



NEWSLETTER

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Letter from the Editor

This is a good year for John Ericsson Society members to STOP, LOOK, LISTEN and be a part of things. It is the 200th anniversary of John Ericsson's birth and he is being celebrated more than ever, on both sides of the Atlantic. Among the highlights of the "John Ericsson Jubilee Year" is the celebration by the American Swedish Historical museum in Philadelphia in April. In New York, the Creativity Contest and Monitor Day (March 12) will be celebrated, as well as in November the anniversary of the arrival of John Ericsson to New York. And, in Sweden, in particular, there are a number of events being planned throughout the year with highlight dates being March 9, July 31 and August 16, 2003. Of course there will be the traditional parade and wreath laying at Nybroplan. For further details please contact the Editor or consult the John Ericsson websites: www.johnericsson.org or www.biderman.net/jesny

In addition you will find in this issue a number of noteworthy articles. One about the Great Western --the steamer with which John Ericsson traveled to the United States arriving in New York on November 23, 1839 -- and one on John Ericsson's life in New York 1839 -- 1889.

The most exciting recent news however is the raising, in August 2002, of the USS Monitor's gun turret. Read more about the salvage operation in this issue of the newsletter!

Last but not least, May 25 of this special year 2003 marks the 90th Birthday of Kjell Lagerström, long-running President of the John Ericsson Society. All of us will be looking forward to wishing him a Happy Birthday.

John Ericsson Society News

Annual Meeting Held

On September 23, 2002 at 6.30 PM, the Society's annual meeting was held in the John Ericsson Room in the Swedish Church, 5 East 48 Street New York, NY.

The following matters were considered.

1. Minutes of Annual Meeting on June 19, 2001 were read and approved.
2. The President's Report for 2002 was read.

3. The Treasurer's Report was presented and accepted with many thanks for an excellent work.
4. The following were unanimously elected:

President	Kjell Lagerstrom
Vice Presidents	George Simpson Janice Lauletta Weinmann Sten Sture Nordin
Secretary	Alvalene Karlsson
Treasurer	Ellen Lavagnino
Historians	Michael Lydon Janice Lauletta Weinmann
Chaplain	Jan Kesker
Editor	Alexandra Svernlov

Committee appointments:

Membership Committee	Alvalene Karlsson
Nominating Committee	Julius Eingoren, Alvalene Karlsson
United Swedish Societies	Alvalene Karlsson, Sten Sture Nordin
5. Membership dues for 2002 and 2003 will be unchanged, \$20
6. New business: Kjell Lagerstrom strongly requested to be relieved from the Presidency. A Committee, chaired by George Simpson, will search for a new president, and report to the Executive Committee on or before the Monitor Day March 9, 2003.
7. Plans for the rest of 2002:
Dinner to celebrate John Ericsson arrival in New York on November 23, 1839
8. Plans for 2003:
 - Celebrate the 200th anniversary of John Ericsson's birth as "The John Ericsson Jubilee Year".
 - March 9, Monitor Day
 - March, Creativity Contest at John Ericsson Jr High School
 - July 31, Celebrate John Ericsson birthday in New York, Filipstad and Stockholm
 - November 23, John Ericsson arrival in New York

After the meeting the Swedish TV film by the Swedish historian Herman Lindquist "John and Nils Ericsson" was shown.

History Revealed – The Raising of the USS Monitor Gun Turret

By Carl Svernlöv

In early August 2002, the turret of the famous John Ericsson ironclad USS Monitor was raised from the bottom of the Atlantic. The civil war gunship, lost in a storm at the end of the Civil War and not found until 1973, lies 230 feet below the surface 16 miles off Hatteras Island along the Outer Banks. The salvage operation was undertaken in cooperation between the Navy and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). In the years since the Monitor National Marine Sanctuary protecting the wreck in 1987, there have been several NOAA-sponsored expeditions which have retrieved nearly 100 artifacts, including the anchor and the ship's lamps. An undertaking of this magnitude had not however been attempted before, and until the rusted and barnacle-encrusted turret broke the surface of the choppy Atlantic waters, scientists were not certain whether the expedition would be successful. It has been determined that the ship is in a too delicate condition to be raised, and there is limited access for exploratory diving so as to not disturb the wreck.

