

**International Matters – December 2015**

**For all Leaders, Network & Explorer Scouts**  
**Scouting in the Arab Republic of Syria**



Scouting in Syria was founded in 1912 when Greater Syria was a major province of the Ottoman Empire. Since then, the country has experienced significant political and boundary changes. Today, the association is open to members of all faiths and of both genders. The number of Scouts at this time can only be estimated at less than 9,000 with so many Syrians having left the country as refugees going to the Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey and Europe.



Here we can see that the Scouts have made some cakes to distribute with presents for children at Christmas time in Damascus.

It must be extremely difficult for Scouts in Syria today with political turmoil, civil war and military action taking place across the country.

We can only applaud their dedication to humanitarian actions where needed.

Five Syrian Scouts managed to attend the World Scout Jamboree in Japan and produced their own commemorative badge – surely a collector’s item.



**For all Leaders, Network & Explorer Scouts**

**Are we prepared to welcome Syrian Refugees to Hertfordshire?**

Already 1,000 refugees from Syria have arrived in the U.K. – at least another 19,000 are expected over the next few years, but of course, the situation may change.

The Isle of Bute was the first to welcome fifteen Syrian refugee families (28 adults & 31 children). Others have travelled on to Essex, Northern Ireland and Stirling in Scotland.



The groups consist mainly of vulnerable families and orphans, most of who have been living in refugee camps outside of Syria.

In the UK, local authorities have been asked to voluntarily put forward plans to accept an allocation of refugees. Each of Hertfordshire's 10 district councils is expected to conform to this plan, but as yet no details are available.

It is suggested that each Scout District contacts the Chief Executive of their appropriate Borough/District Council to find out what its plans are regarding the refugees?

In the meantime, preparations can be made:

- Find Arabic speakers in your district – via local newspapers, Streetwise, etc.
- Be aware of Muslim culture and religious festivals.
- Locate the mosques or halls used for Islamic prayers in your district (there are at least 21 in Hertfordshire) and make contact with the Imam or President. Invite to your unit.
- Locate the Halal butchers, markets, restaurants and caterers in your district (there are over 40 in Hertfordshire).
- Prepare a leaflet in Arabic / English to hand to families about Scouting in general and explaining where and when Beavers, Cubs, Scouts and Explorers meet. A generic template can be obtained from Mike Aston, UK-Arab Region Scout Active Service Unit – just email [mike@kcited.demon.co.uk](mailto:mike@kcited.demon.co.uk) and ask.

All the above activities provide programme ideas and will count towards a number of awards in the badge system.

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## **For all Leaders, Network & Explorer Scouts**

**Stumped for international or faith themed programme ideas over next couple of months – look no further:**

### **Monday 8 February - Chinese New Year- the year of the monkey**



Chinese New Year is one of the most important Chinese holidays and is celebrated across east and south-east Asia. Also known as the spring festival, it celebrates the start of new life and the season of ploughing and sowing.

Traditions include an annual reunion dinner for families on New Year's Eve and the decorating of doors and windows with intricate red paper designs. People thoroughly clean their homes to sweep away any ill-fortunes and children are given money inside red paper envelopes.

Chinese New Year ends with the Lantern Festival, held on the full moon 15 days after the New Year - a time when people hang glowing lanterns in the windows of their houses and dancers carry dragons made of paper, silk and bamboo through the streets collecting money.

To find out more about the Chinese calendar visit

<http://www.chinapage.com/astronomy/calendar/calendar.html>

## Tuesday 9 February – Shrove Tuesday



The last day before the start of Lent, celebrated all over the UK by the cooking and eating of pancakes.

'Shrove' - stems from old English word 'shrive', meaning 'confess all sins'. It is called Pancake Day because it is the day traditionally for eating pancakes as pancake recipes were a way to use up any stocks of milk, butter and eggs which were forbidden during the abstinence of Lent.

## Sunday 14 February - St Valentine's Day



An international celebration of love and affection.

Its roots as a celebration of love and affection seem to lie in 1382, when Geoffrey Chaucer wrote a poem to honour the first anniversary of the engagement of King Richard II of England to Anne of Bohemia.

Common Valentine's Day gifts include chocolates and flowers, while symbols associated with the occasion

include hearts and the figure of Cupid, the Roman god of desire.

In the week preceding, making Valentine's cards, cakes and chocolates, can contribute to colony, pack and troop programmes.



