

THE COLOURS OF THE FLEET

TCOF

BRITISH & BRITISH DERIVED ENSIGNS

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THE MOST COMPREHENSIVE WORLDWIDE LIST OF ALL FLAGS AND ENSIGNS, PAST AND PRESENT, WHICH BEAR THE UNION FLAG IN THE CANTON

“Build up the highway
clear it of stones
lift up an ensign over the peoples”

Isaiah 62 vv 10

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

The Colours of The Fleet 2013 attempts to fill a gap in the constitutional and historic records of the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth by seeking to list all British and British derived ensigns which have ever existed. Whilst primarily aimed to meet the needs and interests of vexillologists, historians, flag enthusiasts, educationalists, politicians and civic and government administrators, hopefully a wider readership may find it useful and informative too. This book (hereafter called TCOF for convenience) is the latest edition of a modest publication first produced in 1994, and which has been updated progressively to reflect research carried out since then. Nevertheless many of the original entries have not been changed and some details may now be out of date. Two major omissions are the lack of a comprehensive bibliography and index, for which apologies are offered – time ran out. Attempts are made to keep the book up to date with recent or ongoing research, but this is not always achieved. Hopefully anybody discovering an error or a new ensign will let the author know.

It must be admitted that any list of well over six hundred flags, most of which are extremely obscure, could easily be sleep inducing. But this book is intended to be fun and quirky as well as a serious attempt at a formal record. No doubt readers will draw their own conclusions.

A word about vexillology

Vexillology is the study of flags, and TCOF concerns an important strand of vexillology. Some years ago, whilst the author was investigating the background of one or two unusual maritime flags, it became apparent that a very large number of flags used at sea had been derived from the three original Red, White and Blue ensigns used by the Royal Navy since the 17th century. Furthermore the scope and usage of these flags, together with their geographic and historical extent, appeared to exceed by far that of any other flag design. At the same time attempts to acquire a definitive list of all these ensigns failed completely, and it became clear that no written record had been compiled, although Rudy Longueville of Belgium has produced an impressive compendium of flag badges, whilst Nick Weekes and David Prothero have done much detailed research into their origins. So thus began a long upwind haul - a task which has so far lasted for well over fifteen years. This is a dynamic area of study and the list of British ensigns and related flags requires continuous fine tuning to maintain accuracy, nevertheless the contents of this book should provide a sound baseline for reference to the subject. Such is the stuff of vexillology.

What Does This Book Contain ?

TCOF is therefore a worldwide muster of British and British derived ensigns and related flags, both current and obsolete. It seeks to list all the national colours authorised for use afloat by vessels in Her Majesty's Service or owned by the Queen's subjects. It also includes numerous ensigns primarily used ashore, together with land flags, distinguishing flags and house flags in the style of ensigns. It covers ensigns in the United Kingdom, the UK Overseas Territories, the Commonwealth and certain foreign countries too. The chapter on obsolete flags includes all known Colonial and Imperial ensigns - but almost certainly it is not complete. There is a vast amount of detail in this book drawn from innumerable sources, including the comprehensive range of Admiralty papers in the National Archives (formerly Public Record Office) at Kew so ably researched by David Prothero. Information is given not only about the flags themselves but also refers to customs, traditions, personalities, names and dates which surround them, so it would be most surprising if expert readers do not find fault with several opinions or facts. The lack of reference footnotes is deliberate because of the huge number that would be needed, acknowledging that some readers may be disappointed at their absence. Nevertheless, throughout the book where reference is made to documents in the National Archives they are noted under the appropriate Admiralty (ADM), or Colonial Office (CO) reference. (NL) refers to Naval Law Division letters. Very many people helped gather information for this book, but if errors are discovered they are the author's fault entirely, and hopefully readers will advise him accordingly. But for those who only wish to dabble in the flag loft, your patience is requested whilst you are invited to skip the parts of this book that do not interest you.

What Does This Book Not Contain ?

TCOF is restricted to those flags bearing the Union Flag in the canton, and this is the principle criteria. No attempt has been made to collate the many other Commonwealth or foreign ensigns which, although not incorporating the Union Flag itself, are of designs directly reflecting British influence (such as the ensigns of India since 1947). At the same time some flags bearing the Union Flag are listed but are not counted in the totals because they fall outside the chosen definitions, whilst others are not mentioned at all. The latter include Sovereign's Colours, Regimental Colours, Standards (but not flags) of military associations (such as the Royal British Legion), Trades Union Banners, and one or two other special categories mentioned later. This is for two reasons: -

- Colours, Standards and Banners are not generally flown as flags or ensigns in the normally accepted sense, and:-
- Further detailed research into a highly specialised area of vexillology would be required to list the multitude of flags in these groups.

Other flags, some in use and some probably no longer in use, that have been omitted include;

New Zealand Ensigns which have the whole New Zealand Flag in the canton.

Unofficial ensigns such Euro-Ensigns and county flags with a Union canton.

House Flags. Fire Brigade Flags. Commemorative Ensigns.

Flags of the Fante Asafo. Fantasy Flags.

Details of some of these flags are in the chapter at the end of the book.

Here is how to find what you want

This first chapter discusses background information about flags in general and ensigns in particular. It also provides a summary of the total numbers of flags in each category within the book, because there are very few sub-totals to be found within the text. This is deliberate because when changes are made, as new flags come or old ones go, the margin for error is much reduced if the places needing arithmetical correction are minimised. The meat comes in Chapter 2 which covers ensigns and related flags currently in use and includes (at a separate Annexe) yacht club ensigns authorised by warrant. Also at Annex are significant flags which are almost ensigns but not quite (just for the record) whilst Chapter 3 lists an amazing variety of obsolete ensigns and related flags. In one or two instances a technically obsolete ensign is actually still in use in particular circumstances, in which case an appropriate notation has been made. Some ensigns might be considered dormant rather than obsolete, but there is no dedicated list of these, which are in any case difficult to identify accurately.

Given unlimited time and space each and every flag mentioned (well over six hundred) would deserve comprehensive remarks, but the resulting book would increase in length hugely and contain an even more indigestible amount of detail. For these reasons only the most significant or intriguing facts have been mentioned where appropriate, and footnotes have been avoided deliberately as already explained, whilst phrases in italics generally indicate a quotation from a reference source. Italics are also used for mottoes and words used as defacements. Like any flag book, a publication such as this will never remain up to date because circumstances change and new details emerge all the time, but hopefully readers will make their own adjustments to the text as flags come and go in the future. So much for an introduction: let us now tackle the subject.

Definition of an Ensign

Before the muster of ensigns could begin it was necessary to establish the clear extent of the topic, and this required a workable description of an ensign, because it would appear that no formal definition has ever been developed by any constitutional authority. The result is the author's own unofficial attempt. It seeks to distinguish ensigns within three related categories, but please note that these are not legal definitions in any sense at all. Although most ensigns fall quite neatly into one or other grouping, in a number of cases it is very difficult to categorise a particular flag with precision. So for better or for worse the following flags are considered to be British and British derived ensigns, and thus the subject of this book:

British and British Derived Ensigns

All flags in the following three groups comprise an ensign for the purposes of this book:

Group 1. British National Colours

Flags worn by government service and civil vessels (at the stern, gaff or yardarm) and flown in appropriate shore installations to represent the sovereignty of the nation as follows:-

- Military ensigns worn by commissioned vessels (and their tenders) of Her Majesty's Armed Forces, together with Royal Navy, Royal Air Force, Army and Joint Service shore establishments. They include for example the White Ensign – as worn at the Battle of Trafalgar.
- Ensigns worn by vessels in the service of other government departments (OGDs) and non-departmental public bodies (NDPBs) in the United Kingdom, the Crown Dependencies and the United Kingdom Overseas Territories. They are mostly but not uniquely Blue Ensigns.
- Civil ensigns worn by vessels registered in the United Kingdom, the Crown Dependencies or the United Kingdom Overseas Territories, together with unregistered vessels which, if they were to be placed on a register, would be registered in those places. They are mostly but not uniquely Red Ensigns.

Group 2. Other British flags in the style of ensigns.

These are flags similar in design to those above, which have been authorised within the United Kingdom, the Crown Dependencies and United Kingdom Overseas Territories. These include some distinguishing flags, land flags and organisational or house flags, and they come in several colours.

Group 3. Commonwealth and foreign ensigns and flags.

These are ensigns and flags similar in design and purpose to those in Groups 1 and 2, flown both as national colours and for other reasons, and which have been authorised in certain Commonwealth and non-Commonwealth states, afloat and ashore. Several British derived ensigns pre-date the independence of the states in which they are used, and were originally authorised by imperial authorities in London. Others have been adopted since independence and reflect decisions to perpetuate historic links between the United Kingdom and the state concerned. They also come in several colours.

The Development of Modern Ensigns

Ensigns are symbols of national sovereignty and represent the State. Because of this individual designs must be properly authorised. Apart from those approved by the Sovereign, the majority of privileged ensigns were, and to a large extent still are, authorised under the long established system of warrants described later. The date (wherever known) of the warrant or other proper authority is given alongside the appropriate flag, usually in the format day/month/year (or sometimes just month/year).

The Squadron System

A good place to begin looking at this subject is the 17th century. In the year 1627 the British Fleet was divided into three squadrons under the Red, Blue and White Ensigns of that time, and in that order of seniority respectively. Then in 1653, for reasons unknown, the squadronal seniority was changed to Red, White and Blue, and this organisation of the Fleet lasted until 9 July 1864 when the arrangement was discontinued by Order in Council. No doubt this is why the colours of the Union Jack are always referred to as red, white and blue in that order, despite it being technically the wrong way to describe our national flag as we will see later on.

1864 Onwards

Since 1864 all Royal Navy ships have sailed under the White Ensign only, whilst other vessels in government service have worn a Blue Ensign and British civil craft have worn a Red Ensign. Until 1864, vessels in the service of certain United Kingdom public offices (for example the Victualling Office) defaced the Red Ensign in the fly with the badge or seal of their organisation. The Order in Council of 1864 further directed that such defacements were to be transferred to the Blue Ensign, and similar badges for other public offices were subsequently authorised by Admiralty warrant. Further afield, the use of defacements on the Blue Ensign in Overseas Territories, and in Commonwealth states that were former colonies, derives from the Colonial Defence Act of 1865 and from subsequent Admiralty instructions. These instructions stated that colonial public service vessels were to wear the Blue Ensign defaced with the seal or badge of the colony, and designs of the defacing flag badges were controlled by the Colonial Office in liaison with the Admiralty. It seems that warrants were not always issued to endorse the final choice of design, as there is extensive late 19th and early 20th century correspondence between the Admiralty to the Colonial Office exchanging information to assist updating the official flag book of the day. Since those days Blue Ensigns (and in one case Red) have also assumed official status as land flags in a number of territories.

Until 1964 most ensign warrants were granted by the Admiralty, and this tradition has continued under the authority of the Secretary of State for Defence. In a number of cases Royal authority has been (and still is) given for the use of an ensign or similar land flag. This is generally for civilian government departments, in which case the Sovereign signs the approved illustration of the ensign. Over the years several ensigns have been authorised by Orders in Council, Commonwealth government statutes or previous colonial legislation. A few have been accepted as legitimate by virtue of very long standing custom and practice over many years, whilst some continue to be used illegally. Some ensigns have been inherited by organisations descended from those originally privileged under different names. All ensigns were initially confined to use at sea, but many are now used in officially ashore as well.

The Different Parts of an Ensign

Like other flags, an ensign is described using particular names for its various parts. The *hoist* is the part nearest the mast; the *fly* is the part farthest from the mast, and the *canton* is the upper quadrant near the mast (technically the first canton - of four). *Breadth* is the shortest measurement, and *length* the longest. In Royal Navy terminology a *breadth* is also the traditional unit for grading the size of flags, formerly equating to 9 inches but now expressed as 23 centimetres. For example a four-breadth ensign will measure 92cm (36in) by 184cm (72 in), because an ensign is currently in proportion 1:2. The word *defaced* is used frequently: it is an honourable term which describes placing the seal or badge of a territory or authority upon an otherwise plain flag, thus creating a new flag in its own right. In the case of an ensign the defacing badge is nearly always placed in the fly, although defacements of the canton are not unknown.

Flying ensigns or wearing ensigns

An ensign is worn *by* a vessel or flown *in* a vessel. Since the turn of the 20th Century ensigns have come to be used ashore as well as afloat and ensigns are always flown (never worn) when ashore. When used ashore an ensign should be flown from the gaff of a mast, and not from a pole, however there are an increasing number of recognised exceptions to this rule (which include the Ministry of Defence Main Building in London, the Citadel in Charleston South Carolina and the Northwood Joint Headquarters near London). The current Merchant Shipping Act governs the use of ensigns afloat, whilst their use ashore is not defined except in a military context. Ashore in England the use of flags (all of which are legally classed as advertisements) is governed by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). In the devolved authorities (Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland) separate regulations apply. This is a complex area and is not a subject for this book.

Use of the Blue Ensign afloat is also forbidden except by properly authorised bodies in possession of a warrant, such as privileged yacht clubs. In the modern context the use of the Red Ensign (or Bloody Ensign as it was once known) by members of the public, in an appropriate setting with maritime or inland waterway connections should not be considered improper. Indeed both at home and abroad the Red Ensign has sometimes been used in the manner of a national flag, in place of (or in addition to) the Union Flag. This was particularly the case in the early part of the 20th century when many private citizens were unclear of their right to fly the Union Flag at all. One instance concerned the Persian Gulf where ex-patriots were advised by the Political Secretary of the Government of India, on 22/9/1927, that they should fly the Red Ensign *for national festivals, visits of HMG representatives and HM Ships, and during disturbances involving danger to the protected person*. Sadly, the Red Ensign would probably not afford similar protection today

In 1931 the Admiralty felt the need to comment on the flying of ensigns and published memorandum No 397 which is transcribed below:-

Memorandum on the use of the White and Blue Ensigns on Shore

The White and Blue Ensigns of His Majesty's Fleet are purely maritime flags, and in general their use on shore is incorrect. There has, however, been a customary extension of the use of the White Ensign from the harbour ship used as a fleet establishment to barracks and other buildings on shore serving the same purpose. There has been a parallel extension of the use of special ensigns from yachts, customs vessels and the like to their headquarters on the coast - the club house or customs office. It is common also for the White and Blue Ensigns to be used on cenotaphs and other memorials to Naval personnel.

With these exceptions, the use of these ensigns on shore is improper. Special ensigns worn by yachts are worn under the authority of an Admiralty warrant issued to the yacht, not to the yacht owner: they are the national colours of the yacht, not the personal flag of the owner, and the owner has no shadow of right to fly the yacht's flag elsewhere than on board the yacht. Similarly, the White Ensign is nothing else but the national colours of a ship of war in commission and no past service in the Navy or other connection with the Navy can make it correct to hoist it on private buildings on shore. It is equally incorrect for either ensign to be carried in procession or marches on shore.

Admiralty S.W.1. 9 Sept 1931

Later on, and notwithstanding the military pre-occupations of the Admiralty in the closing months of World War II, the rules for using ensigns ashore were re-stated in early 1945. In a letter from the Naval Law Division (NL/M.1687/44 dated 3 Feb 1945) to the Secretary of the Girl Guides Association, then located at 17 Buckingham Palace Rd, London SW1, their Lordships almost contradicted themselves and said of the Red, White and Blue ensigns: -

I am to explain that under the Merchant Shipping Acts, British Vessels other than HM Ships and vessels in the employment of certain public offices are required to fly the Red Ensign, that HM Ships fly the White Ensign and that vessels in the employment of certain public offices fly the Blue Ensign. All these flags are, therefore, clearly maritime flags and My Lords consider that it is in general, improper to be flown publicly ashore or to be carried in processions or parades. There is, however, no objection to any organisation such as the Sea Rangers displaying the White or Red Ensigns within their own club rooms.

Named Vessels Mentioned

It will be seen that in some cases the names of individual vessels authorised to wear a special ensign are mentioned; but of course these are only valid whilst those particular ships or boats remain in commission. They were correct when researched, which in most cases was during the period between 1995 and 1998, although vessels known to have been de-commissioned since then have been removed from the current listing. Likewise the names of new vessels have been added when identified. Vessel names are in CAPITAL LETTERS following the Royal Naval custom.

Other Flags Flown In Her Majesty's Ships

In addition to the Ensign, Jack and Masthead Pennant (the suit of Colours) and any command flags, HM Ships are sometimes authorised to fly additional flags for traditional purposes. For example HMS MONMOUTH flies a plain black flag from a small gaff in memory of the Black Duke. This signifies that the Black Duke's allegiance to the Crown should not be taken for granted.

Union Flags, Flagstaffs And Crowns

The de facto National Flag

The Union Flag is not an ensign, nor for that matter has it ever been declared formally to be the national flag of the United Kingdom (but that is another story). However it forms the fundamental ingredient of all British ensigns and thus requires attention. The colours of the Union Flag are always quoted as *red, white* and *blue* in the seniority order of the Squadrons between 1653 and 1864; whereas strictly speaking the flag is *blue, white* and *red* (or rather *azure, argent* and *gules*), because that is the order in which the colours are mentioned in its heraldic blazon or description (see box below). On the other hand the Stars and Stripes of the USA is correctly described as *red, white* and *blue* for the same reason. It is also worth noting that both names *Union Flag* and *Union Jack* may be considered equally correct, and this is supported by wide-ranging documentary evidence since the 17th century. For example in the Royal Proclamation of 1801, reproduced at the end of this book, King George III refers to *Our Jack, commonly called the Union Jack*. Whilst on 17/1/1887 Admiral Sir W M Dowell (President of the Committee for revising the General Signal Book) noted in a letter to the Secretary of the Admiralty *.....the committee notice that throughout the tables [of flag dimensions] the term Union Flag has been substituted for Union Jack, the latter being in the opinion of the committee the correct one [ADM 116/300 and 7/900]*. More recently the First Sea Lord in 1945 declared that *"9,999 of 10,000 Britishers called it the Union Jack"* [Dockets of the First Sea Lord 1939-1945]. However, because the word 'jack' commonly describes a small flag at flown at the bows of a vessel, and to avoid confusion, the term Union Flag is generally used within this book. There is of course another Union Jack too – namely the jack of USN vessels, which comprises the canton of the US national flag.

Heraldic Blazon of the Union Flag

In the box below is the official description (or heraldic blazon) of our national flag. However those versed in these matters will note that the flag is never made up in this exact manner, and if it was it would look most odd. The result would be the white elements of the diagonals being much thinner than is common practice, producing a much less attractive flag. In vexillological terms the fimbriation of St Patrick's cross is now taken from the cross itself, which makes the red diagonal narrower than the white one. A very complex thing is our flag.

The Union Flag shall be azure, the Crosses Saltire of St Andrew and St Patrick quarterly per saltire counterchanged argent and gules: the latter fimbriated of the second surmounted by the Cross of St George of the third, fimbriated as the Saltire.
1 January 1801.

The First Union Flag.

The original flag (without St Patrick's Cross) was designed in 1606. It is a much simpler design of course and has the great benefit of not being able to be flown upside down. It is still in use today in several places, which include: -

- **Australia.** Since 29 Jan 1967 flown outside the former Customs House in Loftus Street, Sydney at the place where Captain Arthur Phillip RN (the first Governor of NSW) first raised the flag on 26 Jan 1788. On 13 Oct 1996 this flag was hoisted at Garden Island (Sydney Harbour), probably for the first time since 1800, in honour of the birthday of Captain Phillip (11 Oct 1738). It is also flown on the quay-side at Old Sydney Town near Gosford, NSW., and is also flown continuously at Cooks' Cottage, on the corner of Fitzroy Gardens and Wellington Parade, Melbourne, Victoria.
- **Bermuda.** Flown in the island's capital Hamilton.
- **Canada.** Quite widely flown by the public, especially in British Columbia.
- **United States of America.** As one of the officially recognised historic flags of the United States of America it is sold widely and is flown in many places including:-
 - Above the town hall (and throughout the town) at Williamsburg historic city in South Carolina
 - Outside the Capitol building in Oklahoma City
 - Outside the Sillars Building (State Capitol) in Jackson Mississippi
 - At all Welcome Centers (sic) on the interstate highways at the borders of Alabama.
- **Scotland.** As the canton of the Northern Lights Commissioners' distinguishing flag which is flown outside the offices in Edinburgh and when Commissioners are embarked in NL vessels.

The Second Union Flag - *Happy Birthday Jack !*

1st January 2001 was the 200th anniversary of the inauguration of the present Union Flag. That occasion went entirely unnoticed throughout the United Kingdom. The present flag (incorporating St Patrick's Cross) was created in 1800 and inaugurated on 1/1/1801. This flag can be seen all over the world representing wider British interests and historical connections. One of the more unusual places it is flown is at the southern (British) end of the site of the Battle of New Orleans in Chalmette, Louisiana USA, and is the only current foreign flag known to be flying in any US national park

The First Union Flag - *Happy Birthday Jack !*

12th April 2006 was the 400th anniversary of the creation of the first Union Jack in 1606. The nation did remember this and the media gave good coverage to the event.

Flagstaffs and Poles.

At sea the ensign and jack are flown from the appropriate staff at each end of a ship. The traditional ensign and jack staffs of Her Majesty's Ships were made of wood with a brass channel let into them to take the runners that keep the flag close into the staff when hoisted. These runners are small brass fittings sewn onto the hoist of the flag at intervals of a few inches. The last Royal Yacht (HMY BRITANNIA) was different and had her own unique method of achieving this end. Ensigns and jacks have headsticks sewn into the top part of the hoist, so as to avoid any gap appearing between the top of the flag and the head of the flagstaff when hoisted close up. Headsticks used to be made of wood but are now plastic, but they are entirely hidden from view within the fabric of the flag. Non-RN ships do not usually follow these two practices, which is why their flags often do not present such a taught appearance. In new warships the flagstaffs are made of anodised metal, which is coloured to represent varnished wood. Ensign and jack staffs are normally fitted with two halyards: this enables one flag to be lowered as another is hoisted when a changeover is needed, thus preventing the ship being without colours.

Crowns

Both the jack and ensign staffs of all HM Ships bear a crown at the top painted in the appropriate regal colours. That on the jack staff is the naval crown, whilst the one on the ensign staff is the royal crown. The main difference between the naval and royal crowns is that royal crowns have a top formed by intersecting arches, whilst the naval crown does not. Indeed the heraldic purist might describe the naval crown as a crest coronet rather than a crown. The current design of royal crown is in the style of St Edward's Crown (with depressed arches at the point of intersection), however between 1876 and 1953 a royal crown with raised arches (in a more imperial shape) was used as the monarch's symbol. The imperial design of royal crown was adopted by Queen Victoria in 1876 to reflect her status as Empress of India, and thus takes the form of the Imperial State Crown. The sealed pattern for this crown was not agreed however until King Edward VII approved it on 4 May 1901, and this may explain why the imperial shaped crown is sometimes known as the King's Crown. In other countries with an imperial history, royal crowns usually had raised arches also. Both royal and naval crowns are made in three sizes (8 inch, 6 inch and 4 ½ inch diameter) to fit the jack and ensign staffs of different sized vessels. The case with civilian manned Royal Fleet Auxiliary (RFA) vessels is ambiguous. Most of them have no crowns but some (especially older ones) have naval crowns on their ensign staffs; and RFA ARGUS follows the RN pattern. The Royal Yacht was different in that she bore a royal crown on both staffs, as did the last two HM Army Vessels (HMAVs), whilst warships of the Commonwealth monarchies follow a similar pattern to RN ships. Boats belonging to naval vessels do not have crowns on their ensign staffs except for those that belonged to HMY BRITANNIA, to which specially made small crowns were fitted. Uniquely for a commissioned ship Lord Nelson's historic flagship HMS VICTORY does not have a crown on either her ensign or jack staff because the practice had not been adopted at the time she served afloat. The naval crown features in the coats of arms of Chatham and Devonport, and the present design (created by Mr Everard Green, Rouge Dragon Pursuivant) was approved by the King in 1903. The Merchant Service uses a similar crown on cap badges and elsewhere. Royal crowns in the imperial design were used by all succeeding monarchs after Queen Victoria until 1953, when Queen Elizabeth II reverted the design to the shape of St Edward's Crown. However the old style royal crown can be seen in many places, including the railings around the Palace of Westminster, pre-1953 letterboxes and telephone kiosks, and on royal coaches. [ADM 1/11609]

A Brief Summary

Cataloguing the multitude of flags in the world-wide British ensign family with complete precision is well nigh impossible, especially as so many now belong to independent states and are no longer under the jurisdiction of the Admiralty or any UK government department. A summary of the flags bearing the Union Flag in the canton, and which are officially authorised or widely accepted as British and British derived ensigns, will be found at the end of this Chapter. Unless you know better dear reader, it may be reasonable to suppose that this reflects the number of those flags which have ever existed, given the degree of accuracy possible in this complex subject. However research continues and further obsolete ensigns are quite likely to be discovered, and new ones approved, from time to time.

TCOF serves another purpose too, because flags represent people. This book is therefore a tribute to the countless millions of people of the Commonwealth and former British Empire, past, present and in the future, for whom these flags represented, and still do represent, a focus in their life and work. This of course includes all the many different peoples of the British Isles today. The unifying symbol of the Union Flag in all its manifestations is something every one of us can share together for the common good.

Reference Sources

A huge debt of gratitude is owed to many people all over the world who have gone out of their way to help. Reference has also been made to many publications both in and out of print and the lists below are by no means exhaustive: -

Correspondents, Authors and Researchers

Fred Brownell (former State Herald of South Africa): Dr William Crampton (late Director of the Flag Institute): Dr Whitney Smith (Flag Research Center USA): Ralph Bartlett (Flag Society of Australia): David Prothero, Graham Bartram, Lieutenant Colonel Nick Weekes, Ian Sumner and Jos Poels (all of the Flag Institute): Jenny Wraight (Admiralty Library): James Liston: Peter Edwards: Neil Freeman: Lieutenant Commander Andrew Brown RANR: Clay Moss: Rudy Longueville: John Lanser: Jeff Thomson: together with flag books by Captain EMC Barraclough CBE RN; Timothy Wilson; WJ Gordon; WG Perrin, and very many others.

Official Publications and authorities

These include:- Merchant Shipping Acts (1894 to 1995): Shipping Registration Act Australia (1991): Australian Flags Act (1953): Canada Shipping Act (1985): Colonial Defence Act 1865: Flags of All Nations past and present (BR 20): Official flag books of several other nations including France: Queen's Regulations (QRRN, QRRNZN, QRRAF, and QR Army): Numerous MOD authorities together with many OGDs, and NDPBs in several Commonwealth countries: English Sea Fisheries Committees: The Scout Association: National Maritime Museum: Imperial War Museum: Register of Seamen and Shipping: Royal Yachting Association: Public Records Office (Admiralty records): Navy List: Members of the General Lighthouse Authority: Lloyds Registers of Yachts: Yacht Clubs (world-wide): UK Fire & Rescue Services: Port of London Authority: Fishery Agencies of the Scottish Executive: Metropolitan Police: Ocean Weather Service: Natural Environment Research Council: British Antarctic Survey: Falkland Islands Museum, and many other authorities too.

Chronology

The thread of history runs through all these pages so the reader may find a summary of important dates in our national flag development to be a useful guide: -

1606. (*James I / James VI*). On 26 March 1603, the throne of England passed to King James VI of Scotland, who became King James I of England, giving the two kingdoms a common monarch. Several efforts were made to combine the English cross of St George and the Scottish saltire of St Andrew. The first acceptable solution was declared by Royal Proclamation on 12 April 1606: previous attempts to create such a flag all having failed. This new flag, generally known as the British Flag, was for use only at sea. It was to be flown in the maintop by all vessels of Great Britain. Vessels of 'North Britain' were to fly the Scottish flag in the foretop, and those of 'South Britain' were to fly the English flag. It was intended to show common allegiance in the two countries to King James I / VI ~ the 'King of Great Britain'. However the design continued to cause disquiet north of the border, and Scottish attitudes to the Union Flag remain somewhat ambivalent even to this day; primarily because the cross of St Andrew is placed behind that of St George, and the colour blue is generally darker than is usual for the Saltire in Scotland.

1625. (*Charles I*). Fleet divided into *Red, Blue* and *White* squadrons in order of seniority. Thought by J. K. Laughton, Lecturer on Naval History at the Royal Naval College in 1879, to have been in imitation of the practice in the Venetian and Genoese fleets.

1634. (*Charles I*). The first (of many) Royal Proclamation restricting use of the Union Flag to the King's ships - a restriction which remains to this day. Around this time the large British or Union flag, previously flown at the masthead, gradually came to be flown at the bow, where it was necessarily smaller and thus came to be called a jack.

1653. (*Cromwell*). Order of seniority of squadrons changed to *Red, White* and *Blue*. Possibly because red and white were the colours of the English flag, with blue, the colour of Scotland, retained for tactical convenience.

1661. (*Charles II*). Proclamation (by Lord High Admiral following restoration of the monarchy and re-establishment of Union Flag) again restricting the use of the Union Flag to the King's ships. Union Flag now commonly also called Union Jack.

1674. (*Charles II*). Royal Proclamation, again restricting use of "His Majesties Jack (commonly called, The Union Jack)" to "his Majesties Ships".

1694. (*William & Mary*). Royal Proclamation repeating that of 1674 and introducing a Red Jack with a Union canton for privateers. The same flag with the appropriate badge in the fly was instituted for vessels of the Navy, Ordnance, Victualling, Customs and Transportation Offices.

1702. (*Anne*). Red cross placed upon the plain white field of the White Ensign to avoid confusion with the plain white field of the French ensign of the time.

1707. (*Anne*). Political union with Scotland, and from now on the three ensigns bear the Union Flag in the canton. Modern ensigns date from this period.

1801. (*George III*). Union with the Kingdom of Ireland (Ireland was elevated from a lordship to a kingdom by King Henry VIII). This was demonstrated by the addition of the so-called St Patrick's Cross to the flag on 1 January 1801 (but see Note below). The modern version of the Union Flag was thus created, and for the first time it became possible to fly the flag upside down. This is a depressingly common phenomenon which is due to the complex arrangement of offset saltires (diagonal crosses) which were very cleverly positioned to ensure that St Andrew's Cross takes primacy over St Patrick's Cross. It so happens that when the Union Flag is flown upside down the insult is to Scotland rather than to England or Ireland, but these matters are not well understood.

Note: St Patrick was not a martyr and therefore had no cross. The red saltire was taken from the coat of arms of the Geraldines, an important Irish family whose influence rested on their support for successive English monarchs. In the 18th century it was adopted as the badge of St Patrick's Societies. This saltire has never enjoyed a serious following in Ireland and is rarely used as a flag in the island, although it does appear in the achievement of arms of Trinity College Dublin, and a charmingly defaced version is used as the distinguishing flag by the Commissioners for Irish Lights.

1805. (*George III*). Battle of Trafalgar fought under the White Ensign because Nelson was Vice Admiral of the White Squadron and decreed that all his ships wore the White Colours.

1842. (*Victoria*). Yacht club use of the White Ensign restricted to the RYS

1864. (*Victoria*). Squadron system discontinued. White Ensign assigned to Royal Navy, Blue Ensign to Government Service and Red Ensign to Merchant Marine.

1873. The earliest (?) official reference to the Union Jack as the national flag is in Queen's Regulations 1873. Section 3. Honours and Salutes. "The following is a list of stations at which the national flag (Union Jack) is authorised....."

1901. (*Edward VII*). Sealed pattern of royal cipher approved by the King on 4 May. The dome shaped crown, called 'Imperial' or 'Tudor', was now used on all official badges. Since the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II in 1953, 'St Edwards' crown with a central depression has been the official crown on badges.

1902. (*Edward VII*). In a Minute about the question, "What is the correct Flag to be flown on land by Civilians?" which was to be asked in the House of Commons on 22 October 1902, Sir Arthur W.Woods, Garter, King of Arms wrote, "The Union Flag, being the National Flag, appertains to the Nation as a whole, ..."

1908. (*Edward VII*). In the House of Lords on 14 July 1908 in response to a question to His Majesty's Government by Earl Howe, the Earl of Crewe replied "*My Lords..... I think it may fairly be stated, in reply to the noble Earl, that the Union Jack should be regarded as the national flag, and it undoubtedly may be flown on land by all His Majesty's subjects*". The Earl of Meath then went on to observe "*My Lords ... It is rather curious that a British citizen is about the only one who is not quite certain under what flag he stands as a private citizen*" (Hansard Fourth Series Volume CXCII (192) page 579).

1912. (George V). A dispatch dated 21 May 1912 from Mr L Harcourt, Secretary of State for the Colonies, to HRH the Duke of Connaught & Strathern, Governor General of Canada concerning the flag which should be used by British subjects, contained the words “...*the Union Flag is the national Flag of Canada as of all other parts of His Majesty’s Dominions and may be flown on land by all British subjects...*”. The wording bears marked similarity to that used by the Earl of Crewe in 1908, albeit without the conditional clauses ‘*may be fairly stated*’ and ‘*should be regarded*’.

1922. (George V) Following some discussion at ministerial level as to whether the Union Flag should revert to its pre-1801 design in consequence of the formation of the Irish Free State, the Provisional Government of Ireland Committee concluded “*given the opinion that the Union Jack is the flag of the British Empire, and even if not accepted and used by the new Irish government, no alteration should be made in it by the rest of the Empire.....the committee think that their opinion should be brought to the notice of the Cabinet*”. Winston Churchill subsequently informed the Committee that it had plenary authority and their decision could be regarded as definite.

1927. (George V). Yacht club general warrants revoked.

1933. (George V). In reply to a parliamentary question from Mr Wills on Tuesday 27 June 1933 about whether private citizens were prevented from flying the Union Flag, the Home Secretary (Sir J Gilmour) said “*No Sir, the Union Flag is the national flag and may properly be flown by any British subject on land*” (Hansard Fifth Series Volume 279 (1932-33) page 1324). These two parliamentary answers of 1908 and 1933 are the only statements of any real authority ever made about the existence of a national flag for the United Kingdom and the constitutional status of the Union Flag.

1945. (George VI). The First Sea Lord supports the use of the term Union Jack as the name of the national flag.

1952. (Elizabeth II). Privileged ensign list (more or less) closed, although a number of ensigns have been granted since then.

1953. Royal crown reverted to the traditional shape of St Edward's Crown, resulting in a progressive change to most (but not all) flags and ensigns bearing a crown.

1985. General yacht club warrants re-issued.

2001. 1st January 2001 (01/01/01) was the bicentenary of the Union Flag in its present design. It was not recorded nor celebrated officially by the nation, except by those of us who flew the flag privately on that day and drank its health.

2002. This year saw both the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother and the Golden Jubilee of Her Majesty the Queen. It also saw the Commonwealth Games in Manchester and the football World Cup (in Japan). On all occasions a huge number of national flags were flown all over the country. Sales of Union Jacks exceeded all expectations and several weeks after the main events the number of flags still flying remained greatly increased from previous years. It may indeed be said that the Union Jack has regained its rightful place at last, along with the sub-national flags, as the icons of the nation.

2006. 12th April – 400th anniversary of the birth of the first Union Flag. An occasion commemorated by the national media in an appropriate fashion.

2008. 25th March – publication of the *Governance of Britain – Constitutional Renewal* White Paper, in which the Union Flag and its greater use and recognition received significant mention.

2010. 6th January. Union Flag on the Victoria Tower of the Palace of Westminster now flown permanently, day and night, except when replaced by the Royal Standard during the opening of Parliament. Previously flown only when either House of Parliament was in session. The national flag now flies above the nation's parliament to celebrate our democracy and the unity of our country.

Numerical Summary Of Ensigns

Hopefully this page won't put you off reading the rest of the book, but you will know much more about British ensigns than most people if you get no further. This is the only place where comprehensive totals are given – for simplicity of amendment as frequent changes are made. This page should be correct up to March 2014 – but there are undoubtedly omissions.

	White	Blue	Red	Sky Blue	Other	Totals
Current Ensigns	8	75	27	9	14	133
Current Yacht Ensigns	-	54	13	1	-	68
Obsolete Ensigns						
Yacht Club Ensigns	10	29	13	-	-	52
British Isles	7	54	28	3	7	99
Commonwealth & Empire	18	187	74	8	16	303
Totals	43	399	155	21	37	655

Each chapter has a more detailed summary.

CHAPTER 2

British Ensigns and Related Flags in Current Use

(excluding yacht club ensigns)

	White	Blue	Red	Sky Blue	Other	Totals
U.K. Organisations	2	28	11	-	-	41
Crown Dependencies	-	3	3	-	-	6
Overseas Territories	1	15	6	-	1	23
Commonwealth	3	11	3	-	-	17
Land Flags						
United Kingdom	-	5	1	4	6	16
Australia	1	13	-	2	3	19
Other Commonwealth	-	-	3	3	3	9
Miscellaneous	1	-	-	-	1	2
Totals	8	75	27	9	14	133

This chapter contains details of every British and British derived ensign and related flag known to be in use under proper authorisation at the time of writing. At the end, Annex A deals with the specific category of privileged ensigns granted to yacht clubs, whilst Annex B covers flags which are very similar to ensigns, but which fall just outside the criteria for inclusion. In line with the definitions outlined earlier, the flags under consideration belong to one of five distinct but closely related groups namely: -

- White Ensign and derivatives
- Blue Ensign and derivatives
- Red Ensign and derivatives
- Royal Air Force Ensign and derivatives
- Ensigns of other colours

Naval White Ensigns

(4)

The Royal Navy

The current design of naval ensign dates from the year 1702, when the large red cross was added to the plain white English ensign (as it then was), but this new ensign was originally only for ships serving outside home waters. In 1707 the Union Flag replaced the Scottish or English flags in the canton, and both the plain ensign and the red cross ensign then existed side by side until the plain one was discontinued in 1744. The ensign was again modified on 1/1/1801, when the so-called St Patrick's Cross was added to the Union Flag, and today only the Royal Navy version has a large red cross upon it. The White Ensign is now authorised for use by warships and ship's boats of the Royal Navy, Royal Marines and Royal Naval Reserve, as well as respective shore establishments. Some other authorities are permitted to fly the White Ensign in special circumstances and they are listed later on. It is of interest to note that the modern White Ensign was also once the flag of HM Coastguard – from about 1865 or '66 until 1923.

