



# Victoria Scout Group

## N e w s s h e e t

Nº: 192

[October - December 2015] January 2016

### From the *Group Scout Leader* **Lorrie Saliba**

Part 2

## 25 years of dedication to the Victoria Scout Group

*\*An interview by Carm Cachia with G.S.L. Lorrie Saliba regarding his role as leader of the Victoria Scout Group for the past 25 years.*

#### **What kind of relationship exists between you as Group Scout Leader and the parents of the members of the Group?**

I have always tried to be clear about what I expect from the parents who entrust their children to us. This has always been an asset and has helped in the smooth running of the Group. We always keep the parents posted on Group activities. From time to time we organise activities for them so that they feel they too are part of the Group and their children feel more at home here. These activities in which parents participate are both recreational and fund-raising.

#### **What is the Group's contribution to society in general?**

Since its inception, the Victoria Group has always offered its services whenever it was asked to do so. In time this became part of the culture of the Group.

However, I think that, during these last 25 years in which I have been Group Scout Leader, such activities were given more importance. Many of these activities help to raise funds which the Group then donates to other philanthropic societies, both local and foreign. I believe that such activities enhance the Scouting educational programme which our members follow. Such activities help them to be altruistic, and this is an important part of the Scout Promise.

I would like to add that donations to other NGOs, which amount to thousands of euros, have paid dividends. The spacious headquarters which house us today are evidence of this.

#### **During this year's Summer Camp, the Victoria Group was joined by Scouts from various foreign Scout Groups. How do you see your Group's role in the international sphere and what is your part in such a role?**

This summer we had a unique experience since at



A group photo with the Chief Scout and Chief Commissioner during the Chief Scout's visit

Views expressed in this publication are personal and not necessarily those of the Victoria Scout Group as a whole, or of the Scout Association of Malta.

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### ***From the Scout Group Leader***

*cont...from front page*

camp we were joined by four Scout Groups coming from various countries. However this was not the only time that we have entertained guests at camp or at headquarters. Ever since the Group's early days there were many occasions when Scouts from Malta and from abroad came over and spent a number of days with us. On other occasions, our members visited Groups in Malta and abroad and participated in Scouting activities, both as individual members or as a Group. Such activities enhance the Scouting spirit in the Group and enrich the idea of a Brotherhood of Scouts.

**During the past 25 years there must have been various occasions which were a great satisfaction to you as Group Scout Leader. Can you mention any?**

Obviously there were various great moments in my career as G.S.L. One important occasion was the visit which Dr Jacques Moreillon, Secretary General of the World Scout Organisation, paid to our headquarters. Then there were the visits by various Presidents of the Republic of Malta to the Group, both at headquarters and at camp. Other dignitaries to visit us were the Prime Minister of Malta, various Ministers from different legislatures and the Bishops of Malta and Gozo. Various Chief Scouts of Malta and other high officials of the Scout Association of Malta visited us too. I interpret this as a sign of appreciation for the part the Group plays in society.

During these 25 years there were various important anniversaries related to Scouting. Just a few months after I became G.S.L., the Group celebrated the 75 years of Scouting in Gozo. Another important anniversary was the 100 years of Scouting in Malta. For this occasion and on my initiative, the Group organised a national parade in Victoria. Many Groups from Malta participated. It was the first time that such a national Scout Parade took place. I felt proud to lead the marching Groups around Victoria.

What I hold most dearly is the publication of the book which narrates the history of the Victoria Scout Group's first 50 years. I had been thinking of this publication for some time and, with the help and support of the Group Council, funds were raised for the publication which coincided with the celebrations marking the Group's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The book contains also the Group's anthem, another dream of mine which came true.

Then there is the increase in the Group membership, which has eventually grown from around 50 to more than 130. There was the expansion of the headquarters themselves. The rapid increase in membership had made the existing premises rather small to house all the members.

**Were there any disappointments during this 25-year period?**

Yes there were a number of disappointments and some ugly experiences. However the satisfaction which I enjoyed during these 25 years helped me forget those negative moments.



