



# IGG OVERVIEW 2019

## What is IGG?

Irish Girl Guides (IGG) is a youth-driven, uniformed, dynamic organisation offering a varied and exciting programme for girls and young women aged 5-30, and opportunities for women of all ages.

Irish Girl Guides is a registered charity and complies with relevant legal obligations, current best practices and good governance standards.

IGG is a member of the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts, a worldwide movement of over 10 million girls and women in over 150 countries. Through this global network our members develop confidence and learn about global issues and advocacy. Girl Guiding offers wonderful travel opportunities for youth members and adult Leaders both around Ireland and the wider world.



## What we do?

Girl Guiding encourages the best in people, giving members the opportunity to discover new ideas, develop new skills, and forge strong friendships.

Members of Irish Girl Guides follow a non-formal educational programme called the Journey Programme which enables each person to embark on a developmental journey full of fun, adventure and challenge. The Journey Programme incorporates all we do and is designed to ensure that we achieve our mission 'to enable girls and young women to develop to their fullest potential as responsible citizens of the world'.

The Journey Programme has three elements in each Branch programme: Compulsory Challenges, Choice Challenges and Interest Badges. Our members learn new skills, grow in self-confidence, develop teamwork and leadership skills, experience new activities, and build lifelong friendships.

Everyone who shares our ethos and values is welcome to have a role in supporting Irish Girl Guides and the experiences members gain and memories they make are priceless. As a girl-only movement, girls are free to develop and express themselves in a safe, comfortable, supported setting. We have a strong emphasis on the outdoors, environment, community responsibility and global sisterhood.

## Who we are?

We are a youth movement of 11,000 girls and women from every county in Ireland. We have four different age brackets which we call Branches and girls of each Branch meet in local groups called Units.

A Unit is a group of approximately 20-30 girls from the one age bracket (Branch) who meet in a local community on a weekly basis. There are over 530 Units spread across Ireland. Units are run by a team of volunteer Leaders who have undertaken the relevant screening and training and there is a support network available to support the volunteer on her leadership journey.

We actively promote diversity and inclusion and welcome girls and young women from all walks of life. Anyone who lives their life as female and accepts our Guide Promise and Law is welcome to join the organisation.

*I love Brownies because it's lots of fun,  
everyone is really nice and the Leaders are kind.*  
**Shona, aged 8**

## How we do it?

The Guiding approach underpins everything we do and it is based on the Fundamental Principles which are clearly expressed in the Guide Promise and Law. The original Promise and Law were developed at the beginning of the Guide Movement's history over a hundred years ago and have evolved in keeping with the times.

Our Leaders are expected to set a high standard and act as positive role models for the girls in the way they work together as a team, the way they wear our uniform and the pride they take in being members of Irish Girl Guides. There is a specific aim that we set out to achieve at every meeting and activity and our volunteers lead with our vision and mission in mind.

A key to the success of every Unit is that the girls are involved in as many decisions as possible and play a large part in the organising of the programme appropriate to their age and abilities, but behind the scenes the success of everything that happens in the Unit largely depends on the leadership team.

Irish Girl Guides is built on an ethos of volunteering and all our members volunteer for the various roles in managing this organisation. IGG employs a small number of staff to support the volunteers at both local and national levels and both staff and volunteers are recognised for the vital role they play in ensuring we achieve our mission and our strategic plan.



## Honorary Ambassador Dr Niamh Shaw

**A**ward-winning space communicator, engineer and performer, Dr Niamh Shaw, has been an inspiration to our youth members and volunteers since her appointment as Honorary Ambassador to Irish Girl Guides in April 2019. She has been a fantastic role model encouraging members to dream big and to not be afraid to follow their dreams. Her energy, enthusiasm and her passion for Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics (STEAM) are infectious and we have been delighted to hear many of our youth members are now considering a career in a STEAM-related area.

Dr Shaw said, *"What I'm particularly interested in, as Ambassador, is empowering Girl Guides of all ages to pursue in life what they are most passionate about, which is usually what they are also most curious about ... STEM subjects can belong in a creative environment as much as a technical one. If I can achieve success in delivering that message to girls and women this year, then I will feel that I have made a worthy contribution to Irish Girl Guides."* There is no doubt that Dr Shaw achieved what she set out to do – and lots more besides – and we are hugely grateful to her.

## Become a Volunteer with IGG

**G**uiding is an opportunity – it gives you the chance to help the next generation to learn to live and grow into adults equipped to cope with the joys, the fears and the demands of life. Guiding encourages the best in all of us as it gives us the opportunity to discover new ideas, new skills, new experiences and new friendships. Being a Leader helps you grow in confidence and you will amaze yourself with your abilities and the skills you will learn. Guiding is enriching, life-changing and will provide you with important lifeskills that are transferable to other aspects of your life such as career, travel, studies and family.

There is a place for everyone in IGG and there are many different roles that you can take up that suit your availability and your skill set. Some adults:

- volunteer at weekly meetings with our youth members and **become a Leader**.
- volunteer for a non-Unit role e.g. committee membership, administration, specific skill teaching and become **Non-Unit Volunteers (NUV)**.
- join **Trefoil Guild** if they can't give a weekly commitment but want to stay involved.
- become an occasional **Unit Helper** with a Unit or in their local area.

All our volunteers complete a screening process when they begin volunteering with us. They also receive training and must complete a number of requirements to gain a licence, called a warrant, after which there are many different opportunities available to them. Furthermore, we provide a pre-planned programme full of activities and instructions to make volunteering with IGG easy.



## New Chief Commissioner

**I**n December 2019, Helen Concannon (above left) completed her 6+ years as Chief Commissioner with IGG and Amanda O'Sullivan (above right) commenced her term as the new Chief Commissioner. Helen was thanked for all the time, commitment, dedication and passion she brought to the role. Throughout her term she kept her firm belief that 'Girls With Dreams Become Women With Vision' at the core of all that she did.

The new Chief Commissioner, Amanda O'Sullivan has been involved in Guiding since she joined IGG at the age of 11. She has been a Leader in the North East, Mid-West and Eastern Regions as well as with Girlguiding UK. She has been Eastern Region Commissioner, Chair of Brownie Branch, Chair of the IT Strategy Team and has twice been Assistant Chief Commissioner. Amanda has been a Leader with Lucan Units since 1994, volunteering with Ladybirds, Brownies and currently with Guides. Amanda said *"I am excited to continue to deliver fantastic opportunities and programmes for all members and support our Leaders who are the drivers of IGG's success."*



*I love meeting my Guide friends and chatting to them while working on the Guide challenges together.*  
**Ciara, aged 13**

### Governance and Management of Irish Girl Guides in 2019

Irish Girl Guides (IGG) is a self-governing, uniformed, youth organisation led by volunteers and supported by staff.

IGG is bound by its Constitution and Bye-Laws. IGG has full membership of the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS) through the Council of Irish Guiding Associations (CIGA). IGG is independent from any political organisation or any political party.



### Structure of the Organisation

The General Council is responsible for the control and general supervision of the organisation. The Executive Committee, subject to the supervision of the General Council, controls and manages the affairs of IGG. In 2019, the Executive Committee met a total of six times. It is made up of 17 voting and 5 non-voting members. The average attendance rate was 82% and 10 members had a 100% attendance rate. The Executive Committee is the Board of Trustees, and the Chief Commissioner is the Chairperson of the Committee. The Executive Committee has overall responsibility for the organisation ensuring it is run professionally and is in keeping with its aims and objectives.

