



# SHIP LETTERS

THOMAS & MARTIN CO. NEW YORK N.Y.

1842

BRITISH POSTAL MARKINGS

SHIP LETTERS



Letters brought to and from England in privately owned ships under no agreement for the conveyance of mails were termed "Ship Letters". Ship masters after 1711 were granted a legal gratuity of 1 d., later increased to 2 d., per letter. Postmasters then forwarded letters to London where the correct postage was assessed.

PAID SHIP LETTER  
 FE 16  
 1842  
 SYDNEY

Feb. 16, 1842.  
 Stamp impressed  
 at Sydney, Aust.  
 indicating passage  
 to London had been  
 prepaid.

1  
 23 JU 23  
 1842

June 1, 1842.  
 Received stamp  
 at London.

SHIP LETTER

Stamp at London  
 to indicate  
 type of mail.

1836

SHIP LETTERS  
COVE

MONTEVIDEO TO LONDON VIA COVE, IRELAND

Ship Favourite

February 26, 1836. Letter datelined at Montevideo. It also contains a triplicate Jan. 22, 1836, letter, original via Buenos Ayres, duplicate per Trevor. This letter was handed to the captain of the Favourite, a private trader.

COVE  
SHIP LETTER

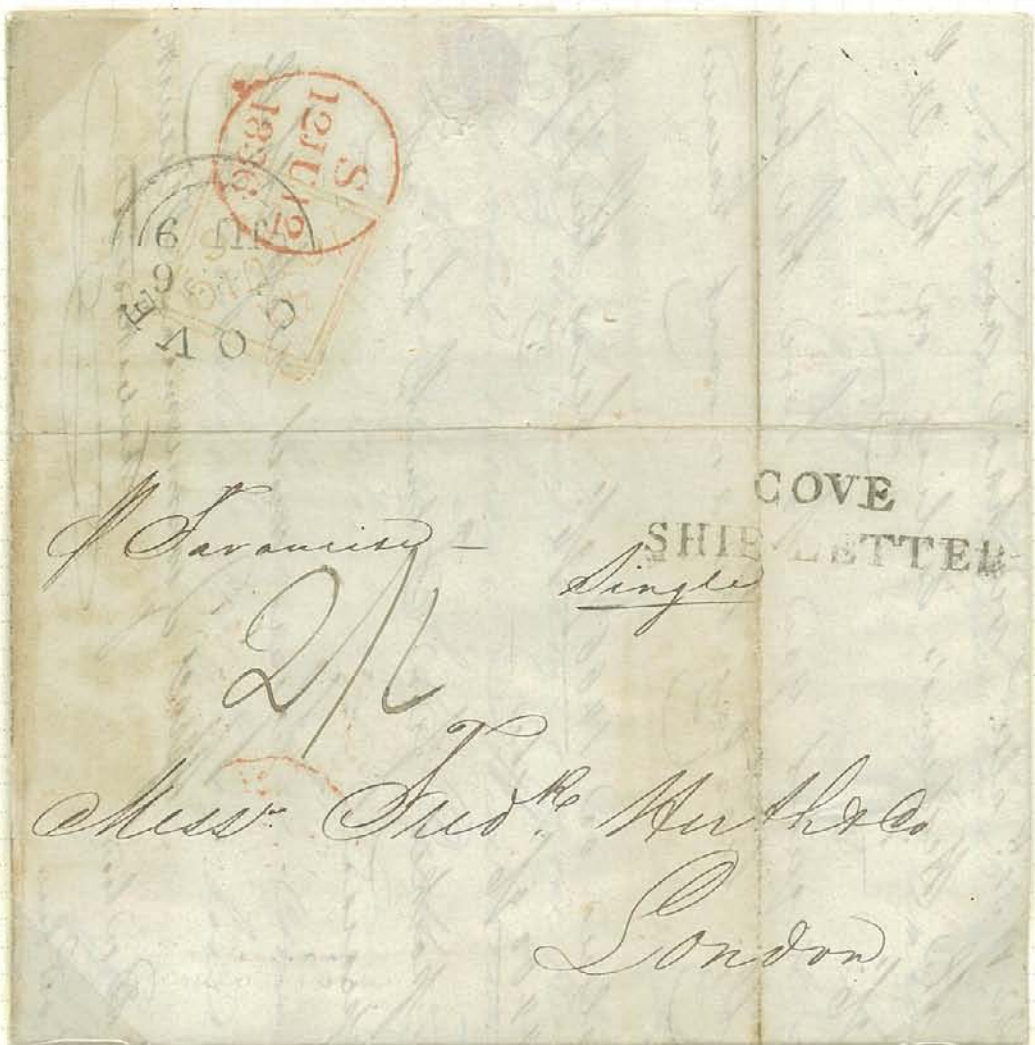
London Sun, Monday June 13, 1836. SHIPPING (THIS DAY). Cork, June 10.- Arrived the Favourite, Christie, from Monte Video.

June 9-10. Cove and Dublin transit handstamps. Cove was re-named Queenstown in 1846. Robertson S.2 Cove Ship Letter mark.

June 12. Sunday "S" arrival stamp at London.

Letter rated:

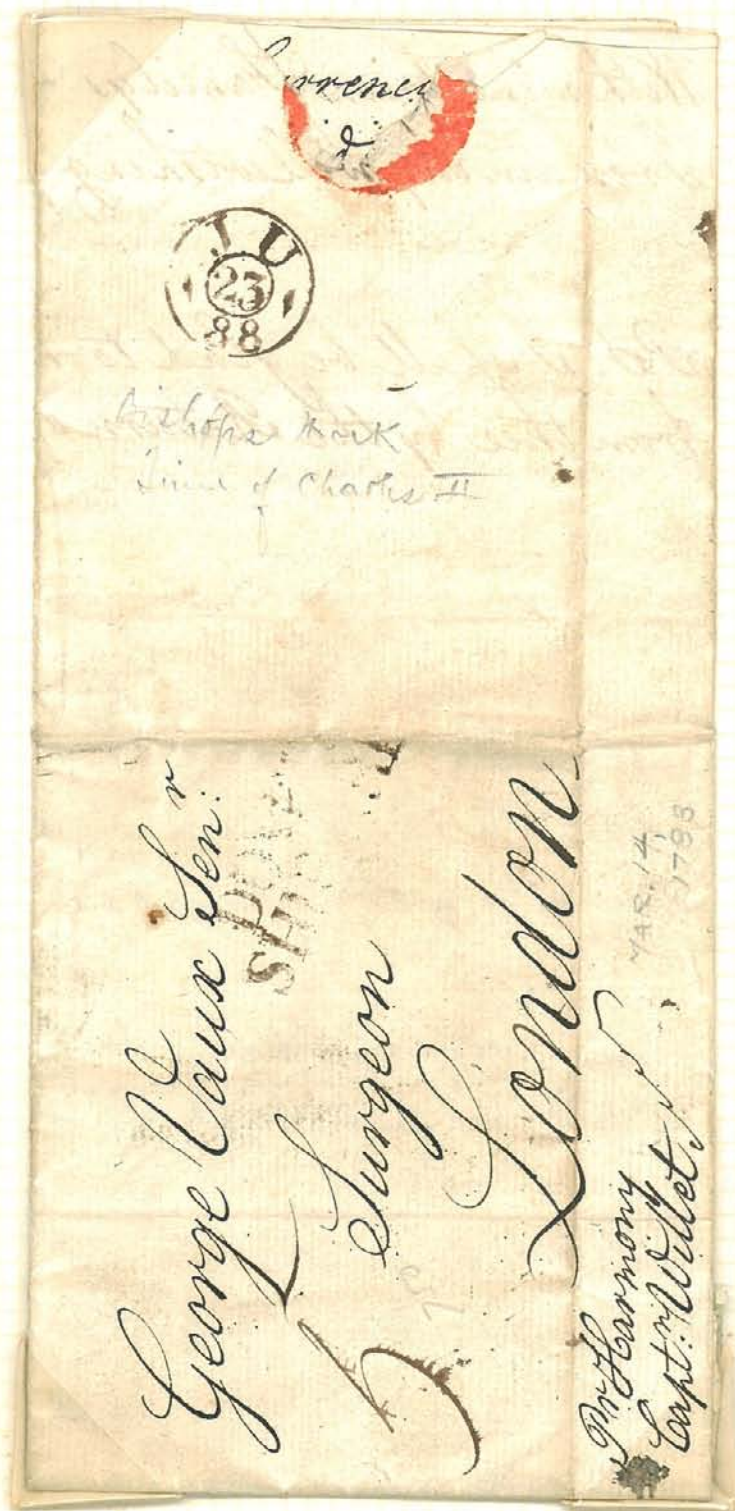
Ship	6d.
Capt.	2d. = 8d.
Cove to Dublin	
(over 30 Irish	
miles)	4d.
Dub.-H'head	
60 miles	
H'head-London	
276 miles	
Total	327 mi.
Act	1812, 300-
400 miles	1sh.1d.
Total	2sh.1d.



1788

BRITISH POSTAL MARKINGS

SHIP LETTERS



May 14, 1788. Cover posted at Philadelphia, Pa. for London.

DOVER SHIP LRE

This letter was delivered to the hand of the ship's master (Capt'n Willet of the "Harmony" as noted in manuscript,) who then passed it to Postal Authorities on arrival at Dover, England where he received 2 d. for the service.

This "DOVER SHIP LRE" mark merely indicates the cover so received at Dover.



June 23, 1788. Letter was duly forwarded to London where it received this postmark of the General Post, showing cover was unpaid and rate of 5 d. added in script to be paid by the recipient, being figured as 2 d. for carriage into London, 1 d. for the London Penny Post, and the ship master's tuppence.

SHIP LETTERS  
DOVER

BACKSTAMP

Oval type Ship Letter handstamp of Dover, 1st port of call in England of the ship "Roebuck. A very fine impression.

July 9, 1806. London transit stamp.

April 23, 1806. Letter posted at Antigua for Cirencester, Gloucestershire, England per the ship "Roebuck".

