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| Contents | <i>Page</i> |
|---|-------------|
| Editorial | 4 |
| Soviet POW Monuments in Norway. <i>By Marianne Neerland Soleim</i> | 5 |
| 'Seldom in the Annals of the British Army has a more ill-prepared Expedition left our Shores...' <i>By Steve Erskine</i> | 8 |
| Sir Anthony Herbert Everington. <i>By Sam Everington</i> | 12 |
| Speaking of Trust: How Norwegian and British Politicians Win Hearts and Minds <i>By Will Coles</i> | 15 |
| 'This Is Sámi Land': Visibility and Discomfort at Bodø 2024. <i>By Rory Cassie</i> | 18 |
| First Year Report for 2024-2025 of Tromsø Scholarship-Holder <i>By Emer Flanagan</i> | 22 |
| First Year Report for 2024-2025 of RCM Scholarship-Holder. <i>By Edvard Adde</i> | 24 |
| First Year Report for 2024-2025 of Dame Gillian Brown Scholarship-Holder. <i>By Catriona Beckett</i> | 25 |
| Did you know? <i>By The Editor</i> | 28 |

The seven-metre high monolith at Tjøtta in Nordland commemorating the Soviet soldiers who lost their lives fighting in northern Norway during WWII. Photo credit: Arne Langås. Falstadsenteret/FSM foto. C.00089

Editorial

It seems that war is something that is never far from us, both in reality and in memory, so it is hardly surprising that the first two articles in this *Review* have their roots in that topic. But I think it is the first time it has covered the complex story of Soviet soldiers who lost their lives in northern Norway, so I am very grateful to a friend who told me about Marianne's research.

I have long thought that the Council members of the Society are an interesting bunch with interesting careers, though admittedly none is quite so distinguished as Sam Everington's. I therefore decided that members should have a chance to read about them, and the profile of Sam is the first of what I hope will be a short series.

Given the rowdiness of Prime Minister's Question Time in the UK, readers may be interested and perhaps relieved to learn that political rhetoric in the UK and Norway are rather different, Norway stressing party more than the individual.

Readers may also have noticed that since the 2023 Summer Issue of the *Review* there has been a slight emphasis on Sami matters, from the article by Else Grete Broderstad and Kirsti Strøm Bull examining the question of why we talk about indigenous rights to covering the art of the Sami artist Britta Marakatt Labba's exhibition at Nasjonalmuseet. Now there is an article by Rory Cassie who has been studying the results of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and believes there is still work to be done.

Finally there are the reports of the students who received Scholarships from the Society. These show just how deserving the recipients were and how hard they have worked in their different fields to justify their awards.

Soviet POW Monuments in Norway

By Marianne Neerland Soleim

Introduction

Soviet prisoners of war (POWs) have been described as the forgotten Nazi victims of the Second World War. Out of 5.7 million Soviet soldiers captured by the Germans between 1941 and 1945, about 3.3 million died in captivity. Between 1941 and 1945 about 100,000 Soviet POWs were transported to Norway and about 13,700 died. The main graveyard with nearly 8,000 Soviet victims is situated at Tjøtta in Sandnessjøen in Nordland. Many Soviet POWs died during the German withdrawal from Finnmark in 1944. Both in Finnmark and elsewhere in Norway it became very difficult to map the number of dead. Both parish priests and local police across the country had problems obtaining sufficient information about Soviet POWs who died in Norway. After 1947 the politics of the Cold War affected the collective memory of the Soviet POWs in Norway.

Moving of the Soviet graves

In 1951, the Norwegian authorities decided that all Soviet war graves in northern Norway should be moved to one central graveyard at Tjøtta. Moving the graves was called 'Operation Asphalt'. Many monuments were destroyed shortly before the operation and in an overall perspective the local memory of the Soviet victims disappeared. In northern Norway such destroyed monuments are still visible near the main road in the mountains. In total, 'Operation Asphalt' included 95 grave sites in the three northernmost counties. The transfer of the dead Soviet POWs was completed in 1951. The removal of the Soviet dead in northern Norway was linked to the politics of the Cold War and the Norwegian authorities' fear of Soviet espionage was the main motive for its implementation. 'Operation Asphalt' occurred during the Korean War when the level of international tension worsened dramatically. Undertaking the relocation of the graves was an expression of the fact that the Norwegian authorities were unsure of Soviet intentions concerning the war graves. The fear of espionage was clear, and the Norwegian authorities wanted to prevent Soviet representatives from using the commemoration of grave monuments in Norway as an excuse for espionage. In several places in northern Norway, the population became horrified witnesses to the excavation, and many Norwegians protested against the operation.

There are several monuments at Tjøtta. The main monument is a seven-metre-high monolith. On the monolith, unveiled in 1953 is written: 'I takknemlig minne om sovjetiske soldater som mistet livet i Nord-Norge under krigen 1941-1945 og som er gravlagt her ('In grateful memory to the Soviet

soldiers that lost their lives in Northern Norway during the war 1941-1945 and who are buried here') A small monument gives the number of 7,551 victims buried at Tjøtta. At the graveyard there are also name-plates for the 826 identified victims placed on the ground. In 2002, all the name plates of the identified Soviet victims were removed from the war graves at Tjøtta and the Soviet prisoners were reduced to anonymous victims. The monolith became a symbol of the grave of the unknown soldiers. The local people and local authorities protested after the removal of the name plates for the identified victims, so the name plates were returned



Soviet War Memorial at Lulle in Storfjord.
Photo: Marianne Neerland Soleim

to the cemetery in November 2008.

