

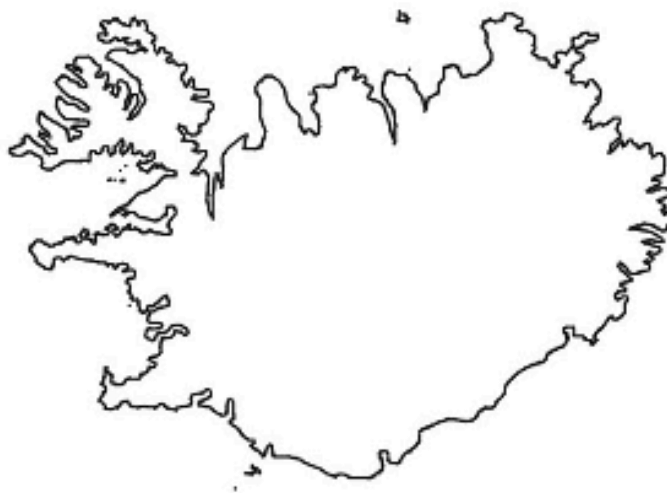
# ICELAND PHILATELIC MAGAZINE

An independent journal for collectors of Iceland stamps and postal history



## EDINBURGH LARGE SHIP LETTER

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This article is a part of a series published based on summarizes, supplemented by recent discoveries, information published over the years mainly in IslandsKontakt, Iceland Philatelic Magazine and elsewhere.<sup>1</sup>

Compilations of other British postmarks related to Iceland and other issues in the series “IslandsKontakt Special” can be accessed for free at <https://www.nfvskandinavie.com/artikelen-ijisland.php>

Special valuable contribution to this issue has been given by Arni Gustafsson.



## 1. HISTORY

Robinson<sup>2</sup> wrote about the post offices at Edinburgh and Leith:

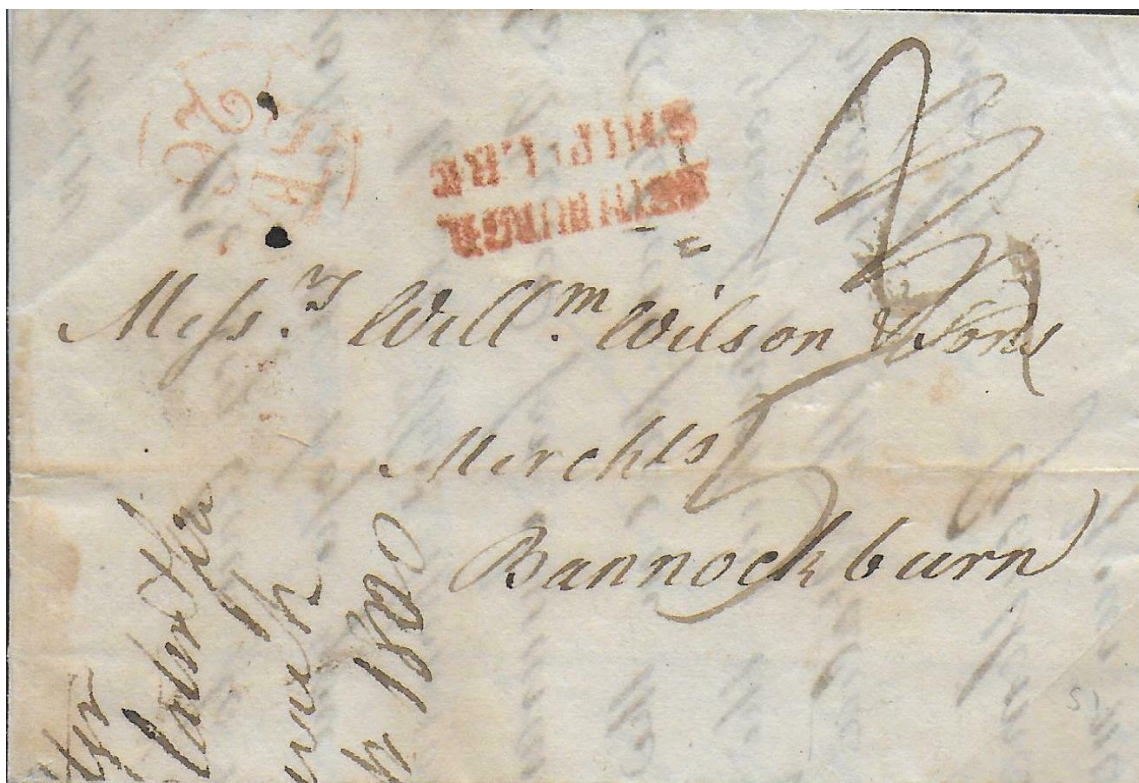
“The use of maritime handstamps at **Edinburgh** and **Leith** is divided into three distinct periods, and it might be almost right when describing handstamps with the name of the town – except the round Leith Ship Letter<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> We are most grateful for the sustained efforts of all those who, over the years, as editors or authors have contributed to the gathering and dissemination of information relevant to the philately of Iceland.

<sup>2</sup> Robertson, Alan W.: “A History of the Ship Letters of the British Isles” Reprinted Edition Volume II E.76 and E.141

<sup>3</sup> IslandsKontakt Special # 33 LEITH SHIP LETTER is a part of the SHIP LETTER study on mail from Iceland.

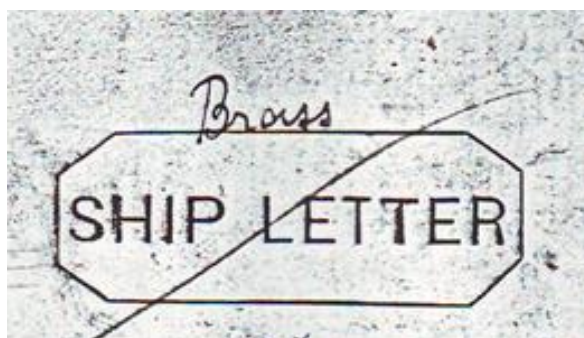
Period 1 from 1770 until 1803 (S.1 until 1800 and S.2 from 1801-02 S.2) The following copy is an ultimate in time use of S.1. - an entire wrapper from Lerwick bearing "Edinburgh/Ship Letter" in red ink. The letter is dated 8. September 1800.



It is the opinion of Robertson that the second period – from 1803 until about 1903 is filled out with 8 different Leith handstamps<sup>4</sup>.

The long period includes per Robertson what we call the large EDINBURGH SHIP LETTER (S.9 1868-1889<sup>5</sup>) The recorded use is from 1868 until 1876 and again 1879 and again 1880 until 1889.

The third period is from 1880 until 1892 and the only handstamp indicated used in that period should be what we call the small EDINBURGH SHIP LETTER (s.3) as shown in the following.



<sup>4</sup> Robertson E.142, 142B and 143 – S.1 – S.8

<sup>5</sup> Robertson's period of use is only until 1888

<sup>6</sup> Kirkwood proof book 1868

The factory Kirkwood, who manufactured and repaired many Scottish handstamps, recorded their work in Proof Books. These Proof Books were donated to the Scottish Postal History Society as the Kirkwood's owner was tired of receiving constant requests from Postal Historians to view them. Copies of the books from 1829 until 1918 are now held by the Scottish Postal History Society.

In the Kirkwood's Proof Books, impressions of each handstamp were taken at the time of issue. The Proof Book from 1868 shows the SHIP LETTER stamp in octagonal frame cut in brass 25 July 1868. But the Kirkwood's Proof Book does not tell where the cancel was going to be used. Above picture is from the Kirkwood's Proof Book.

A.W. Robertson in his great work "A History of the Ship Letters of the British Isles", on page E142/B places the cancel as being used in Leith in red in 1868 [We have not seen an example in red on any mail from Scandinavia] and black in the period 1873-1888. He only refers to an example on page E.98/B which is a 10 aur postal stationary from 1888 with SHIP LETTER GRANTON<sup>7</sup> as well as large SHIP LETTER in octagonal frame. This particular card was cancelled at arrival to Copenhagen 5.7.1888. In the text Robertson says, "Addressed to Denmark, this was an item of foreign mail in transit via the U.K. and as such was dealt with by the neighboring **head post office at Leith.**" It is not known to us from where Robertson got his information about the use of the handstamp.

Heinrich Schilling places it in Leith<sup>8</sup>, but probably because Robertson did so. For some unknown reasons the large SHIP LETTER is not mentioned by Hosking.<sup>9</sup>

Thus, for many years it was believed that the large SHIP LETTER in octagonal frame handstamp was used in Leith.

