

ISSN 1363-0009366

WINTER 2014-15

Anglo-Norse Review



ANGLO-NORSE REVIEW

THE ANGLO-NORSE SOCIETY - LONDON

Patrons: H.M. Queen Elizabeth II

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A Celebration of the Life of Professor Bill Mead

A celebration of the life of Bill Mead was held at the Royal Geographical Society on 31 October 2014. About 100 people attended, including representatives of the Anglo-Norse Society.

Tributes were paid by H.E. Pekka Huhtaniemi, the Finnish Ambassador, Professor Anne Buttmer, former President of the International Geographical Union, Dr Rita Gardner Director of the Royal Geographical Society, Professors Richard Munton and Hugh Clout, both of the Department of Geography at UCL where Bill had been Professor of Geography, and Mr Keith Smith, Former Head of Aylesbury Grammar School.

At the end of the official tributes Rolf Christophersen who had joined the Anglo-Norse Society at the same time as Bill Mead, just after World War II, stood up and expressed the appreciation of the Anglo-Norse Society for Bill's loyalty and support. He had remained a prominent member of the Council until recently when he could no longer come up to London in the evening. He was a great friend of Norway and will be much missed.

Anyone who wishes to read the tributes to Bill should go to <http://www.geog.ucl.ac.uk/about-the-department/news/tributes-to-professor-bill-mead>

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Editorial

Because of continuing health problems in his family Tim Gilbert, the regular editor of the Review, has asked me to edit this issue, and I am grateful to all those who have sent in material in good time, something which has eased my task considerably.

This issue has a strong historical tendency. 2014 included two important centenaries: the bicentenary of the Norwegian Constitution, which was covered in the summer issue of the Review, and the centenary of the outbreak of World War I, and this issue contains a fascinating article on the 15,000 Norwegians who fought with the Allies in that war. The historical theme continues with the story of a naval raid on the Lofoten Islands in World War II and a history of the Olympic Games. The 'rediscovery' of Peder Balke in an exhibition at the National Gallery could also be considered historical. Thoroughly of the present is the article on the recent visit to Norway of the British Norwegian Parliamentary Group. Enjoy.

New Official Faces in Britain and Norway

New Norwegian Ambassador to the UK.

On September 1st 2014, Ms. Mona Juul replaced Mr. Kim Traavik as the Norwegian Ambassador to the UK.



'I have been given the dream job', the Ambassador said upon her arrival from Oslo, where she had been working for three years as Director General of the Department of Security Policy and the High North in the Ministry of Foreign

Affairs. Ms. Juul is the first female Norwegian ambassador to the UK.

'The relationship between Norway and the UK runs deep and wide. It is an honour and a privilege to be given the task of spearheading the Embassy's efforts to further develop this relationship', said Ms. Juul.

Mona Juul is an experienced diplomat who joined the Foreign Service in 1986. Her first overseas posting and diplomatic career initiated in Cairo in 1988, where she worked as a political attaché and Second Secretary. Together with her husband, Terje Rød- Larsen, she was deeply involved in the secret negotiations that took place in 1993 between Israel and the PLO, which led to the signing of the Oslo Agreement.

Mona Juul worked as State Secretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs from 2000 to 2001 during the first government of Jens Stoltenberg, before she became the Norwegian Ambassador to Israel in 2001. Between 2005 and 2010, she served as Deputy Head at Norway's Permanent Mission to the UN in New York, where she chaired the First Committee that deals with issues related to international security and disarmament, during the UN General Assembly in 2006.

(Reproduced by courtesy of the Norwegian Embassy)

New British Ambassador to Norway



Sarah Gillett CMG CVO has been appointed Her Majesty's Ambassador in Norway in succession to Ambassador Jane Owen.

Sarah Gillett joined the FCO in 1976 and has served overseas in the United States, France, Brazil, Canada and most recently as Ambassador to Switzerland and Liechtenstein. She took up her appointment in Norway in July 2014.

On her new appointment as Her Majesty's Ambassador to Norway Sarah Gillett has said:

"Norway is a great neighbour and partner of the United Kingdom. I feel very privileged to have the opportunity to serve such an important relationship. Our shared interests are extensive and I look forward to ensuring that they continue to be well looked after".

(By the editing committee of the Anglo-Norse Oslo)

Senior Chaplain for Norway and St. Edmund's Church



The Venerable Dr. Brian Russell was appointed as Senior Chaplain for Norway and St. Edmund's Church on January 25th this year. The Licensing Ceremony took place at St. Edmund's Church in Oslo, led by the Reverend David Hamid who is the Suffragan Bishop of Europe and all the Chaplains of the Anglican Chaplaincy in Norway, in addition to many representatives of fellow

Norwegian clergy. To quote the new Senior Chaplain on his new appointment:

"I am delighted to accept the Bishop's appointment as Senior Chaplain for Norway and St. Edmund's Oslo. Following visits to St. Edmund's over the last three summers and the formal interview, I feel a strong sense of calling to this post, backed up by the encouragement and enthusiasm shown by all I have met in Norway. My active knowledge and understanding of Nordic and Baltic churches and societies goes back over the past 25 years, involving contacts with Lutheran Churches and theological education, the training of clergy and research on the Church in the future. I believe there is a very positive future for our congregations in which we can continue to offer something unique and distinctive in Norway in the coming years".

St. Edmund's Church situated in the heart of Oslo is part of the Diocese in Europe of the Church of England and the world wide Anglican community. It is a Church of tremendous diversity, with a congregation of people of all ages, races, social backgrounds which include families, single people, refugees and ex-pats. St. Edmund's print a quarterly magazine "OUTPOST", and also have an informative website, where one can read about the history of the church (built in 1883), church services, future events and who to contact. Visit their website: www.osloanglicans.no

De ukjente krigerne. Nordmenn i første verdenskrig

Ola Teige

"We use dresses to the knees," wrote Oscar Lund in a letter to his mother in the Norwegian mining town of Røros. The young Norwegian had just volunteered to enter the Canadian Army, which was raised to enter the First World War in order to help the mother country: Great Britain – in its war against the German Empire. Lund did not feel quite comfortable in a kilt, but as a soldier in the Canadian 16th Battalion - The Canadian-Scottish - he had no choice. Oscar Lund died a few months after he came to the front in 1915, 22 years old.