Most of this local engagement had its background in the catastrophe of the ship 'Rigel' in the autumn of 1944 near the graveyard. Over 2,000 Soviet prisoners-of-war lost their lives in the catastrophe. During the attack on the ship many of prisoners were killed by bombs from British airplanes, or they died in the fire on the ship. Only the strongest and those who could swim saved their lives. The victims are buried at Tjøtta International Graveyard.

A commemoration memorial to the victims of the 'Rigel' catastrophe was unveiled on 1 December 1977.

Weakening of the POW memory

'Operation Asphalt' eventually led to a weakening of the collective memory of the Soviet POWs locally. In the first post-war period, the focus was on the suffering of POWs and the Norwegians who helped them during the war years, but shortly after 1947 this became a topic that belonged to the Cold War. The fate of the POWs was now more linked to the issue of repatriation and not their fate on Norwegian soil. Memorials that were removed or destroyed were no longer part of Norwegians' everyday experiences. With this, the basis for an active remembrance of the Soviet POWs at local and national level was removed. The Soviet dead were buried at Lulle in Storfjord in northern Norway in 1945. The graves were moved in 1951 to Tjøtta under 'Operation Asphalt' and a monument on the grave site was removed and replaced with a 'standard' monument with the text: 'I takknemlig minne om sovjetiske soldater som mistet livet i Nord-Norge under krigen 1941-1945 og som er gravlagt her.' (The text was also in Russian). With this text the commemoration of the victims as POWs was removed.

Final remarks

There is a need for the Norwegian authorities to develop guidelines and routines for how inquiries about the new establishment of memorials from the Russian side should be met. There is also a request from the organization "Support to the People of Ukraine" to set up a separate memorial for Ukrainian soldiers who died during the liberation of Norway. The Norwegian authorities, at the Ministry of Culture, have been little visible in the processes in general around the memorials linked to Soviet soldiers, POWs and forced laborers. They point out that those buried have been dead for at least 77 years and the victims must be allowed to rest in peace, without being drawn into the ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine. The ministry also points out that foreign war graves are managed according to the international law of war and that it is the state background of the combatants that is used as a basis. Foreign fallen are commemorated according to state affiliation and not place of birth. It has not been practiced in Norway to set up separate national memorials at grave sites, and all are commemorated as Soviet. In May 2023, there was a debate about whether the St. George ribbons should be removed

from a memorial of Soviet POWs in Alta in northern Norway. The ribbon has been largely used by pro-Russian actors to show support for the war against Ukraine. The ribbon is still widely used at other grave sites for Soviet POWs without the Norwegian authorities reacting.

Editor's note: readers of this might be interested to know that Roy Jacoben's Ingrid Barrøy trilogy is a gripping fictional account of much of this material, particularly volumes two and three, White Shadow and Eyes of the Rigel.

'Seldom in the Annals of the British Army has a more ill-prepared Expedition left our Shores...'

By Steve Erskine,

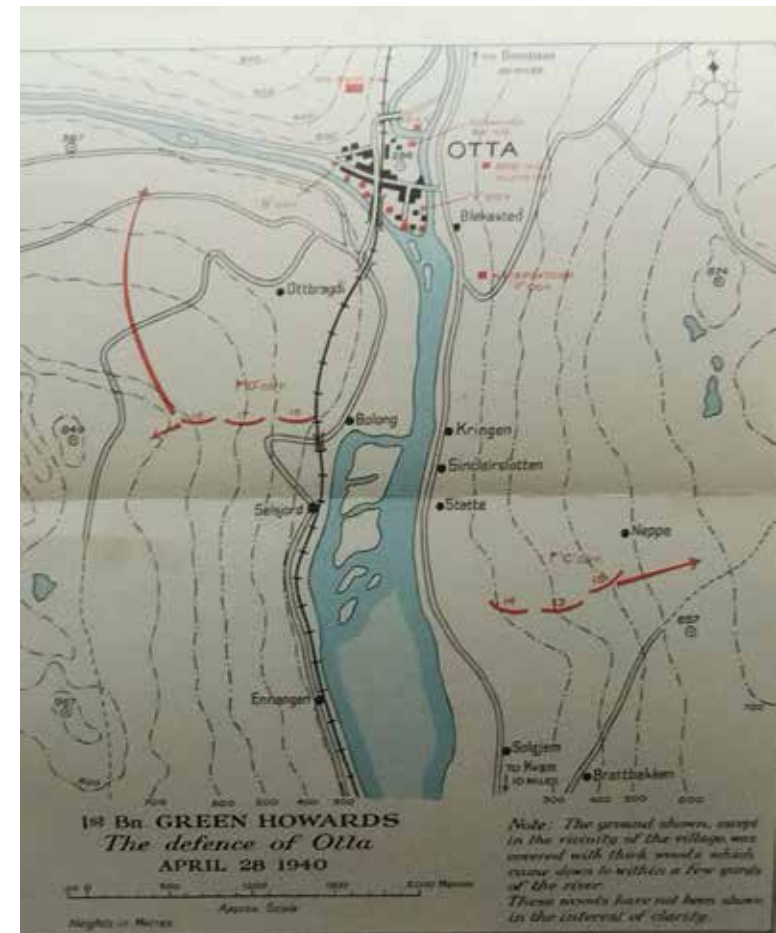
So says the Green Howards' regimental history covering the regiment's participation in the 1940 Norway campaign. But first, some background on the links between The Green Howards and Norway, which long preceded the ill-fated expedition of 1940 (see also *The Anglo-Norse Review* Winter 2018). The Green Howards have a strong, long-standing connection with the Norwegian Royal Family, who served as the regiment's Colonel-in-Chief for four successive generations. This relationship began with Princess Alexandra (who married the future British King Edward VII) in 1863, and was passed down to her son-in-law, King Haakon VII of Norway, who held the position during WWII. His son, King Olav V, and grandson, King Harald V, continued the tradition until the regiment became what is now The Royal Yorkshire Regiment in 2006. Now, back to 1940.

