

## Flettner returns!

For a couple of years, the Finnish Norsepower has been successfully reintroducing (assistance) wind propulsion to shipping. Its Rotor Sail is a 21<sup>st</sup>-century version of the Flettner rotor, the 1922-patented invention of Anton Flettner. *Buckau* was the first ever vessel to feature cylindrical sails (15 m tall and 3.0 m in diameter), delivered by Friedrich Krupp Germaniawerft in October 1924. The retrofitted schooner made her first trip in February the following year, sailing from Gdańsk to Scotland performantly, despite adverse weather. In the early spring of 1926,

the rotor freighter (renamed *Baden-Baden*) crossed the Atlantic (New York via South America), using only 12t of fuel (vs 45t for a sail-less vessel). Next was *Barbara* (three 16.8 m tall and 4 m wide rotors), sailing in the Mediterranean in 1926-29. Flettner secured an order for six more *Barbara*-class rotor ships. Still, the Great Depression thwarted international trade, while cheap oil made the cylindrical sails' fuel savings, thus ROI, not worthwhile. *Barbara* was sold and stripped of her sails, and we had to wait almost a century for the invention's return (but with a vengeance!).

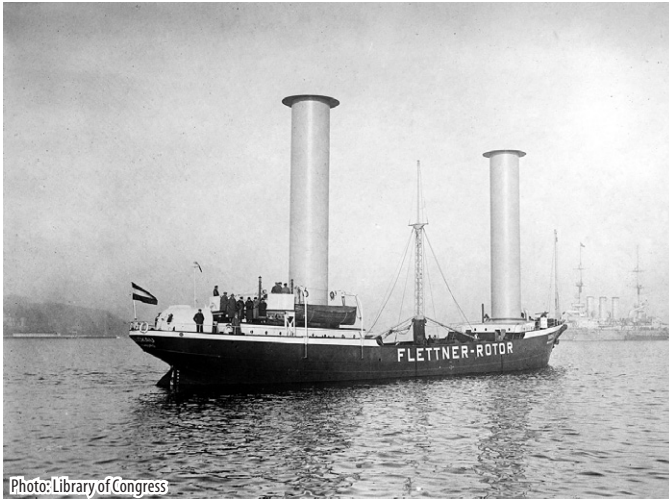


Photo: Library of Congress



Photo: Wikimedia Commons

## The brave family

The monumentally brutal Oslo City Hall is famous thanks to, among others, its indoor murals and outdoor sculptures. Whereas guides depict and describe a healthy chunk of them, some smaller artworks remain in the shadows: their authors are anonymous and understanding the meaning of these cultural heritage-heavy assets requires putting one's imagination to work. For instance, look at the impressive ceramics showing a seaman's family, where, we guess, the ship model symbolises the absent father. This piece of art from the early 1950s makes you think about seafarers leaving, at that time, their families not for weeks or even months – but for years (24-month contracts weren't unseen back then). We salute the brave: men, likewise women and their children!



Photo: Marek Blus

## Treading on thin ice

Sweden's sole 20<sup>th</sup>-century foreign military expedition and the only exodus of Swedish people occurred 105 years ago. On 15 February 1918, the country's forces landed on the Åland Islands to protect the local Swedish majority from the violence of the Finnish Civil War and Russian soldiers' misconduct. Shortly three other parties joined: the White Finns, the Red Finns, and the German Army as the last. The situation was complicated, but major fighting was avoided

– the Russians and both Finnish factions left Åland. Although the Swedish Army performed its police duties well, some Ålanders sought refuge in Sweden. The postcard edited in Hargshamn (posted on 2 March 1918) depicts passengers from Eckerö standing on ice (though not yet on Swedish soil). The image's ships are the icebreaker *Isbrytaren II* (later *Sankt Erik*, preserved in Stockholm) and the passenger steamers *Heimdall*, *Vineta*, and *J. L. Runeberg*.



Photo: P. Em. Andersson/Sjöhistoriska Museet

## Some things never change – or do they?

The photo shows a De Havilland DH 60X Moth named *Pilvetär* (*Cloudstar?*) parked on Pihljasaaari's beach. It reminds us of a forgotten summer hook from the 1930s: a floatplane waiting for a customer willing to go on a short flight over the Helsinki archipelago. For those having shorter purses, it was fun to spectate the noise of an aircraft engine and the waves caused by the floats (at least, that's what we suppose...). This particular aeroplane was made in Finland under a British licence. Delivered in 1929 for the Finnish Air Force (as the eighth in a series of 21), it was quickly decommissioned and sold to a private owner. Eventually, it landed in... Australia! Equipped with a wheeled undercarriage and registered as VH-SSC, under the (un)changed name *Pilvetar*, it kept flying until the 1970s. Air enthusiasts say that the airframe still exists! That would hardly be a surprise – Finns can make sturdy things.



Photo: Helsinki City Museum