

## Joran Jermer

### Professional

After graduating with a Master's degree in chemical engineering from Lund University in August 1974 I was employed by The Swedish Wood Preservation Institute in Stockholm. The institute was founded just a few months before with the aim to initiate and co-ordinate research, work with information, education and standardization related to wood protection and the wood preserving industry and I was the first full-time employed.

At that time I knew virtually nothing about wood preservation and the wood preserving industry. The only experience I had was that our small summerhouse on the island of Öland (2<sup>nd</sup> biggest island in Sweden and situated off the south-east coast in the Baltic sea) was painted with a product called Kreosot-Cuprinol and my father used to maintain it every 5-7 years or so. Later I learnt that my grandparents were neighbours of the founder of the Bitus wood preservation plant, today one of the biggest plants in Sweden. So there was some connection to wood protection after all!

Anyway, after much support from my mentor Prof Björn Henningsson, at the Royal College of Forestry I soon learnt the "the world of wood protection". I quickly became involved in international work. I became responsible for the secretariat of the Nordic Wood Preservation Council (NWPC) in 1975 and became a member of the Swedish delegation of CEN/TC 38 in 1979, the committee within the European Standardization Committee responsible for wood protection.



Within the NWPC I served as secretary from 1975 till 1994 and then again from 1997 till 2000. I was a member of the "Council" from 1983 till 1994 and was chair during 1983-84 and 1991-92.



In 1988 I became chair of a CEN working group with the challenging task to develop a common European standard for preservative-treated wood. As I had been deeply involved in the Nordic development of classification of treated wood, quality control and certification schemes and conditions for approval of wood preservatives, this task was perfect for me, I thought. After six years of hard work – standardization requires tremendous patience and there is no quick fix – the European Standard EN 351 was issued. Although nothing is perfect, and everything can be improved still, but I am proud of my achievements on a Swedish, Nordic and European level with respect to standards and schemes for quality control of treated wood.



I am slowly phasing out of my CEN responsibilities. Colleague Mats Westin has just taken over my Working Group, but I'm still chairing a Task group, responsible for preparing a revision of EN 351.

Via Björn Henningsson I got to know the IRG. Björn and the Director of the Wood Preservation Institute, Mr Lennart Borup, were made aware of the fact that Mr Ron Cockcroft, the Secretary-General of the IRG, was no longer allowed to look after IRG interests during his normal work hours at the Princes Risborough Laboratory in UK. They

investigated the possibilities to offer to host the Secretariat at the premises of the Swedish Wood Preservation Institute. They found a solution and in January 1979, the IRG Secretariat was in place in Sweden.

The fact that the Secretariat was already in Sweden and physically located next door to my office most certainly contributed to my appointment to Secretary-General when Ron retired at the end of 1988.



I became director of the Wood Preservation Institute on 1 July 1980. The activities there had its peak during 1992-93 with three colleagues besides myself: Dr Marie-Louise Edlund, Mr Kent Nilsson (who tragically died in 2015 at age 55) and Mrs Ulla Britt Kronberg. Because of less funding from the Swedish government, Marie-Louise and Kent were made redundant in 1993. This made me very upset but my efforts to save them were in vain and as a result thereof I was fired and left the institute on 30 November 1994. Fortunately, SP, the Swedish National Testing and Research Institute in Borås offered me a position to work with recycling/recovery of building materials in general. However, influenced by colleague Mr Ingvar Johansson, head of SP's quality control and certification scheme for treated wood, my focus changed direction and suddenly I was 100% back in wood protection! Some years later Marie-Louise was also employed by SP and the wood protection activities grew considerably. A field test site was established in 1996 and our importance as a research partner increased.

I became Head of Section Materials & Products in 2008, a position I had until end of April last year.



