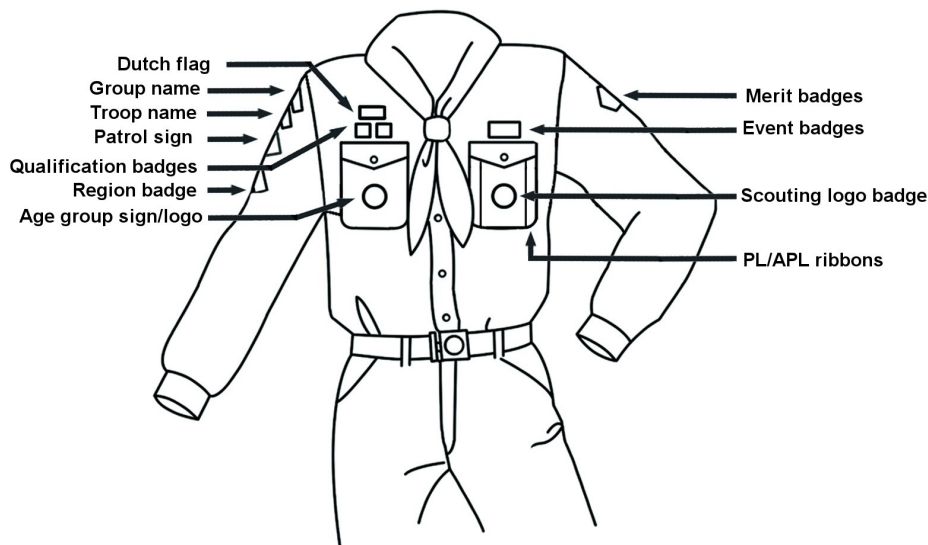


munication specialist and more). Each advanced merit badge can only be acquired when the same basic merit badge is achieved, the specialist badges can only be acquired when the requisite advanced badge is held.

Summer camps are mostly organized independently per scouting group and typically lasts one week. Scouting Van Maasdijk also organizes smaller camps-outs at the various smaller vacations and on special occasions such as the JOTA/JOTI.

The national *Scouting Nederland* organization also organizes national special interest camps during the year (called *HIT*, for scouts wanting to hike, pioneer, sail and other things) and training sessions (Scouting Academy) for supervisors, troop (team) leaders, support crew and the like, where they can qualify for their qualification badges.



In the Netherlands we only have one uniform (called "Scoutfit"), which we wear all the time. Only when very hot we change into t-shirts, but we always wear the neckerchief (which identifies our troop more easily in a crowd). Since we only have one uniform, it contains all of our badges and signs (as seen in het picture above, but some locations are used in a more voluntary way by some scouts). The pants are not part of the official uniform, neither is a cap (but we do have a special Scouting cap per age group).



The Netherlands - country info for the



If you are reading this, you probably met a scout leader and scout from Scouting Van Maasdijk from Heerenveen, the Netherlands, during their holiday in the US in the summer of 2014. Since we rather talked with the scouts we met and didn't want their time spent taking notes, we prepared this leaflet with some things you might want to know about the Netherlands.

The boring facts and figures

The Netherlands (official name "**Koninkrijk der Nederlanden**" or "Kingdom of the Netherlands", a.k.a. Holland) is a country in Western Europe, bordering the North Sea, between Belgium and Germany and located at mouths of three major European rivers (Rhine, Maas/Meuse, and Schelde) . It has **about 17 million inhabitants**, mostly of Dutch origin (80%), but also some from the rest of Europe (5%), Indonesia (2.4%) and other countries. It is **slightly less than twice the size of New Jersey**, with mostly coastal lowland and reclaimed land (*polders*), with some hills in the SE . It has a marine climate, with cool summers and mild winters. The Netherlands is a **constitutional monarchy**, made up of **12 provinces and 3 dependent area's** (in the Caribbean).



What some people think about the Netherlands (but isn't true)

Holland is not the capital of Denmark or Sweden. :) And we do not live in **windmills** or wear **wooden shoes** (clogs) all day, although some farmers still wear them because they are very practical while doing farm work. And we eat and produce



more than **cheese and flowers** alone.

