



Nordic Baltic Sub-  
Region Newsletter  
December 2020

## News from Denmark

### *Something Good has come from the Corona situation!*

District Guild Masters, coordinators and NC-members now have met twice on Zoom, and monthly meetings are planned through to the summer, when the next General Assembly will take place.



*District Guild Masters and coordinators meet on Zoom*

It has proven an excellent way to get to know one another. Ideas are put forward, activities launched and 'circles' established. We talk about all that is on our minds in a structured manner. The districts vary quite a lot, some with many, others with but few members. Some guilds are deemed to shut down, because of the weak number of members. Therefore, we must find ways to offer a place for those members wanting to stay within the fellowship. An exciting debate is in front of us. Our strategy to ensure that every one of our members can stay - and at the same time find accommodation for new members will prove a challenge!

### *New Editor for the Membership Magazine Sct. Georg*

Our membership magazine will now appear only 4 times a year, and we have a new editor. Benny Aros is a professional journalist, and he wants to create a magazine covering themes and collecting information also outside of our own circle. The task is exciting, and we hope that the magazine will be read and found interesting by a broader readership.

## ***The 11<sup>th</sup> European Conference 2023***

Plan for a trip to Denmark the 30<sup>th</sup> July till 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2023 + maybe a post conference tour in the midst of Summer.

Watch this space for further information in the next NBSR Newsletter.

*Text: Birthe Ømark, International Coordinator Denmark*

## ***Think Wild!***

In the district 'Gøngerne' (in the south east part of Sjælland), we started thinking wild a couple of years ago. The reason was that we thought something had to be done for the guilds to develop and, at the same time, also attract new members.

The title came to us from title of the book written by Director of the Danish National Museum, Rane Willerslev. Here, he writes about how his involvement in developing organizations. He even states it is OK to fail.

We started our development project with a workshop where we discussed what to do. We also tried to make some small videos with our mobile phones. We then realized that we would have to work more on that. So, on the second workshop in August 2020, we got at professional to teach us how to make a video film (recording, cutting, adding music/speech etc.).

The objective of Think Wild! is to make us more visible, and that is possible virtually by posting videos on Facebook for instance.

We also become visible through podcast about the Sct. Georges Guilds. So, two of us, the District's Guild Master and Development Secretary, joined an e-learning course of how to make a podcast. There is so much to think about when making a podcast, but we do improve every time we try. We expect to be able to post a few of them on the internet during spring 2021.



*Lone and Inga producing podcast*

We also get exposure through local activities. Here we invite citizens in the local area to partake. We have recently decided to do this jointly in the District. This means that each guild (7 of them) will make an action plan for a day in the open, taking inspiration from UN's Sustainable Development Goal no. 15: "Life on land".

We will meet this spring and present the plan and hopefully get help from the other guilds. The goal is to organize an "Eat-Out-Day" possibly assisted by a local nature activity leader. We will learn what edible things we can find in nature, combine them with other ingredients to make a meal that can be cooked on open fire. At the same time, we will try to increase awareness about life in the natural environment. Could be by building insect hotels, make the subject about biodiversity an interesting issue.

So, while we go about looking for things nature has on offer to eat, and observing life among plants and animals, why not have a conversation with the participants about what we can and will in the Sct. Georges Guilds? Fingers crossed - this might lead us to new and maybe younger members.

*Lone Erkmann & Inga Gustafsen/  
Gøngernes District /SGG Denmark*

### *Peace Across the Borders*



Because of COVID - 19, we had to cancel sending off the Peace Light in Denmark from the catholic church of Our Lady in Aarhus.

We hope and expect that we can take up this countrywide project again in 2021. And it has already begun, as the 2020 flame from the Nativity Grotto in Bethlehem will be passed over from the German Scouts to the Sct. Georges Guilds of Denmark on German/Danish border on 20.12.20, and the following day this flame will be used refresh the one burning in the Church of Our Lady in Aarhus.



*The Peace Light at our Lady, Aarhus 1*

Here, or at the Church of St. Laurentii in Roskilde, where a secondary flame is burning, the flame is available for every guildmember to collect. Many guilds have made use of this opportunity to give the flame locally in churches or other places, where it is tradition to use the flame on the First Advent Sunday or other events during December, often involving local scouts and guides.

*Lene Skriver, Peace Light Coordinator*

### *News from Finland*

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the year has not followed normal routines. A virtual campfire with the scouts was organized early August with around one thousand participants. During the summer, guilds have organized outdoor activities in smaller groups, no big events have taken place. Natural Parks have been very popular in Finland this year, also among guild members.

