

Commonwealth Award

Back in December 2021 I decided to begin my Commonwealth Award for Girlguiding. I stumbled upon the award whilst looking around the Girlguiding Website where it sat alongside the Queen's Guide Award and the Duke of Edinburgh, I was instantly interested as it stated that it was all about the history of the Girlguiding organisation alongside other countries around the World, specifically those in the Commonwealth.

Ever since joining Girlguiding in late 2020, I have been really interested in everything Girlguiding from the current program and all the way through to the origin of Girlguiding at Crystal Palace over 100 years ago.

For those who possibly haven't heard of the Commonwealth Award, the award is open to Guides over the age of 13, Rangers, Young Leaders and Members aged 18 to 25. It's all about challenging yourself to discover more about the Commonwealth and its community of people, both in and out of Guiding.

I began my Commonwealth Award journey by simply looking into how to present the award and how to keep track of my work - you can keep track of your research by scrapbooking, written journals, presentations - you can be as creative as you want, which is really fun! I decided I wanted to set myself up a blog, this way I could separate each module into pages and add photos as I wanted, keeping everything together in a safe place online where I couldn't lose it.

My first challenge involved looking into the history of Guiding, this was about the development of World Guiding and Guiding in the UK - this was my favourite module! I got to learn so much about Girlguiding, especially in the UK. It explored all the way back to the Girlguiding origin at Crystal Palace, how Guides helped in both World Wars, accompanied by the Rosebuds (Brownies), then through into the 1950/60s, I was able to learn what Guiding would have been like when my Gran would have been a Brown Owl for the Brownies, then continuing through the 80s and into the 21st Century, to what we know Girlguiding to be today.

My second challenge involved looking into the Commonwealth more, looking at what the Commonwealth is and choosing one of those Commonwealth Countries to look into further, for this I chose Kenya, I got to look into Kenya's guiding history and what a typical day in

Kenya looks like, as well as cooking a traditional Kenyan meal, of Kenyan Pilau alongside Ugali.

My Third challenge included 20 hours of volunteering work, I volunteered through the Charity I work at, but in a different area - I went around schools in Cumbria with a colleague to help young people plant trees and develop and build new gardens at their schools, I got to meet so many young people who were so passionate about becoming more educated on environment work.

The final two challenges are optional challenges, the Commonwealth Award has 8 challenges to choose from, 2 of which you look into further, the options include; Health, Environment, Cultural Heritage, Fit for Life, Public Speaking, Creative Writing, Citizenship and Investigation.

I decided to look into Environment, where I looked at pollution in the UK and Sri Lanka, another Commonwealth Country, and then Creative Writing, where I wrote a short story about the famous Lake District 'Tizzie Whizie'!

Although challenging, if you are interested in learning more about Girlguiding and the Worldwide Community Girlguiding UK is a part of, I highly recommend looking into this award! its been a really fantastic opportunity and I am now passing on my knowledge to two of my Guides who are now beginning their Commonwealth Award Journey.

You can find out about the Commonwealth Award more in-depth here;
<https://www.girlguiding.org.uk/what-we-do/our-badges-and-activities/badge-finder/commonwealth-award/>