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Front cover: Estonian Priit Tisler in Antarctica

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Editorial



Editing Lennuk is an enjoyable job. So many interesting Estonians out there, so many non-Estonians who have taken an interest in the country, so many new developments, new angles, new books. My job, as I see it, is to bring some of it, a small section, to you in a way that reminds me of the translations I have done where it is important not only to account for words but to make sense of them. Outsiders often view translation as a mechanical word replacement from one language into another – and today’s machines can do this with considerable success – but in actual fact there is much more to it. The process can be very rewarding for the translator – unfortunately not in financial terms – because it involves much thought, time, play with words, which the reader may be totally unaware of until the translator chooses to share the thinking with an audience. This is why it was good to hear Susan Wilson talk about her difficulties translating Jaan Kaplinski and about her ways to finding a solution. She is certainly a resourceful woman whose eight-year-old son was called to the rescue when she ran out of synonyms (for farting, if you need to know).

No doubt there are professional secrets in any job - they become visible only as and when described by somebody in the know, and even then quite dimly, depending on the way they are conveyed and how they register. Meteorologist Priit Tisler has made the world of weather forecasting sound fascinating but the mystery persists: why do the Finns need a research station in Antarctica, this far-flung, white continent? The ecology and crusading project led by Aleks Pluskowski sounded dull until I saw the added colour: it is pollen that is expected to yield medieval secrets and it is dyed pink. (Why pink, I wonder?) I look with interest to 2014 when the results of his research are published. The world of haute couture is by default much more colourful, as Mirjam Maramaa has described. She has made me look up the Caudwell Children Butterfly Ball and wonder about other lesser-known charities that require high-class gowns to be worn on special occasions. She made me also think of ‘my own’ ambassador August Torma who in photographs looks so splendid in his finery, but I am yet to find an image of him presenting his credentials at Buckingham Palace in 1934. Was somebody taking pictures at all?



Charles Drace-Francis has written a little gem of a story about his boat buying; it is a story about sailing without any sailing in it. And Gwyn Davies has lifted the veil cautiously from Sillamäe where rare earths, for which there is apparently a huge appetite in the world, are processed.

Many thanks to all contributors, including those I have not mentioned by name. You all have made my work interesting, my world more colourful – thank you. What about the readers though? I am waiting eagerly – please send in your thoughts and musings.

Tina Tamman, editor

Recent meetings of BEST



Angus Murray *Member of the BEST Committee*

BEST has enjoyed a varied programme of interesting meetings in the first half of 2011 on topics ranging from social and political issues to the arts and business matters. We have been fortunate to have had distinguished and interesting speakers, including Prof Andres Kasekamp, Dr Aleks Pluskowski, Susan Wilson, Dr Tina Tamman and the controversial journalist Abdul Turay.



In January Andres Kasekamp, professor of Baltic politics at the University of Tartu and director of the Estonian Foreign Policy Institute, introduced his new book *A History of the Baltic States*. It covers the period from the earliest times to the present day, but does so by considering the Baltic region as a whole, rather than viewing

each country - Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania - as separate entities. This novel approach has enabled Prof Kasekamp to show how developments in these countries have both diverged and intertwined at different periods of history.

In February Dr Aleks Pluskowski, who teaches medieval and environmental archaeology at the Department of Archaeology in the University of Reading, and who directs The Ecology of Crusading research programme, gave a talk entitled 'Driving out old gods? Exploring the environmental impact of crusading'. This concerned the changes, both cultural and physical, created by the Teutonic knights who, when invading the eastern Baltic in the 13th century, built castles, developed towns and replaced the indigenous pagan societies and tribal groups with Christian states. In particular, he discussed the impact of these developments on the local plants and animals (which would have been held sacred by the local population) and the relationship between such environmental change and the development of new societies in the region. (*Below*: Pluskowski, second left, with his team)



In April Susan Wilson gave a talk on the challenges in translating the work of Jaan Kaplinski. Susan studied French and Spanish at the University of Bradford and did postgraduate work on translation at the University of Kent. She was employed for 13 years at the Foreign Office in London where she learned and translated Estonian, but has now left the FO to translate literature and poetry full-time.



