



Annual Review  
2019 - 2020



THE  
GIRLS'  
BRIGADE  
IRELAND

## Forward – Gillian Lesware, Chairperson

I am delighted to introduce to you to the 2020 Annual Review. I will start with a good news story! Our first year of online registration went exceptionally well, improving the effectiveness and efficiency of our operational processes. Our new website also received very positive feedback during the session. This was uplifting to the National Board; thank you all for embracing these changes so well.



As we look back on our last session, we recognise the significant effects of COVID-19. We paused our activities at the beginning of March, which led to our session being cut short. We had to cancel our District Competitions, Musical Theatre Competition, and our Displays. This was very difficult for all our leaders and members who had worked so hard all year to prepare for these events.

The challenges we face are greater than any our organisation has faced in its 127-year history and unlike anything many of us have seen in our lifetime. However, we have not allowed COVID-19 to stop us moving forward and keeping The Girls' Brigade Ireland alive. The National Board and our National Secretary have taken significant steps to do things differently while focusing on delivering our Motto and Aim. Our main focus was to safeguard the future of our organisation ensuring we were able to continue improving young lives both during and after this crisis is over.

We have been proactive in finding innovative ways to adapt to the 'new norm'. We developed online guidance for all Captains and Leaders in relation to COVID-19, and an exciting online programme which includes a variety of activities for all ages. We stayed connected by hosting District meetings, P&T Committee, and National Board meetings via Zoom. The National Board is committed to providing as much guidance and help as possible to all members of this great organisation.

Our AGM this year will be a virtual meeting. This will be a new experience to us all and will be an opportunity for us to connect with each other. While we are not meeting in person, it is enlightening to know that so many of you will join us.

Margery McElhinney, our wonderful National President, is retiring this year. I do not believe there are enough words in the dictionary to describe the exceptional person that Margery is and the fantastic way that she developed this position during her term. Margery was the most amazing ambassador, meeting Companies and girls around the country, always there with a listening ear, so generous with her time, advice, and guidance, individually and collectively, at every level of the organisation. Margery also represented us at International and European levels. A lot of people will have a special moment that they will always hold dear of Margery.

We as an organisation will miss Margery dearly at the helm, her kind, gentle, understanding ways we have all come to know will live on in all of us as we remember the way in which she guided us through sad, happy and difficult situations. Margery's dedication and loyalty had no bounds and I know going forward she will always be a very special part of The Girls' Brigade Ireland. On behalf of every member, I thank Margery for being a most wonderful President and friend to us all and wish Margery many more years of good health and happiness.

Congratulations to Hazel Ensor who will be commissioned as our new National President at our AGM. Hazel has been a loyal and dedicated member all her life and has immense experience of the organisation. I wish Hazel every success in her new position and look forward to working alongside her in the future.

Congratulations also to Emily Borland who has been elected as one of our Vice-Presidents. Emily is based in Co. Donegal and will be a huge asset to our Companies in District 5. I wish Emily every success as she takes up her new role alongside Isobel Henderson. Isobel Henderson is celebrating her 80<sup>th</sup> year in Girls Brigade, having given exemplary service at all levels of the organisation. I congratulate and sincerely thank Isobel on behalf of us all. You can read more about Isobel's life later in this review.

Two of our Captains are retiring this year. On behalf of The Girls' Brigade Ireland, I would like to thank Joan Moffitt for her 40 years' Lieutenants service. Joan started the 10<sup>th</sup> Co. Sligo thirty years ago and it was unfortunate that we could not celebrate this achievement due to COVID-19. Thanks also to Anne Fitzsimmons, Captain of 28<sup>th</sup> Co. Greystones, for all her work over the years. We wish you well for the future.

It was with great sadness that we heard the heart-breaking news that our Vice-President, Carol Fox, had passed away suddenly and unexpectedly on September 24<sup>th</sup>, 2019. Carol is greatly missed by all those that knew her in Girls' Brigade circles. Carol was a truly dedicated and loyal member, having founded the 26<sup>th</sup> Co. Tallaght where she was Captain for 40 years. There is a beautiful tribute to Carol in this Annual Review which gives an insight in to the incredible person Carol was.

On behalf of The Girls' Brigade Ireland I would like to thank our National Secretary Jemma Lee for all her work during the last session supporting our National Board, sub-committees, and individual Companies. I would also like to sincerely thank the members of the National Board and sub-committees for their continued time, dedication, and energy during these unprecedented times.

There is no doubt that this crisis is bringing about changes in the way we think and work. It makes me proud to see how we have pulled together to ensure this wonderful organisation survives. The National Board will continue to monitor the rapidly changing situation, and to update our guidance documents in line with government guidelines.

We will ensure ongoing communication and support is available to all our Companies. This is a time when virtual or outdoor meetings, or at-home activities will enable us to stay engaged even when many Companies are unable to meet in their halls. We will keep developing our programme and sharing ways for girls and families to continue enjoying this great organisation.

Finally I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to all the Captains, Lieutenants and helpers for your tremendous efforts to keep The Girls' Brigade Ireland alive and for your understanding, support, leadership and patience as we all navigate this difficult time together.

Take Care and Stay Safe,  
Gillian Lesware, Chairperson



## National President's Message – Margery McElhinney

On this the occasion of my final President's Report, words cannot express what I really want to convey to all Girls' Brigade girls throughout the country. I have been truly privileged to have served as your National President. I have enjoyed meeting so many members at Displays, Parent's evenings, and Competitions.

As I am sure you have heard me say, *"Girls' Brigade does what it says on the tin"*. We have such a varied and amazing programme.

Never did I think, as I was enrolled into the 5<sup>th</sup> Company Clontarf Presbyterian at 3 years of age, that my journey would take me to where I am today. From the moment I joined GB I was hooked! I loved every minute! I embraced the Feis, adored the Choral Speaking, and Miss Pemberton's Scripture classes on a Sunday were a joy. She made them so interesting, dramatizing all the stories.

