

The Queen's Letters

A Royal Postal History, 1851-69



Background

This Class 2C Postal History exhibit displays the postal history of the so-called Queens letters; the correspondence between Queen Louise of Sweden and Norway, and her governess Victoire Wauthier in The Hague, from 1851-1869.

Most of the correspondence originates from three Derichs and Schwenn auctions in 1967-70, and a selection of covers and letters was shown in a special exhibition at Postmuseum Stockholm in 1968. As most of Queen Louise's personal archives were burned after her death in 1871 by order of her husband, King Carl XV, her long forgotten correspondence with Victoire Wauthier remains the single, most important primary information source about her personal life.

Purpose

The following exhibit intends to show a selection of the Queen's Letters correspondence as broad and representative as possible. The Queen's writings are put into postal and historical context by examining all relevant postal routes, postage rates and methods of conveyance used during the time period in question, as well as the applicable postal conventions. It outlines the role played by steamships and railroad networks in the development of mail routes between Scandinavia and the Netherlands, and the transition from the pre-philatelic era to the introduction of postage stamps and the subsequent mandatory use of such for prepaid mail.

Choice and display of material

The comprehensive documentation which has been done of the correspondence also clearly defines the opportunity set available for an exhibit of this kind. All in all, the correspondence counts 114 franked covers and 100 stampless covers and letters; all unique in their own right, but as many items are duplicated, at least in terms of their importance from a postal history perspective, a one-frame selection is seen as most appropriate for conveying the message and fulfilling the purpose of this exhibit.

Catalogue/census references are given as per Facit (F) and Bjäringer/Ryen (BR). Expertized items are marked 'e'. Some objects of particular importance or scarcity included in this selection have been highlighted in blue. A few items unique in an even wider philatelic context are highlighted in red.

Plan

The Queen's letters include both Swedish and Norwegian material, but as the Swedish part of the correspondence by far outnumbers the Norwegian, the exhibit is chronologically organized according to the applicable Swedish postage rate periods as follows:

- 1 – The 48 skilling banco period, 1.1.1848 – 30.6.1852
- 2a – The 30 skilling banco period, 1.7.1852 – 30.6.1858
- 2b – The 30 skilling period (N), 1.1.1855 – 12.6.1864
- 3 – The 90 öre period, 1.7.1858 – 21.9.1864
- 4 – The 72 öre period, 1.1. 1864 – 30.4.1865
- 5 – The 63 öre period, 1.5.1865-30.9.1865
- 6 – The 49 öre period, 1.10.1865 – 31.3.1869
- 7 – The 30 öre period, 1.1.1869 – 30.6.1875

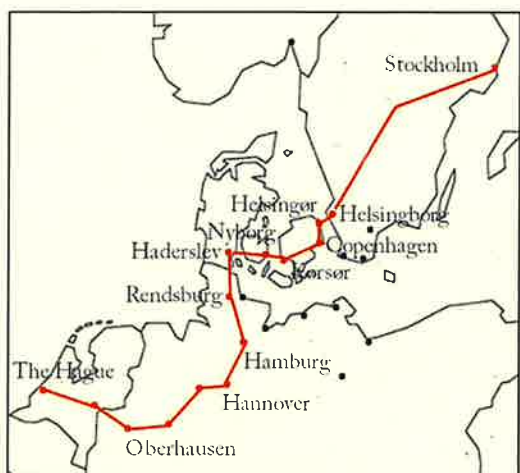
Principal sources and literature

- Bjäringer, T. & Ryen, K.: «Royal confessions to a lifelong friend – Swedish and Norwegian Queen Louise's Correspondence 1850-71», 2023
- Dutch, German, Danish, Swedish and Norwegian circulars and postal conventions
- Digital newspaper archives
- Hughmark, G.: A history of Scandinavian pre-postage stamp foreign mail before 1868

Royal Palace, Stockholm, 26.12.1851
Sharing the joys of little Princess Louise's first Christmas



Par la legation & diplomatic mail
 24 Sk Bco + 50 cents due - via Denmark overland



Some of the earliest Queen's letters, from year end 1851, are sent with the annotation «par la légation» or «par la légation de Suède». «Par la légation» letters do not bear any transit cancels before Hamburg. They were as such sent in closed mail packets or bags to the Swedish-Norwegian post office (KS&NPA) Hamburg, which also acted as the Swedish-Norwegian legation there, and then forwarded as regular, unpaid mail by Hamburg Stadtpost to The Hague.



Right: Main office of Hamburg Stadtpost

Based on contents, however, it is clear the intention of Crown Princess Louise was to have the letters sent via the minister and legation in *The Hague* as diplomatic mail or *fribrev* («j'espère que celle-ci vous parviendra par Løvenskiold»). The instruction was likely misinterpreted; free letters, in Louise's case *fribrev cabinett*, would have had postage paid to destination by KS&NPA. Instead, the letter was forwarded as unpaid from Hamburg, and the recipient was charged postage due upon arrival.

