



# The Old Worcesters' Yacht Club



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## THE ISSUE OF ENSIGN PERMITS

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In February 1985 our Club was granted a Warrant by the Ministry of Defence (Navy) to issue Permits on their behalf to our members authorising them - under certain conditions which must be strictly observed - to fly on yachts owned or chartered by them the defaced Blue Ensign formerly worn by HMS "Worcester". Please note an Ensign Permit issued by another Club does not cover the use of our regalia – and vice-versa. The permit is not transferable to another member or another vessel – even if of the same name. Permits are automatically invalidated if registration details are changed, the vessel is sold, destroyed or Club membership is terminated for any reason.

The Conditions can be summarised as follows:

- The member must hold British or Commonwealth nationality.
- The vessel must hold British registration as a yacht & the applicant listed as a (part-) owner unless the vessel is chartered to them on a short or long term basis.
- The vessel must meet the size minima.

### The Applicant

The applicant must hold British or Commonwealth nationality. The applicant must also be a Member of the Old Worcesters' Yacht Club. Joint Permits for the same vessel are not permitted; all those members eligible requiring an Ensign Permit must make an individual application; if multiple-permits for one vessel are required please copy both sides of the Permit Application Form for the number required. "Charter Permits" are permitted – see later

### The Vessel

The vessel must be registered as a yacht in the United Kingdom \*either: -

- Under Part I of the Merchant Shipping Act 1995 (The former "Blue Book" system) OR
- Under Part 3 of the Merchant Shipping Act 1995 (The "Small Ships Register" or SSR)

Registrations issued by Harbour Boards, River Authorities and the like are NOT acceptable. (Please note there have been reports that SSR registration is of limited value outside the EEC & unacceptable in some countries!)

(\* Also the "Crown Dependencies" of Jersey, Guernsey and the Isle of Man - see later)

It should be noted that both types of registry are now normally only valid for five years; the Registrar will send you a reminder about three months before renewal is due. You should act immediately since the new certificate will be post-dated to start when the old one expires – useful if you are planning a long trip. **"Do it Now!"** You are urged to take immediate action once the reminder is received just in case there are any delays which may upset plans for a long trip; the Registrar is normally sympathetic to even earlier renewals in special circumstance such as departure on a lengthy voyage and the like. In recent months, delays of a month or more in the renewal of registrations have been reported.

In the case of Part One registration – which for the U.K. are now all controlled from the Registrar of Shipping in Cardiff – a unique ships name must be agreed with the Registrar before registration is first granted. This must then be displayed on the stern of the vessel together with the "Port of Preference" (PoP) - formerly known as the "Port of Registry"; there are 100-odd of these to choose from but you should note that no details are held locally by HM Customs as hitherto – all records are now centralised at the Ship Registry in Cardiff. A "tonnage survey" must be carried out; this does not involve slipping the vessel. In the UK this can be arranged through the RYA (Technical Department: 02380-604-203.) 2016 charge = £145; £185 for vessels over 15 metres. There are "approved" organisations abroad such as ABS, BV, Lloyds Register etc. The chain of ownership for at least the last five years must be proved to the Registrar. If the vessel is "Part One" registered & there is more than one owner, one of them must be nominated as the "Managing Agent" to receive any "official correspondence" for the vessel on behalf

of the other partners. It is most important that this address is kept up to date with the Registrar. If the vessel is already registered it is possible to change the name provided it is not already in use – however, adding a suffix of I, II & etc. or “of XYZ” may be acceptable to both sides. The PoP can also be changed if desired. Registered owners can live abroad. There is no requirement for you – or the vessel – to ever visit the PoP. Registration and payment can be made on line through this e-mail address click [HERE](#) ; the initial fee is £124 – renewal after five years is £49.

Our Club is one of the privileged few to have the option of displaying the initials of the Club (“O.W.Y.C.”) in place of the PoP provided the Registrar has been notified; this would be a particularly prudent move for vessels registered in Jersey or Guernsey which otherwise tend to attract endless queries from Custom’s officials about their VAT status whilst cruising in waters of the E.E.C! The display of the name on the bow is not required for yachts. For new registrations the “Carving Note” (a form that is returned to the Registrar before registration is finally granted confirming that correct marking has been carried out) must be appropriately completed confirming this has been carried out if this option is taken – existing registrations can be changed by writing to the Registrar who will normally require proof of Club membership; this service is free on initial registrations but a charge may be levied on subsequent changes. You can, of course, display “O.W.Y.C.” in addition to the PoP without any formal notification.

