

# CoScan Magazine

2014/1



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## **Confederation of Scandinavian Societies of Great Britain and Ireland**

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**Next deadline for contributions to the Magazine: 1 October 2014**

Send to [coscan.mag@mail.com](mailto:coscan.mag@mail.com)



# From the Chairman of the Editorial Board

Iain Robertson



Regrettably, this will be my last submission as Chairman of the Editorial Board. Why, it may be asked, withdraw after so short a time? The answer is that life as a retired person can become very complicated (don't believe the myth about retirement being a golden autumn!). I find that there are so many demands on my time that I cannot fulfil them all. I will not be leaving the Board, however, just playing a more minor role.

And there is good news: Louise Sørensen of the University of Sheffield Centre for Nordic Studies has agreed to join us. The editorial work will continue to be done by members of the Board, and Brita Green has agreed to take over to chair our meetings.

Some articles in this issue look back to the Viking age. One covers the current exhibition at the British Museum, which some of our readers will have seen, while another features a recent rune-stone discovery in Orkney. Our guest writer John Toy tells the complicated story of the 11<sup>th</sup> century St Sigfrid (who is the 'patron

saint' of YASS), and Peter Addyman draws our attention to recent discoveries of a Viking boat burial in Scotland. Additionally, of course, there are the usual features such as Anna Sophie's Kitchen and contributions from those who have been given CoScan Travel Awards.

It has been my privilege to serve as chairman of a board consisting of such gifted people. However even the most gifted people cannot produce material out of nowhere, so I hope that all our readers will consider whether they might have something to say which would interest our readership. We look forward to receiving your contributions.

## New to the Editorial Board

Dr Louise Sørensen is a Research Associate at the University of Sheffield. Louise has a background in Scandinavian languages and history and is particularly interested in how we uncover the experiences of ordinary people in the past. Her PhD thesis investigated English phrasebooks and 'teach yourself' manuals for Scandinavians in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Following that she worked on *Ola Nordmann Goes West*, a project applying virtual world technology to research into Norwegian emigration to America in the late 1800s (see CoScan Magazine 2013/2), and a project that explores the experience of those who have come across the North Sea to live in the UK in modern times. Until August stories can be sent to: [l.m.sorensen@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:l.m.sorensen@sheffield.ac.uk). Above all, with Louise on the Board, we will have a good injection of youth and new ideas.

# Message from the President

Mark Elliott

One of the excitements of CoScan is our constant change of venue. Last year, at this time, I was able to write of the joys of Tallinn in Estonia. 2014 was a year for the Annual General Meeting to be a home fixture, and the Norwegian Scottish Association (NSA) nobly took on the task of arranging a programme for us in their home city of Edinburgh.

Around fifty of us, representing thirteen different societies, were gathered for the occasion. Almost as if we were in a foreign city (and there were inevitably a few comments to the effect that it might indeed soon be so, with the Scottish referendum less than five months away and the outcome in the balance), we were welcomed at a diplomatic reception given by the Norwegian Consul-General, taken around some of the main historical sites and viewpoints by a highly-professional guide (an NSA member), and presented with a bag of local delicacies. Even the sun shone, now and then. We met old friends and made a few new ones, in a very happy atmosphere.

But what struck me most was the warmth of our formal meeting, the AGM. I heard comments from some of those not familiar with CoScan events about how interesting it all was, and at the same time how relaxed. Things are clearly happening – nine new member societies over the last 24 months, a new-look website well on in the



development process, and a new recruit for the magazine's Editorial Board. Our finances are reasonably healthy, and we are beginning to attract advertisers and perhaps even sponsors. There was real debate on some issues, and a measure of constructive disagreement.

Most encouraging of all, perhaps, was the brief statement from a new society, the Manchester Swedish, a bare two years old. Its founder told us that half of his 200-plus members are under 35, recruited through the social media and meeting often just for the pleasure of the company. Groups of this kind, with a Scandinavian/Nordic interest, are (he said) now much more commonly found. There is real hope for a vigorous future, if CoScan can adapt to the 21<sup>st</sup> century way of doing things – and we are very willing to learn new ways. As always, we need new blood, new people to take CoScan forward. As always, we shall be delighted to hear from anybody with ideas. I am increasingly confident that we shall find them.

# Chairman's message

Eva Robards



It's good to be Scandinavian in the UK these days. Wherever you look, there is something Nordic to find: in film, literature, music, food. Nordic Noir has become a household name and even has its own magazine, and in the TV series *Scandimania* earlier this year Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall explored 'the happiest countries in the world'.

Riding on this interest in the North, we can be proud to present ourselves and our activities. But at the same time, we should be aware that we can make our own presence stronger by collaboration. Part of this is knowing what's going on in other CoScan organisations, but also joint events are valuable. Since the last issue of the Magazine there have been two events to which CoScan fellow members have been invited: Lucia in York Minster, and the Scandinavian Day at the British Museum. There may be more to come, but above all, let's keep in contact!



*We are sad to report the death  
of three people who worked with  
dedication for CoScan.*

## Poul Hougaard Nielsen (1936-2014)

by Mark Elliott

Of Poul Nielsen's long and active life, only five years were devoted to his work at the centre of CoScan. But in that short time he drove forward a new initiative to expand CoScan's membership, with unremitting and productive vigour, and won universal respect. The news of his death in January 2014, after some years fighting against ill health, saddened us all.

Poul was elected to CoScan's Executive Committee at the Oslo Conference of October 2005, and at the first committee meeting two days after the AGM volunteered himself for the new role of Membership Secretary. CoScan at the time was reeling from the decision of the five Nordic Embassies in London to cease their annual grant to us of £250 each, and developing the concept of individual membership was seen as one way of bridging the financial gap. Increasing the number of affiliated societies was also vitally important. Poul's new role was crucial for our survival.

He tackled it with a determination and persistence which became legendary. Danish by birth, he tended to focus his efforts most sharply on Danish

organisations and individuals, with immediate and considerable success. But no potential target was forgotten, and failure to reply to an approach from Poul simply meant that he went on trying. His sustained effort was extraordinary. Receipts from members and member societies in 2006 were double those of 2005, and the increase was maintained. When Poul decided to retire from his post in 2010, at the AGM coinciding with CoScan's 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary lunch in London, the pattern of CoScan's membership had been transformed.

Through all these trials Poul was a charming and friendly companion, constant in his attendance at CoScan functions, scrupulous in correspondence – the ideal colleague. He will be missed greatly by very many, and not least by his friends in CoScan.

## Jens Peter Rasmussen (1953-2013)

by Eva Robards

Like a Scarlet Pimpernel, Jens Peter Rasmussen was everywhere. He was a member of two of our Societies: the Anglo-Danish Society and SKOL (Scandinavian Klubb of Lincolnshire). He served on the Council of the Anglo-Danish Society and, for example, I saw him co-hosting an event at the Danish Embassy last summer. For CoScan, he was on the Executive Committee, and he was the first recruited member of the Editorial Board of this Magazine. Beside all this, he had his business to run: as

Director of Cabico Ltd (distributor of European cakes in the UK). His work took him travelling around the country, which made it possible sometimes to catch our Scarlet Pimpernel. When caught, he was full of enthusiasm and ideas, many of which have been implemented.

In this Magazine he appeared in print in both issues of 2013: in 2013/1 with a photo showing where the Danish flag fell from the sky in the battle of Tallinn in 1219 and in 2013/2 describing the pleasure of *æbleskiver* and how to make them. The last meeting of the Editorial Board to which he came was only a short time before he eventually had to capitulate to the cancer he had bravely fought for years. We shall miss him – he truly was a great Dane!



Photo: A W Robards

## Dagmar Dahl Cockitt (1946-2013)

by Brita Green

Just as the December issue of the Magazine was going to press, we received the sad news that Dagmar Cockitt had died, much too young.

Dagmar was born on the island of Mors in Limfjorden in North Jutland on 25 May 1946. She was only two when her mother died giving birth to Dagmar's twin sisters. After spending a year as an au-pair in London, Dagmar went to Ribe to study to be a teacher (1966-70). She must have had a soft spot for England, because she returned the year after finishing her training, this time to Birmingham, where she worked in the Danish Food Centre. She met Tony Cockitt in May 1971, and they married two years later and had two daughters.



Tony and Dagmar were both long-standing committee members of the Midlands Scandinavians, and Dagmar was its chairperson for many years. Right from its inception, the CoScan Trust Fund caught her interest and she raised considerable sums of money for it over the years. In the Magazine 2008/1, she wrote about her twenty years plus of fundraising, in the hope of inspiring others: 'It became an annual tradition that we invite members of the Midlands Scandinavians and our friends for some nice food and good company.' It could be morning coffee with home-baked breakfast rolls and Danish pastries, with a 'Bring and buy', or it could be an evening do with a Scandinavian buffet, combined with a raffle. She summarises: 'A little hard work, a lot of enjoyment, and the pleasure of sending a very nice cheque to the Trust Fund.'

