



Nordic-Baltic Sub-region

News Letter

June 2019

News from Denmark

Sorry, no news from Denmark this time.

News from Finland

The Annual Membership Meeting

This year the Annual Membership Meeting and the Guild Days were held in Kuopio on March 23rd-24th. Kuopio is situated at a big lake, Kallavesi, and is known for ski jumping among other things.

The Days started with gathering at the railway station where we were served lunch. From the station we went to Riisa, the Orthodox church museum, either by foot or by car. At the museum we had a very interesting guided tour and saw a lot of icons and other church treasures. There were several icons with St. George which of course interested us specially.



St. George icon

From the museum, some went to the Puijo tower to watch the lake district, unfortunately the weather was not on our side, it was rainy and a snow shower prevented us from the view we had expected to see.

The others went to the Spa hotel Kunnonpaikka where the Annual Meeting was also held. After the dinner at the hotel we gathered to enjoy the program a group of scouts with special needs had prepared for

us. They showed a video film of their activities and it amazing to see how well they managed with little extra help. Then it was to us to guess which scout songs they gave hints to, and the then sing them.



View from the Puijo tower

The Annual Membership Meeting started on Sunday morning with workshops based on ISGF themes: visibility, peace and environment. The workshop was chaired by Tiina Itävuori and Ritva Liinamaa. There were much discussion and now the National Board has several thoughts to work on. The official part of the meeting started after lunch with the annual points: economy report, activity report and elections. One special point on the agenda was a proposed change of the national constitution, but the meeting could not agree on the new wording, thus the present constitution remains valid and a working group will be appointed to prepare a new proposal before the meeting next year 2020. Some of the members of the national board were replaced on their own request or since they had served "full-time". We have a new NSGF president Juha Kosonen,

Harriet Meinander remains vice president, Tuija-Maija Arvola, Tiina Itävuori and Nanna Katavisto continue as members and two new members Hele Ali-Löytty and Viveca Ståhlström were elected.

Stamp Bank

The stamp bank in Finland has yielded a nice sum every year to the ISGF and the NSGF is grateful to Aaro Makkonen who has taken care of the bank for around 50 years.

Grants

In May, the first FSGS grants were appointed to five scouts who will participate in leadership trainings this summer.

Text and photos: Viveca Ståhlström, IS Finland

News from Iceland

Sorry, no news from Iceland this time.

News from Lithuania

Sorry, no news from Lithuania this time.

News from Norway

Fellowship Trip to Kenya 2019

Jambo hambari? Hi, how are you?

14 expectant Fellowship members went to Kenya to celebrate the «Thinking Day», or Founder's Day. Our tour leader and competent guide was Peter Kimita, previous District Scout Commissioner in Nyeri County and Assistant Scout Commissioner Kenya.

Upon arrival at Nairobi, we were taken to our hotel in Nyeri, which was our base. The next day we went to Embu, where a scout centre was built in 1990 with support from the Norwegian Scout Association. The centre is run as a hostel, has 10 employees, has meeting rooms for hire, and has its own Scout shop and café.

Life outside the towns is largely located along the roads. That is where people and the livestock live. That is where the shops, schools, hotels and the churches are located. A fascinating aspect were the great names. Roads called Temple Road og Morning Site Boulevard. Churches are called Happyland, Full Gospel Church, Living Spirit Ministry, and Wonders of God's Church. The local hotels were commonly the only buildings that had running water, offering the local people access to a shower.

In Nyeri, we visited a local nursery that opened in 2006, taking in

children up to 3 months of age. We had brought them cloths, playthings and some financial support, which was greatly appreciated.

The camp site Pigeon Park outside Nyeri was started in 2008 by Peter, who inherited the property together with his brothers. It covers 2.5 acres and is open all year. A great, spacious camp site, with a good obstacle course and a new education building, which has been built with financial support from the Norwegian Fellowship and the International Ambassadors Guild. For scouts staying at the site it is inexpensive, scouts from the slum areas in Nairobi are sponsored, and stay free of charge. Courses are also held, leader courses for boys 14-18 years of age are particularly popular. Courses for girl guides are also planned. We were entertained by a local school class with traditional attire, dancing the tribal dance «Couraging», providing a lot of sound and dance to demonstrate "Courage and Strength".