## *The Annual Membership Meeting*

The Annual Meeting was held on October 10<sup>th</sup> as a one-day event without the usual Guild Day. The National Vice President and one member of the old board had decided to step aside and were replaced with a new Vice President and two new members, thus the headcount of the board increased with one. The decreasing number of members is a concern for us and therefore a working group for recruitment of new members and marketing of the movement will be established.

The meeting was streamed over Facebook for the first time.



*The new Board*

## *Fellowship Day*

No big Fellowship Day was organized, but the guilds organized smaller gatherings, some of them outdoors.

## *50 Years Anniversary*

The Nypon Guild in Kauniainen celebrated their anniversary in a modest way due to the pandemic.



*The Nypon Guild*

## *Peace Light*

The Peace Light from Betlehem landed in Turku on November 20<sup>th</sup> and started to spread over the country. For each year it is spread wider and we hope that this will be the case also this year although not many events, where it is usually distributed, are organized this year.

*Text: Viveca Ståhlström, IS Finland.  
Photos: copied from Pyhä Yrjänä S:t Göran*

## *News from Iceland*

We wish everybody a nice Advent and a Happy Christmas in this strange time of the pandemic. Here in Iceland the situation has been relatively good. Until 12th January we are allowed to meet 10 people, and a few more in restaurants and shops. As of 9th December the rules became a little more relaxed, but that may change in the new year. Hopefully, we shall begin vaccination early next year.

The guilds have not had any gatherings since March, except for a few meetings during the summer. In Hafnarfjörður and Akureyri, other activities have been possible, in spite of the restrictions, as described below.

We see the light in the end of the tunnel, and the Peace Light was collected in the nunnery in Hafnarfjörður, but in a manner that differed from the usual. Five of us gathered there to receive the Flame, and appealed to our other guild members to light a flame at home and remember all whom they had been unable to meet during the year.

We look forward to May 2022 to our Nordic-Baltic gathering.

Regards to you all from all the guild members of Iceland.

### *News from St. Georgsgildið in Hafnarfjörður*

St. Georgsgildið in Hafnarfjörður was founded in 1963 - fifty-seven years ago. The guild has about 70 members and the guild has been active all these years, although of course there have been some ups and downs in the activities during this time. In 1965, the guild received 7 hectares of land by Lake Hvaleyrarvatn for use from Hafnarfjörður town and a few years later, the guild members had built a hut, Skátalundur, in the area. Work on the renovation and maintenance of the hut to this day, as well as forestry and various repairs, e.g. for camping, has been an ongoing project for guild members. Today, the scout area by Lake Hvaleyrarvatn and the surroundings are a unique outdoor recreation area that many people visit every day throughout the year to go hiking, running and playing

by the lake. Skátalundur is rented out for meetings and various events. In addition, scouts from Hafnarfjörður and elsewhere have used the facilities in the area for day trips and camping.



*Skátalundur at Lake Hvaleyrarvatn*

The year 2020 has been marked by the pandemic and activities in the guild has almost ceased since the COVID19 epidemic raged in March. However, two smaller projects have been ongoing throughout the year. On the one hand, work is being done on sorting and registering older documents of the Hraunbúar Scout Association to put them in safe storage in the National Archives. The other project is the construction of a toilet for the public on the land of the Guild at Hvaleyrarvatn. Both of these projects will be in the final stages at the turn of the year.

Just over a year ago, the idea came up that the guild would seek funding from Hafnarfjörður town to build a high-quality toilet for general outdoor enthusiasts near Skátalundur, in the guild area by Lake Hvaleyrarvatn. The guild received the funding and it was sufficient for purchasing materials. All work, however, was done by the hut-group of the guild. The guild sees this as a community project to serve the growing traffic of outdoor enthusiasts in the area and to create better

facilities for groups of scouts who want to use the area for day trips and camping. Work on the construction of a toilet house with two toilets and new sewage cleaning equipment began last spring and has been ongoing more or less to this day. The work is almost completed and the facility will be formally opened early next year. The supervision of the toilets will be done in collaboration with the town of Hafnarfjörður and Hafnarfjörður Forestry Association.



*The new toilet house at Skátalundur*

*Text: Ólafur Proppé, Guildmaster.  
Photos: Guðni Gislason*

### ***Illuminations on Graves in the Cemetery of the Town of Akureyri***

In 1964 the ISGF in Akureyri received a plan of the town cemetery. It is believed that there were about 100 crosses on graves at that time. A few years ago, the ISGF also received a plan of the cemetery at Lögmannshlíð.

In the first years, oak crosses were used, that had 10 lightbulbs soldered to wires.

Now the crosses are made of plastic tubes with only one large bulb. We get the crosses in units and put them

together ourselves. We put in a power cord, one bulb and place it on a stand.



