

# 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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## Introduction

*The Colours of The Fleet 2008* 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 2K 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 Nevertheless many of the original entries have not been changed and some details may now be out of date.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 over seven 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 2K 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 17<sup>th</sup> 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 ten 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 2K 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 Public Records Office 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 Public Records Office (PRO) they are noted under the appropriate Admiralty (ADM), Colonial Office (CO) or Naval Law Division (NL) numbers. 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.

### **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 Annex) 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 (over six hundred and seventy) 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 squadronal system**

A good place to begin looking at this subject is the 17<sup>th</sup> 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 20<sup>th</sup> 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.

## What flags are left out of the book

TCOF 2K 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.

## 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 17<sup>th</sup> 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 29/1/1967 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 26/1/1788. On 13/10/1996 this flag was hoisted at Garden Island (Sydney Harbour), probably for the first time since 1800, in honour of the birthday of Captain Phillip (11/10/1738). It is also flown on the quay-side at Old Sydney Town near Gosford, NSW.
- Bermuda. Flown in the island's capital Hamilton.
- Canada. Quite widely flown by the public, especially in British Columbia.
- USA. As one of the officially recognised historic flags of the USA 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* !**

1<sup>st</sup> January 2001 was the 200<sup>th</sup> 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 !***

12<sup>th</sup> April 2006 was the 400<sup>th</sup> 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. BRITANNIA, now decommissioned and alongside at Leith, is presently in contention with the Admiralty Board over the flags she may display as an historic ship (White Ensign or Blue Ensign?). 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 2K 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 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: 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*). Following the union of the English and Scottish monarchies on 24 March 1603, 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 only for use at sea by vessels in the service of the King of both nations. It was intended to show common allegiance in the two countries to King James I / VI ~ the 'King of Great Britain', and it excused ships flying it from harbour dues when flown at the masthead. 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.

**1627.** (*Charles I*). Fleet divided into *Red*, *Blue* and *White* squadrons in order of seniority (ensigns still bore English or Scottish flag in canton).

**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 flag flown at the masthead was replaced by a much smaller flag flown at the bows, and the name 'Jack' first comes into use (as in 'the King's Jack')

**1653.** (*Cromwell*). Order of seniority of squadrons changed to *Red*, *White* and *Blue*.

**1660.** (*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 called Union Jack also.

**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 18<sup>th</sup> century it was adopted as the badge of St Patrick's Society's. This saltire has never enjoyed a serious following in Ireland and is never used as a flag anywhere 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.

**1876.** (*Victoria*). Queen Victoria becomes Empress of India, and crown on royal cipher redesigned to reflect a more imperial shape (raised arches as opposed to the depressed arches of St Edward's Crown); this lasted until 1953 and affected flag badges.

**1901.** (*Edward VII*). Sealed pattern of royal cipher approved by the King on 4 May.

**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.** 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*). General yacht club 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.** 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.** 1<sup>st</sup> 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.** 12<sup>th</sup> April – 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of the first Union Flag. An occasion commemorated by the national media in an appropriate fashion.

**2008.** 25<sup>th</sup> 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.

## A QUICK SUMMARY

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 is hopefully correct up to May 08 – but there are undoubtedly omissions.

### ***Current Ensigns (Sections 2 and 2A)***

Total of current ensigns and closely related flags **202**

Made up as follows: -	White Ensign and derivatives	6
	Blue Ensign and derivatives	108
	Red Ensign and derivatives	39
	RAF Ensign and derivatives	7
	Other flags in ensign form	42

.....

Blue Ensigns comprise: -	Undefaced Blue Ensign	1
	Crown Dependencies	2
	Overseas Territories	11
	MOD, OGDs, NDPBs	28
	Australasia & Pacific	15
	Yacht and Rowing Clubs	54

Red Ensigns comprise: -	Undefaced Red Ensign	1
	Crown Dependencies	2
	Overseas Territories	6
	NDPBs	12
	Commonwealth	5
	Yacht Clubs	13

Other flags comprise: -	National flags	4
	Land flags/ensigns	38

.....

### ***Obsolete Ensigns (Section 3)***

Total of obsolete ensigns and related flags is at least **508**

Made up as follows: -	British Isles	110
	Yacht Clubs (world-wide)	38
	Colonial/Commonwealth	361

.....

### **Grand Total**

Grand total (to date May 08) of current and obsolete ensigns **713**

## CHAPTER 2

### **British Ensigns and Related Flags in current use**

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
- Other flags with the Union Flag in the canton

### **WHITE ENSIGNS**

#### **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.

#### **The Royal Australian Navy.**

Following a decision by Prime Minister Harold Holt on 23/12/66 to create a special RAN ensign, the design was authorised 16/2/67. The public announcement was on 1/3/67, 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 Naval Forces.**



Authorised in 1970 for Fijian naval craft. 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.

UK Overseas Territories - British Antarctic Territory.

In 1998 the Queen authorised the use of a defaced White Ensign as the official land flag for the British Antarctic Territory. It comprises a plain white field (no 'naval' red cross) bearing a uniquely large BAT coat of arms (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.

### **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: -

- **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 fourth line has long caused debate when interpreting the exact circumstances to which this authority applies. Does it for instance apply whenever THVs 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.

- **Admiralty Arch by Trafalgar Square.** Several White Ensigns are flown over Admiralty Arch when London is 'dressed overall' for state occasions.
- **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.
- **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.
- **Military Careers Offices nation-wide.** Military careers offices are now tri-Service, however relevant Service ensigns may be displayed at them as appropriate.
- **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.
- **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.
- **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.
- **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.
- **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.
- **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, the latest one being 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.
- **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.
- **Nelson's Dockyard in Antigua.** The Royal Naval Tot Club of Antigua and Barbuda received authority to fly a pre-1801 White Ensign on 21/7/2000. The ensign is flown on the following days:- 26/1 – Battle of St Vincent: 14/2 – Battle of Cape St Vincent: 2/4 – Battle of Copenhagen: 12/4 – Battle of The Saints: 21/4 – QE II's birthday: 1/6 – Glorious 1<sup>st</sup> of June: 2/6: Coronation of QE II: 1/8 – Battle of the Nile: 11/10 – Battle of Camperdown: 21/10 – Battle of Trafalgar. This authority derives from the authority previously granted to the government of Antigua on independence, to fly the White Ensign in the dockyard.
- **The National Maritime Museum.** In Greenwich. All three ensigns fly outside the main door together with the Union Flag.

And once upon a time just for historical interest:-

- During WWII the Palestine Police came under the jurisdiction 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

## RN Ships sailing under different Colours

There is one special case when Her Majesty's Ships wear a different ensign. From the year 2000 warships wear the Government Service Blue Ensign (GSBE) rather than the White Ensign, whilst undertaking contractor's sea trials and until taken over formally by the Royal Navy in accordance with Defence Council Instruction (RN) 15/00. However the White Ensign is worn during the actual launching ceremony (together with the Union Jack and Lord High Admiral's Flag). The first ship to wear the GSBE was the Type 23 frigate HMS KENT, which entered Portsmouth for the first time in February 2000. Until 2000 warships undergoing contractor's trials wore the Red Ensign as their proper Colours and the last ship so to do was HMS BANGOR. 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. 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.

Not only the Royal Navy flies a White Ensign, and all others mentioned are based on the original RN version (without the large red cross). There is also the white land flag of the British Antarctic Territory. Furthermore the 1707 (foreign service) White Ensign is still flying. Thus there are six White Ensigns in use today, and it could further be argued that another historic example remains current as well. The Royal Niger Company's defaced White Ensign, although 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.

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.

## BLUE ENSIGNS

### Blue Ensign - 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), for example MV QUEEN ELIZABETH 2 under a previous Master – although the ship now wears a Red Ensign.
- **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 30/5/1969, for Royal Research Ships (RRSs) 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 ones 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 5/5/1983. Current warrant holders (at the date of the research) RRSs DISCOVERY, CHALLENGER and CHARLES DARWIN.

## **Blue Ensigns – Crown Dependencies**

**Jersey.** 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 2/3/1907 for the tug DUKE OF NORMANDY. However on 14/8/1997 the Home Office issued a warrant permitting all vessels employed by the States of Jersey to wear this ensign. Three vessels now do so, the new DUKE OF NORMANDY, DUCHESS OF NORMANDY and NORMAN LE BROCCQ. This is of interest in view of the fact that Jersey has no special Red Ensign, and Guernsey on the other hand has no Blue Ensign, nor does the Isle of Man, although a design for each would be simple to achieve. The other point to note is that the Queen is the 'Duke of Normandy', and thus there is currently no living Duchess of Normandy. The Home Office letter further 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, and it remains to be seen whether Guernsey will follow suit.

**Guernsey.** The defaced Blue Ensign of Guernsey is a recent, rare and little known flag. The warrant was signed by Dr Lewis Moonie (US of S at the MOD) 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.** Alderney was granted its very striking own Blue Ensign by Her Majesty the Queen in 2007, and is now expected to seek a Red Ensign too.

## **Blue Ensign - Overseas Territories.**

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. Except for Anguilla, Bermuda and Gibraltar, the ensigns are also the land flags of those territories. Despite the hand-over of Hong Kong to China in 1997 there still remain several flags within this group.

Anguilla. Royal approval 30/5/1990. Anguilla also has a land flag introduced in 10/1967, which is a white over blue horizontal bicolour centrally defaced with three circling dolphins.

Bermuda. New design 4/10/1910 authorised by the Colonial Office. Uniquely, Bermuda uses her Red Ensign as the land flag.

South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands. A coat of arms was granted to SG & SSI by the Queen on 14/2/1992. A Blue Ensign defaced with the complete coat of arms is now in use as a land flag but its date of authorisation (possibly in 2006) is unknown. A Union Flag defaced with the arms is used as required by the

Commissioner when he visits. As with the BAT and the BIOT (since the airfield was leased to the USA), there are no indigenous inhabitants.

British Virgin Islands. Established by local authority in 1960 (or possibly 1956).

Cayman Islands. Established by local authority in 1962 (or possibly 1959).

Falkland Islands. New design 29/9/1948, replaced by amended version in 2007.

Gibraltar. The defacing badge (based on the city arms) was authorised by the Colonial Office in 1875: it is on a white disc and is the oldest colonial ensign still in use. The much better known Gibraltar city flag was established in 1966 (but not formally authorised until 8/11/1982). 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 Gibraltar Blue Ensign is little used.

Montserrat. Established 1/1/1960. The island was largely evacuated in 1997 following a major volcanic eruption, although reconstruction began in 1998.

Pitcairn Island and Dependencies. Includes Henderson, Ducie and Oeno islands. Established by Royal authority 2/4/1984. There were just over 50 inhabitants in 1997.

St Helena and Dependencies. Includes Ascension Island and the Tristan da Cunha group. New design 1994 (amending the earlier design of 4/10/1985). The only difference is the flag badge. A local flag for Tristan da Cunha, designed by Jimmy Glass the Chief Islander, has been submitted for approval to the College of Arms. Both the St Helena flag and the Union Flag are flown on the island as well. Ascension Island is also seeking to adopt an island flag.

Turks and Caicos Islands. Established 7/11/1958.

### **Other UK Overseas Territories.**

There are thirteen Overseas Territories remaining (in 2000) within the British Empire or 'Britain beyond the seas', and they have a total population of about 186,000, of whom some 66000 live in Bermuda. Altogether about 112,000 people hold British Dependent Territory Citizenship and for whom the government has recently authorised full UK passports. There are no special flags relating to the Sovereign Base Areas in Cyprus, which are administered by the MOD. The remaining Territories without Blue Ensigns are mentioned below to complete the picture.

British Indian Ocean Territory. The BIOT is administered by the Royal Navy and leased to the United States as a military base. The unique and handsome BIOT flag, which was given Royal approval 4/11/1990 and closely resembles an ensign, is for land use only and is counted later. BIOT comprises the Chagos Archipelago from which all indigenous inhabitants were removed to Mauritius some thirty years ago when the US air base was constructed. However a recent High Court decision has declared that their removal was illegal, and the way may now be open for the islanders to return.

***British Antarctic Territory. The white flag of this territory has already been described and counted under the White Ensign section earlier.***

### **Blue Ensign - Defaced - UK MOD, OGDs and NDPBs.**

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. Granted 4/7/1974. The AHB ensign is worn at shore offices and by pilot boats and harbour craft, but no longer by any named vessels. The chevron defacement was designed by Albert Brebner of Edinburgh. 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. Granted about 1900. 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. HMAVs (which were also operated by the RLC) wore a modified ensign (now dormant) described later. During WWII 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. The BAS ensign was granted 1/8/1963. It is defaced with the escutcheon of the BAT arms, and is currently worn only by the NERC 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. Because of the wording of the warrant, there is some debate as to whether this ensign should only be worn by RRSs when they are actually engaged on BAS work, rather than whilst on passage also.

TS FOUDROYANT. Rescued after many years in Portsmouth Harbour and completely renovated in Hartlepool where she is now berthed as a tourist attraction. A very fine badge; within a white annulus a white letter *F* crossed per bend with a red lightning flash.

Government Service Blue Ensign (GSBE). The Blue Ensign with a gold horizontal anchor was authorised in 1974 for miscellaneous naval auxiliaries. Since January 2000, this ensign is worn by all HM Ships undergoing contractors sea trials (which previously wore the Red Ensign). The first ship so to do was HMS KENT. The ensign is also worn by sail training craft (STCs), BRNC DARTMOUTH training vessels and certain vessels under charter (i.e. MV NORTHELLA and COLONEL TEMPLER). Also tenders to establishments (i.e. the now de-commissioned SULTAN

VENTURER) and diving tenders (i.e. IXWORTH), together with the many ex-RMAS craft now under the management of Serco-Denholm Ltd. Used by all naval auxiliaries until 1968.

Global Marine Systems Ltd. Granted 22/1/1877. The Father Time ensign of GMS, was inherited from 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 (CSs SOVEREIGN, IRIS, and MONARCH), whilst all other British registered GMS ships wear the Red Ensign. A few years ago C&W negotiated for authorisation to use the special ensign in all their vessels without success. 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.

Combined Cadet Force (Naval Sections). Until 1960 they used the Red Ensign, and warrant for defaced Blue Ensign is dated 31/12/1959. Letters surrounding foul anchor should have read *Naval Section Combined Cadet Force*, but first batch issued had word *Corps* instead of *Force*. Worn by training vessels employed by the CCF and flown at CCF shore units and parades. ADM 1/27126.