Now in 2014 we observe the centenary of the outbreak of the First World War in 1914. The war was to go on until 1918. The ripple effects of what has been called the great seminal catastrophe of the 20th century have been many. It led to the fall of four empires, the redrawing of maps across the world, the introduction of terrible new weapons as gas, tanks and airplanes and the

growth of totalitarian ideologies – fascism, communism and Islamism. But what is less known is that also the neutral country of Norway was directly affected by the Great War in several ways. One of the most important, aside from the hardships that lack of food and other vital supplies led to for Norwegian society, and the ordeals of Norwegian sailors – 2000 of whom were killed after their ships were sunk by German submarines, was the experiences of Norwegians who directly participated in the war.



The book, *De ukjente krigerne. Nordmenn i første verdenskrig* by Nik. Brandal, Eirik Brazier and Ola Teige, Humanist forlag, Oslo 2014 tells for the first time the story of the around 15,000 Norwegian men and women who participated in the First World War. In the book we meet Norwegian men and women who were participants in a monstrous war and who experienced things and had to make choices they had not been able to even imagine before 1914. We follow them in the trenches on the Western Front, the deserts of the Middle East, the bush in Africa, training camps in England, Australia and Quebec and in the field hospitals in France. The book portrays, through their letters home, newspaper reports and memoirs how it was to be in combat, the effects of chemical warfare and life as Norwegian soldiers in a foreign war. Last, but not least, it also describes how the veterans coped with life after the war, both those who stayed abroad and those who returned to Norway. It is based on

an extensive source material, drawn from both Norwegian and international archives, letters, newspapers and memoirs. These sources provide an insight into a part of Norwegian history that until now has been underexposed in Norwegian historical writing.

The majority of Norwegians served in the American army – about 10 or 12,000 men. These were swept up when the USA introduced conscription after it entered the war in 1917. All young men were drafted, regardless if of whether they were US citizens or not. But as many as 2-3000 Norwegian-born men volunteered to join the Canadian army, 3-400 entered the Australian Army and perhaps 100 fought in the uniform of New Zealand. The number of soldiers in other armies were about the same, 200 in France – all by law had to serve in the famous Foreign legion, about 50 in the German army and a handful each in other armies; Austria-Hungary, Russia and so on.

Somewhere between 70 and 100 men and women served in the British Army. The majority of them were Norwegians who had emigrated, often at a very young age, and settled in the British Isles. Most of these enlisted in the seafaring towns of the northeast of England: Sunderland, Newcastle and Hull, where they worked in the maritime industries. The first of them to be killed was Corporal Frank Olsen of the elite regiment the Coldstream Guards. He was born in Bergen but now lived in Newcastle, where he worked as a vacuum-cleaner salesman. He lost his life on October 31st 1914, when his unit was all but obliterated during the First Battle of Ypres. Great Britain initially only accepted British citizens as volunteers, but a small number of Norwegian sailors circumvented this by lying to the recruiters about the nationality and place of birth. One of them was the young sailor Henry Riiser (or Harry Resse as he styled himself in the UK) from Kristiania. He served in the British Army from 1914 to 1919 and took part in several campaigns and battles, among them the failed landing at Gallipoli, where he was wounded. After he had been evacuated from Gallipoli his father wrote to the Foreign Ministry in Oslo and asked them to do what they could to get him out of the British service. The Foreign Office responded, as they had in done several similar cases, that there was nothing they could do. If he had signed himself up as a soldier, even though with a false identity, the British authorities insisted that he had to stay until the war ended. After 1916, when the British army faced an acute manpower crisis following heavy losses on the Western Front, the UK Government firstly introduced conscription and allowed foreign nationals, or friendly aliens as Norwegians, to enlist in the British army. We also find

Norwegians in all parts of the British Empire, men born in Norway served in the Indian army, and in colonial regiments in Africa.

It was not just men who experienced the gruesome face of modern, industrial warfare. An unknown number of Norwegian women volunteered also to served as nurses. “We travelled so full of hope - Today we still have this hope, but our illusions are gone. War is cruel and merciless when it touches you personally” wrote Hilda Samsing, a nurse in the Australian army about her experiences at the bloody battle at Gallipoli in 1915.

In graves across Europe there rests several thousand Norwegians who fought in the First World War (1914-1918). On 11 November each year Governments, associations and others flowers on their graves, but representatives from Norway or the Norwegian state is not present, despite the fact that the First World War also was a Norwegian tragedy.

A History of the Winter Olympics - in three episodes.

By Ingrid Christophersen

In 1921 the IOC decided that winter sports should have their own games - figure skating and ice hockey had already featured as Olympic events at some Summer Olympics - and the first Winter Olympics saw the light of day in 1924 at Chamonix, France.

The IOC also decided that the Winter Games should be celebrated every four years in the same year as their summer counterpart. This tradition was upheld until the 1992 Games in Albertville France, when it was felt that the Winter Olympics needed their own space and status, and so, beginning with the 1994 Games in Lillehammer, the Winter Olympics were held every four years, two years after each Summer Olympics.

February 1924, International Sports Week, Chamonix, was later recognised as the first Winter Olympic Games. 17 nations took part, men only (bar 8 female figure skaters), Nordic events only, 18km cross country, 50km cross country, ski jumping and Nordic combination, plus skating and ice-hockey.

