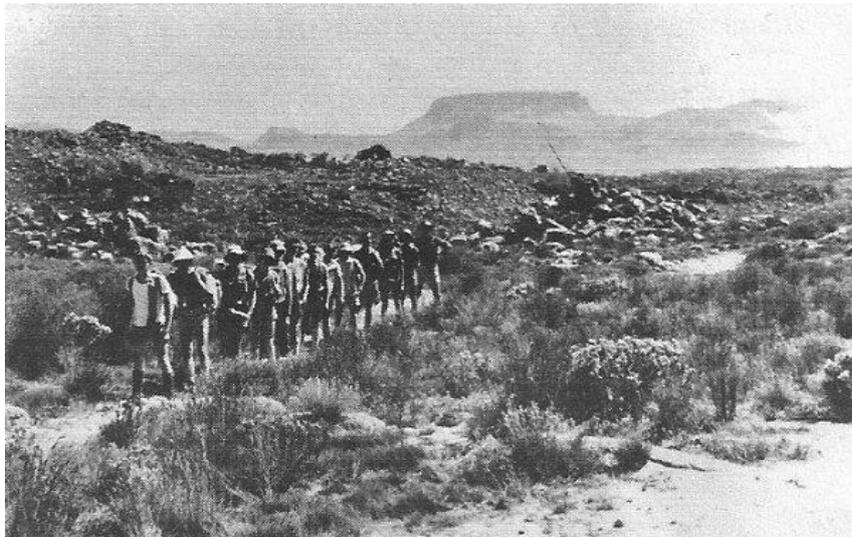


1969 CEDAREBRG HO!

By ASM Richard Goldschmidt Divisional Cederberg Hike Organiser Photos: Jimmy Slater

35 Senior Scouts and 7 Scouters from Cape Western set off by car, kombi and ex-army truck for the Cedarberg mountains under the leadership of Divisional Commissioner Colin Inglis, bound for four days of hiking adventure along some of the most beautiful mountain trails in South Africa.

The hike was part of a programme to supply advanced and adventurous activities for senior boys. It also served as a forerunner to the National Cedarberg Hike for Senior Scouts, accompanied by their Scouters, which Cape Western Division was planning for January, 1971.



Groups on the way up to Sneeberg Hut. Tafelberg in the background

The Cedarberg, 150 miles North of Cape Town, is a range which stretches 40 miles long and about 16 miles wide with some of the highest peaks in the Western Cape. Although it borders on the Little Karoo, the vegetation differs widely, consisting mainly of small bushes and heathers; but also there are large expanses of pine forests; oak trees lining the rivers, and at other isolated spots along the trails; flat marshy plains; kloofs overgrown with proteas and other bush; and crystal clear mountain pools along the rivers. (Bilharzia is unknown in the Cape). The area derives its name from the rare Biblical Cedar trees whose twisted and gnarled evergreen branches adorn many of the koppies above 4000 ft. The peaks are extremely barren, but their fascination lies in the weathering of the rocks by many a winter's snow and ice, into indescribable shapes and forms.

On arrival at Alfa, on the edge of the mountains, we split into three hiking parties, each of about 12 Scouts and 2 Scouters, who were experienced mountain leaders. After the evening braaivleis on the banks of the Olifants River, light-weight hike rations were issued for the following three days to each group of four boys. These were pre-packed in Cape Town before departure, and were extremely light, consisting of: soup powders; sweetened cooldrink powders; instant pudding powders; dehydrated vegetables; cracker biscuits and rusks; rice; spaghetti; dried fruit; breakfast cereals; cheese; peanuts; raisons; glucose sweets; and a small amount of tinned meat, amongst other small items. No tentage was taken, rain being unlikely, and caves and huts being readily available.

The Northern party left immediately that night, by kombi, for Heuningvlei Forest Station, 60 miles further by road, arriving at 2am and sleeping alongside the road. In their three days they hiked back southwards, swimming at every possible occasion (15 swims in 3 days!); spending the nights at Boontjies Kloof and Crystal Pool huts; climbing the Krakadouw Peak, and still arriving fresh and full of high spirits at the Algeria Forest Station.

After supper on the first night, the Southern and Central parties moved deeper into the mountains by car, and slept at the Welbedacht Forest Station. Awakening the following morning, they found low mist swirling around the mountain peaks, and were forced to spend a leisurely morning waiting for the cloud to blow away.

