CoScan Magazine

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CoScan
Confederation of Scandinavian Societies

Contents

Front cover:
Summit marker on Tromsdalstinden. Photo: Laura Cull (see also back cover)

Message from the President

Mark Elliott

It is a time of change — in so many ways, and even for us in CoScan. Eva Robards has now announced, at the AGM in Helsinki this April, that she will step down as Chairman in a year's time. She wrote in more general terms of this intention in the last issue of this magazine in autumn 2017, but the clock is now ticking. Sad news; but I believe that we can rise to the challenge.

In my own message a year ago I mentioned the political uncertainty surrounding us all in Britain then. There is little difference now. The arguments for some form of compromise which will preserve some part of our links with the European Union have been more widely developed, but it is difficult to see how in the foreseeable future the decision taken by referendum in 2016 can be reversed. So change in this respect is inevitable — and, as I wrote a year ago, not necessarily disastrous. The international pattern is constantly shifting; compare the transatlantic relationship in 1963, when the youthful vigour of Kennedy enthused the US and the sage wisdom of Macmillan represented the old world of Europe, with Trump and Macron today who each have very different characteristics. It's not totally obvious that either side is unequivocally better. We are all changing, and maybe good will come of it.

Spring is always a season in which to enjoy change and renewal — a green haze of foliage flooding over the trees, lambs skipping in the fields, primroses and violets by the country roads (I write unashamedly of my own area in the Lake District, but even elsewhere they tell me that spring is evident). But global warming is altering the pattern even of that annual change. We have fewer curlews, swifts, cuckoos these days. In less favoured climes there are more droughts and wildfires, more floods and tempests, more extremes generally. Governmental response to these challenges is patchy at best, and the impact on climate of decisions taken for economic and other reasons is rarely taken into account or even understood. A gloomy picture. But mankind has survived dramatic change in the past and evolved; wrong yet to despair of our finding solutions or at least palliatives even now.

On a more mundane level, we are all living through generational change. It

was ever thus, but maybe more visible and accelerated in our century. Some of us are reluctant to accept all the implications of progress. We cling to cheque-books, to using cash to buy bus-tickets, even to the occasional hand-written letter. We are not too sure about the noisier kinds of modern music. A few of us still don't possess smart-phones, and probably wouldn't use them properly if we did. But we do (or should) recognise that for our children and grand-children it is a different world. They may suffer too much, in our view, from depression or over-indulgence, in more extreme versions than we experienced; they may find it harder to find or keep a job, or a marital partner; but there are compensating advantages to modern society in terms of communication, travel, entertainment, domestic comfort.

So I am optimistic about CoScan's future too. Eva has worked hard over the past seven years in developing new activities and holding us together, but we cannot ask her to go on for ever. The new members of the committee whom she has recruited have a wide range of talents, and I am confident that we shall find another Chairman to take us forward from next year. As in so many areas of human activity, progress depends on flexibility, on openness to new ideas and methods; as well as on genuine enthusiasm and concern for our goals. We have that in abundance.

Helsinki 2018

by Jens Buus

This year's CoScan annual general meeting took place in Helsinki during the weekend Friday 20th to Sunday 22nd April with a total of 31 delegates representing 10 member societies. The venue was the comfortable Holiday Inn, conveniently located next to the main railway station, with easy bus and rail connections to the airport. As for last year, the organisation of the meeting had been in the very capable hands of Wendy Howell (CoScan committee member) and her husband Chris.

We started with an informal 'Meet and Greet' in the hotel on Friday

evening. On Saturday morning two guided tours were organised. One was a walking tour through the central part of Helsinki, passing the Finlandia Hall, the Parliament, the Mannerheim statue and the impressive cathedral on Senate Square, before ending at the market area near the harbour. Those opting for the bus tour visited the Sibelius monument, and had the Rock Church (built inside a massive natural granite block) pointed out to them.

The guide explaining the meaning of the main part of the Sibelius monument.

Photo: Eva Robards

Tony Shaw of Finn-Brit describing their various activities. The author of the article on the left.

Photo: E. Robards

On Saturday afternoon we had an interesting visit to the Finn-Brit organisation (www.finnbrit.fi) where we received a warm welcome. They told us about their work on language training and examinations and various cultural activities.

In the evening we all went for a delicious dinner at the restaurant *Savotta* where we were treated to a variety of Finnish specialities.

The AGM was held on Sunday morning. Among the topics were the CoScan International Award, both the arrangements for 2018 and candidates for 2019.

Next year's AGM is being planned for Stirling (organised by SNS, Glasgow).

Jens Buus is a member of Northants Anglo-Scandinavian Society.

anglo-norse society
founded 1918

The Anglo-Norse Society was founded in 1918 and is thus 100 this year! Festivities may follow but before hearing more about that we can enjoy reading the Anglo-Norse Review on www.anglo-norse.org.uk/publications. The latest issue includes articles on the shipping magnate Fred Olsen, the changing Norwegian language, Dame Vera Lynn, and the opening (with royalty present) of the square in front of the Norwegian Church in London.

ANGLO-SWEDISH SOCIETY

The Anglo-Swedish Society, conceived in 1918 in the aftermath of the Great War and born in February 1919, is about to join the select club of Centenarian societies. In CoScan, only the Anglo-Finnish Society (1911) and the Danish YWCA (1907) are older. Plans for the anniversary will be publicised when they are finalised and all CoScan members are warmly invited to participate.

We are sad to report the recent death of Eeva-Liisa Pratt. She was a member of the Anglo-Finnish Society and one of the most faithful and regular supporters of CoScan for many years. She was also a contributor to this magazine (2014/2): 'A Finn at Christmas' and 'Rovaniemi – the hometown of Santa Claus', and (2016/2): a letter about Nordic proficiency in English, showing considerable depth of thought on the subject. She will be greatly missed.

Quiz

A. Who am I? (Answer on page 17)

1. On 17th May this year, I would have been 100 years old, but I died in 2005.
2. I grew up on a farm without electricity or running water.
3. I married a vet at the age of 30.
4. My picture is on a Swedish banknote.
5. When asked if I was difficult, an opera director replied 'Not at all — put enough money in, and a glorious voice comes out!'

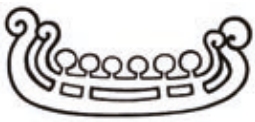
B. Which prominent Scandinavian, also born 100 years ago, do these (English) film titles lead you to? Alternate letters left out.

(Answer on page 18)

1. - R - E - A - D - H - S - E - S
2. S - I - E - O - A - U - M - R N - G - T
3. - A - N - A - D - L - X - N - E -
4. W - L - S - R - W - E - R - E -

Welsh Norwegian Society

by Alan Hall



The Society has only been going since 1995, but its ultimate origins lie in the longstanding connection of Norwegian seamen with the city of Cardiff, the establishment of the Norwegian Seamen's Mission and Seamen's Church, and the subsequent preservation and re-building of the Church after the congregation declined and ceased to meet.

During the 19th century, when Cardiff was an important port for the export of coal (there being a world-wide demand for Welsh steam coal), ships from many nations visited the expanding docks, particularly after 1860. By this time the Norwegian shipping fleet had greatly expanded, both in numbers and in the distances its ships covered; Norway had become the third largest maritime nation in terms of ships' tonnage. So when the coal trade itself greatly expanded from the 1860s on, Norwegian ships came in large numbers to the Bristol Channel ports, bringing cheap timber for pit-props and taking coal in return.

The Norwegian Seamen's Mission was established in 1864 in Bergen, and a branch started in Cardiff in 1866. The Norwegian Seamen's Church was built on the eastern edge of the docks and consecrated in December 1869. The work of the mission grew (at times there might be 90 Norwegian ships in Cardiff Docks) and the building was extended in 1883, fulfilling its role as a religious and welfare centre, with a worship area and reading room; it soon became one of the most popular in Europe. However, from the First World War onwards, the shipping trade greatly declined; the Seamen's Mission contracted, and from 1959 withdrew all financial support from the church. The local Norwegian congregation decided to try to keep the church open; with help from other Lutheran congregations it continued to function as a church until 1974, when it closed and soon became derelict.

