

GALLERY



MEMBERS of the group of 12 1st Trinidad Sea Scout Troop of St Mary's College who went to both the World Scout Jamboree in Sweden and the World Youth Day in Spain. They are (back row L-R) Sean Gokool, Antonio Emmanuel, Kevan Lee Lum, Marcus Moses, Mikhail Woodruffe (Group Pilgrimage Leader); (middle row) Andrew Agard, Gerardo Olivier, Hugh Hoford, Jonathan Girod- Williams; (front row) Kester Wade, Troy Sammy and Mark-Anthony Blackman.

Sea Scouts make mark at two world events

Memories for life

BY ANGELA PIDDUCK

ON July 22, twenty-three members of the 1st Trinidad Sea Scout Troop of St Mary's College left on what could be a once in a lifetime experience, to attend the World Scout Jamboree in Sweden.

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During this year's jamboree, over 40,000 scouts were accommodated in large tents on a field which said Kester Wade said was "four times the Queen's Park Savannah. We learned how to interact better with people living in the same campsite". Housed with the 1st Trinidad Scouts in five tents were six scouts from Guyana and one from the 3rd Trinidad unit in San Fernando, who were added to Gokool's unit. Nine

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Travelling via London, the group spent three days in Copenhagen before moving on to the camp, which started on July 27. At the end of the Jamboree on August 7 when the contingent returned to Trinidad, there was even more excitement in store for 12 Roman Catholic Scouts, who travelled on to Spain to attend World Youth Day from August 15 to 22.

Last Sunday morning, the feeling of excitement still existed when after a Thanksgiving Mass at the St Mary's College Chapel, they gathered in the "Scout Room" to express their appreciation to the leaders. Woodruffe thanked the scout leader "for her hours of work to achieve this good experience for us." Parent, Christine Sammy, also thanked the Murrays on behalf of the parents for "the things you put out for these boys making the trip a success". Three unit leaders, Antonio Emmanuel, Keeshan Ramkissoon and Sean Gookool, expressed gratitude to the Murrays for hard work and long hours put in prior to jamboree to ensure everything worked smoothly.

"The scouts will remember these memories for the rest of their lives," they said.

With deep emotion, the contingent leader stressed: "This is out of love. I hope you save some of the stories for your children and grandchildren."

It had to be out of love, as the Murrays' two adult sons, now qualified professionals, are no longer members of the troop, which Grace took over 15 years ago when the then leader, Father Seanan Murray, was leaving.

The World Scout Jamboree is held every four years. About eight scouts participated in the jamboree four years ago in Chelmsford, England, which marked the 100th anniversary of scouting. Participation in Sweden was made possible through fund-raising initia-

tives over the past four years by the parents and scouts. Also, said the leader, "We have to thank the Ministry of Arts & Multiculturalism, individuals and companies, for financial support."

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"So we did not necessarily eat the same thing every day," said the group last Sunday morning.

"Also, this way, an exchange of food was fostered with other troops, such as the Japanese, Czech Republic, Scotland and Ireland, and they got a taste of Trinidad."

Jordan Hoford explained: "The camp site was huge and was basically a mini-city with stores, cafes, an ice-skating rink, banks, a hospital, a food court serving different types of food and religious areas for everybody's religion. There was also spontaneous activity such as rock climbing and mini circus tents."

A tight 12-day schedule was divided into four types of module activities and each group was assigned to an activity per day, which involved other countries.

Jarryon Paul spoke of the "dream" activity which took them through a forest at night, where each person reflected on life, starting with death and reversed up to birth. Wade's interest was held by the "Quest" activity, which taught about Viking history, earth and the environment. Gookool reminisced on the "People" activity, and learning about our social issues, how they were seen around the earth and how to change and improve social situations. Mark-Anthony Blackman's gave his views on the "Camp In Camp" activity, which was basically a camp away from the main camp site, in which he lived with scouts from other countries.

"It was hosted by young Swedish scouts and with different activities we were able to learn about

GALLERY

Foreigners lap up TT culture

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Swedish culture, including a bath in a pretty cold lake and eating pancakes prepared at a camp fire.”

In spite of the programme being limited to the camp site, two Trinis – Troy Sammy and Andrew Agard – had the privilege of representing Trinidad and Tobago at a one-day United Nations Simulation held at the Swedish House of Parliament, with strictly two participants from each country, making a total of about 200 acting UN Delegates overall. The topic was climate change. The representatives had to prepare an essay and participate in seminars and debates.

