

Anyone identified the ship on this stamp from 2000



La RECHERCHE's Scientific Expedition 1838 – 40

On June 13, 1838, the French corvette **La RECHERCHE** left Le Havre in France, bound for Northern Scandinavia. Onboard were several French scientists and artists, who, together with Scandinavian colleagues, were to explore the coastal regions of the High North and the surrounding oceans.

The expedition lasted almost three years. The research included geology, botany, marine-biology, astronomy, terrestrial magnetism and northern lights - but also subjects like linguistics, cultural history and anthropology.

In the years 1838 - 1840 **La RECHERCHE** travelled far and wide in the High North. The corvette visited Northern Norway, the Faroe Islands, Svalbard, the White Sea and the Kola Peninsula, and people from the expedition made several trips through Scandinavia and Russia.

The scientific expedition was the and naturalist Joseph (1796-1858). participated in naval before the 1838-40 expedition," as he Iceland in 1835. The again returned to leader of a scientific sponsored by the government, scientific studies in Greenland. The studies were "Voyage en Islande a work of nine them with illustrations. This Recherche



leader of the French surgeon Paul Gaimard Gaimard had expeditions "Recherche had visited next year, he Iceland as the expedition, French performing Iceland and results of these published in et au Groënland," volumes, one of geographical was the first "La Expedition." results from the

The scientific second "La Recherche Expedition" were published in "Atlas Pittoresque" in the period 1842-55 with the title: "Voyages de la Commission scientifique de Nord: en Scandinavie en Laponie, au Spitzberg et aux Feroe, pendant les années 1838, 1839 et 1849, sur la corvette **La RECHERCHE**." (The Scientific Committee's Expedition to the North; in Scandinavia, Lapland, Spitzberg and the Faroe Islands in the years 1838, 1839 and 1849 onboard the corvette **La RECHERCHE**). The work consisted of 26 volumes with text and five volumes of illustrations and maps.

The scientific research was extensive, and covered - in accordance with the spirit of the time - a series of natural scientific and cultural historical subjects. But the main reason the expedition is remembered today is the extensive amount of artwork produced. In those days, artists always participated in these kinds of expeditions. Their task was to document scientific discoveries, to draw maps and describe the surrounding environments.

The second "La Recherche Expedition" was no exception from this tradition.

(La RECHERCHE's Expedition, continued on page 34)