

# CoScan Magazine

## 2016/2

The Magazine for the Confederation of Scandinavian Societies  
Published twice yearly (June & December)



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**Front cover:** Hoarfrost, Grythyttan, Sweden. Photo: Eva Robards

# Chairman's message

Eva Robards

These days, in the western world, we take it for granted that we can freely speak our minds, but even here it hasn't always been so. In the publishing domain, this is worth reflecting on. A reminder is the anniversary of the world's first Ordinance Regarding the Freedom of Writing and of the Press, issued in Sweden on 2 December 1766 – i.e. exactly 250 years ago. The English translation of the whole text can be read on [www.frittord250.se/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/FINAL\\_cc\\_His-Majestys-Gracious-Ordinance.pdf](http://www.frittord250.se/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/FINAL_cc_His-Majestys-Gracious-Ordinance.pdf).



Of considerable age is also Dagny. I must tell you about Dagny! This is a lady who celebrated her 104th birthday in early May this year, but is more active than many of us. Daily walks of course, good food and interest in people and life. But what makes Dagny Carlsson special is that she got herself a

computer in her 90s, has been teaching people computer skills and is writing a daily blog ([www.123minsida.se/Bojan/99578357](http://www.123minsida.se/Bojan/99578357)); since 2012 she has had 1.8 million visitors. In addition to that, she had a book published this autumn ('Life according to Dagny'). Ruminating on these achievements, it's only to feel young and pull both sleeves and socks up!



## CoScan in Greenwich 5 – 7 May 2017

As in recent non-overseas Conference years, the 2017 CoScan AGM will be held in a major UK city and linked with a dinner and a programme of local visits. This time the venue will be London, specifically Greenwich, an area with very many attractions. Details of our plans to date and the booking form have been sent out but are also available on [www.coscan.org.uk/whats-on](http://www.coscan.org.uk/whats-on). Deadline has been set for 30 November, so if you would like to participate and haven't booked yet, don't delay further!

# Letter from a reader

Dear Editor,

I was intrigued by the piece in the last CoScan Magazine (2016/1) on English Proficiency. Why are Nordic adults in particular so proficient?

One reason might be that children start very early, learning words in nursery/ kindergarten by singing and through games and numbers – though of course one can take up a new language at any age. Another is that Nordic governments invest in high standards in education, modern methods, efficient teacher training, excellent facilities. In earlier times there were language labs, tapes, videos, role play, but these days there is even better provision by computers with spell checks.

Then there is globalisation – the international outlook on life, whereby researchers and students apply for jobs in other countries' universities, to study, seek work opportunities, travel etc. Even in the largest country, Sweden, whose language does not take Swedish speakers beyond their own borders, people have realised that they have to learn languages other than their mother tongue. Another asset for the Swedes speaking English and maintaining their number one position at the top of the league is that they have phonetic aptitude, they have beautiful sounds and melodious varied intonation – that is why it is easy to understand them.

It is quite obvious that as these nations study a language like English, closely related to their own, with lots of familiar words, it makes learning very much

easier. Here of course the Finno-Ugrians are 'up against it' as their languages are not Germanic, though I was delighted to see that Finns and Estonians score highly in the ratings. Moving to a totally different language group presents initial difficulties for them. I would list here a very heavy syntax, regular stress and flat pronunciation. However, I have noticed over the years that young adults speak English much more fluently than for example in the 1970s.

Of course in the end it all comes down to intelligent personal interest, application, perseverance and maintaining the acquired skills. May these nations carry on being the best English speakers in the world, as so often people are judged by where they live, e.g. on the periphery of Europe with dark days in winter and isolation.

Eeva-Liisa Pratt  
Anglo-Finnish Society, London

## and, from our Treasurer

A thank you to all individual and society members for your support in 2016, which has been much appreciated. Membership forms will be going out in early 2017. We hope for continued support, and the Treasurer would be ever so pleased if members could kindly pay their membership dues as early as possible.

Manja Ronne

## New clerical leaders at the Danish Churches in London and Hull



**Flemming Kloster Poulsen**

Flemming Kloster Poulsen was ordained on 24 July 2016 by Margith Pedersen, General Secretary of Danish Seamen's and Churches abroad (DSUK). He comes from Jutland; his latest posting was Sct Morten church in Randers, a city of which he was selected as the Citizen of the Year in 2015.

In addition to clerical duties, Flemming Kloster Poulsen is a storyteller and an author with several books published in Danish (including *Kunsten at fortælle*, *Det uperfekte liv*, and *I litteraturens spejl*). His homepage [www.flemmingklosterpoulsen.dk](http://www.flemmingklosterpoulsen.dk) tells more (in Danish).



**Arne Kristoffersen in the centre; General Secretary DSUK Margith Pedersen on the right.**

After visiting the Danish Seamen's Church in Hull several times during spring/summer, Pastor Emeritus Arne Kristoffersen is the new minister there; the installation took place on Sunday 4 September. For 16 years, until the end of August, he was pastor at Brøndbyvester church (just west of Copenhagen). The Danish newsletter *Kirkeliv* testifies to how greatly loved and well respected he was (see *Kirkeliv* on [www.issuu.com](http://www.issuu.com)).



**Arne Kristoffersen**

## Scottish Norwegian Society (Glasgow) – 75 years of friendship

by Karen Thom dos Reis, President

In September the Scottish Norwegian Society in Glasgow marked the 75th jubilee of its formation. Seventy-five years of friendship! We held a celebratory dinner in Glasgow and our guest speaker was Honorary Consul-General for Norway, Mr David Windmill, who gave us an interesting and amusing insight to his role. We also took a look at the formative years of the Society.

In June of 1940 the Norwegian Reception Camp was established consisting of 500 men and women who had volunteered for war duty in Norway during the Nazi occupation. Through the summer the number rose to around 1500 and under the command of General Carl Gustav Fleischer the barracks were established at Carronbridge just north of Dumfries in 1941. In that same year



**Karen Thom dos Reis' anniversary speech.** Photo: Garry Irvine

the Scottish Norwegian Society was established. The first AGM was held on 9th April 1942 and there were 160 members. The Rev. Harold Cockburn was the first President. Concerts, language classes and social gatherings were held and it was said that the Norwegians quickly integrated into their new surroundings. This we know was helped by the hospitality of the people of Dumfries. Our SNS enjoys close links with our roots and we share in the memorial services which Richard Reade has held since 2003 and includes wreath laying on the Norwegian graves at Troqueer churchyard. Sadly the Dumfries SNS was wound up owing to waning numbers



**75th anniversary dinner**

but due to social media and Facebook there has been a revival of interest with families in Sandefjord and Dumfries. There has even been a recent Norwegian language group established.

Inside the church in Dumfries there is a silver christening font and a silver wall plaque which reads *Jeg var fremmed og dere tok imot meg* (I was a stranger and ye took me in). The first Norwegians in Dumfries during these war years formed long-lasting friendships and the SNS is based on these same shared values and hospitality.

Noel Dinwiddie was a printer in Dumfries and along with Major Myrseth he set up the SNS. Its objectives were ‘to promote friendship and further cultural and commercial relations between the Scottish and Norwegian peoples’. Meetings were held in *Norges Hus* which even held a Norwegian library. In it, item 949 was a book titled ‘Old English Customs and Celebrations’ – perhaps a

clue to the successful integration!

Newlands was the home of Mr Walter Duncan and was used as a hospital for Norwegian Forces between 1940 and 1945. On the wall are three plaques. One says ‘Scotland Norge. In happy memories of Norwegians at Newlands. *DA STO VI TO BRØDRE SAMMEN OG SKAL SÅDAN STÅ.*’ (Then we two brothers stood together and thus we shall henceforth stand). The other plaques commemorate the visit of King Haakon VII in 1941 and the other the visit of King Olav in 1962 when he was received as an Honorary Burgess of the Burgh of Dumfries. This was a symbol of respect from the people of Dumfries and a recognition of the strong and lasting bond between the people of Norway and Dumfries that had been formed in comradeship and in defence of freedom, and maintained in the years of peace by continuity of interests and mutual affection.

