

**MAIL FROM ICELAND VIA LIVERPOOL, UK –  
LIVERPOOL POSTMARKS ON ICELANDIC COVERS, CARDS AND STAMPS**  
*Jakob S Arrevad & Ebbe Eldrup*



# ISLANDS *Kontakt*

**SPECIAL** # 22 – 2020 – V2 – LIVERPOOL

Compiler: Jakob S. Arrevad: [JSA@AGADVOKATFIRMA.DK](mailto:JSA@AGADVOKATFIRMA.DK)

This is a part of a series published online 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. Compilations of other British postmarks and other issues in the series “IslandsKontakt Special” can be accessed for free at <https://www.nfvskandinavie.com/artikelen-ijisland.php>

To some extent this issue is based on material presented by Ebbe Eldrup “Liverpool skibsstempler 1890’erne-1919”: IslandsKontakt # 88 from page 17.

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You can be lucky and find an “aur-stamp” or later issues with Liverpool Ship Cancellation. It is rarely used on mail from Iceland – but here is an overview.

## **A. BEFORE 1873 – “LIVERPOOL SHIP” USED ON MAIL FROM ICELAND**

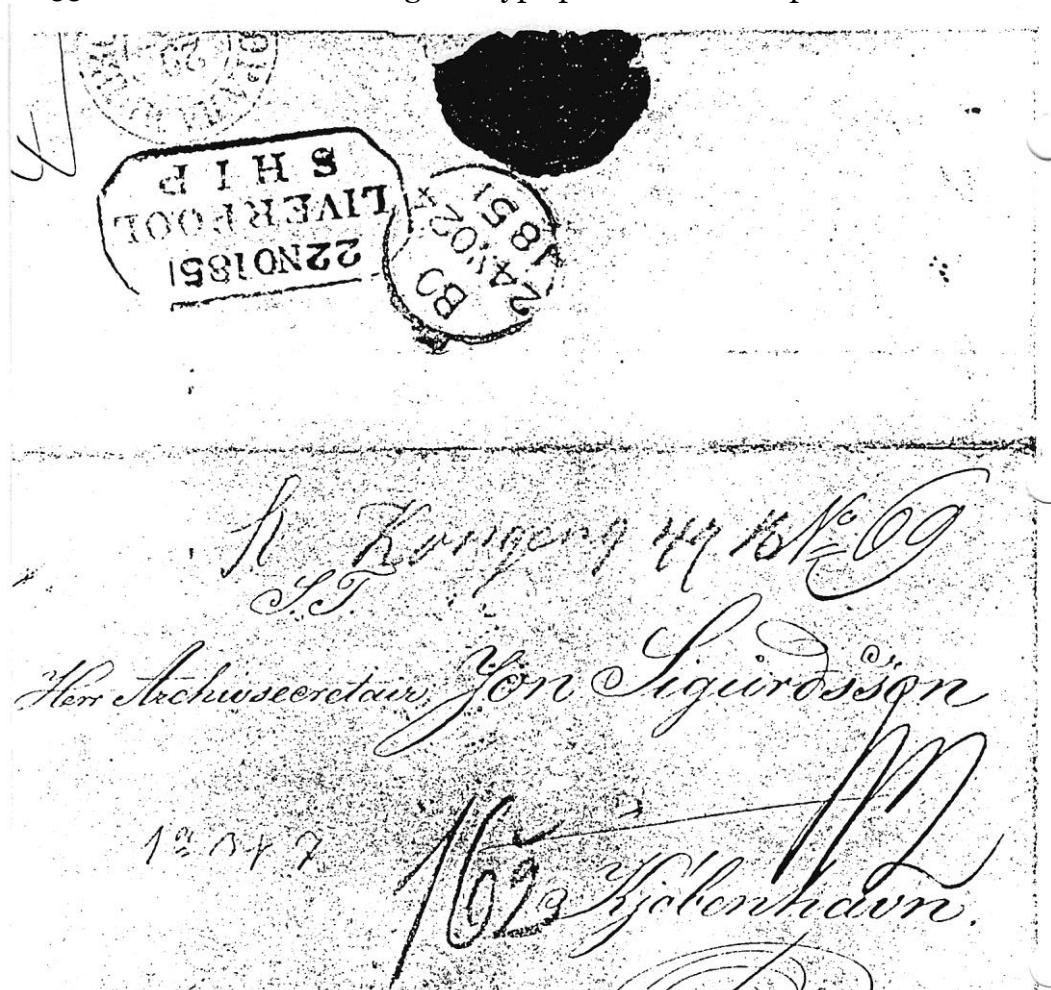
Heinrich Schilling: ”Fremde Anlandestempel aus Islandspost” (1996) shows an (the first?) example from 22 NO 1851 – on a Jon Sigurdsson letter<sup>1</sup> to Denmark.



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<sup>1</sup> The “Jon Sigurdsson” letters are all in the Icelandic National Archive from where Schilling also found below example from 1862.

