

# Anglo-Norse Review

## Anglo - Norse Society in London



*George V*



*Elizabeth II*



*George VI*

## Centenary 1918 - 2018



*Haakon VII*



*Harald V*



*Olav V*

# ANGLO-NORSE REVIEW

THE ANGLO-NORSE SOCIETY - LONDON

Patrons: H.M. Queen Elizabeth II

H.M King Harald

Hon. President: H.E. The Norwegian Ambassador. Chairman: Sir Richard Dales KCVO, CMG

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## NORSK-BRITISK FORENING-OSLO

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## Editorial

As I write the sun is blazing down on southern England, and while I hope members are enjoying this unusually glorious June, we are also looking forward to what we hope will be the shining event in the darker month of November - our Centenary Celebration in the Drapers' Hall on 13 November, which we hope will be in the presence of our Patrons, HM Queen Elizabeth II and HM King Harald V.

This issue highlights not only history in the form of the continued history of the Anglo-Norse Society in London and Part II of the history of the Fred Olsen Line, but also highlights how much our new scholarships are appreciated by those who have received them. Reading the reports will, I hope, make members feel what a worthwhile scheme it is and perhaps encourage them to donate to our Centennial Appeal, so we can increase the number of scholarships we award.

### The Anglo-Norse Society since 1975.

By Aud Dixon, Secretary from 1975-1998

In 1975 Signe Forsberg, the then Secretary, was returning to Norway and with the approval of Sir Michael Wright, who sadly died soon after, I took over the position.



The Anglo Norse Society had at the time an office in the Embassy building in Belgrave Square and thus we were able to cooperate closely on certain projects. I had previously worked for a number of years in the Embassy's cultural department and already knew most of the people there.

At the time we held fortnightly meetings in Norway House, Trafalgar Square in the rooms of the Norwegian Club. This was a convenient meeting place in the

centre of London. It also meant that it was convenient to cooperate with the Norwegian Club on certain events, for example we had a very interesting dinner there with Thorvald Stoltenberg as speaker and guest of honour.

We also welcomed a number of Norwegian writers who were visiting London, such as Jan Kjærstad and Herbjørg Wassmo. This was usually in cooperation with University College London's Department of Scandinavian Studies. Our programmes were otherwise the results of suggestions from members or hearing about Norwegians planning visits to London.

For some years we continued the tradition of 17th of May Dinner Dances in cooperation with the Norwegian students in London and one year we were joined by Liv Ullman who was then performing in a London theatre.

Another memorable dinner was held in the National Theatre restaurant in 1978 to celebrate Ibsen's 150th anniversary. On that occasion we had invited all the Ibsen translators and other Ibsen authorities in the UK.

One year the Norwegian ambassador invited ANS members to his residence to meet King Harald. This was a very popular event. We also organized a large Reception at the Barbican when the Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra gave a concert there. The Barbican was also the host to a large Nordic art exhibition in 1992 entitled *Tender is the North* and in cooperation with the other Scandinavian societies in London, we organised a private viewing. Other exhibitions where we had private viewings were an exhibition of Scandinavian Design at the Victoria and Albert Museum and the great *Dreams of a Summer Night* exhibition at the Haywards Gallery in 1986.

For many years we cooperated with teachers of Norwegian all over the UK. In the years before Amazon it was not so easy to obtain Norwegian books for teaching, so for several years we stocked language teaching books and sold and posted them to teachers all over the UK. This activity helped keep us in touch with teachers who were often working in isolation. Because of this we decided to organize seminars for teachers and rented accommodation at Wansfell College near London, and with the assistance of the Embassy and The Norwegian Foreign Office invited representatives who brought the latest books for Norwegian language teaching. Torbjorn Stoverud who was then Cultural Attache also gave lectures on the subject. Another seminar we organised there was on Grieg with pianists and musicologists taking part.

Anglo Norse Society is an educational charity so in accordance with our brief, we gave bursaries to students, explorers and schoolchildren to visit Norway and take part in expeditions. More recently we have awarded

postgraduate scholarships and in this centenary year are raising funds to extend this activity of the Society and hopefully finance another scholarship for a Norwegian student to study in the UK.

A very memorable event was when we went to see *The Lady from the Sea* at the Rondhouse Theatre in 1978. After the performance Vanessa Redgrave, who had taken the lead role in the play, got up on a chair and gave us an impromptu talk on her relationship with Ibsen's plays.

## The History of Fred Olsen and Co, - Part II

By Marie Wells

### The North Sea Route

By 1955, when the third Fred Olsen (then only 26 years old) took on the running of the Fred Olsen Company, the ships that had been lost during WWII had largely been replaced, but times were slowly changing, and by the mid 1960s air travel was beginning to replace long distance sea routes, and charter flights were taking people to popular tourist destinations in places such as Majorca and the Canary Islands. A third challenge was the growth of motor tourism with more and more people wanting to take their car with them when they travelled to Norway.

The Fred Olsen Company dealt with this challenge in an innovative way by starting a co-operation with the Bergen Line, which with its ships *Leda* and *Venus* had been its competitor on the Britain to Norway route. Fred Olsen's technical director produced a design for a ship which in the summer months could take 587 passengers and 184 cars from England to Norway, and in the winter months would sail to the Canary Islands with its lower car decks converted into refrigeration units for fruit. The ship, jointly owned by the Bergen Line and Fred Olsen Line, would sail under the Bergen Line name of *Jupiter* between Newcastle and Bergen in the summer months and under the Fred Olsen Line name of *Black Watch (ii)* on its winter route to the Canaries. This in effect became a 13-day mini-cruise. A few months after *Black Watch(ii) / Jupiter* was introduced in 1966, a sister ship, *Black Prince (ii)/Venus* joined her, in the summer months sailing between Kristiansand and Harwich and Amsterdam alternately. An innovation on these ships was the fact that when sailing to the Canaries, passengers could enjoy an indoor swimming pool and surrounding lido, but when the ships were serving as North Sea ferries,

the pool and the lido were covered over and became a comfortable lounge. The conversion from one state to the other evidently took only 50 hours. The winter sailings to the Canaries took place from the Millwall dock in London and it is interesting to note that the now world-famous Norman Foster was asked to design a passenger terminal alongside the cargo terminal, and he later freely acknowledged that this commission was a crucial turning point in his career.

