

1957 - 5th World Jamboree, Sutton Park, England.

1st – 12th August / Participants 28 750 / Countries 54 / South Africans 380 / Cost £220 (R440) / 98 days

This was called the Jubilee Jamboree as it celebrated Scouting's 50th Anniversary. It was the first time that a Jamboree for Scouts, Indaba for Scouters and Moot for Rovers, was incorporated into one event and referred to as the **J.I.M.** Jamboree.



Our Contingent numbers are a little difficult to accurately confirm, but there is a photo of 55 Scouters attending the Indaba, a listing of 18 Rovers attending the Moot, and approximately some 300 Scouts attended the Jamboree. Also for the first time, Scouts from Indian, Coloured, African (Black) and White sections of the SA Scout Movement attended as one Contingent, under the leadership of the SA Chief Scout.



The South African Coloured Contingent

L to R: Ralph Wessels, Jacob Oppelt, Charlie Thebus (*Divisional Commissioner of the Coloured Association - Gilray Hall, Grassy Park was named after him in 1958*), Robert Jason, Stanley Solomons, Conrad Poole.

On Thursday 4th July the Cape Western section held a farewell party in the Metropolitan Church Hall, where they were addressed by the Chief Scout Mr. E. Percy Fowle, and on the Friday 5th July the whole South African Contingent was given an official 'Farewell Tea Party' by the Mayor of Cape Town, Mrs Joyce Newton-Thompson. That afternoon the 380 'Scouts' sailed for England onboard the Union Castle 'Mailship' Stirling Castle and would be away for 98 days, returning on the 10th October. As the boys would be away for three months, a Scouter Schoolmaster ensured that revision of school work was carried out, as they would be writing exams soon after returning to their homes.

The voyage by ship to England was via the island of Las Palmas and took 14 days to complete, arriving in Southampton on the 19th July. Here they were met onboard by the Mayor of Southampton, a representative from SA House and various other civil and Scouting dignitaries. They then boarded a train to Chingford which is within walking distance to Scoutings Gilwell Park, which was their base and tented accommodation for the next 12 days.

The pre-Jamboree camp

Some of the time spent at Gilwell was used to rehearse the Arena display under the guidance of Colin Ingles (*who founded the Senior Scout Adventure in 1969 and became Chief Scout in 1977*) and to practice the Theatre item by Impie Bryant (*Commissioner Emeritus in October 1992*). The rest of the time was spent on extensive and very well organised sightseeing tour of London and surrounds and they probably saw more of London than the local Londoner sees.

On the 31st July a special train took the Contingent to Sutton Coldfield Station, from where they marched through the town to the Jamboree site. The streets had been decorated with flags and lined with crowds of people who clapped as they marched past. A separate area was allocated for the Indaba Contingents.



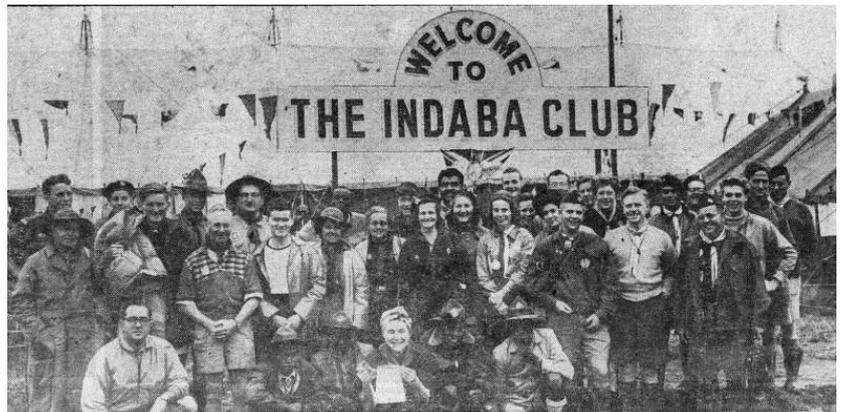
Cape Western Contingent

The J.I.M. events (1st - 12th August)

Initially the weather was hot, but as with previous Jamborees it soon started raining and with it came the mud, only this time it was black mud due to the black peat. The official Opening Ceremony of the JIM was performed on the afternoon of the 1st August by Prince Henry, the Duke of Gloucester with the firing of a cannon. The Queen and the Duke toured the various campsites by car and looked in at the campsites. Although our Contingent was scattered over 5 Sub-camps it did not hamper the fraternisation which was the keynote of the JIM, and this was encouraged by the interchange of visits, international tea-parties, meals and badge swapping.

The Indaba

There were 3 500 Scout Leaders at the Indaba which consisted of serious talks, sing-songs and very popular was the huge marquee called the 'Indaba Club', where they met in the evening for informal discussions. The Scouters had come to experience camp life and were rather loath to leave it for the excursions. At one of the campfires the participants were addressed by both Lord Rowallan (*UK Chief Scout*) and Lady BP, and at another the South Africans did some 'Volkspeler' (*Traditional Plays*).



