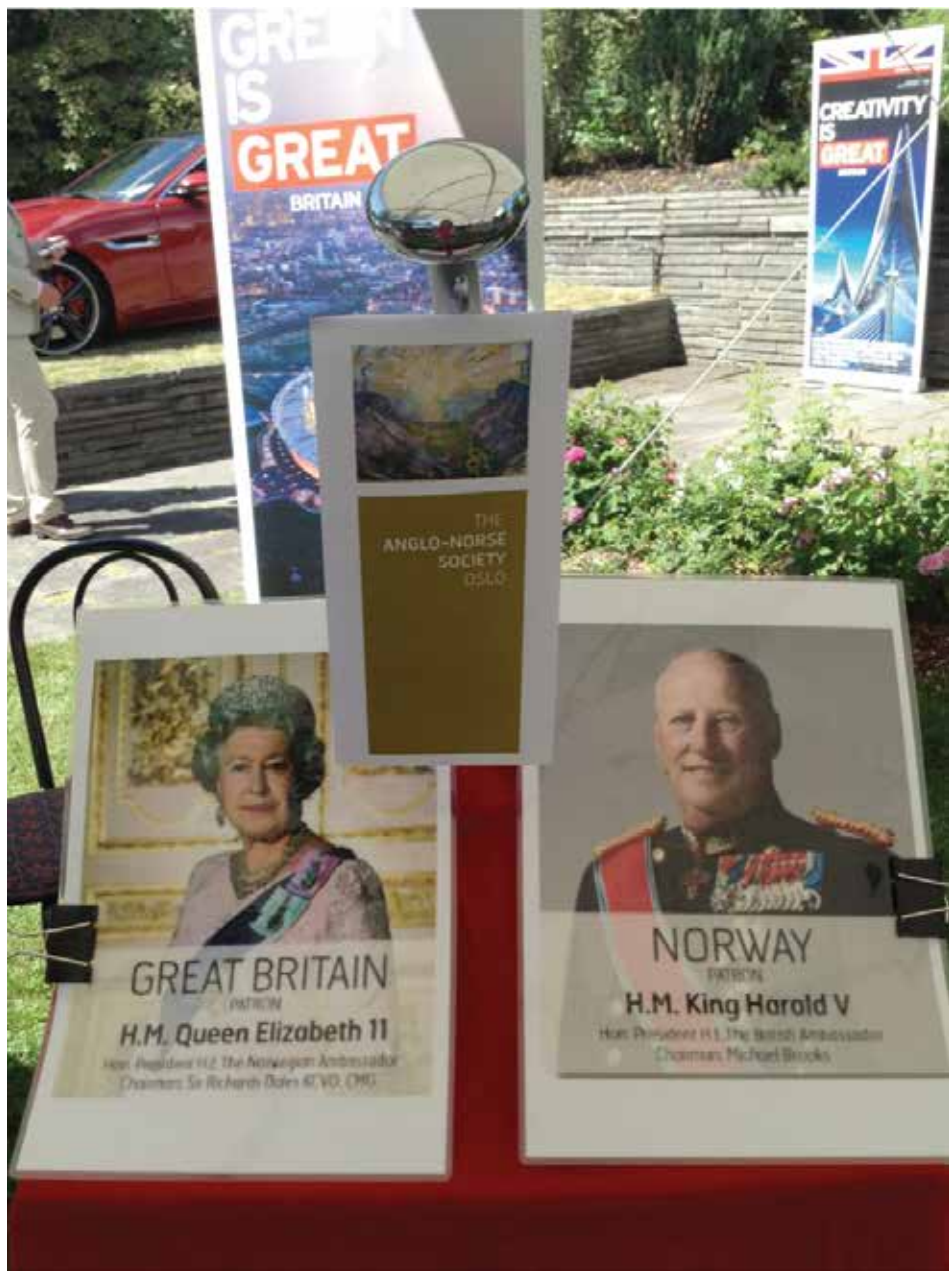


ISSN 1363-0009366

SUMMER 2014

Anglo-Norse Review





The ANS-Oslo stand at the Queen's Birthday Party at the Ambassador's Residence

ANGLO-NORSE REVIEW

THE ANGLO-NORSE SOCIETY - LONDON

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The cover shows one of the Cup-Cake Queens sponsored by BBC Entertainment at the ANS Oslo celebration of the Queen's birthday in June 2014

Editorial

Thank you to all the contributors to this edition. Without you there would be no review. This time we are lucky to have several contributions from our sister society in Norway, making this a truly joint issue.

Amid the 200 year celebrations a note of sadness at the passing of a friend. DFDS are discontinuing the service between Harwich and Esbjerg. The route has been in use since 1875. Those of you wanting to take cars to Norway have had another door closed and in the event of another volcanic dust cloud a contingency route has gone. The nearest DFDS link to Scandinavia is now as far south as Amsterdam. See **“An adventure across the North Sea”** by *Annbjørg McGarry* in the summer 2011 edition to discover the last ferry link to Norway.

Now cheer up, get out your cameras and get snapping. We are looking for some of your best photos to be our front page for the next few editions. Please send photos, in portrait format, electronically to the editor at review@anglo-norse.org.uk. The lucky members will be able to show off to family and friends, with their credit appearing at the bottom of page 3. We cannot accept prints.

Apologies for the very late arrival of this mag. I have suffered a plethora of unfortunate circumstances which all contributed to its delay.

Do any members have Adobe InDesign CS on their computer and are willing to help with future editions of the magazine?

A Very Special 17th of May

By Elisabeth Solem

This year the 17th of May was of special significance since it was the bicentennial celebration of the Norwegian Constitution. In this connection, there have been numerous exhibitions and events all over the country. Historians and political commentators have tried to re-examine the importance of the events 200 years ago.

The National Museum of Art, including the National Gallery, the Museum of Contemporary Art, the Museum of Decorative Arts and Design, have all had an extensive programme commemorating the year 1814 – the *annus mirabilis*, as it was called by a contemporary writer. What really happened

that year that was so exceptional and would have such a wide-reaching impact on our society?

The Napoleonic Wars were over and it seemed only right to give Norway to Sweden as war compensation. We know that it was not quite that simple. Norway was a poor country at the time and rather remote from Europe. But our trade and shipping industry had given us quite extensive contact with Europe and leading Norwegians had been influenced by new ideas and fashion which was a result of the Enlightenment. Moreover, they had contacts abroad. The stage was set for new ideas of government, ideas of freedom and equality. And a war-tired Europe was prepared to give Norwegian a certain amount of self-governance.

