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Anglo-Norse Review

HRH The Princess Royal laying a wreath at the memorial in Vestre Gravlund after visiting the graves of the Freshman Commandos. Photo credit: Erling Eikli

ANGLO-NORSE REVIEW

THE ANGLO-NORSE SOCIETY – LONDON

Patrons: **H.M. King Charles III** **H.M. King Harald V**

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Editorial

It seems that war still creeps into the pages of the *Review*, but this can be a cause for both celebration and lamentation - celebration in the case of Rolf Christophersen who did so much for the British war effort in World War II, and lamentation as in the case of Rolf Lyng Nissen, who along with 2,700 other Norwegians died in Sachsenhausen. Then there are those doing painstaking research to unearth the many acts of co-operation and collaboration between Norway and Britain during WWII, as revealed in Tony Insall's recent book, *Secret Alliances: Special Operations and Intelligence in Norway 1940-1945* from 2021. But believing that it is important to spread awareness of this he has set up the anglonorwegianresistancecommemorationproject.com. (which has to be the longest - but not necesarily the most imaginative title for a project)and has written about its launch in this issue.

To go from WWII to cow-leasing may seem like a descent to the frivolous, but in the Late Middle Ages leasing a cow could be the difference between surviving and not surviving, and I was very grateful to Professor Jørn Sunde for offering to write about this, as he is a very busy, and much sought-after man. I had translated the very positive review of his book *Kongen, Lova og Landet* for last July's issue of the *Review,* but had got a key element wrong, so was doubly grateful that, when approached, he offered to write a whole article on the topic.

I had some difficulty trying to find someone to write about Equinor: either they were too busy, or because of certain commitments they found the topic too sensitive, so after I had given up, I was very pleased when Martin Boon wrote saying he had found my e-mail to him in his spam folder and would be willing to write the article; he is the author of the second volume of a history of Equinor.

For me one of the great delights of 2024 was seeing the exhibition of Britta Marakatt-Labba's Sámi-inspired drawings and needlework, *Moving the Needle* at the National Museum. It was even worth the severe tummy bug I got on my second 3-day visit to Norway just to see the exhibition a second time!

The Visit of HRH the Princess Royal to Norway 20-22 May 2024

By Tony Insall

After the publication of my book *Secret Alliances*, describing Anglo-Norwegian resistance cooperation during the Second World War, I often received feedback from both Norwegian and British readers, particularly younger ones, saying that they had not realised the extent of what our two countries had achieved together during the war. So, after discussion with John Andrews, past chairman of the Special Forces Club, we decided to establish the Anglo-Norwegian Resistance Commemoration Project, which has the aim of increasing public awareness of this important chapter in our history. In 2023, HRH The Princess Royal, agreed to become our Patron.

Our project has several elements. They include the exchange of prominent speakers to give talks on themes linked to Anglo-Norwegian historical cooperation in this field. Sir Richard Moore, Chief of the Secret Intelligence Service (SIS), gave the first of these in Oslo in December 2023.

We were extremely fortunate that in her capacity as Patron, The Princess Royal agreed to make a visit to Norway, which gave a marvellous boost to what we are aiming to achieve. As some of you may know, organising a royal visit is no small undertaking. A suitable programme needs to be worked out and agreed, down to the last detail and minute, and there are issues of protocol, security and transport, as well as extensive briefing to be prepared on the places to be visited and the people who will be presented to the visitor. Fortunately, John and I were given plenty of assistance by willing colleagues and embassy staff in both Britain and Norway: the Norwegian Ambassador HE Tore Hattrem in particular gave us much valuable help. And The Princess Royal's personal staff were very efficient and helpful throughout. We wanted to arrange a visit which took her to some of the key sites, and also provided a chance for her to meet a range of people who had connections with the war, or unusual stories to tell her.

The trip started with a visit to the heavy water plant at Vemork, the site of the well-known Operation Gunnerside. The cellar which housed the equipment has been excavated and refurbished, with some interactive exhibits. It's well worth a visit. The Princess Royal met relatives of some of those who had participated and, together with Joachim Rønneberg's son

Erling, she laid flowers on the memorial stone outside. After lunch in the atmospheric restaurant in the Rjukan Fjellstue, where the saboteurs used to meet after the war, she went to Mæl station on Lake Tinn for a briefing on the sinking of the *SF Hydro*. There she met Knut Aas, a police officer whose wife's grandmother had been on board the Hydro on its final journey. The lifeboat could not be launched for the davits were frozen, and she could not swim. But just as the *Hydro* was going down, the lifeboat (of which she was by then the sole occupant) floated off. There were no oars, so she used her hat, her Sunday best, to paddle to safety! In the evening, after a reception at the British Ambassador's residence, she had a private dinner with King Harald and members of his family.

