Enlarged impressions of the two New Zealand Ship Letter Handstamps

**TYPE I (Proof 3 November 1841)**

**TYPE II (Proof 27 August 1841)**

Whilst there are slight differences in the letters of the two markings, the main difference is the letter “S” of SHIP, which in the case of Type II, it has been set upside down, with the smaller loop at the bottom.
New Zealand Ship Letter Handstamps

The two markings were manufactured in England and were recorded in the despatch books of the GPO (London) Records Room, 1841, Volume 1 pages 24 and 40, registered under dates of 27 August 1841 and 3 November 1841.

The New Zealand Post Office used the 3 November 1841 Handstamp first and this was designated “Type I.”

The other Handstamp which had been registered earlier on the 27 August 1841, was therefore designated “Type II”

Impressions taken from the GPO Records
Volume 1 pages 24 and 40

The two markings were sent with the Treasury Warrant of 1841, to New Zealand on the 29 October 1841, arriving in New Zealand on 28 April 1842.

Reference Robin Startup

Ship Letters
Primarily the SHIP LETTER markings were used to indicate that a Private Ship and not a Packet Boat carried the letter. The definition of a Ship Letter is found in the British Act 1st Vic. Cap 36, dated 12 July 1837.

“A letter transmitted inwards or outwards overseas by a vessel not being a Packet Boat”.

The main reasons for their use, was the collection of postal charges.

From 1840 there was a uniform “in all” ship-letter rate of 8d per half ounce, and 1s 4d per ounce. (This rate covered the letter from port of exit of country of origin to UK destinations).

The Postal Charge for sending a half ounce letter (single sheet) by a Packet Boat was 1s 0d.

1857 was about the end of the “General” period of the 8d ship-letter charge. By that time a standard “Colonial” rate of 6d per half ounce (by Post Office contract steamers) extended to most of the Empire; and the carrying of letters by private vessels had almost ceased.

Introduction

These markings have been discussed in some detail in Volume III, page 259, and Volume VII, pages 123/4 of the RPSNZ Handbooks.

There have also been two of my articles in “The New Zealand Stamp Collector” in December 2006 and later in 2007. These were prepared, following the update by K. J. McNaught, “The New Zealand Stamp Collector” March 1990, where it was purported that the Type II Marking had been reported dated 5 June 1843 in the B. J. E. Scott collection displayed at Royal 100 Exhibition.

B. J. E. Scott also stated that this cover was the earliest of three covers, the latest being 23 September 1843, the intermediate cover recorded is dated 24 June 1843.
In my two articles in 2006 and 2007, I confirmed beyond reasonable doubt that the Type II marking had not been used on those three covers and furthermore had not been used on any of the 20 covers that I had recorded.

This current article is to once again confirm my belief that Type II was never used in New Zealand. It has been especially prepared in view that the 5 January 1875 cover has now been claimed to have the Type II Handstamp. "Len Jury Auction, Spink 7 October 2015, and later Auckland City Stamps Auction."

John Bishop described the differences between the two types as follows:

"Type I, the main characteristics are that the letters appear tall and thin and the “S” is normal, i.e., the smaller loop is at the top and the larger loop at the bottom.

Type II on the other hand (Registered 27 August 1841) has four distinguishing features by which it may be told apart from Type I: the “S” is inverted (small loop at foot and larger at top); the second “A” is noticeably shorter than the other letters; most letters are fractionally shorter and thicker, giving a squat appearance; the lines of words are not parallel, forming a noticeable bow."

![NEW-ZEALAND
SHIP LETTER

TYPE II (Proof 27 August 1841)
The main difference is between the letter “S”
(Normal Type I, Inverted Type II)

TYPE I
Normal
Proof 3 November 1841

TYPE II
Inverted
Proof 27 August 1841
# DETAILS OF KNOWN AND RECORDED COVERS

1. **5 July 1842**  
   [ref John Bishop notes] Details requested

2. **4 October 1842**  
   ex J. Riddell ex John Bishop ex John Woolfe

3. **16 November 1842**  
   Lot 660 Cavendish Auction 9 March 2001

4. **16 November 1842**  
   Lot 662 Cavendish Auction 9 March 2001

5. **16 November 1842**  
   Lot 1875 Robson Lowe Auction 19 September 1990  
   Ex John J. Bishop collection

6. **16 November 1842**  
   Lot 1503 Cavendish Auction 8/9 September 2000

7. **16 November 1842**  
   Lot 1502 Cavendish Auction 8/9 September 2000

8. **16 November 1842**  
   Lot 661 Cavendish Auction 9 March 2001

9. **16 November 1842**  
   Lot 663/1 Cavendish Auction 9 March 2001

10. **16 November 1842**  
    Lot 663/2 Cavendish Auction 9 March 2001

11. **7 December 1842**  
    Lot 1876 Robson Lowe Auction 19 September 1990  
    Ex John J. Bishop, Hugh Wood, John Woolfe

