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Anglo-Norse Review

Two photos from the Patron's Lunch in the Mall on 12 June: The Norwegian table in the afternoon sun and the Queen and Prince Philip driving down the Mall. Photos thanks to Andrew Godber

Cover illustration: The sail training ship *S.S.Sørlandet.* Photo courtesy of Stiftelsen Fullriggeren *Sørlandet?*

ANGLO-NORSE REVIEW

THE ANGLO-NORSE SOCIETY – LONDON

Patrons: **H.M.Queen Elizabeth II** **H.M King Harald**

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Editorial

This is an issue of celebrations and commemorations. We took part in the celebrations on the Mall to congratulate the Queen on her 90th birthday and thank her for her long and gracious patronage of our Society. But there are also some commemorations that contain an element of celebration; the plaque on Chiltern Court not only commemorates the Norwegian members of the SOE who planned the Telemark raid there, but signifies that we think what they did as young men is a fact worthy of remembrance, even of celebration. The Norwegian seamen who are commemorated on the plaque in Dover served on minesweepers in the Dover Strait and died serving the Allied cause. We remember and celebrate them in gratitude. The obituary for Elizabeth Rokkan also celebrates her achievement as a translator. Finally, but certainly not least, an article celebrates some of the reasons for the current extraordinary wealth of Norwegian musical talent.

This issue was planned as one with a maritime theme, and the Dover plaque article which was originally going to appear in the winter issue of the *Review* was held over for that reason. The article on Leith seaman's church also fits with the theme. The other two articles with the sea at their centre cover sailing for pleasure on Norway's famous training ship *S.S Sørlandet* and what is in fact a history of Norwegian merchant shipping in the second half of the twentieth century, described through the experience of one man. The article is longer than as editor I would normally permit, but as it is such a fascinating story I felt I could not shorten it more than I already have.

This *Review* also contains a new element: an article about a visit to Oslo by students studying Norwegian at UCL. This is part of the attempt to involve younger people in the activities of the Society, and I think congratulations should go Dr Elettra Carbone, the Senior Teaching Fellow in Norwegian, for having persuaded SIU (The Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Education) to fund the trip.

I am hoping that the next issue will have a contemporary social and political theme - though not solely that, so if anyone thinks they can contribute I would be delighted to hear from them.

The Patron's Lunch in the Mall,

As many of you know it was decided that as part of the Queen's 90th birthday celebrations there should be a grand street party and carnival-style parade in the Mall for representatives of the 600 organizations of which the Queen is patron. The Anglo-Norse applied for over 20 tickets and received all the tickets it had applied for..

It has to be said that the start of the event was a pretty wet one, and whether one was queueing and waiting to be admitted or already in, many of us were very grateful for the substantial plastic ponchos that were being handed out, because from about 11.00 am to 1.00 pm it poured down.

Once in, and having collected the quite magnificent picnic hamper, guests had to find their way to their table and could chat somewhat damply to fellow guests. At noon there was the first parade, of musicians from various organizations to which the queen lends her name, and dancers from Royal Schools of Dance. They too were wearing ponchos, but as Clare Balding, who was compering the event, said, 'When has a little rain stopped the British from celebrating?'

A group holding placards passing in the first parade before lunch. There were placards for all the organizations the Queen supports and there was also a placard for the Anglo-Norse Society. Photo by Andrew Godber

Because of the rain it was difficult to sit and enjoy the contents of our

hampers in the same way we could have done if the sun had been shining, but towards 2.00 pm it started to clear and the sun came out as the younger royals walked along the Mall and stopped to chat to the crowd. After they had reached the end of the Mall, the Queen and Prince Philip drove down in an open-topped car. Finally there was a repeat parade, this time without ponchos and in sunshine, so much more colourful and lively..

For those who do not know, tickets for the lunch cost £150, BUT the proceeds (from about 10,000 tickets sold) will go into the Patron's Fund, which participating organizations can apply to for grants towards a specific project. The Anglo-Norse will be applying for funds to finance new scholarships.

The Unveiling of the Chiltern Court Plaque

By Sue Keane

(To read the background to this plaque, please refer to the Winter 2105-2016 issue of the *Anglo-Norse Review*).

Sue Keane speaking before the unveiling of the plaque

The Anglo-Norse Society plaque was unveiled on Sunday 10th April 2016. This was the date in 1940 when King Håkon VII refused the demands of the German invaders and thus inspired the formation of Norway's resistance movement. Not only did this date seem auspicious but, pragmatically, I hoped that Baker Street would be quieter on a Sunday. Fortunately, the Metropolitan Police sent five officers, a police car and lots of tape because almost a hundred guests attended, besides some interested passers-by. Joachim Rønneberg is the only member of Operation Gunnerside still alive and sent his good wishes but, at 96, was not strong enough to join us. However, I was thrilled to welcome the descendants of two of the brave saboteurs in his team. Hans Storhaug's niece, Liv Lowrie, put me in touch with his daughters, Marit Storhaug and Åse Storhaug Hole, who travelled from Norway with their husbands for the unveiling. They were joined by Mette Griffiths, the daughter of Arne Kjelstrup.

Brigadier Tom Guttormsen, Liv Lowrie, Mette Griffiths, Åse Storhaug Hole and Marit Storhaug, standing beneath the plaque. Photo by Sue Keane.

I introduced the guests who included the Norwegian Defence Attaché, Øystein Wemberg, Hon. Alderman Anne Mallinson representing the Lord Mayor of Westminster, the chairman of the Special Forces Club, the chairman of Den Norske Klub, the Council and members of The Anglo-Norse Society,

Rev. Torbjørn Holt and members of the Norwegian Seamen's Church, S.O.E. enthusiasts and residents of Chiltern Court.

Brigadier Tom Guttormsen (Norwegian Assistant Chief of Defence Staff – Veterans' Affairs) spoke about the debt we all owed to the brave young men who took part in this famous raid and to the strong ties between Britain and Norway. Then the plaque was unveiled by Sir Richard Dales KCVO, CMG. Afterwards, we went to Park Plaza Sherlock Holmes Hotel for afternoon tea, which included the double kransekake that I had baked for the occasion.

