

## **SAINT OLGA**

Born at the end of the 9<sup>th</sup> Century as a simple peasant , St Olga became the first Russian ruler to accept Christianity.

Once, the young Prince Igor, (son of Rurik- Russia's first Great Prince), was hunting and arrived at a river bank. The 'young man' who got him across in a boat was young Olga. He fell in love with her and they married.

When Prince Igor was killed in battle, Olga became ruler as her son, Sviatoslav, was still a young boy. At that time Olga was still a pagan and she cruelly avenged Prince Igor's death. She continued to reign as a wise and respected ruler, and was much loved by her people.

In 867 the first princes of Kiev, Askold and Dir, accepted Christianity. In 955 Olga went to Constantinople and was converted. She was baptised with the new name of Helene. She became pious , and helped other Christians but her son, Sviatoslav, who was now an adult was a pagan and hostile to the new faith.

She died in 969, and her Feast Day is 11 July. She became the first Russian Saint.

## **SAINT GEORGE – THE DRAGON SLAYER**

The patron saint of scouts is St George.

Originally from Cappadocia, in Asia Minor, St George was a soldier in the Roman army. He was a brave and accomplished fighter who was loved by Emperor Diocletian but the emperor did not know that St George was a Christian. One day when St George refused to bring a sacrifice to the pagan gods, he was horribly tortured as punishment but he still refused to denounce his faith and so earned the respect of the Emperor and his wife. He was nevertheless beheaded in 305.

St George is depicted on a white horse, spearing a dragon. Legend has it that this event happened in a place called Variti, (today known as Beirut, Lebanon), where a dragon lived in a lake and regularly was fed human sacrifices. One day St George was riding past the lake and saw a young maiden who told him that she was to be sacrificed to this dragon. St George slaughtered the dragon and returned the princess and slayed the dragon to the king. As a result of his brave deed, all the people of the town converted to Christianity.

In the Middle Ages knights used to swear allegiance to God and country and adopted St George as their patron saint. He also became the patron saint of the army and soldiers. On the Moscow coat of arms we can also see St George as the protector of Moscow.

In 1769 Empress Ekaterina II created the medal, 'The Order of St George' and this was awarded as the highest medal for bravery. It is similar to the English medal – the Victoria Cross.

On the 6<sup>th</sup> May scouts celebrate the Feast of St George and the traditional colours are green and white.

## **THE RUSSIAN IMPERIAL COAT- OF - ARMS – THE TWO HEADED EAGLE**

The first Russian Coat -of –Arms was used by a Kiev prince – a white horse. In 1380 , after the Battle of Kulikov, the coat of arms depicted St George – this was on the Moscow coat of arms.

In 1472 Grand Prince Ivan III, married Sofia, the niece of the last Emperor Constantine, and adopted the Constantine two headed black eagle, on whose breast he placed the original Moscow coat of arms of St George. This Constantine eagle was adopted as a sign that after the fall of the Byzantine Empire , Russia inherited the leadership of orthodoxy.

During the reign of Ivan the Terrible, when Russia acquired Kazan, Astrakhan and Siberia, other symbols were added to the coat of arms.

In 1698, Peter the Great, included the Order of St Andrew into the Imperial Coat of Arms.

During the reign of Alexander II, the black eagle's wings were raised upwards, above his head there is a crown, on his chest remains the shield of Moscow, and on the wings there are eight shields from different regions of Russia. In his claws the eagle the symbol of power – a sceptre and bailus. Around the shield of Moscow is the chain of the order of St Andrew.

## **THE SCOUT BADGE**

The scout badge is a lily with St George, the patron saint of scouts.

Beneath the lily is a ribbon with the words, ' Be Prepared', and in the centre , under the ribbon is a knot, reminding scouts to do good deeds.

The symbol of the lily has appeared in ancient Egypt, China and on many Russian ornaments and artefacts.

During the Middle Ages, the lily began to appear on knights' coat of arms, shields and kingdoms – referred to often as the 'Fleur de Lis'. The lily was depicted in many formats and designs.

The first compass point, in 1302, was in the form of a lily, and the North point on maps has always used a lily form.

Just like on a compass, the lily helps people to find the right direction, so in the scouting pathway, the lily reminds us to seek the right direction in our life.

The three points of the lily on the badge remind a scout of the three points of the scout promise.

Apart from indicating the right direction, the lily for knights was also a symbol of purity and honour.

St George on the lily signifies that a scout's life is under the protection of St George.

The ribbon at the bottom curves upwards, like a smile, and so a scout should smile through life, accepting any difficulties bravely and optimistically.

After completing Stage III of scout knowledge, the lily is awarded. A scout wears this badge with pride, and remembers that this lily arrow points to a life of serving God, country and mankind.

## **THE ORIGINS OF RUSSIAN SCOUTING**

Colonel Oleg Ivanovich Pantuhoff, a brave soldier who was awarded the medal of St George, began Russian scouting , with the first patrol, 'Beaver', in Pavlovsk, near St Petersburg, on April 30 1909.

Tsar Nicholas II recognised the educational merits of scouting and gave his personal support for the organisation to begin in Russia , and enrolled Tsarevitch Alexei at Tsarskoe Selo. The Tsar was most impressed with the scout motto 'Be Prepared'. E.P. Tsytovitch, the tsarevitch Alexei's teacher, became a troop leader at Tsarskoye Selo, and instructed the young tsarevitch in scouting.

The scout movement spread quickly in Russia from 1914-1920 with numbers ranging from 50 000-100 000 scouts and guides, who participated on the front and guides helped in hospitals and other duties, contributing to the war effort.

After political changes in Russia, many scouts fled to other countries, and they formed scout movements under the leadership of O.I. Pantuhoff, and the formed National Organisation of Russian Scouting.