Over the years I went through the 'ranks' making good friends along the way. Many are still friends to this day; some have since emigrated to Canada and Australia, but we keep in touch and of course reminisce about our years in GB. Another saying of mine which I am sure you have heard is "In GB you make friends for life" – so true!

When Miss Pemberton retired, Valerie Wormell took over the 5<sup>th</sup> Company. I taught the Scripture course for many years and later became Captain for 20 plus years alongside a group of great Officers whose dedication and commitment were second to none. When I retired, Jacky Anderson took up the mantle as the next Captain. I was then elected as National President and the rest, as they say, is history!

I must mention Averil Dobson who rang me up one day and asked if I would let my name go forward for the position of National President. I was so taken aback I could hardly speak. I still remember exactly where I was when I took this phone call – what an honour! I really had to think long and hard about it, but as you know I accepted and was elected at the following AGM in Monaghan.

What a wonderful journey I have been on with trips to Australia and Malaysia representing The Girls' Brigade Ireland at International Conferences. The fun we had on those trips (we did work too!!) was fantastic, as you can all imagine with Isobel Henderson one of our Vice Presidents, alongside you!

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Gillian Lesware, Chairperson of The National Board, who has been such a support to me over the years. Gillian works tirelessly for The Girls' Brigade Ireland and always behind the scenes, her dedication and love of GB is very evident to all who know her – thank you Gillian. I would also like to wish my successor, Hazel Ensor, every success for the future. I have no doubt Hazel will be a wonderful National President for our Organisation.

As I now retire as National President my thoughts turn to the wonderful memories I have and to all the people I have met over the years and of course to the National Presidents who went before me and paved the way, what a hard act to follow. Barbara Carson and Joan Darling were my role models, and I had a lot to live up to.

Thank you all, Captains, Lieutenants, helpers, and girls for making my position such an enjoyable and memorable one. I am sure I will see you all at GB events when COVID -19 is no longer a threat to our members.



## Our Organisation

The Girls' Brigade Ireland is an International, interdenominational youth work organisation which strives to help girls develop new skills, knowledge, and confidence in a safe and fun environment.

**Motto:** Seek, Serve and Follow Christ

**Aim:** To help girls to become followers of the Lord Jesus Christ, and through self-control, reverence, and a sense of responsibility to find true enrichment of life.

### Patrons

The Archbishop of Armagh,  
Primate of all Ireland

The Moderator of the General Assembly of  
the Presbyterian Church in Ireland

The President of the Methodist Church in  
Ireland

The Archbishop of Dublin and Bishop of  
Glendalough, Primate of Ireland

### Vice Patron

Joan Darling

### Trustees

Very Revd. David Godfrey  
Ven. David Pierpoint

### National President

Margery McElhinney

### Vice-Presidents

Isobel Henderson  
Carol Fox

### National Chaplain

Revd Suzanne Harris

### Representatives to the GB

#### European Fellowship Executive

Margery McElhinney, Joan Nicoll,  
Clare Black

### National Secretary

Jemma Lee

### National Board

#### Chairperson / District 1

Gillian Lesware

#### Vice-Chairperson / District 3

Arlene Fitzgerald

#### Hon. Treasurer / District 3

Nadine Watters

#### Hon. Secretary / National Commissioner

Jacky Anderson

#### District 1

Sharon Kinsella

#### District 2

Averil Dobson

#### District 3

Revd Lorraine Kennedy Ritchie

#### District 4

Clodagh Nicholson

#### District 5

Shirley Hewston  
Joan Moffitt  
Rev. Richard Beadle

#### National President

Margery McElhinney

#### Co-Opted

Revd Suzanne Harris

## Extract from our Financial Statements

The financial statements for the year end 31<sup>st</sup> December 2019 will be formally adopted at our 2020 AGM. These financial statements show a deficit for the year of €17.5k, primarily reflecting the costs associated with the implementation of our new Sportlomo membership system during 2019. This compares to a deficit for 2018 of €17k due to the costs related to our 125th anniversary celebrations. The balance sheet as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2019 and 31<sup>st</sup> December 2018 shows healthy accumulated reserves of €1.1m

The amounts below have been extracted from the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2019:

