



ART TITAN

FOLKE

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FOLKE HEYBROEK

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by Michael Heybrook

BERE FIELD PUBLISHING

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INTRODUCTION

There are not many people one meets in life about whom one can say that they are truly creative. Not only in their work, but even in their life, their very being. Each little thing had to receive some inventiveness, some fantasy, whether it was fan-tailed fish painted round the bathroom, a mural for the dining room or lampshades made of chicken wire and vellum. This went on throughout his life - making box beds, kitchen tables, fireplaces, window catches, wooden goldfinches or a hawfinch, acrobatic hoops, circles ascending the stairs, bird baths, installing old-fashioned stoves and finding old-fashioned proverbs, designing toys from chess pieces and chair legs, sheepskin seat covers, composing picture poems, wearing character hats, making wrapping paper, and having a special interest in particular garden plants. Out of love of life, awareness and imagination sprang. This warmth and enthusiasm was infectious and stimulated all around. It was a creativity that needn't be high art, but must be a person's concentrated and dedicated self-expression, not something second-hand. Homes and gardens magazines and mainstream conventional culture were simply boring, whereas the thrill derived from the hand

effecting some nebulous idea – that was exciting. Life all round was so rich and varied, so awesomely beautiful, to savour it fully required an appropriate response: concentrated absorption in expressing the plethora of sensations and that in a way that was communicable to fellow humans. The beauty of the seasons, nature's marvels and the infinite complexity of human relationships were all a passion. That is why I feel impelled to make the effort to convey the range, energy and variety of Folke Heybroek's art, quite apart from my being his close relative.

I have chosen to present the story of this man in a two-book format, because the story can be considered the equal of the art. This was a man of tremendous energy and vitality, who left 100's of letters and a good scrapbook archive for successors to tell his story. As a person everything was funny and amusing and joie-de-vivre was his main-spring, racing about like a lamb at play, whooping like cows turned out to grass, after his early morning dip in the lake. Rising at 6, there was work, usually until midnight, with plenty of hours for chat, friends, errands, even the newspaper. So it was an equality between social life and work.

As the story reads, the illustrations can be followed naturally and in sequence without diversions, and either part can be considered in itself.

Michael Heybrook

CHAPTER ONE

CHILDHOOD AND FAMILY HISTORY

To Juli Aurora Sofi

Folke Marius Heybroek was born on the 2nd. September 1913: “I was born on the same day and lived in the same city as Rembrandt, and that’s why I became a painter,” Folke liked to say in later life, half in jest and half in seriousness. When he was 63, he drew from memory an image of his first conscious impression, which was the illuminated ceiling lampshade hanging in the sitting room. His visual memory was remarkably accurate, as it matched exactly a watercolour by his aunt painted some sixty years earlier, but which he would never have seen. Soon he was a toddler known as “Okke” or “Tolde”, as he struggled with his first words. His mother doted on him and his father was filled with contentment.

Though born in Amsterdam, it was in a house in the country where he experienced his first conscious moments. Roomy, spacious, and light, there was an acre of garden leading to the heath behind, while the front of the house gave onto the main Utrecht-Hilversum road. Infancy and early childhood were uncluttered, in a harmonious domain, where the pressures of motherhood were relieved by a succession of nurses and governesses.

His father, Marius Johannes, now 31, was a kindly, likeable man with his feet on the ground, a love of culture and a taste for family expeditions. Being the youngest of four brothers he was unable to follow his father into the old established family business in Amsterdam of Meyer and van Essen, sugar brokers, so he decided on a career in banking. Frans, Marius’ older brother by five years, went into the timber trade. For this he had to travel and live in Sweden and so it happened that he met and fell in love with Salome, the daughter of the Rev. Svenoni, in the city of Linköping. They married in 1904, by which time the Rev. Carl Erik Svenoni had moved from a curacy

in Linköping to take up a lifelong appointment as vicar of Södra Vi, at which church he officiated in the marriage of his own daughter Salome. For this festive occasion Frans Hendrik, Marius' father, and his wife Maria made the long journey north by train and then by horse-drawn coach, with all their five children. Before that, there had already been several occasions when the Heybroeks had cemented relations with the Svenonis, because of young Frans' attraction to Salome, by making the arduous journey northwards to the Svenoni's idyllic vicarage. Perhaps a little impetus to all this was added because Frans' mother, Maria, was herself Danish. This vicarage stood in a natural paradise, positioned close to a lake with its rowing boat and jetty, its red stained farms and barns, and its fields unfolding amid the forests. The curious thing was that communication between the two families started in French, but then after a short while changed permanently to Swedish. By an unusual symmetry the vicar's four daughters and one son were just a year or so younger than Frans Hendrik's four sons and one daughter.

Carl Erik Svenoni was a stern upstanding vicar in the community, much revered for his faith and righteous judgment. His memory lasted well after his death and both he and his wife, Hilma Theodolina, lie in adjacent graves in Södra Vi churchyard. Hilma was a good foil to Carl Erik, being a home maker, much loved by her children and keeping a welcoming house open to anybody, entertaining freely and devoting a great deal of energy to ensuring that her daughters were first-class seamstresses, competent pianists and well versed in literature. Thanks to her inspiration her children all had "gold in their fingers" -- dress designing and weaving, painting and drawing, and indeed it was their daughter Rigmor, born in 1881, who most epitomised this. She never married, but devoted her life to painting, drawing and pottery, while earning her living as an art teacher. Years later, after she died in 1964 and her nephew Folke had the task of clearing her house, he was surprised to find so many vital and avant-garde art publications in her shelves like "die Sturm" from the Germany of the 1920s - a very exciting time - and the Yellow Book.

Frans Hendrik and Maria, Folke's other grandparents, on the other hand were most jolly and not a bit stuffy. They certainly travelled; wit, enjoyment and strong affection bound the whole family together. All the children attended drawing lessons and there are good drawings surviving by Frans, Marius, and Margarethe. It is an inescapable fact that the visual arts are part of the Dutch tradition. There have been and are so many competent Dutch artists, and even though Frans Hendrik worked as an agent in the sugar business, he is in fact one of three Heybroek artists who are listed in the Netherlands' Lexicon of Fine Artists 1750 - 1950. The entry states that he painted in his youth and was not unrewarded, especially in the field of landscapes, signed F. H. Heybroek and lists an exhibition in Amsterdam in 1865, when he was 18, of landscapes around Hilversum and Guelderland. There is one very fine pencil drawing, signed and dated 1891, of ships in a port, which also documents the transition of ships from wood and sails, to steel and funnels.

With all these natural affinities, it is not surprising that Marius, Frans Hendrik's youngest son, should fall in love with Martha, Carl Erik's youngest daughter. Apart from having left a drawer full of most engaging pencil drawings on a whole range of subjects, his other passion was sport, and unusually for a Dutchman there is a studio portrait of him aged seven, holding a cricket bat. In his teens he took up cycling, making excursions with the girls dressed in boaters and long dresses while the men wore bowlers, wing collars and tweed jackets. He also became an ardent hockey player for Amsterdam hockey club in its very early days, later being on its governing body for many years. So having lost his heart to Martha and gained her father's permission to marry, it was decided that she could follow Salome to Holland, when Marius was ready with his banking qualifications and earning enough to support her. The day of his marriage arrived, the 20th of August 1907, and the ceremony took place in the wonderful church of Djursdala, an off-lying church in the Rev. Svenoni's parish, which involved a four mile coaching procession through some breathtaking countryside. That little church is a rarity,

in being a surviving stave church, black with pitch on the outside as is its separate belfry, but inside a glowing canopy of medieval paintings of scenes from the Bible. Then, after the feasting and celebrations, an emptiness must have descended on vicar Carl Erik, with the third of his daughters departed to far off lands and his wife deceased just two years previously.

However son-in-law Marius was singularly adept at his chosen career. He served his apprenticeship with Mendes Gans, stockbrokers, until his marriage, when he was already doing very well, and when the Royal Approval was given for Mendes Gans to become a bank, he was appointed managing director at the age of 29 in 1911.

Mendes Gans operated mainly as stock traders, helped by the fact that provincial banks and the privately wealthy had to work through stock brokers registered in Amsterdam, as did the privately wealthy, and this was an area of service where Mendes Gans were highly competent. The Amsterdam stock market, which traded little in Dutch industrial shares, was known for its international character, and though Mendes Gans was one of many small banks, it had a good knowledge of the overseas sector.

In the days following the outbreak of the First World War, there was a wholesale collapse in confidence and stock values crashed despite the neutrality of the Netherlands. Everywhere stock exchanges closed because of the rush of panic share selling for cash, silver, coins and food, so dealers could not cover their position. The situation was only saved by government intervention, which in Holland took the form of guaranteeing margin trading to protect small investors and from then on the internal stock market was regulated by the government. However, trading foreign funds remained unregulated and here again Mendes Gans, though only small, had expertise, which probably saved them from closure.

The result was that the bank was able to move to the more prestigious location of Herengracht 619 immediately after the war, of which they bought the freehold. This was the 17th century home

of the Amsterdam mayor Jan Six, built by the well-known architect Adriaan Dortsman, who was Six's friend. Two smaller stockbrokers' offices were taken over and the Roaring Twenties had begun. Mendes Gans never overreached themselves, unlike two of the three big banks, but no one could have been fully prepared for the Great Crash of 1929. They still remained solvent, just, and picked up slowly in the Thirties by acting as trustees for the capital of German and Austrian Jews fleeing to America, and by their clever management of important private fortunes.

The greatest trial of all came with the Nazi occupation. All Jewish shareholders were in mortal danger. In the sad "May Days" of 1940 when Holland was forced to surrender, Isaak Mendes fled to the south of France where, childless, in his seventies and in abject poverty, he died in the course of the war. Other shareholders were Menko, who owned the Bijenkorf and who reached the United States in 1939 with his finances intact, Heymans, Edersheim and Landsberg, who all resigned from the board and K.Edersheim, who managed to save himself by going underground, unlike some of the other directors.

In 1941 an order was issued that all money, cheques, shares, goods and bank deposits of Jews were to be deposited in bank Lippman, Rosenthal & Company of Amsterdam, a recognised established Amsterdam bank, but under the control of a German "Attorney" called A.Flesche. Later it was ordered that the shares be sold on the Amsterdam exchange and they went for rock bottom prices, the money being appropriated.

However, Mendes Gans, being "Aryanised", thanks to the forestalling resignations of all its Jewish directors and the remaining presence of M.J.Heybroek and T.Holkema, joined by H. Mulder, managed to escape the forced sale by taking up the deposited shares at 80 percent of their value and by adopting the name "N.V.Banking House formerly Mendes Gans." After the war it was restored in honour to its former name. In the last year of the war business came to a complete standstill, as all men under 40 went underground to avoid forced labour, there was no food, fuel or public transport and

bicycles were scarce or confiscated by the Germans, so Heybroek and Holkema, who lived eighteen miles from the office, could rarely get there, and the staff living in Amsterdam could only attend a few hours a day as there was no gas or electricity during that last miserable winter. On the fifth of May freedom broke out all over Holland after this appalling attack on Dutch civilisation.

Although Folke's father was a central figure in that bank, it never appeared so in family life. Marius lived in Amsterdam at the start of his married life, when he and Martha immersed themselves in plays and concerts and took an interest in the arts.

Marius' sister, Greta, was an amateur painter of a good standard and the pupil of a well-known painter. She met Piet Mondriaan when his artistic ferment was bubbling and in April 1909 was engaged to him. Marius and Martha frequently met this rising star who was now engaged to his sister, Greta, and without much hesitation made the purchase of "Church at Westkapelle", a canvas of post Van Gogh style, with patches of bright colour building up the image by tonal contrast, which was always on display wherever they lived, as well as two small drawings of an "Apple Tree" both neatly done in a realistic way, and direct precursors for his journey towards abstraction and a reduction to primary colours.

Martha's sister Rigmor was a frequent guest, who also enjoyed the cultural life of Amsterdam and especially the world of painting. After the sadness of the birth of Erik John, Martha's first child, and his death within a year, in 1911, the two sisters started to have thoughts of a house in the countryside and drew up all kinds of designs, so that in 1912 a plot was found next to The Heath, a mile out of Hilversum and here, amidst birches, the triple-mansard family house, two stories with an attic and a cellar, was built in the Swedish style. At that time it stood alone on a large heath.

The stories and little drawings now following are derived from "Memoirs of Morfar", recollections of his own childhood, that Folke wrote in 1973 for his grand-daughter, Juli, on the occasion of her fifth birthday.

" - Darling Juli, sometimes my spelling is rather odd, but I have a Dutch father tongue and a Swedish mother tongue, which creates confusion in the grammar of my mind...but there are surely nice people near you who can explain.

" - At first my mother had several sons, who unfortunately died soon after birth. You can understand my parent's JOY when they received, on the 2nd. Sept 1913, a sturdy, lively son, baptised Folke Marius, who with time became your Morfar (=grandfather). While I was still in my mother's tummy, she went every day to the great galleries and delighted in those old master painters and from this I received a gift for painting, although in the meantime it took many years before I became a painter by profession.

" - Perhaps you imagine I was born in my parent's house in Hilversum, but then you would be wrong. As occasionally, particularly in the winter season, my parents would rent a house in Amsterdam. In that way they had greater opportunities to attend concerts and exhibitions. For that reason I was born in Amsterdam, in Johannes Verhulst Straat 172. Naturally Dr. Petter attended and so that I too would not be equally lifeless, Dr. Petter called out "Goddamn!" and lifted me by the feet and gave me a good smack on my bottom. Then I screamed and all were happy. "A boy," called out Dr. Petter.

" - Your Morfar was like a small, very fat rabbit baby and was fed on a strained purée of brown beans. But then one day I screamed without cease as loudly as possible. At first Morfar's mother thought perhaps he is hungry and made still more bean purée, but I just kept screaming. She became very anxious and found, a little later, that it wasn't a safety pin sticking in my bottom and that rattling my pretty silver rattle didn't help. So Dr. Petter arrived with his bag.

" - He said, "What a fat, podgy baby, he has tummy ache. Make a purée of green salads to settle his tummy." At last I stopped crying and everyone was happy.

" - Behind our house was a wide empty heath with only heather. As a toddler, I could meet a shepherd there with his many, many

sheep and his small, snappy dog. The shepherd spent all his time knitting black stockings while watching his flock. There were also many warm fleecy lambs, which were nice to hug. Over the wide, empty heath little blue butterflies fluttered and here and there you happened on small hollows of pale yellow sand. On the heath was a spring with clear water the sheep drank out of. There could also be found a rarity among the country's birds. The cock has decorated eye markings, large double crest and a great ruff of endlessly varied colours. Courting in the spring, they were far less shy and they seemed to fight fearsome battles with beating wings, boxing, kicking, pecking and pushing and it looked as if it was a fight to the finish, until one noticed no injuries and not a feather out of place. I forgot to tell you they're called black grouse.

" - In the middle of August, as the heather came into flower, the bee man came on his waggon, moving his waggon-load of hives from the buckwheat fields to a warm sheltered spot on the heath, where the air was soon filled with the drone of the workers, who gathered great quantities of honey from the tiny, tiny exquisite flowers.



" - We had an enormous dog called Mirambo, who later became a mat under my father's writing table. And we had a little dog called Tosse Maffe, who was allowed to ride in the car, while Mirambo ran along behind.

" - In 1915 there was a major strike and the "Reds" wanted to sabotage the railways. My father and our gardener went out to keep watch on the line. Every day my mother took me by the hand for a long walk over the wide empty heath to go and see them there, walking up and down the track. We had a basket with lunch bags in it they were glad of. My father came back in the evening and first removed his long puttees.

" - There was rationing, due to the fact that the whole world was fighting and killing each other then, for I know not what reason, in millions. Many, many fine lives were wasted and many were saddened for the rest of their lives. My father knew a farmer who could happily provide a pig for a hefty payment. They carried it via isolated footpaths through the woods and over the heath to our house, in the pitch black.

" - First of my early memories: Two wet men smelling of autumn rain in the warmth of our hall below; one had a bloody nose from walking into a tree in the dark. Loud voices.

" - Second memory: Fine autumn morning, my father cycled to his office, a pleasant little trip, unless you are moustachioed in a dark suit. A fire is lit in a large drum at the back of the house. The pig is hung in it for smoking. Of a sudden the drum collapsed and the pig lay in the ashes, now what? Little mother started to get worried and missed her husband. But those friendly, burly fellows weren't lost for an answer; being well-rewarded Dutchmen, they soon found a green cart and finished the smoking in there.

" - I ask myself why that image was so powerfully imprinted?

" - Apart from my parents, there were three more people in the house. A cook called "Thousand Feet" by my Mummy, as she was so quick. Later she married a policeman in the village, when her sister came and replaced her and she too married a policeman, after which her sister replaced her only again to marry a policeman &c. Then there was Sister Helga, who was with us for six years, after which she emigrated to Canada.

“ – And then there was the gardener, van der Meulen. He wore grey or brown corduroy and, when he walked, the parallel lines scuffed between his knees. I couldn't keep up with his big strides. My mother was from Småland and there they had rocks, huge rocks. So now chance had it that the extensive sandy heath behind our house had been formed in the ice age, when the ice had also carried with it amongst the sand many stones from Småland. If you dug down sometimes you would find a fair sized stone, and in this way she tried to replicate her childhood terrain in our garden.

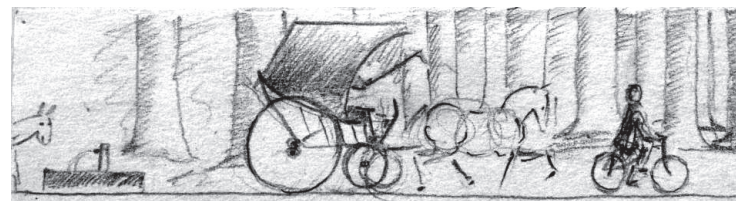
“ – All our neighbours knew she liked these stones and she even had a fixed reward for anyone who found some. One fine day, when van der Meulen was off to fetch gravel for our paths, he happened on a massive boulder – it was 1m. high and 1.2m. across. No one had found such a huge rock, so it was quite an event. Such a boulder could only be destined for placing in the middle of the central square of the town. At first they brought the heaviest waggon of the town with six horses, but that broke down. So they built a special waggon with twelve horses and then they succeeded. Take note, our gardener was suddenly famous and he was photographed next to his stone. But then he wanted the burgomaster to have his name engraved on it, for posterity to note, but the burgomaster didn't want to, so it became an issue. After that he never was any good as a gardener again, he spent all his time dreaming and even sleeping in the loft of the toolshed. But the stone still lies on the central square of Hilversum and is called “ De Hilversumse Kei.” (author's note – still true in 2006, kei=boulder)

“ – It wasn't only stones we had from Småland, we even had junipers, bilberries, whortleberries, Linneaus flowers, blue anemones, aconites and violets. We also had many birches : but a birch in Småland is silvery or virginally white, whereas Dutch ones are green or mossy. To try and make our birches like the ones in Småland, van der Meulen had to scrub the trunks every winter with scrubbing brushes.

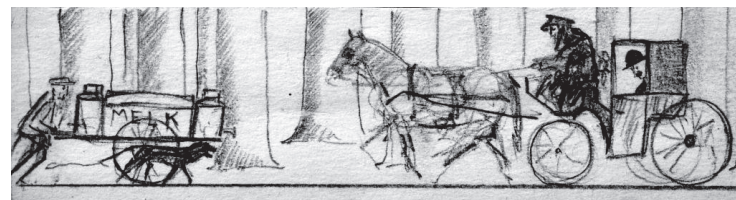
“ – I have so far only mentioned the heath and everything else behind our house, but in front of our house lay the main road to

Utrecht. Across it were tall beech woods with trunks of great girth, the ground covered in coppery leaves, where I used to collect beech mast in the autumn , which we fried in butter and then munched.

“ – Our house was on a rise, in Holland that's only a few feet, but in any case that was enough to develop a tiny stream, which filled a watering place directly opposite our gate. Horses and dogs on the lead availed themselves of it. The heavily laden and clinking milk cart, with its par of black cobs was first to use it in the morning.



Then came Mr. Saltsil in a loden coat, with red nose and hands, on his bicycle. Even if it was bitterly cold, blowing icicles, he always said “ fine day!” Farmers with business in town on their handsome carts with gleaming tack, all passed by the drinker. Our milkman's little trolley was drawn by a huge black dog with a red tongue and his farm was a long way off, so he must have covered 25 miles a day and yet he still had the energy to hug the scullerymaid behind the door. Now I think all that walking and flirting gave him the energy to seek out new opportunities in life.



“ – Dr. Petter’s black carriage also passed by. If we were ill, he left the carriage outside and the horse fell asleep at once, while Dr. Petter hurried in with his doctor’s bag, and the coachman also fell asleep at once, no matter how cold it was. When the horse and coachman died, Dr. Petter bought a Ford and became a fast driver, with lots of accidents, running into horses, trees, steam engines and even a stationary train.