Dagmar had joined the Trust Fund subcommittee in the early 1990's, and she took over as treasurer in 2006. Recently, she had willingly begun to take on more and more of the administrative tasks. She was a positive and thoughtful person, always a delight to work with, and we miss her greatly, as a colleague and a friend.



# Societies

## Anglo-Danish Society

by Lisbeth Ehlers, Hon. Secretary



**The History.** The Anglo-Danish Society was founded on 17 December 1924 with the encouragement of Queen Alexandra, the eldest daughter of Denmark's King Christian IX. The Society's royal patrons are HM The Queen and HM The Queen of Denmark. HRH the Duchess of Gloucester GCVO is protector of the Scholarship Programme.

Queen Alexandra was the first to sign the Society's guestbook on 11 April 1925. She died at Sandringham on 20 November that same year. Her son, King George V, signed on 4 February 1926, followed by King Christian X, Queen Alexandrine and Crown Prince Frederik of Denmark – our first royal patrons.

The Society was founded to further understanding between our two nations following the first World War, and what fun it must have been to take part in the big annual dinners, lunches and lectures where guest lists read like pages from *Who's Who*. Members from our two royal families and dignitaries from the worlds of Politics, the Armed Forces, and the Arts were also always present.

A famous ballet dancer, Dame Adeline Genée-Isitt, became our first lady chairman (1931-1933) and regularly entertained members in her London home. Names like Lord Alexander, Clement Attlee, Sir Anthony Eden, Christmas Møller,

Dame Margot Fonteyn, Victor Schiøler and many more spring from the pages.

The Society's latest royal gala dinner took place in 1999 at London's Guildhall to mark our 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary. 17 chairmen will have served the Society when we celebrate our 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary on 3 December 2014 in the presence of our Royal Patron, HM Queen Margrethe II of Denmark.

**The Events.** Today the Society arranges about six annual events for members and their guests. These are mainly of a cultural nature and take place at venues not easily accessible to the public. Thus we have been privileged to visit the gardens at Highgrove House, Madresfield Court near Malvern, Arne Jacobsen's famous St Catherine's College in Oxford, the Møller Centre at Churchill College in Cambridge. The dinner and concert in early February at Drapers' Hall in the City of London has become a popular tradition.

The 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary programme includes a dinner on 18 June at the Regimental Headquarters of the Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment at The Tower of London, whose Colonel in Chief is HM The Queen of Denmark, and on 7 October we revisit The Yehudi Menuhin School in Stoke d'Abernon in Surrey for a guided tour and a concert by the pupils.

*But the most important purpose of our Society as a charity is the support we give to postgraduate students from Denmark and the UK to study in each other's countries:*

**The Scholarships.** It is thought that the Society's charitable work dates back to the time after WWII when The Anglo-Danish Fund paid for British children suffering from tuberculosis to travel to Denmark for treatment at Danish sanatoria. An article in the Society's magazine from June 1953 indicates that 38 children had been cured and were able to return to England.

The first two Anglo-Danish Society scholarships were granted in 1959 thanks to a gift from the Lord Inverforth Endowment Fund. The awardees were a Danish and a British graduate who wished to continue their further education in the other country. The Scholarships amounted to £250 each, which at that time enabled a graduate to study for a period of 6-8 months. An annual gift from the above Fund was received until June 1992 when the capital (£28,435) was donated to the Anglo-Danish Society.

In 1995 the Society was entrusted with the sum of approximately £140,000 by the Royal Danish Embassy to create a trust fund to give British postgraduates the opportunity to further their studies in Denmark for a minimum of 6 months. This money arose as a surplus from collections both in the UK and Denmark to give British veterans the opportunity of participating in the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations in Copenhagen commemorating the Liberation of Denmark. The Denmark Liberation Fund ceased to exist in 2005, when, in

accordance with the Terms, that part of the Fund not allocated was donated to The British Legion Widows' Fund.

For over a decade the Society has benefited from the generosity of The Ove Arup Foundation which finances an annual scholarship of £2000 for postgraduate studies within the built environment.

Since the inception of the Scholarship Programme the Society has awarded 322 scholarships: 204 to Danish and 118 to British graduates (at present these are £2000 each). To mark the Society's 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary a special scholarship will be awarded. The Scholarship Committee is currently in the final selection process for the 2014/2015 awards.

A 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary fundraising campaign is planned to ensure that the Anglo-Danish Society can continue providing unique educational opportunities for ambitious young women and men so that they can make their contribution to the world we live in.

The Society works closely with the Danish Embassy and KFUK (Danish YWCA) in London. It also maintains close contact with CoScan and other Anglo-Danish and Scandinavian organisations.

**Page 9. In the Great Court, with Viking Exhibition posters on the wall behind, from left: Eva Robards, Gareth Williams, Finnish Ambassador Pekka Huhtaniemi with his wife Liisa, Alexander Malmaeus (Chairman of Anglo Swedish Society), Lady Dales and Sir Richard Dales (Chairman of Anglo-Norse Society), Riitta and Christian Williams (Chairman of Anglo-Danish Society).**

## Co-ordinating the Scandinavian Day at the British Museum

(Lisbeth Ehlers cont.)

I cannot think of many exhibitions in recent times receiving as much publicity as the present *Vikings, life and legend*. Because of its Viking connections, the Anglo-Danish Society was asked in September 2013 to be in charge of co-ordinating a Scandinavian Day at the British Museum. This would consist of a special lecture by Dr Gareth Williams, the curator of the exhibition, who had also been involved last year in the Viking exhibition at the National Museum in Copenhagen. A number of our members had already heard Gareth Williams in 2011 give an illustrated presentation ahead of the 2014 exhibition, so the event was certain to attract great attention.



**Lisbeth giving a visitor guidance.**

Photos on pages 8 and 9: © DWF Hallett

The first task was to agree a date with the British Museum. It is always much more fun to see an exhibition while it is still new and fresh. We settled for Thursday 20 March in the Stevenson Lecture Theatre of the Clore Education Centre (CEC), which seats around 140 people.



The programme would start with eleven sessions at 10.30, followed by a lecture at 11am. After a little over an hour for lunch, timed entry tickets would allow access to the Exhibition, and the whole event would finish at 4 pm. The British Museum would be informed of the number of acceptances one month before the event.

Detailed emails were sent out to our sister organisations, and CoScan became the first to announce the date and the programme. This helped to spread the News. I had great support in the early days by receiving early reservations from three organisations, which brought the numbers up to just under 100, and that was before we had even advertised the event in detail.

I visited the British Museum a couple of times to familiarise myself with this huge establishment. My second visit was with Elin Stone, Chairman of Danish Women's Association. She and I agreed how we were going to receive all the guests with our national flags and fanfares, but unfortunately this had to be altered. A quote from Robert Burns, 'The best laid schemes o' mice an' men gang aft a-gley' springs to mind.

As the deadline approached, numbers changed constantly; Graham Hughes, the Anglo-Danish Society's treasurer, became keeper of the LIST. On the last Sunday morning I received a cancellation which I offered to the Anglo-Swedish Society, whose chairman, Alexander Malmaeus, introduced me to The Anglo-Nordic Times and to its photographer D.W.F. (Bill) Hallett, who came down from Northampton and recorded the event in amazing pictures (photos available on request).

The morning of the event was chaotic. The Great Court is crowded at the best of times, and instead of registration and distribution of tickets taking place at the entrance, guests were asked to go down to the CEC. It was not easy to see the notice, and in fact most guests did not spot it. Attired in red and white like a Danish Flag for easy recognition, I found myself dashing in all directions to gather our bewildered flock. A few lambs went astray; I am sure the invading Vikings were nothing compared with the marauding crowds in the two exhibitions halls.

We were greatly honoured that the Finnish Ambassador and his wife, Pekka and Liisa Huhtaniemi, would attend, and elaborate plans had been made by the Museum for Dr Gareth Williams to meet His Excellency outside the Museum at 10.30. There Dr Williams would accompany the couple inside to be photographed and take them down to the CEC to be introduced to the chairmen of the Scandinavian societies and other guests. By 10.45 Bill Hallett and I were worried about the non-appearance of our special guests. Happily they were downstairs, where they became united with the welcoming committee just in time to go in to Gareth Williams' excellent illustrated lecture.

By strange coincidence, a week after our visit to the British Museum, I was invited to a service at St Edmundsbury Cathedral, named after Edmund, King and Martyr, who was cruelly slain by the Vikings in 869 at Hoxne, only a matter of miles from my home in Suffolk. I thought a lot about Edmund and the Vikings during that service. [See also interview with Gareth Williams on p. 20]

# Manchester Swedish Language Meetup Group

by Tony Bray

**The Beginnings.** I have been going on holiday to Sweden for many years; my family and I really enjoy everything about Sweden – from the buzz of the major cities, to relaxing in the beautiful archipelagos. At the end of 2010, I decided that I needed to improve my very basic Swedish. Searching on the

internet, I couldn't find any Swedish lessons locally, but I did discover on [meetup.com](http://meetup.com), that there were four people waiting for a Swedish Meetup to start in Manchester. (Meetup is a website which helps anyone organise a local group or find one of the thousands of groups already meeting up face-to-face.) I joined and waited a while, but nothing happened so I decided to start a group myself.

