



THE *Scout* ASSOCIATION  
OF MALTA

# Victoria Scout Group

N E W S S H E E T

Nº: 224

[January- March] May 2024

## *From The Group Scout Leader*

Jesmond Scerri

Reflecting on the past three months, it's challenging to pinpoint where to begin, given the multitude of memorable events that have taken place.

Undoubtedly, one of the highlights was the official visit of the President of Malta, Dr. George Vella, to our headquarters. Dr. Vella's visit, one of his final engagements before the conclusion of his mandate, commenced with an inspection of the Group assembled in front of HQ. Following this, he held discussions with the Group Council and undertook a tour of our facilities. Subsequently, Dr. Vella addressed the entire Group in the hall, commending the values of the Scout Movement and praising the significance of volunteerism. A noteworthy gesture was the presentation of a €500 cheque from our Group funds to the Malta Community Chest Fund, presented by our Group Treasurer, Mr. Gino Mizzi. Dr. Vella also took the time to interact with members, during the refreshments that followed.



GSL Jesmond Scerri addresses H.E. Dr. George Vella, outgoing President of Malta.

Another significant event was our Annual General Meeting, which served as a platform to celebrate the accomplishments of our members. In addition to the reports presented by key office-bearers, special certificates and badges were awarded to participants of last summer's Jamboree in Korea, recognizing their dedication. We were honoured to have President Emerita Marie Louise Coleiro Preca as our special speaker, who emphasized the synergy between our Group and the Malta Trust Foundation, fostering prospects for collaboration. During the AGM generous donations of €300 each were also made to The Friends of the Sick and the Elderly in Gozo, and to the Malta Trust Foundation.

Throughout this quarter, we organized several fundraising activities, including the sale of nearly 200

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Group photo taken with H.E. the President of Malta Dr George Vella during his official visit to headquarters

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figolli and a Founder's Day lunch at HQ. Additionally, a dinner event was held to support the mission of Fr. Raymond Portelli in Peru, underscoring our commitment to philanthropy.

Quoting our founder, Lord Baden Powell *"The spirit is there in every boy; it has to be discovered and brought to light"*, is the reason for the many activities held by all the sections. Just to mention a few, we had a number of outdoor meetings for the Cubs, a winter camp for the Troop, a night hike and a Barbeque for the Venture Unit and participation in iScout for the Rovers.

To commemorate Founder's Day, we collaborated with the Xagħra Scout Group, organizing a hike, campfire, and Mass at the Xagħra Parish. Unfortunately, inclement weather forced the cancellation of the planned parade. Leader training remains integral to our mission of providing exemplary service to our members. Over the past three months, several leaders attended courses and meetings to enhance their skills and knowledge, exemplifying our commitment to continuous improvement. These included, the Cub leaders attending an information meeting re the new Cub programme, AVSL Matthew Grech attended a funding network meeting and congratulations to ASL Sarah Grech who finished her Woodbadge training.

In the words of Lord Baden-Powell, *"The most worthwhile thing is to try to put happiness into the lives of others."* Guided by this principle, our activities during these three months have been dedicated to the noble pursuit of *"Building a Better World."*

## *Awards and Badges*

– January to March 2024

### **Cub Scout Packs**

**Ben Abela** - Book Reader

**Neil Bajada** – Pet Care

**Jake Bugeja** - Book Reader

**Jake Camilleri** – Pet Care

**Gabriel Gatt** – Book Reader, Musician, Weather Lore

**Nikolai Gatt** - Pet Care

**Rafael Grech** – Book Reader, Pet Care

**Warren Grech** – Astronomer, Book Reader, Pet Care

**George Mercieca** - People and Places

**Thomas Rapa** - Local Historian

**Adam Said** - Collector

**Jake Said** – Musician, Book Reader, Botanist, Pet Care

**Kurt Saliba** - Book Reader

**Alexey Scicluna** – Hobbies

**Gabriel Tabone** – Book Reader, People and Places

**Liam Sultana** - Pet Care

**Ayden Vella** – People and Places

**Evan Zammit** - Musician

## *Congratulations!!*

**Well done Alexey!**

In January and February 2024, Cub Scout Alexey Scicluna, who attends Sir Arturo Mercieca Victoria Primary School within the Gozo College, represented his school at the fifth edition of the national Thematic STEM Debate organised by the Directorate for STEM & VET Programmes for the primary sector. The theme was *'Should humans use animals for biomedical research?'*

Year 6 students from 34 State Schools debated this theme until eight students made it to the final round. Following the final debate, three participants were awarded the Top Debater Award. Alexey was one of them.

