

GOLD

A PUBLICATION BY AND FOR THE GOLD CROSS BEARERS

Vereniging Gouden-Kruisdragers Vierdaagse

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Preface

Dear Golden Cross Bearers,

By the time you read this, the 4Daagse will already be just around the corner. We have learned from Stichting DE 4DAAGSE that they will further improve the starting areas on the Wedren to prevent cutting in line and congestion. Additionally, the 30 and the 40 Military routes will be slightly shorter on the first day, and the 50 will include a bit more nature on the fourth day. And while the media are concerned about the number of first-time participants in the 4Daagse, we still see thousands of walkers taking part for the first time, and the number of participants in the 50 continues to grow steadily. The 4Daagse remains in motion!

Fortunately, our association is moving along as well. This spring, we sadly lost notable members and volunteers in Ab Schreurs and Ruurd van Slageren. In addition, Jaimy stepped down from our board, and

we found a worthy replacement in Erik. With the help of Ton and Francien from the Appointments Committee, we finalized our new Statutes and Internal Regulations. Moreover, with contributions from the Advisory Group, we wrote a multi-year plan as a guideline for our association, outlining our ambitions for the coming years and a considerable number of good ideas to further grow our organization. From our previous multi-year plan, we completed one of the last remaining actions: becoming a member of IVV Netherlands, enabling us to offer our (international) members several permanent walking routes with an IVV stamp. The “powered by GKD” walk in Leerdam attracted many Golden Cross Bearers to the walking routes through the glass city and the Betuwe, despite the mediocre weather that day.

Our members and board have certainly not been idle in recent months. In this edition of GOUD! and at the meeting points during the 4Daagse, you will hopefully not notice that these tasks have been taken over by another board member—thus maintaining the quality. Do come by our meeting points and feel free to bring your walking companion along for a drink or a short break: our rest areas are not only for our members but also a way to get acquainted with future members. See you in Nijmegen: I wish you all a beautiful, sunny, and successful 4Daagse.

Frans Leijtens
Chairman



* NEWS * SHORT NEWS * NEWS *

On March 4, the board met again with the board of Foundation DE 4DAAGSE to discuss recent developments, new ideas, and possible areas for improvement after last year's 4Daagse. We had gathered questions and suggestions from a number of members, and certainly from our own sounding board group.

The discussion included the new starting zones at the Wedren and the Vierdaagseplein. Queue-jumping by "side entrants" and participants of shorter distances slows down the flow. This has been noticed not only by us but also by DE 4DAAGSE. The foundation is trying to improve this this year. There will likely be two parallel starting zones used alternately. The staggered start will remain in place: deploying more start scanners is possible, but it would lead to congestion further along the route. Therefore, the organization will stick to a limited number of scanning devices at the start.

We also talked about registration and the growing popularity of the 4Daagse. Naturally, we are thinking about ensuring sufficient opportunities for our members, whereas media attention now sometimes seems focused solely on first-time participants. We also discussed DE 4DAAGSE's offer to let us express our viewpoint on this in De Gelderlander. Our secretary Michael wrote a strong article on this, in which he calls for continued appreciation of loyal walkers.

This year there were no complaints about loud music or the availability of toilets: the organization has invested heavily in these areas in recent years. There was even a "high five" within the board of Foundation DE 4DAAGSE when we mentioned that we would not be making any remarks about this for once.

There are two route changes this year on the first and fourth days. The 30 km and the 40 km Military routes will be slightly shorter again due to a change just after Elst, and the 50 km route will include a bit more nature near Beers.

Foundation DE 4DAAGSE will also strictly monitor military participants. Some of them skip the Friday finish march from Charlemagne, even though those final 5 kilometers are part of the official route. This year there will therefore be strict checks on and around the Scheidingsweg, to prevent military participants from taking the shortest route to Heumensoord from Charlemagne.

Finally, we asked the Stichting for help in recruiting more members for our association. We also called for better access to the IML stand and the IVV stand for 50-kilometer walkers on the fourth day.

Much more was discussed, but fortunately it was also an enjoyable evening in which DE 4DAAGSE was able to ask our association how experienced Four Days Marches participants view new challenges surrounding The Walk of the World.



Enforcement and supervision at the Wedren

Fred Kruijer

A maximum of 47,000 participants in the 2026 4Days Marches. It is one thing to lead, guide, and accompany such a crowd of people through the surrounding areas around Nijmegen. But at the beginning and end of each walking day, everyone gathers again at the Wedren and in Julianapark. That enormous crowd requires supervision and enforcement. Goud takes a look behind the scenes of a smoothly running organization.

Jan Kraakman



"We enforce order and supervise all events on and around the start and finish area De Wedren," says Theo Beijer, head of the Enforcement and Supervision Service. This service is part of the executive committee of Stichting De 4DAAGSE. Beijer: "We do this with more than twenty-five people. These are mainly former police officers and military police, along with a few civilians. In this group, there are also some still active police officers, but they work as volunteers in this Service. If something really happens that requires immediate police assistance, we naturally have authorized officers on site right away."

Professional

A professional organization run by volunteer professionals. Beijer: "In April we come together to discuss new developments. We go over the new changes on and around the Wedren and adjust our work processes accordingly. Sometimes we meet again in June for some exercises and to go through any final changes. We also do CPR courses. On the Saturday before the 4Days Marches, we meet once more. Then we receive the final briefings in the meeting of the executive committee. We inspect the event site and check whether the infrastructure on site has changed significantly. This year we are going to reorganize the start-finish area in such a way that we can temporarily hold the early forty-kilometer walkers so that the starting fifty-kilometer walkers are not hindered by them. We will also ensure that so-called 'side entrants' at the start, people who essentially cut in line, can no longer get away with it. That means quite a lot for us, because in the evening we have to remove tables to place barriers, and after the start we have to set everything up again the other way around."



Security staff

In addition to its own Enforcement and Supervision Service, Stichting De 4Daagse is required to hire paid security staff. They fall under the Enforcement and Supervision Service but are managed by their own project leader. They are responsible solely for guarding and security, for example of association buildings and properties, but most of them are positioned on the outside of the event area. Every day there are forty of these professional security staff. But on Friday the event area is expanded with the public grandstand, starting on Sint Annastraat, Keizer Karelplein, and the Oranjesingel. As many as 150 professional security staff are then deployed.

