

8th Fleet Brownies

2019 has been an interesting year for 8th Fleet Brownies. We have spent a whole year on the new Girlguiding programme. Each term we have worked on different skills builder badges as well as trying out new Unit Meeting Activities across the six new guiding themes - Know myself; Skills for my future; Express Myself; Be Well; Take Action and Have Adventures.

In the winter term we worked on Express Myself stage 3 from the Innovate theme. Covering this badge involved find out about different types of balls and how they move depending on the materials they are made of, building various structures with lots of cardboard boxes; creating top trumps style cards; Making zip-wires for cuddly toys and finding out whether the angle and type of wire used made a difference to the speeds; and creating artwork that tells a story.

Our UMAs covered games and activities to learn about handling money and a game to learn about food chains.

In February we commemorated Thinking Day (the birthday of our founder) by finding out about brownies from India, USA, Russia and China. We also sampled food from those countries.

The highlight of March was taking part in A Night at the Library where we joined guides and brownies from the district to stay overnight in Fleet Library. The rainbows joined us for part of the evening.

We ended the term with an Easter egg hunt.

In the Spring Summer term our UMAs covered topics such as personal safety, fire safety, becoming Super Brownies to take action in the community, planting flowers and giving them to people we don't know and discussing other ways that we can help people. The skills builder badge for this term was Be Well stage 3. We found out about the nutrients in our food; ways to relax; what things make us happy; how to motivate ourselves to exercise and reading people's emotions.

We held a cake sale to raise money for an outing to runways End. We enjoyed climbing and caving there. We also joined other brownies in our district for a campfire with singing, sausages in buns and S'mores. Another interesting outdoor activity was a visit to Fleet Pond. Some members of Fleet Pond Society joined us. They shared their knowledge of flora and fauna.

Over the summer holidays we held our own brownie holiday. We stayed at Thirtover House which is a lovely Girlguiding house near Newbury. Our theme was Peter Pan and so Thirtover House became Neverland. We enjoyed archery and grass-sledging and a trip to Beale Park where the girls had a great time seeing the animals and enjoying the large paddling pool. During the holiday girls completed the Explore skills builder badge. The younger girls did stage 2 and the older girls did stage 3.

In the autumn term we worked on the Reflect stage 2 skills builder badge which is part of the Know Myself theme. We found out about places in Fleet; explored different emotions; found out why asking questions is important; discovered how we are all unique; and discovered our traditions and how we celebrate.

The brownies chose some of this term's UMAs. Ones which included some acting were very popular. One UMA that was carried out across the country in the same week was called Future Girl. It highlighted plastic waste and how we need to reduce our use of single use plastic.

We enjoyed this term's activities with the church community - the harvest service, the craft fair (our 'Name the Orangutan' stall raised £55 for the Palani Mission) and the gift service. Our new unit flag was blessed at the harvest service and we were proud to parade with it at this year's Remembrance Sunday parade.

We held a sleepover in November. It was well attended and we worked on the Camp stage 2 skills builder badge. It was interesting trying to put up 2 large tents inside a building! Sadly the weather was poor and we also had to have an indoor campfire.

We enjoyed donutting one week and a movie night towards the end of term. At the Girlguiding District Carol Service we performed a sketch which showed how important the family is at Christmas.

Pauline Warner