In 2010 Susan's translation of Jaan Kaplinski's novel *The Same River* (Seesama jõgi) was published. In her talk she explained the complex process of translating literature and poetry, which involves not just an understanding of the literal meaning of the words but of the connotations and annotations that give the reader a fuller understanding of the text.



In June the journalist Abdul Turay gave a talk entitled 'My Estonian dream'. Abdul is British but is based in Tallinn. He has worked for the British government, has reported for newspapers in Hong Kong and Taiwan and been editor-in-chief of the *Baltic Times*. He is now a columnist for *Postimees*.

His talk, which led to a lively discussion, followed on from his participation in a recent seminar hosted by the British Council and entitled 'Estonia's road to tolerance'. He talked about overall tolerance to foreigners in Estonia and his own experiences, both good and bad, drawing on his experiences in the other countries in which he has lived and worked for comparison.

The final meeting before the summer break

was by Dr Tina Tamman who introduced her new book *The Last Ambassador: August Torma, Soldier, Diplomat, Spy*. She explained how August Torma (born August Schmidt) came to move from active army duty to involvement with politics and intelligence matters and how in 1934 he came to represent Estonia in London. He was still in post in 1940 when the Soviet Union overran his country. Thereafter, in increasingly difficult personal circumstances, he continued to defy Soviet demands and did his best to maintain his contact with the Foreign Office as Estonia's representative until his death in 1971.



Tina's book is based on the research she did for her PhD thesis at the University of Glasgow. She expressed the hope that her book would help raise the profile of the diplomat who has not enjoyed the level of public recognition that she feels he deserves.

We have been fortunate to be able to use the Estonian embassy for our meetings, and we are grateful to the ambassador, HE Mrs Aino Lepik and to the embassy staff for their support, help and assistance.

An Estonian in

ANTARTICA

Priit Tisler

Principal researcher, Finnish Meteorological Institute



When I was in Antarctica in 2010-11, in Dronning Maud Land, our station was inland, in fact in the middle of nowhere. Which means that when I am asked about penguins I have had to disappoint people: these beauties live mostly in coastal areas and on islands and the only living creatures close to our station were snow petrels. We did travel to the coast once – it took us 6 hours on a motor sledge to cover 160 km to Riiser-Larsen Ice Shelf – and stood there, admiring a small group of seals when suddenly a single emperor penguin arrived, as if by magic. The bird was a show-off and became instantly one of the most photographed objects in the area. The seals by contrast took no notice of us.

Dronning Maud Land is an area in the eastern part of Antarctica. Norway has sought to claim it ever since 1939 but its claim, like some others, has not been internationally recognised. Several research stations are located there, with Germans, Russians, Japanese, Indians, South Africans, Finns, Swedes and Norwegians researching the region. I was stationed at Aboa, the Finnish Meteorological Institute's base, where I stayed for slightly over two months in charge of a team of three. Our task was to install a range of instruments and take measurements. The entire expedition consisted of 10 men, with five of them in charge of logistics (provision of electricity, water and heat, maintenance of motor sledges, conservation of waste) and the other five were doing research. Also, there were two physicists from the University of Helsinki who were interested in ice and snow and the lakes that form in summer.

Aboa station was built in 1989, refurbished and enlarged in 2002. It is suited for research during the southern hemisphere's summer months (December and January). This means that most of the time, for nearly 10 months, the station stands empty, which may explain our anxiety on arrival: we were not certain as to what we would find. Fortunately everything went well: we cleared the snow, successfully started the diesel generator and spent our first night in a warm room between clean sheets. The station also boasts a sauna (which saw daily use!) and even a small library that enabled us to watch films on video and DVD, but there is no permanent internet connection and communication with one's nearest and dearest is by satellite phone.

Antarctica is quite something. Three words would describe it: it is distant, cold and dry. And it is not forgiving: particular care needs to be taken over every single thing. Before going out, for example, sun cream must be applied and once outside, sunglasses must be worn. For security reasons a radio and GPS must always be carried because the weather may change rapidly and without warning. If air temperature is somewhere between zero and minus 10, then wind speeds can be remarkable and blizzards are frequent. They quickly turn the surroundings uniformly white,

which means there is no visibility and one can get rapidly disorientated. The worst possible outcome is falling into a crevice.

