

- Sepac 2017: Local Handicraft
- 500th Anniversary of the Reformation
- Faroese National Costumes II
- Franking Labels 2017: The Faroes in Colours









Sepac 2017: Faroese Knife

A knifeless man is a lifeless man

Associations can be quite fun. Sitting here. having just written the heading of this article, an early childhood memory enters my mind. I must have been about 4 years old, standing on a stool in the kitchen with a pocket knife in my hand. My father, who at the time was in Canada instructing local fishermen in need of a modern fishing boat, had sent a package home which, among other things, contained small gifts to us children. For me he had bought a splendid red pocket knife with a coat of arms engraved on the handle. This was the one I had just taken out of a kitchen cabinet. I do not remember much more about the knife or what became of it. At any rate, it was taken away from me on that day because I had used it to transform one of my older brothers' formidable wooden swords to

a bread knife - and that gesture was not well received, to say the least.

It may seem a little strange to give your four-year-old son a knife but considering the time, culture and circumstances, it was the most natural thing in the world.

The knife has always been the most important tool of the Faroese. This is signified by the old saying: "A knifeless man is a lifeless man" which indicates the need in everyday life to have a knife handy at all times. The knife was used in almost all activities undertaken in the old farmer-hunter society, by men and women, children and adults.

The knife was used as an eating utensil almost all traditional Faroese foods require a sharp knife - and it was used for every-



day chores as well. It was used to slaughter sheep, cattle and whales, and for the subsequent gutting. It was utterly indispensable at sea - the fisherman who forgot his knife at home inevitably became the butt end of teasing and sarcastic remarks from his mates. It was used to fashion daily tools and repair things, for construction, processing of leather and the manufacture of clothing and shoes. In their spare time men were wont to take up their knives - a part of our archaeological heritage consists of toys and ornamental objects carved in the glow of the whale oil lamps in the long North Atlantic winter evenings.

The knife, in short, was the Faroese universal tool.

The traditional Faroe knife is a utility knife used for general purposes which is why it has a relatively short blade. In addition, the

Faroese knife is known by the characteristic bend on the blade's spine, causing the blade to slope slightly down towards the point. This slope is probably the result of ages of experiences, indicating that the knife was used for stabbing at the time of slaughter. The balance point is at the centre of the blade, so that it does not slip sideways during work.

In the days of old, blades were often forged of iron in the Faroes - with an inlay of steel in the edge of the knife. It was important that the blade be not too hard because then it would then become more difficult to sharpen. The knife's handle was made of wood without any kind of decoration, and the sheath was made of wood or leather.

In the mid-1800s, the skilled craftsman Jákup Andrias Andrasson, born in 1819, began



Ornamental knife from the beginning of 20th century, made in dark wood, brass and mother of pearl. The knife has a length of 20.2 cm and is made by Ludvig Blåsvær. Photo: Fotostudio.

making knife handles and sheaths of mahogany and ebony with small carved icons from everyday life, such as boats, pilot whales and various hunting tools The icons were made of copper, silver or mother of pearl. This craft quickly spread among skilled artisans and is still popular. There is hardly a house in the Faroe Islands where you would not find an ornamental knife or some other traditional tools with meticulously inlaid icons.

The knife that is featured on the stamp has the same proportions as a common utility knife - 19.5 cm, but the beautifully decorated knife handle and scabbard, with boats, pilot whales and whale hunting tools of brass, suggests that it has served as an ornamental knife. According to its pedigree it was supposed to have belonged to the Faroese national hero, Nólsoyar Páll (1766 -

1808/09). This places it at an earlier period than has traditionally been associated with ornamental knives of this kind. Whether it has been fitted with a new handle at a later time, or, as the knife's pedigree suggests, was made by a contemporary of Nolsøe, a blacksmith in the village of Porkeri - remains a mystery. It is certainly one of the oldest and best preserved ornamental knives in the Faroe Islands today.

Anker Eli Petersen



Stamp of the Year 2016

Stamp collectors worldwide have been participating in the voting for the most beautiful Faroese stamp of the year 2016.

Here are the results.

No. 1

Fish skin stamp. FO 834. Design: Martin Mörck.

No. 2

Sepac 2016: Seasons. FO 827.

Design: Edward Fuglø.

