



Sweden and Australia Trading Partners for 190 years

Ambassador Pär Ahlberger
2014 - 2019



Embassy of Sweden



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I am happy to say that the Embassy of Sweden is more directly engaged in trade promotion than it has been for many years, possibly decades. Our network within Team Sweden Australia as well as with individual companies is now solid and expands further.

My personal commitment to strengthen the trade relations with Australia and the region inspired me to suggest that the Ambassador should become an honorary member of the board of SACC, to create a network of CEOs, to initiate and coordinate Team Sweden Australia, to encourage Swedish companies to become members of SACC to an extent we have not seen for several years, to engage our network of honorary consuls, to create clusters of Swedish companies, to organise Swedish trade missions in Australia and the region, to identify and work with topics of priority such as the SDGs and the FTAs and to analyse the Swedish business footprint and the business climate in Australia.

Team Sweden Australia want to leave a legacy to our successors of which we can be proud. In this context I would like to take the opportunity to acknowledge the early pioneers who established the trade relations between Sweden and Australia. It is a story which to a large extent has been forgotten. The National Library of

Australia and the National Archives of Australia have been of great support in my work.

The first products from Sweden arrived in Australia on British ships as early as the late 1820s. A regular advertisement appeared in the Sydney General Trade List in 1829-30 in which a Mr Maughan offered Stockholm Tar in his stores. In 1830, Mr Birt, Barrack Lane, Sydney offered fifty barrels of Stockholm Tar since he intended to return to England. He stated that he would be pleased to receive wool in return. This would likely have been the first exchange of Swedish and Australian goods, if the offer was accepted.

The Swedish pine tar, under the brand Stockholm Tar, can still be bought in Australia as a veterinary



product, for classic boats, for restorations of heritage houses and in Australian mining, on screw threads. It is fair to say that the brand is well established with nearly 190 years on the Australian market.

The first Swedish ship to Australia was Gouverneur Stirling, with a crew of 20 and 25 immigrants, including five Swedes, bound for Western Australia.

The first direct exports from Sweden to Australia arrived in Sydney from Stockholm on 1 May 1840. The Swedish brig Mary Ann, 22-meter-long and with a crew of eight, of which three boys aged 16-17, arrived on that day under the command of Captain Werngren. It was the first Swedish voyage around the world and the first visit to Sydney by a Swedish ship.

The pilots did not recognise the Swedish flag on Mary Ann and signalled to the port administration that an unknown foreign ship was approaching. The cargo consisted of timber, iron and tar, and was sold within a few hours to a local businessman, without even inspecting it. The agent was Mr Sparks, who was well known in shipping circles.

Captain Werngren then continued the voyage by exporting Australian coal from Newcastle to Valparaiso. Mary Ann was possibly the first European ship to visit the port in Newcastle.



Mary Ann by artist Folke Sjögren. Stamp from 1999 by Swedish Post. A full-scale replica of the Mary Ann

was built in Sweden in the 1990s and is still sailing in the Finnish Archipelago.

Captain Werngren, who sailed around the world three times. He made the first trade deal between Sweden and Australia in Sydney.



REPORT of *P. W. Werngren* arrived in Port Jackson, this *1st* Day of *May* 1840

Vessel's Name <i>Mary Ann of Stockholm</i>	REMARKS.
Tonnage <i>135</i>	
Master's Name <i>A. Werngren</i>	
From whence <i>Stockholm</i>	
When sailed <i>15th of August 1839</i>	
Latitudes <i>(See enclosed)</i>	<i>Agent A. B. P. & Co. Sydney</i>

Passenger's Name.	Children above 15 years of age.		Children under 15 years of age.		Country.	Profession, Trade, or Calling.
	Male.	Female.	Male.	Female.		
<i>(None)</i>						

Official record from the arrival of Mary Ann in Port Jackson.

HEALTH OFFICER'S REPORT.

Questions to be put by the Health Officer to the Surgeon and Master, or other Person, in Command of any Ship or Vessel arriving in Port Jackson.