Viewing Traditional Tribal Dance at the Pigeon Park Camp Site

We also visited Hill Farm, one of Kenya's large coffee farms, extending from 800 to 2200 m.a.s.l.

A traditional farm was also visited. A proud farmer has sufficient income to keep his two daughters at grammar school. The farmer and his wife had two cows, supplied by a couple of calves and fields of vegetables. He daily delivered 20 litres of milk to the dairy, eggs and vegetables were sold at the market.



Learning about Tea Growing at the Traditional Farm

The Thinking Day, Founder's Day, 22 February, is always celebrated on the nearest Saturday, to allow scouts from other parts of Kenya to participate. Early in the morning of 23 February, we gathered at Paxtu for the flag parade, with scouts from the USA and thousands of Kenyan scouts. An estimated 10,000 in all. We marched with a brass band and singing from Paxtu to St. Peter's Church Graveyard, where a great ceremony of laying wreaths was held. We placed a wreath from the Fellowship.



Placing the Wreath on Lord and Lady Baden-Powell's grave

The small Paxtu house, where Lord Baden-Powell lived from 1938 till he died in 1941, was declared a National Monument in 2001 and is today a museum. The name means «Peace only» (tu = only in Swahili). The little room with a fireplace is decorated by scout scarves from all over the world, greetings and memorabilia from travels. From the lawn, the beautiful Mount Kenya can be seen, the second highest mountain in Africa.



Visiting Paxtu

After the Thinking Day celebration, we went to Ol Pejeta Conservancy, which is located on the Equator, and is both a natural park and an animal conservancy. We had a fantastic evening and morning safari, saw the Big Five; two lions padding in front of the bus made it an unforgettable experience.

From Ol Pejeta we went to Lake Naivasha, which is known for its many storks, pelicans, zebras and hundreds of hippos.

The baboons along the road closely watched our travel to the hotel in Nairobi and to Karen Blixen's house, now a museum. We then went to Kazuri, the bead factory, which employs 340 unmarried mothers. The porcelain beads are rolled and decorated by hand. The resulting bracelets, necklaces etc. are sold in own shops, supermarkets in Nairobi, and exported to the whole world.

In Nairobi we also visited St. John's High School, located close to the Pumwani Township. The school has seven scout groups and 250 pupils from the area. The school's motto is «God leads - We follow». Pumwani is a slum area with 2000 inhabitants, many craftsmen and small market stalls, but large unemployment, violence, drug problems and poverty. We visited St. Monica Kindergarten, and then had a display and song by one of Pumwani's scout groups. We also visited Safe House, a crisis centre for sexually assaulted girls in the slum area. The centre is run by Florence Keya, who is well known in and outside Nairobi for her work

with education and talks to strengthen the rights of girls.

The fellowship trip, all the days, was a great experience, we can only say «Sante Sana» - Great thanks for unforgettable days!

Text by Kari Palm, translated by K. Jorde. Photos by Ragnar Sturtzel, Lise Jorde and Knut Jorde

Finnskogen - Walk and Cultural Experience

Wednesday 12 June, 14 expectant Fellowship members entered the legendary Finnskogen area, which is the border area between Norway and Sweden, including the area from Trysil in the north to Eidskog in the south on the Norwegian side and the western part of Värmland on the Swedish side.

The immigration to this area started late in the 14th century and came primarily from the inner part of Finland. Fairly quickly, a Finnish colony was established at Finnskogen (the name means Finn Forest), where they cleared farm areas in what had until then been only very sparsely inhabited. The Finns differed from the original inhabitants: they had a different language and way of life, and they brought a different type of agriculture. They burnt down small lots of the forest and sowed grain in the still warm ashes, getting good harvests, particularly of rye. This kind of farming continued till the 1850-ies.

For five days, we were guests at the Finn farm Mattila. We first received

a presentation of the Finnskogen history, and a description of folklorist Carl Axel Gottlund, who has done a lot to collect and preserve Finnskogen memorabilia, and to promote the knowledge of the Finnskogen culture. Thanks to among others Kurt Eide on the Mattila farm, a great effort has been made to preserve the buildings of the Finn farms, and restore the cultivated fields back to their original form. On Mattila, we experienced an actively used, traditional open-hearth house - a good example of the Finnskogen Finns' use of open fire.