In May 1943 the Scottish Norwegian Society (Glasgow and West of Scotland Branch) was formed. Members were the many Norwegians who worked in the shipyards and Norwegian merchant seamen on the Atlantic convoys. In 1951 a new constitution was formed and the branch became the Scottish Norwegian Society (Glasgow). The then Crown Prince Olav – later King Olav V – consented to become Patron. An interesting programme of talks and other activities was soon underway. 1957 saw the establishment of the Caledonia Cup Ski Trophy which was presented to the first Norwegian to complete the annual Pitman Quaich Slalom Race at Aviemore.



Ragne Hopkins carrying the Norwegian flag.

1961 saw the start of Norwegian evening classes by Oddveig Røsegg and Dr Gashus. These classes continue today.

Notable speakers in the 60s included Tom Weir and Magnus Magnusson. The 25th Anniversary was celebrated with an invitation to Dumfries by Mr Walter Duncan of Newlands. On the 5th of June members attended a dinner in Dumfries and visited Newlands. Wreaths were also laid on the Norwegian war graves. The culmination of the celebrations was a Banquet in the Central Hotel on the 14th November attended by HM King Olav V.

There is a bond between Scotland and Norway which has stood the test of time and continues to flourish and stay strong. We have members who have been recognised with the St Olav's Medal which is given in recognition of outstanding services rendered in connection with the spreading of information about Norway abroad and for strengthening the bonds between expatriate Norwegians and their home country.

Our Scottish Norwegian Society in Glasgow faces the familiar challenges of any society with social media and a changing culture but we celebrated 75 years of friendship and our bonds go way beyond a monthly meeting. Through every link in our chain of fellowship we see the same values that were important



#### **Honouring Norwegian graves in Dumfries**

to our founders in Dumfries. We have had several members who have been excellent ambassadors for both countries. We continue that input, for example in our Oddveig Røsegg Memorial Lecture. We continue to support *Dameklubben* with their efforts for The Norwegian Seamen's Church. We are a community, a brotherhood and friends, just as the first members were. We have a mixture of cultural and social meetings. There is one aspect of membership that has changed since its formation. It is no longer necessary to be proposed as a member as was necessary in the early years! Some members attend all the meetings and others drop in. We hope that all feel welcome and extend an invitation to all who are interested. We meet at Livingstone Tower, 26 Richmond St, Glasgow on the 2nd Wednesday of the month. For further details contact Honorary Secretary Anny Carchrie 01505 863921 or [anny.carchrie@ntlworld.com](mailto:anny.carchrie@ntlworld.com).

# Norwegian Church in London

## Interview with Torbjørn Holt

by Mark Elliott



Torbjørn Holt, Rector and Senior Chaplain at St. Olav's Norwegian church in London, is an eloquent communicator, and after nineteen years in the UK he is fluent on a wide range of subjects extending far beyond the history of his own church in Rotherhithe by the Thames. He gave your CoScan correspondent some of his extremely busy time in October.

The first Norwegian church in London was established in Wapping in 1696, the area where many ship-owners lived at the time when Norway was active in supplying building materials for reconstruction after the Great Fire of 1666. At that time and in succeeding decades the focus of the church was more on the business community than on the sailors. But things began to change, and during the Napoleonic wars in the early 19th century, when Danish and Norwegian sailors were interned as enemy aliens, the then pastor Ulrik Frederik Rosing became their 'guardian

angel', supplying them in prison with food, soap, even clothes. In 1814, when control over Norway passed from the Danish to the Swedish crown, there was a further shift, with Denmark setting up its own church and the Norwegian congregation gradually moving to the Swedish church (established in 1711).

Fifty years later, when the 'religion of the heart' movement in Norway brought an explosion of missionising activity, a priest called Johan Storjohann came to Edinburgh to pursue his theological studies. In 1863, as a consequence of hearing Norwegian voices in the port of Leith and perceiving that there was an opening there, he established the first Norwegian Seamen's Mission; a few years later he moved to London and in 1872 set up a chapel in the docks area about a mile from the present Norwegian church. The Swedish church supported the seamen's mission, but soon the Norwegians preferred the chapel which became identified as a gathering point for Norwegians. Storjohann's church also included two reading rooms, social and cultural spaces for visitors, one for captains and one for ordinary seamen. The class divide with separate spaces didn't last long, though.

The 1914-18 Great War (in which Norway was neutral, but 2000 Norwegian sailors were lost to German torpedoes) brought increased demands on the services of the church. Thereafter

it became plain that the original chapel would no longer suffice, and as a result of activity from the business community a plot of land was acquired in Rotherhithe, near the recently-opened tunnel under the Thames. The present church, St. Olav's, was opened there by Crown Prince Olav in 1927, and within a very few years the congregation increased massively. The 1939-45 war brought still greater change; with the German occupation of Norway and the removal of the Royal Family to London, the Rotherhithe church became effectively the Cathedral of Free Norway, a meeting-place for all Norwegians from the King down. After the war Norwegian shipping was still strong, and veterans from those years maintained their links with the church for many decades.

From around 1970, however, Surrey Docks closed because of the larger ships being built. By the turn of the century there were very few Norwegian nationals among the crew of Norwegian-flag vessels; and although there is still a demand in Aberdeen from the North Sea offshore supply fleet, the Rotherhithe church now serves essentially the Norwegian expatriate community and visitors. Activity today, though, is impressively wide-ranging. Torbjørn Holt described it: in addition to the regular church services, there are artistic and cultural events, groups of many kinds (including both a women's group and a 'new women' group for those in their 30s), liaison with other Nordic churches and the Anglican church, a Saturday school and other youth groups, football, and a choir. The Christmas bazaar in November, in cooperation with

the Finnish church nearby, attracts many thousands of visitors (15,000 in 2015), who make a vital contribution towards the running costs of the church. The church works closely with the Norwegian Embassy on social and consular matters.

Torbjørn Holt's workload does not seem likely to reduce. The church is deeply involved in the development plans for St. Olav Square, in which it stands; the project includes new building construction including residential accommodation, and an important new statue of King Haakon. His energy appears undiminished. But he and his Nordic colleagues are worried about the implications of the Brexit negotiations. Any consequent weakening of the strong and deeply-rooted links between Britain and the Nordic countries would, he said diplomatically, be 'a great pity'.



*Sjømannskirken, St Olav's, at St Olav's Square in Rotherhithe*



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## UK City of Culture Hull 2017 and Aarhus 2017 in partnership

The same year as Hull holds the title of UK City of Culture, Aarhus holds the title of European Capital of Culture. A partnership agreement was signed by the respective CEOs (Martin Green, Hull, and Rebecca Matthews, Aarhus) in April this year. The signing took place during the exhibition 'The Journey to 2017' in Aarhus.

This exciting collaboration commits the European Capital of Culture and the UK City of Culture to create spectacular projects together.



# From iconic international works to the ‘definitively Danish’

by Bent Sørensen

Head of Communication, Aarhus 2017



In 2017, Denmark’s second largest city, Aarhus, and the Central Denmark Region are hosting one of the major European cultural events of the year, the European Capital of Culture. With HM Queen Margrethe II as gracious patron, a sparkling, festive programme for the year with hundreds of events has been launched.

ticketed events – experiences that are huge and human-scale all at once.’

Highlights with a definitively Danish flavour include a spectacular retelling of Frans G. Bengtsson’s classic Viking saga *Röde Orm* (‘The Long Ships’), a



**HM Queen Margrethe II receives the first copy of the Aarhus 2017 programme book from local children Anna and Magnus.**  
Photo: JJ Film

‘Aarhus 2017 is going to be a creative tour de force,’ says Aarhus 2017 CEO Rebecca Matthews, ‘with new works, special commissions, premieres, major events and festivals. And it will encompass plenty of free as well as

stunning Watermusic show around the harbour featuring singer and composer Oh Land, and Oscar-winning director Susanne Bier’s celebrated film trilogy re-imagined as opera, dance and theatre performances.