HM Coastguard. Formed in 1822 as the Coast Guard, and formalised by the Coast Guard Act in 1856, it became incorporated into the Coastguard Agency in 1994. The ensign was granted in January 1973. 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 coastline. The Coastguard Agency combined with the Marine Safety Agency on 1/4/98 to form the Marine Safety and Coastguard Agency (MSA). ADM 1/8950, 1/8462/174.

HM Customs and Excise. Current design authorised 16/8/1948 but not introduced until 6/8/1949 at the request of HMC (reason unknown). There are at least seven vessels, namely Her Majesty's Customs Cutters (HMCCs) VIGILANT, VALIANT, VENTUROUS, VINCENT, SENTINEL, SEARCHER and SEEKER; and numerous other small patrol craft. This ensign is also used by the (quite separate) Gibraltar Customs Service. The HMC masthead pennant has a blue hoist bearing a red cross, and a white fly with a swallowtail. The Principal Officers broad pennant is a burgee version of the ensign. ADM 1/21246.

HMS TRINCOMALEE. On 20/09/05 the Secretary of State for Defence, Mr 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 the end of 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 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. It portrays "a fully rigged frigate surrounded by a double circle of rope, in gold". 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 14/12/05.

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

Lloyd's of London. Granted 9/9/1882. Only used ashore at Lloyd's offices, and 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.

Marine Society. 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 7/12/1984. TS JONAS HANWAY (sister ship to EARL OF ROMNEY) was returned to the MOD in 1998.

Mersey Docks and Harbour Company. Granted in 1912. The MDHC ensign is defaced in gold *MDHB* as originally authorised for the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board in 1912. The Red Ensign variant, also defaced *MDHB*, is obsolete. ADM 1/26610.

Metropolitan Police. Granted 5/9/1952. Despite the date of the warrant, the ensign was not permitted for use until 1/7/1953 (following the Coronation). A range of senior officers' distinguishing flags is also employed.

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.

Ministry of Defence Police. Granted in 1971 and worn by all named and unnamed vessels. Currently the MDP runs 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.

Northern Lighthouse Board. Granted 8/12/1885. Currently worn by MVs PHAROS and FINGAL. A smaller rectangular version of the NLB ensign is worn as a jack.

Port of London Authority. 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.

Queen Victoria Seaman's Rest. Located in Poplar (east London) this charity started in 1843 and has a blue ensign with a white lighthouse in the 3<sup>rd</sup> ¼ and the letters QV over the letters SR in the fly. How this flag came about is not known.

Royal Engineers Diving Training Wing. Granted about 1871. 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. Badge inherited from the RE Submarine Mining Service as granted to the Board of Ordnance in 1806. It symbolises St Barbara, the patron saint of gunners. The status of this splendid ensign is somewhat ambiguous now.

Royal Fleet Auxiliary. Current design authorised in 1968. Before then the RFA used the GSBE with a horizontal anchor (see above) rather than a vertical one. The RFA flotilla comprises about twenty major vessels. A square version is used as the jack, and the Commodore RFA has a distinguishing pennant also.

Royal Gibraltar Police. The RGP is the second oldest police force in the Commonwealth (after the Metropolitan Police). The ensign (defaced *POLICE* in white) is also used by the MOD funded Gibraltar Services Police (GSP).

Royal Hospital School. Granted about 1950. Currently only used ashore, but permission is believed to have been sought to use afloat in school yachts and craft.

Royal Maritime Auxiliary Service. Granted 29/5/1970. The RMAS horizontal 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 12/8/1996 following a market test, and those vessels now sail under the GSBE (see above). The flagship of the remaining RMAS is the operational support vessel RMAS NEWTON.

Royal Ulster Constabulary. Granted 1/1/1948 following an application dated 6/11/47. The warrant states it is only permitted for RUC patrol boats on Upper and Lower Lough Erne. Currently worn by the one named vessel LADY GREY (the three small craft do not wear an ensign). In recent years the ensign has only been worn during VIP visits. An RUC flag and a Standard are available for shore use. The future of these flags may be affected by constitutional changes being made to the RUC. ADM 1/20883.

Sea Cadet Corps. Designed by Commander H Gresham Carr MSNR and granted on 3/10/42 after the Admiralty took control of SCC units (previously run by the Navy League). Minor alteration to design of badge in 1948. Conditions for use laid down in ACRO 28 of 1/12/99. 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 7/11/1951 the Admiralty approved the use of this ensign by recognised SCC units in Australia also.

Scottish Executive Rural Affairs Department. 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

16/10/1882) on 26/3/1885. 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 the Scottish Fisheries ensign still bears a royal crown in the imperial shape as used by successive sovereigns from 1876 to 1953. Currently worn by FPVs 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 FRV SCOTIA, together with FRV CLUPEA). FPVs are painted greenish grey whilst FRVs, which used to be black and buff like RMAS vessels, are now painted in a more Scottish livery of blue and white. Vessels wearing this ensign fought in WWII as far afield as the Mediterranean.

### **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, RMAS, 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).

### **Blue Ensign - Defaced - 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 Annex A 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.

### **Blue Ensigns - Australia.**

Australia is a very 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, and they are recognised by the Australian Flags Act. The following examples currently exist.

The National Flag. The Australian National Flag (ANF) was chosen after a competition in 1901 which had over 30,000 entries. Five were chosen as having equal merit and shared the £200 prize. The winning design was approved by King George V in 1903, amended slightly in 1908 and published in the Australian Gazette on 22/5/1909. It is worn as the jack by RAN vessels and its wider use is governed by the Flags Act of 1953 (Act No 1 of 1954). Very minor design alterations were made in 1954. 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. Authorised probably in 1955. Australian Customs flag is the ANF with the word *CUSTOMS* in the central lower fly. This replaced the 1901 defacement *HMC*.

Fremantle Port Authority Flag. WA flag with *F.P.A.* beneath swan

Launceston Port Authority Flag. Authorised in 1967. Defaced with city Coat of Arms on white disc.

Maritime Services Board of NSW. Authorised in April 1971. Defaced with NSW shield surmounted by letters *MSB* above crown.

State of New South Wales Flag. 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 WWII.

Port Headland Port Authority Flag. Adopted 15/6/1971. WA flag with *PHPA* beneath swan.

Melbourne Port Authority Flag. Adopted in 1906, however an ensign was first employed in 1880, but by 1906 had been altered to its present form, although this was not confirmed by the Commissioners until 1960.

State of Queensland Flag. Adopted 29/11/1876 but crown changed in 1953.

State of South Australia Flag. Adopted 13/1/1904. The badge was designed by Robert Craig.

State of Tasmania Flag. Adopted 29/11/1875 with very minor alterations in 1975.

State of Victoria Flag. Adopted in 1877 with minor alterations in 1953.

State of Western Australia Flag. Current design adopted in 1953 when the black swan turned to face the hoist.

### **Blue Ensigns - New Zealand.**

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

The National Flag. 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 RNZN vessels. The NZF was designed by Lieutenant (later Admiral) Albert Markham of HMS *BLANCHE* in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

### **Blue Ensign - Fiji.**

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. What happens next in the volatile politics of Fiji remains to be seen.

## RED ENSIGNS

### **Red Ensign - 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 September 4<sup>th</sup> - a worthy idea, which will hopefully catch on widely.

### **Red Ensign - Defaced - Crown Dependencies.**

Isle of Man Civil Ensign. Defaced with the Arms of Man (remember that the Arms of Man are legs!) and authorised by Royal Warrant 27/8/1971 for use by local people, and for vessels registered in Douglas. The red land flag authorised 9/7/1968 also has the famous gold trinacria as its defacement.

Bailiwick of Guernsey Civil Ensign. Designed by Commander Bruce Nicholls OBE RN and authorised by Royal Warrant 9/5/1985 for “*vessels operating in waters adjacent to the Channel Islands*” as stated on the warrant: however *adjacent* is not defined further. The land flag (a defaced St George's Cross) was authorised the same day. Note that the Bailiwick of Jersey does not have a unique Red Ensign, but does have a Blue Ensign (recently re-authorised) and a land flag (7/4/1981). Jersey uses the undefaced Red Ensign for civil craft.

### **Red Ensign - Defaced – United Kingdom Non Departmental Public Bodies (NDPBs).**

The Royal National Lifeboat Institution. Authorised in 1964 and bears the RNLI house flag as a defacement. It is worn by lifeboats and 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.

The Corporation of Trinity House. 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 THVs 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.

The Scout Association. Authorised 15/4/1952. 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-lys and

a naval crown. In 1937 the Sea Scouts were refused a Blue Ensign following withdrawal of recognition in 1933.

North Wales & North West Sea Fisheries. Authorised by Warrant 22/6/1901. The NW & NWSF Committee continues to use the ensign granted before it was re-constituted, which is defaced *LWSF* reflecting its previous name (Lancashire & Western Sea Fisheries). Currently worn by MV. L & W PROTECTOR. Unusually (perhaps uniquely?) the LWSF warrant is edged in black, in mourning for Queen Victoria who died on 22/1/1901, exactly five months before the warrant date.

Eastern Sea Fisheries. Warrant issued 9/8/1900. The ESF Committee is believed to be seeking to change its badge (dated 1894) to reflect more accurately its present area of authority. Currently worn by MVs PROTECTOR and SURVEYOR.

South Wales Sea Fisheries. A new defacement was adopted (without official sanction) in 1994 to replace the 1979 version. Currently worn by MV CRANOGWEN. Note also that 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.

The Maritime Volunteer Service. 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 MV APPLEBY in which the ensign will be worn.

The Corporation of Trinity House for Hull. Hull Trinity House has always been a separate organisation and has its own defaced Red Ensign bearing a badge comprising an inverted anchor and black fesse with three stars.

Hull City Council. This flag requires further research but when the council is sitting a red ensign defaced with a shield (azure bearing three coronets in pale or) in the fly, is flown above the city hall.

Humber Conservancy Commissioners. This office was disbanded many years ago 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.

Company of Thames Watermen and Lightermen. 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.

### **Red Ensign - Defaced – UK Overseas Territories.**

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. Used afloat by private craft, and as the unique exception to the general rule of using defaced Blue Ensigns for that purpose, has been the de facto land flag

of Bermuda (the oldest British Colony) since about 1915. The defacing arms were adopted 4/10/1910.

Cayman Islands. Widely used since 1959 especially by yachts, and as a flag of convenience for merchant vessels since 1987. It was subsequently legalised by Order in Council No 1841 on 24/11/1988 and by the Merchant Shipping Act (Cayman Islands)

Falkland Islands. 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 (Statutory instrument 1998 No 3147). The design has the Falkland Island arms in the fly.

Gibraltar. 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 14/2/1996 (effective from 19/3/1996) for civil craft registered in Gibraltar. The city shield is placed directly on the field and the motto *MONTIS INSIGNIA CALPE* lies in a scroll lies beneath it. The defacing badge is quite different from the much older blue ensign badge mentioned earlier.

British Virgin Islands. Adopted in 1956. Known locally as the Merchant Jack. Possibly two versions in existence; one with the motto and scroll and one without. This ensign is technically illegal.

Turks and Caicos Islands. Adopted 7/11/1958, albeit without official sanction. This ensign is also technically illegal.

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

### **Red Ensign - Defaced - Privileged Yacht Clubs.**

There are several different examples of defaced Red Ensigns granted to Yacht Clubs world-wide, and these are listed at Annex A.

### **Red Ensigns - The Commonwealth.**

Australian Civil Ensign. Authorised 15/4/1954, and is virtually identical to the flag gazetted in 1903 and again in 1908, with minor alterations to the stars similar to the ANF.

New Zealand Civil Ensign. Original ensign authorised 7/2/1899 replaced by current version in 1903.

Ontario Provincial Flag. Land flag authorised by the Queen on 21/5/1965. Also used on inland waters as the provincial civil ensign, although strictly speaking this contravenes Section 91 of the Canada Shipping Act (1985).

Manitoba Provincial Flag. Land flag authorised by Royal warrant on 12/5/1966. The same comment applies as for Ontario.

Fijian Civil Ensign. Authorised in 1970. Retained when Fiji left the Commonwealth in 1987 and continued in use on rejoining in 1997. Nevertheless this ensign seem to be gradually being replaced by the national flag for use as a civilian ensign.

### **Pre-1801 Red Ensign.**

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. However it has not been counted as 'current' within the present totals, although it could be argued that it should!

### **Some Ensigns that never were**

It is interesting to note how things might have been different. On 17/1/1918, 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 4<sup>th</sup> August – the fourth anniversary of the declaration of war. However at Admiralty Board meetings on 18<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> 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 2/1/1919, but in the end all were dismissed and the King was persuaded to drop the plan. ADM 1/8530/203.

## **ROYAL AIR FORCE ENSIGNS**

### **RAF Ensign.**

Authorised in 1921. 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). In addition the following UK derivatives exist. ADM 1/21493. 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.

### **RAF Ensign variants**

The RAF Sailing Association Ensign. Authorised in 1986 (and also mentioned at Annex A).

The Air Training Corps Ensign. Authorised in 1945. The ATC badge replaces the RAF roundel in the fly. ADM 1/23993.



Royal Air Forces Association. The land flag of the Royal Air Forces Association (note the plural to include Commonwealth forces) is an 'RAF blue' ensign (without roundel) defaced with the badge of the RAFA surrounded by the words *ROYAL AIR FORCES ASSOCIATION*. 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. Current design authorised in 1982.

Royal New Zealand Air Force Ensign. Conferred on the RNZAF by King George VI on 29/8/1939, and posted in the New Zealand Gazette on 14/9/1939.

Royal Canadian Air Force Association Ensign. Following the official military 'retirement' on 15/2/65 of the RCAF Ensign (authorised by KGV1 in June 1940) the flag continued to be used by the RCAFA, and this was officially sanctioned by the Queen in September 1973. The maple leaf in the roundel was changed to the modern version at the same time. The flag was made copyright as the Association's trademark on 1/1/97 and published in the Canadian Trade-Marks Journal Volume 44 No 2201.

### **Other Flags in the style of Ensigns**

These are flags which take the form and style of ensigns, but most of which are not generally used afloat (with one or two exceptions however). Letters in brackets indicate the primary colour: (W) = White, (R) = Red, (B) = Blue, (LB) = RAF (light) Blue, (S) = Black (sable), (Y) = Yellow (including gold and buckskin coloured). Numerous examples have been identified, but it is quite possible that others exist.

