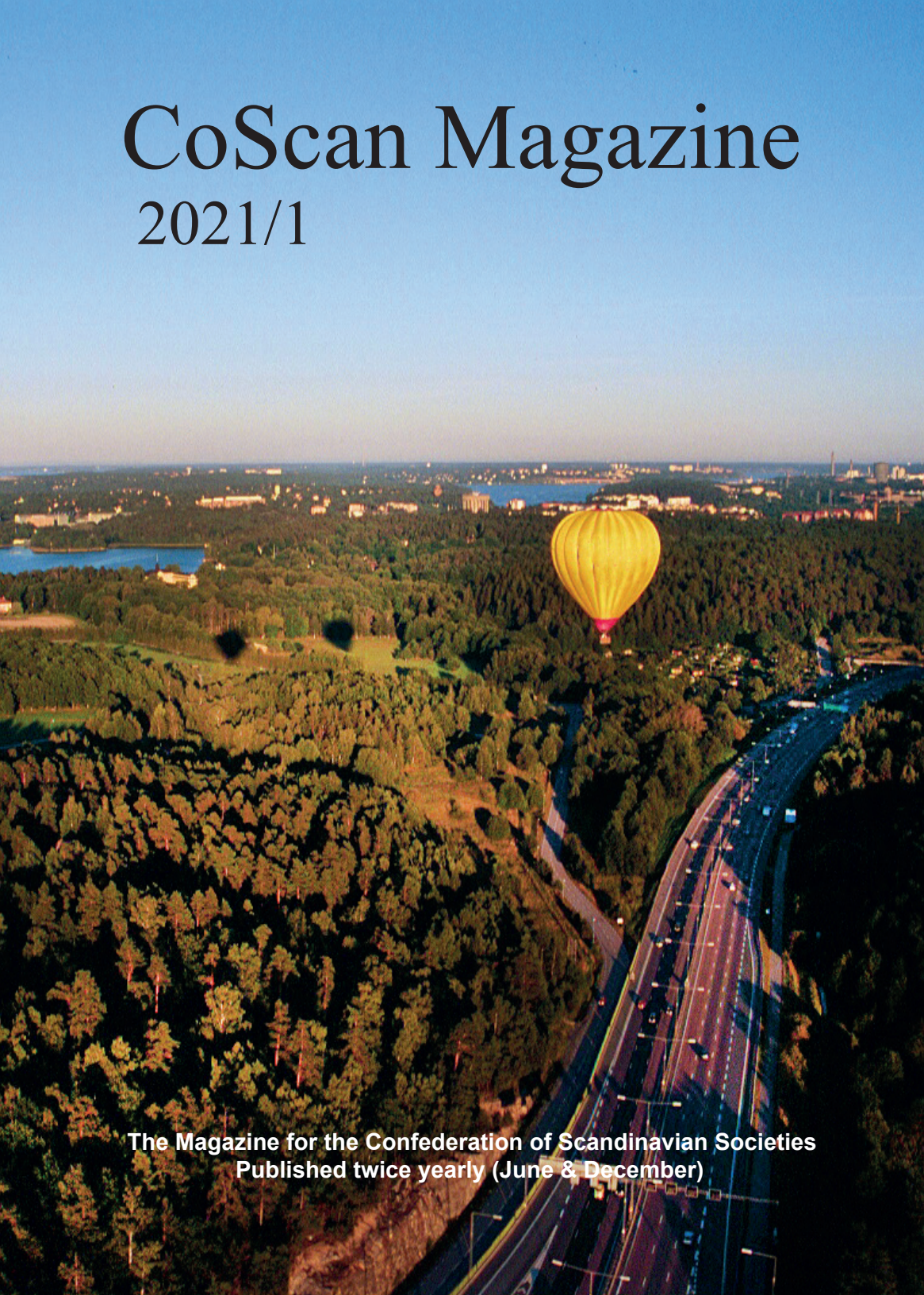
CoScan Magazine

2021/1



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

CoScan
Confederation of Scandinavian Societies

Contents

Front cover:

Part of Stockholm seen from a hot air balloon Photo: Pia Metz/Eva Robards

Message from the President

Mark Elliott

Writing at the end of March 2021 for publication in June, it would be foolish for me to offer any predictions about the weeks and months ahead at least in terms of the pandemic. The various vaccines have had a major impact, and hopes for a more settled future have grown as the spring flowers begin to appear. But even if optimism reigns over the summer—and even that is uncertain—it may be torpedoed by winter. We shall struggle on, and I still believe, as I wrote on this page a year ago, that in the longer term we shall prevail. I believe also that international trade and even travel, and our economies, will recover to a large extent, again perhaps in the longer term.

Over the last year it has however become clearer that Britain has moved significantly away from its former partners in the European Union. Deals are still made, quarrels flare up but are apparently resolved, we are all still talking to each other; but we in the UK are clearly now outsiders, and shall remain so at least during the present phase of our common history. Sadly, a mood of intolerance is growing in some quarters in this country towards anybody seen as less than purely British. The manifestations of this mood are sometimes violent and always unpleasant. Surely, we would all say, this can't affect relations with our Nordic friends and citizens of those countries resident here. Nevertheless the mood exists, and must be countered with all our energy, in common with all forms of discrimination.

It is in this area that CoScan has an important part to play. With the Nordic Embassies, we can offer advice and assistance to individuals and groups affected by Brexit. We can and must continue to reinforce the cultural and social links which unite us. This magazine, and the CoScan website and our presence on other social media, are important tools. Your Executive Committee has over the past year developed effective ways of managing them and other collective activities, even during lockdown. We have flexible plans for the months ahead. The support of our members, both corporate and individual, is vital. In return we offer continued and dedicated commitment to our members and to the ideals we all share.

Editor's note

Eva Robards

The world is opening up ... at least among our member societies: many are now planning events at which it will be possible to meet in person. Sankt Hans/*midsommar* is an obvious outdoor opportunity which appears on several programmes, such as those of the Danish-Scottish Society, Danish YWCA, and the Nordic House/Danish Church in Hull—so Sankt Hans will be celebrated from Edinburgh in the north to London in the south. Also walks, summer parties, lunches and coffee gatherings appear in the programmes.

Things are not likely to return back to exactly what we had before the pandemic, though. Caution will still have to prevail, and Zoom has created a valuable additional stage-setting. More or less reluctantly, a number of our societies have discovered the benefits of this platform. Admittedly, the direct personal contact is missing, but nobody has to travel on a dark evening, and—in particular—the presentation can be opened up to other societies wherever they are in the country. This is a welcome development, as it is at the heart of CoScan to share information and events. For each of these societies it may also be a way of getting new members.

Some societies excel in using Zoom: the Manchester Swedish Language Meetup Group has been holding their meetups twice every week, and through monthly meetings the Anglo-Swedish Society in London has presented a wide range of talks (which afterwards are available on YouTube). Among other societies exploring Zoom are the Anglo-Danish Society, Anglo-Norse Society, Danish Women, Northants Anglo-Scandinavian Society, Norwegian Scottish Association, Orkney Norway Friendship Association, Scottish Norwegian Society (Glasgow), Welsh-Norwegian Society, and York Anglo-Scandinavian Society. And, for the Danish, Finnish, Norwegian and Swedish churches, Zoom has been a most valuable tool for reaching out to their audiences.

To find out what is going on in the different CoScan member organisations, you can consult our CoScan website—and use the link to the society you are interested in to make contact. From this follows that it is important that information about events are forwarded and that contact details are correct for both the website and the magazine (send to eva.robards@coscan.org.uk, please).

Now, briefly, turning to this edition: Mark Elliott presented a summarised history of CoScan in the year of its 70th anniversary. In this issue Lise Hodgson gives a personal account of former times, of which she has more knowledge than most of us. As usual we highlight a couple of member societies, this time the Anglo-Swedish Society of Gothenburg and the Northants Anglo-Scandinavian Society. Continuing our general pattern, the culture section then follows with articles of general interest, book reviews and recent Scandinavian books translated into English and, lastly, we travel with students to Sweden, Norway and Iceland.

My early memories of CoScan

by Lise Hodgson

It has occurred to me that I am one of the longest active members of CoScan, and I thought it might be nice to put down a few memories of the early days.

In the mid 1970s I was a member of the newly formed Northants Anglo-Scandinavian Society. One of our committee members had heard of CoScan, so we became members shortly afterwards. When we heard that they were having their AGM in Birmingham, we decided that a few of us should go and see what it was all about. The AGM was held in an auditorium at Aston University, but we had trouble finding it, so arrived late. We quietly slipped into some seats in the back row and thought we had not been noticed, but when the person making his report when we entered had finished, the chairman asked us to come down to the front and introduce ourselves. Very embarrassing.

Halfway through the morning we stopped for coffee and us newbies were very warmly welcomed. The first people I spoke to were Kari Moss Wright and a Danish lady called Karen. We certainly did not feel like outsiders. Next time I attended a conference, I was greeted like an old friend.

The meetings in those days were formal and usually started with the secretary reading out the name of each society attending, and those present from that society standing up. Meetings were well attended. All conferences were held in the UK and it was customary that the chairman of the hosting society would become chairman of CoScan until the next AGM.

During that first AGM in Birmingham I was asked the inevitable question: Would you consider becoming a member of the committee? At that time I had to decline as my son was still very young. The question was repeated at intervals over the years and I eventually did become a committee member and later secretary.

