

SOME MANUSCRIPTS OF FLAG INTEREST IN THE PEPYS LIBRARY, MAGDALENE COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

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Samuel Pepys is known to every English schoolchild as the author of a famous diary, written when he was a young man, and giving a unique picture of the social, domestic and sexual life of a Londoner in the 1660's. As well as being the writer of the Diary, Pepys was also a competent naval administrator who did much to re-organise the Royal Navy in the period between the Restoration of King Charles II in 1660, and 1688, when James II was forced from the throne by William of Orange - the so called 'Glorious Revolution'. After his retirement from the Navy Office, Pepys spent much of his energy in the last years of his life (he died in 1703) in building up his library, which he eventually left to his old college, Magdalene College, Cambridge. The library is still at Magdalene, in the bookcases he had specially made for him by a carpenter from the naval dockyards. The manuscripts in the library are the principal source for British naval history in the period and there is among them much material valuable to the historian of sea flags (as can be seen in Perrin's standard work on the subject⁽¹⁾). This paper is merely an illustrated introduction to some of the treasures to be found there.

Pepys took an interest in flags both as a historian, and as an administrator and reformer of the navy, and one large volume of his Miscellanies of matters political, historical and naval⁽²⁾ is devoted to flag related matters - the law and etiquette of flags, the 'theory' of flags, flag precedents, the design and size and material of flags.

The burning flag issue for Englishmen in the years of the 'Dutch Wars' was the so-called 'right of the flag' - the English claim to sovereignty over the seas round England and the resulting insistence that all foreign ships should salute any ship belonging to the British Crown in these waters by lowering flag and topsails⁽³⁾. The legal issue had been argued out by Hugo Grotius in Mare Liberum (1609) and John Selden Mare Clausum (1635); in Pepys's Miscellanies is a mass of information on how the claim worked out in practice, with details of precedents and accounts of clashes with the Dutch

and the French over the issue, as well as theoretical comment. In this, and all such matters, Pepys's information is systematically arranged and, because he was intimately concerned with naval affairs, very reliable. A less momentous, and purely English, issue with which Pepys had a lot to do concerned the flags to be worn by English merchant ships. Increasingly as the Royal Navy became more permanent and professional in the seventeenth century the need was felt to make a clearer and more rigid distinction between the flags flown by the King's ships and those flown by merchant ships. From 1634 the flag distinctive of the King's ships had been, in theory, the Union Jack at the bow, and it was for this flag that the 'right of the flag' was claimed from foreign ships; however, there was a tendency among merchant ships and yachts to wear the Jack because of various privileges that it gave - including, as Pepys explains in a memorandum, freedom from port dues in France, freedom from the need to take on a pilot in Holland, and lowered topsails, as a mark of respect, from English merchantmen⁽⁴⁾. It also conferred protection against having sailors pressed into the Navy⁽⁵⁾. Pepys, who was anxious to restrict the unauthorised use of the 'King's Jack', gives, with clear irritation, instances of an entire Dutch fleet lowering flags to British ships which were not really the King's ships at all. He is a witness of unique value since he himself spent so much time trying to re-order and enforce flag regulations⁽⁶⁾.

Another issue well documented in the same volume which reveals the extreme sensitivity of the period to points of honour concerning flags is the series of disputes about the right of officers in command of English squadrons to fly an Admiral's flag. The flag of an admiral was seen an important embodiment of national honour and so easily 'insulted'; consequently Pepys and other naval administrators were anxious to avoid the possibility of admirals' flags being flown in squadrons not strong enough to protect them from 'insult' or attack.

