

St Andrew

December 2015 – February 2016

20 kr



Magazine of the English speaking church in Gothenburg



Farewell Letter from the Chaplain



Some time in October, I became the third-longest-serving Chaplain St Andrew's has ever had, passing Robert Frew, who started the Ladies' Guild, was appointed in January 1931 and died in February 1941. The longest-serving was Morgan Morgan (1822-36), who was recruited by the merchant John Nonnen in order to re-establish the English congregation after the Napoleonic wars; a bachelor when appointed, he married one of Nonnen's daughters, and returned to England after 14 years for the sake of his children's education. Second was Charles Baldwin (1914-1927) who was responsible for the sale of the parsonage which had been built for the church on Avenyn; its "loss was felt keenly by many of the members of the

Congregation who had come to regard it as a little bit of England." (S. Townshend and H. J. Adams, *History of the English Congregation and its Association with the British Factory Gothenburg*, 1946) As Shakespeare made Marc Antony say in *Julius Caesar*, "The evil that men do lives after them." I wonder for what I shall be remembered – apart from being the first woman chaplain.

There is a German marching song, "Es, es, es und es" (literally, "It, it, it and it") which comes to mind whenever I move on, as well as when I want something to sing on a long walk. The first verse can be translated roughly as follows:

*It is a tough decision that I have to leave
Frankfurt.*

*So I put Frankfurt out of my mind, and turn
to God-knows-where.*

I will try my luck today, and march away.

He then goes on to grumble about his boss ("I told him to his face, the work didn't suit me") and his landlady ("I told her to her face, your bacon and cabbage tastes horrible"), and finally the barman ("If he hadn't overcharged me, I would have stayed here longer").

So far, the words seem singularly inappropriate to my situation. When I arrived just over ten years ago, I had an open contract, which meant that I could stay until I was 70, the normal retiring age for priests in the Church of England. So retiring at the end of this year is neither a difficult nor an unexpected decision. However hard I am trying now to let go of both my responsibilities here and my hopes and dreams for the future of St Andrew's, I am sure I shall never put Gothenburg completely out of my mind. And I do know my immediate move, to a modern flat in Greenwich Millennium

Village. Even my plans for long-distance travel – a journey round the world towards the end of 2016 – hardly count as “God-knows-where”.

The work – well, there have been a few difficult times, when I wondered what I was doing here, but there have also been glorious moments too many to mention. As for the food, I have managed to avoid *lutfisk* and *surströmming*, and I like meatballs, lingonberries and the curiously-named *Janssons frestelse*. Far from being overcharged, I have been impressed by the efficiency and courtesy with which *Skatteverket* inform me that I have paid too much or too little tax, and the speed with which they have refunded it in the latter case.

But the last two verses convey two messages I should like to echo.

To the maidens, he says “I wish that you may find someone to take my place.” Yes, indeed. I know that the process of finding a successor is under way, although I have no part in the process. Indeed, much of the Church Committee’s time has been spent discussing, in my absence, the chaplaincy profile, job specification, and person specification (horrible jargon for who we are, what the job involves, and what sort of person we want). I hope that when your new chaplain arrives, you will be as friendly and helpful to him or her as you have been to me.

And finally, to “the brothers” – to his mates: “If I have done any harm to you, I ask your forgiveness.”

Barbara Moss



They made a good show of being sorry to see her go

Books looking for a good home

My new flat in Greenwich is about half the size of my present one, and I am trying to reduce the number of bookcases I shall need there. At least 90% of the books are in English, and the main sections are religion (including bible studies, church history and other faiths), poetry, and Penguin Classics (world classics translated into English). All free of charge to a good home - as many or a few as you want. If you would like to come and browse, please contact me to arrange a time.

Barbara

**Barbara's last service will be on Sunday
December 27, and will be followed by a
reception at Haga Församlingshem from
12:30 to 15:00.**

Our Vision for St Andrew's
Seeking God's will through
prayer and worship, outreach, and nurturing community



Who's Who at St Andrew's

Chaplain (December)

Revd Canon Barbara Moss

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Monica Edholm 031 - 29 30 40

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Services: December — February

Barbara retires at the end of 2015. At the time of writing a successor has not yet been appointed. There will probably be a service every Sunday until a new chaplain arrives, but the details may sometimes be different from the usual pattern – for example, Morning Prayer instead of Parish Communion. Lay Assistants and Intercissors please check before the service.