I can't remember all the destinations we went to and in what order, but one of the first full conferences I attended was in London. We stayed in student accommodation (as we did in those days) and the dinner was held at a very splendid private club in St. James's. At the AGM we discussed how to write CoScan, i.e. COSCAN, Coscan, CoScan etc. It was expected to be a short discussion, but somehow it ran on and on and on. In the end we had to break for lunch and then carry on with the AGM after lunch, resulting in the afternoon's sightseeing being cancelled.

The dinners were quite formal, with everybody dressed up to the nines. It was lovely to see many members, particularly the Norwegians, wearing national costumes. The room was always arranged with a top table, which was strictly for the highest-ranking officers of CoScan and special guests (for example, Scandinavian ambassadors and local dignitaries) and their partners. During the dinners there was always a speech and a response and we drank the loyal toast. Money for CoScan was raised by selling raffle tickets and CoScan goods such as ties, brooches, car stickers, tee-shirts, all with the CoScan logo on. The formula for arranging the conferences was: arriving Friday night (often there was some entertainment), Saturday morning AGM, Saturday afternoon sightseeing and Saturday evening dinner, Sunday morning church and then home. We always stayed in student accommodation, which was usually very comfortable, but as members got older it was felt that we would like the comfort of a hotel. At the same time, the structure of the weekends relaxed a bit and became less formal.

I think I have seen more of the UK than many people born here. In the early days we went to Edinburgh, York (where we visited the recently opened Jorvik centre), Orkney, Shetland, Birmingham, Lincoln, Nottingham, Glasgow, Isle of Man and London, just to mention a few. At the Isle of Man, Kari Moss Wright suggested that we should hold every second AGM in one of the Scandinavian countries, taking advantage of her connections in the travel industry—and, as they say, the rest is history.

CoScan also travelled outside the AGMs and at one point we had a travel secretary. I was never able to take part in those trips, but it sounded as if all had a great time.

I can truly say that being involved with CoScan has given me so many happy memories of places visited and people met during the last 45 or so years.

Gathering of conference participants in Norwegian and Scottish national costumes

The History of the Anglo-Swedish Society of Gothenburg

by John Chaplin

Following the end of hostilities in 1918, Sir Henry Penson, chairman of the War Trade Intelligence Department in the British Ministry of Blockade (1916-1919), saw that there was an immediate need to build up good relations with the neutral countries. Sir Henry, who became the first chairman of the Anglo-Swedish Society in London, also managed to successfully oversee a widespread increase in Sweden's active interest for Great Britain through the establishment of multiple Anglo-Swedish Societies.

In Gothenburg, a Society was first discussed on 14 December 1920 at Gothenburg University. The Society would collaborate with the Anglo-Swedish Society in London to 'promote study between Sweden and England'. Comfortable and roomy premises at Södra Hamngatan 43, in the centre of Gothenburg, were found; here, 'English periodicals and a large library are at the disposal of visitors from the United Kingdom and as a lending library for its members in Gothenburg.'

Anglo-Swedish Society's reading room

At the inaugural meeting in 1921, George Dickson took on the role of chairman. He was the perfect man for the job. Not only was he a bank director in Gothenburg but he was also the grandson of Robert Dickson, who came with his brother James to Gothenburg in 1802 from Montrose in Scotland and ran a very successful wholesale and shipping business based on new techniques developed in the industrialisation of Scotland.

The society was a huge success, with 1300 members paying 5 *kronor* per year (life membership 100 *kr*). Sir Henry Penson visited Gothenburg in November 1922 and gave a speech entitled 'Oxford University, its elegant buildings and the life within'. The importance of cultural understanding was also noted by another visitor to Gothenburg during the Second World War, namely T.S. Eliot, who attended an Anglo-Swedish Society luncheon in 1942 and gave a speech entitled 'Civilisation: The Nature of Cultural Relations'. Eliot later reflected on his visit to Sweden, saying, 'Does it not strike one as odd that it should require a war to stimulate the purely cultural relations between this country and a friendly neutral with which we have close ties of geography, race and civilisation? What about times of peace?'

In times of war, members of the Anglo-Swedish Society in Gothenburg played an active part, including, it is said, espionage activities in Norway. In 1943, the Society was instrumental in assisting British and American services personnel being repatriated from prison camps in Germany via the 'Gothenburg Exchanges'. Nearly 10,000 men passed though Gothenburg. Ladies from St Andrew's Church Ladies' Guild, who met at the Anglo-Swedish Society rooms, provided help and clothing. One soldier wrote: 'The Angels all speak Swedish. They are true Angels though the wings are invisible and many of us have unashamedly burst into tears'. Memorials are laid each year on the British and German graves at Kviberg cemetery on 11 November and on the Australian and New Zealand graves on 25 April (ANZAC day). Sixty-eight graves contain victims of the battle of Jutland in 1916, thirty of whom are unidentified.

In times of peace, the Society hosted visiting English-language theatrical companies, arranged amateur dramatics and exhibitions, and of course there were parties. The Society also took advantage of visits to Gothenburg by members of the Royal family and British Naval ships as opportunities to host parties. This started in 1921 with the visit of 13 ships of the British Baltic fleet, 1000 men in total. Sixty officers were entertained by Anglo-Swedish Society members in their homes.

Proper behaviour was of course encouraged. One young sailor recalled being instructed by the Captain of the HMS Cleopatra on a visit in 1947 that, after dancing with a Swedish girl, you must always 'escort her back to her seat. You were not allowed to say "Thanks Luv" when the dance was finished and leave her standing in the middle of the floor, as was usual in England.' However, proper decorum was not always maintained. Fortunately, the British Consul in Gothenburg could be relied upon when diplomacy was required.

During the 1950s and 1960s, the Society took on the role of providing a social club for members. Every Saturday, there was a very popular tea dance at Kungsportsavenyn 1, where the British Consulate General had accommodation. For many years the British flag was flown there.

The importance of the British Consulate to the life of the Anglo-Swedish Society and to Gothenburg during these years cannot be overestimated, which is why there was general astonishment when the Foreign and Commonwealth Office said it planned to close the Consulate General in 1979. The Society decided to make its feelings felt by kidnapping 50 sailors from HMS Eskimo, which was visiting

Gothenburg. The sailors were released after being made to listen to the Murray Pipes and Drums playing the bagpipes for an hour. 'We sang "Oh Boy", then we sang it again, and after that we sang it some more.' A British Consulate survives in Gothenburg to this day.

The Society no longer has its own premises but it maintains its traditions and remains active through amateur dramatics (*Not Quite a Cèilidh*), an English language book club (ELBA), talks, theatre nights and guest lectures.

In 2019, Helen Pankhurst (third from left in the picture above) gave a talk to the society about her grandmother Sylvia Pankhurst, who visited Gothenburg in 1913. To her left is Lars Wiklund, Honorary British Consul in Gothenburg since 2007.

Not Quite a Cèilidh has been a developing and cherished tradition in the Society. Each year, a play is written celebrating an aspect of an historical event in Anglo-Gothenburg relations—some factual and some semi-factual. In the photos, you see the 1000th anniversary of the marriage of King Canute and Queen Emma (2017):

Lloyd George and Winston Churchill in the 100th anniversary of the women's suffrage march in Gothenburg (2018):

and the Privateer Captain Thomas Chapman in the 300th anniversary of the Pirates of Gothenburg (2019):

Birger Ekengren (former chairman and current treasurer) left and John Chaplin right

In 2020, the Anglo-Swedish Society in Gothenburg had the great honour of being awarded the Swedish banner from the Governor (*landshövding*) Anders Danielsson, in recognition of 100 years of contributing to the life of the city of Gothenburg.

We are planning to have a large, in-person celebration of our centenary in 2022.

Professor John Chaplin is chairman of the Anglo-Swedish Society of Gothenburg.

Northants Anglo-Scandinavian Society

by Jens Buus

The Northants Anglo-Scandinavian Society is for people with links to, or an interest in, the Nordic Countries. As the name indicates, it is based in Northamptonshire, although we do have some 'honorary members', i.e. former members who have moved out of the area.

We currently have around 30 members. The majority of these are Scandinavians who have married in Britain and settled in the area, but we also have some Scandinavian couples and some members with Scandinavian relatives.

We do not know the precise starting date for the society, but it would have been sometime in the early to mid 70s, making the society close to 50 years old. There is a bit more information about the history of the society in CoScan Magazine 2012/1 (available on www.coscan.org.uk/magazine/).

In a typical year our society has six or seven ordinary meetings, the occasional outing, a summer walk, an annual dinner in a local restaurant, and a Christmas lunch, where members provide typical Scandinavian food and drink.

A summer walk; the author on the left

A drink after the walk

At most of our meetings we have a guest speaker, and over the years we have had talks on a wide variety of topics. Sometimes one of our members will give a talk; these talks tend to be related to travels to less common locations. In addition, members have talked about their involvement in voluntary work, or on how they ended up in Northamptonshire.

Over the last few years, we have tried a new meeting format which has proved to be quite successful. We first have an ordinary meeting with a speaker talking about a particular place or building. This is followed up by an outing where we visit the subject of the talk and have a guided tour. Some examples of these 'double meetings' are described in the following.

78 Derngate is a terraced house near the centre of Northampton. In 1916 both the house itself and the furniture were re-designed by Charles Rennie Mackintosh for the local model engineer W.J. Bassett-Lowke. After many years as a high school for girls, and also standing empty, it was brought back to its former glory in a major restoration project in 2002-2003, and is now open as a museum. In one meeting we heard a talk about the house and the restoration project, and the next month we had a guided tour of the house, concluding with a dinner in the adjoining restaurant.

The Phipps Northampton Brewery Company is one of several microbreweries in the Northampton area. Originally started in 1801, the brewery was revived in 2008, with both beer brewing and an adjoining pub. One of the persons behind the revival gave us a presentation about the brewery and its history. The following meeting was an outing to the brewery where we could observe the brewing process—and of course enjoy some samples of the products with a meal.

