

# County Newsletter

 **Girlguiding**  
Surrey East county

Autumn/Winter 2023



# Welcome

Welcome to 2024! It is exciting to reflect on everything guiding members in Surrey East have done in the Autumn/Winter months and look forward to the year ahead.

Congratulations to everyone who completed their leadership development qualification and particular thanks to Janet Coninx this year for all her hard work to support people through the transition from the old scheme. In spring of 2024, we will see the introduction of a new young leader development programme and a similar transition – so young leaders should look out for that!

It's great to see the wide range of activities units are doing in and around our communities, and to see so many girls celebrating completion of their section bronze, silver and gold awards. You have also shared the many Autumn/Winter trips and residential events with units going to Legoland Windsor, HMS Belfast, Faurefold holiday house and campsite in Westcott, Parkwood Campsite in the South Downs and to events at Blacklands and Foxlease. Further afield, it looks like Epsom Rangers had an incredible trip to Iceland. What an amazing opportunity for them; and well done to Alex Lorenz who was nominated to attend the national event, Girlguiding Celebrates at the Odeon Lux in Leicester Square!

In 2023, we presented a total of 52 awards including:

- Silver lion brooches to Lorna Smith for her service to training, and to Dax Patel and Kate Fowles who finished their term as Division Commissioners,
- County good service awards including one to Janet Coninx (mentioned above), to Tracey Pettit and Elaine Edwards for their development of the Little Acres in Epsom and to Sue Sparrow and Clare Hodgson for service to guiding,
- 60 years long service to Anne Collins,
- 50 years long service to Sally Dart and Valerie Tucker,
- 40 years to Tracy Lovell, Pauline Austin and Ronnie Stalley,
- Plus 30 more awards for volunteers completing 5, 10 and 20 years long service,
- Plus hero awards and thanks badges.

Congratulations and thank you to all our volunteers for the amazing support you give to guiding in Surrey East. We are suitably proud of all that we have achieved, the fun and adventures we have shared, and the opportunities our volunteers have given to the girls and young women in Surrey East and look forward to the year ahead. My thanks to Alexia for producing this newsletter to showcase what we do and thank you to everyone who contributed to it.

For 2024, I wish you good health, happiness, friendship and fun in guiding.

PS – If you would like to join the fun and become a volunteer in Surrey East, please do register [here](#). We welcome leaders for our regular meetings, but also have roles for administrators, event organisers, finance or property management. You don't need to have been involved in guiding before or have loads of time to make a big difference.



Beverly Heywood-Jones  
Surrey East county  
commissioner  
surreyeastcc@btinternet.com



# Newly Qualified Leaders

Congratulations to the following Leaders who have completed their Leadership Qualification or added modules to their qualifications since July 2023.

## Downs Heath Division

Yzanne Pepper

## Epsom Division

Amber Brooks

## Godstone Division

Brogan Fricker  
Catherine Eckford  
Phoebe Leeson

## Leith Hill Division

Ameila Hulbert  
Karen Head  
Laura Strong  
Nicola Hamil-chard  
Priya Sharp

## Reigate Division

Becca Dugdale  
Bev Garland  
Caroline Johnstone  
Debbie PeleKani  
Emily Rayner  
Megan Leigh  
Nikki Ford  
Sam Mitchell



## New Leadership Development Programme:

Congratulations to Janet Coninx who has done an amazing job leading the transition from the old Leadership qualification to the new leadership development programme. We had 12 months to ensure that anyone who had started on the old scheme was able to complete any outstanding modules by the deadline. This included some assistant leaders completing their module to become fully qualified. On 30<sup>th</sup> September 2023, the old scheme was finally withdrawn.

Janet was presented a county good service award at the County day to thank her for this excellent achievement.



# County Photography Competition Winners

A few months ago, Beverly Heywood-Jones, Surrey East county commissioner, announced a county-wide photography competition.

Its aim was threefold: to encourage everyone to consider the new GirlGuiding photography principles; to increase our stock of quality images to use in social media; and to have fun. We would like to thank everyone who took the time to submit their photos. We received some fantastic entries to this competition and decided to also include the photography submitted to this edition of the county newsletter.

We were very fortunate to have Abigail Howson as our volunteer judge. Abi was the full time employed Picture and Video Producer at Girlguiding UK HQ for five years and is also a leader at 6th Merstham Guides. She is currently the VP at Jellyfish Digital Group.

Now, it is time to announce the winners. Abi has shared her reflections on the winning images:



**2<sup>nd</sup> Fetcham Rainbows**

'Guiding isn't just about having a great time; it is also about having a safe place to challenge yourself. The two photos that I selected as the winners of the county photography competition sum that up perfectly. They show concentration and determination to learn and progress, whilst having fun and working together!'



**4<sup>th</sup> Caterham Brownies**

The judge also selected a special commendation:

'Although not everyone is smiling, there is a lovely sense of positivity in this image and it really shows how close the girls and leaders are.'



**5<sup>th</sup> Reigate Brownies**



Congratulations also to the runner-up images – you can find them throughout the newsletter by looking for the trophy icon.



