

# [,mægə'zi:n]

Cappelen Damms tidsskrift for engelsklærere

nr01-2009



# Leder



Av og til opplever jeg det som idrettutøvere kaller "flyt" – dager eller til og med perioder da alt ordner seg, alt virker mulig og verden ligger der; åpen for erobring. Denne følelsen kan komme i helt hverdagslige situasjoner, for eksempel en dag du merker at barna virkelig setter stor pris på spagettimiddagen din, og du synes du egentlig ikke står særlig tilbake for Hellstrøm, Moi og deres like. Men hva med flyt på jobben? Er det ikke heller følelsen av at "alt flyter" som ofte preger oss i arbeidssituasjoner?

Vi kan alle ha behov for det som på ikke spesielt godt norsk kalles *input*. I dette nummeret av magasinet får vi høre fra engelsklærere som har tatt initiativ til å reise ut, oppleve nye ting og gjennom dette utvikle seg som fagpersoner. I Siri Hunstadbråten's reportasje fra Cheltenham, England og Trond Christian Anvik og Magne Dypedahl's reisebrev fra Washington D.C. deler de inntrykkene sine med oss. Jeg vil tro de vendte tilbake til klasserommene med den gode følelsen av å ha lært noe nytt og med inspirasjon til å formidle ny lærdom til elevene. Utenlandsreiser er selvfølgelig ikke alltid mulig. Men har skolen kommet særlig langt med å tilrettelegge for læreres selvutvikling i form av etterutdanning og faglig oppdatering – altså tiltak som kan stimulere til *flyt* i skolehverdagen?

Vi forsøker stadig å utvikle magasinet vårt, og noe vi har fått god respons på, er tekster og oppgaver som kan brukes i undervisningen. Meningen er at disse skal supplere og oppdatere informasjon elevene finner i lærebøkene og på våre og andres nettsider. Britisk og amerikansk politikk har stått sentralt i senere utgaver, men i dette nummeret finner du en artikkel av David Woodhouse om reklamens utvikling de siste hundre årene.

Vi tilbyr også humørfylte selvportretter av forfatterne Richard Burgess og Theresa Bowles Sørhus. De er aktuelle med en ny og omfattende revisjon av *Passage* og en fellesbok i *Tracks*-serien. Bøkene er sendt til skolen din, og vi håper de faller i smak.

God lesning!

*Birger Nicolaysen*

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# Advertising: Selling Dreams and Saving the World

by David Woodhouse,  
Eiker videregående skole

Advertising is ubiquitous; it infiltrates our life and all of the spaces in which we move. It interrupts our television viewing, it fills the pages of our newspapers and magazines, it glares down at us from billboards and flashing lights and it clogs up our computers with spam e-mails and pop-ups which congratulate us on winning competitions we didn't even know we'd entered. Its form may change and its appearance may alter, but all advertising has the same aim: to convince you that you need to swap your money for whatever the advertisers are offering, to persuade you that you would be better off if you exchanged your hard earned cash for the product that is made to look as tempting and necessary as possible.

The last hundred years have brought about changes in all aspects of our daily lives, advertising included. Advertising is an age old concept; everybody who has ever sold anything has had to engage in advertising of some form or another. The last hundred years, however, have witnessed the development of three different yet related techniques when it comes to the (not so) subtle art of persuasion which we will now explain and explore.

**The Birth of Public Relations**  
When the First World War ended, Sigmund Freud's nephew, Edward Bernays, realised that the propaganda techniques that had been used during the war could be employed in peace time as well. Bernays had been working for the War Department's Committee on Public Information, the propaganda arm of the US war effort (1), but now he concentrated his efforts elsewhere. Propaganda was given a new name: Public Relations, or PR for short. It was also given a new purpose: to sell products. Bernays became one of the main architects of the modern techniques of mass-consumer persuasion, using every trick in the book, from celebrity endorsement and outrageous PR stunts, to eroticising the motorcar. (2)

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Edward Bernays - © Scanpix

Bernays' most inventive turn was to take the ideas of his then little-known uncle and use them in this new industry. Sigmund Freud invented the process of psychoanalysis, a way of allowing psychologists to tap into the unconscious thoughts and desires of their patients in order to cure them of mental illness (3). Bernays used the idea that people could be controlled by their irrational unconscious desires in

order to link certain ideas with certain products. You no longer had to offer people what they needed; by linking your brand with their deeper hopes and fears, you could persuade them to buy what they dreamt of. Equipped with our subconscious wish-lists, we could go shopping for the life we had seen portrayed in the adverts (4).

The best example of this occurred in the 1920's. Bernays was hired to expand the sales of Lucky Strike cigarettes amongst women. At that time, smoking was considered to be a luxury that only men should indulge in. Recognizing that women were still riding high on the suffrage movement, Bernays used this as the basis for his new campaign. He consulted Dr. A.A. Brill, a psychoanalyst, to find a way

of encouraging women to break the taboo and begin to smoke. Dr. Brill determined that cigarettes could be used to represent "torches of freedom" for women. Bernays then persuaded some women to light up during the 1929 Easter Day Parade in New York. The event caused a national stir and stories appeared in newspapers throughout the country.

Though not doing away with the taboo completely, Bernays' efforts had a lasting effect on women smoking (5). He had linked the process of inhaling the smoke from some burning leaves with freedom and equality for women; on the face of it a completely illogical connection! This caused a revolution in advertising which we are still witnessing the effects of today.

This also had political consequences. People could now define and express themselves through the products they owned, creating a new consumer culture and encouraging the pursuit of happiness that could keep people docile and politically inactive (6).

To persuade those who were still interested in politics, politicians could also use the same PR techniques as were being used in advertising; Bernays was also employed by the then US President Calvin Coolidge in order to portray him as a more sympathetic figure to the American voting public. He did this by inviting the top entertainment stars of the day to the White House and made sure that the press was there to document the event.

### The Search for Identity

As the century continued, people changed and advertising had to follow suit. The economic boom that reached its peak in the 1960's and the early 70's allowed people the time and space to "discover" themselves as individuals. The hippie movement encouraged self "actualization" and people were encouraged to get in touch with their inner selves. The advertisers were left scratching their heads – how could they sell mass produced products to people who were trying to define themselves as individuals?

In 1978 Stanford Research Institute was asked by several leading corporations to find a way to read, measure and fulfill

the desires of consumers. This was the start of market research and lifestyle marketing, techniques which are still widely used today. An example of this can be seen in the new campaign for Hewlett Packard computers, with the slogan, "The computer has become personal again".

### Trying to Save the World – Playing on Your Guilty Conscience

In the 21st Century, there can be no doubt that global warming and climate change is something everybody is aware of. As with the belief in self awareness in the 60's and 70's, when an idea becomes an integral part of national and international culture, advertisers need to respond to this and make sure that they use these ideas to appeal to potential customers.

Of course, this need to appear environmentally friendly is particularly tricky for the companies who sell the products that are perceived to be the cause of the problem: car manufacturers and oil companies. This has led to the process of "greenwashing". We all know that "whitewashing" involves covering up facts or evidence that could aid in finding someone guilty of a crime. Replace "white" with "green" and you have the process whereby corporations try, with the help of advertisers, to appear environmentally friendly.