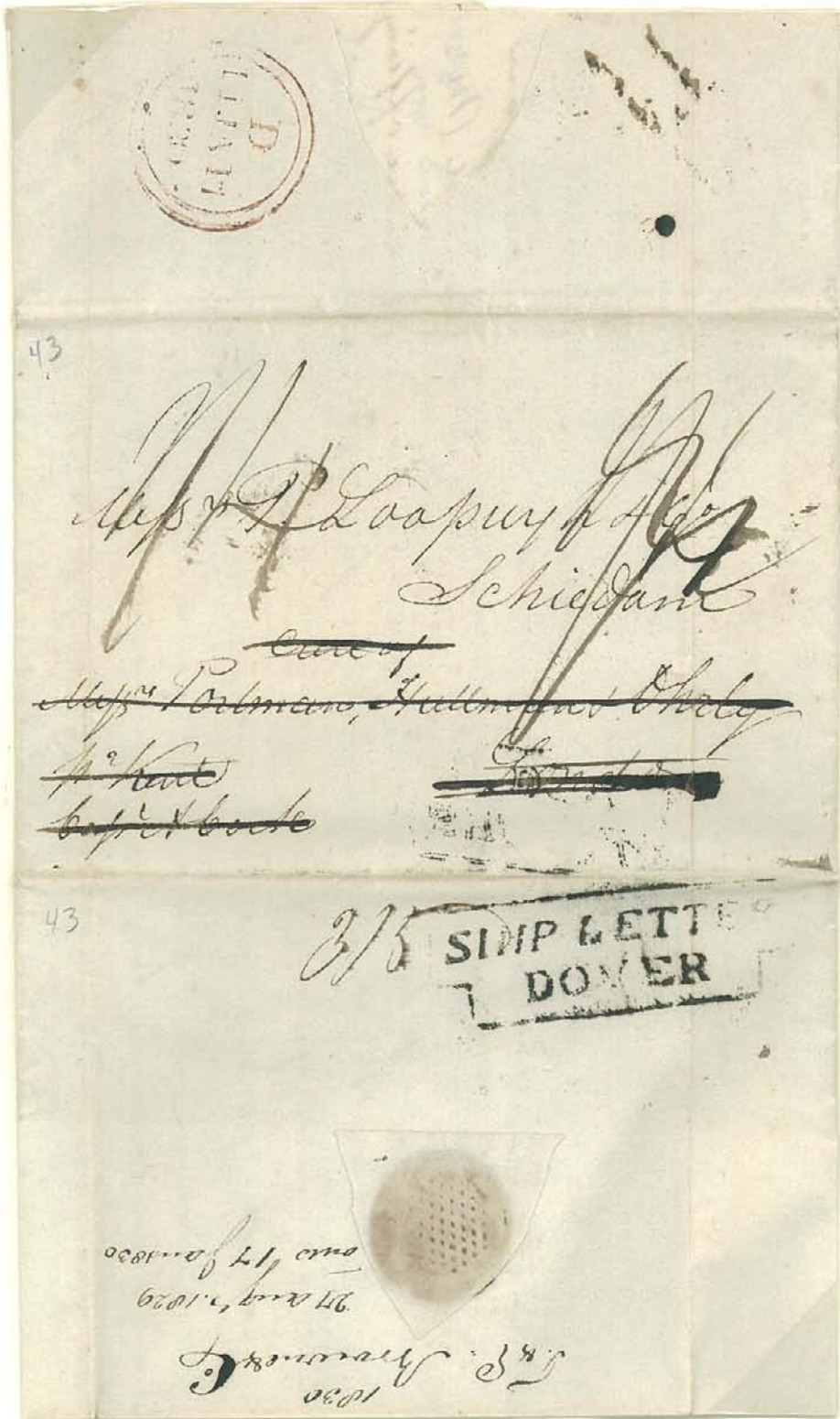
Rate of  $1/3$ , noted in manuscript, computed:

Ship Letter rate	4 d.
Captain's Gratuity	2 d.
Inland rate, Dover - Cirencester (160 mi.)	
Act of 1805 rates	9 d.
	$\frac{1}{3}$ due from addressee.

1829-30

VALPARAISO, CHILE TO HOLLAND VIA ENGLAND  
SHIP LETTER/DOVER

Ship Kent



1829-30

VALPARAISO, CHILE TO HOLLAND VIA ENGLAND  
SHIP LETTER / DOVER Ship Kent

August 27, 1829. Duplicate letter datelined at Valparaiso concerns the shipment of Dutch gin to Lima and the lack of sales of the same.

Letter endorsed: pr Kent, Capt. A. Cooke and addressed care of the forwarding agents Portman, Hullman & Ohrly, London.

SHIP LETTER  
DOVER

R. S. II

SHIP NEWS (London Times): January 14, 1830.  
DEAL, Jan. 12. Wind E.N.E. to N.E. by E. Arrived the Kent from the South Seas.

Heavy coastal storms were reported, so the Kent had put into Dover a day or two earlier and her mails went ashore at Dover per the receiving Ship Letter mark. She made her final destination at nearby Deal on Jan. 12, per the Times news.



January 11. London transit backstamp confirms prior arrival at Dover.

Letter rated Dover to London, 72 miles, Act of 1812 for a letter 50 to 80 miles 8d. plus 8d. Ship Letter fee = 16d. or 1sh.4d., shown as 1/4 at right.

The forwarding agents deleted their name and the ship endorsement and forwarded the letter to Shiedam, Holland. Rates to Holland were 8d. British postage plus 8d. British transit = 1sh.4d., coincidentally the same as the Ship Letter rate charged all the way from Chile. A new 1/4 was shown at left. Dutch collected an equivalent of 80 cent + 20 cent Dutch postage = 100 cent Dutch, collected on an account basis.

1828

BRITISH POSTAL MARKINGS

SHIP LETTERS



**LIVERPOOL**  
**SHIP LETTER**

Sept. 27, 1828. Letter posted at Philadelphia, Pa. to London via ship Wm Thompson at N.Y. (mms notation).

Upward step Liverpool Ship Letter mark struck upon arrival at Liverpool. Heavy frame and lettering and slanted lower line are unique.



Oct. 28, 1828. London unpaid mark of the General Post transit stamp.

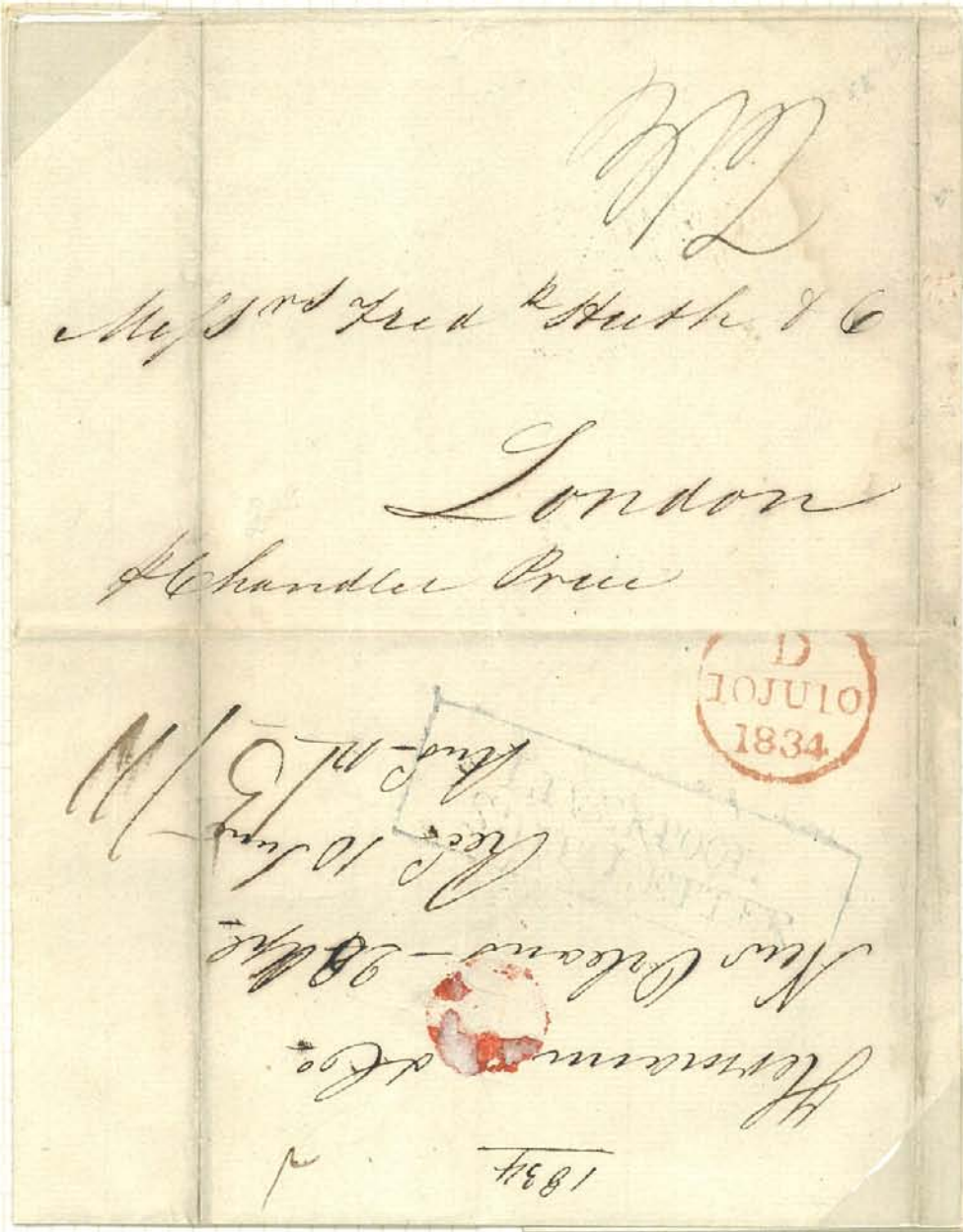
"Wm Thompson" Black Ball Line  
1822-30.



1834

BRITISH POSTAL MARKINGS

SHIP LETTERS



April 28, 1834. Letter posted New Orleans, La. to London via vessel "Chandler Price!"

<p>LIVERPOOL SHIP LETTER</p>
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Square boxed LIVERPOOL SHIP LETTER transit mark showing letter received at Liverpool.

