

Posta Stamps

Faroe Islands

No. 26
November 2015

ISSN 1603-0036



New Stamp Issues:

- Westerbeek
- Old Fire Trucks
- Sepac 2016: Seasons

Posta 
FAROE ISLANDS



FO 822-823



Test proof

The East Indiaman Westerbeek

At half past eleven on September 2, 1742, a large sailing ship appeared out of the darkness under full sail heading directly towards land west of Lopra in Suðuroy. It was a dark and foggy night and the crew was oblivious to the fact that the ship's course would take it directly into the mountain side. The great East Indiaman, having come all the way from Ceylon, had veered off course more than 48 miles to the north. With only a 100 meters clearance separating it from the cliffs, the ship was doomed. It made changed course swiftly with sails being turned as well, but crashed into the rocks on the port side and started beating against the cliffs. This caused severe leakage and soon the ship drifted in between four skerries. The captain gave order to drop anchor and haul down the sails, but it was too late. The ship's rear smashed again and again against the rocks. Fortunately, most of the crew managed to save

themselves by climbing up onto a mountain ledge. A few of them plunged down from the steep hillside while all those who lay sick and bedridden aboard the ship perished. When four of the men reached Vágur to ask for help, people in the village thought they were pirates and ran for hiding.

The crew was in a bad state, but while the ship was breaking up and sinking, 81 of the men were saved while 10 died lost their lives in the wreck of Westerbeek. The survivors were well received in Suðuroy and soon made their way to Torshavn, where a maritime inquiry was held. It was not easy to feed and accommodate all of these men since, at the time, the population of the Faroe Islands numbered no more than about 3000. It proved impossible to transport the entire crew to Denmark with the Royal Danish merchant vessels, so most of the men had to



One of the East India Company shipyards in Amsterdam in 1727. Engraving by Joseph Mulder. The East India Company built over 2,000 vessels, of which approximately 600 were lost at sea.

wait until the following year when the Dutch ship *Mercurius* came to get them.

The history of ships like *Westerbeek* is also the story of the giant Dutch company *Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie*, founded in 1602. It is a story of the race between several European countries to establish colonies in different parts of the world where expensive luxury goods could be extracted and sent back home, among them spices, tea and coffee. The wealth thus created is still evident in Europe's major cities, such as London, Amsterdam and Copenhagen. The Company became so powerful that it became a state within the state, not only securing monopoly of the East Asian trade but also the right to train its own armed forces to escort its ships on their voyages. The Dutch East India Company built castles and fortresses in almost all parts of the world. Between 1602-1795

the Company made 4,721 voyages from the Netherlands to East Asia. The total personnel employed during this period numbered 973,000 sailors from all over Europe, most of them still being of Dutch descent.

Westerbeek is a village at Eindhoven in the Netherlands. It was also the name of this mighty three-masted vessel which in 1742 ran aground west of Lopra. *Westerbeek* was built in 1722 at a shipyard in Amsterdam. The East Indiaman was 145 feet (44 m) long with a tonnage of 650.

The ship was heading to the Netherlands from Ceylon in India when it was grounded in the Faroe Islands. It was a long voyage. *Westerbeek* set sails from Ceylon on January 27, 1742, and on September 2 it approached Lopra. This was the great ship's sixth voyage, but due to foggy conditions conventional



Punto Gale in Ceylon.
Overlooking the beach of Bellini in 1748

navigation devices could not be used with the ensuing disastrous consequences. There were no lighthouses in the Faroes at the time and nautical charts were not very accurate.

Originally, 160 men boarded *Westerbeek* on the voyage to India: 99 sailors, 51 soldiers and 10 artisans. In those days signing on for these long voyages was a perilous affair. It was not unusual for up to 15% of the crew to lose their lives on the outward voyage and about one-tenth of them on the journey back home.

Westerbeek returned home from *Punto Gale* in Ceylon. There were 94 men on the ship: 75 sailors, six soldiers, seven workmen, five patients and one criminal. *Westerbeek's* load consisted of around one hundred tons of peppers and other goods. On the journey from Batavia, the colonial name of the capital city of the Dutch East India known today as

Jakarta, three men died. Batavia is also the oldest name of the Netherlands. The Batavian Republic was a French vassal state from 1795-1806.