No. 3

Westerbeek 1742. FO 822-23, Design: Anker Eli Petersen. The lucky winners are:

1) A Faroese sheepskin rug:

Jaka Sifrar, Slovenia

2) Yearbook 2016:

Karl F. Dehlendorf, Denmark

3) Fish Skin Folder:

Heinz Jakobsmeier, Germany

4) Year Pack 2015:

Yuli, Xian, China

We congratulate the winners and thank you for your vote.







FO 869

500th Anniversary of the Reformation

Martin Luther's Ninety-five Theses

The good Reverend Martin Luther was probably not fully aware of the hornet's nest he had put his hand into when, on October 31, 1517, he nailed his Ninety-five Theses to the door of the All Saints' Church in Wittenburg, Germany. Even less did he suspect the commotion this would cause or the tremendous consequences it would eventually have.

Up until that point in time not many things had indicated that the monk, priest and professor of theology in Wittenberg would assume his place among the world's most significant personalities. The gifted son of a copper miner, born on November 10, 1483, in Eisleben, had received sound education. He studied philosophy and theology at the University of Erfurt, but his father was determined to see him become a lawyer. After having an epiphany in a thunderstorm, Luther vowed to enter a monastery. He was now 33 years old - and his life was about to take quite an unexpected and dramatic turn.

The Problem of Indulgences

As part of the Catholic Church's teachings on punishment after death for sins committed in life, a concept popularly called indulgences, emerged in the Middle Ages. At the occurrence of death, afterlife offered two options. The sinful and evil would spend eternity in hell, while those who had lead a decent and virtuous life entered the joy of heaven. However, the problem remained that no one was able to stay free of sin. To gain access to the kingdom of heaven, one had to confess one's sins to a priest, accept absolution and do the penance assigned by him. In addition, after death one entered purgatory for a period of time depending on the extent and severity of one's sins.

The idea of granting indulgences was a bit of a loophole regarding the penance - as well as constituting a faster escape from the undoubtedly disagreeable, but inevitable process of purification in purgatory. By giving alms to the church, you offered your



penance to the church. You paid so that others, i.e. the clergy, would be able to lead a life of confession, prayer and repentance.

As soon as the gold in the casket rings...

Shortly before, Albrecht of Brandenburg, Archbishop of Mainz, received permission from Pope Leo X to sell indulgences throughout his jurisdiction with the condition that the Pope receive half of the revenues to finance the construction of the new St. Peter's Basilica. There had been some dissatisfaction with the aggressive methods used by indulgence salesmen against the common folks. The most famous of these salesmen was a Dominican monk, Johann Tetzel, who had a flair for the theatrical. With his entourage, Tetzel marched under the sign of the cross into villages, holding stern sermons on the torments of purgatory and then inviting the audience to buy indulgences for themselves and even their deceased relatives. For as Tetzel said: "As soon as the gold in the casket rings; the rescued soul to heaven springs!"

The Theses on the Church Door

When Martin Luther learned about Tetzel's frivolous sales practices in 1517, he regarded them as a question to be pondered and debated. He wrote his 95 theses on indulgences and sent them to the Archbishop and a few others. In addition, he nailed the theses on the church door in Wittenburg's All Saint's Church, thereby proposing an academic discussion of the nature of indulgences.

Apparently unaware of the Archbishop's and the Holy See's role in the promotion of these sales, Luther inadvertently stepped on a few sore corns. Not in the sense that his theses contained some crucial or revolutionary thoughts. Luther was not dismissive of the idea of indulgences. What irked him was the sellers' claim that you could buy God's benevolence by way of papal indulgences, thus



improving the conditions of the deceased in purgatory. And in this Luther was not alone.

The poster on the church door was written in Latin, thus probably being solely intended for scholars as a subject for debate and discussion. But it was not long until someone had translated the 95 theses into German, and while Gutenberg had invented the modern printing press already around 1440, it was a simple matter to have the text printed in large editions. Soon, the ninety-five theses were known in most parts of Germany, and to Luther's surprise, they attracted great attention. He sent an apology to the Archbishop of Mainz where he admitted to have overstepped the limits to some extent. The Archbishop sent his letter to the Pope and this was the beginning of the Church's reaction against Luther.

