



# Essex West News Fest Summer Special

A glimpse of what Essex West have been up to during the summer of 2024

## Rosemary writes...

I've had a busy but fun filled summer. I'd spent some time before the summer approving various REN forms but after that it was time to enjoy seeing what those forms were all about .

Firstly I visited Essex International Guides and Scout Jamboree on a couple of occasions. I stood on the stage in front of thousands of Guides and Scouts as girls made their Guide Promise for the very first time - what a memory for them!

My return visit allowed me to see just a few of the amazing activities available to participants. Some of them I sort of expected - abseiling, axe throwing and the like - but 3D printing and the Jamboree's own news and weather stations - what an amazing opportunity!!

My next trip was to Hautbois fest as part of the security team. My main roles were seeing Guides across the road and controlling vehicle access to the site but it also gave me the opportunity to look around all the things going on. Its really did give a festival atmosphere. The closing ceremony rivalled the Olympics - lots of neon, fireworks and lasers and so many girls making their Promise for the first or renewing it

I've also followed Coral on her adventures in India- though only on social media! really makes me want to go back again to our Sangam home.

As we return to unit meetings I'm looking forward to seeing what Parliament week is all about, preparing for Children In Need and of course those autumn traditions - Guy Fawkes and Halloween!

I do hope to see as many of you as possible at our County Members Day on 19th October - a chance to update some skills, collect lots of resources and have a good natter with old friends while making new ones





Mhairi Mackay, Assistant Chief Guide took a flight from Edinburgh to come and visit us at Essex Jamboree, for the day!

Mhairi experienced a few activities whilst on site. She is pictured above doing bell ringing, trampolining and tomahawk throwing. Mhairi had such a great time that she is planning on bringing her Rangers to Essex in 2028!



Thurrock East had an amazing time on Seine subcamp at Essex International Jamboree this summer. A group of 8 Guides and 2 Rangers who had never camped together before and they had an amazing time with great friendships forged and amazing memories made. 3 of the Guides performed in the opening/closing ceremonies. 2 of those were also in the Gang Show performance.







Thurrock West Division took 23 Guides and Rangers from 4 different units to Essex International Jamboree. The Nile subcamp became our home for the week. We also hosted 17 Explorers and 12 Finnish Scouts and Guides and 3 Finnish Leaders. Although a lot of hard work for us leaders, having so many to feed, everyone one had a great time. All participants were extremely well behaved and everyone got on really well. Definitely a new experience for some, as they have never camped before, but are all looking forward to what will be offered next year.



For the first time at an Essex International Jamboree, tomahawk throwing was an activity on offer to the young people. Within the tomahawk team were a couple of Essex West members, Tony Skinner and Lucy Hill, both of whom played a key role in getting tomahawk throwing approved by Girlguiding insurers.

During the week the team got a visit from the Assistant Chief Guide who thoroughly enjoyed her time throwing with us. She even left with her own EIJ 2024 throwing angel!





1st Upshire Brownies had their residential at Easter but during the summer we visited Colchester zoo and had a fun session of Water Zorbing at Chigwell Row.



On the 12th July, 1st Waltham Abbey Guides travelled to Hautbois by train to spend a weekend together at Lodge Cottage. This was the unit's first trip away since its change of leadership in September. The weather could have been kinder but it didn't stop everyone having a brilliant time. The Guides completed the Hautbois Challenge Badge by taking part in bushcraft skills, climbing, problem solving and bridge building. We followed this with a paracord craft, birthday cake and a self led campfire. The weekend was topped off with some raft building on the Sunday morning before heading back to the station for our return journey. Everyone threw themselves into having a great time even though for some it was their first time away from home and a challenge just to go!



### Waltham Abbey and Upshire Rangers (The Bunch)

Essex International Jamboree - 27th July - 3rd August None of us had ever been to a jamboree before so we were all very excited and it did not disappoint! The dry weather we'd hoped for well and truly exceeded itself (so hot!) and the Rangers were kept busy from the off. There were ten participant sub camps, all named after rivers of the world and our Murray sub camp team were all so good and extremely helpful for us first timers. The week was organised so that each sub camp took part in two activity zones each day with loads of other activities around the site and for the evenings. Our Rangers' favourites were the Enterprise zone where they had to design, make, market and sell (like the apprentice) and the 'it's a knockout' zone, full of inflatable and problem solving fun, which kept everyone involved for the whole afternoon. Our Rangers were given the honour of raising the Essex flag at flag break one morning and one of the Rangers danced in the opening and closing ceremonies. Even Gertie Grape (our mascot) managed to get involved with supporting many of the activities. The last night's party atmosphere and fireworks sent everyone out on a high and by the time we went home, we were all satisfyingly exhausted. We will definitely be going again but with knowledge and experience for next time.







### 1st Shenfield Guides Essex International Jamboree

The week started by setting up their camping area on their Subcamp (Yangtze) followed by a fantastic Opening Ceremony. They then took part in numerous activities. Some evenings there were early evening activities that they took part in with the other groups on their Subcamp which included Scouts and Guides from British Scouts Overseas, Kenya, Ireland as well as many British groups.

