

Iceland Stamps Printed by Courvoisier Printers - Color Proofs to Stamp Usage—1970-1979

Purpose: Showcase the color proofs of the stamp designs while presenting information about Icelandic Philately while identifying stamp designers, cachet makers, & provide information about postal rates, postmarks & the stamps.

Plan: Present color proofs of 48 different Icelandic stamps—final stamp design—show usage of those stamps—while identifying stamp designers, cachet makers, & provide information about postal rates, postmarks & the stamps.

Highlights: The "color proofs" & unique covers—presented surrounded with a "red" border

Significance: Color proofs are an essential step to achieving quality printing of postage stamps and an excellent way to introduce the viewer to a wide variety of Icelandic philately (i.e. postal rates, cachet makers, event cancels, etc.)

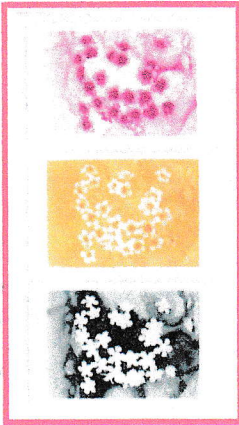
Challenges: Obtaining color proofs for modern Icelandic postage stamps (*exhibit—only known set in private hands*)

Background: Stamps and color proofs presented were printed by **Courvoisier Printers** of Switzerland utilizing the Halftone recess printing process. This process breaks up an image into a series of dots from the four basic colors to produce a full tone range of the design using screens with a varying number of lines per inch inserted over the plates to achieve the desired quality of printing.

Without further ado—color proofs and stamp usage for the period 1970-1979 begins:

"Year of Conservation" stamps—issued 25.08.1970

Color proofs Purple Bracken Saxifrage
Stamp design by Eypór Einarsson



Final Design



FM 102 >>
* 102nd cachet design issued by Frimerkjamoðstöðin—stamp shop started in 1962, co-owners Magni Magnússon, Finnur Kobínsson and Haraldur Sacmunsson.

Color proofs Lakagigar Craters

Stamp design by Sveinn Ólafsson—depicts (Lakagigar)—25km long crater row in south-central Iceland)



Final Design



- (upper right cover) *1. Surface letter rate to countries outside Scandinavia (Jan. 1969—June 1971) 1600aur to 40gm
(lower right cover) *2. Airmail letter rate to Europe (Jan. 1969—June 1972) 1450aur to 20gm
** Laugarvatn—small town southern Iceland by lake of same name, home to Sport & Physical Education school
Laugarvatn—Receiving office 1.1.1930 til 31.12.1958; Post office since 1.1.1959

*1. First Day Cover to U.S.A. Cachet FM 102 by Frimerkjamoðstöðin (Stamp Center)



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* 2. Airmail cover to Germany - postmarked Laugarvatn** (pop. 200)



Iceland Stamps Printed by Courvoisier Printers Color Proofs to Usage – 1970-1979 (Synopsis)

Exhibit Purpose: Introduce the viewer to Icelandic philately by showcasing the “Color Proofs” of Icelandic stamp designs, printed by *Courvoisier Printers* of Switzerland during the 1970s and by showing the final design and usage of the stamps.

Exhibit Plan: Present the “Color Proofs” and final stamp designs of 48 different Icelandic stamps, chronologically that were issued during the period of 1970 through 1979, along with showing usage of the stamps to present information about the stamps and other aspects of Icelandic philately (i.e. stamp designers; cachet makers; postal rates; and town postmarks and the time periods locations were a receiving office and/or post office). Where possible, I have chosen covers that illustrate the use of the stamp(s) in the exhibit to pay correct postage rates and sought out items using a single stamp to pay the rate of various Icelandic postal rates (Inland, Scandinavian countries and Non-Scandinavian countries).

Exhibit Significance: Exhibit provides a rare look at “color proofs” as an essential step in achieving quality stamp designs and a venue to show usage of the stamps while providing a wide variety of other Icelandic philatelic information. Information such as: stamp design and designers; identify cachet makers and the number of different cachets they produced; Icelandic Postal rates applicable to each cover; dates locations were a receiving office and/or post office; identify special event cancels. **Exhibit presents the largest known collection of “color proofs” of Icelandic stamps from the 1970s** (in private hands). Exhibit also presents examples of a wide range of Icelandic philatelic material - FDC's (a couple of envelopes even made of leather); Ship mail, Airmail, registered, express, COD mail items; postcards; from different postal rate periods between 1970 – 1979 and different postal rates based on destination location (Inland, to Scandinavian countries, to non-Scandinavian countries-Europe and the rest of the world). All of these factors impact the correct applicable postage required.

Exhibit Highlights: The “color proofs” of 48 different Icelandic stamps and some unique covers, which are highlighted with a “red” border. The significance of covers highlighted include: Inland registered cover with 10 copies of a single stamp (frame 3 page 3); First Day Stationary cover (frame 4 page 5); Commercial Express Airmail cover with a strip of 6 stamps to Sweden during a three month postal rate period (frame 4 page 8); Inland letter from Bildudalur (pop. 230) to Ísafjörður (both towns in remote West Fjords) (frame 5 page 3); Commercial Registered Inland COD cover to Bildudalur (frame 5 page 7).