DECEMBER 6, Advent 2

10.00 Holy Communion
11.00 Family Service with Baptism
Prayers: Vongai Muyambo-Laasonen

18.00 Nine Lessons and Carols at
Hakarp Church, near Jönköping

DECEMBER 9, Wednesday

19.30 Midweek Mass/last of 2015

DECEMBER 13, Advent 3

11.00 Peace and Justice Sunday, Parish
Communion with **African Roots**
LA: Gisela Barnard, Alan Taylor
Prayers: Gillian Thylander

DECEMBER 16, Wednesday

18.00 Nine Lessons and Carols

DECEMBER 18, Friday

16.00 Carols around the Crib

DECEMBER 20, Advent 4,

LA: Alan Taylor, Ann Gustafsson
Prayers: Heather Wray

18.00 Nine Lessons and Carols

DECEMBER 25, Christmas Day

LA: Alan Taylor, Gisela Barnard
Prayers: Ann Gustafsson
Mince pies and drinks at chaplain's flat

DECEMBER 27, St John the Evangelist

11.00 Parish Communion with Baptism
LA: Ann Gustafsson, Gisela Barnard
Prayers: Ron Jones

JANUARY 3, Epiphany

11.00 Family Service led by Alan Taylor
Prayers: Charity Ezeilo

JANUARY 10, The Baptism of Christ

LA: Ann Gustafsson, Alan Taylor
Prayers: Gisela Barnard

JANUARY 13, Wednesday

19.30 Midweek Mass/Onsdagsmäs-
sa restarts, with Jacob Langvik and
Lars van der Heeg, and continues every
Wednesday until further notice.

JANUARY 17, Epiphany 2

LA: Alan Taylor, Gisela Barnard
Prayers: Keith Barnard

JANUARY 24, Epiphany 3

LA: Gisela Barnard, Ann Gustafsson
Prayers: Alan Taylor

JANUARY 31, Candlemas

LA: Ann Gustafsson, Alan Taylor
Prayers: Cecilia Klevedal

FEBRUARY 7, Next before Lent

LA: Alan Taylor, Gisela Barnard
Prayers: The Willy Family

FEBRUARY 14, Lent 1

LA: Gisela Barnard, Ann Gustafsson
Prayers: Happiness Ezeilo

FEBRUARY 21, Lent 2

LA: Alan Taylor, Gisela Barnard
Prayers: Ann Gustafsson

FEBRUARY 28, Lent 3

LA: Ann Gustafsson, Alan Taylor
Prayers: Jennifer Abbås

MARCH 6, Lent 4, Mothering Sunday

LA: Gisela Barnard, Ann Gustafsson
Prayers: Jeanette Munro

Harvest Festival



Gathering the children after they have brought forward their harvest gifts to be place on the altar

Ecumenical Service

on UN-day in the German Church together with the Lutheran foreign congregations



Domprost Karin Bjurstrand giving the sermon



St Andrew's Day Lunch



Some of our guests enjoying the company between courses



Our Churchwarden Heather Wray getting some much-needed help with the lottery draw

Concerts



Two happy winners of the lotteries, Irené Ungelheim and Bengt Ablad



One of our many concerts on Friday midday - the Animato quartet playing music from the lat renaissance



In Memory of Ron Trimming



Ronald Leslie Trimming passed away on Wednesday 23rd September 2015 after a long illness. He was born in London on May 2nd 1929. Ron was 86. He grew up in wartime London, and joined the army on Jan 2nd 1946, and spent most of his service in Germany. He joined a very famous regiment, the 5th Regiment of the Royal Horse Artillery "The Mercer's troop", of which he was very proud.

Ron was a private businessman and lived with his family in Uddevalla. He represented a British manufacturer of industrial metal detectors, which Ron sold to many Swedish food processors.

He was always promoting Uddevalla in one way or another. Whenever we spoke he would ask when we were coming to visit companies in the town. He always asked for a Naval visit and managed to get our support and then he helped organise the visit. In many respects he was "Our man in Uddevalla", always willing to help wave

the Flag for Britain. He was a keen Rotarian and was one of the founding members of the Royal British Legion Branch. He did a wonderful job partnered by the late and beloved Jack Packer, in raising large amounts as auctioneers at the annual Poppy Day Tea. We will miss Ron and of course his deep voice, which often brought us all to attention.