Phipps Northampton Brewery

Situated on the southern outskirts of Northampton, Delapré Abbey goes back about 900 years. After having been an abbey, a stately home and serving as a records office it fell into disrepair. Following an elaborate restoration project lasting several years it has now become a major visitor attraction offering guided tours, events, exhibitions, a shop, and a tearoom and restaurant. In 1460 the surrounding park was the scene of the Battle of Northampton during the Wars of the Roses. Again, we had a talk about the building and the restoration, later followed by an outing which included an afternoon tea in the orangery.

The Grand Union Canal, which connects London and Birmingham, passes through Northamptonshire, and it is very popular with canal boat enthusiasts. There are several marinas in the county, one of which is located at Braunston; this has now become a major centre for narrow-boats. At one of our meetings, we heard about the history of Braunston Marina and the Grand Union Canal. The accompanying outing was a walk along the canal, ending with a meal in one of the canalside pubs.

Pub lunch in Braunston

The market town of Towcester, in Roman times known as the garrison town Lactodorum, is located on the Roman road Watling Street, now part of the A5. The town has an active local history society, which runs a small local museum. The talk we had was about the history of Towcester, and the outing was a guided walk of the town, and (again!) an afternoon tea, this time in the Saracen's Head, which features in Charles Dickens's novel *The Pickwick Papers*.

Tour of Towcester

Like so many other activities the society has been almost dormant for the last year, except for a couple of informal Zoom gatherings. We are all hoping to restart our activities in the near future, and our committee is working on ideas for more talks combined with following outings.

Dr Jens Buus is a member of Northants Anglo-Scandinavian Society. He has previously written for this magazine (for example about Stevns klint in CoScan Magazine 2020/1).

News in brief

ANGLO-SWEDISH SOCIETY

The death of HRH The Duke of Edinburgh is a huge loss to the Anglo-Swedish Society. He became Patron of the society already in 1954 and remained an active supporter. The 60th anniversary of this patronage was celebrated at Buckingham Palace on 4 November 2014. Together with the King and Queen of Sweden, he attended the Society's 75th Anniversary banquet at the Hurlingham Club in 1994, and the Friendship Ball at The Dorchester in 2004.

The Duke of Edinburgh was also Patron of the Anglo-Finnish Society.

Skt. Nikolaj

The Nordic House/Danish Church in Hull is marking its 150th anniversary. Established in 1871, it is the oldest Danish Seamen's church abroad. Back then many Danish ships docked in Hull with cargoes of cattle, bacon, butter and corn, and a large Danish community developed.

The Church has been serving not only local Scandinavians but also the many Danish seamen on merchant ships, and Scandinavian emigrants passing through the city on their way to the New World.

In August 2019, the Danish Church's last resident pastor, Arne Kristophersen, returned to Denmark. He suggested at the time that the word 'church' might put people off, and so we have the addition of the name Nordic House.

An article on the history of the Danish Church in Hull was published in CoScan Magazine 2012/1.

St Katharine's Den Danske Kirke i London

Queen Margrethe of Denmark has designed and embroidered a new vestment for The Danish Church in London. She could not present it in person due to Corona but sent a letter and best wishes to the congregation. The fabric is from England, and the design is such that it can be used throughout the church year and for all ecclesiastical holidays.

CoScan
Confederation of Scandinavian Societies

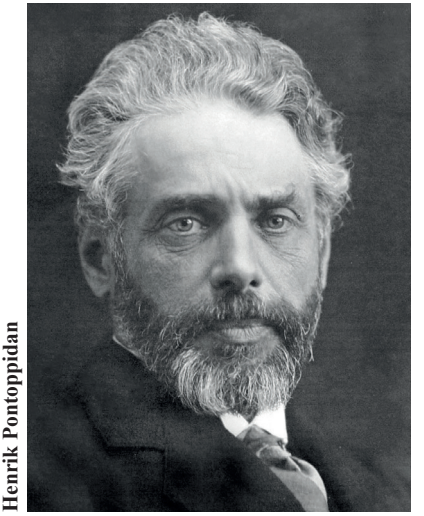
Our AGM for 2021 will be held on Friday 24 September at 15.00, on Zoom.

CoScan informal drinks:
6-8pm on Monday 1 November 2021 in the Buckmaster Room at Buck's Club (where the Buck's Fizz was invented). Dress code: jacket and tie for gentlemen and equivalent for ladies.

‘Passing judgement on oneself’
Henrik Pontoppidan (1857-1943)

by Steen Andersen

The Academy Award winning director Bille August has often based his films on novels—notable examples are Martin Andersen Nexø’s *Pelle the Conqueror*, Peter Høeg’s *Smilla’s Feeling for Snow*, and Pascal Mercier’s *Night Train to Lisbon*. Three years ago Bille August’s version of Henrik Pontoppidan’s *Lykke-Per* (*Lucky Per*) was released. *A Fortunate Man*, as the film is called, generated renewed interest in Pontoppidan’s works, not least among younger generations who might have come across the writer in Danish classes but had perhaps found him rather stuffy.



Henrik Pontoppidan

The film by the two-time Palme d‘Or winner Bille August is available on Netflix and Amazon.

In some respects the film version (*A Fortunate Man* is also the title of the latest translation of the book *Lykke-Per*) differs from Pontoppidan’s novel, but what is important is that Bille August convincingly portrays the protagonist who breaks with his parents and siblings, pursues his ambitions, and ruthlessly uses people before he finds himself struggling with identity issues and existential questions and finds peace of a kind as a virtual hermit.

Pontoppidan may seem a very odd name for a Dane and in fact Henrik Pontoppidan disliked it intensely and poured scorn on his distant ancestors who had found it appropriate to Latinise their original Danish surname, Broby, putting ‘Pontoppidan’ together from *bro* (meaning ‘bridge’—*pons* in Latin) and *by* (meaning ‘town’—*oppidum* in Latin).

Although Henrik Pontoppidan always claimed that he was never a fully committed follower of the critic Georg Brandes—'St. George' as he called him after Brandes's death—he was in many respects a writer who during the Modern Breakthrough in the late nineteenth century adhered to Brandes's dictum that a country's literature is only truly alive if it tackles issues such as religion, politics, social class, gender roles, and the emancipation of women. In the short story 'Eagle's Flight', he was also 'modern' in the sense that he turned Hans Andersen's message in 'The Ugly Duckling' upside down, stressing that environment is more important than heredity.

Pontoppidan shows great psychological insight when portraying both female and male characters and has the ability to show personality in crisp adjectives and nouns. His narrative technique may seem straightforward, but is in fact multi-layered; he wrote in a naturalist and realist style, but always with a twist. It is impossible to pin him down as his novels and short stories are full of irony. Propelled by social indignation, he consistently attacked the right wing anti-democratic governments of the last decades of the nineteenth century, while also attacking what he considered the Danes' propensity for mediocrity and complacency. He dissociated himself from his clerical background—generations of clergymen—but vicars feature prominently in his works and it is obvious that his sympathies lie with troubled and searching souls rather than with self-indulgent administrators of Danish Church doctrine. While some of his texts seem to advocate sexual liberty for both sexes, others speak in favour of conventional family relationships. So reviewers, readers, and fellow writers were often puzzled—what did he really think about the issues of which he was writing? But his ambiguity and polyphony are rewarding features of his work, since he seems to be carrying on a discussion with his readers and with himself in book after book.

His penchant for revision also presents a challenge to critics and scholars. Pontoppidan must obviously have preferred his final version, but was some of the original freshness not lost when he deleted or changed words and sometimes whole chapters? In this connection his autobiography is of particular interest: originally in four slim volumes, it was later rewritten and published as one book, but still showed considerable diversification in important details.

Although he wrote several novellas and collections of short stories Pontoppidan's fame rests mainly on the three novels which were originally published in separate volumes and subsequently revised and condensed: *Det forjættede Land* (*The Promised Land*) (1891-1895), *Lykke-Per* (*Lucky Per*) (1898-1904), and *De Dødes Rige* (*The Realm of the Dead*) (1912-1916).They form a comprehensive picture of decades of Danish society, for example with regard to town and country, industrialisation, politics, values, and morals. *Lykke-Per*, often labelled the best Danish novel ever written, has often attracted special attention since the first chapters have been perceived as a thinly veiled autobiographical account.

When he was awarded the Nobel Prize in 1917 for 'his authentic descriptions of present-day life in Denmark' it was in fact only half a Nobel Prize, as influential members of the Swedish Academy found Pontoppidan a stodgy naturalist and therefore insisted that he share the prize with Karl Gjellerup, whom few people read today; in his youth Gjellerup was a supporter of Brandes's ideas, but he later turned to Indian mysticism, settled in Germany, and in due course wrote his books in German before translating them into Danish.

In a tribute written in 1927 when Pontoppidan turned 70, the German novelist Thomas Mann characterized him as 'a full-blooded storyteller who scrutinizes our lives and society so intensely he ranks within the highest class of European writers […] He judges his time and, as a true poet, points to a purer humanity.' Almost a hundred years later, few would disagree. Already in Pontoppidan's lifetime books and articles were published about him, but the most painstaking study of his life and works is the biography *Livsrusen* ('The lure of life') from 2019, consisting of 700 pages, with additional information on the internet—an impressive work in which Flemming Behrendt presents a spellbinding portrait with much new information, accounts for Pontoppidan's polyphonic writing, and compares first editions to later ones.