The next day, The Princess Royal visited the Vestre Gravlund Cemetery in Oslo, where the five commandos who participated in Operation Freshman and Able Seaman Evans (Operation Title) who were all shot by the Germans on 19 January 1943, are buried. She laid a wreath on the memorial there. Then she went to the Linge Club in the Akershus Fortress, named after the charismatic leader of the Norwegian Special Operations Executive (SOE) contingent, where she met military veterans, as well as holders of the War Cross with Sword, Norway's highest award for gallantry, one of whom was General Eirik Kristoffersen (who is also the Chief of Norway's Armed Forces). On a more sombre note, it also contains cells where during the war members of the Resistance were held prior to their execution. From there, she moved on to the headquarters of the Norwegian Shipowners Mutual War Risks Association (DNK). Had it not been for Norwegian tankers, it is likely that the RAF would not have had the fuel to keep flying during the Battle of Britain. Most of their fleet was chartered to Britain, and they lost more than 2,000,000 tons of shipping and several thousand seamen. She received a briefing there on their current activities, safeguarding the safety and wellbeing of Norwegian shipping across the world. She also unveiled a painting by Serena Vivian-Neal which was donated to the Project and purchased by the DNK to raise funds.

The Coastwatchers, painting by Serena Vivian-Neal

The final visit was to *Norges Hjemmefrontmuseum*, the Norwegian Resistance Museum, where she was joined by Crown Prince Haakon (who is also her godson). The layout of the museum, and the exhibits which are on show, provide graphic illustrations of what Norway suffered during the occupation, and the remarkable range of ways in which Norwegian patriots organised resistance against the Germans. These make a powerful impact on visitors. As they finished, they met Trond Johansen, a centenarian veteran who performed a key role for XU, working in a German office in Drammen. He subsequently had a distinguished career in the Norwegian Intelligence Service. Though invited to sit down by the Princess Royal when he was presented to her, he insisted on standing throughout their

The Princess Royal talking to Trond Johansen, with Crown Prince Haakon on her left and Sarah Mahaffy on the right in dark long jacket waiting her turn to speak with the Princess. Photo credit: Erling Eikli.

conversation!

They also met Sarah Mahaffy, whose grandfather had been the private secretary to Queen Maud, and whose mother had been stranded in Norway when the Germans invaded. Following a request from King Haakon, SOE smuggled her and her sister out of Norway to safety in Sweden in 1942.

During their visit to the Resistance Museum, The Princess Royal and Crown Prince Haakon unveiled a plaque which reads

> In memory of the Norwegians and British who worked for the British Secret Intelligence Service and Special Operations Executive in the campaign to restore freedom in Norway, 1940-1945

The plaque is now mounted in the Resistance Museum.

If you wish to know more, further information about her visit, as well as photographs and additional information about the project, may be found on our website anglonorwegianresistancecommemorationproject.com.

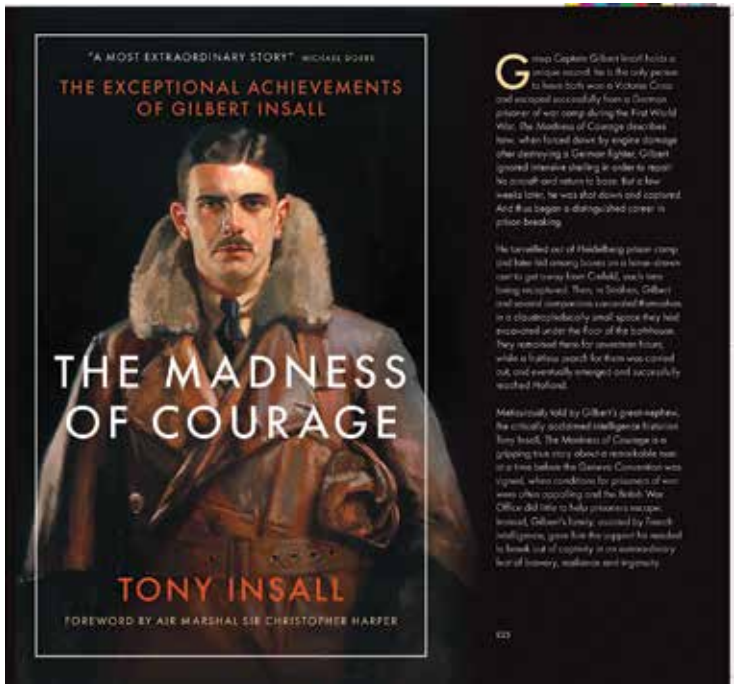
The Madness of Courage

By Tony Insall

The Madness of Courage is Tony Insall's tribute to his great uncle, Group Captain Gilbert Insall, 'the only person to have both won a Victoria Cross and escaped successfully from a German prisoner of war camp during the First World War. *The Madness of Courage* describes how, when forced down by engine damage after destroying a German fighter, Gilbert ignored intensive shelling in order to repair his aircraft and return to base. But a few weeks later, he was shot down and captured. And thus began a distinguished career in prison breaking.

He tunnelled out of Heidelberg prison camp and later hid among boxes on a horse-drawn cart to get away from Crefeld, each time being recaptured. Then, in Ströhen, Gilbert and several companions concealed themselves in a claustrophobically small space they had excavated under the floor of the bathhouse. They remained there for seventeen hours, while a fruitless search for them was carried out, and eventually emerged and successfully reached Holland'.

The book, published by Biteback publishing is available now.



