



Flag Waves - House Flags from The National Maritime Museum

Sue Prichard

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From the Girl Guides to Greenpeace, Royal Mail and the Orkney Steam Navigation Company, the latest offering from Four Corners Books presents a unique and visually arresting chapter in British maritime history, full of graphic inspiration and cultural and historic interest.

Flag Waves is a collection of the little-known area of design history preserved by the National Maritime Museum; house flags. House flags were flown on boats of all sizes, from huge passenger ferries to small recreational dinghies, to indicate the company or organisation to which they belonged.

The collection represents a mix of striking, abstract designs and charming, hand-sewn motifs. Flag Waves is the first book to examine the symbols and motifs of this remarkable collection.

Primarily produced between the mid 19th and mid 20th centuries, the flags are a mix of bold, geometric designs, reminiscent of early modernism. Analysing the origins of flag design in heraldry and geometric forms, and researching the unique role of flags in expressing company identity many years before the use of sophisticated logos and corporate branding, the book provides a vibrant survey of the company flags flown by everyone from British Rail to the Girl Guides.

Written by Sue Prichard, Senior Curator: Arts at the National Maritime Museum.

Design by Claire Mason

orders@artdata.co.uk / <https://artdata.co.uk>