



**St. John's College, Jaffna**  
**Media Report (07.04.2016) – SCOUT CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS**

In 1916, the Rev. Jacob Thompson, Principal of St. John's College first introduced the Scout Movement to Jaffna. St. John's organized a Scout Centenary Celebration Camp to commemorate this from 4th to 7th April 2016.

Preparations had begun almost a year ago. Almost all the staff and students were trained for this task.

On the **first day** of the Grand Celebrations (4<sup>th</sup> April 2016). at 8:30 in the morning, the Chief Guest, Norwegian Scout Leader, Dr.Kirsten Osterguard and Guests of Honour, Mr.Knut Ovea, Mrs.Marit Knut Ovea and Dr.Jens Kristian arrived.

Following this, the Chief Guest and the invitees were shown the Campsites and the Exhibition.



The Guard of Honour of the Middle School and the Band gave them a warm welcome. Students of grade 4A performed the Grand Howl.



The guests entered the Cub Pack Corner.



Games and other activities followed till 2:00 p.m.



2.30p.m. to 4.00p.m. was allocated for the Parents of Middle School. They played various games and got involved in many activities with the students.



On 5<sup>th</sup>, April 2016 (**Day 2**) the Chief Guest of the Day Mr.N.Theivendrarajah, Director of Education, Zonal Education Office, Jaffna and the Guest of Honour, Mr.Supiah Shanmuhakumar, Divisional Director of Education arrived at 8:30 a.m. The Guards of Honour (Junior Secondary) who greeted them at the entrance escorted them to the place where the Grand Howl was set to be performed by the students of Grade 4B.



As in the previous day, the Chief Guest and the invitees spent a lot of time viewing the Exhibition, Scout Stalls and Campsites.



After the games and activities was the Arena Display.

Parents of students in the Junior Secondary School had a string of activities waiting for them on day two.



After dinner was the Friendship Night during which time the Norwegian Scouts, Moratuwa Rovers and Scouts of St. John's strengthened their friendship by singing songs together and engaging in other fun activities.

**Day three** was similar to the previous two days apart from the fact that the Chief Guest was Mr.S.Thevaranjan, District Commissioner. The Guests of Honour were Mr.S.Thavagobal, Assistant District Commissioner and Mrs. E.I.Thevamithiran, Additional District Commissioner – Cub Scout.





The Guards of Honor were from the Senior Secondary and the Grand Howl was performed by students of Grade 4C. Games and activities were held after the Chief Guest viewed the Exhibition, Scout Stalls and Campsites.



Parents / Singithi Cub Scout activities followed in the afternoon. Parents played Musical Chairs, Bursting the Balloon etc.



After dinner which lasted for one hour from 8 p.m. was the Camp Fire.

### **The Grand Finale on 7th April 2016**

The celebrations culminated into a grand finale on 7th April 2016. Present at the function were the Scouts from Norway, Scout Leaders and Delegates from the National Head Quarters, Jaffna District Commissioner, Assistant District Commissioner, Moratuwa District Scouts, Officials from the Education Department, old boys, tutorial and non-tutorial staff of the college and students.

The proceedings of the day began at 3.00 p.m. with the arrival of the Chief Guest from the Sri Lanka Scout Head Quarters, Mr. Shiraz Salih, Deputy Chief Commissioner Sri Lanka Scout Association. After the Chief Guest ceremonially opened the Exhibition, he was taken on a tour of the campsite.





The Honorable Justice C.V.Vickneswaran, Chief Minister, Northern Province was invited to grace the function as Special Guest. Due to his busy schedule he agreed to spare half an hour at St. John's College from 4:30 p.m.

At exactly 4:30 p.m., the Honorable Justice C.V.Vickneswaran was escorted to unveil the Scout Centenary Logo.







After the Logo was unveiled, the Chief Minister and Mr. Shiraz Salih, Deputy Chief Commissioner were received by the Singithi Scouts and Scout leaders. After the Guard of Honor and Grand Yell, they were taken to their seats.



Next, the Sri Lankan flag was hoisted by Mr. Shiraz Salih, Deputy Chief Commissioner, Sri Lanka Scout Association. The Norwegian flag was hoisted, of course, by a Norwegian guest. The Principal of St. John's College, the Rev. N.J. Gnanaponrajah proudly hoisted the Centenary flag after which the Norwegian and Sri Lankan National Anthems were sung.

Following this, two minutes' silence was observed to remember the Late President of the Sri Lanka Scout Association and Former Chief Commissioner, Mr. Chandrasena Batuwangala who passed away just last month.

The Welcome Address by Land Scout C.J. Johanan followed.



