

Earlier in the summer holidays I was fortunate to be invited along to see the Kent Scouts International Jamboree in action at the Kent Showground on Detling Hill. I was blown away by what I saw. And then immediately envious that I am a grown up and not able to do all the fun stuff that the kids got to do! I thought I would use this column to talk not just about the Jamboree but also how brilliant our uniformed youth groups are, and which I have ministerial responsibility for!

The Jamboree attracted over 6000 scouts including local, national and international scouts. I was pleased to see many scouts and guides from across my own constituency in attendance but other than the activity programme, which was amazing, the thing that struck me most was that it was by and large organised by volunteers. My host for the morning was a young man called Chris. He works full time and gets 20 days annual leave. He took 10 days off just to organise and attend the Jamboree. He was not alone in that respect. Most leaders were there in their own time dedicated to the cause of support youngsters in their development.

I am a huge fan of our uniformed groups. Things were slightly different in my day with a more segregated gender group approach of scouts and guides, but still they were there doing things as Baden-Powell had intended. Today's groups reflect modern challenges and it is great to see scouts doing dementia and mental health projects among the more usual initiatives. But it also fantastic to see that they are more popular than ever. As always volunteers are the lifeblood of the movement and are welcomed. So if you fancy getting involved then do get in touch with Kent Scouts. It is never too late for a new adventure!