

World Maritime University

## The Maritime Commons: Digital Repository of the World Maritime University

---

WMU in the News

---

1-1-1986

### Why is there a World Maritime University in Malmö of all places - and what does it do ?

Anonymous

Follow this and additional works at: [https://commons.wmu.se/wmu\\_news](https://commons.wmu.se/wmu_news)

---

This News Article is brought to you courtesy of Maritime Commons. Open Access items may be downloaded for non-commercial, fair use academic purposes. No items may be hosted on another server or web site without express written permission from the World Maritime University. For more information, please contact [library@wmu.se](mailto:library@wmu.se).

*from the Baltic Shipping Gazette* 3 (Alands Sjöfart 1-1986) No. 23:86 206

## Why is there a World Maritime University in Malmö of all places — and what does it do?

Åland is one of the most remarkable shipping communities in the world, and for more reasons than one. For many many years now this group of northern islands has received international recognition because of the fact that ships from there have carried cargoes to ports all over the world and, as a consequence of this, the population of Åland has gathered a unique knowledge of conditions in other countries and has become in that sense truly international, while at the same time having not only a most sincere affection for their islands but also a sense of individuality which has recently been officially recognized in Finland when special Åland stamps were made available.

I have a special reason for this introduction, the intention of which is not to flatter the Åland population and in particular their seamen and shipowners. I do it because I think that shipping in Åland has an interesting link to the institution called World Maritime University in Malmö.

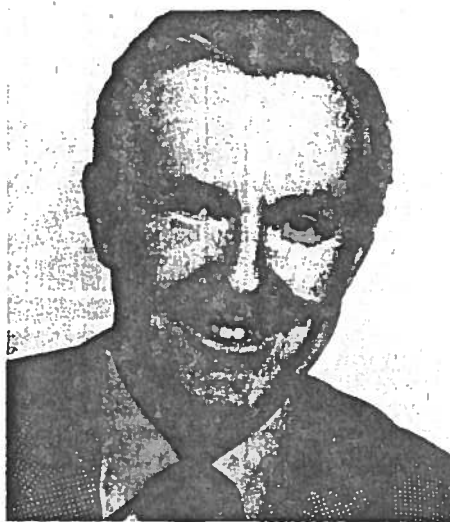
The Ålanders have conquered the world in the field of shipping from their relatively speaking anonymous group of islands in the Baltic and have thus served the need of world trade over many years. The World Maritime University is working in the same spirit but the other way around.

The WMU — for short — has been established as a focal point in the Nordic area for international activities in shipping, but in contrast to Åland we do not deliver services abroad — instead we train highly qualified persons engaged in maritime activities all over the world who come to Malmö in order to expand their knowledge of various maritime activities.

Now, you might very well ask, what is the reason for establishing such an institution in the Nordic countries, from where we normally export shipping services in the interest of world trade?

One simple answer is — and I think every Ålander would agree — that we believe that the experience of the Nordic countries in the field of shipping, the traditions and the know how developed here do give us, not only a commercial advantage which we can try to use to the benefit of our own interests, but also an obligation to assist actively in the transfer of technology which is necessary if the gap between the developing and the developed world is ever to be closed.

Again, this is nothing new. Humanity has constantly witnessed how conditions change and how a country or a group of countries succeed in taking over activities from others as they grow in strength and competence. In the field of shipping we have recently witnessed, and we continue to witness, such a change taking place before our very eyes in that countries in the Far East and elsewhere have been able to acquire a prominent position in



Rector Erik Nordström (55), LL.B., has after service at Swedish courts of law since 1961 been employed by the Swedish Shipowners' Association; since 1969 in the capacity of deputy managing director. In November last year he took command of the World Maritime University in Malmö.

During his long service for the Swedish Shipowners' Association, Erik Nordström attained a very genuine knowledge of the shipping industry, its functions and problems, and he is no doubt one of today's foremost experts in the field of international shipping.

the field of shipping and in shipbuilding using methods and policies developed in the Western Hemisphere and for a long time considered to be the sole affair of a limited number of traditional maritime countries.

The modern environment in shipping and shipbuilding was created in Western Europe and Japan and if the focal point of those activities is now shifting to other countries and areas it might be deplored and criticized but it is only a logical consequence of the basic and simple philosophy that still has the upper hand in maritime activities: Those who can produce services efficiently and at a competitive level should have the business.

