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The cover image is of Kunstsilo at night. Image courtesy of Kunstsilo. Photographer Alan Williams

Editorial

This issue of the *Review* is the usual mix of articles, though the Editor has tried to include a wider range of items, such as the story of Bodø Glimt Football Club, which has hit the headlines in recent years. There is also an article on the films of the Norwegian film director Joachim Trier whose film *Sentimental Value* won the Grand Prix (the Jury Prize) at the Cannes Film Festival in 2025. It is hoped that Peter will continue to be the *Review's* film critic.

I met John Quanrud at an Anglo-Norse meeting and was fascinated to learn that he combined an interest in Anglo-Saxon and Viking Studies with a knowledge of Albanian and had brought the two together in a study of a possible link between the Albanians and the Scandinavians in the eleventh century. It was too good an opportunity to miss, hence the article in this issue.

I was in Norway in April, specifically to visit the new Kunstsilo Museum in Kristiansand, and it did not disappoint. The conversion itself is fascinating but I am not an expert in modern art, so there is plenty of room for someone else to write an article on it for this magazine.

I have continued my intention of including profiles of members of the Council of the Anglo-Norse Society and I think the profile of Solveig Nepstad shows just how fascinating the lives and careers of our Council Members are.

Our Tromsø University Scholarship-holder, Alice Myers writes vividly of her year there, but as I did not know about the 75th anniversary of the restoration of St Olave's Hart Street after its bombing in World War II, the short article on it comes rather late in this issue.

Finally there is a short section on recent Norwegian literature in translation and an important notice on page 31 about the search for a new Editor as the July 2027 issue will be the last one I edit.

Kristiansand Kunstsilo

By Marie Wells

Kunstsilo in Kristiansand is the latest cultural attraction in a country that can already boast of being in the première league where cultural attractions are concerned. Opened in 2024 the building itself is a converted corn silo, originally built in 1935 and in 2025 after conversion it won the

prestigious Prix Versailles for The World's Most Beautiful Museum.

The museum houses the collection of Nicolai Tangen who was the successful investment-fund manager of AKO Capital in London before he moved back to Norway in 2020 to become CEO of Norges Bank Investment Management, which manages the Norwegian Sovereign Wealth Fund. He had been collecting art since 1995 and in 2015 donated his entire collection, which at that point consisted of 1,000 works to Kristiansand, the town where he was born. By 2026 it consisted of 6,500 works. He had already

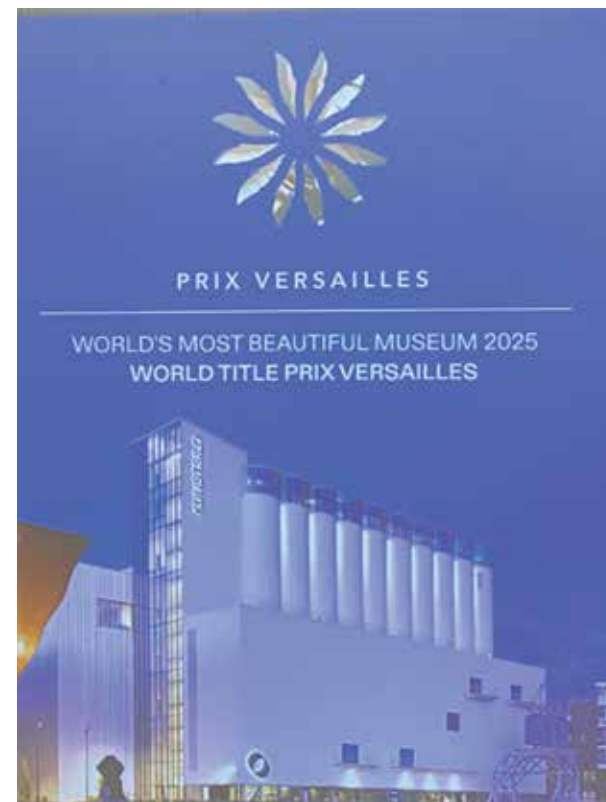


Photo by the author of a film projected onto one of the inside walls

decided to concentrate on Scandinavian Modernism, and then came the question of where to house it. At first he thought of Sørlandets kunstmuseum in Kristiansand, but it was not big enough. That is when the Mayor and the eminent physician Jan Vincents Johannessen came up with the idea of

amalgamating the collections and moving the whole gallery to the Silo and creating the best museum in Scandinavia. Tangen says people laughed, but then when the New York Times wrote in 2025 that it was one of the 50 most important places in the world to visit, people stopped laughing.