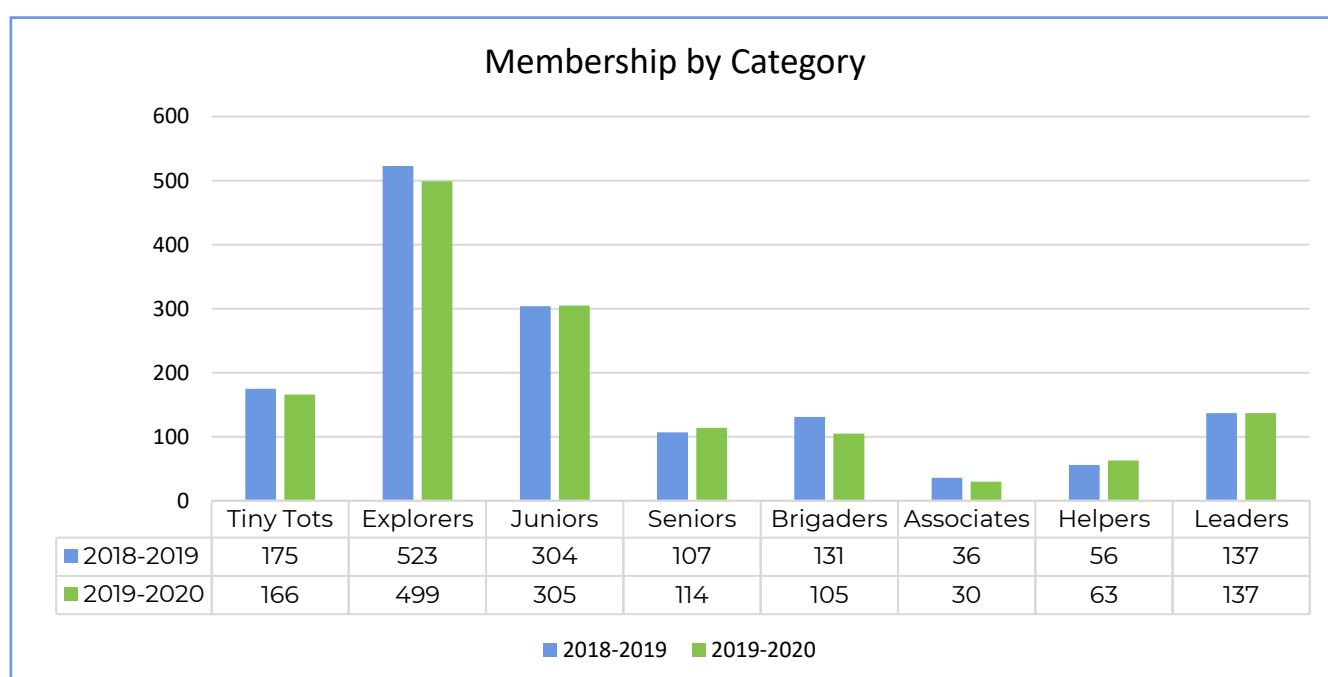
	Income	Expenditure	Net Deficit for the year	Accumulated Reserves
<b>2019</b>	€112,803	€130,306	(€17,503)	€1,139,816
<b>2018</b>	€110,792	€127,830	(€17,038)	€1,157,319

The Girls' Brigade Ireland is a grateful recipient of an annual grant under the Youth Services Grant Scheme from the Department of Children & Youth Affairs.



An Roinn Leanaí  
agus Gnóthaí Óige  
Department of  
Children and Youth Affairs

## Our Membership



## Our Companies

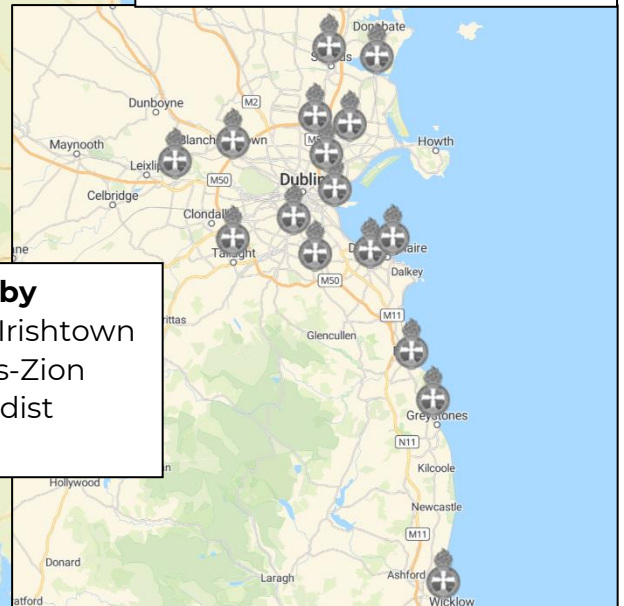
### District 5 Glenveigh

10<sup>th</sup> Co. Sligo Methodist  
 19<sup>th</sup> Co. Kerrykeel  
 23<sup>rd</sup> Co. Donagh Parish, Glaslough  
 30<sup>th</sup> Co. Kilmacrennan  
 31<sup>st</sup> Co. Trinity Presbyterian, Letterkenny  
 32<sup>nd</sup> Co. Clontibret Presbyterian  
 38<sup>th</sup> Co. Monaghan Town  
 40<sup>th</sup> Co. Manorhamilton  
 44<sup>th</sup> Co. Ramelton