# Remembrance Day

Tadworth Rainbows contribution to the Remembrance service



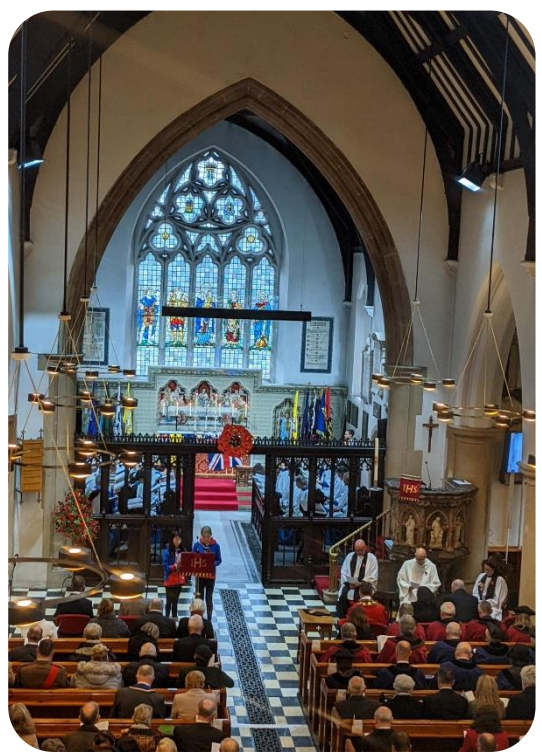
6<sup>th</sup> Horley Rainbows at their Remembrance Parade



1<sup>st</sup> Ewell Village (St Mary's) Brownies and Guides represented Epsom Division at Remembrance. The Guides made the wreath in church and read the prayers.



1<sup>st</sup> Chaldon Guides ready for the Remembrance Parade





7<sup>th</sup> Horley Rainbows



Guides, Brownies and Rainbows from Fetcham took part in the Remembrance service.



4<sup>th</sup> Caterham Rainbows and Brownies helped raise money for the Royal British Legion.



1<sup>st</sup> Chaldon Guides braved a cold and wet morning to sell poppies in a local supermarket.



4<sup>th</sup> Caterham Rainbows enjoyed making wreaths and learning about Secret Agent Olive.



5<sup>th</sup> Dorking Guides made a beautiful wreath and paid their respects at the Remembrance Parade



Rainbows from Oxted, Lingfield and South Godstone and the Brownies from South Godstone have all made poppies for their hair to wear for Remembrance.



# Lingfield, Oxted & South Godstone Rainbows



Rainbows in Lingfield, Oxted and South Godstone have been hard at work earning their badges. Congratulations to these girls who achieved bronze, silver or gold awards.

We wish the girls who are moving up to Brownies the best of luck in the new year!





# Lingfield, Oxted, South Godstone and Hurst Green Rainbows



65 rainbows from Lingfield, Oxted, South Godstone and Hurst Green came together for a party. They enjoyed party games, food and watched a Punch and Judy show.

# 7<sup>th</sup> Horley Rainbows



This term we worked on the 'skills for my future' theme. The fruit shop was a real hit and we managed to achieve three different activities in one night. The girls were really engaged for the whole evening which was lovely.



The girls have also used screw drivers to change batteries, made and fixed holes, and enjoyed underwater fireworks.

In addition to the programme activities, we participated in the Remembrance parade, where the girls were so well behaved, patient and respectful.

We went to see Wish at Cineworld with 120 other Rainbows, Brownies and Guides from Horley East. Everyone had a great time and loved the badge.

At Christmas time, we made a jar for Reindeer Noses and enjoyed an escape room.



# 3<sup>rd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Merstham Rainbows



3<sup>rd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Merstham Rainbows enjoyed a brilliant bushcraft day at Jordan Heights Scout Camp on Reigate Hill.

30 Rainbows took part in sucker archery, climbing wall, firefighting, craft and a campfire and had 'the best day ever'.

# 4<sup>th</sup> Caterham Rainbows



Three Rainbows at 4<sup>th</sup> Caterham received their bronze awards before they fly up to Brownies in January. They have brought bags of enthusiasm for every activity over the last two years, and they have certainly kept their promise, as they have grown in confidence and kind and thoughtful leadership.



# 2<sup>nd</sup> Fetcham Rainbows



2<sup>nd</sup> Fetcham Rainbows had a lovely evening at Faurefold back in the summer, trying the low ropes. They all did amazingly well, and had a great time, followed by cake!



# 3<sup>rd</sup> Redhill Rainbows



Many thanks to Janette Chapman for running 3<sup>rd</sup> Redhill Rainbows for the last 6 years. Janette has loved running the weekly meetings for the girls, including crafting, singing and getting out in nature. Taking the girls to Magic and Mayhem at Blacklands Farm was a definite highlight! Thank you Janette!



# 2<sup>nd</sup> Fetcham Rainbows



2<sup>nd</sup> Fetcham Rainbows filled wellies with flowers to give to their friends and neighbours as acts of kindness.



# 6<sup>th</sup> Horley Rainbows



6<sup>th</sup> Horley Rainbows visited Pets at Home and took part in a session where they got to handle some of the animals and learn about animal care. The girls had a great time.



# 2<sup>nd</sup> Horley Rainbows



Our very hard-working DC at Horley East, Helen Prosser, reopened 2<sup>nd</sup> Horley Rainbows in June 2023. This is a fantastic achievement for our district. The new Rainbows are having a great time and the unit already has a waiting list! Here is a picture of them all doing their promise together.