The Programme and Training Committee (P&T), subject to the supervision of the General Council, is responsible for coordinating the development and delivery of all aspects of the Guiding programme and maintaining communication between Chairpersons of National Committees and Branches. In 2019, the P&T Committee met four times and has 13 voting and 2 non-voting members. The average attendance rate was 85% and 10 members had a 100% attendance rate.

There are seven administrative Regions within Irish Girl Guides. Each Region has a Regional Commissioner and a Regional committee/team who meet at least three times a year. Within the Region, Units are grouped according to geographical groupings of Areas and Districts, each one having a Commissioner and an Area/District team.

### Staffing and Volunteers

IGG acknowledges the vital role both staff and volunteers play in ensuring the organisation achieves its mission. IGG employed 20 staff in 2019, 12 of whom worked at National level in various roles in our National Office, while eight Regional Development Officers worked in the Regions. Sadly, in January 2019, Suzanne Smith, our Managing Director, passed away after a short illness. Our Guiding community joined in sympathy with her family.

Volunteers are the backbone of the organisation, operating Units and as active members of the organisation's various committees at regional and national level. All volunteers undergo training and a screening process which includes attendance at Safeguarding and Child Protection Training. Further support and training opportunities are provided through local, regional, national and international events. Volunteers are encouraged to develop skills and knowledge throughout their time in Irish Girl Guides. These skills are interchangeable with other aspects of their lives.

### Irish Girl Guide Properties

IGG properties are vested in the Irish Girl Guides Trust Corporation Company Limited by Guarantee, and are represented on the Executive Committee by their Chair. Each property has a committee that looks after its care and use and reports on the property's financial affairs.



## Governance & Compliance

IGG is a registered charity and complies with all statutory obligations. Irish Girl Guides has always held itself to the highest standards of best practice in relation to governance and compliance to ensure transparency and accountability.

IGG is registered with the Lobbying Register and submits quarterly reports. IGG is also a signatory to the Dóchas Code of Conduct on Images and Messages and strives to abide by the Leave No Trace ethos. IGG complies with the National Quality Standards Framework for Youth Work (NQS) and contributes to the National Youth Strategy.

IGG has a risk policy which is reviewed annually by the Board and is monitored by the CEO and Chief Commissioner. A conflict of loyalty and a conflict of interest policy operates at Board level and all Trustees make an annual declaration of their interests.

The Executive and Programme & Training Committees are responsible for the strategic direction of IGG and currently monitor the activities quarterly to ensure the organisation achieves its agreed outcomes as stated in our Strategic Plan for 2016-2022, known as #IGG2022.

## Memberships in 2019

Irish Girl Guides held the following memberships in 2019:

- Irish Development Education Association (IDEA)
- National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI)
- National Women's Council of Ireland (NWC)
- Council of Guiding Associations Ireland (CIGA)
- World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS)
- Children's Rights Alliance (CRA)
- Small Firms Association
- The Wheel

## Donating to IGG

We continued to collect online donations and run fundraising events this year. IGG is grateful for all donations, sponsorships and fundraising.

Every year IGG benefits from donations that people have made in their will. Leaving a gift to Irish Girl Guides by this means is a lovely way for your generosity to last beyond your own lifetime and helps to ensure the organisation you value will continue to make a difference in the future. Your gift can be as general or as specific as you like. IGG will fully honour your wishes and donors can remain anonymous if they so wish.

## Financial Summary

IGG is a not-for-profit organisation and has been granted charitable status under the Taxes Consolidation Act 1996 (CHA 4726). IGG is also registered with the Charities Regulatory Authority (RCN: 20006327).

The financial affairs of the organisation are managed by the Finance Committee with responsibility to and in consultation with the Executive Committee. The Finance Committee is responsible for the audit, budgeting and finances which are all subject to detailed review. Adequate systems of internal control are in place which aim to ensure compliance with laws and policies, efficient and effective use of resources, to safeguard our assets, and maintain the integrity of the financial information produced. In 2019 the Finance Committee met six times.

Each Unit, District and Area keeps proper financial records for which they appoint a Treasurer who monitors the finances at local level. Regions and committees keep proper financial records which are checked by the Finance Committee on an annual basis. An external auditor checks the national accounts.

IGG's income is dependent on a grant from the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA) administered by Pobal (53%), membership fees (35%) and fundraising through grants, sponsorships and donations (12%). In 2019, DCYA funding came from two separate funding streams - the Youth Services Grant Scheme (€401,927) and the Capital Funding Scheme (€20,000). All members pay a €40 membership fee which is collected nationally, a proportion of which funds Regional activities.

Irish Girl Guides is officially recognised as meeting the requirements of the Irish Charities' Tax Reform Group (ICTR) Statement of Guiding Principles for Fundraising.

It is imperative for all organisations in receipt of public funding to live up to their fiduciary responsibilities in terms of corporate governance. This is an ongoing process which requires us to review and sometimes modify our procedures as we develop and which we believe are in the best interests of all our members.

IGG greatly appreciates grants from the Department of Children and Youth Affairs; Irish Aid; Trócaire; Aer Lingus; WAGGGS; Ulster Bank Skills and Opportunities Fund; European Movement Ireland; UK Online Giving Foundation and Your Cause. Donations were also received from LHK Insurance and Allianz.

**A full set of the Irish Girl Guides 2019 accounts is available for review at [www.irishgirlguides.ie](http://www.irishgirlguides.ie) or on request from our National Office.**

### Aviation Badge

Irish Girl Guides was delighted to partner with Aer Lingus to launch an Aviation badge for members. Working towards the badge helps girls develop an interest and foundation for future study in STEM subjects and encourages girls to consider future careers in the aviation industry.

An age-appropriate curriculum has been developed for each Branch. Ladybirds colour in a picture of an aircraft and make an object that flies, such as a paper plane or kite. Brownies research different careers linked with aviation and air transportation, investigate innovative women in the history of aviation and learn the phonetic language of aviation. Guides research the pilot profession and the education and skills that are required, and put their engineering skills to the test by creating their own aircraft experiments.

Yvonne De Silva, Head of Operations Control with Aer Lingus, spoke at the launch saying *"Never underestimate the impact a Guiding activity can have on the girls in your Unit, as my interest in aviation was sparked through Guiding."*

Rachel Izzard, Chief Financial Officer announced that *"Both Aer Lingus and myself, as a female leader in aviation who is passionate about supporting diversity and inclusion, are honoured to partner with Irish Girl Guides on the recent launch of the aviation badges."*



### Europe Badge

Developed in partnership with European Movement Ireland (EMI), the Europe badge was introduced in May 2019. Members gain an understanding of the European Union (EU) and how it affects the lives of Irish citizens. To earn the badge, Ladybirds learn to recognise the EU flag, learn greeting customs from other EU countries and make rubbings of Euro coins. Brownies discover which countries are members of the EU, learn about the role of MEPs and, through a variety of activities, identify ways of respecting and including different cultures. Guides learn why the EU was formed, when Ireland joined and the advantages of being an EU member. They celebrate a cultural festival such as hosting a Eurovision-style competition and invite a politician to come and talk to them about the EU.