The Royal Australian Navy

Following a decision by Prime Minister Harold Holt on 23 December 1966 to create a special RAN ensign, the design was authorised 16 February 1967. The public announcement was on 1 March 1967, when it was first hoisted at 0900 local time in RAN vessels, craft and shore establishments; thus replacing the RN White Ensign which had been worn by warships of the Australia Station, and subsequently RAN vessels, since 23/9/11. Also worn by government owned, civilian manned marine service support craft.

The Royal New Zealand Navy

This ensign, which was authorised in 1968 is for RNZN vessels and craft, and shore establishments; and also for yachts skippered by serving flag officers of the RNZ Yacht Squadron.

The Fijian Navy

Authorised in 1970 for Fijian naval craft, which were organised as the Fijian Navy in 1975. Fiji left the Commonwealth in 1987 but retained British derived flags and ensigns adopted on achieving independence in 1970. Fiji was re-admitted to the Commonwealth in 1997, but was suspended on 1st September 2009.

Other Navies and Naval Forces that have flown the White Ensign

In general the White Ensign could be flown only by those armed forces granted the title 'Royal'. This rule was relaxed in war time when it was considered more important that all warships of the Empire should fly the same ensign. Other factors considered before granting an armed force the privilege of wearing the White Ensign were its efficiency, the status of the Officer-in-Command and by whom he had been commissioned, whether personnel were regular or volunteer, full-time or part-time, and whether vessels could serve anywhere, or were restricted to a local area.

In 1940 the Board of Admiralty approved, for the duration of the war only, that ships manned by the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve for local defence in Burma, Hong Kong, Kenya, Straits Settlements and as a special case Tanganyika might fly the White Ensign. 1941 legislation making Naval Volunteer Forces liable for service outside the colony extended the privilege to Ceylon, Fiji, Gambia, Gold Coast, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, and Trinidad & Tobago. The dates in some cases are approximate.

Royal Australian Navy	1911 - 1967
Royal Canadian Navy	1911 - 1965
Royal Ceylon Navy	1950 - 1955
Royal East African Navy	1957 - 1962
Royal Indian Navy	1934 - 1950
Royal Malayan Navy	1952 - 1957
Royal New Zealand Navy	1941 - 1968
(1913 - 1941 was the New Zealand Division of the Royal Navy)	
Royal Nigerian Navy	1959 - 1963
Royal Pakistan Navy	1947 - 1956

It is difficult to be sure about the use of the White Ensign by overseas RNVR units as some had no vessels but helped to man vessels of the RN or other RNVR units.

Burma RNVR	1940
Ceylon RNVR	1942 - ?
Hong Kong RNVR	1952 - 1967
Malayan RNVR (Singapore)	1957(?) - 1963(?)
Mauritius Naval Volunteer Force	1948 - 1963
Nigeria Naval Force	1956 - 1959
Palestine Police, Port & Marine Section	1939 - 1945
South African Naval Service	1922 – 1946 renamed S.A. Naval Force 1942
Straits Settlements RNVR	1934 - 1942 renamed Malayan RNVR in 1941
Tanganyika NVR	1941 - 1942(?)
Trinidad RNVR	1941 - ? some personnel from other Caribbean Islands.

Use of the White Ensign Outside the Royal Navy

Several authorities and locations have the special privilege of using the White Ensign of the Royal Navy on appropriate occasions. One place, the Naval Club in London, was granted special permission to fly the White Ensign on the day of Her Majesty's 50th Jubilee in 2002, the other places are: -

Ministry of Defence Main Building in Whitehall. Flown daily on the roof in company with the RAF Ensign, Army flag, Union Flag and Joint Service Flag.

Military Careers Offices nation-wide. First authorised in 1949 when they were known as Recruiting Offices. Military careers offices are now tri-Service, however relevant Service ensigns may be displayed at them as appropriate.

Trinity House Vessels. By authority of an Admiralty letter dated 21 June 1894.

Sir

With reference to your letter of the 18th instant, No 2387, I am commanded by My Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty to convey to you their permission for the Elder Brethren of the Trinity House to fly the White Ensign of HM Fleet on board their Steam and Sailing Vessels on all occasions upon which ships are dressed, and while escorting Her Majesty in company with Royal Yachts and Ships of War. A copy of this letter may be produced as authority for the use of the White Ensign on the occasions referred to.

*I am, Sir
Your obedient Servant
Evan MacGregor.*

The comma in the fifth line has long caused debate when interpreting the exact circumstances to which this authority applies. Does it for instance apply whenever Trinity House Vessels are dressed, wherever they are and for whatever reason, in addition to the escorting role?

The Cenotaph in Whitehall. At the Cenotaph the Blue, Red and (since 1943) RAF Ensigns are flown, together with the Union Flag and White Ensign. From the Trafalgar Square end of the memorial (where the Unknown Warrior's feet are said to be) the flags are in order Blue/Union/White on the eastern side (the right side of his body), and RAF/Union/Red on the other. Thus the White Ensign takes the senior position at the Warrior's right shoulder.

Ocrakoke Island (British) Cemetery, North Carolina. Smallest Commonwealth War Graves Commission cemetery containing the graves of four seamen who died when HM Trawler BEDFORDSHIRE was torpedoed in May 1942. Flags are not normally flown at Commonwealth War Graves cemeteries but this one is maintained by the US Coastguard on behalf of the Commission, and the White Ensign is hoisted daily.

Fleet Air Arm Memorial Chapel. Former parish church of St Bartholomew, which is adjacent to HMS Heron, the Royal Naval Air Station, at Yeovilton in Somerset.

St Anne's Church at Limehouse in London. The White Ensign was traditionally flown from the church but the practice ceased for a period, however since the recent arrival of the present incumbent the White Ensign has once again been flown from Trafalgar Day until the next royal birthday. St George's Cross is then flown until the next Trafalgar Day. These flags are not lowered at night. The church mace (dated 1730) bears an ensign in the design of that time, giving provenance to the flag's use.

St Martin in the Fields Church in Trafalgar Square. Authorised due to its status as the designated Admiralty church, and the flag is provided at public expense.
[ADM 1/8618/B]

St Werburgh's Church at Hoo near Chatham. Authorised by Commander in Chief the Nore in respect of the church being marked on Admiralty charts and used by HM ships as a navigation mark for the Medway. At nearby Gillingham, St Mary Magdalene church was *required* to fly the ensign daily for the same reason, until the 1940s when a purpose built leading mark was erected and the practice ceased.

HMS BELFAST. The World War II cruiser is moored close to Tower Bridge. In addition to being a tourist attraction she is also the Headquarters of the White Ensign Association.

HMS CAVALIER. The historic WWII destroyer now preserved at Chatham, once the fastest ship in the RN.

HMCS HAIDA. This Tribal class RCN destroyer is berthed at Toronto. Her most famous commanding officer was Captain (later Vice Admiral) Harry de Wolf RCN who died in 2000 aged 97. The ship's exploits during a series of night actions in WWII under his command are the stuff of naval history, and she was selected from over 500 ships to be preserved at Toronto.

HMCS SACKVILLE. This historic Flower class RCN corvette is berthed at Halifax, Nova Scotia. Both ex-RCN ships wear the Canadian Blue Ensign as their jack.

Admiralty Arch by Trafalgar Square. Several White Ensigns are flown over Admiralty Arch when London is 'dressed overall' for state occasions.

The Citadel in Charleston, South Carolina USA. A memorial to the submarine HMS SERAPH lies within the grounds of the Citadel military college in Charleston. In 1942 General Mark Clark was landed in Algeria by SERAPH (Lt Cdr Bill Jewell RN of 'The man who never was' fame) to make contact with the Free French before Operation Torch. The boat's next task was to smuggle General Giraud out of France so he could lead the Free French in Torch. However Giraud demanded an American submarine which was unavailable, so SERAPH sailed under the Stars and Stripes with a USN officer in apparent command and Jewell disguised as a member of his own crew. In 1962 when Mark Clark was Commanding General of the Citadel he heard that SERAPH was to be paid off. He asked for her to be transported to the USA as a permanent memorial to her allied wartime role, but a compromise was reached that the periscope and steering and plane wheels would be dismantled and sent over instead. A monument was designed to house them and the Admiralty agreed that the White Ensign could fly in perpetuity alongside the Stars and Stripes, provided it was hoisted and lowered ceremonially each day. This is done, and replacement ensigns are provided by the RN attaché in Washington.

The National Maritime Museum. In Greenwich. All three ensigns fly outside the main door together with the Union Flag.

Nelson's Dockyard in Antigua. On 21 July 2000 the Royal Naval Tot Club of Antigua and Barbuda received authority to fly a White Ensign in the dockyard in continuation of the authority previously granted to the Government of Antigua on independence. It is flown from the gaff, with the flag of Antigua and Barbuda at the masthead, on the following days:-

16 January – Battle of St Vincent 1780: (Moonlight Battle)

14 February – Battle of Cape St Vincent 1797:

2 April – Battle of Copenhagen:

12 April – Battle of The Saintes:

21 April – Birthday of Queen Elizabeth II:

1 June – Glorious 1st of June:

2 June - Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II:

1 August – Battle of the Nile:

11 October – Battle of Camperdown:

21 October – Battle of Trafalgar.

The club adopted a swallow-tailed version of the pre-1801 White Ensign as its burgee (not ensign), to which the Ministry of Defence does not object.

SS Great Britain at Bristol. She wears the White Ensign and Union Jack (together with a range of other historic flags) as these were the Colours worn at her launch in 1843.

Royal Yacht Squadron vessels and RYS premises in Cowes, Isle of Wight. This was authorised by Admiralty warrant dated 1829 for designated vessels belonging to members of the Royal Yacht Squadron together with the Squadron Headquarters in Cowes Isle of Wight. Possibly up to five clubs used to use the White Ensign but an Admiralty minute of 1842 restricted this to the RYS, however the minute never reached the Royal Western Yacht Club of Ireland, which continued to use the White Ensign until the mistake was discovered in 1857 and the privilege was withdrawn.

HMY BRITANNIA. Now decommissioned and alongside at Leith, is presently wearing an unofficial defaced White Ensign, having failed to gain permission to wear the ensign of the Royal Navy. This matter has rumbled on for several years and is still not resolved. Nationwide, the ensign to be worn by certain other historic ex-RN ships on display to the public is a continuing debate.

And once upon a time just for historical interest:- During WWII the Palestine Police, Port & Marine Section came under the control of the Senior Naval Officer at Haifa, its personnel became members of the RNVR, and their launches wore the White Ensign. This was the only time the ensign has been flown on the Sea of Galilee

Royal Navy Ships Sailing under Different Colours

After completion naval warships remained the property of the builders until sea trials had been satisfactorily completed and the ship accepted by the naval authorities. During this time the Red Ensign was flown. The ship was then commissioned and the White Ensign hoisted. This changed in wartime when ships were commissioned before sea trials so that the White Ensign could be worn in case of enemy action. It was still the responsibility of the builder to rectify any defects. In 2000 the Red Ensign was replaced by the Government Service Blue Ensign (GSBE), in accordance with Defence Council Instruction (RN) 15/00. The change was made for purposes of insurance, because a Red Ensign vessel must be registered and covered by an internationally recognised insurer, and MOD owned vessels are neither registered nor insured. The White Ensign is still worn during the actual launching ceremony (together with the Union Jack and Lord High Admiral's Flag). The last ship to wear the Red Ensign on her sea trials was HMS BANGOR, and the first ship to wear the GSBE was the Type 23 frigate HMS KENT, which entered Portsmouth for the first time in February 2000. Thus it is that at the turn of the new century HM Ships have sailed again under the ensigns of all three original squadrons – Red, White and Blue.

Summary

One or two other flags, which closely resemble a White Ensign, are also in use and will be found later in the book. Some other authorities fly (or have been known to fly) the White Ensign unofficially. For instance the Royal Naval Club in Portsmouth used to do so. Some other churches claim the right but have not substantiated their claims. The San Francisco Yacht Club flies the ensign alongside the Stars and Stripes when HM Ships come into the bay, and the Port Manager's office in Brest flew it during the sailing festival 'Brest 2000' superior to the EU flag and on the same pole. Lastly (and somewhat unfortunately) White Ensigns defaced with the names of football teams are common sights on the terraces when England (but not of course Scotland) is playing.

Other White Ensigns

(4)

British Antarctic Territory *SHIELD WITH YELLOW TORCH ON RED TRIANGLE, ON HERALDIC SEA OVER WHITE; LION ON GRASS, AND PENGUIN ON ICE, SUPPORTERS; HELM WITH RRS DISCOVERY CREST, MANTLING; RESEARCH AND DISCOVERY IN RED ON YELLOW SCROLL.* Authorised by the Queen in 1998 as the official land flag for the British Antarctic Territory. The arms has been granted in 1963. It is for use at each of the UK's five research stations in BAT together with the British Antarctic Survey's headquarters outside Cambridge. It may be flown as a courtesy flag by vessels visiting BAT as well. A defaced Union Flag for the Commissioner of the Territory was also approved by the Queen at the same time.

New South Wales Ambulance Service *RED MALTESE CROSS ON WHITE WITHIN BLUE RING INSCRIBED NEW SOUTH WALES AMBULANCE IN YELLOW.* Authorised 9 October 1984. The NSWAS flag is in the style of the Royal Hamilton Amateur Dinghy Club flag (see below). A rare example of a defaced (plain) White Ensign.

Northern Lights Commissioners Flag. *BLUE LIGHTHOUSE.* Dates from 1786, but is based on the pre-1744 home service White Ensign. Continued to be used with the original Union Jack after 1801 in order to use up old stock, and the design then became traditional. It is flown at the masthead when Commissioners are embarked. The Commissioner's pennant resembles the Icelandic flag (blue field with white bordered red cross) and bears a white lighthouse in the hoist.

Royal Hamilton Amateur Dinghy Club, Bermuda *CROWN ABOVE R.H.A.D.C. IN RED.* A special Warrant was issued 24 Dec 1980 for its use as a clubhouse flag.

Blue Ensigns

(L) indicates those ensigns that are also used on land.

Undefaced

The Blue Ensign of Her Majesty's Fleet is authorised for vessels of the following authorities:-

Merchant Marine. Vessels whose masters hold a warrant from the Secretary of State for Defence in accordance with Queen's Regulations for the Royal Navy (QRRN). At one time, for example, the former MV QUEEN ELIZABETH 2.

Yacht Clubs. Authorised craft belonging to members of designated privileged yacht clubs. These are all listed at Annex A to this chapter.

Royal Research Ships. Authorised in 1969, possibly on 30 May 1969, for Royal Research Ships (RRS) of the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC). Uniquely for government vessels each RRS has an individual warrant from the Secretary of State for Defence, and one of the earliest was granted to the JANE (long since sold) in 1972. The title 'Royal Research Ship' was granted by the Queen to NERC vessels (JANE and FREDERICK RUSSELL were the first ones) on 5 May 1983. At the time of research warrant holders were RRS DISCOVERY and CHALLENGER. Until 1902 ships that were the property of HM Government wore the plain Blue Ensign when proceeding to foreign stations. [MT 23/145]

Defaced

Crown Dependencies

(3)

Isle of Man A Home Office letter implies that all Crown Dependencies may adopt Blue Ensigns, however the Isle of Man (which has only one government vessel – MV ENBARR) does not intend to take the matter forward.

Jersey [Three Yellow Lions on a Red Shield](#). The Blue Ensign of the States of Jersey public departments was designed by Captain Renouf, the Harbourmaster at St Helier, and originally authorised by Admiralty warrant on 2 March 1907 for the tug DUKE OF NORMANDY. However on 14 Aug 1997 the Home Office issued a warrant permitting all vessels employed by the States of Jersey to wear this ensign. At the time of research it was worn by the new DUKE OF NORMANDY, DUCHESS OF NORMANDY and NORMAN LE BROCCQ. A point to note is that the Queen is the 'Duke of Normandy', and thus there is currently no living Duchess of Normandy.

Guernsey [Yellow Cross, Ends of Arms Flared](#). The defaced Blue Ensign of Guernsey is a recent, rare and little known flag. The warrant was signed by Dr Lewis Moonie (Under Secretary of State at the Ministry of Defence) on 11 July 2000. It is worn by the SARNIA (a harbour workboat), LEOPARDESS (sea fisheries protection craft). The defacement is the same as for the red ensign of Guernsey.

- **Alderney** [Yellow Lion on Green Disc in ornate Yellow Frame](#). Granted by Her Majesty the Queen in 2007. Application for a Red Ensign is expected.
- **Sark**

U.K. Overseas Territories

(15)

Blue Ensigns defaced with the appropriate badge or device are authorised for vessels belonging to, or in the service of, the governments of the UK Overseas Territories listed below. Despite the hand-over of Hong Kong to China in 1997 there still remain several flags within this group.

Anguilla [White Shield with Blue Base; Three Circling Orange Dolphins on the White](#). Royal approval 30 May 1990. Anguilla also has a land flag with a similar design introduced in October 1967.

Bermuda [White Shield with Green Base on which a Seated Red Lion holds a Shield bearing a Wrecked Ship](#). New design 4 October 1910 authorised by the Colonial Office. Uniquely, Bermuda uses her Red Ensign as the land flag.

British Antarctic Territory [White Ensign on page 24](#)

British Virgin Islands (L) [White Figure and Twelve Lamps on Green Shield; VIGILATE on Yellow Scroll below](#). Established by local authority in 1960 (or possibly 1956).

Cayman Islands (L) [Shield with Yellow Lion on Red above Three Green Stars on Heraldic Sea; Turtle Crest, Motto on Yellow Scroll](#). Established by local authority in 1959.

Falkland Islands (L) [Shield with White Ram on Blue, above Sailing Ship on Heraldic Sea; Motto on Yellow Scroll below](#). Design of 29 September 1948, modified in 2007.

Gibraltar [Grey Gateway and Key on Red Panel; Motto on Yellow Scroll below](#). The defacing badge (based on the city arms) was authorised by the Colonial Office in 1875: it is the oldest colonial ensign still in use, but the badge was on a white disc until 1923. The much better known Gibraltar city flag was established in 1966 (but not formally authorised until 8 Nov 1982). It is a white over red horizontal bicolour centrally defaced with the arms of a red castle above a gold key. The arms were granted to Gibraltar by King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella of Castille and Leon in 1502. The Ensign is used only by the Port Authority.

Royal Gibraltar Police [POLICE in White](#). The RGP is the second oldest police force in the Commonwealth (after the Metropolitan Police). The ensign is also used by the Ministry of Defence funded Gibraltar Services Police (GSP).

Gibraltar Defence Police [EiR on White within Light Blue Ring inscribed GIBRALTAR DEFENCE around the top, and POLICE below, on shaded Grey and White Eight-point Star surmounted by a Full Colour Crown](#). Until 17 December 2009 GDP was known as the Gibraltar Services Police, when it used the same ensign as the Royal Gibraltar Police.

Montserrat (L) [Blue Shield with Brown Base, Green-Clad Woman holding a Cross and a Harp](#). Established 1 January 1960. The island was largely evacuated in 1997 following a major volcanic eruption, although reconstruction began in 1998.

Pitcairn Island and Dependencies (L) [Yellow Chevron on Shield, Blue above, Bible above White Anchor on Green below, Helm with Wheelbarrow Crest and Mantling.](#) Includes Henderson, Ducie and Oeno islands. Established by Royal authority 2 April 1984. There were just over 50 inhabitants in 1997.

St Helena. (L) [Shield with a Bird in Panel above Ship near Cliffs.](#) Shield of Arms granted 4 October 1985.

- **Ascension Island.** (L) [Shield with Three White Wideawake Birds in Plan and a Green Chevron on an Heraldic Sea, Green Turtle Supporters on Rock Compartment, Helm and Mantling, Sailing Ship and Green Mountain Crest.](#) Arms, minus scroll, granted 2012. Raised for the first time on 11 May 2013.
- **Tristan da Cunha.** (L) [Four Albatrosses on Blue over White Shield; Boat and Naval Crown above Helm, Lobster Supporters and Motto.](#) A Blue Ensign Land Flag for Tristan da Cunha was designed by Jimmy Glass, the Chief Islander, and after adjustment and approval by the College of Arms was granted by Proclamation of the Governor of St Helena on 20 October 2002.

South Georgia & South Sandwich Islands. (L) [Green Triangle, on which a Yellow Lion Standing on One Hind Leg is Holding a Torch, Superimposed over Shield of Blue and White Diamonds, Seal and Penguin Supporters, Helm with Reindeer Crest, and Motto.](#) Arms granted by the Queen 14 February 1992. Officially replaced just the shield of the Arms in 2007, although some unofficial versions were made as early as 1999. Also in use as a land flag but its date of authorisation (possibly in 2006) is uncertain. A Union Flag defaced with the arms is used as required by the Commissioner when he visits. As with the British Antarctic Territories and the British Indian Ocean Territories (since the airfield was leased to the USA), there are no indigenous inhabitants.

Turks and Caicos Islands. (L) [Yellow Shield with a Conch Shell and Lobster above a Turk's Head Cactus.](#) Established 7 November 1958.

Other UK Overseas Territories

There are thirteen Overseas Territories remaining (in 2011), and they have a total population of about 217,000 (2008), of whom some 66,000 live in Bermuda. Altogether about 112,000 people hold British Dependent Territory Citizenship and for whom the government has authorised full UK passports. There are no special flags relating to the Sovereign Base Areas in Cyprus, which are administered by the Ministry of Defence. The remaining Territories without Blue Ensigns are mentioned below to complete the picture. **British Indian Ocean Territory** is listed in the Other Colours section, **British Antarctic Territory** in the White Ensign section earlier.

UK MOD, OGDs and NDPBs

(27)

Blue Ensigns defaced with the appropriate badge or device are authorised by the Queen for non-military vessels owned by or in the service of the Ministry of Defence (MOD), together with those operated by other government departments (OGDs) and certain non-departmental public bodies (NDPBs) in the United Kingdom. The authority is granted to the parent department and not to individual vessels, which is why Commanding Officers or Masters of such vessels do not carry a warrant on board their ships (as do yachts flying privileged ensigns). The following examples are known to be in use:-

Aberdeen Harbour Board (L?) Broad White Curved Chevron in Lower Fly. Designed by Albert Brebner of Edinburgh and granted 4 July 1974. The AHB ensign is worn at shore offices and by pilot boats and harbour craft, but no longer by any named vessels. The ensign is also part of the AHB's achievement of arms (held by the dexter supporter) matriculated by the Lord Lyon King of Arms in 1985.

Army Department Vessels Yellow Crossed Swords. Added to the Admiralty Flag Book in October 1890. The Army Department Ensign is the original War Office Fleet ensign, and is now worn by vessels commanded by non-commissioned officers and operated by the Royal Logistic Corps (RLC) ~ which is the successor to the Royal Corps of Transport (RCT), and the previous Royal Army Service Corps (RASC). The crossed swords pictured in the 1908 'Flags of All Nations' were wrongly shown in the form of cutlasses rather than the customary swords. Her Majesty's Army Vessels (which were also operated by the RLC and commanded by a commissioned officer) wore a modified ensign (now dormant) described later. During World War II some 1400 vessels of the RASC sailed under the Army Department ensign, which was worn by all Army vessels until 1968. It is also flown at appropriate shore offices and worn as a uniform shoulder badge by members of the Port Maritime Regiment.

British Antarctic Survey (L) Shield, Yellow Torch on Red Triangle on Heraldic Sea above White Base. The BAS ensign was granted 1 August 1963. It is defaced with the escutcheon of the British Antarctic Territory arms, and at the time of research was worn only by the Natural Environment Research Council owned vessels RRS ERNEST SHACKLETON (the new BAS flagship, replacing the recently decommissioned BRANSFIELD) and RRS JAMES CLARK ROSS. RRSs wear the merchant jack (Union Flag within white border) as their jack, rather than the square version of the ensign to which they are entitled. The warrant does not make it clear whether this ensign should be worn by Royal Research Ships whilst on passage, or only when the ships are actually engaged on BAS work.

Combined Cadet Force (Naval Sections) (L) White Foul Anchor on Blue, within Pale Blue Ring inscribed NAVAL SECTION COMBINED CADET FORCE, surmounted by a Yellow Naval Crown. Warrant dated 31 December 1959. Replaced previously used Red Ensign. First batch issued had CORPS instead of FORCE. Worn by training vessels employed by the CCF and flown at CCF shore units and parades. [ADM 1/27126]

Consular Officer (afloat). Complete Royal Arms. Not an ensign. Flown at the bow or on a mast. Authorised in 1869. Current but rare – the author has never seen one used in over thirty years of naval service, however in 1979 when R.J. Jacques, Esq. was British Consul in Venice he invariably flew this ensign in his launch when afloat on the canals.

Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform [Circular Picture of Three Masted Ship at Sea](#). Available for use on land, and on any vessels that the department might operate. It was originally the Board of Trade ensign, and has had a variety of uses. In the 1920s troopships carrying army or air force personnel flew it and in the 1960s UK Trade Commissions used it as a car flag.

Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs [Yellow Ring around Full Colour Crown above White Fish](#). Formerly the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries & Food. Currently worn by Motor Vessels CIROLANA and CORYSTES. Authorisation about 1913, but the records appear to have been lost. [NL 13905/13]

Department for Transport [Full Colour Crown above White Anchor on Red Spoked Wheel](#). The old Ministry of Transport ensign which is available for use on land, and on any vessels that the department might operate. It was approved in September 1950 by King George VI, who had criticised the previous badge, and was hoisted for the first time in the SS EMPIRE FOWEY at Southampton on 11 July 1951. Flown by troopships and tugs, and also by sea transport launches in Singapore, Hong Kong, Aden, and at colonial lighthouses on special occasions. Permission had been obtained for it to be flown at the 153 Coastguard Stations operated by the Ministry of Transport, but this was probably rarely done for reasons of economy. In Scotland the Tudor crown (still used in 1960) was replaced by the Scottish crown. [MT 9/5226, MT 45/580]

Devon & Cornwall Police [Eiir within Ring inscribed DEVON & CORNWALL CONSTABULARY on Eight-point Star, Surmounted by a Crown, all in shades of grey](#). Granted by Ministry of Defence warrant, dated 8 September 2011, for vessels owned, chartered or hired by Devon & Cornwall Constabulary. The force was re-named Devon & Cornwall Police in March 2010 but 'Constabulary' is likely to remain on the badge until the royal cypher is changed.

Global Marine Systems Ltd [White Seated Figure of Old Father Time](#). Granted 22 January 1877. Previously used by Cable and Wireless Marine (C&W) who inherited it in 1994 from the General Post Office (GPO) via British Telecom (BT). It was first flown in March or April 1877. Currently only those GMS vessels originally bought from BT wear this ensign Cable Ships (CS) SOVEREIGN, IRIS, and MONARCH), whilst all other British registered GMS ships wear the Red Ensign. A few years ago C&W negotiated, without success, for authorisation to use the special ensign in all their vessels. CS CABLE INNOVATOR, commissioned in 1995, wears the Red Ensign as does the new flagship CS BOLD ENDEAVOUR commissioned in 1999. Perhaps the Father Time badge should now be authorised for the Red Ensign.

Government Service Blue Ensign (GSBE) [Horizontal Yellow Anchor](#). Introduced in 1864 for all naval auxiliaries and known as the Admiralty Ensign. In 1969 Royal Fleet Auxiliaries were assigned a vertical anchor, and in 1970 two yellow wavy lines were added below the anchor for vessels of the Royal Maritime Auxiliary Service (RMAS). Thus the 'Admiralty Ensign' was used only by Naval and Joint Service sail training craft and certain Government operated vessels for which no other ensign was appropriate, and in 1974 it was renamed the Government Service Ensign. However in 1996 the majority of the RMAS fleet was transferred to Serco-Denholm Ltd and once again flew the GSBE. The RMAS ensign became obsolete in 2008 (see Obsolete British Isles). The GSBE is now worn by the many ex-RMAS craft under the management of Serco-Denholm Ltd., sail training craft (STCs), Britannia Royal Naval College DARTMOUTH training vessels and certain vessels under

charter (i.e. at one time including Motor Vessels NORTHELLA and COLONEL TEMPLER). Also tenders to establishments (i.e. the now de-commissioned SULTAN VENTURER) and diving tenders (i.e. IXWORTH).

Hampshire Constabulary Marine Unit [Crown above Rose flanked by Laurel with Scroll at base, encircled by inscription HAMPSHIRE above, and CONSTABULARY below, all White.](#) Warrant signed by Rt. Hon Phillip Hammond, MP, Secretary of State for Defence, 23 November 2012.

HMS TRINCOMALEE [‘Fully Rigged Frigate surrounded by a Double Circle of Rope, in Gold.’](#) On 20 September 2005 the Secretary of State for Defence, Dr John Reid, signed a warrant for a special blue ensign to be worn by HMS TRINCOMALEE, a frigate built in 1817 and now preserved in Hartlepool as the central attraction in the maritime heritage area. The occasion marked the completion of a lengthy restoration programme following a period of over 100 years as a training ship for young people. Throughout that period TRINCOMALEE had been known by the name of the ship she had replaced, FOUROYANT, and from 1950 had worn a special ensign approved for her under that name. This was a blue ensign with a badge consisting of the letter F in red over a flash of lightning, on a white oblong background. The badge on the new ensign consists of a modified version of the HMS TRINCOMALEE Trust's seal. The frigate is sailing 'downwind' i.e. to the right on the obverse side of the flag and to the left on the reverse. The President of the Trust, Captain David Smith, OBE, RN (the inspiration behind the restoration), sought the assistance of Commander Bruce Nicolls OBE, RN in the design and manufacture of the flag. The new ensign was hoisted for the first time at a ceremony onboard on 14 December 2005.

Irish Lights [Lighthouse in Coastal Scene within White Circular Belt inscribed COMMISSIONERS OF IRISH LIGHTS.](#) Possibly granted in 1867 when the Commissioners of Irish lights were constituted. Flown (at least until recently) on special occasions (Commissioner's visits etc) at three lighthouses in Northern Ireland (Mew Island, Rathlin East and Donaghadee). Used to be flown at Ferris Point also until the flagpole was removed to build a helicopter landing pad. The Irish Lights Vessel – ILV GRANUAILE - wears the ensign of the Republic of Ireland, and tends lights throughout the island of Ireland, both north and south. Granuaile is the Irish form of Grace O'Malley, an heroic Irish princess during the time of Elizabeth I, and it has long been a traditional name for Irish vessels. This fine ship visited Portsmouth for the International Festival of the Sea in 2001.

Kent Police Marine Unit [White Horse of Kent on a Red Disc within a Blue Border inscribed KENT POLICE on Crowned Eight-Point Star.](#) Warrant issued on 28 May 2007 by Secretary of State for Defence authorising the Blue Ensign with the badge of Kent Police in the fly to be worn by vessels owned, chartered or hired by Kent Police Marine Unit. It is understood that the ensign was brought into use when PRINCESS ALEXANDRA III was commissioned on 14 May 2008 at a ceremony attended by warships of the Royal Navy and French Navy.

Marine Society (L) [Britannia and a Boy on Marine background within White Ring inscribed MARINE SOCIETY 1756.](#) Granted in 1876. The Marine Society was founded in 1756 and is the world's oldest maritime charity. The ensign is currently worn by the Training Ship EARL OF ROMNEY, and is also flown at the society's headquarters at Vauxhall in London. Early warrants were vessel specific but a general departmental warrant was issued on 7 Dec 1984. TS JONAS HANWAY (sister ship to EARL OF ROMNEY) was returned to the Ministry of Defence in 1998.

Mersey Docks and Harbour Company **M D H B** within Wreath all White. Retains the badge original authorised in 1912 for the Mersey Docks & Harbour Board although the Board was reconstituted as a Company in 1972. The original Red Ensign defaced *MDHB* was replaced by this defaced Blue Ensign, to which more prestige was attached, probably because, in 1911, one of the members of the Board of Admiralty had an interest in the MD&HB. No port authority had been hitherto been granted a defaced Blue Ensign so a warrant for a Blue Ensign defaced with its badge was first issued to the Port of London Authority. The following year the MD&HB warrant was changed, and the new Blue Ensign was first hoisted in a ship named PRINCE LOUIS OF BATTENBERG. The real Prince Louis of Battenberg, Vice Admiral and C-in-C of the Atlantic Fleet, was married to a grand-daughter of Queen Victoria.

Metropolitan Police **EiiR** within Ring inscribed METROPOLITAN POLICE on Eight-point Star all in Blue and White, Surmounted by a Full Colour Crown. Granted 5 November 1952. Despite the date of the warrant, the ensign was not permitted for use until 1 July 1953 (following the Coronation). A range of senior officers' distinguishing flags is also employed.

Ministry of Defence Police and Guarding Agency **EiiR** within Ring inscribed MINISTRY OF DEFENCE POLICE on shaded Eight-point Star surmounted by a Crown all in Black and White. Originally granted to the Ministry of Defence Police in 1971 and worn by all named and unnamed vessels. At one time the MDP ran about 15 patrol craft. New boats acquired in 1994 were named on 5th June after the Normandy beaches (JUNO, GOLD, SWORD and OMAHA), although by 2000 these craft were being phased out. On 1 April 2004 merged with the Ministry of Defence Guard Service.

Northern Lighthouse Board **White Lighthouse**. Granted 8 December 1885. At the time of research worn by Motor Vessels PHAROS and FINGAL. A smaller rectangular version of the NLB ensign is worn as a jack.

Port of Dover Police **Shield divided vertically Red and Light Blue with Three White Beasts arranged vertically; Lion Head and Fore-Body on Red, After-Part of Galley on Blue, within Blue Ring inscribed PORT OF DOVER POLICE on Grey Eight-point Star surmounted by a Crown**. Port Police established in 1933, but the Marine Section which operates one Rigid Inflatable Boat, was formed (as of 2011) 'only recently'. A Ministry of Defence Warrant for the ensign was arranged by Lord Boyce, former First Sea Lord, now Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports and Constable Dover Castle.

Port of London Authority **Yellow Sea-Lion (lion head and upper body with tail of fish) holding a Trident**. Granted in 1911. The PLA flotilla comprises about a dozen named vessels (together with numerous unnamed ones). The PLA ceremonial barge is the ROYAL NORE, originally named NORE after the lightship, but the Queen agreed to the change of name in 1978, and the Duchess of Gloucester conducted the re-naming ceremony on 4 May of that year. Other flags unique to the PLA and used afloat are the Board Flag, the Chairman's Pennant, the Vice Chairman's Pennant and the Statutory Harbour Master's Flag.

Royal Engineers **Arm rising from Mural Crown, Winged at Wrist, holding Thunderbolt with Flashes of Lightning, in Yellow and Grey**. The badge on a Blue Ensign is similar to the obsolete badge of the Submarine Mining Service but differs in some details and reappeared in the Admiralty Flag Book of 1907 as "War Office :

Royal Engineers". It was flown at the RE Diving unit Gunwharf (Portsmouth) until all Service diving moved to the Joint Service Defence Diving School on Horsea Island (Portsmouth) in 1996. The ensign became dormant with the formation of Royal Logistics Corps, but has been revived for the Royal Engineers Boat Squadron.

Royal Fleet Auxiliary [Vertical Yellow Anchor](#). Current design approved by HM Queen Elizabeth II in 1968 and introduced from 16 June 1969. Before then the RFA used the Government Service Blue Ensign (then known as the Admiralty Ensign) with a horizontal anchor (see above). The RFA flotilla comprises about twenty major vessels. A square version is used as the jack, and the Commodore RFA has a distinguishing pennant.

Sea Cadet Corps. [White Foul Anchor on Blue, within Pale Blue Ring inscribed SEA CADET CORPS, surmounted by a Yellow Naval Crown, Motto on Pale Blue Scroll below](#). Designed by Commander H Gresham Carr MSNR and granted on 3 Oct 1942 after the Admiralty took control of SCC units (previously run by the Navy League). Minor alterations colour and star below anchor in 1948. Conditions for use laid down in ACRO 28 of 1 Dec 1999. Motto 'Ready aye ready' taken from the motto of Captain Robert Falcon Scott. Flown as the ensign in vessels run by the SCC and the defacing badge is also used as the cadets' beret badge. SCC craft wear the merchant jack as their jack. On 7 Nov 1951 the Admiralty approved the use of this ensign by recognised SCC units in Australia also. A version with a revised badge and the Australian White Ensign in the canton replaced it in, or soon after, 1973.

Scottish Executive Rural Affairs Department [S F flanking a Foul Anchor surmounted by Scottish Crown within a Thistle Garland incorporating D A F S at the top; All in Yellow except Full Colour Crown](#). This Department of the Scottish Executive runs two maritime agencies, the Scottish Fisheries Protection Agency (SFPA) and the Fisheries Research Service (FRS). The ensign, which is used by both agencies, was granted to the former Scottish Fisheries Board (established 16 Oct 1882) on 26 Mar 1885. "However the badge was not matriculated by the Lord Lyon until 1988. For reasons unknown the achievement describes an imperial crown (with raised arches) as the royal cipher, although the drawing depicts a St Edward's crown (with depressed arches). Thus, until replaced by the Scottish crown, c2002, the Scottish Fisheries ensign bore a royal crown in the imperial shape long after it should have been replaced by St Edward's crown." At the time of research worn by Fishery Protection Vessels NORNA, SULISKER, WESTRA and VIGILANT (and inshore craft MOIDART and MORVEN) of the SFPA, as well as by the government owned contract operated FRS vessels (comprising the recently commissioned replacement Fishery Research Vessel SCOTIA, together with FRV CLUPEA). FPVs are painted greenish grey whilst FRVs, which used to be black and buff like RMA vessels, are now painted in a more Scottish livery of blue and white. Vessels wearing this ensign fought in World War II as far afield as the Mediterranean.

UK Border Force / Agency [Crown above Shield of Royal Arms overlying Circular Blue Ring inscribed UNITED KINGDOM BORDER AGENCY on a Sixteen-Point Star](#). The department was formed on 1 April 2008 by a merger of the port of entry functions of HM Revenue and Customs, the Border and Immigration Agency and UK visas. Since March 2012 that part of the Agency dealing with, among other things, coastal patrols, has been known as **UK Border Force**, operating (in 2013) HM Cutters, SEARCHER, SEEKER, SENTINEL, VALIANT, VIGILANT, and numerous other small patrol craft.