Vice-President: Rolf Christophersen DFC (20.11.1921 – 28.8.2024)

By Paul Gobey

The Anglo-Norse Society's Honorary Vice-President, Mr Rolf Christophersen, died last August at the age of 102. Rolf joined Anglo-Norse in 1949, becoming Treasurer a year later, and was largely responsible for reviving the Society after its suspension during World War 2. Elected Vice-Chairman in 1956, he served until 1997 when, in recognition of his long service, Rolf was appointed our first (and only) Hon. Vice-President. He was also introduced to our Royal Patrons, HM Queen Elizabeth II and HM King Harald V, at the Society's Centenary celebrations in 2018.

Born in Bromley, Gunnar Rolf Christophersen was the youngest of four siblings. His Norwegian parents moved to Britain in 1905 when his father became London representative of *Nitedal Fyrstikker*. Rolf grew up speaking both Norwegian and English, was educated at Cranleigh School and studied Modern Languages at Corpus Christi College, Oxford, where he

attended Officer Training Corps. In late autumn 1940, just after graduating, Rolf tried to join the Royal Navy but was turned down because he had a Norwegian passport and would have been expected to fight with Norwegian armed forces. He was then accepted by the Royal Air Force, which may not have realised his nationality!

After three weeks' training Rolf flew solo in a Tiger Moth in the summer 1941, converting to the Oxford and finally Bristol Beaufort torpedo bomber. Posted to 221 Squadron in Egypt, he received a 45-minute conversion course on Wellington bombers and was immediately deployed! He hoped to fly along the Norwegian coast but was needed in the North Africa campaign (just before the Second Battle of El Alamein), flying sorties often lasting eight hours. The aircraft patrolled the eastern Mediterranean, protecting Allied convoys and helping to destroy German and Italian ships supplying Rommel's army. The trick against German fighters, according to Rolf, was to fly as low as possible above the sea – usually around 50 feet.

Rolf enjoying his 100th birthday celebration in the In and Out Club on 23 November 2021, surrounded by ladies from the Norwegian Church

Rolf was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross in July 1943. The citation, published in the London Gazette, praised his flying skills that had led to successful attacks on enemy shipping, stating: "Flight Lieutenant Christophersen has displayed great courage and determination, often flying at low level in the face of enemy fire to ensure accuracy." After receiving his DFC, Rolf had an audience with King Haakon VII at the Norwegian Ambassador's residence in London, later recalling "a happy meeting with an inquisitive King". He became an RAF instructor before transferring to 525 Squadron flying Dakotas from RAF Lyneham. Upon leaving, the commanding officer completed his operational report with just one word: "Exceptional". Rolf believed this was the reason that, in June 1945, he was deployed to 24 Squadron, the RAF's 'VIP' wing based at Hendon. Here, he was one of a small group of pilots who flew Churchill's entourage to Crimea for the Yalta Conference with Roosevelt and Stalin. He flew royalty, politicians and generals across Europe, including to recently liberated Norway. Rolf's passengers included the Duke of Windsor (formerly King Edward VIII), Prime Minister Clement Attlee (his first official flight as PM) and the British judges and prosecutors to the Nuremberg trials of Nazi war criminals, which Rolf was invited to attend. When he left the RAF in 1946, Rolf's flight logbook totalled over 2,300 flying hours.

Working for *Svenska Tändsticks AB* in London (later Swedish Match) as director of their business in England, Rolf became Chairman in 1986 when the company took over Wilkinson Match (formerly Wilkinson Sword).

Rolf's passing leaves a huge gap in London's Norwegian community, with which he was so involved and for whom he did so much. Present at the opening of the Norwegian Church in Rotherhithe in 1927, when he carried the national flag, Rolf served on the Church council for nearly 50 years (as Chairman for 15 years) and attended services regularly until shortly before his death. He was also a prominent member of Den Norske Klub and – as a life-long pipe smoker – was a Past Master of the Worshipful Company of Tobacco Pipe Makers in the City of London. He read the lesson at King Olav V's memorial service at Westminster Abbey in 1991 and received the St. Olav's Medal for promoting Norwegian-British relations. On his 100th birthday, Rolf was thanked by the Norwegian Ambassador "for all your efforts for Norway, the Norwegian Church and the Norwegian society in London".

A modest man, Rolf loved chocolates (*Mokkabønner*), wine and

watching University Challenge, and was curious about life. He literally kept an eye on successive incumbents of 10 Palace Green from his apartment in Kensington and had a keen interest in the Embassy, Church, Anglo-Norse and Norwegian Club. Rolf's dedication, in particular, to the well-being of the Anglo-Norse Society, his good humour and determination, supported throughout by his wife Angela (and daughters Olivia and Astrid), will be greatly missed.

Rolf Lyng Nissen

By Anthony Everington,

Editor's note: Rolf was Anthony Everington's great, great uncle.

Rolf was born in Trondheim on the 21st January 1919 and his gravestone lies in the graveyard of Nidaros Cathedral, Norway, a stone he shares with his mother and father. But his body and ashes are not there. He was arrested in Oslo in November 1942 for delivering the underground newspaper *Avantgarden* and betrayed by a Norwegian fellow prisoner in Møllergaten, leading to his transfer to Grini in August 1943 and his eventual deportation to the German concentration camp, Sachsenhausen where he was finally killed on the 29th May 1944.

