



Scouting

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there are lots of unique benefits for families here'

Scouting on the Small Isles, page 42



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It is important to note the differing structures of UK Scouting in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. However, for ease of reading, this magazine refers to all variations of 'County'-level groupings simply as County.

At Scouting magazine, we make every effort to ensure that our content is accurate, complete and up to date at the time of going to press. Occasionally, inaccuracies may occur.

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Bear with Scout Ambassador Chris Evans and his wife Natasha Shishmanian

Be proud. Be together. Belong.

When I think of Scouting, I think of great skills, great fun, but above all else, great teamwork. It's when we work together, play together and dream together that we are at our best.

I was reminded of this during my helicopter adventure this summer, meeting thousands of Scouts and dropping into some huge events. None more so perhaps than when we broke a Guinness World Record for the world's largest human fleur-de-lis at CarFest North, with Scout Ambassador Chris Evans. You could feel the sense of shared purpose and shared joy. It's an essential part of what makes the Scouts so special.

There are so many incredible examples of this in our spring issue of Scouting. Meet the inspiring team running Scouting on the tiny Scottish island of Muck, where up until recently, residents were only allowed limited hours of electricity per day. Scouting has the ability to light up the darkest of nights. That's also what we find in our brilliant feature, The light

inside – that we are naturally drawn to the light and that those shared moments together, gathered at the campfire, are to be treasured.

We also need to remember our own light inside when we are faced with challenging issues such as mental ill health, which we look at in our article, Raising boys. As a father of three boys myself, I know a little bit about this. I say, never be afraid to show your emotions – be open, honest and never scared to ask for help.

Remember, it's how we treat each other, how we welcome those who are different, and how we embrace the world that defines us. Let's allow our natural generosity and kindness as Scouts to shine through. Thanks for all you do and in the words of our Founder, 'Good Scouting to you!'

Bear Grylls, Chief Scout



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Let's make this a centenary to remember

For 100 years, we've been proud to call Gilwell Park the home of Scouting. Generations of leaders and young people have come here to experience the special magic of our heritage and woodland setting while developing skills for life.

Now, and throughout 2019, we want you and your group to help mark the centenary by taking part in an exciting programme of special events and exhibitions. Here are just three brilliant ways you can get involved.

Engrave a brick in the Promise Path

One simple way to commemorate our centenary year is to engrave a brick in the Promise Path. This path trails through Gilwell Park and is made up of bricks dedicated to special people, dates and memories.

If you would like to have a brick engraved to honour someone important to you, you can do so in their name – whether you are thanking a Scout leader for many years of service, or celebrating your Group for its

impact on you and the community. The Promise Path represents Scouting's promise to provide young people with new opportunities and a valuable path to follow.

Visit Gilwell during 2019

What better way to celebrate than joining us at Gilwell? We have an amazing calendar of events, from Gilwell 24 in July for 14–18-year-olds, to Gilwell Reunion in September for volunteers to gain inspiration, share knowledge and have fun. We're also hosting Gilwell Centenary Camps and a big Centenary Challenge.

Explore our heritage

We're excited to announce a special exhibition exploring the history of Gilwell Park, which runs from August to October at Epping Forest District Museum. Entry will be free.

In a unique collaboration with acclaimed British artist Jeremy Houghton, we'll also be unveiling 100 portraits of people with a special link to Gilwell. The project is called

Inspiring Generations and will provide a lasting legacy of the year.

Scouting at Gilwell Park

In 1919, a generous benefactor, William de Bois Maclaren, offered to buy a camping area for inner city London Scouts. After months of searching, Gilwell Park was purchased for £7,000. On 17 April 1919, the first Rover Scouts arrived to start converting the site and by 12 May the first Scouts were camping. On 8 September, adult volunteers convened for the first ever Wood Badge course. Soon, Scouts from around the world flocked to attend the courses and Gilwell's fame spread.

Gilwell has grown and evolved since 1919. However, its core ethos of delivering skills for life through fun and adventure remains and 40,000 young people visit each year. It's not every day we celebrate a 100th birthday, so let's make it something really special.

To find out more, visit: scoutadventures.org.uk/gilwell-100.

Digital update

We're working to ensure our new digital programme planning tool focuses on the right functionality, evidence and content, and one of the ways we're doing this is by recruiting a new Community of Interest (a community of beta testers and contributors). This will be open to all section leaders, and each test will only take a few minutes of participants' time. More information on this will be available soon. In the meantime, we're also seeking input on brilliant programme activities from expert section leaders. This will kick-off in the next couple of months and will really ensure that our new digital tool includes the best of Scouting.

Make sure you're getting the emails you want

The law on data protection has changed. As a member of the Scouts, we'll continue to send you information relevant to your role, including information on the Scout Programme, events, rules, guidance, and safety, because it's important that you're kept informed. However, unless you say 'yes' to hearing from us in the future, you'll lose direct access to member-only discounts, exclusive opportunities, competitions and special offers.

How to update your communication preferences

- Use your membership number to sign into Compass here:

<https://compass.scouts.org.uk>.

- Click on the 'Communications Preferences' tab.
- Click the 'yes' option for the benefits you'd like to receive.
- Double check that your email address is correct and that your main role is set to 'primary' on Compass.

To ensure you receive essential communications for your specific role, make sure you're using a personal email address on Compass (so if you currently share an email address with a family member, make sure you update it to your personal one).

Youth Shaped Scouting

All year round, adults should work in partnership with young people in order to shape Scouting. To help you do this, we've put together a selection of resources.

The Climbing Wall of Youth Involvement is available on the members' website and helps you to see where you are now and what you need to do in order to 'move up the wall' of Youth Shaped Scouting.

A way you can improve your result is by getting County Youth Commissioners and District Youth Commissioners in post. Role descriptions can be found on the members' site along with the Youth Commissioners Guide, which aims to help Youth Commissioners and line managers to support Youth Shaped Scouting. If they're unsure about jumping into a Commissioner role or aren't yet old enough, young people can try out



adult volunteer roles by taking part in Wear Their Necker. You can also encourage young people to give feedback about their programme in a fun and engaging way by using YouShape Cards. These are available to buy from Scout Store, or free to download online. Finally, peer leadership is a great way to help young people get involved and develop leadership skills: you can find blog posts with guidance on peer leadership at scouts.org.uk/news.

100 years of Scouts and the Royal Navy

In 2019 we're celebrating RN100, an event commemorating 100 years of partnership with the Royal Navy and Royal Navy recognised groups. A RN100 badge, designed by a Sea Scout, is currently on sale in Scout Store, and festivity planning is underway.

Over 100 Sea Scouts Groups are recognised by the Royal Navy. Sea Scouts was first formed in the UK in 1909 and has a legacy of developing life-saving skills. Sea Scouts regularly get involved in a wide range of water activities from canoeing, sailing, windsurfing, pulling (rowing) and narrow boating, to power boating and offshore sailing. Sea Scouts also find time for many of the traditional Scouting activities, such as camping and hiking, and other activities within the Scouting Programme.



The Scouts Christmas Appeal 2018

Each week, Scouting offers almost half a million young people the opportunity to develop vital life skills, make an impact in their communities and achieve their full potential, but over 55,000 children and young people are still waiting for their adventure to begin. By supporting the Christmas Appeal, you can help us to change that, and ensure that Scouting continues to change lives for generations to come.

Our new mascot – Doris the donkey – stars on our brand new Christmas

badge and blanket badge, available for a minimum donation of £1 each, and we have two new festive card packs on offer. If you missed out on our previous badges, never fear – all our Christmas mascots have been reunited in our four-badge pack.

For a minimum donation of £3, you can collect them all, taking Bernard the robin, Fleur the penguin, Ralph the reindeer and Doris the donkey with you on your Scouting journey. Every purchase helps to support Scouting.

New Scout Scientist Activity Badge

In response to member feedback, we've worked with members and STEM ambassadors through our corporate partnerships to develop a brand new Scout Scientist Activity Badge. Scout leaders were given the opportunity to review draft requirements in July 2018, and the badge will be available to include in programmes and to complete from March 2019.

The badge will include the option to either explore the science behind Scouting activities or to do a range of exciting experiments. We think your young people will really enjoy working towards this badge: it's



fun, curiosity building and will allow creativity and exploration.

Scouts should also feel inspired to learn more about science afterwards, recognising that it doesn't just happen in the classroom.

The Scouts Raffle 2018

We've launched the Scouts Raffle, an exciting new opportunity to support Scouting and win up to £5,000. For only £1 per ticket, you'll have the chance to win eight cash prizes, with all funds helping more young people learn skills for life. Learn more at fundraising.scouts.org.uk/scouts-raffle.

A Million Hands: a Charity Times Award and new resources

Scout Community Month got off to a tremendous start, as Scouts' hard work was recognised nationally at the Charity Times Awards with a Community Award. The Community Award recognises an individual or sector organisation empowering communities and promoting social action by encouraging people to be more involved in their communities, to volunteer and to give money.

A Million Hands is now a double award winner at the Charity Times Awards, with the initiative winning Cross-Sector Partnership of the Year in 2016. A huge 'well done' to everyone who's carried out work in their local community – you are all making a fantastic difference.

To coincide with Scout Community Month, we've released new programmes on a plate for our A Million Hands 2019 Big Moment. These provide support to help our section leaders with programme planning for the year ahead, and are available from amillionhands.org.uk.

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Tom Hylands



Alan K B Beavis



Sally Payne

Spotlight on National Scout Active Support Units

National Scout Active Support Units allow people to give time to Scouting in a flexible way. They can still be involved without the commitment of being a leader, and can choose a unit depending on interests, skills and experience. We spoke to members of three very different units to find out more

Tom Hylands, Country Scout Active Support Manager, Scout Content Active Support Unit

The Scout Content Active Support Unit supports UK Scouting with the production of videos, photography, social media and web content. This is to help promote either an event or local Scouting more generally. I used to do quite a lot of PR with the Scouts – as a young person I'd get involved in news interviews and that kind of stuff, and I often did photography at events. Professionally, I now work in marketing, so it's followed a natural path for how I've ended up being involved in the unit.

We've supported local Counties with their Pride and other events, and help with things like coming up with a good story to attract local press coverage, as well as producing high quality media. One of our aims is to get a member in every single Area, Region and County, so that we can support anyone across the UK more easily. My tip would be to get involved with the Scouting community online, whether via Twitter or Facebook – there's lots of really good Scout groups and Explorer units using those channels. Also, don't be afraid of sharing photos (with permission) of your young people doing activities, because that's what people want to see.

Alan K B Beavis OBE, Country Scout Active Support Co-ordinator, International Scout Support Unit

The International Scout Support Unit gives practical assistance to leaders in delivering the international programme. We try to make every member aware of the opportunities available and the value of international Scouting.

The unit is divided into special interest groups (SIGs), which cover different areas of the globe. My passion is the work we've carried out in Uganda. In 1991, I was invited there by the Vice President and the work done since then has been absolutely phenomenal. I lose track of the number of people there building schools. One project, in the slum district of Kampala, is now a boarding school with about 1,200 pupils. It's what keeps me encouraging members to become involved, and contributed to my award of the OBE. I now work behind the scenes. I've been in Scouting all my life. After the closure of Rover Scouts, I held the position of County Organiser for the BP Guild, which led me to the International Scout and Guide Fellowship in 1977. Since then I have held various positions promoting the value of international projects and visits. It's what we're in Scouting for, isn't it? To widen horizons for young people.

Sally Payne, Scout and Guide Graduate Association (SAGGA)

The aim of SAGGA is to provide services to Scouting and Guiding, and that's one of the things that make us a bit different. We support two organisations but, in our opinion, one movement: the underlying philosophy and principles are shared. One of the ways we provide support is by carrying out practical volunteering at Scout or Guide campsites. This year, we were in Coventry and we had about 70 SAGGA volunteers onsite over 10 days. We re-developed their assault course and caving area, did lots of painting, and carried out inventories.

Another thing we do is parachute our members into existing events to lend support. For a number of years, we've provided an activity team for the Girlguiding event Wellies and Wristbands. This year, our activities were all on an engineering theme, so we were doing things like building and launching paper rockets. The girls enjoyed the activities but, more importantly, leaders could take them back to their groups. What I love most is the opportunity for collaboration and innovation. I'm a Scout leader and you can get a bit narrow in scope in your District. At events, I get to talk to leaders from all over about how they do things and develop ideas.



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Ask Team UK

In this issue, the team answers your questions on topics ranging from St George's Day to winter camping with Cubs. If you've got a burning question for Team UK, head to scouts.org.uk/connect. Complete the online form for your chance to see the answer in the next issue

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Do we have to celebrate St George's Day when we don't live in England, and if we do, do we have to parade to a church?

Baden-Powell chose St George to be the Patron Saint of Scouting for his dedication to helping others, something that remains vital to Scouting today. He wasn't chosen because of his position as Patron Saint of England, so groups outside of England don't need to worry that they're inadvertently celebrating this at the same time. Scouts all over the world now use St George's Day as an opportunity to come together.

How this happens can vary widely. Traditionally, many Districts have chosen to parade through their town to a local church for a service. However, there is definitely no requirement to do so, and many young people would prefer to do something else instead. As Scouting becomes a more diverse movement and welcomes people of all faiths, as well as none, it's important that we ensure what we do is inclusive, in

addition to being fun for the young people taking part. The most important part of St George's Day is renewing our promise and reminding ourselves of our Scouting values. Districts and Counties have arranged camps and fun days, and taken over unusual venues for exciting events, which all fulfil this requirement.

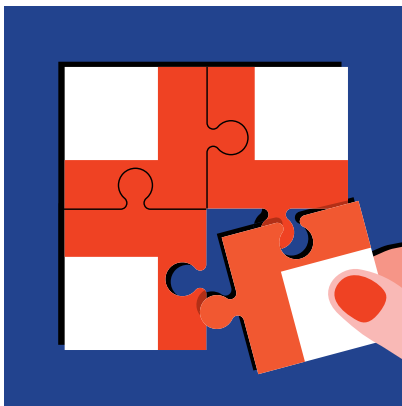
Done well, it can be a great opportunity to showcase Scouting to parents and carers and the public, as well as helping our volunteers to feel valued and proud, and our young people to feel part of something special.

Stephen Donaldson, Chief Commissioner of Northern Ireland, and Kester Sharpe, Deputy UK Chief Commissioner

Census and the membership fee

Why do we do the census?

The census collects a detailed picture of the young people and adults that make up our membership. Asking for equality data (gender, ethnicity and disability) is vital for ensuring we know who our members are, and how we can best support them. We also collect other information, such as the location of meeting places, the number of Top Awards achieved and the size of our want-to-join lists. All of this is important for tracking progress against our four objectives. The census is also used to calculate membership subscription payments, based on the number of young people in each area.



Should we pass the names and addresses of members around the movement?

It is vital that each Group, District and County/Area/Region (Scotland) holds accurate records of the names and personal details of its own members and associate members, and for all adults to be accurately recorded on Compass (POR Rule 3.5(b)). Passing such details from Group to District to County should be done with due care – see scouts.org.uk/gdprtoolkit for more information.

Do young people moving between sections need to be recorded?

Once a young person joins Scouting, they remain a member until they leave. A young person new to Scouting becomes a member when they make the Scout Promise for the first time (POR Rule 3.3(b)). If at the time of the census a young person is in the process of moving sections, their membership should be recorded against their new section. More information can be found at: scouts.org.uk/census.

How has the membership fee changed?

The UK headquarters membership fee for 2019 is £28 and payable for all members under the age of 18. If you pay by Tuesday 23 April, you will receive a 50p discount per member. The membership fee accounts for around 60% of UK headquarters' net

income, and we have kept the £1 increase as low as possible via fundraising, corporate partnerships and our commercial activities.

In Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, the fee is set by each nation.

Mark Tarry, Deputy UK Chief Commissioner

Our Scouts go to winter camp every January. Can we also take our Cubs camping at this time of year?

Of course you can. Everyone in every section can camp outdoors at any time of the year. We saw thousands of Beaver Scouts, for example, camping in the early summer. It's all about good preparation by the leadership team, by parents or guardians, and by the young people themselves. Check out your venues and plan suitable accommodation where everyone can gather and relax after a day of activities. Have plenty of warm drinks or soup on the go, and choose your activities to suit: kayaking might not be suitable if the water is icy, but building igloos could be an exciting alternative. You may not have snow, but it's likely to be cold, so make sure everyone plans their kit in advance and wraps up well.

While on the subject of camping, remember to start looking ahead. Are you offering opportunities for more leaders in your section to get their nights away permits? Are you having a parent and child sleepover? Start now to get the disclosures sorted, so all admin and checks are completed in good time. Do write in and tell us about your winter camps! **Graeme Hamilton, UK Commissioner for Programme Delivery**

What advice would you give to Appointment Advisory Committees (AACs) to understand Youth Shaped Scouting and how it links to their work?

Appointment Advisory Committees



(AACs) have a key part to play in achieving our strategy, of which Youth Shaped Scouting plays a crucial role. An AAC can often be one of the first interactions that new volunteers have with Scouting, so we want to make sure they feel welcomed and supported.

We also need to ensure that the AAC panels don't exclude applications for roles due to age. If a candidate has the right skills and knowledge to perform the role (ensuring the correct support structure is around them), age should not be a negative factor. We would advocate that a young person sits on every AAC. Having young people on an interview panel can bring a range of benefits: it can help to put young people being interviewed at ease, while also bringing a different dimension to discussions.