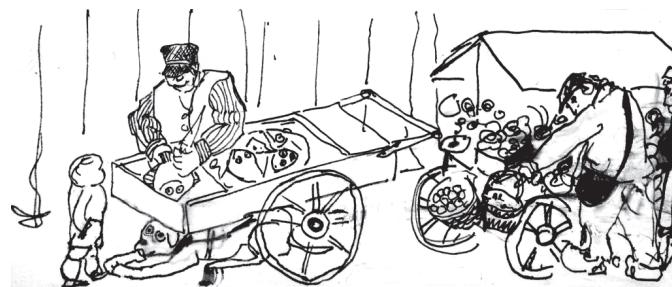


“ –Once a week the rag and bone man came by, heavily laden with stinking bones and his horse always especially drank his fill and sometimes he looked up anxiously as the water dribbled out of the corner of his mouth back into the drinker. And I imagined I could smell rotten bones in that water for a long time afterwards. His driver never moved, never said hello, was expressionless, glassy eyed and as if intoxicated. For me he represented the only real funeral undertaker, even though very occasionally a proper hearse with black clad men, black horses with many silver buckles came by, seeming actually quite festive by contrast. Their horses were never allowed to stop and drink.



“ – We also had calls from the friendly fishmonger in his blue-striped apron. He had a sizeable pale yellow dog with moist brown nose and black fisheyes, trotting underneath his cart. It was interesting to see how he could strip out all the fishbones and guts, and he too

covered great distances as he drove all the way from Spakenburg, which then lay next to the sea.



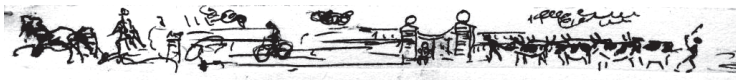
“ - Numerous errand boys also came to us on their delivery cycles, bringing groceries and meat. For instance, one would bring 100gms. of thinly sliced meat costing 35 cents from a distance of 3kms. And then, once a month, he came just to settle the bill, waiting endlessly as Mummy and Annie Nimblefoot checked and re-checked it. It could even take an hour or two. On a stone in the garden, I once found a little rhyme :

“ Wie het wachten nog moet leren,
Moet het hier maar ens probeeren ”

(If still your patience isn’t learned, you’d better wait here till it’s earned)

“ – And then came this cheerful baker, who pushed his handcart along all by himself and without even a dog. He had great bristling eyebrows and a blue-grey moustache that shone like bright wires. He was always cheerful and on Saturdays he gave me a delicious currant bun, the taste of which I shall never forget.

“ – Wednesdays were market days in Hilversum and from crack of dawn onwards farmers and their heavily laden carts passed by. Cartloads of hens, ladies with baskets of eggs, trailed by mares with foals, all to be sold. Also loads of pigs and small bunches of cows, with their coats on, they moomed past. You can understand how fascinating it all was just for me to stand by our gate and watch.



And now I'm forgetting all those cartloads of vegetables, not to mention mountainous loads of hay or wheatsheaves for the baker, who fired their ovens with the straw, as they still do in France, and made delicious bread, believe it or not.

" – One fine autumn night twins arrived from my mother's tummy. A girl and a boy, called Karin Rigmor and Carl Erik. That was October 1915 and made a huge change, as you can imagine. Neither Mammie nor Sister Helga had time for me any more. They just were continuously occupied feeding Karin and Erik. To draw attention to myself I began to poo in my pants and wet my bed again, and to babble like a baby. For that reason it took me far longer to grow up than normal children. It became an issue whether I would ever grow up. My parents even became a bit concerned about this.

" – Sometimes I accompanied my mother to Amsterdam. Firstly we went by horse-drawn carriage, but then it became by train. We sat in a cosy compartment with red plush. While the train powered ahead with its long plume of smoke, which hid the peacefully grazing cows in the meadows, our outer door suddenly swung open allowing our compartment to fill with smoke and racket as the conductor stepped in, like a supernatural apparition.



After clipping our tickets, he disappeared by the same route into empty space. The door was slammed shut and one only heard the usual do-do-da-dak over the points once again. Outside the window, the telegraph wires rose and fell. And so we arrived at the great station of Amsterdam. I just walked amidst an endless flow of long legs to the outside, where an electric taxi was waiting for us. By this means we at last reached aunt Salome and uncle Frans's house.

" – At first you had to climb an endless staircase, which ascended steeply straight to the fourth floor. On arriving at the top, there stood their kindly cook who was called Christina Apple-eyes. And could she make pancakes! And then aunt Salome appeared with my two double cousins, Hilma and Maja. Whilst my mummy chatted with her sister Salome, Maja and I played mummies and daddies and babies under the dining room table. It was a funny game and Maja had lots of dolls.



Morfar's old granny also lived in Amsterdam in a large house on the Herengracht, which had dark panes which reflected in the canal or rather the opposite, the canal was mirrored in them, so that this way the canal looked even wider than it was. This granny was really Danish, with the maiden name of Björn. Her father lived in a castle in southern Jutland as a young man. One night he was tipping and playing cards with friends. The stakes kept mounting and before he could call a halt, he had gambled away all his money, property, almost his shirt. That was 1828. The same night he saddled his trusty horse and rode off to Holland. There he enlisted in the army where, due to his daring and charm, he rapidly became a general and chief of Breda staff college.

" – Granny lived in a high-ceilinged room with red velvet armchairs with fringes, dark red velvet curtains with fringes, and on the black table a dark red velvet cloth with fringes. My granny was a dignified, solid lady with beautiful silver-white hair always neatly arranged, without a hair out of place. She wore a black or violet dress with lace, somewhere a tortoiseshell comb and a brooch of diamonds in a half-moon to gather her collar. She played patience or made puzzles (memory of 1000's of pieces on the red velvet tablecloth, subject:- a half- finished picture of a battlefield – with a wounded soldier raising his standard over a pile of fallen soldiers). She rang the bell and her amiable servant, Willem, brought tea. Later she would wash up those fine Indonesian teacups, as she trusted no one else with them. If you imagine that she then went to the kitchen you would be wrong, Willem came in with a Chinese lacquered wooden basin decorated with birds, a kettle with hot water, a plate with soap, a soft brush and a chequered tea-towel. Granny just did the washing-up whilst chatting to the guests.

" – On the next floor was a large drawing room with gilded chairs and a ceiling painting of clouds, horses and soaring nudes in drapes. One only saw the thin gilt legs of the chairs as everything was under dust covers. These were only removed on New Year's Eve and then the chandeliers were also lit, though I never witnessed that.

" – The dining room was dark and large, heavy dark oak, plenty of wide lion's feet, swirling patterned carpets and black velvet curtains with frills. On one wall a cupboard door behind which a W.C. I never dared visit it as I knew grandfather, after a good dinner, had taken a seat there for the rest of his life. And he was only 54, when it happened. That one needed a W.C. in the vicinity in those times comes from the fact that, as my father told me, at those dinners it wasn't only the plates that were changed, but one also occasionally had to change to cold chairs.

" – It was a huge house, with several floors. The two top floors functioned as warehouses once. Ships came from the East Indies and moored outside the house and all the cane sugar was refined there, which is why we are counted as sugar Heybroeks. The others are coffee Heybroeks and are completely different, even if I am extremely fond of coffee. Sugar suffered its first setback when some Frenchman under Napoleon hit on sugar from beet. The country was at war then and sugar was extremely short. And that sugar was just as good, so no one craves cane sugar any longer, and Napoleon too is long forgotten. But try cane sugar anyway and you will taste the difference, especially when you make jam. Whatever your verdict now it was the end of the Heybroek sugar business, but not in granny's time, as it was her eldest son John who had to pull the chestnuts out of the fire, and in the end he shot himself.

" – For company, granny had her daughter Greta. She looked very handsome, roughly like a Greek statue and many young men cast a roving eye over her, it's held. She also had lessons in painting and there she met the young painter, Piet Mondriaan, who fell madly in love with her, partly due to her classical posture. He painted a picture of her called " Passion Flower ", of which you can find an excellent reproduction in Seuphor's book on Mondriaan. Piet was as in love with her as a tomcat and constantly wanted to kiss her. But Greta didn't like being kissed, she thought artists should talk of art and aesthetic matters. Piet was very hard up and therefore, like many artists, thought a great deal about food, especially brussels sprouts.

Aunt Greta, who had never been hungry, thought it unfitting for an artist to discuss food, and especially not brussels sprouts. Thanks to that the engagement ended after eight enjoyable months. Aunt Greta never married and remained granny's companion till she died. Then she moved to a house outside Arnhem, where she lived with a very old spinster and an irascible dog.

“ – Her life became very narrow, from when her post arrived in the morning until Miss Smit tucked her up at night. But then one day in 1944 her house suddenly became part of the front line. They hid in the cellar. The Germans installed artillery in her garden amongst the lilacs. Wounded English paratroopers were carried down into the cellar with them. Her lovely house became a pile of rubble and they sat in the dark in the cellar without food and much water for a whole week. Above a thunderous hell, until suddenly once again quiet, when they could creep out, only to find a grim, destroyed world. Greta was in her sixties and Miss Smit in her seventies. The house was rebuilt, and aunt Greta was collecting her morning post and being tucked up in the evening by Miss Smit once again, just as formerly.”

As time went on, the Heybroek's family life assumed certain characteristics. For afternoon tea the children had to be immaculately dressed, white linen collars, polished shoes and little suits, and in summer this became sailor suits and white frocks (which they hated). Soon they were all going to a school established by a well-known writer of children's books, walking in all the way with their beloved terrier, Rex, who was also allowed in the classroom. The curriculum was very unstructured and free, with plenty of time for woodwork, pottery, art, gardening-- all pupils had their own plot - - and dramatics and this same ethos has lasted to the present day. Languages were never a problem and learned instinctively from the succession of governesses employed -- French, German and English. In Folke's case this resulted in a rich, expressive vein of personal words often onomatopoeic like “spout” for crop-spraying or “poopkaka” for ginger cake, but also gaining awareness of each country's spiritual base with knowledge of untranslatable terms like

“Själl” or “Götterdämmerung”. In 1921 the last sibling arrived, in Marius Johannes, actually known as Hans. Folke felt an increasing distance from his mother and growing attachment to his easygoing father. School caused huge problems, dry learning was an absolute impossibility, just as in later life accountancy, bank balances and tax returns. He failed the first class in the national school and saw his friends go up. His one comfort in this, strangely enough, was his mother, who rounded on the school authorities unfailingly, rather than on her son, declaring him perfectly intelligent and accusing the teachers of failing in their task. His mother's attitude did wonders for his self-confidence if not for his exam results. At any rate school remained an absolute hell relieved only by holidays, and especially the long summer holidays. Marius, Folke's father, was one of the first owners of a car in Hilversum; a large Studebaker convertible arrived in 1920, the first in a succession of long bonneted motorised coaches; later there was a model called Cord which was capable of reaching 100 miles an hour, but mostly they were Studebakers. The lack of concentration of the driver and the many horse carts were the chief perils of the road. It was a journey of several days to reach Södra Vi or later Storebro or Sommenäs, all in the province of Småland, in southern Sweden. There were numerous gates on the one main road to Stockholm. All that travelling and sleeping in the back of the open car gave a kaleidoscopic impression, unfolding finally into another world that remained for ever paradise for Folke: the natural beauty of Sweden.

The vicarage and Martha's sisters Rigmor and Anna were ports of call, as was her brother Erik, who became a major in the Army and was a confirmed bachelor, and for the summer they rented a house by a lake with flat rocks and canoes, surrounded by meadows and forests. Once they stayed as house guests of Count von Essen of Sjövik who had a fine estate and a house by the crystal clear waters of lake Sommen. Everyone went into the woods and spent the whole day picking wild strawberries for a banquet in the evening. At last a great mountain of the little red jewels appeared on a large silver salver covered with a generous sprinkling of white sugar. Then Martha took a spoonful and put her spoon down as if nothing had happened.

The count took a liberal mouthful and threw his spoon down.... "Bah! It's salt" he exploded, and proceeded to berate his wife in the most insulting terms -- "You bloody, stupid simpering idiot, how could you have done such a thing?" He roared with anger, whereupon Marius slammed the table with his fist,

"Don't you dare talk to your wife in such terms, we're all leaving this minute unless you make a full apology." While the count was still fuming, his pride allowing no climb-down, the party broke up and they left never to return.

Holidays were also spent motoring to Switzerland and Bavaria by which time the older children were now teenagers. During the 1920s they lived a life of great affluence. Marius and Martha used to take a suite in the Amstel hotel, in the heart of Amsterdam, to attend concerts and when at home they liked to entertain. Jan Sluyters was commissioned to paint Karin and Hans in a romantic setting. Music and the piano were part of life.

1928 however, brought a change. The parents decided that after a good primary school in Hilversum it would be wise to move to Amsterdam so that the children could attend a broader-based, more cultural school in the capital and so they found No 54 Vossius straat, a spacious house on three floors with an attic and a cellar. This was ideally placed close to the Concertgebouw for mother, the tennis club for all the children except Folke, who was not interested in sport, and backing onto the Vondel Park. These plans worked well for everybody except Folke, who became a hopeless case altogether at the new school, in consequence of which he found himself moved to another school for children with learning difficulties - when it was merely rebelliousness - rousing an even greater hatred for schools and institutions in general. Still Amsterdam itself was great fun with all sorts of friends, games and parties. The professor's daughter from next door in Hilversum, Liselotte, came to stay as a friend of Karin, and was especially welcome to Martha because of her excellent piano playing. An only girl from a very strict family, she was constantly amazed by the naughtiness of the Heybroek boys, playing football

in the hall, lowering coins with holes in them threaded to a fishing line to tinkle on the pavement behind dignified gentleman in topers -- and then for Liselotte there was the terror of going to the loo as those bad boys had made sure the lock wouldn't work. Folke and his brother Erik were often doing things together, having canoed across the Swedish lakes and picked up an interest in motorbikes, tinkering and trading up to bigger things, until they achieved the dizzy height of owning a Lancia -- a very elegant saloon. How this arrival at considerable prestige came about is a mystery, except that Erik had a nose for business and Folke was a great talker. Perhaps this was a pointer to the different directions the siblings were to take, one into business, the other into art.

Folke's own words from a video, made in 1980, sum up this time of his youth:

" - After the twins I was never close to my mother. She was a woman who had plenty of children, but somehow she remained a virgin. It was that epoch, father loved her and he was the provider. For that reason, which was great for us, she protected us from everything; I could make as much mess as I liked at home with potato cuts and she would just sigh. If I spilt an ink pot over the Persian carpet, she would shrug and say: " dear children". If I got bad marks at school, her reaction was that it was the teachers who were useless"

" - As a P.S. I want to remember 3 famous people who came to our house:

" - Firstly Julius Röntgen, who gave my mother piano lessons. Because of the poor connections, he often stopped over for the night, and I only have a single memory of him, how with springy musician's hair he danced down the stairs for breakfast, struggling with some composition he carried in his head.

" - And then I have a thunderously loud memory of Björnstierna, the Norwegian skald, who held forth the whole night long, while my father was drying his eyes from laughter. Mummy didn't laugh, just sat there with innocent eyes, through an old fashioned Viking evening with punch and brandies.

“ – One afternoon Piet Mondriaan came to visit, newly back from Paris. He gave me a French soldier, a ragdoll of a poilu, but without any weapons or guns as I remember. Handsome and soft with long moustaches, red felt breeches and a blue jacket. At the start of the war the Germans said, “The French wear red trousers,” but they rapidly all changed to khaki. The evening sun sent light shafts into the dark room, haloing their faces as Piet and father chatted, making as if a painting by Rembrandt.

“ - My parents had many friends who were painters and when they called by in the evening to show their work, all the family gathered round. All my family enjoyed painting. My mother made tea and she was a bit snobbish, but nonetheless my parents preferred the company of poets, writers and painters to bankers and business people. I made all sorts of pictures at home on pieces of wood or on an item of furniture or on the wall. So I told father when I finished school that I had decided I would like to be a painter. That was 1929. Father said, well perhaps, but first you must come and work in the bank. So it chanced that I witnessed the Crash –it was an amazing sight to see all that happening on the Stock Exchange -- brokers tearing their clothes, a terrific noise, the smell of sweat, the men in the pit and above bank directors some of whom leapt from the balcony in horror – it was in this atmosphere that I completed a year in the bank”

Between these events, he made a long cycling tour on his own, which took him over the Great St. Bernard Pass. Having crossed it, he was struck by a vicious thunderstorm. Soaked to the skin, he found shelter in a cave, where he stripped off his wet clothing to dry out, and found a branch covered in larvae and cocoons. Continuing down the beautiful alpine scenery, he happened on a farm, where the farmer’s wife gave him food and accommodation. Over four decades later, these happy memories resurfaced in a painting.

According to his sister he spent all his time drawing other people. The little insight he gained into banking left him with the lifelong attitude that banks were enormously rich institutions

preying on ordinary people and fatally attracted to big business. In a wry postscript to his memoirs, there is a letter from his bank in Sweden from the 1970s pasted in, itemising a large sum of money - all whittled away - by debts / interest / loans / exchange rate fees / commissions / charges / amortisations and anticipated fees - with a vague promise that one day the balance would be credited, followed by his written comment, “- thus an artist is taken to the cleaners “

It must have been a disappointment to his father not to have had his oldest son in his hitherto thriving business, but, though there is no record of this anywhere and it was never mentioned in Folke’s lifetime, Marius early on decided his son had great talent and that he would help him as far as possible in his chosen way of life, precarious as it might be. And by now Folke’s own mind was made up, “ - I was born in September like Rembrandt and in Amsterdam, which is why I’m a painter, my mother said.”

These reveries were interrupted by military service. In Holland conscription was confined to the oldest male (or any other male sibling who volunteered), so Folke accepted it as his duty to enlist. As a banker’s son and member of the bourgeoisie he was expected to be officer material, but nothing could have been wider of the mark, as he was rapidly reduced to the ranks for total indifference to discipline. Due to his skill with horses he was charged with exercising all the numerous horses still employed, but he threw the sentries into confusion by often galloping up to the barrier yelling “Postillion, Postillion”, whereupon the gates had to be opened instantly. Of course there wasn’t a message. Then he was put in the cooler: One day he was posted on sentry duty by the barrack gates, the fort was surrounded by a canal, and he was housed in the neat portable sentry box: he took it into his head to launch the sentry box and canoe himself round the fort until he was spotted by an irate officer. He did finally complete his military service, but ingloriously, and as luck would have it, when, years later, Holland was attacked by the brutal Nazi whirlwind, he escaped conscription and the occupation as he was absent in the remote island of Sicily.

CHAPTER 2

THE RIJNSAKADEMIE VAN BEELDENDE KUNST

Throughout those years, after leaving those hated schools, Folke held firm to his aim to become a painter. There are a few works surviving from his youth and they show a raw unformed talent. His father accepted that it was a serious ambition and arranged for him to take tuition as a private pupil with Gustaf Röhling. Gustaf Röhling was an established painter, who had previously been commissioned by Marius to paint Folke's youngest brother, Hans: a sunny shoulder length portrait of the boy in a sailor suit. Folke joined two other pupils, Johanna, "Jo", de Jong and Matilda, "Tilly", Krone for a foundation year in 1933.

On the 31st of May 1934 Folke applied in writing for entry to the Rijnsakademie, there were 95 applicants and 45 were allowed to take the exam which comprised the following tasks:

- Draw a life-size head from a living model
- An anatomical interpretation
- An exercise in perspective.

Firstly the examiners marked each item separately, then, with a general overview, they exchanged opinions on each candidate's work in its entirety. As a result 17 were admitted to the full-time day course in drawing and nine to the sculpture class. Professor Roland Holst, the Director, notified the Secretary of State for Education as to these results. Folke, Tilly and Jo all won admission to the day course by competitive exam.

The Rijnsakademie, founded in the 19th century, was Holland's most prestigious art institution, with all the lecturers accorded the title of full Professor. Among the 1934 entrants were well-known painting names like Fernhout, van Everdingen and A.A.Tadema.

At the end of each year, an exam had to be passed which comprised history of art, anatomy and the main practical section of Modelling, Drawing, Lithography and Composition. Folke passed comfortably, though with the derogatory criticism that he could have exerted himself far harder. In his fourth and final year, after two years work on monumental and decorative art, he was awarded a "satisfactory" for effort and a "very good" for progress.

These are the bare facts behind a personal story. After his military service he formed a lifelong attachment to horses as animals and Roland Holst, when he heard about this, told him about Delacroix' painting and asked Folke if he would bring his horse to the academy so that the pupils might draw it. Folke arrived proudly on a fine horse and, dismounting with a flourish of his cloak, in his boots and jodhpurs, tied it up and strode into the academy building. This caused a few sniggers and sarcastic comments among his fellow pupils - who was this fine gentleman arriving on horseback? Rich clearly, privileged, big-headed probably, anyway very different to most of the others who came from less affluent backgrounds.

Also entering the Akademie that year was Hans van Norden who became a lifelong friend. Hans was the son of a painter who was more in the school of Breitner and a member of the "Independents" in 1900. Then he started work at a ceramic factory called "De Distle" (the Thistle), which was very modern, until 1920, when he moved on as head painter in a ceramic works in Gouda, which was where Hans grew up. Hans showed a natural aptitude for drawing at school: his father knew he had talent, so he rang up Jan Bronner at the Rijnsakademie and Hans was allowed to sit the entrance exam with no preparation. Now in 1934 Hans wondered who this ridiculous figure was, arriving on horseback with boots and a cloak for lessons, but Folke was not a whit abashed, and the whole class had to make serious equine studies on the Director's instructions. For the first two years everyone had full-time drawing lessons, and for weeks they would draw just one figure.