The programme also features a dazzling array of international talent from wider Scandinavia, Europe and beyond, bringing global culture to the Central Denmark Region for the entire year. Under the banner of 'Let's Rethink', Aarhus 2017 challenges the world to use arts and culture as a means of exploring the choices we must make for our future. Whatever those choices are, they will

2017's Artist-in-Residence Anohni, who promises a vibrant interweaving of human identities in sound and vision; a performance of 'Distant Figure', a collaboration between one of the legends of contemporary theatre, US director Robert Wilson, and the iconic artists, choreographer Lucinda Childs and composer Philip Glass; Australian actor Cate Blanchett imbues dramatic life into



**Violin girl in nature.** Under the banner of 'Let's Rethink', Aarhus 2017 challenges the world to use arts and culture as a means of exploring the choices we must make for our future. Photo: Montgomery Studio

bring changes to the way we live and work, the places we live in, and the very structure of our society.

'We hope that the different perspectives and creative energy expressed by the outstanding artists assembling in Aarhus next year will be a catalyst and resource for managing those changes,' says Matthews.

The Aarhus region and its visitors will have the chance to have close personal contact with some of the most exciting cultural talents on the international stage today. They include Aarhus

the text collages of the ground breaking project 'Manifesto' by German artist Julian Rosefeldt; choreographer Wayne McGregor and the Paris Opera Ballet will transform US novelist Jonathan Safran Foer's 'Tree of Codes' with music composed by Jamie xx and scenography by Olafur Eliasson; and there will be a concert featuring pianist and conductor Daniel Barenboim with the legendary West-Eastern Divan Orchestra, a project aimed at celebrating freedom, equality and coexistence through music.

'We are extremely excited about the

year ahead. The quality and diversity of the programme we have assembled mean there is truly something for everyone, whether you're from Aarhus, Denmark, or visiting from elsewhere. We have created a huge, game-changing year by combining the knowledge of global experts on culture with the views of local people, to determine what quality means in and for arts and culture, here and now,' Rebecca Matthews says.

Full details of the hundreds of artistic and cultural events taking place in 2017 are

featured in the Aarhus 2017 programme guide, which runs to a staggering 500 pages. Whether it's the iconic, stage-based events featuring worldwide stars, or smaller and more intimate exhibitions, debates and community activities, the programme has something to appeal to fans, families, fun-seekers – and even sceptics – encouraging all to rethink. Or as the Patron of Aarhus 2017, HM Queen Margrethe II, states in her foreword to the programme: 'Rethink: Think the new, think anew, think again!'

At the CoScan AGM in Aarhus earlier this year, Karin Buhl Slæggerup made a presentation on Aarhus 2017 for the delegates. Many of these took the opportunity to visit Moesgaard museum during the weekend in Aarhus.

The museum has also been visited by Don Henson, former Head of Education at the Council for British Archaeology.



## Moesgaard Museum

by Don Henson

As part of my research at the University of York into how the Mesolithic period (Middle Stone Age) is portrayed, I had the good fortune to visit Scandinavia in October 2015. I went to see how museums there, especially in Denmark, were representing the period. Why Denmark? Mesolithic sites there are amongst the best in the world and form an important

part of the national story. Fortunately, Danish museums are rather good and have a tradition of embracing new ideas about displays. One of the newest is the Moesgaard Museum of archaeology and ethnography just outside Aarhus in Denmark. A new museum building was opened in 2014: a modern design with stark lines, white exterior and sloping

grassed-over roof which emphasises the present as a complete contrast with the past.

Around the museum is a large open area with trails and encounters with woodlands, and reconstructed prehistoric and medieval buildings and monuments, such as a small early Christian wooden church.



This traditional style of open air museum contrasts with the displays in the modern indoor museum.

As you enter the museum, you progress to the archaeology displays downstairs lined with accurate models of early hominin species, culminating in *Homo sapiens*.



This emphasises the nature of the museum, with its focus on encountering people in the past rather than the display only of artefacts.

The designers have used lighting, spatial arrangement and theatricality to provide an experience rather than a traditional museum display. The displays are still being developed and at present cover the Bronze Age up to Viking times. Artefacts are placed creatively in galleries with atmospheric lighting, temperature control and artwork to conjure up a feeling of going back in time. Many of the objects on display are impressive, such as the Bronze Age burials with their clothing preserved, and the preserved Iron Age body, Grauballe Man. What makes the museum special, though, is their innovative use of audio-visual devices to help the visitor understand how these objects tell us about life in the past. Some of these devices are simple, and used elsewhere, but are used here effectively. These include short clips on small or large screens of the curators talking about the objects on display.



More innovative, and more informative, are the uses of animations and cartoon-like images to show imagined characters from the past or what life might have been like inside an Iron Age house. Other visual tricks include a large scale animation that shows how a Bronze Age burial mound was built, eroded and then excavated. Or you can interact with a gaming board and choose different tactics for use in an Iron Age battle between warring tribes. Here you stand amidst the houses of a village that has just been attacked. You then go round the corner and find yourself in between two wall-sized video screens with the two armies facing off and engaging in battle.

Pass through this and then behind one screen is another showing the aftermath: a succession of images of the prisoners and their weapons being sacrificed in a bog. The weapons fall downwards into the bog and the floor below where they are displayed in the traditional glass cases. Only, these are no longer just objects on display. Instead, the museum has given them meaning. We understand they were once used in battle and represent a human tragedy.

Other highlights are at the beginning of the Bronze Age displays where connections with the Mediterranean are explored. Here you can experience at first hand the sights, sounds and feeling of the eruption of the volcano that destroyed the Mycenaean civilisation. Elsewhere, there is a copy of the Iron Age silver Gundestrup cauldron. A larger-than-life-size display next to this allows the visitor to walk inside the cauldron and with the aid of an audio headset explore the

artwork embossed on it in an imaginative way. Sometimes the objects are allowed to speak for themselves. The Aarhus Viking runestone has an elaborate mask, or face with stylised beard, and is the basis for the museum's logo. This is impressive in its own right.



Moesgaard is not a traditional museum. It tries to humanise the past, to remind us that the objects we see were once part of people's lives. It does this by engaging our senses and surrounding us with sights and sounds. If you go to Moesgaard, be prepared to go on a journey into the past. It will excite, thrill, intrigue, amaze and at times, maybe, also disconcert and discomfort you (some of the depictions of human sacrifice may be a little too vivid for some visitors). Not only are the remains of the past in Scandinavia among the best in the world, with museums like this, they also lead the way in interpreting the past to visitors.

# Merry sang the Monks: The rebranding of Cnut Sveinsson

by S.A.J Bradley



Angels crown Cnut as he and Ælfgifu present a large gold cross to Hyde Abbey.

CNUT THE DANE (ca.995-1035), having vigorously supported his father Svein's successful war of conquest against the Anglo-Saxon kingdom of Æthelræd, laid claim to kingship in England, following the sudden death of Svein in 1014. Deals negotiated with the war-exhausted English led in 1017 to his lawful accession to the kingdom. In 1018, at staggering cost to the English in

*2016 is the 1000th anniversary of Cnut's acquisition of the English crown and the beginning of the conversion of the ruthless Danish viking into an effective Christian ruler.*

tribute, he paid off much of the Danish army, and a settlement between Danes and English was reached at Oxford 'according to King Edgar's law'. There Cnut's new-found adherence to the Christian faith and his oath to promulgate and abide by the laws of the English were affirmed. He succeeded to the kingship of Denmark in 1018 and claimed the kingship of Norway in 1028. Thus the Anglo-Scandinavian empire was formed which, however, began to break up after Cnut's death in 1035, with the result that England returned to English rule, notably under Edward the Confessor from 1042 to 1066, before being conquered by William of Normandy at the Battle of Hastings in 1066.

A contemporary Anglo-Saxon manuscript (above, left), *The New Minster Liber Vitae*, made in Winchester ca 1031, depicts Cnut and his queen presenting an altar-cross to the monastic church there. Below the royals, the monks point upwards as witnesses. Above the royals, looking down in blessing, sits Christ flanked by Mary and Peter. The belief was that the names of worthies inscribed in this Book of Life would thereby also come to be inscribed in the great book of

life (Rev. 20:12) to be laid open at the Last Judgement. The monks' intention, we might assume, was that Cnut and his queen should perceive it as a due and fulsome compliment and blessing that they should so appear in the very frontispiece of this Winchester Book of Life: a record for all posterity of Cnut the Christian king. And if the Winchester monks, tactically showing off their collection of royal documents, had pointed out to Cnut the charter (below, p 19) granted them by King Edgar about 966, he might have felt flattered to see that Edgar on his frontispiece and he, Cnut, on his, were depicted in much the same situation, as generous benefactors blessed from above by Christ.