On the Job

Jan Kraakman once started in the military police, worked for more than ten years in 'support' at Warmoesstraat police station, and eventually ended his career as a brigade adjutant at Schiphol. He walked the 4Days Marches several times and now serves as a volunteer in the Enforcement and Supervision Service. Kraakman: "I'm just an operational member. On the Saturday before the 4Days Marches, we of course start with the inspection and then a large meeting with all the volunteers of the 4Days Marches. After that we have a barbecue. Sunday our job starts with the opening of registration. That day we work from ten in the morning until seven in the evening."



On that Sunday there is also the flag parade, ending at the Wedren. Kraakman: "We make sure that participants reach the Wedren and that visitors stand behind the barriers and stay there. On Monday evening we already set up the start locations. We place the barriers ourselves. On Tuesday we start at three in the morning with a briefing, and after that we are at the start or at road crossings such as the Oranjesingel. Recognizable in our vests, we are literally a walking help desk, and people ask a lot of questions. After the start we dismantle the start locations and build the arrival routes with barriers."

At eleven in the morning, the morning shift ends. They are debriefed and the afternoon shift takes over after their own briefing. That work indeed mainly consists of enforcement and supervision. The inflow and outflow to and from the Wedren is fully regulated, and strict enforcement is applied here. After six in the evening, the afternoon shift sets up the start locations again, and this continues for the rest of the 4Days Marches.

Finish

On Friday, most supervisors work a double shift. From three in the morning until the end of the day, around 7:30 in the evening. Jan Kraakman: "We start immediately after the last walkers have set off by building additional barriers from the end of the public grandstand to the Wedren. We also supervise the VIP grandstand and the pedestrian bridges over the Oranjesingel. Once everyone is inside, we dismantle the barriers again. After that we have a closing buffet at Concertgebouw de Vereniging. In October we have a final evaluation."

Meeting points and volunteers

Fred Kruijer

A challenging task for the Association of Golden Cross Bearers is organizing Meeting points during the walking days of the 4Days Marches. Cozy rest spots to catch your breath and recharge for the final stretch to the finish. The Meeting points are run by volunteers. Is it difficult to be a volunteer? Is it hard work, is it fun? Goud! spoke with participants and organizers.

The main reason for the existence of the Association of Golden Cross Bearers (GCB) is to unite and regularly bring together walkers who have completed the Nijmegen 4Days Marches ten times or more. Many walkers want that too. After all, you can walk just fine without being a member. Those who become members of the GCB do so because they want to belong. Proud of their "golden" cross. They are also happy with the jubilee pin, and the GCB badge is often seen on the back of backpacks and waist packs. To give shape to that sense of togetherness, the GCB organizes



reunions every year, makes it possible for members to participate in "Powered by" walks for free, and publishes its own magazine in three languages. That's just a small selection. And all of this to meet each other more often.

Seen in that light, the four Meeting points of the 4Days Marches are more of a meeting place than a resting place. A GCB Meeting point cannot be compared to the large military rest areas. No blisters are treated and it is not commercial. A

Gezellige drukte maar plaats voor iedereen





Meeting point is accessible to Golden Cross Bearers, but also to their partners or fellow walkers. Membership is not checked. A GCB Meeting point is not large-scale, and walkers who step in receive a snack and a drink. But also the company of a volunteer who enjoys having a chat. There are always two portable toilets for members, placed out of sight so they are somewhat more “exclusive” than those at the large general rest areas.

Management

Isis Lacroix is the manager of the Meeting points. Something that suits her well given her background in customs. Isis: “the Meeting points fall under the responsibility of the GCB board, but I act as project leader.” Isis lives in Nijmegen, which makes all Meeting point locations easily accessible for her. That’s convenient during the 4Days Marches, but it also helps her maintain contact throughout the year with the hosts who make their driveways, land, or gardens available for the Meeting points. There is quite a bit more involved for Isis. “Each meeting point requires a permit from the municipality. I arrange that. The tents are rented from a private company, including tables, a refrigerator, and chairs. They set everything up for us and take it down to move it to the next Meeting point the following day. They also bring the food and drinks for us. And, importantly, they move our ‘Inflatable’....”

Growth

That food and drinks, especially cans and cookies, are purchased from a supermarket company and delivered on-site daily. That has to be paid for. Until recently, Jaimy Pieterse, as a GCB board member, was responsible for the Meeting points. She was also a volunteer. Jaimy: “the Meeting points are our most expensive event. And it has grown enormously this year. What we did not expect was the huge appeal of our new ‘Inflatable’, the large inflatable emblem of our club. Last year, on the first day alone, we went through as many as six hundred cans and 400 cookies. Per day. That was much more than we expected. We had to adjust our orders immediately, but we also didn’t want to have too much left over at the end of the fourth day. That didn’t go entirely well. On that day we were once again so unexpectedly overwhelmed that by the end of the fourth day we only had love and attention left to offer. This year we’re simply adding snacks and drinks again....”

Volunteers

Isis Lacroix: “We see how much the walkers appreciate being personally welcomed by a volunteer; they don’t have to stand in line with us. They get a seat, a snack, and a drink. But that means we need a solid number of good volunteers every day. The quality of the Meeting point depends on that. Not a mass operation, but a personal welcome and care for each walker. We already have volunteers who are exceptionally good at that.” But there is also natural turnover. Isis: “There is always turnover, but since the arrival of ‘The Inflatable’ we are also visited much more, and that is not going to change.”

The GCB is therefore looking for

new volunteers to significantly expand the existing group at the Meeting points. A catch-up effort that needs to happen quickly.

GCB board member Jaimy Pieter-son worked as a volunteer herself last year. "It's a really fun task. You welcome the walkers, take a bit of care of them, and chat with them. The walkers love that and are happy to see you. You receive appreciation on the spot for what you do. What's also nice is that you see both the first and the last walkers arrive." Isis Lacroix adds: "We are now looking for at least five additional volunteers for each day."

GCB chairman Frans Leijtens: "Volunteers are invaluable. Of course, we are happy with a volunteer who works 40 hours for our association, but 40 volunteers who each contribute an hour are just as valuable. They make the association 'our' Association and help distribute the workload as much as possible. Our challenges grow every year, and that is why we are making a strong appeal to new prospective

volunteers. This way we remain robust with a healthy, large support base that we can rely on in case of need or when we want to implement more good ideas.

How do I become a volunteer....

