

Beds Buzz

June 2007



Girlguiding

Bedfordshire

Seven Girl Guides Go To Taiwan

Last summer, leaders and guides from 3rd Brickhill Guides (plus one honorary member) travelled to the Joint National Jamboree of Taiwan and China, celebrating 100 years of the Scouting Movement.

After a long journey of trains, planes and coaches we spent our first week in the hot, humid and occasionally very wet campsite in Teinan County. Treated like little starlets we didn't have a moment to ourselves! What with the activities, social engagements, radio and television interviews, photo posing, badge swapping, hat signings, friendship forming, lingo learning, dancing and singing - it was all so tiring!

After saying goodbye to our new found friends we travelled to the other end of the island to collapse in an exhausted, slightly confused state at our home hospitality families. We were split between three homes but rejoined each day to be taken on a sigh-seeing exploration of Taipei.



We visited Taipei 101 the tallest building in the world with the fastest elevator in the world too! We chilled out in a Buddhist temple, viewed some Taiwanese treasures in the National Palace Museum, climbed a lot of stairs in the Memorial Hall and hustled and bustled through the famous Taipei Night Market, all this under the watchful gaze of our hosts!

After a mad rush from farewell in the departure lounge to the comfy seats on a plane we flew to the final destination of our trip - Hong Kong Girl Guides Association HQ, where we stayed for three days before flying home. We visited Hong Kong Island to see some of the sights via ferry, foot, tram and from the top of Victoria Peak, with its murky views of the city below. We spent the remaining hours wisely and did what girls do best... shopping!

So with our bags packed - well sort of, more like overflowing - we made our way home. We parted at the end of our many hours of travelling, saying our farewells and taking our memories of the time spent together over the past two weeks.

We thank everyone who has given us support and encouragement and special thanks goes to Gill Lake for making it happen. If you'd like to read a full report about our trip, log onto www.bedsguiding.org.uk

Louise Forder

Thank You Jeanne!



As you all know, Jeanne Wain retired as County President at this year's Annual Review. She was thanked for all her tireless hard work and presented with 'Tea at the Ritz' and tickets for a London show. A generous cheque, a large bouquet of flowers and numerous gifts from friends and colleagues.

We have been assured that we will still benefit from her magnificent puddings and catering skills to the relief of Marion Prior who has stepped into her shoes. Marion led the singing of a special song written for Jeanne to celebrate her term of office.

It's now the start of camping season so air your tents and bedding. Get out your plate bags and I will see you all at County Camp!

Kathy

Kathy Carroll,
County Commissioner

Dear Friends,

How can I say a big enough thank you for all the wonderful gifts and cards I received at the Annual Review. I was really overwhelmed with the generosity of you all. I shall now look forward to having Tea at the Ritz and going to the theatre, also deciding what to spend my money on. I have so enjoyed my time as County President and thank you all for your friendship, support and kindness over the years.

Best wishes for the future of Bedfordshire Guiding
Thank you - Thank you - Thank you.
Jeanne

Guiding Star

Luton's Guiding Stars

Seventeen eager and excited girls took part in the joint Luton round of Guiding Star held at Haverings in March.

The standard was extremely high and all the girls performed very well. Unfortunately, the judges knew that only four of the evening's seven acts were able to go through to the County final.



Three local people Stewart, Jo and Stephen were our judges. Stewart offered extra support, setting up sound systems and microphones before the girls had a final practice and coaching session.

With an audience of family and friends the competition kicked off at 8.15pm. The Glitter Girls from 5th Stopsley Guides started the evening singing 'Bop to the Top'. Mala from Wardown Guides sang 'How Do I Live Without You' while Devils' Angels from 2nd Stopsley Guides performed 'Reach'. Sarah from 5th Stopsley Guides sang 'Why Not' while 5th Radiant Fusion from 3rd Stopsley Guides chose '1000 miles'. The final two acts were Bethany from 3rd Stopsley Guides singing a Bette Midler song and Amy from 2nd Stopsley Guides with 'I Wish I was a Punk Rocker'.

After the performances each act had the chance to discuss their performance with the judges. The winning acts then announced were: Radiant Fusion, Sarah, Bethany and Devils' Angels. Congratulations to these girls and WELL DONE to everyone for a brilliant night of entertainment.

Sue Champkins

Congratulations Olivia!

Congratulations to Olivia from 1st Arlesey Guides for winning the County round of Guiding Star!

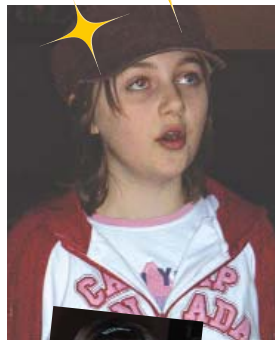
Eight acts from across Bedfordshire put on a storming show on Annual Review Day, showing real star potential. Everyone had a great afternoon - well done to everyone who took part.