This LIVERPOOL SHIP cancellations are among many, see Robertson: “A History of the Ship Letters of the British Isles” volume II. This is “S 16” under “E.153” with the indicated use 1841-1855 and the remark: “Octagonal type peculiar to Liverpool.”



The letter was carried by “CAROLINE” departing from Reykjavik on 15 NO 1851<sup>2</sup>

The following cancellation from 8 AU a862<sup>3</sup> is also from the Icelandic National Archive.



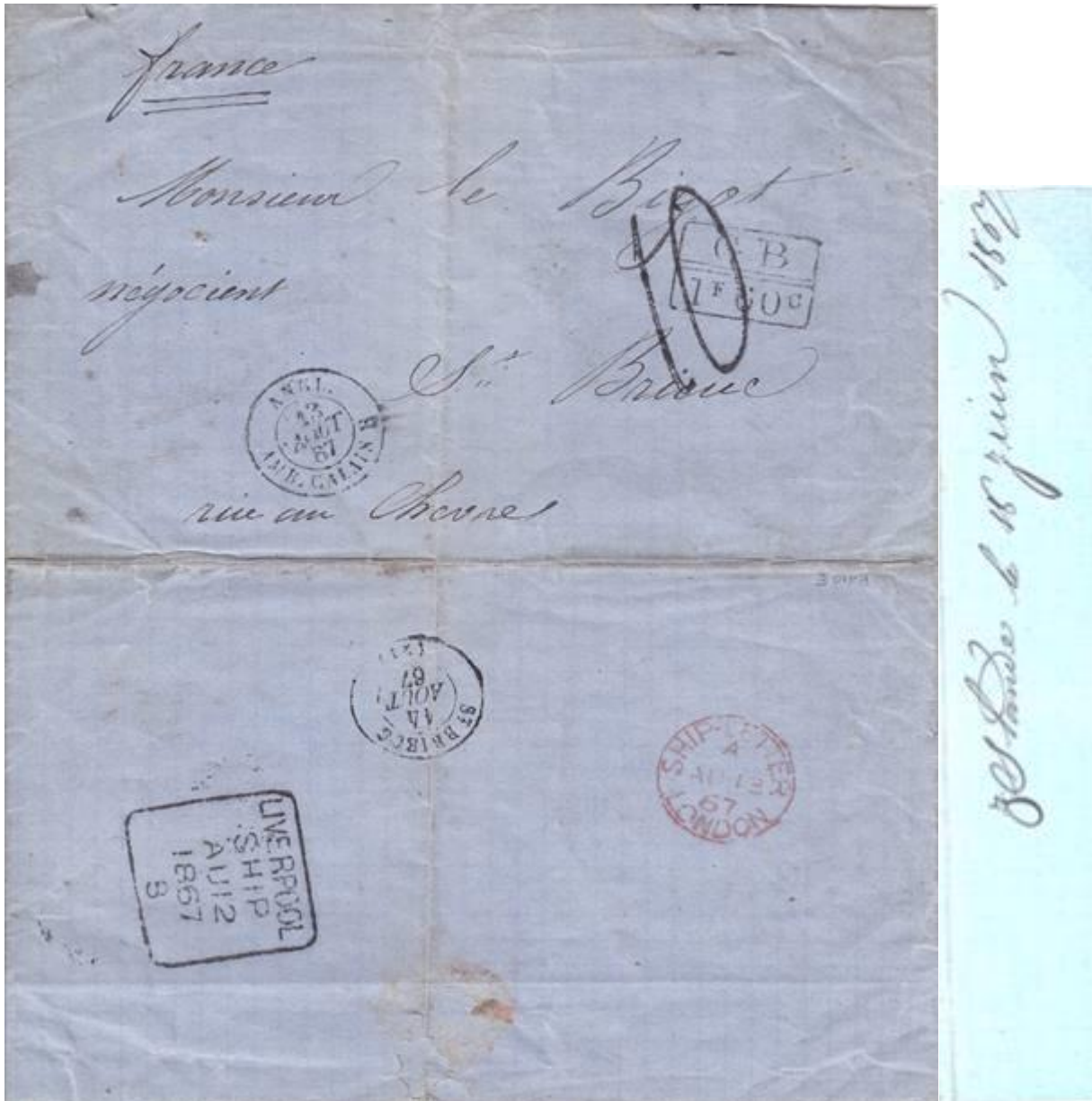
It is as the next example called “S 18” by Robertson in section “E. 153” and the use is from 1853-1877 and his text is here also: “On unpaid letters”.

<sup>2</sup> Ib Krarup Rasmussen: “Den Danske Regerings Postskibsfart mellem Danmark og Island 1774-1880” (2004)

<sup>3</sup> Carrier ARCTURUS scheduled departing from Reykjavik 02 AU 1862: Ib Krarup Rasmussen: “Den Danske Regerings Postskibsfart mellem Danmark og Island 1774-1880” (2004).