As there isn't a suitable Swedish venue in Manchester, I chose the next best thing – a Danish bar. For the first couple of meetings, I duly sat at a table at the appointed time, with a Swedish flag on the table, waiting for the throngs of people to appear. Although I was never completely alone, it was a close call for the first three meetings – there was just me and one other. Slowly but surely the group grew and grew – within two years we were 100 members and now we're just over 200.

**The Group Now.** When I started the group, I had no idea what to expect. I tried to keep it as informal as possible, but didn't know whether it would develop into a drinking club or, at the other extreme, whether we would spend our time discussing the finer points of Swedish grammar.



Photo: Tony Bray



I have been absolutely delighted at how the group has evolved. Although the main objective was to get a group of people together to practise their Swedish, we now also meet to catch up with good friends.

The age range is diverse—from students and au pairs in their teens and twenties, through to pensioners. Roughly half are Swedes and half are learning Swedish, from complete beginners through to fluent speakers. We also have as members Lithuanians, Poles, Mexicans, Russians, Koreans, Norwegians, Danes, Finns – we even welcome people from Yorkshire!

It's very informal – people just have a chat about whatever they want, in whatever language they want. We meet every two weeks at a bar and,

thanks to other people in the group who help, we also have many social events throughout the year: boat trips, meals out, crayfish party, cycle rides, concerts, etc.

If you are thinking of starting a similar group in your area, please feel free to contact me. And if you're ever in Manchester, please do RSVP via the website and pop along and join us – you'll be most welcome!

You can read more about us here:

[www.meetup.com/Manchester-Swedish-Language-Meetup-Group](http://www.meetup.com/Manchester-Swedish-Language-Meetup-Group)

and you can contact me here:

[tony@thebrays.org.uk](mailto:tony@thebrays.org.uk) or on my mobile 07778 648082

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**Norges**  
**skolen**

# Norgesskolen 2014

by Lisbeth Bø Håverstad

Norgesskolen is a three week summer school located outside Oslo. For twelve years, youngsters between the ages of 9 and 18 have been coming to Tomb (Østfold county) to learn the Norwegian language, history and culture.

All of them have in common a connection with Norway, often because their parents or grandparents have Norwegian roots.

The vision for Norgesskolen is to give the children an opportunity to become secure about their Norwegian identity, and learn as much as possible about Norwegian language and culture, as well as creating friendships and networks that last for a lifetime.

Norgesskolen is a part of the organisation Nordmanns-Forbundet/ Norwegians Worldwide. We emphasize that the teaching and the experience as a whole will be of the highest quality possible. The teaching is based on the official Norwegian curriculum of the so called Knowledge Reform (Kunnskapsreformen) of 2006. As from 2014 the students at *Norgesskolen* are given the chance to prepare for *Bergenstesten*, a test of Norwegian – advanced level – which is required in order to study in Norway. Norgesskolen has had students from 55 countries during eleven years and many of them have come from the United Kingdom. Every year the school has a different theme and this year it will be ‘Celebrating

Norway’s Democracy!’ During their stay in Norway, the students will enjoy a talent night, camping and kayaking trips, celebrating both the 17<sup>th</sup> of May and a Norwegian Christmas in the traditional way, but in mid-July. We will also take a day trip to Oslo, with various programmes and guided tours.

Norgesskolen provides children with a wonderful Norwegian summer experience as well as good independence training. Students develop close bonds with children of similar backgrounds, but with important differences – a basis for lifelong friendships. Last, but certainly not least: participating in Norgesskolen is a small contribution towards globalisation. Norgesskolen provides the opportunity to experience diversity and improve multi-cultural understanding.



**NORDMANNS  
FORBUNDET**  

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**NORWEGIANS  
WORLDWIDE**

Norwegians Worldwide, founded in 1907, works to maintain the contact between Norway and Norwegians residing outside of Norway through its magazine *Norwegians Worldwide*, the summer school *Norgesskolen*, the annual trip in Norway *Norgesreisen* and personal contact with members.

## Anglo-Scandinavian Society, Newcastle

In January **Elisabeth Brown** died in Sweden, at the age of 88. Elisabeth and her late husband Joe were pillars of the Society for many years, as members and also as presidents. In the year 2004 they decided to move back to Sweden and left a large gap in the Society. They spent some happy years with family and relatives on the Swedish west coast.

Another longstanding member, **Ditte Prest**, died on 4 May. She was also an individual member of CoScan.

Very well liked and highly respected, surely they will both be missed.

## Finn-Guild

**Ossi Laurila** has handed over to **Helena Halme** who is now the new Development Director. Ossi served for 13 years as General Secretary and for 15 years as Editor of *Horisontti*. For his work Ossi has become *Knight of the Order of the Lion of Finland*. The medal was presented by Ambassador Pekka Huhtaniemi at his Residence.



## Hertfordshire Anglo-Scandinavian Society

is 50 years old in February, having started as Anglo-Scandinavian Society in 1964.

## Orkney Norway Friendship Association

has celebrated its 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Last year they entertained an impressive number of Norwegian guests (400).

On 26 September 2013, ONFA member Donnie Grieve made a fantastic discovery. He was at his daughter's farm in Orphir, Orkney, searching for stones for building when he turned over a stone and saw a runic inscription. His daughter, who is an archaeologist, was able to transcribe it and found that it was an inscription in Latin, which translates as 'who art in Heaven, hallowed'. The next step is to try and find out more about where the stone came from. Meanwhile, Donnie is keeping his eyes peeled for the missing part of the stone.



**Runes found in Orphir.**

From the autumn 2013 Newsletter by Orkney Norway Friendship Association. Printed with permission.

## York Anglo- Scandinavian Society (YASS)

The major event in our calendar this year was the very successful Lucia in the Minster. Around 750 people came to enjoy the experience. A boys' choir from Stockholm joined our local singers, and charmed everyone. We are very grateful to the sponsors who made it all possible. The collection taken was divided between the Minster and YASS, whose share was donated to the Trust Fund.

**John Christmas** has joined the CoScan Trust Fund as its treasurer.

It was with great sorrow that we learnt in March that **Paul Sigsworth** (1956-2014) had lost his battle with cancer. He will be greatly missed. Paul, a modern languages graduate, came to work in the York chocolate industry in his early twenties. He soon joined YASS, set about learning Swedish and quickly became a fluent speaker. It was not long before he was on the committee, where he served on and off over the years, in the 1980's as both secretary and chairman. It was Paul who organised our summer walks. He was the easiest person to work with, always willing to take on jobs, always happy to find a way. It was very much thanks to Paul's hard work that the 1982 CoScan conference in York, with its Viking theme, became such a success.

## Language & Culture

### St Sigfrid

by  
The Revd  
Canon  
John Toy  
Guest writer



Every 15 February the Church of England celebrates *Sigfrid, Bishop, Apostle of Sweden, 1045*. This reflects the Scandinavian medieval tradition of an English missionary bishop who played a crucial part in bringing Christianity to Norway and Sweden in the first half of the 11<sup>th</sup> century.

Most probable is that he was a typical missionary bishop of the time, wandering around with the king, preaching and establishing churches, probably not fixed as the bishop of any one place. The sources, however, are so many and varied that Sigfrid is one of the most difficult issues of this period of Scandinavian history, so much so that there may have been two, or even three, Sigfrids at slightly different periods.