Well done Alexey!!!

**Congratulations ASL Sarah!**

Congratulations ASL Sarah Grech on completing her Basic and Advanced Training Courses.

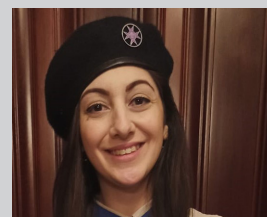
**Congratulations Your Excellency!**

The Victoria Scout Group congratulates Her Excellency Myriam Spiteri Debono on becoming the eleventh President of Malta. As patron of The Scout Association of Malta and a fellow Gozitan, we wish her a fruitful term in office.

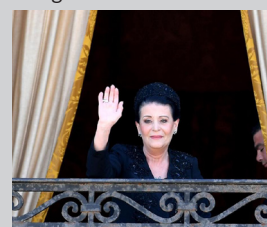
The Group's first meeting with the new President will take place on Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> April when she will take the salute from Scouts and Guides during their annual rally.



Congratulations Alexey!



Congratulations ASL Sarah!



## *Saturday and Seonee Packs Report*

by CSL Anita Muscat

During these last 3 months, there was a mix of outdoor and indoor meetings and so many different topics were addressed. Several Cubs shared their interests with the rest of the Pack and at the same time had a go at several badges.

One indoor meeting included a close encounter with two guinea pigs, which Bagheera Betty, one of the volunteers with Nature Trust's Wildlife Rescue Team was nursing back to health. Later on these will be released back in the wild. Bagheera is licenced by ERA to take care of hedgehogs and other legally protected species of local wildlife.

One meeting was all about the compass – the compass rose, the main parts of the compass, their names and their functions, what it is used for, how it works, how to hold it and use it. Some games, videos, explanations and hands on examples helped to make these points easier to understand. The Cubs then got to use their new compasses and practised finding and following a direction of travel. Another outdoor meeting included an instruction by the Ventures on how to light a fire taking into consideration all the safety features.

A hike to Wied il-Mielah and its 'window', a natural limestone arch, located on the north-western coast of Gozo, gave the Cubs the chance to apply the Country code; use their senses to look, listen, feel, touch and even taste what was around them; learn more about endemic, indigenous and alien species, of which various examples could be seen along the way; notice the practice of terracing of fields and the reason behind them; observe what irrigation methods are used in the fields; discuss the role of rubble walls which prevent soil erosion, allow the passage of excess rainwater and provide a habitat for different species; listen to hidden underground water courses; observe the mini-dams along the way and finally admiring the window, noting its fissures and the pounding waves crashing against it and link this to weathering and erosion and the power of water. The importance of taking nothing but photos and memories and leaving nothing but footprints was stressed throughout the hike.

Other outdoor meetings were held at Ta' Blankas Olive Grove. During one particular meeting the Cubs learned about the secret language of trees and that underneath the tress and intertwined with their roots, lies a microscopic network of fungi. This is responsible for transfer of water and nutrients between trees. Older, taller trees recognize the root tips of their relatives, especially weak saplings and favour them when

sending nitrogen, carbon etc through this underground network. These hub trees can detect the ill health of their neighbours from distress signals, and send them needed nutrients. They warn their neighbours about invasive predators or to inhibit growth of invasive plant species. The surrounding trees can then defend themselves by releasing chemicals to deter predators or pathogenic bugs. Trees can also send a stress signal to nearby trees after a major forest disturbance, such as deforestation, drought or an insect attack. All this was very, very interesting and almost magical, someone commented. And indeed it is!



Hike to Wied il-Mielah



Twins Anthony and Michael share a few words with H.E. the President of Malta, George Vella.



Jake, Luca and Thomas John all hug a tree.



Tug of war at Ta' Blankas Olive Grove

## We were there

- GSL Jesmond Scerri was one of the 11 Scout leaders who completed the Duke of Edinburgh's International Award Leaders Training. This training equips leaders with the tools and knowledge needed to guide our members towards personal growth and achievement.
- Members of our Group were present at University Quad for the (GUG) Gozo University Group's Gozo Week.
- The Gozo Business Chamber organised a public speaking training session at our headquarters. A number of Scouts took part in this important training.
- Members of the group were present for a meeting about the Informal Funding Network and the European Solidarity Fund through the support of Aġenzija Żgħażaġh.