While *Black Prince (ii)* was sailing the new route from Harwich to Kristiansand the *Blenheim (ii)* and *Braemar (i)* continued the Newcastle-Kristiansand-Oslo route until 1968 when a fire broke out on the *Blenheim (ii)*. All the passengers were rescued, but the superstructure and passenger accommodation were totally destroyed, while the hull, engines and much of the cargo (including 50 new cars) were not. After this the ship was sold and converted into a car-carrier. The *Bræmar (i)* then continued the Newcastle-Kristiansand-Oslo route on her own until 1975 she was withdrawn from service and sold.

Because of the success of the *Black Prince (ii)* and *Black Watch (ii)* a third ship, the *Blenheim (iii)* was ordered for the same seasonal route alternations, but she could carry 300 cars as opposed to the *Black Watch's* 184. She started her London-Canaries route in September 1970 and her Kristiansand-Harwich route in May 1971.

In the mid-1970s the huge rise in oil prices led to further co-operation between the Fred Olsen and Bergen Lines, which now became the Fred Olsen/Bergen Line, with a joint schedule of sailings from Newcastle to Oslo and Bergen via Kristiansand and Stavanger during the summer. But winter sailings had eventually to be withdrawn. Another ship, the *Bolero* (see the section below on Ferries), joined the North Sea route for a time, but her capacity was more than was needed so after being chartered to two other companies she was eventually modified and brought into service on the Norway-Denmark route, where she did well.

The late 1970s /early 1980s were also made difficult for the Fred Olsen company by the aggressive expansion of the Danish DFDS company which was buying up smaller companies and challenging them on their traditional routes, including the Fred Olsen/Bergen Line route between Oslo and Newcastle, which DFDS eventually took over. They also bought the *Blenheim (iii)* converting her for their cruise-ferry service with which their newly formed Scandinavian World Cruises subsidiary was trying to enter the American market..

## Ferries

Another branch of the Fred Olsen empire was their participation in various ferry routes. This started in 1961 when the company bought a stake in Anders Jahre's Oslo-Kiel ferries. However, the significant year was 1968 when the Olsens bought A/S Kristiansands Dampskipsselskap (Kristiansand Steamship Company, often known simply as KDS). Its main route was the short one between Kristiansand and Hirtshals in Denmark which was served by two ferries, the *Skagen* and the *Christian IV*, which both had the unusual feature of being able to carry railway wagons, so had railway lines sunk into the floor of the car decks. In 1975 the *Skagen* was transferred to Fred Olsen Oceanics and went on to have an equally unusual second life as a depot ship for mini submarines, another example of Olsen enterprise. Because of the strong views of the previous owners, alcohol was not served on their ferries, but under Olsen ownership this policy quickly changed. The Kristiansand-Hirtshals route was a busy one and a success, so in 1971 another ship, built in the Ulsteinvik shipyard was added to the fleet. It was the *Buenavista*, which like the *Black Watch* and *Black Prince* had a summer route and a winter one to the Canaries. A remarkable feature of her design was that for the winter route the passenger quarters, which were fully air conditioned, could be totally removed to make more space for cargo. In 1974, the *Buenavista* was lengthened by the insertion of a new mid section. This was something we will see as being done to several more ships we will come to. After two more ships, the *Bonanza* and the *Bolero*, were added to the Olsen ferry fleet, it became common for the ships to be chartered to other companies for part of the year. This is how the *Bolero*, after carrying German cars to America became part of a joint venture with Lion Ferries of Sweden and spent three summers as a ferry between Portland (Maine) and Yarmouth (Nova Scotia), and the winters as a cruise ship for the Commodore Cruise Line in the Caribbean.

From an aesthetic point of view Fred Olsen's next purchase, the *Borgen* (ii) was a disaster. Intended for the Kristiansand-Hirtshals route she could be loaded at both the stem and the stern, and had rail tracks. As it was a short route most of her 776 passengers were accommodated in reclining seats though there was also double- and four-berth cabin space for 254 passengers. So successful and busy was this route that in 1981 she was sent back to her builders and not only was a 20-metre long section inserted into her, but she was also split horizontally so an extra car deck could be added. The result was that aesthetically she became even more of a disaster.

The KDS route was so successful that in the 1980s the route was expanded to include both Hansholm in Denmark and Arendal, Stavanger



*The less than elegant Borgen (Photo Peter Bruce)*

and Bergen in Norway. In winter the sailings from Bergen and Stavanger were heavily patronised by lorries wishing to avoid the long trek over mountainous and icy roads to Kristiansand.

In 1985 Fred Olsen bought their largest ferry yet (13,878 tons) from the Sally Line and after much refurbishment christened her *Braemar* (ii). Although a ferry, her interior was worthy of a cruise ship, with a two-deck high tropical garden, a disco area and another area reserved for 'more refined dance music' with full orchestra. Such an expensive ship obviously had to earn her keep and she ran an intensive North Sea route Harwich-Hirtshals-Oslo, interspersed with the Skagerak crossing route. Then in 1989 she was put on the Newcastle-Oslo route where she brought Norwegian shoppers to the Metro Centre in Gateshead, at the time said to be the largest shopping and leisure centre in Europe, and where prices were considerably cheaper than in Norway.

During the 1980s there had been much competition from other companies and chopping and changing of routes and ships, and in 1990 Fred Olsen & Co announced that it would be withdrawing from its ferry services. As a result the *Braemar* (ii), *Bolero* and *Borgen* (ii) plus some other ships not mentioned above, were all sold.

