

Four New Issues from the Faroes



The Faroe Islands recently released four new sets. Three of those, released February 26, included a sheetlet for the legend of the wealthy Lady of Húsavík. It tells the well-

known legend of the poor servant girl of Skúvoy, who discovered where the Viking chief, Sigmundur Brestisson, had buried his golden horn. After selling her treasure to the king, she was able to buy all the land in the village of Húsavík and become the wealthiest woman ever to have lived in the Faroe Islands.

The story sounds like a poor people's daydream but in reality one, or even two, very rich ladies resided in Húsavík in the 14th century. Based on a number of documents dated around 1403, they most likely were mother and daughter, and they left a very substantial inheritance, among them much land and an impressive number of buildings in Húsavík, lots of equipment and other personal belongings.

The mother was probably of Norwegian descent, the daughter of a wealthy Bergen merchant with connections to the Shetland Islands. Her husband may also have been a Norwegian. How and why these people settled in the Faroe Islands remains a mystery. Accounts of their lives and lifestyles went from mouth to mouth in Húsavík and elsewhere and gradually became a captivating legend about a single personage bearing the distinguished title of the Lady of Húsavík, suggesting that this was no ordinary person.



Also issued on February 26 was a single picturing the Faroese Soft Downy Rose. The issue highlights the significant influence

that climate change has on Faroese flora. Some flowers that grow at the edge of the sea thrive as never before, while others diminish and might become extinct. The arctic flowers, growing in the high hills, tend to crawl further and further down the mountainsides to avoid the heat. The Faroese post office also throws the spotlight on the fact that "it is a great shame that there is no official Faroese policy on the preservation of the natural environment."



The strange looking creatures known as jelly fish also are featured in a February 26 set. Their grandiose appearance while under water disappears when we find them washed up on shore, where they look like a lump of jelly, so these underwater photos by Ingi Sørensen brings us some fascinating pictures of these living fossils.



Finally, we picture the souvenir sheet, issued March 17, featuring the latest *MS Norröna*. The first *Norröna* only sailed during the summer season in the North Atlantic and was used for other purposes during the winter season. Among other things, she was used as transport vessel at NATO exercises in the Baltic Sea, the North Sea and the Irish Sea. The ship had gradually become obsolete though and the capacity too small for the increasing pressure of passengers, cars and freight. Three times bigger than the old one, the new *Norröna* started to sail her Atlantic route on April 10, 2003.

The stamps of the Faroes, including many past issues at face value, are available from the World Online Philatelic Agency. These, as well as the issues of 20 other postal administrations, may be accessed at <http://www.stampnewsnow.com/WOPA-NewIssues.html>.