GSL Jesmond (furthest right) receives his certificate at the end of the training.



At the Gozo University Group's stand at the University of Malta



At the public speaking training session

## The Victoria Scout Group holds its Annual General Meeting

CSL Anita Muscat

The Victoria Scout Group held its Annual General Meeting at its headquarters on Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> January 2024. Group Council Chairman Michael Grech delivered the opening speech. Group Scout Leader Jesmond Scerri, Secretary Celine Portelli and Treasurer Gino Mizzi then delivered their reports.

Guest speaker for the occasion was H.E. President Emerita Marie Louise Coleiro Preca. She explained that Scouting is not just an organisation but a Movement which imparts values and life skills to its members. Values and skills such as love and respect towards others, solidarity, compassion, carrying out one's duty to God and country, the importance of living with others and for others, learning to be independent and resilient and fostering a critical thinking mentality, are still as relevant today, if not more so, than they were when Scouting was founded. She thanked the Group Chairman and Council and the leaders, past and present, for their dedication and commitment and for passing on the message to those children and youths who have been members of the Group during the past 60 years since its inception in 1963. She encouraged the members to continue with their efforts to become active citizens who play a constructive role in society. These members are today's citizens and the leaders of tomorrow. She also congratulated the parents who have chosen to send their sons to be part of the Victoria Scout Group. She augured future continued collaboration between organisations such as The Malta Trust Foundation and The Malta Foundation for the Wellbeing of Society, which Her Excellency chairs, and the Group. Council Treasurer Gino Mizzi presented Her Excellency with a cheque for the Malta Trust Foundation.

The awards for the Cub Scouts, Scout, Venture Scout and Rover Scout of the Year 2023 went to:

Rover Scout of the Year: Jerrod Xerri

Venture Scout of the Year: Ġużeppi Formosa

Scout of the Year: Anthony Spiteri

Cub Scout of the Year (Saturday Pack) - Thomas Rapa

Cub Scout of the Year (Seonee Pack) - Giorgio Anici Camilleri

Certificates of Merit were awarded to:

Rover Crew: Matthew Grech, Richard Caruana

Scout Troop: Aleksander Attard, Gabriele Puglisi

Saturday Pack: Anthony Zammit, Gabriel Cutajar

The Brown Six (Andrea Schembri, George Mercieca, Rafael Grech, Lucas Debono, Gabriel Tabone and Jake Camilleri) of the Seeonee Pack and the Green Six (Jan Sacco, Thomas Rapa, Jake Bugeja, Anthony Zammit, Adam Zahra and Neil Bajada) of the Saturday Pack were the winners of the Mowgli Inter-Six Monthly Competition for 2023.

As in previous years, instead of sending Christmas cards, the Group donated a sum of money to a local philanthropic organisation. Donations for this purpose were also received by parents. This year the beneficiary was the Friends of the Sick and The Elderly in Gozo. The treasurer presented a donation to Mr Paul Zammit, president of this organisation.

Head of contingent at the World Scout Jamboree, Timmy Cutugno, then presented a certificate and a commemorative badge to all those who attended last summer's jamboree in South Korea.

The AGM came to an end with the investiture ceremony of 4 Rover Scouts - Jerrod Xerri, James Mizzi, Richard Caruana and Darren Paul Cassar.



Council Treasurer Gino Mizzi presents Her Excellency with a cheque for the Malta Foundation for the Wellbeing of Society.



The trophies and the certificates for the AGM



The investiture ceremony of 4 Rover Scouts - Richard Caruana, Jerrod Xerri, James Mizzi and Darren Paul Cassar



H.E. President Emerita Mary Louise Coleiro Preca addresses the audience.

## *Point to Ponder with the Editor Anita Muscat*

### **The (Hidden) Benefits of Camping .....**

*I am certain that a week or two of camp life is the best rest-cure and the best tonic for both mind and body that exists for a man, whether he be boy or old 'un. And for both it is a great educator. Lord Baden- Powell.*

Having recently returned from the Group's Easter camp, now might be the right time to dwell on this experience and share a few thoughts about the (maybe not so evident) benefits of camping, for children, youths and adults.

Camping offers so many benefits that go beyond just enjoying the great outdoors, exploring new places, learning new things and being immersed in and connecting with nature by spending more time in the outdoors.

