



# **INTERNATIONAL FORUM**

**OSLO, NORWAY**

**June  
NEWSLETTER**

**06/2020**

<b>2</b>	<b>Forum Diary</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>President's Page</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>From the Board</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>From the Office</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Open Door</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Minutes of the AGM</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>A short history of the Forum Singers</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>Around and Beyond Oslo</b>

**Number 455**



## INTERNATIONAL FORUM

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<b>Special Events</b>	Mona B. Reinboth
<b>Activities</b>	Anita Solheim

### Forum Diary

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Page</i>
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To be announced

#### **Committee leaders:**

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### THE DEADLINE FOR SUBMITTING ARTICLES

For the **August Newsletter** is Wednesday, **July 29**. Please send your contribution to Elizabeth S. Rasmussen and to [int.forum@online.no](mailto:int.forum@online.no).

## From the President



Dear Members,

We emerge from our cocoons in the midst of a once-in-a-lifetime experience. There are difficulties to overcome. It has made us sad and anxious, given us new impressions and insights. We feel a renewed appreciation of many good things that we tend to take for granted. Yet, it is too early to absorb and analyse the full impact of this pandemic. Going forward, there will be changes, big and small, temporary and permanent. The big question is Will global society undergo a much-needed transformation on issues like inequality and climate change, or will we revert to business-as-usual the minute things return to normal?

Like everybody else, we in the Forum long for the return of normality, long for our meetings, events and activities, long to be together again, to listen to each other's stories, to sympathise, laugh and learn from one another. Ours is a network of friendship, of companions who read, chat, cook, walk, learn skills and spend time together, listen to speakers who broaden our minds, reflect on art and culture, visit unique places, experience traditional culture and modern architecture. Not doing all this together leaves a big vacuum. So, we look forward to autumn with hope.

Now summer is upon us. The seaside and mountains call. Nature is healing; nature encourages introspection. Albert Einstein said, "Look deep into nature and you will understand everything." He spoke from a philosophical and intellectual, spiritual and scientific standpoint. At the poetic level, author Ben Okri captures it beautifully: "When society pauses, nature sings."

I wish you good health and cheer, peace and harmony as you enjoy the sights and sounds of nature.

Have a wonderful summer! You deserve it.

Best Regards,

Anita Pratap  
President

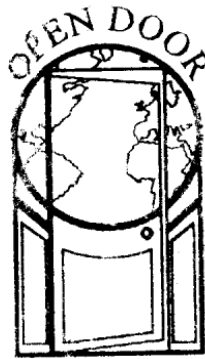
## *FROM THE BOARD*

It is not yet possible to foresee in what form our meetings will take place in the Autumn, but we are hopeful that we'll be able to start up again, as restrictions are continually being eased. We should be able to provide more definite information in the August *Newsletter*, which will be distributed around the middle of the month.

## *FROM THE OFFICE*

Last year an invoice for renewing membership was sent to each member and this worked very well. When the time comes, this procedure will be repeated, so we ask you kindly to wait until then before making any payment.

The International Forum Office will remain closed until mid-August.



## **A BRIEF HISTORY OF OPEN DOOR**

Open Door is a network of International Women's Associations that aims at facilitating and promoting inter-club contact and communication. A main objective is to provide a point of contact for members who move to or visit a town or city where a 'sister club' exists. Today, there are sixty-six International Women's Associations in thirty-four countries which 'open their door to each other', International Forum being one of them.

Information about sister organisations abroad is available from the International Coordinator, Ellen S. Aa. Vollebæk

The network was started in 1980. For thirty years, Ms Ismelda Pellet of The Hague was chairperson of the Open Door network. When she passed away in 2018, Ms Marja van Loopik, also from ICW The Hague stepped in as chair.

More information about the network and its history can be found at the organization's website: [www.opendoorworldwide.com](http://www.opendoorworldwide.com)

*Ellen Vollebæk* – International Coordinator



## **Annual General Meeting of the International Forum**

The **Annual General Meeting (AGM) 2020** of the International Forum was completed on Monday, June 8. Owing to the Corona crisis, the AGM was carried out electronically. Information from the Board about the AGM was sent to all members on May 15, 2020. Members were asked whether or not they approved of the items on the Agenda and to answer by email by May 25. The minutes from the AGM are for members only and therefore not published in the website version of the Newsletter.