A Trust was formed in the mid-1980s to rescue the derelict church building, and raised enough money — in Wales and in Norway — to re-erect the church on a site within the Cardiff Bay development area. The Trust's first President was the Cardiff-born Roald Dahl. Rebuilding started in 1991 and the reconstructed Church was opened in 1992 by Princess Märtha Louise of Norway. Since then the Church has flourished as a very pleasant Arts Centre and venue for concerts, the City of Cardiff Council having taken over the Trust. Visitors might wonder about the little white church on the waterfront; it looks like, and truly is, a little bit of Norway in Wales.

The upsurge of interest in things Norwegian produced by the rebuilding was no doubt a factor in the founding of the Welsh Norwegian Society in 1995. People with Norwegian family connections, or those who were simply interested in Norway, came together. The aims of the Society were, and are,

to strengthen ties and create greater understanding between the people of Wales and Norway, and to encourage participation in activities linked to Norwegian culture. For many years there were monthly evening meetings at the Norwegian Church Arts Centre, but with (at the time) an ageing membership drawn from a wide area of south-eastern Wales, it was difficult to maintain this, whether the meetings were simply informal 'coffee, cakes and conversation' affairs or had a formal speaker. A lot of hard work was put in by the then Committee but for some time the future of the Society seemed to be in doubt. However, in the last year we have had an influx of younger members from a wider catchment, (including more Norwegians!) and most of our meetings are now afternoon gatherings on Sundays, to which children are welcome. Throughout its history the Society has held social events — a *Jultrefest* just before Christmas, the annual observation of *Grunnlovsdag* (*Syttende Mai*) with a formal parade and flag-flying in the morning, children's games in the afternoon, and a supper in the evening, and a Midsummer (*Sankt Hans*) Garden Party. These are in addition to the monthly meetings and are looked forward to and well-attended. The Society seems to have a new lease of life.

We are grateful to Cardiff Council for continuing permission to use the Norwegian Church. With a younger average membership, the Welsh Norwegian Society is well placed to celebrate its Silver Jubilee in 2020.

The Welsh Norwegian Society committee from September 2017. The author third from the right.

Doggerland

Europe's Lost Frontiers

by Professor Vincent Gaffney, University of Bradford

Few travellers crossing the North Sea are aware that these grey northern waters cover a prehistoric landscape that once stretched without break between the English and Danish coasts. This was the case until between 18,000 and 5500 BC, when global warming raised sea levels to the extent that an area larger than the United Kingdom was engulfed by water.

Doggerland was first identified as a lost landscape more than a century ago, with trawlers occasionally netting archaeological remains, including a woolly mammoth skull. H. G. Wells was aware of the theory and alluded to it in one of his short stories.

Until recently, maps of Doggerland were based on little more than informed guesswork. The breakthrough came when we found out that extensive seismic reflection surveys carried out for other purposes, notably petroleum exploration, could be used to map the topography of ancient drowned and buried landscapes. This led to the initiation of the North Sea Palaeolandscapes Project, which has mapped some 45,000 km^2 of inundated Mesolithic landscape, an area somewhat larger than the Netherlands.

All explorers need to make maps — but creating maps of the inundated lands beneath the sea is a real challenge. The lost lands of the North Sea are not only larger than many European countries, they lie below metres of sea water and are buried deep within marine sediments. These landscapes are truly inaccessible. It is also true that the modern sea floor does not reflect the land surface from more than 7000 years ago. The sediments that overlie Doggerland have grown in thickness over the years since inundation, especially in the south of the 'Europe's

A Brexit in the past

Once there was a physical link between the UK and Scandinavia: Doggerland made it possible to walk from London to Copenhagen on dry land. While Britain at that time was a mountainous, hostile area, Doggerland (until the sea level rose 10,000 years ago) contained a fertile landscape with several large rivers, brimming with wildlife.

The remains of mammoths and other animals, in addition to prehistoric tools and weapons, provide evidence for settlement by humans and animals. The findings include a Neanderthal skull fragment from the Zeeland Ridges off the coast of the Netherlands and a collection of 75 Neanderthal stone tools and animal remains from off the coast of East Anglia, both dating to the Middle Palaeolithic (some 50,000 to 300,000 years ago).

Doggerland was catastrophically flooded following the Storegga Slide tsunami, caused by a huge landslide off the coast of Norway 8,200 years ago — a disaster for the inhabitants of Doggerland.

The Norwegian sector of Doggerland has a separate name: Agderia.

Lost Frontiers' study area. To overcome these problems the project team has used marine geophysics to analyse huge areas of survey data collected by industry.

Our present project, 'Europe's Lost Frontiers', is a large interdisciplinary venture exploring climate change, settlement and colonisation of the submerged landscapes of the North Sea basin using ancient DNA, seismic mapping and complex systems modelling. This project, funded by the European Research Council, runs for five years (2015 – 2020) and is a multi-institution effort, bringing together a wide range of people, interests, expertise and technology.

Analysis of the top slices of this huge 3D seismic data set has involved much methodological innovation and resulted in maps showing the rivers, lakes and hills, coastlines and estuaries, wetlands and salt marshes of a large part of Doggerland, sometimes in extraordinary detail.

In addition to seismic mapping, material from cores through the sediment has provided DNA, as well as

conventional environmental data, which will be used in a major computational modelling programme, replicating colonisation of the submerged landscape.

Another unique aspect of the 'Europe's Lost Frontiers' project is the extraction of sedimentary DNA from marine cores as part of a strategy to reconstruct prehistoric environment. The cores drilled for the project also have the potential to reveal the behaviour of the Earth's magnetic field. However, analysis of hundreds of samples from the large numbers of cores is a relatively slow process.

Complementing the above, a two-year marine expedition was launched in April this year, with the purpose of searching for prehistoric, submerged settlements around the area of the Brown Bank — an elongated, 30-kilometres-long sand ridge roughly 100 km east of Great Yarmouth and 80 km west of the Dutch coast. A concentration of archaeological material (including bone, stone and human remains) has been found within this area and may suggest a prehistoric settlement nearby. Teams from the University of Bradford, Ghent University and Flanders Marine Institute will join forces to carry out detailed geophysical surveys of the area, before extracting sediment cores that can be examined for evidence of human activity.

Global warming at the end of the last Ice Age led to the inundation of vast landscapes. These lost lands hold a unique, and largely unexplored, record of settlement and colonisation linked to climate change over millennia. The loss of Doggerland seems all the more pertinent at a time when Britain and the world is faced with present and future climate change, migration and the consequences of immense social change. At such a juncture it may be useful to consider the historic impact of traumatic events of the not-so-distant past and the wider European, and indeed global, context of Britain within a world which is changing rapidly and fundamentally.

Vincent Gaffney FSA has held, since 2014, an Anniversary Chair in Landscape Archaeology at the University of Bradford (where also his brother Chris works as Head of Archaeological and Forensic Sciences); previously he held a Chair in Landscape Archaeology and Geomatics at the University of Birmingham. In 2013 he was awarded the European Archaeological Heritage Prize for 'the unique nature of the marine research undertaken in the North Sea, and the significance of this research'.

He will be one of the speakers at the 'Europa Conference 2018: Coastal Archaeology in Prehistory', 22-23 June, at the University of York.

Denmark – a leader in harnessing wind energy

by David Corry

Middelgrunden wind farm Wikimedia Commons

Having no coal deposits, and having only comparatively recently discovered and exploited its limited resources of natural gas, Denmark is largely reliant on imported fossil fuel — in the form of coal for a substantial part of its electricity production and as oil for transport and agriculture.

The vulnerability revealed by the oil crisis and the powerful motivation of dangerous climate change have fuelled a big push to exploit wind energy. This is supported by government policy, and in 2017 this met 43% of the Danish electricity consumption — up from 17% in 2006 and well on the way to the target of 50% in 2020.