Having said this I also think we all agree that it is an important responsibility of those who to-day control modern technology to share their experience with developing countries. Consultancy activities have their part to play in that transfer but there are also important political decisions in many bodies related to the United Nations which focus on this important theme: The world is one and those who possess knowledge must share that knowledge with those who have not got it but desperately need it and, in the end, it is in the interest of everybody that the level of competence is enhanced everywhere.

In a promotional film about the World Maritime University the Secretary General of the International Maritime Organization, Mr C P Srivastava, who is also the Chancellor of the World Maritime University, has rightly stressed that an unsafe ship is a serious risk to safe ships

everywhere.

I am sure that many mariners from Åland can confirm this: No matter how efficiently you run a ship you are in serious trouble whenever you meet another ship which is not operated with sufficient care and experience.

The World Maritime University has been established to provide advanced training for senior personnel from developing countries and, in that process, to improve maritime safety and also help to prevent marine pollution. The University represents the first international effort under the auspices of the IMO to provide training opportunities within this field and the extensive and intensive training offered there contributes to making it possible for the students to take advantage of the quickly developing technical innovations in the field of shipping and to go back to their countries, after two years of intensive training, to fill senior posts in their home countries and to train, in their turn, their countrymen to cope with a new and changing maritime environment of growing importance to developing countries, many of which have decided to become actively involved in shipping and to create a merchant marine of their own.

Such a general statement should and must be substantiated by a number of hard facts: The WMU was officially inaugurated on 4th July 1983. This is not the time or the place to dwell upon history but it should be said clearly that the Secretary General of the International Maritime Organization Mr C P Srivastava, the Government of Sweden, the first rector, Mr Sölve Arvedson and the City of Malmö played vital roles in the establishment of this institution at a place which I truly believe to be unparalleled in the United Nations family. Barely 15 months passed between the start of the project and the arrival of the first students in Malmö. The University has by now some 170 students — the aim being to have 200 students with 100 admitted every year for two-year courses — and so far the students represent 75 different developing countries. The average age is 35 years which is due to the fact that those who come to the University already have advanced maritime education or an academic degree.

All those students are trained in Malmö by a resident staff of eight professors and three lecturers but also by a very important input of a large number of visiting professors who all provide their services free of charge, which again is a fine example of the support the University is getting. The budget has been kept to at present just over USD 4 million a year — which anyone in the shipping industry can compare with the costs of building even the smallest vessel to-day — and those costs are covered by a combination of financial assistance from Sweden — with an undertaking to cover 1/3 of the total costs — the UNDP with USD 800,000 a year which will be increased in 1987 to USD 1,2 million, by Norway with almost USD 1/2 million, by many other generous contributions from countries, organisations, companies and individuals and by fellowships for students granted by

countries with West Germany in the forefront and the British Commonwealth Office but also others, including Finland, — all joining forces in supporting the University.

According to the Charter of the WMU the University shall "be the international maritime training institution for the training of senior specialist maritime personnel in various aspects of shipping and related fields concerning the improvement of maritime safety, the protection of the marine environment and the efficiency of international shipping" . . .

The first and second batch of students have recently left Malmö to go back to their home countries. The University looks upon them, and they themselves obviously concur in this, as ambassadors devoted to promote safe oceans and high quality shipping and also devoted to encourage their countrymen to come to the University for similar training. They

represent a unique international network of persons, all known to each other by their first name after two long years in the difficult climate of Scandinavia, who can compare notes in the future and give substantial assistance in the promotion of maritime activities in their home countries. I would not be surprised at all if, within a decade or so, many graduates from the World Maritime University will become ministers of shipping or hold other key positions in the future development and policy of their countries.

A promotional film has recently been produced to show the main features and accomplishments so far of the University. It is interesting to note that one of the December 1985-graduates says that the possibly most important result of her studies — (yes there are also a number of women studying at the University) — is that during the two years of living together in the splendid accommodation generously offered by the City of Malmö the students have learnt "to be together, to live together, to study together and to eat together" which is in itself a unique experience in the true spirit of the United Nations aiming at creating an understanding and tolerance between people from all parts of the world with various background and beliefs, habits and traditions. She added that "the acceptance and the understanding which grew out of that experience" might have been even more important than the maritime education.