### **Forum Singers**

#### **A short History of the Choir**

Did you miss the Forum Singers spring concert this year? Unfortunately, it had to be cancelled due to the corona pandemic. This was to be our last concert. Our conductor, Eva Landro, has acquired a position with the prestigious Edvard Grieg choir and has moved to Bergen. When Eva told us she was leaving, the choir decided, since we were all getting older, to ‘call it a day.’



Alice Roscow

The Forum Singers choir was started in 1998 by Forum member Jean Brøvig. Our first conductor was Forum member Tove Alice Rossow, professional

pianist, singer and teacher at Barratt Due Institute of Music. There were 16 members and practices were held privately. As the choir grew, we had to find larger venues for our practices. The choir has had an average of 28 members for several years now, and, since it started, 20 countries have been represented. We rehearsed once a fortnight with our conductor. In the weeks in between, we had voice-group practices in our homes. We are going to miss the choir. The choir members have had a lot of fun together, at practices, concerts and choir parties. Lasting friendships have been made.

We have wonderful memories of the choir and concerts with Tove Alice. Our repertoires have included songs in all genres. We especially enjoyed singing songs from musicals; talented ladies in the choir taking the solo parts! The choir held two concerts a year: a Christmas concert at International Forum's Christmas meeting, and a spring concert, held at various venues.

One of our accompanying pianists was Soen Eng Yap, also a Forum member. When Eng achieved her PhD in medicine, she celebrated by holding a concert in Oslo Konserthus' 'lille sal', where she played the piano for her many guests. Our choir was invited to sing a few songs at the concert. It was certainly a thrill and an honour for us to sing in the Konserthuset!



Tove Alice was our main conductor until 2009. In 2010, Kristin Groven Holmboe, an experienced choir conductor, took over, and Tove Alice joined the choir's soprano group. Through Kristin, we were able to use Frogner parish hall for rehearsals. In return, we participated at services in Frogner church twice a year, which was a rewarding experience for us.



Eva Landro



Kristin Groven Holmboe

Kristin was also conductor for Norske Selskabs Mannskor, which resulted in some joint concerts with the men. We sang with them at Christmas in Akershus Slottskirke, and had a spring concert together in Frogner church. We also have many happy choir memories, singing at the American Ambassador's residence. In addition, we have also performed at care homes for the elderly. This was very popular, and it was gratifying to see and hear the old people joining in the songs.

In 2015, Kristin Groven Holmboe handed over the job as our conductor to Eva Landro, a professional singer, who has worked with us until this spring. One of the highlights of our time with Eva was the Advent/Christmas concerts in Holmenkollen kapell. It was magical to sing in that lovely chapel, packed full with our faithful audience!

Our concerts have had varied repertoires; folk songs, pop, jazz, musicals, classic, etc., in different languages, including Chinese and Japanese! Choir members have sung solos, and the conductor and pianist have also contributed with solo numbers. The programmes always included singalongs for everyone to join in. After the concerts the audiences were invited to a delicious buffet prepared by the choir members. The choir has given its members a lot of pleasure, and our audiences have always seemed to enjoy the concerts.

If you would like to hear the choir again, google: 'lydia rostad vimeo' or go to this link: <https://vimeo.com/user89398855>

Rosemary Hauge  
Lydia Rostad  
Aslaug Bjørtuft Ellingsen

# AROUND OSLO AND BEYOND

## The Fortified Town of Old Fredrikstad

Visit northern Europe's best-preserved fortified town, the old city of Fredrikstad, with its shops, galleries and cafés. *Gamlebyen* is one of Northern Europe's historical treasures.



In well-preserved ancient buildings and along cobbled streets, you will find a living town with quaint shops, museums, galleries, theatres and charming cafés. People have shopped here since 1640! The shops are open all year, also Sundays.