Alan White

Yes, the first thing I noticed about Ron was his rumbling bass voice! Not when singing, but when organising a raffle for Rotary, of which he was a staunch supporter for many long years. He not only raised money for a variety of educational projects in far-flung places, but he and his dear wife Ann generously hosted many of the people connected with them.

Our church also had regular contact with the English-speaking community up in Uddevalla and surrounding districts until

two years ago. Our choir not only went up for Easter and Christmas services in Bäve church or the annex to the old church in the town centre but even once took part in a harvest festival service in the Seamen's Church in the harbour.

Ron also supported St Andrew's unstintingly – he used to sell two packs of lottery tickets every year – and after he became ill, he shared out one pack among his carers. When his office was closed down, my husband Stig and I fetched a great deal of equipment, packs of paper and books for use or sale at St Andrew's. He even bought some of Stig's tomato plants.

As Stig and I have a summer cottage just 11 km south of Uddevalla, we were able to pop into to see Ron every now and then. He was always cheerful despite various serious operations and accidents and insisted on giving us coffee and cake and pressing some CD or book in our hands on leaving. I was extremely grateful to get a lot of piano music that had belonged to Ann. Both Stig and I were always amazed at his phenomenal memory for people, right to the end.

When we last visited Ron in the service flat he had moved to, he was telling us about one carer who couldn't close the cupboard doors quietly! He also had plans for a musical evening at the home! He began singing "There was an old woman, who swallowed a fly"! I offered to ask our choir to assist. He had told us earlier that he came from a home where Gilbert and Sullivan was all the rage and his mother made all the costumes.

We were fond of Ron and hope to keep in touch with Natalie, Sören, Eric and Simon, who must miss him terribly.

Gillian Thylander



Funerals

9 October 2015

RON TRIMMING aged 87, at Uddevalla

27 November 2015

REBECCA VITHAL FÜRST aged 57



Christmas Reflexion!

Are you part
of the Inn
crowd, or are
you one of the
Stable few



Deanery Synod Report

Deanery synod takes place every year often in September. Our deanery includes Norway, Finland, Latvia and Denmark as well as Sweden. Iceland and Estonia have the status of observers. The meeting took place in Finland at the beautiful surroundings of the Sofia Center which is about a 20 minutes' drive to the East of Helsinki. Since our churches are so far away in distance, I believe that our need to meet each is even more important. Two of our church committee members, Cecilia Klevedal and Jeanette Munro represented St Andrew's as well as our Priest Barbara Moss. The representatives stand for 3 years. This is the second year of the present 3-year cycle.

'WALKING TOGETHER IN FAITH – A STRATEGY FOR THE DIOCESE IN EUROPE'

was one of the sessions. You can reach this strategy by googling or through <http://europe.anglican.org/>. The deanery members were to consider which aspects that we believe are most important to us in this strategy. Under the heading

“Building up the Body of Christ and fostering growth”, “Teaching the faith and promoting Christian education” was considered to be the most important.

Under “Sharing, with other churches and agencies in the evangelisation of Europe”, “Valuing and sustaining a culture of welcome, invitation and hospitality” was considered to be the most important.

Under “Striving for the creation of a just society and a sustainable environment”, “Defending the poor, the disadvantaged, and those in need” was considered to be the most important.

Under “Working for reconciliation”, “By intentional engagement with the institutions of Europe” was considered to be the most important.

An enlightening presentation was given by a Finnish lawyer working amongst other things with trafficking. She explained how due experiences in childhood, likelihood of e.g. depression can affect our ability to control our choices or escape from a trafficker/exploiter. What was really



startling was the ability of a perpetrator to notice our individual vulnerability index when selecting victims. The lawyer gave an example concerning middle class Finnish young women/teenagers.

“Good Disagreement: Why do we think as we do?” was an excellent presentation given by a Finnish historian turned theologian. It concerns the changes in the model or the essential beliefs (paradigm) which are considered to be part of Christianity over time and the differences in views which exist today. Changes to the paradigm often occur when something can't be explained with the old world view or new knowledge has come to light.