### SDG 13 Climate Action Badge

Irish Girl Guides launched a Climate Action badge in partnership with Trócaire during its national conference in Galway in February. The badge was inspired by the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal No. 13 - 'Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts' - and IGG was delighted to have Áine O'Driscoll from Trócaire present at the launch. It is hoped that earning the badge will give girls and young women the tools and encouragement to strive to combat climate change.

Ladybirds and Brownies learn through a series of activities how important it is to care for the environment and how they can take steps to combat climate change. Guides and Senior Branch members learn how climate change has resulted from human activities and discover how climate change is affecting communities in Trócaire's partner countries e.g. drought and food insecurity in Ethiopia, migration in Kenya and extreme flooding and sea level rise in Honduras.

Girls and young women of all ages are encouraged to make the link between human rights and climate justice and to consider how Ireland overall, and their own actions, are contributing to climate change. Through a series of activities, they are then supported to decide what actions they can take to address climate change.



Launching the badge at an EMI 'Handshake for Europe' event in Iveagh House, the headquarters of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Minister of State for European Affairs, Helen McEntee TD, said, *"This is a fantastic initiative that I am delighted to launch today. The initiative developed by the Irish Girl Guides and European Movement Ireland is yet another way to promote, learn and understand the workings of the European Union. It is vitally important to educate our young people about why the EU exists in a way that engages them and encourages them to want to learn more."*



### National Guide Awards

In October, 137 Guides aged 14 and 15 from across Ireland travelled with their proud Leaders and parents to Croke Park where they were presented with the National Guide Award – Irish Girl Guides' highest Guide award – by IGG President Maureen Murphy.

Congratulating the recipients, IGG President Maureen Murphy said, *"It is a privilege to be here today to celebrate and acknowledge the achievements of our Trail Blazers who have all shown commitment in completing the challenges and, in doing so, putting your individual footprint on your tasks. You are inspirational, you will inspire younger members and take your learning and experiences gained into your communities and wider society."*

IGG's Honorary Ambassador, Dr Niamh Shaw, who was the keynote speaker during the special ceremony, said she was *"especially excited"* to attend the National Guide Awards to celebrate and acknowledge all the recipients' outstanding achievements and contributions to the Irish Girl Guides. *"I want you to keep contributing your very best to everything you pursue in life because you are our future, Ireland's future,"* she said.

*"We can create any future we want if we dream big enough and work hard enough,"* she continued. *"I can already see that working hard comes easy to you all, so nothing can possibly stop you from becoming whatever you want in your life."*

We sometimes have visits from very interesting people such as politicians, fire brigade and nurses so we can learn about their work and what we can do to help more.  
**Lucy, aged 12**



### 50 Year Service Awards

Four IGG members were presented with 50-year-service awards by IGG President Maureen Murphy and Chief Commissioner Helen Concannon at General Council in April 2019 - Gill Buckley and Joan Gregg from Eastern Region, Margery Godinho from South East Region and Aine Guerin from South West Region. Between them they had clocked up more than 200 years of service!



### Gaisce Awards

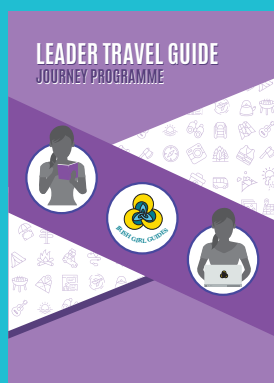
We were delighted to continue our partnership with Gaisce – The President's Award and were very proud of our 12 Senior Branch members who received Gaisce Awards in 2019. Eight young women achieved Bronze, two Silver and two Gold. Gaisce Awards challenge young people aged 15-25 'to dream big and realise their potential' by taking on personal, physical and community challenges and developing new skills.

While working towards her Gold Award, Ailis Ward took up swimming and creative writing, hiked 80 kilometres over four days and became a Leader with her local Ladybird Unit in Kinsale. Her favourite part of her Award journey was helping sick people during a visit to Lourdes, ensuring their stay was an enjoyable one. *"Things do not come easy to me"* Ailis shared. *"I wanted to give back to people because the Irish Girl Guides have very much included and encouraged me within Guiding."*

Gold Gaisce Award recipient, Carol Martin, took up yoga, became a Leader with Smarties Brownies in Charleville, volunteered at IGG's last international camp, IGGNITE2017, and learned to play the violin. She took to it so well that she ended up playing in the National Concert Hall in Dublin with her local orchestra. She also walked the final 120km of the French Camino with Charleville Senior Branch. *"It was one of the most difficult things I've ever done but I got through it with the support of my Guiding group"* she said.

### Revised Journey Programme

In accordance with feedback from Leaders, gathered by way of a 'Pit Stop' survey, the Branch committees revised the IGG Journey Programme, first established in 2015. Leaders were asked for their thoughts on how the programme was working for them and their Units. Issues highlighted ranged from whether it was necessary for Ladybirds to learn their parents' phone numbers to Brownie Leaders feeling somewhat restricted by the amount of compulsory programme for Brownies. The issues raised were addressed in revising the programme and the updated programme material was made available to girls and Leaders. In addition, we highlighted activities and badge curricula that relate to the Sustainable Development Goals as we are committed to raising our members' awareness of their importance throughout our programme.



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### A New Vision for IGG

In 2019, a new Vision for IGG was established. Girls, Leaders and staff were all consulted and a short-list of ten possible statements was presented to each Unit in the country for their votes. Leaders were urged to ensure that all girls and Leaders in their Unit had their vote. Votes were gathered and counted at the Executive Committee meeting in December and the following was selected as the new Vision for IGG:

*Today there can be a place for girls to be themselves, a place where there is diversity, equality, a place to make a difference, and that place is Girl Guides.*

We look forward to displaying this Vision on the walls of our new National Training Centre in Tallaght.



### National Training Centre for IGG

In 2019, after a long search, IGG bought a new property in Dublin and set about turning this blank canvas in Belgard Square, Tallaght into the Irish Girl Guides National Training Centre. Up to 1935, Irish Guiding had no National headquarters but, that year, Lady Powerscourt negotiated the lease of the top floor of 4 Dawson Street in Dublin City. In a short piece of writing taken from the history of the move, it was the many kind benefactors who made it a new home: *"To 4 Dawson Street our only piece of furniture, a very small cupboard, was triumphantly removed. Our spirits were then raised by the gift of a cheerful roll of carpeting from the Deputy Chief Commissioner. The Chief Commissioner presented curtains and an invaluable table to which Mrs Lombard Murphy added a cloth, Lady Walsh a blotter and Miss de Selby an inkstand. To her, we also owe gratitude for a charming little picture, and to Lady Murphy for a clock, to Miss Kenny for bookshelves, to Miss Dease and Mrs Leigh-White for a carved tray, and to Mrs and Miss Beatty for the brass plate on the door."*

We now need the modern day Miss de Selby's, the Lady Walsh's and the Miss Beatty's to lend innovation instead of curtain linings, ingenuity instead of ink blotter's, inspiration in place of bookshelves and brass plates and, most importantly, funding to help create a unique and productive space for our members to become the change-makers of the future. Our new purpose-led building will meet the expanding needs of IGG and be accessible to all members from across Ireland while allowing for growth into the future. When it is renovated and furnished, our new headquarters will include training rooms, collaboration and maker spaces, office space and our Distribution Centre. More than that, this Centre will give members from all backgrounds a holistic space to spark and develop new ideas and to equip the next generation of Irish female role models.

