

MANY ACADEMY
MEMBERS subscribed
to AB Pressurklipp's
newspaper monitoring.

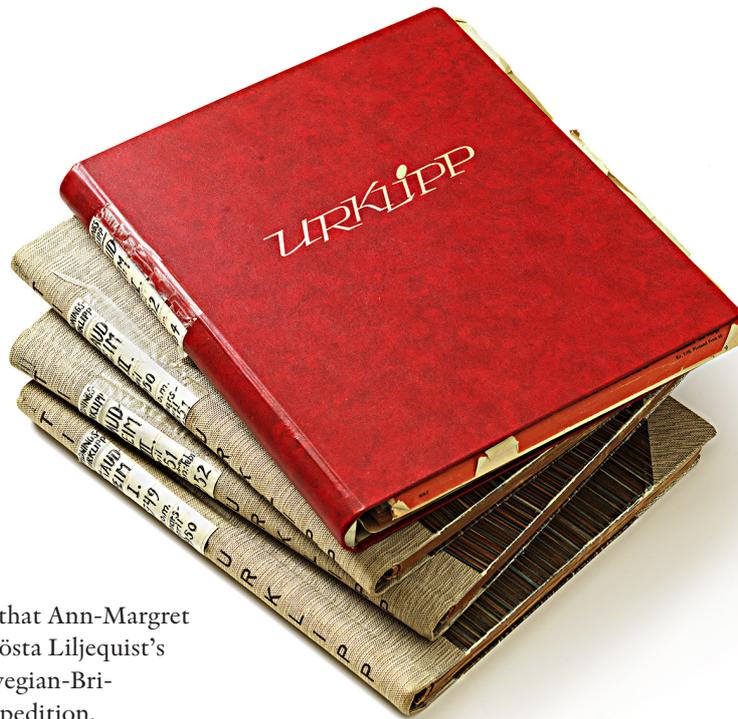


Science clipped

Solveig Jülich

The archive left by meteorologist Gösta Liljequist includes four books with labels taped to their spines, with the words “Newspaper clippings”, “Maudheim” and the dates written by hand. They are numbered and have the same format but, while the first three are clad in a beige-brown textile, the fourth has a blood-red cover in imitation leather. These clippings books contain material taken from newspapers and popular journals about the Norwegian-British-Swedish expedition to the Maudheim Research Station in Antarctica 1949–1952. Liljequist was the expedition’s second meteorologist and photographer. During his two-year absence, his wife Ann-Margret Liljequist cut out news items and articles and stuck them in the books. The fourth, blood-red volume was compiled after he returned home and, altogether, the clippings convey an image of Liljequist’s and the other expedition participants’ successes in Swedish public life.

Liljequist’s clippings books are not unique objects in the archive of the Academy of Sciences. Quite the opposite, many personal archives include newspaper clippings books in various materials, sizes and shapes. Some of the earliest examples are the three blue notebooks with newspaper clippings about the Vega expedition of 1878–1880 in Adolf Erik Nordenskiöld’s archive. These are not designed for organising press material, but instead consist of blank pages that have been stuck together and provided with a blue cover. The index and page numbering have been done by hand and the clippings pasted in single columns in chronological order. However, most of the newspaper clippings books come from the first half of the 20th century and are specially produced for this purpose, with preprinted pages. The collection of Sten Bergman’s clippings books is particularly extensive and contains



THE CLIPPINGS BOOKS that Ann-Margret Liljequist made during Gösta Liljequist's participation in the Norwegian-British-Swedish Antarctic expedition.

voluminous material about his expeditions in Asia, as well as his successful career as a speaker on the radio and as a popular science writer.

The accumulation of clippings books in the archive can be seen in the light of the growth in the publication and reading of newspapers in Sweden from the 1870s onwards. The number of newspapers had dramatically increased, creating new opportunities for people become informed about world events. However, some people instead saw a threatening flood of information that needed management. The philosopher and civilisation critic Vitalis Norström's chastisement of the press in the book *Masskultur* from 1910 is well-known: "what mental energy is not required to read contemporary newspapers, discuss contemporary issues with our acquaintances, with one word for balancing the overflowing volumes of transient and worthless impressions and ditto associations of ideas, presented in the confusion, worry and stress surrounding us".