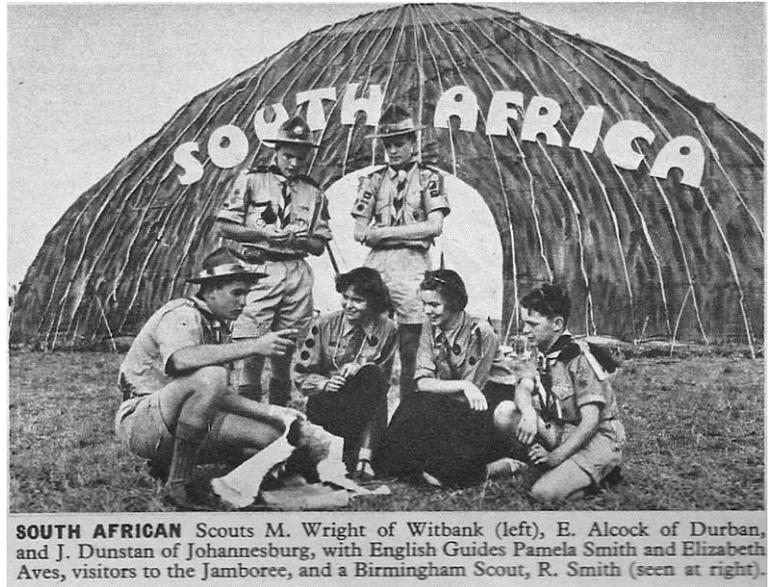
The Moot

Apart from the in camp discussions, displays, campfires and fraternisation, the highlight of any World Rover Moot is the Rover Hike. More than 2 000 Rovers left Sutton Park to hike for three days in the mountains of Wales and Derbyshire. The inclement weather did not dampen their spirits and many of the routes ended near Aberystwyth in Wales, where a large campfire was held. It was quite an international affair with more than 2 000 in attendance, including local dignitaries and Welsh Choirs.

The jamboree

Every afternoon there were Scouty arena displays and in the evenings displays by special performers. There is much on the Internet covering this Jamboree, but the focus is about our Contingent, so here follows the South African display directed by Colin Ingles which consisted of a series of carefully worked out drills.

At the call of "South Africa - South Africa" the Scouts burst in and erected an encampment so quickly that it was finished before one was aware of what was happening. On completion, all the boys were in five formations as perfect as any that could be imagined, and the orange, white and blue flag of South Africa was broken to the well-known Jamboree Song.



SOUTH AFRICAN Scouts M. Wright of Witbank (left), E. Alcock of Durban, and J. Dunstan of Johannesburg, with English Guides Pamela Smith and Elizabeth Aves, visitors to the Jamboree, and a Birmingham Scout, R. Smith (seen at right).

The second scene was a very spectacular display of the South African Flag set out with coloured hats accompanied by their wearers who quickly formed up in the correct pattern.

At the quiet blow of a whistle the performers formed a perfect circle to outline a setting for the third scene, which consisted of a dance by native mine workers associated with the Gold Mines. This dance accompanied by native song was called the "Gum Boot Dance" and finished with a hearty yell.

The fourth consisted of a pageant of the various settlers who had come to South Africa including Dutch and English, these were dressed in very beautiful and typical costumes of the period. There was also a small Contingent of the English Army in their red uniforms who went to South Africa in the late 1840's to keep the peace between the warring tribes, and these were followed by an odd collection of farmers and other traders, who settled and overcame great hardships.

This pageant was rounded off by a very fine and slick display of pioneering by all the settlers showing us bridges, signalling tower and camp equipment.



Gum Boot Dance

The whole display was completed by a most beautiful parade of Basotho blankets which are very, very colourful and also very warm we are told. It is quite impossible to describe the incredible variety of colours and designs displayed by these blankets.

A static South African display was their HQ tent. Here they entertained the other countries' Contingent Leaders, as well as the Mayor and many other dignitaries, where the Scouts had made traditional SA Koeksusters and Melkterk, etc.

The closing **J.I.M.** Ceremony on the Monday 12th August was an evening affair with Lady BP giving the famous closing speech "[The End is only the Beginning](#)".

Post Jamboree Excursions

At the close of the J.I.M., there was the opportunity to visit relations or make use of Home Hospitality until the 20th when the Contingent returned to Gilwell Park for the British and Continental Bus Tours.

The 8 day tours of Britain were organised by the British Boy Scout Association and were of a sightseeing and educational nature, travelling as far as Scotland and included places like the Lake Districts.

The 10 day Continental tours included visits to Paris, Maastricht, Reims, Brussels and Amsterdam.

The last few days were spent back at Gilwell where a senior Scouter had been continuously available for executive decision making. The last night in England was spent at Charterhouse School, before travelling to Southampton to board the Stirling Castle and to see the Scout pennant flying at the yardarm.

The return journey was quite relaxed as it was obvious everyone was tired. The only essential requirement was that the study periods be observed, and that all should dress in full uniform for dinner. They arrived back in Cape Town on the 10th of October 1957.

Badges and insignia

The South African Contingent to the 1957 Jamboree wore a hatband and woggle made of Springbok skin and the following badges on their uniform.



Above right breast pocket¹



Right breast pocket²



Left breast pocket³

1. The emblem of the Jubilee Jamboree is the red Tudor Rose of England. It was chosen, first because England was the birthplace of Scouting, and secondly because Sutton Park, where the Jamboree was being held, was given to the citizens of Sutton Coldfield in the year 1528, by the great Tudor King of England, Henry VIII.

The golden Scout Badge displayed in the heart of the rose, typifies the Scout Jamboree being held in the heart of England. Every Scout will know the magic initials B. P. and remember with gratitude our Founder, Robert Baden-Powell, the centenary of whose birth we were celebrating in this Jamboree as well as the Jubilee of Scouting.

2. The 'Official South Africa Badge' that was worn at the Jamboree and it replaced the Divisional Badge.

3. Official SA Scout Association badge at that point in time.

Click [here](#) for a list of the South African Contingent.

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