Another related concept here is that of "rebranding". When a brand needs to change its image in order to make it more attractive to potential customers, it has to "rebrand". These two concepts, greenwashing and rebranding, are perfectly illustrated in the new advertising campaign from BP. This used to stand for "British Petroleum". It now stands for "Beyond Petroleum", a rebrand that attempts to persuade people that this is an energy company, not an oil company. Unfortunately, BP's investment in alternative energy sources is nothing compared to its investment in looking for new sources of oil. (7)

"Ethical shopping" is another well known concept which advertisers play on in order to prick our social consciences and get us to part with our money. This involves the concept of "voting with your wallet" and websites such as betterworldshopper.com (8) provide

This text is intended to be an introduction to the topic of advertising with the intention of fulfilling the following curriculum goals:

## VG2 Engelsk Læreplan

### Språk og språklæring

*Mål for opplæringen er at eleven skal kunne*

- gjøre rede for grunnleggende trekk ved engelsk språkbruk og språkstruktur
- gjøre rede for grunnleggende prinsipper for oppbygning av tekster i ulike sjangrer
- analysere språklige virkemidler i ulike typer tekster

### Kommunikasjon

*Mål for opplæringen er at eleven skal kunne*

- forstå og drøfte lengre framstillinger om allmenne og faglige emner

### Kultur, samfunn og litteratur

*Mål for opplæringen er at eleven skal kunne*

- drøfte noen internasjonale og globale utfordringer

## VG3 Engelsk Læreplan

### – Samfunnsfaglig og Litteratur og Kultur

### Språk og språklæring

*Mål for opplæringen er at eleven skal kunne*

- drøfte sammenhengen mellom form, innhold og stilnivå i setninger i samfunnsfaglige tekster
- analysere språklige virkemidler i tekster i ulike sjangrer og vurdere virkningen av dem

### Kommunikasjon

*Mål for opplæringen er at eleven skal kunne*

- bruke hensiktsmessig og situasjonstilpasset språk i ulike muntlige og skriftlige sjangrer
- beherske formell og uformell språkbruk i ulike sammenhenger
- drøfte lange og språklig krevende tekster med samfunnsfaglig perspektiv

### Samfunnsfaglig Engelsk Kultur, samfunn og litteratur

*Mål for opplæringen er at eleven skal kunne*

- drøfte spørsmål knyttet til sosiale og økonomiske forhold i noen engelskspråklige land

### Engelskspråklig Litteratur og Kultur Kultur, samfunn og litteratur

*Mål for opplæringen er at eleven skal kunne*

- tolke litterære tekster og andre kulturuttrykk i et kulturhistorisk og samfunnsmessig perspektiv

consumers with information about which companies meet their social responsibilities, such as taking into consideration human rights, animal rights and environmental concerns when producing their products.

Many companies have now tried to jump on this ethical bandwagon. A good example here is that of shoes. Look inside any pair of trainers and you will probably find that it has been made in

some far away Asian country. This can only mean one thing you say to yourself – sweatshops! Nike has often been criticised for its lack of ethics (9), most notably perhaps in Michael Moore's 1996 film, The Big One (10), where Moore unsuccessfully tries to get the CEO of Nike to visit one of his own factories in Indonesia. To counteract this and give consumers the possibility of making a responsible choice when buying shoes, new brands have been launched, for

**"Light a Lucky and you'll never miss sweets that make you fat"**  
Constance Talmadge  
Charming Motion Picture Star

**INSTEAD** of eating between meals... instead of fattening sweets... beautiful women keep youthful slenderness these days by smoking Luckies. The smartest and loveliest women of the modern stage take this means of keeping slender... when others nibble fattening sweets, they light a Lucky!

Lucky Strike is a delightful blend of the world's finest tobaccos. These tobaccos are toasted—a costly extra process which develops and improves the flavor. That's why Luckies are a delightful alternative for fattening sweets. That's why there's real health in Lucky Strike. That's why folks say: "It's good to smoke Luckies."

For years this has been no secret to those men who keep fit and trim. They know that Luckies steady their nerves and do not harm their physical condition. They know that Lucky Strike is the favorite cigarette of many prominent athletes, who must keep in good shape. They respect the opinions of 20,679 physicians who maintain that Lucky are less irritating to the throat than other cigarettes.

A reasonable proportion of sugar in the diet is recommended, but the authorities are overwhelming that too many fattening sweets are harmful and that too many such are eaten by the American people. So, for moderation's sake we say:—

**"REACH FOR A Lucky INSTEAD OF A SWEET."**

**"It's toasted"**  
No Throat Irritation - No Cough.  
© 1929 The American Tobacco Co., Manufacturers

Reach for a Lucky instead of a sweet.

Lucky Strike advertisement, 1929 - © Scanpix

example “No Sweat”. They claim not to use sweatshops, but you should not believe everything that a slogan or a brand name suggests; a closer look at the information they provide on their own website reveals that the workers in their Indonesian factory are far from happy (11).

To bring things right up to date, advertisers are now starting to play on the fact that some people have had enough of being asked to save the world and others don't believe that climate change is caused by humans at all (12). These people have money too and hence they are a target for the ever vigilant advertisers. This approach is being favoured by some car manufacturers, where many brands have undergone a process of greenwashing as described earlier. Some brands, however, attempt to make fun of the “hysteria” that surrounds climate change. This can be seen in the advertisements for Ford's Fiesta Zetec Climate, with the slogan, “Most people would prefer a hot climate” (13).

#### References

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climatechange?picture=332212889

#### EXERCISES

##### Understanding the Text

- (1) Find the word in the first paragraph which means “omnipresent”.
- (2) Which “subtle art” is mentioned in the second paragraph?
- (3) What was the new name given to propaganda and who coined this phrase?
- (4) How were cigarettes marketed in the 1920's?
- (5) Look at the paragraph that begins with the words “This also had political consequences”. Find the word in this paragraph that means “passive” or “quiet”.
- (6) What was the problem for advertisers in the 1960's and how did they combat this?
- (7) What are oil and car companies having to do in order to appeal to environmentally aware consumers?
- (8) Which brand of shoes is often criticised for not fulfilling its social responsibilities?
- (9) What is the latest trend in advertising that is being favoured by some car manufacturers?

##### Discussion

- (1) Many countries ban TV advertising for alcohol or tobacco. Do you agree with this? Can you think of any other products which you think should have an advertising ban?
- (2) Do you take into account how a corporation treats its workers when buying products?
- (3) Think of some of your favourite brands – of clothes, electrical gadgets, cars etc. Can you identify exactly what it is that have made these brands your favourites? Do you go shopping for the life you see portrayed in advertisements?
- (4) Section 2.2 of the Advertising Standards Authority's code of practice in the UK says “All marketing communications should be prepared with a sense of responsibility to consumers and to society.” Should this include responsibility to the environment?

##### The Language of Advertisements

- (1) Advertisers often favour certain adjectives when trying to sell their products. Find some advertisements in a magazine, newspaper or on the internet and identify some of the adjectives used to describe the product that is being advertised.

- (2) Think about advertisements in general. Which adjectives do you think are most commonly used in advertising? Make a list and then compare it with the list given by this website: <http://www.linguarama.com/ps/293-6.htm>

##### Analysing Advertisements

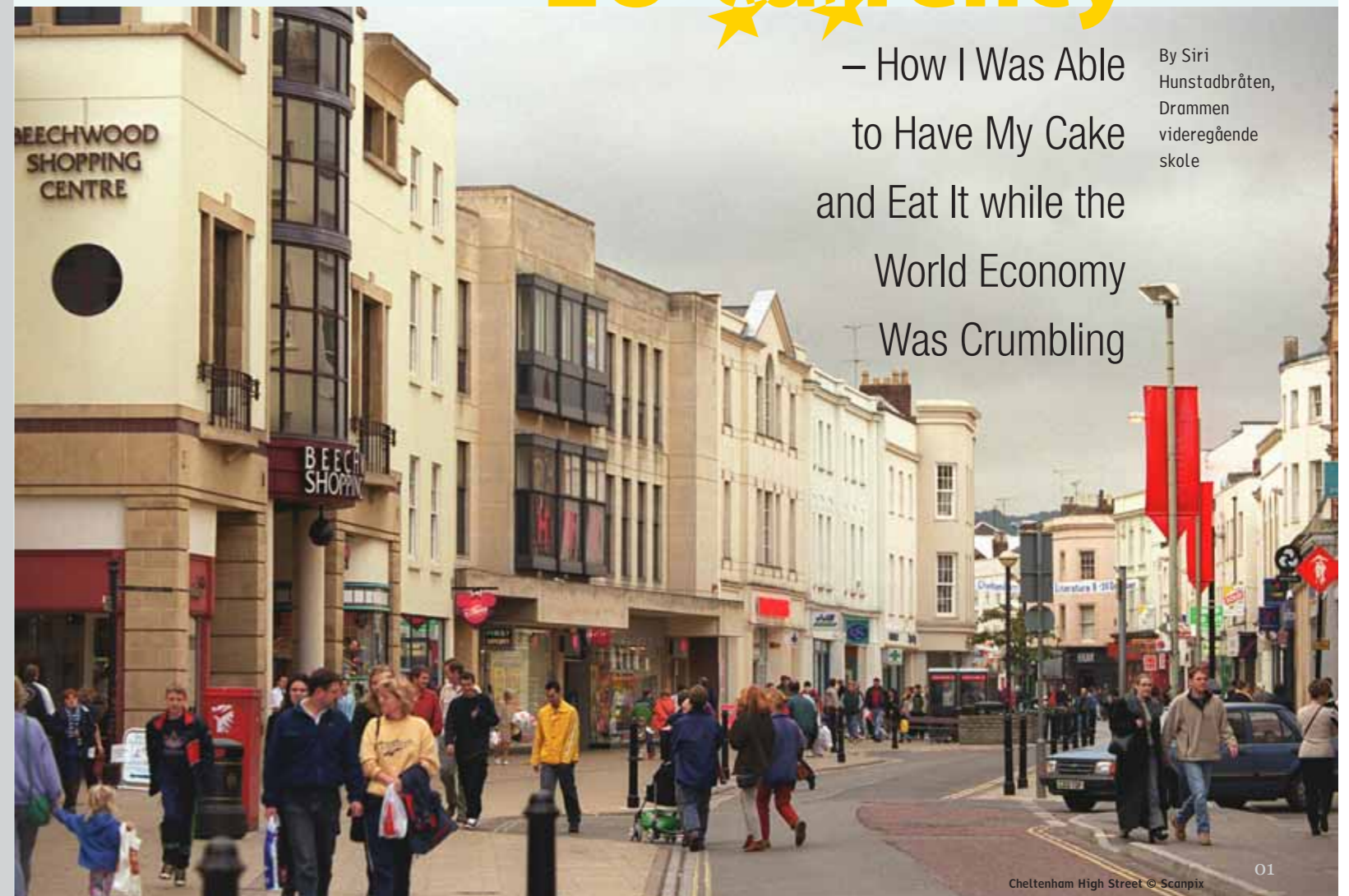
Find an advertisement that interests you in a magazine, newspaper or on the internet. Complete the following tasks:

- (1) *The Advertiser and the Target Audience:* What is the advertisement for and who do you think the advertisement is aimed at? Remember everything in the advertisement will be geared towards the target audience.
  - (2) *The Slogan:* What is the slogan? What types of sentences are used in the slogan: declarative, interrogative or imperative? Is there anything else notable about the slogan?
  - (3) *The Picture:* What impact does the picture/s have on you? Why do you think the picture has been chosen? Try to relate it to the message/product.
  - (4) *The Text*
- (A) Words:
- Find at least five words in your advert that you consider to be important.
  - What types of words are they (nouns, pronouns, adverbs, adjectives, verbs, prepositions, conjunctions, interjections)?
  - What connotations do these words inspire? What do they make you think of?
- (B) Structure / Patterns:
- Can you find repetition of any words? Why do you think these words are repeated?
  - Can you find repetition of any grammatical patterns? Why do you think these patterns have been repeated?
  - What types of sentences are used in your advertisements? Declarative, interrogative or imperative? Why have they been used?
  - Can you find any other interesting linguistics features, for example word play, rhyme, figurative language, direct address, common expressions etc?

# Thank Heaven for Google and EU-currency

– How I Was Able to Have My Cake and Eat It while the World Economy Was Crumbling

By Siri Hunstadbråten, Drammen videregående skole



Cheltenham High Street © Scanpix

For many years I had been reading about various literary festivals in England. The more I read, the more I wanted to visit one. The festival in Cheltenham, whose opening weekend often overlapped with our autumn break, seemed like a good option. Still, I somehow never got round to it – until last October.

It all started a few months earlier, when I googled “Cheltenham Literature festival” to find out which writers were going to appear at the festival that year. I got what I was looking for – a preliminary list of writers and celebrities who were going to feature in the programme. Quite unexpectedly, though, I came across something which proved far more interesting.

Apparently, there was something called a “2 Week Course for European Teachers of English Focusing on Literature: Cheltenham 10 Oct–24 Oct 2008.” Thinking this was simply too good to be true I clicked on the link with bated breath: “This course takes place during the Cheltenham Festival of Literature and focuses on contemporary English literature and teaching literature in the EFL classroom. The participants will get to attend festival events involving prominent contemporary British writers, a seminar on teaching literature in the EFL classroom and an opportunity to observe English literature classes in local secondary schools.” So here was a chance to attend a course for English teachers – not a bad idea after 15 years of teaching. The course would be focusing

on teaching literature, which is what I enjoy most about teaching English, and I would get a chance to attend the long-awaited literature festival. Last but not least, I would be eligible for a Comenius grant which would cover practically all my expenses. Having my cake and eating it? Definitely.

#### The course

“Is there a way to get my students involved in my lessons?” (Elisa from Naples)

Apart from the link with the literature festival, I think one of the greatest advantages of this course was the fact that it lasted for two weeks. I grasped the opportunity to pretend to be a student again, and quickly adapted to a different pace of life. I found myself



Cheltenham Racecourse © Scanpix

with a lot of time on my hands to pursue my interest in the English language and the culture associated with it. The duration of the course also meant that I got to know the other participants quite well. They were secondary school EFL-teachers from Germany, Italy, Spain, Slovakia and Switzerland. I was really pleased to be the only Scandinavian. As one of the Italian teachers said, I was lucky to be able to get the full immersion, which actually made me think of Archimedes's law, but it was of course an advantage that I had to speak English only.

As we were all inclined towards literature and shared many of the same interests, we enjoyed each other's company and had a great time. We kept sharing experiences and swapping teaching ideas – during lessons and out of lessons. Quite soon it became clear that teaching (and learning) English does not mean the same everywhere. The methods, content and materials of EFL-teaching, for example, vary greatly from one country to another. Unlike in Norway, secondary schools in many other European countries use material developed by British publishers such as Oxford University Press and Cambridge University Press.

One immediate advantage is that the students' competence in English can be more easily compared from one country to another.

In retrospect, it was more the total impact of the course and the festival that proved so inspiring rather than any particular aspects of the course. Still, one part of the course stood out and deserves to be presented in some detail. For two days Dr Diana Hicks led a workshop entitled "Cross-curricular language teaching for mixed ability classes". At teachers' training courses it is customary for the lecturer to throw a lot of classroom ideas at the participants and then ask the participants to try the activities out. Dr Hicks did just this, but her approach entailed a consistent focus on justifications and pedagogic priorities. She kept saying: "Every activity has to be justified. If you cannot justify an activity, leave it out." This should hardly be news for any teacher, but her insistence on choosing activities that serve to sustain the motivation of different kinds of students helped me question some of my own pedagogic suppositions and habitual thinking. Old habits die hard, but Hicks really did the trick!

One particular method that I liked – and have used with some success (!) – is what Hicks referred to as the SFTS (start from the students) approach. It can be used in many different contexts and can be varied in an infinite number of ways, but it always entails student activity first. At the beginning of lessons, for example, students may regularly be given what Hicks termed "slow thinking-time". During these sessions students will get a chance to reflect on their own learning, prepare for a new topic, or revise a topic. Here are a few examples of SFTS-activities at the beginning of lessons:

- Write down three things (or indeed one thing) that you remember from last lesson. (Reflecting on the students' own learning.)
- What don't you know about multi-cultural Britain? Write a list of questions. (Preparing for a new topic.)
- What vocabulary do you know that would be useful when talking about multi-cultural Britain? (Revising a topic.)

Here are some of Diana Hicks's ideas for sustaining motivation in mixed ability ELT secondary classrooms:

- 1 Experiment – take risks
- 2 Choose "larger" tasks
- 3 Choose open-ended tasks
- 4 Provide choice
- 5 Involve students in classroom decision making
- 6 Find out what students think about the materials and the activities (This is an abridged version of one section of Dr Hicks's ideas, published with her permission.)

A good teacher training course explicitly addresses the difficulty of transferring new knowledge or skills from the seminar room to the classroom. In this respect, too, Diana Hicks was very good. She simply asked us to state what we would definitely introduce in our teaching when we came home. By doing so, we had already started the process of transference, which in turn would help us develop our teaching practice. Upon returning home, I was fortunate enough to work as a teacher trainer for a while, which gave me an incentive to discuss my newly developed ideas and suggest how they could be put into practise.

### Visiting Cheltenham

Mineral springs were discovered in Cheltenham in the early 18th century. Many visitors came here to take the waters and engage in a busy social life. Even though this kind of spa treatment has long fallen out of fashion, the town's railway station is still called Cheltenham Spa and Cheltenham has remained a town that attracts many visitors. The horse racing festival in March every year is one of the most prestigious meetings in the British horse racing calendar. Furthermore, the town hosts several other arts festivals – for classical music and jazz, and a science festival.