English translations of Henrik Pontoppidan's works in chronological order:

Lucky Per, translated by Naomi Lebowitz (after the fourth edition 1918). Published by Peter Lang, 2010. Reviewed by Fredric Jameson in *London Review of Books,* Oct. 2011.

Sad Tales from Denmark, translated by John Lynch. Published by Austin Macauley Publishers Ltd, 2015.

A Fortunate Man, translated by Paul Larkin (after the second edition 1905), with an afterword by Flemming Behrendt, founder of the Pontoppidan Society. Published by Museum Tusculanum Press, 2018.

Steen Andersen is the author of a number of collections of poems and of articles on Aksel Sandemose, one of which was published in CoScan Magazine 2020/2.

Anna of Denmark

Queen of England, Scotland and Ireland Part 2

by Margot Blanchard

Queen Anna in hunting costume with her dogs
Painting (1617) by Paul van Somer

In 1603 on the death of Queen Elizabeth, James VI of Scotland was declared King of England and Ireland, and travelled to London to great acclaim. A few weeks later his wife, Anna, with her chosen ladies, son Henry, daughter Elizabeth and a huge retinue followed him. Her progress was quite sensational—huge crowds gathered everywhere.

The joint coronation of James and Anna took place on 25 July at Westminster Abbey. James called himself King of Great Britain, the first time the countries of England, Scotland and Ireland had been united under one monarchy. It was a comparatively low-key affair as the plague was raging in London.

James and Anna then set off on a progress around the south of England, attracting large crowds and gatherings of the nobility, especially at Althorpe, where Ben Jonson provided the entertainment and commented on 'the multitudinous press' (of people). All the nobility were there. The character 'Nobody' in the entertainment began his speech with 'Queen, Prince, Duke, Earls, Countesses'.

Anna set up her own court and turned to artistic pursuits through which she was able to wield a great deal of influence both at home and abroad.

As part of the court Christmas entertainments in 1603, Anna produced her first masque, *The Vision of the Twelve Goddesses* by Samuel Daniel. Masques were traditional court entertainments, but Anna took the genre to completely new levels. The main performers were ladies, and not just any ladies: they were the ladies Anna had assembled around her, the influential noblewomen of her Bed Chamber. The costumes were spectacular: cloth of gold and silver was ransacked from Queen Elizabeth's wardrobe, and they were embroidered with gold and peacock feathers. All were bedecked with jewels—Anna wore £100,000 worth of gems. The theme of the masque was peace, in celebration of the recent treaty with Spain. Anna played the role of Pallas Athena rather than Juno, the queen of the goddesses. Athena had traditionally been associated with Queen Elizabeth.

The following year Anna employed Inigo Jones and Ben Jonson to produce a masque called the *Masque of Blackness*. It caused quite a scandal because Anna and her ladies had painted their faces, arms and legs black to represent the twelve daughters of Niger, instead of wearing masks. At the time Anna was six months pregnant. The plot revolves around an argument as to who are the most beautiful goddesses in the world. It is impossible to describe in a few words the magnificence of the performance. The stage was 40 feet square. Beneath it was machinery to produce effects such as the ladies riding on a storm-tossed sea in a giant floating seashell. The light was 'dazzling'. And of course, it cost fortunes.

Torchbearer of Oceania in The Masque of Blackness
Costume design: Ben Jonson

The masques usually had a political subtext. Blackness was an issue at the time—it was the age of exploration and more black faces were to be seen in London. Shakespeare produced *Othello* in the same year. *Blackness* and the later *Masque of Beauty* (1608) explored the idea of assimilation, and praised James as a 'sun king', bringer of light.

In 1609 *The Masque of Queens* included an 'antemasque ' or 'antimasque' which took place before the main performance and featured twelve witches 'in their ugly hell', played by men, who plan to sow chaos into the world. Twelve famous and virtuous queens frighten them away. James was obsessed with witchcraft. Shakespeare produced *Macbeth* in the same Christmas season.

Anna danced in six masques between 1604 and 1611, and remained involved for the rest of her life. The masques were held in the Hampton Court Great Hall, or Whitehall Banqueting House. Shakespeare's plays were also performed there.

All of the masques were grand entertainments, with elaborate settings and costumes and promoted a tradition of women on the stage, which was not allowed in the public arena; Henrietta Maria, wife of Charles I, later developed the concept of female performance and introduced speaking parts for women. Masques evolved into opera, and the antemasque to pantomime. They were attended by nobility and ambassadors from far and wide, and invitations were highly prized. In this way Anna could confer status on those she favoured and influence international diplomacy.

Besides this, she patronized an acting company inherited from Elizabeth called The Queen's Servants, who performed at the Red Bull in Clerkenwell. They even sometimes teamed up with Shakespeare's King's Men. She also patronized a troupe of boy players called Children of the Queen's Revels.

In 1606, Anna's brother, Christian IV of Denmark, paid a state visit to England. He attended a banquet and a masque of Solomon and the Queen of Sheba. Both kings were able to consume enormous amounts of alcohol without too much effect; not so the courtiers and the players. Sir John Harrington wrote: 'The Lady who did play the Queen's part did carry most precious gifts to both their Majesties: but, forgetting the steps arising to the canopy, overset her caskets into his Danish Majesties lap, and fell at his feet. [...] The entertainment went forward and most of the presenters went backward, or fell down: wine did so occupy their upper chambers …'

Anna had inherited a love of ballads and song from her mother Sophie, and besides incorporating song into her masques she encouraged and patronized several musicians and painters. John Dowland spent time at her brother Christian IV's court in Denmark and dedicated his famous *Lachrimae* to her. She supported many artists and greatly expanded the Royal Collection.

Mostly ignored by historians until recently, Anna had great influence on English theatre, the role of women, and also the politics of the day. Her masques are regarded as crucial to the development of female performance, and she and the powerful ladies around her furthered the careers of poets, artists and playwrights, among them Shakespeare and Thomas Nash, as well as Inigo Jones, Ben Jonson, John Donne and John Dowland. She fought for many of her friends in a turbulent period of plots, assassinations, imprisonments and banishments, including the Gunpowder Plot.

Throughout all this activity Anna gave birth to seven children and suffered several miscarriages. Only Henry, Elizabeth and Charles survived to adulthood, and the great tragedy of her life was the death of Henry, who shared her love of the arts, at the age of eighteen. Anna was of course devastated.

She died in 1619. It is a blessing that she did not live to see her other son, Charles, executed in 1649. Her daughter Elizabeth, who became Queen of Bohemia and was the grandmother of George I, lived to be 65.

The information in this paper is mainly from:

Leeds Barroll, *Anna of Denmark, Queen of England, A Cultural Biography*. Published by University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001

Clare McManus, *Women on the Renaissance Stage*. Published by Manchester University Press, 2002

Eva Griffith, *A Jacobean Company and its Playhouse*. Published by Cambridge University Press, 2013

Margot Blanchard is a member of York Anglo-Scandinavian Society.
Part 1 of her article on Anna of Denmark was published in CoScan Magazine 2020/2.

What happened to my parents during the German occupation of Norway

by Dag H. Kjelldahl

Aksel Wilhelm and Edith Kjelldahl

During the war, Norway had to provide food for up to 300,000 German soldiers, and people in Oslo who, like my parents, did not get food parcels from relatives in the country often starved. My mother managed to get some food through friendship with a German officer, who took her to a restaurant now and then, which would not have pleased my father and his associates in the resistance. My mother also needed food for my brother, who was only seven when Norway was attacked (I was born in 1947).

My father managed to get to Sweden, where Norwegian refugees were organising military training (called 'police training' because of Swedish neutrality, and therefore secret). My father helped train dogs for military purposes to be used back in Norway after the Germans had, hopefully, lost the war.

The Norwegian resistance soon managed to help my mother to join my father, and in the depths of winter put her and my young brother on a train which stopped near the Swedish border. They had been given the name of a farm where they would spend the night before joining a party to ski across to Sweden. There were German soldiers on the train, and my mother was so terrified that she feared being asked where she was going and revealing the name of the farm, as she had not been supplied with a credible alternative destination.

The Norwegian group skied across the border at night with what was called a 'border pilot' as guide. He made them remain totally silent as they neared the border, which was patrolled by German troops with Alsatian dogs. At this sensitive moment my mother realised that my young brother was missing, either in front or behind. This was desperate, as they could not use torches. My mother, as all mothers would have done, started calling my brother's name out loud, breaking the silence and putting the whole group in danger. They tried to calm her down, but she was panicking. In the end he turned up and was mortified at having made his mother so scared.

They reached a lake covered in snow. Electric light was streaming out of a building on the far side in Sweden, where there was no wartime blackout. The border pilot turned back, and after the half-starved refugees had skied across

the lake the Swedes gave them a hearty meal. My mother and brother were able to stay at my father's Norwegian military camp, where large and aggressive dogs of various sorts, from private homes where the owners could not control them, were used for training.

My parents were obviously happy to be reunited under happier conditions than in occupied Norway, but handling those ferocious dogs was not for everybody. On one occasion, though, my parents felt completely safe inside a room with four such dogs, because they were all chained in separate corners, so they could not fight each other. My parents were standing in the centre of the floor, canoodling, when an Alsatian became jealous. It jumped out of its corner and went for my father's throat. My father just saw the dog jumping at him and heard its powerful teeth click together only centimetres in front of his throat. He was more careful with those dogs after that.

After the war, when my parents had returned to Norway, my father once tried to teach my mother how to shoot with a machine pistol. They were standing in front of a row of trees, and my father told her to steady the gun so as to prevent it from pulling sideways because of the long magazine mounted on its side. My mother aimed at one of the trees and pulled the trigger, but she was not sufficiently prepared for the strong sideways pull and a stream of bullets plastered the trees, bits of bark flying. Then out from the forest came a man running, hands up in the air, shouting 'Don't shoot, don't shoot!' He had been behind the trees, picking bilberries.