24th January 2015 - A copy of the Group's book is presented to H.E. the President of Malta, Marie Louise Coleiro Preca during her visit to headquarters.



February 2010 - The Victoria Scout Group has been chosen as the President's Scout Group. Chief Scout, Kenneth De Martino congratulates the GSL on the award.



June 2010 - Victoria Mayor, Dr Samuel Azzopardi presents the Ġieħ il-Belt Victoria award to the Victoria Scout Group



October 2008 - To commemorate the 100<sup>th</sup> years of Scouting in Malta, a special parade is held in Gozo.



The history of the Group is now well known, especially now that it has been compiled in the book which has been published mainly due to your initiative. But what about the future? What are your plans for the Group in the future?

I hope that the Group will retain the momentum it has gathered during these last few years, encouraging more members to enrol and enjoying such a good reputation among parents and the general public alike.

Next year, the Victoria Scout Group and the Xaghra Scout Group will be commemorating the first 100 years of Scouting in Gozo - another important milestone. We are preparing a one year programme of activities to commemorate such an important event.

We aim also to upgrade our headquarters. Work is already underway to enlarge the kitchen and to install new appliances. Besides, the main hall also needs redecorating. This includes the painting of walls, the installation of a gypsum soffit and, perhaps, new tiles. The stores also need to be organised better, with the installation of new shelving for the storing of tents and other camping equipment. I hope that by the time I retire, this dream will come true as well.



October 2007 - The Circolo Gozitano presents the Gieh Ghawdex Award to the Group - for outstanding service to the Gozitan community.



November 2006 - The Victoria Scout Group marked 90 years of Scouting in Gozo with a parade and a thanksgiving Mass. GSL presents a painting depicting The Pathfinder to Bishop Mario Grech.

### Conclusion

Finally I would like to take the opportunity offered to me by this interview to thank all those who, throughout these 25 years, have helped me perform well my duties as G. S. L. of the Victoria Scout Group. Among these I must mention the members of the various Group Councils and the leaders who have supported me during all these years. Were it not for the generous and disinterested help of all these persons, I would never have succeeded in running such a demanding Scout Group.

I promise that, as long as I remain Group Scout Leader, I will do my best for the Group which is so dear to my heart.

20<sup>th</sup> September, 2015

*\*Mr Carm Cachia is the group librarian and author of the book narrating the Group's history. He is a former member and leader of the Victoria Scout Group. As such he has known the GSL well for many years and together they have shared many moments of the group's life.*



## Congratulations!



The President of Malta congratulates Group Council Chairman, Michael Grech.

On Republic Day each year, the President of Malta, on behalf of the Government and the people of Malta, pays public tribute to a number of Maltese citizens who distinguish themselves in different fields of endeavours. It is with great pleasure and pride that the Victoria Scout Group would like to announce that the Group Council Chairman, **Mr Michael Grech has been awarded the Medalja għall- Qadi tar-Repubblika** during the ceremony which took place at the president's palace in Valletta on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2015, Republic Day.

Congratulations and well done!



The recipients of the awards for Republic Day 2015

(Special thanks to the DOI for the photos)

## *A point to Ponder with the Editor* – Anita Muscat

### **Pellegrini con Francesco**

#### **Pope Francis urges Scouts to build Bridges instead of Walls!**

On Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> June 2015, a special papal audience was granted to the AGESCI, Associazione Guide e Scout Cattolici Italiani (Association of Italian Catholic Guides and Scouts, one of the two National Scout Associations in Italy).

St Peter's Square in the Vatican was bursting with a blue sea of the AGESCI's light blue Scout shirts. Around **100,000** Cubs, Scouts, Rovers, Rangers, Leaders and Chaplains from all over Italy travelled to Rome to meet and listen to Pope Francis. This was the largest meeting ever of Catholic Scouts with the pope. While the Pope-mobil made its way through the square to St Peter's Basilica, Scouts threw hundreds of their scarves onto the Pope's jeep and he played the game catching some in mid-air. There were also countless hugs, high-fives and letters delivered.

