



Vasa : the story of a Swedish warship

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Marika Hedin

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333 years on the seabed

The Vasa, Gustavus Adolphus's new flagship, put out on her maiden voyage on 10th August 1628. Off Beckholmen ("Tar Island"), however, a sudden gust of wind makes the ship heel over. Her lower gun ports are open and water pours in through them. The gaily painted ship sinks after covering just 1,500 metres.

The Vasa was to spend 333 years on the Strömmen seabed. The wreck was rediscovered in 1956 by Anders Franzén, marine engineer and researcher. On 24th April 1961 she once again saw daylight over the city she had left so long ago. Salvage work had taken several years. A massive crowd of journalists stood waiting as the ship broke the surface.

Any number of artefacts were found on board the Vasa and on the seabed round about her. The Vasa Museum today attracts over a million visitors annually, more than any other museum in the Nordic countries. Scholars, conservators and engineers are working to preserve the ship in all perpetuity.

The Vasa Story, to be published in conjunction with the 50th anniversary of the ship's recovery, describes why and how she was built, how she was lost, the inquiry which followed and the dramatic salvage enterprise. But the book also includes a great deal about Sweden and the rest of the world at the beginning of the 17th century. It is profusely illustrated with historic pictures, photographs of artefacts from and details of the Vasa and pictures of the salvage operation, not forgetting 10 or more facsimiles affording a fascinating insight into the whole exciting story.

The authors are all experts on the Vasa and members of the Museum staff. Executive Editor Marika Hedin is the Museum's Director. The book will be published in Swedish and English simultaneously.

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