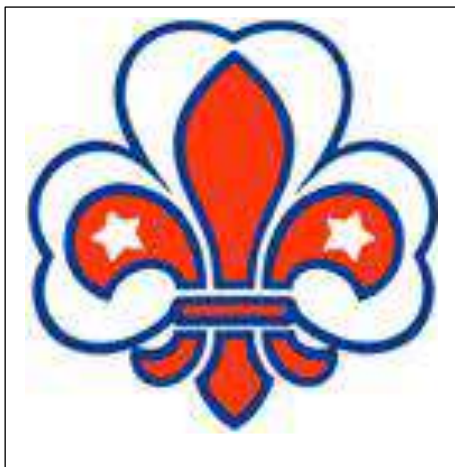




NBSR

NORDIC BALTIC SUB REGION

Newsletter 1 2026

Apologies from the editor

In last issue of the Nordic Baltic newsletter the unfortunate mistake was made that almost all the pictures attached to Sweden's coverage of their new guild was left out. Along with sincere apologies to our friends in Sweden here is the full coverage and all the pictures.

Agnes Thorvalds



Greetings from Sweden

In Sweden we just have one project going on.... but it's a huge and very important one, as we the last years have lost many members. It's named Gillescouting- scouting för vuxna (Gillescouting - scouting for grownups) and is a long-term project going on for five years - three years left this coming May. Hard work but meant to be support for recruitment work. The last two years we just lost 11 members. Up to last year our average age was around 80 years, but pleasingly enough we got a new Guild in the north of Sweden. The members are all young and most of them are scout leaders or somehow working in their local scout corp.



Most of the members from our new Guild, Evvika, from Hortlax in Norrbotten



Surströmming's party



10 of the 14 members in our newest guild Evvika, Norrbotten



Inaugurate ceremony



Cosy together at the campfire



The next day a little group barked in the Naturreservat just south of Piteå.



The European conference in March in Cyprus was postponed until November 2026 because an Iranian Shahed drone hit a runway at one of the island's two English military bases. It is believed that this was a warning from Iran to Great Britain not to interfere in the Middle East war from its military bases in Cyprus.

At the last NBC meeting we decided that this newsletter would be themed. Rolf and I had never been to Cyprus, so in connection with the conference we wanted to have a 12-day vacation. Unfortunately, the conference was canceled so late, so we would lose several 1000 SEK - after some hesitation we decided to travel anyway. That is why I have decided to write a little about Cyprus.



Cyprus is in the eastern Mediterranean, about 70 km south of Turkey and just over 100 km west of Syria. The island belongs to Asia, but for historical, political and cultural reasons the island is considered to belong to Europe. It is a small country with a long, varied, dramatic history and a very rich cultural heritage. The first signs of permanent settlement on Cyprus date from the Early Pre-Pottery Neolithic (11500 - 10500 BC). Findings from excavations in these early settlements show that they were hunters and farmers.



During the following period, the Chalcolithic (3900 - 2500 BC), copper was mined. The Cypriot copper was well known and probably gave the island its name - the ancient Greek word for copper was Kypros, and the Romans called copper as Cyprium, which meant ore from that island.

The geographical location between three continents Europe, Asia and Africa as well as the island's important ports have been important factors in the turbulent history of Cyprus, but to talk about it would take too long. I can only mention that Cyprus has belonged to or been possessed by: Mycenaean Greeks (laid the foundation for the island's Greek roots), Assyrians, Egyptian pharaohs, Persians, Greeks, Ptolemies, Romans, Arabs, the Byzantine Empire, Richard the Lionheart, who sold the island to the French nobleman Guy of Lusignan - then Cyprus became a kingdom in 1197. The end of the kingdom was in 1489, when the island was sold to Venice. After a long Venetian period, the Ottomans came - for the first time a Muslim community was established in Cyprus.

In 1878, Britain took control of the kingdom. The Cypriot freedom fighters, EOKA, fought for the country's liberation from 1955 to 1959, and Cyprus was proclaimed an independent state in 1960. The island became a member of the UN, the Council of Europe and the British Commonwealth. In 1974, Turkey invaded Cyprus and occupied 37% of the territory of the Republic of Cyprus - as a result, approximately 200,000 Greek Cypriots were expelled from the northern part of the island. The illegal occupation of the northern part of Cyprus by Turkish troops is still ongoing. In 2004, Cyprus became a full member of the European Union, although EU laws only apply to the southern part. The work and negotiations to achieve a just and workable solution to the Cyprus issue continue.