The finalists were:

- Radiant Fusion - 3rd Stopsley
- Lizzie Jade - 1st Sandy
- Bethany - 3rd Stopsley
- Olivia - 1st Arlesey
- the County Winner
- Dark Angels - 1st Sandy
- Sarah - 5th Stopsley
- Rosie - 1st Shillington
- Devils Angels - 2nd Stopsley

The Region final will be held on Thursday 31st May at Bedford Corn Exchange.

We all wish Olivia the best of Luck!



World Thinking Day

...at the British Museum

On Saturday 17 February, eighteen members of 12th Dunstable Brownies travelled to the British Museum to celebrate World Thinking Day with 900 other Girlguiding UK members. On arrival we were each given a passport, pencil and backpack and then off we went around the world.

We explored the Museum on the Belief trail using our passport. We had to find different things like an Egyptian statue and the Tree of Life - which is a tree made from guns and other weapons but sends out the message of peace. We watched a Tai Chi demonstration and all had a go - it was something we had never done before. We also listened to a folk tale from Ireland and joined in with the story.

In the theatre, we pretended to be on an aeroplane. We travelled to the four World Centres and sang songs to keep the pilot awake. We learned the actions to Edelweiss, but got very muddled when we had to change hands! The World Chief Guide led us in the renewal of our Promises - a very special moment for us all.

Our favourite part of the day was the African story and dancing. We heard how the leopard got his spots and joined in with the brightly coloured African dancers. It was a busy, well organised day which we all really enjoyed and will remember for a long, long time.

Brownies and Guiders, 12th Dunstable Brownies

Baden Powell Award

Congratulations to Emily from 1st Shillington Guides who has just completed her Baden Powell Challenge Award - the highest award for a guide.

Emily completed 10 challenges from five themes: healthy lifestyles; global awareness; discovery; skills and relationships; and celebrating diversity. She gained her agility and world culture badges, planned a 'reflections' session for her patrol, organised a team games session, went to the Big Gig and told everyone else about it, organised parachute games and helped the unit celebrate Chinese New Year.

The final part of her award was to take part in a special weekend with other Bedfordshire guides. Here's Emily's story:

I arrived on a cold November morning to be greeted by Moley, Woozle, Badger and Kanga - our leaders for the weekend. Our theme was Hallowe'en and Bonfire Night, and so all tasks were linked to this theme. I was in the Catherine Wheels patrol. First job was to erect our tent - luckily it was a lightweight one which was easy to put up. Our first activity was decorating candles using wax crayons that we melted in tea lights. We made little guys out of wool wrapped around card, which we had to wear on our jumpers for the rest of the weekend. Then we had our lunch of chicken casserole and rice, followed by apple crumble, and the washing up!

In the evening we had an incident hike. We set off from camp at 7pm in our groups at 10 minute intervals. We were given a map and co-ordinates and had to find our way to each base and had a task to complete at each to earn points. The group who made it back to camp with the most points would be the winner. We eventually got back to the hut at 1.15am for our supper of hot dogs, and returned to camp at 2.15am. Hot water bottles were filled and beds were rolled out as guides took off all their layers and climbed into bed.

We were woken the next day at 8am sharp. After breakfast we were blindfolded and had to find our way through a rope course to the guys each patrol had made the previous day. Then each patrols had to light a fire using only one firelighter and a match and all three fires were then joined together and we burnt our guys. We cooked burgers on disposable barbeques with special cake for pudding which had been made to celebrate us finishing our BP.

After the tents were taken down and our belongings were packed away it was almost time for us to leave. We were each given a certificate and the winners of the weekend were announced. The Catherine Wheels had won!

Carol Summerfield



Operation Christmas Child

When you plan ahead for the next few terms, why not consider getting your unit involved in Operation Christmas Child?

Operation Christmas Child is a Christian charity that encourages schools and community groups to fill shoe boxes with useful and fun items - such as soap, pens and paper and sweets - to give to less fortunate children abroad.

Ross is a local organiser and is happy to visit units who would like to get involved during the autumn. She can give a presentation, provide printed literature and deal with every aspect of getting a unit involved. Guiders just need to call her on 01525 874039.

Sandra Grant

Thinking Day in Maulden

Maulden's Brownies and Guides played host this February to their district's annual Thinking Day celebrations.

Held at St Mary the Virgin Church, a traditional colours parade was followed by a service. Maulden Brownies and Ampthill Rainbows staged special songs and a collection was made for the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts.

