

Great Britain flag

GB Flag has very interesting history of its introduction.

This is one of the oldest flags in the world. Today it had turned 400 years old.

The flag of Great Britain is officially called the Union flag, because it embodies emblems of three countries united under one monarch. Here's how it happened.

In 1603, the year of Queen Elizabeth I's death, England and Scotland existed as completely separate nations, each with their own monarch and parliament. Elizabeth, being a spinster and therefore childless, expressed a deathbed wish that her cousin, King James VI of Scotland, be named as her successor to the English throne. Thus, the Scottish monarch was projected into the unique position of ruling two nations simultaneously. He ruled Scotland as King James VI and England as King James I.

The English national flag at this period consisted of a simple red cross fully imposed upon a plain white field, this being the emblem of St. George, England's patron saint.

The Scottish national flag consisted of a diagonal white cross, fully imposed upon a medium blue field. This was the emblem of St. Andrew, Scotland's patron saint. In the spring of 1606, the Cross of Saint George was placed over the Scottish Cross of Saint Andrew to form the British Union Flag and it was the forerunner of the present flag of Great Britain.

Although the traditional St. George's Cross flag continued to be used as an English flag for some years, all seagoing ships began using the new Union flag better known today as the Union Jack.

There are various explanations for the origin of this name. We will focus on one of them.

The Union Flag was flown at the front of the ships, on what was called the bowsprit. The end of the bowsprit was called the Jack Star and so we get the name of Union Jack. A jack, by the way, is an old word for the sailor.

The Union Flag, created by James in 1606, continued in use as a purely symbolic banner until 1707. Then, during the reign of Queen Anne, the parliaments of England and Scotland were united to form the new nation of Great Britain, and Anne officially adopted the old banner as the national flag of the newly created nation. In 1801, when Ireland became a part of Great Britain, the Union Flag was redesigned to include the red diagonal cross on a white field. This was the emblem of St. Patrick, the patron saint of Ireland. In this form Great Britain flag exists today.

