

Skoda – Logo



Bicycle production began in Mlada Boleslav's machine works shortly before the end of 1895. Although key components were imported from abroad, mainly from England, Laurin & Klement used the patriotic brand name "Slavia" (Slavonic) when trading within the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Linden leaves were chosen as an eloquent portrayal of the Slav/Bohemian background of both Laurin and Klement. The name SLAVIA was also subsequently used for motocyclettes.



Unfortunately, no clear record exists as to when the L&K symbol replaced the name Slavia. However, this certainly occurred prior to 1904, the year when it was seen adorning the three-wheelers produced in the Mlada Boleslav factory. In any case, the emblem did feature on L&K's first car, the Voituretta, of which just two were built before the end of 1905.



We can only guess the rationale behind this particular emblem. Since Klement was such a dynamic and excellent businessman, he may have had the idea of enclosing the company emblem within a laurel wreath, symbolic of winners and celebrities in ancient times, or even after his levelheaded partner and excellent engineer, Laurin ("Laurel", laurus nobilis). At a time when stunning Art Nouveau creations were appearing in the early 1900s, finding a good graphic artist presented few problems, and the design was soon ready.

Nomen-omen, in other words, the characteristics and the results are in the name. The victor's laurel undoubtedly fits in well with the history of Laurin & Klement.



The L&K emblem remained on the front grilles of Mlada Boleslav cars until 1926, when the new products bore the Skoda emblem alone, as agreed with Skoda Co. following a year's cooperation. These facts are historically linked to another rather mysterious story, describing the origins of the famous winged arrow which still forms the central part of SKODA's emblem. This feature is thought to have been the idea of Mr T. Magliè, SKODA's commercial director, who was inspired by one of SKODA family servants, an Indian, whom the company director, Mr. Škoda, had brought back with him from a business trip to America.



Sometime between 1915 and 1920, Mr. Magliè was entrusted with the design of the stylised head of an Indian with headgear comprising a circular clasp and five feathers. Indian was the nickname popularly used in the twenties to describe the new symbol.



On December 15, 1923, two versions of protected, registered trademarks were filed at the Office for Innovation and Model Registration in Pilsen. The first depicted a winged arrow with five stylised feathers with the name SKODA inside a circle; the second a winged arrow with three feathers. The arrows in both designs pointed to the

right. The first version featured between 1924-25, after which the three feathered design was adopted as the perfect style, and has remained virtually unchanged to this day.



Even though it is unlikely that the graphic design of SKODA's logo was the work of an amateur, its creator is still unknown. Some speculate that designers were the lading Czech sculptors Otto Gutfreund or Otakar Španiel. However, a number of historical documents tend to indicate that the logo was probably the result of a competition organised by SKODA's technical director in Prague, Dr. Sýkora, who initiated plans for the emblem's protection as a trademarks.



The most usual explanation of the elements making up the emblem are: The large circle symbolises global and flawless production, a globe, the world; The pinion or wing — technical progress, production range, worldwide sales; The arrow — advanced production methods, quality production; Small circle, or eye — precision production, technical awareness, vision.



Rights to the protected, jointly owned trademark were bought by SKODA on 16th April 1991. In 1993 the Mlada Boleslav car manufacturer introduced distinctive new corporate colours, black and green, thereby giving the trademark even greater originality. Black symbolises SKODA's 100-year tradition; green embodies the attention focused on the new aspects of current period. It also identifies with the

new age of environmental protection and the recycling of materials on the one hand, and environmentally friendly production on the other. Green therefore represents the most identifiable new SKODA feature in its association with the Volkswagen Group in international competition.



Initially, the new SKODA Felicia will carry a special version of the famous SKODA logo. Laurel leaves surround the winged arrow to reinforce one hundred years of tradition since the company's formation. The oval trademark employed between 1925-29 used these laurel leaves to portray success. Today it still serves to express SKODA's ambition of worldwide success for its cars.



On the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the automobile production in Mlada Boleslav, Skoda automobilova a. s. gave the commission to design an anniversary sign. The usual symbols were supplemented with laurel leaves, which signify excellent historical tradition and economic success. The number 100 with the english inscription YEARS is located in the middle of the sign. English, as the most frequently used international language, was used here, in order to underline the worldwide qualities of the automobile plant in Mlada Boleslav.