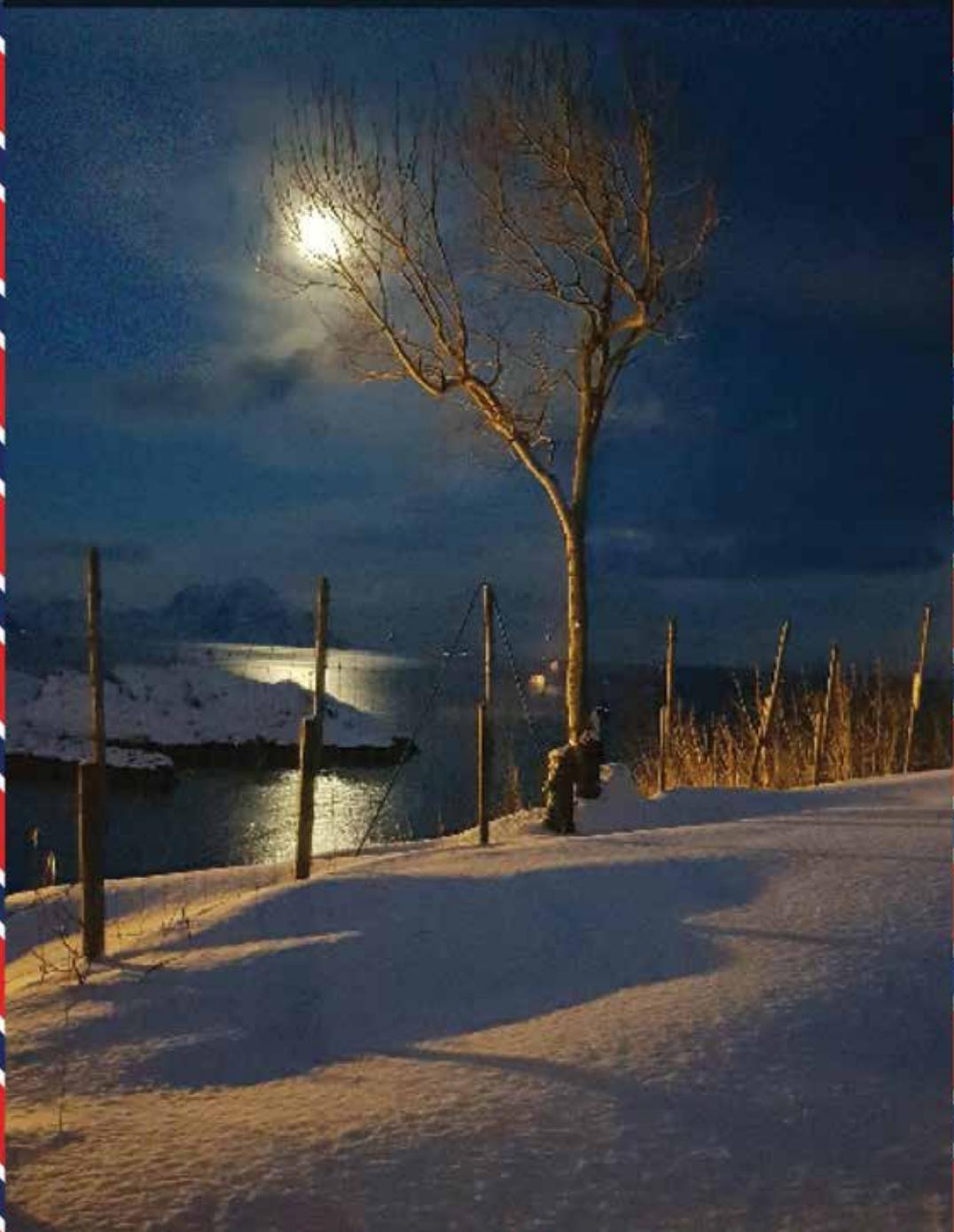


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# Anglo-Norse Review



# ANGLO-NORSE REVIEW

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Cover photo: Winter in Stamsund in the Lofoten Islands.  
Courtesy of Sandra Goldbeck-Wood.

## Editorial

Somehow Norway and World War II refuse to go away, which is why there are three items on the topic in this issue. One is an article about the Green Howards' involvement in trying to defend Gudbrandsdalen during the German invasion in 1940, another is a short note on an English documentary film about the Norwegian Teachers' Protest against the nazification of the school curriculum in 1942. The early stage of this film was supported by a grant from the Anglo-Norse. The third article is a child's account of having a father who was one of the teachers arrested for refusing to teach the Nazi curriculum,

The Anglo-Norse is a charity, and in addition to its scholarships it also awards grants to various projects. In this issue there is a short notice about a Grieg CD, the production of which was supported by the Society and there is a longer article on a visit to Norway by youngsters from disadvantaged backgrounds who had completed a 3-year course with the Renaissance Foundation and were then rewarded with a trip to Oslo to attend the Nobel Peace Prize Awards ceremony.

Finally it came as a wonderful surprise that in November 2019 the Council was informed of a substantial legacy from an E.M. Harmer, who died in 1986. If anyone knows anything about her, please send a note to the editor. The legacy only came to the Anglo-Norse after the two direct legatees in her will had also died. The Council intends to use the legacy to fund another scholarship, which will bear her name.