### **National Flags.**

Cook Islands. (B). Approved by Royal Warrant signed by the Queen, and introduced on 4/8/1979. Defaced with a circle of white stars to represent 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. (LB). Authorised in 1970, followed by independence on 10/10/1970. Retained on becoming a republic and departing from the Commonwealth on 15/10/1987. Fiji rejoined the Commonwealth in 1997.

Niue. (Y). Authorised by the Niue Flag Act of 15/10/1975. Flag comprises a Yellow field with a defaced Union Flag in the canton. The Union Flag signifies that Niue had become a British Protectorate in 1900.

Tuvalu. (LB). On 1/11/1995 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 11/4/97 following popular demand.

## **Ensigns used ashore & semi-official ensigns.**

Board of Trade. (B). Now only appropriate for use at the Department of Trade and Industry offices in London and elsewhere, although the President of the Board of Trade has yet to adopt the practice, so this ensign remains effectively dormant.

Commonwealth Civil Air Ensigns. Four in number, all (LB) - Australia; New Zealand; Fiji; and the United Kingdom. The UK Civil Air Ensign was introduced by Order in Council on 23/9/1931 superseded by another Order in Council dated 18/3/1937. 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. The Australian version was approved by the King in 11/1934 and gazetted on 6/6/1935. The latest design dates from 1948 and is still used widely in Australia. ADM 1/9970.

## **Distinguishing Flags, House Flags & Land Flags Similar to Ensigns.**

Many of these flags are Australian. Note that the Governor of Queensland uniquely retains the use of a defaced Union Flag.

Australian Federation Flag. (W with B cross). First recorded in a flag chart by Sydney Harbour Master, Captain John Nicholson (the son of a Bermondsey baker), on 31/12/1831. Two versions existed – one with stars on the cross arms, and one without. 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 19<sup>th</sup> century. A good example of an historic (and strictly obsolete) flag still in use.

Blood Indian Nation of Alberta. (Y). This tribe uses a 'buckskin' coloured ensign bearing the words *BLOOD TRIBE* beneath the Union Flag canton, and symbols for the sun, two tepees and crossed pipes of peace in the fly. The ensign design is to commemorate the treaties signed in the name of Queen Victoria in 1876, 1877 and 1899.

British Indian Ocean Territory. (B/W stripes with defacing badge). Granted by Royal authority 4/10/1990. It is flown outside the office of the resident Commander RN who is both HMG's military and civil representative in the territory.

Canadian Blue Ensign. (B). The Royal Victoria Yacht Club uses the former Canadian Blue Ensign 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.

Chief of the General Staff (Australia). (B). Authorised 1/10/1992. In 1992 the defacing badge of CGS(Australia) was changed from the traditional British Army crown and lion device in favour of the Australian Army General Service badge.

Fire Service College. (R/B quarters). The current version is similar to that authorised for the National Fire Service on 22/1/1944 (now obsolete), except for the defacing badge in the lower fly. The British flag has one blue and two red quarters, whilst the Western Australian equivalent flag (mentioned later below) has one red and two blue quarters: the similarity is deliberate.

Flag of a Consular Officer (afloat). (B). Authorised in 1869. Defaced with the government arms. 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 barge when afloat on the canals.

Governor of New South Wales. (B). Authorised 19/1/1981.

Governor of Victoria. (Y). Authorised 18/4/1984. A most unusual flag with a yellow field and red stars.

Governor of Western Australia. (B). Authorised 27/5/1988.

Governor of South Australia . (B). Authorised in 1976.

Governor of Tasmania. (B). Authorised in 1977. Possibly two versions exist but counted as one.

Hawaii State Flag. (W/R/B stripes). Dates from about 1816. 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. 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.

Joint Service Command Flags. (B/R/LB). Four examples of Joint Service Command flags exist and are given below. A one star Joint Commander uses a triangular pennant with a very ugly and misshapen Union Flag in the hoist. The dates of authorisation are as follows:-

Chief of Defence Staff	16/7/1965
4 Star Joint Commander	9/11/1965
3 Star Joint Commander	19/12/1967
2 Star Joint Commander	19/12/1967

Murray River Flag of South Australia. (B/W). This flag (for Bottom Enders) is arguably obsolete, but is still used both ashore and afloat. See also Top Enders flag listed as obsolete in Chapter 3.

New South Wales Ambulance Service. (W). Authorised 9/10/1984. The NSWAS flag is in the style of the RHADC flag (see below). A rare example of a defaced (plain) White Ensign.

New South Wales Fire Brigade. (B). Date of authorisation unknown.

Norfolk Island (Islander's Flag). (R). Authorised 26/11/1985. The Norfolk Islander's flag comprises a pre-1801 Red Ensign (reflecting their descent from the HMS BOUNTY mutineers) bearing a Norfolk pine on a white disc. Adopted by the Society of the Descendants of the Pitcairn Settlers in 1985.

Northern Lights Commissioners Flag. (W). Dates from 1786. The Northern Lights Commissioner's Flag is based on the pre-1742 home service White Ensign. It has no St Patrick's Cross in the Union nor large red cross overall. 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.

Ocean Yacht Company Ltd House Flag. (S/W/Y). Registered as a trade mark in 1993. The OYC flag comprises St Piran's Cross (the flag of Cornwall) with the Union Flag in the canton and usually with an inverted triangle of 15 bezants, taken from the coat of arms of the Duchy of Cornwall, in the lower fly (however 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 in Chapter 2B the Devon Ensign.

Pangbourne College Ensign. (B). Authorisation date unknown.

Royal British Legion. (B/Y/B horizontal triband). The RBL flag follows a similar pattern to the better known RBL Standards but without accoutrements and branch name. Date of authorisation unknown.

Royal Hamilton Amateur Dinghy Club. (W). Bermuda. A special Warrant was issued 24/12/1980. The RHADC clubhouse flag comprises a post-1801 Union Flag in the canton of a plain white field defaced with the club initials surmounted by a crown: a combination of a pre-1702 (no red cross) and post-1801 (current canton) style of ensign. Re-hoisted in 1980 *following a period of controversy* (to quote local sources). ADM 1/26283.

Royal Hamilton Yacht Club. (B). Ontario. The RHYC ensign became obsolete afloat in 1938 but is still used as a clubhouse flag.

South Australia Police Department. (B). Based on the Blue Ensign.

Western Australian Fire Brigades Board. (B/R). Royal Warrant dated 7/10/1979. The WA Fire Brigades Board flag was designed by Acting Chief Officer Stephens to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the WA Fire Service. It combines the flag of WA with that of the UK Fire Service College (see above).

Western Australia Police. (B). The WA police flag is similar to their Regimental Banner.

Victoria (Australia) Police Force. (B). Authorised 20/10/1974. 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.

Siksika Nation Reserve. (Y). In about 1990 the Siksika Nation Reserve (90 miles south of Calgary in Alberta) adopted a flag in the form of an ensign (without warrant authorisation) and whose base colour is unknown (but possibly 'buckskin'). It bears the traditional Siksika emblem in the centre. It is carried in parades and flown within the reserve on public buildings. Since 28/6/1989 'Siksika Nation' has been the official name of the Blackfoot federation of tribes. Siksika is the Blackfoot word for moccasin.

Seamen's Hospital Society. (B). The Seamen's Hospital was 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 WWII). The ensign is defaced in white with the society's name.



## **Annex A to Chapter 2**

### **Yacht Clubs and Sailing Associations authorised to use a special ensign**

#### **Introduction.**

All yacht clubs mentioned in this Annex 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 (and more explicit) warrants, necessitated by unspecified circumstances purported to be of *a diplomatic character*. 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 1/11/1927, from which date individual club members had to apply for their own warrants, however on 8 Feb 1985 the Secretary of State for Defence re-issued general warrants to all the privileged UK clubs (with effect from 1/4/1985), 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 one or two additions made since then. Where reference is made to Admiralty records in the Public Records Office they are listed under the appropriate ADM number. ADM 1/8752/200 refers generally to the issue and management of warrants.

#### **Warrants and permits.**

Since 1/4/1985 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, indicated (AW =), together with dates of gaining Royal patronage, shown (RP =) where appropriate. Royal patronage is a separate privilege outwith the warrant system and is solely the gift of the royal personage concerned. 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. UK ensigns originally authorised by warrant are permitted to be worn by Australian yachts under Section 30(4) of the Shipping Registration Act 1981, thus preserving UK symbology within Australia. 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 19<sup>th</sup> 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 Royal patronage before, and some after, the grant of the ensign. Some changed defacements or even ensigns (from Red to Blue) at some time also. Although there are exceptions, Blue Ensigns were usually granted to clubs which could demonstrate some naval or public service connection, whilst defaced Red Ensigns were normally granted to those which could not. Undefaced Blue Ensigns were generally not granted after 1927 (a plain Blue Ensign is 'senior' to a defaced version). 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 emergence of new 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 likely that in due course a proud and colourful part of our maritime heritage and culture may be lost.

## **The Red Ensign.**

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

## **WHITE ENSIGN**

Royal Yacht Squadron. AW in 1829. Awarded to the Royal YC as it was then called. The RYS was originally one of five clubs authorised to use the White Ensign (Royal YC, Royal Thames YC, Royal Western YC of Ireland and two others – possibly the Royal Cork and the Royal Northern). 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 (RP = 7/8/1902) was previously styled the Auckland Yacht (or Sailing) Club, formed in 1876. It was also granted an AW for a plain Blue Ensign 15/8/1902 but this became obsolete when the NZ yacht ensign came into being.

## **BLUE ENSIGN - UNDEFACED**

Royal Albert YC. AW = 17/2/1886. RP = January or February 1886

Royal Brighton YC. Australia. AW = 27/3/1924. RP = 9/4/1924.

Royal Cinque Ports YC. AW = 6/5/1872: RP = by 1872. In common with other clubs, the RCPYC warrant of 1872 was replaced (but was not withdrawn) by an amended version dated 15/5/1894. Many of the club records were destroyed by fire during WWII.

Royal Cruising Club. AW = 8/1/1902: RP = by 1896.

Royal Dorset YC. AW = 19/4/1875.

Royal Engineer YC. AW = 1872. The Royal Engineer YC is often called the Royal Engineers YC mistakenly. The correct name is singular.

Royal Geelong YC. Australia. AW = 27/3/1924: RP = possibly in 1924.

Royal Gourock YC. AW = between 1895 & 1937.

Royal Highland YC. AW = 1881: RP = 25/11/1881.

Royal Marines Sailing Club. AW = 1965.

Royal Melbourne Yacht Squadron. Originally known as the St Kilda Yacht Club, it gained Royal patronage during the 1924/25 season. The warrant was granted at about this time. The name was changed to RMYC in 1961. The Squadron is currently updating its regulations for using the ensign and researching the design of its distinctive burgee.

Royal Motor YC. AW = 10/1/1906: RP = 30/9/1910. 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).

Royal Naval Sailing Association. AW = 1936.

Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve YC. AW = 1965. The RNVR YC was formed as the RNVR Sailing Club in 1947, first sailing under the Red Ensign, and was granted the undefaced Blue Ensign in 1965. World-wide membership also includes those who served in the RN and RNR.

Royal Northern and Clyde YC. AW = 1831: RP = 1828. The Northern YC was founded on 5/11/1824 at Belfast, gaining a Blue Ensign in 1831. The Clyde Model YC was founded in 1856, receiving a Blue Ensign warrant 27/1/1857, dropping 'Model' in 1863, and becoming 'Royal' in 1872. The clubs merged to become the Royal Northern and Clyde in 1978.

Royal Perth YC of Western Australia. AW = 28/3/1903: RP = 19/5/1890.

Royal Queensland Yacht Squadron. Australia. AW = 21/7/1894: RP = 13/3/1902. The Royal Queensland Yacht Club was granted the title Royal Queensland Yacht Squadron by Her Majesty The Queen on 12/7/1961. The Squadron became incorporated as a limited company on 14/10/1991.

Royal Scottish Motor YC. AW = by 1937.

Royal Solent YC. AW = 1901.

Royal South Australian Yacht Squadron. AW = 13/11/1890: RP = 10/1890. The RSAYS was founded on 5/11/1869 and previously known as the South Australian YC. Black ties are still worn as part of official Squadron dress in memory of Lord Nelson.

Royal Southern YC. AW = possibly 1847: RP = 1837. Royal Southampton YC was established in 1837 with Queen Victoria as patron; and granted the White Ensign defaced with the city arms in 1840. The name was changed to R Southern YC in 1844, and the undefaced Blue Ensign was granted in (or shortly after) 1847, as a result of the White Ensign being restricted to the RYS in 1842.

Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron. Australia. AW & RP = 17/10/1863.

Royal Temple YC. AW = 27/4/1898: RP = 18/5/1897. Temple YC established 4/3/1857 (RP in 1897 was Jubilee gift from the Queen ~ Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee was 20/6/1897). Used unofficial defaced Blue Ensign until 1872 when it was changed to plain Red. Plain Blue Ensign authorised in 1898.

Royal Thames YC. AW = sometime between 1842 and 1848: RP = sometime during the 1830s. The Thames YC used the White Ensign until disallowed in 1842 (by which time it was the RTYC). The Red crown defacement of the Blue Ensign, which had been originally granted, was removed in 1848. ADM 1/8744/139.

Royal Western YC. England. AW = 22/8/1842: RP = 1833.

Royal Western YC. Scotland. AW = 6/3/1886: RP = 9/1885.

Royal YC of Tasmania. AW = 10/1/1910: RP = 24/1/1910.

Royal YC of Victoria. Australia. AW = 16/8/1886.

Sussex Motor Yacht Club. Although previously defunct and bankrupt, this club has been resurrected and has 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 ENSIGN DEFACED BY A BADGE

Each one is different except where indicated by the annotation (\*1) for three clubs sharing one ensign, and (\*2) for two other clubs sharing another ensign.

Aldeburgh YC. AW = 13/7/1974.

Army Sailing Association. AW = 1974. The exact date in 1974 of the ASA's original warrant is unknown. The current warrant dates from 1985, as with all reissued warrants.

Bar YC. AW = 1937.

City Livery YC. AW = 22/11/1977. The CLYC was informed of the award of its warrant at their laying-up dinner in Sion College on 22/11/1977. The warrant may perhaps have been dated some days earlier.

Cruising YC of Australia.

Rochester Cruising Club. AW = 2005. Unusually the RCC obtained their 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 on 11 May 2005! Their defacement is a red lion passant guardant on a yellow disc.