We spent the first two days of our holiday in Ayia Napa at the same hotel as the conference in November. It was pouring rain, the palm trees were horizontal, the wind was almost hurricane-force, there was lightning and thunder - we stayed in our room and read. The hotel itself was nice, but very deserted with only about twenty guests. The tourist season had not started yet; many shops and restaurants were closed. The staff at hotels/restaurants and out on the street were very friendly, interested and

informative. The war in the Middle East had its effect on the lack of tourists. We were told that many were either laid off, worked shorter hours or received less pay. The weather may also have played a small role; we were told that it was the coldest and wettest March in decades. One Sunday we visited the Scandinavian Seamen's Church in Ayia Napa, the priest was Norwegian and the deaconess Swedish. During the subsequent coffee break with delicious homemade bread, we talked to several Scandinavian families who lived in Cyprus. Everyone enjoyed it but mostly fled the island during a couple of hot summer months. One woman had her 6-year-old daughter with her. We were told that the girl went to the English school, studied Greek from the first day and the school day was from 7.40 to 15.00 every day except Sundays and holidays, in return she had three months of summer vacation.

We rented a car for a few days. We drove on many narrow, winding roads, saw picturesque villages, beautiful mosques with fantastic views. In the Troodos mountain range with peaks just under 2000m, the snow was still there, so we had a little snowball fight. It was incredibly fascinating to hear about the bedrock, which is geologically unique, as it forms part of the

former seabed, which was lifted above the sea surface, when the African and European continental plates collided. Marine fossils can be found in the limestone-rich areas.

Nicosia - or Lefko Sia, we learned, after looking in vain for road signs with Nicosia - is the world's only divided capital with a large, high, barbed wire-covered wall that runs through the northern part of the city. The city is located on the Pedigo's River. We asked many Greek Cypriots if they went to or vacationed in the Turkish part, but most said they never went there - they didn't want to show their passports in their own country. Most rental cars are not allowed to drive over to the Turkish part, but you can walk across the border if you have your passport with you. It felt strange when, shortly after we had passed passport control, our mobile rang with: "Welcome to Turkey". Suddenly everything was much cheaper, but also greyer and dirtier. It felt like we had come 60-70 years back in time - but we were never out in the countryside to compare.



Last week we stayed Airbnb with a wonderful family in Paphos. We had our own little, cute house with a big lemon tree in the yard and near the sea. We had access to bicycles - we cycled a bit along the sea and to many exciting archaeological excavations. I swam for several days, the water stayed at 17-18 degrees, even when it rained.

Pantelis Charalambous, the International Secretary for Cyprus and a member of the European Conference Committee, lived in Paphos. Pantelis was very pleasant and helpful. One day, he took us on an excursion to the Saint Neophytos Monastery, located just north of Paphos. The monastery is situated in the mountains within a

peaceful, relaxing setting amidst beautiful surroundings. It was built in 1170 to honor Saint Neophytos (1134–1214), a local Cypriot Orthodox monk and later a hermit. He discovered a small natural cave, which he excavated himself into a limestone cliff to create a space containing a cell, a small chapel, and a small hollow—little more than a meter in size—that served as his sleeping area. Known as the *Enkleistra*, these caves are decorated with significant 12th-century Byzantine frescoes; they are listed as a UNESCO World Heritage site and serve as an important pilgrimage destination. Afterward, we had coffee, enjoyed the atmosphere, and discussed topics such as the Guild Scouts.



There are 360 Guild Scouts in Cyprus, distributed across five guilds—one in each of the following cities: Nicosia, Larnaca, Paphos, Limassol, and Paralimni. Like us, they need to



rejuvenate their membership. Pantelis explained that while the guilds used to hold annual week-long tent camps, they now organize shorter joint gatherings in cabins or hotels. They undertake various initiatives to raise funds for the country's Scouts and Guides. Three years ago, all the Guild

Scouts collaborated on a major joint project following the 2021 wildfires, which had destroyed vast forest areas at the foot of the Troodos Mountains. They received seedlings from the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency—or the state—and were assigned a large area to plant.