The following letter dated 18 June 1867 is from the Captain of a fishing vessel in Iceland for "the season" but disappointed to have only "8,000 salt cod on board" having been in Iceland for a month, headed from "Islande" and addressed to a merchant in "ST. BRIECC" (14 Aug. backstamp) in "France". The "LIVERPOOL SHIP" is dated AU 12 1867.<sup>4</sup>

It is probably sent with ARCTURUS departing from Reykjavik to Liverpool 30<sup>th</sup> July<sup>5</sup>



This one is also Robertson under "E. 153" named "S 18".

<sup>4</sup> The editor of IslandsKontakt at that time - Ole Svinth - added to the description: "I am sure this item is connected to the article on French fishermen in the May issue [IslandsKontakt # 71 2009 "French fishermen in Icelandic waters by Þór Þorsteins"]

<sup>5</sup> PJODOLFR 29. Juli 1867

Only very few letters with Liverpool prior to the opening of the first Danish Post office in Iceland (in March 1870) are known; the others are all addressed to Denmark as the one from 1851.

The following example is after 1873. It is Robertson "S 19a"<sup>6</sup>. Unfortunately only one half of the Brjefspjald remains and the lower half - most likely with a 5 aur blue perf 14 - is missing. The card was received in Aalborg 30/4 (1880)

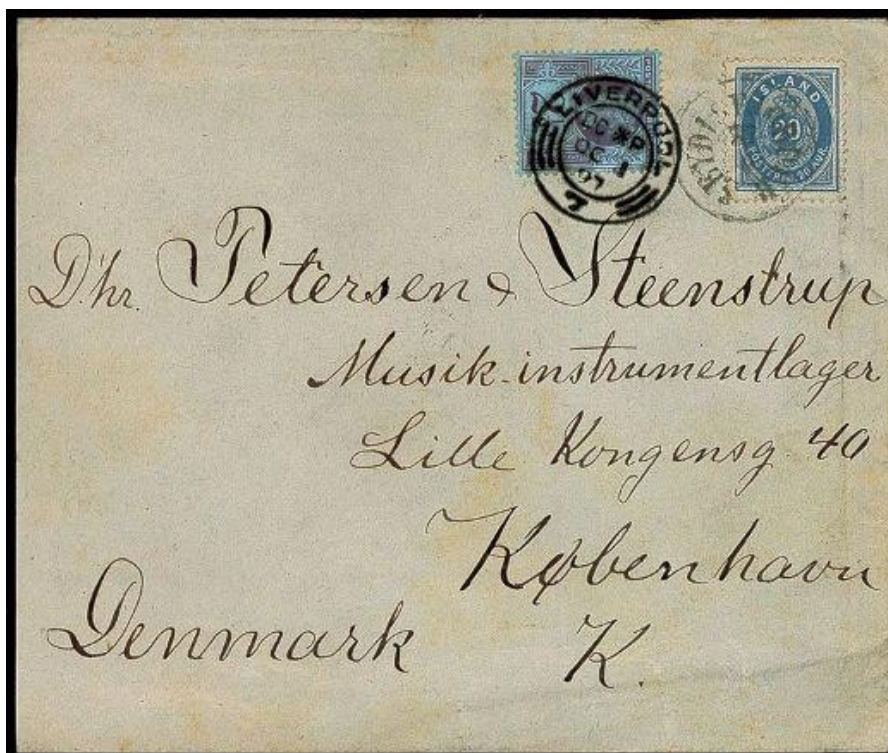


## B. LIVERPOOL TOWN CANCELLATION

The following example is without ship letter or paquebot cancelations.

It is from OC I 97. Although this letter was mailed in Seydisfjörður to Copenhagen and fully paid with 20 aur covering a first-class letter though Great Britain it seems to have been mailed again in Liverpool. The reason for this is unknown.

<sup>6</sup> Robertson indicate a use from of S 19 (the letter "P" over "VE" from 1855 but only until 1870. "19a" is with "P" over "V". There is no indication of the use of "19a"



H. Schilling shows another example of a Liverpool town cancel that was used in 1904 and it is in Arni Gustafsson's collection.



Stempeltyp: Einkreis-Handstempel  
 Außen-Ø : ca. 24 mm  
 Ortsbuchstaben: ca. 2,75 mm  
 Belegte Verwendung: 1904

In the registration by Þór Þorsteins who has compiled a list of sailings in the beginning of 19<sup>th</sup> century (1903-11) from Iceland with mail paid for to the ship, only on trip to Liverpool is recorded:

VIBRAU	25.11.1907	REYKJAVIK		LIVERPOOL	1KR.
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No cancellation on an icelandic item is known to us.

## C. "466" CANCEL LIVERPOOL

### C1 LIVERPOL 466 DUPLEX

Liverpool's town number "466" was used in Liverpool duplex cancellation probably at least as from 1854<sup>7</sup> - here named as C1<sup>8</sup>:



C1 duplex cancel used in 1887

Heinrich Schilling shows this drawing but we have never seen the postmark on Icelandic mail.