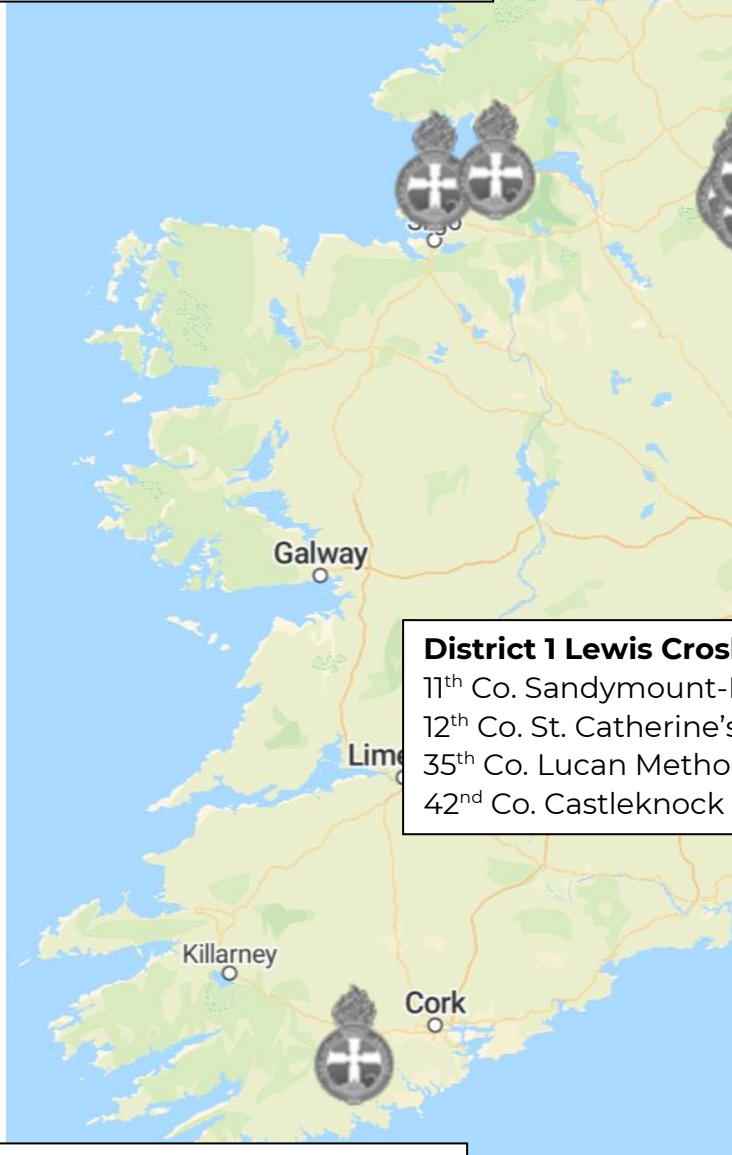
### District 3 North Eastern

5<sup>th</sup> Co. Clontarf Presbyterian  
 21<sup>st</sup> Co. Drumcondra  
 24<sup>th</sup> Co. St. John's Coolock  
 29<sup>th</sup> Co. St. Andrew's Malahide  
 45<sup>th</sup> Co. Swords-Donabate



### District 1 Lewis Crosby

11<sup>th</sup> Co. Sandymount-Irishtown  
 12<sup>th</sup> Co. St. Catherine's-Zion  
 35<sup>th</sup> Co. Lucan Methodist  
 42<sup>nd</sup> Co. Castleknock



### District 2

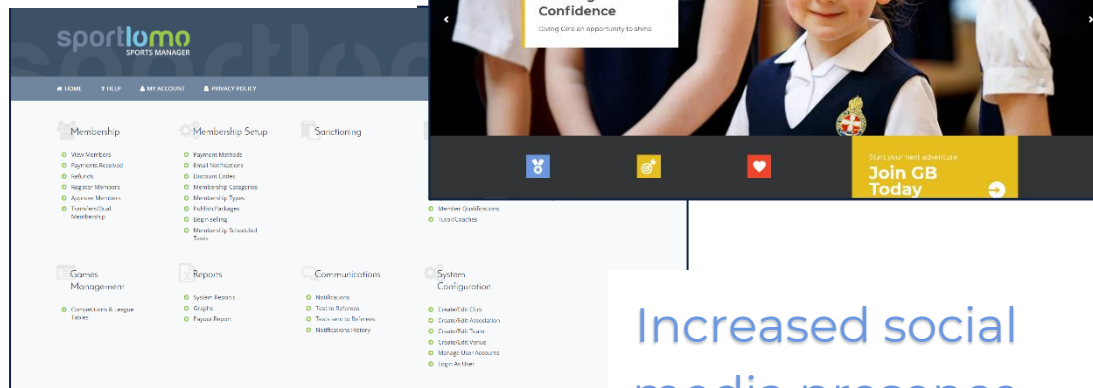
1<sup>st</sup> Co. Wicklow Town  
 7<sup>th</sup> Co. Dundrum Methodist  
 17<sup>th</sup> Co. Christ Church, Dún Laoghaire  
 22<sup>nd</sup> Co. Kill o'the Grange  
 26<sup>th</sup> Co. St. Maelruain's Tallaght  
 28<sup>th</sup> Co. St. Patrick's Greystones  
 39<sup>th</sup> Co. Bray