## The Canaries and Morocco

We have already seen that Fred Olsen was running a combination of cruise and 'fruit ships' to the Canaries, but the Olsens had been involved there since 1904 when they had bought a parcel of agricultural land on La Gomera, the second smallest of the islands, and later developed the luxurious hotel, *Jardin Tecina*, and an 18-hole golf course.

In the 1970s they set up a ferry company linking two of the islands. But as traffic increased steadily so larger, faster boats replaced smaller ones. By the 1990s Lineas Fred Olsen was linking five of the islands, and still growing so that in 1999 a new Fred Olsen company registered in Spain as Canaria de Buques Rápidos came into being with two spectacularly speedy catamarans. They were eventually joined by a third, all three providing fast inter-island connections, and later by a trimarin. Today they carry as many as three million passengers, half a million cars and 125,000 lorries per annum.

Fred Olsen ships had often visited Moroccan ports, but in 1984 they became significantly more involved, setting up the Compagnie Maritime Maroco-Norvégienne (usually known as Comarit) in co-operation with local interests. For nearly a quarter of a century Comarit ferries crossed between Moroccan and southern Spanish ports, carrying many thousands of migrants and other passengers, plus cars and lorries. Eventually in June 2008, the Olsens sold their 55% holding to their Moroccan partners.

## Cruise ships

By 2008 the Fred Olsen Line had five cruise ships. None were newly built. The first, *Black Prince* (ii) had had a chequered history since she had been part of the Fred Olsen/Bergen line North Sea and Canary Islands alternating routes, but in 1986 she was bought outright by the Fred Olsen Company. The aim of a \$15 million refurbishment was to make her attractive to a younger, wider range of passengers than those, mainly middle-aged, who had enjoyed the winter cruises to the Canaries. But it was stressed that she would still be a smaller, more intimate ship than the mega-cruise ships that were now entering the market. The most unusual feature of the ship was her Marina Park, a 60-foot leisure centre that was carried within the body of the ship when sailing but could be floated out from the stern when she lay at anchor, and from which passengers could enjoy water ski-ing, dinghy sailing and other aquatic sports. The *Black Prince* (ii) had rather an unhappy start to her new career, due in part to being registered in Manila with a mainly Filipino crew, but predominantly Norwegian officers, and to a frequently changing

base. After a brief but equally unhappy period as a ferry on the Copenhagen-Gothenburg route, she was put back on her Southampton to Canaries route in 1990, and later cruised very successfully to other destinations, quickly



*The Black Prince showing the marina floated out from her stern (Photo AnthonCooke)*

regaining her former popularity. She was also regularly chartered to the National Trust of Scotland, for highly cultural tours to the west coast of Scotland and elsewhere. To the great sadness of many she was retired in 2009.

Between 1987 and 1996, the *Black Prince* (ii) was Fred Olsen's sole cruise ship, but the expanding market made it necessary for the Fred Olsen Line to look for another ship if they were to stay competitive, and in 1996 they bought an ex-Royal Viking Line, ex-Kloster Group ship and re-christened her *Black Watch* (iii). Larger than *Black Prince* (ii), but not overwhelmingly so, she was designed for longer cruises.

Then in 2001 the Olsens found a third ship to their taste (i.e. not too large) and christened her *Braemar* (iii). Like her predecessor, she was sent to Blohm and Voss shipyard in Hamburg to be refurbished and because she

had been built for 7-days cruises in the Caribbean her water and fuel tanks needed to be enlarged. A unique and attractive feature of this ship was a five-deck atrium in the centre of the ship, which added to the airy feel. Caribbean cruises involved flying from the UK to the Caribbean, but the Olsens had realized that there was a considerable market for this type of fly-cruise among people who wanted to get away from the British winter. In the summer months she did Norwegian and Baltic cruises and in between the two Mediterranean and Atlantic cruises. In 2008 she was sent back to Blohm and Voss to be lengthened by a substantial 31.2 metres.

A fourth ship, added to the Olsen fleet in 2005 was another ex-Royal Viking Line ship built in the early 1970s. She was in fact a sister ship to the *Black Watch (iii)* and had had a chequered history before being bought by the Olsens who intended to call *Boadicea* but then bowed to a change in academic opinion and named her *Boudicca* instead. She had already been lengthened when the Olsens bought her.

Finally in 2006 the Olsens bought their final ocean cruise ship to date and announced that they would call her the *Balmoral*. Built in 1987-88, she was lengthened in 2007 so that she could carry 1,340 passengers. As their largest cruise ship she is now their flagship, her name signifying Fred Olsen's long and broad association with the UK.

Members of the Olsen family have for many years been supporters of Norwegian artists, including Edvard Munch, and to this day their cruise ships are decorated by striking art works.

In the past two years, the Olsens have entered the European river cruise market with a boat which they have called *Brabant*, thus continuing their tradition of giving their ships names beginning with the letter B.

*Ed note. This article is largely based on Anthony Cooke's book, The Fred Olsen Line and its Passenger Ships, Carmania Press, second ed. 2009, and Anthony Cooke kindly authorised the reproduction of the images.*

## Richard Herrmann

By Sybil Richardson

On February 6th Anglo-Norse-Oslo Society presented the first of their events on the 2018 programme, which was a talk about a man whose name became a household word in Norway during the 1960's and 1970's,

the journalist, author, speaker and famous London correspondent Richard Herrmann.

The speakers for the evening were Anders Heger the well known author and publisher who was a personal friend of Richard Herrmann and also his publisher. He was interviewed by Øystein Bratberg, lecturer in British history and politics at Oslo University. Together they wove a very intimate and personal presentation of Richard Herrmann, commentating and sharing stories on several publically unknown aspects of his personality.

Richard Herrmann's voice could be heard daily in his talks from his base in London where his programmes were broadcast through the NRK (Norwegian Broadcasting Cooperation). Thousands tuned in to hear him speak on a huge range of topics over the years and many have said that he became almost like a family friend, popping in to share his daily news and views.

