



BRITISH POLITICS REVIEW

Journal of the British Politics Society, Norway

Volume 6 | No. 4 | Autumn 2011



Ties that unite

Sketches of the British-Norwegian relationship

CONTRIBUTORS

Clive Archer • Rachel Sweetman • Elisabeth Buk-Berge • Stig Inge Bjørnebye
Tony Insall • Kristin Flood Strøm • Lesley Riddoch • Adam Gallari

British Politics Review

Volume 6 | No. 4 | Autumn 2011

ISSN 1890-4505

British Politics Review is a quarterly journal issued by the British Politics Society, Norway. With contributions from academic and journalistic sources, the *British Politics Review* is aimed at everyone with a general interest in political developments in Britain.

British Politics Society, Norway is politically neutral and has no collective agenda apart from raising the interest and knowledge of British politics among the informed Norwegian public.

Editorial team

Øivind Bratberg [Editor]

Kristin M. Haugevik [Associate Editor]

Atle L. Wold

Jannike Elmbloom Berger

Postal address

P.O. Box 6 Blindern

N-0313 Oslo, Norway

Email

mail@britishpoliticssociety.no

Website

www.britishpoliticssociety.no

Print

Reposentralen, Oslo, Norway

Cover photo

Snow at the entrance to Number 10, Downing Street. Photograph taken on 2 December 2010. Crown Copyright.

Manuscripts

Within a relatively broad framework, *British Politics Review* welcomes articles on British politics and society, preferably related to the thematic area set for each issue (announced in the previous issue and on our website). Please contact the editors at mail@britishpoliticssociety.no

Subscriptions

100 NOK pr year

Please contact us at mail@britishpoliticssociety.no or visit our website.

Editorial

A quiet relationship

It accounts for little drama but plenty of warmth: the relationship between Britain and Norway has been quintessential throughout the long century of Norwegian independence. The alliance was sealed by the entry of a British princess to the Norwegian throne and by immediate diplomatic recognition. The relationship became a key pillar of Norwegian foreign policy, and London would later be a safe haven for king and government during the Second World War.

Proximity reflected shared political interests on the international scene, but also a shared past. Relations across the North Sea (although not always pacific) stretch back to the 800s and the first Viking settlements. Culturally and economically, Britain and Norway have always been close.

That relationship is, however, in continuous adjustment, an adjustment which has accelerated since the end of the Cold War. Foreign and security policy, for long the very basis for the relationship, is now changing both in scope and significance. As testified by Clive Archer's analysis in the present volume, security remains important to British-Norwegian relations, but the way in which it does is different from the Cold War years.

This is only one of many areas where relations between Britain and Norway is undergoing change, often quietly yet with wide-ranging consequences. At the same time, it is a partnership that is rarely subject to public attention, or debate. This is also the reason why British Politics Society decided to direct attention to the relationship throughout 2011 – firstly, through a seminar in June on "The forgotten partnership", secondly, through a forthcoming report analysing the relationship in breadth, and, finally, through the present issue of *British Politics Review*.

In this year's final issue of our journal, we offer an additional twist to the British-Norwegian analysis. Particular attention is devoted to Scotland's Norwegian affiliations, seen in Nationalist rhetoric today as well as in its nation-building of the past. Other articles range from student exchange across the North Sea to Tony Insall's research on the exchanges between Attlee's and Gerhardsen's Labour governments in the immediate post-war era.

Finally, two contributions account for cultural dimensions to the relationship: Stig Inge Bjørnebye offers his personal narrative on the Norwegian penchant for English football, while Adam Gallari sees Per Petterson's novels travel to the Anglosphere. A quiet, but multifaceted relationship indeed!

Øivind Bratberg and Kristin M. Haugevik, Editors

Contents

The game, pure and simple <i>Stig Inge Bjørnebye</i>	p. 3	Scotland's Nordic propensity <i>Lesley Riddoch</i>	p. 8
Norway and the UK: a defence and security perspective <i>Clive Archer</i>	p. 4	Meeting the challenges of the classroom: the Teach First initiative <i>Elisabeth Buk-Berge</i>	p. 9
Haakon Lie, Denis Healey and Anglo-Norwegian Labour party relations in the immediate post-war period <i>Tony Insall</i>	p. 5	Student mobility between Norway and England: end of the one way street? <i>Rachel Sweetman</i>	p. 10
Creating a national identity: Scotland and Norway in the 19th century <i>Kristin Flood Strøm</i>	pp. 6-7	Per Petterson and English language affinities <i>Adam Gallari</i>	pp. 11-12

The game, pure and simple

By Stig Inge Bjørnebye

There exists, apparently, a book of famous quotations by not-so-famous people, where I am accorded the following statement: "Some Norwegians appear to have a stronger sexual relationship to English football than to their wives." I cannot say with certainty when or in what context that statement was made, but I see no reason to deny it.

When reflecting upon my relationship to English football, I instinctively look beyond my eleven years as a professional footballer, back to the time of my childhood when I began to understand the significance of the English game. More than anything, football deals with feelings, and perhaps this is the simple reason why some people do not understand how important it is: they simply do not have those feelings.

Sometimes – or even quite often – people approach me to talk about football. I can live happily with that, although it is not always my own favourite topic of conversation. The surprising instances are those where people express their deep *dislike* of football. That takes me aback. Do they expect me to stand up and run to the defence of this complex game, its worldwide position, the boyhood dreams it evokes, and the passion that it generates?

My first memories of English football are also the most cherished. I remember how as a six- or seven-year-old I developed my first fixed routine: to run to the mailbox on the Saturday morning to dig into whatever information was available (the *only* information, as it were) about the exotic events to take place in England at four o'clock. *Tippeskampen!* In the left corner of the sports section the game would be accounted for in the most parsimonious way. Later in my life, I have never seen papers print anything with the same brevity and precision: who are playing, where does the match take place, TV at four as usual. Full stop!

Those ceremonial Saturday mornings, alone, barely dressed, in my father's boots, eager and apprehensive, is the closest I get to the emotions of childhood. As a memory it is sacred, reflecting feelings which were so strong that I could not imagine that life would have anything more precious to offer. A few years later I was introduced to a pornographic magazine. There is no



*Stig Inge Bjørnebye was a professional footballer in England from 1992 to 2002, spending the height of his career at Liverpool FC. He has represented Norway on 75 occasions and has, since retiring, been assistant coach of the national team (2003-06) and head coach of Start (2006-07). In 2009, he made his debut as author with *Løsrivelse (Aschehoug)*, a widely acclaimed account of his life.*

doubt in my mind that such digressions faded away whenever Liverpool FC was announced on a Saturday.

Some people say that becoming a professional footballer is the most widespread boyhood dream there is. That may be true, except for all those who would first need a roof above their heads or enough food on the table. Sometimes the two dreams run in parallel, and sometimes their fulfilment is also interrelated.

The English Premier League has, in terms of dreaming, become a vision closer to Hollywood. Where the generation of my parents admired Humphrey Bogart and Ingrid Bergman, today's young generation may have similar feelings for David Beckham or Ronaldo. But another transformation has also taken place, and this relates to the stuff that heroism is made of. Bogart and Bergman created dreams through performance and character, supported by hard work. The dreams about Premier League today are not equally virtuous and innocent. A cleavage has emerged between ambitions and the work required to achieve them.