Cheltenham is a wealthy, respectable and quiet town – with one exception. On Saturday nights the town centre is taken over by skimpily dressed teenagers partying like there is no tomorrow! The town is situated on the edge of "chocolate box England" within easy reach of the picturesque scenery and sandstone villages of the Cotswolds. Cheltenham is very English – but still has a Continental feel to it. The main shopping street is a tree-lined street called the Promenade and another district worth visiting is Montpellier. Here some of the cafés

have a certain French ambience and the many specialty shops provide the Cheltenham bourgeoisie with the necessities of life. The Montpellier district used to be the home of the spa culture, and important architecture from the Regency period, such as the Pittville Pump Room, can still be seen here.

But even in a town like Cheltenham, safely situated in provincial England, the influence of the global economy can be felt. On my first night in town I was going to take a bus back to where I lived and was uncertain whether I would recognize my bus stop in the dark. Confident that speaking the language would see me through this problem, I said to my landlady: "I suppose I can ask the bus driver to tell me when we're there." She answered tersely: "You can't count on that. He may not speak any English. He may be Polish – and have just come over here." So much for learning and teaching English ...

### Cheltenham literature festival

With 450 authors and 350 venues in the course of 10 days I was, of course, spoilt for choice. The underlying theme of the 2008 festival was the family:

how it shapes who we are and how we live, read and write. I attended many different kinds of events, grouped under different headings – poetry café, live literature, readings and so on. Most events, however, consisted of a talk between a presenter and a writer, followed by a question-and-answer session. Sometimes the writer would read an extract

from his or her most recent work. I really enjoyed listening to questions asked by members of the audience – young and old – at the end of the sessions, and of course the authors' answers. It gave me a feeling that I was part of something spontaneous, something that had not been pre-conceived or planned.

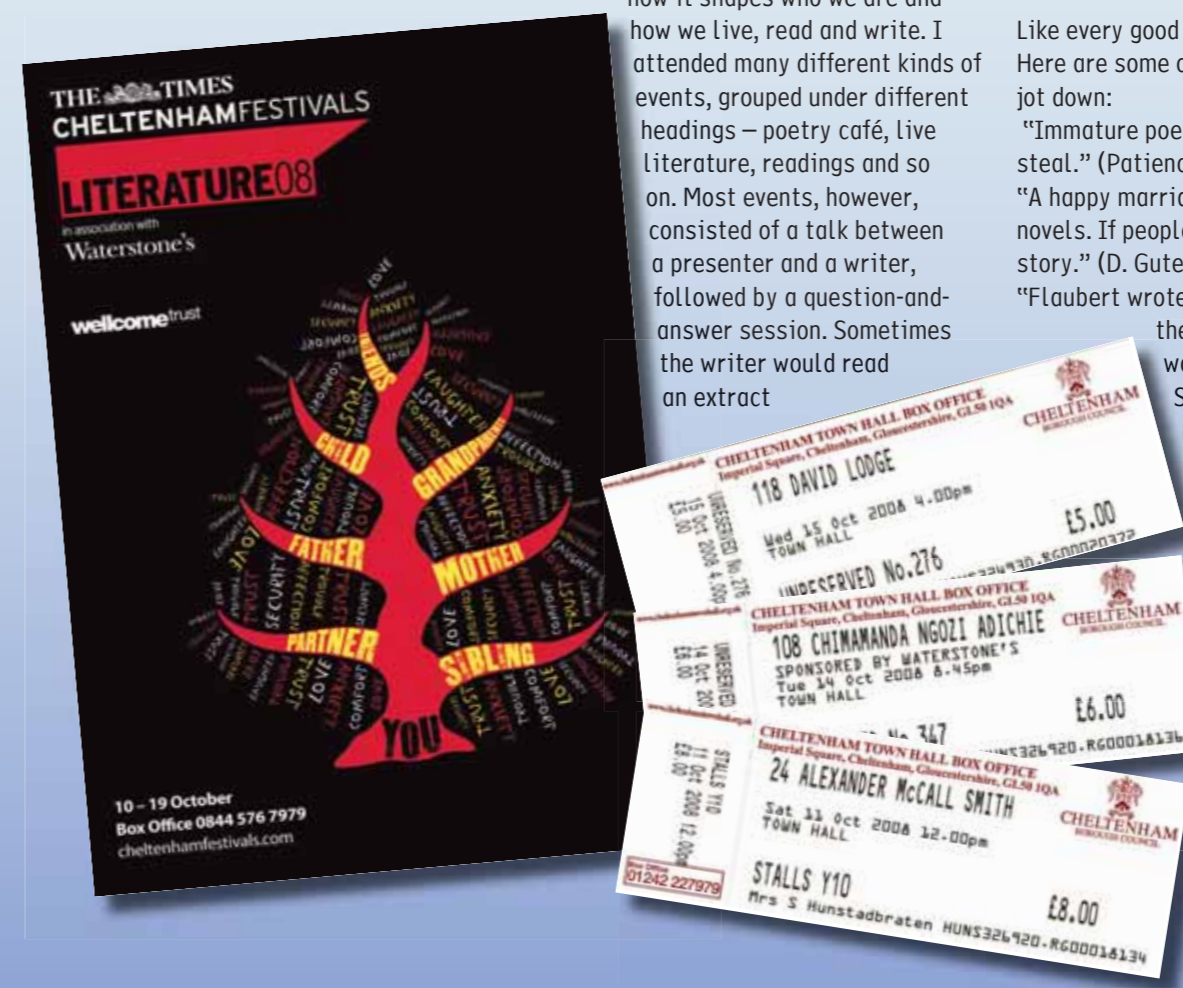
The festival gave me a chance to meet people whose work I like – David Lodge, Alexander McCall Smith, Simon Armitage, Fay Weldon, David Guterson, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Ben Okri and Graham Swift, to mention those who were most important for me. And I discovered many writers that were new to me, such as A.L. Kennedy, Sadie Jones, Patience Abgabi, Yasmin Hai and Sathnam Sanghera.

I could have rubbed shoulders, or at least gone to events with for example Roger Moore, Julie Walters, Richard Attenborough and Joanna Lumley, but I decided not to, simply because there were so many other interesting options. Even Gordon Brown was there. He took a short break from staving off the world financial crisis to open the festival. So who's to say that literature is not important in our day and age?

Like every good student I kept a journal. Here are some of the gems I was able to jot down:

"Immature poets imitate. Good poets steal." (Patience Abgabi)  
 "A happy marriage is uncommon in novels. If people are happy, there's no story." (D. Guterson)  
 "Flaubert wrote five words a day, but they were very, very good words" (Alexander McCall Smith, who writes four novels a year.)  
 "I'm not a British social realist writer. I don't see the point of saying that we're all doomed, but we are – yes." (Alexander McCall Smith)

The 2009 Festival – will you be there? See <http://cheltenhamfestivals.com/literature/>



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# A MOMENT IN HISTORY: LETTER FROM WASHINGTON DC

by Trond Christian Anvik and Magne Dypedahl

Two of Cappelen Damm's textbook writers, Trond Christian Anvik and Magne Dypedahl, visited Washington DC during inaugural week in January. They took part in the celebration of the incoming President and witnessed a nation in transition between a Republican and a Democratic administration. Getting a place to stay in Washington that week was generally no easy matter, but Trond Christian's cousin, Ambassador Wegger Chr. Strømme and his wife, Rev. Cecilie J. Strømme, had kindly invited the two Norwegian scholars to stay with them and their two daughters.

## Going to Washington

For a long time we had wanted to go to Washington DC to follow a major political event at close range. Inspired by the excitement of last year's primary elections, we finally took action and decided to go to Washington for the inaugural week. We knew that it is not easy to get a place to stay anywhere in or near Washington during that week, but kind relatives in the right place at the right time can be a true blessing; Washington residents Cecilie J. and Wegger Strømme could offer historic lodging. As the Norwegian Ambassador to the United States, Wegger Strømme is by appointment a Washington insider, but his expertise on American politics goes far beyond the call of duty. There was no doubt that this would be quite a learning experience for us regardless of the inauguration.

What we did not know at that point last year, obviously, was the outcome of the election. As neutral observers of American politics, we followed the coverage of presidential candidates John McCain and Barack Obama with bipartisan interest and calmness during the fall campaign. As future visitors to Washington, however, we were all but sorry that McCain lost on November 4. Both Obama's rhetorical skills and his appeal around the world made us profoundly motivated for an inauguration week of festivities.

