Heligoland

(Heligoland on stamps and in English, but Helgoland in German)

While the stamps of Heligoland are some of the more complex one shall ever see, the geography and history of Heligoland is actually a bit more straightforward. Heligoland is simply two islands located in the southeast corner of North Sea. Heligoland lies 43 miles by sea from the mouth of the River Elba. The local population numbers only around 1100, they actually speak a Heligoland dialect of North Frisian in language called Halunder.

Of the two islands, only one is populated: Heligoland proper, is a populated triangular 0.4 square-mile main island to the west, while the "Dune" is to the east. The Dune does serve as the site of the airport.

The two islands were connected until 1720, when the natural connection was destroyed by a storm's flood.

While known to be inhabited since European prehistoric times, Heligoland came into some prominence during the Napoleonic wars when the British captured the islands. Heligoland became a small center of smuggling and espionage at that time. By the Treaty of Kiel with Denmark in 1814, the area was formally ceded to Great Britain. They ruled until 1890. At the time Britain was interested in the area to restrict any future French aggression against the Scandinavian or Baltic states.

Heligoland flourished in the mid-19th century as an exotic getaway vacation for the British. By the end of the 19th century it had outlasted its usefulness for the British. French dominance of Europe was simply no longer a concern, and the site was being used less and less as a vacation destination. Because of the era of colonization in Africa and Asia, the British found of the land to be a useful bargaining chip. Through treaty in 1890, not to be thought of as a direct exchange, Heligoland was ceded to the Germans, while the British picked up Zanzibar.

The arrangement between Germany and the UK was called *The Treaty between the German Reich and the United Kingdom over the Colonies and Heligoland*. It cannot be considered a simple trade or swap because Germany did not actually own Zanzibar and many other articles were in the treaty, but it did clear the way for Britain to try to take control of that area.

Top Row Michel #2a, 3b, 4b, 17a, 18b, 1 Type II, 8b, and 9 Bottom Row: 13a, 14e,15, 16b,17a, 18b

Heligoland Michel #20a

Heligoland Michel #12

The stamps – Heligoland philately is a very complex field, with an authoritative text in German being Helmuth Lembeger's text Helgoland Philatelie. A great pdf and online source, besides the ones cited here is Allan Oliver's *Heligoland A Specialised Listing.*

The Michel catalog list 20 issues. That's only the beginning of the challenges associated with Heligoland philatecally. The stamps themselves were actually issued between 1867 in 1890. That makes the stamps actually part of the British system, even though philatecally this category is always considered to be part of the German States. The Michel catalog categorizes them as such. The British part of the stamps is that for many of the stamps, a profile portrait of Queen Victoria is used. However, the stamps were produced under a complex system between the British and the Germans.

Hamburg administered Heligoland's postal system. From 1867 until 1875, the stamps were denominated in Hamburg currency. Between 1875-1890 the stamps were dual-denominated in both German and British currency.

Heinrich Tackett designed Heligoland's stamps. He was an ornithologist and artist who lived on the island for most of his adult life. Making the stamps even more German, the Prussian state printing office, later to be known as the Imperial Printing Office, printed the stamps in Berlin as a German state stamp.

Reprints- If you don't know anything else about Heligoland stamps, it should be that if you have one, you have a **private reprint** until proven otherwise. Most of the reprints are private reprints , meaning that they are produced by a private individual, namely Julius Goldner. He was a well-known Hamburg stamp dealer wholesaler. Back in these days, with philately (and its ethics) in its infancy, people occasionally took it upon themselves to print more stamps. While this seems obviously illegal today, in the 19th century this was not necessarily the case. He took it upon himself to produce a great number of Heligoland stamps for collectors.

Because of his unfortunate yet determined efforts, most Heligoland stamps available today are most likely the

private reprints, and any claim to the otherwise would have to be authenticated by somebody who is quite knowledgeable in this arena. Mr. Goldner is also responsible for the **semiofficial private reprints**. In 1875 Mr. Goldner persuaded the postmaster Heligoland to order reprints of earlier official issues. These issues were in Schillings, and the Schilling system had been recently converted to the Deutschemark monetary system. Thousands were produced and sent to Heligoland's postmaster. Subsequently, tourists' shops sold these issues throughout the island.

In 1879, Mr. Goldner, due to Heligoland's dire monetary needs after tremendous flooding that year, was able to purchase the plates for further reprints. He continued his reprints for several more years, until the new British governor-general in 1886 withdrew permission for printing, seeming stopping the reprints.

Or so one would think. By 1888, Goldner moved to Leipzig and continued to issue reprints. Later, he moved back to his hometown of Hamburg and did more reprinting between 1891 in 1894 with four different episodes.

