

Guiding force

Celebrating 100 years of fun and friendship for girls and young women

By **Jessie Moniz**

This may come as a surprise to some, but the Brownie Rose, isn't actually brown, it is buttercup yellow.

Chief Guide of GirlGuides, Liz Burnley of Yorkshire, England, was in Bermuda to mark GirlGuide's 100th anniversary.

GirlGuides is an organisation for girls five years old and up. The youngest are called Rainbows, the second age group are Brownies and the oldest girls are Girl Guides. In their teen years, girls can become rangers and junior leaders.

At weekly meetings the girls learn life skills, go on camping trips, do fundraising for charity and much more.

As Chairman of the GirlGuide Trustees, Mrs. Burnley is in charge of one of the largest all-girl organisations in the world with 550,000 members including girls in Bermuda.

"Mrs. Burnley's visit has been a mountain top moment," said GirlGuiding Bermuda Commissioner Denise Woodhouse. "It has been very special for the girls to meet Liz. We have eaten a lot of centenary birthday cake in the last few days."

In honour of the GirlGuide Centennial, Mrs. Burnley planted two Brownie Rose bushes at

Government House.

The Brownie Rose was designed specifically for GirlGuides during their 90th birthday celebrations.

The bushes are some of the first of their variety on the island. They are being sold to the Guiding community in Bermuda as a keepsake of the anniversary celebrations.

Mrs. Burnley also planted two cedar trees at West End Primary with the 1st Somerset Brownies.

"It was great and the girls got involved in the planting. They did all the hard work," said Mrs. Burnley with a laugh.

She first got involved as a Brownie at the age of seven. Since that time she has been involved in many different capacities, including many years spent as a Brownie leader.

She said what outsiders often don't realise is that volunteering with GirlGuides is not a chore.

"I really enjoy being part of it, and the fellowship that comes with that," she said.

She urged more Bermudians to train to be leaders and volunteers. There are currently 100 girls on the waiting list for the programme. At least ten new leaders are required to take them all on.

"During this special year, it would be nice to find ways of re-



'Mountain top moment': Liz Burnley (centre) visited Bermuda to help mark the 100th anniversary of GirlGuiding.

connecting with people who have been members themselves and have fond memories of when they were a girl with GirlGuides," said Mrs. Burnley.

"In Bermuda we had a 12 hour challenge. You might only be able to give 12 hours in a year as a volunteer, but we could use that 12 hours. You don't necessarily have to go every Tuesday night. You might have a skill you would like to share with the girls."

As part of her visit, Mrs. Burnley attended a dinner with the GirlGuiding Bermuda Council and senior members, and led a training session for 30 GirlGuide leaders and visited various Rainbow, Brownie and Guide units.

Although the GirlGuide movement was started in England in 1910 by Lord Baden-Powell, it didn't actually reach Bermuda

until 1919.

"I am delighted to be in Bermuda as part of the 100th anniversary celebrations of GirlGuiding," Mrs. Burnley said.

"We provide a unique girl-only space, which enables girls and young women to develop skills and confidence to help them reach their full potential in whatever area that may be.

"It is exciting to see that the guiding movement is so strong on the Island. I would like to congratulate GirlGuiding Bermuda on a successful programme that has provided local residents with leadership opportunities and has helped young women to build self-esteem for over 90 years. Long may this very special programme continue."

Mrs. Burnley said that GirlGuide skills such as teamwork can often come in handy later in life when it comes to careers. Her

own background is in human resources in the manufacturing industry.

"Quite often, in a work situation I have used skills I use through guiding," she said. "It might just be down to training activities or ways of working in teams or groups, leadership, all those kinds of things.

"Sometimes we don't always make the connection that we are offering adult skills that are really useful in the workplace."

She also said it can be useful when getting into college. This year eight teenage GirlGuide leaders in Bermuda received full-scholarships to go onto university.

"Their guiding skills played a big part in them being able to get full scholarships," said Mrs. Woodhouse.

"GirlGuiding participation and awards may be the thing

that sets a girl apart from other applicants.

"It shows that they are committed to doing and achieving things."

Other activities planned for the centennial year include a princess party for the Rainbows and a Brownie sleepover as well as fund raising events such as a dunk tank at the Annual Exhibition, bake sale, car wash, raffle and, in October, a fair.

The organisation is currently raising funds so that Bermuda GirlGuides can participate in GirlGuide activities in England later this year.

For further details on the Centennial celebrations, please telephone the GirlGuiding Bermuda headquarters on 292-0675 or Island Commissioner Denise Woodhouse on 236-2479 or e-mail girlguides@northrock.bm.