CoScan Magazine

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CoScan
Confederation of Scandinavian Societies

Contents

Front cover:
Christmas season in Stockholm archipelago, Sweden. Photo: Eva Robards

Message from the President

Mark Elliott

My last message, earlier this year, spoke of the absence of change. Much has changed on the political scene since, and by the time many of you read this issue the shape of our future government may be a bit clearer. Most of us now want nothing more than a decision, any decision, which will enable Government and Parliament to get back to the business of running the country. We desperately need to escape from the divisions and hatred which have poisoned society. Whatever arrangements are agreed at this stage with Brussels, there is still a long process of detailed talk to be gone through before the nature of the future UK/Europe relationship is fully determined.

In our domestic CoScan concerns there has been no such clear development, and we do not as yet have a Chairman. But your committee has not been idle. As in 2018, committee members and representatives of current member societies met a number of potential new members at a highly successful social occasion in London in October. The CoScan International Award for 2019 has been presented, and arrangements for the 2020 presentation are in train. Gothenburg 2020 is our target for the next biennial 'Conference', and plans for that too are advancing steadily. The finances and membership are holding up well. The magazine, as I am sure this issue will demonstrate, is flourishing; so is the website, and the travel fund. For each of these activities, a different committee member is responsible; and we have a new Secretary to keep us on our toes. We are clearly managing. But we do need a Chairman to inspire us with an overall vision.

For the moment, therefore, you probably need continuity in the position of President. I'll soldier on as long as I can. The choice of my successor isn't likely to be a matter of democratic decision like the appointment of a new Chairman, but I'm sure that the committee, like me, would welcome any personal suggestions from any source within CoScan or its wider readership about a suitable individual.

In a nutshell, my general optimism continues. In all the countries we come from, there is a tradition of managing—if there is a disaster, tie a knot and carry on. I don't foresee any disasters—on the contrary. But between us we shall find a way through, whatever.

CoScan International Award 2019

by Mark Elliott

This year's International Award was presented on 27 November at the residence of the Swedish Ambassador in London, Torbjörn Sohlström. The recipient was Dr Lisbet Rausing, and among those present, as well as a number of her friends and relations, were representatives of a number of Swedish and other Scandinavian organisations in the UK, including members of CoScan.

Lisbet Rausing, who is Swedish, is co-founder of Arcadia, one of the UK's largest philanthropic foundations supporting charities and institutions that preserve cultural heritage and the environment.

Her grandfather was founder of the Swedish packaging company Tetra Pak, and her academic connections include education at Berkeley and Harvard in the US, and doctorates and fellowships from a number of universities and other institutions in Sweden and the UK. Her publications include a biography of Carl Linnaeus published in 1999. The next issue of the CoScan Magazine, in spring 2020, will include a further article about the November presentation and about Dr Rausing.

CoScan enjoyed the hospitality of the Swedish Ambassador for an earlier presentation of the International Award, to the 2003 recipient, Dr Hans Blix, former head of the International Atomic Energy Authority. Dr Rausing is the first Swedish recipient for a few years, the two most recent presentations being that to Sakari Oramo of Finland at the Barbican in 2018, and that to Sandi Toksvig, born in Denmark, at the Royal Festival Hall in 2017.

Lisbet Rausing explains what inspired her to initiate the Endangered Landscapes Programme
www.youtube.com/watch?v=u-md2D23DnEmd2D23DnE

CoScan's drinks reception

by Eva Robards

As in autumn 2018, a reception at the splendid Savile Club in London was held (on 15 October) with the purpose of giving Scandinavian/Nordic organisations the opportunity to meet with similar groups and to exchange experiences. In addition to networking over drinks and canapés, a representative from each organisation in the room was allocated 2-3 minutes to address the audience. Both receptions were organised and presented by Alexander Malmaeus (CoScan, and chairman of The Anglo-Swedish Society).

Last year nearly all societies expressed similar concerns: decreasing membership, ageing membership, finding active members who were willing to take on responsibilities. That these worries would have gone away is unlikely, but this year a more positive feel was evident. A constructive suggestion was presented by Dr Marie Wells, chairman of The Anglo-Norse Society, London: that London-based CoScan members should try to find a permanent base that they could use for their regular meetings. A special welcome was given to Katarina Bäckelin, six days before her installation as Rector of the Swedish congregation in London.

CoScan members based far outside the London area cannot be expected to travel to an event that lasts for only two hours. This is understood by the Executive Committee but for practical reasons London, with the highest number of Scandinavia-related organisations, has been the initial choice for these gatherings. It is indeed important that they have taken place, since meeting up face to face makes any kind of future work so much easier.

Photo: Chris Howell, CoScan

Changes to the Editorial Board

CoScan welcomes a new member to the Board. Dr Katherine Holman is a historian interested in interdisciplinary approaches to early medieval Britain and Scandinavia, especially runic inscriptions, the impact of Scandinavian settlement on the British Isles, and links between Britain and Scandinavia in the medieval period. She gained her PhD from the University of Nottingham in 1996, and has also spent time undertaking research at universities in Göteborg and Uppsala in Sweden, and Trondheim in Norway.

Previously Lecturer in Scandinavian Studies at the University of Hull, she has worked as an Associate Lecturer for The Open University since 2004, where she is also Honorary Associate in History. She also has a degree in archaeology and enjoys volunteering on archaeological digs whenever possible! Publications include *The Northern Conquest* and *Historical Dictionary of the Vikings.*

Katherine beside a runestone in Lund, Sweden Photo: Mindy MacLeod

From our Treasurer:

2020 CoScan memberships

Just a little reminder to all members, individual as well as societies, that CoScan's membership fees for 2020 are due early in the new year. We are pleased to inform you that we are still able to keep the price at £10 for single members, £15 for a couple and £25 for society memberships.

We would also like to remind anybody who is a member through a society that it is possible for you to receive your own, personal copy of the CoScan Magazine if you join as an individual member.

Current members will receive a reminder early in the new year together with a membership form, and it would be much appreciated if membership fees could be paid by the end of January.

ONFA recognised for voluntary service

The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service was bestowed on ONFA (Orkney Norway Friendship Association), on behalf of the Queen, by Lord Lieutenant Bill Spence and received on behalf of ONFA by Chairman Ishbel Borland.

ONFA recently reached its 40th Anniversary and continues its work of providing hospitality and friendship to visiting Norwegians, encouraging learning about Norway and the way of life there, and helping individuals or groups who want to travel to Norway.

The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service

The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service is the highest award given to local volunteer groups across the UK in recognition of outstanding work done in their own communities. The award was created in 2002 to celebrate the anniversary of The Queen's coronation and is the MBE for volunteer groups.

Chairman Ishbel Borland with the award presented by Lord Lieutenant Bill Spence. ONFA members John Mowat and Violet Flett (left) and Bill and Jean Crichton (right)

Anglo-Swedish Society 100 years

by Alexander Malmaeus

Several European Societies were established by the end of the First World War to promote greater understanding and friendship between nations. The Anglo-Swedish Society (A-SS) was conceived in the autumn of 1918 and born in February 1919.

The Times, 18 February 1919:

'The Crown Prince and Crown Princess of Sweden were present yesterday and received guests at a reception of the newly-formed Anglo-Swedish Society, which was held in the Georgian Room of the Piccadilly Hotel. They were received by Lord Crewe (president) and Mr and Mrs Eberstein, Dr and Mrs Classen, and the Rev. A.C.T. Hellenstrom, officers of the society. Sir Henry Penson (chairman), in a short speech of welcome, explained that the society had been formed to promote intellectual intercourse between the peoples of the British Empire and Sweden, assistance in arranging for an interchange of educational facilities and the encouragement of reciprocal travel. The membership already numbers over 200.'