The World Maritime University of Malmö is unique because there is no similar institution anywhere in the world. It is also unique in the sense that there is no other place where people from the whole world — students from developed countries are now also welcome to Malmö — can experience so fully the truly international spirit of the United Nations for such a long and active period of time as during a two year course offered by the World Maritime University in Malmö, Sweden.

I think you can all agree that the Malmö project does mirror the Åland international shipping spirit — the other way around.

## A shipyard with long traditions

by Rolf Ohlsson

*At the end of the 1670s the possibility of acquiring a new peace-time base for the Navy began to be an urgent consideration. The reason? The Swedish fleet lay ice-bound in the Stockholm archipelago during the winter, while the Danish fleet was able to operate undisturbed in ice-free southern waters. A decree issued by King Karl XI on 5 December 1679 ordered that the fleet should be stationed at Blekinge and Trossö (Karlskrona), and that a shipyard should be established there for the purpose of building new vessels.*

Work commenced in the autumn of 1679, a shipyard with two slips being set up at Vämö in what was to become Karlskrona. The first vessel to be built there was the 68-cannon ship BLEKING. Two more vessels were built there before operations were moved in 1684 to the south shore of Trossö, where the Karlskronavarvet is still situated today. Work there had started already in 1681, and at the time when operations moved there three slips were available with necessary workshops, supply depots, bridges and wharves.

From the period when the Yard was established right up to the 1870s timber was the material used for building all ships. Propulsion was by wind-power via sails or muscle power via oars. Timber (primarily oak) was felled from south Sweden, where the State owned all the oak-trees. 1694 saw the completion of a 300-metre-long ropewalk at Karlskrona. Still in existence today, it is the oldest building in the Yard. Rope-making was discontinued in 1961.

The Polhem Dock was built between 1716—24 at the proposal of the naval architect Carl Sheldon, with Christopher Polhem as technical adviser. The "Five-finger Docks" were begun in 1758, being completed about a century later. Still in use, they are well suited for the new light Swedish fleet.

In conjunction with the docks a derrick crane was built in 1803—06. Designed by the architect Fredrik Blom, it is probably the most depicted building in the Yard.

Newbuilding activity was uneven, but in 1782—85 ten 60-cannon ships and ten 40-cannon frigates were built under the supervision of af Chapman. He utilized sophisticated methods of building in sections, and the longest time that ships remained on the stocks was 145 days, the shortest being 45 days.

The dominating position held by the Karlskrona Yard in building naval vessels during the 18th century declined somewhat with the emergence of steam and motor propulsion and new techniques involving steel hulls. The Navy started using the big civil shipyards more and more. However, throughout these 300

years and more, the Karlskrona Yard has maintained its position as leading shipyard for repairs, upkeep and conversion work.

The first step towards civil production was taken when the industrial section of the Naval Yard was re-organized in 1945 as Marinverkstäder (Marine Workshops). In 1960 a civil company was formed: the Karlskronavarvet with the Defence Department as principal. Ten years later it was transferred to Statsföretag (State Enterprises). On 1 July 1977 it became a subsidiary of the Svenska Varv AB (Swedish Shipyards).

Nowadays the Karlskronavarvet is an up-to-date shipyard with excellent technical resources both for building new ships and for carrying out repairs and maintenance work. The sector for naval vessels has dominated throughout the years, but now too — as may be seen from a separate article here — a speciality has emerged, craft built of glass-reinforced plastic.

(Translated by Jocelyn Palmer)

## Hong Kong

Hong Kong shipowners have no plans to move their activities from the crown colony, either in the years before 1997 or afterwards. The agreement reached between representatives of the PRC and Great Britain was recently characterised as "an outstanding agreement" and "a very sensitive and practical agreement" by shipowners Helmuth Sohmen from World Wide and Frank Chao from Wah Kwong. Both looked forward to a new Hong Kong shipping register that should be in place and working well before 1997.

Hong Kong owners today operate the second largest fleet in the world, and a major advantage of the Hong Kong register is that it will provide local shipowners, who own nearly 1500 vessels totalling about 55m tdw, with greater representation in international affairs.