The event was covered by Norwegian television on its evening and morning news bulletins, and there are good pictures on the link. https://tv.nrk.no/serie/kveldsnytt/NNFA23041016/10-04-2016#t=8m2s

Merchant Navy Day in Dover 2015

By Sue Keane

It was in 2000 that the Government announced a National Merchant Navy Day to be held on 3rd September annually. This date was chosen because on this day in 1939 a German U boat sank a merchant ship, the S.S.Athenia, which became the first casualty of World War II, just a few hours after war was declared on the 3rd September 1939.

Merchant Navy Day commemorates the supreme sacrifice made by merchant sailors in WWII. During hostilities, 30,248 sailors were killed; 4,654 reported missing, believed killed; 4,707 were wounded and 5,720 taken Prisoners of War. A total of 45,329 casualties meant that 1 in 3 merchant seamen did not survive the war. Overall, 2,426 merchant ships were sunk.

Without the Merchant Navy tankers, which carried aviation fuel and oil to every war zone, no allied planes could have flown here or overseas. No RAF planes could have taken off from our airfields to defend our country in the 'Battle of Britain'. No tanks would have had the fuel to move over land in defence of our freedom.

Without the raw material carried by Merchant Navy cargo ships across the oceans, Britain could not have manufactured weapons, including tanks, to defend Britain and later to attack the enemy on mainland Europe. Without merchant ships, our soldiers and airmen could not have been transported overseas and kept fully supplied.

In Dover it was Donald Hunter, a World War II Merchant Navy veteran, and his wife who raised the funds to establish a Merchant Navy War Memorial in remembrance of the Merchant Navy sailors killed in WWII, and in 2008 the sculpture for which he had raised £48,000 was unveiled. Since 1998 there had also been a plaque commemorating the Norwegian Merchant Navy Seamen who had operated out of Dover and been killed in mine sweeping operations in the Dover Strait during the war, but in 2013 Donald, who had served as a young wireless officer on three Norwegian Merchant Navy ships during the war, arranged for a new, more visible, memorial plaque on a raised plinth to be placed in The Norwegian Garden of Remembrance. He had been awarded the Legion d'Honneur for his part in the D-Day landings and in 2008 he was also awarded a citation from Chief of Defence Norway, General Sverre Diesen, "for his contribution to the Norwegian Nation during World War II".

Sue Keane with Donald Hunter at the 2015 Merchant Navy Day in Dover. Both are wearing their Normandy brooches (Sue because her father went across with the Royal Norwegian Air Force On D-Day+3). Photo by Iain Reid

I had got to know Donald through my involvement with the *krigseilere* at the Norwegian Seamen's Church in London , and Donald and his wife came regularly to *krigsseilere* gatherings. I was therefore delighted to be invited to the Dover Merchant Navy Day in 2015. The Dover Merchant Navy Day Service of Commemoration, which has been held for the last 15 years, started with a service at the spectacular Dover Town Hall. It was attended by the Chairman of Dover District Council together with mayors and civic dignitaries from all over the county, British Legion delegates, retired merchant seamen, cadets and Commander Erik Hansen representing the Royal Norwegian Navy.

Commander Commander Erik Hansen beside the new memorial to the Norwegian Merchant Seamen who lost their lives minesweeping in the Dover Straits. Photo credit: dover City Council

Afterwards, everyone went down to the seafront where there was a short service before a wreath-laying ceremony at the Dover Merchant Navy War Memorial. Then Commander Hansen laid a wreath and said a few words at the adjacent Royal Norwegian Navy Garden of Remembrance. The sunshine helped to make this especially moving day memorable.

Donald is a true friend of Norway, which he visited for the first time in 2011 with a group of UK-based Norwegian *krigseilere* and widows, like ANS member Lorraine Nepstad. They had been invited to attend on 22nd November 2011 Kong Harald's unveiling of the WWII Naval Memorial on the Museumskipet D/S Hestmanden moored alongside the pier at Kristiansand. The king thanked each veteran personally.

Obituary: the Translator Elizabeth Rokkan.

By Marie Wells

It was sad to learn of the death in January this year of Elizabeth Rokkan, aged over 90. As the translator of Cora Sandel, Tarjei Vesaas and Jostein Gaarder she contributed hugely to making Norwegian literature accessible to an English-speaking public from the 1960s onwards. Indeed, in 1995 she was awarded the Order of St Olav in recognition of her success in doing this.

Press photo of Elizabeth Rokkan from the late 1960s

Elizabeth had a varied life before she became a translator. She came from a strong Welsh nationalist family. Her father William Henry Harris was Professor of Welsh at Lampeter and Præcentor of the chapel there. Elizabeth read French and English at Aberystwyth University and then worked at the

Royal Institute of International Affairs at Chatham House, where she met her husband, Stein Rokkan. They were married in 1950 and in 1951 moved to Oslo where she worked as a translator, both for the new Institute of Social Research, where Stein had a research position and the British and American embassies. (One has to say at this point that she must have been very good at languages in order to do such important translation work from Norwegian so soon!).

In 1958 the couple moved to Bergen where Stein became head of Chr. Michelsens Institutt. Elizabeth was attached to the University of Bergen first as a sessional lecturer in English and later as a permanent lecturer teaching English and American culture and politics.

A photo of Elizabeth taken by Kate Allen in 2014

While doing this she also started translating Norwegian literature. The first novel she translated was Cora Sandel's *Kjøp ikke Dondi*. This was going to be translated as *The Cuckoo,* but at the last minute Elizabeth had to change the title to *The Leech* as another novel called *The Cuckoo* had just been published. After this came the Alberta trilogy: *Alberta and Jacob**, 1962, A*lberta and Freedom*, 1963* and *Alberta Alone*, 1965*, and finally *Krane's Café* in 1967. These were all published by Peter Owen, but with the growing interest in women's writing, they were later re-issued first by Panther and in the early 1980s by the Women's Press. I remember Elizabeth talking to me about this and mentioning that apart from the initial translation fee, she never received a penny each time the rights for her translations were sold to another publisher.