The collection is the largest collection of Nordic Modernism in the world. The author finds the image in Fig.1 by the Swedish artist Gösta Adrian-Nilsson, who was influenced by German Expressionism, a particularly vivid example of one branch of the genre.



Figure 1. Gösta Adrian-Nilsson, *Express Train*, 1915. The Tangen Collection, Reproduced by courtesy of Kunstsilo

The Tangen Collection was significantly enhanced when Nicolai Tangen (via the AKO Foundation which he had set up) acquired 333 major works from the Canica Art Collection, amassed by fellow Norwegian billionaire Stein Erik Hagen.

Many well-known Norwegian artists, such as Per Krogh, Axel Revold and Aage Storstein are represented, but Aage Storstein is one of the few Norwegian artists who was most influenced by Cubism. As the information on the wall beside the painting of *De forlovede* states, 'he developed his ideas in notebooks and sketchbooks before transferring them to canvas. If the original



Figure 2 Aage Storstein, *De forlovede*, 1930. Photo by the author

idea was lost along the way, he would scrape off the paint, prime the canvas and start again. While working on *De forlovede* (*The engaged couple*) he repeated this process seven times before finally succeeding in bringing the idea to fruition.'

During WWI Copenhagen had been the centre of Nordic Modernism but after the war Paris again became the centre of the avant-garde art world and one of the students to come under the influence of the avant-garde painter Fernand Léger was Ragnhild Keyser. She spent several periods in Paris and developed her own

expression in the direction of abstraction 'with precisely defined geometric formal elements often composed in a vertical format', according to the information on the wall next to her painting entitled *Composition with a Female Profile*.



Other artists who were new to the author are Rudolph Thygesen (1880-1953) and Marius Martinussen, (1978-). Thygesen whose paintings went through several stylistic changes had travelled in Germany and Italy, but also spent much time in Paris, at first influenced by Matisse and later by André Lhote, though his *Brodermord/ Fratricide* (Figure 4) shows elements of Cubism.

Figure 3. Ragnhild Keyser *Komposisjon med kvinneprofil* 1925-1926. The Tangen Collection, previously part of the Canica Art Collection. Photo by the author.



Figure 4. *Fratricide* 1919, by Rudolph Thygesen, The Tangen Collection, but formerly part of the Canica Art Collection. Photo by the author.

Silo also puts on temporary exhibitions and when I was there in April there was an exhibition of the patrons who had supported Edvard Munch: people such as the ophthalmologist and art collector, Dr Max Linde, who with Ernest Thiel, the Swedish banker, were Munch's most important patrons during the early 1900s. There were also portraits of Munch's close friend, Christian Gierløff, the town planner, economist and writer and the imperious German industrialist Walther Rathenau (see the back cover).

An unusual painting in the context of patrons is the portrait of Sultan Abdul Kareem, who was the only person of African heritage Munch painted. He had visited Kristiania as part of the German Hagenbeck Circus in 1916, after which Munch employed him as a servant, driver and model, and as the text on the wall next to the image states 'thereby reinforcing stereotypical and racial notions of Africans at the time.'



Figure 5. Sultan Abdul Kareem by Edvard Munch, 1916, Munch Museet. Photo by the author.

Oslo as thematic Stage in the Films of Joachim Trier

By Peter Aurdal-Lawrence

Joachim Trier's films are firmly anchored in their depiction of Oslo. Of six films to date, only *Louder than Bombs* (2015) is set elsewhere. The link to Oslo is made explicit for *Reprise* (2006), *Oslo, 31st August* (2011) and *The Worst Person in the World* (2021), marketed as the 'Oslo Trilogy.'

The opportunity this locational commonality affords Trier to depict peoples' lives in the city's parks, bookstores and coffee shops amongst instantly recognisable landmarks offers no surprise. An interview between Trier, his longstanding scriptwriter, Eskil Vogt and Bjarte Breiteig at the release of *Oslo, 31st August* highlights the considerable thought that went into selecting specific streets and neighbourhoods for filming. Vogt commented, 'We think of the film as a document of today's Oslo.'

What is of greater interest is how the depiction and Trier's 'use' of the city has developed in his filmography, allowing for a deeper focus on the interior worlds of his protagonists. In his most recent film, the Oscar-winning *Sentimental Value* (2025), a narrower focus on three specific locations enables them to embody the film's key thematics, a highly original cinematic



Figure 1. Opening shot of *Oslo, 31st August* (Motlys 2011).

treatment.