Letter with contents dated Stockholm 26.12.1851, with annotation «par la légation» and Dutch postage due 50 cents, corresponding to 24 skilling banco or 8 silbergroschen, for the distance from Hamburg to The Hague. Postage split 35 cents to Hamburg and 15 cents to the Netherlands, as per Dutch circular no. 381 of 18.03.1848. Arrived Hamburg and KS&NPA 02.01.1852, with Arnhem border office «hammer» cancel in red and Dutch arrival cancel from 's-Gravenhage 04.01.1852. Steamships from Sweden had ceased operations for the winter, as had the steamships from Copenhagen to Kiel. The letter instead went overland via Denmark and Slesvoig/Holstein.



Transit cancel from KS&NPA in Hamburg on reverse



Dutch border office («hammer») cancel struck on mail received at Arnhem from Hamburg.

The letter arrived Hamburg the day after Hamburg had entered the German-Austrian Postal Union on 1 January, but the corresponding rate reductions to Holland did not come into force until 1 February, as per Dutch circular no. 455 of 15.01.1852, when the rate from Hamburg to The Hague was reduced to 5 silbergroschen, or 30 cents (15 Sk Bco). Origin: Unknown, BR: SL4.

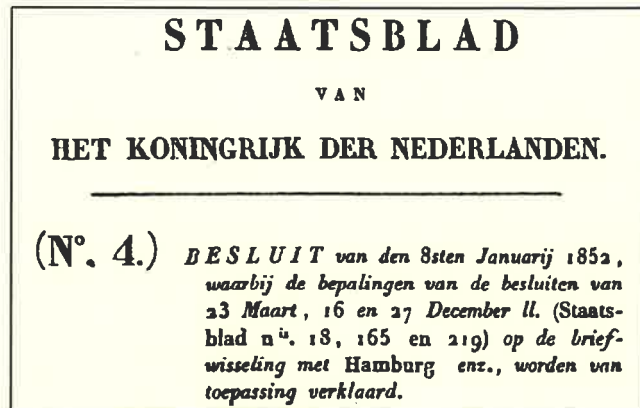
Royal Palace, Stockholm, 15.04.1852

What to bring and not; planning Victoire's summer visit to Bäckaskog;



Franco Hamburg

24 Sk Banco + 30 cents due - via Lübeck direct



Royal decree of 08.01.1852, announcing the temporary convention with Hamburg and the subsequent rate reduction with effect from 01.02.

The German-Austrian Postal Union uniform transit rates became applicable for mail from Hamburg from 01.02.1852, and annotations to this effect can thus be found on unpaid mail and mail sent Franco Hamburg from this date. For fully prepaid mail from Sweden, the rate reduction was not reflected in the tariff until 01.07.1852, when new postal conventions and new and reduced rates between Sweden-Prussia and Sweden-Denmark came into force.

A summer steamship route between Stockholm and Lübeck had been in operation by private contractors since the 1840's. Mail could be posted prepaid or unpaid at the post office, or posted in the ships' mail boxes. Upon arrival, mail was delivered to Lübeck Stadtpost for further conveyance until 01.07.1852, after which the new, Danish post office (KDOPA) obtained monopoly rights for conveyance of mail to and from Scandinavia over Lübeck. Louise would usually synchronize her letter writing with the direct steamship departures to the continent, to ensure the very latest of news were included for Victoire.



Letter dated Stockholm 15 April 1852, sent with private steamer «Svitliod» to Lübeck and Hamburg. The prevailing rate to Hamburg at the time was 24 skilling banco, or 8 silbergroschen, which has been prepaid. The letter was received and handled by Lübeck Stadtpost and delivered to K&S&NPA in Hamburg. «Schmetterlings» transit cancel from Hamburg Stadtpost, which was responsible for transport to The Netherlands. The letter was sent in closed transit from Hamburg to Arnhem, and the new, reduced rate from Hamburg of 30 cents, or 5 Sgr (3 Sgr: Hamburg share), was payable by the recipient, as per the «30» annotation in black. Origin: Unknown, BR: SL6

Bäckaskog Castle, 07.06.1852

Louise is pregnant again— and Victoire is the first to know!



Prepaid, unfranked

48 Sk Banco- via Ystad/Stralsund

The 1847 Swedish-Prussian convention established a 48 skilling banco single letter rate from Sweden to The Netherlands, equal to 16 silbergroschen, and the erection of regular steamship services Ystad—Stralsund and Ystad-Stettin. The first route was served by Swedish postal steamers; the latter by Prussian ships.

From Stralsund, mail was brought to a connection point on the Berlin-Königsberg («Ostbahn») railway. Further railway conveyance via the Berlin-Halberstadt, (Magdeburg-Brunswick-Hannover), Minden-Dortmund and Minden-Deutz railways to Oberhausen. From there, diligence service covered the last stretch to the Dutch border post office at Arnhem via Emmerich.



