

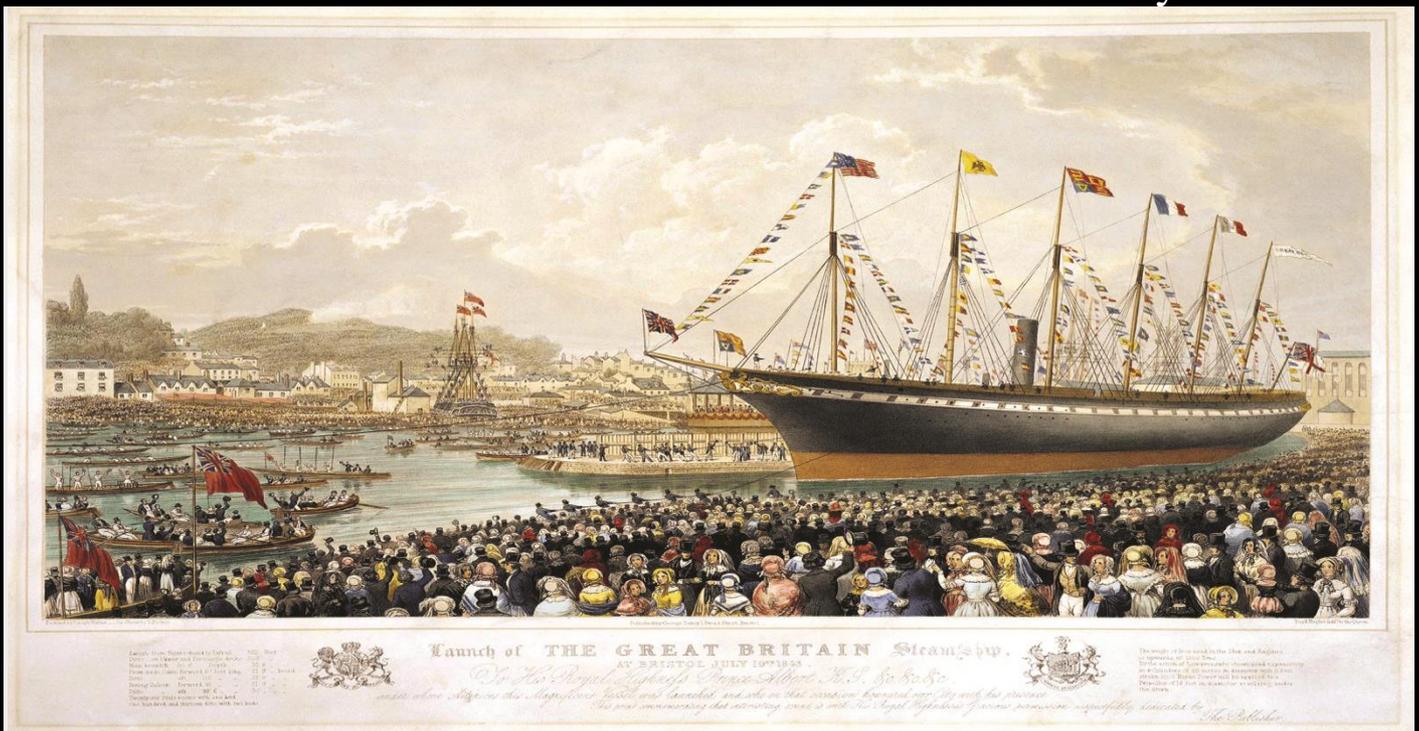


S.S. GREAT BRITAIN

"There's never been anything like her.

She's absolutely unique.." –Prince Philip

The *SS Great Britain* was the longest steamship of its time (1845-54). It set the design standards for today's modern shipping and eminently demonstrated the industry and inventiveness of the Victorian era. Now a museum, the *SS Great Britain* formerly served as a passenger carrier for the Great Western Steamship Company. She was one of the first to combine an iron body and screw propellers. The *SS Great Britain* is a historic ship since its very first voyage across the Atlantic, which made it the first iron steamer to cross the ocean in a time of 14 days.



She journeyed across the Atlantic, made 32 runs to Australia with emigrants, and was known in her time as one of the fastest, most elegant and luxurious emigrant clipper ships – the ‘Greyhound of the Seas’. Between 1854 and 1855 she was chartered by the Government to carry troops to and from the Crimean War, and over the course of the conflict transported over 44,000 troops. She served as a troop ship in the Crimean War and the First War of Independence in India, and later became a cargo ship.



The S.S. Great Britain at the seas

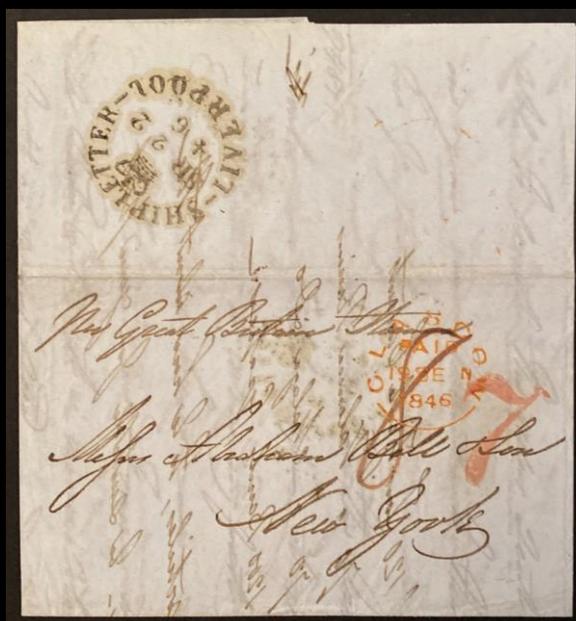


At the Dundrum Bay

The ship was the largest vessel afloat, although she took a long time to build, and the high costs of constructing it, left the owners in a difficult financial position, causing them bankruptcy after they incurred huge costs after she ran aground in Dundrum Bay on 22nd September 1846, carrying over 180 passengers.

The passengers and crew were safely taken off, and the ship survived for 11 months where she was.

All mail being carried on the ship was saved by the ship's surgeon.



(This cover is a part of Rudraskh collection)
One of The Only Known Cover

Today there are only 4 known covers that survived the stranding they are endorsed "*per Great Britain*". These covers later did cross the Atlantic to their destination aboard the SS Caledonia, and therefore have no wreck mail marking.



That wasn't the end for the *Great Britain* though. It went on to get repaired and carried thousands of immigrants to Australia in 1852. She was later converted to all sail in 1881 after which it retired in the Falkland Islands, where she was used as a warehouse, quarantine ship and coal hulk. She was scuttled and sunk in 1937, at the age of 98. After 33 years of lying abandoned underwater the *Great Britain* was raised and repaired by businessman, Sir Jack Arnold Hayward, OBE, who had it towed back to Bristol, to the dry dock where it was constructed, to finally become a museum.