

Chapter 47 : “The Entourage”

In 1968, during university studies, the following was considered CG's “circle”: Prince Bertil, Carl Adam Lewenhaupt, Ameli Bagge, Meta Bergqvist, Christina Wachtmeister, Carl Johan Smith, Charlotte Arver & Anders Ihre, Madeleine Bussler, Eva Persson, Hans-Eric von der Groeben, Fredrik Skiöldebrand, Eva Treschow and Carl Olof Sturén.¹ They were family, childhood friends, schoolmates and friends of friends.

Then the circuit grew. In 1969 it consisted of about 100 people. Of the 25 closest friends, 23 studied and two interned: Eleven studied economics at the university, five attended business school, four studied law, two studied political science, one studied architecture. The two who did not study were Carl Adam Lewenhaupt and Anders Philipson. Fourteen of the 25 were sons of directors, three of landowners, two of officers, and the others of either publisher, lawyer, ship owner, engineer, architect and musician. High bourgeoisie thus, with a sprinkling of nobility.² To compare with 50 nobles who graduated from one of the national boarding schools around the same time: 12 became landowners, nine graduated in business administration, six in civil engineering, four in medicine and four in law.³ This is the Swedish establishment.

1969 four members of the old gang took part in an interview. It was his schoolmates since Broms Carl Johan Smith, Carl Kleman and Johan Beckman and his coach and “adjutant” since the age of 10, captain Bengt-Herman Nilsson. Everyone had positive if not very specific things to say about CG: An extremely good companion, unsentimental, slightly romantic, realistic, a sense of duty, an interest in nature, economically minded, a really good photographer and with an ability to enjoy life, stylish cars and good food. CG was naturally interested in girls, but it was not enough that they were beautiful. His future wife would be a girl with style that was also fun, pleasant and had something to say. And then CG was mischievous. Nilsson recalled a number of episodes in which CG refused to take advantage on his royalty. CG always took the blame for his own and others' antics, stood in line and expected to be treated like everyone else.⁴

When CG became king in 1971, the court called his friends and informed them that he could no longer be called Tjabo. He was now king and should be treated as such. In particular they were expected to be loyal. CG as a private person died that year and was replaced by a paragon of virtue: Energetic, dutiful, stubborn, loyal, judicious, serious, frugal & pleasant.⁵ When turning 50 they described as stubborn, natural, straight, honest, sincere, frugal, educated, quick to decision, loyal & humorous.⁶ Comparing the lists 1971-1996 CG is no longer dutiful or serious. It may be an over-interpretation, but other data also suggest a change in personality around the 50s.

Everybody was not happy with the “new” CG. In 1974 his circle had shrunk to a number of party buddies: Tore Bergengren & Björn Kreuger residing in Switzerland, Anders Lettström, Carl Johan Winberg, Anders “Aje” Philipson, Carl Adam “Noppe” Lewenhaupt, the brothers

¹ Kronprins Carl Gustafs cirkel. Hänt i Veckan, 1968:11.

² Gösta Ollén. Kronprinsens umgänge. Expressen: Reflex, 1969-04-30.

³ Lili-Anne Rundblad. Adliga strategier : en studie av adelns yrkesval och utbildning i Sverige 1960-1998. Stockholms universitet, institutionen för ekonomisk historia, 1999.

⁴ Margit Fjellman. Sådan är kronprinsen, del 1. Hemmets veckotidning, 1969:48.

⁵ Bengt Michanek. Här är kronprinsens kompisar. Allers, 1972:53.

⁶ Herman Lindqvist & Elisabeth Tarras-Wahlberg. Carl XVI Gustaf - Porträtt i tiden. Ekerlids förlag, 2006.