EDGAR was that king of whom the Anglo-Saxon chronicler wrote: 'In his days things prospered well. Widely he raised aloft God's praise and he loved God's law; and he, above all those kings that were before him, most improved the security of the people. And God also aided him so that kings and earls readily submitted to him. And constantly and continually, in the things both of God and of the world, he wisely counselled all his people.' Edgar the Peaceful. Edgar whose laws Cnut had sworn in Oxford to uphold and administer. Unlike Edgar, Cnut is depicted with his queen at his side. The monastic illustrator names her: *Ælfgifu Regina*. But curiously, this is the name of Cnut's first wife, the mother of two of his sons. Hardly had Cnut, in 1017, claimed the crown of all England before he put aside *Ælfgifu* and, says the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, 'ordered the widow of King *Æthelræd*, daughter of Richard, to

be fetched as his wife.' The widowed Queen Emma can have been under no illusion: she was needed in the strategy of rebranding Cnut as king after the English dynastic model. She might also guarantee a useful alliance with Richard, Duke of Normandy. The Church cannot have been entirely happy at having to string along with this high-handed attitude towards the sacrament of marriage. But royal patronage was precious, and appearances mattered: the Church had an interest in fudging the historical record a little by muddling the identities of Cnut's wives.

Another contrast: Edgar's crown sits securely upon his head (ritually placed there by the strict and proper Archbishop Dunstan of Canterbury in the coronation in Bath). The monk-illustrator has chosen a rather different iconographic option for Cnut's crown and his queen's regal veil. These hover above their heads somewhat ambiguously, as though conditionally, held by angels each pointing a finger upwards to Christ who sits with an open book – that Domesday book of life? – open upon his knee. No such ambiguous signalling was needed for the portraiture of Edgar: the angels attendant upon him are, like God's good friend, the king himself, gazing upwards in homage to Christ in majesty. Here, the movement of the design is uniformly and uninterruptedly upwards, from the King of the English to the King of the Angels.

Indeed, heaven's queen and the keeper of the keys of heaven and hell have descended to Edgar, in this idealised scene. Mary stands at his left hand in which he holds the charter he is presenting to the abbey and to God, and at his right

hand stands Peter with a book – that book of life again? – on his arm. No doubt that the book's entry for Edgar is a favourable one. But at Cnut's donation these same exalted figures remain high in heaven above the admonitory angels. Perhaps the company below has not yet proved to warrant their descent.

Was the artist, then, instructed not to appear, under the eye of God, to endorse all the irregularities about Cnut and his queen – while appearing to the common (or regal) eye to be dutifully honouring a special relationship between earthly and heavenly kingship? A tendentious reading of what is in these two images of kingship, perhaps: yet the reality must have been that the monks believed that God had already observed from on high the atrocities that Cnut had undoubtedly perpetrated both on his way to this crown and after he had secured it.

As soon as he could after his accession, he exiled one of the late King Æthelræd's sons, then allegedly had him murdered. He invited a powerful collaborator to his presence, then without compunction had him killed there. He was not unmatched in this respect by the English. War, as we still witness, can bring with it moral degradation in all the belligerents. It was an age of violence and brutality on both sides, but for the English it was all the more horrifying for the contrast with the long reign of peace under King Edgar, while Cnut's court poets exulted (profitably, one assumes) in Cnut's love of warfare and carnage: 'Great king! you carried the war-shield: not quiet was the life you lived and delighted in; Lord of the Jutes, killer of King Edgar's kin,

most resolute of men of blood-royal, you ransacked them.'\* Nor were his more notorious brutalities hidden in the mêlée of the battlefield but ostentatious and defiant gestures recorded in the *Chronicles*, as when, fleeing from a temporary English battlefield victory, he put ashore the distinguished English hostages his father had received by negotiation – having first ordered his men to cut off their hands, ears and noses.

The Archbishop of York, Wulfstan (d. 1023), was not one to hold back from castigating the Christian English as vigorously as he did the Danish 'pirates'. In his account, the Danes enjoyed humiliating the defeated and powerless English gentry by raping their womenfolk in front of them; while the English discovered that they too could trade women and children as slaves in the style of the Danish invaders. He published a pastoral address to the whole English people cataloguing this downward moral and ethical spiral and pleading with them to turn back to God. Yet it appears to have been Wulfstan, chiefly, who set about turning Cnut into a passable model of a Christian English king, once the situation had become irreversible – and at least held a promise of peace. The Church of the English, led by its two archbishops, gave Cnut a Christian coronation and marriage to Emma and must have fudged sufficiently to sanction Cnut's disposal of his first wife. Wulfstan appears to have drafted the laws issued by Cnut, securing principles embodied in English legal tradition. The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicles*, which Wulfstan probably had a hand in compiling, dutifully call

Cnut king and record for posterity his royal, even pious actions. Wulfstan and other distinguished clergy escorted Cnut to Ashingdon, Essex – presumed site of the decisive battle which in effect gave Cnut the English crown – and there a new minster was dedicated, to the benefit of the souls of both Danish and English dead: excellent PR, a modern publicist would say. Then, in the year of Wulfstan's death, Queen Emma and her young son by Cnut, Hardacnut, joined the cortège which conveyed the remains of the martyred Archbishop Ælfeah (Elphege) from London back to his cathedral in Canterbury, ten years after he had been savagely clubbed to death by drunken Danes, enraged because no ransom was yet forthcoming for their prize prisoner. The bad bits of history were being tidied up.

Cnut has sometimes been esteemed the most effective king among the kings of Anglo-Saxon England, perhaps chiefly by those who admire strong government; and indeed it doesn't seem to have taken long before the more edifying image of King Cnut, propagated largely by that early spin-doctor (and, actually, very admirable churchman, politician and framer of laws) Anglo-Saxon Archbishop Wulfstan, took firm root. By the late 1100s the good folk of the fenlands could cheerily sing:

*Merie sunge ðe muneches binnen ely  
ða cnut ching reu ðer by.  
roweþ cnites noer ðe lant,  
ond here we þes muneches sæng.*

*Merry sang the monks in Ely  
when Cnut the king rowed thereby.  
'Row, lads, nearer the land,  
and let us hear these monks' song.'*

Plainly, all the heathen viking nastiness had now been well forgotten.

\* The poet Ottar the Black, quoted in *Knyttlinga Saga: The History of the Kings of Denmark*, tr. H. Pálsson, P. Edwards (Odense U. P., 1986).



**King Edgar standing between the Virgin Mary and St. Peter. Winchester New Minster Charter (ca 966).** British Library, Cotton Vespasian A. viii

## St Elisabeth Hesselblad – Sweden's first new saint in 625 years

by Bridget Morris

Most people in Sweden will have heard of their national patron saint, St Birgitta (1302-73). Canonised in 1391, in 2000 she was named by the pope as the first female patron saint of Europe, together with Edith Stein and Catherine of Siena.

St Birgitta was a charismatic mother of eight who in her widowhood lived among the rich and powerful ecclesiastics in Rome and founded a new monastic order for men and women within the same enclosure but under the overall authority of an abbess – an understandably complex challenge for the architects of the monasteries. The first monastery of the so-called Birgittine Order was founded in 1369 in Vadstena on the shores of Lake Vättern. The Order rapidly expanded throughout Europe as far afield as Poland, Spain and Southern Italy. In England the Birgittine house was originally situated in the present grounds of Northumberland Park on the banks of the Thames, but later relocated to South Brent in Devon. It sadly closed a couple of years ago, within a whisker of its 600th anniversary.

But Catholic interest in the Birgittine order has another dimension nowadays, in the person of one Elisabeth Hesselblad, who was canonised only a few months ago, on 5 June 2016 at St Peter's Square.