I often ask young footballers what they want to do for a living. "Professional football", they say. "Why?" I ask. And something has changed when it comes to the responses that are given. More is about fame and material well-being, less about performance or the game itself. One may ask, relatedly, how a person like Paris Hilton can become a teenage idol. On the basis of what skills?

After having collected the paper on those Saturdays, I ran back and left it on the kitchen table to get out to play. I dribbled past all the fruit trees in our garden, I struck the ball at our garage (enough to make it fall down in the end), had a sandwich served through the kitchen window by my mum and continued playing till four. At that time, solemnity reigned in our home. The football game, herring and potatoes. Life was pure and simple. I knew nothing about the lives of the players, their wages, cars, houses, wives, lovers, parties, clothes, their latest linkage to a big club in Spain or hardly their haircuts on a windy day.

Has the combination of wealth and modern technology fooled both children and parents into skipping the basic needs as defined by Maslow? Is the need for nutrition, health, love and care no longer valid? Do we jump directly into the summit of his hierarchy, where self-fulfilment and consumption are all there is to it? I merely ask. And when self-fulfilment is obtained mainly through sitting in front of a computer screen we lose something important on the way. The running in the garden, the climbing of trees, and we even lose the important idea of *falling down* from a tree and perhaps even

breaking an arm. Today EU gravel reigns in the carefully arranged playground.

The most important driving force of my development as a footballer, and the one that took me to Liverpool FC, were the pastime activities I did on my own. The never-ending game in my own little world, the fine-tuning of spots to hit with the ball against the garage, and the sheer enjoyment of it all. I am eternally grateful that there was never any cyberspace to side-track my interests as a boy.

Meanwhile, the most essential narrative about David Beckham is one I have never seen referred in the papers, despite the extensive coverage that he gets. Icon, it is said. What is true is that Beckham caught the point in his own silent way. Yes, he was transported by helicopter to the training ground from time to time at Manchester United. Yes, he did pay Milan the odd visit to follow a fashion show rather than to play football. Yes, he is a handsome guy. But he is more than anything a great footballer. Friends and colleagues who have played with him confirm how he was always on time, prepared and focused. And when the training session was over and Sir Alex sent the players to the dressing room you would often find one man left on the pitch, practicing what he already did better than anyone in the world. David Beckham curled his free kicks and corner kicks, refining his skills. Then he went home, by helicopter.

He understood that it was required. He understood, literally speaking, that practice pays off.

"England, the birthplace of giants", Børge Lillelien famously quipped in his legendary commentary on the Norway-England game in 1981. To me, England will always be precisely that. It was where the game has unfolded, on the pitch but also in a much wider context, about the values it is seen to represent. I will also find my own heart in that game, in that country. I want to keep it like it was, pure and simple. Where footballers gave their teeth in every tackle, where a run-down pitch would not stop us passing the ball and where we had baked beans, scrambled eggs and toast before the games. I want to keep the smell of the dressing room – spiced sweets and detergent – just like I remember the smell of my first football boots, Adidas World Cup, which were placed on the bed-side table for two days before I dared besmirch them on the pitch. English football is purer than the way it is portrayed in newspapers and on TV. English football is not simply a dream. It is also a close and intense reality. To me it is the closest I get to myself as a child.

And it is my childhood that is the part of me that I least of all will allow to let go.

Norway and the UK: a defence and security perspective

By Clive Archer

Norway and the United Kingdom (UK) have much in common in their maritime histories, in their political and economic orientation to North America, and in their reservations about political links with continental Europe. The defence relationship between the two countries has been one of ebbs and flows but has always been close.

Norway and the UK had close defence and security links even before the signing of the North Atlantic Treaty in April 1949. Since independence in 1905, Norway looked to Britain as its natural protector. During the First World War, Norway had become what Olav Riste called "The Neutral Ally" of the UK. Nevertheless, the German invasion of Norway in 1940 and the subsequent Norwegian Campaign showed the difficulty of translating belief into reality. After the British withdrawal from Norway, the relationship entered a wholly different phase, with the Norwegian royal family, government, remnants of armed forces and merchant marine exiled in the UK. In May 1945, it was a British general who exercised allied authority in Norway for the month after German capitulation as Stalin had tacitly agreed that Norway would be a British sphere of influence.

With the 1949 North Atlantic Treaty, defence relations between the UK and Norway became institutionalised within NATO. This signalled the rise in influence of the United States in defence and security matters and the comparative weakening of the UK with regard to Norway. Still, Britain still played a significant role in Norwegian security during the period from 1949 to 1989 and, increasingly, UK policy, plans and provisions were centred on the northern-most part of Norway and the seas around that region.

In the 1950s the priority for NATO was the defence of Germany and continental Europe with the Norwegians being expected to hold the Skibotn line in North Norway in the event of a Soviet attack. In the maritime area, the British contribution was secondary to the US. However, the 1960s saw a more active British involvement, with exercises involving the defence of Norway. The move from



*Clive Archer is Emeritus Professor in the Department of Politics and Philosophy, Manchester Metropolitan University. He has written extensively on the Nordic region, international organisations, European integration and security issues. Archer is the author of *The European Union* (Routledge 2008), *Norway outside the European Union* (Routledge 2005) and *International Organizations* (Routledge, 3rd ed. 2001).*

"out-of-area" by UK forces meant a greater concentration on the defence of Europe, especially the "flanks" such as Norway. The Royal Navy took on anti-submarine warfare tasks in northern waters and British Royal Marines exercised in north Norway.

By the end of the Cold War in 1989, the UK was closely engaged in the defence of Norway. British land, sea and air forces were an important part of NATO's planned reinforcement of Norway and the defence of the Atlantic. Norway was successful in keeping the UK committed to the reinforcement of the Northern Flank of NATO and of Norway. With increased Soviet air and maritime power, the far north became of increasing interest for UK air defence, and military communications and intelligence.

The end of the Cold War changed the British-Norwegian security framework. Events in the world outside Europe—the "9/11" terrorist outrage, the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq—as well as those in southern Europe—the conflict in Yugoslavia—altered their security interests.

The UK's security interests moved from being mainly within Europe and the North Atlantic to being engaged "out-of-area" in Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya. The priority risks listed by the UK government in 2010 were international terrorism, cyber attacks, international military crises and major accidents or hazards, demonstrating the widening of the understanding of security. The government still had a preference for multilateral responses. Notably, it also wished to maintain an active presence at sea, with deployable capabilities across the whole conflict spectrum.

Norway also moved from the Cold War emphasis on the north to accepting a range of insecurities with Norwegian forces being involved "out-of-area". This journey was not straightforward. Norway's stance

did not change as quickly as other NATO states: Norway still wanted its NATO allies such as the UK to maintain a capability to reinforce Norway, should the need arise. However, Norway did increase modestly its own "out-of-area" operations, with missions in Afghanistan and, later, Libya.

Norway was still following closely Russian military activities in areas adjacent to its border and in 2010 the Norwegian defence minister, Grete Faremo, asked that NATO balance afresh its commitments between "home" and "away". This Norwegian core initiative within NATO was at first not welcomed by the UK. Nevertheless Norwegian perseverance paid off when London gave support to the new NATO strategic concept adopted in Lisbon in November 2010 that, in part, reflected concepts of a balanced NATO effort.

