

A brief history of the Senior Scout Adventure

One evening during 1968 Colin Inglis, then the Cape Western Divisional Commissioner, called a meeting of a selected group of Commissioners and Scouters to discuss methods of stemming the loss of 15 and 16 year old scouts, usually before they obtained their 1st Class Badge.

He felt that once scouts had reached 16 years of age, troop activities, except in a few of the better troops, were no longer an adventure for that age group and consequently left the movement. He said this not only lost the opportunity to develop scouts to their full potential but also lost candidates who could be trained for an adult position once they had reached their 18th birthday.

He suggested that the Division should hold an adventurous event for 16 year olds of 1st class level which would be the “cherry on top” of the scout’s career and hopefully would be an incentive for the seniors to remain on till their 18th birthday.



The meeting agreed that a small committee should be set up to plan such an event to be run at the end of 1969. As far as I can recall, the committee consisted of Colin, “Fatty” Rutter, Richard Knight, “Impie” Bryant and the Divisional Secretary.

Early in 1969 Colin got permission to use the Cederberg from the Department of Forestry and the local farmers. Once the site was finalised other Scouters were co-opted on to the committee for various functions such as communications, food, transport, medical, activity centre leaders etc.

The year was spent planning routes, getting the loan of equipment, hiring transport, putting together programmes for the activity centres and carrying out recce’ trips to time routes, testing communications and other preparatory tasks.



Then came the great day when the hired school busses full of eager scouts rolled into “Driehoek” farm which was Camping Head Quarters and the Senior Scout Adventure was born. The fact that one of the busses had broken down on Nieuwoudt’s Pass did not dampen the spirits and everyone was rearing to go.

This adventure was only open to scouts from the Western Cape and was so successful that scouts from other parts of South Africa heard of the event and asked that one be run as a National event.

The team decided to rename the adventure “The National Senior Scout Adventure” and open it to all scouts over 15 years and 6 months who held 1st Class. It was decided if the national event were a success then future events would be opened to scouts from other countries.

Due to pressure from Scouters the age was dropped to 15 years for scouts who had obtained the 2nd Class badge and scouts 14years & 6 months who held the 1st Class badge and were recommended by their Scouter as physically fit and having the maturity to handle the event. The committee felt it was departing from the main objective of being the “Cherry” for the 16 year old but agreed as long as no younger scouts were accepted. In 2004, the minimum age of 15 years was re-instated.

The first National event was held over New Year 1970/1971 and was an even greater success than the experimental event and it was decided to repeat it every 2 years but this was not always possible and the next one was only held in 1974 in the Cederberg.

The Cederberg then became a 'Wilderness Area' and we were no longer able to have our "activity centres" at the same site for more than 24 hours due to the new Forestry rules so we moved to the Winterhoek for the 1976 Adventure.

On that Adventure, a violent storm turned the rivers into raging torrents of water, which became uncrossable. The adventure came to a stand still for a few days till the water subsided and movement was again possible. In spite of this the scouts met the challenge and enjoyed the adventure of being marooned and living off emergency rations.

This was the only adventure where we used a helicopter to rescue teams marooned in a kloof by the rising water. This added a new dimension to the Adventure.

The following three were held in the Witzenberg Valley over the New Year in 1978, 1981 & 1983 and except for a problem of staff being away from their families over New Year, they were highly successful. These adventures went very well with the 1983 adventure being the biggest adventure to date with 599 boys and one Australian girl.

By 1985 we had permission from the private landowners in the Cederberg to put our "activity centres" on their land and permission from the Dept. of Forestry to hike and trail camp on their land. In December 1986 the Adventure moved back to the Cederberg and has remained there ever since.



Colin Inglis continued to organise the Adventures in 1988, 1990, 1992 and 1994 after which he handed over the reins to Richard Goldschmidt but carried on as "Trips Planner" carrying out the planning of the itinerary and transport for each team.

Richard ran the 1996 and 1998 Adventures before handing over to Buzz Macey who ran the 2000 and 2002 Adventure when the event was opened to the Guides and Girl Scouts.

John Mütti took over as Adventure Organiser for the 2004 and the 2006/7 "Centenary of Scouting" Adventure.

Carveth Geach, a past Chief Scout and Chairman of the Southern Zone who attended many of the adventures said: "Those Scouts flourished and grew like the Cedars of Clanwilliam through the wonderful things they did, the marvellous sights they saw and the great comradeship they developed during those magical ten days.

Over the years we have had a variety of activities, run mainly by Scouters who have volunteered to use their skills for the benefit of the youth but we also had outside experts who came to run activity centres or to be an additional activity at H.Q. or at one of the centres. These have included Forestry, Geology, Fossil hunting, Archaeology, Astronomy, San Lore, Motor Engineering, Flying, Environmental Education and Conservation.

Scouts from the England, Republic of Eire, Scotland, USA, Canada, Alaska, Australia, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Swaziland and Botswana have attended the Adventures over the years.

Colin Inglis passed away in 2005 but his legacy of the Cederberg Adventure will live on.

Compiled by "Buzz" Macey (c) 2006