



# Girlguiding Northumberland Annual Review 2021

## County Commissioners Report

2021 began once more in a national lockdown due to the Covid 19 pandemic. However, this did not deter the leaders and units within Northumberland. Many Girlguiding units returned to online guiding and managed to provide a wide range of activities to cover the themes of take action, know yourself, skills for my future, be well, express myself and have adventures. Units once more welcomed 'virtual' visitors to their virtual meetings and embraced and adapted the programme to remain inclusive to all. For those units that were unable to meet online activity packs were once again sent out for girls to do at home. A virtual County World Thinking day was held on line and attended by members from all over the county. Due to the marvels of technology we were able to connect with the Girl Scouts of Japan and share memories of the county camp that took place with members of the Girl Scouts of Japan in 2019. In March 2021 the country opened up again and the majority of units began to meet face to face once again, albeit with Covid secure measures in place. Old and new friendships were formed and rekindled and units started where they had left off, following the Girlguiding programme, day trips out and some residential events even took place.

Girlguiding Northumberland continues to provide a variety of opportunities for all its members. Units and County were anxious about making many plans in 2021 due to the uncertainty surrounding Covid but towards the end of 2021 it appeared that Girlguiding was getting back to 'normality' with lots of plans being made for 2022. The continued resilience of volunteers and young members during the pandemic has been amazing and I am grateful to all our volunteers for all they do. I'm also grateful for all the support that our volunteers receive from their family and friends in order that they can commit to their units and give the girls the amazing opportunities that they do. Many thanks also go to Sir James Knott and W A Handley Charity Trusts for their continued support to Girlguiding Northumberland.

**Gillian Teasdale**  
**County Commissioner**

## **Whittonstall**

We are finally able to offer Whittonstall for camps and holidays and are beginning to get a steady trickle of bookings. It is lovely to see the building come alive again.

The committee have a programme of refurbishments which will take place over the coming months bringing the property up to date. Whilst we are limited as to what we can do within the fabric of the existing building there is still plenty of scope.

We have this amazing asset in our county. If you've not been before it is well worth a visit.

**Allison Graydon**  
**Chair Buildings Committee**



## **Training**

We are finally able to offer face to face trainings and have seen many leaders complete their First Response training.

Who would have believed two years ago we would be trained via this new phenomenon called Zoom?! It is definitely here to stay and the way forward will be to offer hybrid training.

The new training platform allows you to attend training from the comfort of home but there is much to be gained from face to face training.

Congratulations go to Marguerita Gray on completing her training licence. Well done!

**Allison Graydon**  
**Training organiser**

## Berwick-upon-Tweed Division

The year began with the whole country in lockdown, meaning no face-to-face meetings for our units once again. However, Guides continued to meet on Zoom



and enjoyed a varied programme of activities including an art night with a local artist and illustrator, making lemonade scones and the 'Great Guide Bake Off!' with 18 fantastic entries.



On World Thinking Day, activity packs were delivered to our Brownies which included a cute Brownie heart ♥knitted by one of our occasional helpers. Guides held a Zoom meeting and several also joined the Northumberland County Zoom event, linking up live with the Japanese Girl Scouts in Chiba.



When Girlguiding announced that we could meet out of doors in the spring, Brownies enjoyed a fun Easter Egg Hunt and picnic in the garden of their meeting place. They continued to meet outdoors; following a local woodland trail and leaving behind positive pebbles, finding out that 'Girls can do anything' and are 'Supergirls!'



It was lovely for Guides to get back to face to face meetings and to everyone enjoying time together. Activities they enjoyed included planting sunflower seeds, and messy science experiments. Navigation skills learned were put to good use as the Guides completed a trail around Spittal, finishing with chips!



Other outdoor skills learned included; fire lighting with matches and fire sticks, making egg box firelighters, cooking toasties and s'mores and finishing the summer term with a beach barbeque.



By Autumn Term, Guides, Brownies and Rainbows were meeting indoors once again and taking part in a range of exciting activities. Rainbows worked to gain Stage 1 Skills for my Future and some girls gained their Book Lover badge.



As part of the Union Chain Bridge Project, Guides and Brownies were involved in learning more about bridge building and took part in several related STEM activities. Guides were fortunate to receive a grant from the British Science Association and had great fun making bristle bot robots, solar bracelets, soap roses and designing bridges using kits.





