

the **GIRLS'**  
**BRIGADE**  
ENGLAND & WALES



# Winter 20/21 round-up

A winter 2020/2021 round-up of news and stories  
from Girls' Brigade England & Wales

## Putting the fun into fundraising

Several of our GB community groups have been busy raising money for their work and it's great to celebrate their fundraising successes.

1<sup>st</sup> Ryton GB group applied to be a chosen cause with the Co-op Local Community Fund and received nearly £3,000.

Team Leader Sam Cree says 'We launched as a new group in September 2019. Starting up a new group is costly and as part of planning for setting up the group, I looked at applying for funding. I applied to the Co-op Local Community Fund at the Ryton store in March 2019 and the application pitch was to help us with start-up and running costs through the year. Our application was successful and from the autumn we were a local cause.'

Receiving this funding is a great help to us. It also means we can ringfence money for our annual fees for 2021 and use money to make our group COVID-19 secure for returning in person. Due to us getting this grant, we're asking our GB families to donate to GBM nationally instead of giving us subs this term.'



## A hair-raising donation



A GB member has donated 40cm of her hair to a charity supporting children with cancer – as well as raising more than £800 for the same cause.

Rebekah Patis, aged 10, from 2<sup>nd</sup> Leigh Park GB group, decided that she wanted to donate her hair to the Little Princess Trust. On Friday 23 October, Rebekah, and her mum Helen, visited a local salon where her hair was prepared in two plaits before being cut off and her hair restyled.



Helen, who is Team Leader at 2<sup>nd</sup> Leigh Park, says 'Rebekah's been overwhelmed by the amount of money that has been raised. She's received amazing sponsorship support from her family, friends, and members of Hart Plain Church where she attends church regularly, currently virtually.'

## GB community group celebrates anniversary online

Girls and leaders at 1<sup>st</sup> Waterloooville marked the group's 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary by joining together virtually to play an online escape room game.

Originally it was intended the group would have a whole weekend of celebrations including a trip to a theme park, sleepover and church parade service followed by lunch, but that was cancelled due to the COVID-19 restrictions on meetings and services.

Team Leader Sian Evans says 'Instead, with much scribbling, head-scratching, and chocolate inspiration, we encountered and solved various puzzles to all safely reach our final destination after about 90 minutes. Up to 6 players can log onto each session, which cost £15, and we also had a separate chatroom open to help us share information and ideas across the team. There are more episodes available in the series and we're looking forward to doing some more.'

Many former 1<sup>st</sup> Waterloooville members had been planning to attend the July celebration weekend and some had sent in photos of their own time in GB including a camp in Jersey in the 1950s and the 70<sup>th</sup> birthday cake from the year 2000.



## Belgian buns at 1<sup>st</sup> Hawkwell



Baking 120 vegan Belgian buns helped one GB leader raise more than £200 for Girls' Brigade.

Jazz Zekai, from 1<sup>st</sup> Hawkwell community group, was inspired by the fundraising challenge the group set its members for the summer – the Sponsored 100 Challenge – to raise funds for GB nationally.

Jazz adds 'It was most definitely a challenge – my kitchen was a picture! But it was so much fun and it felt great to deliver them to so many wonderful people who bought them and to know all the money was going to GB.

'Girls' Brigade means so much to me and I really feel like it's shaped who I am today.'



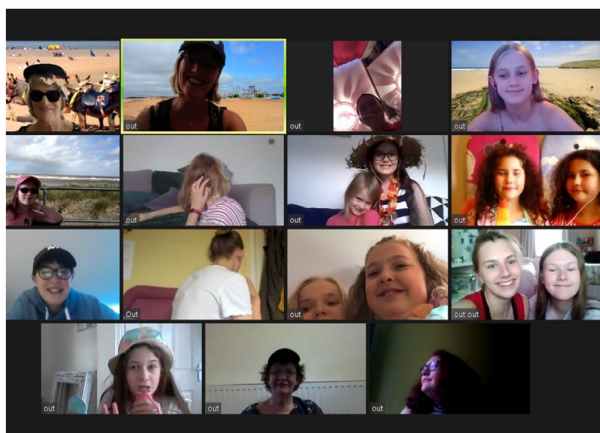
## Staying connected in the summer

Our groups and GB members were busy right through the summer engaging in various activities and programme resources produced by GB as well as their own tasks and challenges!