NB: It is possible to make a Part One or SSR registration in the “Crown Dependencies” of Jersey, Guernsey and the Isle of Man under similar terms to the U.K. & such registrations are equally acceptable for the issue of an Ensign Permit. Jersey & Guernsey registrations last for ten years with free renewal in Jersey but a fee is payable in Guernsey. The life of a ensign permit issued for such vessels is limited to a maximum of five years from the date of issue - or the date of registration expiry if sooner. Contact the local Registrar of Shipping for details of registration in such locations.

In the case of Part Three registrations – also controlled from Cardiff - virtually any ship’s name (obscenities are an exception) can be used -even if a duplication of an existing name- without consultation since the SSR number allocated is the key identifier – but this number together with the name MUST be displayed on the stern or sides of the vessel. There is no requirement for “official measurement”. The registered owners must be permanently resident in the United Kingdom.

The whole process of SSR registration - including payment - can be carried out through the website <https://mcanet.mcga.gov.uk/ssr/ssr/> and the registration certificate is mailed within a few days. The issue and renewal fee is currently £25 for five years.

A “PoP” should not be displayed on SSR registered vessels but the Club letters (“O.W.Y.C.”) may be. It is incorrect to display unofficial “Ports of Preference” such as Chichester, Lyminster, Newton Ferrers & the like particularly for Search & Rescue reasons.

### Vessels

*Ensign permits may NOT be issued to vessels that are:*

Not registered in the United Kingdom or the Crown Dependencies.

If registered under Part One of the Merchant Shipping Act 1995 – the former Blue Book system - are less than 2 tons gross tonnage.

If registered under Part Three of the Merchant Shipping Act 1995 – the Small Ships Register or “SSR” - are less than 7 metres in length.

Vessels used for any form of commercial purpose – save occasional recreational charter – or those with any form of commercial sounding names such as “Spirit of Bisto”.

### Ensign Permits

The Club is still occasionally asked to arrange the granting an old style Ensign Warrant – but these were discontinued well over twenty-five years ago & all have now been withdrawn; all currently issued permits run only to the date of expiry of the Registration Certificate – or a maximum of five years for certain “British Overseas” registrations such as the Channel Islands.

Please apply to the Permit Secretary for an application form – or download from the “Yacht Club” section of the Worcester website (<http://www.hms-worcester.org.uk/>) - & meantime arrange for a copy to be made of all parts of the Registration Certificate not forgetting page (2) if an encapsulated “Part One” type document; your application cannot be progressed without these two documents. Please do not send original Certificates of any kind nor Bills of Sale, Radio Licences, Tonnage Certificates, Sales Invoices or the like since they are of no interest & troublesome to replace if lost! Back –to – back copies of any documents are appreciated to cut down on storage space for the number of vessels concerned!

Please take care in completing your application for the issue OR renewal of an Ensign Permit. Sadly, many are delayed for a variety of reasons – cheques unsigned or for the wrong amount (now £15 for renewals, £25 for new issues), Application Form incomplete or unsigned, Certificate of Registration not enclosed or – as mentioned above - Page Two of a “Part One” registration omitted. Help me to help you! NB The payee for all cheques or foreign drafts is “The Old Worcesters Yachts Club” - our bank will not longer accept cheques payable to “O.W.Y.C.” as hitherto!

You are reminded that it is essential that the originals of your Registration Certificate, Ensign Permit & if appropriate, Charter Documents are always on board the vessel when cruising – as some have found to their quite considerable cost & inconvenience copies are **not acceptable** to most authorities!....France & Greece are particularly notable in this respect! In order to avoid problems with foreign & colonial bureaucrats, Ensign Permits are always issued using exactly the same name(s) - and title, if any - that appears on the Registration Certificate.

It is a condition of the Ensign Permit that the Club Ensign shall only be flown when the Permit Holder is in “effective control” of the vessel – this has been defined as “either being on board or in the immediate vicinity ashore or afloat”. Make sure a plain Red Ensign is carried on the vessel for use when you are not on board. A small “Storm Ensign” may also be a prudent investment...

The Club Ensign may also be flown on tenders\* that “can be conveniently carried on board” provided they are clearly marked with the words “Tender to” together with the parent vessels’ name & PoP OR SSR number as appropriate which must, of course, hold an Ensign Permit. Burgees should not be worn on a tender when flying the Club Ensign.

\*Members are reminded that tenders should always be identified in this way for insurance purposes & a note of the serial number of the “hull” & any outboard motor or other equipment carefully recorded – the lack of some or all of these details may repudiate an insurance claim if they are lost or stolen.