The Loop is Tightened

The pressure came from various corners, both indirectly and with direct

communications between Luther and cardinals. Luther was genuinely surprised by the Church's reaction, which caused him to strengthen his resolve and put up resistance. In October 1518 Luther was interrogated by Cardinal Cajetan in Augsburg but he refused to back down. In the previous year, Luther had received declarations of support from many of the German princes and from lay people. The Church began to regard the obstinate monk as somewhat of a nuisance.

The Leipzig Disputation

On November 8, 1518, the Pope issued the bull "Cum postquam" dealing with the Catholic doctrine of indulgences. The Pope admitted that there were certain disparities concerning them, but he rejected Luther's fundamental position. The debate was running off track and both sides had begun to move beyond the core of the matter, the Ninety-five Theses.



At a disputation staged in Leipzig in 1519 between representatives of the Universities of Wittenberg and Leipzig, theologian Johann Eck directed a sharp attack against Luther claiming that he questioned the Pope's authority, the doctrine of infallibility and the sacraments of the Church. Luther, in turn, responded that there was no justification of the Pope's authority to be found in the Bible and the Church Councils were not free from errors. Eck pressed Luther by comparing him with Jan Hus, who a century earlier had been burned at the stake for declaring that the Pope was fallible and for other utterances things resembling Luther's statements. This made Luther declare famously: "Ia, Ich bin Hussite." Thus, his fate was sealed.

The debate in Leipzig sharpened Martin Luther's attitude toward the Pope. Up to this point, Luther had not regarded his views as being subversive to the Church and the Pope's authority. However, after the Leipzig debate Luther started comparing the Pope with the Antichrist.

Exsurge Domine

In June 1520 Pope Leo X issued the bull Exsurge Domine. Johann Eck was set to proclaim the papal bull in Germany. He condemned 41 doctrines in Luther's writings and demanded that he withdraw them within 60 days or face excommunication. This was not an easy task for Eck - he was exposed to violent protests in many places and at times, he could not even proclaim the bull. Luther's popularity in Germany was great, both among the laity as well as the ruling princes. Luther's reaction to the bull was to burn it publicly in Wittenberg, along with writings of his other opponents' and some church records.

The Diet of Worms

The rift with the Church was now a reality. On January 3, 1521, Martin Luther was excommunicated by the Pope. The Church



could not take the obstinate rebel to court on its own accord, so it was left to the young Emperor Charles V to conduct the Assembly. Luther had a powerful supporter in Prince Frederick III, Elector of Saxony. The Prince persuaded the Emperor to have Luther examined at Augsburg where the Imperial Diet was held - and to guarantee his safe passage to and from Worms.

On April 18, 1521 Luther found himself at the Diet of Worms. His old opponent, Johann Eck, speaking on behalf of the Empire, presented Luther with copies of his writings laid out on a table and asked him if the books were his, and whether he stood by their contents. Luther confirmed he was their author, but requested time to think about the answer to the second question. The following day he stated that he took responsibility for the contents, finishing his speech with the following words:

"I cannot and will not recant anything, since it is neither safe nor right to go against conscience. May God help me. Amen."

The following five days the Reichstag held deliberations on Luther's fate - and on May 25 the Emperor presented the verdict. Luther was declared an outlaw, his literature was banned and an order given requiring his arrest. The edict also made it a crime for anyone in Germany to give Luther food or shelter.

Wartburg

Since the Emperor had promised Martin Luther safe passage to and from Worms, he could not be arrested immediately. Luther left for Wittenberg but on the way he was abducted by Frederick of Saxony's men who brought him to Wartburg Castle in Eisenach. Under the pseudonym *Junker Jörg*, he hid in the castle until March 1522. It was here that he began his translation of the New Testament into German. This translation was a



milestone in the history of the German language and the foundation of Hochdeutsch - High German. Translating the Old Testament took a little longer but in 1534 the first German Bible was finished.

Martin Luther did not come out of hiding until March 1522. The reason was the outbreak of revolts and disturbances in the wake of the upheaval caused by Luther. To bring them to an end he had to return to Wittenberg.

During the 1520s Martin Luther laid out the fundamental principles of the Reformed Church, its catechism, ethics, the church concept, etc. The Protestant Church was defined in pamphlets which were easily understood by the common folks.