It was on March 9, 1862, that the battle of the Monitor—designed and built by John Ericsson for the Union Navy in 100 days—and the Merrimac took place off Hampton Roads, VA at a critical stage of the American Civil War. The Monitor's gun turret could revolve completely and thus fire independently of the direction the ship itself was traveling in. This was an innovation in naval warfare and contributed to enabling the smaller and lighter Monitor to stand up to the more heavily armed Merrimac.

The "Great Western"

By Kjell Lagerstrom

William Connant Church tells us in his "The Life of John Ericsson"; published in 1891 that John Ericsson sailed from Bristol on board the steamer

Great Western on November 1, 1839, arriving in New York on November 23rd.

Great Western was a paddle ship with a side lever direct-acting steam engine and had an iron wire standing rigging with sails. The dimensions were 71.9 x 107 x 5.1 meters and she could accommodate 148 passengers. The saloon was 23 x 10 meters.

Isambard Kingdom Brunel was the designer and the ship was built at the William Patterson Shipyards in Bristol, England. The ship was launched in July 1837 and first taken to London for boilers and other machinery. On its way back to Bristol, heat from a boiler ignited the deck beams resulting in a small fire, which nearly killed Brunel.

Great Western made its first sailing from Bristol to New York on April 4, 1838. There were only 7 passengers, fifty bookings had been cancelled because of the rumours of the previous fire. The ship arrived in New York on April 23rd.

Next year, in 1839, John Ericsson made his Atlantic journey in November. The recorded sailing schedules do not, however, state any sailing arriving in New York on November the 23rd. The closest schedule notes departure Bristol on October 19, arrival in New York on November 2.

There could be several reasons for this discrepancy. William Church might have the wrong information or John Ericsson went by another ship. Further studies will investigate this matter.

Great Western made 67 Atlantic crossings during the next 8 years, westbound in 12 days and 9 hours and eastbound in 13 days and 6 hours,

After 1846 Great Western was engaged in the West Indies passenger trade out of Southampton and as a troop transporter during the Crimean war. She was broken up in 1856-1857.

As a curiosity, in November 2002, BBC in London conducted a poll about who is the best "Briton". Winston Churchill was the winner, but the builder of the Great Western Railways, Isambard Kingdom Brunel, came in second.

Main source: "Brunel's Great Western" by Patrick Stephens, Wellingsborough, ISBN 085059-743-9.

Fig 19: Great Western at her moorings at Broad Pill in the River Avon. (Courtesy City of Bristol Museum and Art Gallery).



John Ericsson in New York 1839 - 1889

By Kjell Lagerstrom

John Ericsson arrived in New York on November 23, 1839 after a stormy passage from London in the steamer "Great Western". His first residence in New York was in the then new and fashionable Astor House, located on lower Broadway, opposite the southern tip of City Hall Park. The building had been erected in 1836 and was considered sensational for its interior plumbing on all floors. The building covered the whole block between Vessel and Barclay Streets. His wife, the former Amelia Byram, whom he had married in London, had stayed there, but joined him later in New York. They continued to live at Astor House until 1843.

Then they moved north to a 3-story home at 95 Franklin Street, two buildings east of Church Street. His wife returned to England. It is said that John Ericsson preferred the drawing board too much. They never met again. He provided, however, for her support and they continued correspondence until her death in 1867. John Ericsson had his office and residence at Franklin Street for 21 years until 1846.

On July 31, 1924 a plaque was placed at 95 Franklin Street by the National Museum of Engineer and Industry. The building is gone and the plaque has disappeared. Our Society has, however, a miniature of the plaque in its possession. A copy of the miniature was offered for sale on the eBay web site on May 15, 2000.

He then purchased a private house at 36 Beach Street, between Hudson and Varick Street, facing the southern end of St Johns Park. His workroom was the front room on the second floor overlooking the Park. John Ericsson lived in this building for 43 years until his death. All buildings east of Hudson

Street, including 36 Beach Street, have been changed. The name of Beach Street between Hudson and Varick has been changed to "Ericsson Place".

