

## **Why I Got Into Girlguiding...**

I have been involved in Girlguiding for so long that I had no idea how I first got involved – my parents have said that a family friend who was a Rainbow Leader in our local area came to our door on my fifth birthday with the registration form for Rainbows, and I joined a couple of weeks later! I moved through the sections, later joining Brownies, Guides and Rangers, before becoming a Leader.

I started Rainbows before starting school, and it was a way for me to get to know other young people in the area. Rainbows saw me spend my first nights away from home, as well as doing crafts and games which I loved! When I came to the end of Rainbows, I went up to Brownies with the friends I had made through Rainbows and at school.

While I was in Brownies, Girlguiding celebrated their centenary which brought with it lots of extra events and trips with other units from around Aberdeen. I also remember enjoying working towards badges that explored my interests outside of Girlguiding, including music and swimming. Moving up to Guides gave me the opportunity to meet a new group of people, as many of the other members were from the local secondary school, as well as my friends from Brownies. I enjoyed the independence that we were given as Guides and the choice we were given over what we wanted to gain from attending the meetings. I also loved the challenge of working towards my Baden Powell Award, and enjoyed having something to focus on outside of school work.

I had thought about leaving Girlguiding after finishing Guides as I had a lot of other commitments, however going to my first large scale camp changed my mind and I moved on to Rangers instead! Moving to Rangers was the biggest change, as none of my friends chose to go and I had to attend a unit in a different area. However, my time in Rangers gave me some of my most exciting Girlguiding opportunities, including a Thinking Day event in Edinburgh, two trips to Tartan Gig, my first IntOps experience, and achieving my Chief Guide's Award!

My time at Rangers was interrupted by lockdown, however I continued to attend our meetings online until I turned eighteen. Looking back, I can see why I loved my

time as a young member in Girlguiding as each section brought new opportunities and experiences that I wouldn't have had otherwise!

## **... And Why I Have Never Left!**

I always hoped that I would be able to continue my involvement in Girlguiding as a Leader, and I have had even more amazing opportunities. I have met so many people through Girlguiding while at university, and some of my closest friends are those who I have met through the National Scout and Guide Concert Band. I also had the opportunity to volunteer at the Coronation which was definitely a once in a lifetime experience!

Since starting as a Leader I have achieved my Leadership Qualification and am now working on my Queen's Guide Award, which have both presented new challenges as well as a sense of achievement. My weekly unit meetings have also been a welcome break from studying, and the trips and residentials we have been on have made the last four years even more exciting!

I hope that Girlguiding will continue to be part of my life, and I am so glad that five year old me was introduced to Rainbows!