The most reliable and near-contemporary evidence we have is from Adam of Bremen, writing about 1070. The passage dealing with Olav Haraldson of Norway (later St Olav, killed 1030), states: '*He had with him several bishops and priests from England, with the help of whose exhortations and teaching he himself turned his heart to seek the Lord and he commissioned them to guide his subjects. Among them were Sigfrid,*

*Grimkil, Rudolf and Bernhard, famous for learning and working miracles. At the king's command they also visited Sweden, Gotaland and all the islands that lie beyond Nordland and preached there...'. Adam later records that Bishop Sigfrid was among those present in Bremen in 1030 for the funeral of Bishop Turgot of Skara. Confirming the tradition of his work in Norway, the later bishops' list has Sigfrid as the third Bishop of Trondheim.*

The next evidence comes from 130 years later when the Swedes were anxious to establish their freedom from the ecclesiastical overlordship of Hamburg-Bremen and were writing lists of bishops of their sees showing the connection with England. In 1205 the *Acts of the blessed Sigfrid* states: *'King Olov in Sweden [this is Olov Skötkonung, 994-1022] is a heathen and worships idols. He has however heard of Christianity but knows nothing of Christ since he had not been strengthened in the faith by any missionaries. Therefore he turned to his friend and near-companion, King Mildred in England and asked him to send him a missionary. With this request in mind King Mildred gathered a council of priests and told them of the Swedish king's need. Since for three days none of the present indicated that they were willing to go as missionaries to the Swedes, who were well-known for their cruelty, Archbishop Sigfrid of York stood up and declared in a long speech that it was God's will that these people should come to the Christian faith, and at everyone's approval he undertook the task. After certain preparations Sigfrid and his companions left England and after a few days landed in Denmark*

*where Christendom was a novelty. In Denmark he was met by the king and the nobles of that country and by another, well known for his piety and holiness. With the king's safe-conduct he went by difficult routes to Varend [south-east coastal area of Sweden]... At the place the Swedes call Våxjö is now built a stone church in honour of God the Father and this saint. This church is still a cathedral and seat of a diocese.'*

There is of course no King Mildred of England, nor Sigfrid Archbishop of York, and this account has generally been discounted as having only slight basis in history, although it was influential at the time. Sigfrid heads the medieval bishops' lists as the first Bishop of Våxjö. Mildred could be a mistake for Ethelred II (978-1013), perhaps a deduction from the adjective 'the mild one' (*mildr* in Old Norse) applied to him (later replaced by his enemies with 'the Unready'). Recently a suggestion has been made that Sigefr, Bishop of Lindsey (north Lincolnshire) may have been considered for the vacant archbishopric of York in 1002, but instead undertook the Swedish mission.

Later in the 13<sup>th</sup> century another legend of St Sigfrid was written, according to which Sigfrid left his three nephews, Unaman, Suneman and Vinaman in charge of the church in Våxjö while he went to preach in Sigtuna (Uppland). While he was away, there was a pagan reaction and the three men were martyred and thrown into the lake. On his return Sigfrid retrieved the heads and the three heads became the arms of the diocese and are to this day. If this slightly later legend of the three nephews is regarded as totally unhistorical, it was suggested





**The seal of the Chapter of Växjö, still in use, with the heads of St Sigfrid's nephews Unaman, Suneman and Vinaman.**

some eighty years ago that the names of Sunaman, Unaman and Vinaman may be a distant memory from England of some Anglo-Saxon martyrs: the Chronicle of John of Oxenden records '*At that time [9<sup>th</sup> century] Sunneman and his brothers were killed, the first inhabitants of the sacred place of St Benedict at Hulme*'.

The story of this saint becomes more and more complicated when other legends are considered. One relates that Sigfrid spent much time with King Olov Skötkonung in Husaby, c.1008, where the king was baptised by Sigfrid in a spring. Sigfrid also appears in the medieval bishops' lists for Skara diocese. The last source to mention is a 15<sup>th</sup> century one which says that Sigfrid died as an old man in 1045, and was buried in Växjö, where his relics were at that time.

The reason why there may have been more than one Sigfrid is that different sources tell of one of that, or a very similar, name from different periods. The Icelandic poet Snorre also wrote

in a *Saga of St Olav* about a Bishop Sigurd who for a while served as bishop of Trondheim (Norway) and he seems not to have distinguished between the Sigurd who was court bishop for Olav Haraldson, and the Sigurd who was court bishop to Olav Tryggvason (995-1000) thirty years earlier. The issue is further complicated by William of Malmesbury in his work on Glastonbury Abbey which records the death of a Sigfrid there at the time of King Edgar (957-975): '*On April 5<sup>th</sup> St Sigfrid, Bishop in Norway, monk of Glastonbury. He donated four copes, two of them with lions and two mantles*'.

So then, whatever was the exact history behind these 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> century Sigfrids, an English St Sigfrid figured largely from 1100 onwards in the traditions, particularly of Sweden. He headed the list of many named English early missionaries, most of them bishops, who supplemented the Rome-authorised missions from Hamburg-Bremen. Contacts between Britain and Scandinavia have been continuous over many centuries but few, or none, more significant than when many of the pagan Vikings, having been converted to Christianity in England, returned home bringing with them bishops and priests to encourage the much-feared Scandinavians to become part of Christian Europe.

*John Toy was Chancellor of York Minster up to his retirement. He has lived in Sweden and is an authority on medieval Swedish liturgies.*

# Scotland's First Scandinavians

A Viking boat burial at Ardnamurchan documents one of the first Norse settlers in mainland Scotland.

by Peter Addyman

Scotland's Northern and Western Isles and shores, like most parts of Northern Europe, began to feel the brunt of Norse expansion in the last years of the AD 700s. The first documented raid was the sacking of the Celtic monastery of Iona in 795. Soon after settlement followed in the north and west, contributing a distinctive Scandinavian strain to the culture of what eventually became Scotland. There are place names of Scandinavian origin, dialect words derived from old



Reconstruction drawing: Sarah Paris

Norse, settlement sites that have been progressively revealed over the years in excavations, hoards of Viking age metalwork buried with the intention of recovery but never recovered, chance finds, and, of course, Viking age graves.

Unlike the local Pictish inhabitants the settling Vikings were pagans, given to burying their dead in distinctive ways and with distinctive grave goods. One particular type of burial – in a boat set in a boat-shaped hole in the ground – is reminiscent of the great ship burials of Norway and Denmark in the Viking age, and is peculiarly evocative of



Team members Oliver Harris and Helena Gray excavate the Ardnamurchan Viking sword.

Photo: Dan Addison. To the left: X-radiograph of the sword by Pieta Greaves, AOC Archaeology

the sea-faring traditions that made the attacks on Scotland possible in the first place, and lay behind the sea-linked Scandinavian earldoms that eventually developed around the western and northern seaboard of Scotland.

Several such boat burials have been found in Scotland in the past, most recently in 1991 at Scar on Sanday in Orkney. Here, in a grave exposed by coastal erosion, three people, a man, an elderly woman and a child, had been laid out in a 7.15 metre boat and accompanied by distinctive and rich grave goods. An even richer grave, with coins of about AD 850, was excavated in 1882-83 in the sand dunes at Kiloran Bay on the north west coast of Colonsay, evidently of a man and his horse buried under a boat that must have been as much as 9 metres long. The boat, in each case, was represented by the iron rivets which fix together the strakes of a clinker-built boat (that is, one with sides built up of overlapping planks) typical of the Viking age. Groups of such rivets have been recorded with other Viking burials from Scotland, often in early excavations before their significance was understood – which suggests that boat burials may have been relatively common.

Recently another Viking age boat burial has turned up – discovered during a well-organised archaeological study of Swordle Bay on the north coast of the Ardnamurchan Peninsula, the most westerly part of mainland Scotland. The Ardnamurchan Transitions Project, carried out by a consortium of scholars from several universities and commercial and charitable archaeological organisations, seeks to study the Swordle

Bay area from earliest times to the present, identifying ancient sites and land uses, excavating where relevant, and creating a story of the area through time. During the survey a low-lying mound was noted on the foreshore which seemed to be of some antiquity because traces of post-medieval fields seemed to respect it.

Excavations started in 2006 and were completed in 2011. They revealed that a boat-shaped hole had been dug into the shingle of the foreshore. A boat some 5 metres long and 1.5 metres wide, represented by over 200 iron rivets, had then been placed in it. Within the boat had been laid the body of the dead person, evidently a man, and an extensive set of his kit. This comprised everyday personal items such as his flint strike-a-lights, and his whetstone for sharpening blades. There was also a set of the weaponry typical of a Viking warrior: an axe, a sword with decorated hilt, a spear and a shield boss (the domed iron fitting at the centre of a shield that accommodated the hand grip). Textiles preserved by mineralisation adhered to the scabbard of the sword, indicating that the buried person was clothed, and there was a ring-headed bronze pin, perhaps to secure his clothes or a shroud. In addition he had a drinking horn and a pan with a metre-long handle and a hammer and tongs, presumably for use in metalworking, perhaps indicating that he was, amongst other things, a smith.

The boat was then surrounded by a stone kerb, filled with stones and probably covered with a mound of stones, subsequently much eroded.

The aggressive soil conditions at the Swordle Bay site had destroyed almost

all the physical remains of the person buried in the boat, leaving only two molar teeth and three fragments of bone. The teeth were enough to provide samples for stable isotope analysis which suggested that the buried person had not grown up in Scotland – more likely in coastal Norway or perhaps in Ireland. The sword, with an inlaid hilt and guard and silver and bronze wrapped bands, had a five-lobed pommel and a slightly dropping hilt guard which are typical of Norse swords of late 9<sup>th</sup> or early 10<sup>th</sup> century.

