

FEBRUARY 2015

Sleepover

We held our annual sleepover on January 31st / February 1st. The theme for the weekend was promises and we looked at the story of Noah. There were numerous crafts made over the weekend including Noah's ark mobiles, cloud promise badges, and rainbow pencil pots. Everyone drew their hands on coloured card and then added names and prayers. These were expertly put together by Eleanor, Rebecca and Kim to form a lovely rainbow which along with a play mobile Noah's ark formed a focal point in Church for the Sunday School Service.

The explorers joined us for the Saturday afternoon joining in the crafts and having their supper before going home.

After supper the girls decorated biscuits as part of our

Acts of **R**andom **K**indness before they moved on to watch the film Evan Almighty.

The girls were all very well behaved and settled down for a reasonable night's sleep.

All too soon the alarm was going off and it was time to get up and by 9.30 everyone had been fed, was dressed and the building was clean and tidy with the exception of the upstairs room.

The girls were in there making boats out of scrap objects, there was a competition for the best decorated boat and for the one that floated the best.

We then came into Church where the explorers had already joined us and along with members of the congregation enjoyed watching pictures of the activities the girls had been singing over the weekend.

The service was led by our Girls Brigade District Commissioner Dawn Webster.

During the service Eleanor Bennett was commissioned as an officer in our company. Hannah Jackson, Eleanor Bennett and Rebecca Bennett all received their Duke of Edinburgh Gold Award and Rebecca Bennett also collected her Brigader Broach and received her advanced Young Leaders Award.

The officers then made their promises and received their membership cards before it was the turn of the girls to make their promises.

Service awards and membership cards were then handed out to all the girls.

During the service the girls shared a song about Noah's ark and all the congregation joined in our old Girls Brigade hymn as it was very fitting to the theme of the service.

After the service refreshments were served including buns and a cake made by Joyce Barnes in the form of a rainbow. A big thank you to her for all her hard work, they looked great and tasted wonderful.

Cards of hope for Chibok school girls

(An extract from GB website)

One year on

14 April 2015 marks the anniversary of the kidnappings of over 250 young women from a boarding school in Chibok, Nigeria. As we approach this poignant date, 219 girls remain missing and separated from their families. Six of them are our GB sisters – Abigail, Deborah, Grace, Awa, Esther & Deborah.

Girls' Brigade cares for girls because God cares for girls. We believe in hope for the Chibok girls. We believe that God calls us to build the hope-filled Gospel alternative by modelling His transformative and restorative heart. In 2015, let's be expectant. God loves each one of these girls and He can do immeasurably more than we can ever imagine (Ephesians Ch.3:20).

How can you help?

As a GB family, let's mobilise our young people and leaders to contribute to a collective positive action which will ensure that these girls are not forgotten by people in positions of influence.

In the run up to the one year anniversary of the abductions, GBEW is asking every leader, every girl, every friend of GB and every church associated with GB to create a hope card for one missing young woman. This could be done collectively as an opening or closing reflection during your GB night.

In late March, a group of young women from GB will be presenting all the cards to a representative of the UK government (hopefully the Foreign Secretary).

Why should you get involved?

Quite simply - it will make a difference. You will also be empowering the young people in your GB group to act against an injustice and help bring God's hope and light into this dark situation.

You will be using your influence in a positive way. The UK government is elected to represent our views. By creating these hope cards, we're demonstrating that young people across the UK care about these young women. These cards will be presented to the heart of UK government by an all-age delegation of GB members.

By creating a hope card, you'll be saying: 'I've not forgotten you.'

One evening our girls took part in making the cards and these have are now on the way to headquarters to join those from other companies to be handed in.

Explorers

We have started the new year in high spirits with a great bunch of explorers. Many of them have been part of the Girls Brigade for a long time but we have also had a few new recruits. They are enjoying their weekly games and crafts and on our last week before February half term they had the chance to decorate cards valentines themed to give to a loved one such as their mums or grandmas.

Juniors

The Junior group is growing and we currently have 12 girls in this age group. They have finished their 'Love' badge and have made some lovely cards. We have had a few fun weeks baking and doing colouring and crafts and we will be starting a new badge after half term. Here is what some of the juniors have to say about what they have been doing and what they think about Girl's Brigade:

At church we have had a sleep over and we did a lot of crafts and that was very fun by Gracie, aged 8.

Here at Church we have lots of fun by Madeline, aged 8.

Today we have made cornflake buns by Megan, aged 9

We have done baking by Summer, aged 7

At Girl's Brigade we have had a sleepover and we watched a movie about Noah's ark by Tilly, aged 8

Girl's Brigade is so much fun, fun, fun by Chloe, aged 8

We learn different things at Girl's Brigade by Hermione, aged 8

I am new to Girl's brigade's and I like it by Emily, aged 9

I really like the leaders by Emma, aged 7

Seniors

The seniors are a small but very good group to work with they like to come and interact with each other. We are working on a badge called taking risks, this badge is a good one as it helps them understand all areas that come out of taking risks in day to day lives and they have really adapted to this badge.

Brigaders

The Brigaders have been looking back at the roots of Girls Brigade including the uniform, badges, activities and even had a special visit from an ex member of Girls Brigade whom they had a chance to ask questions and look at the differences with. The girls have learnt a lot about how Girls Brigade has changed but how it's values and morals are still the same.

Duke of Edinburgh Award

The whole duke of Edinburgh Award is an experience and I've learnt a lot from it. I've got more skills than I had before. I've become really close with my team mates which is really good as you get to know each other's strengths and weaknesses but also you can help each other along the way. Going to St James palace on Wednesday was amazing it was a real big eye opener. Walking through the palace was amazing it was beautiful. Charley Boorman was there and he gave a little talk about his adventures then HRH (Edward) came in and spoke to us and asked us questions and we received our certificate. It was an amazing day. It is a real big achievement. I can't wait to help the other girls in our company achieve the DOFE like I have. I couldn't have done it without all the support and prayers from everyone thank you it was very appreciated. *Hannah Jackson*

After months, even years of preparation, volunteering, learning new skills, first aid training and more walking than we care to think about,

this week three of us completed our final journey (thankfully by car!) to St James's Palace, London to receive our official certificates for completing our Gold Duke of Edinburgh Award. None of us are scared to admit that the road has been tough, we have all laughed, cried and fallen over several times, but this week made the whole thing worth it.

Myself, Rebecca Bennett and Hannah Jackson were together for the presentation along with two Girls' Brigade members from Birmingham and several other young people from various national organisations. We met Prince Edward - Earl of Wessex who spoke to most of us individually and congratulated us on our success and Charley Boorman - TV personality and keen traveller who presented us with our certificates and shared his travelling stories along with listening to ours. It was an experience none of us will forget and a very special and rewarding day.

The whole experience has been wonderful, from the first time we got together and agreed to complete our Gold award to the great day we had in London this week. We are now closer friends than ever, have gained skills that will last a lifetime and are simply better people for it. We pushed ourselves hard, stuck together and eventually achieved something great!

We were reminded at the event that our participation doesn't have to stop here and that we are now fully capable of helping younger girls in Girls' Brigade to achieve the same great award, experience the things we did and have a wonderful day at St James's Palace just like us.

Best of luck to Beth and Leah on finishing their awards and getting their certificates and thank you to everyone who has supported us through our journey: our family, friends, church, captain and most of all, our invaluable mentor, Amanda. *Eleanor Bennett*