



POSTMARKS OF HOBART TOWN 1825 to 1854

INTRODUCTION

This exhibit aims to present the handstamps used in Hobart Town in the thirty years from 1825 to 1854.

The first allocation of numeral cancellers is a subject in itself and is *excluded* from this exhibit, as are instructional markings.

All of the categories of handstamp that were used are represented. A few variations within categories are not included; these are referred to on individual pages. Two "FREE" stamps are not included; one is very rare and the other is rare. The categories are:

- Ship letters, inbound and outbound
- Paid and unpaid letters internal to Van Dieman's Land, inwards and outwards from Hobart Town
- Paid and unpaid city post mail, within the boundary of Hobart Town
- Free mail

Some handstamps were used for multiple purposes and some were used as transit stamps – for example, a letter from a rural location to London transiting through Hobart Town might receive a PAID stamp as a transit mark.

The sequence of presentation is based on the year in which the use of the postmark commenced, from Rico De Righi's "TABLE OF HANDSTRUCK MARKINGS 1837- 1855" reproduced in "Tasmania: The Postal History and Postal Markings", Part II. In this table the "earliest date" has been taken as an indication of the issue date. Ratings (R, RR etc) are taken from "Tasmanian Postal History: The Post Offices and Their Date Stamps" by John Hardinge.

The exhibit is arranged as follows:

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4	Ship letter inbound	13	Unpaid City Post
5	Paid, transit	14	Ship letter inbound
6	Paid internal letter outbound	15	Ship letter outbound - Crown inside Circle
7,8	Unpaid internal letter outbound	16	Free mail
9, 10	Unpaid internal letter inbound		

References:

Tasmania: The Postal History and Postal Markings Parts I and II (Campbell, Viney et al)
 Tasmanian Postal History: The Post Offices and Their Date Stamps, John Hardinge
 Tasmanian Postal Acts and Regulations Part 1: 1803 – 1846 and Part 2: 1847 - 1860, A. E. Orchard
 Postmarks of the British Isles 1840 – 1876, John G. Hendy
 The Courier vol. 3: Tasmanian Markings to 1875, Early and Late Dates, Malcolm Groom
 United Kingdom Letter Rates 1657 – 1900, C. Tabart



Letter (1827) stamped with oval HOBART TOWN V.D.L. (rated RRR), known used from 17/12/1822 to 31/3/1832. The regulations promulgated in 1822 included:

The Postage on all Letters and Packets are to be paid at the Office where they are received for Transmission, and they will be stamped with the Mark of the Town from which they go.

The postage rate from Hobart to Launceston was 1/-. At this time, all letters had to be pre-paid in cash.

The postmark appears to have been withdrawn following proclamation of the postal act of 1828 in 1832.



The letter is dated Hobart (not Hobart Town) June 8th 1827. It is from E. W. Barnard to his brother at Tamar (near Launceston). E. W. Barnard had recently completed the first survey of King's Island (now King Island).



Ship Letter Outbound – Crown above Oval

1837 - 1839

Around June 1837, seven handstamps were introduced for use in Hobart, for ship letters, paid and unpaid country letters and free mail. This is known from dates of use; records of their procurement have not been found.

Following a tender issued in September 1839, six of them were replaced around the start of 1840. The tender called for 14 handstamps; some of these were not introduced into use until much later..

The "Crown above oval" canceller was introduced in 1837 for outbound ship letters (rated RR) and was in use until 1839. Earliest date is 1/6/1837 and latest date is 18/11/1839. It was applied when a ship was about to leave.

The fees and charges were:

- /4 (red)** dispatch fee for ½ oz. letter
- 2/10 (deep red)** 8d sea postage plus
2 x 1/1d for inland postage, London to
Edinburgh, 317 miles
- ½d** Scottish wheel tax
- 1d** Edinburgh local rate



Outward ship letter mark



London receiving mark



Edinburgh receiving mark



Edinburgh local rate



Scotland ½d wheel tax



This letter to Edinburgh was probably carried on the brig *Harriet* which left for England on 9th January 1838.