Born in 1870 to Lutheran parents in Fåglavik (a village 100 km northeast of Gothenburg), Elisabeth Hesselblad emigrated to the USA in 1888 where



**Portrait of Elisabeth Hesselblad**

she trained as a nurse and converted to Roman Catholicism. During a pilgrim visit to Rome to the house where Birgitta had lived she was deeply affected by the example of her medieval compatriot. She set about reviving the order in Sweden as well as Rome, and bringing a renaissance of the Catholic faith to Sweden.

Thus she became the founder of a new 'reformed' branch of Birgittines in 1911 that accommodated the care of the sick as well as guest house facilities. (In this way her branch differs from that of its founder, which was a closed contemplative order, set apart from the world). The nuns of the reformed Birgittine Order of St Saviour are sometimes seen out and about in public, and very recognisable through

their distinctive black head-dress with a white cross and five red circles.

In 1923 Hesselblad founded a house in Djursholm, Stockholm, and this was followed by new houses as far afield as India and the US; the house in England is at Iver Heath, Bucks. She also re-established the house in Rome as the active heart of her new Birgittine network. Between the years 1935 and 1963 there was also a rest home and guesthouse in Vadstena, and since 1968 a convent has flourished in Falun. There

are now more than 40 reformed convents around the world (while only a handful of St Birgitta's original foundation still remain, still following her original Rule, but that is an incredible survival in its own right).

Elisabeth Hesselblad died in 1957 in Rome, and she was beatified in 2000, the first step towards her canonisation, for which many Swedes and affiliates and friends of the Birgittine order made the journey with great excitement in June 2016.

## *Sisu* – Finnish spirit

by Helena Halme

Every Finnish person knows the meaning of *sisu*, but finds it hard to describe. This is what Wikipedia has to say about the elusive national characteristic: '*Sisu* is a term which dates back hundreds of years and is described as being integral to understanding Finnish culture. It is a term for going beyond one's mental or physical capacity, and is a central part of the country's culture and collective discourse.'

It is said that it was *sisu* that gave the Finnish soldiers the strength and determination – against all odds – to defeat the Russians in the Winter War 1939-40. It's also said to be the word that defines Finland, and believe me, it does.

To me Finnish *sisu* is made up of the following five resources, or character traits:

1. It's the main component in winning against all odds, as in the Winter War, or

in sports like ice-hockey where our small country has been doing remarkably well against bigger nations such as the US or Russia.

2. It enables Finns to suffer in silence, for example *sisu* helps us endure our harsh climate, where temperatures can go from +30 C in the summer to -40 C in winter.

3. It means being brave or to do something, which someone without *sisu* would have thought wise never to attempt. A good example here is ski-jumping, a sport where Finns have also excelled, and which to my mind no-one in their right mind should ever consider doing!

4. It means perseverance. Finns are known for never giving up, and carrying through on their promises. When Finland was forced by circumstances beyond its control to ally itself with Germany in

WW2, and ended up on the losing side, our small country was one of the few which paid the war reparations in full. The country was poor, but proud, and so my forefathers and mothers worked hard to keep their promise. I'm sure a lot of *sisu* was needed for that effort.

5. Some say *sisu* means foolhardiness, and I guess they may be right. Who'd jump into a hole, carved in an ice-covered lake? The practice is called ice-swimming, and is usually done straight from the sauna – another weird Finnish tradition, which it takes *sisu* to enjoy (or endure, depending on your nationality or character).

In a fairly recent – and rare – study Emilia Lahti of University of Pennsylvania, describes *sisu* as a psychological key competence, which enables extraordinary action to overcome a mentally or physically challenging

situation. She concludes that *sisu* also contributes to what has been named the action mindset: a consistent, courageous approach toward challenges which at first seem to exceed our capacities.

I certainly recognise these characteristics in myself, but even more so in my British-born children. Strangely enough, it was one of the things that I worried they wouldn't have, when I knew my half-Finnish offspring would not be brought up in Finland. But over, and over, I recognize the determination in both my grown-up daughter and son. Whether it's dealing with 12-14 hour working days, or enduring a 3-day, 125 mile long canoe race with 77 portages on a cold, snowy March weekend, they display a lot of *sisu*. I just hope they tone down on the foolhardiness a bit, although I'm not counting my chickens on that score!



Ice-swimming, Finland.

Photo Marjaana Pato 9 January 2016

## From the bookshelf

### *Hygge everywhere ...*

Review by Louise Sørensen

Hot on the heels of 'Nordic noir', the concept of *hygge* appears to be the next big thing to hit the UK. Most commonly translated as 'cosiness', *hygge* is about taking pleasure in the simple things and creating a warm and comfortable environment in which one can unwind.

In the past couple of months, The Guardian, The Independent, Daily Mail, Herald Scotland, and online news sites such as the BBC and the Huffington Post, have all featured articles on the topic. Several books have also been published aiming to make their readers' lives a little more *hyggelige*. Three of these books, one published in August and two in September 2016, are reviewed in this piece.



Meik Wiking, *The Little Book of Hygge. The Danish Way to Live Well*. 288 pages. Published by Penguin Life, Sept 2016. 978-0241283912.

Wiking works for the Danish independent think-tank, the Happiness Research Institute, exploring what makes people happy around the world. Denmark consistently ranks amongst the happiest countries globally, and Wiking thinks that knowing how to do *hygge* may play a part in these statistics.

Through a mixture of interesting facts, practical tips and short anecdotes, Wiking delves into topics such as food and drink, home design and social relationships – all constituent parts of *hygge*. We are told that Danes annually consume 8.2 kilos of confectionery per person (second only to the Finns and twice the European average), because '*hygge* is giving yourself a treat' and sweets are obviously more *hyggelige* than a carrot stick. We are also told that every single Dane, in the quest to combat the long, dark winters, burns around six kilos of candle wax a year – more candles per head than anywhere in Europe.

Readers aspiring to bring more *hygge* into their lives are given tips on how to make their home more *hyggelig* (lighting is the most important thing) and recipes for hearty Danish dishes. There is even a guide to a *hygge* tour of Copenhagen for the ultimate *hygge* seeker.

Charlotte Abrahams, *Hygge: A Celebration of Simple Pleasures. Living the Danish Way*. 240 pages. Published by Trapeze Sept 2016. ISBN: 978-1409167594.

Abrahams' book is an exploration of *hygge* from the perspective of a non-Dane. She sees it as a lifestyle philosophy – one which she brought into her own life

following a period of personal turmoil. She likes *hygge* because it, as opposed to many other current lifestyle philosophies (especially those focusing on diet and exercise), is not rooted in denial. *Hygge* is about cherishing the little things and allowing oneself a break now and then to enjoy the moment.

As a design journalist, Abrahams does devote a lot of space in the book to Danish design. But this is within the context of her belief that design can be used to improve the quality of people's lives; the Danes place great emphasis on aesthetics and functionality and this in turn contributes to their overall feeling of wellbeing. Again, like Wiking, Abrahams makes the link between *hygge* and happiness (despite the bad weather and high taxes).

Abrahams' book is a journey through how the principles of *hygge* have helped her improve her personal life. Design, of course, is important to her and she describes a home full of warm lighting and comfortable furniture. Yet, the less tangible social aspect of *hygge* seems to have had an even more profound impact on her. She describes everyone participating in food preparation and the passing round of dishes at the table, rather than a host dishing up, as a revelation. For a food-based event to be truly *hyggelig*, no single person must be stuck at the stove, she proclaims.

What is particularly interesting about Abrahams' book is that she offers an outsider's explanation of *hygge*. While Danes have a shared unconscious idea about what *hygge* is (and what it isn't), a fact acknowledged by Abrahams, others

have to try and understand what it is before attempting to experience *hygge*, and this book definitely helps with gaining that understanding.



Lena Bentsen. *Goodbye Clutter, Hello Freedom: How to create space for Danish Hygge and Lifestyle by cleaning up, organizing, and decorating with care.* Published by Eire Publishing Ltd, Aug 2016.

Bentsen is a lifestyle designer who helps people organise their homes, and her book is quite different to Abrahams and Wiking's. Whereas they try to explain what *hygge* is, she focuses on practicalities, on the necessary steps to take before *hygge* can be brought into one's life.