### C2 LIVERPOOL 466 SINGLE

Later just 466 (C2) is known on Icelandic mail in 1896. Probably others exist and in many shapes.



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<sup>7</sup> See for example Dr. JT Whitney: "Collect British Postmarks" 2th edition 1980 and later editions by Stanley Gipson

<sup>8</sup> See Heinrich Schilling: "Fremde Anlandestempel aus Islandspost" (1996) and "The History of the Postmark of the British Isles From 1840 to 1876" by the late JOHN G. HENDY: "The " Pearson Hill " machine stamps were introduced into the country post offices early in the sixties."



C2 numeral cancel 466

## D. REGISTERED LIVERPOOL

An “exception” is registered mail. In Icelandic Philatelic Magazine # 31, page 24 there is an example from 11 DE 1888 (and we show a clearer example from a UK cover):



The following examples are from WW2 (see below) – September and December 1940



And on the back:





December 1940:



## E. "LIVERPOOL SHIP" WITHOUT TIME

The "new regular" LIVERPOOL SHIP starts in red and turn into black - but the usage period is a bit confusing. Robertson (S 20) specifies the period of use to 1881-1895, while Roger Hosking corrects the period of use to 1894-1900, Heinrich Schilling: 1888- 1902 and most recently Dovey & Morris (112) specifies the period of use to 1894-1903.

### E1 – RED "LIVERPOOL SHIP"

The reds are presumably from 1894 to 1902.

Here are two examples from 21 AU 1896. One of them from IslandsKontakt # 91 – see the brjefspjald above <sup>9</sup>.



The second one is from the autumn auction at Postiljonen 2019 <sup>10</sup>



<sup>9</sup> From Arni Gustafssons collection

<sup>10</sup> It was prior sold on ISLANDSKLUBBEN GÖTEBORG'S November auction 2011, lot 1364

They deserve some further comments, as these are two of the few shipments carried by the Icelandic Government Steamship Company that only sailed in 1896 and 1897, and even with interruptions - and one of the few trips that went via Liverpool

After a decision in the Alting, it was decided to charter a ship for sailing between Iceland and other countries and around Iceland. "Vesta" was chartered from the competitor DFDS. The other countries were Denmark and Great Britain, where "Vesta" called at Leith (like the other shipping companies), but also Liverpool, where according to the plan (see below) "Vesta" was calling on 4 July (but arrived 6 July) and 15 August (but arrived 19 August).

There was a myriad of problems: SS Vesta was damaged on the first trip; there was competition from DFDS and also from Tulenius, as the Danish Government would not pay for postal transport, etc.

It is clear from the dating that there were also problems with the schedule as Vesta is delayed - but that does not change that it is a special transport and a rare item.

In 1897 there was a new timetable for VESTA, but Liverpool was not included. I have not been able to find a timetable for 1897, where Vesta was replaced by S/S Hjalmar owned by Thorarinn Erlendur Tulinius (better known as Thor E. Tulinius). He bought "Hjalmar" 28.12.1896. Whether "Hjalmar" ever called at Liverpool we don't know.

"Vesta" after transported sheep to France in 1897, so if anyone has a French cancellation in the fall of 1897, then it is probably a sheep transport.

