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*The new Tumba Paper Mill Museum. An annex to the Royal Coin Cabinet in Stockholm*

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## THE NEW TUMBA PAPER MILL MUSEUM

An annex to The Royal Coin Cabinet in Stockholm

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It could happen to any of you: A phone call could “land” you with a new museum. This is what happened in the story that I am now going to tell you. In December 2001, on a Tuesday afternoon, I sat thinking that I should leave early to buy Christmas gifts for family and friends. Suddenly the phone rang. When I answered, I heard the voice of a Director of the central bank of Sweden, or in Swedish, *Sveriges Riksbank*. The bank wanted to know if we, The Royal Coin Cabinet, could help them to take inventory of the historical objects belonging to the banknote printing office in Tumba, a community south of Stockholm. They also wanted help doing the same thing in the Swedish mint, situated in the city of Eskilstuna, approximately 100 kilometres south of Stockholm. Both the banknote printing office and the mint belong to the central bank, which was to pay us for all the work.

At this point, I had forgotten all about Christmas gifts and had already started planning a nice trip to Tumba. The reason for taking these inventories was connected with the sale of the two institutions. The banknote printing office had been sold to the American paper firm *Crane & Co.*, and the mint had been sold to the expanding Mint of Finland. But, the central bank did not want the sale to include historical objects connected with Swedish National Heritage. They only wanted to sell the buildings, machinery, furniture, etc. The bank was well aware that thousands of heritage objects were housed in Tumba and in the mint. The banknote printing office started operations in 1701 (though the first Swedish banknotes were printed by Stockholm Banco in 1661), and the mint started in the late 10<sup>th</sup> century. However, most of the objects in the two institutions came from the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

So, a few days before Christmas, The Royal Coin Cabinet started taking inventory in Tumba. When we arrived in the morning, the banknote printing office was covered with snow from a snowstorm during the night. The guards opened the doors, and we were met by a couple of directors with frosty smiles. The printing office had been sold against their will, and they did not want to lose any of the old objects, they said, “had always been in Tumba”. However, as they had been sold to the American firm, they were forced to cooperate. We were an intrusion into their secretive world. First, they tried to stop us. Then, they tried to tell us that there were no historical objects in the printing office buildings. Certain rooms were locked, and no one knew where the keys were. In the end, we managed to find most of the historical objects – a total of some 20,000. We wrote inventory lists and

fastened number tags to nearly all the historical machinery, framed paintings, lamps, furniture, etc. But naturally, we could not do this with all the old banknotes.

A few months later, it was spring, and the snow was melting, I received another phone call. This time the central bank wanted to know if we were willing to run the small museum belonging to the Tumba Paper Mill, adjoining the banknote printing office. The museum had been established in 1968 and was housed inside two 18<sup>th</sup> century buildings. We were of course interested, but thought the museum to be too small and too old-fashioned. We also told the bank that we were not all that happy about being responsible for objects and buildings belonging to another institution, that they would have to pay for an extensive restoration of the museum and finance the cost of new exhibitions. We held new meetings and asked many questions. The bank subsequently informed us that they wanted to give us two more buildings and the aforementioned 20,000 objects – all as a gift. They also agreed to restore the buildings and cover the cost of the new exhibitions. The bank had also decided to set up a foundation with the sole purpose of financing the museum. All we had to do, was create new exhibitions and open the museum in the spring of 2005. Fortunately enough, we do have some experience in building a museum. The same people handled the restoration as built the new Royal Coin Cabinet in the centre of Stockholm, next to the Royal Palace, in 1996–1997. Inaugurated by the Swedish king and queen in June 1997, that museum contains three floors of exhibitions, two floors of offices and one floor containing our vaults. The museum's 4,000 m<sup>2</sup> house 600,000 objects – mostly coins, banknotes, medals and tokens.



**Fig. 1.** Logo and font of Tumba Bruksmuseum.



**Fig. 2.** Entrance of Tumba Bruksmuseum. (Photo: Reiner Cunz, Hannover, 2006).

The new museum in Tumba opened in time, to celebrate the 250-year anniversary of the Tumba Mill Plant. The public can see the following exhibitions:

### **Monetary history**

- The story of Swedish banknotes since the beginning in 1661.
- Facts about the various banknote printing offices in Sweden over the past 300 years.