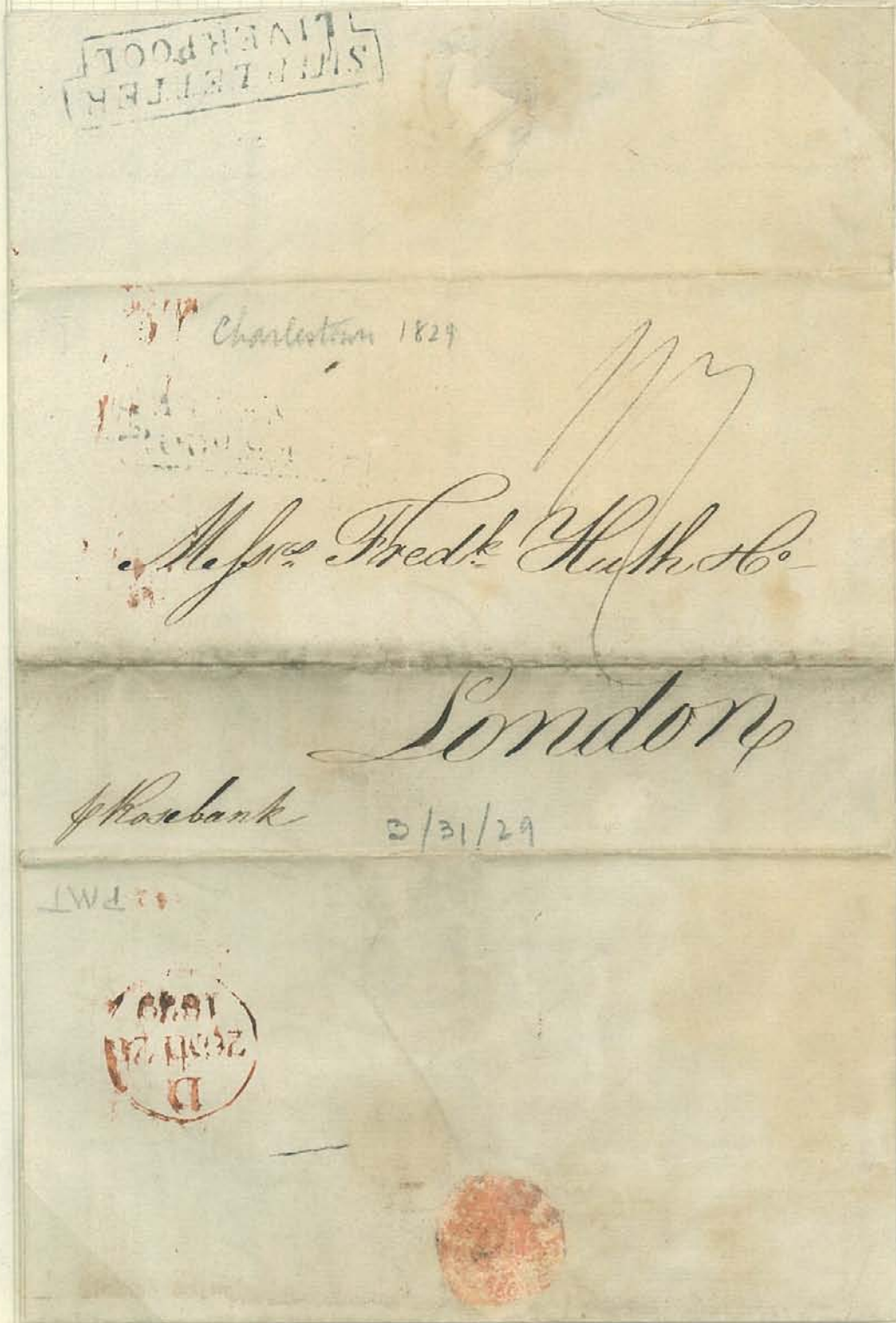
D  
10 JULIO  
1834

June 10, 1834. London unpaid mark of the General Post. Rate, in mms. was added here.

1829

BRITISH POSTAL MARKINGS

SHIP LETTERS  
LIVERPOOL



Mar. 31, 1829.  
Charleston, S.C.  
letter to London  
via ship  
"Rosebank".

SHIP LETTER  
LIVERPOOL

Arrival at  
Liverpool as a  
"Ship Letter".

D  
28MY28  
1829

May 28, 1829.  
London transit  
stamp.

RATES APPLIC-  
ABLE IN 1829:  
Letter rated as  
a Private Ship  
Letter (from  
1815) at 8d.  
plus Inland Rate  
from Port of  
Entry, L'pool to  
London, 206 miles,  
Act of 1812 rate  
(170 to 230 mi.)  
lld., total  
lsh 7d., as rat-  
ed in mms.

THORP & MARTIN CORP. NARIBO NO. DD

1839

BRITISH POSTAL MARKINGS

SHIP LETTERS

LIVERPOOL



Sept. 6, 1839. Letter handed to master of ship "Landbach", outbound for Liverpool, at Demerara (now Georgetown) British Guiana.

LIVERPOOL  
SHIP LETTER



Ship letter stamp. Oct. 23, 1839.  
London transit stamp.

Letter rated:

1815 ship letter rate	8d.
Inland rate from Port of Entry, Liverpool - London (206 miles) Act of 1812 rate 170 - 230 miles	<u>11d.</u>
As shown in mms	1/7

1846

BLUE SWALLOWTAIL LINE:  
Ship Henry Clay cleared  
N.Y. Jan. 6, 1846 for L'pool.

SHIP LETTERS  
LIVERPOOL

After 1840 a flat 8d. Ship Letter rate was adopted regardless of the Port of Entry and included inland delivery. Hand-stamped 8d. charge marks were adopted after this period.



Letter posted Jan. 5, 1846 at New York for Tewksbury, England as a "Ship Letter".



Jan. 26, 1846.  
Receipt stamp incoming  
at L'Pool, to be  
rated as a Ship  
Letter.



Handstamp,  
8d. Ship Letter,  
rate (see above).



Jan. 28, 1846.  
Tewksbury, Gloucs.,  
receipt.

SHIP LETTERS

FORWARDING AGENTS

ROBERT R. HUNTER  
CONSUL, U.S.A., COWES



SHIP

Sept. 6, 1827.  
New York Exchange  
Office transit  
stamps.

Letter written Aug. 21, 1827 at London and delivered by hand to the U.S. Consul at Cowes, Isle of Wight who also operated as a private forwarding agent.

Received and forwarded by  
Your obedient Servant,  
ROBERT R. HUNTER,  
CONSUL, U.S.A.  
COWES.

Letter rated at 20-3/4¢ (mms. U.R.)  
due from recipient as follows: Zone  
rate, New York - Kennebunk, Maine, of  
150-400 miles (Act of Mar. 3, 1825)  
18-3/4¢ plus 2¢ added for delivery  
beyond Port of Entry, Ship Letter  
charge.

Forwarding Agent's  
cachet. This is Type  
2 of 3 types used by this  
agent.

"Hudson" Black X Line

SHIP LETTERS

FORWARDING AGENTS

R. R. HUNTER  
CONSUL, U. S. A., COWES



Aug. 9, 1838.  
New York "Ship"  
transit mark.  
A remarkable  
39 days west-  
bound passage.

Letter, originating at Cowes, Isle of Wight, was written by ship master John Murphy to his brig's owner James Titcomb at Kennebunk, Maine, June 30, 1838.

Letter was handed to Robert R. Hunter, U.S. Consul at Cowes, who also operated as a private forwarding agent.

Received and forwarded by  
Your obedt Servant  
R. R. HUNTER.  
CONSUL, U. S. A.  
Cowes,

Forwarding Agent's  
cachet. 1 of 3 types  
used by this agent.

Letter rated at 20-3/4¢ as follows:

U.S. Zone rate of 150-400 miles (Act of Mar. 3, 1825).....	18-3/4¢
Ship Letter charge for delivery beyond Port of Entry.....	2 ¢
Rate, mms. U.R.	20-3/4¢

1837

SHIP LETTERS  
FORWARDING AGENTS

MOSES TAYLOR  
NEW YORK



F  
2 MR 2  
1837

Mar. 2, 1837.  
London receipt  
backstamp.

Jan. 21, 1837. Letter handed to ship's master at Havana, Cuba. He turned it over to Moses Taylor, forwarding agent at New York who forwarded it as a "Ship Letter" to London.

FORWARDED BY  
MOSES TAYLOR  
NEW-YORK

LIVERPOOL  
SHIP LETTER

Letter rated 3/2  
(mms.) due from  
rec pient:  
Ship Letter 6d.  
L'pool-London  
(Act of 1812),  
170-230 miles  
1ld.x3(triple)  $\frac{2}{8}$   
 $\frac{3}{2}$

Forwarding agent's  
cachet.

Stamped incoming at  
L'Pool.

BSH 05510

1812

BRITISH POSTAL MARKINGS  
SHIP LETTERS  
BRISTOL



Sept. 11, 1812.  
Letter handed to  
Ship's Captain at  
LaCorunna, Spain.

BRISTOL  
SHIP-LETTER

Letter stamped  
incoming at Bristol.  
This mark in red is  
about 3X as scarce  
as the same in  
black.

E  
7 OCT 7  
1812

Letter rated:

Ship letter fee	6d.
Captain's pence	2d.
Mileage, Bristol to London (122 miles)	<u>1sh8d.</u>
	2sh4d.

Oct. 7, 1812.  
London General Post  
transit.