Prepaid letter sent from Christianstad 07.06.1852, departing the same day from Ystad with postal steamer «Svenska Lejonet» for Stralsund. Total Swedish postage 8 silbergroschen/24 skilling banco, noted in blue and black and crossed out, the latter in favor of a «frco» annotation. Prussian and Dutch postage of 4 sgr each («fr4»), for a total of 16 Sgr or 48 skilling. The black «8» and «9» annotations are letter bill numbers. Wax seal containing Louise's double coat of arms as Princess of Orange/Crown Princess of Sweden and Norway. This is the only recorded prepaid letter to The Netherlands sent according to the 1847 Swedish-Prussian convention. Origin: Schwenn 1970, BR: SL16.

Tullgarn Castle, 27. & 31.08.1853

Celebrating Prince August's birthday – but what's with the mail these days?



Diverted/forwarded mail

10 & 20 cents due - via Hamburg/Amsterdam



Mail from Sweden to The Netherlands did generally not travel by sea to Amsterdam. However, in summer of 1853, Northern Europe was plagued by a cholera epidemic which disrupted normal mail service. A couple of Queen's letters from this period bear signs of conveyance via Amsterdam. These have likely been sent via the Hamburg-Amsterdam line, which operated a service every five days in each direction.

The owner of the steamship line, Paul van Vlissingen, was a close business partner of G.F. Egidius; the Swedish-Norwegian Consul General in Amsterdam, who probably assisted in forwarding the letters from there. «Willem de Eerste» arrived in Amsterdam in regular service from Hamburg on 6 September, corresponding with the date of the Amsterdam cancellations. No other potentially matching ship arrival to Amsterdam on or before this date has been recorded.



G. F. Egidius



«G.F.Egidius» cancel on envelopes' reverse

Letter 1 dated Tullgarn 27-29.08.1853 with annotations for double letter Dutch postage due of 20 cents and conveyance via Stettin, likely with «Nordstjernen» on 30 Aug, arriving Stettin 31 Aug. Letter 2 dated Tullgarn 31.08.1853 with 10 cents postage due annotation and conveyance via Lübeck, likely with «Gauthiod» on 1 Sep, arriving 4 Sep. Both letters with Amsterdam cancel 6 Sep, 's-Gravehage arrival cancel 6 Sep and «G.F.Egidius» cancel on reverse. Origin: Unknown, BR: SL34 & SL35.

Christiania, 21. & 28.04.1857

«The Løvenskiolds are nothing...they call themselves barons without having the right»/
«Burn this letter, so no one will know what I wrote about Prince August»



Franco Hamburg/Unpaid

16 Sk (summer rate)+30 cents due/65 cents due - via Kiel



During the steamship season, mail from Norway could be sent directly to the continent, avoiding Swedish transit. From 1855, the summer rate to Hamburg was 16 skilling vs. a winter rate over Sweden of 21 skilling. The 16 Sk rate prevailed until 29.09.1865. Mail from Norway to The Netherlands could be sent as unpaid, prepaid to destination, or prepaid to Hamburg. Of the latter, only stampless covers have been recorded.

It is not clear why all of Queen Louise's letters from Norway are stampless and not prepaid to the final destination, which would otherwise seem to be the rule rather than the exception for the Queen's correspondence; possibly it is due to being delivered last-minute directly before the ship's departure.



On obverse:
«Sandö Sund» TPO cancel in blue struck onboard Norwegian postal steamers to the continent, and «butterfly» transit cancel in black from Hamburg Stadtpost.

Letters dated Christiania 21 and 28 April 1857, sent via Kiel and Hamburg by postal steamer «Christiania». Postage to Hamburg was 16 Skilling/6 Sgr/35 cents, and postage from Hamburg to The Hague 14 skilling/5 Sgr./30 cents. The latter was divided with 3 Sgr/20 cents to Hamburg Stadtpost and 2 Sgr/10 cents to Dutch post. The «Franco Hamburg» letter therefore has postage due of 30 cents, and the unpaid letter is due 65 cents upon receipt in The Hague (the erroneous «55» has been crossed out).

On reverse, cancel from KDOPA (Danish post office) in Hamburg, wax seal in black displaying the Crown Princess' great coat of arms. Cover framed in black due to court mourning over Queen Josephine's sister, Theodolinde de Beauharnais, Countess of Württemberg, deceased on 1 April. Origin: Unknown, BR: SL46 & SL47.

