

# To choose a king!

## Bernadotte and Örebro 1810

An exhibition at the Örebro County Museum

15/5 2010 – 14/1 2011

200 years ago the French Lord Steward Jean Baptiste Bernadotte was elected to be the heir to the Swedish throne at an extraordinary Parliament in Örebro. How did it come to pass that a small country town became the focus of this exceptional national political event?

With powerful historical artefacts, illustrations and recreated sceneries, the Örebro County Museum tells the story of this historical event.

### The exhibition includes these themes:

- The events that led up to the election
- The town of Örebro and its inhabitants
- The Parliament in Örebro
- Democracy and different forms of government
- Bernadotte – up close and personal
- The style of Karl Johan, food and fashion

### The background

The events leading up to the election in 1810 is a dramatic piece of Swedish history. It includes some spectacular ingredients: the murder of a king, war, a prince's sudden death and the lynching of the Lord Steward in the streets of Stockholm. It all leads up to an extraordinary Parliament in the small town of Örebro.

### Örebro in 1810

Örebro was at the beginning of the 1800's a town of just over 3 000 inhabitants. It was a small country town, in the backwater of the main events of the day. A place where pigs and hens ran free in the narrow, muddy streets and where there was a tavern in almost every street corner. When the Parliament arrived in Örebro it meant that the town's population temporarily rose with almost 1 000 people. A model of how the central parts of the town looked like in 1810 helps to visualize what the incoming deputies and their entourage encountered.

### Who has power over daily life?

We meet the people who lived in Örebro, both rich and poor; maids and daughters, the bourgeoisie and the upper class. Their ability to influence society was very varied. In the Parliament only parts of Swedish society was represented and most people were without representation. A central and important aspect of the exhibition is: Who has power over daily life? With the historical perspective in mind, questions about what democracy is are raised. Issues that is as valid and important today as they were then.

### Jean Baptiste Bernadotte

Finally, we meet Jean Baptiste Bernadotte, later king Karl XIV Johan. A Frenchman who hated Swedish food and the country's cold climate. A king who ruled with a firm hand and strengthened his own personal power in relation to the Parliament.