Mats Burström, Selective Remembrance: Memories of a Second World War Refugee Camp in Sweden, *Norwegian Archaeological Review*, Vol. 42, No. 2, 2009:

…at the end of 1943 the Swedish government decided to permit camps for training Norwegians as a 'police reserve'. The official motivation for this was the need for reliable policemen to uphold law and order in Norway in the event of a German retreat or surrender. In reality, however, this was a camouflage for military training camps.

During the war Sweden trained and equipped 1600 Norwegian policemen and an infantry force—the so called 'police reserve' (Norwegian *Reservpolitiet*)—consisting of approximately 12,000 soldiers and officers. Also, about 6000 Norwegians were allowed to leave Sweden in order to join forces under Allied command. All this was clearly in contradiction to Sweden's official neutrality policy. This is probably also the reason why this is not a very well recognized part of Swedish history, and why the Norwegian 'police reserve' has been called 'the forgotten army'.

Educationalist Dag H. Kjelldahl set up a 'hands-on' science museum, Whitby Wizard, which he ran for ten years. He has now retired to paint and write. His oil paintings on canvas can be found by googling his name. His book Bear Iceland *was published in 2006.*

One Thing after Another:
Assemblies and Assembly Places in the Viking World

Conference report by Katherine Holman

The Richard Hall Symposium has become an annual event, linked to the programme of activities that takes place each February as part of the Jorvik Viking Festival. Due to lockdown, this year's day conference *One Thing after Another: Assemblies and Assembly Places in the Viking World*, took place online on 19 February as part of the rebranded and virtual Jorvik Viking Thing. In total, four speakers examined the evidence for Viking assemblies (known as 'things') across the Scandinavian world, with a particular focus on the evidence from Britain and Ireland.

Dr Alex Sanmark, from the University of the Highlands and Islands, opened proceedings with her comprehensive review of a range of legal, archaeological and place-name evidence for assembly places and how they functioned in Viking and medieval Scandinavian society. The review reflects her involvement in The Assembly Project (TAP), 'an international collaborative project investigating the first systems of governance in Northern Europe', details of which can be found at www.khm.uio.no/english/research/previous-projects/assembly-project. Particularly interesting was the way in which the project's research has highlighted key features of assembly sites, and Dr Sanmark outlined how geophysical and archaeological excavation has been used to explore and identify sites such as Lunde near Tjølling in Vestfold (Norway). One of the most distinctive features of Lunde was several hundred cooking pits that were clearly visible in the geophysical survey, highlighting the way in which communities came together at such sites and often used them over a considerable period.

The next speaker was Edmund Southworth, Director of Manx National Heritage, whose talk surveyed the Viking legacy of Tynwald, the parliament of the Isle of Man. Tynwald (derived from the Old Norse *Þingvöllr* 'assembly plain') claims to be the oldest continuous parliament in the world, having met since its establishment by Norse settlers on the island over a thousand years ago. Each year, on Tynwald Day (usually celebrated on 5 July), the parliament meets at Tynwald Hill, an artificial four-tiered mound, near the Royal Chapel of St

John's. The presence of a tenth-century rune-inscribed stone at St John's, found in the walls of the church, illustrates the antiquity of the site, which was once the centre of the Norse kingdom of the 'Southern Isles' off Scotland's west coast.

After a break for lunch, Professor Stephen Driscoll, of the University of Glasgow, gave a presentation on recent investigations of royal centres at Forteviot, Govan and Scone in Scotland, examining the cultural iconography used by rulers on monumental sculpture found at these sites. His talk highlighted the complex geopolitics of the period 800-1100 in Scotland, where Pictish, Gaelic and Norse rulers vied for power and reshaped Scotland as a Christian kingdom, using these key locations to declare their power, authority, and aspirations. Further information about the work undertaken by Professor Driscoll is available at www.gla.ac.uk/schools/humanities/research/archaeologyresearch/currentresearch/serf.

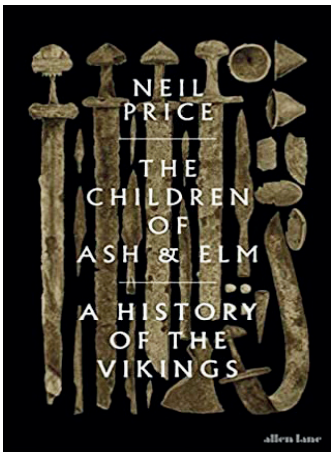
The final session of the day was presented by Dr Stephen Harrison, also of the University of Glasgow. His talk focused on new evidence from Viking-Age Dublin, particularly the location and form of the *longphort* established around 841 AD and its 'Thingmote', or assembly place, which has been traditionally located at Hoggen Green, now College Green. Harrison presented a range of place-name, archaeological and antiquarian evidence that suggests a different location for the assembly site, and he also introduced a recently-announced project to explore the close political, social and economic links between York and Dublin during the period of Scandinavian rule: www.nui.ie/news/2020/YorkDublinAxis/default.asp.S

The sessions were followed by questions and a panel discussion. Despite the online format, which reduced the opportunity for informal discussion over lunch and coffee, the day offered many new and interesting perspectives on how law and order functioned in Scandinavia and in settlements that Vikings established in the British Isles. The sessions also illustrated how new archaeological evidence can be used alongside other sources to refine and revise our understanding of this exciting chapter in the history of northern Europe.

Dr Richard Hall was one of the foremost archaeologists on the Viking age. In a career spent almost entirely in the city of York, he not only transformed understanding of pre-Norman urban development, but did so in a manner that combined scholarship and meticulous archaeological technique with a flair for enhancing public awareness and understanding.

Richard Hall's interest and expertise led him to advise numerous international excavations, including those at Birka, Sweden in 1984, the Navan project, the Armagh project, the Forsand migration period village reconstruction in Norway, and archaeological projects for the new Danish Science Foundation 1990-93.

From the bookshelf



Review by Peter Addyman

Neil Price, *The Children of Ash and Elm —A History of the Vikings*
Published by Allen Lane Penguin Random House UK, 2020
ISBN-978-0-241-28398-1

Neil Price, Swedish Research Council Distinguished Professor and Professor of Archaeology at Uppsala University, recently generated global headlines with his re-assessment of a grave excavated in the 19th century at Birka, the Viking trading settlement on an island in Lake Mälaren, Sweden. The grave was evidently that of a warrior buried accompanied by a panoply of weapons. Re-examination of the skeleton using modern techniques had demonstrated that this formidable warrior had been a woman, sparking debate about Viking war women on the one hand but also (hence the global interest) touching 21st century sensibilities about gender typing.

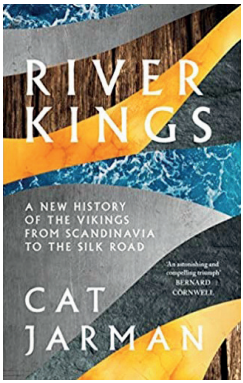
Like so many topics, the Birka grave—despite its sudden world-wide interest—gets only the briefest reference in Price's new book, which is a 600-page compendium of pretty well everything that is currently known about Scandinavia's Viking age, the troubled conditions that preceded it, and the traditions it left behind. Recent decades have seen huge advances in archaeological knowledge, including excavation of sites of all types, exponential increase in artefact discoveries through metal detecting, and new or improved techniques of examination, analysis, dating and interpretation. Dating techniques have improved. New techniques of stable isotope analysis of human bones enable us to determine the birthplace of Scandinavians found abroad—and those from abroad who died in Scandinavia, whether as immigrants or slaves.

Evidence has come not only from the Scandinavian countries themselves but from a huge tract of the Northern Hemisphere, from the Asian steppe to North America, that at one time or another came under the influence of or was invaded by or visited by Viking-age travellers. Price claims to have visited over 50 countries in his search for it.

To all that are added the written sources. There are contemporary accounts by Scandinavians or by others who came into contact with them, often allowing the incidence of raiding or campaigns of conquest to be accurately followed and dated. In addition there are accounts from Icelandic sagas and histories, most

dating from after the Viking age but often incorporating earlier material. These have similarly been the subject of intense scholarly research, debate and revision in recent years, and are an important source of our knowledge of Viking beliefs—the Viking creation myth for example—with which Price begins his book. We find the god Odin and his brothers Vili and Vé walking along the strand, finding two hunks of driftwood, carving from them the first man and the first woman, naming the man Askr, the Ash Tree, and the woman Embla, the Elm, and giving them life and speech. From them all of humankind were descended...

A substantial part of *The Children of Ash and Elm* is devoted to referencing the sources from which the story in the main text is derived. This, efficiently and comprehensively done, is a valuable quarry for anyone who wants to take the subject further. It acknowledges the value still of several older works, one, Peter Foote and David M Wilson's *The Viking Achievement*, published as long ago as 1970, and another Price's own publication with Stefan Brink, *The Viking World* of 2008. Clearly, however, *The Children of Ash and Elm*, though not easy to read because of its extremely tight binding and inexplicably sooty maps, will be the book to go to for the 2020s.