He said that Scouting had progressed remarkably to reach this important milestone at St. John's College. He also had the following to say:

- 144 Scouts were trained as Patrol Leaders in three batches.
- 108 teachers have completed Phase I Training in Scouting
- 43 teachers have completed Phase II.
- 42 teachers have completed Phase III
- 39 teachers will be participating in Phase IV Training to be held from 16<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2016 in Nuwara Eliya.
- Two teachers, the Rev. V. Daniel Jeyaruban and Mr. S. S. Thomas were awarded Wood Badges at the National Jamboree held in Jaffna.
- Presently there are 190 Singithi Scouts, 330 Cub Scouts, 299 Scouts, 298 Sea Scouts and 297 Air Scouts at school – a total of 1414.
- Proud to be the only College in the island with Singithi Scouts, Cub Scouts, Scouts, Sea Scouts and Air Scouts.
- Classes from grade 1 to A/L took part in various games and activities related to Scouting.
- Even the parents of students from grade 1 to 9 took part in 'Fun Time.' Practically, the whole school with the exception of none was involved in the celebrations.

'Today is the peak day of our grand finale. Hope you enjoy this evening and carry pleasant memories with you,' he said before winding up his speech.

Next was a Kummi Dance by the Cub Scouts. The students performed with unity. In the midst of the performance, there was an unexpected power outage. The background music stopped. The members of the dance team hesitated for a split second. The audience waited to see what would happen next. Soon the members regained their composure and were in total control of the situation.





The Chief Minister later, in his speech, commended the young Cubs for going ahead with the programme instead of stopping halfway through and looking at each other for a cue to discontinue. He said, 'I am proud of their presence of mind of continuing rather than just looking here and there.' He said that Johnian Scouts had been true to the Scout Motto, 'Be Prepared.'

Next, the Chief Minister of the Northern Province, Honorable Justice C.V Vickneswaran gave his message of blessing. He said:

- It was a great pleasure to be at this function.
- Founded in 1823, St. John's is one of the oldest educational institutions in Sri Lanka. His school was founded in 1835.
- Though founded by Anglican missionaries, the College serves not only the Christians but also children from other faiths.
- There was a time when several students from Down South joined St. John's.
- St. John's produced citizens of good caliber and people worthy of emulation.
- Johnians were recognized wherever they went, not only in Sri Lanka but also abroad.
- Scouting prepares children to be brave and self confident at a young age. It also

enables a child to face the challenges and difficulties of life and keeps him or her physically fit.

- I wanted to be a scout and help the society. When I grew up, I took up law, entered politics. Thankfully I am now able to help the society without being a Scout - I must thank politics for it.
- The foundation to this function was laid by St. John's College a hundred years ago. The sapling has now grown with branches in every nook and corner of the Northern Province. Had your college not started this movement then, it would not have reached the status of participating in the South Asian International Scout Jamboree.
- The society will forever be grateful to St. John's for its yeoman service.
- I am very grateful to the Principal and the community of St. John's for me to the centenary celebration. May Scouting at St. John's, like St. John's College grow from strength to strength and continue to be of service to mankind.



Following the speech, the Chief Minister was honoured by the Principal. After being felicitated with a medal, he stepped down from the lectern and headed towards his cab followed by the host. On the dot at 5 o'clock, he was in the cab going towards the exit. *That* was the punctuality of the Chief Minister *and* St. John's College!





Next was the Group Song by Moratuwa Rover Scouts. After some English and a lot of Tamil, it was nice to hear some Sinhala words being uttered from the platform.



After the song was the message of greetings from Mr.P.Senthilnathanan Additional Government Agent, Jaffna District. He said that scouting was essential for one's physical, mental, emotional and social development. He said that scouting helped students reach their fullest potential. He congratulated the parents of scouts and scouts before stepping down.



The distribution of awards was done in three sessions. Approximately 350 students participated in scout activities from each section (Primary School, Middle School, Junior Secondary, Senior Secondary and Advanced Level – totally about

1800 students). The first thirty from each section were to receive gold medals, the second thirty, silver medals and the third thirty bronze medals. Thus, 150 gold medals, 150 silver and 150 bronze medals waited for the achievers to claim them as their own.

Next was the distribution of Gold Medals. Apart from the students of St. John's, ten medals were given to the Norwegian Scouts and five to the scouts from Moratuwa.



The audience then got a chance to listen to the magical sounds of a flute when Norwegian Scout and flautist, Ingwild, was called on stage to give a solo performance.



As she whistled, whispered, sighed and hummed into the flute, an airy, rich, clear, poetic, ethereal sound wafted out from the instrument. The sound was sometimes soft, mellow and graceful and sometimes penetrating and shrill. In short it was a wonderful performance.

Next was the greetings from the Norway Scout Leader, Dr. Kristen Ostorgard. She said:

- She has been to Sri Lanka twelve times but only twice to Jaffna.