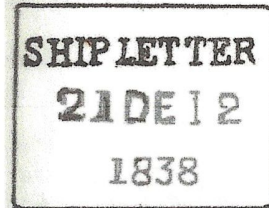


Ship Letter Inbound

1837 - 1839

The handstamp below (rated RRR) was introduced for inbound ship letters in 1837.

This example, dated 21 DE(cember) 1838, has the day of the date reversed on the right hand side. It was replaced by a similar stamp in 1840. (The replacement was 1 mm higher and showed slightly different lettering).



Stamped SHIP LETTER
21 DE 1838

Ms "Per Emu"
(Dept London 8 Sept
Arr Hobart Town 21 Dec)

Ms. "4" (?) crossed out

Ms. "10"

As there are no London postmarks the letter was probably handled by an agent, implying that the Ms. was applied in Hobart Town. 10d = 4d for an incoming ship letter + 6d being the correct rate from Hobart Town to Ross.

This lengthy letter was sent from London bound for Hobart Town, dated 31 August, 1838. The addressee, Philip T Smith, owned a store in Ross and purchased 680 acres of land there in 1839. The letter deals with the conveying of servants for Mr Smith from Ullapool to Van Diemens Land (especially the difficulties involved), and the price of wool. The Hobart "Courier" listed "4 shepherds" aboard the "Emu", who may have been the "servants" mentioned in the letter.



Paid Transit

1837 - 1839

Also introduced in 1837, for letters to be sent to Hobart Town, this stamp PAID was used for only two years (Dec 1837 to Nov 1839). The letter's originating location is unknown (as the page is missing) but it was sent to London via Hobart Town and dispatched via the "Marion". The use of this "Paid Inbound Letter" mark was for its journey to Hobart Town.



Paid mark rated RRR

"Per Marion via Hobart Town" in ms

"4" in red - dispatch fee for ship letter, paid in Tas.

"8" in black - incoming ship letter rate, paid in London



Arrival mark:

SHIP LETTER DEAL

London arrival marks:

Chief Office circular mark, code A, indicating "processed"



London time stamp
2 A^N 2 JA 23 1840
A^N = afternoon

The "Marion" left Hobart Town bound for Sydney on 29 September 1839, so the letter was transferred to another vessel for the voyage to London.



**Paid Internal Letter Outbound
Replacement issued, 1843**

1837 – 1855

“PAID” handstamps for letters originating in Hobart Town internal to Tasmania were introduced in 1837. Only one example of the original is known. This replacement is known to be in use from 1843 to 1855. The latest date recorded is 13/3/1855.

Stamped with 4d courier cut to shape, cancelled indistinctly but probably “64” of Hobart Town
Marked with PAID stamp in red (as was usual), 15 FE 1854 (rated R)
Arrived Launceston next day, with Launceston arrival mark 16 FE 1854 (rated RRR)



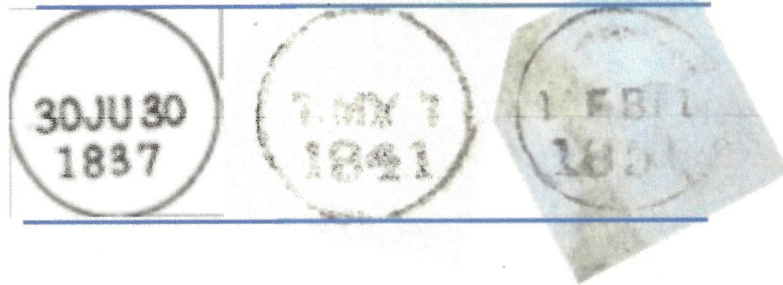
The letter requests the agent (Johnstone) to book passages to Melbourne.



**Unpaid Internal Letter Outbound
Type 2, 1840 - 1845**

1837 – 1854

Unpaid letters sent within Tasmania were stamped with an un-named date stamp from 1837 onwards. There were three iterations, illustrated below. The first (left) had narrower letters and was in use only until March 1838.