Furthermore, the centre-right government in the UK since May 2010 appears to have brought a closer relationship with Oslo on defence. Its approach to security issues increasingly spoke to Norwegian concerns. In the UK government's strategic defence and security review, Norway was designated as "one of our key strategic partners". The UK Secretary of State for Defence attended a meeting of Baltic and Nordic defence ministers in Oslo in November 2010, and the British prime minister invited the prime ministers from the Nordic and Baltic states to a meeting in Downing Street. This renewed closeness on defence and security was reflected in the joint UK-Norwegian statement by the two countries' prime ministers in January 2011.

It is a fair appraisal that British security interests and presence in Northern Europe have diminished since the end of the Cold War, whereas Norwegian interests have increased. Nevertheless, the official understanding of security has broadened in both countries with common interests in NATO's maritime strategy and energy security.

Despite these shared concerns, it is doubtful that a renewed British defence and security interest in the wider Nordic-Baltic region will be matched by increased UK resources at a time when defence capabilities are cut back and other deployments demand priority. There may, however, be an increased UK diplomatic interest in the region as the UK involves itself through multilateral institutions such as the Arctic Council and EU. Where these concerns gain a higher priority, the UK will certainly be able to build on its strong and mutually beneficial relationship with Norway.



The Nordic dimension. David Cameron delivering his speech at the UK Nordic Baltic Summit, 20 January 2011.
Crown copyright / the Prime Minister's Office

Haakon Lie, Denis Healey and Anglo-Norwegian Labour party relations in the immediate post-war period

By Tony Insall

In his valedictory despatch to the Foreign Office, sent before his departure from Oslo in November 1950, Sir Laurence Collier, the retiring British ambassador to Oslo, wrote that in 1945 it had "scarcely seemed possible that Anglo-Norwegian relations, then at the crest of a wave, should not subsequently suffer some diminution in cordiality".

He went on to explain why no such deterioration had occurred, despite differences over issues such as the provision of Norwegian troops for the occupation of Germany and later, fisheries policy, as well as concerns about the Norwegian foreign policy of bridgebuilding. He gave due credit to Foreign Minister Halvard Lange – and also to the way in which "members of the Norwegian Government have discovered, during and since the war, the affinity of their political and social ideas with those of the British Labour movement". The relationships, formed as a result of this affinity, played a significant role in the strengthening of bilateral links; a role which until recently has been very largely overlooked.

It was not always so. After the First War, when the Norwegian Labour party (DNA) was affiliated to the Comintern between 1919 and 1923, a number of Norwegians, including Aksel Zachariassen, were arrested in Britain for providing support to the Bolsheviks. The suspicions which their activities caused were slow to disappear and the British party kept their Norwegian counterparts at arms length during the interwar period: LO chairman Konrad Nordahl famously observed that when Norwegian trade unionists visited the UK in the 1930s, their British counterparts were not prepared to treat them to so much as a cup of tea.

The war made the difference, providing a basis for wide-ranging collaboration and bringing many Norwegian socialists to London, where they formed relationships which they subsequently maintained after their return to Oslo. The key link was between Haakon Lie (secretary of DNA) and Denis Healey (international secretary of the Labour Party), both appointed in the autumn of 1945. Each had authority and



Tony Insall is the author of *Haakon Lie, Denis Healey and the making of an Anglo-Norwegian special relationship 1945-1951* (Unipub 2010) and is co-editor of *The Nordic Countries: From War to Cold War, 1944-1951* (Routledge 2011), the most recent volume in the *Documents on British Policy Overseas* series.

influence which went beyond their party positions: Lie was chairman of the international committee of DNA which reported to the central committee chaired by Gerhardsen, while Healey had the ear of Ernest Bevin, the Foreign Secretary, who instructed that he should be given regular confidential briefings by the Foreign Office – an arrangement which has never been replicated.

Lie and Healey corresponded frequently and met often at international socialist conferences. Their collaboration, and that of their parties, was facilitated by Collier, who wrote to Bevin in March 1946 to encourage the development of closer relations between the two labour movements as a tool to facilitate closer bilateral relations. He was assisted by staff such as Rowland Kenney (the first editor of the *Daily Herald*, married to a Norwegian), his son Kit, and an active labour attaché, John Inman. It was Kit who arranged for Healey to visit Oslo in October 1947 to address several DNA meetings, a measure intended to counteract the impact of a visit by the outspoken leftwing MP Konni Zilliacus. Such blurring of diplomatic and party political boundaries (by both diplomats and senior party officials) occurred quite frequently in Norway during this period.

There were a few similar links in London. Olav Bratteli, the Norwegian labour attaché, often represented DNA interests to Healey. And Healey gave weekly briefings to Anders Buraas, the *Arbeiderbladet* London correspondent (and later, when Buraas was Foreign Editor, began to write a series of weekly articles for the paper, contributing over 700 in all).

There are many examples of the effectiveness of the party links (and Collier's involvement)

during this period. Two may suffice here. Healey and Lie co-operated closely on international socialist issues, helping both to win widespread acceptance of the Marshall Plan, and in time also to rebuild the International. And in January 1948, Lie asked Healey for an explanation of the thinking behind Bevin's Western Union speech, a significant step in the process which led to the creation of NATO 15 months later. Healey replied that he could not do this directly – though he provided a copy of a classified briefing document prepared for Bevin – but would arrange for a briefing in Oslo, which was provided by Inman (whom Lie described to the author as "so close as to be a member of the family").

However, the area where party collaboration provided the greatest practical value was in assisting the work of the secretive Information Research Department (IRD), set up by the Foreign Office in January 1948 to counter Soviet propaganda. The Labour Party (and especially Healey) was much involved in facilitating its work, particularly by nominating suitable contacts in socialist parties, such as Lie, who might be suitable recipients for IRD material and who might give it wide circulation. Lie rewrote and published in *Arbeiderbladet* in April 1948 an article entitled "The Real Conditions in Soviet Russia", based on the first IRD report. IRD produced many such reports which were similarly used by Lie, as well as material which he and his colleagues exploited for other purposes, including election propaganda.

These party links, established during the war and steadily developed thereafter, helped to create a climate of mutual understanding and confidence on both sides which made an important difference to both ministers and policy makers. Relations became so close that in August 1951, four senior British ministers including the Prime Minister, Attlee (who scarcely ever holidayed abroad) and the Foreign Secretary, Morrison, visited Norway on holidays which both Attlee and Morrison combined with party and official talks in Oslo.

Was this relationship unique? It is difficult to think of any other period when two parties could have simultaneously enjoyed so much power and authority, and have co-operated so closely across such a wide range of practical and political issues. Healey wrote in his autobiography in 1989 that "the period of the Attlee government marked the high point of the Labour Party's role in Europe". Both Britain and Norway benefited from the advantages which this brought.



Authority. Denis Healey on the campaign trail with Harold Wilson in 1974, decades after his work as international secretary of the Labour Party contributed to a particular link with the Scandinavian left.