Of Tarjei Vesaas's work Elizabeth translated, *Spring Night* 1964*, *The Ice Palace,* 1966*, *The Great Cycle*, 1967, *The Bridges,* 1969*, *The Boat in the Evening*, 1971*, and *The Bleaching Yard* in 1981. These were also published by Peter Owen. Of Elizabeth's translation of the *Ice Palace,* Ann Born, herself a distinguished translator, wrote, 'This translation by Elizabeth Rokkan is so sensitive that the book reads as if in the original and allows the strange beauty of the novel total freedom.'

Of Jostein Gaarder, who enjoyed a sort of cult status in the 1990s after the publication of *Sophie's World*, Elizabeth Rokkan translated Through *a Glass Darkly,* 1999 and *The Christmas Mystery*, 2001. Johan Borgen's *The Scapegoat* was published by the Norvik Press.

Elizabeth may not have received a penny each time the rights to her translations were sold to another publisher but it is gratifying to note that all the novels asterisked above are still available in Peter Owen's Modern Classics series (most at under £10.00 each), and at the risk of speaking out of turn, I can only say to anyone wanting a good read – go for them.

Church becomes School of Art

By Eva Tyson

In the autumn of 1863 a young theologian, Johann Cordt Storjohann, arrived in Leith from Norway to study The Free Church of Scotland. He was amazed at the hustle and bustle of the busy port containing large numbers of ships from the Nordic countries. In fact, records from that year show that 3,500 Scandinavian sailors visited Leith.

In those days the life of a sailor was harsh indeed and as our theologian was already familiar with the welfare work carried out by the

British and Foreign Sailors' Society, he decided to do something to help. His plan was that the sailors should have a place where they could not only meet on a permanent basis, but also hear the gospel in their own language. Not one to drag his feet, Storjohann started religious services on board the ships, usually out on deck and up to forty sailors would attend at any one time. The idea of the need for a "Seaman's Church" was born.

Financial help came both from the Scandinavian countries and the local community in Leith and in August 1868 the church was inaugurated by Storjohann, who had promised to return to Leith for the occasion. Among prominent people present were representatives from the Church of Scotland. The church was to become the first Seaman's Church in Europe, and when in 2014 a delegation from the Seaman's Mission in Norway visited all the Seaman's Churches in Europe, Leith was literally and metaphorically their first port of call.

A staunch supporter of the new church was Christian Salvesen, who had settled in Leith from Norway in 1851. As a prominent shipowner, the wellbeing of sailors had always been close to his heart and he supported the church in every way.

The interior of the church in 1962 when King Olav visited Edinburgh. Note the ship hanging down from the ceiling, a characteristic of all the Seaman's Churches. Photo credit: Sjømannskirken/norsk kirke i utlandet

The church continued to be a success and was regularly visited by Norwegian sailors docking in Leith. As the years passed Leith docks became less busy, but the church became a meeting place for the Norwegian students

at Edinburgh University and Heriot Watt. I have fond memories of the church, I was married there and both my sons were christened there.

Today the church has become the Leith School of Art. It was opened in 1988 and is today a sought after place of study for aspiring artists. Somebody asked me how I felt about the church now being a school of art. I was reminded of something one of my favourite painters, Vasily Kandinsky said, " Art is the greatest expression of the human spirit".

I think the church is in good hands.

How Norway has gained an International Reputation for Musical Excellence.

By Paul Gobey

It is a remarkable fact that Norway has produced and continues to produce musicians of international stature in so many genres. Given Norway's small population, how does she manage to punch above her weight so successfully? Indeed, one might include other spheres of human endeavour such as playwrights and authors (Ibsen and Nesbø), painters (Munch and Astrup) and explorers (Amundsen and Nansen), let alone skiers!

I shall focus, in particular, on Norway's classical musical artists, but one could justifiably consider other musical genres where one can point, for example, to jazz and popular musicians such as Jan Garbarek, Lisa Stokke (the original 'Sophie' in Mamma Mia), Sissel Kyrkjebø and the group A-Ha, to name a few, all of whom have made an impact on the international scene. A consideration of composers is also, regrettably, beyond the scope of this short article.

I have been keen to discover if there is any particular aspect of the education system (locally or nationally) that allows or encourages musical excellence, and if Norway supports its culture in a way that fosters proportionally more outstanding musicians; is there something else in the Norwegian character that causes relatively many promising musicians to strive for and achieve excellence on the international stage; or is it a combination of all these factors and more.

For many decades, Norway has supported musical training through a network of 'kommunale musikkskoler', more recently becoming 'kulturskoler' (whereby other arts such as drama, dance and circus are

included), that by law are accessible in each of Norway's 428 kommuner – either individually, or in co-operation with their neighbours. This has helped to nurture a considerable number of talented young musicians, though it has to be acknowledged that there is wide variation in the level of provision across the country as a whole, as each is allowed to decide the curriculum and there is no national standard for music (unlike in the UK with, for example, agreed attainment levels through the graded exam system). Many towns have one or more choirs, there are many regional symphony orchestras and Norway also has a strong tradition of band music or 'korps', particularly visible (and audible) on 17 May; children will have often grown up in households where one or both parents play an instrument and are thus in a position to encourage and support their child(ren) more effectively.

Within the regional variations noted, there are some centres of particular musical excellence:

The Barratt-Due Institute of Music in Oslo, broadly equivalent to a British music conservatoire with both Junior and Senior Departments, can claim a host of distinguished alumni, some now also teaching there, such as

Leif Ove Andsnes in London. Photo by permission of Leif Ove Andsnes Management..

Henning Kraggerud, who (as Leif Ove Andsnes points out) serve as role models for more recent successes such as Vilde Frang (violin) and Tine Ting Helseth (trumpet). At his recent concert in Dulwich (coinciding with the Nikolai Astrup exhibition), Andsnes accompanied two exceptional 21 year-old violinists, who trained at Barratt-Due; Eivind Holtsmark Ringstad and Guro Kleven Hagen are already performing solos with international orchestras and winning international competitions.

