



# ISLANDS *Kontakt*

**SPECIAL** # 39 – SS MAGNETIC – 2024 V1

Compiler: Jakob S. Arrevad: [jsa@agadvokatfirma.dk](mailto:jsa@agadvokatfirma.dk)

In collaboration with Ebbe Eldrup: [ebbe.eldrup@gmail.com](mailto:ebbe.eldrup@gmail.com)

This is a part of a series published which summarizes, supplemented by recent discoveries, information published over the years in IslandsKontakt and elsewhere. We must all be 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.

This is a part of seven studies:

IslandsKontakt Special # 29 V1 2021	GRANTON SHIP LETTER
IslandsKontakt Special # 31 V1 TO COME	EDINBURGH LARGE SHIP LETTER
IslandsKontakt Special # 32 V1 TO COME	EDINBURGH SMALL SHIP LETTER
IslandsKontakt Special # 33 V1 2023	LEITH SHIP LETTER
IslandsKontakt Special # 37 V1 2023	LONDON SHIP LETTER

And earlier:

IslandsKontakt Special # 3 V2 2018	EDINBURGH PAQUEBOT
IslandsKontakt Special # 5 V1 2016	LEITH PAQUEBOT

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

In the study of LEITH SHIP LETTER, we found that SS MAGNETIC gives some further information relating to the final use of the LARGE EDINBURGH SHIP LETTER<sup>1</sup> and the introduction of the round LEITH SHIP LETTER on mail from Iceland<sup>2</sup> in 1889. . SS Magnetic also provides information in relation to LONDON SHIP LETTER<sup>3</sup>.

It is in the middle of the “The steamboat case” between the Icelandic Parliament, The Althingi and DFDS. In the years 1888 and 1889 there were disagreements between The Althingi and DFDS about payment. The Althingi decided to reduce their annual subsidy

<sup>1</sup> The latest use I a letter written 17.4.1889 in Akureyri (It looks like a Reykjavik cancellation over the text)and arriving in Winnipeg JU 4 89.

<sup>2</sup> IslandsKontakt Special # 33 LEITH SHIP LETTER V1 2023

<sup>3</sup> IslandsKontakt Special # 37 LONDON SHIP LETTER V1 2023

from DKK 18,000 to 9,000 DKK and from 1890 to stop the rent altogether. The discussion is mentioned in the press as “Gufubátsmálið” (“The steamboat case”)⁴

It is a period with relatively few known letters with SHIP LETTER stamps. We have only recorded the following from 1889:

LARGE SHIP LETTER –the last use - Probably gone by the grain ship “ROSA” - Akureyri 17.4.1889.

One SMALL SHIP LETTER **RED** - Reykjavik 1.6.1889 Edinburgh JU 16 89 to France. With “THYRA” leaving Reykjavik north around Iceland on June 2end.

SHIP LETTER GRANTON/EDINBURGH - Edinburgh duplex JY 1 89, Plus SHIP LETTER GRANTON. “LAURA” left Reykjavik 26.6.89.

LEITH SHIP LETTER – the first om mail from Iceland - Akureyri 30 JY 1889. LEITH SHIP LETTER AU 7 89. “MAGNETIC”.

LEITH SHIP LETTER - Reykjavik 15 8 89 send via Leith – LEITH AU 21 89 and LONDON AU 22 89. “Majestic”

Small SHIP LETTER in black . Vopnafjörður 10.10.1889 to Winnipeg, Canada. Arrival cancelled Winnipeg 4 Nov. 1889. “LAURA” left Reykjavik 18. October after a trip around Iceland including a stop in Vopnafjörður.

