 'The Wellington Centre', both in Hastings. Recently she has set up the 'Perfume Society', which helps people to develop their sense of smell via the exploration of perfume and the scented world. Jo also writes for many publications and is now one of the UK's leading motivational speakers, sharing her insights about business and success with a wide variety of companies and organisations. Jo has always believed in 'giving back' to the community and is heavily involved in many charities. She helped to establish a Peace Garden in Hastings, and has raised funds for refugee camps in Calais and Dunkirk. She is a Matron of the Women's Environmental Network and for the past 15 years, alongside her colleague, Sharron Lowe, a motivational coach, has run a confidence and self-esteem training workshop for young women at Centrepont, the London homeless charity, in addition to helping with the packing and distribution of Christmas gifts to other Centrepont users.

What impact have they made on their community?

Jo's ethos of giving back to the community led her to help found the Peace Garden in Alexandra Park, Hastings. This can be enjoyed by all residents and also provides a focus for services of remembrance to the victims of war. Jo has focused her entrepreneurial skills in creating new businesses and jobs in Hastings. Not only can these be used by the local

community but they help to make Hastings an attractive place to attract visitors, contributing to the success of the town.

What connections are there between Jo and the Trailblazers of World War One?

Martha Gunn (1726 – 1815) is best known as 'the queen of the dippers' who helped aristocratic women to bathe during the sea-bathing fad in Brighton. However, despite having had no education and coming from a poor background, she showed similar entrepreneurial spirit to Jo Fairley. Not only did she become the most famous and accomplished bather, charging women for her work, she also purchased a string of bathing machines which she then operated as a business, employing other women. Martha was able to go on to buy her own house, a rare thing for a woman to do in the late eighteenth century. Showing another streak of business flair, Martha's house was situated at what is now Lower East Street, right next to the drop-off point of the stagecoach from London, ensuring even more custom!

How do they inspire your class to be Trailblazers of the future?

By leaving school at 16 with only a few qualifications, Jo shows that success in business doesn't necessarily need an academic background. By supporting so many charities and getting her hands dirty working for them, Jo shows that success in business can be used to help communities and give other people a leg-up.

Trailblazing Women: Jo Fairley



REMEMBER TOGETHER



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government



www.big-ideas.org | #Trailblazers
trailblazers@big-ideas.org