As usual we had morning and evening prayers. We also looked at the Book of Jonah under the guidance of the new Archdeacon-Designate of Germany and Northern Europe, Colin Williams. The synod ended on Sunday with a Eucharist service at St Nicholas in Helsinki.

It was an intense few days but time well spent. Please don't hesitate to talk to Cecilia or myself about the deanery synod meeting. Or to ask Barbara what she was doing in the photo to the right!

Jeanette Munro



The Anglo-Swedish Society Program is now on-line:
www.angloswedish.wordpress.com

Members of St. Andrew's community are invited to apply for membership of the British Club.

Membership benefits include an active social programme.
www.britishclub.se



The annual fee per family is 100.00 SEK. Anyone interested should contact Gisela Barnard (031 147101) or or send an email to membership@britishclub.se to request more information.

❖ Christmas Message from Bishop Robert

My eldest daughter, Ruth, used to work for a famous high street retailer.

Sadly, the stress in and around Christmas was one of the reasons that she left them. The long hours in the run up to Christmas, the packed shops and stressed shoppers, and the night shifts just before Christmas Day itself when the shop had to be turned around rapidly into Boxing Day 'sales' mode, piled huge pressure on assistants and management alike. Yet everyone knew that Christmas was of vital commercial importance. And not just for this shop. The centre for retail research suggests that many Northern European retailers make more than half of their sales and profits in the three months around Christmas. <http://www.retailresearch.org/shoppingforxmas>.

The main character in the commercial Christmas is of course Saint Nicholas, Father Christmas. But underlying Santa's prominence, is the original Christmas story. Indirectly, at least, the giving of gifts is rooted in the gift of the Christ-child and the costly gifts given by the magi. And so the Christmas story is used to help legitimate the retail sector and the consumption of goods at Christmastime. How ironic, that our own texts can be co-

opted to trap us in the very patterns of modern behaviour that many of us would long to escape or at least to control!

In this light, it is important to read the biblical infancy narratives again with fresh eyes and to notice their hugely subversive, liberating and revolutionary intent. In Luke's gospel, when Gabriel announces to Mary that she will have a child, the angel tells her that her baby son will be great and that God will make him a king inheriting the throne of King David. Everyone was well aware that there was already a local king – Herod – and that behind him was the weight of Roman imperial authority. Yet, after she is visited by Elizabeth, Mary responds with the words of the Magnificat, in which she glorifies the Lord who exalts the humble but brings rulers down from their thrones. When the child is eventually born, the first to see the new born Christ in Luke's gospel are the shepherds, who symbolise the lowest and poorest in society.

The opposition between the infant Jesus and the ruling powers is highlighted even more clearly in Matthew's gospel. Matthew's Jesus is presented from the outset as a king – descended from David, born in the royal city of Bethlehem, worshipped by Magi. He is immediately a threat to Herod and must be taken for his own safety out of Israel into Egypt.

Biblical commentators have usually interpreted the flight into Egypt in theological terms, relating it in some way to Israel's



journey into and subsequent exodus from Egypt. But, straightforwardly, it's clear that the infant Jesus is on the run. He is fleeing persecution. He is a refugee.

Thus both Matthew and Luke introduce Jesus as a king who threatens the oppressive powers governing first century Israel. Jesus is a 'prince of peace' whose kingdom is founded on very different principles from the military rule that underpinned the 'pax Romana'. His kingdom is one where the first will be last and the last first. Even in his birth and infancy he is identified with the poor, the persecuted and the refugee.

Europe faces an ongoing refugee crisis. Many towns and cities across the whole continent are receiving large numbers of migrants. Our own parishes and chaplaincies are doing what they can to bring aid and assistance. There is no easy solution to the crisis. The long term solutions involve peace building and the generation of economic prosperity in the Middle East and Africa. Medium term solutions might involve the creation of safe routes and the speedier processing of asylum applications. But in the short term, the particular calling of the church is to pray and to work for the welfare of those who have been forced to flee their homes and who face a European winter. The book of Deuteronomy 10:19 teaches: 'You are to love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.' We remember that this was how Jesus began his infant life too.

I have heard some wonderful and deeply moving stories of how care for the stranger has brought unexpected grace. A teacher was telling me how pupils at her school found a new sense of meaning and purpose through ministering to the Syrians who had arrived in their town. Clergy have told me how their congregations have laid aside minor disagreements when faced with the

urgency of a common mission and purpose.

