

Communications Branch Museum Ref:

The following are two (retyped) documents held in the Museum detailing how the Inglefield Clip came into being. The first document is a short explanation of what the Inglefield Clip was/is used for followed by the service career of its inventor Rear Admiral Sir Edward Fitzmaurice Inglefield KBE. This is followed by a letter (retyped) from Edward Inglefield to Mead (believed to be Commander Mead) giving details of how his invention came about.

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THE INGLEFIELD CLIP

Invented by Lieutenant Edward Fitzmaurice Inglefield later Rear Admiral, about 1889 when serving onboard HMS AGINCOURT as Flag Lieutenant to Admiral Sir St. George Caufield D'Arcy-Irving. The clip was introduced into the Fleet in 1895 in HMS TRAFALGAR in which ship the inventor was serving as the Commander, to replace the "toggle and eye" method of joining flags and under criticism as being too slow and insecure.

**Rear Admiral Sir Edward Fitzmaurice Inglefield, KBE**

(10.4.1861 – 19.7.45)

(Son of Admiral Sir Edward Augustus Inglefield (inventor of the Inglefield anchor)).

Entered RN 1874

Commanded torpedo boat 1<sup>st</sup> class at the blockade of the coast of Greece in 1886 under the Duke of Marlborough.

First Lieutenant of HMS VICTORIA when she foundered in 1893 but was in Malta hospital at the time.

Retired 1906

Secretary Lloyds 1906 – 1921

Member of Royal Yacht Squadron

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Burke House,  
Beaconsfield  
Bucks

My Dear Mead,

2<sup>ND</sup> March, 1940

Pray forgive the long delay in replying to your letter re Flag Clips.

The want of something of the sort became apparent to me when I was Flag Lieutenant to Rear-Admiral D'Arcy-Irvine, Second-in-Command of Channel Squadrons, in the "AGINCOURT" in 1888-1889.

As repeating ship, we had a staff of 20 or more on the poop in the day-time, as the Flagship "NORTHUMBERLAND", Admiral Sir Baird, frequently made long signals of 6 or 7 hoists of flags going up simultaneously.

On one occasion, when we were going round the North of Scotland in winter, it was

Freezing and snowing, and the running eyes on the signal halliards were frozen hard, and the signalmen had to open them with their teeth, which delayed matters very much.

Also cases occurred sometimes when in his haste a signalman had not closed the running eye taut over the toggle, and when half way up it slipped off, and a man had to be sent aloft to round down the halliards.

I therefore began to consider a device for hooking on the Flags, and thought it might be something of the sort illustrated by putting the tips of fore-finger and thumb of each hand together, with a slight opening, and sliding them together. But for sometime I did not get further than that, though I occasionally thought about it.

In October, 1889, I went out to the Mediterranean as First Lieutenant of the "MELITA", and one Sunday afternoon, when at Sea on our way from Malta to Alexandria, it occurred to me to try what I could do, and I got a piece of wood about ½ inch thick, and hacked out a pair of Clips, on rather a large scale, about 3 inches long, each.

I was rather surprised when the result seemed effective, and the next day I got our Blacksmith to make a small pair out of some Muntz Metal which I had. He was a clever man and he evolved a pair of clips of exactly the same shape and size as are used to-day.

From Alexandria I sent the pair to Mark Kerr who was Flag-Lieutenant to the Commander-in-Chief, Admiral Sir Anthony Hoskings, who ordered a complete set to be made for his Flag Ship "VICTORIA", in Malta Dockyard.

Apparently the signalmen in the "VICTORIA" resented the innovation, and complained so strongly that Mark Kerr had them all taken off, and toggles and running eyes replaced.

When the Admiral was informed of this he said that in view of the expense of making the set they ought to have further trial, and ordered them to be sent to "TRAFALGAR", Flagship of Rear-Admiral Lord Walter Kerr.

Some little while afterwards the "TRAFALGAR" beat all the other ships at flag-drill and Mark Kerr had the "VICTORIA" signalmen fallen in to slate them for being beaten by "TRAFALGAR". The Yeoman replied: "Of course she beat us with them there Clips".

So another set was made in the Dockyard for the "VICTORIA", and I believe that it was some years before any more ships had them.

They were only supplied to ships which specially asked for them.

It was not till 1894 or 1895 that they were established for all ships.

I did take out a Patent but never did anything with it. Actually I was out of pocket altogether over it, but it was well worth while for the satisfaction of havind something useful.

Yours Sincerely,  
(SGD). EDWARD INGLEFIELD.