ISSN 1363-0009366

WINTER 2023-24

Anglo-Norse Review

A border post on the Norwegian side of the Russian-Norwegian border in the north of Norway. The Russian posts are red and green striped. Photo credit: Dag Endre Opedal/Kraftmuseet (Norwegian museum of hydro power and industry)"

ANGLO-NORSE REVIEW

THE ANGLO-NORSE SOCIETY – LONDON
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Editor: Marie Wells
marie.wells@btinternet.com

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Editorial

Sometimes events occur that one knows will need to be covered in the *Review;* that was the case when Russia invaded Ukraine. Norway shares a border with Russia in the north and after the invasion relations between the two countries could not be the same. The difficulty was finding someone to write the article and I am very grateful to Sir Richard Dales, our former Chairman and UK's former Ambassador to Norway for volunteering.

I was at an Anglo-Norse Council meeting at the Norwegian Church in Rotherhithe when the minister there, Dag Magnus Hopstock Havgar came in and told us that Jon Fosse had just won the Nobel Prize for Literture. I knew precisely who I had to contact and could not wait to get home to contact Paul Binding who I knew would do it. Indeed he had already been contacted by the *TLS*, who wanted an article by Monday 8th October - it was then Thursday 5th October!

I think I can have been only half listening when James Raven offered an article on Erik Pontoppidan's *Natural History of Norway,* because I dreaded receiving something rather dry, but what arrived in my Inbox was a delightful piece, which shows how something totally fantastic can be accepted as truth if published with enough authority - a warning for today?

Sometimes one thing leads to another as was the case when the religious pomp and ceremony of King Charles's coronation made me wonder about the state church in Norway, which I then learnt had been disestablished, so there was another article. This led to a comparison of the Cathedral in Bodø and Coventry Cathedral, both destroyed in World War.

A celebration of the contribution of Professor Janet Garton to Norwegian studies and the publication of translations of Norwegian literature is long overdue, but finally comes in this issue.

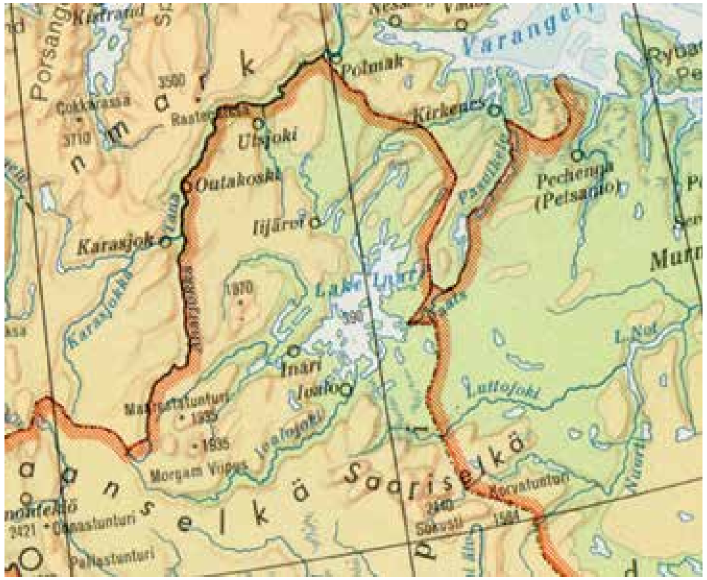
And as I still had a bit of space, what better way to use it than to include an article on the unwelcome invasion of Russian Pink salmon into the rivers of north Norway.

Norway and Russia

By Sir Richard Dales

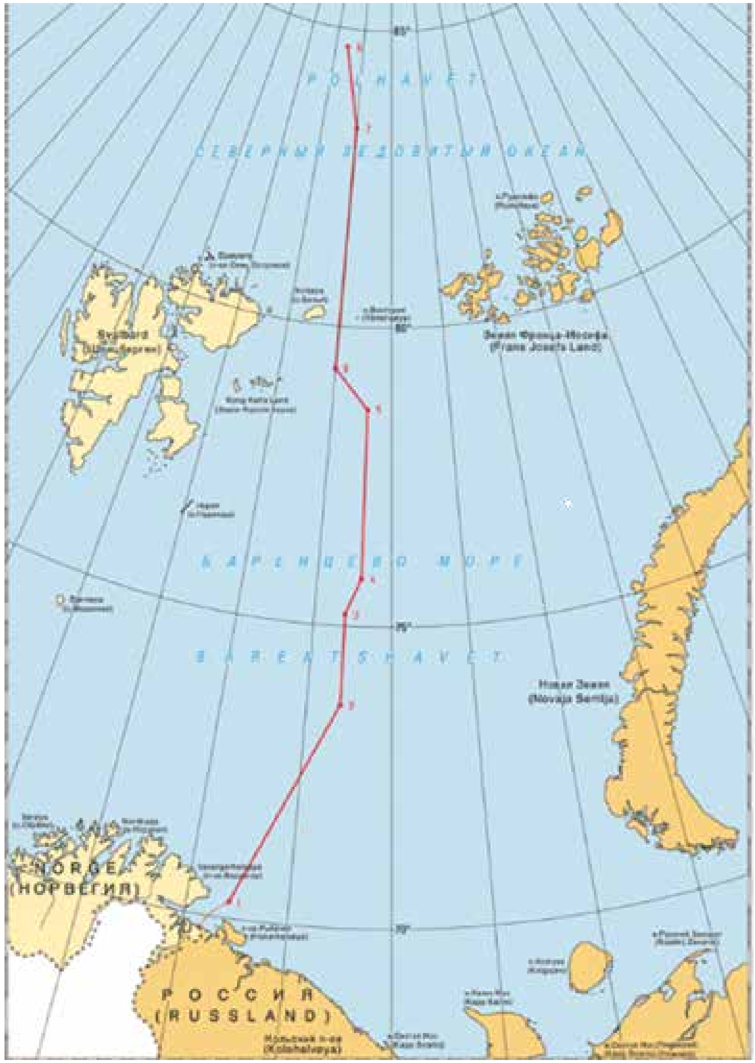
Not everybody knows that Russia is one of Norway's closest neighbours; only a small part of Norway, in Finnmark, abuts Russia. There was no boundary between them until 1826, since when they have mostly been free to talk over the fence and get on well together. Sadly, Russia's invasion of Ukraine means that they are hardly speaking to each other, at least officially.

Before a border was agreed in 1826, Finnmark, the Kola Peninsula and other Arctic regions of what are now parts of Norway, Russia and Finland were open to reindeer herdsmen, to trappers or to anyone able to survive the harsh conditions. Today's border runs some 200 kms south along the middle of the Pasvik River, just east of Kirkenes, to the Finnish border. It is marked by posts. It was extended some 300 kms out to sea in 2010, after the new UN Law of the Sea gave maritime countries the right to form off-shore Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ) with rights to exploit the resources under the sea bed way beyond their territorial waters. In Norway and Russia's case this new



Map showing the Norwegian-Russian border. Source: Faber Atlas, 1959.

border determined how the riches of oil and gas under the Barents Sea right up to Svalbard could be shared out. Norway and Russia became even closer neighbours.