Evening activities on offer included a dance tent, the stages (to see live music acts), the cinema tent, the circus extravaganza show or the campfire. Also, there were theme nights - Barn dance, Gang Show, Neon Night, Battle of the Bands and International.

The Guides had a fantastic time and thoroughly enjoyed all the different activities and really embraced meeting Scouts and Guides from all over the world.

#### Quotes from 1st Shenfield Guides parents' post-event:

"Thank you so much to the whole 1st Shenfield Guides team for taking 'S' to Jamboree. She had an amazing time and can't stop talking about it. I really appreciate everyone's hard work and hope you can all have a good rest now!"

"A huge thank you for everything you've done this week to make Jamboree so special for 'H'. What an amazing experience for all the girls. Memories made for a lifetime."







Brownies from Fyfield, Doddinghurst and Ongar had a brilliant Brownie Holiday at Skreens Park. The theme was Brownies in Wonderland. The girls enjoyed a trip down the Rabbit hole in the Cave Bus and finding Flamingos on the lake, while Canoeing. Lots of games, craft and fun outdoors was enjoyed by all. The Sunday afternoon was the chance for the girls to show off their baking. They held a Mad Hatters Tea party, for their invited guests



Lily Hart, a Young Leader with Fyfield Brownies was surprised, when Region Assistant Chief Commissioner, Chris Skinner, presented her with The Region Buddy Award. Lily had been nominated for her one to one volunteering, with a Brownie who is sight impaired and has extra educational needs. Apart from helping her navigate weekly Brownie meetings, Lily has also completed a mud run, canoed, climbed and caved with her. Chris presented Lily with her badge and certificate, while Lily was buddying the young Brownie on Brownie Holiday . When the Brownie was asked what she thought about Lily receiving the award, she said “Thankyou for helping me”



During Essex International Jamboree, our Region Chief, Karen Johnson and her Deputy, Claire Course, came to visit

They spent their day walking around the site, chatting with young people and volunteers.



What a Super Star  
7 year old Iris, joined a Colour Run team and helped raise £1000 for the Food Bank

Iris, from Matching Green is going to use this event and what she has learnt about Food Banks for her Charities badge.



## Future adventures

Kernow Jamboree (Cornwall) 26th July - 2nd August 2025  
[www.kernowjamboree.org.uk](http://www.kernowjamboree.org.uk)

Norjam 9th-16th August 2025 [www.norjam.org.uk](http://www.norjam.org.uk)

Intents @ Thriftwood - August 2025

KIJ(kent) 2nd-9th August 2025 <https://www.kij.org.uk>

Wings Jamboree 25th July - 1st August 2026  
[www.wingsjamboree.org.uk](http://www.wingsjamboree.org.uk)

Poacher (Lincolnshire) 1st -8th August 2026  
<https://www.poacher.org.uk>

Camjam 2027 - dates TBC <https://www.facebook.com/CamJam2025>





On a fabulously sunny Friday morning in August we departed Harold Wood by train with Guides, Leaders and more luggage than I care to mention. We were met at Norwich station by the Hautbois shuttle service which ensured a smooth start to our amazing weekend at Hautbois Fest 2024!

As a unit this was our first camping trip and we couldn't have asked for more. The weather was perfect, tents were already pitched, and the food was fantastic. We started with spag bol on our first evening, then a choice of catering vans for the second night and finally a bbq for our last evening. How the Hautbois Fest catering team managed to get so many people fed, with food of such a high standard, for 3 meals per day is an absolute miracle!

During the day there was a full programme of events ranging from yoga, paddle boarding and kayaking to hair braiding and henna tattoos and time for visiting the alpacas, pythons and the baby skunk! Also need to mention Swoperz.com who had a stall and the Guides have asked us to invite them to a unit meeting, they were a big hit! The evening entertainment was fantastic with numerous bands performing, but a particular highlight was the neon disco on the last evening. It was so lovely seeing all the wonderful outfits and all the guides and leaders having such an amazing time!

The pinnacle of that last evening was watching as our two youngest guides made their promise in front of all the neon party goers - and just before the fireworks and laser show!!

Everyone had a wonderful time, created many memories, made new friendships and we have already put Hautbois Fest 2026 in the calendar!





# Coral's summer adventure to Sangam with Anglia Region



On our last evening,  
we dressed in our  
Sari's for an Indian  
afternoon & dinner.  
This was taken by  
the pool at Sangam



On the night of the  
Indian celebrations, we  
had to make a rangoli  
pattern in sand next to  
where we would sit for  
the Maharashtra feast.



Sitting on  
the Diana  
memorial  
seat at the  
Taj Mahal



At one of the  
restaurants we  
were given a dish  
with small raw  
onions, hot  
chutney & lime. We  
challenged each  
other to eat in one  
go.

We visited the Jama Masjid  
mosque in Agra. We had to  
go bare feet & wear a gown  
to cover ourselves,  
surprisingly we didn't have  
to cover our head.



We went to the Amber fort in  
Jaipur, we were told that we  
would ride up on the elephants &  
come down by Jeep. Within  
ethical guidance & advice from  
Sangam we were told not to ride  
the elephants. When we told our  
guide, he cancelled them but to  
our disappointment it meant we  
were unable to see the elephants.  
We showed our disappointment &  
our guide arranged for us to see  
this elephant at his home.