Its replacement (centre) is known to have been used from 1840 to 1845. It was larger than the third type (right) at 29 mm diameter and had larger letters than the original.



Un-named date stamp, diameter 29 mm (rated R), 7 MY 1841

“7” in mss, being double rate for mail from Hobart Town to Campbell Town (up to 90 miles), to be paid by the recipient

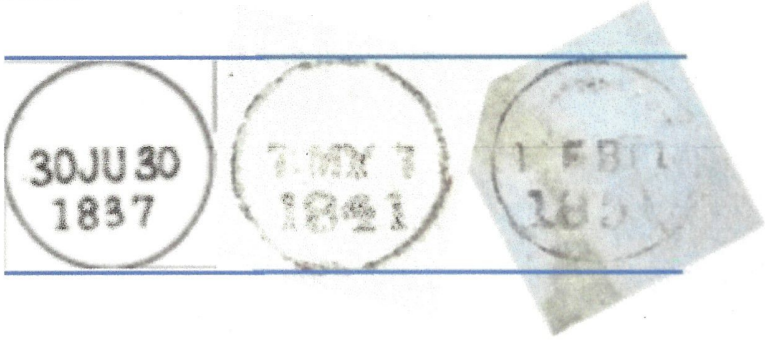
The cover was addressed to Mr John McLeod of Meadowbank, the site of the future bauxite mine.



**Unpaid Internal Letter Outbound
Type 3, 1846 - 1853**

1837 - 1854

The third type of un-named date stamp was used from 1846 to 1853. Shown below on the right, it is slightly smaller at 27.5 mm diameter than its predecessor and the numbers "1" and "8" in the year are different.



*New postal rates were introduced in an Act of Parliament passed in 1841.
Inland postal rates started at 4d for the first half ounce, irrespective of distance.*

Un-named date stamp 27.5 mm diameter, applied at Hobart, 11 FB 1851 (rated R)

Mss "4" signifying rate for internal letter to be paid by recipient

Launceston arrival mark, primitive CDS type (iv), 12 FB 1851 (rated RR)





Unpaid Internal Letter Inbound
Type 3, 1846 - 1849

1837 - 1854

From 1837, rectangular date stamps were applied to letters arriving in Hobart Town from other parts of Tasmania. Four very similar handstamps were used successively.

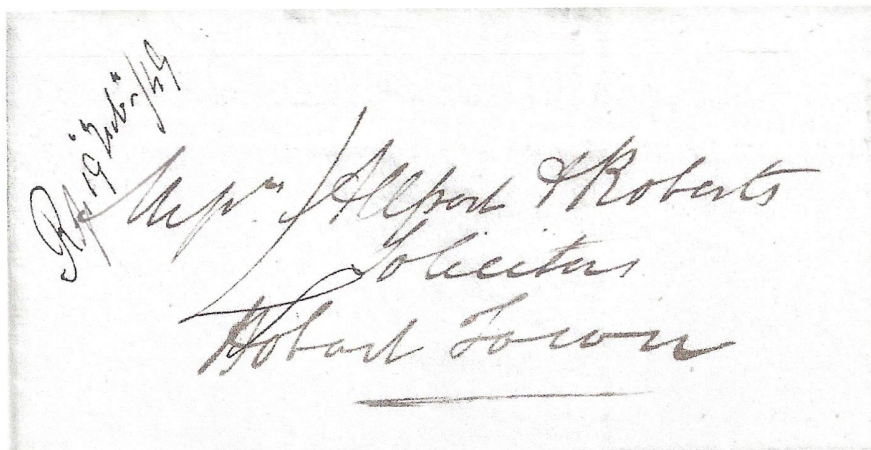
The third type illustrated here is known used from 1846 to 1849.