The Chairman addressing his guests
Photo: Nillie Teymouri

A hundred years later the society is still going strong. A number of events are organised every year to promote Swedish culture and arts, bringing members and their guests together in a pleasant context. The culmination of the centenary year was reported on *The Daily Telegraph*'s Court and Social page on 11 November 2019: 'The Ambassador of Sweden and Mrs Sohlström were present at a centenary ball held by the Anglo-Swedish Society at the Cavalry and Guards Club. Mr Alexander Malmaeus, Chairman of the Society, and Mrs Malmaeus were the hosts and the Very Rev Katarina Bäckelin, Rector of the Swedish Church, and Mrs Anders Rydell, the Chairman of the Swedish BV Society, were among others present. Miss Ami-Louise Johnsson, a Society Scholar from the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, performed during the evening.'

After the establishment of A-SS in London, sister organisations were set up in Sweden: the British-Swedish Society in Stockholm in 1919, and the Anglo-Swedish Society in Gothenburg in 1920 (both still active today). The three

worked closely together with setting up lending libraries and summer holiday courses in Sweden. The courses received support from members of the Swedish Royal Family and business enterprises in Sweden, who placed their houses and hospitality at the disposal of the Society. By the 1930s, a thriving exchange programme between British and Swedish school children had been established.

Some dates from the Society's history:

• In 1922, the Swedish Travel Association was amalgamated with the Anglo-Swedish Society with the aim of providing 'opportunities for Swedish journalists to visit the United Kingdom'.

• In 1924, an exhibition of Swedish art principally of the 1880s and 90s was exhibited at Burlington House. The exhibition was a collaboration of the Royal Academy of Art and A-SS. Artists included Prince Eugen, Anders Zorn, Bruno Liljefors and Carl Larsson.

• In 1933 Prince Albert (later George VI) was present at an A-SS reception in honour of the Nobel Prize winners of Great Britain and Ireland. Among the many famous names were Rudyard Kipling, George Bernard Shaw and W.B. Yeats. The Italian Marchese Marconi was also present.

• In March 1953, the Society held a reception in honour of Dag Hammarskiöld, Secretary-General of the United Nations.

• In 1954 and 2004, the Society held balls at the Dorchester Hotel to celebrate the Treaty of Friendship between England and Sweden.

The annual dinners of the Society were generally held in the late autumn, and it was common for members of the British and Swedish Royal Families to be present. Crown Prince Gustaf Adolf (later King Gustaf VI Adolf) and Crown Princess Louise (formerly Lady Louise Mountbatten, Earl Mountbatten's sister) attended frequently. Prince Philip (who was Queen Louise's nephew) has as Patron been a keen supporter of the Society for 65 years.

Charitable activities include research funding and scholarships. To help research, A-SS acts as a fund-raising partner for Uppsala University and the Oncolytic Virus Fund. The scholarships and awards are to enable young people from both countries to study or take part in cultural exchange programmes in the United Kingdom and Sweden. In addition to the major scholarships, smaller sums for one-off events can also be made available. The necessary funds for the charitable activities are raised from individual and corporate donations.

Among the disciplines that A-SS funds are

• music: enabling Swedish postgraduate students to attend the Guildhall School of Music and Drama,

• visual arts: a glass and ceramics exchange programme between the Royal College of Art and Konstfack (University College of Arts, Crafts and Design in Stockholm),

• culinary art: enabling a student from the Restaurant School at Nyköping to spend time at Michelin-starred restaurants in the United Kingdom.

The Anglo-Swedish Society is a registered charity in the United Kingdom. Patrons are King Carl Gustaf, the Duke of Edinburgh and the Swedish Ambassador.

The Norwegian Church in Cardiff 150 this year

by Alan Hall, Welsh Norwegian Society

In the heart of the recent development of Cardiff Bay stands the little white Norwegian Church, a very well-known and well-loved architectural landmark. It was originally built on another site and, having ceased to function as the Norwegian Seamen's Church, was saved by the Norwegian Church Preservation Trust and is now a cultural centre.

The South Wales coalfield underwent extensive development in the 19th century, leading to the building of large docks in the Bristol Channel ports, including Cardiff. Large numbers of Norwegian ships came to Cardiff, taking coal to Norway and bringing wooden items such as pit props to Wales. The Norwegian Seamen's Mission decided that, following the example of Leith in Scotland, a mission should be started and a church built in Cardiff. The first pastor arrived in 1866; the church was built in 1869. Very many Norwegian sailors visited the church until after the Second World War, by which time the Bristol Channel trade in coal and pit props had irreversibly declined. The Seamen's Mission withdrew all financial and pastoral support in 1959. The church continued to function, supported by other Lutherans in Cardiff, until 1974, when financial constraints forced its closure. A service held in 1970 celebrated the building's centenary, but the church became derelict and dilapidated.

A Trust was formed in order to save the building, raising money from Wales and Norway to rescue and reconstruct the building within the Cardiff Bay Development. Its first President was Roald Dahl, who had been baptised in the church. In 1991 reconstruction started and the Church was reopened in 1992 by Princess Märtha-Louise of Norway.

In 2005 the City Council took over the Trust, and for a time this proved a satisfactory arrangement. Recently, following the financial difficulties faced by local government throughout the UK, the Council seems to be moving to a commercial use for the Church. The Welsh Norwegian Society will organise and take a full part in the 150th anniversary celebrations on 15th and 16th December, but is worried about a very uncertain future for this lovely building. Other seamen's churches have passed into private hands and been irreversibly altered. We need to save the Cardiff church from this!

The Hanseatic League and its legacy

by Katherine Holman

With relations between Britain and its European trading partners currently under the spotlight, it is perhaps not surprising that countries and individuals have looked to the past for ideas about a new way forward. History certainly reminds us that our present-day links have much deeper roots that reflect a range of shared interests. European co-operation and collaboration is something that goes back far beyond the 20th century, with extensive cultural and trading networks linking Scandinavia, Britain and northern Europe, even before the start of the Viking Age c.800. The recent establishment of a so-called New Hanseatic League within the EU has particularly highlighted the legacy of the original League, which dominated the trade of northern Europe from the thirteenth to the sixteenth century.

Hanse is a German word for guild or association, and it came to be used specifically for this important association of merchants that monopolised much of the trade in valuable commodities from northern Europe, such as furs, fish, oil, timber, salt, wax, iron and copper ore. Centred on the north German towns of Lübeck and Hamburg, at its peak in the mid-fourteenth century, the original Hanseatic League linked together perhaps

Extent of the Hanseatic League's influence around the year 1400
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hanseatic_League

as many as 200 ports and towns across the Baltic and North Seas, including Visby, Stockholm, Kalmar, Riga, Tallinn (Reval), Gdánsk (Danzig), Ålborg, Oslo, Tønsberg, and Hull. Particularly important were the four *Kontore* or 'factories' in London, Bruges, Bergen, and Novgorod, which were administered according to Hanseatic law and formed independent communities of German merchants, operating outside the law of the land in which they lived.

Designed primarily to preserve and protect the trading interests of its members, the economic power of the League was nevertheless matched by its considerable political power. The Hanseatic League had its own army and navy to ensure that its ships and its merchants were able to operate without risk of piracy and hindrance, and on occasions it also pursued a more aggressive policy in defence of its interests. Famously, following the Danish king Valdemar IV Atterdag's capture of Skåne and Visby, which challenged the Hansa control of Baltic trade, the League used military force to secure Valdemar's submission. He was forced to reinstate and guarantee its commercial rights with the Peace of Stralsund in 1370, and significantly this agreement even gave the League the right to determine the Danish succession for fifteen years! A hundred years later, the League also successfully went to war against England to challenge growing competition from English merchants, and they had their privileges in London restored with the Treaty of Utrecht, 1474, as well as access guaranteed to Boston, Hull and King's Lynn.