The newly established Soviet Union was absent but the emerging countries resulting from the Treaty of Versailles such as Estonia, Lithuania, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia were all present. Germany had not been invited. Representing the rest of the world outside Europe were USA and Canada. These winter games were a battle between nations rather than

individuals. Skiing had mostly been a domestic means of getting around, now it was playing a part on the world scene. It would, however, be an exaggeration to say the eyes of the world were focused on Chamonix - too much was going on elsewhere - Lenin in Russia and Wilson in America had both recently passed away.

The opening ceremony took place in the centre of Chamonix, in front of the *mairie* and the small stone church. The Olympians, representing 17 nations, marched through the town in ten minutes, preceded by the band of the *Chasseurs alpins*, and into the Olympic stadium, or the skating rink. The countries paraded alphabetically, France bringing up the rear. In front of each nation an athlete carried a spear - probably some sort of reference to the Greek Olympics - from which hung a name plate indicating the country, garlanded in a laurel wreath. He was followed by athletes carrying skis over their shoulders or skates in their hands. The august inhabitants of Chamonix - about 3000 in those days - were satisfied to watch the proceedings from their windows. There were about 1000 spectators in the skating arena, most of them visitors.

Little Sonja Henie, 11 years old at the time, arrived in Chamonix under her own steam and at her own expense - and caused a sensation. Her entry into the arena was the start of a truly dazzling and stunning sporting career. Three times Olympic champion, 10 times World Champion, followed by a star spangled movie career. In Chamonix however she came 8th out of 8.

Gold, silver and bronze medals went exclusively to Norway, with the exception of one bronze each to Finland and USA. (The USA bronze medal for jumping, the only American jumping medal to date, but as the competitor was called Anders Haugen there is no doubt about his parentage - just one more Norwegian who had gone west). So very nearly a clean sweep for the land of the cradle of skiing - the land of eternal snow.

This was the age of the amateur. The cross country skier trained in the evening, after work, often with the top of a fir tree tied round his waist, trailing in the snow, to enhance resistance, often with a head lamp to light his way. They were lumberjacks, farmers, trappers even. Training was wading through deep, untracked snow to logging areas, to inspect snares, to elk and hare hunting. The skiers were dressed in their own plus-fours and home-knitted ear- warmers. (We called the plus-fours apple knickers when I was little, because you could carry a pound of apples round the knees!)

The fifty kilometres was first out of the cross-country competitions. A

Norwegian lady, wife of the chef de mission, had hatched an ingenious plan: refreshment stands sited at strategic points in the terrain. The boys were fed chocolate from Norway, bread baked *à la Norvège* and eggs from Norwegian hens – no wonder the sustenance and the encouragement from pretty Norwegian girls – imported from Grenoble for the occasion – resulted in such overwhelming superiority.

The telegraph was young and expensive. Important or favourable results might reach the newspapers at the same time as descriptions of the opening ceremony, one sent by letter the other by telegraph. Electronic transmission was not even a twinkle in anyone's eye.

Fast forward and pause at the 1952 Olympics – and my first Olympic memory. How little Norway, emerging from 5 years of German occupation, could host such an event defies imagination. But it was all run on a shoestring and my father was the commentator in three languages – multi-tasking – and we had tickets to most events, including the figure skating and ski jumping at Holmenkollen. 'With the hope that our unique world may live in peace and toleration yet, Norway wishes the friends of winter sports a hearty welcome to the 6th Winter Games in Oslo'. Thus sounded the opening speech.

A new hotel had been built for the press and dignitaries, along with three dormitories to house athletes and coaches. The Games attracted 694 athletes representing 30 countries, who participated in four sports and 22 events. Japan and Germany made their returns to the winter Olympic competition, after being forced to miss the 1948 Games in the aftermath of World War II. Germany was represented solely by West German athletes because East Germany declined to compete as part of a unified team. At first Norway was reluctant to welcome German athletes and others considered Nazi sympathisers, but eventually they agreed to allow German and Japanese athletes to compete. The Norwegian speed skater Finn Hodt was left out of the Norwegian speed skating team because he had collaborated with the Nazis during the war. Portugal and New Zealand made their Olympic debuts, and for the first time women were allowed to compete in cross-country skiing. The 1952 Winter Games were the first to be held in a nation's capital. The Soviet Union sent no athletes to Oslo, despite being recognised by the IOC.

The opening ceremony was held in Bislett Stadium on 15 February. King George VI of Great Britain had died on 6 February 1952, eight days before the start of the Games. As a result, all national flags were flown at half-mast, and Princess Ragnhild opened the games in place of her grandfather, King

Haakon VII, who was in London attending the funeral. This was the first time an Olympic Games had been declared open by a woman. After the parade of the nations the Olympic flame was lit. The torch had been lit in the hearth of Morgedal House, birthplace of skiing pioneer Sondre Nordheim. The torch relay lasted two days and took place entirely on skis. At the opening ceremony the final torch-bearer, Eigil Nansen, grandson of Fridtjof Nansen, received the Olympic torch and skied to a flight of steps where he removed his skis, ascended and lit the flame.



Eigil Nansen on the last stage of of the Olympic torch relay
(Source: www.olympic.org/Oslo-1952-winter-olympics)

There were three alpine events on the Olympic program: slalom, giant slalom (which was making its Olympic debut) and downhill. Both men and women competed in the three events, held at Norefjell and Rødkleiva. Austrian skiers dominated the competition, winning seven out of a possible 18 medals. Greek slalom skier Antoin Miliordos fell 18 times on his

run and crossed the finish line backwards. During the downhill at Norefjell – and do not imagine that every inch of the course was surveyed by CCTV and TV as is the case today – an American skier got caught up in some spruce and in his words, ‘it took me several maddening seconds to untangle myself and continue’. At the closing ceremony 40 children dressed in national costumes performed an ice dance, the lights were extinguished and a 20-minute fireworks display lit up the night sky

Now fast forward to Sochi. I have a DVD of the highlights and the words that spring to mind are: awe-inspiring, breath-taking, overwhelming.