The 1st Battalion of the regiment had been in France since October 1939 when, to everyone's surprise, in April 1940, the order came through to return to England, which they reached 17th of the month. On 24th they embarked from Rosyth, Scotland bound for Norway. The main object of the expedition was to work with the Norwegian Army to prevent the northward advance of the Germans. There is a well-known saying in the military, 'planning never survives first contact with the enemy'. Never was that more true than in Norway.

Space here allows for only a brief description of events. For the regiment, the main action focussed on the town of Otta. Having advanced inland to Dombås, they were then forced to withdraw until they arrived at the strategically important town of Otta, – strategically important because of

its position on the main rail line, and because it is where the Gudbrandsdalen river splits, giving birth to its eastern arm, the river Otta.

The original plan was that the 1st Green Howards, supported by the 1st Battalion of the York and Lancaster Regiment would hold, allowing for other units to withdraw in an orderly manner. Unfortunately the York and Lancs had sustained heavy losses in its withdrawal from Sjøa so that, in the words of the field Commander, 'the Otta position would thus have to be held solely by the Green Howards. The Green Howards are in good



Map of the Otta position. Courtesy of the Green Howards.

heart, but all too few to cover this extensive position.'

The German force approaching the Green Howards at Otta was Group Pellengahr, named after its commander Generalleutnant Richard Pellengahr. The German combat group consisted of seven infantry battalions, including one of mountain troops, a motorised machine-gun unit, a troop of tanks and associated artillery. The Green Howards had a few anti-tank guns, mortars



British and German casualties buried at Sandbakken, south of Otta. Photo from the Green Howards' archive

and machine guns but no artillery and, crucially for the whole of the Norway campaign, no air cover. Advance units of Group Pellengahr made contact with the Green Howards on April 28th.

On the face of it, the Green Howards held a strong position. The lines of advance open to the Germans ran along the Gudbrandsdalen valley floor. This route was relatively easily blocked by a small force such as the Green Howards had. The threat came from two directions: the air and ski troops operating on the flanks i.e. moving across and along the peaks on both sides of the river. The Germans for their part recognised that there was no immediate need to commit troops; they brought their advantage in air power and artillery to bear to soften up the Green Howards.

The first German reconnaissance aircraft had flown over the position

early in the evening of the 28th (at the time of year sunrise was around 4am and sunset at about 9:30pm). Bombers followed accompanied by low flying aircraft that machine gunned the position. Artillery soon joined the conflagration; the Green Howards with so little to fight back with had to cower in their slit trenches and take it, knowing that once the rain of explosive stopped, they would have to deal with the German infantry heading their way.

At around 10:30pm the first enemy troops, accompanied by tanks, were sighted headed toward D Company on the east bank of the river. Orders for a withdrawal had been issued the previous night but, due to the confused position and the lack of understanding of where everyone was actually located, the order was only patchily relayed and acted upon. Orders were issued for the bridge at Sjoa to be blown, but the Engineers tasked with the job did nothing, having not received the blow order, thankfully so, as had the bridge been blown large numbers of British troops would have been cut-off from the route back to the coast.

The retreat to the coast was a difficult task to co-ordinate; whole platoons of Green Howards simply lost contact and were not seen again. Tragedy would also be visited on those who were close to evacuation. On 30th April, a train carrying large numbers of British troops left Dombås station bound for Åndalsnes. Early the next morning, the train crashed near Lesjaskogen. The first carriage carried the ammunition stores, and it was not long before this began to explode. It was pitch dark except for blazing trucks and the flashes from the explosions and, to make matters worse, the snow at the sides of the line was waist deep making the gathering of survivors difficult. Nevertheless, it was something of a feat of leadership that all the survivors and their kit were on the march within 45 minutes of the accident.

Given the likelihood of further air attacks once the sun rose, it was imperative that this column cover the 17 or so miles to the protection of the railway tunnel at Verma. The troops accomplished this march by 8am. Åndalsnes was reached late on 1st May.

All embarked safely onboard various ships: *HMS Birmingham*, *Manchester* and *Calcutta*; the last ship pulled away from the dock at about 2am on 2nd May, and all were at Scapa Floe by the morning of 3rd for the onward journey to Glasgow.

An official report into operations particularly highlight the fight put up by the Green Howards at Otta: 'Artillery was then employed on a most

extensive scale, but none of these expedients could dislodge the Green Howards from their positions. Incendiary bombs set fire to houses behind the leading Companies, aeroplanes dropped their bombs as near the defences as they could, artillery pounded them, but when hostile infantry came on, they were met by controlled and accurate fire. Special emphasis is laid on this tenacious defence. Anything less good would have cracked.'