Richard Herrmann was born in 1919 in the small coastal town of Larvik on the west side of the Oslo Fjord. He studied philology at the University of Oslo before embarking on his journalistic career. He worked at the Reuters office in London for a period of fifteen years from 1952-1967 and became Head of Reuters British desk in 1967. He was also engaged as one of the pioneers in building NRK's P2 radio station, working as a correspondent and writing his books at the same time. He became the leader of P2 in 1977.

His interest and knowledge of British history and daily life was vast and he was equally at home talking about history, sports or English and Norwegian literature etc.etc. His style was relaxed and he communicated in a personal way to both his radio audiences and to his readers. His approach was simple and had great impact. To quote Anders Heger, 'he said of himself, that his sole intention was to capture the attention of people and spread interest, in the hope that Norwegians would begin to read more about history and politics.' His style did not always appeal to the Norwegian academics who, according to Herrmann, were much more rigid than the British and he had to deal with criticism. Anders continued to tell us of Herrmann's shyness and humble way of being and of his dry sense of humour, his love of the man in the street and his reactions towards authority. He always conducted himself like an English gentleman, adopting mannerisms including choice of clothing, but once in a while the fury of his Viking ancestors would burst forth, mocking authority with an outrage of what has been described as 'rough humour'. Returning afterwards to what

Anders Heger described as 'his modest and shy self'. One of the special stories Anders shared with us during the talk was the one about his dread of being recognized in public. On several occasions when Herrmann was approached by strangers who would ask: 'aren't you Richard Herrmann?', to which he would always reply, 'Oh, heavens, no - you're mistaking me for my twin brother!'

He wrote 16 books: *Over til London*, 1967; *Mine gleders by*, 1983, about London's history through 2.000 years; *Med skjebnen i hånden*, 1992, the history of the Churchill family in war and peace; *Livets med Elizabeth og andre kongelige personer*, 1986, the history of Queen Elizabeth 1 and other Tudor monarchs; *Victoria, en dronning for sin tid*, 1987; *Maria Stuart*, 1988; *Den alvorlige lek* - about the serious game of football, 1993- to name just a few of his immensely popular books.

He received the MBE (Member of the British Empire) medal and Cappelen prize and many more credits. Apparently he gave his medals the amusing name of 'dingel dangel'. One of his unfulfilled wishes was to write a book about William Shakespeare, but his fear of criticism from the Norwegian academics stopped him from doing so. However, *En dikter fra Stratford*, does exist as an audio book. He died at the age of 91 in 2010.

We could have gone on listening to more stories about Richard Herrmann, so brilliantly put together by the speakers, who we would really like to praise for their colorful talk, excellently narrated in clear English. Our members were invited to ask questions afterwards.

The last treat of the evening was the opportunity to say hello to Richard's daughter Frøydis who surprised us with her visit.

NRK Gull have released all

of Richard Herrmann's radio recordings on the Internett and his books are available in digital form.

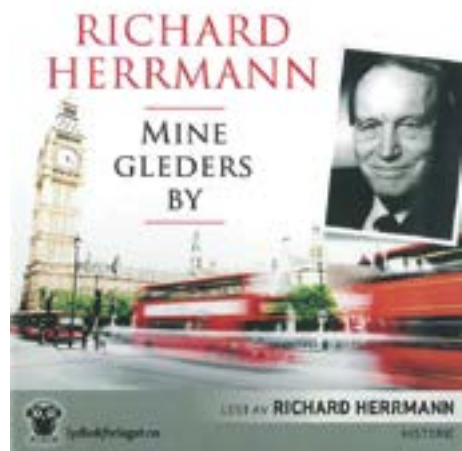
## Student teachers and multicultural awareness in Norway

Morten Løtveit and Liv Susanne Bugge

Norway has become a far more multicultural society than it used to be. In 2018, 14% of the population in Norway are immigrants, while 3% are born in Norway with two immigrant parents. The immigrants come from many different countries; almost half of them from Europe and almost half of them from Asia and Africa. Although much attention has been paid to Muslim immigrants, probably less than one in four immigrants or children of immigrants are Muslims.

The new multicultural reality influences the daily life of schools and kindergartens. The policy of the Norwegian authorities has been to integrate children of all walks of life in the kindergartens, which now include most preschool children, and in the comprehensive Norwegian school system. Furthermore, they have wished to encourage development of 'awareness of cultural differences, and skills in treating these as positive resources' (to quote the 2010 national guidelines for teacher education). Still, while the children are becoming more diverse, the teachers and the student teachers belong almost entirely to the majority culture. With what kind of attitudes and thoughts do they meet the increasingly diverse classrooms and kindergartens? This was one of the questions which in 2014 prompted us to carry out a research project on student teachers and multicultural awareness at a teacher education college in Norway. We wanted to examine the student teachers' multicultural awareness when they began their studies, and we wanted to see the extent to which their attitudes and thoughts changed after three years at college. In order to do so, we administered a questionnaire to novice students in the autumn of 2014, and the majority of the same students responded to virtually the same questionnaire in the spring of 2017. The response rates were 90% (2014) and 82% (2017), which are high compared to other studies.

Even though we have not finished the analysis, the overall impression so far is that the student teachers are positive and open-minded to multicultural classrooms and kindergartens, and to cultural diversity in general. Furthermore, many students seem to have developed more minority-positive or inclusive attitudes between 2014 and 2017. Still, there are also divergencies, as well as important nuances and ambiguities in our research material. To give an illustration, let us look at the responses to a few items in





the questionnaire. We presented the students with some statements, and asked them for their opinions. These statements, which had already been used in a survey by Statistics Norway, were: a) 'Most immigrants make an important contribution to Norwegian working life; b) 'Most immigrants enrich cultural life in Norway'; and c) 'Immigrants in Norway should strive to become as similar as possible to Norwegians.' The respondents were given the following answering alternatives: 'Agree completely', 'agree to a certain extent', 'both [yes] and [no]' (i.e. being ambivalent), 'disagree to a certain extent', and 'disagree completely'.

