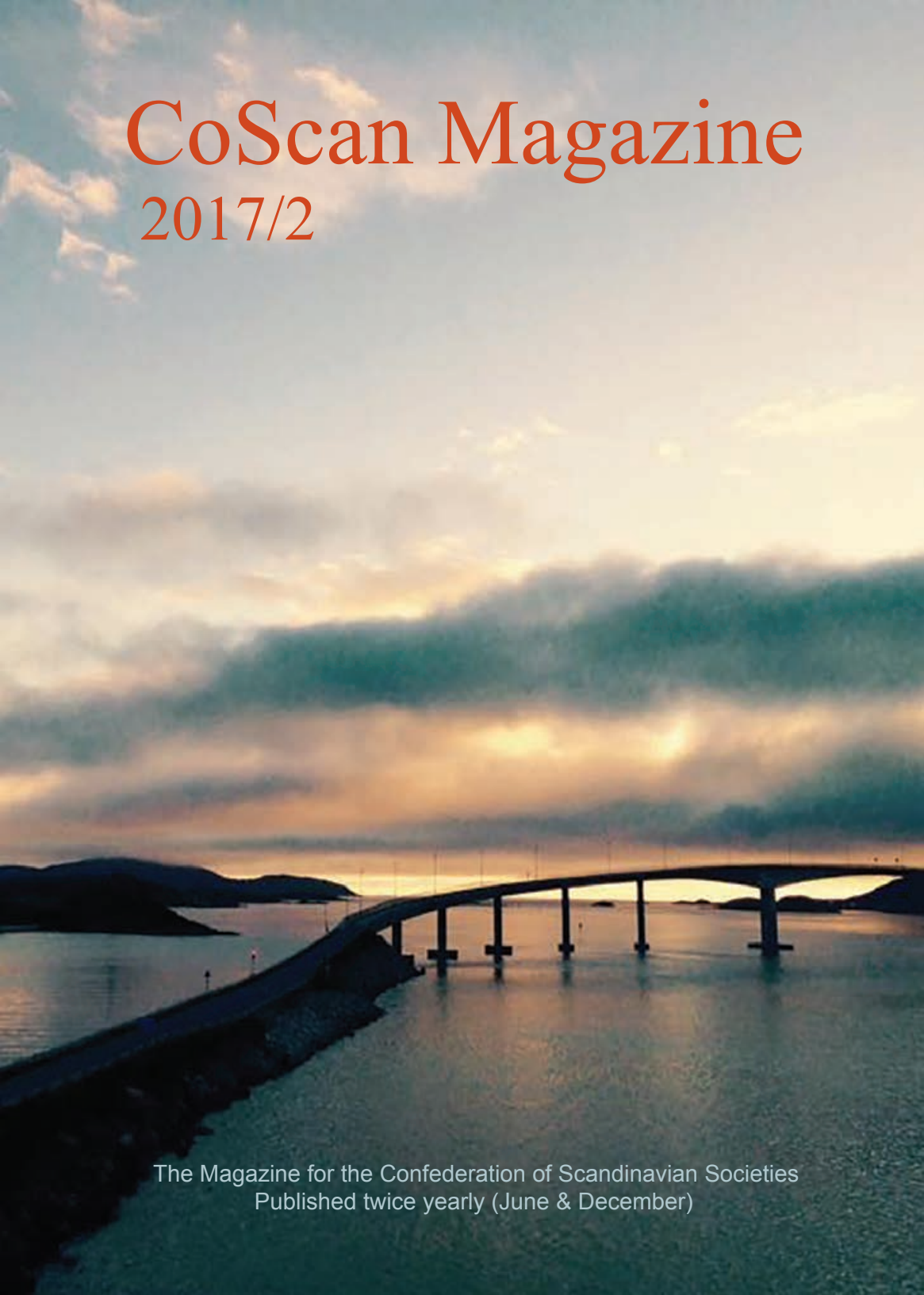


# CoScan Magazine

## 2017/2



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

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Bridge in Norway. Photo: *Anna Schumann*

# Chairman's message

Eva Robards

Culture allows people to understand each other better so, in the world we live in now, all our members' organisations are more important than ever. The closure of any of these is therefore always a sad occasion. Over the years we have seen highly valued CoScan members, including the Midlands Scandinavians, the Shetland Norwegian Friendship Society and the Danish Cultural Institute, needing to wind up for internal reasons. The latest victim is Finn-Guild, which recently ceased its operations in this country (see p. 3).

Only a couple of years ago Finn-Guild celebrated its 50th anniversary (see CoScan Magazine 2015/2, pp. 7–10 for the background history, by a founder member). Personally, I have fond memories of meetings with previous Managing Directors (Helena Halme and the late Ossi Laurila) and the AGMs they organised. These meetings offered excellent networking opportunities, traditional Finnish food, and workshops addressing issues such as how to attract new members. Unfortunately this couldn't stop Finn-Guild's loss of membership revenue and eventually the battle was given up. Anja Eskelinen, final Managing Director, says that 'for the last two years there has been a daily battle between reason and emotion: whether to quit or continue. But when you fight for something you believe in, you don't count the time you've used for the battle. Passion, or the famous Finnish *sisu*, keeps you going.'

On the subject of continuing, there is another matter to consider: how long to stay in office. I don't think it's good practice for an officer to stay on



for too long. I have been chairman since April 2011 when I thought that I would serve for three years or so. We are now well beyond that and it's time to look for a successor, so recommendations are welcome. Naturally there are still issues I would have wanted to resolve but I shall have to be satisfied with the progress that has been made. However, I don't have the intention to disappear totally from the scene — I will for example continue editing this Magazine for a while longer.

Above all, I remain firmly convinced of the need for CoScan to link and help in promoting the various Scandinavian/Nordic organisations in this country and beyond, when possible.

## CoScan in Helsinki 20-22 April 2018

The overseas Conference/AGM in 2018 will take place in Helsinki, Finland. Details of our plans to date and the booking form have been sent out, and the deadline has been set for 30 November. Please contact Wendy Howell ([wendy.howell@coscan.org.uk](mailto:wendy.howell@coscan.org.uk)) urgently if you would like to participate but haven't yet booked.

## Anglo-Danish Society *Ridder af Dannebrog*

On the occasion of the end of Claus Grube's tenure as Ambassador to the Court of St. James, Her Majesty Queen Margrethe II of Denmark has bestowed upon our Chairman since 2010, Christian Williams, the Knighthood of the Order of Dannebrog, in recognition of Christian's tireless activities in promoting Denmark's interests in Great Britain. Congratulations to him.

*From the Anglo-Danish Society Newsletter  
September 2017, with permission.*



Christian Williams with his order

## Orkney Norway Friendship Association (ONFA) Royal Visit

ONFA hosted, on 16 June, a visit to St Olaf's cemetery by the Norwegian Crown Prince Håkon Magnus and Princess Mette-Marit, as part of their involvement in the commemoration of the 900th anniversary of St Magnus's death.

The memorial event at St Olaf's cemetery recognises Norwegian sailors and Second World War soldiers who are buried there, and is a ceremony that ONFA has developed into a fine art over the years.



The royal couple and Ishbel Borland,  
Chairman of ONFA

## Farewell letter from Finn-Guild

It was decided at Finn-Guild's Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) on 30 September 2017 that Finn-Guild was to cease its operations by the end of October 2017. This will mark an end to Finn-Guild's charity work, which it has done since its establishment in 1965. The decision was not made lightly: over the past five years changes have been made to restructure and revive Finn-Guild, firstly by reducing its operating costs to match the resources available, and secondly (and most importantly) by seeking to reconnect with its members through three clearly identifiable operating areas: language, culture and community.

However, resources available to Finn-Guild have greatly decreased as the result of a drop in membership, and hence income from the membership fees, and loss of revenue from Guild Travel Ltd largely due to changes in the travel market. Finn-Guild's income has continued to fall short of what would have been required to continue its operations in a sustainable manner. Several applications were made to major funders but none of these was successful.

Therefore the EGM concluded that despite every effort, it had not been possible to revive the organisation in the time and with the resources available. The EGM resolved to terminate memberships in preparation of the wind-up. It was also decided that following the closure of the charity, any remaining funds will



be donated to the Finnish Church in London and to Finn-Guild Finland ry [= registered association] in proportion to the number of Finn-Guild members in the two countries. Finn-Guild Finland ry will continue independently as a separate organisation.

The Finnish evening language courses will continue as planned throughout the autumn semester 2017, and one final number of the Finn-Guild Links magazine was published at the end of October. The Finnish Schools in Britain will continue to operate as usual.

Finn-Guild has achieved a great many things over the past five decades. It has demonstrated what communities can achieve when we work together and look after each other. It has been Finn-Guild's pleasure to serve as the link between individuals, communities and organisations nationwide in the UK and Finland for all these years. The legacy and spirit of Finn-Guild continues in the local expatriate organisations that are now established across the country.



