

🌀 Guides and Scouts 🌀

As the village grew in the 1970s and 1980s, demand increased for out of school activities for children and teenagers. Brownies, Guides and Fox Ranger troops were formed for the girls and Cubs for the boys.

Finmere Brownies

Finmere Brownies pack was established in 1980. Tessa Hollingshead recalls the details.

One day I was reminiscing with Rose Sasser, an American whose husband was with the American Air Force at Croughton. We remembered the wonderful times we had in our youth as members of Girl Guides—Rose had travelled all over the world as a guide and I had spent many happy hours at Foxlease, Lyndhurst, where I then lived, with guides from every nation. We decided that we would start up a guiding unit in Finmere and, as our children were then of Brownie age, we chose a Brownie Pack. The District Commissioner, Mrs Gray, a wonderful lady from Souldern, who gave us every encouragement and told us how to go about it. We also visited the Guide shop in Oxford to research whether there had been a Brownie Pack in Finmere before—there had not, so we were able to call ourselves the 1st Finmere Brownies.

Our uniforms were quite different from the sweatshirt and casual culottes of today. We wore little brown dresses and in the winter, we had to wear them over piles of jumpers and tights to keep warm. Instead of the sash, we had a Brownie tie and many hours were spent learning how to tie this correctly, and use it as a sling if someone hurt their arm!

We spread the word that Brownies was to start in the village school on Monday nights from 4.00 to 5.30 pm and we found 12 eager girls waiting for us on the first night. Most were pupils at Finmere School, just two came from other schools. After a few weeks, our first recruits were ready to make their Promises. Mrs Gray came to enrol them and reinstate Rose and me as adult leaders. One of our most exciting events in the first year was a trip to the Brownie Revels at Tusmore Park where we met Brownies from many other packs and took part in games and races. After a while we moved into the village hall and we were joined by a wonderful helper Pat White who quickly became a qualified leader and has led the pack through 20 exciting years from strength to strength.

In March 2000, we celebrated our 20th official birthday, together with Brown Owl, Pat White, having also completed 20 years service. Over the years, uniform and programmes have changed dramatically. The pack is now drawn from many local villages and occasionally Buckingham, with an average pack size of 22 girls. Activities have involved the programme, supporting various charities, going on over 20 pack holidays and generally having fun together.



Finmere Brownies in November 1999



Eric the Fox on the Eiffel Tower, 1997

It was a tradition that Rangers made their promises in an unusual place; these included the Bell Tower of the church, on the roof of Delta Gray, in a Jacuzzi and, best of all, at the top of the Eiffel Tower.



The founding Finmere Cubs, 1988

In 2000, only the Brownies and Guides remain active.

Finmere Guides

The 1st Finmere Guides Company was formed in May 1985. In the ensuing years, the girls have obtained many badges and trefoils and their continued aim is for fun, learning and entertainment. They regularly attend camps, both at home and abroad, and their activities have included abseiling, bell ringing and night hiking. Within the community, the girls undertake the litter blitz in the spring and the postal service at Christmas.

Fox Rangers

Fox Rangers, for girls aged 14-25, are the next step up from Guides and started at Finmere in September 1993. Two Guiders, Bev Mallion and Di Davis, ran the unit. They had a varied programme and did many activities, including starting up the recycling in the village. Money raised from this was used to sponsor an Indian boy, Ramlal Uiky. One member was fortunate to go on an international trip to Russia, another to an international camp in Wales. Other activities have included quad biking, raft racing and a night out at the ballet. Unfortunately, the unit closed in late 1998 due to lack of numbers; it is in abeyance, ready to start again, once demand allows.

Finmere Cubs

At the beginning of 1988, plans were put into action to start a Cub Pack in Finmere by Ann Smith, Carol Cooper, and an enthusiastic committee of parents. It thrived with boys taking part in scouting activities locally and further afield. By the end of 1991, however, numbers had declined to seven and were due to drop to five after Christmas. The decision was made to amalgamate the Finmere and Tingewick packs, which had a new leader. Village children must now attend cubs at Tingewick, which is a sad loss for Finmere. Finmere has not hosted a Scout troop.