



ISLANDS *Kontakt*

SPECIAL # 29 – 2021 V1 – SHIP LETTER GRANTON

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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 Editors¹ 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.nfvsandinavie.com/artikelen-ijsland.php>

Special valuable contribution to this issue has been given by Ebbe Eldrup.

Arni Gustafsson and Stephen Parkin has contributed with copies and knowledge.



Granton Post Office - was near the end of Granton Pier - just off Granton Square - behind the Hotel - on Lower Granton Road:

¹ Among editors are highly reputable philatelists: Ebbe Eldrup, Jørgen Steen Larsen and Ole Svinth.



“Granton is a district in the north of Edinburgh, Scotland. Granton forms part of Edinburgh's waterfront along the Firth of Forth and is, historically, an industrial area having a large harbor. In 1834 Edinburgh debated the need for a larger harbor. James Walker in his capacity as President of the Institution of Civil Engineers oversaw a committee, also including Admiral David Milne, to choose between three options: an extension to the existing Leith Docks; a new harbor at Trinity or a new harbor at Granton. The initial bid for Trinity did not receive parliamentary consent and in 1836 a second Bill promoting Granton was agreed. It received Royal Assent on 21 April 1837.

Construction began in June 1837 and the initial central pier was opened on 28 June 1838, coinciding with the coronation of Queen Victoria. The entire project was funded by the 5th Duke of Buccleuch. The original project included a central pier named the Victoria Jetty and a road running eastwards to Leith. The young Queen Victoria landed at the pier on RY Royal George on 1 September 1842 on her first official visit to Edinburgh as queen. In 1843/44 the pier was extended in length to a total of 1700 feet (around 500m) this stage being completed in October 1844. By 1845 an "exceedingly low" cost steamboat service used to run between Stirling and Granton.

Lighthouse engineer Robert Stevenson oversaw the later construction of the outer breakwaters, which were completed in 1863. Thereafter the Resident Engineer was John Howkins, followed by his son, also John Howkins. The original concept to create two large wet docks on the landward side was abandoned as this proved impractical.

Granton became a successful port for the export of coal and import of esparto grass for making paper. The fishing fleet grew considerably, leading to the development of an icehouse in the late 19th century, to the west of the harbor. There were some 80 fishing trawlers resident just before World War II. The first example of the fossil crustacean *Waterstonella* was found in the Granton shrimp beds by the keeper of geology at the Royal Scottish Museum, Dr. Charles Waterstone. The foreshore area between Granton and Newhaven is a designated Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) aimed at encouraging and preserving the resource of fossils in the area.

From 3 February 1850, the world's first ferry-train began operating between Granton and Burntisland, Fife. The paddle-steamer Leviathan carried the trains, which formed the main link across the Forth until completion of the Forth Bridge in 1890. Passenger and car ferry services continued into the 1960s.

In 1884, John Murray set up the Marine Laboratory in Granton, the first of its kind in the United Kingdom. In 1894, this laboratory was moved to Millport, Isle of Cumbrae, on the Firth of Clyde, and became the University Marine Biological Station, Millport, the forerunner of today's Scottish Association for Marine Science at Dunstaffnage, near Oban, Argyll and Bute. During the First World War Granton harbor was used as the base for mine-sweeping equipment: mainly Scottish trawlers and their crews, called into active service and conscripted as part of the Royal Navy Reserve. During this period the harbor was officially renamed as "HMS Gunner" when referred to in military documents, in reference to the name of the largest trawler in its fleet. The harbor was then home to minesweepers, decoy ships (Q-ships), and anti-submarine vessels. The north section held smaller support vessels specifically built for Navy use, including 24 motor launches, 18 paddle mine-sweepers, and 30 boom-defense vessels, with a total of 103 craft.”²

Occasionally in the late 19th century a small handstamp black - app. 26.5 x 13 mm appear on mail from Iceland.



The harbor of Granton has been used as transit harbor from Iceland at least from 1873 but this is a new stamp, and to the best of my knowledge – only used on mail from Iceland (?)

It appears in the Kirkwood proof book app. August 1884:



The known period of use is from **1886 until 1895** plus one single day extra use in **1907**.

Examining the examples from the period 1886 until 1895 it is noteworthy that next to SHIP LETTER GRANTON there are almost always different cancellations from Edinburgh³. This is because the local post office was not authorized to process the stamps - this happened at the Edinburgh Head Post Office - located at the end of North Bridge Street, to where mail was brought 3 times a day.

