



Welcome to the

# MARITIME MUSEUM OF ROSLAGEN



## VISITORS GUIDE-BOOK

OPEN JUNE, JULY, AUGUST  
DAILY 10 AM – 4 PM

**Roslagens Sjöfartsminnesförening**

Kaplansbacken, Gåsviksvägen 47.

Tel +46176-502 59. [www.sjofartsmuseet.se](http://www.sjofartsmuseet.se)



## **The archipelago of the Vikings**

The archipelago of Stockholm and Roslagen consists of thousands of islands in all shapes and sizes, extending into the Baltic Sea. There is nothing quite like this anywhere else in the world.

The archipelago has a long and important history. During the age of the Vikings, which lasted from around 800 to 1050 AD, many long ships were manned by the Vikings from Roslagen. They primarily ventured eastwards, crossed the Baltic Sea and travelled on the rivers of Russia.

The Viking sagas claim that Rurik, a chief from the archipelago of Roslagen, and his two sons founded a kingdom in Kiev that was to become the nucleus of the Russian empire.

History remembers the Vikings foremost for their ferocious raids in wealthier countries. However, the popular image of the Vikings as villains in the history books, as bloodthirsty warriors who found pleasure in looting, rape and murder – has undergone revision. It has been proven that the Vikings were also remarkable poets and artists, explorers and settlers who contributed positively to the territories they occupied.

## **Under Sail**

Through the centuries, boats and the sea have been an integrated part of the life in Roslagen. The straits, the open waters and the sea provided the transport routes since the roads were poor or non-existent and there were yet no railroads.

The farmers in Roslagen were entitled to sail with their own or their neighbour's products to sell in Stockholm. Typical commodities were salted fish, sandstone products, hay and firewood. The boats used were open and had **one mast** with a square sail.

Apart from the provinces in the far north, the farmers and fishermen were not allowed to deck their boats. One-masted boats were preferred in the inner and middle archipelago. People living on the outer islands in Roslagen and sailed the Baltic Sea used the **two-masted** boats.

Until 1832 ships from the country districts in Sweden were not allowed to sail with freight and, except for the Nordic countries, forbidden to sail to foreign ports. Nor was Roslagen permitted to establish shipyards competing with the shipyards of the towns/cities.

After 1832 a period of active shipbuilding begun in Roslagen (Vätö, Väddö and Häverö). The preferred types of ships were schooners and sloops. As larger carrying capacity was more economical, the ship-owners gradually shifted towards new types of ships, the brigs and the barks and later the **three-masted** schooner.

With the two-masters freights, primarily wood products, were transported from the northern parts of Sweden and Finland to ports in Germany, England, Wales and Scotland. Returning to Sweden they often carried cargoes of salt, clay for porcelain and coal.

The three-masted ships, very often a bark, sailed the oceans of the world in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and carried whatever cargo they could. Thus, the descendants of the Vikings had become deep water sailors.

In the 1890's, in Roslagen, there was a late boom of seafaring under sail by using ships bought second-hand. From the turn of the century steamships and railroads gradually took over.

Many tall ships under sail were sunk during World War I. In the years that followed the few remaining ships were sold or scrapped. However, there was one exception. On Åland a ship-owner named Gustaf Erikson started buying American, British, German and other countries tall ships. One by one they became registered with Mariehamn as home-port. This fleet mainly sailed with grain from Australia and guano (fertilizer) from South America to ports in Europe. The 2<sup>nd</sup> World War marks the end of the sailing-fleet era.

Ships and sailors from Roslagen and throughout the world has played an important role in the development of our modern society.

At the museum, you can buy a CD with traditional sea shanties from Roslagen and the oceans, e.g. "Around Cape Horn", "Blow the Man Down", "Sweet Rose of Bristol", "Rolling Home", "Svarta Rudolf", "Albertina" etc.

## **The history of our museum**

The Roslagen Maritime Association (referred to as The Association below) was founded in 1938 to preserve the memory of the grand era of shipping under sail. At the turn of the century 18/1900 one third of Sweden's east coast sailing ships had their home ports in Roslagen and were manned by sailors from the region.