## 3401 Massachusetts Avenue

After a long day of travelling we arrived at 3401 Massachusetts Avenue on January 17. The neighborhood rings of diplomacy, power and affluence. Many of the embassies in Washington were originally built by American magnates and later sold

to become chanceries and residences of various nations. The Norwegian Ambassador's residence, however, was built in 1931 by Norway to serve as chancery and residence combined (later a new chancery was built behind the residence). The depression made it possible to find cheap labor and enable Norway to afford a house that is one of the jewels in the crown among Norwegian missions across the world (possibly only surpassed by the Georgian mansion housing the Norwegian Ambassador to the United Kingdom). As opposed to many of the grandiose residences of different countries in Washington DC, the house at 3401 Massachusetts Avenue has an intimate charm along with its elegance.

One of the stories of the house that Wegger Strømme shared with us was the history of the carpet in the living room. The 70 square meter Persian carpet once belonged to Vidkun Quisling, who received it as a gift in Russia while accompanying Frithjof Nansen during the hunger crisis in Russia in 1920. When Quisling was executed after World War II, the state inherited one half of his belongings and his wife Maria Quisling the other half.

The fantastic carpet that can be seen in many photographs from Gimle was too large for the rooms in Maria Quisling's apartment in Oslo, and governmental use of it in Norway was a delicate matter after the war. Long-time Norwegian Ambassador to the United States, Wilhelm Munthe de Morgenstierne, then offered to save the carpet from possible oblivion by getting it transported to the Norwegian Embassy in Washington, where it has stayed ever since. The quality of this carpet from

around 1900 is extraordinary as you can hardly see any wear and tear. This is quite remarkable given the fact that Norwegian ambassadors to Washington host approximately 3500 guests for different events every year, and most of these guests step on the carpet at some point.

## The Pre-Inaugural Concert

In stark contrast to the quiet atmosphere at the Norwegian Ambassador's residence, we spent most of Sunday, January 18, at the Lincoln Memorial, the famous site of Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech. Along with approximately 400,000 people, including Barack Obama, Joe Biden, and their families, we attended the Obama Inaugural Celebration, or the "We Are One" concert. Almost by coincidence we arrived quite early. In spite of our lack of local knowledge, we found a very convenient entrance to the closed part of the National Mall and ended up much closer to the stage than expected. We later heard that the lines at the security check points eventually ran blocks long, but we were happily ignorant about that where we stood.

Instead we enjoyed observing people around us. In a tree right next to us a modern-day Zacchaeus climbed up and held up the front page of the *Washington Post* from the day after the election: "Obama Makes History". He instantly became a popular motif and was soon baptized "Tree man" by a photographer eager to catch his attention for a picture. Everywhere strangers spoke cheerfully with each other, tall people assisted shorter ones in reuniting with their friends after having gone to buy coffee and snacks, and humorous comments were constantly shouted out. We stood packed like sardines, but when one of the giant loudspeakers right behind us

failed to work during sound check, the crowd parted like the Red Sea at the calling of Moses to let the technician through. It was an amazing sight in itself, but it became even more hilarious when a few thousand people started to support the technician in his work by shouting "YES, YOU CAN" in a very coordinated and steadfast manner. And fortunately he could.

The concert itself included an incredible lineup of celebrities in a fine mix of people like Tom Hanks, Jamie Foxx, Martin Luther King III and Denzel Washington, who read historical passages, and musical performers such as Bruce Springsteen, Stevie Wonder, Usher Raymond, Shakira, Mary J. Blige, James Taylor, Beyonce, Bettye La Vette, John Legend, Josh Groban, and U2.

Nonetheless, the one who really got the crowd going was Garth Brooks singing "You Make Me Want to Shout" and "American Pie". It gave us all a chance to move in the chilly weather, and for a few minutes the dancing and jumping made the National Mall look like a fraternity party, with Obama singing along in his chair.



## "Never Lose Faith"

We do not know if Ambassador Wegger Strømme will offer Barack Obama any advice when they meet, but here is TIME Magazine's report on Ambassador Wilhelm Munthe de Morgenstierne's last meeting with an American president:

William Howard Taft was President of the U.S. when Wilhelm Munthe de Morgenstierne arrived in Washington as a junior attaché at the old Norwegian Legation in 1910. Named Norway's Minister to the U.S. in 1934 and Ambassador in 1942, he saw the U.S. through seven other Presidents, three wars, depression and unprecedented prosperity. Last week, frail and bent at 70, Wilhelm de Morgenstierne, dean of Washington's diplomatic corps, on the eve of his retirement paid a farewell visit to an old friend, Dwight Eisenhower. As he left the White House, Morgenstierne offered some advice about the nation he has watched through 47 years of trial and triumph. Said he: "Never lose faith in the U.S. as a leader of the free world. I don't think the U.S. is going to fail the free world—just wait and see." TIME, January 6, 1958



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Obama's speech at the Lincoln Memorial



People of all ages were at the concert

### Some Inauguration Facts

- Every president since George Washington has delivered an inaugural address.
- George Washington's second inaugural address in 1793 is the shortest in history at 135 words.
- President Thomas Jefferson was the first president to be inaugurated at the Capitol in 1801.
- William H. Harrison's inaugural address in 1841 was the longest address in history at 8,445 words. He was supposedly so vain that he skipped the overcoat and spoke for so long that he caught pneumonia and died one month later.
- President James Monroe's inauguration in 1917 was the first outdoor inauguration.
- President Warren G. Harding's inauguration in 1921 was the first president to take his oath and deliver his inaugural address through loud speakers.
- President Calvin Coolidge's inaugural address in 1925 was the first inauguration address to be broadcasted nationally by radio.
- Inauguration Day was changed to January 20, from March 4, in 1933.
- President Franklin D. Roosevelt's 1937 inauguration was marked by record rain.
- President Harry S. Truman's inaugural in 1949 was the first inaugural to be televised.
- President Ronald Reagan's second swearing-in ceremony in 1985 had to be moved into the Capitol because the temperature was about -14 degrees Celsius.
- President Bill Clinton's inaugural address in 1997 was the first address to be broadcasted live over the Internet.
- When January 20 is on a Sunday, the president-elect usually takes the oath of office privately and then repeats the ceremony in public on Monday.

There was something for everyone and for all ages that afternoon. We soon realized that we are getting old when two young women behind us exclaimed: "James Taylor – I have heard the name". The appearance of Denzel Washington, on the other hand, had produced a passionate scream from the same young women. There was a lot of cheerful screaming from the highly multicultural audience during the concert, but also seriousness. A few feet away from us stood an old African American woman who had tears in her eyes when actor Samuel L. Jackson referred to Martin Luther King Jr. and the March on Washington in 1963. America has come a long way since then.

We had also come a long way to listen to political speeches. Early in the show Vice President-elect Joe Biden gave a short speech that was very well received, apart from the fact that people wondered why on earth he shouted like he had no microphone. There was no doubt, however, that it was Barack Obama who was the greatest star of them all that day. Every time his face appeared on the big screens, or jumbotrons, all the way down to the George Washington Monument, the audience went wild. Finally, it was Barack Obama's turn to give his pre-inaugural speech. It also proved to be his best, or at least his most inspirational, speech that week because it captured the excitement of

the moment so well. It can be argued that he had a very captive audience, but only a superb speaker can move 400,000 people the way Obama did on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial.

In many ways the Obama Inaugural Celebration was the emotional highlight of the week for us. There was this great sense of history and seriousness that was mixed with entertainment, cheerfulness, and not least optimism. In the face of such a magical experience it was hard to be cynical or pessimistic about America's future. After two hours, however, it was all over and a crowd of more than 400,000 people left the area in true satisfaction and in a very civilized manner. It was so peaceful that a policeman organized photo shoots for tourists by letting their children sit on his motorcycle. It was indeed a day of hope.

### The Prelude

Monday, January 19, was Martin Luther King Jr. Day. Since this is a national holiday, observed on the third Monday of January each year, parts of Washington DC was quieter than usual. However, the downtown area was rather busy due to the inauguration preparations and all the people pouring in from all over the country. We chose to start the day with a less lively destination by visiting Arlington National Cemetery, where more than 300,000 people are buried. The peaceful view of all the white head stones in orderly patterns made a strong impression as we were reminded of all the casualties from the nation's wars. Another aspect of America's more violent past came to mind when we visited the graves of both Robert and John F. Kennedy.

Afterwards we took the bus to the National Mall and Capitol Hill where there was a lot of activity to get ready for one of the biggest political events

of all time. Then we walked down to 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue to look at the White House. It may not be a grandiose building, but it is surrounded by plenty of grandeur. It also made quite an impression on us to be there on this very last day of George W. Bush's presidency. There was a strong feeling of a nation in transition between two very different governments.