Royal Palace, Stockholm, 19.10.1857

«I was shocked to read about the death of your husband in the papers»



Prepaid, franked

30 Sk Banco- via Stettin direct



Kongl. Svenska Post-ångfartyget
NORDSTJERNAN
och Kongl. Preussiska Post-ångfartyget
NAGLER

Komma detta är att göra reguliera turer emellan **Stockholm** och **Stettin** på det sätt, att ett fartyg ågår hvarje Tisdag från **Stockholm** och ett från **Stettin** med anloppande af **Kalmar**. Passagerare-afgiften bliver som följer:

	1:a plats	2:a plats	3:a plats
Från Stockholm till Kalmar	Banko Riksdaler 11: 32	9: 16	3: 16
" " " Sveinöfjärde	" " 3: 32	2: 24	1: 16
" " " Stettin	" " 11: 16	7: 32	3: 32
" " Kalmar till Sveinöfjärde	" " 16: —	11: 16	5: 32
" " " Stettin	" " 18: 32	13: 16	7: —
" " Sveinöfjärde till Kalmar	" " 2: 32	2: —	1: 16

Båda Fartygen äro bekvämt och elegant inredde för Passagerare samt försedde med Restaurationer och god upppassning.
Fraktkods här afseenas dagen före fartygens afgång.
Närmare underättelser meddelas undervegs af hvar Sjö- och Kongl. Postkontoret i Stettin och Hrr Eggert Naude & Son i Stockholm, Skeppshörn N: 32.
Kalmar i April 1857.

J. G. Rothman.

The 30 skilling banco rate and the steamship route between Stockholm and Stettin were both a result of the 1852 Swedish-Prussian convention, which stipulated a weekly service to be inaugurated in each direction, with one Prussian («Nagler») and one Swedish («Nordstjernan») steamship, respectively. This continued until 1859, when «Nagler» tragically shipwrecked off the coast of Sweden, after which exclusively Swedish steamers served the route.

Following the development of the railway network in Southern Sweden (Södra Stambanan), the Stettin steamship route could no longer compete on speed and efficiency and became obsolete, but for more than a decade, Stockholm-Stettin served as a main artery in postal communication between Sweden and the continent. Mail via Stettin went directly by train over Berlin and Hannover to The Netherlands. Louise often indicated preferred route on the envelope to ensure quickest possible delivery.



Single weight letter franked with F3c+F5b, sent by postal steamer «Nordstjernan», departing from Stockholm in the early morning on 20.10.1857 via Stettin and Berlin. The letter was posted the day before. Total postage 30 skilling, equal to 10 silbergroschen. Swedish postage of 2,5 Sgr and Prussian share of 3 Sgr. Sea postage of 2,5 Sgr was equally shared. Dutch postage 2 Sgr. The «5» annotation in blue bence refers to the sum of Prussian and Dutch postage. The red «Aus Schweden» origin cancel is typical for Stettin, but a similar cancel was also used in Stralsund. Stettin-Berlin railway cancel on back. Ten 30 Sk Queen's letters exist. Origin: Unknown, BR: S3. Provenance: Gustaf Douglas, Anna-Lisa/Sven Eric Beckeman. 'e'

Royal Palace, Stockholm, 30.01.1861

Royal fighting over late Queen Desideria's estate – Louise shares the details



Prepaid, franked

90 öre - via Denmark per ice boat over Great Belt



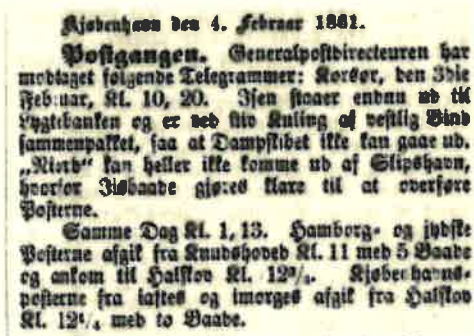
Ice boats had to be dragged by raw manpower across the Great Belt during the icy winter of 1861

Cold weather and icy conditions in the Great Belt remained an obstacle for marine traffic in winter time. Screw driven steamships were still not common, so precautions had to be taken with respect to the steamers' relatively fragile paddle wheels. The steamship route between Korsør and Kiel would therefore at times be out of service, and during the most adverse weather periods, special *ice boats* would be used to cross the sound between Korsør and Nyborg. From there, mail would continue the overland route to Hamburg.

In January/February of 1861, the Kiel route was suspended. Steamers «Jylland» and «Njord» operated on the Great Belt between Zealand and Funen, but were locked in by ice. Ice boats were prepared to assist.

The 90 öre rate was a continuation of the 30 skilling banco rate. Following the monetary reform of 1858 and the introduction of the *krona* with effect from 01.07 that year, one skilling banco was set to equal 3 öre. This coincided with the issuance of the new Vapen Öre (coat of arms) series of postage stamps in seven different values, which would remain in use for more than a decade.

Just like the new stamps, the 90 öre rate would also have a long life; it was replaced on 01.01.1864 by a 72 öre rate for letters over Prussia. For letters over Denmark/Hamburg, it officially lasted until 22.09.1864, although it only had limited relevance after 1 February that year, due to the outbreak of the Danish-Prussian war.