Rolf Lyng Nissen, studio photo taken in 1942, by Sturlason Studio

Rolf was living in Oslo at the outbreak of war, studying socio-economics at Oslo University. He was a frequent visitor to my mother's home, and she says he was a sporty type, even building his own canoe, but that he also sang with a student orchestra. His girlfriend, Magni Ulverstad, was a musician. She was very keen on him and kept coming to my mother's flat while he was in prison to ask if there was any news of him. Magni, we believe, never married.

When Rolf was arrested he was originally put in 'Møllergaten 19' a police station in the centre of Oslo. The family had little contact with him although they had to take him fresh underwear on a regular basis. One day his mother and father came down to Oslo (from Trondheim) and wanted to see Rolf. His sister spoke German, and she realised that it would be impossible to get herself and both Rolf's parents in to see him, so it was decided that his mother and sister should go alone. When they came to the prison the German officer initially said 'no' to a visit, but a little later Rolf stood in front of them. His mother was allowed to go to him and give him a brief hug. That was the last time she saw him. Soon after he was transferred to Grini prison on the outskirts of Oslo and then to Sachsenhausen concentration camp in Germany. The reason he was sent to Grini Prison and then to Sachsenhausen in Germany where he died was that at Møllergaten he had had a 'privileged' job as a *korridorgutt* ('corridor boy', someone responsible for cleaning and food distribution in the different wings). But among the corridor boys there was a traitor who had grassed on Rolf for an opinion he had expressed on the Nazi rule.

View of the camp of Sachsenhausen from the entrance building

Sachsenhausen was one of Hitler's original concentration camps built in 1936, 15 km north of Berlin. It was originally intended for political

© Sachsenhausen Memorial and Museum.

prisoners, mostly communists, but came to be used for anyone the Nazis hated, gypsies, Jews, homosexuals, Russians, Norwegians and the disabled. Some of the camp buildings are still standing and today the camp is a museum and memorial to all who died there. In the corner of the camp is the ruin of the death chamber. Prisoners were led one by one into a small room and shot in the head by an SS officer. The corpses were then thrown into the large mortuary next door, stripped, and eventually assigned to one of four small ovens in an adjacent crematorium. Near this building was a trench containing a motorized gallows that could hoist up to four people at a time for hangings. In the exercise yard there was also a gallows and a track with different surfaces used for prisoners to test certain designs of shoes to destruction by walking for hours and sometimes until death.

Some 100,000 prisoners were killed in this camp, from disease, malnutrition, executions and overwork in local armaments factories. Approximately 5850 Norwegians were sent to concentration camps in Nazi Europe of whom 828 came home. In Sachsenhausen there were 2700 Norwegian prisoners of whom 61 came home.

What we know of Rolf's time in Sachsenhausen comes from what Frode Rinnan, a friend of Rolf's, told the family after his release in 1945. Frode had met Rolf in Møllergaten 19, when Rolf was a 'corridor boy', and they had become friends.

He tells of what happened when prisoners had been sent money. Then they could have goods delivered for that amount:

'These goods consisted of mustard, beer and potatoes - which, with duties and commissions, ran up staggering prices. It was a pure scam. Magelsen in the wing once calculated that he had received a total of Deutsch Mark 6,000.00 in mustard, i.e. mustard substitute, an I.G Farben product, which was so bad that no one would eat it. The first months were the worst - then they starved, but at Christmas time the Red Cross parcels started arriving, and then it became liveable.

The first couple of weeks, Rolf, like the other newcomers, were general dogsbodies, and it was a sad job. However, he soon got a better position, became an electrical fitter, and set up new installations in the barracks - a job that was very sought after because you could always be inside. At first, they were all rather cold, and Rolf froze just like the others. But he was lucky. For two boxes of sardines, some German 'boss prisoner' bought him a huge Russian coat - one of the biggest and warmest coats you could get your hands on. Otherwise, the clothes situation was bad. He was therefore greatly envied by his comrades, who, before anything else, gradually got themselves the most necessary garments as well.

Due to his optimism, his calm nature and his distinct sense of humour, Rolf was very well liked by his fellow prisoners. At Christmas (1943) he was Santa Claus, and as such was very funny. It was on the same occasion that Arnulf Øverland wrote his poem, 'Jul i Sachsenhausen', Christmas in Sachsenhausen. They did not dare to write this poem down, but some of the lads, e.g. Frode and Rolf learned it by heart so that it would not be forgotten'.

Rolf's last letter to his parents was actually dictated to Per Gresli, Rolf's Norwegian doctor in Sachsenhausen on 28th May 1944, and is a clear example of an inmate not wanting to worry the recipient (also letters expressing negative views of the conditions would be censored). The letter was actually written in German, and in it Rolf thanks his parents for various items they have sent

On the 25th November 2018, Rolf´s family erected a gravestone in Sachsenhausen, read his letters and family and friends' comments from his 1944 memorial book. They also each laid a paper-clip on his gravestone, a wartime symbol of solidarity. (The author is fourth from the left).

'bacon and sardines, cheese and again for sardines and thanks to Magni for the apple jam. Since I also got parcels from Sweden and Portugal I am very well off. Many thanks to Jannis, but at the moment I need no more money; I will let you know when I need some. You must not be concerned that I am not writing this hope you are all well, especially you mother.'