This Christmas, we are summoned to see the world with divine perspective and compassion. For our own good and for the good of others, we are invited to reclaim the Christmas story! We are to preach, proclaim and live the amazing news that God enters his own creation to save, console and heal the poor and the lost. God comes amongst us as a vulnerable baby sharing our own human weaknesses and vulnerabilities. He becomes human so that we become divine (to quote Athanasius), but he also becomes human so that we can become more fully human ourselves. And in humanity to reach out beyond ourselves to others as he has reached out to us. That is the real gift.

Finally – aside from the commercial pressures - I am very aware that the Christmas season puts particular opportunities and pressures in the way of our chaplaincies. We are typically receiving lots of visitors who don't normally darken the doors of our churches. At the same time, many regular church members are away at Christmas itself, visiting family or friends. So those that remain have to work especially hard to keep everything running and to provide a cheerful welcome. To all those who sustain and enable our worship over Christmas I give my warm and sincere thanks: to our clergy, lay readers and leaders, musicians, welcome, wardens, caterers and cleaners.

And may the God whose message of peace was sung by the angels to herald the birth of his Son, bring his peace to our hearts, our homes, our families and our world over this Christmas time.

+ Robert Gibbiller in Europe

The Gothenburg Book Fair 2015

The main themes of the Book Fair this year were Hungarian and Icelandic literature. Another particularly interesting theme was the importance of reading for young people. Tore and I spent three days at the Book Fair talking to authors and publishers. We have previously visited both Hungary and Iceland so it was particularly interesting to look at new material. We have recently become involved in new developments to encourage young people to read. Tore also leads a “Poetry Group” where we meet once a month to read and discuss poetry.

Alice Bah Kuhnke – the Minister for Culture and Democracy, opened the Book Fair said in her introduction to the 2015 Book Fair:

“A book as a physical term is not more than a bunch of paper connected to a spine.

But as a concept one of the most precious things we know. A carrier of knowledge, of ideas, experiences and stories, well worth celebrating. To me the book – may be in the form of printed papers or digitalized information of recorded voices – symbolizes knowledge, adventure, fantastic journeys, feelings of joy, passion and sorrow – all the complexity of life. Many times, the simple joy of reading a book is nothing more than a pleasure. Sometimes when we least expect it, reading a certain book can be a life-changing experience.

Perhaps most of all, a book is one of the strongest symbols of expression... Not so long ago, many of us felt that freedom of speech and democratic values was being strengthened in many countries... But sadly in the last few years we have seen quite



Alice Bah Kuhnke and Gustav Fridolin — Autumn Break becomes Reading Break: the panel discussion

the opposite in many parts of the world... We can never take freedom of speech for granted. Freedom of speech has to be defended every day and every hour.”

The first conference that we attended was about the theme “Autumn Break becomes Reading Break.” Both Alice Bah Kuhnke and Gustav Fridolin – the Minister of Education – were speakers at the meeting, which stressed the importance of reading for children and young people. Tore and I happened to be carrying a pack of books - *The Children’s Guide to Tjörn, (Nature, Culture and other things of interest)* which had been written and illustrated by children in the third and fourth classes of all the schools on the Tjörn island. This book has been printed and published and is available for sale. Leader of this project is Boel Sjöberg, who has worked incredibly hard with the children. I happened to be standing near the way out, and held this book in my hand when Gustav Fridolin came up the stairs. I held out the book and he took it and was really interested, so I simply said Var så god and he was really pleased. (We have checked and this is the first time this kind of book has been published).

We had also contacted Björn Hygstedt at the Svenska Dagbladet newspaper because they were introducing a children’s weekly Newspaper *Svenska Dagbladet Junior* which will be published weekly.