### District 4 Munster

36<sup>th</sup> Co. Clonakilty-Rosscarbery

## National Projects

## New Website & Online Membership System



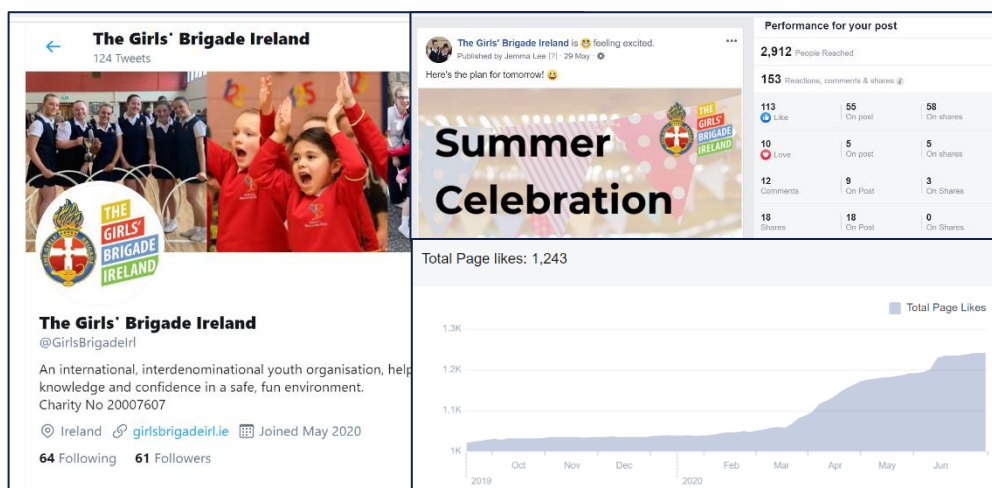
Increased social media presence

1426 members

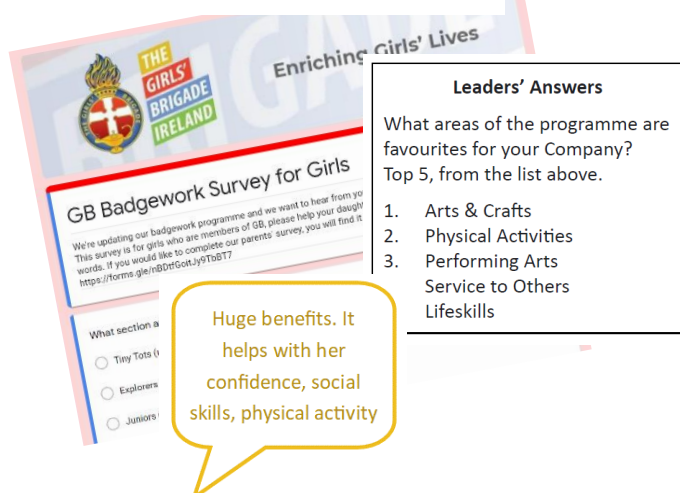
26 Companies

20 New Officers

13 Brigader Brooches Awarded



## Badgework Survey Completed



GB@Home Programme Launched



## Congratulations



## Newly Commissioned Officers

Eva Evans Foley - 5th Co. Clontarf Presbyterian  
 Lucy O'Byrne - 5th Co. Clontarf Presbyterian  
 Nicole Saunders – 10<sup>th</sup> Co. Sligo Methodist  
 Sarah Ralph - 21<sup>st</sup> Co. Drumcondra  
 Alice Farrell – 29<sup>th</sup> Co. St. Andrew's Malahide  
 Claire Johns – 29<sup>th</sup> Co. St. Andrew's Malahide  
 Niamh Lynch – 29<sup>th</sup> Co. St. Andrew's Malahide  
 Katie O'Connor – 45<sup>th</sup> Co. Swords-Donabate

## 40<sup>th</sup> Co. Manorhamilton

Cynthia Siberry  
 Leesa Flynn  
 Jiliann Boardwell  
 Pam Boardwell  
 Pauline Beadle  
 Clara Hewston  
 Shauna Williamson  
 Helen Siberry Hay  
 Elaine Siberry  
 Charlotte Lee  
 Megan Lee



## International Award

Jean Syne and Rachel Reid  
 7th Co. Dundrum

## Brigader Brooch Awardees



### 1<sup>st</sup> Co. Wicklow

Melissa O'Shea  
Catherine McCullagh  
Alexandra Spencer  
Laura Cooney  
Sophie Quinn

### 21<sup>st</sup> Co. Drumcondra

Alice Jack  
Niamh Smithers

### 26<sup>th</sup> Co. St. Maelruain's, Tallaght

Emma Laughlin

### 28<sup>th</sup> Co. St. Patrick's, Greystones

Isobel Langton

### 31<sup>st</sup> Co. Trinity Letterkenny

Elsie Wilkin

### 42<sup>nd</sup> Co. Castleknock

Rachel Denner  
Emma Denner  
Clíodhna O'Rourke



1<sup>st</sup> Co. Wicklow Brigaders  
Feis Winners

## National Competition Winners

<b>Feis November 2019</b>	
<b>Explorers Age 6 &amp; Under</b>	
1 <sup>st</sup>	1st Co. Wicklow
2 <sup>nd</sup>	45th Co. Swords-Donabate
3 <sup>rd</sup>	39 <sup>th</sup> Co. Bray 17 <sup>th</sup> Co. Christ Church, Dún Laoghaire
4 <sup>th</sup>	11th Co. Sandymount-Irishtown 42nd Co. Castleknock
<b>Explorers Age 7 &amp; 8</b>	
1 <sup>st</sup>	11th Co. Sandymount-Irishtown
2 <sup>nd</sup>	39 <sup>th</sup> Co. Bray
3 <sup>rd</sup>	45th Co. Swords-Donabate
4 <sup>th</sup>	42nd Co. Castleknock 39 <sup>th</sup> Co. Bray
<b>Juniors</b>	
1 <sup>st</sup>	11th Co. Sandymount-Irishtown
2 <sup>nd</sup>	42nd Co. Castleknock
3 <sup>rd</sup>	17 <sup>th</sup> Co. Christ Church, Dún Laoghaire 1st Co. Wicklow
4 <sup>th</sup>	17 <sup>th</sup> Co. Christ Church, Dún Laoghaire 39 <sup>th</sup> Co. Bray
<b>Seniors</b>	
1 <sup>st</sup>	11th Co. Sandymount-Irishtown
2 <sup>nd</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup> Co. Clontarf Presbyterian
3 <sup>rd</sup>	39 <sup>th</sup> Co. Bray
<b>Brigaders &amp; Associates</b>	
1 <sup>st</sup>	1st Co. Wicklow
2 <sup>nd</sup>	1st Co. Wicklow
3 <sup>rd</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup> Co. Clontarf Presbyterian 1st Co. Wicklow

<b>Choral Speaking November 2019</b>	
<b>Explorers</b>	
1 <sup>st</sup>	7 <sup>th</sup> Co. Dundrum
2 <sup>nd</sup>	45th Co. Swords-Donabate
3 <sup>rd</sup>	11th Co. Sandymount-Irishtown
4 <sup>th</sup>	12 <sup>th</sup> Co. St. Catherine's-Zion
<b>Juniors &amp; Seniors</b>	
1 <sup>st</sup>	12 <sup>th</sup> Co. St. Catherine's-Zion
2 <sup>nd</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup> Co. Clontarf Presbyterian
3 <sup>rd</sup>	11th Co. Sandymount-Irishtown
4 <sup>th</sup>	39 <sup>th</sup> Co. Bray