As well as this Helen took her Brownie unit (2<sup>nd</sup> Horley) and 6<sup>th</sup> Horley Rainbows to enjoy what could be a last visit to Blackland Farm in November to the Superheroes weekend.

# 4<sup>th</sup> Caterham Rainbows and Brownies



With 4<sup>th</sup> Caterham Rainbows, you can't really go wrong with food, so we made fruity rainbow kebabs to encourage them to do their Fruit & Veg badge. We also made the time-honoured bonfire biscuit. The Brownies asked to make them too!

We sold poppies and completed the Communicate 2 Skillsbuilder as well as enjoying the "Room in a box" UMA, which led to us awarding a Gold, four Silver and a Bronze awards at the end of term.

During the summer, some of our oldest Brownies were invited to join the Guides at camp for a day; fire lighting and befriending animals (albeit worms) was very much enjoyed. On the same day, we awarded Bumblebee with her Leadership badge and then waved her off to pastures new on the south coast.



In October half term, we joined with 9<sup>th</sup> Caterham on our annual week-end away, enjoying a theme of 'on the farm'. There may have been tree climbing when the sun came out. As ever these things don't happen without the adults, and we are immensely grateful to Hippo for all the activities she comes up with!

Dragonfly's proudest moment was enabling a Brownie with speech and language difficulties to make her promise. We supported her by learning the promise in sign language, but to the amazement of us all she said it out loud.



# 4<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Epsom Brownies



9<sup>th</sup> Epsom Brownies, along with some Brownies from 4<sup>th</sup> Epsom, had a sleepover at Legoland Windsor in August 2023. We arrived on a Friday morning and were met by the amazing Legoland team who settled us into our home for the night: the Legoland Education Centre.

We then spent the day exploring the theme park, going on lots of rides, watching the Pirate show and eating ice lollies. The day ended with a pizza dinner and our own private 4D film showing. The next morning, we enjoyed a Lego Robotics workshop and then got to spend more time on rides before heading home, all absolutely exhausted!





## 2<sup>nd</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> Dorking Brownies



Caga Tio from Catalonia

I was invited to help at a sleepover for 2<sup>nd</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> Dorking Brownies. The sleepover was held at Faurefold and the theme was 'Christmas around the world'. The Brownies started by making lovely star lanterns, called Parol decorations, from the Philippines. They then had a BBQ on the beach in Australia before visiting Sweden to make angel chimes, Italy to make a nativity scene in the snow, Norway to make a gnome and Germany to make an origami Christmas tree. Before going to bed, they were introduced to Caga Tio from Catalonia. He is a log that 'poops' gifts!

Sadly I had to leave early the following morning as I had booked on a course to renew my First Aid qualification. I therefore missed making gingerbread and decorating a gingerbread house and enjoying some lovely nativity activities from Israel. However, even though I wasn't there, I do know that Caga Tio did leave gifts for the Brownies and I think this is because he enjoyed his drink and biscuits, which the Brownies left out for him.  
5th Dorking Brownies Leader

## 9<sup>th</sup> Epsom Brownies



9<sup>th</sup> Epsom Brownies visited Epsom Fire Station in November 2023. We were shown around the outside and inside of the fire engine by Green Watch and had the chance to ask lots of questions. We then tested our aim with the fire hose on the training tower. Everyone got a scare when the fire crew tested the sirens!



# 1<sup>st</sup> Ewell Village (St Mary's) Brownies



1<sup>st</sup> Ewell Village (St Mary's) Brownies enjoyed an Icelandic evening celebrating our Epsom Rangers who had come back from their amazing trip to Iceland. To fundraise for their adventure, the Rangers created a great challenge and the Brownies completed enough activities to be awarded one of their special Iceland badges!



# South Godstone Brownies



Congratulations to Morgan from South Godstone Brownies for achieving her gold award. Well done!



# 10<sup>th</sup> Redhill Brownies



Planning began as long ago as last October for 10<sup>th</sup> Redhill Brownies' big summer adventure. At the start of July, 22 girls and six leaders made our way by train to London where we all stayed overnight onboard HMS Belfast!

On the Saturday, we had an amazing time exploring the sights around the St Katherine's Dock and Tower of London area, enjoying ice cream to help us cool down, eating delicious pizza and learning about what it was like to be on board HMS Belfast during World War II. We slept below deck in bunk beds which was a very special experience. I'm sure the girls will remember this for a very long time.

On the Sunday, we had some more time to explore the boat before disembarking and climbing the 311 steps to the top of the Monument to the Great Fire of London. The girls sang very loudly from the top - we have trained them well in campfire singing!

We then enjoyed our lunch before heading to the Tower Bridge Experience, where we learnt about how and why the bridge was built and enjoyed walking across the glass floors, looking down onto the traffic and the river below us. We also saw the bridge lift for a tall boat which was very interesting. The girls all had a brilliant time, and many happy memories were made.

This trip, like everything we do with Girlguiding, is made possible by wonderful volunteers who give their time to provide girls with amazing experiences and great memories.



# 10<sup>th</sup> Redhill Brownies



This year, instead of the Brownies bringing in harvest donations from their cupboards at home, the girls went shopping for their gifts!

