

Friends of the World Centres

Newsletter 18

May 2011

Welcome

Welcome to the second Australian Friends of the World Centres newsletter for 2011! We hope that you will enjoy following the latest events at our four World Centres, and the reports from our members who visit them throughout 2011 – especially our participants in the Young Women's World Forum!



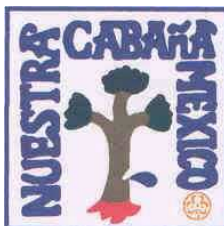
Our Chalet
Adelboden Switzerland

The focus World Centre for Term 2 2011 is Sangam. We encourage you to raise awareness of, and funds for, all four World Centres all year round, but perhaps this term you might like to consider a Sangam night!

Pax Lodge

Australians at Pax Lodge

Two Australians have recently joined the staff at Pax Lodge! **Rachael Marchese** is from Victoria and now lives in London. She was a previous volunteer at Pax Lodge and has also been a long term resident. Rachael has returned to Pax Lodge as the Assistant Guest Services Manager with responsibilities for the house and catering areas in the Guest Services Team. Rachael says:



As the end of my second week draws to a close, I realise how good it feels to be a part of the Pax Lodge team again, though things have changed since volunteering almost 6 years ago! I'm looking forward to the challenges my new role brings, once again sharing my country with others and meeting more of my International Guiding Family.



Sarah Belsham from the Northern Territory has joined Pax Lodge as the Guest Services Coordinator: Conference. Sarah reports as follows.

My name is Sarah Belsham and I'm a teacher from Darwin in the Northern Territory. I have been a member of Girl Guides Northern Territory since I made my promise and became a Brownie in 1986. I was a Guide Leader for a number of years, Development Officer for Girl Guides NT for three years and last year I became the Programme Manager for the NT.



A week ago I moved to Pax Lodge in London to begin my position as Guest Services Coordinator: Conference. There are young women here from New Zealand, Canada, USA, Austria, Argentina, Nicaragua, Spain and now... Australia. I was

immediately welcomed by this wonderful team of staff and volunteers. During my first week, I've been on a tour of the local area, participated in flag raising ceremonies in the mornings, done housekeeping training, helped in the kitchen, assisted with a cream tea and participated in two evening programmes (one with an International theme and the other about the Millennium Development Goals).

It's been a wonderful week and I'm looking forward to a very exciting six months.

We wish Rachael and Sarah all the best for their time at Pax Lodge, and look forward to following their London adventures!



Young Women's World Forum

By Margaret McCoy - Volunteer Event Assistant (USA)

This past March not only welcomed a sunny Spring here in London, but it also brought with it a whirlwind of preparations and excitement for the **Young Women's World Forum 2011**. The anticipation of the event was enough to keep us on our toes, but being a volunteer in the midst of all of it was amazing. Shortly after my arrival in early February I took on the job of communicating with the delegates and answering the seemingly endless number of questions that each delegate had about everything. What began as a simple chart of names, countries and other personal information turned into real Guides and Scouts from around the world.

When I saw the first delegate come through the arrivals gate at Heathrow Airport I realized at that moment that they weren't just names, but real people! I was overcome with relief that all the hard work that had been put into this week would pay off immensely. Throughout the day I helped to welcome our 39 delegates into our Pax Lodge home. The young women were excited and very willing to share their thoughts, experiences and culture with everyone. Being a volunteer during YWWF was amazing, but at the same time very tiring. The first day was the longest of the week, with a 5:00 A.M. start, so that all the delegates could be greeted and welcomed. Even though I was very tired some days, it was worth every minute of it.

Throughout the week we enjoyed participating in evening activities with the young women. We had a ceilidh dance evening, pup quiz at a local pub establishment, and even an international night. As an event assistant volunteer, I was able to partake in the sessions, but I was also responsible for all my regular volunteer duties. It was challenging at times, but I know that neither I nor the delegates will ever be able to replace this amazing experience with anything. The young women were so open about issues in their home countries and absorbed the information supplied in the sessions like sponges. We had sessions on various MDGs, field visits to back up the knowledge, and even had a WAGGGS cafe evening session so that the participants had direct contact with the World Bureau. You could really tell that they were going to take what they had learned that week and truly make a difference in the world. To me personally the most significant part was to be able to represent Girl Scouts USA as the symbol of next year's forum and accept the declaration from this year's delegates. I know that what the delegates created this year will allow the next group of young women in 2012 to build on and thus create a better tomorrow for us all.