It also became apparent that reformed Christian freedoms could be interpreted differently than Luther had done. Thus, splinter groups were formed built on Luther's teachings. There were also more violent outbursts such as those caused by Thomas Müntzer and his peasant revolt 1524-26. However, Martin Luther strongly resisted the idea of his reformation being used for the subversion of the social order.

The Reformation spread across Northern Europe, but this historic development must wait for another time. The story of the monk who wanted to start a debate but ended up with a reformation is now 500 years old, and there are no signs that it will end in the foreseeable future – so this is where we conclude our narrative.

Anker Eli Petersen





Faroese National Costumes II

The Female Dress

The Skirt

Nowadays the traditional skirt is black with red stripes. The material used was the so-called "linsey", i.e. originally homespun flax with wool, but now machine-woven cotton with wool is being used. In recent years traditionalists have levelled some criticism at this trend. Young women especially have chosen other colours, for example black with green stripes or black with yellow stripes.

The sources, however, tell us that from times of old different colours have been used. In his description of the Faroes, dating back to 1800, pastor Jørgen Landt (1751 - 1804) reports that the skirts were brown with white stripes for everyday use and yellow-striped for special occasions. The tailor Hans Marius

Debes (1888 - 1978) writes that formerly the skirts were dark blue in basic hue rather than black, with light blue, white, red, yellow or green stripes. Debes also writes that the skirt should be fitted with 13 pleats, the reason being the common practice of girls getting their skirts around the age of confirmation and as their bodies developed the pleats would gradually even out.

The Apron

The apron, of course, is a remnant of the old everyday dress and served the purpose of protecting the skirt from dirt and wear. It's easier to wash an apron than a skirt – and the apron can be replaced in a trice. Folklore researcher J. C. Svabo (1746-1824) stated that the aprons were made of blue-striped canvas, while H. M. Debes, a few centuries later, stated that they were made of muslin,



silk or some similar fabric. In the past aprons were shorter than nowadays when they are worn exclusively for decorative purposes. Much attention is often paid to the apron's embellishment, usually by using embroideries which, incidentally, have to match the scarf.

Socks and Shoes

Underneath the skirt girls and women wore black or gray socks, most likely knitted with Faroese yarn. Since then socks have become daintier, made of silk and nylon, and nowadays black nylon stockings or panty hoses are used.

The shoes were originally traditional Faroese cowhide or sheepskin shoes, or clogs and galoshes. Besides, shoes of foreign origin have undoubtedly been used as well.

Today, the most commonly worn shoes are black semi-high heeled patent leather shoes with wide shoe buckles made of silver.

The Male Dress

The Breeches

One of the most distinctive features of the men's traditional costume are the black breeches. J. C. Svabo gives quite a humorous description of Faroese trousers used in his own times. He writes that they are black and wide, open below the knee and fastened about the leg with drawstrings. The fly was in front without any buttons, always open and extra visible because of the white undergarment. It would have been more befitting, in Svabo's opinion, to use a flap or a panel to cover the front opening of the pants - but he doubted that this would happen.



Chances have actually happened since the times of Svabo. Today, the pants have a flap in front which is fastened up with silver buttons on the sides. The modern breeches are also tighter, made of black homespun cloth and they are also fitted with buttons in the seams just below the knees.

The reason for the traditional use of breeches is a practical one. Coming home after a hard day's work it was easier to change socks than pants since work often meant getting your feet and legs wet.

The Stockings

The socks, or rather the stockings, are long, reaching up above the knee and held in place with a so-called garter, preferably woven in coloured patterns. The stockings date back to ancient times, most often brown or grey in colour. On festive occasions men often used

blue or white stockings - which is also the case today. The stockings are usually blue, but they can be white or brown as well.

Footwear

Traditionally, cowhide or sheepskin shoes with long laces wrapped up around the legs were used almost exclusively. For festive occasions some men may have worn shoes of foreign make, but this would have been very rare.

As the national costume became distinct from everyday clothing in the late 1800's, people started using "Danish shoes" which were more refined leather or patent leather shoes with a wide silver buckles, often decorated with shaded ornaments.

Anker Eli Petersen





Maximumcards: 40,50 DKK



FDC with set: 31,50 DKK



Self-adhesive booklet: 79,50 DKK



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Royal Golden Wedding Anniversary

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Kongeligt guldbryllup

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Golden Anniversary Folder

On June 10, this year, HM The Queen of Denmark and HRH Prince Henrik celebrate their Golden Wedding Anniversary.