The Brownies went to Sainsburys in their sixes and Snowy Owl gave each six £10 to spend. Kestrel shared the shopping list from the food bank and we learnt about which types of food are best to donate.

The Brownies enjoyed going around the shop and choosing what to buy. They had to make sure their choices were good value as well as nice to eat.

Snowy Owl had spoken to the Sainsburys manager ahead of the Brownie's visit and he agreed to match our spend from their community fund, so we were very pleased to be able to donate £80 of shopping to the Harvest collection.



# Lingfield, Oxted & Tilburstow Brownies



## Tri-District Trip to Drusillas



In September, the Brownies from the Tri-District (Lingfield, Oxted & Tilburstow) enjoyed a day out at Drusillas Park.

The sun shone, and everyone enjoyed seeing the animals, doing the zoo challenges, riding on the train, going on the rides and visiting the adventure playground.

Here are some of the Brownies "posing" as farm animals!

# 2<sup>nd</sup> Leatherhead Brownies' 60<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebrations

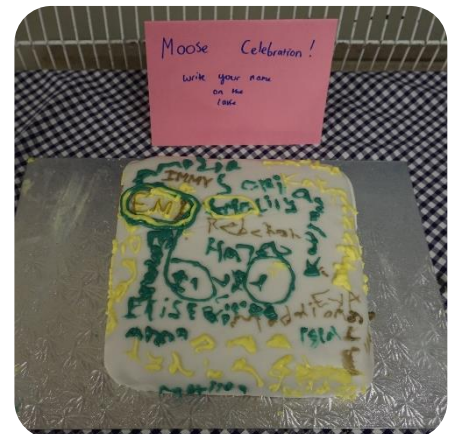


In October, 2<sup>nd</sup> Leatherhead Brownies had an eventful day celebrating the 60th birthday of the unit!

On the morning of their special birthday party, the adult volunteers running the group discovered that their usual venue – the Bridge Youth Club in Leatherhead – was being closed immediately, due to the discovery of RACC in the roof's building. Alternative arrangements were hastily made, with the celebrations moved to Fetcham Guide HQ in Cannon Grove.

Despite all the last-minute changes, the party still went ahead as planned for the 22 Brownies in the unit. Members of 1st Fetcham Guides were also on hand to help make everything run smoothly.

All the party activities were based on the crazy moose challenge badge, which 2<sup>nd</sup> Leatherhead Brownies have been working towards recently. The girls sang the crazy moose song, made mocktails, known as "crazy moose juice", and decorated gingerbread biscuits, which when turned upside down looked like a moose. They also threw hoops onto moose antler headbands being worn by their fellow party-goers, played a "pin the quiff on the moose game" and moose skittles, as well as signing their names in icing on a special 60th birthday cake. Fetcham Guides also presented Brownie leaders Wendy Amer and Becca Spicer-Horgan with a special handmade birthday card.



Wendy Amer said: "It was a shock to receive an email on the morning of our party from the Bridge Youth Club stating that it was closing immediately. Snowy Owl (Becca), the Brownies and I (Brown Owl), had already put so much effort into preparation and we had also invited many previous members. We were fortunate that we could take over Fetcham Girlguiding HQ and our special party went ahead as planned. All the girls were able to get there and everyone had a fantastic time celebrating our unit reaching such an amazing age! In September, the Brownies had a competition to design a special badge. Hazel's design was chosen and the resulting badge was given to all those who attended. We are now looking for a new home for early evening on Tuesdays".



# 1<sup>st</sup> Ewell Village (St Mary's) Brownies



Many soft toys found a new home at the Ewell Village Fair this summer. Thanks to the hard work and donations from 1<sup>st</sup> Ewell Village (St Mary's) Brownies they raised £122.50 for St Mary's Church. They were definitely keeping their promise to "serve the community". The vicar Father Mark and our local MP Chris Grayling were ecstatic to have adopted a soft toy from the Brownie stall!



St Mary's Church in Ewell Village asked the 1<sup>st</sup> Ewell Village (St Mary's) Brownies to test out their new "Messy Church Goes Wild" event. The Brownies learnt a lot about nature and the local environment while going round the churchyard before they came back to the church hall to make nature collages. They really enjoyed the activities and their feedback helped the church volunteers with their planning.



# 9<sup>th</sup> Epsom Brownies



9<sup>th</sup> Epsom Brownies went to Walton Firs Activity Centre, Cobham for the day in October. We did the Nightline (blindfolded) obstacle course, the High Ropes Gladiator Climb and also the low ropes course. There were lots of chances for the Brownies to challenge themselves and to practise their teamwork and leadership skills.



# 9<sup>th</sup> Caterham Brownies and Guides



9<sup>th</sup> Caterham Brownies and Guides sold home-made crafts, kits to do at home, and trinkets to the public at St Mary's Christmas fayre.



# 5<sup>th</sup> Reigate Brownies



5<sup>th</sup> Reigate Brownies took part in a street dance session kicking off the start of the term with Skills for my Future!

5<sup>th</sup> Reigate Brownies enjoyed a fantastic pack holiday at Blacklands in September –there were always lots of activities to do so it made it an easier time for the Owls! We will always remember our camping days and friendships true.



A Brownie all grown up, and now a Brown Owl herself, that still loves to get wet fortunately!