When the proof from Kirkwood's Proof Book surfaced, Mike Tuttle in his article from 2001 in Scandinavian Contact questioned this and suggested that this handstamp was always used at the Edinburgh head post office.

Mike Tuttle's suggestion was based on the fact that the large SHIP LETTER in octagonal frame handstamp was recut in September 1887, and in the Proof Book this time with the remark "EDIN<sup>R</sup> OFFICE" next to the impression of the handstamp:

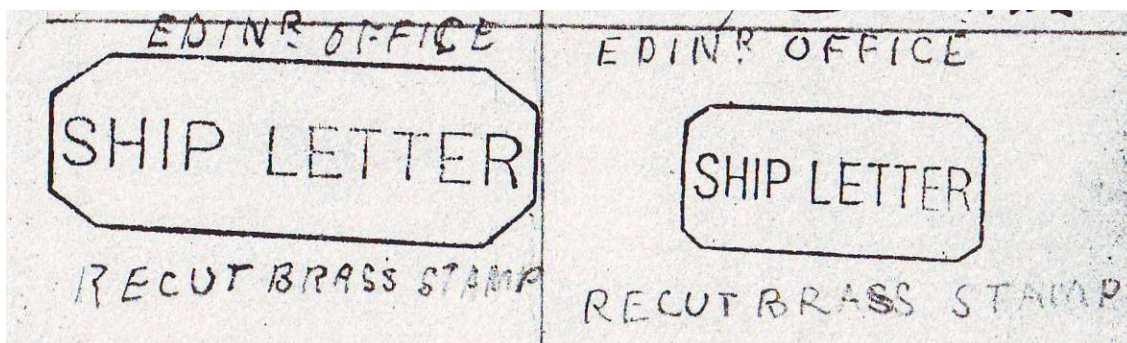
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<sup>7</sup> See further contribution in IslandsKontakt SPECIAL # 29 – 2021 V1 – SHIP LETTER GRANTON – published in a special issue of Iceland Philatelic Magazine February 2021, and in The Scottish Post 2022 No.172

<sup>8</sup> Schilling, Heinrich: "Fremde Anlandstempel auf Islandpost" (1996).

<sup>9</sup> Roger Hosking: "Paquebot cancellation of the World" and 4<sup>th</sup> edition by Mike Dovey & Keith Morris: "Paquebot cancellation of the World and more..." (2010)

Interestingly, the impression of the handstamp in the Kirkwood's Proof Book is right next to an impression of the small SHIP LETTER in octagonal frame handstamp that was also recut at the same time. Next to this handstamp is also noted "EDIN<sup>R</sup> OFFICE" suggesting that both these ship letter stamps were to be used in Edinburgh. Pictures from the Kirkwood's Proof Book September 1887:



There is no evidence that two copies of the large SHIP LETTER in octagonal frame cancel exist. But it was used from 1868 until September 1887 and after recutting, the "same" handstamp was used from September 1887 and until 1889 after which the handstamp can no longer be found on mail (to our knowledge).

We have found no use in the years 1878 - 1884. A question is why?

To the best of our knowledge the large SHIP LETTER in octagonal frame was only used on mail from Iceland, Norway and occasionally from Faroe Islands and Denmark.

Below the existing copies of the handstamp are shown chronologically from 1868 including examples without SHIP LETTER:

### **1868 although no SHIP LETTER postmark**

It starts in 1868 in IslandsKontakt # 77 where late Orla Nielsen deals with prephilatelic letters from Island. The following is an extract from Orla Nielsen's Study:

The letter has probably been found in the correspondence after Charles W. Shepherd who has carried out scientific research in Island in 1862, resulting in a book: "The North West Peninsula of Iceland", published in Iceland in 1972: "Íslandsferð 1862".

The letter to Shepherd is written by Oddur Vigfús Gislason; besides being a priest also worked as a tourist guide!





The letter is dated Reykjavík 2. June 1868 and send with the mail steamer "Anglo Dane", and per the official publication ÞJÓDÓLFR from 13 June 1868 left Reykjavík 4 June for England.



Gislason mentions in his letter that the ship will arrive in Granton and not as earlier, Grangemouth. On the back you can see the transit cancellations EDINBURGH JU 9 68 and LONDON JU 10 68 (both date stamps) – arriving in MAIDSTONE JU 10 68. The inland rate 6(d) is written on the front page. The ships from Denmark and Iceland did not normally go via Granton/Leith<sup>10</sup>.

## 1869

No use recorded by us. The ships from Denmark and Iceland did not normally go via Granton/Leith<sup>11</sup> but there might be mail from Norway, as the emigrant routes used Granton. It might be the reason for the large ship letter – but we don't know, see examples from 1870.

"In 1869 the Anchor Line opened a route between Goteborg - Christiania - Christiansand - Leith/Granton dock, Edinburgh and Glasgow in Scotland. The service was intended as a feeder service for the company's transatlantic service out of the port of Glasgow for New York. The ships

<sup>10</sup> Rasmussen, Ib Krarup: "Den danske regerings postskibsfart mellem Danmark og Island 1774 – 1880" (2004) page 53- 61. PHØNIX and ANGLO DANE are the vessels – but the schedule and transit harbors are not known, see Rasmussen, Ib Krarup: "Sejlplaner fra den danske regerings postskibsfart mellem København, Færøerne og Island 1839 – 1880" (1986)

<sup>11</sup> Rasmussen, Ib Krarup: (2004) page 53-61. PHØNIX and ODIN are the vessels - - but the schedule and transit harbors are not known, see Rasmussen, Ib Krarup(1986)

used for the Scandinavian service were the S/S Scotia and the S/S Scandinavia. The first departure from Kristiania on this service was by the S/S Scandinavia on March 16th, 1869, and the last departure was by the S/S Scotia on Oct. 5th, 1872. The passengers were conveyed by train from Granton dock, Edinburgh, to Glasgow, a 2 hour journey.”<sup>12</sup>

It is important to register: “The passengers were conveyed by train from Granton dock, Edinburgh, to Glasgow” – no involvement of Leith.

We have not seen examples of covers from this year.

### 1870

The organization of mail transport between Iceland and Denmark found its solution in 1869 with an implementation from spring 1870<sup>13</sup>, but our documentation begins with a fantastic example on a letter from Norway:



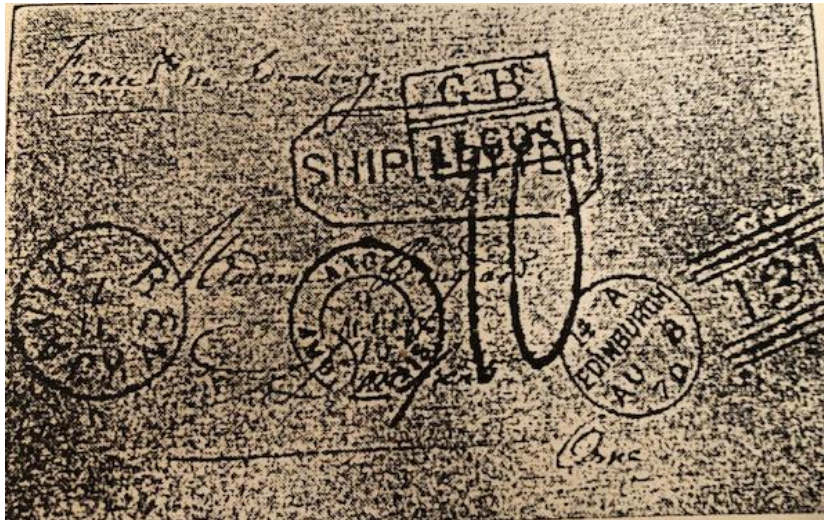
Mailed from Christiania (Oslo) 28 June 1870 and transit cancel Edinburg duplex with 131 JY 1 70. It must be noted: no sign of Leith.

The following<sup>14</sup> is a poor copy of a letter without stamp probably sent from Iceland (Reykjavik 31.7.70) to France, Edinburgh duplex AU 8 70 and SHIP LETTER sent with DIANA scheduled

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.norwayheritage.com> under Anchor Line.

<sup>13</sup> Rasmussen, Ib Krarup: (2004) page 61-72. The mail steamship DIANA left Copenhagen 18 3 70 and continued until the end of 1875

leaving Reykjavik 31 July 70. Diana went to Granton. It is written in the newspaper<sup>15</sup>: “After these tidings were written and sent off, it reached Granton in Scotland, in the days when the mail-steamer Diana lay there, that Marshal Bazaine had rushed through the Prussians to join the main army”. Marshal Bazaine took over the command 13. August 1870 and took his army back to Mainz.