Royal Air Force YC. AW = 1936.

Royal Anglesey YC. AW = possibly 1885: RP = 18/6/1885. (\*1). The Beaumaris Book Society formed in 1826, becoming RAYC in 1885, and still occupies same building. No records of original warrant exist but likely to be 1885.

Royal Southampton YC. AW = 14/11/1877: RP = 6/9/1877 (\*1).

Royal Torbay YC. AW = 25/8/1875: RP = 1901. (\*1). Torquay YC granted warrant and Royal patronage in 1875. In 1885 name changed to Royal Torbay and warrant amended. On 27/9/1901 Royal patronage re-confirmed by King Edward VII.

Royal Armoured Corps YC. AW = 1949. Warrant was reviewed in 1959 due to low tonnage. ADM 1/24013.

Royal Artillery YC. AW = 22/5/1936. R Artillery YC ensign bears the RA badge without the two mottoes. Ensign first granted to the yacht CYGNET.

Royal Australian Navy Sailing Association.

Royal Bermuda YC.

Royal Bombay YC. AW = 15/5/1894: RP by 1894. ADM 1/21260.

Royal Burnham YC. AW = 7/5/1928: RP = 15/12/1927. (\*2). RBYC was refused a Blue Ensign 13/2/1928 (total tonnage deemed insufficient) but re-applied 3/3/1928, and on 19/4/1928 the Admiralty relented. However plain Blue Ensign refused (on grounds that no more would be authorised), but defaced Blue approved if badge suitable. Badge submitted 25/4/1928 and authorised 7/5/1928.

Royal Channel Islands YC. Jersey CI. AW = 1/1/1863: RP = 4/12/1862.

Conway Club Cruising Association. AW = post 1975.

Royal Corinthian YC. AW = 1894: RP = 1898.

Royal Cornwall YC. AW = 12/6/1872: RP = 3/11/1871. 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.

Royal Forth YC. The best known vessel in this club is the former Royal Yacht, HMY BRIRANNIA. Since her decommissioning and subsequent move to Leith for public display she is no longer able to wear the White Ensign.

Royal Freshwater Bay YC . Western Australia. Currently seeking to update its burgee.

Royal Gibraltar YC. Governor's warrant = 22/7/1842 issued in his capacity as Vice Admiral of the Colony: AW = 1927. RP = 13/10/1933. GYC was formed in 1829 (the first in the British Colonies) and originally used the White Ensign authorised by warrant dated 27/10/1837. This was revoked in 1842 in a letter which implied the White Ensign had been defaced, and which went on to authorise the Blue Ensign similarly defaced. A replacement warrant was issued (backdated to 1837 !). Royal patronage was granted in 1933. 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.

Royal Harwich YC. AW = 1/4/1845: RP = by 9/1845.

Household Division YC. AW = 1934 as Household Brigade YC.

Royal Irish YC. Republic of Ireland. AW = by 1893.

Royal Jamaica YC. RP = 11/1889. The RJYC was formed in 1884. 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 9/2/1977, but the yacht struck a reef in bad weather in about 1980. Mr Wilson died in 1997.

Royal Lake of the Woods. (B) defaced. Apart from the Royal Windermere, this was the only other yacht club with no access to the sea. ADM 1/8537/242. Ensign re-instituted in 2002. Possibly now called the Royal Murray YC.

Little Ship Club. AW = 15/12/1937. 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 RNVR and RNSVR 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 23/3/38, but was refused, however it was granted on appeal one year later on 7/3/39. Perhaps this was the first YC ensign (and even the first ensign) to receive a patent, although others have since.

Little Ship Club (Queensland Squadron). AW = 12/11/1956. An individual warrant was granted to a member of the LSC in about 1950 but withdrawn when the boat was sold in 1952. Application was made for an AW in 1955 and the warrant was actually received 'on board' on 18/12/1956.

Royal London YC. AW = 17/10/1849: RP = 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 25/2/1846 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 RYS in Cowes IoW. HRH the Duke of Edinburgh became Commodore in 1988 but has since resigned.

Royal Malta YC. Malta GC. The privileged status of this club was re-instituted in the early 1990s.

Medway Cruising Club. AW = 13/7/1971.

Royal Mersey YC. AW = 24/9/1844: RP = 23/9/1844. The Mersey YC formed on 26/7/1844, and quickly gained both a privileged ensign and Royal patronage.

Royal Motor YC of New South Wales.

Royal Nassau Sailing Club. Club established in the winter of 1924/25. RP = 30/6/25. AW = 12/8/25 for a circular badge bearing sun, sea, sand and a palm tree.

Royal Natal YC. AW = 15/5/1894: RP = 10/2/1891 (letter dated 17/02/91). 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 2SL 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).

Royal North of Ireland YC. AW = possibly sometime between 1893 and 1937 !

Royal Northumberland YC. AW = 10/8/1934: RP = 29/5/1935.

Royal Ocean Racing Club. AW = 1931.

Parkstone YC. AW = probably June or 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 25/7/1947. The original Warrant has been lost.

Royal Plymouth Corinthian YC. AW = 9/6/1893: RP = 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.

Poole Harbour YC. AW = between 1936 & 1955. 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.

Poole YC. AW = post 1938. The PYC is the amalgamation of the Hamworthy & Bournemouth Sailing Club and the original Poole YC. The club's centenary was celebrated in 1965.

Royal Prince Alfred YC. Australia. AW = 15/5/1894: RP = 8/1911. (\*2). The PAYC was founded on 15/10/1867 at McGrath's and Punch's Hotel in King Street, Sydney, and granted Royal patronage by King George V in August 1911. The original 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 21/10/1868 and this was confirmed by a second letter dated 21/7/1869, and requesting details of the burgee which were duly supplied in October of that year.

Royal Prince Edward YC. Australia. AW = 20/5/1937: RP = 8/1935. 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 21/8/1935.

Severn Motor YC. AW = 13/10/1969. 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.

Sussex YC. AW = 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.

Royal Suva YC. Fiji. AW & RP = 10/5/1950.

The Cruising Association. AW = 1950. The club was established in 1908. ADM 1/21976.

The House of Lords YC. Following much debate over a long period, initiated by the request for a White Ensign on 15/6/1949, the current ensign was approved on 2/6/50. ADM 1/21976.

The Medway YC. AW = 7/10/1953.

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

Royal Ulster YC. Club established 1866: RP 20/8/1869: AW = 19/2/1870. This was informed by letter from the Home Department to "*the Lord Dufferin, &c, &c*" who was Commodore from 1867 to 1902.

Royal Welsh YC. AW = 5/11/1847: RP = 1847. The Welsh YC was founded in 1847, receiving a warrant for a privileged ensign that year. Royal patronage was granted in

1847 by the dowager Queen Adelaide, and was continued after her death by the Prince of Wales (letter dated 26/11/1859). On 5/5/1901 King Edward VII continued the privilege, but this was questioned by the Home Office in 1909, who subsequently backed down in 1911 when King George V became the club's patron.

Royal Yorkshire YC. AW = 18/6/1847: RP = 1847. The RYYC was founded by shipmen of Hull and Whitby in 1847. RYYC applied for a defaced Red Ensign on 14/6/1847; which was granted four days later ! An alteration to the defacement was requested on 6/3/1879, and authorised two days thereafter ! The rules governing the use of defaced ensigns by unregistered vessels under 15 tons burden were restated by Admiralty circular letter of 1/7/1879, in which their Lordships admitted their own culpability in the issue of warrants in certain cases. Continuation of the privilege of using the prefix 'Royal' was confirmed by the King on 2/12/1909. Permission to change to a plain (or was it defaced ?) Blue Ensign was sought on 16/10/1929, and this was granted on 7/11/1929 (officially adopted as from 1/11/29). The Red Ensign warrants were ordered to be returned by Admiralty letter of 1/1/1930. Permission for a defaced Blue Ensign was sought on 1/5/1946, and was granted (in continuation) on 28/5/46. Club members gained two DSOs and seven DSCs in WW II; two members became Commanders in the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve.

Old Worcesters YC. AW = 31/1/1975. 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 Worcesters association formed a yacht club in 1975 and approval was given to transfer the ensign to the club.

Royal Dee YC. Founded as the Dee YC in 1815 and membership was initially limited to 50, but this has now been increased to 150 ~ by invitation only. Royal patronage bestowed on or about Trafalgar Day 1847 together with warrant for defaced Blue Ensign. The warrant suspended in common with all other clubs in 1927, but for some reason suspension was not rescinded in 1985 ~ undoubtedly an error. 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.

### **RED ENSIGN DEFACED BY A BADGE**

Each is different except where indicated (\*3). Except for St Helier, Lloyds and West Mersea, all Red Ensign defacements include a crown or coronet.

Brixham YC.

Royal Dart YC. AW = between 1870/73: RP = 12/3/1870. The DYC was formed in 1866 by Henry Studdy, becoming RDYC in 1870. Date of the original warrant is unknown (probably 1870 but possibly as late as 1873).

Royal Fowey YC. AW = 31/10/1908: RP = 10/5/1907. The Fowey YC was formally constituted in 1894. A warrant may have been issued on 25/10/1905 although the accepted date is in 1908. A new warrant was later issued on 1/11/1927. The insignia granted by the Prince of Wales on 29/8/1905 included the coronet of the Duke of Cornwall. On 14/11/1952 the Rouge Croix Pursuivant of Arms confirmed that the proper device for defacing the ensign was the coronet of the Prince of Wales.

House of Commons YC. AW = between 1960 and 1979.

Lloyd's YC. AW = 1950.

Royal Hamilton Amateur Dinghy Club. Bermuda. AW = 25/5/1973: RP = 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. The defaced ensign was approved in 1973. 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.

Royal Lymington YC. AW = 1936.

Royal Norfolk and Suffolk YC. AW = 1898.

Royal St George YC. Republic of Ireland. AW = 9/5/1845: RP = 3/5/1845. (\*3). In 1845 the Kingstown Boat Club was granted Royal patronage and the defaced ensign authorised. The club's name was later changed to Royal St George's YC and then to the present (singular) name. ADM 1/21260.

Royal Windermere YC. AW = by 1893: RP = 1887. (\*3).

St Helier YC. Jersey CI. AW = 12/5/1952. Application for royal patronage refused 17/7/48. 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 British troops 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 fowl 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.

Royal Victoria YC. Isle of Wight. Both AW & RP = 4/6/1845. 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 8/10/1872. Request then made to Admiralty on 16/8/1897 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 *VR*. Admiralty allowed crown but not letters on 24/8/1897. Osborne House approached about the letters on 7/1/1898. On 27/1/1898 Queen Victoria gave her consent for inclusion of *VR* beneath the crown in the fly and the Admiralty (not surprisingly !) issued the new warrant on 3/3/1898.

West Mersea YC. AW = 4/3/1953. Admiralty letter NL 386/53 of 4/3/53 authorised defacement of three seaxes in gold.

Royal Yachting Association. AW = 11/1992. The RYA ensign is the most recently authorised (warrant dated November 1992, 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.

### **ROYAL AIR FORCE ENSIGN DEFACED BY A BADGE**

RAF Sailing Association. AW = 1986. The RAFSA administers its own ensign permits.

# Ensign Totals

White Ensign	1	
New Zealand White Ensign		1
Blue Ensign		29
Blue Ensign (defaced)		57 (*1) & (*2)
Red Ensign (defaced)		14 (*3)
RAF Ensign (defaced)	1	
	-----	
		102

Notes:

1. White Ensign. There are no defaced White Ensigns authorised for yacht clubs.
2. Blue Ensigns defaced. Three clubs share one ensign (\*1), and two other clubs share another one (\*2). Thus the total of *different* defaced Blue Ensigns is 54.
3. Red Ensigns defaced. Two clubs share the same ensign (\*3). 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 67.
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

## National Totals (Defaced and Undefaced)

Australia	16	
Bahamas	1	
Bermuda	2	
Channel Islands	2	
Fiji	1	
Gibraltar	1	
Hong Kong	1	
India	1	
Jamaica	1	
Malta	1	
New Zealand	1	
Republic of Ireland	2	(the only non-Commonwealth ensigns)
Republic of South Africa	1	
United Kingdom	72	
	-----	
14 Territories .....	and .....	103 Privileged ensigns

## Annex B to Chapter 2

### Exclusions

#### Flags similar to Ensigns & Unofficial Ensigns

It could be argued that this Annex 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: -

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.
4. 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).

#### Unofficial Ensigns.

Although some unofficial ensigns have been counted in the totals (on the basis of well established custom, practice and general acceptance) there are some noteworthy examples that, by any reasonable guidelines, fail to meet the criteria.

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.

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.

The Cornwall and Devon Ensigns . Both the Cornwall and Devon county flags are sometimes seen in ensign form (especially Cornwall) and used afloat illegally (see also Chapter 2 and below).

### **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: -

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. See also the widely used but unofficial ensign of Cornwall in Chapter 2.

The 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.

County of Avon Fire Brigade. Defaced Red Ensign

County of Clywd Fire Brigade. Clywd 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

Gibraltar Sea Scouts. The troop was founded on 4/7/44, and currently uses 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.

Oxford Fire Brigade. Defaced Red Ensign

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. Defaced Red Ensign

Western Isles Ensign. Believed to have been inaugurated (unofficially) on 9/9/76. 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.

The 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.

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).

The 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.

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.

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.

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.

### **Commemorative Ensigns.**

This group comprises current or historic flags uniquely defaced to record special events: -

The 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.

The Armilla 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.

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.

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.

### **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!

### **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:-

Bumbunga. The self declared Province of Bumbunga (1979) in South Australia (a Blue Ensign defaced with an outline map of Australia).

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.

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.

The Sultanate of M'Simbatj. 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 3

### 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.

#### Coding of Contents.

The flags are listed in three groups starting with the British Isles, then Yacht Clubs and finally Colonial & Commonwealth ensigns. House flags together with land flags in the style of ensigns are included too designated (HF) or (LF) as appropriate. Following established practice, entries are colour coded (W) = White, (B) = Blue, (R) = Red, (LB) = RAF (light) Blue, (G) = Green, S = Black (sable) and (Y) = Yellow. Where a previous design of an ensign still in current use is listed, this is indicated by the suffix (pd). In some cases reference is made to Admiralty (ADM), Colonial Office (CO), Naval Law Division (NL) or Admiralty Fleet Order (AFO) records in the Public Records Office under the appropriate notation.

