

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



# Autumn 2021 Round-up

An Autumn Round-up of news and stories  
from Girls' Brigade England & Wales

## GB member selected for 2021 England Girls' Golf Squad



GB member Rachel Gourley, aged 16, from 4<sup>th</sup> Newcastle upon Tyne, has been selected for the 2021 England Girls' Golf Squad.

Rachel shares 'I started playing golf on my 5<sup>th</sup> birthday with a set of Barbie golf clubs. I'd seen them while shopping for a Father's Day present. My grandad bought me the clubs and I was instantly attached. I started going to a field with my dad to practice – I was too young to join a golf club then, once winter

came, I went to a local driving range. I worked as hard as a five year old could over that winter and played my first competition in the May in a county organised flag day event which I won, winning a year's membership at a golf club. I chose Arcot Hall Golf Club, which is still my home club now. I continued to compete over the summer and met my coach Andrew who is still my coach now.

'The next season, my dad found a national tour called The British Junior Tour. I won my first event; a qualifier for the Callaway Junior World Championship, in San Diego, California. It was my first experience of representing my country, aged six. I continued to play those events for a further four years which gave me lots of competitive experience.

'My first experience of an elite national event was aged 10 at the Scottish Girls' Under 18s Championship. I made the cut which was extremely exciting. In 2018 and 2019, I helped with a girls' beginner programme called Girls Golf Rocks where I helped to teach beginner girl golfers.

'In May 2019, I was selected to play my first England match against Spain in a team. I won one of my matches, however England unfortunately lost to Spain. This was a different experience for me as golf is an individual sport, however using teamwork skills I gained through Girls' Brigade I was able to engage and encourage my team.

'During 2019, I was selected for four other England matches and, in the September, I was chosen to join the Elite England Girls' Squad training sessions on a trial basis and then, in January 2020, was announced as a squad member.

'2020 was a difficult year as we spent time in lockdown unable to play which ultimately taught me lots about myself and my golf. I learnt skills such as adaptability, resilience and problem solving which I had bases of from Girls' Brigade. The 2020 season was a short one however, I won the English under 16s championship and had 3 top fives in other tournaments.

'Now into the 2021 season, I'm hoping to get some international golf played with the England squad but, most importantly, just getting back to competing.'

## 1<sup>st</sup> Hawkwell's happy birthday

1<sup>st</sup> Hawkwell GB group recently held a birthday party for everyone in their group – complete with an ice cream van visit!

Team Leader Sally Claydon says 'As most of us have missed out on birthday celebrations, in fact some have had two lockdown birthdays, we decided to have a birthday party for everyone! We used our church car park on a sunny evening.

'We'd collected lots of birthday badges, balloons and banners from the local community. Girls chose badges and so enjoyed an evening of being a different age. I enjoyed being 13 again!'

The group enjoyed craft and party games before a special treat from the ice cream van. The ice cream man very kindly embellished the basic cones the group had paid for with sprinkles, sauce, flakes and marshmallows.

Sally adds 'There were squeals of delight! We finished the evening by singing *Happy Birthday* to each other.'



## Zoom-tastic work at 4<sup>th</sup> Nottingham

4<sup>th</sup> Nottingham GB group met every week on Zoom for over a year, meeting at first for game and quiz nights. Then from September 2020 they met for badgework, completing GB provided badges and taking part in UK Parliament week where their local MP joined for a debate night.

Activities for **n:vestigate** and **n:gage** included celebrating cultural differences and looking at emotions and activities for **n:counta** and **n:spire** included looking at different countries. They cooked Caribbean banana fritters, hot cobbles Kenyan style and Anzac biscuits from Australia. They also heard a Bible story each week emphasising travel and also Jesus' love.

Team Leader Pat says 'Girls and leaders shared news each week and we kept positive with them telling us good things that have happened. If they needed to tell us sad or unhappy things we turned that round in our prayer time. At the end of each night the leaders stayed on for a social time to share issues we were facing, and this was a very positive time.'

## First female helm at Cullercoats RNLI in 170 years is GB member

Cullercoats RNLI crew member Anna Heslop has become the first female helm at the station after passing out as a helm on the station's Atlantic 85 class lifeboat. Anna, a GB member at 4<sup>th</sup> Newcastle and Queen's Award recipient, says being part of GB helped equip her for her RNLI role.