This transitional feeling only grew stronger as we walked home and it grew dark. Later in the evening we understood more of the feelings involved when we had the pleasure of meeting a former Clinton advisor who said how glad he was that we could come and visit the United States on such an occasion. Needless to say, he was a Democrat. However, on that very special day in Washington DC our thoughts also went to Republican Vice President Dick Cheney, inspired by the fact that the official home of the Vice President of the United States is situated right across the street from the Norwegian Ambassador's residence, on the grounds of the U.S. Naval Observatory. We were wondering what he might be doing over there on the final night of his vice-presidency. The truth may have been far more mundane than we ever could have imagined. The day after Cheney was getting pushed around in a wheelchair because he had hurt his back lugging books while preparing to move house.

**"So Help Me God": Inauguration Day**  
 "The first subway leaves around 4 a.m., and a lot of people plan to be on that subway", we had been told. Therefore we decided to leave the house early on Tuesday morning and walk downtown. When we left, the glowing digital clock outside the entrance to the Naval Observatory showed 4.25 a.m. Since the Naval Observatory is America's major authority in the area of time-keeping, there was no reason to doubt the clock's accuracy. The first person we met on an empty Massachusetts Avenue was a female jogger who was considerate enough to shout "I'm not gonna hurt you" when we turned around to see where the heavy breathing came from. As we came closer to the city center we saw more individuals walking in the same direction, gradually turning into longer and longer lines of people. On our way we also observed many homeless people who probably had been woken up much earlier than usual.

To make a long walk short, we found a good spot on the National Mall at 6.00 a.m. We overheard strangers greeting each other and sensed enthusiasm in the crowd, but the inauguration ceremony was still six hours away, it was still dark, and it was extremely cold. Soon the cold started creeping in under our layers of wool and all the way under our skin. The solution could have been to jump up and down a little bit, but we soon realized that it was impossible to move.



Barack Obama swears in as the 44th president of the United States of America - © Scanpix

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The reason was that many people around us were fast asleep on the ground or just taking it easy lying down. A woman was literally lying at our feet, embarrassingly close if it had not been for all the layers of clothing we all had. It was even impossible not to spill crumbs on her face when we enjoyed a couple of sandwiches, but when we apologized she just smiled and said that she liked crumbs. It was quite evident to us that people really were determined to be happy and enjoy the company of others when history was in the making.

There were some moments when we wondered whether we would be able to endure the cold for so many hours, but the alternative would be to go to a warming tent and perhaps end up behind a million people or so when we returned. As the inauguration ceremony drew closer, however, it became easier to motivate ourselves to stay on. People also started to get on their feet, and the organizing committee started to send live pictures and sound directly from the Capitol on the gigantic jumbotrons. Watching all the invited guests walking through the corridors of the building and entering the platform was in fact very entertaining, not least compared to the past few hours. Hillary and Bill Clinton did not look thrilled when they arrived, but when they reached the platform they started smiling like movie stars during the Oscars. In contrast, George W. Bush looked extremely relaxed and joyful from start to end. This was after all a day for etiquette and professionalism.

At 11.30 the speaker announced: "Ladies and gentlemen, please be seated". The invited guests sat down, whereas the standing crowd of about 1.5 million people started laughing. The ceremony was solemnly opened. Unfortunately, the thing that came to dominate the Inaugural Ceremony more than anything else was the cold. People up on the platform were clearly freezing, and most of them looked intensely uncomfortable. Perhaps this affected the performance of Chief Justice John G. Roberts, who stumbled over the words when he swore in Barack Obama as the new President. He even did it so badly that he had to re-administer the oath to Obama on Wednesday evening in private.

The inaugural address was less of an inspirational performance than many of Obama's speeches during the campaign and the speech two days before at the Lincoln Memorial. We had perhaps expected a few more memorable phrases, but Obama had clearly chosen to give a very severe speech that underscored the serious challenges ahead. Although the speech may have fallen short of expectations, the majesty of the moment did not. The enthusiastic roar of 1.5 million people can match absolutely every sports event in the whole world, and they all cheered for the same man and the same team.

Leaving downtown Washington was more difficult for us than for George W. Bush, who flew by in the Executive One helicopter for the very last time. But after a few hours of walking among thousands of people and constantly meeting blocked roads due to the Inaugural Parade, we were back at the ambassadorial residence. While we had been gone, there had been a change of guards across the street. Exactly at noon Dick Cheney's moving trucks had left, and the moving trucks of the incoming Vice-President, Joe Biden, had arrived. We were most of all glad we did not have to move at all, least of all our aching legs. At that moment it felt like a blessing that we did not have tickets to any of the Inauguration balls, unlike Cecilie J. and Wegger Strømme. Instead we ended up watching TV and listening to countless TV commentators analyzing the day's events. Since we had taken part in the celebration of a "new America", as

one observer called it, we watched TV with a rare feeling of having been at the center of the world's attention for a few hours. Our contribution was of course quite insignificant, but we had at least been present.

#### Business as Usual

On Wednesday, January 21, we felt tired. In the morning we stepped outside the Ambassador's residence to watch President Obama's motorcade on his way to the National Prayer Service in the Washington National Cathedral just a few minutes away. It was going to be an ecumenical session where all denominations and religions were present. When the motorcade passed us we were standing on the sidewalk, but for some reason we were not focused enough to take a good look or even take a good photograph. A few minutes earlier the same thing had happened when Vice-President Joe Biden's motorcade left the compound of the Naval Observatory. We soon found out that we should not plan too many activities later that day.

On Thursday we visited the famous Headquarters of the Department of Defense, the Pentagon. This department was less in transition than the rest of the government since President Obama had decided to ask Secretary of Defense Robert Gates to continue his work at the Pentagon. We were invited by Mark S. Patrick, who serves on the Joint Staff of the Defense Department as Chief for the Information Management Division. He took us on an exciting tour of the building with its numerous offices, as well as restaurants and shops. Although the building is

extremely large, it is possible to walk between any two points in the building in 7 minutes. That is to say if you know where you are going. Otherwise, it may take you a few hours. Mark also brought us all the way to the doorsteps of the Defense Secretary and gave us fascinating insight into everyday life at the Pentagon.

What made the strongest impression on us was the Pentagon Memorial, located southwest of the building. It is designed so that the nation can remember the 184 people killed in the building and on American Airlines Flight 77 on September 11, 2001. Mark shared his own story of this event. He was not in the building himself that day, but one of his friends was killed. Since his friend was a former helicopter pilot who had survived many missions in war zones, his family was very pleased when he got a job in a supposedly safe office at the Pentagon. That was where the plane hit, and Mark was one of those who were at the side of his friend's widow when she received the message that the body had been identified.

Later on Thursday we visited the Capitol. After having toured the building we got a chance to use our Norwegian passports. Getting access to the galleries of the House of Representatives and the Senate is somewhat easier for foreigners than

for Americans, who have to go to the office of their Congressman. We did not have time to go to both chambers before closing time, but our choice of the Senate turned out to be a good one. From the gallery we could watch senators we have become familiar with on TV, such as Senator John Kerry and Senator Dianne Feinstein, who gave the welcoming remarks at the Presidential Inaugural Ceremony. While we were there even Vice President Joe Biden came by in the capacity of president of the Senate to swear in some new and some re-elected senators.

We had to hurry to get out of the Capitol building before they closed, but once again we felt lucky to have been in the right place at the right time. On our way to Union Station afterwards we passed the Supreme Court and witnessed a mass demonstration organized by Pro-life activists. Thousands of people had mobilized. This stood in stark contrast to the calm style in Congress. All the same, both arenas symbolize a vibrant democracy that in spite of its flaws keeps a very diverse nation unified.

#### Once in a Lifetime

It is Friday, January 23, and our week in Washington DC has come to a close. From beginning to end it has been a truly once-in-a-lifetime experience to be here. A public letter cannot reveal

all the excitement we actually felt, but we have tried to share some eyewitness observations of Washington DC at this very special moment in time. Everyday life is sure to catch up with us very soon, as it will catch up with President Obama and his administration. However, we will forever see the United States with slightly different eyes, and we are forever grateful to the people who helped making this week so special.

### The Pentagon

The Pentagon is one of the world's largest office buildings. It has three times the floor space of the Empire State Building in New York. The National Capitol could fit into any one of the five wedge-shaped sections.

