

**The 11<sup>th</sup> World Jamboree**  
**Marathon Plain, Greece**  
**1<sup>st</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> August 1963**

I was one of the lucky Scouts to be chosen for this Jamboree, to be held on the site of one the greatest battles in history, where the Persian invaders were unexpectedly beaten by 11 Greek tribes. A messenger ran in armour all the way to Athens and so instituted the marathon race.

**Mon 29<sup>th</sup> July**

The first half of the Scottish contingent, 160 strong, left cold Prestwick airport at 2 AM and were truly amazed by the luxury on the plane, and, as an extra surprise for me, the pilot showed me the cockpit. I was privileged especially because he had been educated at Greenock High School and I was the only Greenockian on the Comet.

We arrived at Athens airport at 6:30 AM and were welcomed by a dazzling warm sun (Temperature of 70°) and many customs officials who quickly checked us out. Tanned Greek Scouts then showed us the way to a special luxury coach by which we were transported through bustling Athens, past simple Greek villages and donkey carts piled high with melons, past orange and lemon groves. We eventually, after 20 miles, reached Marathon plain.

After putting up shelters, we had a special lunch prepared for us. All the rest of the meals at the camp would be cooked by us using charcoal and special clay stoves. Lunch finished, we had a fully utilized siesta. Having had a fine sleep, we were doled out with all the up-to-date gen. Before the evening meal at 6:30, we managed to walk the half mile to the sandy beach for a soothing swim in the Aegean. The beach was well arranged and run by the Greek Navy. We had lifeguards, look out towers, a shark net and boats. We then made our own ways through the camp to get to know the place. At seven thirty p.m., the sun set, but the lighting system was perfect. By 11 PM, we were all asleep, most of us outside the tents in the cool.

**Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> July**

Got into the routine of things, acclimatized ourselves, met new friends and prepared for the official opening ceremony to take place on August 1. We had a band practice- I was a piper.

**Wednesday 31<sup>st</sup> July**

The other half of the Scottish contingent arrived and we *made* them at home in the spacious campsite. The jamboree site *was* composed of 11 Sub camps named after the Greek tribes who beat the Persian invaders. Our Sub camp was Leintis; each was self-sufficient with first aid stations, providores, food centres, ablutions etc and, apart from the Sub-camps, were an amphitheatre, an arena, a hospital, bank, post office, GHQ, rifle range, specially constructed Greek village with souvenir shops, cinema, amusement park and other necessary items.

14,000 Scouts filled this canvas town representing 87 countries. There was also a large Greek soldier contingent to do the labouring.

**Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> August**

We were inspected by our Sub camp leader. Had a great time at the "talent-o-rama" (an international variety show with dancing, construction, cooking, model-making etc).

In the evening, we all gathered in the huge amphitheatre built by the Greek army and the jamboree was officially opened by Crown Prince Constantine, Chief Scout of Greece. Flaming torches were lit and the Japanese gave an excellent firework display.

### **Friday 2nd August**

Special today was Field sports and athletics, the Labours of Hercules (An army assault course) and the opening of Exhibition Halls where much was on show, including Walter Schirra's, an eagle scout, space capsule.

In the evening, we had a Sub-camp fire with stunts by the Germans, Japanese, Canadians, Greeks and Cypriots.

### **Saturday 3rd August**

Each day before lunch, we had a swim in the warm Aegean and always we had a siesta. Special that day was a wide game, which was good for making foreign friends and for kicking up dust. Also, there was a philatelist meeting and a YMCA meeting, but there was always a great varied programme and, as I was busy swapping, I did not get to see some of the main things that were on.

In the evening, I went to a German boy's troop for a campfire and supper. I played them a tune on the pipes and they really loved it. The Germans had a fine skiffle group and we all joined in, singing in different languages.

### **Sunday 4th August**

Being a Sunday, there were different outdoor services, most of them in the woods bordering the shore. I was at a Protestant service and it was real cool in the shade of the cypress trees. In the evening, I had an Austrian boy to a sing-song and a supper of hot dogs and flapjacks.