# Anglo-Finnish Society: Conference celebrating the Centenary of Finland's Independence

by Paulus Thomson, Secretary

There have been numerous events in Finland and around the world to mark the Centenary of Finland's Independence. They have included concerts, exhibitions and all manner of celebrations of Finland's culture and its way of life. One of the most significant of these in the UK was the Conference arranged by the Anglo-Finnish Society and the Finnish-British Chamber of Commerce to celebrate a Centenary of Political and Trading Links between Finland and Britain 1917-2017. The Conference was held at the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development on 27 October and was attended by almost 200 people.

The Conference was opened by Sir Paul Lever, President of the Anglo-Finnish Society, who chaired the first session on Finland and Britain in northern Europe. Eric Hayes, a former EU Ambassador, spoke about Finland's position in British foreign policy, and in providing a succinct overview of Finnish history he demonstrated that Britain has not had a direct policy towards Finland but has always acted to promote that country's national interests. Prof. Juhana Aunesluoma addressed the position of Britain in Finnish Foreign Policy. He observed that Finns have an affinity with Great Britain, even to the extent that there is a feeling of there being a Fenno-British special relationship in which Finland has played the subordinate role,

similar to that of Britain in the Anglo-American relationship. He speculated that post-Brexit the inequality would be less marked. Jaakko Laajava and Matthew Kirk, respectively former Ambassadors in London and Helsinki, provided some personal views and recollections of their times in office.

In the second session, 'War and Cold War', Terry Charman, former Senior Historian at the Imperial War Museum, contrasted Mannerheim and Churchill as war leaders and Prof. Kimmo Rentola provided some interesting insights into the role played by British intelligence officers, at the time often referred to anonymously as 'friends of the President' (Kekkonen).

Erkki Liikanen, the Governor of the Bank of Finland, spoke about Finland in Europe. He mentioned that Finland's first trade agreement was with Britain at a time when half its trade was with this country. Later President Ryti had a close connection with the Bank of England but the USSR objected to the Marshall Plan being extended to Finland. There were delays in Finland being able to participate in European institutions which it wanted to join as a way of compensating for its physical distance from the centre of Europe.

Prof. Riitta Hjerpe provided an overview of Finnish-British trading relations. She was followed by a panel discussion with veterans of the timber trade in the 1950s, and with those involved in the expansion of the paper and wood

products trade and the revival of the British paper manufacturing industry.

Cormac Whelan, CEO of Nokia UK and Ireland, spoke about 'Reinventing Nokia'. Whilst the mobile phone business has gone, Nokia is now very active in the development of communications systems which will be essential in the years to come. Risto Penttilä, CEO of the Finland Chamber of Commerce, spoke about Finnish-British relations in a post-Brexit Europe and saw opportunities for the Scandinavian and Baltic countries to co-operate as a bloc in a way which could come close to filling the vacuum left by Brexit.

The final session dealt with Banking and Finance Relations. Sir John Stuttard, a former Lord Mayor of London, spoke of the internationalisation of Finnish companies in the 1980s and 1990s. This was followed by a panel discussion on

the City and the future of Finnish-British financial relations. The participants were another former Lord Mayor, Sir Roger Gifford, who spoke from the perspective of a career in banking, Sari Lounasmeri, CEO of the Finnish Foundation for Share Promotion, and two representatives of the FinTech industry, Andrew Jesse of Basware and Lawrence Wintermeyer, formerly of Innovate Finance. The consensus seemed to be that although in the immediate future Brexit will give rise to a period of uncertainty, which is never popular, ultimately commercial necessities will prevail and change will bring new opportunities.

The Conference was a great success but one which the organisers would not have been able to arrange without the support of many others, including practical support from the Finnish Embassy.



Ambassador Päivi Luostarinen delivering closing remarks Photo: Minttu Taajam

# The Swedish Church in London

by Åsa Höjer, Communications Manager

The Swedish Church in London is a vibrant and lively place. It is the ‘home’ to many Swedish expats — new to this country or perhaps born here long ago — a community for those living ‘in between’ homes. A peaceful oasis to rest and relax in, but also a place to go to for meetings, seeing friends and, of course, worship.

The parish was founded in 1710. The Church of Ulrika Eleonora was built in 1728, named after the then Swedish Queen. The church was erected at Prince’s Square in Wapping, London, after designs by the parish priest Jacob Serenius, a highly influential minister and theologian. During the 18th century, the

economy of the parish was significantly improved and in 1778 the Church rules of law were established by Baron von Nolcken. During the Napoleonic Wars, several Swedish sailors were stranded in London. As a consequence of the general increase in the number of Swedish seamen in London due to trade across the sea, the Scandinavian Seamen’s Home was founded in 1888. In the same year, Jack the Ripper murdered a Swedish girl close to the church.

In 1911, a Swedish Church with school facilities was built in Harcourt Street. The architect was Axel Herman Hägg (1835-1921), with H. Wigglesworth designing the interiors. The library of the church was sadly bombed in 1940 but subsequently restored. In 2000, the Swedish Church ceased to be a state church and it is now funded by its members and by generous donations.

Today the church welcomes around 60,000 visitors yearly, with its busiest time around Advent and Lucia. The Christmas Fair, run by some 200 volunteers, is by far the greatest event, with more than 8,000 visitors during the three days of the Fair, coming to share the joy of Swedish Christmas by shopping for food, handicrafts, gifts, glassware, textiles, decorations, and enjoying a nice Swedish *fika* in the pop-up café situated in the Church Hall.

The Christmas Fair is soon followed by the Lucia season, when the Ulrika Eleonora Church Choir, joined by the Lucia Project Choir, performs in more







**Stall at the Christmas Fair**

than fifteen Lucia services, the grandest being held every other year in St Paul's Cathedral and Westminster Cathedral respectively.

Throughout the year a service is celebrated weekly in the Church, as has been the case since the very start in 1710. Also, as there is today only one Swedish Church in all of Great Britain, we travel around the UK and Ireland to gather Swedes for lunches or *fika* and to give them a chance to speak Swedish, celebrate a service in their mother tongue, and sing the hymns they might not have sung for many years. These meetings are very much appreciated and open to everyone to take part in.

In Ulrika Eleonora Parish Church in London we have a weekly Stay & Play group for children and carers, meetings for Young Swedes in London, and monthly lunches for Seniors gathering around 60-90 people who enjoy meeting up regularly. We offer a wide variety of concerts, either with our own choirs or visiting choirs as well as Swedish musicians living or studying in the UK.

Our café is open daily and in addition to offering the traditional home-baked cinnamon buns and Swedish coffee, it is a place to meet new friends, get updated on the latest news from 'home' (as we have Swedish magazines and newspapers), or simply chill out for a couple of hours. The

atmosphere is friendly and our volunteer café hosts are generous and helpful — no matter if you are new in town, just here for a visit, or have lived here all your life. There is also a library with a good selection of Swedish books, and a bookshelf from which you can take away a paperback or two.

Every Sunday there is *kyrkaffe* ('church coffee') after the service and people tend to stay on to talk and meet up with friends, or make new ones. The Sunday School for children is held during the service and we also offer a service in English a few times over the year. We often have visiting choirs from Sweden joining the Sunday service — a great chance for them to experience the Swedish Church abroad, and for us to keep updated on what is happening in Sweden.

Over the the years the congregation has of course kept changing, with new people joining, new traditions and ideas being tested, new staff, new volunteers, and a new world to be a part of. We try our best to listen to our members, to base our activities and functions on their needs. Since 2015 we have two permanent deacons, as a result of an increasing number of vulnerable people in need. Since 2017 we have a part-time fundraiser, as a result of us being a charity in need of funding. We are forever changing, but stay true to our history and our faith.

Follow us on social media:

[www.facebook.com/svenskakyrkanlondon](https://www.facebook.com/svenskakyrkanlondon)

[www.instagram.com/svenskakyrkanlondon](https://www.instagram.com/svenskakyrkanlondon)

Our website:

[www.svenskakyrkan.se/london](http://www.svenskakyrkan.se/london)

## The Grieg Society of Great Britain Celebrating 25 glorious years

by Wendy Howell, Membership Secretary

The Grieg Society of Great Britain was founded on 12 October 1992 and 25 years later we are still going strong. To mark this milestone anniversary we embarked on a whole year of celebratory concerts.

We began our journey in May with a Gala Concert at St Alfege Church, Greenwich. Christopher Petrie and the Philharmonic Chamber Orchestra dedicated one of their annual series of concerts to the Grieg Celebration,

and included the first performance of *Varianter på temaer av Grieg* (Variations on a Theme of Grieg) by Robert Matthew-Walker, written especially for this occasion.

Next, in June, was Grieg's 'birthday' concert at the Norwegian Church. Our Patron, the world renowned cellist Raphael Wallfisch, played for us, and after the matinee concert there was wine and eats, time to socialise with the

artists and friends — an important part of Society gatherings. (By the way, Raphael's birthday is the same day as Grieg's.)