This policy has also produced a thriving industry manufacturing and installing wind turbines, which is the springboard for an equally thriving export trade in this sector, now worth more than the traditional Danish bacon! The sole product of the Danish firm Vestas is the manufacture and installation of wind turbines, and by 2007 it was installing one turbine every four hours somewhere in the world.

Although average windspeeds in Denmark are only moderate, the country has no deep valleys impeding wind flow and has many exposed coasts and areas of shallow sea with unimpeded wind 'fetch'. This includes the North Sea coasts of Jutland and the western and southern coasts of all the Danish islands. Although offshore turbines are markedly more expensive to install than those on dry land, these areas, where there are now 13 major wind farms, are in water shallow enough to make them economically viable.

Public opposition to the erection of wind turbines appears to be considerably less than in the UK, partly because of an early policy making them publicly or community owned, and there are cases where groups of residents club together to build mutually profitable wind energy generation near to the housing estate concerned.

On one of the smaller islands, Samsø, the then Social Democratic government promoted a concerted island-wide demonstration scheme to save energy and to develop renewables, and this involved the great majority of the islanders in a big co-operative push — which has also put extra money into their pockets. In addition the Samsø Energy Academy was set up, and this has attracted many visitors including some from a number of foreign countries. The island actually exports electricity to the Danish mainland, and this to such an extent that the surplus outweighs the fossil fuel energy (for transport and agriculture) used on Samsø. (See https://www.ecowatch.com/samso-worlds-first-100-renewable-energy-powered-island-is-a-beacon-for-1881905310.html)

Apart from wind energy, the author of this article was shown around the heating plant of a Samsø district heating scheme. In this installation, solar collectors ran in parallel with a wood-chip furnace in order to provide heat during periods of inadequate solar radiation. The wood-chips, produced on the island from purpose-managed woodland, were fed into the furnace without being pre-dried. I asked whether they were not losing a lot of heat because of the amount of heat needed to drive off/evaporate all the moisture contained in the wood chips (sometimes as much as 50%). Yes, they explained – but we get all that latent heat back again when we run the flue gases through a condenser and convert the water vapour back to water.

David Corry is a member of York Anglo-Scandinavian Society.

Holger Danske — the protector of Denmark

by Louise Sørensen

Ask almost any Dane who Holger Danske (‘Ogier the Dane’) is and they will tell you that he sits in the casemates beneath Kronborg Castle, currently in a deep slumber, but ready to wake up and defend Denmark should the country come under threat. This well-known legend has made him a national hero and a uniting figure at times of crisis. He has been a solid, reassuring constant in the collective consciousness of the Danish people for years, but who was he really?

We first encounter him as ‘Ogier de Danemarche’ in the French medieval poems called ‘Chansons de Geste’. In these poems he developed over time from a bit player to a central character, held in high esteem at King Charlemagne’s court. His heritage is uncertain — and some have suggested that he was in fact from the Ardennes, not Denmark — but according to legend he was the son of Gudfred (d. 810), the Danish Viking king. The thirteenth-century poem 'La Chevalerie d’Ogier de Danemarche' tells the story of how Gudfred sent his son as a pawn to his sworn enemy, Charlemagne, in return for the guarantee that the Franks would not attack Denmark. The young Holger did at first rebel against his new master, but they later reconciled and he went on to become a noble knight, admired for his prowess in battle.

Holger Danske’s first appearance in Nordic literature is as ‘Oddgeir danski’ in *Karlamagnús saga,* the late thirteenth-century Old Norse tale about the achievements of Charlemagne and his men. His role as an important Danish historical figure is first portrayed in earnest a few centuries later in Kristiern Pedersmayen’s sixteenth-century *Olger Danskes krønike* (‘Chronicle of Holger Danske’) translated from the French *Ogier le Danois.* The legend of Holger Danske was finally cemented by Hans Christian Andersen’s ‘Holger Danske’ (1845). Andersen based his fairytale on Pedersen’s chronicle and through his trademark descriptive language succeeded in creating the myth of a national folk hero which prevails to this day:

‘But the most beautiful sight of all is the old castle of Kronborg, where Holger Danske sits in the deep, dark cellar, into which no one goes. He is clad in iron and steel, and rests his head on his strong arm; his long beard hangs down upon the marble table, into which it has become firmly rooted; he sleeps and dreams, but in his dreams he sees everything that happens in Denmark. On each Christmas Eve an angel comes to him and tells him that all he has dreamed is true, and that he may go to sleep again in peace, as Denmark is not yet in any real danger; but should danger ever come, then Holger Danske will rouse himself, and the table will burst asunder as he

Holger Danske in the casemates at Kronborg castle

draws out his beard. Then he will come forth in his strength, and strike a blow that shall sound in all countries of the world'. (For a full English translation see www.andersen.sdu.dk/vaerk/hersholt/HolgerDanske_e.html)

As with many other historical legends, the facts surrounding Holger Danske's life and accomplishments are somewhat vague. Whether he really existed is difficult to prove, and it is more likely that he has been 'patched' together from a number of lesser historical characters to create a national hero. His legend serves as a reassuring presence in times of uncertainty, and his mythical power has been harnessed by those who felt his name would imbue them with strength in the fight against the enemy. This was most notably seen during World War II where the biggest grouping in the Danish resistance movement was called Holger Danske.

The statue of Holger Danske at Kronborg was installed in 1907 and was in fact the plaster cast of Hans Peder Pedersen-Dan's bronze statue which had been commissioned by Hotel Marienlyst near Helsingør. In 1985 water damage in the castle cellar caused the statue to crumble and it was replaced with the concrete version we can see today.

Medieval church-paintings in Denmark and Sweden

by Sid Bradley

Above the gilded altar in Brunnby kyrka, Skåne, a 15th-century painting depicts a scene once popular throughout medieval western Christendom: the Coronation of the Virgin in the presence of the Trinity.

Brunnby church, Sweden: Coronation of the Virgin Photo: Kurt Johannes Dokkedahl

The Son extends the crown; the Father (in front of and below the Son; much damaged) gives a blessing; the Holy Spirit, as a dove, perches on the throne below the crown. Discoveries since the mid-19th century have increasingly witnessed that the medieval churches of Denmark and Sweden were not whitewashed within, nor those of England stripped to the bare stone, as many now are. Picture-narratives of the Bible, the doings of the saints, the triumphs and pitfalls of the soul's journey through life, and the meaning-filled marvels of Creation, painted (as here) on walls and ceilings had, over five centuries, afforded the preacher visual aids and served the unlettered in place of writing. Then post-medieval reformative zeal hacked them away or obliterated them with whitewash.

Iconoclasm, the rejection of religious images as heretical, has Biblical beginnings: Thou shalt not make any likeness of any thing that is in heaven or in the earth beneath or in the water — the interpretation of which generated heated quarrels within the early Church. But by the 8th century the western Church could approve the Venerable Bede's defence of such images, as having power not merely to communicate information to the unlettered beholder but to effect a 'piercing of the heart' (*compunctio cordis*), delivering absolute spiritual grace. Nor did such painted representations of both Scriptural and non-Scriptural narratives stand alone in the medieval Christian's encounters with the lively imagising of Church-proclaimed truths. It is likely, for example, that in Scandinavia there were cross-fertilisations between the wall-paintings and medieval religious drama, just as in England where the guilds of medieval York annually performed a dramatisation of the Coronation of the Virgin.

In the libraries of monasteries and of wealthier layfolk there were books which inspired instructive pictorialisation of Providential history and of the Christian reading of the world. The *Biblia Pauperum* — the poor man's Bible — prioritised pictures over text and demonstrated that stories of the Old Testament foreshadowed events of the New.

Thus in Danmarks kyrka, diocese of Uppsala, a painting by Albertus Pictor (c. 1440 – c. 1507) shows Jonah (left) pitched into the jaws of the whale then (right) disgorged by the whale — prefiguring Christ's resurrection from the tomb.

Danmark church, Sweden: Jonah and the whale

The hugely popular *Travels of Sir John Mandeville* (medieval versions in Danish translation survive) includes accounts of the marvels found in the most easterly parts of the world: their images made their way into the medieval wall-paintings. Dalbyneder kirke, Randers kommune, preserves the somewhat crude early 16th-century figure of a *Blemmya*, member of a monstrous tribe whose eyes and mouths are in their belly.