A total of 98 events in 15 winter sport disciplines were held during the Games. A number of new competitions were added, including biathlon mixed relay, women’s ski-jumping, mixed-team skating, mixed-team luge, half-pipe skiing, ski and snowboard slopestyle and snowboard parallel slalom. The torch relay lasted 123 days, and covered 64,00 kilometres (40,000 miles). In September 2013, the Olympic torch was lit in Ancient Olympia, beginning a seven-day journey across Greece and on into Russia. The relay started in Moscow before visiting 83 Russian cities and arriving at Sochi on the day of the opening ceremony, 7 February 2014, the longest relay in Olympic history. The torch travelled to the North Pole in a nuclear-powered ice-breaker and into space, to the International Space Station in a spacecraft adorned with Olympic-themed regalia, including the Games emblem. Russian cosmonauts, Oleg Kotov and Sergey Ryazansky waved the torch on a spacewalk outside the ISS. It returned to earth five days later, and was then taken to Europe’s highest mountain, Mount Elbrus, and to the depths of Siberia’s Lake Baikal.

A record 88 nations qualified to compete. Seven nations, Malta, Paraguay, East Timor, Togo, Tonga and Zimbabwe made their Winter Olympics debut. But enough of statistics. The sophistication, the state-of-the-art technology, the entire spectacle was quite simply overpowering. To sit at home and know, the moment the athlete crossed the finish line what his or her time was, and in which position he or she classified, defies comprehension. Every hard-fought cross-country race, every spill on the alpine pistes, every 100th of a second down the skeleton run, or slow-motion twist on the half-pipe: ecstasy, elation, triumph, tears, defeat, hugs, flag-waving, fair-play, sportsmanship. It was there for the world to see from the comfort of one’s own sitting-room.



Editorial note: Ingrid Christophersen was a member of the British Ladies Alpine skiteam from 1963-1968. Since then she has been the manager of various teams and sits on 4 committees of the International Ski Federation. She works as a translator and for two years was secretary to Thor Heyerdahl. In 2007 she was awarded an MBE for services to skiing

A Raid on the Lofoten Islands in World War II,

From the war-time diaries of Nicholas Mercer (1918-2001)

Although by mid 1941 I had been in the Navy for eighteen months I still had not been to sea. I knew I would soon be sent to sea, so I applied for a commission, something for which one could never be considered unless one had spent a minimum of three months in a theatre of war, so I was returned to the "Pembroke" the naval barracks at Chatham, where I spent a week before being drafted to a minesweeper, H.M.S. "Harrier", built in 1934, but currently being refitted in Grimsby. By 1941 her design was outdated, and, with new inventions such as radar, the accommodation for the ship's company to service new equipment was inadequate.

Ratings slept, of course, in hammocks and I had to get permission from the Engineer Officer to sling my hammock from the only two pipes on the mess deck that weren't permanently taken.

After swinging compasses we left Grimsby and sailed north to Scapa Flow, the naval base that had been penetrated by the German Captain Prien in his U-boat, which sank the battleship "Royal Oak" at her moorings.

I had never been to a more desolate place. The low hills surrounding this natural harbour were devoid of any form of major plant life, certainly not a single tree, but they were green with lichen and tundra vegetation.

Swinging round the buoy there for several days there were a few 'make and mend days' in other words leisure time. We were allowed ashore, but I didn't get there. Others said there was a miserable canteen that sold warm beer, but that it wasn't worth getting wet on the liberty boat.

An old WWI battleship, "Iron Duke", was the base headquarters, said to be kept afloat by the tin cans thrown overboard. Nevertheless, she lumbered off to sea once a year, heavily escorted, and sailed outside the 12-mile limit and back, to qualify for duty-free goods.

A buzz went round the ship that we were going on a secret mission. One quite pleasant morning we set off with the cruiser, "Arethusa", the surveying ship, "Scott", an oiler, a tug, a commando landing vessel and several destroyers, including a Polish one, for a secret destination. After about two days sailing the Commanding Officer, E.P. Hinton, using the tannoy, announced, that we had passed the point of no return, and he didn't think we'd been spotted so the operation was on. We were to invade part of the Lofoten Islands, whilst the "Arethusa" and the destroyers were to steam up

and down the coast sinking and harassing German shipping.

It was either Christmas Day or Boxing Day when we arrived at the target, a narrow inlet between cliffs and it was 4.0 a.m. The fleet hove to and the commando vessel began to lower her invasion craft. The blocks had not been oiled and squeaked and creaked, the sound echoing off the steep fjord cliffs. I felt sure a withering fire would descend on us from the cliff tops, but nothing happened. The engine of the invasion craft made a great din echoing off the cliffs, but still there was no enemy response.

The commando landed and went for the German barracks, and it was subsequently disclosed that all the German troops were lying in their bunks drunk, and I suppose they must have been rounded up. Off went "Arethusa" and the destroyers, leaving one destroyer and the smaller vessels with comparatively little firepower, but nothing significant happened that day. "Scott" charted the waters and I have a framed copy of the surroundings. We anchored and had a 'make and mend'.

The following morning a large reconnaissance Blohm and Voss flew overhead and we opened fire with our single 4" gun, and were gratified to see a small shell explode under the fuselage, causing the bomber to climb rapidly. Later a small vessel, crammed with Christmas goodies for the Germans, entered the anchorage and, mistaking the warships for German ones, turned on all her lights and ran up a large Swastika, but she had a rude awakening when she was boarded and seized.

We had probably been there a couple of days when we had an urgent signal from the Admiralty instructing us to disengage and clear out as the Germans were amassing aircraft from the Low Countries and were on their way to bomb us.