In the following, the ticking off of the first two answering alternatives are reckoned as agreement and the ticking off of the last two as disagreement. In 2014, 44% of the students agreed that most immigrants make an important contribution to Norwegian working life, while 7%, disagreed. Interestingly, 49% were ambivalent. A somewhat similar picture emerged with respect to the students' viewpoints concerning immigrants' impact on cultural life in Norway. In 2014, nearly half of the students (47%) agreed that most immigrants enrich cultural life in Norway, while 42% were ambivalent and 11% disagreed. In both cases we ended up with two major groups of between 40% and 50%, one which expressed a positive view and another which expressed an ambivalent view on the economic and cultural contributions of the immigrants. The two main tendencies, thus, were one of positiveness and one of ambivalence.

The question about whether immigrants should strive to become as like Norwegians as possible differ from the two other. In this case, an affirmative answer could be perceived as negative to immigrants' cultures and habits, although it could also be perceived as a wish to see immigrants more deeply integrated into Norwegian society. Interestingly, 36% responded affirmatively, while 16% disagreed and 48% signalled ambivalence. Again, the high percentage favouring the middle alternative is notable. The share that responded affirmatively was more than twice as big as the share that responded negatively. This leaves us with a question whether there is an incongruity or not in the responses of some of the students. In fact, 23% of the students who agreed that 'most immigrants enrich cultural life in Norway', also agreed that immigrants ought to try to become as like Norwegians as possible. Is there necessarily a contradiction here or not? The overall picture we were left with after analysing the 2014 responses was one of both positiveness and ambivalence to immigrants' contributions to Norwegian

society, combined with a possibility of some inconsistencies in the responses.

We have not analysed the 2017 data yet. At first sight, however, they seem to indicate that the student teachers have become more positive to immigrants during their first three years as student teachers. If so, it remains to be explored whether this primarily is due to the academic and social life at the college, or to something else.

## **Thorvald Stoltenberg - Diplomat, Politician, Humanitarian**

*By Celia Syversen*

It is difficult - no, impossible - to visualise the patrician figure of Sir Anthony Eden, even in appropriate attire, jogging purposefully around the Serpentine. Even more unthinkable, that he would have greeted fellow joggers with a cheery wave and smile!

Fast forward: the scene changes to idyllic Sognsvann, on Oslo's northern outskirts, where a trim figure in green tracksuit jogs his way happily round the lake, smilingly acknowledging the greeting "Hei Thorvald" from fellow sporty-types and families out for recreation. Long ago, before the media decreed that the Norwegian public ought to be on first-name terms with its public figures, 'Thorvald' was always 'Thorvald'. So how did this come about? Perhaps as a pendant or even a contrast to his distinguished career in the field of public service: it is the ready smile, the slight lisp, the *folkelig* aspect and the sheer interest in his fellow men that endures. And endears?

Thorvald Stoltenberg was born in Oslo in 1931 and grew up in the elegant Frogner district - hardly a bastion of the Labour Party, of which he was to become such an important figure - and where he still lives today. But in his mix of genes are to be found some from the eastern part of the city - his paternal grandmother was the daughter of a butcher from Lakkegata. His father was a military man and his mother reportedly a talented pianist. At the age of twelve Thorvald was witness to a traumatic event - unhappily familiar in Norway during the years of Occupation - which was to change the course of his childhood: his father, Emil, was arrested by the Germans and sent to prison camps in Poland and Germany. Thorvald, after promising Father to look after a little sister, was then largely cared for by his grandparents. Emil Stoltenberg only returned once the War was over, but in the meantime

Thorvald had, as he readily admits, become a keen breeder of rabbits!

After his time as Russepresident in 1950, he began to study law and then embarked on his career in the Foreign Ministry. The young Stoltenberg became a member of the Labour Party in 1963. But, before that, his deep involvement in matters humanitarian had already made itself clear: in 1956 he was involved in helping Hungarian refugees escape from the invading Soviet Army and an account of his personal bravery only emerged many decades later.

His career within the Labour Party was to show a steadily rising curve – State Secretary during the 1970s, then Defence Minister and finally Foreign Minister in the governments of Gro Harlem Brundtland in the 80s and 90s. His work, after a modest start as Vice Consul in San Francisco, also brought him prestigious diplomatic posts: Belgrade, Lagos, the United Nations. He was Norway's Ambassador to Denmark from 1996-99 and, as a humanitarian, served for three terms as President of the Norwegian Red Cross. But he was not destined to become Prime Minister, this was a position left for his son to achieve – twice!



*Thorvald Stoltenberg in 2011. Photo from Arbeiderpartiets Archive, courtesy of Arbeiderpartiet*

In 1957 Stoltenberg married Karin Heiberg and their children, Jens, Camilla and Nini, have all, in their various ways, made their mark on the Norwegian scene. Nini, whose drug addiction became public knowledge before her untimely death in 2014, has undoubtedly been a factor behind her father's leadership of the commission set up to review changes in Norwegian drug policy. Also in the international field he has been active in working for less punitive measures towards drug addiction.

And then, of course, he has a kitchen - everyone in Norway knows about Thorvald's kitchen - where he has received the great and powerful for informal talks over the breakfast table, with a breakfast prepared by their host himself. Here collars have been unbuttoned, jackets removed, and much useful personal diplomacy unfolded. Many are the famous names who have drunk coffee, tried Thorvald's very own pickled herring, maybe even brunost, and exchanged views off the record in an unexpectedly informal setting. Since his retirement from public service he has become a sought-after speaker, giving talks reflecting his wide interest in life, love and the human condition. Among his published books are two entitled *Frokost med Thorvald* and *Sild*.

In April this year ANS members were looking forward to hearing Stoltenberg give one of these famous "kitchen" talks but, alas, he was obliged to cancel. Longstanding members will, however, recall the evening in 1987 - way back in the days when we were privileged to meet in the Assembly Room at the British Embassy - when, as Norway's Foreign Minister, he gave us an informal account of some topical issues. But, even though 'informal', his presence there caused no small diplomatic flurry...