Almost every year since 1995, the Society has presented a Record of the Year award for a recording that we consider has added significantly to the available recorded repertoire. We are greatly privileged in that, since 1997, this event has been generously hosted at the residence by each Norwegian ambassador. For our Anniversary event, instead of a 'Record of the Year', we decided to celebrate all the records and artists we have fêted over the years. So in October we gathered for a performance of Scandinavian songs by Astrid Sandvand Dahlen, a popular soloist and ensemble singer. She was accompanied by one of our members, Paul Gobey, who has been Organist of the Norwegian Church, London, since 1990 and now combines a freelance musical career with being an ABRSM examiner and President of the Livery Club of the Worshipful Company of Musicians. The recital was followed by wine and canapés, and plenty of chatting among members and guests.

The final event for this year will be the AGM recital at Schott Music in London. After the meeting there will be drinks followed by a recital given by The Champion Duo, who are Mary Pilbery (oboe / cor anglais) and Vicky Reed (piano). Plus post-recital chatting, of course.

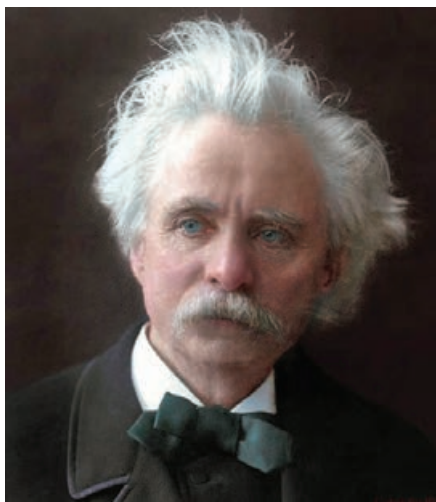
All our events are photographed and the pictures shared with members via our regular Newsletters. We also publish an annual Grieg Journal which is currently

edited by the indomitable Bob Matthew-Walker, who last year published a book on Grieg which he dedicated to the Society and its members.

In this our anniversary year we moved into the 'modern age' and, thanks to Torbjørn Holt and Mary Pilbery, we now have a Facebook page — please take a look.

We are extremely fortunate to have the support of our Hon. Vice Presidents, and especially our very generous Patron, Raphael Wallfisch. We are also very appreciative of the on-going support of all our members, some of whom have been with us since the Society began all those years ago.

As the celebrations roll over into 2018, we will also be marking the 175th anniversary of Grieg's birth. More music and more time to spend with friends old and new. So, here's to our next 25 years!



Edvard Hagerup Grieg (1843 – 1907)



## Finland celebrates 100 years of independence

While the centenary forms the perfect opportunity for a great big party, it's also an occasion for contemplation and insight. The 100-year mark offers a chance not only for people to look back in order to understand the way the nation emerged, but also to gaze ahead to the future to see what Finland can still become.

The main events in Finnish history can, broadly speaking, be divided into three chapters:

1. the Swedish period prior to 1809
2. the Russian period from 1809 to 1917 when Finland formed an autonomous grand duchy in the Russian Empire
3. the independent period from 1917 to the present day.

Until the middle of the 12th century, the geographical area that is now Finland was a political vacuum, though of interest to its western neighbour Sweden and the Catholic Church there, and also its eastern neighbour Novgorod (Russia) and its Greek Orthodox Church.

Sweden came out on top, as the peace treaty of 1323 between Sweden and Novgorod assigned only eastern Finland to Novgorod. The western and southern

parts of Finland were tied to Sweden and the Western European cultural sphere, while eastern Finland, i.e. Karelia, became part of the Russo-Byzantine world.

As a consequence of Swedish domination, the Swedish legal and social systems took root in Finland. Feudalism was not part of this system and the Finnish peasants were never serfs; they always retained their personal freedom. Finland's most important centre was the town of Turku, founded in the middle of the 13th century. It was also the Bishop's seat.

During its period as a great power (1617–1721), Sweden extended its realm around the Baltic and managed, due to the weakness of Russia, to push the Finnish border further east. With consolidation of the administration in Stockholm, uniform Swedish rule was extended to Finland in the 17th century. Swedes were often appointed to high offices in Finland, which strengthened the position of the Swedish language there.

When Sweden lost its position as a great power in the early 18th century,

Russian pressure on Finland increased, and Russia conquered Finland in the 1808–1809 war with Sweden.

During the Swedish period, Finland was merely a group of provinces and not a national entity. It was governed from Stockholm, the capital of the Finnish provinces at that time. But when Finland was joined to Russia in 1809 it became an autonomous Grand Duchy. The Grand Duke was the Russian Emperor, whose representative in Finland was the Governor General.

Finland's highest governing body was the Senate, whose members were Finns. Matters pertaining to Finland were presented to the Emperor in St Petersburg by the Finnish Secretary of State. This meant that the administration of Finland was handled directly by the Emperor, and the Russian authorities were therefore unable to interfere.

The enlightened Russian Emperor Alexander I, Grand Duke of Finland 1809–1825, gave Finland extensive autonomy, thereby creating the Finnish state. In 1812, Helsinki was made the capital of Finland, and the university, which had been founded in Turku in 1640, was moved to Helsinki in 1828.

The Finnish national movement gained momentum during the Russian period.



The Finnish national epic, the Kalevala, created by Elias Lönnrot, Finnish physician, philologist and collector of traditional Finnish oral poetry, was published in 1835.

The obliteration of 'Finnish separatism', a policy also known as Russification, started during the 'first era of oppression' (1899–1905) and continued during the second era (1909–1917). The 1905 Revolution in Russia gave Finland a short breathing spell, while a new legislative body to replace the old Estates was created in 1906. At that time this was the most radical parliamentary reform in Europe, because Finland moved in one bound from a four estate diet to a unicameral parliament and universal suffrage. Finnish women were the first in Europe to gain the right to vote in parliamentary elections.

On 6 December 1917, Parliament approved the declaration of independence drawn up by the Senate under the leadership of P.E. Svinhufvud (1861–1944).

The theme for the celebratory year is 'Together', showing that everyone — Finns and friends of Finns — is welcome to take part, just as creating and building the nation were joint efforts.

Text source: ThisIsFinland, provided by the Embassy of Finland.

### Finland's Independence Day — *Itsenäisyyspäivä*, on 6 December

Friends and family get together for a dinner and white-blue candles are placed on the window sills. People also take part in torch-light processions or visit soldiers' graves in the cemeteries.



## English military graves in Scandinavia 2: Seven white stones in Falkenberg, Sweden

by Brita Green



On Tuesday 29 August 1944, fifty airfields in eastern England were preparing 600 bombers for the night's raid on two Baltic harbour towns, Stettin and Königsberg. The route the crews were instructed to follow would take them over northern Jutland, the Kattegat — and southern parts of neutral Sweden, a fact that was not to be recorded or drawn on any maps.

During the whole war there were some 16,000 violations of Sweden's air-space by foreign aircraft - 6,600 in 1944 alone. So it was not the first time it had happened, but the night of 29 August was the worst. The first report came from Malmö at 22.15, and at 22.50 Halmstad reported that their anti-aircraft defences had been in action. In Falkenberg too the anti-aircraft guns were fired.

Many allied airmen believed that the Swedish anti-aircraft activities were just for show. There was a widespread anecdote:

Swedish anti-aircraft to allied bomber:

*You are violating Swedish air-space!*

Allied bomber: *We know.*

Anti-aircraft fires at the plane.

Allied bomber: *You are firing too low!*

Swedish anti-aircraft: *We know.*

Others recalled that, whereas they had been told that the Swedes would shoot to miss, the reality was different. Probably both impressions were right. One Swede remembered: 'Not firing would have been out of the question. And firing was the same whatever the planes'. Another says, 'When there was an opportunity to shoot at the Germans we fired for real, but American and British planes were only given warnings'.

On the night of 29 August, the planes came in three waves. A British mechanic remembered, 'After the flight over Denmark and the Kattegat, the first view of Sweden is something I'll never forget:

towns and villages full of light from houses, streetlights and cars. After five years of blackout back home, it looked like a fairytale land.'

The first wave of bombers, destined for Königsberg, was undetected by German radar. The second wave — some 390 bombers heading for Stettin — attracted the attention of German fighter-planes, and several bombers were shot down, some crashing in Denmark, some in Sweden, some in the sea.

The Australian pilot of one of these planes later wrote to a Danish friend: 'We were above the Danish east coast when we were hit by a German fighter-plane. I had to dump the bombs, and that is something that still weighs on my mind. I may have killed some of your countrymen and injured innocent people.' The plane lost height, and in the end had to come down in the water near the Danish island of Anholt, not far from the Swedish coast. Four of the crew, including the pilot, saved themselves in a rubber boat, and

were taken prisoner by the Germans, but three were killed. One of them was later found on Anholt and was buried there. Two of them were carried by currents and winds to the Swedish west-coast, near Falkenberg. The body of Philip Aviet, 20, was found on Friday 8 September by a couple of men collecting seaweed. Aviet's crew mate Dennis Fallon was found the following day some miles away.

Also on 8 September, near a campsite, a young girl found a body of a British airman who was never identified but was possibly a member of the same crew as another body found at a bathing beach just north of Falkenberg, that of 22-year old Donald Baron, from a second Lancaster heading for Stettin. Later that day, a fifth body, from a third plane, was found on Skrea beach, just south of the town, that of Thomas Baillie, 24, a Canadian.