How do you become a volunteer at the GCB Meeting points? Anyone who finds it enjoyable is welcome. The work is not physically demanding. The setup and dismantling, the delivery of goods—it is all taken care of. No physical strength is required and it won't make you tired. A good mood and a willingness to chat, however, are important. Being able to empathize a little with what an exhausted walker is going through and needs.

As a volunteer, you don't necessarily have to be at the Meeting point at ten o'clock, when it is still quiet, but if you come later you should check in advance how to get there. The traffic controllers are strict. Volunteers also do not have to come every day. We discuss your wishes and possibilities when you contact us. You do not have to be a Golden Cross Bearer yourself. Or even a walker. And you don't have to speak Dutch either; German and English work just fine. Potential volunteers are also welcome to come and observe for an hour without any obligations. At the end of the week there is, of course, a small reward. But the real reward is the appreciation of the walkers themselves. Current volunteers will gladly confirm that.

Potential volunteers can contact:

Isis la Croix, 06-52810052

Fred Kruijer, 06-23354175



'Powered by GKD' 2026

Leerdam Welcomes Golden Cross Bearers

Reint Huizinga

A few times a year, the board of our association takes the initiative to organize a "Powered-by Golden Cross Bearers (GCB)" walking tour. "Organize" is actually a bit of an overstatement in this context, as the organization of the walk is left to a local walking sports association.

For Golden Cross Bearers who register in time, participation in such a walk is free. Our association ensures that the registration fees are paid to the organizing association. To give as many GCB members as possible the opportunity to participate, the locations are selected in such a way that they are well distributed across the Netherlands, allowing members in all parts of the country to occasionally walk a "home match." The most recent "Powered-by GKD" walking tours were held in Rotterdam, Breda, and Emmen.

The most recent "Powered-by GCB" walking tour was part of the Winter Series of Leerdam. On Saturday, March 14, no fewer than 271 walkers took part, including 24 Golden Cross Bearers. The walk was organized by the 90-year-old walking sports association "Prins Bernhard." Participants could choose distances of 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, and 30 kilometers.

Since I had not done much walking yet this season, I chose to follow the 15-kilometer route. This took participants from



Leerdam, via Asperen—just across the provincial border in Gelderland—and Heukelum, back to the Feel Fit Center in Leerdam. When the walkers set off, it was heavily overcast with occasional light drizzle. But as the day progressed, the sky cleared and the sun actually began to shine. The average day-time temperature was 8°C.

The walkers left the city via Zuid-Hollandlaan—named after the province that Leerdam was part of until 2019—crossed the Linge Bridge, and continued along the Oude Zuiderlingedijk, which after some time changed from a paved road into a grassy dike with a san-

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dy path. Due to the rain earlier that week, the dike had become quite muddy and slippery. Many had to adjust their pace to avoid sliding down the slope. The dike, which had meanwhile become the Appeldijk, ended at the Dutch Reformed church in Asperen, formerly the St. Catherine's Church. This 15th-century cross-shaped church has a monumental 45-meter-high tower in the style of Campine Gothic. The church was visible from afar and thus serves as a landmark in the landscape.

In Asperen, the route passed two former town halls. The more modern one was well hidden among the trees near the former castle of Asperen, where a playground now stands. The old town hall in the center of the town was hardly recognizable. A single street name sign pointed to where the building should have been, but I did not find it. Along the city wall and through a 1960s neighborhood on the west side of the town, the walkers left Asperen.

Via Heukelumseweg and Heidenseweg—at one point offering a view of

Merckenburg Castle on the right—they approached the town of Heukelum. Then there was a lovely walking path with many benches along a modern city wall. However, at the end of that path, the 15-kilometer walkers were directed left out of the town. Via Voorste Gewind and an endlessly long, straight Nieuweweg, they continued southward. At the end, there was a sharp right turn. On this equally straight Nieuwe Zuiderlingedijk, without a separate bike or footpath and without any road markings, cars were driving quite fast. I would like to make a few critical remarks about whether it was responsible to include this road in the walking route, especially since walkers had no way to step aside. On both sides of the dike, the slope dropped quite steeply.

The participants then walked along Kerkweg and Dwarsweg and eventually reached another, much longer Appeldijk. This was a very picturesque path, which after many bends and beautiful viewpoints led back to Heukelum. Via Molenkade with views of boats in the marina, the Lingewaal with a view of the river of the same name, and the Kruissteiger, the 15-kilometer walkers reached their first and only rest stop after 12.1 kilometers: Café "De Zwaan," where it was quite pleasant. This café is located a few hundred meters from the previously mentioned modern city wall and could also have been reached earlier on the outward route via Rooyenburg and Marinus Visserstraat, after 6.6 kilometers. That would have provided an extra rest stop. But of course, as a walker visiting Heukelum for the first time, you would have to know that.

The organizers of WSV "Prins Bernhard" had saved the most beautiful parts for last. Along a tree-lined dike, the route continued toward Merckenburg Castle, also known as

Kasteel Merckenburg





Molen 'Ter Leede'

Heukelum Castle. This time, the walkers passed the driveway with a beautiful view of the front façade of the building, which is still inhabited and therefore not open to the public. The final kilometers once again followed the Oude Zuiderlingedijk, but now on the west side of the N848. With views of farmland on the right and the Linge on the left, and with the sun now shining brightly, the final stretch was not difficult. The walkers crossed the Linge Bridge back to Leerdam, passed the "Ter Leede" windmill—standing in full sunlight at that moment—and took another glance at young parents enjoying life with their children at the petting zoo, before shortly afterward reaching the Feel Fit Center. This marked the end of a beautiful day of walking. The route was excellently

Routepijlen in Heukelum



Oude Zuiderlingedijk

marked—I did not get lost once. My compliments!

If you missed this walk, you will soon have another chance, as WSV "Prins Bernhard" is organizing a jubilee walk on June 27 to celebrate its 90th anniversary. On that occasion, the same distances can be walked as during the "Powered-by GCB" tour.

The next "Powered-by" walking tour is scheduled for August 15 and will take place in Ouwerkerk, starting from the Watersnoodmuseum.

A Spring Day on the Gouden Kruisdragers Path

Erik Heskes

At the General Members' Meeting in April, the Gouden Kruisdragers Path was once again on the agenda. The GCB board is currently making strong efforts to turn this march into an IVV march, so that even more participants from the Netherlands and abroad will join the annual walk. It is well worth the effort. Erik Heskes, the new GCB board member, agrees. He walked the route and wrote down what he saw and experienced.....