The commandos blew up the local oil installations, collected any Norwegians who wanted to join their forces in the UK and we sailed. To those unfamiliar with naval warfare, I should inform them that the Admiralty controlled everything. From their huge radio nerve centre in Whitehall they had contacts all over the world and directed operations. Battle tactics would be decided by the senior officer at sea, but the strategy was Admiralty inspired.

As far as I can remember, it was said that the radar operator was reporting huge squadrons of German aircraft approaching from different angles, which would have been impossible odds. Sure, we would have shot down a few, but aircraft nearly always won against a ship and they would have sunk most of

us. But as they arrived, down came a blinding snowstorm which lasted until we were several hundred miles out to sea, and my guess is that the pilots were reluctant to descend into or near those steep fjords. There was another scare about an approaching E-boat, but nothing happened and we returned to Scapa unscathed. God seemed to have been on our side, and it was a hazardous and risky venture achieving nothing much!

Editorial note. What Nicholas Mercer as a rating could not have known was that this and an earlier raid on the Lofoten Islands in March 1941 were both involved in trying to capture one of the German Enigma coding machines. In this operation one was taken from the German auxiliary warship GEIER (V5904) with the associated wheels and documentation and delivered to Bletchley Park.

See www.naval-history.net/xGM-Chrono-10DE-Wheatland.htm

A visit to Norway by ex.pat Kenneth Richardson CVO. QSO.JP.

By Sybil Richardson

Kenneth Richardson, born in Liverpool, moved to New Zealand in 1958. He has held the position of official secretary to the former Governor General, Dame Catherine Tizard and principle private secretary to former Prime Minister David Lange amongst others. Kenneth, with his ardent love of all things British wanted to visit “The Little England Tearooms” at Vollen on the outskirts of Oslo which he had heard about through Norwegian friends in New Zealand. He was given a hearty welcome by the proprietors Henning Lyche, a strapping Norwegian and his English wife.

The house, which was originally a Coaching Inn has been completely renovated and tastefully decorated into lovely tearooms where one can revel in such English culinary delights as High Tea, Cream Tea, Scones, Clotted Cream, home made Jams and not forgetting real English sausages, which can be washed down with a choice of 17 different varieties of tea, including one with the name “Hobbit”. One can also join in social events such as tea tasting, musical entertainment etc.

The picturesque coastal village of Vollen with a breath of “Little England” thrown in will no doubt be a topic of conversation on Kenneth’s return, and who knows, maybe if “Hobbit” tea was introduced to New Zealand it would prove to be as popular as the film of “The Lord of the Rings”.



Kenneth Richardson, right with Henning Lyche and his wife Kjersti

UK's close friendship with Norway remains strong.

By Rt Hon Sir Alan Beith MP

*On November 19th a group of members attended QuestionTime in the House of Lords, followed by afternoon tea in the Peers' Dining Room, at which they were given a copy of the report printed below of the *BGIPU's visit to Norway from 29 September to 3 October 2014, led by the Rt Hon Sir Alan Beith MP.*

* BGIPU is the British Group Inter-Parliamentary Union.

The United Kingdom's close friendship with Norway, forged in the dark days of Norway's occupation by the Nazis, remains strong despite the passage of time since 1945 and the dramatic change in Norway's situation now that oil and gas have made it one of the richest countries in the world. Indeed, our recent BGIPU delegation to Norway found that the wartime experience was still a strong factor in Norwegian perceptions of the UK, and that Norway was happy to be investing parts of its wealth in the UK.

Our delegation consisted of Sir Alan Beith (leader), Paul Farrelly and Gisela Stuart from the Commons, and Richard Faulkner and Diana Maddock from the Lords. We were most helpfully supported before and during the visit by Dominique Rees, who is herself half Norwegian. We were unable to secure any Conservative participants because the visit coincided with the Conservative party conference.

After a briefing from our newly appointed Ambassador, Sarah Gillett, we headed for where the money is - in Norway's sovereign wealth fund, administered by the Central Bank but with a team of staff in major financial centres, including London. With enviable administrative costs of 0.05 per cent, it works within ethical guidelines determined by parliament but makes day to day investment decisions. There is currently discussion as to whether it should disinvest from heavy carbon producing industries, notably coal. It does not invest at all in Norway. It now invests up to five per cent in property, including half of Regent Street.

We found from parliamentarians in the Finance and Economic Affairs Committee that, although the Progress Party had at one time advocated spending more than the current limit of four per cent of fund revenue supporting the state budget, it no longer took that view, and a Progress Party minister holds the finance portfolio on the coalition government. We found that neither the Progress Party nor the parliamentarians of other parties

thought it should be seen as in any way equivalent to UKIP or to the right wing parties in other Nordic countries.

A second theme of our visit was to gain an understanding of Norway's relations with the European Union. There is now, for the first time, a Minister in the Prime Minister's office with EU responsibility, and he told us that Norway has incorporated over 10,000 pieces of EU legislation in the last 12 years. The acknowledged authority on Norway's EU position is Professor Fredrik Sejersted of Oslo University, and he gave us a lively presentation on the issues. The unavoidable conclusion is that if your problem is having so many policies decided in Brussels which you then have to implement, Norway does not have the answer. Their calculation is that it is vital to be in the single market, that the population will not vote to join the EU, so the politicians have to make agreements in which Norway carries out almost all EU policies without any real say in deciding them. Immigration is part of this, but is not as controversial as in the UK, and Norway, with its small population, needs workers. It is, however, taking steps to prevent forced marriages and is looking at UK models of detention centres for illegal immigrants. Norway is a Schengen member.

The Minister was keen to draw our attention to the situation in Hungary, where Norway has withdrawn some of its financial support for civic programmes because it has serious concerns about civil rights and the extent to which it believes the Hungarian government is seeking to exercise political control over NGOs.

