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Cancellations on Sweden's Skilling Banco Issue

By Nils Stålhandske (299)

Collectors at one time or another are faced with the problem of what to do next—of finding new worlds to conquer. This is true especially when, for instance, a general collector has obtained a fine copy of each of the stamps of the country or countries he has been collecting. He is faced by the problem of specializing or taking up a new country. When I had reached this stage in my hobby, a wise and friendly dealer advised me to take up Danish West Indies, Swedish booklets and some low-priced but interesting French and German classic issues. He added, "of course you can't help but collect Swedish cancellations when you live in Sweden." I couldn't help it and still can't.

My interest in cancellations began rather suddenly. Just before the Christmas holidays in 1943, I was searching for a nice copy of the turquoise blue shade of the 4 skilling banco which I did not possess. In going through the stock book at one of the shops I found a copy with an arch cancellation. Studying it more closely I found that it was not listed in the handbook issued in 1936, and it dawned on me that I had found something unusual. Needless to say I purchased this stamp which had the Svenljunga arch cancellation. About a year later Curt Haij bought a lot from a place in the Province of Småland, which is near Svenljunga, and obtained no less than three copies. So far I have not heard of any other copies of this cancellation being found. It is almost impossible to go through a collection or a lot of Skilling Bancos, or Ore Vapen (second issue) for that matter, without finding something unusual and interesting in the way of cancellations.

Before going into the why and how of collecting Swedish cancellations, perhaps it would be helpful to explain something about the social structure of Sweden, for the benefit of those who may not be aware of the fact that Sweden is somewhat differently organized than most other countries. For practical reasons Sweden is "decentralized" into 24 "län" or provinces and the church is intimately connected with the State and the government. Each

province has a capital with a civil governor and nearly all of them have a bishop too. Whenever a man is appointed civil governor or bishop of a province it is for life. There is also a military installation consisting of one, two or three regiments; two or more regiments being commanded by a general. These institutions are solidly established in the capital of each of the 24 provinces. These provincial capitals have populations of 10,000 to 30,000 inhabitants, their society is traditional in many ways and the social standards are very high. The "upper twenty" or so families observe strict formality as far as dress and "rank" are concerned. People from other towns and villages come to the provincial capital for shopping, they send their children to public school there, and when they go to the university they invariably join the college which is named for their "län" or "landskap." Throughout the country the provincial capital is the center and heart of all social life. This was true even a hundred years ago. There is strong community feeling and people know and trust each other throughout the provinces as well as in the towns and villages. They have a great belief in public institutions.

As far as civil administration is concerned there is not enough control but often too much correspondence. This is one reason why towns with only a few hundred inhabitants produced so many letters that today thousands of cancellations are known from the early 1860s. This love for the province—the home county—is the reason there are so many collectors of cancellations in Sweden. They start off with one cancellation from each village in the province. Later, they have hundreds and so another specialist is born. As mentioned before there are a great many cancellations to be found on early Swedish stamps and the 4 Skilling Banco and 12 öre Vapen (arms) are both fairly common making this a fascinating pastime. Collectors are as much interested in shades as they are cancellations. The stamps referred to above are both blue and can be found in a great many attractive shades, many of which are very rare.

Although the Skilling Banco stamps were "officially" issued on July 1, 1855, copies are known to have been sold and used in June, in fact, cancellations prior to the "official date" exist on these stamps. This can be confirmed because the postmaster of Visby, on the island of Gotland, advertised the new stamps in the local newspaper on June 20, 1855. Of course the authorities in Stockholm had no way of anticipating that the postmaster in Visby would be so zealous but, nevertheless, the result was that these stamps are known used in Visby before July 1. It is probable that others will be found in the future, perhaps from other towns.

In the early days of postal service the matter of deciding which type of canceller was to be used was left to the good judgement of the local postmaster or postal official. Generally, a canceller was used as long as it was serviceable. Thus, the different types of cancellers appear on stamps without regard to the chronological order in which they were issued. Arch cancellations are circular with the town name across the top, and the year date parallel with the surrounding circular frameline. They are known on Skilling Banco stamps from eleven towns: Enköping, Fahlköping, Fahlun, Haparanda, Helsingborg, Norrtelje, Skara, Strengnäs, Söderköping, Umeå and Varberg; and from two villages: Nordmaling and Svenljunga. There are some 10 or 20 other places from which they could be found because it is known that they had arch cancellations on prestamp covers. Furthermore, no stamps have been found from these places with the ordinary round canceller for 1855 or the early months of 1856. These are among the rarest of Swedish cancellations on stamps and clear, vivid strikes on deluxe stamps are practically non-existent.