More important: we are not blunt, crude or unmanly, **we just speak our minds freely and direct** most of the time. :)



Scouts are divided into different age groups:



Bevers (Beaver scouts/Joey scouts)

Age ±5 to ±7, mostly playing (educational) games
Red blouse



Welpen (Cub scouts)

Age ±7 to ±11, learning basic scouting skills , not independent
Green blouse



Scouts (younger Boy scouts)

Age ±11 to ±15, learning most scouting skills, partly independent
Khaki blouse



Explorers (older Boy scouts)

Age ±15 to ±18, learning all scouting skills, independent/self-run
Red "brique" blouse



Rover scouts (Venturing scouts)

Age ±18 to ±21, using all scouting skills and supporting the group
Red "brique" blouse

Scouting groups are not affiliated with community groups (churches, rotary clubs) in most cases. They are funded independently and only a few get some sponsoring from the local county.

All the age groups (Rover scouts excluded) have a **merit badge system**

of some sort, adapted for their age group. It is much less comprehensive than the BSA system. For the Scouts it consists of three phases:

basic, advanced and specialist, where the basic and advanced phase

consists of the same 10 merit badges (outdoor, expression, identity, international, community, fun & games, health, wood-work & fire making, camping & pioneering and navigation) with 5 challenges each (of which the scout chooses 3) but the challenges differ in difficulty and the color is darker for the ad-

vanced badges. The specialization phase builds upon the skills learned in the previous phases but the 30 merit badges are role/skill based (e.g. bush crafter, navigator, first aid, cook, pioneering specialist, com-



ondary education (*HAVO*) lasts five years and qualifies students to enter higher professional education (*HBO*). Some students also choose to enter in the 5th grade of pre-university secondary education *VWO* or start *MBO* education. The *MBO* is comparable with community college and is depending on the field of study two to four years, still, it is considered as secondary education. Pre-university education

Age				
23				University - Master
22				
21				
20	MBO - middle	HBO - higher		University - Bachelor
19	vocational	("university of")		
18	education ("community college")	professional education		
17				
16	VMBO - prevocational	HAVO - senior general secondary education		VWO - pre-university education
15	secondary education			
14				
13				
12				
11				
10				
9				
8				
7				
6				
5				

Basisschool - primary education

(*VWO*) lasts six years and prepares students for academic studies at university level (*WO*), but some students also decide to enter *HBO*.

The academic calendar runs for 40 weeks; from the middle or end of August until the beginning or half of July (depending on where the school is located). The summer break is six weeks. There is a one week break in October, a two week break around Christmas, and two single week breaks in spring.

In The Netherlands the high school is not the center of a teenagers life. Usually students are finished with school between 2.30 pm and 4.00 pm to go to a sports club, music lessons, cultural association or they simply go home. Extracurricular activities are mainly funded by the city council and not by the school.

Scouting in the Netherlands

Scouting in the Netherlands started in **1910**, but the current Scouting *Nederland* organization was founded in 1937 as a merger between all the boys and girls scouting groups in the Netherlands. While we still have some single sex groups, most of the groups are mixed. The official logo shows this, as it is a blend between the French lily of the boys and the clover leaf of the girls, surrounded by a tied rope as a sign of being connected.



In the Netherlands we have about **125.000 scouts in about 1250 groups**, divided in landscouts (the majority), waterscouts and airscouts.

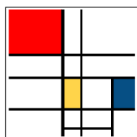
Interesting facts about the Netherlands

- The Netherlands has the **highest population density** (493 inhabitants per square km - water excluded) of any European country with over 1 million inhabitants.
- The Netherlands (*Nederland*) means "Low Country" in Dutch. About half of its surface area is **less than 1 meter above sea level**. Its highest point is 321 meters (1,053 ft) above sea level (or 877 meters/2877 ft high at Mount Scenery on the Caribbean island of Saba).
- Dutch people are **the tallest in the world**, with an average height of 184 cm (6 feet 1 inch) for men and 170 cm (5 feet 6 inches) for women.
- A 2007 UNICEF report on child well-being in rich countries ranked the Netherlands as **the best country for children to live**.
- The village of **Giethoorn**, in the province of *Overijssel*, does not have any roads. All transport is done by water over one of the many canals. It is known as the "Venice of the Netherlands".
- **New York City started as Dutch colony called New Amsterdam**. Many places and names in New York remind of the Dutch origins of the city, such as Flushing in Queens (famous for Flushing Meadows), named after Flushing (*Vlissingen*) in the Dutch province of *Zeeland*.
- **Gin** was invented in the Netherlands under the name of *Jenever*. It was first sold as a medicine in the late 16th century.
- Orange-colored carrots appeared in the Netherlands in the 16th century. Before that carrots were white, yellow, black, purple or red. Orange carrots are said to have been bred in honor of **the House of Orange**, who led the Dutch Revolt against Spain and later became the **Dutch Royal family**. Orange is still the official color of the Netherlands and a sign of patriotism. The Dutch national football team wears a bright orange shirt.
- The Dutch were the first Europeans to **discover Australia and New Zealand** in the 17th century. Australia was then named "New Holland". New Zealand was named after the province of *Zeeland*. Tasmania was named after Dutch explorer Abel Tasman (1603-1659).
- The island country of **Mauritius** was named in 1598 in honor of Prince Maurice of



Nassau, the Stadtholder of the Netherlands at the time.

