

The story as it got known to the world is fascinating, but Karl Kroyer did not know about Uncle Scrooge's yacht and did not copy Donald Duck. The ship, however, did sink in the harbour. It could not be raised by pontoons and a floating crane able to do the job was no closer than Sidney. The ship was insured by a Danish company, who asked Kroyer for assistance. Kroyer presented the problem to his staff.

During my lunch hour I bought a sack of polystyrol spheres used for thermal insulation and my idea of using entrapped air was demonstrated in bench scale the very same day. Karl Kroyer got convinced and a couple of weeks later an airlift from Berlin to Kuwait with non-expanded polystyrol was in full swing. On the quay the polystyrol pellets were expanded, hardened and pumped down into the hull of the ship. The invention was later sold to a Dutch salvage company Van den Tag and has been used in salvage operations in awkward places of the world.

Kroyer gave me a check and got me on the board of the "Danish Inventors Association" when it was formed a few years later.



Images from 'The Sunken Yacht', © 1949 Walt Disney Corporation.

Since ping pong balls are buoyant bodies, and they were fed to the yacht through a tube, the Donald Duck episode discloses the same technique as that which is claimed in the patents. Consequently, the Duck story has to be considered novelty-destroying prior art: given the story, any Patent Office would have rejected Krøyer's patent application.

It remains an open question whether the Dutch patent office in fact used this document as prior art to refuse the patent application. Regrettably the files of the cases have been destroyed by now, and the Dutch patent attorney who represented the inventor has passed away several years ago.

According to some sources, Krøyer himself remembered the Donald Duck story from his youth. This is incorrect as Krøyer (born 21 August 1914) was 45 by the time the Duck story was published.

## Epilogue

The freighter Al Kuwait was towed to Denmark. Dead animals and millions of polystyrol spheres were dumped somewhere on Sealand. An autumn storm, however, spread the spheres - some all the way to Sweden.

## Karl Kroyer

Karl Kroyer - The Danish inventor of the continuous glucose process - born 21. August 1914.

During and after the Second World War Karl Kroyer was challenged by the shortage of supplies. Sweets were among the goods in shortage and he studied his grandmother's encyclopaedia to learn how to make it. The described procedure was a batch autoclave process. The encyclopaedia, however, was old and the process outdated, he imagined. He believed that "nowadays" a machine takes starch in one end and glucose out the other. G.A.L.Thorsen - an inventive acquaintance - had just succeeded making the well known kitchen sink from a stainless steel plate in a one step press and he was also the person who solved the technical problems by building the first converter. This prototype proved successfully at the Ceres Breweries, Aarhus and hundreds of converters were distributed world wide.

Karl Kroyer attracted young people to his research and engineering centre in Aarhus. Five years I worked in his lab before he moved the glucose section to Copenhagen and I choose to quit.