## Monday 22 February – Founder's Day



Celebrated worldwide in nearly all Scout associations, Founder's Day is celebrated on 22 February, the birthday of Robert Baden-Powell, 1st Baron Baden-Powell (born in 1857), the founder of Scouting, and coincidentally also of his wife Olave Baden-Powell (born in 1889).

Girlguiding UK refers to the day as Thinking Day.

Lots of programme ideas for all four sections can be found here:

<http://scoutsrecords.org/scoutsuploads/scout%20history%20programme%20ideas.pdf>

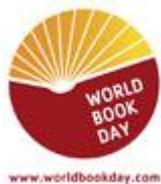
## 29 February - 13 March - Fairtrade Fortnight



Fairtrade Fortnight brings together consumers, retailers, licensees, businesses, producers and campaigners nationwide to promote awareness and sales of Fairtrade products and to campaign on issues of trade justice. Every year, thousands of events and activities take place up and down the country in celebration of Fairtrade Fortnight.

<http://www.fairtrade.org.uk/en/get-involved/current-campaigns/fairtrade-fortnight-2016>

## Thursday 3 March - World Book Day



World Book Day was designated by UNESCO as a worldwide celebration of books and reading, and is marked in over 100 countries around the globe.

A main aim of World Book Day in the UK and Ireland is to encourage children to explore the pleasures of books and reading by providing them with the opportunity to have a book of their own.

Invite everyone in the colony, pack or troop to bring in their favourite book, read from it and say why they like it. This may well spread over several weeks.

## Sunday 13 March - Africa Scout Day



**Journée Africaine du Scoutisme**  
13 March / Mars

Africa Scout Day is a day of celebration for Scouts in Africa and is held annually on 13 March. There are 54 countries in Africa – all have Scouting in some form or other.

Pick one country to investigate and perhaps communicate with members. Compare their programme with ours.

Invite a couple of Explorer Scouts or Network to your meeting to tell you about their adventures in Swaziland, Lesotho, South Africa, Namibia, The Gambia, Mauritius, Ghana, Morocco – all countries

visited by Hertfordshire Scouts.

## Monday 14 March - Commonwealth Day



Since 1977, Commonwealth Day has been celebrated throughout the Commonwealth on the second Monday in March. Find out more about the role of the Queen, the origins of the Commonwealth and the Commonwealth members.

Resources to celebrate Commonwealth Day, which promotes understanding on global issues, international co-operation and the work of the Commonwealth's organisations, can be found at:

<https://thercs.org/youth-and-education/teaching-resources/>

## Thursday 17 March - St Patrick's Day



For a variety of programme ideas go to:

<http://www.activityvillage.co.uk/st-patricks-day>

– and have lots of fun with shamrocks, leprechauns and potatoes.

## Saturday 19 March - Earth Hour



Find out about this global event that encourages people to take a stand against climate change by switching off their lights for one hour.

<http://www.earthhour.org/>

## Sunday 20 March - Palm Sunday



Information about the origins and significance of Palm Sunday, a day commemorating the triumphal arrival of Jesus into Jerusalem can be found at:

<http://projectbritain.com/easter/palmsunday.htm>

Practical activities include the making of Pax Cakes and Palm Crosses

## Monday 21 March - World Poetry Day



Bring and recite your favourite poem.

## Tuesday 22 March - World Water Day



The day is intended to raise awareness of the importance and competition for clean, safe water for drinking and for agriculture and industry.

Ideal for the Cub Scout Global Issues Activity Badge - *Take part in an international awareness day or week.*

[http://www.wateraid.org/\\_/campaigns/where-we-campaign](http://www.wateraid.org/_/campaigns/where-we-campaign)

## Wednesday 23 March - Holi



Find out about Holi, a Hindu celebration of creation and renewal when people throw coloured powder and water at each other.

<http://www.holifestival.org/holi-festival.html>

## Sunday 27 March - British Summer Time begins



Why the clocks 'go forward' an hour and the implications for people in different parts of the UK.

Think about train timetables, Big Ben, smart phones .....

and so

あけまして おめでとう ございます

**bliadhna mhath ur**

**blwyddyn newydd dda**

**unyaka omusha omuhle**

**ath bhliain faoi mhaise**

**sretna nova godina**

**Happy New Year!**

**to all**

**from the County Global Support Team**

**And don't forget – if you are travelling abroad next year with Scouts or as an individual ask Peter Makewell for a Visits Abroad Pack by email to [acc.international@hertfordshirescouts.org.uk](mailto:acc.international@hertfordshirescouts.org.uk) or call 07801 480946**