Note – The letter is directed to “France via Edinburgh” - it went to Granton and the letter received the big SHIP LETTER and Edinburgh duplex. We believe it is fair to conclude, that Leith is not in the picture and the large SHIP LETTER is either used in GRANTON or at the main post office in Edinburgh before the letter continued to France.

And then again, a letter from Norway – next one is sent by S/S Scotia.

Text from Scanfil auction 2022: “Letter dated Christiania 13. September 1870 sent to a firm in Bordeaux but with an address in London. Handwritten with red "via Granton"”.

Further comments in the catalogue: “(Granton is an "under post office" near Leith) Octagonal "SHIP LETTER" – presumably added in Leith.” After our survey that is not correct. And from the back it is clear, that it has been transported from Granton (per our information mail was transported 3 times a day) to Edinburgh and received there on SP 17 70.

Further: “The letter is privately delivered from London and the fee has been "8" pence. Unusual routing – probably because of the outbreak of war between France and Preussen.”

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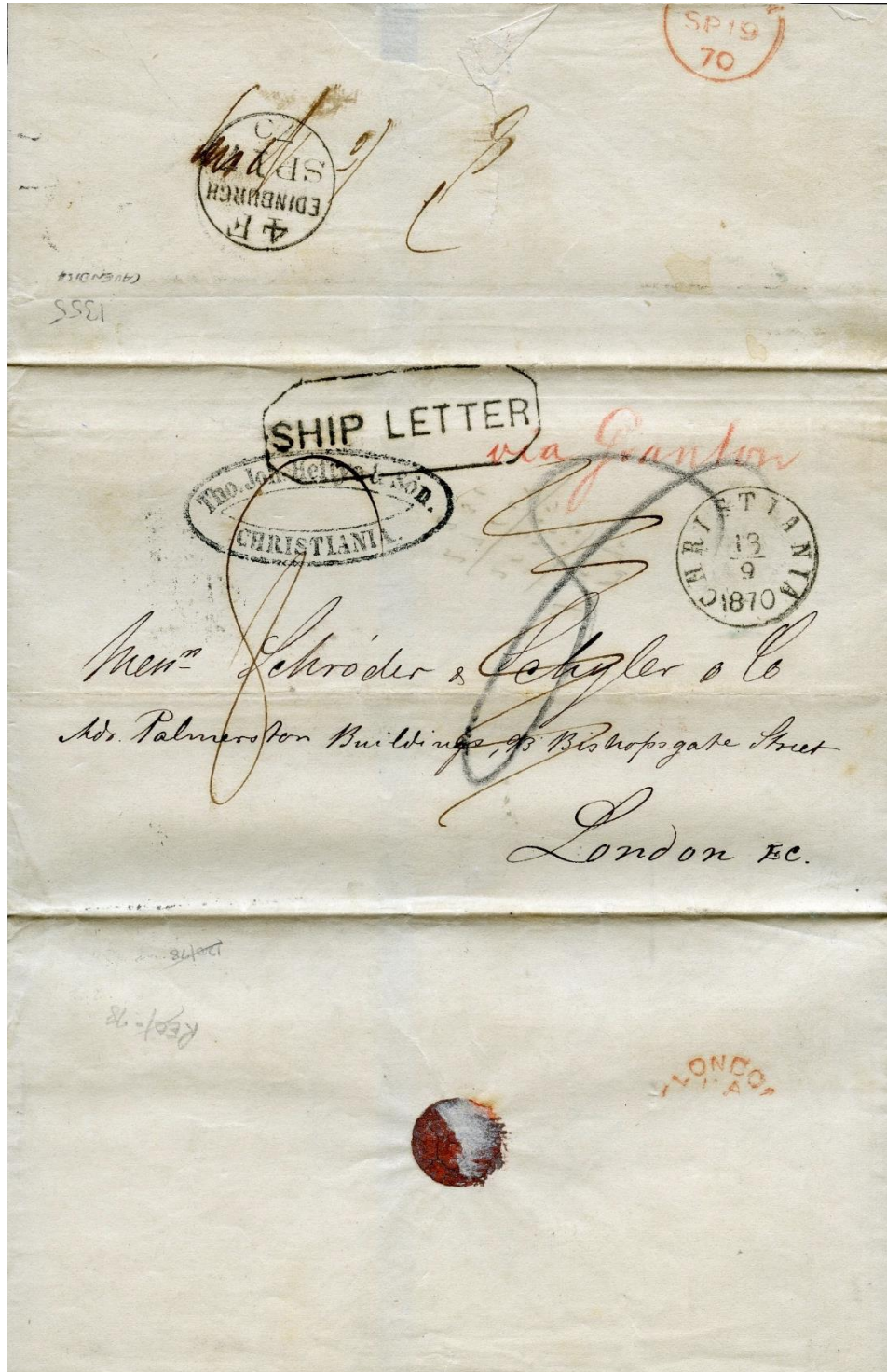
<sup>14</sup> Orla Nielsen deals with prephilatelic from Iceland in IslandsKontakt # 77

<sup>15</sup> Þjóðólfur - 06. september 1870



Schroder & Schyler Co is a well-known wine company in Bordeaux and the trip from London is a prediction from the letter and is unclear. The "8" pence is for the transport in UK.

Note: Again, there is no sign of Leith:



### 1871

No examples with SHIP LETTER, but per schedule DIANA went via Granton on trips in August September and November /December<sup>16</sup>.

### 1872

DIANA went via Granton in June, July/August, September and November/December<sup>17</sup>. No SHIP LETTER sent with DIANA is known.

But the newspaper Þjóðólfur reports<sup>18</sup>, that the ship “Queen from Granton” left on July 22, and that she carried passengers coming from Edinburgh.

With that further information the direction can be read: “pr. Queen”



The letter is also from “the Danish Period” cancelled with 236<sup>19</sup> in Reykjavik and with the date stamp Reykjavik 22. 7. to Edinburgh with arrival cancel on the back JY 27 72. (Arni Gustafsson collection)

<sup>16</sup> Rasmussen, Ib Krarup (1986) say Leith – but the schedule indicates Granton. In the wording it changes between Granton and Leith

<sup>17</sup> Rasmussen, Ib Krarup (1986) say Leith- but the schedule indicates Granton. as in 1872

<sup>18</sup> Þjóðólfur - 25. July 1872

<sup>19</sup> This one must be no. 7 letter with 236-cancelation cfr. Jón Aðalsteinn Jónsson: “One hundred years of Icelandic Stamps”: Page 30 (later one was found in the Archives in Iceland) plus this one.



Arrival cancellation on the reverse.

And again; no sign of Leith

### **1873 – 1875 – First skilling years**

The mail to Denmark were probably send in separate mailbags and therefore without SHIP LETTER but some letters are sent transit, but we have only registered the following – and tried to explain the missing SHIP LETTER on some.

#### **1873**

We have not recorded any use of the large SHIP LETTER.

#### **1874**

In 1874 "Diana" is sailing via *Lerwick* or *Granton* and there is one letter with the large SHIP LETTER:







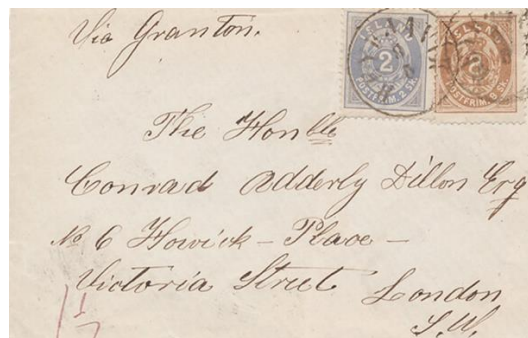
From Reykjavik 1874 with postmark 17/6. Octagonal framed SHIP LETTER, transit Edinburgh JU 23 74 (on the back), transit LONDON PAID 24 JU 74 in red and arrival cancel EDMONTON JU 24 74 on the back. Red chalk "1 1/2". Unfortunately, severely damaged letter but one of two existing to U.K. Correct postage 10 skilling. There is no sign of Leith.<sup>20</sup>

## 1875

In 1875 "Diana" as in the years before sailing via Lerwick or Granton.

In Jón Aðalsteinn Jónsson: "One hundred years of Icelandic Stamps"<sup>21</sup> shows a copy of a letter to London, cancelled 7.5 in Reykjavik directed "via Granton", but actually arriving in Lerwick with cancellations on the back 13.5 – and then London 17.5.1875.

The trip from Lerwick to London is unknown – but there is no sign of Granton, Leith, Edinburgh or SHIP LETTER. The reason might be, that it entered UK in Lerwick and from there was not a ship letter.