Yet the social situation of the students was very unequal. Hans van Norden, through connections, lived with a rich wine merchant, who liked young artists of promise. He had to pay him a visit once a month to tell him what he was doing, in exchange for which he received a glass of wine and 25 guilders. Tilly lived at home, the state paid her fees (100 guilders per annum), which were promptly cut off when her father earned over 4000 guilders a year, but then she had a wealthy uncle who paid her fees. By contrast, Folke, with his wealthy background, had no money problems.

Nonetheless, Folke's four years at the Akademie awakened his socialist feelings, the horse was returned to the stables, he moved into a room in a working-class area of Amsterdam called "De Pijp" (the pipe), near the Albert Cuyp straat, he put away his fine clothes and started to wear a rough labourer's shirt and trousers to the Akademie. He was deeply moved by the Spanish Civil War, which he called the last war of idealism, and had high hopes for the Popular Front movements. His art reflected this with the study of "A Gardener" pushing his barrow of logs and with the lithograph of "Workers in a Brickworks". Yet through all this he remained very family-minded, as illustrated by the careful portrait of his father and the romantic study of his mother. In the spring of 1934 there was a reunion of over 100 members of the Heybroek family, of which he was a "sugar" as opposed to a "coffee", the division going back to 1805, and he came up with the ingenious idea of making a painting of a large tree, branching out with ever greater numbers of oranges or lemons in the branches, in which the individual names were written.

Roland Holst, the director of the Rijksakademie, was an Impressionist painter in his youth, who then achieved his ultimate expression in decorative art, typically by embellishing public buildings such as schools and in particular, making the wall decorations in the Upper Chamber in The Hague. He was adventurous in experimental techniques, in glass and other new materials, and in some respects mirrored the decorative talents of Charles Rennie Mackintosh and William Morris. He also had a liking for mystical realism like Jan

Toorop, coupled with socialist ideas, while yet belonging to the élite. The atmosphere at the Akademie in those years was optimistic. The standing of Dutch art was very high with a revival in the 19th century after the weak 18th-century. As the Dutch bourgeoisie prospered so the art market expanded, though everyone at the Akademie knew that a painter could only really succeed in Paris. They felt they were at the beginning of a great adventure and allowed themselves to think "God schiep de wereld en Nederland zich zelf" ("God created the world and The Netherlands itself").

In the words of Hans van Norden, - "For us it was a great experience. We knew exactly what Matisse and Picasso were doing and I met Mondrian in Paris, who had also been to the Akademie, and we followed Gros and the German Expressionists. Even though we were learning only through a very dry training, all the time we marvelled at modern art, and in truth the lecturers were backward looking and none of them achieved greatness as artists. They were traditional painters. After two years drawing we moved on to live sculpture in plaster and to oil painting and always just figures -- a woman with a shawl by a washstand would be the most elaborate. Gradually after the war, the Akademie adopted the new ideas and eventually it fell apart and everyone had to find his own way. Nowadays it's a sort of meeting place for young "artists" from all over the world -- the further off and the more foreign the better and any form of strict teaching is avoided. "

There was at least one exception to the charge that none of the lecturers achieved any importance as artists:

Heinrich Campendonk became a lecturer in decorative art at the Rijksakademie in early 1935, as a consequence of victimisation by the Nazis, from whom he fled in 1934. Soon after Roland Holst retired as director, there were even voices raised in favour of Campendonk for the post of Director, but in the end he became head of Decorative Arts, where he taught until 1949, when he reached 60 and retired from teaching.

Born in 1889 in Krefeld, Campendonk quickly showed talent in drawing, and became a pupil of Thorn Prikker, who was a lecturer at the Krefeld School of applied art, from 1906 and Prikker made him aware of the work of Van Gogh and Cézanne. Thorn Prikker had no truck with Impressionism but his sweeping airy abstractions coupled with his symbolism were not appreciated in a Holland then being swept along with the flow of the Marises, Breitner and Israels. So he had to leave the land of the koekebakkers (cake makers) and work in the more receptive soil of German culture.

Other pupils also there included Helmut and August Macke, Der Vetler, Gieskes and Wieger and they became firm friends of Campendonk. After 1910 Campendonk's father refused to support him any longer, so he went to restore the wall paintings in Osnabruck Cathedral with a good salary of 100 marks a month under professor Schnelle. Macke and Wieger looked him up there and then they all joined Nauen in Düsseldorf to participate in the exhibition "New Art" at the Kunstpalast. Macke then went to join Frans Marc in Sindelsdorf, leaving the young Campendonk, isolated and alone, as all his best friends had moved on. He wrote to his friends in Sindelsdorf "Entgegen seiner Erwartung bemühte man sich in Bayern den jungen Krefelder Maler zu helfen" (contrary to expectations, you have helped the young Krefeld painter to be united with you in Bavaria) and thanks to Alfred Flechtheim, a Rhenish art dealer, who decided to pay his travel expenses and guarantee him 50 marks per month, he was finally able to join them in October 1911. They asked Campendonk to send some paintings for an exhibition in the Thannhauser gallery in Munich. This opened on the 18th December 1911, and was the launch of "The Blue Rider" movement. Campendonk had three paintings there, which didn't sell, but after this Macke's uncle, Bernhard Koehler, took up a lifelong appreciation of his work. The Blue Rider propelled Kandinsky, Marc, Macke and Gabriele Munter to fame and today many great paintings by them are on view in the Munich Modern Art Museum.

In 1905 Campendonk met the dark-haired Adelheid Deichmann from Cleves, who had been to art college in Dresden. She became his

most important Muse, at the very heart of his creativity, and from 1909 Campendonk became a productive artist painting many self-portraits and landscapes, often with cows and horses. Then in the spring of 1912, "Adda" joined him in Sindelsdorf and he constantly portrayed her both in landscapes and in fine erotic ink drawings, often nudes with cats. At that time he never threw form away for complete abstraction, but he adopted swirls and blocks of harshly opposed primary colours that had all the characteristics of German Expressionism. In the spring of 1914, Frans Marc and Niestlé left Sindelsdorf, the ferment diminished, and the outbreak of the Great War emphasised the breakup of the artistic circle. Kandinsky and Jawlensky left, Macke, Marc and Klee enlisted, as did Campendonk who never reached the front and was discharged from military service, because of illness. He continued to paint scenes from family life but when his friend Marc was killed it was a terrible blow to him, despite the joy of Adda giving birth to a son the year before. He moved to Seeshaupt where he was close to Niestlé and while the war raged, lived a rural, domestic idyll in total isolation. His paintings breathed lightness, harmony and contentment. In 1918 he was blessed with a daughter.

In post-war Germany, however, he felt increasingly friendless. A painter ridiculed his work as "Alpenduft" (alpine vapour) and he gradually withdrew from Klee's "Der Sturm", Klee even privately feeling that Campendonk's art was backward looking. There was no chance of selling his pictures in Seeshaupt and his dealers only offered half-hearted help. There followed some fine expressive paintings where his increasing poverty and misery could no longer be concealed, with titles like "The Poor". He always kept in friendly contact with Klee, visiting him in Munich, and this was reciprocated when they came to Possenhofen, which was nearby, and stated "Zauberhafte Dinge sieht man ständig bei Klee" (you always see magical things with Klee). He went to Italy and Ravenna in 1920 on a study trip but made no sketches.

It was a severe blow to his self-esteem when he had to give up the independence of being a "freischaffender", even though he said

his art gained new freedom when he no longer needed to worry about his family's upkeep. At the end of 1922 he got a job at the Krefeld School of Art "auf probe" and in 1926 he moved to Düsseldorf. It is true his pupils formed an élite in Teuwen, Oberhoff, Macketanz, Schreiber and he was a serious teacher, very shy with colleagues, but one who liked to portray himself through his painting "nicht durch Erläuterungen". No one dared enter his personal studio. He discussed the deeply spiritual aspects of art and trends in culture through the ages. He instructed his pupils, pencil or brush in hand, making basic strokes, with comments like "So, you must make it".

These new demands and his previous links with Flemish poets and painters immediately after the war changed him. Withdrawn and inward at home and with colleagues, except for Nauen and Klee, he gradually became estranged from his wife, puzzling over his sexual feelings for her, (1926 his painting "Red Reclining Nude" and "Pierrot with Guitar") and alienated by Adda's increasing preoccupations with domesticity. He painted her looking harder, older, more desperate in 1925 as in "Woman with Oil Light".

In 1929 he went to Antwerp and found understanding in the different artistic milieu offered by Edith van Leckwyck, seven years younger than he and also a studied painter. In 1930 and 1932 they toured Brittany together, sketching and painting, and in that year he divorced, though still keeping close contacts with his children. In the summer of 1933 he travelled to the Lofoten islands where he made marvellous watercolours.

Once again another creative awakening was to be smashed. Since 1925 he had started with glass painting, so much so, that building and church glass soon became central to his art, and his painting went into the background. But in the autumn of 1933, the Nazis cancelled his Düsseldorf window commission. On the 18th December he was informed in writing that, as his cultural outlook was wrong, he should resign his post and enter public service, probably in some military capacity. The director of the Düsseldorf Academy wrote a reply in his defence, which was never seen. In March 1934, feeling

increasingly threatened, he left for Antwerp and Edith van Leckwyck and was sacked by the Nazis in June. He wrote to Klee saying, "My paintings are being sold for nothing".

As Roland Holst had announced his retirement, there was discussion about the appointment of a new director of the Rijnsakademie in August 1934 in the Dutch press, and though Campendonk was recognised as a master of woodcuts and a fine painter and glazier, the prevailing opinion was against his appointment as Director. So it was, after considerable debate in Holland and victimisation in Germany, that he took up the post of lecturer in Decorative Arts at the Rijnsakademie, in early 1935. Naturally shy, he reserved most of his conversation for his pupils, and was respected, but not really known by his colleagues. The rising tide of Nazism was his worst nightmare -- from 1935 to 1938 there are many drawings, emphasising in a symbolic way the suffering of Jesus, his Blood, his Crown of Thorns, his Cross, as he felt his position deteriorate. During the occupation, as a German citizen he was put under immense pressure to conform to the Nazi code, against which he back-pedalled heroically, all of which took a tremendous toll, for he retired from teaching in 1949, on reaching the age of 60, and spent his remaining years painting subjects of increasing religiosity.

It was a great boon to Folke that, amidst so much rigid emphasis on draughtsmanship, there was actually a teacher whom he could also greatly admire as an artist.

Meanwhile, after the first two years at the academy, despite a continuing emphasis on studio work, there was now also encouragement to work outdoors. The teaching of art history would certainly have encompassed the study of the Barbizon movement with its ideal of direct painting from nature, in contrast to the idealised studio landscapes of Lorrain and Poussin. Constable was a hero of this, "No two days are alike" was his catchphrase, and his "Haywain" won a gold medal at the 1824 Salon. Other direct painters were Cuyp, Hobbema and Ruysdael and in the 19th century this translated down to Corot "I dream my picture and then I paint

my dream" or "I am struck by something I have seen" and Rousseau "The whole vegetable world lived like the signs of dawn at which I guess". Barbizon became a painter's shorthand for a method of work, as well as being an enchanting small village near Fontainebleau.

Folke was certainly an enthusiastic exponent of this approach. In September 1935 he went to live on a farm with Jan Meine Jansen, a fellow student, in Colmschate, a small village just south of Deventer and there he painted "The Cornfield" [Fig. 1]. In a letter to his parents he describes his experience:

" - Firstly I should like to write a more personal section to Mum regarding my board and lodging:

Once a week the whole house is thoroughly cleaned by the daughter of the gardener for the sum of 50 cents, for which I would not be willing to do it. I regularly wash my hands in warm and soapy water, which makes them soft and supple again. My hair was cut a week ago and washed, so I looked beautifully clean. Now follows some of last week's menu, as far as I can remember, going backwards:

Sunday: Steak, fried potato, steamed marrow. I thought of putting a few drops of lemon and sugar on it. It was perfect on some fine melon.

Thursday: Pigeon, whose breast I stuffed with sweet chestnuts and walnuts (a dream together) potatoes, cream and apple sauce

Wednesday: Delicious cabbage hearts, without meat, but good, so that Meine is still sorry there is none left.

" - I could, I think, easily become a chef, as I enjoy it and have the talent. Please be aware that I am not spending all my day cooking. I normally only start as it gets dark and then together we rustle up something delicious in half an hour. My wellingtons are wonderful and I can tramp through the wettest meadows in the morning dew. Today I even walked right through a stream without getting wet feet. Once I'm home I immediately take them off and put on some dry shoes. You can get everything perfectly dry here by the fire.

" - Now something about my work, more for your joint interest:

Firstly I have painted a composition of four kids on a gold/yellow ground. This is a strong composition in the manner of the little calf, if you recall that, though some details must be altered, I felt afterwards.

Then I have made differing studies of maize, for which oil painting acts as a kind of signature for me.

p.s. I would be so pleased if you would send me the specified notes, understanding Daddy!, then I can settle my bills with Meine. Meine is delighted that I find his drawing technically good.

Pen and ink drawing of three enormous oaks

I have started a painting of ivy -- which in truth I look on as a search. In any case a large watercolour emerged of which I saw the imagery in a half conscious dream. My expectation of this work is great by reason of the strong impact of the composition. It was a strange process. First I dreamt of a nasty great vacuum cleaner which was making a terrible racket; this sound slowly transformed into a roaring whistling wind mixed with the bellow of a large herd of upset cattle stampeding; a mad dance of billowing clouds with gulls wheeling round two very tall perpendicular rocks, whose summits were invisible; in the distance a choppy boiling sea crashed its way inwards through a crevice. Ships appeared on the sea and were wrecked; the cows walked about on the field amongst the rocks.

" - I imagine copious reading of Strindberg would not be without influence in all this. I feel it's not a bad idea to tell you about such things, so you can better understand.

" - In the evening I mostly work on " Karin " (his sister), which I conceive entirely as the spirit of a visionary girl, both in her attributes and in the composition. I so want to make a more real portrait of her just once, even though the composition promises to be very interesting, though almost too difficult for me to realise completely.

“ - Then I’ve worked damned hard the whole week on a painting with three haystacks, which after all I’ve abandoned. This doesn’t matter so much as you learn an awful lot about yourself, and, due to the intense concentration with which you made it, the time is absolutely not wasted. There is still such a mass of work to be done, but I become a bundle of nerves about it, the week passed far too quickly for my liking, I’d like to start the next just now, as I could go on with ten more projects.

“ - I have written to Prof. Campendonk and plan to return to Amsterdam on Sunday with Meine. We could then even meet Mr. van Lier and demonstrate to the old gentleman that fine art painters are just as ordinary people as others, even if they are always balancing and juggling their finances.

“ - Now something about van Degsel’s analysis of Hals. I simply feel that people like him drag out more than there is and make their own little story about it, which others find fine and well; but as he has never held a brush, it’s just his recitation of technical terms, as opposed to the analysis of a craftsman, and it could be viewed as a lot of hot air if you look at it objectively. In short, it’s a fine story in itself and a good demonstration of van Degsel’s literary talent; but for me that style has as passé a feel as, for instance, The Hague School in art. Hals painted his figures and subjects direct from life. Let him also take his literary pictures direct from life and not via Hals. Though one sees certain things in a picture, surely one doesn’t see them in that exaggerated manner. At least I don’t believe so, as Hals did almost everything unselfconsciously, like a child. He was absolutely not a highly complex intellectual person. He painted drunken sots because he enjoyed hitting the bottle and he made the Regentesses ugly as he disliked them. Hals’ greatness was simply that he was able quite often to be absolutely honest about what he saw. Despite these remarks about Hals I would still like to be sent more critical reviews. I’m interested in anything that comes to your attention.

“ - About the poem by Strindberg, I prefer to say nothing, as I understand poetry badly. In any case it did not succeed as rhyme.

Love seems to be a subject that constantly inspires and always remains fresh and enigmatic. I was given a book by Meine I read with rapt attention and feel it will have a lasting value for me. It is “ Het land van Herkomst “ (The Land of Origin/Provenance) by Duperron. I never saw the present and the future so sharply drawn and so breathtakingly accurate in a book.

“ - Now I am going to bed. Outside everything alters by the day as everywhere one sees and smells autumn, so that you feel powerless in the face of so many impressions. Make sure you all keep healthy, otherwise come here.

Big Hugs, Folke.

So the Rijnsakademie years passed. It is impossible to assess Folke’s output from that time. In those days, exercises were constantly repeated and paintings were endlessly worked, as exemplified by his “Vanity Piece”, [Fig. 2], showing glimpses of the Vondel Park from the window of the house in the Vossius street where they were then living and including the customary portrayal of dead animals. Output, thus, was low. However there are 12 works definitely known and a further seven described, though everything else including sketches has vanished.

As a postscript, when tidying his father’s house after his death in May 1958, he found a bundle of letters in a folder in the attic, which were to his parents exactly 20 years before, and in one of them he wrote this introduction:

“ - In the spring of 1938 I went to Sweden. Campendonk had told me such a fascinating tale of a sojourn in the Lofotens together with Per Krohg. He allowed me to see his sketches. So then I began to think I would like to do something like that. My father had a fine atlas called André’s Handatlas. This was just as thick as a fine old church Bible, but then four times as big. So when I was at home one day, I began to study it in earnest. In this way I came to the conclusion that on the Swedish east coast, at the same latitude as the Lofoten islands, the land and the sea come together in the same way. And as my mother

was Swedish and I have a lot of relatives there and a reasonable grasp of the language I asked myself whether I should go there.

“ - The region is called Nordingrå. It lies between Härnosand and Örnsköldsvik.”

It was Campendonk's fine evocation of the Lofotens in his art that was to inspire Folke to his powerful visions of this region in a remarkable creative outburst.

“ - The region is called Nordingrå. The spot I picked out was called Bönhamn. The train went to Härnosand. After that the bus. You couldn't see a sausage as everything was veiled in freezing fog and the worst was, there was still snow on the ground, at the beginning of May.

“The bus put me down at Sandö where I had to wait with all my baggage for the postman's car, an old 1929 Chevrolet. At this point I had to take a ferry over a river, and I thought: what have I started now? I felt like a premature migratory bird. The postman was a friendly, chatty fellow who took a cup of coffee in almost every farmhouse.



Thick mist up hill and down dale. Towards evening, just as I was thinking I am going home tomorrow, this was a big mistake, we came over a ridge and saw before us the sun's ray's breaking through the mist, making the silver sea glisten as it shone on a small village. Bönhamn!

"I stepped out by the one and only village shop, the postman disappeared and there stood I. There was no hotel or suchlike, nothing in fact except tiny houses. But still, they couldn't just leave me standing in the cold. The shopkeeper indicated a house to me where the widow of a fisherman lived. I could stay there for one night as long as I went away the next day. But then I had a toe in the door and that night became almost one year."

These are a few of Folke's letters to his parents, written during the time he was in Bönhamn, which were carefully kept together by his father –

" Dear Parents, 29 May 1938

In Bönhamn I can manage on 75kr. This month I spent a maximum of 100kr. thanks to all manner of items I had to purchase; and if I see something fine I buy that as well. I've still got 25kr. left, the remainder I consider my return fare. So you see I am not living extravagantly here... not with a hair of my head have I considered exceeding my allowance. But I do hate sitting here worrying about every last halfpenny. Yet of all the money spent hitherto, every penny is weighed and accounted for. Still, if you really want to do me a favour, just send me a couple of hundred kroner, anything left you can have back. I expect you to come up with a counter offer--Ha, ha, that's business.

In general, I find the news from home far from cheerful, why don't you try and create a sunnier mood just the once. It's hard enough already here, on my own, so please let's have a bit more chin up and enough of the pessimism. It's bad for you and you get so old from it. It is of course right that these things are discussed, but I really get the feeling that your whole heart and head is permeated

with misery. But, good heavens, in everything, you are exceptionally fortunate. You are all still together, with your heart's desires met. And yet you are so heavily fatalistic. Just face up to things somewhat and everything will be satisfactory. Sometimes you can learn about these things from poor fishermen. For instance one caught strömming for 30 öre, whereas another has earned 50 kroner and yet they joke with each other without a hint of jealousy.

I feel the beginning of my letter is over critical, but I am letting it go as my initial reaction. I remain here wholly for my work, any other reason, I would have long since departed this hole. It's fine as a holiday destination for 14 days. But a conversation with a simple soul here offers up few surprises, and rapidly results in boredom. It is exclusively the shapes and colours that bind me to this place. But I should like to luxuriate in a hot bath, a fine piece of music or an interesting conversation. My only proper contact is a steady flow of letters.

Before I forget, I'm really pleased you like my window. Stick it in somewhere, or if necessary put it on display loan with Hilma (his cousin), - it's made for Nordwijk. I value it as a pattern and theme for a future commission. Or it could look good in my studio, on the place where formerly "The Cornfield" hung. By the time you arrive in Sweden I shall have enough for an exhibition in Stockholm.

Should you find a good book or a Groot Nederland, send it up. At the moment I'm hard at work at French. Stendhal. Every word I don't know I write down, so I have long lists, which every so often I learn, thanks to Hans' dictionary.

That 10kr. for my house was actually a mistake and seemingly far too high. The actual rent is-- nothing--with free wood, which in the evenings is often very agreeable.

I'm writing nothing more about my work, you'll see it a bit later, I imagine. I will fall in entirely with your plans, when you arrive, at any rate you have my proposal.

