

SCOTTISH-SWEDISH SOCIETY

Annual General Meeting 2013

Venue: 3 Belford Road, Edinburgh

Date: Saturday, 13 April 2013, 12.00 noon.

Welcome

Present Kerstin Phillips, Claire Craig, Kristel Torokoff, Linn Elder, Erika Boström, Helene Nordberg, David and Elisabet Stewart, David and Britta Sugden, Arthur Lightfoot, Jeanette De Geer Nairn, Anna Winstanley, Ingela and George Presslie, Caroline Dow, and Torvald Colliander.

Apologies Håkan Arnlund, John Gilmour, Carina Dahlström-Mair, Harris Keillar, Ingeborg Crabbie, Cathy Bell, Christina Coltart, Jennie Ferguson

Minutes of The Previous AGM were not available.

President's Report, Håkan Arnlund:

Midsummer 2012 For the second year running, we celebrated midsummer with the Scottish Finnish society at the Edinburgh Academy Cricket ground. We had a very good turnout again – in total over 80 people, with many families and children that braved the rain and took part in the midsummer dances and songs.

Kerstin Phillips:

We have arranged the usual annual events. In the autumn we had the Pea soup and Pancake evening which was held at Hemma this year with lovely food organised by Anna Christofferson and her staff. Anna also invites us to Scandinavian evenings at *Hemma* and gave us Swedish food at the lunch for Swedish pensioners paid for by Swedish Benevolent Fund and organised by Camilla Persson.

Linn has written about the Lucia event at the Wardie parish church which was very successful this year with a larger attendance than ever before. We are currently searching for a venue with a larger hall for the gathering after the service, preferably in an Episcopalian church but their halls have so far been smaller than the halls in Wardie church.

In January we had a very enjoyable Burns and Bellman evening at the restaurant at HIBS with excellent food, wine, speeches and Swedish songs performed by two musicians.

We are grateful for Carina's interesting Newsletters.

Treasurer's Report, Kristel Torokoff

Kristel Torokoff passed round a summary of the Society's Profit and Loss.

Assets at 13.3.13 : £3,500 (£2648 in Bank of Scotland account and £1000 in PayPal)

The Society made a loss of £1500. Two Society events made a loss:

1) Burns and Bellman : £400 This was a new initiative and higher priced than earlier and unfortunately there was a low turnout.

2) Lucia: £150 There was an excellent turnout but extra expenses e.g. a donation of £100 to the Swedish Church. There was considerably less income from stalls than in some previous years. More money was spent on the children.

3) Website sub: £35 per month. This is now changed to an annual payment to get discount; an extra £350 cost this year which will not be taken next year.

Britta Sugden queried £1500 loss for the Society. Torvald Colliander pointed out that the current website costs half the subscriptions. Linn Elder suggested she could look into website situation.

The Accounts will now be prepared and examined so that a proper financial report can be presented to members shortly.

Secretary's Report, John Gilmour

First, can I thank Kerstin for taking on the job of reading out the report for us absentees this year. Secondly I apologise for being unable to deliver this report myself due to a long-standing clash of dates.

And now on to the report.

It has been a mixed year for me as secretary because of personal and workload difficulties that have meant that I have been unable to attend to my duties as secretary in the way that I would have liked to have done. I am grateful to my fellow committee members for their understanding and support. Sadly, there have been a small number of members who have forgotten that the society work is done by volunteers as opposed to employees and have communicated their displeasure when everything has not worked as well as we would all like.

90 renewal invoices were issued in March of which 16 remain unpaid. This may be due to individual difficulties in paying but this meeting should note that 74 members *were* able to pay using the website.

The members yet to pay will be contacted to find out what difficulties they may have. Once more, may I apologise to all members who have experienced difficulty in paying due to the system.

According to our records, our active membership stands at 117 as follows:

complimentary members 3

couple/family member 43

honorary member 2

individual membership 19

life membership 15

senior couple 17

senior individual 7

student membership 11

This represents in my view a stable situation which hope to improve on in the coming year.

I would now like to turn to a very important matter. Members are responsible for maintaining the accuracy and updating of their own membership records. If the membership record is wrong for example the e-mail address, this is the responsibility of the member to correct their own record.

On a number of occasions in the last year, I have heard complaints about not being able to get onto the website when in fact the member was using an outdated e-mail address. Life members also need to check their record from time to time for the same reason. I do what I can to help when I have the time to do but members also need to help themselves.