<b>Arts &amp; Crafts March 2020</b>	
<b>Explorers Age 5 &amp; 6 - Umbrellas</b>	
1 <sup>st</sup>	45 <sup>th</sup> Co. Swords-Donabate
2 <sup>nd</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup> Co. Wicklow
3 <sup>rd</sup>	17 <sup>th</sup> Co. Christ Church, Dún Laoghaire
<b>Explorers Age 7 &amp; 8 - Umbrellas</b>	
1 <sup>st</sup>	45 <sup>th</sup> Co. Swords-Donabate
2 <sup>nd</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup> Co. Wicklow
3 <sup>rd</sup>	7 <sup>th</sup> Co. Dundrum
<b>Juniors – Button Bracelets</b>	
1 <sup>st</sup>	17 <sup>th</sup> Co. Christ Church, Dún Laoghaire
2 <sup>nd</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup> Co. Wicklow
3 <sup>rd</sup>	26 <sup>th</sup> Co. St. Maelruain's, Tallaght
<b>Seniors – Chevron Bracelets</b>	
1 <sup>st</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup> Co. Wicklow
2 <sup>nd</sup>	7 <sup>th</sup> Co. Dundrum
<b>Brigaders &amp; Associates – Knitted Hats</b>	
1 <sup>st</sup>	42 <sup>nd</sup> Co. Castleknock
2 <sup>nd</sup>	42 <sup>nd</sup> Co. Castleknock



<b>Sibbald Cup Drilldown</b>	
Winner	5 <sup>th</sup> Co. Clontarf Presbyterian
Runner-Up	1 <sup>st</sup> Co. Wicklow
<b>Ada Davis Cup Drilldown</b>	
Winner	26 <sup>th</sup> Co. St. Maelruain's, Tallaght
Runner-Up	1 <sup>st</sup> Co. Wicklow

<b>Modern Dance February 2020</b>	
<b>Juniors &amp; Seniors</b>	
1 <sup>st</sup>	11 <sup>th</sup> Co. Sandymount-Irishtown A
2 <sup>nd</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup> Co. Wicklow
3 <sup>rd</sup>	26 <sup>th</sup> Co. St. Maelruain's, Tallaght
4 <sup>th</sup>	12 <sup>th</sup> Co. St. Catherine's-Zion
<b>Brigaders</b>	
1 <sup>st</sup>	11 <sup>th</sup> Co. Sandymount-Irishtown
2 <sup>nd</sup>	29 <sup>th</sup> Co. St. Andrew's, Malahide A
3 <sup>rd</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup> Co. Clontarf Presbyterian A
4 <sup>th</sup>	29 <sup>th</sup> Co. St. Andrew's, Malahide B



<b>Teamwork February &amp; March 2020</b>	
<b>Explorers</b>	
1 <sup>st</sup>	12 <sup>th</sup> Co. St. Catherine's-Zion
2 <sup>nd</sup>	29 <sup>th</sup> Co. St. Andrew's, Malahide
3 <sup>rd</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup> Co. Clontarf Presbyterian
4 <sup>th</sup>	11 <sup>th</sup> Co. Sandymount-Irishtown
<b>Juniors &amp; Seniors</b>	
1 <sup>st</sup>	29 <sup>th</sup> Co. St. Andrew's, Malahide
2 <sup>nd</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup> Co. Clontarf Presbyterian
3 <sup>rd</sup>	11 <sup>th</sup> Co. Sandymount-Irishtown
4 <sup>th</sup>	12 <sup>th</sup> Co. St. Catherine's-Zion
<b>Brigaders</b>	
1 <sup>st</sup>	29 <sup>th</sup> Co. St. Andrew's, Malahide A
2 <sup>nd</sup>	7 <sup>th</sup> Co. Dundrum
3 <sup>rd</sup>	11 <sup>th</sup> Co. Sandymount-Irishtown
4 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup> Co. Clontarf Presbyterian A
<b>Associates</b>	
1 <sup>st</sup>	12 <sup>th</sup> Co. St. Catherine's-Zion
2 <sup>nd</sup>	7 <sup>th</sup> Co. Dundrum
3 <sup>rd</sup>	29 <sup>th</sup> Co. St. Andrew's, Malahide
4 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup> Co. Clontarf Presbyterian 1 <sup>st</sup> Co. Wicklow

<b>Skipping</b>	
<b>Explorers</b>	
1 <sup>st</sup>	11 <sup>th</sup> Co. Sandymount-Irishtown
2 <sup>nd</sup>	17 <sup>th</sup> Co. Christ Church, Dún Laoghaire
3 <sup>rd</sup>	12 <sup>th</sup> Co. St. Catherine's-Zion
4 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup> Co. Clontarf Presbyterian 12 <sup>th</sup> Co. St. Catherine's-Zion
<b>Juniors &amp; Seniors</b>	
1 <sup>st</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup> Co. Clontarf Presbyterian
2 <sup>nd</sup>	11 <sup>th</sup> Co. Sandymount-Irishtown
3 <sup>rd</sup>	11 <sup>th</sup> Co. Sandymount-Irishtown
4 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup> Co. Clontarf Presbyterian



<b>Millie Pemberton Plate</b>	
1 <sup>st</sup>	29 <sup>th</sup> Co. St. Andrew's, Malahide
2 <sup>nd</sup>	11 <sup>th</sup> Co. Sandymount-Irishtown
3 <sup>rd</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup> Co. Clontarf Presbyterian
4 <sup>th</sup>	12 <sup>th</sup> Co. St. Catherine's-Zion



<b>Solo</b>	
<b>Brigaders</b>	
1 <sup>st</sup>	12 <sup>th</sup> Co. St. Catherine's-Zion
2 <sup>nd</sup>	29 <sup>th</sup> Co. St. Andrew's, Malahide
3 <sup>rd</sup>	26 <sup>th</sup> Co. St. Maelruain's, Tallaght
4 <sup>th</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup> Co. Wicklow 29 <sup>th</sup> Co. St. Andrew's, Malahide
<b>Associates</b>	
1 <sup>st</sup>	7 <sup>th</sup> Co. Dundrum
2 <sup>nd</sup>	7 <sup>th</sup> Co. Dundrum
3 <sup>rd</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup> Co. Clontarf Presbyterian
4 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup> Co. Clontarf Presbyterian

<b>Norah Watters Cup</b>	
1 <sup>st</sup>	29 <sup>th</sup> Co. St. Andrew's, Malahide
2 <sup>nd</sup>	12 <sup>th</sup> Co. St. Catherine's-Zion
3 <sup>rd</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup> Co. Clontarf Presbyterian
4 <sup>th</sup>	11 <sup>th</sup> Co. Sandymount-Irishtown



## Awards & Achievements

### Garda Youth Achievement Award for 40th Co. Manorhamilton leader

Clara Hewston was nominated by her school, Mercy College Sligo, for her community involvement including her volunteer work with Girls' Brigade, Team Hope Christmas Shoebox Appeal, and fundraising for children living in poverty in Tanzania.