<sup>20</sup> Claes Arnrup in Facit, Special Classic 2018: "Icelandic Skilling Covers in Private Hands" No. 13

<sup>21</sup> Page 47. Also, Claes Arnrup in Facit, Special Classic 2018: "Icelandic Skilling Covers in Private Hands" No. 12.



The following are fragments.

One from the beginning – only due to the clear frame and one probably (?) in 1875/76: First cancelled in Reykjavik with the Reykjavik A cancel and part of SHIP LETTER – from the latest use before recutting:



### ***1876 – last skilling year***

#### **1876**

DFDS takes over partly and sailed with "Arcturus" in 1876. March via Lerwick thereafter 6 trips via Granton<sup>22</sup>.

The only example from the last skilling year is not sent with the ordinary post steam ships. Unfortunately, the two stamps on it were cut off at some time<sup>23</sup>.

The cover has full content and was written by captain Bille, who was in charge of the vessel "Fylla", and sent to his wife.

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<sup>22</sup>Rasmussen, Ib Krarup (1986). In the Skilling "period: "S/S Acturus" make a trip from 23.3 via Lerwick and on 7.5, 17.6 and 27.7. 1896 via Granton. No mail is recorded.

<sup>23</sup> Jakob S Arrevad: "Skibe og forsendelser til og fra Island"; Islandsklubben (2005)



It was cancelled in Reykjavik 2.6. (1876). Large SHIP LETTER and Edinburgh JU 8 76 as well as SHIP LETTER LONDON JU 9 76. No arrival cancellation. Sent with English steamer via Edinburgh. Again, no sign of Leith.

Today the cover + content weighs 18-19 g but it seems to have been mailed as a first-class letter (up to 15 g) at 8 skilling rates as the perforations 12½ from the stamps remains indicating that a pair of 4 skilling 12 ½ was cut off. What a pity!

**1876 – 1879 – AUR**

**1876 after 1st August**

After 1st August 1876<sup>24</sup> the picture is not very clear<sup>25</sup>. The transit ports are now *Leith* and **Granton** – apparently Leith are used by DFDS and Granton by Diana

**1877**



Cover front from 1877 (2 July) Reykjavik to Rennes in France with arrival 9 July 77. 20aur violet 1<sup>st</sup> issue from 1876. Large SHIP LETTER and Edinburgh JY 7 77 and London Paid 9 JY 77. It does not fit into any vessel schedule. It was sent with “Snowdon” mentioned in the newspaper Ísafold from 03 July 1877: “A horse merchant ship from Slimon in Leith, the steamer 'Snowdon' (355, Thomas), was here on the morning of the 30th last month and went again yesterday with 283 horses and many passengers.”



5 aur blue perf 12 ½ from 1876, most probably cancelled 1876 or 1877 before the recut.

<sup>24</sup> “S/S Acturus” had a trip from 23.3 via Lerwick and on 7.5, 17.6 and 27.7. 1896 via Granton, no mail is recorded.

<sup>25</sup> Read more about all the troubles: Rasmussen, Ib Krarup (2004) p. 92 – 111 – The schedules are from Rasmussen, Ib Krarup (1986)



The Danish 8 øre red/grey tied by single circle "THORSHAVN 8/12". According to certificate from Lasse Nielsen 4th print - so after 1875, but the SHIP LETTER looks like the shape from app. 1877 – but it doesn't fit with a ship schedule.

***1878 and 1879 – no recorded use of either the large or the small SHIP LETTER***

This is the “Bermuda triangle”? There is a use in 1878-79 with LEITH town cancellation and duplex 221 and no “ship letter”. It doesn't give any help. We simply need further material to try to explain two years! To bear in mind; the first Icelandic postal card was issued 18 December 1879 – and it was carried over NORTH SHIELDS (JA 23 80) and arrived in Copenhagen 2?.1.80<sup>26</sup>

***1878 – 1884 – no use recorded of the large SHIP LETTER***

**1885 – 1889**

From 1885 until 1889 the **small SHIP LETTER** is used alongside the use of the **large SHIP LETTER**.

**1885**

Next cover recorded is from March 1885 and despite the lack of recorded usages in the period 1878-1884 the handstamp SHIP LETTER is now clearly worn.

<sup>26</sup> Hálfán Helgason: “Icelandic Postal Stationary” (2019) page 16.

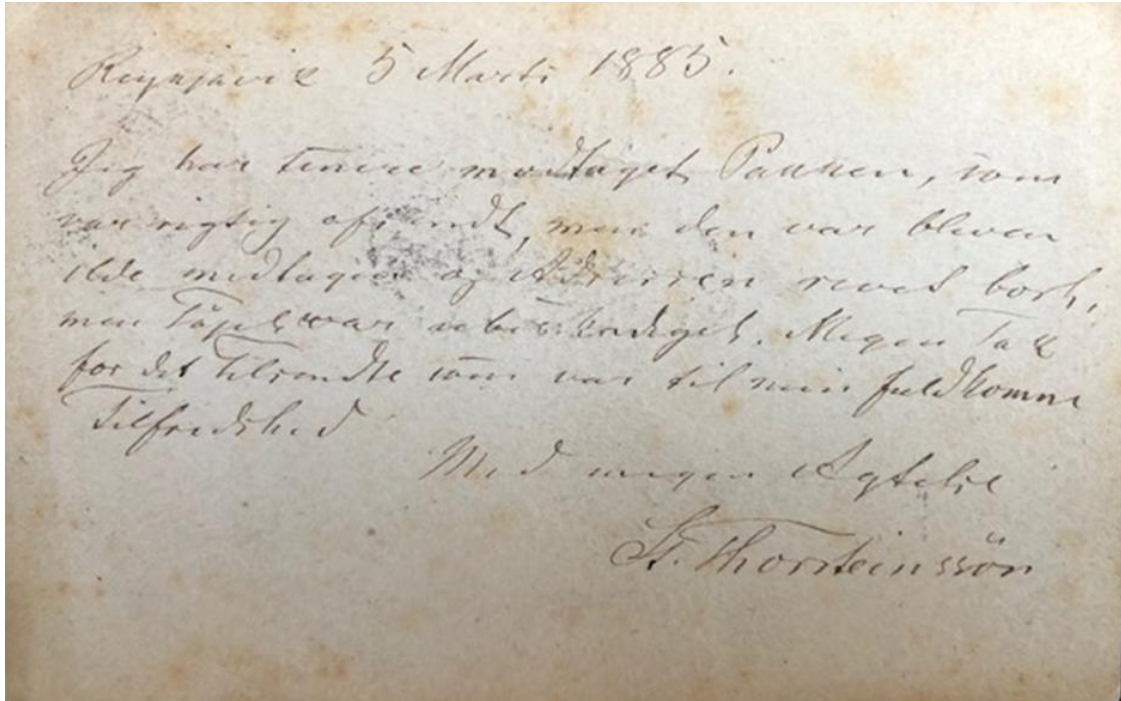




Defect 20 aur blue 1882 printing on cover to Canada. From Hjarðarholt 15/3. Large SHIP LETTER and transit Reykjavik A 19/3 as well as Edinburgh (date?) on the back. Two small Canadian postmarks AM AP 16 85 + AM 17 85.

From the same trip - Second trip 1885 – SS Laura. A stationary - written 5 March 1885 in Reykjavik but must have waited for the next ship - cancelled 21 March 1885