Dalbyneder church, Denmark: *Blemmya*
Photo: Malene Thyssen

Other illustrated books circulating in the Middle Ages were *The Bestiary* and the *Liber Monstrorum*. Between them they featured such beasts and monsters as the lion, the dragon, the unicorn, the mermaid, dog-headed men and men with a single eye. All these turn up in medieval wallpaintings in Denmark and Sweden. But it would be a mistake to put them down to a gullible medieval taste for the grotesque. A fundamental concept in the medieval Christian perception of the world was *Homo mundus minor est*. Man is the world in miniature or, conversely, the world is Man writ large. All Creation, monsters included, illumines both the destiny and the nature of humankind, within the Creator's ordered purposes.

The unicorn illumines the mystery of the conception of Jesus: thus in Tingsted kirke, diocese of Odense, a unicorn is depicted below the scene of the Epiphany. The *Blemmya* symbolises human gluttony and the mermaid voluptuousness. The handsome lion in Dråby kirke needs thinking about: is he (according to the Bestiaries) God the Father (the lion, whose young are born dead, roars life into them on the third day: Christ's resurrection) or (according to Scripture, 1 Peter 5:8) the Devil who, 'as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour'? Whichever, rarely are these creatures idle bits of decoration. Medieval *mappae mundi,* world maps, authoritatively depicted such 'moralised' marvels in particular parts of the world-circle (see for example Hereford Cathedral's world map, c. 1300, online).

Skibby church, Denmark. Below: the three Living & the three Dead Kings Above: Martin & the beggar

It was in Skibby kirke in 1854 that the modern recovery of Denmark's concealed wall-paintings began with discoveries made during a programme of restoration; among the rest, one of Denmark's oldest surviving *kalkmalerier* (c. 1150, a well-executed Christ in judgement). Clearly, rich parishes could engage established artists such as the Isefjord Master who between 1460 and 1480 was employed in some twenty-five churches in Sjælland, including Dråby, Gerlev, Kirke Hyllinge — and Skibby, which among the rest features a motif from legend (three crowned, mounted and hawk-bearing kings meet three crowned but naked corpses which warn that as they are now, so will the living kings eventually be) and an episode from the Life of St Martin (he gives a beggar half his cloak). In Sweden, the workshop in Helsingborg was responsible for Brunnby's Coronation of the Virgin. Albertus Pictor ('the painter') signed his work in a number of churches, including the image in Täby kyrka, Uppland, used by Ingmar Bergman in *The Seventh Seal* (1957): a man plays chess with Death [illustr. in CoScan Magazine 2015/2, p, 12]. In Anderslöv kyrka and elsewhere in southern Skåne in the mid-14th century the Snårestad Master was active. Other churches evidently employed local craftsmen, who perhaps copied from a grander church in the region. The results could be rustic, but rarely less than eye-catching.

The keywords *kalkmalerier* and *kalkmålningar* present a wealth of further online material from many distinguished churches which there is not space here to mention.

All illustrations are believed to belong in the public domain unless otherwise noted.

Answers to quiz on page 4

Born 100 years ago: Birgit Nilsson

(17 May 1918 - 25 December 2005)

by Brita Green

Was there ever a more truly Wagnerian singer than Birgit Nilsson? asked the Guardian in their obituary of the Swedish soprano.

It was the choir-master in the local church who noticed Birgit Nilsson's gift for singing and advised her to take lessons. She got a scholarship to the Royal Academy of Music in Stockholm, but never spoke highly of the teaching she had received. 'The best teacher is the stage', she said. She made her operatic debut in Stockholm in 1946, which did not go well, but soon built up a repertoire of roles in operas by Strauss, Verdi, Puccini and Wagner.

Birgit Nilsson's international debut was at Glyndebourne in 1951, in a Mozart opera, but it was as a Wagnerian soprano that she became world-famous. At the Metropolitan she sang two complete Ring cycles in the 1961–62 season, and another one in 1974–75. Decca made a studio recording of her singing it, conducted by Georg Solti, which took seven years to produce.

She was a good businesswoman, and became one of the highest-paid singers of her time. She was not a temperamental diva but had a sharp tongue and was not afraid of speaking her mind. Once when rehearsing at the Vienna Staatsoper, her string of pearls broke. While helping her retrieve them, the conductor Karajan asked, 'Are these real pearls bought with your La Scala fees?' Nilsson replied, 'No, they are fake pearls bought with your Vienna Staatsoper fees.' She would probably have been pleased to know that she now (since October 2016) features on the Swedish 500-*kronor* banknote. She had already, in 1981, been depicted on a postage stamp.

After her death, the Birgit Nilsson Foundation, which she set up herself, has awarded a prize — a cash award of a million dollars — for outstanding achievement in classical music and opera. It is the largest prize given in the world of classical music, and has so far been awarded three times, in 2009, 2011 and 2014.

Birgit Nilsson's father was a sixth-generation farmer in Skåne in southern Sweden, and she grew up helping at the farm and was always faithful to her roots. In an interview in the 1990s, after she had retired to a small village in Skåne, she said, I've always tried to remember what my mother used to tell me: 'Stay close to the earth. Then, when you fall down, it won't hurt so much.'

In 1945, on a train journey between Skåne and Stockholm, she met another student, future veterinary surgeon Bertil Niklasson. They married in 1948 and stayed together for life. Bertil survived her by two years. There were no children. Her childhood home is now a museum. On 11 August they will be putting on a concert there with some two hundred singers and musicians to celebrate Birgit Nilsson's 100th anniversary.

Placido Domingo, the first recipient of the prestigious Birgit Nilsson Prize (inserted: with Birgit Nilsson).

The recipient for 2018, (recently announced) is the Swedish soprano Nina Stemme. The prize ceremony will take place on 11 October at the Royal Opera in Stockholm.

Born 100 years ago: Ingmar Bergman

(14 July 1918 - 30 July 2007)

by Brita Green

Ingmar Bergman said himself that he was incapable of improvising. He was a man of order, punctuality and tidiness, as his daughter Linn Ullmann makes clear in her recent book about her parents. He spent the last years of his life on Fårö, the northernmost part of Gotland, where he had had a house since the 1960s and where some of his films were made. He had also built a cinema there, and visiting family and friends all knew that for the afternoon performance at 3 p.m., you were expected to arrive at ten minutes to three, precisely. When, the year before his death, he himself did not turn up until eight minutes past three, Linn knew there was something very wrong with her father.

Bergman was born in Uppsala, the son of a vicar, and many of his films feature religious themes and show his struggles with religious belief. In *Wild Strawberries* a couple of young men get into a fight about the existence of God. The famous scene in *The Seventh Seal,* where the knight plays chess with Death, was inspired by medieval paintings he had seen in churches his father took him to. He said himself, 'there was everything that one's imagination could desire —

angels, saints, dragons, prophets, devils, humans'. Music was important to him, and in an interview he said that music and film share the ability to go directly to the emotions.

In 1976 a rehearsal (of Strindberg's *Dance of Death*) was famously interrupted by two plain-clothes policemen, and Bergman was arrested for tax evasion. It was later found to be without foundation, but it caused him a nervous breakdown and great distress. He left the country and lived abroad for a number of years, not returning for good until 1984.

Bergman had affairs with several of his actresses, was married five times, and had children — nine in all — with all his wives and also with the Norwegian actress Liv Ullmann, who came to Sweden in 1965 to make the film *Persona* with him, and with whom he then had a four-year relationship.

Ingmar Bergman made around 70 films for the cinema, and a large number of TV-films and radio dramas. He was also very active as a theatre director, in Helsingborg in the 40s, Malmö in the 50s and Stockholm in the 60s and later. For many years he used a kind of repertory company of actors, both in films and on the stage, including Bibi Andersson and Harriet Andersson, Gunnar Björnstrand, Erland Josephson, Max von Sydow and Liv Ullmann. Three of his films won Oscars for best foreign language film: *The Virgin Spring* (1961), *Through a Glass Darkly* (1962) and *Fanny and Alexander* (1984).