Following a French ordinance of 1665⁽⁷⁾ Pepys worked towards more rigid rules about admirals' flags and prepared a new set of regulations under which at least twenty warships had to be in a fleet before a full set of flags - Admiral, Vice-Admiral, Rear-Admiral - could be flown; but these regulations never came into effect because Pepys lost his job on the deposing of King James II in 1688.⁽⁸⁾

Pepys attempts to impose more order clashed at times with the wish of senior naval officers to fly an admiral's flag: one well-documented case concerns an officer named Sir Roger Strickland who was Vice-Admiral in a fleet which escorted the Queen of Portugal to Lisbon. Strickland applied for permission to fly a Vice-Admiral's Union flag which Pepys opposed, writing that it was 'a thing so extraordinary, so irregular and so unjustified by any practice past of having two of the top flags of England exposed to sea, in view of the two greatest Rivalls of England for Sea Dominion and Glory (I mean the Dutch and French) with no better provision for supporting the Honour thereof than six ships ...). Eventually the rather remarkable compromise was reached that Strickland was authorised to carry the flagstaff for a Vice-Admiral's flag, but not actually to fly the flag. The extensive correspondence between Pepys and Strickland on this issue is most revealing about contemporary attitudes to flags⁽⁹⁾.

Another case involving Strickland, the previous year, is also fully documented. On this occasion Strickland made a complaint against another sea officer, Captain Priestman, on the grounds that he had without authority devised a pendant and flown it on his ship. This case was felt to be important enough for Priestman to be censured by the King himself, on advice from Pepys who criticized Priestman for 'violating the discipline of the Navy and credit of the King's flag abroad by bringing it under an uncertainty what the same is'⁽¹⁰⁾.

While considering, in the 1670's and 1680's, the regulations about flags, Pepys had submitted to him schemes by other people for new arrangements of flags. One of these was by Strickland who produced a set of proposed 'designs for distinction for the Vice and Rear Admirals of England'⁽¹¹⁾. A more elaborate document is a discourse by an elderly doctor in the King's service, John Knight, on the history of the flag of St. George; this charmingly eccentric treatise contains, besides a good deal of inaccurate history, a eulogy of St. George's cross and a proposal to make it again dominant in the national flag (as opposed to being confined to a mere canton in the national ensigns): 'I do propose the cross, the ancient and noble cognizance (of this Kingdom) be restored to its former use, splendour and glory and by inserting it into all our flags, jacks, ancients, and streamers; from thence it may be known to what king and people our ships do belong'. This document is entertaining for its jingoism and implication that the decline of St. George's cross is due to a

conspiracy of puritans, republicans and foreigners, and it is also ornamented with a series of coloured drawings showing how a fleet might be divided into squadrons by the use of St. George's cross. For good measure he adds an attack on the harp as the emblem of Ireland used in the Stuart royal standard and gives a design for a standard using a red cross on gold, the 'arms of Ulster'⁽¹²⁾.

Arising out of his concern with flag regulations, Pepys made some interesting theoretical notes in which he classifies the functions of flags under five headings:⁽¹³⁾

- (a) Command - that is, admiral's flags representing authority and a chain of command.
- (b) Respect required or paid - this covers salutes and the right of the flag, and matters of precedence.
- (c) Distinction - this deals with the division of a fleet into squadrons; and the distinction between the King's ships and those belonging to other people.
- (d) Protection - this involves the rights due to the 'King's Jack' and the protection it gave against having men pressed.
- (e) Signal for Action - this covers flag signalling, a matter in which King James II made important innovations.

There is information under all these headings in the manuscript, the chief interest being the insight it gives into contemporary attitudes to flag issues. There is also detailed information on other flag topics, for example a complete table of sizes for sea flags⁽¹⁴⁾, and a pair of fine drawings of the standards used on board the ships which took William of Orange and his wife Mary to Holland after their wedding in 1677⁽¹⁵⁾.

