

Opportunities Guiding Has Given Me

Since joining Girlguiding, I (and plenty of other young people across the UK) have been given lots of opportunities to go on international adventures, volunteer at events and even help local communities!

When I first joined the organisation, I got the opportunity to beat a world record for the world's largest sleepover. I and 2,003 Brownies from North West England gathered at Chester Zoo for a weekend's worth of animals and activities to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the formation of the Brownies. All of us slept in a field in a huge marquee and we managed to beat the record previously set by 1,626 Brownies in Kent!
(<https://www.guinnessworldrecords.com/world-records/largest-sleepoverpyjama-party>)

This wasn't my only opportunity to sleep away from home, however. I've had my fair share of indoor and outdoor adventures from Brownie holidays to Guide/Ranger camps! I went on two Brownie holidays which allowed me to try out new activities, explore new areas and gain confidence being away from home at a young age. As I got older, I joined Guides and then became a Ranger, opening a new world of possibilities for me! I've spent many nights at Waddow Hall, camping for Sparkle and Ice and staying in their residential buildings. I've also stayed at non-Guiding centres with my unit such as Colomendy in North Wales and The Venture Centre in the Isle of Man (which I've written a separate blog about here: <https://www.girlguidingnwe.org.uk/news/adventures-on-the-isle-of-man/>). One of my favourite camps I've been on, however, is Mersey Moot, a combined Scout and Guide camp for Rangers, Explorers and Young Leaders. The camp is pretty unique, offering a wide range of daytime activities like shooting clay pigeons, inflatable assault courses, and a craft tent! At night, there is a huge rave which goes on until midnight, barn dances with a prize for the best costumes (which my unit won with our jellyfish costumes), a Ferris Wheel and a silent disco. Everyone is allowed to go and explore, not having to stay within units or with their leaders.

Some more opportunities I've gained where I stayed away from home are going on Internationals! In 2019, I was selected to go on a county international to Berlin, Prague and Switzerland. On this trip, I got to visit Our Chalet, one of our world centres! I was only 13 at the time of this trip and it was my

first time travelling outside of the UK without my parents. The experience was exciting and scary but 100% worth going on! After this, covid hit and internationals were cancelled until 2023. I applied for the three trips offered by the region and made it to the selection camp. This camp was also an awesome experience! I got to meet so many members from all across my region and learnt about (and tried) different cultures and foods themed around the available trips. I sadly wasn't chosen to go on one of the trips, but it has only encouraged me to try again!

Of course, to go on an International you need a lot of money... So throughout my guiding journey, I've taken the opportunity to fundraise for not only my internationals but plenty of other things as well! When I was 11, I raised £102.50 for my unit to buy new camping equipment just by spending £1

[https://ormskirk.glocal.co.uk/ormskirk/news_list/Enterprising Maya's £1 challenge raises over £100 for the Guides-55020001.htm](https://ormskirk.glocal.co.uk/ormskirk/news_list/Enterprising_Maya's_£1_challenge_raises_over_£100_for_the_Guides-55020001.htm)). I've also had a bake sale to raise money for my 2019 international. Finally, I've supported others going on international trips by buying things from their stalls and donating money whenever I get the chance. I've especially helped my friend, Frankie, with organising and running events and stalls to raise money for her 2023 trip to Madagascar.

As well as helping and supporting my unit, I've taken the opportunity to follow the Guide promise and help my community. I've volunteered to support a Rainbow unit as a Young Leader, giving young children a great first experience with Girlguiding, and encouraging them to continue Girlguiding as they grow older and move up the sections. In my unit, I've volunteered at a local food bank, packaging food for people in need. I've also spent a night litter picking, clearing the streets around my town. Girlguiding has also given me the opportunity to represent them at public events. I've attended the annual Remembrance Day parade in my town as a Brownie and a Ranger. Similarly, I've attended a Civil Service of Remembrance for our late Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II.

Finally, I've earned lots of rewards, badges and qualifications during my time in the organisation. I've recently been awarded a Sefton Star Award for all my hard work as a Young Leader. As well as this, I am working towards my Queen's Guide Award and Young Leader Qualification. I've also worked towards plenty of interest badges and skills builders, all of which have

widened my knowledge on a range of subjects, allowed me to express myself and helped me develop new and existing skills!

I already have lots of opportunities I'm looking forward to taking in the future, such as applying for the 2024 Internationals, starting my Lead Away Permit and writing even more blogs for The Guiding Vibe!