### Seniors Branchers address UN President at UN Youth Delegate event

Four Senior Branch members, from Tralee and Dunshaughlin, represented IGG at a UN Youth Delegate event in Farmleigh House in the Phoenix Park. Two of the girls were invited to address the audience, which included the President of the UN General Assembly Mr Tijjani Muhammad-Band and climate activists from around the country. They talked about their experience on the Senior Branch trip to India during the summer and the work that IGG is undertaking in relation to climate action and the SDGs. They spoke about the Climate Action badge that IGG has developed with Trócaire and about the plans for a Responsible Consumerism badge in collaboration with Irish Aid. The girls' speech is available to read on the IGG website.

## #FutureCEOs Cookie Programme

For the third year running, National Cookie Month in November saw thousands of IGG members throughout the country selling Irish Girl Guides' cookies in order to raise funds for their Units and other charities. Thanks to a grant from the Ulster Bank Skills and Opportunities Fund, we were able to conduct research around adding a new flavour. The 122 Guides at the Patrol Leaders' weekend in April, did a cookie taste test of six different flavours and the clear winner was chocolate-enrobed chocolate chunk cookies. These are made with Irish butter and were a very tasty addition this year. A total of 14,077 packets of cookies were sold. Merlin Woods Unit in Galway was the top-selling Unit, selling over 1,500 packets in total.



The previous year's winners, Carrigdhoun Guides from Carrigaline, Cork, were lucky enough to receive a visit from Dragon's Den Investor Alison Cowzer. The cookies are produced in East Coast Bakehouse in Drogheda where Alison is the Marketing and Innovation Director. The Guides were delighted to hear some of Ms Cowzer's insider marketing and sales tips.

The #FutureCEOs Cookie Programme isn't all about the cookies, or even the money! By deciding how many packets to order, how to go about selling the biscuits and how they will spend the proceeds of their sales, the girls develop communication, teamwork and other essential life-skills.

Ms Cowzer, who spoke at IGG's Extraordinary General Meeting, is delighted to lend her support to the cookie initiative, given that, she says, *"It could take centuries to achieve equality without serious efforts to bring women into male-dominated spheres, such as business and politics. No other organisation in Ireland is specifically working with girls to tackle the gender imbalance in business and so I am very happy to be a part of this project, which is helping foster a spirit of entrepreneurship among Irish girls and young women."*



*I like playing games especially Corners and doing the arts and crafts. I love getting badges.*  
**Rachael, aged 6**

## IGG and Earthology Garden at Bloom

We were delighted to partner with Earthology, a sustainability consultancy founded by IGG Leader Sarah Blake, to create a Pledge Against Plastic garden at Bloom. The postcard garden, which was created almost entirely out of recycled materials, was Highly Commended by the Bloom judges and attracted much attention and praise as

well as sparking many conversations around how we can take practical steps to care for the environment and combat climate change.

As part of IGG's Responsible Consumerism focus, IGG members from all around Ireland contributed to the garden by collecting bottle tops and making eco-bricks. The back of the garden featured a wall on which Rathgar Brownies and Guides had signed their pledges to reduce their use of plastic and visitors to the garden were encouraged to make their own #PledgeAgainstPlastic.

An Taoiseach Leo Varadkar spent some time admiring the garden and even tried out the sofa, which was made entirely out of eco-bricks (two litre plastic bottles filled with soft plastics). Peter Donegan, a Royal Horticultural Society Silver Medal awardee, said the girls' hard work and creativity had made him *"smile very much"* and climate campaigner and author, Lorna Gold, said it was her favourite garden because *"It has the most heart in it"*.

### Fun fact!

Can you guess how many bottle tops were used to create the garden?

**Answer:** 1,500 plastic bottle tops!

### Encouraging girls in STEM

As a result of our continuing partnership with Dublin City University's School of STEM Education, Innovation and Global Studies department, 18 Guides and Senior Branch members took part in the FIRST\* LEGO League Leinster finals in DCU in January. The girls, who had all won scholarships to take part in the League, worked on their projects for months and the two teams impressed the judges with their innovative and creative research and performance skills (which involved designing and programming a robot). Team Sparrots managed to scoop top prize in the research category for their exploration of new ways to grow vegetables in space. The other IGG team, CLWKD, looked at ways to help reduce homesickness and to improve the benefits from fitness programmes on the space station.

In June, 21 Guides and Senior Branch members successfully completed a mission to blast off 'Into Orbit' at a LEGO Robotics Summer Academy in DCU's LEGO Education Innovation Studio. The girls learned programming concepts, experienced elements of computational thinking and developed an understanding of a range of mechanical engineering procedures. The teams of four researched topics as varied as radiation to depression and loneliness in space and, at the end of the academy, each group gave a presentation at a special ceremony. Teams also participated in a robotics challenge using the robots they had designed and programmed and were each presented with a certificate and a medal.

*\*FIRST is an acronym for 'For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology' and the FIRST LEGO League is an international organisation that encourages young people to think like scientists and engineers, developing practical solutions to real-world issues.*



### Juliette Low Seminar (JLS)

The Juliette Low Seminar is an international week-long leadership development event for young women that provides adventure, cultural and leadership experiences. It is organised by the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS) every three years and this year, for the first time, the JLS was delivered simultaneously in 18 hub locations across the world. Over 500 young women took part with 150 facilitators and volunteers.

IGG hosted the Irish hub in Gormanston, Co. Meath and welcomed 23 young women from 18 countries. Three IGG members participated in the Irish JLS hub and eight members represented IGG at JLS hubs overseas in the USA, Oman, Nigeria, Our Cabana in Mexico, Our Chalet in Switzerland, Madagascar, France and Poland. In addition to this, four IGG members were part of the WAGGGS global facilitation team – two in Ireland, one in the USA and one at Our Chalet.

The 500+ Guide Leaders followed the same Lead Out Loud programme at each hub, which saw them develop their leadership skills and learn how to tackle gender barriers to leadership so that they can take the lead and bring about change in their communities.

Each participant was asked to share their learnings with 100+ younger Girl Guides on their return home. By doing this over the next two years, it is expected that 100,000 girls and young women throughout the world will be encouraged and empowered to take on leadership roles in their communities and, in so doing, to have a significant positive impact on society.

*Guiding is a place where you can be yourself and have fun. Sophie, aged 15*

### National Conference

Our National Conference for Leaders in February was another jam-packed weekend of training and networking, chat and laughter. A number of launches were held during the Conference. Our new Climate Action badge was launched with Trócaire (read more on page 6); our next international camp, Octagon, was launched with great excitement by members of Barna and Merlin Woods Guides; and the Cara badge for Leaders was introduced, a two-part metal Cara pin that they can earn when they recruit a new Leader (one part for them, one part for the new recruit). We were also pleased to have Liz Waters, CEO with An Cosán, speak at the event. On the Saturday afternoon all Leaders were encouraged to go out for a walk on the lovely Salthill promenade. The walk was organised to create awareness of the Women's Aid Walk for Women in February fundraising initiative.