On 12 September, the five allied airmen were buried with military honours at *Skogskyrkogården* (Forest Burial Ground) in Falkenberg. The five coffins



were covered with Union Jacks, and the vicar said, ‘Who of their nearest would ever have thought that their husband, father, son or brother would find his last resting-place in our Swedish soil?’

Four days later two more bodies were washed ashore near Falkenberg, those of Harold Gordon, 19, and Douglas Sparkes, another Canadian, both from the same plane as Thomas Baillie. So, on 19 September, there was another military funeral at *Skogskyrkogården*. Initially, seven white wooden crosses with the inscription ‘Killed in action’ were put on the graves. Through the British War Graves Commission, they were later replaced by white gravestones, and made more personal. Sparkes, at 34 the oldest of the seven, is ‘remembered by his wife and children’.

On All Saints’ Day every year since 1954, Falkenberg’s Lions Club have put flowers and candles on these graves. Aviet’s father wrote to Lions in 1956, ‘It was indeed very kind of you and your members to take such interest in the graves of the lads who gave their young lives for their country. Please accept the very sincere thanks of my wife and I for all you have done. Although we would like to see his grave ourselves, we have not been able to do so due to financial reasons. Someday perhaps we may be able to, but he is always in our thoughts as he was our only one.’

The Falkenberg experience was not unique. There are many other Swedish cemeteries with British WW2 graves. In the Jewish graveyard in Malmö, there is a particularly moving monument, that of a 19-year old Englishman, whose plane

crashed in Skåne. The inscription reads, ‘He fell fighting for his country and for freedom. Our only sunshine, so dearly loved and so sadly missed. Rest in peace. Mutter and Papa.’ The parents, who lived in London, wished to be buried with their son, and their graves are now close by.

Main source:

Lars Wikander, *De kom aldrig hem — historien bakom de sju flygargravarna på Skogskyrkogården i Falkenberg* (They never came home — the story behind the seven airmen’s graves in the Forest Cemetery in Falkenberg), Falkenbergs Museum, 1994.



# Family research

by Lise Hodgson

When I was a child I was not particularly interested in finding out about my grandparents. I knew that my grandmother Inga was Norwegian, and have always been proud of being a quarter Norwegian, but I now know that I am actually one eighth Norwegian and one eighth Swedish, as my great grandfather came from Sweden. I was born in Copenhagen and am Danish for the rest, so I can claim to be a real Scandinavian!

I often wondered if I still have family in Norway but sadly, by the time I was really interested, there was nobody I could ask. Then last year I decided to write down what I knew, so that my children at least would have some information, if one day they started wondering, as I have. I started with my parents' names and their siblings.

Doing this, I had to check the correct spelling of an aunt's first name and therefore googled her surname but, instead of finding information about my aunt, I saw that someone in Norway was looking for Danish descendants of Inga. There was more information which told me that it was my grandmother they were talking about. The search was made through a Danish ancestry site, and I immediately registered, logged in and found an email address for the person who had placed the search. That was over a year ago, but I contacted her, hoping for the best. I was really excited when she responded. Her name was Margrethe and my grandmother's brother was her

great grandfather. She put me in touch with another relative, Birgit, and she was the granddaughter of my grandmother's brother.

Birgit sent me copies of some letters my mother wrote in the 1940s to family in Norway, which had been kept. It was very emotional reading these letters. My mother died when I was 14, and reading the letters was like hearing her voice again. It also gave me a new insight into her thoughts and feelings. She commented on life in Denmark soon after the end of the Second World War.

Margrethe and I sent each other information, and she suggested it would be nice if I could come and visit. So I went in April. I flew to Trondheim, where I was met by both Margrethe and Birgit (who will be 80 in the autumn) and we drove to Røros, where my grandmother and her family moved in the 1890s. Røros is a Unesco World Heritage site and very beautiful.

It was cold, as low as minus 12°C one night we were there. Birgit and Margrethe had arranged a dinner with another four 'cousins', all very friendly, and I really felt the family connection. I felt they were as delighted to meet me as I was to meet them.

Back in Trondheim I met another second cousin and we did a lot of sightseeing. Margrethe had also found that a first cousin of mine is living in Australia. I can't remember ever meeting her, but have heard her name, and I am



now in touch with her family. She is 91 and I am hoping to hear from her directly. That would really be something. Her daughter-in-law has got my Skype details, so perhaps I can even see my cousin and talk to her.

Doing this family research, and also research into my grandfather's family,

where I have found a lot of drama and sadness, has been fascinating. I still have things to do, but it has certainly made the family history I am writing for my children a lot longer and more interesting and detailed.



Danish Lise (standing, in the centre) with Norwegian relatives

## **A message from the Secretary and the Treasurer regarding membership**

Once again CoScan would like to thank all individual and society members for their support over the past year. It is much appreciated.

As usual, membership forms will be sent out early in the new year, and we hope you will want to renew your membership. It would be of great help if you could pay early as this would simplify the administration.

Finally, if you have changed your contact details during the year and haven't advised us yet, kindly let us have your new information as soon as possible.  
**THANK YOU.**

With best wishes for a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to you and your family  
from Lise Hodgson and Manja Ronne



# An Evocation of Orkney

Extract from a book by Victoria Whitworth

I have gone down to the sea early. No time to swim, I have a meeting in the town, but there are a few minutes in hand. The sun is already high, the tide low and retreating further. A likely time to die, on the ebb of the tide and the waning of the moon. A bad time to marry, in Orkney lore.

The breakwater is exposed, its slabs of sandstone stacked like haphazard piles of books waiting to be boxed and carted away. Bits of rusty metal, hooks and staples. A length of chain. Colonies of limpets, clinging to their home scars. The various weeds, kelp and daberlack, carrageen and wrack. If you wander up the western side of the breakwater and peer into one of the crevices towards the lower end, the bit that's under water most of the time, there is a surprise waiting. We have a guerrilla artist, who takes smooth pale stones and draws on them in indelible black pen, creating stark zigzags and cells, patterns reminiscent of the carved stones from Skara Brae and the Ness of Brodgar, then tucks them into the landscape, balanced on fence posts, camouflaged among the shingle, resting on top of a drystone dyke. One of these anonymous gifts, like a Neolithic Easter egg, lurks wedged and irretrievable in a crevice of the breakwater.

The calm sea has left the pale gold sand smooth, clear of weed and thickly studded with shells. The sand is patterned with tiny wavy lines that run parallel to

the ebb, each one marking a fallback, a retreat, the fingerprints of the last fluttering wave to reach this high. A few paces to the west the little burn has cut a ravine through the sand, exposing the underlying slab and shingle, before spilling laterally into a miniature estuary of a thousand interlacing rills that run down into the lapping brine. You lose all sense of time and scale: this could be the Grand Canyon, the Mekong Delta. Great deeds of geology are compressed into a few square metres, the twelve hours between tide and tide.

Everyone reads this beach differently. One friend helps me understand weed; another shells; a third, who's a sailor, talks about the tide and the rosts; another reminisces about her childhood, trudging down here to swim before the council put in the road and the loo-block.

I see this space as a landscape of the dead. A couple of hundred yards up from the beach there is a little walled cemetery, eighteenth-, nineteenth- and twentieth-century graves, Orkney names of folk and farms. There was a medieval chapel here, dedicated to St Nicholas, but it's hard to trace, even though the undulating grass within the drystone dyke has been mowed recently. In the seventeenth century the minister recorded that mysterious lights glowed from within the ruins 'as if torches or candles were burning': explanations have ranged from spontaneously combusting kelp to

clandestine Catholic masses. The church went out of use in 1788, though some of the dyke-stones may have come from its walls. An irate evangelist visiting in 1797 noted that ‘in Evie there had been no sermon for eight or nine years’.

In St Nicholas kirkyard a different artist has been at work: in among the gravestones of standardized, imported granite there is an upright slab of local sandstone. Unsigned, but I know who

elegantly serified capitals, up and over and down again, forming a tantalising sentence-fragment, like a half-heard whisper: ‘found the secret of immortality and took it with him to the grave’.

From the Sands of Evie I can see two nesses, two headlands: Gurness, which forms the eastern arm of the bay, and Westness over on Rousay. There was a Pictish cemetery on Westness, typical Pictish graves, rectangular, stone-lined,



Sands of Evie near Broch of Gurness

made this one: Frances Pelly; she’s a well-known local sculptor whose secret stone gifts punctuate the Orkney landscape. It looks like another headstone at first, but you need to lean in close and read the

unfurnished, east–west aligned, into which the Norse later inserted their own more cluttered and complex burials. Gurness has its Iron Age broch, later surrounded by Pictish houses, and there

are Norse burials at Gurness as well, of which one survived largely intact.

The Westness woman wore traditional Norse oval brooches to fasten her dress, and a bead necklace, and she was buried with her tools: weaving implements, an iron sickle, a lump of pumice. But she's most famous for her brooch.