- She was thankful for the days together at St. John's. These four days we have been were fantastic. It has given us a new inspiration. Despite being here for four days, I still get lost in the school premises when I try to walk about alone.
- The food was very nice. The nature was nice. The people are friendly. There are a lot of sight-seeing to do. It has been very nice to be in Jaffna for all of us.
- Their Scouting Movement was just 32 years old – compared to St. John's, they were just small children.
- The invitation to the Centenary was extended in 2013. She has been looking forward to coming to St. John's since then.
- The celebrations were fixed for April because this was the month we take time off to come here.
- They had links with Sri Lanka since 2002 and with St. John's since 2010 when Mr.V.DanielJeyaruban (now Asst. Chaplain of the College) came to stay in Norway for a short stint.
- Five Scouts and one Leader will visit BrOnnOysund this August.
- We have learnt a lot from Sri Lankan Scouts. We have also learnt a lot about St. John's and its history.
- All Sri Lankan people want peace. I hope it lasts forever.

Dr. Kristen Ostorgard's colleague joined in. He said:

- The long tradition of friendship between the schools and Sri Lanka and Norway should continue.
- BrOnnOysund and Jaffna should cooperate.

After Dr. Kristen gave the Principal a memento, Mr.N.Sounthararajan Commissioner of Head Quarters Sri Lanka Scouts gave his message of greetings:

- Father Jacob Thompson started Scouting 100 years ago.
- Hundred years later, Father Jameson Gnanaponrajah leads the march with thousands of members following him.

- He was thankful to the present principal whose untiring effort made it possible for about 1360 members to enlist in the Scout Movement.
- He was proud that all wings of the Scout Movement were at St. John's.
- For the first time in Sri Lanka, 41 teachers of the same school are going to participate in Phase IV Training. This is going to be the biggest training camp for teachers of one school!
- Next year, after many of the teachers complete Phase IV, the scouting strength at St. John's will increase.
- Scouting was not an idle activity. It distracts students from unnecessary temptations.
- Only one hour a week was allocated for scouting. This has led to a grand centenary! This one day a week has paved the way for this function! All the credit goes to the Principal, Rev. Daniel Jeyaruban, Mr.S.S.Thomas, Mr.V.S.B.Thuseetharan and all the Scout teachers.



Next, the Principal of the College gave the first copy of the Centenary Souvenir to the Chief Guest of the function. Following this, the Editor, the Rev. V. Daniel Jeyaruban distributed copies to the special guests and invitees.





Following the issue of the souvenir was the distribution of about 150 Silver Medals.



Mr. Sarath Godakandaarachchi National Training Commissioner took the podium after the award distribution. He spoke in Sinhala and was translated by a teacher of Sinhala at St. John's College.



He said:

- Today is a happy day for all. I am happy more than anyone because hundred years ago, a man called Mendis who hails from a village next to mine came to start scouting here.
- So there is a strong relationship between me, Mr. Mendis and St. John's College.
- Forty three teachers from the same school have completed Phase II. This is a big achievement indeed!
- We applaud and respect the Principal for strengthening this Movement. We don't know where we will be in another 20 years time. But one thing I can say with certainty is that you will all be in high positions in the society.
- We trust this school and the Scouting Movement guided by the Principal, the Rev. Daniel Jeyaruban and Mr. Thomas to serve the community.

Mr.Sarath ended his speech thus: 'Let me remind you once again – money cannot buy the skills that scouting and volunteer work alone can inculcate. Long live this Scout Movement.'

Following Mr.Sarath's speech, 150 Bronze Medals were awarded.



The group Song by Norwegian Scouts, described by the presenter as a 'magnificent performance' preceded the Greetings from Mr.S.Thevaranjan, District Commissioner who in his speech said:

- He joined Scouts forty years ago. He felt a sense of pride when he walked in through the gates of St. John's College because Mr.J.N. Ponniah, late Scout Master, guided him a lot during his formative years and contributed immensely towards Scouting in Jaffna District.
- 120 scouts were trained on this same grounds 100 years ago due to the efforts of Rev. Jacob Thompson.
- I believe Rev. Thompson is in the flesh of Rev. Gnanaponrajah.
- The Principal has given a reason for Jaffna to be proud of.

Mr.S.Thevaranjan recalled a certain conversation with the Principal of St. John's. 'I just casually said



that we should get hundred President Awards when we celebrate the Scouting Centenary. The Principal, the Rev. N.J.Gnanaponrajah replied, '100? Why can't all those hundred be from St. John's College?' And ever since, he has worked hard towards the Centenary.'

'I assure this College of my cooperation at all times. I wish the Scouting Movement at the College continues to grow in strength,' he concluded.

Next was the 'Honoring of the Guests by the Principal.' The Principal walked to wherever the guests were seated and medalled them. (The Guest List can be found on the last page.)



A teacher and past student of St. John's had worked hard on producing a song to mark the Centenary Celebration.