Many of the recent exhibitions demonstrate the atmosphere of 1814. The landscape paintings convey the love of the Norwegian countryside, showing Norway as a beautiful and resourceful country. The portraits show men dressed in the fashion of the day, able men who give the impression of being capable of leadership. The furniture and interiors of Norwegian upper-class houses, as well as fashion for both men and women, give way from the sumptuousness of the Rococo style to the more subdued ideal of the Empire, ideals that appeal to reason and restraint.

The feelings of a growing national identity, coupled with a fear of loss of freedom forced a group of 112 men from varying backgrounds and regions, with at large age difference (the average of 42), to agree and declare their allegiance to a new constitution “until Dovre falls”. Somehow this group became statesmen within a few weeks. They were acutely aware of being a part of history, that their actions would influence the future of the nation. They were even smitten by a euphoric optimism for the future as well as a feeling of rebirth of an old and proud society – the people portrayed in the saga literature.

The far-reaching effects of 1814 have certainly formed a Norwegian national identity which influences our thoughts about government today. Ideas of freedom, democracy, equality and justice are deeply shared by all Norwegians. The uniqueness of the story of 1814 was that it all happened rather peacefully. Truly an *annus mirabilis*.



The Goddess of Liberty carries the torch of freedom from revolutionary France to Norway. The picture shows an extract from Aage Storstein's mural "Human Rights" in Oslo City Hall. Reproduced by kind permission of the City Hall Administration Services

1814: The Miracle Year that still Influences our Reality

by Irene Garland.

This article was originally published in Norwegian in the London 17. mai programme and has been translated by Marie Wells. [Ed.]

While we now celebrate the Bicentenary of the Constitution, it is natural to look back on the events that led to the formulation of the Constitution and to evaluate the effect it has had on our subsequent history.

It started with the peace treaty between Denmark and Sweden, signed in Kiel on 16 January, 1814, as a result of the Napoleonic Wars in Europe. When the wording in this agreement became known in Norway, it led to uproar. The Treaty of Kiel stated that Denmark should cede Norway to Sweden without the people's consent. Norway's then vice-regent, the Danish prince, *Christian Frederik*, summoned representatives from the whole country to a meeting at Eidsvoll on 16 February. Here the peace treaty was rejected, and a constituent assembly with broad representation from the whole country was summoned. The opening of this National Assembly took place on 11 April with 112 representatives present. Only Northern Norway was not represented, on account of the great distance and the shortness of time. Even in its composition, with an average age of 42, this assembly was groundbreaking. It was composed of 57 government officials (including those from the church, army and navy), 37 farmers, 13 merchants and 5 Mill owners or estate proprietors. The result was a uniquely democratic constitution that gave voting rights to about 40% of men over 25 – a greater percentage than in any other country in Europe at the time.

The background for the ideas that were given expression in the constitution was the American Declaration of Independence and the French constitution: the sovereignty of the people, separation of powers, and civil rights. The Constitution was signed on 17 May, and *Christian Frederik* elected king the same day. For a few months after 17 May, Norway was a completely independent state, even if the independence was not 'recognized' by the major powers.

When *Carl Johan of Sweden* returned from waging war in Europe at the end of July, he attacked Norway and won. This led to the Convention of Moss, and the formalization of Norway's union with Sweden. Despite this, Norway retained its constitution. This was to be important in the years ahead, when

there were many battles between the government in Oslo and the government in Stockholm. Important contentious issues were the composition of the Council of State, the question of the royal veto on legislation and the consular service. The struggle for a Norwegian flag without the sign of the union on it also stirred many people, particularly seamen.

In the course of the 1800s, Norway quickly established its own social institutions and central administration, national assembly, a government and courts, as well as the Bank of Norway and the university. Members of the cultural elite were also active in social debates. *Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson* did not just write the national anthem but was also deeply involved politically, and must be reckoned as the national opinion-former of the day. *Edvard Grieg* also took up the cause of the flag and gave an impassioned speech in the Student's Union in support of a flag without the colours of the union.

In 1899, the 'unsullied' Norwegian flag was raised for the first time over the Storting. The National Theatre opened in the same year with plays by *Holberg* and *Ibsen*, plus Bjørnson's saga drama *Sigurd Jorsalfar* (*Sigurd the Crusader*), with music by *Edvard Grieg*.

However, it was the question of the consular service that became the trigger for the dissolution of the union in 1905. Prime Minister *Michelsen* forced through a law on this issue in the Storting that the king refused to sanction. The government was dissolved, and since the king could not form a new government, he had, according to *Michelsen*, ceased to function as Norway's king. In the referendum that followed, nearly 100% of those entitled to vote, which at that time were men, supported the dissolution of the union. Women, with the support of *Michelsen*, started a petition in support of independence from Sweden, and this also gained wide support. There was mobilization in both Norway and Sweden, but at the negotiating table the delegates of both sides were concerned to find a peaceful solution, and *Oscar II* renounced the Norwegian crown after some months of negotiation. The Danish prince, *Carl*, was chosen as the Norwegian king and took the name *Haakon VII*.

The 'freedom, equality, and fraternity' of the French Revolution are perhaps simple words in themselves, but the idea behind them became important. In *Aage Storstein's* fresco in the Oslo City Hall, we see how the torch of freedom travels through Europe to Norway. The Constitution is the legal manifestation of these democratic ideas, and Norway's Constitution is the oldest national constitution in Europe still in use. But in 1814, we did not only acquire a new political system and new status as nation, but also an 'over-

riding frame of reference for all Norwegian nation-building and nationalism up to our own time.' Today Norway is one of the most egalitarian countries in the world and listed as a leading democracy on the International Democracy Index.

The birth of the modern state happened in 1814--often referred to as 'the year of miracles' -- but the ideas that were planted in Norwegian soil 200 years ago are still firmly fixed in the consciousness of the Norwegian people. This we saw clearly expressed after the mass murders in July 2011, when Prime Minister *Stoltenberg* called for more democracy. The response from the people was a spontaneous coming together in the 'rose processions' across the whole country. Two hundred years have passed, but the ideals handed down to us by our forefathers are still alive and in the best of health. "*Gratulerer med dagen*" is how we greet each other in Norway on May 17th.

MANY HAPPY RETURNS!