Carl and Gustav Banér and Erik “Jejje” Brodin. It is these that are mentioned in the writings at the time of CG's courtship of Silvia.⁷ If they ever spoke about CG I have not found the article. Their silence has been interpreted as meaning that unmentionable things are going on but probably they are only afraid of being excluded from the circle. This was commented on in 1975 as the demands on the circle of acquaintances had increased for many reasons when CG became king. It was no longer a gang of friends but a royal gang whose *raison d'être* was CG in person. The recruitment base narrowed. You had to have the same interests as CG, a lot of free time and money - a lot of money - because CG never paid out of his own pocket. CG set the rules: Absolute discretion! Full loyalty! One hundred percent honesty! The secrecy increased. This had both to do with CG's safety and with his aversion to publicity. This wasn't anathema to the group. They too wanted to have a private life and the shortage of news made their relationship with CG seem more interesting than it was, which suited them well.

Anders Lettström held a semi-official position as spokesman for the royal gang. “[He is] the gang's diplomat. It is often he who gets the brunt when someone outside tries to penetrate. He has an incredible ability to say no and 'it's impossible' in an incredibly nice way.”⁸ 2011 Lettström's fall from grace was thus all the greater when he had to take the fall for CG's schenanigans.

It stands to reason that there should exist a serious grouping in CG's surroundings, but it has not been possible to identify which ones it would be. Silvia seems to be the most serious member of the group and from the beginning moderately fond of CG's party pals although she tolerated the croquet club - which, however, by then had stopped playing croquet and only met to have fun. CG thinks his business acquaintances help him stay in touch with reality - always a problem for a person in CG's position.

In 2001, another list of CG's closest friends was published: Carl Adam “Noppe” Lewenhaupt, Anders Lettström, Christer Tegnér, Stefan Persson, Anders Wall, Hans Eric “Jejje” Brodin, Johan Åkerhielm, Anders “Aje” Philipson, Christer Gustafsson, Kenny Bräck, Torgils Bonde, Erik Lallerstedt, Stig Strand, Björn Åkerlund, Fredrik Ramberg, Fred Wennerholm & Archie Hamilton. The criteria seem to be a long acquaintance, money and interest in food, parties, hunting, cars, sailing & downhill skiing. “The King is known for his curiosity and tremendous social skills. He loves to meet new people, but from there to becoming friends with the king is a long step. It takes an incredibly long time before you enter the inner circle around the king. It's about you being introduced by one of his friends and so on. Everyone knows that it is good for your business to be associated with the king as a friend but of course it is not something you talk loudly about. Basic rule number one is not to talk about your relationship with the king. Everything should be handled discreetly and neatly. Many have tried to bask in the glory of the king but been excluded from his circle of friends in 10 seconds flat.”⁹

The exception is Bertil Nordström, skipper (!), food dealer & general money man: Bertil “Bersan” Nordström lives at Beckholmen on Djurgården, in a house that is rented out by the Royal Djurgården Administration on behalf of the King. The King and Bersan have known each other since their youth. ... The King and “Bersan” are best friends and when they meet, it's to socialize like two middle-aged men usually do. They sit in separate couches with a beer, watching football and talking. They can talk about everything and the king knows that what he says stays there. Unlike the other

⁷ Maude Edgahr. Kungens åtta bästa vänner. Lektör, 1974:42.

⁸ Per Gudmundsson. Kungens hårda krav på vänkretsen. Kvällsposten, 1975-11-16.

⁹ Johan T Lindwall & Tomas Carlson. Kungens kompisar. Expressen, 2001-06-04.

friends, “Bersan” doesn't care if he belongs to the inner circles or not. A court position does not interest him in the slightest, so he is actually one of the few who openly dares to hold a different opinion from the king.¹⁰

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No one in CG's circle of friends has had a prominent role in society. This has been explained by the fact that their old fashioned highly conservative views and lifestyle differs to much from society in general, a form of political discrimination thus, but also that Swedish politics is organized this way: Swedish businessmen rarely play at politics.