# Eimskipaútgerð hinnar íslensku landstjórnar

## Ferðaáætlun fyrir árið 1896

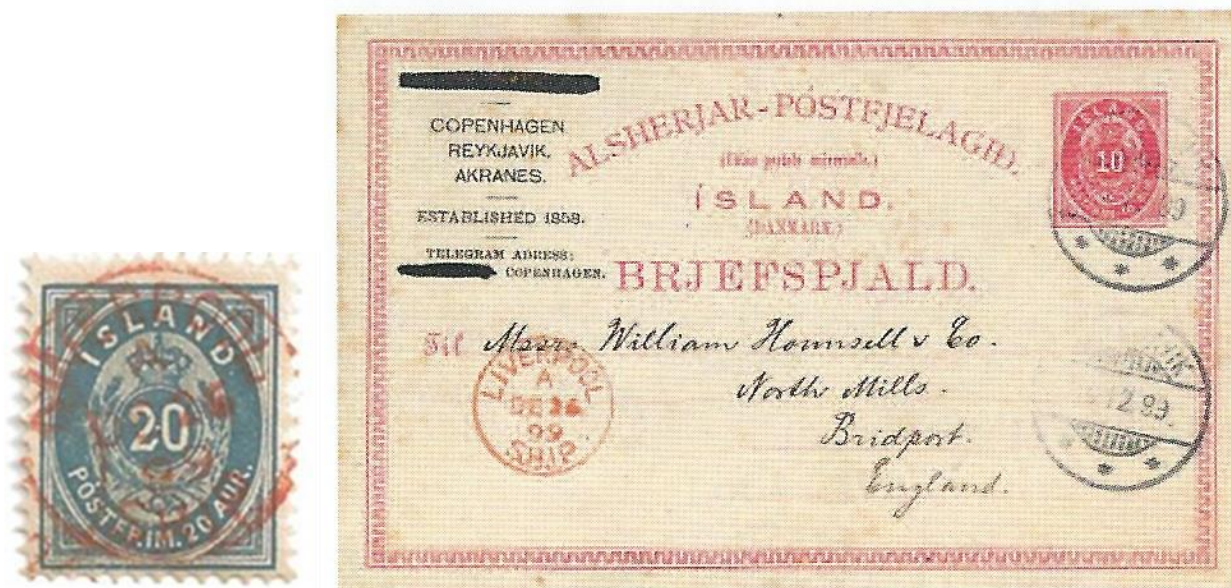
Vesta	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
<i>Ferðir milli landa:</i>								
Frá Khöfn .....	6. marz	18. apríl	1. júní	.....	.....	5. sept.	26. okt.	
— Leith .....	10. marz	22. —	5. —	.....	31. júlí	9. —	30. —	
— Liverpool .....	.....	.....	.....	11. júlí	.....	.....	.....	
— Vestm.eyjum .....	.....	25. apríl	8. júní	14. —	.....	12. sept.	2. nóv.	
Í REYKJÁVIK .....	.....	26. —	9. —	15. —	.....	13. —	3. —	
Til Austfjarða .....	13. marz	.....	.....	.....	3. ág.	.....	.....	
<i>Strandferðir:</i>								
Í REYKJÁVIK .....	31. marz	(26. apr.)	(12. maí)	27. júní	(15. júlí)	13. ág.	(13. sept.)	20. nóv.
Frá REYKJÁVIK .....	.....	30. apr.*	(14. maí)	(11. júní)	17. júlí	(15. ág.)	17. sept.	(7. nóv.)
— Stykkishólmi .....	.....	30. apríl	.....	24. júní	.....	11. ág.	17. —	.....
— Flatey .....	.....	.....	.....	24. júní	.....	.....	17. —	.....
— Patreksfirði .....	27. marz	1. maí	.....	23. júní	.....	10. ág.	18. —	.....
— Arnarfirði .....	26. marz	1. —	.....	23. júní	.....	.....	18. —	.....
— Dýrafirði .....	26. marz	2. —	.....	22. júní	18. júlí	9. ág.	19. —	.....
— Öundurafirði .....	25. marz	.....	.....	22. júní	.....	.....	19. —	.....
— Ísafirði .....	25. marz	3. maí	.....	22. júní	19. júlí	9. ág.	21. —	16. nóv.
— Reykjarfirði .....	.....	.....	.....	20. júní	.....	.....	21. —	.....
— Borðeyri .....	.....	.....	.....	20. júní	.....	.....	22. —	.....
— Blönduós .....	22. marz	.....	.....	20. júní	.....	.....	22. —	.....
— Skagastönd .....	21. marz	.....	.....	19. júní	.....	.....	22. —	.....
— Saudárkrók .....	21. marz	5. maí	.....	19. júní	.....	7. ág.	24. —	14. nóv.
— Siglufirði .....	20. marz	.....	.....	18. júní	.....	.....	24. —	.....
— Akureyri .....	20. marz	7. maí	.....	18. júní	21. júlí	6. ág.	26. —	13. nóv.
— Húsavík .....	17. marz	.....	.....	16. júní	.....	5. ág.	26. —	.....
— Vopnafirði .....	16. marz	.....	.....	15. júní	.....	.....	27. —	.....
— Seyðisfirði .....	16. marz	9. maí	18. maí	15. júní	23. júlí	4. ág.	29. —	10. nóv.
— Norðfirði .....	14. marz	.....	16. maí	13. júní	.....	.....	29. —	.....
— Eskifirði .....	13. marz	.....	16. maí	13. júní	.....	.....	29. —	.....
— Fáskrúðsfirði .....	13. marz	.....	16. maí	13. júní	.....	.....	30. —	.....
— Berufirði .....	.....	.....	.....	12. júní	.....	.....	30. —	.....
— Vestm.eyjum .....	.....	.....	.....	11. júní	.....	.....	1. okt.	.....
Í REYKJÁVIK .....	.....	12. maí	.....	.....	.....	.....	2. —	.....
Frá REYKJÁVIK .....	.....	.....	14. maí*	11. júní	.....	.....	(8. okt.)	7. nóv.
<i>Ferðir milli landa:</i>								
Frá REYKJÁVIK .....	3. apríl	.....	30. júní	.....	15. ág.	8. okt.	22. nóv.	
— Austfjörðum .....	.....	18. maí	.....	23. júlí	.....	.....	.....	
— Vestm.eyjum .....	3. apríl	.....	30. júní	.....	15. ág.	8. okt.	22. nóv.	
Í Liverpool .....	.....	.....	4. júlí	.....	19. —	.....	.....	
Frá Liverpool .....	.....	.....	(11. júlí)	.....	22. —	.....	.....	
Í Leith .....	7. apríl	21. maí	.....	26. júlí	.....	12. okt.	26. nóv.	
Frá Leith .....	7. —	21. —	.....	(31. júlí)	.....	12. —	26. —	
Í Khöfn .....	11. —	25. —	.....	.....	26. ág.	16. —	30. —	

\* Banni is skipinu fyrirhugaða leið frá Reykjavík þ. 30. apríl, vestur, norður og austur um land, svo að það neyðist til að snúa við og fara suður um land, og þar af leiðandi verði fyrir allmiklum töfum, fellur ferðin frá Reykjavík þ. 14. maí til Austfjarða burtu, og skipið fer því beina leið frá Reykjavík til Leith.

