

How it all began

In 1936 Barbara Dobson attended a Girl Guide Training Week in Hampshire and became friendly with a Danish Guider. The friendship continued until the outbreak of war and was resumed afterwards. This was responsible for an interest in Denmark which resulted in her attending an Anglo-Danish Summer School in 1947 at Rødning.

Many of the Danes at this Summer School were being trained to take up Det Danske Selskab (Danish Council – similar to the British Council) appointments in other countries. Among them was Mr. Vagn Fenger who became the first Danish representative in Britain and was based in Birmingham and Mr. Reg. Spink who was the editor of the publication Denmark.

She attended a second Summer School in Oxford in 1948. A visit was made to this school by the Danish Ambassador and the possibility of a second sea route from Britain to Denmark was discussed- Hull and Leith were suggested but it was pointed out (no doubt by Miss Dobson and others) that the Tyne was an ideal half-way house between England and Scotland and already had Norwegian Shipping Lines.

On 23 May 1949 the M/S A.P. Bernstoff sailed from the Tyne and the second Sea Route was opened.

A Memorial to the Danish seamen who had lost their lives in the Second World War was erected in 1949 at the Danish Seamen's Mission in Newcastle. The reason for this was that the Danish Merchant Navy had been based on the Tyne during the war. It was unveiled by Commodore Kai Hammerich, Royal Danish Navy, on 30th April in that year. Widows and other relatives of these men were invited to attend the ceremony and when Miss Dobson saw them wandering about the City on their sad visit, she thought that it was dreadful that there was no local group who could offer to help them.

She approached her Danish contacts in Britain who suggested that the German and Scandinavian Department of King's College, Newcastle, and the Danish Church in Newcastle might be interested. Of the various people approached it was Dr. Mennie and Mr. Niels Lyhne Jensen (Danish Lector) who responded. It was thought that a Society including all Scandinavian countries would create a wider interest than one for Danes only.

A meeting was arranged and advertised and on 1st November 1950 the Anglo-Scandinavian Society, Newcastle upon Tyne, was born.

The advertisement in the Press read as follows:

*"Angles, Scandinavians and friends
A cordial welcome is extended
to all who are interested,
to a meeting to be held on
Wednesday, November 1st 1950 at 7.30 p.m.
in the British Council, 5 Windsor Crescent,
Jesmond, Newcastle 2,
to consider the possibilities of forming in this area
an Anglo-Scandinavian Society."*

The first meeting was duly held on the appointed day. About 50 people attended.

Dr. Mennie was elected Chairman of the meeting and Miss Dobson explained why the meeting had been arranged. It was moved that an Anglo-Scandinavian Society should be formed in Newcastle only. It was doubted whether people from Sunderland would be able to attend meetings in Newcastle and to have two meeting places would be beyond the resources of the Society. Suggestions about the objects of the Society were made.

For a general Committee to set up a Constitution and to organize a programme, the following were elected;

Present:	Miss Barbara Dobson
Vice-President:	Mr, G. Rowell
Hon Secretary:	Mr. Niels L. Jensen
Hon. Treasurer:	Miss C. Purves
Committee:	Miss Ingeborg Sohlberg
	Mr. A. McK, Simpson
	Mr. John Egglshaw

The subscription was fixed at 2/6d. per annum,

The following are interesting 'Firsts':—

1.

The first Receipts and Membership Cards.

A Woolworth receipt for 2/6d. signed C. Purves and stamped with the Anglo-Scandinavian Society stamp was also the Membership Card.

In 1951 and 1952 there was a Membership Card which read:-

<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Anglo-Scandinavian Society</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Member's Card</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">.....</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>has paid the Subscription for the period 1/11/51 to 1/11/52</i></p>

From 1953 the first folded Membership Card with programme details in the inside was used. This type is still in use with perhaps more detailed information.

2.

The first Financial Statement.

Anglo-Scandinavian Society
Newcastle upon Tyne
Summary of Accounts - Year ending 31st October 1951

Membership Fees	£4.17. 6	Cash in hand	£ 17.4. ½
		Refreshments	
Refreshments	3. 5 7	(British Council)	3.12. 8
		Projectionist's	3. 1. 7
Christmas Party	3.10. 6	Christmas Party Expenses	1.17. 9
Subscriptions		Postages	1.14. 4 ½
		Stationery	9.10
Totals	£11.13. 7		£11.13. 7

*This information was compiled by Miss Muriel E. Short –
Taken from her booklet THE FIRST 25 YEARS*

*Copies of the booklet is available from the Treasurer –
Ingelise McNulty price £1.50 + £1.00 postage*