Until this day in 2021 I am only aware of approximately 27 examples of use of this specific cancellation, and they are listed for each of the years:

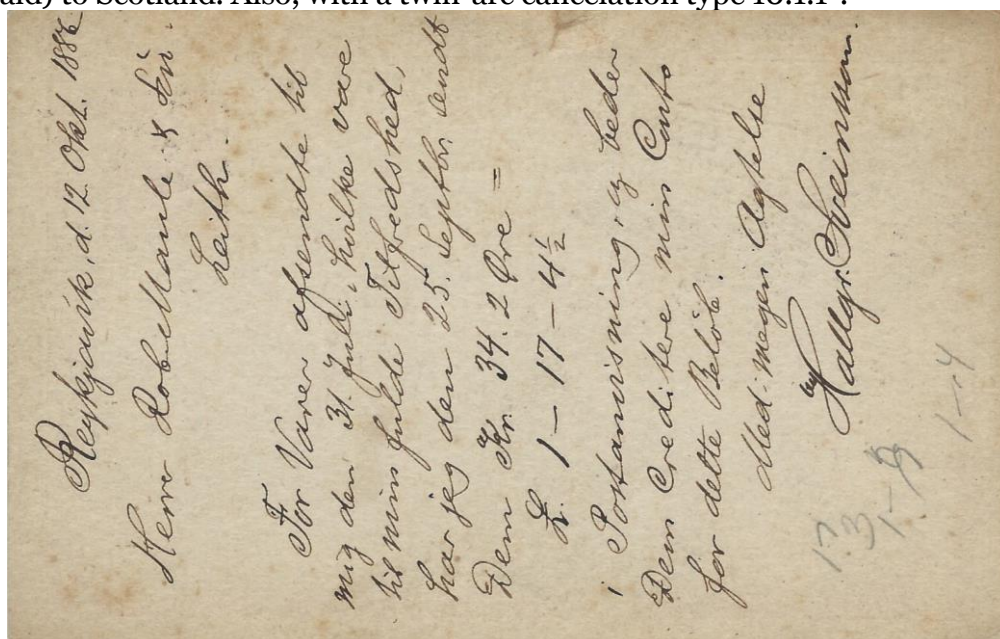
² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Granton,_Edinburgh

³ See the overview in the end

1886



This is the first SHIP LETTER GRANTON known – from October 23, 1886 - on a stationary (Brejefspjald) to Scotland. Also, with a twin-arc cancelation type 10.1.14.



This commercial card was written in Reykjavik 12. October 1886. Mr. Sveinsson notifies that he has paid his debt 34 kr. 2 øre per postal money order.

Interestingly, but detracting from the beauty, is Mr. Manle's control calculation of 1 pound 17 shillings and 4 pence on the front.

⁴ Arreavad type of designation: Stampers number (10) type (here number 1 for two thin arcs) and sup-types (here 1)

1887



10 aur stationery dated Seydisfjörður 11.9.87 to Munich, Germany— arrival 21 September 1887. Transit SHIP LETTER GRANTON – the day unknown.

Notice, that the “stamp” is not cancelled. It was not allowed for the district offices, as Granton, to invalidate stamps and this was then normally done at the post office in Edinburgh. For some reason it did not happen on these one of four known cases in this SHIP LETTER GRANTON series

1888



A 10 aur stationery written in June 1888 to Copenhagen (arrival 5 July 1888) with “SHIP LETTER GRANTON” and the big “SHIP LETTER” from Edinburgh. “Stamp invalidated at arrival to Copenhagen and not invalidated in Edinburgh.

And further in 1888:



A ship letter to France with 20 aur blue perf. 14x13½ Sent from “Consulat de France in Iceland”. Round Edinburgh 8 DE 88 and Calais a Paris 10.OC.(18)88 transit cancel.



It has the cancellation “SHIP LETTER GRANTON” but very interesting is also the small “SHIP LETTER Edinburgh in red invalidating the stamp

1889



Stationary send from, Reykjavik – written 25 June 1889 - Edinburgh with duplex cancellation 1 July 1889 (stampers number 4) probably arriving the same day in Granton and transported to the Edinburgh Head Post Office and then through UK, France etc. over land to Copenhagen, Denmark.

1890



Letter to Germany from May 1890 with SHIP LETTER GRANTON plus Edinburgh duplex MY 20 90 (stampers number 3) and even round Edinburgh from the same day (stampers number 12) – so at least 3 “stampers” have handled the letter from arrival in Granton until it left Edinburgh. Arrival in Hamburg Germany MY 22 90.