Driven by a common spirit of pilgrimage, no obstacle proved too challenging for the Scouts. Hundreds of Roman Scout Groups hosted their brother Scouts who had come to the city from the north, the south and the islands. Some had travelled by train, others by plane, and many by bus. A group of 17 Rovers and Rangers had followed a section of the Via Francigena (a historical route which in the past was used by pilgrims on their way to Rome from Canterbury) by bicycle to Rome.

Addressing the Scouts and Guides, the pope said: *"I am certain, that AGESCI can generate fresh evangelical fervour in the Roman Catholic Church and a new capacity for dialogue in our societies. Don't forget: be open to dialogue with everybody!"* Describing the ideal Scout, Pope Francis said he or she must have *"a capacity for dialogue and build bridges in a society that is used to putting up walls"*. He described the Scouts as, *"an asset to the Roman Catholic Church in Italy"*, but requested them not to *"boast about this, please."* Scouting and Guiding, *"provide an important contribution to the mission that families have in educating children and young people"*.

This unforgettable meeting with the charismatic pope was indeed a unique occasion for those all those present, one they will cherish all their life.

(Information taken from L'Osservatore Romano, [www.agesci.it](http://www.agesci.it) and the EuroScoutInfo.com)



The Scouts greet Pope Francis



The Pope- mobil is full of Scout scarves.



An aerial view of St Peter's Square during the papal audience



### **Gone Home**

Mr Charles Vella, former GSL of the Mosta Scout Group. Mr Vella dedicated his entire life to Scouting. He served as a Group Scout Leader for over 40 years. He remained a great friend of the Victoria Scout Group till his death. The Group treasures several pioneering models donated by Mr Vella, which models are kept at headquarters. The group was represented at his funeral.

***We extend our condolences to their families. We urge our readers to remember them in their prayers. May they rest in peace.***

**Brian A. Beek BEM**, Chairman of the Brownsea Island Scout Fellowship. Brownsea Island is the place where the first Scout camp was held in 1907. Mr Beek had been a good friend of our group for quite a number of years. He was a regular visit to our headquarters especially during Founder's Day celebrations where he would join the Group for the church parade.

On St George's Day 2008, he was awarded the Silver Wolf which is the highest award an English Scout can gain and which is given 'In recognition of services to Scouting of the most exceptional nature.'



Founder's Day 2013 - Mr Brian Beek attends the church parade and mass.



Founder's Day 2013 - Mr Brian Beek (in the middle) accompanied by the GSL Lorrie Saliba and the AGSL George Said



## Chief Scout's visit

The newly elected Chief Scout, Mr George Cassar recently paid an official visit to the Group. He was taken round the headquarters by the Group Scout Leader, Lorrie Saliba and met the Group Council members, leaders and members of all sections. Mr Cassar is a former member and Venture Scout Leader with the Victoria Scout Group. During his speech, he commented on his years as a member and how those years helped him in his life later on. He wished the group all the best and encouraged the leaders to keep up the good work.



The GSL Lorrie Saliba and the Council Chairman Michael Grech welcome the Chief Scout to headquarters.



The Chief Scout meets the Council members.



The Chief Scout addresses the Scouts

## Bishop Mario Grech's letter of congratulations

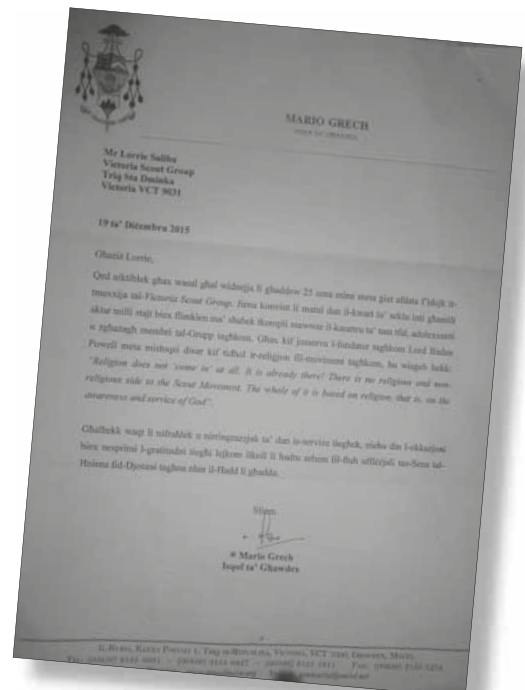
On the occasion of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary as the Group Scout Leader of the Victoria Scout Group, the Bishop of Gozo, Mgr Mario Grech, sent a letter of congratulations and thanks to the GSL Lorrie Saliba.