Not only is it a great experience for the appointed young person to learn how an AAC works, but they can also develop a range of interview techniques and skills, as well as other valuable experience relevant to their career. If you're interested in taking this approach, we would encourage a discussion between your Local Youth Commissioner and AAC using the new guidance and PowerPoint resources, available at scouts.org.uk/youshapemanagement. **Ollie Wood, UK Youth Commissioner**





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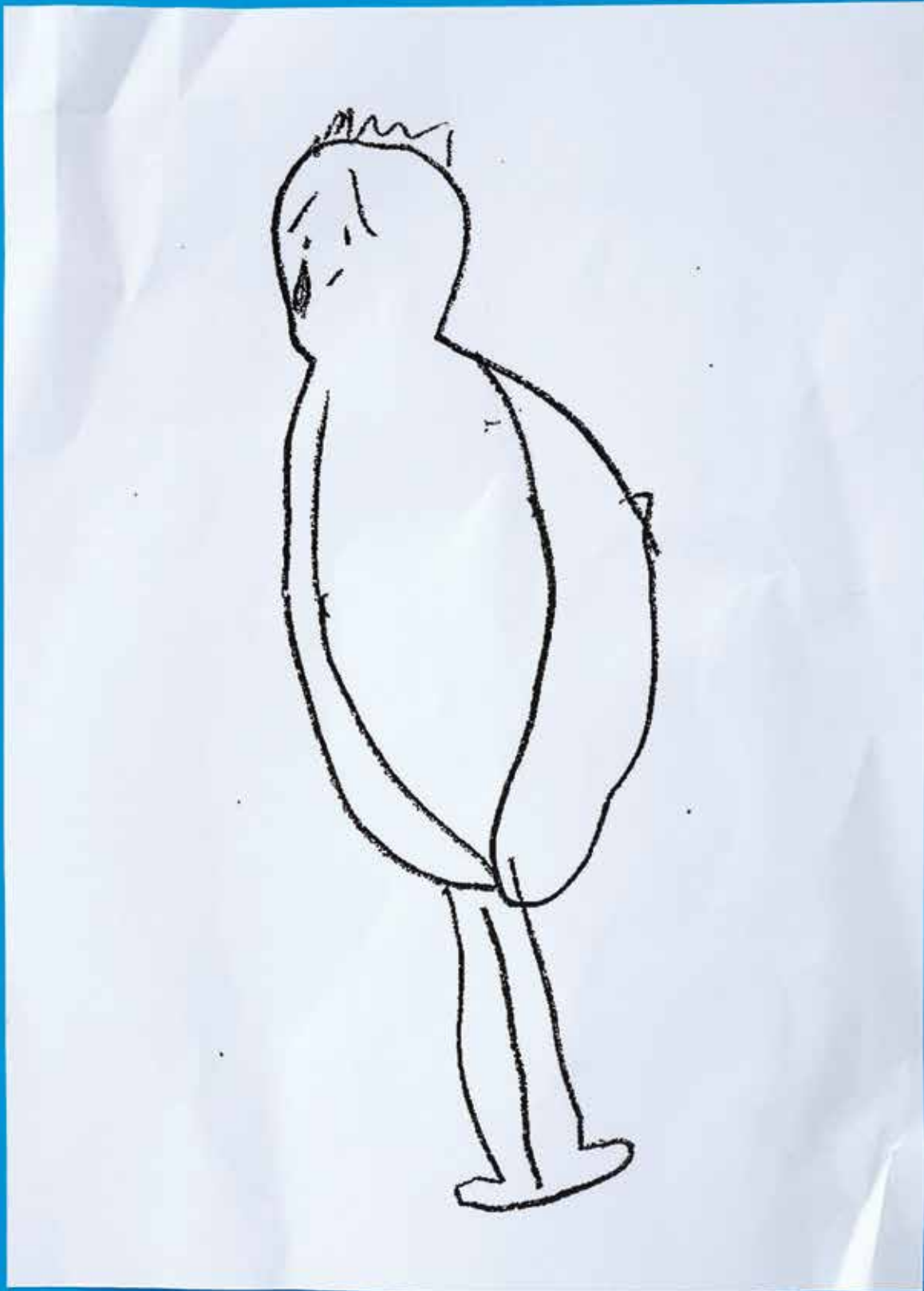
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Raising boys

Boys have traditionally been discouraged from showing their feelings, with often damaging results. So an unusual Scout Group – all boys – broke with convention to help promote wellbeing in their community

Words: Jacqueline Landey | Pictures: 9th North Leeds Scout Group



'This generation recognises that your feelings are just as important as your ability to climb a tree'

Assistant Scout Leader David Donaldson

Scouting is an inclusive movement of young people, proudly open to all – boys, girls, LGBTQ+ young people, everyone. 9th North Leeds Scout Group is therefore a rarity: a Group made up entirely of boys. And so, when they took on the challenge to explore mental wellbeing for A Million Hands, the mental wellbeing of boys naturally came into focus. As it turns out, they're not the only ones tackling the topic.

To illustrate a petition sent to their local MP, the boys drew two things: what makes them feel happy and what makes them feel sad. One drew a picture of a figure crooked with anxiety; another a little boy scoring a goal with glee; one scribbled 'when my dog died I felt like the world was empty'. Paging through the pictures, the message behind the petition shines bright – in short: the way people feel matters.

Signed by 72 Scouts plus 62 members of their community, the petition asked their MP what steps are being taken to ensure the equity of access to treatment of physical and mental health services in England – and to reduce the incidence of suicide.

Reflecting on a few things that had happened in their community, choosing mental health as their social impact issue seemed like an appropriate choice. When the Group took on the challenge in late 2015, Assistant Scout Leader David Donaldson says they began very simply. Sometimes it was just a case of recognising that we all have feelings, and then working through the resources developed by mental health charity MIND to explore mental wellbeing – 'essentially, what makes us feel happy and what makes us feel sad,' he says – and how with self-awareness we can help manage and strengthen our mental resilience, just as we learn to look after our physical health.

In the leafy suburb where the Group is based, Assistant Scout Leader Andy Smith reflects on the impact of the challenge: 'I've been thinking about it recently – what has it done? Has it changed anything? And I don't know. There was an openness from the young people, but maybe it's made us spot that they are more open to saying, "I'm a bit scared of that", on camp or something. They'll be honest about it. Whereas maybe our generation were more...' he whispers: "'Oh no, I can't tell anyone about that... just get on with it.'" But whether that's changed or that's us noticing it

through the mental health activities we've done with them, I'm not 100% sure.'

'I'd agree with that,' says David, 'it could be the leaders as much as the lads. That it's OK to talk about this stuff. When I was a Cub, 60 years ago, no, you didn't talk about your feelings. It was "soft", it was inappropriate.'

A silent suppression

With young men more likely to die by suicide than by any other cause of death, the question of how to support men's mental health has gained traction in recent years. The reasons behind the high incidence of male suicide are highly complex, but studies show contributing factors include relationship breakdown, unemployment, bereavement and mental health problems. Dr Ben Hine – senior lecturer in psychology at the University of West London and co-founder of the Men and Boys Coalition – says 'there are multiple risk factors at play. Our understanding of the relationship between sex, gender and suicide is still in its infancy, and some of the arguments made regarding men's high suicide rate are therefore a little simplistic; for example, the argument that because men don't express their emotions that means when they have problems they commit suicide.'

'That being said, masculine norms and expectations certainly don't help, as men are socialised away from showing vulnerability and weakness and sharing their emotions with others. They are also discouraged from the kind of close, personal, emotionally open relationships expected of women, which means they may be less likely to share with friends or family when confronted with serious issues. Add to this the fact that most services are designed around a 'female' model of sharing and communication, and that there is a stigma particularly around men's mental health, and it is no wonder that men may feel that they have no other option.' As one Scout put it, 'If you can't speak about a feeling it gets locked inside and it builds up, like tension, the more you keep it inside.'

More and more people are questioning the expectations of certain forms of masculinity. Last year, comedian Robert Webb's memoir *How Not To Be A Boy* shot to the top of the charts. In it he examines the potential damage of encouraging young boys to follow the supposed 'rules' of their gender, when these aren't suited to everyone.



When rich people laugh at poor people

Growing up, Webb thought that to be a 'real man' he needed to get into fights, obsess over sport, never cry and not talk about feelings. It was a box he didn't fit into and it led to destructive consequences.

Among the countless reports on the topic, the documentary *The Mask You Live In* interrogates versions of masculinity that box men into a role in which they're expected to suppress any sign of weakness. Expressions such as 'real men don't cry' or 'man up', which imply that men should be strong at all times, can put pressure on men to conceal the more vulnerable sides of themselves. In 2015, *The Telegraph* posed the question: 'Is 'man up' the most destructive phrase in modern culture?' Dr Hine believes, 'There are few more damaging phrases that exist in the English language. Whenever it is used, in whatever context, it reinforces the idea that to be manly is to be strong, and to suppress emotional expression.'

The phrase is not only damaging to women, he explains, 'as it suggests that men have the monopoly on the characteristic of strength', but it also, 'continuously and insidiously reinforces to men that they, fundamentally, as men, must be strong and not show weakness or vulnerability of any kind. This leaves them in an extremely vulnerable position (ironically) as it does not allow for the healthy sharing and expression of emotion that is needed for good mental and physical health.' David also hates the expression. 'It has all sorts of connotations. I didn't really get to grips with this, and with my own



Exploring

feelings, until about 10 or 12 years ago and that was because I was ill with depression and I learned a whole new language and learned how to talk about it.

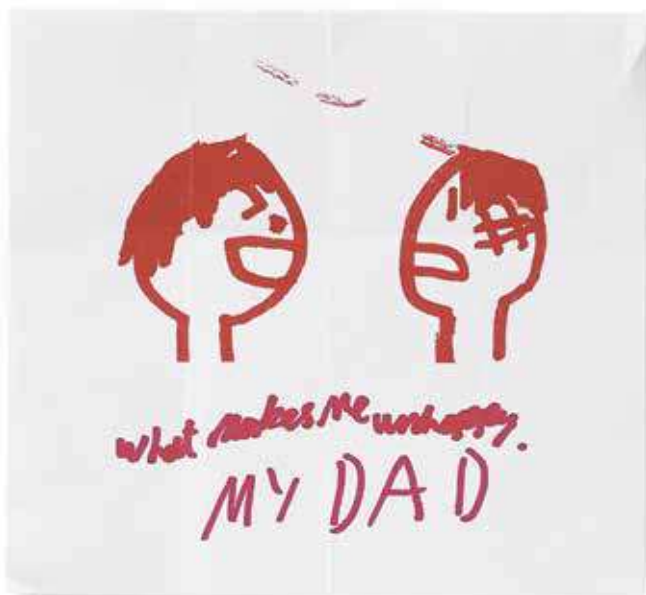
'So it's good to see that this generation is willing to talk about it and recognises that your wellbeing and your feelings are just as important as the strength of your arm and your ability to climb a tree.'

From boys to men

The boys in the Group talk about their feelings willingly, but in some cases the older the boys are, the less open they seem. Dr Hine reflects on this, what he describes as the 'emotional spectrum that we gradually shrink for boys as they grow', explaining that, 'even boys as young as eight have trouble with providing words to describe their emotions, other than anger – the principal emotion that we reserve for boys, and the men they become. This fits into a bigger picture of an incredibly restrictive and damaging male gender role that boys are still socialised into.'

Author Tim Winton, whose novels often explore the damage caused by this traditional image of masculinity, says, 'It's almost as though kids show up with a box of coloured pencils in infancy and as a little boy you're allowed to do a lot of things. You're allowed to do almost anything, up to a certain age, and then they start taking the pencils off you. They take yellow and red and orange off you. By the time you're 11, you're down to the blacks and the blues and the purples and by the time you're 17, it's all the

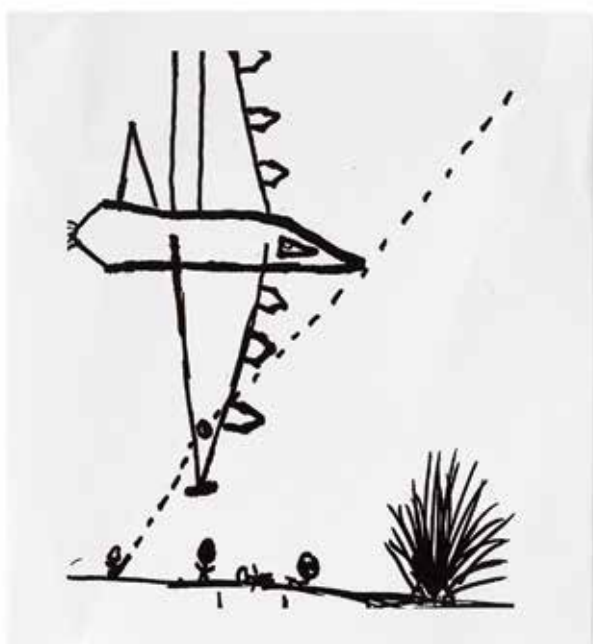




Difficult relationships



When bad things get worse



War and violence



Caring for those who can't speak for themselves

dark colours – you're not allowed to do certain things. You can't kiss your father good-bye, you wouldn't hold another boy's hand. You couldn't express any softness. All the things that are actually part of being a boy and which we associate with exclusive feminine traits, they're boys' as well, they just get robbed of them.'

The extent to which masculine and feminine traits are innate or socialised into us is at the centre of gender research. In Dr Hine's view, based on the current research

available, 'whilst there are fundamental biological elements that differentiate men and women, much of the behaviour we deem as typical or appropriate for men and women, and our concepts of masculinity and femininity, is at least in part socially constructed (I would say mostly)... In infancy our neurobiology is moulded by the environment to a greater extent than any other mammal.'

Because this nature-nurture debate is an issue of ongoing research, the question of what it means to be a man today

'If it's something you're sad about, it's quite hard and you just keep it to yourself'

A 9th North Leeds Scout

can be a contentious, sometimes divisive subject. But it's one that plays an important role in the formation of individuals' identities and mental wellbeing, as well as wider social justice. It warrants exploring in pursuit of a society where all people – across the gender spectrum – are empowered without disempowering someone else.

As a movement supporting young people, we need to ensure we are supporting all young people – regardless of their sex or the gender they identify with – to think positively about feminine and masculine traits, so they can engage in the world with confidence, kindness and a deeper sense of resilience. Where being vulnerable, processing the failures that we all face, and breaking down sometimes, can feel like a natural part of life rather than the end of the world.

The talking cure

Talking about the stress balls they'd made, one Beaver says you should squeeze one when you're angry. 'Without a stress ball, someone might just react, fight. And I don't think that's good. I don't like fighting,' he says. You can tell when someone is angry, one Scout explains, because 'they go quite red', 'they react without thought almost. Like they have no filter... so they're not being the nicest person they can be.'

To make himself feel less angry, one Scout tells us, 'I just think happy thoughts,' before another quips, 'Yeah, I think about anything but my sister.'

The young people explain that it's not always easy to talk about feelings. 'If it's happiness, you can go bursting out, like, "Hi it's my birthday, it's my birthday!"' says one, 'But if it's something you're sad about, it's quite hard and you just keep it to yourself. Like if you've lost a member of the family maybe, or if your parents split up, things like that.' One Beaver says when he's feeling really sad he hides under his bed, explaining: 'I just go to the bottom of it and then I just calm down.'


For many people, regardless of gender, talking about difficult feelings can be a challenge, but Dr Hine believes, 'When it comes to men and mental health, one of the principle misconceptions is that men aren't talking or that they don't want to talk. It is much more useful to say that we tell them not to talk, that we aren't listening, and that we

aren't listening in a way that makes men feel comfortable sharing. For example, some of the most successful men's mental health initiatives acknowledge that men prefer to discuss their feelings whilst engaged in a joint activity with their listener.'

Considering the research linking Scouting to mental health, perhaps there's something to this, as Scouting offers opportunities to connect with others in an activity-based format. Andy says the A Million Hands mental health challenge has influenced the activities they do with the young people – how they build their resilience. A few weeks earlier, the Scout section had gone on a camp they called Survival Night. There was this hum of: 'We've got to survive... we've got to get through,' Andy remembers. The Scouts had to build their own shelters and then a thunderstorm arrived and the rain just poured in. 'Sleeping bags were soaked and suddenly there was this chorus of "I want to go home"... But they stayed and, you know, another sleeping bag arrived and a tent went up rather than a washed-out shelter and they spoke about their feelings and in the morning it was like: "I survived!"'

Safe spaces

Creating an environment that nurtures mental wellbeing isn't about being prescriptive when it comes to talking about feelings, says David. 'It's more about an attitude in the room. The way people interact, the way we're willing as leaders to have them interact. We won't have bullying and we won't have racism and we won't have all sorts of things, but we try not to be too rule-based and just talk about being kind to one another. 'We ask "how do we deal with this situation, how do we be inclusive and encourage all people?" It's not just about listening and talking about the woes and miseries and being able to talk about them. There are things we can do to look after ourselves – connecting with people, being active, taking notice when things are not going right.'

Andy says he doesn't know if the young people were 'necessarily making that link between being happy or sad and anxiety and depression. But they were quite open to talking about it and I think hopefully that's one of the things that carries forward and makes the difference. That we've got a generation of young people coming through who are more open to talking about their feelings – and sooner.' 



Halfway to the moon

Lucy Budge, a 17-year-old Explorer Scout from Bognor Regis, talks about how Scouting enabled her to go abroad this year for the very first time

Words: As told to Jade Slaughter | Illustration: Tallulah Fontaine

My family stays in the UK for holidays. The furthest we've been is Wales – we tend to do a lot of camping and stuff like that, which was actually what got me into Scouting in the first place. It can be quite costly to go abroad.

I decided to make Roverway in the Netherlands my first trip abroad for a few reasons. The fact that I'd be going with my friends was a big plus: most people tend to go abroad for the first time with their families, which is nice, but going away with the Scouts gives you more freedom. Roverway is also much cheaper than other trips like the World Scout Jamboree, because it's EU only, rather than global.

I was able to fundraise for the trip with my Group, so it hasn't cost us a lot of money. We worked really hard, writing applications for the Twinning Society, Lions Club, the Rotary Club – all kinds of places – as well as for District. It's really accessible: as long as you write a good application, there are places where you can find funding to help you do things like this. We made crafts and sold them at fairs, which raised quite a bit too. That's one of the good things about the Scouts. I'd never have been able to afford two weeks abroad without doing it through a charity like ours. Scouts gives really good opportunities to young people.

A couple of years ago, I would've said the main challenge of going on a trip abroad would be meeting new people. I was very shy, hated talking to people I didn't know and didn't have much confidence. But being part of a Scout Group pushes you in the deep end sometimes. There are new people every term and getting to know them is part of the fun – camping with other groups forces you to make friends. Eventually you realise you're doing it without thinking, and the confidence that you had to fake originally has become natural. It's the kind of progress you'll rarely find from anything else.