The Pentagon is virtually a city in itself. Approximately 23,000 employees, both military and civilian, work here. These people arrive daily from Washington, D.C. and its suburbs over approximately 30 miles of access highways, including express bus lanes and one of the newest subway systems in our country. They ride past 200 acres of lawn to park approximately 8,770 cars in 16 parking lots; climb 131 stairways or ride 19 escalators to reach offices that occupy 3,705,793 square feet.

The original site was nothing more than wasteland, swamps and dumps. 5.5 million cubic yards of earth, and 41,492 concrete piles contributed to the foundation of the building. Additionally, 680,000 tons of sand and gravel, dredged from the nearby Potomac River, were processed into 435,000 cubic yards of concrete and molded into the Pentagon form. The building was constructed in the remarkably short time of 16 months and completed on January 15, 1943.

Stripped of its occupants, furniture and various decorations, the building alone is an extraordinary structure. It is still thought of as one of the most efficient office buildings in the world. Despite 17.5 miles of corridors it takes only seven minutes to walk between any two points in the building.

(Adapted from: <http://pentagon.afis.osd.mil/facts.html>)



Congress



Memorial stone at the Pentagon Memorial

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When you use a textbook, have you ever wondered who the persons are who have dedicated most of their spare time and holidays to making it? What makes them tick? Because, as their editor, I can assure you that sometimes it doesn't feel too far-fetched to quote Winston Churchill: "I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears and sweat. We have before us an ordeal of the most grievous kind. We have before us many, many long months of struggle and of suffering." Well, making textbooks together with the two people you are going to get a little better acquainted with is not war, but it's inspiring toil and friendly struggle interspersed with tears ... of laughter.

**RICHARD:**

I was born in Dover in 1956 and grew up on the coast of Kent. On a clear day you could see France from the cliffs above our farm, and sometimes smell the garlic wafting over the Channel. (That last bit wasn't quite true.) When I was 10 my father gave up farming and we moved to a little village in Essex.

I was about 14 when I decided I wanted to be a Norwegian. It was rather an inexplicable wish since I had absolutely no connections with the country, and I think my parents rather hoped that it was just another passing fad, like the previous career plans I'd had: helicopter pilot, ornithologist, undercover agent and Prime Minister (more or less in that order).

But it wasn't a fad. After leaving school I spent six months working on an isolated farm in Helgeland – an unforgettable, if rather daunting experience in which I learned a lot about haymaking and sheep. Then I signed up for Scandinavian Studies at University College, London. In the second term they send students to a Scandinavian university to learn the language. I chose Tromsø – because it was farthest north! Anyway, what with one thing and another – a different sort of haymaking this time! - I never returned for the second year. Apparently they lose a lot of students like that!

Those four years in Tromsø were a real adventure. You learn so quickly



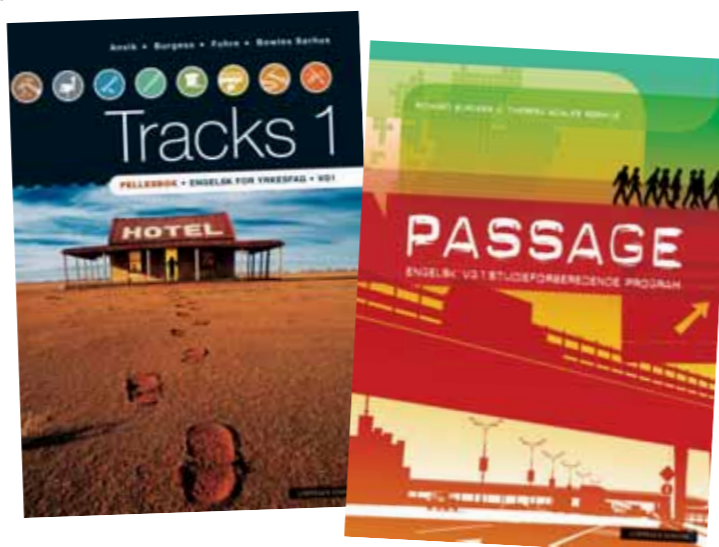
Richard Burgess

# “GO NORTH YOUNG MAN/WOMAN!”

when you're at that age and as highly motivated as I was. I used to read the dictionary before I went to sleep. I remember after about a year I was standing in a queue outside a pub called Prelaten on Friday night, taking part in the usual Tromsø dialect banter and it suddenly struck me: "My God, I've done it! I'm a Norwegian!" Of course, it wasn't true, I can see that now. But I was on a very steep learning curve!

I took English *mellomfag* there and had various odd jobs – not least at a kindergarten. Then I moved south to Oslo – I was married by this time and my wife is from Oslo. I worked on the trams at the weekends to finance my studies. It wasn't easy being a *nordlending* in Oslo in those days, I can tell you – particularly when you were from Kent! I remember one passenger shouting "jævla polardegos" when he left the tram!

In Oslo I took a *grunnfag* in Literature before I started on what I really wanted to study, which was Norwegian. *Grunnfag, mellomfag* and finally *hovedfag*. It was a wonderful period. Since I'd never had the subject at school it was all completely new to me – the dialects, the Old Norse, language history, the literature. I loved it all. My *hovedfagsoppgave* was called *Utskjellingsdialoger i norrøn litteratur*. It's come in very useful, as you can imagine!



In 1988 we moved to Fredrikstad. We had a daughter by this time and were soon to have another one. I started teaching, first at St. Olav *videregående* in Sarpsborg and later at Frederik II in Fredrikstad. I was there for 17 years. By that time I felt I really needed a break. Teaching is in many ways a great profession, but I think people outside underestimate how demanding it is. They notice the long holidays, but they don't think about how emotionally draining it is to "perform" in front of all those people every day. There are days when you feel like hiding under the desk, but you've still got to get up there and strut your stuff.

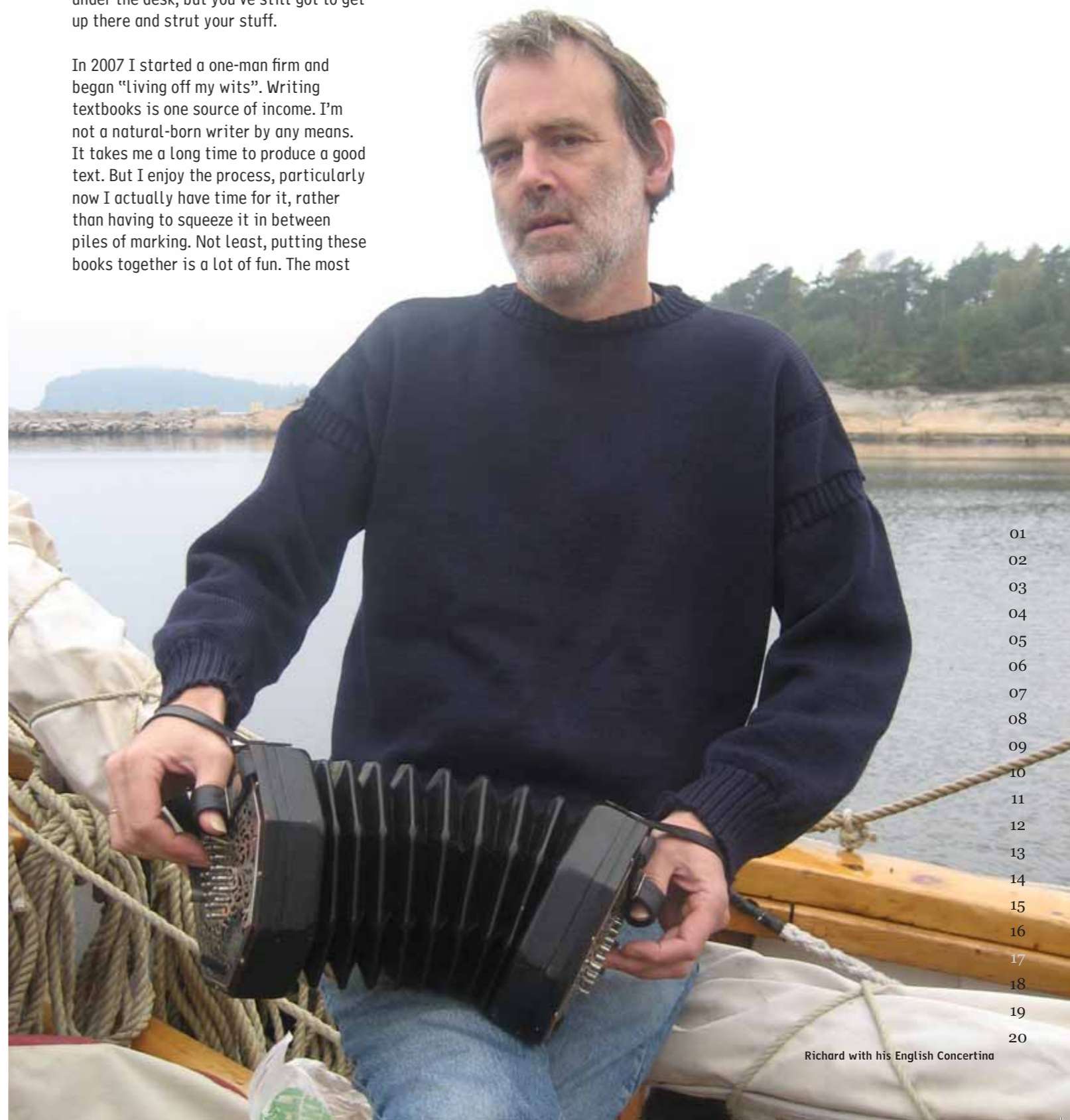
In 2007 I started a one-man firm and began "living off my wits". Writing textbooks is one source of income. I'm not a natural-born writer by any means. It takes me a long time to produce a good text. But I enjoy the process, particularly now I actually have time for it, rather than having to squeeze it in between piles of marking. Not least, putting these books together is a lot of fun. The most