Public Service Jacks

Although Jacks are not discussed in this paper it should be noted that public service departments are authorised to use a square version of their Blue Ensign as a Jack. Currently only the Royal Fleet Auxiliary, Marine Society and Northern Lighthouse Board vessels are believed to do this. These privileged jacks are not included in the totals because they are only variants of existing ensigns. HMAVs wore the Union Flag as their jack, as did HM Air Force Vessels when they existed. The British Antarctic Survey and the Sea Cadet Corps use the merchant jack (also known as the pilot jack).

Privileged Yacht Clubs and Rowing Clubs

Yacht Clubs. The many different Blue Ensigns currently authorised for Yacht Clubs world-wide, all of which are listed in Chapter 2 together with descriptive notes about many of them.

Rowing Clubs. Only one privileged rowing club is known to exist. The Royal Chester Rowing Club was established in 1838 and granted royal patronage at the end of June 1840 (announced in the Chester Chronicle on June 26th). The Blue Ensign defaced *RCRC* dates from the mid 1850s, but no warrant details are known to exist.

Australia

(5)

Australia is a rich source of ensigns of all kinds, especially defaced Blue Ensigns. They are authorised for vessels belonging to, or in the service of, national and state governments, and are also official land flags in several cases. Before the mid-1950s these flags were authorised by Admiralty warrant, but since then they have been approved by Australian government departments or NDPBs. The Australian Flags Act specifies the design of Federal flags and gives the Governor-General the power to authorize other flags and their use. The following examples currently exist.

The National Flag (L) [Five Star Southern Cross on Fly, Seven-Point Star in Lower Hoist, all White](#). The Australian National Flag (ANF) was chosen after a competition in 1901 which had over 32,823 entries. Five were chosen as having equal merit and shared the £200 prize. The winning design was approved by King Edward VII in 1903, amended in 1908 when a seventh point was added to the Commonwealth Star, and published in the Australian Gazette on 22 May 1909. The original Admiralty Warrant was vague describing the Southern Cross as “..five smaller stars”. A more precise description was published in the Australian Gazette of 23 March 1934. It is worn as the jack by Royal Australian Navy vessels. There are additional defaced Blue Ensigns used in Australia as flags (and as ensigns) by the states and maritime authorities listed below. It is however likely that changes may occur in the use of these flags and readers with more up to date knowledge are encouraged to inform the author. Aside from the well known state flags themselves, Australian ensigns are based on either a defaced ANF; a defaced state flag; or a defaced 'plain' Blue Ensign; and examples of each are given.

Australian Customs Service Ensign (L) [Australian National Flag with CUSTOMS in White between the Commonwealth Star and the Southern Cross](#). Introduced 1 January 1988 under legislation published 17 December 1987. It replaced the 1904 defacement HMC between Commonwealth Star and the Southern Cross.

The following three flags may now be dormant.

Maritime Services Board of New South Wales (L?) [Yellow Two-Masted Sailing Ship and Four Stars on Red Disc within Pale Blue and Yellow Ring, Scroll below inscribed THE MARITIME SERVICES BOARD OF N.S.W.](#) Probably authorised in 1995 when an Act established “the corporatisation of the three former Maritime Services Board port authorities (Sydney Newcastle and Port Kembla Ports Corporations)”.

Fremantle Port Authority Flag. (L?) [F.P.A. beneath Swan of State Flag.](#)

Port Headland Port Authority Flag. (L?) [P.H.P.A. beneath Swan of State Flag.](#)
Adopted 15 June 1971.

New Zealand

(2)

In Australia we have seen how Blue Ensigns proliferate, but this is not so in New Zealand. All New Zealand flags are authorised by the New Zealand Flags, Emblems and Names Protection Act of 1981.

The National Flag (L) [Southern Cross: Four White Edged, Red Stars.](#) The above mentioned Act declared the New Zealand Blue Ensign (current design 1902) was to be known as the 'New Zealand Flag' (NZF). The NZF is also worn as a jack by Royal New Zealand Navy vessels. The NZF was designed by Lieutenant (later Admiral) Albert Markham of HMS BLANCHE in 1869.

Customs Flag. (L?) [NZ CUSTOMS SERVICE in White between Hoist and Lowest Star.](#) “The Customs flag shall be the New Zealand Ensign with the addition in the fly of the words ‘NZ Customs Service’ in bold characters.” New Zealand Customs and Excise Act 1996.

Cook Islands

(L) [Circle of Fifteen White Stars](#) Approved by Royal Warrant signed by the Queen, and introduced on 4 August 1979. The circle of white stars represents the islands. Not to be confused with the illegal Euro Ensign bearing twelve gold stars. This flag is also used as an ensign by vessels in local waters.

Fiji

[Shield with Yellow Lion on Red above Cross of St George with Emblems in Each Quarter.](#) Vessels authorised by the Fijian government to wear the Fijian Blue Ensign (1970). Fiji left the Commonwealth in Sept 1987 but retained British derived flags. Fiji rejoined the Commonwealth in 1997 at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Edinburgh that year, but was suspended 1 September 2006.

Land Flags

Australia States

(6)

State of New South Wales Flag [On a White Disc, a Yellow Lion between Four Yellow Eight-Point Stars on a Red Cross](#). Adopted in 1876 and also worn as the ensign by vessels of the Royal Volunteer Coastal Patrol; a privilege accorded in respect of services during World War II.

State of Queensland Flag. [Crown in centre of Pale Blue Maltese Cross on White Disc](#). Adopted 29 November 1876 but crown changed in 1953. Maltese Cross originally Navy Blue.

State of South Australia Flag. [On Yellow Disc, Front of Black and White Shrike with Raised Wings](#). Adopted 13 November 1904 and officially proclaimed the State Flag 30 October 1980. The badge may have been designed by Robert Craig, though this is disputed.

State of Tasmania Flag. [Red Walking Lion on White Disc](#). Adopted 29 November 1875. Very minor alterations on 3 December 1975 when the ensign was officially proclaimed the distinguishing flag of the State of Tasmania.

State of Victoria Flag. [Crown above White Southern Cross](#). Adopted in 1877 with minor alterations in 1953.

State of Western Australia Flag. [Black Swan on Yellow Disc](#). Current design adopted in 1953 when the black swan was turned to face the hoist.

Flags of Office

(5)

Chief of Army's Personal Flag [Australian National Flag, with Australian Army Badge between the Commonwealth Star and Southern Cross](#). Introduced in 2001. It replaced the flag, listed under Obsolete Ensigns as Chief of General Staff.

Governors of Australian States [Crown above Badge on State Flag](#).

New South Wales Authorised 19 January 1981

South Australia Authorised in 1976.

Tasmania Authorised in 1977. Possibly two versions exist but counted as one.

Western Australia Authorised 27 May 1988.

Note. Governor of Queensland has retained the original defaced Union Jack. Governor of Victoria has a yellow flag.

Police and Emergency Services

(4)

Fire and Rescue NSW. Two Fire-Axes and Flaming Red Torch on Blue Shield Shape behind Arms of NSW on Red Disc, Surrounding Scroll inscribed FIRE AND RESCUE to the Left and NEW SOUTH WALES to the Right. Was **New South Wales Fire Brigades** until 1 January 2011. Date of authorisation not known.

NSW State Emergency Service Red Flower and Two Green Leaves (waratah) on Blue within Yellow Ring inscribed **STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE NEW SOUTH WALES**; Crown, mostly within ring, at Top. Set up in 1955; reorganised 1972 and 1989; manned by volunteers.

South Australia Police Department Wattle Garland with Crown, around Blue Ring inscribed **SOUTH AUSTRALIA POLICE**, enclosing Shrike of State Badge on White. In some case the badge is on a white disc. Introduced 1993.

Victoria Police Force. Five White Stars on Blue Cross on Red Disc within Blue Ring inscribed **VICTORIA POLICE** above Scroll inscribed **UPHOLD THE RIGHT**; both superimposed on Inverted Five-Point Star below Crown; all superimposed on Green Wreath. Authorised 20 October 1974. The VPF flag was designed in 1955 by Major General Porter (using the badge & motto designed in 1946 by R K Knox & Chief Commissioner Duncan). First flown in 1956 but not formally dedicated until 1974. St Edward's crown replaced Imperial design of royal crown in 1972 as with many Australian ensigns. The original motto, 'Tenez le Droit' was replaced in 1985.

United Kingdom

(6)

HM Coastguard Crown above Yellow Octagon around Yellow initials **C G** on Blue. Introduced 28 Oct 1974. Formed in 1822 as the Coast Guard, and formalised by the Coast Guard Act of 1856, when control passed from Customs to the Admiralty. Transferred to the Board of Trade in 1923 (when the two words were combined into 'Coastguard'), the Ministry of Transport in 1945, Department of Trade in 1964, and incorporated into the Coastguard Agency in 1994. Her Majesty's Coastguard has over 20 general purpose boats but they do not normally wear an ensign (by default) which is now limited to shore installations such as the Maritime Rescue Co-ordination Centres (MRCCs) and several other smaller Rescue Centres around the British coast. The Coastguard Agency combined with the Marine Safety Agency on 1 April 1998 to form the Marine Safety and Coastguard Agency (MSA).

HM Revenue & Customs Crown above Yellow Portcullis with Chains. Flag previously used by HM Customs & Excise. (See UK Border Agency page 33) The design was authorised 16 August 1948 but not introduced until 6 August 1949 at the request of HMC (reason unknown). This ensign is used by the (quite separate) Gibraltar Customs Service.

Lloyd's of London Shield of City of London above Angled Yellow Foul Anchor on Blue all within a Yellow Ornamental Frame. Granted 9 September 1882. Only used ashore at Lloyd's offices, and, until it closed down, on appropriate occasions at Gibraltar signal station (RN manned but partly funded by Lloyd's). The defacement is the same as Lloyd's Yacht Club privileged Red Ensign. The Lloyd's defaced White Ensign (granted in 1896) became obsolete in 1914.

Pangbourne College Ensign. Three Masted Ship on White within Brown Ring inscribed in the upper half FORTITER AC FIDELITER above PANGBOURNE COLLEGE below, surmounted by a Naval Crown. Introduced in 2011 when it replaced the earlier badge which had no crown or inscription. Was founded in 1917 as a Nautical College by Devitt & Moore to produce better educated officers for the Merchant Navy. A public school since 1969. Ensign permitted by Admiralty in the 1920s but paper work lost. [ADM 1/8760/221] A new warrant was not needed when the badge was changed.

Royal Hospital School St George's Cross Shield with Crown at Centre and Anchors in each Quarter, Yellow Naval Crown above and Motto below. Originally sited at Greenwich, in the building that is now the National Maritime Museum, but moved to Holbrook in Suffolk in 1933. Flag first hoisted 25 July 1953. Currently only used ashore, but permission is believed to have been sought to use afloat in school yachts and craft.

Seamen's Hospital Society SEAMEN'S HOSPITAL SOCIETY in White. Established afloat at Greenwich in 1821 in the ex-HMS DREADNOUGHT. RN Colours were granted to the vessel in 1822, later changing to the Blue Ensign and pennant. The Hospital came ashore in 1870 and continued to fly the ensign (probably adopting the distinctive defacement at this time), firstly on Founder's Day (8 March), and since 1993 on a daily basis. No current warrant exists (most probably lost as a result of enemy action during World War II).

Red Ensigns

Undefaced

Correctly known as the Red Ensign of Her Majesty's Fleet, it is authorised for all vessels and craft belonging to Her Majesty's subjects resident in the UK, Crown Dependencies and Overseas Territories which are not entitled by warrant or other legal authority to wear other national colours. Until the end of 1999 it was also worn by HM Ships undergoing contractors' sea trials, and it is also worn by the historic HMS WARRIOR in Portsmouth (which also flies the red masthead pennant of the Red Squadron). In August 2000 an announcement by the Deputy Prime Minister (John Prescott – ex merchant naval steward) invited all citizens to fly the Red Ensign on 3rd September - a worthy idea, which hopefully will catch on widely. The day has been commemorated in Australia and New Zealand since 2008 and 2010 respectively. The Third of September was chosen because on that date in 1939, a few hours after war had been declared against Germany, the first shipping casualty occurred when the Donaldson Line passenger ship, ATHENIA was sunk with the loss of 112 passengers and crew. For almost six years barely a day went by without the loss of merchant ships and their crews.

Defaced

Crown Dependencies

(3)

Isle of Man Civil Ensign **Three Armoured Legs Radiating from the centre.** Defaced with the Arms of Man (remember that the Arms of Man are legs!) and authorised by Royal Warrant 27 August 1971 for use by local people, and for vessels registered in Douglas. The red land flag authorised 9 July 1968 also has the famous gold triskelion as its defacement.

Bailiwick of Guernsey Civil Ensign **Yellow cross flared at tips.** Designed by Commander Bruce Nicholls OBE RN and authorised by Royal Warrant 30 April 1985. No reference to registration but restricts use by companies “to vessels operating in waters adjacent to the Channel Islands” as stated on the warrant: however ‘adjacent’ is not defined further. The land flag (a St George's Flag defaced with same yellow cross) was authorised on the same day.

Bailiwick of Jersey Civil Ensign **Three Lions on a Red Shield topped with an Ancient Crown** On 23 June 2010 the States Assembly approved an optional Red Ensign authorised under Art.4(1)(b)(ii) of Shipping (Jersey) Law 2002 as an alternative to the plain Red Ensign for vessels register at the Port of Jersey. The defacement is the Arms of the Royal House of Plantagenet.

U.K. Overseas Territories

(6)

Although most Overseas Territories have Blue Ensign land flags, not all boast an equivalent Red Ensign for use afloat, nevertheless this is slowly being addressed by the government departments concerned. The following Red Ensigns are in current use: -

Bermuda. **White Shield with Green Base on which a Seated Red Lion holds a Shield bearing a Wrecked Ship.** National colours for vessels registered on the Bermuda Register by virtue of section 17(1)(b) of The Merchant Shipping Act 2002 (No. 35 of 2002). Alternative use of the plain Red Ensign is permitted. A Red Ensign with the Arms of Bermuda has been the de facto land flag for Bermuda since about 1915, which is an exception to the general rule of using the defaced Blue Ensign for that purpose. Bermuda's unique use of the Red Ensign as a land flag may stem from Canadian influence. The defacing arms were adopted 4 October 1910.

British Virgin Islands **White Figure and Twelve Lamps on Green Shield; VIGILATE on Yellow Scroll below.** Authorized by s. 70(1) of the British Virgin Islands Merchant Shipping Act, 2001. Alternative use of the plain Red Ensign is permitted. An earlier unofficial ensign had been adopted in 1956. It is possible that some versions of this ensign, which was known as the Merchant Jack, did not have the motto and scroll.

Cayman Islands **Shield with Yellow Lion on Red above Three Green Stars on Heraldic Sea; Turtle Crest, Motto on Yellow Scroll, all on White Disc.** Widely used since 1959 especially by yachts, and as a flag of convenience for merchant vessels since 1987. The Cayman Islands is a Category I Register of the Red Ensign Group (British Register). The Cayman Island Red Ensign was first authorised by Order In Council, 1988, for vessels registered in Cayman; the flag was subsequently (and is currently) authorised by section 69 (1) of The Merchant Shipping Law (Cayman Is.) (2008 rev.)

Falkland Islands Shield with White Ram on Blue, above Sailing Ship on Heraldic Sea; Motto on Yellow Scroll below. An unofficial Red Ensign was long used illegally, but in 1996 the Department of Transport (DoT) decided to establish an official civil ensign, and two proposals were submitted by Dr Crampton. A change of staff at the subsequently formed Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR) delayed further action, and it was not until 16 December 1998 that the ensign was eventually approved by Her Majesty, coming into effect on 25 January 1999 Merchant Shipping (Falkland Islands Colours) Order 1998 (UK Statutory Instrument 1998 No 3147). The design had the Falkland Island arms on a white disc in the fly. Her Majesty subsequently (9 May 2007) approved a modified version with a larger defacement and no white disc.

Gibraltar White above Red Shield, Red Gateway on White, Yellow Key on Red, MONTIS INSIGNIA CALPE on White Scroll below Shield. Gibraltar Red Ensigns have been manufactured unofficially in the past but not authorised for use until 1996 when the Gibraltar Shipping Register was established by Order in Council. A newly designed version of the Gibraltar Red Ensign was authorised by the Merchant Shipping (Gibraltar Colours) Ordinance on 14 February 1996 (effective from 19 March 1996) for civil craft registered in Gibraltar. The defacing badge is quite different from the much older blue ensign badge mentioned earlier. Use is restricted to registered vessels with apparently no plain Red Ensign option. Unregistered vessels use plain Red Ensign.

Turks and Caicos Islands Yellow Shield with a Conch Shell, Lobster and a Turk's Head Cactus in the corners. Adopted 7 November 1968, albeit without official sanction. This ensign is also technically illegal. In recent decades (i.e., since the 1960's) there has been a strong custom of using a local version of the Red Ensign, both by some locally registered craft, and by visiting craft, especially U.S., as a courtesy flag. The Shipping Ordinance 2002 (T&C) allows for an Order in Council to proclaim a local Red Ensign, but so far, this has not happened.

Of the territories with indigenous inhabitants, this leaves only Anguilla, Montserrat, Pitcairn and St Helena without their own Red Ensigns.

U.K. Non Departmental Public Bodies (NDPBs)

(10)

Company of Thames Watermen and Lightermen Shield with Crossed Oars and Tasselled Cushions on Blue Panel above Brown Boat on Heraldic Sea. This ensign was granted in 2003 and unveiled by Admiral Sir Alan West, First Sea Lord in early 2004. It bears the shield of arms of the Company in the fly.

Corporation of Trinity House St George's Flag with similar Three-Masted Ships in each Quarter. Possibly dating from 1771. This is the only original defaced Red Ensign surviving in public service following the general change to Blue Ensigns in 1864; currently worn by Trinity House Vessels PATRICIA and MERMAID. The other Red Ensigns mentioned in this section are much more recent. The Trinity House Lighthouse Service (THLS), the Northern Lighthouse Board (NLB) and the Commissioners of Irish Lights (CIL) together form the General Lighthouse Authority (GLA) and between them run five named vessels covering the entire British Isles.

Corporation of Trinity House for Hull **Three Yellow Stars on a Red Bar across an Inverted Yellow Anchor on a Green Shield.** Hull Trinity House has always been separate from Trinity House.

Fisheries

Eastern Sea Fisheries. **Quartered Shield on White Sky and Blue Sea within Circular Border inscribed EASTERN SEA FISHERIES JOINT COMMITTEE 1894.** Warrant issued 9 August 1900. The ESF Committee is believed to be seeking to change its badge (dated 1894) to reflect more accurately its present area of authority. At the time of research worn by ESF PROTECTOR III, THREE COUNTIES and PICES III.

North West Inshore Fisheries & Conservation Authority **Enigmatic Yellow Monogram which includes letters S F.** Formerly North Wales & North West Sea Fisheries until 1 April 2010 when fisheries functions in Wales were transferred to the Welsh Assembly, and North West Sea Fisheries until 1 April 2011 when it merged with Cumbria Sea Fisheries Committee. Authorised by Warrant 22 June 1901, when the authority was called the Lancashire & Western Sea Fisheries. At the time of research was worn by Motor Vessel L & W PROTECTOR. Unusually (perhaps uniquely?) the LWSF warrant is edged in black, in mourning for Queen Victoria who died on 22 January 1901, exactly five months before the warrant date.

Welsh Assembly Government Fisheries **Daffodil and Two Fish on a White Shield with Red Dragon Crest on large Yellow Bordered Green Disc.** Was South Wales Sea Fisheries until 1 April 2010 when North Wales Fisheries was transferred from North West Fisheries. A new defacement was adopted (without official sanction) in 1994 to replace the 1979 version. At the time of research worn by Motor Vessel CRANOGEN.

Note. There are twelve English and Welsh Sea Fisheries Committees, only three of which enjoy the privilege of a special ensign. The remainder are assumed to use the undefaced Red Ensign.

Maritime Volunteer Service **Naval Crown above Yellow Bordered Blue Disc on which V is superimposed on an Anchor, both Yellow.** The MVS gained formal approval and a warrant for its defaced Red Ensign (designed by Commander Bruce Nicholls OBE RN) in mid 1998, bearing the MVS badge in the fly. Following the demise of the Royal Naval Auxiliary Service (the obsolete RNXS ensign is listed in Chapter 3), the MVS seeks to encourage people to take part in maritime activities and has recently commissioned the ex-Sea Cadet Corps tender Motor Vessel APPLEBY in which the ensign will be worn.

National Historic Ships **Circular Badge depicting White Ship's Bow with Blue Bow-Wave.** Introduced in 2010(?) for the over one thousand ships on the National Register of Historic Vessels. Those of particular interest or significance form **The National Historic Fleet** and are entitled to an ensign with a **Yellow Naval Crown above the Badge.**

Nautical Training Corps **Tudor Rose superimposed on shank of Grey Vertical Plain Anchor on White Disc.** Granted by the Ministry of Defence in 2009.

Royal National Lifeboat Institution St George's Flag with Crown above Yellow Foul Anchor on Vertical Arm, and Red Initials **R N L I** arranged, one in each Quarter. Authorised in 1964. The defacement is the RNLI house flag, which is flown at shore installations. The RNLI was founded in 1824. The familiar RNLI house flag is based on St George's cross and is much older than the ensign. It was designed by Miss Leonora Preston in 1884, formally adopted in 1908, and has been painted on lifeboats since 1920. The RNLI currently operates about 280 named lifeboats in the UK and Ireland. In 1923 the Admiralty refused to grant a Blue Ensign for a new 60 foot motor lifeboat at New Brighton.

Scout Association White Fleur-de-Lis on Purple Disc, Naval Crown above, **BE PREPARED** in White below. Authorised 15 April 1952, when the ensign was shown with a yellow fleur-de-lis on a green disc. Only permitted for those Scout troops (maximum of 100 nation-wide) classified as Royal Navy Recognised. These troops are also granted a special pennant. The defacing badge includes a fleur-de-lis and a naval crown. In 1937 the Sea Scouts were refused a Blue Ensign following withdrawal of recognition in 1933. [ADM 1/23993]

Privileged Yacht Clubs

There are several different examples of defaced Red Ensigns granted to Yacht Clubs world-wide, and these are listed in the next chapter.

The Commonwealth

(3)

Australian Civil Ensign Five Star Southern Cross on Fly, Seven-Point Star in Lower Hoist, all White. Authorised 15 April 1954, and is virtually identical to the flag gazetted in 1908, with minor alterations to the stars similar to the National Flag.

New Zealand Civil Ensign Southern Cross of Four White Stars. Original ensign authorised 7 February 1899 replaced by current version in 1903.

Fijian Civil Ensign Shield with Yellow Lion on Red above Cross of St George with Emblems in Each Quarter. Authorised in 1970. Retained when Fiji left the Commonwealth in 1987 and continued in use on re-joining in 1997. Nevertheless this ensign seem to be gradually being replaced by the national flag for use as a civilian ensign.

Land Flags

(4)

Hull City Council. Three Yellow Coronets set Vertically on a Blue Shield. This flag requires further research but when the council is sitting a red ensign with this defacement is flown above the city hall.

Manitoba Provincial Flag Shield Cross of St George above Buffalo standing on a Rock, Green Background. Land flag authorised by Royal warrant on 12 May 1966. The same comment applies as for Ontario.

Ontario Provincial Flag **Shield with Cross of St George above Three Yellow Joined Maple Leaves on Green.** Land flag authorised by the Queen on 21 May 1965. Also used on inland waters as the provincial civil ensign, although strictly speaking this contravenes Section 91 of the Canada Shipping Act (1985).

Norfolk Island (Islander's Flag) **Pre-1801 Union, Green Norfolk Pine on White Disc.** Authorised 26 November 1985. The flag reflects islanders descent from the HMS BOUNTY mutineers. Adopted by the Society of the Descendants of the Pitcairn Settlers in 1985. Apparently not well known and little used.

Some Red Ensigns that never were

It is interesting to note how things might have been different. On 17 January 1918, King George V expressed a desire that the Merchant Marine's war service should be recognised by the award of a white fimbriated red cross upon the Red Ensign – just for merchant ships and not for yachts. The King also proposed a similar idea for the Blue Ensign, and he wished to announce his plan on the 4th August – the fourth anniversary of the declaration of war. However at Admiralty Board meetings on 18th and 25th July. Their Lordships advised against this. Their reasons were that the Red and Blue ensigns were well known and loved and had served in many glorious actions. Also the proposed changes had no historical significance and furthermore such a change would require an alteration to the Merchant Shipping Act. They also wisely realised that the addition of a red (St George's) cross would only symbolise England, and they went on to point out the difficulty of addressing those civil ensigns already bearing defacements in the UK, Dominions and Colonies. Meanwhile the Board of Trade suggested a white cross instead of a red cross might be added to the ensigns. Other ideas included a red bordered and blue bordered Jack. These proposals were discussed again on 2 January 1919, but in the end all were dismissed and the King was persuaded to drop the plan. [ADM 1/8530/203]

Sky Blue Ensigns

(9)

Royal Air Force Ensign. **Three Roundels superimposed Red upon White upon Blue.** Authorised 26 July 1920. Used ashore at all RAF stations, and at one time by RAF vessels (large vessels were prefixed HMAFV and/or RAFV - whilst small RAF marine craft were prefixed RAFMC). [ADM 1/12493] Other than official RAF locations, the RAF ensign is flown on special occasions at the Battle of Britain memorial at Biggin Hill, and at Canterbury's Westgate during Battle of Britain week each September. In addition the following UK derivatives exist

Royal Air Force Ensign Variants

Air Training Corps Ensign. **Yellow Falcon with raised wings within Red Ring, inscribed AIR TRAINING CORPS and surmounted by an Astral Crown with VENTURE : ADVENTURE on Yellow Scroll below.** Authorised June 1941.

Royal Air Forces Association. **Three-Quarter view of Silver Eagle with Raised Wings perched on a Globe superimposed on a Blue Ring inscribed ROYAL AIR FORCES ASSOCIATION.** The land flag of the Royal Air Forces Association (note the plural to include Commonwealth forces). It is flown ashore on appropriate commemorative occasions, often alongside the RAF Ensign.

It should be noted that the Royal Naval Association does not have an equivalent flag (only standards) although the Royal British Legion does have a flag (as well as numerous standards). Date of authorisation unknown.

RAF Ensigns - Commonwealth Versions

Royal Australian Air Force Ensign. **Air Force Blue version of Australian National Flag with Southern Cross tilted to accommodate Red Kangaroo on White Circle within Blue Ring in Corner of Lower Fly.** Current design authorised 6 May 1982.

Royal New Zealand Air Force Ensign. **Royal Air Force Ensign with White NZ on the Red Circle.** Conferred on the RNZAF by King George VI on 29 August 1939, and posted in the New Zealand Gazette on 14 September 1939.

Commonwealth Civil Air Ensigns

Australia. **Air Force Blue version of Australian National Flag with Overall White Edged Blue Cross, and Southern Cross tilted Forty-Five Degrees Anti-Clockwise.** Gazetted 4 March 1948 when the yellow stars of the original 1935 design were replaced by white stars.

Fiji. **Air Force Blue version of Fiji Light Blue Flag with the Shield superimposed on Overall White edged Blue Cross.** Probably dormant.

New Zealand. **UK Civil Air Ensign with addition of Four Red Star Southern Cross in Lower Fly.** Adopted 16 November 1938 but now little used.

United Kingdom. **Air Force Blue Ensign with Overall White edged Blue Cross.** The UK Civil Air Ensign was introduced by Order in Council on 23 September 1931, superseded by another Order in Council, dated 18 March 1937, which extended its use. Provisions for its use are covered in relevant Air Navigation Acts, but sadly this ensign is effectively dormant although efforts are being made to encourage its use once again.

Ensigns of Other Colours

(16)

National Flags

(3)

Fiji. **Light Blue: Shield with Yellow Lion on Red above Cross of St George with Emblems in Each Quarter.** First flown on Independence Day 10 October 1970. Retained on becoming a republic and departing from the Commonwealth on 15 October 1987. Fiji re-joined the Commonwealth in 1997, but has been 'fully suspended' since 1 September 2009.

Niue. Yellow: Yellow Star on Blue Disc at Centre of Union, Yellow Star on Each Arm of St George's Cross. Authorised by the Niue Flag Act of 15 October 1975. The Union Flag signifies that Niue had become a British Protectorate in 1900.

Tuvalu. Light Blue: Nine Yellow Stars. On 1 October 1995 (or possibly 1 January 1996) Tuvalu adopted a national flag without the Union Flag in the canton to celebrate 17 years of self-rule, however Tuvalu reverted to the original (1978) flag bearing the Union Flag on 17 April 1997 following popular demand.

Sub-National

(2)

British Indian Ocean Territory. Heraldic Sea: Crown and Palm Tree. Granted by Royal authority 4 October 1990. It is flown outside the office of the resident Commander RN who is both military and civil representative in the territory of H.M. Government.

Hawaii State Flag. Horizontally Striped White/Red/Blue: White/Red/Blue: White/Red. Formally adopted as the state flag by the Hawaiian Constitution of 1845. Its use is governed by Hawaiian State Statutes in which the Canton is described merely by its design without any reference to the name Union Flag or the British historical connection.

Flags of Office

(5)

UK Joint Service Command Flags. Blue, over Red, over Sky Blue. Ministry of Defence Emblem (Blue Foul Anchor, Red Crossed Swords, Sky Blue Eagle) in the fly.

Chief of Defence Staff. Ministry of Defence Emblem on White within Oval Garter surmounted by a Crown. 16 July 1965.

Unified Commander-in-Chief. Ministry of Defence Emblem on White within Circular Yellow Garland surmounted by a Crown. 9 November 1965.

Unified Commander (3 Star). Ministry of Defence Emblem on White Disc surmounted by a Crown. 19 December 1967.

Unified Commander (2 Star). Ministry of Defence Emblem on White Disc.
19 December 1967

A one star Joint Commander uses a triangular pennant with a very ugly and misshapen Union Flag in the hoist.

Governor of Australian State of Victoria. Yellow: Crown above Red Southern Cross. Authorised 18 April 1984.

Other Flags

(4)

Fire & Rescue Service of Western Australia. Was Western Australian Fire Brigades until 1995. **Blue with Red 4th Quarter: Black Swan on Yellow Disc in Centre of Fly.** Royal Warrant dated 7 October 1979. The WA Fire Brigades Board flag was designed by Acting Chief Officer Stephens to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the WA Fire Service. According to one account Stephens intended to combine the flag of Western Australia with the flag of the UK World War II National Fire Service (Red Ensign with blue 4th quarter), but was misled by, possibly, Campbell & Evans' 'The Book of Flags', in which the National Fire Service flag is incorrectly described as being blue with a red 4th quarter.

Fire Service College. **Red with Blue 4th Quarter containing Badge: EiiR within Red Ring inscribed FIRE SERVICE COLLEGE on Eight-point Star, Surmounted by a Crown.** The current version is similar to that authorised for the National Fire Service on 22 January 1944 (now obsolete), except for the defacing badge in the lower fly.

Royal British Legion. **Blue over Yellow over Blue; Blue inscription on Yellow Band.** The flag follows a similar pattern to the better known Standards which were adopted without authority in 1921. [HO 290/46] In some cases the Union is reduced in height to match the upper blue band, but in others the Union has the usual proportions and the bands are in the proportion 2:1:1. Date of authorisation not known.

Royal Flying Doctor Service, Queensland Section. **Broad, Light Blue, St George's Cross on a White Flag, Union Canton, Southern Cross with Yellow Stars outlined in Red.** The top Star is in the top hoist corner of the Upper Fly and the bottom Star in the bottom fly corner of the Lower Hoist. **Badge of the Service in the Lower Fly. (Queensland Crown and Cross on White Disc flanked by Yellow Wings and Four Red Lightning Flashes. Antennae above and Wattle Spray below, both in Black)** Assumed to be current. The yellow stars suggest that the flag was created in the period 1935-1948, when the Civil Air Ensign had yellow stars. An example hangs in St Andrews Uniting Church, Brisbane.

Tuvalu Customs. **Upper fly Blue, lower hoist and fly White, with H.M.C. on lower half.**

Old Flags in Current Use

Air Force Association of Canada Ensign. **Royal Air Force Roundel with Central Disc replaced by a Red Maple Leaf.** The Royal Canadian Air Force Ensign (authorised by King George VI in June 1940) was not retired until three years after the introduction of the present Canadian Flag, when the Canadian Forces were unified, and even then the flag continued to be used by the Royal Canadian Air Force Association. This was officially sanctioned by the Queen in September 1973. The maple leaf in the roundel was changed to the 1965 version at the same time. The flag was made copyright as the Association's trademark on 1 January 1997 and published in the Canadian Trade-Marks Journal Volume 44 No 2201.

Australian Federation Flag. *WHITE: OVERALL BLUE CROSS.* First recorded in a flag chart by Sydney Harbour Master, Captain John Nicholson (the son of a Bermondsey baker), on 31 December 1831. Two versions existed – one with stars on the cross arms, and one without (page 85). Now used as the house flag of the Sydney Maritime Museum, and occasionally by yachts of the Sydney Amateur Sailing Club who used the ensign unofficially as far back as the 19th century. A good example of an historic (and strictly obsolete) flag still in use.

Canadian Blue Ensign. *Shield, British Royal Arms with lions of 4th Quarter replaced by Three Yellow Fleur-de-lis on Blue, above Three Red Maple Leaves on White.* The Royal Victoria Yacht Club uses the former Canadian Blue Ensign (page 105) as a house flag both afloat (sometimes as an ensign) and also ashore. In addition the Royal Canadian Yacht Club successfully petitioned the Canadian Heraldic Authority in 1996 to use the ensign as a Club House flag. This flag is also worn as the Jack by the RCN historic ships in Toronto and Halifax.

Humber Conservancy Commissioners. *Circular Picture of a River God and the Humber within a Girdle inscribed HUMBER CONSERVANCY COMMISSIONERS.* In 1907 the Commissioners were replaced by a Board, which in 1968 became part of British Transport Docks Board, and it was assumed that the ensign had become obsolete. However it is still flown, from the historic Spurn Light Vessel alongside in Hull Marina.

Murray River Flag of South Australia. *Five White Stars on Red Cross on Blue Upper Fly, Four Blue and Three White Stripes in Lower Hoist and Fly.* This flag (for Bottom Enders) is arguably obsolete, but is still used both ashore and afloat. See also Top Enders flag on page 85.

Pre-1801 Red Ensign. *Without St Patrick's Saltire in the Union Canton.* This ensign is flown in front of the Sillers Building (the main government facility which houses the State Governor's office) in Jackson Mississippi, and at each State Line Visitor Center at the borders of the State of Alabama.

Pre-1801 White Ensign. *WHITE ENSIGN WITHOUT ST PATRICK'S SALTIRE IN THE UNION CANTON.* All Saints Church at Burnham Thorpe in Norfolk. The 1707 White Ensign is authorised to be flown from the tower of All Saint's Church at Burnham Thorpe in Norfolk in memory of Lord Nelson and is provided at public expense; one was made in 1994 by United Flag Traders Ltd. Although obsolete for maritime use it is therefore still a current flag and commemorates the Battle of the Nile in 1798 (rather than Trafalgar) because the modern ensign was in use by 1805. Nelson, although Rear Admiral of the Blue at the Nile, ordered the wearing of the White Ensign to minimise risk of confusion with the French ensign.

Queensland Ensign. *Pale Blue; Overall St George's Cross fimbriated White.* Page 86. Some descriptions do not include the fimbriation. Flown at Newstead House, Brisbane, historic residence of the governor, and sometimes on ensign staff of navigation aids workboat CHAMPION.

Royal Niger Company. *WHITE ENSIGN: OVERALL ST GEORGE'S CROSS WITH A BLACK Y ON WHITE WITHIN RED RING IN THE FLY.* Listed later on as obsolete, is believed to have been revived ~ to fly at a memorial to the company outside an hotel in Nigeria. If a travelling reader comes across it the author will be glad to hear from them.

CHAPTER 3

Yacht Club and Sailing Association Ensigns

Those that are the same as other ensigns (e.g. White Ensign) not counted.

	Blue	Red	Sky Blue	Totals		Clubs with plain Blue Ensign
United Kingdom	38	10	1	49		20
Crown Dependencies	1	1	-	2		-
Overseas Territories	2	1	-	3		-
Australia	7	-	-	7		10
Other Commonwealth	5	-	-	5		-
Republic of Ireland	1	1	-	2		-
Totals	54	13	1	68		30

Introduction

A special ensign may not be worn by a yacht unless the club's burgee is flown at the main masthead, or other suitable position. All yacht clubs mentioned in this Chapter are in the United Kingdom unless otherwise indicated. Warrants for privileged ensigns were originally issued to each club listed; a practice which began in the early 19th century. In May 1894 authorised clubs received new warrants, which now included, "The ensign shall not without our authority in writing be worn on board a vessel belonging to the _____ Yacht Club while such vessel is lent, on hire or otherwise, to any person not being a member of the club, or, when being a member of the club, is not a natural born or naturalised British subject." Since 1927, clubs enjoying the privilege of a special ensign have been listed in the Navy List thus replacing the previous general warrants as the authority for the privilege. General warrants were revoked by the Admiralty with effect from 1 November 1927, from which date individual club members had to apply for their own warrants, however on 8 February 1985 the Secretary of State for Defence re-issued general warrants to all the privileged UK clubs (with effect from 1 April 1985), and since that date they in turn have issued permits to qualifying members. The privileged club list (which continues to be published in the Navy List quinquennially) was closed in 1952, however in the late 1960s it was agreed to include additional clubs in special circumstances. The list was finally closed in 1983, although there have been a few additions made since then. Where reference is made to Admiralty records in the National Archives (formerly Public Records Office) they are listed under the appropriate ADM number. ADM 1/8752/200, ADM 116/2500, ADM 116/2501 refer generally to the issue and management of warrants.

Warrants and Permits

Since 1 April 1985 the Royal Yachting Association (RYA) has administered the UK warrant system on behalf of the Ministry of Defence, providing permits for the clubs to issue to authorised members. All UK clubs therefore grant permits under the 1985 warrant authorisation, so the dates given below are those of the original Admiralty warrants, together with dates of gaining the title "Royal". The title "Royal" is a separate privilege outside the warrant system and was granted by the reigning monarch based upon the recommendations of the Home Office which dealt with such applications. Royal patronage is a completely separate matter and it is possible for a club to have royal patronage without having the title "Royal". Members of non-UK clubs continue to apply for individual warrants, which are issued by the Secretary of State for Defence (it used to be by the Second Sea Lord), although such a grant is now a most infrequent occurrence. Finally, a small number of clubs and Service sailing associations administer their own warrants.