I'd never even been through an airport, let alone visited a different country, so I was really excited about that. The main thing that surprised me wasn't the security or the expensive food (though I've never paid so much for a bottle of water in my life). It was the sheer amount of people passing through every minute. Whichever window you looked out of, multiple planes were taking off and landing, with hundreds of bags being ferried to other countries. I didn't think so many people travelled.

The thrill of taking off was incredible. One of my favourite songs is 'Fly Me to the Moon' by Frank Sinatra. And I was halfway there.

Once at Roverway, it was like someone put their hand in a lottery and picked 50 random people from around the world, shoving them all onto one campsite for six days. Except it was more like winning that lottery, because those people became my family. My teachers. My closest confidants. In six days, I learned that the Swiss do actually carry Swiss army knives, and that the Spanish are very good at flirting, but that none of these cultural stereotypes defined them.

One experience on my trip stood out the most. After five days of intense heat, one shower between fifty, and only lukewarm water to drink, there was a storm. Before it even hit, my new friends – who, by now, were sharing bites from the same apple – were making murmurs of excitement, hastily checking their tents and putting on waterproofs. We all walked to the edge of a lake, and watched as the rain pelted down and lightning flashed in the distance.

If you didn't bother with the fundraising and networking and all of the hard work as a group beforehand, and just paid the full amount for a trip like that, I don't think you'd get the same experience. So I'm glad, really. ✿

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All points north, south, east, west

When organising a trip or expedition, it's tempting to choose tried and tested places. But the UK has plenty of unusual sites, and a visit to one of these curious destinations is sure to fuel young people's imaginations, proving that adventures can be had at home, as well as overseas. Visit them for yourself or encourage your Group to do some research and discover their own places. The weirder, the better.

Words: Jade Slaughter

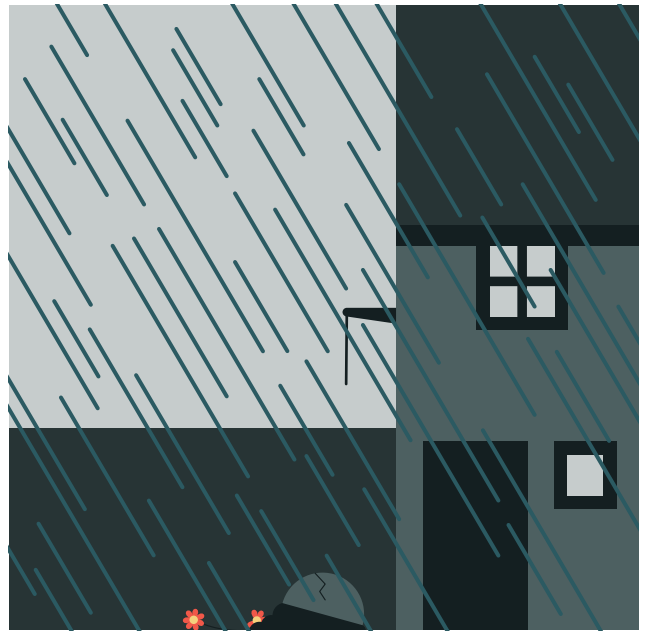
Peel Castle, Isle of Man

On a clear night at Peel Castle, you might be lucky enough to see one of the world's most beautiful sights – the Aurora Borealis, or Northern Lights. Constructed by 11th-century Vikings under the rule of the excellently named King Magnus Barefoot, the castle has a rich history with plenty of stories to tell. One such tale is that of 'Moddey Dhoo', a phantom black dog who terrorised soldiers in the 18th century. One man – attacked by the hound after claiming he had no fear of it – was left so terrified by the experience, he supposedly fell silent for two days and then died on the third.

**Mother Shipton's Cave and
the Petrifying Well,
Knaresborough, England**

Opened in 1630, Mother Shipton's Cave is England's oldest visitor attraction. The cave itself is the legendary birthplace of witch and prophetess, Mother Shipton, and the nearby well is the only one of its kind in the country, possessing the eerie ability to turn things into stone. This is due to the mineral content of the water, which over time has 'petrified' objects including ice skates, bicycles and even a lobster.





The Smallest House in Britain, Conwy, Wales

Britain's smallest house is a narrow, two-roomed cottage, measuring less than 6 feet wide and 11½ feet tall. At 6'3", the last occupant – a fisherman named Robert Jones – was taller than the house is wide. Despite being unable to stand up in either of the rooms, he lived at the property until 1900, when the local council declared it unfit for human occupation. Today, Robert's family still own this 16th-century treasure and, for a small admission fee, you can have a look around inside.



**Fingal's Cave,
Isle of Staffa, Scotland**

The ancient Celtic people featured this strange sea cave in many of their legends, linking it with the Giant's Causeway in Ireland. Both sites are made of distinctive hexagonal columns, and many believed they were the two 'ends' of the same structure. One legend holds Irish giant Fionn mac Cumhaill responsible. Determined to defeat his larger rival, Benandonner, he built a bridge all the way from Ireland to Scotland to fight him, fleeing in fear once he saw Benandonner's size. Amazingly, the story has some geological truth. Experts believe a lava flow could be the culprit behind the unique rock patterns at both sites, forming a now-eroded 'bridge' between them 60 million years ago.

The Dark Hedges, County Antrim, Northern Ireland

In 1775, a preacher's son named James Stuart built an estate home, planting more than 150 beech trees along the entry road to create an impressive first view. Over the years, the trees bent towards each other, their branches twisting overhead to form a haunting canopy. Today, many claim a ghost called the Grey Lady of the Dark Hedges still visits the road at night, flitting from tree to tree. Some believe she's the spirit of James Stuart's daughter, Margaret. Others suggest that she represents an unknown phantom, escaped from the abandoned cemetery beneath the fields.





Craftivism (a combination of craft and activism) gives people a creative opportunity to channel negative emotions into effective action. Sarah (top) calls her approach 'gentle protest'

The art of gentle protest

Activism doesn't have to involve marching, signs and shouting. Find out how the quieter approach of craftivism can get right to the heart of the matter

Words: Aimee-lee Abraham | Images: Jenny Lewis

Sarah Corbett started practising craftivism (a hybrid of craft and activism) in 2008, after she became burned out and started doubting the effectiveness of the more traditional forms of campaigning she'd practised since childhood. In 2009, she founded the global movement Craftivist Collective, 'to expose global poverty and human rights injustices through the power of craft, using provocative and non-violent creative actions.'

Here, Sarah explains why her unique 'gentle protest' approach to activism can be transformative for adults and young people, and shares tips on how leaders can enhance their programme and encourage their Scouts to make the world a kinder and brighter place, one stitch at a time.

Hi Sarah! You've been involved in activism from a young age. Can you remember where the instinct came from?

I grew up in Everton in Liverpool. My dad was, and still is, the local vicar, and my mum was a nurse, with three kids under the age of five. We lived on the 14th floor of a tower block. The building shook in the wind, and small fires were a frequent occurrence. Nothing awful happened, but my mum remembers asking the firefighters what we should do if something more serious broke out, only to be told 'we've got ladders that can reach up to the 10th floor, but you're on the 14th'. She started campaigning because of that need to safeguard our family and community, and since then, she's become a local councillor and cabinet member campaigning on local and citywide issues. When you're growing up in a low-income area, you feel the impact of inequality directly. It's not something you can ignore.

Did your parents talk openly about injustice?

My parents were always open but gentle too. Whenever we discussed injustice, it was presented in a way that made us feel empowered and hopeful that we could be part of the change we want to see in our world, rather than helpless or hopeless. I'd advise Scout leaders to bear this in mind when they discuss weighty topics with their young people.

Activism isn't something that should be forced upon us as a chore, nor is it something that should be tied to our own

agenda, especially if we're working with young people. Growing up, activism was a part of our everyday lives. In hindsight, I can see that reminders to practise what we preached and live out our values were literally part of the furniture! Half the mugs in the kitchen cupboard had different campaign logos printed on them, and we had posters on the wall of change makers like Martin Luther King. Those little things certainly influenced how we saw the world and our place within it.

For those who don't know, could you explain what craftivism is?

'Craftivism' was coined by Betsy Greer in 2003, and it's a broad label for anything that combines craft and activism. I call my approach 'gentle protest'. Gentle protest is not about being passive or weak. It's about channelling negative emotions into productive, strategic and effective activism and encouraging everyone to be a part of the solution. It's about prompting people to use the action of making to slow down and reflect.

I create 'crafter-thought' questions for makers to reflect on alone or in a group whilst their hands are busy, then encourage them to use craft as a catalyst for change. Craftivism is very much a tool people can use in their campaigning when appropriate, just like petitions and demonstrations. We don't make things just because we love craft; we make things because it's an effective way to get a message across.

How does 'gentle protest' differ from other forms of activism?

When young people think about what an activist looks like, they might picture someone holding a placard or shouting into a megaphone, but we can all be activists – and quieter, more intimate forms of protest are often more effective. In my conversations with power holders, I've found it's far more inspiring and effective to stand for something rather than against it. Being gentle is about practising self-control and using that self-control to advance your campaign, not your ego. It's about being compassionate and considered instead of impulsive; composed instead of angry.



'Craftivism can empower young people to channel their concerns in a positive and meaningful way'

Sarah Corbett, craftivist and gentle protester

Could you give us a few examples of craftivist projects you've worked on?

As craftivists, we often give small, handmade gifts to power holders, like hand-stitched handkerchiefs telling MPs not to 'blow' the opportunity to use their power to support the most vulnerable people in society, or green felt hearts embroidered with the names of natural wonders the maker would miss if they were damaged by climate change.

These types of gifts are humble. They're intimate. They're interactive. Most importantly, they're memorable. Power holders know that members of the public are not going to spend hours crafting if they don't care about the issue. By investing your time and creativity, you're ensuring your voice has a better chance of being heard.

The gifts themselves are usually custom-made to suit the individual we want to influence. They are always consistently positive and empathetic in tone, and always respectfully challenging. As a power holder, it's pretty disarming to receive such a thoughtful and thought-provoking gift, especially if you're used to being screamed at all day.

When is craftivism a good tool for Scout leaders to consider using with their young people?

Just like Scouts, I encourage craftivists to act with integrity, have respect for themselves and others, take care of the world in which we live, explore different faiths, beliefs and attitudes, and cooperate with others to make a positive difference.

Craftivist activities can therefore be a great tool for a leader to have on standby, but they're more useful in some situations than others. For example, craftivism might work perfectly if you want your young people to identify the topics and values that matter to them, if you want to help them to better understand their chosen A Million Hands issue, or if you want to enhance your programme planning around your Craft or Global Issues badges. It might also be helpful when something difficult happens in the world and your young people are affected, because it can empower them to channel their concerns in a positive and meaningful way.

How can craftivism serve those who want to work more closely alongside other adult volunteers?

Craftivism can be a great icebreaker to use when a new adult volunteer joins your section, or whenever you'd like to



Left: a simple handkerchief is embroidered with a message to an MP, encouraging them to use their position to bring positive change

Right: activist Malala Yousafzai gets involved with craftivism

Opposite page: craftivist Sarah Corbett leaves a message of gentle protest

bring existing members closer together. It can also be used to strengthen ties between Scouts and other groups in your local community, or to promote the values and benefits of Scouting when you're trying to recruit new volunteers.

If you use a multi-purpose community hall as your Scout meeting place, for example, you could host a craftivism evening to talk about the issues you care about as Scouts and find out about what matters to other people in your community and why. Doing so is an act of solidarity, but also an opportunity to work smartly together.

Handicraft can be an extremely effective way to bring people together, especially if they come from different backgrounds or have opposing views. The nature of the task forces you to be patient and allows you to find common ground in your shared goal. I'll often use little psychological tricks to urge people to interact, like pretending I have fewer pairs of scissors than I actually have, so people are encouraged to share.

Emotions can run high when we're discussing issues that matter to us. Do you have any advice for Scout leaders dealing with young people who might feel angry or frustrated by the topics at hand?

Instead of telling young people not to be angry, talk about how anger is a natural response to unfairness that shows they care. Then talk about why their anger should only be a short-term response, because studies have shown how long-term anger can be damaging to our physical and mental health. When we're looking for long-term change, anger is not only bad for us, but bad for our cause. Remember: the world is full of change makers who use self-control, non-violence and kindness to create long-lasting change, from Desmond Tutu to Malala Yousafzai (pictured on the previous page).

How can leaders talk to young people about world issues, without letting their own political bias seep in?

It's best to talk about universal themes like fairness and kindness, rather than focusing on micro issues or party-specific politics. It's also important to explain to young people that expressing their thoughts and feelings through activism isn't just something we do just to make ourselves feel better. It's a strategy, a way of doing things. To illustrate this, you can explain that campaigning is something we can do as Scouts, not only because it represents our values but also because it's a method we can use to protect others and ourselves, because it's effective and because it works. If your young people find it difficult to see the point, you could talk to them about the various activists throughout history who have been successful, even if that success wasn't immediately obvious or took many years to fully materialise.



How can Scout leaders talk to young people about the fact that activists don't always get what they want? That sometimes we can try our best, and still not get the results we're looking for?

Young people want to think big, and if they don't reach their goal quickly enough, they can feel disempowered, so it's important to manage their expectations about what's possible for them to achieve.

In your Scout programme materials, you often use the analogy of climbing Everest. You talk about the fact that you can't usually take your young people to Everest, but you can take them on a series of smaller hikes that could eventually lead to the equivalent of them conquering Everest.

The same principle applies to craftivism. You might not be able to solve the world's problems, but you can work together to be the change you'd like to see. Step by step and stitch by stitch, you can have genuine impact.✿

Sarah's book 'How to be a craftivist: the art of gentle protest' is published by Unbound books and available in all good bookshops now. You can watch her TED talk, 'Activism needs introverts', at go.ted.com/sarahcorbett and find out more about Craftivist Collective at craftivist-collective.com.

For free craftivist activity ideas, keep your eyes peeled on our social media channels and blog, where exclusive content from Sarah is coming soon.

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The light inside

With winter bonfires soon to be crackling on camps, we take a look at the fireside rituals of campfire stories and song – where they come from and why they're so good for us

Words: Jacqueline Landey | Illustration: Nick Ogonosky

It was thousands of years ago that humans first gathered around a fire. An anthropological study suggests that before then, interactions were consumed by practical necessities – what can we hunt, what can we gather, how can we avoid being eaten by a sabre-toothed cat? But when humans learned to control fire, waking hours extended into night and conversation flowed into storytelling, song and dance. Whereas daytime was about survival, fireside gatherings were a chance to express oneself and learn more about one another, ultimately growing relationships and shaping culture.

The anthropologist behind the research, Polly Wiessner, describes the factors making firesides such fertile spots for creative expression and exchange: 'Fireside gatherings are often, although not always, composed of people of mixed sexes and ages. The moon and starlit skies awaken imagination of the supernatural, as well as a sense of vulnerability to malevolent spirits, predators, and antagonists countered by security in numbers. Body language is dimmed by firelight and awareness of self and others is reduced. Facial expressions – flickering with the flames – are either softened, or in the case of fear or anguish, accentuated. Agendas of the day are dropped while small children fall asleep in the laps of kin.'

Today, the flicker of light that most of us are more familiar with beams from a screen. Which is why escaping into the forest, the mountains, or far away onto some forgotten beach, to set up a tent and sit around a fire, feels so calming. Away from mobile reception, Wi-Fi, the constant buzz of modern life, age-old fireside rituals continue. We talk, we tell stories, we sing songs. And it feels so good. But why?

Fireside tales

We're all storytellers. Everyday we narrate our experiences for those around us – sometimes with wit, sometimes humour, sometimes a lesson for the listener to take away. A good storyteller is the life of a dinner party, an asset to a company, the captain of the campfire. A recent anthropological study showed that among Filipino hunter-gatherers, storytelling is valued more than any other skill.

Of course, there's a chunk of space between a story that delights and one you simply can't wait to end. The fear of falling into that space can put some people off. And so, many people sit quietly listening on, keeping their sharp insights and heart-warming anecdotes contained; which seems a shame – our desire to share thoughts and experiences is innate; telling stories helps us connect. Stories fill the space between us, moving us marginally closer to those around us, tapping into our longing to understand and to be understood.

For people who feel less confident about their storytelling abilities, firesides may be the ideal spot to experiment. By the dim light of the fire, we relax, let down our guard and may feel more open to expressing ourselves. But once the conditions are right – fire lit, friends gathered, the toasty sweetness of browning marshmallows in the air – how do we tell engaging stories?

Telling a story in the first person voice – so, as yourself – helps to take the listener on the same emotional journey that you travelled. It's also useful to keep an element of mystery and to constantly be raising questions that you'll answer later. The key is to keep the listener engaged. It's not only about what we tell but the way we tell it. Oral storytelling gives us the chance to use timing, volume, eye contact and gestures to connect with the listener.

In contrast to written narratives that might provide detailed descriptions and back stories, when we tell stories aloud, it helps to keep the story moving forward. Remember, the underlying structure of a story is simply: this happened, and then this happened, and then this happened. Storyteller extraordinaire Ira Glass, host of the popular radio show and podcast *This American Life*, refers to this construction, in his series of tips, as 'a story in its purest form'. He says this is really just 'a sequence of actions' that make up 'the anecdote'. The anecdote is one of the essential building blocks of telling stories and he explains that 'the power of the anecdote is so great that in a way no matter how boring the material is, when it's in a story form it has momentum... there's suspense to it... it feels like something's going to happen.' The second building block he





When they're welcoming, inclusive, uplifting, respectful to all cultures and people, campfire songs draw on the great well of human commonalities

talks about is 'the moment of reflection'. This is the reason you're telling the story, why did it mean something to you, and so why should it mean something to those listening.

There's a deep well of folklore and family tales that you can draw from, too. Campfires are famous for stories passed down from generation to generation and to make sure they'll be told for generations to come, keep telling them.

Sing to your heart's content

Like oral storytelling, traditional folk music is often associated with folklore. As the genre developed, folk music came to be known for its storytelling elements, sometimes regardless of the musical quality. But when folk legend Bob Dylan won the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2016, paying tribute to his talents as a poet and a storyteller, he said in his acceptance speech that for him, the thing about songs was not so much what they mean to us, but how they move us. Anyone who's ever sat around a campfire and been swept up in the animation of Baby Shark knows that to be true.

