



# SONS of NORWAY



February 2021  
Walworth County, WI

## Norsemen of the Lakes 5-650

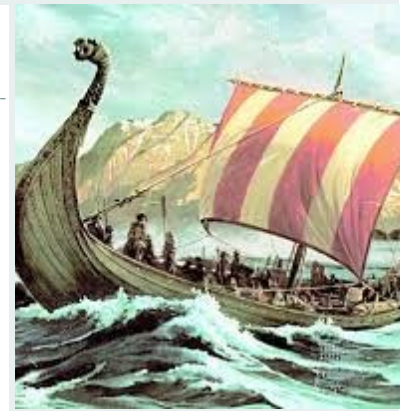
Greetings, Norsemen, I'm so happy to be here in Arizona. I've been watching the weather in the north country and thanking my lucky stars to be here where the weather has been in the 70s. In fact, one day last week we hit 83. Whew!

Another thing I'm pleased about is the roll out of the vaccine. I know it has been frustrating for many individuals, but please be patient and we will all get one eventually. I'm hoping many of you have already received one. I really feel that when spring comes, we will be able to get together again and resume celebration of our Nordic heritage.

Many of you may remember a past member, Erling Hansen, who returned to Norway some years ago. The great news is that he has returned. **Welcome back Erling.** He is living in Rochester, MN, as I understand it, but has become a member of Norsemen of the Lakes.

Again, if anyone needs anything, please be sure to contact me, and we will help wherever we can.

Corlene



### Gratulare Med Dagen

#### February Birthdays

Bill Kaul	18th
<b>King Harald V</b>	<b>21st</b>
Corlene Bartels	21st
Erling Hansen	25th

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#### KALENDAR

Let's all hope and pray for extermination of the Covid 19 virus by spring so we can resume some semblance of normalcy.

### This month, on February 6, we celebrate National Sámi Day.

For the indigenous people of the Sápmi region, which spans the northernmost parts of Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia, storytelling through song has been part of their culture for centuries.

How much do you know about joik? Joik, the music of the Sámi, is a melodic chanting used to describe everything from emotions and landscapes to animals and people. Legend has it that the Sámi people got these chants from Arctic fairies and elves. The oldest joiks are believed to have been recorded by priests and missionaries in the 1700s and 1800s, making it one of the earliest vocal traditions in Europe.

Joik is experiencing a resurgence thanks to contemporary musicians who are blending the melodic chanting with mainstream genres like pop, rock and jazz. In the February issue of *Viking* magazine, we explore the history of joik and highlight some of the musicians who are responsible for its recent resurgence.

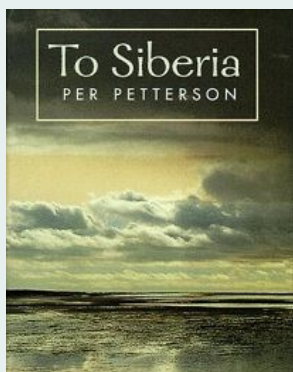
One of Sámi music's most genre-bending trailblazers is Mari Boine. Raised on the Finland-Norway border, Boine's career started in the 1980s, and today she's a music icon. Her music is inspired by and infused with her cultural roots. It blends rhythms of jazz, folk and rock.

A young musician following in Boine's footsteps is Ella Marie Hætta Isaksen. She hails from Tana in northern Norway and combines joik and Sámi lyrics with modern music. Check out a video of her performing here. She also sings with her band, ISÁK.

Elle Márjá Eira is from a Kautokeino-based reindeer herding family. She emerged from the small municipality of 3,000 to perform her electronic-joik music on a global stage, both solo and as part of the three-piece band Snoweye alongside Led Zeppelin's John Paul Jones. She's also a talented film music composer and filmmaker.

# Vikings Had Dark Humor and Joked, Even During Deadly Battles

By Ellen Lloyd AncientPages.com | November 10, 2016



Evoking the severe beauty of the tundra his heroine dreams of, Petterson's second novel fashions a subtle stoicism reminiscent of Katherine Anne Porter's work. An unnamed narrator recollects her girlhood in Denmark on a farm in Vrangbaek near Skagen, where she and her beloved brother, Jesper, live with their hymn-writing mother, carpenter father and stern grandfather. The family falls on hard times when their grandfather hangs himself, leaving behind the explanation, "I can't go on any longer."