Royal Celebrations at Pax Lodge

By Emily Knowles - Volunteer Event Assistant (Canada)

April 29th 2011, now known as the day that Kate Middleton and Prince William said, "I do", is going to be a well-remembered day at Pax Lodge! Guests, staff and volunteers got up in the early hours of the morning in order to find a spot in the crowds so that they could show their support and admiration to the royal couple. A group of Brownies that were staying at Pax Lodge brought their enthusiasm and banners to the Hyde Park Crowds, and were broadcast across the world showing their support to the newlyweds as well as their devotion to Girl Guiding and Scouting.



Those at Pax Lodge who could not venture into the streets of London also showed our support to the future King of England and his bride. Our building also decorated with the Union Jack and banners of Kate and William. At 11 o' clock precisely, guests, staff and volunteers gathered together to watch the beautiful Westminster Abbey Ceremony. After the wedding ceremony was over, there was a traditional British lunch prepared, which included sausages, sandwiches, tea, scones, meringues and fruit. This delicious British Feast was enjoyed while watching the famous balcony kiss. It was a truly majestic afternoon!

In the evening a group of Brownies came to Pax Lodge for an evening program to further celebrate the union of Kate Middleton and Prince William. The group played a variety of wedding themed games, sang some royal tunes (such as Princess Pat), tested their knowledge in the interactive "Who wants to be a Weddingaire" game, and made thank you cards for the royal couple. The evening was highly enjoyed by all and was a great conclusion to the day's celebrations.

Maia Faulkner has also provided a photo of Pax Lodge's Rainbow Guides dressed as newspaper princesses in honour of the big day!



YWWF at Pax Lodge – An Australian Perspective

Alison Bennett from Victoria recently represented Australia at the Young Women's World Forum at Pax Lodge. Her report on this exciting opportunity follows.

I was thrilled to hear that I would be attending the Young Women's World Forum and eagerly awaited the letter to find out which World Centre I would be visiting. Pax Lodge hosted 40 delegates from 35 different countries for the YWWF and I was privileged to be one of them. Along with the delegates at the three other World Centres, we spent a week building our capacity to advocate for the achievement of the MDGs.

However being at Pax Lodge certainly provided a number of unique opportunities. We spent considerable time interacting with members of the World Bureau and Chairs of the World Regions. Whether it was discussions over a cup of tea or a scheduled time to brainstorm our thoughts for improving our Region, our ideas as young women were heard loud and clear. It was an honour, although unexpected, to be sought upon in this manner.

We were also given the opportunity to visit the headquarters of a number of International NGOs. Seeing the work that is being done by these wonderful organisations was truly inspiring and we were grateful for their advice and resources to assist us in our individual efforts.



The Forum was a wonderful event, providing the delegates with the skills and strategies to make a contribution to the MDGs. I also came away with 39 new friends and a new understanding of the joys of staying at a World Centre.

Our Chalet

Spring has been a busy time at Our Chalet! Following is a report from **Sally Thornton**, World Centre Manager.

Spring Greetings from Our Chalet, Switzerland!



Spring has arrived and the fields and mountains are once again a vivid green, the cows are out and the wildflowers are just super!

Young Women's World Forum 2011

The YWWF was an amazing experience for the 45 delegates from all five WAGGGS Regions and nearly 40 different Member Organisations. It was an exciting and inspiring event, uniquely shared with the other three World Centres. At Our Chalet, the highlight for many was the day trip the

delegates made to visit the United Nations office in Geneva, Switzerland, to find out about the [Millennium Development Goals](#) at a global level. While there they had a comprehensive tour of the UN Headquarters and met with a representative of UNEP. This was followed by sharing with a Guest Speaker from the global organisation World Pulse. Anna Baulderstone (*left*) from Adelaide was a super representative for Girl Guides Australia at the Forum in Our Chalet!



From one delegate:

"The best way to start is to dream. We are all excited about bringing a change that is good, but in what field? Define it, be precise, but then make your dream big so as not to lose it out of sight. Action follows through small steps one by one. That is how we start making changes. Be the change you want to be yourself."