Similarly to storytelling, too many people don't sing because they believe they can't. But in the merry hum of campfire singing, even the tone-deaf can find a home in the crescendo of voices. And considering the benefits, it's worth the risk. Studies show singing improves breathing, speech and posture, circulation, and even our immunity. Neuroscience has analysed the way singing connects neural pathways in our brain and releases endorphins, which is what makes it feel so good. The connections that music makes in our brain are said to improve literacy, numeracy and even intelligence.

And because oxytocin is released when we sing, it makes us feel less anxious. Oxytocin also promotes a sense of trust and bonding, which may contribute to why, according to research, singing can help with depression and loneliness, a feeling which is obviously only enhanced when we sing together.

Survival song

While singing can help us feel more in touch with ourselves, it also takes us out of ourselves, away from negative thoughts and tension. Our voices are an instrument that connects us with others, especially when we sing in unison. Each individual voice around the campfire travels from

inside, up and into a circle of collective harmony. It's not only soothing, it's uplifting.

Singing together helps us feel part of something bigger, simultaneously more sensitive and more powerful, as we create something beautiful as a group. A recent study in Sweden showed that when we sing together, our pulses begin to speed up and slow down at the same rate, suggesting that when singing we don't only breathe together but our hearts start to beat together.

A research project looking into the wellbeing associated with choral singing suggests that singing in harmony with others 'engenders happiness and raised spirits, which counteracts feelings of sadness and depression.' It takes us out of ourselves so we feel less isolated and gives us a common goal to work towards, promoting social cohesion, harmony and a greater sense of belonging.

No wonder song has been such a powerful force in mobilising causes. Many of the campfire songs we sing today have a rich heritage of resilience and protest. Passing them on gives us an opportunity to pay homage to where they've come from. For instance, during the American civil rights movement of the 1960s, gospel and folk music played an instrumental role in spreading the message of the cause and inspiring individuals to bravely continue fighting for equal rights. From mass gatherings to lone jail cells, singing and humming fuelled the spirit and encouraged unity. Dr Martin Luther King called music 'the soul of the movement'.

Many believe that when the world feels more divided, there is a greater yearning to connect. There is now a record-number of choirs in operation in the UK. According to the Big Choral Census of 2017, 2.14 million people now sing regularly in choirs. In their own small way, great campfire songs bring us together too. When they're welcoming, inclusive, uplifting, respectful to all cultures and people, they draw on the great well of human commonalities and the shared beating of our hearts.

Around the world we sing to celebrate, to praise, to protest, to mourn. Song gives us a way to express our feelings when words alone won't do. Much like our early ancestors, the survival of the body may still rely on sustenance, but the survival of the spirit is nurtured by something a little softer: storytelling, singing, and marshmallows, of course. 🍡



When in doubt, save the library

When their library faced permanent closure, the Preston community rallied to save it. We went to find out how the local Scout Group joined in

Words: Jacqueline Landey | Pictures: Rob Scott

What makes a community? A high street and some houses? A gathering of neighbours arguing over dustbins? Is it a shopping centre – filling up car parks as it empties parks – or a penthouse flat very few can afford?

Or is a community made of something heartier? Is it an atmosphere, an energy, a spirit, or the simple but powerful belief that a group of people working together creates a neighbourhood greater than the sum of its parts?

In 2011, the community of Preston in north-west London came together to prove the impact of this kind of community. As part of a wider libraries closure, the council had closed the local library, saying it was poorly used and financially unviable. The community was not impressed.

They said that as the last local service in the area, their library provided important facilities to its community, particularly older people and those with limited mobility, schoolchildren, the unemployed and those without access to a computer.

A campaign was launched. More than 6,000 people signed their name in solidarity, committing to the fight to keep the library open. There were vigils and anti-closure events. The campaign received international coverage and raised more than £36,000 to help fund the legal costs of appealing the council's decision – a battle that went all the way to the High Court. Sadly, they lost the appeal and the library

remained closed. To help fill the void, a local notary set up The Preston Community Library in her tiny office.

But the community's fight continued, and in May 2014, after uncompromising perseverance from locals, Brent councillor Roxanne Mashari promised to hand over the library and its property to Preston Community Library, 'in perpetuity' and 'at a peppercorn rent'.

Pillar of the community

It was a victory for the little guy, but it's an ongoing job to keep this beacon of the community alive. The library is now run entirely by volunteers – a position familiar to libraries across the UK. According to the latest information from the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy, 449 libraries have closed since the austerity measures of 2012, largely due to funding cuts, arguably at a time when society needs them most. As Eleanor Crumblehulme, a libraries professional and campaigner from Canada, has poignantly commented, 'Cutting libraries during a recession is like cutting hospitals during a plague.'

For many of us, libraries have been integral to our personal development. We know the value of a library, as a place to access knowledge, spark new ideas and catch glimpses into other worlds. We know that a good library is a safe space – free from judgement – to think, to work, to learn, to be with fellow community members, side by side in bookish solitude. For some, a library is a sanctuary, an escape, from





The library that the Scouts helped to clean up is a hive of activity and learning, with members of the local community attending classes in art, English and chess

A bit like Scouts, the library is a hub for people with the best intentions for their local community

anything from a broken home to a broken heart. In times of angst, a library is a place of calm, which is why author J.K. Rowling's words – 'when in doubt, go to the library' – resonate with so many. But many communities have had to save their library first. In response to the threat of closure, around 15,500 volunteers across the UK have come forward to keep their local libraries going.

Grass roots

Since volunteers took over Preston Library, it's said to have become even more of a community space. It ticks along by the helpful hands of locals from all walks of life. The shelves are neatly stacked and ordered so visitors can select anything from a reference book on knitting to a Polish picture book for children. A friendly face signs you in and welcomes you at the door. Volunteers take turns bringing in packets of Hobnobs. An expat now living in Preston takes time out of her evenings to sweep the library floors.

And when the library grounds needed clearing and tidying, 3rd Kenton Scout Group stepped in. One of the Cub Scouts, Milan, who joined his older brother for the excursion, explains how they spent an evening clearing the weeds, reshaping the hedge and collecting all the bottles and crisp packets buried beneath the leaves.

Another Scout, Deep, says, 'We wanted to help because the library is where the community comes to work and it attracts more people if it looks cleaner and neater.' Deep's twin brother Dev says he enjoyed doing it, 'because of all we learnt about how to garden and when to cut plants.' Scout Johanan tells us, 'It was a good way to spend an afternoon instead of doing stuff that doesn't help others. We got to help others and put our afternoon to good use.'

The Scouts say that the library is important not only as a source of learning and education, but also as a place for the local community to meet. Cub Section Assistant Reena Patel said that when the community was fighting to keep the library open, they emphasised the fact that the library 'was more of a community place.'

'There are lots of elderly people in the area,' she says, 'and it was a place for them to get together or read the newspaper. When it closed down for a period that was the concern, that those people wouldn't be able to make it to Brent Town Hall instead. It's not within walking distance so it was really good to hear that the community had taken over and the

library was being run by volunteers.'

Today, their community-run library offers a range of classes and activities, from the Memory Lounge (a space for those with dementia or anyone looking to improve their memory), story time for children, language classes, yoga, knitting, computer and art classes, to a book club, a chess club and the popular cinema nights.

Small town heroes

A bit like Scouts, the library is a hub for people with the best intentions for their local community. Gillan Barnard, Scout Leader of the Group, explained that because Preston is quite a school-based community, Scouts gives an opportunity to those who don't come to the school to feel more a part of things.

Dashing between young people, parents and leaders, answering questions and keeping the meetings ticking along, Gillan is clearly an energetic force behind the Group. Beaver Leader Abha Mehta says, 'Gillan never gets tired! She's always doing something, every weekend.'

Modestly, Gillan replies: 'Well, I enjoy it. And that's the whole point isn't it? We try to make a big friendship group for us because that makes the difference, feeling like you're friends with the other leaders.'

Reena praises parents' involvement, too: 'I think without their help it would be quite difficult for the leaders to do everything. So we have them doing things like rotas and chipping in with making food, helping with parties, camps, transport. And they do it willingly,' she adds, 'I don't have to harass them too much!'

The Scouts talk about the books they've been reading, from non-fiction tomes to fantasy favourites. One Scout's eyes light up as he shares his thoughts on the book he's been reading, 'about ancient Greece and its heroes who save the world from destruction.'

Looking around the room, at the volunteers bantering, divvying up activities and praising the Scouts for the way they help out, it seems that sometimes the heroes who save the world from destruction are closer than we think. 🌿

Turn to page 87 in the activities section to find out how to create a Free Little Library at your meeting place.





Mucking in

In a small Scottish island community, a new Scout Group has sprung up, hoping to help its young residents to try new things, gain skills and learn to read a map...

Words: Aimee-lee Abraham | Photos: Fran Mart



It's a Friday afternoon on Muck – the smallest of Scotland's Small Isles – and hordes of young people are descending the hill. Armed with pegs, spades and buckets, some are travelling to the island's main community field on agricultural buggies, mud splattering in their wake. Others run through the grass, clutching action figures and toy tractors.

Today, all 40 residents of Muck are busy preparing for the annual inter-island sports day: baking to feed visitors from all three of the neighbouring islands, marking out the best route for the hill race and putting up marquees in the rain. The event is the Small Isles equivalent of the Olympics, and this year it's also the perfect opportunity to announce that Scouting is back on the island after years of absence.

Leading the crowd is Phoebe Haigh, the island's nursery teacher and newly elected

leader of 12th Lochaber. Phoebe is a 'returner'. Having grown up on Muck, she left during adolescence and returned shortly after finishing her degree, keen to complete a teaching qualification at the island school, and to help out on the farm she so loved as a child.

Over the years, teachers have come and gone with varying levels of success, but while the lights of many remote schools have dimmed, Muck Primary has continued to burn bright. Throughout the highs and the lows, Phoebe has played a key role on the island, offering a sense of stability. Watching her dash between the houses – always with several dogs and children in pursuit, always answering five questions at once – it's clear that the role of Scout leader suits her perfectly.

Island life

Amidst the noise, we take a detour to the craft shed and hurriedly fill her wheelbarrow with

The inter-island sports day is an annual highlight. Crowds of people from the neighbouring Small Isles participate, taking it in turns to host

‘There’s no such thing as escaping to an island, but there are lots of unique benefits for families here’

Phoebe Haigh, leader of 12th Lochaber Scout Group



equipment for tomorrow’s obstacle course. Searching for her beloved badge maker, she speaks fondly of her experiences growing up here, but acknowledges that the utopia tourists expect to find is little more than a myth. ‘There’s no such thing as escaping to an island, but there are lots of unique benefits for families here. There are no fast cars. The children know everyone. They can only go so far – you can jog from one end of the island to the other in 10 minutes. But they miss out on things, too, which is why I wanted to start a Scout Group. They play with the same people day in, day out, and it’s often only when a child goes to high school

that the dynamic shifts. I hope Scouting will encourage them to try new things and take on roles they hadn’t considered before. And I really want to teach them how to read a map!’ Hearing that those growing up in one of the most remote parts of the UK can’t map-read may come as a surprise, but residents are not immune to the same distractions as everyone else, and some families are more in tune with the landscape than others.

The lure of internet culture available elsewhere was once seen as something that could threaten the appeal of island life – tempting

Group Leader Phoebe Haigh is bringing Scouting back to the Isle of Muck





residents to leave and putting newcomers off. It was feared that people already settled there would feel even more tempted to leave by the view of the outside world being shown to them online, while those who might consider moving there would find it too difficult to go from a digitally-rich life to the seclusion of an island. However, in the last census, the overwhelming majority of Scotland's inhabited archipelago saw populations increase, and the arrival of high-speed internet seems to have made remote living more appealing.

High-speed internet has made modern life on Muck more sustainable, as people feel more connected to family living elsewhere, they can do the food shopping online and can work remotely. Although farming is the dominant industry, many families are running successful businesses from their laptops, reaping the benefits of living in a community refreshingly void of consumerism and rich in natural beauty, but without missing out on the comfort and benefits that connectivity can bring.

Until 2013, locals relied on expensive diesel generators for their 10 hours of power per day – a quirk that often ruined family dinners and interrupted films precisely as the plot got interesting. Now, this system has been replaced with sustainable wind farms and solar panels, and though online purchases have to be delivered to a post box two hours from home and transported on the next available ferry, they're delivered nonetheless. It helps that those who settle here tend to be resourceful, and it's not uncommon for people to juggle several roles at once. Earlier in the year, Phoebe put Scouting on hold due to a particularly demanding lambing season, and those who believe moving to the island will guarantee a quiet life are mistaken. They might have replaced the screech of beeping horns with the sound of seals singing in the bay, but nobody stands still. There is simply too much to do.

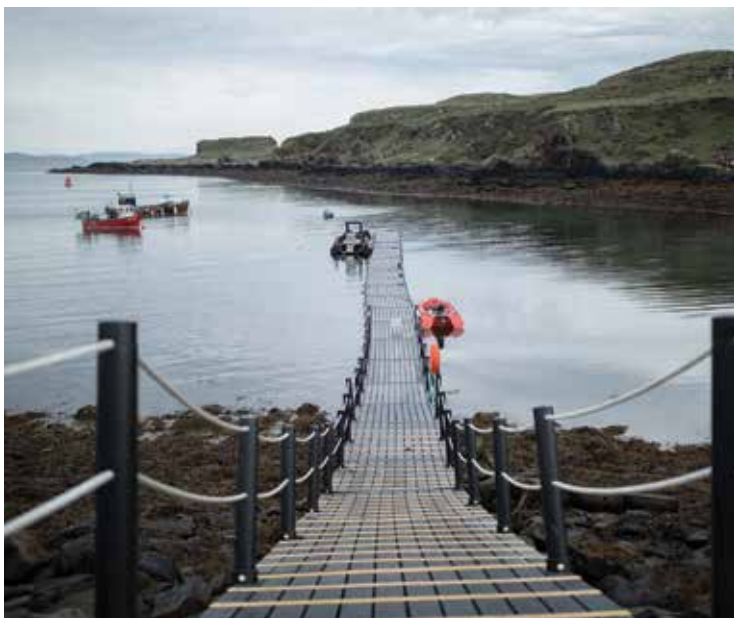
Remote control

For parents on Muck, the opportunity to let their children roam free is one they couldn't refuse. And for the young people here, making the

Muck is about two miles long by one mile wide. It's home to a dozen houses, 40 species of bird, and 38 people

Living on an island means its younger residents have more freedom than those growing up on the mainland

Until 2013, locals relied on diesel generators for their 10 hours of power per day – a quirk that often ruined family dinners and interrupted film nights



most of what they have has become second nature. Willow, for example, has no memories of mainland life, having arrived on Muck when she was just a year old.

Her mum Zoe – an artist who runs her own business from the island – remembers how Willow used to remove her coat and shoes whenever they visited a shop, unaware that walking into a public space ‘wasn’t quite the same as going into someone’s home’.

She admits the mainland still holds a mythical appeal. With no shops on the island, other than a small tea shop that sells cake, groceries ordered online are delivered to a small shop two hours away on the mainland, before being delivered to residents by ferry, when it’s running. Going to a big supermarket is a six-hour round trip.



‘A visit to the mainland is an event,’ says Zoe. ‘Even a dreaded dentist appointment becomes something to look forward to because it inevitably turns into a shopping trip or a visit to a restaurant. These might seem like tiny, insignificant things to an outsider, but everyday conveniences like takeaways and trips to the supermarket become a novelty. Being able to walk down an aisle and pick something up purely because you fancy it – that’s a treat. Spontaneity is a treat.’

As the sun sets, Willow and fellow young residents Hugh and Tara gather at the farmhouse, making badges that represent their favourite things, to sell at the Scout stall the following day. Tara draws a ruby-red lobster, while Hugh draws the creels he uses to catch them, a pastime he says he’s ‘obsessed with’. Willow draws a portrait of the artist Frida Kahlo, and then moves onto the sea that crashes against her island home, which, despite what most people think, she says, ‘isn’t just blue,’ but ‘a whole range of different colours’. ‘I think the

>





Clockwise from left: young people on Muck take advantage of the beach; the inter-island sports day ends with a ceilidh; the old school house; 12th Lochaber Scout Group; good drying weather for washing

most wonderful thing about Frida,' Willow says, 'is that when she was lying in bed after her accident, she had an easel by her bed, and she'd paint on it even though she was in a lot of pain. If you want to do something, why don't you just do it?'

This is a sentiment shared by the laird (owner) of the island, Lawrence MacEwen, who understands the importance of finding a way through adversity.

'It used to be much more difficult on Muck,' he remembers. 'I didn't see a car until I was seven. In an emergency, our only way of getting help was to light a fire to alert our neighbours on

Eigg that something was wrong. I think it's wonderful that Phoebe is starting up Scouts here. Some of the more traditional skills have probably been lost, so it would be great for the children to learn them again.' He adds: 'That said, it's a different island today, and just as well. Islands have to change. We can't stand still.'

Watching the preparations for the following days unfold despite the bad weather, we pause for a moment and nod in agreement. Life on Muck isn't perfect – often, it can be difficult – but the people keep going, like boats against the current, cheered by a genuine sense of optimism, and the thrill of shared achievement. 🌊



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Adapting to adventure

Scouting in a wheelchair is easier than you might think. Here, two Scouts talk about the small changes that have made a big difference to their Scouting experiences, and explain why we need to encourage more people to have adventures on their own terms

Words: Aimee-lee Abraham | Pictures: Gavin Roberts and Francesca Jones





Finn

Finn Eyles, 13, is Assistant Patrol Leader at the 8th Winchester Scout Group. Although he was born with a genetic condition called Spinal Muscular Atrophy (Type 2) and uses a wheelchair to get around, he's one of the most active Scouts in the District. He excels in precisely the sorts of things that you might not necessarily expect in a person with a disability, from archery to bivvy-building to firelighting.

His mum and dad, Lou and Andy Eyles, initially joined Scouting to give him some extra support. But, they say, they immediately 'got hooked' themselves and soon became joint Assistant Scout Leaders. They've now all been Scouting as a family for two years.

Does having Spinal Atrophy affect you much as a Scout? Is there anything you have to think about or do a bit differently?

Lou: Finn is pretty independent and plays a big role in the Group, but if he's doing something where some strength is needed, that's when he needs some extra help.

