

British Politics Society, Norway – the inaugural year in retrospect



The initial efforts to establish a forum for individuals and institutions interested in British politics were made during the early spring of 2006. Originator Øivind Bratberg wanted to establish a politically neutral society, with an academic basis but with contributions also from journalistic, political, and other relevant sources. Bratberg contacted various people whom he thought could be interested in taking part in one way or another. Over the summer, innumerable coffee-cups and ideas were shared, and the British Politics Society, Norway gradually began to take form.



Øivind Bratberg,
initiator of the
British Politics
Society, Norway

In the beginning of June, the quartet constituting the current board had their first joint meeting, following which the process picked up momentum. During the eventful weeks that followed, fundamental issues such as names, logos, and the format and content of the society's first newsletter fell into place, followed by official registration, preparation of regulations, and the establishment of the official website, www.britishpoliticssociety.no

In July, the first issue of the quarterly newsletter *British Politics Review* was sent out in print and by e-mail to a wide range of individuals and institutions known to take an interest in British politics, culture, and society. The topic of the first issue was New Labour's nine years in office, with articles ranging from devolution via Blair's foreign secretaries to his political contenders. In addition to contributions by the acting board members themselves, the British ambassador to Norway, David Powell, and journalist Annette Groth contributed with articles. Following this first edition, the launch of the society was welcomed by the British Embassy in Oslo, and made mention of in the periodicals *Lektorbladet* and *Språk og Språkundervisning*. The society also received pleasant feedback from a large number of readers.



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In August, the society's first Annual General Meeting was held at café Tekethopa in Oslo. In accordance with formal regulations, Øivind Bratberg was elected President for a period of two years, Kristin M. Haugevik Vice President for one year, Atle L. Wold scholarly responsible for one year, and John-Ivar S. Olsen secretary and accountant for two years.

In October, the autumn issue of *British Politics Review* was sent out. This time, British diplomacy and intervention was the topic of attention, containing articles on the Suez crisis, the Sierra Leone intervention, the ten year anniversary for Hong Kong's independence, and idealism and diplomacy in British foreign policy. Guest writers this time were the Norwegian ambassador to London, Bjarne Lindstrøm, and publishing director of Fagbokforlaget, Jan Erik Mustad.



The topic of the second issue of *British Politics Review* was *diplomacy and intervention*.

The British Politics Society received financial support in 2006 from the Department of Political Science and the Department

of Literature, Area Studies and European Languages at the University of Oslo. In addition, the society had income from paying members (22 as of December 2006). These available funds were, without exception, directed at covering the expenses for the society's everyday management, including the rental of a Post Office box, maintenance of www.britishpoliticsociety.no, and printing and distribution of *British Politics Review*.

Activities for British Politics Society, Norway in 2006 included four board meetings as well as the Annual General Meeting. The first two issues of *British Politics Review* had a total distribution of approximately 400 paper copies, in addition to electronic distribution.

The board presupposes that the level of activity, the distribution of *British Politics Review*, and the number of paying members will increase further in 2007.

On behalf of the British Politics Society, Norway

*Kristin M. Haugevik
Vice President*