



SALTIRE

NEWSLETTER OF THE SCOTTISH FLAG TRUST

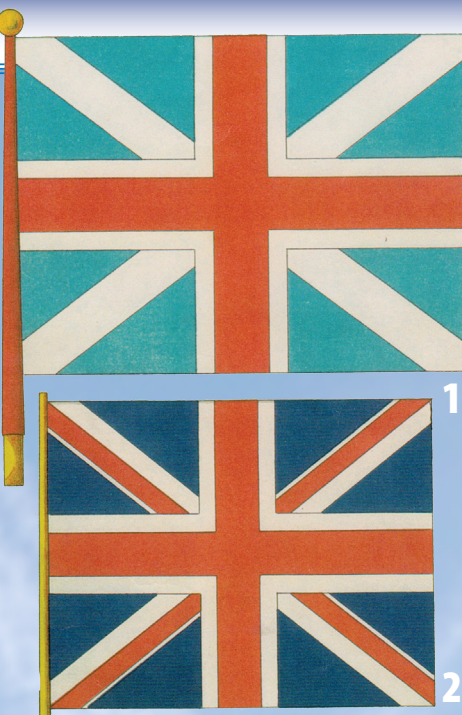
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Scotland's national flag, the St Andrew's Cross, is a white saltire (diagonal cross) on a blue background or field. The technical term is azure, a saltire argent.

Flags in the UK are not covered by legislation, as in other countries, and there is nothing in law to define the proper colour of Scotland's flag. As a result, manufacturers were able to produce Scottish flags in a wide and confusing range of different shades of blue.

To remedy this, the Heraldry Society of Scotland in conjunction with the St Andrews and Saltire Societies and the Scottish Flag Trust, produced a Flag Code to cover the manufacture of the national flag. In terms of colour, the Code specified that "the field of the flag shall be blue and of a hue compatible with Pantone 300 (unglazed)". The Societies wrote to the then Scottish Executive, and asked that it endorse the Code as guidance. Happily, the Scottish Parliament accepted this, and the guidance is now commonly followed by flag manufacturers.

The question often arises as to why the British flag, the Union Flag, has a very dark blue or navy field, which is clearly at odds with the lighter blue field of the St Andrew's Cross.



Correct Colour of the Flag

The definitive reference book on the subject is *British Flags: Their Early History and Their Development at Sea* by W.G.Perrin (Cambridge University Press – 1932). In this book, colour plate IV shows two flags, the upper one (1) depicting the Union Flag of 1606 and 1707 which combines the St George's Cross and the St Andrew's Cross, and the lower one (2) depicting the Union Flag of 1801 which combines the St George's Cross, the St Andrew's Cross

and the Cross of St Patrick. It is clear that the original Union Flag had a very light blue field, whereas in the later Union Flag this had become a darker navy blue.

When the Union Flag was first designed in 1606, the light blue field used was not in dispute, rather it was the design which upset the Scots. The shipmasters of Scotland were particularly aggrieved and appealed to King James that the new flag was "prejudiciall to the fredome and dignitie of the Estate and will gif occasion of reproche to this natioun" because "the Scottis Croce, callit Sanctandros Croce, is twyse divydit, and the Inglishe Croce, callit Sanct George, holdin hail and drawne through the Scottis Croce, which is thairby obscurit".

There is nothing in Perrin's book to explain the sudden change of colour in 1801. The suspicion is that a navy blue field was quietly introduced at the Admiralty's behest for purely practical reasons. At that time, flags were universally flown on ships at sea. But as the dyes used in manufacture were of a poor quality, they quickly faded, with the light blue bleached almost white through a combination of sun and salt. The Admiralty's decision to opt for a much darker blue dye was in order to prolong the flag's life expectancy. And the navy blue of the Union Flag has persisted to this day.