Finn: Yeah, that's when I need more support, but I can do nearly all of the activities on offer and I have a lot of hobbies. It's only occasionally I'll need to avoid something at Scouts. If there's a hike at nighttime when there's low visibility, for example – that would be more difficult for me than it is for other people. But I can really do a lot!

You're all still relatively new to Scouts. What drew you to join?

Lou: It was a bit unexpected. A leap of faith, really. Finn's Dad and I were sat up late one night, reminiscing about camping and other outdoor activities we enjoyed as kids. At first, we weren't sure whether Scouting was going to be beneficial for Finn. We didn't want to set him up for disappointment. We didn't want to introduce him to all these new and fun things that ultimately he might not be able to do. We decided to try it and see.

Finn: Yeah, we just decided to give it a go one day and we really liked it. I really like all of the survival skills; the camping and the firelighting. That's what kept me doing it. It's stuff I wouldn't get to do at school.

What sort of adjustments do you have to make, as a family and as a Scout Group?

Lou: Whenever the Group goes on camps, we let them get their more challenging day-long hikes out of the way, and join in from the next day onwards. That usually works out well. Overall, we've found that some people can naturally adapt activities, while others need more help understanding how something can be tweaked.

Can you think of any specific examples, where an activity you previously couldn't do has been made more accessible?

Lou: When Finn signed up to do archery at the Scout Activity Centre in Pinset, he hadn't been at Scouts for long and we weren't sure what to expect. We really wanted him to take part, but there was just no way he could pull a bow string back, due to difficulty with his core strength. I visited the centre to let them know about the situation and, unbeknownst to us, the team took it upon themselves to make Finn a bow stand from scratch. It was made out of bits of scaffolding and scrap materials, and it completely opened up a new sport to Finn. By the end of our sessions, he'd gained his Master at Arms Badge, and now he loves archery, which he would never have tried otherwise. It was a simple gesture, really, but it was so kind. It's always worth firing off a quick email to whoever is in charge of an activity or camp. As Finn has said, there's usually a solution, and if people know what they might need to do differently, they can be better prepared.

Finn: I loved doing the archery! I'm working towards my Chief Scout's Gold Award, and I've only got one more Challenge Award to complete for it. I really like the survival badge, too.

Lou: The survival stuff has been so much fun to complete. Another great memory for me is when we went on one of the County survival weekends. Do you remember that, Finn?

Finn: Yeah, that was great.

Lou: Everyone had to sleep outside in a bivvy. The other Scouts had these tiny, low-hanging shelters, but we had to work together in extreme weather to build a giant one for Finn, to accommodate the height of his wheelchair. I remember sitting there, watching him having a brilliant time, and thinking, 'this is exactly the sort of thing you don't expect a disabled person to do'. He was just absolutely roughing it and having the best time. You make all these memories in Scouting.

Finn: It's the sort of thing you never normally do, apart from when you're at Scouts. We went on a hike near Gloucester last year. That was one of my favourite things we've tried, because we got to look over at the Black Mountains in Wales when we reached the top. We had lots of fun and all the young leaders were helping to manually push me when it got hard.

Lou: The team really rally together.

8th Winchester seems like a really tight-knit Group. Could you tell us a bit more about the fundraising you have been doing recently?

Finn: This year, we've been raising money as a Group so that I can hopefully get a new wheelchair. My current chair has been great, but we do lots of different activities as a family and at Scouts, and we've really pushed it to its limits by taking it to places that this type of wheelchair wouldn't normally go. The new model has wheels that can be easily swapped and changed, so Mum won't be constantly chasing after me, worried that I'll topple over when I go too fast!

Lou: The chair we'd love to trial for Finn is the Magic Mobility Frontier V6. It's easy to manoeuvre in tight spaces at school but robust, stable and powerful enough to cope with



regular trips through the woods and on uneven terrain. Unfortunately, the chair is very expensive so, back in July, five of our leaders undertook a sponsored hike to walk 55 miles from Oxford to Winchester. When the walk was planned, they weren't anticipating that an intense heatwave would hit the UK, sending temperatures over 30 degrees! But despite this, they managed to cover 30 miles on the first day and 25 on the second. They've raised over £5,000 for Finn so far.

Finn: The leaders and young leaders have been amazing! And the other Scouts have been brilliant, too. As well as the big hike, we've done lots of smaller fundraisers. One of them did an ice cream sale and the other did a cake sale. Everyone has joined in, which is really nice. Joining Scouts is the best thing we've done.

Finn is already one of the most active Scouts in his District, and his Group is fundraising for a new wheelchair that will help him to do even more

Finn's fundraising quest is still underway. To donate to his new wheelchair fund, visit: uk.gofundme.com/finnsfund2018.





Lois

Lois Hill is a Cub leader at the 1st Weston Village Cub Scout Group in Weston-super-Mare. Though she has likely always had a condition called Ehlers-Danlos syndrome (EDS), she only became symptomatic after the birth of her first child.

EDS can affect different people in different ways. For some, the condition is relatively mild, while for others their symptoms can be disabling. In Lois' case, it causes her to experience joint pain, fatigue and problems with several of her internal organs, which can result in her collapsing unexpectedly. She's been using a wheelchair for six years, and has been Scouting for one year.

Despite using the chair, Lois is an active leader, and the Group tries to get outside as much as they can. Their favourite activities include hiking, walking on the beach, and 'hosting big barbecues'.

One of the main barriers people face when they're adapting to someone with additional needs is a lack of

understanding. Are there any misconceptions people have about your condition or ability to participate?

Generally, I've found people in Scouting to be very welcoming, but some parents are a bit surprised when they first see me, purely because they're probably not expecting to see a leader in a wheelchair. I'm sure some even felt a bit apprehensive about it at first. They might worry about my ability to look after their children because of my additional needs.

But once they've spent time with me, they realise that's not the case, and they don't think anything of it. I've got the support of my husband, who joins me at Scouts and is also my carer. Although I do most of the work myself, he can support me in my role, which is a big help.

Are there any new skills you've gained at Scouts that you perhaps wouldn't have otherwise?

I think the main benefit has been gaining confidence and building new friendships. I can't work because my condition means I can collapse at any time, so I didn't get many opportunities to meet new people before I joined Scouts. I'm more active since I became a volunteer. It forces you to



get out there and do things, doesn't it? My first camp was with the whole District. There were about 600 people there, so I jumped into the deep end pretty quickly. Generally, we try to get outside and be social as much as we can.

Are the young people in your Group aware of your condition and how it affects you? How do you talk to them about it?

They are aware, but we don't often need to talk about it. Something I find really lovely is that the Beavers, Cubs and Scouts have never even questioned me or my condition. They understand I have good days and bad days and have only ever known me as I am, so they just see me as me.

Do any of the young people in the Group have their own additional needs?

Although we don't have any young people with additional physical needs in the Group, there are some young people who have non-physical additional needs, such as ADHD and Autism. While they're learning about my needs and adapting to them, I'm also adapting to theirs. The changes I make tend to be quite simple; things like making sure that young people who



find it difficult to enjoy unstructured time always have something to do, and get extra reassurance whenever we plan to try new and unexpected things. We get to learn together.

Do you need to adapt your Scouting very often?

The days aren't always great for me but the evenings tend to be better, so it's nice to have the routine of going to Scouts one night a week. It's the right amount of challenge. Being a leader keeps me busy preparing Programme activities during the evenings in-between, and it's a nice regular activity we can enjoy as a family. My son is in my Cub Group and my daughter is a Beaver.

Generally, I'm able to participate in most Scouting activities, but there will be times when I need extra support. I had one episode on camp when I felt unwell and had to go and lie down for a bit, but the other leaders immediately gathered around and helped. You don't always get that same sense of connection in other group situations. The people I've met through Scouting are very understanding and quick to jump in if I need them to share the load with me. Knowing I can rely on them is great. 🌿

The support of her fellow volunteers helps Cub leader Lois participate in almost all Scouting activities





The parent hack

It can be challenging to know how to react to young people, especially if you're not a parent. Laura Quick has literally written the book on parenting, so we asked for her top tips, from how to diffuse a situation to trying not to laugh when they swear...

Words: Jade Slaughter | Illustrations: Laura Quick

Even with all the training in the world, you can still feel underprepared for parenthood. The same can be said for Scouting, and for volunteers who aren't parents themselves, the prospect of standing up in front of young people can be nerve-racking.

To put minds at ease, we called upon award-winning illustrator and no-nonsense parent Laura Quick for expert advice. Laura is author of *The Quick Guide to Parenting* – a beautifully illustrated book that documents the charming, funny and unexpected hurdles of raising children.

Let's begin with the basics. What do you wish you'd known before you became a parent that might be useful for a new Scout leader?

That children are fabulous, bizarre and fairly off-the-wall. Their perspective is so different from ours; what matters and what doesn't. It's important not to ignore something that matters to a young person but to understand that, as a grown-up, problems can often be easily solved.

For example, imagine you're eight years old and off having an outdoor adventure, when someone comes

along and nicks the stick you're playing with. It may well be a fairly average-looking stick to everyone else but in your imagination you were a Jedi Knight and that stick was your lightsabre. The fact some other kid ran off with it when you weren't looking? Torture. Watching them duelling and making their own lightsabre noises feels like the end of the world.

But then your Scout leader might come along and give you a new stick. It's a bit straighter than the old one. Bingo. That's all it takes. Lightsabre back on.



As the adult, it's your job to remain rational. Over the years, I've learned to stop taking things too seriously. When I did an art workshop with some amazing kids last year, one of the girls grabbed the PVA glue and started sticking paper to her dress. At first, I was thinking 'Oh God, this is terrible. I should never have given her the glue.' But then the staff took her hand, cleaned her up, and brought her back. She did it again, of course, but no one stressed. It was a good lesson!

Your book includes examples of 'challenging behaviour'. What's your approach to discipline?

With my own children, I generally find under-reacting works best. I try to withdraw a bit if their behaviour is attention-seeking, then I'll give them loads of attention once they've calmed down. I'm also quite honest. I'll say, 'I think you were wanting my attention just now,' or 'I think you were feeling a bit left out. If that happens again, please use your words to tell me.' I'll always listen to words.

If it's really challenging and I feel like I want to explode, I imagine I'm being filmed and live-streamed to the nation on a reality TV show. It helps me to stay calm and think rationally. Is that weird? The real advantage of being an adult volunteer is that you'll always have someone with you. You can support each other.

Do you find it hard not to laugh when your children are being challenging or baffling? How do you keep a straight face?

If it's funny and you laugh, I think that's OK, unless someone is hurt, of course. You just need to be straightforward about why what they said or did was funny, and then outline why they still shouldn't do it in future.

If they swear in a perfectly timed way and swearing isn't allowed, that can be trickier. Why is well-placed

swearing from a child secretly so funny? My daughter cut her middle finger once, on the fingernail, so I had fun telling her to go and show Daddy her cut...

If you had another adult with you at all times while parenting, what would you do differently?

Having someone to share ideas, questions and observations with is great. You can store up the funny stories, the challenging ones, the downright abstract conversations, and share them, advise, laugh and reflect with fellow volunteers and friends.

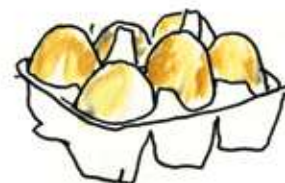
It's about putting things into perspective and keeping the experience light and fun. I realised this when I found a box of eggs behind my curtains in the living room. They were six months past their expiry date and like grenades waiting to go off.

When I asked my daughter if she was responsible, she nodded and just kept stuffing crisps into her mouth with her chubby fingers. No remorse. I laughed to myself and thought: 'I'll share this in my book!'

- Did you hide the eggs behind the curtains?



-yes?



Are there any advantages to being a non-parent, while 'parenting' other people's children?

I think we can all learn a lot from spending time with young people. My closest friend isn't a parent but loves spending time with my kids. She says they have this 'off-centre perspective' that's enlightening and at times, very refreshing. She was feeling a bit grumpy one afternoon and one of mine asked, 'Are you happy your dad's alive?' When she said 'Yes', they replied: 'Well cheer up then.'

Finally, do you have any other tips for volunteers who might be worried about looking after a group of young people?

As I say to my kids when they're presented with a plate of food they're uncertain about: try it, and if you don't like it, you can always stop. We rarely regret trying new things. There's always something to take away from the experience, after all. Then again, I'm up for trying anything. Keeps life interesting, I think. ✿

The Quick Guide to Parenting by Laura Quick is available on Amazon.



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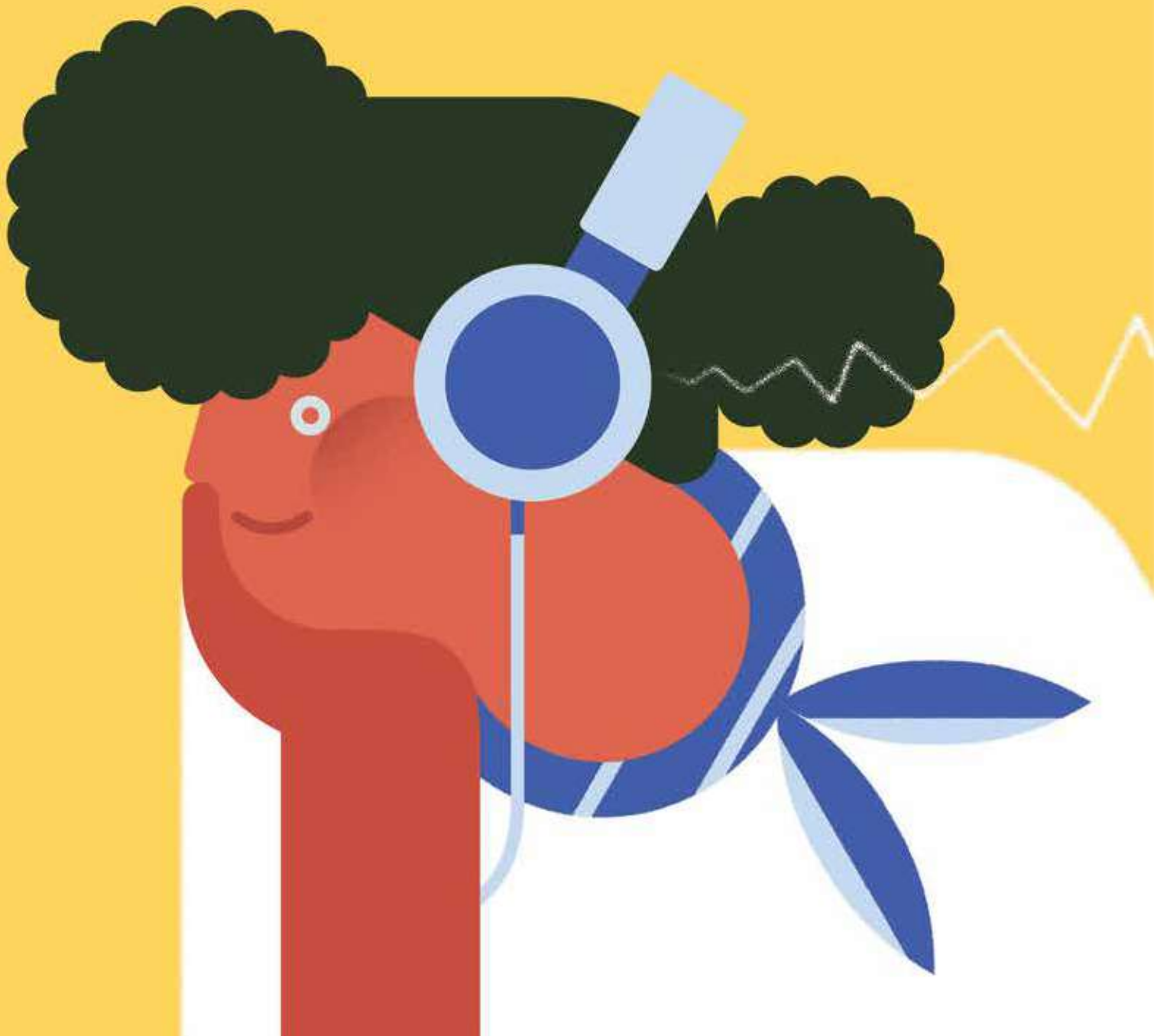
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Sound advice

We round up a host of audiobooks and podcasts for volunteers and young people that can help to improve your Scout Programme.

All you need is a smartphone or a set of speakers

Words: Aimee-Lee Abraham | Illustrations: Blok Magnaye



Podcasts and audiobooks are powerful storytelling tools, allowing us to access the intimacy of whole new worlds through our headphones. They can also be a great tool to store in your Scout leader tool-kit: sparking debate among your young people, supplementing any skills-based activities you're running, and even helping you to plan a more effective and engaging Scout Programme.

Why include podcasts in your Scout Programme?

- They boost learning. Thanks to the smartphone, podcasts tailored to suit every interest can be accessed and downloaded at the click of a button. Tuning in allows young people to explore their interests on their own terms, while listening as a
- Group can bring everyone closer, and help us all to develop a stronger grasp of how the world works.
- They reduce screen time. Audio storytelling allows you to enjoy the same level of education, engagement and entertainment you'd expect from watching a film or television series with your young people, with no screens in sight.
- They're portable. You can enjoy podcasts wherever and whenever you like, making them ideal for those who need to keep their young people engaged on the move, or to deliver a programme in a restricted space. Simply download episodes ahead of time and you're good to go.
- They don't cost anything. Unlike many other forms of entertainment, podcasts don't rely on subscriptions

or download fees, which means anyone with internet access can listen for free.

- They're compelling. Audio relies on the host's ability to maintain your attention with voice and sound alone. This is no easy feat, and as a result, storytelling standards tend to be very high. Many episodes are released weekly, in real time, featuring nail-biting cliff-hangers and plot twists aplenty.

Here are 15 podcasts for young people and adults that Scouts are sure to love...



Best for Beavers

Story Pirates

Instead of stealing gold or conquering land, the Story Pirates hunt for a different kind of treasure: scouring the seven seas for the wildest, most imaginative stories written by young people. Each week, the crew aboard ship – including world-class actors, comedians, improvisers and musicians – take on original ideas pitched by young listeners and turn them into a wild comedy podcast. Play it on your next long coach journey with your Beavers, and expect the dreaded calls of 'are we there yet?' to be replaced with giggles and gasps.

