

 Scots who made their mark on.....  
*The History of Africa 2: Leander Starr Jameson* 

**"Dr Jim", the Charismatic Figure who Inspired Kipling's "If"....**

If you can dream -- and not make dreams your master;  
 If you can think -- and not make thoughts your aim;  
 If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster  
 And treat those two imposters just the same;  
 If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken  
 Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,  
 Or watch the things you gave your life to, broken,  
 And stoop and build 'em up with worn-out tools;.....

This poem, one of the most popular and quoted in all English literature with its stiff-upper-lip ethic, written by quintessential Englishman Rudyard Kipling in the mid 1890's and published in 1910 was inspired by the actions of an amazing Scot, Dr Leander Starr Jameson, who gained notoriety and fame in Southern Africa at the end of the Nineteenth Century for his actions in support of Cecil Rhodes' Empire building.



Monaco 2007 celebrates the centenary of Kipling's winning of the Nobel Prize for Literature and mentions the poem *If*

Dr Jameson had emigrated to South Africa in 1878 to get away from the pressures of practising medicine in London. He set up a practice in Kimberley and soon had a number of celebrity clients including President of the Transvaal Paul Kruger and King Lobengula Kumalo, the chief of the Ndbele (or Matabele) people (whose territory is now part of Zimbabwe), but his most influential contact was Cecil Rhodes, politician, diamond mining magnate and one of the wealthiest men in the world and who referred to him as "Doctor Jim".

Jameson made such an impression on improving Lobengula's health treating, for example, his gout that he gained the honorary role of "inDuna" or



King Lobengula (nicknamed "Old Buster" by the Europeans), Cecil Rhodes (Southern Rhodesia 1940) and Paul Kruger (South Africa 1955)

Commander in the King's Imbeza Regiment. This position of trust and influence permitted Jameson to persuade the King into a series of agreements with representatives working for Rhodes that was to lead to the formation of the British South Africa Company (BASC) and as the Company moved into those parts of Matabeleland known as Mashonaland and Manicaland at the end of the 1880's, Jameson left his medical practice and became a pioneer on behalf of Rhodes, making claim for Britain of large swathes of territory and becoming Governor of Mashonaland in 1891.



Rhodesia 1967 marks the 50th anniv of Jameson's death

Jameson then became a prominent figure in the "First Matabele War" a prolonged series of engagements in 1893 between Rhodes' private army, the small military wing of the BASC and King Lobengula's many but relatively poorly armed and badly trained troops. Nevertheless one notorious episode in that "war" was the massacre of the Shangani Patrol which was to make another Scot a legend. (See below).

Two years later in November 1895, the Pilsani Strip, part of Bechuanaland (now Botswana), which bordered the Transvaal, the Boer homeland was annexed with the approval of the British government and local chieftains to the British South Africa Company to provide security for the railway line which was being built across it. History now sees this move as provocation by Rhodes, who was hoping that the "Uitlander" gold mining immigrants who had flocked to the Transvaal from many European countries would begin to agitate against their Afrikaner masters and that in due course would result in the Boers being driven out and the Transvaal declared British.

**The Jameson Raid**

In the closing week of 1895 with the approval of Cecil Rhodes as Prime Minister of Cape Colony, Dr Jameson, having obtained a letter from Uitlander leaders begging for help to protect their "women and children" so justifying his incursion, led a private army of over 500 men into this territory in what was to be known as The Jameson Raid, the result of which action was to be interpreted (or "spun") in completely opposite ways by the British and the Boers. Jameson advanced to Krugersdorp, within threatening distance of Johannesburg, before being defeated and forced to surrender somewhat ignominiously.



Jameson's Journey from doctor in Kimberley in to disaster in 1878 at Krugersdorp in 1895 can be plotted on this map

*Bungle, debacle, fiasco*—may seem appropriate to describe what happened when the raid got underway. Most but alas not all telegraph wires were cut so the Boers knew exactly when Jameson was coming, there was no proper supply chain of stores or fresh horses to support the forces, Jameson ran into not one but two ambushes—and there was after everything no popular uprising from the Uitlanders. His defeated men were mocked by their opponents and sang “After the Ball was over...” as they were escorted to jail in Pretoria, but since around 30 of the attackers were killed or injured by elite Boer Commandos perhaps the best word is ..... *disaster*... and it is from that perspective and the series of events that happened next that we can see further reasons why Jameson was an inspiration for Kipling's famous poem.

Rhodes was forced to resign, his oldest brother Frank tried for high treason and only just escaped hanging. Historians regard this event as seminal to The Second Boer War (1899-1902). There was great embarrassment back in London where hawkish Colonial Secretary Joseph Chamberlain played an ambivalent role, informing Prime Minister Lord Salisbury of the incursion decision only at the last moment.

Because Jameson had led a brave if hopeless mission and was then publicly abandoned by politicians—effectively “hung out to dry” both by Rhodes and Chamberlain, who had privately supported the project—he was seen as a scapegoat and very much a hero back home.