# 4<sup>th</sup> Ashtead Guides



At the end of the summer, 4<sup>th</sup> Ashtead Guides enjoyed doing a postbox trail around the village: there is a postbox with the cypher of each monarch from Victoria to Elizabeth II. We completed this as part of our Coronation celebrations. We also sent a card to the King & Queen and received a letter back.



This term, we took part with the village's Remembrance parade alongside Rainbows, Brownies, Scouts and the wider community. We visited Leatherhead Fire Station and had a great time being shown around the appliances and having fun with the hose!

We went to the local Odeon to see Wish, and finally celebrated at the end of term with several Guides completing Theme Award: Hazel completed her Silver and Olivia achieved her Gold award - the first for the unit!



# 1st Chaldon Guides



This term, 1st Chaldon Guides ran the glow light stall at Caterham Dene Round Table Display and have worked towards their mocktail Guide interest badge. We had a great evening tasting lots of different ingredients and flavour combinations before designing and making our own mocktails to enjoy at our unit mocktail evening.

1st Chaldon Guides had an evening of wrap pizza making and sweetie towers. No sweets were wasted during this activity - the Guides ensured that every single one was eaten!

They also took part in an autumn scavenger hunt.



Six new Chaldon Guides made their promise at our final meeting of the term



Merry Christmas Everyone from 1st Chaldon Guides and a big thank you to Toby Carvery for accepting our booking of 30 people once again!

# Get Active in the Woods Day at Faurefold



Fifty guides from across East Surrey enjoyed a "Get Active in the Woods" day at the Faurefold holiday house and campsite near Westcott. The girls got back to nature in early autumn sunshine, as they took part in a wide range of outdoor activities across the Faurefold site, which is nestled in the Surrey Hills.

The Guides started with a wide game then the guides were able to choose from a variety of outdoor activities including a blind trail in the woods, campfire cooking, axing, sawing and whittling.

Some opted to re-paint the shed, paint matching chairs, or add painted pebbles to the sculpture, whilst others were totally absorbed by building a fairy castle from an old tree stump.

It was a marvellous day enjoyed by all. Our thanks to Val, Roo, Margaret the team for organising this event and to all the volunteers who helped with all the activities and in making the day so lovely for the Guides.



# 5<sup>th</sup> Dorking Guides



5<sup>th</sup> Dorking Guides had a busy end of summer. We finished our term with paddle boarding and then had a party to celebrate our two Golden Guides, Izzy and Bethan. We are very proud of them both and very happy to say both are now young leaders.

All the Guides are working hard and we will have silver awards by the end of term and hopefully more golds next year.

The Guides also celebrated Rebecca getting married and joined her for her hen party - at Guides of course with the traditional toilet roll dress.

We had a blast at Wellies and Wristbands. We shared our camp with 1<sup>st</sup> Capel Guides and Leith Hill Rangers. All the participants had a great time and even the weather was very kind.

We paid our respects on Remembrance Sunday and made wreaths at Guides. We will finish this year with a party and look forward to the next year with hopefully more adventures to come.



# Bookham and Effingham District Guides



July saw Bookham and Effingham District Guides heading off to summer camp at Parkwood Campsite in the South Downs. Despite somewhat changeable weather, we embraced our inner flower power and set off. The site was fabulous and we enjoyed a very traditional camp, growing our camp skills and a lot of patrol cooking. The Guides cooked for themselves on traditional altar fires, as well as more convenient gas stoves, earning their Backwoods cooking badge. Unsurprisingly “sticky wraps” got a firm thumbs-up.

We tie-dyed tea-towels, made macrame bottle holders, got messy with paint and muddy on the adventure course. The highlight of the week was a bus trip to Brighton where we rode the carousel and visited the upside-down house, topped off by delicious fish and chips at the beach. We left some painted pebbles so if you are down that way see if you can find one!.



# Epsom Rotary's Showcase



Guides and Leaders from Epsom Division wowed the audience at Epsom Rotary's Showcase recently. The group recreated a campfire on the stage of the Epsom Playhouse and entertained the audience with campfire songs and actions. They performed as part of an evening of entertainment organised by Epsom Rotary featuring singers, groups, dancers and other talented performers from the local community. Well done to everyone involved.



## 7<sup>th</sup> Epsom Guides



In November 2023 we presented Elena, Grecia and Iris from 7<sup>th</sup> Epsom Guides with their Guide Gold Awards. We are so proud of them as they all worked so hard to achieve their award and they all gained confidence and learned valuable life skills. It's fantastic that they've all decided to continue their Guiding journey and have joined Epsom Rangers.

# Sparkle and Ice



Sparkle and Ice was a winter camp held at Foxlease in November for guides and rangers. Some units in Surrey East have shared their experiences of attending this event.

Leaders found cake!



At Sparkle and Ice, girls were able to climb and try firelighting, paracording and aeroball. As the sun went down, they enjoyed a night-time wide game.



# Sparkle and Ice continued



The Guides made orange cakes and toffee apples as well as playing in the 'snow'.