Un-named rectangular date stamp 24.5 x 18 mm, 20 FE 1849 (rated R)

Mss "4" signifying rate for internal letter to be paid by recipient



Front of letter (reduced to 80%)



The letter was sent by Thomas Parramour of Wetford, Ross (in the midlands). The mss reads "Ross 19 Feb 49" being the date it was posted. It requests deeds to be sent "per Cox's coach to be left at Mrs Hudson's Res."



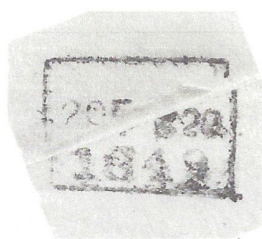
Unpaid Internal Letter Inbound
Type 4, 1851 - 1853

1837 - 1854

The fourth type of rectangular date stamp is known used from 1851 to 1853. Hardinge states that the date shows the day before and not after the month; Groom does not mention this point. It may be that the right-hand number is missing because of faint impressions.

In the fourth type the letters are finer, narrower and placed more towards the centre of the rectangle.
The height of type 4 is about 1mm less than type 3.

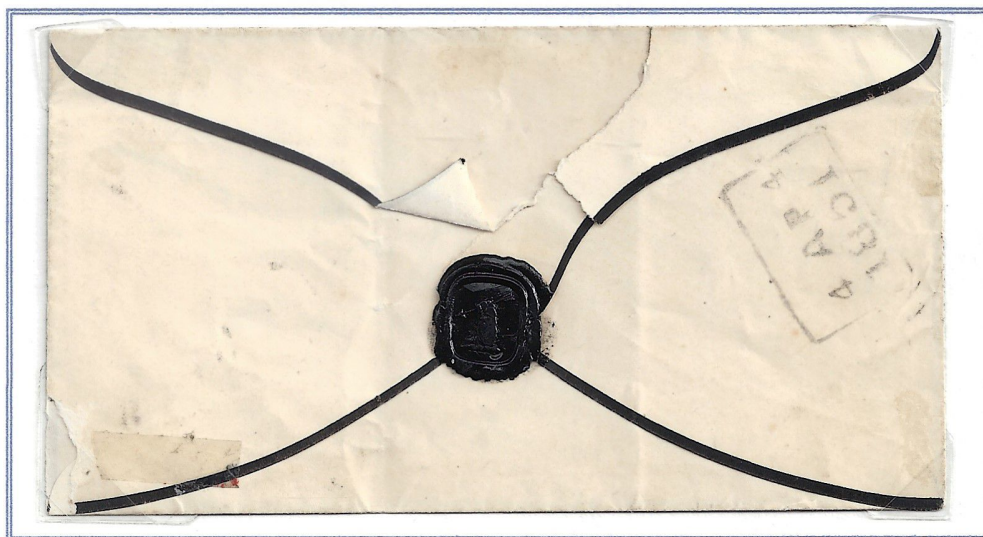
Mourning envelope posted from Longford, 3/4/51,
annotated in mss.
Un-named rectangular date stamp 24.5 x 16 mm , 4 AP 1851 (rated R)
Mss "4" signifying rate for internal letter to be paid by recipient



