

ROYAL SCOUTS -1-

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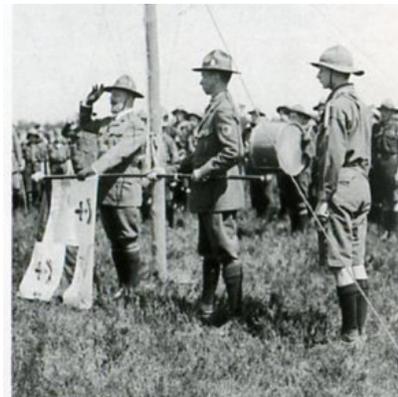
THE NETHERLANDS.

In August 1910 six Oxford Scouts (British) and their "Scoutmaster" toured the Netherlands. They were the first Scouts ever seen in the country. Shortly thereafter some Dutch troops were founded and on January 7th, 1911 8 Amsterdam troops united in the NPO = Nederlandsche Padvindere Organisatie (Netherlands Pathfinder Organisation). The NPO used Baden-Powell's rules which were translated. Soon thereafter troops founded in other parts of the country joined the NPO. But on March 10th, 1912 another number of troops united and during a meeting at Den Haag (The Hague) founded the NPB = Nederlandsche Padvindere Bond (Netherlands Pathfinders League) which developed a Dutch variant of Scouting.

In 1901, Queen Wilhelmina (1880-[1890-1948]-1962) married Heinrich (1876-1934) Duke of Mecklenburg (Germany) who thereafter was known as Hendrik, Prince of The Netherlands. He got interested in Scouting, and recognised its value for the Dutch youth. But he wondered why there had to be two national organisations in the country, whereas it was Baden-Powell's ideal to have only one National Scouting Organisation per country to which everyone could belong. Prince Hendrik embraced B-P's idea of national unity and in March 1915 he installed a Princely Commission under the guidance of a neutral President. This commission's task was to examine how one could reach up to unity. In June the Prince invited the top leadership of both organisations for a meeting in the royal palace in The Hague. His insistence was successful and on December 11th, 1915 a general leaders meeting was called in Utrecht. NPO and NPB merged and the Vereeniging de Nederlandsche Padvindere (Association the Netherlands Pathfinders better known as the NPV) was founded that day. To last until 1973. The Prince agreed to become the new movement's patron.



The Prince designed the NPV's national standard existing of 4 quarters two of which with the national flag and two with new the Arrowhead chosen, its outlines in orange on a white field. On April 24th, 1916, 1500 Scouts met on the heath near the village of De Bilt. The Prince presented every district with the new standard. On May 20th, 1918 he made the Scout Promise. (Photo left.)



Thereafter the Prince kept a finger on the pulse and he found the retired vice-admiral J.J.Rambonnet willing to become the NPV's national chairman as per October 31st, 1920. The two of them, as a team, were a great stimulant to Dutch Scouting, which owes them a lot.

Meanwhile SCOUTING FOR BOYS was translated as were the British Rules which were introduced as per January 1st, 1928 also meaning that Rambonnet's title was from then onwards Chief Scout instead of Chairman, and the Prince's Royal Commissioner.



Prince with walking stick and the Chief Scout Rambonnet, 1932.

Though he continued his activities as the Royal Commissioner the Prince retreated to the background but still visited all camps and events such as the First National Camp in August 1932, which Baden-Powell also attended. This was an experimental camp in preparation of the 5th World Jamboree of 1937 which the World Movement requested Dutch Scouting to organise. In 1934 the Royal Commissioner passed away. He had been of very great importance to the development of Dutch Scouting. Queen Wilhelmina accepted to become Scouting's Patron.

In 1936, the couple's daughter Crown Princess Juliana accepted the patronage of the Nederlandsche Padvindster Gilde (Netherlands Girl Guides Guild).