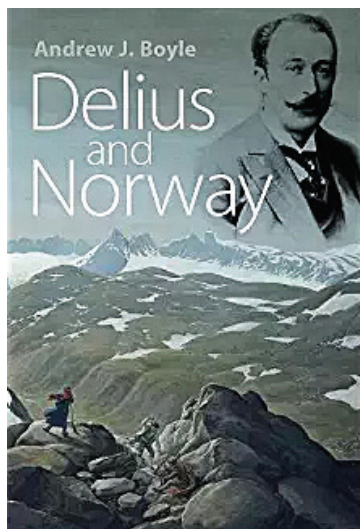
It was the most visible and expensive part of her burial outfit, pinning a cloak or shawl across her breasts. Its pin is nearly eighteen centimetres long, the ornamented ring five and a half centimetres wide, made of silver, decorated with gold, red glass and amber. The brooch was already a century old when it came into the hands of the doomed young mother at Westness. It's full of tricks and secrets: traces of beeswax in the cells that hold the glass insets hint at the adhesive the goldsmith used. The red glass looks like garnet until you get it under a microscope and can see the bubbles. Gold wire was soldered with copper which vaporizes when heated. The finest wires are less than a quarter of a millimetre thick. Examination of the back of the filigree panels shows that the design was laid out by one hand, but the ornament executed by another, and less skilful, one. All the closest parallels come from Ireland, and so it seems likely that this brooch crossed the Irish Sea, though whether it was new or old when it did so is anyone's guess. It could have belonged to a Pictish woman. Maybe she was the loving mother of the woman in the grave. Or the brooch could have been looted from her still-warm corpse. Sentimental, or cynical: make up your own story.

*Victoria Whitworth (b. 1966) is an Anglo-Scots writer, archaeologist and art historian. After reading English at St Anne's College, Oxford, she completed an MA and a D.Phil at the University of York. From 2012 to 2016 she was a lecturer at the Centre for Nordic Studies on the Orkney campus of the University of the Highlands and Islands.*

*She has published three historical novels set in Viking Age England: The Bone Thief (Ebury Press, 2012), The Traitors' Pit (Ebury Press, 2013), and Daughter of the Wolf (Head of Zeus, 2016). The preceding extract is from her evocative Orkney-based memoir, Swimming with Seals (Head of Zeus, 2016).*



## From the bookshelf



Review by Mark Elliott

Andrew J Boyle, *Delius and Norway*.  
Published by Boydell Press, June 2017  
ISBN 978-1-78327-199-3

Frederick Delius was born in 1862 in Bradford to German parents. Many would describe his music as quintessentially English, but the depth of his affection for Norway, where he spent long periods on more than twenty separate visits between 1881 and 1923, and which had a profound influence on his music, has always been recognised. Andrew Boyle has himself lived in Norway since 1980 and his new book is a penetrating and satisfyingly readable analysis of Delius, his world and his music.

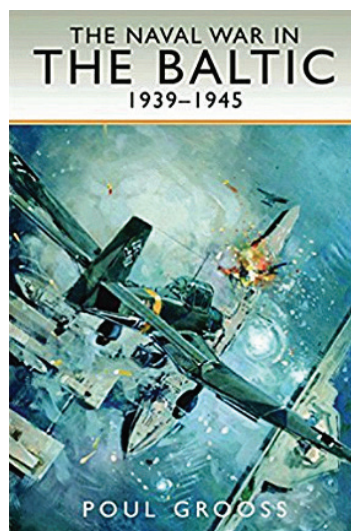
Boyle defines his theme as Norway's importance to Delius and Delius's importance to Norwegian culture. He

sets the scene by describing 'Norway's awakening' at the time of Delius's first visits in the 1880s and 90s. Social and economic pressures brought increased urbanisation and forced many to emigrate, there was explosive growth in the merchant navy, and Norway was beginning to find its own democratic voice. Edvard Grieg was a prominent figure in this new climate, and Boyle argues that Delius's admiration for Grieg, whom he met in Leipzig in 1887, played a part by encouraging Grieg in his creation of a distinctive Norwegian style. Grieg in his turn was impressed by Delius's enthusiasm for Norway; he called him 'Hardangervidda man', described him as 'musically deep, marvellous', and introduced him to his publisher. By 1889 the two were sufficiently intimate to set out on a trip together in the Jotunheimen region. Delius was beginning to build his life-long fascination with the mountains of Norway.

Delius's home for much of his life was in Paris; there he met Edvard Munch, who remained a close friend for the rest of his life, and associated with Bjørnson, Knut Hamsun, Strindberg, and Gauguin among others. Halfdan Jebe, the Norwegian violinist and composer, was another lifelong friend, and is said by Boyle to have personified Delius's own urge to break from social orthodoxy; the two, together apparently with Hamsun, had a riotous and alcohol-fuelled peregrination through the Norwegian mountains in August 1896, giving public performances of words and music.

Many of Delius's best-known works have identifiable Norwegian roots, analysed in detail by Boyle. 'A Mass of Life', and the opera 'A Village Romeo and Juliet' (containing the intermezzo separately known as 'The Walk to the Paradise Garden'), use the mountain-music themes described by Boyle as 'peak and plateau' to create a mood of exaltation. Horn calls evoke pastoral associations and 'a sense of repose in an open, natural landscape'. In 'The Song of the High Hills', Delius represents the immense space of the *vidde* by reference to the herding calls used to convey messages over great distances. Even the English favourite 'On Hearing the First Cuckoo in Spring' is based on a Norwegian folk-tune. According to Thomas Beecham, then at the start of his distinguished conducting career, Delius longed to escape the ugliness of modern life and saw simple, unspoilt Norway as a refuge. Beecham was a close friend, and joined Delius ('a mountaineer of untiring energy') on an epic month-long hike in 1908 across Norwegian mountains and glaciers, including an ascent of Galdhøpiggen. Delius's health rapidly declined thereafter, but he was still able to holiday at Lesjaskog in the Gudbrandsdal in the 1920s, and even purchase a plot of land to build a small home there.

Andrew Boyle's book is attractively presented, nicely balanced in content, and well illustrated. It offers perceptive insights not only into Delius and his emotional world, but also the musical and artistic society of the period.



### Review by Bridget Morris

Poul Grooss, *The Naval War in the Baltic 1939-1945*. Published by Seaforth Publishing, April 2017  
ISBN 978 1 5262 00001

This book is a comprehensive survey of the whole Baltic region in the course of the second world war, and part of a series of reference narrative histories by Seaforth about ships and the sea. The maritime territory in question stretches far beyond the waters of the Scandinavian countries, to include the southern Baltic states, Germany and the Russian front. The book presents the major events chronologically and covers the attack on Poland, the siege of Leningrad, the Soviet campaign against Sweden in 1942, the three Finnish wars, 1939-1944, the Soviet liberation of the Baltic states, the German evacuation of two million people from



the East, and Soviet ambitions westward from 1945 onwards.

At the centre is of course the unfolding story of the naval battles, a story that for a number of reasons is less widely told than the air and land war in this region. Each event, battle and type of weaponry is meticulously described. At the same time there are excursions into some of the bigger questions, for example the nature of Swedish neutrality, questions about the hardness of the Finns in their campaigns, and the movements of peoples and ethnic groups between various locations in the course of the war. These wider perspectives give an indication of the breadth of the book in telling the history of the second world war from deeply complex angles.

The book is richly illustrated with black and white images of dozens of naval vessels. It provides occasional inserted entries of factual information to help the layperson (for example there are entries on a torpedo bomber, radar, sea mines, and Asdic sonar). It has copious appendixes and indexes that document the carefully compiled material, and doubtless will be invaluable for future research and reference.

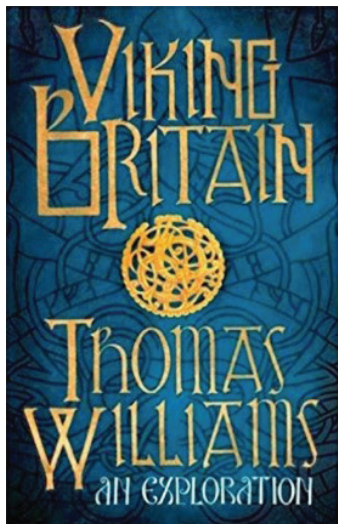
As a retired Danish Navy Captain, teacher of Naval History, and intelligence officer in the Cold War, Poul Grooss is well positioned to write this study. It will be of interest to the professional historian for the naval perspective it offers, and because it draws on primary sources from all the regions concerned. Grooss also opens up a range of larger questions in his reflective Postscript. He succeeds in writing a compelling account of the

significance of the naval war in the Baltic and the way it shaped unfolding events in so many different ways across the region. His book will be a treat for the naval historian, but there are many fascinating perspectives here for the lay reader as well.



Marjatta Bell and Marjatta Hietala,  
*Helsinki: Finland's Innovative Capital*  
(Paperback). Published by Suomalaisen  
Kirjallisuuden Seura, 2017  
ISBN-10: 9522228834  
ISBN-13: 978-9522228833

Marjatta Bell is the Chairman of the  
Anglo-Finnish Society (member of  
CoScan).