Flyveposten, 04.02.1861



Single weight letter franked with 3xF11b, sent from Stockholm 30.01.1861 via Denmark. Due to conveyance by ice boat over Great Belt, it took the letter 8 days to get to Hamburg instead of the normal 5 (via Kiel) or 6 (overland). The oval transit cancel from Hamburg Stadtpost dated 07.02.61 replaced the old «butterfly» cancel from the beginning of that year. Annotation «5» in red for Hamburg (3) and Dutch (2) share of postage of 5 silbergroschen, equal to 45 öre. Linear «FRANCO» cancel from KSPA in Hamburg, and framed «FRANCO» cancel possibly from German railways. The cover's black frame is for double court mourning over dowager Queen Desideria, died on 17 December, and Queen Louise's uncle; King Frederick William IV of Prussia, died on 2 January. Fifteen Queen's letters exist with this franking. Origin: Schwenn 1970, BR: V13. 'e'

Royal Palace, Stockholm, 09.02.1864

«Last night, the mail arrived via Rostock for the first time»



Prepaid, unfranked

90 öre - via Ystad/Warnemünde, closed transit over Hamburg

247

KONGL. GENERAL-POST-STYRELSENS

1865. CIRKULÄR N^o 20.

Till samtliga Postförvaltare i Riket.

Om fränkerade börs försändelser.

Då, enligt hvad hos Kongl. General-Post-Styrelsen blifvit anmaldt, posträkenskapen utvisar det förhållande, att ofrimärkte fränkerade bref vid högst få postanstalter numera förekomma, samt mycken lättnad och mera redighet i expeditionen, redovisnings- och kontrollväg skulle vinnas, om endast ett slag af fränkerade bref blefve att behandla, vill Kongl. General-Post-Styrelsen härmed förordna, till iakttagande från och med nästkommande års ingång, att alla afgående bref och korsbandsförsändelser, för hvilka, utom assurancesgiften (hvilken fortfarande bör med penningar erläggas och i räkenskapen såsom kontant uppbörd redovisas), öfriga belöpande portoafgifter kunna ersättas med frimärken, men, i afseende å hvilka detta betalningssätt icke blifvit af afsändaren iakttaget, utan afgifterne kontant erlagts, böra af vederbörande postförvaltare, innan försändelserne till adressorterne expedieras, behörigen frimärkas och såsom frimärkte karteras och protokolleras samt de för dem belöpande befordringsafgifterna i kvartalsförslager och årsräkningar redovisas såsom på berörde sätt influtet; kommande blanketterne till nämnde räkenskaper att i enlighet med ofran gifna föreskrift förändras, i mon af det nuvarande förrådets åtgång. Stockholm den 30 november 1863.

O. W. STAEL v. HOLSTEIN.

C. E. Löfgren.

Even long after stamps were introduced, there was no general requirement to actually use them. Letters could be sent unpaid, or prepaid in cash at the post office and sent without stamps. One benefit of using stamps was of course alleviating the need for going to the post office every time a letter was to be posted; a letter box could be used instead.

The fact that several prepaid Queen's letters are stampless is perhaps both understandable and explicable; mail from the Royal Palace would probably amount to a considerable quantity every day. The practise of not affixing stamps on all of it might simply have been a time saving measure for a busy postal clerk when the day's bundle of letters and parcels from Court were dropped off, but from 1866 the use of stamps became mandatory in Sweden for prepaid mail (by Circular No 20 of 30.11.1865); an exception remained for *free-letters*.

Prepaid, stampless letters include «Franco» cancels on the front cover verifying the prepayment of postage. Annotations in blue or red signify amount of postage creditable to foreign postal services.



The only recorded stampless cover to The Netherlands sent via Warnemünde. Contents dated 09.02.1864 and including a confirmation of first receipt of mail via the new route. Circular KSPA cancel on the back and oval transit cancel from Hamburg Stadtpost, both dated 15.02.64. Arrival cancel 's-Gravenhage 17.02 and delivery cancel «B2», indicating the 2nd mail delivery round. Blue annotation «10» for Dutch share of postage in cents. Wax seal containing Queen's crowned monogram. On front: Annotation «5» in blue for the sum of Hamburg (3) and Dutch (2) part of postage of 5 silbergroschen and two franco cancels. Origin: Unknown, BR: SL84.

Route: 10 Feb - Delivered and paid. 11 Feb - Stockholm - Falköping - Jönköping - Alvesta, 12 Feb - Alvesta - Malmö - Ystad. 13 Feb - Postal steamer «Polhem» was scheduled to depart Ystad early in the morning, but due to storm, departure was delayed until the evening. As a result, the mail bag missed the connecting train from Rostock to Hagenow, and arrived Hamburg on the 15th, one day after schedule.

Royal Palace, Stockholm, 17.02.1864
 A Royal wedding contract under negotiation in Germany



Prepaid, franked
 90 öre (insufficient postage) - via Ystad/Warnemünde, closed transit over Hamburg



The Danish-Prussian war, which broke out on 1 February 1864, disrupted winter postal routes over Denmark. An agreement was reached between authorities of Sweden and Mecklenburg-Schwerin for a temporary mail route from Ystad over Warnemünde. Postal steamer «Drottning Lovisa» entered service on 3 Feb, and «Polhem» followed on the 5th. Postal tariffs to the Netherlands would come to depend on method and route of conveyance.