Estonia cannot boast of a research station in Antarctica, but Estonian scientists have in the past been included in Soviet expeditions. Even now it is satisfying to find our people, representatives of a small country, on this cold and beautiful continent, even if working for foreign countries, like myself. Incidentally, Fabian von Bellingshausen, who first set eyes on Antarctica on 27 January 1820, was born in Estonia.

I became a meteorologist more by chance than design. After school I wanted to train as a mining engineer, probably because I come from Jõhvi where oil shale is mined and where my father and



grandfather were miners. However, that particular year mining was obviously not attractive: not enough people applied and in haste I had to choose something else, which is how I ended up reading physics at the University of Tartu. I cannot say that at school any teacher had influenced me in particular – I was generally good at sciences - but I remember the teacher who had an unusual way of explaining the concept of trajectory by throwing a piece of chalk across the classroom, in a most beautiful arc, when a boy at the back had annoyed him.

I was awarded a degree in physics (cum laude) in 1990 and ever since then I have been working for the Finnish Meteorological Institute in Helsinki. I was awarded a PhD in meteorology by the University of Helsinki in 2006 (my thesis was called ‘Aspects of weather simulation by numerical process’). My home, however, has all along been in Tartu. This is where my wife and two daughters live (in a house I built myself) and this is where I have been able to lecture at the university at times. My life has been full of commuting but I have not found it hard. It is impossible to be in two countries at the same time but my family approve, the distances are not great and my work is very interesting. Commuting has with time become a matter of habit.

During my initial years at the Finnish Meteorological Institute I drew up weather forecasts in various formats for a range of customers: the press, radio stations, airfields, construction firms, the army, peat producers, people floating logs, etc. Metaphorically speaking, I was always looking ahead, living in the future. The forecasts were for the next day or the day after, sometimes for six months ahead. It was also important to verify the forecasts later, which for a meteorologist provides valuable experience of the kind not found in textbooks. Even if a present-day meteorologist relies largely on the benefits of modelling, personal experience and knowledge of local conditions have a big role to play.

Now that I am doing research full-time and can sometimes work from home, I no longer follow weather forecasts as a matter of routine. All the same, whenever an important event is coming up I find myself checking the modelling and doing calculations in my head. Over the years the format has improved considerably thanks to computer technology. Visual presentation, with the use of animation, can often be much more attractive than it used to be. This is particularly true of television.

There are big differences between Estonia and Finland in their attitude to the weather. Estonia has only one weather centre while Finland operates several regional ones. The University of Helsinki provides excellent training for meteorologists of the kind that Estonia cannot match. As many as 650 people work at the Finnish Meteorological Institute. For Finns the weather is a serious business.