Australia and New Zealand

Special ensigns in Australia are now being authorised locally. However the Blue Ensign of the Royal Victoria Motor Yacht Club was authorised by the Secretary of State for Defence in 2007. This was an interesting example of an authority in one sovereign state authorising a national symbol for use in another sovereign state (albeit the same sovereign) and illustrates the unique connection between our two countries. Under Section 30(4) of the Shipping Registration Act 1981, Blue Ensigns, both defaced and undefaced, originally authorised by Admiralty Warrant, can be worn by Australian yachts, but only in Australian waters. New Zealand has taken an alternative approach and created specific NZ symbology for yachts. A special Yacht Ensign was recently authorised under the Ship Registration Amendment Act 1999 by Royal Licence. The ensign comprises the NZ flag in the canton of a blue flag with an overall white cross – sometimes defaced in the lower fly with a Pahi Tere surmounted by a naval crown. The design was created by the Queen's Herald for NZ and was inspired by an ensign used by the Auckland Sailing Club in the 19th century. Thus are rendered obsolete the previous special ensigns accorded to NZ clubs.

Authorisation

All yacht clubs privileged to authorise a special ensign used to be listed in the Navy List annually, however this ceased in 1989, after which it was decided that largely static data would only be reprinted every five years. Although the list did not reappear in the 1994 edition, it did so in 1995. Many clubs were founded before they were granted a special ensign, which was generally dependent on achieving the required net total tonnage of all the club's yachts. Some gained the title Royal before, and some after, the grant of the ensign. Some changed defacements or even ensigns (from Red to Blue). Although there are exceptions, undefaced Blue Ensigns were usually granted to clubs which could demonstrate some naval or public service connection, whilst defaced Ensigns were normally granted to those which could not. Undefaced Blue Ensigns were generally not granted after 1927 (a plain Blue Ensign is generally considered to be 'senior' to a defaced version, however that is not really the case at all and does not of course apply to national flags or territorial flags). There are exceptions to all these provisions, but space does not allow for detailed analysis of each individual case.

Control of special ensigns

On 8 Sept 1868 the Admiralty sent a circular to yacht clubs complaining that *some Yacht Owners are in the habit of flying the Colours of the Clubs to which they belong without having obtained the proper Warrants from this Office* and an annual return listing club yachts was requested from then on. On 29 Sept 1930, following widespread unauthorised use of privileged ensigns (*.... particularly common at South Coast towns and on the Upper Thames....*), the Admiralty sought the assistance of all yacht clubs and other appropriate civil and military authorities in reporting abuses. There may be scope for repeating this endeavour, and thereby enforcing the provisions of the current Merchant Shipping Act.

Future developments

With the development of legislation concerning the nationality of citizens and the registration of vessels (both in the United Kingdom and Commonwealth and in foreign countries), the future of the many privileged ensigns granted to non-UK clubs is in some doubt. Ideally there should be a rationalisation of the current rules to enable these ensigns to continue to be used as the Sovereign of the day (and/or Admiralty) intended. It is most unlikely however that any effort will be made to achieve international agreement about these flags, and thus it is possible that in due course a proud and colourful part of our maritime heritage and culture may be diminished or even lost.

Red Ensign

All United Kingdom yacht clubs not mentioned here use the Red Ensign undefaced.

White Ensign

Royal Yacht Squadron Warrant in 1829. Awarded to the Royal YC as it was then called. The RYS was originally one of eight clubs authorised to use the White Ensign (Royal YC, Royal Irish, Royal Western of Ireland, Royal Western of England, Royal Thames, Gibraltar, Royal Southampton (later renamed Royal Southern), and Wharnclyffe SC). The RWYC of I began as part of the RWYC – see below - but separated in 1831. In 1842, when the Admiralty restricted the privilege to the RYS, they forgot to tell the RWYC of I until this came to notice in 1853. After protests the Admiralty relented and granted individual warrants to RWYC of I boats for a White Ensign, but in 1857 withdrew the privilege entirely, leaving the RYS the only club so entitled.

New Zealand White Ensign

Royal New Zealand Yacht Squadron Flag Officers of the RNZYS (only) were authorised to use the NZ White Ensign in 1976. The RNZYS (Royal on 7 August 1902) was previously styled the Auckland Yacht (or Sailing) Club, formed in 1876. It was also granted a warrant for a plain Blue Ensign 15 August 1902 but this became obsolete when the NZ yacht ensign came into being.

Blue Ensign – Undefined (30)

Royal Albert YC Warrant 12 Feb 1865: Royal 26 December 1865.
Blue Burgee : Crown on Centre of White-edged Red Cross

Royal Cinque Ports YC Warrant 6 May 1872: Royal 1872. In common with other clubs, the RCPYC warrant of 1872 was replaced (but was not withdrawn) by an amended version dated 15 May 1894. Many of the club records were destroyed by fire during WWII. Blue Burgee : Crown above Shield with Foreparts of Three Walking Yellow Lions with Heads-turned on Red, joined to Sterns of White Ships on Blue

Royal Cruising Club Warrant 8 January 1902: Royal April 1902.
White/Red Burgee : in Hoist, Yellow Naval Crown on Blue Cross with Flared Arms

Royal Dorset YC Warrant 19 April 1875: Royal 3 April 1875.
White Burgee : Crown on Red-edged Blue Cross

Royal Engineer YC Warrant 1872. The club is often mistakenly called the Royal Engineers YC. The correct name is singular.
Quartered Burgee:Blue/White, 3 Field Guns 1st Quarter, Lion 4th quarter, all Yellow

Royal Gourock YC Warrant 1910: Royal 1907.
Blue Burgee : Crown over Red Cross with Flared Arms on Yellow Shield

Royal Highland YC Warrant 1881: Royal 24 November 1881.
Pale Blue Burgee : Crown on Centre of White Saltire

Royal Marines Sailing Club Warrant 1965.
White Burgee : Red Royal Marine Badge on White Disc on Centre of Blue Cross

Royal Motor YC Warrant 10 January 1906: Royal 30 September 1910. The HQ of the RMYC is housed in RMYCS ENCHANTRESS. Although now a building, this is a unique use of the title RMYCS (Royal Motor Yacht Club Ship).
Blue Burgee : Crown on Centre of White-edged Red Saltire

Royal Naval Sailing Association Warrant 1936.
White Burgee : Blue Naval Crown on Red Cross

Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve YC Warrant 1958. The RNVR YC was formed as the RNVR Sailing Club in 1947, first sailing under the Red Ensign. World-wide membership also includes those who served in the RN and RNR.
Blue Burgee : Red Naval Crown above White-over-Red Zig-Zag Horizontal Line

Royal Northern and Clyde YC Warrant 1978 when Royal Northern merged with Royal Clyde.
Blue Burgee : Crown in Centre of White Cross, Yellow Foul Anchor in Upper Hoist, Scottish Lion in Lower Hoist.

Royal Scottish Motor YC Warrant 1922: Royal 1922. Blue Burgee :
Crown above Red Thistle on Yellow Shield in Hoist, Yellow Propeller in Fly

Royal Solent YC Warrant 12 May 1902: Royal 22 May 1947.
Blue Burgee : Small Crown above a Yellow Ship, Three Masts, No Sails

Royal Southern YC Warrant 1847: Royal 14 July 1840. Royal Southampton YC was established in 1837 with Queen Victoria as patron; and granted the White Ensign defaced with a crown and the city arms 15 July 1840. A warrant for the Blue Ensign with the same badge was issued 22 July 1842 as a result of the White Ensign being restricted to the RYS. The name was changed to Royal Southern YC in 1843, and the undefaced Blue Ensign was granted in 1847.

Blue Burgee : Yellow Crown on Red Cross

Royal Temple YC Warrant 27 April 1898: Royal 18 May 1897. Temple YC established 4 March 1857 (Royal title was Jubilee gift from the Queen ~ Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee was 20 June 1897). Used unofficial defaced Blue Ensign until 1872 when it was changed to plain Red.

Blue Burgee: White Pegasus on Yellow Foul Anchor surmounted by Crown

Royal Thames YC Warrant 24 July 1848: Royal 1830. The Thames YC used the White Ensign until disallowed in 1842 (by which time it was the RTYC). Crown and initials RYTC defacement of the Blue Ensign, which had been originally granted, was removed in 1848.

Blue Burgee : Crown in Centre of White Cross

Royal Western YC England Warrant 22 August 1842: Royal 15 May 1834

Blue Burgee : Crown

Royal Western YC Scotland Warrant 6 March 1886: Royal September 1885.

Blue Burgee : Crown above Yellow Thistle on Yellow-edged Red Shield.

Sussex Motor Yacht Club Warrant 1909. Although previously defunct and bankrupt, this club has been resurrected and regained the right to fly the undefaced ensign. In 2001 it had 33 active members and is trying to rediscover its history and origins. It has already recovered its trophies including the 1931 Britannia Trophy presented by the then Prince of Wales (subsequently Edward VIII).

Blue Burgee : Six Red Martlets and a Propeller on a White Shield

Australia

Royal Brighton YC Warrant 27 March 1924: Royal 9 April 1924.

Blue Burgee : Crown on White Cross

Royal Geelong YC Melbourne. Warrant 27 March 1924: Royal c1924.

Blue Burgee : Crown above Plain Anchor in hoist, Red Lozenge Fly

Royal Melbourne Yacht Squadron Warrant 1924: Royal May 1924. Originally known as the St Kilda Yacht Club. The name was changed to RMYS in 1961. The Squadron is currently updating its regulations for using the ensign and researching the design of its distinctive burgee.

Red Burgee : Crown on White Cross, White Seven-point Star in Canton

Royal Perth YC. Warrant 28 March 1903: Royal 19 May 1890.

White Burgee : Red Cross, Crown in Canton

Royal Queensland Yacht Squadron Warrant 21 July 1894: Royal 13 March 1902.
The club was granted the title Royal Queensland Yacht Squadron by Her Majesty
The Queen on 12 July 1961. The Squadron became incorporated as a limited
company on 14 October 1991.
White / Blue Burgee : Crown on White Hoist

Royal South Australian Yacht Squadron Warrant 4 Nov 1890: Royal 25 Oct 1890.
The RSAYS was founded on 5 November 1869 and known as the South Australian
YC until 1890. Previous warrant of 28 July 1877 for defaced Blue Ensign. Black ties
are still worn as part of official Squadron dress in memory of Lord Nelson.
Blue Burgee : Crown on Cushion above White Cross with Flared Arms

Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron Warrant & Royal 17 Oct (or 27 Jun) 1863.
Blue Burgee : White Cross, Crown in Canton

Royal Victorian Motor YC Warrant 24? November 2007: Royal 18 February 1937.
Absorbed Little Ship Club (Victoria) in 1955. Blue Burgee :
White Cross, Red Propeller in Upper Hoist, Five-point White Star in Lower Hoist

Royal YC of Tasmania Warrant 10 January 1910: Royal 24 January 1910.
White Burgee : Crown on Centre of Cross, Vertical Arm Red, Horizontal Arm Blue

Royal YC of Victoria Melbourne, Australia. Warrant 16 August 1886: Royal 1887
Red burgee : Crown on White Cross, Blue Canton

Blue Ensign Defaced by a Badge

(56 clubs : 54 ensigns)

Each one is different except where indicated by the annotation (*1) for three clubs
Royal Anglesey, Royal Southampton and Royal Torbay sharing one ensign.

Aldeburgh YC Warrant 13 July 1974. [Three Masted Mediaeval Ship](#)

Army Sailing Association Warrant 1974. The current warrant dates from 1985, as
with all reissued warrants. [Lion above Vertical Plain Anchor on Crossed Swords.](#)

Bar YC Warrant 1956. [White Scroll tied with Red Tape](#)

City Livery YC Warrant November 1977. The CLYC was informed of the award of
its warrant at their laying-up dinner in Sion College on 22 November 1977. The
warrant may perhaps have been dated some days earlier.

[Red Cross on White Shield, with Vertical Red Sword in First Quarter, on White
Bordered Red Diamond surmounted by a Green Sprig.](#)

Conway Club Cruising Association Warrant 1977. [Yellow Castle.](#)

Cruising Association Warrant 1950. The club was established in 1908.
[Vertical White Plain Anchor on Red Disc.](#)

Household Division YC Warrant 1934 as Household Brigade YC.
Crown within Red Ring inscribed SEPTEM JUNCTA IN UNO in Yellow on Radiant Eight-point Star

House of Lords YC Warrant 2 June 1950, following much debate over a long period, initiated by the request for a White Ensign on 15 June 1949. [ADM 1/21976]
Coronet above Vertical Plain Anchor, both Yellow

Little Ship Club Warrant 15 December 1937. The club was founded in 1926 and was not a yacht club in the accepted sense. During an after dinner speech at the club in 1937 the First Sea Lord personally invited the club to apply for a privileged ensign in recognition of its work with the Royal Naval Volunteer Supplementary Reserve training programmes. Perhaps this is the only occasion on which a club was directly invited to apply for a warrant by the authority empowered to grant it. The club applied to patent the ensign on 23 March 1938. This was refused, but it was granted on appeal one year later on 7 March 1939. Perhaps this was the first YC ensign (and even the first ensign) to receive a patent, although others have since.
White Triangle on Circle divided Sky-blue above Sea-blue, in a Garland of Yellow Oak Leaves.

Medway Cruising Club Warrant 13 July 1971.
Small White Foul Anchor left of White Horse of Kent

Medway YC Warrant 7 October 1953. White Horse of Kent on Red Disc

Old Worcester's YC Warrant 31 January 1975. The training ship(s) 'HMS' WORCESTER wore the Red Ensign from 1862 until the 1920s when she was granted a defaced Blue Ensign. The unit closed in 1968, but the Old Worcester's Association formed a yacht club in 1975 and approval was given to transfer the ensign to the club. Naval Crown above W, all Yellow

Parkstone YC Warrant July 1947. It was suggested in April 1947 (by the Royal Singapore YC), that the PYC should apply for a Warrant. This was successful and the announcement was made at the committee meeting on 25 July 1947. The original Warrant has been lost.
Yellow Arched Dolphin on Red-edged White Cross with Flared Arms

Poole Harbour YC Warrant 1950. There is currently some debate as to the continued entitlement of the PHYC to qualify for its ensign because of recent constitutional changes in the management of the club.
Yellow Arched Dolphin

Poole YC Warrant 1948. The original Poole YC, founded in 1865 and dissolved in 1939(?) did not have a special ensign. In 1948 the Hamworthy & Bournemouth YC which had been granted a special ensign in 1938, changed its name to Poole YC.
Yellow Fir Cone on Blue-edged Red Cross on White Disc

Rochester Cruising Club Warrant 11 May 2005. Unusually the RCC obtained authority for their warrant from The Queen, having asked her directly, and not via the Secretary of State for Defence. S of S simply signed the warrant.
Red Lion Walking, Head Turned, on a Yellow Disc

Royal Air Force YC Warrant 1936. [Crown above Eagle](#). In 21st century, vertical anchor added, behind eagle and below crown.

Royal Anglesey YC Warrant 1887: Royal 18 June 1885. (*1). The Beaumaris Book Society formed in 1826, becoming RAYC in 1885, and still occupies same building. No records of original warrant exist. [Crown on Union Canton](#)

Royal Armoured Corps YC Warrant 1949. Warrant was reviewed in 1959 due to low tonnage. [ADM 1/24013] [Crown above Mailed Fist](#)

Royal Artillery YC Warrant 22 May 1936. Ensign first granted to the yacht CYGNET. [Crown above Yellow Field-gun](#)

Royal Burnham YC Warrant 7 May 1928: Royal 15 December 1927. RBYC was refused a Blue Ensign 13 February 1928 (total tonnage deemed insufficient) but re-applied 3 March 1928, and on 19 April 1928 the Admiralty relented. However a plain Blue Ensign was refused (on grounds that no more would be authorised), but defaced Blue approved if badge suitable. Badge submitted 25 April 1928. [Crown](#)

Royal Channel Islands YC Jersey Warrant 1 January 1863: Royal 4 Dec 1862. [Crown above Three Yellow Lions Walking, Heads Turned on Red Shield](#)

Royal Corinthian YC Burnham, Essex. Warrant 4 July 1894: Royal 17 June 1892. [Yellow Garland around Crown](#)

Royal Cornwall YC Warrant 12 June 1872: Royal 3 November 1871. RCYC formed in 1871 with the Prince of Wales as patron, although Royal patronage was not confirmed until 1872. HRH the Prince of Wales remains the club's patron today. [White Prince of Wales' Feathers](#)

Royal Dee YC Warrant and Royal 21 October 1847 (Trafalgar Day). Founded as the Dee YC in 1815 when membership was initially limited to 50, but this has now been increased to 150 ~ by invitation only. Warrant withdrawn in 1928 due to lack of applications. The club was reissued with its warrant in 1997 after a successful campaign which included an appeal to HRH The Duke of Edinburgh in 1996 and research by the author of this book. [Crown above Head of White Wolf](#)

Royal Forth YC Warrant 1882/3: Royal 1882. The best known vessel in this club is the former Royal Yacht, HMY BRITANNIA. Since her decommissioning and move to Leith for public display she is no longer able to wear the White Ensign. [Crown above Yellow Cross with Flared Arms](#)

Royal Harwich YC Warrant and Royal 1 April 1845. [Yellow Lion Standing on One Hind Leg](#)

Royal London YC Warrant 17 October 1849: Royal 20 September 1849. Formed as the Arundel YC in 1838 (named after Arundel Stairs near the Strand in London) with a red house flag bearing AYC in white, it became the London YC in 1845, adopting a White Ensign with a blue cross and a gold star in the lower fly. The gold star was replaced on 25 Feb 1846 by a shield of the arms of the City of London, and in 1849 the White Ensign was relinquished for the present blue one. The original membership restriction of 50 was increased to 500 by 1850. The RLYC now occupies premises adjacent to the Royal Yacht Squadron in Cowes Isle of Wight. HRH the Duke of Edinburgh became Commodore in 1988 but has since resigned.

[Crown above White Shield, with Vertical Red Sword in First Quarter of St George's Cross](#)

Royal Mersey YC Warrant 24 September 1844: Royal 23 September 1844. The Mersey YC formed on 26 Jly 1844, and quickly gained both a privileged ensign and the title Royal. [Crown above Liver Bird](#)

Royal North of Ireland YC Warrant 1903: Royal 2 September 1902.
[Crown above Yellow Shamrock Leaf](#)

Royal Northumberland YC Warrant 10 August 1934: Royal 29 May 1935.
[Yellow Lion Standing, Tail Extended](#)

Royal Ocean Racing Club Warrant and Royal 1931. [White Naval Crown](#)

Royal Plymouth Corinthian YC Warrant 9 June 1893: Royal 10 January 1886. The RPCYC was established in 1877. Duke of York granted Royal patronage in 1886. 1893 warrant withdrawn in 1930 but re-awarded in December 1976 with the support of (the now) Lord Owen. The four forts on the defacing shield depict the castles built by Henry IV to protect the Barbican from attack by sea. [Crown above Shield, Red Saltire on White, with Tower in each Quarter; Yellow Garland](#)

Royal Southampton YC Warrant 14 November 1877: Royal 6 September 1877 (*1)
[Crown on Union Canton](#)

Royal Torbay YC Warrant 25 August 1875: Royal 15 October 1875. (*1). Granted to Torquay YC but name changed to Royal Torbay in 1885 and warrant amended. On 27 September 1901 Royal patronage re-confirmed by King Edward VII.
[Crown on Union Canton](#)

Royal Ulster YC Warrant 19 February 1870: Royal 20 August 1869. This was communicated by letter from the Home Department to "*the Lord Dufferin, &c, &c*" who was Commodore from 1867 to 1902. [Crown above White Shield with Red Hand](#)

Royal Welsh YC Warrant 5 November 1847: Royal 1847. The Welsh YC was founded in 1847. Royal patronage was granted in 1847 by the dowager Queen Adelaide, and was continued after her death by the Prince of Wales (letter dated 26 Nov 1859). The club assumed that royal patronage entitled them to adopt the title "Royal". King Edward VII continued the privilege on 5 May 1901. The title was questioned by the Home Office in 1909, who subsequently confirmed the title 4 December 1909. King George V became the club's patron in 1911.
[Crown above Prince of Wales' Feathers with Motto](#)

Royal Yorkshire YC Warrant 7 November 1929: Royal 18 June 1847. The RYYC was founded by shipmen of Hull and Whitby in 1847. A warrant issued 18 June 1847 was probably to permit the use of a crown on the burgee. Another warrant for a defaced Red Ensign was issued 8 March 1879. Continuation of the privilege of using the prefix 'Royal' was confirmed by the King on 1 December 1909. Club members gained two DSOs and seven DSCs in World War II; two members became Commanders in the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve.
[Crown above White Rose](#)

Severn Motor YC Warrant 13 October 1969. The '7MYC' warrant points out that the club did not indicate whether a defaced Red or defaced Blue was requested (and surprisingly mentions that both are equal privileges). It implies that the club was free to choose - it chose Blue. The 7MYC is one of very few inland clubs ~ being based at Worcester. [White-edged Red Saltire on Blue Circle within Yellow Garland](#)

Sussex YC Warrant 1955. The SYC was founded in 1892, and formed into a Company in 1925. The Duke of Norfolk became 'The Admiral of the Sussex YC' in 1958, being succeeded by the present Duke in 1976.

[Red Cross on Yellow Bordered Black Shield](#)

Thames Motor YC Warrant 1951. TMYC was formed in 1930, and received the warrant on its 21st birthday. Defacement was awarded in recognition of services during World War II and especially Dunkirk in 1940 (see Red Ensign St Helier YC).

[In Blue, M Y C overlying Plain Anchor, on White Horizontal Chevron on Red Disc, within Yellow Garland](#)

Australia

Cruising YC of Australia Warrant 1954. [C Y C in Yellow](#)

Little Ship Club (Queensland Squadron) Warrant 1948. A Little Ship Club (Australia) had been formed in 1945 by former members of the Victorian Division of the Naval Auxiliary Patrol, a wartime volunteer organisation. The club amalgamated with the Royal Victorian Motor YC in 1955, but an off-shoot was established in Brisbane, where it appears that a warrant was granted (and later withdrawn) to an individual on the basis of the original 1948 club warrant. Application for a new club warrant for Little Ship Club (Queensland Squadron) was made in 1955 and the warrant, dated 12 November 1956, was actually received 'on board' on 18 December 1956. [Five-point White Star on Light-blue Disc](#)

Royal Australian Navy Sailing Association Warrant 1980. Established in 1966 having been the Australian Squadron of the Royal Naval Sailing Association since 1949. [Naval Crown above R A N S A all in White](#)

Royal Freshwater Bay YC Western Australia. Warrant 1936: Royal 13 June 1934. Currently seeking to update its burgee. [Ducal Coronet on Short Armed White Cross](#)

Royal Motor YC of New South Wales Warrant 12 July 1927: Royal 1927. [Crown on Short Armed Yellow Cross](#)

Royal Prince Alfred YC. Australia. Warrant 21 October 1868: Royal August 1911. The PAYC was founded on 15 October 1867 at McGrath's and Punch's Hotel in King Street, Sydney, and granted Royal patronage by King George V in August 1911. The original unwarranted ensign was identical to the RN White Ensign but with a blue cross. In 1868 application for a defaced Blue Ensign was made, together with a request that it should be called the Prince Alfred Ensign to commemorate the escape of the Duke of Edinburgh from an assassin during a visit to Australia. The new ensign was authorised by letter of 21 October 1868 and this was confirmed by a second letter dated 21 July 1869, and requesting details of the burgee which were duly supplied in October of that year. [Yellow Ducal Coronet](#)

Royal Prince Edward YC. Australia. Warrant 20 May 1937: Royal August 1935. The club began seeking Royal patronage in 1932, and formal application was made in 1934 to London via the State Governor and Governor General. The approval was announced to the club at a committee meeting on 21 August 1935.

[Prince of Wales' Feathers above R P E Y C in Yellow](#)

Bahamas

Royal Nassau Sailing Club Warrant 23 August 1935: Royal 30 June 1925. The original warrant was withdrawn 26 June 1931. Date of new badge not known.

[R N S C around Crown on White Disc](#)

Bermuda

Royal Bermuda YC Warrant 22 November 1847: Royal 18 December 1845.

[Crown above R B Y C all Yellow](#)

China

Royal Hong Kong YC Warrant 15 May 1894: Royal 3 February 1894. In Navy List 2009. [Yellow, Head-on, Chinese Dragon](#)

Fiji

Royal Suva YC. Warrant and Royal 10 May 1950.

[Yellow Local Sailing-boat on White within Yellow Ship's Wheel](#)

Gibraltar

Royal Gibraltar YC Warrant 22 July 1842: Royal 13 October 1933. GYC was formed in 1829 (the first in the British Colonies) and originally used the White Ensign authorised by warrant dated 27 October 1837. This was revoked in 1842 and replaced by a warrant for the Blue Ensign defaced by the badge of the club. A new warrant was issued in 1927 when the badge was changed. The flag of the Commodore of the RGYC is the only personal flag in the territory allowed to bear the territory's shield un-ornamented.

[Crown above Shield, Red Castle on White above Yellow Key on Red](#)

India

Royal Bombay YC Warrant 1881: Royal 1 July 1876. [ADM 1/21260]

[Crown above Star of India, all Yellow](#)

Malta

Royal Malta YC Warrant August 1935: Royal before 1881. The original Blue Ensign warrant of 1873 was cancelled in 1928 as there had been no applications for yacht warrants since 1882. The club was inactive in 1978 but the privileged status of this club was re-instituted on 13 November 1990. For members with British registered yachts. [Crown on White/Red Maltese Cross](#) also [Crown above Cross](#)

Republic of Ireland.

Royal Irish YC Warrant 10 August 1846: Royal 23 July 1846. Original warrant for White Ensign defaced with Arms of Ireland in lower hoist, 17 Oct 1831. [Crown above Yellow Harp](#)

South Africa

Royal Natal YC Warrant 1891: Royal 10 February 1891 (letter dated 17 February). RNYC was instituted in 1858 and is the only club in the Republic of South Africa that continued using its privileged ensign during the period RSA was outside the Commonwealth (and thus not listed in the Navy List). However this fell into disuse but is now (in 2006) being formalised once again, and is thus left in the 'current' ensigns chapter. Uniquely for non-UK clubs RNYC warrants are not regulated by the Second Sea Lord but by the club itself. Two other clubs in RSA used to fly a privileged ensign: the Royal Cape YC (until 1966), and the Point YC at Durban (until 1973). [Crown above Royal Arms, above Two Wildebeest within Ornate Frame](#)

Red Ensign Defaced by a Badge

(14 clubs including Royal Yachting Association : 13 ensigns)

Each is different apart from Royal St George and Royal Windermere indicated by (*2). Except for St Helier, Lloyds and West Mersea, all Red Ensign defacements include a crown or coronet.

Brixham YC Warrant 1958. [Antique Crown above Apple, all Yellow](#)

House of Commons YC Warrant 1968. [Coronet above Portcullis, all Yellow](#)

Lloyd's YC Warrant 1950. [St George's Cross with Vertical Red Sword in First Quarter above Inclined Yellow Foul Anchor on Blue, all in Ornate Yellow Frame](#)

Royal Dart YC Warrant 1870: Royal 12 March 1872. The DYC was formed in 1866 by Henry Studdy. [Crown above an Arrow, all Yellow](#)

Royal Fowey YC Warrant 31 October 1905: Royal 10 May 1907. The Fowey YC was formally constituted in 1894. A new warrant was later issued on 1 November 1927. The insignia granted by the Prince of Wales on 29 August 1905 included the coronet of the Duke of Cornwall. On 14 November 1952 the Rouge Croix Pursuivant of Arms confirmed that the proper device above the shield was the coronet of the Prince of Wales.

[Heir Apparent Crown above Triangle of 15 Yellow Circles on Black Shield](#)

Royal Lymington YC Warrant 21 December 1925: Royal 3 November 1938. The naval crown was added to the badge in 1939.

[Naval Crown above Mediaeval Ship, Single Mast and Oars, all Yellow](#)

Royal Norfolk and Suffolk YC Warrant 8 March 1898: Royal 1898. Title 'Royal' was an error on the Admiralty warrant but allowed to stand when queried in May 1909. [Crown above Prince of Wales' White Feathers](#)

Royal Victoria YC. Isle of Wight. Warrant 3 March 1898: Royal 4 June 1845. The RVYC was founded as a Royal club and given a warrant for The Red Ensign of HM Fleet in 1845 (on June 4 or possibly June 29). The RVYC was known locally as the Red Squadron, as opposed to the White Squadron (or should it have been Wight Squadron) which the RYS at Cowes was colloquially termed. Warrant for defaced Red Ensign (crown on Union) subsequently granted 8 October 1872. Request then made to Admiralty on 16 August 1897 to move defacement to fly (because of

confusion with undefaced Red Ensign of Merchant Service following dis-establishment of squadronal system in 1864), and to include the letters V R. Admiralty allowed crown but not letters on 24 August 1897. Osborne House approached about the letters on 7 January 1898. On 27 January 1898 Queen Victoria gave her consent for inclusion of V R beneath the crown in the fly and the Admiralty (not surprisingly !) issued the new warrant on 3 March 1898.

Crown above V R, all Yellow

Royal Windermere YC Royal 5 July 1887. (*2). Adopted a Red Ensign with a crown in the fly as a Club Flag in 1902. Because of its location on a lake it is probable that no warrant has ever been issued, and yet RWYC was included in the Navy List of clubs having a special ensign in 2001. **Crown**

Royal Yachting Association Warrant November 1992. The RYA ensign is the most recently authorised, (signed by The Viscount Cranborne). It differs from all the others in that the RYA is not a yacht 'club' in any sense, and the ensign generally only flies at the shore offices in Southampton. However if a vessel is acting in an official RYA capacity (as committee boat during a race for instance) the RYA ensign may be worn afloat as the proper Colours of that vessel.

Yellow Royal Yachting Association Crown

St Helier YC. Jersey, Channel Islands. Warrant 12 May 1952. Application for royal patronage refused 17 July 1948. SHYC defacement by an Admiralty pattern anchor *uniquely warranted as a Battle Honour* was awarded in recognition of services by members' yachts in the evacuation of crew of HMS Wild Swan from St Malo on 17 June 1940 (see also Thames Motor YC Blue Ensign). The Warrant was issued by the Lieutenant Governor after Admiralty approval. Following enemy occupation, Jersey was liberated on 9 May 1945. The original request for foul anchor on the defacement was turned down and a plain anchor was insisted upon by the Admiralty. The crossed axes represent Parish of St Helier. In 1948 a Blue Ensign was requested but was refused because of the close proximity to Royal Channel Islands YC, which is located just across St Aubin's bay on the south coast of Jersey and already has a Blue Ensign. **Crossed Axes and Plain Anchor all Yellow**

West Mersea YC Warrant 4 March 1953.

Three Seaxes with White Blades, Yellow Handles towards Hoist.

Bermuda

Royal Hamilton Amateur Dinghy Club. Warrant 25 May 1973: Royal 1953. RHADC was founded in 1882: styled Royal in 1883: but club records were destroyed by fire in 1916: Royal style was dropped in 1927: but reinstated in 1953. Following the August 1995 referendum to maintain colonial status, the position of this ensign (and all other Bermudan flags) should be assured for the future.

Crown above Fitted Dinghy

Republic of Ireland

Royal St George YC Warrant 1895: Royal 3 May 1845 and 21 May 1847 on change of name. (*2). In 1845 the Kingstown Boat Club was granted Royal patronage and the a Red Ensign defaced on the Union was authorised. The club's name was later changed to Royal St George's YC and then to the present (singular) name. The 1895 warrant was issued when the crown was moved from the Union to the fly. ADM 1/21260. **Crown**

Royal Air Force Sailing Association Warrant 11 June 1986. The RAFSA administers its own ensign permits. **Crown above Head-on Eagle with Wings Spread, both Yellow, on Red Circle within White Ring within Blue Ring.**

Notes:

1. **White Ensign.** There are no defaced White Ensigns authorised for yacht clubs.
2. **Blue Ensigns defaced.** Three clubs share one ensign (*1). Thus the total of *different* defaced Blue Ensigns is 54.
3. **Red Ensigns defaced.** Two clubs share the same ensign (*2). Thus the total of *different* defaced Red Ensigns (including the RYA) is 13.
4. **Grand Total.** The total number of *different* defaced Yacht Club ensigns is therefore 68.
5. **New Zealand.** Since 1999 the new NZ yacht ensign has been authorised for the RNYS (undefaced) and the Royal Akarana (defaced), but not it seems for the Royal Port Nicholson (reasons unknown). The NZ yacht ensign is blue with a white cross and the NZ flag in the canton (and ensign within and ensign). The defacement is in the lower fly and comprises a Pahi Tere surmounted by a naval crown

Defaced Blue Ensigns now used as Club House Flags

(Details under obsolete defaced Blue Ensigns)

Adelaide SC / Holdfast Bay Used by Adelaide Sailing Club which was formed when Holdfast Bay amalgamated with Glenelg YC.

Royal Canadian Canadian Blue Ensign flown at Toronto Island Station from outer halyard of starboard yardarm.

Royal Hamilton Ontario.

Royal Hong Kong Dragon re-drawn. In Navy List 2009.

Royal Jamaica This privileged ensign is currently only used ashore, at the clubhouse, where it is flown in conjunction with the Jamaican national flag. The most recent yacht to have worn it being the COCOBAN whose owner (Alastair Wilson) received his warrant on 9 February 1977, but the yacht struck a reef in bad weather in about 1980. Mr Wilson died in 1997.

Royal Lake of the Woods Apart from the Royal Windermere, this was the only other yacht club with no access to the sea. Ensign re-instituted in 2002 as a land flag.

Yacht Club Obsolete Ensigns

Includes, ensigns of clubs which no longer exist, ensigns of existing clubs that no longer have a special ensign and former ensigns of existing clubs that have adopted a new design. Yacht clubs now defunct which bore a plain Red Ensign are not mentioned.

Duplicate designs (e.g. Gibraltar YC Plain White Ensign) not counted

	White	Blue	Red		Clubs with plain Blue Ensign
British Isles	7	9	6		11
Empire	-	5	-		2
Australia	-	2	-		1
Canada	-	4	-		6
New Zealand	-	1	-		2
South Africa	-	1	1		-
Foreign		2	-		-
Totals	7	24	7		22
Unwarranted					
British Isles	3	3	7		2
Australia	-	1	-		-
New Zealand	-	1	-		-
Empire	-	-	1		-
Totals	3	5	8		2

White Ensign

Seven clubs have had a white ensign, and although one club (Western of England) had two different designs, there were only seven different ensigns, as another club (Gibraltar) had, like the Royal Yacht Squadron, a standard white ensign.

Gibraltar YC Warrant 27 October 1837. Defaced Blue Ensign 22 July 1842

White Ensign Defaced with Badge

(4)

Irish YC Warrant 17 October 1831: Royal 23 July 1846. Defaced Blue Ensign 10 August 1846. *YELLOW HARP ON BLUE IN LOWER HOIST*

Royal Southampton YC (Now Royal Southern YC) Warrant 15 July 1840: Royal 1840. Defaced Blue Ensign 22 July 1842. *CROWN AND SHIELD WITH TWO WHITE ROSES ON RED, ABOVE ONE RED ROSE ON WHITE, IN CENTRE OF ENSIGN*

Royal Western YC of England Warrant and Royal 15 May 1834. *CROWN WITHIN GARLAND OF ROSES AND OAK LEAVES, IN THE CENTRE OF OVERALL RED CROSS*

Royal Western of Ireland Warrant 7 February 1832: Royal 1833. Defaced Blue Ensign 26 June 1858. *CROWN WITHIN SHAMROCK GARLAND*

White Ensign with No Overall Cross

(1)

Wharncliffe Sailing Club London. Warrant 9 June 1840. Defaced Blue Ensign 22 July 1842.

Defaced White Ensign with No Overall Cross

(2)

Royal Thames YC Warrant 19 February 1835: Royal 1830. Defaced Blue Ensign 22 July 1842. *CROWN AND R T Y C*

Western YC of England Warrant December 1837. Blue Ensign 22 August 1842 implemented 1 January 1843. *CROWN AND LION*

Blue Ensign – Undefined

(20)

Birkenhead Model YC Warrant c1855. Obsolete by 1875.

British Motor Boat Club Warrant 1905. Club dissolved 1933.

Liverpool YC Warrant 1853. Obsolete by 1875.

Lough Erne YC Warrant 1881. Not in Lloyd's Yacht Register after 1922.

Royal Barrow YC Warrant 1880: Royal 7 March 1881. Obsolete by 1891. Ashburner brothers were members.

Royal Boston YC Warrant 1854. Obsolete by 1875.

Royal Clyde YC Warrant 27 January 1857: Royal 15 December 1871. Merged with R.Northern YC 1978.

Royal Eastern YC Warrant 30 June 1836: Royal 2 May 1836. Warrant withdrawn 24 March 1928 due lack of applications. Amalgamated with Royal Forth YC 1969.

Royal Largs YC Warrant 1885: Royal 1885. Club dissolved 1975.

Royal Northern YC Warrant 10 May 1831: Royal 20 September 1830. Merged with Royal Clyde YC in 1978 to form Royal Northern & Clyde YC.

Australia

Glenelg YC Warrant 1879. Warrant withdrawn 1928. Amalgamated with Holdfast Bay YC in 1998 to become Adelaide SC. May have been a defaced ensign. See Glenelg in Obsolete Defaced Blue Ensign section.

Canada

Royal Cape Breton YC Warrant 18 January 1901: Royal 18 April 1902. Canadian Blue Ensign 1937.

Royal Halifax YC. Warrant 14 April 1862. Royal 1861. Warrant cancelled 13 July 1880. May have merged with, or been absorbed by Royal Nova Scotia YS.

Royal Kennebecasis YC Warrant 19 January 1899: Royal 5 July 1898. Canadian Blue Ensign 1937

Royal Nova Scotia YS. Warrant 9 November 1880: Royal 14 August 1880. Canadian Blue Ensign 1937.

Royal St.Lawrence YC Warrant 1894?: Royal 1894. Canadian Blue Ensign 1937.

Royal Vancouver YC Warrant 18 December 1905: Royal 1906. Canadian Blue Ensign 1937.