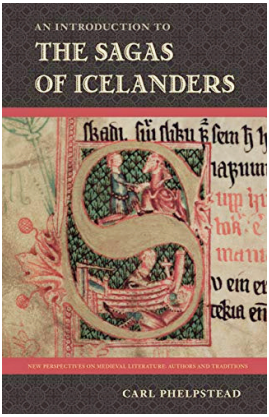
Review by Peter Addyman

Cat Jarman, *River Kings: A New History of the Vikings from Scandinavia to the Silk Roads*.
Published by William Collins, Feb 2021
ISBN- 978-0-00-835307-0

Cat Jarman is a distinguished bio-archaeologist who uses forensic technique such as isotope analysis, DNA analysis and radiocarbon dating to elucidate the significance of buried human remains. We first find her re-evaluating the burials excavated at Repton, on the River Trent in Derbyshire, associated with the 873-4 winter camp of the Viking Great Army that ravaged England in these years. Notable among them were the remains of a slaughtered warrior and a young adult—genetics suggest his son—who were both, as strontium isotope analysis indicated, possibly of Danish origin, evidently buried together. Jarman uses historical sources to seek to establish their identity.

In addition, also studied, were the remains of 264 individuals, buried

together as mixed charnel in a re-used earlier building, and thought perhaps to be members of the Great Army and its followers. It was here that a single carnelian bead was found—bright red, and of a material that originated in India, that becomes the leitmotif of the rest of the book, tracing how it may have travelled from Gujarat to Derbyshire. The likely routes, linked at each stage by water travel, allow us to visit some of the most renowned sites of Viking age archaeology, accurately interpreted here in what in other ways seems like a novel, and to make our way through the Baltic, down the Dnieper into the Black Sea and make ultimate links to Constantinople, Baghdad, and the Silk Routes to India.



Review by Rory McTurk

Carl Phelpstead, *An introduction to the sagas of Icelanders*. Foreword by R. Barton Palmer and Tison Pugh. Published by the University Press of Florida (Gainesville, FL), 2020
ISBN-978-0-813-06651-6

The sagas introduced in this book, the sagas of Icelanders or family sagas, the anonymous prose narratives composed mainly in the thirteenth century and dealing with events supposed to have happened in Iceland in the so-called Saga Age (930-1030 AD), are by no means the only Old Icelandic literary monuments. Others include the Poetic Edda, a thirteenth-century collection of anonymous poems of varying dates about gods and legendary heroes; the so-called 'mythical-heroic' or 'legendary' sagas, the best-known of which is the anonymous *Völsunga saga*, containing the story of Sigurðr and Brynhildr; and the Prose Edda, a treatise on mythology and poetics attributed to Snorri Sturluson (d. 1241). Carl Phelpstead, the author of the present book, is well aware of the existence of these, but is led into error, regrettably, by an insufficient awareness of how they relate to two in particular of the sagas of Icelanders, *Gísla saga* and *Laxdœla saga*, which are among those to which he gives special attention.

On p. 122 Phelpstead writes: 'Having learned of his wife's infidelity, Þorgrímr at first refuses to have Ásgerðr in bed with him, …'. This is incorrect. It is not Þorgrímr, but Gísli's brother Þorkell who at first refuses to let his wife Ásgerðr join him in bed after he has overheard a conversation between Ásgerðr and Gísli's wife, Auðr, in which Auðr had strongly hinted that Ásgerðr was having an extramarital affair with Auðr's brother

Vésteinn. One might have expected Þorkell, believing this, to take revenge on Vésteinn, but when Vésteinn is killed in mysterious circumstances the indications are that it is Þorgrímr rather than Þorkell who has done the deed: Þorgrímr himself hints as much, as Phelpstead rightly notes. The reason for this is that Þorkell and Vésteinn had sworn an oath of blood brotherhood by which Þorgrímr was not bound; he was thus free to take revenge on Vésteinn on Þorkell's behalf. In making Þorgrímr the jealous husband of Ásgerðr Phelpstead is mistakenly conflating him with Þorkell.

The swearing of an oath of blood brotherhood recalls the story told in different ways in the Poetic and Prose Eddas and *Völsunga saga* of how the brothers Gunnarr and Högni swear oaths of blood brotherhood with the dragon-slayer Sigurðr, who becomes the husband of their sister Guðrún having earlier been tricked by sorcery into forgetting Brynhildr, his betrothed. When Brynhildr is later deceived into marrying Gunnarr and then finds out that Sigurðr was involved in the deception, albeit unwittingly, she urges Gunnarr to kill Sigurðr. Both Gunnarr and Högni are reluctant to do this, since they are bound to Sigurðr by the oaths of blood brotherhood, but Guttormr, who is described variously as a brother or half-brother of theirs and is not bound by the oaths, is persuaded to carry out the deed. Guttormr's position in this story is thus comparable to that of Þorgrímr in *Gísla saga*. Knowledge of this story, which clearly influenced *Gísla saga*, is helpful in following that saga's somewhat obscure narrative, and might have saved Phelpstead from the error noted above.

The influence of this same story is apparent in *Laxdœla saga*, of which Phelpstead also gives an account. Central to *Laxdœla saga* is the love-triangle of Kjartan, Guðrún, and Bolli, with Guðrún at the triangle's apex; this corresponds to the triangle of Sigurðr, Brynhildr, and Gunnarr in the older story, with Brynhildr at the apex. What happens in *Laxdœla saga*, to simplify a little, is that Guðrún, in love with Kjartan but married to Bolli, urges Bolli to kill Kjartan after hearing of Kjartan's marriage to a woman named Hrefna, just as Brynhildr in the older story urges her husband Gunnarr to kill Sigurðr, to whom she had been betrothed, but who is now married, through trickery, to Guðrún, as shown above. This Guðrún is not of course the same person as the one in *Laxdœla saga*; she corresponds to Hrefna in *Laxdœla saga* whereas the Guðrún of *Laxdœla saga* corresponds to Brynhildr in the older story, as appears in the two love-triangles described above. When Phelpstead writes, on p. 139: 'Just as her namesake in the *Poetic Edda* incited her brothers to kill Sigurðr, Guðrún [in *Laxdœla saga*] goads her husband into killing the man she was to marry,' only the second part of this statement is correct. It was not Guðrún's namesake, but Brynhildr, who urges the killing of Sigurðr in the older story, and she incites not her brothers to carry it out, but her husband Gunnarr, who then consults with his brother Högni and (half-)brother Guttormr.

These are serious errors, which it is hoped will be corrected in a later edition.

We all make mistakes, of course, but in an introductory volume of any kind it is surely important to be as accurate as possible, and in an introduction to the sagas of Icelanders it is hardly less important to stress the value of studying them in relation to other forms of Old Icelandic literature. An example not so much of error as of lost opportunity in this last respect may be given from Phelpstead's account of the so-called 'poets' sagas' *Kormáks saga*, *Gunnlaugs saga ormstungu*, *Bjarnar saga Hítdœlakappa*, and *Hallfreðar saga*, which form a group of their own among the sagas of Icelanders. Phelpstead rightly points out (p. 102) that in each of these the eponymous poet fails to marry the woman he loves, for more or less obscure reasons. He could have considered here the possibility that confusion in thirteenth-century Iceland as to the nature of Sigurðr's relations with Brynhildr, reflected in the discrepant accounts of these in *Völsunga saga* and the Prose Edda, may have given rise to the impression of a wavering hero that each of these poets' sagas conveys.

This book reads at present more like preparatory notes, some needing to be erased, than as a solid introduction to its subject. It is greatly to be hoped that this and other reviews may help to guide the author towards a revised and improved version.

Scandinavian/Nordic

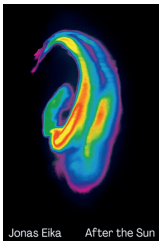
Keith J Hayward, and Steve Hall, 'Through Scandinavia, Darkly: A Criminological Critique of Nordic Noir'
The British Journal of Criminology, Volume 61, Issue 1, January 2021, pp 1–21, July 2020; available as pdf on https://bit.ly/3ffEJil

From the list of contents: Nordic Noir: a review of definitive themes and cultural origins; Trouble in Paradise: Nordic Noir's political conscience; A nightmare that can make us happy; Paradise lost?: Nordic Noir's political amnesia.

Johanna Gillbro, *The Scandinavian Skincare Bible: the definitive guide to understanding your skin*
Published by Scribe Publications, Dec 2020

A comprehensive guide, in which skin scientist Johanna Gillbro tells us how best to care for the skin—and what not to do. Think drinking water will replenish your skin? Think again. More products, better skin? Nope. And an expensive product does not guarantee reliable results.

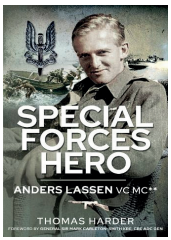
Danish



Jonas Eika, *After the Sun,* translated by Sherilyn Nicolette Hellberg
Published by Lolli, Aug 2021

In the five stories that comprise *After the Sun*, a missed meeting in Copenhagen catapults an IT consultant into derivative trading, a young boy working at a beach club in Cancún struggles to survive, a love triangle in London's underworld falls to pieces, and a grieving man tries to merge with a strange machine in the Nevada desert.

After the Sun was awarded the Nordic Council Literature Prize in 2019**.**

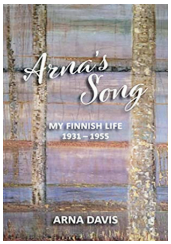


Thomas Harder, *Special Forces Hero: Anders Lassen VC MC****
Published by Pen & Sword Books Ltd , Feb 2021

Anders Lassen became a highly decorated Special Forces legend and the only non-Commonwealth recipient of the Victoria Cross. This biography, a worthy tribute to an outstanding soldier, is also a superb account of the numerous special force operations Anders Lassen was involved in.

The author gave a talk about the book at an online event as part of the Anglo-Danish Society's spring programme.

