

the **GIRLS'**
BRIGADE
ENGLAND & WALES



Winter 2022 round-up

A Winter round-up of news and stories
from Girls' Brigade England & Wales

A Christmas round-up

There's no denying that GB groups know how to celebrate Christmas, and last year was full of parties, crafts, gifts and giving and, of course, celebrating the birth of Jesus.

In December, 1st **Sutton** Girls' and Boys' Brigades collected gifts for shoeboxes they were donating to Samaritans Purse. Through donations, and along with the knitting skills of GB leader Jacqueline, they filled 30 shoeboxes! A church member kindly wrapped them and took them to a collection point.



1st **Higham Ferrers** made wreaths from jigsaw puzzle pieces – what a lovely way to recycle old jigsaws!

4th **Sheffield** joined their weekly meeting in their favourite Christmas jumpers to raise money for the May Queen's chosen charity. With added hats and lots of sequins and glitter, it certainly created a festive atmosphere!

1st **Huncote** enjoyed an awards evening and Christmas celebration all in one, with young people making and displaying Christingles in a dimly-lit, cosy service. When 1st Huncote first launched, they had just three members. The group is now thriving and a big part of the church family.

1st **Yorkshire District** held a GB activity day called Advent Adventure. The young people explored what advent is, played snowman beetle, made delicious sweets, danced at the silent disco and made a giant group advent wreath.



1st **Guildford**, along with other young people at their church, had a very special Christmas treat this year. Worship pastor David Neutel, a professional musician, teamed up with the church's Children's and Families' Pastor to write a new worship song. The young people were invited to feature in the music video. *I call on Jesus* is available to stream on Spotify.

A young leader from 2nd **Leigh Park** has earned a reputation for herself at her church by writing a Christmas song each year. Last year was no different and Mahlah Forder has written a beautiful song called *Christmas is Love*, complete with lyric sheet and music video! The song is fantastic and Mahlah is certainly a very gifted young lady.

A Christmas round-up (cont.)

At 4th **Nottingham, n:counta** and **n:spire** members included Christmas celebrations in their badgework as they looked at what life was like for Jesus as He grew up in Nazareth. They looked at His lifestyle, home, education, religious background and much more. What a great way to learn about Jesus!

The whole group also made a stained glass backdrop to this year's local Christmas shed. Crafts were made by local schools, church groups, BB and GB as a community display with the aim of depicting the true meaning of Christmas.

7th **Leytonstone** learned about advent and took part in a wreath decorating workshop with Christmas snacks, a fabulous time was had by all!



1st **Kexborough** performed their *Christingle Rock*. At the end of the performance, the group sang some Christmas songs, which included a very special, bespoke, version of the *Twelve Days of GB Christmas!*

37th Bristol are 70

In October, 37th **Bristol** celebrated its 70th birthday.

Along with the 70th birthday, 37th **Bristol** had a young leader, Eloise, commissioned into the group as a leader – and what better time to celebrate her commissioning than during a special service for the group.



A whole church service dedicated to the group took place, where girls from the group paraded in their colours. Team Leader Sharon told stories of how the group began and its journey to today. One leader took part in a chat show style session to find out more about what GB means to her and the theme of the service was based on our motto: Seek, Serve and Follow Christ.

The service was followed up by a huge lunch at the church along with a display of old uniforms, timeline photos and memorabilia, along with (in true GB style) a cake!

Fantastic fundraising for Kenyan education charity

An n:counta member from Ist Drighlington set herself a fundraising task for a Kenyan charity close to her heart. 14-year-old Gabby came up with the idea of providing a fundraising meal for Kenyan charity, Memusi Foundation. Gabby explains all about her inspiration for fundraising for the Memusi Foundation.

Gabby says, 'I'm very passionate about helping people that need it, so when the idea of doing a meal to raise money for charity came up, I was very excited. I love cooking and baking so I took pride in what I made. I decided to do the meal on my birthday as it shows my dedication to the charity as I'm giving up my special day.