The only recorded franked (3xF10d1) cover sent to The Netherlands via Warnemünde and Hamburg in closed transit, departing with «Polhem» from Ystad on 21.02.1864. The postage of 72 öre was the correct, new rate for open transit via Prussia. However, the letter ended up in a closed mail packet to KSPA in Hamburg, and was therefore handed over to Hamburg Stadtpost. Hence, the old 90 öre rate came into force, and the letter was marked «Ungenügend» for insufficient postage of 18 öre, which was likely claimed by Hamburg Stadtpost from KSPA. Origin: Schwenn 1970, BR: V22. Provenance: Klaus Michtner. 'e'



Mail sent via Warnemünde in closed letter packets to KSPA in Hamburg received the circular KSPA cancel, reserved for mail received from Prussian post, before being handed over to Hamburg Stadtpost for further conveyance, as can usually be confirmed by the oval Hamburg cancel struck at the Stadtpostamt. Mail in closed transit via Warnemünde was hence subject to the 1858 Hamburg-Netherlands convention, with a rate of 5 silbergroschen/30 cents between Hamburg and the Dutch 2nd rayon, which included The Hague, giving a total rate of 90 öre from Sweden.



Royal Palace, Stockholm, 22.02.1864

Louise breaks with her uncle, the King of Prussia, and sides with Denmark in the war



Prepaid to destination, franked

72 öre - via Ystad/Warnemünde, open transit over Prussia

As a result of a new Dutch-Prussian convention, rates from Sweden to the Netherlands were reduced with effect from 1 Jan 1864 for mail sent over Prussia. The rate also became applicable for mail via Warnemünde through agreement with Mecklenburg-Schwerin, but only for mail sent in open transit, as handling by Hamburg Stadtpost could then be avoided.



Postal steamer «Polhem» served the Ystad-Warnemünde route

KONGL. GENERAL-POST-STYRELSENS					
CIRKULÄR.					
1864.		N ^o 1			
Till samtlige Postförvaltare i Riket, <i>angående ändring i utrikes portotaxan.</i>					
På grund af en emellan Preussen och Nederländerna nyligen afslutad postkonvention, som med innevarande års början trädte i verkställighet, komma de uti utrikes portotaxan under nr 5 och 46 utsatta bestämmelser att blifva sålunda förändrade, nämligen:					
Ord- sätt- ning- i taxan.	Landt och stert.	Porto- belopp for frank- örde sable levr.	Typpostprocent.	Frankerings- sättet.	Bestämmelser för frankering af kungen af Nederländer, särskildt med rekommenda- torer bel. m. m.
5	Nederländerna	72	Enkelt levrt 1 a m. 3 sgr. För ändring i utrikes utskick porto samt för svare 3 sgr. mera.	Frankering- fritt.	Konvention/Stramåttare 10 sgr. för levrt vgt af 3 sgr. Förpackningar, adresser och kon- vokationer. Dessutom och Dessutom levrt porto till Svenskt land och Skandit Preussiska skipter 45 sgr. för levrt vgt till 6 sgr. och 10 sgr för vgt lev- vandes till 9 sgr. samt Tyskt och Nederländskt porto tillhöra 7 sgr för krage vgt af 7 sgr.

Letters sent via Warnemünde in open transit will only display a Rostock transit cancel on the back. Unlike mail sent in letter packets to KSPA, they do not include KSPA or Hamburg Stadtpost cancellations, as they were handled by Prussian post directly. Only three such covers exist, as proof of a postage rate which in effect was only in use for less than two months.



Letter franked with 3x10, sent from Stockholm 22.02.1864 via Ystad, departing in the early morning on 25.02 with «Polhem» for Warnemünde. Total rate 72 öre/8 silbergroschen. In line with the 1863 Dutch-Prussian convention, the Prussian share had been reduced from 3 to 2 sgr, and the Dutch share from 2 to 1 sgr. Rostock transit cancel on back; blue annotation «w(eter)f(ranco)1», for 1 silbergroschen reimbursable to Dutch post. Origin: Schwenn 1970, BR: V23. Provenance: Klaus Michtner

Royal Palace, Stockholm, 06.05.1864

Raise your glasses for the newlyweds! Prince August and Teresia of Saxe-Altenburg



Prepaid to Dutch border, double weight franked
144 öre + 20 cents due - via Malmö/Lübeck



The route via Warnemünde was long and time consuming. From April 1864 until November that year, it was therefore replaced by a new route Malmö – Lübeck, served by the same ships «Drottning Lovisa» and «Polhem». From end-November, the winter route over Denmark was partially reopened, following the inauguration of a new, direct Lübeck-service from Korsør.