QUESTIONS.	REPLIES.
1. What is the name of the Vessel and Tonnage?	<i>Mary Ann 135 Tons</i>
2. What is the Master's name?	<i>A. Werngren</i>
3. From whence do you come, and when did you sail?	<i>Gothen 15th of Aug. 1839</i>
4. At what Ports have you touched on your passage?	<i>Port Paga 21 Jan. 1840</i>
5. Did you receive any Cargo or Passengers at the intermediate Ports?	<i>None</i>
6. What is the nature of the Cargo, and the number of Officers, Mariners, and Passengers?	<i>From S. B. 1840 9 crew</i>

Health Report from the arrival of Mary Ann in Port Jackson.

The trade with Australia was successful and the following year, the Swedish brig Gurli arrived in Sydney. The cargo consisted of timber, 3,974 bars of iron, 150 boxes of steel, 104 barrels of flour and 20 barrels of pitch.

IKEA was certainly not the first exporter of Swedish furniture to Australia. In 1842, three Swedish ships met up in 2.

Sydney harbour, thereby broadening the Swedish exports further. *Edward*, described as a floating general store and twice as large as the brig *Mary Ann*, brought with it timber, 2 wooden houses, 1 carriage, 1 wagon, 25 windows, 55 window frames, 360 doors, 72 bedsteads, 4 sofas, 576 birch chairs, 93 other chairs, 124 tables, 2 commodes, 100 ladders, 702 flag stones, 540 grindstones, 20 barrels of pitch, 45 barrels of tar, 14 casks of starch, 64 firkins of butter, 8 carboys of linseed oil, 20 tons of iron, 132 pieces of reindeer meat, 615 reindeer tongues, 24 ox tongues, 12 hams, 112 bushels of wheat, 6 clocks, 1,115 pound of clover and timothy seed, 23 chests and 85 pairs of oars, among other things. The second Swedish ship in the Sydney harbour that winter of 1842 was the brig *Bull*, which under the command of Captain Werngren came via Adelaide and Port Phillip, possibly the first Swedish ship to visit these harbours. The cargo consisted of steel, nails, timber, tar, granite, linen and one boat. Finally, the third Swedish ship in the harbor was *Caledonia*, which brought iron, timber, oat and 900 garden chairs.



Trade with Australia increased, and for a number of years, export of timber was very dominant. There were occasional large individual shipments. In 1860 25,000 Swedish made bricks were exported to Victoria.

In 1851 the first honorary consuls of the United Kingdoms of Sweden and Norway were appointed in Sydney, Melbourne and Port Adelaide to further promote trade and shipping. These were followed by consuls or vice-consuls in Geelong (1859), Hobart (1865), Newcastle (1868), Launceston (1877), Brisbane (1883), Port Pirie (1890) and Perth/Freemantle (1894). It has been stressed that these consuls were appointed to support business and less so the Swedish migrants to Australia, which in some cases led to disappointment and even criticism.

Swedish high-quality axes have been exported to Australia from the very early days and are still being sold on the Australian market. The text on the iconic Arvika Five Star held by the Ambassador at the Scandinavian Christmas Bazaar in Melbourne reads: "This Axe has been designed for use on Australian hardwoods and the Special Swedish Steel is correctly tempered for this purpose". Hults Bruk has been making axes since 1697 and received awards in Adelaide 1887 and Melbourne in 1888.

The first Swedish naval visit to Australia took place in 1852, when *Eugenie* arrived in Sydney on the first voyage around the world by the Swedish Navy. The aim was to promote Swedish trade. The ship anchored outside Fort Macquarie and the crew was received with great hospitality. All officers and civilians on *Eugenie* were granted access to the Australian Club, founded in 1838, which impressed on them. The commander of the 11th regiment, Lieutenant Colonel Henry Bloomfield had spent some time in Sweden and invited the officers on *Eugenie* to a splendid dinner. Many other dinners, functions and even a ball were organised for the Swedes, who reportedly were overwhelmed. The visit resulted in a detailed account on the progress of Sydney.