Staffing Changes

Nothing is as constant as change, they say! I am delighted to announce some staffing moves within our team: Koka Kovacevic (Slovenia) formerly Programme Manager is moving into the Deputy World Centre Manager position followed by Katie Scales (UK) who is moving from Assistant Programme Manager to Programme Manager. We have also recently welcomed Tina Berglez (Slovenia) as our new Catering Coordinator and Susanne Kofod (Denmark) as the Guest Services Coordinator.

Chalet Celebrates Centenary!

Staff at Our Chalet celebrated Centenary Day on the 10th April. We took the theme "Grow" and based our day of activities around this. We planted 100 seeds and bulbs around the Chalet grounds and then watered them and hope that they will grow. With flowers starting to appear in the gardens, we were reminded that Spring is the start of new things.

Our next challenge took the form of making Centenary passports. We added our own reflections on the Centenary, what Guiding means to us and what we hope will be achieved by the end of the celebrations.



As the Centenary celebrates 100 years of Girl Guiding and Girl Scouting, we took the theme of 100 miles and recorded the location of Our Chalet on a world map. We then asked everyone present at the Chalet to add their own home location with the aim of showing that we have travelled more than 100 miles to get here. With staff members here from as far away as South Korea and Rwanda, this was very successful.

Easter

Our Easter activities were enjoyed by Guides from Stowmarket and a group of Girl Scouts USA Overseas from Germany who were with us for the Easter week. They made chocolate Easter

Egg nests, learned some Rwandan traditional dancing and completed an Easter Egg treasure hunt. The girls also made Easter bunnies from plastic bags which were used to decorate the Chalet and wrote Easter messages to the other World Centres.

Ready Steady Go Spring Cleaning

Our Chalet has welcomed 16 eager and hard working women to take part in Ready Steady Go fortnight which will last until the 15th of May. Many people have helped to create the permanent path to the campfire circle and one group did especially well to work outside all day in the pouring rain and the mist. Fortunately the sun has now come out and so much is happening outdoors. Other tasks included spring cleaning both Main Chalet and Spycher, getting Squirrel House and Camp House ready for the Summer season and sorting through our massive collection of badge swaps that have been left here for future guests. However, it is not all hard work and the participants have heard Falk's story, celebrated and shared culture during international night and enjoyed a movie night.



This is an annual volunteer opportunity held in May. For more information: [http://www.ourchalet.ch/en/people/volunteering_opportunities/roles/Ready Steady Go Week](http://www.ourchalet.ch/en/people/volunteering_opportunities/roles/Ready_Steady_Go_Week)

Volunteer Experiences at Our Chalet

Rwandan Night was celebrated with guests and staff during Spring, with our two volunteers from Rwanda – great dancing and fun had by all!

Katy Runacres (UK) Spring Volunteer says: *"Our Chalet is awesome. I pledge to share more about international Guiding with my Guide company back home. It has been amazing!"*



Being a WAGGGS World Centre volunteer provides rewarding training, learning and development opportunities. We encourage diverse applications from all member organisations. On some occasions, financial assistance may be available to assist with travel costs. Would you like to join us? We are currently recruiting for Winter 2011/12 and Spring 2012:

Season	Dates	Closing date for application
Winter	5 December – 29 February 2012	1 June 2011
Spring	1 March – 31 st May 2012	1 September 2011

http://www.ourchalet.ch/en/people/volunteering_opportunities

Michelle Ahrens from Loxton, South Australia, will be volunteering at Our Chalet later this year. We look forward to hearing about her Alpine adventures!

WAGGGS INTERNATIONAL EVENTS

High Adventure Weeks (18 – 30 year olds)

'Lead your way': 2 - 10 September 2011

Everyone can be a leader! Don't believe that? We do! So come and try for yourself. Take the opportunity to develop your leadership skills through learning by doing.

Guide hikes, lead programme activities, learn about orienteering and see how outdoors and leadership go hand in hand.

<http://www.ourchalet.ch/en/resources/document/view/21068>

Rover Week: 4-11 February 2012

Rover Week is a Winter WAGGGS International Adult Event for Guides and Scouts (18 – 30 years). Participants will have the opportunity to challenge themselves with outdoor alpine activities, community action and learning about bringing their own youth group to an event. Would you like to join us?



Staff Reunion January 2012 – information on website soon – keep checking!

