

Field Trip – Stockholm

We arrived to a city that was just below freezing with intermittent snow. Our first visit was to have been the Maritime Museum which had unfortunately lost all its power. A change of tack took us to the City Museum where a Curator gave us a talk around their work on an island where they have identified an early Port Town, of which they had reconstructed a model (shown below) and also of their efforts to find a Viking Ship which still eludes Swedish archaeologists.

Model of Early Swedish Port Town



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The next day was perhaps one to remember for a long time, we went to the Vasa Museum and were given an informative talk and tour around the museum by Fred Hocker, a Marine Archaeologist with a considerable wealth of knowledge in and around the ship. The Vasa is not that different to the Mary Rose, it sank due to some fundamental flaws in a period when ships design was still a developing art. In essence she was too heavy. She was on her maiden voyage with all her gun ports open, including the lower ports which were just over a metre above the water level. A swell flooded the ship which was unable to right and recover from the water ingress. As a newly built ship she did not suffer from ships worm and thus sat on the seabed for 331 years. She was raised in the early 1960s and her reconstruction and subsequent preservation were a joy to see and a testament to the

¹ S.Littler, Photographed 02/02/2018

skills of the naval archaeologists.² The knowledge gained through this process will no doubt have assisted in other shipwrecks raised in the following years.

Vasa - Stockholm



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² <https://www.abc.se/~pa/publ/vasa.htm#I>. Brief history of the birth and disappearance of the Vasa. Accessed 08/02/2018

³ S.Littler, Photographed 02/02/2018

The intricate carvings on the stern were very impressive and to have survived leave a lasting record of the skills of the carpenters.

Vasa – Stern - Stockholm



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⁴ S. Littler, Photographed 02/02/2018

One interesting part of Fred's talk was the construction of a replica 24 pound brass cannon. Within the museum he showed us the damage the cannon had caused to a piece of timber similar to a wooden ship's hull (approximately 18 inches thick). This provided a clear understanding of how devastating a relatively small cannon would have been to sailors on such ships during the period.

Replica of ships hull depicting damage after struck by ball from 24lb cannon



On the second day we returned to the Maritime Museum, where power problems still persisted, but fortunately the backup lights were working. We were the only group within the museum and given a few valuable hours of a Curator whose extensive knowledge was again very evident. Of special interest was the development of the Swedish Navy from its wooden world to a modern period through a few hundred years, not very different to that of the Royal Navy. The whole period was depicted in the form of some intricate ships models which would have taken some skill to construct in their own right.

We were only a small group of a dozen and took the time after each days visits to sample some of the local cuisine and a little local tipple. I think all of us found the various visits of particular use towards our own development of naval and maritime development in another area of the globe.