The opening shot of three films set Oslo as filmic backdrop, yet to different purpose. (See Figure 1) *Oslo, 31st August* opens with a series of historic and rather unflattering shots of the city from the 1960's onwards, with voiceovers from multiple invisible actors relating their first impressions of the city at that time. Oslo is presented as a communal space, initially depersonalised (the first images are devoid of people), then gradually populated. The initial scene ends with a large crowd assembled to watch the demolition of the iconic Philips building at Majorstuen in 2000. It is a concise time-capsule-as-time-lapse that underscores Trier's preoccupation with transformation.



Fig. 2: Opening shot of *Worst Person in the World* (*Verdens verste menneske*, Oslo Pictures, 2021)

The opening shot of *Worst Person in the World* marks a complete contrast. The protagonist, Julie (Reinarte Reinsve), is depicted alone, elegantly dressed at an Ekeberg party. It is an iconic shot of a regenerated city bathed in a late summer sun. Julie remains the focus throughout the film and as the plot unfolds, she is presented as a typical Millennial Oslo inhabitant, financially comfortable, but independent, rootless and self-preoccupied: the most memorable line in the film is Julie telling her soon-to-be-ex partner, Aksel 'Yes, I do love you. But I don't love you.' Trier elegantly depicts emotional transience in contemporary urban life: social criticism is absent and the film's



Fig. 3: Opening shot of *Sentimental Value* (*Affeksjonsverdi*, Mer Film, 2025)

persistent humour accounts for its commercial success.

The opening shot of *Sentimental Value* bears similarities to that of *Worst Person* but demonstrates greater subtlety and ambiguity. Firstly, the setting is recognisable, but the image not iconic. *Regjeringskvartalet* (the government district) is only alluded to by the cranes above the trees masking the ongoing rebuild post the 22nd July 2011 terror attack. The camera then slowly pans west to *Vår Frelses Gravlund*, the cemetery in central Oslo. This short sequence thereby almost imperceptibly introduces the thematics of death, family history and brutality which run as intertwined leitmotifs through the film.

The film then immediately narrows its visual horizon. Multiple images in the previous films of Oslo's streets/districts/recognisable landmarks such as the opera house are replaced by a focus on the Frogner *sveitservilla* in which the plot predominantly unfolds. The house itself becomes a voice in the film, it is anthropomorphised, a physical anchor that comments on its inhabitants, their lives and the generations of family predecessors who lived in the house since the time they constructed it. In an interview, Trier describes it as a 'soulful, worn, imperfect house in the middle of a bourgeois, fancy neighbourhood. That's kind of how the family is – artistic and prestigious from the outside but wounded about certain things.' The literal crack in the house's foundation mirrors the strained interaction between its inhabitants, highlighting how unresolved pain, memories, and



Fig. 4: The Frogner villa, *Sentimental Value*. (Mer Film 2025)

unspoken traumas are passed down through generations. These thematics scrutinized within the confines of the family home are amplified through their separate depiction at two locations in Oslo:

1) *Riksarkivet*

Gustav's younger daughter, Agnes (Inga Ibsdotter Lilleaas), visits the National Archive on the outskirts of Oslo to research documents relating



Fig 5: At Riksarkivet, *Sentimental Value* (Mer Film 2025)

to the torture of her grandmother/Gustav's mother by the Nazis for her participation in the resistance movement during WWII. Her intention is in part to reach a better understanding of why her grandmother subsequently committed suicide in the family villa. Prior to her entering the Archive, there is a remarkably long introductory scene depicting the archiving process itself within the vaults of the building. This reflects Trier's preoccupation with memory and how memory resides in place: in the context of the scene at *Riksarkivet* this is both formalised and institutionalised, whereas in the villa it is captured through family photographs, the house's contents and clear repetitions of behaviour through the generations (the humorous scenes where different generations eavesdrop on their family by listening through the pipes of the iron stove).

2) *Nasjonalteatret*:

Gustav's elder daughter Nora (Renate Reinsve), an actress, is depicted at the National Theatre in the first scene of the film, refusing to perform because of stage fright. Later in the film we witness her triumphant first night and adulation at the post-performance reception. The thematics of rehearsal, performative art, the disconnect between reality and artifice, and



Fig. 6: On stage at *Nasjonalteatret*, *Sentimental Value* (Mer Film 2025).

difficulty of self-expression find in the theatre scenes a broader and more public stage than in the confines of the family home.