Bentsen's book is a nice little guide to clearing the clutter from your home, but anyone wanting to find out more about *hygge* will be disappointed (and will have to buy her next book, it seems) as it is hardly mentioned.



nordiskbooks.com

"Hærværk (Havoc) is one of the best novels to ever come out of Scandinavia. As discomfoting as beautiful, it portrays the fall of a man, and it's so hypnotically written that you want to fall with him."

**Karl Ove Knausgård,**  
author of 'My Struggle'

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'You can't betray your best friend and learn to sing at the same time'

## Review by Mark Elliott

Tom Kristensen, *Havoc*, translated by Carl Malmberg. Published by Nordisk Books, October 2016.  
ISBN 978-0-9954852-0-4.

'*Hærværk* (Havoc) is one of the best novels to ever come out of Scandinavia.' Karl Ove Knausgård's verdict is printed on the cover of this new edition from Nordisk Books of Tom Kristensen's 1930 novel in the 1968 translation by Carl Malmberg. This reviewer, as a mere Englishman reading the book for the first time only in translation and half a century after that translation appeared, cannot legitimately do more than offer a personal and superficial assessment.

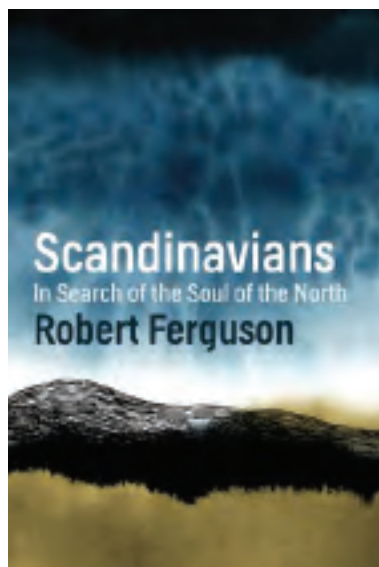
It is a remarkable book – vivid, sometimes painful in the clarity of its perceptions of human disillusion and degeneration, always intelligent in its use of language. The central character, Ole Jastrau, is literary editor at the newspaper *Dagbladet*, with a particular taste for poetry. A short poem written by an unwelcome visitor to his apartment, the Communist son of another eminent literary figure and one of Jastrau's main companions in his descent into the abyss of alcoholism, includes lines which epitomise the book and have apparently become among the most often-quoted in the Danish language: 'I have longed for

shipwrecks, for havoc and violent death'. The lines, which appear early in the book, are quoted again towards the end on page 573 (it is a seriously long read) when Jastrau has arrived at a sort of emotional plateau from which he might just clamber back into social acceptability.

Politics, and visionary poetic images, are active themes throughout 'Havoc'. Jastrau and some of his associates are rebelling against what they see as the conservatism and complacency of the Danish establishment at the time. Frequent and extreme recourse to alcohol is one expression of this rebellion, although heavy drinking appears to be universal in the Copenhagen of the period. The hallucinatory images which accompany the later stages of these debauches are brilliantly described. Religion is another sub-theme; part two of the book is entitled 'Behold the Man' or *Ecce Homo*, a reference to Jesus in the Christian scriptures, and Jastrau is inclined in moments of self-realisation to mutter 'behold the man' to himself. Jesuit priests figure in the story and are sometimes seen by Jastrau as black-garbed devils sent to torment him. But his own musings are often deeply philosophical, on the nature of freedom of choice, on the motivation for committing crimes, on his own identification in certain moods with Christ and his occasional ambition to convert to Catholicism. At one point he describes himself as a simple ordinary man trying to find the meaning of absolute freedom; but then he reverts. 'There is something I want, and when I drink I sometimes feel for a moment that I've captured it. Liquor is the only substitute

for religion, shall we put it that way – just for fun?' In contrast Steffensen, the poet/Communist responsible for the 'longed-for shipwrecks' lines, is more extreme: 'Language is a slut. People should never have taken up with her. No, they should never have learned to talk. That's what's ruined our lives.'

There are some more conventional scenes: tender moments for Jastrau with various women, and with his small son; vivid passages in prison; the fire which destroys Jastrau's apartment. There are some good phrases – 'I'd like to write a book about the Danish national characteristics – deceptive blue eyes and blond unreliability'; an out-of-the-way part of down-town Copenhagen seen 'as if a cloud had passed in front of the sun'; an ambulance which swept by 'with the speed of a shiver running down a spine'. There are echoes of other literary styles, a Kafka-like sense of oppression, inconsequential conversation reminiscent of Chekhov, an almost Homeric repetition of epithets when one character is described as 'the inevitable Kjær' twenty or thirty times in the last section of the book. There are some Americanisms in the translator's style which jar occasionally with the English reader, and other slightly odd usages which may reflect the flavour of the period. But the whole novel has a sweep and an urgency, a compelling quality of dialogue and description, which carry one through. As Knausgård puts it in the quotation on the cover, the book 'portrays the fall of a man, and it's so hypnotically written that you want to fall with him'.



Robert Ferguson, *Scandinavians: in Search of the Soul of the North*  
Published by Head of Zeus, Nov 2016.  
ISBN-13: 978-1781858943.

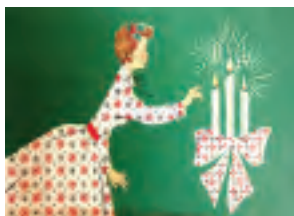
In a Times review of Robert Ferguson's *Scandinavians: in search of the soul of the North*, David Aaronovitch says, 'Despite Britain's love affair with all things Scandi, our understanding of the Scandinavian peoples and their culture has never been better than patchy and usually laced with that condescension that we tend to bring to everything foreign'. Robert Ferguson is well qualified to help. He has written books about the Vikings, Henrik Ibsen and Knut Hamsun and has lived in Scandinavia for over 35 years. The Times reviewer is very positive, summarising '*Scandinavians*' as a 'charming, affectionate and enhancing yet critical book'. It was the Times' 'Book of the week' in early November this year.



Helena Halme, *The Good Officer*.  
Published by Newhurst Press, Nov 2016.  
e-book ISBN 978-0-9935956-4-6  
Paperback ISBN 978-0-9935956-6-0.

Helena Halme is a Finnish-born author of six novels. Her latest title, 'The Good Officer', is the fourth book in the Nordic romance series, called 'The Englishman'.

Helena grew up in Tampere, central Finland, and moved to the UK via Stockholm and Helsinki. She is the winner of the John Nurmi prize for best thesis on British politics, and a former BBC journalist. Helena has also worked as a magazine editor and a bookseller and as head of Finn-Guild, the Finnish/British cultural association in London. She's currently Publications Manager and Nordic Ambassador for The Alliance of Independent Authors.



## Anna Sophie's Kitchen

Photo: [passion4baking.com/detsotoliv.no/Anna Sophie Strandli Schmidt](http://passion4baking.com/detsotoliv.no/Anna%20Sophie%20Strandli%20Schmidt)

### Macarons

A meringue-based cookie with a crunchy exterior and a weightless interior. Filled with Butter or Cheese cream, Ganache, Fruit Curd, Ice cream, or indeed Salted Caramel.

### How to make Macarons?

There are just as many practices and directions as there are macarons in this world. Much of this well-intentioned advice is so detailed and complex that you give up before half way through the manual. You may have read about egg whites that must ripen at room temperature for several days? Scalding almonds? Cake trays holding perfect temperature before going into the oven? Syrup? Doting of macarons with toothpicks? Using a hairdryer before baking?

Some things are important in order to get a good result. Other stuff can just be skipped. **The trick lies in the stirring.** Too little causes the macarons to become like small meringue peaks (enough air is not stirred out). Too much will cause them to float out.

Also, be careful to measure the ingredients. The consistency of the mixture should be such that when left alone for **30 seconds** after stirring, the contours will start to even out. Be quick about piping the mixture onto a silicone baking mat or slightly oiled baking sheet. Leave the piped cookies at room temperature until they form a hard skin on top (about 1 ½ hour). Then they are

ready to be baked. Baking with the oven door slightly open until the macarons' surfaces are dry is another good tip.

