

PRESS RELEASE

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16th century ship's cannon to be salvaged and housed in the Museum of Gotland

Visby, 13 July 2007. Nord Stream is supporting a detailed survey of shipwrecks lying on the Baltic seabed near Gotland. This marine archaeology project is a joint initiative of the County Museum of Gotland, Gotland's Havsgille and the marine archaeology company AquaArkeologen launched with the purpose to research and document Gotland's maritime heritage, including wrecks and other artefacts.

Baltic Sea conditions mean that the remnants of wooden ships, metal objects and other man-made items survive for hundreds of years (sometimes for much longer) on the seabed.

Located in the centre of the Baltic Sea, the Swedish island of Gotland is surrounded by the remains of wrecks of merchant ships, of ships carrying pilgrims, of pirate ships, of fishing boats and of warships.

Says Göran Ankarlilja, marine archaeologist at AquaArcheologen in Gotland: "The seabed around Gotland has been only partially examined for human artefacts, and the number of these is unknown. Historical sources for the last 250 years show more than 2,500 ship wrecked around the island, but only about 100 wrecks have been found. Only some few wrecks and remains have been archaeologically excavated."

The investigation is prioritising maritime archaeology and historical research into the disaster that befell the Danish-Lübeck fleet in 1566: up to 7,000 men and 16 warships were lost in a storm while they were at anchor outside Visby port. A first step will be to salvage the 4 meters long cannon from 1566. This will be treated for preservation and then exhibited at the County Museum at Gotland.

Says Bertil Bäckström, Head of Department at County Museum of Gotland: "We are very pleased to be able to present an exhibition soon about the marine archaeological heritage and the salvaging of the large cannon."

The project is fully acknowledged by the County administration.

Dirk von Ameln, Deputy Technical Director of Nord Stream, noted that the company's support for such surveys is a natural extension of its cooperation with many different Swedish authorities during the planning and construction process for the pipeline across the Baltic Sea.

“Employing Swedish marine survey companies such as Marin Mätteknik, we are pursuing the most extensive investigation ever of the Baltic seabed and its environment along the planned pipeline route in cooperation with environmental experts and marine archaeologists around the Baltic Sea. Our support for this marine archaeology project is a way of giving back some of the knowledge we are gaining in the pipeline project. The Baltic Sea is a marine archaeological museum and Gotland is the centre. What, then, could be more natural than starting an archaeological survey right here?”, explains Dirk von Ameln.

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