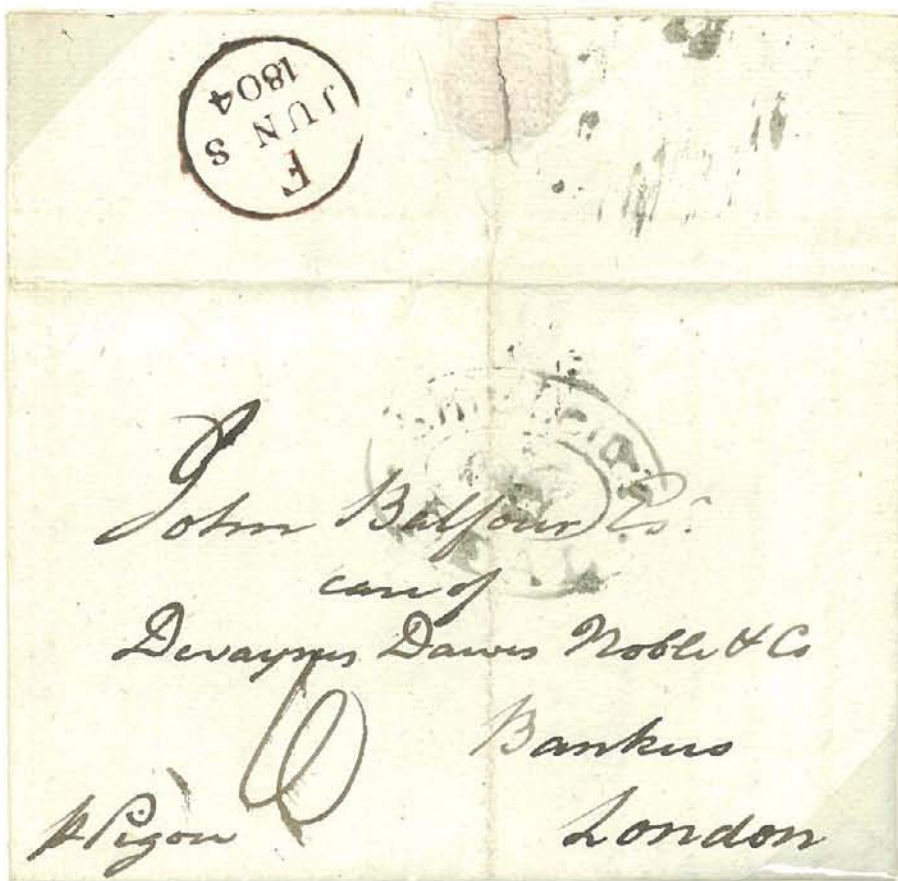


1804

SHIP LETTERS  
DEAL

Ship Pigeon

May 4, 1804. Letter Quaker dated (5 mo. 4, 1804) at Philadelphia. It concerns the attempt "...to receive dividends on 3 pcent deferred stock in thy name on the books of the Treasury of the U.S. Loan office." They had previously written on this matter April 10, 1804. The further write, "...and have been under the necessity of sending for it to New York, where we had hop'd to procure it in time for the present conveyance the Pigeon, Capt. Collet for London, but it is necessary to have it sent to Washington for transfer..." Letter is endorsed: Pigeon. The Pigeon sailed from Philadelphia for London.



The Pigeon touched at Deal where this letter went ashore for conveyance to London by mail coach. This was not unusual as the time beating up the Thames by sail to London was longer than over the road carriage. Deal to London was 74 miles.

June 8. Letter backstamped on arrival at London. It was rated, Act of 1801, single letter inland 50 to 80 miles at 6d. + 4d. Ship Letter charge = 10d. due, shown in manuscript.

1838

SHIP LETTERS  
DEAL



To *M*  
Thomas Wilson, Esq  
Treasurer of the  
London Missionary Society,  
Mission House  
Blomfield Street,  
London.



*Albania*

DEAL  
SHIP LETTER



Feb. 13, 1839.  
London arrival  
stamp.

Dec. 20, 1838. Letter  
posted at Berbice, British  
Guiana to London, per the  
ship "Albania".

Letter rated:  
Ship Letter  
charge in 1839 6 d.  
Capt. Gratuity 2 d.  
Inland charge,  
Deal - London,  
74 miles. 8 d.  
Due from addressee (in mms.) 1/4

1804

SHIP LETTERS

GRAVESEND



November 2, 1804. Letter datelined at Amsterdam, where it was handed to a ship's captain headed for England. Letter deals with prints and bookselling matters, plus the loss of several members of the writer's family the previous summer from "fever".



GRAVESEND Ship Letter marking applied upon arrival at that port. Robertson S2, noted in use 1803 - 1805.



November 12, 1804. Unpaid mark of the General Post, transit backstamp, double rim for evening duty. Letter rated 8d. due, being that of a double letter, 15 to 30 miles, as Gravesend to London is but 22 miles. No captain's pence charged. Act of 1801 rates.

1828

SHIP LETTERS

GRAVESEND



PP

August 23, 1828. Letter into mails at Frankfurt, Germany via Ostende, Belgium. "PP" = Porte Payee, indicating postage paid to the port of debarkation at Ostende, from thence as a Ship Letter, unpaid.

SHIP LETTER  
GRAVESEND



Letter marked as a SHIP LETTER incoming at Gravesend. Robertson S6a. In use in black 1822-32.

Sept. 1, 1828. Receipt backstamp at London. Letter rated (Act of 1812) 1 oz., 20-30 miles (Gravesend to London) at 1sh.8d. + 8d. Ship Letter charge = 2sh.4d.

1801-02

SHIP LETTERS  
GREENOCK



December 2, 1801. Letter datelined at St. John, New Brunswick, and handed directly to the captain of the brig Friends, as endorsed: pr Brig Friends.



4

Letter arrived at the port of the addressee, where the mail was handed over to the postmaster at Greenock, Scotland. Here this letter was rated under 39 Geo. III, Cap. 76, effective July 12, 1799, at 4d. for a Ship Letter addressed to the port of arrival. Inward Ship Letters were charged 4d. plus inland, here no "inland" charge made. Masters to have 2d. per letter, inwards or outwards.

1836

'SHIP LETTERS  
GREENOCK



May 15, 1836. Letter datelined at New Orleans and handed to ship captain headed for Great Britain.

GREENOCK  
JUN 27 1836  
SHIP LETTER

1  
—  
2

June 27. Letter handed in at the post office at Greenock, North Briton (Scotland). Greenock to Liverpool is 240 miles so letter was rated under Act of 1812:

Single inland letter 230-300 miles	1sh.
Ship Letter charge	6d.
Captain's Pence	2d.
Scottish Mail Coach Fee	<u>1/4d.</u>
Total due	1/8 1/2d.

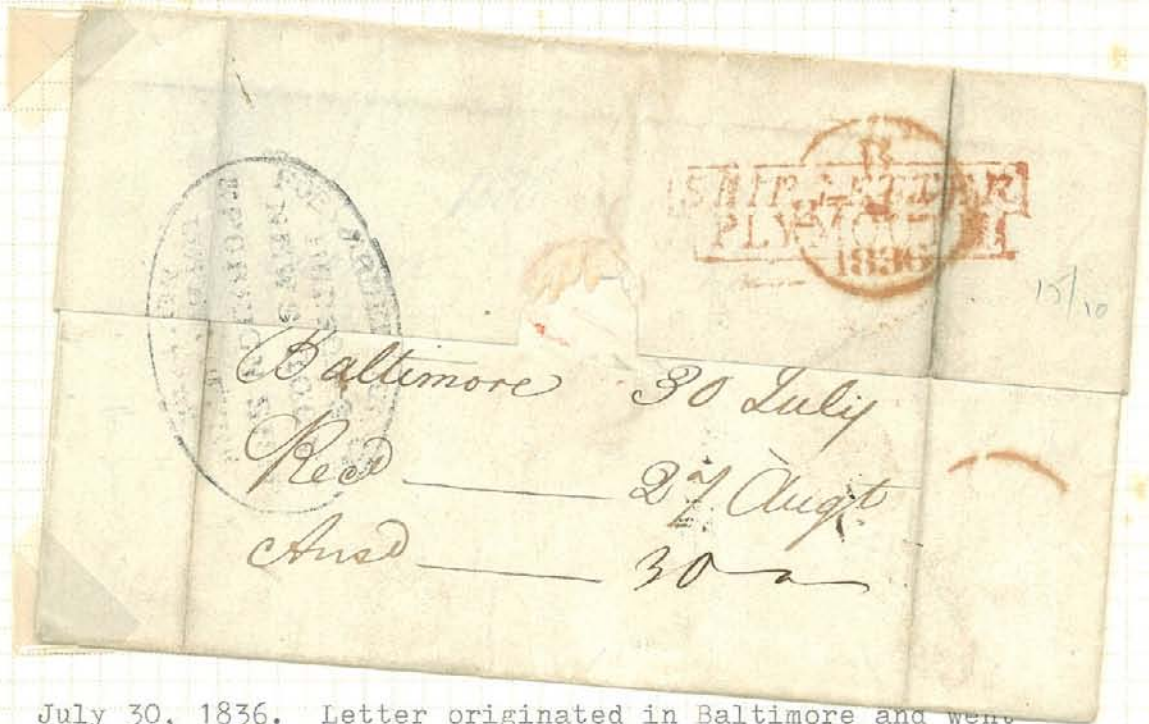
Letter was re-addressed by the forwarding agent, Robert Nelson, to a local address, Crosby. No forwarding postage was charged, but the letter was correctly re-rated as a double letter at 1sh.8d. x 2 = 3sh. 4d. The Scotch 1/4d. Mail Tax was applied only once per letter regardless of weight, making total due 3/4 1/2d.

N.B. Ha'penny Scotch Mail Tax: Greenock Type C2 Group. The 1/2 is enclosed in a vertical frame and the "2" has a straight base.

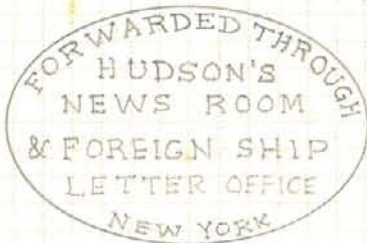
1836

SHIP LETTERS  
PLYMOUTH

FORWARDING AGENT  
Hudson's News Room &  
Foreign Ship Letter Office  
New York.



July 30, 1836. Letter originated in Baltimore and went "out of the posts" to New York. Addressed on obverse "Packet for London - August 1st."



Letter handled at New York through the offices of Hudson's News Room, where it was put aboard packet for London.

This handstamp unfortunately only fairly legible, as usual.

Black X Line, New York to London.  
Packet Toronto, Capt. Griswold, sailed Aug. 1. 1836  
for London from N.Y. Toronto, 631 tons, service 1835-48.