Review by Rory McTurk

Thomas Williams, *Viking Britain: An Exploration*. Published by William Collins, London, Sept 2017  
ISBN: 978-0-00-817193-3

This book traces the history of the Vikings in Britain from the eighth century to the eleventh, the landmarks being the capture of York by the Great Army in 866, Alfred's defeat of Guthrum at Edington in 878, and the death of Cnut in 1035. It is far from being a dry chronicle of events, however: part of its argument is that the English subconsciously recognized in the Vikings characteristics they shared with them from their common Germanic heritage, not least a fascination with dragon-slaying as reflected in the stories of Beowulf and Sigurd the Volsung. This leads the author, Tom Williams,

who clearly shares this fascination, to punctuate his narrative with accounts and quotations from Old English and Old Norse literature illustrating heroic and vengeful activity in both human and supernatural contexts.

This greatly adds to the book's readability. It may be asked, however, if the episodes from literature are always appropriately chosen. For instance, Williams takes up nearly three pages in reworking, 'by way of backstory to the capture of York' (p. 98), the account in the thirteenth-century Icelandic *Ragnars saga* of how Ragnarr, the supposed father of the leaders of the Great Army, acquired his nickname *loðbrók*, 'hairy-pants', as a result of wearing shaggy trouserwear for protection in slaying a monstrous serpent, and so winning his first wife, Þóra, in marriage. Ragnarr *loðbrók* is a figure 'of indeterminate historicity', as Williams admits (p. 99), and it is hard to see the relevance of this episode to the capture of York. More relevant is the saga's account, mentioned only briefly on pp. 108-09, of how Ragnarr was put to death in a snake pit by King Ælle of Northumbria, since it provides vengeance as a reason for the Viking aggression of 866.

With regard to the 'blood-eagle' carved on Ælle's back in revenge for Ragnarr's death, as reported in the saga and elsewhere, Williams accepts (pp. 110-13) the widely held view that this is based on a misunderstanding of an eleventh-century Old Norse poem apparently indicating that Ælle's slain body provided carrion for an eagle. It is more likely that the word for 'eagle' in this poem is a poetic word for 'sword' and that its meaning is

that Ælle was attacked with a sword. The poem was indeed misunderstood, but not necessarily as Williams suggests.

A really surprising feature of the book is that Williams, with his obvious love of legendary embellishment, makes no mention of the story of Alfred burning the cakes. This is supposed to have taken place during Alfred's time at Athelney, described by Williams on pp. 163-65, and the twelfth-century *Annals of St Neots* hint that it marked a turning point in Alfred's career, since he proceeded from Athelney to his final victory over the Vikings. It finds a parallel in *Ragnars saga*, where Ragnarr's followers, bedazzled by the beauty of the woman who becomes his second wife, burn the bread they are baking. This also marks a turning-point, since Ragnarr's second wife, Áslaug, gives birth to sons of whom one, Ívarr, seems to have had Inguar, one of the leaders of the Great Army and remembered as a king, as a historical prototype. His birth thus ushers in the new type of Scandinavian kingship, the military (as opposed to tribal) kingship characteristic of the Viking Age. Mention of this would have illustrated not so much the shared inheritance of the English and the Vikings as the likelihood that stories told in the Danelaw influenced storytelling in Scandinavia.

These minor criticisms should in no way discourage readers of CoScan Magazine from buying and reading this fascinating book.



## Review by Mark Elliott

Anu Partanen, *The Nordic Theory of Everything*. Published in the UK by Duckworth Overlook, Oct 2017  
ISBN 978-0-7156-5203-9

Anu Partanen, born and raised in Finland, has become a US citizen and this book is written for a US readership. It is less ambitious in scope than the title implies, preaching essentially the simple message that the Nordic approach to welfare — not the ‘nanny-state’ deplored by Americans, but in Finnish something much closer to ‘well-being state’ — makes for a greatly happier and more successful society than that of the US. In her Prologue Partanen quotes Ed Miliband of the British Labour Party in 2012 as saying ‘if you want the American dream, go to Finland’. Significantly, that remark was made at a conference on social mobility.

Partanen’s chapter on education is perhaps her best, with a persuasive

analysis of the differences. The US follows a ‘demand’ approach, education dependent on the abilities and circumstances of the parents; Finland a ‘supply’ approach, seeing education as a basic human right. This latter achieves excellence through aiming at equity, with fewer tests and more emphasis on creativity and play in the early years. Fundamental in this area and throughout the book is the contrast between the deep anxieties of all but the richest Americans, based on the intolerable complexity and cost of daily living, and the freedom afforded to Nordics by the generous and universal provision made by the state.

There are chapters on baby-rearing, on health (full of phrases obscure to a British reader such as ‘copays and deductibles’), on taxation. The gross inequalities caused by the US health-care system make especially vivid and painful reading, and may come to have some relevance in the UK. But Europeans generally will readily agree that the Nordic model is superior. Anu Partanen has given us something of a text-book for the CoScan message that sanity nowadays resides in Northern Europe.

Lesley Riddoch and Eberhard Bort,  
*AMcSmörgåsbord: What post-Brexit  
Scotland can learn from the Nordics.*  
Published by Luath Press Ltd, 2017  
ISBN 978-1-912147-00-7

Lesley Riddoch is a journalist and the  
Director of Nordic Horizons (member of  
CoScan).

**Lagom** [lɑ:gɒm] is a Swedish word meaning ‘just the right amount’. The word may go back to the Viking days, when mead was passed around, *laget om*, and everyone would take their sips. Like *hygge* it has now given rise to numerous books. Among these, the following have been published since July this year:

Linnea Dunne, *Lagom: The Swedish Art of Balanced Living*. Published by Octopus Publishing Group Ltd, July 2017  
ISBN 978-1-85675-374-6

Anna Brones, *Live Lagom: Balanced Living, The Swedish Way*. Published by Ebury Press, July 2017  
ISBN: 978-1-78503728-3

Lola Åkerström, *Lagom: The Swedish Secret of Living*. Published by Headline Publishing Group, Aug 2017  
ISBN: 978-1-47224933-3

Niki Brantmark, *Lagom: The Swedish Art of Living a Balanced, Happy Life*. Published by Thorsons (HarperCollins-Publishers), Sep 2017  
ISBN 978-0-00-826010-1

Steffi Knowles-Dellner, *Lagom: The Swedish art of eating harmoniously*. Published by Hardie Grant Publishing, Oct 2017  
ISBN 978-1-78713202-3

Elisabeth Carlsson, *The Lagom Life: A Swedish Way of Living*. Published by Ryland Peters & Small, Oct 2017  
ISBN 978-1-78249538-3

## Copenhagen — big globe, small world

by Katherine Aiken

In August 2016, a day after returning from holiday in Iceland, and following some frantic use of the washing machine and tumble drier whilst shaking volcanic ash out of my suitcase and stuffing it with clothes, I was on my way to Copenhagen! Earlier in the year, I had applied and been accepted onto a course at the University of Copenhagen, entitled ‘Global Health Challenges’. It turned out to be two weeks of a great adventure.

My days in Copenhagen were spent at the university, where we had classes on ‘Global Health’ — a mixture of lectures and tutorials. The speakers and the students really reflected the name of the course, with about 30 different countries being represented, but most in demand were the Danish students, who were invaluable sources of local information — things like where to buy a coffee, or why the traffic lights were so odd! We covered everything from ‘what is global health?’ to health as a human right, infectious diseases, natural disasters and Zika virus. The discussions were stimulating, with a myriad of different opinions and viewpoints represented, as we learned that we could and should all learn from each other, and appreciate the opportunity we had to meet together.

When class was over for the day, we would spend the evenings and weekends sightseeing. First stop: the Danish treasure of the Little Mermaid statue, staring wistfully out to sea. Walks along

the promenade led us to that globally appreciated delicacy — ice cream, which we romantically ate while sitting looking at the houses of Nyhavn, and pretending we were in a Hans Christian Andersen story.



**My fellow students work out ‘where next’ on our walking tour of the city**

Other highlights included exploring the Royal Palaces, of which Copenhagen has not one, but three: imagine the costs involved in keeping them all! It did raise an interesting point with our Danish counterparts — taxation that is a lot higher than in the UK, but they didn’t seem to mind (although this may be due to the fact that they are students and therefore do not pay them yet!); they get free university education in addition



to a public healthcare system and other benefits.

One exhibit in Rosenborg Palace proved that people in the past certainly had a sense of humour — an armchair from the 17th century that squirted water at people's backs when they sat down!

One Saturday I went down family memory lane, to see the Viking ships at Roskilde, where my Mum had gone when she studied in Copenhagen as part of her degree. There was another link with home, with one of the ships having been built by Vikings in Dublin — confirming my belief that 'it's a small world after all', already piqued by the fact that one of the Danish students on the course used to go out with a girl from the Czech Republic I had previously met whilst in Lithuania! This reinforced something we had learnt on the course — the connections and friendships we built with our fellow students did not need to be fleeting, but could be nurtured into something more, creating a worldwide network of young people passionate about the field of global health.

My sister, keen to take advantage of the chance to visit someone abroad, flew out for a few days towards the end of my time in Copenhagen, and I was happy to be the tour guide and show her around the many sights of Copenhagen (being there for two weeks had clearly made me an expert!). Our last evening was spent in Tivoli Gardens, the second oldest amusement park in the world, complete with ballet, a Ferris wheel, a big band and illuminations — we felt as if we'd stepped back into the 1950s and felt rather inelegant in our jeans and coats.