But the young girl endures the changes in her life, including the new rancor of the Nazi occupation of Denmark, by finding security and hope in her deepening relationship with Jesper. She and Jesper sense there is no future in Denmark and long to go elsewhere: she yearns for the cold stillness of Siberia, he for the desert tumult of Morocco. Jesper, a vivacious and sharp idealist ("I'm no peasant, I'm a proletarian," he shouts at the local baron), opens his innocent sister's eyes to the diminishing possibilities and hypocrisies of life in North Jutland.

When the Nazis invade, Jesper joins the resistance and, under suspicion, flees to Morocco, leaving his worshipful sister behind. Instead of fulfilling her own goal of a Siberian idyll, she swallows her disappointment and her dreams of travel. Although Petterson addresses the impact of WWII, alluding to the resistance movement and the coexistence of gentile and Jewish Danes, the novel focuses on the profusion of little moments shaping the beauty and pathos of a stagnant life.

This novel is available at the local library.

Historical studies of Icelandic Sagas reveal Vikings had a dark humor and joked, even during deadly battles. It was a mixture of sarcasm, irony and unusual jokes. The Vikings approach was that, if you knew you were going to die, why not do it laughing.

Death was never something Vikings feared because they believed that a warrior who died in battle was rewarded and could join all other great fighters in Valhalla, a majestic, enormous hall located in Asgard, ruled over by the great god Odin.

Written during the Middle Ages, Icelandic Sagas tell stories of Vikings, and usually the tales all centered around various kinds of disputes that ended in battles between the Vikings. Often two or more families could be involved in blood feuds that lasted decades or generations.

According to historian Trine Buhl, at the Århus University in Denmark, authors of the Icelandic Sagas deliberately added dark humor to their tales. Without it the stories would be boring.

There are several examples of sarcasm and dark humor in the Sagas. For example the Droplaugarsona Saga, written sometime in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, tells about Droplaug's two sons, Grímr and Helgi. When the Viking Helgi gets his lower lip cut off in a battle, he says to his opponent: "I have never been particularly handsome. and you haven't exactly improved my attractiveness." This remark shows Viking Helgi possessed self-knowledge and self-deprecating humor.

In the Gunnlaug Ormstungas Saga, a famous Icelandic saga that is over 1,000-years-old, we encounter Viking Gunnlaug who falls in love with a young woman named Helga. Gunnlaug embarks on a long and adventurous journey, and when he returns home he discovers that his beloved Helga was forced to marry Hrafn, Gunnlaug's enemy. This leads to a long, hard battle between the two men. After a while, Gunnlaug uses his sword to cut off Hrafn's foot.

Gunnlaug is happy and feels this is the end of the battle which he won. However, despite being mutilated, his enemy Hrafn yelled: "It's true things are not going my way, but I can probably continue a while longer if I just get something to drink!" The battle ended with the death of both Vikings.

Sarcasm, irony, and dark humor were not restricted to Icelandic Sagas. In the Kings' Sagas, we encounter similar jokes often uttered when someone's life was about to end. In one chapter we read about how Danish King Harald Bluetooth refuses to accept Sweyn Forkbeard (Sven



Tveskagg) as his son. Sweyn Forkbeard is instead raised

by Palnatoke, a legendary Danish hero, chieftain of the Island of Fyn and founder of the Jomsvikings Brotherhood.

Sweyn Forkbeard (Sven Tveskäg) is furious when he learns King Bluetooth calls him a bastard. He seeks revenge, gathers his followers and convinces them to wage war on King Harald Bluetooth.

One late evening, Forkbeard's assassins see the King sitting, calmly relaxing by the fire. When the King bends forward, one of the killers shoots an arrow. The author relates the event by writing, "According to testimonies of those who knew and witnessed this event, the arrow flew straight into the King's lowest point, continued through his body and came out of his mouth. Then the King collapsed and died."

