

# The Scout '*Thanks Badge*' through time

The purpose of the Thanks Badge is the means of expressing the appreciation of the Movement to those who are not Members, but who have been of service to Scouting.

Many of our original Scouting insignia and badges can be traced back to the era of early 20<sup>th</sup> century Britain and their norms of the day and this includes the evolution Scout Thanks Badge.

## The Fleur-de-lys

The symbol was chosen by Robert Baden-Powell as it had been the arm-badge of those soldiers qualified as 'Scouts' (reconnaissance specialists) when BP served in the British Army. The classical description of this shape in Scouting literature connects the compass rose with the purpose of Scouting's principles - namely that Scouting gives one's life direction.

## The Fylfot

Better known as the *swastika* it became stigmatized because of its iconic usage by Nazi Germany. The use of the swastika as a background (already being used by Rudyard Kipling the author of 'The Jungle Book') was chosen by Baden-Powell based purely on the sign's Indian meaning of '**good luck**' or '**well being**', which in turn was meant to bring 'good luck' to the person receiving the badge or medal.

## The progression of the Thanks Badge

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <p><b>1908 – 1914</b></p> <p>The original 1908 Boy Scout Thanks Badge.</p>   |  The original 1908 Boy Scout Thanks Badge is a dark metal badge. It features a central fleur-de-lys symbol superimposed on a swastika. The swastika is oriented with its arms pointing left, right, and down, and its top arm pointing up. The fleur-de-lys is centered over the swastika, with its stem pointing down. A small ring is attached to the top of the fleur-de-lys.                                  |
| <p><b>1914 – 1935</b></p> <p>In 1914 the Thanks Badge changed to depict the revised version of the fleur-de-lys.</p>   |  The revised 1914-1935 Thanks Badge is a gold-colored badge. It features a central fleur-de-lys symbol superimposed on a swastika. The swastika is oriented with its arms pointing left, right, and down, and its top arm pointing up. The fleur-de-lys is centered over the swastika, with its stem pointing down. A small ring is attached to the top of the fleur-de-lys.                                     |
| <p><b>1933 – 1939</b></p> <p>When the Coloured Division of the Boy Scout Association was formed in 1933 they chose to be known as Pathfinders.</p> <p>To meet their requirements, a new Thanks Badge, a Pathfinder Badge on a swastika, was introduced in South Africa, to be used specifically by the Pathfinder Section of Scouting.</p> |  The Pathfinder Thanks Badge is a dark metal badge. It features a central Pathfinder symbol (a triangle with a 'P' and an arrow) superimposed on a swastika. The swastika is oriented with its arms pointing left, right, and down, and its top arm pointing up. The Pathfinder symbol is centered over the swastika, with its base pointing down. A small ring is attached to the top of the Pathfinder symbol. |

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <p><b>1935 – 1955</b></p> <p>In November 1935 a new design for the Scout Thanks Badge (and medal) were approved by Britain. The new badge was of a rectangular design with a fleur-de-lys centre.</p> <p>This was to replace the old swastika designs, due to several incidents being reported of people wearing the old badge being assaulted when abroad in Europe, due to the use of the swastika by the German Nazi Party.</p>  |   |
| <p><b>1955 – to date</b></p> <p>By the mid 1950's another change was made, giving the Thanks Badge a round shape, which has remained as such to date.</p>   |   |
| <p><b>The 'Thanks' Medal of Merit (1910 – 1935)</b></p> <p>This was awarded for special service or kindness to Scouting.</p> <p>The original medal depicted earlier designs of both the swastika the Scout fleur-de-lys.</p> <p>In 1914 it was changed to depict a newer design of both the swastika and of the Scout fleur-de-lys. (as seen on the right).</p> <p>In 1935 the medal was again redesigned removing the swastika and depicted only the fleur-de-lys. The medal was re-designated to become the 'Medal of Merit' and is still in use today.</p> |  |

**Western Cape Heritage Team  
2009**

[Back to Awards](#)