

Report of the IPH congress in Stockholm and Uppsala 27 – 31/5 2008

by Anna-Grethe Rischel – the new president of IPH

IPH members from twenty nations were for the first time united with their Nordic paper historian colleagues in the most beautiful weather in Stockholm and Uppsala in the last week of May. “The birth of an Industry – from Forest to Paper during the 19th Century” was the theme chosen by the Nordic Association of Paper Historians NPH- the organizers of the 29th IPH congress in Sweden. SPCI – the Swedish Paper- and Cellulose Engineers 100 years’ jubilee was celebrated in this “World Pulp and Paper Week” in Stockholm, and the IPH congress participants were invited to join the opening ceremony of the jubilee and visit the huge exhibition area in Älvsjömassan. The association of Swedish hand papermakers were present at the exhibition with their tools and samples of their fine products among endless numbers of the newest equipments and machineries for the paper industry.

In the afternoon the jubilee participants could join the 1. Scientific session of the IPH Congress with the invited Scandinavian speakers presenting the following papers with special focus on the theme of the congress: 1) The revolution of papermaking – from handicraft to an industry, 2) The Nordic forests – a new raw material resource for papermaking, 3) The parallel development of the rag fibre based industry, 4) The evolution of paper products, and 5) The paper industry development – its economical and social indications. English was chosen as the congress language for all speakers and summaries in English, French and German were distributed at the registration desk to all participants.

The evening was spent at the Royal Coin Cabinet, where the IPH congress participants received an inspiring introduction to the collection of coins



and bank notes from the world's oldest Central bank – Riksbanken –, and the day ended in a very positive atmosphere with an excellent buffet of the best possible Scandinavian specialities.

Scientific session 2 was planned to take place the next day at the National Archives of Sweden before lunch with the following title for the session “Historical aspects on the development of paper grades and qualities”, divided in “Classification of paper grades” with three papers and “Paper performance” with four papers, and the speakers represented seven different nations. I will not go into details with the various papers in this report, because they will all be published in the coming IPH congress book in the beginning of 2009.

The afternoon program was opened by the keeper of the archives, Karin Borgkvist-Ljung, with an introduction to the archives, followed by a short presentation of the conservation section and a small exhibition of their watermark collection. 25 IPH members were present at the succeeding General Assembly, and Claire Bustarret conducted us professionally and kindly through the agenda. Suzanne Ackerson-Addor from Switzerland, Elaine and Sidney Koretsky from United States and Alphonse Radermecker from Belgium were elected as new honorary members of IPH. Our president from Poland since 2004, Józef Dabrowski retired and I was elected as the IPH president and new member of the Council. The possibilities for a celebration of the IPH 50th year jubilee 2009 was discussed, and Claire Bustarret as congress coordinator together with Denis Peaucelle presented their very promising program for the 30th IPH congress in the autumn 2010 in Angoulême in the southern part of France with a rich representation of new and old paper industries, and their ideas and plans were well accepted by all participants of the General Assembly.

The evening was spent at the Museum of Ethnography and opened by the director of the Hedin Collection, Håkan Wahlquist, with a presentation of the famous explorer and geographer Sven Hedin and his collection of ancient Central Asian paper. A fine meal of exotic spicy food followed the presentation, and the day ended with a visit to the exhibition of Sven Hedin's expeditions,

presented with a special atmosphere of adventure and dreams of far away cultures, characteristic for the museum with so rich ethnographic collections.

The next day's program did not include any scientific sessions with papers, but we listened to several splendid presentations at the various places, that we visited on the bus tour north of Stockholm. The weather was even warmer with blue sky and sunshine at Linné's house in Hammarby, where the famous botanist had spent his summers with his family and students from the nearby university in Uppsala. Much festivity had taken place a year ago celebrating the 300-year of the birth of Linné 23/5 1707. We were received by Linné in the shape of an actor who gave an impressive lecture with a presentation of the life of the famous scientist and of his collection of plants and specimens of curious, before we entered the beautiful wooden building with the original arrangements of the rooms. A cool and comfortable atmosphere met us within the house after the heat and sunshine in the garden, rich with wild flowers mixed with plants and trees arranged in botanical sections in the hilly landscape with big stones.