A few days later Pantelis picked us up again to take us up to a lovely restaurant with a fantastic view over Paphos. We met Maria



Charalambidou, who was the District Commissioner for all the scouts in Paphos. She told us that there were between 5000 and 6000 scouts in Paphos and just over half as many guides. The scouts have a close collaboration with Greece - they have an annual camp together, so the slightly older scouts don't think it's that strange, they would rather be away for longer. They are of course the same age group as us, but the scouts over 18 are mostly leaders/assistant leaders.

The last day we were in Larnaca, where the Old Town, the beach and the city center were very close to each other. I liked the many exciting, large paintings on the walls of the houses.

It was an eventful holiday with many exciting meetings. Now we are looking forward to the Europe Conference and reunions with several wonderful people. The registration period for the conference has now been extended to September 2nd, 2026 - I hope many of you will be interested in attending. Cyprus awaits!

Regitze/ Gitte IS Sweden



Greetings from Norway

The Norwegian guilds are always quite busy before Christmas. Many guilds participate in spreading the message of peace, ceremonies are held in churches and together with scouts around the country. Some groups use the Peace light from Betlehem, some use candles with the peace light symbol as a sticker. Some on the last meeting before Christmas, and some have made new ceremonies for when they invest new scouts or start the new year. Now, more than ever, is the message of peace important and should be important to all scouts. Therefore, we continue to promote the peace-light as a symbol even though we do not manage to spread the "live flame" all over this long and weather-filled country.

The theme for 2026 in our long-term plan is "We support the scouts". This is in the plan for most guilds. Arrangements for scouts and leaders are traditions already in the calendar. In addition, many guild members will help in arranging meetings for leaders who prepare for the next World Jamboree.

The Norwegian government has named 2026 "The year of total defence". In their national plan all volunteer organisations are included in one way or other. We are all expected to **be prepared!** In March the national board had a meeting where we discussed how and in what way we can contribute, given the age of our members. We made a PowerPoint presentation that afterwards was sent all guilds to enable them to have the same discussion. Key words are to have enough supplies and to know who you can collaborate with to keep safe and warm. Also, it is important to keep track of each other to make sure all our members have someone to contact.

So far this winter our local guilds have held their general assemblies and reports of the activity in 2025 is sent to the national office. We see that many guilds have taken the theme of last year "Outdoor life" seriously. We believe that a lot of guilds have made new traditions with regular walks and more meetings around campfires.

In March the members of our active committees met to discuss strategies for next year and how to implement the long-term goals in their work. Members that were leaving their committee were thanked for great contribution and new members were welcomed.

The international committee thanked Knut Jorde for his many years of engagement and Gry Walderhaug Grimsrud was welcomed as a new member.

This fall and winter we have collected money to support Pigeon Park in Nyeri, Kenya. They want to build cabins to enable them to earn money so that they will be more self-sustained. That way they can support poor scouts better with more camps with free meals.



International committee 2026-2028 Lena Frantzen, Gry Walderhaug Grimsrud, Inger Merli (European committee) Kari Palm and Kristin Øilo (IS)

The committee that takes care of our campsite Kvernmoen, has already had their first “workday” (dugnad); lots of trees were taken down and made into firewood and sorted to dry for next winter. Working with chainsaws and making bonfires of the huge piles of branches is good work that many like to participate in.



Big trees became firewood at Kvernmoen.

In March more than 20 guild members from several guilds helped serving food and refreshments to the scouts that offered scout-activities at the Children’s “Camp wilderness”. The camp is a part of a big exhibition with stands that offer all kinds of equipment and expeditions for outdoor life. Scouting is heavily promoted on this camp and almost 2000 children tried the activities.



<https://www.facebook.com/search/top/?q=barnas%20camp%20villmark>

We wish you all a good spring and hope to see each other in November.

Britt Ørbech and Kristin Øilo

NP Norway IS Norway.



Greetings from Finland

In the beginning of 2026, we were 409 members aged from 40 years to 108 years. Ilmari Kopponen, earlier active member of Fransiscus Fellowship in Rauma, now the only in Salo Fellowship, associate professor, war veteran and veteran sportsman, 108 years in January 2026, is the oldest man in Finland. He is World Champion 2025 in discus throwing in 100year's league. We are honored to have him as a fellowship scout friend. He moved first last year to a service home, before that he lived alone 20 years after his wife's death.