Seal of the city of Elbing (now Elbląg, Poland), showing the distinctive Hanseatic trading ship, known as a cog, from 1350

Naturally, the close economic and political contacts that resulted from the League have left their mark on the language, culture and architecture of the places where they lived and worked. Large numbers of Middle Low German words were loaned into the Scandinavian languages, partly reflecting the economic and political importance of the Hansa merchants. In Bergen, the carefully rebuilt colourful Hanseatic offices that line the wharf at *Bryggen* preserve the townscape established by German merchants in the 14th to mid-16th centuries. The local parish church, *Mariakirken,* was taken over by the merchants in 1408 and became known as the German church; services are still said to have been held in German as late as the early twentieth century. The Hanseatic town of Visby on the Swedish island of Gotland is still surrounded by its well-preserved thirteenth- and fourteenth-century walls that sealed off the trading town from the surrounding countryside,

so that the German merchants were able to protect their monopoly of trade with Russia in the east and charge locals for the privilege of trading at the harbour. In London, nothing today remains of the Hanseatic 'Steelyard', an independent enclave of warehouses and dwellings, with its own chapel and guildhall, which is commemorated in a plaque at Cannon Street railway station: the remains of the Steelyard were destroyed when the station was built in 1865. However, elsewhere in England, there are still some traces of the Hansa, such as the fifteenth-century warehouse at King's Lynn that was built following the establishment of a depot there as a result of the agreement made at Utrecht.

The Hanseatic Warehouse, King's Lynn, Norfolk. Dating from about 1475, this is the only surviving League building in England.

From the fifteenth century onwards, however, the dominance of the Hanseatic League gradually diminished as a result of changing political and economic conditions. Overexploitation of some resources and a shift in consumer demand impacted on the important trade in Russian squirrel furs that were the key commodity exported from Novgorod via Visby. The valuable herring fisheries of the Öresund declined dramatically in the early fifteenth century. Local rulers also increasingly reasserted their own rights over their territories and sought to protect their own merchants: Ivan III captured Novgorod and expelled its Hanseatic merchants, with the *Kontor* formally ceasing to exist in 1494, while Elizabeth I closed down the Steelyard in London in 1598. The growth of Swedish royal power in the Baltic also impacted on the hegemony of the League. At the same time English and Dutch traders effectively challenged the Hanseatic monopoly, establishing new trading routes and new centres such as Antwerp and Amsterdam that came to eclipse the Hanseatic towns.

The last meeting of the Hanseatic Assembly (*Hansetag*) took place in 1669, although some Hanseatic merchants still continued to operate: they dominated trade in Bergen until the closure of its *Kontor* in 1754. More recently, the legacy of the League has been revived by *Die Hanse*, a voluntary association of towns that was established in 1980 to promote 'economic, cultural, social and civic unity in Europe'. It now boasts membership of 195 cities across sixteen countries, significantly both inside and

outside the EU. These include east-coast towns in Britain, such as Aberdeen, Edinburgh, Hull, Boston and Kings Lynn, and the Scandinavian towns of Bergen, Visby and Kalmar; and its members can even be found as far north and west as Hafnarfjörður in Iceland. Although the future direction of European politics may still be unclear at this moment in time, as this association demonstrates, our cultural and historical links remain both relevant and important.

Det Hanseatiske Museum og Schøtstuene (2019) '*Hvem var hanseatene*?' https://hanseatiskemuseum.museumvest.no/norsk/hvem-var-hanseatene

DIE HANSE (2019) '*Die Hanse* today' www.hanse.org/en/hanse-today/active-network

Morris, Chris (2019) 'Hanseatic League. The first European Union?,' www.bbc.co.uk/news/extra/A2MFANtn3Z/hanseatic_league

Morris, Chris (2019) 'The Hansa inheritance' www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m0006l6d

UNESCO World Heritage Centre (1992-2019a) *Bryggen*, https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/59

UNESCO World Heritage Centre (1992-2019b) 'Hanseatic town of Visby' https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/731

English military graves in Scandinavia 3:
The Crimean War and cholera in the Baltic

by Tony and Eva Robards

If I should die, think only this of me:
That there's some corner of a foreign field
That is for ever England …

When Rupert Brooke wrote his famous poem in 1914 he had soldiers in mind, but we doubt that he would have objected to his poignant words also being dedicated to sailors of the British Royal Navy buried far from home in remote and lonely graves.

The Royal Navy had already long been active in the Baltic when a fleet under the command of Admiral James Saumarez on his flagship Victory (yes, that Victory) used the tiny island of Hanö (south-east Sweden) as a base during the Napoleonic wars 1810-1812.

Forty years later, the British and French navies were fighting with, rather than against, each other. The main features of the Crimean War (1853-56) are familiar to most of us, but the very appellation 'Crimean' has meant that contemporary naval operations in the Baltic have been relatively overshadowed, and yet they were of great military importance. A large Anglo-French fleet was rapidly assembled under the command of Sir Charles Napier and Alexandre Ferdinand Parseval-Deschenes with instructions to attack the Russian seaport of Kronstadt (outside St Petersburg in the Gulf of Finland) and the Russian fleet stationed there. Attacks were launched in April and August 1854 which, while not destroying the Russian fleet, did have the effect of keeping it in harbour so it was unable to emerge towards the North Sea and Britain. Maritime trade with Russia was also greatly damaged by the blockade. Part of the Russian resistance was credited to the

deployment of newly invented blockade mines. Perhaps the most influential contributor to the development of naval mining was a Swede resident in Russia, the inventor and civil engineer Immanuel Nobel (the father of Alfred Nobel), who helped the Russian war effort by applying his knowledge of industrial explosives, such as nitroglycerin (invented in 1847) and gunpowder.

The tiny island of Fårö lies off the north-eastern tip of Gotland in the middle of the Baltic Sea with the channel between Fårö and 'mainland' Gotland providing a well-sheltered anchorage for ships at the village of Fårösund as well as a setting-off point towards the Gulf of Bothnia, the Gulf of Finland … and Russia (see map on page 9).

It was during the early part of the Baltic campaign of the Crimean War that Asiatic cholera struck. In late August 1854, the English screw frigate HMS Termagant had returned to Fårösund from the island of Åland. On the journey they had captured a Russian ship with cholera on board. Five crew members had already died and been buried at sea. The illness spread from ship to ship and also reached land where around 20 locals fell victim to the epidemic.

The local authorities on Fårö made land available for two cottage hospitals, a kitchen and a landing place at Ryssnäs (none of which now remains), while the British hospital ship HMS Belleisle served as a disease ship on the coast.

At Fårö the cholera epidemic had already come to an end before winter set in for 1854-55, and it did not return. A plot of land was bought by the English, and about 20 of their dead countrymen were laid to rest there. A granite marker with the names of those buried was shipped out from England but was lost overboard during unloading. It was replaced by a wooden board that had become illegible by the 1930's.

Most of this story was unknown to us when we made an expedition to Fårö one summer. Making our way north-east towards Fårösund we stopped in the little village of Bunge, just a couple of miles from the ferry. Here, visiting the open-air museum we encountered a woman proud of her locality and heritage and keen to tell us 'We have an Englishman buried in the churchyard'. She showed us the stone, which covers the grave, and said that the naval officer, John Thomas, had died from cholera in 1854.

The memorial stone had been provided by the English Admiralty. Its text is no longer readable as the limestone has eroded and a considerable amount of lichen covers its surface. Still, the stone is thought to be of cultural value, not least as it is a reminder of important historical events. Our volunteer guide then alerted us to the presence of the English graveyard on the nearby island of Fårö and, intrigued, we set off to find it.