The Norwegian Russian Border in the Barents Sea. To the left of the red line is the Norwegian Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). Source: The Norwegian State Department.

During the Cold War, Norway was one of only two countries where NATO touched the Soviet Union, the other being Turkey. The border was guarded by troops on both sides. The Russian watch towers were still manned when I visited in 1999. There was one official crossing point at Storskog near Kirkenes. Not much crossed the border because on the Russian side the Kola Peninsula had been turned into a vital military region whose ports gave the Soviet navy its only direct access to the North Atlantic via the waters between mainland Norway and Svalbard. The Soviet nuclear-armed submarines were based in the Murmansk fjord. With the strategic importance of the region, including the Barents Sea, to both NATO and the Soviet Union, Norway's relations with the Soviet Union were a matter for the whole Alliance and remained frosty or confrontational for most of the post-war period. There were some exchanges at local level. These included the occasional meetings of border commissioners from both sides and 'cultural exchanges' such as that by the male voice choir from Berlevåg in the film *Heftig og Begeistret.*

The collapse of the Soviet Union (1988-91) and the end of the Cold War brought an improvement in both the atmosphere and substance of relations between Norway and Russia. People and goods could again move relatively freely from one country to the other. Exchanges between the local authorities became frequent and substantial. In 2012, the visa requirement was removed for the Norwegians from Finnmark and Russians from Murmansk. Kirkenes's economy benefitted from the arrival of Russian ships, especially fishing boats. They could at last land their catch in an area which had access to European fish markets. They could also get their ships repaired. Russian immigrants increased the population; by 2022, 10% were Russian. Russian shops opened selling Russian goods, including the famous dolls.

At the international level the problems of the High North, especially those deriving from global warming, could be handled by good neighbours. Norway and others (including the UK) helped Russia dispose of radio-active waste from the run-down Soviet nuclear submarines on the Kola Peninsula. Despite the continued strategic importance of Murmansk and the Kola ports to Russia, the area was opened up to cruise ships. In 2016 I was on a British cruise ship which docked in Murmansk where we visited the Russian Navy Museum as well as the British war cemetery (mostly for sailors from the Arctic Convoys).

Meanwhile the receding ice was opening up Arctic waters, notably the Northern Sea Route across the top of Russia to China, while technological developments were making possible the exploitation of the sub-sea resources, especially oil and gas. So in 1996 Norway and Russia became founder members of the Arctic Council of states bordering the Arctic to deal with the practical and technical issues arising from increased maritime traffic and oil and gas exploration., such as environmental protection, search and rescue, and even how to maintain the sustainable development of indigenous communities.

Not all was plain sailing for Norway. There were seemingly endless negotiations with Russia over the extension of the land border to define the EEZs in the Barents Sea, during which there was a ban on exploitation of any oil and gas below the sea-bed in the disputed area. Russia seemed determined to get the maximum benefit to the detriment of Norway. Not until 2010 did Russia give in and agree a sensible division. Meanwhile in the 1990s Russia began to rebuild its navy. This was pursued with new vigour and resources when Putin became Prime Minister in 1999. New military bases were established and even a new FSB (formerly KGB) regiment was formed. Russia said that it needed to defend its growing interests in the Arctic and the Northern Sea Route. Consequently Norway found itself facing increasing Russian pressure, both over the fisheries and the potential resources in the Barents Sea and over the alleged use of scientific research activities on Svalbard as cover for espionage and surveillance. So with the turn of the millennium Norway adjusted its defence posture to concentrate on the High North. NATO also began to recognise the growing threat from Russia and to enhance its provisions for deterrence and defence in the High North. This became even more pressing after Russia's seizure of the Crimea in 2014.

Hence, until 2022, the Norway-Russia relationship had operated on two levels. On one level there was cooperation on practical matters, especially in the Arctic region and locally in Finnmark, with considerable freedom of movement and interchange. Kirkenes did well out of it. On the second level, Russia's naval and military build-up on the Kola Peninsula and its aggressive stance posed a growing threat to Norway's interests in the Arctic and around its coast-line, especially its oil and gas assets including platforms and pipelines. The invasion of Ukraine only increased tensions. Norway is now strengthening its armed forces, including the Home Guard and increasing its readiness and ability to withstand an attack until NATO reinforcements arrive. Border controls have been strengthened to prevent illegal crossing and arrangements made to close the border altogether if necessary as Finland has done. Educational, scientific and cultural exchanges have ended. The State Pension Fund (the worlds biggest sovereign wealth fund) has divested its Russian assets. Sanctions have been imposed on Russia in line with those of EU countries. Cooperation with Russia in the Arctic Council has been suspended. On Svalbard, tensions have grown with the Russian mining community. At the national level, relations are in the deep-freeze.

In contrast, at the local level in Kirkenes exceptions have been made. Although the Kirkenes Council has suspended relations with its twin, Severomorsk, in Mumansk the fisheries authorities still cooperate to supervise the fishing boats, enforce regulations and preserve fish stocks. Russian fishing boats may still call in to Kirkenes and a couple of other Finmark ports, but they can no longer be repaired there and the movements of their crews is restricted. The Russian shops are still open and Russians can still cross the border. Relationships between Norwegian and Russian residents in Kirkenes reportedly remain cordial. The local newspaper (*The Barents Observer*), which has some Russian journalists who have fled Russia on its staff, reports that most Kirkenes Russians condemn Putin's invasion of Ukraine but are reluctant to speak out for fear of the consequences for their relatives back in Russia or even that their phones may be tapped by the FSB. Russia maintains its Consulate-General in Kirkenes, so it has plenty of ears on the ground.

While the three decades since the end of the Cold War may have brought about a warmer relationship with Russia, especially in Finnmark, it has now gone back on ice, except for a small community in North Norway where Norwegians and Russians are close neighbours.

(Information correct as at end of November 2023)

The Bishop and the Monster: the Global Reception of a Norwegian History

By James Raven,

The book I'm currently completing asks how far the production of attractive books with careful design, fine typography, quality paper and well-crafted images assists in making the incredible believable. My subject is *Det første Forsøg paa Norges naturlige Historie* written by Erik Pontoppidan, Bishop of Bergen between 1747 and 1757, Pontoppidan's history was published in two parts in 1752 and 1753. In 1755 both parts were translated into English and published together in London as the *Natural History of Norway*. Plentiful illustrative engravings and, in the London version, a pull-out map, accompanied the different printed editions bought by dozens of institutions and significant writers and collectors around the world.