Clara achieved all of this while also overcoming the daily struggles of ME (Myalgic Encephalomyelitis) and POTS (Postural Orthostatic Tachycardia Syndrome).

Congratulations Clara, a truly well-deserved award for an inspirational young woman!



### Retirements and New Beginnings for the 10<sup>th</sup> Co. Sligo Methodist



In 1990, Captain Joan Moffitt realised her vision of opening a Girls' Brigade Company in Sligo. This year, after 40 years of service as a GB Officer, Joan is retiring.

*"I feel proud to think of the hundreds of girls who have passed through the Company. My philosophy as Captain was to ensure that Sligo Girls' Brigade was a safe and inclusive place to be, a place where a girl would get the opportunity to reach her full potential."*



Joan started as a GB member aged 3 in Dublin and has fond memories of attending displays, competitions, and GB camps. One of her highlights as a Captain was taking part in the Musical Theatre competition in Dublin.

*"We had to fundraise for accommodation and buses. We had a great experience and made wonderful memories with the girls."*

Officers Hazel Robb and Yvonne Stuart also retire this year. They brought their expertise in art, craft, cookery, and music to the Company and will be missed. Caroline Durneen will take over as Captain.

Caroline has achieved the Girls' Brigade International Award and has vast leadership experience in both the Manorhamilton and Sligo GB companies. We wish Caroline well as she takes over the reins with a new team.

## Awards & Achievements

### Vice President Isobel Henderson reaches 80<sup>th</sup> year as GB member



Isobel was aged 2½ when she joined the 10<sup>th</sup> Co. St. George's Girls' Brigade. This year marks her 80<sup>th</sup> year as a GB member!

Isobel was Captain of the 6<sup>th</sup> Co. Holy Trinity Rathmines for 34 years; she organised the GB swimming club for 27 years and helped Marie Hade with the GB Sports.

She has represented The Girls' Brigade Ireland on the European Fellowship, Central Council and All-Ireland National Boards and attended five World Conferences.

*"I have entered my 80<sup>th</sup> year this month as a member of The Girls' Brigade and I hope to remain a member for another few years with God's help.*

*One of my highlights was leading our colour party around the Aviva Stadium and I was carrying our National Colour.*

*Being a member of The Girls' Brigade has shaped my life and given me so many friends and I thank God for all it has done for me over the years."*

### Unsung Hero Award for Captain Shirley Hewston

Shirley Hewston, Captain of the 40<sup>th</sup> Co. Manorhamilton Girls' Brigade, was presented with an Unsung Hero Award at the Love Where You Live Leitrim Awards in October 2019.

The award recognises people who contribute to their local community in their own way, making it look easy as they stay up late, leave their firesides on wet nights and encourage others when they could do with a pat on the back themselves. Shirley did not know that GB parents and leaders had nominated her for this award until her name was announced.

In presenting the award, Shirley was described as someone who "embodies the very essence of what the award is recognising". She was described as "a lighthouse of unfaltering beam" and was praised for her ongoing commitment and dedication to her community and especially to Manorhamilton Girls' Brigade.



## Tribute to Carol Fox

*Written by Jasmin Hourie*

Carol was born in June 1949 to her proud parents Harry and Doris Gaw. As the years went by, she had two sisters, Linda and Jasmin and a brother Peter.

Carol married Donald in March 1970. They have one daughter, Nicola and three sons Craig, Bruce, and Alec who between them gave Carol and Donald eight wonderful grandchildren. Carol adored her family, she had a heart of gold, so kind, loving and generous.



Carol started her education in Sandford parish national school, then on to Park House School until it closed, finishing up in the Diocesan School for girls in Adelaide Road.

During her life Carol enjoyed many family holidays from Brittas Bay to Australia, USA, Hong Kong, Russia, Alaska and many cruises, a very well-travelled lady.

Carol joined The Girls' Brigade at the tender age of 2, as her Mum was Captain of the 6th Co. Rathmines at the time. Carol stayed a member of Rathmines going through all the ranks of Sub-Officer then Lieutenant. At the age of 24 she opened the 26th Company St. Maelruain's Tallaght where she was Captain for 40 years and then honoured to be made "Company Patron".

Hundreds of girls have gone through Carol's hands over the years and Carol was totally devoted to her second love "The Girls' Brigade" after her lovely family.

She was on the National Board for many years, giving her time generously and rising through the ranks to become the Vice President of Girls Brigade Ireland. She always played a big part in the wider GB organisation and was Commandant and committee member of District 2. During her time in that position she was the main instigator for putting on the magnificent GB show in The National Concert Hall in 1993, which is still fondly remembered to this day. During her time, she also went to Australia, representing Ireland as an observer at the GB International AGM.

Carol put a lot of her life into Girls Brigade, but she also got a lot in return and has much to thank the Girls Brigade for. She made many good friends in GB, attended many meetings, social gatherings, and nights out, and had plenty of fun and laughs. Carol was a perfect role model she always embraced the principles of The Girls Brigade with compassion and caring.