'The charity I raised money for is called the Memusi Foundation which is a charity set up in Kenya that provides help and education for children. Due to generous donations from many people the charity has managed to grow a lot and several schools have been built in Kenya by the charity. The charity is frequently sending out groups of volunteers to go over to the schools to visit the children and help where needed. In July, my mum and I were part of a small group who went out to Kenya to visit. I was so excited to finally go, as we had been planning this trip for years but as COVID hit the trip was cancelled several times.

'On my 14th birthday, I held a 3-course meal to raise more funds for Memusi before we went. I had a lot of help on the night but did all the cooking myself. On the night, we raised £770 to donate and I'm hoping that the money raised can go to help keep young girls in education, as most drop out after primary school to work or get married

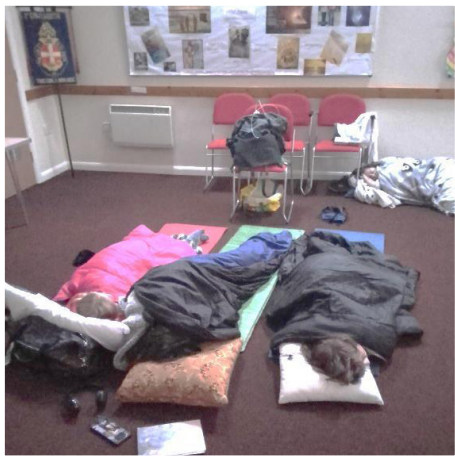
– something a young girl shouldn't have to do. Girls deserve to have a good education just as boys do.'



Julie, Team Leader from Ist Drighlington, has since been in touch to say that since the event, Gabby raised over £2,000!

We're very proud to have Gabby as part of the GB family and wish her well as she continues to support the Memusi Foundation.

Boycott your Bed at 1st Gawsworth



On Friday 7 October, 1st **Gawsworth** took part in Boycott your Bed, for Action for Children. The leaders and older girls stayed over at church, while the younger girls were at home, but found an alternative bed for the night. The group had lots of fun, games and food, raising a fantastic total of £313 for an amazing charity! Here are a few thoughts from some of the girls who took part:

'We had to find somewhere else to sleep, instead of our usual comfy bed. I chose to sleep on the sofa as that was the comfiest option we had in our house. We brought a donation to our next meeting for Action for

Children who help lots of children who aren't as lucky as us and it was good to think about how they must feel sometimes.' Sophie

'I slept in my bath. My mum put my pillows and my covers in the bath for me. Me and my mum watched a film while I lay in the bath with my covers and then I had a story. It was a bit uncomfortable but I did manage to get to sleep in the end.' Darcy

'I stayed up on the sofa and mummy let me watch lots of movies. I also got to play video games. I fell asleep really late and woke up still on the sofa; daddy didn't carry me to my own bed. I got lots of money to help children that live in another house.' Evie

'We played lots of games during the night, such as Jungle Speed, Twister, Top Trumps and Uno. They were all very fun, however, Jungle Speed got very competitive but that made it more fun. Some girls stayed until late and left, but six girls, including me decided to stay overnight. The other girls managed to stay up till around 6am but I wanted to go to sleep early so I ended up getting in bed at around 1am. During the evening they supplied us with lots of fizzy drinks, sweets and snacks which made it easier to stay up later and at one point during the night we were given pizza. I really enjoyed it and I definitely would like to do it again but the next time I would try and stay up later!' Catherine



National award for Paisley

Paisley, aged 6, was born with a serious heart condition, called Hypoplastic Left Heart Syndrome, and Turner Syndrome. She has had 3 major heart operations, with the last in 2022.



The Endurance Award is for GB members who have had prolonged periods of illness, where they may be in and out of hospitals – making Paisley an ideal recipient. She was given the award in July by GB's Assistant Director Catherine Burt.

Pauline, Team Leader at **1st Weymouth**, says 'As only half Paisley's heart works properly, she can get out of breath or go blue with too much exercise, but she gives everything 120% commitment and desperately tries to do everything the other GB members can do. Paisley is the most upbeat little girl – always happy – so it's wonderful she's been recognised with a special award.'

