



ISLANDS *Kontakt*

SPECIAL 2016.5 v.1

Historical tribute to the former editors and contributing members:

Ship Letter/Paquebot Leith - Iceland

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The Ship letter handstamps were used in Leith for a long time. Here we are focusing on the use of ship letter handstamps and paquebot handstamps used or theoretically used on mail to or from Iceland. We try to describe the handstamp and the time of use.



1. Round SHIPLETTER LEITH

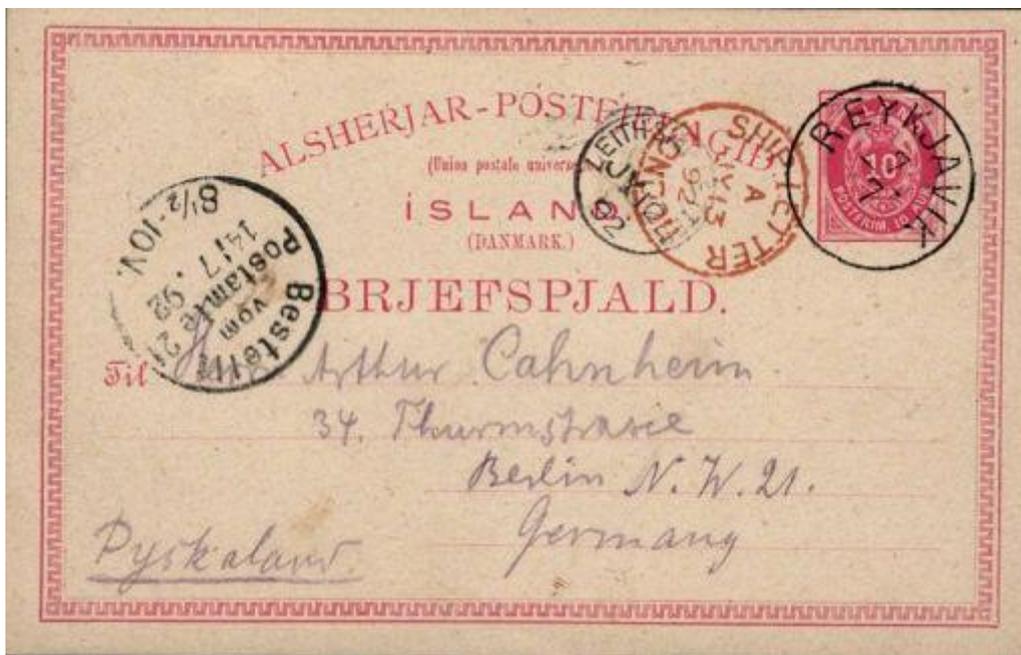
1.1 - 19 mm

Robertson calls it s.8 and informs about a use from 1887 until 1903, but it is also mentioned in the reprinted edition: "Extended recorded 1875", but no example is shown.

Hosking 2nd edition (# 180) say used from 1894 until 1907.

The 4th edition of Hosking by Dovey and Morris (hereafter Dovey/Morris) calls it # 315 and say it has been used from 1894 until 1908.

But - here is an example from 1892 and Mike Tuttle has a (poor) photocopy of a 10a Stationery Card to Germany with a Leith Ship Letter of JU 28 1889. Heinrich Schilling also shows a card with AU 7 1889



It has probably been used earlier. James A. Mackay: "Scottish Postmark" show a drawing from NO 4 1869 as # 1668.

- and here is the end - 1912 from Ole Svinth.:



Therefore, the period on Icelandic mail is at least from 1889 until 1912, but it might be, that it starts earlier.

In a copy of Swanson's collection there is a 20-aur letter with a Leith cancellation dated MY 12 1879 and no ship letter handstamp – but if Mackay is right - the start is probably earlier.

1.2 - 26½ mm

There is reported use of another round ship letter from Leith in 1906 – per Robertson reported in T.P.O Bulletin 1982 and in James A. Mackay: "Scottish Postmark" (1669)

It is shown by Robertson, Hosking, and Dovey/Morris – but it is the same copy from FE 10 06. It might be, that it was used, when the letter handstamp 2.3 was distorted in 1906 see underneath) – but it is only speculation. We can only show the same copy:

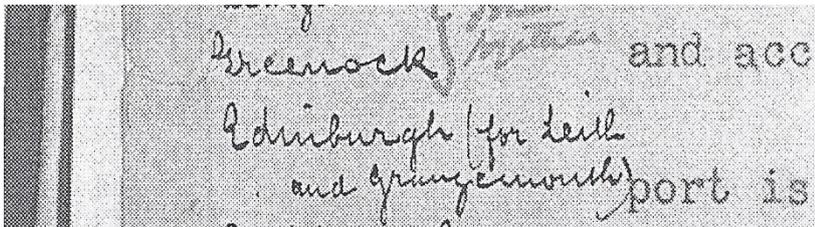


2. PAQUEBOT – handstamp

2.1 - 33 mm – 1st omnibus type.