To place another baking tray above the tray with the macarons would prevent them from overheating or cracking up. After baking, let the macarons cool completely on the baking tray before lifting/removing them. Spread half of them with any desired filling, put the remaining halves on top, and refrigerate for one hour. This allows the macarons to become deliciously sticky inside.

### Vanilla Macarons

Basic recipe for 25 macarons.

75g egg whites  
100g sugar  
100g almonds (ground with skins on)  
100g icing sugar  
Seeds from one vanilla pod.



Beat egg whites until foamy. Add sugar and continue beating until glossy and fluffy. If you want to add colour to the macarons this is the time. Sift icing sugar and the ground almonds in a separate bowl and quickly fold the almond mixture into the egg whites, about 30 strokes. Spoon a small amount of mixture into a plastic bag with a corner cut off and pipe a test disk onto prepared baking tray. The disk should flatten into a regular round (about 3– 5 cm in diameter). Pipe out the macarons and leave space between the disks. Preheat oven to 150 degrees and bake for 12-15 minutes, or 130-140 degrees for about 18 min. Ovens vary.



### Two suggestions for fillings:

#### Salted Caramel

275g sugar  
75 ml water  
150 ml double cream  
Seeds from one vanilla pod  
or 1 tsp vanilla extract  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp sea salt



**Mix the sugar and water** in a small saucepan. Place on a medium heat and stir until the sugar has dissolved. Stop stirring and turn up the heat to high. Boil until the colour has turned into a deep caramel.

Remove from heat. Add the cream, vanilla, and salt and stir until well blended.

Let the mixture cool completely.

Transfer the caramel to a piping bag fitted with a circular tip. Pipe a dot on to half of the Macarons. Sandwich them together.

#### Cream Cheese Frosting

100g cream cheese  
100g white chocolate, melted  
25g of almonds (blanched if you wish)  
Seeds from  $\frac{1}{2}$  vanilla pod  
Mix all ingredients for 30 seconds in a blender.



*Happy Baking!*

## CoScan Trust Fund

On the next few pages you can read reports written by young people who visited Scandinavia in 2015, and who were helped to do so by receiving a travel grant from the CoScan Trust Fund. As you will see, they are very appreciative of our help.

### CoScan travel grants

are awarded once a year to people aged between 15 and 25 who are planning a journey of an educational nature to Scandinavia.

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## ‘Happy sausage!’

by Oliver McCallion

Being a student in my final year of medical school, I recently returned from Norway after living there for six months studying Child Health and Obstetrics & Gynaecology at *Rikshospitalet* and *Ullevål sykehus*, part of *Universitetet i Oslo*.

I won’t bore you with all the details of settling into a foreign city, although suffice to say it was a challenge. Alongside my medical studies, I took a course in beginners’ Norwegian with the vague idea of being able to have conversational Norwegian by the end of my stay. My teacher, Astrid, had the patience of a saint – slowly but surely correcting my terrible pronunciation of Norwegian vowels (ø, å, and æ are absolutely impossible to articulate). Obviously my attempts at conversing in Norwegian failed spectacularly, but I think a lot of the patients found it amusing that I tried, particularly when I confused *pølse* and *påske*, and inadvertently wished someone ‘happy sausage’. I would have been lost had everybody not spoken perfect English.

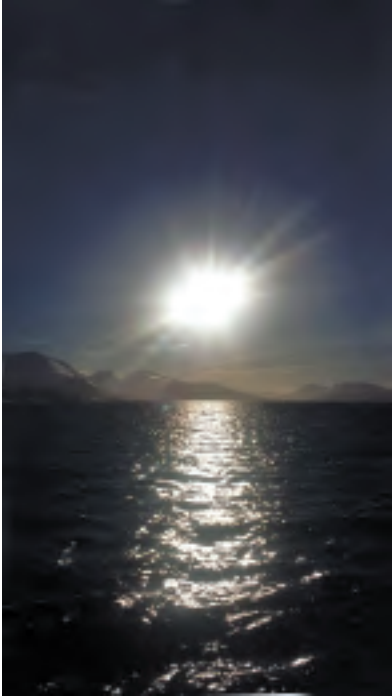
Norway is renowned for its beauty and, on escaping the city, it immediately becomes apparent why. The landscape is epic. Being quite a keen hiker, myself and a friend joined DNT (the Norwegian Trekking Association) who own an enviable network of lodges throughout the entire country and we spent a number



‘Little Norway’



Bergen, panorama



Midnight sun

of happy weekends trekking from lodge to lodge in Østmarka. I also travelled to Bergen and, being a bit of a classical music geek, visited Trolldhaugen—the home of Grieg. It's easy to see where his inspiration came from – the view from the garden is picture perfect.

No visit to Norway would be complete without hunting the Northern Lights. We

flew to Tromsø with naive expectations that the Northern Lights would be waiting for us as we got off the plane. Unfortunately no such luck! By day three, with no signs of the aurora, things were looking bleak. And then, on our last night after an impromptu midnight visit to the Arctic cathedral, the sky erupted. I would be doing it a disservice to even attempt to describe it here, but the closest I can come to a description would be symphonic. We lay outside in the snow till gone 1 am and I would have quite happily stayed there all night had the lights continued.

The ultimate privilege during my trip, however, was being so welcomed by the patients and staff I met. It was an absolute honour to be able to observe and assist in such joyful moments. And often quite surreal: it was a tense moment watching the English Eurovision entry in a room full of Norwegian *jordmødrer* at 2 am.

I'd like to thank CoScan for helping me with their Travel Grant. For all its beauty, Norway is an expensive place, so it was gratefully received. I can't recommend visiting Norway highly enough. It has so much to offer and I hope that one day I'll be able to see more of this idyllic country (and even improve my poor Norwegian skills!).



# The Power of the Earth: Iceland

by Freya Muir

I have always had a strong attachment to nature and the strength of Earth's processes, an attachment that in part led me to choose my degree area of Geology and Physical Geography. This summer I wanted to use my time wisely, so early in 2015 I decided to submit an application to The GREEN Program, a company based in Philadelphia whose passion is providing climate-conscious students with a more interactive learning experience. At first, everyone I knew thought I was crazy to want to pay out of my own pocket just to go to lectures during the summer holidays. But, the application came back successful and I was informed that I would be spending ten days in August, with 40 other students from around the world, adventuring around Iceland and learning all about renewable energy and sustainability. So I fundraised and worked overtime, and saved up enough to accept my place. And it was possibly the best decision I've ever made.

Every day was fun-packed and informative, and every day had more innovative ideas popping into my head as I got to know some of the loveliest people I've got to meet so far. Apart from an always wonderfully Scandinavian breakfast, lunch and dinner, there was no set layout to the days other than incredibly fun activities and lots of amazing sightseeing. We visited some of the oldest and largest geothermal and hydroelectric plants in Iceland, which also have some

of the most efficient energy outputs in the world. Feeling the raw power pouring out of geysers in the ground and roaring over the edge of waterfalls was truly magical. 100% of Iceland's energy is from renewable sources, so even your shower in the evening was a constant reminder of how self-sustaining modern life is there. The most recent hardships of the financial crisis and drop in fishing prices had not taken a toll on the average resident's friendly patriotism, and everyone we spoke to had a wonderfully warm and inquisitive manner. Most of the hostels we stayed in around the west of the country seemed to be surrounded by very modern utilities technology whilst retaining a beautifully traditional and antique décor. The days were mostly taken up by touristic adventures: we hiked in the outwash valley between three enormous glaciers, we rode in 6-wheeled 'super jeeps' across volcanic sand beaches, we snorkelled in glacial meltwater (which is 4°C year round!) and we ate bread cooked with geothermally heated rocks.

Although we were learning new things interactively with our guides Helga Lucie Káradóttir and Erla Margrét Gunnarsdóttir every day, there were several interesting lectures given at Reykjavik University, along with a group project to be completed throughout the week and presented as a business model in front of our peers and lecturers at the university on the last day. The project was

to come up with an inventive new system of utilizing renewable energy, and all of the projects were an incredible testament to the young minds of our generation and the power of enthusiasm and teamwork. I loved working with my team to create a model for introducing outdoor gym equipment (like a playground for adults!) fitted with electricity-generating technology into large inner-city districts in America. The projects were peer-assessed along with a Q&A session involving the lecturers, but I couldn't bring myself to give anyone a low mark; the room was filled with such innovative concepts!