Born in Aarhus in 1698, Erik Pontoppidan made his first visit to Norway in 1719, and was later appointed preacher to the Copenhagen Court and chaplain to the notably pious and authoritarian Christian VI. Commissioned to write an elucidation of the *Small Catechism* of Martin Luther, Pontoppidan's resulting *Sandhed til Gudfrygtighed* [Truth to Godliness] remained, with its 759 questions and answers, compulsory reading in many schools until the1960s. (Those of you who have read Alexander Kielland's *Gift* will know of the struggle children had with this at Confirmation, which was their passage to adulthood).

The origins of the *Historie*, though, lie in the crisis that faced Pontoppidan in 1746 when Frederick V acceded to the throne and brought a rejection of his father's famously pious Court, and Pontoppidan's virtual exile as bishop of Bergen. His exceptional energy was evident within months of his arrival in June 1748. He introduced educational reforms, established reading classses for poor children, penned pedagogical pamplets, and wrote and published (in Bergen in 1749) his hugely important collection of Norwegian words, the *Glossarium Norvagicum, eller Forsøg paa en Samling af saadanne rare norske Ord*. And he soon conceived the writing of *Norges naturlige Historie* 'to demonstrate the glory of God in the rationally and physically revealed marvels of the northern lands still little known to scholars and educated readers in the rest of Europe.'

By examining archival notes, reviews and annotated surviving copies bought by scholars, writers, clerics and institutions in Europe and the North American and Indian colonies and trading ports, we can determine how Pontoppidan's scientific and historical 'verification' methods were received. There was, however, one other key reason for the influence – indeed, the notoriety – of the *Naturlige Historie*. In a celebrated and much debated section, Pontoppidan argued for the existence of sea serpents, kraken, and mermaids. For all his insistence on providing evidence for everything he described, the bishop included long sections on the sightings of varieties of marine monsters. He gave notes on contemporary observations and images of the creatures, many drawn from earlier works on Scandinavian myth. His observations astonished. Pontoppidan wrote that the kraken was the size of a floating island. Some mermaids and mermen were said to be Danish-speaking.

From the outset, Pontoppidan envisaged his *Naturlige Historie* to be illustrated for reference, and all the editions included copperplate engravings. In addition, he provided a series of in-court witness statements verifying sightings of sea snakes, kraken, and other sea monsters. Most notable was the Bergen sworn testimony of one Captain Lorentz Ferry, followed by the names of court witnesses. Ferry's account of sighting the great sea snake is given in impressive detail. Pontoppidan's friend, the Norwegian naturalist Hans Strøm

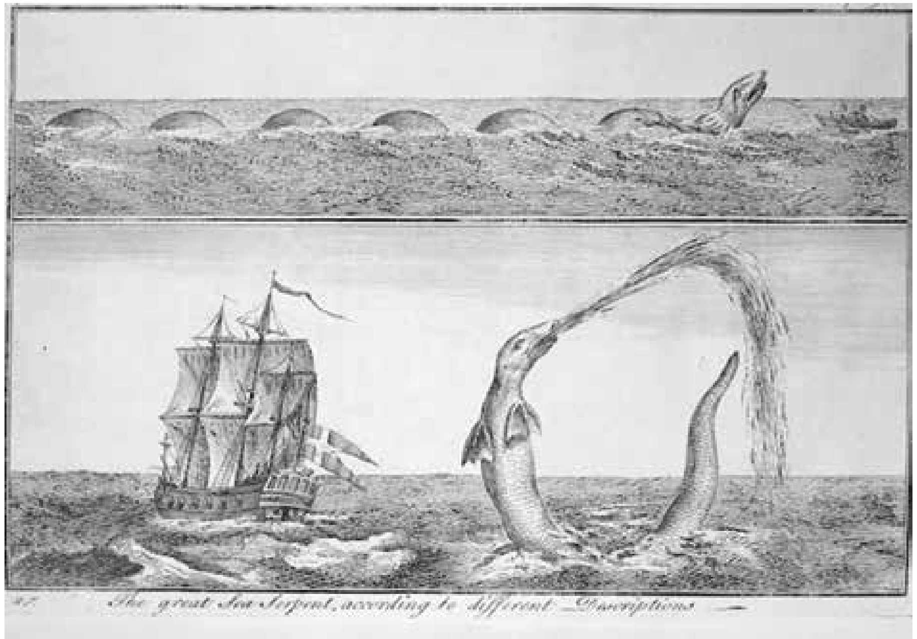

The great Sea Serpent, according to different Descriptions

Illustration from the *Natural History of Norway*, **p.197**
Courtesy of the Master and Fellows of Trinity College, Cambridge.

provided a drawing of the sea serpent, itself notably derivative.
The depiction of the 'Soe Orme' (sea worm) was imaginatively close to longstanding representations circulated widely in Europe over several centuries.One image dominated. A lengthy book of 1555 about Scandinavian people, customs and animals by Olaus Magnus, *Historia de gentibus septentrionalibus*, much translated (and known in English as *A Description of the Northern Peoples)*, became the standard reference on Scandinavia. He described a menagerie of exotic sea creatures, including a colossal sea serpent that prowled beyond the rocky coastline of Bergen. Among notable readers of Olaus Magnus, Conrad Gessner (1516-65), Swiss physician, naturalist and bibliographer, repeated the descriptions in his *Historiae animalium* (Zurich, 1551-58) which redrew the alarming illustrations of two species of sea serpent: a smaller type of up to 40 feet long and the dragon-like mega-serpent. The bishop draws heavily on assumptions made by Olaus and the larger of the combined views of the 'sea worm' follows the two-centuries' old drawing of the writhing, spouting monster lifted well out of the sea - so much so that Sir Walter Scott conflates 'the wondrous tales told by Pontoppidan' with Olaus Magnus in his 1821 novel *The Pirate*.

Almost immediately after the publication of the *Historie,* Pontoppidan's sea monster appeared in popular essays, travel books, natural histories and even novels. London periodicals applauded *The Natural History* in extensive tributes, giving the bishop a generous benefit of doubt. Credibility was also secured by the authority given by the physical grandeur and beauty of the English edition of the *Natural History,* a quality of design that withstood even the occasional deficiencies of the printing house and bindery.

The elegant English edition ensured a lasting and global influence and most emphatically the enduring image of apparently genuine Norwegian sea monsters. Readers' annotations and pasted-in notes in surviving copies attest to their animated engagement, and readers' notes on their own sightings of sea monsters can also be found in copies of all three editions. A copy of the original edition now held at the National Library in Oslo, for example, bears in the margins alongside 'serpens marinus' scribbles dated 1868 and made by Ludvig Daae (1829-93) Norwegian jurist, landowner and politician, referencing three sightings recorded in the Oslo newspaper *Morgenbladet* (founded 1819).

Other references citing the authority of Pontoppidan appeared for the next one-hundred-and-fifty years or more in newspaper references to kraken appearing off the coasts of Ireland, Newfoundland, South Africa and India and in the spectral depths of Loch Ness. But the most celebrated referencing came in canonical novels. In 1851, Herman Melville described the arrival of a giant squid in a dramatic passage in *Moby Dick* (chapter 51):

> There seems some ground to imagine that the great Kraken of Bishop Pontoppodan [sic] may ultimately resolve itself into Squid. The manner in which the Bishop describes it, as alternately rising and sinking, with some other particulars he narrates, in all this the two correspond.