Missionaries and Manuscripts: the Christianisation of Norway

By Matilda Watson, PhD Student at King's College London

This article has been written in response to requests by members unable to attend the author's very interesting lecture in February. Ed

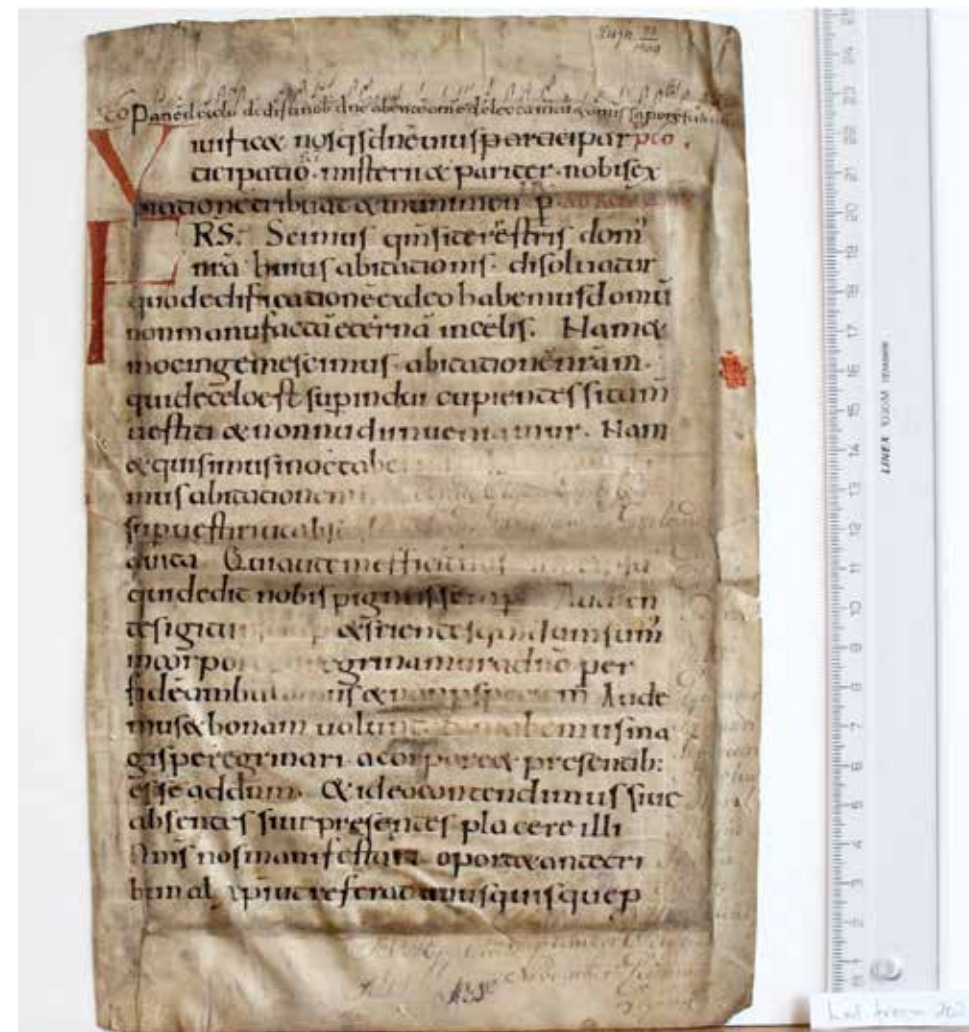
Around the year 1015, *St Olaf* is said to have sailed from England to Norway in order to win the throne. As king, *St Olaf* reigned until c. 1030 and is credited with playing a crucial part in the conversion of Norway, which had been initiated by an earlier king, *Olaf Trygvason*, who ruled Norway in c. 995-1000. This was a time of turmoil, change and drama and although both kings played important parts in the narrative of Norway's Christianisation, we now know that the conversion process took place much more gradually during the tenth and eleventh centuries and that Anglo-Norse contacts were a significant part of this process.

The Norway of *Olaf Trygvason* and *St Olaf* was, of course, a very different place to the Norway of 2014. The kingdom of the Norwegian kings changed shape often, but roughly speaking; their power base was centred on the Oslofjord and extended north to Trøndelag. Until c. 1050, the area around Trondheim, comprising Trøndelag and Hålogaland, was ruled by a dynasty of powerful Norwegian lords -- known as the jarls of Hlaðir -- who sometimes

worked with the Norwegian kings and at other times fought against and usurped royal power in fierce battles. It was one of the jarls of Hlaðir who joined forces with *King Cnut*, ruler of Denmark and England, and forced *St Olaf* into exile around 1028. Norway was a dangerous place if you ended up fighting on the losing side!

In this context, it is perhaps rather surprising to read that during *St Olaf's* reign, the king “had with him many bishops and priests from England by whose admonitions and teaching he prepared his heart to seek God, and he committed his subjects to their direction... At the king’s command they also went to Sweden, Gothia, and all the islands beyond Norway, preaching the Word of God and the Kingdom of Jesus Christ to the barbarians”. We know very little about the man who wrote these words in the closing decades of the eleventh century, except that he was a cleric called *Adam* who came from Bremen in Germany and he seems to have travelled to the Danish royal court where he talked to the Danish king about the history of the Scandinavian lands - he is known to us today as *Adam of Bremen*. *Adam* wrote one of the most important, near contemporary accounts about events in Scandinavia.

Adam names a few of the “bishops and priests” who came from England, but we are left wondering who they were, how many others came across from England and how these men went about “preaching the Word of God”. All we have to go on are a few scattered crumbs of evidence. One particularly eye-catching source of information for the eleventh century are runestones. More runestones survive in Sweden, but there are a few across Norway. One particularly famous runestone is the Kuli runestone from Møre and Romsdal. This runestone is inscribed with the words: “Þórir and Hallvarðr raised this stone in memory of Ulfljótr... Christianity had been twelve winters in Norway”. Historians argue a lot over the date of this runestone, but it is often thought to refer to the reign of *St Olaf*. [See the article on the Kuli stone in the Winter 2012 edition – Ed] However, archaeologists can bring forth a range of different sites which preserve the foundations of early churches and Christian grave sites which can be dated to before the year 1000 and therefore well before the reign of *St Olaf*.



Oslo, Rikssarkivet, Lat. fragmenter 202, 1, recto. Image courtesy of Åslaug Ommundsen.

This is arguably one of the few surviving pages of one of Norway’s earliest liturgical manuscripts, possibly written in Norway circa 1050-1100

But there is one form of evidence which has been lying in Norwegian archives for hundreds of years and has largely been ignored by historians - and everyone else for that matter! These are thousands of fragments of manuscripts in archives across Norway, although the majority are housed in

the peaceful surroundings of the National Archives in Oslo. These fragments are almost all that survives of Norway's medieval manuscripts. Most of these manuscripts were written in Latin because they were created for and used by the Catholic Church in order to carry out the services and rites of the Church. I will briefly explain the strange fate of these manuscripts before explaining their importance for the history of English-Norwegian links in the Christianisation of Norway.