Creating a national identity: Scotland and Norway in the 19th century

By Kristin Flood Strøm

We often think of national identity as an original essence, deeply imbedded in our past. However, identity is not a fixed characteristic that can be uncovered by peeling back the layers until the unchanging core is exposed. Identities are developed and are a result of a process whereby "who we are" is defined by several factors. Especially in the development of group identities such as national identities the social and political

situation is of great significance. This process followed a parallel pattern in Scotland and Norway and the birth of a national identity can be quite clearly pinpointed to a specific period: the 19th century, a period of significant changes in both countries. Many of the images and symbols that are most easily recognisable and closely connected with the two countries today stem from this period. The fact that our identities were in part created does not make them any less real for us today. Our identities are closely connected with our past, it is just a more recent past than we might think.

The historical background of the two countries and the two peoples are in many respects similar, and this is clearly reflected in the national identities. Norwegians and Scots have a strong sense of nationality and pride in their own history and culture. They are small countries, with a bigger neighbour that they have been at war with, ruled by and exploited by (the question of exploitation depends largely on your political point of view in Scotland). The relationship with this neighbour is a central theme in the history of both countries. The history of Scotland is intermingled with England just as Norwegian history is closely connected with Denmark and Sweden, having been alternately enemies, allies, union partners etcetera. The fear of being swamped by this neighbour resulted in a national identity that to a large degree focused on what separated them from the neighbour. There was a strong interest in and search for the countries' uniqueness, but it did not necessarily lead to a strongly expressed wish for political independence.

In the process of creating or recreating a national identity both countries turned to specific aspects of their culture and society. The rediscovery or sometimes



Kristin Flood Strøm holds an MSc by Research in Scottish History from the University of Edinburgh. She currently works as Senior Executive Officer at the Dept of Teacher Education and School research, University of Oslo.

downright creation of national symbols played an important part in this process: national dress, emblems, music, food, language, literature, mythology etcetera. One especially important field was history: the past was used for specific purposes in the present as the narrative was written, re-written and in many cases distorted for political or ideological purposes. In both countries there was an intense interest in history and a large increase in the number of historical publications. In Scotland the romantic revolution in history led by Sir Walter Scott was of great significance as well as the multi volume works on the history of Scotland published by Patrick Fraser Tytler and John Hill Burton.

In Norway this was paralleled by the semi-romantic works of Wergeland and Welhaven, the more research based works of The Norwegian Historical School (and their contemporary critic Ludvig K. Daa) and the political works of Ernst Sars. Historians and the general public were rethinking the present situation by appealing to the past and there was bound to be discussions and arguments as to which past, or what aspects of it, should be recalled. "Getting history wrong" is the precondition for nationalist history as it requires both collective remembering and collective forgetting.

During the 19th century Scotland developed many of the features which still influence the lives of modern day Scots. Scotland experienced a revolutionary expansion in towns and industry and by the 1850s it was second only to England in the rate of

urbanisation. This transformation changed the country from an agrarian and rural to an industrial and urban society. But the image presented was entirely different; it was romantic, firmly rooted in the Scottish past. The romantic cultural nationalism stressed particular aspects of Scottish life, culture and history, and ignored others. As such it was bound to present an unbalanced and lopsided picture, and was a paradox at several levels. Scotland was an urban society that adopted a rural face.

An important aspect of romanticism was the creation of the myth of the Highlands. Most of the familiar and distinctive symbols of Scotland are of Highland origin, such as tartan, the bagpipes and the kilt - Scotland came to be seen as a predominantly Highland country.

"Norwegians and Scots have a strong sense of nationality and pride in their own history and culture. They are small countries, with a bigger neighbour that they have been at war with, ruled by and exploited by... The relationship with this neighbour is a central theme in the history of both countries."

This image did neither reflect the realities of modern Scotland nor any genuine reflections on the Highland region itself. The picture that was presented was one of the past, not of the future or even present of the region. It was essentially an imaginary world. It cloaked the harsh realities of both Highland life and of Scottish urban existence with its increasingly false picture of Scotland as a tranquil and rural

country. The stress on the rural rather than the urban and industrialised might seem odd, but it is a process that is both natural and understandable. As Scotland became more like England it turned its focus to images and symbols that would underline the differences.

A central theme in the research about Scottish identity and nationalism in the 19th century has been the debate over the so-called "missing nationalism". The main question is why full blown nationalism did not emerge in Scotland, the failure to mobilise national identity in the kind of struggle for cultural emancipation and political independence that was so typical of other small European nations. Many of these nations were "history-less": intellectuals had to construct an emotional basis for their nationalism through purely invented traditions and non-existent feelings of a common identity. Scotland however, was an ancient nation with a lot of material from which an effective nationalism could have been brought forth.



Scottish Highlands. Just as in Norway, nature has performed a vital role in forging a Scottish national identity.

Photo: Richard Webb. Published under Creative Commons Attribution 2.0.

Creating a national identity (cont.)

By Kristin Flood Strøm

Today being both British and Scottish seems a dilemma for many Scots, but this dual identity was not felt as a contradiction by most Scots in the 19th century. These two identities were concentric, one did not necessarily exclude the other. The symbols of Scotland could celebrate both the union and Scotland's independent nationhood. National identity did not vanish; Scots retained a strong sense of Scottishness while also adopting a British identity.

The same argument can be made for Scottish nationalism. It did not fail, and it was not missing, it was simply of a different kind than the contemporary European norm; Scotland could assert its nationality within the framework of the union, and there was thus no need for any separatist nationalism. This Unionist-Nationalism would not last however and by the late 19th century Scottish nationalism moved in another direction.

The specific characteristics of Norwegian nationalism in this period were a result of tensions arising from Norway's two unions; the long term influences of the Danish union and the consequences of the union with Sweden after 1814. In this way Norwegian nationalism became twofold: Norwegian nationalism "fought at two fronts" as the cultural and the political strands of nationalism went down different paths. In this way the line between the political and the cultural strand of nationalism was more clearly marked in Norway than it was in Scotland, where the two elements were so closely connected that they are often difficult to separate.

The 19th century was a period of intense nation building in Norway, a tendency that was present in all fields of national endeavour. This process of nationalisation was directed mainly against the Danish influence and would result in a strong national consciousness, a general identity, a unified cultural heritage and common national symbols. Norwegian society was of a fairly uniform ethnicity, but national identity was nevertheless a problematic issue in the new nation state after 1814. The development of a uniform Norwegian identity demanded that similarities were underlined and differences disregarded.

By the 1840s an idealised peasant culture had been established by the urban elite as the real and true Norwegianness. But many elements of this "rediscovered" national culture had been imported from abroad via the cities a couple of generations earlier (such as the decorational

rosemaling). Thus, as a great paradox, many of the strongest symbols of Norwegian national culture had foreign roots, some having been part of Norwegian culture for under a century. It was their adjustments to Norwegian specifics that made folklorists and historians able to nevertheless declare them as thoroughly Norwegian nonetheless. It was the configuration that made these non-national inputs Norwegian.

From the middle of the 19th century political nationalism grew stronger in Norway, and this was directed solely towards Sweden, as Denmark posed no threat to Norway's political sovereignty. Although cultural nationalism had been directed mainly against the Danish influence, it still became an important factor in the political struggles with Sweden. The powerful cultural nationalism backed up political nationalism; it was a precondition for the growing resistance towards Sweden. Cultural and political nationalism became more closely connected, as it became a movement for popular democratisation and for national liberation in one composite political current.