CG, his circle of friends and their women have socialized for a very long time. As they are the same age, they have married and had children around the same time. All are godfathers and godmothers of each other's children. They have also been unfaithful to and remarried each other. Their children socialize with each other. However, the descriptions of their socializing are not very exciting. For example, they are invited to Solliden where the women take care of the children while the men go fishing. They go skiing together, they hold parties with each other, etc. The parties can be quite lively though. While CG was young enough for such, he has hung upside down in the chandelier at Solliden's guest house singing serenades.

It takes much before someone is completely excluded from the circle of friends. This has less to do with CGs' loyalty to old friends than with their concerns about what they have to tell journalists if they are rejected. The strategy appears to be effective because no one in CG's immediate circle of friends seems to have told of their experiences. There is probably also an economic aspect. Like the paparazzi images, the Swedish market is too small for it to pay off. Since no one officially disappears, the circle of acquaintances becomes something of a midden that no one knows in detail any more. New ones are added but old ones remain on the periphery. The latest addition is the businessman Bertil Hult, who has been able to use his dyslexia as a door opener and literally buy himself in by inviting CG and family to grand parties. As I have said, good economy is a condition for belonging to CG circle. Hult, however, appears to have disappeared into the periphery in 2011 along with Anders Philipson and others.

Silvia acts as a bouncer. She learned the hard way, however, that it was CG's circle of friends, not hers. Nobody told her about the affair with Camilla Henemark until she read about it in the newspapers.

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The “razzmatazz gang” within the circle of friends has been much written about. Some presentations:

Carl Adam ”Noppe” Lewenhaupt (1947-2017)

Noppe Lewenhaupt is the son of the chief chamberlain and count Gösta Knutsson Lewenhaupt (1912-1996), CEO of Swedish IBM Inc (later working chairman), and the baroness Christina Louise “Sicky” De Geer af Leufsta (1917-2004). Lewenhaupt is Sweden's oldest surviving noble family. His father owned the entailed estate Geddeholm outside Västerås which ran agriculture and forestry. There was a 1963

¹⁰ Eva Åström. Grattis Kungen. Svensk Damtidning, 2006:17.

parliament resolution that the then owners of the entailed estates would be the last, but the legislation allowed that it was transformed into a so-called entailed company which for Geddeholm occurred in 1976/77. Noppe however sold the property in 1997, the year after his father's death. According to one version because of the inheritance tax – he would have had to cut up the farm. According to another version because he was childless. It had been five generations in the family.

Noppe had a messy schooling. He attended high school a year at Sigtuna but was expelled in 1967. He has interned at department stores in various parts of Europe and advanced to middle management positions at NK, Harrods, Marks & Spencer and Bloomingdales. On behalf of NK, he was two years in London and one year in New York. In 1979 he took over the farm. In 1986 he started a call centre for telephone sales after American model which was very successful and which he sold to Telia-Sonera in 1997. Since then he has sat on boards and been able to use his name in different contexts. He is very interested in hunting and cars.

Noppe was married 1978-1982 to Ann Kerstin Katarina Svanstein (1958-), 1983-1995 to actress Anna Kristin “Grynet” Mollvig (1942-), 1997-2001 to Maria Susanne Johansson-Ekman (1951-) and from 2004 to South Korean Lee Haeng-Wha (1959-) at the Ralph-Lauren store at NK. The divorce from “Grynet” in 1996 was widely published, but Grynet herself kept quiet.

Grynet was known for statements such as “Men are significantly overrated. But that of course she “would miss them if they disappeared”. Noppe had apparently passed the eye of the needle. She claimed they had fallen for each other because they had the same kind of humour. They were also both intensely interested in sex. The motto of both seems to have been “A day without nookie is wasted.” The divorce was on Noppes' initiative. Grynet later delivered half an explanation for it: “But one thing Grynet is aware of and grateful for. When she married 'Noppe' 12 years ago, she did not lose her soul to the countess title. Somewhere inside her there was always the struggling lonely mother who never had a thought that a rich Count would appear on his white knight and solve her problems.”¹¹ Perhaps Noppe tired of that attitude but more likely is that she was past her expiration date. Grynet: “It went well until I turned fifty.”