The regimental links to Norway and the Norwegian Royal Household continue to be a source of great pride. Plans are being developed for a number of members of the current Royal Yorkshire Regiment (the descendant regiment of the Green Howards) to hike the route from Otta back to Aandalsnes in 2026. Further details can be had from research@greenhowards.org.uk

Editor's note: Steve Erskine is a Researcher at the Green Howards Museum

Sir Anthony Herbert Everington

By Sam Everington

In 1950 my father aged 35 and a bachelor was living at home with his mother and working as a Barrister. My mother 12 years younger was a very glamorous air hostess working for SAS. They met at a party but in those days, as my mother recounted, you needed the captain's permission to go out on a date. The captain insisted that the whole crew would need to come along and that this was only possible if they were all collected in a Rolls Royce! The captain was teasing, but my father duly collected the whole aircrew in his Rolls Royce on the runway at Heathrow Airport! Geoffrey Everington and Laila Hovind were married in 1952 and soon the first of 7 children was born.

After one year of marriage my mother said she was very lonely and told my grandparents that she wanted to come back to Norway. They told her that she was married, and that that was not possible. However, they then spent all their money building a cabin on my grandparents' mountain farm for our family to spend every summer with them and our cousins. I still own that cabin with some of my siblings and cousins and every summer we are there reconnecting with each other and nature. What a fantastic legacy from my grandparents.

For many years my mother worked at the Christmas Bazaar at the Norwegian Church in Rotherhithe, an annual outing for all the family. She died soon after I was knighted by Prince William in 2015 for services to General Practice.



Sam's parents with their seven children. Sam is the one on the right in the middle row.

I was the middle child of 7 and left school at the age of 17 to be a welder at Rosenberg Verft shipbuilding yard in Stavanger. I came back to London after a year to train as a Barrister, but after qualifying I realised it was not going to be my life. I had been a welder aged 17 and a fellow student had died close to me when a crane fell and landed on him. It was a lesson for me that life is not a rehearsal and you need to follow your passions. So I worked in a pub for a year, did science A-levels and got into medical school and have never looked back.

I started as a single handed GP in a small shop in East London with an outdoor toilet and now have 4 surgeries and 55,000 patients, an amazingly diverse population with people from over 180 different countries. We like to say we have the world in the East End. I love my work and even now at 68 I walk into the surgery with a spring in my step. What a privilege to have such a fantastic job and career. As a young doctor I never wore a tie and my patients have always known me as Sam. I am passionate about working in partnership with patients and providing holistic care, not just the traditional medicine I learnt at medical school. Right from the beginning I provided a whole raft of different therapies. Now our health centre at Bromley-by-Bow

has over 100 projects under its roof ranging from art and garden therapy to financial and jobs advice, all supporting the wider determinants of health. The social prescribing that we invented at the centre, is now part of a network of thousands across the country and a growing movement across the world. Its focus is on what matters to patients rather than what is the matter with them. We have 3000 visitors a year from health services and governments around the world who come to learn about providing holistic care that reconnects patients to their families, communities and nature - much of which I learnt about on my grandfather's mountain family farm in the mountains around Kongsberg.

Sam's official profile

Sam is an Honorary Vice President of the British Medical Association.



Sam with his wife Linda outside the Norwegian Church

In 1999 he received an OBE for services to inner city primary care; in 2006, The International Award of Excellence in Health Care and in 2015 a Knighthood for services to primary care. In 2022 he received the Albert Medal from the Royal Society of Arts (Previous recipients include Marie Curie, Stephen Hawking and Winston Churchill). He is a member of the East London Foundation Trust board (a mental Health Trust), an Associate Director of NHS Resolution and is a Fellow and Honorary Professor of Queen Mary University of London and Honorary Vice President of the Institute of Community Nursing. Sam is a member of the Royal College of GPs Council and the Knights' Society and is co-chair with the King's doctor of the Charity



the College of Medicine. He is a non-executive board member of NHS England and is the President of the RCGP. Sam is also a trained woodcarver, day skipper, and speaks Norwegian. He trained originally as a cadet pilot in the RAF and lives with his wife Linda and children in the East End of London in the heart of his community.

Speaking of Trust: How Norwegian and British Politicians Win Hearts and Minds

By Will Coles

When politicians try to persuade us to vote for them, how do they win our trust? This question was at the heart of a recent research article I wrote comparing political speeches in Britain and Norway. My focus was on ethos; a concept from classical rhetoric that refers to how speakers project credibility, character, and trustworthiness. In modern politics, this is about

how leaders appear competent, authentic, and aligned with the values of their audience. And when we compare Norway and Britain, we see very different rhetorical traditions shaped by culture, media, and political systems.

Let's begin in Norway. With its proportional voting system and coalition governments, Norwegian politics places a high value on consensus and cooperation. Rhetorically, this translates into leaders who speak in the first-person plural *vi* and who highlight the achievements of their team or party rather than their personal credentials. This collective tone is so common that Norwegian communication scholars have called it "the Norwegian *vi*".

Take Jonas Gahr Støre, the current prime minister and leader of the Arbeiderpartiet. In his 2021 party conference speech, he said, 'Jeg tror folk ser at vi – og jeg – har samlet laget, har et program som er tro mot våre verdier og at vi har stått støtt i en krevende tid for partiet'. Note the subtle shift between *vi* and *jeg*: 'we - and I - have brought the team together'. Even when asserting his leadership, Støre embeds himself within a group effort. It's a rhetorical style that resonates with Norwegian voters, who tend to view leadership as a shared responsibility rather than a solo performance.

Contrast this with the UK, where politics is often defined by its adversarial tone. The first-past-the-post system favours single-party majorities and rewards bold, individual leadership. Unsurprisingly, British political rhetoric is more personal and combative. Leaders speak in the first person - I have, I will, I believe - and often define themselves against their opponents.