### **The Green Howards and Norway 1940**

*By John Mills. volunteer at the Green Howards Museum*

*In the 2018 winter issue of the Review which covered the Anglo-Norse Centenary Celebrations, there was an article about the Green Howards and Norway. The article focused on how Norwegian Royalty became involved with the Regiment. But it also mentioned that in 1940 the Green Howards were involved in trying to defend Gudbrandsdalen*

*from the invading Germans, and in the process 370 men were either killed or taken prisoner. At the beginning of 2020, the year that marks the 80th anniversary of that event it seems appropriate to learn more of that struggle.*

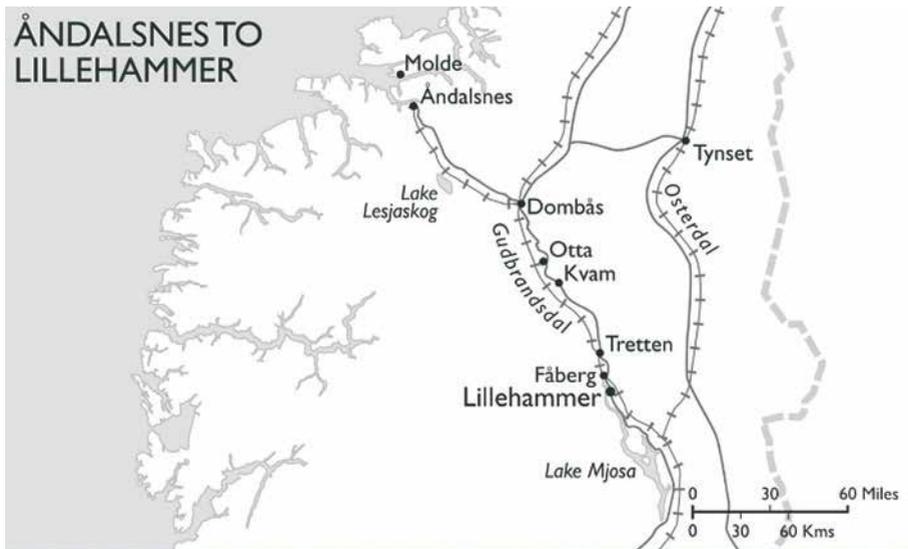
The German invasion of Norway was basically brought about by two factors. Germany relied heavily on vital iron ore supplies from Sweden, these being transported from the ice free port of Narvik in the north of Norway. Securing Narvik was therefore of great strategic importance to the Germans. Also, the capture of the Norwegian ports along the coast would make for maritime control in the area and potential submarine operations. The Allies had planned to mine Norwegian territorial waters but the Germans struck first.

The invasion of Denmark and Norway was codenamed 'Operation Weserübung'. The Germans occupied Denmark on the 9th April 1940, then began their invasion of Norway; landing at Oslo, Bergen, Trondheim and Narvik. Paratroopers landed at the airports of Oslo, Kristiansand and Sola in the first airborne invasion in history.

Operation Sickle was launched with the aim of repelling the German invasion forces. One element would focus on Narvik, with two others aiming to recapture Trondheim. The British and Norwegian army's objective was to staunch the northern attack of the Germans as they made their advance up the Gudbrandsdalen valley. The valley covered some 250 kilometres north from Lillehammer.

The 1st Battalion of the Green Howards were part of the 15th Brigade along with the 1st Battalion Kings Own Yorkshire Light Infantry (KOYLI) and the 1st Battalion York and Lancaster Regiment (YL).

The KOYLI and the YL had landed at Åndalsnes on the 23rd April, with the 1st Green Howards arriving on the 25th. The next day the Green Howards moved south by train to Dombås. During the previous 48 hours the KOYLI and YL had held off repeated enemy attacks at Kvam, 50 miles to the south in the Gudbrandsdalen valley.



The Battle of Kvam on the 25th/26th April was effectively the first military ground offensive between Britain and Germany since 1918. During this action two German tanks were destroyed, these being the first of the war. However, casualties had been heavy and the troops were exhausted.

In Dombås the Green Howards had been subjected to heavy aerial bombing. Overnight of the 26th/27th the regiment travelled by train to Otta and spent the day of the 27th preparing a defensive position covering the road to Dombås. The next day the Germans attacked in what would become known as The Battle of Otta.

By now the YL and the KOYLI had suffered heavy losses, so it was mainly the Green Howards who withstood the German onslaught. Heavily outnumbered, they were facing some 9000 Germans who were strongly supported by tanks, artillery and air power. However, they held up the German advance by almost 24 hours. But the writing was on the wall, and by the end of the day the Battalion had to accept the inevitable and began the onerous withdrawal back to Åndalsnes, a distance of about 100 miles. The next day, during the initial retreat, they would be in

more fighting around Dombås. The retreat itself was far from straightforward. Soldiers got detached and had to make their own way to the coast. In one tragic incident, having survived the fighting, some soldiers were killed and injured when the train in which they were travelling crashed in a tunnel. The eventual embarkation for England took place on the 2nd May.

The ill-equipped and makeshift expedition had failed. It would bring down the Chamberlain government. Ironically, the new Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, as First Sea Lord of the Admiralty was actually responsible for the doomed operation.

Approximately 370 Green Howards were killed or taken prisoner during the Norway campaign. Of those killed there are 28 buried in Norwegian cemeteries. 26 rest in the Nord-Sel Churchyard, about 11 km north of Otta. One is buried at the Hen Churchyard near the port of Åndalsnes, and another one at Overdalen Churchyard, about 37 km south of Åndalsnes. Norway lost around 860 military personnel and 400 civilians.

Within the ranks of the Green Howards there would be several gallantry awards during the campaign. Two Military Crosses, three Military Medals, one Distinguished Service Order, one Distinguished Conduct Medal and twelve service personnel were Mentioned in Dispatches.