Professor Pierre Aronnax, fictional natural scientist and narrator of Jules Verne's 1869-70 *Vingt mille lieues sous les mers (Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Seas*) asserts that 'another bishop (that is, other than Olaus Magnus], namely Pontoppidan of Bergen, also tells of a devilfish so large a whole cavalry regiment could manoeuvre on it.

Many other modern newspaper accounts name Pontoppidan as their source, however hazy they often are about the nature and origins of his work. Even cinematic creatures featured in such films as *It Came From Beneath the Sea* (1955), *Behemoth the Sea Monster* (1959) and *Gorgo* (1961). Spin-offs continue in current computer games with digital versions of sea monsters bearing an uncanny resemblance to the drawings of the *Naturlige Historie* and its successive editions. The influence of the notorious section of Pontoppidan's *Historie* has endured over two-and-a-half centuries because of the apparent authentication of natural discoveries, abetted by residual myths of Nordic monsters and maritime behemoths, as advanced by the appeal and persuasiveness of materially different forms of integrated word and image.

Editor's note. Professor James Raven is a Fellow of Magdalene College, Cambridge and an eminent scholar of the history of the book)

Jon Fosse

By Paul Binding

On December 7, in his Nobel Prize acceptance speech in Stockholm, Jon Fosse told us: 'Each single work I have written has, so to speak, its own fictional universe, its own world. A world that is new for each play, for each novel.' This view of his creations means, 'One thing is certain, I have never written to express myself, as they say, but rather to get away from myself.' That explains why '[If] I should use a metaphor for the action of writing, it has to be that of listening.' Writing, even with his close, years-long involvement with theatre, is for Fosse a solitary undertaking, its purpose exploration, its aim discovery – of a truth beyond words. The all-important condition for these activities is silence. In his plays, says Fosse, the many pauses punctuating dialogue or the appearances and reappearances of dramatis personae can be thought of as their most determining feature. And – 'What speaks most through the pauses is silence.'

These personal statements about his art do not surprise, rather they confirm the remarkable impact Jon Fosse's works have on us, whether as readers or playgoers (or both): that we are accepting an invitation to regard selfhood – our own and that of others – as temporarily connected to body, brain and voice, but belonging ultimately to the spiritual domain into which it sooner or later will dissolve, and for which 'silence' is perhaps the only adequate name humanity has.

The power of silence – 'it is only in the silence that you can hear God's voice' - is, of course, integral to Quakerism, and Fosse has always stressed the importance to him of coming from an old Western Norwegian Quaker family, with Pietistic affiliations. (That in 2012-13 he underwent conversion to Roman Catholicism in no way reduces this importance.) It was surely inevitable therefore that he was creatively drawn to the strange, disturbing landscape- painter Lars Herterwig (1830-1902) who also came from rurally-based Western Norwegian Quaker stock. As a Quaker myself I know no description both as moving and as accurate of silent Quaker meetings as Herterwig's recollections of them in *Melancholia 1* 1995 (*Melancholy 1* 2006) breaking in as it does into the mental chaos, compounded of obscenities and violence, of the painter's declaredly 'incurable' psychosis. Likewise these last do not lessen our realisation that Lars, however unfit for ordinary living, is *au fond* a true artist, whose works show a positively Quaker-like reverence for Nature as it repeatedly reveals itself to him in his native region. This novel follows the tragic events of Hertervig's life faithfully, and a wonderfully handled 20th century epilogue gives us a 1990s fictional writer's (Vidme's) grateful response to Hertervig's paintings which sadly only posterity knew. *Melancholia II* (1996 – *Melancholy II*, published in English in one volume with Part 1 2022) takes place shortly after Hertervig's death as a misunderstood pauper but shows his sister glimmeringly realising the profundity of Lars's gifts, pursued in literal silence.

Jon Fosse. Photo credit: Agnete Brun.

Melancholia 1 and *II* unite to form an original, powerful, single masterpiece, one of Fosse's supreme achievements, but I have also highlighted it because its appearance somewhat impairs – without however contradicting – the view of Fosse's oeuvre which he himself has promoted. Chronologically the completed pair came out right in the middle of Fosse's most productive period as a dramatist. During the course of his working life it is as this that Fosse has been most widely famed, the most performed Norwegian dramatist after Ibsen and globally one of the most widely produced from any provenance. Fosse, who as a young man intended to be a novelist writing in *Nynorsk*, received unrefusable encouragement to write plays in his preferred own language, and to this applied himself with near-phenomenal creative productivity. Then, about the turn of this century Fosse (his Nobel Prize speech again!) felt 'enough was enough, and I decided to stop writing drama'.

True in essence, this pronouncement is not completely borne out by facts, though. In 2007, for instance, he wrote for the Bergen International Festival *Eg er vinden* (*I am the Wind*; English text 2011-12 by eminent British-Irish dramatist Simon Stephens), which is wholly characteristic of Fosse's minimalist dramas with its stylistically pared lines and its presentation of but two men, the One and the Other, together on the open sea. Yet in its existential preoccupations – the One commits suicide – it lies close to the novels Fosse was then at work on, especially the seven-part *Septologien (*one volume, Norway 2022 – *Septology* one volume in English, translation Damion Searls, also 2022). It is worth saying that on 19 November *I am the Wind* was hauntingly broadcast on BBC Radio 3, a fortnight after the Nobel Prize announcement. The anglophone world has hitherto been out of sync with elsewhere in productions of Fosse plays, allegedly attributable to their departure from English theatre conventions, despite their recognisable kinship to the successful Samuel Beckett. Yet unlike in Beckett, it is possible to see behind Fosse's plays' minimalistic stage presentation of people, usually given only generic names, deeply felt societal and psychological selves – see *Sonen* (1997 *The Son* 2004) and *Besøk* (2000, *Visits* 2004). In truth plays and prose fiction come from the same unique mind.

Nonetheless the Swedish Academy in its citation emphasized the latter genre as crowning literary attainments, especially *Septology*. Says Fosse 'That there is not a single full stop in the whole novel is not an invention. I just wrote the novel like that, in one flow…' Its theme of the divided self is conveyed, he feels, by that same 'silent language' which is his particular medium, enabling our understanding that 'the first Asle and the second Asle may well be the same person'. He gives as one of his happiest creative moments 'the one Asle finding the other Asle lying in the snow and thus saves his life', (compare with – darker - *Eg er vinden*).

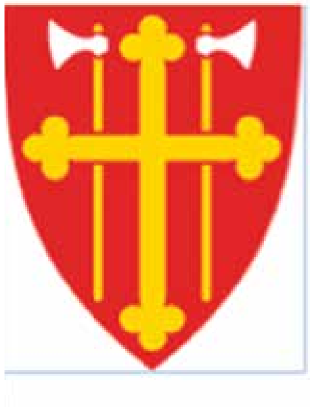
And Fosse's latest novel/novella *Kvitleik* 2023 (*A Shining* 2023), an arbitrary solo forest journey ending in numinous discovery, likewise affirms life and 'the radiant, shimmering presence' silently beyond.