Fårö is different from the rest of Gotland, even though it only takes seven minutes on the ferry to cross the

strait from Fårösund. The island is world-famous through the Swedish film director Ingmar Bergman, who settled there and made many of his films in the locality. Its strategic importance as the eastern extremity of Swedish territory has meant that, until 1998, it was forbidden for foreigners to visit as it was a protected military area. Our travel was totally legal, though, and after following winding tracks through the forest, we eventually found the graveyard, among low stout pine trees (typical of Gotland), by the sea at Ryssnäs, an area of rich wildlife which became a nature reserve in 2009.

The causes, conflicts and conclusions of the Crimean War were all complex and messy. It started in October 1853 with an alliance of Turkey and Sardinia resisting Russia's southwards advance. Fearing threats to their own overseas territories and interests, France and Britain joined the alliance early in 1854. Fighting in the Crimea and Black Sea was ferocious, with more than 200,000 killed on all sides. After rather indifferent naval operations in the Baltic during the summers of 1854 and 1855, France and Britain prepared to return in 1856 with a far stronger fleet, including innovative attack vessels but, by late 1855, Russia realised that it could not succeed in its ambitions and the move towards peace talks resulted in the Treaty of Paris being signed in March 1856. The treaty was not conclusive and left many problems unresolved.

There is another English graveyard in Sweden: at Hanö, the island mentioned above. But that may be a story for a future issue of this magazine.

One of the stones with the inscription of a cross at the top and ENGELSKA KOLERAGRAVAR at the bottom

The sign reads: 'Here rest some 20 English navy men who died from cholera in 1854 during the so-called Crimean War, when Fårösund served as a base for an Anglo-French naval unit. North-west of the graveyard there was a temporary hospital.' Photos: Eva Robards

Riches to rags – A Renaissance love story

by Margot Blanchard

Sophie Bille Brahe, a sister of Tycho Brahe, the famous astronomer, was born in 1559 into two of the wealthiest of Danish noble families—her ancestors for generations had been immensely rich and powerful king's counsellors. In 1579 she married Otto Thott of Eriksholm, from another noble family, and had a son, Tage.

In 1588 Otto died and Tage entered the royal court as a page. Sophie was now free to pursue her interests, which were many. She studied astrology, astronomy, horticulture, chemistry and medicine, and became one of the most learned women in Europe.

She created a knot garden at Eriksholm which became famous, cast horoscopes for friends and prepared medicinal 'distillations' from her laboratory in her garden, which she gave to friends and the people on her estate.

Tycho Brahe built an observatory on the island of Hven, Uraniborg, which attracted people from all over Europe. As a teenager Sophie had helped Tycho with his observations. He was impressed with her abilities, and she visited him on Hven many times.

It was here that she met Erik Lange, who was a dashing nobleman and a dear friend of Tycho's. He was a charmer and had a way with words. Sophie fell madly in love and in 1590, after several meetings and trips, they got engaged. The family did not approve and turned their backs on Sophie, as they had on Tycho,

because he became a scientist, which was not considered suitable for a Danish nobleman.

The good times did not last long. Erik was an alchemist and spent his considerable fortune attempting to make gold. Heavily in debt and pursued by creditors he escaped to Germany in 1592. Sophie waited in vain for word of him.

In 1594 Tycho wrote a 600-verse poem in Latin expressed as a letter from Sophie to Erik. It begins:

The letter you have in your hand,
my Titan (Erik), comes from Urania (Sophie).
She does not want a written reply,
but you in person!

You have sent many letters
—and I hope they continue—
but when I miss you,
what good is paper?
You are kept away by your science,
which is envious of my wishes.
... Your science is empty
and leaves the purse empty of money
—and I also am left behind.
My marriage bed is empty
because of it!
Because of it I remain alone
in sunless days, starless nights,
while you are away,
my sun, my own light.

Throughout the poem Sophie longs for Erik's return. She hears that he has had an accident in his alchemical laboratory and worries about him. He has promised to be back in Skåne in the spring, but now three springs have passed and he has not returned. If he is looking for somewhere to practise alchemy, she has an 'arbour' in her garden equipped with everything needed for making gold—if such a thing is possible:

Ovens of all kinds,
coal, lamps, flames
(perhaps my flames
can dampen them).
There is no lack of materials ...
We can create the secret fire
that approaches
the (philosopher's) stone together.

She worries that he has left her:

People say I have been too naive,
that my heated feelings are stupid,
and that without scruples
you have left me.

She talks about his way with words:

They say your flattering talk
has deceived me
(and many women would wish
to be duped by you in this way!)
but I can't complain that
I have allowed myself to be deceived
by your honey-sweet words
that come so easily to you ...
you attract me as a magnet attracts steel
...
But your beautiful language
that overshadows all others
is not artificial:
It is a gift from nature.

She casts their horoscopes and finds that the conjunction of Venus, the moon, and Jupiter
... gives me sure hope
that the night will come
that we long for,
where wedding torches light the way
to our bridal chamber.
... So just come home, follow the stars
that are calling you back.

She complains that the family is against her, except for Tycho:

Yes, apparently he is the only one
of my many brothers
who has understood
that my love for you
is more than an intoxication.
This is due to his intellect,
level-headedness, reason, morality,
it is due to his sense of justice
and good judgement.

She is afraid that she is losing her looks:

But one thing I am afraid of:
you have been away so long
that you will perhaps
think less of my appearance
when you come.
For even though I was quite pretty
when you went away,
I may have changed
when you come home.

She ends wishing him well and hopes he will come home to her safe and sound.

Despite all this Erik did not come home. He was in Kassel when the letter was written, and continued to journey around Germany, avoiding creditors and continuing his search for gold.

After seven long years, when her son Tage set off on his Grand Tour, Sophie saw her chance to find Erik. She travelled all over Germany looking for him—from Braunschweig to Holstein, Lübeck, Wandsbeck, Segeberg and Rostock. She finally rented a place in Ekernforde in Holstein, and at last Erik joined her. They married in 1602.

By this time Sophie's fortune was also completely depleted—she had probably been trying to bail Erik out of his debts, perhaps literally from debtor's prison. They lived in dire poverty and Erik was seldom at home. Some friends visited her and were shocked to find the state she was in. In a letter to her sister-in-law Margrethe Lange in 1602 she says that she had holes in her stockings (they had neither heels nor toes), and two friends had given her stockings and torn pieces from their clothing to repair hers. They also gave her jewellery to get Erik's clothes out of pawn. Her family, however, offered no help.

This was the noble lady who had played hostess to kings and queens, including the visit of Queen Sophie in 1586 and King James in 1590, the lady who had lived in luxury and was renowned for her learning. But she stuck it out until Erik died, probably in 1613 in Prague.

It seems that after Erik's death Tage took her home to Denmark and, since he was immensely rich, presumably looked after her. She lived in Helsingør, and wrote a 900 page genealogy of 60 noble families. In 1643 she died and was buried in the Thott family chapel, Torrlösa old church, near Landskrona (now in Sweden), demolished in the 19th century. Her tombstone still stands on the site.

There is a street named after her in Helsingør. Her house was on the corner of Sophie Brahesgade and Hestemøllestræde—it burned down in 1860.

Heiberg* said of Sophie, 'Denmark must never forget the noble woman who, in spirit much more than flesh and blood, was Tycho Brahe's sister, the shining star in our Danish heaven is indeed a double one'.

* J.L. Heiberg, *Prosaiske Skrifter*, Volume 9, København,1861, p. 364

The information in this piece is mostly from Peter Zeeberg's study of the poem 'Urania Titani', København, 1994.

The translations of the poem are mine from Zeeberg's translation from Latin into Danish.