In his 2024 general election campaign, Labour leader Sir Keir Starmer regularly referenced his working-class upbringing with 'My dad was a toolmaker; my mum was a nurse', while Prime Minister Rishi Sunak spoke about his parents, a GP and a pharmacist, as his inspiration. These narratives are designed to build an emotional connection and to show that, regardless of current wealth or status, the speaker understands ordinary people's concerns.

But in Norway, this type of personal storytelling is rare in formal speeches. Both Støre and his predecessor Erna Solberg made almost no reference to their childhoods or family lives when addressing the public during their 2017 or 2021 conference speeches. Instead, parties share

such details in separate campaign videos or on social media, often in an understated and informal tone.

Solberg, for example, opened her 2021 party conference speech with a remark about the arrival of spring, but she quickly pivoted to a serious defence of her government's pandemic response, citing Norway's low mortality rate compared to its neighbours:

'I Norge har en tredel mistet livet sammenlignet med Danmark. En tidel sammenlignet med Sverige. En fjortendedel sammenlignet med England.' Her rhetoric was clear, measured, and grounded in facts. She spoke not of personal brilliance, but of collective achievement. 'Dette skal vi være stolte av,' she concluded. 'We should be proud of this'.

This contrast in style reflects deeper cultural norms. In Britain, political speech often relies on rhetorical flourishes: metaphors, contrast, alliteration, even humour. Debate is viewed as a contest, and successful leaders are often those who dominate the stage. In Norway, by contrast, speeches tend to be more colloquial, policy-focused, and modest in tone. There is no standard spoken Norwegian, and politicians frequently use their own dialects or regional expressions in their oratory. This contributes to a feeling of authenticity, without the need for personal narratives.

Interestingly, this rhetorical modesty has deep roots in Norwegian social democracy. Einar Gerhardsen, who served as prime minister for over 15 years after the Second World War, was known as *landsfaderen*, 'the father of the nation'. But he was also known for his plainspoken, accessible style. He embodied the values of *felleskap*, community, solidarity, and mutual respect, which continue to shape Norwegian political life.

Even in televised debates, Norwegian leaders tend to avoid sharp personal attacks. While Erna Solberg occasionally spoke in the singular, she almost always framed her arguments around collective action. Similarly, Støre closed his 2021 debate remarks not with a personal appeal but with a party-centred message: 'Norge trenger en ny regjering og en ny kurs. Da trengs et sterkt Arbeiderparti.'

Meanwhile in Britain, televised debates feature direct confrontation between leaders, with heavy use of I statements. In one exchange on illegal immigration, Starmer emphasised his experience as Director of Public Prosecutions, 'I've seen it done; I've been part of the operations to do it.' This assertive, personal style is a staple of British political communication. Whether it's a campaign slogan like 'Get Brexit Done' or a leader's plea

for trust, the British model prizes individual leadership, and increasingly, emotional storytelling.

In Norway, however, a leader is expected to reflect the nation more than define it. Personal charm matters, but it's not decisive. As one 2021 Høyre campaign video asked its ministers a mix of personal and political questions – from 'What's your favourite food?' to 'What's the most important thing for Norway?' – the goal was not to elevate the individual, but to humanise them and discuss policy. However, the former seldom influences the latter.

So, what does all this mean? In short, the way politicians speak tells us a great deal about the political cultures they inhabit. In Britain, leaders build trust through personal conviction and rhetorical force. In Norway, trust is built through consistency, community, and modesty. Both approaches aim at the same goal; *å skape tillit*, to create trust. But how they get there could hardly be more different.

'This Is Sámi Land': Visibility and Discomfort at Bodø 2024

By Rory Cassie

We left the pub and joined the horde of people flocking towards the harbour, many of whom were wrapped in thick winter jackets, hats, and scarves. Icy snow, long settled, crunched beneath our feet as we made our way eagerly to the seafront. The anticipation was palpable; this was no ordinary evening. Tonight, the eyes of Europe were on Bodø: a small, little-known city lying just above the Arctic Circle, often dismissed by southern Norwegians as ugly or provincial.

We trundled down to the end of Dronningensgata, one of Bodø's main streets, and were met with the sight of a striking wooden stage floating in the harbour. Towering LED screens lit up the night, displaying the Bodø 2024 logo and marking the opening ceremony of the city's year as European Capital of Culture. Thousands had already packed into the harbour square. Squeezing through the dense crowd, my friend and I joined others from the university, sharing in the mounting excitement of the evening.

After a period of rising anticipation, the tension finally broke. A low hum swelled into a powerful *joik*, as stage lights brightened to reveal a fleet of small boats circling the floating platform – each carrying a giant animatronic cod. Inside each robotic fish was a performer, and I recognised the foremost



Crowds gathered at the harbour to watch the grand opening of the Bodø European City of Culture: Picture credit: NRK, April 11, 2024

of them as John André Eira, known from the band, *Gabba*. As his *joik* came to a close, two actors – Reidar Sørensen and Hannah Schulte Strid – appeared on stage as a grandfather and granddaughter. They narrated a story centred around otoliths – tiny calcium deposits found in cod, which can be read to determine the fish's age and living conditions. Through this metaphor, they began to 'tell the story of Norway', as the journalist Jessica MacDonald wrote for the magazine *Inuit Art* (2024).

The performance was framed and guided by these two characters, all the while a troupe of backing dancers – some dressed in *gákti* (Sámi traditional dress), others in reindeer costumes – moved around them. As a friend of mine aptly observed in a later Facebook post: 'The Sámi were in charge of dancing and singing, but not of telling the official narrative of the ceremony' – which he surmised as 'very indicative indeed.'