Oil painting of Eugenie by Jacob Hägg from the art collection at the Maritime Museum, Sjöhistoriska museet in Stockholm.



The Separator - Swedish iconic export success.

During the 1890s other export commodities were added from Sweden, such as agricultural equipment, chemicals, telephone materials, glassware, machinery, matches, wrapping paper, electric appliances, wood manufactures and cardboard. It reflected the industrial revolution in Sweden, with new successful industries establishing themselves on the export markets. The Separator from Alfa Laval, the iconic Swedish export success, was introduced on the Australian market already in the mid-1880s. In 1890 the Consul of Sweden in Sydney, Carl Albert Fahlstedt, became the first agent for Ericsson on the Australian market. The sales consisted of telephones and spare parts and were successful. Already in the 1890s Australia and New Zealand became one of Ericsson's largest markets outside Europe. In 1900 sales in Australia were greater than in Sweden.

In a report to Stockholm in 1892, Consul Fahlstedt stressed the potential of the Australian market but also the need for the Swedish companies to coordinate its efforts through joint delegations or exhibitions. He expressed a certain frustration, based on 30 years of experience in Australia, with some Swedish companies who insisted on marketing traditional products. To be successful, he stated, one had to adapt to the Australian market. Managing Director Wulff at Holmens Bruk later recalled the important support from Consul Fahlstedt in the 1890s: "He encouraged us to engage in the exports of paper to New South Wales and through this we gained a new sizeable market." Another example of the early business presence in Australia is SKF, who appointed an agent in 1908.

In 1907, the first regular shipping line between Sweden and Australia was established by Transatlantic with the two steamships *Tasmanic* and *Australic*, specifically built for this trade.

A committee under the chairmanship of the Director General of the Swedish National Board of Trade, Alfred Lagerheim, presented a proposal in 1906 to strengthen the support given to the expanding Swedish industry on mainly distant export markets. It was recommended by the committee that a Consul General, the first sent out from Sweden to Australia, should be appointed in Sydney. The main purpose was to support Swedish trade with

Australia but also to identify business opportunities in New Zealand.

Sweden's first Consul General, Count Carl Birger Mörner, arrived in Sydney in 1906. He was received very enthusiastically by the Swedish community. His first speech in Melbourne has been quoted: "I bring you a personal greeting from your King, and I bring you a greeting from your mother". Apparently, "...tears welled to the eyes of many a hardy immigrant, while the applause was deafening." The Consul General soon began to receive inquiries from Swedish exporters and decided to establish an informal network of Swedish businessmen to support him. He would refer to them as his Commercial Council or Chamber of Commerce.

Mörner was inspired by the two first successful Swedish Chambers of Commerce in London and New York, established in 1907. However, it was still not the right moment to establish a chamber in Australia. The time was soon to come.

On 13 of March 1911, a dinner was held on board the Swedish ship *Indianic* in Sydney Harbour. A large and representative gathering of Swedes and their Australian friends attended. decided to establish a Swedish Chamber of Commerce for British Australasia.



Enligt fotograf.

FRÅN SVENSKA HANDELSKAMMARENS FÖR AUSTRALIEN OCH SÖDERHAFSÖARNA ÅRSFEST.

Svenska Handelskammaren för Australien och Söderhafsböarna firade den 2 april sin ettåriga tillvaro å Paris House i Sydney, hvarvid svenske konsuln S. T. von Gös, handelskammarens ordförande, presiderade.

Sedan kongerne Gustaf och Georg hyllats redogjorde konsul v. G. för handelskammarens verksamhet, påpekande att Sverige allt sedan 1905 kan glädja sig at en för hvarje år ökad export till Australien.