Two soldiers received Norway's highest gallantry honour; the Norway Cross. One was Captain (and future Lieutenant Colonel) Patrick Bulfin, also Mentioned in Dispatches during the campaign. He received the award through the leadership and courage he displayed during the Battle of Otta. In Italy in January 1944 he was awarded the Distinguished Service Order. Patrick was the son of the Lieutenant General Sir Edward Stanislaus Bulfin, the much distinguished and famous Green Howard of the First World War.

The other Norwegian Cross recipient was Sergeant Clarence 'Lofty' Peacock, also a Military Medal holder and Mentioned in Dispatches during the campaign. He received the award for his coolness and courage while covering the withdrawal of the battalion during the latter stages of the Battle

of Otta. His obvious nickname came from his 6' 4" height. He would become the most decorated Regimental Sergeant Major in the British Army. His bravery in Palestine in 1938 had already earned him a Military Medal and in the last days of the war his bravery during an attack at Buchen in Germany was rewarded with the Distinguished Service Medal.

Also worth mentioning is Captain (and future Colonel) Paul Hubert Devas Dessain. Commanding an anti-tank company his bravery and leadership won him the Military Cross and he was credited with taking out a German tank. His action gained widespread admiration and his exploits featured in the December 4th 1971 edition of the boy's comic 'The Victor'.

In 1973, the year the regimental museum was opened His Majesty Olav V, 29 men of the 1st Battalion retraced the steps of their Second World War forebears from Otta to Åndalsnes.

On the 25th October 2005 the last surviving Green Howard of the Norway campaign was honoured at Buckingham Palace by King Harald and Queen Sonja of Norway. Frederick Leach from South Bank, Middlesbrough was a private during the campaign. Apparently he had to thank the thickness of his greatcoat for saving him from flying bomb splinters during the Battle of Otta.

## The Norwegian Teachers' Protest

*On 31st October 2019 Jon Seal, the maker of the documentary film The Teachers' Protest gave a presentation of his film at a well-attended joint meeting of the Anglo-Norse Society and UCL students at UCL in London. Jon had been supported by an Anglo-Norse grant in the early stages of making the film.*

The film tells how in 1942 in Nazi-occupied Norway teachers were being pressed to join the Nazi Teachers' League and teach Nazi ideas in their classrooms. 8,000 of them wrote letters of protest. They were threatened with salary withdrawal and the sack. When they refused, the Nazi government arrested 1000 male teachers and sent them to prison camps, 300 miles

above the Arctic Circle, where the struggle really begins.



The documentary weaves together archive footage, first-hand testimony and the skilful animation of poignant drawings by Herlov Åmland which Jon Seal tracked down.

The Teachers' Protest is a sad, tender and uplifting documentary exploring a completely different kind of war story – an inspiring tale of passive resistance, where the heroes fight without weapons and still win.

To read more, go to <https://theteachersprotest.com>.

## The Norwegian Teachers' Protest

*By Jorid Gerd Borgvin Weiss*

At the outbreak of the second world war in Norway, I was 10 years old and living in Svolvær, a small town on the island of Østvågøy in the Lofoten Islands inside the Arctic Circle in North Norway. Svolvær was a small town with a population of a few thousand.

My father, Ole Borgvin, was a teacher and one of the many who refused to educate his students in the new Nazi ideology and, as a result, he was one of those who was arrested. The Education Ministry had sent an instruction to the teachers, telling them that they had to work actively and positively with their students to create an understanding of the new order and the beliefs expressed in the programme of the Quisling government. The teachers had to do this not only in school but also in daily life outside school. Many threats were made towards the teachers, one being that if they refused this instruction, they would be dismissed and a great many were.

When war broke out, the town of Svolvær had two schools. The elementary school (for children from 7 to 14) consisted of several buildings. There was a fairly large, old building housing classrooms and a doctor's room, a handicraft building for girls and another building purely for gymnastics. There was also a new building with modern classrooms, and soon after it was finished my father took me round and proudly showed me the special rooms: one contained maps and geography-related items; another contained stuffed animals, birds and shells etc; there was a chemistry room; and of course there were rooms for domestic science for the girls and woodwork for the boys. It seemed wonderful to have a school with so many modern facilities! The elementary school classes were mainly single-sex and my father taught the boys.

There was also a small secondary school teaching up to 'gymnasium' standard – the level needed for university entrance. This was attended by both local children and children from neighbouring islands who sometimes lodged in town.

The unexpected March 1941 English/Norwegian raid on the Lofoten Islands, whilst successful in its mission, had dire consequences for the local people. A large number of German troops arrived in Svolvær and took over the new school building so it was no longer available for the town's children. After that, teaching took place in any available space such as the church vestry, religious meeting houses, community buildings and

teachers' houses. The school had to fit in with the everyday use of these buildings so some classes were held in the morning and others in the afternoon or evening. Some students found it difficult to find their way home in the dark, particularly in the winter blackout!

I know that the arrest of teachers from all parts of Norway began in March 1942 but I cannot remember the exact date when my father was arrested. Having refused to collaborate with the Nazi instructions to teach their fascist ideology my father lost his job as a teacher and needed to earn money for his wife and three children. Consequently, on the day he was arrested, he was working at a refrigeration plant making ice to freeze fish and whale-meat. I particularly remember visiting him and speaking to him one day in this new workplace, partly because it was unusual to see him in overalls rather than in a suit, and partly because I saw a dead whale floating in the sea before being taken to the factory.