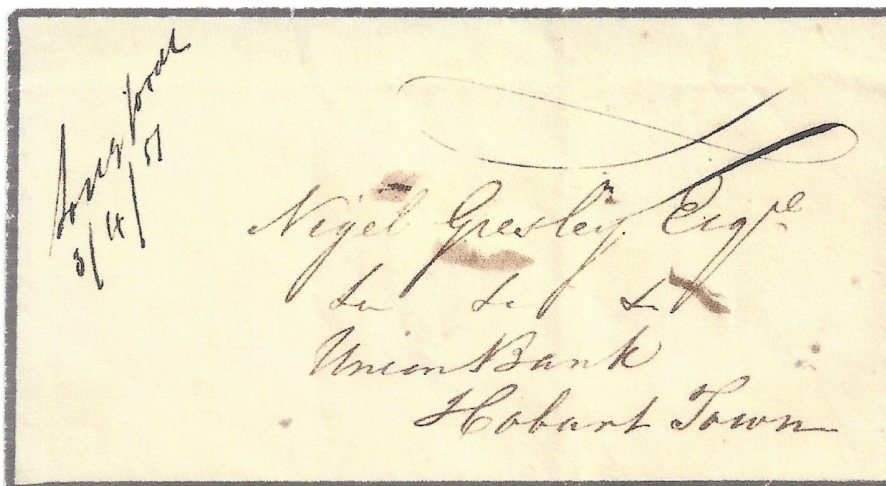
Type 3



Type 4



Front of letter





SHIP LETTER OUTBOUND – CROWN set in OVAL

1840 - 1846

The distinctive “crown and oval” mark (rated RR) was introduced in 1840 for pre-paid outward ship letters.

This example contains the substantive part of a letter to Deptford, England. It was probably carried on the brig “Eleanor” which left Hobart Town for Sydney on 6 January, 1844. The writer argues against the granting of probation to convicts:

“...some would boast they never did a days work until they came to Van Dieman’s Land, but in the prospect of being thrown on their own lands in a certain number of years, the certainty of obtaining wages if efficient workmen stimulated them to apply themselves And in a short time the London thief and other useless men became good farmers, Cutters of Timber, Sawyers, Bullock Drivers, Ploughmen, Harvestmen, Shepherds,”

“By enforcement of this term of servitude a moral check was placed on the man for a long period and good habits were forced upon him, and he was not allowed [to] take his station in society, till there was ground to believe he was likely to fulfil the duties of the new situation. Now contrast this with Probation. A convict is associated with about 300 of all sorts They are to serve say 2 years on Probation during which they are chiefly employed in road-making. The work they do is comparatively minimal and there is little to excite to do anything so that the tendency of these parties is to destroy industrious habits, when these existed previous to transportation. At length they are eligible for hire. They are neither Bullock Drivers, Ploughmen, Reapers, Shearers nor Shepherds.”

Crown above Oval handstamp, HOBART TOWN, 6 JA 1844 rated RR. 4d seapost from Hobart Town, 8d ingoing ship letter fee to pay at Deptford. Arrival MY 30 1844 (top right), London Chief Office stamp (top left).