Malta

Royal Malta YC Warrant 1873: Royal before 1881. Warrant withdrawn 5 May 1928.

New Zealand

Royal New Zealand YS Warrant 15 August 1902: Royal 25 June 1902. New Zealand Yacht Ensign 1999.

Royal Port Nicholson YC New Zealand. Warrant 1896: Royal 1921. Rendered obsolete by NZ yacht ensign in 1999.

Singapore

Royal Singapore YC Warrant 1924: Royal 27 June 1922. Became Republic of Singapore YC in 1967, but remained in Navy List until 1975.

Blue Ensign Defaced with Badge

(24)

New Thames YC, Gravesend. Warrant April 1867. Not in Lloyd's Yacht Register 1908. [Yellow Phoenix](#)

Portsmouth YC Warrant April 1936. Last entry in Navy List 1939.
[Star between Horns of Horizontal Crescent Moon, all Yellow](#)

Royal Holyhead YC Warrant c1859: Royal 1858. Obsolete by 1875.
[Crown above Red Dragon](#)

Royal Southampton YC Warrant 22 July 1842: Royal 1840.
[Crown, and Shield with Two White Roses on Red, above One Red Rose on White](#)
Re-issued in name of **Royal Southern YC** 5 August 1843. Replaced by Blue Ensign warrant 1847.

Royal South Western YC Warrant 1891: Royal 22 March 1891. Merged with Royal Western YC of England 1961. [Crown above Arched Dolphin](#)

Royal Thames YC Warrant 22 July 1842: R = 1830. Blue Ensign warrant 24 July 1848. [Crown and R T Y C](#)

Royal Western of Ireland YC Warrant 26 June 1858. Club dissolved by 1884.
[Crown in Shamrock Garland](#)

Thames Motor Cruising Club Warrant 1951. Initials on badge changed in 1969 when the name was changed to Thames Motor YC. [In Blue, M C C overlying Plain Anchor, on White Horizontal Chevron on Red Disc, within Yellow Garland](#)

Wharncliffe Sailing Club Warrant 22 July 1842. Club dissolved by 1850.
[“Badge of Club” ?](#)

Australia

Glenelg YC Adelaide, S. Australia. Although the one entry in the Navy List (1927) is under ‘Blue Ensign’, the S. Australian Register of 7 June 1877 reported that “Warrants have been received from the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty authorizing the Glenelg Yacht Club to fly the blue ensign of her Majesty’s fleet with the distinguishing badge of the Club thereon.”

Holdfast Bay YC Adelaide, S. Australia. Warrant 1890. Removed from Navy List 1928. [White cross with two horizontal arms.](#)

South Australian YC Warrant 28 July 1877. Replaced by current plain Blue Ensign when when club became Royal South Australian Yacht Squadron 4 November 1890.
[White Cross with Flared Arms](#)

Bahamas

Royal Nassau Sailing Club. Warrant 12 August 1925: Royal 30 June 1925. New badge unknown date. [Circular Badge, Sun, Sea, Beach and Palm Tree](#)

Canada

Royal Canadian YC Warrant 10 July 1878; Royal 4 August 1854. Canadian Blue Ensign 1937. [Crown](#)

Royal Hamilton YC Warrant 10 February 1891; Royal 14 February 1891. Replaced by Canadian Blue Ensign 1937. [Crown above Three-lobed Maple Leaf all Yellow](#)

Royal Lake of the Woods YC, Manitoba. Warrant 17 March 1925: Royal 8 March 1924 (request had been approved 27 July 1914, but delayed by war)
[Blue Shield with Yellow Border, Crown above Yellow RLWYC on Red Bar above Yellow Foul Anchor.](#)

Royal Victoria (BC) YC, British Columbia. Warrant 1911: R = 1911. Canadian Blue Ensign 1937. [Crown over V I](#)

China

Shanghai YC Warrant 1909. Not in Navy List 1952.
[Blue Dragon on Hind Legs on Yellow Disc](#)

Egypt

British Boat Club, Alexandria, Egypt. Warrant 1938. Not listed 1948.
[Vertical Yellow Trident](#)

Gibraltar

Gibraltar YC Warrant 22 July 1842. Badge changed 1927.
[Castle above G Y C](#)

Jamaica

Royal Jamaica YC Warrant 1897: Royal November 1889. The RJYC was formed in 1884. [Crown above Green \(later yellow\) Aligator](#)

New Zealand

Royal Akarana YC, New Zealand. Warrant and Royal 22 February 1937. NZ Yacht Ensign 1999. [Naval Crown and Pahi Tere \(Maori Voyaging Canoe\)](#)

South Africa

Royal Cape YC, South Africa. Warrant 1920: Royal 28 May 1914. Had been recommended for plain Blue Ensign in 1914 but implementation delayed by war. Warrant 22 September 1966 following RSA leaving the Commonwealth. [Crown above Vertical White Plain Anchor](#)

Tanzania

Dar es Salaam YC Warrant 1936. Obsolete 1950. [White Dhow](#)

Red Ensign Defaced with a Badge

(5 different)

Queenstown YC, Cork, Ireland. Warrant 14 January 1860. End ? [“Marks of club” ?](#)

Royal Cork YC Warrant 2 November 1831: Royal 1830. Club was a revival of the Water Club established in 1720. Warrant cancelled 1926. [Crown above Harp on Green Shield, on Union](#)

Royal Portsmouth Corinthian YC Warrant 1880: Royal 25 November 1880. Cancelled 1930. Merged with Royal Albert YC 1946. [Crown on Union Canton](#)

Royal St.George YC Warrant 28 May 1847(?); Royal 3 May 1845. Crown moved to fly 1895. [Crown on Union Canton](#)

Royal Victoria YC Warrant 8 October 1872: Royal 4 June 1845. Crown moved to fly 3 March 1898. [Crown on Union Canton](#)

Royal Yorkshire YC Warrant 8 March 1879: Royal 18 June 1847. Defaced Blue Ensign 7 November 1929. [Crown above White Rose](#)

South Africa

Point YC, Durban, Republic of South Africa. Warrant 19 April 1937. Club ceased to be listed in Navy List in 1973. There is however some discussion as to whether the Point Yacht Club may seek to have its ensign re-instated following South Africa's return to the Commonwealth. [White Lighthouse on Brown Rock](#)

Ensigns Probably NOT Warranted

(18 different)

White Ensigns

(4 different)

Junior Thames 1875. *BLUE CROSS*

London 1845 *BLUE CROSS, GOLD STAR IN LOWER FLY*

London 1846 *BLUE CROSS, SHIELD OF ARMS OF CITY OF LONDON IN LOWER FLY*

Royal Prince Alfred YC 1867 *BLUE CROSS*

Sydney Amateur Sailing Club 1868 *BLUE CROSS*

Royal Thames YC 1830. *NO OVERALL CROSS. R T Y C IN RED.*

(Royal) Yacht Club 1815 *NO OVERALL CROSS*

Blue Ensigns

(2)

Colne YC Colchester, Essex. 1880. Blue Burgee : Red Shield with Three Yellow Crowns, Two above One, on Yellow Ragged Cross. Used until 1920 ?

Temple YC 1857. Blue Burgee : T Y C in White.

Defaced Blue Ensigns

(5)

Auckland YC 1890. Became Royal New Zealand YS with Blue Ensign in 1902. *Overall White Cross, Five White Stars in Lower Hoist.*

Corinthian YC 1875. *White Pegasus*

Ranelagh YC 1875 *R Y C in White*

Royal Anglesey YC 1886

Prince of Wales' Feathers, above Man's Head, above Scroll, MON MAM CYMRU

Royal Perth YC Western Australia. 1898. *Circle of five white stars*

Defaced Red Ensigns

(8)

Brighton Sailing Club 1875. *Two yellow and red fish on white shield.*

Eniskillen YC 1906/10. *E Y C in Yellow*

Liverpool YC New Ferry. 1896. Formerly Liverpool Bay YC. 1908 *Liver Bird*

Montego Bay YC Club established in 1936 and still operating. This ensign should perhaps be classed as 'dormant'. There is no intrinsic reason why the ensign should not be employed as a house flag in the manner of the Royal Jamaica YC ensign.

Royal Plymouth Corinthian YC 1887. Same badge on Blue Ensign 9 June 1893.
Crown above White Shield bearing a Green Saltire, U shaped Yellow Garland

Windermere YC c1873. Shield bearing Three Lions within Fleur-de-Lys Border.

Royal Yacht Club 1824 - 1829. **R Y C** in Yellow

Yarmouth YC Norfolk. 1884 – 1890?

Yellow Forebodies of Three Lions conjoined with Tails of Three White Herrings

CHAPTER 4

Obsolete Ensigns and Related Flags

Introduction

This chapter contains a bewildering number of British and British derived ensigns and related flags which have become obsolete over the years. One contributory factor to their huge number is that in 1905 all colonies without an Achievement of Arms were encouraged to apply for one, and gradually new flag badges based on the Arms replaced most of those based on the Seal of the Colony. But, as you will see, anybody who was anybody throughout the British Empire sooner or later became the proud owner of an ensign of one sort or another.

Sometimes obsolescence occurred because a territory became independent and sometimes because an organisation was disbanded or taken over, but often a flag's final retirement from active service resulted from a variety of other causes such as changing from a white disc for the badge to no white disc. There are so many of these ensigns, some very obscure or little used, and some differing only marginally from another version, that no guarantee is given for the completeness of the list. Some jacks are included too, but only if they differed significantly from contemporary ensigns. Where flag defacements differed only in very minor ways, such as the style of crown used by subsequent Sovereigns, the alternative flag has not generally been counted separately. This list changes continually, and it is to be expected that readers will have their own amendments or additional to suggest. The author will be delighted to hear from them if this is the case.

Not included

Similar exclusions have been made from the lists of obsolete flags as already made for current ones. One example for instance is the Tin Plate Worker's Society Trade Union Banner of 1838, which bore a Union Flag in the canton, but has not been counted here. Another is the 'The Empire White Ensign', which was widely made but for festive decoration only. It comprised a White Ensign defaced with the arms of South Africa, Australia and Canada (quarterly), the Star of India at the centre, and a white star in each arm of the red cross (New Zealand ?). It was commonly used as a hand flag and street bunting in the early 1900s. Concerning the Port of London Health Authority (B) - this one may not have existed but an application was made to the Admiralty on 6/9/1955, and the response on 10/10/55 indicated a formal request should be made. ADM 1/26610.

Warrants refused

Several organisations applied unsuccessfully for warrants over the years, amongst which are:- TS CONWAY for plain Blue Ensign (1903); Navy League of Canada (1918); North Irish Central Association of Sea Cadet Corps (1922); RNLI Blue Ensign (1923); Upper Mersey Navigation Commission (in 1924, 26, 27 and 33); TS FORMIDABLE, Portishead 1927); BRITISH EXHIBITOR floating trade fair (1933); Ketch TAI MO SHAN (1933); Isle of Man Harbour Commission and Tees Conservancy Commission(1936); Messers Chadburn (Liverpool) (1952); Falmouth Docks and Energy Company (1950s); South Shields Council Fire Brigade Fire Boat – for a visit by the Queen (1954); Maldon River Baliff (1955); Falmouth Harbour Commission and Southampton HC (1956); and no doubt several more.
[ADM 1/8529/187, ADM 1/8772/169, ADM 1/26610]

Obsolete Ensign of the British Isles

	White	Blue	Red	Sky Blue	Other	Totals
1707-1801	2	2	9	-	-	13
1801-1864	1	6	9	-	-	16
Post 1864						
Royal Navy	-	5	-	-	-	5
Army	-	5	-	-	1	6
Royal Air Force	1	2	-	3	-	6
Government Depts.	-	7	2	-	3	12
Ireland	-	5	-	-	2	7
Port / River Orgs.	-	5	2	-	-	7
Training	1	16	5	-	-	22
Miscellaneous	2	1	1	-	1	5
Totals	7	54	28	3	7	99

Arranged 1707-1801, 1801-1864 and post 1864, alphabetically under the headings above.

Descriptions of Ensigns that are not *WHITE*, *Red*, *Blue*, or *Sky Blue*, are in *Brown*

1707-1801

(13)

1694. Distinctive flags, with Union cantons and the seal of office in the fly for vessels in the service of any public office, were introduced by Royal Proclamation, but were "Red Jacks" and not ensigns.

1707. By Royal Proclamation, the existing ensigns with a St George's cross canton were replaced by ensigns with a Union canton combining the crosses of St George and St Andrew.

1707-1801 Red Ensign. It will have been noted from Chapter 2 that this ensign is still flown in front of the Sillers Building in Jackson Mississippi. It has not been counted as a current ensign however.

1707-1717 (limited use until 1744) *WHITE ENSIGN WITH NO OVERALL ST GEORGE'S CROSS.* For use in home waters.

1707-1801 *SIMILAR TO THE MODERN WHITE ENSIGN BUT WITH 1707 UNION AND LESS THAN 2:1.* Foreign service only until 1717. This latter flag is still flown at public expense over All Saints church at Burnham Thorpe in Norfolk.

1707-1801 Blue Ensign.

1731. Distinctive ensigns were introduced when 'Regulations and Instructions relating to His Majesty's Service at Sea' replaced individual Commanders-in-Chief's Instructions. "Ships or Vessels in the Service of any publick Office, are to wear the same Ensign and Jack as Ships having Letters of Mart, only that In the Body of the Jack or Ensign, shall be likewise described the Seal of the Office they belong to."

Navy Office. **Anchor flanked by Two Smaller Anchors, all Yellow.** There is some doubt about this ensign. Would the Navy Office have operated any vessels ?

Ordnance Office. **Shield with Three Cannon Balls above Three Field-guns facing Fly.** When the shield was incorporated into the Arms of the Board the colours were settled; black cannon balls on white, yellow guns on blue.

Victualling Office. **Yellow Foul Anchors in Saltire.**

Customs. **Customs House.**

Transport Office. **Plain Vertical Yellow Anchor.**

c1731. **General Post Office.** **Horseman Blowing a Post-horn.** Usually riding towards the hoist, but sometime towards the fly.

1760. **Maritime Department of the Excise Board.** **Crown above a Star containing the Initials E X, all Yellow.**

1768. **Irish Board of Customs and Excise.** **Crown above Harp.**

1784. **Revenue Cutters.** **Customs House.** Hoisted by Revenue Cutters, in addition to the Customs Red Ensign, before firing upon suspected smugglers that did not heave-to.

1801-1864

(16)

In 1801 St Patrick's cross was added to the Union Flag and cantons were changed accordingly.

Navy Office. Anchor flanked by Two Smaller Anchors, all Yellow. Some doubt about this ensign; would the Navy Office have operated any vessels ?

Board of Ordnance. Shield with Three Black Cannon Balls on White above Three Yellow Field-guns on Blue, facing Fly. The shield of the Arms created by Royal Warrant of 19 July 1806. In 1855 the Board of Ordnance was dissolved and the ensign was adopted by the **War Department**.

Customs. Customs House.

Marine Department of the Excise Board. Crown above a Star containing the Initials **E X**, all Yellow.

Revenue Cutters. Customs House. Hoisted by Revenue Cutters, in addition to the Customs Red Ensign, before firing upon suspected smugglers that did not heave-to.

1816. **Customs cruisers under Admiralty control.** Crown above Star containing the Initials **C H**, all Yellow.

1816. **Maritime Department of the Excise Board.** Crown above a Star containing the initials **E X**, all White.

1817. **Customs and Excise.** Crown. The ensign of all vessels employed by both Customs and Excise, following a Royal Proclamation of 10 February 1817.

Transport Office. Plain Vertical Yellow Anchor. Sometimes shown with the barrel of a cannon across the shank below the stock.

Victualling Office. Yellow Foul Anchors in Saltire.

Post Office. Post Boy

1833 - 1857. The period from when the Admiralty began to take-over the mail packets until the service was contracted out to steam-ship companies,

Post Boy.

POST OFFICE in White.

Crown above **G P O** in Yellow.

Note also the unproven possibility of a New South Wales version of this flag. Just possibly also a white version according to the late Mr Louis Loynes, but not counted.

Modified for Merchant Ships

1819. *WHITE ENSIGN WITH RED BORDER*. For use by merchant vessels whose Red Ensign had become "much torn and is being repaired". The red border was to be 14 inches wide for ships over 800 tons and 9 inches wide for vessels under 800 tons.

Blue Ensign with red border. This ensign was permitted as an alternative to the above.

POST 1864

Royal Navy

(5)

Royal Maritime Auxiliary Service. [Horizontal Anchor above Two Wavy Lines, all Yellow.](#) Granted 29 May 1970. The anchor reflects mooring work and wavy lines illustrate sea-going character of the Service. Defacement designed by the then Director of Marine Services (Captain Cartwright RN) in 1969. In 1995 the RMAS flotilla comprised nearly 100 named vessels and some 300 small craft, however the majority of the fleet was transferred to Serco-Denholm Ltd on 12 August 1996 following a market test, and those vessels now sail under the General Service Blue Ensign. The flagship of the remaining RMAS was the support vessel RMAS NEWTON until the final contractorisation in 2007. Last flown 1 April 2008 at the disbanding ceremony on salvage vessel MOORHEN.

Royal Naval Minewatching Service. [Circular Yellow Cable, surmounted by Naval Crown and Panel inscribed R N M W S, enclosing Mine Exploding in Heraldic Sea against Blue background.](#) 1954-1962. The ship's badge of RNMWS. Formed in 1952. Its only vessels were the yachts owned by some members. Initially they flew the Red Ensign with a distinguishing blue flag bearing the RNMWS badge. Thus owners who were members of yacht clubs that had a special ensign, flew a Blue Ensign when sailing their boat privately, but a Red Ensign when operating it on behalf of the Navy.

Royal Naval Auxiliary Service. [Royal Naval Minewatching Service badge with the initials in the panel below the Naval Crown changed from R N M W S to R N X S.](#) 1962-1994. The Royal Naval Minewatching Service amalgamated with Admiralty Ferry Crews Service to form the Royal Naval Auxiliary Service in 1962. Its task was to assist in the evacuation of major ports in the event of an attack on the UK. The Service was disbanded on 1 April 1994.

Royal Naval Artillery Volunteers. [R N A V in White.](#) 1877-1892. Created in 1873 by Act of Parliament to replace Royal Naval Coast Volunteers. Trained ashore with Royal Naval Reserve and Coast Guard. Unpaid, bought their own uniforms, paid their own expenses. Function in war never stated.

Royal Naval Reserve. [Crown above R N R all Yellow.](#) 1863-64. Became redundant when squadron colours were abolished. As an aside it is interesting to note that vessels of the recently disbanded RMAS were painted black and buff, the original colour scheme of RN ships and still preserved in the colours of HMS Victory. The last coal burning vessels in the fleet were the HLDs (harbour launch diesel) of the RMAS which used coal for their heating stove and only went out of service in 1995.

Army

(5)

Correction. The entry below which was in versions between 2002 and 2012 is incorrect. There was no '7th Army Division' and the flag was probably the 7th Victory Loan Flag of Canada (page 108).

Seventh Army Division Flag (WWII). A most unusual red bordered plain 'white ensign described as bearing the 7th Army Division badge in blue in the fly. An example was seen on ebay.

Ordnance / War Office.

1864. **Red-edged Shield with Three Black Cannon Balls on White above Three Yellow Field-guns on Blue, facing Fly.** The Army Service Corps took over the War Department Fleet in 1888. The badge in the Admiralty Flag Book was amended in 1891 to read "War Office : Ordnance and Royal Artillery.

1944. **Field-guns Reversed to point to the Hoist and Blue Background may have been changed from Dark to Light.** Amendment of 30 October 1944. It was pointed out that heraldic blue was always light blue and that a border was unnecessary.

1947 - 1962. **Yellow became an optional colour for the Border.** Used until 1995 when it was by a large margin the oldest defaced British ensign in use (over 300 years). Although long obsolete afloat (and never authorised for shore use!) the ensign was flown at the Proof and Experimental Establishment (P&EE) at Eskmeals in Cumbria, now belonging to the Defence Evaluation and Research Agency (DERA). Although the flag dated from 1694, it was not patternised until 14 April 1896, over two hundred years later.

War Office: Submarine Mining Service. **Arm, grasping a Thunderbolt, issuing from a Mural Crown.** The badge, based on the crest of the Board of Ordnance Arms, was approved 25 October 1886. Formed in 1871 to maintain underwater defences in the approaches to dockyard ports. Taken over by the Admiralty in 1904, the badge was endorsed obsolete in 1909. Also used in Canada where the flag of the 48th Submarine Company, Royal Canadian Engineers is preserved at CFB Esquimalt.

Royal Ulster Rifles. Green Ensign: Metallic Grey, Crown above a Harp with 'Quis Separabit' on a Scroll between it and a Bugle hanging below. Regimental flag on land until 1968.

HM Army Vessels. **Royal Crest (Crowned Lion standing on a Crown) above Crossed Swords.** A Royal Warrant (Army Order 53/66?) was published in October 1966. "HM the Queen has graciously permitted operational vessels of the Army flying the Army Ensign commanded by Army Officers and manned by military personnel in uniform to be titled 'Her Majesty's Army Vessels' and to fly the Union Flag at the fore when moored or dressed overall under way." An Army Ensign had then to be created as the only ensign in use was the corps ensign of the Royal Corps of Transport. The design was approved by the Queen and announced in Defence Council Instruction (General) 62/67. On 28 June 1977 HMAV AUDEMERE (Captain P J Robyns RCT) had the distinction of being the oldest of the 174 vessels in the Queen's Jubilee review of the Fleet at Spithead. This ensign was worn most recently by HMAVs ARACAN and ARDENNES, and it only became obsolete (or perhaps more correctly 'dormant') upon their de-commissioning in 1998.

Royal Air Force

(6)

Ocean Weather Ship. **Sun Rising (or setting ?) at Sea within Ring inscribed OCEAN WEATHER SHIP, RAF Eagle superimposed overall, in Yellow and Black.** Approved in Admiralty Letter 19 November 1948 for the four weather ships owned by the Air Ministry and administered by the the Meteorological Office. [NL 6920/48] The ships were withdrawn by 1981, but when the (Ministry of Defence owned) Ocean Weather Ship CUMULUS was stationed in the North Atlantic between 1993 and 1996 the words on the badge were changed to OCEAN WEATHER SERVICE.

Royal Air Force. *WHITE ENSIGN WITH BLUE OVERALL CROSS; EAGLE IN THE CENTRE OF THE CROSS WITH CROWN ABOVE ON VERTICAL ARM.* The 1918 armistice ensign. Only four of these ensigns were ever made - to be flown from the Air Ministry building on Armistice Day 1918, although one without the badge was flown at Inverkeithing Air Force Pier in 1919. It was never formally adopted by the newly created Royal Air Force, which used the Union Flag until the adoption of its present ensign in 1921. [ADM 1/12493]

Royal Air Force Air Support Craft. *RAF wings above an anchor.* It became obsolete in 1993 when the function was contracted out to a private company.

Royal Air Force World War One Station Flag. *Air Force Blue Ensign with Small Roundel in fly with Gold RAF Wings beneath.* Only known version on sale for £79-00 on e-bay in November 2005 !

Royal Air Force (Belgian Section). *RAF Ensign with Black/Yellow/Red Roundel replacing Red/White/Blue Roundel.* Used in World War Two. It may be questioned if other national RAF ensigns existed too.

Royal Observer Corps. *Air Force Blue Ensign with Elizabethan Coast-Watcher, on Sky Blue background within Garland having Full Colour Crown at Top and Motto FOREWARNED IS FOREARMED at Base. Mainly Yellow.* June 1945 Royal Warrant. Formed in October 1925. Following a partial stand down in September 1991, the ROC was finally stood down on 31 March 1996 (although the volunteer element stood down on 31 December 1995) after more than 70 years service. The ROC Banner (or Colour) was laid up at RAF Cranwell on 8 December 1995.

Government Departments, Public Offices & Organisations

(11)

Civil Defence.

Quarterly Blue / Yellow: Union in the First Quarter and a Crown above C D in the Blue Fourth Quarter, 3:5. Designed by Sir Gerald Wollaston, Garter King of Arms, approved by King George VI, 11 August 1943, first flown on Battle of Britain Day, 26 Sept 1943. Some examples had the names of Divisions and Posts in the yellow quarters. **1:2 version with no crown or letters.** The only known example in the public domain is laid up in Bath Abbey. At least one other is in private hands.

Colonial Development Corporation. *Design Not Known* Admiralty warrant issued 23 February 1951 for a defaced Blue Ensign for vessels of the CDC fishing scheme. All registered in UK except for the AFRICAN QUEEN, registered in Gibraltar [ADM 1/26610]

Customs & Excise.

1872. **C H above Crown.** Used on buildings and hulks, but not by cruisers.

1873 - 1949. **Crown.** Customs did not adopt defaced Blue Ensigns in 1864, because the Order in Council which introduced them, had not specifically repealed the Royal Proclamation of 1817.

Fishery Board for Scotland. **Yellow Foul Anchor flanked by White Initials F B within a Wreath of Yellow Thistles surmounted by a Red and Yellow Crown.** The 1916 Admiralty Flag Book incorrectly showed the badge on a white disc with green thistles and yellow initials. Errata 7 of 30 January 1925 was still incorrect, showing a green wreath with yellow flowers. [ADM 1/8685/156]

Ministry of Munitions of War. **Vertical White Artillery Shell with Two Copper Bands; Pair of White Wings attached to the Upper Band. On Blue within a White Ring.** 26 July 1916 the cupping and rolling factory at Woolston (Southampton) requested a Blue Ensign with the badge that was painted on their vehicles. No warrant was necessary. Obsolete in 1919 and never included in amendments to the Admiralty Flag Book. [ADM 1/8464/183]

Ministry of Transport. **Yellow and Red Winged Elliptical Spoked Wheel.** Design suggested by College of Arms. Approved 29 June 1920 in time for 16 July visit of King George V to the harbour at Holyhead, which the Ministry of Transport had taken over from Board of Trade. Replaced by present badge in September 1950.

Naval Ordnance Department. **Yellow Cable in the shape of a Shield, Knotted at the Base, having Three Horizontal Cannon Balls on White above Three Vertical Yellow Field-guns facing Fly; Vertical Yellow Foul Anchor in Lower Hoist.** Introduced 1892 when Naval Ordnance was separated from the War Office, and phased out in 1922 by Admiralty Fleet Order 2189 which stated *The special ensign used by Naval Armament Vessels will cease to be used when existing stocks of flags have been consumed.* Two examples of the Naval Ordnance Ensign are known to exist, and are in the naval armament museum at Priddy's Hard in Gosport; now in the ownership of Gosport Borough Council.

National Fire Service. **Quarterly Blue and Red with Union in first quarter; N F S in Red on the White Centre of a Crowned Radiant Star in Blue Fourth Quarter.** Presented on 22 January 1944, the second anniversary of Service's establishment. Laid up in Imperial War Museum 20 January 1949. A proposal by Richmond Herald that the Union should not have St Patrick's saltire as the Northern Ireland Brigades had not been amalgamated into the National Fire Service was rejected.

Pacific Cable Board. **Crown above Cable-laying Tools in Saltire.** Formed in 1901 by the governments of Britain, Canada, New Zealand and Australia, to establish a west-about cable link with Australia, that would not cross any foreign territory. The ensign became obsolete in 1929 when the Board was wound-up and its assets combined with those of the Eastern Telegraph Company, to form Imperial & International Communications. Name was changed to Cable & Wireless in 1934.

South Wales Sea Fisheries Committee. **White fish on green disc within yellow ring.** It is not known whether this was the original design, or the one adopted without authorisation in about 1994. Since 2010 part of Welsh Assembly Government Fisheries.

Ireland

(6)

Irish Ensign.

1801 Union: Green; Yellow Harp.

1801 Union: Green; No Defacement.

Congested Districts Board Ireland. 1893 - 1907 **C D B** below a Crown and above a Harp. Worn by the yacht FINGAL.

1907-1916. **Initials were re-arranged so that they did not separate the crown from the harp; All within a Red Outline Diamond.** Worn by SS GRANUAILE, the name since held by successive flagships of the Commissioners of Irish Lights (latest vessel commissioned in 2000). The Board operated along the remote but well populated coastline of Donegal, Mayo, Galway, Clare and Kerry.

Department of Agriculture Dublin. About 1900. **Yellow Harp on Blue Disc surrounded by Green Shamrock Garland on White Ring.**

Government of Northern Ireland. **G N I in Red on white disc.** On 5 June 1929 the Ministry of Finance at Stormont applied for a flag for vessels operated by the Government of Northern Ireland. The Admiralty, the Board of Trade and the Home Office were all involved in granting the application. In 1932 the German Embassy asked the Foreign Office why there was no illustration of the flag of Northern Ireland vessels in the British Flag Book. The question was passed through the Home Office to Stormont whose reply returned by the same route without a copy being made. In April 1935 the Admiralty informed the Home Office that the German Flaggenbuch showed a Government of Northern Ireland Blue Ensign and asked if it was correct, so that it could be added to the Admiralty Flag Book. The Home Office denied any knowledge of the flag and suggested that it might be that of the Great North of Ireland Railway. Admiralty finally obtained a drawing of the flag from Stormont which was added to the 1930 'Drawings of Flags of All Nations' in 1936 5th amendment. Ensign possibly used only by dredgers in Belfast harbour.

Port of Dublin Corporation. 1864 **Lighthouse in Coastal Scene within White Circular Belt inscribed PORT of DUBLIN CORPORATION.** This was the General Lighthouse Authority for Ireland and also the corporation for preserving and improving the Port of Dublin. In 1867 the Port of Dublin was separated from Port of Dublin Corporation which became the Commissioners of Irish Lights.
[ADM 116/1063C]

Royal Ulster Constabulary. 1948 - 2001 **Harp and Shamrock on a Dark Background within an Oval Green Belt, surmounted by a Crown.** 1948-2001. Granted 1 January 1948 after an application of 6 November 1947. The warrant states it is only permitted for RUC patrol boats on Upper and Lower Lough Erne. Was worn by the one named vessel LADY GREY (the three small craft did not wear an ensign). In recent years the ensign has been worn only during VIP visits. An RUC flag and a Standard were available for shore use. [ADM 1/20883]

Port & River Authorities

(6)

Port Authorities were not entitled to a defaced ensign, but two were issued, probably through confusion between Public Offices, which did qualify, and Public Bodies, which did not.

Humber Conservancy Commissioners. "The figure of Humber, a river god with an oar in his right hand and leaning on two pots from which issue streams typical of the rivers Trent and Ouse, uniting in the background to form the Humber, the word VMBRE below the figure and legend Humber Conservancy Commissioners with date 1852 upon a girdle encircling the design" Warrant issued 13 January 1888.

1907. Name changed to **Humber Conservancy Board.** River God Badge redrawn, '1852' removed and Inscription changed to **HUMBER CONSERVANCY BOARD** in 1911. Worn by SS AUKLAND. Incorporated into British Transport Docks Board in 1968.

Mersey Docks and Harbour Board. 188? - 1912 **M D H B within a Garland all White.** Warrant for dredging fleet became obsolete when the present Blue Ensign warrant was issued.

Falmouth Harbour Commissioners. 22 March 1955. Request for Blue Ensign defaced with Falmouth Harbour Commissioners badge referred to a photograph of Harbour Commission launch ARWENACK wearing a Red or Blue Ensign with seal of Falmouth Harbour Commissioners in the fly, that was taken in probably 1910 or 1911 after launch's acceptance trials. No record of such an ensign and the request was refused. [ADM 1/26610] **not counted**

Greenock Harbour Trust Early 1900s. **White G.H.T. in Lower Fly.** Probably unauthorised.

Clyde Lighthouse Trust, Glasgow Pre-1914. **Lighthouse above C.L.T. all White.** Probably unauthorised.

Metropolitan Asylums Board. **M A B on white cross coupe.** Worn by the London River Ambulance Steamers.

National Fire Service **Black and White Eight-Point Star with Top Point replaced by a Full Colour Crown, small N, large F, small S in Red on White in centre.** Approved for Fire Boats on 19 November 1943. 12 April 1948; National Fire Service now individual Fire Brigades and this Blue Ensign no longer flown.

Nautical Schools, Training Ships & Cadets

(21)

AKBAR. "Blue Ensign (probably plain ?) discontinued 4 April 1933 after 20 years." 1860 - 1906. Reformatory Ship, Rock Ferry, Birkenhead
1908 - 1956. **Nautical School, Heswall, Cheshire. Not counted.**

ARETHUSA. [T S ARETHUSA in White](#). Admiralty warrant of 31 December 1927. A Shaftesbury Home ship moored astern of CHICHESTER (below). Said to have flown a plain Blue Ensign and Union Jack as a jack since 1874. New warrant for the same ensign issued on 18 July 1933 when the school was moved to ex-German nitrate-carrier PEKING, renamed ARETHUSA, moored at Upnor on the Medway. Requisitioned by the Royal Navy 1940-1945, renamed PEKING. School closed in 1968. Ship now the maritime museum ship PEKING in New York.

Bearwood College. [Yellow Dolphin and Anchor beneath a Crown](#) (probably). Independent school since 1970 but had been Royal Merchant Seamen's Orphanage in 1921 and Royal Merchant Navy School in 1935. The college chapel contains many fine wall paintings of the house flags of shipping lines from days gone by.

CHICHESTER. Shaftesbury Home, Greenhithe, Lower Thames 1866 - 1889. Said to have had an Admiralty Warrant for, probably, a plain Blue Ensign in 1877. **Not counted.**

CONWAY. [Yellow Castle](#). Warrant dated 31 December 1927. Previous warrant of 4 May 1896 for defaced Blue Ensign probably similar. Liverpool Mercantile Marine Association school ship moored off Birkenhead in 1859. Moved to Menai Straits in 1940. School taken ashore to Anglesey 1953. Closed 1974.

CORNWALL. [White C](#). Warrant dated 31 December 1927. Reformatory set up in redundant ship-of-the-line HMS CORNWALL and moored at Purfleet by the School Ship Society in 1859. Transferred to Blyth in 1868 and became TS WELLESLEY. Society then purchased HMS WELLESLEY, built by the East India Company and renamed her TS CORNWALL. Probably flew plain Blue Ensign until 1927. In 1932 it was suggested that the ensign should be red as the boys were not eligible to enlist in the Royal Navy. Moved to Gravesend in 1928 and sunk in bombing raid in 1940. Only ship-of-the-line to have been sunk by aircraft ?

CUMBERLAND / EMPRESS. [Lion Standing on One Hind Leg](#). Adopted before 1878. Clyde Industrial Training Ship Society; Greenock/Gareloch 1869 - 1923. CUMBERLAND replaced by EMPRESS formerly HMS REVENGE in 1889. **Not counted**; the same badge as Royal Harwich Yacht Club.

EXMOUTH. [Shield of St George with Scalloped Edges and Black Border; Snake Twined around a Staff, both Yellow, on Vertical Arm](#). Shield of Metropolitan Asylums Board. Warrant dated 6 January 1928. Former HMS GOLIATH moored off Grays, Essex, replaced in 1875 by former HMS EXMOUTH. Replaced in 1905 by a new steel copy of a ship-of-the-line.

[Mural Crown on top of Shied with Lion of England on St George's Cross above Heraldic Sea](#). New warrant issued 15 April 1930 after the Board's functions were transferred to the London County Council. The school moved ashore in 1939, but the ensign was revived when a letter of 3 November 1947 permitted the London Nautical School to fly it ashore at Woolverstone, Essex. The school now flies a plain Red Ensign at its premises near Waterloo railway station. After the war, the ship itself became TS WORCESTER.

FOUDROYANT. [Yellow Lightning strike through Red F on Blue Disc with Yellow Border](#). Frigate HMS TRINCOMALEE was renamed when she replaced the original FOUROYANT. Moored successively in Falmouth, Milford Haven, and Portsmouth where she was attached to TS IMPLACABLE. School closed in 1986 but ship, now in Hartlepool, has been restored to its original condition as HMS TRINCOMALEE.

INDEFATIGABLE. [Liver Bird](#). Warrant dated 31 December 1927. In 1865 the original ship was moored at Rock Ferry, Mersey, in the same area as AKBAR and CONWAY, with reformatory ship CLARENCE nearby at New Ferry. In 1940 the school moved ashore to Plas Llanfair, Anglesey, and after merging with **Lancashire and National Sea Training Homes** in 1945 was renamed **The Indefatigable and National Sea Training School for Boys** which closed in 1995.

MARS. [Yellow Square with a Red Lion Standing on One Hind Leg and Thistles in each Corner](#). 7 February 1878 letter of approval from Admiral Phillimore. A lion alone had been requested, but this had already been granted to TS CUMBERLAND. Established in 1869 at Woodhaven near Dundee as an industrial ship. CUMBERLAND closed in 1923 and a warrant was issued on 31 December 1927 for Blue Ensign with yellow Scottish lion. Closed 1929.

MERCURY. [Talaria \(Winged Sandals\) of Mercury](#). Warrant dated 31 December 1927. River Hamble 1892 - 1968. Said never to have been used, as, from 1918 until closure, the Captain Superintendent was always in the Royal Naval Reserve, or an ex-Royal Navy officer on the Reserve, and a plain Blue Ensign was flown. Original ship was replaced by HM Sloop GANNET (renamed MERCURY) in 1913. Ship now in Chatham Historic Dockyard restored as HMS GANNET.

Navy League. [Naval Crown above a Ring inscribed NAVY LEAGUE above, and KEEP WATCH below; Foul Anchor within](#) (probably). Warrant dated 6 June 1916 for TS Stork at Hammersmith and Liscard, (Boys Naval Brigade) Wallasey. In 1921 the [Same Badge on a Red Ensign](#) was adopted as the proper flag for Sea Cadet Corps vessels, while larger training ships flew the defaced Blue Ensign. Possibly included FOUOROYANT, IMPLACABLE, BOUNTY and NELSON. Admiralty took over the units to form the Sea Cadet Corps in 1942.

NORTHAMPTON. ["An Anchor with an Axe and a Hammer crossed in the Ring thereof and the letter N and A on either side respectively, the whole surmounted by a Coronet."](#) Five year warrant dated 27 March 1914. The Marquess of Northampton was patron of the school which was sited in the former torpedo-gunboat HMS SHARPSHOOTER moored at Temple Pier on the Thames Embankment.