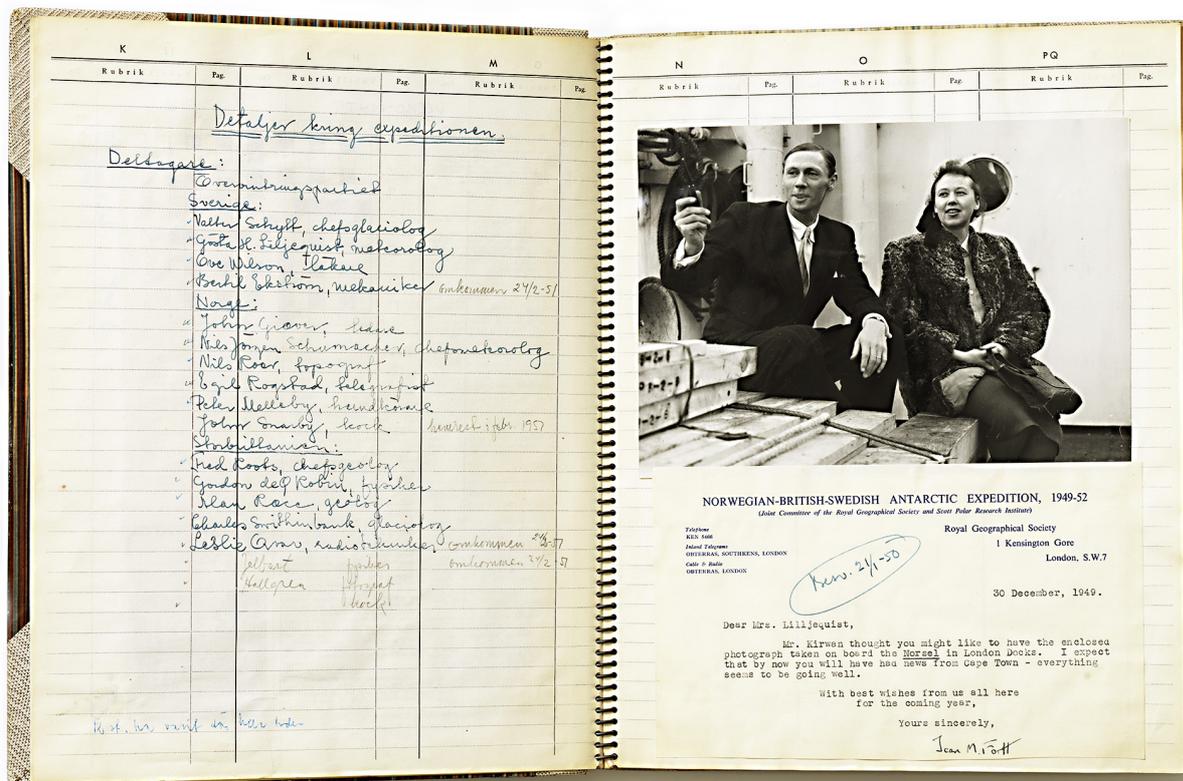
Collecting newspaper clippings can be regarded as a reaction to that era's need to organise, preserve and overview the information. Soon enough, a market developed for companies that were commissioned by other businesses, organisations or individuals to collect relevant newspaper articles. In Sweden, Svenska Argus was founded in 1898 and, in 1903, Svenska Telegrambyrån started a department for press clippings. These clippings companies were then merged to create AB Pressurklipp, and the personal archives preserved

at the Center for History of Science testify to just how many Academy members subscribed to press material relating to their specialisms. Additionally, some members had also commissioned monitoring of what the press wrote about activities relating to them personally – everything from book reviews to lectures and participation in public events.

It was also at about the turn of the last century that companies began selling books specifically for newspaper cuttings, which some members acquired and filled with material. The advertising for one company, *Wilhelmssons Boktryckeriaktiebolag*, maintained that their product, with its index and glued boxes, was suitable for scientists, teachers, politicians, business men and artists, “for everyone who reads a newspaper, i.e. cuts out the best of their contents”. This clearly appealed to Svante Arrhenius and Nils Holmgren, whose archives both include clippings books from *Wilhelmssons*.

There was increasing variation in the clippings books’ appearance in the first half of the 20th century. More companies were introduced on the market and different design trends made their mark on the books. In around 1900, when the medium was new, clippings books’ covers imitated the decorative expressions of magnificent works, but in a later and more established phase in the mid-century, they came to be characterised by a functionalist style in which scissors and glue pot symbolised what was regarded as specific for the medium. The contrast between Sten Bergman’s volumes from the 1950s, in grey fabric and with a sober gentleman wielding scissors on the cover, and Georg Borgström’s scrapbooks from the late-1960s could not be greater. It does say “press clippings” in printed text on the spines of the latter, but the plastic covers and overfull plastic pockets with cuttings about the impending population explosion indicate a medium in crisis.

There is almost no information about the clippings books in the Academy of Sciences’ archive that makes it possible to say who held the scissors and stuck in the texts and pictures. At the newspapers’ editorial offices, the clippers had an anonymous and inferior role in relation to the writing publicists and field reporters. The clippers performed mechanical work and were not deemed to be adding anything to the material themselves. In a corresponding manner, it appears that the names of the people who made the clippings for the members’ clippings books were not regarded as important enough to name or highlight. In some cases, the members themselves are probably the makers, but it could equally often be assumed to be a family member who did the cutting out. Liljequist’s clippings books on the expedition to Maudheim in the Antarctic, in 1949–1952, are notable in that Ann-Margret has written, if not her name, at least “from your wife”. In many cases, the manual cutting work at home was replaced by *AB Pressurklipp*’s subscription service, but this still required an active contribution from a person who was willing to spend time and effort on sticking the material onto the pages.



ANN-MARGRET LILJEQUIST filled the clippings books with newspaper articles about the expedition's adventures, as well as more personal material.