The bishop commented that he was sure the GSL and the other leaders had done their best to support the children and youths in their holistic development and ensured their personal growth.

His Excellency also include a quote\*\*\* by the Scouts' founder.

When asked where religion came into Scouting and Guiding, Baden-Powell replied, *"It does not come in at all. It is already there. There is no religious and non-religious side to the Scout Movement. The whole of it is based on religion, that is, on the awareness and service of God."* (Religion and the Boy Scout and Girl Guides Movement--an address, 1926).

**N.B. \*\*\*The same quote was also mentioned by Pope Francis during a special meeting with the Italian Catholic Scouts in June 2015. - See editor's article.**



## Visitors to headquarters

- The Chief Scout, Mr George Cassar
- The Chief Commissioner - Mr Leslie Bonnici
- Dave and Gill Clements - UK
- Garry and Mary Thomas - UK
- Velia Ceccarelli - Tolfa, Italy



Well done to ACSL **Nicholas Formosa** who has completed the Basic Leadership Training Course.



# S.C.Out.E.D activity

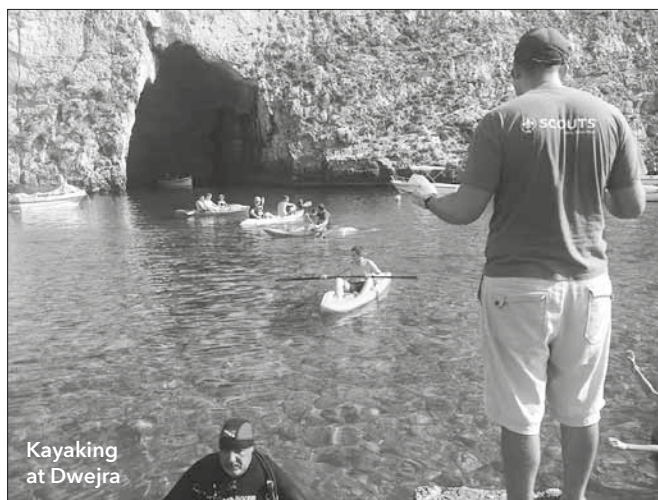
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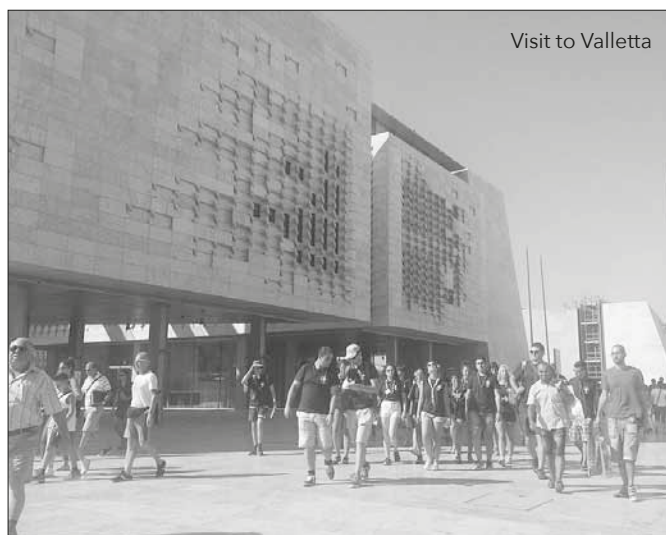
Helping out during the BBQ for persons with special needs.



Abseiling over the Qattara Pond at Dwejra.