*Connecting the crosses to the power supply*

For Christmas 2020, more than 3,000 crosses will be put up and lit. All work on the illumination of the graves is done on a voluntary basis and the proceeds go to support the work of scouts and charities in Akureyri.



*The cemetery at night*

*Text: Pétur Torfason and Fjóla Hermansdóttir. Photos: Tryggvi Haraldsson and Kristín B. Jónsdóttir*

**News from  Lithuania**

*Sorry, no news from Lithuania this time.*

## News from Norway

### General News

The rules and recommendations that have been introduced by the Authorities to restrict the Covid-19 pandemic have necessarily had an impact on the guilds' activity level. Increasing limitations in the number of participants and a general rule about avoiding unnecessary travelling have reduced the number of participants or caused planned meetings to be cancelled or postponed to 2021 or 2022.

In spite of the restrictions, many guilds have been creative and modified the meetings to what is allowed, with outdoor meetings and local and regional/national tours, hence the general activity level has still been reasonably good.

### Peace Light

The activity that was hit most severely was the distribution of the Peace Light, which was limited to a few activities. In Bergen, where we now have a Peace Flame continually burning, a Peace Light Service was held in Laksevåg Church. Among the participants were two Polish scouts who had travelled from Oslo to collect a flame to be used in Oslo - a very nice example of the symbolic importance of the Peace Light in international scout and fellowship work.



*International cooperation: Polish scouts collecting the Peace Flame in Laksevåg Church for transport to Oslo*

### Inspiration Weekend

In the middle of October, we organised an "inspiration weekend" at a hotel in the town of Drammen, near Oslo, with some 40 participants. Four of them were fairly young, former scouts that were invited to participate in our discussion of how to best inform young people about our activities and thereby attract new members to our organisation. We had also invited Birgitte Schiøll Heneide to give a speech on how to attract and keep members in an organisation of volunteers. Birgitte is vice president of one of our scout associations and is professionally working with this aspect also for other voluntary organisations.



*The participants of the Inspiration Weekend – widely spaced to obey the rules of social distance*

After this presentation, we went groupwise on a "walk-and-talk" trip along the banks of the Drammen River, with discussion and exchange of ideas on how to better reach new, potential members. The result was an active and inspiring

exchange of experiences, ideas and advice on this very important issue.



*Exchange of ideas on the banks of the Drammen River*

Additionally, since we are currently discussing a potential change of the name of our organisation, we had invited Ole Christian Apeland to present some general thoughts about this item. Ole Christian is a former scout and has a job providing advice on communication and the process of building a reputation as an attractive organisation. He said that it was beneficial for an organisation to have a name that indicated what were the organisation's key activities. He did, however, emphasize that the name in itself was less important than was commonly thought, and that an organisation's activities themselves were more important than the name.

Since the virus conditions are likely to have restricted the number of attendants, the presentations were recorded on video, and has been made available to all our guilds for internal use via the Internet. (Due to an agreement with the presenters, access to the videos is only for a limited time and is restricted to the Norwegian guilds only).

In addition to the activities at the hotel, we went to Sunday morning prayers in the nearby Strømsø Church, with a reflection on hope amidst climate

problems by our secretary, Ivan Chetwynd.

A common view among the participants was that the meeting was quite inspiring and a good contribution to our ongoing campaign to improve our efforts to inform potential new, younger members about our organisation and our activities.

*Text: K. Jorde, IS Norway.*

### ***Autumn Trip in the Footsteps of BP***

In September, a small group of guild members who are interested in scouting history met on the Hamar railway station, north of Oslo. The invitation was for a four-day round trip in Sollia, an area between the Østerdalen Valley and the Rondane Mountains, where Sir Robert Baden-Powell spent trout-fishing vacations in 1911 and 1912. We were received by Øystein Gonsholt, an active scout master in Ringsaker Scout Group and chairman of the Norwegian Scout Museum.

The first stop was the Scout Centre in Hamar, where former Norwegian Fellowship President Harald Pettersen proudly showed us the results of recent improvement work. The next stop was the railway station of Atna in the Østerdalen Valley, where Øystein served cinnamon rolls and coffee - and the history telling got a proper start.

In both 1911 and 1912 BP started his trip to Norway by ship. After a couple of days at sea, he finally arrived in Oslo (then named Christiania), lodging at the Victoria Hotel, commonly used by English tourists at that time. The next day, he took the train via Hamar to Atna. He arrived at Atna late in the



evening of 7 August 1911, where he was met by his friend George Graves. In 1912 he also went to Atna by train, then travelling with his nephew Donald.