The members of 3<sup>rd</sup> Southwick group enjoyed using the GB@home material. The group had fun taking part in activities such as cake making, writing letters to friends they hadn't seen and making some really impressive Easter bonnets from kits that were sent out to member's houses!

4<sup>th</sup> Nottingham had a jam-packed year of online meeting – all the way from April right through the summer! A variety of ages logged on for fun activities including scavenger hunts, Pictionary, talent shows, bingo, quizzes and much more! The group were also set challenges, such as a sunflower growing competition, a cake decorating competition and even a 'Hope' picture competition where the entries were sent a local care home.

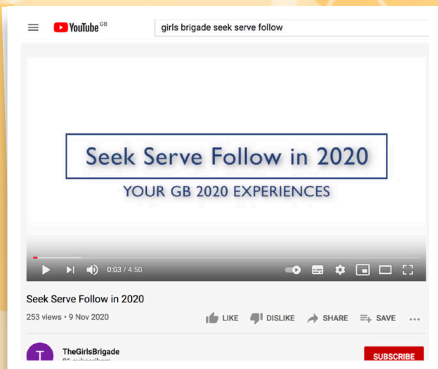
In July, the group should have been going on a trip to Skegness, so seized the opportunity to go on the trip virtually! Everyone dressed ready for the seaside and had buckets and spades, surfboards, sun hats, ice lollies etc. 'On the way', the group sang songs and played 'Simon says'!



Team Leader Pat says, 'The emphasis for the whole time was on fun and sharing. At the end of the summer, one of our older girls left to go to university so we held a Zoom disco night – which was good fun.'

'Although this year has been different it has given us all the chance to recharge our batteries and continue to work with the girls. We have had some fantastic times.'

## November conference round-up



It was great to have over 140 leaders join us for our online winter conference on Saturday 7 November.

Leaders were invited to be part of the GB Council meeting, enjoy worship together and take part in an Volumise equipping session led by GB's Mission and Advocacy Enabler Dr Claire Rush navigating loss, discovering new ways of engagement and encouraging leaders to continue to raise hope for girls in practical ways in a COVID-19 world.

To accompany the session, a downloadable handout of 'top tips' has been produced containing ideas and advice from GBEW leaders who are currently engaging with GB members on Zoom or face-to-face (when restrictions allow). This is available on the Resources section of our website along with a handy video guide to using Zoom.

We also shared an inspiring film of our 2020 experiences. You can view this on the '*TheGirlsBrigade*' YouTube channel.

## Christmas Countdown creations

After releasing our GB@home resources in October, it's been wonderful to see so many groups using them.

The *Christmas Countdown* resources have been created for blended age groups of 4 to 11s and 10 to 18s and are adaptable for face-to-face or online meeting.

*Christmas Countdown* looks at the themes of advent as we journey together towards Christmas, considering God coming close to us... and linked to the fact we might not have been physically close to those we love this past year, but we can be close to them in other ways.

1<sup>st</sup> Fareham made wreaths to learn about how churches celebrate advent, 1<sup>st</sup> Newport Pagnell made sock snowpeople using craft supplies and anything else they could find in their homes and 2<sup>nd</sup> Plymouth decorated pebbles of Peace with beautiful decorations, words and prayers on them. 1<sup>st</sup> Kings Hill also had a great time having a go at several of the crafts from the resources during their online meetings.



## God is with us

During October, Trinity GB group was able to enjoy a brief time of meeting face-to-face together. Team Leader Kerin Adam shared her experiences of meeting again...

'Despite GB looking so different the girls responded so well. They shared their experiences of being in lockdown and we were able to guide them to the good things that God was able to bring out of it.'

