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A little more than two years ago, on June 13th 1997, one of Sweden's oldest museums, The Royal Coin Cabinet – dating back to the last decades of the 16th century – was reopened to the public after having been closed for three years. The new museum had moved from its old and outdated premises with only about 300 m² of exhibitions and almost inaccessible locations, to a completely rebuilt house situated in one of the most visited tourist areas in Stockholm's Old town, just opposite the Royal Palace. The surroundings are perfect, almost every tourist in Stockholm will sooner or later pass by our museum on his or her way to the Palace or to the beautiful sights over the waters so characteristic for Stockholm.

The house itself, an old building dating back to the 16th century but rebuilt and enlarged several times, had been completely blown out by the previous owners and almost only the façade was left. This was perfect for us when we started planning for the exhibitions – we only had to leave the outer façade as it was but for the interior we could plan to fulfil almost all our ideas. Thus we had at our disposal about 4000 m² and we finally got an exhibition area of 1500 m² on three floors/storeys – a considerable change indeed.

The main advantage of and also reasons for the move was that we would – for the first time – put together all our collections in one single building, that we would be able to display our coins and medals to the public in a modern way and with good security, and also, that we in the daily handling of the coins would be able to take the objects under full security from the vaults to the offices, to the photographer or to the conservator, all this within the security zones.

For the public's convenience we got a well equipped lecture hall with modern technical equipments, automatic loudspeakers, perfect air conditioning and a computer laser projector with Internet connections. We can also offer our guests a pleasant meal or just a cup of coffee in our restaurant after their visit to the exhibitions. This restaurant has turned out to be popular among the curators of the other museums in the neighbourhood as well as among many of the trendy architectural firms. We also hoped that the idea of offering the lecture hall for conferences together with the restaurant's facilities would be supported by the market and it has actually turned out to be a success. Many computer companies, medical drug industries or learned societies have given their conferences a touch of culture, and a guided tour through our museum.

I will divide this short presentation into two parts: first I will talk about the three floors of exhibitions, and secondly about the security arrangements, the climate control and the arrangements in the vaults.

I will now take you on a – to use a modern word – virtual tour through the exhibitions. But first I will recall for a few seconds what the exhibitions looked like in the old premises. In the 1940's the medal room was designed by the then Swedish Garde des Médailles, Bengt Thordeman with Elias Svedberg as architect. He made a very clear and intuitive disposition of the medals: above, a line of the royal medals, in the middle in beautifully arranged compositions the medals issued with royal permission and, in the bottom line, medals with portraits of Swedish men and women.

These show-cases were a model for their time and this arrangement was often referred to in discussions of how to arrange coin or medal exhibitions. They were also made in a much more peaceful time: the glass screen was elegant but a mere window glass – nothing to protect the often extremely valuable gold and silver medals.

Even 30 or 40 years later we lived in the safe conviction that nothing would ever happen until suddenly on May 6th 1983 somebody quite simply smashed the screen and stole the unique gold medallion of Constantine the Great, at that time valued at, at least, 100,000 dollars – today that sum would probably equal 500,000 dollars or even more. The medallion has never appeared again.

This has led us to formulate a security concept which I will touch upon later. First, let us go on to the tour of the exhibitions.

The ground floor exhibitions are intended to cover the world's monetary history. They begin with a survey of pre-monetary money. The Swedish coins are exhibited in the centre of the room and the coins of the world follow around the walls.

We had at our disposal for this room no less than 50 show-cases. These were of three different types: firstly, for the visitor with a limited time, the so-called «*Highlights*» with only one – but important – object in each showcase. Thus we here show and tell the story about, for example, an electrum coin from king Croesus, about a Roman Denarius, or a Dollar coin.

In show-cases of the second type, «*The Main Thread*» is followed in show-cases of this size, where we show as many coins as possible from the museum's collections of more than 500,000 objects.

In the third kind of show-cases we have felt freer to dwell upon important thematic questions, the gods and goddesses of Ancient Greece or Roman propaganda, inflation or the mutual development of trade and coinage.

The Swedish monetary history is fully dealt with in a special chamber with 14 show-cases systematically covering the development from 995 to the present time. Other aspects such as coins from medieval times or the period of many denominations at the beginning of the 16th century or the different methods of striking copper coins in Sweden are shown in the thematic parts.

Other minor items are the counterfeit money, and a small selection of our collection of piggy-banks.

Then, on the first floor we have a major exhibition on the development of the Swedish saving banks from their beginnings in the 1820s, which were based on philosophical discussions and social ambitions, to the modern banks of today, fully computerized and with the same goals as any merchant bank or stock broker.

The history of the Swedish National Bank forms the background for a major treatise of the development of the Swedish economy from about 1600 until our time. Two of the visitors' 'musts' in the museum are exhibited here: Europe's first bank-note from 1661 and the world's largest struck coin, a Swedish copper-plate coin from 1644, weighing 19.7 kg. This part has been designed with an eye to the needs of secondary school pupils and also shows bank-notes issued by the private banks in the 19th century, pie charts showing a family's economy in the 1940's, 1960's and 1990's and much more. The Royal Coin Cabinet wishes to take an active part in showing the interdependence between monetary and economic history - hence its full name: The Royal Coin Cabinet Swedish National Museum of Economy.