During Parliament Week, Guides thought about a change they would like to see locally, nationally or globally and how they could help achieve this. A great opportunity for the girls to learn debating skills.



Brownies made a Poppy craft and learned about the importance of Remembrance Sunday in preparation for their attendance at the service on 14<sup>th</sup> November 2021. Berwick Girlguiding Division was well represented in the parade at this local event.



Guides, Brownies, their leaders and community members planted 9,600 bulbs in Flagstaff Park, for the Queens Platinum Jubilee Celebrations in 2022. Photos appeared on the front page of the Berwick Advertiser!



During the year funds were raised for local and national charities. The Division took part in the World's Biggest Coffee Morning and held their event in Berwick Town Hall where almost £400 was raised due to a great team effort! Brownies made chocolate Santa sleighs which were delivered to the Peoples Kitchen in Newcastle and were



very well received. They also took part in Christian Aid's Climate Change Appeal. Guides voted to support Berwick Animal Rescue Kennels (BARK) for their Christmas good turn and a large amount of food and treats for the animals was delivered to their headquarters.



Despite the ongoing Covid crisis and a decrease in our numbers, Berwick upon Tweed Division has been proud to continue to offer our girls the opportunity to meet up indoors, outdoors or virtually, whenever possible.

By the end of the year we had enrolled and celebrated, as many new members joined all our units and 4 Guides had achieved their Bronze Award.



This is due to the support and commitment of our volunteers. Well Done and Thanks!



## Alnwick Division

The Rainbows in Alnwick Division all enjoyed the ability to meet outdoors once Covid restrictions allowed us to do so. Units met on their local beach, in woodland and their local play park. Promises were made around beach fires, with S'mores and stunning sunsets, and under umbrellas in heavy rain. A new Rainbow Unit opened up later in the year and across the Division there have been several Bronze, Silver Awards presented. One Rainbow achieved her Gold Award and had a special Hidden Treasure-themed celebration at a playpark. When restrictions were lifted, one Rainbow unit visited Northumberland Zoo and has been fundraising to sponsor their chosen since then.

Alnwick Division Brownies also enjoyed meeting outdoors after several months of some units not being able to Zoom. Girls have been pond-dipping, had walks and fires by the river, built sandcastles and made s'mores on the beach, and played games and followed programme activities on the local school's field and playground. Once we were allowed indoors, girls have baked biscuits and decorated cakes, had a go at tie-dying using natural dyes and built structures out of fruit and veg. Two new Brownie units opened this year and across the Division several girls have achieved their Bronze and Silver Awards, with a couple even managing to gain their Gold Award.

Our Guides have met over Zoom, at the beach, and at a community orchard. They have had the opportunity to talk to our local MP over Zoom, do a Harry Potter-themed virtual tour (joined by the Brownies) and made salt scrubs via video conference. We have also done water sports, WW2 altar-fire cooking and taken part in several community events. When restrictions allowed us to meet indoors, all units have enjoyed being back indoors, especially as the nights were getting darker and colder. Several girls have been able to complete their Bronze Awards and many are working hard to achieve their Silvers and Golds. One Guide unit had a fantastic time at their Autumn residential at Kirknewton.

All sections massively enjoyed the Division Christmas Crafts afternoon and went home with some lovely things, and after a challenging year, it's been lovely to see all the girls enjoy themselves once more. Our longest serving leader, Madeline Russell retired at Christmas, after receiving her 40 year Long Service Award.

## Ashington Division

2<sup>nd</sup> Ashington Rainbows loved zoom and actually grew the unit whilst meeting on zoom. The girls loved playing bingo but also participated in crafts and cooking. Once back to face to face an outdoor promise ceremony was held. The girls also participated in Rock pooling in Newbiggin, visiting Airbox bounce and ice-skating at Christmas.

1<sup>st</sup> Woodhorn Rainbows completed the NEE 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Badge where girls did tea testing, Ant and Dec's bush tucker trial and Mad Hatters hat competition. They successfully received a bags for life grant for the project Santa's little helper where they spent £500 on food and advent calendars for the local food bank. On their last night before Christmas they had a surprise visitor from Elf.

1<sup>st</sup> Woodhorn Brownies loved zoom sessions where they undertook various quizzes, treasure hunts and cooking activities. They also enjoyed on returning to face to face meetings, Rock pooling in Newbiggin, Airbox Bounce and Ice Skating at Christmas. To commemorate Remembrance Sunday the girls decorated pebbles and displayed them in Stakeford Methodist Church.

