



# When the Lions Came to Town: The 1974 rugby tour to South Africa

*Luke Alfred*

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The early 1970s in South Africa were a time of economic boom, political repression, growing isolation and an unshakeable confidence that the Springboks were the best rugby team in the world - until the infamous 1974 British Lions tour.

It was a tour in which a group of talented and long-haired rugby players from the British Isles played, sang and drank their way across the country, beating the Springboks 3-0 in the four Tests, with the last one a dubious draw. Until then the Lions hadn't beaten South Africa at home in 78 years.

Based on original research and interviews with players on both sides, *When the Lions Came to Town* vividly recreates a tumultuous rugby tour that sent shockwaves through South Africa. It captures a bygone era, a time before television, a golden age of amateurism, pranks and setting hotel rooms alight – as the Lions did after winning the series in PE.

Insightful, provocative and frequently amusing, *When the Lions Came to Town* casts a fresh eye on a divisive but undeniably colourful period in South African political, social and sporting history.

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