Hurtigruten, the rough and the beautiful

by Björn Knutson-Ek and Lisbeth Olving

Before:
She (who is half-Norwegian):
I've always had a dream about Hurtigruten.
He (not uninterested, but somewhat sceptical):
Is it really worth the price?

Early June 2019 the dream came true. We flew into Bergen one day early, for sightseeing, but also to be sure to be on time for the cruise. A bit of rain, yes! and, surprisingly, rhododendrons of all colours everywhere: in the humid climate they grow well. We saw *Bryggen*, the medieval part of town, rebuilt after a big fire, and enjoyed a delicious 'Today's seafood platter' at *Fisketorvet*. We visited *Troldhaugen*, the charming home of Edvard Grieg, which included an excellent lunch concert and a walk in the garden by the lake, peeping into his composer's hut. We also experienced an amazing 3D-concert performed by the London Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Esa Pekka Salonen at beautiful *Grieghallen*. A day well spent.

Our first night onboard MS *Midnatsol* was a short one as we passed Hornelen, Northern Europe's highest sea cliff (860 metres above sea level), at about four in the morning. Only few people were up at this time. We chatted to two gentlemen. When passing Måløy, our second port, they told us about Martin Linge, who was killed just after Christmas 1941 during Operation Archery, a British Combined Operations raid at Måløy against German military positions. The unit he led was named *Kompani Linge* in his honour. Måløy became a German coastal fortress, which led to the eradication of all settlement on the island. Måløy was well known for transporting resistance men to England. The fishermen knew the coastline so well that they could sail through the archipelago at night. The Germans who tried to stop them went aground, and sank. Today Måløy is one of the most important fishing ports of Sogn og Fjordane, and in all Norway. It was rebuilt after the war and, interestingly, most streets are only numbered and have no names, as in New York.

Hurtigruten: the main ports (out of 34)

The Geiranger fjord was stunning! The ships only sail into this spectacular fjord from 1 June. In bright summer weather, the best on our tour, we saw plenty of waterfalls cascading from high above down into the fjord. The Seven Sisters waterfall, in particular, was a dream to see and even more impressive than from land.

In Ålesund we enjoyed all the *art nouveau* architecture, inspired by plants and leaves. Our tour could have ended here since we almost missed the boat while walking the streets, admiring all the buildings. A left turn in a crossing took us on a stupid detour. Some panic, some running, but we just made it!

Trondheim was founded in 997 by Olav Tryggvason, who named it Nidaros, mouth of Nidelva (River Nid). The town was a trading post from the beginning of the 10th century and served as the capital of Norway during the Viking Age until 1217. We had a long sightseeing tour, including a thorough visit to the impressive cathedral *Nidarosdomen*, and a walk along Nidelva with all its beautiful old wooden houses.

Kjeungskjær is a coastal lighthouse on a tiny island outside Trondheim. Here we learnt that the children living there used to be tied up so they could play on the rocks at low tide without being washed away by the sea. They were towed back into the lighthouse just before high tide, when the rocks became submerged.

At 66° 33' north we crossed the Arctic circle and were baptised on deck by King Neptune, in icy water. Afterwards we were offered some nice cloudberry wine to make us feel better. We also watched spouting killer whales from deck.

Majestic Lofoten with its fishing ports was a highlight of the cruise. We saw (and smelled!) a lot of dried fish on stocks. The word *torsk* (cod) derives from Old Norse *þorskr*, which means dried *(torr)* fish.

Trollfjorden is one kilometer long and only slightly wider than the ship. How our captain managed to turn the ship around is a mystery. The fjord is famous for its population of bald eagles.

In Tromsø, port to the Arctic, Paris of the North, we hired bicycles and saw the Ice Cathedral and the enigmatic coast line.

We passed North Cape in a snow storm. All excursions, by boat and road, were cancelled.

The cruise not only took us far north but also surprisingly far east. Staying on the ship at Vardø harbour we were actually beyond the meridian going through St Petersburg in Russia. Arriving in Kirkenes, the next harbour and our final destination, we added one extra day, just like in Bergen.

We used most of the day for a nice mountain hike in the Arctic early spring. We could hear melting water everywhere along the footpath. Gaining altitude on the slopes with bright green small mountain birches and tiny, red Arctic lingonberry flowers, we viewed our cruise ship heading southbound and felt somewhat nostalgic. Sleepy from staying awake day and night we crashed into a log shelter for some sleep. Later in the evening we had a tasty dinner of halibut, king crab and whale beef.

Russian influence is obvious with dual language road signs. There are a lot of Russian workers and visitors, all much welcomed by the Norwegians.

In the town square the moving War Mothers' Monument commemorates women's efforts during the Second World War, when Finnmark was occupied by the German Army. The liberation of Finnmark lasted from October 1944 to April 1945. Approximately 50,000 civilians were forced out of Finnmark as the German army used the scorched earth strategy, when they realised that the Allied forces planned the liberation. Most towns were burnt out.

After (back home again):
She: The Hurtigruten dream really came true!
I want to go again, southbound,
in July or September!
He: I want to go again, southbound,
any time of the year.

The monument to the mothers in Kirkenes
Photos: the authors

A conference of The Society for Name Studies in the British Isles

Report by Katherine Holman

The Society for Name Studies in the British Isles held its autumn day conference on *Vikings and Names: Exploring place-names, personal names, and the ongoing legacy of Scandinavian speakers in language, literature and culture* on 19 October, 2019, at the King's Manor, University of York.

In total, seven speakers presented papers on varying aspects of the historical legacy of the Viking settlement in the British Isles. Together the presentations highlighted the magnitude and the diversity of the linguistic contribution that Scandinavian settlers made to the place-names, personal names and the dialect of large swathes of northern and eastern England in particular.

The significance of this linguistic evidence has long been debated by scholars, some seeing it as the result of a series of Viking migrations, while others prefer to see it as the legacy of a small class of Viking leaders who settled and became overlords in parts of the British Isles.

The sixty or so conference delegates were privileged to hear a range of new perspectives on this old problem. David Parsons opened the day with an analysis of the word 'cross' in place-names and inscriptions, illustrating how the word was brought to England from the Irish Sea region by Vikings in the tenth century. Previously neglected areas of study, such as Cleveland, were examined (Pragya Vohra), and new technology was used to map and analyse the distribution of particular kinds of place-name and personal name data (Josh Neal, Eleanor Rye, and Peter McClure). Jack Hartley used anthropological theories on landscape to analyse how the Norse heritage of Cumbria was central to the work of the twentieth-century poet Norman Nicholson, while Matthew Townend's paper revealed how Victorian philologists laid the foundations for modern research through their collection of Scandinavian words, many of which are now lost, in the local dialects of Lincolnshire, Yorkshire and Cumbria.

Overall, the conference highlighted how linguistic evidence can offer a fruitful and fascinating insight into issues surrounding the legacy of Scandinavian settlement in the British Isles.

Abstracts of each presentation can be viewed on the Society's website at: www.snsbi.org.uk/2019_York.html

Out-of-date travel guides to Scandinavia

by Chris Kyriacou

Over the years I have gradually acquired a collection of out-of-date travel guides to various parts of Europe, or perhaps I should say these books seem to have collected me. When I visit a second-hand bookshop, I usually gravitate towards the section marked 'Travel' and if I find a travel guide published around the middle of the 20th century, which appeals to me, before I know it, I have bought it! There is something about travel guides published in the period between 1930 and 1960 that I find very attractive. These books provide a marvellous glimpse from a past age, of how things were.

My growing interest in Scandinavia had its genesis in a research collaboration between the University of York and academic colleagues at the University of Stavanger. This led me to joining the York Anglo-Scandinavian Society, which fuelled my interest in Scandinavia as a whole. I now have a very pleasing collection of travel guides to Scandinavia, which I delight in poring over whenever the mood takes me. There are several aspects of these books which appeal to me: information about the country and its people; places to visit; pictures and maps; practical information for travellers; and adverts.