We spent quite a lot of time at the Icelandic book exhibition. Icelanders are proud of their literary tradition. They are the proud owners of medieval literature such as the poetical Eddas and the Flatö Book. They are also proud that Iceland publishes more books per capita than anyone else in the world. Last year new publications of the Icelandic sagas were translated and published in Swedish, Danish and Norwegian in five volumes. The sagas are also available as

English Penguin pocket books. Iceland must be a very dangerous country judging from all the detective stories published there and many of these books are translated both into Swedish and English. We listened to Arnaldur Indridason describing his detective fiction on Saturday morning. It is interesting to speculate on where the Icelandic detective writers find their inspiration in a country whose crime statistics are amongst the lowest in the world! A recent Icelandic novel that has made a lasting impression is *Angels of the Universe* by Einar Már Gudmundsson. In the novel, the main character Paul tells his story from the cradle to the grave, and describes how the shadow of mental illness falls over his life as the innocence of childhood slips away. Although the novel describes the bitterness of Paul’s fate, it is also very humorous. A book planned for publication in January 2016 is *Shudder* by Jonina Leosdottir who studied linguistics and art history at Essex university and has a degree in Literature from the University of Iceland. She is a novelist, poet and former journalist who writes both for adult readers and teenagers. This book is about Edda a lively lady in her sixties who lives in Reykjavik. She has just retired from her job as a bookseller and has loads of energy and a lot of time on her hands. Her curiosity, sociability and love of mysteries lead Edda to discover people’s secrets. She doesn’t hesitate to get involved in dangerous situations, much to her family’s distress!

Just to finish: two books about Britain: *Great London Walks* and *Scotland - Best round trips* by Bosse Bjelvenstedt. Enjoy your reading!

The 2016 Gothenburg Bookfair will be about “Freedom of Speech” when it is 250 years since the Freedom of the Press Act was passed in Sweden.

Nancy and Tore Fjällbrant



Whatever happened changed my life

Moments of awareness of something larger than my own self - part 2

A few years later, when I was almost fifteen, my father died suddenly of coronary thrombosis. He apparently had not been completely healthy. Apparently the doctor had said that he should take it easy, but such was not possible I suppose for a breadwinner at the time, 1950 in the UK. My father had not been insured at all, and we found ourselves totally dependent on social services and welfare. My mother was left with us three brothers to look after, of which I was the oldest, and my youngest brother was only five years old. Neither was she very healthy either. She suffered from a bad arthritis and had difficulty walking longer distances. My mother had to nevertheless take a part time job as a housekeeper for the local priest. This place I'm sure was a charity gesture from the priest, as he had previously done well without such help. The work involved mostly cooking lunch and a little house cleaning. I hardly think she could do shopping because of the distance to the shops and her limited capacity. To my shame, I must admit that we were not brought up to help at home, and I lacked the self-realization to know that such should now be the case. Washing up occasionally, cutting the hedge and lawn and shopping was about all that I and my younger brother did.

Despite this, there was never any question other than that I and my brother should study further. "My boys are brilliant" my mother used to say. These words always made me feel uncomfortable. Certainly, I was quite good at school, since I had a good memory, but it came naturally and was of

no special credit to me. In fact my school results were probably due to the fact that I was silent, introvert and lacking in initiative, so that there was never anything to distract me very much. Strangely enough, not a single one of my friends and acquaintances were allowed to study further by their parents (if they were even interested). Just as natural as it was for us to continue our studies, so was it for them to go out and work as soon as possible.

My mother and father (when he was alive), had suggested some time that I should become an architect, and so it became. In England one can already begin architectural studies at 16 years of age, after complete general schooling. But the study is a full 5 years plus an internship at an office afterwards, and then a new professional practice exam. I began my studies, but my immaturity was a major obstacle. I was not a particularly good student, and I completed my studies with the smallest possible margin. Even though I had learned to appreciate the profession, I realized the possibilities to get an interesting job in a reputable architect office were extremely small. Modern architecture was not accepted by the public or the authorities of that time in England, and an old semi-classical style of architecture was predominant. The school curriculum during the first three years had been focused on just such an old-fashioned architecture. Most of us students did not of course appreciate that at all.

I started to think about my future military service, which would begin after the completion of my training. The Second World War was fresh in memory, and in addition, the fear of nuclear weapons and pollution by all the nuclear weapon tests

was a constant topic of conversation at the time. I became more and more sceptical of man's right to use arms against one other, except in extreme emergencies. Then came in 1956 an invasion of Egypt by British and French troops, when Egypt had nationalized the Suez Canal. This was for me quite clearly a war of aggression, and certainly not an act of defense, which for me is perhaps the only excuse for military action. Then, if not before, I made up my mind to become a conscientious objector, and I declared myself as such when it became time to report for military service registration. A trial and probably prison awaited. I looked forward to the trial, and had sent in a long explanation of my position. Unfortunately I never took a copy of this, which I would have loved to have now.