I think his arrest must have been carried out quietly by local police, collaborating with the occupying Germans, because there were no German soldiers present at his arrest. I recall that he was allowed to return home to collect any belongings he might need in prison and to say goodbye to his wife and children. He did not know for how long he might be in prison, but secret information was being circulated about teachers being sent to prisons around Norway or to Finnmark.

In Svolvær, as everywhere else, most of the population was sympathetic to what the teachers had done – namely saying 'no' to Quisling and the Germans. When father was in prison, people came quietly to my mother and offered help, including money.

Svolvær, being a small and fairly new town, had no prison, but there was one in Kabelvåg, a much older settlement and a trading centre with a large church, a bishop and many long-established institutions. It was about 10 km away with an old road that wound uphill and downhill between sea-coast and mountains. There was also an infrequent bus connection between

the two places.

As far as I know, most prison warders were friendly and some may have been sympathetic with the teachers' actions. I did not hear of the prisoners having to do heavy work, nor can I remember any talk of starvation or punishments. I don't know whether or not they were allowed to read or play games or to write or receive letters. I was extremely fond of my father and I wonder now whether I was kept in ignorance of the reason for his imprisonment in order to protect me from being upset or frightened.

Although father was, of course, very anxious about the future and what would happen to his wife, his children and himself, he was not idle and must have been allowed to spend some of his time doing woodwork. He was one of those people who could put their hand to most things and wood-working was a favourite hobby. While in prison he made two wooden dolls' cots - one for my sister and the other for me. They were beautifully made and decorated with painted animals and flowers. They have since been passed down through generations of the family and are still intact. Father also made a model fishing boat for my brother which looked just like the boats we so often travelled on between the islands.

During father's stay in prison, my mother, Ingrid, and other wives visited their husbands to bring fresh clothes and food although I don't know whether or not they were allowed to talk with their husbands. The wives packed their bags and skied from Svolvær to Kabelvåg, returning physically and mentally exhausted from the hard-going through the snow and the worry about what the future would bring. Food was, of course, rationed. Vegetables were of the very basic root variety, so fish and potatoes were our staple diet. Bread was of a very poor standard, like dark wet dough, often containing pieces of shell and sand. There was very little butter or margarine and we used melted down whale fat which had a terrible smell. We were told that our supplies of fish would compensate for the dreadful bread, but we heard that bread in the capital, Oslo, was far

superior to ours!



Jorid, 3rd from the left standing at the back at a Swedish-run food kitchen for Norwegian school-children during the war.

Transport between Svolvær and Kabelvåg was difficult but on one occasion my mother took me and my siblings by bus to see our father in the prison. We were allowed to stand outside the prison where it had been arranged for my father to appear at a third-floor barred window some distance away, so we got the chance to see each other and wave. That was good but also very sad, especially for my father. We all wondered when he would come home again so we could talk to him. On reflection, this event could not have taken place without meticulous arrangement between the prison and my mother.

On the whole, as far as I know, the prisoners were treated well, but on one occasion my father was taken to visit a dentist which turned out to be an act of subterfuge as it had been

secretly arranged that my mother would visit him while he was there. When the prison guard found out, he was furious, attacked my father and gave him 'a good kicking'. Clearly this was one warder who did not share the sympathetic outlook of his colleagues. I am well aware though that the treatment received by my father was nothing in comparison to what happened to so many others.

In Kabelvåg the prisoners were waiting for a ship to arrive from the south of Norway with around 500 other teachers. The ship was to transport them up to the very north of Norway to a prison camp in Kirkenes in Finnmark. The expected ship was a cargo ship, not the familiar coastal boat run by the Hurtigruten company which plied the coast north and south and regularly stopped at Svolvær.

... And then, one day, the Kabelvåg prisoners were released and sent home. The reason for this in family memory is that a raging storm had made it impossible for boats to enter the harbour, but there are other theories too. Perhaps the Germans did not consider it worth the bother of picking up a few teachers from Kabelvåg on their way north, or perhaps the boat was already overloaded and could not accommodate any more prisoners.

I am not sure of the date that father and his colleagues were released but there was great happiness and relief, not just in the families but also on the part of everyone in the population who had wished them well. Father was home and stayed safe for the rest of the war, continuing to teach in Svolvær.

I know that schools in Oslo re-opened on 7th May, without the signing of the new contract, and Norwegian teachers returned to work. The actions took their toll though, and I recall two of my teachers in post-war Oslo (where I moved in 1947) having been physically and mentally damaged by their experiences in the Kirkenes prison camp. This showed in their behaviour in the classroom and in their personal lives too. But who can blame them after their ordeal?

Ten years ago, in 2009, I visited a Svolvær school friend,

then living in Kirkenes, who had become a teacher herself. She and her husband were our guides and showed us places where the imprisoned teachers had worked in 1942. At that time, I was still not fully aware of the hardships suffered by those teachers. It was only after my visit and reading a fascinating book, *Kirkenesferda 1942* (The Journey to Kirkenes 1942) that I really understood the nightmare that my father had escaped.



Jorid today at 90.

Photo credit: Ivan Weiss

This book, with contributions by one of my own teachers outlines, in amazing detail and drawings, the cruelty experienced by these brave people who refused to teach a fascist ideology.

My father remained a teacher for the rest of his working life. Following in his footsteps, I too became a teacher – teaching in a Primary School in the London Borough of Brent until my retirement.