An international buffet was held after the service, with international displays from all units and presentations of songs and activities. 1st Ampthill Brownies sang an African version of 'Head, shoulders, knees and toes', 2nd Ampthill Brownies ran a game from Canada, 4th Ampthill Brownies presented a French version of "Taps" and Lidlington Guides performed a Mexican poem.

The District would like to thank the Revd Richard Winslade for making the event very special and a lot of fun and thank everyone who took part for making it a wonderful afternoon.

Sandra Grant

Christmas Panto

It's not too early to start planning for Christmas! The Young Leaders at 7th Stopsley Brownies would recommend putting on a panto. They say:

"Brownies and Young Leaders decided to put on a Christmas pantomime and adapted the panto from Guiding magazine. It was great fun and a huge challenge, but we pulled it off spectacularly and all the Brownies enjoyed themselves. We plan on doing another next year."

Photos of all the fun can be downloaded from:
<http://www.bedsguiding.org.uk/7thstopgallery/index.htm>
 Helen, Mairi, Nicola and Laura, Young Leaders

You can also see photos from Luton South Division's very successful Christmas Activity Day for all sections. The girls spent their time making tree decorations, sweets, singing and the Brownie and Rainbow session even had a visit from Santa. To see more visit
<http://www.bedsguiding.org.uk/lutonsouthdivgallery/index.htm>

Luton Mayor's Citizenship Awards

The value of Girlguiding Bedfordshire volunteering was publicly recognised in January when Gillian Henley and Donna Pienkowski were each presented with a Citizenship Award.

Luton's Mayor, Cllr Julian Waite, presented the awards at a special ceremony in the Council Chambers. The awards are a way for the people of Luton to nominate volunteers for their community service. The Mayor said that the nominees had been of a very high standard and that it was a pleasure to thank those who have made a positive contribution and make a difference to other's lives.

Gillian was nominated for her service to Strathmore Brownies where she has given 38 years services before retiring. She has also been Commissioner for Stockwood District for the last five years as well as volunteering with her local church and at Whipsnade Zoo.

Donna was nominated by her mother for the work she does with Bushmead Brownies, raising money for charities, being a member of the Trefoil Guild and volunteering at the Pasque Hospice. Donna is also a committee member of the British Stammering Association.

Well done to both of them! Sue Champkins

Annual Review Rowgirl

by Spring



Sleeping bags and cups of tea - two things we Guiders hold close to our hearts. But what if your sleeping bag was soaked through and there was 3,000 miles of ocean between you and your next cuppa? That's the situation Claire Mills found herself in as she joined a four-woman team, the Rowgirls - on a quest to row across the Atlantic.

Claire, a former Brownie from Dunstable and now a teacher in Norwich, held the Annual Review audience enthralled as she told us about the ups and downs of her inspiring 10-week adventure. She and her three crew mates were aiming to be the first four woman team to cross the Atlantic Ocean - and it wasn't easy.

The tiny boat they were living on contained everything they needed for the trip, including plenty of dehydrated food and equipment to make sea water drinkable - not exactly tempting fare.

The crossing was also hard work, with each crew member rowing for 12 hours a day, on a two hours on, two hours off rota. When they were able to sleep in their cramped cabin, bad weather could mean they found themselves in soggy sleeping bags.

The team's journey from the Canary Islands to Antigua was nothing if not eventful. Fifty foot waves battered the boat, a man-eating shark took a nibble out of it, they lost their rudder and faced the crushing disappointment of one of their team having to leave the race after she injured her back. Disqualified from the race, Claire and her team decided to carry on and instead become the first three-woman crew to finish the crossing.

Their arrival in Antigua was a tearful reunion after such a long time away, and there was a huge Victoria sponge waiting!

On the University of Birmingham website, Claire describes herself as 'An outdoor girl with a passion for rugby and lip-gloss alike, never one to turn down a challenge.' And it's that passion for a challenge, as well as appreciation for a good cuppa, that I think struck a real chord at the Annual Review. Kelly Quigley

Picture Gallery



Send your articles and comments to:

BedsBuzz

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Thanks for all your articles and pictures - they are great!
 keep sending and I will print everything I can fit in!

Life in the 'Big Sister House' Volunteering at Our Chalet

"Ooh, you lucky thing!" was most people's reaction to the news that I had been offered a month working at Our Chalet.

I accepted exploitation of my labour in return for subsidised time in a privileged location. But there were surprises in store for me when, after six months of anticipation, I finally arrived there.

Our Chalet has magnificent views from its position at the head of a valley - up to snow-capped peaks and across to a village of traditional chalets sprinkled across the lower slopes. However, this remoteness can also have its drawbacks.