To get an idea of how many stamps we are talking about, according to stamp-collecting-world.com, 2.6 million original stamps were produced, but Goldner published 7 million reprints. Obviously, the chances of buying one of the reprints is higher than buying one of the originals, and it is believed that fraud is rampant.

Official Reprints should be also mentioned. When the island became part of the German Empire in 1890, the state printing-office produced official reprints of the then-current 5, 10, 20, 25, 50 pfennigs as well as the one and five Mark stamps.

These official reprints are printed on white satin paper with yellowish gum perforated at 13.5 x 14.25. A total of two hundred each were printed for the postal Museum in Bonn.

Most of the discovered missing, except the five pfennig, and it has to be assumed they were stolen. Perhaps they are out there somewhere today but are obviously extraordinarily rare. The stamps are worth many times more what would be expected simply from looking at the Mitchell catalog, but would have to authenticated first.

One note needs to be made: the symbols "ND" is usually meant for "Neudruck" or reprint. However, this symbol is only for these official reprints that are extraordinarily rare.

The originals. Of course, everyone wants to know what can be used to identify and separate the originals from the reprints. Certainly, I am no expert on this matter. Stamp-collecting-world.com has an excellent summary, of which I can only summarize myself to a certain extent. With that said, the main characteristics that are looked at include the following:

1. Head type
2. Measurements
3. Ridges
4. Paper type
5. Color

Head type. (Taken from stamp-collecting-world.com)

- **Type 1** - has a solid round knot of hair hanging from Queen Victoria's chignon. The base of the neckline is rather pointed and symmetrical.
- **Type 2** - has a hanging curl open towards the neck and is shaped rather like a sickle or the tip of a corkscrew. The neckline is rounded slightly upward and the underside of the neckline is concave.
- **Type 3** - has a short curl pointing to the neck and it may be compared to a spigot or a tongue. The neckline comes to a sharp point and is convex on the underside.

Type 1 - Only occurs on Michel # 1 I, 2-4, and 8-10.
Type 2 - Only occurs on Michel # 1 II, 6, and 11-16.
Type 3 - Only occurs on Michel # 7.

Any stamp that deviates from these three groups, as far as the head type, is either a reprint or a forgery.

Measurements:

Official Heligoland Stamp Characteristics

Stamp #	Cut	Measurement
Michel #1-4	Roulettted	10X10
Michel #6-7	Perforated	13.25X14.25
Michel #8-20	Perforated	13.5X14.25

Suffice it to say that if your stamp doesn't have this measurement, you have a reprint or a fraud.

The following section is taken directly from stamp-collecting-world.com Thank you, Lawrence Mead!!

Paper (1867-1873)

The 1867-1868 issue was printed on normal paper. The sheets were rouletted from the face side. During the rouletting process, the sheets of stamps were laid upon a negative grid of grooved metal. This negative grid always made a pronounced indentation in the extreme outer margins of each of the stamps on the sheet. This is what we call the **"Ridge"** in Helgoland philatelic terminology.

These ridges are sometimes difficult to see, but traces usually appear in at least one of the margins of the stamp. Stamps that do not show any trace of this *"ridge"* may quite possibly be reprints.

<<< Personal Observation >>>

There are many text descriptions of these "RIDGES" on the internet, but they are very confusing. THERE ARE NO GRAPHIC ILLUSTRATIONS of them ....

I have noticed that, viewed from the front of the stamp, these usually appear as colorless or very light grayish lines, in one or more of the extreme margins that are parallel to the adjacent frame lines of the stamp.

I made three close-ups of my authenticated 1867 issues, and they are shown above.

- **Top Left:** The ridge lines show faintly, parallel to the left frame line and the bottom frame line.
- **Top Right:** The ridge line is stronger, and it is parallel to the left frame line.
- **Bottom:** The ridge line shows at the bottom corner and along the bottom frame line.

Another means of detecting the ridges requires the physical examination of the stamp. Along with strong side-lighting (whether a desk lamp or maybe a pen light), position the stamp upright so it can be **viewed from the edge**. With the aid of good eyesight or a magnifying glass, the *upward projecting ridges,* ***or traces of them****, should be visible along one or more of the far margins of the stamp*.

I attempted to create a photographic representation of this edge examination process, but it didn't work out very well. With a little practice, using original examples of the rouletted stamps, it will become obvious to most collectors of these issues.

Of course, on a "perfectly centered" example, there could be a situation where none of the actual outer edge ridge lines are visible. In this event, one will have to use the stamp's other attributes to determine whether it is an original or a private reprint.