NARVA

past, present and future

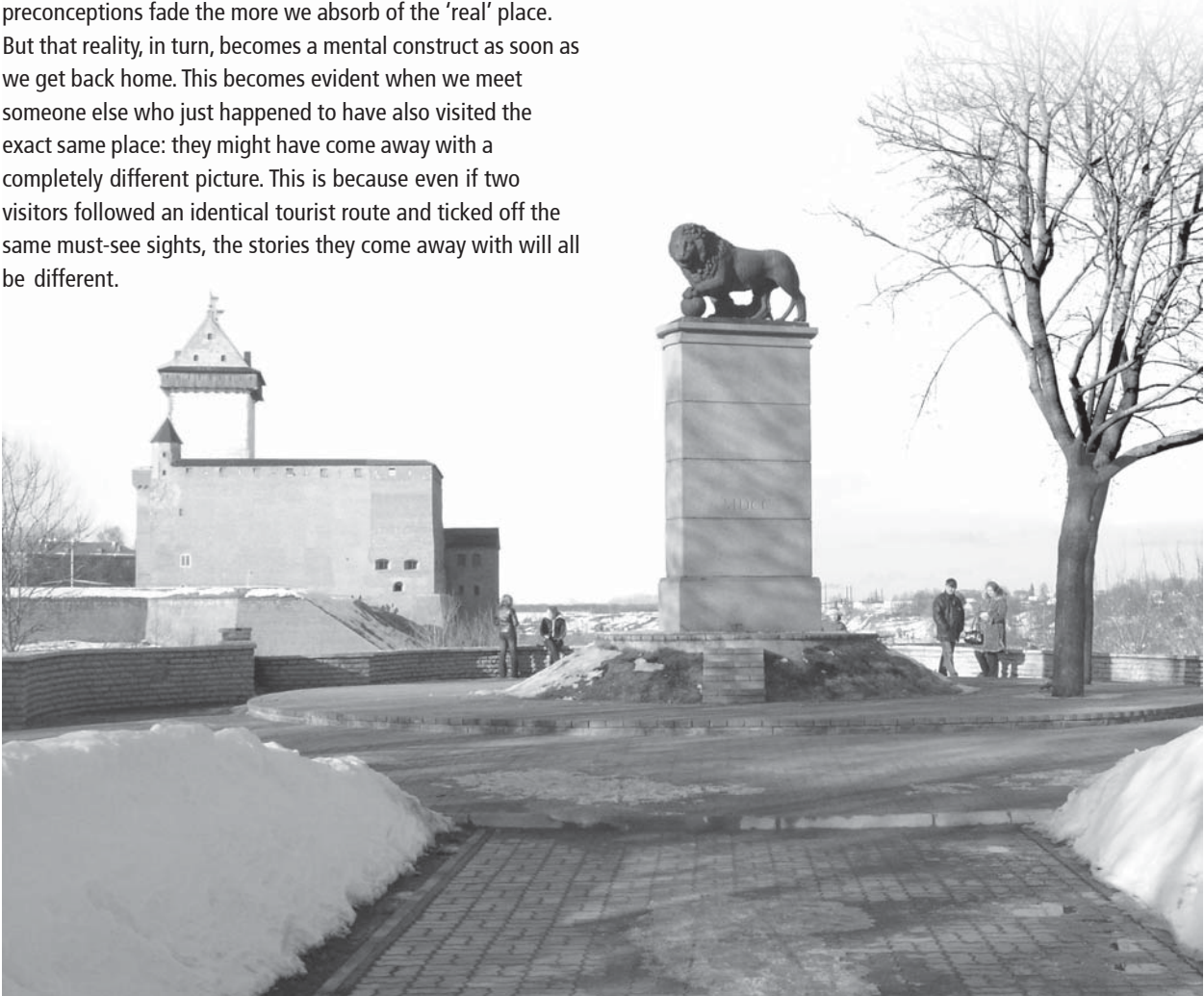
Stuart Burch *senior lecturer in museum and heritage management, Nottingham Trent University*

Think back to the last time you travelled to some place new. What was going through your head? Excitement? Expectation? Nervousness at the prospect of venturing into the unknown? Even if you knew next to nothing about the destination, your mind would have started building up a mental image; a collage of ideas based on various snippets of information from guide books, conversations with previous visitors, reports in magazines and on TV. Of course, nowadays the world is just a click away: all we need do is visit Google Earth and zoom about like migratory birds.

But no matter how advanced the technology, there is no substitute for the real thing. Physically experiencing a place involves all the senses. We 'read' the environment taking in its sights and sounds, tastes and textures. Our mental preconceptions fade the more we absorb of the 'real' place. But that reality, in turn, becomes a mental construct as soon as we get back home. This becomes evident when we meet someone else who just happened to have also visited the exact same place: they might have come away with a completely different picture. This is because even if two visitors followed an identical tourist route and ticked off the same must-see sights, the stories they come away with will all be different.

But what must it be like to visit a place that apparently doesn't even have a tourist itinerary? Somewhere that is full of foreboding, described as a place where there is nothing to see or do and where the only experiences you are likely to have will either be ghastly or ghostly. Ghostly because the place *used* to be nice and touristy but all that remains is destruction and despair. It's no exaggeration to say that that was what I'd been led to expect when I told people in Tallinn that I planned to visit Narva. This was confirmed by a trip to a bookstore: there were plenty of publications about Narva, but they were all filled with sepia coloured postcards dating from before 1944. That was the year Narva died.