During the years, a lot of things have happened and the Association has grown and become a vital institution in collecting and preserving the history of Roslagen. With 1200 members and a museum with many unique maritime objects, an annual book – Rospiggen - (available in Swedish only) which has been published every year since 1940. The Association also participates in several cultural events in the region.

But it is not only the history of shipping under sail which attracts the interest of the Association and the Museum. History of shipping under steam, tug boats, shipping with barges (the forerunner to container traffic and “boxboats”), timber towing at sea, coastal passenger transportation as well as the ferries to the Finnish archipelago is documented and displayed in the Museum. Ports of Roslagen, lighthouses, piloting, sea rescue service, communication with ships, life of the sailors from Roslagen, knotting and the region during wartime also are documented and illustrated.

## **A walk through the museum**

As you enter the museum you will find yourself in the reception and museum shop where you can find several books, postcards, T-shirts, caps and other items for sale.

### **The Auditorium**

From the reception, you enter the auditorium where a short movie covering the history of shipping in Roslagen is shown. On one wall, you will find paintings of several sailing ships from Roslagen, all by marine painter Gustav Fredriksson (1901-1982).



On the opposite wall hangs several paintings by the artist Harald Lindberg (1901-1976) who has made several

covers of the year-book of the Association, Rospiggen. He was born in the archipelago and sailed the oceans during seven years. That had a strong influence on his artistic career and painting. His seaman's chest is on display in the Auditorium.

In a niche in the wall is a small wooden sculpture portraying Fredrik Nilsson who was the first chairman of the Association.

### **The Navigation Passage**

In the short Navigation Passage going from the Auditorium to the Room of Sail you will see different ways of steering ships.

## **The Hall of Sails**

At the entrance to the Hall of Sails you will find information, ship models and pictures of coastal shipping with boats and ships carrying



1 or 2 masts. These were used for fishing, to transport firewood, sand and other bulk products from the archipelago to the capital Stockholm.

From there you move on to the part where history of ocean shipping is displayed,

ships with 3-4 masts. On the back wall a world map shows ports visited by sailing ships from Roslagen. Of course the wall is full of typical souvenirs that sailors brought home from their voyages around the world.

## **The Passage of Knots**

The sailor, like no other workman, from the very nature of his craft, has a dependence upon rope and must be familiar with knots. From the Hall of Sail, you enter the Passage of Knots where you will find different types of rope and as much as 136 different sailor knots. Our library is full of books in different languages on knots and knotting.

## **The Engine-room**

For a long period, sail competed with steam. In the late 1830's the prototype of the modern-day propeller is considered to have been invented by a Swedish-American named John Ericsson. With the development of the compound steam engines ships equipped with these inventions became more economical and suitable for long-distance trade.

The major object in the Engine-Room is an old steam engine with boiler built at Bergsunds Mekaniska in Stockholm and once installed in the small Stockholm commuter ferry *Saltsjön 2*.

*S/S Norrfjell*, a plain white steamship model, shows the biggest steamship ever built on the island of Vaddö. She was launched in 1902.

As sailing ships became old many of them had their rigging removed and were converted to barges to be towed by tugboats. Barges were in service for many years in the Baltic Sea, forerunners to modern day container ships and trucks.



In Herräng (25 kms north of the museum) you could find mines excavating iron ore and a foundry. The process of extracting the iron from the ore required charcoal and it was, by large, brought from Northern Sweden and Finland in barges.

These barges normally had a crew of two men, an old skipper and a young boy. The tug delivered the barge at the port of destination and the crew had some hard work ahead of them unloading and loading and then wait for the tugboat to come and pick them up.

Also, a lot of timber was shipped with the use of tugs boats. Logs were chained together into big rafts which were towed by tugs. A paper mill was established in Hallstavik (20 kms north of the museum) in 1915. Paper is manufactured from timber. The paper mill had, by large, a lot of their timber deliveries made by tugboats and timber “rafts” from the northern part of Sweden.