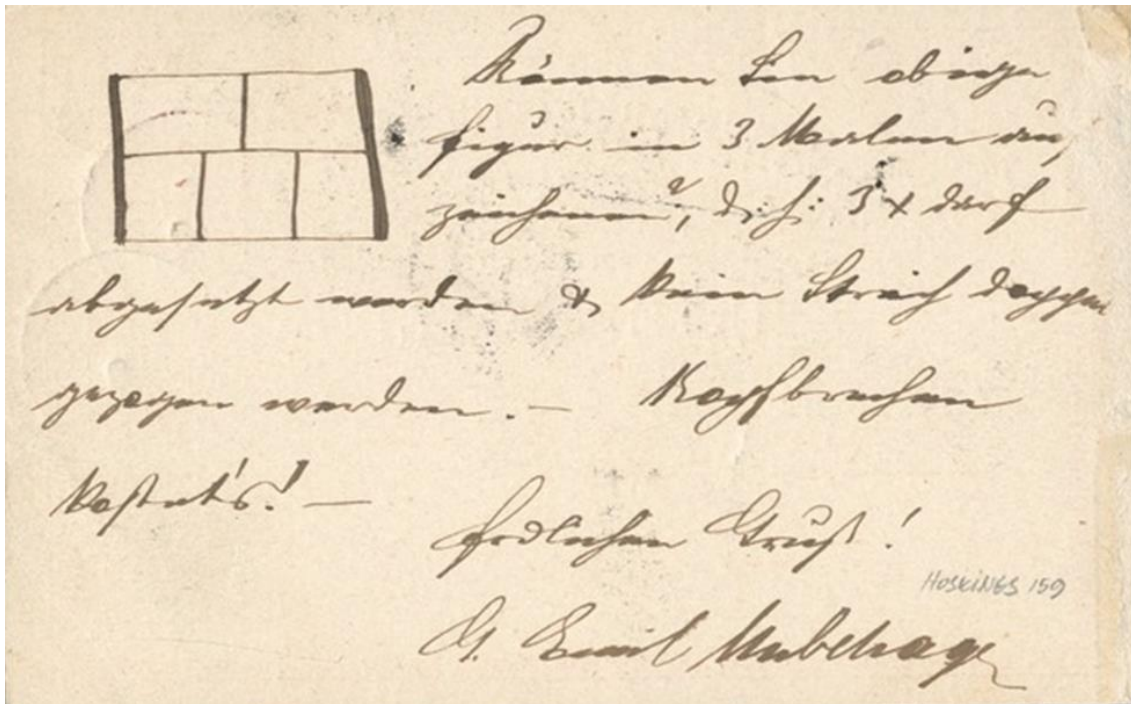




Another copy of the SHIP LETTER handstamp on a 10 aur stationary from Reykjavik G1a to Frankfurt, Germany. The year does not appear from postmarks or text on the card but G1a cancel was produced and send to Reykjavik 5. January 1883 and probably arrived late January or early February that year. We chose to place it carried by Laura on trip 3 in 1885.

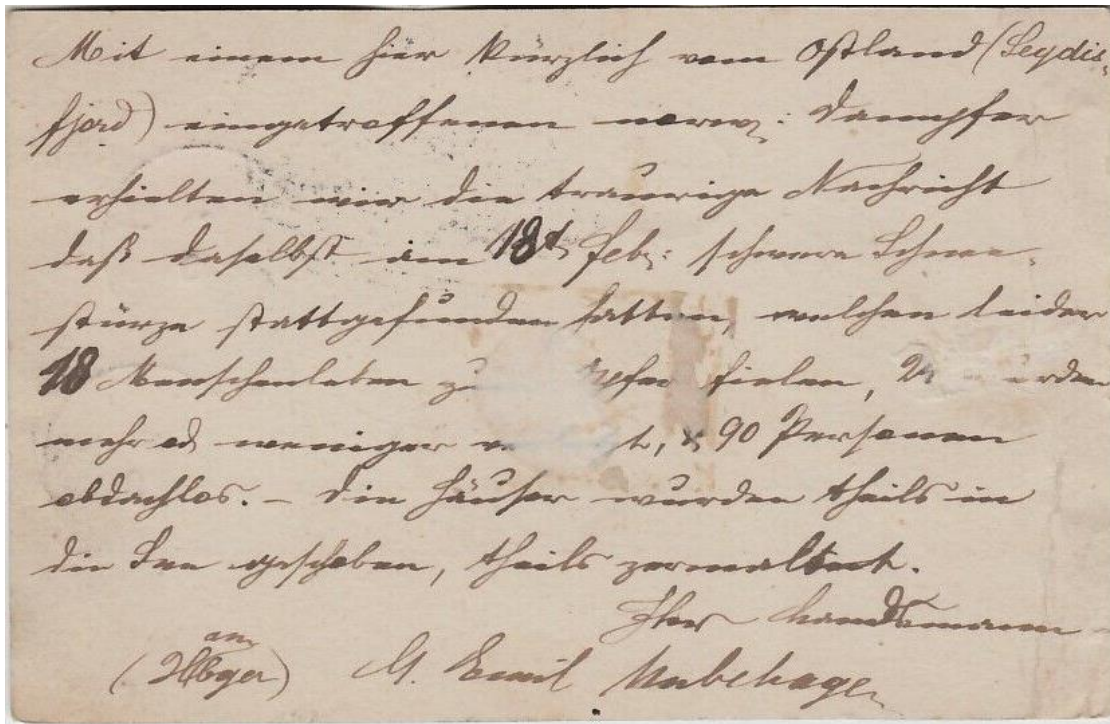




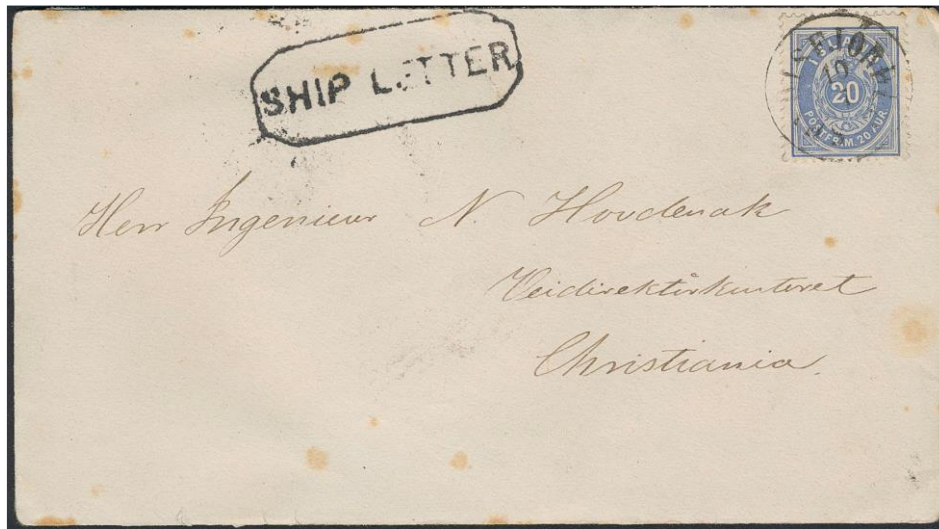


When we received the copy of the above – the back was shown like the following. Same sender but wrong back!

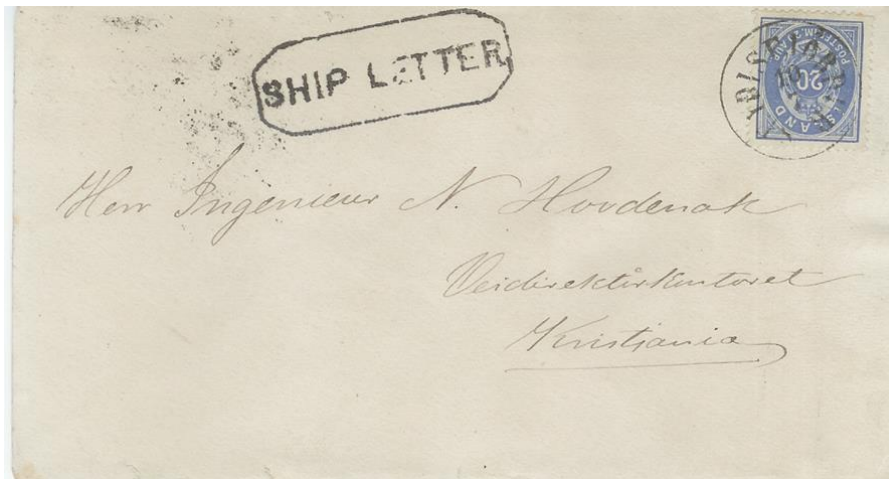
We don't know the front – and it might not have the large SHIP LETTER?



More usages in July 1885 with the worn handstamp



Another similar cover but written 2 days later according to content and addressed to Kristiania instead of Christiania. It was sent with the same mail but from the content it appears that the sender in between had received the letter from Iceland that he asked for in the first letter.