As the event drew to a close, the acclaimed North Sámi singer Ella Marie Hætta Isaksen took to the stage. Most seemed captivated by her performance, though I do recall hearing murmurs of complaint – 'another Sámi performer?' Almost as if in response, Ella Marie ended her performance by opening her jacket to reveal the words 'This is Sámi land' inscribed inside. An audible gasp rippled through the crowd.

The large screens displaying the ceremony abruptly cut away,



This is Sápmi land: Ella Marie Hætta Isaksen at the opening of Bodø 2024 [Photograph]. Picture credit NRK.

underscoring the discomfort that her words had stirred. Before leaving the stage, she paused for a moment to ask the crowd pointedly: “We are standing on Pite Sámi and Lule Sámi soil, but have you heard a single Pite Sámi or Lule Sámi word from this stage tonight?” Her question was met with uneasy murmurs and scattered sighs. One comment, which I overheard nearby, stuck with me: ‘Er vi alle samiske nå?’ (‘So, are we all Sámi now?’).

This moment seems emblematic of a broader challenge facing Bodø, and Norway more broadly, as the state reflects on the work of the recently concluded Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Given the limited public knowledge of the historic Sámi presence in Bodø and its surrounding areas, it can feel both surprising and, for some, even threatening to have their understandings challenged. Consequently, Bodø is marked by a persistent disconnect, in which the presence of a local Sámi population stands in tension

with historical narratives that have long centred Norwegianness while erasing minority visibility.

This disconnect was something I encountered repeatedly while living in the city. Working first in a bar and later in a café, I was often met with disbelief when I explained that Bodø was the focus of my research. Several customers expressed surprise, and even incredulity, that I was studying Sámi issues in a place they believed had, at most, a minuscule Sámi population; others insisted there were no Sámi in Bodø at all. As one close friend remarked, the Sámi community in Bodø has come to function almost like a ‘secret society.’

This cognitive dissonance did not arise in a vacuum. Rather, it is a legacy of Norwegianisation: the century-long state-led project of assimilation that sought to incorporate Sámi, Kven/Norwegian Finn, and Forest Finn populations into the Norwegian national corpus. Through the sustained foregrounding of Norwegian perspectives, this process promoted homogeneity while relegating minority concerns, histories, and presence to the periphery.

In the wake of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, it is clear that significant work remains to bridge the resultant ‘knowledge gap’: the gulf between Sámi, Kven, and Norwegian Finn experiences on the one hand, and the majority population’s historical awareness on the other. It is within this context that Ella Marie’s unscripted intervention must be understood.

In the weeks following her performance, debate raged. ‘Was it too much Sámi?’ journalist Per Christian Selmer-Anderssen (2024) reports overhearing while walking the streets of Bodø. ‘It’s not Sámi Culture Year we’re opening, but Bodø 2024,’ added two older men, as he quotes in his article for *Aftenposten*. By going against the grain of sanctioned visibility, Ella Marie’s act was interpreted by some as a threat – as if she were claiming the land as exclusively Sámi. Seen against the backdrop of the ‘knowledge gap’, however, her words can be better understood as an attempt to make a long-erased presence visible.

First Year Report 2024-2025 of Tromsø Scholarship-holder

By Emer Flanagan

My first year in Tromsø has officially come to an end, and now I'm faced with the daunting task of summarising it all into one report (and sadly not a 1000-page novel).



Emer ringing a blue tit chick

When I first arrived in Tromsø last August, I was incredibly nervous and apprehensive. Would I fit into Norwegian culture and society? Would I be able to find friends in a city where I knew no one? I'm happy to say all my fears were completely unfounded. Tromsø is not only a beautiful Norwegian city but also a world class international hub of research. As a result, the culture and people here are incredibly welcoming to foreigners such as myself. I quickly found my place within a close-knit group of Master students, made up of friends from Norway (of course), France, Austria, Germany, the Netherlands, Italy

and Sweden. I'm looking forward to next year, when we will all be reunited after summer and can continue our adventures together.

Having a great network of friends really helped me get through the long polar nights and made celebrating the return of the sun with *solboller* that much sweeter! It was also a pleasure to be in Tromsø in February during the annual Sámi week festival. The lassoing tournament and reindeer racing were personal favourites, as well as seeing all the competitors in their traditional dress. The 17th of May was also a highlight, when the streets of Tromsø were filled with parades, food stalls and people wearing their best Bunads. Now that the warmer weather has arrived in Tromsø, I love to go down to Telegrafbukta and go swimming with friends. Jumping off the pier into the cold Norwegian sea is definitely refreshing, but I'd strongly recommend packing a thermos of hot tea for afterwards.

During the first year of my MSc in Arctic Animal Physiology I was also lucky enough to go on a field course to Svalbard, where I learnt and observed first-hand the struggles and dangers of giving birth in the

Arctic. Seeing the roaming Svalbard reindeer and climbing to a Little Auk colony made me feel like I was in a David Attenborough documentary – every biology student's dream. I've worked hard this year to integrate myself into the Arctic Chronobiology and Physiology department at UiT, for example by working as a research technician maintaining snail populations (*Arianta arbustorum*) which are being used to investigate the evolution of biological clocks, as snails are moving slowly (very slowly) northward due to climate change.



A Little Auk in Bjørndalen, Svalbard, photographed by Emer

I also stayed in Tromsø after the academic year ended to assist with the 2025 Great Tit Project breeding season, which investigates possible behavioural and phenotypical

adaptations in Arctic tit populations, relative to mainland Europe. This was an intense but invaluable experience which gave me the opportunity to learn bird handling skills, and I can be seen handling a Blue tit chick in the collage included in this report. The days were long (midnight sun), the mosquitos were abundant, but the team and birds were wonderful.