#### 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:- Upper Mersey Navigation Commission (in 1924, 26, 27 and 33); Isle of Man Harbour Commission and Tees Conservancy (1936); Messers Chadburn of Liverpool (1952); Falmouth Docks and Energy Company (1950s); South Shields Council Fire Brigade Fire Boat – for a visit by the Queen (1954); Falmouth Harbour Commission and Southampton HC (1956); Navy League of Canada (1918). ADM 1/8529/187, 1/8772/169, 1/26610, and no doubt several more.

## BRITISH ISLES

Bearwood College. (LF) (B). Bearwood College in Berkshire flew the ensign of the original Merchant Navy College which occupied the same site. The college chapel contains many fine wall paintings of the house flags of shipping lines from days gone by.

Blue Ensign. (pd). 1707-1801 version, in which the Union Flag had no St Patrick's Cross.

British Electricity Authority. (HF) (LB). Two versions used by the extensive Collier fleet. First design of electric blue ensign defaced *BEA* in white approved by Air Ministry 19/5/1949 (Admiralty passed it to Air Ministry because of colour). When BEA became the Central Electricity Authority on 18/1/55 following the separation of the Scottish division, the flag was resubmitted for approval to change the defacement to *CEA* and this was approved on 15/2/55. ADM 1/21971.

British and Foreign Anti Slavery Society. A plain White Ensign bearing a coat of arms of the society. Nothing further known at time of writing Jan 05.

Central Electricity Generating Board. (HF). (B). Defaced with the letters *CEGB*.

Church Lads Brigade. (R). Warrant 4/5/1922. Defaced with an anchor surmounted by a naval crown and the letters *C.L.B.*

Civil Defence. Two variants of the (LF), both (B/Y) quarters with different badges. The only known example in the public domain of the latest version is the one laid up in Bath Abbey. At least one other is in private hands.

Colonial Development Corporation. Admiralty warrant issued in 23/2/1951 for defaced blue ensign for vessels of the CDC fishing scheme registered in UK (except for the *AFRICAN QUEEN*, registered in Gibraltar. Design of defacement badge unknown. (ADM 1/26610)

Combined Cadet Force. (B). (pd). In Chapter 2 it will have been noted that the first batch of CCF ensigns wrongly included the word *Corps* in place of *Force* on the defacing badge.

Congested Districts Board Ireland. (B) defaced with the letters *CDB* with crown above and harp below. Worn by the yacht *FINGAL* in 1893. The CDB operated along the remote but well populated coastline of Donegal, Mayo, Galway, Clare and Kerry. The second version (letters rearranged around crown and harp, all enclosed within red outlined lozenge) was approved in 1907 for *SS GRANUAILE*, the name

since held by successive flagships of the Commissioners of Irish Lights (latest vessel commissioned in 2000).

Department of Agriculture Dublin. (B). About 1900. Defaced with yellow harp on blue circle surrounded by green shamrock on white ring.

Eastern Telegraph Company. (HF). (R/W stripes). The Eastern Telegraph Company of London ran a fleet of eight cable layers in the 1920s. Their (HF) closely resembled the ensign of the East India Company, but was defaced with the letters *ETC* in blue.

Eastern Extensions Telegraph Co. (HF). (R/W stripes). The EETC flag was similar to the ETC flag above, but with an additional *E* superior to the other three letters in the fly.

Falmouth Harbour Commissioners. A special (blue) ensign was requested in 1955, to be defaced with the FHC badge in the fly. The request was refused but it is possible that the launch ARWENACK wore an unofficial ensign of similar design in 1910 – this one is not counted in the totals however. ADM 1/26610.

Government of Northern Ireland. (B). Defaced with the letters *GNI*.

Guernsey. (pd). During the 19th century a (B/W) check flag with an overall red cross and Union in the canton was in use by the Lieutenant Governor, but it never became widely accepted. ADM 116/1847B. There was also the possibility of a Guernsey Blue Ensign for States vessels, but this is not proven.

HM Army Vessels. (B). Approved by the Queen and announced in Army Order 53/66 and Defence Council Instruction (General) 62/67. This ensign was worn by HMAVs (commanded by a commissioned officer); most recently by HMAVs ARACAN and ARDENNES, and it only became obsolete (or perhaps more correctly 'dormant') upon their de-commissioning in 1998. The title HMAV was granted by the Queen in October 1966. 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.

Customs and Excise. A complex group which has been counted as nine:-

Custom House. (R) two variants 1694-1817. (R) two variants 1817- 1823. Possibly one (B) variant.

HM Excise vessels. (B), and possibly (R) also. 1815-1817.

HM Customs and Excise. (pd). 1949-1953. Both (R) and (B) variants.

HM Mail Packets. Two variants with horses and riders facing different ways - one (R) and one probably (B); (and just possibly a white version too according to the late Mr Louis Loynes, but not counted). Colloquially known as the Post Boy Ensigns because of their design. The London Gazette of 21/12/1696 commanded mail packets to wear a special ensign as follows "*...This is to give notice.....the Right Honourable the Lords of the Admiralty have directed that the boats employed in this service do carry colours, in which there is to be represented a man on horseback blowing a post horn.*" The 19th century versions included one with the letters *GPO* in gold. Note also the unproven possibility of a New South Wales version of this flag.

HM Training Ships. Mostly (B). The involved story of these ensigns almost deserves a chapter of its own. Between the late 1700s until the 1960s there were about fifteen nautical training ships in commission, not all of which had defaced ensigns, and several of which changed ensigns and indeed names during their lives. Counted as twelve. NL 2433/32, 4090/32, 3309/27 and 67008/17: ADM 1/8760/221, 8770/157, 1/20882, 1/21648, 1/10876, 8462/174, 1/23993, 1/8529/187, 1/8369/48, 1/8721/264, 1/8744/122, 8751/178, 27126, 116/156 all refer.

a. They included the officer cadet ships TS CONWAY (1859) – defaced with a yellow castle, three towers and a gateway: TS WORCESTER (1862) – the letters *TNTC* in white: the reformatory ships CLARENCE (1864): AKBAR (1856) and CORNWALL (1859) – defaced with the letter *C* – believed to have been later renamed WELLESLEY; and the destitute or voluntary boys ships CHICHESTER (later named ARETHUSA (1886) – ensign defaced *TS ARETHUSA*: GOLIATH / EXMOUTH (1870) – defaced with the shield of the Metropolitan Asylums Board and later with the shield of London County Council: INDEFATIGABLE (1865) – defaced with the Liver bird (same as R Mersey YC but minus crown): MERCURY (1885) and WARSPITE (1783).

b. Others were MARS – defaced with yellow Scottish lion (as for R Harwich YC): STORK (Red Ensign 6/6/1917, defaced with the Navy League badge – later she may have had a Blue Ensign): also LISCARD at Wallasey (Red Ensign 6/6/1917 – although not a vessel she appears to have had a Blue Ensign too). Finally TS NORTHAMPTON (ensign granted 27/3/1917 bearing an anchor with an axe and hammer crossed in the ring and the letters *N* and *A* on either side, surmounted by a coronet). STORK and LISCARD were considered to be *as good as WARSPITE and ARETHUSA* by an Admiral commanding training ships at the time.

c. Some vessels inherited names of others when replacements were commissioned, which greatly confuses research. WARSPITE wore the original Blue Ensign of the Marine Society in 1949. CONWAY, WORCESTER and possibly INDEFATIGABLE had their own unique Blue Ensigns in later years at least. HMS (then TS) WORCESTER originally wore a Red Ensign (from 1862 - 1927), and then the defaced (B) until closure in 1968. The ensigns of CONWAY and the later WORCESTER live on in the Conway Cruising Club and the Old Worcesters Yacht Club. There is doubt about exactly how many different ensigns existed for these ships and this group is counted nominally as 12.

Hospital ship HAMADRYAD. (B). 1896-1905. Despite its name it had no connection with India but was built at Pembroke Dock in 1823 as a frigate with thirty-eight 18 pounder guns before conversion. Taken out of service, becoming a hulk, in 1866.

Humber Conservancy Board. (R). Two variants dated 1888 and 1911 (minor differences in the badge). The latter was worn by SS AUKLAND.

Isle of Man. (R). Ensigns of the Manx Karran Fleet. Five minor variants of the Manx ensign were used by the five ships of the Karran fleet of sailing vessels. Each ensign had a small hand painted picture of the ship concerned beneath the trinacria in the fly. One example is in the Manx museum. Counted as a single entity due to similarity of design.

International Line Steamship Company. (HF). (B/W/R stripes).

International Police Association. (pd). (W) (LF). This was traditionally a pale blue defaced ensign but was changed to a white one in about 1993 because it was found to be cheaper to produce. No warrant was sought or obtained by the IPA for either flag.

'Irish' Ensign. (LF). (G) defaced with a gold harp. This flag was for a time the unofficial national flag of Ireland during the stirrings of rebellion and Irish nationhood in the 19th century.

Lloyd's Signal Stations. (W) variant approved in 1896 after refusal of an 1894 request to fly a naval White Ensign but with a blue cross. This is despite current Lloyds Blue Ensign having been granted in 1882. White variant ceased to be used in 1914. ADM 1/8950.

London County Council. (B). 15/4/1930. Defaced with the arms of the LCC - barry wavy of six azure and argent on a chief of the last the cross of St George charged with leopard of England.

London Nautical School. (B). This ensign was used by the training ship EXMOUTH (see above) before 1939. It may have been used by the WORCESTER at some stage too, however it has been given the benefit of the doubt and included separately. The school now flies a plain Red Ensign at its premises near Waterloo railway station.

Marine Society. (B). (pd).

Meff Brothers of Aberdeen. (HF). (B).

Merchant Jack of 1701. (R).

Mersey Docks and Harbour Board. (R) variant for dredging fleet became obsolete in 1912. The current (B) ensign of the Mersey Docks and Harbour Company uses the defacement *MDHB* authorised for the original Mersey Docks and Harbour Board. The Blue Ensign appears to have been granted with some reluctance by the Admiralty, but the fact that the first vessel to use it was the PRINCE LOUIS OF BATTENBERG may have been relevant.

Metropolitan Asylums Board. (B). 6/1/1928. Worn by the London River Ambulance Steamers. NL 3309/27. ADM 1.8744/122.

Ministry of Transport. (B). Two variants of the badge, the first with a winged elliptical spoked wheel, and the second with an anchor on a circular wheel. The former was promulgated by AFO on 6/5/1921 – ADM 182/29. The latter badge was approved by King George VI in September 1950, and hoisted for the first time in the SS EMPIRE FOWEY at Southampton on 11/7/1951.

Ministry of War Munitions. (B). The cupping and rolling factory at Woolston (Southampton) requested a defaced ensign on 26 July 1916. The very handsome flag badge depicted a gunnery shell with wings within a white annulus. No warrant was necessary. It was discontinued in 1919, and was never reproduced in any flag book.

National Fire Service. (R/B). Two variants. This flag was the previous design (pd) of the red/blue quartered house flag now used by the Fire Service College. This one bore the letters *NFS* in the defacing badge. The NFS also had a Blue Ensign defaced *NFS* in the fly for its vessels.

National Fire Service Fireboat Ensign. (B). Bearing the National Fire Service badge in the fly.

Naval Ordnance. (B). Introduced 1892 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.* This was the final version of possibly several (B) ensigns over the years with minor differences. Two examples of the Naval Ordnance Ensign are known to exist, and are in the naval armament museum at Priddy's Hard in Gosport; recently transferred to the ownership of Gosport Borough council.

Navy League. (R). Warrant 15/2/1922. Defaced with a ship afloat surmounted by a cross superior on a rising sun, the whole surrounded by a scroll bearing the words *Sacrifice: Service*, and with the words *Navy League* in a scroll below.

Navy Office. (R) pre and post 1801. There were very minor differences (in the relative size of the canton) between the jacks and ensigns of this office during the 18 and 19th century, nevertheless the jacks have not been counted separately.

North Irish Central Association of Sea Cadet Corps. (R). Warrant 29/8/1922. Defaced with the Red Hand of Ulster. A request for a defaced Blue Ensign, which included a royal crown, had been turned down.

North of Scotland Steam Fishing Company. (HF). (B).

Ocean Weather Ship. (B). Two examples. A badge with the words OCEAN WEATHER SHIP was authorized by Admiralty letter dated 19/11/1948 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 (MOD owned) OWS CUMULUS was stationed in the North Atlantic between 1993 and 1996 the words on the badge were changed to OCEAN WEATHER SERVICE. In 1998 Cumulus was converted into a yacht, which is said to be the 40th largest in the world. She is for sale for 19.75 million dollars.

Ordnance Ensigns. (B). The original design was from 1694 – possibly by Royal Proclamation of 12 July – and latest revision was in 1944. It was used up 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 14/4/1896, over two hundred years later. The defacing badge was heraldically wrong however, and this was corrected on 30/10/1944. The very similar Naval Ordnance Ensign is also obsolete. At least four other early variants, some (R) and some (B).

Pacific Cable Board. (B). Flown in the HM Cable Ship IRIS (prefix HMCS not to be confused with HM Canadian Ships). ADM 116/1063C.

Post Office. (B). Two 19th century versions.

Privateer Jack. (R). Commonly called the Budgee Jack and named (for reasons unknown) after the 17th century pirate stronghold of Bougia in Algeria.

Property Services Agency Dredging & Diving Fleet. (HF). (B). Used until 1994. The only known British ensign to include the colour purple as a main feature of the defacing badge. No warrant is believed to have been issued for this ensign which was probably intended to be a house flag.

Prince of Wales Sea Training School Society. The Red Ensign of the parade Colours and land flag. The school was founded in 1920 and closed in 1976. A picture of this flag may be seen at [www.pwsts.org.uk/amagazines.htm](http://www.pwsts.org.uk/amagazines.htm).

RAOC Corps flag. (LF). (B).

Red Ensign. (pd). 1707-1801 version without St Patrick's Cross in the Union. However 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.

Royal Air Force. (pd). (W/B cross). 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 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. (B) not RAF blue. It became obsolete in 1993 when the function was contracted out to a private company. The badge was the RAF wings above an anchor.

Royal Air Force WW1 Station Flag. (LB) Pale blue ensign bearing a small roundal in fly with gold RAF wings beneath. Only version know on sale for £79-00 on e-bay in November 05 !

Royal Air Force (Belgian Section). (LB). Used in WWII. RAF roundel replaced with Belgian version. It may be questioned if other national RAF ensigns existed too.

