

Loose Ship Letter Brisbane

The 'Loose Ship Letter' cancel is described by Webb¹ on p. 370 being 'A cancellation found occasionally on Hong Kong adhesives around the turn of the century...'. It is a 26 x 22 mm oval with seriffed capital letters and was struck on uncanceled stamps posted on board ship arriving at Brisbane, Queensland.

On stamps, it is not particularly rare but forgeries exist in plenty. There is a cover known to Tasmania dated 24 June 1903 franked with a pair of HK QV 10c. The cover is illustrated in colour as lot 422 in the December 1980 Ishikawa catalogue. It fetched GBP300. It re-surfaced again in Christie's Hong Kong Sale in November 1996. It realized for HKD13, 800 (Figure 1)



Figure 1

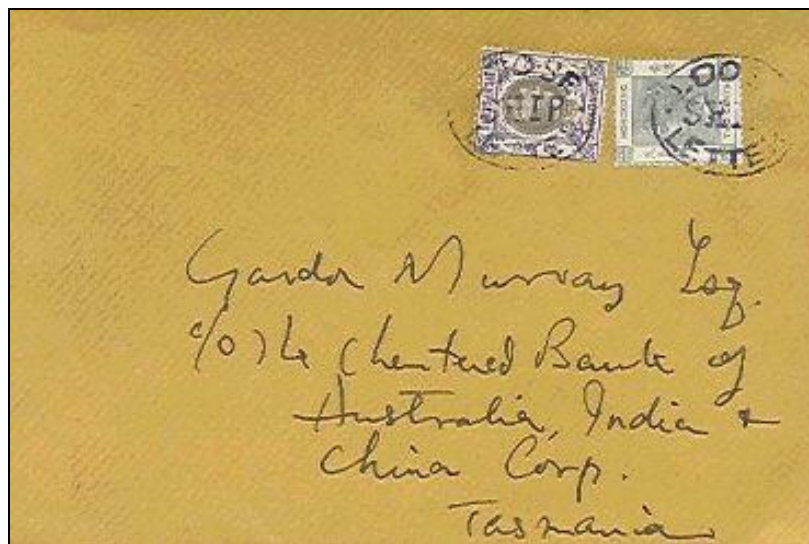


Figure 2

Three covers bearing forged oval Loose Ship Letter cancel of Brisbane came up recently in an overseas auction (Figure 2, 3 and 4). One of the covers actually bears the Brisbane c.d.s. dated the same as the "original" cover. The forged covers probably do not bear the Launceston arrival on reverse since the reverse of the cover was not illustrated in Ishikawa catalogue. It is interesting to note that the style of the forged Loose Ship Letter cancel looks like the illustration on Webb p.370; there is a short bottom serif to the letter "P", whereas the serif of the "P" of the Ishikawa cover is much longer. Since only the cancel of the covers are shown in the auction catalogue, it can be very misleading at first; luckily, the astute auctioneer described these three covers as forgeries and priced accordingly.



Figure 3



Figure 4

Reference:-

1. F.W. Webb, Hong Kong & the Treaty Ports in China & Japan