Photos from 1<sup>st</sup> Fetcham Guides and 1<sup>st</sup> Chaldon Guides



# Epsom Division Rangers



Trip to Iceland  
22nd -29th July 2023

On 22nd July 2023, 15 members of Epsom Division Ranger Unit (10 Rangers and 5 leaders) embarked on an exciting trip to Iceland, a land of breathtaking landscapes and geological wonders. We stayed for five nights at Úlfjótsvatn Scout Center, a beautiful campsite that overlooks Ulfjotsvatn Lake (the second coldest lake in Iceland). The view from our campsite was stunning, particularly on a clear night as it never got dark. There were lots of flies but we learned to live with them and the midge nets certainly helped.

We spent our first day kayaking on Ulfjotsvatn (the second coldest lake in Iceland). We paddled around Hrutey Island and across the lake to Steinngrimsstod hydroelectric power plant where we took a short walk over a hill and had lunch overlooking Thingvellavatn (the coldest lake in Iceland!). We were entertained on our journey across the lake by the crazy laugh of the Common Loon. It was a challenging paddle but teamwork and camaraderie prevailed.



On Monday, we went on the Golden Circle tour, which took us to some of Iceland's most iconic natural wonders. The first stop was the Secret Lagoon where we swam in the geothermal waters, which were lovely and warm. Our next destination was Gullfoss, a stunning two-tiered waterfall which we viewed from three different viewing platforms at differing heights. Our journey continued to the geothermal area of Geysir, where the Strokkur geyser delighted us with frequent eruptions.

Our tour guide, like everyone we spoke to in Iceland, was extremely friendly and happy to tell us about Icelandic culture and history which we saw at our next stop, Thingvellir National Park. Here we saw the site of the oldest parliament, which also has geological significance as it lies in the plate boundary between the Eurasian and North American tectonic plates.



# Epsom Division Rangers

On our return to the campsite, that evening, we joined the Scouts for an entertaining campsite with hilarious sketches and fun campfire songs. Lots of badge swapping took place and international friendships were made.

Tuesday was a day of on-site activities where we had fun taking part in team challenges, both on the water and on dry land and a visit to the scout museum. Some brave Rangers even enjoyed swimming in the lake.

On Wednesday, we went glacier hiking at Solheimajokull, which was the highlight of the trip for many. We put on our crampons and helmets and picked up our ice axes and we trekked through the icy landscape covered in volcanic ash up towards the plateau. We even got to drink water straight off the glacier, which was very exciting and we peered down into a glacial moulin (which drains water from the surface to the base of the glacier).

We learnt a lot about the glacier and how quickly it is receding due to climate change. On our way back, we stopped off to see Skogafoss, another magnificent waterfall.

On Thursday, we left Ulfjotsvatn to spend two nights in Reykjavik. We went to the Perlan museum, saw the northern lights in the planetarium, experienced an ice cave at freezing temperatures and watched and learned about volcanoes.

On Friday afternoon, we set sail to go whale watching and were lucky enough to see minke and humpback whales as well as dolphins and puffins. It was an incredible experience to see these marine mammals and birds in the wild.

We had an early start on Saturday morning but we were delighted to catch a glimpse of an erupting volcano from the coach.

Our trip to Iceland fostered a spirit of adventure and lifelong friendships were made. It was a brilliant opportunity to learn about ourselves and the world around us, and I believe it will leave a lasting impression on all of us, serving as a reminder of the profound forces that have shaped our planet and the importance of preserving its delicate ecosystems.



# Faufold Knitters

Faufold Holiday House and Campsite has a fabulous group of ladies who knit some of the souvenirs for visitors to the site to buy. While at the Capel Show in August, we were asked by a lady if we could knit her some cats for an activity she was organising. It turned out she wanted 230! Not a problem we said. They were all done by the beginning of October and delivered.



# Long Service Award



Ronnie Stalley (pictured far right), Brown Owl of 4th Stoneleigh Rainbows, was awarded her 40 year long service award at an event held at Little Acres campsite in Epsom recently.

Ronnie started helping in Girlguiding her daughter was a Brownie. She ended up staying and has now volunteered for over 40 years. Ronnie has been Pack Holiday adviser and loves being with the girls and seeing them grow and develop. She attends all the camps, most outings and is the unit's craft queen! Ronnie is an important and integral part of the team, and we are so proud of her achieving this award. Congratulations Ronnie!



# Good Service Awards

Surrey East County Commissioner Beverly Heywood Jones presented Elaine Edwards and Tracey Pettit with well-deserved Good Service awards at Little Acres Campsite this summer.

Elaine has been part of the campsite committee since 2007 and was chair for many years. She has been instrumental in the vision of the lodge from the start and stepped in twice when two previous chairs stood down. She was then officially made chair in 2017 until 2022. She is now on the fundraising committee, continuing to help the campsite committee raise money to make the lodge and campsite even better.

Tracey Pettit took over as Little Acres Campsite Chair in 2022 and has worked tirelessly since then to get the Lodge open. She has already achieved her promise to complete the lodge ready for use and is now working on the next part of the project to develop and deliver an innovative plan to ensure that the campsite is self-sufficient into the future. She has also been on the campsite committee since 2007 and has been campsite bookings secretary and project manager for the lodge.

Both Elaine and Tracey's dedication to the campsite is very much appreciated and we are delighted they have each received this hard-earned award and recognition for their work.