Following the reading of the Secretary's report, some members remarked that they are not comfortable with computer usage and find that accessing the website can be difficult. Torvald explained the importance of using passwords as some groups want access to lists of people when an election is approaching. Other members are happy to use the website. It was clear that no-one likes PayPal. Arthur offered to deal with any cheques as he can bank them.

Non-internet members, report by Arthur Lightfoot

Arthur reported that he is in a position to change anyone's name and address on the website (bar his own). He represents non-internet using members and so far has only handled one cheque. Kerstin and Kristel also have some cheques to be processed.

Reports on Groups and Activities

Swedish School, Helene Nordberg

Svenska Skolföreningen i Skottland bildades 2009 då det fanns en stor efterfrågan på svenskundervisning för barn bland våra medlemmar.

Föreningen började med undervisning i åldersgruppen 12-16 år. Anmälningarna blev många och gruppen fylldes snabbt upp. Nu består den av 10 elever.

Våren 2010 var föreningen tvungen att utöka verksamheten med en grupp i åldrarna 8-11år; 11 barn deltar nu i denna undervisning.

Lärare i båda dessa undervisningsgrupper är Helene Nordberg. Helene har arbetat som lärare i Sverige under 40 år. Efter att ha flyttat till Edinburgh 2008 var hon med och startade skolföreningen tillsammans med Håkan Arnlund som nu arbetar som ordförande i föreningen.

Svensk-Skotska skolföreningen är officiellt accepterad av Skolverket i Sverige och erhåller statsbidrag, precis som all annan utlandsundervisning runt om i världen.

Undervisning sker varannan söndag i Wardie Parish church och varje lektionspass är en och halv timme.

Vi använder oss av svenskt undervisningsmaterial och internet är till stor hjälp för att hålla undervisningen aktuell. Digitala spåret är en länk som flitigt används.

Vi har planerat att göra ett studiebesök till en svensk skola i Stockholm. Tanken var att vi skulle resa nu i vår men det är svårt att få till bra restider. Våra elever har ett tufft program i sina vanliga skolor så vi har skjutit denna resa på framtiden.

It was clear after this that all those present was very impressed and pleased with the work of Helene and Skolföreningen

Classical Swedish literature, Christina Coltart

The Book Club has had an enjoyable year reading Swedish books that we have chosen.

We started the year with Nilsson Piratens *Bock i Örtagård* and continued with Victoria Benedictsons *Från Skåne* and Hjalmar Söderbergs *Martin Birck*. We had many different thoughts about the authors and their titles and the books. After these we started on a different kind of novel, the series of books by Jan Gillou about Arn de Gotha: *Vägen till Jerusalem*, *Tempelriddaren*, *Riket vid vägens slut* and *Arvet efter Arn*. We found these book most thought provoking. Most of us learnt a lot about the Crusades, the Templars and their war with muslims as well about the Swedish history during the 12th century. Many of us had very vague knowledge of how Sweden was ruled and what life was like then. Very interesting indeed. We have just started reading the series by Vilhelm Moberg about emigration and immigration of one Swedish family. The first book *Utvandrarna* is most interesting as well as a good read. We are looking forward to read the next three books about the family in USA: *Invandrarna*, *Nybyggarna* and *Sista Brevet till Sverige*.

Recent Swedish literature, Kerstin Phillips

We read books written by authors alive during our life time and in Swedish. We meet in our homes once a month and talk about the book we have just read. We share our views of the story, the language and what thoughts have arisen from the book. As we have different life experiences, have been away from Sweden for many years or only left recently and cover a wide age range our discussions are stimulating and interesting. In the months since the last AGM we have read Theodor Kallifatides, *Ett nytt land utanför mitt fönster*, Linda Olsson *Nu vill jag sjunga dig milda sånger*, Kerstin Ekman *Grand final i skojarbranschen*, Marianne Fredrikson *Anna, Hanna och Johanna*, Kerstin Thorvald *Nödvändigheten i att dansa*, Göran Thunström *Maskrosbollen*, Majgull Axelsson *Aprilhäxan*, Åsa Nilssonne *Kyskhetsbältet* and at the moment we are reading *Babels hus* av P C Jersild.

Swedish literature in translation, Claire Craig

There are currently six members in the Swedish Book Club. We meet in each other's houses every two months and talk about the Swedish books in English translation which we have read and this is very enjoyable.

Books discussed this year were:

Unto a Good Land - Wilhelm Moberg (1952, translation 1954)

Fishing in Utopia - Andrew Brown (2008)

The Myth of Wu Tao-Tzu - Sven Lindqvist (1967, translation 2012)

Doktor Glas - Hjalmar Soderberg (1905, translation 2002)

Currently we are reading the hilarious *The 100 Year Old Man Who Climbed Out of the Window and Disappeared* by Jonas Jonasson (2009, translation 2012).