Royal Marines. Perhaps strictly speaking this flag should be classed as a colour and thus be ineligible for inclusion however, in 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 *RMB* in white. This flag is preserved in the convent of Santo Domingo with the caption (translated from Spanish) "*Trophy of the reconquest of Buenos Aires 1806, of the Guard of Infantry of the Sea*".

Royal Maritime Auxiliary Service. Granted 29/5/1970. The RMAS horizontal 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 12/8/1996 following a market test, and those vessels now sail under the GSBE (see above). The flagship of the remaining RMAS was the support vessel RMAS NEWTON until the final contractorisation in 2007 when the ensign (very probably) became obsolete.

Royal Naval Auxiliary Service. (B). The RNXS ensign became obsolete on 1/4/1994 when the Service was disbanded. This ensign was originally granted to the RN Minewatching Service (hence the badge showing a mine dropping into the water), transferring to the newly formed RNXS in 1962.

Royal Fusiliers. (W). A most unusual white flag in ensign form, used in WWI by the 38<sup>th</sup> Battalion, bearing the Union in the canton and a blue Star of David in the fly. Provenance unknown.

Royal Naval Artillery Volunteers. (B). 1877-1892. The letters *RNAV* in the fly

Royal Naval Reserve. (B). Defaced *RNR*. Dates from 1862-64.

Royal Observer Corps. (LF). (LB). Formed in October 1925. Warrant for privileged ensign dated 1945. 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 Dec 1995) after more than 70 years service. The ROC Banner (or Colour) was laid up at RAF Cranwell on 8/12/95.

Royal Ulster Constabulary. Granted 1/1/1948 following an application dated 6/11/47. The warrant states it is only permitted for RUC patrol boats on Upper and Lower Lough Erne. Currently worn by the one named vessel LADY GREY (the three small craft do not wear an ensign). In recent years the ensign has only been worn during VIP visits. An RUC flag and a Standard are available for shore use. The future of these flags may be affected by constitutional changes being made to the RUC. ADM 1/20883.

Royal Ulster Rifles. (LF). (G). Regimental flag bearing the cap badge in the fly - until 1968.

Scottish Office Fisheries. (B). At least one earlier variant of the current SFPA & FRS ensign with different lettering on the badge.

Sea Cadet Corps. (B). (pd). Following authorisation in 1942, a minor alteration to the defacing badge occurred in September 1948.

Second World War Pledge Flags. There were several of these (but counted as one) used in conjunction with Victory Loan campaigns. They comprised a red bordered plain White Ensign (no red cross overall) but with a badge in the fly reflecting the campaign which they represented. The first such flag bore a torch as the badge taken from 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 ....*"

Seventh Army Division Flag (WWII). A most unusual red bordered plain 'white ensign' bearing the 7<sup>th</sup> Army Div badge in blue in the fly. An example in the possession of Rev John Hall (Chairman of the Flag Institute).

South Wales Sea Fisheries Committee. (R). (pd). The defacement was changed, without any authorisation, in about 1994.

Transport Office. (R) pre and post 1801. As usual the jack was similar but square.

Thomas Walker (Aberdeen). (HF). (R/B).

Union Steam Fishing Company (Aberdeen). (HF). (B/R).

Unknown. Discovered in USA in 2007, a 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.

Victualling Office. (R). Pre and post 1801.

War Office Submarine Mining Service. (B). This was the (pd) of the Royal Engineers Divers, and differed only in the style of the badge. Also used in Canada where the flag of the 48<sup>th</sup> Submarine Company, Royal Canadian Engineers is preserved at CFB Esquimalt.

Ward & Holzapfel of Newcastle. (HF). (R/W/Black). Union Flag on an Imperial German flag.

White Ensign 1707- about 1742. (pd). For use in home waters. There are two versions of the pre-1801 White Ensign bearing the Union in the canton, but only one of which is counted as obsolete. The home waters only version had a plain white field, whilst the foreign service version had a large red cross overall (as does the modern version). This latter flag is still flown at public expense over All Saints church at Burnham Thorpe in Norfolk.

White Ensign. (pd). Post 1801 but without red cross overall. Two Yacht Clubs (Royal YC and Royal Thames YC) both used such an ensign during the early 19th century. A completely undefaced modern White Ensign in other words. 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.

White Ensign with red border. Authorised about 1819 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.

White Ensign – defaced. A curious 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.

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

## **YACHT CLUBS**

Obsolete yacht club ensigns belonged to clubs which have ceased to exist or of which the original privileged ensigns have been changed (at date in brackets). Yacht clubs now defunct which bore a plain Blue or Red Ensign are not mentioned. Colour coded as before with the field of the ensign in brackets and the following different examples are known to have existed:-

Queenstown. Ireland (R). Established in Cobh in January 1860 with a warrant dated 14/1/1860



Royal Cape. South Africa. (B). Royal patronage granted by the King and warrant approved for a plain Blue Ensign by Governor General (Viscount Gladstone) on 26/6/1914. Defaced ensign granted after WWI and lasted until 1966 when Warrant returned to Admiralty following RSA leaving the Commonwealth.

Royal Cork. (R). Warrant 2/11/1831. Club established in 1720 and ensign introduced in 1759; continued in use until early 1900s.

Royal Gibraltar. (B). (pd). ADM 1/8744/141.

Royal Irish. (W). 1831. With arms of Ireland in lower fly

Royal Lake of the Woods. (B) defaced. There is some doubt about this club and its ensign. It may be current or may be obsolete. Apart from the Royal Windermere, this was the only other yacht club with no access to the sea. ADM 1/8537/242. Ensign re-instituted in 2002. Possibly now called the Royal Murray YC.

Royal London. (W with B cross). (1845-49). Two versions existed.

Royal Port Nicholson YC. New Zealand. Dates awaited. Rendered obsolete by NZ yacht ensign in 1999.

Royal Portsmouth Corinthian. (R). This ensign was shared by two other clubs namely the Royal St George (Ireland) and the Royal Victoria (Isle of Wight). Warrant dated 1880, obsolete in 1946 on amalgamation with Royal Albert YC. Removed from listing in 1930. ADM 1/8744/141.

Royal Plymouth Corinthian. (R).

Royal Prince Alfred. (W with B cross)

Royal Prince Alfred. (Australia). (B). The RPAYC originally used a White Ensign with a blue cross in place of the red cross (as did the Royal London), however this was replaced by a defaced Blue Ensign, whereupon the Sydney Amateur Sailing Club (SASC, and known locally as the 'Amateurs') adopted the blue cross ensign unofficially. It is believed that this ensign is once again being used occasionally by members of the SASC in Sydney Harbour.

Royal Rothesay. (R).

Royal South Western. (B).

Royal Southampton. (W). 1840. Crown and city arms in centre

Royal Victoria of Canada. Vancouver. (B) defaced VI for Vancouver Island. Warrant granted in 1911

Royal Windermere. (R). Previous (unofficial) version until 1887, defaced with shield bearing three lions within fleur-de-lys border.

Royal Western. Galway. (B).

Royal Western (Plymouth). (W). 1834. Crown in centre surrounded by wreath of roses and oak leaves.

Royal Western (Ireland). (W). Crown in centre surrounded by wreath of shamrock.

Royal Yorkshire. (R) version.

Auckland. (B). Circa 1892. White cross on a blue field with the New Zealand stars.

Brighton Sailing Club. (R).

British Boat Club. Alexandria in Egypt. (B).

British Motor YC. (B).

Dar es Salaam. (R).

Eniskillen YC. (R). Possibly unofficial ensign of 1910 (defaced EYC in gold in the fly).

Great Yarmouth. (R).

Holdfast Bay YC. South Australia. (B).

Montego Bay. (R). 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.

New Thames. (B). Gravesend. Established 1867. Received Admiralty warrant, April 1868. for: Blue ensign with phoenix in gold. Burgee: Blue, with phoenix in gold in centre

Point. (R). Durban in the Republic of South Africa. Club formed in 1837 and Warrant granted on 19/4/1937. 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.

Shanghai. (B).

South Australian. (B).

Sussex Motor YC. (B). AW = between 1907 & 1937. Club dissolved in 1993 and ensign obsolete

Temple Yacht Club. (B). Defaced TYC in white but was never authorised. Used before 1872.

Toronto. (R). (1880-89).

Wharnccliffe Sailing Club. (W). WHEREAS we deem it expedient that the " Wharnccliffe Sailing Club" shall be permitted to wear the distinguishing flags described below: We do, therefore, by virtue of the power and authority vested in us, hereby warrant and authorise the said flags to be worn on board the respective vessels of the Wharnccliffe Sailing Club accordingly. Given under our hands and the

Seal of the Office of Admiralty this 9th day June 1840. (signed) Charles Adam. S. John Brooke Pechell. Ensign. — Plain white, with a union in the corner. Burgee. — Plain white.

## COLONIAL & COMMONWEALTH ENSIGNS

It is known that some Colonial Red Ensign variants emerged into common use without having formal authority. A change dated 1/4/1890 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 S 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.*

### Unauthorised Ensigns.

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 20/8/1969 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.

### What follows

The third group includes some distinguishing flags, land flags and house flags in ensign form. Most are based on the Blue (B) Ensign. Several flags have been replaced with updated designs. For an organisation or place which still exists within the same constitutional framework, and where no other indication is given, the flag mentioned below will be a previous design or (pd). Some places had several versions over the course of time, and this is indicated by the multiple numbers alongside appropriate names (for example Cyprus). Precision in counting colonial ensigns is very difficult to achieve, and complete historical accuracy cannot be guaranteed.

## EUROPE AND THE MEDITERRANEAN

Bremen-Hanover. (R/W). 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.

Cyprus. Two variants of (B) and one of (R) also. 1881-1922 and 1922-1960 (warrant 31/8/1922, or possibly 25/8/22). A proposal to alter the badge of Cyprus in 1922 was stopped by Winston Churchill who felt it inappropriate. ADM 1/8601/38.

Gibraltar. (B). Pre 1982 variant.

Hanover. Between 1714 and 1837 at least three versions: two (R) and the (G/R/W) quarantine flag.

Heligoland. (LF) and unofficial merchant ensign. 1807-1890 two (G/R/W). From the Governor's dispatch No 37 of 11/5/1888 *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. (B) with a red border. A very similar flag has also been attributed to the Order of St John of Jerusalem. This unusual flag was authorised by the Constitutional Chart of the United States of the Ionian Islands, ratified by the Prince Regent 26/8/1917. It was intended to be flown ... *on days of public rejoicing and festivity*.

Malta. Four (B) variants between 1874-1964.

## ATLANTIC OCEAN

Bermuda. (R) pre 1910 badge. It is not known if a blue version also existed of this flag. CO 323/321.

Falkland Islands and Dependencies. (B). Three (pd)s. 1870 - 1936 variant bearing a bullock and unpopular 1936 - 1948 version bearing sea lions and a sailing ship. 1948-2007 version with white disc.

St Helena and Dependencies. (B). Two variants pre 1995. Before 1922 Ascension Island flew the White Ensign whilst administered by the Admiralty.

## BRITISH WEST INDIES

Bahamas. At least three of each (R) and (B) versions. 1869 - 1964; 1964 - 1973; and 1964 unofficial. No records exist of warrants or other authorisations for the Red Ensigns which are assumed to have been unofficial. However the spread of the 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. ADM 116/1847B. 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. Possibly both (R) and (B); not confirmed but given benefit of doubt. Also the 1919 Harbour Police ensign (B) with *HARBOUR POLICE* in red on white background fimbriated yellow.

Board of Trade Tenders to Bahamas & Sombrero Lighthouses. (B). Admiralty warrant dated 20/7/1898. Possibly two variants with different badges.

Dominica. (B). Two examples. 1955-1965 and 1965-1978.

Grenada. (B). Two examples. 1875-1903 and 1903-1967, although before 1930 the Union Flag was more generally flown ashore. ADM 1/8771/162.

Jamaica. (B). Two examples. 1875-1900 and 1900-1962.

Leeward Islands. 1874-1960s. Further south, the Windward Islands never had a flag of their own because they were never a unified colony (although there was a governor's flag). However this begs the question of what ensign would a vessel belonging to the government of Dominica (for example) have flown between 1940 (when Dominica was transferred from Leeward Is to Windward Is) and 1955 when Dominica's first badge was authorised.

St Lucia. (B). Three examples. 1875-1939 and 1939-1967, also the 1919 (B) defaced *HARBOUR MASTER* in white in the fly.

St Vincent. (B). 1877-1979.

St Christopher, Nevis and Anguilla. (B). 1957-1967.

Tobago. (B). Until 1888. Some authorities quote two additional flag badges.

Trinidad and Tobago. (B). Two examples. 1875-1958 and 1958-1962.

Trinidad Water Police. (B). Colony badge surrounded by words *TRINIDAD CONSTABULARY*. ADM 116/1063D.

Turks and Caicos Islands. (B). Pre 1968. Quaintly for a flag from the sub-tropics, this one bore an igloo on its defacing badge. This was because the heraldic artist mistakenly drew a door in one of the two igloo shaped salt piles on the badge, and the error was not noticed before the flags were made.

## **BRITISH NORTH AMERICA**

The historic flag locker of Canada mirrors that of Australia and contains numerous examples, with several unofficial variants having a degree of popularity from time to time. The United States is included within this section because of its colonial history.

Battle Flag. (W). Designed by Colonel A Fortesque Duguid and approved by War Committee on 7/12/1939. Three red maple leaves on single stem in centre, three gold fleur-de-lys on blue roundel in upper fly. Flown on merchant ship acting as HQ

of 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Division went overseas, and at HQ in Britain. Small car flag version presented to King George VI, who accepted it and expressed approval.

Canada (official). (R) and (B) four variants of each but seven counted because the last Blue Ensign is still in use as a house flag and jack as mentioned in Chapter 2. 1865-1870, 1870-1921, 1921-1957 and 1957-1965.

Canada (unofficial). (R) and (B). Two versions of the four province shield in both colours. One version of the five province shield in red only. One version of the seven province shield in red only. One version of the nine province shield. Two versions of a nine province shield flag by Edward Chadwick (including shields for Yukon and North West Territories). Both colour versions of a 1944 design by Barlow Cumberland comprising a single maple leaf defacement. Counted as nine.

Defence Research Board. (B). Approved by the Queen in 1952 and discontinued in 1968. Armillary sphere with naval, mural and astral crowns.