**1886**

From 1886 until 1889 **SHIP LETTER GRANTON** is used alongside the use of the large SHIP LETTER

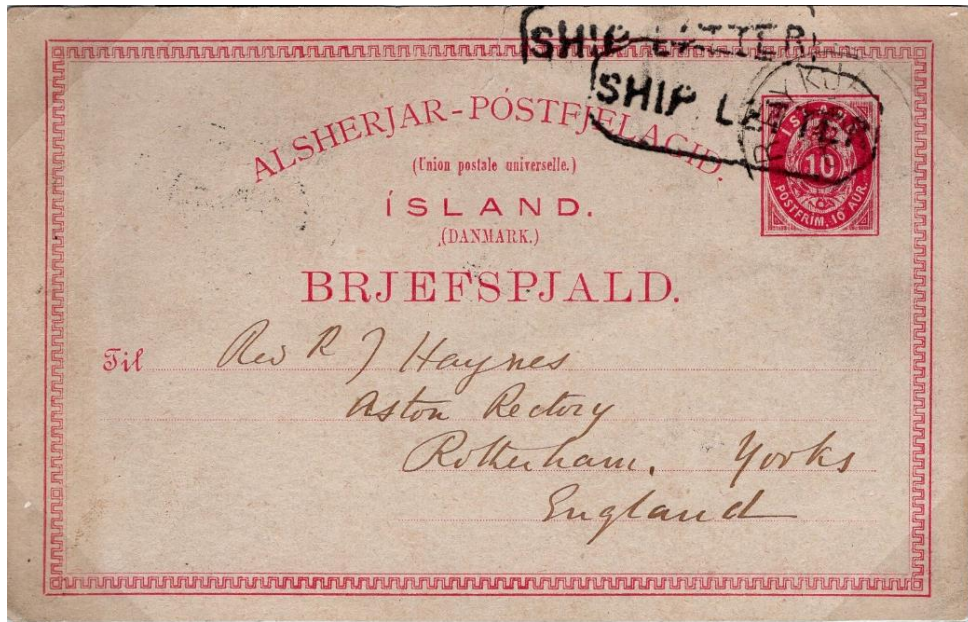
From "ISAFJÖRDUR 1.9.(86)" with text to Germany. The recipient appears again later.



**1887**

The round small **LEITH SHIP LETTER** was introduced on mail from Iceland – but not together with the large SHIP LETTER.

This is a stationary from June 1887 - just before the recut mentioned hereafter. (Stephen Parkins collection)



The Reykjavik date stamp is indistinct - but the message on the reverse is headed with the date 22nd June 1887. SS ROMNY was scheduled to leave Reykjavik 29 June but actually first left 30 June. From the sailings details it seems most likely that it travelled on the SS ROMNY.

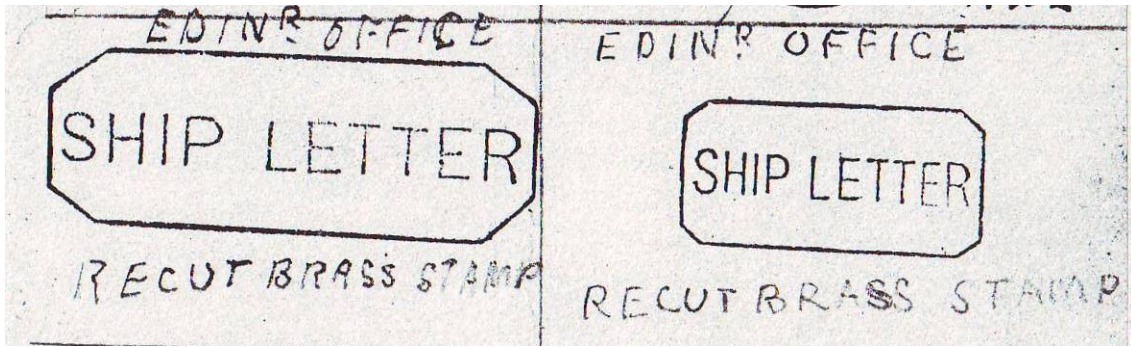
As mentioned earlier a new brass large SHIP LETTER in octagonal frame handstamp was cut in September 1887 at the same time as the small one.

This one on mail from Faroe Island is from before the recut.



The new stamps in the Kirkwoods proofbook:





From that time the impression is clear.

This is an early example from 20. October 1887 with the new and beautiful cancel:



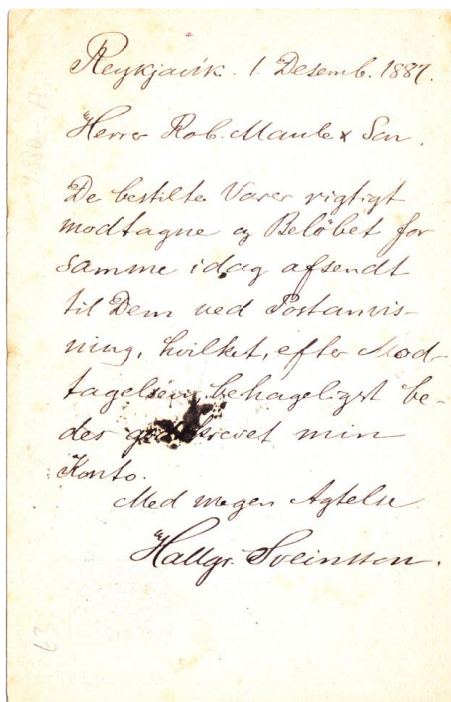


Written Reykjavik 20 Oct 1887 and carried by SS Laura on the 11<sup>th</sup> trip in 1887



10 aur postal stationery written Reykjavik 1. December 1887 and postmarked Reykjavik 2/12. To Leith with the new large SHIP LETTER in octagonal frame. It arrived with SS LAURA at the last trip in 1887 – and it arrived in GRANTON. It was then brought to the main post office in Edinburgh and then delivered in Leith.

Strange, if post arrived at Leith (no SHIP LETTER GRANTON postmark) and went into Edinburgh to be cancelled without date stamp and then delivered back to the recipient in Leith – and there are no signs of postal handling in Leith.



**1888**

Several copies are recorded from **1888** – but why so many?

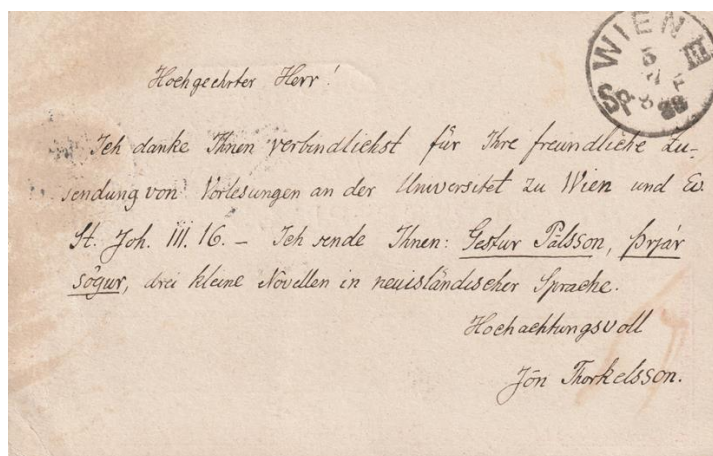






book). Beside the Kirkwood Workbook this card is probably the best evidence that the new large SHIP LETTER handstamp was used in Edinburgh. This card was not cancelled in Iceland but delivered to a person on the ship and handed into the postal system at arrival to Granton. From there it went to Edinburgh and from there to Denmark overland. It seems highly unlikely that the card arrived at Granton and was then transported to Leith and furthermore did not receive a postmark in Edinburgh.

Same trip:



29

The text read:

Highly honored Sir!

<sup>28</sup> See further IslandsKontakt SPECIAL # 29 – 2021 V1 – SHIP LETTER GRANTON

<sup>29</sup> See Mike Tuttle: “UTLÄNSKA ANKOMST- & TRANSITSTÄMPLAR” - Rapport # 169 page 19, translated to Swedish by Leif Nilsson. Card to Austria, Received 5/7/(18)88.



My most profound thanks for your friendly delivery of lectures at the university of Vienna and Ev. St. Joh. III.16 - I will send you: Gestur Pálsson, Þrjár Sögur, three little novels in modern Icelandic language.

Respectfully

Jón Thorkelsson<sup>30</sup>



10 aur double postal stationery card sent to Germany from "REYKJAVIK 4.7" (1888) via Edinburgh. Large SHIP LETTER cancellation on front and "EDINBURGH JY 11 88" on the reverse. Commercial message on the back, the return card still attached unused. Arrival cancellation Herten 13.7.88. A 5 aur stamp has been removed in the NW part of the card.

<sup>30</sup> Translated from German by Harald Thoma. Jón Þorkelsson (born 16 April 1859 in Skaftártunga, died 10 February 1924) was an Icelandic literary historian





8 aur postal stationery card from Reykjavik 4/7. The 40 aur clearly does not belong to the card as appears from the postmarks. It was put on instead of the 3 aur stamp that originally was there. Large SHIP LETTER and arrival cancellation Düsseldorf, Germany, 12 7 88.

Another card to the same recipient and from the same date. Stamp may have been removed but postage is correct:



The same handwriting is used at the same time on mail with the small SHIP LETTER

## The Burchardt-correspondence from 1888.

The next cards are from the same sender and written as a series of messages.