Fig. 1 — Arch type cancellation

The "square" cancellations vary a bit in size and are, therefore, sometimes rectangular rather than square. They are found from 61 towns and 63 other places. Of these some are very common and others are so unusual or rare that they are seldom seen. Among the common square cancellations are: Carlskrona, Carlstad, Christianstad, Gefle, Köping, Neder-Kalix, Nordmaling, Nyköping, Nyland, Stockholm, Upsala, Wexiö and Örebro. Among the rare squares are: Burgsvik, Dalarö, Ekolsund, Gislaved, Grenna, Landskrona, Lindesberg, Ljugarn, Skanör, Slite, Waxholm, Ofver-Torneå and Öregrund. Between these extremes—very common and very rare—are many interesting cancellations. In Sweden it is the fashion to specialize on cancellations from certain places. My aim is to concentrate on Stockholm and endeavor to assemble enough clear cancellations to exhibit at our Centenary Exhibition in 1955.



Fig. 2 — Square type cancellations



Fig. 3 — Square type cancellations

One of the reasons why I took up the study and collection of Swedish cancellations—in preference to Danish or Norwegian—is that they are more attractive than the others which did not generally include place names. Finland did include the place names in their cancellers, but the stamps from the old days were nearly all expensive and the "serpentine" are difficult to find in good condition.

The big bulk of postmarks in any collection of Swedish cancellations will be the ordinary round type. These common circular cancellations are found from 67 towns and 35 other places. Towns and other places to be found with this type cancellation in most collections are: Borås, Calmar, Carlshamn, Carlskrona, Carlstad, Engelholm, Eskilstuna, Fahlun, Gefle, Götheborg, Haparanda, Hernösand, Linköping, Mariestad, Norrköping, Solefteå, Stockholm, Uddevalla, Wadstena, Warberg, Wenersborg, Westerås, Wisby and Amål. Never sold in the market and very unusual are: Björnlunda, Funäsdalen, Furusund, Laholm, Landskrona, Råda, Stora Rör, Wassbacken, Asele and some others.



Fig. 4 — Ordinary round cancellations

Pen cancellations on the Skilling Banco issue are most unusual, but not exactly a rarity. Some 20 to 40 probably exist, almost all on the 4 Skilling Banco. They have been wrongly called "telegraph" cancellations as there is no material foundation for such assumption. It is more likely that they were made by postal officials checking the incoming mail. The square cancellation with "Lokalbrev" is more of an accident, if not a freak, and many collectors compare it favorably with the cut 1 cent of 1880 from the Danish West Indies. Cancellations from the Swedish and Norwegian Post Office in Hamburg, as well as other foreign cancellations, are among the great rarities.

INDEX FOR THE POSTHORN

This issue of The Posthorn completes Volume 8 and we are including an index of Volumes 5 to 8 for the convenience of our readers. You may recall that an index was issued for Volumes 1 to 4 and many members have had these first four volumes bound. Those who prefer to keep their issues of The Posthorn in this manner, may wish to have Volumes 5 to 8 bound in the same manner. In any case it is felt that an index for The Posthorn is well justified by furnishing ready reference to articles and authors.

FROM THE EDITOR'S CHAIR

This issue is abbreviated in size for two reasons. The first is to enable the club to send you the Auction Catalog for the Club Auction Sale (to be held in November) in printed form. The second and more important reason is the shortage of material. If we are to continue publication of The Posthorn, which is regarded as one of the finest club journals published in this country, we must have articles—large and small. We do not like to fill The Posthorn with articles reprinted from other papers. Help us avoid this by preparing an article. After all, this is YOUR publication.



by Agent No. 42
Staff of the Old Sleuth

"CAPEX" the International Exhibition in Toronto has now gone down in history as one of the finest, even though poorest attended, shows ever held on this continent.

The exhibition which was held in the spacious Automotive Building, was light and well arranged and contained over 1400 competitive frames of the finest material ever shown, in addition there were the Foreign Governments exhibits, the Court of Honor and the Royal Collection.