Governor General. (W). First used at a reception at Windsor Hotel in Montreal when the Earl of Dufferin (the third Governor General) visited the city on 11/2/1878.

Hudson Bay Company. (R). Possibly two versions. The Hudson Bay Company was formed in 1670 and adopted its first house flag about 1767 (the company Coat of Arms on a white field), however in about 1818 the Red Ensign defaced with the company initials *HBC* was adopted in addition. There appear to have been two versions of the flag, the more common of which had the letters *H* and *B* conjoined. It would seem an Admiralty warrant was issued in 1929. The Royal warrant granting a red ensign defaced with the letters HBC at the fly, was granted 21 July 1682 by Prince Rupert, Vice Admiral of England - and also, at that time, Governor of HBC - and gave rights to use the ensign on the Company's forts and on its ships entering Hudson Strait. The cross of St Patrick would not have originally been included.

Prince Edward Island. (B). Three examples. 1873-1878, 1878-1905 and 1905-1981.

Newfoundland. Both (R) and (B), 25/10/1918, and two variants of each. 1870-1905 (bearing the words *TERRA NOVA*), and 1905-1987, when the very unusual provincial flag based loosely on the Union Jack was introduced. Also two unofficial versions, one using the 1637 arms was certified in 1925 and reinstated in 1928, the other defaced with a white St George's cross with a lion in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> and unicorn in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> quarters. The latter flag was used during the 1939 Royal visit of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth.

Quebec. (B). Two examples. 1870-1939 and 9/12/39-1965.

Alberta. (B). 1905-1967.

Manitoba. (B). 1870-1905. The (R) variant is still current.

New Brunswick. (B). 1870.

Nova Scotia. (B). 1870-19/1/29 and 1929-1965

Ontario. (R). The provincial governor's flag 1959-1965 which was the Canadian Red Ensign with the provincial arms beneath the Union canton. An unusual case of two major defacements on one flag.

British Columbia. (B). Three examples. 1870-1896, 1896-1906 and 1906-1960.

Saskatchewan. (B). 1906-1969.

Royal Canadian Air Force. (LB). Probably two versions. Like the RAF ensign but with a red maple leaf in the centre of the roundel.

Royal Canadian Air Cadets. (LB).

Royal Canadian Sea Cadets. (W). Approved by Chief of Naval Staff in 1953. Lasted until 1976 when Union Flag canton replaced by maple leaf. In the fly a gold anchor on blue circle surrounded by red maple leaves surmounted by a naval crown.

Royal Canadian Ordnance Corps. (B). The only corps in the Canadian Army with the distinction of its special flag, developed through its connection with the RAOC. Defaced in the fly with a large green yellow maple leaf bearing the original (1694) Board of Ordnance arms in the centre (azure, three field pieces in pale or, on a chief argent three canon balls sable). The design was submitted for approval on 23/04/47 and approved in CAO 54-3 on 1/12/52. 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 ½*". This is far a flag 3' by 6'.

Unknown. Blue or possibly Red ensign defaced with the letters *PH* in the fly and photographed on a small pleasure craft in Toronto in the early 1900s.

Vancouver Island. Used ion 1865 – blue ensign complicated bearing badge of a beaver, Neptune's trident, a caduceus of two serpents and a bunch of pears.

Victory Loan Flags. Ten variants. First one was awarded in 1919 to any Canadian city or district that had purchased a specific value in Victory Bonds. It was a red bordered white flag with the Union in the canton, and inescutcheon of the arms of Saxony in the fly (this was supposed to be the badge of the Prince of Wales, but unbeknownst to the flag designers that had recently been changed to the arms of Wales). During WWII nine Victory Loan flags, each with a different badge, were awarded as a token of the community's pledge:-

2/6/41- blue torch / 16/2/42 – blue maple leaf / 19/10/42 – blue dagger on shield /  
26/4/43 – *IV* above 4 maple leaves on a shield / 18/10/43 – winged *V* on a shield /  
24/4/44 – winged *VI* on a shield / 23/10/44 – Flaming sword over a 7 on a shield /  
23/10/45 – laurel around an 8 on a shield / 22/10/45 – 9 over a pen on a shield

America ~ Continental Colours. (1775-77). (R/W). Two variants. The first national flag of the American Colonies (also known as the Great Union Flag and, since the 19<sup>th</sup> century sometimes as the Cambridge Flag or the Grand Union Flag) was identical to one of the flags of the East India Company, however because of their

entirely different usage they have both been counted. A rare version had R/W/B stripes.

America ~ Taunton Flag. (R). Two variants of the 1774 flag. 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*

America ~ Calvert Flag. (Y/S). Maryland state flag with pre-1801 Union Flag in canton. Dated about 1755.

America ~ New England. (R). 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. This unique and ingenious design merits inclusion for that reason.

## BRITISH CENTRAL AMERICA

British Guiana (now Guyana). (B). Four examples. 1875-1905, 1905-1920, 1920-1954 and 1954-1966.

British Honduras (now Belize). (B). Two examples. 1875-1920 and 1920-1981 (white disc removed from defacement).

Mosquito Coast. (B/W). 1824 version with six horizontal stripes. 1852 with ten stripes and 1853-1881 with twelve stripes. Defaced *KING OF MOSQUITO COAST*.

## PACIFIC OCEAN

British Solomon Islands. (B) and (R). Four examples, including the flag of the British Solomon Islands Protectorate. 1910-1947 (badge surrounded by *BRITISH SOLOMON ISLANDS*, and possible variant incorporating *BRITISH SOLOMON ISLANDS PROTECTORATE*), 1947-1956 (different badge but also including the name of the islands) and 1956-1978 (an new badge but no words). The Red Ensign version is of doubtful legality although it undoubtedly existed.

Gilbert and Ellice Islands (now distinct as Kiribati and Tuvalu). (B). 1892-1975.

Gilbert Islands. (B). 1975-79.

Commissioners of the G & E and Solomon Islands. (B). Two examples. 1902-1907 and 1907-1937.

Cook Islands. (R/W). The islands comprise two groups of which the main one is called Raratonga. Between 1888 and 1901 Raratonga had four versions of a (R/W/R) horizontal triband with a Union Flag in the canton (one version having the Union defaced with a badge). Between 1901 and 1979 the island's flag had no Union on it. Also obsolete is the Cook Islands Prime Minister's flag which bore a New Zealand flag in the canton.

Fiji. Three examples. (B). 1874-1883, 1883-1908 and 1908-1970. The 1887-1883 version came about as follows. In 1877 the Admiralty approved a badge for the Fiji



Islands, apparently under the impression that its design was based upon the Public Seal of the colony. It is possible that it was actually the Seal of the Supreme Court of Fiji. The badge was included in the HMSO booklet, 'Arms and Badges of the Several Colonies of Great Britain', published in 1881. In 1883 the Colonial Office noted, 'M. des Volux grumbled at the device for the badge of the colony and suggested a simpler one. After some correspondence with the Admiralty the following was approved as the badge for the colony and the device for its flag. [Letters F I J I below the royal crest] The crown surmounted by the lion is part of the seal and is unique.' This was not correct as the royal crest between the letters B C had been approved as the badge of British Columbia in 1870. [National Archives (PRO) CO 325/54]

Hawaii, or the Sandwich Islands. 1816-1825 (R/W/B stripes). 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 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.

Hawaiian naval ensign. (R/W). 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.

New Hebrides (now Vanuatu). (B). Resident Commissioner's flag 1906-1980.

Western Pacific High Commission. (B). 1877- 1972.

Western Samoa. Two examples of each (R) and (B). 1914-1925 and 16/1/25 – 1962.

Tuvalu. (LB). pd 1975-78. After inaugurating a flag without the Union Flag in the canton on 1/11/95, Tuvalu reverted to the use of the post-1978 version of the British style national flag on 11/4/97. Also flag of Chief Minister 1976 – 1978, which bore additionally a meeting house shield in lower hoist.

Prime Minister of the Cook Islands. Not counted are those flags which contained a canton within a canton, for example the Prime Minister of the Cook Islands flag of 1973 ~ which bore the NZ flag in the canton.

## **NEW ZEALAND**

Auckland Harbour Board. (B). ADM /26610.

New Zealand. (B). Three previous national flags with minor differences in stars. 1867-1869 (temporary flag bearing letters NZ), 1869-1900 and 1900-1902. The first NZ flag was designed by Lieutenant (later Admiral) Albert Hastings Markham whilst First Lieutenant of the screw sloop HMS BLANCHE on the Australian station at the time when the NZ marine had but a single ship. 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.

New Zealand Customs Service Ensign. This is the only known defacement of the NZF and it comprises the NZF defaced *HMC* in the 3rd quarter. This flag became obsolete in 1996.

New Zealand Red Ensign. (R). Three previous civil ensigns as above. Final warrant dated 7/2/1899. The Shipping and Seaman's Act of 1903 made the ensign official for NZ ships.

RNZAF Ensign. (LB). Previous design had *NZ* in the roundel instead of the present kiwi.

NZ Forces Motor Service Corps. (B). Ensign granted to the Motor Boat Section by warrant dated 9/10/1915.

Maori Queen and Tribal Flags. (R) & (W). 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 NZ 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 (NZ 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 (defaced Red, NZ Red and White)

## **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.

Albany Port Authority. (B).

Australian National Flag (ANF). (B). First warrant 11/9/1902, second one 11/6/1903. This flag lasted from 1901-1908.

Australian Colonial Flag . (W). (1823 - 1824). Two versions existed.

Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service. (B).

Australian Customs Service. (B). Three (pd)s from 1901 up to 1955.

Australian Anti-Transportation League. (LF). (B). 1851-1853. Blue flag to demonstrate the justice of the cause: the flag of a political movement rather than a traditional ensign.

Australia Civil Ensign. (R). 1903-1909 version authorised 11/10/1902 or 4/6/1903.

Australian Civil Air Ensign. (LB). At least two and possibly three (pd)s 1935-1948. Stars were originally yellow and are now white

Commonwealth Lighthouse Service. (B). The Australian national flag with a lighthouse badge in the middle of the southern cross. This flag was in existence since before World War II, but is no longer in use. Note that the small five-pointed star had to be moved flywards in order to accommodate the oval badge.

Chief of the General Staff. (B). (pd).

Dept of Harbours and Lights (WA). (B).

Dept of Marine and Harbours (SA). (B).

Dept of Marine and Harbours (WA). (B).

Dept of Navigation (NSW). (B).

General Officer Commanding in Chief. (B).

Geraldton Port Authority. (B).

Herald Federal flag of 1900. The winning design was from a competition run by a Melbourne newspaper.

Maritime Services Board (NSW). (B). This flag is still sometimes seen.

Melbourne Harbour Trust Commissioners. (B).

Murray River Flag of 1853. (B/W/R). See also Top & Bottom Enders' flags.

Murray River Flag of NSW. (B/W). This was the Top Enders flag. The Murray River Bottom Enders flag is still in use (and is listed in chapter 2).

New South Wales. (B). Two (pd)s. (1876).

New South Wales Ensign. (W). Two versions. Firstly a Blue Ensign 1870-1876 defaced *NSW* in the lower fly and worn by two unarmed government vessels and two vessels of the naval brigade. Secondly a White Ensign 1831-1901. Identical to the Federation Flag of the late 1800s, although there were alternative designs of the latter. One of a select group of White Ensigns bearing a blue cross rather than the normal red cross.

New South Wales Merchant Ensign. (B/W). 1830s.

Prime Minister. (B). It is most unlikely this flag will reappear in British ensign form !

Queensland Customs. (R). Early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Defaced with royal crown above 6 pointed star formed by interlocking triangles (like Nigeria), with a gold Q in the centre of the star. A picture of this ensign, dated 1899, can be found in the Customs House on Queen St, Brisbane.

Queensland Separation Flag. (LB). Described in the Moreton Bay Courier on 5/11/1859, as a light blue flag with a red St George's Cross, and the union in the upper corner. Said to have been made when Queensland separated from New South Wales (on 10/12/1859) under its first governor Mr Bowen, and used unofficially until 1870. Seen flying in 2004 !!

Queensland. (B). Two other (pd)s possibly.

RAAF Ensign. (LB). 1948-1981. (pd) which bore RAF roundel.

Royal Australian Engineers. (B).

Royal Australian Army Ordnance Corps. (B).

South Australia. (B). State flag ~ three (pds). 1872-1878, 1878-1903 (including what may be the first official depiction of a kangaroo on a flag), and 1903-1907 (when a minor change occurred in what is essentially the present design).

South Australia. (B). Government vessels 1870.

Sydney Harbour Trust. (B).

Tasmania. (R) and (B). Three examples of the state flags (pd).

Victoria. (B). State flag ~ three (pd)s. 1865-1872, 1872-1878 and 1878-1902.

Victoria Boxer Rebellion Ensign. 1900.

Victoria Mercantile Marine. (R). 1870.

Western Australia. (B). State flag (pd). 1876-1953. Same as present flag but with swan facing the fly.

Australian First Fleet Re-Enactment. (B). 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 !

Department of Defence (Civil manned vessels). (B). This handsome ensign (blue defaced by a horizontal gold anchor surrounded by a gold circle) has sadly and unnecessarily become extinct by default. In September 1928 it was noted that Australian auxiliaries were using the ANF as their ensign and the RFA jack as their jack. The Australian Navy Board suggested a distinct ensign should be adopted and proposed the badge described above. It appears to have gone out of use around the 1970s, although the Master Attendant in Sydney has no records. ADM 1/8732/214.

### **Australian Postscript**

On 1/1/1832, Captain John Nicholson (the harbourmaster of Port Jackson) produced an engraving entitled 'Code of signals for the Colony of New South Wales'. It showed 8 flags all in ensign form. 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). They have not been counted additionally to others in the list because their provenance is unproven.

## **THE FAR EAST**

Burma. (B). Badge based on the peacock flag of King Mindon was approved by King George VI, and the Times of 9/2/1939 declared *date of use to be reported after international recognition*.

Commissioners for the Port of Rangoon. (R).

British North Borneo Company. Two versions. Both (R) and (B). Royal Charter 1/11/1881. Warrant 5/1/1882. Or, a lion rampant gules; badge reversed in 1902 so lion's head was towards hoist. ADM 116/898B.

British North Borneo. (B). Colonial administration 1946.

Hong Kong. Five (B) variants pre-1959, and final (B) variant (Order in Council 27/7/59) which became obsolete on 1 July 1997. There was one unofficial but widely used (R) variant for HK registered vessels and local craft from 21/1/1959 to 30/6/97. HK vessels were supposed to wear an unsightly combination of the HK Blue Ensign above the undefaced Red Ensign on the same mast, but not surprisingly most did not.