She says 'I'm thrilled to have passed out as the first female helm at Cullercoats Lifeboat. It's been amazing to hear how many women and girls have been inspired by my story.

'I've been in GB since I was born, it runs in the family with my gran, mam and sister all involved. My group and wider GB family has always inspired and encouraged me to be the best I can be and empowered me to go into the world with big aspirations. Training to be a helm wasn't easy but I've worked hard, been supported and had some great women as role models. GB equips you with skills for life and it's amazing how many of those skills you draw on as you grow older.'

Anna joined the crew at 17, after witnessing a person in trouble in the water at Whitley Bay, where she called the 'sea police'.



Following this, she went down to the station to see what the RNLI do first-hand. After that, Anna joined the crew and has been saving lives at sea since. After lots of training, Anna is now the first female helm in the station's 170 year history!

Anna's first time on a lifeboat was part of a GB outing. Her mum, Kay, says 'Fast forward 20 years and Anna has become the first female helm at Cullercoats lifeboat station. This achievement has taken dedication, commitment and overcoming challenges. GB supports the development of girls in many ways – aspiration, commitment and serving others are only some of the qualities.'

Anna's message for all GB members is 'Just because something hasn't been done before, it doesn't mean it can't be done. Believe in yourself enough to take on your Everest girls, and do it with the full support of Girls' Brigade behind you.'

*Pic credit: RNLI/Alex Bateman.*

## If you go down to the woods today...

For 1<sup>st</sup> Guildford Girls' Brigade and Boys' Brigade, May half-term should be annual camp week which is always a very special and exciting time that's anticipated all year. Sadly they were unable to hold the camp for the second year running but the leaders were able to plan an amazing woodland 'day camp' instead.

Having only just returned to GB, they anticipated low numbers, but 16 girls joined in for a wonderful day. The girls were divided into 3 groups and rotated around the activities. A system of ropes were set up in the woodland and the girls had to jump onto a swing, and swing across to parallel ropes. Then working as a team, trying not to fall off, they passed a bucket along the line to the end. Another activity involved a series of pulleys which the girls had to manoeuvre and pick up a bucket of 'toxic waste' and empty it into a container.

They also enjoyed playing wide games, created 'art attack' pictures from things they found on the ground and had a picnic together. The afternoon was ended around a campfire and with the story of Zacchaeus.

They had beautiful weather and everyone went home tired and happy, celebrating being together again.



## Locks Against Leukaemia event at 1<sup>st</sup> Hawkwell



In July, 1<sup>st</sup> Hawkwell held a charity event called 'Locks Against Leukaemia' as a fundraising event.

The event, organised by Leader Jordan, included some girls from the group having their hair cut and donated to the Little Princess Trust, who make wigs for young people who have experienced hair

loss due. **n:spire** member Nicole is currently receiving treatment for leukaemia, and has received a wig from the Little Princess Trust, so the group wanted to show their support and give back. The group also encouraged people to sign up for stem cell donation through DKMS, as many people who have blood cancer will need a bone marrow transplant.

Leader Grace says 'The team raised over £1,400 for the Little Princess Trust, DKMS and Nicole's family! We're so proud of their generosity and bravery and we're continuously proud of Nicole for her strength and courage. It's a privilege to be a part of the GB family and see our girls supporting each other.'

## Awards nights with a difference

After over a year of operating with adaptations, groups have found fantastic new ways of celebrating awards nights.



After 15 months of meeting online, **14<sup>th</sup> Stoke on Trent** met face-to-face in the church car park for the last month of term. They finished with an awards night to celebrate badges and the girls' commitment. They invited a children's worker to speak and a worship leader too.

Team Leader Amy says 'I wasn't sure how it would all work, but what a witness to sing and share God's work in the open air! Our church car park has houses backing onto it and a boy appeared, watching and listening.'

'Families who engaged throughout the pandemic have shared how grateful they are for GB continuing. Even via Zoom, GB has kept some routine for us as leaders and the relationships we have are now stronger.'

**4<sup>th</sup> Nottingham** couldn't hold an awards evening for the girls, but leaders managed to enjoy a celebration with Mia Brown who achieved her Queen's Award. Lorna, Nottinghamshire's District Team Leader presented the award, speaking highly of Mia and thanking her for all she does. Members of Mia's family were able to join too, which was very special.