1891



10 aur inquiry card sent from Reykjavik to Denmark via Granton and Edinburgh Canc. "REYKJAVÍK 28.11". transit canc. with GRANTON SHIP LETTER and the small Edinburgh SHIP LETTER and "K OMB. 1 8.12.91" on arrival in Copenhagen.

1892

Ferðaáætlun pósthúsfuskipanna millum Kpmh., Granton, Færeyja og Íslands, 1892.											
— Frá Íslandi til Kaupmannshafnar. —											
	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.	11.
frá Reykjavík	Laura. 5. febr.	Laura 20. marz	Laura 14. maí	Thyra 2. júní	Laura 26. júní	Thyra 28. júlí	Laura 27. júlí	Laura 9. sept.	Thyra 1. okt.	Laura 18. okt.	Laura 29. nóvbr.
— Trangisvog		24. —	17. —		29. —		31. —	13. —		22. —	3. —
— Granton	11. febr.	27. —	20. —	17. júní	2. júlí	12. ágúst	3. ágúst	15. —	16. okt.	25. —	6. —
í Kaupmannahöfn	17. —	3. apríl	24. —	23. —	6. —	16. —	8. —	20. —	22. —	30. —	12. —

(Extract for postal vessels between Reykjavik, Iceland, and Copenhagen, Denmark, in the year 1892. The vessels were "Laura" and "Thyra"

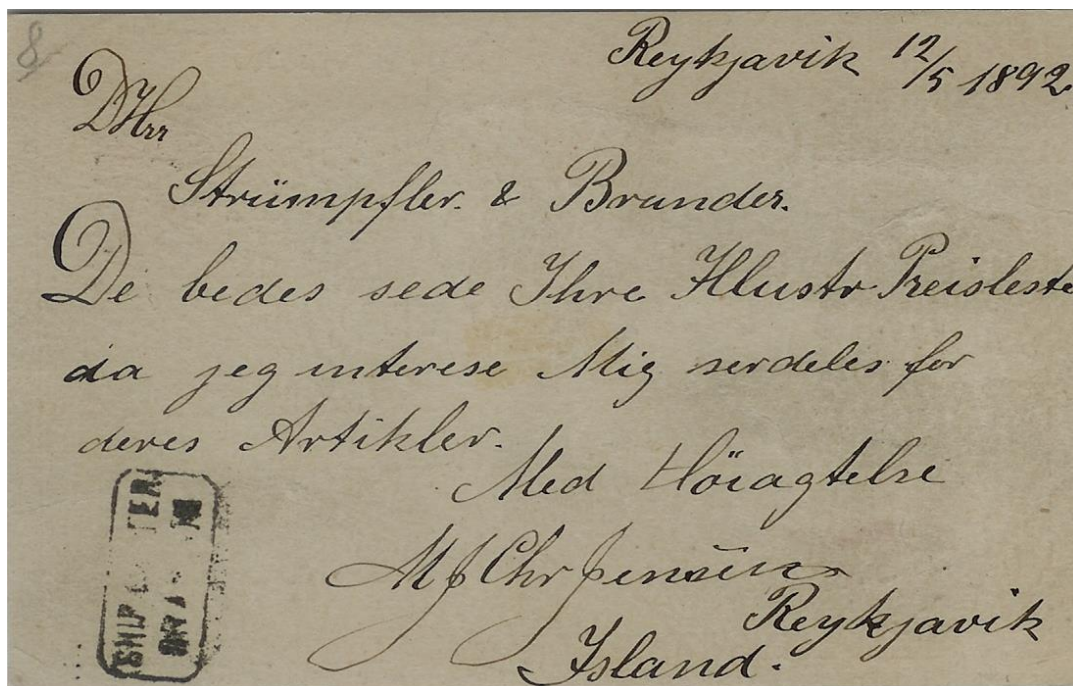
And from the same sender to same recipient but here in Germany – time unknown:



10 aur stationary sent from Iceland to Leipzig. Transit "SHIP LETTER - GRANTON" and Edinburgh 131 between two beams.



This Stationary do not have the Granton Ship Letter cancellation! -oh- yes it does on the back:



Stationary written 12 May 1892. The card is cancelled with Edinburgh 131 between two beams beams.