No port in Roslagen ever became a home-port of tramp steamers. In the ports, you could find ships registered in foreign countries unloading coal and loading pig-iron (Herräng) and paper rolls (Hallstavik) or tugboats with barges or “rafts” of logs. In this hall, you will find a model of the tugboat *Björnen* (“The Bear”) which was the last steam powered tug in Sweden. Her home port was Hallstavik, thus this is where the history of steam engine tug boats ends in Sweden.

In 1959 modern day passenger traffic between Sweden and Finland was started in Roslagen. *M/S Viking* was the first ship on this route, closely followed by *M/S Slite* five days later. In the museum, you will find a ship model of *M/S Slite* and several photographs from the very start of a major player in this trade, Viking Line.



### **The Trästa Ferry Passage**

Väddö is a long island (approximately 40 kms as the crow flies) and historically only had one bridge connecting it to the mainland. However, in two other locations, one north and one south, crossings were provided by ferries. The passage is dominated by an exhibition of the northern ferry at Trästa. This ferry nowadays is replaced by a bridge.

### **The Boat-house**

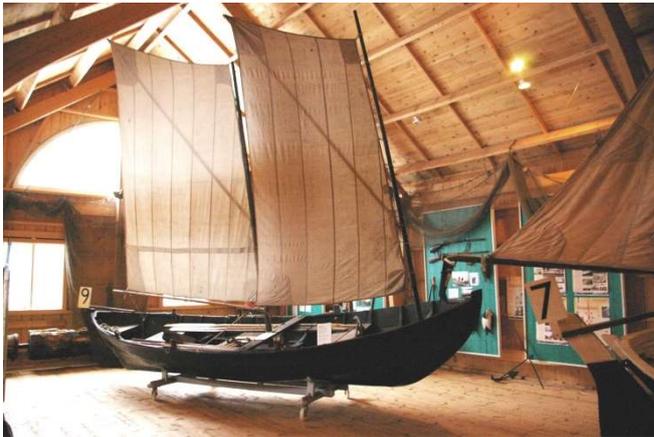
You enter the Boat-house on the upper level where you will find a historical cavalcade of smaller outboard motors.



There are also inboard motors on display. The Ortala inboarder is unique. It is a four-stroke engine built 1904 in Ortala, just a few kilometres away.

In one corner, there is an exhibition relating to wartime history and defence measures in Roslagen. In 1719 the coastal area was burnt by Russian troops. In 1809 a Russian cavalry raid (Cossacks) attacked over the frozen Baltic Sea from Åland and was encountered in Grisslehamn. During WWI and WWII the Åland Sea and Roslagen was of military interest and defended by coast artillery, mine lines, and the Coastal Fleet. Surveillance of sea traffic on the surface as well as under water was important.

On the lower level, you will find a few boats, fully rigged, on display. One is a typical Eckerö boat. Eckerö is the most western part of the archipelago of Åland (Finland), only some 25 nautical miles east of Grisslehamn on Vädö (see further under the Great Mail Race). The other one is a typical example of an everyday (and every task) boat from Singö (just north of Vädö).



Both are also typical of the small open boats used in the archipelago during centuries and on the mail route between Sweden and Finland (see further under The Great Mail Race below). When steam

took over the mail route from the year 1870 the small *S/S Postiljonen* was built to replace the old wooden boats.

There are also various samples of historical equipment for fishing and hunting.

## The Coastal Hall

From the Boat-house you continue (turning back) to The Coastal Hall, where you meet a section on Customs authorities and smuggling. Communication between land and ships at sea always has been very important. A cabin for the telegraphist on board a vessel tells about radio-telegraphy.



The science and adaption of navigation practices is essential in the story of man's encounter with the sea. Navigational instruments required were a patent ship's log, a sextant used for measuring the height above the horizon of a sun or star, and a magnetic compass.

In coastal navigation, piloting, lighthouses, perches and buoys are essential. One section in this hall cover these important features in everyday maritime life.



There is also a section covering the life on-board as well as the life shore side in a port somewhere far from home, bars, women but also the important seaman's mission where sailors could meet other Swedes,

hear the latest from home, read Swedish newspapers and more. Ceramic sculptures made by the artist Maggie Friberg are real masterworks. They show different occupations under sail. These unique sculptures will stand up to very close scrutiny.