In conclusion, a small personal recollection: a chance meeting at a diplomatic event led to conversation about this and that and the World in general. "Takk for pratene!" said Thorvald Stoltenberg as we parted.

And, no, Nelson Mandela did not care for makrell i tomat...!

## **Three Action-packed Days in Oslo**

*by Weronika Strzyzynska, Sofie Kitts and Jemma McFarlane*

2nd year students in Scandinavian Studies, Department of Scandinavian Studies, UCL

This April, thanks to the funding of SIU, the Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Education, we, a group of first and second year

UCL students of Norwegian, had the opportunity to spend three days in Oslo, developing our language skills and experiencing Norwegian culture. For many of us, it was our first time in Norway. Brimming over with visits and tours of Oslo's cultural landmarks and institutions, the three-day visit gave us a unique opportunity to put our linguistic skills to the test in a wide spectrum of settings, ranging from the lofty lecture halls of Oslo University to humble hot dog stands on the corners of the side streets.

The tight schedule of the trip meant that no time was wasted and as soon as we dropped off our bags, we were on our way to *Bymuseet* (Oslo City Museum). Situated in Frogner Park, the small institution offered a tour of Oslo's history from a small Viking settlement to a European capital. However, what stood out the most for us, was not the interactive displays and impressive multi-media installation, but our patient and understanding guide, who was exceptionally adept at adapting her Norwegian to our less than fluent proficiency, allowing both the first and second year students the chance to participate and interact with the exhibition, and more importantly, giving us a much needed boost of confidence in our own language skills.

After the tour of the museum we had the opportunity to explore Frognerparken and the Vigeland sculptures. Despite it being the first days of spring, much of the park was still full of left-over snow and the trees were black and bare. Meanwhile, the ongoing restorations meant that the landscape was threaded with temporary orange barriers. Amidst the melting snow and construction, the naked granite bodies seemed all the more vulnerable and painfully aware of fatality, whilst the grand monolith, even if not as grand, was still as eerie and troubling.

After breakfast on Friday (our most jam-packed day), we got on the tram towards the Blindern campus of the University of Oslo. Our teachers (Elettra Carbone, Lecturer in Norwegian Studies, and Kristin Lorentsen, Teaching Fellow in Norwegian) had arranged for us to audit a seminar of a course called *Historieformidling*. As part of this course, Norwegian history students learn to communicate historical research to non-specialist audiences by, for instance, writing or editing Wikipedia articles on a topic of their choice. The evening before the class, Elettra and Kristin had provided us with printouts of some of these Wikipedia articles written by the students, and we were given the task of reading through and attempting to understand the content of the articles – which we found rather challenging! We all collaborated on making notes regarding the accessibility, structure,

layout and use of sources in these articles to bring to the class at university. We were therefore somewhat nervous on the tram, knowing that we were expected to address the Norwegian students about their work, in their own language. However, we were quickly put at ease on arriving as the teacher suggested that the Oslo and UCL students introduce themselves to each other. Following this, the teacher brought up the students' articles for class viewing on the projector and encouraged us to contribute to class discussion of the work. The Norwegian students were very patient with our language skills and open to our feedback. The articles covered a range of topics, from the Mosul Question to the uniquely Norwegian cultural concept of the *husmann* (roughly corresponding to the English 'crofter'), which few of us knew anything about before. This experience was not only both linguistically challenging and exciting, but also offered us an insight into our future studies in Oslo

After saying our goodbyes to the history class, Kristin and Elettra took us on a mini-tour of the campus, which was particularly valuable for the three of us who were the only ones on the trip due to begin studying in Oslo



*Inside Ibsenmuseet. Photo by Elettra Carbone*

this summer. It was also useful to be introduced to the University of Oslo Library and interesting to compare it to UCL's facilities.

Next on our itinerary was a visit to *Ibsenmuseet*, a highlight of the trip for many fans of Ibsen's work. This included a tour in Norwegian of his private apartment where he spent the last eleven years of his life, as well as an exhibition showcasing his life and his enduring legacy, a result of his social commentary on themes such as equality and class. We particularly appreciated the insight into Henrik Ibsen's private life in contrast to the celebrity status he enjoyed. For those on the trip who were less acquainted with Ibsen's work than others, it was an opportunity to see an authentic Norwegian residence from this period.

Following the tour of *Ibsenmuseet*, our action-packed day continued at the National Library where we received a fascinating tour of the library and its collections. We enjoyed hearing about the origins of the Library as well as how it is used today, with almost all of their works digitised and accessible online. The library is also always expanding its collection by adding different media in the form of film and photography through to letters and leaflets. We were even told that they collect food packaging, such as empty chocolate boxes! This really shed a new light on what a library is for us, as *Nasjonalbiblioteket* is always striving to preserve not only the intellectual heritage of Norway, but also its cultural heritage. Furthermore, we were all both amused and impressed to hear that there is a copy of most of the collection in a mountain in northern Norway.

Following our tour of the collection, we were taken to a room recently opened within the library which functions as an exhibition space. The exhibition on display was about the work of journalist A.O. Vinje (1818-1870) and his work during the early days of journalism, but it also followed the development of journalism through the ages to issues today with fake news. Vinje was a man that few of us had ever heard of before so this was a very interesting and rewarding experience.

The building itself was also impressive to see. Although it appeared old from the outside, the interiors were deceptively modern and spacious, creating an environment conducive to productivity. We also enjoyed seeing the imposing mural painted by Per Krohg (1889-1965), showing a modern interpretation of *Ragnarok* from Norse mythology. We look forward to being able to utilise this wonderful space and its extensive collections during our studies in Oslo and must thank our fantastic tour guides for opening our eyes

to this fantastic resource.