(Early June)

“ - Three days of continuous storms have forced me to work indoors. Just now with these cold winds I became aware that the outhouse actually was rather cold for working. On top of that too unsettled. There are regular visits from the local women, who come to use the mangle that stands in the corner somewhere. I shall not say that this is a distraction, often I get the feeling that there are splendid live models walking round me. The whole village, the entire surroundings, the wide sea, the stones and trees -- all of it is actually my workshop. I feel like a starved wolf, for once standing in front of a mountain of food, who doesn't know where to start. Here I feel totally in harmony and fulfilled, in as far as a human can. I am convinced that this is the true path for me and feel I must make a go of it and that I shall succeed, precisely as it speaks to me so directly and comes from an inner urge. I still have a bad feeling about my last letter, you must be convinced that I wanted to put you off, when in fact all I meant to say was that I felt you should leave this little corner to me.

Fruit here is far too expensive, as 4 apples cost 1kr. So I prefer to eat strömming, which my stomach has got used to. On top of which I get berry compôte nearly every day.

My work progresses very well, returning to the opening theme of my letter. I think I've managed to rent a single-room house for 40kr. per month. It's about 100 m from the widow so I can take my meals with her still, now she's agreed. My bedroom remains with her, as I have gradually made it homely with flowers, drawings, paintings and curtains, so it has its own special atmosphere. The house is furnished with a sleeping bench, two chairs, table, I just need to whitewash the walls and it is ready. The lighthouse man is going to do that for me. Also there's a fine fireplace should you feel cold, or want to make coffee. I haven't found out, but I think it's an extract of grains.

Today I received a letter from Mottan (=Rigmor, his aunt), who proposed several schemes. She is so nice. First she will follow a course in Stockholm and then travel to the North. She suggested she pick me up and then travel to Östersund, Trondheim, Oslo and Stockholm,

treating me, if you please, but I feel that is inappropriate, on which I await your advice. For myself I feel attracted to the idea, just to take leave every now and then and to renew direct contact with the civilised world. On top of which it would be very good for my artistic development to experience first-hand a great deal of Northern art (Per Krohg etc.)

At three o'clock this morning we had to go out in a storm to retrieve the nets which had drifted close to the rocks, because of an anchor which had dragged. But the boats are so well found, and the men so experienced, that it all seemed quite normal. It's very striking and makes a great impression when such an enormous volume of blue green water breaks into a thousand fragments of white foam on a shining black rocky edge. The day is so wonderfully long if you start that early, mostly you're home again at five with a whole morning to work, before breakfast is ready, after which your second morning commences.

Midsummer takes priority over everything. They are preparing for it day and night, buying in a lot of new items, endless cooking and bed-making for all the guests. With Midsummer come the heaviest catches of herring (2000 kilos per catch) and they have to slave till they drop, salting and souring these creatures. The men have the best of it really. Sometimes they only go out in the morning and do very little after that. Even tillage they leave to the women, as well as the stable cleaning and woodcutting.

I was greatly surprised that on the first day of a hefty storm, the coastal vicar arrived in a boat. He navigates the entire coastline to the north of Stockholm and comes to Bönhamn three or four times a year. He steps straight out of the boat and into the church and once there he rings the bell. The man from the general store puts up the numbers of the psalms and the local population all congregates. The vicar single-handedly pulls out an organ from under a red tarpaulin and starts to play. Then he sings a solo to accompany the organ. Like Bruno Walter. The only thing is that he is very fat and looks round like Mengelberg, has the same imposing manner and looks at least as self-

satisfied. Thereafter he allows the now filled congregation to sing the psalms and pray. Then he climbs the steps to the pulpit and reads a brief message from St Paul. Then he delivers a good-natured sermon: for instance “You, Scholander, (pointing to Scholander) were out at sea and someone asked you, what do you believe in?” or “Spring is always a time of renewal, you, Näslund, the oldest villager here, tell us just what spring means to you.” Enthusiastically the eighty-year-old shoemaker told us what he thought, with the benefit of all his experience.

I forgot to tell you that before the service even began, he shook hands with everyone, so I too was introduced to him as the Dutchman. He forthwith launched into an improvised review of the times with a “time is money and make haste, and if you consider carefully the heart of the matter, everything is goalless and without principle”, just look at the war crisis, and as an example he then recited a poem from The Flying Dutchman that ended in a thundering triple refrain “Hurry, Hurry, Hurry” which he broadcast over the heads of the congregation, in consequence of which the whole community quietly laughed in their beards at me, which I think was his intention. After that psalms again, followed by a full-throated solo with organ. Then a prayer. Then a personal goodbye to everyone, with a word of comfort here and a pat on the back there. For instance - to a young girl with a low-cut blouse - “Listen Anna, I think you should buy a cloak so that you don’t freeze”. The people adore him and I must say I have never heard a more jolly and more movingly childish sermon than that one for the simple souls of these fisher-folk. This is the only way you can reach the deep inner being of these rock hard, dour people. Then the vicar stepped into his boat and departed into the storm and squall.

A lot about that, but little about my work: as it happens I feel that it is going well, but I am moving away from the linear and seeing things more in the flat plane. Also again with more colour. In other words you must see it soon, this mountain!

(4th July)

“ - When shall I hear something from you? Shame on you for leaving me so abandoned on my lonely crag. I have at last really spoiled myself and feel very happy. It’s actually a question of time. You really can’t keep up with it. And as if there was an emergency making you feel highly anxious, you see one subject after another that you were thinking of creating changing before you. For instance a net is just removed after it’s been hanging there for two days. They were decent enough to hang it out again, but in any case. A boat that had been unused for a couple of months, lying in the same place, is taken away, just as I had begun to sketch it. A field with flowers and grass, tall thistles and docks is mown down just as you plan to start on it that morning. That’s how it goes with everything. Even a row of racks, which make a striking image like crosses standing on the crest of a hill and therefore splendidly highlighted against the horizon (you think these will be still there till next year) are suddenly removed. “Not Allowed!” I was so angry and upset that now they have been put up again and I can quietly carry on working. Meanwhile I have other paintings I am working on, where the paints are still lovely and wet, and which you don’t want to allow to dry.

Which makes life interesting! I suddenly had a great idea of making stretchers from the wooden bottoms of barrels. I nail boards behind and then stretch the canvas on them. Makes a pleasant round pattern ideally suited to portraits. Fortunately there is no hurry there, except perhaps with the oldest inhabitants, who perchance might snuff it. It is very good having your own house and I sit there the whole day until far into the night. There is a steady stream of visiting fishermen, which is good at creating atmosphere and they are very calm. At night it is still pretty cold so I light a fire in the hearth. I earn my own wood by cutting what I need every morning, which gives me some physical exercise. The water is also still very cold at 11 degrees, and yet last week I bravely crept in every day and then you feel wonderful after running about on the rocky shores. The

weather here is unusual, very rainy -- often the whole day, and then a storm coming from the northeast which is very bad for the fishery, as the fish move southwards. It's looking poor for the hay, harvest and fishery this year, especially as spring began far too early. At the beginning of March it was warmer than now.

I have also made a historic piece without knowing it. It is a large canvas 120 by 100cms with all kinds of fishing appliances. An old fisherman told me a long story, while telling me what one of my objects was. A block and tackle and a lifting hook, as used in cranes, formerly belonged to the brig "Maria", which lost its sails in an autumn storm in 1929 and broke up on the rocks. Everyone was rescued apart from one man who was trapped within the shifting cargo of timber. He was a brother of the storyteller. Again and again he tried to break out of his trap while others worked with saws and axes to release him, but constantly they were driven back by the waves. The next day they were able to extract the tragically lost man's dead body and the only thing still okay and working was his silver timepiece that he always carried. The storm was so violent that of all the lengths of timber only a few pieces, good only for firewood, were left. Each year, each winter the coast alters here. What in one year is a great pile of boulders, in another year can be transformed into a perfect bathing beach. A huge rock was deposited on the cliff shore that is some 10m. above sea level. There was a three-day snowstorm, the people couldn't get out of their houses, and the waves at sea were so massive they washed over the boathouses and boats were broken up. The island that shelters the harbour mouth was stripped bare of all its trees and also a long peninsula with all manner of shingle disappeared and no one can fathom where it went. The whole harbour was blocked off by tree trunks, roots and driftwood. That was in 1927.

Another story: My widow suddenly fell ill, a swelling in her throat was asphyxiating her. I can't remember what they call this illness. Four men placed her in a rowing boat and rowed the 40 miles to Härnosand as fast as they could. Had they arrived an hour later, said the doctor who performed the operation and who had been

called from his bed in the middle of the night, it would have been too late. The old boys here all have strange pectoral dewlaps from so much rowing. They row six miles to Ulf's island for strömming, and another six miles to Kramfors to sell them, and to Sundsvall for salt, rowing with loads of two tons. Now it's all done with engines.

The strange thing is that formerly they earned far more: 1kr. per kilo instead of 40öre. On top of which a totally different kind of herring has arrived. Before it was a small fish that hugged the shoreline. These were caught with a "knot", a sort of dragnet pulled into the shore in a wide arc. In this way they even catch salmon, exciting absorbing and enjoyable work. They do that on a Saturday or Sunday near here, just for the fun of it now. The women light fires and make coffee, which you get with a shot of spirits and the men sweat blood to draw in the net which has to be done quickly, or else the salmon just swim out round the edge of it, on top of which they also can leap over it. The result after such an evening, or rather night as you don't get to bed before five o'clock in the morning, was 22 salmon weighing about 100 kilos at 3kr. per kilo -- though this is only considered a recreation, and I must admit I can think of no more entertaining way of spending your Saturday evening. The net is rowed out from one headland to another in a large bend and then they pull in the ropes while walking towards each other, the "king net-man" holds the net up so salmon can't jump over and then the pulling is guided in an even rhythmic way by singing. I think that salmon here have the same role as crayfish in southern Sweden.

Coming back to my strömming story, they used to catch such an abundance of herring in one of those draw-nets that one drag would fill four boatloads. Then all of a sudden they were gone, but then they discovered a different larger race of herring in deeper water; of a finer quality, but far fewer in numbers. New nets had to be obtained. Now one fisherman fishes with about 25 nets each night, due to the far lower comparable yield of fish. Strange how something like that can change overnight:



This becomes a long letter I feel, but it can be fun, in such a groove.

I've purchased a few old bargains: a reddish copper bucket, taller than a normal bucket, really good quality, tinned throughout internally for 5kr., a copper coffee pot with three legs, to stand by the fire and a beauty, for 2kr., but the finest of all is a stool over 100 years old which I was taken with from the moment I saw it. It was just lying in the attic of a beach hut and they thought me mad to want it. This was at an auction, a real laugh it was to experience: the belongings of an old lady who had died. At least 60 people, all the neighbourhood,

swarmed in and all received coffee. If it all came to 30kr. I would be surprised. A spinning wheel was the crowning glory.

Now I think it's bedtime so I shall only write down a few big wishes. If you do come, could you bring my rubber boots? They cost 10kr. here, and the old ones I have borrowed have got a few leaks. Then I would like more paint -- three tubes Cerulean, 3 plain Umber, 2 Black. That is for me. I've got to know an exceptionally nice doctor Albin here, who lives 30 miles away in Bjärtra and we met by chance when he visited Bönhamn just out of personal interest. He has a son who paints as a hobby, who he brought along the next day, to show him everything. That's a journey of 100 km to see my work and it was bad weather. Then he was also very enthusiastic about some works, asking about prices. I told him I hadn't thought about it, as hitherto I was in Bönhamn purely to work creatively. The son asked attentively about all my materials and became extremely jealous when he saw all my wonderful paints and asked if I could get him some. Would it be awful to bring a series for him? I think it's worth it, as the doctor has means, on top of which he is a cultured man. I suggest cobalt blue, cerulean blue, cadmium green, chrome oxide hydrated green, and normal cadmium yellow and lemon, natural umber, dark lacquer of Scheveningen, cadmium fire red, super yellow ochre and English red. You could for instance deduct it from my August allowance and I can reclaim it here.

I am very curious about your plans. For myself, I now know I shall go to the south on the 16th, firstly to make myself presentable (haircut) before you set eyes on me. I am very much looking forward once more to being well-dressed, to a select dinner, hearing fine music and seeing some shops. I forgot to tell you that I gave a jolly address about Holland in the chapel, especially about their waterways, customs and fishing, and also a lot about tugboats. A great success. Now dearest folk, I can assure you it is well past bedtime, this will probably cost extra stamps, don't you think? Thanks for Konst Revy. (= Swedish journal of art)

(July)

“ - I am positive that I shall always manage, in a certain way I am so much more capable than others and also have a deeper awareness, I feel.

Poor old Dad, what a shame with the cross of such a son in the far North, but you have given me the gift of life, so you had better forgive that wayward son for his contrary ways. For certain, one of those other three will turn out better. I'm really not doing this out of spite. How awful that business is so bad now, I really feel this must be a bitter and depressing time for you. You can of course send me far less now, as I can manage. Otherwise why don't you also just come to the land of the last lutenist? It's so splendid! Leave behind the appalling world of endless warmongers. Ugh! Next time a more sunny message with more Bönhamn stories.

p.s. concerning paint. Please forward this a.s.a.p., also I have used up all my canvas, and that powder paint really is very important. I would happily have done this myself but now there's no alternative. In advance a big thank you for your cooperation. with love, F.

(19th August)

“ – All of a sudden, after a prolonged spell of sunshine and heat, which I have exploited to the full, knowing how short the Swedish summer is, there has come a cold front. Autumn. My concern over the brevity of this fine weather gripped me totally and I often returned home at dusk famished and worn out. I had then put behind me a day starting at 4 in the morning. I don't know where I got my energy from, but I was living in a state of nervous excitement, which was bound to result in activity. Yesterday I was sitting on a fantastic mountain top opposite the entrance to a cave I had discovered, painting in a searing heat wave: A view of the entire sea with all its islands. It was more vaporous than usual and suddenly the whole sea and sky were like milk. Just white and completely dissolved into each other. How that could have come about so quickly is incomprehensible. And then all at once a coal black sky and white breakers on the previously silvery

sea. Glad not to be at sea just then. In front of my eyes a heavy squall broke out, such as I'd never seen anything like before. A constant crash of thunder, savage lightning and massive downpours with large hailstones bouncing on the granite cliffs. Folke sits anxiously in his roomy cave in ecstasy and wonderment at something so elemental. The hail was so intense that even now the ground is still white here and there. Often it was four inches thick. Savage gusts blasted the landscape. Big trees blew over with roots in the air, lifting up large parcels of earth. Then came the reaction. Out of the excitement I never noticed the cold and wind, despite my light summer clothing, but now I became tooth-chatteringly chilled. The anti-climax was so powerful that I left my painting materials in the cave, hurried home, slipping and sliding on the saturated soil. I sprang straight through steaming white pools reacting with the hot granite rock. It was Dante's Inferno or Wagner or Shakespeare. The whole night the thunder rumbled and the lightning flashed. Five cows and an old woman were killed in the Nordingrå area. Today I stayed in bed till one o'clock and still feel tired out. I think that now I shall pass some time doing nothing. Look at my work a little and at the changes in nature, read a bit, eat a lot, go early to bed. Amazing such a reaction, which in fact I rather needed, thanks to the intensity with which I had been working. But I shall return to normal soon enough I hope. A philosophical interlude like this, of doing nothing, can only be of benefit.

My last letter home I'm afraid was actually rather over-intense, but one lives so much in one's work that there is hardly any time left over, in such a period of concentrated effort, for family and friends and they don't even interest me, they rather hinder me in such a moment, with what in my eyes are trivialities. Please forgive me for being unexpectedly brusque. Even my housekeeper tells me I am tense and rude, when I am locked into my painting, as I don't want to turn up for meals and put everything that gets in the way to one side. After this you will be able to check back and find what an enormous difference this has made to my work: to be out in the countryside in strange surroundings, a stranger yet a free agent working for oneself with full concentration, or in a house with family and acquaintances.

I would never be able to live in such a lonely way permanently, I would go mad, or at least become an impossible person, insofar as I am not already a difficult and awkward enough offspring. I feel as if I am one of a thousand Folkes needing to emerge: Folke the fishermen, Folke the farmer, Folke in the wilderness, Folke the fantasist, Folke the intellectual, Folke the... and so it goes on. In the end I have to know all these kernels and essences in order to know which is the real Folke.

For some time to come I may and shall not leave Bönhamn, there is still so much waiting for me here. I wish to complete my work on the region if at all possible, to bring to a conclusion my portrayal of this period.

Queeny is an angel, has sent me the most essential paints and sketching materials, as well as fruits and delicious Roquefort and Cantal. Where is my paint? Shall I write to Mottan?

It is now the sour herring time here and the whole of Bönhamn stinks of turd. I have been asked to dine and stay with various families, but until now have politely refused, as it has so little meaning and only distracts me. I always get plenty of visitors from all sides and even received an invitation to exhibit in Sollefteå. Mostly I am not at home, but there is then a local who shows them round, I couldn't do it any better or with greater enthusiasm. I have set up a sort of gallery where things I've done are hanging.

As far as holding an exhibition is concerned, I think it is a real bind, it is so dark in the winter, so that in practice here everything can only be seen in artificial light. In conclusion, I don't really bother to think about such things during my time here in Bönhamn. I have written to Queeny in Castelholmen if only to tell her prices. I know I can get a locale here cheaply, but in fact this just gives me a more exact idea as to what I might be able to aim for. Personally, none of this interests me so much at the moment. I would prefer to work in Stockholm in the spring. I am making absolutely no plans for the future. Now I am in Bönhamn and what develops out of this I cannot determine until I feel I am ready here.

"My residential permit arrived in the post yesterday. My room is now filled with stones. There is nowhere in Sweden with such a variety of different stones. As the evenings draw in, I want to make mosaics out of them. Only small ones of course.

"Now dears, I'm stopping, just like that, I can't go on. This evening I'm going to delight in a fire, it's just the weather for that.

(24th August)

" - Hearty thanks for your lovely letter. Really cheering. After three days of deteriorating weather I have begun again with renewed impetus. Particularly with the working out of old impressions. But I did have a sort of hangover from all those new impressions every day. There had to be some sort of reaction. So now I am in a rather neutral phase. Where you have to fill in the background. My canvas arrived as well as the paints. But I urgently need more -- white, six or eight tubes. Send them express. The largest size they have. I think cream white No 11 or 12. The other paint doesn't matter, thanks to Queeny I've received all I need. When I ran out of canvas I painted something on an old door panel - I think it's fine but it'll be troublesome in transport. Then I'm afraid I used curtain material after that, funny how inventive one becomes when the need arises.

I bought a trailer load of firewood and in September I move to a warmer dwelling. This one is too close to the water and too far out on the end of a headland into the sea, so you practically blow away with a strong north-easter.

So that you shouldn't be upset, I never told you that I'd bought a boat for 60 kroner, as I have now sold it again for 60 kroner. A splendid red and brown fishing boat with a jolly little sail. Firstly it made my waterside fisher's house more complete. What is a fisher's house without a boat? On top of which I often went out with the fisherman and painted as they drew in their nets, or if all the boats lay at anchor in a row, waiting for dawn. Then you had the difficulty of putting up your easel and taking all your painting things with you. Also it was handy if I wanted to go out to an island to paint.

My next house is much more sheltered in between the others, yet still has an outlook. It is a proper winter house with double windows. I shall no longer collect so many fresh impressions, apart from autumn and winter ideas. The weather forces you to remain indoors. An excellent situation for working everything through, which will keep me fully occupied at least till Christmas. I am glad I spotted the danger in constantly picking and choosing. You lose height, depth and tension, the equivalent of what in literary terms is called journalism. So always call a halt to yourself, take a deep breath, philosophise, reach more deeply into yourself about all those deer-leaps of the last months. The new impressions that I forgo between now, September, and Christmas due to my working through of existing themes, will surely take their turn another day. You soon become calm here thanks to the cool summer which on the other hand makes you so highly strung through lack of sunshine and light by which to work. The south must have a far more balancing influence in that respect due to its permanent sunshine.

(Late August)

“ - Today I painted a landscape from the top of a mountain. Naturally I came into a conflict between my concept and the perspective. But a conflict has to be resolved. I find it a delight to take in the view from a mountain top, so then I have to examine this, and then find a solution for this strip of cloth which is my personality. A large landscape is actually just the same as a piece of tree bark or a wave (trouble with a flea!) with all its waves, bubbles and shapes. The entire earth's crust is simply a stone enlarged, or the other way round. I have a great love of the details, even in large forms, which all have their origin in common source material, and, being better understood, become (again that flea, nearly caught it this time, a large black one, who has just leapt off, the first of my life) equally valid.

I am now too bothered by this flea to write more, must catch it. How did I get it? Now I can feel them everywhere. What do you do when you get them? In any case I must end-- good night.

(3rd September)

“ - Thank you for all your letters, oh..., oh..., how the time flies. Sometimes you get in a nervous state about it. It is already fully autumnal and all of a sudden you realise with a shock that you have to pack up your daubing between five and six in the evening. Nature changes by the day and as a matter of fact I have never seen anything so beautiful as the autumn up here. Extremely variable weather, constantly revealing new moods and settings. Sometimes a storm, then hot and sunny, then a sudden mist.

