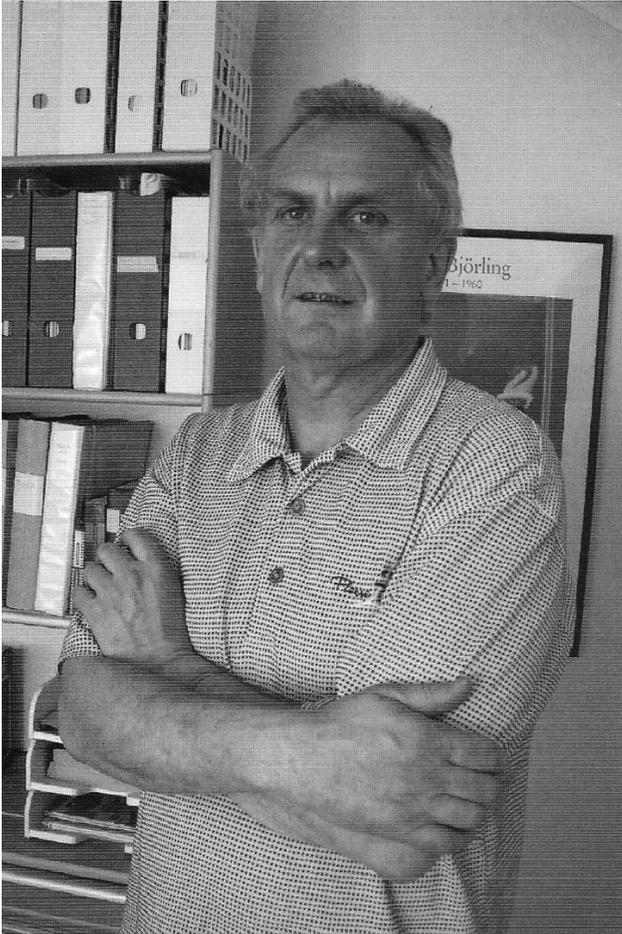


# Jan-Olof Damberg: the new Curator steps up



Jan-Olof Damberg, Curator

Jan-Olof has been a considerable presence in our lives and in the life of the JB Museum for the last six years. Every Summer he has joined Harald in greeting visitors, responding to email, making presentations and managing the many administrative chores of a small museum. During the more financially flush years of the past, Jan-Olof was often joined in the Summer by the extremely tall Roger Alderstrand (discoverer of an enormous number of performances by the young Björling boys in the Swedish hinterlands), but at the end, it is Jan-Olof who is putting his DNA into the Museum. Every year has seen him grow in enthusiasm and expertise, and we have all come to admire his quiet competence and unflinching good humor.

The new curator of the Jussi Björling Museum spent his first 8-week stint in the Museum in the Spring of 1999. One could say the rest is history, but that's too flippant and ignores the unexpected routes that Jan-Olof and many others have taken to the places where we ultimately find ourselves.

Jan-Olof's work life began at a major Swedish forestry-management company. Although nearly 40, he was then motivated to start university in Uppsala, and graduated with a degree in history and cultural studies in 1999. He searched for a job in publishing, but the consolidation in publishing

was going on in Sweden as it was in the US, and there simply weren't any jobs to be had. That was the spur that propelled Jan-Olof to call Harald at the JB Museum for his first temporary work assignment.

But temporary and very limited is what it was, alas. Damberg went back to forestry, and then to a local teaching job until 2003, when he began his annual Summer guide service at the Museum. As the years have gone by, Jan-Olof has become more deeply involved in Jussi's life and art, and has presented a large number of programs during the regular museum season (as well as during various Congresses and to the Scandinavian Sällskap) on subjects as varied as Jussi and sports, and Jussi's concerts at Skansen; his choice of subjects and approach have provided a productive counterpoint to Harald's own curatorial style.

Local area residents also know Jan-Olof as the man who several years ago rescued a drowning dog from a frozen lake, when the dog had fallen through the ice. Jan-Olof leaped in right after the dog, at considerable risk to his own life, and managed to drag the dog to safety. He and the dog are still friends. ■