On March 9, 1922 a memorial plaque was placed the 36 Beach Street building. Grace-Mari Hedman, daughter of the architect Axel Hedman, made the sculpture. It was presented by our Society to the American Scenic and Historical Society. Dr. George E. Kunz received the plaque and promised that it should be preserved. It has, however, disappeared.

John Ericsson died at Beach Street on March 8, 1889. It might be of interest to note that this date was the anniversary date of the Monitor arrival at Hampton Roads on March 8, 1862 - 22 years earlier.

On March 11, 1889 American and Swedish dignitaries and groups proceeded in cortege from Beach Street to the funeral service at Trinity Church, directly opposite the west end of Wall Street. After the funeral service the casket was taken to the Marble Cemetery on East 2nd Street, between 1st and 2nd Avenues, and placed in a receiving vault. Some of New York's Mayors and some other notables are buried here.

A year later, on August 23, 1890 John Ericsson's casket was taken from the Marble Cemetery in cortege to Battery Park to the new US Navy cruiser "Baltimore" for transfer to Sweden. The ceremonies around this event had one official and one unofficial side.

The official side was lead by the Secretary of the Navy surrounded by admirals and generals from the Navy and the Marine Corps, the City Mayor and other city officials, foreign dignitaries, including the Swedish minister and Consul, detachments from the Navy, the Marine Corps and the Police with music bands. There were also American and Swedish civilian organizations like the American Society of Swedish Engineers, the Manhem club and the Swedish

Glee Club.

The unofficial side was the 100,000 people who lined the streets and filled the windows and the roofs of the surrounding buildings

On September 16, 1890 John Ericsson's casket was received with great honors and ceremonies at Kungsträdgården in Stockholm. Train then transferred him to Filipstad where he is now resting in the grand Mausoleum dedicated in 1895.

Swedish Council of America Merit Award

The Board of Directors of the Swedish Council of America has presented an Award of Merit to Kjell Lagerström in recognition and as an expression of gratitude for his key role in promoting and preserving the legacy of the great Swedish inventor John Ericsson.

As President of the John Ericsson Society in New York he has taken the initiative to ensure that the memory of John Ericsson will continue to inspire coming generations.

The Award was presented to Kjell Lagerström by Swedish Council of America board members Bruce Karstadt and Erik Gustavson at a memorial service at the John Ericsson mausoleum in Filipstad on July 28, 2002.

In his acceptance speech Kjell Lagerström expressed that he was happy and proud to have received the award and that it also acknowledges the value of the John Ericsson Society.



Important Events for the John Ericsson Society, New York, for the year 2003

January-March The Annual Creativity Contest for 8th and 9th grade students at the John Ericsson Jr. High School in Greenpoint, Brooklyn.

March 12 Jubilee reception at the Residence of the Swedish Consul General and Mrs. Olle Wästberg,

May 25 President Kjell Lagerström celebrates 90th Birthday

July 31 Celebration of John Ericsson's birthday at his statue in Battery Park, with the customary wreath-laying. Members and friends of the Society attend the John Ericsson Days arranged by the Emigrant Register in Karlstad/Filipstad in July as well as the John Ericsson birthday celebrations organized by John Ericsson Sällskapet at the statue at Nybroplan in Stockholm.

November 23 Dinner and meeting to commemorate John Ericsson's arrival in New York on that date in 1839.

Membership Dues for 2002

(\$20/year or \$200/one-time life membership)

Those of you who have not yet paid the dues for 2002 please make your check out to "John Ericsson Society" and mail to the Society Treasurer:

Mrs. Ellen Lavagnino
C/o Sackman Enterprises
165 West 73rd Street
New York, NY 10023

John Ericsson Sällskapet

Ni som är bosatta i Sverige tillhör John Ericsson Sällskapet. Avgiften (per person SEK 70 eller SEK 700 per person/livstid, samt SEK 350 per år för organisationer) kan betalas via postgiro 837 04 24-7 eller genom att kontakta redaktören på nedan angivna adress eller kassören Ronny Persson, Plogvägen 26, 191 63 Sollentuna SWEDEN

Members residing in Sweden (per person SEK 70 or SEK 700/person life membership, and SEK 350 for associations), please pay via post giro or contact the Editor below.

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