

# Sydenham Methodist GB

July 2020



## Hope you are well

During these very strange times, I hope you and your family are keeping safe and well. The current restrictions have resulted in big changes for everyone and I'm sure it is a very confusing time for all the girls. It has been a few months now since GB ended and lockdown began and so I thought I would pull together a short newsletter, giving you some news and updates and looking back on the past year in GB. I hope you and your girls enjoy reading this!

Firstly, thank you for your continued support over the past year. Our company has just under 50 members (~25 explorers, 11 juniors, 2 seniors, 5 associates/sub-officers and 4 officers). We hope to continue to grow the company and we are excited that our Junior and Senior sections will grow this coming year due to large groups moving up into older sections. We really hope all girls will return next year when we can re-open (and maybe even bring some friends with them). Look out for our new banner outside the church before we reopen!

We also want to say thank you to a few other people:

- Our Chaplain, Robin Waugh, for his continued support this year, allowing us to keep our GB running smoothly.
- Emma-Jayne, the churches family and community worker, who has attended every week to support the Junior section leaders.
- Carol Winstanley, who continues to support us through help with paperwork and even teaching some sign language this year.
- Julie Armstrong, for taking an educational badge focusing on mental health with our company section this year(see below).

As you know, we were unable to finish this year as normal, missing our display and final evenings. We know the girls worked really hard this year and so we are keen to ensure they still get their awards when it is safe to do so. We are hopeful that some of the items the girls had practiced can be used next year too!

Finally, thanks to all the girls for coming every week. We hope you are missing GB as much as the leaders are and we cannot wait to see you all again!

## News & Updates



### Easter Egg Donations

Due to the abrupt closure of GB, the girls did not receive their Easter eggs before the Easter break. We felt that it would be a nice gesture to donate these eggs to those nurses working extremely hard, looking after the most vulnerable at this difficult time.

One of our officers, Rachael Clarke, is a district nurse within the Dundonald District Nursing team. Our eggs were able to bring a smile to many hardworking nurses at the start of April. Rachael has not only been working long, hard hours to ensure the most vulnerable keep well at home, but she also took part in a brilliant virtual performance by 40 members of the Belfast health and Social Care Trust staff Orchestra, performing a musical tribute to our NHS. We want to say a big thank you to Rachael and all the NHS staff for their dedication through this pandemic.



### Queens Award Completion

We want to say congratulations to Nadia Hall for the completion of her Queens Award. She was due to attend an award ceremony in May but due to current restrictions this has been postponed to next year. Queens award is the highest award you can achieve in GBNI and involves two year of hard work and skill development. This includes leadership skills, commitment, gaining an in-depth knowledge of the GB organisation and its history, participating in community service and growing in her own faith in God. It requires dedication to our company and the church and it is completed at a difficult stage in a girls personal life, where they need to balance A-levels and university work, alongside the required activities for this award. Well done Nadia on this great achievement and we want to thank her leaders, in particular Rebekah Bryans who has supported her throughout the two years.





### Awaiting the birth of a new baby...

For those of you who don't already know, Melissa Patterson, section leader of the Explorer section, is due to have a baby in July. Melissa will be on maternity leave next year and we will all miss her on Thursdays! We hope she will return to GB in the future, but for now we want to wish her all the best and we cannot wait to meet your new baby!



### Training Officers

This year, three of our leaders participated in officer training. Brooke Hanna, Claire Flanigan and Nadia Hall have all been working hard in our company to become officers. Unfortunately due to the current restrictions, the final part of their training has been cancelled but they should all be able to complete their training over the next session. We want to say well done for all the hard work and commitment they have shown this year and we will support them over the next year to grow as officers in our company.



### Official Facebook Page

This year, we have decided to set up a private Facebook group where only parents of girls attending GB will be allowed to join. Many GBs across Northern Ireland have open Facebook pages where they share videos, photos and regular updates. We felt a private Facebook page would be more suitable, with access for parents/leaders only. We hope to reduce the amount of paper waste we produce by posting regular updates here instead of printed notes and this will also allow you to see some photos/videos of the girls throughout the year.

To join, visit <https://www.facebook.com/groups/7sydenhammethodistgb> and answer the questions to gain permission. Any concerns/queries regarding this group, please do not hesitate to contact us.

*(Please note that important notes will still be sent in paper format).*



### Goodbye and Good Luck Emma-Jayne

Emma-Jayne Speers has been an amazing help this year, particularly with our Junior section. Emma-Jayne is moving to a new job in Woodvale Methodist and so unfortunately she will not be returning to help next session. We want to wish her all the best in her new job and thank her for this year as we have really appreciated the extra support!



### Looking ahead

Unfortunately we are unable to anticipate when GB will resume for our next session, but we will re-open once it is safe to do so. There may be amendments to our regular schedule to accommodate the government guidelines, however we will keep you updated as soon as we understand the implications. To keep up-to-date, I encourage you to join our Facebook group. Additionally, if you or anyone you know is interested in helping at GB on a weekly/monthly basis, through teaching badgework or helping with the younger girls, please let me know.