“It was indeed a learning experience,” said the two delegates.

Other memorable moments



MEMBERS of the 1st Trinidad Sea Scout Troop of St Mary's College pose at the Piarco International Airport in July, before leaving to attend the World Scout Jamboree in Sweden.

were for Wade, who considered it an honour to carry the national flag at the opening

ceremony, and for Marcus Moses and Wade, who were chosen as young correspon-

dents to train with the overall media team for the jamboree.

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Hugh Jordan Hoford, Sean Gokool, Marcus Moses, Kester Wade, Antonio Emmanuel, Troy Sammy, Johnathan Williams, Kevan Lee Lum and Gerardo Olivier.

On August 7, the St Mary's twelve were the very first pilgrims to arrive in Toledo, where 5,000 young pilgrims were expected to visit from August 11-15, before proceeding to WYD in Madrid.

“Being first, we were treated like celebrities for a while, and made the front page of the Toledo Newspaper.

However, August 11-15, called “Days in the Diocese”, brought a planned programme at the Catholic College. We stayed with families in two small villages near to Toledo and at last there was a bed to sleep in and showers. Whereas in Sweden everyone spoke English, here in Spain it was only Spanish, so our Spanish came up,” Woodruffe recalled.

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College pose at the Piarco International the World Scout Jamboree in Sweden.

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"We had a choice of coverage and carried out interviews on the radio on the jamboree network and in magazine articles."

The scouts also spoke proudly of the Cultural Festival Day, when they sang calypso, soca, chutney, played steelband and prepared and served accras, pholourie, bake and saltfish, sorrel and mauby.

"We really enjoyed this and learned from it."

Every country had been allotted a booth for its national headquarters; the Trinidad and Tobago booth was very popular, as scouts from the world over took the opportunity to visit and try their hands at the steelband, which most were hearing for the first time. They also enjoyed trying on Carnival costumes, while they viewed Dimanche Gras and Panorama tapes which our scouts displayed from a laptop.

Said Woodruffe, "Many people promised to come to Trinidad and Tobago. Trained by Myron B, the Trini scouts had a repertoire of about 20 songs in different genres of music to show the diversity of TT's culture. On pan, they played the Swedish national anthem, our anthem and the scout song.

So fascinated were the scouts from other countries, that in addition to the national booth, they visited the Trini campsite every night to hear steelband and songs, providing a carnival atmosphere for boys and girls from around the world.

"Amazingly, there are more girls than boys in the movement in Europe," Emmanuel said.

"Trinidad and Tobago is not as involved in scouting or youth activities, so we are hoping through our group, that we could encourage our youth to get involved in scouting and or other youth activities."

Blackman hopes "We would have made a difference".

And it was on to Spain to World Youth Day for the group of twelve Roman Catholics, led by Mikhail Woodruffe and comprising Andrew Agard, Mark- Anthony Blackman,

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By August 15, the St Mary's 12 were back to a tight schedule at WYD in Madrid, and back to sleeping bags and pilgrim-like accommodation in a camp which was basically for breakfast and sleeping, as they left early in morning and came back late at night after a full day in extremely high temperatures of 40 plus degrees. They were humbled at being surrounded by priests and nuns in the hundreds.

"We had already witnessed priests casually giving confession on benches the last day in Toledo before a big Mass in the streets of Toledo.

Here in Madrid, priests gave confession in about 250 confessional booths. It was a very spiritual time and our group prayed together morning, evening, before meals and before travelling to an event."

Needless to say, their talking point was the unexpected storm on the final night when the Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI got very wet in spite of several umbrellas.

Said Hoford, "The forecast was really for the next day, the final Sunday, but the storm came the night of the 21st. But the ground was so dry that the water was absorbed."

Blackman was at the adoration tent when strong winds blew it over.

"But we followed our motto and were prepared with change of clothes for the overnight vigil into Sunday morning for the final Mass."

By August 22nd the group left for London with one small regret, they were not selected in the fifty young people from around the world to meet the Pope on his arrival in Madrid.

Some are hopeful that lifelong friends were made on this journey, which will never be forgotten, as they left with invitations to return and the words "Mi Casa Es Su Casa" ringing in their ears.