This remarkable new find therefore gives us a vivid picture of one of Scotland's first Scandinavian colonists – probably a Norwegian, clearly a man of prestige, a warrior, a metal smith, probably a farmer, and certainly a sailor – that is, someone typical of the Norse settlers of Scotland. Probably he died around or soon after the year 900 – and his community thought it proper to place him at rest in sight of the sea he once sailed in the boat he once rowed with the objects that had defined his status in life. It is a reasonable supposition, too, that he was laid to rest not far from the place where he lived – and hopefully the marvellous Ardnamurchan Transitions Project will soon find that too.

To read more see Current Archaeology 280, July 2013, 18-24, or visit [www.ardnamurchantransitionsproject.co.uk](http://www.ardnamurchantransitionsproject.co.uk)



## Gareth Williams on the Viking exhibition at the British Museum

Excerpt from interview  
by Kåre Odgaard Gade,  
Press Attaché  
at the Danish Embassy

*What should people expect from the exhibition?*

Well, I think what is different about this exhibition from other exhibitions on the Vikings is that people think of Vikings as a purely Northern European phenomenon. Everyone knows that Vikings came from Denmark, Norway and Sweden. Most people know that they had an impact on places like Britain and Ireland and around places in Northern Europe. What we try to do with this exhibition is to emphasise that the Vikings had global connections. Their culture spanned four continents.

That they made it as far west as North America is well known. It is less well known that they made it as far south as Morocco and as far east – in terms of their connections at least – as Central Asia and the Middle East. ...

So for example, I think it will be a surprise to many people that the most common inscription in Scandinavia from the Viking Age says 'There is no God but Allah, He stands alone, He has no partner', because there are thousands of Islamic silver coins, all of which carry that Islamic statement of faith. The trading links with the Middle East

and Central Asia were enormous. The whole idea of using precious metal as currency wasn't there in Scandinavia at the beginning of the Viking Age and it seems to be led by trading links with the coin using economy of the Arab world.

Equally, in the beginning of the period Scandinavia had an entirely different belief system. Contact with Western Europe led to Christian missions and then Christianisation, which had

chess pieces made after the Viking age, probably in Norway. At that point the Isle of Lewis in Western Scotland was still part of Norway. We think the Viking Age stopped at 1050 or 1100, whatever date one wants to put on it, but up to 1266 Western Scotland was part of Norway. Up to 1469 Shetland was part of Norway – or indeed Denmark as well at that point, because of the joint throne. So we finish by making the point that the Viking Age didn't just



**Curator Gareth Williams** Photo: © Kåre Gade

an impact not just on belief but also on society. So these interactions – what did the Vikings learn from others, what did they leave behind them elsewhere, and how did mixed cultures grow up?

... The last item you come across is a group of the famous Lewis chessmen – one of our own treasures. These were

stop – the connections have continued.

... There is a glamour to Vikings. The Vikings as a concept is very much a 19<sup>th</sup> Century invention. The term wasn't really used before that. The notion we have of Vikings, both in Denmark and the United Kingdom, is very much a product of that romantic period. The Vikings have horns on their helmets because to 19<sup>th</sup>



century writers and artists any barbarian is bound to have horns and wings on his helmet and a big beard – they wouldn't look upon it otherwise, even though there is no historic foundation for that.

... And when you look at it there is a lot of common contact and heritage before, during and after the Viking Age. It's not surprising in that sense that they were able to blend in almost seamlessly into the areas where they settled in Eastern England. We can see it from the place names there, we can see it to some extent from the objects that turn up – they mixed in much more easily than perhaps in other areas like Ireland and Russia where there wasn't the linked language and where material culture was much more different.

But even there, they mixed and blended in, and I think it's that adaptability of the Vikings that is fascinating – the way that, when you look at the Vikings in Russia, Normandy or Greenland, you get different patterns. There are some things that you see in common in every part of the Viking world and that's something we bring out

in the exhibition. For example we show a series of the grave goods from women's graves and look at both the things they have in common and the things that differ. There are shared elements of Viking identity which are the same wherever and there are other things where they change, depending on who they're mixing in with.

The Vikings were great adaptors. I think that one of the things that we find interesting is that they were capable of doing so much and changing and adapting. But the fact that they were able to get to so many different places, I think impresses people.

One of the things that is a theme throughout the exhibition is the fact that what really enabled the Viking Age to happen was Viking ships. We got Roskilde 6, the longest Viking ship ever found, as the physical centerpiece of the exhibition.

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## 1814 – Annus Mirabilis

by Per Steinar Raaen

The title of this article is a quote by the priest-in-charge at Akershus Castle in Oslo, Claus Pavels, who summarised the year in his diary on 31 December, 1814. Claus Pavels referred to a concept shared by most people in the early 1800s, that what actually took place in 1814 was so far beyond imagination, that 'miracle'

was an appropriate way of describing the events: during an extremely eventful year, Norway was first handed over from the Danish to the Swedish king in January, then the country developed a modern and revolutionary constitution during a few weeks in April and May, elected a Danish prince King of Norway, fought a

short war against Sweden in the autumn and, finally, the Norwegian parliament voted almost unanimously in favour of a union with Sweden in November, electing the Swedish king Karl XIII as king of Norway. Annus mirabilis, indeed! Moreover, the modern constitution had

British attack and subsequent conquest of the combined Danish-Norwegian naval fleet in Copenhagen in 1807, Denmark-Norway joined the losing side in the Napoleonic wars, and when Napoleon was defeated in the battle of Leipzig in 1813,



*Riksforsamlingen på Eidsvoll 1814* Painting: Oscar Arnold Wergeland

survived, and 1814 has since then been a defining year in the history of Norway.

So what did actually happen? As so often in the history of Norway, the course of history is a result of both internal and external factors. The short version goes like this: Norway and Denmark had been a united kingdom since the Middle Ages, with the king sitting in Copenhagen, ruling Norway by his clerks. Since 1660 the king had absolute power, appointed by the grace of God. Largely because of the

the Danish-Norwegian king realized that he unfortunately had few friends.

Meanwhile, Sweden had lost Finland to Russia in 1809, and the Swedes had appointed the French marshal, Jean Baptiste Bernadotte, one of Napoleon's former generals, as their new crown prince, since the Swedish king Karl XIII was old and weak and without heirs. Bernadotte took part in the battle of Leipzig and was somehow promised Norway as a compensation both for the loss of Finland

and for the war effort against Napoleon.

During the final weeks of 1813, when marching west and south towards the final battle against Napoleon with his allies, Bernadotte suddenly marched a minor part of his army north, towards Denmark, and conquered Kiel, which was Danish. With his rapid strategy he demanded complete Danish capitulation, and in the oncoming negotiations the Danish King was forced to hand over Norway to the Swedish King. A 400 year union with Denmark was over! Luckily for Norway, immediately after the peace treaty was signed, Bernadotte rushed south to join the allied forces before the final battle against Napoleon, leaving only a small and relatively powerless military force to take care of things in Scandinavia.

Hardly anyone in Norway knew about this, and the news of the capitulation and the results of the negotiations hit Norway as a bomb in January 1814.

The Danish king, Frederik VI had sent his cousin, prince Christian Frederik, to Norway in May 1813 to run the royal business in Norway on the king's behalf. Another reason for Christian Frederik's journey to Norway was most certainly an act of precaution, in case anything were to happen to the union between the two countries. When the news of the capitulation reached the prince, he reacted very swiftly, summoning some of the foremost men among the Norwegian elite to a meeting in February at the mansion belonging to one of his friends and advisors, Carsten Anker, at Eidsvoll outside Oslo. At this meeting, prince Christian Frederik presented his idea of a silent revolution, by sabotaging the Kiel Treaty and appointing himself

King of Norway. A Norwegian constitution was subsequently to be created in the power vacuum before Bernadotte could reach Scandinavia, because of his involvement in the final settlement with Napoleon at Waterloo.

The Norwegian elite supported the prince's proposals, but could not accept that he would be appointed absolute king by the grace of God, as had been the custom in Denmark. If he were to be King of Norway, this had to be realized within the concept of a constitutional monarchy; the king was to be elected by the will of the people, not by the grace of God.

Prince Christian Frederik finally agreed to this and summoned a relatively representative constitutional assembly of 112 men at Eidsvoll, who, in the course of a few weeks, finally and unanimously signed a new constitution for Norway on 17 May, 1814. Prince Christian Frederik was elected King of Norway.

The Norwegian Constitution of 1814 has been described as the most radical and revolutionary in Europe at the time. Quite a few of the 'Constitution fathers' were highly educated men, they had studied law and other disciplines at the University of Copenhagen, many of them under the same tutor: Professor Schlegel. They were familiar with the ideas of the age of Enlightenment; they had studied the ideas of Montesquieu, they had read the French *Déclaration des Droits de l'Homme*, and they knew the American Declaration of Independence. Many of the representatives at Eidsvoll actually brought drafts of a new constitution to the meeting. This is probably the main reason why the constitutional work at Eidsvoll went quite fast. We also

know that the work was accompanied by a lot of food and drink, up to more than a hundred bottles of imported wine to each main meal. The speed can also be illustrated by the fact that the representatives of the three northernmost counties never came to Eidsvoll, since communication and travel conditions were too poor for them to make it in time.