Paid Transit

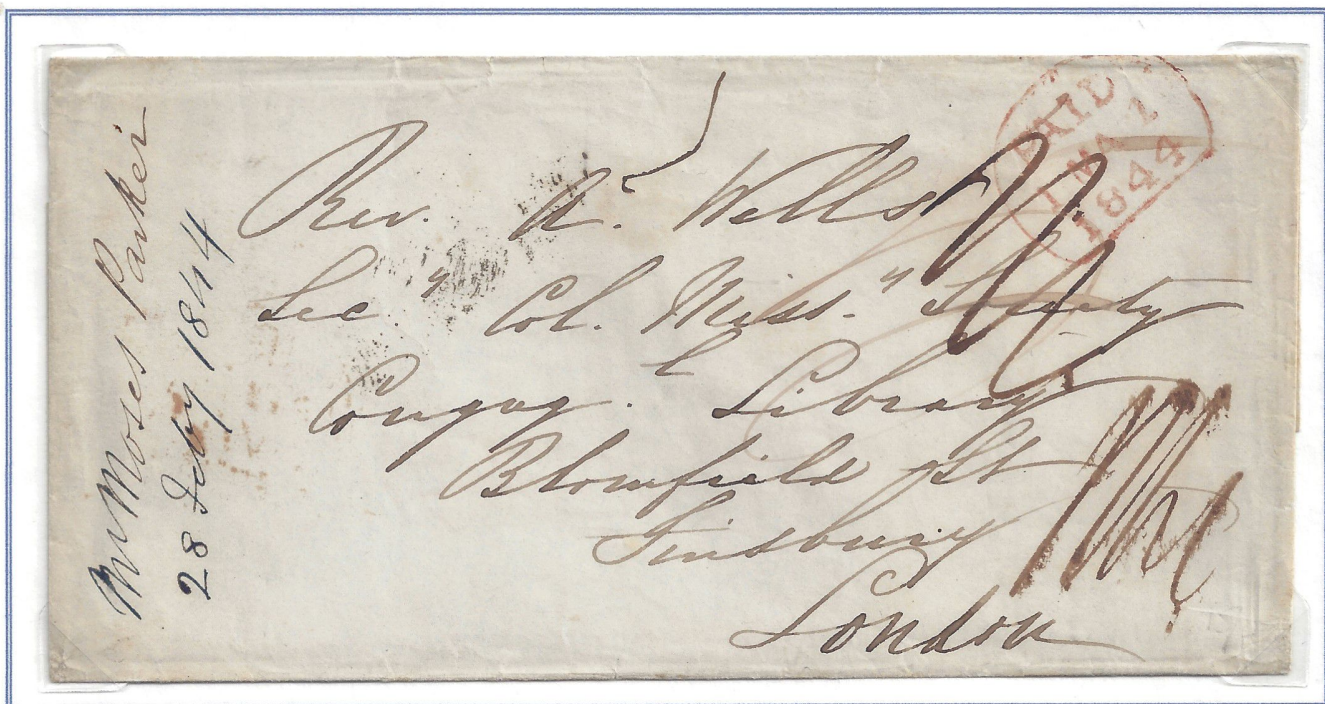
1840 - 1845

In 1840 a new "tombstone" stamp was introduced for paid internal letters to, and letters in transit via, Hobart Town. This stamp replaced the PAID stamp shown on page 6.

This letter was sent from Richmond to Hobart Town and then to London. The writer, Moses Parker, was the head of the Congregational Church of Richmond in 1844.



Tombstone type PAID stamp, 1 MA 1844 (rated RR)
Mss "5" in red, being 4d for ship letters under 1/2 oz plus 1d surcharge (introduced in the Act of 1841), dispatch fee paid in Hobart Town
"5" crossed out on arrival in London, and replaced by:
Mss "1/4" in black for ship letter incoming to London, double weight @ 8d per oz



Folded side (reduced to 75%)



SHIP LETTER
applied in London

Chief Office
processing stamp
18 JY 1844 code Jn
Applied in London



Unpaid City Post

1845 - 1851

In November, 1845 the Post Office introduced timed date stamps for paid and unpaid deliveries within Hobart Town and Launceston (although the handstamps appear to have been tendered for in 1839). They were used for the 2d. post service initiated in a proclamation of 1839. The times represented were 10 o'clock, 1 o'clock and 4 o'clock corresponding to the delivery times for letter carriers. All these six handstamps are rated R or RR (and possibly under-rated).

In the example below a 10 o'clock stamp was applied after an initial error. The sender, Phillips, has marked the envelope as "out of boundary" referring to the town boundary of Hobart Town. An un-named date stamp (type 3) was applied to it – correct for a letter destined beyond Hobart Town. But Landsdown Crescent is 2 km from the GPO and was therefore inside the boundary. A correct city post stamp was applied. "4" for 4d was entered in mss, then crossed out and "2" applied in mss being the correct postage rate internal to Hobart Town.

This combination of marks is unique (ex Rigo de Righi).

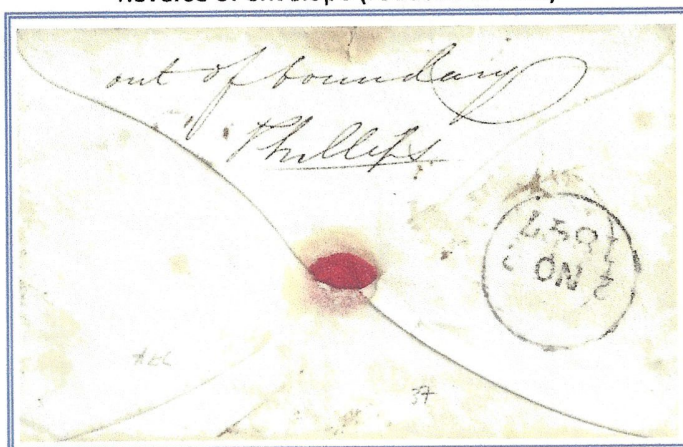


Unpaid city post
10 O'CLOCK
3 NOV 1847 (rated R)