He died the following day, aged 25.

Cow Leasing – a Forgotten Part of Norwegian History

By Jørn Øyrehagen Sunde. Professor of Legal History, University of Oslo

Editor's note. *When I translated Carline Tromp's review of Jørn Øyrehagen Sunde's book,* Kongen, Lova og Landet *for the July issue of the Review, I assumed that the lease of a cow was paid for by what the cow produced,(milk etc), but I wrote that if this was incorrect I would correct it in the next issue, and as this article makes clear I was wrong, the lease was paid in money. I apologise.*

It is very unlikely that you have leased a cow lately. However, you might have leased a car, a refrigerator or a washing machine. Leasing, or renting, is an old phenomenon, but what has been leased has varied over the centuries. Cow leasing was up till the end of the 19th century the most common object for leasing in Norway.

How important cow leasing was, we can see from the prominent place it was given in the 12 volumes on Norwegian countryside customs (Norsk bonderett), published by Kristian Østberg between 1914 and 1939. As soon as he started law school he began touring Norway to uncover old customs that were about to be forgotten in the industrial age. From 1912 he was given a permanent scholarship by the Norwegian Parliament to continue his work.

The first volume Østberg published of the material he collected was on cows, and especially cow leasing. In a country where only small parts of the land were suitable for growing grain, cows played a vital role in the economy. In the Middle Ages the law stated that a person who possessed no cows was poor, but a person who possessed one cow was not. In folklore the one-cow divide between poor and non-poor would remain till at least the late 19th century.

Already in the Gulating compilation we find traces of a system of cow leasing. This is a compilation of legislation, customs and other legal material, that dates back to before the Norwegian Code of 1274. Each of the four Norwegian legal provinces – Gulating in western and southern Norway, Frostating in middle and northern Norway, Eidsivating in the interior eastern Norway, and Borgarting around the Oslo fjord – had their own compilations of law. Since we are talking compilations, and not codes of law, the age of the content varied a lot. In the Gulating compilation we find more than 1500 legal rules dating from around 1000 to the 1250s.

We find the rule on cow leasing in a part of the Gulating compilation that was revised in the eleventh century. However, this part of the compilation on commercial activities was probably revised several times, and it is impossible to date the rule on cow leasing exactly. We may still conclude that the rule only clarifies what must have been an established and well-known practice, and hence that the system of cow leasing is probably is very old.

Gulating was a provincial popular assembly. On the one hand, considerable efforts were made to keep the assembly from being an aristocratic meeting place. Every year a tax was paid in all parts of the province to finance the travel and accommodation of the delegates meeting

at Gulating. Aristocrats did not need such financial support, and taxation must have been levied to secure a rather broad social representation at the assembly. At the same time, it was only persons with property and hired farm hands who could meet. This means that the usual cow lessees were not at Gulating, and could not influence the rule on cow leasing. Not surprisingly, the cow-leasing rule favours the cow owners and not the lessees.

Favouring cow owners over cow lessees was in line with the general content of the Gulating compilation, where land-owners were given priority over tenants, creditors over debtors, etc., and debt slavery was the ultimate misfortune of the poor. When a farmer rented or leased a cow, everything the cow produced: milk, a calf and dung belonged to the lessee, but the Gulating compilation stated that all risk was on the lessee. In practice this meant that if someone leased a cow that suddenly died, the lease still had to be paid as agreed. This would be a double misfortune for the lessee: the money invested in the lease was lost while the lessee would have no, or reduced, income from the lease, and the lessee had to pay compensation for the dead cow.

This tilted relation in favour of the cow owners was changed with the Code of 1274. It replaced the four provincial codes of law, and about half of Norwegian law was much changed or totally renewed. The Code of 1274 became popular, and in 1350 existed in one manuscript per 1,200 inhabitants in Norway, which implies extensive use. This is proven to have been the case by the ten thousands of preserved legal documents from the Norwegian Middle Ages.

The Code of 1274 firstly made the lessee free of responsibility for the accidental death of the leased cow. Only negligence or deliberate violent actions could make the lessee liable. If the lessee was poor, he even got three years to pay the compensation for negligence. This is typical of the social policy in the Code of 1274, in general changing the power relation between property owners and tenants and especially making more lenient rules for the poor. The cow leasing rules in the Code of 1274 were adopted in the Norwegian Code of 1687, and hence in use until the nineteenth century. Several cow leasing contracts and other related documents from the Middle Ages are preserved. However, most cow leasing was considered such a small matter that it was not worth the price of parchment (made of calfskin) to put the contract in writing. Rather, we can detect the importance of cow leasing from church documents. Firstly, because tithes were paid to the Church on cow leasing as on other commercial activities. Secondly, different local churches often had livestock of their own, which could be leased out. When Østberg finished his volume on customs relating to cows in 1914, he noted that the church at Fjellberg, in the western part of Norway, still owned a cow that a local farmer had leased for over a decade. This was, however, a very late example of cow leasing that was less and less common in the second half of the 19th century, and now is a forgotten part of Norwegian history.

