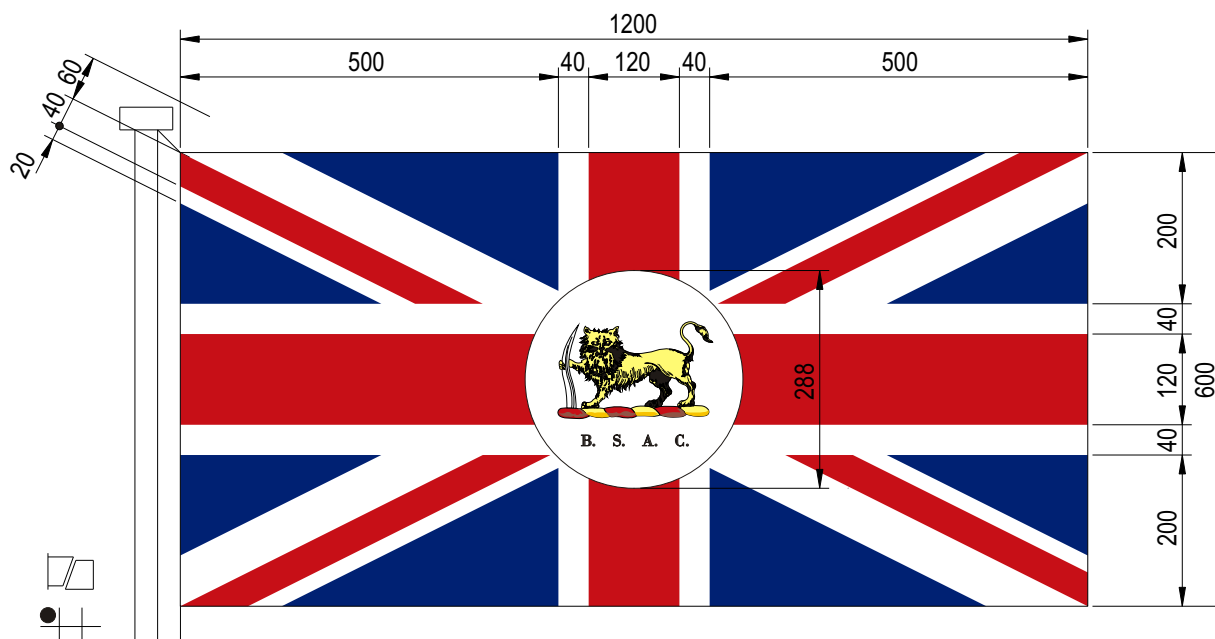


SOUTHERN AFRICAN VEXILLOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION
FLAG SPECIFICATION SHEET

British South Africa Company

Company flag 1893 - 1923 (second variant)



HISTORY AND SYMBOLISM CONTD.

The flag of the BSAC was raised in the Matabele capital of Bulawayo on 04 November 1893 after the Company's forces led by Major Patrick Forbes drove the native Ndebele from the town. The flag consisted of a Union Jack emblazoned with the BSAC badge in the centre. The badge comprised a yellow lion holding an elephant's tusk and standing on a red and yellow wreath or torse; under the wreath were the letters B.S.A.C. in black. The badge was derived from the crest of the arms granted to the British South Africa Company twenty years after it received its royal charter.

The company flag hoisted at the occupation of Bulawayo, and presumably used elsewhere in the area under company jurisdiction, was not described in detail in the Royal Charter and the lack of such a description probably accounts for the discrepancies and different versions of the company flag which exist. The most important anomaly in the flag design relates to the incorporation of a red ring surrounding the crest in some instances and being absent in others. From the drawing of the hoisting of the company flag in Bulawayo, it is not clear whether a red ring is present or not. The lion on the BSAC flag is taken from the BSAC Arms. There is no official description of the BSAC flag, and it appears that several variants of the basic design, and renditions of the lion, were used. Most illustrations of this flag show a red ring around the white circle containing the crest, but original flags in versions with and without the red ring are known to exist.

The end of the Company administration came following a referendum which was held in Southern Rhodesia. The referendum was held in October 1922 to determine whether the European settlers wished to join the Union of South Africa or become a self-governing Colony with 'Responsible Government'. The majority was in favour of the latter and consequently the administration of the BSA Company came to an end with the granting of Responsible Government to Southern Rhodesia by the British Government on 13 September 1923, while in April 1924 Northern Rhodesia became a British Protectorate. After being relieved of its political obligations, the Company continued to manage a wide range of agricultural, mining and commercial interests in both Southern and Northern Rhodesia until it amalgamated with the Anglo-American Corporation in 1965.

Source:

"The Flags of the British South Africa Company, 1890-1923", by Bruce Berry (ICV Lecture), 1993