The release of the Centenary song to the Principal by Lyricist Mr. P.Samuel and Composer, Anton Lurgino took place next.

The Chief Guest was then called on stage to present the Award to the Best Troop. The Best Troop Award went to the Air Scout. After the presentation was the Chief Guest's Address by Mr. Shiraz Salih Deputy Chief Commissioner.



He had the following to say:

- He brought greetings and best wishes from Prof. Nimal de Silva, Chief Commissioner to the Rev. N.J.Gnanaponrajah, Rev. Daniel Jeyaruban 'the Pivot of the Centenary Celebration and the Right Hand of the Principal,' Mr.S.S.Thomas, Wood Badge Holder, Scout Leaders and Head Quarters Commissioners.
- Thanked the College for inviting him in the capacity of a Chief Guest.
- Today is the culmination of four days of celebrations which have been organized with a lot of enthusiasm. First few days would have been tough but today I am sure, everyone will go back with nostalgic feelings.
- I can quite imagine the hardships Mr.Mendis must have faced in travelling all the way from the South to Jaffna in 1916 to organize scouting here. My colleague, Sarath and Jeyasinghe will vouch that travelling this distance is not an easy thing to do.
- As I look back, I see the hard work of all the Principals of St. John's and Jaffna. Scouting has grown from strength to strength and I am grateful to all those who sustained Scouting in the Jaffna Province even through periods of war. The National Head Quarters is indebted to you all.
- About 1500 persons from this school alone have become members of Scouts. The Sri Lanka Scout Association should place on record the hard work the Scout Association of Jaffna and St. John's has put in.'



- Sri Lanka was backward in Scouting but not any longer.
- Forty One teachers are going to complete Phase IV. Mr. Soundarajan is going to break the Sri Lankan record with the Rev. N.J.Gnanaponrajah!

The Chief Guest, Mr. Shiraz Salih called the Centenary Celebrations a 'Roaring Success!' Offering his best wishes, he stepped down from the lectern and gave two copies of 'History of Scouting in Sri Lanka' to the Principal, the Rev. N.J.Gnanaponrajah and to the Rev. Daniel Jeyaruban and Mr. S.S. Thomas together. He presented additional copies of the book to the Norwegian Scout Leader and the students of Moratuwa.



Next, the 'Architects of the Centenary Celebration' President Scout S. Sharmilan, President Scout E. Abeesan and President Scout J. Ragul were given medals in appreciation of their hard work.



Next was a very exciting dance performance by the Scouts. It was a Creative Dance, titled 'Tamil Virucham' which told the story of the Tamil Language and the Tamil people. The dance ended

with a positive note – a ray of hope. One day, Tamil will start flourishing and blooming again...



It was a marvelous and colourful performance which added glamour to the function.

Following the Vote of Thanks by Air Scout K. Sudaron was the College Song and the 'Three Hearty Cheers.'



The Centenary Celebrations ended well.



In the words of the Chief Guest, it was a Roaring Success. Hip-hip-hooray!! Hip-hip-hooray!! Hip-hip-hooray!!



## **The Guest List**

### **Guests**

01. Justice C.V. Vickneswaran is Chief Minister Northern Province
02. Mr. Shiraz Salih -Deputy Chief Commissioner Sri Lanka Scout Association
03. Mr. P. Senthilnathanan - Additional Government Agent Jaffna District
04. Mr. N. Soundarajan Commissioner Head Quarters Sri Lank
05. Mr. SarathGodakandaarachchi- National Training Commissioner
06. Mr. S. Thevaranjan - District Commissioner
07. Mr. M. E .S. Jayasinghe- Former National Training Commissioner
08. Mr. Jerome De Silva - Head Quarters Commissioner Media
- 09 Mr. Jinadasa - Head Quarters Commissioner,Colombo
10. Mr. Ajithkumar, Head Quarters Commissioner

### **Norwegian Scout Leaders**

01. Dr. Kirsten Ostergard, Main Leader,BrOnnOysund
02. Mr. Knut Ove
03. Mrs. MaritKuutOve
04. Dr. Jens Kristian

### **Norwegian Scouts**

1. Karlanus
2. Jenny
3. Thea
4. Oda Marie
5. Ingwild
6. Sverre
7. Oddbjorn
8. Vivianne
9. Anne Claassen
10. Lisa

### **Moratuwa Scouts**

- 01.Lahiru Fernando - Scout Leader
- 02.RashenFernando
03. Savindu Fernando
- 04.ImeshNimantha
- 05 Dirk Ferreira

### **Architects of the Exhibition**

- Scout S. Sharmilan  
Scout E. Abeesan  
Scout J. Ragul  
Scout S. Kanujan  
Scout P.Samuel  
Mr. Mohanapriyan. P  
Mr. Vakeesan. A