Trier's films are specific, psychological portraits of individuals, whether standing largely alone as in the Oslo trilogy, or in the 'polyphonic homogeneity' (Trier's description) of a dysfunctional family unit, as depicted in *Sentimental Value*. They are simultaneously universal reflections on the significance and meanings of words and language, of imagery and filmic language, the interrelatedness of home, city and fictional space.

These meditations on the human condition are anchored by Trier's deft



Fig. 7: Art mirrors life, *Sentimental Value* (Mer Film 2025)

framing through both broad and increasingly specific images of Oslo: they not only capture a sense of place and of zeitgeist but allow the city to function as a frame for consciousness.

FC BODØ GLIMT

By Wiktor Mølleskog

FC Bodø Glimt was founded 19th September 1916.

At that time Bodø was only a small Norwegian village just north of the Arctic Circle with a population of 3,000. It was founded under the name Football Club Glimt.

In those years no club north of Trondheim was allowed to play in the Norwegian top division as the Norwegian FA did not believe that any club in the north of Norway had the financial strength or players talented enough

to do so. During the early years FC Glimt won the now defunct Northern Norwegian Cup 9 times.

In 1948 the club changed its name to FC Bodø Glimt because there was another older football club in the county of Trøndelag with the name FC Glimt.

Teams from Northern Norway were not allowed to compete in the Norwegian FA Cup before 1963 and it was not until 1972 that teams from northern Norway had the right to gain promotion to the Norwegian top division. Bodø Glimt did not gain promotion to the Norwegian top division until 1976. But in 1975 it was the first club from Northern Norway to win the Norwegian FA cup!

No Norwegian football clubs have had such a close relationship as FC Rosenborg (from Trondheim) and Bodø Glimt. FC Bodø Glimt has been a feeder club to Rosenborg and about 20 Bodø Glimt players have transferred across to Rosenborg. This was especially true in the sixties and seventies, the



The old grass mat stadium. Photo provided by Wiktor Mølleskog

glory years of Rosenborg.

Bodø Glimt's old stadium was only a grass mat, no seats, standing only if you did not bring your own chair and very poor facilities for visiting teams. In the winter months this grass mat was used as a speed skating rink. It was not until 1966 when the Aspmyra Stadium was completed that Bodø

Glimt got a proper home.

One of the best known Bodø Glimt players is Harald Johan Berg, born Bodø 9 November 1941. Harald 'Dutte' Berg got the nickname 'Dutte' because he was quite short, but what he lacked in size he made up for in football knowledge and technical ability. He was a significant player for Bodø Glimt in the late fifties and early sixties, but as I have already mentioned Bodø Glimt being from a town north of Trondheim was not allowed to play in the Norwegian elite division. To develop to his full potential Harald Berg had to go to the south of Norway and he and his brother Knut, also a Bodø Glimt player, transferred to FC Lyn Oslo. With FC Lyn they won the Norwegian top division in 1968 and the Norwegian Cup in 1967 and 1968. In 1969 Harald Berg transferred to FC Den Haag, and stayed with them until 1974. During his 5 year stint there FC Den Haag consistently challenged for the 3 top spots in the Dutch *Eredivisie*, the Dutch top division. He went back to his mother club, Bodø Glimt in 1974 and retired from his playing career after the 1981 season at the age of 40. In 1983, he briefly came back as Manager of the team.

During his last stint with Bodø Glimt he had a Diego Armando Maradona role on the pitch, and his decisive contribution as a playmaker made Bodø Glimt a top Norwegian club in the mid seventies. Harald Dutte Berg also fathered a football dynasty. His sons Ørjan, Runar and Arild, his grandson Patrick and his brother Knut all played football for Bodø Glimt.

1980 until 2016 were difficult years for Bodø Glimt with problems both financial and on the field and with relegation one year and promotion the next. In 2016 Kjetil Knutsen was hired as assistant coach and Bodø Glimt won the top division by a margin of 16 points. Ahead of the 2018 season he was named head coach, and with him as coach since 2019 Bodø Glimt has made its mark in European competitions. Bodø Glimt has just started construction of a new stadium.

Achievements

In the early years Bodø Glimt won the Northern Norwegian Cup 9 times. In recent times Bodø Glimt has won the Norwegian cup 3 times: in 1975 - the first time a team from the North of Norway won the Norwegian cup, - 1993 and 2025-26.