The GREEN Program not only gave me many new ideas for my career path and a greater sense of climate consciousness, but it also gave me a set

of warm, intelligent, like-minded people who all very quickly became great friends of mine. It was upsetting to leave them all and return back to normal life at the end of my stay, but just knowing that they felt the same way about me was enough.

I'd like to thank CoScan for their generous donation to my adventure and for allowing me to experience such an incredible place as Iceland. I am honoured that the fund considered my application worthy of an award, and so grateful to everyone who makes the award scheme possible for young travellers like me. I'm sure my parents and peers hoped it would quench my thirst for travel for a little while, but it has done the complete opposite. Next stop, once refuelled and refunded: the rest of Scandinavia!



**Seeing a geyser for the first time.** Photo: Freya Muir.

Freya's Prize Winning Photo 2015 *Snorkelling in glacial meltwater* was published in CoScan Magazine 2016/1.

## Recording a Swedish accent

by Lauren Phillips-Kirby

Shortly after completing my exams in June of 2015 I breathed a sigh of relief. Summer was officially here and I could relax. Ha! On the contrary, the moment my final exam was over, I began my arduous journey from the city of Sheffield to the city of Karlstad. Sweden is a mere two-and-a-half-hour flight from England but to my partner's hometown it is much further than that.

So, after eleven hours of trains, taxis, a plane, and another train, I finally arrived in his hometown of Karlstad. I arrived on the day of students' summer graduation. The roads were congested with huge open top trucks filled with drunken students dressed all in white with sailor hats, blasting loud music and cheering. Now that's how you celebrate graduating, I thought!

We went to a small local festival that day and the weather was warm with a gentle breeze. My first Swedish summer. We did a great number of things, travelled to Finland and Norway, went to a festival in Gothenburg for my birthday, and during my partner's five weeks' vacation spent a lot of precious time together that we ordinarily don't get; long distance is tough.

My partner works full time, which gave me plenty of opportunity to study at his apartment alone every day, doing my Japanese revision and also my linguistics phonetic practice, since I am a dual student. However, I soon came to

feel rather lonely and isolated, and would take myself for walks around the town, to enjoy the local and constantly changing exhibitions at the museum, which I could enter for free, since 25 and under is considered a youth in Scandinavia! Often I would take myself to my favourite café and enjoy a *fika*, which is the simple art of enjoying a coffee and a delicious cake, either alone with a book or to have an intimate conversation with a friend.

I definitely experienced culture shock. I soon realised I was unable to leave the house, I was constantly tired during the day and fully awake at night, I found myself easily irritated with the small differences I had come to notice between cultures which became a nuisance and bothered me. I also realised how much more beautiful and cosy everything is during the winter, and myself being of an alternative persuasion, did not enjoy the Swedish weather at all. I began to long for the candle-lit shops, the dark but warm and cosy house parties, and did not revel in the summer the way the Scandinavians did. I suppose they long for the light as much as I longed to hide in the shadows. All in all, it was an experience that I am so grateful to have had.

Now, the actual work I did is as follows: On Sunday the 29th of June during the afternoon I conducted a short interview with my partner who is from the city of Karlstad in Sweden. During that interview he was asked to read a

paragraph which contains most, if not all, of the sounds of the English language. The elicitation paragraph is as follows:

*'Please call Stella. Ask her to bring these things with her from the store: six spoons of fresh snow peas, five thick slabs of blue cheese, and maybe a snack for her brother Bob. We also need a small plastic snake and a big toy frog for the kids. She can scoop these things into three red bags, and we will go meet her Wednesday at the train station.'*

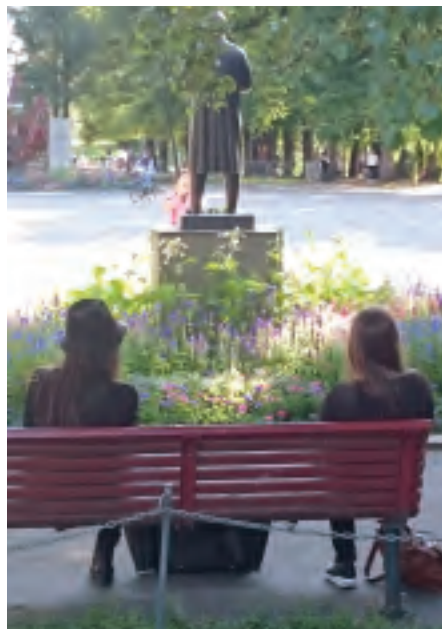
His voice recording, along with a phonetic transcription of it, can be found here, and our particular recording is entitled Swedish 20: [http://accent.gmu.edu/browse\\_language.php?function=detail&speakerid=2065](http://accent.gmu.edu/browse_language.php?function=detail&speakerid=2065). (N.B the phonetic transcription is done by the Americans who run the website and due to their backlog, may not be completed at the point of this report submission.) You will find my name credited, as a remote submission researcher, on <http://accent.gmu.edu/about.php>.

I found the whole process delightful in that I got to work with my partner. He felt a bit nervous at first, but together we contributed a little bit of history for an archive whose purpose is to collect and preserve accents of the English language from around the world. I felt particularly proud since he was the first person from the Karlstad area to be added to the archive. The whole interview took around ten minutes with half an hour's preparation of questions, reading and

also getting my partner to agree to the consent form. Once the interview was finished I emailed the recording and the biographical data to the archive and had it confirmed within 24 hours. I am very pleased since it is opening doors for me and furthering my interest in the area in which I want to expand my research.

In the future I would wish to conduct more recordings like this and am currently awaiting consent approval to do so within my University. That is, I want to collect data through voice recordings of speakers of Scandinavian origin.

I am forever thankful for this opportunity to have kick-started my passion for these things.



## Danish midwifery

by Lara Zestic

CoScan travel grant has been a huge help with my elective as a midwife in Copenhagen, DK. During my two weeks there I worked with a homebirth midwife and learned and saw so many new things. We visited women in their homes for antenatal pregnancy checks as well as checks post birth, helping them with breast feeding, weighing the baby and making sure they were recovering well. I was able to participate in one antenatal class where we taught a group of pregnant women about childbirth and what to expect, and in which I was able to talk about some natural ways of coping with pain – and the women spoke superb English.

Most amazingly of all, I was able to participate in two homebirths which were quite similar to, and at the same time quite different from, the homebirths I had attended in the UK. The births were calm, with the women's families supporting them throughout labour and they were able to relax in their own home, and felt more comfortable. After the birth, both women took off a piece of their placenta and blended it in a smoothie – something I had never seen before! The midwife said this helps them ingest hormones which help reduce the risk of postnatal depression. When I asked them how it tasted, they both answered: 'Delicious!' It is definitely a practice I have told many of the women I look after in labour and pregnancy here, and I love hearing the mixed reactions!

All in all, I feel that my elective in Denmark really helped shape the kind of midwife I am today, now that I've graduated, and I am so grateful for CoScan's award, as it made it possible for me to travel and partake in the placement. I still try to introduce the positive aspects of midwifery I learned there in my own practice – and when I look after a Danish woman I can use the few Danish words I learned too!



An unusual smoothie



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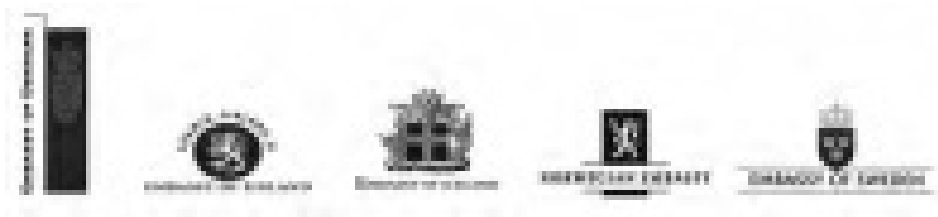
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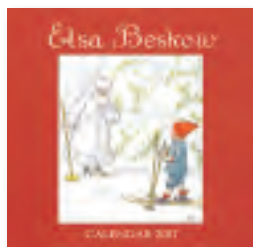
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