## **Barbara Arbuthnott of Elverhøj**

*By Sir Richard Dales*

“Englishmen are objects of great wonderment to the Norwegians”. This may be no surprise to Anglo-Norse readers perhaps, but it was to Matthieu Williams who travelled through Norway with a knapsack in the 1850's. On the (then) steam ferry up Lake Løsna, he was told of 'an English lady who has a farm hereabouts, who rides bare-backed horses, and cuts her own timber in a silk gown'. Matthieu did not meet this lady and does not say anything more about her, but for many years I have presumed that she was Barbara Arbuthnott who made such an impression on Norwegians that her home is now a museum and

her life celebrated in a musical. *Lady Arbuthnott – Mistress of Elverhøj* will be performed next June for the 25th consecutive year as part of the Sunndal Festival. It is a tragic story which brings out the resilience, intelligence, compassion and sheer strength of character of an extraordinarily liberated Victorian woman.



Barbara Arbuthnott as a young woman

Barbara Arbuthnott (nee Douglas) was born in 1822 to wealthy Scottish parents; her mother was the daughter of an Edinburgh banker and her father an army general who as a colonel had been on Wellington's staff at Waterloo. She was well educated, having learned not only Latin and Greek but also French, German and even Hindi (picked up while accompanying her father on a posting to India). In 1846 she married James Allen. Sadly, he died of cholera after after less than

seven years of marriage leaving Barbara as a single mother of a five year-old. In 1855 she married again, this time to an army Captain. He was killed in the Crimea barely seven years later.

In 1865, now aged 43, she married the 44 year old Lt. Col. the Hon. William Arbuthnott, son of the 8th Viscount Arbuthnott. Barbara Douglas became the Hon Mrs Arbuthnott. The couple decided to spend their honeymoon in Norway, so in 1866 they went salmon fishing on the Driva River. In other words, the Arbuthnotts became "lakselorder", salmon lords, who were "objects of great wonderment" to the Norwegians because they fished by casting a fly instead of

dangling a baited hook. It had become fashionable in the middle of the nineteenth century for the wealthy British to travel to Norway for the hunting, shooting and fishing.

The Arbuthnotts, including James, Barbara's son by her first marriage who suffered from epilepsy, came to Norway in successive years. Like other salmon lords they decided to buy their own chalet or farm house instead of renting from the locals. (No 3-star hotels in Sunndalsøra in those days.) In the summer of 1868, while on their third salmon fishing season, they bought a smallholding in Sunndal called Elverhøj.



Elverhøj. Photo courtesy of Nordmøre Museum

Then tragedy struck again. That autumn, James had an epileptic fit and Barbara decided to take him by horse and trap to Christiania to get proper medical help. While they were going over the Dovrefjell James died. Barbara blamed her husband for James' death, accusing him of bringing on the seizure by having a quarrel with him. William and Barbara then had a big row and

decided to separate. William returned to Scotland, but agreed to pay his wife a maintenance allowance.

Barbara stayed behind in Sunndal and apparently never returned to Scotland. A wealthy woman, she stayed on the farm and employed Oluf Endresen, a traveller's guide from Horten who spoke English, to help her run the farm and to teach her Norwegian. Their relationship became the subject of much local gossip but in this case it was well founded; Oluf moved in with Barbara and co-hosted the lavish parties she gave for the local worthies. When Oluf died in 1879, she replaced him with the local school teacher, Lars Hoås.



A photograph of an older Barbara Arbuthnott. Courtesy of Nordmøre Museum

During her time at Elverhøj, she accommodated visiting British salmon fishers. She also played a full part in the life of the Sunndal community. As well as being a generous hostess, she was a great benefactress in an otherwise very poor community. She helped to improve local medical facilities. She joined the newly founded Sunndal Shooting Club (*Skytterlag*) and helped set it on a secure footing. They still have a competition named in her honour. She founded a local library. She also used some of

her money to build fishing and hunting lodges in the mountains, so that the increasing numbers of British visitors would have somewhere to stay. In an attempt to help improve farming standards locally she brought in from England a better stock of pigs and hens. She even wrote a manual in Norwegian on chicken farming.

In 1885 fate struck again; the Scottish bank which held her funds failed. Barbara lost all her money and was declared bankrupt. She had to sell first the farm and then the house to keep going. In 1892 she moved with her two servants to a very small house near Elverhøj, which was bought by a British salmon lord. (It is now in the Sunndal Bygdemuseum.) Three years later, a grateful community built a house for her called Einabu in the hamlet of Grøa. There she lived out her years on hand-outs from local people. She died of a stroke in 1904 aged 81. She is buried near her son in the churchyard at Løken (Løykja).

Barbara Arbuthnott is little known in Britain. But in Norway today she is remembered as Lady Arbuthnott, the uncrowned Queen of Sunndal, the "lakselady" who used her wealth to help the people of the Norwegian community into which she settled. At least two books have been written about her, NRK has made a TV documentary about her and since 1996 Stig Nielsen's musical at the Sunndal Festival has celebrated her life. The Sunndal Heritage Park at Leikvin, which sadly I have not visited, has a special section about Barbara Arbuthnott as well as on the history of salmon fishing. (It also has a rhododendron garden created in the 1890's by a British horticulturalist called Phillips.) Few British women are commemorated so actively in Norway. And the lady in the silk dress whom Matthieu Williams heard of must have been someone else because his visit to Norway was some years before Barbara Arbuthnott's. So who was she? Were there many liberated Victorian ladies living the rural life in remote parts of Norway?

