

We all know that Girlguiding is an extraordinary organisation, built up of even more extraordinary girls, young women and ladies. It is a place of safety, fun, and lifelong friendships. But, do you know where these opportunities came from?

## **In the beginning**

Back in 1907, Lord Robert Baden-Powell, a British Army officer, ran a camp for boys training them in scouting. It was a huge success and so the foundations for the boy scouts movement took off. Girls were excited by these new opportunities being given to boys and decided join them! After all, whatever a boy can do, a girl can do just as well.

When Baden-Powell organised the first Boy Scout Rally at Crystal Palace in 1909, the girls decided to attend too, and caught his attention. Realising the importance of a movement to support the girls, his sister, Agnes Baden-Powell, took responsibility for forming an organisation for the girls. They called it Girl Guides Association.

## **Guides**

The early guides practiced skills such as first aid, cooking, and signalling, and by 1910, they had 22 badges to work on. Many of these badges developed skills that would come to be valuable during the wars.

In 1912, the first handbook for Guides was published, called "How Girls Can Help Build up the Empire".

## **Brownies**

When the younger girls of the Girl Guide Association started to split up to do age appropriate activities, a new junior section was created in 1914. They were called "Rosebuds" and this group was specifically for girls under the age of 11. In 1915, the group was renamed Brownies.

The new Brownies section had their own badges and tests to complete, and, in 1920, the first Brownie Handbook appeared.

## **Rangers**

As well as new opportunities for younger guides, a senior group was formed in 1916, giving older girls new challenges and opportunities. This section was later renamed "Rangers" in 1920.

## **Olave Baden-Powell and Princess Mary**

In 1912, Robert Baden-Powell married his wife, Olave Soames. Olave would come to be a significant influence on the guiding movement, being appointed chief commissioner in 1916 and in 1918 she was appointed Chief Guide. Later, in 1930, she was appointed World Chief Guide.

HRH Princess Mary became president of the Association in 1920 and the Association given the Royal Charter of Incorporation in 1922.

## **WAGGGS**

The Girl Guides quickly became a world wide movement, and in 1928, the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts was formed. This brought together 26 countries who had all formed their own associations, based around Robert Baden-Powell's 1912 handbook.

## **The War**

Throughout the wars, the girls played important roles in caring for people back at home and ensuring that moral was kept high. The girls could earn badges such as child nurse, needlewoman and sick nurse, and these proudly worn on their uniforms allowed easy identification of girls who had the skills to perform different jobs. As many men and boys went off to war, their training the practical skills became incredibly valuable and badges such as Handywoman, farmer and carpenter were just as important.

Many of our modern day interest badges can be tracked back to original badges of the 1910's. Some have stayed consistent, such as first aid, whilst others have developed beyond belief, with new opportunities being added throughout the years.

## **Trefoil Guild**

Once a girl graduated out of Rangers, they had a choice about how they wanted to continue participating in Girl Guiding. They could either become a Guider (leader), join the Trefoil Guild or leave the organisation. The Trefoil guild was a movement developed in 1943 specifically for women aged over 21 to keep in touch with the Association, without the commitment to regular work. The age was later lowered to 18, in line with the other sections, in 1971.

## **Queens Guide and Duke of Edinburgh**

Among all of the opportunities available to girls, a new award was introduced in 1946 called the Queen Guide Badge. This is still the highest achievement available to girls within Girlguiding.

In 1959, girls also helped to pilot the brand new Duke of Edinburgh award.

## **Rainbows**

In the 1950's, Northern Ireland developed a new opportunity for young girls called the "Bunny Scheme". This inspired Trefoil Guild members to develop the scheme and add it to the Guide movement, giving young girls the opportunity to make their promise. In 1983, the Executive Committee decided to create a program for young girls in the UK. In 1987, Rainbows was agreed with an age bracket of 5-7 years.

## **Branding**

After the initial name, Girl Guide Association, was created in 1909, a rebrand was decided in 1994 following the 1990 uniform change. The new name was "The Guide Association" and the Promise and Law were updated at the same time.

Then, in 2002, the name was once again updated to what we know today, "Girlguiding UK".

## **Inspire**

The newest section to Girlguiding UK is the 18-30's Inspire section. This section is specifically for older girls to develop themselves in ways that interest them.

## **Learning more**

If this has interested you to learn more about Girlguiding, there are lots of resources that you can look at. For those aged 13-25 can also look into completing their Commonwealth award.