Stoneleigh leader Sue Sparrow was presented with a well-deserved Good Service award at Summer Fun at the Campsite by Epsom Division Commissioner Mary Zoeller. Sue has been a volunteer in Epsom Division for over 30 years and sadly retired this summer. She has held numerous roles including District Commissioner, Division ID Verifier, and is currently unit leader at 3rd Stoneleigh Brownies. She will be very much missed.

Another Good Service award was given by Mary to Clare Hodgson (right) who has moved away and has stood down as leader of 3rd Cuddington Brownies. Having helped with the unit since 2001 (as a 13 year old pack leader!), she is very sad to say goodbye but has promised to keep in touch. As well as being a pack leader, young leader, unit leader, Division Residential Adviser and Association Centenary Project Volunteer, she is also a region trainer. We would also like to congratulate Clare on the recent birth of gorgeous Anna!



# Leatherhead Division Long Service Awards celebration



Girlguiding volunteers from across the Leatherhead Division with almost 300 combined years of service were celebrated in October at Fetcham Guide Hall.

Awards were made to local women who have volunteered for durations from 5 years, right up to a remarkable 60 years!



Over the last six decades, Anne Collins has been a unit leader with the Bookham and Effingham Guide and Brownie units, served as District Commissioner and has also held a number of volunteer posts at county level. More recently, Anne has moved to Malta, but continues to help with the Ashtead Guide units, when she is back in the UK.

Beverly Heywood-Jones, Surrey East County Commissioner for Girlguiding attended the awards celebration and the afternoon tea which followed. Beverly said: "It was lovely to see so many awards being presented to leaders who volunteer in Leatherhead. 5 years, 10 years and right up to an incredible 60 years. It was certainly a day to celebrate! They should all be suitably proud of their achievements in bringing guiding to girls and young women in and around Leatherhead".

Ros Allen and Denise Coutts (both 20 years), Roberta Wilson (30 years) Sally Dart and Valerie Tucker (both 50 years) and Anne Collins (60 years) received flowers alongside their long service award badges.



Sally Dart (50 years service), Valerie Tucker (50 years), Anne Collins (60 years), with Surrey East County Commissioner Beverly Heywood Jones.

# Leith Hill Division Leaders

The leaders spent a lovely weekend at Foxlease. On Friday night, we made our own Gin. Saturday began with training sessions on 'inclusivity and diversity' and 'adapting the programme to suit individual needs'. We also covered risk assessments and RENs (residential event notification forms).

We were happy to welcome Bev, County Commissioner to present George Ede with her Region Chief Commissioners Award for her outstanding service to Girlguiding on Saturday evening. The gin may have been sampled too.

We also said goodbye to Jodi and Kate who have finished their time as division and assistant division commissioner.



Even leaders can dress up. The three bears at Polesdon Lacey.

# Leith Hill Division Leaders

Kate Fowles has finished her 5-year term as district commissioner. Kate took up the role in 2018 and with Jodi Morton as Assistant Division Commissioner, together forming a strong team. Leith Hill Division leaders celebrated with a gathering after their final division meeting in July.



Kate shared a poem thanking Jodi for her incredible support and summarising some of the challenges that they had faced during their time in role:

- the launch of the new programme
  - recruitment of new leaders and seeing their confidence grow
  - supporting the division through the global pandemic
  - ensuring that Leith Hill is well run.
- It was clear from the enthusiasm of everyone there that Leith Hill has become a great team and appreciate all that Kate and Jodi have done.

County commissioner, Beverly Heywood-Jones, surprised Kate by presenting her with a silver lion brooch, to recognise her service in Surrey East and the amazing job that she has done.

# Epsom's Christmas Card Competition



There were over 130 entries to Epsom Division's Design a Christmas Card Competition. Guest judge Zehra Hicks was impressed by all the entries. Congratulations to the winners – their designs are available as Christmas e-cards.



# Epsom Division Leaders

Epsom Division Leaders helped out at Epsom Fireworks Display organised by Epsom Scouts. This popular community event supports local charities and is a highlight in the Borough's calendar. Even the rain didn't put people off!



Epsom Division volunteer Alex Lorenz attended Girlguiding Celebrates at the Odeon Lux in Leicester Square London today, a party to recognise the hard work of Girlguiding members. Alex was nominated to attend this prestigious event by her Girlguiding colleagues who said: "Alex is a very inspiring volunteer. She jointly runs a Guide unit and runs a Ranger unit almost single-handedly as well as supporting the division and county as an adviser and event organiser. She is upbeat, positive and a great role model." Alex said: "It was a huge privilege to be nominated to attend this event. It was lovely to meet other volunteers from around the country and share stories." Well done Alex we are very proud of you!



# Reigate Division Leaders

Well done to Reigate Division who were the fastest leaders on the low ropes course at the County Outdoors Day.



# Mayor of Reigate & Banstead's Reception

Volunteers across Reigate and Banstead were invited to a reception in October by the Mayor of Reigate & Banstead Councillor Eddy Humphreys, to thank them all for their service to the community and to recognise this vital role that Girlguiding and Scouting has. His theme for this year is "togetherness" and this was a great opportunity to bring people together. Cllr Humphreys welcomed us and thanked us for all we do, and then we learned more about the town hall, its history, the mayoral robes and had a fascinating tour.