The 1937 World Jamboree was a great success. Well before it and during it a lot of attention was being paid to the event in the press and on the radio. There was not a Dutchman that was not aware of the camp

and everybody knew the popular Jamboree Song: " In nineteen three seven. The camp was one of Dutch Scouting's climaxes and attracted hundreds of new members and thousands of visitors.



Crown Prince Gustaf Adolf
of Sweden

Together with Baden-Powell Queen Wilhelmina opened the Jamboree. To her headdress she had attached her late husband's golden Royal Commissioner's hat badge. In 1937 her daughter Crown Princess Juliana (1909-2004) married Bernhard, the German Prince of Lippe-Biesterfeld (1911-2004). The couple paid some official and unofficial visits to the Jamboree. They were always accompanied by Crown Prince Gustaf Adolf of Sweden, the popular Chief Scout of Sweden who acted as the Swedish Contingent leader.

Gustaf Adolf and Baden-Powell talked Prince Bernhard into assuming the task of Royal Commissioner. He remained in office until 1989.

Right from the beginning the new Royal Commissioner got involved in a problem. Shortly after the 1937 Jamboree, the Dutch Episcopate decided that Roman Catholics could no longer be allowed to be members of organisations that did not have a 100% RC leadership. Scout groups in the mainly RC southern and eastern parts of the country as well as the RC groups in the big cities felt very happy in the NPV since 1915 and so raised a protest. The NPV also approached the Bishops but even the Royal Commissioner, who wanted one national movement, could not change their attitude. The RC Scouts had to leave the NSO and to found a separate RC Movement, the KV = Katholieke Verkenners (Catholic Scouts). As the World Movement recognised one NSO per country only, they were no longer part of the World Movement and they could not even call themselves Scouts anymore. In order to avoid this the NPV leadership and the Royal Commissioner communicated with Baden-Powell and the International (now World) Bureau and though no one liked the idea of losing the united NSO "open-to-all", reluctance was overcome and a Nationale Padvindere Raad (National Scout Council) was founded with Prince Bernhard as the chairman, which was recognised by the World Movement.



Prince Bernhard

Meanwhile, just after the Jamboree, Chief Scout Rambonnet resigned for health reasons. He was the first and the last Chief Scout (Hoofdverkenner) of the Netherlands and was never succeeded as such as the NPV and the KV were, from this regretful split onwards, each led by a Hoofdcommissaris = Chief Commissioner.

In September 1939 the Second World War began. On May 10th, 1940 Nazi Germany attacked the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg. The Royal Family and the Government were obliged to leave the country and settle in London. After the occupation a German SS administration was installed. The Nazis intention was – after their final victory – to annex the Netherlands and its SS administration had the task to make the country and the people ready for this. As far as Scouting and Guiding were concerned the Nazis tried to convince the movements to disband and let their members join the Dutch equivalent of the Hitler Youth, the small Nationale Jeugdstorm (NJS). When the movements declined this invitation in April 1941 Scouting and Guiding were banned and persecuted. All properties were confiscated and handed over to the NJS. Scouts and Guides were told to wrap up their uniforms, badges, books etc. and hand in the parcel at the local police station. Very few did so.

The Scouts that managed to also escape to Britain or – coming from somewhere else could not return to the homeland – formed the TVNP = Temporary Association of Netherlands Pathfinders. Prince Bernhard sponsored and led the refugee Scouts. Though he was very busy with military matters he, like many others, that knew that Scouting had been forbidden, had the general idea that, when and if the Netherlands would be liberated by Allied Forces, the Scouts would be without uniforms. So armbands were being manufactured with the words: Padvinder/Scout and also the special "Scarf with the (Netherlands) Lion". The intention being that during the Liberation these would be distributed to the Scouts. But during the Liberation period (September 16th, 1944-May 5th 1945) it was



The Scarf with the Lion

proven that hardly anybody had handed in the uniforms and so the armbands and the scarves were not really necessary. ("The Scarf with the Lion" was later presented by Prince Bernhard as a decoration to those Scouts who had been active in the Resistance.)