For the last meeting of the year, **18<sup>th</sup> Sheffield** met in the garden at their sister church. They took part in nature-themed activities which was a lovely end to a disruptive year. At the end of the evening all girls received a certificate recognising their commitment during the pandemic.

Traditionally, **1<sup>st</sup> Hawkwell** held an annual awards

evening in their church. This year, with restrictions still in place, they borrowed a local church with a garden and had summer fair activities such as hook-a-duck, a buzzer game, a human fruit machine and candy floss machine, many items generously loaned from other local churches. The group had a lovely sunny evening with the girls enjoying the activities before settling down to clap each other as they received their awards.



## A five-star review at the bug hotel!



At 1<sup>st</sup> Loughborough, the young people had a great time making their very own bug hotels during their last term before summer.

The girls were working through their Stewardship badge, looking at what they could do in and around their environment to improve it and learning about recycling. Team Leader Vicky ventured to B&Q one weekend and found quite a few offcuts

from pallets in the donations box by the exit and thought they'd make great bug hotels once cut up!

The leaders made sure they were safe to use and took them into GB. The girls loved foraging for sticks, twigs and moss in the church garden to make cosy little homes for bugs and then, using some Sharpie pens, decorated them beautifully. The group talked about what kind of bugs might use them and where the best place would be to put them at home.

## GB has been an essential part of my spiritual journey

Patsy Attwood, 21, is leaving 1<sup>st</sup> Saffron Walden after 16 years to train to be an ordained minister of the Salvation Army.

'GB has been an essential part of my spiritual journey. Because of GB, I feel equipped and empowered to serve God and follow His plan for me. Over the years, I've experienced so much because of GB and I've met some amazing people. I've found GB to be a place where I'm encouraged to be myself. During stressful times in my life, GB has been a place where I could go to relax and to enjoy fun and creative activities.

'The **n:fluence 14-18s** scheme has given me skills that I'll use throughout my ministry. I've learnt how to plan activities for a wide age range, how to create spaces and opportunities for girls to be themselves and explore how much God loves them; I've learnt to work effectively in a team and how to support other leaders so that they too can develop and flourish.

'As I leave GB and begin the next chapter of my life, I look back fondly at all the memories I've made, all the people I've met and everything that I've learnt and gained because of it. Even though I'll no longer be formally a member of GB, in all I do I will make sure to Seek, Serve and Follow Christ.'



## GB leader smashes half marathon walk



Team Leader at 1<sup>st</sup> Carshalton Beeches, Janice Ogilvie, walked 25km over every London bridge from Putney to Tower Bridge to raise money for GB.

After a year of walking around the local area, Janice and husband Tony decided to enter the London Bridges Trek in 2020. Due to COVID-19 restrictions the event moved to a Winter Walk in February 2021, and then changed again to a Summer Walk.

Janice says 'It was a lovely day in June to start from The Oval and up to Tower Bridge and back taking in various sights. After 4.5 hours and over 20km later we completed the walk, and with the help of friends and family, raised £345 for GB!'

Janice adds 'It was great fun, with a sense of achievement that we were able to do something we enjoyed as well as finding a way to raise money to help GB be there in the future.'

## Growing GB

The screenshot shows a digital invitation form for the Girls' Brigade. At the top left is the logo for 'the GIRLS' BRIGADE ENGLAND & WALES' with a red cross on a white shield. To the right is a small photo of three girls in red uniforms sitting at a table. Below the logo and photo is the heading 'You're invited to'. The form contains several input fields: 'Name of group', 'For: age/gender', 'At: Venue', 'On: Wednesday 19 September 2018', and 'Time: 18:00 to 19:30'. On the left side of the form, there are four 'Additional info' labels. On the right side, there are three input fields labeled 'Name', 'on', and 'Number' under the heading 'For more details call'.

We have released a set of brand-new resources designed to help GB groups promote themselves and grow their groups.

Promoting a Girls' Brigade group means being visible in the local community so that people know it exists and understand a bit about what we do. Being visible is important to growth especially in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic and could also help with any fundraising activities the group undertakes.

We have shared a pack with our GB leaders containing several resources including a leaflet template and a how-to guide to help their group flourish.



The Girls' Brigade England and Wales,  
Cliff College, Calver, Hope Valley, Derbyshire, S32 3XG

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