Peace Out

Drawing on the idea that mindfulness can alleviate worries, spark joy and sharpen attention spans in young people, the Peace Out podcast broadcasts a new meditation exercise each fortnight, guiding listeners aged 5–12 through imaginative scenarios and breathing routines. Some visualisations are purely fictional ('mini mind vacations' to the bottom of the ocean; pretending to be a dandelion floating on the breeze). Others are rooted in the everyday challenges of being a young person today, tackling everything from the experience of 'hanger' – the grumpiness encountered when hungry – to helping others, and the conflict that can arise when a young person isn't sure which choice to make.

Dream Big

This family-friendly podcast is aimed at inspiring young people to pursue their passions. In each 15–20 minute episode, seven-year-old host Eva Karpman and her mother speak to somebody about their passion, and ask how they got where they are and why dreams matter. As well as interviewing world-famous entertainers and Olympians, Eva shines a light on people who have found purpose and fulfilment in their everyday work, whatever that might be. Each episode features free personalised discussion sheets to download and print, so if your Beavers are unsure about which badges and awards they'd like to try, this could be a good springboard to kick-start a wider conversation.

Best for Cubs

The Show About Science

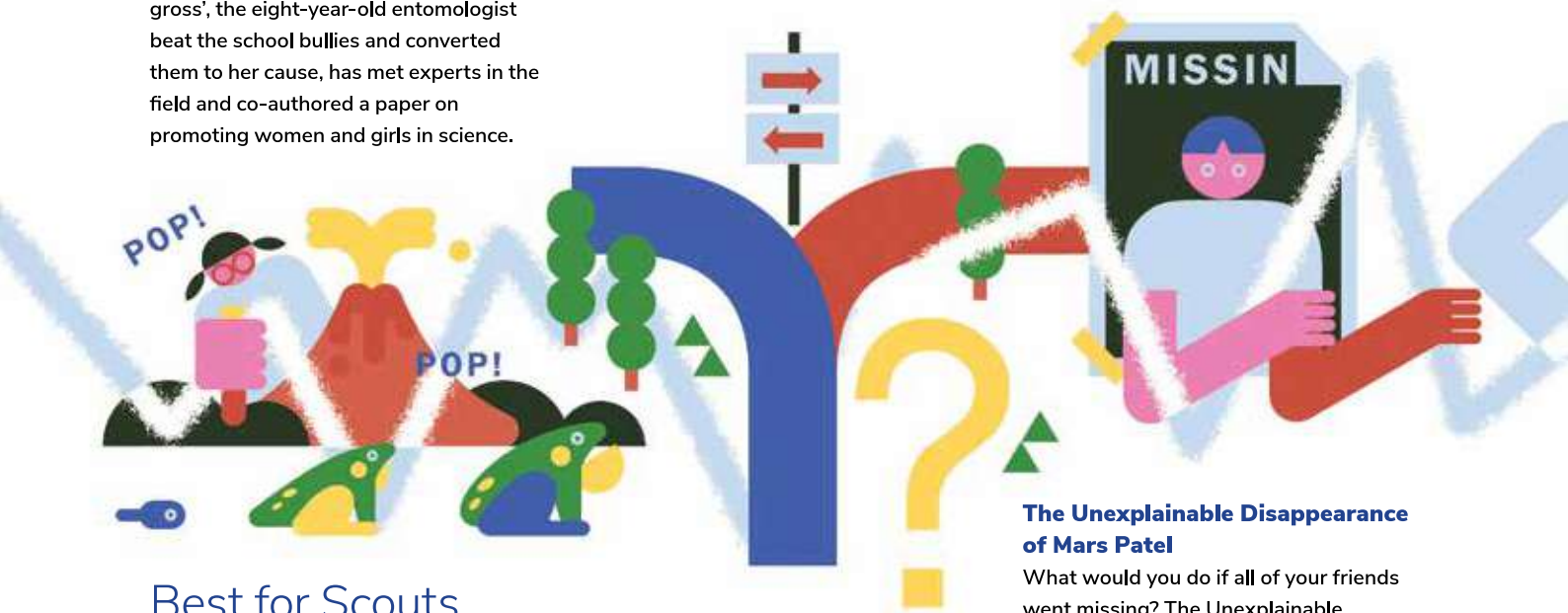
On his podcast young scientist Nate Butkus has talked about everything from bat biology to extra-terrestrials, but ask about his favourite moment and he'll tell you it was when he burped on air. So it goes when the host is seven years old. Start with episode 53: 'Amazing Kids Doing Amazing Things', especially if you're volunteering with Cubs working on their Naturalist or Scientist Activity Badges. It introduces us to trailblazers like Sophia Spencer. Initially teased for 'loving bugs everyone else thinks are gross', the eight-year-old entomologist beat the school bullies and converted them to her cause, has met experts in the field and co-authored a paper on promoting women and girls in science.

Short and Curly

Short and Curly is a fast-paced, interactive ethics podcast. Each week, a scientist, a performer and a philosopher take it in turns to respond to moral dilemmas submitted by young listeners. Questions like: 'Is it ever OK to fight back against a bully?' 'Do I have to like my sibling?' and 'Why can't children vote?' Never shying away from grey areas, it is refreshingly upfront about how the trials we face in life are often not as simple as they seem, and offers solutions from different perspectives. Pauses are built in to allow for listener debate, and there's plenty of side-splitting silliness for some comic relief.

Circle Round

Created and produced by parents, Circle Round showcases folktales from around the world, combining unusual cultural traditions with universal topics like kindness, persistence and generosity. Perfect for sparking conversations around the heritage, rituals and beliefs of your own Cubs and fellow volunteers, the show has the potential to introduce young people to new cultures and experiences, and could be a great accompaniment to activities you're planning to celebrate diversity.



Best for Scouts

Pants on Fire

In the era of fake news, young people need to learn how to be engaged, active citizens, as well as able to tell what's true from what's false. Audio game show Pants on Fire helps young people to do just that, by encouraging them to ask insightful questions, weigh the evidence before them, and trust their instincts. Each week, a young person is tasked with interviewing two people on a particular topic, one of whom is a genuine, credentialed expert, the other a liar. Can they tell the difference? And why does it matter? Tune in to find out.

Horizon Line

Blending history with storytelling, Horizon Line is a podcast series produced by the creators of the award-winning travel blog, Atlas Obscura. In each episode, co-founder Dylan Thuras and associate editor Ella Morton take turns spotlighting a person who pushed the limits of what was believed to be possible. The pilot episode is particularly weird and wonderful. Taking us back to 1897, it recounts the surreal true-life tale of S. A. Andrée, a Swedish janitor-turned-aeronaut who dreamt of ascending to the North Pole in a hot air balloon.

The Unexplainable Disappearance of Mars Patel

What would you do if all of your friends went missing? The Unexplainable Disappearance of Mars Patel is a highly addictive scripted podcast performed by 8–12 year olds, but older Scouts and adults are sure to get hooked, too. The plot centres around a group of intrepid 11-year-olds who embark on a mission to find out the truth about their friends, who are mysteriously disappearing into thin air with alarming frequency. A glorious hybrid of The Goonies meets Spy Kids meets Stranger Things, The Guardian listed it as one of the top 50 podcasts of the year back in 2016, and more recently it was honoured with a Peabody award, the highest accolade in the world of audio storytelling.

Best for Explorers

Youth Radio

Created by teens for teens, the mission of Youth Radio is to train budding broadcasters in their chosen area, making it the perfect show for any aspiring journalists in your section to draw inspiration from. Just like Explorers, the young people behind the microphone are brave, adventurous and unafraid to talk about the issues affecting their futures.

MentalMusic

Along with a group of Year Nine students from Brisbane State High School, in Australia, teen Jordan O'dell-Fontana launched the programme MentalMusic to encourage young people to talk more about their mental health. Since then, the show – initially launched as an English school assignment in social entrepreneurship – has grown into a weekly podcast, and the team has created a platform where young people can tune in and feel included, while listening to music produced by their peers.

Flash Forward

Flash Forward is a field trip to the future of humankind. Each week, host Rose Eveleth takes on a possible (or not so possible) future scenario – from the existence of artificial wombs, to the invention of sleep-replacement pills, to the chaos that would ensue if space pirates dragged a second moon to Earth. Super fun and ever so slightly terrifying, it's electric brain fuel for curious teenagers.



Best for adult volunteers

Fathers and Sons

This award-winning documentary series explores contemporary masculinity through the eyes of fathers and their sons, celebrating the multifaceted nature of being a dad from a range of perspectives. At turns funny and inspiring, thought provoking and poignant, it focuses on the highs and lows of becoming a parent, unpacking topics like birth, death, love, money, health and inheritance.

The Sharp End

Not for the faint-hearted, a podcast about people who find themselves in serious danger while climbing, and make it through. Each month, long-time instructor Ashley Saupe brings to life stories from Accidents in North American Climbing, the annual publication of the American Alpine Club (AAC), and shares knowledge to make us a little safer on the ropes.

She Explores

Fascinated by the way women experience the great outdoors, nature lover and photographer Gale Straub made it her mission to amplify the voices of women adventurers in an area where they have been underrepresented. She Explores – a series about the strong women shaping the outdoor industry – is the result. In each episode, Gale and her fellow producers meet ordinary people doing extraordinary things in the outdoors, and talk through topics as far-ranging as hiking solo, adventuring with small children (while pregnant!) and the perks and pitfalls of living out of a backpack.

Mood foods

Everyone can feel down during the winter months. We know that it's important to get plenty of exercise, sleep and healthy food, but did you know there are certain foods that can specifically improve our mood? Try these recipes to experience their uplifting qualities, or create your own using these ingredients; they'll still have the same benefits

Words: Jade Slaughter | Illustrations: Young



Porridge with banana, chocolate and Brazil nuts

Ingredients:

- 65g porridge oats CC S
- 1 banana, sliced T B
- 2 squares dark chocolate, shaved or finely chopped S
- 2 Brazil nuts, finely chopped S
- 300ml milk or water (or half and half) C

Method:

You can cook this comforting recipe in the microwave (just put all of the ingredients (except the chocolate and nuts) in a microwaveable bowl, stir and zap on high for one-and-a-half minutes, stir, then zap again for a further minute). However, we're going to do it the old-fashioned way:

1. Put the oats in a saucepan with the water and/or milk. Bring to the boil. Simmer for four to five minutes, stirring.
2. Add your banana. If the texture seems too thick at the end of the cooking time, add a little more milk or water. If it's too runny, add more oats a tablespoon at a time until you reach the right consistency.
3. Pour into a bowl, then sprinkle the chocolate and nuts on top. Voilà.

Warm salmon (or walnut) and lentil salad

Ingredients:

- 1 portion salmon (approximately 85g) or 25g halved walnuts O
- 125g lentils, pre-soaked or tinned CC S F I
- 355ml water
- Half a teaspoon chilli flakes (depending on how hot you like it) E
- Half a lemon or 1–2 teaspoons lemon juice C
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 teaspoon additional olive oil (for greasing)
- Salt and pepper to taste

Method:

1. Season the salmon with a little salt and pepper, and place skin-side down in a lightly greased baking dish or pan. Bake in the oven at 180C for about 12 to 15 minutes.
2. In the meantime, heat up your lentils in the microwave (one minute on high, stir, a further minute) or on the hob (five minutes while stirring).
3. Once the salmon is cooked, use a fork to separate it into flakes and then add it to the lentils. This is the point where you could add your walnuts instead.
4. Stir in the lemon juice, olive oil and chilli flakes until everything is coated. Season to taste – it's now ready to eat.





Chicken (or cheese or tofu), spinach and avocado wrap

Ingredients:

- 1 chicken breast or 50g cheddar cheese or 50g tofu **T** **T**
- 1 teaspoon olive oil (for cooking)
- Half an avocado **B** **E** **F** **T**
- 1 wholegrain wrap **CC**
- 1 small handful of spinach **B** **I** **C**
- 1 tablespoon mayonnaise, salsa or tahini (whichever you prefer)

Method:

1. You can cook the chicken in advance, so it's cold and ready for a packed lunch or snack, or you can eat it right away while it's warm. Slice the chicken breasts horizontally into even pieces. Preheat the oil in a frying pan, and add the chicken. Keep stirring – once the pieces are opaque and all juices run clear, they're done. If you're using cheese it just needs grating, and tofu should be thoroughly dried with kitchen roll and then fried until crispy.
2. Spread out your wrap on a plate or chopping board for assembling. Spread your mayonnaise/salsa/tahini thinly over the wrap, then add your spinach, chicken and avocado in a line down the middle of the circle.
3. Fold the bottom quarter of the circle over to keep your fillings inside, fold one side over, and then roll the whole thing up horizontally from one side. If you're eating it later, wrap tightly in foil to keep the wrap's shape.

Nutrition key

CC Complex carbohydrates: These are foods that contain a large amount of nutrients in relation to the number of calories they provide. Most complex carbohydrates have a low glycaemic index (GI), which means they release energy slowly and keep your blood sugar (and your mood) stable. Anyone who's ever tucked into a bag of chips or mound of mashed potato when they're feeling down knows the comforting qualities of carbohydrates – they also help the absorption of tryptophan in the brain.

T Tryptophan: Tryptophan is converted by vitamin B6 into the mood-lifting hormone serotonin. As a result, tryptophan has been used to treat conditions such as depression, anxiety and insomnia.

S Serotonin: Serotonin is known as the 'happy hormone', because it helps you to feel positive and calm. It also aids sleep.

S Selenium: A 2014 study found that getting the right amount of selenium each day can decrease your likelihood to develop depression and low mood.

B B vitamins: Serotonin levels can drop if you aren't getting enough B vitamins, so keep these topped up.

C Calcium: Calcium helps to nourish the nervous system and prevent anxiety and stress.

O Omega 3: About 60% of the dry weight of our brain is made up of fat, with 30% of that being omega 3 – strange, but true. Making sure we get enough essential fatty acids like omega 3 keeps our brains healthy and can help to prevent us from getting glum.

F Folic acid: Low levels of folic acid have been linked to irritability, tiredness and depression.

I Iron: Iron has been found to combat tiredness and improve brain function, giving you more get-up-and-go.

E Endorphins: Spicy foods have also been proven to make some people feel good. When our body is exposed to pain (for instance from 'hot' foods), the body releases endorphins to counteract it. This response varies between people, which might be why some people like their foods mild while others like to feel the burn.

C Vitamin C: A key ingredient of the hormone norepinephrine, which has been shown to play a role in a person's mood, as well as their ability to focus and pay attention to things.

T Tyrosine: Tyrosine, an amino acid, is a building block of adrenalin. Consuming tyrosine has been linked to increased energy, alertness and improved moods.

E Vitamin E: Possesses anti-inflammatory qualities that can potentially target depression.



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Going above and beyond: Cubs edition

How to help young people adapt to changes and handle challenges they might be facing

Words: Jade Slaughter | Illustrations: Charlotte Leadley

Young people have a lot to think about. Day-to-day, they're going from one new experience to the next, coming across personal and practical issues they don't know how to deal with. As a volunteer, you have the opportunity to help them cope, just by being aware of what might be going on in their lives. In this series, we'll hear from an expert on the types of issues young people in each section might face and how you can support them. Daniel is Safeguarding Manager at School-Home Support, a charity helping disadvantaged young people and their families to overcome issues preventing them from attending or making the most of school, such as poverty, mental ill health or domestic violence.

As Scouting reaches more and more disadvantaged and vulnerable young people, as well as those from different cultural backgrounds, it's important

that we are aware of what could be happening in their lives. This issue, Daniel focuses on Cub Scouts.

Seasonal pressure points

Winter festivities

Lots of people have celebrations to look forward to over the winter break, and most will enjoy them. However, the return to the Pack can throw up challenges for young people who have difficult issues at home.

It may be that they celebrate Christmas or Hannukah but didn't get many, or any, presents, as their parents or carers don't have much money. A family member may be very unwell, or there might have been incidents of domestic violence, which spikes around the holidays as more alcohol is consumed, there's a

pressure to be around relatives for longer periods of time, and financial issues often arise. Young people who live in abusive or emotionally chaotic households often dread the winter break, and it can be tough when they return in January and everyone wants to swap stories. While some Cubs will have gone on trips abroad or days out to Santa's grottos and winter wonderlands, others might not have done anything at all, and the comparison can be hard. If everyone celebrates a particular holiday except for one or two young people, they might also feel left out.

Opportunities to help

■ It's important that young people feel that they can talk to you, or another trusted adult, about issues like domestic violence. If someone seems upset, give them space to talk and really listen. You can also



look out for signs of domestic violence in both the lead-up to the winter break and afterwards, such as young people mimicking abusive behaviour or language, and parents or carers showing signs of displaying or experiencing abusive behaviour (such as visible bruises or fear of their partner). Always follow the Yellow Card guidance.

- Emphasise that not all people celebrate Christmas. As a section, learn about other winter festivities and note that some people don't celebrate any winter holidays at all.
- Discourage conversations comparing presents and trips away, and offer distractions if anybody seems upset or unwilling to speak. You could even celebrate winter festivities within your group, for example, holding a section activity such as tobogganing or ice-skating. This gives young people a chance to focus on something aside from presents and provides positive experiences for those who may not have had a good winter break. It is also a great conversation starter for when the group starts the new year, giving them something positive to reflect on. This can be combined with a focus on the start of the year, personal goals and new year resolutions.
- Families that are struggling financially may be unable to afford certain Scouting activities. Speak to your GSL or District Commissioner and the Scout Grants Committee team to see if there is support available to enable them to take part in these activities. If you're concerned that neglect may be an issue, speak to the Safeguarding Team.

Summer holidays and FGM

Once they reach Cubs and Scouts age, young people from some cultural backgrounds will be at risk of female genital mutilation (FGM). A common time for this to occur is over the



summer holidays, as a lengthy period of time is needed for healing, when it's less likely to raise suspicion. Young people might leave the country for this or experience it in the UK.

FGM has been a criminal offence in the UK since 1985. In 2003, it also became a criminal offence for UK nationals or permanent UK residents to take their child abroad to have FGM. Anyone found guilty of the offence faces a maximum penalty of 14 years in prison.