The Norwegian Academy of Music (Norges Musikkhøgskole), along with many other smaller conservatoires in Norway (Andsnes himself trained at the Bergen Conservatory), has a growing reputation for training musicians to the highest level, and one such alumnus is the trumpeter Ole Edvard Antonsen. Exchange programmes with European and US music music colleges are a common feature of study there.

Trondheim has succeeded in gathering together a number of gifted teachers at Trondeim Kommunale Kulturskole, centred around Olavskvartalet with its concert hall Olavshallen; the Trondheim Soloists and Trondheim Symphony Orchestra are world class ensembles and the city boasts a number of international festivals, as well as Nidarosdomen with no fewer than six attached choirs and two renowned pipe organs.

In researching this article, a number of other common threads became clear from contributors:

Along with Norwegians throughout history, there is a desire by students to reach out and expand their horizons, to live and study abroad, where the musical environment raises standards even further. Many have chosen to study at London conservatoires (RCM, RAM, GSMD) and we at Sjømannksirken have been fortunate to have had the benefit of their time with us: professional singers such as Marianne E. Andersen, Peder Holtermann, Marianne Juvik Sæbø and Leif Jone Ølberg, violinists Marianne Thorsen, Lars Magnus Steinum and Viktor Stenhjem and organist Arnfinn Tobiassen (now Artistic Director of the Norwegian Organ Festival). The Anglo-Norse Society is proud to be sponsoring a Norwegian student at the RCM from September 2016.

The influence of music festivals is having a major impact on the development of professional musicians, not least in chamber music where those at Risør (and, from 2016) Rosendal – founded by Leif Ove Andsnes – and Oslo and Trondheim serve to both attract international artists and to provide unparalled performing opportunities for promising Norwegian talent. The Bergen International Festival is the largest in the Nordic countries.

Finally , and underpinning all the above, Norway's financial position

that there is a healthy environment for teaching, performing and studying; pay and working conditions have improved not least through the construction of outstanding new halls (e.g. Stavanger and the Opera House in Oslo). A hard working attitude throughout orchestras and choirs exists where people take pride in being very prepared. As the working days are shorter than many other countries, with more rehearsal days per concert, musicians have a better chance of staying relaxed and in shape ('well-being' is a term we are hearing more and more often).

There are, for sure, areas that still rely on imported labour, notably in church music but, with steadily improving facilities, teaching and performing opportunities, success undoubtedly breeds success, creating a virtuous circle whereby we should continue to see many more outstanding musicians from this small country.

Living the Dream: Sailing on a Full-rigger

By John Wells

One of my mid-life ambitions was to sail before the mast (i.e. as a common sailor) on a 'tall ship'. This ambition was finally fulfilled when my Norwegian brother-in-law gave me the opportunity of a two-week trip as a sixtieth birthday present.

First a little explanation: A full-rigger is a sailing ship with three or more masts all carrying 'square sails'. If all the masts are not carrying square sails the vessel becomes either a Barque, a Barquentine or a Brig or a Brigantine – all depending on how many masts are carrying square sails and how many of them. Full-riggers are ideally suited for a following wind or at least a wind coming from aft of athwart-ships. A clipper is a ship with a hull shape built for speed, hence the 'tea clippers' of the nineteenth century, which set astonishing records for the time. In 1866 the Clipper Ariel reached the English Channel with its cargo of tea a mere 99 days after leaving Foochow in China – an astonishing voyage of around 15,000 Miles. A windjammer is a heavier full-rigger built for cargo. All are tall ships, though today the term is mainly used for full-rigged sea-training vessels and the competitions in which they take part.

England got its first training ship for boys who wanted to go to sea in the mid nineteenth century, while Norway obtained its first sail training ship in 1881 when it commissioned the *S.S. Christiania* (ex. *Lady Grey*), and named it after Norway's capital. It was a great success, providing well-trained seamen for Norway's expanding merchant fleet. This set the pattern throughout the country for coastal towns of any significance aspiring to have their own sail-training vessel for the benefit of the youth of that community and the longer-term economy of that town or city.

One such town was Kristiansand on the southern tip of Norway where a local shipbuilder and benefactor funded the building of the *S.S. Sørlandet*, a 216 foot full-rigger. Launched in 1927 she carries 27 sails when fully canvassed. Other well-known square-riggers from Norway are the Bergen-based *Statsraad Lemkuhl*, and the Oslo-based *Christian Radich*, which is probably the most famous, because considered the most beautiful, she gained the lead role in the 1958 film *The Windjammer*.

S.S. Sørlandet had a very varied post-war history until in 1977 she was bought back to Kristiansand by the ship owner O.A.. Skjelbred who gave her to the city. In 1981 the foundation 'Stiftelsen Fullriggeren Sørlandet' was established which is now the owner and operator, and today she is the oldest ship of her type still in service.

So back to my experience on board S.S. Sørlandet in 1992. I still remember driving from my brother-in-law's summer cabin to Kristiansand and seeing *Sørlandet* moored there in all her glory.

We were a very multinational crew who assembled on board: French; German; Italian (very noisy!); Polish; as well as Norwegians who were probably in the majority. Nor was there any shortage of girls. If not the oldest, I was certainly one of the oldest. Sometime well before dark the ship was moved to anchor out in the town's 'roadstead' for the night. This is when we were assembled and given our first briefing by the Captain and also split into our 'watches'.

I think I was lucky in this respect because our watch leader was the 'Bosun' on the ship, i.e. the senior crewmember who is not one of the ship's officers. After that we were permitted to go up in the rigging to get the feel of it while we were still in harbour and reasonably stable. Later in the evening there was supper: poached fish, which next day reappeared as the best fish soup, I have ever eaten.