NB. Þá dálka, sem prentaðir eru með skáletri, á að lesa upp á við.

Ath. 1. Svo framarlega sem timinn leyfir, eða nægur flutningur fæst, verður viðstöðutíminn í Reykjavík notaður til að skjótast til Hafnarfjarðar og Akraness.

Below are examples of the cancellation DE 16 (18) 99<sup>11</sup>:



It has – until now – not been possible for me to find solid information about which ship carried the mail.

But from JA 19 00 there are a cover, piece and Brjefspjald showing, that the carrier is SS Isafold.



<sup>11</sup> 20 aur from Ebbe Eldrup's collection and a postcard from Indridi Palssons collection.



For a long time, I thought that January 1900 was the last time the red stamp was used - at least on Icelandic shipments, but the following examples from DE 11 1902 and the two philatelic cards with DE 23 1902 disprove it.



And finally, DE 23 02 - It is unknown which ship carried these postcards to Liverpool.



Postiljonen 2019 lot # 463: "Very beautiful 10 aur postal stationery card sent to Germany canc."REYKJAVIK 15.12.1902", transit "LIVERPOOL SHIP DE23 02" as well as "PADERBORN 24.12.02" arrival canc" – same as the following.



## E2 – BLACK LIVERPOOL SHIP

The black LIVERPOOL SHIP has at least been used from 1894. Here is an example on a stamp from Sierra Leone.



On Icelandic stamps it is known from DE 18 1900. A curiosity is, that "o o" are filled and look like dots.





and one from February (19)01, from Arni Gustafssons collection:



The following, MR 23 (19)01, is shown by Ebbe Eldrup:



It is SS Ceres calling at Liverpool and arriving MR 23 01, but the explanation why we don't have. Per its schedule it was not planed.



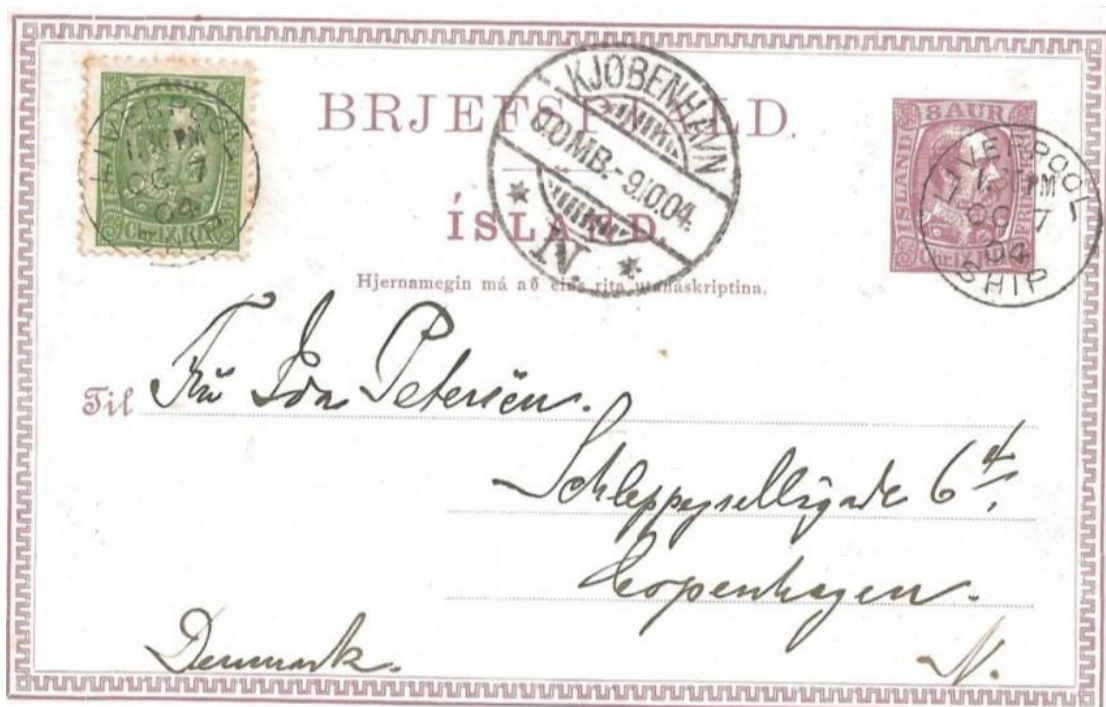
The same apply for FE 21 (19)02: It is SS Laura – but we don't know why.