Alas, many of Norway's medieval manuscripts were destroyed in the sixteenth century because firstly, the printing press and paper grew in popularity and secondly, Norway separated from the Catholic Church. Since the medieval manuscripts' primary function was for use by the Catholic Church and they were also all written by hand and made from parchment, the manuscripts lost their purpose and importance. Instead, the parchment, which is tough and durable, being manufactured from animal skin, usually calf, suddenly became far more valuable than the texts so carefully written on them by generations of scribes. The parchment leaves were cut out of manuscripts and used in sometimes quite extraordinary ways, for example, to line shoes, to make pouches for wax seals and, most infamously, for use with gunpowder to create a spectacular firework display in Copenhagen! Of course, Norway was governed by Denmark in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Fragments of Norway's medieval books did, however, survive: the government in Copenhagen in the period 1550-1600 decided to create tax records which covered the entire kingdom. These were written into paper account books, but the readily-available parchment from old manuscripts provided a useful strong binding material. By which I mean that the parchment was chopped up either into small parts and sewn into the bindings in order to strengthen the paper books, or whole leaves were used to wrap around the paper books as covers.

The policy was very systematic and this is the main reason why so few entire manuscripts survive from Norway. And there is a further complication: most of the tax books were taken for storage in Copenhagen but at some point in the seventeenth century, the decision was made that there was not enough space for new account books and so the oldest accounts were destroyed. Therefore in Norway, very few fragments which would have been used as bindings before 1600 are preserved. This is a shame because it is likely that the earliest tax accounts preserved fragments of the manuscripts that were most readily available. In other words, the important manuscripts which would

have been kept in Cathedral libraries were the most accessible to government officials in the sixteenth century and so were probably cut up first. When the sixteenth century account books were destroyed, so was all evidence of the manuscripts bound up into them.

However, every cloud has a silver lining and there is a positive aspect to the destruction and reuse of medieval manuscripts: officials who gathered up the manuscripts did not select them on the basis of their type or content, instead they just used all of the available manuscripts.



Oslo, Riksarkivet, Diplom. perg. 1589 u.d. Antiphoner 70.

The three seal tags are the remnants of an antiphoner, known as Antiphoner 70, which dates to the eleventh century and may be of English origin. The antiphoner was cut up and the parchment attached to a sixteenth-century charter.

In England, by contrast, manuscripts tended to survive only because of antiquarian interests and because antiquarians – rather like magpies – tended to go for particularly beautiful and impressive manuscripts, there are relatively few surviving manuscripts which would have been used from day-to-day in churches. Instead what England has are the magnificent, but

less used, display manuscripts. This is all very well, but it does make it very difficult to piece together the daily activity of the Church and the ordinary ecclesiastical and manuscript culture. Although the Norwegian manuscript fragments may sound less exciting than the highly-ornamented, high-status manuscripts surviving in England, they are actually far more valuable in enabling us to retrace everyday life in Norway's churches. So, while Norway may not have many remaining manuscripts which can match those from England in terms of completeness or decoration, what Norway does have is a very rich resource of different types of manuscripts which would have been used from day-to-day in churches across Norway.

My PhD focuses on the earliest strata of the manuscript fragments which come from the time of *St Olaf* and the Christianisation of Norway. Amazingly, some fragments of manuscripts which were created and written before the year 1100 have survived. However, many of these manuscript fragments were not written in Norway; instead we can trace the origins of the manuscripts to England, France and Germany (among other countries) through careful study of the script, content and musical notation. These fragments thus provide us with a glimpse into some of the contacts between Norway and the rest of Europe in this period of Christianisation.

How did the English manuscripts reach Norway? We have to look back to *St Olaf* and the "*priests and bishops*" who sailed across from England to Norway. These manuscript fragments represent scant but tantalising remains of manuscripts which came across in the hands and bags of missionaries, churchmen and individuals travelling across the North Sea to England, among other destinations. *Adam of Bremen* who wrote about the "*priests and bishops*" of *St Olaf* is one of the very few medieval historians to shine a faint light onto the landscape of eleventh-century Norway. These manuscript fragments help to fill out the picture; by studying the script, content and notation we can catch sight of the English monasteries and scriptoria in which the manuscripts were first created and therefore where the missionaries came from, who they were and why they were travelling to Norway in this tumultuous and exciting period of history. Such research is already indicating that Christianisation followed multiple lines of connection and that we should not think only in terms of kings converting Norway. Instead, trading routes, the influence of individual bishops, churchmen and ecclesiastical houses were as important as the royal court in the Christianisation of Norway.

The eleventh century saw not only the birth of the Norwegian church, but

also the first pen strokes of Norway's own earliest manuscript scribes who launched the history of manuscripts and the book in Norway. For among the many manuscript fragments, we can also catch a glimpse of the earliest manuscripts to be written on Norwegian soil. It is beyond the scope of this short introduction to my research to enter into detail, but a smattering of the fragments suggest that they were written in some of the first writing workshops established in Norway, often by scribes influenced by and almost certainly copying English manuscripts. We can, for example, tentatively identify a Norwegian scribe learning to write a new alphabet in letters drawn hesitantly and a little uncertainly onto a manuscript page or through an inconsistency in the spelling of words written in Latin, a language being newly introduced to the Norwegian people. The manuscript fragments provide a point reference between the present and the first Norwegians to set quill to parchment in a time of changing kings, religions and customs in Norway.

The "*priests and bishops*" who briefly step onto the stage of *Adam's* narrative are just a few of the individuals who travelled between England and Norway in the eleventh century and who worked with Norwegians to found the Church in Norway. The manuscript fragments give us a few extra candles with which to shed light on the often obscure and opaque history of how Norway became Christian and on the English and Norwegian men and women who traversed the North Sea and in so doing, shared cultures and technologies in the turbulent years of the eleventh century.

Obituary: Bill Mead

By Rolf Christophersen



Members of our Society will be very sad to learn of the death of *Professor Bill Mead* just before his 99th birthday.

When he retired from the Council in 2011, I wrote an appreciation in the Review of his exceptional contribution to the Anglo Norse during his 60 years on the Council. He played a very important role in building up the Anglo Norse Journal, as it was originally called. Also his very close connections with the academic world in Norway as well as the other Scandinavian countries and his important position in the Royal Geographical Society were instrumental in giving our Society access to some very important and internationally known Norwegians who came to lecture.

He was, of course, highly regarded in the academic world especially in Scandinavia and was Emeritus Professor of University College, London where he continued to work even after he officially retired as head of department. However busy he was, he was always enthusiastic about assisting the Society in any way he could and despite his close connection with Finland he was very keen to promote Norway.

Over the many years that I knew him, especially during my time as Vice-Chairman of Anglo Norse, he gave me unflinching support and I greatly valued his friendship. Like many others, I will miss him greatly.

Anglo-Norse Oslo Annual Summer Excursion 2014

By The Anglo-Norse Editorial Committee

Our Summer Excursion this year was a guided tour through the Monastery ruins on the island of **Hovedøya** (Main Island). The island is the largest of six others situated in the inner Oslo Fjord, only a five minute boat ride from the city pier.