For information on actual flags we turn to another volume, a fine flag book prepared by Lieutenant Gradon in 1686, and, as far as I know, the only surviving English flag book of the period⁽¹⁶⁾

Lieutenant Gradon is John Gradon, later a Vice-Admiral; I do not know if there is any evidence for the traditional view that the book was done specially for Pepys but Pepys appears to have owned it by 1687. Mr. Sierksma, who has studied these books more than anyone else, comments that the Gradon book 'hardly contributes anything that is not known from other sources'⁽¹⁷⁾. It is also certainly true the book contains some serious inaccuracies⁽¹⁸⁾ which cast doubt on its reliability. However, though I have not been able to make a full comparison with other flag books⁽¹⁹⁾ of the period, I believe that, for flags of the British Isles at least, the book records some flags that are otherwise undocumented⁽²⁰⁾.

A different kind of source on flags flown at sea is a large and beautiful manuscript in the library dating from 1546 and known as the 'Anthony Roll', which was given to Pepys by King Charles II⁽²¹⁾. This contains drawings of the ships of the Royal Navy in the 1540's showing a variety of flags including striped flags, streamers of the Tudor livery colours (green and white) and flags with the royal arms and badges. It is one of rather few pieces of evidence for the flags flown by British warships in the middle of the sixteenth century.

In conclusion, I want to come back to Pepys's own most celebrated work, the Diary. This contains some passages in which Pepys describes, as it were, day-to-day encounters with flags. A series of entries for the years 1664-5 records how Pepys tried to cope with a shortage of 'bewpers', the normal material sea flags were made of, by going out among the London merchants and buying calico himself which he then supplied to the navy, flattering himself that he had saved the King money, as well as making a worthwhile profit for himself⁽²²⁾. In another passage is a graphic description of the journey over to Holland in May 1660 to fetch Charles II back to the throne. Pepys describes the haste with which the Commonwealth flags were altered on board ship: 'Then to the Quarter Deck, upon which the tailors and painters were at work cutting out of some pieces of yellow cloth into the fashion of a crown and C.R., and put it upon a fine sheet, and that into the flag instead of the states arms; which after dinner was finished and set up - after it had been showed to my Lord who ... liked it so well as to bid me give the tailors twenty shillings among them for doing of it ... In the afternoon a council of war only to acquaint them that the Harp must be taken out of all their flags, it being very offensive to the King'⁽²³⁾.

I hope this has given some idea of the sort of material to be found in the Pepys Library, and if anyone is encouraged to follow the subject up, I can recommend the library as one of the pleasantest places to do research that I have ever been in.

NOTES

- (1) W.G. Perrin, British Flags (1922)
- (2) Miscellanies, Volume IX (ms.2877) Catalogued in Bibliotheca Pepysiana: a descriptive catalogue of the library of Samuel Pepys, Part I: Sea Manuscripts, by J.R. Tanner (1914), pp.54-8.
- (3) The subject is covered in formidable detail in T.W. Fulton, The Sovereignty of the Sea (1911).
- (4) Misc. IX pp. 315; Perrin, British Flags, pp.66-70
- (5) Misc. IX, pp. 375-7.
- (6) See, for instance, C. Fawcett 'The East India Company's Striped Flag', Mariner's Mirror, XIII (1937), pp. 451-2.
- (7) Misc. IX, pp. 313.
- (8) Misc. IX, pp. 399.
- (9) Misc. IX, pp. 336-54; Perrin, British Flags, p. 95. There is a short life of Strickland in J. Charnock, Biographia Navalis (1794-8), I, pp. 179-82.
- (10) Misc. IX, pp. 331-4.
- (11) Misc. IX, pp. 388-9.
- (12) Misc. IX, pp. 402-36.
- (13) Misc. IX, pp. 375-7.
- (14) Misc. IX, pp. 367. Also in the library is a manuscript dated 1558 containing a table of sizes for heraldic standards, banners, pennons and guidons for various ranks: ms. 1266, p. 1-3.
- (15) Misc. IX, p.270. The flags were designed by Sir William Dugdale.
- (16) Ms. 1608. A manuscript in the National Maritime Museum (ref.NVT 8) by William Downman, written c. 1685-6, contains a number of drawings of flags, but can hardly be called a 'flag book'.
- (17) K. Sierksma, Flags of the World 1669-70 (1966), introduction, p.10.
- (18) A Flag marked 'Whitehaven' is given which appears to be a mis-drawn and mis-labelled attempt at the British white ensign. A considerable number of the European flags are wrongly drawn, e.g. Amsterdam. The flags contained in the book are: -