Perhaps the reason for the poor attendance may be attributed to the Toronto press, which was reluctant in giving the show any publicity, with the result that the general public was not aware that an International Stamp Exhibition was held in their city.

To the many S. C. C. members that attended the show, it was somewhat a disappointment, due to the poor showing of Scandinavian material, in fact this group for the first time in my memory, did not rate a single gold award. However, our members did not leave this show without its usual quota of medals, the following have something to remember this show with:

SILVER GILT AWARD

Marcus W. White ----- United States

SILVER AWARDS

Michael Miller ----- Danish West Indies
 Arnstein Berntsen ----- Norway
 Hans Lundberg ----- Sweden
 General Robert Gill, U. S. A. ----- Hungary
 Marcus W. White (Certificate) ----- Great Britain
 Marcus W. White (Certificate) ----- United States

BRONZE AWARD

Dr. G. Philip Grabfield ----- Malta
 Robert C. Munroe ----- St. Helena
 Carl E. Pelander ----- Tonga
 Eigil Rathje ----- Lombardy-Venetia
 Capt. Robert W. Scherer ----- Iceland

Several others of our members also exhibited at this show, among those were Robert Read, Harry M. Konwiser, Bernard Davis, Erwin C. Nielsen, William H. Freeman, and Philip Grabfield. In the court of honor we also had the magnificent lot of first issue Denmark by W. F. Foulk and Finnish entires of 1845 by George Wiberg.

Several informal gatherings of S. C. C. members were held during the ten days, and general disappointment was expressed that no meeting of this group had been planned, with more than 60 of our members attending the show. It was generally agreed that next year at the A. P. S. Convention in

Philadelphia a meeting of our Society should be held, so as to make it possible for our members to meet each other and exchange ideas for the good of the club.

The vanguard of the S. C. C. to Toronto consisted of good old Harry Konwiser, who had charge of the "Bin Room"—a tough job—which he ran in a masterful way, the other was Bob Scherer—the real work horse of the show—he put it up and took it down—a glutton for punishment * * * Springfield Chapter was certainly well represented—among them was Bob Munroe, the oldest member of the Springfield Stamp Club and a truly fine student of Philately * * * Roland and Mrs. Anderson were handing out special perforation gauges by the gross * * * Roland and Mrs. Morse lost ten pounds each looking at all the wonders of this great show * * * Philadelphia was not so far behind either—Bernard Davis had the pleasure to put up the first exhibit of the United Nations stamps and proofs * * * Doris and Bill Stericker haunted all of the booths and stamp shops in Toronto for elusive D. W. I. cancels—Doris did find a few St. Jans at 12¢ a piece and did she love it * * * Gerhard Frantz walked around the show with a fixed smile—we think the long look he took at the British Guiana stamp did it * * * New York also had its quota of visitors, besides Harry in the Bin Room there was the perennial International Judge John Hall, serving on the Jury—John's "tack för maten" has improved * * * and of course what would an international show be without our own Harry Lindquist, who with charming Marion, ate more banquet luncheons and dinners than all the rest of the visitors put together * * * Sid Barrett will now be known as the man with a cast iron stomach—because all he did was laugh at the rest of the gang who got food poisoning at the King Edward Hotel, during the Air Mail Society dinner—he spent a peaceful, even though sonorous night while his room-mate Carl Pelander was commuting between the bed and the bath room * * * an ultimatum was served on our Treasurer Bob Read, that the books would be audited at a very early date, after he was seen driving up to the Royal York in a new Lincoln and in the company of a couple of charming ladies * * * Albert Tate, our secretary, flew up to the show, and after a hasty look at the splendid material there and the various ways of mounting gave him so many new ideas that he flew right back and went to work on his own stamps—probably he will have a one man exhibit soon * * * and Phil Grabfield seems to be more interested in petit Tally Lowe than anything else in the show * * * and of course we must not neglect the native members of our club in Toronto William H. Freeman and charming Mrs. Freeman were delighted to meet so many members of our club, because they have been among our strongest boosters in this our neighboring country * * * Hans Lundberg's pair of the normal and "Tretio" öre error on cover was duly admired by every one who saw it—Mr. and Mrs. Lundberg entertained some of the members of our club with a dinner at the Granite Club and later in his lovely home, which is one of the show places in Toronto * * * other S. C. C. members from far and near could be seen everywhere—Fritz Billig demonstrated that he could be a bell ringer in one easy lesson * * * Ignatz Reiner regretted not showing his "Black Jacks" * * * and of course what would a show be without that bus riding Finn from San Francisco Roy Hill—he told us the bus only broke down three times, but he made it * * * Alexis Kellogg showed up, but the thought of the sales he could have made in Detroit, was somewhat depressing * * * and Erwin Nielsen had a booth at the show—he was collecting some of those nice Canadian bills * * * the candid camera fiend from Peoria, Ill., Doctor Sneller, was using up yards and yards of film, when he ran short of several thousands of subjects, he was last seen taking pictures of all the Scandinavian exhibits * * * Alton R. Hansen of Waupaca, Wis., left his only other fellow collector home in that thriving community of 4000 or was it 400 souls—