The *first perforated German States stamps* of Helgoland, **Michel 6x and 7x**, issued in 1869, *were printed on thick soft paper*.

Beginning in 1873, a thick, slightly rough, slightly yellowish, *quadrilled / cross-hatched paper* was used for the printing of stamps. They were **Michel #6y, 7y, and 8-10**. **The quadrilling / cross-hatching is very fine and is parallel to the edges of the stamps**. NONE OF THE PRIVATE REPRINTS WERE EVER PRODUCED, UTILIZING THIS TYPE OF PAPER.

An un-issued variety of the 1873 1/4 Schilling, Michel #8c, was printed on a thin, wove paper.

The Leipzig reprints of these issues are printed on a white, glossy paper.

Currency- The change from Hamburg (prior to 1875) to German currency was made on the 1st of January 1875 and the different currency rates are given below.

Hamburg :1 mark Kurant = 16 shillings = 16 pence

German: 1 Reichsmark = 100 pfennig = 1 shilling (12 pence)

Taken directly from Fritzwagner.com:

Comparing Colors, and Paper

This table shows many of the common differentiating characteristics among the stamps. Included are colors (according to Michel) gum and paper types.

PART I—The Schilling Issues

Mi #	Denom	Hd Typ	COLORS [1]			GUM		PAPER				SEP	YR
			Frame	Spandrel	Oval	Type	Color	Weave [4]	Weight	Finish	Color		
1 I	1/2 Sh	I	dunkel-blaülichgrün	karmin	dunkel-blaülichgrün	crackled	yellow-ish	rand-om wove	thin	porous	natural	Roul 10x10	'67
1 II	1/2 Sh	II	blaülichgrün	rötlichkarmin	blaülichgrün	"	yellow-ish	rand-om wove	thin	flat	natural	Roul 10x10	'68
2	1 Sh	I	rosakarmin	dunkelgrün	rosakarmin	"	toned	rand-om wove	thin	flat	natural	Roul 10x10	'67
3	2 Sh	I	lilakarmin	dunkelgelb-lichgrün	dunkelgelb-lichgrün	"	"	rand-om wove	med thin	soft	yellowish	Roul 10x10	'67
4	6 Sh	I	(dunkel)-graugrün	lilarosa	lilarosa	"	"	rand-om wove	med thin	porous	yellowish	Roul 10x10	'67
6xa	1/2 Sh	II	blaugrün	dunkel-karmin	blaugrün	"	"	rand-om wove	med thick	soft	golden to beige	13½x 14¼	8-'69

6xb	1/2 Sh	II	[U] mittel-bläulichgrün	karmin	[U] mittel-bläulichgrün	"	"	rand-om wove	"	"	"	13½x 14¼	8-'70
6xc	1/2 Sh	II	grünoliv	[P] karmin-rot	grünoliv	"	"	rand-om wove	"	"	"	13½x 14¼	7-'71
6xd	1/2 Sh	II	[U] hell-gelbgrün	rosarot	[U] hell-gelbgrün	"	"	rand-om wove	"	"	"	13½x 14¼	1-'72
6xe	1/2 Sh	II	[S] hell-olivgrün	karmin	[S] hell-olivgrün	"	"	rand-om wove	"	"	"	13½x 14¼	9-'72
6xf	1/2 Sh	II	hellgelb-lichgrün	karmin	hellgelb-lichgrün	"	"	rand-om wove	"	"	"	13½x 14¼	9-'72
6yg	1/2 Sh	II	bläulichgrün	dunkel-karmin	bläulichgrün	"	"	quad-rille	"	med	"	13½x 14¼	7-'73
6yh	1/2 Sh	II	lebhaft-bläulichgrün	karmin	lebhaft-bläulichgrün	"	"	quad-rille	"	med	"	13½x 14¼	9-'73
7xa	1 Sh	III	[F] karmin	[P] gelblich-grün	[F] karmin	"	"	rand-om wove	"	soft	"	13½x 14¼	7-'71
7xb	1 Sh	III	[H] rosa-karmin	dunkelgrün	[H] rosa-karmin	"	"	rand-om wove	"	"	"	13½x 14¼	7-'72
7yc	1 Sh	III	karmin	[I] lebhaft-gelblichgrün	karmin	"	"	quad-rille	thick	"	"	13½x 14¼	6-'73