Eventually it became bedtime or more correctly 'Bunk time'; surprisingly bedding was provided and privacy was ensured by drawing

curtains, and despite my excitement about the day to come I slept like a log The following morning arrived bright and breezy so we weighed anchor and headed into the North Sea. It escapes me what the watch rota was, but I do remember that some time during the afternoon I was delegated to take the wheel, that is to be the helmsman. What a feeling – with a fresh breeze coming from the starboard quarter and the waves lifting the stern and trying to throw the ship off course - something one had to counter. This could be surprisingly heavy work, and there were frequently two crew on the wheel to keep things under control in a blow. That was probably the highlight of the whole trip, but it wasn't the end of it!

It was towards dusk when we were streaming down the Kattegat between Demark and Sweden that we were called on to go aloft and shorten sail because we were going too fast in relatively confined and busy waters – and of course we were also an inexperienced crew!

This is where things got interesting! Basically you need two teams, one on deck manning the ropes and the other up the mast(s) and out on the yards stowing the sails. You are told which sails(s) are to be stowed.

Manning the yards onboard *Sørlandet* (Photo from Flickr 2013)

The problem for the people on deck is that each sail has about eight ropes that control various aspects of it, and seeing each mast has FIVE sails things could get very confusing – but we were guided, so all was well! With the sail free

and hauled up to the yard by the deck crew, the only job for the guys on the yard is to gather and stow the sail securely using the gaskets, which hold it neatly in place – one hopes!

None of the above is a problem except if like me one is over six foot tall. Standing on the foot-rope was fine so long as I was there by myself, but as soon as I had somebody next to me, possibly on both sides, on the same foot-rope, they lifted the rope so that my thighs, rather than my mid-riff were against the yard. That rendered me top heavy and tended to unbalance me, meaning that I had to bend my knees to lower my body weight and that became somewhat tiring over time!

The following day we were in the Kiel bay for two days with little or no wind. On one of the days a Safety Boat was launched and the crew were allowed to go swimming, and a rope ladder was dropped over the side to allow them to clamber on board again. Sometime after mid-day we entered the Kiel Canal which joins the Baltic with the Elbe and then headed up river towards Hamburg under engine.

The Canal provided an excellent opportunity to go aloft again and take our time in tidying the furled sails into show standard rolls on the yards using the gaskets – lengths of stout cord permanently tied to jackstays'.

On the way up river towards Hamburg we unfortunately glanced a marker buoy, but did more damage to the buoy, which had a six foot lattice tower on it, than to the boat. Later some port officials came aboard, doubtless to hear the explanation of the ship's officers. Clearly our lookout had missed it or failed to signal properly or adequately to the bridge. We also passed a bandstand on the river bank, which played the national anthem of all the passing ships; I was off watch, but felt quite emotional as they played 'Ja, vi elsker'!

The Saturday and Sunday when the ship was in Hamburg we were on show, that is we had open house for the people of Hamburg. Because of that there were always odd jobs to be done to maintain ourselves in ship-shape show condition.

Then came Monday morning and we were off again. After so long my recollection of the sequence of events is a little vague, but among the duties we had to perform were:

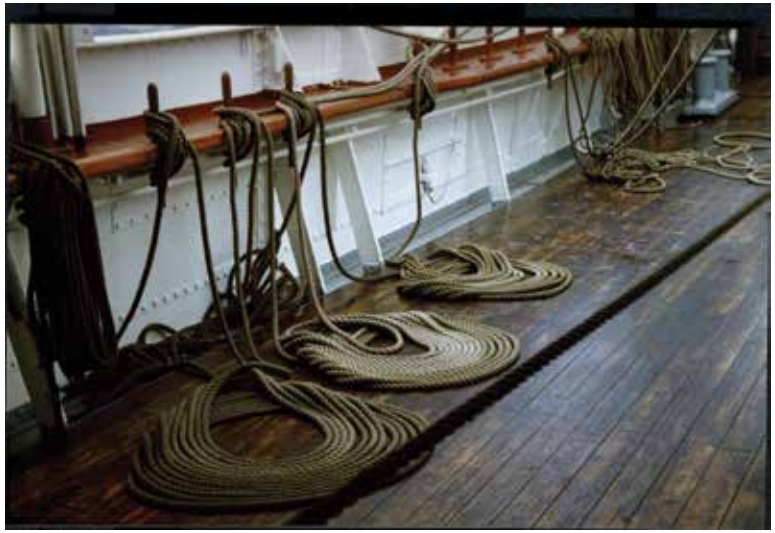
Fire watch: this entailed walking the length and breadth as well as the 'depth' of the ship once every hour to look out for fire or the risk of it.

Lookout: this was performed from the 'Fo'c's'le' (the raised portion at the

front of the ship) by ringing the ship's bell on sighting any other vessel or danger. You first had to ring the bell vigorously to attract the attention of the Bridge or watch officer, then ring one, two or three strikes depending on whether the other vessel or danger was dead ahead, on our starboard, or port side.

Cleaning the 'Heads': This is the usual maritime name for the toilets and washrooms, which invariably on traditional sailing ships were up front – away from the Captain's and/ or Officers' quarters, which tended to be at the stern. This was the only time I was nearly seasick, not so much on account of the motion of the ship as the stink of the ammoniacal liquid that was provided to clean/disinfect the area!

Deck Watch: This consisted of the whole watch; some 7 to 10 bodies on standby to perform any duty required. Here I learned the usefulness of a 'rolling hitch' a knot that extends the length of a rope that can't be tightened further because a block or something else prevents this. The hitch is made on the sail side of the block and allows the now lengthened rope to be further tightened by hauling manually and belaying to any free secure point – we used it to tighten the mainsail brace which adjusts the angle of the mainsail yard so that it draws the wind better.



Neatly stowed rope. Photo John Wells

We also learned some rope handling work, useful in avoiding a 'spaghetti' tangle on the deck when you 'wear ship', i.e. change the direction of the ship in relation to the wind. In this operation you have to move the yards through a significant angle and because the braces, or ropes use pulleys to ease the strain you end up with metres of rope on the deck which can easily become an 'unholy mess' – not good when you have to reverse the operation!