We were both a little gloomy and excited waking up on Saturday, knowing that although it was our last day already we were going to the Viking Ship Museum. After breakfast we took the tram from Oslo city centre towards the museum, and on the way passed the stave church at the *Norsk Folkemuseum* and saw the affluent area of Bygdøy first-hand. The museum was of particular interest for those of us studying Viking and Old Norse studies, as *Vikingskipshuset* is most renowned for its display of the Oseberg ship (the most complete and originally maintained example of a Viking ship to exist in present day), the less preserved Gokstad and Tune ships as well as some of the grave goods found in the Oseberg burial mound. On arrival, we were guided towards the Oseberg ship (which occupied a prominent position in centre of the building and was impossible to ignore) and informed of the history surrounding the museum's vessels. We were also shown several grave goods found with the ships, including the skeletons of both men and women, carved wooden animal heads, textiles, carts and sleighs. *Vikingskipshuset* has also launched a new film that we could view in a room where it was projected onto the walls surrounding us, which coupled with beautiful music created a surprisingly immersive experience that left many of us in awe. The tour guide was delightfully interactive and eager to listen patiently as we pieced together questions in Norwegian before we were given free time to view the rest of the museum at our leisure.

In hindsight, it is hard to believe that the vast range of experiences we enjoyed on our Oslo trip took place in under three days, from coming face-to-face with a real Viking ship to experiencing a class environment at a Norwegian university. For her meticulous planning to ensure we had as fulfilling a trip as possible in such a short time, as well as her clear passion for Norway, we would like to thank Elettra, and also Kristin for giving us a taste of local life ahead of our arrival later this year.

## **Det var engang'! Skrivesirkelen i Den norske sjømannskirken i London.**

*Sigurd Reimers*

'Det var engang.' Barns eventyr på mange språk begynner på denne måten, men jeg tror ikke at noen av de hundrevis av historier vi har skrevet i skrivesirkelen vår har hatt denne klassiske begynnelsen. Men så er vi heller

ikke en klassisk gruppe..

På dette tidspunktet er vi seks norske 'ekspats' med svært ulik bakgrunn. Våre grunner for å bo og leve i UK er også ulike, men en ting har vi tilfelles: Vi elsker å skrive! En gang i måneden møtes vi i tre timer i Sjømannskirken ved Rotherhite i sør-øst London. Vi leser historiene og diktene våre for hverandre, kommenterer og gir tilbakemelding.

Jeg er 'yngste' medlem - med fire års medlemskap. Da jeg kom lurte jeg svært på hva jeg hadde innlært meg på. Jeg hadde ikke behøvd å bekymre meg. Snart var jeg dypt inne i en rik verden av historiefortelling, noen ganger ren fiksjon, andre ganger selvbiografi og minner. Jeg oppdaget gleden ved å gjenoppta kontakt med et språk jeg sjelden brukte. Gleden var enda større da jeg oppdaget at språket fra barndommen - som hadde vært begravet i så mange år, hadde et eget liv. Det kunne komme tilbake - overraskende og helt uten varsel.

Språk er et alvorlig emne. Det kan ha elementer av skam, av bryddhet og frustrasjon, likesåvel som glede. Det rører ved våre dypeste



*The writing group enjoying their coffee and waffles*

følelser, det definerer oss - hvem vi er - hvem vi gjerne vil være, hvem vi tror vi er. Selv gudenes språk har utfordringer!

Noen ganger har vi et tema for møtene våre. Det kan være vår barndoms by, en opplevelse på skolen, et møte med naturen - ingen norsk amatørforfatter kunne leve uten det sistnevnte! Men vi har en regel - det er ingen regler for hva hver person kan skrive om. Å skrive en historie er ikke alltid lett, noen ganger må vi komme til gruppa uten bidrag. Å få fram en historie på førstespråket vårt trenger ofte tid og modning. Det kan ikke tvinges fram.

Til sist, kaffe og vafler blir servert av staben på Sjømannskirken, og ja, stearinlysene selvfølgelig, hvor ville vi være uten dem?!

Vil du være med å skrive? Ta kontakt!

## **An inspiring year in London**

*By Erlend Vestby*

Time is flying, and I am now halfway through my master's degree at the Royal College of Music (RCM) where I have been the lucky receiver of a scholarship from the Anglo-Norse Society. It has been an absolute treat to study in a cultural capital such as London that attracts some of the finest musicians from around the world. It has been a year filled with new experiences and inspirations. It has certainly raised my level as a musician, and I am eternally grateful to have been given this opportunity.

As a cellist with a dream of getting a position in a top orchestra, RCM has given me the opportunity to work with legendary conductors such as Vladimir Ashkenazy and Bernard Haitink. These projects have been great fun, instructive and inspiring, and I have also had some very useful sectional rehearsals led by musicians from major London orchestras who have given me invaluable advice on orchestral playing.

I was one of the lucky few who were selected to travel to Shanghai for a joint project with the Shanghai Conservatoire of Music to play with their student orchestra. We were introduced to a very different culture in many ways and experiencing a rehearsal and concert in Chinese was very special. I experienced that our approach to music is different and it opened up my mind and perspectives on how we do things back home in Europe.

This year I have also studied towards a Diploma in music performance in Stavanger, Norway, and had a very successful graduation

recital there in mid-June. I am studying with cellist Jakob Kullberg in both countries and we have done a lot to connect the two classes together. The entire London class came to Stavanger in December for a mini festival with various masterclasses and a few concerts. Receiving support from the Anglo-Norse Society has made me more eager to connect the two countries, and for all my solo concerts in London this year I have included music by



*Erlend 'together with one of the biggest inspirations of the year - Maestro Bernard Haitink. Photo supplied by Erlend'*

Scandinavian and Norwegian composers that has mostly been unknown for the average London audience.

I am studying the baroque cello as well as the modern and have

become active within the historical performance department in college. I have been part of various orchestras and small ensembles with performance at the Queens Gallery at Buckingham Palace for instance. RCM is lending me a baroque instrument which I use whenever I play early music repertoire. On the other hand, I am very interested in contemporary music. Being a composer myself, I completed a course in orchestration this year.

