

In this issue of Forum there are several reports from the celebration of the 100 year anniversary of the SSDV. Here Halvor Möller tells us how he persuaded the famous graphic artist to design a logotype for the Society.



## Karl-Erik Forsberg, the SDS Logotype Master

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Karl-Erik Forsberg (1914-95), a mason's son, was born and raised in the Stockholm archipelago. He trained at *Skolan för bokhantverk*, Stockholm, as well as with Jan Tschichold and Hugo Steiner-Prag. Forsberg had many teaching positions and became the main graphic artist for the publishing houses of Almqvist & Wiksell and Norstedts. He soon developed an excellence in miniature decorative art, such as calligraphy for ex libris and monograms (1) and type faces for printing, the Berling antikva being the most admired (2). Well known and well commended for his graphic art as well, including stamps, he also painted a series of water colours of the entire alphabet (2). On completing his calligraphic monograms for the royal family, Forsberg was appointed Graphic Artist to the Swedish court. He received an honorary Ph.D. from Uppsala University in 1983.

In 1982, as Chairman of the Swedish Dermatological Society, I succeeded in talking Erik Forsberg into designing a logotype for us. His commission was supposed to be a calligraphic presentation of the initials SDS together with



the foundation year 1901. Forsberg showed some apprehension with regard to the two S's, in his opinion a difficult letter when forming a monogram: "Bokstaven S kan också bereda svårigheter. Man bygger upp en parallellverkan med staplarna, och detta får bilda stommen kring vilken slingorna får sväva ut. Det kan då bli svårt att få den slingrande rörelsen i S att gå parallellt med en rakare stapel." (1).

In my mind, this commission involved a straightforward symmetrical design. Thus, Forsberg gave me a surprise when he presented his proposed monogram with the year 1901 on the left side. This was necessary, he said, for the equilibrium of the group of letters. "Ibland får man en känsla av att gruppen faller framåt eller bakåt. Då gäller det att lägga till en liten detalj, som återställer intrycket av balans" (1). At his insistence, I covered this detail with my thumb and found, of course, that he was right.

The logotype was accepted by the Swedish Dermatological Society in 1983. When the society changed its name in 1990 so that the initials became SSDV, there was discussion of whether the logotype had to be abandoned. Because of the artistic value as well as for historical reasons, it was decided to keep the SDS logotype. (In fact, during the first 42 years of the society, its name was "Dermatologiska Sällskapet i Stockholm", so the same initials were pertinent at the time.)

In the Lund University Library retrospective exhibition on Karl-Erik Forsberg's graphic art, also in 1983, the SDS logotype was included (3).

### References

1. Forsberg K-E, Forsberg G. Exlibris monogram och andra märken. P.A. Norstedt & Söners Förlag, Stockholm 1981.
2. Forsberg K-E, Forsberg G. Mina bokstäver. Wiken 1983.
3. Grafisk form. Karl-Erik Forsberg. Lunds Universitetsbibliotek 2-31 mars 1983.