The star-shaped defence walls and moats are perfect for picnics and strolls and for slowing your heart beat. The old town is a living part of modern Fredrikstad, and offers good food, attractive shops, art galleries and a unique atmosphere.



This site is about one hour and fifteen minutes from Oslo. Fredrikstad can also be reached by train. Bus 8 from the St. Croix underpass (20-minute ride).

## **Skibladner**

### **Steamboat on Lake Mjøsa**



**The season starts June 23 and ends on August 23**

Skibladner has been in regular traffic between Eidsvoll and Lillehammer since 1856; in the beginning as an extension of the railroad service, which ended at Eidsvoll. It is the world's oldest paddle steamer still in service.

The ports of call are Hamar, Kapp, Gjøvik, Moelv and Lillehammer. You can start your trip at any of them, and disembark at any of them. If you sail from Hamar to Lillehammer, make sure to order the second seating in the restaurant. Then you can enjoy the wonderful landscape of Nes, Toten and Gjøvik before

reaching the forests south of Lillehammer. That's when the second seating starts.



The medieval church at Nes



Kapp (Toten)

Because of the current Corona situation, the paddle steamer will sail with 50% passenger capacity all summer, as the operators wish to follow the rules of hygiene and social distancing. Tickets must therefore be purchased in advance. The persons purchasing tickets must also be able to supply contact information about their fellow travellers, in case Covid-19 tracking becomes necessary.

For information about tickets and prices, please see <https://www.skibladner.no/travel-with-us/departure-times-and-prices> or call 61 14 40 80. Please note that this year all passengers must order a meal. The traditional meal served is Norwegian steamed salmon and strawberries. The boat has its own labelled white wine.

For tickets, please go to <https://www.skibladner.no/reis-med-oss/booking-og-bestilling>.

### **Lillehammer Art Museum**



The trip with Skibladrer may be combined with a short visit to the Lillehammer Art Museum, which is a 20-minute walk up from the steamboat pier. The museum is not far from the train station, for a one-hour ride back to Hamar, if that is where you embarked on the boat. The current exhibition features a new and exciting presentation of the vast art collection, including more than 300 works ranging from the era of Romanticism to the present day. Two hundred years of art collection presented in a new way!

<https://lillehammerartmuseum.com/utstilling/have-we-met-before/?lang=en>

## **Avaldsnes Historical and Viking Center at Karmøy**

Kong Augvalds veg, Avaldsnes. Follow Route 47 south from Haugesund



**The museum is open from June 19 to August 13**

Avaldsnes is Norway's oldest royal court both before and during the Viking age, as shown by the hundreds of burial mounds in the area. This royal 'seat' controlled most of the commerce along the coast of Norway from very early on.

Harald Fairhair (c. 850-932) chased the local King Hjør Halfsson and made the estate his main residence after he won the naval battle at Hafrsfjord in the year 872, which resulted in the unification of Norway into one kingdom.



It was also at Avaldsnes that Olav Haraldsson (later Saint Olav †1030) and the mighty Erling Skjalgsson met. Erling fought for the traditional small, autonomous kingdoms and the Þing system, against the reformists of the Fairhair family line. King Håkon Håkonsson built Avaldsnes Church around 1250.



Concerts, exhibitions, guided tours of the sites of historical events and a Viking market are some of the activities on the program of the annual Viking Festival at Karmøy. For information about activities and tickets, please go to

<https://avaldsnes.info/en/historiesenter/apningstider/>



## **INTERNATIONAL FORUM**

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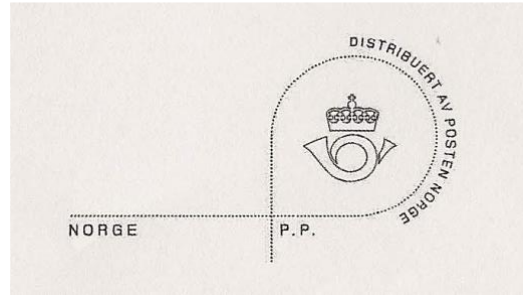
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