Prince of Wales Sea Training School Society. [Blue Scroll inscribed BRITISH SAILORS SOCIETY above Blue Ring inscribed PRINCE OF WALES SEA TRAINING SCHOOL enclosing White Prince of Wales Feathers](#). The school was founded in 1920 and closed in 1976.

WARSPITE. [MARINE SOCIETY](#) Admiralty warrant 31 December 1927. Around 1936 this was replaced by the current ensign with the Marine Society badge. A previous special ensign was authorised by Admiralty Letter of 28 December 1877, but the details are not known. Ship was destroyed by fire in 1918 and the school moved to cruiser HERMIONE, renamed WARSPITE, moored off Grays, Essex.

Watts Naval Training School, North Elmham, Norfolk. ["Badge of College"](#) (possibly a foul anchor within a circle) Granted 16 January 1933 [NL 4090/32]. Had previously used a [White Ensign with W N T S in the lower fly](#). Was told to stop using it in a letter of 22 March 1927. Opened 1906, combined with Russell Coates Nautical School in 1949 to form Parkstone Sea Training School which closed in 1964.

WELLESLEY. Upper-half of Red Lion holding a Red Pennant with St George Hoist rising from a Coronet (Crest of Sir Arthur Wellesley, Duke of Wellington) Granted 1877. Former training ship HMS CORNWALL moved from Purfleet to Blyth and renamed in 1868. Retained name when replaced by former HMS BOSCAWEN in 1873. School moved ashore in 1914 but ensign continued in use until 1933.

WORCESTER. Thames Nautical Training College. **T N T C in White.** Admiralty warrant dated 31 December 1927. Lower Thames, 1862. 1876 replaced by HMS FREDERICK WILLIAM renamed WORCESTER. Between 1939 and 1946 the college was ashore near Sidcup in Kent with seamanship and boat drill being done on CUTTY SARK which had been donated to the college in 1938. After 1945 took over EXMOUTH which was renamed WORCESTER and moored at Greenhithe. Granted **Letter W surmounted by a Naval Crown all in yellow.** Despite the 1927 warrant for T.N.T.C, this defacement was being used in the 1930s, and is said to have been in continuous use since World War One, if not before. College closed in 1968. Not counted as the ensign was revived in 1974 as a special ensign for a yacht club restricted to former WORCESTER cadets (Page 54).

Cadets

(2)

Church Lads Brigade. **C L B and Anchor surmounted by a Naval Crown.** Warrant dated 4 May 1922.

North Irish Central Association of Sea Cadet Corps. “A Blue Medallion surmounted by a Naval Crown and bearing in Gold Letters **NORTH IRISH CENTRAL ASSOCIATION OF SEA CADET CORPS** and having in the centre a Red Hand, Sinister, Erect, Open and Couped” Warrant of 28 August 1922. A request for a defaced Blue Ensign, which included a royal crown, had been turned down.

Miscellaneous

(5)

British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society. *A PLAIN WHITE ENSIGN BEARING THE COAT OF ARMS OF THE SOCIETY.* This was perhaps the silhouette of a chained slave, on one knee with arms raised, within a Horizontal Oval Border inscribed BRITISH & FOREIGN ANTI SLAVERY SOCIETY. Nothing further known at time of writing January 2005.

Guernsey. **Overall Red Cross, Fly and Lower Hoist Chequered Blue (or black) and White.** In use during the 19th century but it never became widely accepted. There was also the possibility of a Guernsey Blue Ensign for States vessels, but this is not proven.

Hospital Ship HAMADRYAD. **HAMADRYAD over cursive H S within open-topped Yellow Wreath surmounted by a Crown all Yellow.** 1896-1905. The ship was built at Pembroke Dock in 1823, but never commissioned. Cardiff had no hospital for seamen and in 1866 HAMADRYAD was moored in Bute Dock to serve this purpose. A seaman's hospital was built ashore in 1904 and the present general hospital still bears the name Royal Hamadryad Hospital.

Lloyd's Signal Stations. *PLAIN WHITE ENSIGN; ST GEORGE'S CROSS WITH VERTICAL SWORD IN FIRST QUARTER, ABOVE ANGLED YELLOW FOUL ANCHOR ON BLUE, ALL WITHIN A YELLOW ORNAMENTAL FRAME.* Approved in 1896 after refusal of an 1894 request to fly a naval White Ensign but with a blue cross. This was despite current Lloyds Blue Ensign having been granted in 1882. White variant ceased to be used in 1914. [ADM 1/8950]

Manx Karran Fleet. **Manx Ensign with small Ship below the Triskelion.** The five ships of the Karran fleet of sailing vessels each had a small hand painted picture of the ship concerned beneath the three-legged emblem in the fly. One example is in the Manx museum. Counted as a single entity due to similarity of design.

Obsolete Ensigns of Commonwealth and Empire

The basis for an organised system of colonial ensigns was established by the Colonial Naval Defence Act of 1865. After the Act had been passed the Admiralty laid down the "Rules as to the Flag to be borne by any Vessels maintained by any Colony under the Clauses of that Act :-

1. That any Vessel provided and used under the Third Section of the Colonial Naval Defence Act, should wear the Blue Ensign, with the Seal or Badge of the Colony in the Fly thereof, and a Blue Pennant.
2. That all Vessels belonging to, or permanently in the service of the Colonies, but not commissioned as Vessels of War under the Act above referred to, should wear a similar Blue Ensign, but not the Pennant.

A Blue Ensign for a colony did not require a warrant. It was established by agreement between the Admiralty, the Colonial Office and the Governor of the Colony. Red Ensigns did require a warrant as they were established under the legislation of various Merchant Shipping Acts.

Red Ensigns fall into three categories.

1. Those needed by Protectorates and Mandated Territories whose inhabitants were not British subjects and whose vessels were therefore not entitled to fly a plain Red Ensign.
2. Those established for self-governing Colonies or Dominions as a mark of distinction.
3. Unwarranted ensigns with a colonial badge that had been authorised only for Blue Ensigns, or for governor's Union Jacks. A change dated 1 April 1890 to Article 86 of Queen's Regulations included the statement that *A Colonial Merchant Vessel may carry a distinguishing flag with the Badge of the Colony thereon, in addition to the Red Ensign, provided that such Flag does not infringe the provisions of Section 105 of the Merchant Shipping Act 1854 (see Article 87).* This is further emphasised in Flags of All Nations dated 1930 Chapter V paragraph 127.3 in which was reprinted an extract from King's Regulations & Admiralty Instructions (KRs & AIs) of the time which stated .. *Any colonial merchant vessel, may, however, fly a distinguishing flag with the badge of the colony thereon, in addition to the Red Ensign, provided that such flag does not infringe the provisions of Section 73 of the Merchant Shipping Act, 1894.*

Similar directives to those mentioned above appeared in subsequent KRs & AIs, and indeed in other official pronouncements. For example the Foreign and Commonwealth Office issued a statement on 20 August 1969 declaring that the Ministry of Defence had agreed to the use of defaced Blue Ensigns in Overseas Territories *For decorative purposes inside the Colony* and *For distinguishing purposes inside or outside the Colony*. Therefore some pronouncements suggested that colonial distinguishing flags should comprise a plain field bearing the arms of the colony, whilst others permitted the defacement of a Blue (and sometimes Red) ensign. Confusion and ambiguity have always been features of the British ensign story. Some authorities (F E Hulme for instance) have alluded to the general acceptance of defaced colonial ensigns provided of course an Admiralty warrant was obtained. Perhaps some distinguishing flags eventually took the form of a defaced ensign and replaced the undefaced ensign in the colony concerned without such a warrant being obtained. It is not really surprising that some unauthorised defaced ensigns remain commonplace in certain Overseas Territories to this day; and this matter only began to be addressed seriously in 1996 with the authorisation of the new Gibraltar Red Ensign.

In this section each valid ensign is classified according to the following criteria.

[o] Official. Listed in an Admiralty or Colonial Office flag book, or officially recognised if before 1865.

[oa] Official Amended. e.g. Badge modified or white disc removed. Changes to representations of the royal crown, which occurred after the accession of King Edward VII in 1901 and Queen Elizabeth II in 1952 are not listed.

[oo] Other Official. Not in official flag books but good evidence that the flag was used by an official body, or officially approved organisation, though not always with Admiralty or Colonial Office approval.

[i] Irregular Use. Use of an official badge on the wrong, usually red, ensign.

Errors. Common errors and badges that appeared only as Union Jack defacements are listed but not classified.

Colours

Descriptions of Ensigns that are not *WHITE*, *Red* or *Blue* are in *Brown*

Arrangement

Countries are listed within geographical areas arranged in the following order,

Pre-1865

Europe
West Africa
India
Australasia
North America

Post-1865

Mediterranean
West Africa
East Africa
Central Africa

South Africa
 Indian Ocean
 Indian Empire
 Far East
 Australasia
 Pacific
 North America
 Caribbean/South America
 Atlantic

Summary of Obsolete Commonwealth & Empire Ensigns

The completely amazing proliferation of British ensigns used throughout the past three centuries must surely be the all time record for flags derived from a single national theme. They represent over one hundred and fifty authorities in over one hundred colonies, provinces, regions, states or organisations of one form or another. Such was (and indeed still is) the scope and extent of British influence throughout the world, and is something of which we can rightly be very proud.

Obsolete Ensigns; Commonwealth & Empire

Pre-1865	White	Blue	Red	Sky Blue	Other	Totals
Europe	-	-	4	-	2	6
West Africa	1	-	-	-	-	1
India	-	-	-	-	5	5
Australasia	3	-	5	-	3	11
North America	-	-	3	-	1	4
Sub-Totals	4	-	12	-	11	27
Post-1865						
Mediterranean	-	11	2	-	-	13
West Africa	1	20	-	-	-	21
East Africa	-	11	4	-	-	15
Central Africa	-	7	4	2	1	14
South Africa	-	6	5	-	-	11
Indian Ocean	-	8	-	-	-	8
Indian Empire	-	7	17	-	-	24
Far East	-	15	2	-	1	18
Australasia	1	48	10	3	2	64
Western Pacific	-	12	1	-	1	14
North America	12	7	13	3	-	35
Caribbean	-	30	4	-	-	34
Atlantic	-	5	-	-	-	5
Sub-Totals	14	187	62	8	5	276
Totals	18	187	74	8	16	303

Flags used before the 1865 Colonial Naval Defence Act.

Europe

(6)

Hanover.

In 1727 King George II, who was also Elector of Hanover, directed that all his subjects' ships should have similar flags. This came to an end in 1866 when Hanover was annexed by Prussia.

[o] 1727. **White Horse on the Union canton.**

[oa] 1801. **Same with 1801 Union.**

[o] 1801 Royal Yacht. **Hanover Ensign with a Crown over G R over V in fly.**

[o] Postal Flag; **Hanover Ensign with a Post-horn, Crown, and Garland in fly.**

Heligoland

[i]1807-1890. **Green over Red over White.** From the Governor's dispatch No 37 of 11 May 1888 "Tricolour is flown on shore and in their boats, and some have added the English (sic) jack to mark their English (sic) nationality." The Colonial Office responded that the tricolour was not officially recognised and the Red Ensign should be used, however the matter was not of great enough importance for any action to be taken. [ADM 116/300]

Ionian Islands

[o] **St Mark's Lion on a Red Bordered Blue Flag.** Between 1817 and 1864, when the islands were a British protectorate, a Union canton was added to the flag, as authorised by the Constitutional Chart of the United States of the Ionian Islands, ratified by the Prince Regent 26 Aug 1817. It was intended to be flown "on days of public rejoicing and festivity."

West Africa

(1)

Nigeria

[oa] *WHITE ENSIGN WITH INITIALS K E AND H IN THE WHITE QUARTERS.* King Eyo Honesty, 1860. [Steenbergen] Probably Eyo Honesty III who established christianity as the official religion at Creek town in the Niger Delta. The flag may have been the work of the British consul at Old Calabar and Presbyterian church missionaries.

India

(5)

The Honourable East India Company

Granted a trading monopoly by Queen Elizabeth I in 1600, it eventually had a fleet of forty three warships (and its own army as well), and held sway over half the world's trade and one quarter of its population between the Red Sea and China.

[o] 1606 Union. Usually **Six or Seven White Stripes and Six Red Stripes**

[oa] 1801 Union. **White Ensign with Broad Armed Cross and Three Narrow Red Stripes in Each of the White Quarters**

[oa] 1801 Union. **Same but Overall Cross with Narrow Arms.**

[oa] 1801 Union. **No Overall Cross with Seven White and Six Red Stripes**

[oa] 1801 Union. **No Overall Cross with Four White and Five Red Stripes**

Officially all were replaced by the Red Ensign in 1824, but the Bengal Marine were still flying striped ensigns in 1861.

Australasia

(11)

AUSTRALIA

Nicholson's Chart

On 1 Jan 1832, Captain John Nicholson (the harbourmaster of Port Jackson) produced an engraving entitled 'Code of signals for the Colony of New South Wales'. It showed eight flags all in ensign form in a panel entitled 'Proposed Miscellaneous Flags for N.S.Wales and the South Seas'. Red, Blue, Customs, Post Office (bearing Post Boy on plain white ensign), NSW civil (with Federation Flag star design), NSW civil (same but with blue horizontal stripe in quarters 2, 3 and 4), NZ (with 4 blue and 3 white horizontal stripes) and Sandwich Islands (4 red and 3 white horizontal stripes). Apart from NSW civil, they have not been counted additionally to others in the list because their provenance is unproven. The same applies to John Bingle's National Colonial Flag of 1823/4, a White Ensign with a white star on each arm of the St George's cross.

Australasian Anti-Transportation League.

[i] A 3:4 Blue Flag with Union canton and a White Border on the Free Edges. AUSTRALASIAN LEAGUE, (colony name e.g. TASMANIA), and INSTITUTED 1851 were inscribed in the Border of the Top, Fly and Bottom respectively. The fly originally had a Four-Star Southern Cross, but the number was increased to Five to represent each of the protesting colonies of New South Wales, New Zealand, South Australia, Tasmania and Victoria. The flag was flown on at least two ships; the brig 'Raven' and the schooner 'Swift'.

Murray River Flag

[i] 1853. Known only from an ambiguous contemporary description. "It bears a red cross with four horizontal bars of blue, the cross being charged with five stars as emblems of the different Australian colonies, while in the upper corner in token of british connection is depicted the Union Jack." This has been interpreted as either an overall red cross with two blue bars on white in each of the three free quarters, or the red cross on white in the upper fly, and the four blue bars on white in the whole of the lower half of the flag. The modern replicas used on tourist boats (p47) have the second interpretation, but with the red cross on a blue background.

New South Wales Ensign.

[i] WHITE ENSIGN WITH FIVE WHITE EIGHT-POINTED STARS ON THE ARMS OF A BLUE OVERALL CROSS. Appeared on, not only Nicholson's chart of 1832, but also Hedberg's Hobart flag chart of 1855. Its use was reported in the 30 January 1838 issue of the 'The Australian' newspaper, and flown at sea until 1883 when its use was prohibited by the Admiralty due to its similarity to a Royal Navy White Ensign. It later reappeared in a modified form with five-point stars as a flag promoting federation of the Australian colonies. It was among the flags decorating the hall when the Prince of Wales opened the National Physical Laboratory, Teddington, on 19 March 1902. Still used occasionally; page 46.

New South Wales Merchant Ensign.

[i] 1839 Two Stars "signifying the two States, Sydney and Van Diemen's Land" Reported in South Australian Register 14 September 1839.

Queensland Customs

[oo] Possibly early 19th century. **Crown above Six-Pointed Star formed by Interlocking Triangles, with a Yellow Q in the Centre of the Star.** Resembles in some respects the British Excise ensign used between 1801 - 1816. A picture of this ensign, dated 1899, can be found in the Customs House on Queen St, Brisbane

Queensland Separation Flag.

[i] Described in the Moreton Bay Courier on 5 November 1859, as a **light blue flag with a red St George's Cross, and the Union in the upper corner.** Said to have been made to celebrate Queensland's separation from New South Wales on 10 Dec 1859 under its first governor Mr Bowen, and used unofficially until 1870. Seen flying in 2004 !!

Van Diemen's Land Ensign. (Name changed to Tasmania in the mid-1850s)

[i] *WHITE ENSIGN WITH TWO, THREE OR FOUR HORIZONTAL BLUE STRIPES IN THE WHITE QUARTERS.* Shown in a number of flag charts produced in the early 1850s by Private Edward Murphy of the 99th Regiment. The design is similar in some respects to the contemporary Murray River Flag (see above).

Victoria.

[i] **Government vessel** 1856. **Crown above yellow upright kangaroo facing hoist.**

NEW ZEALAND

Maori Queen and Tribal Flags. Flags were often presented to chiefs and tribes as a reward for loyal services during the Maori Wars. Such flags were unique in that only one of each was made. Some of these, such as *Te Rakau i Mataahu*, which Queen Victoria presented to Major Ropata in the 1860's, incorporated the **Red Ensign with special devices**. But those presented by the Government usually consisted of the **New Zealand Red Ensign with the name of the hapu, or of a noble ancestor, worked or printed on the fly**. Maoris preferred this flag because red is a colour denoting rank and mana. Moreover the hapu that could boast a genuine 'Queen' flag was bound to acquire great prestige in the eyes of less fortunate hapus. The Maoris of the Ngati Makino tribe of Otamarakau Pa (near Rotorua) requested a flag in August 1902 which was duly presented by the Government (**New Zealand Red Ensign with WAHAHA AHE in the lower hoist**). In commemoration of the Wanganui tribes' victory over the Hauhaus at Moutoa Island (on 14/5/1864), the ladies of the town presented a large silken flag of their own design to the local chiefs. It comprised a plain *WHITE ENSIGN AND IN THE FLY A GOLD CROWN WITH LEAVES ON EITHER SIDE, BELOW THIS THE WORD MOUTOA, AND BETWEEN THE TWO BOTH MAORI AND EUROPEAN HANDS CLASPED IN FRIENDSHIP.*

This group is counted as a nominal three in total; [o] **defaced Red Ensign**, [oa] **New Zealand Red Ensign** and [i] *WHITE ENSIGN*.

North America

(4)

Hudson Bay Company. The company was formed in 1670 and on 21 July 1682 its ships were given permission by Prince Rupert, Vice Admiral of England - and at that time also Governor of HBC - to fly the Kings Jack while west of the straits of Hudson Bay. The cross of St Patrick would not have originally been included. In about 1767 the company adopted its first house flag (the company Coat of Arms on a white field), which was joined in about 1818 by the [o] **Company Initials H B C** (Said by some to mean 'Here Before Christ') There appear to have been two versions of the flag, the more common of which had **the initials H and B conjoined.** [oa]

Northwest Company.

[oo] Formed in 1783 and merged with Hudson Bay Company in 1821. **NW Co.**

Colony of Maryland

[oo] c1755. **Yellow and Black Lozenge Check with pre-1801 Union canton.**
Banner of Arms of Calvert family.

Post 1865 Obsolete Ensigns

Mediterranean

(12)

Cyprus

[o] 1881 - 1922. **C H C on White Disc.** Intended only for Cyprus High Commissioner on his Union Jack, but also used on Blue Ensign until error noticed.

[o] 1922 - 1960. **Two Red Lions.**

[o] 1922 - 1960. **Two Red Lions on a White Disc.**

Gibraltar

[o] 1870-1923. **Gateway and Key on Red, Motto on Yellow Scroll below, on a White Disc.** Granted 10 July 1502 by, probably, King Ferdinand.
1923. White disc removed creating current ensign.

Malta

[o] 1874 - c1905. **White Maltese Cross on White/Red Shield with Elaborate Gold Frame, on White Disc.**

[o] c1905 - 1922. **Simplified White/Red shield with No Cross, on White Disc.**

[oa] 1922 - 1943. **White Disc Removed.**

[oa] 1943 - 1964. **Top of Shield Straightened, St George's Cross added on Blue Canton, on White Disc.**

Palestine

[o] 1927 - 1948. **PALESTINE in Black inside upper edge of a White Disc.**

[o] 1929 - 1947. **PALESTINE in Black inside upper edge of a White Disc.**

[oo] 1926 - 1929. **Customs. PALESTINE CUSTOMS** around edge of a White Disc.

[oo] c1940 - c1945. **Police. White cursive PP on Blue within Ring inscribed PALESTINE POLICE** surmounted by a Crown.

West Africa

(21)

West Africa Settlements

Comprised Gold Coast (until 1877), Lagos (until 1888), and Sierra Leone and Gambia (until 1889).

[o] 1870-1889. [Circular Badge, Palm Tree and Green Mountains behind an Elephant, WEST AFRICA SETTLEMENTS](#) inscribed in Red across the base. From the Public Seal of the Gold Coast Settlements.

Gold Coast

[oa] 1877 – 1957. [Same Badge as West Africa Settlements but inscribed G.C in Red](#)
Also in the Gold Coast are the unofficial tribal flags of the Ghanaian Fante Asafo people which are mentioned in Chapter 2. Although very many of them are in current use, some are historical only, however no attempt has been made to differentiate each category. An exhibition of a selection of Asafo flags took place in London and around Britain in 1993.

[oo] 1933. **Customs. HM CUSTOMS** in White.

[oo] 1933. **Public Health Office. P.H.O.** in White.

Lagos Colony Lagos, which had been ceded to Britain in 1861 as a base for operations against the slave trade, joined the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria in 1906 to form Colony and Protectorate of Southern Nigeria.

[oa] 1888 - 1906. [Same badge as West Africa Settlements but inscribed L. in Red.](#)

Gambia

[oa] 1888 – 1965. [Same Badge as West Africa Settlements but inscribed G. in red.](#)

Sierra Leone

[oa] 1888 - 1916. [Same Badge as West Africa Settlements inscribed S.L. in Red.](#)

[o] 1916 - 1961. [Shield of Arms, Union Jack above Seated Native at Left and Palm Tree at Right; Motto on Scroll below, on a White Disc.](#) Arms granted 30 July 1914.

[oo] 192? -1933. **Police. POLICE** added below Badge.

[ADM 1/8771/162, CO 323/1222/2]

[oo] 1935. **Customs. CUSTOMS** added below Badge.

[oo] 1935.**DISTRICT COMMISSIONER PORT LOKO** below Badge.[CO 323/1333/9]

Oil Rivers Protectorate 1885 - 1893. Probably no ensign as the protectorate was administered by the Foreign Office. A consul-general was appointed in 1891 replacing the consul at Old Calabar. See West Africa in pre-1865 section.

Niger Coast Protectorate 1893 - 1900. Name given to Oil Rivers Protectorate when it was enlarged.

[o] 1895 - 1900. [Crown above Garter, inscribed NIGER COAST PROTECTORATE, enclosing the Royal Arms, on a White Disc.](#) Even though the Niger Coast Protectorate was administered by the Foreign Office until 1899, a flag badge was produced and added to the Admiralty Flag Book as an 1895 amendment.

Protectorate of Southern Nigeria formed by combining Niger Coast Protectorate with the southern territories of Royal Niger Company. Amalgamated with Colony of Lagos in 1906.

[oa] 1900 - 1914. [Crown above Garter, inscribed SOUTHERN NIGERIA, enclosing the Royal Arms, on a Green Disc.](#) Originally the disc was to have been yellow.

Protectorate of Northern Nigeria. Name given to the northern territories of the Royal Niger Company when its charter was surrendered to the Crown in 1899.

[oa] 1900 - 1914. **Crown above Garter, inscribed NORTHERN NIGERIA, enclosing the Royal Arms, on a Red Disc.**

Royal Niger Company

[o] 1888 - 1899. **Black Y on Red Ringed White Disc. ARS, JUS and PAX on the Arms in White or perhaps Yellow.** The Y represented the rivers Quorra from the north-west and Benue from the north-east and the union of them both from Lokoja to the sea.

[i] 1887 - 1888 *SAME BADGE ON A PLAIN WHITE ENSIGN.* On 2 June 1887 the Admiralty approved the badge for use in the fly of the Saint George's cross White Ensign on the presumption that its use would be confined to inland waterways. When the Admiralty discovered that the company actually used it on a plain White Ensign, which was flown at sea, as well as on inland waters the warrant was withdrawn on 1 February 1888 and a new warrant was issued authorising use of the badge on the Blue Ensign. This flag does appear to live on. Outside an hotel in Nigeria stands a memorial to the company, and in 1996 the management of the hotel asked the Flag Institute for details of the ensign which they intend to fly from the memorial. It is not known if this is still done. [ADM 1/21259, FO 403/75, FO 403/76]

Nigeria

[o] 1914-1960. **Crown and NIGERIA in Centre of Interlaced Green Triangles on a Red Disc.**

Of the flag badge Lord Lugard wrote "The design of interlaced triangles is I think commonly called Solomon's Seal. I do not know if and when it was adopted as the seal of Islam, but it was found on the lid of a very handsome goblet or jug of brass and copper covered with designs, which was captured by our troops when the Emir of Kontagora, the principle slave raider in Northern Nigeria, was defeated. I thought it an appropriate badge for Northern Nigeria and as far as I can remember it was my own suggestion. On amalgamation of North and South it was adopted as the emblem of united Nigeria"

? - 1934. **Harbour Master. White H M.** The same as Barbados and St Lucia.

[oo] Before 1932- ? **Customs. Crown and HM CUSTOMS.** Authorised by the Admiralty and confirmed by Colonial Office in 1933 for Lagos and Victoria.

[oo] ?-1958-? **Customs & Excise. Full Colour Crown above H.M. CUSTOMS & EXCISE above NIGERIA.** An example of this flag is in the possession of HM Customs and Excise, and was until the early 1990s kept at their Portsmouth office in the old HMS Vernon (now subsumed within the Gunwharf Quays development). Another was bought at auction in 2011.

[oo] 1955 - 1960. **Nigeria Ports Authority. Yellow N.P.A. within Interlaced Green Triangles on White Disc.** Authorised 29 August 1955. Return of warrant requested 6 November 1961. [ADM 1/26610]

[oo] ? - 1933. **Police. NIGERIA POLICE FORCE** Discontinued 1933
[CO 323/1222/2]

British Cameroons. 1922. Administered as part of Nigeria. In 1930 the name was changed to **Cameroons under British Mandate.** Unconfirmed reports of an unofficial Blue Ensign with a banana plant in a white ring inscribed Southern Cameroons. If correct this would have been in the 1950's.

East Africa

(15)

British Somaliland

1884 - 1898 administered from Aden as a dependency of Government of India, 1898 - 1904 administered by Foreign Office.

[o] 1904 - 1950. **Head of an Antelope (kudu) on white disc.**

[o] 1904 - 1950. **Head of an Antelope (kudu) on white disc.**

Somaliland Registration of Vessels Regulations 1904.

Article 3. Every vessel employed in navigation in any waters of the Protectorate which belongs to, or is used by, any natives of the Protectorate, or any person residing or to any Company or partnership carrying on business therein shall, unless exempted, be registered, lettered and numbered in a manner hereinafter provided.

Article 20.

1) Every vessel registered under these Regulations shall fly the red ensign with the Protectorate badge on the fly in the prescribed form.

Article 23 allowed exemptions which were.

a) native canoes,

b) yachts, vessels or boats used solely for pleasure or private purposes

c) HM ships or vessels belonging to the Government of the Somaliland Protectorate.

[o] 1950 - 1960. **Shield with Round Shield and Two Spears on Yellow, above, on left, a White Minaret on Green, on right a Dhow and Yellow Anchor on Blue; Crown and Kudu Crest (on white disc ?)**

[o] 1950 - 1960. **Same Badge. (on white disc ?)**

Imperial British East Africa Company

[o] 1890 - 1895. **Radiant Sun surmounted by a Crown, all Yellow except Red Cap of Crown.**

[o] 1890 - 1895. **Same Badge**

Warrant 6 March 1890, cancelled 1895.

Kenya. British East Africa Protectorate 1890 - 1920.

[o] 1896 - 1921. **Red Lion Standing on One Hind Leg, Head Turned, on White Disc.**

[oa] 1921 - 1963. **White Disc Removed.**

[oo] ?-1933. **Police. KENYA POLICE** in black around the Badge within a White Disc.

Some sources incorrectly record a Red Ensign. This may be because the British East Africa Protectorate, which became Kenya in 1920, had previously been administered by the Imperial British East Africa Company, which did have a Red Ensign warrant. .

Tanganyika

[o] 1919 - 1961. [The Head of a Giraffe.](#)

[o] 1919 - 1961. [Head of a Giraffe on a White Disc.](#) This ensign appears to have been introduced without a proper warrant. It was listed in a 1920 amendment to the Admiralty Flag Book with reference to NL 35731/19, but after it had been reported in a letter of 13 November 1922 that locally registered vessels were using a defaced Red Ensign, a warrant dated 9 March 1923 was issued for, "... the head of a giraffe ... for inhabitants of the Tanganyika Territory." [ADM 1/8690/219]

[oo] 1934. **Customs.** [The Head of a Giraffe and HM CUSTOMS.](#)

? - c1933. **Police.** [POLICE in White.](#) On launches at Dar es Salaam and Tanga. [CO 323/1333/9] Also used in Cayman Islands and still used in Gibraltar.

Uganda

[o] 1914 - 1962. [Gold Crested Crane on Circular Badge.](#)

East Africa High Commission

[o] 1937 - 1949. **Kenya & Uganda Railways.** [Crowned Blue Garter inscribed KENYA & UGANDA RAILWAYS & HARBOUR ADMINISTRATION enclosing a Red Monogram KUR on White.](#)

On 3 December 1936 the High Commissioner for Transport in Nairobi wrote to the Colonial Office requesting a Blue Ensign defaced with the badge of the Kenya and Uganda Railways and Harbours Administration, for the Administration's harbour craft, lake steamers, and headquarters in Nairobi. Normally the Blue Ensign of a colonial Public Office was defaced with the badge of the colony, but under Orders in Council of 16 December 1925, 20 December 1927 and 13 August 1935, the working and management of Kenya and Uganda Railways and Harbours was vested in a High Commission for Transport, a 'Corporation Sole', staffed by officers administering the Governments of Kenya and Uganda acting jointly. Existing regulations did not cover two colonies having a joint administration, and the vessels could fly neither the Kenya nor the Uganda Blue Ensign. The Colonial Office replied on 8 March 1937 that the badge submitted had been approved by the King for the Blue Ensign of the Administration's lake steamers and harbour launches, and also for its building in Mombassa. It was not approved for the headquarters in Nairobi, where the badge should be set on a plain blue flag. "Port Authority" might be written on the ensign flown ashore in Mombassa. [CO 323/1377/4]

[o] 1949 - 1961. [Giraffe, Lion and Crane within a Ring inscribed EAST AFRICAN RAILWAYS & HARBOUR ADMINISTRATION, surmounted by Crown, Flanked by Palm Trees, on a White Disc](#)

Royal East African Navy. 1952 - 1962, was finally granted a badge in 1957, but this was used only on the jack, as the R.E.A.N. had been granted the privilege of flying the White Ensign.

Zanzibar The badge was used only on the Union Jack of the British Resident.

Central Africa

(14)

British South Africa Company

[o] 1902 - 1924. [Yellow Lion, with Head Turned, Standing on Three Legs with Right Fore-leg holding an Ivory Tusk, above B.S.A.C.](#) Crest of the Arms of the Company.

[o] 1902 - 1924. [Same Badge](#). Warrant 11 November 1902.

Northern Rhodesia (Zambia)

[o] 1928 - 1964. [Shield with Fish-Eagle above an Heraldic depiction of Victoria Falls](#). The Arms granted in 1939 were derived from this badge.

[i] [The Same Badge](#). Reported to have been used by yachts on Lake Nyasa.

Southern Rhodesia. (Zimbabwe)

[o] 1924 - 1964. [Red Lion between Thistles on White above Yellow Pick-Axe on Green. Many examples said to have been on a white disc.](#) Shield of Arms granted 11 August 1924. Possibly used only on land, and outside Southern Rhodesia.

[i] [The Same Badge both, With, and Without a White Disc](#). Unauthorised land flags in the late 1940s/early 1950s.

Rhodesia

[oo] 1964 - 1968. [Same Badge on Light Blue Ensign](#). Introduced 1 April 1964 after Northern Rhodesia had become Zambia in December 1963.

Royal Rhodesian Air Force.

[o] 1953 - 1964. [Royal Air Force Ensign with Three Small Assegais \(spears\) on the Centre of the Roundel](#). The assegais represented the countries of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland.

[oo] 1964 - 1970. [Same Ensign with One Large Assegai on the Whole Roundel](#). Adopted after the dissolution of the Federation.

British Central Africa Protectorate / Nyasaland (Malawi)

Nyasaland was made a British Protectorate in 1889, renamed British Central Africa Protectorate in 1893, transferred from the Foreign Office to the Colonial Office in 1904, and resumed its original name in 1907.

[o] 1905 - 1914. [Coffee Bush on Disc Diagonally divided Yellow / White / Black](#).

[o] 1914 - 1920. [Shield with Rising Sun above Leopard standing on a Rock, on a White Disc](#). Shield of Arms granted 11 May 1914.

[oa] 1920 - 1964. [White Disc Removed](#).

[i] [Same Badge](#) Reported to have been used on by yachts on Lake Nyasa.

Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland

[o] 1954 - 1963. [3:5 Shield with Yellow Rising Sun of Nyasaland on Pale Blue, above Red Lion of Southern Rhodesia on White, above Northern Rhodesia's Vertical Wavy Black and White representation of the Victoria Falls](#). Shield of Arms granted 22 July 1954.

South Africa

(11)

Union of South Africa

[o] 1910 - 1928. **Quartered Shield of, Female Hope on Red, Two Wildebeest on Yellow, an Orange Tree on Yellow, and an Ox-Wagon on Green.** Shield of Arms granted 17 September 1910. HMSA Ships wore the White Ensign until 1946, often also flying the South African national flag at the yardarm. During the 1920s there were a number of proposals for a new national flag, two of which bore a Union Flag in the canton, but neither were ever adopted or used.

[o] 1910 - 1912. **Same badge.** Admiralty warrant of 28 December 1910.

[oa] 1912 - 1951. **Same badge on a White Disc.** Since the first quarter of the shield was red a note was added to the Admiralty Flag Book that "In the case of the Red Ensign the shield is displayed on a white ground in the fly." The ensign was the unofficial national flag until the introduction of the Vierkleur in 1928, but remained the official ensign of the South African merchant marine, outside South African waters, until 1951.

[oa] **South African Railways** **Above Shield plus Springbok and Oryx Supporters, Lion Crest and EX UNITARE VIRES on a White Scroll, on a White Disc.** A third variant of the Red Ensign was used (inter alia) by the South African Railways. A surviving example of this flag was originally issued by the Railways Stores Depot at Bloemfontein. The Railways Version (in standard regimental Colour size) was used as a Colour by General Botha in the South West Africa campaign of 1915. A 6' by 3' example, which probably dates from that campaign, is displayed at the S.Africa Army College to this day.

[I] **Graaf Reinet Commando** **GRAAF REINET COMMANDO 1914 and on a Black Ribbon DIEU NOUS CONDUIT.** This flag is one of a small number which lie on the border between a regimental Colour and flag. It was a gift from a Mrs C A Nesor and was consecrated on parade on 27 October 1914 at 3 pm. The Colour Party was commanded by Lieutenant G van Niekerk, and the unit took part in the 1915 South West Africa campaign.

Cape Colony

[o] 1875 - 1910. **Shield with Three Yellow Fleur-de-Lis on White, above Lion Standing on One Hind Leg and Three Rings, all Yellow on Red, Gnu and Oryx Supporters, Crest of Hope and SPES BONA on a White Scroll, on a White Disc.** Complete Arms, that had been granted by Royal Warrant of 29 May 1876.

Natal

[oo] 1870 - 1905 **Public Seal in Brown on White Disc, Royal Arms, Two Wildebeest in an Ornamental Frame and Inscription.** Adopted as a land flag by the Natal Legislative Council. An example preserved in Durban has the wildebeest running towards the hoist rather than towards the fly.

[o] 1876 - 1905. **Same Badge.**

[oa] 1905 - 1910. **Crown above Two Wildebeest within an Ornamental Frame.**

Transvaal

[o] 1904 - 1910. **Natural Landscape with a Hill, Palm Trees and a Lion Lying Down on a Circular Badge.**

Orange River Colony

[o] 1904 - 1910. [Natural Landscape with Standing Springbok on a Circular Badge.](#)

Basutoland The Arms were used only by the Resident Commissioner on a Union Jack.

Indian Ocean

(8)

Aden

[o] 1937 - 1967. [Circular Badge; Two Masted Dhow on an Heraldic Sea.](#) Replaced the Indian Local Maritime Ensign when the administration of Aden was transferred from the Indian Government to the Colonial Office.

Ceylon (Sri Lanka)

[o] 1870 - 1948. [Circular Badge; Elephant and Temple within Decorated Red Border.](#) Designed by Mr Smithers of the Public Works Department because the design in the Public Seal was unsuitable as a flag badge. One of a few early colonial badges which were never altered. [ADM 1/8771/1/162, CO 54/457].

[oo] ? - 1933. **Police.** [POLICE in White below Colony Badge.](#)

Mauritius

[o] 1869 - 1906. [Quartered Shield in Beige Ornamental Frame; 1. Fully-Rigged Ship at Sea, 2. Palms on Yellow, 3. Yellow Key on Black and 4. Star in Sky reflected on Green Sea, STELLA CLAVISQUE MARIS INDICI on Scroll below, all on White Disc.](#) (Star and Key of the Indian Sea). Amateur Arms replaced by official Arms.

[oa] 1906 - 1923. [Quartered Shield 1. Yellow Mediaeval Ship on Blue, 2. Green Palms on Yellow, 3. Red Key on Yellow, 4. Star shining on Blue, Sambur Deer and Dodo supporters holding Sugar Cane, Same Motto on Scroll, on White Disc.](#)

[oa] 1923 - 1968. [White Disc Removed.](#)

Seychelles. From 1814 until 1903 the islands were administered as a dependency of Mauritius.

[o] 1903 - 1961. [Circular Badge; Coco-de-Mer and Giant Tortoise on a Sandy Beach, Finis Coronat Opus on White Scroll.](#) 'The end crowns the work'

[oa] 1961 - 1976. [More Detail added and set in a Decorated Oval Frame.](#) According to a Toronto newspaper the governor of Seychelles held a competition for a new badge, and selected the entry of Mrs. Alec McEwen, a former commercial artist of Toronto. The Queen approved the design and the Admiralty agreed to its use.