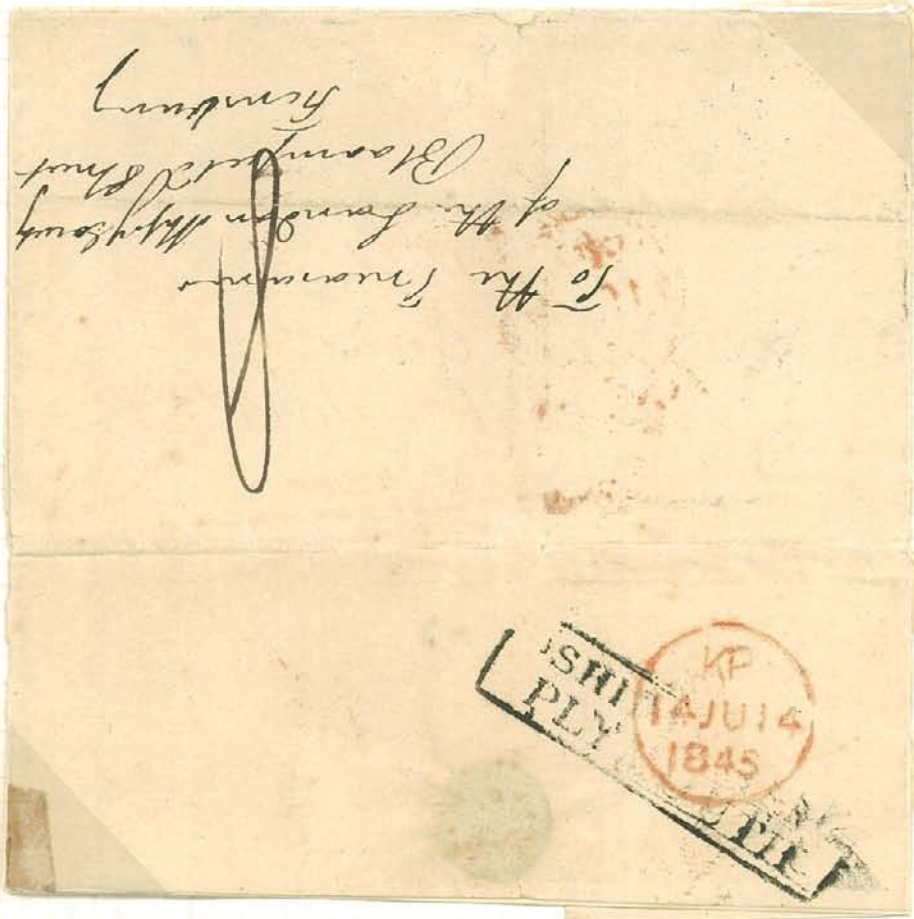
Letter landed at Plymouth, England, where it received this "Downward Step" mark, Robonson S7 in red, noted as used 1835-38.

August 27, 1836. Letter arrived at London. Rated at 1sh.7d., as follows:  
Rates by Act of 1812  
Plymouth-London 215 miles 11d.  
Ship letter 6d.  
Captns pence 2d.  
19d.  
= 1/7.

1845

BRITISH POSTAL MARKINGS

SHIP LETTERS  
PLYMOUTH



SHIP LETTER  
PLYMOUTH

KP  
14JUL 14  
1845

Ship letter marking impressed when ship docked at Plymouth, indicating to rating clerk at London the mode of transportation of letter.

June 14, 1845. London transit stamp. Ship letter rate of 1840 of 8d. was marked in mms. at London.

Letter posted April 18, 1845 at Cape Town, South Africa.



1847

BRITISH POSTAL MARKINGS

SHIP LETTERS  
PLYMOUTH



Nov. 2, 1847.  
Rio de Janeiro  
letter to Ham-  
burg, Germany  
via Plymouth,  
England per the  
ship "Conrad".

SHIP LETTER  
PLYMOUTH

Letter arrived at  
Plymouth, first English  
Port at which ship land-  
ed.

BX  
8 FE 8  
1848

Feb. 8, 1848.  
London transit  
stamp.

St. PA  
12 Feb 48

Feb. 12, 1848.  
Hamburg, Germany  
transit stamp.

1829

BRITISH POSTAL MARKINGS

SHIP LETTERS  
PORTSMOUTH



Letter posted May 9, 1829 at Havana, Cuba

PORTSMOUTH  
SHIP LETTER



Arrival mark struck at Portsmouth, England showing method of transport.

Sept. 7, 1829. London receipt mark. Double rim, evening duty.

The rate on this letter was figured at 5 double sheet rates at 1 1/4 oz. (mms. on cover) or 1/4 oz. per sheet. 1sh. 4d. x 5 equals 6sh. 8d. as noted on cover.

BSA 1100

1833

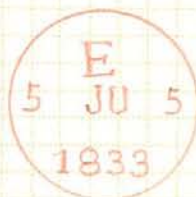
SHIP LETTERS

PORTSMOUTH



May 4, 1833. Letter datelined at Boston. Apparently hand delivered to ship captain, as no handling was done by the U.S. Post Office.

PORTSMOUTH  
SHIP LETTER



Letter entered Britain at Portsmouth and was marked as a Ship Letter with this "large" step down mark, S. 13, recorded used in black 1815-44.

June 5, 1833. Letter back-stamped on arrival at London. It was there rated under Act of 1812 rates, Portsmouth to London, 72 miles, at 8d. single x 10 rates = 80d. = 6sh, 8d. (mms. U.R.) + 4d. Ship Letter charge = 7/- due, shown as the large mms. numeral.

1902

SHIP LETTERS  
SOUTHAMPTON

NORTH GERMAN LLOYD River Plate to Southampton, S.S. Pfalz  
HAMBURG -AMERICAN LINE. Southampton to N.Y., S.S. Kiautschou



April 27, 1902. Postcard picturing the steamer Pfalz was posted at Madeira Island aboard the Pfalz, en route to Southampton from the River Plate (Buenos Aires.)

May 2. The 10 pfennig German stamp was cancelled aboard the Pfalz showing the route Bremen-La Plata. Use of foreign stamps aboard a ship of the country's origin was permitted under the "Ship Letter" or "Paquebot" designations of this era.

May 2. Letter arrived at Southampton as a Ship Letter (Paquebot) (Hosking 117). No further postal charges were needed.

N.Y. Times, Monday, May 12. Arrived S.S. Kiautschou (Ger.,) Luneschloss, Hamburg May 2 and Southampton 3d. and Cherbourg 4th to Hamburg-American Line. Inside the Bar at 12:20 A.M. 12th.

May 12. Newburgh, N.Y. arrival machine cancellation.

1818

SHIP LETTERS  
PHILADELPHIA TO BELFAST VIA LIVERPOOL (Ship)



March 2, 1818. Letter headed at Philadelphia, and handed to Captain Ferguson.

LIVERPOOL  
SHIP LETTER

30 AP 30  
1818

Robinson No. S8. Letter marked incoming and rated 1 sh. 8d., arrived at as follows:

British miles, L'pool-Holyhead	104
" " , Dublin-Belfast	110
	214

Mileage rate	1/-
Capt'n's pence	2d.
Ship Letter chg.	6d.
	<u>1/8d.</u>

April 30, 1818. Letter in transit at Dublin and this diamond struck there. This mark predates cataloged type 45 by 2 years, recorded in use 1820-41 (Cf: Handbook of Irish P.H.).

Charge was here added for the Holyhead-Dublin Packet, making 2 shilling total due.

1824-25  
SHIP LETTER

LIVERPOOL

INDIA LETTER/LIVERPOOL

Ship New Jersey

(Error)



1824-25

SHIP LETTER

LIVERPOOL

INDIA LETTER/LIVERPOOL(Error)

Ship New Jersey

Letter is datelined at Oxmead, near Philadelphia, using the "Quaker" dating: 12th Mo., 1824. Endorsed on the face "p.New Jersey".

Shipping & Commercial List and New York Price Current lists the private trader the Ship New Jersey, Capt. Whittle, cleared Philadelphia Dec. 22, 1824 for Liverpool. Letter had been handed directly to the ship's captain, hence no U.S. Domestic postage is shown or was needed.

INDIA LETTER  
LIVERPOOL

R. In 2

LIVERPOOL  
SHIP LETTER

R. S 12

Upon arrival at Liverpool the letter was turned over to postal authorities who, in error, struck it with the INDIA LETTER/LIVERPOOL backstamp which would subject the letter to special concessi- onary rates accorded to ships of the East India Company. This was invalidated by overstriking with the correct mark SHIP LETTER/LIVERPOOL. It was then backstamped again with the correct SHIP LETTER/LIVERPOOL handstamp.

SHIP LETTER  
LIVERPOOL



January 19, 1825. Backstamped on arrival at London with the red circular mark of the General Post and the time red oval stamp of the Chief Office at 10 F.NOON.10 (10 A.M.). Letter was rated Liverpool to London (206 miles) under the inland rates, Act of 1812 (52 Geo. III.Cap 88) at 11 pence for a letter going 170 to 230 miles plus 8d. Ship Letter charge = 19d. or 1 shilling 7d. x 2 (double letter) = 3 shilling 2 pence shown as 3/2 on face.

1837

SHIP LETTERS  
LIVERPOOL

Ship Malcolm, Private Trader, Buenos Ayres to Liverpool

April 7, 1837. Letter datelined at Buenos Ayres, directionally endorsed: via Liverpool/pr. Malcolm.



R.S.137

LIVERPOOL  
SHIP LETTER

June 24, 1837. Arrival backstamp at London. Gore's General Gazette, L'pool of July 6, notes under arrivals: The Malcolm (963 of Kirkaldy), J. Malcolm from Buenos Ayres with salted hides, tallow, Nicaragua Wood, etc. - Waterside

Dock. She was 68 days out from B. Ayres.

Letter rated Act of 1812, 170-230 miles, Liverpool to London, at 11d. plus 8d. Ship Letter charge = 19d. or 1sh.7d., as shown in manuscript as 1/7.



SHIP LETTERS  
LIVERPOOL



Aug. 21, 1838.  
New York "ship  
letter" mark.



Aug. 24,  
Montreal receipt  
mark.



July 11, 1838.  
Dublin receipt



July 14, 1838.  
Liverpool Ship  
letter mark.  
Scarce mark.

Letter rated outbound at  
Dublin (1Vic.c34, 1837) 1/-  
( mms. in red U.R.) prepaid  
to Port of Entry (N.York).

Letter then rated at U.S.  
zone rate of 150-400 miles  
at 20 $\frac{1}{2}$ ¢ (mms. black at rt.)  
or Canadian currency equiv-  
alent of 1sh, 5 $\frac{1}{2}$  d. (mms.  
U.L.) paid by the recipient.

BLACK BALL LINE, New York to Liverpool.

Packet Ship Columbus. 663 tons, in service 1834-45, left Liverpool July 16,  
1838, arrived N.Y. Aug. 20.

Captain Frederick A. DePeyster, born c.1785, served on the Columbus '36  
to '38.

1839

Notice in New York Shipping & Commercial List for Letter bags at Gilpin's Reading Room: Liverpool - Columbus - 1st Feb.

Packet Ship Columbus, Capt. Cropper, Black Ball Line, sailed Feb. 1, 1839 for L'pool.

SHIP LETTER-LIVERPOOL  
FORWARDING AGENT-NEW YORK

Letter posted Feb. 1, 1839 at New York via Gilpins Exchange, forwarding agents.



F  
22 FE 22  
1839

Feb. 22, 1839.  
London transit mark.

FORWARDED THROUGH  
GILPIN'S EXCHANGE  
READING ROOM AND  
FOREIGN LETTER OFFICE  
N-YORK

LIVERPOOL  
SHIP LETTER

Received as Ship Letter at L'pool and forwarded to London for rating.

