

A History of the Scout Museum and its leadership

It is not uncommon that the history of some organisations is kept in a dark unwanted location, sitting on dusty shelves in battered boxes, its members unaware of its existence. Many years ago, this certainly seemed the fate of Cape Western's Scouting past, resting peacefully within the Area Headquarters, but this was to change.

Where it all began

During the period 1965 to 1982 Mr Carl Rayner became the first Archivist to venture into the hidden past. He spent many hours sorting, reading and making a pathway that others would follow. In 1970 he took on the task of writing up the History of Scouting in the Cape from 1908. Well into his eighties with his task completed, 'Serpent' as he was fondly remembered, passed away in 1982.

Work then stood still until 1990 when Alan Shinton took over as Archivist. He was to explore and catalogue the over 90 years of Scouting in the Cape. It was Alan's idea to create a Museum and display Scouting's hidden treasures.

Museum opens in Cape Town

On Heritage Day 2000 the museum section was opened by the Colin Inglis and to acknowledge Carl Rayner's contribution, his Granddaughter opened the reference library which was then named after him.

The museum's stay was however short-lived as the building was sold and after two weeks the exhibits were packed away and moved to the new abode in Goodwood. Then came the mammoth task of sorting out all the boxes containing the museum artifacts, archives, and library into their new locations.

Museum re-opens in Goodwood

Sunday 25 November 2001 saw the re-opening of the Scout Museum by Andre Bredenkamp the Area Commissioner. The Scout Band was in attendance and guests were able to view the exhibits.

The Museum, Library and Archives were now part of an integrated Heritage Centre and at that time the Team members were; Alan Shinton, John Waterhouse, Ruth Cloete, Richard Dey, Denzil Roberts, Colin Inglis, Jock Ritchie, Les Weber, Jenny Howard and Caryl Curran.

Alan passed away in November 2004, but his legacy lived on.

The digital age

By 2007 Social Media and the Internet were upon us and the Heritage Centre had just one webpage, but that was soon to change. Retiring from the corporate world and with the team down to just Denzil, John and Jock they were joined by Stuart Ravenscroft who applied his IT skills in digitising and indexing many of the records. Scouring the archives to record our long Scouting history he created anecdotes sourced from the records of those South Africans who were witness to these historical events. Most of these accounts had never been published before.

'Gilwood' is born

The next reorganisation of the Museum display area came when the Western Cape Office relocated to Rondebosch in early 2013. Once again many of the exhibits were boxed as the floor space was reallocated to accommodate a lecture hall. With the interior freshened up the Training Team moved in and we became 'Gilwood'.

Unpacking and placing the memorabilia then took place giving both the museum and the training area a genuine 'Scouty' feel to the building. This time there was even more Scouting memorabilia as the collection from the National office was transferred to the museum at Gilwood.

Mick Hatton was the next to join the heritage team and much of the redecorating was done by him. Not only were his practical talents put to good use, but he has done great work in the archives.

Andre Foot who for a long time had been helping Stuart with his IT graphic skills, upon retiring in 2015 spent many hours restructuring the display cabinets.

In 2016 the Eastern Cape collection, consisting of the old Border Area (East London) and Midlands Area (Port Elizabeth) was transferred to Gilwood and they have their own display area.



Bree Street Museum



Goodwood Museum



Gilwood Museum