According to historian Trine Buhl, the most popular sagas were those with dark humor. Most researchers agree that the Sagas are based on oral traditions. From about 900 A.D. to 1000 A.D. The sagas were told by storytellers from one generation to another.

Around the year 1200 A.D., literate men such as monks and others learned and started to write down the Sagas. Over the years, when the Sagas spread among the Nordic countries, they became more colorful and often slightly exaggerated. Some of the stories can have been confirmed because the same verses have been found on runestones from the Viking Age.

## Norway Closes Border To All But Essential Travel

David Nikel Jan 27, 2021

The Norwegian prime minister Erna Solberg has closed the country's border in a bid to halt the further spread of coronavirus variants into Norway.

Despite falling infection numbers across Norway, Solberg said the stricter measures were "absolutely necessary" to contain the various virus mutations.

### Norway is closed to almost everyone

Aside from Norwegian residents returning to the country, only "socially critical personnel" are exempt. This includes workers in a very limited number of categories along with parents of resident children. "This means that many foreign workers cannot come to Norway," Solberg confirmed.

The border closure comes into force on Friday, January 29 for two weeks, at which time the situation will be reviewed. But Solberg emphasized that Norwegians should prepare for strict measures for some time to come.

### A difficult week for Norway

Norway has been one of the European countries to escape the worst of the coronavirus pandemic so far. But in recent days, an outbreak of the so-called British variant of Covid-19 in eastern Norway has created a new set of headaches. New measures include closure of all non-essential shops and services.

### Previous regulations not working as intended

Before today's announcement, everyone arriving in Norway from countries designated "red" by the Norwegian Institute of Public Health was subject to compulsory registration and testing at the border followed by serving a quarantine period. However, SIM-card data reported by NRK revealed that a big proportion of those arriving by road were not tested upon arrival.

As of 23 January, 2.17 per 100 inhabitants have been vaccinated.



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## Norwegian Speed Skater Passes

By Melinda C. Shepherd

Hjalmar Johan Andersen, by name Hjallis, (born March 12, 1923, Rødøy, Norway), died March 27, 2013 in Oslo. The Norwegian speed skater dominated the longer speed-skating distances in the early 1950s, winning three gold medals at the 1952 Olympic Games in Oslo and setting several world records.

Andersen, who was considered one of the most powerful speed skaters of all time, began skating as a boy, but the World War II Nazi occupation of Norway delayed his entry into international competition. In the early 1950s, he set world records in the 5,000 meters (8 min 7.3 sec) and the 10,000 meters (16 min 32.6 sec); the latter record stood for eight years.

As a three-time world and European champion (1950–52), he arrived at the 1952 Winter Olympics as a preemptive favorite in the longer distances, but he captured a surprise victory in the 1,500-metre event. In the 5,000-metre final he set an Olympic record (8 min 10.6 sec) and won by 11 seconds, the largest margin of victory in the history of the event. He capped off his Olympic performance with the most decisive victory in the men's 10,000-meter event in Olympic history, crossing the line in a record time of 16 min 45.8 sec, almost 25 seconds ahead of the second-place finisher. Andersen's three gold medals in one Olympics matched a record for men's speed skating that lasted until the 1980 Winter Games in Lake Placid, New York, where American Eric Heiden earned five.

Andersen officially retired from competition after the Oslo Olympics, but he returned to the ice in 1954 to win his fourth Norwegian title in five years and a silver medal at the European championships. He qualified for the 1956 Winter Olympics in Cortina d'Ampezzo, Italy, but failed to medal.

The Norwegian government paid tribute to Andersen by erecting a statue of him in the Vikingskipet, the speed-skating venue for the 1994 Olympic Games in Lillehammer, Norway.

At the 1994 Games countryman Johann Olav Koss duplicated Andersen's 1952 feat by winning gold medals in the 10,000-, 5,000-, and 1,500-metre events.

# Icelandic Cinema: A Historic Time For International Recognition

By **Valur Grettisson**, January 26, 2021

One could easily argue that 2020 was the best year in the history of Icelandic cinema. C'mon, an Icelandic artist won not only an Oscar, but more or less every other international award possible for the best cinematic score. We also had two films on The Guardian's Top 50 Best Movies of the Year. When else has that happened?