Stationary from Iceland with SHIP LETTER GRANTON and cancelled in Edinburgh JU 24 92 (twin-arc 10.1.3 ⁶ - with bar cut). Arrival cancellation in Berlin 26. JU 92.

⁶ Again, Arrevad type of designation



Written on board LAURA (see back) on the way south in August 1892 to Denmark. SHIP LETTER GRANTON and Edinburgh 131 between two beams - arrival Ringkjøbing, Saturday 06.08 and redirected to Holstebro the same day.

3 B. Om bord paa Laura 3. August 1892.
 Kjære Johannes!
 Naar du modtager dette Brev er jeg paa
 Veien fra England til København og
 haaber at være hjemme Søndag men det
 beroer sig paa Vind og Veir som det lydes.
 Tak for dit Brev til Kaffort, jeg haaber
 du befinder dig vel hos Familien i Ringkjøbing
 og for vel og sunde vangs, Holstebro. Lad der
 ikke komme noget til skade i det, Værst for vangs
 med daerlig og kært Hjem til alle jeres
 kærester

Note – the writer is on his way from Iceland/England to Copenhagen and inform: “I hope to be home Sunday” (which was 07.08) – the card send over land will be in Denmark before the ship.



Letter from Iceland to Copenhagen. SHIP LETTER GRANTON and the stamps are cancelled with two round Edinburgh DE 11 92.



Postal stationery with missing 5 aur stamp. Written in Reykjavik 3.12.1892. SHIP LETTER GRANTON and cancelled with the round Edinburgh DE 11 92 (stampers number 3). Arrival in Thüringen, Germany, 13 December 92.

1893



Stationary (only 5 aur) from Iceland (written 24 June 1893 in Reykjavik) to Regensburg in Germany with Edinburgh duplex cancellation JU 30 93 (stampers number 11) and German arrival cancellation 2 July 93.



Stationary from Vestmannaeyjar 03 AU 93 to Copenhagen. Week SHIP LETTER GRANTON and two Edinburgh 131 between to beams. Arrival in Copenhagen 12 AU 93.

Vestmannaeyjar 3. 8. 93.
 Eftir en sárdeles þægileg og interessant
 Reise, er þú nú þá í hertönnu nátt
 hertel, Allt vel. —
 Væntu at nua Faraerne d. 5, Skotland
 d. 9, Kjöbenhavn 14-15 ds, og haaber
 allt stæva godt til þjéluu.
 Hvertel. Hælin til Allu
 Eru.

Written at Vestmannaeyjar 3. August 1893. Sender expects to arrive at Faroe Islands on the 5th, Scotland on the 9th and finally in Copenhagen 14-15th August. The card, however, already arrived at Copenhagen 12.8.1893. The quicker transport explains why so many – as demonstrated in this compilation – asked for and paid 2 aur extra (10 aur instead of 8 aur) for transport of mail (stationaries) to Denmark via UK.



10 aur stationary written “the night between 8th and 9th August before Scotland”. So, probable cancelled SHIP LETTER GRANTON and then Edinburg 131 between two beams on 9 August 1893. Arrival in Copenhagen 11.08.

3 III
 Jætte mellem 8 og 9 aften
 i Toldboden

Og blev afrejst til Rønde, men
 for en Sikkerhed med vil jeg dog
 sige at jeg vilde sig at Laura kom-
 med i kammer i Løkke af Tirsdag; -
 og efter i aften blandt meddelere
 som skete, der har pareret man og
 for hin paa Søndagens Korte Løse Efters
 naar de uventer; - Mit skæbne saa vist
 jeg med til ned Toldboden. - Jeg glæder mig
 til at se dig dermed. - Kærlig hilsen paa

The text further informs that "...Laura" will possibly arrive Sunday..." and "the ship will as far as I know dock at Toldboden".



Stationary 1893 with SHIP LETTER GRANTON and Edinburgh 131. Arrival in Berlin 22 September 1893. Delayed due to wrong address.

1894



10 aur Stationary from Reykjavik March 1894 via Granton with SHIP LETTER GRANTON to US with New York arrival mark on the reverse 7 April 1894. This example with no cancellation of the stamp in Edinburgh.



Stationary from Iceland to Norway. Transit SHIP LETTER GRANTON and Edinburgh MY 18 94 (twin-arc 21.1.37 - with bar-cut). Arrival in Christiania (Oslo) 22 MY 94.