Ingmar Bergman is considered one of the most influential film-makers of all time, and he has been honoured in many ways. He has been on a postage stamp, and also features on a current Swedish banknote. His centenary is celebrated in film festivals, theatre productions and exhibitions all over the world. His estate on Fårö is now the *Bergman Center*, and this year their annual Bergman week — between 25 June and 1 July — will offer a full programme of films, plays, talks, discussions and much more to celebrate the anniversary.

Ingmar Bergman
Source: flickr: bitly/2r9ZqUR

The films on page 4:

Cries and Whispers
Smiles of a Summer Night
Fanny and Alexander
Wild Strawberries

Viking Hiking in Norway and Orkney

by Ragnhild Ljosland

A small group of Vikings is moving through the breath-taking scenery at the intersection of the Dovrefjell and Trollheimen mountain ranges, in the heart of Norway. Known in folklore as the home of trolls, and currently home to a herd of around 300 hairy and majestic musk oxen, this national park has a timeless feel — or, rather, it feels like a place where time never existed, and your presence there is simply about being. This is where the Vikings, dressed in wool and each carrying a reindeer skin, will cook and eat, sleep and travel without the aid of modern equipment, for the next three days. They are time travellers.

In Trøndelag, Norway, we find two time-travel enthusiasts: archaeologist Heidi Brimi and her colleague Ingrid Galadriel Aune Nilsen, whose background is in theatre studies. Together they are the manager and producer of Hands-on History, a four-strong company whose vision is to make cultural heritage tactile and accessible to people who don't engage with static museum displays. They do anything from blacksmithing courses and medieval cookery workshops to heritage festivals, but their most spectacular offering is the Go Viking Hiking trips through the wild mountains of Norway.

Viking hikers try their hand at tablet weaving — a technique used to make belts and decorative braids for Viking clothing. Photo: Mark Cook, by kind permission of Brodgar

‘People are mad keen to sign up!’, says Heidi. ‘In fact, it has been so popular that we can’t accept everyone. Signing up has become more of an application process, where we select those we think are most likely to have a positive experience. We have had participants from all over the world. When they arrive here, we provide them with a full set of Viking clothes and equipment. Not costumes, but proper clothes that are made of good quality wool. The whole idea is that during those four days, you should 'be' a Viking. Everything you eat, wear, how you sleep, what you do — even what you feel and dream. But at the same time, you are also yourself. We are not asking anyone to play a character.’

Modern clothes and equipment are strictly forbidden. The reindeer skin that each traveller carries acts both as wrapping for their sparse luggage and as a bed for the night. Before nightfall, the Hands-on History guides coach the group in setting up a primitive camp for the night. It can take half an hour or more to light a fire without the aid of matchsticks or firelighters. And two more hours before dinner is ready: a stew made of peas and dried meat, or fish they have caught on the way.

Meanwhile time travel adventures have also reached the old Viking colony of Orkney. I normally teach Viking Studies at Master’s level, but my passion for communication and dissemination of history took me to time travel. In my teens I became involved in live action role-playing, better known as *larp*, where you take on a character from a different time period and live as that person, along with perhaps fifty to a hundred others, for a few days. Heidi Brimi and I were both part of a group that produced *larp*, adventures which people could sign up to. It made me realise that you can’t really know much about what life was like in the past without doing it for real. Reading about, for example, Viking weaving techniques is one thing, but it is when you try it out for yourself that you fully understand it. We taught ourselves to make butter and cheese, and do one-needle knitting, *nålebinding*, as the Vikings did it.

When I married an Orkneyman and moved to the old Norwegian earldom west in the ocean, it was these skills, and my passion for storytelling and adventure, which became the basis of Brodgar, the business I share with my archaeologist husband, and its Orkney Time Travel tours, which are now in their first season. Somewhat toned down compared to its Norwegian counterpart, Orkney Viking Hiking lets time-travellers keep their own clothes on the journey, but nevertheless aims to be a Viking immersion experience. We tour leaders are in Viking outfits, though. And the tour is very much about plunging into the time when Orkney was an earldom under the Norwegian crown.

Just as the sea was the Viking highway, Orkney Viking time travellers also start their journey by boat to the majestic island of Hoy, where a seven-kilometre walk through a roadless valley awaits. As the valley opens up to the bay of Rackwick at the other side, the Viking

time travellers set up camp on the beach, surrounded by spectacular red sandstone cliffs.

Viking culture is all around us here. Rackwick valley was settled by Viking farmers more than a thousand years ago. Here they lived their lives and told their stories. It was here that the Everlasting Battle took place, according to legend, and it is in the waters between Hoy and the Scottish mainland that the giantesses Fenia and Menia sit at the bottom of the sea with their magical rotary quern, grinding out salt for the ocean.

These and other stories are told around the campfire, while the chicken and beer stew is simmering. Tablet weaving is also part of the programme, and so is rope making. Home made *leiv,* a bannock-like type of bread made from ancient bere barley, is also cooking over the fire. I like to see how many stories I can tell in the time it takes the participants to make a batch of homemade butter. And, of course, we challenge people to drink from the horn!

If you are curious to find out more about time travel adventures, go to www.handsonhistory.no/portfolio/go-viking/ (Norway) or www.brodgar.co.uk/vikinghiking (Orkney).

Dr Ragnhild Ljosland teaches Viking Studies at the University of the Highlands and Islands campus in Kirkwall.

'For a good year and peace!'

Ragnhild Ljosland invites Viking hikers to drink from the horn.

Brewing and offering drink to guests was an essential part of Viking culture in Orkney and the rest of the Viking world.

Photo: Mark Cook, by kind permission of Brodgar

From the bookshelf

Review by Eva Robards

Ebba Witt-Brattström, *Love/War*, translated by Kate Lambert
Published by Nordisk, Nov 2017
ISBN-978-0-99548-522-8

This is a book about a couple who are linked to each other only through their children. Both of them highly intellectual and part of the cultural elite in Stockholm (media sometimes called them the 'Royal Couple of Culture'), they for a long time gave the impression of living in a paradise of equality. But that was clearly not the case. After more than 30 years together they went through an acrimonious divorce and have each published a book. Difficulties with the other gender scream from the page. It is impossible not to draw parallels between fiction and authenticity but they individually deny such a connection and state, when asked about the connection, that 'fiction has the right to stand on its own merits, even if life experience can provide inspiration'.

Love/War is a novel with a paragraph format and took the author six years to write. A 'He' and a 'She' carry out a dialogue which sometimes is painful to read. It is a cruel marital break-down. Once there was great love, but if any of that now remains, it is well covered by quick-witted bitterness and brutality.

He said:
If you desert me
you will have only life-long hate
ahead of you.

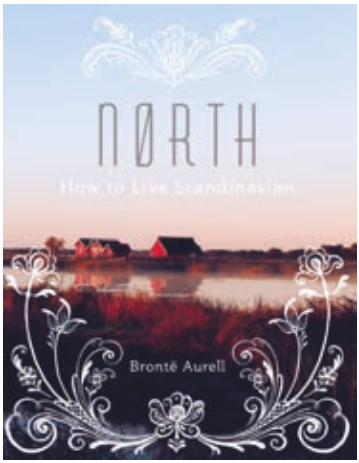
She said:
I think either
you or I
must die.

Witt-Brattström says that her novel 'will become a classic; it is unlike anything in contemporary literature right now'. It is peppered with cultural references. The flyleaf says 'homage to Märta Tikkanen & August Strindberg', authors who wrote about — lightly masked — furious marriage feuds. Tikkanen wrote about life with her alcoholic husband Henrik Tikkanen, also an author, and Strindberg described his marriage to the actress Siri von Essen in *The Defence of a Fool*.