The 19th century was a decisive period in the development of national identity in both Norway and Scotland. At the critical phase in the development of identities they were experiencing the modern breakthrough, and in this process they both harked back to the past. Cultural elements were important in the creation and consolidation of identity

as culture and history in particular became source books that nation builders could draw on. Searching for continuity in times of change, two modernising and urbanising countries adopted a rural face, the face of the old historical nation. A main aim was to underline the differences with England and Sweden respectively, and these differences were most noticeable through a reference to the past. Historical research was essential to the nation building agenda:

historians emphasised the historical continuity of the nations by focusing on their Golden Age. In this way they showed how these old and once powerful nations deserved a place in the contemporary world. History became a way of legitimising the countries as nations; the roots showed that they had an ideological right to a distinct existence.

"The 19th century was a decisive period in the development of national identity in both Norway and Scotland. At the critical phase in the development of identities they were experiencing the modern breakthrough, and in this process they both harked back to the past."

There was a strong tendency in both Scotland and Norway to focus on civic pride and cultural continuity, rather than on grievances that were such powerful and emotional issues in other nationalist movements. Even if Scotland no longer had a separate Parliament, Scottish law, Church and education system was deemed to be highly significant to the continued existence of Scotland as a separate nation. In Norway the civic element was more complicated as all the political institutions had been situated outside the country and had been controlled from abroad for a considerable number of years. But as a result the significance of the new

Norwegian Parliament was seen as all the greater. And most historians stressed that even if Norway had had no serious political influence in the Danish period, the abstract ideas of freedom and equality had lived on in the people, providing a line of civic continuity.

The parallel development in the 19th century did not last and in the early 20th century the roads of Norwegian and Scottish nationalism diverged. With the dissolution of the union with Sweden in 1905, the political strand of Norwegian nationalism more or less died as it had achieved its goal. In Scotland however, political nationalism would continue to grow over the course of the century.



The national home. *Husandakt (De ensomme gamle)* by Adolph Tidemand. Oil painting, 1849.

Scotland's Nordic propensity

By Lesley Riddoch

Scottish voters look set to vote on independence from the rest of the UK in a referendum in 2014. If Nationalist First Minister Alex Salmond has his way, a third option of "devo max" will be added to outright independence and the status quo allowing Scots to opt for full control of tax and economic policy while refraining from cutting all ties from the UK. It's not yet clear if that third option will be put, or even allowed, as an alarmed UK government threatens to take over the whole referendum process. But since the SNP's landslide victory in May 2011, the question is being taken seriously north of the border – how would an independent Scotland manage itself? What would be different about a uniquely Scottish taxation and welfare system?



Lesley Riddoch is a Scottish political columnist, broadcaster and author. She is a regular contributor to the columns of the Guardian and the Scotsman and was shortlisted for the Orwell Prize for Political Writing in 2006. Riddoch is presently doing a PhD comparing the cabin traditions of Norway and Scotland as part of the newly formed North Atlantic Research Group. She is also a founding member of the thinktank Nordic Horizons - see www.nordichorizons.org

The intriguing aspect for Scandinavian observers of this debate is that there is such an obvious Nordic dimension to it. Could the Nordic Model serve as a new social and economic template – whether Scotland votes to become Europe's newest independent state or remains Britain's most highly devolved national region?

Thanks to her geographical, political and historical position within Northern Europe, Scotland has always had a dual identity. Since the Treaty of Union in 1707 Scotland's formal position within the UK has defined it as remote, small, relatively infertile, leftward-leaning, northern and Celtic.

But arguably, Scotland could also be viewed as the most accessible, second largest, most socially conservative, fertile, southern part of the Nordic region. In reality, the land of Picts and Celts once ruled by Norwegian Vikings is a bit of both. Veteran English politician Peter Shore once observed that Scots-born Labour Party leader John Smith would struggle to win votes in the south-east because, "he was too Nordic to understand southern greed."

Throughout 17 years of Margaret Thatcher's Conservative government – and the Major administration which followed – Scots voted Labour, against national trends. The Iron Lady's belief in competition, de-regulation and sale of public utilities went down like a lead balloon in Scotland and resulted in the removal of every Conservative MP at the 1997 General Election.

But even though Tony Blair and New

Labour won, Scots were determined not to be outmanoeuvred by conservative English voters ever again. The extra-parliamentary Constitutional Convention that prompted the 1999 Devolution referendum was positively Nordic in its breadth, earnest intent and inclusiveness – boycotted only by the Scottish Nationalist Party who would, within a decade, become the main political beneficiary of devolution.

But devolution has been a disappointment for many – "not being English" is not a good enough *raison d'être* for a new policy or an expensive new parliament.

Alex Salmond has been the first to grasp the thistle. He intends to craft a distinctive economic base by avoiding nuclear energy and generating (the equivalent of) all domestic electricity from renewable sources only by 2020. He wants to create a Renewables Fund for future investment. He believes Scotland's unsurpassed wind, wave and tidal resources can be harnessed to supply the home market whilst oil and gas reserves can become valuable exports. The parallels with Norway could hardly be stronger.

During a 2009 speech in Edinburgh about the political consequences of climate change and the new north-east passage around Russia, Norwegian Foreign Minister Jonas Gahr Støre appeared to reciprocate; *"When I talk of the High North I include Scotland. There is a North Sea community based on past links and present interests and Scotland is in it. The High North is not about individual states but about a developing part of northern Europe. Ecosystems, migration flows, technological communities all make more sense when you are dealing with wind, wave and sun – they don't observe national boundaries. It's only with oil and gas that boundaries matter."*

And yet, boundaries do matter. In 2007, Alex Salmond made a speech memorable for his mention of the "Arc of Prosperity". Iceland, Ireland and Norway – he said – were three examples of small, dynamic, northern nations whose prosperity Scots could hope to share if they controlled all the policy levers that come with independence.

Within a year Iceland and Ireland had gone belly-up, the Arc of Prosperity was dubbed the Arc of Insolvency by critics and Scotland's banks were saved from Icelandic-style meltdown only by the intervention of Big Brother Britain. Scotland's self-confidence was badly shaken. Months later, Alex Salmond's hopes of "endorsement" by the resurgent Norwegians were also shattered when Jonas Gahr Støre reportedly urged the Scottish First Minister not to use comparisons with Norway to justify the cause of Scottish independence.

Diplomatic relations have since been resumed with more realistic expectations on all sides. And for Scottish policymakers comparisons

abound. Could Scots adopt Norwegian-style outdoors kindergartens to combat poor health outcomes and indoor, sedentary, inactive lifestyles? How could Scotland adopt Swedish-style insulation, recycling and district-heating to cut heating bills and transform housing standards? Would Scotland benefit from rubbing shoulders with like-sized nations in the Nordic Council?

Already the first policy directly lifted from a Nordic neighbour is rumbling its way through Holyrood. I was a member of the Scottish Government's Prison's Commission which adopted many aspects of the Finnish community payback model after an inspiring fact-finding trip to Helsinki.

And inspiration is a two-way street. Swedish educationalists are watching keenly as Scotland launches the Curriculum for Excellence where the separate disciplines of history, geography and science are largely replaced with study of single, compelling issues – like the Cold War or Air – across all subject divides.