Opportunities to help

- A young person at risk of FGM may be unaware, but could mention things like: a long holiday abroad or going 'home' to visit family; an older female family member visiting from abroad; a special occasion or ceremony to 'become a woman'; or a female family member being 'cut' – a sister, cousin, or an older relative such as a mother or aunt.
- You can read more about the signs of FGM and what to do if you suspect it is happening to a young person here: scouts.org.uk/shsfgm.
- As with domestic violence, make sure you follow the Yellow Card safeguarding code of practice if you suspect there is an FGM risk for a young person.

Starting secondary school

In a recent survey, school leaders were asked to give the most common ways young people were unprepared for secondary school. These included: showing a lack of resilience (53%), lack of social skills (46%) and low self-esteem/confidence (47%) – all areas that Scouting helps with.

Of course, everyone gets nervous about moving into secondary school, and older Cubs (and their parents or carers) might appreciate some reassurance around this big move.

Opportunities to help

- Planning an expedition or other adventure with your Pack is a great opportunity to build their resilience and independence. They might be nervous – especially if it's some Cubs' first time away from home – but it will allow them to develop lasting friendships and learn new skills, showing them that extra responsibility and independence can be really positive. Let them know that expectations of them will change as they get older, and that they'll need to be more responsible for their time management, learning, clothing and equipment. Preparing for a trip is a great way for them to get used to this.
- It's good to create an open space where young people can air any concerns, so hold a session dedicated to the move and bust some myths together. If they've been told that having to attend so many different lessons is overwhelming, reassure them by drawing a connection between their new school timetables and the range of badges and activities they've done at Cubs. For example, Cubs who enjoyed their Chef or Backwoods Cooking Activity Badge can look forward to Food Technology, while those who got stuck into their Scientist Activity

Badge will love exploring biology, chemistry and physics in more depth.

- Talk about how your young people can plan their own journeys to school, emphasising the importance of safety. Linking it to their Personal Safety Activity Badge is a good way to do this.

Year-round issues

LGBTQ+ awareness (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning/queer or other)

Exploring their sexual orientation or gender identity should be a positive experience for all young people, and all Scouts should feel included and accepted. At this age, some young people will realise that they are lesbian, gay or bisexual, meaning that their sexual orientation may be different from many of their peers, while others will discover that they are trans or non-binary, facing the same issue with gender identity.

Opportunities to help

- It's helpful to be aware of local LGBTQ+ groups and resources that you can signpost young people and their parents to, if needed. Some young people and their families will be happy doing their own thing, but others will appreciate the support.



Charities like Mermaids (mermaidsuk.org.uk) and Stonewall (youngstonewall.org.uk) are brilliant sources of information and advice.

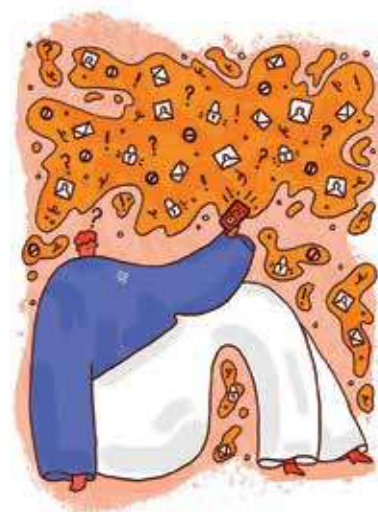
- Use inclusive language. If you're talking about families or relationships, don't make assumptions about the gender of parents or partners, that these relationships will always be opposite-sex, or about anyone's marital status.
- Avoid splitting the group into girls and boys, and keep activities gender-neutral.
- When you're coming up with positive role models for young people to meet, think about representing people from different sexualities and genders, as well as different cultural, racial and spiritual backgrounds.
- Just being positive, welcoming and respectful is one of the best things you can do. LGBTQ+ young people may be bullied at school, so offering an alternative safe, fun place for them to go will be truly appreciated.

Increased online access

The average age a young person in the UK gets a phone is 10 years old. If your young people don't yet have phones, they're likely to have the key codes for a parent or carer's phone or other device. While young people this age aren't usually on social media yet, they could potentially stumble across dangerous or upsetting things on the internet. There are a huge range of benefits that internet access can bring for young people, but it's important to help them stay safe.

Opportunities to help

- Make sure your section is aware of basic internet safety: this can be part of the Digital Citizen Staged Activity Badge or Communicator Activity Badge. A good way to start is by talking about their digital



footprint and why privacy is so important, how to make secure passwords and who to speak to if they feel uncomfortable with any content they find. Internet Matters (internetmatters.org) is an excellent source of information.

- A good online game young people can play is Webonauts Internet Academy, which can be found at pbskids.org/webonauts. Players take on the job of being a 'webonaut': a brave explorer who'll have to complete a series of missions. An immersive game, it includes lots of information on 'netiquette' and online safety, and is suitable for young people aged 8+.

While it's great to be aware of all of these issues potentially facing young people, please note that it's not your responsibility to carry out extra work around them on top of your usual volunteer role. If you're worried about someone in your section, it's best to contact your GSL or District Commissioner about support you can signpost the Cub or their family to. 🌟

Not your section?

Find similar guidance for supporting Beaver Scouts at scouts.org.uk. In the summer edition, we'll be looking at Scouts (with Explorer Scouts guidance available online).



Christmas badge and
blanket badge



Christmas cards



The Scouts' Christmas Appeal

This Christmas, you can help Doris the donkey deliver the gift of Scouting to more young people than ever before

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Did you miss out on the badges before?

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If you would like to buy any of the badges from the packs separately, please visit **fundraising.scouts.org.uk/christmas-appeal**

Number of card packs with both designs (minimum donation £3 per pack of six or £5 for two packs):

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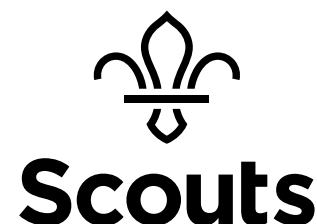
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This activity contributes to the following badges:



Snowsports Staged Activity Badge

Beavers | Cubs | Scouts

Snowsports warm-up

Four stretches to get you and your section ready to hit the slopes

Time: 10–15 minutes

Instructions

1 Discuss with the section about why we should warm up before exercise. Warm-ups can elevate the heart rate and increase blood flow to the muscles, which helps prevent strain or injury.

2 Explain that they're going to try some warm-up exercises perfect for skiers/snowboarders, similar to ones that athletes in the Winter Olympics use. Lead your young people in these four exercises to warm up the upper, middle and lower body. They don't have to be for snowsports – use it as a quick warm-up before any physical activity. Leaders take part too!

3 First up is leg swings. This is done by putting one hand against a wall or chair for balance, standing up straight and swinging the outer leg (furthest from the wall or chair) gently back and forth. Do five swings on each leg, getting a bit higher each time. Repeat once for each leg. This warms up legs and hips.

4 Next is arm circles, which stretch the arms, upper back and shoulders. This is done by stretching up the arms and moving them both in forward-motion circles 10 times, slowly and with control (no flinging). Now circle them backwards 10 times.



5 The back takes a lot of strain during exercise, and is vital for balance in skiing, snowboarding and other sports. To do a back stretch, stand up straight, bend your knees slightly, then slowly bend forwards until you can touch your toes (or as near as possible without strain). Gently straighten your legs, stretching your back and hamstrings (backs of the thighs). Hold for 10 seconds. You will feel a bit of a burn in your back and legs – that means it's working!

6 The last one is a toe hop. On the slopes this is done on a snowboard, but you can do a version without snow or equipment. It helps with balance and warms up the legs. Stand on the balls of your

feet, lean forward slightly, bending a bit at the knees, and hold your balance. Start with some small 'hops', gradually jumping higher and landing back on the balls of your feet each time. Repeat 10 times.

7 You can adapt some of the warm-ups so that young people with limited mobility can enjoy snowsports. 'Sit skiing' was designed for wheelchair users and para-alpine skiing is part of the Paralympic Games. There is equipment that can aid in 'adaptive skiing', like outriggers: forearm crutches that can help people who only have the use of one leg. For those with limited mobility, it is especially important to warm up the arms. Learn more at paralympic.org/alpine-skiing.

This would be a great activity for Explorer Scout Young Leaders to run.

All activities illustrations by JamesPop

This activity contributes to the following badges:



Community Impact
Staged Activity
Badge



Cub Global Issues
Activity Badge



Scout World
Challenge Award



Scout Global Issues
Activity Badge



Explorer Global
Issues Activity
Badge

Make sure a
code of behaviour
is in place for the
meeting, ensuring
the behaviour of
young people.

Cubs | Scouts | Explorers

Exploring equality

International Women's Day, 8 March Help young people to discuss gender discrimination around the world

Time: 20–30 minutes

Equipment

- Downloadable statements (printed out)
- 'True' and 'false' signs
- Blue tack or sticky tape

Instructions

1 Go to scouts.org.uk/genderstereotypes to download the statements and the 'true' and 'false' signs.

2 Discuss with your young people about how gender equality has improved but still has a way to go. Some countries have different rules for men and women. This might be for religious or cultural reasons, or to maintain power over them. Explain how they can make the world better by challenging assumptions and treating everyone with respect.

3 Designate one end of your meeting place as the 'true' end and one as 'false' and stick up the relevant signs. One at a time, read out the statements about gender and ask the young people to think about whether they are true or false, and walk to the corresponding end of the room. If they are uncertain or don't know, they can stay in the middle of the room.

4 Discuss each of the statements respectfully with the young people, ask



them to share why they thought it was true/not true, and explore if they agree with it and why. They wouldn't want to be held back in life because of other people's stereotypes and should be able to reach their full potential, whatever their gender. Be prepared for some challenging questions; it's OK not to know all the answers. Young people could take them away to do further research and bring back their findings the following week.

Take it further

To demonstrate how some people are unfairly given more rights than others, the right to participate in a round of a game could be taken away from a few young people. For example, ask everyone whose

name starts with 'A' to sit down for one round. Explain to the young people about #5 of the UN's Global Goals, Gender Equality. Let them know that Emma Watson (Hermione in Harry Potter) is a UN Women Goodwill Ambassador. Learn more at scouts.org.uk/emmawatson and find out what Scouts is doing at scouts.org.uk/heforshe.

Global Goals

The Sustainable Development Goals, known as Global Goals, are aims that people and governments are striving for to make the world a better place. The World Organisation of the Scout Movement (WOSM) has committed to them, and they are reflected in the global elements of our programme. Learn more: globalgoals.org.

How much do you know about gender discrimination around the world?



The UK has one of the smallest gender pay gaps in Europe.

FALSE. In the UK, it is estimated that men are paid nearly 10% more (April 2018, The Guardian). Estonia, Czech Republic and Germany have bigger pay gaps, but Italy and Romania have the smallest gap (Financial Times).



More men than women are world leaders or in national government.

TRUE. The percentage of women in government is rising, but at the current rate it could take 40 years to reach equal representation (UN Women).



In Russia, men are not allowed to work as train drivers.

FALSE. It's women who are not allowed. There is a ban on them doing a range of jobs, including train driver, firefighter and diver (Big Think).



All new parents can take paid time off to look after their newborn children.

FALSE. In some countries, like Sweden or the UK, both parents can take paid leave, but in others, such as the US, neither parent is entitled to it (The Guardian).



Girls with higher levels of education are less likely to marry young.

TRUE. If all girls had primary-level education there would be 14% fewer child marriages (UNESCO).



The UK is the second most equal country in the world.

FALSE. It's 20th! We're beaten by countries like Iceland (top), Norway and Slovenia (Global Gender Gap Index).



Women are allowed to drive cars in all countries of the world.

TRUE. But it was only made legal in Saudi Arabia in June 2018.



In Pakistan, only men are allowed to vote.

FALSE. It is legal for women to vote, but there are some areas of the country where women are barred from voting, or where it can be very difficult, due to social attitudes (BBC).

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This activity contributes to the following badges:



Beaver My Outdoors Challenge Award



Cub Animal Carer Activity Badge



Cub Gardener Activity Badge



Cub Naturalist Activity Badge

Beavers | Cubs | Scouts

Make a bug hotel

World Earth Day, 22 April Give insects a home by building them one at your meeting place

Time: 45 minutes

Equipment (enough for two bug hotels)

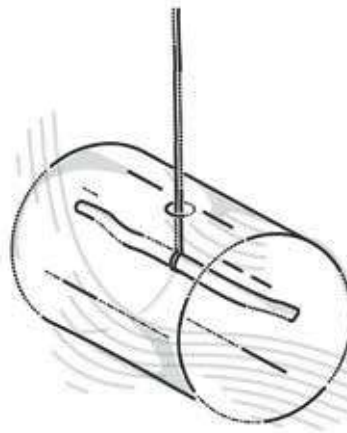
- A recycled plastic bottle (2l), cut in half, ends removed
- Twigs and small sticks
- Pine cones
- Bark
- Other materials like bamboo, broken bits of plant pots
- String
- Scissors

Instructions

1 Help your young people to make a simple bug hotel to keep outside your meeting place. Explain that this will create a habitat for beetles, woodlice, bees and other mini beasts and that insects are vital to our ecosystem. They can monitor the hotel to see which bugs move in and learn why helping insects is important for growing things.

2 Ask the young people to collect twigs, sticks and other natural materials. Explain that different materials attract different insects. For example, ladybirds live in cracks, crevices and leaf litter. Stag beetles and bark beetles like hanging out in dead wood.

3 Next, the sticks and twigs need to be snapped to size, so that they just stick out of the bottle. You will need enough for two hotels, one to hang and one to keep on the ground, for different insects.



4 Cut a length of string and tie it firmly around one of the sticks. Cut a small hole in the very centre of one of the halves of the plastic bottle and thread the string up through the hole. This can be used to hang the bug hotel from a tree or fence.

5 Starting with the stick that has the string tied around it, ask the young people to cram the bottles with the natural materials, mixing them up as they go.



The bottles should be packed tightly so that the contents don't fall out.

6 Once the bottles are full, hang one of the bug hotels from a tree or other high structure, and place the other one somewhere sheltered on the ground, like under a bush or in the corner of your outside space, where it won't get disturbed, tripped over or blown about.

7 To identify some common insects that could move into the bug hotels, and to find out what time of year you might see them, go to: wildlifetrusts.org/wildlife-explorer/invertebrates. There are some insects that young people should not touch because they bite, including red ants, earwigs and shield bugs.

8 The young people should monitor the bug hotels for at least three months to see what comes to live there – or a whole year to see different species through the seasons.

Take it further

Make a more elaborate mini-beast mansion using two wooden pallets stacked on top of each other and filling in the spaces with bricks, pieces of wood, dried grasses, bits of roof tile and other natural materials to create habitats for a wider variety of creatures.

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This activity contributes to the following badges:



Scout Media Relations and Marketing Activity Badge



Scout Photographer Activity Badge



Scout Creative Challenge Award



Scout Teamwork Challenge Award



Explorer Media Relations and Marketing Activity Badge

Scouts | Explorers

Scouts on film

Scouts can make a 'how to' video to help other young people

Time: 90 minutes or more

Equipment

- A video camera or smartphone with at least an 8-megapixel camera
- Materials for whichever activity they choose to film, e.g. scarves for tying friendship knots

Instructions

To challenge your young people, ask them to create a 'how to' video on a topic of their choosing – something other Scouts and sections will find useful, such as 'how to tie a friendship knot'. The topic should be chosen as a group. There are lots of things to consider, and they should decide democratically who will be the producer, presenter, script-writer, director, set designer, editing team, etc.

Make sure parental consent is gained for any young people who appear in the film. If the content is going to be online, or on social media, follow the guidelines and give the young people the Stay Safe leaflets (scouts.org.uk/staysafe).

The video should be as engaging as possible. Use these top tips as a guide:

- **Location:** choose somewhere with good lighting – outside, a room with lots of windows, or a room with good lights. Avoid rooms that are dark or



have only one light source. Find quiet areas, away from traffic or building noise.

- **Angles:** the camera should be placed at or above shoulder height, ideally on a tripod. If filming by hand, stand with your legs slightly apart to create stability. For a stationary video, the presenter's shoulders should be near the middle and their waist or knees at the bottom. Do a test, to make sure the sound is recording and the presenter is in position.

- **Loud and clear:** make sure the presenter knows what they're going to say. The script should be brief so they can remember it. Bullet points can help. They should practise saying it confidently and clearly and get used to being in front of the camera.

- **Personality:** the presenter should pretend they are

talking to someone to keep it friendly and relaxed. They should try not to sound like they are reading a script. Keep it natural by using small hand gestures and facial expressions and making jokes, if appropriate.

- **Post-production:** editing can be done in YouTube using its built-in software, or on a computer. Most have free software. Make short clips and choose the best takes, instead of trying to film it in one go. Effects and filters can be used to change brightness, add music (inexpensive tracks are available from music libraries), titles and more.

Take it further

To add another dimension of challenge, the young people could first pitch their video ideas to the section in a Dragon's Den-style process.

This would be a great activity for Explorer Scout Young Leaders to run.



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This activity contributes to the following badges:



Beaver Creative Activity Badge



Beaver My World Challenge Award



Cub International Activity Badge



Cub Our World Challenge Award



Scout International Activity Badge

The activity could also help towards:



Scout World Challenge Award

Beavers | Cubs | Scouts

Make a New Year tree

Chinese New Year, 5 February A creative way for young people to reflect

Time: 45–60 minutes

Equipment

- Branches or long twigs – could be foraged if they have already fallen, or bought from a florist – or you could use a large potted plant with sturdy stems

- Red paper
- Pens
- Scissors
- Hole punch
- String or thin gold cord
- Gold spray paint or similar (optional)

Instructions

1 Discuss with your young people some of the principles and traditions of Chinese New Year. For example, it's an opportunity to sweep out the old and celebrate the new. Red is used to symbolise good luck and happiness. Money is traditionally given in red envelopes and tied to a tree.

2 Help the young people to create their own Chinese New Year tree, but explain that this one will be for messages, not money. Branches could be sprayed gold, which is traditional.