Several of the early clippings books have instructions stuck to the inside of the front cover. Wilhelmssons Boktryckeriaktiebolag's books were accompanied by strips of sticky paper squares that were used to attach the clippings to the pages. It was important not to be too generous with your saliva and to move your thumbs properly:

[one] gently moistens one or both sides of a couple of squares of the sticky paper which are then, with your other hand, placed *under* the clipping, at the same time as the first hand's thumb steadily presses, after which the remaining sticky strip is torn off to be used later in the same way.

Some of the clippings books from the 1950s in Sten Bergman's archive are ring binders from Esselte with instructions to the user about how an index can be created "by cutting along the outer pointed line and angled lines as necessary". Using the right technique, you can achieve a "heading index for 6 different subject groups".

Inserts in the early clippings books attempted to imitate newspapers through the use of printed pages with three columns. The logic of the book world was also found in the various index formats. These existing media undoubtedly affected the collecting, selection and organisation of newspaper clippings. One of Alfred Gabriel Nathorst's clippings books largely consists of the continuous documentation of the national and international newspaper reporting surrounding the search for the participants in Andrée's polar expedition in the years prior to 1900. Similarly, Sten Bergman's clippings books are full to bursting with articles and reports about his adventurous global travels – interleaved with news items about how he has been named the most popular radio voice and cut-out advertisements for his book *My Father is a Cannibal*. Major events and famous people are what receive the attention of the newspapers – and the members' clippings books reproduce this pattern. More mundane news about scientific works and routines were less popular in the press and consequently do not have such a prominent place in the clippings books.

However, the users could utilise the books to add newspaper clippings to more personal life stories. Ann-Margret Liljequist had a free approach to the conventions of the format. In the clippings book that is volume 1, she has used the index pages A–C to create a personal title page with the expedition's name as the title, the drawn outlines of an iceberg and a penguin, and the name of her husband. On the index pages D–F, she has written a text across the three columns, grouping the newspaper clippings' content into two parts – partly the period before departure, partly the first stops on the way to the Antarctic – and stating the sides on which the material is found. A page a little further in has information about the expedition's participants and a large photo has been stuck to the index pages N–Q, showing the couple onboard the *Norsel* when it was anchored in London, prior to its departure for Cape Town. A letter stuck under the photograph and addressed to “Mrs. Lilljequist” from Jean M. Fortt at the Royal Geographic Society contains reassuring words about how the journey has gone well thus far (see picture on the previous page). Another page has an article with a picture of Ann-Margret, Gösta and their eleven-month-old son. The article is from the *Aftonbladet* newspaper in 1949 and has the headline “2 whole years until we meet again”. In the article, she is quoted as saying: “It is going to be a terribly long time until we meet again, but personal considerations must naturally stand aside for an opportunity such as this”.

It is then possible to follow the sometimes dramatic events during the expedition using Ann-Margret Liljequist's clippings: constructing the building in Maudheim in difficult conditions, the challenging journeys over the ice, an accident in which three expedition participants died. Perhaps to counteract this drama, in a few places she has stuck in cartoon strips from Disney's

world of animals, which was published in newspapers: anthropomorphised penguins in amusing and romantic situations. In this way, some of the clippings books in the Academy of Sciences' archive are reminiscent of related older forms of media, such as scrapbooks which, using more mixed media materials and personal additions, document events in private and public life. In the contemporary media landscape, many people prefer to share news, events and memories via Facebook and other digital channels, but there is a noticeable retro trend in which scissors, glue and paper have once again come to be used.

The clippings books have had an anonymous presence, but are also a source of joy for historians of science hunting for material that is hard to access – a kind of archive in the archive. Before the age of digitisation, a book of newspaper clippings about a scientific event or a career could save many hours of zooming in on newspaper articles on microfilm. But the newspaper cuttings books offer no unmediated access to what once was in the same small way as other archives. The history of science of newspaper clippings books is dependent on their time's medial and societal conditions, and the narratives created when the clippings are brought together with other material are no neutral statements about the past. Taking over their historical memory is thus not unproblematic, but they may still be useful for the historian while a source of fascination in their movement between science's private and public spaces.

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Anke te Heesen has described the history of collecting newspaper clippings in *The Newspaper Clipping: A Modern Paper Object* (Manchester, 2014). How newspaper clippings were used, regarded, collected and ordered has been described in detail by Johan Jarlbrink in “Historien i tidningsklipp – tidningsklipp i historien: Klipp i arkiv, dagbok och bokfilm”, *Historisk tidskrift*, vol. 130:3, 2010. He investigates the newspaper clippers' everyday work and inferior position in relation to writing publicists in “Avklippta från historien: Tidningsklippare och tidningsklipp i 1800-talets press”, *Nordicom-Information*, vol. 31:4, 2009. The scrapbook, a form of media closely related to newspaper clipping books, is covered by Ellen Gruber Garvey, “Scissoring and scrapbooks: Nineteenth century reading, remaking and recirculating”, in Lisa Gitelman & Geoffrey B. Pingree (eds.), *New Media 1740–1915* (Cambridge, MA, 2003).