Labuan. (B). Separate colony until combined with North Borneo in 1890 and then annexed by Straits Settlements in 1906, separating again in 1912. Badge comprised Sir James Brooke's schooner ROYALIST with the mountains of Kinabalu in the background. CO 325/54

Liu Kung Tau. (B). Administrator's flag 1899 - 1902. Liu Kung Tau was the main town in Weihaiwei.

Malacca. (B). Special Commissioner's flag.

British New Guinea (until 1908): Papua (since 1908). (B). Six examples: 1884-888; 1888-1906, 1906-1921, 1921-1942 / 1945-1949, 1921-1942 (Customs) and 1951-1964 (Customs); also a defaced ANF.

Penang. (B).

Perak. Resident's flag – A very unusual (W/Y/S) burgee with the Union Flag in the canton, although some authorities doubt it was of this design.

Straits Settlements. (B). Possibly two examples, one of which was not strictly authorised.

Sarawak. (B). 1947 - 1963.

Singapore. (B).

Weihaiwei. (B). This flag (which became obsolete on 30/9/1930) has a delightful mandarin duck on the defacing badge.

## INDIAN EMPIRE

As an exception to the general rule in this Section, nearly all are (R) variants relating to Princely States in the northern part of the western coast around Bombay. A general warrant for the Indian states was dated 2/8/1921, preceded by an Order in Council dated 14/7/1921 signed by Almeric Fitzroy. The authority for special ensigns did not apply when vessels of the States were in British territorial waters – an unlikely event. Individual warrants were granted between 10/10/1924 and 15/8/1947. Descriptions are brief and intended only to give a feel for the range and style of the imperial ensigns of India:-

Army Department. (B). Used by Army vessels when not operating as part of the Royal Indian Marine. Defaced with a horizontal anchor and cable (as on Admiralty flag) with the Star of India in the centre of the stock

Royal Indian Marine. (B). Warrant 21/4/1894 (or perhaps in 1884), following original sanction by the Admiralty on 2/7/1879. Defaced with the Star of India and inscribed *HEAVEN'S LIGHT OUR GUIDE*.

Honourable East India Company. (R/W). 1707-1824; possibly as many as seven variants but counted as five. Perhaps also the inspiration for the Stars and Stripes of the USA. The East India Company was formed 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.

Indian Maritime Governments. (B). 1897-1947. Two variants. Use of this flag included the ship *ABYSSINIA* (warrant 30/7/1883) *while firing shotted guns for exercise*.

Baroda. (R). On a panel in white *BARODA* above a horse's hoof over crossed swords.

Bhavnagar. (R). Complex defacement covering most of the fly with the words *MAN PROPOSES GOD DISPOSES*.

Bombay Port Trust Vessels. (R). Possibly two variants originally designed as Blue Ensigns, but Admiralty refused to sanction them and thus they became Red Ensigns. 1880-1884.

Cambay. (R). Defacement in lower fly; a somewhat unusual but not unique location.

Cochin. (R). An unusual white fimbriation between Union canton and field – see modern South African flags which follow a similar pattern.

Janjira. (R). Possibly two variants with same defacement (white moon and stars over black and white fort) but differently positioned in the fly.

Jafarabad. (R). Similar to Janjira but without the fort, warrant 10/10/1924. ADM 116/1847B.

Junagadh. (R). Defaced *JUNAGADH STATE BADGE* in red beneath badge on white disc.

Kutch. (R). Two variants. One had *KUTCH STATE* with moon and sun in centre fly, whilst the other had the same design within the fourth quarter only. This name of the State is wrongly spelt *Cutch* in the 1921 Order in Council.

Morvi. (R). Large arms in the fly (as is once more becoming common – see new BAT flag), with the gallant words *VALOUR IS FORGIVNESS*.

Nawanagar. (R). With the stirring motto *VICTORY TO SHRI JAM*.

Porbandar. (R).

Sachin. (R). Bearing a right hand in green (known as a Panja).

Travancore. (R). Bearing a conch shell.

Commissioners for the Port of Calcutta. (R). A very handsome quartered badge surmounted by a royal crown.

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.

## INDIAN OCEAN AND MIDDLE EAST

Aden. (B). No flag until 1937. Possibly two variants existed.

Ceylon. (B). Used as land flag and at police stations. Badge designed by Mr Smithers of the Public Works Department in 1869, and was one of few colonial badges which were never altered. ADM 1/8771/1/162, CO 54/457.

Mauritius. (B). Two examples; the key on the badge is for the island's status as the key to the Indian Ocean.

Palestine. A total of four ensigns:

a. Both (R) and (B). First established 14/10/1927. 1927-1948 (R) defaced *PALESTINE*, and likewise (B) from 1927 probably to 1948. Also two (B) square jacks defaced *POSTS* and *CUSTOMS* between 1929 (authorised 2/5/29) and 1948. Finally a (B) defaced *PALESTINE CUSTOMS* 1926 - 1929. Three ensigns (and 2 jacks)

b. Palestine Police Port and Marine Section formed 1935 and operated under command of RNO Haifa, and flew White Ensign. One boat operated on Sea of Galilee - only time WE ever seen on the S of G. White Ensign replaced by Blue defaced with Palestine Police badge on date unknown. NL 2820/32.

Seychelles. (B). Two examples 1903 and 1961. Seychelles became independent in 1976.

## **BRITISH EAST AFRICA**

Royal East African Navy. (B). 1949-57. The same flag badge used on both the ensign and later on the (square) jack. The author knows of one found in a garage in southern England.

East African Railways and Harbour Administration. (B).

Imperial British East Africa Company. Both (R) and (B). Warrant dated 6/3/1890.

Kenya. Both (R) and (B), and two examples of each. 6/3/1890. ADM 1/8771/162.

Kenya and Uganda Railways & Harbour Administration. (B).

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. However, 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. 8 March 1937. After consulting the Admiralty the Colonial Office replied 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. An amendment plate, 20a, was produced for the Colonial Office book 'Flags, Badges and Arms', with the note; 'No white circle. On Blue Ensign as shown'. [National Archives (PRO) CO 323/1377/4.]. The badge was in use until February 1949 when the Administration also became responsible for the railways and harbours in Tanganyika. Its name was changed to East African Railways and Harbours Administration, and a new badge combining the emblems of Kenya, Uganda and



Tanganyika was adopted.

Kenya Police. (B) with *KENYA POLICE* in black around the badge within the white disc.

Somaliland. Both (R) and (B), 1904, and two variants of each. ADM 1/8690/219.

Tanganyika. Both (R) and (B) versions. Warrant dated 9/3/1923 and lasted until 1963. NL 35731/19, 28145/20. ADM 1/8690/219.

Uganda. (B). Circular badge of a gold crested crane.

## **BRITISH SOUTH AFRICA**

Basutoland. (B). There is some doubt about this, although the badge was used by the Resident Commissioner on a Union Flag.

British South Africa Company. Both (R) with no disc and (B) with a disc. Warrant dated 11/11/1902.

Union of South Africa. Two (R) and one (B) version dating from 28/10/1910-1928. There were two maritime versions of the SA Red Ensign. One bearing the shield of arms without a white disc (28/9/1910-1912) and the second bearing the shield on a disc (1912-1928 as an unofficial flag: and 1912-1951 as the official ensign of the SA merchant marine, despite the SA tricolour having been adopted in 1928). The Blue Ensign had no disc. HMSA Ships wore the White Ensign until 1946, often flying the South African national flag at the yardarm also. 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.

Union of South Africa (variant) – ‘Railways Flag’. A third (R) variant of the above example was used (inter alia) by the SA Railways (the ‘Railways Version’). This comprised the full 1910 SA coat of arms on a white disc, complete with supporters and motto. 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 African campaign of 1915. A 6’ by 3’ example, which probably dates from that campaign, is displayed at the SA Army College to this day.

Graaf-Reinet Commando. (R). This flag is one of a small number which lie on the border between a regimental Colour and flag. As a Colour it should be excluded, but it was actually a ‘home made’ Red Ensign defaced with the words *GRAAF REINET COMMANDO 1914* and the motto (sewn onto a black ribbon) *DIEU NOUS CONDUIT*. It was a gift from a Mrs C A Nesper and was consecrated on parade on 27 Oct 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 of Good Hope. (B). 1876 to 1920. Arms granted by Royal Warrant 29/5/1876.

Malay Corps. (G). Similar in type to the one above, this flag was authorised in 1846, bearing the defacement *ALLAH AKBAR*. An interesting (and surely unique) combination of Christian and Muslim symbology on one flag.

Natal. Both (R) and (B), and two variants of each. 1876 to 1905 (the only flag badge which consisted of the whole of a colony's seal including the Royal Arms). 1905 to 1910 a simplification and enlargement. A Red Ensign version is preserved in Durban has the wildebeest running towards the hoist rather than towards the fly.

Northern Rhodesia. (B). New flag created in 1930, following division of Rhodesia into two separate colonies in 1910 and subsequent transfer of sovereignty from the BSAC in 1924.

Southern Rhodesia. Both (R) and (B). Two versions of the (B) ensign (with and without disc). Annexed to the crown in 1923. Likewise two similar versions of the unofficial Red Ensign also existed The Red Ensign variant was never official although some examples were made (no disc). NL 1655/25.

British Central Africa Protectorate. (B). 1907. NL 14063/14, 16149/15.

Nyasaland. (B) and (R). The Red Ensign was used on Lake Nyasa..

Rhodesia. (LB). 1/4/1964 version which was designed following the creation of Zambia out of Northern Rhodesia in December 1963 and approved by the Governor Sir Humphrey Gibb. Used on land and on government vessels. This flag was not a great success because the light blue faded quickly in the sun to a dirty grey. The subsequent change to a green and white flag was partly because green is colour fast in the sun.

Royal Rhodesian Air Force. (LB). Two versions. 1953 to 1964, 1964 to 1970. RAF ensign with three small assegais added to represent the three countries making up the federation. Became the Royal Rhodesian AF on 15/10/1954. Following dissolution of the federation in December 1963 the three assegais became just one.

Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. (B). 1953-63.

Transvaal. (B). Possibly an additional (second) version between 1877 and 1881.

Orange River Colony. (B).

Prince of Orange Ensign. This most unusual ensign is a mystery and is believed to have been orange with a blue cross fimbriated in white. It was reputedly worn by HMS ECHO at the battle of Muizenburg on 7 Aug 1795, and is said to have represented an agreement between the British government and the Prince of Orange. This is probably a myth and the only evidence for it is on a large oil painting from the period. There remains doubt about its authenticity and it is not counted in the total. ADM 51/1110, 51/1136 and 51/1171.

Horse Flag of the Digger's Republic. (R). (1910). This 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.

Transvaal. Possibly two versions. A very fine badge was proposed in 1878 for a Transvaal flag, following the usual colonial ensign pattern, however it is not clear that it was ever used.

Unofficial SA Red Ensign. (R). Souvenir flag (1910).

## BRITISH WEST AFRICA

There was a very complicated sequence of administration throughout West Africa between 1807 (when the area around Freetown became a Crown Colony) and 1914 when the colony of Nigeria was established.

Creektown. (W). Old Calabar river, King Eyo Honesty 1860. White Ensign bearing letters *K*, *E*, and *H* in white quarters. Old Calabar consul replaced by consul general in 1891.

Gambia. (R). 1889 – 1963. The letter *G* replaced the *W'A'S'* defacement (see below).

Gold Coast. (B). 1874 – 1957. Gold Coast became a separate colony in 1874 and placed *GC* on the flag in place of *West African Settlements* (see below). 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.

Nigeria. (R). The whole of Nigeria was claimed by Britain at the Conference of Berlin in 1886, and Northern and Southern Nigeria merged in 1914. The new flag lasted until 1960. 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*"

The Lower Niger. (R). On 22/3/1830, 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. Perhaps an illustrative count of one 'obsolete ensign' may be allowed for the Lower Niger as a result.

Lagos Colony. (R). Separated from Gold Coast in 1886, replacing *GC* with *L*. Lagos was established a British base against the slave trade in 1861. Amalgamated with Nigeria in 1906. CO325/54.

Niger Coast Protectorate. (R). Established in 1885 as the Oils River Protectorate and renamed in 1893 when the name on the flag was changed.

Nigerian Customs and Excise. (B). The only known 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).

Nigeria Ports Authority. (B). Authorised 29/8/1955. An unusually recent colonial ensign. Return of warrant requested 6/11/1961, but flag probably not used after October 1960. Comprised the usual green interlocking star but with the letters *NPA* in place of the crown. ADM 1/26610.

Northern Nigeria. (R). Established in 1900 from land of the Royal Niger Company. Amended inscription on badge.

Oils River Protectorate. (B). Established 1885 and disestablished in 1893.

Royal Niger Company. (W) and (B) and possibly (R) also. The National African Company was given a royal charter on 10/7/1886 and established under its new name (RNC). The royal charter was surrendered in 1899. (W) variant authorised on 21 Nov 1895 (or possibly 1/10/1886) although used from 1887 until 1895. The Admiralty cancelled the warrant on 1/2/1888 when Blue Ensign was authorised, having discovered the White Ensign was being used at sea and not just on inland waterways. The badge of a black 'Y' represented the rivers Benue and Quorra joining to form the Niger, with the words *ARS*, *JUS* and *PAX* written in the arms. In point of fact the White Ensign of the RNC 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.

Southern Nigeria. (R). Created in 1900 from Niger Coast Protectorate and Royal Niger Company land. Inscription on badge changed to suit.

Sierra Leone. (R). Three flags. Separated from Gambia in 1889, becoming a protectorate in 1896. Replaced the *W'A'S'* defacement (see below) with *SL* until 1914 when new badge authorised based on Arms granted 30/7/1914; also the *POLICE* defacement. ADM 1/18771/162.

West Africa Settlements. 1870-1889. They originally consisted of Sierra Leone, Gambia, Gold Coast and Lagos. The flag bore the words *WEST AFRICA SETTLEMENTS* inscribed beneath the elephant and palm tree. Gold Coast and Lagos detached in 1874. CO 325/54.

### **Summary of Obsolete 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.

Figures for the totals in each ensign category are given at the end of Section 1.

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**

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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**

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2 As to Pendant and Ensign of ships in the Preventive Service see Order in Council of February 1, 1817.