The half-hour hike to the little town centre dissuades guests and staff alike from getting out after dark. The gradient down the valley is steep and I was too tired to contemplate it after 9pm, which was the time we finished work most evenings.

For three days I didn't get out at all, such were the work demands. It then occurred to me I was living in the 'Big Sister House'! There were nightly activities for the guests presented by us, despite having been up at 7am to prepare breakfast!

When days off came round it cost from £30-£50 to ski for the day depending on whether you chose cross-country or down-hill style. I managed one day of each and took the train to Zurich another day, taking advantage of a £15 pound day pass to travel anywhere in Switzerland. That was more relaxing!

I hadn't anticipated how awkward it would be

live and work 24 hours a day with girls mostly half my age. My stamina didn't match theirs nor did our interests coincide much. Their relaxation was DVDs and Gluhwein, sometimes into the early hours. My room was directly above the lounge, not wanting to be a killjoy I had to invest in some earplugs!

An unexpected afternoon off saw us dashing up the mountain with the chalet's sledges for a run down the 2.5 km sledge route. The departure of a long-term member of staff also gave us a reason to perform a sketch and have a party. The rest of the time we slogged away cleaning, preparing food and washing up, doing our best to please the management, the guests and each other. I actually cooked a roast dinner for 55 one night when the cook had time off, something I would never have tackled at home.

Communication was not always easy or harmonious, but we had to cotton on quickly as the accommodation filled to its capacity of 70 people. With only four paid staff and five volunteers on a rota we were under pressure, tempers began to fray and I lost it once or twice. Lucky for me I was not on TV!

What really irked me was the lack of freedom. I sneaked out as often as possible to walk the local area in search of sights and encounters.

This year is our Chalet's 75th Anniversary and once visited it leaves a lasting impression. For me it was not as exciting or romantic as I had anticipated but it took me out of my comfort zone in ways I had not thought of.

Life in the Big Sister House may sound fun but it's tougher than you think! If you feel up to the challenge and are over 18, Our Chalet welcomes volunteers all year round for periods from two weeks to three months. Visit www.ourchalet.ch

Charlotte Wylam



Leighton Buzzard Trefoil Guild

It had been an ambition of mine that when I came out of uniform as a Guider, I would be able to reopen the Leighton Buzzard Guild. With the support of guiders, members of the previous Guild, other interested ladies and with the help of the County Chairman, we were able to re-register in March 2003.

We meet once a month on a Tuesday or Thursday evening and try to have lots of variety. We have invited speakers, learn new craft skills, hold quizzes with buffet suppers and barbeques in summer, hold a dinner at Christmas go on outings and so on.

Our first highlight was at the tree Cathedral at Whipsnade where, in tranquil surroundings on a summer evening, we renewed or made our promise.

A memorable meeting was a visit to a local butcher who put us through our paces at sausage making and then stringing them - a slippery task!

We are a 'Friend of Hautbois' and some of us have helped at the Service Week in past years, and will be helping at the Fun Day this August.

Two of us were able to go to the 60th Anniversary Gathering at Swanwick and this year two members are going to the National AGM in Leeds. One member's knitting skills have resulted in a lovely variety of jumpers for the children at the orphanage near Sangam.

We have been able to help a new Rainbow Unit and Brownie Pack with a starter pack and have enjoyed sharing meetings, World Thinking Days, being in Gang Shows and serving refreshments within South Beds Division.

We have been welcomed by other Guilds to share their special occasions, and our teams came first and seconds at Milton Keynes Guild's quiz evening. Members also took part in the sponsored walk organised by Jean Wheeler for the Hautbois Lift Fund at Marston Vale Forest Centre.

We have one member, Dolly, who has gained nine Gold Certificates for her work in the Dark Horse Venture, and other members are working on sections of the Discovery Award. Members attended the Bedfordshire Annual Review in March and we have a busy summer to look forward to with invites to join other Guilds, Bedfordshire's Trefoil Guild AGM, and we have invited Guilds to a Potluck Day in May.

Have you thought of joining the Trefoil Guild? Well do it! We are all girls, sharing fun and friendship and there are lots of opportunities to take up. Look near the back of your County directory for your local Guild's Chairman's details.

Carina Wallace
Chairman - Leighton Buzzard Trefoil Guild

BEDFORDSHIRE SINGING CIRCLE	Dates for 2007 - 2008	Start Time
Sandy Baptist Church -	Tuesday 3rd July 2007	7:45pm
Windy Sayles, Whipsnade -	Tuesday 18th September 2007	7:45pm
St Marks Church, Bedford -	Monday 26th November 2007	7:45pm
Haverings, Luton -	Tuesday 15th January 2008	8:00pm