Handicraft group, Erika Boström

Erika reported that the Handicraft Group met for the first time last month. It is intended for anyone of any ability in eg. weaving, knitting etc. who either needs help or would like to get ongoing projects completed. The next meeting is at Jeanette's on Tuesday April 23rd in the evening.

Coffee mornings, Kerstin Phillips

Once a month somebody invites us for a coffee morning between 10.30 am and 12 noon in her home. Sometimes there are only a few of us, at other times there are more. We drink coffee and talk about current issues or past experiences. It is a relaxed and enjoyable opportunity to meet old friends and make new friends.

Events for children with their parents, Linn Backola

On the junior front, we arranged "julpyssel" at Niddry Castle on the 25th of November. Everyone got stuck in, and we made for example cards, various little santas and angels, "franskarameller" and of course baked gingerbread cookies! We also rehearsed the songs to be sung at the Lucia procession.

Lucia was a well attended event 2012, and we had more children than predicted. After the procession, most children and some parents gathered in "The new hall" for some games, like *Throw the wellie* and for "fika". Swedish children's films were also shown there, to entertain the younger and give the parents an opportunity to catch up. Helene doubled up as "korv-gumma", and the children were given korv med bröd" as well as a shot at the "fiskdamm", which was very well received! More than 40 children and a number of babies attended.

A new event that we arranged was "påskpyssel", which we did on March the 10th. As this was a new event it was a bit of a try, but it was greatly appreciated by those attended, and our intention is to continue with this tradition too. Twelve children and twelve adults attended.

We thanked Linn Backola very much for her work with children and their parents on behalf of the Society.

Website Report, John Gilmour

Once again, may I thank Kerstin for reading out this short report on my behalf.

I think it is fair to say that it has been a difficult year for the website. We have struggled to find a developer willing to use the WildApricot technology in order to improve the presentation of the site. Now we have found one, we have embarked on an ambitious project to offer current and potential members an interesting and attractive experience.

Unfortunately, recent project progress has been hampered due to my lack of time and some slow responses from those members who have been asked to contribute material for their pages. I have been unable to chase up those members and also to deal effectively with the developer. For that I apologise.

Looking forward however, we hope to have an exciting website in place by midyear. One of the difficulties has been sourcing quality images for the site so if anyone has some pictures of Lucia, Midsummer, or any other society activity, please e-mail them or otherwise get them to me and we will try to include them in the site.

One other innovation we hope to include in the site will be video clips. For example, our president explaining what the society is about and welcoming potential members in English and Swedish.

And on the subject of dual language, we hope to have dual English and Swedish text on the same page. Everyone wants a better website and I hope that every member will be prepared to help.

Finally, it has been said that the website does not carry personal statements and addresses. This is not correct. Members choose what personal details they want to show to other members. Currently, the minimum information provided is name and e-mail address. However, if you look me up on the website, will find that my photo and address is available to all members. So it's up to you what you want to have on the website about yourself and remember, it is always restricted to members only.

If you have questions or points, I'm always pleased to answer these when I can.

After the report several members expressed their concern about the current and future cost of the website.

Election of Committee for 2013-2014

Current committee

Claire Craig, Minute secretary, withdrawing from the committee and we thank her for her competent work as minute secretary and her valuable contributions to the society. Helene handed over some flowers and a card .

President: Håkan Arnlund

Treasurer: Kristel Torokoff

Secretary and website: John Gilmour

Non-internet membership: Arthur Lightfoot

Skolförening: Heléne Nordberg

Facebook: Harris Keillar

Kerstin Phillips

Carina Dahlström-Mair

We thanked Harris for his valuable efforts with Facebook which has proved useful on a number of occasions to reach non-members.

Proposed committee 2013/14 which was accepted

President, Håkan Arnlund

Senior Vice President, Helene Nordberg

Junior Vice President, Harris Keillar

Secretary and web master, John Gilmour

Treasurer, Kristel Torokoff

Carina Dahlström-Mair

Kerstin Phillips

Arthur Lightfoot

We welcome our new member Jennie Ferguson in her absence.

Ingela Presslie volunteered to join the committee, proposed by Anna Winstanley. Ingela was also welcomed.

AOCB

The possibility of increasing the membership fee was mooted but it was decided to keep the fees as they are at the moment.

Erika remarked that it is now more expensive to provide food for events, such as Lucia, as individual members no longer have the time to prepare food. Food is now bought in when required even though Lussekatte have to be made by members who are then given their expenses.

Minutes by Claire.