In policy – and maybe in politics – Scotland clearly has as much to learn from its left-leaning, five-million-strong Nordic cousins as from our right-leaning, fifty million strong English neighbour. Two years ago, after making a BBC documentary on Norway's Outdoor Kindergartens, I set up a think tank called **Nordic Horizons** with fellow Nordophile Dan Wynn. We've held 7 well attended meetings in the Scottish Parliament for policy-makers and the public on subjects as varied as municipal government, women's quotas, oil, gas and the High North, kindergarten and the applicability of the Nordic Model(s) to Scotland. Slightly more Labour than SNP MSPs have attended, including former Scottish Labour leader Wendy Alexander and Labour Party Whip John Park. We've had financial backing from the Norwegian and Swedish Embassies to bring relevant speakers to kick start each meeting – the bulk of which is a highly interactive "round table" discussion. A special lunchtime meeting for interested civil servants was also successful.

The Nordic nations record the highest levels of trust in the world. Trust between people. Trust between people and politicians. They have the highest levels of child happiness. They also have fit, healthy, forward-thinking and relatively gripe-free people. People are the biggest asset of any nation. And the resilient outlook of Nordic people fascinates many Scots.

Turn the map of northern Europe on its side, and you can see a new geography for Scotland. Routes that allowed Viking invasion a thousand years ago now lead to a new, challenging Nordic future – if Scots have the courage and humility to ask.

Meeting the challenges of the classroom: the Teach First initiative

By Elisabeth Buk-Berge

How to recruit the best graduates to teaching in schools in challenging circumstances? How to recruit highly qualified and exceptional graduates who might not have considered teaching? **Teach First**, a charity organisation in Britain with funding from Government, private donations and schools, has provided a platform to address these questions, with obvious lessons to be learnt in Norway.



Elisabeth Buk-Berge is a visiting fellow at the Institute of Education, University of London and vice-president of the Comparative Education Society in Europe. She has published widely on education policy and the linkages between research and policy-making in this sector.

Results of a full inspection of Teach First by the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) published in July 2011, are very promising. Ofsted awarded the highest possible grade, "Outstanding", in all 44 areas evaluated across all regions that Teach First has operated in. Moreover, Teach First is seen as one of the most prestigious career tracks for Britain's top graduates. It is rated seventh in the 2010 Times Top 100 Graduate Employers.

It is no wonder then that many countries in Europe and beyond, including Norway, are adopting the UK model. In Norway it all started in August 2009 when Statoil and the City of Oslo education authority (UDE) established a collaboration agreement on a new Leadership Development Programme, "Teach First Norway". The agreement has formed a platform for a special type of partnership between industry and local school authorities which today includes today two additional actors: University of Oslo/Institute for Teacher Education and School Research (ILS), and the Teach First organisation in Britain.

There are big expectations for Teach First Norway on the part of involved stakeholders and, importantly, also at the political level. The Leadership Development Programme, commenced in Norway in autumn 2010, is a pilot responding to "The teacher – the role and the education", a White Paper launched in February 2009. What will happen when the pilot is completed depends on the evaluation of the programme, and the political interpretation thereof.

Certainly, the conditions for commencing Teach First Norway are very different from the ones in Britain. Difficulties with recruitment of good candidates into teaching Mathematics and natural sciences in secondary and upper secondary schools are the driving forces in Norway. In Britain there are lasting problems with recruitment of teachers

in all school subjects to schools in challenging circumstances. However, despite essential differences between Teach First in the two countries in terms of context and objectives, the positive results of Teach First in Britain provide a point of departure for developing the programme further in Norway.

Teach First in the UK is an independent education charity with a vision for a society where no child's educational success is limited by their socio-economic background. The mission of the charity is to transform the life opportunities for children from the most deprived backgrounds. In the short term, this is done by recruiting top motivated graduates to teach in challenging schools while supporting them to become effective, inspirational teachers. In the long term, Teach First is creating a movement of leaders who are expected to be committed to influencing change in education, from both inside and outside the classroom.

"Difficulties with recruitment of good candidates [for] Mathematics and natural sciences are the driving forces in Norway. In UK there are lasting problems with recruitment of teachers in all school subjects."

for six weeks of intensive teacher training at the Summer Institute at the University of Warwick. However, despite immersion in the British Teach First at the very start of the programme, Norwegian participants obtain their formal teacher certification not from Britain, but from the University of Oslo. Moreover, during the second year they attend selected courses managed by Statoil.

Since it was launched in 2002, Teach First in Britain has been supported by the government of the day. In 2010, it was identified by all three political parties in their election manifestos as an initiative they each wished to support and expand. On July 5 2010, two months after the coalition government came into office, Teach First received a £4million grant providing start-up funding to support its expansion. As Prime Minister David Cameron put it: "Teach First is a programme that recognises our shared responsibility for raising standards in schools, combining

business, the voluntary sector and schools themselves. Fast tracking exceptional graduates into challenging inner city schools is a great idea and one that should be expanded nationwide."

With the new grant from government, Teach First plans to undertake the following by 2013/14:

- Place Teach First teachers in every region of England and in almost a third of all challenging secondary schools
- Start a new programme placing Teach First participants in primary schools
- Expand the Teach On programme that accelerates the progression of its growing community of teachers who are ready to become senior leaders and head teachers within challenging schools.

The multifaceted expansion of Teach First in Britain will be elaborated further in the new Strategy 2022 which will be launched next year. As it is already announced, the strategy will include a new Statement of Intended Impact; measurable, time-limited and evidence-based statements of the progress Teach First intends to make with their partners.

Only time will show how further developments will affect Teach First Norway, as well as in what way the Norwegian programme will meet expectations in its own right. The initiative certainly reveals some of the shared features - but also some important differences - with regard to challenges in the classroom on each side of the North Sea.



New challenges ahead. Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg visited Southfields Community College in South West London on the first day of the new term, 5 September 2011. Crown copyright / the Cabinet Office

Student mobility between Norway and England: end of the one way street?

By Rachel Sweetman

Last year saw a record number of Norwegian students heading overseas, with 22,000 studying abroad in 2010-11. The UK was the most popular destination, ahead of the USA, Australia and Denmark. While the flow of students between these two countries offers an important link, it is one that is highly asymmetrical: in recent years, around 3,000 Norwegians students have flooded to the UK, while around 350 UK students have trickled into Norway. This imbalanced relationship reflects a significant difference in the role that student mobility has played in the two countries. It is however a relationship that may be undergoing some substantial changes in the years to come.



Rachel Sweetman is a researcher at NIFU, the Nordic Institute for Studies in Innovation, Research and Education. She holds an MPhil in Comparative and International Education, University of Oslo and an MA in Politics from the University of Edinburgh.

Kingston, London. Indeed, while the North East of England remains important as a hub for engineering links between Norway and the UK, London-based universities and business schools have become incredibly popular: where better than the local global city for young Norwegians to earn their business stripes?

In contrast to this history of outward travel, British students have long been reluctant to study overseas. European exchanges show twice as many students come into the UK as flow out, and numbers of outgoing students fell by nearly a third from the mid-1990s to the mid 2000s. Norway attracts only small numbers of British students; indeed, as a student in Oslo, meeting a fellow Brit was always quite a shock, while American, German and Dutch students were much more present on campus. The dominant attitude to student mobility among UK universities seems to be that, having done so well in bringing the world to their campuses (with the second most internationalised student population after America) why should any British student leave?