It is late March and a radiant spring day is unfolding. Ideal weather to walk the Gouden Kruisdragers Path—a route that has been on my wish list for quite some time. I park my car near the center of Nijmegen and walk via the Wedren to the starting point at Irish Pub The Shamrock. On this Saturday morning, it is already lively on the Wedren. The market is in full swing and the square is buzzing with activity. Yet it feels different from the Four Days Marches week, when thousands of walkers gather here and excitement fills the air. I begin my journey at The Shamrock. At Plein 1944, I pass an impressive mural of walking shoes with a gladiolus—the symbol of the Four Days Marches. The post-war buildings are a reminder of how severely Nijmegen was hit during the bombing of 1944. Old buildings are hardly to be found here anymore. Via the Broerstraat, I walk to the Grote Markt, where I pause briefly at a commemorative tile in honor

of the 75th Four Days Marches in 1991. It is pleasantly busy. Remarkably, this central spot is not part of the official Four Days Marches route. Here too, the war left its marks. One of the few buildings that was spared once housed café Raafs, a legendary place where countless walking tours began. In 1951, the association of Gouden Kruisdragers was also founded here — a special thought in this location.



Waal Bridge

I continue along the Sint Stevenskerk, where a temporary exhibition is taking place, and return to the Market via the Kerkboog. Then I descend toward the Waalkade. In the distance, the Waal Bridge is already waiting. The quay has only been part of the route since 2006, after the original route became too crowded. At museum De Bastei, I climb back up to the upper town via the Voerweg. It is quite a climb, but at the top, the greenery of the Valkhof and the Hunnerpark awaits. A little later, I find myself on the Waal Bridge. The view over the river and Nijmegen's skyline remains impressive, no matter how often you come here. On the other side, I descend to the Oosterhoutsedijk, a place full of memories for many walkers. In the past, stalls selling coffee and tea were already set up here early in the morning. Now it is quieter. Since the construction of the Spiegelwaal, the area looks more open, but also somewhat deserted. Along the dike, I pass old cafés where walkers used to gather their last bit of energy. A little further on stands a remarkable artwork: a life-sized Roman mask, based on a find from 1915.

Market Garden

Via a bridge, I cross the Spiegelwaal and continue toward the railway bridge. Urbanization is unmistakable here; where the horticultural village of Lent once stood, modern residential areas are now rising. At De Oversteek, I pause to reflect on the history of Operation Market Garden. The Sunset March,



held daily since 2014 in memory of the fallen Allied soldiers, makes a deep impression. A beautifully understated tribute, where at sunset 48 pairs of lights on the bridge are lit one by one. I would like to join that march myself one evening. Back on the southern bank, I walk via the Westerpark toward the south of the city. Along places like Kanaalstraat and Sint Annastraat—better known as the Via Gladiola—the atmosphere of the Four Days Marches comes alive again, even outside the season. At Charlemagne, the traditional finish location for military participants, I take a moment. This

is where their achievement ends, before they march into the city to loud applause. It remains a striking contrast: the silence now, and the euphoria that usually hangs here.

Back at The Shamrock

Via wooded paths, I reach Heumensoord. Now it is a quiet open space, but during the Four Days Marches, a complete tent camp for thousands of military personnel rises here. It is almost hard to imagine. The route continues through Brakkenstein, past the university and historical sites such as the Prins Hendrik barracks, where the Four Days Marches once began. Slowly, I approach the city center again. Via the Wedren and past De Vereniging—long the starting and finishing location—I walk toward Keizer Karelplein. For many walkers, this still feels like the real finish, even though the official one lies a bit further on. In the end, I finish where I started: at The Shamrock. With a well-earned Guinness in hand, I look back on a remarkable journey. A walk that not only takes you through the city, but also through the history and soul of the Four Days Marches. The Gouden Kruisdragers Path is more than a route. It is an experience that every Four Days Marches enthusiast should experience at least once.

In Memoriam

Nel de Boer-Hoogland
Marius Bakker
Ronald Denz
Dirk Noorlander
Ronny Cairo
M.A.R. van der Lans-Rompelaar
Ruurd van Slageren
Jan Boerhof
Ab Schreurs

Woerden
Woensdrecht
Groenekan
Hardinxveld-Giessendam
Eindhoven
Nijmegen
Gieten
Smilde
Haaksbergen

Interview

Katrien Delanote, ambassador

Finie Groenewoud interviewed Katrien Delanote, ambassador for the association of Golden Cross Bearers for Belgium and France. Who is Katrien Delanote? And what exactly does an ambassador of the GCB mean and do?

Personal portrait:

I am Katrien, 44 years old, and since my eleventh participation in the Nijmegen Four Days Marches I have been an ambassador for the Belgian Golden Cross Bearers.

I "discovered" the Four Days Marches during the reunion of my speech therapy internship at the Radboud hospital in Nijmegen. I saw the finish and that's where the seed was planted! I walked for the first time the following year, in 2002. Together with my mother we walked the 4x30 km, which was still perfectly allowed at the time as diploma walkers. In 2003 we went for the real Four Days Cross badge and I haven't stopped since! When I earned my tenth badge, I received



Katrien op haar allereerste 4Daagse

membership of the GCB as a gift from the Vink sisters. Leonie Vink was the chair of the GCB at the time and immediately asked if I would like to become ambassador for the Belgian Golden Cross Bearers. A few years later the French joined as well. In my free time I really enjoy walking, skiing and singing. Gardening also provides the necessary relaxation. Currently I still work in the evenings as a speech therapist, giving voice therapy to adults and children, but during the day I am an educational support staff member (administrative employee) for the medical program at Ghent University.

Ambassador for the GCB

When asked what an ambassador of the GCB does for the association, Katrien says: "As an ambassador I answer questions from Belgian and French participants all year round. For Flemish members this is usually not a problem, but for Walloon and French participants the language can sometimes be a barrier. On the Monday before the start of the Four Days Marches we meet with all ambassadors. This is our only moment to really meet each other in person. During the walking



days I also meet several other ambassadors every year, always nice to say hello."