Mss "4" crossed out

Mss "2" for 2d rate

Reverse of envelope (reduced to 75%)



Mss "out of boundary"

Un-named date stamp
type 3
2 NOV 1847



Ship Letter Inbound

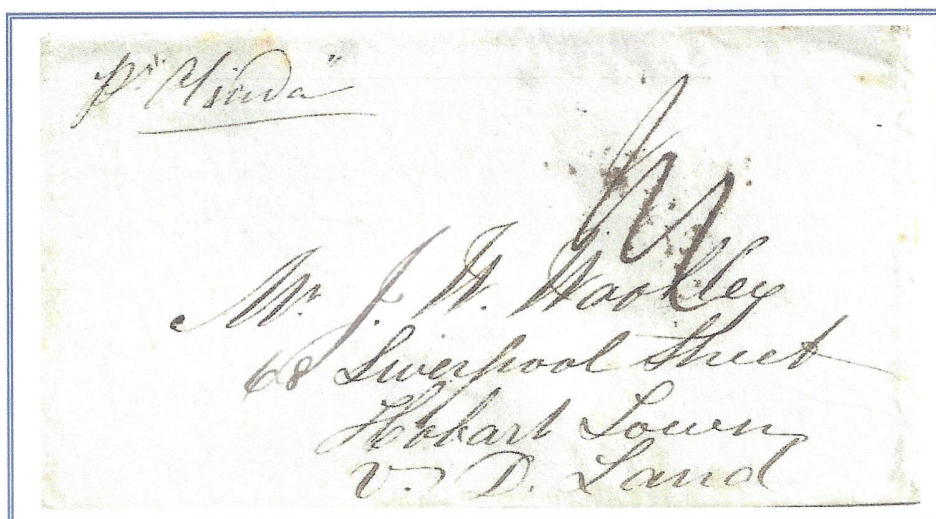
1846 - 1852

In 1846, a handstamp with rounded corners was introduced for inbound ship letters, replacing the earlier rectangular stamp (refer page 4). It was slightly smaller than the earlier stamp at 27.5 x 36 mm. It remained in use until 1852.

SHIP LETTER 27 AP 1852 (rated R)
Ms. "4" being charge for ship letter
No marks from the London end indicating that the letter was handled by a shipping agent.



Dispatched "per Olinda" from London
Mss. 4 being rate for letters originating beyond Hobart Town



The "Olinda" left London on 4 December 1851 and arrived in Hobart Town on 27 April 1852.