2012 Summer Event Schedule!

Our Chalet has spent the quieter months of winter working on the programme for 2012. Bookings are coming in strongly so book early to avoid being disappointed! New options are on offer for Summer 2012 with both Indoor and Outdoor packages and Swiss Experience or Alpine Adventure options. Read more in the package information brochure at:

<http://www.ourchalet.ch/en/Programme/Internationalevents/2012SummerYouthEvents>

YWWF at Our Chalet – An Australian Perspective

Anna Baulderstone from South Australia recently represented Australia at the Young Women's World Forum at Our Chalet. Her report on this memorable opportunity follows.



From 19-26 March 2011, almost two hundred young women from around the world gathered at the four World Centres to participate in the Young Women's World Forum (YWWF) 2011. I was lucky enough to attend Our Chalet.

The focus of the week was developing our advocacy skills. We learnt about managing diversities, using different methods of communication to convey a message, lobbying and campaigning and knowledge management.

All these learnings were that much easier to take in when surrounded by the beauty of the snow-capped Alps. Although it can be easy to feel insignificant in such surroundings, it's also easy to believe you can change the world when you're in an environment of beauty, peace and seclusion.

It was undoubtedly the most diverse group of women I have ever encountered, but we nonetheless had much in common; a passion for Guiding, a willingness to overcome cultural boundaries and a deep commitment to pursuing the Millennium Development Goals in our home countries.

What I valued most was the opportunity to discuss issues, concerning the



Millennium Development Goals and concerning Guiding in our home countries, with a group of vibrant, passionate, committed and concerned young women. Discovering that Veronique from Guyana was running a 'Trash Up' Day with a concept almost identical to Clean Up Australia Day, as well as a Life Skills program similar to one run in South Australia brought home just how universal many of these issues are. Further, it gave us an opportunity to discuss sharing resources.

We discussed, we planned, and we committed ourselves to action at home. How much of what we set out to achieve actually eventuates remains to be seen, but the effects of the Forum will certainly be felt within WAGGGS and the wider community. We have prepared the way, and in 2012, a further group of girls and young women will be taking what we have learned and what we have done out into the community.



Our Cabaña

The Staff members at Our Cabaña have taken part in lots of exciting activities recently! A report from **Vicky Gagliano**, Deputy World Centre Manager, follows.

We have been busy over the last few months celebrating the Centenary through many different exciting events! Read on for more information...

Thinking Day

Our Cabaña celebrated Thinking Day in style, with around 250 members of Guías de Mexico coming for a day of activities themed around MDG 3 'empowering girls will change our world'. The activities were facilitated by participants of the Butterfly event, representing the UK, El Salvador, Canada, Argentina and the USA. The Guías de Mexico enjoyed discovering how they can change the world, through activities on communication, gender equality, decision making, women in history and learning and working for a fairer world.



Spring Break

Participants from the USA, Canada and UK were joined by local Guías de Mexico for a fun week of activities, including a camping trip to the village of Tepotzlan. International Women's day was celebrated with a pancake party for all the staff, and special activities focusing on gender equality. Highlights of the week were exploring some of Mexico's celebrations and service projects with children and senior citizens.



Young Women's World Forum

Our Cabaña, alongside the other World Centres, hosted the second Young Women's World Forum from March 19-26. 41 young women representing 38 different



countries worked for a week on 3 Millennium Development Goals, discussing the declaration created at the YWWF 2010 in the UK, and designing ways of implementing it in their home countries. The forum was mixed with a range of culture sharing from the participants, and evenings of Mexican culture too. To read in detail about the forum, visit www.wagggsworld.org/en/YWWF2011.

Virtual Rally

For the first time ever, Our Cabaña participated in the Virtual Rally organized by Guías de Mexico. The rally ran for 6 hours, and included tasks on various themes including empowerment, peace and working together. Our team, made up of Cabaña volunteers, two Canadian participants and local Guías de Cuernavaca, came 4th in the competition, involving lots of Google translating, fun and food! You can check out our photos from the rally on Our Cabaña's facebook page.