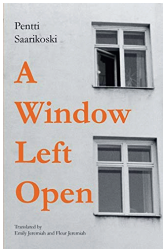
Finnish



Arna Davis, *Arna's Song: My Finnish Life 1931-55,*
Paperback published by Cicero Press, Dec 2020

The tale of a girl growing up in Finland before, during and after the Second World War to the day that she leaves her country of birth.

Arna Davis is a member of the Anglo-Finnish Society, with many years on its Council. She was a founder member of Finn-Guild, about which she wrote an article for CoScan Magazine 2015/2. (Finn-Guild later folded.)

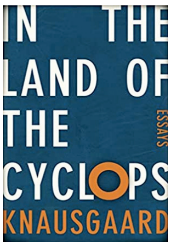


Pentti Saarikoski , *A Window Left Open*,
translated by Emily and Fleur Jeremiah
Published by Norvik Press, Nov 2020

This dual-language edition places the original Finnish poems side-by-side with their English translations, inviting readers to explore the elegant craftsmanship of Saarikoski's use of language.

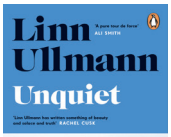
Pentti Saarikoski was a prolific translator and journalist, and a revered modernist poet, central to the Finnish literary scene of the 1960s and 1970s. His inventiveness, warmth and humour have made him something of a national treasure in Finland.

Norwegian



Karl Ove Knausgaard, *In the Land of the Cyclops,*
translated by Martin Aitken
Published by Harvill Secker, Jan 2021

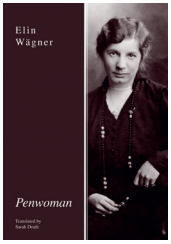
A wide-ranging essay collection from the author of *My Struggle* exploring how philosophy, art and our daily and creative lives intertwine. These essays capture Knausgaard's ability to mediate between the deeply personal and the universal, demonstrating his trademark self-scrutiny and his deep longing for an authentic vision, understanding, and experience of the world.



Linn Ullman, *Unquiet,*
translated by Thilo Reinhard
Pocket edition published by Penguin, June 2021

The author is the daughter of the renowned Swedish filmmaker Ingmar Bergman. Her mother is the actress Liv Ullman whom he directed and once loved. Each summer of her childhood, the daughter visits the father at his remote Fårö island home in the Baltic Sea. The intricacies of their family life are portrayed in the book.

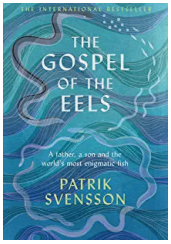
Swedish



Elin Wägner, *Penwoman,* translated by Sarah Death
Published by Norvik Press, 2021

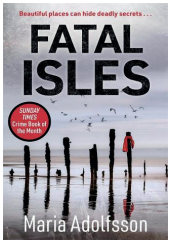
***Penwoman,* originally published in 1910, is the classic novel about the Swedish women's suffrage movement. But it also explores a range of other issues affecting the situation of women in Sweden at the time, from the role of paid work to matters of morality, eroticism and love. The style is refreshingly disrespectful and witty.**

Elin Wägner began her career as a journalist, but went on to become one of Sweden's leading writers.



Patrik Svensson, *The Gospel of the Eels: A Father, a Son and the World's Most Enigmatic Fish,* translated by Agnes Broomé
Published by Pan Macmillan, Aug 2020

A fascinating blend of nature writing, memoir and philosophy, in which Svensson explores human attempts to understand the elusive life of eels, as well as what it means to live with questions we can't answer. Through the exploration of eels in literature and the history of science as well as modern marine biology, we get to know this peculiar animal.



Maria Adolfsson, *Fatal Isles—Doggerland*
Paperback published by Zaffre, Feb 2021

A remote island. A brutal murder. A secret hidden in the past . . . In the middle of the North Sea, between the UK and Denmark, lies the beautiful and rugged fictional island nation of Doggerland. Detective Inspector Karen Eiken Hornby has returned to the main island, Heimoe, after many years in London and has worked hard to become one of the few female police officers in Doggerland.

[CoScan Magazine 2018/1 has an article about the real Doggerland.]

CoScan Trust Fund

2021 report by Brita Green

During the thirty years that my Trust Fund notes go back, we have helped more than 500 young people to go to Scandinavia, and have managed to collect—and give away—some £35,000. Interestingly, not very much has changed over the years, apart from a slow and modest increase in the size of the grants awarded. The number of applicants has remained fairly steady. Most years (seventeen of the thirty) we have had between eleven and nineteen applications, and never fewer than six or more than twenty-five. In 1992 we had sixteen applicants, eleven of whom shared a sum of £750, and in 2000 there were fourteen applicants, twelve of whom shared £1000—the first time we reached that amount. Ten years later, in 2010, we gave a total of £1550 to thirteen individual applicants plus two groups. The most we have given in any one year was £1760, in 2015. In 2020, of course, things were different because of the pandemic: we awarded grants to nine people, but in the end only four were able to travel, sharing £550. What has actually changed somewhat over the years is the type of applicant. We used to get more applications from school-age youngsters, scouts and guides, for example, but latterly university students have dominated.

Like last year, the Trust Fund group—Tony Bray, Hugh Williamson and I—had to resort to a virtual meeting: we met on Zoom on 12 April. Our treasurer pointed out that the major regular donation from YASS (Lucia in the Minster, which did not happen in 2020, and may not happen in 2021 either) was missing from our income this year. Fund-raising must be on our agenda. However, mainly due to the fact that we spent so little in 2020, he could report a healthy balance.

We had twelve applications for 2021, and decided to offer seven individual grants of between £100 and £200, and a group grant of £500, totalling £1590—if all offers can be taken up—and leaving us with just enough for another year's grants if all our fund-raising efforts should fail. As usual, activities planned this year are varied: language study, archaeology, 'sustainable development and engineering', and 'environmental changes at higher latitude'. The group is off to Iceland on a research expedition studying 'native animals, their health and behaviour'. Two of the individual applicants are also going to Iceland, three to Norway, one to Denmark and one to Sweden.

As always, we are very grateful to our individual donors, in particular to Michael Smith for his regular support, and to two societies, YASS and the Scottish Norwegian Society and, of course, to the CoScan executive committee, for their donations. We appeal to all the member societies for help during these unprecedented times. One-off or regular contributions would all be very welcome!

With only four people managing to travel in 2020, we have only four reports, three of which are published in this issue.

CoScan Trust Fund
PRIZE-WINNING REPORT 2020

Scanning brains during the pandemic

by Marta Topor

I am a neuropsychology PhD student primarily based at the University of Surrey, England. I have always wanted to arrange a visit to another country to learn new research skills and meet inspiring scientists in my field of work.

Scandinavian countries were an obvious first choice. My goal was to learn how to use a brain activity measurement method called magnetoencephalography (MEG). MEG records the magnetic brain activity using a large machine located in a magnetically shielded room. Leading manufacturers of MEG technology are based in Finland and Sweden and there are many research groups conducting ground-breaking MEG studies within this region. They meet annually as part of the MEG NORD initiative to share and discuss the latest advancements in the use of MEG for clinical and neuroscience research.

I reached out to the National Research Facility for Magnetoencephalography (NatMEG) at Karolinska Institutet in Stockholm, Sweden. Karolinska Institutet is a prestigious medical university, and the team at NatMEG investigate a range of health conditions relevant to my own work. I was absolutely thrilled when I found out that they would like to host me as a visiting student for two and half months—I felt that this opportunity could not be more ideal.

Working at NatMEG was a great experience. I have learnt a range of practical neuroscience skills. I assisted with a project that aimed to develop a protocol for the study of movement control in Parkinson's disease. First, I had a brain scan myself and then I assisted with brain scans conducted for the purpose of the project.

The author with electrodes prepared for a scan

Recording my brain activity at the National Research Facility for MEG

I received great support from the team at NatMEG, and as a result I was also able to learn advanced programming skills and make a lot of progress on my own PhD work. I hope that this short stay will result in high quality research reports published in scientific journals in the near future. It has certainly helped me to become a highly skilled scientist and will help to advance my career after I finish my PhD.

It must also be mentioned that the visit took place during a global pandemic! This caused a number of complications. Sweden was not on the UK travel corridor list for a very long time, and I was informed that this would prevent me from undertaking my visit. I had lost hope and thought that this great opportunity would have to be cancelled. But in the middle of September, Sweden was unexpectedly added to the list and I arranged my travel right away.

A further pandemic-related complication was the fact that most people who are normally based at Karolinska Institutet worked from home, and all in-person meetings were held online. This was challenging for an international visitor, as it was hard to integrate within the new environment. However, I joined two online journal clubs and attended regular team meetings with the NatMEG group. I generally tried to network and meet other researchers virtually, and I did not feel at all lonely throughout my stay. One of my neighbours was a fellow PhD student who also helped to make my time in Stockholm very special. When working in the MEG lab, we had to wear extra protective equipment and keep the environment sterile, but we were lucky to be able to continue working with participants who were keen to have a brain scan taken.

Despite the challenging circumstances, I also had a chance to explore Stockholm and the surrounding areas. I enjoyed visiting the museums before they closed due to the pandemic. I explored the beauty of the local nature when taking walks and jogging. I went on a 20 km walking trail around the Tyresta National Park. I also have very fond memories of relaxing in a small wooden sauna hut next to the sea in the town of Tyresö.

Looking for fairies in the magical Tyresta National Park

I also wanted to experience the culture of Sweden as much as I could during this short period of time. Some highlights include *fika* breaks (coffee and snack) with colleagues, and standing outside the Nobel Forum as this year's Nobel Prize laureate in medicine was announced.