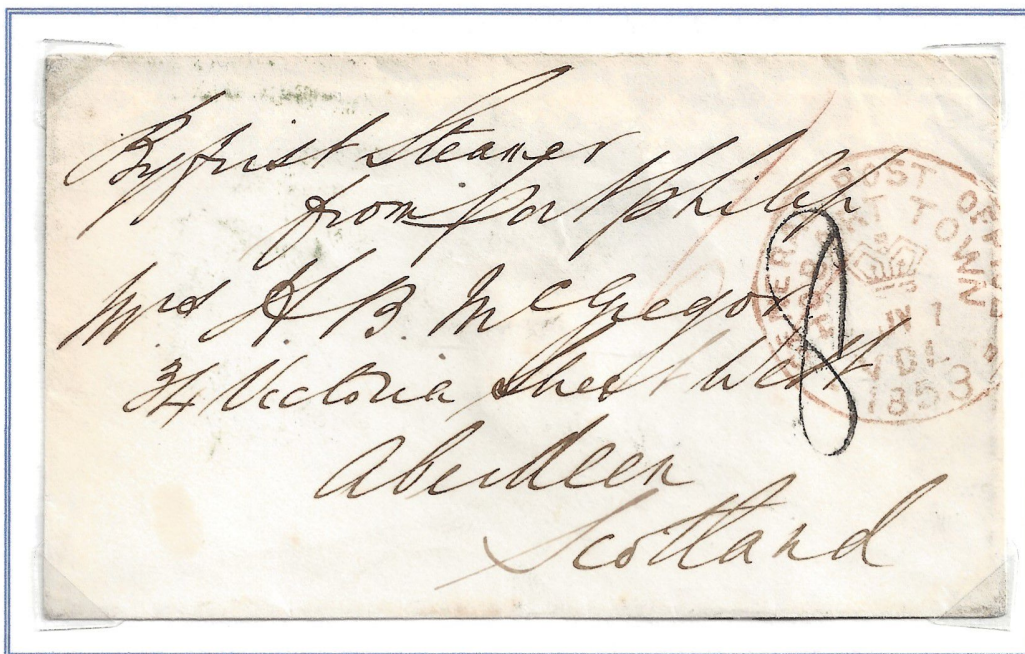
Ship Letter Outbound – Crown in Circle

1846 - 1855

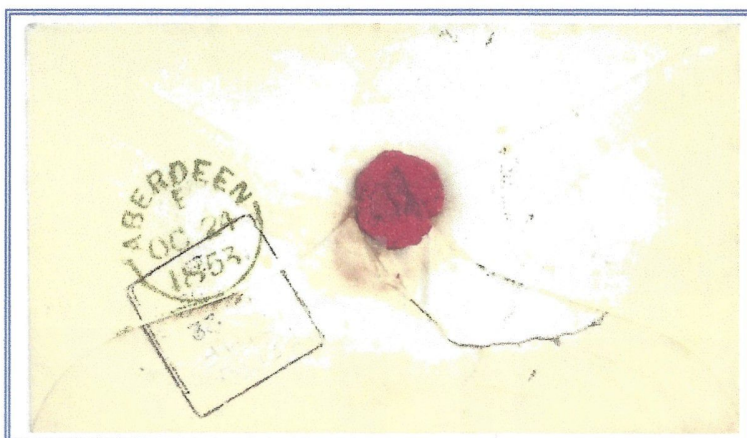
Late in 1846, a new handstamp, with the crown inside a circle, was introduced for pre-paid outward ship letters, replacing the handstamp shown on page 7. It remained in use until 1855.

Circular stamp: GENERAL POST OFFICE HOBART TOWN V.D.L. (rated R)
7 J(ul)Y 1853

Mss: "By first steamer from Port Philip"
Faint "5" in red, being 4d for ship letters under ½ oz plus 1d surcharge
"8" being inbound ship letter rate paid in Liverpool



Arrival marks: LIVERPOOL SHIP OC 22 1853 code B
ABERDEEN Code E OC 24 1853



The code letter is almost invisible.



(Reduced to 75%)



Free Mail

1847 - 1854

Handstamps for free mail were introduced in 1837 and a second type came into use in 1840. These handstamps had crowns outside the circle. A new type with crown inside the circle was introduced in 1847.

This cover was sent from Launceston to the Collector of Internal Revenue in Hobart Town, as a Money Letter. Money Letters were precursors to registered letters. A registration fee of 6d. was introduced on 1 October, 1851 (after this letter was posted).

The letter is marked "on public service only" in mss. But at some point a postal clerk must have determined that the sender was not a public servant – resulting in a mss. endorsement.

- Despatch mark: LAUNCESTON 14 JA 1851
Primitive CDS type 3 (rated RR)
- Free: Stamped in Hobart Town, 14 JA 1851 (rated R)
- Mss: Money Letter
4 (?) in red – 4d for internal letter



The letter was written by William Johnstone, founder of Johnstone (originally) and (subsequently) Johnstone and Wilmot, general merchants and wine and spirit vendors. Numerous items of Tasmanian postal history have been sourced from Johnstone or Johnstone and Wilmot. The letter encloses a cheque for ten pounds to purchase "wholesale wine and spirit licenses."