With packing complete, I had time for one last trip to Nyhavn, where a busker was playing 'Time to say goodbye' — and so it was.

My two weeks in Copenhagen flew by, but I came back enthused about the importance of global health, with wanderlust temporarily quenched by my experiences in this beautiful city with its remarkable people, and with friendships made despite cultural and language barriers. Without the help of the grant from CoScan, it would have been difficult for me to embark on this trip.

Pat Conroy said 'Once you have travelled, the voyage never ends, but is played out over and over again in the quietest chambers. The mind can never break off from the journey'. I agree: the experiences I had and the people I met have given me memories which will last a lifetime.



Ice cream and Nyhavn

# Neuroscience Conference 2016 in Copenhagen

by Anežka Macey-Dare

Whilst on my gap year, I spent several months working in the Oxford University Department of Pharmacology (Ellender Lab) researching the development of medium spiny neurons in mice brains. I was lucky enough to be given the opportunity by my supervisor to present a poster of our data at the Federation of European Neuroscience Societies (FENS) Conference in Copenhagen in early July 2016, and was grateful to receive a Travel Award from CoScan to help cover the costs of the flights to Denmark.

I arrived on 2 July and met up with Sif, an old Danish school friend who had kindly agreed to host me for my trip. We went and had dinner in Nyhavn and then she took me on a quick whistle-stop tour of the city. What struck me initially was the picturesque nature of the city with all its beautiful lakes and canals, as I had imagined something much more industrial. I was also quite surprised by how empty the city was, having been used to the huge crowds of students and tourists filling the streets back in Oxford.

The morning of 3 July was our poster presentation, which was an exciting but slightly nerve-racking affair. It was only once I arrived that I got a real sense of the scale of the conference. It was much bigger than I had imagined, with thousands of highly esteemed neuroscientists, and I was by far the youngest and least experienced person

there! Although I was initially quite nervous, I found that talking through my data with other scientists actually proved to be very useful. As ever, I was grateful for my supervisor's support and for his help tackling some of the more challenging electrophysiology questions.

In the afternoon, I went to look around several of the other posters and spoke to presenters who were looking at aspects of neuroscience of interest to me. I found this experience really rewarding as not only did I get to understand alternative techniques, I was also able to help other scientists with troubleshooting some of the small issues in their own experiments.

The next two and a half days entailed attending a variety of lectures on different topics and seeing several more poster presentations. I particularly enjoyed the lectures on aspects of Alzheimer's disease and of chronic pain disorders, as they gave insight into how experimental results from lab research have practical applications in the advancement of medicine (something of particular interest to a future doctor!).

Attending many different lectures also gave me a lot of insight into different presenting styles. Having always struggled slightly with having to stand up and talk in front of people, it was helpful to see the methods different researchers utilised. One plenary lecture in particular was presented in a way that made it very easy to understand what were quite challenging concepts by breaking them

down into small parts and using analogies to help the audience imagine what was happening.

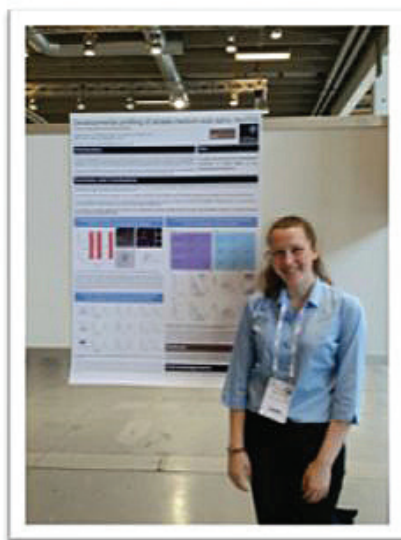
Another big highlight of the conference was seeing one of the researchers from our department receive the prize for her PhD thesis. It was great to have a prize winner so close to home, and she has definitely inspired me to aim towards doing a PhD at some point in the near future!

As well as the lectures and poster presentations, I also attended the conference dinner and afterparty on the Monday evening. On the Tuesday morning I got a chance to explore Copenhagen with Sif. We climbed the Round Tower, which gave a lovely view of the city from the top, and then visited the Little Mermaid and had lunch in the converted paper storage unit 'Paper Island'. I thought the idea of Paper Island was a particularly unique and clever concept, and I was really struck by how carefully it had been thought out and designed down to the very last detail.

On the last morning and back at the conference centre, I also took on the challenge we had been set of speaking to at least 35 different companies at their various stations around the conference centre, in order to be entered for a prize draw. I found speaking to the companies a very useful experience, as I was able to troubleshoot some minor problems with my more recent experiments, and was also able to learn about new technologies that could be useful in improving the precision and efficiency of my experiments. I even managed to win four stuffed toy rats in the prize draw!

After the close of the conference, Sif and I headed out to lunch in the centre of Copenhagen for a final meal and catch up, and then she dropped me at the airport and I flew home.

Overall, I thoroughly enjoyed visiting Copenhagen and was quite sad to leave. I think I not only gained a lot of increased insight into neuroscience as a field, but also into the culture and society Scandinavia has to offer. I hope to go back again very soon!



**Anežka Macey-Dare with her poster**

## 'For the journey and return' with The Orkney Boat

by Beatrice Searle

This summer I made a journey from Orkney: sailed over the North Sea to Bergen, travelled inland to Oslo and then continued on foot for the entire 643 km of the Gudbrandsdalen Path, over the Dovrefjell mountains, to Trondheim and back over the sea to Orkney... with a 35 kilo rock harnessed to my body.

Some years ago I had come across a photograph of The Ladykirk Stone in a book about Orkney. The stone is housed in St Mary's Church in South Ronaldsay. Into this sea-rounded piece of whinstone are carved two foot-shaped hollows. The footprints are shaped and smoothed so that a bare foot fits comfortably into them. One of many stories surrounding the stone tells that Magnus Erlendsson (c.1080-1115, Earl of Orkney) placed his feet in the stone, which was transformed into a boat to carry him across the Pentland Firth. It is this myth that lends the stone its local name, St Magnus's Boat.

In fact, the stone precedes Magnus and the myths that surround him, having been made and used by the Picts during the late Iron Age. For the Picts, stones such as these were connected with kingship. The chosen king would stand in the footprints in order to signify his connection with the land he ruled and to reinforce his intention to follow in the footsteps of his ancestors. Pictish stones containing footprints also occur elsewhere in Scotland.

Footprint stones occur in Roman history, too. To bring safe travel, the

Romans are known to have carved pairs of footprints into stones, bearing the inscription *Pro itu et reitu* (For the journey and return). The traveller would place his feet twice in the footprints: first to be in direct contact with the land he was leaving, and then as an act of reconnection when he returned.

I was deeply touched by this idea and by the fact that the purpose of these footprint stones had been to provide the strength and security needed to lead, to speak, or to undertake a journey. I was a keen walker and most happy outside. I loved many landscapes and felt I belonged to none. I knew that stone offered me something wild, strong and wise, its cycle spanning millions of years, and I was keen to make an art work in response to this anchoring artefact which demonstrated a belief in the power of stone, something far more ancient and timeless than me.

Throughout human history people and cultures have been on the move, and wherever possible they move with the objects that define them. Over a billion people are on the move across the earth today. In fact the world is witnessing the greatest mass migration it has ever known. What happens when these people are dispossessed of their land, when they leave it behind? Robyn Davidson writes of the Aboriginal people of Australia: 'Once dispossessed of their land, they become ghosts. Half people. They are not separate from their land. When they lose it, they lose themselves'.

And so I wondered: what if I could raise one of those pieces of land that grounds me and make a journey with it? 'For the Journey and Return' was born. I decided I would take on these historic precedents and mythologies and carve my own footprint stone, in a rock particular to the geology of Orkney. Carrying this stone I would make a journey, during which I would often set down the stone and stand in it. The impetus of my journey would keep me daily moving forward, whilst the moments of stillness and security and solidity of the stone would allow me to be in constant contact with Orkney. All who encountered the stone on its journey would have the opportunity to stand in it, draw strength from their connection with it and add to its on-going narrative.

The stone that became The Orkney Boat is a 390 million-year-old Devonian siltstone from Marwick Bay, strong enough to withstand our months of bumping along tracks and multiple

'standings'. It allows for a wide stance so that the stander feels stable and planted strongly. Unfortunately this also contributes to its excessive size and weight. The Orkney Boat is approximately 900 x 600 mm and weighs 35 kilos. It is so called as a nod to the original and because boats are able to raise their anchors and move with them. Incidentally, in its shape, The Orkney Boat also somewhat resembles an Orkney yole.

The Gudbrandsdalen path follows the Old Kings Road between Oslo and Trondheim. At 643 km it is Norway's longest pilgrim path. The route has been the most direct route between Oslo and Trondheim since the Middle Ages, and today it is walked by religious and secular folk alike. There is no doubt that I thought of my journey with the stone as a kind of metaphysical pilgrimage. I would move with a very defined goal, I would be acutely conscious of the



**The Orkney Boat**



landscape I moved in, and I would be in pursuit of a closer connection with the landscape through which I moved. To walk in Norway was a nod to the original stone, to the old connection between the Orkney archipelago and the old Norse rule. Moreover, the path ends at Nidaros Cathedral — which is a triumph of stone in itself!