Another of our themes was development in the Arctic region, and we had a useful meeting with the Chair of the Storting delegation for Arctic cooperation. Future energy exploitation in the Arctic will raise major issues.

A fourth theme for our visit was defence, and we met with most of the members of the Storting's Defence Committee as well as visiting the new NATO Joint Warfare Centre in Stavanger. It was during the week of our visit that a Norwegian, Jens Stoltenberg, became NATO Secretary General. Defence Committee members spoke of Norway's role in removing chemical weapons from Syria: participation in air strikes was, they said, not the best way they could contribute at a time when they were changing their base structure. While keen to stress the importance of good relations with Russia, they reminded us that most of their military resources were in the North of Norway, where they border Russia.

The NATO Joint Warfare Centre has been built in a magnificent location

outside Stavanger. We were welcomed there by the German Major General Reinhard Wolski and the senior British officer there, Colonel Stephen Wilkinson. We were able to meet about thirty UK service personnel working there, and we had a thorough briefing. This included meeting the team which works on simulating the active media context in which any threat to a NATO member would inevitably be played out. Given recent events in the Ukraine and the nervousness of NATO's Baltic members states, it was important to gain an understanding of several aspects of NATO's preparedness.

While in Stavanger, in meetings and informally, we were able to get a picture of how the oil and gas industry has developed there, and also of how the area is planning for a future when it will need to find other sources of employment. Stavanger is expected to see its population rise to half a million - virtually doubling in a generation. There is significant UK participation in the economy of the Stavanger area, and it is only an hour's flight from Newcastle or Aberdeen (a benefit felt by two of us while the rest of our colleagues faced delay and transfer to get to fog-bound Heathrow!) In our various meetings other topics were raised - Norwegians were keen to hear from us about the Scottish referendum, and we were told about their plans to reduce significantly the number of local authorities in Norway.



UK delegation meeting with Norwegian Deputy Speaker, Marit Nybakk

Every courtesy was extended to us, including a very wide-ranging discussion during our courtesy call on Deputy Speaker Marit Nybakk, which included the shared problem of dealing with radicalised young people who may return from Syria - up to 60 in Norway's case. The State Opening of the Storting by King Harald took place while we were in Stavanger, and two of us were able to attend the service in Oslo Cathedral which marked the opening. We had good support from the small team at our Oslo embassy, from staff at the Storting, and from the NATO staff at Stavanger. We were welcomed as friends by a country and which feels close to Britain in so many ways.

Peder Balke - Citizen and Artist

Two articles in connection with the exhibition at the National Gallery (Sunley Room), 12 November 2014 till 12 April 2015.

Peder Balke - fattiggutten som ble kunstner og samfunnsreformatør

By Eva McKenna

Peder Andersen Balke ble født på Svennerud-eie på Helgøya i Mjøsa i 1804, døpt i Nes kirke 4. november. Hvilken av husmannsplassene han er født på er usikkert, men Sollien er nevnt. Plassen lå i det området der Helgøya kirke og garden Sinnerud nå ligger og grenset opp mot Åsen. Her vokste han opp i svært trange kår sammen med sin mor Pernille Pedersdatter og sin eldre bror Tor. Som 8-åring måtte han ut i skogen for "at Tage Bark fra Trærne, som blev tørret og malet og hvoraf Moder lagde Brød" - en nød og en fattigdom som vi ikke helt skjønner i vår tid.

I tida 1811-1818 gikk Peder på omgangsskole her på Øya. Lese hadde han lært av sin mor slik at han kunne hjelpe sin skolemester Ole i undervisningen av de andre barna. Peder fikk ros av presten da han sto til konfirmasjon i 1818.

Peder la for dagen helt fra barnsbein av en enorm energi og jernvilje til å stå på og aldri gi seg. Hans ansvarsfølelse var også sterk helt fra unge år, ikke minst for sin mor. Som 10-åring lærte han å reparere og binde fiskegarn, ble snart flinkere enn læremesteren og tjente penger på dette gjennom flere år. Som 12-åring rodde han til Eidsvold med 2 sekker karve. Derfra til Christiania

hvor han solgte den for dobbelt pris, kjøpte med seg varer som ikke var å få tak i på Helgøya, som han så solgte med fortjeneste da han kom hjem! Peders morfar hadde vært en anerkjent og dyktig maler i sin tid, og arbeidene hans vekket lysten til å bli en like god malermester som han. Peder gikk derfor i lære hos Anders Skrædderstuen i to år, og arbeidet med malerarbeid om sommeren på Øya, Nes og Toten.

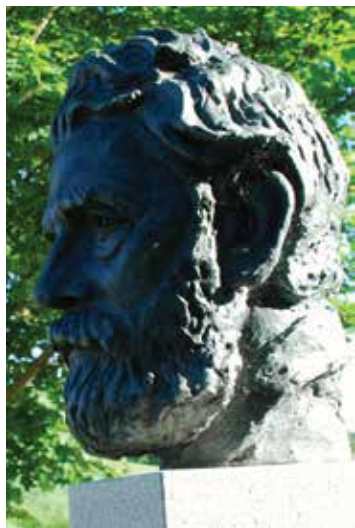
Etter endt læretid tok han på seg flere oppdrag på Toten hvor han likte seg godt. Og fra Maurud på Helgøya meldte han utflytting til Balke på Toten i 1826. Han kalte seg da maler. Som kunstner tok Peder etternavnet Balke etter en av sine velgjørere på Toten

Peder Balke visste at hvis han kunne utdanne seg som malermester kunne han unngå verneplikt så i 1826 flyttet han til Christiania og gikk i lære hos forskjellige kunstnere til han i 1827 begynte å studere på Den kgl. Tegneskole. Livet hans fra nå til 1850 kan regnes som hans forsøk på å utdanne seg som kunstmaler, og etablere seg som sådann og denne delen av hans liv dekkes i artikkelen under.