Kayaking at Dwejra



Visit to Valletta



The European citizenship and identity activity

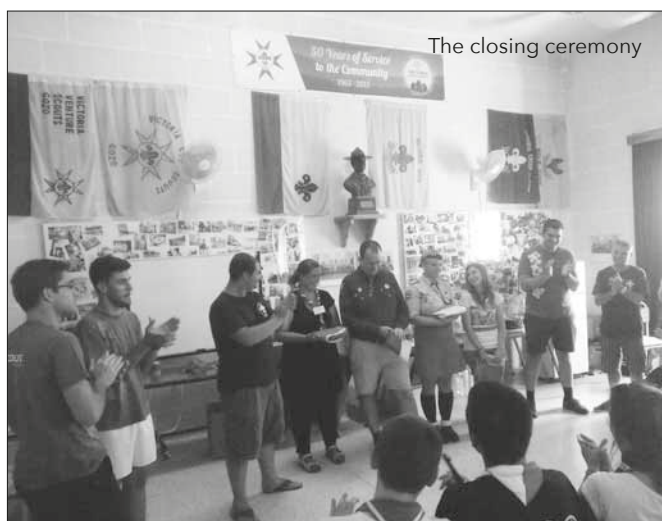




One of the international nights



All hands on deck. A few helping hands are more than welcome in a busy kitchen.



The closing ceremony



Goodbye dear friends!



# SATURDAY & SECOND PACK REPORT

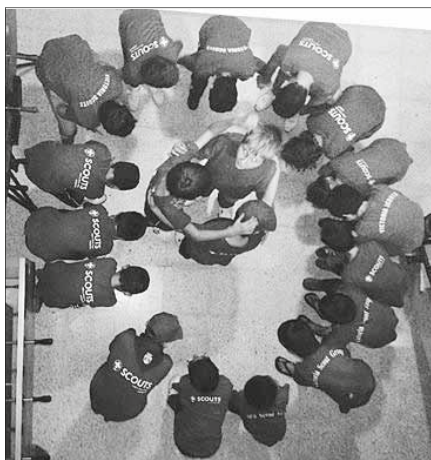
by **CSL Anita Muscat**

At the beginning of this period, lots of new boys joined the Packs. We welcome Alex, Benjamin, Carlos, Ġużeppi, Jake, Jayden, John Paul, Juan, Karl, Lucas, Ludvic, Mattia, Matthias Ryan, Maxim, Mikiel, Sven and Thomas Oliver within our Scouting family. We hope that they will enjoy different experiences, make new friends and learn skills which will serve them in good stead for the future.

In October, the Packs took part in the Jamboree on the Internet - J.O.T.I. activity. This is an international activity where millions of Scouts from all over the world contact each other using the computer. This year's theme focused on environmental responsibility - **The Earth is Yours**. Wherever and whenever possible, Scouts are encouraged to act in a way to minimize the environmental impact of their actions. This is consistent with the World Scout brand statement: *Creating a Better World* and with Lord Baden-Powell's advice: *Leave this world a little better than you found it*.



JOTI 2015 - During the Chatting session



World Diabetes Day - The Cubs form the United Nations blue ring symbol for diabetes.



Festa Scouts - At the entrance to the park at Ta' Qali.

This year's world tour (contacts) took us to Canada, the Dominican Republic, Australia, New Zealand, Sweden, Iceland, Indonesia, Malaysia, Romania, Greece, Madagascar and Mauritius amongst others. Besides the chatting part, there were other activities suggested by the Scout Bureau. During the Mood Texting activity, the Cubs had to use SMS text symbols and create new symbol combinations to express their moods. The Spaceship activity encouraged dialogue between small groups in order to solve a problem and reach a democratic solution. Using the phonetic alphabet they had to create a message



Festa Scouts - At the Adventure Park - Up they go!

and during the Morse code activity they had to decipher a message produced by beeps of light. They also had to decipher other messages in a different code. The favourite activity was undoubtedly the STOMP where they had to produce their own (very noisy) sound and dance STOMP routine using items found in the yard. Since at that time, a clearance exercise was taking place at headquarters, there was plenty to choose from.

At the end of October both Packs attended the Festa Scouts activity held

by the Scout Association of Malta at Ta' Qali Park. They joined other Scout groups in different activities and enjoyed themselves participating in lots of games.