5<sup>th</sup> Ashington Brownies had a busy and exciting 2021, did zoom sessions and were entertained and instructed in an artist's workshop, a drumming workshop and by some peer educators. They also took part in the Blue Peters Climate Change challenge and received a Blue Peter Badge. The girls also enjoyed a visit to the Phoenix Pantomime.

1<sup>st</sup> Bedlington Brownies up until October where doing a mixture of zoom and outdoor meetings where they explored having adventures and had lots of fun lighting fires outside and thinking about camping. They took part in the Bedlington Remembrance Parade and Service. They worked alongside Friend of Gallagher Park where they helped with the plight their local squirrel colony who had started to succumb to pox. 7<sup>th</sup> Ashington Guides brought in donations for the local toy appeal at our local Leisure Centre



## Castle Ward

It has been another busy year for Castle Ward with some units at the beginning of the year meeting on zoom, camping at home, learning first aid, making bird feeders and 1<sup>st</sup> Stamfordham Brownies enjoyed completing the Trefoil Guild's Air Ambulance Challenge with a zoom session from them informing the Brownies all about the amazing work they do. Also one Brownie completed her Promise on zoom.



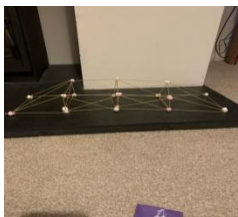
When we were able to meet outdoors, units enjoyed playing games, going on Easter egg hunts and learning how to light fires, cycling proficiency and cricket skills with England Cricket Board (ECB) All Stars and Dynamos.



Rangers enjoyed a BBQ on the beach and having a Sandcastle competition.



Then we were back indoors, where Rainbows have been working on the North East England 50<sup>th</sup> Birthday Challenge badge. They really enjoyed making bridges out of marshmallows and pasta and completing bush tucker trials.



Over the summer holidays Rainbows had a competition to see who could grow the tallest sunflower.

At harvest festival time Rainbows and Brownies donated food to Throckely and Newburn food bank and again at Christmas along with toys and Christmas treats. Brownies also Fundraised for Children In Need.





All units completed different crafts for Father's day and Christmas. We enjoyed several parties from Pizza to Halloween and Christmas.



They enjoyed completing their skill builders, Unit meeting activities and interest badges and several girls gained their Bronze, Silver and Gold awards. Well done Girls.



Rangers completed many UMA's, had a Halloween/Hen party and completed the self-care badge. They completed craft activities for Mother's day and Easter via zoom, button bouquets for my wedding, as well as Christmas advent calendars when we could meet in person.

We all joined in with the Remembrance parade and this was the first time for Rainbows.

### Tynedale East

The division had a good year with lots of activities around the Girlguiding programme. There was lots of community action, awards and fun.







### Cramlington Division

Due to Covid-19, the majority of units started 2021 virtually on Zoom and enjoyed the opportunity to end the year with face-to-face meetings. Everyone is very happy to be back with physical meetings rather than virtual ones! As a Division we collected food and toys for the Salvation Army Christmas Food Parcel appeal.

Rainbows celebrated Burn's night, visited East Cramlington Nature Reserve, completed a recycling challenge, enjoyed cooking while on zoom, played games and had parties. Promise ceremonies were carried out virtually and face-to-face.

Brownies made shortbread and mug cakes over zoom as well as crafts and working on a variety of skills builders and UMAs. Once they were allowed to meet face to face they had various trips out including to CJ's Funhouse and the Girlguiding screening of Encanto at the local cinema. Gold, silver and bronze theme awards have been earned by girls and two leaders received the Girlguiding Hero award.

Guides have enjoyed getting back to activities together outside and have enjoyed outdoor backwoods cooking, camp skills, learning about the RNLI and adventurous activities at Dukeshouse Wood. The 50<sup>th</sup> Birthday Challenge from NEE enabled girls to try different things and learn about other counties throughout the region.

Rangers were awarded a grant from the Community Foundation and were able to have a paddle boarding session at Cullercoats bay. As part of Parliament week, they discussed political issues, voting and created a biscuit replica of Elizabeth Tower. Not an easy thing to do!

