

Girlguiding UK

ISSUE 1 AUTUMN 2007

Today

Welcome to the first issue of *Girlguiding UK Today*, the newsletter that will keep you up to date with the UK's leading voluntary organisation for girls and young women.



**Girls
shout out!**

**Top skills
every girl
should have**

**GOLD
stars**

**Take the
volunteer
challenge**



Girlguiding UK
girls in the lead

Registered charity number 306016. Incorporated by Royal Charter.

'Talking! Multi- tasking! Everything!'



Guiding is about giving girls a voice – just ask KATIE and HEATHER, 13.

'Everyone has the right to be heard.'

How loud would you say your voice is?

Heather: Quiet, unless I'm shouting at my sister.

Katie: Loud, because people tell me.

What's the best thing about being a girl?

Heather: You can wear make-up and dress up.

Katie: Girls get away with more than boys.

What's the best thing about being 13?

Heather: You feel older because you're a teenager.

Katie: It's like you're not looked upon as a child any more.

What's the hardest thing about being a girl?

Heather: We have to prove ourselves in some subjects at school, like tech and PE. And periods.

Katie: Boys have more freedom than girls and there's the pressure of weight and size for girls.

What things are girls really good at?

Katie: Talking! Multi-tasking! Everything!

Do you think we need to be telling people what girls think today?

Heather: Yes, because we want people to listen to us, sometimes we are right.

Katie: Yes, because everyone has the right to be heard.

Do you feel as a young woman that your voice is heard?

Heather: Well, Guide Leaders do listen to your ideas and thoughts.

Katie: Sometimes. It depends how loud you shout for the things that matter to you.

Shouting about it

As a truly girl-led organisation, we've always sought and acted upon the views of girls. To help make sure their voices are heard outside guiding as well, we recently launched a landmark report – *Girls shout out!* – presenting the results of one of the most extensive surveys of girls' and young women's views conducted by any organisation in recent years.

Find out more: www.girlguiding.org.uk/girlsshoutout

Looking at me



We've teamed up with Dove and the UK's leading eating disorder charity **beat** to produce a new self-esteem resource for girls.

Looking at me is designed to help build self-esteem in ten to 14-year-old girls, challenging the effect popular media can have on how girls and young women view themselves, as highlighted in our recent *Girls shout out!* report.

Thanks to a grant from the Dove Self-Esteem Fund, *Looking at me* is now available free to every Guide Leader in the UK.

'I think the resource will

'We're always there for each other.'

help because most girls today are like, "I have to look pretty or no one will like me," said Aimee Halliwell, 13, who tried out the new resource at Girlguiding UK's Commonwealth Headquarters in London.

'In magazines everything is fake. What makes me feel good is my friends because they don't judge. We're always there for each other.'



In the hood

Senior Section members turned fashionistas this year when Zoe Atkins, Chloe Turner, Laura Clark and Sara Perry won the chance to create a fresh new hoodie for girls in their section.

The girls worked with Eurotex clothing designer Tim Winterbottom to come up with a final design, drawing on ideas from all four of their competition entries.

Since rolling off the production line in April, 3,393 – and counting! – have been sold.

I've got skills!

Cyber safety, standing up to boys and saving lives are among the top skills girls should have, according to the experts – the girls themselves.



'Producing a first-rate CV is a priority for me!'

Girls in guiding have named the top skills that every modern girl should have under her belt. The online survey showed that today's girls prioritise independence, knowing how to take care of themselves and getting their voices heard. Over a thousand young members of Girlguiding UK – aged from seven to 25 – took part in the survey.



7 – 10s

Safety is where it's at for seven to ten-year-olds, with four out of five rating knowing their Green Cross code first, followed closely by safe cyber-surfing. Caring for a pet and knowing basic first aid were also deemed important skills and counting to ten in another language won the cosmopolitan vote. Sports made the grade too, with riding a bike and swimming 100 metres valued by just over half.

10 – 15s

Cooking a healthy meal was the first choice for four out of five ten to 15-year-olds, followed by leading a team, pitching a tent and knowing how to stand up to boys. Two thirds chose getting to grips with Word and Excel, while similar proportions opted for changing a light bulb and mastering self-defence.

16 – 25s

Money management came first for 95 per cent of 16 to 25-year-olds, followed by performing CPR, speaking confidently in public and practising safe sex. A career-conscious two thirds prioritised producing a first-rate CV and holding down a job, while over half rated being able to assemble flat-pack furniture.

Guiding stars



Girls have always sung into hairbrushes, but this year we gave 2,700 of them the chance to take their talent to the stage.

All over the UK girls sang their hearts out in *Guiding Star*, an *X-Factor*-style competition, for the chance to perform in front of 26,000 of their peers at Girlguiding UK's BIG GIG 2007 in October.

In June, 18 finalists each took the stage at Sheffield City Hall for the Guiding Star National Final.

'I was so shocked!' said Samantha, 18, who won the 16–25 age category. 'All the finalists were amazing and so talented.'

The winner of the ten–16 age category, Isabella, 14, was equally awed.

'I can't stop smiling!' she said. 'It's been an amazing experience, a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.'

'I can't stop smiling!'