Small SHIP LETTER in black - Two stationaries cancelled Reykjavik 25.11.89. “LAURA” came to Reykjavik 23. November 1889 and left 29. November 1889.<sup>5</sup>

The ordinary mail ships go to Granton/Edinburgh. They either get SHIP LETTER GRANTON/EDINBURGH or the SMALL SHIP LETTER. One merchant ship – “ROSA” probably went to Granton and the mail received the last LARGE SHIP LETTER. The merchant ship “MAGNETIC” goes to Leith and institute a new era; the use of LEITH SHIP LETTER

SS MAGNETIC is interesting in a short period – 1889-1891. SS MAGNETIC was in the period owned by R. & D. Slimon. The shipping company sailed among others on Iceland, and continued their earlier transport with S/S Camoens with S/S Magnetic from 1889. It was not a mail route and not a regular voyage with timetables and the like. One can read in Ísafold - 11 May 1889: "The steamship Magnetic. Slimon in Leith has acquired a new steamer instead of Camoens. It is called Magnetic, very well made in all respects ... (13 knots). The cabin is in the middle of the ship, holds 50 passengers, lighted by electric light. An even more beautiful cabin for women." Ísafold 11.05.1889.

---

<sup>4</sup> See about the case Hilmar Þorleifsson “Póst saga Íslands 1873-1935” page 170-172

<sup>5</sup> The “statistic” is influenced by the fact, that it is our opinion, that most mail direct to Denmark pass Scotland in separated mailbags/boxes.



**Fejl! Bogmærke er ikke defineret.**

Year built: 1863	Yard: Meadowside
Owner:	
1886	James Hay & Sons, Glasgow.
1889 – 1892	<b>R. &amp; D. Slimon, Leith.</b>
1892	James R. Greig, Glasgow.
1898	register closed on foreign sale.
1906	Wrecked in Greek waters.
Length	210.1 ft
Breadth	27.1 ft
Depth	14.4 ft
Tonnage	571 grt / 385 nrt /
Vessel type	Passenger / Cargo

There are recorded sailings with SS MANEGTIC from June 1889.

1889

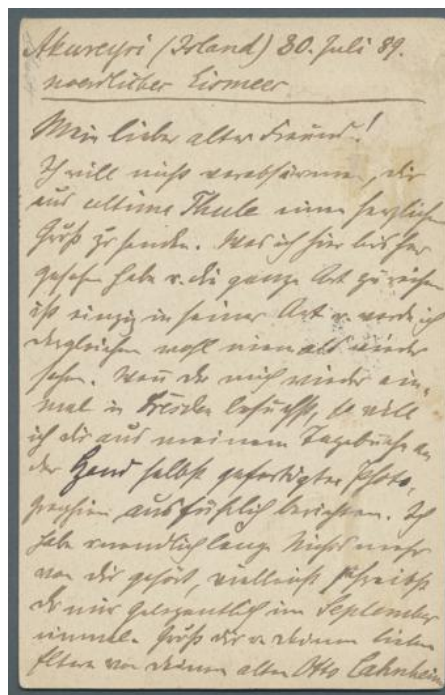
The following maybe transported with “S.S Magnetic”?<sup>6</sup>

It is the first recorded LEITH SHIP LETTER – on mail from Iceland.

<sup>6</sup> SS Laura left Reykjavik for Copenhagen 27.7 and SS Thyra left 28.7 for costal trip going west. None of them can have reached Akureyri and picked up the card on 30.7 ore the following days and arrived in Leith on AU 7 89 SS Clutha left Akureyri 28.7 (Norðurljósið 31.07.1889). We have found no other information on ships from Akureyri around 30 July 1889. We are missing the schedules for 1889



Stationary from Akureyri 30 JY 1889. (date on the back) to Vienna with LEITH SHIP LETTER AU 7 89. No postal treatment in Iceland.



Reverse side of the card.

The first letter solid recorded known mail from Iceland with SS Magnetic is sent from Reykjavik 15 August 1889