Concerning mist, today I was the hero of the hour. All the fishermen had sailed out and in these circumstances there is always a predominance of women left behind. The mist was like pea soup. Then I caught the sound of the muffled thud of a boat wanting to come into the harbour. I was still wondering how he was going to manage it and went down to the water's edge. Sometimes the sound died out, came closer, then died out again, and then I caught some notes from a fog-horn. A fisherman's wife, Friedeborg (splendid character, young, strong, black-haired, ruddy-cheeked) said they were calling for help. So then I rowed out as fast as I could, anxiously hugging the shore to keep it in sight, then crossing to an island, whose occasional cliffs I recognised in the dark, rowed round the island whereon I heard the boat again. Thick, thick fog and darkness. I couldn't see a thing. I could only hear the waves breaking on the shore and the ship that thudded and trumpeted. I hardly dared to lose sight of my island so I started to bawl. Ahoy, ahoy, ahoy... then horn blowings ...Ahoy, where are you?...at last a man's cry, yelling. At first I couldn't catch it... Rakt fram... Straight ahead... ahoy... this way, this WAAAY... couldn't really follow it, so I lit some clusters of matches and made torches and that helped. Out of the mist a black shape emerged and then rapidly a three masted schooner appeared. Proud as a peacock,

I lead the way in, rowing past the cliffs and into the harbour. They would never have managed it unassisted, they announced, and furthermore they had wandered miles off course. It was an amazing feeling to do something like that, not as an adventure I mean, but just as an experience, to be able to pilot a big ship like that into a safe haven.

Now with the long evenings I have the opportunity to do things which I would consider a waste of time in daylight. One of the most important attributes of my job is above all, discipline and patience. One sees so incredibly many things of beauty, which you see as a picture, but there is only a tiny fraction that you can succeed in reproducing. Now I've finished with my perceptions, I gradually complete one subject after another in the fullness of time. In a way you do lose a lot. But the subjects you complete are richer and more profound for it and even supersede the previous good work and are influenced by it. I have made a great leap forward, I feel. And begin, more and more to reach my true form, and actually also to be more a part of Bönhamn. This time here is a wonderfully rich one for me, not only just from the point of view of painting, but also for me personally. You begin to reach self-awareness and to distinguish yourself from the hundred other Folkes, standing out so sharply against this background, you can begin to evaluate the changes in yourself. Of course this then has a beneficial effect upon my art and follows from it.

Now I am stopping for today, as I always start early in the morning to get the best light. My work is piling up here. It's a dead shame about the old work that is in store. Apart from my "Cabbage Field", "Flower Piece" (bloemstuk) and the "Maize Harvest", there's nothing worth keeping. The "Cornfield" is bad. Can you imagine how insensitive the people are who like such assorted rubbish? At the time I made it, it was good and even a step forward. Now it no longer has any value. Then I could have sold it at once in all good faith, now no longer. That flower piece is in fact also not good, not worked through enough. At best it is a cold thin painting, so airy. This time I shall be more businesslike and hold an exhibition promptly.

Otherwise next year I shall have the same attitude. Sometimes I feel I am exceptionally advanced in my craft for my age and feel surprised about it. I only feel this when something is finished. But then you have often sweated and cursed beforehand. You apply all your powers of concentration and finest efforts to the work and then generally you are so drained and spent as to be almost in a faint. Such a level of concentration would be far harder to build up in Amsterdam, if you consider that even here nearly a whole day can be disturbed just by the arrival of a letter. Now I never read one until I am ready, as you are immediately in another world. Only by giving everything you can, making yourself feel as if a mountain when you are painting one, can you really achieve something profound. The alternative also looks like a mountain, but it lacks blood, is just composed of pleasant planes and colours. Through all this, which I reluctantly reveal, but about which you have a certain right to know, I hope you will realise that what has driven me into this remote corner has absolutely nothing to do with adventure. Maybe so in the first instance, though also accompanied by a large measure of healthy intuition pushing me here. I am constantly amazed that I do not quit, on the contrary, I keep feeling more enthusiastic. Now really it's you who are keeping me from sleep, 'bye, with much love,

(8th September)

" - Very many thanks for the letter with money and especially for the paint which in fact I still haven't received. The telegram therefore served little purpose, but I had to give it a try. As far as money goes I am never in a hurry or stuck completely without means. Paint is another matter.

This evening I had quite an adventure. The whole day I sat painting on a hilltop five miles from Bönhamn. A large canvas. Splendid view. Wonderful typical northern sunset. Halfway down it was totally dark and I lost my way. That's nothing much to worry about as whichever way you go, you will always find a road or the sea with all its deep inlets. But the long slog was the worst -- straight through mires and bushes and trees, breaking your neck over stones

and up to your knees in the bogs and nothing but darkness. At last the glimmer of a light and then close by, a village. But from that village, where the disturbed but friendly villagers offered me coffee, some food and directions, it was still all of five miles to Bönhamn. Today I slept like a log till eleven o'clock. So for the first time for ages I did some reading. Just right.

Don't be alarmed that I might disappear here, as there are so many mountains, lakes and roads that that could not happen. Only in the heart of Norrland, further inland, might one get lost. Special message for Mum.

(September)

" - Sometimes you must feel that I'm only mucking about, alone with my nature, forest, trees and mountains in peace and quiet in a tiny village miles away from the world. However---can I ask you this question?

Did you too sit up the whole night?

These events are unbelievable. The expression "nothing new under the sun" has become a meaningless phrase, as recent events are something new and altogether terrible. Are you witnessing the world and all its culture burning out and on its deathbed? That's how I felt the whole night long, by the radio, as one record after the other filled in the time between the news bulletins. It was like a terrible torture. One has the feeling of being shoved into the execution chamber. You keep thinking now it'll be the end, and you can't think how to pass the time between bulletins. I read, paced up and down, now and then smoked, contemplating the door with aching heavy head.

When will it open? -- You hear the footsteps of the guards and soldiers, the diplomats and ministers. When will the door burst open and they come in and tell you it's the end? Nothing to be saved. Death has won, the scourge. That's how I experienced the dreadful nightmare of Friday night to Saturday. Perhaps it was mankind's greatest nightmare, and inescapable. Our dire fate. Record after

record was played, the announcer gave the title, orchestra, composer, number of the record while underneath you are thinking, What will happen now? Is the first shot fired? Have the first bombers dropped their hellish destruction on Prague, leaving just a pile of ruins? Or is it London or Paris? Is it finish billiards and dig over the Champs Elysées amidst a wilderness of grenade launchers? Yes, and that's how one thinks between the cliffs, the sea and the forests.

What a beastly, swineish lot, with their thunderous news reports by the hour, egged on by brainless golden youth calling for " Space " and " Honour." Heavy words to impress the herd. A common little demagogue who bawls catchphrases, with a hoarse screwed-on head. Ready to kill for God and the Fatherland and so on, foul with booty. Quivering with bloodlust in all his animal instincts with puffed out chest and armaments " For the Fatherland! ", "Keep our blood free from foul contamination!" Bah!

That such things can grow into the main issue. And the whole world-- from the left to the right, even the centre parties – all are colourless. Sorry for this terrible unburdening, but I just have to say it. One sees it all so clearly and one actually loses less of the impact here than one does in the city with all its plethora of news. This evening gripped me, it was impossible to sit passively by and I shall never forget it (but we do anyway fortunately). Overwrought as I was from all these events, I became totally absorbed by the music of Handel, but when that moment was passed and there was a long pause, I thought now Europe is condemned to death. " War!" they will say, more is not necessary.

How do you feel about it? For myself, in the end I did not actually think and feel so much, as far as I myself was concerned. I thought now I cannot make my planned walk to Älgsjöberget. Very puny and human as you see, something you discover almost with shock and astonishment. Just at this moment Älgsjöberget's in full splendour with its russet golds of autumn and with a crystal clear sky. Autumn, winter, spring, and Life. Just now, here, I feel that if all mankind fights itself to death, that mother earth will still preserve

its wonderful apparel, fulfilling its promise that each spring again be tender green and that each autumn glow a rich gold. The Earth continues equally beautiful with or without a declaration of war.

But war did not come and war still has not happened. Sick, terminally ill Europe has begun to breathe again, even if with a death rattle. Next day, the clearest blue sky, with a summery warmth and the sun glittering on the mirror-like water. The forests were more golden and fiery than ever. I made my walk to Älgsjön and I thought about life again in a more positive manner, there was so much beauty round about.

Now the stars are gleaming in the heavens. The northern lights unfold their shimmering curtains. The fire crackles. A mist forms over the sea and slowly climbs the cliff face. The whole day, breathing in peace, a great feeling of peace. Not a real fisherman, but feeling like a fisherman sitting on his step looking out over the sea, at the pitch black forest silhouette, breathing it all in, the sheer delight, breathing in the cold night air in all its intimacy. Incredibly grateful for that endless dark blue above, with the Northern Light's dancing sheen.

Then I went to sleep and dreamed a beautiful long dream, but that is a book in itself, while in the hearth the last pieces of wood glowed and burnt out. Let whatever comes happen! The last three days have been of deep awareness in any case. You engage in a very different way and in far greater depth, though not actually in any specific way to create anything artistic. You delight in the wide world and its limitlessness.

p.s. I've noticed from a Swedish newspaper that even in your stable Holland they've gone mad. The Queen and her entourage overruling the majority in the same despotic manner. That could have been done far more sensibly, more democratically. But then how could I have been so chauvinistic as to think that Holland would be better than any other country? It is so facile and cheap to instil patriotism into the people just now, and thereby to make brutes of them with eyes wide open.

No. Now I say stop or else I'll be off again. I must not waste all my energies. In any case I think I've given a fair summary. Now, dearest ones, I'm tensely awaiting the fate of the world. I even hear the petty opinions of people who say that it won't work out too badly, which doesn't make me feel any more optimistic. Military power and dangerous intent are both there and that has got to go somewhere.

(End September)

" - I feel as if in a wave, filling my dream canvases with landscapes of mists and forests. It's raining a great deal and I am working happily indoors and not under too much pressure. The odd times the sun shines I could go out and tackle anything and I do very strange pictures. I always start with a walk or a boat trip. Today, a strong silvery pale sun shone. Very fine. Nature was in festive clothes. Odd that nature doesn't match the festivities of mankind. People are actually deprived of a great release as a consequence. I was so very happy this morning that it sang and bubbled over within me, so I put all my carefully prepared plans to one side and walked for miles in the newly rinsed landscape that danced and sparkled in silver light, round which the autumn colours conjured the most fantastic hues. It was absolutely still and yet autumn thrilled. Or was it perhaps the summer breathing out its last? In Bönhamn too the sounds were more clamorous than usual. Funny that simple people always make a racket if the air is festive. I think that has the same origin as cats in season playing, or cows careering about in meadows. For my part looking at it creatively as an artist or even more so, as a sensitively aware person, I delight in not missing anything in this charged stillness. Then only do you hear how still it can be and do your eyes become aware of every least nuance. Acknowledging this and taking it all in soon makes you tired and so visually exhausted you close your eyes from time to time and smoke a cigarette, which indicates to me that it takes a great deal of energy to really see. Just as much as it takes to paint or to fashion in one way or another the image in comparison with what you have seen.

The woods and fields were enlivened by bright yellow and red patches. The understorey in the forest was fiery red, carmine, from the bilberry shrubs with still a few blue berries. A vast carpet. Then something would suddenly flare up -- fiery red, green, russet, yellow. At the field margin, red arrows with a downy silvery veil over the ripe seed trusses. Just think in summer this plant has those, actually ugly, red purple flowers. Funny that such a commonplace weed, as it dies off, achieves its full glory. A lily of the valley for instance is different. There the birth is the richest, with tiny green and white bulbs producing relatively enormous sappy leaves, and you hardly notice the process of senescence, they just disappear. I think one could say this about most species of bulb: it's precisely that sappy leaf that rots away, instead of drying out. The leaves of wild strawberries become far redder than their most perfectly ripe and scented berries. I started to pick a sprig here and there, until by the time I got home I had a bunch I could hardly carry. With the help of every container I could muster, I displayed them in my room like an enormous fiery autumn symphony and then I stretched a fair sized canvas and immediately applied red, green, yellow, brown so they swirled before my eyes. [Fig. 3]. Thus another canvas, with so much else waiting outside. But I could not leave it. My room is so crammed I can't get into my cupboard and my canvas stands, half in and half out of the door. You have to improvise as much as possible. I think you have got an interesting letter here for the main.

(October)

" - Bless me, at last a moment's peace. Been painting the whole day, with a head saying "stop painting." Where it comes from I don't know, but it gives you the creeps. With each brush stroke you feel as if you are spoiling, rather than improving it. It's as if the paint can't think, your brush is at fault, and still you work on, the dupe of energy, time and feelings of duty. Inwardly you feel you would be better off going for a walk. You fiddle and fiddle to find what is at fault, but you are blind. You keep going out of grim determination as if you

are blind, you paint furiously on, obsessed, and with each stroke you loathe your painting, it becomes an enemy, but you don't allow him to sit on your head and just because of that, lose... become nervous and irritable. He would have been the victor if you had rushed into the woods or plunged into the sea. So you see, it takes a rum pup to blindly work in clods of paint.

It's odd that one fine day all feeling drained out and one can only carry on one's work out of feelings of obligation, when all round one could find fresh inspiration everywhere. In conclusion I have totally lost my direction and would like to run away from my painting, far into the autumnal woods now gleaming in the most radiant colours and shimmering in the evening sun. Everywhere little rivulets run, everywhere it's wet, the moisture driving the warmth away. Norrland's autumn is the most beautiful you could ever live through and indeed more beautiful than any other time of year. Should you ever come here then come at the end of September or beginning October. It is usually fine then too. Mixed in with a few wild, lashing storms or cloudbursts, or suddenly a day of mist. Is anything finer than a fierce storm breaking on the shore with its little houses almost engulfed by the sweep of the waves, which crash with thunderous force in foaming billows? Is anything finer than mist, dense silvery mist, which dampens all sounds, which if viewed from far off makes the hills, woods, fields, flowers float in the sky like illuminated hanging gardens?

All that is unquestionably just as beautiful as that hot sunshine for the tourists, so sought-after by the day-tripper, surely through a mistaken appreciation and understanding of the elements. They miss the whole point of the meaning of nature, just that whole culture of travel, see far-off countries, climb high mountains, stretch out on sun-drenched beaches -- their whole way of enjoyment is so poverty stricken and narrow. You are indeed an enriched person if you can feel for a golden sun, a green tree, a wild wave or a waft of soft mist.



Recently a sort of painter came by for three days, not much better than the aforementioned sort. He climbed up a hill in the mist and came down with a painting "View with Red Sky", he climbed a hill in a storm and came down with "View with a Storm"... roughly the same tune. Thus he made eight canvases in three days. The first day I met him I decided--no more, and nearly had to drive him off. The dolt came to see me and asked to see a painting I'd made he'd heard about, of a mountain 8 km from Bönhamn deep in the woods. He said he wanted to see it, to weigh up if it was worth the bother to go there. I then gave him such an overpoweringly dramatic description of the setting that, blinking in astonishment, he looked at me as if to ask if I was all there, and anxiously left me.

Bliss is it to have become so aware that you can see, can really intensely be aware. Give me a small piece of tree bark or a piece of moss and I am already very happy, delighted in the beauty of it. It's just as big as the furthest landscape.

You ask when I am returning to Holland? Well, I don't really know yet. I'm doing my best to get finished here before Christmas, in any case I have my residential permit until the first of January. I don't know how I shall get back to Holland with all the things I have put together. There is a regular cargo vessel in Kramfors, which sails to Holland. You need have no fear regarding the cold, as I have perfect warm clothes, and even bought some splendid brown leather boots in which you can splash through water. Also I bought in an auction in Näs three fur hats for 25öre. They're really nice. Something for you even. Also a superb ultra-heavy, long wolf-skin coat with square buttons, which I shall probably sell before my departure, as it would fill a whole suitcase.

"Now for a story:-

"That auction was of the effects of old Sjöberg, who was a landowner. Old Sjöberg in his youth had been the captain of a vessel. When he gave up the seafaring life, he had built up a considerable fortune of 20,000kr. The poor man however was smitten with such miserly complexes that in the end he almost stopped eating. Just dry old stale bread. He found everything extravagant. He became so weak, he only lay in bed and if anyone came to visit him, he hid his head under the bedclothes. But there was a buxom woman called Selma and she grabbed hold of him and kept forcing him to eat something, else he would have died of starvation far sooner. Selma treated him like a dog who is ill and whom you force food into. Old Sjöberg however just got worse and worse and was completely unresponsive and didn't even recognise you. The eating complex got so bad that he started to vomit everything over her, so Selma couldn't manage any more. A daughter tried at the very end to save him with artificial foods, but it was too late. Incredible that you can starve yourself to death like that. Otherwise he was totally in good health.

Now the auction: It all sold quickly by raised hands and for high prices, except for the bed and all pillows. They wouldn't touch those items, they were afraid that they would go funny too if they were to

sleep in such a bewitched bed, or even wear one of his enchanted hats -- which is why the three fur hats went for 25öre! Isn't it just priceless. As you see I am ready for anything."

I am now busy with five Bönhamn plates in mosaic. They belong to each other and if I sell them, all five will go together. I shall need a big chest and a strong-armed porter so I can take these mosaics back to Holland. As for my furniture, I'll leave that here, as this could be a future dwelling for Karin.

Incidentally, Mum, I feel nothing for your suggestion for a little house by a lake with some land: Far too dull, you would lose your tension, everything so stolid, dull and unstimulating. I'm staying here till I'm ready, and will then make new plans. I should like to have an exhibition in Amsterdam and at any rate try and sell something. After that, I don't know. Probably I shall forge ahead. I should break off at this point, it's already a full story.

But I would love to have some reading matter. It's as wonderful as companionship. Indeed my pen has nearly become as good a friend to me as my brush and I am almost writing as much as I am painting. I often write until late in the night. I have an urgent wish to make a book of this, accompanied by drawings. It will be Bönhamn sawn through the middle, suddenly revealing stories of Holland and Italy. The aim is to do it roughly as if they were small cameos. The whole barely united by a thread.

The papers also always give me a complete block. This doesn't come from my being so far removed from the world, but much more that I have gained a more objective view of the thunderings of the world press. The Swedish papers are bad, as biased as a bloodsucker wriggling with overactive lice. From which perhaps my great misgivings when everything was so critical. The Dutch paper of the same day is far calmer, clearer and more factual. And yet soon everyone is prattling again, so soon after such an important event. Within two days the whole affair was pushed into the background and all the little trivial concerns that had been temporarily forgotten

returned to prominence. The horribly compromised piecemeal approach of certain English politicians, who clearly out of pure selfishness, make everything straight appear crooked. No country building up its power like that can ever be strong. For two days after that evening at the end of September, Chamberlain kept our and everyone's radio stations live till daybreak. While we dozed in a state of fearful anxiety together with thousands maybe millions, the Good Lord at least interfered in these wild events and made prayers day and night. The world press rejoiced in Chamberlain's achievement, and his name was mentioned in connection with the Nobel peace prize. The world didn't know what to do after the rejoicing, when the demons of war were once more distanced, perhaps for a long time, could it be forever? In Holland people showed their gratitude by sending chocolate eggs from Barneveld. Here they sent salmon, fat living salmon. Bah! Just like an almond-ring cake from Aunt Bet's sewing group. Dear, dear: -- Barneveld sent hen's eggs to England's peace apostle Prime Minister. Lo and behold -- Härnosand sent a salmon to Mr. Chamberlain. And the newspapers report that he doesn't even say thank you to us personally, a letter from his Secretary suffices. Why didn't he say thank you? He got a thank-you, so why not they? But we were not acknowledged. One could almost start a war over it. One had hardly rested after such tensions, hardly had the ministers and presidents rubbed the sleep out of their eyes, hardly had the police forces returned to their beds, when all the pens were scribbling, the typewriters and presses were thundering over that shower Chamberlain who hadn't gone to war.

This doesn't really belong in a letter to you, but rather in my personal writings, but that's how it goes once I have a pen in my fingers. There it is. Now it's really late, I've given you a lot to think about all at once, but be calm...I'm nearly asleep,

(1st November)

" - Thanks for everything! Delighted to receive those books. That was a wonderful breathing space and reprieve after all that wretched,

benighted situation. You say that the matter may now rest; that's a possibility, but for me it wasn't and still isn't clear, but it must be easier and more agreeable for you, now that things are calm again.

As soon as possible, when my finances allow, I shall take on entire financial responsibility for myself and I don't want you to lose a penny over this. I am now talking of gentleman's honour and peace of mind. But for the moment I could not allow myself the luxury of such a gesture and would be most grateful for a further extension of credit. Not only for the end of my stay in Bönhamn, now rapidly approaching, but also I shall certainly need some money for the homeward journey. The weather is really good. Always clear. Finer than it was all summer. Colder of course, but then you don't notice that so much here.

My work is going very well, with a strong and steady impulse. "

Where Folke wrote these letters, in Nordingrå-Ångermanland a half-century ago, was still a mere outpost of mankind, its wild mountainous country full of bears and wolves, its mighty rivers teeming with salmon and its rocky shores indented with tiny coves providing here and there a haven for a fishing village, whose frail craft risked life and limb in pursuit of the abundant herring.

In 1938 it was the scene for Folke's first concentrated output of pictures, which thereafter all simply bore the tag "Bönhamn" [Fig. 4]. It was a time of great inspiration among the tough fishermen where his interpretation of the elemental forces of nature was resolved in part by his recent training: Campendonk for emphasising the decorative, Van Gogh for his method of applying paint, and perhaps Holst for the search for what lay behind the apparent reality. Thus the problem was to deal with so many changing realities: the forests in mists, in rain, in sunlight or in storm. His efforts were especially applied to inanimate objects: water, rocks, trees, nets, boats and mountains rather than people at work or at leisure. Balance, harmony and proportion in a painterly way and with a powerful hand-to-eye coordination inspired by all manner of aesthetic consciousness

resulted in works that are highly pleasing and have a timeless appeal. Inanimate objects aside, the most gripping subject was nature's abundance, which resulted in compelling canvases of herring fishing, the laden boats, the glistening fish, and the bulging nets.