Let me start with some pictures, which can be so superb that they alone can justify purchasing a book.

This advert for SAS airlines published in 1953 embodies the sense of excitement at a time when more and more people were gradually getting used to the idea of tourism by air**.**

My favourite book in this regard is *Scandinavia* published by McGraw-Hill in 1952, edited by Dore Ogrizek. This book contains an outstanding variety of pictures by different artists in different styles. The four pictures featured here to illustrate this variety show winter in Dovre, Norway:

the Round Church at Bornholm, Denmark:

Finnish folk dancers in traditional dress:

and an Icelander:

I also enjoy looking at maps and town plans. The appearance of these very much conveys the style of the times. I particularly like maps which are peppered with drawings of what you can see in various locations, such as this illustrated map of Southern Finland which brings the region to life:

Pictures and descriptions of the people you are likely to meet can be very interesting. They provide a fascinating portrayal of how society functioned in this period—illustrating many types of jobs, tasks and ways of enjoying oneself, that are so different from today.

There are so many great travel guides to Scandinavia, focusing on Scandinavia as a whole, or particular countries or regions, or specific towns or islands, that it is hard to single out those that have given me the greatest pleasure.

However, I have always had a soft spot for the Ward Lock series of continental handbooks. These combine being compact enough to fit into your pocket, and yet detailed enough to cover much more than you could want of a travel guide. The edition on Norway published in 1936 contains a fantastic set of photos, maps, and detailed information. The quality of the black and white photographs is outstanding.

Another favourite of mine is Nagel's Iceland Travel Guide, published in 1953. Despite being a thin volume, it includes a good coverage of both the geography and history of Iceland, a delightfully simple map of the island, and also has room for a useful vocabulary.

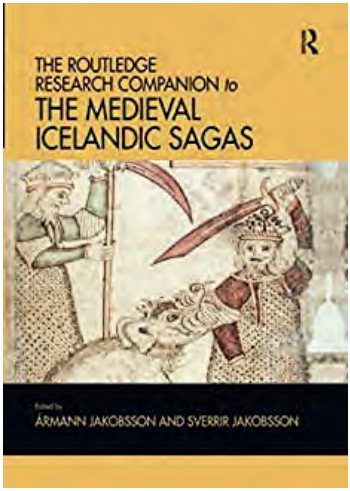
I have also come across a number of books describing the experience of people from the UK who have lived in Scandinavia. Such books provide a fascinating insight into day-to-day life. One excellent example of this is Diana Ashcroft's *Journey to Finland* published in 1952. Whilst not in any way a travel guide, this and other similar books give the traveller some idea of the way of life that goes on behind the scenes whilst they are visiting Scandinavia.

Practical information and adverts in guide books are often fascinating. There are two adverts I particularly like. One concerns the need for travellers to make sure they carry some 'Chlorodyne' with them—a medicine so powerful that it can cure a broad range of health problems, including asthma, cancer, cholera, epilepsy, and gout.

The other advert is somewhat surprising—the legal profession has clearly noted that when many couples spend time together on a long holiday, their thoughts can turn to 'divorce', and has thus advertised their legal services in travel guide books:

Chris Kyriacou is Emeritus Professor, Department of Education, University of York. The 5th edition of his book Essential Teaching Skills was published in 2018.

From the bookshelf



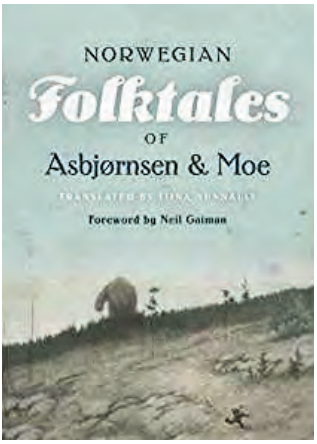
Review by Rory McTurk

Ármann Jakobsson and Sverrir Jakobsson (editors): *The Routledge Research Companion to the Medieval Icelandic Sagas*
Paperpack published by Routledge, June 2018
ISBN-978-0-367-13365-8

First published in 2017 and now in paperback, this book, a collection of twenty-seven essays by different authors, including the two editors, gives a comprehensive scholarly introduction to the saga literature of medieval Iceland. With chapters on 'Genre', 'Ecclesiastical Literature and Hagiography', 'Courtly Literature', 'Indigenous and Latin Literature', 'History and Fiction', 'Narratives and Documents', and 'The Long and the Short of It' (this last on long and short saga-type narratives), it conveys a sense of the extraordinary variety of the Icelandic sagas. The relationship of the sagas as written literature to oral tradition is discussed in the chapters on 'Dating and Origins' and 'Literacy'; their style and structure in those on 'Style', 'Structure', and 'Drama and Performativity'; their setting in the chapters on 'Space', 'Time', 'Travel', 'Marginality', 'Class', and 'World View'; and their subject matter in those on 'Fate', 'Heroism', 'Gender', 'Emotions', 'The Paranormal', 'Christian Themes', and 'Feud'. The afterlife of the sagas is treated in a chapter on 'Artistic Reception', and the use of digital technology in studying the sagas today is introduced in the final chapter, on 'Digital Norse'.

The book is extremely well edited, with all the chapters written (by no means all of them by native English speakers) in convincing, clear English, and each of them supplied with a wealth of references, mostly reflecting, as the editors note in their Introduction, research undertaken over the past thirty years. While this is obviously greatly to be welcomed, it may be asked whether the concentration on such recent scholarship always justifies the disregard of earlier work on the sagas that this book shows in some cases. One does not have to agree with time-honoured work on the sagas to find it a useful starting point for present-day discussion. No reference is made, for example, to Vilhelm Grønbech's *Vor folkeæt i oldtiden* (2 vols, 1955; first published in 4 vols, 1909-12; translated as *The Culture of the Teutons*, 3 vols, 1932), an immensely stimulating study of the sagas and related literature, parts of which would have made admirable

starting points for the chapters on ‘Fate’, ‘Gender’, ‘Emotions’, ‘Marginality’, ‘Feud’, and ‘World view’. More could also have been said about eddic and skaldic poetry, both important for the development of the saga as a prose form. The book will nevertheless be of great value to its intended audience, ‘the novice and the advanced saga enthusiast’ alike.



Review by Katherine Holman

Peter Christen Asbjørnsen and Jorgen Moe, *The Complete and Original Norwegian Folktales of Asbjørnsen and Moe,* translated by Tiina Nunnally with a foreword by Neil Gaiman
Published by University of Minnesota Press, Oct 2019
ISBN-978-1-517-90568-2

This is a new, definitive English translation of the celebrated folk-story collection, regarded as a landmark of Norwegian literature and culture. As Tiina Nunnally says in her introduction, remarkably, this is also the first English translation of the complete corpus of all sixty tales that Asbjørnsen and Moe collected and published in their third edition of *Norske folkeeventyr* in 1866. Therefore readers will happily find that all of the classics are here, including favourites such as ‘East of the Sun and West of the Moon’, ‘Soria Moria Castle’, ‘The Twelve Wild Ducks’, and the ‘Three Billy-Goats Gruff’. Talking animals, magical transformations, hideous trolls and bewitched princes and princesses are the norm in this world, and while many of the stories have moral lessons, such as the importance of helping others, others simply amuse or explain aspects of the natural world, such as why the sea is salty and why the bear has a stumpy tail.