## F. "LIVERPOOL SHIP" WITH TIME

Ebbe Eldrup points out that there is a later Liverpool Ship cancel. It is rather unnoticed and is only known in a few copies of Icelandic objects. Maybe only with the date OC 7 (19) 04.

It is a cancel with slightly flatter letters and where the time is shown above the month and date as opposed to the previous (B) stamp where there is just a letter.

The cancel is Robertson S.21 with period of use 1896 - 1919, while Hosking 2nd Edition corrects the period of use to 1904-1919, but Dovey & Morris (114) goes back to 1896-1919. I don't know whether they have seen the differences or just consider the change regarding the time as a logical consequence.



The 8 aur Brjefspjald was written in Seydisfjörður on October 2, 1904 and despite being fully released with 8 aur for a postcard to Denmark, it is enriched with a 5 aur Chr IX.

The reason appears from the text on the reverse: "... a Norwegian steamer is now going from here to England ..." The postcard was to be franked with 10 aur but the minimum value of 3 aur Christian IX was apparently not available and a 5 aur was used instead. That the letter is a private card and not philatelic is clear.

Legðisfint, d. 21.04.  
 Hjónab. f.  
 Lífe Auksama í góðum Bólum; en nýrri Daga  
 gættur um hvar til Reykjavíkur. Tíundit Tala þess um Reykjavík.  
 Alþingur daga til þess þess um Reykjavík; en gættur um af  
 Daga. Allt vel, tíundit kveiktur þess, en allgættur  
 Hjónab. f. til þess þess.  
 Síni  
 Hansi  
 Tíundit glad þess í vörðum af kveiktur  
 Hjónab. f.

In the Icelandic newspaper "Austri" you can read that it is probably SS FIX, who carried 2,179 sheep to Liverpool.



Another copy from the same day, OC 7 04.

Arni Gustafsson has a pair from OC 8 04 shown above under "B", but probably with the same ship, just handled differently

Arni Gustafsson has one without year and after June 1907 as it has a 10 aur Two-Kings stamp:



## G. PAQUEBOT LIVERPOOL

One further use of Liverpool is known on our stamps.

The cancel is PAQUEBOT in the upper part of the circle and LIVERPOOL in the lower part. There are two versions: Hosking (57) from 1895 to 1985 and Hosking (58) 1985 to 1969 - same Dovey & Morris (113).

They are common but not on Icelandic items; only a few copies are known:

The first we know from Iceland is from October 1899:



– most of the usages known are from DE 27 1899



(Hosking-Nr. 57)

Stempeltyp: Zweikreis-Handstempel

Außen-Ø :

Innen-Ø :

Ortsbuchstaben:

Verwendung: 1895 – 1985

Ab ca. 1914 steht Tag vor Monat.  
Stempel kommt ohne Uhrzeit vor.

(Sonntagsstempel)



(Hosking-Nr. 58)

Stempeltyp: Zweikreis-Handstempel

Außen-Ø : ca. 24,5 mm

Innen-Ø : ca. 15,5 mm

Ortsbuchstaben: ca. 2,5 mm

Verwendung: 1906 – 69

Ab ca. 1914 steht Tag vor Monat.  
Stempel kommt ohne Uhrzeit vor.

(Sonntagsstempel)

The other version Hosking (58) "Liverpool. I", has maybe been recorded on Icelandic material, above illustration from Arni Gustafsson.

Then we leave the Aur-issue but there are further Liverpool ship mail cancellations.

## H. PAQUEBOT – TEXT – WW1

This is special; Liverpool PAQUEBOT from WW1. It was according to Dovey & Morris: "Paquebot cancellations of the World" (# 118) only used in 1915.