## Disadvantaged young Londoners experience the trip of a lifetime to Oslo

*Ed. The Renaissance Foundation is a youth development charity that works in deprived inner London communities and supports young carers, school pupils at risk and young people with life-limiting but not critical conditions as they move from paediatric to adult care. The charity believes that every young person should have the opportunity to achieve their full potential and it runs a three year tailored outreach programme which aims to inspire and support disadvantaged youngsters to do this. The highlight of the programme for the most engaged young people in their third year is the Foundation's annual trip to Oslo to visit the Nobel Peace Prize ceremony. This year the Anglo-Norse Society donated a substantial grant towards this trip and below one of the participants, Grace, reports back on the trip.*

Despite a very early start to catch our flight, arriving in Oslo everyone was full of energy. We headed straight to the Nobel Peace Centre where we were given a guided tour. We learned about the history of Alfred Nobel and the significance of the prize in promoting peace around the world. This set the tone of the trip, and we all left feeling very inspired by the amazing people who've been awarded the honour.

The next day we were lucky enough to be invited to the Thief Hotel for *frokost*. The breakfast was amazing and we all loved the omelettes! One of the managers did a special talk for us about his job at the hotel and what it's like to work in the hospitality industry. He spoke about the importance of doing what you love.

That afternoon we headed to Equinor, one of the biggest companies in Norway. Their offices are amazing, like stacked boxes. We toured the building and met staff working there. They are one of the world's largest oil companies and are now working to develop renewable energies too.

Tuesday was the big day everyone had been looking forward to. It was the day of the Nobel Peace Prize Award

Ceremony. To get to be in the room where it happens was a bit surreal as I've seen it on the TV and there I was seeing it live for myself. The room was so colourful. Half the group had tickets in the main area. The other half had arguably the better deal. We were up on the media balcony and could still watch the ceremony. We could also eat the press food and watch the photographers and news crews at work!



Group photo taken at the Deputy Mayor's office in Oslo City Hall

That evening we joined Norwegian Youth Charity *Kirkens Bymjsion* to play an escape room. You are locked in a room and have to find and solve clues to escape. It was a fun way to get to know the Norwegians. I was surprised they could all speak English.

Wednesday began with the annual Nobel Forum. It was the first time I've been to a lecture. The person who won the 2011

Nobel Prize was the speaker. She talked about Yemen and was really passionate and emotional. She described how close her movement had been to securing peace in Yemen and what it's like living through war.

After the Forum we visited Chitra House. We had a special tour and then a Norwegian meal of fish soup which was really good. The guide joked that it was what Vikings ate! It was my favourite meal of the trip.

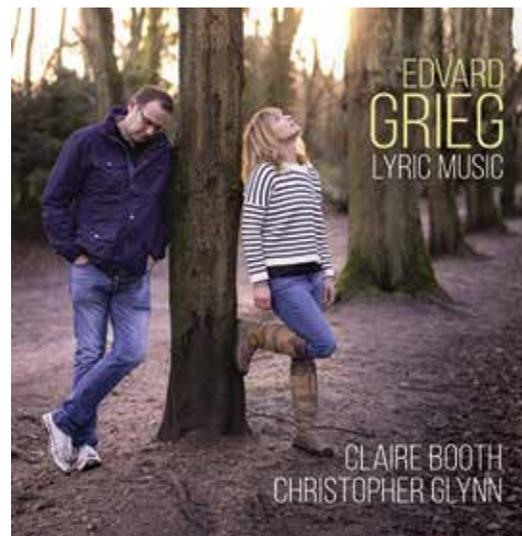
One of the highlights of the trip for me was the reception at the British Ambassador's house. Richard Wood, who is the Ambassador, put on a big event for us. Stein Erik Hegerberg spoke – he is the father of Ada Hegerberg, one of the best female footballers who plays for Norway. It was fun meeting the Norwegian pop stars Nico and Vinz there too.

On Thursday we toured City Hall and met the Deputy Mayor, Kamzy Gunaratnam. She was really inspiring and interesting. Following this we had a presentation on Green Oslo and heard how Oslo is the European Green Capital and doing lots of things to reduce emissions and tackle climate change.

I'm so grateful I got to go to Oslo with RF. Not many young people get to go to the Nobel Peace Prize or meet Ambassadors and Deputy Mayors. I want to apply to college next year and this will be great to put on my personal statement. I loved Oslo and didn't want to come home. I'd like to thank all the people who made it possible.

## Edvard Grieg Lyric Music

In the autumn of 2018 the singer Claire Booth applied for, and was awarded, an Anglo-Norse grant towards the production costs of a CD of Grieg's lyric music which finally came out in the autumn of 2019 to considerable critical acclaim. The *Guardian* wrote 'Booth and Glynn beautifully manage the contrasts between simplicity and immense



sophistication'. The CD intersperses intimate vocal miniatures with lyrical solo pieces played by Christopher Glynn, and the programme mirrors those performed by Grieg and his wife Nina on their many recital tours. The heart of the recital is Grieg's setting of Arne Garborg's haunting *Haugtussa* poems.

## The Spelling of Norwegian Place-Names

By Professor Emeritus Tom Schmidt

Most readers of the *Anglo-Norse Review* will be familiar with the present linguistic situation in Norway, with two written standards, *bokmål* and *nynorsk*. *Bokmål* is a Norwegianized version of Danish, while *nynorsk* is the result of Ivar Aasen's (1813–96) on the whole successful work from the 1850s of creating a new written language based upon the most 'genuine' living dialects.

When Norway during the 15th and 16th centuries lost its independence to Denmark Old Norse (ON) – or rather Middle Norwegian – gradually disappeared and was replaced by Danish as the only written language. During the 19th century, when the country was in a dynastic union with Sweden, literacy became general but Danish was still the only conceivable language, though it was often referred to as *Modersmaalet* (Mother tongue). With the translations of the sagas into Danish in the 1840s and a growing National Romantic Movement voices were raised for a

revision of the official spelling of the farm-names in the land register (*Matrikkelen*).