'When **n:counta** and **n:spire** met, we worried about how it would be having to ask the girls to wear face masks. Not one complained about having to wear a face covering, we laughed when we couldn't quite hear each other and supported those who've struggled and missed out on things during this time. You know you've done the right thing when one of the **n:counta** girls turns and says 'GB is the only place that I can be myself'.

'We thank God that He's enabled us to be in this position that we can meet together again. We don't know how long we'll be able to do this with the situation changing so rapidly around us. But we'll just have to work week by week knowing that our Heavenly Father is with us in everything we do. Knowing that when we feel at our weakest, He is our strength and will sustain us through this time.'



## GB members are 'living well'

Since the release of our latest *Living Well* resources for the new year, we've received lots of messages about how GB groups have been using them.

As part of the badge, 1<sup>st</sup> Hawkwell Leader Grace Claydon created a winter walking trail around the group's local park and nature reserve. GB families were encouraged to enjoy some fresh air and to follow various clues and challenges that had been positioned on the trail.



GB parent Claire says 'We all had a wonderful time doing the trail yesterday – full of laughs, jumping in muddy puddles and precious family time together!'

At 2<sup>nd</sup> Worcester Park, the **n:spire** section have made mug cakes and 'rockariums' as part of their self-care activities. They were also each sent a self-care package from their leaders.

Our latest resources, called *Approaching Easter*, have now been released for use in GB groups.

## Hayley's mask-making mission

GB Leader Hayley Flint from 4<sup>th</sup> Lincoln has spent the last few months making face masks to help raise funds for GB and a mental health charity.

She started by making masks for herself and her family, drafting a pattern and gathering some fabric she already owned. Before long colleagues and friends were asking to buy masks.

Hayley says, 'I instantly knew I wanted to support Girls' Brigade, I've been a member for around 17 years. The leaders at my group have always encouraged and supported me. I've also been given amazing opportunities from head office, from attending the Esther Generation Weekend, to being invited to London for an event on International Women's Day and then applying and helping to run the Esther Generation Weekend in 2019. Being in GB has also enabled me to be on the Youth United Foundation Youth Panel, which is how the second charity I am supporting came to me.'



'We, the Youth Panel, completed a research project on loneliness and mental health within uniformed youth organisations. Mental health often carries a stigma and has negative associations. From researching, I picked CALM as the mental health charity I wanted to support.'

Hayley recently expanded her mission to include making hair scrunchies in fun fabrics from Harry Potter themed to dinosaurs and Peter Rabbit! If you're interested in supporting Hayley, you can order and see the fabrics available and photos of Hayley's craft at [\*\*@handmadebyhayleyrona\*\*](#) on Instagram. You can also email [\*\*handmadebyhayleyrona@hotmail.com\*\*](mailto:handmadebyhayleyrona@hotmail.com). Masks are £5 and scrunchies are £2.50 each.



## GB leader awarded British Empire Medal



Anne Stapleton, Team Leader of 2<sup>nd</sup> Plymouth GB group and District Team Leader of Plymouth District, has been awarded a British Empire Medal in the Queen's Birthday Honours List 2020 for her work with GB.

The Queen's Birthday Honours Lists 2020 recognise the outstanding achievements of people across the United Kingdom.

Anne, who has been Team Leader for nearly 40 years, says 'I was honoured and delighted to be able to accept this award not only for myself but for all the GB leaders in our group. It also pleased me that the importance of the work of GB within youth work in general had been recognised in such a way.'

GB's Director Jules Murdy adds 'What wonderful news and very well deserved. Many congratulations to Anne.'

## GB face coverings

You can now show your support for GB when you're out and about with a GB face covering.

The 'GB est. 1893' face coverings are navy and have 2 layers, a metal strip in the nose bridge to help mould it to your nose shape and adjustable ear-loops for comfort. They cost £4.95 each (GBG00154).

GB's Trading Manager Caroline Knowlden says 'Our face coverings are a great way to show your support for GB, for example at the supermarket, and a good talking point.'

Available from [www.girlsbrigadetrading.com](http://www.girlsbrigadetrading.com)



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