#### **Campers develop self-confidence and independence:**

Camp offers a unique experience for children – the chance to be away from parents for a short period of time and learn to handle things on their own. At camp children develop confidence in their own ability to make decisions and solve problems. Just being “on their own” is a huge confidence builder for them, and they feel more self-reliant after being responsible for themselves and their belongings for a few days. At camp, children and youths have the opportunity to live and thrive without being with their parents and under their constant scrutiny. The growth in confidence and independence happen at camp **BECAUSE** the parents are not there.

#### **Camping teaches new skills, builds resilience and teaches problem-solving, adaptability and responsibility.**

The physical and mental health benefits of camping are immeasurable. It builds resilience and teaches life and survival skills, as well as commitment and perseverance. Campers learn to adapt to changing conditions and find creative solutions.

Camping takes us all out of our comfort zone and into an unfamiliar environment where we will need to adapt, solve problems, improvise and cope with whatever comes our way, whether it be starting a fire, dealing with unpredictable weather conditions, setting up or taking down tents, fixing a broken tent pole, taking care of our kit, sharing the same tent with others, sealing an airbed leak or even just cooking a meal. Taking risks, learning to cope with and facing the challenges of life and to bounce back from adversity, developing relationships with other adults and peers develops resilience, responsibility and self-esteem, and this is beneficial for all.

#### **Unplugging from Screens:**

Camping provides a screen-free environment. Devices, social media and the various apps and games can limit our social skills; affect our sleep and impact on our anxiety levels. In the great outdoors, you don't find computers, tablets or televisions and there's so much else to do that does not require electronics. Without constant digital distractions, people connect with nature and each other. Camping provides an opportunity for team-building and improving communication skills.

#### **Appreciating the simple things in life:**

Away from screens and technology, one learns to appreciate simple pleasures like watching awesome sunrises and sunsets, stargazing, listening to the seagulls mewing or the waves hitting the cliffs, storytelling, singing and laughing around a campfire, getting all caked in mud while building a clay oven, running down a valley or climbing up a hill, building a pioneering project and enjoying the beauty of natural landscapes.

#### **Appreciating nature:**

Getting up close to local flora and fauna fosters an appreciation and responsibility for our natural environment. First-hand observation can also stimulate one's thinking and encourage a greater awareness and understanding of the world around us.

#### **Experiencing Stress Relief and Relaxation:**

Nature acts as a powerful stress reliever. Camping allows one to escape the hustle and bustle of daily life, providing a much-needed break.

#### **Breathing in fresh air and boosting energy levels:**

Camping provides fresh air which benefits lung health, boosts energy levels, sharpens mental acuity, and contributes to overall happiness. Even the most lethargic children seem to gain energy from being outdoors.

#### **Engaging in physical activity and exploration:**

When you're camping, you can't help but engage in physical activity. Whether it's hiking, swimming, canoeing, climbing, or playing outdoor games, campers engage in healthy movement.

#### **Living with others and forging lifelong friendships:**

At camp we learn to live with, feel accepted and accept others even though we are all different. We are part of a team and we all work together for the benefit of that team.

#### **Creating lasting memories:**

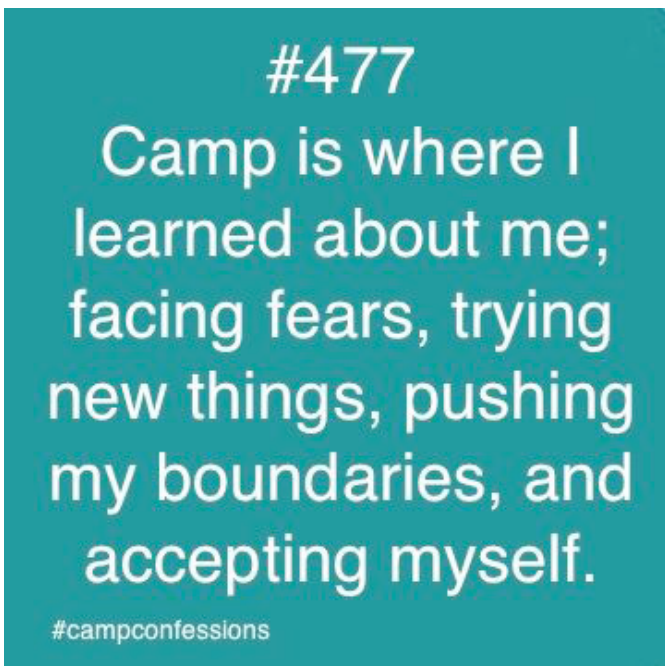
Camping adventures become cherished memories. Whether it's roasting marshmallows, spotting

constellations, or sharing a meal, a joke or ghost stories, these moments stay with the campers throughout their lives. So do not grudge your child the opportunity of coming to camp.