essential ingredient at our editorial meetings is laughter!

Another thing I do is to give presentations for teachers at *videregående*. I got the idea when I was *fagleder* in English at Frederik II. It struck me that so many of the courses teachers were sent on were dictated by new pedagogical fads and departmental directives rather than what teachers feel they need themselves. So I prepared a handful of themes that I thought English teachers would find

useful and interesting – and that I find interesting too – and offered my services as a lecturer. I don't pretend to be an academic heavyweight, but rather someone who knows where the shoe pinches. (Yes! That's an English expression too!) The response has been good and I've had the chance to meet English teachers all over the country.

Ever since I came to Norway, music – and folk music in particular – has been a sort of parallel career to teaching. I play in a number of groups and perform on my own



Richard with his English Concertina

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as well – mostly traditional material from the British Isles, but also, increasingly, Scandinavian music. I sing and play various stringed instruments, as well as English concertina – a small relation of the accordion, and incidentally the only musical instrument invented and developed in England! Mostly the worlds of academia and music are pretty separate – I feel quite schizophrenic at times – but occasionally they meet. Not least, I've recorded a lot of songs for English textbooks. Pity my poor daughters who have been subjected to hearing their father sing *Hang Down your Head, Tom Dooley* in English classes since they were small!

It's one of those ironies of life that, having spent all that time and effort trying to become a Norwegian, I end up being a sort of professional Englishman! These days pretty well every penny I earn is in some way due to the fact that English is my mother tongue.

33 years after arriving in Tromsø, I'm still a British citizen and, to be honest, I feel more English now than I did then. I suppose it's part of the aging process. You start to embrace your past rather than trying to escape from it. I'll probably end up in an old people's home as the eccentric Englishman who's constantly asking for the cricket results!

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02 [www.richardburgess.no](http://www.richardburgess.no)  
03 [www.doggerland.com](http://www.doggerland.com)  
04 [www.foghorn.no](http://www.foghorn.no)



Theresa in Africa

## Theresa:

**I'm Nobody! Who are you?  
Are you – Nobody – Too?  
Then there's a pair of us.  
Don't tell! They'd advertise – you know!**

I've always identified myself with Emily Dickinson's poem and thought of myself as a "nobody" and yet a nobody who has lived an exciting life. Who would have thought that someone born in Santa Fe, New Mexico in the United States would ever end up in Norway? And yet that's exactly what happened. One of my secret dreams growing up was to travel to France and see the Eiffel Tower, perhaps inspired by Gene Kelly dancing and singing in "An American in Paris". What a disappointment it was to discover that the entire film had been filmed in a studio in Hollywood! But I was never one to be stopped by disappointment. I decided to major in French at The University of New Mexico and spend my junior year abroad in France. There, one of life's little twists of fate put me in the path of a dashing Norwegian. You've heard the story before. Otherwise I don't think I would ever have ended up in Norway.

When I came to Norway I spoke no Norwegian and so my first job was in a hospital kitchen here in Oslo. I quickly learned Norwegian, however, and my second job was in a library. But I wasn't satisfied with a Bachelor's degree in French and so travelled back to New Mexico to get a Master's degree. It was during this time that I had the French Nobel prize winner for literature, Jean-Marie Gustave Le Clézio as one of my teachers. In fact, I used to babysit his daughter and we became friends. I laughingly tell my students that this is my only claim to fame!

I came back to Norway in 1978 and have lived here ever since. At one point in my life I discovered that I had lived here longer than in the United States. Does that make me European or even, dare I say, Norwegian? No, not really. I've kept my American citizenship and my three children are dual nationals which means that we all can and do vote in presidential elections. This year it was thrilling to partake in the elections and vote for Barack Obama. His victory felt almost like a personal triumph and my

daughter surprised me afterwards by showing up with a bottle of champagne to celebrate!

I began teaching almost immediately after my return to Norway - first French, then English and then Spanish when the school where I teach (Grefsen *videregående skole* in Oslo) decided to offer Spanish. I've always loved teaching and foreign languages and being able to navigate from one language to another. But, unlike Richard who is such a talented musician, I never learned to play an instrument. As for singing, my father used to tease me that I couldn't carry a tune in a bucket, which is fairly harsh as I have often sung in choirs! But even though I'm not a musician I love music and am constantly listening to it. I must admit, I too am usually plugged into my I-Pod on the streetcar or bus or when I walk home from school, but I never listen to music when I am hiking in nature. As for my taste in music, this ranges from classic to opera, folk, rock, pop, jazz, Celtic, world music, etc. In fact, I think the only type of music I don't like is heavy metal! I often try to incorporate music when I teach and I find that even the most apathetic students sit up and take notice when music is used in a teaching sequence. The last song I played in class was Don McLean's "American Pie". Beforehand I had asked my students if any of them knew what the phrase "the day the music died" referred to. None of them did. Afterwards, this had become a cultural reference for them and, to be quite honest, I think that this is one of the really fun aspects of learning a foreign language.

As far as hobbies and pastimes are concerned I love to read, hike, swim and travel. Now that my children have flown the nest and I have parted ways with the aforementioned dashing Norwegian, I have time to cultivate all of these interests. I think, in all honesty, that I am happiest when I am traveling and in recent years I've traveled to some of the most exciting places in the world (at least for me). I've hiked on the pilgrims' trail to Santiago de Compostela in Northern Spain, been to Africa and the top of Mount Kilimanjaro (rumor has it that Vegard Ulvang didn't make it to the top but I did!), been to the bottom of the Grand Canyon, hiked

Hiking in the Dolomite Mountains



in the Dolomite Mountains in Italy and the Pyrenees in France and most recently "hunted the light" in northern Sweden.

I started out by saying that seeing the Eiffel Tower had been an adolescent dream of mine and how this dream compelled me to travel to France. One of my adulthood dreams has always been to see the Aurora Borealis. For Norwegians who are from the north this phenomenon may not be spectacular but for someone born much closer to the Equator than to the Arctic Circle this is something I have longed to see. Just this past winter vacation I travelled north to Narvik and from there to Abisko in Swedish Lapland. In temperatures of minus 30 degrees Celsius, my companions from all over the world and I stood for as long as we could without freezing to death and searched the sky for any sign of light. We weren't disappointed. The skies came alive with color and movement. The feeling of grandeur and magic was overwhelming. I feel privileged to have experienced this and to live in Norway where these northern lights occur. If I

had stayed in New Mexico I would never have seen them!

Living as we do in a global village where large distances have been reduced to a few uncomfortable hours in a plane it is no disadvantage to have extended family in another part of the world. Life in Norway has always been good to me and I am happy to have ended up here. I often reflect on how much "chance" influences

our lives. Have I mentioned that I have an identical twin sister who also studied in France at the same time as me? What if the dashing Norwegian had fallen for her? He didn't.

And so I ended up here in Norway writing English textbooks for Cappelen Damm (among other things).

Not bad for a "nobody"!

Hunting the Northern Lights in Abisko



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