Towards the end of May Bernadotte returned to Sweden. He could not accept what had happened in Norway, and time had come to use military means to make the Kiel Treaty come true. Bernadotte, one of the cleverest among European generals, crossed the border of Norway with an experienced and well equipped army. The newly elected king Christian Frederik of Norway understood that this could not last very long; he withdrew his troops and invited his Swedish adversary to negotiate the conditions of a future union on the basis of the new Norwegian constitution. This was not acceptable for the Swedes, since they claimed the right to Norway on the basis of the Kiel Treaty. In this deadlock came another surprising element in the *annus mirabilis*; Bernadotte offered armistice and further negotiations on the basis of the new Norwegian constitution! The armistice was then signed in Moss on 14 August, and has since been called a strategic masterpiece by Christian Frederik.

During the subsequent negotiations about the conditions of the union, it was imperative for the Norwegian negotiators to save as much of the Constitution of 17 May as possible. Understandably, Bernadotte was equally anxious about the consequences should the negotiations fail.

Anyhow, on 4 November, the new

Norwegian parliament elected the Swedish King Karl XIII as King of Norway and accepted the new version of the constitution, only slightly changed compared to the May version. Bernadotte was later to become King Karl Johan, when Karl XIII died in 1818. Diplomacy and statesmanship on both sides had prevailed! A most difficult political process involving all the Scandinavian countries had come to a peaceful end.



*Per Steinar Raaen is a historian at Stiklestad National Culture Centre, Norway. The last two years he has spent in Great Britain.*

## Anna Sophie's Kitchen

by Anna Sophie Strandli

**In the spring of 1814** the 112 men at *Eidsvoll* would not only shape Norway's new Constitution, they should also be provided for over a period of nearly six weeks. In Norway there were shortages of absolutely everything, but no expense was spared and enormous amounts of food, wine and spirits had been purchased.

*Eidsvollsmennene* argued and complained, not least of 'sour red wine' and 'the monotonous meat soup, roast veal and bread pudding'. The Danish Prince, Christian Frederik, who had brought his own French chef *Beauvin*, would invite delegates to his banquet table where there was an abundance of 'lækre Spieser'. 12 men were invited at a time, by alphabetic principle, regardless of position and rank, and these highly uncommon Royal receptions are seen as an early sign of equality; an exercise in practical democracy.

Much effort has been made to reconstruct the 1814 menus and adapt them to 2014. Many of the recipes contained a lot of spices and lemons were used in large quantities and excessively as flavouring. The sweet and aromatic Amalfi lemons.

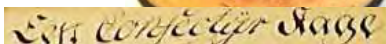
### Citron Suppe



6 lemons (24 in the original recipe) + finely grated zest of two lemons and the juice of all six + ½ litre of water. ½ litre of white wine (e.g. Blue Nun) 1 or 2 dl of sugar (not mentioned in 1814), 3 eggs and 1 tsp cardamom.

Mix all ingredients in a (steel) pan over a gentle heat. Whip until the mixture thickens and very slightly bubbles. Pour into a bowl and cool (over a cold water bath) while stirring. Refrigerate and serve as dessert or as a drink with or without a dash of alcohol. The 1814 variant of the Italian Limoncello, only with that extra touch of cardamom to this delicate and light lemon-drink-soup.

### Citron Kage



**Pastry:** 175 g flour, 80 g butter, 2 tbs cold water, 1 pinch of sugar. Knead and leave the dough to cool, roll out, place in a greased tin, 3cm above the edge and blind bake.

**Filling:** 6 egg yolks, 125 g sugar, 125 g butter (melted and cooled), 4 tbs thick cream, 4 lemons and 4 egg whites.

Whip egg yolks and sugar well. Add lemon juice and zest + the butter and the cream. Stir over a warm water bath until thickened. Beat egg whites until stiff and fold them in. Cool and pour into the tin. Bake at 120°C until core temperature reaches 70°C.



## From the bookshelf

### Old Songs of the North

Ian Cumpstey  
on his ballad translations

The mediaeval Scandinavian ballads represent a treasury of folkloric material that is less well-known outside Scandinavia. These narrative folk-ballads were part of an oral storytelling tradition combined with musical performance. Some of the ballads were widely known, and variants of a particular ballad were often recorded in Swedish, Danish and/or Norwegian, or in different regions of the countries. The earliest known manuscripts with texts of the ballads in Swedish are from the 1600s, and some Danish manuscripts are slightly older. The origin of the genre seems to have been rather earlier than this, sometime around the 1300s. In the early-to-mid 1800s, an increasing literary and cultural consciousness in the Nordic countries led to interest in this style of ballad, and folklorists were able to record contemporary versions of the ballads, and also collect and print the texts of the old manuscripts. Similar ballads were known in English, and there was even some crossover in content. *The Two Sisters* (or *The Cruel Sister*) is a relatively well-known example in both England and Scandinavia.

The ballads would have been performed by a singer. They rhyme, and the most common structures have either two or four lines per stanza. I have aimed for the same rhyming patterns

in my translations. There are normally also one or two chorus lines in every stanza, which would have been sung by backing singers or by the audience.

The subject matter covered by the ballads is wide. Most of the ballads included in *Warrior Lore* are songs of fighters and heroes. Other well-known ballads feature stories of the supernatural, with elves, mermaids and so on; even humorous ballads were common. There is a riddle ballad with a mixture of questions from Christian themes and from nature. A violent beating awaits those who cannot answer, and there is a reward for those who can. There are ballads of love, and the consequences of loving the wrong person. A historical ballad tells of the seizing of the daughter of the King of Sweden from the convent at Vreta.

It is interesting to note that skiing features prominently in two of the ballads. In a ballad translated from Norwegian, King Harald Hardrada challenges Heming to ski on a mountain so steep and high that he thought that skiing it would be impossible. But Heming is up to the task, and the story – which shouldn't be viewed as historically accurate – doesn't end well for Harald.

*Heming skied on Snarafell,  
His skis they turned on high.  
The King he thought he seemed to see,  
The stars falling out of the sky.*

*Heming the young he could run on his  
skis so well.*

The mediaeval Scandinavian ballads are part of the Nordic heritage, and *Warrior Lore* gives an English-speaking audience a take on this lesser-known aspect of old Scandinavian culture.



*Warrior Lore*, a collection of ten Scandinavian folk ballads in illustrated paperback, published by Skadi Press 2014. ISBN 978-0-9576120-1-3.

*Ian Cumpstey read chemistry at Oxford (MChem, DPhil), and then moved to Sweden (2003), where he stayed until 2010, eventually becoming Associate Professor (Docent) in organic chemistry at Stockholm University. He now lives in England and is an associate member of the Swedish-English Literary Translators' Association.*

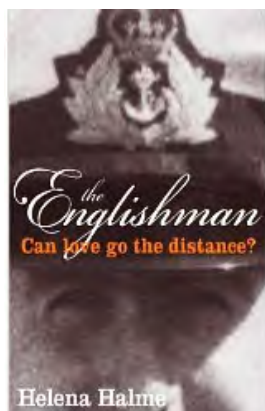
## The Englishman. Can love go the distance?

Review by Eva Robards

To move country is something that cannot be taken lightly, even if passion opens the door to contemplating the unthinkable. This book by **Helena Halme** deals with a wide range of problems that can arise. The storyline may appear simple: girl meets boy, they fall in love and – hopefully – they will manage to live happily ever after. Interwoven is a palette of complications.

Kaisa already has her life panned out when she meets the Englishman (Peter). This includes being engaged to be married to a steady Finn with a forceful mother. How do you pick up courage to cut the bonds to your previous life? How can you continue your professional career? How can you establish yourself in an unknown environment, far away from all that is known and even taken for granted? Are you about to make a serious mistake that you'll regret for the rest of your life?

The book is set in the 80s, so emails and cheap flights don't exist. Instead the lovers write frequent letters, have to plan their telephone conversations carefully, and save up money for those rare occasions when they can meet in person. Naturally, doubt is looming about the prospect of a life together, misunderstandings can easily happen, and vulnerability is huge. But a relationship depends not only on the interaction between lovers – there are also family and friends, and their views and actions.



Many of us who moved from a Nordic country to the UK some thirty years ago will be able to identify with Kaisa. This book largely tells our story.

Helena Halme, *The Englishman: Can love go the distance?*, published by Newhurst Press Nov 2013. ISBN-10 0957371160, ISBN-13 978-0957371163

Other books by Helena Halme:

*Coffee and Vodka*, Published by Newhurst Press 2013, Kindle edition. ASIN B00BQ1FN9A

*The Red King of Helsinki: Lies, Spies and Gymnastics*. Kindle edition. ASIN B00C416296.  
'Nordic Noir meets spy thriller.'