Bodø Glimt has also won the Norwegian top division, Eliteserien 4 times, 2020, 2021, 2023, 2024.



An artist's impression of what the new arena, to be called the Arctic Arena, will look like. (Design: Nordic Office of Architecture, engineering by Arup)

Harald Hardrada's Long Way Home

By John Quanrud

In the summer of 2030, Norway will mark the thousandth anniversary of the battle of Stiklestad. King Olav II fell on the field, and in falling became Norway's patron saint. His fifteen-year-old half-brother, Haraldr Sigurðarson (better known to English-speakers as Harald Hardrada), escaped wounded into Swedish lands, and began a career that would end thirty-six years later at Stamford Bridge.

From Sweden, Harald made his way south to Kiev, to the court of Grand Prince Yaroslav. There he heard talk of the Varangian Guard: the Byzantine emperor's own bodyguard of axe-wielding northmen. He gathered five hundred Scandinavian warriors and set out down the rivers toward Constantinople.

He was about nineteen when he arrived. Nearly a decade in imperial service showed him one of the world's richest courts, and made him rich.

Above all, he served under one of the great commanders of the age: General George Maniakes.

In 1038 the emperor sent Maniakes to take Sicily back from its Arab



Figure 1. Varangian guardsmen (bearing axes) in Byzantine service. Miniature from the Madrid Skylitzes, a twelfth-century illuminated manuscript. [Source: Wikimedia Commons.]

rulers. He drew his force from across the empire and beyond: Normans and Lombards from southern Italy, the seasoned Varangians of the guard, Harald and his Scandinavians among them. And Albanians, highlanders from the mountains behind Dyrrachium on the Adriatic coast who had served the empire long enough to count as full allies, sharing with the Byzantines in their rights and religion.

For two years the fighting was hard. By 1040, Maniakes held most of the island's eastern coast. At Syracuse they recovered the body of St Lucy (the Lucia whose feast the north still keeps on the thirteenth of December) and sent her relics to Constantinople. Then they broke the Arab forces on the plains west of Mount Etna. Sicily lay open.

Here Maniakes was destroyed by a lie. His admiral of the fleet, the emperor's own brother-in-law, accused him of plotting to seize the throne. He was arrested and shipped back to Constantinople in chains. The conquest soon collapsed.

Harald was summoned to the Balkans, where the ailing emperor



Figure 2. Maniakes is brought captive to Constantinople. Miniature from the Madrid Skylitzes. [Source: Wikimedia Commons.]

needed his Varangians against a Bulgarian uprising. He fought well, the rebel leader was beaten, and just before the emperor died in late 1041, he made Harald a *spatharokandidatos*, a high honour for a foreigner.

Then the throne in Constantinople changed hands. Maniakes was freed and sent back to southern Italy to put down a Norman-Lombard uprising. But, within months, it changed hands again and the new emperor moved to arrest him a second time. This time the great general refused, killed the envoys sent for him, and rebelled. He sailed for Dyrrachium (modern Durrës, on the Albanian coast), and from there his army marched east on the Via Egnatia, the old Roman road across the Balkans to Constantinople. At the battle of Ostrovo, in 1043, with the throne all but won, an arrow found him. His army scattered.

Where did they go? (See Figure 3 on the next page)

The imperial army had come from the east; the rebels from the west, from Dyrrachium. The road home, the only one not held by the emperor's forces, ran back west, toward the Albanian coast. Some surrendered. A Byzantine writer of the time recorded that others 'got away to their native countries without attracting the enemy's attention'. For the Albanians, that country was close: a short march west. For the Scandinavians, it was a thousand miles off and more, with an imperial army between them and the Black Sea. Yet northmen were no strangers to the Adriatic coast. A century before Maniakes, an emperor's record of a seaborne expedition shows



Figure 3 . Dyrrachium and Ostrovo on the Via Egnatia. Maniakes marched east to the battle of 1043; the same road was the survivors' way back west. Base map: 'The Byzantine Empire at the death of Basil II (1025)' by Nécropotame and Cplakidas, Wikimedia Commons, CC BY-SA 2.5, heavily adapted by the author. Source: commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Map_Byzantine_Empire_1025-en.svg. Licence: creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.5/.

Scandinavians (Rus) garrisoned at Dyrrachium, more than six hundred sailing with the fleet.