Traces of *Westerbeek* can still be found in the Faroe Islands, among them a casket in the Faroese National Museum and a lump of pepper in a museum in Suðuroy. By most accounts a part of the Faroese population are descended from the crew of *Westerbeek*. At least one of them remained in the Faroe Islands and fathered children there i.a. the Swiss surgeon Joseph Gervording von der Schild (around 1707-1753).

Kim Simonsen

The University of Amsterdam



FO 824-826

Test proof

Old Fire Trucks

Fire is a Wonderful Friend but a Terrible Enemy

On February 26th, 2016, Posta will issue three stamps featuring a historic fire pump and two old fire engines. The fire pump, which dates back to 1776 and underwent repairs in Denmark in 1819, was the first of its kind in the Faroe Islands. The evolution of firefighting equipment has followed the development of Tórshavn as a city - the need for new firefighting equipment steadily increasing along with the growth of the city. The inhabitants of Tórshavn numbered 984 in 1880. Most of them were living in the "Reyn" quarter of the town where the houses were huddled together, prompting extreme caution when people were dealing with fire. At the time population growth rate was high due to the influx of people from the rural areas to Tórshavn. There were no fire hydrants, water pipelines being non-existent. In case of fire the fire pump was hauled to wherever the fire had broken out.

Water for the fire pump was retrieved from the sea or from rivers. Since the engine had no feed-pump, a human chain was formed and buckets of water passed along it from the shore or the river bank. In 1822 a fire station was built in the "Reyn" quarter, and at the same time firefighting equipment was purchased from the Royal Trade monopoly. All of these tools were moved in 1898 to the new engine house north of the old Municipal School by the town square.

An actual fire brigade, "Tórshavnar slökkilið", did not come into being until 1933. At that time Tórshavn had approximately 3,000 inhabitants, and the town expanded steadily out from its centre. The fire pump was often a long way away from the shore - and rivers sometimes ran dry in summer. Therefore fire protection ponds were made in the rivers of "Rættará" and "Havnará". The first of these protective ponds was built by "Vaglið", the



square in the centre of Tórshavn. Later on two ponds were made in “Havnará” opposite the city’s theatre, where they can still be seen today.

It was a great event in the city’s history when the fire brigade got its first fire engine in 1948. It was a Bedford K truck, purchased in England, rigged as a fire truck with two motorized pumps. The truck was equipped with a 500m long hose and a 20m ladder. The truck accommodated ten fire-fighters and there was also room for firefighter uniforms and assorted firefighting equipment.

My thoughts now go back to my childhood years - the Bedford K fire truck and I are actually of the same age. Young people in those days were always alert when fire sirens started howling in the city. I remember that one siren was located on the roof of the Telephone House in the city centre, one on the Drying-house in Hvannasund and one out at Skansin. These sirens could be heard all over

the city. Right away we, the young people living out by Landavegur, hurried up a large hill close by where we had a view of the entire city. First we looked for smoke, then we listened for fire engine’s siren whereupon we ran as quickly as we could down to the fire site.

When there was a fire, whether small or large, spectators always thronged in. The fire engines, sound of sirens and the fire itself affected us children, as did the sight of fire-fighters in their uniforms and helmets trying to gain control over the fire. Something about this chaos captivated us - and often people thronged so close to the site that they were a nuisance to the firemen.

Another fire truck arrived in 1962, this time from Denmark. It was a used truck, built in Denmark in 1937. To its great advantage this “Triangle” fire engine had a water-tank containing 1,500 litres. If the firefighters were not fighting a raging blaze, they usually man-



aged to extinguish it using the truck's pressure pump before the conventional water hoses and pumps were in place.

These three stamps issued by Posta illustrate the history of the Tórshavn Fire Brigade, thus also outlining the development of the Faroese fire services. I am pleased that the staff at the Fire Station, which is now located in the old quarry at Oyggjarvegur, has preserved the two fire engines, and not least the original fire pump from 1776.

The Bedford K fire engine has my keen interest, because I was a young motor mechanic apprentice at Vilhelm Nielsen who represented Bedford in the Faroe Islands. I knew several of the old firefighters, and remember one of them telling me that the Bedford fire engine was too small and powerless for the steep hills of Tórshavn.