Carol was a wonderful cook and entertainer. Her family, Girls Brigade, the girls, and her many friends all enjoyed wonderful parties over the years. I can still taste her Prawn and Rice salad and her Hazelnut meringue cake.

As we mark Carol's 1st anniversary on Thursday 24th September, it is an honour as Carol's sister and Past Captain of 17th Company Dún Laoghaire to write this tribute.

Carol will always be remembered for her friendly smile, unconditional generosity, and her huge heart. Someone as Special as Carol will never be forgotten.



## GB Session 2018-2019 An Overview

The session began with over 70 participants at our **AGM** in September 2019. Leaders received training on our new online membership system, GDPR, and GB's new website and branding.

Companies started to open around the country, new members were welcomed, and **enrolment services** were held.

"It is always great to get new girls joining the Company as it allows us to continue to grow"  
21<sup>st</sup> Co. Drumcondra



AGM 2019



28<sup>th</sup> Co. Greystones  
Enrolment



30<sup>th</sup> Co.  
Kilmacrennan

The theme for our Explorer Packs and Scripture programme for the session was **GB Cares for the World**. Many Companies focused on this theme throughout the session. They learned about climate change, recycling and caring for God's world.

The Juniors and Seniors in the 1<sup>st</sup> Co. enjoyed making a video of a clean-up of the beach in Wicklow as part of the **Chaplain's Assignment**. In Sligo, the 10<sup>th</sup> Co. held an "Up Cycling Fancy Dress Party" and made their own costumes. While in the 31<sup>st</sup> Co. the Letterkenny girls learned how to recycle old toilet roll tubes and Christmas cards to make nativity scenes and Christmas wreaths.

Many Companies held **Halloween** parties and outings before the mid-term with lots of fun crafts, games and dressing up.

The **Feis and Choral Speaking** competitions took place in November. The 7<sup>th</sup> Co. Dundrum entered the Choral Speaking competition for the first time in a few years and there was great excitement when their Explorer team won!



22<sup>nd</sup> Co. Kill O'  
The Grange



**Christmas** always brings out the best in us and this year was no different. Many Companies got involved in a variety of projects to support those most in need.

Many Companies got involved in collecting items for shoeboxes for our Charity of the Year, **Team Hope**. The 40<sup>th</sup> Co. Manorhamilton even volunteered at the depot, helping to sort through donations received.

The 31<sup>st</sup> Co. Letterkenny collected food items which were delivered to a local **food bank** and the 1<sup>st</sup> Co. Wicklow made up care packages for Wicklow Helping the Homeless. Meanwhile, the 10<sup>th</sup> Co. sang carols for residents in St. John's Hospital in Sligo.



10<sup>th</sup> Co. Sligo



40<sup>th</sup> Co. Manorhamilton



7<sup>th</sup> Co. Dundrum Officers

In the new year, Officers from the 7<sup>th</sup> Co. made a special trip to Edinburgh to surprise a past member. It just shows that **GB friends are friends for life!**

This is why it was great to hear that the 19<sup>th</sup> Co. Kerrykeel and the 30<sup>th</sup> Co. Kilmacrennan came together in January for a games, crafts, and pizza night for their Junior and Seniors.



21<sup>st</sup> Co. Drumcondra

"We are so grateful to all the leaders and helpers who give up their own time each week voluntarily"

17<sup>th</sup> Co. Christ Church, Dún Laoghaire

Thanks to all our volunteers!

"Our amazing Brigaders worked so hard this year, helping teach PE to the younger girls."

28<sup>th</sup> Co. Greystones

1<sup>st</sup> Co. Wicklow



Our girls learn so many **important skills** in GB that they will carry with them for life. In Manorhamilton and Kilmacrennan, girls learned the important lifesaving skills of **CPR** and first aid.



Meanwhile, 22<sup>nd</sup> Co. Kill O'the Grange and 42<sup>nd</sup> Co. Castleknock faced their fears and tested their **teamwork** with trips to an adventure centre and rock-climbing.

Castleknock also got involved in their Parish Fair, running games and sweet stalls, and doing face painting.



11<sup>th</sup> Co. Sandymount-Irishtown

Our **PE and Modern Dance** National Competitions took place in February and March. Teams and soloists demonstrated the dedication they had put in all year to learn and practice their sets.

These were some of the last events to take place before COVID-19 entered our lives and restrictions began. We are very grateful that we were able to hold them. Many District level competitions, Displays and parents' evenings had to be cancelled in later weeks.



17<sup>th</sup> Co. Christ Church, Dún Laoghaire



7<sup>th</sup> Co. Dundrum



Our GB leaders rose to the challenge of finding new **ways to connect** with our members in a safe way during the lockdown. 42<sup>nd</sup> Co. Castleknock sent out weekly activities of Bible stories, crafts, recipes, and games so that girls could continue to participate in GB activities. 40<sup>th</sup> Co. Manorhamilton held craft and **baking nights over Zoom**, while 1<sup>st</sup> Co. Wicklow organised a virtual choir.

Many Companies found ways to mark the end of term with online or “drive-through” prizegivings.

1<sup>st</sup> Co. Wicklow



40<sup>th</sup> Co. Manorhamilton



45<sup>th</sup> Co. Swords-Donabate



The 26<sup>th</sup> Co. St. Maelruain's, Tallaght organised a wonderful project, **knitting hearts** to give to people in hospital who cannot have visitors. This project has been published in research by the National Youth Council of Ireland as an example of “**best practice**”.

Our HQ ran a number of challenges and competitions across our social media platforms and we continued to find ways to stay connected with one another throughout the summer.



“We thank God for all this blessings throughout last year in GB we ask for His wisdom as we endeavour to reconnect with our girls and reopen GB this year.”

40<sup>th</sup> Co. Manorhamilton

The Girls' Brigade Ireland

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