"During the Four Days Marches I enjoy looking for Belgian and French participants among the walkers. The military are easy to recognize; although the Belgian delegation remains small, they are certainly clearly present. If our Belgian National Day (July 21) falls during the Four Days Marches, they make extra effort to hand out Belgian flags. The French military have also been present in large numbers in recent years, but only a few are gradually approaching their tenth participation. Civilians are usually less easy to recognize; Belgians tend to be modest and only occasionally carry a flag, but I recognize them by their accent! I approach them and give them a card with some information about the GCB association. Gradually I recognize many faces and this leads to nice encounters and conversations along the way. I also sometimes talk about the Nijmegen Four Days Marches during Belgian walking events. Although the Four Days Marches is also called 'The Walk of the World', it is not that well known in Belgium."

The 'special' aspect of the Four Days Marches



Katrien tussen Ivonne en haar partner

For Katrien, the encounters are what make the Four Days Marches special. Katrien: "With the walkers of course, but also with the spectators. During my third participation I was on my own. And that leads to the most beautiful encounters. That's how I met the sisters Ivonne and Ellen Vink, together with a friend Aletta. We started talking on the second day and before you know it you walk an entire Four Days Marches together. Ivonne invited me at the end of that edition to stay at their home in the future during the Four Days week. It has since become my second home."

Katrien also sees that the event continues to grow. "That





Irish Pub The Shamrock

creates impressive scenes as you walk through the villages and enter Nijmegen again every day. From brass bands to orchestras, to choirs, to loud speakers and also sometimes quiet dikes and long bridges. I'm definitely already looking forward to the next edition."

Fixed rituals

When asked whether Katrien—like many walkers—has fixed rituals before or during the Four Days Marches, she answers: "On the Saturday before the Four Days Marches I always go to the Shamrock, an Irish pub in Nijmegen. I also go every year to the flag parade and the GKD meeting. In addition, we have an annual BBQ."

Katrien is heavily infected with the Four Days virus. "There's no way a summer goes by without me being there. I am a proud ambassador, although my Belgian friends sometimes laugh at my title 'ambassador of the Association of Golden Cross Bearers Four Days Marches Nijmegen'. During the Four Days Marches everything seems possible; people surpass themselves, both in sports and on a human level. For a moment we live in a world where everyone, regardless of age, nationality, orientation, abilities, rank or status, shares the same goal and can achieve it together in unity."

Katrien can be reached by email. The address can be found on the GCB website.

Four Days Marches Mass

On Sunday, July 19, 2026, the Sunday preceding the 4Daagse, the familiar Four Days Marches Mass – edition 63 – will take place in St. Stevenskerk in Nijmegen. A highlight among the many festivities surrounding the 4Daagse.



The theme of the celebration is: "Growing Together." The theme connects well with the reading of that day, "A sower went out to sow," and with the intrinsic message of the 4Daagse: setting out is something you do together.

The Four Days Marches Mass starts at 10:00 a.m. The church is already open from 9:15 a.m. More information can be found on the website www.vierdaagsemis.nl.

Admission is free, but you can optionally order special tickets via the website.

From 9:45 a.m., all seats will be released for anyone still arriving. The celebrants are Emeritus Bishop Joris Vercammen, Reverend Ardin Mourik, and chaplain Manuel Kuhn (Switzerland). The celebration will be musically accompanied by the Nijmegen Men's Choir under the direction of Dion Ritten and singers from the City Church Nijmegen. The organist is Jetty Podt.

History of the Golden Cross Bearers

Peter Berends

The history of the Golden Cross Bearers (GCB) began in 1926, when for the first time a walker completed the 4 Days March for the tenth time. After that, the number of bearers grew slowly but steadily. The fact that the marching event, like many larger events, was banned by the occupying forces during the Second World War naturally caused stagnation. Our history in a nutshell.

In 1946 and '48, the first Golden Cross Bearers marches were organized. Other walkers were also allowed to participate, but those who had completed the Nijmegen march 10 or more times formed the vanguard. On July 24, 1951, the first day of the 4 Days March, a committee gathered in café Raafs in Nijmegen. The Association of Golden Cross Bearers 4 Days March (until 1980 still without a hyphen) was founded, with Jonkheer Feith as the first chairman. The objectives of the association were and



De Vlaggenparade





are: promoting the walking sport and the 4Days March, and strengthening the bonds between the Golden Cross Bearers. Almost a year later, on May 24, 1952, the first reunion was held in Ede, which has since become an annual tradition. The day began with a general members' meeting, in which statutes and regulations were discussed. This was followed by a walking tour for the attendees to Heukelom and Bennekom and back. The mausoleum on the Paasberg was also visited, where a wreath was laid in honor of the resistance fighters who had fallen during the war.

Flag

Only in 1956 – when it had 237 members – did the association receive its flag. Although there had already been calls

for this after its founding, many felt it more appropriate to design one for the lustrum, so in 1956, with the support of Nijmegen businessmen, it was ceremoniously presented to the board at the Oranjehuis. Mr. A. A. M. Göbel became the first official flag bearer. The gathering was concluded with the singing of the 4Days March song. The flag immediately proved useful, because on the evening of the same day the Flag Parade took place. This parade had meanwhile become so popular that major traffic problems were expected around the Goffert Stadium. There was a shortage of parking spaces, and no fewer than 90 police officers were deployed to manage the flow of traffic. A large tattoo was held that evening at Plein 1944, for which thousands of spectators were expected.

Guardians of tradition

It is remarkable that the Association of Golden Cross Bearers 4Days March has always enjoyed loyal board members and regular members. Throughout its history, it has had only five chairmen. We have also had record holders among our members, such as Annie Berkhout and Bert van der Lans. The association also has a close relationship with the KNBLO and the 4DAAGSE Foundation. Regularly with a critical attitude and in an advisory role, but also because Golden Cross Bearers often take seats on the boards of both organizations and the Executive Committee. In this way, the association provides the guardians of the history and traditions of the march of marches. In addition, the GCB undertakes many other



De vlag van de Vereniging

initiatives. In 1966, the late Major Breunese, former march leader, was honored by placing a bench in Nijmegen named after him. Golden Cross Bearers also played a role in the founding of the 4Days March Mass Foundation, which organizes a church service on the Sunday before the walking event in St. Stephen's Church. At our 50th anniversary, a special book about the association was published. When the 100th 4 Days March takes place in 2016, a CD with 4Days March songs is released together with singer Paul de Graaf.