### **History of paper manufacturing and writing**

- The story of paper.
- The history of writing in different cultures.
- How to make paper with watermarks.

### Social history

- Two centuries of working in the Tumba Paper Mill and living on the Tumba estate.
- The story of the school belonging to the Tumba Paper Mill.



**Fig. 3.** Modern Swedish exhibition design in Tumba Bruksmuseum.  
(Photo: Reiner Cunz, Hannover, 2006).

There are also public presentations on how to make your own watermarked paper, so that visitors can try it themselves. We have a museum shop in the main building and also a café. This is important, because we are also going to market the museum as a place to hold conferences, wedding receptions, and meetings, to bring much-needed revenue to the museum. As our budget is limited, we need to use volunteers in the museum. We will send out invitations to people living in the neighbourhood. We inform them about the new museum and give them an

advance look at the recently renovated buildings. At the same time, we ask for volunteers willing to help us in a range of ways.



**Fig. 4.** Watermark manufacturing. Presentation for the ICOMON board.  
(Photo: Reiner Cunz, Hannover, 2006).

We get most of our budget for Tumba from the central bank of Sweden. They have so far paid 30 million kronor or 3.5 million euro into a special foundation, intended solely to finance the Tumba Mill Museum. The foundation got even more money from the sale of a commemorative banknote, specially printed in 2005 with a limited edition of 100,000 copies. This is Sweden's third commemorative banknote, the first having been issued in 1947 and the second in 1968. The banknote is printed in honour of the 250-year anniversary of Tumba Paper Mill. All profits from their sale go to the museum foundation. This banknote is one of the rare examples with a money museum as motif. Another one was issued in Colombia, showing the mint museum in Bogotá (cf. the article of Angelina Araújo Velez in this volume).



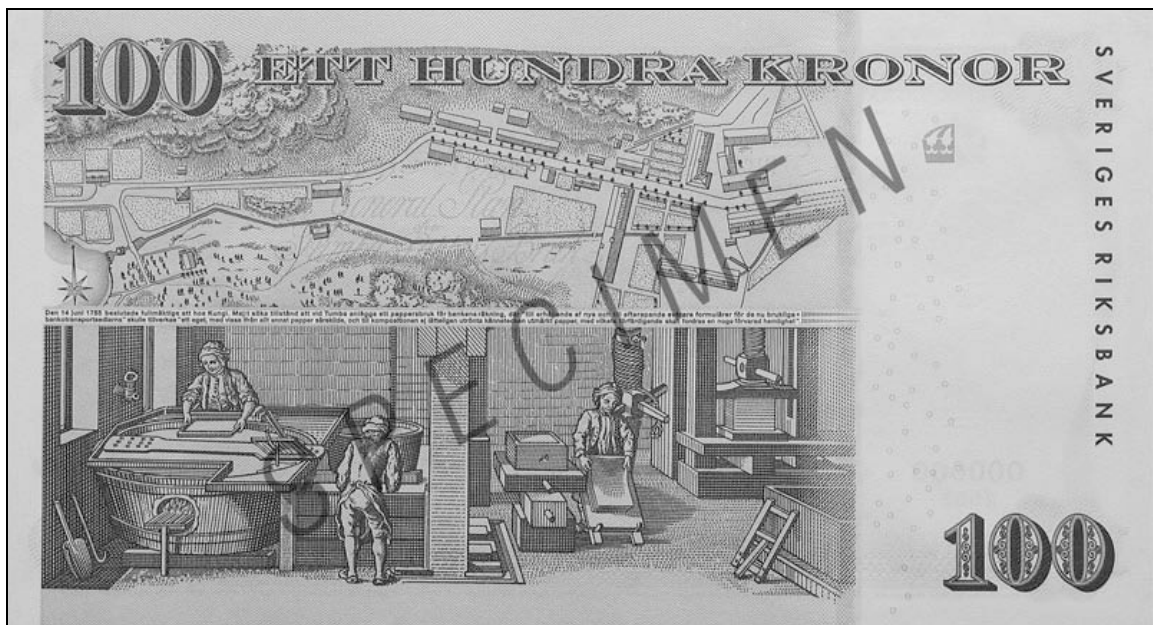


Fig. 5. Sveriges Riksbank. Commemorative 100 kronor banknote honouring the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Tumba Paper Mill (issue 26 May 2005).

