

And from an earlier period still there is a novel by Matti Aikio, Norway's first Lapp author, "I dyreskind", originally published in 1906, a lively, realistic description of everyday life among the Lapps. Adding to our collection of Gabriel Scott, we have a first edition of his first novel, "Aftenrøde" (1896).

Yngvar Ustvedt has brought out a series of "interviews" with Norwegian authors from Holberg to Gill entitled "På klingen". Odd Eidem has a further volume of his "flanerier" called "Flaskepost". And Sigurd Kolsrud contributes to the language debate with "Nynorsken i sine malfore."

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27th NOVEMBER 1976

by

A Member

Early one late November morning on Waverley Bridge in Edinburgh a number of Scandophiles were converging on a small brown bus which was to carry them over the Border and far away. Their number was sadly diminished by an outbreak of an unspecified Asian virus which confined some potential travellers to their beds and their books. The brown bus scurried round - alas in vain - to transport these unfortunates who had been lain low. The weather being fine the gallant (and healthy) enjoyed a picturesque and splendidly lit journey over the hills as far as the ancient limes of Scotland, wisely set by the Imperial

Eagles many centuries ago. The site is now marked by a new city somewhat begrimed by an overeager haste to show signs of progress. There, in the centre, our bus stopped by the imposing modern edifices of Newcastle University - our destination.

Carefully crossing a high speed bypass that had thoughtfully been placed through the middle of the campus, we attempted to scale a building which housed the Department of German and Scandinavian Studies. Eventually we discovered a means of penetrating the building and were made welcome by our southern confrères with coffee.

The first talk was given by Alison Gardner-Medwin on the topic of Mother and Son, in which she skilfully contrasted British and Scandinavian ballads using recordings to good effect. The lecturer traced the changes in this particular form of dramatic dialogue from 17th century onwards.

The second treat consisted of a magnificent koldt bord prepared by our hosts who had spared no labour to provide, possibly the best, meal that the refectory had ever seen. We were all gratified and enjoyed the opportunity to eat and chat.

After lunch we had an illustrated report on the digs in Orkney by Chris Morris. We saw the rise and fall of the settlement at the Brough of Deerness, perched precariously on an outcrop, in wilder Orkney. Its very position posed problems for our intrepid archaeologist friends who found it necessary to convey their equipment across a ravine by an improvised aerial lift. An enjoyable experience to watch on slides!

Lastly we heard John Frankis tracing for us the convoluted history of how the Anglo Saxons influenced Norse writings. It was fascinating to learn how Aelfric gave ideas to Snorri....

Although this ended the official programme, the lust for things Viking (a curious reversal after a millenium) prevailed and we trooped off round the pedestrian precincts, flyovers and one-way streets to an exhibition of Norwegian art.

These pictures were on loan from Norway and we were able to see a representative selection of a century's paintings: 1820-1920. It showed the Norwegians in a romantic mood for a change, reflective and peaceful, and was a fitting end to our cultural raid over the border.

Darkness had fallen and we had no chance to stop and place another stone upon the Wall - just in caae! The little brown bus weaved in and out of the northbound traffic but our members were too replete or asleep to notice. All the same, the heart-beats slowly quickened as the miles sped past and when we reached the Tweed a cry went up - we were home, safe, sound and satisfied.

Many thanks to our Newcastle friends and to Maggie and John for arranging the lectures and trip.