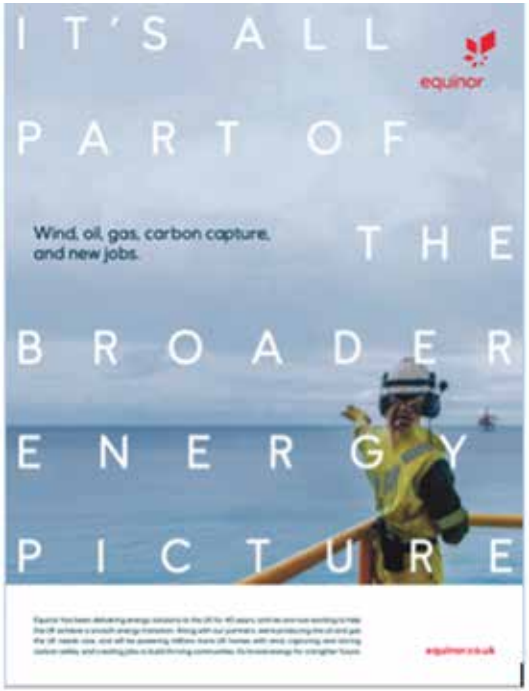
Equinor: Leading or Lagging in the Energy Transition?

By Marten Boon, Utrecht University

The oil and gas industry is in the dog house over climate change, and rightly so. Apart from pumping and selling the very stuff that causes the climate to change, the industry has also engaged in climate change denial, in spite of knowing about the phenomenon as early as the 1970s, and routinely called climate science into question and lobbied governments to tone down climate policies. Although it was especially major American companies that engaged in this behaviour, their European counterparts are culpable too. In comparison, Equinor, the Norwegian state owned oil and gas company, appears to be a positive exception. Hailing from the country whose prime minister, Gro Harlem Brundtland, presided over the United Nations commission that put climate change on the global political agenda in the late-1980s, Equinor was among the first oil and gas companies to publicly acknowledge climate change in the early 1990s. Today, it portrays itself as a 'leading company in the energy transition'. Nonetheless, like its peers, Equinor is under huge public pressure. In the UK alone, Equinor has faced heated protests over its controversial development of the Rosebank oil and gas field, saw its 'Broader Energy' ad campaign banned as misleading by the Advertising Standards Authority in 2023, and had its longstanding collaboration with the London Science Museum severed in 2024, as part of the Museum's bid to cut ties to the fossil fuel industry. How well deserved is the critique on the company?

There are many positive things to say about Equinor. It is a major contributor to Norwegian welfare and sovereign wealth, and an important supplier of energy to Europe. In Norway, Equinor produces around 70 per cent of the country's oil and gas, of which over 90 per cent is exported. With

a total value of more than 80 billion British pounds in 2023 alone, the income generated from these exports is enormous. The vast majority of this sum ends up in Norwegian state coffers. Some of it is used to finance Norway's generous welfare system, but most of it flows into Norway's famous sovereign wealth fund, known as the Oil Fund, which held a staggering 1.3 trillion British pounds when this article was written.



The Broader Energy ad that was banned in Britain as misleading by the Advertising Standards Authority in 2023.

Equinor is also an important contributor to energy security in Europe, especially since many countries have reduced imports of Russian oil and gas following the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022. In the UK, Norwegian natural gas covered around 40 per cent of total gas consumption in 2023. Equinor is also a major investor in offshore wind farms along the UK coast, including the world's largest offshore wind farm, Dogger Bank, currently under construction off the Yorkshire coast. In the EU, Equinor supplies the lion's share of Norwegian energy exports that made it the EU's largest supplier of natural gas and the second largest supplier of oil in 2023. In short, it is no exaggeration to say that Equinor is vital to Norwegian prosperity and European energy security; a point the company is not shy of making.

However, most of the energy Equinor supplies, is derived from fossil fuels. Although its renewable energy production has more than quadrupled between 2015 and 2023, this pales in comparison to its fossil energy business. Of the company's total energy produced in the first quarter of 2024, only a measly 0.23 per cent was from renewable sources, the Norwegian daily newspaper *Vårt Land* reported in April 2024. Despite its modest advances into renewable energy so far, Equinor boasts of itself as a leading company in the clean energy transition. Equinor was late to develop tangible climate action, even compared to companies like Shell or BP, but it changed course radically in 2015, rebranding itself as a broad energy company, and changing its name from Statoil to Equinor to eradicate the traditional association with oil from the company's name. But how credible is this course shift? Is the company doing enough to green its own business and to contribute to the clean energy transition that is so sorely needed to avoid catastrophic climate change?