# Leatherhead Division Leaders



Leatherhead division said farewell to Dax Patel who has relocated to Shropshire. Dax Patel was Division Commissioner for Leatherhead and leader of 1<sup>st</sup> Fetcham Brownie and Guide units and will be sorely missed by us all. The division celebrated with a summer social and a farewell speech from district commissioner, Joy Lord. Dax was also delighted to be able to award Sally Dart with her 50 years long service award as Sally has supported Dax in units for many years.



Mary Zoeller, Assistant County Commissioner, attended on behalf of the county and presented Dax with a silver lion to thank her for her service to the County. Thank you to Christine Moss who organised the afternoon, which was a lovely celebration with lots of food and chat!

# Epsom Yule



Epsom division leaders ran a children's games stall at Ewell Yule - a well-established Christmas event held in Ewell High Street with stalls, entertainment, food and drink and Santa's Grotto!

This popular local event brings the community together and we were delighted to be part of the organising committee this year. The profit from our stall will go to our lovely lodge and campsite Little Acres in Horton Country Park, Epsom.

# Little Acres Lodge Open Day

Thank you to everyone who came to the Little Acres Lodge open day! We were thrilled to welcome so many Girlguiding and Scouting people to the event and show them the newly opened Lodge and facilities available. After over 10 years of fundraising and over £280,000 having been raised, the stunning lodge has finally been completed. It comprises a large hall for sleepovers, a leaders' room, toilets and shower, kitchen and large veranda. The campsite itself offers a huge camping area with campfire, wood store, concrete bases for smaller fires, outside tap and power in a quiet private area in the picturesque and peaceful setting of Horton Country Park. There is also plenty of camping equipment and other useful items available to borrow free of charge.



## Thank You Award



Godstone division commissioner Sue surprised former district commissioner Rebecca with a Girlguiding Thank You award in the middle of her workplace - and picked up a new adult volunteer at the same time!

## Capel Show



Capel Friends of Guiding and Faurefold fundraising volunteers helped in the Tea, Cake and Bacon Stall 19th at the Annual Capel Show.

# GirlGuiding Exclusive Viewing of Wish



7<sup>th</sup> Horley Rainbows



1st Fetcham Guides and Brownies enjoyed watching Wish at Epsom Odeon.

## Epsom Division

Epsom Division leaders went out with the Rotary Club of Ewell collecting for local charities. They were accompanied on their way round the streets by Santa and the festive trailer bellowing our Christmas tunes to get everyone in the spirit! Father Christmas was extremely popular and said hello to many families on his way round. It was great to see so many leaders keeping their Girlguiding promise to serve the community.



# Surrey East Trefoil Guild

To celebrate the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Trefoil Guild, Surrey East joined with other LaSER Trefoil members to 'See Red' around the coast from Herne Bay to Littlehampton. Surrey East spent the day at Goring with photos being taken at 3pm.



Other members joined the 'Ribbon of Red' down the Thames. Many members walked the bridges from Westminster to Tower Bridge then met up with others at Potter's Field for a group photo of over 100 Trefoil members at 3pm.



During this year, members have taken part in the 80<sup>th</sup> Challenge, 'from small acorns to giant oaks', which has been great fun with much laughter and a badge at the end – what else! Guilds have celebrated in other ways such as Afternoon Teas, picnics at a campsite and similar activities.

Within the county, guilds have hosted various events to raise money for their chosen charities. We have joined Kingswood Guild at an enjoyable Coffee Morning in aid of 'Clowns in the Sky', Bookham for a lunch in aid of the Grange Centre in Bookham, Banstead for a Tea Party for Alzheimer's and Reigate Guild for an excellent Quiz Evening in aid of 'Facial Palsy', a good variety of events. In October, we joined other Trefoil members at Tonbridge School for the LaSER Trefoil Annual Review. It was a good meeting and a good opportunity to catch up with friends.

The county out & about group (formerly the walking group) had a visit on Armistice Day to the Field of Soldiers on Epsom Downs, where we joined about 60 other people for the 2 mins silence. We walked in pleasant sunshine up to Jutland Wood where the ships which had sunk during WWI are remembered.



The next County Newsletter will be published on Friday 12<sup>th</sup> July.

**The deadline for guaranteed inclusion is Friday 5<sup>th</sup> July.**

All articles are welcome, from units, districts, divisions or county – please email your contribution to [newslettersurreyeast@gmail.com](mailto:newslettersurreyeast@gmail.com). Any article is always better if accompanied by photos but please ensure that you have permission for them to be used before sharing them. Please give a contact name, email and telephone no. with every contribution (even if you wish it to be published anonymously), and mention that it is for the County Newsletter.

We would love to hear from you – no story is too small to be included. It is so fantastic to see what everyone has been up to and see how vibrant the Surrey East county really is.

I look forward to hearing from you!

Alexia Beale

County newsletter coordinator

[newslettersurreyeast@gmail.com](mailto:newslettersurreyeast@gmail.com)

Twitter: @ggSEcountynews

Find out how to volunteer at: <https://www.girlguiding.org.uk/get-involved/>  
County Website: <https://www.girlguidingsurreyeast.org.uk/>  
National Website: <https://www.girlguiding.org.uk/>

You can also follow us at:

<https://www.facebook.com/girlguidingsurreyeast>  
<https://www.instagram.com/girlguidingsurreyeast>



Oxted Guide Hall all set up for the gold award presentations.