During the difficult years of the Nazi occupation the mutual enemy had created national unity. But after the Liberation there were those that wanted to restore the pre-war conditions and discord pushing back the nation into the religious separation. Regretfully they succeeded in doing so.

During the Nazi occupation Scouting had gone "underground" and during the oppression the general idea was that after the Liberation there was need for one united NSO only. Prince Bernhard stimulated the idea and as early as September 29th, 1945 top leaders of the NPV, the KV and some pre-war small "break-away" groups met in the Western Church in Amsterdam. The very same day agreement was reached and signed and all would join the NPV. However, the RC episcopacy that, during the German occupation had lost part of its grip on its followers, wanted to restore its pre-war power over its followers and had other plans. So it put a spoke into Scouting's wheel by ordering the RC leaders to withdraw from the new NSO even telling them that it had decided that a National Catholic Youth Movement was to be founded which all Catholic Youth would have to join including the Scouts whose Scout Movement had to be disbanded. No more Scouting for RC youngsters!! There were flaming protests. It all ended with compromises. The Bishops, reluctantly, had to permit the Scouts to carry on Scouting but not in the NSO but as a section in the newly formed National RC Youth Movement. The very stringent Church discipline was only just being restored and so protests did not help. Once again Dutch Scouting had to ask the International Bureau's permission to reactivate the National Scout Council and a reluctant Prince Bernhard was in the chair again. The Council was installed on May 3rd, 1947 by the Prince who remained Royal Commissioner of both Movements.

However, many in both movements still desired unity and throughout the years following they were in pursuit of this ambition.



The Royal Princesses in Guiding. (Left to right Princess Beatrix, (born 1938, Queen since 1980), Irene (born 1939), Margriet (born 1942 in Canada) and Christina (born 1947))

During the Liberation period Queen Wilhelmina and Prince Bernhard had returned to the partly liberated country, in May 1945 to be reunited with Princess Juliana and the three Princesses, who had been staying in Canada. The Princely family settled in the Soestdijk Palace in the forests near the village of Baarn. When the Princesses Beatrix and Irene were old enough they joined a local Brownie Company. But unlike in Belgium (see Royal Scouts 3) no special unit was founded for them. The Princesses Margriet and Christina were to follow them. When the Brownie time was over Beatrix and Irene joined a Water Company. Margriet and Christina stayed on in the local company as Guides.



Their mother had succeeded Queen Wilhelmina in 1948 as Queen Juliana. Thanks to her father, with whom she was very close, she had always shown a great interest in both Scouting and Guiding. In 1936 she accepted Guiding's Patronage. On May 30th, 1950 she made the Guide Promise on the World Guide Flag. Her Guide name was MOVAVEDO, (MOeder VAn VEle DOughters = Mother of Many Daughters.) This was no a reference to her own daughters but to all Girl Guides of the Netherlands.

As before she visited many Guide meetings and camps, always in uniform.

On January 6th, 1973 the two Scout Associations (NPV & KV) and the two Guide Movements (NPG & NG) merged and at long last SCOUTING NEDERLAND came to being, one NSO, in fact one SAGNO (Scouts and Guides National Organisation.) With Prince Bernhard's full support and encouragement.

On April 8th, 1989 Prince Bernhard resigned as Royal Commissioner during a National Garden party in the Palace Gardens. He, and Juliana – since her abdication in 1980 a Princess again - were members of the International Baden-Powell Fellowship led by Carl XVI Gustaf, King and Chief Scout of Sweden.

In 1966 Princess Beatrix (who succeeded her mother in 1980 as Queen Beatrix) got married to Prince Claus von Amsberg (1926-2002).

The Prince succeeded his father-in-law as Patron of SCOUTING NEDERLAND. Regretfully he passed away in October 2002. But in 2006 Princess Maxima, Crown Prince Willem Alexander's wife, took over as Scouting Nederland's patron. Apart from her, no other members of the now very large Royal Family seem to be involved in the Movement.



**Prince Claus
1926-2002**



**Princess Maxima
1971 -**