Proud parents Mark and Lisa add 'Despite all she's been through, Paisley's always got a smile on her face. She loves school, swimming, trampolining, and absolutely loves Girls' Brigade. She is very head strong with a bubbly personality and just gets on with things.'

GB leader wins community award

Team Leader Julie, from **1st Drighlington**, recently won the 'Adult Making a Difference for Young People' category at the Child Friendly Leeds awards for her work and dedication to GB. It's lovely to see leaders recognised for the difference they're making in their community.

The awards night was held at The City Varieties in Leeds and Julie was accompanied by husband Mark, daughter Jessie, and GB volunteers Bev and Margaret.

Julie says 'The event and entertainment were all organised by young people, it was great fun and a most enjoyable evening. I'm also invited to an afternoon with The Lady Mayoress of Leeds at The Civic Hall.'

Julie also added that a friend shared with her that if they cut Julie in half, she would have Girls' Brigade written through her like a stick of rock!



GB leader receives highest parish award

2nd Polesworth's 2022 awards evening contained one very special, surprise, award. Once girls had been presented with their badges and awards from the past year, a presentation was given to Team Leader Christine and her husband, who were awarded Freeman and Freewoman of the parish of Polesworth – the highest award that the parish council can give!

The award was given to Christine for her hard work, dedication, and commitment to GB and young people over a very impressive 55 years of service! Her husband David also received the award for 55 years of service to Boys' Brigade.



Their daughter Rebecca, who is also a GB leader in the group, got in touch to tell us about the award and how proud she was.

Rebecca says 'Apparently mum and dad are now free to graze their sheep anywhere in Polesworth. (They don't have sheep, but that is one of the benefits of being a Freeman and Freewoman!)

Duke of Edinburgh's participants invited to Buckingham Palace

For the first time since the COVID-19 pandemic began, Girls' Brigade members who completed their gold Duke of Edinburgh's award were invited to Buckingham Palace last year to receive their awards.

One of the invited members was Rachael from 1st Denton. Here's what she had to say about her trip to the Palace.

'Myself and Mum and fellow GB leader Lynne travelled down to London to celebrate achieving my DofE at Buckingham Palace. It truly was a day I'll never forget. The gardens are stunning, I struggle to keep a single potted plant alive so I can't imagine trying to maintain that! The day was full of lovely walks, delicious cakes, a visit from the Earl of Wessex, the best brass band, and, of course, plenty of laughs and amazing memories. Not many people can say they've played giant Jenga on the lawns of Buckingham Palace after all! I'll be forever grateful for the opportunities GB has presented me with.'



Waitressing for Water Aid

35th Birmingham have recently helped to raise more than £300 for the charity Water Aid.

The group hold Saturday coffee shops to raise money for, and awareness of, various charities. The members provide a waitress service, taking orders and serving hot drinks, bacon rolls, toast, and homemade cakes.

At their most recent coffee shop they raised funds for Water Aid – a charity working to ensure people have access to clean water, decent toilets, and good hygiene.

Team Leader Shirley says 'The girls do a wonderful job. It's helped girls get jobs in hospitality in the past, raised their confidence talking to strangers in a safe environment, and helped to gain food hygiene certificates. Just as importantly, it's allowed customers to socialise, to feel valued by young people, and to make a difference to charities they've helped.'

The servers wore t-shirts designed when they first set up the coffee shops. On them is a cross with NBC written on (for Northfield Baptist Church), and a rainbow logo saying Saturday Coffee Shop Volunteer.



GB leaders have a 'blooming lovely' day

It isn't just the young people who have fun in GB – it's also the leaders!

GB leaders from **Sutton District** had a day out to see the Superbloom at the Tower of London where the moat was filled with wildflowers for the Jubilee. It was great for the leaders to meet up and to spend time together. Their time together started with lunch before walking to the Tower. In the attraction was a slide where all the leaders found their inner child and had to try – there were more adults queuing for the slide than children!



District Team Leader Janice Ogilvie says 'It was a lovely time looking at the wildflowers and catching up without having to count heads!'



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