When I return in August, I will begin working full-time on my Master thesis project. This will involve characterising the light wavelengths that are perceived by the non-visual light detection pathway in reindeer (*Rangifer tarandus tarandus*). When light enters the mammalian eye, it is detected and perceived by two systems: the visual system, through which we see our surroundings; and the non-visual system, which uses environmental light conditions to inform physiological time-keeping processes. For example, many mammals are seasonal breeders – like reindeer, who go into rut in late September. Changes in day length detected by the non-visual system are what trigger physiological (e.g. hormonal) changes that result in rut. I have taken various animal research ethics courses this year in collaboration with the University of Bergen and the Norwegian University of Life Sciences (NMBU) to prepare for this project and have also worked on the habituation and taming of three reindeer to be used in my study. Writing this report has made me reflect on my achievements and experiences this year, which are all the result of the generous support offered by the Anglo-Norse Society. I am filled



Emer with a female calf during harness training

with pride for myself, and gratitude for the Anglo-Norse society: Sincerely, thank you for supporting me during my studies in Tromsø. I am also filled with excitement for the year to come, wondering what I will find in my research project and also what Norwegian adventures I'll get up to next.

First Year Report for 2024-2025 of RCM Scholarship-Holder

By *Edvard Adde*

I came to the RCM after completing a B.Mus at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland in Glasgow, and before even coming to Scotland I had sung with the Norwegian Broadcasting Boys' Choir, *Sølvguttene*.

I would like to thank the Anglo-Norse Society so much for their support this year. I've had an amazing first year at the Royal College of Music and that would not have been possible without its support. Since coming down to London I have been given a lot of opportunities and I have had so many amazing experiences that I would not have been able to enjoy if it wasn't for the Society's help.

It's particularly been a great last term at the College. I traveled



Edvard with Paul Gobey at the recital he gave at the Norwegian Ambassador's Residence in October 2024.

This summer I will perform the role of Nemorino in *L'elisir d'amore* by Donizetti on the 5th July with St Paul's Opera here in London. I would like to thank the Society again for its support. Coming to London has been an amazing experience. The support and help I get from RCM has been invaluable and that would not be possible were it not for the Society

First-Year Report of 2024-2025 Dame Gillian Brown Scholarship-Holder

By *Catriona Beckett*

Last August, I arrived at Oslo Airport carrying a large suitcase and backpack filled with my best art materials, winter thermals, and other essentials for the first term of my Master's degree in Fine Art at Kunsthøgskolen i Oslo (KHiO). Having visited Oslo once before in 2017 - wandering along the river beside the former textile factory - it felt surreal to return years later to begin the very course I had dreamed of then, now housed in that same building, transformed into an art college. Thanks to the generous Dame Gillian Brown Postgraduate Scholarship awarded by the Anglo-Norse Society, I have been able to focus fully on my studies while immersing myself in Norwegian culture and everyday life.

During my first year of the MFA, I have established connections within the Norwegian art community, developed my creative practice, and presented my first solo exhibition. I have long been drawn to Norway, and to Oslo in particular, due to its vibrant cultural life and strong artist-led scene, with numerous galleries and exhibition openings taking place each week. I was also motivated to study in Norway because of my long-standing fascination with Norwegian artists and musicians, ranging from

classical composers such as Edvard Grieg and his mythological influences, to contemporary musicians like Biosphere, as well as visual artists from Edvard Munch to contemporary abstract painters such as Ingrid Toogood.

Within this context of Norwegian cultural influence, the MFA programme at KHiO has equipped me to work as an independent artist, professionalise my practice, and operate within both national and international contexts. The course offers extensive studio time within a supportive environment, alongside rigorous critical discourse fostered through dialogue with peers and professors. Throughout my first year, I have used this studio time to focus on the three core strands of my practice - painting, music, and poetry - through which I explore themes of abstraction, landscape, and folklore.



Catriona performing at the Ultima Contemporary Music Festival. To hear this piece, upload the link into your browser: <https://catrionabeckett.bandcamp.com/track/selkie-song>.

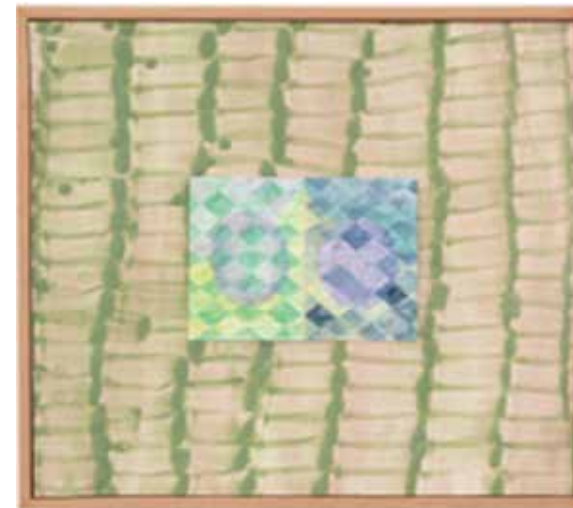
Given Ultima's reputation for showcasing experimental and boundary-

This research gained early momentum through a course undertaken at the beginning of the academic year titled *Between Site and Voice*. This week-long intensive programme was led by professors and artists working at the intersection of music, text, and performance, and focused on the creative possibilities of the performative voice in public space. Combining theoretical and practical components, the course involved tutorials, group critiques, independent studio work, and rehearsals. A particularly stimulating aspect of the course was the opportunity to present an artwork at the Ultima Contemporary Music Festival at Vega Cinema. This marked my first public presentation of new work in Oslo, the city where I aim to establish long-term artistic

pushing sonic practices, it was a true honour to contribute to the festival.