Receiving an Introduction by Kurt Eide on Mattila

Kurt Eide also gave us an introduction to the Finns' knowledge of the forest plants, and how they could be used in daily life. As an example, tansy in olive oil, with a little lemon herb added, is an effective mosquito repellent; the puff-ball mushroom can still bleedings; the root of the tormentil can help against prostate problems; fresh sallow bark contains acetylsalicylic acid; and the dry tinder from German tinder is very handy when alighting a fire.

In Finnskogen a series of walking routes have been marked, passing a number of old Finn farms on both

sides of the border. We walked a part of the 10-farm route, where we visited Jan Storberget on the Hytjanstorpet farm. Jan is one of the last who lives permanently on an old Finn farm, and has a few cows. Earlier, he also had sheep, but he had to discontinue that due to the risk of losing them to lynx, wolf and brown bear.

On the 7-farm route we started at Lomsen on the Swedish side in nice weather. After a short while, we arrived at Svartbäcken, and passed Østerby and Lebiko on the Norwegian side. We also passed Kissalamp and Valli on the Swedish side, where the houses are now falling down. At the end, we arrived at Ritamäki, which is a nature reserve with well-preserved houses and cleared fields.



Walking Towards Ritamäki

The last day was spent on the Joppolaleden route from Mattila. It has been cleared and marked by Kurt Eide, and passes 15 abandoned farms, many of which are hardly visible.

Close to Mattila is located the large Finn farm Juhola. Here, a lot has been done to preserve the place, with Kurt Eide in charge of the work.

The old fields, where trees had been planted, have been cleared again, and Juhola is now a nature reserve.



Arve Telling the Story of Lomstorp

We were also invited to participate in the inauguration of a new sauna at the Hällsjöen Lake a little further from Mattila. The sauna has been built by Finns, in co-operation with associations from Sweden, Finland and Norway, and representatives from all three countries took part in the ceremony.

Each night, a concert was organized for us by people associated with Finnskogen. On the first night, we listened to very nice song by Gunnbritt Gerhardson, who has 16 generations of ancestors back to the first Finnish immigrants. The following night we had a visit by Sinikka Langeland from Svullrya, who sang local songs and played the kantele, a zither-type instrument which is today the Finnish national instrument. On the last night, we were entertained by the troubadour Gøran Nilson.

Text by Jan-Erik Kihlgren, translated by K. Jorde. Photos by Jørgen Eger and J.-E. Kihlgren

News from Sweden

National Assembly 2019

Sweden held their National Annual Assembly 25 to 26 May in Karlstad. The new National Committee consists of National President Heinz Frohm, Helsingborg, National Vice President Mona-Lenah Nordberg, Karlstad, International Secretary Mariana Ceder, Trollhättan, National Secretary Inger Carlsson, Västerås, National Treasurer Leif Granéli, Kristianstad, and Committee members Regitze Waida Krenchel, Roberts-fors and Jan Tollsten, Falun. Mona-Lenah was a new member, all others were re-elected.



Some of the Assembly Participants in the Karlstad Square

A number of issues were discussed in the Assembly. Most effort was given to the discussion on the Peace Light Fund. The Fund has received insufficient financial contributions, hence the National Committee last year granted SEK 20 000. This year,

applications of a total of SEK 500 000 was received, therefore the National Committee decided not to distribute any money during the current year. Instead, it was decided to discontinue the Peace Light Fund.

Another item that caused interest was the number of annual issues of the Fellowship Magazine "Gillescouten". Previously, four issues were made each year. A few years ago, the number of annual issues was reduced to two. Two proposals to increase the number back to four were presented in the Assembly. Following a discussion, the National Committee proposed to appoint a working committee to present financial and practical possibilities for reintroducing four annual issues of "Gillescouten", and this was agreed.

Text and photos by Mariana Ceder, IS Sweden. Text translated by K. Jorde.



The Conclusion of the National Assembly

Future Activities

The next Fellowship walking trip shall be held in Degeberga in Skåne (Scandia) 26 to 30 August 2020

The next National Annual Assembly shall be in the town of Skövde, some 150 km northeast of Gothenburg.