For further details of Jon Fosse and the Nobel Prize go to info@norla.no

Separation of Church and State in Norway

By Einar Vannebo

On 1 January 2017, a significant, but still relatively unnoticed, event took place in Norway. The Church of Norway was then formally and legally separated from the state and became a legal entity in its own right. A fundamental prerequisite for this final step in the process of disestablishing the state church was the amendments of Articles 2 and 16 in the Norwegian Constitution, passed by the Storting in 2012. Article 2 originally stated, 'The Evangelical Lutheran religion shall remain the official religion of the State'. It was changed to a value clause declaring, 'Our values will remain our Christian and humanist heritage'. Article 16 originally stated that the King was head of the Church. It was replaced by a clause securing all inhabitants religious freedom, a principle which actually had been written into the Constitution already in 1964. At the same time, Article 16 declares that the Church of Norway will remain the national church (*folkekirke*) of the country, and as such will be financially supported by the state, and also that all other religious and belief communities will be supported on equal terms.



The coat of arms of the Church in Norway - a cross laid over two St Olaf's axes.

These changes have been referred to as the biggest change to the Church since the Reformation. Since the Danish king, Christian II, imposed Lutheranism on Norway in 1537, there had been an intimate link between the Crown and the Church. The King was the formal head of the Church, and clergy were royal officials. After the introduction of parliamentarianism in 1884, church matters were in practical terms taken care of by the government. At about the same time, a public debate about the relationship between church and state started, which resulted in a slow-moving increase of church autonomy. The authority resting with the Ministry of Church Affairs was gradually transferred to parish councils, diocesan councils and a general synod, the latter with a central church council as its implementing body. The right to appoint clergy has been assigned to diocesan councils, and of bishops to the central church council. The general synod also has the final authority in liturgical and doctrinal issues, with the bishops' conference as an advisory body. By King Harald's own request, the Constitution still requires that, 'The King shall at all times profess the Evangelical-Lutheran religion' (Article 4), but the monarch no longer has any formal or actual authority in the Church.

The separation of church and state has been a natural consequence of the fact that Norway, especially during the last six decades, has developed rapidly from a religiously homogeneous nation with the Church of Norway comprising nearly the entire population, into a multi-religious society with a plethora of faiths and a growing secularisation. Today approximately 64% of the population are members of the Church of Norway, and around 16% are members of other churches or organised religious bodies, the largest of them being the Roman Catholic Church, Pentecostals and Moslem communities. Approximately 2.6% are affiliated to the Secular-Humanist Association (*Human-Etisk Forbund*), and a growing number are not affiliated to any organised group at all.

Even if Norway no longer has an official religion, the Norwegian authorities pursue a policy of equality and support in religious matters. Churches and other religious communities are considered as important contributors to the civil society and their activities should have a natural place and visibility in public life. This support is also evident in the government's financial contribution to all organised religious and equivalent secular/humanist bodies.

In the wake of the disestablishment there have been conscious efforts to secure the principle of equality in a better way, as far as chaplaincy care in public institutions, such as hospitals, prisons and the army, is concerned. Holding church services for schools in connection with major festivals, especially before Christmas, has furthermore been a controversial issue, and also services and devotional programmes on radio and television. The question is where the dividing line lies between the church as a bearer of a cultural heritage and as a proponent of a particular faith. Similar uncertainty and controversy about neutrality versus expressions of religious affiliation has been noticed in various other public fields; but in principle religion should not be restricted exclusively to the private domain, but in all its versatility be a visible and vibrant part of community life.

Otherwise, church life has continued more or less as before which is probably the reason why the legal changes have been largely unnoticed by most people. There are considerable geographical differences between rural parishes with a membership of close to 90%, and parishes in areas of Oslo where only 30% of the population are church members. Church attendance and parish activities naturally differ, but the Church is not necessarily most vibrant where the membership figures are highest. Even if figures for baptism, confirmation and general attendance have declined to an extent, the Church has experienced a revitalisation, in particular through its programmes of religious instruction for children and young people. New traditions have also gained ground, e.g. linked to pilgrimage walks. The Church is challenged in defining what it means to be a *folkekirke*; e.g. does it require membership by a majority of the population, or is it characterised by its universal presence and availability irrespective of membership? Other challenges include a shortage of clergy, and also internal struggles to keep the Church united when faced with controversies not least related to LGBT issues.

At the same time, the dividing lines between various denominations are not as strict as they used to be, and there is increased cooperation between different churches in many fields. In multicultural areas there have also been fruitful dialogue projects between churches and non-Christian groups in the community, especially with Moslems.

As Norway is looking ahead to 2030 and the millenium celebration of the battle at Stiklestad and St Olaf's Christianization of the country, the Church is seeking to find its independent place and relevance in a society which is growing increasingly more secular and multi-religious.

Professor Janet Garton

By the Editor

Few people have done more to promote Norwegian literature outside Norway than Professor Janet Garton.

When I came to Cambridge in 1970 to start a PhD, people at New Hall (now Murrray Edwards College) said to me 'you must know Janet' (Mawby as she was then), but I didn't because by then she had been asked by the late James McFarlane, (the first Professor of European Literature at UEA and editor-in-chief of the *Oxford Ibsen*) to help develop the Scandinavian Studies programme at UEA, so I did not meet her till several years later.

Janet's first degree at Cambridge was in Modern Languages, but not Norwegian. Her main honours language was French and four of her five subject papers were in French/German/ European literature. But she had started learning Norwegian in her second year because she was reading Ibsen. She then saw that there was a paper in 'Twentieth-Century Scandinavian Drama' and thought 'it couldn't be too difficult to learn to read Danish and Swedish, and so it proved'. After graduating with a First Class Degree in 1966 she went to the University of Oslo on a Norwegian Government Scholarship, and decided while there to return to Cambridge to do a PhD. It was during the second year of this that Mac asked her to go to UEA, and that remained her base till she retired.

Professor Janet Garton, who also provided the photo.

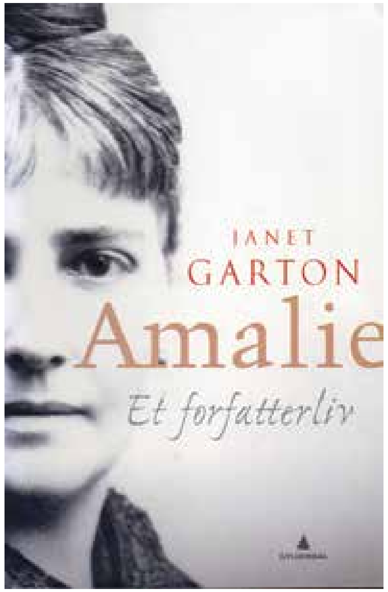
She was heavily involved in setting up and running the Department of Scandinavian Studies that taught Norwegian, Danish and Swedish language and literature, with a special emphasis on modern literature and Advanced Translation.