The Southern party left after lunch along the pathway through the beautiful! Cederhout Kloof, climbing steadily up to the Sneeberg hut for the night. An early night was had in preparation for the following day which was to be strenuous, with a climb up Sneeberg at 6652 ft, the highest peak in the range, and a level traverse along the Shale Band to Disa Pool for the night. En route they passed the Maltese Cross, an 80 ft. high mass of rock which has proved unconquerable to rock climbers, and is forbidden after a number of serious accidents during attempts to climb it. The last morning was spent lazing, diving, and swimming in the clear green water of Disa Pool before the final walk down valley to the Krom River farm and transport back to base camp.

The Central party set off at the same time as the Southern group and, after leaving their packs at the 4200 ft. level of Welbedacht Cave, sprinted the remaining 2200 ft. up the Tafelberg, roping up the last pitch which is of a "C" standard, and returning to the Cave to sleep. The following morning found them striding Northwards along the Shale Band, around the Langeberg, down Engelsmans Kloof, to Crystal Pool for an afternoon's swimming, where they spent the night. The weather still held out; perfectly clear blue skies, warm and no wind. The final day of their hike, they climbed one of the rock formations known as the Uilsgat Needles, before returning via the Middelberg hut area to the Algeria Station.



Southern Party at Sneeuberg Hut, where they spent the night. Sneeuberg in background

While the parties were on their separate hikes, a base camp was established at Sandrif, in the extreme South, under large Oaks, and next to a part of the river where it broadens, and where the swimming is good. The base camp was manned with a first aid post, but was fortunately unnecessary.

All parties returned to base on the third evening: then there was much ado in the river, red glowing coals, the aroma of meat braaiing, sleeping bags laid out early on the clean white river sand, and then at last the snores under the twinkling stars.

The final morning early, found the entire group climbing the Wolfberg Cracks in beautiful weather. These cracks run about 500 yards into the top of the mountain, at times only shoulder wide, and at others almost 50 ft. wide. We climbed through the cave entrance to the main crack, and squeezed through the dark and narrow passage-way before emerging inside the mountain with the sky shining through high above us. The crack opens up under a large archway into the adjoining crack which "goes" until you reach the summit. We then descended another crack to our starting point, and then set off down the mountain slopes back to base camp for lunch.

That afternoon we departed for Cape Town after four very enjoyable days in the Cedarberg, taking with us the wish for a return trip in the near future, to explore some of the many other trails.

Cape Western Scouter. Circa February 1970

North (Ingles + Western)

Ernest Mc. Gregor	16.3	7 th GASP	Carl Malan	15.4	1 st S.W.
Martin van Lierde	15.5	7 th GASP	Paul Saunders	16.10	1 st S.W.
John Vaughan	16.11	7 th GASP	Robert van der Molen	16.1	1 st S.W.
Martin Szapiro *	14.6	6 th Rondeb.	Jerome Gardner	15.11	1 st S.W.
Bryan Starke *	15.3	6 th Rondeb.			

Central (Walt + Kerek)

Michael Kramer	16.3	2 nd Rond	Delf Amm *	17.3	1 st Strand
Andrew Kramer	16.3	2 nd Rond	Sydney Holden *	17.3	1 st Strand
Gavin Weaver	15.5	2 nd Rond	Robert Dorrill *	16.4	1 st S.W.
Christopher Harding	15.10	2 nd Rond	George Voss *	14.8	4 th Rond.
Michael Humphries	15.4	2 nd Rond	Alan Hutton	16.6	3 rd Blavemant.
David Bykes *	17.2	2 nd Pine			
Kuba Miszewski *	15.5	1 st Pine			
John Gray *	17.8	2 nd GASP			

South (Goldschmidt + Good + Slater)

Kenneth Webster	16.3	1 st Pine	Stephen Laskay	15.3	4 th Wynberg
Michael Wright *	16.9	2 nd Pine	Andrew Smith	15.8	4 th Wynberg
Hans Beiman	15.8	2 nd Bellville	Nicholas King	16.1	4 th Wynberg
Andri Zoot	15.4	2 nd Bellville	William Boucher	15.11	4 th Wynberg
Richard Lee-Warden *	18.10	1 st Slipton	Stephen White	15.3	1 st Meadowridge
José Milewski *	15.11	1 st Slipton			
John Ravenscroft *	16.5	1 st Slipton			

Martin Sheron 16.11 2nd Rond. (Base)