Opposite Bönhamn, and very close, lies the small island of Högbonden, a 250 foot high lump, steep-sided and striking, due to a 30 foot cleft which splits it across the middle. This was the theme for several canvases emphasising the dramatic and mysterious, the sea and the changing light, right until the early Sixties, though all these are missing now.



To visit Bönhamn today is to be reminded of Polperro or St. Ives: A velvet-smooth, dead straight, asphalt superhighway terminates in a large car park from where one walks the short distance to the

cluster of small, red houses serried along the water's edge; everything unchanged, except that the boats are yachts, the drying racks for the nets are relics, and the herrings are totally gone, along with the salmon and the cod. Not a single person earns his living from fishing along the whole coast anymore, since the factory ships cleaned out the Bothnian sea in the last few years. The fishing industry has been replaced by tourism, which still admires the rocks, stunted pines, mosses, velvet scoters and gadwall, but that abundance of nature, so ardently portrayed in 1938, has been greatly diminished.

The Bönhamn period was an important time of concentrated effort free of distractions. There was the temptation to make a tour of some northern cities with his aunt, but this was resisted. In 1935 Campendonk went to the Lofotens with Per Krohg, who was the son of Christian Krohg, one of Denmark's most important painters, who had lived in Grez-sur-Loing and followed the Barbizon. Per Krohg was a friend of Henrik Sörensen and a whole circle of promising young Norwegian painters, so it would have been of great interest to meet Per Krohg, but he kept to his task with the mature attitude that if you don't concentrate and make an intense effort--he was in any case driven by his inner creative force--nothing will come of it. And so it was at Bönhamn that Folke came to his conscious self-realisation, thanks to so many intense experiences, such excitements and such inner fulfilments that he was now set immutably on his life's path, to be a self-supporting artist and nothing else.

CHAPTER 4

MARRIAGE

There had been talk of one or two members of the opposite sex in his letters home, but now someone arrived, who was not mentioned and yet was far more important. Much to his annoyance he discovered that he was not the only painter working in Bönhamn. He had driven off the 'View with Red Sky' painter, but now he found his patch was being invaded by another artist and a woman, to boot.

At first Folke was deeply resentful that another painter was intruding on his inspirational corner of paradise, and resolutely kept his distance, but where he lodged, the widow only prepared meals of fresh, soused or soured herring and potatoes, and sometimes when he passed this other painter's house he scented the most delicious cooking-smells on the air, so – one day he introduced himself. Folke - cheerful, confident, funny, joking about Sjöberg, the widow, the vicar and Albin - but yet still sensitive with his carefully muted tonal range.

They were both enraptured by the natural beauties surrounding them.

She was called Brita Horn.

She was eight years older than he and already had considerable experience and great talent as a painter. An only child, she was the daughter of a salon-loving, intellectual mother, who wrote copious novels, and a very good, deeply honourable gentleman, chiefly interested in army life and the running of his large estate in Skåne, near Hälsingborg, some of the best arable land in Sweden. Their's was not an ideal match: He was little interested in Strindberg and the theatre, in Flaubert, Baudelaire and Balzac, and she hated sex and its connotations, disfiguring her shapely figure deliberately by wearing clothes to flatten her fine bosom and making her teenage daughter do the same.

Christer Horn was the scion of one of Sweden's noblest families, whose ancestor, Arvid Bernhard Horn, served with distinction in the Netherlands and Hungary and then saw action in the Great Northern War as one of Charles XII's leading soldiers. After the defeat of Pultava, he opposed Charles XII's continuing militarism, yet still did not fall from grace, as he was so trusted. When Charles died in 1718, he became Speaker of the Riksdag and he saw to it that the country was ruled in a climate of peace, mercantilism and limited monarchy. Christer, his descendant, was a high-ranking soldier and a gentleman of honour of the old school, who married Viveka Ankarcrona, also of the nobility and with a famous military background. Their differences rapidly became apparent: he took to his bed alone without a murmur after the birth of his daughter, Brita, in 1905, and being kind and very good he simply stood back and allowed his wife to do what she wanted.

Viveka, strong-willed, was determined to take part in the intellectual world, so that her life centred on writing and salons. A string of novels was published, most notably "Flickan från Strömstad" and "The Big Montgomery", which in their time achieved considerable popularity but all of which are out of print now. She had an iron constitution and lived to a ripe old age. Brita's upbringing was also a focus of attention for her mother, with all the emphasis on art and literature, languages and travel, and Swedish culture and theatre. Her abilities in painting took her to the Konstakademie in Stockholm, where she completed her apprenticeship in fine art. Emma Löwstadt was her tutor. She went to Grez sur Loing, which had been a focal point for the Barbizon painters, and she followed in the steps of numerous northern painters who had worked there like Bruno Liljefors and Christian Krohg, but especially Carl Larson and his wife Karin Bergoo, August Strindberg and Ernst Josephson. Grez, with its rural quiet, instantly appealed to the Swedish eye - low meadows, still waters and old stone buildings made the Swedish winter blissfully shorter in March or April. Brita, too, had an inspired spell of painting in Grez and lived during that time in a little house

in the garden of an English painter, Chadwick. Frederick Delius was living in the same village just then with his wife, Jelka, also a painter, so it was for a long time a favoured spot for artists. Returning to Sweden, Brita then became a companion to Sigrid Hjertén, perhaps Sweden's finest Impressionist painter, but now in poor health, and together they journeyed to Sicily in 1934. Working subsequently in Sweden, there survives a splendid canvas of a dinner party from 1936, and Brita also wrote a book "People and Paint" published in 1939.

It so happened that in September/October 1938, Brita journeyed northwards, seeking to capture the landscape of Nordingrån, an area of legendary beauty among Sweden's poets, artists and troubadours, and with something of the feel of the Italian lakes. So she came to Bönhamn. With her gypsy's knowledge of mushrooms, Gallic flair for concocting culinary dishes, and an innate Swedish love of local fish, berries, game and their limited vegetables, she was a fantastic cook. With her aristocratic knowledge of French culture, it was like a dream come true for Folke to discuss Proust, St. Exupéry, Apollinaire and Verlaine. For Brita it was perfect to meet someone so uninhibited, cutting his wood, improvising canvases, bathing no matter how cold the water, tramping up mountains, through all storms and mists with that warm, uncomplicated, Dutch ardour for life.

Love when it happens is such a delirium, so unanswerable, so direct, so permeatingly quick.

Soon after she met Folke, she called him "Pulls", and Folke too was enchanted.

To plight her troth, Brita gave him a little decorated matchbox, painted (in Folke's way by using the pointed end of the brush to delineate) "Pulls' Cupboard", which, when opened, contained five half-inch drawings entitled "Wakening" showing a figure asleep on a bed of heather between boulders and trees, "Watering", "Five currant buns" and "a Wine shop". Their love was sealed.

On the 19th of January 1939 they were married in Brita's parents' house in Birger Jarlsgatan, Stockholm. It was a very small family

ceremony, just the two sets of parents present and the statutory witnesses. No regular income, no established career, just themselves, their passion for life, their absolute self-assurance in their emerging art, and Marius, at least, prepared to support his son with all necessary money in the early years. Before this momentous event, there was much work to be done organising his first exhibition. Folke had returned to his parent's house - they had now moved to de Lairesestraat, Amsterdam - and from there he arranged to exhibit with the very same gentleman, Mr. C. van Lier, whose gallery was at no. 126 Rokin, to whom he had been introduced by his father in a previous autumn with Jan Meine Jansen. In a letter of the fourth of January, Mr. van Lier offered his premises for the period 18th February to 9th March. The gallery included a large room for the oils and a small room, one floor up, for the drawings, with a fixed charge of 200 Fl., 20% commission on the first 750 Fl., 10 percent thereafter, with all other expenses apart from transport paid for by the exhibitor. The gallery politely requested a list of titles and prices, names and addresses for invitations and some biographical details.

The exhibition opened exactly as planned and was widely reviewed in the Dutch press with very positive notices. On the 22nd of February 1939 *The Algemeen Handelsblad* (=The Dutch Times) reported "The joyfulness of a young painter able to follow his chosen calling in surroundings entirely suited to his longings, shines through in these works. They speak of a spirit of inner refinement, while, outwardly, there is a delightfully fresh, unspoiled and uncomplicated quality in his work. Heybroek possesses above all a feeling for decorative effects and portrays them in an exceptionally lively and spontaneous way. For instance he likes to scratch in the paint. Sometimes, as in "Autumn Colours" there is too great a loss of form - this work is actually a collection of fine, rhythmically arranged, groups of colours. similarly in "The Cabbage Field", where one scarcely finds composition or colour contrasts, one can only call it a picture in a reduced sense, and yet charm shines out of it in the same way as a piece of cloth. In this respect Heybroek reveals a

certain link with Paul Klee, though one would be wrong to find any direct influence from this artist". The other paintings singled out were "Harbour at Bönhamn" and "Fishing Appliances", used as the cover of his invitation, but now missing.

The *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* (= The Manchester Guardian) intoned: "This is his first exhibition and it is an unusual one. No trace of Röhling or the Academy in these paintings. His work does and doesn't remind one of others. "Kids" for instance has no blocking of the plane; "Water rings round Stones" has something of the Bali artists recently shown here; "Docks" is half van Gogh and half Nieweg. A peculiarity of almost all the canvases is their flat verticalism, no foreground, no space. They miss perspective. Where are the "Stones" seen from? From under the water? Not that the viewpoint can't be logically worked out, but it is a question that follows. But when the canvas "Fishing Appliances" has everything hanging except two items, a coil of rope and a wooden item - these latter painted in the horizontal plane - questions begin to be asked as to whether one sees the verticalism of the background continued to the foreground. A painter must at least be logical, although even the illogical has its logic. As a decorative work it is too full and too busy and as a natural still life it is too undifferentiated in colour. The plastic quality of the rope work is not the result of colour, but of the scratched out drawing, and the blocked ground has something of a mosaic. For all that, one can conclude, with approval, that this young painter is in search of an individual style of decorative painting."

De Telegraaf (= The Telegraph) weighed in on the 28th of February with a major article and a photo of the "Harbour at Bönhamn" under the headline "Debut of a decorative painter: Folke Heybroek reveals nature in his ornamentation" "Let me state right away that this is a happy debut for the 25 year-old painter, even if one may have reservations over his rather strange understanding of the art of painting, whose ways he does not always honour. He seems to me above all gifted for decorative art, and it is evident that he was a pupil of Heinrich Campendonk, whose paintings were once

exhibited prior to his appointment as Professor. One can clearly see their influence on Heybroek.

“This is not as important an issue as one might imagine, for originality is a myth in the art of painting and we all imitate, both as followers and contemporaries: Matisse closed his studio to pupils when he found that they weakly imitated him; Lhote was wiser and hung a notice in his pupils’ studio: that it was forbidden to make sub-Lhotes.

“Heybroek paints things not only as he sees them, but also as he comprehends them. He represents outwardly very charming things, not slavishly, but takes from nature just what he needs to achieve his goal. In “Water Rings round Stones”, which somewhat reminds one of a modern photo, he doesn’t paint here with the tip of his brush, but less elegantly with the point of the handle, drawing lines in the wet paint which go through to the white ground. In his “Autumn Colours” he employs colour blocks as a mosaicist does with stones, which seems more appropriate to mosaic, fresco, stained glass or weaving than canvas. He is perfect in mosaic as evidenced by the five small examples in this medium. Figures appear not to be his strongest side, but we shall follow the development of this decorative talent with interest.”

Folke wrote “van Lier was a most likeable man and the only gallery owner prepared at that time to exhibit more adventurous, living painters. I saw Campigli (= a group of Italian artists, formed in 1922, that favoured a return to the great Italian representational art of the past) there for the first time, for instance, as well as modern Balinese and young Dutch painters”

On the fourth of March, van Lier wrote “your exhibition is all round a success, though strangely enough without a single sale. In general all are impressed by your originality, character and feeling for colour, especially your fellow painters. But with the wider public there is the typical Dutch reserve towards a young unknown. As always they wait for full fame and recognition with the attendant tenfold increase in prices, and then they buy.

A pity you could not see the exhibition, it looked very good. For me the canvas “Cattle” on which you were still working was the overall winner, except that the circle of green leaves is rather heavy and you will perhaps come to agree with me and change it. I hope all goes well with you and your wife in the far north. P.S. the drawing “Herring nets” has just been sold.”

On the 11th of March van Lier sent his final reckoning showing that the drawing sold for 60fl., leaving Folke in receipt of a much-needed 48fl., while his father paid the 200fl.fixed charge and concluded with the summary, forwarded to Stockholm:

“Thus again an exhibition is history, and a felicitous history. Interest remained high till the end. Nor, contrary to your expectations, did the position on sales alter. I see absolutely no cause for concern in this, this also will fall into place, though rather slower than anticipated. I heard you were ill, are now recovered and will soon depart for Italy. I wish you a very fruitful time and am most curious as to the results from there. My best wishes to you both.”

Folke’s friend, Piet van Eeghen, chided him for not going to see his own exhibition and said next time he must paint a large canvas and hide behind it, as the comments would be highly instructive. Then he did a series of five cartoons of the various visitors to the exhibition including, “the man who could do it better”, “the lady who finds it so charming”, “the real enthusiast”, “not much to it, eh?”, and “the worldly connoisseur.” No catalogue list survives unfortunately, but one can deduce that there were some 50 works on view and there is reference to 21 works from Bönhamn and 8 earlier works from Holland.

Folke had long before departed to Stockholm, to Brita, and was set to go to Brita’s beloved Italy and on to Sicily, its most distant corner. His father collected all the unsold paintings and stored them in his attic, occasionally hanging one or two downstairs. Whence, to his great chagrin, many of them disappeared, as almost a decade was to elapse before he could return and by then the collection of at least 30 canvases had melted as loans, borrowings or gifts.

Leaving aside Renaissance Florence or Venice, they searched for the wild, the primitive and the romantic, and where could be more so than Sicily? Viking raids had struck there; these were followed in the twelfth century by a golden age under Norman rule. These invaders were recent Viking descendants, who had left Normandy to enlist in Apulian city-states as mercenaries and proved indomitable warriors: All were the sons of Tancred and all hailed from the tiny village of Hauteville la Guichard. They rose by force of arms to become counts, dukes and eventually kings, Robert the Guiscard winning southern Italy and Roger, with the help of his younger brother Sarlo, of Sarlo's Rock fame, becoming King of Sicily in 1094. This ushered in 150 years of tolerance and prosperity, as king Roger, having conquered, never offended his Greek Orthodox or Islamic subjects. A year later he ignored Pope Urban's appeal to join the crusade to recover the Holy Places and in fact King Roger preferred to rely on his Saracen troops and administrators. He rejected calls to attack the Sultan of Tunisia and established peace and harmony in his lands unequalled anywhere else in Europe. This led in due course to a flowering of art, science and poetry during the 12th century, as his son Roger II continued to maintain peace, toleration and prosperity. One of the glories of the Sicilian Normans was King William II's Benedictine monastery, established in Monreale in 1174, and which developed into a cathedral after 1183. This is one of Italy's finest churches with its mix of Norman, Byzantine and Saracen styles and especially famous for its vast interior mosaics covering an area of six acres, created by a group of Byzantine craftsmen in their own late Commenian style: agitated, expressive, swirling scenes of the miracles and life of Christ, the old Testament, and SS. Peter and Paul.

In the spring of 1939, Folke and Brita arrived in Monreale, a town a few miles inland from Palermo, which was dominated by the cathedral and the remains of the monastery, that is, the splendid cloister. They found a dwelling on the edge of the town and quickly learnt that the water supply was intermittent and dependent on the extortions of the Mafia. The fact that this part of the island had endured centuries of

interminable wars, earthquakes and impoverishment had created a "sullen mental climate", unlike anywhere else in the Mediterranean, which had already been observed by Goethe, and was now equally observed by Folke in his intense drawing "Procession passing a wine shop" and his lithograph "Sicilian wine bar", [Figs. 5 & 6], now in Stockholm's Modernamuseet. On the one side a magnificent natural landscape - "Cactus", and on the other heart-rending poverty - "Maria Cooks Maize", [Fig. 7].

Adding to the stifling oppressiveness of life in Monreale was the drift to war, with Mussolini's ever greater admiration for Hitler, whose menace was only too clear after the Munich crisis. Everywhere round them they felt the primitive forces which provided the Mafia's springboard, despite Cesare Mori's attentions: that private loyalties and personal violence are the best means of survival in a cruel world. Montelepre, just a little further into the mountains, was Salvatore Giuliano's headquarters. He started out as a Robin Hood against the Latifundia (the kingdom of Naples and Sicily had belonged to the Spanish throne for 600 reactionary years), then turned bandit, and was used by the Separatists who wanted to join the United States as the 53rd State.

The truth was that there was violence and foreboding everywhere, yet among the poor, they found help and friendship. They experienced the great Easter procession with its apocalyptic drumbeat and dancing torch lit shadows, and they heard the mournful, Arabian fishermen's songs and saw the broad fertile sweep of the Conca D'Oro (= golden shell) flattening down to Palermo, with its productive orange and olive groves. It was a wonderful working honeymoon of heat, rocks, thorns and strong wind, where the real world could be forgotten in a dazzling artistic quest, sometimes naive and sometimes inspired.

It was no longer the stable if oppressed society Brita had visited in 1934 with Sigríd Hjertén, with fascism, the mafia, and agrarian revolt all in open conflict, but it provided a view of life that was never forgotten, and Brita retained a lifelong love of Italy and its working

people as well as its Luchino Viscontis, its Alberto Moravias and its Carlo Levis. Carlo Levi was especially admired by Brita for his “Christ died at Eboli” and even for “Words are Stones” where Levi discussed the Mafia with his lawyer friend:

“Just as we had climbed the hill above the broad garden-filled valley of the Conca D’Oro and were entering the piazza of Monreale, the hot African wind was blowing with a scorching breath that made the green palm-fountain with its mossy, grooved Saracen stonework, in the retired corner of the cloister, seem, to our imagination, even fresher and moister than it was...we halted just for a moment, at the corner of the piazza in front of a kind of warehouse. This is one of the capitals of the mafia, from here you can dominate Palermo.”

This scene could almost spring out of “Procession passing a Wine Shop.”

Needless to say, Folke and Brita avidly read “Christ died at Eboli” after the war and heard how Salvatore Giuliano was shot down in 1950 in the street of his own town of Castelvetro, and how his mother licked his blood off the street.

In early September, war was declared on Germany, and though Italy did not enter the war until the tenth of June 1940, on the grounds of some defensive treaty, the Italian authorities wanted to intern Folke as an enemy alien, being Dutch. Fortunately Brita, being Swedish, was able to exploit her status as a neutral. She found a ship, which was just setting sail for Morocco, in Palermo harbour, and somehow managed to persuade the skipper to take both her and her husband whom she also called Swedish. For them war had in the end come unexpectedly, and they suddenly had to down tools and leave with what few canvases and folios they could carry. Little did they know that their vessel was engaged in gun-running, as it dodged authorities along the coast of North Africa, but when they found out, they had little option but to keep quiet during the various illicit transfers; they eventually disembarked, without being blown up, in Tangier. Here Brita this time found a Swedish vessel on its homeward journey and

once again secured a passage for Folke, but as they entered the waters close to the British Isles, a British warship ordered the vessel to sail into Scapa Flow until further notice, for their own safety, as the Navy had no idea how the battle would develop in the Atlantic. And so, still in September, they witnessed the dreadful explosions when a U-boat torpedoed the battleship “Royal Oak” with the loss of 833 lives and other vessels of the main British North Sea fleet, a terrible event in the middle of the night.

Their brief internment now extended for a further seven months, so that Brita’s newly discovered pregnancy must have progressed with steadily increasing anxiety. At no stage was permission granted for anyone on their vessel to go ashore, which was a disappointment to Folke, who had a great desire to meet the author of “Sealskin Trousers” and “The Wind on the Moon”, Eric Linklater, who was also in the Orkneys just then, and whom he had met previously in Stockholm.

But the worst hardship of their “boat arrest” was later described as lack of toothpaste.

CHAPTER 5

DEAR FELLOW ARTIST

Like Gösta Berling, they escaped the wolf packs of the North Sea and reached that strange shadowland that was Sweden bending before the Nazi storm. It was an ignominious oasis of calm where, at best, the ruling parties were too frightened to fight, at worst, they were pro-German. Only the Communists, who had no power, wanted war. King Gustaf V's wife was a German, who never did anything to oppose the Nazis, and Gustaf, too, was tacit. Even before the war, the Swedish government agreed to a German diplomatic request for all new passports to be stamped with the letter "J" where relevant, and, to maintain "neutral" status in the face of Hitler's ultimatum, 2.5 million German troops were entrained across Sweden to conquer Norway and also to wreak awful, almost total, devastation on Finland in the two campaigns, of conquest and of retreat. At least when the authorities caught him, they did not hand over the British agent to the Germans, after he was smuggled in by Norwegian partisans in 1943 to blow up a supply train near Krylbo, when the guards were killed.