Finally, in this hall you will find a section on the Swedish Sea Rescue Service, having saved many sailors from an early grave under the waves in our waters.

### **The Vaddö Canal Passage**

As mentioned earlier under The Trästa Ferry Passage, Vaddö is a long but rather narrow island that always has been separated from the mainland by a narrow stretch of water. Between 1819 and 1832, due to the isostatic uplift of the land, the narrowest parts were widened and deepened by means of excavation. The work was carried out by Swedish soldiers. The



purpose of the excavation was to ensure that The Royal Navy, as well as the merchant navy, could have a safe and sheltered passage since the eastern side of Vaddö faces the open sea.

Trästa (north), Elmsta (middle) and Bagghus (south) from the beginning had a ferry service. Bridges were built and replaced this service in Elmsta 1830, Bagghus 1939 and Trästa 1998. Photographs show the widening and deepening of the canal in 1890-1900.

### **The Hall of *Freia***

From The Vaddö Canal Passage, you will enter The Hall of *Freia* which is the original part of the museum. Here you will find the forecastle (fo’c’sle) of the Roslagen bark *Anna & Meta*, showing a



typical sailors' accommodation (and "dining room") in late 19<sup>th</sup>, early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

In this hall, you will also find several tools used by shipbuilders back in the days of wooden ships.

One of the oldest items in the museum, an old punt, hewn out from a single oak log is also on display here, as well as an enlarged drawing of a Viking long ship (20 – 40 m in length, having 16-30 pair of oars).

Finally, in the hall there is an old compression diving suit.

### **The courtyard**

Outside the museum buildings the lighthouse from Nygrund (south of Vaddö) is easily visible as well as the propeller from *Holmen VIII*, one of the tugboats which used to belong to the paper mill in Hallstavik.



But, right by the entrance, is the most impressive item, the 27-metre tall mast of *Elvira* one of the many one-masted small cargo ships that used to carry firewood from Roslagen to Stockholm. These small vessels had an all-over length of about 15 metres, the width around 4 metres and the draught normally slightly less than 1 metre.

In addition, on the yard you will find The Captain's Home, which was built in the 1850's and has been moved from its original location, Malmberga in Häverö (some 15

kms north) to the museum. It is open as a part of the museum and shows a typical home of a sea captain/ship owner in Roslagen during the 19<sup>th</sup> century

Also, you can see the newly built Pitch-house (not open to the public) where the active boats of the museum are being maintained.

Finally, on the yard is

also the home of the museum's caretaker. This is private and not open to the public.



### **The Great Mail Race (Postrodden över Ålands hav)**

Regular postal services between Sweden and Finland began 1638. On the Swedish side, peasants on Vaddö were given the task to carry mail and passengers to Åland. This was conducted by rowing and sailing the 44 kilometres across the Baltic Sea in boats just like the ones in the Hall of Boats.

Bad weather and, in winter, ice made these trips difficult and hazardous and more than 250 peasants lost their lives in delivering this service.

To commemorate the contributions made by these peasants, Roslagens Sjöfartsminnesförening is taking an active part in arranging The Great Mail Race every year. Middle of June every year, several traditional boats, each with a crew of four, row and sail between Grisslehamn in Sweden and Eckerö on Åland. Crews dress up in traditional work clothing of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the event has become a folk festival covered in media.



30-40 teams/boats participate in the race and the competition is first and foremost a competition about historical accuracy. Points are awarded for the historical accuracy of the boat and the crew and finally for the speed. The passage usually takes between four and nine hours.

The Mail Race is also a great event for stamp-collectors. The boats are carrying specially stamped real mail over the Åland Sea.





Roslagens Sjöfartsminnesförening  
Box 56, S-764 21 Vaddö, Sweden

Roslagens Sjöfartsmuseum  
The Maritime Museum of Roslagen  
Gåsviksvägen 47, Älmsta, Vaddö, Sweden

Tel. +46176-50259  
[www.sjofartsmuseet.se](http://www.sjofartsmuseet.se)