This handstamp was distributed to many British post offices and only the side mark can tell the name of office in question. Post offices getting this 1st omnibus type were: Bristol, Dartmouth, Dover, Folkestone, Grimsby, Liverpool, London, Newcastle-on-Tyne, North Shields, Plymouth, South Shields, Southampton in England, Greenock, Edinburgh (for **Leith** and Grangemouth), and Glasgow in Scotland, Cobh and Dublin in Ireland and finally St Heller and St. Peter Port on Jersey.

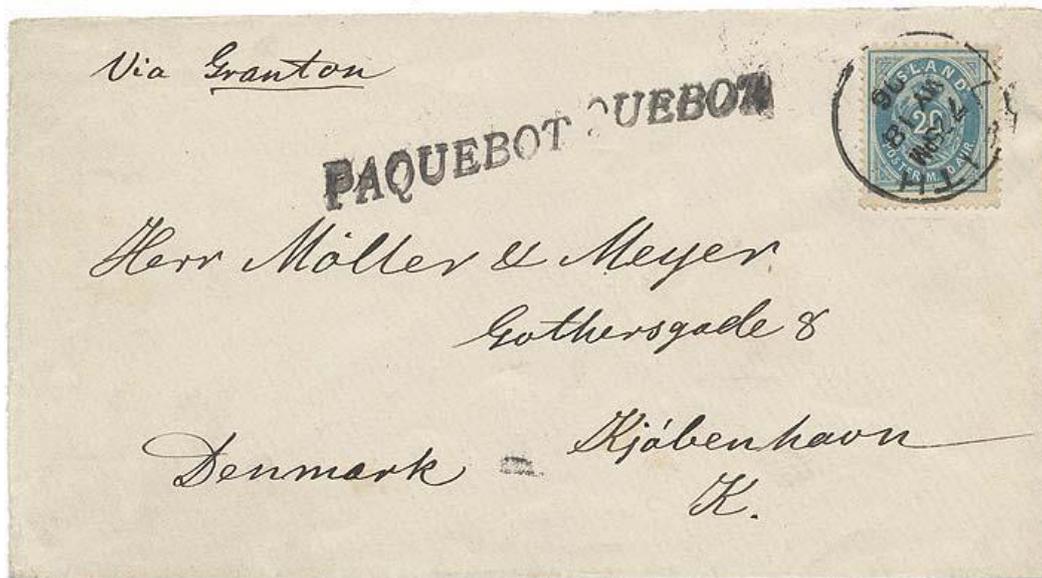
The omnibus paquebot was sent to Leith on January 9th 1894



Robertson calls it "p 1" and he only indicates the use as "- 1907 -".

Hosking 2nd edition # 7 and Dovey/Morris # 22 both have a period of use from 1896 until 1907, but it alt least received in 1894.

Here is a copy from 18 MY 1896



And from February 1897:



- and here from the back of a card cancelled AU 20 97 in Leith:



Heinrich Schilling show JY 22 97 with both Leith Ship Letter and Paquebot.

In Swansons collection there was a 20 aur letter with Leith cancellation SP 7 97. It was sold at Postiljonen oct. 07 and are shown here but we do not have the dimensions. As it can be observed, the handstamp, Paquebot, is rather worn



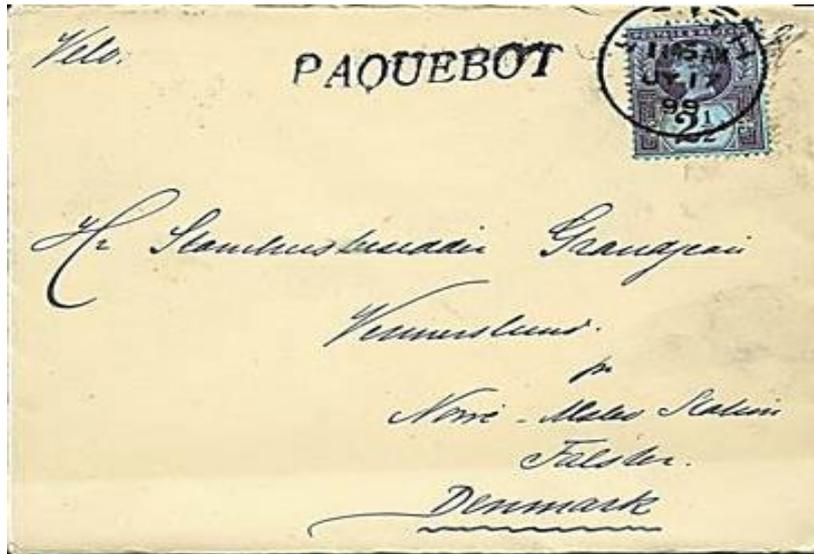
We have no valid examples from after DE 1897, and it is a possibility, that this handstamp is simply replaced by the following, so there is no use in Leith hereafter.