### Chartered Vessels

If you are not one of the registered owners of the vessel – because it is chartered from a third party, borrowed from a friend or relative, or is registered in the name of a Limited Company (of which you may well be the beneficial owner) – then a “Charter Permit” can be issued. This will have the same validity as a normal permit subject to a maximum validity of twelve months only - or the registration expiry date if sooner. Brief details of the “charter” must be provided on the Permit Application Form. If a commercial charter is involved the broker/owner may take some weeks to supply a copy of the Registration Certificate so due allowance should be made.

### Renewal of “Part One” Registration

If no details of the registration are changed, this is a simple procedure & the Registrar will send the “Managing Agent” a reminder about three months before expiry – but does he have your current address? The current fee is £49. If you fail to renew your registration by the expiry date you may find you will have to start again from scratch to re-register the vessel and have to: -

Pay the “initial fee” of £124 rather than the “renewal fee” of £49.

Get the name (re-) approved & - if it has been re-issued - agree a new one.

Possibly have to get the vessel officially “re-measured” – minimum charge £145.

Possibly hire a sign writer to make any necessary changes!

**Do you really have £300-odd to throw away???**

### Renewal of “Part Three” Registration

As with initial registration under this scheme, it is a very straightforward matter with a fee currently of £25. The same fee is payable to amend the registration such as change of owners, rig etc. A tonnage survey is not required. This type of registration does not provide evidence of title & may be of limited use in some areas outside the EEC. You are urged to act immediately on receipt of the reminder from the Registrar – but does he have your current address? There is no penalty for late renewals.

### Invalidation of Permits

An ensign permit must be returned for cancellation and re-issue if: -

There is any change in the registration details or the vessel is sold or struck off the Register.  
The vessel is changed from the Part One Register to the Part Three Register or vice-versa.  
There is any change in the names of the owners – male or female.  
The vessel is changed even if the successor bears the same name.

### You & the Registrar

Irrespective of the type of registration, you are **obliged** to keep the Registrar informed of any changes in the registered details in particular any change of address, engine, type, rig, tonnage etc. – the former is particularly important in an emergency with the automatic bonus of a reminder coming about three months before registration expiry. Help them to help you!

The Part Three (“Small Ships”) Register is only available to those living in the U.K. – if you live abroad only Part One registration is open to you. However, this does bring the fringe benefit not given to SSR vessels of the entitlement to Consular Assistance **for the vessel** if abroad and clear title to the vessel, which can then be mortgaged – possibly well worth the extra cost particularly when the vessel is sold. However, neither benefit may be open to you if the registration is invalid for any reason....

**Delay is dangerous!**

(One of the reasons that the registry was changed to a five-year basis is that on the old system many entries were years out of date with vessels having been destroyed, the owner(s) moved, died or even the vessel sold several times without the Registrar ever having being notified!)

### You & the O.W.Y.C....

Please note the Club is obliged to automatically withdraw any Permit issued to a Member for whom the Club has no current address. New or Renewed Permits are normally mailed the day the application is received. A reminder that the OWYC makes only a very modest charge for the issue of Ensign Permits which the Club has to BUY from the RYA – some Clubs charge as much as £50.

You are reminded of your obligation always to fly the Club Burgee – or (ex-)Flag Officers Broad Pennant – preferably from the main truck - whenever the Club Ensign is worn; a long staff is the key to success & may need to be 6-8’ long & weighted at the bottom. Please – no scruffy/faded/torn ensigns, burgees or pennants! Please note there is a higher fee for the initial issue of a permit or to renew one that has expired; a lower rate applies to renewals where there is no change of details – see the application form.

Please address any queries on registration direct to:  
The Registrar General of Shipping, PO Box 420, Cardiff, CF24 5XR.  
Part Registrations 029-2044-8866 SSR Department: 029-2044-8813

Do not forget the Ship’s Radio Licence (<http://licensing.ofcom.org.uk/radiocommunication-licences/ships-radio/>), which is now non-expiring once issued provided the vessel does not change hands or the licensee move address. Remember to update any EPIRB Registration in force as and when required (Call 01326-319264).

### Permit Secretary:

Steven Duke

Please contact me if I can help in any way - amended in July 2016

You are reminded of the severe penalties in force for the incorrect use of a “privileged” ensign such as ours which can call for a fine of up to £1000 and the seizure of the flags involved. However, the unfortunate reflection on our Club is a much more severe penalty which could result in the cancellation of our treasured and unique privilege we have now held since 1974.