On 1 June we set off from Stromness on The Swan, a Shetlandic fishing vessel first launched in 1900. Three days later we arrived in Bergen, amidst rollicking Viking celebrations! It took us a further day to get by road to Oslo and then there followed 50 days and 643 km of walking to bring us into Trondheim. To move with the stone was an almost impossible task. The entire journey took 82 days in total, during which time the stone and I became very closely linked. I came to think of the stone as essential. I never resented it. I resented the weight of the food and I raged at the difficulty of the trailer, but the stone was constant, not just in its size and weight and patience but in its presence. It was unnegotiable. Carrying the stone brought me great reassurance, emotional comfort and security, despite also leading directly to my physical discomfort and fear.

When I was in motion, it rolled behind me, requiring me to be aware of every tree root, rock and slope that my feet passed over. When I was motionless, so was the stone. It did not move without me and I did not move without it (though I joked many times that only a retreating glacier could get the stone to Trondheim.) To walk with it was for me, as for others who walked alongside, vital to its vitality

and ours. A key element in our eventual success was the involvement of other people, the kindness of strangers — their generosity, their open-mindedness and their willingness to help. The trailer broke many times and each time we had to seek out a willing mechanic. And people did stand in the stone throughout the journey, stand in it, speak from it, even sing from it.

Jürgen, a business consultant from Germany, was most interested in the opportunities the stone gave for the gift of expression, since his work and his thoughts often focus on improving communications between people. During his travels in the northernmost climes of Finland he had met a shaman who performed a ritual especially for him, with a piece of driftwood. Jürgen uses this piece of shamanic wood in his workshops now. We spoke about the parallels with standing in stones such as the Orkney Boat to gain the strength to speak. And at 6 am the following morning, while I was asleep and unaware, Jürgen stood in the stone, entirely without witnesses. He later told me that he felt he had risen up to look over a map of the world and from that vantage point watched the connections form between places. His gaze passed from Nidaros to Iceland to Shetland to the North Cape and to the Black Sea, and when he had finished looking, five minutes had gone by.

The Orkney Boat visited the Tokstad Pine, a 500 year old protected pine tree outside Ringsaker. Ursula stood barefoot in the stone, with the tree ascending behind her and told me she was perfectly balanced there between earth and sky.



**Crossing Dovrefjell**

On the morning of our departure from Lillehammer, we met a member of the university staff coming along the path. Her understanding was immediate: ‘Yes,’ she said, ‘sometimes I say to my students, stand up! Stand up and just feel yourself in contact with the ground!’

One fellow walker asked me if the rewards of the project had been as I thought they would be, which prompted me to realise something unexpected. When I began, I thought my reward would be to walk with The Orkney Boat, and I thought that the reward of others would be to encounter the stone and to have the opportunity to stand in it. In fact, my greatest reward was to walk *with people*, as well as with The Orkney Boat, and it seems that to move alongside the

stone was greatly significant for others too. It is the shared journey that has given the stone and its participants their power.

I am hugely grateful to CoScan for the financial support of the project.

### **CoScan travel grants**

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

Further information: Tony Bray (see p.40) or [www.coscan.org.uk/travel-award](http://www.coscan.org.uk/travel-award).

**Apply before 31 March 2018.**

## Orkney folk musicians in Norway

by Ishbel Borland

In June last year 23 members of the West Mainland Strathspey & Reel Society (WMSRS) flew from Orkney to Bergen (using the Loganair scheduled flight via Shetland). We go to Bergen and Voss because, through the Orkney Norway Friendship Association — ONFA — and through Orkney's twinning with Hordaland, we have made many friends and contacts. It is also convenient for us to have a 'direct flight' from Kirkwall.

We first travelled to Voss for three nights. While there, we met and had lunch and a wonderful concert with *Bygdaklang* - the choir who had visited Orkney previously.

We moved to Bergen on the Tuesday evening after the wonderful 'Norway in a Nutshell' trip (which some of us have done several times, but still enjoy). On Wednesday we had the privilege to play in the square at *Gamle Bergen* — the

result of a meeting in Kirkwall with the Hordaland Museum people who invited us to come and play and have a look around the lovely museum. We had fun playing for some schoolchildren who were on a week's summer school. After that we had lunch with retired British consul Rolf Hestness & his wife Nina, where we played for some guests who were friends of Orkney. The moving quote from Rolf as we were leaving was, 'You are leaving our home now, but our walls will remember your music'.

Thursday saw us joining with the Sotra folk dance group who gave us a lovely meal before we played for some dancing and fun with them. (Again, a link with ONFA).

Friday, our last day, was different again, as we were playing in *Torgalmenningen*. As it was pouring that day (surely not raining in Bergen!!), we asked the manager of the shop *BIKBOK* if we could take shelter outside his window. He was happy to have us there.

This was our third visit and we had a wonderful time, making new friends and catching up with those we already knew. Hopefully these friendships will flourish, as our youngsters are already planning our next visit!

**Playing in Gamle Bergen and being joined for some dancing by Norwegian youngsters**



# Pre-Hospital Care in Nepal and Norway

by Anna Schumann

My passion for humanitarian, expedition and pre-hospital emergency medicine motivated me to explore different environments and healthcare systems on opposite ends of the spectrum for my medical elective. I therefore split my elective time into several parts.

I first flew to Nepal, where I initially worked for a week in the Emergency Department of a hospital near Kathmandu. For a long time I have been curious to get involved with medical aid work in the future. Therefore, to gain some real-life experience of what working with an organisation such as *Médecins Sans Frontières* might be like, my urban placement was followed by an internship at a hospital in Manthali. Here the population is still dealing with the aftermath of last year's devastating earthquake, and medical resources are greatly limited at best, or non-existent at worst. My most memorable case at this hospital was an emergency Caesarean section, during which I was asked to assist. Further cases I found striking included a child with measles (a disease I had seen only in textbooks), and a case of severe childhood tuberculosis.

In addition to helping with outpatient clinics at the hospital, I and two other UK volunteer doctors helped the medical chief to run remote health-camps at the weekends. This involved driving out to local villages by jeep with as much medication as possible and then seeing several hundred patients per day, most



of whom rarely get the chance to see medical staff during their lifetime. The consultations were carried out with severely limited clinical resources and only rudimentary knowledge of the local language. Therefore, treatment was completely symptom-based, rather than focusing on elaborate diagnoses.

After experiencing Nepali pre-hospital care, I set off to travel back to Europe and headed into the midnight sun, to Norway's northernmost hospital on the island of Tromsø, 350 km north of the Arctic circle. I had decided that a placement in Scandinavia, which is known for its world-leading healthcare as well as its extraordinarily remote medical services, would be a perfect contrast to healthcare (and temperatures) in rural Nepal. From my previous experience with Critical Care Emergency and Pre-Hospital teams in Europe, I had learned that skills in anaesthesia are crucial for any pre-hospital doctor. Therefore, I



started off by joining Tromsø Hospital's Anaesthesiology and Critical Care Department, where I was warmly welcomed and integrated fully into the medical team, thanks to the friendly and multilingual staff and patients. I got daily practice in inserting IV-lines, placing airway adjuncts, performing common airway manoeuvres (which I learned quickly look a lot easier than they really are), pain management, appropriate ventilation and intubation, as well as different kinds of regular and rapid sequence induction.

My last week on elective was spent with the Norwegian Air Ambulance HEMS (Helicopter Emergency Medical) Team, which I had successfully arranged after long negotiations. This was the

highlight of my placement. For several days I got to work with the HEMS duty doctor, rescue man and pilot, who fully integrated me into their team. During my time there I got to see the base and dispatch centre, to attend morning video-conferences with other remote bases and, most excitingly, to join several missions across the vast fjords of Norway and Finland. While I was there the team was called out for two search-and-rescue missions, two critical care inter-hospital transfers, two remote transfers of cerebral accidents and one homicide. I absolutely loved every minute of being part of this incredible medical team, and watching them work in sync and with calm under pressure: with discipline as well as enjoyment and empathy.





I believe that we often forget how privileged we are within the NHS and other Western healthcare systems: it may sound like a cliché, but it is true. The opportunity to contrast emergency, critical care and rural medicine in a developing country with developed Western anaesthetic medicine at opposite ends of the world (and temperature scales) was a great privilege for me. To ensure safety for my future patients, I want to make sure I am adequately trained and have confidence in the bread-and-butter skills of clinical medicine and anaesthetics, whichever country or

environment I may end up working in during my future career. My placement in Norway allowed me to increase my knowledge competencies in anaesthetics, while my time in Nepal refreshed my appreciation of Western medicine and passion for humanitarian and pre-hospital care.

I would encourage other medical students to get creative, to 'pick-and mix' their future electives and to contrast different health care systems. I would relish the opportunity to share my experiences with anyone who would like to hear about them.

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