Letter rated 1 1/4 oz.  
(5 times std. rate)

Act of 1812 rate,  
L'pool-London,  
170-230 mi. 11d.  
Capt's pence 2d.  
Ship letter ch. 6d  
19d.

X 5 = 7/11 (nms.)  
due from receipt.

Cachet applied by Gilpin, letter forwarded per packet Columbus.

BSH 130.0

1842

SHIP LETTER

IRELAND TO BALTIMORE

Liverpool Ship Letter  
New York Ship Letter

MARYBOROUGH  
DE 13  
1842  
HG

Dec. 13, 1842. Letter posted at Maryborough, Co. Laoighis and pre-paid at the 8 pence ship letter rate. Endorsed on face, "Per private ship".

PAID  
DE 14M  
1842

Dec. 14. Paid transit stamp of the Dublin General Post.

D  
DEC 15  
42

Dec. 15. Octagonal backstamp of the L'pool packet office. Letter did not go aboard the L'pool packets, but sender's instructions were followed and sent as a ship letter.

SHIP-LETTER  
DEC 15  
42  
LIVERPOOL

NEW-YORK  
SHIP  
FEB  
4



Feb. 4, 1843. Letter incoming as a "SHIP LETTER", rated 18-3/4¢ for a letter going 150-400 miles (N.Y. to Baltimore) + 2¢ ship letter charge = 20-3/4¢ due (blue mms. U.R. of face).

Black Ball Line. Ship Oxford, 752 tons. Left L'pool Dec. 13, 1842. Arr. N.Y. Feb. 3, 1843. Capt. Rathbone

1843

SHIP LETTER

IRELAND TO NEW JERSEY

Liverpool Ship Letter

New York Ship Letter



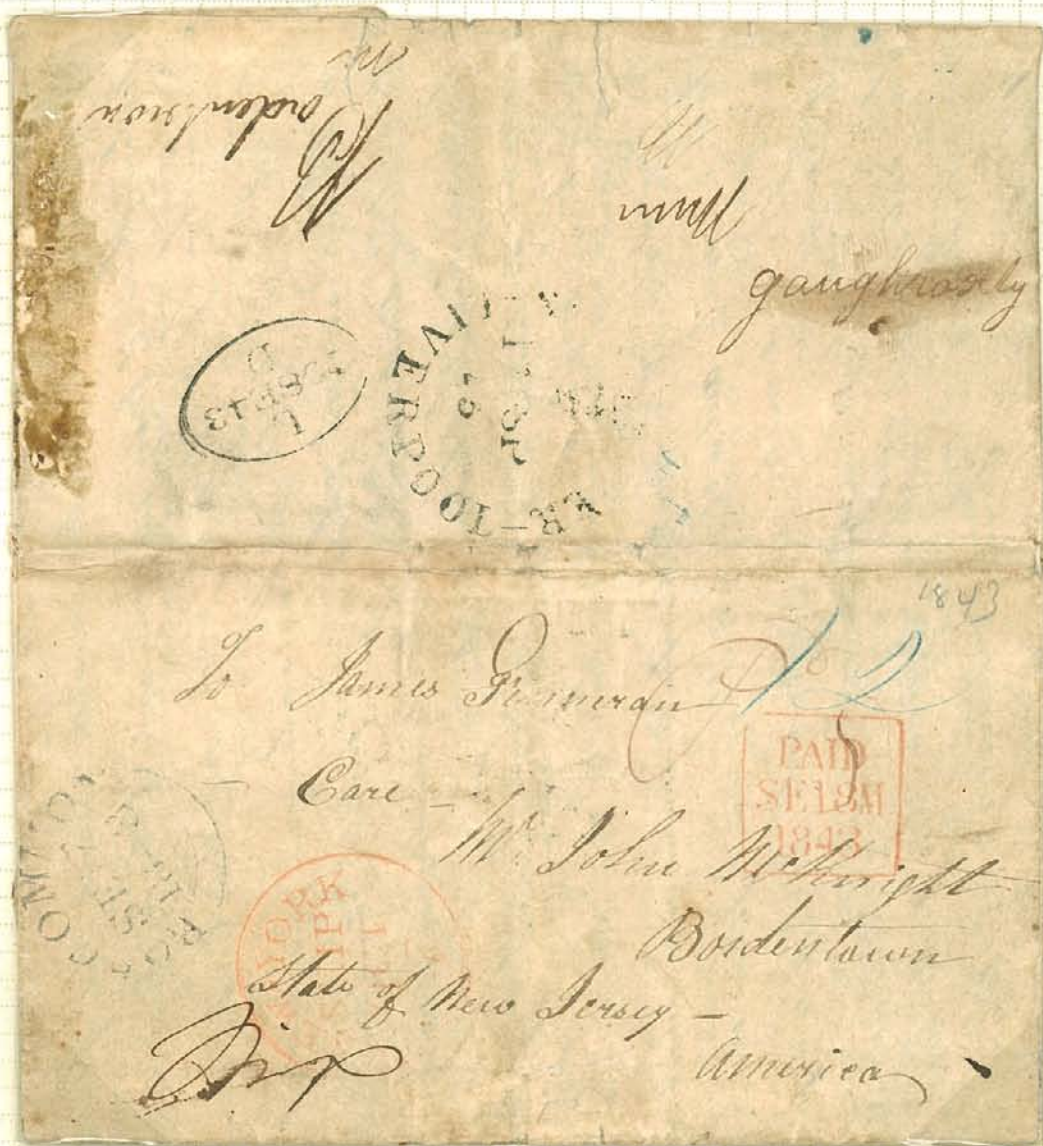
Sept. 17. 1843.  
Letter posted at  
Roscommon, Co.  
Roscommon, Ireland  
to America as a  
ship letter, rate  
paid of 8d.



Sept. 18. Dub-  
lin transit mark.



Sept. 19. L'pool  
transit backstamp  
of Packet Letter  
Office.



Sept. 19, 1843.  
Robertson S15.  
Letter did not make  
outward sailing of  
one of the L'pool  
packets, but sent  
out as a SHIP LET-  
TER and struck  
with this back-  
stamp.



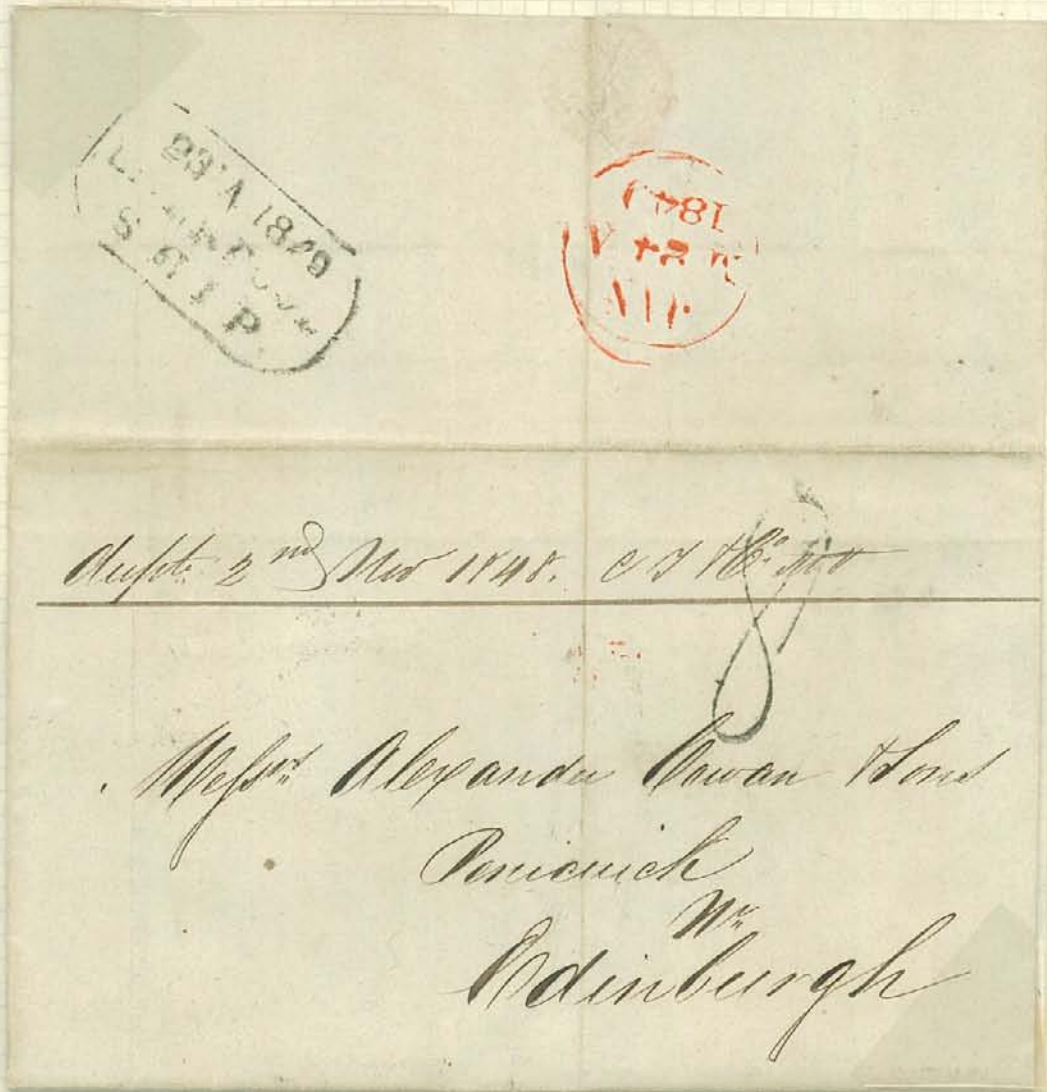
October 17,  
1843. Letter  
incoming at  
New York as a  
SHIP LETTER,  
rated (Act of  
Mar. 3, 1825)  
at inland rate, 30-80 miles  
New York to Bordentown, N.J.,  
+ 2¢ Ship Letter = 12¢ due.

BLACK BALL LINE. Packet Ship Europe, 618 tons, sailed from L'pool Sept. 19. 1843,  
arrived N.Y. Oct. 16, Capt. Edward G. Furber.

1848

SHIP LETTERS  
LIVERPOOL

After 1840 Ship Letters incoming into Britain were flat rated at 8d. regardless of the Port of Entry, and this fee included delivery within the U.K.



