

On the last days of November took place the big autumn project of Laane Riding School. Together a visit to one of the biggest events for horse-friends in the Northern Region – the Stockholm International Horse Show – was made. Inseparable parts of the trip were also visits to the Royal Mews and one of Stockholm's best known riding schools, the Östermalm Riding School.

The trip started with a little glitch – two days before the planned departure the ship company Tallink decided to move M/S Baltic Queen from Tallinn-Stockholm line temporarily to Turku-Stockholm one. The travellers were obviously a little bit alarmed since their voyage was cancelled. Causeless, as it turned out, since the cancelled booking was changed to Tallinn-Helsinki-Stockholm (and back). So it turned out rather well since Laane Riding School's company unexpectedly had time to enjoy the capital of Finland as well, not to mention the comfort of the cabins given to replace the original ones.

After landing on Friday, 27th most of the day went to get acquainted with the city. To start, the company headed towards the Royal Mews. The route brought them along Drottninggatan, one of the main streets in the city centre that now was so beautifully decorated in anticipation of Christmas. In the Royal Mews, it was a pleasure to see one of Europe's finest collection of coaches and carriages and know that many of them are still in use on formal ceremonies; also to take a look at the fine-looking horses that belong to His Majesty the King of Sweden. Interesting fact: all 14 horses living there belonging to the king always carry the same names – after arrival they receive new names that belonged to the former horses of the Royal Mews. The evening went to sightseeing, shopping and visiting numerous lovely Christmas Markets.

Saturday morning came with a plan to see the old town of Stockholm with its enchanting streets, nice buildings and little shops. In front of the Royal Palace the company had a wonderful opportunity to witness the ceremony of change of sentries – an event worth to see. On the afternoon the travellers headed to Ericsson Globe Arena, world's biggest spherical construction to see its event of the year and also the highlight of the trip – the Stockholm International Horse Show. The program included two exciting competitions on 140cm and 150cm with many best showjumping riders of this part of Europe participating. Among them were this year's European champion Kevin Staut, best rider in Sweden and Olympic Games silver medalist Rolf-Göran Bengtsson and many others. Titillation was given by the demonstrational competition of four horse harnesses where the best teams from Europe (and one even from Down Under) competed in accuracy and speed. Numerous shows left a strong impression even to people daily working with horses and made everybody wonder just how far can be driven the line of mutual understanding, obedience and trust between people and animals.

On Sunday there was just enough time left to visit Östermalm Riding School. It is one of the most popular riding schools in Stockholm having approximately 540 regular riders and 50 horses and ponies. A lovely tour was given to the company showing the horses and stables, introducing the classes and running of this place. It was interesting to hear how things are done outside Estonia. After leaving Östermalm, the ship was already waiting to bring the company back home.

Since all the feedback from participants has been positive it can be said that the trip was completely successful. To many company members it was the first experience – would it be visiting Sweden, using the underground or something else. The main summarising thought can be expressed as: „Many good experiences, many nice people.“ One can only hope that Laane Riding School's plan to turn this kind of educational and fun trips into a tradition will come to life. The stallion parade in Celle, Germany and the Spanish Riding School in Vienna, Austria were already mentioned as the next possible destinations. If and when they will actually be visited – the time will tell.



In the Royal Mews. On the picture (starting from left): Janeli Lepla, Linda Tammekivi, Gredi Sooväli, Kristiina Eisenschmidt, Kadi Ruumet, Hanna Reena Krüger, Janne Ööpik, Kelly Raadik, Elisabeth Altroff, Airi Reinvar, Andrus Kallaste, Karin Lehari, Kerly Luige. Absent is Age Põldaru, who was holding the camera.