Through an intense period of focused work and critical feedback from professors, I produced a spoken-word reading centred on a mythological character within a landscape, accompanied by a synthesised soundtrack which I composed in Ableton. The work expanded my ongoing research into selkie myths - Scottish, Norwegian, and Icelandic folktales about hybrid human/seal beings. The performance reimaged the selkie as a marginalised voice, serving as a metaphor for a lost animal world and the experience of subjected womanhood.

Alongside my work in performance and sound, I have continued to develop my painting practice through the opportunities afforded by the MFA programme. In the second semester, I undertook a specialist course in encaustic wax painting at Muralverkstedet, an arts centre dedicated to supporting painters. There, I learned the ancient technique of combining beeswax, damar resin, and pure pigment to create vivid and tactile paintings



Untitled 2025 53 cm x 44 cm x 3 cm
Encaustic wax, gouache and gloss on paper, wooden frame. Shown at Akademirommet, Kunstnernes hus

Photo by Thando Sikawuti.

through the immediate application of hot wax onto a surface. This experience provided not only a historical and technical deep dive into encaustic painting, but also a chance to situate the method within Norwegian artistic traditions, drawing inspiration from artists such as Oda Krohg and Anna-Eva Bergman. I became particularly drawn to the organic process of making paint from raw pigment - material that is quite literally derived from nature - which I found deeply energising and creatively stimulating.

This exploration of encaustic painting directly informed my first solo exhibition, held last year at Akademirommet at Kunstnernes Hus. The exhibition presented a series of small- and medium-scale works on paper using gouache, acrylic ink, and the wax techniques developed at Muralverkstedet. It marked a pivotal moment in the evolution of my artistic direction since beginning my studies at KHiO, introducing my work to a new audience within a Norwegian context and helping to forge meaningful connections with Oslo's art community.



Stimulus 2025
 Size : 22 cm x 15 cm
 Materials : Gouache, acrylic ink and collage on paper.
 Photo by Thando Sikawuti

The paintings in the exhibition emerged through a balance of playfulness and intention, combining layered washes of colour with sporadic, automatic drawing. They were shaped by fleeting encounters with Oslo's landscape - from patterns in the urban environment to the morning light observed during my walk to the studio. Bringing these

influences together in a public presentation was a significant and affirming moment in my artistic development.

Overall, this first year has been one of foundational integration: building relationships within the Norwegian art community, deepening my interdisciplinary creative practice, and presenting my work publicly. The support of the Dame Gillian Brown Scholarship has been instrumental in enabling this, allowing me to strengthen my connection to Norway and to continually draw inspiration from its rich and dynamic cultural life.

Did you Know?

By the Editor

When I went into my local cheese shop in Cambridge, I was surprised to see in the display cabinet a cheese described as 'Nidelven blå' (sic). As



Image courtesy of Gangstad Gårdsysteri

I knew nothing about *Nidelven blå*, I looked it up when I got home and was amazed to see that it had won the overall prize in the World Cheese Award 2023, beating 4,501 other entries! Made by fourth generation farmers, husband and wife team, Maren and Ole Gangstad at Gangstad Gårdsysteri, only twenty miles from Trondheim, it is a handmade cow's milk cheese, aged for six months. It is described as 'buttery and rich. Gentle and plump when young; yielding, sweet, and spiced when mature.'

But this was not the only surprise I had when I started looking into prize-winning cheeses from Norway. Another blue cheese that had been crowned the world's best cheese was *Kraftkar* in 2016.



Image courtesy of Tingvolløst AS

Made by another family-run farm, the Waagens in Tingvoll kommune in Nordmøre, *Kraftkar* is made from 'unskimmed cow's milk and cream, with an injected culture of the mould *Penicillium roqueforti*'. To quote the TasteAtlas (sic), 'aged for 7 months, this robust cheese is known for its rich and creamy texture with blue veins running throughout, offering a balanced combination of sweetness and sharpness in its flavors.' *Kraftkar*

takes its name from the farm boy, Tore Nordbø, who, legend has it, was so exceptionally strong and large that he had to go through doors sideways.



But what about Norway's most popular cheese, *brunost*, or *gjetost*, which is perhaps not a cheese at all, since it is made of boiled whey. There are many local varieties, for example *Prestholt geitost* which is made totally of local goat's milk at Hol in Buskerud, and this won Gold (the category below the overall winner at the World's Cheese Awards in both 2022 and 2023).

Image courtesy of Holysteri



Perhaps one of the strangest facts about Norway's staple *pålegg* is that Eleftheria dairy near Mumbai in India has started making *brunost*, and not only that, it has been winning international prizes for it. In 2021-22 and 2022-23 it won Silver at the World Cheese Awards (WCA) then in 2023-24 it won Super Gold at the WCA when it was held in Norway, securing a place as one of the top 5 best cheeses in the world! The texture of brown cheese is reminiscent of the ubiquitous Indian milk sweet 'Peda.' Just as artisans do

with 'Peda,' Eleftheria embosses its Brunost with the initials of the company name in Indian Devanagari script – to make it uniquely their own.



The Bromley by Bow Health Centre
& the works of **Paula**, the resident stone sculptor