Posta marks this event with the issue of an elegant mini-sheet, which shows a photo of the royal couple without official pomp.

The mini-sheet is a joint issue with Denmark and Greenland – this is symbolized by a polar bear, a ram and a swan printed on the mini-sheet background.

Posta also publishes a beautiful Golden Wedding Anniversary Folder with the mini-sheets of Faroe Islands, Denmark and Greenland.

Date of issue: 15 05 2017







Royal Golden Wedding Anniversary Kongeligt guldbryllup

Date of local | Vidgire banding 19-65 mm* Editor | Videolo 54-in (SE) | Videolo 54-in (Se)







Top: HM Queen Margrethe and HRH Prince Henrik with their sons Prince Joachim and Crown Prince Frederik wearing Faroese national costumes in the Faroe Islands in 1978. Photo: Scanpix.

Left: HM Queen Margrethe II and HRH Prince Henrik of Denmark visiting the Faroe Islands in 2010. Photo: Scanpix.



Franking labels 2017: The Faroe Islands in Colours

The new franking labels were designed by graphic artist Miriam Hinz. Miriam has in recent years worked on the design of new Faroese posters. She designs the posters with the aid of a computer, drawing ideas from Faroese landscape, towns and villages, nature and cultural traditions. Further information about Miriam and her artistic designs can be found on www.einfalt.fo where posters can be bought on the online store.

The Faroe Islands is an archipelago in the North Atlantic, located at 62 degrees north latitude and 7 degrees west longitude.

Historians claim that the name of the islands reflects an Old Norse word "fær" (sheep) indicating the abundance of sheep that the islands are known for. There is at least twice as many sheep as humans in the Faroes, and

it is believed that sheep have thrived on the islands as long as the inhabitants. " My land, oh most beauteous, possession most dear," the poet intones - there is never any shortage of grazing land for the multitude of sheep.

In the grassy fields you will see the Faroese national flower "sóljan" – the buttercup. The popular song about the girl who picks a bouquet of buttercups is a sign of welcome to spring - the buttercup being the first indication of brighter times to come. The buttercup grows in large swaths, leaving its pleasant and beautiful mark on the scenery.

Merkið, the Faroese National Flag, is a so-called cross flag and the design symbolizes Christianity as it does in other Nordic countries. The colours are white, red and blue. On the Faroese Flag Day, 25th April,



we sing "Sjá, tú blánar sum loftið og tú rodnar sum blóð, men hitt hvíta er fossur, brot og vetrarins ljóð" ("Lo, you turn blue as the sky and red as blood, but the white is a waterfall, surf and the sound of winter.")

The white base colour can also symbolize the clear sky and foamy waves breaking against the rocks. Red and blue are colours that are also found in the traditional Faroese head-dress, and besides the colours also indicate the close relations with Iceland and Norway, both of which use the same colours in their flags



New Stamp Issues - 8 September and 2 October 2017



SPECIAL ISSUE! The motif will be unveiled at a later time.

New stamp issue: Date of issue: Value: Numbers: Postal use:

08.09.2017 9.50 and 19.00 DKK FO 865-866 Small inland letters, 0-50 g. and small letters to other countries, 0-50 g.

The Seven Swans



FO 868 Test proof



FO 867



New stamp issue:



500th Anniversary of the

Cartor Security Printing, France

Large inland letters, 51-100 g.

Sepac 2017: Faroese knife

02.10.2017

19.00 DKK

Reformation

02.10.2017

18,00 DKK

60 x 80 mm

40 x 30 mm Anker Eli Petersen

FO 869

Offset

FO 867 and FO 868



Mini-sheet, size: Stamp size: Artist: Printing method: Printer:





Postal use:

Faroese National Costumes II 02.10.2017 9,50 and 17,00 DKK FO 870-871 30 x 40 mm Edward Fuglø Offset

> OeSD, Austria Small inland letters, 0-50 g. and small letters to Europe, 0-50 g.

Wil also be issued in booklets with 6 self-adhesive stamps.



Test proof



FO 870-871

Test proof

Posta Stamps Óðinshædd 2 FO-100 Tórshavn Faroe Islands

Tel. +298 346200 Fax +298 346201 stamps@posta.fo www.stamps.fo



