

ANNUAL REVIEW GUIDING IN 2018

2018 saw many members presented with long service awards for 30, 40 and 50 years, Betty Mayes, Julie Woodland, Di Southerland, Janet Wheeler and Barbara Wing who has actually given 65 years to Guiding and has now been presented with the new 60 year long service award. This took place at Hayling Island and was a lovely surprise for Barbara.

Girlguiding has been recognised in the community this year by being chosen as one of the Epsom & Ewell Mayor's Charities, raising funds for the Little Acres Lodge being built and we look forward to seeing the finished building.

Awards from Tandridge Volunteer Bureau were given to a leader and also young member Sarah who is working very hard to take part in many opportunities that Guiding offers and to encourage younger members in her area. In her words: "Guiding has pushed me and taught me that being dyslexic will not stop me doing things I love."

We need to remember the challenge that Girlguiding has set its self in being open to all from five years and above, that many of us will have different levels of skills and ways of working which may not be how it's always been done. But at the heart the aim is always the growth of Guiding.

Thinking Day saw Reigate Guild at the Windmill church on the Heath and also the region Big Sleepover. This led to many interpretations of international guiding ranging from a visit to Spain and flamenco dancing to sleeping in tents at a barn and skyping Guiding and Girl Scout friends in Toulouse France, Buenos Aires, Argentina, Houston Texas, and Melbourne Australia. The wonders of technology demonstrates how guiding continues to move and evolve to stay in touch with girls in the 21st century.

May not only saw the Royal Wedding but also the official opening of Faurefold, the result of many hours of volunteering work. Members will now be able to experience adventure in a warm heated building and enjoy the impressive outdoor facilities that the site offers. No words can express the magnificence of this project.

Local events continue across the county with leaders putting in many hours in their local communities, running district days, unit meetings and new adventures. These range from Guiding Ambassador Sally Kettle visits, HMS Belfast sleepovers and Icando, to Growing up Wild in Nower Wood - a local partnership we are continuing to enjoy with Surrey Wildlife Trust for all sections.

Bazzaz was a first for 2018 - when Rainbows and Beavers from all over Surrey took over Merrist Wood for a day of fun and activities - think mini Scoutabout for a day! The sun shone and bouncy castles were in plentiful supply.

In trying to attract new volunteers to the family of guiding we saw units out at local fairs and carnivals raising our profile and explaining it's not all work and no play! We discovered via social media that the posts with the most interaction are those when leaders dressing up!

In July we saw the launch of the long-awaited new programme. It came after many hours of consultation with leaders and members - we all had the chance to feedback and still do. Change is never easy but the girls of today are different in many ways to the girls of 50 years ago. We need to engage with these members by moving forward.

On the same day as the new programme launch, Trefoil celebrated being 75 at Southwark Cathedral, a great experience for all who took part as I am sure you will agree.

The summer of 2018 saw international trips for girls and leaders. We continually see how leaders and girls have grown after experiencing these trips and we can be assured that international trips have a place in tomorrow's programme.

We saw Wellie and Wristbands revisited at Foxlease, Girlguiding's very own Glastonbury Festival complete with mud and rain! This led to our youngest newsletter contributor Abi reporting on her experience at the camp from her unique perspective.

In the autumn term a group of leaders travelled to Lorne in Northern Ireland for a mix of training and sightseeing. Lorne offers gorge walking as an activity - so in the break of training where we looked at resources they have uniquely in Ulster, many of us, for some strange reason, decided it would be a great idea to walk into cold water and experience the delight of gorge walking. Not being satisfied with this, some of us also walked across a 100 foot high rope bridge and visited the Giants Causeway. Why? Because without leaders pushing their own boundaries the girls will not have new experiences.

A proud moment for Surrey East this year was when Epsom young leader Samantha Foster was appointed a Lord Lieutenants Cadet. Throughout the election process for the cadet, adults were impressed with the quality of girls and since selection Samantha has constantly given guiding a great

reputation with her approach to the role. It is with great pride I constantly receive compliments on the standard of young ladies we have in the county.

The autumn saw the beginning of the Pears Foundation Growth project. This is a national project which is a joint venture with Scouts and Girlguiding. We still recruit and welcome new members to Girlguiding but we are now seeing a steady decline nationally with membership. To try and address this Surrey East and Croydon counties are sharing a Growth coordinator who will work with us for two years and engage with new communities and create new opportunities. We also still have Membership Growth operating to help when leaders express their wish to stop running units and we are still managing to open new units, although volunteer overload is a great worry.

2018 was the 100th anniversary of women getting the vote, so Girlguiding took up the challenge, Equaliteas tea parties were held and visits to London took place when the county took part in Parliament Week and women in politics visited units. Personally I was encouraged by the engagement I saw in Parliament Week - our pack of brownies were not shy at voicing their thoughts. Learning that voting is a simple thing but which we cannot take for granted was humbling.

As the year drew to a close that meant full steam ahead with fundraising, carol singing, Christmas tree festivals, arts and crafts days, Kidszania trips and visits to Virgin Atlantic. There was a rush to put on enough Baden Powell Challenges to get girls through in this transition year. In Surrey East we have had a theme of Cops and Robbers with girls engaging in forensic science as a theme - no more Cluedo as a board game, this was proper crime scenes with fingerprints and white overalls!

Guiding remains an opportunity for many exciting experiences for both girls and leaders. How can you help us to encourage new leaders? By continuing with positive talking about Guiding as you engage with your neighbours, schools and other volunteers. We do ask a lot but the rewards are huge.

Thank you to all the volunteers in Surrey East you really do make a difference too many girls lives.