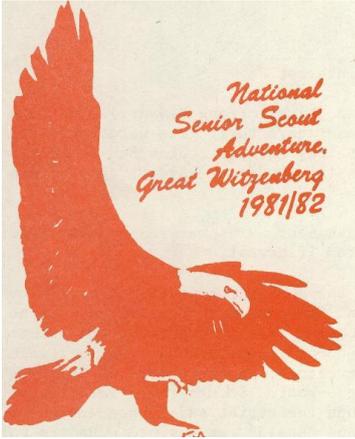


4th NATIONAL SENIOR SCOUT ADVENTURE 1981: GREAT WITZENBERG



"Adventure" was the simple but attention-grabbing headline to "The Argus" coverage of this two-week event, which represented outdoor Scouting at its world-beating best. The newspaper article continued as follows.

"All 420 Scouts who took part will have their favourite memories of the adventure in the Groot Witzenberg near Ceres.

But few who met a 200-litre drum named Clarence will be able to forget him easily. Clarence was the main feature of a commando course - one of the challenging activities at sixteen base camps scattered around 600sq km of mountains and valleys.

Each Patrol which tried the course had to manoeuvre the unwieldy Clarence across a tree trunk spanning a river. Then, without the drum touching the ground, they had to get it up an inclined pole into a tree - all the time trying to keep intact a raw egg they had been issued with. Clarence was the main reason for the wide range (from 19 minutes to 1 hour 16 minutes) between the fastest and slowest teams. The commando course was designed to test leadership and team work."

However, Clarence has many rivals as a highlight of the Adventure, surely the most exciting single activity ever staged by Scouting in this country. Scouts were attracted from all over South Africa and also from Zimbabwe, Transkei, South West Africa and Swaziland.

As a result of personal contacts made by Colin Inglis during an overseas trip, fourteen Scouts and leaders from Canada took part. At their own request, they were split up amongst the Patrols; this was a great success, and they proved good ambassadors for their country. They were by all accounts most impressed with the Adventure and the comradeship and, according to their leader, Dr Ian Metcalf, will with alacrity accept any future invitation to attend a similar event. Truly, the Adventure's reputation has spread worldwide!



The Adventures, which have been held every two or three years-since 1971, have each year, followed a similar pattern, with the notable qualification that both the scale and standard improve with each Adventure.

Patrols hike along trails and across mountains, and swim down rivers, to reach activity centres which they have selected from alternatives publicised to them many months before, (Working out the several schedules, and matching road transport where necessary, is a complex and vital task which Colin has at every Adventure executed with great efficiency.)



Reflector oven cooking

These activity centres are staffed by experts in their fields. The Adventures enable the Scouts to put into practice the skills which they learn back home (eg. hiking, camping, pioneering and map reading), on a big scale, in beautiful territory, and with the comradeship of the Patrol and the opportunity to meet fellow Scouts from other areas.



Scuba diving

Over 100 volunteers staffed the activity centres and saw to the mammoth tasks involved in the logistics of ensuring that all participants received food supplies when they required them. Errol Kotze was Grubmaster - this unenviable task included being responsible for the ordering and packing beforehand. Other important tasks at headquarters included responsibility for farmer liaison (Fatty Rutter), the camp shop (Impie Bryant), radio (Buzz Macey), home hospitality (Stan Thomas) and medical matters (Dr Chris Rainier-Pope). Especial thanks are due to Lt. Braan van Deventer of the S A Army. He and his

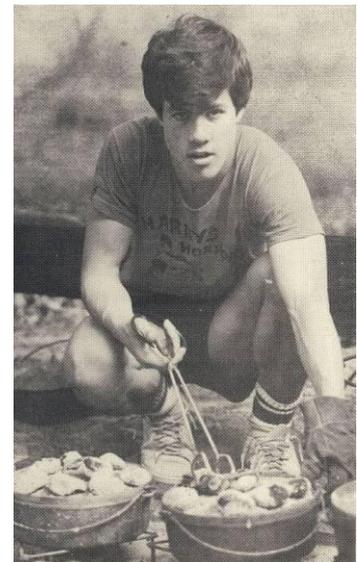
men and equipment took away many of the hassles encountered on previous Adventures, principally transport.

A few words on each activity centre will be of interest.

Mention was made above of the commando course (in charge, Frank Flowers). Patrols which survived this course next encountered a base where their kits were taken from them and they were instructed in, and had to live on, chicken (which had to be slaughtered first), edible roots and creatures of the veld, (As one Scout said: "Ag sis, dis 'n akkedis!").

Jerry Wilding was the archery Hood. The next base southwards was fox hunting (radio direction-finding), in the care of Ian Cooper from the Transvaal.

An undoubted highlight for all participants was the Voyageur Expedition, i.e. Swimming with lilo's and waterproofed kits down the Visgat Canyons, with towering sandstone cliffs (100m high in places) the gorge is so narrow that at one point the swimmer can touch both banks simultaneously! Scouters, co-ordinated by Chuck Moller, made sure that Patrols were able to cope. Naval instructors, in the charge of Chief Petty Officer Peter Hutchinson, manned the base at the S-pool. Scouts there were taught scuba-diving. The only near-casualty occurred when the strict safety precautions were for a moment relaxed - the reporter from "The Cape Herald" was rescued when he got into difficulties while swimming (not scuba-diving)! The tough Windhoek Patrol excelled at this base - the cold water in the depths of the pool was no disincentive, it seemed.



Dutch oven cooking

Chris Goldschmidt manned the mountaineering base, activities at which included ascent of North Peak (1900m). Donal Bradley taught the Scouts how to cook biscuits, pies and roasts, using reflector and Dutch ovens.

Nearby was Cliff Turk's astronomy base, where he gave expert guidance on the night skies - equipment was loaned by the Astronomical Society of South Africa (of which he is a prominent member) and the University of Cape Town.

Jim de Necker, at canoeing base, gave basic instruction and then set the Scouts loose on an obstacle canoe course. The S A Army was responsible for both the marksmanship and motor engineer bases.



Cliff at Astronomy

Paul Marsh and his team at Bosrivier set to work on those Scouts who had previously been innocent of orienteering. Patrols arriving at Denzil Roberts base were given a choice of building an aerial runway, two bridge types, raft or other interesting pioneering projects.



Windsurfing at Water
Activities

A very popular base was "water activities", in the overall charge of Kuba Miszewski. Here Scouts went windsurfing, waterskiing and sailing. Many had never tried windsurfing before and, to initiate them into the techniques, a dry land simulator was of great assistance. Finally the rock-climbing base was expertly run by Bob Reinecke and Mike Scott of the Mountain Club of South Africa.

The opening and closing campfires were memorable. Mickey Lowther's pageant brought the history of the Witzenberg to life; Mack Shange was a star with his songs and antics. Few watchers will forget seeing six senior Scouters, including Colin, prostrate in the dust, victims of a Canadian campfire stunt! The sight, at the close, of the flickering light of more than 500 candles, carried by Scouts dispersing to their campsites, was indeed stirring.

All tribute to Colin, whose brain child these Adventures have been. He worked long and hard to make this, the fifth, the outstanding success it was. Appropriately, this was the opening event of the 75th Anniversary of Scouting.

As Car Geach was quoted in the "Sunday Times". The Adventure "is a glorious mixture of fun and education. It teaches boys to become men. They come here and are introduced to activities, many of which contain an element of controlled danger, and leave here enriched by the experience."

KEVIN WALL

Cape Western Scouting, February 1982