### Morpeth Division

Another year of Covid, but it has not stopped our units from meeting. We started the year with virtual meetings with lots of family pets joining. Slowly we returned to outdoor face to face meetings and then finally indoors.

Lots of cooking has taken place online. Two units linked up together for their Keep Connected badge and also learnt a new mug cake recipe from each other which is always a bonus.

We used our time outdoors to practice our outdoor cooking, tie dying, games nights and taking part in a penny hike.

One of units celebrated its 60<sup>th</sup> birthday with a diamond and 60s themed meeting.

In the autumn term we were able to take part in the Remembrance Parade in Morpeth Town. Put on our dancing shoes and glitter for our strictly come dancing themed Division disco to celebrate Children in Need. Ended the year with a trip to see Encanto at the cinema and a Division Christingle service.

We have girls who have achieved interest badges, theme awards and Guides completing their bronze and gold awards despite the obstacles during the year.

It has been good to see the girls together again and their happy faces. We still managed to have a full and busy year. We learnt how to adapt to change and make the most of what we have got.

Thank you to everyone in the Division who helped make this possible.

### **Blyth Division**

A mixed year for Blyth with girl numbers staying high but less units to put them in. Our units continued to offer online meetings then outdoor and finally indoor face to face meetings. We still need more adult volunteers. Our parent rotas seem to be working to attract Mams to help on a more permanent basis slowly but its helping. We have a new leader in training who has moved from another area and have said goodbye to Shirley and Lee. Lee has retired and Shirley is now just volunteering in one Division. Thank you to them both for all the time and energy they gave to Blyth over the years.

We had a scaled down Carol Service with fewer girls and the leaders in Blyth and are hoping to have our usual large event in 2022.

A huge thank you to all our volunteers for hanging on in there and giving up all their precious time.

### **Tynedale West**

Tynedale West started off quietly with at least half of units holding meetings over Zoom, and nearly all returning to face to face meetings by spring half-term. Unfortunately over the year 1st Bellingham Brownies have become a casualty of Covid, with the leaders being unable to continue so the unit is closing. 1st Hexham Guides will also be closing at the end of the summer term, unless any volunteers come forward. Hexham in particular will be looking into a volunteer recruitment as the year continues. Pauleen Peart, is stepping back from both Rainbows and Brownies after 30 years of Guiding. Each unit is continuing to run with the help of unit helpers. Haltwhistle Guides are also closing, but due to lack of numbers, though Brownie numbers are high, it will be a year or so before they are ready to move onto Guides.

## Northumberland Trefoil.

After two years in which we were unable to hold our Annual Meeting and the report was circulated by email and hardcopy I am looking forward to being able to present the Annual Report in person in 2022.

The events of 2020 and 2021 have necessitated that we all review the way in which we operate our meetings. Berwick Guild has moved its meeting place into The Parish Hall, to achieve better accessibility and ventilation. After many years of holding their meetings in the homes of members Cramlington Guild has moved to a community venue and Ponteland Guild has plans to do likewise in 2022. Both guilds are grateful to their members for all of the previous kind hospitality extended.

Some Guilds made tentative steps towards recommencing meetings in the early summer, with outdoor gatherings for walks, chatting and partaking of refreshments, all appropriately socially distanced. All Guilds returned to meetings in the autumn. Some members are naturally still wary and numbers attending meetings crept up gradually in some instances. Plans have not always come to fruition, but Guilds are all optimistic about the future with programmes in place for 2022. Membership numbers in 2021 remained fairly stable.

### WELCOME

Kathleen Ross  
Phyl. Wigham  
Ann McDougall

Chair Berwick  
Treasurer Berwick  
Chair Blyth

### THANK YOU

Pat Potts  
Heather Boden  
Vera Weddell  
Thelma Oliver  
Jeanette Bell  
Shirley Manton  
Mary Main

Chair Wansbeck  
Secretary Wansbeck  
Treasurer Wansbeck  
Chair Berwick  
Treasurer Berwick  
Acting Chair Blyth  
Executive Rep. Berwick

In February we came together online to mark Thinking Day with a further online gathering in June when we celebrated the 95<sup>th</sup> birthday of Her Majesty the Queen. By September we had brought the County together and thirty-seven animated members attended a lunch followed by a slide talk.