There is a lot of water under the river bridges since the first water pump arrived in the Faroes in 1776. At that time a tenth of the population in the Faroes lived in Tórshavn. Now as we enter 2016, Tórshavn Municipality includes the south of the Streymoy island along with Kollafjørður, and the islands of Nólsoy, Hestur and Koltur. Approximately 40% of the population lives in Tórshavn Municipality.

With the rapid growth of Tórshavn, its Fire Brigade has also evolved and is now equipped with similar equipment as the fire departments in our neighbouring countries. The fire service employs full-time firefighters and has, if and when the need arises, reserve personnel on call at a moment's notice.

Vagnur Michelsen



Sepac 2016: Seasons

*One day when my soul was so tired and sad,
I walked towards the shore in the west
Then I heard your "klip", this familiar sound
You most beloved summer guest...*

Winter storms, drizzle and sleet, the ocean's relentless hammering on the coast and - the almost permanent winter darkness. Although the merciful Gulf Stream guarantees relatively mild winters, temperature wise, here in the North Atlantic and we rarely suffer from extreme cold, winter is a tough time of year to go through. Rain, snow and hail, combined with winter darkness and the harsh Atlantic gales, can faze even the strongest.

It is therefore no wonder that the Faroese rural dean, nationalist and poet, Jákup Dahl (1878 - 1944), probably on a stroll in the hometown Vágur, was torn out of his depression by the sound of the oystercatcher's calling - and inspired to write one of the most beloved Faroese songs: "Tjaldur, ver vælkomid" - a welcome hymn to the Faroese

national bird, the oystercatcher (*Haematopus ostralegus*).

As a matter of fact, spring in the Faroe Islands is heralded, even before it physically manifests, by the arrival of the oystercatchers, from wintering in the British Isles and the French Atlantic coast. The symbolic significance of this particular bird's arrival is not only a cultural condition - the oystercatcher's first call, the characteristic "klip, klip," also affects the instincts, the unconscious computer, which detects and combines the small signs of oncoming changes. Just like the arrival of the first lambs, a couple of months later, the first calling of the oystercatcher is something that people notice and talk about.

So, although the stormy winter season is not over yet, Saint Gregory's Day on the 12th of March is celebrated for the arrival of the oystercatcher and the oncoming spring. All over the country, scouts march, people gather at public meetings and listen to speeches about



Oystercatcher, *Haematopus ostralegus*.
Photo: Ólavur Frederiksen.

springtime – and sing Dahl's popular song about the beloved summer visitor.

The next couple of months, the spirit of winter gradually fades out from the rugged landscape. Just nine days after Saint Gregory's Day, Spring Equinox appears and the light hours start to accelerate, until they at summer solstice are so dominant, that night is reduced to a vague shadow of itself. The colours of the islands shift from the khaki yellow winter costume, into an orgy of green. Alongside the countless streams in the meadows, broad yellow belts of marsh marigold (*Caltha palustris* L) appear – the national flower, which the Faroese love almost as much as the oystercatcher.

It is high summer, and nature exploits the long daylight to its extent. In the outback, sheep and lambs are grazing, while the oystercatcher and other birds of the outback are busy hatching and feeding their young. Down

in the meadows, the faint breeze makes waves in the juicy grass, while eider ducks and their hardy ducklings gently float in lazy waves in fiords and straits. A surprised tourist may stop on a path, puzzled by the sound of playing children at eleven o'clock in the evening – a pretty common occurrence in the Faroese summer. And generally sounds are carried wide and far in the bright evening hours, when the noise from man's daily work has subsided. The cry of the seabirds, wading birds calls and warnings and the smaller birds song in gardens and meadows. This is the happy season, the children's season, the festival season.

After the last town festival, the national festival Ólavsøka, in late July, comes the next major change in the cultural landscape. Farmers and smallholders have to secure the winter feed for sheep and cattle, and begin to harvest hay in the meadows. Slowly but surely bright rectangles appear on the



Anker Eli Petersen

slopes, until the meadows finally resemble an oversized patchwork. The landscape loses its fresh green color - and out of the Atlantic, the first low-pressure storms come rolling toward the islands. The urban gardens change color as shrubs and trees first turn yellow and then red and brownish - autumn has arrived and nature slowly shuts down.