For half a century after Ostrovo, an enigmatic unit bearing Maniakes' name kept surfacing in Byzantine sources. It appears in a civil war in 1078 and again in the 1090s, still named for a man whose severed head an emperor had paraded through Constantinople. In 1078 it fought under a commander who had once governed Dyrrachium. That they kept his name for two generations, and kept it by that coast, invites a second look. One writer called them the Maniakatoi Latinoi, the reference to Latins leading some to assume they were Normans. But the Normans had refused Maniakes to a man, as their own historians boasted. The sources closest to the rebellion name only Albanians and Varangians, with Byzantine recruits, fighting for him at Ostrovo.

If that reading holds, some of these Scandinavians may never have gone home. They may have turned west into the highlands with their Albanian comrades to escape the emperor's forces, and stayed to build a life there.

Harald did go home. Though his part in the rebellion is unclear, the sagas tell that he slipped out of Constantinople, sailed north in ships filled with treasure, married the Kievan princess long promised him, and soon after won Norway's crown. On 25 September 1066 Harald Hardrada died at Stamford Bridge with an English arrow in his throat. Three weeks later, at Hastings, Norman cavalry broke the English line. That autumn the Viking age ended in England.

But perhaps not all of it. What happened in England was written



Figure 4. The battle of Stamford Bridge, from Matthew Paris, The Life of King Edward the Confessor. Thirteenth century. [Source: Wikimedia Commons.]

down, as were Harald's Byzantine years and the rest of his story, sung by his skalds and told by his men, and in time set into the sagas. What may have happened in Albania was not: the men who stayed there left no skald and no saga. Johann Georg von Hahn, the Austrian consul who founded Albanian studies, came upon it in 1850 and never let it go: the old unwritten law of the Albanian highlands, the Kanun, closely echoed the old law of the Germanic

peoples. Certain the likeness was no accident, he challenged future scholars to find its cause. Few took up the question, and none thought to look north.

But the north was not as far as it looked. The empire had a way of throwing the two peoples together: garrisoned on the same coast already a lifetime before Maniakes, comrades in his Sicilian army, side by side in the rebellion that killed him. Whether any of that ran deep enough to leave a mark, von Hahn had no way to test. The bones of the dead and the blood of the living can now be read. No one has yet read them with these men in mind. None of it is proof; all of it is, at last, testable. The answer, when it comes, may be that some of Maniakes' Scandinavians never went home at all, that their descendants are in those mountains still and have never known it. Harald's road led home, and into the sagas. Theirs led into the highlands, and out of the record.

The author's case is set out in full in two scholarly articles: one on the identity of the Albanoi, online in *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* (2021) at <https://doi.org/10.1017/byz.2021.11>; the other on the Maniakatoi Latinoi and the fate of Maniakes' men, in the print volume *Albanische Forschungen* 50 (Harrassowitz, 2024), listed at harrassowitz-verlag.de/title_7414.ahtml.

Profile of Solveig Nepstad, Anglo-Norse Society Vice Chairman

By Solveig Nepstad

My story began in Lagunillas on Lake Maracaibo in 1967. My father, Bjarne Nepstad, had been born and raised in Salhus near Bergen, then served in the Merchant Navy during the World War II and was part of the many convoys across the Atlantic. After the war, he settled in Venezuela working for Gulf Oil where he met his future wife, Lorraine, a British teacher with Shell Oil. My brother and I were both born there.

In 1973, my father received an offer to help start an oil rig supply business in Bergen and we moved there for six years. I went to St Paul's Skole and learnt Norwegian with a distinctly Bergen accent which I still have to this day!

In need of sunshine, my father answered a call from the Gulf of



Solveig's parents' wedding in 1967



Solveig at the Oleana factory

Mexico, so we then moved to Mexico City, where my love of the Spanish language and all things Latin American blossomed. This led me to study Latin American and Hispanic Studies at Bristol University.

After a number of years at LWT selling British TV shows into the Latin American market, I followed my passion for interior architecture and took a second degree in Interior and Spatial Design at Chelsea College. Since then, I have worked as an Interior Designer on both commercial and residential projects in the UK and Spain, while maintaining a strong interest in Scandinavian Design. From 2019 -2023 I was also the UK representative for

the Norwegian fashion brand Oleana, who make exquisite wool/silk knitwear in a factory in Ytre Arna (well worth a visit!). More recently, I have been working to arrange tours for Norwegian design students to learn more about the London design scene.