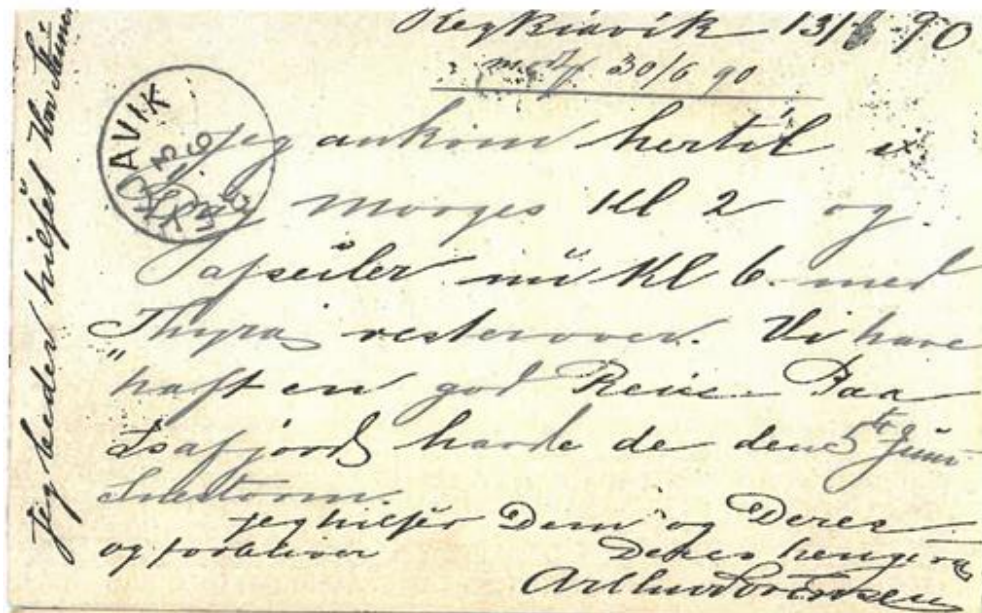
With "S.S. Magnetic" via Leith – LEITH SHIP LETTER AU 21 89 and LONDON AU 22 89 to Wiesbaden Germany 23/8.



The LONDON stamp is also interesting - not being the LONDON SHIP LETTER used from 1890<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> See IslandsKontakt Special # 37 V1 2023 LONDON SHIP LETTER (same in Iceland Philatelic Magazine April 2023)

1890<sup>8</sup>



Stationary 8 aur added 3 aur from Reykjavik 13.6.90 to Copenhagen. LEITH SHIP LETTER JU 27 90 and black – but unclear – black **LONDON SHIP LETTER**. The text tells, that the sender arrived at Reykjavik 13. 6. 90 and the next day will continue with S/S THYRA going west. Per the schedule from 1891 (predicting that it is a duplicate from 1890) it is trip 5 – expected to go to leave Reykjavik around 13. 6. On the card is written by pencil: “received 30/06-90”.

“Magnetic , Slimon's steamer, left here the night of the 19th...” - so probably send with S/S Magnetic. (Isafold 21 06 90)

<sup>8</sup> The following is mostly not new - it can be found in IslandsKontakt Special # 37– LONDON SHIP LETTER –V1 2023 and # 33 – LEITH SHIP LETTER –V1 2023



1891



Letter from Reykjavik 13.6.91 to Copenhagen with LEITH SHIP LETTER JU 22 91 and red LONDON SHIP LETTER JU 23 91.

Ísafold 13.06.1891:

“The steamer Magnetic, Slimons, arrived here yesterday and leaving again tonight west of the country and north.”

Same Newspaper same day:

“Thyra, the coastal ship, Capt. Hovgaard, set out from here this night for the west of the country and for the north, with a number of passengers” and “The mail ship Laura, Christiansen, arrived here last night, and with her a number of passengers from Copenhagen and the Faroe Islands”.

In Þjóðólfur from 19.06.1891:

“Thyra set off from here on the night of the 13th. west and north of the country with a large number of passengers.

Laura left here on the 15th. m. south and east of the country. About 400 passengers went with her”.

It was sent with SS Magnetic because “Thyra” arrives in Edinburg 30 JU 91, and “Laura” is not possible either. Reading the schedule for the 6<sup>th</sup> trip 1891 (Laura), there is an asterisk to here scheduled departure from the Faroe Island on the 8<sup>th</sup> of June:

“2) from there a direct route to Reykjavík, arrives there on the 11th, goes on the 15th, south across the country to Berufjörður.”

And looking further in the newspapers it is clear, that she didn't go to Scotland on the 15<sup>th</sup> but around Iceland.

In Þjóðólfur from 26.06.1891 it is mentioned:

“The mail and passenger ship Laura arrived left last night from her fourth round the country”.