Dessverre greide han ikke i lengden å leve av sin kunst og i 1850 slo han seg ned i Christiania, tildels fordi han var blitt mer og mer opptatt av politiske spørsmål og sosiale problemer. Han ble aktiv i thrannerbevegelsen og i 1851 fremsatte han for Stortinget det oppsiktsvekkende lovforslag om en pensjonskasse for arbeidere, samtenke- og invalide pensjon. Etter at professor Rathke, hans velgjører fra 1820 og 1830-årene, var død i 1855 kjøpte Balke

hans løkke-eiendom Carlstad (nord for Bogstadveien ved nåværende Industrigata) og bygde seg hus der. På den store eiendommen begynte han å utparsellere tomter med sikte på å etablere en nybydel for arbeidsfolk. Området døpte han Kunstnerlund, men på folkemunne ble det kalt Balkeby. En brannkatastrofe i 1879 la hele 42 hus i grus, deriblant hans eget hus. Dette førte til økonomiske problemer, han fikk slag og hans siste malerier er datert i dette året.

I nekrologen som ble skrevet etter hans død i 1887, ble ikke landskapsmaler nevnt, men på førstesidene i hovedstadsavisene



Fra plasseringen av busten ved Helgøya kirke kan man se opp til Peders fødested, husmannsplassen Sollien; til Nes kirke hvor han ble døpt, konfirmert og gift; til garden Svennerud og til Toten - fire sentrale plasser i hans oppvekst.

sto det kun at "en aktet samfunnsborger var gått bort."

Peder Balke the struggling Artist

By Marie Wells

Peder Balke (1804-1887) was already a successful craftsman artist decorating the insides of rural houses with stencilled ornamentation and scenes when he decided he wanted to become a 'real' painter, an artist, and so came to Christiania in 1827 to study. His major problem was lack of funds, though he did find a benefactor and lifelong friend in the scientist Professor Jens Rathke. He studied firstly in Christiania and later at the Stockholm Academy. Both Rathke and later his compatriot J.C. Dahl recommended him to apply himself to the study of nature, which he did by undertaking strenuous walking tours in the mountain districts of Norway, always with his sketchbook..

Balke was always enterprising. The first time he arrived in Stockholm it was after having driven a carriage to the Norwegian cabinet office there. He had done this to save money, but it also led to him meeting a junior minister, one Frederik Due, who later became prime minister, and who was to become

one of Balke's most helpful supporters. He helped Balke gain access to the royal palace to see the much talked-about paintings of Norway's northern county, Finnmark, by the German painter Johann Christian Emdorf.

Balke had to earn money and he had the knack of seeing where there might be an opportunity. Many of these opportunities involved trying to interest those in his power in his work. The first time he tried this was early in the 1830s when after a visit to Norway he took the pilgrim route back to Stockholm across the Dovre Mountains to Trondheim and then on the Jämtland road to Östersund, Uppsala and Stockholm. The reason for this choice was that the road had been built at the command of the Swedish king who wanted to make travel between Norway and Sweden easier. Balke hoped that if he could show the king some of his sketches of the road the king would commission a painting. Due suggested that even before doing this he make a painting of a particularly steep section that bore the king's name. When Due arranged an audience with the king, not only did he buy the painting of the Karl Johan Pass but three more. Where the king had led the way, the crown prince and notables followed and Balke was able to sell several paintings.

With the money he had earned Balke could now fulfil a plan that he had long cherished, which was to visit northern Norway and in 1832 he set off on a great sea journey up to the North Cape. His experience of nature on the trip made an indelible impression on him, one that he would draw on for the rest of his life, and indeed it is for his paintings of the north that he is remembered.

Balke married in 1833 and in 1834 he and his wife moved to Christiania, but Balke was soon on the move again, this time to Dresden where Dahl lived and worked, and shared a house with the great German Romantic painter Caspar David Friedrich, whose work had made a deep impression on Balke when he had seen it in museums.

The late 1830s were not easy for Balke who could get on easily with diplomats, merchants and leading officials and could win a certain number of private commissions but he found it difficult to win acceptance in artistic circles, where it was thought he lacked artistic education. It was at this point that he turned to marine painting, based on the sketches from his journey to the North Cape. It was a motif he was to return to often and one through which one can trace his development as an artist.

In 1840, still trying to create opportunities for himself he travelled to St Petersburg in the hope of selling some of his paintings to the imperial court, but when he arrived there he found they had moved south.



The North Cape (Source: National Gallery Exhibition catalogue)

Finally in 1843 Balke was awarded a government scholarship which after much persuasion he was permitted to use to spend a year with Dahl in Dresden. The following year Dahl visited Norway and in July he and Balke set out for Bergen with Balke driving the carriage with Dahl and his two children in it. After a week together in Bergen, Balke left Dahl and returned to Christiania by boat.



Lighthouse on the Norwegian Coast, 1855 (Source: Wikimedia Commons)

It was on this journey that he noted 'the many splendid lighthouses' that had been built along the coast and which were later became such a feature of his paintings as in one of his most famous paintings *Lighthouse on the Norwegian Coast* from 1855.

Balke's art was developing rapidly in the 1840s, and the Christiania Art Society even paid a top price for one of his paintings. But tastes were changing away from the Romantic School centred on Dahl and Dresden and moving towards Düsseldorf and the National Romantic school of painting exemplified by Adolf Tidemand and Hans Gude, and Balke's style even stimulated debate in the papers. He was beginning to doubt that he had future in Christiania, and ever enterprising and still undaunted he decided he would again try to sell to royalty. On his voyage to the North Cape he had noticed that during the French Revolution the exiled French prince had travelled by boat from Trondheim to Norway. Balke had even made sketches of the places the prince had visited. Now he hoped to meet the king and recreate for him in painting his journey north!