Centenary Celebration

For WAGGGS' Centenary Celebration, Our Cabaña held a morning of activities for around 40 local Guides aged 4 – 18. We were helped by participants from Canada and older Guides from Cuernavaca who were training to be volunteers. The activities focused around the WAGGGS theme 'Grow' and tracked a women's life, looking at ways to have fun, ways to have new experiences, qualities of women, and achievements in life. We ended with each group making a WAGGGS pledge tshirt, and even skyped with Our Chalet to wish them a happy Centenary! The staff and volunteers worked on a pledge to identify and implement ways to make Our Cabaña more environmentally friendly. Watch out for news on our progress!



Easter Event

During our Easter Event we welcome participants from USA, UK, El Salvador, Costa Rica, Norway and Mexico. We shared a week of activities that focussed on learning about Mexico and its traditions, leadership development, learning about the 4 World Centres and running a service project with children from the local community. We also travelled to various places and welcomed Mexican Guides who were being trained to be volunteers at Our Cabaña.



Upcoming Events

Why not join us at one of our upcoming events?

October 27 – November 4: Mexican Fiestas and Traditions

This event will include many Mexican traditional celebrations, day trips and service projects. The event is always popular, and the Day of the Dead festivities are well worth experiencing.

December 29 – January 6: 100 Wishes for New Year

Celebrate New Year with Our Cabaña! We will be having Centenary Celebrations, day trips, service projects and traditional Mexican New Year celebrations. What better way to spend the New Year than meeting Guiding/Scouting friends from around the world?

For more information, visit www.ourcabana.org/en/events. We hope to see you soon!

YWWF at Our Cabaña – An Australian Perspective

Michelle Price from Queensland recently represented Australia at the Young Women's World Forum at Pax Lodge. Extracts of her report on this inspiring opportunity follow.

I was fortunate enough to be chosen as one of the three Australians to attend the Young Women's World Forum. For me, the forum indicated an opportunity to share my interest in the Millennium Development Goals, as well as mark my first trip to a World Centre. I'm not sure who was more excited - my mother or I - when I found that I had been selected to attend the Forum in Mexico. Our Cabaña had been my mother's first experience of a World Centre over 20 years ago and her enthusiasm was hard to curb which, if possible, only added to my own excitement.

As the trip got closer, I attempted to prepare myself for everything that might come up. We'd been asked to do some preparation work, including identifying both Girl Guides Australia's and the Australian Government's position and current work towards reaching the MDGs.

I arrived in Mexico City after a loooooong flight from Brisbane. AtTicalli, the Guide Hostel in Mexico City, I met up with other Guiding people and the following day, we went exploring, before heading to Cuernavaca that afternoon. My first impression of Our Cabana was complete awe. None of the photos or stories that I had ever seen had done it justice and it was the first of about 1000 times throughout the week I considered myself extremely lucky to have been selected.



The Forum had the theme of "Grow", based on the triennial theme of "Plant, Grow, Share", and each day of the Forum consisted of a different aspect of Growing



Guiding. The first day of the Forum consisted of several "goosebump moments" and I found it quite incredible to hear the World Song and each Member Organisation's promise in all of the different languages. The day's activities focused on our own development and the formation of our patrols. My patrol - the Silver Scorpion s-

consisted of 9 of us from around the globe and our first challenge was to

communicate, as there were a couple in our group who only spoke Spanish, while the majority knew very little Spanish. However, we came together very quickly and were able to share, enthuse and inspire each other.

The second day of the Forum looked at the leadership in WAGGGS and with the Community and the impact that advocacy has on it. I found from my experiences in GGA that I was confident in this area and I particularly enjoyed being able to share my skills with others. That evening we gathered together for a taste of International culture. We were divided up into Regions and the Asia-Pacific Region, being very diverse, elected to share some cultural dancing. While this may have been easy for the Cook Islands and Fiji, with their beautiful dancing, I found this much more challenging and decided to share what the boys of Australia had once taught me when it comes to dancing- the Lawn Mower, Sprinkler and Shopping Trolley moves!

The week continued looking at how to go about defining a problem and putting projects into place. With 40+ passionate and opinionated young women, there were often differences of direction. However we were all able to put aside any differences and understand that what may work for one area is not always practical in others.

The biggest and most rewarding challenge came in the form of our community outing. We visited various projects of the VAMOS organisation, which works with the local community to provide support in areas including health care and food, education and utilising artisan skills to provide an income for their family. My group began the day at Casa Romano (similar to an After School program, and which provides many of the children with their only food and education for the day) and Casa Tactil, which is the base for a group of young artists who make some of the most amazing jewellery and artwork that I've ever seen. After some communication and translation, I managed to work out that for many of these young men, this income - in some cases about AUD\$5 - would feed them for a week.