Lastly, for personal safety on windy days, a rope was tied on the windward side of the boat stretched between the open parts of the deck, that is between the two deck housings. This acted as a kind of hand grab across the open parts of the deck when the going was rough.

It was with great sadness, but also a sense of achievement that we eventually returned to Kristiansand. However, I could not disembark before I had asked the capain to sign my log book which states that I took part in all watch duties during the 11 Days at sea, covering 1,100 Sea Miles and with 24 hours actually on watch. Wind velocity was max. 7/8 according to my log! '8' is Gale, so it must have been a very steady ship because I can't remember those conditions!

From a Life at Sea.

By Vermund Gravdal,

In an article that originally appeared in Gammalt frå Kvam 2014, *Vermund Gravdal describes his life at sea from 1956, when as a 16-year old he joined the training ship DS Gann to 2000 when he finally retired after 25 years of being a captain. This article comes from the second half of his account and describes a period of major change and has been edited and translated by Marie Wells*

Welfare initiatives.

During my first years at sea, the unloading docks were near the centre of town, as in Antwerp, Rotterdam and Hamburg. Off duty, most of us paid a visit to the seaman's church, where the newspapers from home were popular, and of course the waffles. The staff in some churches were absolutely fantastic, and arranged outings and activities for the seamen. I particularly remember the staff in the seaman's church in San Francisco.

'Aunty' in Vancouver (Marjorie Noel Lowndes) was also a special lady. When a Norwegian ship docked, she organised matters and arranged things on a voluntary basis and at her own expense. Finally she was employed by the Norwegian Government's Seamen's Service, and of course did a good

job there too. 'Welfare' was eventually cancelled, one reason among others being the short time the ships were docked and the decreasing number of Norwegian seamen.

There was a large library on the ships built after the war, but in the 1970s the shipping companies removed these, which was perhaps OK, for the selection was the same on all the ships, and the same books could largely be found in the same place on all the shelves.

Many Norwegian ships had adopted a school class. Pupils were sent information about the ship and the places we visited, and the children sent letters and greetings back. It was the radio officer who was responsible for the contact. The last of 'my boats' to have such an arrangement was *Mauranger* and the school was obviously Mauranger School in Sundal. As regards the radio we got NRK's short wave transmissions. The telephone connection was via Rogaland radio, and anyone who wanted could listen to what was said. Later we got satellite telephone. This was a closed loop, but the cost of conversations was high, from 60 kroner per minute to 90 kroner per minute if the link went via a Japanese station.

In the 1950s it was usual to have a crew of 40-50 on a general cargo ship, with reasonable time to carry out the various tasks on board. Round about 1962-63 savings were being made by the majority of shipping companies and crews were cut to about half, with the promise of better equipment and resources. 'My' shipping company Westfal-Larsen wasn't the first to rationalize, but gradually the number of crew approached the limit of what was defensible also for us, not least with regard to safety on board.

Loading routines.

After attending Mates School in 1963 I signed on as 3rd officer on *MS Falkanger.* All the officers on board were Norwegian, while the majority of the crew were from Spanish-speaking countries, and many had poor English. Before there had always been people on board who could communicate orders to the foreign workers, but now it became difficult. The officers really had to take into account the language difficulties, not least because of their responsibility for safety and readiness on board.

The first tankers I worked on as 2nd officer and chief officer was the chemical tanker *MT Haukanger.* It was a smallish vessel with 28 tanks, but we could have up to 26 different types of cargo on board. It was the chief officer's responsibility to plan the positioning of the cargo, to organize the loading and unloading, in addition to the cleaning of the tanks. It was a process that had to be carried out far more carefully and thoroughly than in any kitchen.

Some of the chemicals were considered hazardous material and could not be loaded into tanks next to each other, there had to be a buffer of at least 60 cm between (cofferdam). Nor could cargoes that could interact with each other be placed close together. And if we were carrying raw materials for the production of pharmaceuticals the three previous cargoes in those tanks must not have been poisonous.

The gas tanker *LPG Hardanger* was the first ship I sailed as captain, back in 1975. *Hardanger* and its sister ship were specially built for the transport of highly explosive materials, for example we sailed between Freeport in Texas to Santos in Brazil with two small cargoes of ethylene-oxide for the car industry. On this voyage we could not take any other cargo, as ethylene-oxide is so highly explosive (exp. boundary 3,0 –100%) that if a drop of it fell 2-3 metres from the top of the tank and down the whole lot could go up in the air, according to the shipper. We felt no need to test his statement.

As for security in general, loading and unloading now take place in totally closed systems, and when procedures are followed gas tankers are some of the safest ones afloat.

Captain Gravdal (on the right) taking delivery of *MT Brimanger* in Poland in March 1977 (Photo from the author)

A danger that it was difficult to protect against in the 1970s was the pirates in the South China Sea, particularly in the Strait of Malacca. They would come towards us in small speedboats. Beforehand we had rigged up fire hoses on both sides of the ship, and when the pirates approached we turned them on at full pressure, and thus prevented the bandits from coming on board. The ships that unfortunately got such 'visitors' on board tended to be threatened with loaded weapons and locked up. When the pirates left, most of the accessible items of value had gone.

Nine years with *MT Mauranger*

I had many years as captain of the *Mauranger.* It was built in Florø, and I was able to supervise its construction. Mauranger was a tip-top modern ship, and had good qualities, nevertheless I had my most challenging time as a seaman precisely on this ship. It was certainly not account of the ship, but on account of the Iran-Iraq war in the 1980s, when the struggle was for control of the Persian Gulf. My sailing times were now changed, I was 4 months at

MT Mauranger coming into Mauranger Fjord, in Hardanger Fjord for the christening ceremony in August 1981. Photo by the author.

sea and 4 months ashore. *Mauranger* had a permanent contract for the Gulf, loading methanol in Dubai and Bahrain, and taking it to countries in the Mediterranean or the States. Usually the return load was acid for India, and then ballast to the Gulf. Both Iran and Iraq attacked oil tankers and merchant ships, and this phase of the war was called 'the tanker war'. One saw and heard terrible things, boats round us were attacked and sunk, and boats close by in flames.