I left Stockholm on Lucia day, but I did not miss the opportunity to eat many *lussekatt* buns (sweet saffron bread eaten around Lucia day). I also tried the *julmust* (traditional Christmas soda drink) and special *glögg* with *pepparkakor* (mulled wine and gingerbread biscuits).

I would like to end this report by expressing sincere gratitude to CoScan for supporting my visit to Sweden; a huge thank you to Mikkel Vinding for being a fantastic teacher and supervisor during my stay, and to the whole NatMEG team for the warm welcome I received; and huge thanks to my peers Dominika Radziun and Ada Juraś for introducing me to the Swedish way of life. I certainly hope to be back one day for a longer stay.

Spectating the announcement of the Nobel prize in medicine

Jazz and coffee in Oslo

by Michael Dunlop

The reason for my trip to Oslo was a 30-minute audition at the Norwegian Academy of Music. In the final year of my undergraduate jazz course, I had applied to do a postgraduate course in Oslo, but I wouldn't hear if I had an audition, or when it would be, until a couple of weeks beforehand. Of course I didn't want to run the risk of missing it, so I decided it was best to go for the whole week, brought two friends from my course along with me to play, and ended up having an enjoyable holiday.

Not everything went quite to plan, with bailiffs turning up at my flat (not looking for me or my flatmates I should add) just before I had to leave, train delays and extra charges at the British end, and a just-missed coach resulting in a 90-minute wait at the Norwegian end. (I probably spent too much time buying chocolate, which with hindsight was still absolutely worth it.) Still, we made it in one piece, and things could only get better!

Within a few days we had a favourite coffee spot along the river and always made sure to pass the nearby waterfall on the way into town. Having come to Oslo from London, this proximity to nature was a breath of fresh air—as was the friendliness of the people. While the locals initially seemed quiet, they were always happy to recommend places to visit and would often end up being quite chatty.

The author enjoying the spray of the Aker River
Photo: Dave Adsett

Now to the real reason for my trip—the music. I am really interested in the Nordic jazz scene and had never found anything quite like it in London, but from my first evening in Oslo I went to concerts almost every night, whether or not my friends were coming, and there was always plenty to choose from. Unfortunately my audition didn't go to plan, but that wouldn't stop me from making the most of the music scene while I could. Some highlights were an entire concert of solo double bass (courtesy of Sigurd Hole), and my encounter with a new instrument—the Hardanger fiddle (like a violin but with additional 'sympathetic' strings that make the sound brighter). But it wasn't these novelties that had got my ears' attention, it was rather the strength of the folk tradition and what seemed to be a lack of stylistic

Braving the frozen shallows of Svartkulp
Photo: Michael Dunlop

barriers in this music. These are cultural influences as much as they are musical, so it wouldn't have made much sense to leave Norway without having attempted to learn more about the history of the people and the place.

Time flies when you're having fun, and particularly so when you're walking everywhere in an effort to save money (which doesn't work so well if you stop for coffee as much as I do), but I did manage to tick off a few essentials: the *Folkemuseum*, Viking Ship Museum, Akershus Fortress and the Munch Museum, among others. These were really interesting, especially for learning about more recent Norwegian history. The Munch Museum even provided inspiration for a tattoo one of my friends decided to get in Oslo as a permanent reminder of our trip. It remains the one he regrets least.

Once we realised that it was actually pretty cheap to get around on public transport, we set off for Sognsvann, just to the north of the city on the metro line, and were amazed at how close at hand this huge frozen lake really was—it was like something from Scotland's Cairngorms, yet so near to the capital city. We took an unexpectedly long walk around it and its smaller neighbour Svartkulp, not without mishaps (my jeans still bear the scars from my misjudged steps), and the views were beautiful. I can certainly understand why these landscapes might inspire musicians, and anyone else for that matter.

As we were coming to the end of our trip, we decided finally to do some shopping—so far the infamous Norwegian prices had kept us away from most things, though noticeably not the coffee. It was only at this late stage that we discovered that not quite everything was as expensive as we'd previously thought. I came away with some presents for the family, and a bizarre record by Norwegian singer/guitarist Øystein Sunde, while one of my friends bought so many clothes he had to wear three coats on the journey home.

Though my audition—the reason we went to Norway in the first place—didn't go as I'd hoped, I gained a huge amount from the experience, and particularly from the wealth of live music I got to hear in Oslo, something that I haven't seen anywhere before or since. A week after arrival back in the UK, we all agreed: we'd happily do it all again.

Lifting Rocks in Iceland

by Ela Sefcikova

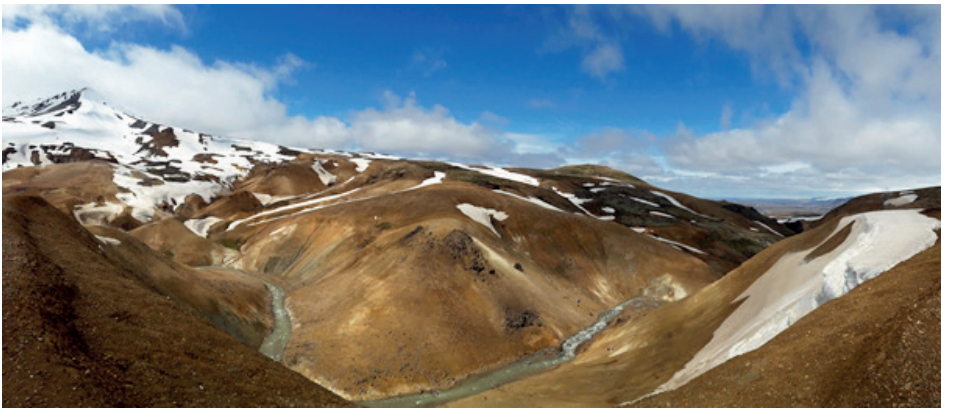
I found SEEDS ('SEE beyonD borderS') while looking for a gap year placement; I had studied medieval literature at university, including some courses on the Icelandic sagas and Norse myths, so Iceland was a place I had wanted to go to for a while. I was very excited to meet some locals, since I had spent years learning about the language and culture, and to travel around the island seeing the landscapes and the sites where the ancient chieftains and Vikings from the sagas lived.

SEEDS is an NGO (non-government organisation) which runs environmental conservation and awareness camps, hosting people from all over the world and enabling them to explore Iceland while learning about environmental issues and helping with environmental protection efforts. Each camp has its own focus, from photography in the Reykjavík area to tree planting in the remote east of Iceland. The camps are run by long-term volunteers, who stay for about five months and all live together in a big flat in Reykjavík. I was a logistics volunteer, so I did shopping and bakery runs, drove participants to their camps, and guided excursions.

I arrived in Iceland in a snowstorm at the end of February. The plane was barely able to land and I could see nothing out of the window—and soon, there was worse news. I had been in Iceland for about a week when we got our first case of corona and the country began to shut down. Since SEEDS relies on people coming from abroad to participate in camps, I was worried I would be sent home, but they decided to keep the long-term volunteers so that we could start running camps again when the country reopened.

The next three months were very quiet, and I had lots of time to get to know the other volunteers. There were eleven of us, all from different European countries, and we ended up doing everything together: cooking, movie marathons, long walks through the city. Lockdown in Iceland began to lift earlier than in other countries, due to its low population and effective track-and-trace system, and for a few weeks car rental and accommodation were very cheap, since there were no tourists. We took full advantage of this situation, travelling to Snæfellsnes and the Westfjords, and we had the glaciers, mountains and waterfalls all to ourselves. We were very lucky to be the only ones visiting places that are usually crowded with tourists, and to have such a supportive group that pulled each other through quarantine and went along with each other's crazy ideas (like sea swimming in March and midnight volleyball under the red summer sky).

By the end of May, we got news from some of our camp hosts that they would be able to run camps again, but only with long-term volunteers, since we lived together and didn't need to 'socially distance' from each other, just from the hosts. Since there wasn't much logistics work to do, I was sent to two different camps: one in Kerlingarfjöll in the highlands, and one in Húsafell, about



Kerlingarfjöll (Camp 1)

an hour's drive north of Reykjavík. The camp in Kerlingarfjöll provided some of the most dramatic landscapes we had seen in Iceland; the geothermal area with its bright yellow soil spans an entire valley, and you can see two glaciers from the mountains.

We spent most of our time fixing and building paths, which meant that we had to carry tools and materials up and down

The volunteering group (the author on the back left) at Húsafell (Camp 2)

the mountains every day. The views were worth it, though, and we couldn't complain, since we wanted to prove to our host that we could manage. When our camp leader had spoken to him on the phone before we arrived, he had seemed surprised that all of the volunteers would be women and asked her 'But can you lift rocks?'

The next camp was very different (although there were still rocks to be lifted); we split our time between working with a local artist, Páll Guðmundsson, and building a stone floor as part of an interfaith church and event space. We got to work with one of only four professional drystone wallers in Iceland, and in our spare time the camp host took us sightseeing. We walked on a glacier, climbed through lava caves and saw waterfalls—we even met the strongest man in the district, who could lift a 195kg rock and carry it 20m, but we still beat him and his brothers at football.

In July, we began hosting short-term volunteers as Iceland instituted its airport testing system, and I went back to doing logistics work until the end of August, when my placement ended. I drove excursions around the Reykjavík area, took participants to their activities, and helped with some maintenance work. So after all the disruption, I still got to do some of the work I had originally signed up for, even if it wasn't quite as glamorous as lifting rocks.

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A puffin from Látrabjarg in the Westfjords, Iceland

CoScan Travel Award—Prize Winning Photo 2020:

Ela Sefcikova

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