Jubilee Path

Finally, in 2023, a true jubilee path is created, allowing walkers to learn more about the history and traditions of the 4 Days March.

The association now has more than 3,100 members from 21 countries. For this reason, the association magazine Goud! is also published in German and English.

Grandstand tickets finish parade

As a service to our loyal members, we annually issue grandstand tickets for the finish parade of the 4Daagse on Friday. You may request the grandstand ticket(s) from June 1 to July 1. You can do this by completing the form on the website.

Members who can demonstrate that they have completed the Vierdaagse more than 35 times are entitled to 1 grandstand ticket, and members who have completed the Vierdaagse more than 40 times are entitled to 2 grandstand tickets.

Your request will be assessed by us based on your details with Stichting DE 4DAAGSE and, if possible, granted with 1 or 2 tickets. You will not receive written confirmation of whether your request has been approved due to the large number of requests we have to process in a short time.

Due to the high postage costs, you are requested to collect the tickets on the Monday prior to the Vierdaagse between 13:00 and 13:50 at Hotel van der Valk in Lent-Nijmegen. It is also possible to collect the tickets on Sunday and Monday afternoon at the Wedren.

If you are unable to collect the grandstand tickets, they can be sent by post for a contribution of €1 in postage costs. In that case, please state the postal address to which the tickets should be sent.

Report General members meeting april 2026

Chairman Frans Leijtens begins by welcoming those present, including honorary member Francie de Leeuw, members of merit Marcel Claassen, Ed Hendriks and Vicky Hendriksen-Delaney, and board members Rino Hamelink, Michael Kors, Fred Kruijer, Dauphine Noordanus and Jaimy Pieterse.

Absent with notice are honorary member Leonie Vink, member of merit Gerard Aarts and board member Lisette Melisse.

Chairman Frans Leijtens addresses the following topics:

KWbN: the relationship has improved significantly. A point of attention is the membership administration (linking).

Stichting 4Daagse: developments are mentioned regarding registration for debutants, starting sections to prevent queue-jumping, two route changes, the monitoring of military personnel on the Scheidingsweg, more toilets and less noise nuisance from music, joint marketing and member recruitment. These points were discussed with the 4Daagse board during our annual joint dinner.

The newspaper article in De Gelderlander, in which secretary Michael Kors explains why loyal walkers are given priority over debutants.

At present, our association has 3,030 members; in 2025 there was a net increase of 36 members.

Our annual program:

the flag parade (July 19),

the AGM at Van Der Valk in Lent (July 20),

the meeting points during the 4Daagse (July 21 to 24),

the 'powered by GKD' WNM Krekentoct (August 15 in Ouwkerk) and

the reunion in combination with the 'powered by GKD' Waterval walking tour (September 26 in Loenen).

The board has met with several members to brainstorm about a new multi-year policy plan. This concerns, among other things, vision, member recruitment and retention, volunteers, sponsors, marketing/PR and activities. This will be further developed in the autumn. We can already reveal our motto: 'Proud of Gold'.

Members are requested to continue informing us when a member has passed away, and to include a copy of the obituary/death notice.

The requested anniversary badges have been designed and are currently being produced. They will be sold at the next AGM.

The board wishes to obtain IVV membership, with our GKD path as a permanent IVV route. Discussions for this have started.

The minutes of the AGM of July 14 are adopted and approved.

The secretary's annual report was already available on our website prior to this AGM. Secretary Michael Kors reads out a summary.

The full 2025 annual report (result, balance sheet) from the treasurer was also available on our website prior to this AGM. Treasurer Dauphine Noordanus further explains it, after which the Financial Committee, through a detailed report, indicates that no irregularities were found, expresses its appreciation for the execution, and recommends discharge. By unanimous applause, discharge is granted to the board.

Subsequently, the budget for 2027 is discussed. With a membership fee of €13.50 per member, a loss of €3,800 is projected. This is approved by the members present.

Board: Rino Hamelink, Frans Leijtens and Lisette Melisse are eligible for re-election. Without any opposing candidates, they are re-elected. Jaimy Pieterse is stepping down; two candidates have come forward, from which Erik Heskes is chosen. Erik introduces himself and is appointed for the remaining two years of Jaimy's term. Financial Committee: all committee

members may and can continue; the members present approve this. Appointments Committee: the board is given a mandate to search for a successor for Ruurd van Slageren.

The statutes and internal regulations have been newly drafted and were presented on our website prior to this AGM. A significant addition compared to the previous version is the inclusion of 'board liability', as well as a clear description of extraordinary membership (honorary members + members of merit).

In accordance with the (current and proposed) statutes, this amendment requires at least two-thirds of

the votes cast during this AGM. This requirement has been met as everyone agrees. During the AGM in July, this must be ratified again, now by majority, after which a notarial deed can be drawn up.

NB: regarding board liability, to further professionalize in this area, the intention is to apply for SBBI status.

It is proposed to send birthday cards digitally in the future, which would reduce costs to such an extent that the projected loss in 2027 would almost be eliminated. Members without an email address will continue to receive their birthday card by post.

This proposal is approved by the members present.

In the absence of questions, the chairman thanks those present for their attendance, closes the meeting, and invites everyone for a concluding snack and drink

Maattabel heren								
Maten in cm	XS	S	M	L	XL	2XL	3XL	4XL
Hoogte	160	165	170	175	180	185	185	190
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	180	185	190	195	200	205	205	210
Borst	91	95	99	103	107	111	115	119
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	95	99	103	107	111	115	119	123
Taille	75	79	83	87	91	95	99	103
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	92	96	100	104	108	112	116	120
Maattabel dames								
Maten in cm	XS	S	M	L	XL	2XL	3XL	4XL
Borst	76	80	84	88	92	98	104	110
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	80	84	88	92	97	103	109	115
Taille	60	64	68	72	78	84	90	96
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	72	76	80	84	90	96	102	108
Lengte	150	155	160	165	170	175	180	180
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	170	175	180	185	190	195	200	200

Speciaal jubileumshirt



Beschrijving

De shirts zijn zogenaamde technische shirts en ze zijn licht en ademend, met uitstekende vochtafvoerende eigenschappen. Ze zijn zacht en rekbaar met platte naden om schuren te voorkomen. Ze zijn verkrijgbaar in heren- en damesmaten.