A typical day's menu was

- Breakfast – fruit juice and cornflakes  
                  scrambled egg  
                  continental hard crust bread with marm and marg.  
                  tea, coffee or milk
- Lunch- spaghetti and luncheon meat, tomato and cucumber  
          fresh peaches  
          tea etc
- Dinner- minestrone soup  
          sardines, lettuce and tomato  
          fruit tarts and custard  
          cocoa etc

There was plenty of variety of foods like veal, stew, chicken, frozen fish, chicken sausages etc. Melons were plentiful and good for thirst. We had to drink at least 2 L per day and we must have drunk about twice as much.

### **Monday, 5 August**

The finals of the sports and games were held in the arena. I have visited the rifle range. The Greeks, to pass their King Scout, must be able to ride, shoot and sail, among other things. Had the German boy to dinner.

### **Tuesday, 6 August**

King Paul visited us and there was a grand march past. He had especially asked for the pipers to play; we obliged and afterwards went to his private pavilion for drinks, where the Prince and Sir Charles Maclean shook hands with us.

### **Wednesday, 7 August**

Rose at 6 AM and about 3000 of us went into Athens to give a large scout display at the Panathenian Stadium. Before the display, which was to be open to the public in the evening, we were given free time. A Greek boy showed me round the wonderful Acropolis and the main sights. After bargaining for a lot of souvenirs, having my shoes polished for 2 drachma (6d), I hurried back to the marble stadium in time for the international show. We put on the highland dancing to the sound of the pipes and other nations put on brass bands, gymnastics and such-like.

The Athens newspapers claimed the show the best in Athens for 10 years.

### **Thursday, 8 August**

Sea Scouts Day. The Greek navy assisted and provided boats for the Sea Scouts to race in and helicopters for rescue demonstrations.

Kept busy with general affairs like watching displays, shows and swapping

### **Friday 9th August**

Air Scouts day. Great show of model planes and of Greek air force jets, also U.S.A.F. fire-fighting units. Also, the camp weather station forecasted temperatures at noon of 84° degrees Fahrenheit. You could feel the sun like an electric radiator.

Prince Constantine visited our contingent for a lunch of haggis etc.

### **Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> of August**

Arena Show. We did our usual although the pipes were not improving in the hot dry sun. The Nigerians gave some excellent tribal dances. After the show, all 14,000 of us walked down the hill singing the jamboree song.

### **Sunday, 11 August**

We had an impressive Protestant church service in three languages - English, German and Norwegian. This was the last day and, in the evening, there was a closing ceremony at which Lady Baden Powell spoke, and we heard a record of BP. It was a perfect ending to an excellent Jamboree.

We then all marched shoulder to shoulder realizing it was all over.

### **Monday 12<sup>th</sup> August**

6 AM. Bade farewell to my foreign friends and started on a 4 day tour of part of Greece.

The tour briefly was Athens to Corinth Canal where, on the bus, the temperature at 2 PM was 115°F. Passed typical Greek life and reached Delphi, where we saw Apollo's Temple, then on to Mycenae and Agammon's tomb and down a long valley into the port of Nafplion where there was a huge castle built by Crusaders. Bargained for a haircut.

### **Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> of August**

Left the Army barracks where we had slept and headed for the best preserved ancient Greek building, viz Temple at Epidhavros, thence the port of Epidhavros where we swam, sampled retsina (Greek wine) and took the boat for Piraeus where we spent the night.

PS sampled grapes, figs and olives straight from vines and trees.

### **Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> of August**

Left Piraeus, the port of Athens, and took the boat for a typical Greek island name, Aegina, where we had an enjoyable time swimming, seeing around the chief town of San Marine and visiting the temple of Aphaea, the sun goddess.

### Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> of August

As the day before, before taking boat for Athens.

### Friday 16<sup>th</sup> of August

Had whole of day in Athens touring about visiting Olympia swimming pool etc before packing completely and heading for airport where, at midnight, we awaited our plane.

### Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> of August

At 2 a.m., we rolled down the runway and saw the last of sunny Greece.