The next card: Reykjavik 4.7.91 via LEITH SHIP LETTER JY 10 91 – red LONDON SHIP LETTER JY 11 91 - send to Germany.

“Steamer Magnetic, Slimons, arrived here Sunday evening 4th., and with her few foreign tourists, ... The ship left from here directly to Scotland last evening with over 400 horses,” (Isafold 8.7.1891)



Holtz show the following card send i 1891 vis Leith transit London to Lille Kongensgade 33 i København<sup>9</sup>. “10 aur stationery card from "Reykjavik 20.7.1891" per S/S Magnetic via England to Copenhagen. Two different ship cancelations "LEITH SHIP LETTER JY 24 91" and in red "LONDON SHIP LETTER JY 25 91". Arr. mark "K.OMK 1 27.7.91".



<sup>9</sup> IslandsKontakt # 103.



The recipient Goldstein & Søn, should according to the internet be "wholesale business and manufacture, furs, hats and caps. Founded on 24 June 1880 by Jac. Goldstein (b. 1829, d. 1911) and Isidor Goldstein (d. 1914)".  
We don't know the text.



10 aur stationery card canc. REYKJAVIK 20.7 sent to France via England with transit canc. LEITH SHIP LETTER JY 24 91, red LONDON SHIP LETTER JY 25 91" and CALAIS 25 JUIL 91 as well as arrival canc. TOURS INDRE ET LOIRE 26 JUIL 91.

“The steamship Magnetic arrived here yesterday straight from Scotland and with her an agent Sigfús Eymundsson and 3 English tourists. Will go again on Monday evening.”  
(Ísafold 18.07.1891)

The last recording in the Icelandic press regarding SS Magnetic is from the end of 1891:

Austri – published in Seyðisfirði 10.11.1891:

"Magnetic" brought a load of coal to Seyðisfjörður on the 7th. It was decided that she would go abroad with herring from there."

Norðurljósið published in Akureyri 30.11.1891:

Með austanpósti bárust hingað bréf frá Kaupinannahöfu, sem komu með "Magnetic" til Seyðisfjarðar. Bréfin eru dagsett 31. október, og segja þau verstu fréttir hvað snertir gangverð á íslenskum vörum.

Nokkuð af hvítri ull norðlenskri var selt fyrir 61 eyri til 65 aura pundið, en mikið óselt af þeirri vöru.

Málsfiskur, sem hér var borgaður með 50 kr. skpdið. var seldur með tregðu á 40 kr. skpd.

Lýsi hcfir fallið síðan 1 sumar um 2–3 kr. tunnan.

Kornvara í mjög háu verði, frá 19—20 kr. 200 pd. Af rúgi, og var farið að flytja rússneskan rúg frá Kaupmanna. höfn til Rússlands. Spáð að bann gegn útflutungi á kornvöru frá Rússlandi muni ekki einungis standa þetta ár, heldur líka einnig lnð næsta.

“Letters arrived here from Copenhagen brought by “Magnetic” to Seyðisfjörður. The letters are dated October 31 and tells the worst news as far as market price of Icelandic goods.

Some white northern wool was sold for 61 eyri to 65 eyri per pound, but much was unsold of that commodity.

Swordfish, which here was paid with 50 ISK. was sold with difficulty at 40 ISK.

Fish has fallen since summer by 2-3 ISK. per barrel.

Cereal products at very high prices, from ISK 19-20, for rye, and Russian rye was transported from the Copenhagen port to Russia. It is predicted that the ban against export of grain products from Russia will not only last for five years, but also for the next year.” (Google translation)

Difficulty in relation to Russia is not new!

We have not seen mail with SS Magnetic after 1891.

On 24. April 1896 it was announced (in Stefnir) that DFDS will use Leith instead of Granton. The announcement was repeated 31 Maj and 27 June. Until that time, it must be other ships than the ones from DFDS, who are the carriers, when the mail receive LEITH SHIP LETTER<sup>10</sup>

---

<sup>10</sup> Again, see IslandsKontakt Special # 33– LEITH SHIP LETTER –V1 2023