- Page 1: Royal Standard, Ld. Admls. Flag, Jack Flag, Eng. Ensigne (red).
- Page 2: English Merts Jack, New England, Eng. Ensigne (blue), Scots Standard.
- Page 3: Scots Admls. Flag, Scots Ensigne, Whitehaven (?), France.
- Page 4: French Standard, Fr. Gally Standard, Fr. Gally Streamer.
- Page 5: East France, Dunkirk and Calais, Fr. Merchant, Spaine.
- Page 6: Ostend, Ostend Fighting, Spaine Ca (?) (red flag), Biscay.
- Page 7: Portugall Standard, Portll. Jack and Ensigne, Portll. Merchant, Holland.
- Page 8: Pr. of Orange, Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Horn.
- Page 9: Flushing, Labeck, Sailing (blue flag), Midlebourg.
- Page 10: Denmark, Holstein, Brandenburg, Halygoland.
- Page 11: Rustick, Bremen, Anchona, Tunning.
- Page 12: Dantzick, Lunenburg, Anchusa, Canphir.
- Page 13: Memlick, Venice, Ven.Jack.
- Page 14: Genova, Livorne, Messina, Malta.
- Page 15: Malta Streamer, Livorne Streamer.
- Page 16: Savoy, Hamburgh, Malta Prattig, Jerusalem.
- Page 17: Sweden, Turks Standard, Constantinople, Algeir proper.
- Page 18: Algeir, Tunis and Tripoly, Sally proper, Mainora.
- Page 19: Tettuan, Algeir and Sally, Ireland.
- (19) For example the book of Paulus van der Dussen in the National Maritime Museum or the books mentioned by Sierksma Flags of the World 1669-70, introduction, pp.10-11.
- (20) The flag given for Ireland on the last page of the book and the Scots Admiral's flag are mentioned by Perrin on the sole evidence of the Gradon book (British Flags, pp. 52,84).
- (21) Ms. 2991.
- (22) Diary, 5th October, 1664, 7th October, 1664, 27th November, 1664, 28th January, 1665, 24th September, 1666.

(23) Diary, 12th May 1660! The first passage presumably refers to the alteration of a standard more or less similar to the oddly designed Commonwealth Standard now in the National Maritime Museum (illustrated by Perrin, British Flags, plate 6, figure 5), the last sentence no doubt to the removal of the harp from the pattern of jack illustrated by Perrin, plate 5, figure 4. Compare C. King 'The King's flags and some others', Mariner's Mirror, 38 (1952), p.95.

ARMS OF CHARLES I OF SPAIN AND V OF GERMANY

General Fernando de Sandoval y Coig

The purpose of this work, is to describe the arms of the Emperor Charles, in the different phases of his life:

- As Prince
- As King of Spain
- As King of Spain and Emperor of Germany
- Ending up with the description of others doing with deeds of his kingdom.

Notwithstanding the above matter being the object of the lecture, we think that it is interesting to make some broad considerations over the historic circumstances being before his birth, and from his birth so far as the year 1532 date upon which Charles sets off for the defense of Vienna, already besieged by Suleiman the Magnificent.

Such general remarks, als also some biographic particulars to be given, have to be short so not to make longer the lecture, and not to get away excessively of its purpose.

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

The Hispanic Monarchy of the Catholic Kings presiding the transit from Medieval Spain to modern Spain, was projected to the first place of the world policy due to the happy Coincidence of two factors: the joining in Charles V temples of the hispanic and Habsburg heritages, and the incorporation of the territories recently discovered in the Indies. Thus, the presence of Spain was decisively felt from the Baltic up to the Pacific; that is, in almost the whole of the ecumenical scope.

The singular fortune of Charles of Gante was due to the