The Monastery ruins on Hovedøya

The Monastery was founded by English Cistercian monks, but prior to their arrival a small church already existed on the spot, dedicated to *Edmund the Martyr*. Abbot Philipuus and twelve monks arrived at Hovedøya from

Kirkstead in Lincolnshire in May 1147. A Monastery was built and dedicated to *The Virgin Mary* which flourished for 385 years until 1532 and the arrival of the Reformation. The City of Oslo bought the island in 1952 and it is today a much visited sanctuary with an abundance of plants, trees, flowers and birds and lovely walks. Our excellent guide was the well known theologian and historian *Karl Gervin* who has written several books on Norwegian church history and the Reformation in Norway. The tour lasted two hours, and we all learnt a lot about the history of this unusual and beautiful island. The weather was superb and extremely warm for the end of May. A good crowd of Anglo-Norse members turned up and we ended the tour basking in glorious sunshine with the traditional serving of "Strawberries and Sparkling wine". An evening to remember!

The Vikings at the British Museum

By Sir Richard Dales

On 20 March, 2014, some 30 members of the Society joined others from the Anglo-Danish, Anglo-Swedish and Anglo-Finnish Societies for a visit to this splendid exhibition at the British Museum. The exhibition has been arranged in association with the National Museum of Denmark and the National Museums in Berlin with money from BP. It is mounted in the Museum's new Sainsbury Gallery.

Before seeing the exhibition, we all attended a special lecture by its curator, *Gareth Williams*. He explained that the aim of the exhibition was to illustrate the geographical extent, variety and cultural sophistication of the activities of the Scandinavian peoples in what is generally called the Viking Age, between the 9th and the 11th centuries. The Scandinavians were sometimes raiders for whom going "a-Viking", even against fellow Scandinavians, was a praiseworthy activity. Violence, rape and pillage were an alternative method of acquiring wealth. At the same time they were successful traders and settlers. Thus the exhibits not only include swords, helmets (without horns!), shields and slave shackles but also silk from China, silver from Uzbekistan, Arab coins, balances for weighing gold and silver and ostentatious jewellery from all over Europe. They illustrate that the Scandinavians not only settled and traded over a wide area but also absorbed cultural influences from some of the people they had contact with. A find from Gnezdovo in Russia shows

how Scandinavian, Slavic and Middle Eastern influences were combined to form a unique style.

The centre piece of the exhibition is a recently excavated long-ship from Roskilde. It is so large at 37 metres that it could not have been displayed at the British Museum had the new gallery not been open in time. It was found in 1997 with several others during the digging of foundations for an extension of the existing Viking Ship Museum at Roskilde. It is the longest longship ever found. It was built in the Oslo Fjord and dates from around 1025 when *King Canute (Knud den Store)* was King of England as well as of Denmark and large parts of Norway and Sweden. It is believed to be a royal warship. About 20% of the timbers of the original have been preserved and mounted in a special stand which shows the shape and dimensions of the original ship. Showcases around the ship explain and illustrate ship-building techniques.

Another dramatic display is the Vale of York Hoard which is on show in London for the first time. Discovered in 2007, it is the richest Viking hoard found in Britain since 1840. It includes 617 Anglo-Saxon, Frankish, Islamic and Viking silver coins, and metalwork (including six armrings) from Britain, Ireland, Scandinavia and Russia. They were all contained in a beautiful silver cup, believed to be of Frankish origin and probably looted from a church. The artefacts reflect Islam, Christianity, the worship of Thor and seven different language groups. The cup and its contents represent enormous wealth and were presumably buried so that they would be safe from theft (fellow Vikings?). One can only speculate why they were never recovered. Did their owner die in a raid or fail to tell his heirs where the family fortune was buried?

For me, the most intriguing objects were the smaller pieces of jewellery. Less ostentatious than much on display, they demonstrate very high standards of workmanship and skill which would be difficult to find in the modern world. There is humour in some of the carvings as well as a sense of design. One can see features common in earlier Celtic and contemporary Anglo-Saxon design which suggests to me that there was more integration and cross-cultural influence than is allowed for in the usual portrayal of the Viking Age. The exhibition is well worth a visit. But it would be wise to go late in the day, after 4.30pm, when the crowds have thinned. The smaller artefacts are neither well displayed nor clearly captioned. One needs time and space to be able to have a good look. Also, leave time to look round the hall where the ship is displayed. It is worth the effort.

Born without Skis

By John Birch

Norwegians are born with their skis on, or so I was told. But even as a young child, I realised that was physiologically impossible. It was a metaphor for saying that they had a natural aptitude for skiing, and indeed could do it better than any foreigners.

When I returned to Norway from Denmark after the war, I did not doubt this for a moment. I could not ski properly, which was a terrible handicap now that I was facing my first Norwegian winter. It certainly made me feel inferior to my classmates in our Oslo school. They could ski, and how! On Sundays, and on weekdays after school, they would go by tram to Holmenkollen and beyond, and take to the ski slopes with a verve and fearlessness that I could only admire. The many opportunities for skiing were denied to me, however. When my school friend *Arne* asked me to go skiing with him, I felt I had to say no, because I knew I was not good enough, and would only be a nuisance.

The only solution was to improve my skiing, and I enrolled with the well-known *Tomm Murstad Ski School* at Tryvann. This was half an hour's tram ride towards Frognerstøien, the gateway to the Nordmarka ski terrain, and a tourist venue at the top of a ridge overlooking Oslo. On a cold and sunny January morning I travelled up there with my new skis and bamboo staves.

I was dressed in my new outfit consisting of blue ski trousers, a grey hooded anorak and a dark blue topplue, a woollen hat with a white border and pompom on top. Such hats were worn by famous Norwegian ski jumpers, and it helped my confidence to think that I was correctly dressed. I had put on my leather ski boots, which my uncle had greased to make them supple.

To begin with I was to have private lessons with a ski instructor. When I had learnt the basics I would then go on to join a beginners' class. My problem was that the children in bottom class were younger than me, and knew how to ski.

One of the first things I learnt was how to look after the skis. They needed to be waxed underneath to help you cope with many different snow conditions, and you had to know which type of ski wax would be appropriate. If you waxed your skis correctly, you would not only go faster, but would stop lumps of ice forming under your skis. Perhaps the best thing of all was that it would stop you sliding backwards when mounting a slope, provided it was

not too steep.

Knowing how to climb hills under your own power was essential. I learnt how to make crow's feet by moving my skis up alternatively at an angle. When that became too hard I had to go up sideways. I got quite puffed out by the time I got to the top, and I asked another boy why there were no ski lifts, like they had on the continent.

- They must be sissies, he replied. We are obviously tougher here in Norway. Climbing up hills on skis makes you fit!