Camping is all this and so much more!

If people ever question your decision to send your child to a traditional Scout camp such as ours, away from the comforts of home and the watchful eyes of parents, let them know that though it's hard for you to let your child go and that you will be worrying about how he is coping, you're giving your child A GIFT THAT WILL HAVE MORE IMPACT THAN ANY MATERIAL ITEM YOU'VE EVER GIVEN THEM.

So let your sons embark on more camping adventures. Let them explore, run free and use their imagination in the great outdoors. It's an enriching experience for everyone!



## Gone Home

The Group would like to offer its sincere condolences to the families of:

- Fellow Scouter Carmel Attard who was instrumental in the reactivation of the Xagħra Scout Group in 2008, where he occupied various roles, including that of Assistant Group Scout Leader.
- GSL Emeritus Lorrie Saliba and his family on the loss of their brother Michael.

May they rest in peace.

Please remember them in your prayers.



## Akela's Council - Cub leaders' training camp - Be prepared!

On Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> February, some Cub Scout leaders from our Group attended a training session at the Żurrieq Scout Group headquarters, which session discussed the new Cub Scout programme to be launched later this year.

It is always a pleasure to meet other Scout leaders, exchange ideas and share good practices.

Thank you to all those who are contributing towards developing the new programme.



Group photo of the participants at Akela's Council

## Venture and Rover Report

by Assistant Venture Scout Leader Matthew Grech

### Unforgettable Memories and Upcoming Challenges

As the new year dawned, our Unit and Crew gathered for a delightful barbecue and lasagna dinner, reminiscing about the cherished moments of the past year. Laughter filled the air as we shared anecdotes from our Scouting adventures, fostering even stronger bonds of friendship. Our Venture Unit wasted no time in embracing fresh challenges. Embarking on a gruelling 23-kilometer night hike along the rugged North East coast of Gozo, they traversed challenging terrain from Victoria to Xewkija, Ramla to Daħlet Qorrot, Qala to Mġarr, and finally Għajnsielem back to Victoria. Despite the daunting obstacles, our Scouts conquered every hurdle, forging unforgettable memories along the way.

Meanwhile, the Rover Crew is diligently preparing for upcoming events, notably the Explorer Belt activity. Through meticulous planning and rigorous training, they are gearing up to tackle the forthcoming challenges head-on.

Our recent participation in the iScout challenge underscored our deep-rooted connection with Scouts worldwide, reaffirming our place within the global Scouting community. Our members were amongst the 12,000 Scout participants from 22 different countries.

Another successful activity organized by the Rover Crew for the Venture Unit was a survival camp in Dwejra, where our Ventures had to put their survival skills together so that they could survive all the obstacles one might encounter while camping in the wild outdoors.

Service and leadership lie at the core of our ethos. Members of our Group demonstrated this through active involvement in various endeavours, including preparations for the Presidential visit, the commemoration of Founder's Day, and the successful Annual General Meeting where members of our section were awarded for their hard work and commitment towards the Group and the local community throughout the last year. A notable highlight during the AGM was the knighting of four Rovers – John Paul Caruana, Darren Paul Cassar, James Mizzi and Jerrod Xerri - into the Rover Crew symbolizing their unwavering dedication and allegiance to Scouting. Additionally, participants representing our Group at the World Scout Jamboree last year were commended and presented with tokens of appreciation for their outstanding representation on the international stage.

As we eagerly anticipate the upcoming Easter camp, our excitement knows no bounds. Each adventure brings us closer as a Scouting family, ready to confront whatever challenges lie ahead with courage and camaraderie, guided by the spirit of Scouting.

Here's to the indelible memories we've created, the trials we've surmounted, and the adventures that await us. May Scouting continue to inspire us on our collective journey.