### WELL DONE

Northumberland County raised £1105  
Towards the North East England total of £13223  
for the Air Ambulance Challenge

Berwick Guild's members met monthly from September to December. After electing new officers and planning activities they have held a games afternoon with beetle and card bingo, made lovely Christmas cards, based upon ideas demonstrated by Pauline Brown, and had lots of fun participating in a Christmas themed afternoon where they played a fun version of pass the parcel, related an alternative version of Cinderella complete with masks, indulged in an excellent buffet during which Christmas music was played and concluded with a Christmas themed quiz.

After keeping in touch for so long by telephoning one another and regularly sending cards

Blyth Guild finally got together in September and shared what they had achieved during lockdown. They spent an afternoon “Remembering the Brownies”, reminiscing about their experiences whilst folding ties, tying reef knots with eyes closed, identifying interest badges and concluding with a craft. They enjoyed an easy but effective Christmas craft, making pom-pom Christmas puddings. Members were pleased to be able to hold their Christmas lunch at Northumberland College.

In the early part of the year Cramlington Guild’s members found plenty to chat about when they met regularly on zoom and had no difficulty filling the allocated hour. The shared news was passed on by telephone to those unable to access the meetings. By June the first move towards meeting in person was made with a get together in a garden, when it was judged to be so good to be able speak to a human instead of a screen. In July and August members met at Plants Plus and The Brockwell Seam respectively for coffee and chat and the theme of refreshments and chat continued until the end of the year.

Becoming detectives for the evening to find the culprit who killed Friendly Fred the Fond Fisherman during “The Amble Scandal Treasure Trail” challenged Morpeth’s Members. They also participated in a summer Treasure Trail, exploring display boards to learn more about the history of the town and the park’s wildlife. Some sessions remained on zoom, including the County’s “Discover the World” Thinking Day event for all sections. Members were part of the planning group that organised the event. To get in the mood for Christmas the year ended with a craft evening during which pine cone trees, angels and bottle hat toppers were made and snowmen wine glasses were a big hit. Members are also continuing to complete their Voyage Awards.

Ponteland Guild completed the Air Ambulance Challenge Badge via online meetings which included a presentation on cloud formation by BBC weatherman Paul Mooney. Following a talk by a representative of GNAAS, members took the opportunity to make clothing donations. Prior to the summer they met outdoors at Errington Coffee House and Kirkharle. Life in the Falklands with the RAF was the subject for a lovely talk with slides in November and in December they made felt santas and pine cone reindeer tree decorations.

Regular attendance at meetings has proved more difficult to re-establish in Rothbury where members have experienced a variety of health issues, but mainly avoided covid until quite late in its progress. Understandably, they have been more reticent to venture far and meet face-to-face until booster jabs were secured. Two meetings were held in the autumn beginning with sharing memorabilia and followed a month later by lunch at a local hotel.

Wansbeck members, met in May for tea in the garden of their Chair but sadly this was to be their last meeting. The timing wasn’t ideal for recruiting new members as so many venues had not reopened. However, the willingness of the Division Commissioner to try was greatly appreciated. We were pleased to welcome so many of their members to the County lunch in September.

**Congratulations to the following members who have completed awards in 2021.**

**Voyage Bronze Award**

**Amy Brown**

**Morpeth**



Voyage Gold Award	Megan Kelly	Morpeth
	Elizabeth Kelly	Morpeth
	Glynis Docherty	Morpeth
	Karin Jackson	Ponteland
Queen's Guide	Megan Kelly	Morpeth

Without the Executive Committee all that we achieved would not have been possible and I thank them all most sincerely for keeping the spirit of Trefoil alive through very challenging times.

## A Word from our President.

Having been stored in a tin for nearly 20 years I have finally got round to sorting my collection of Guiding postage stamps. I was thrilled to discover the set of stamps issued to celebrate the first World Camp held after the foundation of the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS) in 1939 in Hungary. On the advice of Olave Baden-Powell the name Pax-Ting was adopted for the camp as this translated as Meeting of Peace. The four stamps are so uninspiring in appearance but what they signify is far from this. Despite the threat of World War 2, which broke out a month after the camp, 5,800 Guides from around the world enjoyed the thrills of international camp in the spirit of happy fellowship. Over the last year leaders have continued in the spirit of Pax-Ting giving unit members something to look forward to. Let's face it, we all need this, leaders most of all.

Next year may still have its challenges but together on our Guiding journey we can make it special for everyone.

Guiding is purpose designed to offer the best to us all.

**Ann McDougal**