Previously, the most complete English version was Sir George Dasent’s *Popular Tales from the Norse* (1859), containing fifty-eight of the tales, but—as Nunnally highlights—this now seems rather old-fashioned and includes some details that seem ‘more identifiable as British rather than Norwegian’, such as Dasent’s use of ‘Boots’ for *Askeladden* (pp. xviii-xix). In Nunnally’s translation, *Askeladden* becomes instead, and much more sensibly, ‘Ash Lad’, and a few Norwegian words are left untranslated, to retain the flavour of the original stories. While it is easy to work out the meaning of the old Norwegian currencies of *skilling*, *mark*, and *daler*, for the English reader the untranslated *lefse* (which Dasent translated as ‘bannock’) is a little more difficult. However, as a whole, Nunnally has expertly balanced the need to provide a clear and accessible translation for

modern audiences with the desire to retain the traditional storytelling voice.

Of course, alongside the fantastic creatures, magical objects, royal palaces, and omnipresent trolls, the tales reveal a now-lost way of rural life, set against the landscape of forests and mountains. Reproductions of four of Theodor Kittelsen's iconic illustrations are included in the volume—two on the dust-jacket, one with Gaiman's foreword, and one introducing Nunnally's translator's note; it would have been even better if more could have been included in the volume, as these help capture the mood of the stories and their evocative cultural landscape.

Norske folkeeventyr was, of course, instrumental in defining and developing Norwegian national consciousness and the Norwegian language. For those interested in the historical background to the collection of tales, the volume also helpfully includes biographical information on Asbjørnsen and Moe, English translations of their introductions to different editions, and even a list of the places where the two men collected the various tales from, and how widely known the different stories were in the first half of the nineteenth century. This volume is certainly indispensable reading for anyone interested in Norway and its cultural heritage.

Caroline Boggis-Rolfe,
The Baltic Story: A Thousand-Year History of Its Lands, Sea and Peoples. Published by Amberley, April 2019

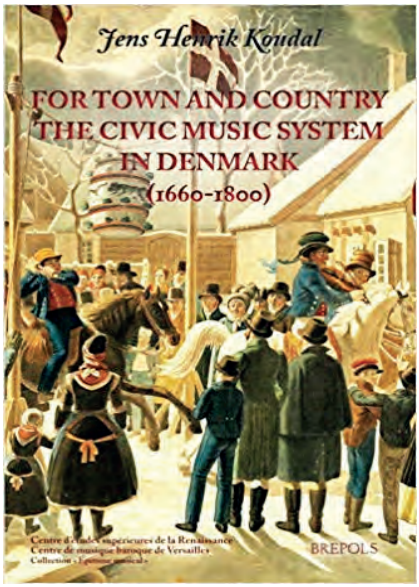
The shared history of the countries around the Baltic, including the Hansa, the foundation of some of Europe's greatest cities, and their rulers. The author has been a regular visitor to the Baltic as a guest lecturer.

Carl Florman,
A Memoir,
translated by Elisabet Baldwin
Published by Livonia Print, 2018

Carl Florman (1886-1963) served as Sweden's first ever Airforce Attaché to the United Kingdom in 1922-23. The following year, he co-founded AB Aerotransport (later Scandinavian Airlines, SAS). The book was launched by the Anglo-Swedish Society in the presence of the Swedish Ambassador Torbjörn Sohlström.

Christian Bundegaard,
Finn Juhl: Life, Work, World.
Published by Phaidon,
Sept 2019

A monograph on Finn Juhl, the Danish architect, interior- and industrial designer and still one of the biggest names in Danish design. The Danish author is a design authority and a former diplomat.



Jens Henrik Koudal, *For Town and Country: the Civic Music System in Denmark, 1600-1800,*
translated by Colin Roth
Published by Brepols, Sept 2019
ISBN-13:978-2-50358-572-7

In his foreword to this substantial study by Henrik Koudal, Luc Charles-Dominique, Professor of Ethnomusicology at the University of Côte d'Azur, LIRCES, says, 'This book is a major study in musical social history, with special emphasis on the various statutes and functions of musicians, their forms of organisation and activity, and the deftly treated question of their apprenticeship. Yet it is also a major anthropological study, first from a political standpoint, as it studies in depth, and most revealingly, the musical consequences of Danish royal absolutism, whose authority then extended to a multinational empire, including the kingdoms of Denmark and Norway, among others; but also as an anthropology of cultural transfers, as it studies German influences in Danish musical organisation and practice, while taking into account the *ménétriers*' mobility and itinerant careers.

Colin Roth adds, 'One of the great strengths of this book is the way in which it delineates, on the basis of scrupulous research, the complexity of those many factors which have contributed to the "fellowship" which underpins modern Danish culture, the way Danes are content to feel part of a coherent national culture. The explanation for this phenomenon has too often been oversimplified, put down to the influence of N.F.S. Grundtvig and the folk high school project alone. Henrik Koudal's detailed analysis of the interplay between economic and social factors, and especially Denmark's persistent efforts to protect itself against risk whenever possible, show the complexity of Danish cultural homogeneity's aetiology as well as the sheer antiquity of the country's distinguishing characteristics.'

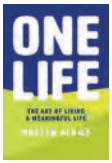
Because the study focuses on the circumstances in Denmark, seen in its Baltic and European context, Danish place names are given Danish spellings, with the exception of Copenhagen for København, Denmark's 'shopping haven'.

Jukka Gronow, Lotte Holm (editors), *Everyday Eating in Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden: A Comparative Study of Meal Patterns 1997-2012* Published by Bloomsbury Academic, April 2019

The editors are professors from the Department of Social Research, University of Helsinki, Finland (Gronow), and the Department of Food and Resource Economics, University of Copenhagen, Denmark (Holm).

Julia Chiles, *Finnish Style Recipes: A Complete Cookbook of Nordic Dish Ideas!* Paperback Independently published, Oct 2019

Basic ingredients cooked with recipes from prior generations. The meals are fresh and filled with healthy ingredients. They use unprocessed, natural foods like berries and whole grains.



Morten Albæk, *One Life: The Art of Living a Meaningful Life* Paperback published by LID, Oct 2019

We should stop separating our working selves and our private selves, and instead see ourselves as one, with one life in one lifetime. Albæk is a Danish philosopher, business executive and public speaker.

Ib Katznelson, *Let Him Go: A Danish Child in Ravensbruck and Theresienstadt,* translated by Robert Maas. Paperback published by Vallentine Mitchell & Co Ltd, May 2019

The author relates his own and his mother's and father's stories, along with those of others in the camp, through testimonies, letters and historical documentation.

Henrik Nor-Hansen, *Termin:An Inquiry into Violence in Norway,* translated by Matt Bagguley Published by Nordisk Books, May 2018

This novel looks at the case of Kjetil Tuestad, who on midsummer night 1998 was found severely beaten and unconscious. Nominated for the Nordic Council Literature Prize in 2017.

Maria Gerhardt, *Transfer Window,* translated by Lindy Falk van Rooyen
Published by Nordisk Books, June 2018

The protagonist is a terminally ill young woman who lives in a wealthy suburb of Copenhagen that has been turned into a hospice. The narrator spends much of her time at the Virtual Reality Store, reliving old memories.

Norway rocks!

by Jodie Hannah Marsden

In the summer of 2018 I was lucky enough to travel to Norway, where I spent six weeks mapping the geology of an area known as the Kvamshesten Basin in Sogn og Fjordane. I was studying at the University of Cambridge for a degree in Natural Sciences, specialising in Earth Sciences, and this work formed the basis of my third-year mapping project. We were tasked with creating a map of the geology of an area at least 10 sq. km, and subsequently, on return to the UK, producing a computer-drawn map and accompanying report. There was the option to travel anywhere in the world, but we chose Norway for its beautiful scenery, friendly people and of course its interesting rocks!