Exhibit Challenges & Changes: Obtaining “color proofs” for modern Icelandic stamps. Since the exhibit was last shown – seventeen new color proofs and supporting material have been added. Thus the exhibit has grown from a three frame exhibit to a five frame exhibit providing the opportunity to show more color proofs and interesting Icelandic philatelic material.

Exhibit Background: The “color proofs” and final stamp designs shown in the exhibit were printed by *Courvoisier Printers* of Switzerland utilizing the “Halftone recess printing process”. This process breaks up an image into a series of dots from the four basic colors to produce a full tone range of the design by using screens with a varying number of lines per inch inserted over the plates to achieve the desired quality of printing. The Courvoisier Family had long been, watch and hat makers before moving into the printing business (January 1881) to create flyers and ads for their products. In 1928, Courvoisier printing house obtained a photogravure printing press and entered into an agreement with the Swiss Postal Authorities to carry out tests of printing postage stamps. They have now printed postage stamps for more than 80 different countries. The first Icelandic stamps that they printed were in 1960. During the 1970's they printed more than 70 different Icelandic stamps.

Thus, the presentation of the “color proofs” supplemented with the final stamp designs and the stamps’ usage creates a colorful, interesting and informative Icelandic philatelic exhibit.

Icelandic philately is a very interesting collecting area because:

1. the country was long a remote and isolated country. Even within Iceland many individuals live in very isolated/remote areas;
2. the Postal system was divided into Bréfhiriding (Receiving offices) and Post Offices; Bréfhiriding locations were where mail could be dropped off or picked up, but did not offer full Post Office types of services. Most were like a church, store, ship or farm in a remote location. (Examples: Eyrarlot (farm) Bréfhiriding 01.01.1962 to 31.12.1975 & a Post Office 01.01.1976 to 11.01.1983 when it closed; Bildudalur (church) Bréfhiriding 01.01.1873 to 31.12.1913 & Post Office since 1914.)
3. the Postal rates changed frequently and aside from having Inland rates, they had rates to Scandinavian countries (which periodically changed as to which countries were included or excluded from this category), Non-Scandinavian countries (Europe) and the Rest of the World; (Fifteen rate changes during the 1970s in all categories - Inland, to Scandinavian countries and non-Scandinavian countries – Europe and the Rest of the World)

01.01.1969 – 31.10.1970	01.10.1975 – 30.04.1976
01.11.1970 – 30.06.1971	01.05.1976 – 31.12.1976
01.07.1971 – 31.03.1972	01.01.1977 – 31.01.1978
01.04.1972 – 30.06.1973	01.02.1978 – 30.04.1978 (3 months)
01.07.1973 – 31.03.1974	01.05.1978 – 31.12.1978
01.04.1974 – 31.12.1974	01.01.1979 – 28.02.1979 (2 months)
01.01.1975 – 30.09.1975	01.03.1979 – 31.05.1979 (3 months)
	01.06.1979 – 31.01.1980
4. many stamp designs highlight Iceland’s history, special events and its love of art and nature, and
5. cachet makers were plentiful and created a wide variety of different first day covers and cachets. Cachet makers included in the exhibit are:
 - the Icelandic Postal Administration,
 - FM – Frímerkjamiðstöðin (Stamp Center) opened in 1962; co-owners were Magni Magnússon, Finnur Kolbeinsson, and Haraldur Sæmunsson. They made more than 90 different cachets during this 10 year period.
 - FF – Iceland Stamp Company (issued more than 35 different cachets during this period)
 - FV – Frímerkjshusid (Stamp House) store was opened by David Johannesson in 1952 and later operated by his son Boli Davidson until 2012 (also issued at least 35 cachets during this period)
 - Þorsteinn Sigvoldason (leather envelopes) He made a leather envelope for every Icelandic stamp issued during this 10 year period. In fact, he made a leather envelope for every Icelandic stamp issue for about a 25 year period (one set known).
 - N – Fritz Neve (a Danish Stamp Dealer) and
 - Cachets where maker is not designated/unknown.

Resources:

1. Frímerkjalsti konungsríkisins Íslands 1873 – 2020; by Íslandspóstur 2021
2. Exploring Iceland Through Its Stamps, A Philatelic Odyssey; by Don Brandt 1991
3. Walking Into Iceland’s Postal History; by Don Brandt 1995
4. Courvoisier Printers; by Imprimerie Courvoisier S. A. La Chaux-de-Fonds,
5. The 50th Anniversary of “The Match of Century” A Philatelic Look; by Michael Schumacher, Gaetan Lapierre, Jon Edwards 2022
6. Iceland Postal Rates 1870 – 2009; by Brian Flack 2018 (updated and revised)