7yd	1 Sh	III	dunkelrot-lichkarmin	[P] mittle-gelbgrün	dunkelrot-lichkarmin	"	"	quad-rille	thick	"	"	13½x 14¼	8-'73
8a	1/4 Sh	I	dunkelrot-karmin	none	lebhaft-gelblichgrün	"	"	quad-rille	thick	"	"	13½x 14¼	8-'73
8f	1/4 Sh	I	(lebhaft)" gelbgrün	none	lilarosa	"	"	quad-rille	thick	"	"	13½x 14¼	9-'73
8b	1/4 Sh	I	lilarosa (Tones)	none	(lebhaft)" graugrün	"	"	quad-rille	thick	"	"	13½x 14¼	9-'73
8c	1/4 Sh	I	lilakarmin	none	dunkelgrün	"	"	rand-om wove F N	thin	smooth	white	13½x 14¼	12-74
9	3/4 Sh	I	Hz-hellgrün Vert-rosa	none	rosa (Tones)	"	"	quad-rille	thick	soft	golden to beige	13½x 14¼	12-'73
10	1 1/2Sh	I	hellgrün	none	karmin	"	"	quad-rille	thick	soft	golden to beige	13½x 14¼	9-'73

NOTES:

1. For comparison of Michel and Lemberger color terms, see Heligoland Color Table.

2. Michel 6 and 7. Noteworthy characteristics of the print impressions ("Druck")are indicated by letters as follows: F=Fine, H=Heavy, I=Inaccurate, P=Porus, S= Sharp, and U=Unsharp.

3. NUMBERS OF PLATES USED: Michel 1 I was produced using three plates, one for embossing and one each for the red and green typography. Michel 1 II, produced the next year, used only two plates, one for the embossed medallion and frame ("Rahmen"), the other for the spandrel ("Zwickel"). Michel 2 also had three plates: the embossed head, the spandrel and the frame. All the rest use two, until the "shields," Michel 17 and 18 (four plates) and Michel 19 and 20 (three plates).

4. Quadrille is a synonym for mesh, grill, grid, lattice, or any other similar term Here it is understood to describe fibers crossing at right angles and parallel to the edges of the stamp. *For examples see quadrille paper image.* Note that in the Mi 17 (3pf) below, the right-angled quadrille pattern is more difficult to discern.

5. Note that Mi 8c is on random wove paper, NOT quadrilled.

6. Paper terms are a mix of those used by Barefoot, Colonia, Pollard, and Lemberger (more weight given to the last-named gentleman).

PART II—The Farthing-Pfennig Issues

Mi #	Denom	Hd Typ	COLORS [1]			GUM		PAPER [2]				YR
			Frame	Spandrel	Oval	Type	Color	Weave [4]	Weight	Finish	Color	
11	1F/1Pf	II	lilakarmin	N/A	(dunkel) grün(Tones)	smooth to crackled	toned	random	thinish	dull	natural	'75
12	2F/2Pf	II	grün	N/A	lilakarmin	"	"	"	"	"	"	'75
13a	3F/5Pf	II	lilakarmin	N/A	grün	"	"	"	"	"	"	'75
13b	3F/5Pf	II	lefhaft-lilakarmin	N/A	grün	"	"	"	med	med satin	"	6-'90
13c	3F/5Pf	II	lefhaft-lebhaft-karmin	N/A	grün	"	"	"	"	strng satin	"	8-'90
14a	1½P/10 Pf	II	dunkelgrün	N/A	dunkel-lilakarmin	"	"	"	"	med satin	gold-ish	2-'75
14b	1½P/10 Pf	II	mittelgrün	N/A	mittel-lilakarmin	"	"	"	"	"	"	9-'85
14c	1½P/10 Pf	II	blaulichgrün	N/A	rotlich-karmin	"	"	"	"	"	"	5-'87
14d	1½P/10 Pf	II	hellgrün	N/A	hell-bis mittelrot	"	"	"	"	satin	"	5-'89
14e	1½P/10 Pf	II	blaulichgrün	N/A	karmin	"	"	"	"	"	"	6-'90
15	3P/25Pf	II	lilakarmin	N/A	grün (Tones)	"	"	"	"	"	"	2-'75
16a	6P/50Pf	II	grün(Tones)	N/A	dunkel-lilakarmin	"	"	"	"	dull	"	2-'75
16b	6P/50Pf	II	grün(Tones)	N/A	dunkel-karmin	"	"	"	"	"	"	6-'90

Except for Mi 17, there were no reprints of the following issues, so little is needed or given about gum or paper. The challenge is mainly to identify the varieties known by their colors, often requiring U.V. See Robert Pollard's study.

