

This is my fourth time writing for 'The Guiding Vibe' now, and I wanted to take the chance to introduce myself a bit. I have been in Guiding as long as I can remember. I joined Rainbows at the age of five, but as my Mum is a leader, Guiding had already been a big part of my life, having attended many events and meetings (I went to my first Brownie meeting at just 5 days old). After being a part of the Rainbow and Brownie units in my village I was one of the few to go onto Guides and then, after achieving my Baden-Powell award, Rangers where I did my Queen's Guide Award.



Enjoying a Brownie outing age 3 with my best friend Elliott.

Throughout this, I was a Young Leader for both Rainbows and Brownies and had the opportunity to take part in several international opportunities. In 2013 I started university in Nottingham and joined SNoGS, the student Scout and Guide society which led to me helping at a local Brownie unit. After finding out a Rainbow unit needed someone to take it over, I moved section and have recently also joined the leadership team of the Brownie unit that meets on the same night. I have now started the cycle again by taking my own daughter to her first Rainbow and Brownie meetings at 7 days old and she too enjoys the Brownies love and attention, as I did.



Getting ready for my first Rainbow church parade age 5. And my Brownie enrolment in 2002.

As you can see I have had a very wide range of roles in Guiding and I wanted to share my top ten memories with you. It was incredibly difficult to choose just ten and I have missed out many amazing moments (maybe I'll have to write a 'Ten more amazing Guiding moments' post at some point).

10. Making corn dollies at Brownies.

One meeting when I was a Brownie we had August visit our meeting to make corn dollies. The actual meeting I don't remember, however I do remember the fun. Also clear in my mind is the feeling of pride every time I walked past that little corn dolly hanging in our kitchen for many years after. I loved that we had done something unique that none of my other friends could.

9. Giving my first Rainbow Gold Award.

This has to be one of my proudest moments as a leader. We were still getting to grips with the new programme and lockdown was still in force, but in amongst cycle rides around the local area to hand out badges and resources I had the pleasure to give the first Gold Award of our unit. The Rainbow in question had worked exceptionally hard and we were all very proud of her. Although unconventional, handing that badge over on a chilly doorstep as her Mum took photos and she beamed with pride will always be amongst my top moments.

8. Camping in the snow.

As a Guide we used to go to the annual pedal car olympics camp at Thriftwood. Although these were always great fun, one year in particular sticks in my mind when it was so cold and snowy that there was a parent's meeting to decide if we would still go. Of course we did! Many pairs of socks were worn, a thermos of something warm was permanently in our hands and we all had great fun!

7. Organising a Reindeer party

As a young leader I organised a Christmas party for both Rainbows and Brownies based around a Reindeer challenge badge. It was the first event involving more than one unit that I had ever planned and its success hugely boosted my confidence. To this day I am proud of how well that evening went and it shows what a difference Guiding can make to girl's personal development.

6. Going on Brownie pack holiday as a Rainbow

Being the daughter of a leader has a few perks, and getting to go on Brownie pack holiday while I was still a Rainbow was definitely one. Being the baby of the group I had a fantastic few days being looked after and playing with a pack of doting Brownies (although I was more than a little scared of getting lost in the huge house we were staying in).

5. Taking Rainbows to Birmingham Think Tank

Not long after lockdown I was able to organise a Rainbow trip to Birmingham Think Tank. For most of those going it was their first time on a train and we all had a fantastic day looking around the centre and playing hide and seek outside. Nothing beats hearing a little voice tell you 'that was the best day ever!' (disclaimer: this particular Rainbow has been heard to utter these words on at least three occasions).

4. Taking Brownies on pack holiday

I am lucky now to have had the opportunity to take Brownies on pack holiday both as a young leader and a leader. Memorable experiences as a young leader include being woken up by the Brownies because there was a spider in their room and they were scared to wake the leaders and volunteering VERY quickly to take a scared Brownie out of the caving activity whilst trying to hide how relieved I was to be leaving! As a leader I've had so many fantastic times, great activities with the girls but also sitting chatting and reflecting on the day after they had gone to bed.



3. Sleeping in a six person bunk bed in Switzerland

When I was a Ranger we did a joint trip to Switzerland with the local Guide unit. Upon arriving the four of us were shown to our room which contained a bed. Just one bed. A bunk bed. Big enough for three people on the bottom and three on the top. I immediately volunteered to sleep on the top along with one other, but we soon regretted this decision as the bed began to sway sickeningly while we were setting our sleeping bags up. This was alarming enough that we abandoned the top bunk completely and all four of us were very cosy on the bottom bunk! The rest of trip was, of course, amazing but years later we still laugh about this situation.

2. Watching the sunset in the Sahara desert

While I was a Ranger I also had the opportunity to go on an international trip to Morocco. We did loads of exciting things but one of the best memories of my life (not just within Guiding) took place here. We spent the day camel trekking in the Sahara desert with local guides to reach our campsite. We then played a few games and had some dinner. Me and a friend then went off and sat on a sand dune, the camels standing below us, and watched the sunset. I couldn't quite believe I was really there. Later that night one of the tents fell down. Oh well.



1. Drinking hot chocolate before bed at jamborees.

I couldn't distinguish one night at camp from another in my head now, but the things they have in common is what makes them my number one Guiding memory. Nothing can beat sitting in a lamplit tent, snuggled up in a blanket with a steaming hot chocolate, surrounded by friends and the noises of other people preparing their own camps for the night. These are where the best moments happen; discussions about the past, current excitements and dramas, and aspirations for the future; and the best friends are made.

I hope you've enjoyed reading about my top moments in Guiding. I have enjoyed the taking the opportunity to think back through my time. I hope it also helps you to remember your favourite moments and maybe even inspire you to create some more amazing memories!