23 JA 1849  
LIVERPOOL  
SHIP

JAN  
24  
1849

8

Recd. 2<sup>nd</sup> Nov 1848. Edinb. Wm

Messrs Alexander Gordon & Sons  
Piccadilly  
Edinburgh

8d. Handstamp,  
Standard Ship  
Letter rate.  
(See above).

Nov. 2, 1848. Letter handed to ship's master at Monte Video, Uruguay for Edinburgh, to be given up at first English port as a "Ship Letter".

23 JA 1849  
LIVERPOOL  
SHIP

Jan. 23, 1849.  
L'pool receipt  
mark.

JAN  
M 24 A  
1849

Jan. 24, 1849.  
Edinburgh transit  
stamp.

THORP & MARTIN CORP. NARIBO NO. 88

1848

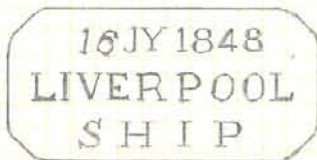
BRITISH POSTAL MARKINGS

SHIP LETTERS

LIVERPOOL



May 13, 1848. Cover delivered to hand of Ship Master of vessel "Foam" in Sierra Leone, British Crown Colony on west coast of Africa.



July 16, 1848. Ship Letter stamp applied upon delivery of letter to Post Office at Liverpool.



July 17, 1848. London transit mark where letter was sent for assessment of postage (8 d. in manuscript) and delivery.

1857

BRITISH POSTAL MARKINGS

SHIP LETTERS



Oct. 14, 1857. Cover posted at Lisbon, Portugal for Plymouth, England. Noted per Steam Ship "Cintra" in mms.



Oct. 21, 1857. Transit mark at Liverpool indicating letter was a "Ship Letter". This is the type of Ship Mark that succeeded the earlier types and lasted from the early 1850s and into the 1870s



Oct. 22, 1857. Receipt mark at Plymouth.

1867

SHIP LETTERS  
HAITI TO PARIS VIA LIVERPOOL  
S.S. West Indian

Aug. 3, 1867.  
Letter date-  
lined at Haiti.  
It went aboard  
the SS West In-  
dian, a private  
trader at her  
port of call at  
Port au Prince.

LIVERPOOL  
SHIP  
AUI8  
1867  
B

SHIP-LETTER  
A  
19 AOUT  
67  
LONDON

London Times,  
Aug. 19. WEST  
INDIES, Liver-  
pool, Aug. 18.  
The steamer  
West Indian  
from Colon, &c.  
arrived here  
this morning.  
All was quiet  
at Hayti under  
the new government.



Letter received at Liverpool as a Ship Letter and transit at London, also as a Ship Letter, backstamps.

GB  
1F 60c  
53040



ANGL.  
19  
AOUT  
67  
AMB. CALAIS

PARIS  
19  
AOUT  
67  
(60)

Encircled cross is inspector's mark at London showing letter received special treatment.

Letter was struck with the "tray" mark applied under Article 34 of the British-French agreement of Jan. 1857, unpaid letters from foreign countries by British vessels charged at 1 franc 60 centimes per 30 grams.

Aug. 19. French entry mark ambulant (RR) at Calais, Paris backstamp. 10 decimes due.



1798-99

SHIP LETTERS

LONDON/SHIP-LRE

*Mr. Newton*  
*of the*  
*Mildred*  
*is sailed, if not sailed by the Jamaica*  
*Mildred*  
Calcutta 1798

March 6, 1798. Letter dated at Calcutta and endorsed: p Mildred (lower left corner.)

LLOYD'S LIST, February 3, 1799. Arrived at Deal Mildred, Jordan from Bengal.

LLOYD'S REGISTER, 1798. Mildred, Ship, M. Jordan, commander, 400 tons, 2 decks, sheathed with copper, Moxon &c. owners, surveyed at London, hence to India.



LONDON  
SHIP-LRE

R.S.B

February 5, 1799. Forwarding agent in London directed the letter on to Madeira: p Roskeld if not sailed, if sailed by the Jamaica. Shilling Ship Letter rate paid and Robertson S.3 LONDON/SHIP-LRE struck on face. This mark used 1786-99.

LLOYD'S LIST of April 23, 1799 notes, "Arrived at Madeira, Jamaica, Sherry, London."

1800

SHIP LETTERS

LONDON "Ship Letter"



Two very similar London crown type Ship Letter stamps were in use concurrently, Robertson S.7, 1799-1825, normal with distance between "S" of Ship and "L" of Letter 6mm. and S.8 1799-1800, scarce, distance between same points only 4mm. This strike is of the scarce variety.



Jan. 27, 1800. Letter datelined at Leeds, where it was noted  $1\frac{1}{4}$  (oz.) in upper left, which required 5 rates at one rate per  $\frac{1}{4}$ -oz.

Rated Act of 1796 (37 Geo. III. Cap 18), Leeds to London (191 miles) at 8d. per  $\frac{1}{4}$ -oz. for a letter going over 150 miles x 5 rates = 40d. or 3sh.4d. To this was added the Captain's gratuity of 2d. x 5 = 10d. for a total of 4sh.2d. shown as  $4\frac{1}{2}$  in red manuscript. Endorsed "p the Thos. Russell", the letter went directly to the addressee at Boston, thus no U.S. postal marks.

1804

LONDON - SHIP LETTERS

May 22, 1803.  
Letter posted  
aboard H.M.S.  
Lancaster,  
Madras Roads,  
India. Letter  
9 months in  
transit.

*Charles  
Buller Building  
Holborn London*



Feb. 21, 1804.  
Ship Letter  
stamp, incom-  
ing at London.  
Scarce single  
circle stamp  
in use 1804 -  
1807. (Robert-  
son S. 15)

Feb. 22, 1804.  
London transit  
stamp.



1810

SHIP LETTERS

LONDON

Sweden to Edinburgh via London

May 20, 1810. Letter headed at Gottenburgh, Sweden, and handed to a private ship bound to England.



SHIP  
MY 24  
1810  
LETTER

May 24. Ship Letter arrival mark at London. Letter rated, Act of 1805 (45 Geo. III, Cap. 11), for a letter inland 396 miles (London to Edinburgh) at 1sh.4d. plus 4d. captain's pence= 1sh.5d. due, shown as 1/5 in manuscript.



June 1. Receiving postmark at Edinburgh.

N.B.: London SHIP LETTER mark is Robertson S.16. He notes, "1810-1811. V. short life. Few examples of this rare mark recorded."

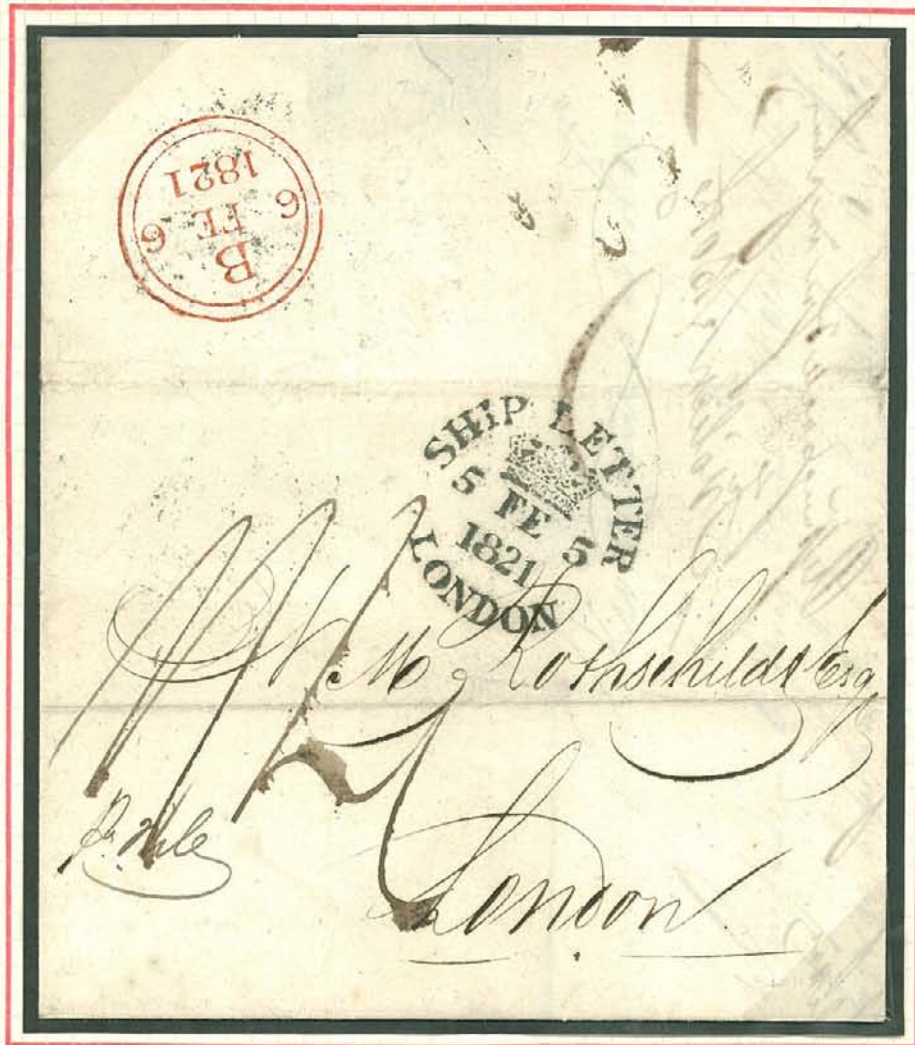
— TRANSATLANTIC MAIL. —

1820-1. Private ship letter, Rio de Janeiro to London.

An entire letter headed, "Frolien & Bothe, Rio de Janeiro, 15<sup>th</sup> Novr 1820"  
carried by private ship to London, endorsed 'Pr. Nile', arrived 5. Feby 1821.

Handed in by ship's captain at London post office where the unframed  
'Ship Letter London' datestamp was applied (Robertson S. 21.)

— Twelve weeks in transit from Brazil to London. —



Rate in m/script '1<sup>s</sup>/4<sup>d</sup>', the double rate charge for a letter 1/2 - 1 oz.

Basic rate per 1/2 oz : 6<sup>d</sup> Ship letter charge .  
2<sup>d</sup> gratuity to ship's captain.  
8<sup>d</sup>

1831

SHIP LETTERS  
LONDON

April 8, 1831.  
Letter posted unpaid  
at Hamburg, Germany  
for London, "per  
Steam Boat", as noted  
in manuscript.



