

THREE WOMEN SHARE THEIR REMARKABLE STORIES OF

I lost 6st and now I'm in a class of my own

Lorraine's story Slimming success

■ Julie-Anne Barnes

When Lorraine Rosie plucked up the courage to join a weight loss group, she never thought she would end up running it.

The mum of two spent months battling depression and hiding herself away after being bullied at work.

But 2016 saw her turn her life around, shed more than 6st and become a Slimming World class leader.

Lorraine, 55, said: "I was sitting at home, depressed, not going out and eating another packet of crisps from a multi-pack and I just thought, 'I'm better than this'."

Lorraine, from Edinburgh tipped the scales at 15st 4lb.

She was struggling to get into size 20 clothes and her weight gain made it difficult for her to exercise.

She has now shed 6st 4lb and the size 10 smartly dressed mum has transformed her life. She said: "You could tell the smile on my

“You could tell my smile was fake. It's not any more

TRIM
Lorraine is now a size 10



DEPRESSED Before diet face in pictures when I was bigger was fake.

"But not any more."

Now with a new career and a new outlook on life, Lorraine couldn't be happier.

She said: "This job is meant for me, I know exactly how my members feel so I can help and encourage them. I wish I'd done it years ago."

YEAR

Finally seeing a picture of my mum made the long hunt worthwhile

Elaine's story Discovering a photo of birth mother

Elaine Henderson will always remember 2016 as the year she finally saw the face of the mother she had never known.

From the moment almost 30 years ago when she discovered she had been fostered, Elaine wanted to see a photograph of her mum Irene Cullen.

Heartbroken to discover Irene had died when Elaine was just five, she began a search to find out everything she could about her blood family. Most important to her was putting a face to the woman who gave her up as a newborn.

Elaine, 44, said: "For so long I feared I was never going to know what my mum looked like. When I thought of my mum I couldn't 'see' her, and that broke my heart.

"To finally find someone who had a photo of her was amazing, and when I saw the photo I was so emotional. I've found out what she looked like as a girl – and now my search continues to find a photograph of her as an adult."

When learning assistant Elaine first went in search of her birth family, she dreamed of a fairytale reunion, not the nightmare of finding she was the secret eighth child of a woman whose entire family grew up in care.

Mum-of-two Elaine, of Falkirk, said: "I've been through so many emotions – hope, shock, anger and probably most of all grief – but despite everything, my heart is full of love for my mum.

"Other than my birth father, no one at the time knew anything about her having me, her eighth baby, so no one was looking for me.

"The fact she never told anyone about me was hard to take – I felt as though I hadn't been validated in the world. But I've come to terms with it and I've pieced together so many bits of my family story, but the final thing I need to uncover is a photograph of my mum as an adult."

Elaine, who was born in 1972, spent the first three years of her life at Blairvadach Children's Home in Helensburgh,

■ Jenny Morrison and Julie Anne Barnes

Dunbartonshire. She has searched everything from birth, death and marriage certificates to old parish and school records to find out about the birth family of her mum, who was put up for adoption as a baby.

She said: "I discovered my grandmother was 16 when she gave birth to my mum, who was then adopted. When my mum grew up, she got married, becoming Irene Smith, and had her first daughter with this man, then went on to have two sets of twins to him.

"The marriage broke down, she met my dad, she had a set of twins with him, then had me."

Elaine has tracked down her six sisters and a brother – who she found out had all spent long periods growing up in care.

She said: "I hoped for the fairytale, that I would hit it off with my siblings, that we would share this fantastic connection and live happily ever after but I learned the hard way it doesn't work like that.

"My eldest sister lived at home until she was put into care, aged seven, along with one of the sets of twins – so she remembers our mum.

"Because there were three sets of twins, they have mostly been kept together in groups of two, apart from one set of twins who were separated, with one adopted but the other not."

Elaine was sent a school photo featuring her mum by a woman who spotted an appeal she made on Facebook.

Elaine said: "My mum is 13 in the photo and I love that she is the only

girl holding the hands of the people she was beside."

Elaine believes her mum had mental health problems, for which she never received help. Irene died in March 1977, aged just 42, while living in Edgefauld Road, Springburn, Glasgow.

Elaine knows many people won't understand how she can love the mother who gave her up but she feels deeply sad never to have known her.

She said: "She was my mum and I love her – it's that simple."



EMOTIONAL Elaine thrilled to find Irene's photo, below



Entrance assessments

Now is the time to examine an independent education and discover how your child can fulfil his or her potential, not just academically, but as a well-rounded, confident individual. Entrance assessments are being held at 9 schools over the coming weeks. These assessments allow schools to gain a good understanding of your child's skills and abilities in an informal, friendly setting.

Do visit our website for further information, register your child and find out about financial help.

✓ Key diary dates



WEST of SCOTLAND
WOSIS
Independent Schools

BELMONT HOUSE SCHOOL, Newton Mearns, Glasgow

24th January 2017, Entrance Assessments all levels. Interviews and assessments also organised throughout the year. Please contact the School for more information Tel: **0141 639 2922 belmontschool.co.uk**

CRAIGHOLME SCHOOL, Glasgow*

Our Senior Entrance Assessment Day is Saturday 28th January, 9am, although Junior and Senior pupils are welcome to be assessed through a Taster Day at any point during the year. Tel: **0141 427 0375 craigholme.co.uk**

THE GLASGOW ACADEMY

Entrance exam for P4 - S3, Friday 27 January Kindergarten to P3 entrance assessments take place throughout January by appointment. Tel: **0141 342 5494 theglasgowacademy.org.uk**

FERNHILL SCHOOL, Glasgow*

Our main Entrance assessment is on Monday 16th January 2017. For P2-S6 Primary 1 and Nursery entrance assessment is by interview week commencing 16th January Tel: **0141 634 2674 fernhillschool.co.uk**

THE HIGH SCHOOL OF GLASGOW

Entrance Tests are on Wednesday 25 January 2017 – 9am (Transit (P7) – S4), 1.30pm (J2-J6). Assessments for Kindergarten-J1 throughout Jan. Tel: **0141 954 9628 highschoolofglasgow.co.uk**

HUTCHESONS' GRAMMAR SCHOOL, Glasgow

Wednesday 25 January 2016, Entrance Test Day (P1, P5 & S1). Intermediate Entrants will be tested in late January. Please telephone for information.

Tel: **0141 433 4402 hutchesons.org**

KELVINSIDE ACADEMY, Glasgow

Assessment Day, Saturday 28 January (Primary 7 & Senior 1 applicants) Primary 2-6 & Senior 2-6 candidates are invited to come and experience a Taster Day at the school. Primary 1 and Nursery informal assessments will take place throughout January. To register for all assessments contact Lynda Andonovic on **0141 357 3376 www.kelvinsideacademy.org.uk**

ST COLUMBA'S SCHOOL, Kilmacolm

6th, 9th January - Junior School
7th January - Senior School: Transitus (J7) - Senior VI
10th, 11th January - Junior 1
12th, 13th January & 20th, 21st April - Early Years
Tel: **01505 872238 st-columbas.org**

WELLINGTON SCHOOL, Ayr

Entrance Tests are scheduled on Saturday 21 January for P7 and S1 entry, although applications for entry at all stages will be considered at any time. Visits and Taster Days for prospective pupils can be arranged by appointment. Tel: **01292 269321 wellingtonschool.org**

*Nursery (3-5 yrs) is co-educational. Junior school and Senior school (5-18 yrs) are girls only. ^Co-educational across both sectors