2.2 – 36 mm

Robertson calls it "p3" in the revised edition and Hosking 2nd edition it is # 181 and Dovey/Morris # 316. A handstamp of 36 mm only used in 1898 and 1899, and we believe that is almost right see below FE 24 00

There is a clear difference in the size of the letters (larger in 2.2 than in 2.1, as well as the difference in length between. The larger size letters (less worn in the middle) can be seen in the example from MT dated JY 18 99, later.

JSA has a copy from 1898, but it is in bad condition. The following examples are from JY 17 99



There might be two handstamps in use – the day after, on JY 18 99, it looks rather different:



DE 14 99; It was mentioned in the auction catalog, that the paquebot was Hosking # 181, but we cannot confirm it.



The latest use of that stamp we know:



2.3 – 30½ mm – 1900 to 1906(?)

We believe that the use has to be divided into 3 different periods.

From 1900, the paquebot handstamp look definitely different in Leith. The letters are different; there are small "dots" on some of the letters as you can see here on an enlarged example (without full stop in the end as further described hereafter):

PAQUEBOT

Robertson calls it "p 2" and has a use from 1904 until 1906. No dimension mentioned but the copy in the book is 30½ mm. In "Robertson Revisited" – Colin Tabearnt 1997, the copy measures 31½. Use 1900-06, but he does not take into account the changes mentioned in the following.

Hosking 2nd edition # 182 and Dovey/Morris # 317 both used from 1900 until 1906. In Hosking 2nd Edition the dimension is 31½ mm but in Hosking 3rd edition and I Dovey/Morris it is now 30 mm – but the copy in the book is larger.

H. Schilling has a use from 1900 until 1907 and 31½ mm but no indication either of the differences shown hereafter.

We think that Dovey/Morris measurement is wrong, but the possibility exists, that there are two dimensions – before and after 1904 – but it does not get smaller!

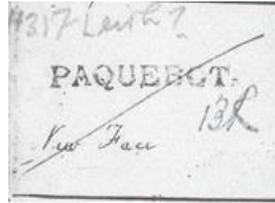
Robertson writes a bit in contradiction to the use period: "G.P.O record "repaired 1900 and 1904".

The repair in 1900 must be from the type 2.2.2 to 2.3.1. It looks right, that another repair took place in 1904.

In notes found by MT from the British GPO archives

"LEITH

12 Nov 1900 PAQUEBOT repaired, top renewed" and the Kirkwood day book in November 1900



The next information from the British GPO archives is:

“31 Mar 1904 PAQUEBOT repaired.”

Again, an already issued handstamp, a new rubber face was fixed to it.

In some old papers, MT has also found a photocopy of a microfiche film of “our GPO Records Book”; it shows PAQUEBOT WITHOUT Full stop, "Repaired 7.11.06". The letters are clean and neat looking and perhaps different from the 2.3.3 as the example dated AU 30 06 underneath. Perhaps there were 2 handstamps in 1906 – but the use of the stamp 2.3.3 is rather short, so it might be it was used rarely or – se 2.4.

We cannot measure the lengths or reproduce the pictures because of the poor quality.

2.3.1 from 12th November 1900 until 31st Marts 1904

This is a paquebot with a full stop.

The first example we have is from MR 29 02:



JSA do have a bad copy from FE 17 04, and that can be of interest, as it shows, that it is rather "exhausted" in 1904:



2.3.2 from 31st Marts 1904 until summer 1906

On the internet we found: "Front and back of cover from Vaag to Kobenhaven via Leith, Scotland with two 5 øre stamps satisfying the first class international rate. When received in Leith a *PAQUEBOT* cancel was applied, and the Danish stamps were canceled **July 8, 1904**, with a Leith c.d.s. The arrival cancellation in Kobenhaven indicated that the cover arrived on July 11th, just 3 days later. The letter was then sent onto Korsor where delivery was

attempted, but could not be made. The envelope was stamped with a boxed *RETOUR* and transit canceled with a July 21st. Kobenhavn c.d.s. The envelope was then returned to the Faroes".