So, I was, as you might expect, feeling a tiny bit nervous as I stepped off the bus at Narva. Fortunately the person I was





travelling with spoke Russian, so I knew that we could talk ourselves around this supposedly barren landscape. We had travelled to Narva to study something that we knew *did* exist. But even that was a ghost-like recreation of a lost original: a sculpture of a lion erected by the Swedes in the year 2000 to mark the 300th anniversary of the battle of Narva. The Swedes presumably hoped that this version would last longer than the original: erected in 1936 it had been blown up along with everything else in 1944.

In my copy of *The Rough Guide to the Baltic States* I'd read that the new lion monument was 'barely tolerated' by local people. This conjured up yet another vivid fantasy in my head: a wasteland with the lion at its centre, circled by packs of feral youths. What I actually discovered was a town full of friendly people, tasty pickled lampreys and a lion monument that is situated in a neatly tended park with a fabulous view overlooking the river and two fortresses, one in Narva, the other in neighbouring Ivangorod. And instead of utter destruction I found a town that hadn't been completely annihilated – at least not architecturally. Traces of the past abounded, if you knew where to look. I discovered fragments of old buildings incorporated into new structures. Narva had been reborn as a Soviet place. Now, this might be to everyone's taste, but I happen to like my architecture ugly. One of my favourite buildings in Britain is Birmingham Central Library. This icon of brutalist architecture is soon to be torn down by those who consider it to be ugly, unfit for purpose and of no value whatsoever. I wonder what future generations will think about this 'lost heritage'?

Because *anything* can qualify as 'heritage'. Take Narva's statue of Lenin, for example. Instead of gesturing to people in the town square, he now occupies a corner of the castle grounds. He's been knocked off his pedestal, moved sideways and become a tourist attraction. Perhaps this might be a sign of things to come? After all, if we want to understand modern European history and the still-festering divide between East and West, there's no better place to visit than Narva. There are already indications that this tourist potential is being tapped. On a repeat visit to the town a couple of years ago I noticed that a number of heritage signs had been erected pointing out the various monuments and memorials – including its Swedish lion.

Hopefully there will be more attractions to point out in the future. The monumental 19th century Alexander Cathedral is being restored to its former glory. It was built as a house of worship for the thousands of workers at the Kreenholm textile factory. In recent times the factory has struggled to continue production, leading to its Swedish owners going out of business in 2010. Perhaps other uses can be found for this palace of the industrial age? If Saltaire in West Yorkshire can achieve UNESCO World Heritage status, why not Kreenholm? The ongoing restoration of Narva fortress shows what can be achieved. Its history – told so well in the museum inside – really puts Narva on the historical map.

And it's not just about piecing together the past: the present is making a contribution too. One such example is the plan for a bold new building to house Narva College. This is to be erected on the site of the old stock exchange, which currently stands empty next to Narva's impressive Town Hall. The latter had originally been built in the 17th century during the Swedish era. The Soviet authorities reconstructed it after the Second World War, not so much for its heritage value but because the building had been used to launch the Estonian Workers Commune of November 1918. During the Soviet period it became a House of Pioneers. But it has been empty and in disrepair since the early 1990s. It could and should be refurbished. The weirdly Swedish-Soviet-Estonian Town Hall is the perfect setting for a museum and heritage attraction telling the *whole* of Narva's eventful story – and not just the sepia-imaged, nostalgic view of its pre-war past. That way future tourists might avoid the nervousness I experienced before travelling to Estonia's not so wild and not so destroyed East...

Town Hall in Narva.



TALLINN

European capital of culture 2011



Martina Tramberg *literary rights, Black Market Industry Screenings*

For someone like me who has lived her whole life in Tallinn, the concept of ‘Tallinn, the European Capital of Culture

2011’ (known locally as ‘Tallinn 2011’) sounds grandiose, unexpected, intimidating and exciting. The title has been designated by the European Commission for a calendar year during which the city is expected to put on a series of cultural events that are required to have a strong European dimension. No city is chosen solely for what it is, but mainly for what it plans to do or be for that particular, exceptional year.

With Tallinn as the title holder a rare opportunity has opened up for a small country such as Estonia: suddenly all eyes are on us, or at least that’s what we are hoping for. If normally we don’t notice in a city the changes brought by development and change, since they stretch over a long period of time, then for me as a long-term resident of Tallinn there is the hope that within a year there is a chance to see these difficult-to-perceive changes brought together in a concentrated way, like an essence.