This imbalanced relationship reflects language, history and convenience, but also policy. Internationalisation has been central to Norwegian HE policy, which has stressed the role international links are expected to play in driving up quality in research and education. In line with this, the Norwegian loan system (Lånekassen) has long provided generous support for students studying overseas and even subsidies for those going to prestigious or competitive institutions.

Meanwhile, the internationalisation agenda in UK universities and colleges has been dominated by the growing importance of international students as a source of revenue. In 2004 HEFCE found that while attracting international students was embedded in institutions' strategies, few promoted outward mobility. As tuition fees have risen steeply in England (more than in Wales, and dramatically more than in Scotland), institutions have

become adept at international marketing. Foreign students have become big business, and are estimated to have generated around £2.9 billion for universities in 2010, nearly 10% of total revenues.

Both Britain and Norway have had reason to go with the (largely) one way flow of traffic between the countries, but that may be about to change. In the last few years, efforts have shifted from facilitating student exchange towards bilateral partnerships between institutions, often involving shared industrial interests, such as the marine sciences, oil and extractive industries, as well as in technical skills needed for wind and other sustainable energies. A recent Norwegian initiative seeks to encourage students to look beyond safe, English-language destinations, with new incentives for those taking up courses in the BRIC countries, offering a boost to language skills and links with key trading partners beyond Europe. Meanwhile, the rising fees may deter the inflow of Norwegians to English universities. England is now the third most expensive country for international students to attend, after Australia and America. It looks even more expensive when other countries are stepping in to offer popular courses in English, and at a fraction of the cost. East European countries have become major sites for Nordic students on medical and vocational courses. One such student in Slovakia, after spending his student years eating out every night and living like a king off his student loan, wondered aloud why anyone stayed in Norway for university.

While competition for Norwegian students is increasing, there are also signs the new fees or up to £9000 a year may overwhelm English students' hesitancy to study overseas. Dutch universities have already reported large influxes of English students' applications for 2012. Norway is affected by these changes. The only remaining country in Europe to offer tuition-free higher education to foreign students, Norway has upped its international offer in recent years, with more than 170 Masters programs taught in English, and an increasing range of English-taught undergraduate programs now available. The University of Oslo saw a 60% increase in applications to its self-financing masters programmes, and Trondheim's Norwegian University of Science and Technology reported a 45% growth. It is inevitable that the high cost of living in Norway, which tended to deter inflows of students, will be being carefully weighed up the low fees, generous provision for post-graduate students and, good employment prospects.

The established one way street in the relationship between Norway and England may be about to see some pretty drastic changes.

A case study may serve to exemplify how things have looked from the Norwegian perspective. Harald Vabø describes how three generations of his family came to cross the North Sea and study in England. The reasons motivating the Vabø's decisions from the 1950s to the present day, are typical of the history between the countries. Norway's students had no option but to take their university education abroad before 1811, when the first University was established in Oslo. After the long period of foreign rule, Norway's higher education (HE) system developed late and fairly slowly, contributing to an acute lack of places after the Second World War, so Norwegian students set out to learn the skills needed for a rapidly developing society abroad. The post-war decades saw nearly half of Norway's medicine and civil engineering graduates train abroad. Britain became a prime destination, as more young Norwegians spoke English as their second language, and it offered an easier journey than much of Europe. Harald's father was a classic example of the time, going to Sunderland in the mid 1950s to train as a civil engineer, and returning to Norway to work in the booming public infrastructure sector. When his own turn came to study in the 70s, competition for technical and engineering places was still fierce, and instead of changing courses when he was unable to get a place in Trondheim he set off for Sunderland.

Today, Harald credits his time abroad with helping him gain communication skills and a knack for handling international working environments that many of his technically as accomplished peers did not have. His daughter has also chosen England, studying architecture in



Inheritance. The Bodleian Library, the main research library of the University of Oxford. Photo by J. Salmoral. Published under Creative Commons Attribution 2.0

Per Petterson and English language affinities

By Adam Gallari

How does a work travel? It is, in many ways, a question unanswerable in the hypothetical and only shown upon the arrival of an author to a foreign shore and to a foreign audience. Why do some authors resonate beyond their language and others fail to connect, and what does this lay bare about the soul of a people?



Adam Gallari is the author of the short story collection *We Are Never as Beautiful as We Are Now*. He holds a BA from Vassar College, an MFA from the University of California, Riverside, and is currently a PhD candidate at the University of Exeter, where he is examining the translated works of Per Petterson.

Discounting Stieg Larsson, the English speaking world has not encountered as prevalent and influential a Scandinavian voice in literary fiction since Knut Hamsun. Per Petterson has gained a powerful foothold in the American literary consciousness, and while there are parallels in the work of Hamsun and Petterson, Hamsun's biography included a failed emigration effort to America, while Petterson's personal narrative is entirely Norwegian and both specifically and personally informed by its local trajectory.

Petterson's international rise is indisputable. However, while his popularity continues to swell across the Atlantic, he has not garnered the same kind of interest in Britain straight away. Despite sharing a common language, the literary affinity between the United States and the United Kingdom remain divided, and a writer like Petterson serves as an ideal study as to what might lie behind this disconnect. There are many deep and plausible explanations at work here, but for the brevity of this essay, traditions, both cultural and literary, will bear the bulk of examination.

His novels are simple in scope. That is not to say that they are pedestrian, but one would be hard-pressed to claim them to be operatic works, and this arguably strikes at the heart of a fundamental difference between the American and British literary traditions. Petterson's narratives glory in the solo experience, and often revolve around an outcast or lone-wolf character adrift in a tempest of their own making. Most, if not all of his protagonists could easily be transplanted to the American west of old and, with minor changes, would be right at home alongside any itinerant cowboy persona. To be even more frank, it would not be a stretch to imagine Arvid Jansen (*I Curse the River of Time*) or Trond Sander (*Out*

Stealing Horses) being portrayed by a young, stoic and reticent Clint Eastwood ready to offer his patented scowl towards a harsh and cruel world that has pushed him to the margins.

Furthermore, Petterson's work possesses a fatalism and existential quality that is often amiss in British fiction, while this fatalism has been until very recently a stalwart characteristic in American literature. It is a motif that is beautifully illustrated by two of Petterson's most notable American influences—Raymond Carver and Ernest Hemingway. Petterson's work, if classified, would easily find itself drawing comparisons to the many different schools of existentialism that arose during the 20th century, most notably in France and Russia before being transplanted by the exiles of these countries to the United States. But for some reason, the existential formula never quite captured the British imagination the way the grand, performative world of Dickens has done. To this day, British literature exists in the shadow of Dickens, still applying his formulas and still attempting to conflate the entire human experience within 340 pages of text.

The question of why existentialism never truly hoped the channel but swooned within the hearts of continental writers would serve as the genesis for an interesting dissertation. However, for present purposes we must merely resign ourselves to the

Per Petterson made his debut as an author in 1987 with the short story collection *Aske i munnen, sand i skoa*. Since then he has published six novels and been translated to 49 languages. His *Out Stealing Horses* (*Ut og stjele hester*, 2003) was awarded numerous literary prizes, among which were the Independent Foreign Fiction Prize and the International IMPAC Dublin Literary Award. When *the Times* selected the 100 best books of the decade 2000-2009, *Out Stealing Horses* marked the only Scandinavian presence. Petterson worked as a bookstore clerk, translator and literary critic before becoming a full-time writer. Knut Hamsun and Raymond Carver are mentioned among his key literary influences.

inadequate admission that it did happen this way, even though the world of Dickens, if viewed through a certain slant, could easily have become the world of Dostoevsky or Tolstoy. Perhaps the reason that it never quite took that path is found in the English literary tradition that lies in the poetic epics of Chaucer, Milton and Pope, and even in the trenches of World War I. It was the poetic form that responded to Britons' yearning for individual voice, whereas the Norwegian/Scandinavian mindset stems from a well-spring that produced the not only Hamsun but Strindberg and Ibsen. The work of the latter pair might even have been better served not on the stage but in the voice of a keen observer ready and willing to narrate and comment on all of the stilted protocol present inside each Norwegian doll house and Frauline Julie stable.

