

The Anglo-Swedish Year in Gothenburg

Report from the Chair – John Chaplin Feb 2016



We have had an exciting and cultural year in the Anglo-Swedish Society. A new committee was appointed at the **AGM** in February 2015 and this started our year of cultural events for the Society. Although we have had two people resign from the committee, we have also had two new people join the committee and all the current members are hoping to continue next year. We have also continued our close **cooperation** with the British Club, the English Church and Business Region Gothenburg. The English Shop in Linnéstaden has also helped to advertise the Society.

The AGM at Chalmers Villa in February 2015 was followed by our annual **Chalmers lecture**. This year we invited Leif Jendeby from Trafikverket to tell us about *Västlänken – Something good or just expensive and disruptive?*

During the year we have focused attention on **membership** partly through developing our new webpage (www.angloswedish.se), Facebook (facebook.com/AngloSwedishGothenburg), and Twitter (twitter.com/AngloSwedish) accounts. We now have dedicated email addresses (events@angloswedish.se, membership@angloswedish.se etc.) in order to make contacting us easier and we have succeeded in expanding the membership. I hope that the members will continue to make use of these sites and encourage more people to join the Society.

ANZAC day and Remembrance Day 2015 were **commemorated** by laying wreaths on the war graves. This was an important year for ANZAC, as it was 100 years since the Gallipoli campaign. There was a huge turnout at Kviberg and at the lunch afterwards at Kronhuset. Remembrance Day was also well attended, followed by a reception at the Bachelors Club as guests of Lars Wiklund, the British Honorary Consul.

Our main focus has, as always, been to actively support live **English language theatre** events in Gothenburg throughout the year. We had our first theatre visit in March. This was something special: a play by our own John Wright (Anglo-Swedish Chair 2014) entitled *Small Jonny*, performed by the Humane Theatre at Stadsbiblioteket. Also in March we saw *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at Fröa Teatern, and in April we saw *Three Short Comic Plays* by Alan Ayckbourn and Woody Allen, performed by the Gothenburg Drama Group, at Teaterhuset, Mölndal. We were back in Mölndal in May to see a fantastic performance of *SIVE* by John B. Keane performed by an international cast. In June we saw *The Point of No Return* by Tommy Lexen, an English language play on tour from London, performed at Folkteatern. We hope will have the opportunity of seeing other English language theatre at Folkteatern this year.

In October our **Not Quite a Cèilidh** tradition celebrated the 800th anniversary of Magna Carta by staging a 'mock trial of King John – was he really such a bad man?' This is the main event of the year and we had over 50 members attending with several on the waiting list; the audience was given the task of judging the innocence or otherwise of King John based on the dramatized witness statements presented by our own theatre company of 14 members taking various roles during the evening. Special thanks to our two barristers Mr Archie Leach (Birger) and Ms Rumpole of the Bailey (Barbara). King John was found guilty and the Magna Carta was re-sealed by the Anglo-Swedish Committee 2015. We were also ably supported by Simon Cull who has provided the catering.

We have continued to expand the cultural activities supported by the Society. The **NLive** theatre performances at Bio Roy (www.facebook.com/NLiveKlubben) have proven popular, with approximately 12 people attending each show. The most popular performances were *Hamlet* with Benedict Cumberbatch and *A Winter's Tale* with Dame Judy Dench, both of which saw over 20 members attending. Our new google.docs events booking page (<http://tinyurl.com/zpvmv9t>) has proven to be very popular. We have had good support from Bio Roy on Avenyn, Göteborg, who have continued to offer our members a discount on these plays. The list of NLive plays we have seen is an impressive array of top quality theatre from England, including:

- *Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck
- *A View from the Bridge* by Arthur Miller
- *The Hard Problem* by Tom Stoppard
- *Man and Superman* by George Bernard Shaw
- *The Beaux Stratagem* by George Farquhar
- *The Importance of Being Earnest* by Oscar Wilde
- *Hamlet*
- *Jane Eyre* *A Winter's Tale* with Dame Judy Dench and Kenneth Branagh
- *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*

We have also continued to support the almost monthly **ELB(A) book club**, which discusses English language literature and has attracted a number of young people via the social networking site Meetup (<http://www.meetup.com/ELBexA/>). **Sharon's Culture Group** has also been taking us to Swedish language activities in Gothenburg during the year, with special emphasis on English plays performed in Swedish.

In November we were back at the Gothenburg English Studio Theatre (GEST) to see *YEN*, a new play by Anna Jordan. After the performance we had a chance to participate in a question-and-answer session with the actors, the director and the author of the play. We finished the evening with a **cheese and wine** party provided by Keith and Gisela.

Later in November we sadly said goodbye to Barbara, who was returning to England. Barbara Moss had been the secretary of the Anglo-Swedish society for many years. To mark our appreciation we had an evening of poetry and songs chosen by Barbara in the style of *Desert Island Discs* - 10 poems or songs you would take to a Desert Island (or in this case to Greenwich).

We finished the year on 16th December in the usual way, with our traditional evening of **Christmas carols** at Restaurant Solrosen in Haga. This is an especially pleasant evening for spreading Christmas cheer with English and Swedish Christmas carols. The English Church Choir was in good form and we thank them and Gillian, the Choir Master.

This coming year (2016) looks like it will be equally exciting, especially as we will be celebrating the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's death by attending numerous Shakespeare events during the year and performing a **Not Quite a Cèilidh** in which Shakespeare will be invited to our own version of *This is your Life* and the Anglo-Swedish Society will make a definitive decision on the 'author debate' – did Shakespeare, the man with only a grammar school education, actually write the most important theatrical dramas of all time?