In September the oystercatchers start to congregate in large flocks on the beach - and in the middle of the month, the first birds take off and start the long journey to the British Isles and the Atlantic coast of France.

This is the melancholic season, the beginning of winter, when people see the last oystercatchers migrate southeast. Ahead lies stormy months with rain, sleet and snow.

But that is the price for living on these beautiful but rugged islands. And we pay it without complaint, knowing that sooner or later, the oystercatcher's "klip, klip", again will herald the coming of spring.

Stamp Programme 2016

- 22/02** **Westerbeek** - 2 single stamps and a mini-sheet with 2 stamps. Westerbeek was a Dutch sailing ship which shipwrecked on the west coast of Suðuroy in 1742. Design: Anker Eli Petersen. Value: 17,00 and 19,00 DKK. FO 822-823.
- Old Fire Trucks** - 3 stamps + a self adhesive booklet (6). Photos of the first fire pump and fire truck in the Faroe Islands. Photos: Martin Sirkovsky. Value: 1,00, 15,00 and 19,00 DKK. FO 824-826.
- SEPAK 2016: Seasons** - 1 stamp. Spring and fall, the oystercatchers arrive in the spring and leave the islands in the fall. Design: Edward Fuglø. Value: 17,00 DKK. FO 827.
- 01/04** **Postverk Føroya 40 Years** - mini-sheet with 2 stamps + 1 single stamp. 40 years have passed since the Faroese Postal Service was established on 1st April 1976. Value: 9,00 and 17,00 DKK. FO 828-829.
- 26/04** **Nólsoyar Páll 250 Years** - 1 stamp. 250 years have passed since the Faroese national hero Nólsoyar Páll was born. Value: 24,00 DKK. FO 830.
- Norden 2016: Nordic Food Culture** - 1 stamp. The theme is nordic food. Photo: Finnur Justinussen. Value: 9,00 DKK. FO 831.
- 09/05** **EUROPA 2016: Ecology - Think Green** - 2 stamps + a self adhesive booklet (6). Artists: Edward Fuglø and Doxias Sergidou, Cyprus. Value: 9,00 and 17,00 DKK. FO 832-833.
- 26/09** **Fish skin** - 1 stamp. For the first time ever: Real fish skin from cod on stamps. Artist and engraver: Martin Mörrck. Value: 50,00 DKK. FO 834.
- Faroese National Costumes I** - 2 stamps + a self adhesive booklet (6). First issue of a series of three, illustrating Faroese national costumes. Artist: Edward Fuglø. Value: 9,00 and 17,00 DKK. FO 835-836.
- Jesus of Nazareth** - mini-sheet with 10 stamps. Wooden ornaments made by the artist Edward Fuglø. The artwork is decorating the conference room in the church of Klaksvík. Value: 10 x 9,00 DKK. FO 837-846.
- 01/10** **Franking Labels 2016** - 4 franking labels. Theme: Music Festivals. Value: 4 x 9,00 DKK.
- 07/11** **Yearbook, year pack and Christmas Seals**

Vote for Stamp of the Year 2015

and join the draw to win a sheepskin rug



FO 800



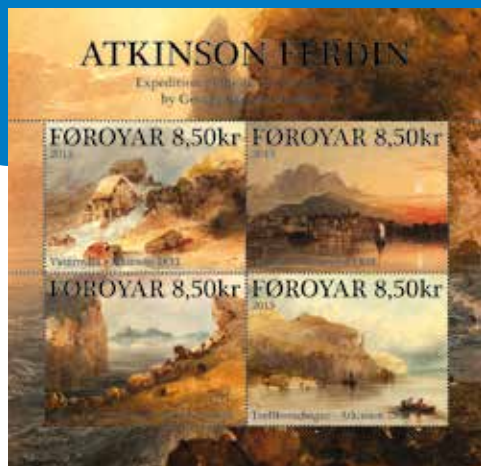
FO 801



FO 810



FO 811



FO 804-807



FO 808



FO 809



FO 802



FO 803



FO 808-809



FO 817



FO 814-816



FO 812



FO 813



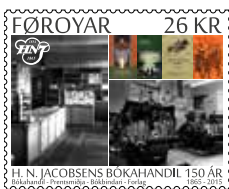
FO 820



FO 821



FO 818



FO 819

1st prize: a sheepskin rug from Stóra Dímun in the Faroe Islands

2nd prize: The Yearbook 2015

We will also draw lots for 5 year packs 2014

Cut out the coupon and send it to us or you can vote on www.stamps.fo The deadline for voting is 15th March 2016!