Once captured, Jameson and his men were returned to the British on payment of a very large amount of compensation and he was sent for trial to London, charged with “preparing a military expedition against a friendly state”, a unique charge in British legal history. Far from being seen as a criminal he was feted and celebrated, the start of the process that made him a media personality—his defeat portrayed as heroic victory—and of course brought the details of his ventures to Kipling's attention!

If you can make one heap of all your winnings  
And risk it on one turn of pitch-and-toss,  
And lose, and start again at your beginnings  
And never breathe a word about your loss;.....

Jameson's stock continued to rise because of his stoical behaviour at his trial where he kept quiet, implicating nobody else honourably accepting the blame taking his punishment of eighteen months in jail, from which he was released after a few months because of the state of his health.

In the end, after the conclusion of a lengthy and controversial Committee of Inquiry into the events around his Raid, on which ironically sat Chamberlain himself, Jameson had the last laugh as he was able to return to South African politics early in the next century, become Prime Minister of the Cape—Rhodes's old position between 1904 and 1908 and work at restoring British-Boer relationships for which he was knighted. He continued to serve politics becoming founding leader of South African Unionist Party from 1910 to 1912 where he returned to London, dying five years later. After the end of World War One his body was interred on a hillside in Rhodesia which his friend Cecil Rhodes had called “The View of the World”.



Northern Rhodesia 1953

Born in Edinburgh in 1853, the youngest of twelve children and named after the American tourist who saved his advocate father Robert William Jameson from drowning of the morning of his birth, Leander Starr Jameson led a remarkable life, first as a doctor, then politician, then military adventurer and finally as eminent statesman.

He was a charismatic figure, small in stature but of immense character, being witty and laconic, not suffering fools gladly, very logical in his thinking, and a born leader who could easily persuade followers to trust him with their lives. He was a patriot who subordinated his personal wishes and safety to the good of his country and the Crown, all of which made him a perfect model for Kipling to hold up to the British people.

## The Shangani Patrol *Major Wilson's Last Stand*

Another Scot played a memorable role in this story.

In 1889 Cecil Rhodes received both a Royal Charter from Queen Victoria to allow him to promote his B.A.S.C. – and permission from the African King Lobengula for a limited search for gold in an area fabled to be the place of the legendary King Solomon's Mines.. Rhodes thought these ventures would produce enough money to allow his B.A..S.C. to take control of the whole of Southern Africa. To do this it was necessary to make an enemy of Lobengula and decimate his large army of warriors

A force some 600 Company men and South African police invaded Mataberland in early July 1890 and slowly progressed well into the territory ever ready for a native attack, but this did not materialise because the Matabele warriors understood that their weapons were no match for the Maxim guns the Europeans carried and the spotlights which scanned the land beyond the wagon train circle every night prevented surprise attack.

Two months later the force began the settlement of Fort Salisbury by putting the area "under Her Majesty's protection" and this was to become the capital of the new country known as Rhodesia but Lobengula evaded engagement and capture for many months to come. Rhodes therefore commissioned Dr Leander Starr Jameson to engineer a war of sorts and the resulting slaying of many Matabele warriors made their capital of Bulawayo a reachable target. Unknown to the Europeans Lobengula was seeking to appease the invading force but his emissary carrying a huge amount of gold was intercepted by a couple of soldiers who killed him and made off with the money themselves.

A further year later in November 1893 Jameson's men were on the heels of the fleeing King and in the first week of December were very close indeed. A

detachment of just over thirty men of the Victoria Column commanded by Scotsman Major Allan Wilson, born in Glenurqhart in the Black Isle and schooled both in Orkney and Moray, then had the appalling luck to cross the river and find themselves right inside the Matabele Camp at Shangani without realising until it was too late. Wilson prepared his men for certain death, as unseen assegai beat ox-hide shields in that blood – curling way we recognise from the classic film *Zulu*.

It took the Matabele four hours to kill all the invaders and Major Wilson was the last to fall. Their efforts, particularly his became legend as badly wounded men continued to load rifles for their comrades to fire at the attacking warriors. When they were out of ammunition those who could presented themselves as easy targets and sang, *God the Save the Queen*, as far as we can tell. Major Wilson was the last to die when with both arms broken he walked towards the Matabele and was speared to death. For every one of his men killed, the native warriors lost 20 men, according to some reports so it was something of a Pyrrhic victory..

Their bodies of the soldiers of the Victoria Column were firstly buried together at Zimbabwe near where they made their last stand and then moved to rest where both Rhodes and Jameson lie today.

The heroics of Wilson's men are portrayed on many memorials which still stand today and the heroic Scottish Major was commemorated by this 1968 stamp marking the 75 anniversary of Matabeleland.

Soon after Lobengula was dead - of smallpox ! – and the Matabele apparently defeated.



*Below Leander Starr Jameson and King Lobengula, the leaders of the sides in the First Matabele War*