While we today can easily cross the Glomma River by a road bridge, BP had to cross the river by a self-service cable ferry, staying the night at the Atnosen Farm. The oldest farmhouses date back to the sixteen hundreds, and among the hunting trophies on the storehouse wall are 20 bear skulls that were already a two hundred years old when BP spent the night on the farm.



*Atnosen farmhouse: as seen today and as painted by BP*

From Atnosen the trip continued towards Sollia, where BP and Donald in 1912 had a long stop at the local church. BP made a water-colour showing Donald on a small hill beyond the church. It appears as if BP had a special eye for Donald, who lost his father when he was only one year old. BP had also lost his father at that age, hence they had that sad fate in common. Donald had also participated in the first scout camp of 1907.

At Sollia Church we were met by a local guide who told us the local history and showed us the church, a richly decorated timber church built in 1738.



*Sollia Church*

BP continued to the Uti Farm, which at that time was both a coaching inn and a sanatorium - a place where well-to-do city people and foreigners could stay and enjoy the fresh mountain air. Nearby was a sauna with was used for a number of tasks in addition to the steam baths: the drying of grain, meat and fish, and the production of beer and spirits, as well as simply offering a nice and hot location on the very cold winter days that are common in this area. BP naturally used the sauna for a steam bath. This most likely did not surprise the locals very much - although his subsequent skinny-dipping in the nearby waterfall may have caused some consternation.



*The interior of the old sauna*

On Friday afternoon we continued to Finstad Farm, possibly the climax of the trip, where the group picture of the participants was taken - just like BP in 1912 was photographed in front of the

same house! One of BPs well known water-colours "My camp residence in Norway" is painted near Finstad.



*The participants at Finstad Farm*

On Saturday, our means of transport changed to walking. After having been ferried across the Atnsjøen Lake, we continued by foot to the mountain lodge Bjørnhollia. After a quick shower we had a nice social gathering with an excellent three-course dinner, with time enough to enjoy the food and reflect on all our experiences. The next day we returned to Lake Atnsjøen, thereby finishing the trip through scouting history.

*Text and photos: Berit Roll Elgsaas.*

### ***Finnskogen tour***

"As long as you can dream new dreams, you are young." So said Åsta Holth.

Åsta Holth (1904-1999) was a Norwegian novelist, poet and short story writer. She was born at Svullrya in Solør in the county of Hedmark, Norway and was of Forest Finnish descent. Many of her written works are about the residents of Finnskogen. Holth published a total of 19 books. Her story was part of the program when 1. Lillestrøm St. Georg's Guild invited to a bus trip to Finnskogen in August.

Finnskogen - Suomalaismetsät ("Forest of the Finns") is an area of Norway and Sweden situated in the counties of Innlandet and Värmland respectively, named so because of immigration of Finnish people, the so-called

Skogfinner/"Forest Finns" that settled here in the 1600s.

In the original trip plans, there was a visit to the Finn farm Mattila in Sweden, where there have been overnight trips before, but this could not be done due to the border being "closed" by the rules during the pandemic.

Nevertheless, it was a fantastic trip in glorious weather to Finnetunet on Svullrya and to the beautiful garden, Leiråker, where Åsta Holth had lived. There was also time for a quick look at the family stone, Rantala, with all the Finnish families who came to Finnskogen once upon a time. Then came a big surprise: A mini concert in Åsnes Finnskog Church by Velmundsjøen.



*Åsnes Finnskog Church*

A good guide, Øivind Roos, kept us updated on everything we passed.

*Text and photos: Arve Urlin.*

### **News from Sweden**

There have been few Fellowship activities during the Corona period. Most guilds have met outdoors when the weather permitted or cancelled meetings. Walks and outdoor meetings

have constituted the most common activity.



*The Trollhättan Guild having an outdoor meeting in Sunnanå by Lake Vänern*

The National Committee has held their meetings by phone. We have decided to move the National Assembly from May 2021 to August 2021 in association with our planned walking tour in Skåne in southernmost Sweden. We merge the two activities, and hope that we shall not have to change the date once more.

Our website, which has caused us some problems, has got a new platform and a new web master, resulting in a significant improvement. Please feel free to visit it at [www.gillescouterna.se](http://www.gillescouterna.se) and see how nice it is.

During the autumn we have sent the Peace Light on its usual travel through Sweden. We do not know how much it will be used, but it will be available for those who want to use it in their local ceremony.

We have also started to work on the preparations for participation in a joint Nordic-Baltic recruitment campaign that is planned to be addressed and advanced in an "inspiration forum" in the coming Nordic-Baltic gathering in Iceland. The progress of the preparations was slowed down a little when it was decided to move the

gathering from May 2021 to May 2022, but we continue the work.

We long to meet again in our usual meetings and gatherings.

*Text and photo: Mariana Ceder, IS Sweden*