Anders “Aje” Philipson (1943-)

Aje Philipson is the son of businessman Gunnar Philipson (1883-1970) and model Märtha Möller (1917-1997). His father became wealthy at importing luxury cars Chrysler, DKW and later Daimler-Benz. He also had a factory for the final assembly. The money was invested in real estate and “one of the country's foremost silver collections - stored in old shoe boxes at home”. The assets were at the peak valued at over half a billion, making the family the richest in Sweden. Aje's personal fortune after the settlement in 1998 amounted to 78 million, which he in 2004 had increased to 128 million.

In 1964 Aje graduated from Norra Latin with a lower school certificate. He then interned for a year at Daimler-Benz in Germany and studied business administration

¹¹ Svensk Damtidning, 1995:37. Citat ur: tidningen Viva. Odaterad.

for a year in the United States. His parents lived in Switzerland. When his father died, he expected to take charge: "Now I will personally lead the company. I am aware that there are deficiencies in my formal training as a leading businessman. But I will surround myself with experienced advisers."¹² Instead he was bought out of the company in 1971 by his mother who had the majority share. Aje and the siblings each received a 15 percent share.

In 1972-73 he lent a lot of money to the director Sven Stenheim at Trygg Hansa who ran a kind of ponzi scheme where those who invested were promised 10 percent dividends each month. 30-35 people lent out about 40 million, Aje 8 million. Only 16 brought charges. This seems to have been because most of the money was untaxed. The trial took place in 1974. That year Aje gave his last interview. He hates the press even more than CG. In 1989, after a long litigation, Aje recovered 6.5 million.

From 1971 onwards, Aje devoted himself to a frenetic, albeit aimless, lounge lizard life. He had enough money to do as he pleased. He is supposed to have said, "I'm not going to get an ulcer when I don't have to. It's better, healthier and more fun to live the way I do." - "The cottage on Ingarö is the most sacred thing I have. There I can relax and be myself."¹³ - "I like parties. All kinds of parties. And I am one of those who always have fun." His attempt to become part of the international jet set somehow failed. However, he adopted many of their habits. As a person, he was regarded as unique to Sweden. The country's only luxury item. All other rich people in Sweden are workaholics. Aje now deals with wealth management. He owns the estate Skenäs in Vingåker in Sörmland where he stores a large car collection, some 50 luxury and sports cars. Large areas were 1984-2009 fenced for raising hunting animals for rich tourists: Red deer, mutton sheep, fallow deer, boar and bison. Like CG, he is a hobby farmer.

An equal-age comrade described him in 1988 as the Philipson family's charmer: "Medium-gifted, calm and pleasant. Actually, I am surprised that he has been able to keep such a spiritual balance without having anything to do. But he keeps his toys in order, they're well-polished and he's somehow anchored in reality in a way that very few idle rich kids succeed in. Not very cultivated - a slightly more well-dressed Björn Borg type."¹⁴

Aje was 1967-1982 married with the model Grete Qviberg (1944-), 1986-2000 with the model Gisela Schöön (1962-) and from 2004 with the Syrian-born weather girl on TV3 Bathina El-Soudi (1978-). He has a total of nine children, three with each wife. In 2008, Aje published a picture book about his family life and his party life. Aje has strong opinions on his family life and was for a while in the weeklies known as the "family philosopher". A friend: "In the beginning he was a shy, almost reclusive person, who had to force himself to act natural in company. It was only when he met Grethe that he was kind of delivered and the shyness slowly began to disappear. But still [1980] it happens that he sits among comrades at parties and hardly utters a word."¹⁵

¹² Bengt Michanek. Så lever Aje - vår mesta lyxlirare. Fib/Aktuellt, 1976:45.

¹³ Husmodern, 1980:15.

¹⁴ Claes J B Löfgren. Fram för lilla Märta. Månadstidningen Z, 1998:9.

¹⁵ Husmodern, 1980:15.

