

A Tribute to Colin James Inglis 14.8.1925 – 1.3.2005

**CHIEF SCOUT OF SOUTH
AFRICA 1977-1985**

Colin became a Scout at "Scoutholme" in Pietermaritzburg under his Scoutmaster, Prof. Hattersley, a man for whom he had the highest regard, who clearly influenced his life and whom he honoured throughout his own life. Colin lost his father at an early age and Scouting filled a need in the young boy. I believe that, in a way, Colin spent his life repaying his perceived debt to Scouting



Colin was more than an outstanding Scout; he was a gifted individual. I once described him at a Gilcape function at Eersterivier as:
"Colin James Inglis B.Com. M.A.(Cantab.) a Scholar, an Officer, a Gentleman and, of course, an outdoor Scout par excellence."

Colin was a Victoria scholar and a trained economist. He had a mastery of the English language, as those of us who had our written offerings corrected by him well know!! Seriously though, his mastery of English was shown time and again in the numerous Scout Books that he wrote, so meticulously researched that they became 'definitive works'.

Posterity will be indebted to him; for his reports and the papers that he wrote that so clearly describe the times that went before him and the times of his intimate involvement in making of the history of Scouting in South Africa.

Colin was a raconteur, as those of us who spent time with him will know –the stories – the gems of information from this acute mind and well-read intellect. I will always remember the time that we visited Cambridge together and we retraced the steps of his student days with stories, stories and facts, facts, facts. For me that was Colin, happy and at his best.

Colin saw service in the South African Air Force as a pilot in the 2nd World War and from that followed a number of wonderful stories and this was clearly a happy and a fulfilling time in his life.

Colin was a cultured man with a tasted and understanding of the non-material but enduring things in our Western culture. In a way Colin was very much a product of the "English Natal".

I am not competent to sing the praises of Colin the skilful and knowledgeable mountaineer, his

reputation and record surely speak for themselves, as does his History of the Mountain Club of South Africa

Colin clearly understood the philosophy of Robert Baden-Powell. He understood Scouting to be for adolescents and his commitment to separating Cubs from being regarded as Junior Scouts clearly supporting this understanding, as aligned with Baden-Powell, of the role of Scouting. This is something, which regrettably, few understand to day.

I served as Area Commissioner under Colin as Chief Scout and while we were at one in our understanding B.P. I fear that on many occasions I caused him considerable stress with what I suspect he regarded as an "unorthodox approach".

I enjoyed serving under him and supporting him when many at National Council misunderstood his selfish motives for what was clearly the good of South African Scouting. This brought confrontation and conflict but Colin had the moral fibre to stand firm and win through time and time again.

As Divisional Commissioner and particularly as Chief Scout. Colin was a "boy's man" he enjoyed the company of young men and spent many an hour as guide philosopher, friend and storyteller in their company. Scouting is after all a boy's movement.

Colin gave the South African Scout Movement so much that one is at risk in trying to describe his contribution, some would say that it was immeasurable. Colin gave us a Rayner Trophy that was the epitome of adventure and healthy competition. He gave us the Senior Scout Adventure and who would dare to measure that or speculate on how much fun, adventure and good that has done?

It is easy to pay tribute to Colin but difficult to him justice in that regard. I suspect that he was often a lonely man – I think that he would have loved to have been a father of a son.

To many of us he was a friend and that was a priceless gift. To Colin Inglis one time Chief Scout of South Africa, on behalf of World Scouting, I say a very sincere "Thank you." You have gone home my friend – "stay well."

**Garnet de la Hunt
Former Chief Scout of South Africa
Chairman of the World Scout Committee**