### Health Quality Mark

IGG received its sixth Gold Health Quality Mark from the National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI) in recognition of our work on health promotion for young people. Lisa Harold from the NYCI National Youth Health Programme presented the award at our National Programme and Training Committee meeting in May and said, *"This award is a testament to the hard work and dedication of all at Irish Girl Guides. They are committed to the highest quality standards in health promotion and it is clear that ensuring a healthy and safe place for young people and staff is a key priority here."*

Ms Harold added: *"Congratulations are in order to the staff, volunteers and young people of the service, especially those who have guided the organisation through the process to ensure that their work is in line with national and international best practice in the area of youth health promotion."*

IGG National Programme and Training Commissioner, Jenny Gannon, said *"Irish Girl Guides has successfully maintained the Gold Standard in Health Promotion since the award was launched in 2001. We continue to incorporate health-focused approaches in our programmes, events and weekly meetings because we believe that they form the basis of good quality youth work relevant to today's young people."*



### IGG Website Developments

We introduced three online courses for Leaders on our website in 2019 - *Safeguarding and Child Protection for Under 18s*, *Assistant Leader Warrant* and a *New Safeguarding and Child Protection Refresher Course (for over 18s)*. All courses are self-explanatory and self-guided so Leaders can navigate them easily and go at their own pace.

An online booking system for the IGG cottages and campsites around the country was also established making it easier for Leaders to plan and book trips away with their Units.

*You can never be bored when you are a Brownie as there are so many ideas for badge work.* **Ríonagh, aged 10**



### National Good Turn Week

We held our third ever National Good Turn Week in April. As well as doing Good Turns at home and at school, many of our members took the opportunity to do Good Turns in the local community, such as litter picks in conjunction with An Taisce's National Spring Clean.

We encouraged members of the public to join us in doing Good Turns too and to share them on social media with the hashtag #GoodTurns. In this way, we spread kindness and goodwill throughout the country, making a positive impact on individuals, families, communities and on society as a whole.

Carrying out Good Turns daily impresses the value of volunteering on our members from a young age. Younger girls can help with chores around the home and at school while older girls and young women get involved in community action projects and learn to use their voices and their skills to improve the world around them. Carrying out Good Turns helps everyone to see opportunities in everyday life and to become active citizens.

## International Activities



### International Committee

The International Committee received lots of entries from Ladybirds, Brownies and Guides for the International Postcard Competition which was held in January 2019. The theme for submissions was Leadership and the winners were Maria O'Connor (Rathfarnham Ladybirds), Aoife Azmi (Owenabue Brownies) and Daisy Ellen Foy (Maynooth Guides).

Guide Units from across the country were invited to take part in Timpeall an Domhain. Guides had the opportunity to explore the cultures of Jamaica, Jordan, New Zealand, Nigeria, and Poland in Patrols. Each Patrol presented on a craft or song, a drama piece, an information sharing poster and a dessert from their selected country. The National Final was held in Sunshine House, Balbriggan in April 2019 where each Patrol presented fun facts about their chosen country and completed a cooking challenge. Well done to North Longford Guides who won the Junior Division and Merlin Woods Guides who won the Senior Division.

The International Selection Day was held in October. This event enables IGG members to put their name forward for international events under a number of panels. This year, 14 people took part in the day and there were four panels to choose from.

Lots of Units travelled abroad throughout 2019 taking part in various camps and adventure holidays. You can read about some of these on these pages.

### WAGGGS European Conference

The European Conference was held in Croatia this year where Jenny Gannon, Jenna Goodwin, Amanda O'Sullivan, and Dara Callanan represented IGG along with our members from the Catholic Guides of Ireland. The conference included sessions on WAGGGS' initiatives and a presentation by the IGG contingent on partnerships that have been developed by IGG. IGG were honoured to accept, on behalf of Jillian van Turnhout, a Medal of Service which is awarded for outstanding service.

### Helen Storrow Seminar

In February, Ciara Beth Griffin represented IGG at the Helen Storrow Seminar which is held in the Swiss World Centre, Our Chalet, each year. The week-long WAGGGS leadership seminar focuses on climate action and participants learned about the Sustainable Development Goals, climate change and leadership.



### My Europe, My Say

The My Europe, My Say event was held in Strasbourg and attended by Dara Callanan, Rachel Doyle, Emily Yule, and Niamh Healy. They addressed the importance of getting young people involved in Europe with one of the aims to encourage young people to vote in the European elections. They learned communication skills, shared campaign ideas and discussed the lives of young people around the world.



### The Academy, Slovenia

Orla O'Neill, Alison Cahill and Emily Yule had the opportunity to attend The Academy in Slovenia. The Academy is a Guide and Scout event which provides training and networking opportunities around the core priorities of WAGGGS and WOSM European Regions.



## Explorer Belt

At the end of July, the Explorer Belt was held in Belgium. 12 brave Leaders took on Guiding's ultimate challenge in pairs when they each walked 180km over the course of ten days carrying all their camping and cooking equipment, food and water, and surviving on just €3.25 a day.

The teams pitched their tents in a new place each night and tackled projects along the way - without the use of a smartphone. One participant reported, *"I realised I can be personally resilient; once we took that first step, I wasn't going to stop."* Teams had the chance to experience the wonderful Belgian welcome and culture and to explore the beautiful countryside.



## 1999 World Conference Reunion

In July 1999, the Council of Irish Guiding Associations (IGG and Catholic Guides of Ireland) hosted the 30<sup>th</sup> WAGGGS World Conference in University College Dublin. In 2019, to commemorate 20 years since it was held, a reunion took place in July in Mount Temple School, Dublin and was attended by 45 volunteers who had been involved in some aspect of the organisation and smooth running of the World Conference.

Participants brought photo albums and other Conference memorabilia to share with others and some even wore the jade green polo shirts worn by Irish Guiding volunteers in 1999. Those present were interested to hear Margaret Dunne, Conference Administrator, give the background to how Ireland had come to host the World Conference. Elspeth Henderson, Conference Chair, then showed a presentation of photographs of the event, bringing back many happy memories. Several people shared experiences, memories, highlights and funny stories which kept everyone entertained. Some members of the Service Team (Senior Branch age) explained how much Guiding had come to mean to them as a result of their involvement in the World Conference.

Nicola Grinstead, former Chair of WAGGGS, spoke about some of the top moments in Guiding in the years since the Conference. The day ended with Ollie Ballantine, composer of the 1999 World Conference Song, leading the singing of "Dare To Dream".

## Network Meeting for Guide and Scout External Representatives

In January, Lucy O'Donovan and Sarah Canavan travelled to Brussels to participate in the network meeting organised by WAGGGS Europe Region. There were 50 participants from across Europe and the four-day training involved skills development, advocacy workshops and communications training.