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postal Code/ _____

Town: _____

Client no.: _____

Stamp of the year 2015:

FO



☒ Yes, please. I would like to register for the e-newsletter from Posta Stamps.

E-mail: _____

End sale of the year

Please note that 31st December 2015 is the last date of sale for the stamps and articles presented on these pages.

The articles can be ordered by completing the enclosed coupon or by visiting our web-shop at www.stamps.fo/en.

It is therefore your last opportunity to purchase the stamps at the nominal value.



FO 724



FO 724



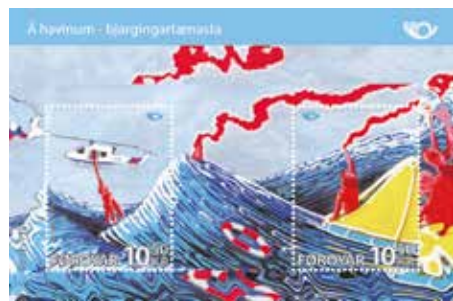
FO 729-730



FO 725-728



FO 745-746



FO 731-732



FO 735-737



FO 733-734



FO 747



FO 739-744



FO 677-680



FR 036



FO 710-711



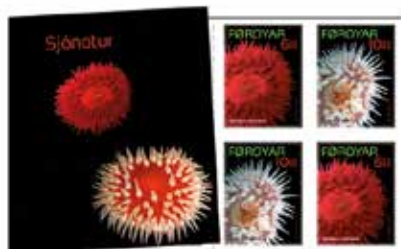
FO 748-749



FO 714-715



Christmas Carols 3, 8-stamp booklet
PPN000912



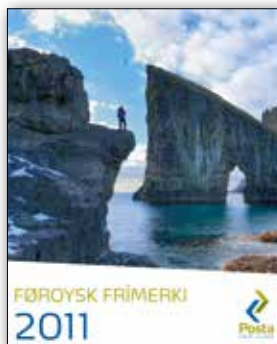
Sea Anemones, self adhesive 8-stamp booklet
PPN000212

Yearbook 2011



Danish/Faroese: PPZDKV11
English/German: PPZENVI11

Year Pack 2011



PPY002011

FDC Folder 2011



FDM002011

New Stamp Issues 22 February 2016



Test proof



New stamp issue:

Date of issue:

Value:

Numbers:

Stamp size:

Mini-sheet size:

Design:

Printing method:

Printer:

Postal use:

Westerbeek

22.02.2016

17,00 and 19,00 DKK

FO 822-823

45,00 x 30,45 mm

100 x 70 mm

Anker Eli Petersen

Offset

Joh. Enschedé, Netherlands

Small letters to Europe and to other countries, 0-50 gr.



Test proof



New stamp issue:

Date of issue:

Value:

Numbers:

Stamp size:

Photo:

Printing method:

Printer:

Postal use:

Old Fire Trucks*

22.02.2016

1,00, 15,00 and 19,00 DKK

FO 824-826

30,0 x 43,5 mm

Martin Sirkovsky

Offset

LM Group, Canada

Additional value, medium letters inland, 51-100 g and small letters to other countries, 0-50 g



* also available as stamps in a self adhesive booklet of six (2 of each stamp)



Test proof

New stamp issue:

Date of issue:

Value:

Numbers:

Stamp size:

Design:

Printing method:

Printer:

Postal use:

SEPAC 2016: Seasons

22.02.2016

17,00 DKK

FO 827

43,0 x 24,4 mm

Edward Fuglø

Offset

Cartor Security Printing, France

Small letters to Europe, 0-50 g

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