We are also inviting sculptors to display their art in the great park that surrounds the museum. It would be fantastic to have new exhibitions of sculptures in the park every summer. Our hope is that many visitors will come to Tumba to see the sculptures and that they will also find their way to the museum and its café. We keep the museum open on weekdays. At the same time, museum facilities can be used by conference guests. *Crane AB.*, the Swedish branch of the American firm *Crane & Co.* wants to use the museum when it has important guests and customers interested in ordering banknotes made in Sweden. Certainly, it can use our premises for conferences. We have promised that it can do so at least six times per year. We have also promised to prepare a small showcase about Crane and its history in our exhibition space.

Why did the Tumba Paper Mill belong to the central bank of Sweden? Well, in the early years of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, there were many criminals trying to counterfeit banknotes. This was partly because counterfeiting was quite simple, due to the poor quality of the paper used for printing banknotes. Because of this problem, the bank thought it advisable to produce its own, higher quality paper. The result was the acquisition of the Tumba estate, just south of Stockholm. The new paper mill was founded in 1755, and in 1759, the first Swedish banknotes were made of paper from Tumba. Skilled paper workers were scarce in Sweden at that time, so the bank had to employ Dutch masters and workers experienced in making fine paper. Now, 250 years later, the Tumba Mill is still producing paper. The printing of the banknotes was initially done in Stockholm, first in various small printing offices in Gamla Stan, the old town, and from 1760s until 1936 in the same building as the central bank. In 1970, the banknote printing was moved to Tumba.

Today, Crane prints banknotes in Tumba, not only for Sweden but also for many other countries. There are still many buildings from the 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries on the Tumba estate, which consists of some 80 buildings in all. Of these, only a few were built as recently as the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Apart from creating the exhibitions in Tumba, we are now considering several initiatives to encourage the public to visit this new museum, situated as it is in an environment long kept hidden to or even secret from the general public. We try the following measures:

1. Entrance is free – no admission charges.
2. The museum is kept open all year round.
3. Free guides are available to all area schools, during visits to the museum.
4. Conference guests are welcome – this gives the museum an extra income.
5. A website is created for the museum.
6. A café and a museum shop serve visitors.



7. Audio guides will be available to help non-Swedish visitors to understand the exhibits.

8. We feature at least one new temporary exhibition each year.

In our first years, we hope to welcome between 5,000 and 7,000 visitors p. a. (so far, there have been only approximately 1,000 visitors per year). However, the above initiatives are not enough. To create interest among young visitors, aged 18 years and above, we try making contact with a group of independent artists – painters and sculptors. If we can interest artists in placing sculptures in the large park in Tumba, we will gain considerable media exposure and curious visitors will come. Our plan is to have new exhibitions in the park each year. It is important to have contemporary art, so we might interest new visitors, people who otherwise are not keen on museums. If they come to see the modern art, they will probably also visit our museum.

There could be other ways to attract new visitors. We could, for example, arrange a series of jazz concerts or invite theatre companies to perform outdoors near the museum. Why not a Strindberg festival? It is very important to inform schools in the municipality of Botkyrka of the museum. There are some 15,000 pupils in the area, and we now have an agreement with the local authorities to let all pupils visit the museum.

Botkyrka municipality is very large, and its residents come from many countries in the Middle East, Asia, North Africa, and South America. In some parts of Botkyrka and Tumba, many Swedes live in their own homes. They have higher income and education than the average Swede. In other parts of the same municipality, many immigrants live in multi-family housing. These new Swedes have little or no knowledge of Swedish history. How can we go about interesting them in visiting our museum? Perhaps we should tell them about the Dutch paper workers who moved to Sweden and Tumba in the 18<sup>th</sup> century to help us to produce fine paper. They too came to a foreign country with different customs, food, a new language, etc. If we also tell the story about the art of writing in other parts of the world, might they be interested in paying us a visit?

How do we interest a sophisticated urban population living in central Stockholm in travelling 30 minutes on a commuter train to the suburb of Tumba? This we do not yet know, but we will certainly try to find an answer.

**For further information:**

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