

2008
March

News from the Embassy of Iceland in London

United Kingdom - Ireland - Lebanon - Netherlands - Malta - Macedonia - Jordan - Nigeria - Qatar

Presentation of Credentials in Jordan

Ambassador Gunnlaugsson has this month presented his credentials as the first Icelandic Ambassador to Jordan to His Majesty Abdullah II Ibn Al Hussein, King of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. During his stay in Amman, he made numerous visits to Government departments and institutions. The Ambassador was ably assisted by the Consul General of Iceland, Mrs Stefánía Reinhardsdóttir Khalifeh.

Celebration of Hallgrímur Petursson

The Annual General Meeting of the Anglican-Lutheran Society was held earlier this month in London at St. Matthew's Church Westminster. In connection with the meeting a conference was held to celebrate the Icelandic priest-poet, Hallgrímur Petursson. Ambassador Gunnlaugsson addressed the meeting and presentations were made by Dr. Einar Sigurbjörnsson of the University of Iceland, Dr. Margrét Eggertsdóttir of the Árni Magnússon Institute and Rev. Bernharður Guðmundsson, former Rector of Skálholt, the Church of Iceland Centre for Culture and Education. A Eucharist was led by The Rt. Rev. Dr. David Tustin, Rev. Dr. Roy Long and Rev. Sigurður Arnarson the Embassy Chaplain. Written in the 17th Century, Hallgrímur Petursson's most famous work *The Hymns of the Passion* is revered in Iceland, especially when Lent comes around, with a specific verse being read daily on Icelandic national radio. His work and life continues to be influential for generation after generation.

Iceland's Economic Status

The GDP growth for 2007 in Iceland was 3.8 % which is down from 4.4 % in 2006. Unemployment in January 2008 measured at 1.0%, rising from as low as 0.8% in December. The inflation rate has, however, jumped from 5.8% in January to 8.7% in March.

Viking Society for Northern Research

A General Meeting of the Society was recently held at Birkbeck, University of London, where Sian Grönlie spoke on "Saint's Life and Saga narrative."

Amsterdam Porrablót

The Icelandic Society in the Netherlands held its annual Porrablót (Icelandic midwinter feast) this month in Amsterdam. Information about the society can be found at www.verenigingijslandnederland.nl

ICEHORSES April 2008

Britain's first IceTölt competition, Icelandic Horses competing on ice, is to be held at Basingstoke's *Planet Ice* on Saturday 19th April 2008 at 6pm. These unique horses, with their special gaits and amazing temperament, will take part in Preliminary Rounds and Finals, plus displays of the best of Icelandic horse riding. Riders and horses will take part from across the UK, Iceland and Europe. Tickets for this exciting event are now on sale (Tel: 01256 355 266). www.icetolt.co.uk

Icelandic Travel - Trade Mission to Birmingham

The Trade Council of Iceland brought several Icelandic companies from the travel and tourism sector to Birmingham earlier this month for training and for meetings with local businesses. The group also visited the Outdoor Show 2008 at the NEC. The Honorary Consul of Iceland in Birmingham Mr Nigel Dace assisted greatly with the planning of the mission and a reception held for the Birmingham business community, where Sigrún Hlín Sigurðardóttir of the Icelandic Tourist Board gave a presentation.

Lecturer in Medieval History

Dr Haki Antonsson has recently been appointed lecturer in Medieval Norse History at University College London. Haki joins UCL from the Centre for Medieval Studies in Bergen and his research interests in medieval history are Christianisation and the cult of saints.

Sjón - Free the Word!

Icelandic author and poet Sjón will be speaking at the Royal Festival Hall in London's Southbank Centre on Saturday 12 April, as part of International PEN's celebration of world literature - *Free the Word!* www.internationalpen.org.uk

Björk UK Tour

Björk and her band are on tour around the UK in April and May 2008. She will perform in Manchester, London, Plymouth, Wolverhampton, Belfast, Blackpool and Sheffield. www.bjork.com

Eliza - New Single

Icelandic singer-songwriter Eliza's new single *Change my name / Return to me* is out now on digital download and is available to buy from all major download stores. www.myspace.com/elizanewman