But she had not been at UEA very long before she became involved with the journal, *Scandinavica* (founded in 1962), first as assistant editor to Mac (which is how James McFarlane is affectionately referred to), and then as editor. As if this were not enough, in 1986 Mac and Janet set up Norvik Press, a not-for-profit desk-top publishing enterprise that is still going strong, publishing both translations of Nordic literature and academic studies. (For more on this see the *Anglo-Norse Review* Winter 2021-22). One of Janet's many skills is that she has managed to raise money for these projects from multiple sources.

Janet also shouldered more than her fair share of university administrative duties from Dean of European Studies to Humanities Associate Dean for Postgraduate Studies, and steered European Studies through times of major change with unflappable fairness. Internationally she served for many years as Secretary and then President of the International Association of Scandinavian Studies, for which she organized the millenial conference at UEA in 2000.

When asked what else stands out as significant in her time as a university teacher, Janet responded: 'The early part of my career corresponded with the second-wave feminist movement of the 1970s and 1980s. I can remember the delight of discovering women's writing, after reading almost exclusively male writers at school and university. My course on European Women Writers was one of the most popular I taught, as well as one of the most personally rewarding, and I enjoyed writing a book on Norwegian women's writing. It also became evident that the young and forward-looking University of East Anglia had somewhat of a blind spot in that area. There were several years during which there was not a single woman professor at the university, and I can remember being the only woman on the Senate, the university governing body. We had to fight to change the statutes, which had been drafted to refer to 'the student' consistently as 'he'. I am glad to say that things improved dramatically in later years.'

None of the above have detracted from her own research and publications, which have recently focussed very much on Amalie Skram (1846-1905) and her relationship with, and eventual marriage to, the Danish writer Erik Skram. This research resulted in a three-volume edition of their letters, a further two volumes of letters to other authors, new annotated editions of two of her novels and ultimately a biography of Amalie Skram. In connection with this work she spent two years researching in Copenhagen, the city where Amalie spent her writing life, under the auspices of the Danish Language and Literature Society. I asked Janet what interested her so much about Amalie Skram, and she replied that what she found fascinating 'is that



The cover of Janet's book on Amalie Skram, published in 2011

she is a writer who embodies so many of the conflicts of her time. She was a fearless author who insisted on writing the truth as she saw it, even though it resulted in oppbrobrium from the right-wing press and the refusal of her first novel by Fr.V. Hegel of Gyldendal.'

Janet has also translated works by Knut Faldbakken, Bjørg Vik, Johan Borgen, Cecilie Løveid, Erik Fosnes Hansen, Jan Kjærstad, August Strindberg, Herman Bang and Kirsten Thorup, and edited many other translations. Her services to Scandinavian literature and culture have been recognised with an MBE, and in 2009 she was appointed *Ridder første klasse av Den Kongelige Norske Fortjensteorden*

Bodø and Coventry Cathedral, both bombed in WW2 and both dedicated to peace - and the resurrection of Bodø

By Sandra Goldbeck-Wood

The city which in 2024 is going to be European Capital of Culture is often seen by visitors as the gateway to the Lofoten Islands - a stop on the coastal cruise ship, and Norway´s northernmost railway station. But to the Arctic region it serves, Bodø, or Båddådjo, in its other local language, Lulesami, is the historic citadel of North Norway´s economic liberation.

Located just inside the Arctic circle at 68 degrees north, Bodø was founded when in 1816, local fishing communities in Nordland county were newly emancipated from the Bergen-based Hanseatic League. They now needed their own town. The Hanseatic league had enabled Norwegian stockfish to be traded profitably in international markets, but the League´s monopoly over prices, vessels and equipment, had kept profits in the south, and suppressed independent local trade. Until, that is, a bishop with an eye to the political dimensions of ministry – call him a kind of Arctic liberation theologian - fought for the livelihoods of northern fishermen in the national parliament. It was Bishop Bonsach Krogh who won the debate in the Storting which led to the dissolution of the Hanseatic monopoly, liberating the region, and paving the way for wealth creation in North Norway. It is not surprising that his was one of two statues mounted on the side of the new cathedral, when it was rebuilt after World War II.

Bishop Bonsach Krogh

Like Coventry, Bodø was all but flattened in a single day in the Second World War. And like Coventry Cathedral, Bodø Domkirke was rebuilt in the late 1950s, amid architectural controversy, but with a deep commitment to peace and reconciliation. The tale of these two cities´resurrected cathedrals is in many ways a single story of rebuilding after destruction, and peace in place of vengeance.

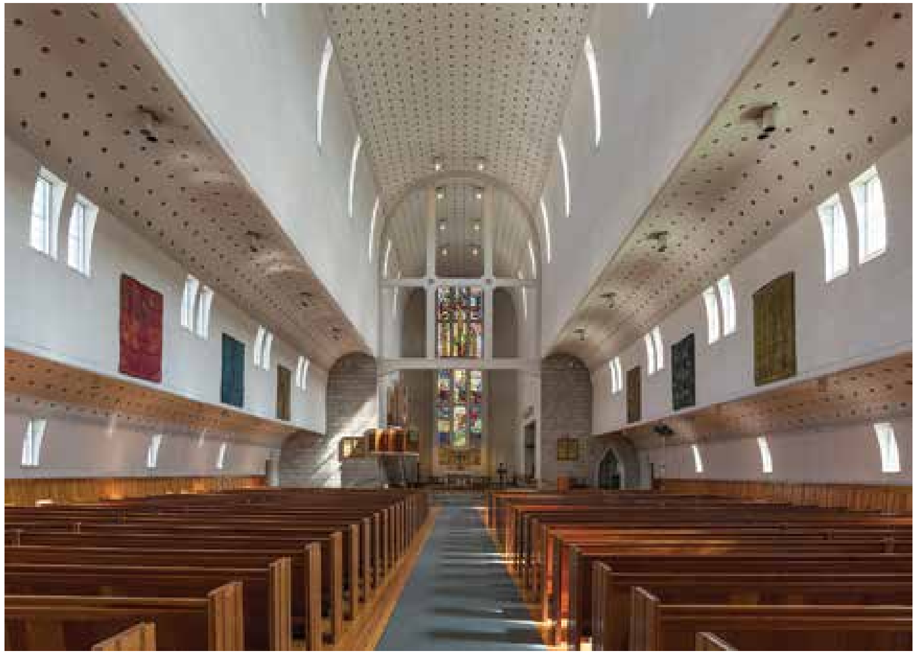
Each cathedral was destroyed on a single day in 1940 during the Second World War. When the fire-storm that hit Bodø, on 27th May, took the homes of two thirds of the city's inhabitants, it also took the 1888-built wooden church in the town centre. But not everything was lost: as the flames began to overcome the church, the sexton, Albert Andersen, saw the steeple collapse, and as it fell, heard a deep groan from the organ. With no thought for his own safety, he ran into the burning building and saved the church silver, and the Bible, sheltering as the church burned to ruins, with a British soldier under an upturned boat outside. The bible, and silver, were gathered into two fish boxes and driven in a hand cart to safety.