Het shirt is goud van kleur met oranje mouwen en groene accenten. Het opgedrukte logo aan de voorkant is het embleem van onze vereniging, met daaronder de tekst 'Est. 1951'. Het logo is in de verenigingskleuren, de tekst is zwart. Op de mouwen, zowel links als rechts, staat het logo van onze vereniging met daaronder de tekst '75 jaar', alles in zwart. Op de achterkant van het shirt staat de nieuwe slogan van onze vereniging 'Trots op Goud' in groen en oranje.

Let op! Zowel voor dames als heren geldt: het shirt zit strak en is kort. Het is daarom beter om een maat groter te kiezen.

Kosten

De shirts kosten € 34,50 per stuk. Ze zijn verkrijgbaar in de maten XS t/m 4XL (dames) en XS t/m 5XL (heren). Aangezien de shirts redelijk strak zijn is het misschien verstandiger om een maat groter te bestellen. De maattabellen voor mannen en vrouwen staan onderaan dit bericht. Deelnemers aan de Vlaggenparade krijgen eenmalig € 5,- korting (wordt contant teruggegeven bij de Vlaggenparade).

Bestellen

Stuur vóór 10 juni a.s. een mail naar rino.hamelink@gouden-kruisdragers.nl. Vermeld je naam, woonplaats en telefoonnummer. Laat weten of je een heren- of damesmodel wilt en de maat. Maak vervolgens het verschuldigde bedrag over naar bankrekeningnummer NL76 REVO 0482 6648 19 van A. Hamelink onder vermelding van je naam en 'shirt GKD'. Je bestelling is pas definitief als de betaling binnen is. Ruilen is niet mogelijk, aangezien de shirts op bestelling gemaakt worden. Van bestellingen na 10 juni kan niet gegarandeerd worden dat deze voor de Vierdaagse gereed zijn, en worden tegen betaling van de verzendkosten, nagestuurd.

Ophalen

Als de bestelling definitief is, ontvang je een bevestiging. Met deze bevestiging kun je je shirt(s) ophalen op zondag 19 juli of maandag 20 juli op de Wedren. Of, indien gewenst, voorafgaand aan de ALV op maandagmiddag bij het Van der Valk Hotel in Lent. Degene die meeloopt met de Vlaggenparade krijgt het shirt op zondagmiddag.

Anniversary rewards

15 times 4 Days Marches

Barbara van den Bosch
Hans van Dijk
Gerda Jirka-Klinkenberg
Nell Kauffman
Teunina de Keijzer
Hans van den Mark
Stefan Meeldijk
Gerrie Mühren
Ton Vermeer
Aard van den Wijngaard
Wout Kelder
John van der Sluiszen
Wilma Schluter
Liesbeth Westplat

20 times 4 Days Marches

Divera Bijvoet
Hans Boeijen
Chris Bolster
Folkert Bosma
Simon Branderhorst

Ilonka Brundel Steenbeek
Laurens Goeken
Nijen Hermans
Erik Heskes
Rinus de Heus
Jos van der Meer
Yvonne Stoutjesdijk
Peter Michels

25 times 4 Days Marches

A. Bloemberg
Johanna Brands-van den Elzen
H. van Dijk
Theo de Frankrijker
M. Hanema-Kuipers
Corrie Hest van Alphen
Jaap Nales
Ans van Soelen
Sjaak Verkerk
David Eras
Thale Lesschen

30 times 4 Days Marches

Wim den Dekker
Peter Habraken
Janny Muller Compagner
Steven Rijpstra
Jo Stam

35 times 4 Days Marches

Piet van der Kroft

40 times 4 Days Marches

Michael Standaert

45 times 4 Days Marches

Jan Hendriks

50 maal de 4Daagse

Ronald van Rijn

Members' Meeting 20 July 2026

The board of the Vereniging Gouden-Kruisdragers Vierdaagse invites you to attend the members' meeting prior to the 4Daagse, on Monday afternoon 20 July 2026 in Lent.

Location: Van der Valk hotel Nijmegen-Lent

Start: 2:00 PM

The board proposes the following agenda:

1. Opening by the chair
2. Contribution by the march leader of THE 4DAAGSE and/or a delegation from the KWBN
3. Incoming documents and board announcements
4. Minutes of the general meeting of 11 April 2026
5. 'powered by GKD' walk in Ouwerkerk, 15 August 2026
6. Reunion and 'powered by GKD' walk in Loenen, 26 September 2026
7. Proposals from members
8. Any other business
9. Closing with the Vierdaagse song

Explanation of the agenda:

Item 7: if members have proposals or questions for the board, the board would like to hear these in advance of the meeting, so that we may be able to respond to a proposal or question immediately. The board requests everyone to submit questions that reasonably require some research, if possible in writing and no later than one week before the meeting, to the secretariat.

The new anniversary badges will be available for purchase before and after the meeting.

The board aims to conclude the meeting around 3:00 PM.

Powered by GKD Wandeltocht in Ouwerkerk – 15 Augustus 2026

De 2e 'Powered by'-tocht van het jaar wordt gehouden op 15 augustus 2026 in Ouwerkerk op Schouwen-Duiveland. Voor de 3e keer wordt door Stichting Nationaal Monument Watersnood 1953 de WNM Krekentocht 2.0 georganiseerd.



Er kan worden gekozen uit diverse afstanden: 5, 10, 15 en 25 km.

De routes zijn deels verhard en deels onverhard door de natuur op Schouwen-Duiveland. De wandeling gaat langs de Oosterschelde, door het krekengebied van Ouwerkerk, natuurgebieden en door de prachtige weidse polders van Duiveland.

Op de rustposten kan worden genoten van koffie, thee, frisdrank en verse Zeeuwse bolussen. Een paar kilometer voor de finish wacht voor de wandelaars een leuke, frisse ver-

rassing. Na het afmelden is in het startbureau een heerlijke lunch verkrijgbaar in de brasserie voor een speciale Krekentochten prijs.

Opgeven voor een 'Powered by'-tocht kan (tot een week voor de tocht) door een mail te sturen naar: rino.hamelink@goudenkruisdraggers.nl. Vermeld duidelijk je naam, adres, geboortedatum en de gekozen wandelafstand. Deelname aan de 'Powered by'-tochten wordt, na aanmelding via de mail, voor onze leden door de vereniging betaald. Een aantal jaar geleden is er ook een stempelkaart in het leven geroepen die bij deze tochten afgestempeld kan worden. Na het verzamelen van 5 stempels krijg je een bronzen pin van onze vereniging en na 10 stempels een zilveren pin. Deze stempelkaarten zijn te krijgen bij de organiserende vereniging van en tijdens de wandeltocht. De kaart wordt door de organiserende vereniging afgestempeld.