In the afternoon, my group made our way to Laguilla, which provides afternoon sessions for children (providing food, assistance with homework, English education etc) and parents (arts and crafts, which would hopefully be sold). The rooms, which would be smaller than an average Australian bedroom, would hold over 20 children. At home, I work in a homeless shelter. However, if a family arrives with nothing, I have a cupboard full of toys, pyjamas, school supplies etc to help them. In Mexico, there is no cupboard of resources and I found this realisation very difficult.



We spent the last day making "I pledge" statements, examining what we were willing to commit ourselves to. Having had an eye-opening experience, I made the following pledge: "I pledge to step out of my bubble... and to encourage others to do the same." This fitted in quite well with a couple of the other Guides and between the three of us we had the following statement- "I pledge to step out of my bubble... to get my hands dirty... and to make the dream a reality".

The week can only be described as one of the greatest experiences of my life. I am still shaking my head in disbelief that I was able to be a part of it and I am very much looking forward to being able to share it with other Guides around Australia.

Our Cabaña Activities Pack

Our Cabaña has produced an Activities Pack to help groups learn more about Mexico in preparation for a trip to Our Cabaña. However, the Activities Pack is also a wonderful resource that can help you plan a Mexican night for your Guides – with games, crafts, recipes and more! The Activities Pack is located at: <http://www.ourcabana.org/en/grab/21973/1/10.1-girls-activity-pack-final-.pdf>.

Sangam

Jen's Sangam Adventures

By Jen Barron, Programme Manager (Tasmania)

Namaste from Sangam... I am very happy to write you this report as the Programme Manager at Sangam. Many of you know that I have had a long association with Sangam. I now have the chance to impact on the lives of girls and young women every day by living the WAGGGS vision. Here's an update of events and activities since I came in late November.



From 28 November - 4 December we had a visit from a Canadian Girl Guides Board member who wanted to learn more about HIV/AIDS, especially in relation to India. During her 7 day stay we spent time exploring HIV/AIDS issues while visiting some of our community partner organisations including a visit to Kayakalp, an organisation working with women in the red light area of Pune. This provided an opportunity for valuable learning for our guest and for staff. We also spent time on World Aids Day working with Dr Mune (one of our community partners) and the local corporation school. During this time the COP16 climate change conference was going on and we participated in the WAGGGS climate change action in true Bollywood style! Here's the URL of our clip... <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tu1dD10dtGk>.

The **Essence of India event plus children's camp** was held from 4 - 15 January. Ten participants attended the event from Australia, 1 from Denmark, 1 from Japan and 1 from Canada. The 5 Community Programme Tares (3 month community volunteers) also joined the event to bring the total number of participants to 19. Essence of India was a good fun, high energy event. Some of the event highlights included dinner with Indian families, a visit to Gold Ad Labs to see a more modern side of India and visits to three community partner organisations – Anand Gram, Door Step School and Mobile Crèche. 30 children came from each of those community organisations for the three days of the children's camp. Participants were well organised and provided a great experience for the children. Plus it was awesome for me to have a bunch of Aussies in the house. They made an impact and on a personal level helped me celebrate my birthday in style!

In January members of the programme team presented a comprehensive programme report to the **Friends of Sangam International and Centre Team meetings**. We also participated in some of the meetings and ran some programme activities to give the members a break from their intense meeting schedules.

The **Celebrate our Centenary I** event was held from 15 - 24 February 2011. 45 participants attended the event from UK, 3 from Mexico and 1 from Canada. Also, World Thinking Day was celebrated both here at Sangam and at the Bharat Scout

and Guide ground in Pune. The participants thoroughly enjoyed celebrating **World Thinking Day** with the BS&G. The other highlight of the event was the participants working with four of our community partner organisations to further highlight the theme of World Thinking Day 2011 – empowering girls and young women. The participants really enjoyed their time working alongside the women and children.

Centenary Special Event was held from 2 - 10 March 2011 with 38 participants from the one region in the UK. Highlights of the event included the rally for International Women's Day and a visit to three community partner organisations, from which children came to Sangam for a fun day coordinated by our Tare and assisted by the participants. The children and the participants had a very enjoyable day.