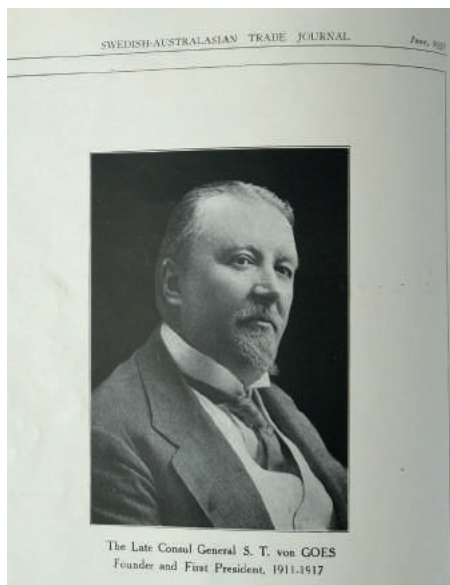
Vi nämnteckna: 1. Svenske konsuln S. T. von Gös, handelskammarens president, 2. Svenske vicekonsuln T. B. Dibbs, handelskammarens vicepresident, 3. E. Owen Cox, handelskammarens vicepresident, 4. Nils Ljungberg, handelskammarens sek., 5. Kapten Hakon Wiik, Öbteborg, 6. O. Sundström, 7. H. O. Ekensteen, 8. H. Axelsson, 9. J. A. Josephson, 10. Kapten Hultgren, 11. Tulldir. S. Milla, 12. De Haas, 13. John W. Eaton, 14. Pres. i Sydney Labour council T. Miller.

The first annual dinner of the Chamber of Commerce, 2 April 1912 at Paris House in Sydney. Consul General and President of the Chamber of Commerce Goes marked with "1" (Hvar 8 Dag Årgång 13, 1911/12).

The new Consul General of Sweden in Sydney, Sigurd Theodor von Goes,

took the initiative and also became the first President of the Chamber. A few weeks later a committee met at the Swedish Consulate at 91 Phillip Street in Sydney. The name of the chamber was altered to the Swedish Chamber of Commerce for Australasia and the South Sea Islands. At the time of the first annual meeting in June the same year, the chamber had 25 members.

The main purpose with the chamber was to deal with trade inquiries received from Sweden. During its first year 1911-12 and the following years it struggled financially. It has been stressed that had it not been for the enthusiasm of its founder and first President, Consul General von Goes, the history of the chamber would likely have been a short one.



Mr Sigurd Theodor von Goes, Founder and First President of the Swedish Chamber of Commerce 1911-1917.

In 1913, Mr Sahlin, the Swedish Commercial Attaché in Tokyo who later became the Swedish Consul General in London, arrived in Sydney with the task of identifying further business opportunities in Australia. He remained there for a year and greatly contributed to the chamber. Two Swedish trade stipends, Mr Ljungberg and Mr Svensson, also introduced new products on the Australian market. The Commercial Attaché at the Consulate was later succeeded by a Chancellor.

Australasia and the South Sea Islands, was published in June 1914.