nevertheless, he was having a dandy time—and has a lovely family * * * Agda Pade of Denver, Colo., was seen kidding all of the S. C. C. boys and was the life of the party everywhere * * * Mike Miller was giving Doris S. a run for everything that even looked like D. W. I.—we think he even got mixed up and bought a couple Danish stamps in his hurry * * * Marcus White, of Worcester, Mass.—the triple winner—attended every banquet held, why, he was even seen at the Confederate Alliance dinner * * * David Lidman tried hard to look dignified—but in this he was a dismal failure * * * General Gill duly admired all of the exhibits and secretly wished some of those nice early Belgian blocks could have been transferred to his collection * * * Paul Vignos was there and so was George Stribley, looking for Greenland stamps or even anyone willing to talk to him on Greenland, finally Hans Lundberg felt sorry for him and told him some whopping tales of this country—of course, we have no way of knowing how true these tales were * * * and our good friend A. James Wennermark from Rochester, enjoyed the new acquaintances he made at the show * * * last but not least we had a nice visit with Arthur Rydquist, formerly from the Detroit Chapter, but now residing in Cleveland—Arthur was somewhat disappointed in the few Scandinavian exhibits—however he made it up in other ways * * * and so we come to the end of a report of a fine show—and if this old sleuth has overlooked anyone there—it was not done intentionally—and with this I say—so long until the next time.

New and Recent Issues

by Carl E. Pelander



DENMARK:

Sept. 13, 1951

Red Cross Issue

This semi-postal stamp depicts the Danish Red Cross hospital ship *Jutlandia* which was in the news recently when it was proposed that the truce talks between the United Nations and Communist representatives be held aboard the vessel, then in Korean waters but now back in Denmark.

The design is by Viggo Bang and the engraving by Bent Jacobsen. The text at the top reads: "In war, in peace—mercy." The surcharge of 5 ore is for the Danish Red Cross.

Engraved

Unwmkd.

Perf. 12½

25+5 øre red

NORWAY:

1951

King Haakon VII Type

Photogravure

Unwmkd.

Perf. 12½x13

60 øre green-blue



SWEDEN:

August 30, 1951
Polhem Issue

Issued in commemoration of the bicentennial of the death of Christopher Polhem (1661-1751), great engineer, who has been called "The Father of Swedish Mechanics." The stamps were designed by William Peterson, and engraved by Sven Ewert. The likeness of Polhem is from a portrait by J. H. Scheffel.

Engraved

Coil Stamps
Perf. 13 vert.
25 öre gray
45 öre brown

Unwmkd

Booklet Panes of 20
Perf. 13 on three sides
25 öre gray



DE-NO-FIL

Souvenir Sheet

Illustrated at the left is the most attractive souvenir sheet issued by the Norwegian postal authorities on the occasion of the De-No-Fil Stamp Exhibition in Oslo, Norway, held from August 25 to September 2, 1951. This exhibition celebrated the 65th anniversary of the Oslo Filatelistklubb and was a great success. A complete list of awards is not available at this time but will be included in the next issue of The Posthorn. From Mr. K. Blom, writing in the Western Stamp Collector, it is revealed that only 5000 of these souvenir sheets were printed. The demand far exceeded the supply, and each visitor to the exhibition was permitted to purchase only one sheet.

THE POSTHORN

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