On November 14<sup>th</sup> which is World Diabetes Day, a special meeting was dedicated to increase the Cubs' awareness of the effects of diabetes and the complications caused by the condition.

At the beginning of December, the Packs organized their seasonal good turn. They visited the geriatric wards - male and female at the Gozo General Hospital and entertained the residents with Christmas carols and Scout songs. They also presented them with some gifts. Later in December, the Cubs had their customary Christmas party with lots of games and good food. A Group meeting held in December was extra special since it included the boy's sermon by Cub Scout



Festa Scouts - Watch out boys! Those fountains are out to get you.



Festa Scouts - Return ferry trip to Gozo - It seems that Juan and Maxim have had a LOOOOONG day.

Alex Vella Muskat and a visit by Father Christmas who popped in to distribute the presents.

At the end of another year, I would like to thank the other Pack leaders for their help and support. The Pack leaders would also like to thank the Group Scout Leader, Lorie Saliba, various Council members, parents and supporters who gave a helping hand whenever this was needed.



The Cubs' good turn



## Venture Unit REPORT

by VSL Darren Mercieca

The last quarter of 2015 brought quite a change within the Venture Unit. The Unit is now 27 Ventures strong, making it the second largest Unit in Malta. Although this brings great opportunities in order to plan and carry out large projects, it also involves attendance issues, commitment issues and also problems to manage such a large Unit. The Venture Unit works best when it is self driven in order to give opportunities for leadership and teamwork. In today's society, teenagers have a number of commitments which means that attendance can be weak at times and strong at other times which makes it even more difficult to plan. Focus is being given on a fully functioning Executive which is the elected body of members who plan the Unit activities. An active Executive will help the leaders to fulfil the Venture Programme which includes a number of interesting and demanding activities in order to achieve the Olympian Award. In late October, an election was held in order to elect a new Executive. The decision was taken to elect a young Executive. The new Chairman is Keith Bajada, a newly joined Venture Scout and an active, committed person. The Secretary is Nathan Camilleri, whose enthusiasm and energy will surely energise the Executive to work even harder. Andrea Galea, another committed and active Scout was elected as Treasurer. Five other Ventures were elected as members on the Executive in order to represent the rest of the Unit.

Throughout this quarter, several meetings were held for the Ventures to plan their way through the Olympian Award. After the progression plans are drafted, the Ventures move to carry out the chosen activities. Special consideration is given to long term plans, outdoor activities and activities which help the society in general. The Olympian Award is structured in such away to encourage planning, outdoor activities and activities which improve the personal self.

In October several meetings were held at HQ in order to help with the ongoing works within HQ. As the kitchen is being refurbished, works also affected the Venture Room (affected positively of course. We got a new balcony and a newer kitchen.) Cleaning was needed on multiple occasions and help was given whenever necessary.

On the 18th of October an abseiling session was held at Mgarr ix-Xini. A lot of new Ventures had never attempted abseiling and therefore the activity was a new experience for most of the Venture Scouts.

In November, apart from the group activities and other activities, the Unit organised a football match and also a wide game at the Cittadella. Both activities were part of the Olympian Award.

During December the Unit was in charge of setting up the decorations at HQ and also helped the GSL and librarian Carm Cachia to set up the book selling fundraiser in Victoria. In December the Unit also organised a LAN Party at HQ and a Christmas dinner at a local restaurant.

I hope that 2016 will bring a number of interesting activities and together we can make it a fantastic year.



The Chief Scout, George Cassar and the Chief Commissioner Leslie Bonnici meet the Unit.



The going up ceremony for the Scouts into the Unit.

An abseiling session at Mgarr ix-Xini



A wide game at the Citadel



## KITCHEN REFURBISHMENT

The kitchen at headquarters is undergoing a major makeover. Various Scouters, Council members as well as the older boys are doing their bit towards the completion of this project. Special thanks are due to AGSL George Said and Council member Raymond Caruana. Well done to all!