The initial bid for the title was rich in wonderful ideas (see www.tallinn2011.ee). However, as luck would have it, some of the planning lost out to the subsequent world recession. Less money meant that the ideas have been harder to turn into reality. Let me first put it proudly on record that in my view Tallinn is a vibrant city with innovative and diverse cultural events for every taste – this has been so for quite some years now – and Tallinn 2011 has brought this vibrancy under one umbrella.

Alternative approaches have emerged in the city. One of the notable projects is the Straw Theatre. The idea of a black box suddenly appearing in central Tallinn appealed to some theatre people and so NO99, the theatre in question, now operates temporarily, for five months only, from an installation built of straw at the

Skoone Bastion. It is a nice spot close to the old town wall – a public space under trees with a view to the sea where modern plays complement the unexpected ‘architecture’. The structure and the performances have quickly gained popularity with the locals.

One of my personal favourites is the Guerilla Cinema, a project that shows films at different unexpected locations all over the city. The appeal is in the secrecy. You need to register and the venue will be sent to you in a personal text message or email with very little notice, maybe just a day. Each film is shown only once and this ensures a unique experience.

Installations have sprung up in public places. During the early part of the year when it was still winter, a big glass bowl resembling a greenhouse and symbolising summer was installed in Freedom Square (Vabaduse väljak). It is called ‘Site No 2011’ and it is inhabited. Well-known celebrities, one at a time, have an opportunity to ‘relax’ inside, right in the heart of Tallinn.



An artificial island has been created in Tallinn Bay, near the Linnahall (a concert hall). It is called Ökosaar (Ecology Island) and its aim is to raise awareness about the need for recycling. Made entirely from plastic bottles and recycled materials, the island is a showcase. It is big enough for an old London double-decker bus turned into a café and there is even a piano on the island. Visitors can gain clever ideas and see a home of the future.



Passionate as I am about my home town, in the light of the events/installations I have seen, none of them makes Tallinn stand out among the other cities that have been the European capitals of culture. Something is missing. What I have witnessed are events that are quite usual and natural for Tallinn and the Tallinn 2011 connection seems artificial at times.

What concerns me most is that it is difficult to see a unifying factor or strategy linking all the Tallinn 2011 events and activities together. I would not like to be hasty in my criticism, since strategy takes a long time

to formulate and the process can be complicated, but it seems to me that much of the potential that goes with the limelight has remained unharnessed.

An opportunity for a city to build itself a reputation is something rare, not to mention the cultural, social and economical benefits that can derive from the process. One could look no further than Liverpool for a good example of success. Its university conducted a research project, 'Creating an impact: Liverpool's experience as European capital of culture', which identified a strategy aimed at resolving particular local problems. This is a perfect example of a broader approach that I would like to see in Tallinn.

Tallinn 2011 brought a great idea to our TV screens by way of introducing *Stories on the Seashore*. For the series, journalist Jaan Tootsen has been inviting local people, both well known and not so well known, into the studio. Each is given 2-3 minutes to tell a personal story, something close to their hearts, about Tallinn. I like the broadcast very much for its personal touch and the opportunity it gives to me to see the place through another person's eyes. However, the programme's format has further potential that has not been utilised, because there has been no strategic thinking involved. There have been no stories from the local Russians who have been living here for decades. And yet, when Tallinn applied to become a capital of culture it promised to engage the Russian community – this was one of the priorities listed. Now the stories as they stand are nice enough but they are told in Estonian and designed to appeal to the local audience alone.

Which makes me wonder what we will have left at the end of the year to look back on. Tallinn has not been



short of artistic endeavors even without the status of capital of culture. So, perhaps I should blame my own high expectations? Has it been the case of a parent hoping for the best in a gifted child and then feeling sad when the child fails to rise to expectations? That Tallinn is full of potential goes without saying. Come and see for yourself.



A lot of interesting projects, such as Ökosaar (Ecology Island), *opposite*, and the Straw Theatre, *below*, have been happening in 2011. A new 'cultural kilometre' path (*above right*), replaces an old railway track from Kalaturg to Tööstuse tn. It passes the old Patarei prison and the Maritime Museum's Lennusadam (*top right*) – a major project which is well on the way to being finished, but maybe not in 2011.