**Series A** consists of six cards (from A.I to A.VI ) sent to doctor Eugen Burchardt in Strasbourg.

We have the text to A.I , A.IV and A.VI and the front of one card in-between that we arbitrarily have named "A.II". We do not have copies of what we have named "A.III and "A.V".

**Series B** are sent to Richard Burchardt in Berlin. We only have the text from one card (and it doesn't say much) and we don't know whether there are more than these two cards that we have copies of – so we just call them "B.I" and "B.II"

The A-series is written "Reykjavik 18. July 1888" and all of them are canceled Reykjavik 19/7 1888 – transit Edinburgh 27. July 1888 together with the large SHIP LETTER - and arrival cancellation Strasburg 29/7 88. The story on the back seems to be a continuous story in German language.

The B-series is also canceled Reykjavik 19/7 1888 – transit Edinburgh 27. July 1888 together with the large SHIP LETTER - and they have an arrival cancellation in Berlin 30.7.

SS Laura left Reykjavik on the 18<sup>th</sup>. So - they have probably all been carried with SS Copeland:

18.7.1888 Ísafold: "The steamer Copeland arrived here yesterday from Scotland, and on the same day went to Stykkishólm with goods ... Will come again either tonight or tomorrow to take horses, and then go to Scotland directly."

### Series A

On following pages:-



I Reykjavík 18 Juli 1888

Liður frjánu!

Þor Lánu 13 þen  
Juli. fahan var Leith niðft uban  
þu Rinnan. Am 14 þu megnat  
10 vfu Rinnan þu nu. Þu about  
Verhafngun nu fubrafun abrafafun,  
ist nu v. Rafafot þuþ bakrannan.  
Am Þuungunufufun nu, þuþ nuu þu  
þuþtignu Þfuutkalus þuþu in þu Þoþi  
þuunufuunufufun nu. niðft þuþluþu þuunþu.

Card # A.I: 10 aur Double Brjefspjald type Es 3-2a





Card # "A.II": Double Brjefspjald Ts 3, 10 aur. Copy of the back is missing.

Card # "A.III" cannot be shown as we do not have a copy.



Card # "A.IV": Double Brjefspjald Ts 1, Message and reply card. 5 aur postal stationery 1883-issue with additional 5 aur green perf 14, 2<sup>nd</sup> printing. The rest is on next page.

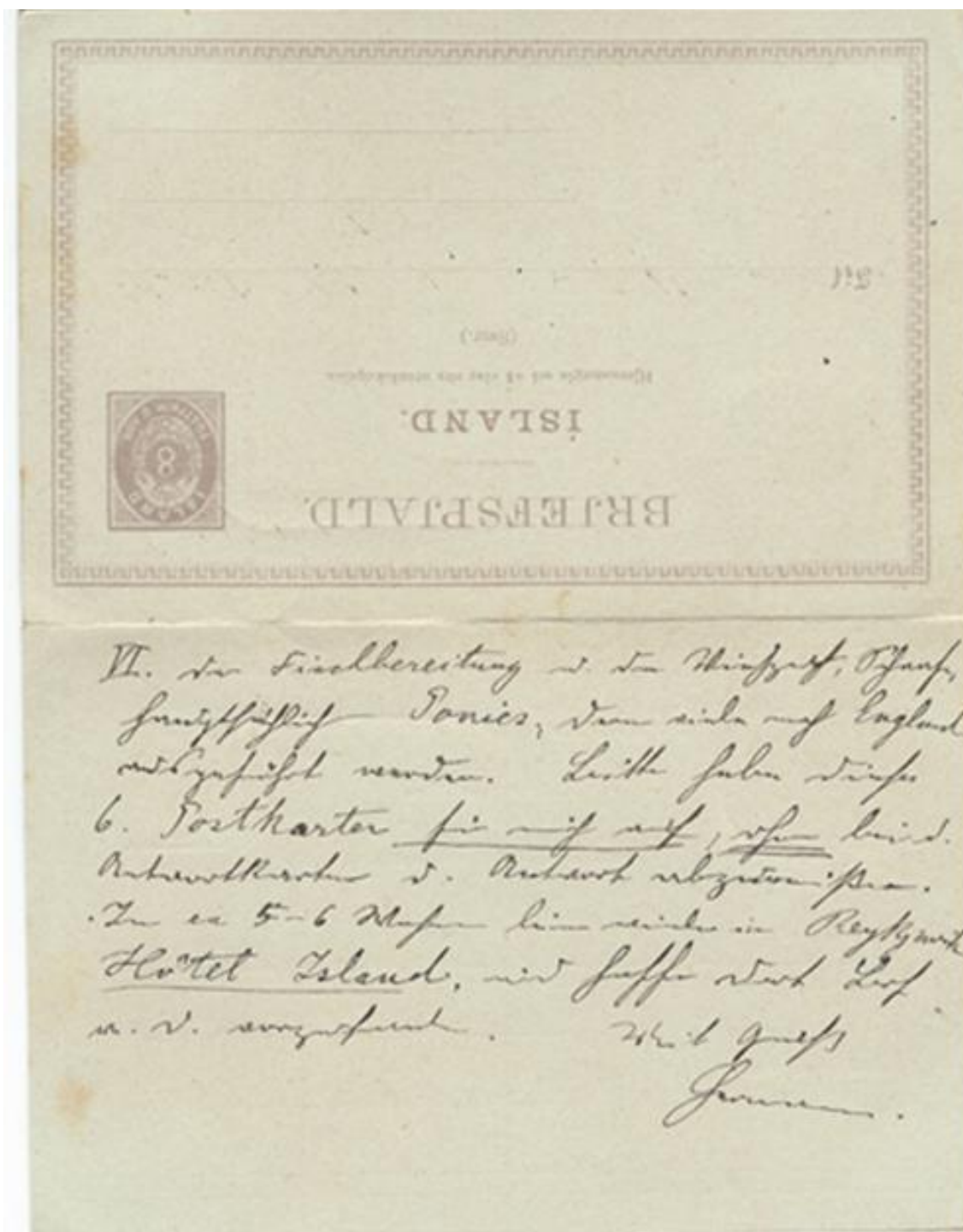




Card # "A.V" cannot be shown as we do not have a copy.



Card # A.VI: Double Brjefspjald Ts 2, Message card 8 aur postal stationery 1883-issue with additional 3 aur yellow perf 14, 4<sup>th</sup> printing. The rest is on next page.



Card #A.VI: Double Brjefspjald Ts 2, Message card. 8 aur postal stationery 1883-issue with additional 3 aur yellow. The rest is on the page before.

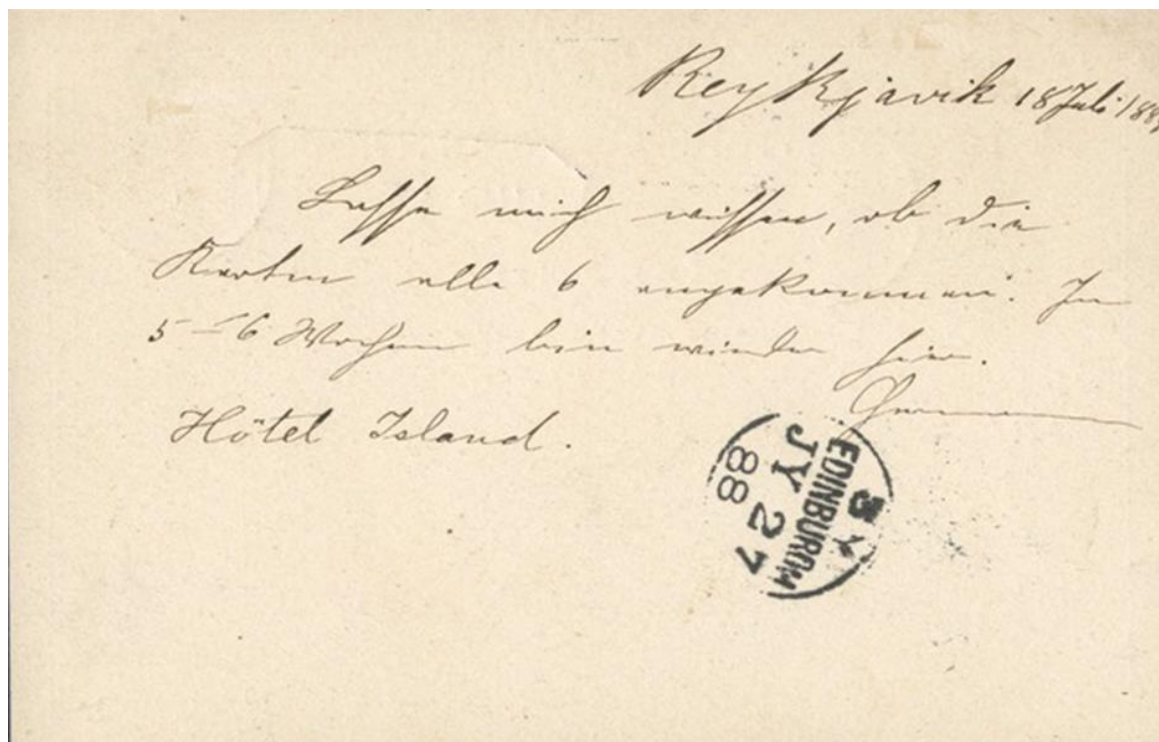


Series B



Card # "B1": Double Brjefspjald Ts 1. 5 aur postal stationery 1883-issue with additional 5 aur green perf 14, 2<sup>nd</sup> printing. Copy of the back is missing.