Even though I have been settled in England since the '90s, I still consider myself first and foremost Norwegian. We spent summers with our two children, Amber and Hunter, at my parents' summerhouse near Salhus. Our children are both Norwegian citizens and Hunter has played for the Norwegian Rugby team.

A couple of years ago, I wrote and



Solveig enjoying being at the Sanderson Design Showroom

illustrated a children's book about a surprisingly small Norwegian troll, named Odd (as yet unpublished). Through words and pictures, I could bring some of my precious memories of Norway to life, such as walking in the mountains, swimming in the fjords and picking cloudberries in the summer.

It is an honour to serve on the Council of the Anglo-Norse Society and to continue celebrating the culture of both countries that have shaped so much of who I am.

First Year Report of University of Tromsø Scholarship-Holder 2025-2026

By Alice Myers

This year at the University of Tromsø was centred on studying marine and cold-adapted biotechnology, a field that is specialised in northern Norway. My work focused on proteins and enzymes adapted to function in extreme environments and in particular low temperature, for applications in industry and diagnostics. Researching in Tromsø has been a fantastic experience with the friendly tight-knit research group supporting my academic growth, and I leave with a more developed scientific skillset.

The daily commute to and from the lab was a reminder of how different northern Norway is to anywhere I have lived before, crossing



Alice's route to her lab.

snowy streets with a dramatic mountain backdrop was extraordinary. It is hard to believe that to some Norwegians it is ordinary to see northern lights appearing on the way back from the supermarket.

I was lucky enough to share my experience with several visits from my family. One memorable experience was encountering a herd of reindeer while walking around neighbouring island Kvaløya with my sister and cousin. Of course this was exciting for us all but became more eye opening as the reindeer farmer approached and asked for a helping hand with one of his reindeer which had unfortunately been involved in a traffic accident. I was able to communicate with the farmer

using the basic Norwegian I have learnt. He described the effects of climate change and the growing impact of tourism in the region, highlighting both the opportunities tourism provides for cultural exchange and the pressures created by overtourism. The conversation served as a reminder of both the resilience and fragility of life in the Arctic.

Celebrating my first 17. Mai was another memorable occasion. It was exciting to see Tromsø transformed by parades, *bunads*, ice cream, and Norwegian flags. It offered a fascinating insight into Norwegian culture and national identity, with an atmosphere of celebration and community. Travel to nearby regions such as Lofoten in early June further deepened my appreciation of the region. Here the landscape is spectacular with steep mountains, sea and scattered little fishing villages and *rorbuer* (traditional red fishing houses) lining the coast. Lit at all hours by the sun it is a truly magical experience, one of my most cherished memories is of a quiet beach with glowing midnight sun and crystal clear waters. Another highlight was hiking up Reinebringen, emerging above the clouds with views of the mountain peaks was unlike anything I have seen before.

Looking back, what I value most is the combination of academic and



Rorbuer in the Lofoten islands. Photo by Alice Myers

for which I remain extremely grateful. Thank you to the Anglo-Norse Society for the support.

personal experiences it offered. The opportunity to study marine biotechnology in an Arctic environment was academically rewarding, but the year was equally shaped by learning a new language, travelling through northern Norway, and gaining a better understanding of the people and cultures of the region.

The links between Britain and Norway are not simply historical, but continue to be strengthened through education, research, and personal connections. This year in Tromsø allowed me to experience those connections firsthand, and it is an experience

St Olave's Hart Street, London

Compiled by the Editor from material supplied by Sam Everington.

On 21st June this year St Olave's celebrated the 75th anniversary of its restoration after it was bombed in World War II. Representatives from the Norwegian Embassy, the Diocese of London, the Norwegian Church in Rotherhithe and Nidarosdomens Guttekor – the boys choir of

Nidaros Cathedral in Trondheim, all attended a special service of Holy Communion.

St Olave's was founded in 1050 and dedicated to a Viking warrior who became King and then Patron Saint of Norway. It miraculously survived the Great Fire of London and Samuel Pepys worshipped there and had a gallery built, which joined the naval offices where he worked to the church so he could attend without getting wet. When he died in 1703 he was buried there.

During World War II King Haakon VII of Norway who was in exile in the UK sometimes worshipped there until it was totally destroyed by German bombing. In 1951 he laid the foundation stone for



Crown Prince Olav visiting the destroyed Church of St Olave's during World War II

its restoration, and in 1954 it was rededicated in his presence.



All that was left of St Olave's after the German bombing was the arches!