*Helena is the Development Director of Finn-Guild.*

## The Tomtes of Hilltop Stream

Review by Harriet Podmore, aged 13

This is the third book written by **Brenda Tyler**, following *The Tomtes of Hilltop Wood* and *Hilltop Farm*.

Jamie and Emily from Hilltop Cottage are visiting a pretty stream in the heart of Hilltop Wood. They are hoping to see the beautiful otter that they saw last year. The stream is surrounded by delicate flowers and all manner of creatures great and small. But when they arrive the stream is full of green slime, dead fish and the otter is nowhere to be seen.

Jamie and Emily call on their little friend Lichen to help them save the stream and pool, and with the help of their Tomte friends and their magic shrinking hats, they can save the stream before it's too late.

Read this enchanting book with beautiful illustrations by Brenda Tyler. I would recommend this book for ages 4-11, but it's really a fantastic book for all.

Brenda Tyler, *The Tomtes of Hilltop Stream*, published by Floris Books, 2014. ISBN 9781782500452



*Brenda is a member of YASS.*

# The Almost Nearly Perfect People?

Review by Mark Elliott

**Michael Booth's** just-published book with this title (minus the question-mark) is a really good read. I'm sure that anybody with a Nordic passport will find things in it to take offence at. But as a mere Englishman I find it all rather fun. The author examines in much detail the assertion that one or all of the five Nordic countries is/are the best and happiest place in the world to live, picks out some of the oddities and what he calls the darker side in all of them, and concludes... well, let's leave that to the end.

Some obvious common threads running through the region emerge from the book. One is the tendency to be inward-looking and self-sufficient. Often this is the result of a hard climate and isolation, but there are local differences. The Finns are identified as the most silent – über-Scandinavian, Booth calls them; but the Swedes too are singled out for taciturnity coupled with a capacity for avoiding personal conflict.

Another – and all of these overlap – is social equality, defined in one quotation from a Danish source as 'few have too much and fewer too little'. Booth spends some time analysing the cult of understatement or inconspicuous consumption and modesty associated for example in Sweden with the word *lagom*, a kind of collective restraint – don't boast.

In practice, though, he finds signs of an increasing rich/poor divide, for example in fast-urbanising Denmark.

A third is the rise of right-wing movements: the vocal anti-immigrant party in Denmark; a similar political party in Sweden, where the proportion of immigrants and asylum-seekers is exceptionally high; and in Norway, despite the universal horror at Anders Breivik's antics, the success of the Progress Party, now part of the governing coalition. None of these however seems much to diminish a widespread and growing multi-culturalism.

The fourth is the importance of *hygge*, a complex mix of clubbability, attention to the niceties of social behaviour, generally banding together against the outside world and having a good time in a cosy sort of way. Easy to recognise when you meet it, as we all do; probably dangerous for an outsider to say much more about.



Within this general picture, a careful and rather penetrating analysis of each of the five countries reveals certain special factors. In *Denmark*, which is given most space as the author has lived there for years, the poor figures for educational attainment, quality of health services, and employment attract his attention. He has a soft spot for *Finland*, which comes out best in some of these areas especially education, and whose history has been more challenging over the 20<sup>th</sup> century than most; he remarks that having 200,000 lakes and an eight-month winter has naturally developed resilience in the Finnish character, and suggests that the apparent absence of a future tense in the Finnish language may have something to do with their pragmatism. Like Finland, *Iceland* is in a sense on the edge – poised on the mid-Atlantic ridge, it receives rather more American influence, Booth says; the years of a US presence and Iceland's high-risk environment, together with almost an excess of homogeneity ('too Nordic'), may have contributed to the extraordinary economic collapse of 2008. Booth quotes a Danish saying about the Icelanders – 'they wear shoes which are too big for them and keep falling over their shoelaces'. A sign, perhaps, that the Danish/Icelandic relationship is not always harmonious.

*Norway's* geography, with great distances and mountainous country separating isolated communities, accounts in some measure for the national passion for *friluftsliv* – the outdoor life. But even more obvious in recent years is its extraordinary oil wealth, much of it sensibly invested overseas, but also in Booth's eyes fostering a kind

of complacency – not much attention to research and development or the manufacturing sector, a tendency to sit back and enjoy life. He repeats a Danish story, conceivably even a true one, to the effect that in a certain Norwegian food processing plant Swedish workers are employed to peel bananas – in Danish eyes, lazy Norwegians and exploited Swedes all in one anecdote. *Sweden* indeed seems to be something of a target, the goody-goody, high-achieving big brother in the Nordic family. Booth's analysis is a fascinating blend of paradoxes – benign totalitarianism, he says, an almost Orwellian state made up of conforming individualists; apparently courteous, but when boarding or leaving trains apt to barge into the opposing stream of humanity with total disregard for anything but their own convenience. Maybe years of residence in Copenhagen has warped his outlook.

Whatever prejudices Michael Booth may have developed, his admiration for the Nordic achievement is genuine. He shows his hand on the final page. Some have spoken, he writes, of a closer Nordic union of 25 million people forming a kind of Northern alternative to the European Union. Unlikely, maybe. But his final plea to his Nordic friends is – please don't; the rest of us wouldn't stand a chance.

Michael Booth, *The Almost Nearly Perfect People*, published by Jonathan Cape London 2014.  
ISBN 9780224089623.



# CoScan Trust Fund 2014

Report by Brita Green

Sadly having lost Dagmar Cockitt from our group, as the deadline for applications was approaching, we were urgently looking for someone to help. Fortunately, John Christmas, who has always been interested in the work of the Trust Fund, agreed to join the subcommittee and declared himself willing to do the treasurer's job.

John and his Danish wife became members of YASS in 1997, and they have both served on the committee more than once. John, who is a fluent Danish speaker, says:

*'I am a teacher and my job has tended to keep us in England, although I took part in a one year teaching exchange in Aarhus, Denmark, a lifetime ago. Our home is a cross between Danish and English and we often speak 'Danglish' too. We have tried to retain as many Danish traditions as we can in our household, particularly at times like Christmas and Easter.*

*I helped organise the CoScan AGM in York two years ago and Karen and I attended the AGM in Tallinn, Estonia, last year.*

*There is something very positive about the applications for CoScan travel grants from a very wide range of applicants. I guess my professional background in education can be brought into play here, and I hope to be able to help fulfil at least some dreams in the role I've agreed to take on.'*

We are very happy to welcome John onto the subcommittee. Alfild

Wellborne, John Christmas and I met on 8 April to decide on this year's winners. We had 15 strong applications to consider. They ranged from arctic exploration, anthropology, medicine, dentistry, composing, conducting and art-curating to football and a guide expedition. Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Greenland and Finland are the countries to be visited this year. We felt the quality of applications was high and were as generous as we could be. Having £3074 in the bank, we decided that we would be able to spend a maximum of £2000 on this year's travel awards. We gave two grants of £200, four of £150, two of £125, one of £115 and six of £100. We should be able to look forward to some interesting reports next year.

We are grateful to the societies that have given us donations since our last distribution of grants – Anglo-Scandinavian Newcastle, Scottish-Norwegian Glasgow, and York Anglo-Scandinavian Society. Special mention must be made of YASS, which alone has contributed over £1200 during the year. Almost half of that was the Society's share of the collection at the Lucia in the Minster service, the rest from sales and raffles, as well as a donation from funds. We cannot rely on such bounties every year, however, and we appeal to other societies to get involved and arrange special raffles, auctions or events, or simply donate from funds. Please keep up your efforts. We are extremely grateful to our generous monthly contributor for his regular donations, and to CoScan's executive committee for theirs. DFDS have again kindly offered free crossings on the ferry – although presumably for the last time, as the final ferry-crossing to Scandinavia is closing down in September.

**Please send your donations to our new Trust Fund Treasurer  
John Christmas, 22 Hobgate, York YO24 4HF**

**Cheques to be made out to CoScan Trust Fund**



## 2013 PRIZE-WINNING REPORT

### Chasing runaway tents

by Rosie Hoggmascall

Life as a seventeen year old is brilliant. There are so many opportunities out there. I live some of my time in Brunei, some of my time in Windermere, and so going on an expedition to Arctic Norway was one of those bold steps that had to be taken. At my age we are all supposed to be doing things that are fulfilling, adventurous, educational and essential to our UCAS statements so that we stand out from the crowd and everyone wants to accept us onto their degree course. This was not the reason I wanted to go – I just thought it was cool and I really like rocks.

During the expedition to the Nuvsvag peninsula we explored the natural environment through scientific data collection and cross-country trekking. We set up various camera traps, took hydrology readings every hour of the 24 hour sunlit day, measured the strike and dip of the underlying geology, and finally we identified and logged over 60 species of alpine flora and fauna. For adventure we trekked up mountains,

went fishing in the fjords, climbed almost 1000m to the top of a glacier and on a few occasions had to dodge rock falls.