Another thing that worried me was that I had started to look upon living in London as a sort of confinement. Everything was so terribly dirty from the dust from coal fires and factory chimneys. There were few green spots hidden among dull and repetitively boring suburban areas seemingly stretching out for ever, and it was quite an undertaking just to get out of the city. The thought of staying here, in a dull mediocre job, seemed at the time to be giving my future a lack of meaning. I had no solution to the problem – I seemed to be destined to an extremely run of the mill, boring life. I could imagine myself working in a small office in the suburbs designing public toilets and the like.

On the day on which I am about to describe, I had just completed and passed my final exam thesis at college, and was on my way home on my bike, an hour's trip across London. On those journeys which I did every day (to save the train fare), I used to often go up in my own thoughts. Morning and evening, for long stretches, I

could disappear into myself, hardly aware of how or where I had travelled. On this particular day, I was having a long conversation with God; a monologue in which I asked desperately why everything seemed so pointless, my future life seeming so bleak. "Go to Sweden" I suddenly heard a voice saying to me in my inner ear very clearly. At once I experienced in a strange way that this voice-response to my question was so evident that it was impossible to doubt. A new MOMENT of fundamental importance had hit me. I just can't describe how that answering voice gripped, filled and took over my whole body, soul and intellect. From that moment on my immediate future and direction in life was mapped out. It may sound strange how a few words ringing in my head can so affect me, with no questions or doubts, but this was the case. Life had suddenly regained a meaning and I had a new zest for life, in a way I had never experienced before.

I began immediately to find out what sort of a country Sweden was like. I knew virtually nothing. The only thing that we had learned at college was that there were some modern architectural buildings worth admiring. Two buildings I knew about even then were a residential area in Stockholm from the forties, near Mälärstrand, and Gothenburg Concert Hall which was admired for its acoustics. I had probably also seen pictures of the Town Hall in Gothenburg, also a recognized gem in architecture. Now I went about taking lessons in Swedish at night school, became a member of an English-Swedish club and visited the Swedish Church in London twice a week. At the same time I was working in an architect's office in central London preparing for my professional practice exam. I was also awaiting my trial for refusing to do military service, although I was kept completely in

the dark as to how and when this would happen. When the practice exam was completed I decided not to wait any longer. I was eager to get going. It turned out that I had a college friend who had relatives in Sweden and was already working there after completion of his exams. I gave in my notice at work and booked on the boat to Gothenburg, where I would be able to stay with my schoolmate until I had settled in and found a job.

My first task in Gothenburg was to try getting a job. It turned out that it was not so simple. My companion worked for a less reputable architect, who also paid extremely poorly and treated his employees, at least my companion, as a servant. I did not even try to get work there, although I had been told by my friend that there might be an opportunity to start there. So I went through the phone book, and visited in turn every office in the central parts of town. There was apparently a recession at the time and work was hard to come by. My visits to the various offices went further and further outside the central parts of the city. After almost a month, and in windy and rainy autumn weather, I had come to the end of the list of possible architectural offices. The last office on my list was out in Högsbo. I remember how I was walking out to Högsbo, and found myself about at the gas station, at the end of Bangatan. Now as so often before I was talking with God in an

inner monologue, and saying to Him that this was my last attempt in Gothenburg, and that I would then set off to Stockholm to look for a job there. It was not such a clear voice this time I heard, but nonetheless a clear message, a compelling feeling that said “you will get this job.” Even this message felt so obvious that I did not need to doubt it. Strangely enough I could put it aside without thinking further about it and continued as if nothing had happened. When I arrived I immediately had an interview and was hired on the spot. People didn’t seem to care about such formalities as work permits. At my question as to when I would start I was asked if I could not start immediately. I just had to take off my jacket, be given a workspace and take a pencil in my hand, even though it was already well into the afternoon. Strangely, although I knew beforehand that I would get the job, I did not think about it throughout the rest of the walk, or at the interview. It was as if everything that happened was predetermined and part of the natural order of things. Guess what, my new office had a speciality - designing churches. This began a period in my life where I learned more about my profession than the years in the college and in practice afterwards - a wonderful time with a wonderful and thoughtful boss...

there may be a continuation ...

Alan Taylor



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