- Although the Portuguese were the first Europeans to "discover" **tea** in East Asia, it was the Dutch who introduced the beverage commercially to Europe in 1610. Tea didn't reach England until the 1650's.
- **Soft drugs** (e.g. cannabis, "magic mushrooms") are legal in the Netherlands. Only licensed "coffee shops" are allowed to sell such drugs, although people are allowed to grow cannabis at home for their personal use. In contrast to the legalization of soft drugs, the Dutch are less addicted to drugs (about half as much) as the Americans. However, using soft (and hard) drugs is discouraged by the government.
- **Prostitution** is legal in the Netherlands. However, prostitutes must be at least 18, and clients must be at least 16.
- The Dutch government has **legalized same-sex marriages** since 2001 and euthanasia since 2002.
- The Netherlands has spawned many **world-class painters**, such as Rembrandt, Jan Vermeer, Jan Steen, Vincent van Gogh or Piet Mondriaan.
- The **microscope**, the **telescope**, **pendulum clock** and the **mercury thermometer** are all 16th or 17th century Dutch inventions.
- The Dutch company 'Philips' invented the **audio tape** (in 1967), the **video tape** (in 1972), the **Compact Disk** (in 1982) and the **CD-ROM** (in 1985).
- **Tulips** were imported from the Ottoman Empire and became very popular in Holland in the early 17th century. Nowadays, the Netherlands is the **world's first producer and exporter of tulips**.
- **Keukenhof Park** is the **largest flower garden in the world**.
- **Famous Dutch companies** include Philips, Akzo Nobel, Royal Dutch Shell (half-British), Unilever (half-British), Heineken, IKEA (formerly Swedish) as well as the banks ING, ABN-AMRO and Fortis (Belgian-Dutch).
- The **KLM** (Royal Dutch Airlines) is the **longest running national airline** in the world. It was founded in 1919.
- The Netherlands are **famous for their dikes and waterways**. A Dutch company was asked to help design the storm surge barrier and dams that now prevent



New Orleans from being flooded again due to hurricanes like Katrina. New York also received Dutch support to protect from future hurricanes like Sandy..

- **Rotterdam**, in South Holland, is the **largest seaport in Europe**. It used to be the largest port in the world by cargo tonnage, until being overtaken by Singapore in the 1990's, then Shanghai in 2003.
- The Global Connectedness Index 2012, computed on data from 2005 to 2011, ranked the Netherlands as **the world's most internationally connected country**. The ranking is based on economic depth (size of the country's international flow compared to its domestic economy) and geographic breadth (number of countries it connects with).
- **Traditional Dutch cuisine** consists of working class meals. Many traditional dishes are mashed dishes, for instance potatoes mashed with kale (*boerenkool*), sauerkraut (*zuurkool*), or endive (*andijvie*). These dishes are served with greasy, smoked sausage (*rookworst*) and gravy. Another traditional dish is split pea soup (*erwtensoup*). As the Netherlands always had strong ties with (former) colonies Indonesia and Suriname, dishes from those countries have mixed with Dutch cuisine. Common Asian dishes in the Netherlands include noodles (*bami*) and rice (*nasi*) dishes.
- We **own more bicycles than cars** (actually there's about twice the amount of them!). We use the bicycle for a quarter of all our traveling around (relatively more for shorter distances though), because it's a reliable way of transportation. On average each Dutchman travels 900 kilometers (562 miles) per year by bike. We have about 35.000 kilometers (about 22.000 miles) of bicycle paths in the Netherlands.



The Dutch educational system

There are three tracks of education each aimed at a different academic level. After primary school, students can pursue prevocational secondary education (*VMBO*) which is usually an introduction to middle vocational education (*MBO*). *VMBO* takes four years to complete and students must choose one of four sectors: engineering and technology, economics, agriculture, and care and welfare. Senior general sec-