*Guiding means friends. We're all from everywhere and we all love exploring new activities and opportunities I am so proud to be a Guide.*  
Lauren, aged 13

## Senior Branch 100<sup>th</sup> Celebratory Sangam Trip

During the summer of 2019, to mark the Senior Branch Centenary, 35 Senior Branchers and 15 Leaders had the opportunity to travel to Sangam in India, one of the Guiding World Centres. The trip was an educational and cultural experience. They learned about Guiding at a global level and were linked in with community action projects in local schools and retirement homes. One of their tasks was to consider how India recycles waste and reduces plastic packaging. The participants will use their new knowledge to develop a Responsible Consumerism badge linked to SDG 12. The badge, which is being supported by Irish Aid's Development Education grant, will encourage IGG members to reduce their use of single-use plastic and take other steps to lead more sustainable lives.

As well as participating in community action projects, the group explored the area, met local people and experienced Indian culture, went on hikes and shopped for saris. It was a life-changing experience for all who took part. Reflecting on the experience, one Senior Branch member, Ailbhe Mangan, said the trip easily exceeded her expectations and that *"we were provided with a trip of a lifetime that opened my eyes to the amount poverty in the world."*



### Ladybird Branch

Ladybirds introduced their Book Lover Interest Badge in 2019. It sees girls enjoying stories, making bookmarks, and dressing up as their favourite book characters. It was the most popular badge among Ladybirds in 2019 with 985 girls achieving it.



Fota Wildlife Park in Cork and Dublin Zoo were the venues for simultaneous birthday parties in June celebrating **30 years of Ladybirds**. More than 300 Ladybirds and 100 Leaders attended each event. There was singing and dancing and a big birthday cake at each event. Monica McDonnell, Chair of Ladybird Branch, said *"There was a brilliant atmosphere and the girls in Dublin were particularly excited to be joined by award-winning space explorer and science communicator Dr Niamh Shaw [IGG Ambassador] who told them about her space adventures."* Our thanks to event sponsors including Impression Design and Print, Galway Bay Hotel, Tayto, Fyffes and the staff of Deloitte.

In addition, Ladybird Units across the country gathered for their own 30<sup>th</sup> birthday celebrations throughout the year with lots of very special Ladybird birthday cakes, fun, games and singing.

Ladybird Branch ran a competition for Ladybirds to design the Ladybird's 30<sup>th</sup> birthday card. They received lots of wonderful entries and the winner hailed from CúChulainn Ladybirds in Drogheda.

### Guide Branch

Guide Branch held a very successful Patrol Leaders' weekend in Kilkenny College in April. It was attended by 122 Guides and their Leaders. The Guides completed a range of indoor and outdoor activities to empower them to return to their Units with lots of ideas and skills on the importance of being a Patrol Leader. During the weekend, a competition was held to name our new Guide mascot. The winning name was 'Bella Bear'. The Bella Bear mascot now visits Guide Units across the country and those girls can receive the new Bella Bear badge.



In October, we held our annual National Guide Award ceremony in Croke Park (see page 7). 137 Guides, their parents, Unit Leaders and invited guests attended. This is the highest award that can be awarded in Guiding. At the ceremony, IGG Ambassador Niamh Shaw gave a very inspirational talk to the Guides about her interest in space and showed a very interesting video which has piqued the interest of Guides in space. Luckily for them, IGG is introducing a Space Interest Badge in 2020.

October was also the month for outdoor cooking and Guide Units across the country took to fields, gardens and yards to cook up a variety of good food on outdoor stoves and campfires.

### Brownie Branch

The Brownie Challenge ran from September 2018 all the way throughout 2019 and we were delighted to have 3,361 Brownies from all over the country earn the Brownie Challenge badge. In order to gain the badge, Brownies completed challenges from six different areas - Guiding, Outdoors, Lifeskills, Global Awareness, Teamwork and Change.



2019 saw some significant tweaks and changes being made to the Brownie Journey Programme to ensure that the programme is even more enjoyable for both Leaders and Brownies. The revised programme allows for more flexibility when choosing compulsory activities and more time to complete Brownie Interest Badges, Choice Challenges and new badges as they are launched.

In the summer, Brownie Branch launched a Brownie Pack Holiday Challenge to encourage as many Units as possible around the country to go on a Pack Holiday. Brownies from all around the country took part and each Brownie was sent a special limited edition Pack Holiday Challenge badge as a big Brownie 'well done' for taking part.

### Senior Branch

Twenty Senior Branch members took part in the 2019 Ventact South camp at Kilcully Campsite in Cork in September. Ventact is an annual event organised by the Joint Committee of Scouts and Guides in Cork. The girls enjoyed campfires, live music, a fire display, a disco and a range of outdoor activities.



104 Senior Branchers enjoyed a fun time at the National Senior Branch Weekend in November at the Knocknacara GAA Club in Salthill, Galway. The girls piloted a number of activities in preparation for the Responsible Consumerism badge, led by the group that travelled to India who are developing the badge. Congratulations to North Longford Senior Branch who were announced the winners of the Senior Branch Challenge at the weekend.

Senior Branchers successfully raised €2,752 for Women's Aid and Focus Ireland by attending Electric Picnic as staff. The girls worked in shifts, stewarding, answering questions from festival goers and lent a helping hand with tents. The girls enjoyed staff perks, from free time to enjoy the festival to the quiet staff campsite, and the girls' pay went to their selected charities.

The Explorer Belt in Belgium and the Senior Branch 100 years trip to Sangam in India, were highlights of 2019 for Senior Branch. Girls travelled and participated in a range of activities and experienced different cultures. Read more about these trips in the International Activities section on the previous page.

## Trefoil Guild Highlights

Trefoil Guild were very active during the year with 8 Guilds and 31 Lone Members keeping in touch with Guiding by attending meetings of local Units and enjoying a large variety of social and cultural activities. One member attended the European Conference of the IFGS in Bremen in August which was followed by a few days of hospitality in the region.

Closer to home, a large group of Trefoil Guild members visited the Little Museum of Dublin followed by an educational tour of Stephen's Green. Another group visited Stormont at the invitation of the Friends of Lorne where they were shown around and entertained for lunch. At Christmas, members from several Guilds came together to visit the Neopolitan Crib in Dublin Castle and found it fascinating leading to much discussion.

Guilds organised fundraising events for several charities during the year including the Capuchin Day Centre and the Hope Foundation, and a donation was made to the Mosney Direct Provision Centre. Plans for a few new Guilds are in the pipeline and we hope to welcome them to Trefoil Guild in 2020.



## Membership, Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Committee (MEDI)

The MEDI Committee was delighted to continue its partnership with Trócaire this year. A great success was the launch of our SDG 13 Climate Action badge at the National Conference in Galway, with lots of positive feedback on the activities available to engage our members in the topic of climate change.

We also began a connection with Involve in 2019. Involve are an inclusion youth work service particularly aimed at young people from the Traveller Community. We explored how best to include girls and young women from Traveller families in Irish Girl Guides.

MEDI continues to support the Mosney Brownie Unit and were happy to see a new Guide Unit open in the Direct Provision Centre in Co. Meath. The committee was happy to hear of other centres where girls have been involved in Guiding locally such as in Wicklow. We hope to reach many more girls and Leaders in the future.

We began investigating how accessible the buildings we use around Ireland are to members with different needs. The committee was keen to develop more supports for Leaders around diversity issues and made plans as to how best to provide these including further possible collaboration with other organisations and IGG committees.