- * Your first husband, Aje, with whom you were married for 18 years, is one of those blamed for the king's supposed life among "coffee girls". What did you see in him?
- He was young and unspoiled when we met.
- * Have he and his friends ever grown up?
- No, I do not think so.
- * That girl culture started on Aje's sailboat "Orm af Ingarö" (you can see old pictures of the king on it in the film about Sandhamnsligan) That boat was already in your time. Were you aware of what went on board and did you think it didn't matter? [They hired young guys who went around in the ports with printed invitations for parties, mostly to the girls.]
- If I had known that I would not have thought it was OK.
- * Who left whom?
- I couldn't take it any more. And we developed in different directions.
- * Did you have a marriage contract, and is it true that he didn't speak to you for 20 years?
- Yes. I think the problem was that of male pride.¹⁶

Aje is a member of the club PILSK which according to a source should be interpreted as Boys at the End of Life, probably a fitting name. A lovingly critical blog post about Aje: "What fascinates me [most] are the king's friends. Yesterday I stood in line behind Aje Philipson at 7-eleven. He had a hot pink lamb wool shirt. How courageous and completely handsome. I have also spotted him in red pants and blue skipper jacket, like ten years before all of Östermalm started to wear it. I love when older gentlemen in the upper class walk down Nybrogatan in red pants and look pompous and full of themselves at the same time as "I've got the power!" plays in their inner jukebox."¹⁷

Anders Gustaf Lettström (1948-)

Anders Lettström is the son of the architect Gustaf Lettström (1913-1999) and Ingrid Berthner (1921-2005). His father was a successful architect. The son is a businessman: trained architect, lawyer and economist. From 1972, he worked as an architect in his father's firm and then in various administrative positions. In 1986 he became CEO of Reinhold real estate och building AB and in 1990 Reinhold City AB. The latter leveraged its property portfolio in Stockholm to buy additional properties abroad, which in 1992 ended badly. In 1999, he sold his shares to CB Richard Ellis AB and was a board member during the transition. All his later assignments ended in 2011: From 2003 to 2011 he was a board member of the event company 2Entertain AB, from 2006 to 2011 chairman of the subsidiary Oscarsteatern AB and from 2006 to 2011 a board member of Reinhold Polska AB.

Lettström graduated from Östra real. (His student procession was long talked about. A lightly dressed Pia Degermark picked him up lying in a hearse.) The family has long owned Sköldnora kungagård in Upplands Väsby with good hunting grounds. Lettström, like CG, is very interested in this. From 2007 to 2011 he was chairman of the Swedish section of the World Scout Foundation after Sven Ragnar.

¹⁶ Cecilia Hagen. Det här är Grete Qviberg. Expressen, 2010-11-28.

¹⁷ Kungavännerna. Erinas blogg, 2006-05-10.

In 1978-1990 Lettström was married to Finnish student Eva Marianne Dahlbäck (1947-) and from 1991 to Inga Christina Hjärpe (1960-), head of Diös Stockholm Properties with whom he has two children. One or both of the children attended Lundsberg's boarding school.

According to evil-minded tongues, Lettström makes facelifts, visits the solarium to hide a sickly paleness and dyes the hair.

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Regardless of what one thinks of Thomas Sjöberg's and Deanne Rauscher's conclusions, "The Reluctant Monarch" and its aftermath suggest something unhealthy in the relations of this trio and CG. Too much secrecy. Too little self-esteem. Probably it can be explained by all four having in common to be upper class on the skids. Sweden has in recent decades had the world's highest social mobility culminating in the abolition of nobility as a legal concept on July 1, 2003. It is not only the working class that has become bourgeois, but also the nobility - both those of the blood, the robe and the money - it is cramped in the middle. CG and his friends from youth are successful parents' less successful sons. But if so be it, it is imperative to go out in style. The remaining group around the royal house, Sweden's last traditionalists, really stands out. I refer interested to the subject's canon "The Decline and Fall of the British Aristocracy" by David Cannadine in 1990.