

## Guides through the years



The Guides at camp in the 1950s

The 1st Hampton Hill Guides was formed in 1918. "At seven pm on a Sunday evening in July, 1918, the 1st Hampton Hill Guides paraded for the first time, the Hampton contingent being present to encourage them". They were not formally affiliated to St James's, but had close connections, and the flags were always kept in the church. The guides were very active in the 1930s and it was in 1935, under their captain, one of the daughters of the vicar, Revd Harvey, that they first started the carol singing that became such a regular feature of their Christmas celebrations. They were always much in evidence at church annual fetes and at other social events. Many a good cause in the village and farther afield has been effectively supported by Hampton Hill's little girls in blue uniforms.

A former member, Sonia Dunn (nee Baldwin) recalls carrying the Standard of Lady Baden Powell on a very windy day at a big Remembrance Day Parade. They had tea at her residence in Hampton Court Palace, when Sonia collected the standard. In those days they often used to go on early morning hikes starting at 05.00. Many of the Guides were pupils at The Lady Eleanor Holles School, and some were boarders who attended St James's Church every Sunday morning. A number of the Guides were involved in the Hampton Court Pageant around the time of the coronation in 1953 and two of them had the opportunity to ride the Queen's horse, Churchill.

The company functioned under great difficulties having had a succession of leaders. However, from about 1961 to 1970 the group was run by Ruth Mills and there were many outdoor activities, particularly wide games and nature study in Bushy Park. Camping was high on the agenda. They always travelled in a removal van (no health and safety then!), with Guides and leaders standing for much of the journey (singing and being rather noisy), plus equipment and provisions. The first camp was at Blacklands Farm, East Grinstead; others were in Kent and Somerset. Gadgets were made from wood to ensure that nothing touched the ground. Campfires and singing were also very popular with this group.



Sonia and Daphne with the Queen's horse Churchill 1953

For several years prior to 1999 there was a thriving Brownie Pack, but no Guide Unit for them to progress. Then Sue Blay started 3rd Hampton Hill (St James's) Guides, which met in the church hall on Tuesday evenings, overlapping with the Brownie Pack for fifteen minutes. It was open to all those who attended St James's Church or lived in Hampton Hill. It offered the girls a varied programme of challenges, crafts and sports. Rafting, canoeing, swimming and adventure courses helped the girls develop team-building and leadership skills and achieve their own goals, having great fun throughout. The Guides also camped once or twice a year.

When Sue retired as Guide leader, the group was taken over by Sarah Reed. The Guides have continued with crafts, map-reading and cooking, plus ice-skating, kayaking, raft-building or air rifle shooting. They go to the borough camp at Walton Firs to take part in caving, rock-climbing, crate-stacking and archery.



Guides singing  
at the Open Day 1983



Guides and Brownies  
at Church Parade 2013



Guides at the Christingle  
service 2012