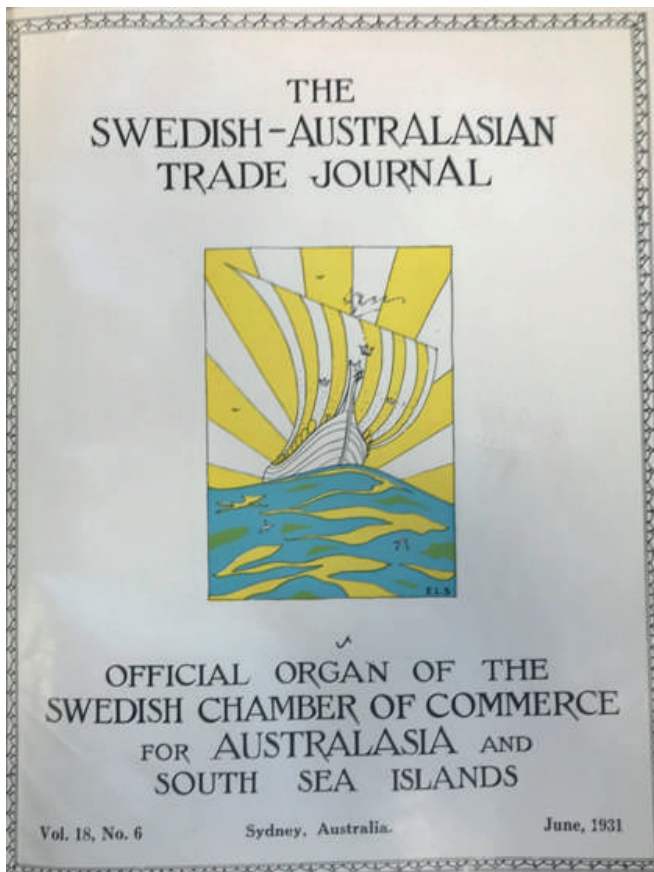
The first advertisements in the bulletin appeared later the same year by among others Husqvarna, which was founded in Sweden in 1689. Alfa Laval had a regular full-page advertisement in the bulletin for several years. In 1919 the Chamber of Commerce received a grant from the Swedish Government of 5,000 SEK annually. Two years later this annual subsidy was doubled. With a rough estimate it would be the equivalent of approximately 34,000 AUD annually today.

The financial support made it possible for the chamber to recruit a full-time secretary. Until then, the chamber had also been supported by the secretary at the consulate. Mr Gustaf Lindergren became secretary of the chamber in 1920 when it had 37 members. Before the end of the year the number had increased to 108. Mr Lindergren organised the important sample room for Swedish goods in Sydney, which was of great value. This later expanded to Perth, where the sample room was supervised by the Swedish Consul.



Front cover of the Swedelink Autumn issue 2018.

The first issue of what is today Swedelink, then called The Swedish Chamber of Commerce Bulletin for



The Journal in June 1931, on which this article in Swedelink is partly based.

Over the years, Mr Lindergren played a very important role for the expansion of the chamber and held the position as secretary for 27 years. Many others have contributed to the chamber over the years. One of them was Ivar Stenström, Director of Alfa Laval Australia from 1926 to 1956, who served as President of the chamber as well as Consul General in Sydney for 23 years.

In 1938 the chamber had 296 members and the board had representatives from Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, Perth,

Brisbane, Hobart and Wellington. In 1947, after a decision by the Swedish Riksdag in agreement with the Australian Government, the Consul General of Sweden in Sydney, Constans Lundquist was appointed as Head of the new Swedish Legation and thereby the first Swedish Minister to the Commonwealth of Australia.



Swedish sample room established by the Chamber at 16 Carrington Street, Sydney. The picture is from 1922.

The Australian Government decided to establish a legation in Sweden in 1961, thereby completing the exchange of missions. The Australian Trade Commission in Sweden, established in 1958, was integrated in the new legation at Hötorget, Stockholm. Mr Carney, the Australian Trade Commissioner was appointed as Chargé d’Affaires Ad Interim.

In 1963, the Australian Government suggested to the Swedish Government that the respective legations in Stockholm and Canberra be elevated to that of Embassies. The Australian Ambassador in Moscow would be accredited to Stockholm. On 23 of December 1963, the Swedish Minister for Foreign Affairs, Torsten Nilsson replied to the Australian Minister for External Affairs, Sir Garfield Barwick: "...It is a pleasure for me to inform Your Excellency that my Government is in full agreement with your proposal and we

consider our respective missions raised to the status of Embassies as of today's date."

Gösta af Petersens became the first Swedish Ambassador to Australia. The first two Australian Ambassadors to Sweden were resident in Moscow. In 1966 Bertram Ballard became the first resident Australian Ambassador in Sweden.



Ambassador of Sweden to Australia

HE Mr Pär Ahlberger

2014-2019

This article draws on several sources, of which these should be mentioned in particular:

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The Swedish-Australasian Trade Journal, June 1931.

The Australian People, encyclopedia edited by James Jupp.



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