April 8, 1831.  
Letter received the  
transit mark at  
Hamburg packet office,  
indicating that it  
was to go by ship  
post.



April 11, 1831. A very fine strike of the London  
ship letter (Robinson S24). Double rated letter of  
ship rate 8d. x 2 = 16d. or 1sh. 4d. (mms. on face)  
due.



1832

BRITISH POSTAL MARKINGS

SHIP LETTERS  
LONDON



June 8, 1832. Letter posted at Hamburg, Germany for London, per steamer, as noted in mms.



June 8, 1832.  
German Ship Letter  
mark.



June 11, 1832.  
London Ship Letter  
mark.



June 12, 1832.  
London Office receipt  
mark where ship letter  
rate of 8d. (in mms.)  
was assessed.

1839

SHIP LETTERS

LONDON

S. S. John Wood

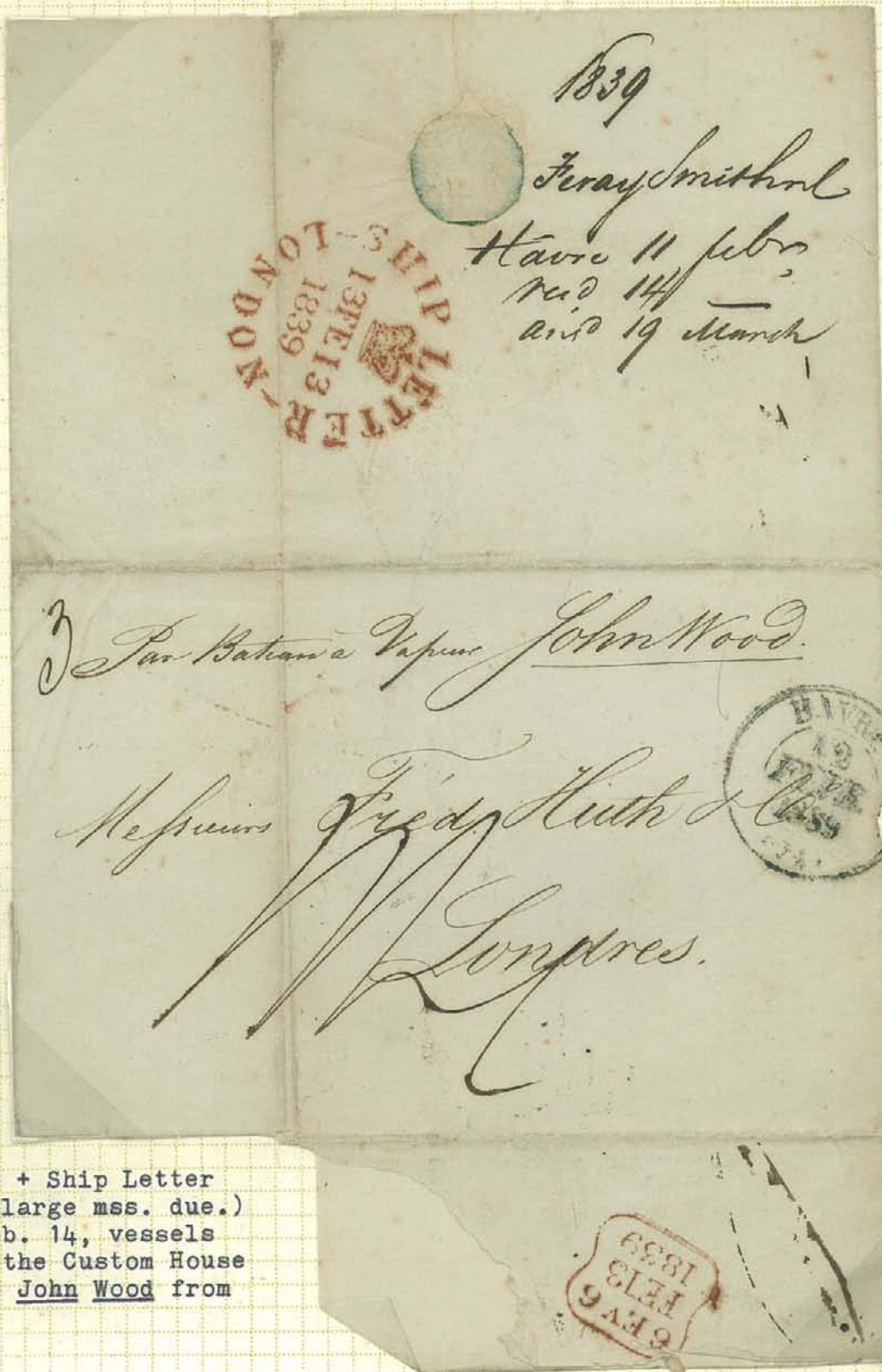


Feb. 15, 1839.  
Letter posted un-  
paid at Havre,  
France and dir-  
ectionally en-  
dorsed "Par  
Bateau a Vapeur  
John Wood".



Feb. 13. At  
London a perfect  
strike of the  
LONDON/SHIP LET-  
TER (R. S.28),  
used in red 1838-  
47. Mss. 3 notes  
subject to treble  
rate, hence Act  
of 1812 rate for  
under 15 mi. of  
4d x 3 = 12d (1/-) + Ship Letter  
charge 4d. = 1/4 (large mss. due.)

London Times, Feb. 14, vessels  
entered inward at the Custom House  
Feb. 13, 1839, the John Wood from  
Havre.





1840

SHIP LETTERS  
LONDON



PF

October 11, 1840. Letter "Paid to the Frontier" at Antwerp (Anvers) and noted "PF" in a red box. Sender noted "Below One Ounce" for a double weight letter. Letter marked on reverse at "25" (decimes), roughly 2½d. to get the letter aboard the steamer ferry.



October 12, 1840. Marked incoming at London as a "Ship Letter" with the Robertson Type S.28 (34½ mm, Crown type H). Time stamp of the Chief Office, 2AN = 2 Afternoon. Letter rated at the standard Ship Letter rate in effect from 1840, double, of 8 pence x 2 = 16d. or 1 shilling 4., shown as 1/4 in manuscript.



1815

SHIP LETTERS  
LONDON PAID SHIP LETTER



May 25, 1815. Letter prepaid as a Ship Letter at London where this "PAID" mark was struck. Robertson Type 44a with smaller letters. Letter endorsed "Brighton 7". This letter was rated under the Acts of 1799 which authorized the Post Office to accept and despatch letter by vessels other than regular Post Office packets. Outgoing letters by vessels other than packets were handled through London and were subject to half the packet rate. Here the rate to France was 1sh.2d. per  $\frac{1}{2}$ -oz. (G.P.O. Foreign Letter notice April 25, 1814. Robertson C.14/B), half being charged was 7d. per the Ship Brighton. Had the letter originated outside London the Inland rate to London would have been in addition to the Ship Letter Charge.

June 4, 1815. Docket notes receipt at Cognac where a French charge of 18 decimes ("18" in mss.) was due. Letter concerns an attachment on brandy for a London debtor.

1843

### BRITISH POSTAL MARKINGS

#### LONDON SHIP LETTERS

By Postal Regulations, letters carried by private ship ("Ship Letters") were required to be turned over to the Postmaster at the first English port of entry where a suitable SHIP LETTER stamp was impressed, bearing the town name of the port of entry. This was vitally necessary before 1840 as the letter was rated with the Inland Rate from the port of entry plus the ship letter charge. After 1840 a flat 8d. ship letter rate applied regardless of the port of entry.

There is considerable evidence to show that after 1840, with the extension of the railways to all large ports, the more important ship letter mails were dispatched to London by train without breaking bulk at the port. The plain SHIP LETTER stamp without name of port was applied to such letters on their arrival in London (after 1840).



SHIP LETTER

London Ship Letter designation, arrival at port other than London.



March 31, 1843  
London transit date stamp.



March 23, 1843  
Windsor receipt date stamp.

Letter rated 8d., ship letter rate after 1840.

1840

SHIP LETTERS  
LONDON

Ship Waverley

Docket notes letter originated at Sydney. It was endorsed: p  
Waverley, a private trader.

SHIP LETTER

R. S. 36



Oct. 26, 1840.  
Arrival backstamps  
at London. S.36  
is known used 1840  
to 1857. It was  
transferred from  
the G.P.O. to the  
Ship Letter office  
on Sept. 2, 1840,  
so this represents  
an early usage.

Rating represents  
a quadruple rate at  
8d. the standard  
Ship Letter rate  
after 1840 x 4 =  
32d. or 2sh.8d.  
as shown in manu-  
script.

The London Times,  
Sat. Oct. 31, 1840:  
Vessels Entered In-  
wards at the Custom  
House: Hero and  
Waverley from  
Sydney.



1843

SHIP LETTERS  
LONDON

Ship Persian



March 3, 1843. A ship letter paid 3d. in Sydney, Australia, and handed to the captain of the private trader Persian, bound for England.

July 10, 1843. Arriving at London, the letter was backstamped with the S.36 in black and a transit datestamp in red.

London Times, July 14. CUSTOM HOUSE. July 13, Vessels Entered Inward: Persian from Sydney.

Single 8d. Ship Letter rate was due at London.



SHIP LETTER

R.S.36



1872

LONDON  
SHIP LETTER



April 22, 1872. Letter posted at Gloucester. 6¢ rate per  $\frac{1}{2}$  oz. Treaty effective 1 Jan. 1870 to 1 July 1875.

April 23, 1872. Boston "Paid" transit.



May 4, 1872. Ship Letter mark at London. The use of these circular paid London Ship Letter handstamps was very limited. By the time of their use most letters were carried by ships under Post Office Packet contracts and the private ship was no longer the usual means of conveying mail. The role of the stamp had also changed to that of an indication of course via the London Office rather than a letter landed at London.

Robertson, A.W., The Maritime Postal History of London, Robson Lowe, London, 1960. Pg. 18.

1872

LONDON  
SHIP LETTER



Mar. 1, 1872. Letter posted at Gloucester for London, 12¢, double letter rate (6¢ per oz. x 2), Treaty rate eff. 1 Jan. 1870 to 1 July 1875.

Mar. 2. Boston "Paid" transit mark.



March 16, 1872. Ship Letter mark at London. The use of these circular paid London Ship Letter handstamps was very limited. By the time of their use most letters were carried by ships under Post Office Packet contracts and the private ship was no longer the usual means of conveying mail. The role of the stamp had also changed to that of an indication of course via the London Office rather than a letter landed at London.

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