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The **43**rd **Nordic Congress** of **Ophthalmology** **2018** in Oslo

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BENTE HAUGHOM, AVTALESPELIALIST, LEDER AV NORSK OFTALMOLOGISK FORENING

Dear friends and colleagues,
In the statutes for the Nordic Ophthalmological Committee (NOK), the stated purpose is “To support and promote the cooperation between the Nordic Ophthalmological Societies, to inform of and deal with matters of common interest, and to “stimulate scientific education by planning and arranging Meetings for Nordic Ophthalmologists”. After four exciting days and a total of 1025 registered participants to the meeting, it is finally time to sit back and evaluate the NOK2018 journey. When an event such as this is on the agenda, it is at first too far off in the future to be of much interest, being hardly visible in the calendar; then, as time passes, you

realize that action must be taken, but there simply is not enough time. Then, when there are only weeks to go, and you realize that it is really too late to do anything, you suddenly find the time to do everything and the days have 42 hours instead of 24.

We are sure that things have proceeded in the same manner ever since the first NOK meeting was organized in Stockholm in 1900. The speakers at that very first meeting mentioned the unbreakable Nordic cooperation, and Nordenson from Stockholm greeted the participants with the words of Albrecht von Graefe: ophthalmology was not only something to live for, but also something to die for!

The second Nordic meeting was in

Copenhagen in 1903, and it was agreed that the third meeting should be in Kristiania in 1906. The invitation was signed by Hjalmar Schiøtz, Søren Holth, Albert Kolstad, and Harald Lystad. In 1905, Norway became a free country and was no longer administered by Sweden. The affront towards Sweden became an issue, and the meeting was postponed to 1907 in hopes of reconciliation. However, the answers from Widmark, Forsmark, and Dalen were disappointing: “tyvärr förhindrad” (unfortunately prevented from coming). Gullstrand wrote in his reply that he would have wanted to come, but not as the only Swedish participant.

This time in 2018, almost 200 Swedish participants came to Oslo,

and the Swedish Ophthalmology Society even moved the date of their own annual meeting to increase the possibility of more Swedish attendants.

The social program in 1907 included dinner at Holmenkollen Restaurant, a steam boat trip (at the price of 1,00 kroner per person), dinner at Dronningen Restaurant (10.00 kroner per person), and a *dejeuner dinatoire* at St. Hanshaugen. These places are still present in Oslo today, but the prices may be a bit different.

The next meeting in Oslo was in 1928 and included 59 attendants, 23 wives and eight daughters. On Thursday, there was a gala dinner at the Grand Hotel. On Friday, the dinner was organized at home with colleagues in Oslo; gala attire was still required. On Saturday, casual attire was allowed, and lunch was served at Frognerseteren Restaurant.

The next time Oslo played host was in 1947, and again in 1979. Trondheim hosted the event in 1987, Bergen in 1998, and Tromsø in 2008.

In Bergen in 1998, there was a sense that these Nordic meetings were of more limited interest, and also it might be better to change the speakers' language to English. As far as we



Keynote Lectures gathered nearly 800 participants in the main lecture hall



Guldbergs Academic Choir during the opening ceremony



understand, the decision was finally made 2 years later in Iceland.

At this year's meeting, there appeared to be no communication problems, and although the corridors buzzed with six languages, the focus remained on our long history of common interests and cultural understanding.

We were both happy and relieved to see so many participants present

The venue – grey and anonymous at the outside filled with interesting discussions about the future of Nordic ophthalmology inside



Lively discussions in different languages during coffee breaks



Inger Westborg during Nordic Panel Discussion



Young Ophthalmologist Dry Lab session



Welcome reception in Oslo City Hall



Welcome reception in Oslo City Hall

at the very first morning session at Wednesday, and hear the sound of lively discussions during the coffee breaks.

The first Keynote speaker was Dr. Richard Hertle (USA) giving an inspiring talk on “Everything you need to know about nystagmus”. A difficult topic for many of us, but he managed somehow to address this too; simplifying and clarifying the classification and giving valuable input on treatment, such as topical carbonic anhydrase inhibitors. Then, at the opening ceremony after the presidential address, Guldbergs Academic Choir entertained us with humour, white tie and Bellmann.