The 75th anniversary of its restoration was a festive occasion and after the service there was a party in the grounds.

St Olave's has a full programme of cultural events throughout the year and the Anglo-Norse's Christmas service is held alternately at Rotherhithe and Hart Street



The commemoration stone laid by King Haakon VII of Norway in 1951

Some Suggestions for Summer Reading

By the Editor

There is a new Vigdis Hjorth novel for those who enjoy her writing. According to the advertising, *Repetition* brilliantly captures the tension between wanting to remember the past and wanting to forget it, and it deals with the psychology of repression. When the mother discovers the narrator's diary, it exposes a hidden, unspoken trauma that shatters the family dynamic.

For those who have followed Åsne Seierstad there is *The Afghans*, which originally came out in 2024. It is a compelling, intimate and thought-provoking novel which introduces us to three people whose lives have been shaped by the fall and rise of the Taliban - Jamila, Bashir and Ariana - as well as their families, friends, foes and co-fighters. Jamila is a women's rights activist; Bashir is a Taliban commander; Ariana is a law student who had one semester left when the Taliban came to power.

In May this year *The Night of the Scourge*, the final volume of Lars Mytting's *The Sister Bells Trilogy* was published in paperback. The trilogy is an epic historical saga blending Norse folklore, mythology, and generational drama. It spans three generations, revolving around two mythic church bells forged in memory of conjoined twins, and an ancient tapestry foretelling Ragnarök or the night of the scourge.

For those who can't wait for another thriller by Jo Nesbø there is *Wolf Hour*, in which a suspended Minneapolis detective, Bob Oz, investigates a string of murders after a small-time crook is shot by a mysterious sniper. Grappling with personal grief and alcoholism, Oz realizes he shares disturbing similarities with the elusive killer.

But there are other Norwegian thrillers too, e.g. Ørjan Karlsson's *Into the Dark*. When a mutilated body rises from the icy waters off the jetty in Kjerringøy, it shocks the quiet coastal village. Not long after, a young woman is found dead in a drab Bodø apartment. Is it suicide or something far more sinister. Detective Jakob Weber and former national investigator Noora Yun Sande are drawn into both cases. As the investigation deepens, the clues grow more disturbing - and the wild, wintry landscape of north Norway closes in.

Jakob is certain of one thing: if they don't find the killer soon, he'll strike again.

My own personal choice would be *Stolen*, the English translation of a Swedish novel by Ann-Helén Laestadius, which came out in 2023, and gives a very convincing portrayal of the problems of growing up as a young Sami girl. Lest readers think I am betraying my support for Norwegian literature, let me say at once that I read Norwegian literature in the original, and for those who do read Norwegian easily I would recommend *The Sister Bells* trilogy in Norwegian.

But I would also recommend Ingeborg Arvola's *Sanger fra Ishavet* volume 1, *Kniven i ilden* and volume 2, *Vestersand*. Both volumes are set in the second half of the nineteenth century and follow the Finnish Brita Caisa Seipajærvi who in 1859 travelled on skis from Finland to Bugøynes i Finnmark with her two sons to find a husband and a new life.

As readers perhaps realise I am particularly interested in literature from northern Scandinavia so I am not ashamed to say that my final recommendation is the Norwegian translation of the Swedish novel *Koke bjørn* by Mikael Niemi. It tells the story of the new minister, Lars Levi Laestadius who comes to a parish in northern Sweden in 1852 and starts a conservative Lutheran revival there among the Sami. But he also finds, and adopts a little Sami boy, Jussi. When women in the village begin to disappear, only to be found dead, Lars Levi and Jussi start their own investigation in order to find the culprit, whom the *lensmann* (sheriff) mistakenly thinks is a bear. They think it is a far more dangerous enemy that they are tracking.

Important Notice

Our current editor is going to give up the editorship after the July 2027 issue, and the Society is looking for someone who is keen to take on this interesting, but voluntary job. The *Review* comes out twice a year (January and July), and previous issues may be seen on www.anglo-norse.org.uk, then click on *Review*.

A keen interest in the history, culture, national and local politics of Norway is essential. It would also be useful to have contacts in Norway.

Some familiarity with the desktop publishing package Adobe InDesign would also be an advantage, though training in this can be given.

If interested please get in touch with either our Chairman, Mr Paul Gobey: p.m.gobey@gmail.com. or the current editor Dr Marie Wells: marie.wells@btinternet.com



Walther Rathenau 1907 Oil on Canvas - Edvard Munch