Soon I was considered ready to move to a class. When going fast downhill I tended to make myself fall over for fear of getting out of control, and ending up in a fir tree. This caused grins from other children and disapproval from my instructor.

- You must remember to bend the knees, he admonished. That way I would be able to stay keep on my feet. Eventually I managed to conquer my beginner's fear and to put his advice into practice.

At the end of term there would be a cross country race on a track winding its way up and down through typical forest terrain. This prospect filled me with trepidation. Would I be able even to complete the race, I asked myself. And if I did, was I not going to be last? I mentioned these worries to my friend *Arne*, who was an advanced skier.

- You should be able to do it. Your skiing is getting better and not bad for someone from Denmark. We know the Danes can't ski, because their country is flat like a pancake!

- But aren't you really from England, asked his friend *Erik*, who stood nearby.

- They don't ski in England, said *Arne*. Too much fog there. This was of course before the exploits of the English ski jumper *Eddie the Eagle* became known to the world, though when the news reached Norway it made little impression.

- In Norway we have a thousand eleven-year-olds who jump better than *Eddie*, a newspaper commentator wrote.

On the day of the race I was given a numbered apron to hang round the neck and tie round my waist before lining up with my primary school group. More advanced classes were doing the same track as us, but they were expected to complete in a faster time. We started at 20 second intervals, because there was only one narrow, single track through the forest. If somebody was catching up and wanting to go past they would shout *løype*,

and the person in front had to leave the track to let him pass. Each time you had to give way you would lose precious time, and if you should fall this would make your result even worse.

I soon heard someone coming up behind me shouting the dreaded word *løype*. Eventually my friend *Arne* passed me saying:

- Try to go faster; they are closing up behind you! But I was already going as quickly as I could. Flushed and exhausted I at last came within sight of a banner marked *mål* – Norwegian for goal. Relatives and well-wishers cheered us on for the last stretch. I was relieved to have got that far, and never mind if I came last.

Once the instructors had worked out our times and listed us accordingly, we were summoned to the prize giving ceremony. This being Norway, such an occasion had to include a speech. It was given by the founder, *Tomm Murstad*, himself.

The ceremony marked the end of the ski school for that winter, he said, and he praised the young participants for their enthusiastic efforts, and the parents for their support.

Prizes were only for the few, he said, but all participants would receive a diploma – the important thing was to take part. Our new skills would enhance our enjoyment of the beautiful and invigorating skiing terrain which Oslo was lucky enough to have on its doorstep. No other capital he knew of was blessed with such recreational opportunities.

The speech was followed by the prize giving, which I followed with interest, but also with some detachment knowing that I had no hope of getting anything. My friend *Arne* came fourth in our group, and there were five prizes. Then something unexpected happened.

- We are not quite finished, *Mr. Murstad* said. I am awarding a special prize to our only British participant. We are glad to have the son of a British diplomat here as a representative of a country thanks to which we have regained our freedom. If *Mr. Churchill* and the British people had not so bravely resisted *Hitler* in their darkest hour, we Norwegians might still be living under the Nazi yoke!

- Would *John Birch* please step forward! Somewhat sheepishly I did so, to warm applause from the crowd. I took the prize, making a deep bow to our director before re-joining my group.

When I got over my surprise, I began to feel embarrassed. I had come bottom in my group, and yet been given a prize. That could not possibly be

fair. I told *Arne* of my misgivings.

- I don't think anyone is worried about it. You have improved – you are not bad for someone coming from a country flat as a pancake! I was surprised and pleased to have the support of my classmate. My uncle also told me that I should dismiss any thought of handing the prize back.

- If you did that you would cause a diplomatic incident! In life you do not always get what you deserve, so why quibble when you are given something you think you did not merit?

The following Sunday *Arne* asked me if I would go on a ski tour with him, and this time I thought I could manage, and wanted to say yes.

- Are you sure it is all right for me to come with you? I might hold you up?

- There should be no problem now. We do not have to choose a difficult route; we can take our time, and admire the nice landscape.

I was extremely happy, and felt grateful to *Tomm Murstad* and his ski school, which was to do so much to train future generations of children in their national sport. He died some years ago, and I was pleased to hear that the King had given him the Royal Gold Medal for his achievements. If my prize had not been deserved, *Tomm Murstad's* honour certainly was!

A Powerful Connection

By Christer Gilje, Head of Communications, Statnett

The NSN interconnector between Norway and the UK will connect two very different electricity systems. The benefits? Higher security of supply, more green energy and more climate friendly energy systems.

Norway's landscape is well known for its beauty. However, all the rolling mountains and the lakes and rivers in between them are not only nice to look at, they are also the best possible environment for green and flexible hydropower production.

With reservoirs large enough to gather enough rainwater and melted snow for several years of green power production, Norwegians have for a long time had access to a clean and reliable source for their energy needs. Now this capacity can also contribute to support the non-flexible wind power production in the UK and help in reaching climate goals in both the UK and Norway.

Green cooperation

The planned interconnector NSN between Norway and the UK will for the first time create a direct connection between the British and Norwegian power markets, and makes cooperation between the two energy systems possible. When the wind blows and the increasing amount of wind power creates a surplus in the UK, Norway can import renewable energy for a reasonable price, and store water in the reservoirs. When there is little wind and a greater need for power in the UK, the situation will be the other way around. The UK then can import Norwegian hydropower to a lower price than in the British market and through this secure the power supply.

This interaction facilitates a higher proportion of renewable energy in Norway and the UK, thereby contributing to a future climate-friendly society. It also increases security of supply and provides a larger market place for UK and Norwegian generators. In addition, the consumers will get a more predictable supply situation and price throughout the year and from year to year.

A Norwegian-British project

The NSN interconnector is also a Norwegian-British cooperation all the way from the planning period. The project is owned 50 per cent by Norwegian Statnett and 50 per cent by British National Grid, and will be installed between Kviteseid in the south western part of Norway and Blyth near Newcastle. With more than 700 kilometres, it will be the longest subsea cable of its kind in the world, and the capacity will be 1400 MW, equal to some of the largest Norwegian and British power plants.

