

Girlguiding UK

ISSUE 4 SPRING 2009

Today



Top tips for today's girls

The Queen's Guides

Changing the World continues

The Centenary is coming!



Girlguiding UK
girls in the lead

Giving girls a voice



Our *Girls Shout Out!* series continues with two new reports: one exploring girls' views on citizenship and the other focusing on risk and responsibility.

'We give girls a safe environment.'

Active Citizenship surveyed 1,000 Girlguiding UK members aged 16–25. It found that girls in guiding are committed volunteers, but even they display a worrying lack of engagement with politics.

To make positive changes in the world, girls and young women need to have a voice in the political arena. This report took an important first step by bringing girls together to produce a set of recommendations for politicians, the media and wider society.

Our most recent report, *Redefining Risk*, is also about responsibility – but this time about helping girls to take responsibility for themselves and their personal safety.

Based on research among 1,000 girls aged 10–18, the report suggests that media headlines and anxious parents cause girls to be preoccupied with serious but rare threats, which ironically leaves them less well-equipped to deal with newer risks such as those they face online.

However, rather than more rules, girls say that experiencing risk in positive environments, such as guiding, gives them the best chance of staying safe. Chief Guide Liz Burnley said: *'By providing opportunities for girls to undertake challenges such as overseas travel and taking responsibility for their peers, we give girls a safe environment in which to learn how to manage risk.'*

Read more at www.girlguiding.org.uk/girlsshoutout.

Friends in need

In 2008 our Guide Friendship Fund gave out over £11,000 in grants so that girls in units that are struggling financially don't miss out. 'This help enabled our Brownies to enjoy a day out at Bristol Zoo while learning about conservation and wildlife.' (Leader, 1st Taunton Brownies)

Halfway to changing the world!



Girls in guiding of all ages are making a difference to the world through our Changing the World project.

'We've pledged donations totalling £170,000.'

In September 2008, we teamed up with 18 well-known charities, as well as our Branch Associations in British Overseas Territories, to launch our first Centenary project, Changing the World. Each partner created their own unique project, which challenged our members to raise money, raise awareness or take direct action – or even all three!

Now six months in, and the news coming in from around the UK is impressive. So far 75,000 of our members have embraced the Changing the World challenge. Of course, it's not just about the money – but money matters, and to date, we've pledged £170,000 to our partner charities.

Like everything in guiding, Changing the World is also enabling girls to have fun and to learn – about themselves, about others and about the world around them:

- 5,107 girls now know how to deal with an asthma attack, thanks to Asthma UK.
- 6,166 girls have reduced their consumption as part of the One Planet Challenge with WWF.
- Girls have planted 50,853 trees with The Woodland Trust.

Changing the World is far from over and the achievements of the next few months will be just as amazing! You can keep in touch with the project by visiting www.girlguiding.org.uk/changingtheworld.

Vital volunteers!

Around 80,000 amazing volunteers contribute ten million hours to guiding every year. But there are still 48,000 girls waiting to join, so we need lots more help! There are loads of different ways you can volunteer and you can give as little or as much time as you like. For more information about becoming a volunteer, visit www.girlguiding.org.uk, email JoinUs@girlguiding.org.uk or call 0800 1 69 59 01.

A new coffee high!



Last September, Girlguiding UK members took the traditional coffee morning to the dizzy heights of Mount Everest.

'Guiding offers amazing opportunities!'

Macmillan Cancer Support's 'World's Biggest Coffee Morning' campaign reached a new high this year, thanks to 13 members of Girlguiding South West England who set out to raise awareness for the charity by breaking the record for the world's highest brew – near Everest Base Camp!

Sponsored by Somerfield, the girls trained on Dartmoor for months in advance and spent over two weeks in the Himalayas beforehand preparing for the high altitude. Post-monsoon rains, blinding sunlight, thin mountain air, sub-zero temperatures or 30 degree heat ... the girls took it all in their stride as they trekked the classic Everest Base Camp route to their

final destination – the peak of Kala Pattar at an incredible 18,550 feet.

After a welcome, warm mug of coffee or two, the girls sent this message home: *'The team have today summited Kala Pattar and beaten their previous coffee morning records set earlier this week! There are very few higher places on the planet where you can get an open invite brew and biscuits!'*

Gill Slocombe, Girlguiding South West England's Chief Commissioner said: *'It offered an amazing opportunity to combine an extreme challenge with fundraising for a very worthwhile cause. And amazing opportunities are what guiding is all about!'*

Girls get active

Girlguiding UK members have been enthusiastic participants in the Sainsbury's Active Kids programme, an initiative designed to increase physical activity among children. Over the last year, 3,161 units have taken part and received activity equipment worth a whopping £385,000!

Centenary countdown



Guiding's 100th birthday is fast approaching and we can hardly contain our excitement!

'Mountain-top moments for all!'

Our Centenary celebrations kick off this September and will build up to a grand finale in October 2010. During the year, we want all our members to experience a 'mountain-top moment' they will always remember, so we've been planning some extra special events and opportunities.