Another argument of the difference between a British and Norwegian mindset would be to engage in a discussion of how religion, or most specifically the Baroque, influences the psychological landscape of both literature and the public reception to it. Granted, both Britain and Scandinavia are Protestant, and both have taken oppositional stances to art of Papist inspiration. Yet Petterson, like the British Catholic convert Graham Greene, seems at war with a very Catholic god who has not been taken down from a gilded cross by Luther and Calvin to walk amongst the people but instead rules from on high.



Master of fine arts. Per Petterson (b. 1952), today an acclaimed author across the world.

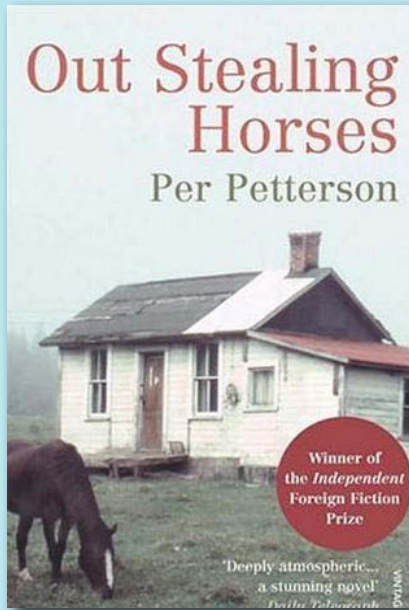
Per Petterson and English language affinities (cont.)

By Adam Gallari

However, while it would be interesting to trace this connection further, there is little textual evidence other than the secondary interpretation of a readership looking for these motifs that lends any credence; rather it is more telling to again speak in terms of gods literary and not religious; while Shakespeare reigns supreme in the British pantheon (and his late protégé Dickens ranks an arguable second in reverence), American literature does not have the weight of history to burden its proclivities.

America is not a nation of verse, whether in drama or epic form, but a child-nation, one whose birth coincided with the growth of the novel as the chic written art form, as it is the 19th century that sees the novel beginning to grab a foothold in lands that were previously averse to seeing prose as fit for anything more than missive or academic discourses.

Moreover, America, much more so than the British tradition, has experienced the death of the storytelling technique in prose and adopted a much more character-centric theory of literature. The mental exploration, which began with Hemingway, reached its height with Salter, Carver, Updike and Ford,



Breakthrough and cornerstone. *Out Stealing Horses* (Vintage, 2005, first published in Norwegian in 2003).

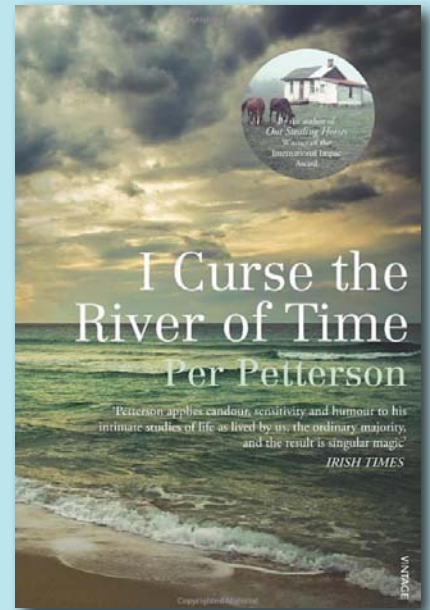
"Petterson's work possesses a fatalism and existential quality that is often amiss in British fiction, while this fatalism has been until very recently a stalwart characteristic in American literature."

and then was given a minimalist make-over by Carver, still serves as the starting point for many American authors. Contrast this with the work of one of England's foremost contemporary novelists, Philip Hensher, whose books like *The Mulberry Empire*, *The Northern Clemency* and *King of the Badger* attempt to serve, almost as a microcosm of British society rather than the case study of singular human.

The distinctive difference in how human fate should be addressed provides a dividing line across the Atlantic. Perhaps this cleavage between

an American and a British tradition is also a reason why the former culture has embraced Petterson with more immediate effect than the latter. In many ways, the British tradition has been a tradition of the collective, of a binary class system that has lived without, for lack of a

better word, a *voice* to address the no-man's-land between middle and working class, since for much of its tradition the British literature has been one where the upper-class author engages from a distance their topic of discussion so as to either point out the taboos of society in earnest (Thackeray), lampoon (E.M. Forrester) or to write into existence a lower class whose knowledge they garner from observation rather than from commiseration (Orwell.)



Existentialism on familiar shores. *I Curse the River of Time* (Vintage, 2010, first published in Norwegian in 2008).

Thus, class has always been at the forefront in British fiction, while the American style, taking its motivation from the myth that America is a "classless society," takes a more optimistic view of the possibility for characters' climb and experience rather than the glass ceiling they will, in the British system, inevitably encounter.

Nonetheless, nothing is permanent in literature, and canons continue to be fluid as new generations of readers experience the upheavals of the world around them and continue to look for a meaning or explanation in the works of great writers both contemporary and archaic. And, with the recent upsurge of interest in Britain for the once dismissed stories of Carver, it is not too bold to predict that an interest in Petterson will accompany it. But then again, as Petterson himself would easily say, only time will reveal what is to be.

Membership 2012

Time has come for BPS memberships to be renewed for 2012. Membership in BPS is open to all individuals and institutions with an interest in British politics, society, language, and culture. As a member, you receive subscription to four editions of *British Politics Review*, invitation to all events organised by the society and the right to vote at our annual general meeting.

Your membership comes into force as soon as the membership fee, 100 NOK for 2012, has been registered at our account <6094.05.67788> (please make sure to mark your payment with your full name).

If you have questions about membership, please do not hesitate to contact us by e-mail
mail@britishpoliticsociety.no

Forthcoming edition of British Politics Review

Anglo-Irish relations have been under the spotlight this year, in relation to the Queen's historical visit to Ireland in May. Meanwhile, the financial crisis has revealed some shared points of fragility in the two economies as well as some of the key differences between them.

The Irish Republic, built on the notion of distinctiveness from the UK, remains in a tight, historically and

geographically defined relationship with the larger state on the British Isles. In December 2012, ninety years will have passed since the foundation of the Irish Free State in 1922, which was based upon the Anglo-Irish Treaty signed one year before. The next issue of *British Politics Review* approaches the complex relationship between Britain and Ireland from a range of perspectives, from the political, via

the economic to the cultural aspects. Where is the political dynamic heading today, and what has been the contribution of EU membership for the two countries? What role have Irish migrants played in British public life? And what has been the significance of arts and literature in forging the relationship?

The winter edition of *British Politics Review* is due to arrive in February 2012.