We had a highly engaged scientific committee that together with the moderators searched far and deep to recruit the right persons to the program. They did a magnificent job and together with all the speakers created a comprehensive scientific program consisting of scientific sessions and Nordic plenary discussions covering all major field of ophthalmology.

The Young Ophthalmologist (YO) and Allied Health program at the meeting was also ambitious, and we will not

forget the brilliant lecture by dr. Andrew Lee (USA) about “The power to detect disease and death by looking in people’s

eyes – that is a real superpower”. Dry lab sessions were included for the first time at NOK this year, and they had a high number of participants.

Oslo City Hall generously welcomed us in the afternoon, and also offered a taste of food and something to drink. The mayor Marianne Borgen showed in her speech that she understands many of the challenges that we have. She wore the traditional Norwegian folklore dress called “bunad”. The singer Stine Hole Ulla gave us a beautiful performance before we were taken on a tour of the building. The rooms upstairs were a real attraction also for many of the participants from Oslo, who often already have seen the hall; famous for being the place where the Nobel Peace prize is awarded.

Thursday was the day for the plenary session; and time to discuss: Choosing wisely; aren’t we doing it already? Timely; it came up directly after the Keynote of Anja Tuulonen (Finland), who has been addressing the issue already for some time. To take a step back, look at the way we work, and change practice



Keynote Lecture by Anja Tuulonen about how to prioritize in the setting of glaucoma care and beyond



Oddbjørn Bjordal and the rest of the Nordic Plenary panel

patterns can be quite difficult. Still; many national societies have found it fruitful to do this, and hopefully, we have started a discussion that will continue in our meetings to come. The participants at this session were Bente Kristin Johansen from the Norwegian Medical Association, Anja Tuulonen from Finland, Toke Bek from Denmark, Stefan Seregard from Sweden, Jóhann Ragnar Guðmundsson from Iceland and Oddbjørn Bjordal from Norway.

Then on Friday Dr. Dan Martin (USA), the principal investigator among others of the CATT-trial, gave a novel insight about "Evolution of Intravitreal Therapy for Retinal Diseases: From CMV to CNV", and how we can cope with the seemingly ever increasing load of intravitreal injections. This was followed by the "Acta Ophthalmologica Honorary Lecture". This year this prestigious prize was awarded to Professor Toke Bek (Denmark), and he took us through an exciting journey from translational to clinical research in the field of retinal vascular diseases.

Friday was also the day for the Norwegian Society to present the European Society of Ophthalmology (SOE) lecturer, and this year it was awarded to Øygunn Aass Utheim. Congratulations!

At the dinner Friday evening, we



The SOE award 2018 was given to Øygunn Aass Utheim



Toke Bek giving the Acta Honorary Lecture



The last Keynote speaker was Stefan Seregard (Sweden)

in the foyer about new collaborations and new appointments for visiting each other. The last Keynote speaker was Stefan Seregard (Sweden). He guided us through the improvements and innovations that we have experienced in just a few years. The possibilities in the future can be great, but what will be the cost?

Deciding whether the future is friend or foe; we are safely assured by one of his last slides: The golden era of ophthalmology is yet to come! The closing ceremony included a best free-paper and poster award to Lotta Gränse, (Sweden) and Yasmin El Dabagh (Denmark), congratulations!

Finally, we got the presentation of the next Nordic meeting in two years in Reykjavik, Iceland. The very impressive drone film convinced the audience that Iceland is truly an exciting destination!

Once again we would like to thank all the organizers, moderators and speakers, the delegates and the sponsors making NOK2018 exactly what we envisioned; high-quality scientific lectures, lively discussions and some unforgettable evenings together. We really hope that you came home with new knowledge and perhaps some new friends! And we already look forward to the next NOK meeting!

*Kindly
Bente Haugom and Morten C. Moe
on behalf of the NOK2018 organizing committee*



Congress dinner at the Opera

had 400 guests dining in the opera foyer. Many considerations must be taken when arranging social events at meetings these days, but hopefully all our guests enjoyed themselves as much as we did! At least, the dance continued

until the hi-fi system collapsed after midnight.

Still, at Saturday morning, plenty of participants were still around to participate in the scientific sessions, and we were excited to hear people talk



See you all at NOK2020 in Reykjavik, Iceland!(From webpage www.nok2020.com)

Photos NOK 2018: Geir Akseil Ovale