His contacts in Paris, including Due, were not optimistic about his chances, but Balke persevered, and in 1847 gained access to the king who liked his sketches, commissioned two paintings, and from the 54 sketches Balke showed him, bought 33, 26 of which still hang in the Louvre. Nothing came, however, of his hopes of recreating Louis-Philippe's journey to the North Cape, because when the February revolution broke out in 1848 the king abdicated and fled to England.

Balke's grand hopes were now dashed and as the situation in Paris grew worse he decided to go with his family to Dresden. But the situation there was uneasy and he was unable to sell anything, so he made a brief visit to Norway, where this time he was able to sell some paintings to a wealthy merchant and the crown prince. Returning to Dresden he realized that artistic life there had ground to a halt and that he would have to move again. This time he chose London, where the family stayed for two years before returning finally to Christiania where they settled. Balke himself, however, made yet another visit to Germany, this time visiting Hamburg, Berlin and Dresden, and now his paintings even received critical approval, though this made no difference to opinion in Norway when he sent *Morgenbladet* a copy of the review.

In 1855 Balke's benefactor, Professor Rathke died and left his property to Balke, who divided the eight-acre estate into small plots that could be leased

by workers and craftsmen. This meant that he no longer had to live by selling his paintings, or paint in such a way as to please princes and wealthy merchants. This seems to have liberated him and many of the paintings for which he is known were done after this time, as for example *Coastal Landscape with Wreck*, probably from the 1860s. (Dates are often approximate because Balke did not date his work)



Coastal Landscape with Wreck, (source:Wikimedia Commons)

Balke could now draw on the deep impressions that his trip to northern Norway had made on him, and render them in such a way that what we get is a sense of his experience rather than a realistic painting of the sea and a mountain which here looms powerfully, like something out of a vision, and bears no relation to the seascape in the foreground.

This was a trend that Balke was to take even further in many small, but still powerful paintings where in the light parts the paint is almost scraped away. *Stormy Sea* from 1870 (see over) only measure 11x 8.5 cm, but there is no doubt about the power of the storm that has made even the birds look ragged. It is paintings like this and other even more monochrome ones that have excited viewers at the National Gallery and made critics see in Balke early modernist

tendencies.



Stormy Seas 1870 (Source: Wikimedia Commons)

Book Review

Frans Widerberg *The Art of Re-enchantment*, 208 pp., published by Northumbria University Gallery, 2014, £26, paperback, ISBN 978-0947940-02-07

By Marie Wells,

This volume was published in connection with exhibitions of Widerberg's paintings at Kunstnerforbundet, Oslo from 5 June - 31 July, the Kings Place Gallery, London from 5 September - 19 December 2014 and the University Gallery, Northumbria University from 6 February - 2 April 2015, but it is not a catalogue

Frans Widerberg's paintings are immediately recognizable, due to the artist's bold use of primary colours – mainly blue, red and yellow – and the floating or hovering human figures, and animals – chiefly horses – standing on nothing substantial, and this volume has a generous 150 pages of illustrations. The paintings exist in what Mara-Helen Wood, in the Foreword to the volume has described as 'an existential wilderness illuminated by a light that sometimes recalls the Aurora Borealis and the at other a post-nuclear incandescence', (p. 5.)

There are three essays in the volume. The first by William Varley looks at the influences on Widerberg, influences as diverse as Masaccio's painting of *The Expulsion* (of Adam and Eve from Paradise) to the landscapes of Liguria. He also places Widerberg in the northern Romantic tradition, first

argued by Robert Rosenblum in *Modern Painting and the Northern Romantic Tradition*, a work that challenged the orthodox view of artistic developments based on Paris. In 'A Nordic Metaphysical Painter' Holger Kofoed shows how Widerberg and like-minded artists, concerned to explore man's existential

position, rejected abstract, non-figurative art and sought inspiration in everything from the modern hippie and beatnik movements to Buddhism and the reading of Kierkegaard. The paintings of Munch and the opening of the Munch Museum in 1963 showed them how it was possible to express feelings and ideas through a form of 'modernist figurative expressionism' (p.176). Kofoed argues that Widerberg's breakthrough came in the period 1967-74 when he concentrated on motifs from dreams and visions and myths, his paintings showing that he had moved from one reality to an alternative one. At the same time his use of colour changed from naturalistic to symbolic. In the final essay 'A Song of Something Else' Michael Tucker takes further aspects covered in the



Detail from *Rider, Northern Lights*.
(The original measures 175x 200cm)

first two essays. Unable to rest in existentialism Widerberg himself had said that he needed to 'dig deeper and fly higher' and Tucker shows how he found the deeper in a form of primitivism, and the higher, the transcendental, in the work of William Blake, and he suggests that Widerberg's art tries to express both simultaneously. Setting his vulnerable, naked figures in a luminously coloured cosmic void he tries to express the tension of man's place in the world. Taken together these essays help to give anyone interested in Widerberg's art an understanding of the thinking behind his work and the meaning he hopes to convey in his paintings.

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17th of May 2015, Southwark Park, London

It may seem early to start thinking about the 17th of May celebrations, but the organising committee started its work already in September 2014.

The Committee consist of a group of volunteers representing various Norwegian organisations in London, and there is plenty to do for those involved to make sure everything runs smoothly on the day so that visitors can have a good time.

The number of visitors at last year's celebrations was estimated at somewhere between 5 and 10 thousand and the arrangement was seen as a great success. The Committee is keen to replicate this success on Sunday 17 May 2015.

In order to manage this on the day we need some extra help and we are therefore, looking for volunteers to assist for with various jobs such as selling lottery tickets, manning stalls and so on for a few hours. If you are interested or know someone who could help (you don't need to speak Norwegian) please contact Irene. Contact details below.

You will be given more information about the available jobs and practical details nearer the date. What is important at this stage is to get an overview of potential helpers who are available on the 17th.

Looking forward to hearing from you.

Irene

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