## Adult Training and Outdoors Committee (ATOC)

The first Outdoor Training Weekend for Leaders was held in Kilkenny in April, in parallel with the National Patrol Leaders' Training in Kilkenny College. Leaders from all over Ireland and all Branches came to learn and share skills like outdoor cooking on stoves and fires, pioneering, map-reading, compass skills and orienteering. They joined with the Patrol Leaders for a table quiz and Guide's Own and finished with a highly competitive game of Captain Ball. The Outdoor Training Weekend was a great success, mainly due to the enthusiasm of the Leaders present, and we hope to build on this in the future.

In September, we launched the Outdoor Challenge. This is based on the principles of Leave no Trace and comprises a menu of outdoor activities based on the existing Journey Programme. All Units, from Ladybirds up, can pick the challenges they want to complete over the year to gain their Outdoor Challenge badge.

In November, the Trainers' Conference was held in Nenagh. Prospective and existing trainers came together to learn new skills to help them in their role, such as presentation methods, outdoor activities and conflict resolution. They were introduced to IGG's new online trainings and other new developments, and had an opportunity to share ideas and experiences with other trainers.

*I love Brownies because  
I like making new friends and doing new  
things, especially crafts.  
Ella, aged 7*

### South West Region

2019 started off with the official opening of the refurbished, more spacious South West Regional Resource Centre. An Open Day was held for members to drop in and have a look and the number of meetings and trainings increased exponentially from Area and District Commissioner Trainings to the Regional Finals of Timpeall an Domhain.

Guides, Senior Branch members and Leaders attended numerous international events in 2019 including Action on Body Confidence at Our Chalet, Switzerland; Charnwood Camp 2019; Explorer Belt in Belgium; the Discover Your Potential IV event in Sangam, India for the Senior Branch 100-year celebrations; Tartan Gig in Scotland; and the Juliette Low Seminar in Ireland and further afield.

225 Ladybirds and Brownies descended on Ballinora in May for the Regional Fun Day where they visited five organised zones - Active, Guiding, STEM, Craft and Outdoor. A visit by the local Fire Brigade with their fire engine was a great hit, as was the ice cream van. Big numbers of Ladybirds attended the Ladybirds' 30<sup>th</sup> birthday celebrations in Fota Wildlife Park in June.

The South West Regional Camp, Campa Crann, was held in West Cork Secret, an activity centre near Kilbrittain. Biodiversity-themed activities focused on SDG 15 Life on Land. The Camp was attended by 17 Brownies and 120 Guides and Senior Branchers and a number of Leaders gained their outdoor qualifications.

Cork Life Long Living Festival, Cork Culture Night, UCC Fair Day and the HSE Well-being Day event in Doneraile Park were all wonderful opportunities for IGG in the South West to showcase the advantages of IGG membership and numerous new members and Leaders were recruited at these events.

28 Guides received their National Guide Awards in October and Ailís Ward received her Gold Gaisce at Dublin Castle in December.

The South West Regional Conference was very well attended by Leaders, there was much learning and enjoyment, and the address by Carmel O'Keeffe from Dress for Success went down very well.

Coolnasmear and An Crannóg Brownies re-opened, as did Dunmanway Ladybirds, and a new Brownie Unit started up in Dingle.

*I love Senior Branch because it is a break from the digital world and where your friends are real. Senior Branch is about friendship, fun and lots and lots of laughs.*  
Marsha, aged 16



### South East Region

Our 2019 Regional Camp took place in the brilliant International Outdoor Adventure Centre in Wexford. The Camp saw Guides and Senior Branchers from across the Region take part in activities including raft-building and high-wires, camp crafts and an epic campfire with lots of songs. We were delighted to have some special visitors to the camp including Maureen Murphy, IGG President.

The Region held its first Guide Cookout in several years in Waterford in October. The cookout was themed 'ready, steady, cook', with the Guides given a bag of ingredients from which they were to prepare a main course. The cookout was meat-free to tie in with our support of SDG 12 Responsible Consumption and Production and SDG 13 Climate Action. All Guides produced super tasty vegetarian dishes but the Guides from Kilkenny stole the show.

The 2019 Regional Conference was held in Lyrath Estate, Kilkenny. As well as holding our usual Branch Training and Warrant Training, the 2019 conference was a lot of fun. We had a range of special guest speakers including IGG's Honorary Ambassador, Niamh Shaw; a representative from Focus Ireland; and a speaker who informed us of the importance of staying safe online. Leaders had the opportunity to relax by using the hotels' leisure centre or by taking part in a yogalates and meditation session. Another exciting addition to the conference was the 'Superstar Leader Award' where all Leaders present had the opportunity to choose one Leader from the Region who is truly a superstar. Our 2019 Superstar Leader was Fiona Cantwell from Kilkenny.

## West & Central Midlands Region

2019 was a very successful year for West and Central Midlands with North Longford Guides winning the junior section of Timpeall an Domhain and Merlin Woods Guides, Galway, winning the senior section. Not to be outdone, North Longford Senior Branch won the National Senior Branch Challenge at the Senior Branch Weekend, an annual event each November, hosted in 2019 by the Region in Galway.

Annette Coughlan came on board as the new Regional Development Officer and spent much of the autumn months assisting new Units and Leaders in Longford to get up and running.

The West and Central Midlands Regional Camp was held in Portlick, Co. Westmeath, where the Regional Cookout competition was held. A team from Sí Gaoith Guides, Barna, won the cup with a second Sí Gaoith team coming second and winning the shield.

Guides from St. Rynagh's Guides in Banagher were presented with their National Guide Award at Croke Park, as were Guides from Merlin Woods, Galway, and Sí Gaoith, Barna.

On the international front, Maggie Cumiskey attended the Juliette Low Seminar Irish hub in Gormanstown, Co. Meath, and Orla O'Neill took part in the 2019 Academy. Tegan Stanley, Lucy Lyons, and Orla O'Neill from the Region travelled to Sangam in August with the IGG contingent.

Our 2019 Regional Conference was held in the Shamrock Lodge Hotel in Athlone in September. As well as Branch Training and other participatory learning activities, Leaders had fun decorating cupcakes and ended the conference with a trip on the viking boat on the River Shannon.

Ann Walton, a former Brownie Leader in Galway City and now a stalwart of the Galway Distribution Centre, was presented with her 40-year service pin in November. A range of 5-year, 10-year and 20-year service pins were also presented to attendees at the Regional Conference.



## North West Region

The North West Region had a very active year in 2019. Ardagh Guides represented the Region at the National Final of the Timpeall an Domhain competition in Dublin. Three girls from Tireragh Guides and one from Raphoe Guides received their National Guide Awards in October at Croke Park.

Units from Claremorris, Bohola, Ardagh and Ballina attended a Fun Day at the Jackie Clarke Museum in Ballina. The girls were given a tour of the museum, had a talk from a pilot who used to work for Aer Lingus, made some wreaths and took part in a treasure hunt through the town.

The Donegal Area Day Out involved Ladybird, Brownie and Guide Units from Manorcunningham, Newtowncunningham, Convoys and Raphoe. The girls enjoyed a day of crafts, games and making cupcakes. Belleek Ladybirds had a great time at the Ladybirds' 30<sup>th</sup> birthday celebrations at Dublin Zoo.