For my next year's master project, which makes up a big part of the Master of Music degree, I will combine my interests in historical performance with my compositional skills. I will experience 19th century performance practice, with a case study on Edward Elgar, and use this when writing new music in collaboration with composers and performers. RCM has the original manuscript of Elgar's Cello Concerto and I can easily find expertise on Elgar and his performance style within and outside of college. London has great resources and I have thoroughly enjoyed this throughout the year.

RCM is a place that allows me to develop myself as a musician, and they help and support me in everything I wish to do and learn more about. This is the main reason I wanted to come to London and RCM in the first place. London holds a larger cultural community than Norway, and I experience it as having more opportunities that allow me to pursue my interests and dreams as a musician other than just a cellist.

All this would not have happened without the support I have got from the Anglo-Norse Society. Not only have you given an important support financially towards my tuition fees, but you have also taken a great interest in what I have been up to throughout the year, and highly supported me. Thank you, Marie Wells and Paul Gobey, for attending my end-of-year recital! By the time this has gone to print, I have already completed my last project this year as part of an orchestra masterclass with world-class violinist Maxim Vengerov and a recording of Prokofiev's Romeo and Juliet in Abbey Road Studios. I am now enjoying a well-deserved summer holiday back home in Sandefjord, and I am already looking forward to what next year will bring. Have a wonderful summer, and Thank you!

## Navigating Norway: From Trondheim to the Arctic Circle

By Connor McKnight

As I reflect on my last academic year, I cannot help but grin from ear to ear as I recall all the fantastic memories I have made so far while undertaking my postgraduate studies. I would like to take the time to thank the Anglo-Norse Society, who have provided me with a platform in the form of a scholarship which has greatly aided my studies and provided many memorable experiences. I hope you enjoy reading about all the wonderful things I have gotten up to over the past year!

Originally, I am from Glasgow, Scotland and for as long as I can remember I have always had a wide fascination with the natural world and have a love for the oceans. Naturally, this led to pursuing an undergraduate degree in Marine Science with Arctic Studies at the Scottish Association for Marine Science (SAMS) in Oban, Scotland. During my 3rd year, I was able to go on an Erasmus exchange programme to Svalbard, an island archipelago located at 78 degrees North in the Norwegian Arctic. While here I studied Arctic biology and learned about the fragility of these ecosystems and how threats such as climate change, pollution and human activities are currently threatening this sensitive environment. Since then I have been determined to learn as much as I can, so that future generations are able to enjoy this part of the world which I have fallen deeply in love with.

Fast forwarding to a year after graduating from my BSc, I enrolled in the MSc Environmental Toxicology programme at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU), beginning in August 2017. I felt that this would be a great progression and allow me to specialise in an area where I feel like I can make a real difference, which could combine my passion for both learning and the outdoors.

My first experience at NTNU involved a week dedicated to welcoming all the new international students. There were many performances, of which included traditional Norwegian music, singing from local choirs, welcome speeches, a treasure hunt and even opera! By the end of August, I went on fieldwork to the Dovre mountain range with my professors and classmates, where I managed to get my first taste of Norwegian nature at its finest. Here we learned about localised threats to the surrounding wildlife, went hiking, seen a pack of muskox and even got to see the Northern

lights while on an evening hike! The hard work finally began soon after, with my courses in Environmental Toxicology and Advanced Ecotoxicology. Although challenging, it has been incredibly rewarding to gain knowledge from professors who are the experts within my chosen discipline. I especially enjoyed my lessons with Bjørn Munro Jenssen, who I am lucky to call one of my supervisors for my upcoming thesis project.

Following on from my whirlwind semester in Trondheim, I was granted acceptance to study in Svalbard again, where I studied courses in Arctic technology at the University Centre in Svalbard (UNIS) – the worlds most northerly higher education institute. I spent 6 months (January-June 2018) in Longyearbyen, which has a population of roughly 2,000 people (plus the occasional pack of reindeer!). For my first week I was required to take part in a mandatory safety course. This included activities such as avalanche



*Connor at Barentsburg in his 'gigantic fluorescent orange survival suit' Photo supplied by Connor.*

rescue, driving snowmobiles and learning how to fire a rifle in the event of potential polar bear encounters. I was lucky enough to experience the most amazing fieldwork during my stay up north. Some highlights included snow sampling during the polar night, snowmobiling to the East Coast in search of reindeer and spending a week at the Russian settlement Barentsburg, where I collected amphipods at the harbour in a gigantic fluorescent orange survival suit. From hiking to the peaks of the surrounding mountains to celebrating the return of the sun, learning how to knit and marching in the Norwegian national day parade plus making countless friends for life, this was by far the best semester at university I have ever had!

With my academic year coming to a close, I look back on all the great experiences I have had, and I can't help but feel an overwhelming sense of gratitude towards the Anglo-Norse Society. They have supported me and allowed me to create memories which I will remember for the rest of my life. From the bottom of my heart I am, and always will be truly thankful.

Back cover image: the first Anglo-Norse Newsletter when the Society started up again after World War II. It may now have a more professional appearance but the plea for support and more material remains the same!



# ANGLO NORSE NEWS LETTER

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## INTRODUCING OURSELVES

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This News-letter is the mouth-piece of the Anglo Norse Society and of all who are interested in close and friendly relations between Great Britain and Norway.

We start modestly - some say too modestly - with eight small stencilled pages once a month. But we look forward to the day - not too distant - when we can produce a printed journal.

All depends on the support that is forthcoming. Circulation must be increased, and all members are asked to sell copies to friends or persuade them to take out a subscription.

Contributions are welcomed - short articles, news items, gossip notes, anecdotes, letters. Suggestions for improving the News-letter will all be carefully considered.

Several Anglo Norse hands have helped to produce this first number. This is a co-operative venture and we therefore say "the more cooks the better".

"Architect-in-Chief", however, is the editor, Mr. A. E. Endorud. He awaits with the acutest anticipation a really overwhelming flood of contributions, subscriptions and advertisements.

It is now up to us all to support the Anglo Norse Society's first venture in the periodical publishing field.

The Editorial Board.