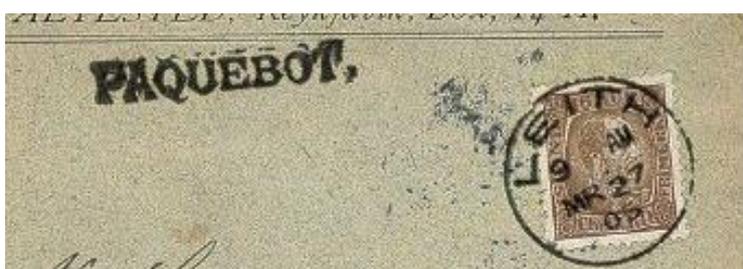
It is perhaps difficult to see the dimension on the handstamp covered by the "Kjøbenhavn" arrival stamp, but it is obvious, that the letters are fresh and new.



And a few days later a copy from Ole Svith:



And in 1905 we have FE 27 from Mike Tuttle and MR 27 and latest AP 21 1905





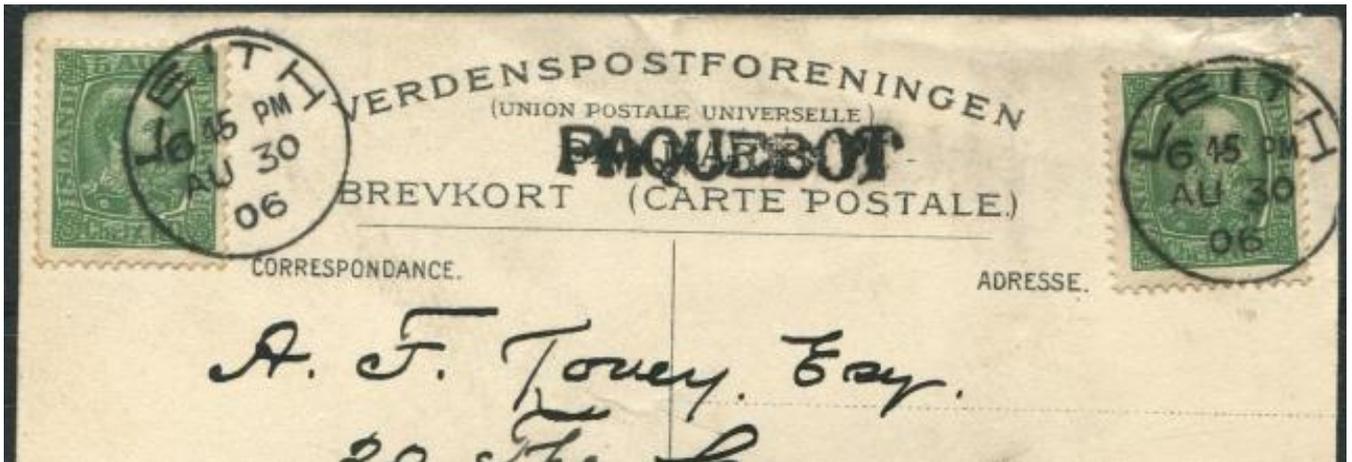
AP 21 1905 still looks ok and the full stop is there, but in May it is one it way to be broken.



Between MY 22 06 and AU 30 1906 the full stop disappear.

2.3.3 SUMMER 1906 until 7th November 1906 – Without full stop

Robertson has a copy from AU 30 06, and here is a copy from the same day and we have seen a third one. They are addressed to the same person but two with an address in Kent and one with an address in Faroe Islands.



It is possible, that it was exhausted – se this copy from OC 29 06



We have not yet seen it from 1907 as indicated by H. S chilling, but the reason might be the following

2.4 34 mm "Repaired 7.11.06" – until end 1907

We believe that there is a change in 1907(?) (it might be in 1906). The "tail" on Q is different, there are no "dots" on the letters and there are no "full stops" any longer. It can be noted, that a very similar handstamp, 34mm, was issued to Methil (1907-10)

Robertson does not mention any new handstamp.

Hosking 2nd edition does not either but 3rd edition shows it, H318, 34mm, 1906-7

Dovey/Morris shows # 318 with the dimension 44 mm (it must be a typing error – it is 34mm) and they now indicate a use from 1904 until 1907.

We believe that the use in 1904 until 1906 is the repaired 2.3.1 and the use in 1906 is a new (or repaired) handstamp without "full stop". It can be, that some handstamps in the period from 1904 until 1906(7) can be measured longer than 31½ mm, but it is due to use. The new one is 34 mm and the letters are different. We can show tre examples from 1907 from Stig Österbergs collection, Ole Svinth and Mike Tuttle.





From 1908 and onwards the handstamp paquebot is only used in Edinburgh, and the round Ship Letter Leith only occasionally. Why the letter handstamp disappear is unknown.

In the beginning of 1911 it is officially announced, that the mail from Iceland in the future are to be send to the post office in Edinburgh in contradiction to the time before to the post office in Leith

3 Remember

Remember – it is rubber stamps and there can be more than one of the same type