Ebba Witt-Brattström was born in Stockholm to a German father and an Estonian mother who had sought refuge in Sweden. She has won numerous

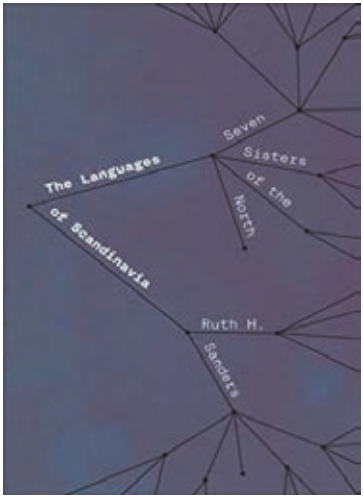
awards for journalism and criticism and is a well-known feminist having written several books on literature and women's liberation. She is currently Professor of Nordic Literature at Helsinki University. *Love/War* is her literary debut and so successful that it has gone on to become both a play and an opera in Sweden.

The ex-husband then? He is Horace Engdahl, a member of the Swedish Academy and as such scrutinised by the media, following this organisation's recent troubled time.



Bronte Aurell, *North, How to Live Scandinavian.* Published by Aurum Press, Sep 2017
ISBN-978-1-78131-652-8

Full of inspiration and ideas, how-tos and recipes to help you experience the very best of Scandinavian design, philosophy, cookery and culture.

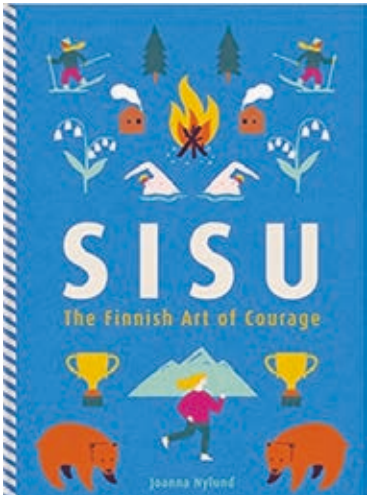


Ruth Sanders, *The Languages of Scandinavia: Seven Sisters of the North.* Published by University of Chicago Press, Dec 2017
ISBN-978-0-22649-392-3

Home to seven languages, Scandinavia has traditionally been understood as linguistically bifurcated between its five Germanic languages (Danish, Norwegian, Swedish, Icelandic and Faroese) and its two Finno-Ugric ones (Finnish and Sami). Ruth H. Sanders takes a pioneering approach as she considers these Seven Sisters of the North together. *The Languages of Scandinavia* offers profound insight into languages with a cultural impact that is deep-rooted and far-reaching, from the Icelandic sagas to Swedish writer Stieg Larsson's internationally popular *Millennium* trilogy. Sanders's book is both an accessible work of linguistic scholarship and a fascinating intellectual history of language.

Linda Åkeson McGurk, *There's No Such Thing as Bad Weather*; *A Scandinavian Mom's Secrets for Raising Healthy, Resilient, and Confident Kids (from Friluftsliv to Hygge)*. Published by Touchstone, Oct 2017
ISBN-13 978-1-50114-362-5

Struggling to fit in and to decide what was best for her children, McGurk turned to her own childhood for answers. Could the Scandinavian philosophy of 'there is no such thing as bad weather, only bad clothes' be the key to better lives for her children? And how would her children's relationships with nature change if they were introduced to Scandinavian concepts like *friluftsliv* ('open-air living') and *hygge* (the cosiness and the simple pleasures of home)? McGurk embarked on a six-month-long journey to Sweden to find out.

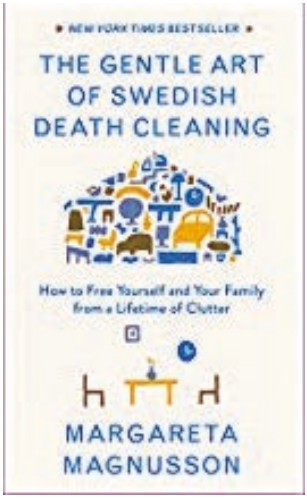


Joanna Nylund, *Sisu*. *The Finnish Art of Courage*. Published by Gaia (a division of Octopus Publishing Group Ltd), Feb 2018
ISBN-978-1-85675-380-7

The Finnish word *sisu* describes an attitude of courage, resilience, grit, tenacity and perseverance. This key psychological competence enables extraordinary action in times of adversity.

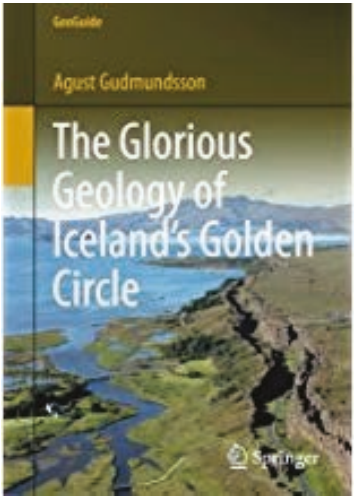
Sisu is a universal trait. It may have been bottled and labelled by the Finns, but it is within reach of everyone.

An article on sisu *by Helena Halme was published in CoScan Magazine 2016/2 (pp. 21-22).*



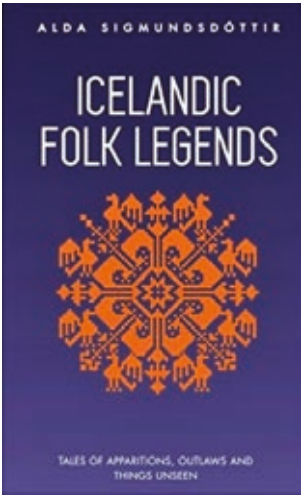
Margareta Magnusson, *The Gentle Art of Swedish Death Cleaning. How to Free Yourself and Your Family from a Lifetime of Clutter*. Published by Scribner Book Company, Jan 2018
ISBN-13 978-1-50117-324-0

In Sweden there is a kind of decluttering called *döstädning*. This surprising and invigorating process of clearing out unnecessary belongings can be undertaken at any age or life stage but should be done sooner rather than later, before others have to do it for you. In *The Gentle Art of Swedish Death Cleaning,* artist Margareta Magnusson, with Scandinavian humour and wisdom, instructs readers to embrace minimalism. Her radical and joyous method for putting things in order helps families broach sensitive conversations, and makes the process uplifting rather than overwhelming. Along the way readers get a glimpse of her life in Sweden, and also become more comfortable with the idea of letting go.



Agust Gudmundsson, *The Glorious Geology of Iceland's Golden Circle* (Paperback). Published by Springer, June 2017
ISBN-13 978-3-319-55151-7

The Golden Circle offers the opportunity to observe and understand many of our planet's forces in action. These forces move the Earth's tectonic plates, rupture the crust, and generate earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, channels for rivers and waterfalls, and heat sources for hot springs and geysers. The Golden Circle includes the famous rifting and earthquake fracture sites at Thingvellir, the hot springs of the Geysir area, the waterfall of Gullfoss, and the Kerid volcanic crater. As the book is primarily intended for people with no background in geosciences, no geological knowledge is assumed and technical terms are avoided as far as possible (those used are explained in a glossary). With its more than 240 illustrations explaining geological structures and processes, it is also a useful resource for geoscientists.



Alda Sigmundsdóttir, *Icelandic Folk Legends: Tales of Apparitions, Outlaws and Things Unseen* (Paperback). Published by Little Books Publishing, Nov 2017
ISBN-13 978-9-93593-702-5

In this collection of fifteen Icelandic folk legends, we get a glimpse of the world-view of the Icelanders in centuries past as they endeavoured to understand and cope with the natural phenomena around them. There are stories of malicious ghosts, outlaws living in carved-out boulders, hidden people residing in grassy knolls, trolls that are tripped up by their own stupidity, and much more.

CoScan Trust Fund

2018 report by Brita Green

The Trust Fund committee — Tony Bray, John Christmas and I — had our annual meeting in York on 4 April. The main items on the agenda were to consider this year's travel award applications and discuss last year's reports, and also to make recommendations to the Magazine editorial board for the 2017 report and photo prizes.

You can see some of the reports, including the prize-winning one, in this issue of the Magazine, along with several photos. As usual, further 2017 reports and pictures will follow in the winter issue.