The **Young Women's World Forum** – a definite highlight of my time here so far - was held from 19 - 25 March simultaneously at the four World Centres, with 34 participants from 28 countries here at Sangam. The programme team worked well with the planning team to deliver a high quality event to the participants. Highlights for us included the Holi party (celebrating harvest where you throw water and coloured powder over each other), the closing ceremony (including livestreaming our ceremony on the internet) and Centenary celebrations on the last evening. The celebrations included having an Indian street cart food festival, a 100 shaped cake, a poolside candle ceremony and lighting up a large centenary banner from the water tower. A party to be remembered!



CENTENARY DAY 2011 - GROW

To celebrate the 100th Day of the year here at Sangam we had 96 Guides join with us from Mumbai for a 2 day camp focusing on MDG 7 - ensuring environmental sustainability. The girls participated in a number of interesting interactive activities that included a field trip to the local zoo on Saturday, learning facts about animals

and animal conservation. On Sunday the programme started at 6 am with four rotations on the themes of pollution, waste, bird watching and yoga. After breakfast, girls went on an environmental journey where they learnt about WAGGGS and MDG 7. They also watched a film on the theme, made newspaper carry bags, contributed to climate change action and did other environmental based activities. We finished the day with a Centenary celebration. taking our '100' pic and of course eating cake! It was a fantastic two days that included



learning the importance of our responsibility for being the change we want to see in the world.

I am thoroughly enjoying my time here at Sangam and as we are approaching Summer in India, staff are working hard to prepare for the next season. *I would like to encourage as many of you as possible to come and visit us here at Sangam. Come as an independent guest, attend an event, apply for the community programme or as a Sangam Volunteer or just come to say 'Hi'.* Check out our website for all the details you need... www.sangamworldcentre.org. I look forward to seeing many more Aussies here during my time!!!

Essence of India and Children's Camp

In January, a contingent of 10 Australians had a great time participating in the Essence of India Event and Children's Camp. Contingent Leader **Rosey Donnelly-Grubb** reports on their exciting adventure.



A very proud contingent of 10 Girl Guides went to India for an event that we found to be truly amazing. We arrived as a group of girls from Australia not really knowing each other – other than our friendship on facebook as a get to know you tool, as we came from different states in Australia. Finally, we met at the Melbourne Airport and from there our adventure started. We were now to be a contingent, a Guiding family and friends going into a new country for all of us for the first time.



We were welcomed at Sangam with a memorable welcome ceremony – which I found truly emotional as it was so meaningful. New friendship started blossoming for Girl Guides

and Girl Scouts all over the world – we were so lucky to have such a wide range of countries represented by participants and staff at Sangam during our event - Australia, Japan, Canada, Argentina, UK, Denmark, USA, Sweden, India, Malaysia and Egypt. During the event, we were visited by Guides from Poland, and later people started arriving for the Friends of Sangam Gathering, including the representative from Kenya. This meant there was a member from each WAGGGS Region, which was truly special for us. We learnt a lot about Indian culture, the community partners of Sangam, and WAGGGS in real action in an international setting, amongst friends with whom you could share your experiences, whether good or bad. We were becoming one in one million. The real highlight of our trip was the Children's Camps and visiting the Community Partners and seeing them for ourselves and sharing stories and songs.



We took a bear with us called Mini Morris as pictured to the "right". We gained a greater understanding of our World Centres. Go on - make a difference to yourself and others - plan a trip now! There are so many events offering a huge variety of challenges, learning and experiences.



All I can say is if you get the chance, travel! Yes, travel to our World Centres - you will love it!

Upcoming Events at the World Centres

There are many exciting events coming up at the World Centres, and you can also visit the Centres as an independent guest during your overseas travels; you do not have to attend a specific event! Allow yourself to be tempted... visit the World Centres' websites and choose which Centre you will visit!

Please note that groups visiting a World Centre (for example, leaders taking Guides overseas) need to obtain approval from their State Organisation and the Australian International Manager. Make sure you organise your trip well in advance, as many sessions (particularly the mid-year sessions) fill up quickly.

Let's focus on... Sangam!

Last year our "focus" sections provided information about the exciting opportunities you have if you visit the Centres. This year, in honour of Sangam's 45th birthday in October, we will look at the history of Sangam.