The project has been high on the agenda on top political level for a while. When the newly elected Norwegian Prime Minister *Erna Solberg* met the British Prime Minister *David Cameron* in January this year the planned interconnector was discussed. The project is now in the last phase of planning, and an investment decision is expected within this year. If all goes as planned, the interconnector will be in operation by 2020, giving Norway and the UK a new powerful

News from Anglo-Norse Oslo website

We hope all our members will enjoy reading the many interesting and diverse links which you will find only a “click away” on our new link file:
www.anglonorseoslo.com

The British Norwegian Chamber of Commerce (BNCC) is based in Oslo and Stavanger and is a non-profit membership organization with its headquarters in London. The organization consists of British and Norwegian companies and business people. The organization was created to establish a forum for professional and social networking. Regular annual events are held with speakers who talk about a variety of topical interests from the business world in Britain and Norway. The Oslo branch hold their meetings and events at the British Embassy in Oslo. *Thomas Heftysgate 8. Tel: oslo@bncc.no/ www.bncc.oslo*

The Caledonian Society in Oslo is a gentleman's society, established in 1946 and is incorporated in the World Federation for Scottish Societies. The society's constitution states that it was established “*to promote cultural relationships between Norway & Scotland, to be achieved by appropriate lectures, gatherings and such.*”

www.cally.org and email secretary@cally.org

St. Edmund's Church situated in Møllergate 30, Oslo is a part of the Diocese in Europe of the Church of England. It is a church of tremendous diversity, with people of all ages, races and social backgrounds which includes single people, families, refugees, ex-pats. The Senior Chaplain of St. Edmund's Church is The Venerable Brian Russell. Beside church services there is an array of activities to be enjoyed, such as Saturday concerts at 5 pm in collaboration with the Norwegian Academy of Music and arranged by the organist and musical advisor, Edward Dean. Tea and scones are served from 4.15 pm. St. Edmund's produces a quarterly magazine “OUTPOST” and also has a colourful informative website, where you can read about the history of the church, church services, upcoming events, and who to contact. Visit St. Edmund's website, www.osloanglicans.no. Address: St. Edmund's Church c/o The British Embassy. Thomas Heftyesgate 8. 0264 Oslo.

"This England" magazine is a patriotic British quarterly magazine for all those who "*love our green and pleasant land*", its beautiful countryside, its colourful customs, its history, its traditions and heritage. 4 annual editions packed with 84 pages with interesting articles and photographs to please and delight its over 2.000 global readers. Sales & subscriptions contact: **This England, Post box 326. Sittingbourne, Kent ME9 8BR. UK. Tel: (44)1795412823. www.thisengland.co.uk.**

The subscription is approximately Kr.270.- including postage.

The British Embassy. Thomas Heftyegate 8. 0264.Oslo www.gov.uk/government/world/norway and email britemb@online.no. "*We develop and maintain the good relations between The United Kingdom and Norway. This involves dealing with a range of political, business, economical and security issues that are important to The United Kingdom and Norway.*" www.facebook.com/britishembassyoslo and www.twitter.com/UKinnorway

The Shakespeare Society in Oslo. The Society was established by the Norwegian author *Edvard Hoem* for the purpose of creating a forum for those interested in Shakespeare's works and world. The Society has many activities such as seminars, film shows, study tours abroad and there are many interesting links on their website. The Society's present chairman is: *Bernhard Ramstad*, email bernhard.ramstad@ramstad.as

The British Council in Norway. The British Council is the United Kingdom's International Cultural Relations Organisation, operating in 110 countries within the sectors of: English language, Arts, Education and Society. The Norwegian office works mostly with Society, which means exchanging knowledge and experiences around topics of inclusion, diversity and social innovation. There is also a modest Arts programme, related to positive social change and audience development. www.britishcouncil.no & www.facebook.com/britishcouncilnorway. The British Council's office in Oslo, is not open to the public.

Anglo-Norse in London. Sister Society to The Anglo-Norse in Oslo hold their meetings and activities in the British Embassy in Belgrave Square, London. The Patrons of the two Societies are: *H.M. Queen Elizabeth II* and

King Harald V. Honorary Presidents are their Excellencies The Ambassadors to Great Britain and Norway. Anglo-Norse-London publish the Anglo-Norse Review, which is distributed in Great Britain and Norway. The Society have many interesting activities, talks etc. including the annual 17th May parade to celebrate Norway's National Day. The present Chairman of the Society is *Sir Richard Dales*, former British Ambassador to Norway from 1998-2002. www.anglo-norse.org.uk email secretariat@anglo-norse.org.uk

Coscan Confederation of Scandinavian Societies in Great Britain and Ireland. Coscan has been linking and supporting societies since 1950. Patrons are: Their Excellencies The Ambassadors of Denmark, Finland, Sweden, Iceland and Norway. Coscan is comprised of over 25 different Societies with several thousand individual members. Their website offers a multitude of information. www.coscan.org.uk

The Norwegian Post. The most comprehensive English language news site on Norwegian affairs. www.norwaypost.no

British in Oslo. Inter-Nations. British connections in Norway (via The British Embassy). www.british.expats.internations.org

News in English. www.newsinenglish.no

Scotland Alone? Awaiting the Independence Referendum.

By Elisabeth Solem

Angus Robertson, MP representing Moray and the Scottish National Party Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs, visited Oslo recently and gave a lecture on the issue of Scottish independence and the forthcoming referendum. *Angus Robertson* argued very enthusiastically the view that Scotland is indeed very capable and ready for independence. Not only do the Scots have the right to more self-determination, but government closer to home would mean better governance, according to *Mr. Robertson*.

He emphasized the need to build confidence among the Scots themselves, since many years of dependence has somehow instilled a feeling that the country is too small, too poor and too dependent on Westminster to be a good

candidate for independence.

On the whole, the impression given of the “Yes” side is that there is a democratic imperative underlying the demand for independence, and that the fiscal problems and the issue of defence are problems to be solved, issues that are best handled by the Scots themselves. The comparison with Norway and Sweden is used to debate the fact that it is possible for two closely linked countries to separate and still thrive and be good neighbours.

Angus Robertson underlined the feeling that the Scots have a “Nordic” identity, and would be a natural Northern European partner. The ties to Scandinavia are old and very strong. With the North Sea oil and fishing industry, Scotland would be a part of the Nordic region. *Mr. Robertson* concluded his lecture by assuring us that it is inevitable that Scotland gains independence at some point. It remains to be seen, however, if that time has come on September 18.

Angus Robertson was a guest lecturer at the University of Oslo, British Politics Society.

The British Politics Society

British Politics Society, Norway is a politically neutral society which has been founded by a team of young, Norwegian academics to raise the interest and knowledge of British politics among the informed Norwegian public. They publish a quarterly journal, *British Politics Review*, which has contributions from academic and journalistic sources. The *British Politics Review* is aimed at anyone with a general interest in political developments in Britain. Subscriptions cost kr. 100 pr. year.

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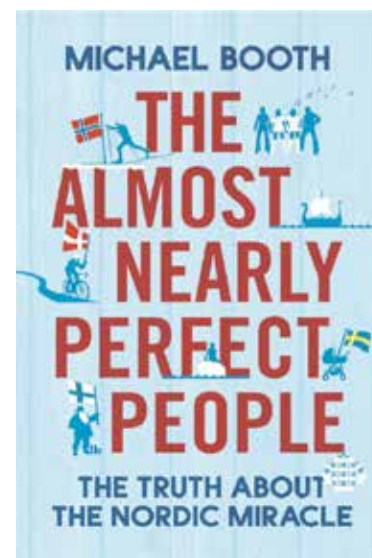
Book Reviews

The Almost Nearly Perfect People – The Truth about the Nordic Miracle by *Michael Booth* 406pp, Published by *Jonathan Cape*. £14.99 Paperback.