Indian Empire

(10)

[oo] 1880 - 1884. Yellow Ring inscribed **BOMBAY PORT TRUST** enclosing Four Port Scenes surmounted by a Crown.

[oo] 1883 - 1884 (?). Yellow Ring inscribed **CALCUTTA PORT TRUST** enclosing Four Port Scenes surmounted by a Crown.

[o] 1896 - 192? Yellow Ring inscribed **COMMISSIONERS FOR THE PORT OF CALCUTTA** enclosing Four Port Scenes surmounted by a Crown. Admiralty Warrant of 1 Feb 1896 issued after the Government of India had required the return of the original Blue Ensign Warrant.

[o] 1884 - 1947. **Indian Government Local Maritime Ensign**. Yellow Lion on One Hind Leg with Head Turned holding a Crown; the crest of the East India Company. The Indian equivalent of a colonial Blue Ensign.

[o] 1879 - 1892. **Her Majesty's Indian Marine**. "Star of India" Five-Point White Star overlapping a Pale Blue Belt inscribed in White **HEAVENS LIGHT OUR GUIDE** surrounded by Wavy Dark Gold Rays alternately Longer and Shorter.

1892 - 1928. **Royal Indian Marine**.

1928 - 1947. **Royal Indian Navy**. Jack

2 July 1879. Admiralty Letter granted ensign to Her Majesty's Indian Marine.

30 July 1883. Admiralty Warrant granted ensign to Indian Harbour Defence Force vessels ABYSSINIA and MAGDALA while firing shotted guns for exercise. (Indian Government Local Maritime Ensign would have been the normal ensign)

21 April 1884. Admiralty Warrant for Her Majesty's Indian Marine confirming letter of 2 July 1879.

[oo] 1928. **Military Transports**. Admiralty Anchor with the Star of India in the Centre of the Stock. Worn by vessels of the Military Department of the Government of India manned by Royal Indian Marine personnel but not operating as an R.I.M. unit. Also vessels other than ships of war employed in the Naval Service. Illustrations of this ensign in 'The Royal Indian Navy' by Cdr.D.J.Hastings, RINVR and 'In the Wake' by Cdr.E.C.Streatfield-James, RIN show the Lord High Admiral's anchor with cable draped around three sides, but it is more likely that it was the plain horizontal Admiralty anchor.

1941 - 1943. **Commander-in-Chief, India**. Dark Red over Black over Dark Red, Royal Crest in Centre, Union Jack in hoist half of Upper Red Panel. Car Flag.

[oo] 1942? - 1947. **Royal Indian Army Service Corps**. Star of India on Crossed Swords.

[oo] **Flag of India**. Star of India. Flown with the flags of the Dominions at the ceremonial opening of Luton Airport in 1938. It was probably used between 1945 and 1947 to represent India at the United Nations, and may have been used earlier at the League of Nations, though according to a 1936 Empire Directory, the Viceroy's Union Jack was used.

[o] **Burma** Circular Badge of a Peacock Displaying its Tail. Based upon the flag of King Mindon, was approved by King George VI. The Times of 9 February 1939 reported that the date of use would be announced after international recognition.

[o] 1906(?) -c1927 Yellow Ring inscribed **COMMISSIONERS FOR THE PORT OF RANGOON** enclosing Four Port Scenes surmounted by a Crown.

Red Ensigns of Indian Native States

(14)

In 1917 it was reported that the vessels of some north-west India Native States, that traded to the Persian Gulf, were flying unlicensed plain Red Ensigns outside the territorial waters of the British Empire, contrary to the requirements of the General Act of the Brussels Conference, 1890. An Order in Council of 22 April 1920 made some sections of the British Merchant Shipping Act 1894 applicable to vessels of the rulers of Indian States and their subjects. Following an Order in Council of 14 July 1921, the Admiralty issued a General Warrant authorising the use of the Red Ensign, defaced with an appropriate badge, by vessels of the States detailed below. Individual Warrants were issued for approved badges on 10 October 1924.

[ADM 116/1847B]

[o] **Baroda** A Horseman, a Scimitar and **BARODA** in White on a Red Ochre Rectangle with a White Margin.

[oa] 1921 – 1924. The symbols below **BARODA** had been the Hoof of a Horse over Crossed Swords.

[o] **Bhavnagar** A Crimson Shield bearing a Gold Eagle supported by Bulls above a Motto, which translated as 'Man Proposes, God Disposes'.

[o] **Cambay** A Green Shield bearing Two Galleys and a Tower in White, supported by Angels, a Portcullis Crest with Helm and Mantling.

[o] **Cochin** A Gold and Red Palangin, a Gold Lamp, a Red Umbrella, and a White Conch, on a White Disc.

[o] **Janjira** A Crescent Moon and a Five-Pointed Star in White above a Fort in Black and White.

[oa] **Jafrabad** A much Larger Crescent Moon and Star with No Fort.

[o] **Junagadh** Three Circles between Two Mountains above and One Mountain below, all in Pale Green, below **JUNAGADH STATE BADGE** in Red arranged in a Semi-Circle, on a White Disc.

[o] **Kutch** A Crescent Moon and Sun and words **KUTCH STATE** in white.

[o] **Morvi** A Gold Shield bearing an Oval Badge charged with the Sun, Crescent Moon and Stars and the words **MORVI STATE**, supported by Tigers' Head and Shoulders and surmounted by an Ancient Crown and Swords, above a motto which translated as 'Valour With Forgiveness'.

[o] **Nawanagar** A Shield bearing a Galley and Three Fishes, Antelope Supporters, a Lion Crest, above a Motto, which translated as 'Victory Be To Shrijam'.

[o] **Porbandar** A figure of Hanuman (a Hindu Deity with the Face of a Monkey) Flying, with a Club and a Mountain in his Hands.

[o] **Sachin** A Right Hand in Green (known as a Panja).

[o] **Travancore** A White Conch Shell surmounted by a Crest in Gold adorned by a Blue Cloth.

The Far East

(18)

Borneo

British North Borneo Company. Royal Charter 1 November 1881.

[o] 1882 - 1946. [Red Lion Standing on One Hind Leg on a yellow disc.](#) The 1889 Admiralty Flag Book incorrectly showed the lion facing the fly. [ADM 116/898B]

[o] 1882 - 1946 [Same Badge.](#) Warrant 5 January 1882.

[o] 1948 - 1963. [Rising from a Yellow and Blue Torse, Two Arms, One Native, One European with a White Cuffed Blue Sleeve, Holding a Flag Staff with a Red Lion on a Yellow Flag.](#) Crest of Arms granted 13 September 1948.

Labuan

[o] 1875 - 1907. [Circular Badge of Sir James Brooke's Schooner ROYALIST with the Mountains of Kinabalu in the Background.](#) [CO 325/54]

Labuan was administered by the British North Borneo Company from 1890 until 1907 when it became part of Singapore within the Straits Settlements.

Sarawak

[o] 1947 - 1963. [Yellow Shield with an Ancient Crown in the Centre of a Cross Vertically Divided Black/Red, on a White Disc.](#) Arms granted 10 March 1947.

Brunei 1948 - 1983. Two different badges used only on Union Jack.

Malayan Peninsular

Straits Settlements

[oo] 1870 - 1877. [Yellow Crown in Lower Fly.](#)

[o] 1877 - 1946. [Three Crowns on White Inverted Y ,on Red Diamond.](#)

Perak

[o] **British Resident.** [White over Yellow over Black Swallow-Tail with Union Canton](#) On government vessels; at main for Resident, at fore for Assistant Resident. Resolved at Perak Council Meeting 1 March 1879 in accordance with letter 790/79 of 31 January 1879 from Governor of Straits Settlements

Singapore. After Straits Settlements were officially dissolved in 1946.

[o] 1948 - 1959. [Crown in Centre of Red inverted Y ,on White Disc.](#)

Malacca While in the Federation of Malaya 1948 - 1957.

[o] 1951 - 1957. [Gateway on White Disc.](#) Crest of Arms granted 14 August 1951.

Penang While in the Federation of Malaya 1948 - 1957.

[o] 1949 - 1957. [Pale Blue Battlements separating Pale Blue Prince of Wales Feathers on Yellow, above, from Pale Blue and White Heraldic Sea below.](#) Shield of Arms granted 11 September 1949.

China

Hong Kong

[oo] 1870 - 1873. [Crown above H K All White](#). [CO 325/54]

1873 - 1876. [Crown](#). [CO 325/54] Similar to United Kingdom Customs & Excise

[o] 1876 - 1955. [Circular Badge of Harbour Scene](#). From the Public Seal.

[oa] 1955 - 1959. [Harbour Scene Revised](#).

[oa] 1959 - 1997. [White Battlements separating Yellow Naval Crown on Red, above, from Two Red Junks on an Heraldic Sea, below, Crest of Yellow Crowned Lion holding a Pearl above Blue and White Torse, Lion and Dragon Supporters standing on an Island, HONG KONG in Red on Yellow Scroll, on a White Disc](#). Full Arms on white disc. Order in Council 27 July 1959.

[i] **Same Badge** The badge based upon the Arms granted on 21 January 1959 was widely used without authorisation for Hong Kong registered vessels and local craft from 1959 to the end of June 1997. Hong Kong vessels were supposed to wear an unsightly combination of the Hong Kong Blue Ensign above the undefaced Red Ensign on the same mast but, not surprisingly, most did not.

[oo] 1969? - 1997? **Royal Hong Kong Police**. [1876 Harbour Scene surmounted by Crown, enclosed by Yellow/Red Garland, with ROYAL HONG KONG POLICE on scroll below](#). Title Royal was granted in 1969. Displayed in the office of the Commissioner of Police. Possibly the only example.

Liu Kung Tau Main town in Weihaiwei.

1902 - 1903. Chinese dragon. Civil Commissioner's flag. Badge used on only **Union Jack**.

Weihaiwei 1903 - 1930. Two Mandarin Ducks at Water's Edge.

"The design of the flag hitherto used by the Commissioner of this Dependency is a dragon on the **Union Jack** and is in my opinion quite unsuitable. I have therefore to request that the Crown Agents may be instructed to have made for the use of the Commissioner two new flags, the device of the Mandarin Duck being substituted for the dragon, which is as you are aware the national emblem of China and not appropriate in the case of a British Dependency." J.H.Stewart Lockhart, Government House, Port Edward. [CO 523/2]

Since the badge of the previous Commissioner was used on only the Union Jack, it is likely that the new badge was also used on only the Union Jack ? **Not Counted**.

Australasia

(64)

Australia

Australia is a particularly rich source of ensigns both past and present. There were many slight variations in design of state flags over the years, especially in the stars and crowns so some licence is needed in counting those substantially different. It is also the case that a significant number of historic Australian flags are being seen once more as the constitutional future of the country is debated.

Australian National Flag

[o] 1902 - 1909. **Five Star Southern Cross and in Lower Hoist, a Six-Point Commonwealth Star.** Telegram approving design sent 6 October 1902.

[o] 1903 - 1909. **Merchant Flag. Five Star Southern Cross and in Lower Hoist, a Six-Point Commonwealth Star.** Warrant dated 4 June 1903. Delayed until after the Commonwealth Navigation Act had been passed.

[o] 1935 - 1948. **Civil Air Ensign. Similar to Current Civil Air Ensign but with Yellow Stars instead of White .**

[oo] 1950s – 1966. **Prime Minister Australian National Flag defaced with the Arms of Australia, between the Commonwealth Star and the Southern Cross.** An official drawing of this flag is dated 1938, but it does not appear to have been used until the 1950s, and then only as a car flag. Probably last used on aircraft and cars during Harold Holt's visit to the USA in 1966.

Customs Service

[oo] 1901 - 1904. **H M C above AUSTRALIA in White.**

[oo] 1904 - 1988 **Australian National Flag with H M C in White between Commonwealth Star and Southern Cross.**

Commonwealth Lighthouse Service.

[oo] not before 1918 – 1963? **Australian Red Ensign with Red Lighthouse, White Sky and Blue Sea on an Oval Badge in the Middle of the Southern Cross.** Flown by lighthouse tenders.

[oo] c1963 – c1973. **Australian Red Ensign with White Lighthouse and White Beams on Blue Disc between Commonwealth Star and Southern Cross.** Flown by lighthouse tenders.

[oo] not before 1918 – c1955. **Australian Blue Ensign with Red Lighthouse, White Sky and Blue Sea on an Oval Badge in the Middle of the Southern Cross.** Flown at lighthouses.

[oo] **Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service.** 1909 – 1980? **Badge on Australian National Flag between Commonwealth Star and Southern Cross.** Described in a Department of Health letter of 1954 "a circular yellow disc or badge, the crown over an anchor crossed by a serpent-coiled rod.

[oo] **Department of Defence (Civilian Manned Vessels).** 1929-c1950. **Horizontal Plain Yellow Anchor within a Yellow Ring.** This handsome ensign has sadly become extinct. In September 1928 it was noted that Australian auxiliaries were using the Australian National Flag as their ensign and the Royal Fleet Auxiliary jack as their jack. The Australian Navy Board suggested that a distinct ensign should be adopted and proposed the badge described above. [ADM 1/8732/214] It was replaced by the White Ensign around the time of the Korean War.

[oo] **Military Board** 1941 - 1947. **Australian National Flag, with Royal Crown above White Scroll inscribed MILITARY BOARD, between the Commonwealth Star and Southern Cross.** For Board member embarked upon duty in boats or vessels. Probably never used as the Board was abolished in March 1942.

[oo] **Commander-in-Chief, Australian Military Forces.** 1942-1945. Australian National Flag, with 1904 pattern Australian Army Badge (no crossed swords) between the Commonwealth Star and Southern Cross. Personal flag of General Sir Thomas Blamey.

[oo] **Chief of the General Staff.** 1946/7-2001. Australian National Flag with Royal Crest (Crowned Lion standing on a Crown) between Commonwealth Star and Southern Cross. 1:2 but often illustrated as 2:3, the proportions of the car flag version.

Royal Australian Engineers 1945 - 1955/6. The same as the Royal Engineers in the United Kingdom but possibly also a simplified version with only a Mural Crown. Also the same as Royal Army Service Corps in the United Kingdom. Neither used on land.

Royal Australian Army Ordnance Corps 1946. In use in 1957. The same as the Royal Army Ordnance Corps in the United Kingdom. Not used on land.

Australian Army Service Corps. 1943 - ?.

Australian Electrical & Mechanical Engineers 1944. In use 1949.

Both the same as Royal Army Service Corps in the United Kingdom. Not used on land.

Royal Australian Air Force Ensign

1922 - 1948. The same as the Royal Air Force Ensign.

[o] 1948 - 1982. Australian National Flag with Southern Cross angled to accommodate a small Royal Air Force roundel in the bottom corner of the fly.

[oo] **Volunteer Air Observers Corps** 1945. Royal Air Force Ensign with Yellow Eagle superimposed on Roundel and V A O C in White below Union. 24,000 personnel and 2,656 posts in 1944. 50 flags ordered 10 July 1945, but perhaps never issued. Reduced to cadre in December 1945 and disbanded 10 April 1946.

New South Wales

[o] 1870 - 1876. White N S W in the lower fly. Worn by two unarmed government vessels and two vessels of the naval brigade.

[oo] **Customs** 1882. Overall white cross with white C H in lower fly.

[oo] **Department of Navigation.** Design Not Known

[oo] **Forestry Commission.** c1970s. Tree

[oo] **Sydney Harbour Trust.** (1901 – 1936) New South Wales Shield surmounted by a Crown, superimposed on tilted Blue Foul Anchor; flanked by Pilot Ship and Lighthouse, with Sydney Harbour Trust below, on a White Disc.

[oo] **Maritime Services Board.** (1936 - 1995 ?) M S B in Black above New South Wales Shield surmounted by a Crown, superimposed on tilted Blue Foul Anchor, on a White Disc. This flag is still sometimes seen.

Queensland.

[o] 1870 - 1876. Head of Queen Victoria on Blue Disc within White Ring inscribed QUEENSLAND.

South Australia.

[oo] 1870 - 1878. Four, (or five) White Star Southern Cross, tilted ten degrees anti-clockwise, and off-set into Upper Fly corner, and Two White 'pointer' Stars in Lower Hoist.

[oo] 1870 - 1878. **Similar.**

[o] 1878 - 1904. Britannia being greeted by an Aborigine on a Circular badge. Derived from the Public Seal. Includes what may be the first official depiction on a flag of a kangaroo.

[oo] **Customs** 1889. Crown above **C H** in red.

[oo] **Department of Marine and Harbours** Design Not Know

Tasmania.

[oo] 1875. Overall White Cross and White Southern Cross in the Fly, Three Stars in the Upper Quarter, and Two in the Lower Quarter. Existed briefly from 9 November 1875, when it was officially proclaimed, until 23 November 1875, when a second proclamation revoked the first.

[oo] 1875 **Similar.**

[oo] **Marine Board of Launceston** ? – 1968. Australian National Flag with Yellow Foul Anchor within Crowned White Garter inscribed **M B L**, in the middle of the Southern Cross.

[oo] **Port of Launceston Authority.** 1968 - 1997? Blue Lion, standing facing hoist, holding Yellow Foul Anchor in Right Paw, above Blue Shield on which Two White Lighthouses flank a Wavy Blue Barred Yellow Triangle, charged with a White Sailing Ship, Port Beam view, all on a White Disc.

[oo] **Port of Launceston.** (Authority 1997? - 2006?) (L?) City Arms on White Disc; Shield has Three Waratah Flowers on Green, above Blue Inverted Y on Yellow; Tasmanian Tiger Supporters, Helm, Mantling, Compartment and Motto.

Victoria.

[oo] 1865. **Customs.** Crown above **H.M.C.**

[oo] 1865. *WHITE ENSIGN WITH CROWN IN UPPER FLY AND EITHER '1' OR 'T' IN LOWER FLY.* Navy Gun Raft in Illustrated Melbourne Post 18 February. The symbol appears to be 1 but it has been suggested that it is a partially obscured **T** indicating that the raft was funded by the Treasury. (An alternative description had a Crown in Centre and **V**.)

[i] 1867. Crown above yellow upright kangaroo facing hoist. Flown at the stern of HMCS VICTORIA when dressed overall.

[o] 1870 - 1877. **White Southern Cross covering the Whole Fly.** A flag used by the Victorian Naval Brigade in the Boxer Rebellion of 1900 (on display in the Victorian Parliament) appears to a flag of this type with a small crown added between the top star and the Union, there being no room for it above the Southern Cross. A number of variations of the Southern Cross on a shield, appeared on only the Governor's Union Jack.

[oo] 1870 - 1875 (or 1903). **Southern Cross in White.** Authorised by mistake. Possibly continued in limited use until 1903, although rescinded 10 December 1875.

[oo] **Port of Melbourne Corporation Flag** Two Crossed White Plain Anchors. Originally Melbourne Harbour Trust and later Port of Melbourne Authority and Melbourne Port Corporation. An ensign was first employed in 1880, but by 1906 had been altered to its present form and adopted, although this was not confirmed by the Commissioners until 1960. Date when flag was taken out of use not known by current staff.

Western Australia.

[o] 1876-1953. **Black Swan Facing towards the Fly, on a Yellow Disc.** On the current flag the swan faces towards the hoist.

[oo] **Department of Harbours and Lights.** Design Not Known

[oo] **Department of Marine and Harbours.** Design Not Known

[oo] **Albany Port Authority.** Design Not Known

[oo] **Fremantle Harbour Trust.** 189? – 1964. **State Swan Badge with F.H.T. below in Yellow.** **Fremantle Port Authority.** 1964 – 2000. Same with **F.P.A.**

[oo] **Geraldton Port Authority.** Design Not Known

[oo] c1970-2005. **Western Australia Police.** **State Swan Badge with W A above and POLICE below, in White.**

British New Guinea / Papua. South-Eastern New Guinea.

[o] 1885 - 1888. **Crown above N G on White Disc.** South-eastern New Guinea while a British protectorate.

1888 – 1906. The Initials were changed to **B N G** when the territory became colony.

South-Eastern New Guinea as the Australian Territory of Papua.

[o] 1906 – 1942. **Crown above PAPUA on White Disc.** None made until 1908

[oo] 1908 – 1942. **Australian Blue Ensign with PAPUA on White Disc between Commonwealth Star and Southern Cross.**

Both the above flags were authorised with, apparently, the Australian version gradually replacing the British version.

[oo] **Customs** 1917 - 1942/51 “**Flag of the Territory of Papua with the addition of the letters H M C in black in bold character.**” Said to have never been used.

[i] **Papua.** 1920s & 30s ? **Crown above PAPUA on White Disc**

Flown as a courtesy flag by Peninsula & Orient Line ships.

Mandated Territory Of New Guinea. North-Eastern New Guinea.

[oo] 1921 – 1942. **T N G on a White Disc.** Possibly surrounded by a laurel wreath when used by Administrator.

[o] 1928 - 1942/51. **Customs.** **Australian Blue Ensign with TNGC on White Disc between Commonwealth Star and Southern Cross.**

Papua / New Guinea. North-East and South-East New Guinea.

[o] 1951 - 1975 **Customs.** **Australian National Flag with T P & N G C on a White Disc between Commonwealth Star and Southern Cross.** Ampersand may later have been omitted.

Nauru

[oo] ? – c1952. **Nauru Customs.** **Australian Blue Ensign with N C between Commonwealth Star and Southern Cross.**

The Port Medical Officer used the Australian Quarantine Blue Ensign.

New Zealand

[oo] 1867 - 1869. [N Z in Red Edged in White](#).

1869. Essentially the same as the current flag. New Zealand Gazette, 23 October, a Blue Ensign with "four five-pointed red stars in the fly, with white borders to correspond to the colouring of the Jack". This was designed by Lieutenant (later Admiral) Albert Hastings Markham whilst First Lieutenant of the screw sloop HMS BLANCHE on the Australian station. He was asked to suggest a distinctive flag. He replied "You already have the right to fly the Blue Ensign, why not add to it the stars of the Southern Cross". The initial design had the stars rather small and was returned with a request to enlarge them in Lewis Carol verse "Will you, won't you, will you, won't you, magnify the star". This was duly done. In 1893 Markham rammed and sank the flagship of the Mediterranean Fleet in a manoeuvring accident.

[oo] 1900 - 1902. [Four Red Stars on a White Disc](#). Intended for use only in conjunction with signal flags, but was used on land.

In the latter part of 19th century a Red Ensign similar to the current New Zealand Civil Ensign was in use and became the official Civil Ensign in 1903.

[oo] 1900 - 1903. [Four Red Stars on a White Disc](#). Warrant dated 7 February 1899. Intended to be used only in conjunction with signal flags. Some examples have the [Four Red Stars on a Blue Disc](#).

[oo] **Auckland Harbour Board**. c1870 - 1900? [AHB on New Zealand National Flag](#). "similar flag with different letters is used by some other local bodies in the colony"
[Napier, MP for Auckland City, Code Signals Bill, New Zealand Parliament Sept.1900]

[oo] **Customs Service Ensign**. ? - 1996. [HMC in the 3rd quarter of New Zealand National Flag](#).

[oo] New Zealand Forces Motor Service Corps. 1915 - ? [Design Not Known](#)
Granted to the Motor Boat Section by warrant dated 9 October 1915.

Cook Islands

British Protectorate in 1888 but annexed to New Zealand in 1901. Between 1901 and 1979 the islands' flags did not have a Union canton.

[o] 1892 - 1901. [Palm Tree on White Disc on Union canton of Red over White over Red flag](#).

[i] [Same Flag with Three Blue Stars on the White Band](#). A possible earlier version in which a Union canton was added to the Raratonga flag.

Western Samoa

Occupied in 1914 and Mandated Territory of New Zealand 1920 - 1962.

[o] 1914(?) - 1962. [Three Coconut Trees on a Circular Badge](#). Not authorised until 1922.

[o] c1915 - 1962 [Similar](#) Not authorised until 16 January 1925

Not counted are those flags which contained a canton within a canton, eg. the Prime Minister of the Cook Islands flag of 1973 ~ which bore the NZ flag in the canton.

WESTERN PACIFIC

(14)

Western Pacific High Commission. 1880 - 1976. Crown above W.P.H.C. Used only on **Union Jack**.

[o] **British Resident Commissioner.** Crown above **B.R. on White Disc.**

British Solomon Islands c1902 - 1947? Apparently still used by the Commissioner after Solomon Islands badge had been introduced.

Cook Islands. 1895 - 1901.

Gilbert & Ellice Islands 1895 - 1937. Also used by Customs until 1933.

British Solomon Islands

[o] 1902 - 1947. Crown encircled by **BRITISH SOLOMON ISLANDS** on White Disc. [CO 863/1] Did not appear in Admiralty Flag Book until 1916.

[o] 1947-1956. **BRITISH SOLOMON ISLANDS** below Shield with White Triangles on Black above Plan View of Vertical Turtle on Red, all on a White Disc. Arms granted 10 March 1947.

[o] 1956 - 1978. Shield with Yellow Walking Lion, Head Turned, on Red, above Bright Blue and White Quarters bearing an Eagle, Turtle, Bow and Four Crossed Spears, and Two Frigate Birds, on White Disc. Arms of 24 September 1956.

[i] **Similar.** Of doubtful legality although it undoubtedly existed.

Gilbert & Ellice Islands (now separate as Kiribati and Tuvalu)

[o] 1937 - 1975. Shield with Frigate Bird above Sun Rising from the Sea. The introduction of this badge involved nine government departments or agencies, that took nearly six years to agree on the design. A further four years elapsed before the Admiralty Flag Book was amended. [CO 323/1272/20, CO 323/1333/3, CO 323/1377/13, CO 323/1468/18, CO 323/1575/22 and MINT 25/2] 1975 - 1979. Ensign of just the Gilbert Islands.

[oo] 1934 - 1937? **Customs.** "Block letters **H.M.C.**"

[o] 1976 - 1978. **Ellice Islands / Tuvalu** Meeting House above Sea, on Yellow Shield with Decorated Border, Motto on Yellow Scroll below, on White Disc.

[oo] 1976 - 1978 Flag of Chief Minister (or State Flag ?). **Current Light Blue National Flag with 'Meeting House Shield' in Lower Hoist.**

New Hebrides (Vanuatu)

[o] 1902 - 1909. Crown between **NEW** above, and **HEBRIDES** below, on a White Disc. Flag of British Resident. The Condominium was not proclaimed until 1906, but British and French Resident Commissioners had been appointed in 1902.

1909 - 1980. Ensign of government vessels. In 1909 the British Resident was considered to be an 'Officer Administering a Government' and allowed a defaced Union Jack. [CO 323/1641/11]

Fiji

[o] 1874 - 1883. Mermaid on Shield superimposed on Crossed War Clubs(?) and Foliage, on a White Disc. In 1882 M.des Volux complained about the badge and suggested a simpler one. It was not, as had been thought, the Public Seal, but the Seal of the Supreme Court of Fiji.

[o] 1883 - 1908. Crowned Lion standing on a Crown (Royal Crest) above **FIJI** on a White Disc.

[o] 1908 - 1924. Shield with Yellow Lion holding a Cocoa Pod on Red, above St George's Cross with Three Sugar Canes, Coconut Palm, Flying Dove and Bunch of Bananas in the quarters, Fijian Canoe Crest, Native Supporters, Fijian Motto on White Scroll below, on White Disc.

[oa] 1924 - 1970. White Disc Removed.

North America

(35)

Canada

[o] 1870 - 1922. Shields of Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick Quartered on One; St George's Cross above Three Yellow Maple Leaves on Green; Two Blue Fleur-de-lis on Yellow, above Yellow Lion Walking with Head Turned on Red, above Three Green Maple Leaves on Yellow; Two Thistles on Yellow, above White Fish on Blue, above One Thistle on Yellow; Yellow Lion Walking with Head Turned, above Blue Mediaeval Ship on Green Sea with Yellow Sky.

[o] 1922 - 1957. Shield having the British Arms with Fourth Quarter Lions replaced by three Yellow Fleur-de-lis on Blue, above Three Green Maple Leaves on White. Shield of the Arms granted to Canada on 21 November 1921.

[oa] 1957 - 1965. Maple Leaves changed from Green to Red, and the Female Harp replaced by a Celtic Harp.

At Sea.

[o] **Four Province Badge of 1870.** Used at sea from the early 1870s. The Admiralty finally issued a warrant for its use by vessels registered in the Dominion on 2 February 1892.

[oa] 1922 - 1957. **Shield of the 1921 Arms.** Authorized for use on the Red Ensign by Order in Council 26 April 1922.

[oa] 1957 - 1965. **Amended Arms Badge.**

On Land.

Four Province Badge. Used unofficially on land,

[i] **Four Province Badge with a Garland and Crown.** As used on the flag of the Governor-General. By 1891 use of the defaced Red Ensign was being officially encouraged by the Canadian government.

Other unofficial Red Ensigns had badges that reflected the increasing number of Canadian provinces.

[i] 1870 - 1873. **Five Province Shield with Manitoba (St George's Cross above Buffalo Standing on a Rock)** added to Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick.

[i] 1873 - c1907. **Seven Province Shield; Prince Edward Island (Two Oak Trees) and British Columbia (Crowned Lion standing on a Crown between B and C)** added.

[i] **Single Maple Leaf.** Produced in 1896 by Edward Chadwick, a Toronto barrister. Had a limited use right up to the 1950s.

[i] Early 1900s. **Nine Province Badge with Yukon and North West Territories.** Also designed by Chadwick.

[i] c1907 - 1921. **Nine Province Shield; adding Saskatchewan (Lion and Wheat Sheaves) and Alberta (St George's Cross, Prairies Scene and Ears of Wheat).** There may possibly have been Blue Ensign versions of some of the various multi-province Red Ensigns, but there is no conclusive evidence.

Some books state that the individual badges of the **Canadian Provinces** could be used on a Blue Ensign. This was not legal, and there appears to be no evidence that it was ever done, even unofficially. "The badge with the crown is used by the Governor-General of the Dominion of Canada, and without the crown is used in the fly of the flags of all vessels belonging to the Dominion of Canada irrespective of the particular Province to which they belong." [1875 Admiralty Flag Book] Later Flag Books omitted "irrespective of the particular Province to which they belong".

In 1926 and again in 1939 British Columbia requested a Blue Ensign, with the badge of British Columbia, for Police and Forestry launches, citing the Australian States' flags. The request was refused with the observation that the badge of the province might be worn on a square blue flag used as a jack. [ADM 1/8700/133, DO 35/629/2]

Customs

1850 - 1911. **Crown**. (British Customs changed to a Blue Ensign in 1873)

Erroneous Governor-General's Flag Four province badge with crown and garland in the centre of a **White Ensign** (instead of a Union Jack). Used at a reception at Windsor Hotel in Montreal when the Earl of Dufferin (the third Governor-General) visited the city on 11 February 1878.

British Columbia

[oo] Mid-1920s. **Shield with Ancient Crown in centre of Union Jack above Rising Sun and Heraldic Sea**. Flag for trade mission in San Francisco.

Ontario Lieutenant Governor

[oo] 1959-1965. **Canadian National Flag with a Shield having St George's Cross above Three Yellow Maple Leaves on Green surrounded by a Garland on a White Disc (badge from Lt-Governor's Union Jack) beneath the Union canton**. An unusual case of two major defacements on one flag.

[oo] **Battle Flag**. *UNION CANTON ON WHITE FLAG WITH THREE RED MAPLE LEAVES ON A TRIPLE STEM EXTENDING ACROSS THE FLY AND HALF THE LOWER HOIST, THREE YELLOW FLEUR-DE-LYS ON BLUE DISC IN THE UPPER CORNER OF THE FLY*. Designed by Colonel A Fortesque Duguid and approved by War Committee on 7 December 1939. Flown on merchant ship acting as HQ of 1st Canadian Division went overseas, and at HQ in Britain. Small car flag version presented to King George VI, who accepted it and expressed approval.

Royal Canadian Ordnance Corps

[oo] **Large Green Maple Leaf bearing a Badge in which a Shield (Three Black Circles on White above Three Yellow Field-guns on Light Blue) on Red within a Crown surmounted Blue Garter inscribed HONI SOIT QU MAL Y PENSE, Red Scroll below inscribed ROYAL CANADIAN ORDNANCE CORPS in Yellow**. The only corps in the Canadian Army with the distinction of its special flag, developed through its connection with the RAOC. The design was submitted for approval on 23 April 1947 and approved in CAO 54-3 on 1 December 1952. In 1964 CAOs describe the flag as "On a blue field, the Union Flag in the upper left hand corner; on the fly end a green maple leaf 12 inches high; superimposed on the maple leaf, in full colour, the Royal Canadian Ordnance Corps badge in the design approved by the Sovereign in December 1963, height of badge 6 1/2". This is for a flag 3' by 6'.

Royal Canadian Air Force

[o] 1941 - 1968. **Red Maple Leaf on White Circle on Blue Circle**.

Civil Air Ensign.

[o] 1922-1923 ? **White-edged Red Shield with White Albatross above Three Conjoined Maple Leaves.** For the premises of the Air Board. Canada Gazette 7 January 1922. Air Board was absorbed into Department of National Defence 1 January 1923.

Defence Research Board

[oo] 1952 - 1968. **Armillary sphere with naval, mural and astral crowns.** Approved by the Queen in 1952.

[oo] Royal Canadian Sea Cadets.

1953 - 1976. *WHITE FLAG WITH UNION CANTON; IN THE FLY A YELLOW ANCHOR ON A BLUE DISC SURROUNDED BY RED MAPLE LEAVES SURMOUNTED BY A NAVAL CROWN.* Approved by Chief of Naval Staff.

[oo] **Royal Canadian Air Cadets.** **In Yellow on a Blue Disc, RAF Eagle surmounted by a Maple Leaf.**

Victory Loan Flags. *WHITE FLAG WITH RED BORDER AND UNION CANTON, AND AN EMBLEM (LISTED BELOW) IN THE FLY.*

[oo] 1919. *IN FULL COLOUR, ROYAL ARMS PLUS FEATHERS AND DRAGON BADGES OF PRINCE OF WALES IN LOWER FLY.* Awarded to any organisation that had purchased Victory Bonds of a specified value. *BADGE OF PRINCE OF WALES' CORONET AND FEATHERS, ADDED IN ANY POSITION,* for each 25% raised over the assigned target.

[oo] 2 June 1941 - *BLUE TORCH.* Inspired by the poem written by Canadian John McRae 'In Flanders Fields' – "To you from failing hands we throw the torch, be yours to hold it high"

[oo] 16 February 1942 – *BLUE MAPLE LEAF.*

[oo] 19 October 1942 – *WHITE DAGGER ON BLUE SHIELD.*

[oo] 26 April 1943 – *IV ABOVE FOUR SMALL MAPLE LEAVES ON A WHITE SHIELD.*

[oo] 18 October 1943 – *BLUE WINGED V ON A WHITE SHIELD.*

[oo] 24 April 1944 – *BLUE WINGED VI ON A WHITE SHIELD.*

[oo] 23 October 1944 – *IN BLUE AND WHITE, A FLAMING SWORD SUPERIMPOSED ON A 7 ON A SHIELD.*

[oo] 23 October 1945 – *IN WHITE, 8 SURROUNDED BY GARLAND ON A RED/BLUE SHIELD.*

[oo] 22 October 1945 – *IN WHITE, 9 OVER A PEN ON A DIAGONAL BLUE RED SHIELD*

Hudson Bay Company

1929. An Admiralty warrant may have been issued for a Red Ensign defaced HBC, but is not listed in any known records. See Hudson Bay in pre-1865 section.

Newfoundland

Became a province of Canada in 1949, but retained its unique ensigns until 1965.

[o] 1870 - 1904. Crown above **TERRA NOVA** on White Disc.

[o] 1904 - 1965. Circular Badge of Mercury, a Kneeling Fisherman and Britannia.

[o] 1918 - 1965. Same badge.

[oo] 1939. Red Shield, outlined in Black having a White St George's Cross with Lions in Quarters One and Four, Unicorns in Two and Three. Shield of Arms granted in 1638, but unknown in Newfoundland until 1924. Used during the Royal Visit of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth.

Caribbean

(34)

Antigua

[o] 1956 -1967. Coastal Scene with Hills and a Large Agave on a Shield, on a White Disc. From Leeward Islands' Arms.

Bahamas

[o] 1869 - 1923. 18th Century Ship at Sea within Horizontally Oval Yellow-edged White Garter inscribed COMMERCIA EXPULSIS PIRATIS RESTITUTA, surmounted by a Crown, Scroll below inscribed BAHAMAS, all on White Disc.

[oa] 1923 - 1963. White Disc Removed.

1963 - 1973. Badge redrawn, but not significantly different.

[oo] Shield with a Crown on a Red Panel above an 18th Century Ship at Sea, Scroll inscribed BAHAMAS above, and below another Scroll with the Garter Inscription, on a White Disc. A land flag used during the celebration of internal self-government in 1964. The badge was the shield and motto of the 1959 Arms.

[oo] Same as above.

Board of Trade Tenders to Bahamas & Sombrero Lighthouses

[o] 1898 - 1973? Crown above Red Vertically Oval Garter inscribed BOARD OF TRADE, around Lighthouse, BAHAMAS on Red Scroll above. Admiralty warrant 20 July 1898.

1919. Out Island Commissioners Large St Edward's Crown. Known as the Revenue Flag.

[i] No records exist of warrants or other authorisations for Bahamas Red Ensigns which are assumed to have been unofficial. It is likely that they appeared with the 1869 badge and the 1964 badge, both with, and without, a white disc [i]. The spread of the Bahamas Red Ensign was encouraged by its use as a courtesy flag on American and Canadian vessels in Bahamian waters. In 1962 it was estimated by the Nassau Port Director that there were up to one thousand such ensigns in use and that over the years it had probably been flown by over five thousand different vessels. As an unconnected aside, when the author visited Nassau in a ship in 1963, the Harbourmaster came on board sporting three gold stripes. He immediately noticed the Captain also had three gold stripes. When the Harbourmaster returned the next day he had been miraculously promoted and was wearing four gold stripes, thus outranking our Captain.

Barbados

[o] 1870 - 1966. **Britannia and 'Sea-Horses' on Natural Sea inscribed BARBADOS in Black on Circular Badge.** From Public Seal.

[oo] 1919. **Harbour Police. "Buckle, White with Yellow Edge, HARBOUR POLICE in Red on the White."**

? - 1934. **Harbour Master. White H M.** The same as Nigeria and St Lucia.