Even the domestic box office in Iceland went better than expected. Two Icelandic movies—'Amma Hófi' and 'Agnes Joy'—received more attendance than the rest of the 16 Icelandic movies and documentaries released in 2020 got combined. And that doesn't even get into the quality of this year's material, so here's our highlights for the last year in Icelandic cinema.

## **Sharp political comment**

The year started with 'Héraðið' ('The County') directed by Grímur Hákonarson. If you haven't heard about Grímur yet, please put him on your list. For reference, his last movie

'Hrútar' ('Rams') got the Un Certain Regard award at the 2015 Cannes Festival, which is more or less the second biggest prize there. At the time, this was the highest prestige any Icelandic filmmaker had received.

'Héraðið' is a strong and surprisingly sharp exploration of injustice and corruption in Iceland. In this critic's mind, the film is the smartest and most successful political criticism ever made by an Icelandic filmmaker. Many others agreed—in fact the movie made headlines for its nuanced take on the history of farmers being exploited in Iceland by various institutions.

The movie ended up as number 47 on The Guardian's aforementioned "Best Of" list, and deservedly so.

## **A slow burner enchants**

But Icelanders weren't only thinking of politics in 2020. 'Hvítur, Hvítur Dagur' ('A White, White Day') by Hlynur Pálmason was a compelling character drama starring Ingvar Sigurðsson that I was particularly fond of. The movie tells the story of an ex-cop named Ingimundur, who realises that his dead wife—whom he is still mourning—had an affair with his friend. Hlynur's creation is a slow-burner that turns everything up to eleven at the end. The director sprang up from nothing in 2017 with his film 'Vetrarbræður' ('Winter Brothers'), which you should also watch.

'Hvítur, Hvítur Dagur' is an interesting showcase of Hlynur's vision and talents. In my view, it's just a matter of time until he will—if not win an Oscar—grab Europe's attention with his raw and innovative storytelling. His film received the 31st spot on The Guardian's list.

## **Hildur writes history**

But the biggest win—and a historic moment for Icelandic cultural life—is without a doubt the amazing success of Hildur Guðnadóttir. The composer started in 2019 by hypnotizing the world with her score for the HBO miniseries "Chernobyl," which I assume you've watched because it's fantastic. She followed that up with the iconic score for Todd Philip's "Joker". For her contribution to this film, she won the BAFTA, Grammy and finally the Oscar.

I anticipate that the bathroom scene from "Joker" will probably become compulsory viewing for anyone in film school studying how to combine music and cinema. The movie itself is an odd masterpiece, but it manages to become one because of its unusual combination of stark imagery and compelling music. Add Joaquin Phoenix to the mix and you've got something special.

## **TV!**

Of course, 2020 was also a record year for Icelandic TV series. Six series were on TV, which is pretty good for a nation of 360,000. One of them, "The Valhalla Murders" also did quite well on Netflix, and we believe more will grab the world's attention in good time.

If 2020 has taught us anything, it's to wear a mask and that Iceland's success in films and TV is just beginning.

# Swedish culture and traditions

By Lund University, Lund, Sweden

The Swedes have the second highest proficiency in English as a second language in the world according to the 2019 Education First English Proficiency Index. With 90% of the population fluent in English, you can leave your phrase book at home and get by with English throughout the country. English is widely spoken, and for some companies it is the official working language. English is also taught as a compulsory foreign language in Swedish schools. The prevalence of English is hugely appreciated by international visitors and Swedes alike, as visitors can easily adapt to their new surroundings and the Swedes get to practice their language skills.

For those with an interest in learning another language, there are opportunities to learn Swedish. Lund University arranges some introductory courses for students and staff. Those who wish to study the language can do so through free language classes for immigrants funded by the Swedish government. Alternatively you can pay for classes at local education institutes or arrange a private tutor.

## Swedish traits

Swedes can sometimes seem a bit reserved at first, but people are generally very friendly and are always happy to help and to answer any questions you might have. A good way to get to know Swedish people is to join Swedish societies, clubs, associations and non-profit organizations. Learning some Swedish language is also a good way to experience more of the culture.