We are very grateful to all our donors. We have again had contributions from the following societies this year: Hampshire and Newcastle Anglo-Scandinavian Societies, Scottish Norwegian Society (Glasgow), Scandinavian Klubb of Lincolnshire (SKOL) and York Anglo-Scandinavian Society (YASS). The share of the collection at the York Minster Lucia service is now a major part of YASS's contribution — and of our income. We have also had donations from the CoScan executive committee and from generous individuals, and must again make special mention of our regular monthly contributor, Mr Smith. If you think the travel award scheme is a good idea, I appeal to you to try to think of a way to help us, either through some activity in your society or as an individual — or both!

One of last year's award-winners had to postpone his trip to Norway until this coming summer, and we had a further six applications to consider, all high-quality: three to Sweden and one each to Denmark, Iceland and Norway. People are going to present papers at conferences, a violin-maker is attending a language course, and a Cambridge student is doing some geological mapping. We are also this year helping a church group of ten youngsters, which is twinned with a parish in Sweden, to have a week there in July when they will be looking forward to some new experiences like lake-swimming and 'indoor cross-country skiing'.

With comparatively few applications, we were able to be quite generous this year — we gave £175 each to the five individual applicants and £500 to the group. If all offers are taken up, it will leave us just over £1000, in line with our usual policy, as a start for next year's awards.

If you would like to make a donation, you can download a form from our website www.coscan.org.uk/travel-award. Alternatively, just drop Tony Bray a line (tony.bray@coscan.org.uk) and he will send you a form to fill in.
Or send a cheque made out to 'CoScan Trust Fund',
directly to the Trust Fund treasurer:
John Christmas, 7 Sutton Farm, Langton Road, Norton, YO17 9PU.
(Please do NOT send donations to the CoScan treasurer.)

CoScan Trust Fund
PRIZE-WINNING REPORT 2017

Measuring lichens in the Arctic

by Freya Sykes

'10 855, 10 856, 10 857?!' I was sprawled across my tent's groundsheet, tangled up in a mess of food, clothes and field equipment. I had just finished my final day of fieldwork up on the moraines of Kebnekaise, Sweden's highest mountain, and through pure whim decided to count the number of lichens I'd ended up measuring for my research.

Ten thousand, eight hundred and fifty seven. It was little wonder that their electric green forms were scoured across my vision every time I closed my eyes.

By this point I had spent most of August up in the northern mountains of Sweden, traipsing between the many moraines fronting the glaciers of the Kebnekaise massif. My aim was to collect data for my dissertation project, an assessment of the applicability of lichenometry to dating Little Ice Age and 20th-century glacial fluctuations. At its very simplest, the technique proposes that as lichens are one of the first colonisers on the bare rock exposed after glacial retreat, the age of the exposed rock can be dated by the diameter of the largest lichen growing on it. In fact, glacial fluctuations here had previously been dated in this manner in 1973 by the Swedish geomorphologist, Wibjörn Karlén. I wasn't intending to repeat his work however. Rather I wanted to test a more recent statistical development of lichenometry, called the size-frequency technique. This utilises the entire lichen population on a surface, as opposed to just the largest lichen. Of course, it also means that I had to measure a lot of lichens!

Every day I would wake to a 7 km commute up Tarfala Valley. I'd then spend the day in the shadow of Kebnekaise's great bulk, watched over by the crinkled shapes of Storglaciären and Isfallsglaciären. On the rare days of sunshine, the two glaciers would reflect the light so strongly that it physically hurt to look at them. When the weather turned, they would retreat into the clouds, and I'd be totally isolated within a grey and featureless landscape. It seemed to be that I experienced the absolute best and the absolute worst of what the valley had to offer. One day all I could see was the ground beneath me, the next day everything was dusted with fresh snow, and the day after that I was chasing rainbows across the moraines.

Undertaking fieldwork in this landscape was an absolute privilege. Years and years of reading textbooks and papers and lecture notes all came to mean something when I could finally put them into practice in my own research. I'm not saying it was all blue, sunny skies — in fact, in literal terms, it mostly wasn't.

Spending that much time alone in a remote mountain environment was always going to have its tougher moments. While I was prepared for the isolation, there were many occasions when I was also very glad to be working near a popular hiking trail. During my more conversation-starved periods, I developed an alarming tendency to jump on unsuspecting hikers, just to break up the monotony of the day. This did lead to one amusing moment when a group of lovely Swedes to whom I'd briefly introduced myself in Swedish overheard me talking to another woman in English. After I'd finished they came over to compliment me on my 'amazing' English accent, wondering how it could sound so genuine. Didn't really know how to answer that one… Just a natural, I guess?

After weeks spent with just a ruler and prolific spreads of lichens for company, the final act of my fieldwork was to take the beautiful trek up to Abisko, in order to leave the mountains. Not that the weather was going to let me go that easily. In one final act of farewell, the day went black and the heavens opened their gates. The landscape was flooded out, and I seemed to spend more time wading than walking. But with sodden feet, I finally stumbled upon civilisation again. Yet although the sight of a supermarket set my heart singing (a diet of porridge and coffee having worn just a little thin by that point), I'd rather acclimatised to tent life and was really quite sad to see the end of my fieldwork. Not that work has ended really — now that I'm back in the (relative) warmth and comfort of my Edinburgh flat, I have ten thousand, eight hundred and fifty seven lichens to deal with!

Measuring lichens in Kebnekaise's shadow

Emergency Medicine in the Northernmost Capital of the World

by Klara Weaver

One cloudy Icelandic Thursday in April 2017, I found myself back at Keflavík Airport. It had been four years since I first landed in Iceland, and back then I knew immediately that the five days I had there were nowhere near enough. This was the start of two and a half months of medicine, hiking, culture — and some really exceptional schnapps.

I was in my last year of medical school when I arrived, fresh from my final exams and full of rapidly fading knowledge. Having organised my accommodation via a Facebook group recommended by a fellow traveller, and with most of my correspondence with the hospitals oozing the typical Icelandic 'we will sort it when you get here' attitude, I did not know what to expect. What I got during my time in Iceland was an unforgettable experience: lots of new friends and a greater appreciation for remote retrieval medicine in a resource-scarce environment.

I spent most of my time in the Reykjavík Emergency Department, with shifts in the Fire/Ambulance joint services and with Icelandic Search and Rescue. The initial purpose of my time in Iceland was to experience healthcare and prehospital care outside the UK. Instead I just found myself falling in love with the people and alien, almost lunar, landscapes.

During my two months in the Reykjavík Emergency Department, I encountered familiar conditions such as heart attacks, sepsis and asthma that one would find anywhere else in the world. However, I also saw pathologies unique to the harsh environment such as extreme hypothermia and more horse-related injuries than I can count. I knew the Icelandic horse was known for its hardy and feisty temperament, but I didn't expect quite so many equestrian accidents! There was also a striking contrast between the Emergency Department in Akureyri in northern Iceland and the one in Reykjavík. Akureyri was not manned by specialists, in fact they were struggling to recruit doctors above a junior training level. Additionally, transfer time by plane, and the probability of surviving transfer made a huge impact on clinical decision making. It was an astonishing example of remote medicine at its most extreme, as Akureyri is the only intensive care unit outside of Reykjavík for the whole of Iceland.

My time with the Icelandic ambulances was extremely formative for me. Prehospital medicine in Reykjavík was such a unique opportunity because it is relatively nuanced as a paramedic-led service. The first paramedic to train in Iceland was in 1993, and the system

veered away from physician-led care in 2008, giving paramedics and EMTs more autonomy. They have novel approaches to pain relief and vascular access, having a much lower threshold to give more 'exotic' pain relief and performing arguably more invasive access techniques. I learnt a lot of good clinical skills from the teams, as well as how to take a basic emergency history in Icelandic. And most importantly of all, I can finally pronounce the name of the volcano that covered Europe in ash!