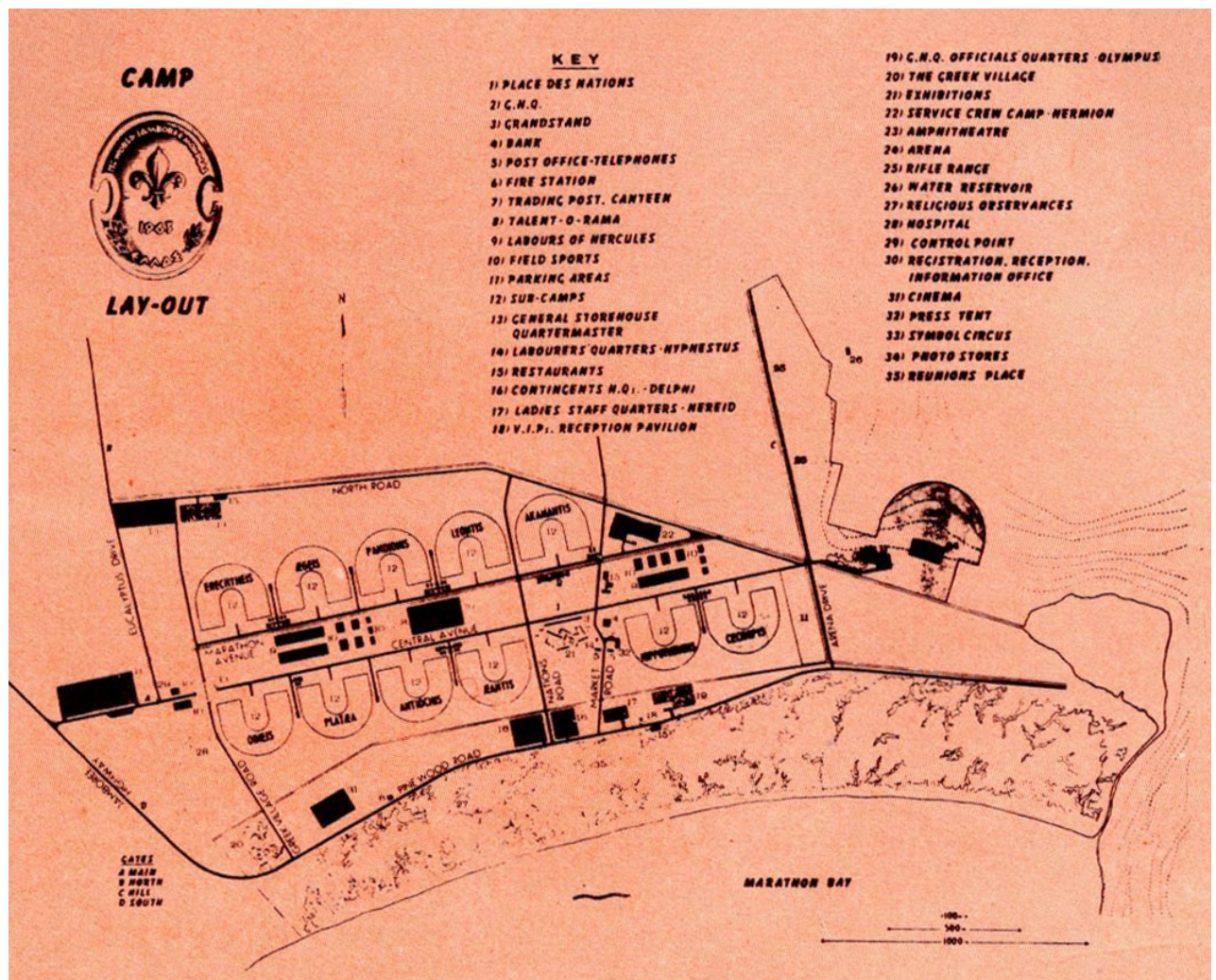
4 AM BST left the plane at Prestwick and faced cold Scottish drizzle. Brr.

5:30 AM Glasgow.

6 AM Took first bus to Greenock.

9 AM fell asleep in my own pit, exhausted after a thoroughly enjoyable experience in Greece.

The total cost was £80 of which the troop paid £25. For which, much thanks.







Acropolis



Greek Cypriots



Talent-o-Rama

Alan Conway  
P.L. Seal Patrol