An important part - more than 200,000 coins - of the museum's collections consists of coins from hoards, especially the Viking Age, 9th to 11th centuries, with Islamic, German and Anglo-Saxon coins found in the Swedish soil. The Swedish legislation on coin hoards and archaeological artefacts dates back to the 17th century and thanks to this many hoards are kept in our museum instead of having been sold and scattered. A recently opened exhibition - *The Magic of Coin Hoards* - evokes a fascination for rich hoards, and gives nourishment to thoughts about the fate of those who lost their savings. The Dragon watches his treasures ... But we are also told about the hard work needed to make the hoards speak, about the international cooperation in publishing the hoards.

On the second floor the main room is devoted to a splendid show of medals from the cast Renaissance medal to today's experiments with form

and material. For the selection of medals and commentaries we had the excellent help of – among others – the museum's former director, Dr Lars O. Lagerqvist, for 20 years President of FIDEM, Federation International de la Médaille.

This model shows how we planned the room. The red wall in the front was designed by the architect Jan Polasek for the modern medals. For the royal medals, he has chosen more dignified colours and he designed new, strikingly simple show-cases for the medals issued by the royal academies.

A special interest is attached to the six beautiful coin and medal cabinets made for Queen Lovisa Ulrika's collections in the Royal Palace Drottningholm, just outside Stockholm, in the 18th century. Apart from ordinary medals, medals carved in ivory, medals as jewels and decorations and – of course – a Nobel Prize medal in gold can be found.

The numismatic books from Queen Lovisa Ulrika's library have been housed in a specially designed library which is very popular. This room is often lent to companies for elegant receptions and conferences.

Last but not least, I will mention the Children's' room which is a kind of numismatic museum especially made for those who are not so old and tall. There is of course – among other things – a pirate ship with part of an authentic gold treasure, found off Rio de la Plata in a ship, probably the «*Nuestra Señora de la Luz*» which went down in 1752.

If you allow me a few more minutes, I will mention something about security, climate control, and the everyday handling of the coins.

One of the most important improvements this new house gave us was the excellent vaults. We have no less than four vaults that are all of bank vault standard. We have two with a climate for metal objects, one for bank-notes and valuable books and archives and also one very close to the office rooms, where all employees have cupboards of their own for the coins or medals they are presently working with.

We have installed a climate control system for correct Relative Humidity and temperature with a filter against sulphur. It was expensive but we are confident that this investment will pay for itself by causing less damage to the silver objects. We get print-outs twice a week from the climate control system.

For many years we have been using a Norwegian system of cupboards in steel with metal trays. These trays are designed to hold two or four plastic trays, each taking 28 coins. We decided to continue with this system and to put all coins and medals in such cupboards. We also decided – to save

space – to use a computerized compact system on wheels that works smoothly. Even our women colleagues can run these long combinations with no effort, by just pressing a button.

The same system is used for the library in the office floor – it is easy to find a book that you are looking for.

Another good thing in the new house is that the conservator and the photographer have their laboratories within the security zones. Thus the objects never leave the safe area.

We have worked hard to construct high security show-cases. The idea has been that even if you were to leave the show-case in the street, nobody should be able to open it in at least 15 to 20 minutes even if they were allowed to use any tool they wished.

The glass is made of a special combination of float-glass, hardened glass and polycarbonate. It is important to note that there is a great difference between shot-proof glass and glass that can resist a break-through.

The glass is alarmed, even though it is laminated, which is quite novel and unusual. There are in all four different alarms in each show-case. But, they must be easy to open and to handle for the staff. Therefore we have made the door at the front. You can swing it open and pick out a coin or adjust the fibre light. By covering the case with a coloured frame and building the whole into a light wall even a heavy show-case may look inoffensive. Below you see the cables for alarm, light and air. This wall shows a coin hoard hidden in a wall in a church. When the wall is swung open it is easy to work in the case.

Finally, a few words about the alarm system. We have a system which in one programme combines the museum's alarm system with more than 2,000 alarm-points, detectors and video cameras, a passage system for cards which are easily changed with the computer and which also has a presentation system. This means that you can see all parts of the building on the computer screen and that you can choose to open a door or set an area on alarm just by clicking the mouse. On this slide the green parts are not alarmed but the security room is alarmed and red. If you prefer to look at the exhibition area you can see that the alarm of the show-cases is O.K. – that is red.

The fire protection is especially important as fire is the most dangerous enemy we have – it destroys everything. Therefore we have installed a sprinkler-system in all exhibition areas. The staff – all of us – has been trained several times to use the different kinds of fire-extinguishers and to evacuate the building in case of fire. We do hope that we will never have to use the leather gloves hanging above the extinguisher.