A well-known national characteristic is the love of nature. Many Swedes like to spend their free time in the forest or by the sea. In Sweden nature is really available to everyone as there is a right of common access which applies to all forests, fields, beaches and lakes across the country.

Being punctual is important to Swedes; arriving just prior to an appointment, but not too early! And forming an orderly queue is expected of everyone when waiting to be served in a shop or bank, for example. Almost no excuse is good enough to get in front of the people who arrived before you. Many places use a system of "queuing tickets", whereby you take a number from a ticket machine when you first enter the store. When your number shows on the screen, or the shop assistant calls your number, it is your turn.

Taking off your shoes off before entering the home of a Swedish family is a common act of courtesy, especially in winter. Some Swedes bring a lighter pair of clean shoes to wear indoors when visiting people.

It is also customary to have a small present for the host to say thank you for their hospitality, when invited for dinner or other occasions. When you next see the host, it is then customary to thank them again "tack för senast".

## Weather

"There is no bad weather, only bad clothes" is a common expression in Sweden. Come rain or shine, cold or warmth, the Swedes are always prepared for changes in the climate.

Sweden is often associated with freezing cold temperatures and plenty of snow. Whilst that may stand true for the northern parts of Sweden, in the very south of Sweden – where Lund is located – the winters are much milder. In Lund, and in Sweden in general, you need to be prepared for both sunshine and rain, warmth and cold. The average temperature in Lund is around zero degrees Celsius in winter and around 17 degrees Celsius in summer.

Typically you can expect summer temperatures in Lund to reach the mid-high 20s (Celsius) with up to 17 hours of daylight. Summer is a time to enjoy the beautiful beaches along the coast and the nature all around Skåne. In winter, daylight is reduced to 7 hours and temperatures drop down to zero degrees Celsius. Although snowfalls do occur, it is uncommon for snow to stay on the ground in Skåne for several weeks, in contrast to winters in the north in Sweden.



Friluftsbym Högå Kusten/imagebank.sweden.se





### Food

Meatballs and pickled herring, anyone? Of the many culinary classics in Sweden, one of the most popular is meatballs served with potatoes and lingonberries – a staple meal that is served in many homes around the country.

Another classic dish is pickled herring (sill), which is served at all festivities. Whether it is Christmas, Easter or Midsummer, no important celebration meal is complete without pickled herring. Fresh, pickled and smoked seafood

Daniel Herzell/imagebank.sweden.se

(particularly herring, crayfish, salmon and eel), game meats such as elk and reindeer as well as berries and currants (including the lingonberry), are all typical ingredients used in Swedish cuisine.

In Lund, Malmö and Helsingborg you will find a growing international food scene, with restaurants offering Thai, Greek, Persian, Indian, Italian and American cuisine. Specialist food stores selling ethnic ingredients are also located in the cities so you can create a taste of your home country here in Sweden.

### “Fika” – coffee break

Of all the words to learn when you come to Sweden, “fika” is one you will quickly pick up. Swedes love to “fika”, meaning to take a coffee break. Coffee breaks usually involve pastries (especially cinnamon buns), biscuits or sandwiches and the all-important coffee; Sweden is the second largest consumer of coffee.



Tina Stafrén/imagebank.sweden.se



Anna Hållams/imagebank.sweden.se

### Midsummer

The midsummer celebrations take place in June, on the longest day of the year. This is a day filled with parties and dancing around the



Cecilia Larsson/imagebank.sweden.se

### Swedish traditions

The Swedes celebrate many traditions throughout the year. Some of the highlights include:

#### Walpurgis Night

on 30 April, when large bonfires are lit across the country as symbols of the passing of winter and the approach of spring.



Anna Hållams/imagebank.sweden.se

traditional maypole that is decorated with birch leaves and wild flowers. Midsummer and Christmas are the most important celebrations in Sweden.

#### Kräftskiva (Crayfish Party)

As the summer draws to an end, crayfish parties with schnapps and singing are very popular.

**Jul (Christmas)** In the lead up to Christmas there are the Lucia celebrations, where processions of boys and girls in white gowns holding candles charm the crowd with beautiful songs. Christmas is celebrated on 24 December.