12. **11 December 1842**  
    David Holmes Private Treaty sale 2000

13. **8 June 1843**  
    David Holmes Northpex Private Treaty sale 2004  
    Ex Gerald J. Elliott, John Bishop collection

14. **14 June 1843**  
    Lot 1878 Robson Lowe Auction 19 September 1990  
    Ex John J. Bishop collection

15. **15 June 1843**  
    Lot 38, Spink Auction 3 October 2006  
    Ex Barry Scott ex John Woolfe, ex Elliott collection

16. **24 June 1843**  
    Ex Barry Scott collection.

17. **25 September 1843**  
    Ex. Michael Burberry collection.

18. **12 February 1844**  
    ex Hugh Wood collection

19. **26 February 1844**  
    Stanley Gibbons Direct sale 1981  
    Ex. John Woolfe collection.

20. **30 March 1844**  
    [ref John Bishop notes] Details requested

21. **5 January 1875**  
    Lot 926 Christies Robson Lowe Auction Zurich  
    Incorrectly described by Jury as Type II.
ILLUSTRATIONS OF KNOWN COVERS

1 - 21

Cover No. 1 – Dated 15 July 1842

Provenance. The Plantation Papers – The Philatelist November 1965
Reference John Bishop notes 1973

5 July 1842
Details requested

Cover No. 2 - 4 October 1842, Lot 57, Robson Lowe Auction 11 March 1973.
Ex. J. Riddell, ex John Bishop ex John Woolfe.

Cover No. 3 - 16 November 1842, Lot 660 Cavendish Auction 9 March 2001

Cover No. 4 - 16 November 1842, Lot 662 Cavendish Auction 9 March 2001
Cover No. 5 – 16 November 1842, Lot 1875, Robson Lowe Auction 19 Sept. 1990, ex John Bishop

Cover No. 6 - 16 November 1842 Lot 1503 Cavendish Auction 8/9 September 2000
Cover No. 7 - 16 November 1842; Lot 1502 Cavendish Auction 8/9 September 2000

Cover No. 8 – 16 November 1842, Lot 661 Cavendish Auction 9 March 2001
16 November 1842
Details requested
LIVERPOOL-SHIP Marking


Cover No. 12 - 11 December 1842, David Holmes Private Treaty sale 2000
Cover No. 13 - 8 June 1843, David Holmes, Northpex Private Treaty sale 2004
Ex Gerald J. Elliott collection  Letter dated 1 April 1843 at Kawhia 1 May 1843.

Cover No. 14 - 14 June 1843, Lot 1878 Robson Lowe Auction 19 September 1990
Ex John J. Bishop collection

Cover No. 15 - 15 June 1843, Spink Auction 3 October 2006, ex John Woolfe, ex Barry Scott (incorrectly described as Type II)
Cover No. 16 - 24 June 1843, David Holmes Private Treaty sale 2000
Ex Barry Scott collection (incorrectly described as Type II)

Cover No. 17 - 25 September 1843, Lot 434 Christie's Robson Lowe Auction
28 October 1986. Ex Michael Burberry collection
Cover No. 18 - 12 February 1844, ex Hugh Wood collection

Cover No. 19 - 26 February 1844, Stanley Gibbons Direct sale 1981
  Ex John Woolfe collection
Cover No. 20 - 30 March 1844, [ref John Bishop notes 1973]

30 March 1844
Details requested

Cover No. 21 - 5 January 1875, Lot 926, Christies Robson Lowe Auction Zurich 17 May 1988, ex Marcel Stanley collection. Later offered by Spink etc. 2015.

Incorrectly claimed to be Type II
This cover is a bit of an enigma, in as much it is addressed to Australia, from San Francisco, and was taken off at Auckland from The Australian and American Mail Steamship Co. screw ss Macgregor which left San Francisco on 8 December 1874, via Honolulu, arriving at Auckland on 5 January 1875. (confirmed by the AUCKLAND cds). The ss Macgregor left Auckland for Sydney on 6 January, arriving at Sydney, New South Wales, on 11 January 1875. The mail from Sydney to Melbourne was carried on the ss City of Adelaide that left on 12 January, arriving at Melbourne of the 15 January, confirming the endorsement.

The only Question still to be answered is why was the NZ SHIP LETTER Marking applied?

CAVEAT EMPTOR

I hope that this article will generate some discussion and hopefully I will receive information on the two covers that I have not illustrated, together with a lot of comments on my hypothesis that the Type II Handstamp was never used in New Zealand.

Gerald J. Elliott 17 August 2016