Granted, Equinor's investments in clean energy have grown quickly in the past few years, from only 4 per cent of total investments in 2020 to 20 per cent in 2023, and it plans to grow that share to over 50 per cent by 2030. It also published a comprehensive energy transition plan in 2022, outlining how it will expand its renewable energy business, grow low carbon energy solutions like hydrogen and carbon capture and storage (CCS), and shrink its carbon emissions in line with the Paris Agreement of 2015. External assessments of Equinor's energy transition plan, for instance by the global investor platform Climate Action +100 or the Transition Pathway Initiative of the London School of Economics, acknowledge that the company is transparent about its emissions and offers a concrete pathway for its decarbonization toward 2050. But they also conclude that Equinor's plan fails to align with a scenario that limits global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

The main reason for such assessments is that Equinor, like most of its peers, is stubbornly clinging to the concept that oil and gas will remain a major part of the global energy mix far into the future. Citing such projections, Equinor continues to explore for new oil and gas reserves, even though the International Energy Agency, the authoritative energy club of the OECD, has acknowledged that exploration for new oil and gas reserves is incompatible with meeting the Paris Agreement. Pressure on Equinor and the Norwegian state to stop exploration has mounted in the past few years, with some political parties in Norway even actively campaigning for a ban on exploration in Norwegian waters. However, Equinor continues to explore and develop new reserves, both in Norway and abroad, conveniently citing European energy security as justification.

Equinor further legitimates this course of action through its 'low

carbon' strategy, which boils down to reducing its Scope 1 emissions as much as possible. Scope 1 refers to the carbon emissions from a company's own operations in the production stage of oil and gas, as opposed to scope 3 emissions from the final consumption of oil and gas. The electrification of production platform operations is one of Equinor's main ways of reducing scope 1 emissions, which it has, for example, announced recently for the Rosebank field. It is a strategy that it developed first in Norway, where it has been eagerly adopted by consecutive governments as a core climate policy to reduce Norway's carbon emissions without having to cut oil and gas production. However, electrification of platforms diverts much needed power from households and industries looking to decarbonize by substituting electricity for oil and gas, especially when it involves renewable sources like wind power. Moreover, scope 1 emissions avoided by electrification are marginal compared to scope 3 emissions. As such, electrification is at most a token gesture and a rhetorical move to continue producing oil and gas under the guise of 'low carbon'.

The same could be said about Equinor's involvement in industrial projects around the UK that use so-called blue hydrogen derived from natural gas as a low carbon fuel for industrial decarbonization. Blue hydrogen is labeled low carbon because it is combined with carbon capture and storage (CCS), which captures and stores the carbon emissions from the conversion of gas to hydrogen. While CCS and blue hydrogen are acknowledged by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, among others, as legitimate and much needed technologies to reach net zero emissions by 2050, it also allows Equinor to don a climate-friendly image while continuing exploration and production of oil and gas. In the balance, Equinor is very vocal about its climate and energy transition strategy but the company appears too wedded to its traditional fossil energy business to really justify styling itself as "a leading company in the energy transition".

Exhibition of Britta Marakatt-Labba's work at the National Museum in Oslo.

By Marie Wells

I was fortunate enough last year to see an exhibition of Britta Marakatt-Labba's mainly embroidered textile work at the National Museum in Oslo – in fact I saw it twice, flying back to Oslo to see it again, just before the exhibition closed on 25 August.

Britta Marakatt-Labba is a Swedish Sámi artist and political and climate activist, born 15 September 1951, who grew up in a reindeer-herding family, but always knew she wanted to draw. She reached wide public acclaim after her major piece, *Historjá*, was displayed in 2017 at a contemporary art exhibition called documenta 14 in Kassel, Germany. Before that her work was mainly shown in northern Scandinavian galleries and exhibitions. (She has said the sudden recognition was like ketchup comimg out of a bottle - all at once). The exhition in Oslo was on the the top floor of the museum, in *lyshallen*. In the centre was a black circular 'tent' showing her major work, *Historjá*, from 2003-2007, a 24 metre long x 40 cm high history of the Sámi, embroidered on linen, which shows all aspects of Sámi life, fishing, farming, Sámi mythology and travelling with reindeer.

I stated above that Marakatt-Labba was also a political activist and this was triggered by certain events in the 1970s and 80s, such as the proposal to dam the Alta River and develop the Alta-Kautokeino basin for hydro-electricity. This led her to being one of the founders of the artists' collective, the Mazé Group in 1978 (Mazé being a village that would disappear if the plan went ahead), which in turn led to the founding of the Sámi Artist Union in 1979. The events of the 1970s and 80s were the start of the modern Sámi struggle for liberation and self-determination, which eventually led to the establishment of the Sámi parliaments in Norway in 1989 and Sweden in 1993. But these events also found expression in Marakatt-Labba's art, as in *Garjját / The Crows* from 1981, which shows a flock of crows descending and gradually being transformed into policemen who break up the chain of peaceful protestors and carry them off to detention centres.

Industrialisation and its effect on the Sámi way of life is another aspect of Marakatt-Labba's work, as shown in the embroidery *Devdon vávnnat, Filled Wagons* from 2022 (see page 26). As she has said in a series of conversations with Susanne Hætta 'we fought for Sámi land rights and we still do. Now there are even worse in intrusions of different kinds – mining,

mineral extraction, wind turbines and forced slaughter of reindeer. I don't understand the Norwegian state's thinking. They store mining waste in the fjords, but then individuals are forced to slaughter their herds. It is our duty to be critical of society.' (Quoted from the exhibition catalogue, *Moving the Needle* (p. 126)

Garjját - The Crows, 1981. The original is 41 x102cm. Photo by the author

Guodoheaddjit –They kept Watch at Night 31 x 108.5 cm. Photo by the author

The continuation of *The Crows*, showing police carrying off protestors in front of the first tent , while others sit quietly on the ground in front of the second tent. Photo by the author

Continuation of *Guodoheaddjit –They kept Watch at Night* 31 x 108.5 cm. Photo by the author

Devdon vávnnat, Filled Wagons. 37x 40.5 cms, Photo by the author.