- From days out to international charity challenges, there's something for everyone – Rainbows can go wild at the zoo, Brownies can take over an activity centre for the weekend and Guides can choose from some great getaways in the UK and abroad. And for Senior Section members, there's a range of international adventures for adrenaline junkies and city sophisticates alike.
- In August 2010, our special week-long Centenary Camp at the historic Harewood House in North Yorkshire will attract 5,000 UK Guides and 2,000 international guests, making it Girlguiding UK's biggest ever camp! And that's not all: during the week of the Camp, thousands more Girlguiding UK members will descend on Harewood House for a magnificent one-day festival of performance, creativity and music.
- During the final week of celebrations, the Young Women's World Forum will bring members from the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts together to create a shared vision for a better world.

One World One Beat

World Thinking Day, in February, is one of the most important dates in the guiding calendar. In our Centenary year, we will be marking it with weekend festivals of dance, drama and music in locations across the UK, and all linked by satellite!

A BIG hit!



As well as new experiences and challenges, we aim to provide girls with lots of fun too.

'A hugely diverse range of activities'

You would have heard nothing but stomping feet and deafening screams when 22,000 members flocked to Birmingham's NEC Arena for Girlguiding UK's annual pop concert in October.

Now in its eighth year, the BIG GIG has taken on a life of its own – no longer just a pop concert, the event is now a brilliant excuse for girls and adults alike to dig out their best fancy dress. Guides and older members were wowed by this year's amazing line-up including X-Factor winner Leon Jackson, the Sugababes, Alphabeat and Scouting for Girls – but pop's most popular performers were also in for a treat: a sea of dancing cowboys, pirates, fairies and disco queens, as well as the ever-popular flashing bunny ears!

The girls, of course, love it: *'I cannot describe the sound of 10–14 year olds screaming, but I thought my head was going to burst'*, said one plucky volunteer. But it is also great opportunity for girls to spend girl-only time with their friends, something which girls constantly say they appreciate most about being part of guiding.

Chief Guide Liz Burnley said: *'The BIG GIG is a great example of how our modern and relevant programme really does extend well beyond badges and the girls are today involved in a hugely diverse range of activities'*.

Add me!

Girlguiding UK Today is a free newsletter. If you would like to be added to our mailing list or would prefer to receive an e-version instead, please email today@girlguiding.org.uk. Please also let us know if you would prefer not to receive any further issues.

Reaching for the top



100 of our highest achievers received one of guiding's top accolades, the Queen's Guide Award, at a ceremony at St James' Palace.

'I have gained confidence and determination.'

The Queen's Guide Award is the premier guiding award open to members between the ages of 16 and 25. This February 100 young women from across the UK received their award from HRH the Countess of Wessex – Girlguiding UK President – at a spectacular ceremony held at St James' Palace.

To achieve the award, girls can take on a wide range of challenges from working with the homeless to leading an expedition abroad or raising money for charity.

Every participant's challenge may be different but they all demand incredible determination and commitment, and bring

huge benefits both personally and to the wider community. One award-winner, Joanna Erkiert said: *'I have gained confidence and determination and have set my lifetime aspirations higher. The Award gives you a sense of purpose and drive which shows that anyone can achieve their goals.'* Joanna had worked in schools and crèches across Namibia, organised a four-day expedition up Snowdon and more.

Chief Guide Liz Burnley added: *'The Award gives young women an amazing sense of empowerment and confidence within a girl-only space at a time when they are making serious life choices and shaping their future.'*

Golden girls

2008 was a good Olympic year for graduates of Girlguiding UK! Swansea-based Guide Ellie Simmonds took two swimming golds and a world record at the Beijing Paralympics, and two former members found victory on the cycle tracks: Nicole Cooke became the first woman to win both an Olympic gold and the world racing title in the same year and Victoria Pendleton took yet another gold for Team GB in the cycle sprint.

Guides for the modern girl



Girlguiding UK has launched a new series of guides covering top issues for today's girls, kicking off with money management and street safety.

'A wealth of commonsense advice.'

With over half a million young members in the UK, we have a unique responsibility to help girls confront the responsibilities and risks of growing up in the modern world. So in January we launched the first two issues in a new series, *Guiding's Guide to Managing Money* and *Guiding's Guide to Street Safety*.

Ninety-three per cent of the girls we polled identified being able to manage money as the number one skill every girl should have. As the recession begins to bite, *Managing Money* gives young spenders and savers tips on how to be savvy by avoiding debt, shopping around and protecting themselves against fraud.

Street Safety was launched in partnership with the Suzy Lamplugh Trust. Aware that many young women fear being out alone after dark, it focuses on practical ways to stay safe such as planning ahead, staying in touch and avoiding unnecessary risks.

'We believe this guide has got the balance just right', said Jo Walker of the Suzy Lamplugh Trust. *'It offers young women a wealth of commonsense advice on how to stay safe, which in turn will give them extra confidence to get out there and live their lives to the full.'*

To read the Guiding's Guides, visit 'News & events' at www.girlguiding.org.uk.

Guiding online

Girlguiding UK has relaunched the Guides and Senior Section websites, bringing them bang up-to-date with blogs, moderated message boards, competitions and cool designs. They've gone down a storm with the girls. In the first three months, the Guides site alone notched up over 56,000 visits. To take a look, visit: www.girlguiding.org.uk/guides and www.girlguiding.org.uk/seniorsection.