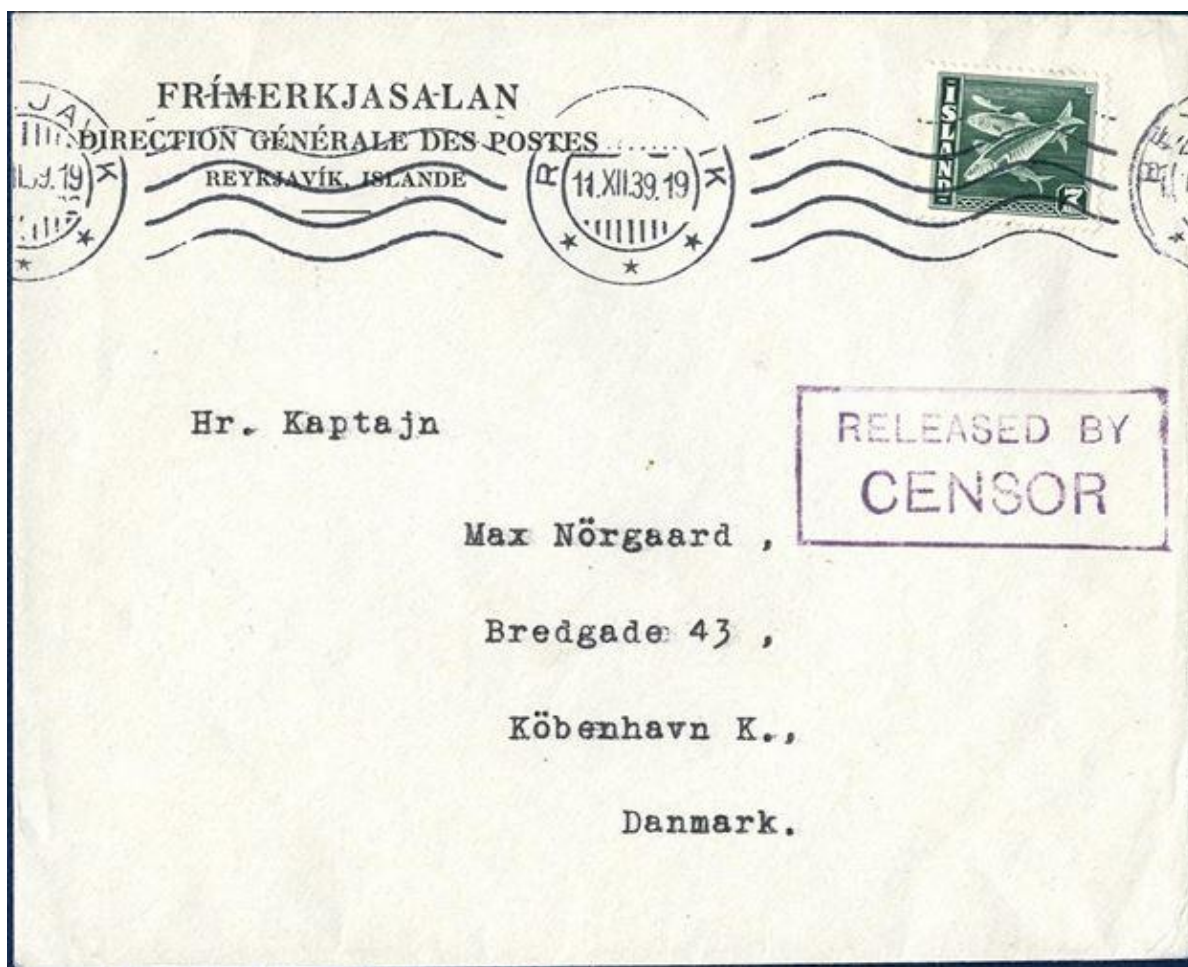
On the front side it is a lovely family photo sent to Gudrun Bjarnason, who allegedly lived in Edinburgh. Neither Edinburgh nor Leith had a PAQUEBOT cancel similar to this that surely is from Liverpool and it is quite rare. Since PAQUEBOT is applied in Liverpool, it is the port of arrival – but which ship sailed from Iceland to Liverpool in August 1915?

We do not have the best records of ships and departures during World War I. So far, we owe an answer to how the card got to Liverpool.

## I. WW2

The next is from December 1939: "Printed matter letter sent from Reykjavik to Copenhagen 11 Dec. 1939 with a 7 aur Heering Issue. This letter was sent with »Brúarfoss« or »Gullfoss« which anchored at Kirkwall as mailed was ceased and sent for censorship in Liverpool, where the letter received the boxed "RELEASED BY CENSOR", stamped on front and reverse. The letter is illustrated in Hopballe book page 125."<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Frank Banke (2020)



The following is cancelled in Reykjavik on 18<sup>th</sup> of April 1940. It is per the auction catalogue sent via LIVERPOOL 25.4.40.

The carrier is unknown. M/S Brúarfoss came to Liverpool on the 4<sup>th</sup> of April and was there until departure 20<sup>th</sup> April. They might have been carried to another destination and then transported to Liverpool and censored there?



## REFERENCES

Mike Dovey & Keith Morris: "Paquebot Cancellations of the World and more.." (Hoskings 4<sup>th</sup> edition), 2010

Ebbe Eldrup "Liverpool skibsstempler 1890'erne-1919" IslandsKontakt # 88 from page 17.

Arni Gustafsson collection, Reykjavik, Iceland (with special thanks!)

Kristian Hopballe and Ólafur Eliasson: "ICELAND POSTALLY IN THE PERIOD 1939-1945"

Roger Hosking. Paquebot cancellations of the world (second edition), 1987.

IslandsKontakt, Iceland Philatelic Magazine and Auction catalogues

Orla Nielsen: IslandsKontakt # 67 "Måske det første brev fra Island med engelsk censur under verdenskrigen 1939-45"

Alan W. Robertson: "A History of the Ship Letters of the British Isles" (reprint 1995)

Heinrich Schilling: "Fremde Anlandestempel aus Islandspost" (1996)

Þór Þorsteins: "French fishermen in Icelandic waters" IslandsKontakt # 71 2009