The demand for a more Norwegian spelling was strongly supported by the increasing number of farmers elected to be members of *Stortinget* (the Norwegian parliament). After the elections in 1833 *Stortinget* consisted of 45 farmers and only 35 officials and clergymen which resulted in the nick-name *Bondestortinget* (Farmers' parliament). In the previous storting the numbers were 21/43. *Stortinget* decided to revise the land register mainly, of course, to impose a more efficient and just land tax, but it also opened the way for a careful revision of the spelling of farm names. The official land register of 1838 represented a certain improvement, but in preparation for the next register, a commission was established in 1878 with the expressed mandate of giving the place-names a more Norwegian, modern and adequate spelling.

The commission was led by Oluf Rygh (1833-99),



*Oluf Rygh*

historian, archaeologist and philologist, who based his suggested name forms on spellings in medieval as well as more recent sources and – equally important – on information on the present day pronunciation of approx. 50.000 farm-names, as well as information on local topography. His expressed aim was to substantiate the revised spellings by the names' etymologies, presumed Old Norse forms and present day use.

The result of the commission's work is found

in the new *matrikkel* of 1886, and Rygh's notes and handwritten manuscript were deposited in the National Archives. In 1896 *Stortinget* proposed that the manuscript should be published, as 'the information is of interest to nearly every single farm in the country besides having great value for the study of our national language' – and money for publication was granted. The result is *Norske Gaardnavne* (Norwegian Farm-Names) in 18 volumes, one for each county, published between 1897 and 1924. Rygh's work created the basis for Norwegian name research and also inspired similar publications elsewhere in Scandinavia and even – it has been suggested – the publications of The English Place-Name Society.

Oluf Rygh died after only 3 ½ volumes were published, but the work was continued by other leading linguists, among them his assistant Albert Kjær and professor Magnus Olsen (Kjær's son-in-law), Oluf Rygh's brother Karl, the etymologist Hjalmar Falk and the dialectologist Amund B. Larsen. Rygh's written language was Danish and all commentaries in *NG* are in Danish, although he and his successors could not avoid using Norwegian words such as *fjell* and *bekk*. Such words were, however, spelled in a danicized way (*Fjeld, Bæk*). This, together with an old-fashioned syntax, makes *NG* rather inaccessible to many modern readers.

Between the first and second world war the focus was on revising the spelling of names on official maps and Norwegianizing names of counties, municipalities and cities (e.g. Smaalenenes Amt → Østfold, Søndre Bergenhus Amt → Hordaland, Kristians Amt → Oppland; Børseskognen → Skaun, Fane → Fana, Lister → Lista, Urskog → Aurskog; Kristiania → Oslo, Fredrikshald → Halden, Frederiksværn → Stavern, Trondhjem → Trondheim).

By the mid 1930's leading linguists and historians proposed a revision of Rygh's *Norske Gaardnavne*, but this was prevented by the war and the question was only raised again in 1949. *Norsk stadnamnarkiv* (Norwegian Place-Name Archives) initiated a project *Norske bustadnamn* (Norwegian Settlement

Names) which besides revising *NG* would include a large number of names of minor farms and crofts (which were not included in the *Matrikkel* and hence not treated by Rygh). By 1980 some 100.000 names had been recorded from 12 counties, but only for the county of Østfold, Oluf Rygh's Smaalenenes Amt, had a preliminary manuscript for the revised and enlarged version of *NG* been commenced. The archivist, subsequently professor, Kåre Hoel (1919–89) for several years travelled – on foot or on bicycle – through all parts of the county collecting pronunciations and topographic information and could by ca. 1955 start writing his life's work, *Bustadnavn i Østfold (BØ)* which after 30 years consisted of 7789 handwritten pages. After his death two of his colleagues, Margit Harsson and myself, decided to venture publication which between 1994 and to-day has resulted in 17 volumes, one for each municipality. Volume 18 is now ready for publication, and then only two volumes remain. The plan is to complete BØ for Østfold by 2023.

In BØ each name is supplied with a large number of written forms, Oluf Rygh's interpretation, Hoel's analysis and explanation supplemented with – in some cases – extensive commentaries by the publisher in which attention is also given to recent place-name research.

During the last few years university policy has downgraded this type of study and it is, unfortunately, highly improbable that the settlement names in the 17 remaining counties will ever be subjected to similar investigation.

## **Green luxury: the world's first energy-positive hotel**

*Edited by Tim Gilbert from a longer version of the article in the online journal the explorer.no from 25 November 2019.*

*Svart*, the first energy-positive hotel ever designed, is a breath-taking example of a building in harmony with its surrounding nature.

The hotel is situated at the end of the emerald-green Holandsfjord near the ice-blue Svartisen glacier, just above the

Arctic Circle. *Svart*, however, is much more than a hotel. It is an ambitious project involving innovative thinking, community-mindedness and green solutions, with the ocean as a red thread. *Svart* takes its name from the glacier. Although *svart* means black in modern Norwegian, it is the word both for black and blue in Old Norse. Thus, the name honours the hotel's cultural heritage as well as its natural surroundings.

## **How this energy-positive hotel came to be**

MIRIS – a sustainability-focused Norwegian real estate developer – is the owner and developer of the *Svart* project, which has been designed by the renowned architecture and design firm Snøhetta. Jan-Gunnar Mathisen, CEO of MIRIS, explains how he first became aware of the site:

“Three years ago, my wife and I decided to spend our summer in the north of Norway, although our 15 year old twin boys were not too happy. We took our old motorhome and went to visit family up north before we took the coastal road all the way down, boarding a lot of ferries along the way. After a while, my boys put their phones away and started to look out the window. They were speechless.