At the training camp for Rovers and Ventures



iScout 2024



Founder's Day lunch – service with a smile from some of the Ventures, Rovers and GSL Jesmond who assisted the kitchen team



# Troop Report

by ASL Charles Tabone

## Laying the Blueprint for Education Through Adventure

Every moment spent in the world of Scouting deepens my conviction that this is precisely what our children's education needs to embody. Imagine an education that isn't confined within the four walls of a classroom but sprawls amongst the wild camomile and the open skies of Dwejra, an education that isn't about memorising facts but about experiential learning, collective discovery, and personal growth. This vision of education comes to life in Scouting, where every game, task, and adventure is a lesson in itself, building not just knowledge but character, resilience, and lifelong friendships.

This Scouting year, particularly from January to March, has been a testament to this dynamic form of learning. Scouts have been engaging in a variety of activities, each designed to challenge them physically and mentally while instilling valuable life skills. During our annual January indoor camp our Patrols donned their chef's hats and competed in cooking the tastiest healthy meal. During our Saturday meetings our boys navigated through games that tested their strength and agility, planned, and led activities to develop their leadership skills, and mastered the art of task delegation and teamwork. Orienteering sessions were held to teach how to navigate using a map and compass and pioneering sessions introduced them to skills like tying a clove hitch or executing square and diagonal lashings. All these activities formed a rich tapestry of learning. These experiences, leading up to the Easter Camp, have been crucial milestones in their journey of growth and discovery.

As a leader, witnessing the transformation in Scouts as they reach new milestones is both an honour and profoundly rewarding. There's a unique sense of pride in seeing a Scout cook their first meal or confidently lead a pioneering project from conception through construction (and be confident enough to dangle upside-down from it). These moments of achievement, whether it's a Patrol Leader inspiring his peers or a Scout experiencing the thrill of getting their clothes caked in mud for the first time, underscore the transformative power of Scouting. It's a shift from the ordinary, a leap into a realm where

learning is hands-on, engaging, and infinitely rewarding. Easter Camp at Dwejra, themed "Unity in Diversity: Together We Explore, Learn, and Grow," was the culmination of these efforts. It wasn't just a camp; it was a celebration of all that Scouting stands for. From setting up camp and engaging in pioneering projects to the high tea organised for parents, each activity was infused with learning opportunities and the joy of discovery. This high tea for parents was a significant moment, offering them a glimpse into the world of Scouting and the incredible growth their children experience within it. It was a chance for parents to see the practical skills, confidence, and leadership qualities their children have developed, showcasing the real-world value of Scouting experiences.

Scouting is more than an activity; it's a movement that offers a holistic approach to education. It challenges Scouts to learn by doing, to lead with integrity, and to embrace diversity with an open heart. It is therefore encouraging to see parents filled with pride as their child gets invested into this organisation which still clings to values seemingly of a bygone era which turned boys into men. As we look back at the first half of our Scouting year and forward to future adventures, it's clear that Scouting embodies the essence of what education should be: a journey of discovery, growth, and joy.



# Founder's Day activities

by CSL Anita Muscat

## Saturday 24.2.2024 – District activity

This year's District activity consisted of a hike from Marsalforn to Xaghra. A campfire for both Groups followed the hike and brought the activity to an end.

## Sunday 25.2.2024

On Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> February, the Gozitan Scouts commemorated Founder's Day 2024 with a mass at the Maria Bambina Basilica in Xaghra. Unfortunately the parade had to be cancelled because of inclement weather. Council members and parents from both Groups also attended the ceremony.

At the end of the mass, the Scouts renewed their Scout Promise.

## Founder's Day lunch

This was held at headquarters on Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> March.



The Victoria and Xaghra Scout Groups at the end of the mass on Founder's Day



Let the campfire begin .....



Group photo during the District hike



Campfire's burning at the end of the hike.

## We will do our best to help others...

A fundraising activity in aid of Fr. Raymond Portelli's mission in Iquitos, Peru, was organised by the workers of the Water Services Corporation in Gozo at headquarters. At the end of the meal, the money collected and some other donations were presented to Fr. Raymond.



Group photo of the volunteers from the Water Services Corporation together with Fr Raymond Portelli, GSL Jesmond Scerri and GSL Emiritus Lorrie Saliba

# Projects for 2024

- As part of CanvasCamp, a project funded through a Ministry for Gozo and Planning NGO 2023 Assistance Scheme, the Victoria Scout Group Rover Crew and Venture Unit organised a number of activities including a camp related to camping skills at Dwejra over a weekend.
- Another aspect of this project targets the repair and purchase of canvas and other camping equipment. During Easter Camp, the Group made use of tents which were repaired thanks to a grant under the same scheme.