On the 21st of June 1940 they were blessed with a daughter, Mieke Marion, a joyful moment indeed. Folke, warm, always optimistic, positive and natural, wanted lots of children. While war was unresolved and still raging, Brita could not even think of more children. It was not her only thought, probably it was hardly a thought at all, but the fact was that while she had one child only, she was able to continue her work and do quite a bit of painting.

Her knowledge of her country also provided the answer to where they were going to live. Mariefred is a small town on lake Mälaren some 60 km from Stockholm, quite close to a railway, with a ferry service to Stockholm in the summer months. Chiefly famous for its castle, Gripsholm, begun in 1537 during the reign of Gustaf Vasa,

who first properly unified Sweden and rolled back the power of the Danes. It was designed like Kalmar, Vadstena and Älvsborg to be a rallying point and supply centre to equip the home forces against any invading army, rather than a defensive bastion. Gripsholm was not the scene of any battle, but was used as a royal prison on two dramatic occasions: by Erik XIV to imprison his over-mighty stepbrother Duke Johan who had proclaimed himself King of Estonia, though later the tables were turned when Erik went mad and was himself incarcerated in Kalmar castle; and by Bernadotte's invading army to imprison the defeated King Gustaf Adolf IV. It enjoys a beautiful setting on a low tongue of land extending into the Mälaren, has wonderful marquetry panelling and some great paintings by Beck, from Holland, who had learnt the methods of Rembrandt. Queen Christina also liked to spend time there, which it is felt may account for the dedication of the church to St Mary, something which is very rare in Protestant Sweden.

They had no money. Marius was struggling for even the most basic of necessities, with the occupation of Holland. They rented a small upstairs flat and lived as simply as possible. Brita gave French lessons and Folke painted with undiminished energy towards an exhibition. Already in Sicily he had, through Brita, attempted to hire two rooms in the Stockholm Akademie for an exhibition in October 1941, but they replied that this would clash with their autumn collective salon, and that in any case they were unwilling to make a commitment prior to a viewing of his work. Now, with the world tearing itself apart all round him, Folke made those microbial almost abstract paintings built up of myriad patches of colour, if not pointillist then tachist, where the subject was masked, broken down, and concealed. These canvases were very laborious and painstaking, which fitted both the feeling of almost working in a vacuum because of his cultural isolation, and the extreme shortage of materials. Other more accessible, more charming canvases were also painted, of the surroundings of Mariefred.

At the end of 1941, Folke signed a contract with Harry Lund to

exhibit at Gummeson's Gallery, a prime location and still in use, on Strandväg, looking across to Stockholm's old harbour, and one of the capital's most prestigious galleries. Cost 500 kroner, plus 20 percent commission, with the exhibitor responsible for his own transport to and from.

There is no mention as to how he financed all this, but hitherto his opportunities for income from picture sales had been minuscule and would have defeated most painters. So securing such an expensive locale was a big gamble, needing considerable self-confidence; especially as Sweden then only had a tiny art market. In those days it was not customary for middle-class families to buy oil paintings, and the country as a whole was unfamiliar with the enormous strides in art that had taken place in Paris and Europe. The war changed this as both during and, especially, after it, enormous prosperity ensued. Culture and art became an integral part of Swedish life, with an unfettered acceptance of modernism, and folk art was put to one side. Folke writes:

" - Harry Lund was quite a friendly man, who could have been any kind of businessmen at all. As help, he had Marusja Engvall, who belonged to the out and out Bohemian side of Stockholm; she was a dear, warm being of quality with a Russian feeling for art. We had our vernissage party at Östermalm. She had invited the cream of the city's cultured intelligentsia and I had prepared a special Indonesian rice table, which was quite an achievement in those wartime days. But thanks to Arvid Nordqvist and Bjorn Palm, it succeeded. I had never before prepared a rice table and never before prepared food for at least 40 people, but Swedes are kind and credulous and as long as there is plenty to drink they are happy.

" - It was very, very cold those days. One day -42 degrees and a polar snowstorm. Not a soul about except one 92 year-old Jack Frost, who still had to take his walk in the fresh air. Covered in rime, he came in and warmed himself for a while."

The Gummeson's exhibition can only be described as a great

success. With 30 oils, 10 gouaches and 20 drawings, he sold 22 works with a sale value of 4400 kroner. Against this, deductions came to 1900 kr, leaving 2500 kr. to cover materials and the best part of a year and a half's work. It was an excellent result, and yet the deductions show how hard it was to make a living as a painter. The gallery had sneaked in a 25% commission charge contrary to their assigned contract allowing for 20 percent, to which they added a further 5% VAT. Their 500 kr. fee was the price one had to pay to secure such a fashionable location, but then they charged mercilessly for every little extra - three cycle deliveries - 7.20 kr., postage-7.80kr., packaging- 6kr., transport, catalogues- 49 kr., advertisements - 253 kr., refreshments for 100 people - 16 kr., one frame- 34 kr., etc.; altogether adding a further 500 kr. to the deductions. It was a necessary and important exercise in reputation building, but the haemorrhaging of costs was something that Folke thereafter did his best to stanch.

This time there were reviews in 11 different Swedish newspapers and even the 3 main newspapers in wartime Holland. This was a significant reaction from the art critics of the time, such as only a handful of artists could expect. The critics on the whole reacted with incomprehension and doubt, even while the public was reacting by buying a third of the works. The most glowing review came from the correspondent of the Dutch Telegraaf:

"The work is principally from the last two years: a series of large canvases of Sicily, some slightly older canvases from Holland and northern Sweden, and the most recent works in and around Mariefred. Mostly of an unmistakably Dutch disposition, it is surprising to see how, in one of his most recent works - of the daughter in a playpen, wife and mother on a bench in the garden behind Mariefred church - it makes one think of Sweden.

"Of the paintings from Sicily, we particularly point out a large, scorchingly lit landscape of wild cacti in silver and grey tints, between which one glimpses a little Eden with peaches and flowers under dark green. Fine of tone is a Sörmland landscape emerging from the dry summer of the previous year, called "The Dry Spring". Also a

landscape "Rye Field, Holland", with its lowering sky and threatening thunderclouds above the sunken Dutch landscape. To conclude, Heybroek has done a series of Indian ink drawings - amongst them a delightful scene of ice-skating on the Amsterdam canals. The painting which attracted the greatest controversy was No 13 and had the title "Seglats" which can only be weakly translated as "sailing" when perhaps it means voyaging or sailing trips or seafaring; Viking ships had a sail; Mariefred, where they lived, was a favoured mooring for yachtsman, where, tossed by the elemental winds and waves, the helmsman planed the mighty seas. For this painting Svenska Dagbladet said: "His, to our eyes, rather strange technique with paint patterns applied as in a mosaic, and in which the motif is indicated in a more or less abstract manner, sometimes totally disappearing, creates a bit of a barrier for anyone contemplating owning some of his work. One discovers here a rather precious artist with a pale, agreeable but rather anaemic choice of colours."

Then there was the Aftonbladet: "Heybroek's art stands all the time on the boundary of abstract art. In "Seglats", he errs well into the other side, where, with the help of squalls and clouds of shimmering paint spots he divides the meeting of heaven and sea. The most extreme reaction came from Berco newspaper: "Here the critics have a perfect opportunity to praise an artist and discover all sorts of unusual qualities in him, this despite 90 percent of ordinary folk not being able to see what the pictures portray. The exhibition might as well be entitled "guessing games". The hardest riddle of all is "Sailing" (= "Seglats") [Fig. 8] put together as a mosaic, thousands of small spots on the canvas like a kilo of confetti. After looking at it for 10 minutes I was barely able to make out a man's head and the suspicions of a body, but that was all. I asked some of the bystanders if they could detect boats. Then the artist himself came forward - he was a very jolly chap - and declared that all the remainder (about 1300 small pieces) were boats. When I commented on the difficulties in finding this, he replied that this was abstract art and belonged with these times. At this moment a Swedish troll-bumpkin stepped forward and said loudly to everyone,

"That one can chuck about oil paint like this now when there is such a shortage of materials is one matter, but I would be very pleased to hear how much tree-spirit one has to drink to get in the mood to make such a thing?" he asked to murmurs of general agreement "I drank no alcohol when I made this painting" answered the artist politely, while maintaining his self-control.

"Dunces will always understand everything! I must now speak more encouragingly to the artist, some of whose works are beautifully painted, to speak truthfully, so I led the conversation to his impressions of Sicily, especially what he had learnt from the famous mosaics of Monreale. He agreed at length as to their exceptional beauty. Yes, I said, but one can see what they represent. Then he replied, "Even in ancient art they made things where you cannot see what it represents. There can come a time when a work like this one will be understood. People always follow so far behind." Folke Heybroek is a man working in the very long term. He hopes for fame in 1000 years and I heartily wish this for him and hope this canvas survives."

As a postscript one can add that the painting still survives, but was never again offered for sale. It was the middle of the war with everywhere terrible news regarding its outcome. In this atmosphere it was impossible to paint the simple delights of family life. Furthermore as painting materials became scarce to the point of being unobtainable, Folke changed his art, so that everything was painstaking with images built up from endless small elements in a very time consuming way. He called his painting microbial - to reflect the endless turmoil in the world, then with its multitudinous divided forces and he lived through these times in concentrated work on just a few canvases. As Folke said years later, " - Sweden was so isolated just then, one lived in the sort of vacuum, culture sort of ceased, one was so closed in, I was young, I worked outside time, I was thinking more of a cosmological painting, where there are molecules, very detailed."

This is the most extreme of these detailed paintings, the other examples of a rather abstract approach to composition and colour are apparent in “Cactus”, “The Dry Spring” [Fig. 9], “Horses on the Mere” [Figs. 10 & 11], “Landscape with Docks”, and “Landscape with Cow”.

“Market Gardener’s Planting” is an earlier work from Holland, and the two gouaches “Maria Cooks Maize” and “Wagons in a Field” are from Sicily, when the mood and intention were different, being detailed yet clearly recognisable compositions. There survives a small black and white photo of “Stones” which was not even catalogued, with the comment by Folke, “ - This painting was bought by Sven Söderholm: Actually he should have been at home for the baptism of his child, but he wanted nothing to do with this Christian invention, so his wife had to take part in the baptism alone, and instead (like a Pilate) he bought a painting and went round the gallery.”

Another work which attracted notice (but is now untraceable) was a 5m cartoon of a decorative nature of “The Baltic Herring Fishery” described thus by Yngve Berg, of Dagens Nyheter: “As unifying factor the painter has, with great ingenuity, used evocative fishing appliances, nets, ropes, floats etc. slipping them into the composition of the stormy sea, the fishing scenes and many fisher-folk”.

After the success at Gummesson’s, life became a little less cramped, constrained and constricted. A two room upstairs flat (from whose confines the lithograph “Ladies Taking Tea”, [Fig. 12], was composed) was exchanged for a delightful, red, timbered house in the fields overlooking Mälaren, called “Lugnet” (= calm) just outside the town and there was money for a little social life. They became firm friends with the dentist who had a sharp sense of humour and was to have a surgery filled with paintings, so they often dined together out of conviviality and their shared love of good food and wine. Folke never stopped painting all this time and according to the dentist’s daughter he was always thinking of doing things his way. Brita too was painting and providing a steady income by giving her French lessons. After the war, one summer’s day, they gave a party at Lugnet

- a bathing trunks, buckets and spades party — and when everyone came, the downstairs rooms were spread with thick sand - they didn’t worry about cleaning up, and next day the dentist Nisse Spångberg had a very heavy head. At some stage Nisse commissioned Folke to paint his portrait.

Another good friend was Harry Karlsson, who was about 18 in 1940, played the accordion at folk dances, and was an apprentice carpenter. “That’s good”, said Folke, “You can help me make my picture frames.” For him the picture frame had to complement the picture decoratively and was a most important adjunct. Harry started to take up drawing and asked Folke to show him how to do it. “Just do it!” He replied, he never taught anything directly, he just said that it was wonderful. Harry had never seen art like Folke’s before, the lines were so coarse and hard, but eventually Folke showed him many, many drawings by van Gogh and he felt that Folke drew in a similar way, though he never copied him. In Harry Karlsson’s words “He had the same vision, the same Dutch way of looking, I never got to know another real artist like him, he knew exactly what he wanted to do, he wasn’t a bit shy and everything had to be funny, we were always laughing.” From these beginnings Harry Karlsson’s drawing skills blossomed, he studied at the Stockholm Konstakademie and became for many decades the townscape and landscape illustrator for Dagens Nyheter and a much more famous national figure than Folke. His pen and ink drawings are charming, there are several volumes in print, and he could be compared to Ken Messer of the Oxford Times, as an artist.

Painting continued apace, with Folke assembling sixty canvases for his next exhibition two years hence.

In the meantime, in December 1942, he received an inquiry for a wall decoration for Lidköping’s Mekaniska Verkstad, a machine tools company established in 1885 that employed 800 men in 1944 and was then a subdivision of S.K.F. L.M.V. is still in business today as an independent company after a management buyout, exporting precision grinders to Germany, the United States and China with

a labour force of 250. The sales director put it very formally: "Thy proposal was received with great interest and I am almost certain that the work with decoration in our factory shall be awarded for thy approval." Folke writes,

" - Bertil Damm at first had the commission with a painting called "Midsummer Dance", but just then he died, and gradually I came into the reckoning. They wanted me to come down to Lidköping first, to see for myself the building with its lighting and dimensions, so I travelled down around St Lucia's Day (= 13th of December). In Katrineholm I had to change trains and according to the timetable wait for an hour, yet somehow I missed the train, which left under my nose. I became concerned as the directors were to meet me on the platform at Lidköping. So I spoke with a taxi driver who assured me that he would drive me to the next station on time. The train could only go very slowly, as the boiler was only stoked with wood. But the car was also only running on birch charcoal. The road wound through 60kms of forest. Going as fast as possible, we were stopped at a level crossing and just then the train rumbled past. At full throttle we came to Vingåker station just as the train drew away. My driver became worried, put a sack of birch wood into the stove, and didn't really want to go any further. But I persuaded him, next station was Kilsmo, even if we had a small chance in Högsjö, but at Högsjö I just saw it disappear after a skiddy trip over twisty roads. I did take the step of speaking to the station master who promised to ring Kilsmo that we were coming. It was an endless road and the firewood began to be used up so the car was going slower and slower. In the end we just got there...and there was the train waiting. I paid my fare, the stationmaster waved on the train, the situation was saved, and it was an exciting adventure.

" - At Lidköping I was immediately taken by the directors to the rotary club's St Lucia celebration, which was a pretty ghastly affair, and then I found that one of the directors was an arch Nazi and Germano-phile, but his partner and fellow director was the opposite. I lived handsomely at their expense in the Stadshotell (in Sweden

every town has one and it was formerly always the grandest) and feasted on expensive lunches and dinners having already danced with their wives.

" - Isaac Grunewald was also living in my hotel just then as he was working in Rörstrand (the lake front almost next door to Lidköping's and the site for one of Sweden's most famous porcelain works): He at least is a master in colour". (Grunewald was Sigrid Hjertén's husband and was "a man of 1908" i.e. a man who had studied under Matisse at his academy at the Couvent des Oiseaux, perhaps more commonly known as the Ecole de Marquise). In due course Folke's commission came through in this way:

"Referring to our previous dealings and to your conversation with Doktor Tornebohm of S.K.F., Göteborg, we would like to enquire whether you are prepared to replace the expensive design with a cheaper decoration, the price, including your already completed sketch not to exceed 2000 kr.

Years later Folke noted:

" - They didn't order a suit. They settled for a little waistcoat instead - but in any case it was my first decorative commission in Sweden". However Folke must have curtly replied that he couldn't do it for less than 2400 kr. as that nice Mr. Ekholm confirmed a bit later that they would be pleased to order it for that price, with a request to carry it out as soon as possible. And indeed it was another of Folke's strong points that in all the commissions he undertook, he was always on time, unlike many of his fellow artists, and only ever for a good reason, which was hardly ever, did he run over budget.

In this way his sometimes naive expressions of indignation are actually wholly justified. As for instance with his description of his next small commission - to make a carpet design based on the Baltic herring fishery which was produced subsequently at a Gävle carpet factory for AB Tapet-Magasinet in 1943. A cheque was sent for 300 kr. -"according to our agreement" with the comment by Folke - "Miserable stingy people; but they did run to an expensive lunch

at the "Opera Källaren" (Stockholm's top restaurant). The lunch cost more than the carpet design, that's the logic of business people. Curious." In conclusion on the Lidköping contract, Folke writes,

" - It was a considerable feat to complete such a large painting in the small, low rooms of Lugnet in Mariefred but in spring 1944 it was ready. I can't remember how I delivered the whole, but I do remember that the river Lid had a terrific spring flood and that the ice swept away the bridges." It is oil on board, measures 5.7 m by 2 m, is signed and dated 30.3.44 and is in very good condition. Soon after, a series of four black and white still photographs shows the workers taking lunch in the new dining-room - wolfing sandwiches, swigging milk from their pinta's, intent on eating, not laughing and talking, trilby hats and Lenin caps - certainly no one casting a glance at the "art", dungarees and hands oily in the black wartime atmosphere. Mr. Ekholm and the management however, were clearly pleased with their commission as, just after the war, they decided to use the entire painting to front their brochure for overseas clients. Today the painting is still much admired, hangs in the main entrance hall, where one is instantly greeted by a helpful receptionist, and the whole atmosphere is polite, friendly and cooperative. There are plans to move it yet again to their old building, which is going to be converted to a museum. So "The Midsummer Dance" lives on [Figs. 13 & 14]. At the time Folke was working on the Midsummer Dance he participated in a group exhibition in Stockholm with the title "Artists in flight to the Land" which took place in January. Of this, critic Otto Carlsund wrote:

"A timber shack was thrown up on the Nybroplan (Stockholm's equivalent of Trafalgar Square), something of a log cabin to simulate farm life in the metropolis, with only the aroma of the dung heap and coffee and buns missing to really authenticate the setting. A little free chapel to celebrate art, instead of the high temple of Liljevalch-- and when did one last see any art there? The vernissage was launched in the presence of Royalty and though the exhibition doesn't give the impression of displaying the giants of world art - they have probably

gone to America - it would be churlish to be too critical, as even at the entrance there is something showing a promise to be fulfilled" he then lists the participants who were described by Folke in these words; Peter Weiss- "I first met him when he was still just a painter". (In 2003 Bukowski's auctioned his "Villa Mia" for £22,000) Egon Möller-Nielsen "was also a nice, though rather wet acquaintance." Endre Nemes- "was unbearably talkative but rather intriguing" Jan Brazda - "I never liked or had any contact with him. He was the son of Amelie Posse, who occasionally attended Viveka Horn's salons."

About Folke, Otto Carlsund, who wrote for "Konstvärlden", reported- "Folke Heybroek, already known as a highly spiritual and refined draughtsman, shows in his few images that not everyone from his country, Holland, degenerates into a van Gogh."

Throughout 1944 work continued with undiminished energy. Clearly the tide of war was turning in favour of the forces of freedom so there could be a normalisation of motif away from the hidden, totally restrained, fragmented and painstaking, towards ordinary domestic scenes, studies of Mieke, now aged 4, evocations from Sicily and local figures and landscapes. In the summer they had probably been on a trip to Skåne, to Brita's uncle Gösta near Hälsingborg, as there were several paintings from Skåne. These are only known to have existed thanks to the surviving list of 60 works exhibited in November 1944 at the Eskilstuna Konstforenigen. This was a joint husband and wife exhibition of 120 works, Brita Horn and Folke Heybroek opening on the 29th.

Eskilstuna Art Society was established in 1926 after a widely advertised public meeting in the town hall, with the object of developing and promoting interest in fine art. This was enthusiastically attended, and a committee was formed with the task of putting on exhibitions, lectures and study meetings on art, organising lotteries with artworks as prizes and aiming to build up a representative collection. For the first ten years, exhibitions were held either in the Town Hall, the Freemason's or Stads Hotell, but in 1937 they took over the old 18th-century hospital which had been redesigned so that

up to 150 paintings could be displayed. By 1948, when the museum was incorporated in the municipality, the art society had staged about 150 exhibitions and the collection had become very considerable, as it was customary for the exhibitor to donate one of his works, and furthermore the society often made a purchase at the time of the exhibition. As of now the museum possesses three or four of Folke's works so perhaps he donated "a Glade" (Skogsbyn) and "Net's Drying" as he exhibited twice, and perhaps the society purchased "Oak" (Ek) and "The Ram" (Bagge).

At any rate Folke and Brita were invited by Dr Petrus Ranström, one of the founders of the society and on the purchasing sub-committee, to exhibit, with these words, "Highly honoured Artistic couple, invitations for the opening on the 29th of November will be sent out soon, the caretaker will help with the hanging, if you wish you may stay in the museum and the caretaker could provide you with meals." Dr Ranström was a consultant, married to Suzanne Larsson, eldest child of Carl Larsson, the well-known painter.

Folke writes,

" - On the 29th it was very snowy, dark and dripping wet. The gentry of Eskilstuna arrived, and then the lights went out in the town, so all were gathered together in total darkness. I rushed into town and bought Christmas tree candles and set them out. It was beautiful, but everyone went home rather soon, and there we stood in the large dark room.

" - Next day, not a sausage, as there had been no advertisements. Next day the same, and the third day, dead all the time. On Monday I had had enough, so I bought fireworks, which I let off in front of the museum at 5pm. just as everyone was coming out of work. At once I gained a good attendance. This was the story that followed in the newspapers, "Artists in Panic-- The town's Art Society only wants the venue hired out and they couldn't care less about the art being shown there."