The most entertaining experience, however, was unplanned and very unexpected. The icecap and its outlet glaciers cause a microclimate in and around the base-camp valley that resulted in very strong winds one evening. Gusts were so strong that they blew away tents and snapped guy ropes. We had to work as a team to pin down tents that were on the edge of being blown away, and secure down the safe tents with heavy rocks and ice pegs. One moment you would be hammering pegs into the earth, the next you would be flying across the rocky ground in pursuit of a runaway tent. It was tense but exhilarating.

The expedition experienced challenges during the first week. A heatwave meant that the glacier was melting rapidly and becoming increasingly unstable. In the end the leaders made the right decision that it was too dangerous to attempt to climb up onto the icecap. We were all very disappointed because it was what we all were looking forward to after a significant amount of training towards the ice climb. It was this

and the fact that the expedition was more socially orientated that made it different to how I had imagined it. Having to live with unfamiliar people, to work with the team, support them and also be supported by them for three weeks was a large part of the expedition. It was a big part of the BES's aims to develop your character, so we completed a personality test and found out what type of person we are. It was useful to see how people interact and to learn about their personalities as well as your own. The best thing was that we had the chance to write a small note to each of our fire members to tell them what we liked about them. Some were funny, some deep and others just really touching, and they gave me confidence about my personality. One person said that I am 'the happiest girl they ever met'. Moreover, an individual meeting with the team leaders described me in three words as 'positive', 'helpful' and 'motivating', which is reassuring.

For me, the big learning curve was taking chances and raising funds. Fundraising was daunting but incredibly valuable. When signing up I concentrated on the gain from being in the arctic, and I did not think about how my appreciation for things at home would grow: I can now appreciate simple, daily things that are invaluable such as a shower and a flush toilet.

I still look forward to gaining a full experience of cold conditions, in future still to be planned expeditions to cold places. I hope to pursue a career in geology, and thus the fieldwork experience and knowledge gained were invaluable and beneficial for applying to university. What I did not expect was meeting a huge number of trainee leaders

studying geology at university who gave me valuable advice on universities for geology and the courses. The expedition was expensive, and raising the money to cover costs was a new challenge, but there is no doubt that it was a unique experience I will savour for many years.

*Rosie was not the only grant recipient to take part in a BES (British Exploring Society) expedition last summer. Here are some extracts from other reports:*

**Miranda Nixon.** This summer I spent an amazing five weeks in Arctic Finnmark, Northern Norway, with the British Exploring Society. This expedition entails camping rough, exploring the area and carrying out experiments, the results of which would be sent back to universities in Britain.

One day we had the opportunity to go (safely!) down a crevasse. I was really excited to do this, as we'd heard so much about them, and seen loads on our climb up the glacier. Going in was like abseiling, plus crampons! You just had to lean back and walk down the ice face, and trust that you wouldn't slip. Being inside a crevasse has to be one of the best moments of the trip for me. You could see the layers in the ice and how deep the cracks really go down. The further down you went, the more blue it seemed to get. I was blown away by the experience. I never knew that a hole in some ice could be so beautiful.

The bursary I received from CoScan helped a lot with my fundraising for this trip. Thank you for helping me to explore such an amazing part of Scandinavia.

**Esme Hotston Moore.** One surreal experience was swimming in glacial lakes, as it chilled our bodies and washed off at least some of the ingrained dirt (that we otherwise hoped was tan) from lack of showers and other home comforts. One particular morning we were crazy enough to find the guts to not just wade but actually swim in the sea, which we found to be surprisingly bearable (all things relative of course) and perhaps even comparable to a chilly day in Britain.

From time to time we interacted with the local community. They lent us their boat for marine sampling, helped organising our complicated travel plans there, stored the equipment for next year's explorers, and finally they gave us

their old school's facilities to shower in, for the sake of the other plane passengers. We hosted a final celebration with them, where we enjoyed the local delight of halibut (a fish found in nearby waters) and shared our talents. Expedition members and locals alike sang and shared traditions, including the village shaman. With the help of his neighbour's translation, he spoke of connections to nature and his feelings about the area, before adding passion in a spiritual drum ritual.

Once again, I would like to thank CoScan for their generous grant which made all of this possible for me and has left me with so many unforgettable memories.



**Esme climbing out of a cravasse**



Photo: Esme Hotston Moore

**Edward Lavender.** Although we had seen reindeer down in the villages on the way to base camp, at mountain camp we saw our first evidence of wildlife in the valley (apart from animal scat): a colony of Arctic terns, which I spent a relaxing evening watching. Also at mountain camp there was a beautiful turquoise lake, its colour known as glacial flower, and gigantic boulders which had been deposited in previous glacial retreats. This, together with a view of the whole valley, demonstrated the incomprehensible size of the glacier once, and how much it had shrunk; thoughts which I grappled with for the rest of the trip.

Overall, everyone enjoyed the trip, and for me, the experience broadened my personal view of the Arctic, personalising some of the huge environmental issues today, being able to see them in action and their impacts, including global warming, linking glacial retreat and the effect of rising carbon dioxide levels on marine life. This has inspired me to help raise awareness of these issues.

## England has much to learn from Swedish healthcare

by Joseph Malone

I am a final year medical student at the University of Liverpool and have just returned from my four-month Medical Erasmus Exchange Programme at the Karolinska Institute, Stockholm, Sweden, from December 2012 until April 2013. This was a wonderful experience, which has really opened my eyes. On reflection, I think this has been the best learning experience throughout my entire time at medical school. I'd like to say thank-you to the Co-Scan Trust for supporting me in this incredible trip.

I undertook three rotations, each four weeks in length. The first was a month in Karolinska Hospital, Solna, in the Breast and Endocrine Surgical department. I rotated through all areas of the department shadowing the surgeons and seeing my own cases where possible. The surgical attitude towards postoperative scarring really amazed me. All surgical teams I encountered took real time and care to leave patients with the minimum scarring possible, using hidden sutures beneath the skin with fine gauge thread. This has never been the case from my experience of English surgery, save for the obviously cosmetic operations I have witnessed. This attention to detail showed a real compassion for the impact of the operation on each patient.

I was based for one month in Huddinge Hospital at the Infectious Disease department in the unexplained



fevers department ward. To my pleasant surprise, the placement turned out to be the equivalent of four weeks with Dr House, from the TV series House. My supervisor there is a truly inspirational doctor, proof that medicine is still an occupation of logic and reasoning, rather than simply following guidelines blindly.

My last placement was one month of emergency medicine at Södersjukhuset Hospital in Södermalm. This is the largest emergency room in Northern Europe and exposed me to the poorer communities in Stockholm and a surprising level of drug and alcohol cases. It was interesting to see that despite a relatively high standard of living for a European country and strict alcohol and drugs policies, substance abuse was still highly prevalent. I thought the attitude in general towards alcohol was much more moderate than in the UK, but there was clearly still a night time culture of excess in big cities such as Stockholm, despite the eye-wateringly

high prices. I was surprised just how many homeless people I encountered in the city.

I was taken aback by the efficiency with which services ran. It seems Sweden has a culture of rapid change to improve productivity. Staff appeared generally very healthy and happy in their jobs. Shorter training periods for specialisation post graduation meant consultants often looked significantly younger. Most impressive of all was the complete lack of work place hierarchy. I felt a tremendous sense of cohesion, all staff referred to each other by first name and it was common to see medical students sat side by side with senior doctors in a relaxed conversation regarding work.

Nature is of great importance to the Swedish population. The close proximity of nature to the city of Stockholm really surprised me. At weekends you often see a mad exodus for the wilderness as people race to their cabins for solace at the weekend. I was lucky enough to rent a cabin for 30 friends over a weekend, just before leaving Sweden. The wilderness closely surrounding the city is truly enchanting.

I felt that the picture I took of a wheelchair-bound in-patient sunning herself outside the main entrance to Södersjukhuset hospital summed up the holistic aspect of Sweden's healthcare service, in which great care is taken ensuring psychological and social factors are considered in every patient.



Photo: Joseph Malone

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**Scottish Norwegian Society (Glasgow)** – ragneshopkins@yahoo.co.uk  
www.norwegiansocietglasgow.co.uk

**Scottish-Swedish Society** – john.gilmour@scottishswedish.org  
www.scottishswedish.org

**Shetland Norwegian Friendship Society** – ninaherning@hotmail.com – www.communitydirectory.shetland.gov.uk/shetland-norwegian-friendship-society-i380.html

**Swedish Church in London** – london@svenskakyrkan.se  
www.svenskakyrkan.se/london

**University of Sheffield Centre for Nordic Studies** – a.r.linn@sheffield.ac.uk  
www.nordic-studies.group.shef.ac.uk/home.html

**York Anglo-Scandinavian Society (YASS)** – riitta\_hanson@live.co.uk  
www.yorkangloscan.org.uk

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