Wintry 2015 St Andrew's Service



Left: Lord Lieutenant Michael Williams and youngsters march through Athelstaneford with the Saltire

Above: Haddington Pipe Band defy the snow

2016 St Andrew's Service Invite

Note that the 2016 St Andrew's Day Service will be held in Athelstaneford Church at 11.00am on Sunday 27 November. Everyone is warmly invited to attend, and afterwards to partake of sandwiches, cakes and hot drinks in the Village Hall.

Thanks to Emily, Davie and Eric

The Trustees at Athelstaneford are extremely sorry to bid farewell to **Emily and Davie Armatage**, custodians of the Flag Heritage Centre over the 2014 and 2015 visitor seasons. Emily had been Session Clerk at the Parish Church for many years, and she had also played a pivotal role in organising the annual St Andrew's Service. Davie too had put his photographic skills to good use in capturing many of the important events at the Centre. The Trustees wish them well following their move to Haddington.

Happily, the Trustees are delighted to welcome two volunteers who have stepped forward to take over the role of custodian. **Jenny and Francis Newman**, who recently moved to the village, live close by the Churchyard and have taken responsibility for opening and closing the Centre each day.

Also departing with our thanks and best wishes is **Eric Wishart** who is standing down as independent examiner of the Trust's accounts. Eric is a qualified accountant who has



generously given of his time and expertise for over two decades to a number of voluntary bodies, including the St Andrew Society and the Flag Trust. The Trust is on the lookout for someone to take on this role.



The Rev Gordon Macaulay from Falkirk with 24 German visitors at the Memorial in October 2015.

Overseas Visitors

The multi-lingual audio-visual display system in the Heritage Centre tells the story of the 9th century Battle of Athelstaneford, and it incorporates an electronic counter that records the number of times the show is viewed in each of the seven languages. During the 2015 season, there were 938 viewings in English, 270 in Gaelic, 163 in French, 92 in German, 62 in both Italian and Polish, and 53 in Spanish. These figures do not represent total visitor numbers, as the majority of viewings are by groups rather than by individuals.

2017 – Exhibition to Mark 20th Anniversary

An important milestone is approaching, as 2017 will mark 20 years since the Flag Heritage Centre first opened its door to visitors. It seems like only yesterday, but it was back in May 1997 when the Trust Chairman Dr Allan Macartney, together with Trustees Lord Wemyss and Nigel Tranter, officiated at the opening ceremony in Athelstaneford Church before 100 guests. This followed the successful restoration of the 16th century Hepburn Doocot and its conversion into a 4-star interpretative centre, all at a cost of £90,000.

The Trustees are planning to mark the 2017 anniversary by staging a major public exhibition in the John Gray Centre in Haddington. Entitled East Lothian – Birthplace of Scotland's Flag: The Story of St Andrew and the Saltire, it is intended that the exhibition will start in November 2017 to coincide with East Lothian Council's Saltire Festival, and that it will run for up to 3 months. This should help raise interest in and awareness of this important part of East Lothian's heritage. The intention is that the exhibition boards will be transportable and able to be put on display in other communities on demand. (190)



Lord Lyon Lecture 29 November 2016

The Trustees are delighted to announce that the Lord Lyon has accepted its invitation to give a lecture as part of **East Lothian's 2016 Saltire Festival**. The illustrated talk, entitled **Flags and Heraldry**, will be in the **John Gray Centre Star Room at 7.30pm on Tuesday 29 November**. The event is free. As places are limited, anyone interested in pre-booking should contact the Trust (info@scottishflagtrust.com).

Appointed Lord Lyon on 25 February 2014, **Dr Joe Morrow** is President of the Mental Health Tribunal for Scotland. Dr Morrow is a QC who has worked in private, public and voluntary sectors, and he at present Vice Lord Lieutenant of the City of Dundee.

The Lord Lyon King of Arms, head of the Lyon Court, is the Scottish official with responsibility for regulating heraldry in the country, issuing new grants of arms, and serving as the judge of the Court of the Lord Lyon, the oldest heraldic court in the world still in daily operation. The Lyon Register, on which the Lord Lyon records all Scotland's coats of arms, dates from 1672. (178)