

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. Early in 1969 Colin got permission to use the Cederberg from the Department of Forestry and the local farmers.



Colin Inglis

Richard Goldschmidt organised the trial Adventure and Colin was the co-convener. There were three patrols of 12 scouts each, hiking for 4 days in December 1969. Peter Watt led one patrol in the Tafelberg area, Colin Inglis led another in the Northern Cederberg, and Richard led the third in the Southern Cederberg. The base camp was at Sanddif. This trial proved successful and planning began for the first Cederberg Adventure to be held the following year.

Colin Inglis was the 1970 Adventure Organiser and the base camp was to be at Driehoek farm. 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, test communications and other preparatory tasks.



Driehoek farm

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 1 st 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 1 st 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 un-crossable. 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. Permission to use Kliphuis on the Nieuwoudt's Dwarsrivier farm as the Base Camp was given and each subsequent Adventure has used this Base Camp. In 2004 the Adventure funded a permanent power supply, water source and a toilet block at the Base Camp.

Colin Inglis continued to organise the Adventures in 1988, 1990, 1992. In 1994 he shared the organising with Richard Goldschmidt. Colin carried on as "Trips Planner" for subsequent Adventures, carrying out the planning of the itinerary and transport for each team.

Richard Goldschmidt led 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. Richard took over from Colin as Trips Planner from 2004 and introduced circular itineraries which reduced the amount of internal transport needed. The Adventures have adhered to this format ever since.

In 2008 and 2010 Buzz Macey again ran the Adventures. Nigel Forshaw took over as Adventure leader for the December 2012 Adventure.

The leadership of the 2014 Cederberg Adventure was shared by Nigel Forshaw, John Mutti and Richard Goldschmidt. It was the 21st Adventure.

The convener for the 22nd Senior Scout Adventure – 2016, was Andre van der Walt.

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 lives on.

Thanks to Buzz Macey for much of the historical information.

Western Cape Scout Heritage