Between 2008 and 2013 I was coordinating two major research projects; the European WoodExter and the national WoodBuild. Both these projects had a strong focus on service life prediction. Pioneering work in this field was done, and both projects have resulted in many spin off activities and projects which is obvious for all IRG members who follow Section 2 activities and the work from Christian Brischke's team in particular.

I became member of the IRG in 1983, but the first IRG conference I attended was IRG11 in Raleigh, North Carolina in 1980, where I also presented my first paper (IRG 80-3134) on remedial treatment of railway sleepers with boric acid. I must admit I was quite nervous then!

Since the conference in 1980, I have attended all IRG conferences except in 1981 (Sarajevo) and in 1986 (Avignon). I have chaired the Local Organizing Committee in connection with the



two Swedish conferences, IRG15 in Ronneby Brunn in 1984 and IRG 44 in Stockholm in 2013. The most spectacular memory from the conference in Ronneby Brunn was the theft of one companion's jewelry from a hotel safety box! This was of course reported in the local newspaper but nothing about the conference itself. Even more spectacular was that perhaps half a year later a policeman called and said they had found the jewelry!

I have served during 11 IRG Presidents. I hope all of them agree, but I believe I have had a very good relationship and collaboration with all of them.



However, I would particularly mention the period during 1990-92 at the beginning of my career as IRG Secretary-General when Hubert Willeitner was President, Tony Bravery was



Vice President and Gérald Ozanne was the Finance chair. This was a very busy time when the Group re-structured and included the preparation of the Procedures Manual (all guidelines). All four of us could meet rather often for informal meetings in Paris in connection with CEN activities. Once we even met at Gérald's summerhouse in Normandie.



I was supposed to retire from the position as Secretary-General last year and was duly celebrated at the final Plenary and banquet. However, unfortunate circumstances at SP led to another year in service. From July 1 this year I will finally retire but be at disposal for my successor Mats Westin with advice and support if needed.



It has been a great job and a pleasure to serve the Group for nearly 29 years. Meeting people from around the world, the friendship, the "big family feeling" and true international spirit have been highly appreciated. Last but not least, having the opportunity to travel and visit many interesting places have been a tremendous privilege.

### Education

After graduation from high school in my home town 1969, I left for Lund and studied chemical engineering at Lund University. I graduated with a Masters degree in 1974. During the summer 1969 and one year during 1971-72 I did my military service in the Engineering Corps. Additionally, I took some odd courses at Stockholm University Law School and School of Business Economy after moving to Stockholm for the job at the Wood Preservation Institute.



### Family and interests

I was born on 18 September 1950 and grew up in the small town of Nybro in "The Kingdom of Glass" in south eastern Sweden. I have a younger brother, Stellan, who has attended a couple of IRG meetings as a companion.

I have always been interested in sports and play tennis almost every week, preferably doubles with a couple of old guys like myself. Additionally, I was one of the founding fathers of a local tennis club, for which I am presently the treasurer. When I was younger I used to play football and ice hockey and practiced cross-country skiing whenever it was snowy enough. When I was 35 I took up downhill skiing. This was a new, exciting experience for me that later on took our family to the Swedish mountains for a number of years on winter vacations.



Now, as semi-retired I hope to devote more time on Öland where we have built a new and bigger summer house. It is well insulated which will make it possible to use more or less all year round.

I married my high school love Eva in June 1985. We re-united on New Year's Eve in 1983 after being more than 12 years apart from each other for various reasons. Eva retired last year after a busy life as a family doctor at a health centre in Stockholm. We have three children, Tomas (born 1986), adopted from Colombia 1987, Karin (born 1988) and Kristina (born 1990). No grand-children yet, but a grand-dog, Karin's little



Click on thumbnails to view enlarged

Yorkshire terrier Opie.



Tomas is presently looking for a job, preferably something that has to do with fashion, his big interest. Karin has a Bachelors degree in geography but is continuing her studies, now more towards biology and environment. Kristina graduated from Lund University School of Architecture just recently and is now also looking for a job.

### Additional Images