When we entered the Gulf before the war, we would take the shortest route to the port of loading. When the war broke out we had to follow the Arabian coast, as far as possible from Iranian territory. The Iranians shunned nothing, coming with fast motor torpedo boats and firing their torpedoes. Coming through the Straits of Hormuz during the war everyone on board had to move their cabins from the starboard over to the port side that was towards the Arabian coast. When we had loaded and were sailing out again, everyone had to move back. Those on watch on the bridge wore bulletproof vests and knew little about what the next hours or days might bring. We never took a direct hit, but on another boat a torpedo went through the wall of the telegraphist's cabin, through the ceiling and out – without exploding. Fortunately the telegraphist was not in his cabin at the time.

Mauranger sailed for several years as a tanker in the war zone, but despite dangers only one trip was cancelled. Radio communications couldn't be used, as the warring parties listened in and radio communications were like an invitation to attack. All communications had to be via satellite. Towards the end of the war it became usual that we got a message via satellite from the British or American Navy, 'at such and such at time we are going in. Join us.' Accordingly we went in a sort of convoy and thus got some protection.

When the war was over in the autumn of 1988, Iran and Iraq had sunk so many ships that the total tonnage of merchant shipping lost was more than one third of that sunk during World War II. More than 300 seamen died. Norwegian ships were also hit, for example both the supertankers, Wind Eagle and Wind Enterprise, were attacked and damaged by Iraqi jet fighters. Other ships were attacked by rockets. (…)

Refugees on board

It was not only in Iran and Iraq that you could see the results of acts of war. In 1983 *Mauranger* was on its way from the Gulf to Japan via Singapore when we discovered boat people. The Vietnam War was certainly over, but the North Vietnamese army had the reputation of being merciless towards those thought to be traitors. Several hundred thousand left Vietnam at the time.

Entry from *Mauranger's* log, 16 October 1983.

18.30: discovered a small boat full of people to starboard who signalled with a white flag. Reduced speed.
18.40: boat so close to our own ship that we could talk to people on board, who said they were Vietnamese refugees.
18.42: stopped the engines.
18.50: boat tied up alongside ship. Began to take refugees on board.
17.30: Taken on board a total of 55 people. Continued journey. Position N 06 55, E 108 22.

It emerged that half the refuges were under16. Their boat was 30-35 foot, they had been on board 10 days, the last 4 without food. Their water was also finished, and many children were weak and exhausted. The refugees told us that many ships had passed them without stopping, truly also Norwegian ships.

The refugees were on board for a week. I tried to put them ashore in Hong Kong, as that was not a major deviation from the original route, but the authorities refused to accept them. I was then contacted by the UN Commissioner for Refugees, and it was decided that they should come all the way to our unloading destination in Japan. Apart from giving them good and nourishing food and clean clothes, the first officer gave them classes in English, something that was very popular. (…)

In many jobs there have been huge changes in ways of working and in working conditions during the past 25-30 years, often resulting in a reduction in the number of employees. All the same there are few professions where there has been such a radical change as for Norwegian seamen in merchant shipping. Since the 1980s more and more Norwegian seamen have been replaced by foreign crew, many from the Philippines. On many ships there were perhaps only a couple of Norwegians left, the captain and the chief engineer, the crew and other officers being foreigners.

The transition period was difficult as the captain tended to be between a rock and hard place. As the shipping company's man he had to tell the Norwegian seamen that there was no longer any use for them in their present positions, a foreign crew was to take over. As the person responsible for the ship and cargo it is the captain's job to see to effective performance and a good economic results, regardless of which country the crew come from. Even if the foreign crew were competent seamen, the situation could be challenging.

From sea to land.

I was many years at sea in ships, 44 in all. Apart from my service in the navy and naval training, I was the whole time with Westfal-Larsen's shipping company.

It added up to many years for those at home too. If the distance to husband and father is half the globe, the responsibility for home and family lies heavily on those who keep things going day to day. The seaman's choice of profession has consequences for the whole family.

When I now think back on events and experiences in many countries over many years, my conclusion is this: more and more I appreciate that my family and I live in Norway and more particularly Vestlandet, not least on a fine evening by a lake when the trout are rising…

Learning by Travelling

by Karl Farrugia

2nd year student, Viking and Old Norse Studies, Department of Scandinavian Studies, UCL

In April this year, 13 students of Norwegian at UCL had the opportunity to travel to Oslo on a study trip generously funded by SIU, Senter for internasjonalisering av utdanning (Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Education). As an avid language student I acknowledge how important it is to be acquainted with the history and culture of a country in addition to learning the language, and as students of Scandinavian Studies, we have the possibility to learn about this region in depth. This trip, however, allowed us to go beyond the textbooks and experience Norway first-hand in reality. Most of us had never been before, while some are seasoned travellers to the country, but the itinerary prepared for us by Dr Elettra Carbone, Senior Teaching Fellow in Norwegian at UCL, ensured that there was something new and interesting for all of us. Throughout the three packed days, we had private tours in Norwegian at 6 different museums and institutions, touching upon the history, literature and contemporary culture of Norway.

Right after arriving in Central Oslo, we headed to our first stop of the

weekend: Bymuseet in Frogner Park. This museum was established in 1905 and was integrated into the Oslo Museum collective in 2006 alongside the Interkulturelt Museum and Teatermuseet. The museum documents the history of Oslo from the earliest settlements in the Viking Age to contemporary society. The exceptionally informative tour of the permanent exhibition illuminated this chronologically and thematically, guiding us through not only the changing face of the city itself but the changes in society that came with it. The development from a trading town to industrialisation, war and disease, the new-found wealth in the oil age and the flow of immigration are all trends and processes that irreversibly shaped the city, and the museum displays this in detail and with clarity. I found the focus on how the life of the regular Oslo citizens was affected by these events. of particular interest. All of this is presented in a series of paintings, videos, models, artifacts and photos. The museum, in fact, has one of the largest collections of photos of the city.