Routing mail via Lübeck and Hamburg once again revived the 1857 Hamburg-Netherlands convention, and the new 72 öre rate over Prussia fell short of covering the Dutch share of postage according to this convention. Letters were therefore from now on treated as paid up to the Dutch border only, and struck with a «Franco Grenze» cancel. Remaining Dutch postage of 10 cents (18 öre) was paid by the recipient.



Mail from Sweden and Norway over Lübeck was received by the Danish post office (KDOPA) in Lübeck, which operated a monopoly on mail to and from Scandinavia over that city, and handed over to Lübeck Stadtpost for rail transport to Hamburg. Letters received from KDOPA Lübeck by the Swedish post office KSPA in Hamburg were struck with the rectangular KSPA (D) cancel, thereby differentiating it from that previously received from Prussian post via Warnemünde.



Letter franked with F10d1+4xF11d1, sent from Stockholm with the morning train on 07.05.1864, arriving Malmö in the evening on the 8th for the 3 pm departure with the postal steamer «Drottning Lovisa» the next day. The postage rate of 2x72 öre/16 silbergroschen was only valid up to the Dutch border, hence the annotation «6» in red for Prussian share of postage of 2x3 Sgr and the «Fr(anco) Grenze» cancel. Oval transit cancel from Hamburg Stadtpost, rectangular KSPA (D) cancel and Dutch arrival cancel from 's-Gravenhage (The Hague) on reverse. This is one of four recorded double weight covers from the 72 öre period. Origin: Schwenn 1970, BR: V32. 'e'

Bäckaskog Castle, 01.08.1865

Just returning from opening the Christianstad-Hässleholm railway

Prepaid, franked

63 öre - via Malmö/Stralsund



Above: Stralsund–Berlin railway cancel on back of cover

Right: Prussian postal steamer «Pommerania»



The short-lived 63 öre postage rate, which lasted only from 01.05 – 30.09.1865, coincided with a temporary steamship service between Malmö and Stralsund for the 1865 steamship season (Ystad again temporarily became departure port for Swedish postal steamers in 1866). Both were a result of a new postal convention of 31.07.1864 between Sweden and Prussia, which in theory came into effect on 1 October, but which in practise first came into use with the opening of the steamship season.

The expansion of the Southern railway network is indeed also why the letter is sent from Christianstad; the Royal couple combined a trip to their summer retreat at Bäckaskog with official opening ceremonial for the Christianstad-Hässleholm railway on 29 July. The 3 August Stralsund-Berlin cancel indicates the letter will have travelled with the Prussian steamer «Pommerania», departing from Malmö on the 2nd. The letter was then sent via the new Stralsund-Berlin railway, inaugurated in 1863. Hence, from 1865 onwards, the route via Stralsund once again became a principal transit route for mail between Sweden and The Netherlands. Louise lets us know that the Postmaster in Ystad was always informed of her stays at Bäckaskog on beforehand, which always ensured expedient delivery of letters, periodicals and other mail to her summer residence.



Letter franked with 2xF11+F14, sent from Christianstad 01.08.1865. Total postage of 63 öre /7 silbergroschen, according to the 1864 Swedish-Prussian and Dutch-Prussian conventions, including Dutch domestic postage. Swedish share was 1,75 Sgr plus half of the sea postage of 2 Sgr, leaving 4,25 Sgr to be shared between Prussian post (1+2,25 Sgr) and Dutch post (1 Sgr), which is noted in red. «Aus Schweden» origin cancel from Stralsund, and oval «FRANCO.» cancel. This is the only recorded 63 öre cover sent to The Netherlands. Origin: Schwenn 1967, BR: V42. 'e'

Royal Palace, Stockholm, 06.02.1867

«Carl's Day» and a string of balls and representational events completed



Prepaid, franked

49 öre - via Malmö/Korsør/Kiel



The 49 öre rate was the result of both a Swedish and a Prussian rate reduction; the Swedish rate was lowered from 1,75 to 1 silbergroschen, and the Prussian rate from 2,25 to 1,50 from 1.10.1865. Dutch and sea postage remained unchanged at 2 and 1 silbergroschen, respectively, for a total of 5,5 Sgr vs. previously 7,0.

Mail from Stockholm to the continent would now travel via Södra Stambanan either to Malmö or Ystad for transit via Denmark or Stralsund. The Swedish post office in Hamburg was still in operation at this time, and would receive mail over Korsør-Kiel via Preussische Eisenbahn-postbureau No 3; the Kiel-Hamburg line. Prepaid mail was from 1865 cancelled with an oval «FRANCO.» cancel at the Swedish post office in Hamburg and at Swedish border post offices.



Letter sent from Stockholm 06.02.1867, franked with 2x F7b2, F8d & F11e2. This is the most common franking for the 49 öre rate; 29 out of 50 recorded 49 öre Queen's letters are franked this way. Blue railway cancel on back. Arrived The Hague 10.02 (cancel in red and delivery cancel «D2»). Annotation «3 1/2» in red for the total postage reimbursable to Prussian post in silbergroschen, of which 1 Sgr for Dutch post (blue annotation «1w(eiter)ffranco»)). Red wax seal with Queen's crowned monogram. Origin: Schwenn 1970, BR: V68. 'e'

Royal Palace, Stockholm, 28.04.1867

First time in the saddle in 5 ½ years! Louise mounts her new horse, «Malakoff.»



