*I’m Tina Powell, the Regional International Advisor for Anglia. I have been travelling to India regularly, and have visited around 40 times, over the last 30 years. Many of my trips have been with large groups of Guides and Rangers, starting at Sangam, and then travelling afterwards, to explore more of the country.*

*In June, 2022, Sangam was able to welcome its first guests, in over two years, following the Covid pandemic and everyone is now working very hard, to rebuild numbers, so it is able to hit its bed-nights target, for 2023 and secure its future.*

*Realistically, it’s too big an ask to select girls for a trip, next year, both because of the limited time they would have to fundraise for such a big trip and given the likelihood that some parents would be wary of their daughters travelling such a distance. I am, therefore, instead suggesting an adults’ trip, in August.*

*I am passionate about our World Centre in Pune, but recognise that, while many are keen to visit, people often feel wary of embarking on such an adventure on their own. I am proposing, therefore, that, rather than arrange a single trip, to offer to adults, I will be at Sangam throughout August, 2023. Anyone aged 18 and over who is interested in visiting will be able to sign up to the dates s/he wants; the accommodation s/he wants and the activities s/he wants. Everyone will be able to decide if/where to travel after Sangam. I will be on hand, before the trip, to advise on how to make suitable plans to ensure a seamless journey, and available during your stay, to help arrange/decide/choose and to provide advice on just about anything you need advice on!*

*Come on your own (and meet new friends), or plan a trip with others: the choice is yours.*

***This is a sign-up-and-go mix-and-match trip!***

**Sangam**

There are two ways to attend Sangam:

1. **As an event participant:** For Her World runs 16th-22nd August, 2023 and will include a charity project, working with one of Sangam’s community partners. The event fee, £630 covers all board, lodgings and materials, from dinner on 15th August, to lunch, on 22nd, as well as transport to/from various sights and sites in the city and an optional yoga class, before breakfast, each day. *This choice effectively reduces your planning to arranging to get yourself to/from Sangam, as everything in Pune will have been arranged for you.*
2. **As an independent guest:** You would have the opportunity to spend as much, or as little time in and around Sangam as you would like, and in a range of accommodation (prices quoted per night).
* Dormitory £ 11 *per person*
* Twin Room £ 47 *per room*
* Twin Room + Ensuite £ 54 *per room*
* Triple Room £ 67 *per room*
* Triple Room + Ensuite £ 73 *per room*
* Poolside Villa (sleeps max 4) £108 *per villa - two large beds*
* Poolside Villa (sleeps max 5) £108 *per villa –includes bunk beds*

You could simply choose to spend your time in the pool, or enjoying Sangam’s gardens and grounds, or you could use the centre as a base, from which to explore Pune and its environs: whether to shop (*there are small, local shops, or a rickshaw into the main city centre is about £2 each way – and can carry up to three people)*; to visit temples and cultural sites (*many, in walking distance and others a rickshaw, bus, or train ride away)*; to try out different massages and therapies (*almost too many to mention – but a 1hr massage, at Sangam, is about £20; one hour of singing bowls therapy is about £65, for a group of 8)*; to attend a class on making hand-made paper, or to visit the only nature reserve which is home to the Indian giant squirrel (*which, being some 120km away, would probably need a car and driver, or a bus – and a 17-seater could be hired for less and £1 a kilometre)*, for example.

You could join a whole day of the event (at a cost of £90, which would include all meals and accommodation); a half-day (£40, including one meal, or £30, without) or an evening event £10. *You might want to consider attending the traditional opening ceremony, for example, or the Maharastrian dinner.* From memory, early morning yoga is a couple of pounds.

You could eat as many, or as few meals at Sangam as you wish: breakfast is roughly £3, per day; lunch, £3.50 and dinner, £4.25. If you eat out, a light lunch, with a soft drink, will set you back £2-50 or so; a slap-up dinner, with alcohol, from £8 up to European prices (depending on the area, and the kind of food you are looking for).

**After Sangam:**

You could return home, or you could travel and explore more of India. For example:

* Head south, to spend a couple of days chilling on a beach
* Visit the Golden Triangle of Agra, Jaipur and Delhi, to see the Taj Mahal and so much more
* Cruise the backwaters of Kerala, in an air-conditioned boat, with your own chef on board and visit the spice markets and the famous Chinese fishing nets
* Visit a tiger reserve (*although this is not the best time of year to see a tiger, as the lush vegetation and plentiful water supply means they do not have to visit water holes and have more places to hide)*
* Explore local crafts

*Such visits can be as cheap, or as expensive as you like, depending upon whether you want to fly, travel in a private vehicle, with a driver, or take a bus, or train! Hotels can cost European prices, or as little as £5 a night. I can help and advise…*

**What do You Need to Do?**

1. Let me know you are interested, so I can help you make your booking with Sangam and can liaise with them, to make the necessary arrangements. tinap@girlguiding-anglia.org.uk
2. I will advise what to do, and when, but you will be responsible for arranging/buying:
* Travel insurance (*This should include Covid cover.)*
* Flights *(Currently available from £450, upwards, with a stopover, or from £700, flying direct from London to Mumbai)*
* Getting to/from Heathrow/Gatwick/other UK airport
* Transport to/from Sangam (*A car and driver, for a single passenger is about £40, each way; for two passengers, about £47 and for 3-4 passengers, around £58. Local companies run regular minibus shuttle services, which are cheaper.)*
* Visa (*Currently, India has still not re-opened its e-visa option for UK citizens – although that will hopefully change, by next year, but currently a visa costs around £160. An e-visa is about half the price.)*