British Guiana (Guyana)

[o] 1875 - 1905. **Starboard Bow view of 19th Century Ship at Sea on a Circular Badge.** From the Public Seal.

[oa] 1906 - 1920. **Similar View in a Vertically Oval Yellow Garter inscribed DAMUS PETIMUSQUE VICISSIM, on a White Disc.**

[oa] 1920 - 1955. **White Disc Removed.**

[oa] 1955 - 1966. **Similar View on a Shield with Motto on Yellow Scroll below.** Arms granted 6 December 1954. Admiralty help had been requested to ensure that " the design submitted is correct from a seaman's point of view." Badge approved 6 July 1955. [ADM 1/25042]

British Honduras (Belize)

[o] 1870 - 1919. **In a Roughly Circular Ornamental Yellow Frame, Three Triangular Panels containing Union Jack on White, Logging Tools on White, above 19th Century Ship at Sea, covering most of a White Disc.**

[oa] 1920 - 1981. **White Disc Removed.**

Cayman Islands Dependency of Jamaica until 1959.

1935 - 19???. **POLICE. POLICE** Commissioner indented for a 12' x 6' ensign for the Police Station, and a 4' x 2' ensign for the Police launch. Colonial Office pointed out that the Blue Ensign should not be flown on land and instructed the Crown Agents to supply only the smaller ensign. [CO 323/1333/9] Also used in Tanganyika and still used in Gibraltar.

Dominica

[o] 1955 - 1965. **Shield with 18th Century Ship, Sails Furled, near Coast, Red Sun Setting in Orange Sky.** From Leeward Is. Arms..

[o] 1965 - 1978. **Shield Quartered Yellow / Light Blue containing Cocoa Palm, Dominican Toad, Sailing Canoe, Banana Plant, Parrot Supporters, Lion Crest, Scroll inscribed APRES BONDIE C'EST LA TER.** (After God, the land)

Dominica was transferred from the Leeward Islands, where each island used the Leeward Island ensign, to the Windward Islands, where each island had its own ensign, in 1940, but no ensign was authorised for it until 1955. This raises the question of what ensign would have been flown by a vessel belonging to the government of Dominica, between 1940 and 1955 ?

Grenada

[o] 1875 - 1903. **On a Circular Badge, Two Oxen turning a Sugar Mill above a Tawny Segment inscribed HAE TIBI ERUNT ARTES.** From the Public Seal.

[o] 1903 - 1974. **On a Circular Badge a Two-masted Ship with Two Square Sails at Sea before a Coast and a Scroll below inscribed CLARIOR E TENEBRIS.** From new Public Seal.

Jamaica

[o] 1875 - 1906. St George's Cross on Vertically Oval Yellow-edged surmounted by a Beige Helmet and Grey Cayman.

[o] 1906 - 1957. St George's Cross Shield with Yellow Pineapples on each Arm and centre, Amerindian Supporters, Cayman Crest, White Scroll below inscribed INDVS VTERQVE SERVIET VNI, on a White Disc.

1957 - 1962. Royal Helmet added between Shield and Crest.

[i] 1950s. 1906 Badge. Existed and may have been used. Perhaps some connection with the reported, but unauthorised Montego Bay Yacht Club ensign ?

Leeward Islands. St Christopher & Nevis, Antigua, Montserrat, Virgin Islands and, until 1940, Dominica.

[o] 1874-1956. Circular Badge with Small Royal Arms, Large Pineapple and Two 19th Century Sailing-ships in Coastal Scene. From Public Seal.

St Christopher, Nevis & Anguilla

[o] 1957 - 1967. Shield with Three Triangular Pictorial Panels; Elizabethan Seaman with Telescope; Three Females by a Waterfall; an Amerindian on a Beach with a Canoe; Crest of Three Dolphins, their Tails within a Coronet. Nevis and St Christopher from the Leeward Island Arms and a new design for Anguilla which had not been represented on the Arms.

St Lucia

[o] 1875 - 1937. On a Circular Badge, a View of the Island above a White Segment inscribed **STATIO HAUD MALEFIDA CARINIS**. From the Public Seal.

[o] 1937 - 1967. Black Shield Quartered by Yellow Sugar Canes, Roses 1st and 4th, Fleur-de-lis 2nd and 3rd, All Yellow. Originally a badge, but granted as Arms in 1939.

[oo] 1919. Harbour Master. White H M.

St Vincent

[o] 1877 - 1907. Circular Badge with Two Females at an Altar and **ST VINCENT** in White. From the Public Seal.

1907 - 1969. Females' Clothing Altered and Inscription now **PAX ET JUSTITIA** in Black.

Tobago

[o] 1870 - 1889. Circular badge with Ships near the Coast, Sun Rising above a Hill, Palm Tree in Foreground **PULCHRIOR EVENTIT** in Red. Reported variations of badge probably due to inaccurate reproductions of a complicated picture.

Trinidad (& Tobago after 1889)

[o] 1875 - 1958. On a Circular Badge, Ships and a Boat near a Sea-wall with a Blue Ensign, Beige Mountain behind, White Segment inscribed **MISCERIQUE PROBAT POPULOS ET FOEDERA JUNGI**. From the from Public Seal.

[o] 1958 - 1962. The above Scene on a Shield with Motto on Scroll below. (?)

[oo] 1906 - 1933. Water Police. **TRINIDAD CONSTABULARY** around Colony Badge. [ADM 116/1063D]

1906 - ? Customs. Crown The same as UK Customs.

Turks & Caicos Islands

1799 Dependency of Bahamas. 1848 Presidency of Jamaica. 1874 Dependency of Jamaica with own Commissioner.

[o] 1875 - 1968. [Circular badge with 18th Century Ship at Sea with Salt Pans and Two Mounds of Salt in the Foreground.](#) The original badge in the Colonial Office flag book showed two mounds of salt, but in the Admiralty flag books a small arched rectangle at ground level was added to one mound giving it the appearance of an igloo.

Windward Islands St Lucia, St Vincent and Grenada.

The island group did not have a flag of its own (apart from the Governor-in-Chief's Union Jack) because although united into a single government, the individual islands retained their own institutions.

Atlantic

(5)

Bermuda

[o] 1869 - 1910. [Stern-on Ship outside Lock-gates with a Schooner to the Left and Bare-mast Ship to the Right on a Circular Badge.](#) From 1817 Public Seal.

St Helena & Dependencies

[o] 1874 - 1985. [Ship with Sails Furled near Cliffs in Ornate Yellow Framed Shield draped with a Pink Ribbon.](#) From the Public Seal.

1816. Ascension Island was classified as the sloop-of-war HMS ASCENSION and flew the White Ensign until paid off to the Colonial Office 31 October 1922.

Falkland Islands and Dependencies

[o] 1870 - 1936. [Circular Badge with a White Bullock on Grass to the Right and in a Channel to the Left, a Three-Masted Ship under Top-sails.](#) From the Public Seal in use since 1846.

[o] 1936 - 1948. [Shield with White Ship on Blue obscured across Bottom Left Half by a Brown Sea-lion on Yellow, White Ribbon joined at ends by Fancy Rope-work and inscribed DESIRE THE RIGHT.](#) Based on Arms granted 16 October 1925.

South Georgia & South Sandwich Islands

[o] 1992 - 1999. [Green Triangle, on which a Yellow Lion Standing on One Hind Leg is Holding a Torch, Superimposed over Shield of Blue and White Diamonds, on a White Disc.](#)

Unidentified Flags

The flags in this section have been seen or reported but no firm details of their provenance or origin have been discovered. Any ideas or suggestions as the identity or use of these flags will be welcome.

Blue Ensign bearing the shield of Ulster (St George's Cross with the bloody hand in the centre) surrounded by 6 six pointed white stars. Definitely old. Discovered in USA in 2007.

Blue or possibly Red ensign defaced with the letters P H in the fly. Photographed on a small pleasure craft in Toronto in the early 1900s.

New Zealand Red Ensign with H U I and possibly **A** in the lower hoist. Photographed at a political protest rally in Wellington in about 2011.
<http://image.absoluteastronomy.com/images/encyclopediainages/h/hi/hikoi-foreshore.jpg>

Royal Air Force Ensign with the roundel replaced by the RAF badge. The crown looks old fashioned but is similar to a rather pointed crown that appears on some Command and Squadron badges. In the reserve collection of the RAF Museum at Stafford, who don't know what it is.

White Ensign defaced in the lower fly with a black 'Balkan' type of eagle was discovered for sale on the Internet in May 2004. Its provenance has yet to be established.

Hypothetical Flags

Comments from readers, on any of these flags, would be welcome.

Queen Victoria Seaman's Rest. White Lighthouse in Lower Hoist , QV over SR in the Fly. Located in Poplar (east London) this charity started in 1843 as the Seaman's Mission of the Methodist Church. Flag appeared in an advertisement in Lloyd's Calendar of 1962, and is on the organisations website, but may be only a logo ?

Aden. No flag until 1937. Possibly two variants existed. **What was the variant ?**

Australia

Australian Civil Air Ensign. **At least two and possibly three designs 1935-1948.** Stars were originally yellow and are now white. **What were the other designs ?** Report of a 1938 photograph of the flag, on an airline terminal at Essendon Airport Melbourne, with very small Commonwealth Star and no Southern Cross.

Queensland. **Two other previous designs possibly.**

Was there a previous design, other than the head of Queen Victoria, before the current design ?

South Australia Company. **Three red kangaroos.** 1836 ?

South Australia Government vessel Before 1866. Emu. **An ensign, or perhaps just a flag ?**

<http://prov.vic.gov.au/publications/provenance/crown-and-kangaroo>

Victoria. 1856. Departmental initials on flags. Used or only proposed ? Also on url above.

Board of Trade Tenders to Bahamas & Sombrero Lighthouses. Possibly two variants with different badges. What were the variants ?

Barbados. Possibly both red and blue; not confirmed but given benefit of doubt
Was there a Red Ensign ?

Bremen-Hanover. Quarantine flag. **The hoist was green with a defaced Hanover Union Flag in canton; in the fly were five red and white horizontal stripes with a blue panel bearing gold key.**

Did this flag have a Hanover Union canton or were the Hanover and Bremen flags side by side in the centre of a green flag ?

Canada

Harbour Commissioners of Montreal. 1911 Said to be recorded at www.collectionscanada.gc.ca as 'Blue Ensign'. Plain or defaced ? Not found

Newfoundland. "Also two unofficial versions, one using the 1637 arms was certified in 1925 and reinstated in 1928."

Did the flag using the 1637 arms reinstated in 1928 have a Union canton ?

Cook Islands.

Queen's Representative, Crown within circle of stars,

Customs, HMC within circle of stars.

Both believed to have been approved, but were they ever used ?

Bremen-Hanover. Quarantine flag. **The hoist was green with a defaced Hanover Union Flag in canton; in the fly were five red and white horizontal stripes with a blue panel bearing gold key.**

Did this flag have a Hanover Union canton or were the Hanover and Bremen flags side by side in the centre of a green flag ?

Hanover. Between 1714 and 1837 a **green/red/white quarantine flag.**

Was there a quarantine flag with a Hanover Union canton ?

Hong Kong. Five variants pre-1959.

Were there five variants before 1959 rather than the three listed ?

India

Indian Maritime Governments. 1897-1947. Two variants. What were the variants ?

Mosquito Coast. 1824 version with *SIX HORIZONTAL STRIPES*. 1852 with *TEN STRIPES* and 1853-1881 with *TWELVE STRIPES*. Defaced *KING OF MOSQUITO COAST*. Did the number of stripes have any significance ?

Niue

Customs. "Niue Ensign with the addition in the fly of the letters H.M.C. in White in Bold Characters." Niue Customs Act 1966. What was the Niue Ensign in 1966, was the ensign ever produced, and, the 1966 Act still being in force, what was the ensign after the 1975 Flag Act which created the current flag of Niue ?

St Helena and Dependencies. [Two variants](#) pre 1995. **What were the variants ?**

Tobago. Until 1888. Some sources quote [two additional flag badges](#).

What were the additional badges ? Likely to be poor representations of original badge ?

CHAPTER 5

Exclusions

Flags similar to Ensigns & Unofficial Ensigns

It could be argued that this section is superfluous. Why include flags that are excluded! However, because the line between exclusion and inclusion is so difficult to define it seemed appropriate to mention those which nearly made it to the flag locker – but not quite, if only to stop the reader saying “*why didn't he include such and such a flag*”. This wide-ranging group includes territorial, organisational and commemorative flags as well as standards that closely resemble ensigns, both official and unofficial. All of them bear the Union Flag in the canton but are generally different in style and/or purpose from traditional ensigns and are therefore not counted in the grand muster.

Military Standards and Colours.

Four groups have been identified, with examples given below of each. Details of some of the numerous flags that fall into this category may be available from the Flag Institute Librarian

1. Standards of British and Commonwealth Military Associations. These include Royal British Legion Standards.

2. Colours (Queen's and Regimental) of British and Commonwealth Armed Forces Regiments and Commands. These include Queen's Colours for the Royal Navy and Royal Marines.

3. Colours of Commonwealth Reserve and Cadet Forces. These include for example the Australian Reserve Cadets Colour and New Zealand Air Training Corps.

4. Armed Forces Flags. These include **Royal Army Ordnance Corps Blue Ensign** land flag and a **Royal Marines** flag of 1806. A battalion of 340 Royal Marines under Major A.M.McKenzie, RM, landed to attack Buenos Aires, carrying both their regimental colour and a Red Ensign defaced with the letters R M B in white. This flag is preserved in the convent of Santo Domingo with the caption (translated from Spanish) “Trophy of the re-conquest of Buenos Aires 1806, of the Guard of Infantry of the Sea”. Also a **Malay Corps** flag of the Seventh Cape Frontier War of 1846 which is more likely a colour than an ensign, but nevertheless an interesting (and surely unique) combination of Christian and Muslim symbology on one flag; green with a Union canton bearing the defacement ALLAH AKBAR.

Flag said (on ebay 2009) to be **Royal Irish Regiment**. Blue Ensign with red (outer) and green(inner) border on three free sides. Badge in lower fly, and motto of Connaught Rangers above bottom border.

Ensigns within ensigns.

This group (mainly within New Zealand, and some quite recent) places a complete ensign within the canton and a defacing badge in the fly (NZ Police, both the Wellington and Auckland Harbour Boards, NZ Ministry of Transport, NZ Yacht Ensign, NZ Fire Service flag).

House Flags.

The distinguishing flag at sea of a commercial firm or government agency that was usually flown at a masthead. Some examples;

Belfast Harbour Board. Pre-1914. White Ensign with Harp on centre of Union, Shield in Lower Hoist and Vertical Black Foul Anchor in Upper and Lower Fly.

British Electricity Authority. 1949-55. Initials on electric blue ensign.

Central Electricity Authority. 1955-57. Initials on electric blue ensign.

Central Electricity Generating Board. 1957-90? Initials.

Property Services Agency Dredging & Diving Fleet. Blue Ensign used until 1994. The emblem(?) was purple.

Eastern Telegraph Co. and Eastern Extension Telegraph Co.

Meff Bros., Tho's Walker, Aberdeen, North of Scotland Steam Fishing Co.

Union Steam Fishing Co. Grimsby.

Others had Union cantons that were less than a quarter.

Granite City Steamship Co., International Line Steamship Co.,

L.Mamood, Whitby, Northern Line Steam Fishing Co.

Ocean Yacht Company Ltd House Flag. Black: Overall White Cross with Triangle of Fifteen Yellow Discs in Lower fly. Registered as a trade mark in 1993. The flag has St Piran's Cross (the flag of Cornwall) with the bezants from the arms of the Duchy of Cornwall. Examples are frequently made without the bezants. Designed by Brian Pope and registered as his company house flag in 1993. Although it is marketed with the caveat that it is not a legal ensign, it is nevertheless popular both as a house flag in Cornish vessels (although the Cornish flag is more commonly used in this regard) and also as an (illegal) ensign itself. Known locally in Cornwall as The Cornish Ensign and is used widely both ashore and afloat. See also the Devon Ensign below.

Unofficial Ensigns.

Commodore Hopkins' Ships. 1776-77. Grand Union with individual ships identified by different coloured stripes. One known to have been Red/Green .

The Euro-Ensign. Dates from the mid 1980s. Blue defaced with 12 gold stars; i.e. the EU flag with a Union Flag in the canton. It is illegal as an ensign for British vessels but is often seen as a house flag. Not to be confused with the Cook Islands flag. A version has also been seen with 15 stars ! Maybe this was a mistaken to the 15 member states at the time or a wrongly produced Cook Islands flag – we will never know.

Eton College Boat Ensigns. Several traditional flags are used as boat ensigns by Eton College during the annual 4th of June procession of boats. These include about ten richly embroidered red, white and blue banners with the Union Flag in the canton.

Hawaiian Naval Ensign Red and white stripes. On 21 January 1887 the Hawaiian government bought a 15 year old British copra steamer and converted it into a gunboat and training ship, commissioning it as HHMS KAIMILOA (the local translation of its original name Explorer). The King asked his friend Isobel Strong (the step daughter of Robert Louis Stevenson) to design an ensign. She defaced the Hawaiian flag with a white rectangle bearing a yellow shield bearing in turn a poloulu

crossed with two red kahili, to symbolise the king and the princess heir apparent. A jack of red, white and blue stripes was also flown. The ship and the Hawaiian navy ceased to exist within a year.

Manitoba Maritime Ensign. A Red Ensign defaced with a large water buffalo. This flag was designed on request by Dr Whitney Smith following the extensive flooding near Winnipeg during May 1997, for use in rescue boats. It reflects the official provincial flag which bears a bison.

Lexington Ensign. 1776. Grand Union with Red/White/Blue stripes. Flown by brigantine 'Wild Duck' renamed 'Lexington'.

Unofficial Land Flags in Ensign Form.

There are quite a number of flags in this very broad category, and by their nature they are difficult to specify with any real accuracy. For example, in addition to the official flag of the Fire Service College, most of the fifty-eight British Fire and Rescue Services use a plain flag defaced with their badge (instead of or in addition to a Union Flag). However some Brigades have adopted unofficially a flag or standard in the form of a defaced Red Ensign for use at Fire Stations and Headquarters and on ceremonial occasions both indoors and out of doors. Fire Brigade flags have only recently been codified. Many other authorities and organisations use similar flags too, and the following flags are known to exist within this group: -

The Cornwall Ensign. The Cornwall county flag is not infrequently seen in ensign form and used afloat illegally. (See also Ocean Yacht Company Ltd House Flag on page 115)

Devon Ensign. Comprising the Devon county flag (green with a white cross fimbriated black) bearing the Union in the canton. Flown at the Burgh Island hotel off the Devon coast. First hoisted by Commodore Harris of BRNC Dartmouth in summer 2006 during the HMS Ganges Association reunion at the hotel.

Ulster 'White Ensign'. The Northern Ireland version of St George's Cross (with the Red Hand in the centre) is sometimes flown bearing a Union Flag in the canton, often with a white fimbriation. The resulting flag is effectively a defaced White Ensign, and although not uncommon, has no official standing and is both improper and illegal.

Vancouver Blue Ensign. A modern flag with the distinctive panel from the public seal of the Colony of Vancouver Island in the fly. Vancouver had been absorbed into the colony of British Columbia within ten months of the introduction of colonial Blue Ensigns making it unlikely that such a flag was ever produced in the 19th century.

Western Isles Ensign. Believed to have been inaugurated (unofficially) on 9 September 1976. It is understood to be a Blue Ensign which bears a black galley with furled sail in a white roundel. Nothing else is known about this flag.

Fire Brigade Flags. Some of these flags may no longer be used following reorganisation of services.

County of Avon Fire Brigade. Defaced Red Ensign

County of Clwyd Fire Brigade. Clwyd and Gwynedd Fire Brigades combined in April 1996. Authorisation may be sought for an ensign type flag for the new authority.

East Sussex Fire Brigade. Defaced Red Ensign

Kent Fire Brigade. Defaced Red Ensign

Oxford Fire Brigade. Defaced Red Ensign. Apparently obsolete since the Brigade was reorganized as the Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Service.

Surrey Fire and Rescue Service. SF & RS is believed to be replacing its existing flags and is considering making an application for a Warrant.

Wiltshire Fire Brigade. Red Ensign with Brigade badge on Blue 4th quarter. Badge on Red Ensign used as ceremonial standard.

Historical Land Flags / Proposals.

Australian Colonial Flag 1823 - 1824. **White Ensign** with a star on each arm of the overall St George's cross. Also a version with a fifth star in the centre. Proposed and said to have been approved by the Admiralty, but probably never used.

Continental Colours. 1775 - 77. Red and white stripes. The first national flag of the American Colonies (also known as the Great Union Flag and, since the 19th century sometimes as the Cambridge Flag or the Grand Union Flag) was similar to one of the flags of the East India Company.

Blood Indian Nation of Alberta. This may once have been a conventional ensign with a buff field, but is now a white flag charged with a pale blue 'ensign' which has a dark blue triangular extension to the bottom edge. BLOOD TRIBE in red is beneath the Union Flag canton, and symbols for the Sun, Two Tepees and Crossed Pipes of Peace in the Fly. It commemorates the treaties signed in the name of Queen Victoria in 1876, 1877 and 1899.

Digger's Republic. The flag comprised a large brown horse upon a Red Ensign (sometimes depicted facing the hoist, and sometimes the fly). The Digger's Republic (which had various other names too) existed for a few months towards the end of 1870.

Hawaii, or the Sandwich Islands

1816-1845 **Red/White/Blue stripes, possibly three of each.** The Hawaiian Islands (or Sandwich Islands) were never formally part of the British Empire, although they considered themselves to be a British Protectorate from 1794 to 1816. In 1793, Captain George Vancouver gave a Union Flag to King Kamehameha I, who incorporated it into his local striped flag (it must have been in the pre-1801 pattern, although there is no record of the old Union Flag being used). The earliest documented use of Hawaiian flag was during the visit of HMS BLONDE in 1816. A Hawaiian ship first flew the flag during a visit to San Francisco in 1828. The King's flag was retained as the flag of the islands when Hawaii became a territory and later a state of the USA, and the only change has been the order and number of the coloured stripes in about 1845.

One example with w/b/r/w/r/b/w/r stripes is in the Tasmanian Museum. It was originally given to Lady Jane Franklin, while Hawaii's Queen Emma was staying with her in England in 1865. Lady Jane's husband had been the Lieutenant-Governor of Van Diemen's Land 1836-43.

Herald Federal flag of 1900. Similar to the 1901 Australian Blue Ensign but with six red stripes on a white lower hoist. The winning design from a competition run by a Melbourne newspaper.

Indian Home Rule Movement. Of the several HRM flags of the early 1900s, the 1917 version was striped and burgee shaped with the Union in the canton. First hoisted by Dr Annie Besant and Lokmanya Tilak.

New England. A flag said to have been used in New England between 1707 and 1775 comprised a Red Ensign with the first quarter of the Union replaced by a green fir tree.

Taunton Flag. Red Ensign. The Boston Evening Post of Monday 24 October 1774 reported that 'We have just received the following intelligence from Taunton – that on Friday last a liberty pole 112 feet long was raised there on which a vane, and a Union flag flying with the words LIBERTY and UNION thereon.'

Other Organisations

Australian First Fleet Re-Enactment In May 1987 a replica of the First Fleet sailed from Portsmouth to Sydney. The BOUNTY wore as a jack a modified 1823 Australian Colonial Flag. The differences were the use of a pre-1801 Union Flag in the canton and the addition of the SIRIUS star at the join of the overall cross

(SIRIUS was the flagship of the First Fleet). This unusual jack was therefore an unofficial 20th century flag based on an unofficial 19th century flag !

Christian Outreach Centre of Australia. Although the organisation often uses a plain flag with their globe 'logo' upon it, it is also known to fly an unofficial Blue Ensign defaced with the globe. It is believed to be flown at the organisation's offices in Brisbane and Hove (England).

Christ's Hospital School - House Flags. Christ's Hospital School at Horsham in Sussex comprises 8 Houses each divided in two sections. Each section has a House Flag (1 foot by 2 feet) which is a Blue Ensign defaced in white with the name of the House and section. These 16 'ensigns' have existed at least since the 1880s or 1890s and may have been properly authorised although no records exist. They are paraded each day at meal times, and were also paraded when the whole school exercised an ancient right by marching through the City of London in September 1997.

Flag of British California. A Blue Ensign displaying the California bear on a white roundel, displayed in the Edinburgh Castle pub in San Francisco. It has reputedly been used at sea (once) as a yacht ensign too. It reflects the possibility of California having been British if only Sir Francis Drake had landed there and formed a colony.

Gibraltar Sea Scouts. The troop was founded on 4 July 1944, and at the time of research used the motor boat ROCK ROVER. They use as a Colour (but probably only as a Colour) a Blue Ensign defaced with the scout emblem in gold. It is not known what ensign they fly in their boat.

International Police Association. The IPA formed in 1950 and now has branches in over fifty countries, each one having its own flag. The original flag of the British Section was a pale blue ensign bearing the IPA badge. The colour was changed to white, because it made the flags cheaper to procure! The defacing badge comprises a globe within a police star, surrounded by a form of wreath surmounting a motto.

Loyal Orange Institution - Canada. An orange ensign with the maple leaf in the fly. There is an Australian version too which has St George's Cross in the canton and the Southern Cross in the fly.

Royal and Ancient Golf Club. White ensign with St George's cross counter-changed red and blue; crown in second quarter, crossed golf clubs and three balls in third quarter and figure of St Andrew in fourth quarter.

Royal Cinque Ports Golf Club Flag. An unofficial Red Ensign defaced with the club's shield of arms is flown daily at the clubhouse in Deal. No records exist relating to its provenance, despite its handsome design.

Siksika Nation Reserve. In about 1990 the Siksika Nation Reserve (90 miles south of Calgary in Alberta) adopted (without warrant authorisation) a white flag having a small Union Jack in the upper hoist and the tribal symbol, which is registered as a Coat of Arms, in the centre. It is carried in parades and flown within the reserve on public buildings. Since 28 June 1989 'Siksika Nation' has been the official name of the Blackfoot federation of tribes. Siksika is the Blackfoot word for moccasin.

Commemorative Ensigns.

This group comprises current or historic flags uniquely defaced to record special events: -

Armillar Red Ensign. Presented to the Commander-in-Chief Fleet (then Admiral Sir Jock Slater KCB LVO) by the President of the General Council of British Shipping (Sir Jeffrey Sterling CBE) on 24/10/1990, embroidered in gold with 112 names of merchant ships (from 23 companies) escorted by the RN in the Persian Gulf during the 1980s. This flag hangs on display in the RN Fleet Headquarters at Northwood near London.

Newfoundland Red Ensign. A Newfoundland colonial flag defaced beneath the Union in gold with the words *I.A.F. AEROPLANE. SHEFFIELD* and the place & date *Sheffield 29/9/1917*, to record the funding of an RE 8 aircraft by the city for the colony in 1917. (IAF standing for Imperial Air Fleet). Lost soon afterwards, the flag was re-discovered in 1934 stuck in a hole in the sea wall on the beach at Ilfracombe in Devon. It has been kept at the Imperial War Museum since 1936.

SS GREAT BRITAIN Atlantic Flag. Designed in 1845. Flown at the foremast on arrival in the USA after her first Atlantic crossing and now displayed by the historic ship in Bristol docks. It comprises a White Ensign with the 1845 (27 star) version of the Stars and Stripes in the 4th quarter - a most unusual and not wholly attractive flag.

The Zeebrugge Association Flag. Designed in 1918. A very handsome White Ensign defaced with a large winged dragon in gold. Presented to the Imperial War Museum in 1979.

Flags of the Fante Asafo.

One of the tribes of the Akan people of West Africa is called the Fante. The warrior groups of the Fante living in the coastal areas of Ghana are known as the Asafo, and they have a great love of flags of all sorts. During the past two hundred years the Asafo have developed a striking range of ceremonial flags to identify individual warrior companies. Many of these flags take the format of British ensigns, with the Union Flag in the canton and scenes from their own rich and exuberant cultural heritage in the field. Defacements include figures, animals, plants and tribal scenes, in a huge variety of colours; some also bear names or identity numbers of warrior companies. Some of the Union Flags thus depicted are rather liberally interpreted, however many are correct in all details.

Modern Asafo flags generally show the Ghanaian tricolour in the canton but some are still made in the old British style. Well over one hundred Fante Asafo flags bear the Union Flag in the canton, and although many of these cantons are rather smaller than is European practice, several of them would pass for an ensign if used as such. A few would be indistinguishable even at close quarters. See also the catalogue produced by Peter Sadler and Nicholas Barnard (ISBN 0-500-27684-6 published by Thames and Hudson in 1992). Perhaps there are more 'British ensigns' in Ghana than in Britain!

The Lower Niger. On 22 March 1830, Richard Lander and his brother John landed at Badagri in Nigeria, and travelled inland to Bussa. From thence they explored the Niger upstream for 100 miles, followed by a hazardous canoe trip downstream to the delta. They were captured by natives at the delta and held until a large ransom was paid and they secured passage to Fernando Po. On the Lower Niger they saw many canoes flying flags on very tall bamboo canes. These flags were generally similar to

those flown by the Fante Asafo of Ghana, and some were depicted in contemporary sketches bearing a Union Flag in the canton - however unlikely this may have been.

Bogus Fantasy Flags.

These relate to imaginary nations created as a joke or to satisfy personal ambition. There are over thirty such places but they have no legal standing whatever although all of them have flags, some of which are based on British Ensigns:-

British Arctic Territory. On 12 March 1995 the northeast tip of Ellesmere Island was declared to be the British Arctic Territory by certain flag enthusiasts in the United States. The announcement was accompanied by a defaced Union Flag and a Red, White and Blue Ensign ~ the badge being formed by a shield bearing a Polar Bear above three blue wavy lines. The Air Force variant bears a roundel with a red polar bear in the centre. These very handsome flags were designed by Clay Moss, a former Christian missionary in Romania, since returned home to the USA.

Royal Newfoundland Air Force. Pale pink ensign with green on white on dark pink roundel. Not intended to be taken seriously, but the flag of a credible imaginary airforce.

<http://www.vintagewings.ca/VintageNews/Stories/tabid/116/articleType/ArticleView/articleId/222/language/en-CA/The-Pink-and-the-Black--The-Royal-Newfoundland-Air-Force.aspx>

Bumbunga. The self declared Province of Bumbunga (1979) in South Australia (a Blue Ensign defaced with an outline map of Australia).

Federal Republic of Corterra. Established in 1974 in the Line Islands group in the Pacific Ocean and given a Blue Ensign defaced with 13 white stars. Not to be confused with the official flag of Cook Islands which has 15 white stars, nor the unofficial Euro Ensign which has 12 gold stars.

Sultanate of M'Simbati. In the 1960s an elderly Englishman called Latham Leslie-Moore attempted to declare independence for a square mile of territory on the coast of Tanganyika which he had purchased in 1924. A flag was raised comprising a vertical tricolour of red, blue and yellow with a small Union Flag in the canton.

CHAPTER 6

PROCLAMATIONS

BY THE QUEEN

A PROCLAMATION

AMENDING PROCLAMATION DATED 1st JANUARY 1801
DECLARING WHAT ENSIGN OR COLOURS
SHALL BE BORNE AT SEA BY MERCHANT SHIPS

ELIZABETH R.

Whereas by Royal Proclamation made on the first day of January in the year One Thousand Eight Hundred and One (1), His late Majesty King George III, with the advice of His Privy Council, inter alia, charged and commanded all His subjects not to wear in any of their ships or vessels His Majesty's Union Jack or any pendants or colours usually borne by His Majesty's ships, or any flags, jacks, pendants or colours imitating or resembling those of His Majesty, or any ensign (other than the ensign appointed by the said Proclamation and required thereby to be worn by the masters of all merchant ships and vessels belonging to His Majesty's subjects) without particular warrant for their so doing from His Majesty, or His High Admiral of Great Britain or the Commissioners for executing the Office of High Admiral for the time being;

And whereas it is expedient to modify the said Proclamation in consequence of Our having revoked Our letters Patent whereby We appointed Commissioners to exercise the Office of High Admiral, and having charged one of Our Principal Secretaries of State (hereafter referred to as 'Our Principal Secretary of State for Defence') with general responsibility for the Defence of Our Realm;

Now, therefore, We do hereby declare that the said Proclamation shall have effect as if for any reference therein to Our High Admiral or to the Commissioners for executing the Office of High Admiral for the time being there were substituted a reference to Our Principal Secretary of State for Defence.

Given at Our Court at Buckingham Palace this twenty-sixth day of March in the year of our Lord One Thousand Nine Hundred and Sixty-four and in the thirteenth year of Our Reign.

GOD SAVE THE QUEEN

1 As to Pendant and Ensign of ships in the Preventive Service see Order in Council of February 1, 1817.

PROCLAMATION DATED JANUARY 1, 1801 DECLARING WHAT ENSIGN OR
COLOURS SHALL BE BORNE AT SEA BY MERCHANT SHIPS

BY THE KING

A PROCLAMATION

Declaring what ensign or colours shall be borne at sea, in merchant ships or vessels belonging to any of His Majesty's subjects of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and the dominions thereunto belonging.

George R.

Whereas, by the first article of the Articles of Union of the Kingdoms of Great Britain and Ireland, as the same have been ratified and confirmed by two Acts of Parliament, the one made in Our Parliament of Great Britain, and the other in Our Parliament of Ireland, it was provided that the ensigns armorial, flags, and banners of Our United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland should be such as We should appoint by Our royal proclamation under the Great Seal of Our said United Kingdom: And whereas, We have, by Our royal proclamation dated this day, appointed and declared that the arms, or ensigns armorial of the said United Kingdom, should be as therein expressed: And whereas according to ancient usage, the ensigns, flags, jacks, and pendants worn by Our Ships, and appointed as a distinction for the same, ought not to be worn on board any ship or vessel belonging to any of Our subjects, so that Our ships, and those of Our subjects, may be easily distinguished and known:

We have, therefore, thought fit, by and with the advice of Our Privy Council, to order and appoint the ensign described on the side or margin hereof to be worn on board all ships or vessels belonging to any of Our subjects whatsoever, and to issue this Our royal proclamation to notify the same to all Our loving subjects, hereby strictly charging and commanding the masters of all merchant ships and vessels belonging to any of Our subjects, whether employed in Our service or otherwise, and all other persons whom it may concern, to wear the said ensign on board their ships or vessels: And to the end that none of Our subjects may presume, on board their ships, to wear Our flags, jacks, and pendants, which according to ancient usage, have been appointed as a distinction to Our ships, or any flags, jacks, or pendants in shape and mixture of colours so far resembling Ours as not to be easily distinguished therefrom, We do, with the advice of Our Privy Council, hereby strictly charge and command all Our subjects whatsoever that they do not presume to wear in any of their ships or vessels Our jack, commonly called the Union Jack, nor any pendants, nor any such colours as are usually borne by Our ships, without particular warrant for their so doing from Us, or Our High Admiral of Great Britain or the Commissioners for executing the Office of High Admiral for the time being: And we do hereby also further command all Our loving subjects, that without such warrant as aforesaid, they presume not to wear on board their ships or vessels any flags, jacks, pendants, or colours, made in imitation of, or resembling Ours, or any kind of pendant whatsoever or any other ensign than the ensign described on the side or margin hereof which shall be worn instead of the ensign before this time usually worn in merchant ships; saving that for the better distinction of such ships as shall have commissions of letters of mark or reprisals against the enemy, and any other

ships or vessels which may be employed by the principal officers and commissioners of Our Navy, the principal officers of Our ordnance, the commissioners for victualling Our navy, the commissioners for Our customs and excise, and the commissioners for transportation for Our service relating particularly to those offices, Our royal will and pleasure is, that all such ships as have commissions of letters of mark or reprisals shall, besides the colours or ensign hereby appointed to be worn by merchant ships, wear a red jack with a Union Jack described in a canton at the upper corner thereof, next the staff; and that such ships and vessels as shall be employed by Our service by the principal officers and commissioners of Our navy, the principal officers of Our ordnance, the commissioner for victualling Our navy, the commissioners for Our customs and excise (2), and the commissioners for transportation for our service relating particularly to those officers, shall wear a red jack with a Union Jack in a canton at the upper corner thereof, next the staff as aforesaid, and in the other part of the said jack shall be described the seal used in such of the respective offices aforesaid, by which the said ships and vessels shall be employed; and We do strictly charge and command that none of Our loving subjects do presume to wear any of the said distinction-jacks, unless they shall have commissions of letters of mark or reprisals, or be employed in Our service by any of the before-mentioned officers; and We hereby require Our high admiral, and commissioners for executing the office of high admiral, the governors of our forts and castles, the officers of Our customs, and the commanders or officers of any of Our ships, for the time being, upon their meeting with or otherwise observing any ships or vessels belonging to any of Our subjects, neglecting to wear the ensign hereby appointed to be borne as aforesaid, or wearing any flag, pendant, jack, or ensign contrary hereunto, whether at sea or in port, not only to seize, or cause to be forthwith seized, such flag, pendant, jack, or ensign, worn contrary to Our royal will and pleasure herein expressed, but also to return the names of such ships and vessels neglecting to wear the ensign hereby appointed, or wearing any flag, pendant, jack, or ensign contrary hereunto, together with the names of their respective masters or commanders unto Our high admiral or commissioners for executing the office of high admiral, or the judge of Our High Court of Admiralty for the time being, to the end that all persons offending may be duly punished for the same. And We do hereby command and enjoin the judge and judges of Our High Court of Admiralty for the time being, that they make strict inquiry concerning all such offenders, and cause them to be duly punished; and all vice admirals and judges of the vice admiralties are hereby also required to proceed in the like manner, within the several ports and places belonging to their respective precincts. And Our further pleasure is, that this proclamation shall take place according to the times hereafter mentioned; videlicet, for all ships in the Channel or British seas, and in the North Seas, after twelve days from the date of these presents; and from the mouth of the channel unto Cape St Vincent, after six weeks from the date of these presents; and beyond the Cape, and on this side of the Equinoctial Line, as well as in the ocean and Mediterranean as elsewhere, after ten weeks from the date of these presents; and beyond the line after the space of eight months from the date of these presents.

Given at Our Court of St James's, the first day of January one thousand eight hundred and one, in the forty-first year of Our reign.

GOD SAVE THE KING

2 As to Pendant and Ensign of ships in the Preventive Service see Order in Council of February 1, 1817.