Fribrev Cabinet

49 öre - via Malmö/Korsør/Kiel



Members of the Royal family had enjoyed free-letter privileges since the erection of the Swedish postal service in 1636. By Royal decree of 22 April 1830, it was instructed that a specific Stockholm free-letter cancel was to be used, and that records of all free-letters sent were to be kept for accounting purposes.

Royal free-letters sent abroad were under the responsibility of the Cabinet for International Mail Exchange; an entity under the Chancellery of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, hence the term «Fribrev Cabinet». Postage due to foreign postal services was reimbursed by KSPA in Hamburg.

Queen Louise and other members of the Royal family would irregularly make use of their free-letter privileges. Free-letters were normally subject to inspection. This was not the case for Fribrev Cabinet, and most of Queen Louise's letters sent this way are sealed with her personal wax seal.

Above: Louise out for a trot; she could only do 20 minutes, she admits in the letter (contemporary photograph, Grenna Museum).

Right: Prussian railway cancel and Dutch delivery cancel («Bestellerstempel») type 1867 on reverse.

Far right: Wax seal on reverse containing the Queen's greater coat-of-arms, which displays the arms of Sweden, Norway and the Netherlands, with mantling and a sovereign's crown.



Free-letter (Fribrev Cabinet) from Stockholm 28.04.1867 via Kiel and Hamburg. Oval «FRANCO» cancel used by KSPA in Hamburg and other Swedish border post offices. Total tariff 49 öre/5,5 Sgr; annotation «3 ½» in red for Dutch (1) and Prussian (2,5) share of postage in Sgr. On reverse: Kiel-Hamburg railway cancel, Dutch delivery and arrival cancels. Red wax seal with Queen's greater coat of arms. 24 out of 100 stampless Queen's letters recorded are sent as Fribrev Cabinet; most of them during 1861-62. Origin: Unknown, BR: SL98.

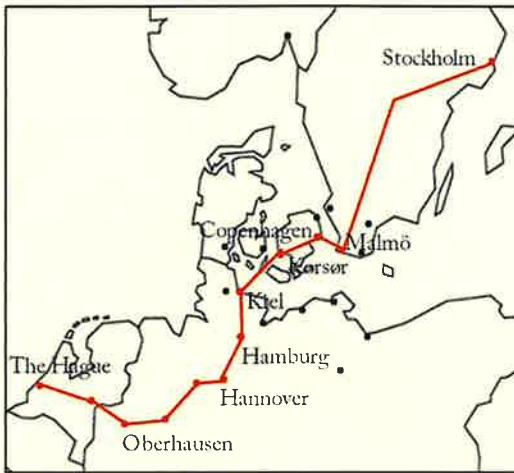
Royal Palace, Stockholm, 29.09.1869

Having overseen her daughter's move to Copenhagen, Louise returns to an empty nest



Prepaid, franked

30 öre – closed transit via Denmark



Dutch delivery cancel



Traveling Post Office (Södra Stambanan)



Dutch arrival cancel

The 30 öre rate was a result of a new Swedish –Dutch postal convention of 1868, with subsequent amendments and rate adjustments valid from 1.1.1869 for letters sent in closed transit through Denmark and directly to the Netherlands. The rate was equally divided between Sweden and The Netherlands, each country bearing the expenses for transit postage.

The normal route of conveyance from Stockholm was via the Södra Stambanan railway line to Malmö, and via Korsør to Kiel by steamship, from where transport was done by railway to The Hague. The full distance could now be covered in as 2-3 days.

As mail was sent in closed mail bags for the entire journey from the Swedish border post office, letters do not bear any Danish or German transit cancels. Worth of note is that the 30 öre rate co-existed with the more expensive 49 öre rate via Prussia for a period of three months, until the 49 öre rate was abolished completely from 1 April 1869.



Letter franked with F11e2, sent 29.09.1869 from Stockholm in closed transit through Denmark and directly to the Netherlands. The letter was first sent by train to Malmö via Södra Stambanan, as can be seen from the Pkxp Nr 2 cancel. Dutch arrival cancel of 02.10.1869 and delivery cancel «D22», indicating the letter was delivered on the fourth delivery tour of the day. The Stockholm Tur cancel is an anomaly. Like the Dutch delivery cancel, it was primarily used to state the delivery round on which a letter was delivered. It was also used for cancelling local mail, and as such it should not be expected on a Queen's letter sent abroad. This is the only Queen's letter recorded with this cancel. All in all, six Queen's letters exist with the 30 öre franking, including the very last Queen's letter recorded, sent 10.10.1869. Origin: Schwenn 1967, BR: V95.