Peace Light

The Peace light 2025/2026 was distributed to 255 of the 308 municipalities in Finland. It is always a task of honor to write the message; this year it was written by Counsellor of Education Rexi Takamaa. In 2024 the Peace Light reached 266 municipalities. The Peace light was even this year distributed in co-operation with the scouts and guides.



This year we received a badge which was meant to everyone who helped to carry the light to a neighbor. Until today over 800 badges have found their owners.

Picture 1: The new Peace Light Badge

The **Fellowship Day 2025** and the **autumn meeting** took place in Tampere in the Häme Scout district's office on November 22nd, 2025. About 20 members around Finland were gathered round the table. The theme of the day was "Social preparing" while the world situation is not easy, and every citizen should learn to be prepared for everyday life in crisis situations.

The stamp bank funds were discussed further, especially how we want the money to be used. While we had not heard from the world office since many years and after many times asking, we decided to give the stamp bank money of 5900 euros (from 2021-2025) to the Ukrainian Scouts via WOSM. The next years money will be donated half and half to WAGGGS for girls and via WOSM for Ukraine.



The money goes to the World Scout Foundation's (WSF) Camp Nadiia ("Hope" in Ukrainian) Project. The camp team writes: "We are a very small team of mostly older Scouters aligned with Scouting America and the Ukrainian Scouting Organization (NOSU), and we've been organizing summer Camps for Ukrainian Scouts since the outset of the war 4 years ago."

"We were all thrilled and amazed to see your group donation when it appeared on the WSF donation platform. Your generosity and support gave us all great hope and enthusiasm for this year's Camp Nadiia as the fundraising side of the Camp is usually very challenging. We learned from Mischa at WSF that you raised the funds through the sale of stamps and that really warmed our hearts – that must have been a lot of stamps that were sold to make such a generous donation!"

"Your enthusiasm about the project is very much appreciated and shared by us all."

During the summertime July – August seven of the 11 scout districts organize their large scout and guide camps (over 1000 delegates). Our aim is to participate for some days or even longer and bring our ideas of fellowship scouting and helping hands to those who are in need.

The Finnish National Fellowship celebrates its 75-year Anniversary during 2026

We are 19 eager Fellowship members who'll take part in our jubilee trip to London, Pax Lodge and Gilwell Park from 3rd to 7th September. It will be the time for the 100th Gilwell Reunion.

We'll have our birthday party "A Quarter to Hundred" in Seinäjoki. The local fellowship Kärppäkilta is helping in organizing and planning the program. Our National Fellowship committee had a meeting in Seinäjoki with representatives of Kärppäkilta to get familiar with the possibilities and places. There will be history, fun and good food. Everyone is invited.

Other festivities will take place, too. One of them will be the Fellowship Day organized this time by the Fellowship of Akaan partiokilta. They have promised in addition to lunch and coffee another interesting program, too. But it is secret.

Local guilds have their activities, for example one group takes their way to Kandersteg and Adelboden, Our Chalet. We hear about the adventures later in the magazine Pyhä Yrjänä / S:t Göran. The Ukrainian Scouts from Camp Nadiia have also promised to send us pictures.



Greetings from Denmark

The Hadsten Guild cracks the code: New group of young guild scouts

The local fellowship, the Hadsten Guild, has achieved what many guilds across the country dream of: they have recruited eight new – and significantly younger – members all at once. The group consists of former and current scout leaders aged 42–50 who wanted a community focused on adult scouting and outdoor life.



The initiative began with two local scout leaders, Mogens and Morten, who missed scouting activities for their own age group. Together with their spouses and other scout friends, they formed an independent “Youth Group” under the Hadsten Guild – with the full backing of Guild Master Kirsten Andersen. The group was admitted in November and has since carried out an ambitious programme ranging from kayaking trips to car orienteering races and a legendary shelter

trip in -13°C frost.

A key part of the success is that the new members joined as a group and were allowed to shape their own way of being guild scouts. The Hadsten Guild has also opened more informal settings, including a less formal guild hall in a circle.





Guild Master Kirsten hopes that, in the long term, the young people will become an even bigger part of the guild's future: "I dream that they will grow, whilst the rest of us naturally dwindle – so that eventually we are left with a strong, young guild and a small group of older members alongside them."