Aanmelden Vlaggenparade 2026

Ook in 2026 mag onze vereniging schitteren tijdens de Vlaggenparade op zondagmiddag 19 juli, de zondag vóór de start van de 4Daagse!

De parade volgt dezelfde route als voorgaande jaren: Start in het Westerpark, door het Waterkwartier en het centrum. En tot slot de finish op de Wedren voor de officiële opening door de marsleider.



We willen met een flinke groep van minimaal 40 leden meedoen om onze vlaggen en verenigingsbanieren te dragen. Laten we samen uitstralen wie we zijn! Draag daarom bij voorkeur ons verenigingsshirt – en goed nieuws: het nieuwe jubileumshirt komt eraan!

Zin om mee te lopen? Meld je nu alvast aan via rino.hamelink@goudenkruisdragers.nl

Praktisch/route

De vlaggenparade start om 15.45 uur vanaf de Kanaalstraat/Rivierenstraat in het Westerpark. Zorg dat je minimaal een half uur voor de start van de Vlaggenparade aanwezig bent. Vanaf het Westerpark loopt de route door

de Kanaalstraat naar de Waterstraat, Biezenstraat, Voorstadslaan, Lange Hezelstraat, Parkweg, Doddendaal, Plein '44, Augustijnenstraat, Grote Markt, Burchtstraat, Hertogstraat, Van Broeckhuysenstraat, Van Schevichavenstraat, oversteken Oranjesingel en Prins Bernhardstraat. De parade arriveert rond 17.00 uur op de Wedren. Daar worden alle vlaggen gehesen, met aansluitend de ceremoniële opening van de 4Daagse door de marsleider.



Sinds dit jaar hebben we naast onze vertrouwde Facebook-groep ook een Instagram account voor onze vereniging: @goudenkruisdragers. De komende tijd willen we, naast onze website www.goudenkruisdragers.nl, social media meer inzetten

Socials

Door Erik Heskes

om onze vereniging zichtbaarder te maken, verhalen te delen en nieuwe wandelaars enthousiast te maken voor onze vereniging. Houd daarom de komende tijd — en zeker rond de 4Daagse — onze socials goed in de gaten.

Nog geen volger van onze accounts? Meld je dan aan via ons Instagramaccount of sluit je aan bij onze Facebook-groep!

Reünie en 'Powered by GKD'-tocht in Loenen

Zaterdag 26 september 2026

De reünie wordt dit jaar wederom gehouden in combinatie met een 'Powered by GKD'-wandeltocht.

De wandeltocht en de reünie zullen plaatsvinden op zaterdag 26 september 2026 in Loenen.

Reünie

De dag begint met ontvangst met koffie en iets lekkers. Voor de lunch brengen we een bezoek aan een kasteel in de buurt, kasteel Ter Horst. Dit kasteel uit de 16e eeuw wordt nog steeds bewoond. Hier krijgen we een korte rondleiding. De lunch nuttigen we weer in Loenen. Hierna gaan we naar Museum Papierfabriek De Middelste Molen aan de Loenense Molenbeek. Dit is de enige nog werkende papierfabriek in Nederland die op authentieke wijze met waterkracht papier produceert. Ook hier een korte rondleiding. Aan het eind van de middag gaan we terug naar ons beginpunt, waar we afsluiten met een drankje. Hier kunnen ook de deelnemers aan de wandeltocht naar toe komen en worden de lustrumbeloningen uitgereikt.

Het programma ziet er als volgt uit
(*tijden kunnen nog iets wijzigen*):

- 10.00 ontvangst met koffie en iets lekkers
- 11.00 bezoek aan Kasteel Ter Horst
- 12.45 lunch
- 14.00 bezoek aan Museum Papierfabriek
De Middelste Molen
- 15.30 einde rondleiding
- 16.00 afsluitende borrel met uitreiking lustrumbeloningen
- 17.00 einde

De kosten voor deelname aan deze reünie bedragen € 42,50 per persoon voor leden van onze vereniging. Eventuele introducees betalen € 55,-.

Inschrijven kan door uiterlijk 15 september een mail te sturen naar rino.hamelink@goudenkruisdragers.nl (met uw naam, geboortedatum en woonplaats en de vermelding als u voor een lustrumbeloning in aanmerking komt) en gelijktijdige overboeking van het verschuldigde bedrag op bankrekeningnummer NL70 INGB 0000 3757 02 t.n.v. Vereniging Gouden-Kruisdragers Vierdaagse o.v.v. reünie en de na(a)m(en) van de deelnemer(s).

'Powered by GKD'-tocht

De derde 'Powered by GKD'-wandeltocht van 2026 is de Watervalwandelingen in Loenen. Deze wandeltocht in september wordt, zoals de laatste jaren gebruikelijk is, tegelijk georganiseerd met de reünie. De wandeltocht wordt georganiseerd door de Apeldoornse Wandel Federatie.

Bepaal zelf welke afstand je loopt en geniet van de prachtige natuur van de Veluwe. De route gaat onder andere door het gebied de Reeënberg, Landgoed Loenerveld en uiteraard kan onderweg de waterval bewonderd worden. Er kan bij deze wandeltocht gekozen worden uit de afstanden 5, 10, 15, 20 en 25 km.

De kosten voor deelname aan deze 'Powered by GKD'-wandeltocht zijn gratis voor leden van onze vereniging. Inschrijven kan door uiterlijk 20 september een mail te sturen naar rino.hamelink@goudenkruisdragers.nl (met naam, geboortedatum, woonplaats en de gekozen wandelafstand en de vermelding als u voor een lustrumbeloning in aanmerking komt).

De vereniging schrijft dan voor u in en maakt het inschrijfgeld over naar de organiserende wandelvereniging. Uiteraard is het bij deze tocht weer mogelijk om te stempelen op uw 'Powered by GKD'-stempelkaart. Deze zijn ook te verkrijgen op het startbureau van deze tocht.

Eventuele medewandelaars dienen op de gewone manier (online voorinschrijven of op de dag zelf op het inschrijfbureau) in te schrijven.

Meetingpoint Gouden-Kruisdragers