But not all of Marakatt-Labba's work is socially critical. There are many charming individual pieces, like *Guodoheaddjit –They kept Watch at Night,* (p.24*)* which shows Joseph leading a pregnant Mary on a reindeer, and in an extension of the embroidery on p.25 the Three Kings kneeling outside the lávvu, or Sámi tent, with on the right a 'shepherd' with his flock or reindeer. Or there is this one (left) showing two men ice fishing. The title is *Gávnnadeapmi or The Meeting* from 2012. The original is 36 x 35 cm. Photo by the author.

Marakatt-Labba has said that she does not sketch what she is going to embroider, but sews directly onto the linen except in major, commissioned pieces, such as *Lodderåidaras*, *The Milky Way,* a commission by Stortinget in 2022, which now hangs in Stortinget's concourse where politicians and journalists meet to exchange views.

Lodderáidaras, *The Milky Way,* 169 x 180 cm. Photo by the author.

Report on a Placement with theAnglican Chaplaincy in Oslo.

By Rachel Sheppard

I am writing to thank the Anglo-Norse Society for the grant I received in January to help fund a placement in Oslo with the Anglican Chaplaincy at St Edmund's Church. My project ran from 23rd March until 3rd April 2024 and encompassed Holy Week. I worked with the Senior Chaplain to the Anglican Chaplaincy in Norway, assisting with the organisation and running of the Church's Holy Week activities and services. The following report covers some of my experiences, what I have learnt from the placement and highlights some of the connections I was able to make.

Inside St Edmund's Church

Having arrived in Oslo Saturday afternoon, I settled into the chaplaincy accommodation and soon it was Sunday morning. It being Palm Sunday, the service involved a blessing of palms, and it was a great opportunity to meet congregation members and those who serve at the church.

On Good Friday afternoon, we took part in an ecumenical walk of the cross, organised by Oslo Cathedral and the Church City Mission, an inclusive, nonprofit organization, which works in towns and cities across Norway, among people who face various challenges in life. The walk began at Oslo Central Station, with stops at nine places around the city including the Stortinget (Parliament), Regjeringskvartalet (the Government Quarter) and Tinghuset (Courthouse). This was a good opportunity to meet with various clergy from the city, including those who work at Oslo Cathedral. Afterwards, we were invited to visit the Cathedral, and it was good to learn more about how the Porvoo Communion works on the ground and some of its fruits in terms of mutual understanding and joint projects between the Church of Norway and the Anglican Chaplaincy. I reflected on how moments of the Church year, such as Easter and Christmas, have great potential for encounters between different churches and traditions, as does on-going social action in local communities.

The Walk of the Cross on Good Friday

A highlight of my trip was visiting an exhibition by the Sámi textile artist Britta Marakatt-Labba at the National Museum. Her work explores the culture, mythologies and religion of her people and the issues that affect them, such as climate change and industrialisation. It was fascinating to learn more about Sámi life, to reflect on the importance of preserving nature and natural resources and to hear stories of Sámi experiences.

A trip to Norway would not be complete without skiing. We took the T-Bane to Holmenkollen where I had my first experience of cross-country skiing. It was wonderful to get out of the city centre and to view Oslo from above, to see the iconic Holmenkollbakken Ski Jump and to take part in an activity with such a rich heritage in Norway.

Participating in the Eucharist at Bragernes Church

I preached at the Easter Vigil on Saturday, and it was a great learning experience of how to speak to a Norwegian context. Easter Sunday was a joyful occasion, and it was great to reconnect with the congregation members I had not seen during the week. The Tridium, the three days of the festival of Easter, was both celebratory and demanding, and we spent the evening of Easter Sunday relaxing by enjoying another Norwegian tradition – *Påskekrim*!

On Easter Monday, we visited Bragernes Church in Drammen. Bragernes Church is a member of the Church of Norway, and we were able to participate in their Eucharist. After the Eucharist, we attended another service, led by a Sudanese congregation who meet in Bragernes Church. It was good to talk with the congregation members and to hear about their experiences of the Norwegian refugee resettlement programme and their integration into Norwegian society.

I would like to express my thanks to the Council of the Anglo-Norse

Society for the grant which enabled me to do a placement with the Anglican Chaplaincy at St Edmund's Church in Oslo. It was wonderful to join St Edmund's, especially at Easter, one of the high points of the Church year. I learnt so much about life in Norway, and not just limited to the religious sphere, and was able to reflect on some of the questions that Norway is engaging with at the present time, such as social justice, the interaction between climate change and indigenous rights, and migration. During my placement, I learnt from the various people I encountered, was able to exchange ideas and to make connections that I hope to build on in the future.

Outside Bragernes Church with the Pastor of the Sudanese congregation

Back cover

The mobile rig Deep Sea Bollsta. Photo credit: Odfjell Drilling.
(The image has been extended vertically to fit the magazine)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