The highlight of my trip was flying with Icelandic Search and Rescue (ICE-SAR) in their two helicopters offshore and inland. Aside from being a fantastic way to see the inaccessible highlands, it was also a valuable training exercise. Practising in the helicopter environment and going through the flight medical bags with the doctors opened my eyes to what was possible on scene, and in the air. This was also a pivotal moment for my career direction as it solidified my ambition to fly with the Helicopter Emergency Medical Services in the UK. I had never been in a helicopter before!

No description of the aurora borealis or mountainous highlands could do it justice; my pictures barely do. The land itself is best represented in the character of the people that live there. The doctors, nurses, pilots that I met were stubborn, kind and constant. They faced a changeable, violent and wild country with an attitude of perseverance. Even foreigners who had lived and worked in Iceland for years knew they could never tap into that calm aura that surrounds a native. During my time, I was privileged to be privy to normal life outside the bounds of tourism, from five-hour hitchhikes to being welcomed into the homes of people who had previously only existed virtually on Facebook. I felt the warmth and hospitality of this private little nation and I cannot wait to return.

Reykjavík ambulance Source: bit.ly/2w6q85C

Internship with the World Health Organisation
in Copenhagen, June-July 2017

by Jonny Mayes

Background

In 2015 the United Nations (UN) adopted 17 Sustainable Development Goals aiming to achieve these ambitious goals by 2030. Goal number 3, Good Health and Wellbeing, includes a commitment towards universal health coverage for all. In order to achieve this goal countries need to address global shortages of nurses, doctors and other healthcare staff, which by 2035 is expected to reach 12.9 million.

In September 2017 a framework for action will be presented at the 67th Session WHO Regional Committee for Europe. This framework will outline steps towards a sustainable health workforce and will include an illustrative toolkit of examples of good practice, along with policy and planning tools. The target audience for this document is primarily politicians and policy makers. However, the document is also aimed at healthcare professionals, healthcare employers, regulatory bodies and the wider community.

My role is to help produce the toolkit that will go with the framework for the international meeting. I have been contributing case studies of success stories. These have ranged from how Malta has dealt with severe emigration of doctors to the UK, to how Russia and Norway have collaborated to deliver healthcare services to rural populations.

World Health Organisation

My placement began in June and I hope to provide impetus to the team before submission in August. The first thing I noticed on my placement was the incredible architecture of the building where I was working. UN City is located in east Copenhagen, not far from the famous Little Mermaid statuette. The building has won awards for its environmental and sustainable design. It repurposes rainwater and water from the harbour to generate power, this combined with solar panels and other energy-saving technologies means that the entire building runs on less than 50 kWh/m²/year. The magnificence of the building is matched only by its occupants. The campus hosts nine UN agencies with 1,200 employees from 104 countries.

Diversity is one of the key strengths of the WHO: different experiences and opinions enhance the WHO's work and make it globally applicable and implementable. It is able to produce policy free from political bias. That so many people are united under such important core values makes the WHO's work incredibly powerful and vital. Further, it makes working for the WHO extremely enjoyable.

However, sometimes its strengths are weaknesses. There are 53 Member States in WHO Europe and all have differing interests and desires for the WHO. It is difficult to implement clear policy without

The staircase at UN City Copenhagen Photo: Jonny Mayes

offending governments involved. The result is statements which can be rather nebulous and lack clear instruction when it is often needed.

Reflection

I undertook this placement to gain insight into public health as a future career option and to understand more about creating health policy. My work involved editing a Policy Brief, proof-reading an editorial piece for *Panorama* (the journal of the WHO Regional Office for Europe), and a main project — developing the toolkit.

As regards an academic career, my work at the WHO involved careful thought, planning and teamwork, which I enjoyed. It has reaffirmed my desire

to combine clinical and academic work. I fulfilled my aim of finding out more about public health policy and gained further understanding of the WHO's work. I greatly enjoyed the events and seminars which are a frequent occurrence at the WHO. These covered topics such as sharing healthcare data and gender inequality in health. I was fortunate to undertake my internship with a brilliant team with innovative ideas and an excellent work ethic. The team was extremely supportive when I was unsure of my work, and feedback was always constructive.

My internship highlighted how enjoyable it is working with employees from a diverse mix of financial, political and cultural backgrounds. This project has emphasised my need for clear structure and planning, something I will take forward into my future career. The contacts I have made and benefits of the placement for my professional development are vast. It has been an extremely valuable experience that has greatly enhanced my career prospects. The WHO is an internationally respected organisation, and it was a privilege to be selected and to complete a project with the organisation.

Aside from work I have relished the opportunity to be in Copenhagen and enjoyed the Scandinavian way of life. The rich, inclusive society is a demonstration of the benefits of equality and how well society can work. As with any community there are problems, but the amount of openness and reflection makes these surmountable.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank the Confederation of Scandinavian Societies and Newcastle University Career Insights team for supporting my application. Additionally I would like to thank the WHO and my brilliant team: Nuala Burke, Cris Scutter, James Buchan, Galina Perfilieva, Elena Galmond and Sharon Miller.

In Olfert Fischers Gade, Copenhagen

Viking Congress in Denmark

by Jamie Barnes

From 5th to 12th August 2017, I attended the Eighteenth Viking Congress in Denmark to present my on-going PhD research, for which I was awarded a grant of £100 from the Confederation of Scandinavian Societies.

The Congress proved to be an excellent opportunity, not least due to the volume of constructive feedback I received on my PhD research, but also through the connections I was able to make with like-minded scholars of the Viking Age from around the world. I was able to converse with fellow PhD students on the state of current research as well as consult with senior academics on the details of my research, which I am sure will prove fruitful in refining my thesis.

The Congress began in Copenhagen and was opened by Queen Margrethe II of Denmark at the National Museum. There were two full days of paper presentations and tours of the museum, with an excursion to a recently discovered Viking ring fortress, Borgring, on the evening of the second day. This tour was led by Professor Søren Sindbæk and some recent unpublished discoveries were revealed. Discovered in 2014, this is the most recent Viking ring fortress to be excavated in Denmark, thought to be related to the campaign of Harald Bluetooth, and is one of only a handful to be discovered to date.

On day three, we travelled cross country via Roskilde Viking Ship Museum, Trelleborg Viking Ring Fortress, and the Jelling complex, before arriving at our second destination, Ribe. The Roskilde Viking ship museum was a personal highlight for me. It contains the remains of five Skuldelev type ships from Roskilde, and it also houses a working boatyard and a seagoing reconstruction, most notably that of Skuldelev 2: The Sea Stallion of Glendalough. We got to board this vessel to receive a lecture on its recent journey between Roskilde and Ireland.

Skuldelev 3, Roskilde Viking ship museum

Aboard the Sea Stallion, the replica of Skuldelev 2, Roskilde Viking Ship Museum

Next stop was another Viking ring fortress at Trelleborg, which is perhaps the most famous in the series of ring fortresses. The ring fortress is massive and the site also contains a Viking Age village reconstruction and a long house reconstruction.

The Trelleborg long house reconstruction

The last stop of day three was at the Jelling complex, most famous for the Jelling Stone. The stone is notable as it represents the unification of the Danes under Harald Bluetooth and signifies their conversion to Christianity. [An article about the Jelling stone was published in CoScan Magazine 2014/2.]

Day four involved more paper presentation and was followed by the poster presentation session, where I presented my PhD research and, thankfully, received the feedback and support I had hoped for. In the evening, I visited the new Ribe town excavations, where they are currently excavating an entire Viking Age house plot. For me, this was a unique opportunity to see the early stages of a Viking Age site under excavation.

Day five involved morning paper sessions and a half-day trip to Hedeby to see the reconstructed village and on-going new excavations where again unpublished discoveries were revealed.

The final day involved more paper presentations and was followed by a trip to the Ribe *VikingeCenter* for a tour of the reconstructed village and the closing of the conference. We got to experience life in a modern living Viking Age town. The experiences here were incredible, and it was also pleasing to see the commitment of so many dedicated staff and volunteers.

This experience has proved to be one of the highlights of my archaeological career. I have made many fruitful contacts and friendships, and received unparallelled feedback on my research. I am very grateful to CoScan for the financial assistance in support of my attendance at the Congress.

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