It was just under 6 months later, on the night of 14th November, that Coventry suffered the most severe raid, which the Luftwaffe code-named Moonlight Sonata. Unlike Bodø where the population, forewarned, were able to take shelter in cabins, an estimated 568 people were killed in Coventry. In addition, 4,300 homes were destroyed, along with St Michael´s cathedral.

On the morning of 15th November, as Provost Howard inspected the smouldering ruins, the decision was taken to rebuild the cathedral, not as an act of defiance, but as a sign of faith, trust and hope for the future of the world. Stonemason Jock Forbes found two charred medieval roof timbers, which had fallen in the shape of a cross. He had them set up in the ruins, where they were later placed on an altar of rubble, with the words 'Father forgive' inscribed on the sanctuary wall. Another cross was fashioned from three nails by local priest the Revd Arthur Wales.

In the post-war years, each cathedral was re-imagined in contemporary style, as a monument both to local lived experience and to peace. Each was the result of an architectural competition, selected for the strength of its embodied theology. Each broke with architectural tradition: Coventry´s committee did not follow recommendations that the new cathedral be rebuilt in the gothic tradition, to harmonise with the surviving tower and spire. And when the plans for Bodø cathedral were published in the local newspaper, a dissatisfied correspondent complained, 'It looks like a power station!,' to which the dean replied: 'that is exactly what it is to be.'

The new Bodø Domkirke's chosen design followed a traditional basilica style, but, built in pre-tensioned, reinforced concrete, it needed no colonnades. This meant it could both embrace a large congregation, and allow light to flood in at three levels, unimpeded. Its open, airy space is furnished in warm Oregon pine, pierced, again and again, by the circling light outside – the midnight sun at midsummer, or, through the lowest windows around January 6th, by the precious, returning sun which follows the polar night.



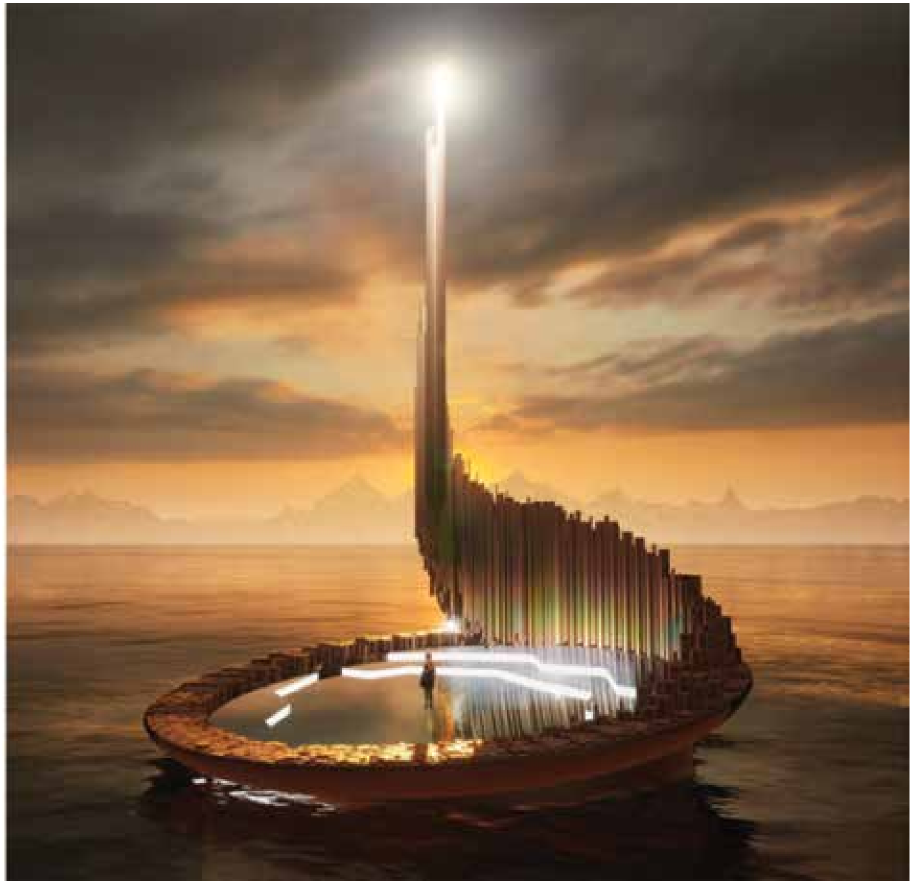
The nave of Bodø cathedral, showing both the way the light enters and the wall hangings between the windows. Source: Wikimedia Commons.

Between the windows of the nave you can see plant-dyed boat rugs, such as kept fishermen alive for weeks on end in open fishing boats. They were made by Norway´s best-known post-war textile artist, Sigrun Berg. On one side of the building the rugs show earthly symbols, while those on the other, heavenly symbols. On festive occasions the bishop´s Northern light cope (*nordlyskåpa*), brings the aurora into church.

The cathedral's post-war functionalist style, known in Norwegian as *funkis,* speaks intimately to the city´s rebuilt centre. Walking around Bodø, you will find little that is ancient or quaint. This twice-undefeated city has learned to wear its modernism with pride. Situated in some of Norway´s loveliest scenery, it has become a place of imagination and aspiration. In 2014, ithe cathedrtal acquired the world´s northernmost carillon, and a new church organ built by Eule Orgelbau. The city also acquired a new harbourside public library and concert hall called *Stormen* designed by the London firm of architects *DRDH*. It hosts several music festivals, in different genres, and its football team, Bodø Glimt has become legendary as the northernmost football club to win a European league Competition.

***Stormen*, the combined library and concert hall, facing the sea. At night and in winter, the interior lighting shines out over the water, and in daylight the white concrete of the building reflects the light, glowng pink in the evening. Wikimedia Commons**

It is wonderful to see Bodø emerge from the oppression, assault, and at times ignorance and condescension it has endured in the past, and achieve recognition as European Capital of Culture. Well into the 1960s, rental properties in Oslo would advertise for 'no blacks, no gypsies, no North Norwegians'. It was 1974 before the now national league winning team, Glimt, was permitted to play in the national league. The pandemic became a moment when many southern Norwegians discovered North Norway for the first time. Perhaps 2024 will be a year for Southern Norwegians and foreign visitors alike to enjoy the growing city and its peace cathedral.



The floating stage entitled 'Here comes the sun', which will be used on 3 February in the opening ceremony for Bodø's European Capital of Culture .