Next stop on our tour was Uppsala, where Linné had been professor at the university and here we visited the University Library Carolina Rediviva. The head librarian, Professor Ulf Göranson, gave an introduction to the history of the library and to the selected bindings exhibited in the beautiful library hall with collection of globes. We continued after studying the exhibited books under the guidance of the curator, Per Cullhed, to the conservation workshop and to the new exhibition of treasures and arrangement of the history of paper, book and graphic art.

We drove – filled with impressions – by bus to the lake Mälaren with the white 17th century castle Skokloster, since 1967 a state culture historical museum. Fresh, cold water was served by our careful organizers before the conducted tours in the castle. The building was still without central heating and the collections of furniture, woven tapestries, gilt leather-tapestries and the famous 17th and 18th library collections of books and maps had been following the natural seasonal change of the

climate in the castle for centuries. Ann Hallström, the conservator of the library gave an illustrative presentation of the collections of books and how to deal with the special and passive preservation complex of problems – of interest for archiving of library collections elsewhere with artificial and expensive climate regulation. Registration of watermarks of the Skokloster collection of books might give an interesting illustration of the European paper trade in this unsettled period with numerous wars in the 17th and 18th centuries, but there was only time for a single presentation, and the tour ended with a delicious banquet in the nearby guesthouse.

The final Scientific session 3 and 4 took place at the STFI-Packforsk – the institution for research of wood material and of the development of new technological methods and materials. The title of session 3 was “The techno-economical development of the paper industry during the 19th century”, divided into: “Development of papermaking technology” and “Paper industry development in different regions” and the title of Scientific session 4 – ending the official program of the congress – was “Historical perspectives”. Concentrated attention and great responsiveness were characteristic for both audience and speakers during the whole day with the nine presentations, followed by a visit to the Troedsson library with a fine collection of Dard Hunter’s books and a presentation of the EuroFEX Pilot paper machine in the great STFI-Packforsk hall. Experiments with new paper products were performed at this machine with limited width and length, a closed rotation of water consumption without circulation of the pulp and with the possibility of increasing the speed of the production. Professor Gunnar Svedberg and his staff gave us a glimpse of the future research projects at the STFI-Packforsk aiming at the fruitful exploitation of wood from the initial planting of the tree until the end as a final product and their ongoing development with new applications of the very fibre material and of wood. The importance of the research in wood for our global climate was so clearly explained by Marie S. Arwidson, director of the Swedish wood industries that everybody understood the message and it is my hope that the results of the research at

the STFI-Packforsk will be presented at the climate conference in Copenhagen 2009.

Nearly half of the congress members participated in the visit the following day to the paper museum at Tumba. A paper mill was built here in 1754 for production of bank notes paper for the Swedish Central bank Riksbanken. It was crucial to avoid any kind of falsifications and a special technology was developed by Dutch papermakers and taught to the local people in Tumba. The museum illustrated with its exhibition in the original surrounding the daily life of the papermakers and their families in tiny dwellings with hard work for many hours from early morning to night and the paper master Gunnar Ståhl gave a rich and detailed description of his life as a hand papermaker at Tumba until the introduction of the paper machine in the production of bank note paper.

There was a very positive atmosphere during the whole congress with meetings of old friends and new ones and well prepared and inspiring papers from all speakers. It is of highest importance for me as the new president of the international association of paper historians IPH to continue these good relations in a fruitful network in IPH and especially between IPH and other national associations with a similar interest in paper – in history, technology, watermarks, preventive conservation, restoration and use of paper for various purposes. Spreading of information of congresses, exhibitions, publications and activities of interest on the internet through the IPH website www.paperhistory.org as well as on paper in newsletters of local organizations as the Nordisk Pappershistorisk Tidskrift in Scandinavia and the Quarterly – the Journal of the British association of Paper Historians – is an existing useful and inspiring way to get contacts and links to colleagues working with similar projects and problems and exchange useful information. Hopefully the IPH Council will succeed in starting a newsletter for IPH again with contributions from IPH members and members from other societies with interesting projects as a most important link between our congresses and meetings and the publications of the congress books every second year.