- ♣ In 1956, the WAGGGS International Commissioners met in New Delhi, India. They came up with the idea of building a World Centre in the Asia Pacific Region, to 'promote the Spirit of Guiding, the sharing, the understanding and above all the friendship of a common humanity'.
- ♣ WAGGGS wanted to find a place with a good climate, good transport routes, and a strong local Guiding community that would support the Centre.
- ♣ Australia, the Philippines, Pakistan and India all bid for the Centre, and India was selected.
- ♣ Pune was considered the ideal city for the Centre due to its climate, rich cultural history and strong tradition in education. Its proximity to Mumbai meant that it was relatively easy to access. The Government of Maharashtra (the State in which Sangam is situated) donated 7¾ acres of land for the Centre.
- ♣ In 1963 the building plans were approved at the World Conference. WAGGGS member organisations around the World were asked for donations to help build the Centre, and the response was fantastic!
- ♣ It was decided that the new Centre should be called "Sangam". This is an old Sanskrit word meaning 'joining together' and is literally used to describe the place where rivers meet. Like the confluence of streams, Sangam is a meeting place for Girl Guides and Girl Scouts.
- ♣ Sangam was opened on 16 October 1966 by the World Chief Guide, Lady Baden Powell.
- ♣ Thanks to the generosity of supporters, Sangam has continued to grow over the years, with the continual addition of new buildings, amenities and equipment. Sangam also enjoys a strong relationship with the Bharat (Indian) Scouts and Guides and many community service organisations.

Programme and Fundraising Ideas

- ♣ 16 October is Sangam's birthday, and World Sangam Day! The World Sangam Day resources contain all sorts of information and ideas (including an Activity

Pack) to help you plan an Indian night. You can find the resources at this link: <http://www.sangamworldcentre.org/en/friends/wsd/wsdres>. There are activities suitable for groups of all sizes and ages!

- ♣ Visit a local Indian restaurant, or try out some new curry recipes and have an Indian Feast, asking guests to make a gold coin donation. There are some recipes for Indian food on Sangam's website: <http://www.sangamworldcentre.org/en/grab/20728/5/WSD009Recipes.pdf>.
- ♣ Have a blindfolded taste test of Indian food. Who can identify coconut, mango, cardamon, black pepper, ginger, coriander and lime juice without looking?
- ♣ Find a book in your local library with pictures of Indian embroidery or *rangoli* (a chalk design placed at doorways to bring good luck and harmony) and make your own *rangoli* designs. Find out more about *rangoli* in the World Sangam Day activity pack: <http://www.sangamworldcentre.org/en/grab/20728/2/WSD008ActivitiesPack.pdf>.
- ♣ This year Sangam will be turning 45 years old. Challenge each girl to bring 45 coins (of any denomination) during the year, and at the end of the year donate all the money raised to Sangam! As the coins come in, you could keep the coins in a jar, or stick them onto a large piece of paper – perhaps in the design of an elephant, as Sangam's mascot is an elephant named Sangelee.

Thank You and Acknowledgments

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this newsletter, and special thank you to Jen Barron (Programme Manager, Sangam), Sarah Belsham (Guest Services Coordinator: Conference, Pax Lodge), Maia Faulkner (World Centre Manager, Pax Lodge), Vicky Gagliano (Deputy World Centre Manager, Our Cabaña), Rachael Marchese (Assistant Guest Services Manager, Pax Lodge), Sally Thornton (World Centre Manager, Our Chalet), Anna Baulderstone, Alison Bennett, Rosey Donnelly-Grubb and Michelle Price for their assistance in gathering contributions and information.

We also acknowledge the following websites from which information was sourced for this newsletter: www.sangamworldcentre.org and www.ourcabana.org.

A big **THANK YOU** also to all Australian Friends of the World Centres members. In February we transferred \$46,877.32 to WAGGGS, for distribution to the World Centres. The majority of this represented funds held in the former FOWC Life Members fund. The World Centre staff were very pleased with this World Thinking Day surprise!



Next Newsletter

Do you have any fundraising ideas or program ideas? Have you recently visited a World Centre? If so, we would love to hear from you! Please provide all contributions to Judy Harris, Australian Friends of the World Centres Liaison, by no later than Sunday **7 August 2011**. Contributions can be provided by email (judyharris@bigpond.com) or through your State International Adviser.