Tireragh Guides and Leaders enjoyed a wonderful visit to Lithuania and Eimear McElchar, from Convoys Senior Branch, represented the North West Region at the Juliette Low Seminar in Paris, France.

A number of our Units enjoyed sleepovers and Pack Holidays including Ballina Brownies, Sligo Brownies and Convoys Brownies.

Spring Training included outdoor training and Safeguarding and Child Protection Training. At the North West Regional Conference in October, Leaders learned about LEGO robotics and we had a welcome visit from Irish Girl Guides' CEO, Annemarie Harte.



### North East Region

2019 was a very busy year for the North East Region with lots of Leaders and girls involved in travelling abroad, trainings, camps and overnight trips. We were delighted to open two new Units in the Region - Clogherhead Guides and Mosney Guides - and eleven new Leaders joined us.

Lots of training took place in 2019. We had 19 new Leaders taking part in our Safeguarding and Child Protection Training in Drogheda and Blackgrove Cottage. Spring Training was also a great success with 22 Leaders taking part. Our trainers and champions were busy all year offering fireside training and 20 intrepid Leaders took part in our outdoor skills training event in Collon.

Lots of Units had days out and took trips this year visiting Orchard Cottage, London, Wellies and Wristbands, and our Region saw 12 Leaders visit Sangam, the WAGGGS World Centre in India.

Our Regional Camp, Camp Trilogy, was an amazing success with 200 girls and Leaders camping. It was one of the biggest Regional camps for many years. The Guides enjoyed the challenges of the outdoor pursuits centre, backwoods cooking, drama, making things from natural materials, and helping to save bees. The organising committee and all the Leaders involved did a huge amount of work to make the camp such a success.

Some of the highlights for the Region during the year include the involvement of Navan Girl Guides in the launch of the new Aviation Interest Badge; the participation of five Leaders from the Region in a valuable media skills training with Rick O'Shea; and the crowning of Clogherhead Brownies as 'Ireland's Top Brownie Engineering Team' for their excellent project on preventing water wastage (see back cover).

The North East Regional Conference was a great success with over 80 Leaders attending, taking part in trainings covering play-based learning, the new Europe Interest Badge, Branch training, OGM and IGG accounts, and a self-care workshop with Jigsaw, the National Centre in Ireland for youth mental health.



### Eastern Region

In the Eastern Region we had a great start to the year with two new Regional Development Officers (RDOs), Ceara Martyn and Heather Burnett Niland, bringing with them enthusiasm, energy and ideas. Many of our Leaders attended the National Conference in Galway getting to know each other while training and having fun.

Celbridge District celebrated 50 years with a gathering of Leaders, old and new, and girls, from Ladybirds to Senior Branchers. Everyone enjoyed the photo history, the huge celebratory cake and we celebrated World Thinking Day together.

Our Brownie Day Out on 24 March to Larch Hill was a great success with over 100 Brownies and their Leaders attending. The Region introduced a new badge for all who attended the Area Cookouts during the year. We also ran four Taster Days in Castleknock for Guides and, as a result, re-established a Guide Unit there after a long time.

In September, 16 adults participated in a very successful Outdoor Training weekend which culminated in Carol O'Brady successfully completing her Outdoor Advisor training. We also ran a very successful Leaders' outing to Go Quest in May - who knew that Leaders could be so competitive!

Over 50 Guides from Eastern Region attained their National Guide Award at the Croke Park ceremony in October and 37 Ladybirds attended our Ladybirds 30<sup>th</sup> birthday party in October in Kings Hospital School.

In October, 93 Leaders attended the Eastern Regional Conference where the highlight was a talk from our guest speaker, the CEO of Girlguiding Scotland, Denise Spence.





## Mid-West Region

2019 was another busy year for the Region, and it started off with over 500 members attending the Panto. This was followed shortly after by Leaders travelling to Galway for the National Conference.

Highlights in 2019 included our Regional Ladybird Day Out where 154 Ladybirds from around the Region and their Leaders enjoyed a magical day out at Bunratty Castle and Folk Park including a

celebration for Ladybirds 30th birthday, full of adventure and fun. 246 Brownies had an adventurous and exciting day at Bunratty Castle too, while Guides, Senior Branch and Leaders enjoyed the challenges at their Unit, District and Area camps with cook-outs and other fun activities all completed.

The Region were very proud to be well represented at the Gold Gaisce Awards Ceremony, the National Guide Awards, Timpeall an Domhain National Finals, the FIRST LEGO league finals in DCU, international events including the Senior Branch trip to Sangam, India, the Juliette Low Seminar and other training and leadership events representing IGG and the Mid-West.

As always, our Regional Conference was very well attended. The day was filled with trainings on badges and programme, computer skills, service awards and lots of fun. 135 Leaders were treated to relaxing yoga at the end of the day.

The year ended with a toy appeal collection for Saint Vincent de Paul where members came up trumps and donated a large number of toys for others.

*I look forward to Ladybirds as we get to do arts and crafts, play exciting games, go on adventures and have lots of laughs every week, thanks to the Leaders.*  
**Freya, aged 7**

## Continuing to support our new IGG members

IGG's Guide Unit in Mosney Accommodation Centre began in April 2019 and the Brownie Unit kicked off its second year in September. The girls enthusiastically undertake the IGG Journey Programme, completing challenges and earning badges, and are particularly good at very loud sing-songs. Two of the Guides took part in the Lego robotics course in DCU in June and a number of the women living in Mosney have been trained as Leaders. Both local Leaders in the North East Region and staff at Mosney have been offering great support for the Units which have become very popular with the girls at Mosney.



The girls were given uniforms with the help of a donation from Trefoil Guild and the North East Region who very generously ran a raffle fundraiser at the North East Regional Conference. When the girls are relocated around Ireland, the hope is that they will already have a connection with their peers in their new community and IGG Units are encouraged to be supportive and inclusive.

In Wicklow Town, a number of girls from the Direct Provision Centre at the Grand Hotel have joined the local Brownie Unit and immediately got stuck into the programme and activities. There have been numerous outings including trips to the beach, a farm visit and the panto. One of the mothers joined as a Leader, two of the older girls as Unit Helpers and four girls joined the local Guide Unit.

Angie Wojnar, Area Commissioner and Leader with Wicklow Brownies, pointed out that *"By their addition to our Units our lives have been enriched and the experience has opened our little world up to new cultures and traditions which is very interesting."*

Agnes Oluwabanwo, Leader with Wicklow Brownies and a resident at the Grand Hotel, reflected that *"All the girls were excited as it was a great time to get out of the limited area of play, to have fun with other kids in the community and make new friends."* Agnes added that *"I am grateful for each time I spend with Brownies, since time is all I can give ... I look forward to many more merry years of Guiding."*

## Ireland's Top Brownie Engineers

Clogherhead Brownies, Co Louth, were thrilled to be crowned Ireland's Top Brownie Engineers in a competition run by Engineers Ireland. They scooped first place for their impressive design of a water conservation project to benefit their local community. Brownie Team Leader, Aoife McGovern, said: "I'm really happy to have won! I've learned a lot more about saving water and realise how saving water is so important. I am happy to have been a part of it and I liked working with the team."



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