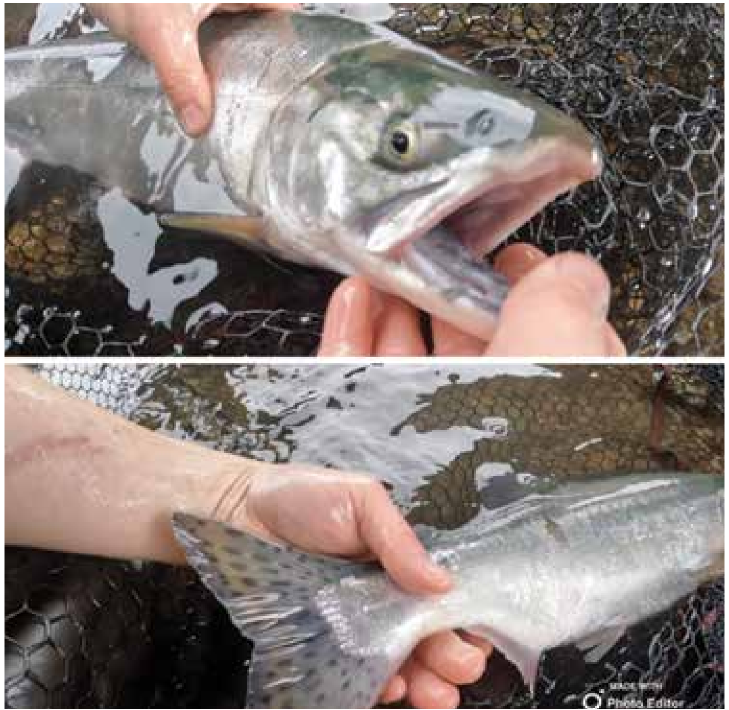
Enemy No 1

From: The Barents Observer. June 30, 2023 Text and photos by Elizaveta Vereykina

‘We have declared a war on this invading species, Norway’s Minister of Climate and Environment Espen Barth Eide tells Elizaveta Vereykina holding a Pink salmon in his hands. The fish was caught in a trap installed in the river Munkelva, not far from the border with Russia in Arctic Norway.

The Pink salmon, or the so-called ‘Russian’ salmon or *pukkellaks*, has become enemy number one for many Norwegian fishermen. Originally from rivers draining into the Pacific Ocean, millions of Pink salmon were released into rivers on the Russian Kola peninsula during the 1950s. While in Russia now Pink salmon, or ‘Gorbusha’, is a valuable resource, for the Norwegian rivers across theborder it is a threat.

This invasion comes every second year and every second year there have been more of the Pink salmon”, Minister Eide tells Elizaveta and adds that thegovernment has more than doubled its economic contribution to build such traps all over the northern region.



Pink Salmon are easily distinguishable from Atlantic salmon because they have a black tongue and spots on their tails (photo credit: Elizaveta Vereykina)

The Pink salmon invade the northern rivers, stress the Atlantic salmon and compete for resources with the Atlantic salmon - a species that is already considered endangered in Norway. But the worst feature of their invasion is that after spawning, they die. As a result thousands of rotting fish end up polluting the rivers

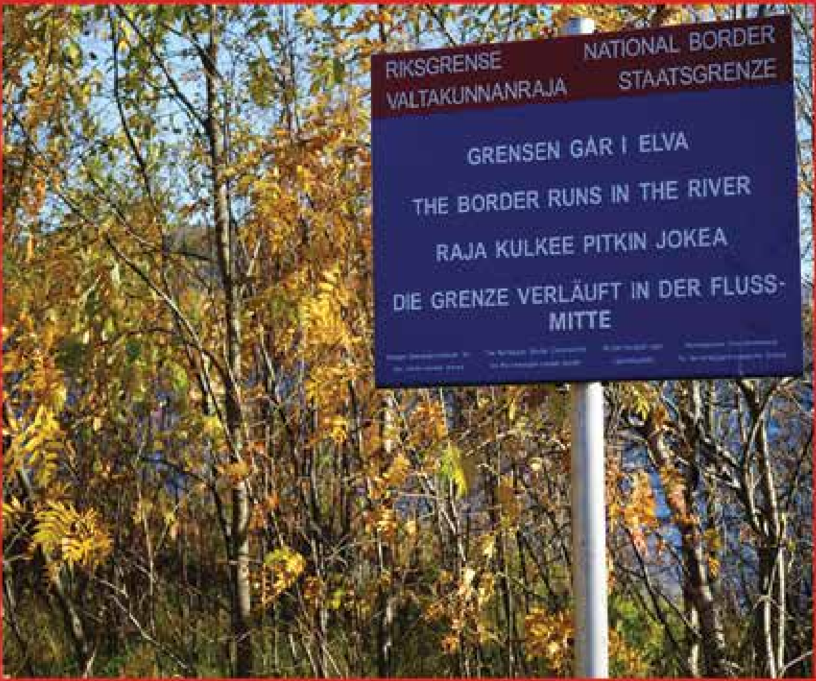
The Norwegians are trying to combat this problem by setting up traps, which catch both the Atlantic salmon and the Pink Salmon. Fishermen then catch the Pink Salmon, (and presumably cook them) while the Atlantic salmon are released to carry on their journey up river.

A trap for the salmon, where the Pink salmon can be separated from the Atlantic salmon. (photo credit: Elizaveta Vereykina)

Climate change is connected to the Pink salmon’s success because it survives in warmer waters, while Atlantic salmon need cold waters. The Karpelva River has warmed about one to one and a half degrees every tenth year during the last twenty years. But Norwegian scientists are concerned not only about the temperature of the water, but also about the water quality in these rivers later in the autumn. The rotting carcasses of the Pink salmon could be harmful to the eggs of the Atlantic salmon.

That’s why NIBIO scientist Paul Aspholm and his assistant David Kniha will spend the summer regularly driving to gather water samples at several locations to monitor water conditions. During the Pink salmon season they sample the water every week to see how this is changing through the season . They do this until the frost comes and ice puts a lid on the river. Then they will continue the next year again to see how the water is influenced by the rotting Pink salmon carcasses that are left during winter and continue to rot in the spring.

Norway's border with Russia is 198 km long of which about 2/3 runs in rivers - the Pasvik River and Jakobselv. In September 2018 the then Norwegian Border Commissioner, Roger Jakobsen signed a 1,500 page agreement with his Russian counterpart defining the exact border between Norway and Russia. It is marked by 396 pairs of border posts and there is a detailed protocol for each post. The original agreement from 1826 says the borderline follows the deepest point of the river, but at some points that has changed.


RIKSGRENSE
NATIONAL BORDER
VALTAKUNNANRAJA
STAATSGRENZE
GRENSEN GÅR I ELVA
THE BORDER RUNS IN THE RIVER
RAJA KULKEE PITKIN JOKEA
DIE GRENZE VERLÄUFT IN DER FLUSS-MITTE

Sign beside the Pasvik River.
Source: **The Barents Observer;** Photo: **Thomas Nilsen.**