### We were there

- The group was represented at the ceremony commemorating Remembrance Day at Independence Square
- On Sunday 13th December 2015, the Bishop of Gozo, Mario Mgr Grech launched the extraordinary Jubilee Year, the Holy Year of Mercy in the diocese of Gozo by opening the doors at the Gozo Cathedral. The Group provided a guard of honour to the corteo.



The Bishop of Gozo launches the extraordinary Jubilee Year, the Holy Year of Mercy at the Gozo Cathedral.

- On December 26<sup>th</sup>, the Group Scout Leader, Lorrie Saliba presented the proceeds of the raffle held during the Group's summer BBQ to representatives of the Community Chest Fund during the Strina fund-raising activity.

### Awards and badges for October to December 2015

#### Packs

Abela George - Tenderpaw, Membership  
 Casha Neil - Scientist, Artist, Weather Lore  
 Grima Christon - Tenderpaw, Membership  
 Morgan Sam - Collector, Book Reader  
 Said Lucas - Local Historian, Artist  
 Sultana Paolo - Tenderpaw, Membership



#### The following Cubs gained the JOTI badge:

Abela George, Attard Christian, Azzopardi Ludvic, Azzopardi Nathan, Bonello Nathan, Buhagiar Matthew, Caruana John Paul, Camilleri Paul, Casha Neil, Cini Sven, Cassar Mattia, Cauchi Karl, Debattista Jean, Farrugia Mark Saviour, Giordanella Enzo, Galea Jayden, Grech Nicholas, Grima Christon, Grima Lucas, Magrin Michael, Mizzi Maxim, Morgan Sam, Rapa Simon, Refalo Michael, Said Lucas, Said Neil, Scerri Juan, Sultana Paolo, Vella Gabriel, Vella Muskat Alex, Zammit Matthias Ryan.

#### Unit

Keith Bajada - Theseus  
 Samuel Rapa - Theseus  
 Andrea Galea - Theseus  
 John Luke Debrincat - Theseus



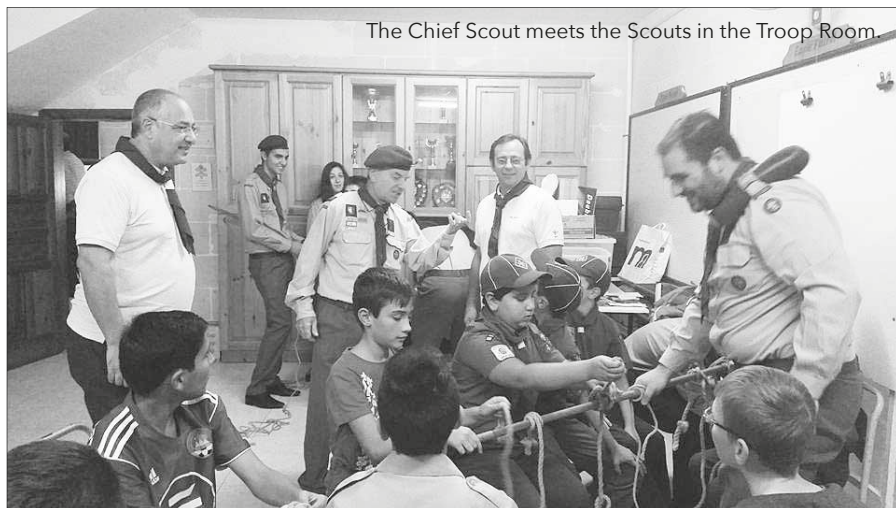
# TROOP NEWS



The going up ceremony for the Cub Scouts into the Troop



At the Festa Scouts activity in Ta' Qali



The Chief Scout meets the Scouts in the Troop Room





The Chief Scout was a special guest at this year's Christmas dinner.



The patrons queue for the main course.



Would you like a ticket for our lottery?

### ***Forthcoming events:***

- **Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> January 2016** – District Activity – Charity Fun Walk in aid of the Community Chest Fund
- **Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> January** - Annual General Meeting
- **Saturday 20<sup>th</sup>, Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> February** – Founder's day activities

*Further details will be sent in due time.*



The raffle items