Find out more: www.girlguiding.org.uk/guidingstar

How to: take off and fly

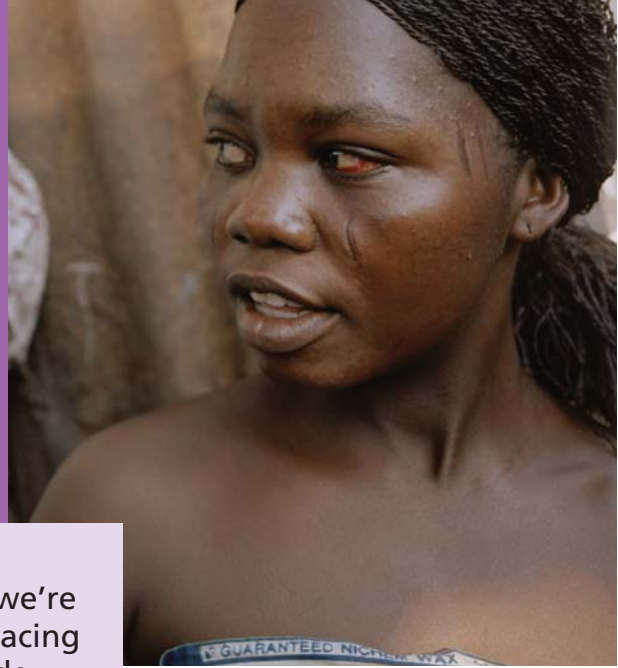
For thousands of girls in guiding, summer was a chance to get outdoors and go!

This summer in guiding:

- > 6,500 girls rode the rapids and tried canoeing, kayaking and raft building
- > 3,000 took off and flew down the zip wire
- > 5,500 added another string to their bow and gave archery a go
- > 6,000 reached new heights and learned to climb
- > 3,000 put their strength to the test on the assault course
- > 5,000 took the plunge and tried their hands at abseiling.



Girls just wanna have equality



Alongside global community development organisation Plan, we're taking action on the challenges facing girls and young women worldwide.

Because I am a Girl: The State of the World's Girls, a report published by Plan and supported by Girlguiding UK, shows that girls and young women often face inequality, violence and abuse.

Like our groundbreaking research report *Girls shout out!*, which asked young guiding members what it means to be a young woman today, *Because I am a Girl*

surveys issues that affect girls and young women – but its findings reflect the lives of girls all over the world.

Because I am a Girl is the first in a nine-part series of reports that will chart the lives of 120 girls born in nine different countries, profiling their health, education and income.

Girlguiding UK will use the report to help girls in the UK

learn about the issues that other girls their age in different parts of the world face every day.

'We want to give girls and young women a voice,' said Girlguiding UK Chief Executive Denise King. 'Helping them understand equality is the first step towards empowering them to make change.'

'Girls and young women face widespread inequality.'

Find out more: www.becauseiamagirl.org

Take the challenge

There are 8,765 hours in a year... could you spare just 12? If so, you could take part in our 12-hour Challenge! There's no set agenda for the Challenge so you have complete control over how you spend your 12 hours.

To find out more, visit www.girlguiding.org.uk or call 0800 1 69 59 01.

Going for gold



GOLD projects enable young guiding members to make a difference overseas – like EMMA BOTTING, 19, who journeyed to Madagascar.

'I learned that, I am stronger than I realised.'

'We were based in Antananarivo, Madagascar's capital, and we also travelled to Majunga at the northern tip of the island.

'Our workshops concentrated mainly on the Girlguiding UK activity resource *Right now!* [which focuses on global issues of human rights and social responsibility]. We also spent some time teaching English and personal hygiene.

'The biggest challenge was coping with the culture in Madagascar. Nothing could have prepared me for how different everything is – the poverty is just so visible.

'Word spread at one of our workshops that we were in the village, and soon the road had filled with children who wanted to

join in. It was heartbreaking to see all these children who had nothing and were just so eager to learn.

'More than anything, I enjoyed working with the village children in Ambohimanga. They were all so eager to learn, and absolutely loved all the games we played with them. There were lots of children there, but also teenagers and some adults, who also wanted to join in the activities and learn some English.

'Over the course of GOLD, I learned that I am stronger than I realised – I am now far more self-confident, and not afraid to take on challenges.'

GOLD stars

Guiding Overseas Linked with Development (GOLD) projects are designed to create positive and ongoing change within developing countries. They're life-changing experiences for the guiding members who take part in them too.

Find out more: www.girlguiding.org.uk/seniorsection

Give a little, gain a lot



Our volunteers – and their employers – gain big rewards for a little time.

'Volunteers bring a wider range of skills to their jobs.'

Girlguiding UK offers each of its 80,000 adult volunteer Leaders at least 15 hours of training a year in practical skills such as risk assessment and first aid, while helping to develop 'soft skills' such as leadership, time management, team building and diversity awareness.

Independent research commissioned by Girlguiding UK proves that an amazing 94 per cent of employers recognise that employees who

volunteer bring a wider range of skills and experience to their jobs.

Not only that – 80 per cent of employers who have volunteer-friendly policies feel that they benefit the company.

Employer supported volunteering (ESV) schemes can include anything from flexible working hours to matching fund-raising attempts, and many have few or no cost implications.

Add me!

Girlguiding UK Today is a free newsletter published twice-yearly. If this issue wasn't mailed to you directly and you would like to be added to our distribution list to ensure that you receive all future issues, please email today@girlguiding.org.uk. Please also let us know if you'd prefer an e-version instead of the printed version, or if you don't want to receive any further issues!

About us

Girlguiding UK is the UK's largest voluntary organisation for girls and young women, with nearly 600,000 members. We enable girls and young women to realise their full potential and take an active and responsible role in today's society. This is achieved through a distinctive, stimulating and enjoyable programme of activities provided by 80,000 adult volunteer Leaders.