## Explorer Section 2019-2020

This year has been busy as always with the Explorer section. For Scripture this year we explored the life of David, learning how David fought Goliath (and won) and how he was chosen to become King of Israel. For Badgework, groups explored the seasons of the year, fashion and even learnt sign language and marching!



### End of Year 2019

For our final evening of last year, we had a visit from Casey's Creatures. The girls got to learn about a number of animals including an armadillo, a possum and a meerkat. Checkout some great photos later in the newsletter!

### Trip to the Zoo

The Girls Brigade organisation was celebrating 125 years and they organised a special zoo trip for Explorers from GBs across Northern Ireland. It was a great day and the girls all really enjoyed it. More photos can be found later in the newsletter.



### Play it by Ear visit

Play it by Ear are a Christian drama company and they visited GB this year to teach the girls some basic drama skills through games and story-telling while also telling us the story of the birth of Jesus!

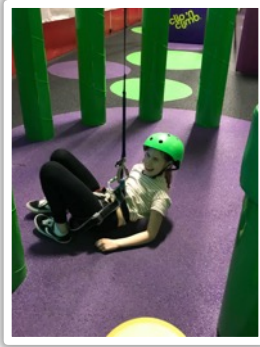
### Crafts and Games

Our Explorer section love to do crafts and games so we have tried to do plenty throughout their badges and scripture as well as nice Christmas trees and some baking at Halloween. The girls favorite game is musical statues but the problem is they are just too good at it!



## Company Section 2019-2020

This year in our company section we also learnt about the life of David, focusing on his journey to become King. We learnt we can trust God to protect us and that no matter how difficult things get, God always has a plan. In badgework the girls learnt about mental health and dealing with stress through relaxation techniques and learning to express their feelings. The company section continue to enjoy non-uniform nights and the occasional movie night in their pajamas!



### End of Year 2019 – Clip and Climb

At the end of last year's session, the Junior section took a trip to Clip and Climb in Dundonald. It was loads of fun and the girls definitely showed their fearless and adventurous side!

### Crafts and Games

The older girls also enjoy crafts and games. They made beautiful Christmas stockings for their Christmas craft this year. Their favourite game is human tic-tac-toe! Be sure to ask the girls how this game works!



### Focus on Mental Health

Now more than ever, teaching kids to look after their mental health is vital. Julie Armstrong taught the girls techniques to relax and discussed how we can de-stress and stay positive despite some of the difficulties we may face. The girls used feelings charts to communicate about mental health and they learnt some Yoga and stretching techniques. We hope the girls have found this useful, particularly during the current lockdown.

### When the cinema comes to GB

For Christmas this year, we decided to bring the cinema to GB. A large screen was set up in the hall and the girls all got comfy with sleeping bags and blankets. There was lots of popcorn and sweets and we enjoyed watching the Grinch (I think the leaders enjoyed it more than the girls)!





## Photo Gallery – Casey's Creatures\*



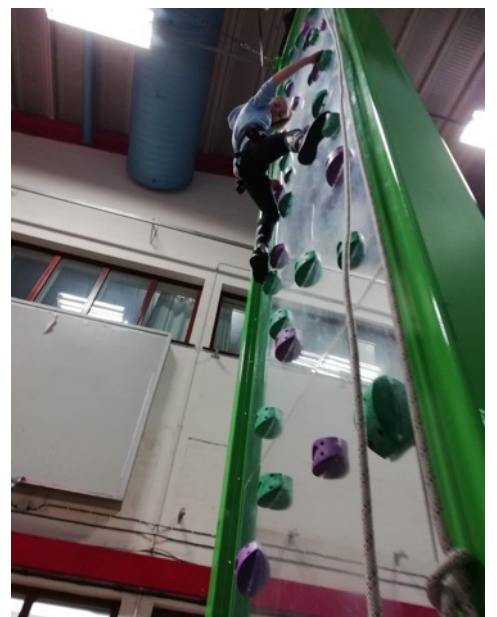
\*We had so many great photos from this evening that it was hard to choose some to put into this newsletter! We could share some on the private Facebook group if parents want to see more!





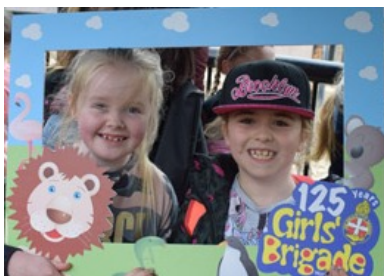
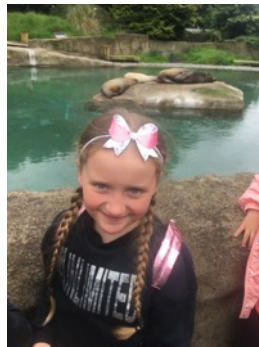


## Photo Gallery – Clip & Climb





## Photo Gallery – Zoo Trip





## Photo Gallery – Explorer GB Nights





## Photo Gallery – Company GB Nights