3 Hand out the red paper, scissors and pens. Ask the young people to cut pieces of red paper big enough to write on and to punch a hole near the edge. They can then write their own 'Chinese proverbs' – e.g. 'Dig the well before you are thirsty' (plan ahead). These are messages of wisdom or goodwill. The young people could write down things like the Scouts values, wishes for the next year, or something they are grateful for. It could be a reflection on the activities they have done.

4 You could search online for some simple Chinese symbols and their meanings –

like 'happiness' or 'luck' – and help the young people to copy these onto their messages.

5 Encourage the young people to share their messages with the group and to talk about why they wrote them, if they feel comfortable. The messages could also be kept anonymous.

6 Next, they can tie them to the tree using the string or gold cord. The messages can be added to throughout the year, and the young people can look back at their messages to see if their feelings have changed or if they have achieved the goals they hoped for.

Take it further

On Founder's Day (22 February), the young people can reflect on the messages they wrote and think about the impact of Scouting around the world.

Step 2



Step 3



Step 6



This would be a great activity for Explorer Scout Young Leaders to run.



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This activity contributes to the following badges:



Cub Global Issues Activity Badge



Scout World Challenge Award

The activity could also help towards:



Explorers International Activity Badge

Cubs | Scouts | Explorers

Fair play

Fairtrade Fortnight, 25 Feb–10 March Help your young people to understand how fair trade works and the difference it makes

Time: 60 minutes

Equipment

- Fairly traded prizes, such as chocolate or bananas
- 'Fair trade zone' sign (download from scouts.org.uk/fairtradeprintout)

Instructions

1 Discuss with your section what fair trade means when it appears on foods and other goods, like clothes. Let them know that the Fairtrade Foundation is the most recognisable organisation and logo, but there are many others. Discuss with them that sometimes people are paid low wages and work in poor conditions to produce the items we buy.

2 Lead your section in a game of tag that will help them understand how fair trade works, that there are companies that want to keep profits high and wages low, and that co-operatives can help workers to get a fairer deal. Co-operatives are jointly owned or run by members, who share the profits and benefits. There are lots of companies that already trade fairly, but not all of them.

3 Ask the young people to come up with a name for a fictional company that does not use fair trade practices. Most of the section will be 'farmers' while a few will be



'company owners'. Decide who will be the company owners – the number will depend on how many are playing. (e.g. one company owner per 10 workers.)

4 The farmers will run away from the company owners, and if they get 'tagged' they have to sit down on the floor, which means they have been treated unfairly. Another farmer that is still free can help by joining with them – they do this by standing next to them and putting their hand on the other farmer's shoulder.

5 Once there are four farmers joined together like this, a 'co-operative' has been formed and the company can no longer force them to work for low wages or in poor conditions. They can now move together (with their hands still on the first farmer's shoulder) to a pre-determined

safe space, protected by being in a 'fair trade zone'.

6 Distribute prizes to the farmers who make it to safety. Swap who the farmers and company owners are and play again. To help young people understand the impact and context of fair trade, discuss with them that the chocolate industry is at risk and could collapse within five years because of low wages and poor conditions, but choosing fair trade chocolate could help it to survive.

Take it further

Run a debate about fair trade, sustainable farming and the impact of buying 'local vs global', especially on developing economies. Host a fair trade breakfast. Discuss the UN's Global Goals (globalgoals.org): #8 is Economic Growth and #12 is Responsible Consumption.

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This activity contributes to the following badges:



Scout Electronics Activity Badge



Explorer Science and Technology Activity Badge

Cubs | Scouts

Build a wiggle robot

British Science Week, 8–17 March Young people will create a circuit to make their own robot that wobbles around on its legs

Time: 60 minutes

Equipment (per robot)

- Paper cup
- Electrical tape
- Felt pens x 3
- AAA batteries x 2
- Battery pack/holder (for 2 AAA batteries)
- 1.5-3V DC motor (available on Amazon or from electrical or hobbyist shops)
- Clothes peg
- Wooden lolly stick
- Scissors

Instructions

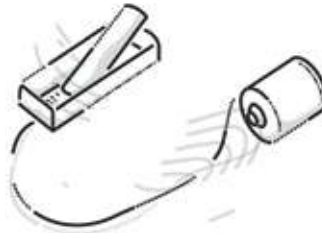
1 Ask the young people to use the felt pens to draw robot faces on the cups. Then, use the tape to stick the pens inside the cup, nibs facing away from the cup, spaced evenly so that it can stand on them when the cup is turned upside down.

Step 1



2 Next, they should attach the battery pack to the DC motor by wrapping the wire from the battery pack around the leads on the motor.

Step 2



3 With the cup upside down, ask them to tape the battery pack to the bottom of it, following the shape of the holder with the tape, so that you can still put the batteries inside, on top of the tape.

Step 3



4 Show them how to tape the motor onto the bottom of the cup, next to the battery pack, then insert the batteries and turn on the motor to demonstrate that the robot doesn't move around yet.

Step 5



5 With it turned off again, they need to tape the lolly stick onto the clothes peg and then clip the clothes peg onto the motor. This makes it off balance, which is what makes it wobble. They might need to reinforce the peg with tape if the vibration makes it fall off.

Step 6



6 Lastly, ask them to turn on the robots and place them on a piece of paper to watch them wiggle and spin while they make patterns with their felt pen legs. Make sure the surface the paper is on is protected in case the robots wiggle off. You could put the paper and robots in trays, so they can't wiggle away.

Take it further

If you have the equipment, the circuit can be soldered instead of the young people wrapping the wires of the battery pack around the motor leads.



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This activity contributes to the following badges:



Beaver My World Challenge Award



Cub Our World Challenge Award



Scout Librarian Activity Badge

The activity could also help towards:



Beaver Book Reader Activity Badge



Cub Book Reader Activity Badge



Cub Global Issues Activity Badge



Scout Global Issues Activity Badge



Community Impact Staged Activity Badge

Cubs | Scouts | Explorers

Make a little library

World Book Day, 7 March Create a book share project for your local community

Time: 90 minutes

Instructions

1 Discuss with your young people that local libraries are struggling to stay open due to lack of funding, and lots of communities are creating their own Little Free Libraries in their neighbourhoods, where people can share books for free.

2 To find advice about starting your own Little Free Library go to littlefreelibrary.org/start. There are now more than 70,000 around the world! You can ask other 'stewards' for help and add your own library to the map, so that other people can find it.

3 Download the detailed instructions from scouts.org.uk/littlefreelibrary to build your library. You can find lots more little library designs to choose from on the website, depending on how complicated you want it to be: littlefreelibrary.org/build.

4 Help the young people to decorate the library and include the name of your Group/section on it, so that people know who built it.

5 Find a good place to put your library outside the meeting place, so that it is on view to passers-by. It should be just within the grounds, not on public property, unless you



have checked it's OK with your local council.

6 Ask the young people to check with their parents or carers if they have any spare books at home that they can donate, for both young people and adults.

Take it further

Some young people in the world don't have access to all the exciting books we do, and some don't even have the opportunity to go to school. Find out about young people

your age in another country and their access to education and books.

European Scouts set up a charity called Bookbridge to help young people in countries around the world gain access to education. To find out more and get involved, go to bookbridge.org/uk.

This activity also links to UN Global Goal #4 – Quality Education. Learn more about them at globalgoals.org.

This activity contributes to the following badges:



Beaver My World Challenge Award



Cub Our World Challenge Award



Scout Naturalist Activity Badge, Scout Forester Activity Badge

The activity could also help towards:



Community Impact Staged Activity Badge



Beaver Global Issues Activity Badge (if linked to endangered animals)



Cub Global Issues Activity Badge (if linked to endangered animals)



Cub Naturalist Activity Badge



Explorer Naturalist Activity Badge

Beavers | Cubs | Scouts

Forest amnesty

International Day of Forests, 21 March Take your section for a walk in the woods to discover more about trees

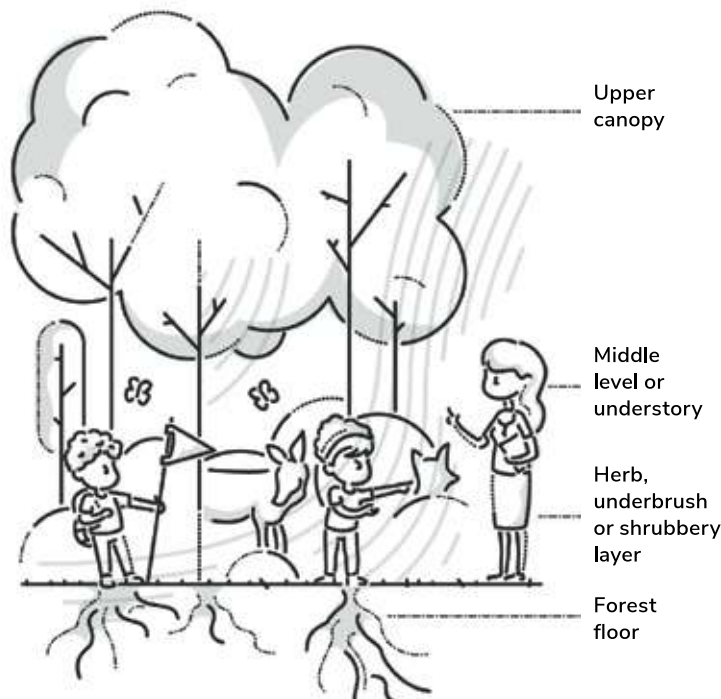
Time: 90 minutes

Instructions

1 Discuss with your young people some important facts about forests, e.g.

- Trees account for about 30% of the Earth's surface.
- In the UK, tree coverage accounts for 13% of land.
- The European average is nearly half-covered in trees (44%). Finland has the highest level (72%).
- Tree-coverage has increased dramatically in the UK since World War II. But worldwide, deforestation is taking place for a variety of reasons such as clearing the land for growing palm oil, farming, or building housing.
- To bring the UK more in line with European levels, the Woodland Trust launched a campaign in 2010 to plant 20 million trees in Britain for the next five decades.
- A useful website for more information is: un.org/en/events/forestsday.

2 Help your young people explore the importance of our forests and the benefits of trees to humans and animals by taking them to a local forest, woodland or park. Apart from cleaning the air and producing the oxygen we need to breathe, trees also provide habitats for animals and spending time in forests or woodland can have mental health benefits for people.



3 Once there, help them to identify the different levels of the trees (e.g. forest floor, canopy), some of the animals that live there, and the trees themselves. Resources like the Wildlife Trusts' Nature Finder app can help you identify trees, animals and insects. (See our feature in the autumn term issue of Scouting magazine for other useful apps and websites for helping young people to engage with nature.)

4 Have a discussion with the young people about issues like deforestation, how forests/trees are being destroyed around the world, and the local and global impact of this. Ask them if

they would miss the trees, and why they think they are so important to both humans and the environment.

Take it further

This activity links to UN Global Goal #15: Life on Land, through protecting and restoring terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably managing forests, combating desertification, and halting biodiversity loss. Learn more at globalgoals.org. Get in touch with your local park warden or council to learn more about how to protect your local woodland and get involved in a community project, or join a scheme to plant or adopt a tree.

This activity contributes to the following badges:



Scout Creative Challenge Award

Scouts

Paint a graffiti wall

World Art Day, 15 April Young people can find their inner street artist, reflect on programme ideas and come up with new ones during this Youth Shaped activity

Time: 60 minutes

Equipment

- Spray paint
- Masks (such as dust masks)
- Goggles
- Wood or cardboard slabs, to use as a canvas
- Protective covering for the floor
- Old clothing, to be worn

Instructions

1 Before you start, check if anyone in your section has asthma or any other allergies

that may be affected by using spray paint. They might still be able to take part. The activity must take place in a well-ventilated area, preferably outside. Ensure safety instructions are followed, and have a quick conversation with everyone about the laws surrounding graffiti.

2 Have a discussion around types of urban art and graffiti. You could print some images ahead of time to help spark ideas.

3 With the protective covering, masks and goggles in place, encourage your young people to spray paint any ideas they have onto the wood/cardboard. Encourage them to use their imaginations – there are no ‘wrong’ ideas.

4 Use the finished masterpiece to inspire your next planning session. Display it in your meeting place to refer back to throughout the term.

Three types of graffiti to try:



Stencil

Uses a stencil made of cardboard or another material. This is less freestyle than just spray-painting, for example, but still allows for artistic expression.



Papercut

Created by drawing large images onto paper and then pasting them onto outside walls using paste, and covering it in paste as well, to protect it.



Reverse negative

Instead of cutting out the design for a stencil, with this method you cut out all the space around the design, so that the design is left blank but the area around it gets painted.

Youth Shaped Scouting

Over the last four years, there has been a growing momentum to ensure young people are shaping their experiences and taking on peer leadership roles at Scouts. For more information about Youth Shaped Scouting visit: scouts.org.uk/youshape.

This activity contributes to the following badges:



Community Impact
Staged Activity
Badge



Beaver Creative
Activity Badge



Beaver Global Issues
Activity Badge



Cub Artist Activity
Badge



Cub Global Issues
Activity Badge



Scout Artist Activity
Badge



Scout Global Issues
Activity Badge

To find more
resources go to:
[scouts.org.uk/
wateraid](https://scouts.org.uk/wateraid)

Beavers | Cubs | Scouts | Explorers | Network

Make a tippy tap

A Million Hands Get young people thinking about how simple technologies can have a huge impact on people's lives



Activity 1: Thinking challenge

Time: 30 minutes

Equipment

- Tippy tap images
- Tippy tap materials
- Paper and pens
- Scissors

Instructions

1 Show your young people the images of different tippy taps in the A Million Hands WaterAid resource pack. A tippy tap is a simple but clever piece of technology

that can have a huge impact on developing communities around the world.

2 Ask them what they think they would need to make one. Then ask them to make a list and source the materials for the next meeting. (Younger sections may need some more guidance making their lists.)

3 At the next meeting, show the young people the images of the tippy tap

again and ask the section to make their own (you may have to bring spare resources just in case a few forget their materials).

4 Put the young people into smaller groups to test their tippy taps. If it didn't work, why do they think this is?

5 Use the water they tested the tippy taps with to water plants so that it does not get wasted.

Activity 2: A tippy tap to try

Time: 45 minutes

Equipment (per tap)

- Water container (with a handle)
- String
- 2m forked sticks x 2
- 1m straight sticks x 2
- Bar of soap
- Digging tools
- Nail
- Candle and matches
- Gravel

Instructions

1 Discuss with your young people the importance of hygiene and having access to clean water – something that not everyone in the world has.

2 Divide the young people into several groups. Each group will make one tap in this outdoor activity – the number of people will determine the number of taps you might need.

3 Ask one person from each group to come and get the materials they need to make a tippy tap.

4 The first thing they need to do is make the frame. Ask them to dig two holes 18in deep and about 2ft apart, place the two forked sticks in the holes, then fill the holes with soil and rocks, packing it tightly to keep the sticks upright. One of the shorter sticks is then rested on the forks. If you are in a forest, you could use a level branch instead of sticks.

Step 4

Step 5

Step 6

Step 7

Step 8

Step 9

5 Next, support the young people to carefully heat the nail using the candle, so it's sanitised. This is then used to make holes in the water container – one in the front just below the lid, and one on the opposite side.

6 While the nail is still hot, ask them to use it to make a hole in the middle of the soap. Using a piece of string, they should tie one end to the soap and tie the other end onto the horizontal stick.

7 To hang the water container up, the

young people need to remove the lid from the water container, fill the container with water, tie a piece of string around the opening, and then replace the lid tightly. The container can then be hung on the stick. If the stick doesn't fit through the handle, string can be used to attach it instead.

8 The other end of the string should be tied to the final stick, which is placed on the ground, using enough string so that only one end of it is on the ground. It will then work as a lever when the young

people step on it and release it – turning the tap on and off.

9 Once the gravel has been spread underneath for the water to drain through, the tap is ready to use, so ask the young people to test them out by washing their hands.

Take it further

You could follow this activity with the Water Collection Device challenge. Use the A Million Hands resource pack from WaterAid to find this and more activity ideas.



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This activity contributes to the following badges:



Beaver Global Issues Activity Badge



Cub Global Issues Activity Badge

The activity could also help towards:



Community Impact Staged Activity Badge

Beavers | Cubs | Scouts

Travelling water

World Water Day, 22 March Explore access to water with this simple game

Time: 20 minutes

Equipment (per pair)

- Greaseproof/wax paper (or normal paper and wax crayons to make your own)
- Paper straws
- Paper cups
- Sticky tape

Instructions

1 Have a discussion with your young people about the importance of water in their everyday lives and ask them to imagine what it would be like not to have access to clean, running water. Talk about World Water Day, an international day of awareness that encourages people to learn about how the lack of water impacts people's lives, and how to reduce water use and wastage.

2 Divide the young people into pairs and give each pair a piece of paper, some tape, two straws and one cup with a little water in it. Alternatively, if making your own wax paper, distribute normal paper and crayons instead, asking the young people to completely colour one side of the paper using the crayons, to make it waterproof.

3 Within their pairs, ask each young person to take turns using their straw to put a droplet of water at one end of a piece of wax paper that is taped to a flat surface, like a table or the floor.



4 They should then take turns using their straws to try and blow the droplet from one end of the paper to the other, without it breaking up into smaller droplets. Discuss with the young people that this symbolises the long journeys some people have to make carrying water to their homes and families, without spilling it on the way.

5 The bigger the droplet, the more difficult it is to keep intact. Ask the young people to experiment using different strengths of breath and holding the straws at different angles to find the most efficient way of transporting the water from one end to the other.

Water facts

You can use the A Million Hands WaterAid resources to find information about access

to water, to share with your section, including things like: one in 10 people around the world still lack basic access to clean water; in some developing countries, many women and children have to walk long distances carrying water containers as heavy as 20kg – the same as the average airline luggage allowance. Find more information to share at scouts.org.uk/wateraidfacts.

Take it further

This activity links to UN Global Goal #6: Clean Water and Sanitation. Learn more at globalgoals.org. Use the A Million Hands WaterAid resources to have further discussions with your section about access to clean water and find more activities to do with them on this theme here: scouts.org.uk/wateraid.

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Life drawing

How do your young people see their leaders? Share their drawings with us and you could appear on this page – our address is on page 3.



Mowgli (Lucy Cope) drawn by Hollie (holding the plane) of 1st Wythenshawe Scout Group



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