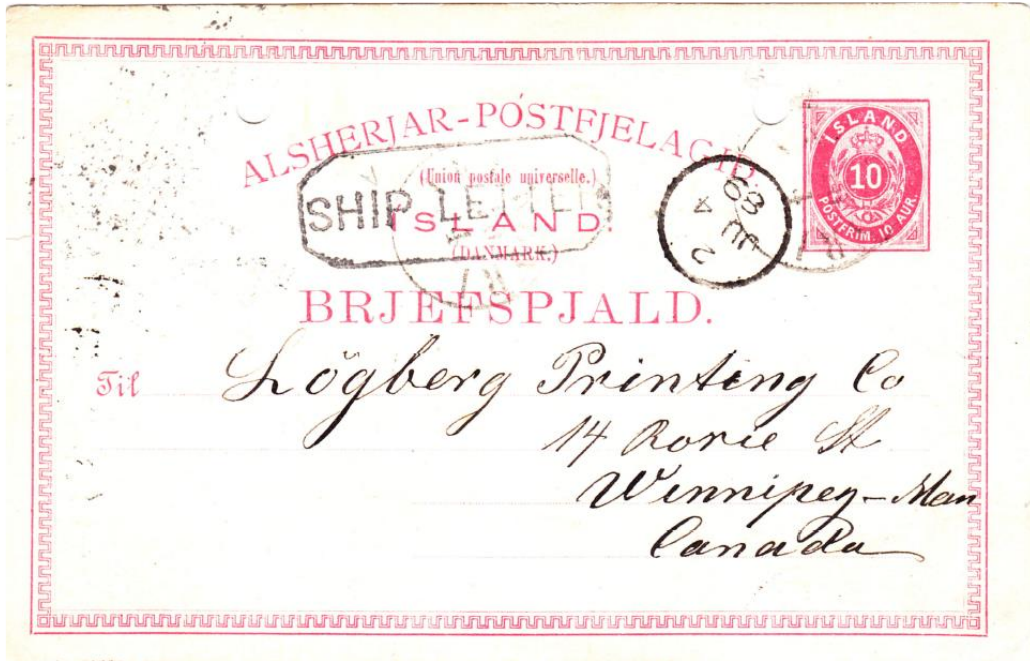




Card "B.II": 8 aur Brjefspjald type Es 2 with additional 3 aur yellow perf 14, 4<sup>th</sup> printing

1889

The last usage to our knowledge is from May or June 1889. The postal stationary is written Akureyri 17/4-89 and cancelled Akureyri in April. When it arrived in Scotland and received the large SHIP LETTER is unknown. Arrival cancel in Canada JU 4 89. The recipient is the publisher of „Heimskringla“.



3 B(2)  
Akureyri 17/4-89

Tyri líkur er Lögbergs get þú ekki greitt ritstöfuna „Lýets“ meitt, því þú hefur afgreitt þar <sup>the Trade</sup> reitning og ávísad and reidinu til útgjafnda blaðsins. ... Sendu þu blaðsins til minn hofur þess á 5-álfum þessu hlutan, nema þessu hl. va. þanda <sup>upmottum</sup>, en af reinni hluta <sup>þess</sup> þess meira. Mig vantar alþjóðlega 12. 13. 14. - 23. 24. blað. - sem þú þarft að leiða um þanda & kaupendur, létu í. -  
 Til Heimskringlu: Mig vantar 14. 15. 16 og 31. 32. 33. 34. 35. hl. sem þú þarft að leiða um þanda & kaupendur.  
 Sameiningum þú vantar 8. og 9. hl. af 4. ári. Nú eru kaupendur þessu blaðanna 4, en ekki <sup>er</sup> önnur leik þess þessu uppað 10, en alls ekki meir.  
 Þú Heimskringlu

THAT WAS THE END

## Overview 1.

Ship letter postmarks used on mail from Iceland in Edinburgh, Leith and Granton.

Year	SHIP LETTER Large	SHIP LETTER small	SHIP LETTER GRANTON	Round LEITH SHIP LETTER
1868	1868			
1869				
1870	1870			
1871				
1872				
1873				
1874				
1875				
1876				
1877	1877			
1878				
1879				
1880		1880		
1881				
1882				
1883				
1884				
1885	1885			
1886			1886	
1887				1887
1888				
1889	1889			
1890				
1891				
1892		1892		
1893				
1894				
1895			1895	
1896				
1897				
1898				
1899				
1900				
1901		1901		
1902				
1903				
1904				
1905				
1906				
1907			1907	
1908				1909
1909				
1910				
1911				
1912				1912
And further				



## Conclusion

Where was the **large SHIP LETTER** in octagonal frame used? In Granton, Leith or in Edinburgh?

The ports next to Edinburgh are primarily Leith and Granton. Up to 1707, Leith on the Firth of Forth was the most important port in Scotland but later it was second to Glasgow on the Firth of Clyde (Robertson). Leith was merged with Edinburgh in 1920.

Overview 1 shows the ship letter and other postmarks used on mail from Iceland

From the overview we can see, that the large SHIP LETTER postmark was the first to be used and it was used alone on mail up to 1887.

We can also see, that the large SHIP LETTER postmark has not been recorded in use from 1878 until 1885.

The explanation is found by examining the ship schedules. We find, that until 1878 Granton was used by the official mail ship DIANA and the use of the large ship letter seems to feed the schedule for DIANA. There is due to that a limited number of transports passing Granton. Thus, it seems likely that Edinburgh and not Leith received the original 1868 version of the large SHIP LETTER handstamp.

DFDS transported mail in parallel but they used Leith as their transit harbor and in 1878/79 DFDS took over all regular mail transport and they only used Leith as arrival harbour in Scotland.

From our recordings of ship routes and routing plans we know that Leith certainly received mail from Iceland. In 1879, 1883 and 1893 Leith cancelled the stamps on the covers with the duplex Leith date stamp with 221 and date and year, and in 1877, 1880 and 1881 a single round date cancel Leith was used.

According to Robertson, in the period “1803 to about 1908, 8 different Leith ship-letter handstamps succeeded each other and none named Edinburgh ship-letter handstamps appear to have been used.” In 1887 Leith received a small LEITH SHIP LETTER with date and year (Robertson s.8) and that was widely used on mail from Iceland. None of the earlier Leith ship letter postmarks are known on mail from Iceland or Norway.

Edinburgh received the small SHIP LETTER in frame handstamp in 1880 and it is used on specific mails.

In the period from 1880 until 1884 where mail presumably was carried with SS CAMOENS bound for Granton mail was cancelled first with GRANTON SHIP LETTER and then with round Edinburgh date stamp.

DFDS changed its use of transit port in Scotland in 1885 back to Granton and the large SHIP LETTER postmark was used again. Comparing the postmark over the years show, that it was worn when our recording stop in 1877:



and the same applies when it was used again in 1885:



The "P" tilts to the right and it almost falls in 1887:



Therefore, the large SHIP LETTER postmark was sent back to Kirkwoods for recutting – together with the small SHIP LETTER - and they were thereafter<sup>31</sup> delivered back to Edinburgh, where they were both used for some time.

Leith received its own new ship letter cancel also in 1887 and it took over from 1887 onwards.

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<sup>31</sup> See the print from Kirkwood Proof books in the beginning



Granton used SHIP LETTER GRANTON in frame in the period 1886-1895.<sup>32</sup>



We don't know the reason for having 3-4 different ship letter cancellations in use at the same time, but **in conclusion; the large SHIP LETTER in octagonal frame was used in Edinburgh 1868-1877 and 1885-1889.**

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