⁷ Again, Arrevad type of designation

Another example from 1894 where I only have the description from Argyll Etkin Limited Auction 4 May 2012 # 29 is: 7

“Granton. 2 September 1894 Iceland: 5 aur postal stationery to Copenhagen bearing a 5 aur stamp, the card and stamp both cancelled by Edinburgh c.d.s (Sep 2), with boxed “SHIP LETTER GRANTON”.”

1895



Stationaries from Iceland to Copenhagen⁸. Directed “via Granton” and transit SHIP LETTER GRANTON. Cancelled Edinburgh FE 11 95 (Twin-arc 17.3.19) and PAQUEBOT¹⁰.

⁸ One in IslandsKontakt # 13 page 11 the second Paquebot.info.

⁹ Again, Arrevad type of designation. FE 11 1895 is the first recorded day of use of the cancellation Twin-arc 17.3.1.

¹⁰ The omnibus paquebot send to Edinburgh (for Leith and Grangemouth) on January 9th, 1894 – see IslandsKontakt Special 5 (2016 v.1) by Jakob S. Arrevad, Mike Tuttle and Ole Svinth



10 Aur Stationary cancelled Reykjavik 21.3.1895 to Copenhagen. SHIP LETTER GRANTON and per the description transit Edinburgh AP 6 95. Arrival Copenhagen 9.4. (1895).



Stationary from Reykjavik 15.5.1895 to Tribsees in Germany. Transit SHIP LETTER GRANTON and Edinburgh 131 between two beams. Arrival cancellation 24.05.95



Stationary from Iceland to London. Transit SHIP LETTER GRANTON and cancellation round Edinburgh AU 28 95 (stampers number 3).



Reykjavik 16.10.1895: 10a stationary to Edinburgh (uncancelled at Reykjavik and at arrival in Edinburgh – but addressed to Edinburgh). Transported by LAURA leaving 17.10.1895 to Granton.

The last registered use until 1907 of SHIP LETTER GRANTON.

1907

Finally: a single day use in **1907**

Adding the extremely rare postmark **Granton Harbour Edinburgh:**



Boths carried with S/S Valhal departing from Reykjavik 24 October 1907 and arriving in Granton 30 October 1907. The ship was paid 1 kr. for carrying mail.



Postcard from Reykjavik to Copenhagen with 10 aur franking (4 aur and 6 aur two kings). Transit SHIP LETTER GRANTON and Granton Harbour Edinburgh 30 10 07 and arrival in Copenhagen 2. November 1907



Stationery with 10 Aur red from Reykjavik to Copenhagen. Transit canc. with GRANTON HARBOUR EDINBURGH postmark as well as "SHIP LETTER GRANTON". Copenhagen arrival cancellation 2. November 1907.

Overview

Year	DAY MONTH in Granton	Vessel¹¹	Other (Edinburgh) postmarks	Scottish
1886	23 October	LAURA	Twin-arc type 10.1.1	
1887	(18/19) September	CAMEONS?	Only SHIP LETTER GRANTON	
1888	(01) July	LAURA	Large SHIP LETTER	
1888	8 December	LAURA	Small SHIP LETTER red - round Edinburgh on the back	
1889	1 July	LAURA	Edinburgh duplex	
1890	20 May	LAURA	Edinburgh duplex	
1891	(03) December	LAURA	Small SHIP LETTER black	
1892	26 March	LAURA	Twin-arc 17.1.3 and Small SHIP LETTER	
1892 ?			131 between two beams	
1892	(17) May	LAURA	131 between two beams	
1892	24 June	THYRA	Twin-arc 10.1.3	
1892	(1) August	LAURA	131 between two beams	
1892	11. December	LAURA	Edinburgh round date stamp	
1893	30 June	THYRA		
1893	(09) August	THYRA?	131 between two beams	
1883	(20) September	LAURA	131 between two beams	
1894	(26) March	LAURA	Only SHIP LETTER GRANTON	
1894	18 May	LAURA	Twin-arc 21.1.3	
1894	September	LAURA	?	
1895	11 February - two	LAURA	Twin-arc 17.3.1 and omnibus paquebot	
1895	6 April	LAURA	Only SHIP LETTER GRANTON	
1895	(21) May	LAURA	131 between two beams	
1895	28 August	LAURA	Round Edinburgh date stamp	
1895	(22) October	LAURA	Only SHIP LETTER GRANTON	
1907	30 October 1907 - two	VALHAL	Granton Harbour Edinburgh	

The dates in parenthesis are estimated.

¹¹ - As far as I can see!

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