I travelled as part of a group of four: myself and my mapping partner Chris and fellow mappers Jess and Lucy. We arrived in Oslo on 24 July and spent a day exploring the city. The weather was incredible, 30 degrees and bright sunshine (definitely not a sign of what was to come!), so we took the opportunity to catch a ferry to the island of Gressholmen and spend the afternoon on the beach.

The next morning, we caught the train to Bergen. The journey lasted over seven hours, far longer than a flight, but it was worth it. We travelled through some of the most stunning scenery I have ever seen, whilst sampling a new favourite: waffles with brown cheese. We spent the following day in Bergen, catching the funicular to Fløyen, canoeing on the lake.

We hired a car and drove north, over Sognefjord, and up to the village of Bygstad near the town of Førde. Our accommodation for the following weeks

was a rented house hidden down a single-track lane from where we could see Kvamshesten mountain looming above us. We weren't quite prepared for how mountainous the area would be, and it came as quite a shock to see it for real for the first time. The house itself was cosy and provided an ideal place to write up a day's work in the field and relax on days off.

Our first few days in the field were a baptism of fire. There was a car park at 400m, but the remaining ascent into the basin had to be done on foot. The blue skies and sunshine from Oslo and Bergen were replaced by grey skies and mist, and temperatures in the mapping area regularly fell below five degrees. And then there was the rain. I have since learned that western Norway is the wettest place in Europe, and from my experience I can easily believe that. It rained most days, often torrentially, and this could make mapping almost impossible.

We did what we could, planning our days around the weather and adapting our mapping techniques in order to maximise efficiency when it was dry and try to be a bit productive when it was wet. The problems were worsened by equipment failures—two leaking coats, one leaking pair of waterproof trousers, three ripped waterproofs and one very non-waterproof pair of walking boots between the four of us. This led to a number of emergency trips to Førde to buy new kit.

A further problem came when we returned to the car one day to discover it had a flat tyre. Having rented it from a company called 'Rent-A-Wreck' we weren't too surprised and, on the flip-side, we got to learn a new skill because of it! We were very lucky that we could afford to have the car: without it we would have had a three-hour hike climbing 700m into and out of the basin every day.

For the most part, we were able to get some mapping done. Generally, this involved walking across the area attempting to follow contacts between rock units, locating faults and folds, taking data from structural measurements and collecting samples. The summit of Kvamshesten mountain (1209 m) was in our mapping area, and on a rare clear day we climbed to the top. The views were breath-taking; it was the highlight of my trip.

We took days off from mapping and used them to explore the local area. We visited the towns of Dale, Askvoll and Sande, sampling the cafés and coffee shops and ranking their cinnamon buns. Towards the end of our stay, to celebrate nearly finishing our maps, we drove out to Jostedal Glacier, the largest glacier in continental Europe.

We spent 28 days in total in the field and left Norway on 4 September. I feel privileged to have spent my summer in such a beautiful country, and it is thanks to organisations such as CoScan, which kindly provided me with financial assistance, that I was able to do so.

A Tour de Norse

by Josefina Troncoso

Twenty-fifth of April, 2018. My paper on women and suicide in the *Poetic Edda*, adapted from my undergraduate thesis for the Aarhus Student Symposium, was ready; my Powerpoint presentation was ready, and my conference outfit, of course, was ready. The only things that were not ready were the excerpts of Eddic poetry that I was going to use to reflect on the plot points highlighted throughout my paper, since I was not counting on the audience being as obsessed with the Völsung legend as myself.

Given that this was my first ever paper at an international conference, I could have made the job easier for myself by providing referenced translations when needed. Instead I was stubborn, and adamant that this should all be my own work, despite already being busy working on my master's thesis. It all seemed to go according to plan—until the moment when, during the lunchbreak of the first day of the conference, my friend noted: 'You're next.'

No matter how much or how hard I try to make sure that things go well before a trip, there is always a little big detail that goes amiss. This time, I made it to Aarhus with my passport and wallet still in my bag, and I did not get lost on the way to my Airbnb—but, for some reason, I was under the impression that I was due to present on the second day, thus being able to take my time translating those last little lines of Old Norse. At least my overconfidence gave me the peace of mind to make the most of my first three days in Aarhus.

I had been to Denmark before—once on a stopover before starting a course in Modern Icelandic, and later for a two-week course in manuscript studies—but I had never been outside Copenhagen. Many friends had described Aarhus as a wonderful city, so I was particularly

excited to experience that for myself. I landed in Aarhus the day before the conference, and took myself out for a walk immediately after leaving my suitcase at the flat. After twenty minutes or so of a rather scenic route full of blossoming trees, I sat down to do some translation work inside Mikuna, Aarhus' only one-hundred-percent-vegan café (now named Melone).

My inability to estimate walking times and ineptitude at making a desperate call for a taxi almost ruined any first impressions I may have had, but luckily I made it on time to chat to my fellow conference-goers. I was, uncharacteristically, really looking forward to the social aspects of this conference, as I knew that many of the brilliant young researchers I had met through medieval Norse studies were going to deliver papers as well.

For convenience, the papers were split into sessions. Throughout the morning we were treated to papers on Old Norse literature, followed by sessions on runes. Naturally, as I felt oh, so sure that my paper was not due until the next day, I chose to relax and attentively listen to my friends—the pesky Old Norse could be sorted out later.

By the time I came back after lunch, I thought very differently, and questioned whether any aspects of Old Norse

'My conferencing debut'

grammar and syntax had stuck in my head after four years. But, by some miracle, I ended up with rather satisfactory translations with fifteen minutes to spare. I came out of the presentation alive—and enjoyed my first experience presenting abroad thoroughly! Once day one was over, my friend Hannah and I went to celebrate our international debuts at another vegetarian café, and later I went to ARoS, the modern art museum, on my own.

Over the course of the next day, we saw presentations on the themes of the digital humanities, contemporary approaches to Viking-age culture, animal studies, material culture, and lastly Old Norse poetry, which I found especially useful. And to celebrate the delivery of what was a series of really insightful and creative papers, we went to the top floor of one of the university buildings for some food, drink and selfies!

The friendly environment fostered by the conference organisers and attendants really helped me gain confidence and practice in presenting my research, something which no doubt I will come to be grateful for again and again as I try to navigate the academic world.

Josefina Troncoso was the Prize Winning Photographer 2019. Her photo was published on the back cover of CoScan Magazine 2019/1 (see www.coscan.org.uk/magazine).

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Christmas quiz

1. Which is 'the official home town' of Santa Claus?
2. The Yuletide-lads, Yule Lads, or Yulemen are portrayed as being mischievous pranksters—in which country?
3. *Æbleskiver* (apple slices) is a Danish dish. From which variety of apples are they made?
4. In which country (or countries) is reconstituted stockfish soaked in a solution of lye a festive Christmas dish?
5. What is the origin of the Lucia song tune? Is it a) a composition by Sibelius, b) a Neapolitan song, or c) a traditional Scandinavian song?
6. In which Nordic country is watching 'Donald Duck and his friends wishing you a Merry Christmas' on TV at 3 pm on Christmas Eve a tradition for about 50% of the population?

Answers

1. Rovaniemi on the Arctic circle in Finland (there are contestants).
2. Iceland (*jólasveinarnir* or *jólasveinar*).
3. Despite their name, *æbleskiver* have nothing to do with apples. They are small round pancakes, sprinkled with powdered sugar and served with strawberry jam.
4 Norway (*lutefisk*), Sweden (*lutfisk*), and Finland (*lipeäkala*).
5. b) A Neapolitan song *(Sul mare luccica)*.
6. Sweden. The tradition started in 1959. Other TV traditions include the daily advent calendar in December for children, and a Christmas host/hostess presenting the programmes on TV during the Christmas period.

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