This scheme is designed to provide support and facilitate the realisation of small projects, activities and other initiatives on the island of Gozo by Gozitan voluntary organisations.

The Group would like to thank the Ministry for Gozo and Planning for its support.



Scouts, Ventures and Rovers check the tents for damages.



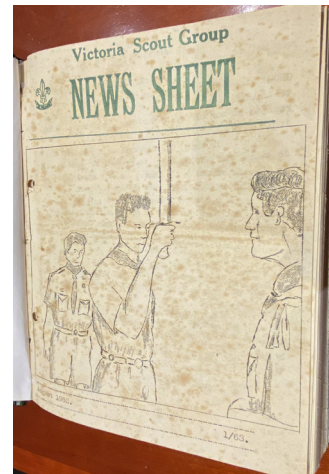
Tents which were repaired under the scheme were used during the Group's Easter Camp.

# Happy 60<sup>th</sup> Birthday Victoria Scout Group Newsheet

The year 2023 did not just commemorate 60 years of the Victoria Scout Group and GSL Emeritus Lorrie Saliba as a Scout. The Group's Newsheet also celebrated this milestone.

From edition number one in 1963 to edition number 223 in January 2024, year after year, it has narrated the life and times of the Group.

Thank you to all those who contributed to making this happen. To more editions in the future...



The first issue of the Newsheet in 1963 and the most recent one numbered 223 issued in January 2024

# Via Crucis 2024

On Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> March, the Victoria Scout Group organised The Way of the Cross at Ta' Ghammar Hill, near the National Shrine of the Blessed Virgin of Ta' Pinu.

Members and parents walked up the hill and stopped to pray and reflect at each station.

Mass was later celebrated by Fr Crystof Buttigieg.



## Projects for 2024

- Through the BeActive Scheme by Aġenzija Żgħażaġh, the Group will be getting funds which will support an overseas expedition by the Rovers as part of their training programme.

- Through the A4U scheme also by Aġenzija Żgħażaġh, the Venture and Rover room will receive a much-needed facelift.

BeActive is a scheme where youth organizations apply for funding by developing a community project related to a number of priority topics while Assistance For You (A4U) aims to support youth organizations by providing funding for initiatives that either improve their facilities or increase their resources.

The Group would like to thank Aġenzija Żgħażaġh for their support.



## The President of Malta Dr George Vella visits the Victoria Scout Group

by CSL Anita Muscat

On Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> January, the President of Malta, Dr George Vella paid an official visit to the Victoria Scout Group headquarters. This was part of the concluding celebrations for the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Group.

A guard of honour by the Cubs, Scouts, Ventures, Rovers, leaders and Council members in front of headquarters welcomed him on his arrival. Dr Vella first met the Council members in the board room and then was taken around the various rooms at headquarters.

The entire Group then met in the Ġorga Grech Hall. Group Council Chairman Michael Grech and the Group Scout Leader Jesmond Scerri delivered their welcoming speeches.

In his reply, the President thanked the Group for the invitation and congratulated it on its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary. He described how impressed he was with the headquarters and the number of Scouts present. He commented that the competencies, skills and values imparted through Scouting will help in one's character formation. Being

loyal to the Scout Law and Promise, to the country and to one's Scout Group and the leaders all contribute to Scouts becoming responsible local and global citizens. Though sometimes it is difficult to stick to one's principles, the President urged the Scouts to do their best. He thanked the Council members and leaders for their commitment and said he hoped this inspired present members to become future leaders.

Group Council Treasurer, Gino Mizzi presented a cheque from the Group towards the Malta Trust Foundation. Group Chairman Michael Grech presented the President with a copy of the book narrating the history of the first 50 years of the Group.

A reception followed during which the President could mingle with those present, answer their questions and in turn ask them questions.

The Group would like to thank Dr George Vella for this visit and for his message.



H.E. the President of Malta Dr George Vella meets the Council members and the Mayor of Victoria Josef Schembri.



H.E. the President of Malta Dr George Vella addresses the audience at headquarters.



This note and recognition were sent by the Office of the President following his visit.



Cub Scout Alexey Scicluna and Scout Giorgio Anici Camilleri get their chance to discuss some points with H.E. the President of Malta Dr George Vella.