



# **FIRST CLAREMONT SCOUT GROUP**

*THE OLDEST SCOUT GROUP IN SOUTH AFRICA  
ESTABLISHED 3 MARCH 1908*



PO Box 44277 Claremont 7735  
17 Bowwood Road

PRESS RELEASE

28 January 2008

## **South Africa's Oldest Scout Group Celebrates 100 years**

1<sup>st</sup> Claremont Scout Group is the oldest Scout group in South Africa, and they are inviting friends and former Scouts to attend their 100<sup>th</sup> birthday celebrations on 1 March.

### **Former Scouts invited to Reunion**

Former Scouts are invited to join the group at a reunion at the 1<sup>st</sup> Claremont Scout Hall in Bowwood Road, Claremont, on Saturday 1 March. The Scouts will be camping at the hall, and families and former Scouts will join in at 6pm for a celebration of 100 years of Scouting. There will be presentations of Scouting history, and old photo albums and memorabilia will be on display. The event will end with a campfire. For this event, the group has a list of over 400 former members who they are trying to contact.

Later in March, the Scouts will be celebrating with a 10-day camping trip to the Northern Cape, visiting the Roodebergskloof Conservancy (a new community-driven conservation project), then camping at Augrabies Falls, and finally canoeing on the Orange River. The Scouts at 1<sup>st</sup> Claremont come from a wide range of backgrounds, but they are determined that all their members should take part in this centenary trip, so they will be sponsoring several who cannot afford the cost of the trip.

### **History**

The Claremont Scouts began in March 1908 after two boys at the Claremont Public School read about Scouting, which had started in England in 1907, and approached their headmaster to start a group. The first two Scouts were Fred and Charles Stern, and the headmaster George French became the first Scoutmaster in South Africa.

Their first big undertaking was an expedition in the winter of 1908 from Claremont to Strandfontein and back. The Scouts trekked all their equipment on a hand cart across the sandy tracks and flooded areas of the Cape Flats. The following year they hiked for 3 weeks with a mule cart, covering more than 300 miles via the Hex River.

The 1<sup>st</sup> Observatory Scouts started at around the same time in 1908, and for many years there was rivalry between the groups as to who was the first. Sadly, Observatory closed a few years ago and 1<sup>st</sup> Claremont is now the only remaining claimant.

1<sup>st</sup> Claremont moved from Claremont Public School to vacant land in Bowwood Road in the 1920s. Their current hall was built in 1940 next to the Claremont Bowling Club.

### **1<sup>st</sup> Claremont today**

1<sup>st</sup> Claremont has 20 Scouts and is run by a dedicated team of 6 adult leaders. Two of the leaders, Ross McDonald and Ian Webb, are former Springbok Scouts, the top award a Scout can achieve. Meetings are on Thursday evenings and they are open to boys and girls age 10½ to 17.

Anyone interested in the reunion or in joining the group should contact Ian Webb at [firstclaremont@scouting.org.za](mailto:firstclaremont@scouting.org.za) or 078 2551122 or 021 6831567 after hours. Details are also available at [www.scouting.org.za/groups/1stclaremont](http://www.scouting.org.za/groups/1stclaremont).

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**For further information about this press release, please contact:**

Ian Webb

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078 2551122

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**Photo attachments**

- George French, the first Scoutmaster in South Africa in 1908
- George French and 1<sup>st</sup> Claremont Scouts in 1908 examining a large tortoise
- 1<sup>st</sup> Claremont Scouts on summer camp in Elgin (formal)
- 1<sup>st</sup> Claremont Scouts on summer camp in Elgin (informal)
- 1<sup>st</sup> Claremont Scouts at the annual Kon Tiki raft building competition at Sandvlei