The second day started off with an obligatory visit to Vikingskiphuset at Bygdøy, which houses the Gokstad, Tune and Oseberg ships. The museum was built between 1926 and 1957 to house these archaeological finds. Increased tourism has been weighing on this 90-year-old structure over the past few years, raising concerns about the safety of these priceless artifacts due to overcrowding and fire hazards and triggering discussions on its future. In September of 2015, the Norwegian government announced a contest to choose the designs for its overhaul, and on 12 April, 2 days before our arrival, the 'Naust' design by the Danish architect firm AART was announced as the winner. During our visit, the top floor of the museum housed a temporary exhibition of the winning design and the 2 runners up. This exhibition led to some discussion amongst us on the topic of museums and their roles, a theme that we had been exploring throughout the year in a series of targeted joint Norwegian and Danish classes. The tour of the museum was given by Dr Erin Goeres, Lecturer in Old Norse Language and Literature at UCL, focusing on linking the exhibits to Old Norse and Old English texts that we have studied. This visit was particularly interesting and informative for those of us reading Viking and Old Norse Studies, as it allowed us to see the items we study in the flesh.

Following Vikingskiphuset, we took a short walk to Norsk Folkemuseum. The museum which was established in 1894 by the historian Hans Aall today houses 160 historical buildings. Walking through authentic buildings with the tour guide explaining the context of each and the development of the living conditions as society changed, the tour took us through hundreds of years of history of how people lived their daily lives in their communities. The tour ended at the thirteenth-century Gol Stave Church, by far the oldest building in the museum and one of the few original stave churches still standing today. The church was originally located in Gol, Buskerud, and was moved to Oslo after being purchased by Fortidsminneforeningen (Society for the Preservation of Ancient Norwegian Monuments), and later King Oscar II, who bought it in 1881 to prevent it being demolished to make way for a new church. It was reassembled in 1884 in its current location. The church itself is an exquisite example of traditional stave church architecture from the early period of Christianisation in Norway, retaining a number of Vikings age features such as the intricately carved doorway. Once again, although this was undoubtedly a fascinating tour for all of us, it was especially interesting for those us who study Viking .

The last stop for the day took us to Nasjonalbiblioteket to explore collections thanks to a programme of activities kindly put together by Dr Ruth Hemstad, Research Librarian at Nasjonalbiblioteket and Associate Professor at the University of Oslo. The institution was established in 1989 but moved to its current location in Henrik Ibsensgate in 2005. We started the tour with a short introduction to the library itself followed by a walk around the premises and explanation of the different functions of the rooms, stopping to look at the large mural by Per Krohg on the staircase which depicts episodes from Norse mythology. We were then led into the manuscript section of the library where we were treated to a special viewing of manuscripts. Amongst those on display were a manuscript by Ibsen, some handwritten letters, a medieval copy of *Fagrskinna*, a medieval psalm book, and an illuminated Persian manuscript, showing the breadth and variety of the collection. As with Vikingskiphuset and Norsk Folkemuseum, the experience of being able to see original documents and old manuscripts of texts we are accustomed to reading in class was invaluable. These manuscripts are not on public display and are usually only accessible by researchers, so we are extremely privileged to have had this unique and exciting opportunity.

As part of our visit to Nasjonalbiblioteket, we were also able to visit the temporary exhibition IMAGE - *Norske forfatterportretter fra kobberstikk til silverprints* which displayed portraits of some of the most famous Norwegian authors, from Petter Dass in the seventeenth century to contemporary authors. We were given a private tour of this exhibition by the curator, Arthur Tennøe,

who gave us information about the portraits and the authors themselves, highlighting the importance of their work on Norwegian literary history.

For the final day of the trip, we visited Rådhuset, Oslo City Hall, which was completed in 1950. It is perhaps the most iconic landmark in Oslo, which, amongst various other official functions hosts the annual Nobel Peace Prize ceremony every year is. Dr Erin Goeres gave us a tour of the Yggdrasilfrieze along the courtyard perimeter, which consists of 16 wooden reliefs by Dagfin Werenskiold depicting characters and scenes from Norse mythology. We went inside to admire the richly decorated interiors, including Arbeid, administrasjon og fest (Work, administration and celebration), the mural painted by Henrik Sørensen, that celebrates Oslo's history and its inhabitants, and which also happens to be the largest oil painting in Europe.

The group photographed by the monolith in Frogner Park. (Dr Carbone on the right).

We then walked to Akershus festning (Akershus Fortress), the medieval complex overlooking the Oslo fjord. The building of the structure started as early as the 1290s and underwent a series of restorations, modifications and new constructions throughout the ages. The tour of the castle was a very educational experience for all of us, as it gave us a glimpse of a period of Norwegian history that is sadly often overlooked, i.e. Norway under Danish rule. One could really get a sense the lavishness which the royalty and nobility enjoyed in this period, and the artifacts on display show the changing relationships with other kingdoms abroad, be it in times of peace or war.

As I am sure is evident from what I have written, this was an exciting and educational experience for all of us. One of the major contributors of this was the fact that we were given the opportunity to take our studies outside of the classroom and interact with the very thing we study, i.e. Norway, in all its aspects, be it history, culture, literature, or of course, the language itself. For those in the first and second years of their studies, this was also the first opportunity to use their Norwegian language skills not only for academic purposes but for practical ones. In addition, for those of us in our second year, it was indispensable to get acquainted with the city and its various institutions in preparation for our year-abroad the next scholastic year. I do hope that this trip will become an integral part of the study program in the years to come and that future students will have the unique opportunity that we had.

With thanks to Angela Chan (4th year Scandinavian Studies and History of Art student at UCL), whose thoughts and reflections on the trip also informed this report.

It is with regret that we announce the death of Sir John Robson on Monday, 6th June. Sir John was the British Ambassador to Norway from 1987 to 1990, and Chairman of the Anglo-Norse Society in London from 1998 -2003.

Anyone interested in reading more about Sir John should go to the 1999 ..... issue of the Review, where there is a profile of him by Audrey Beatty

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