The young people share this vision and hope that Hadsten's model can inspire other guilds wishing to attract new generations of scouts.



Greetings from Iceland

Kópavogur

In Kópavogur, the Kópar Scout Group is the oldest active association in the town, founded in 1946, and it celebrated its 80th anniversary in grand style on February 22 this year.

The Kópavogur Scout Guild was later founded in 1997 and has consistently provided strong support to Kópar in their many activities and projects.

Once a year, the so-called Kópakviss (Kópar Quiz) is held. On that occasion, the group's leaders are invited to dinner, after which everyone is divided into teams and competes in answering a variety of questions, both scout-related and general knowledge.

Prizes are awarded to the teams that perform best. Around 40 scouts attended when the quiz was held this March.

On the First Day of Summer, the arrival of summer was celebrated in the Valley by the scout hall. The Kópar Scout Group and the Scout Guild organized entertainment and refreshments. Residents attended in large numbers, and the valley was filled with life and joy for both young and old alike.

Now the National Scout Jamboree, "Á Norðurslóð" ("In the North"), is coming up, to be held at Hamrar near Akureyri. Many members will attend and provide the scouts with various kinds of support. Although we are only just over 20 members in the Kópavogur Scout Guild, it is a close-knit and hardworking group.

Hafnarfjörður

Lively work at the St. George Guild in Hafnarfjörður

After a successful autumn trip and campfire song evening in August, work resumed its traditional course, continuing work in Skátalundur, as you can always find something to do there.

In November, a good group of guild members went to Borgarnes to go to a play at the Settlement Center.

There, the play "Sálmurinn um blómið" tells the story of the relationship between Þórbergur Þórðarson and little Hegga, and it was the actor Jón Hjartarson who played their roles and did it brilliantly on the air in the Settlement Center.

After the play, we sat down to eat and were offered meat soup or fish soup along with homemade bread. About thirty guild members took part in the trip.



Receiving the Peace Flame

A group of guild scouts gathered at the Carmelite Monastery in Hafnarfjörður on Thursday, November 27, with the purpose of receiving the Peace Flame, which the nuns in the monastery keep.

Those present sang together "Light a little scout light..." and then Guðni Gíslason, the national guild master, gave us the message of the Peace Flame in 2025.

In Guðni's address, it was stated, among other things, that we were meeting to receive the Peace Flame, which has a simple yet multifaceted message. It is, among other things, a light of peace and friendship and a light of tolerance.

At the ceremony, the Scouts in Iceland presented the sisters at the Carmelite Monastery with a grant in the amount of ISK 500,000

Guild members then presented the Peace Flame at masses in the churches in Hafnarfjörður.



A large Christmas gathering in Skátalund.

As usual, the guild's annual Christmas gathering was held in Skátalund on December 7th. It was pleasing to see how many people participated and the hall was packed, with all seats occupied, the children sitting on the floor and a few having to make do with standing.

It began with lighting the Peace Flame and Guðni, the guild master, gave us a message of peace on the occasion. A few songs were sung, a Christmas story was told, and the children took part in a small play about Sleeping Beauty. At the end, those present were able to hear the Christmas story.

After cocoa and good refreshments, everyone dressed nicely and walked down to the area below the hall with torches, where a campfire was lit and a procession was made around the fire. Soon two Santas came trotting around with a big bag of goodies for the children and they continued walking around the fire, the Santas played Christmas carols and at the end

gave the children goodies from their goody bags. After that, everyone finally went home happy.



New Guild Master

At the annual general meeting on March 10, Þórunn Reykdal took over as guild master.

A successful chop evening

The annual chop evening was held in restaurant Kænan on Saturday, March 21. As usual, there was a house full of guests,

Sturla Már Jónsson and Guðmundur Pálsson were there with their guitars and kept the fun going, there was entertainment, a quiz and more.



Akureyri

This year Kvistur celebrates its 30th anniversary and it will be the common thread in our work this year. Fall started with the friendship meeting that we oversaw. It was well attended by guild scouts who came from all over the country. The work is varied, monthly social meetings, document/data registration for Klakk, café meetings, sewing club and much more. In the spring and summer, we will work on preparations and work at the national scout conference at Hömrur in July.

Best regards from the north

Guðrún Ásta and Helga

Below is a selection of pictures from the birthday celebrations in Akureyri







Hamrar campsite