17a	2½F/3Pf	n/a	dunkelgrün/(braunlich)gelb/zinnoberrot	thinner than b	yellower than b	quadrille rt angle	med	soft	nat	6-'76
17b	2½F/3Pf	n/a	grün/(dunkel)orange(Tones)/zinnoberrot	thicker than a	whiter than a	quadrille rt angle	"	"	"	6-'77
18a	2½P/20Pf	n/a	lilakarmin/gelb/blaugrün	thin	pale	quadrille rt angle	?	?	?	6-'76
18b	2½P/20Pf	n/a	rosakarmin/dunkelbraungelb/dunkelgrün	"	"	light waffle	"	"	"	4-'80
18c	2½P/20Pf	n/a	hellrosalila/graugelb/graugrün	"	"	quadrille rt angle	"	"	"	7-'82
18d	2½P/20Pf	n/a	lefhaftrot/graugelb/graugrün	"	"	?	"	"	"	5-'84
18e	2½P/20Pf	n/a	lebhaftrosa/hellrotlichgelb/graugrün	"	"	"	"	"	"	7-'85
18f	2½P/20Pf	n/a	rotorange/gelb/graugrün	"	"	"	"	"	"	1-'87
18g	2½P/20Pf	n/a	rötlichorgange/hellgelb/hellgraugrün	"	"	"	"	"	"	7-'88
18h	2½P/20Pf	n/a	graurot/hellgelb/hellgraugrün	"	"	"	"	"	"	6-'90
19Aa	1Sh/1M	n/a	blaugrün/grauschwarz/mittelrosa	more brittle than Ab	Yellow-er than Ab	"	"	satin	"	8-'79
19Ab	1Sh/1M	n/a	dunkelgrün/schwarz/karmin	less brittle	whiter than Aa	"	"	more satiny	"	5-'89

19Ac	1Sh/1M	n/a	grün/schwartz/lebhaftrot	smooth	yellow-er than Ab	"	"	high satin	"	8-'90
20A	5Sh/5M	n/a	mehrfarbig	smooth	pale	random	thin	med	pale	9-'79
19B	1Sh/1M	n/a	mehrfarbig	?	?	?	?	?	?	Proof [6]
20B	5Sh/5M	n/a	mehrfarbig	"	"	"	"	"	"	Proof [6]

NOTES:

1. For comparison of Michel and Lemberger color terms, see Heligoland Color Table.

4. See quadrille paper image.

6. All separations here are perforated 13½x14¼ except for the last two which are proofs and are perforated 11½.

Taken from Fritzwagner.com:

Heligoland Cancels

(Helgoland Stempeln)

CANCELS PRESENT special difficulties in the study of Heligoland stamps. Over the twenty-four years in which Heligoland stamps were issued, 38 different cancels were applied to the stamps. However, almost all stamps were cancelled with two basic cancel designs and most of the other cancels are rare. Fortunately forged cancels are mostly limited to these two basic designs. We will consider these basic designs first. Once a collector learns to "see" the cancel, he will not be fooled by a forgery.

The first is the round cancel adopted by the British administration and the second is the Helgoland line cancel used in Hamburg. The British round cancel machine, a common stamping device with a handle—and similar to designs used in other British possesions—featured steel or other hard metal die construction and allowed changes in day, month and year.

Because of the hard die of the cancel face, impressions were extremely sharp when the machines were new and as they wore over time, became less so.

THE BRITISH CANCELS are sorted into five varieties of cancels used in sequence over time. (The Germans call the cancel designs *englischer Rundstempel* . I use the resulting abbreviation "ERS" to describe the cancel design.) These five varieties were produced with only three machines.

When the first machine (1866-1876) became too worn, it was replaced by a new machine(1876-1884). Something happened to this second machine and the first one was gotten out, repaired

When a year later a new machine (the third and last) was finally obtained, it was put into use and produced the fourth variety (April-July 1885). After a few months it suffered a tiny break on one of its edges and this produced the fifth variety (July 1885-1890).

These cancels were all applied at the postoffice on Heligoland. The following illustrations are taken from many sources, some almost one hundred years old. The illustrations are close to actual size, but not always exact.

and put back into service (1884-1885)
(giving the third cancel variety).

ERS Type I
July 1866-
Feb 1876
Dia: 24.75mm

ERS Type II
Feb 1876-
August 1884
Dia:25.75mm

ERS Type III
August 1884-
April 1885
Dia:24.75

ERS Type IV
22 April 1885-
15 July 1885
Dia:27.5mm

ERS Type V
16 July 1885-
9 August 1890
Dia:27.5mm

Here are more examples to show variations:

ERS I

ERS II

ERS III
The last two
digits of the
year are
always raised.

ERS IV

ERS V
The break in
the outer ring
is 3mm long.

Below are the images greatly enlarged to enable easy study of the letter shapes and spacing:

ERS I

ERS II

ERS III

ERS IV

ERS V