ISBN 978-0-224-08962-3.

By *Marie Wells*

For some time now the Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden) have been regarded as the closest one might come to ideal societies, with Denmark, Norway and Sweden coming first, second and



fifth in the 2013 World Happiness Report. These countries are also known for their egalitarianism, their gender equality, social welfare provision and the corollary of that – their high taxes.

But one man, the English journalist and food writer, *Michael Booth* who is married to a Dane and who has lived in Denmark ‘on and off’ (his words) for ten years, wanted to see if there was another side to the story, and so he set off to visit the five Nordic countries, to experience their differences from each other, but also to talk to leading figures in politics, academia and journalism. He devotes a chapter to each country, the longest – perhaps unsurprisingly

because he lived there – being on Denmark and the chapter on Norway being the next shortest after that on Iceland.

The result is a book that is an entertaining read. To some extent *Booth* does present the stereotypical images: the comfort-loving, gregarious and sociable Danes, the taciturn Finns, the independent, efficient Swedes, but these aspects are described with verve and humour, as when he tries to teach the Swedes simple things like letting others off the bus or train before trying to get on, or when he describes his adventure of going alone to try a Finnish sauna. More seriously *Booth* also tries to explain why things are the way they are. Regarding Iceland’s disastrous financial adventure he wonders whether America could be ‘the real pernicious influence that turned the Icelanders’ (whom he sees as ‘essentially western Norwegians with a touch of Celtic blood’) into ‘a nation of irresponsible high rollers (p. 157). And he suggests that the value the Danes place on togetherness, social cohesiveness can be explained by their loss of external territory in the nineteenth century and their turning in on themselves to make the most of what they have. This is in contrast to the Swedes who *Booth* believes accepted social democracy partly as a result of post-war guilt when The Social Democrats held out the carrot of modernity.

But *Booth* does find aspects that are worrying. One concern that he has about both Sweden and Denmark is the ‘bumblebee problem’. Just as the bumblebee in theory should be too heavy to fly, so the economies of those

two countries should not be able sustain the level of welfare spending that they do, especially when as in Denmark productivity is low. But there are also differences. Whereas in Sweden labour laws make it almost impossible to sack someone, Denmark has a more flexible approach to employment with good provision for those who suddenly find themselves out of work.

In the chapter on Norway Booth has a section entitled 'Dutch Disease', on the social consequences of Norway's oil wealth, and it is here that he sees the negative side of the miracle. Not only does he show that the oil wealth has made the Norwegians lazy, so that they now work fewer hours and take more holidays than their neighbours, but they languish in 'fifteenth place on the World Economic Forum's Global Competitiveness Index' (p.202), so that the OECD has warned that Norway's greatest challenge is 'to maintain its population's incentive to work, study and innovate', (p.203).

Immigration is another sensitive issue in Scandinavia (as elsewhere). Booth believes Norway seems to have done best in integrating immigrants, and as an example of this notes how 17th May now expresses the inclusivity and multiculturalism of the country with Somali, Turkish and Pakistani children all marching and waving the Norwegian flag, some even in Norwegian bunad. Sweden which has the third highest number of immigrants per capita of anywhere in the world, while acknowledging difficulties, insists on seeing them as problems to be solved, by for example getting immigrants into employment. The support for right-wing parties in all three countries is an issue, but is tackled rather differently in Sweden and Denmark, Sweden preferring to deprive them of the oxygen of publicity, while Denmark has preferred to let them speak.

Although Booth set out to find the flies in the amber, and indeed he does for each country, in the end he finds it is the positive aspects that predominate – 'the trust, the social cohesion, the economic and gender equality, the rationalism, the modesty, the well-balanced political and economic systems and so on' (p. 388). Though, as he says, the price for all this is high, not just in terms of taxes, but in the gentle pressure to conform. As he puts it in his Guardian article of 28.01.14, 'these societies function well for those who conform to the collective median, but they aren't much fun for tall poppies. Schools reign (sic) in higher achievers for the sake of the less gifted; "elite" is a dirty word; displays of success, ambition or wealth are frowned upon. If you can cope with this, and the cost and the cold, [...] then by all means join me in my adopted hyggelige home.' The only other fly in the amber that this reader

has found is that there are no references. In sections on welfare spending, immigration etc, figures are quoted but no references are given.

Culture Smart Norway By Linda March, published by Kuperard, ISBN 978 1 85733 331 2. Paperback priced at £6.95, also available as an e-book.

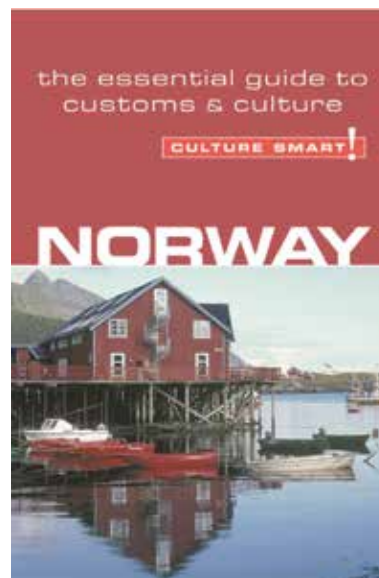
This book aims to educate the reader about Norway, principally its people and culture. Culture Smart Norway is suitable for reading from cover to cover or use as a reference volume. As a good reference work all relevant details appear under each heading which does make the book a bit repetitive. For readers new to Norway and its culture this repetitiveness might be a useful learning aid.

Culture Smart Norway is well researched and written by a former expat. I see that one of the reference works was my first ever book purchase in Norway. Perhaps that is why I can find so little fault with it. Although apparently written by a Brit, the publication's language is American, which is a distraction at times.

For those that are perfectionists or are looking into fine detail there are a few minor errors but really at a "nit-picking" level. Neither publication date nor edition number is given but I am forced to conclude that it is an old publication because of some out-of-date facts and an early edition number due

to simple faults like word repetitions that have not been removed. Unfortunately nisser are referred to as elves and there is no mention of that prime Norwegian creation the niste. There is a small section with emergency information and Bokmål equivalents. A phrase book would probably be a better option if available. I heartily recommend this book but do remember that there is no substitute for experience.

Culture Smart! Essential Guides are published by Kuperard and there are currently almost 100 titles in the series. You can find them all at www.culturesmart.co.uk



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