“The weather was quite bad that summer, but when we reached Svartisen it was completely clear. The climb takes around two hours. Sitting up there on the ice looking out over the emerald green water is truly something else.

“Three months later, a man visited Mathisen's office out of the blue, bringing ice cubes from Svartisen that he wanted to sell. I told him that ice cubes were not my thing, but then he told me that he owned a plot close to the glacier and that he was planning a hotel. Then it clicked and I bought the plot off him.

“MIRIS contacted Snøhetta, which has a number of landmark buildings to its name, including the brand-new underwater restaurant Under in Southern Norway. Snøhetta is the most inventive design partner we could possibly have. In the beginning, they were a bit sceptical as they want to make

sure that all planned projects will materialise. We had done our homework and told them how we wanted to do it, what our environmental ambitions were, where the travellers would arrive from and so forth,” says Mathisen.

Snøhetta then introduced Mathisen to the Powerhouse concept of an energy-positive building – a building that will produce more energy than would be used during its entire life cycle, from production of the building materials to construction, operation and demolition.

“It is an extreme vision, but I could tell that Snøhetta really wanted to be on board. ‘Let’s try this,’ I said, and got a lot of energy back. It has also really reflected on the project, and everyone wanted to be a part of it.

Jan-Gunnar Mathisen says that Svart will be the first building constructed in accordance with the energy-positive Powerhouse standard in an Arctic climate, as well as the world’s northernmost Powerhouse. Not only will the hotel consume about 85 per cent less energy per year than a modern hotel, it will also produce its own energy – which is critical in the vulnerable Arctic environment.

“Building in such a precious environment comes with some clear obligations in terms of preserving the natural beauty and the fauna and flora of the site. It was important for us to design a sustainable building that will leave a minimal environmental footprint on this beautiful northern nature,” says Kjetil Trædal Thorsen, founder and head of Snøhetta.

“Building an energy-positive and low-impact hotel is an essential factor in creating a sustainable tourist destination respecting the unique features of the plot; the rare plant species, the clean waters and the blue ice of Svartisen glacier.”

The design of the hotel is inspired by a *fiskehjell* (an A-frame wooden structure for drying fish) and a *rorbu* (a seasonal cabin used by fishermen). Like a *rorbu*, the hotel will be supported by wooden poles stretching several metres below the surface of the water. The construction will ensure a minimal footprint and give it an almost transparent appearance.

The body of *Svart* will be circular and extend from the base of the Almlifjell mountain into the Holandsfjord. When viewed from above, it will glow in the dark like a gold band. The circular shape will give tourists 360-degree views and the experience of living in proximity with nature.



What started out as a hotel is now turning into much more.

“There are so many other factors to include. We have a farm up there that will provide the hotel with local produce. We are also building some smaller cabins nearby. The area should not be restricted to people with big wallets and anyone is welcome to visit the hotel for a meal or to go paddling,” says Mathisen. MIRIS and Snøhetta will be collaborating extensively with local players, including wood suppliers.

“The community is incredibly positive: There are virtually no complaints, because we have involved them in the whole process,” he says. “They have so much to offer: You might be served an amazing meal on a windswept skerry. The local food and experience, this is what they excel at.”

There are plans to use electric ferries to shuttle the guests who arrive on the Hurtigruten cruise ship.

“The solar panels on the roof, possibly from the Norwegian company Glomfjord, will create an energy surplus that we can use to power the ferries from Ørnes, where the Hurtigruten cruise ship docks, to the hotel,” says Mathisen.



He adds that *Svart* may be joining forces with the Norwegian company Brim Explorer, whose silent hybrid-electric catamaran offers a unique tourist experience with underwater drones.

Another Norwegian company, Jets, will deliver the hotel’s innovative vacuum toilets, which will use 90 per cent less water and produce 90 per cent less sewage than traditional toilets.

Moreover, a nearby waterfall will be integrated into the hotel’s ecosystem. There will be facilities for marine research as well.

*Svart* is scheduled to open in Q4 2021, with construction starting in spring 2020. MIRIS and Snøhetta are currently working to make the building process as efficient and discreet as possible.

“We have created a vision: In five years *Svart* will go off-grid regarding water, sewage and electricity. We are currently looking for solutions that support this vision, this framework. We are setting a standard for the next generation of technology that we will use in future projects,” Mathisen concludes.

Rear cover image: Gate to St Olave’s Church, Hart Street, London, where the Anglo-Norse Society held its Carol Service on December 19th 2019, and where it holds its Carol Service on alternate years to the Norwegian Church in Rotherhithe.

It is not just the name that links the Church to Norway, for it was in this church that Haakon VIIIth worshipped during WWII while with his government in exile until part of it was bombed. When it was rebuilt and rededicated he laid a stone from Trondheim Cathedral (*Nidarosdomen*) in front of the Sanctuary.

The Church is also associated with Samuel Pepys, whose house and Royal Navy office were both on Seething Lane. A regular worshipper, he affectionately referred to St. Olave’s in his diary as ‘our own church’. In 1660, he had a gallery built on the south wall of the church and added an outside stairway from the Royal Navy Offices so that he could go to church without getting soaked by the rain. The gallery is now gone but a memorial to Pepys marks the location of the stairway’s door. In 1669, when his beloved wife Elisabeth died from fever, Pepys had a marble bust of her installed on the north wall of the sanctuary so that he would be able to see her from his pew at the services. In 1703, he was buried next to his wife in the nave.