" - That hit home: Petrus Ranström was embarrassed. Next day the whole committee came, Allan Ebeling and Hans Lillan came, Suzanne came with flowers for Brita, the director of the steelworks and all the bigwigs came...and they bought!

" - At the same time something else happened. Isaac Grunewald was going to lecture on Matisse. He arrived on the afternoon train and was met at the station by a man from the art society who said that the Professor was to stay at the Stadshotell, and that he had a taxi standing by. But the taxi driver took him to the Freemason's hotel. Isaac said "I thought you said I had a room at the Stadshotell?" "That's correct" said the fellow," but I have a good friend holding an exhibition here, and I would be grateful if you could tell me whether or not he could get into the academy?" Isaac was as good as kidnapped and was naturally bloody annoyed, but he was not such a churlish fellow as not to study the wretched works, and then he said:

" - In general terms I have absolutely no say whatsoever as to who gains entry to the Academy, but I can tell you that in the case of this man he hasn't got the slightest chance at all of any time ever getting into the Academy, these works aren't even worth the nails that are driven in the wall." And that's how Isaac was driven to the Stadshotell.

" - Later that evening he came to the art museum where the lecture was to be given in front of a full house of the town's public. He was still simmering with rage, and the newspaper story about the dozy art committee hadn't improved matters. And with his temperament and rhetoric he simply couldn't hold his fire. Firstly about Paris and his time at Matisse's School of Art, but then becoming more and more fired up, it became almost as if he had taught Matisse to paint.

" - After the lecture there was an elaborate dinner at the Stadshotell with Isaac, Allan, Lillan, Brita and myself as guests of the Art Society. Isaac was in fine form – the flood of words continuing on

from his lecture, only more rapidly - a monologue for all those seated near him. After art, he moved rapidly over to religion- "If I hear the word "God" I'll throw up".

District Judge Johansson demurred lest he forswear his God. But his mumbled protest with a hackneyed phrase at once drew down an even more crushing reply. Now it was politics:

" - Well now, as the war is going badly for the Germans, you're all now thinking it's best to keep quiet, but if I was to scratch, even lightly, your exterior, hey presto! out would pop a lot of Nazis. Yes... You were a Nazi (to Petrus)... and You! (to the Mayor's wife)... and You! (to the doctors wife)." They all started shaking their heads, crimson faced, in protest, then Isaac got up and declaimed "I have had enough of you!"..."You!" he said, indicating us, the guests," We'll take our leave and drink in my room." And so we painters left the entire committee still seated, and we all broke into merriment afterwards in his room.

Next day and the rest of the week, it was one of the town's chief topics of conversation, and with a landslide expression of public opinion, the entire committee was thrown out."

The official history of Eskilstuna's museum bears out these dramatic events. By September 1945 Göran Silfverstolpe was chairman of the Art Society and Petrus Ranström had served his 20 years as founder, Chairman and member of the buying committee; it should be added that Dr Ranström donated the entire graphic output of Reinhold von Rosen, which forms an important part of the museum's graphic collection. The Art Society was a bold far-sighted venture, which formed a focus for the Strängnäs Group in the mid 20th-century. It continues to show contemporary artists' works to this day with a full-time director for its present Konstmuseum. Eskilstuna has for three centuries been one of Sweden's chief centres for metal-working, famous for knives and precision instruments; but also known for its high incidence of violence and murder, it is not surprising there was a certain apathy about fine art in the past.

The fireworks over the lack of attendance certainly did the trick in the end, for out of his 60 works exhibited, he sold 13 for the very satisfactory total of 5100 kr. His more general easing of circumstances, coupled with the practical desire to avoid tax, is shown by his readiness to do a bit of bartering, so that one painting was exchanged for 400 kr. of bedclothes, another for 400 kr. worth of gramophone player and records, another for 1000 kr. worth of fur coat and another for 300 kr. worth of paint. "The Garden is Watered, Sicily" from Gummeson's and not listed, was also sold. The Museum purchased "Oak" for 250 kr., and was probably donated "Nets Drying" listed then at 300 kr. On December 2nd 1944, the art critic of "The People, Eskilstuna", whom Folke dismissed as "a tired old drivelling drawing teacher" gave this perceptive and analytic report:

"Coming to this exhibition, in the ground-floor hallway, one finds oneself facing something that could be a plan drawn up in an army command map-room. Extending for 5m, closer examination revealed something quite different: a decorative composition about the Baltic herring fishery made with patience and enormous discipline and which is a very singular work in comparison with our more conventional artists.

"Both Folke Heybroek and Brita Horn are innovators, and though the former is more unobtrusive in his art, this doesn't prevent him from being the more interesting. Though one sees traces of his fellow countryman, van Gogh, in his work, he prefers to distance himself from his violently expressionistic brushwork. He changes surfaces to a more illusory outline, almost allowing the line around central figures to disappear, so that you have to hunt round for "Horses in a Mere" gnawing birch trunks. The painting becomes a lost enigmatic search amongst the blocks of colour - as also in "Nurserymen" [Fig. 15] which, as the artist himself put it, disappear as if to merge with the earth.

A proportion of his work has a very calm surface as in "Beach Bathing", which is white on white, more in the Impressionist style, with small figures moving on the beach. Rarely has one seen such a

self-confident draughtsman and among the drawings we can point out are "Oak", with several piles of logs, "Marshes", and "Religious Procession". He must have enormous patience, I can only wonder at how long it takes to make these large sepia drawings, especially the last. Here he tells, in different areas of the picture plane, what happens in Sicily on religious feast days. He sees a procession advance which is bearing a crucifix, with swarms of people in front and behind, and afterwards people drinking wine in a tavern, where slaughtered goats are suspended, with roses hanging from their entrails. Among the figure studies we could single out "Landowner G.": there he stands, beautifully portrayed in blue striped clothes, exactly as if van Gogh was present."

On the same day, Birger Halling, who was described by Folke as "an art critic and slightly embittered painter" wrote in the Eskilstuna Courier under a photo of the gouache "Wagons in a Field"- "Folke Heybroek is an exceptional decorative talent, every inch is adorned to bursting point. Tones are restricted without being dull. One gets the feeling that in many works he makes it stranger than is needed, yet one can leave these to one side and delight in such works as "Nets Drying", "Cattle Pens," and "Wagons in a Field". These are fine and well executed studies showing genuine craftsmanship, and that must be a good sign when there are other works where one cannot follow the artist's intentions.

One more critic capped them all:

"Captain Eric Noumelli arrived on horseback, tied his mount to a tree outside the museum, marched in with jingling spurs, bowed low and kissed Brita by the hand. Stood to attention in front of each painting... one step forward... 1,2,3 back...attention... and so on to the next picture. In "Sörmland's Poster" he wrote,

"At autumn's 11th hour, the couple Horn-Heybroek invited the public to an exhibition with an international flavour, and it really is a pleasure to leave behind the usual motifs that are often boringly repeated. Judging from the results, Heybroek must have worked extremely hard, and being relatively young, he has an exceptional

gift for composition and decoration. His sepia drawings are genuine small masterworks." Brita too earned praise for her pastels and oils, her lavish paintwork making bravura scenes from Italy and Sicily that had nothing to do with holiday art.

A minor milestone had already been passed earlier that summer. On June 2nd 1944, Folke was formally granted Swedish citizenship by his Royal Majesty with a certificate carrying a 40 kr. stamp- "In view of his domicile in Kärnbo District, and his marriage to Viveka Brita Anna Sofia Horn af Rantzien." One might have imagined some mention of his maternal ancestry, but even before the war a Residential Permit had to be renewed every six months. Sweden, like England, is insular and though Folke spoke Swedish fluently, it struck the locals as different, even if that was mainly because he enjoyed colouring it with the syntax of other languages. Despite his citizenship and his mastery of Swedish language and culture, he was always described as Dutch born and somehow not Swedish, and indeed, temperamentally, Swedish reserve never fitted with Folke's extrovert and humorous nature.

Years earlier, in the early 1930s, Folke's father, Marius, was entertaining a Swedish client wishing to come and do business in Rotterdam, who brought along his son. In this way Folke met Ragnar Hedén, the son, and both being passionate about art, Folke took him to see the famous paintings in Amsterdam; it was not long before they became firm friends. Ragnar joined the Göta shipbuilding works, rose to be the financial director and married Kerstin Schiller, the sister of Gustaf Schiller, who became chairman of Göta AB, a colossal enterprise employing tens of thousands and the city's chief employer from the Great War until the Seventies when the shipyards abruptly died. Ragnar not only bought paintings from Folke, but also encouraged him to come to Gothenburg, Sweden's second city, and exhibit there, and his contacts were also to lead to future commission work in the area.

Accordingly, in April 1945, he contracted with Lorensberg's Gallery, Arkivgatan 8, Gothenburg, to exhibit some 40 works while

sharing the venue with Gunnar Norrman, born 1912, who had turned to art after studying natural sciences. Lorensberg's is situated just off the large Göta Square and is a famous name, now no longer surviving as an art gallery, but as the "democratic" theatre, having no boxes, just standard stalls, and only putting on shows in Swedish. The exhibition opened on the 27th of April, was the last showing of the cartoon "Baltic Herring Fishery", and presented 20 oils, 10 gouaches and 10 drawings, being largely a rerun of the Eskilstuna works but with the addition of a "Study of Brita at the Writing Desk" and a few landscapes.

The reviews placed Folke as a follower of van Gogh and summed up his work thus: van Gogh reacted against Impressionism's lack of rules and extreme loosening of form, by adopting a strikingly expressionistic method with energetic brush strokes as if making the tree grow up out of the ground. Folke felt a lack of system in expressionist methods and broke up the strokes to create a patterned, ornamental surface. This technique clearly required great patience and raised the question whether the labour was worth the effort, but the search for the underlying structure, coupled with his subtle and restrained palette often within a very limited tonal range, undeniably gave striking and radiant canvases.

" - On the fifth of May, the world suddenly became ordered. The sun shone. The radio crackled out news throughout the festive day. I put the radio out in the street in front of our gallery. Slowly a crowd gathered on the Göta Square. When that very large square was full, even more people congregated in the side streets which included our street, and as the gallery was still open, the multitude even started to squeeze in there. We had to open the back door to let in some fresh air. The singing and dancing however was not just plucked from the air. In contrast to Stockholm, Gothenburg was very pro-English and some of my friends from there had even helped in the resistance, particularly in Norway.

" - In the evening, I was seized with longing for a big party, which we celebrated with my friends in the nearby municipal garden. I lived

very happily through those days with my old friend, Ragnar Hedén, of the Göta Works.

" - In terms of sales, the exhibition naturally achieved very little: people had other things on their minds during those tempestuous days. Rather it was just a lovely time, there was hope again."

The financial results were still positive, six paintings selling for 2225 kr. with deductions of 955 kr, commission 25%, fixed charge 200 kr. etc.

Furthermore Folke was, not long after, engaged by Ragnar Hedén's relative, Sverker Brunius for an enjoyable commission. Sverker had an extensive sawmill and timber works at Töcksfors, over 150 km upstream from the sea, yet navigable and with its own lock. Folke was asked to do a documentary sketch of this in 1947 and this was done almost like an industrial drawing, mainly using sepia and black inks, but also with pale colourwash. It is filled with detail, but only interesting to those who like industrial bygones, though it conveys more about labour and harmony than toil and struggle.

" - At Sverker Brunius' old-fashioned works I made a painting of the countryside and the works, very narrative and epic. Their working methods were also old-fashioned with nice long breakfasts and dinners, where artists were never left unentertained. One Saturday evening, just as we had taken our seats at table, there was a fire in an old store. Two big blacksmiths came running out with a fire pump and an enormous hose, I flapped about on one side of the pump while they heaved away on the other and we succeeded in dousing the flames.'

CHAPTER 6

HOPE AGAIN

Sweden, like America, was in no way broken by the titanic struggle that had just elapsed, and with recent memories of extreme hardship from before 1914, an industrious and inventive population took full advantage of the economic regeneration of the post-war era to build a country that was both highly prosperous, mostly very egalitarian, and with a generous welfare system. In this climate artistic patronage flourished. Soon new municipal buildings were budgeted a generous percentage to include artwork, a considerable number of new churches were constructed and older ones embellished, and new schools were built to replace old. Eventually this mania for new modern building, at the expense of the old, was carried to excess. In general, there was a prolonged boom, gradually feeding a burgeoning consumer world.

Life for Folke and Brita became genuinely enjoyable; more and more little jobs kept coming in, indicating a growing recognition, but the greatest joy was the birth of their second daughter, Beatrice Katrin, on the 23rd of September 1945. This reflected Brita's certainty of mind that the dark forces of fascism were finally going to be defeated, as until then thoughts of another child had been impossible. Uncle Gösta Horn from Hälsingborg had fallen tragically ill and gave his niece a wonderful old Ford motorcar, affectionately known as Stritt, which featured in Harry Karlsson's drawing of Mariefred Square. This made it possible for them all to take up the offer of a free summerhouse, by the sea near Hälsingborg, for lengthy stays during the summers of 1946, '47 and '48. Even if they could not afford to travel abroad, they now received visits from friends and family. This ended the former terrible feeling of isolation-- despite everything about where they were living being charming and delightful and all their memories of Mariefred being happy.

That year Folke submitted six oil paintings for the autumn salon at Liljevalch's Gallery. This handsome building, in the cultural heart of Stockholm, on the edge of Djurgården, was built at the turn-of-the-century to mirror the Paris Salon and had staged some famous exhibitions with Carl Larsson, Anders Zorn and Prince Eugen. Folke sold "Spring in the Beechwoods" to the Stockholm school's board and "Livestock Auction" to Mr. Nilsson, a dealer from the city. "Brita at the Writing Desk", "Night Shoot", "Ingalisa" and "View from Gripsholm" were unsold. At a charity auction in the National Museum an unspecified painting was sold and the total raised was 40,000 kr.

Folke entered the eighth drawing competition, held in memory of Maria Leander-Engström, in which 155 artists under 35 participated (472 works were presented), 8 of whom won travel bursaries. Ragnar Hoppe, the well-known critic, listed realism (the most common), impressionism, romanticism and surrealism among the styles, and just mentioned Folke among 16 non-prizewinners.

Round about this time Folke made a thoughtful study of his daughter, Mieke, wrapt in concentration, making her own sketch.

" - I made a series of large-scale advertisements for Albin Rapp, a confectioner, which attracted attention. Later they were taken down and decorated a school. Albin Rapp considered himself a patron and collector of art in Örebro. He was a full-blooded lover of life who liked the violin, herring and spirits, a typical provincial big-wig with his factory, in other words a mackerel with a golden lining." -Folke wrote.

In that autumn he participated in the Eskilstuna art society collective exhibition called "27 Sörmland Artists". He entered "Flower and Pet Shop" with a new top asking price of 4000 kr., which didn't sell, another oil and two drawings, one of which was sold to the Rev. Einar Rydberg. Brita had five canvases, but regrettably the increasing duties of motherhood were to stop her flow of art from now on, and for 15 years she restricted her creative output to pastels which could be completed more quickly.

Folke knew many of the other artists, especially Allan Ebeling “ - who was a true friend, yet, though a fine artist, through his isolation in Torshälla, was never able to make himself free to develop and break out of that circle, even though he really was capable of it, being very gifted in ceramics and in his handiwork. Once in 1944 his firing was going to fail through lack of wood, but I managed to buy a lorry load at the last minute, and though we were prohibited, we made it via small roads from Mariefred to Torshälla.”

He knew Gunnar Gustafsson, “ - a nice painter living in Strängnäs, married to our district nurse, he was only allowed to paint in the cellar so as not to make any mess.” Also Folke Hellström-Lindh - “ - a real bohemian who lived in Torshälla Stadshotell. His debt there was so enormous he could never extract himself from it. When he appeared in the dining-room the other residents did everything they could to avoid catching his eye, from fear that he would sit down and sponge off their table.”

He was acquainted with four or five of the local drawing teachers, and his other friends were the stormy brothers Knut-Erik and Uno Lindberg, whom he found very talented. Later he collaborated with “Knutte” in work on Härlanda and Aspeboda churches. The story goes on...

“ - I think Silfverstolpe was museum director then, and on this occasion he invited all the artists to a dinner together with their wives. It was a proper dinner with silver candlesticks, white damask and black and white uniformed waitresses. All the artists and wives put on their best finery. The atmosphere was stiff and formal and everyone felt awkward and embarrassed by all this fine silver with portraits of the notables looking down - a really upper-crust setting they were not used to. Then the first glass went down, and then the half. At once things were a little lighter. Ladies not used to strong drink got red patches on their necks. So an extended formal dinner ensued, with white wine, red wine, madeira, speeches, coffee and brandy.

“ - Then Uno got rather drunk and finding some grudge against me, he started swearing at me and working himself into a fury. Allan, hearing all this, lost his temper in his turn and sprang to my defence, so we had to grab hold of him. Others restrained Uno forcibly, but the polite Silfverstolpes were totally shocked, and started to imagine that this beautiful soirée was going to be shattered by a bunch of berserks. But that’s what tends to happen when you invite artists to such a stilted function. Regrettably everything ended tamely, people started to go home and then the Silfverstolpes thanked everyone endlessly, while being determined never again to make such an invitation.

“ - In the spring of 1946, Engineer van Gogh (the son of Theo) brought a large exhibition of Vincent’s paintings to the National Museum in Stockholm, as a thank-you for all the “white bread.” (Sweden presumably had sent food supplies to the starving Netherlands in 1945). This was such a success that there was money to spare. Thus about 20 Dutch painters were given travel bursaries and invited to spend the summer in Sweden. It was in August 1946, I think, and I was picked out as a host, and went to meet them at Brömme airfield; we took them to Pub (a large department store) and bought clothes for 500 kr., after which we went to Beckers and bought paints for 500 kr., followed by a reception with Prince Eugen. The 20 painters were split up around the country with everywhere a Swedish painter as host. For myself I took in hand my old academy friend Hans van Norden, Theo Kurpershoek (both 1934 Rijksakademie intake and both had become members of the Kasteel Oost group in Limburg at about this time) and Lucie Visser. The two most tiresome I didn’t want at close quarters, but just kept them under observation and they were Gerrit van t’Net (1934 RA) and Charles Roelofs. They were assigned to Major Sandmark-Liefwendal (one of the 27 Eskilstuna artists) together with Jan Mulder, whom we never did get rid of, as he settled to live in Eskilstuna. A little later Gerrit Rietveld and Tande Guermongrez arrived.

“ - At the time of the exhibition we were invited several times to meet the van Goghs. Firstly with Carl and Cecelia Nordenfalk

(director of the National Museum), who lived on Carlavagen 2, and hosted a large and magnificent dinner with some 30 Stockholmers; but their children did not want to go to bed, and hung and swung about on trapezes over the table. That was original!

“ - Later there was a really magnificent dinner at the Von Stackenströms in their wonderful castle near Åker, where there were still proper footmen in livery. Another time, Engineer van Gogh and his wife came on a visit to us with Carl Sandberg and his wife. Sandberg, as a matter of fact, liked both me and my art. Engineer van Gogh wanted us to help with his difficult son, but this fellow was as big a misfit and moralizer as his great-uncle Vincent was in his time, so happily we avoided any involvement.”

Carl Sandberg was the Director of the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam and he accompanied the young Dutch painters. Later, in 1961, he staged an exhibition called “Realism in Dutch Painting Now” with works by many of the Kasteel Oost painters, as a contrast to the “Cobra” group, who were then the avant garde. Nico Wijnberg was the founder of the artist’s colony in the old castle 10kms. south of Maastricht just before the Occupation, which prevented Hans van Norden from joining it until after the war. Among the painters there, who all remained figurative, were Tilly Krone, Theo Kurpershoek, Tuenis and Jopie Rosenburg and An Tydeman and many felt that Hans van Norden was the most original. After this visit, Folke would have been aware of what many of these Akademie contemporaries were doing.

Later that year, The National Museum staged a travelling exhibition entitled “Good Art in the Home and Community” which was launched in Stockholm. As part of this, Folke was invited to give a public demonstration and masterclass in lithography; so, filmed by A.B.F to provide a pedagogic record, and surrounded by the public, he made the lithograph “Children in the Playroom”. At the end of the year when the exhibition had toured the country, Folke had sold 8 copies of the “Children in the Playroom” and one of the “Birdcage”

[Fig. 16], all at 55 kr. together with the previously exhibited oil painting “Flower and Bird Shop”. This exhibition continued to run for some years taking 20 percent commission on all sales, and Folke left his lithographs with them till 1950 when the unsold copies, about half of the runs of 20, were returned. Early on the organisers had advised that such prints, in small size, could not compete with their other prints which were larger, brighter and cheaper, adding that Folke’s were too pale and not cost competitive.

In June and July they made their first visit to Dr. Rhode’s summer cottage in Arild: Surrounded by the endless flat, alluvial plain of Skåne, there is a curious rocky spine rising some 200 m and forming a promontory some 6 km long extending in cliffs and ravines into the Kattegat. Arild was a small fishing hamlet looking across a wide bay and by 1946 it had also become something of a summer idyll for the citizens of Hälsingborg making the atmosphere very different to Bönhamn. The striking topography [Fig. 17], the fishing community, little beaches and the sea for the children, and the holiday atmosphere of the Flikorna Lundgren’s famous coffee house were all to inspire paintings of warmth and serenity.

Farmer Lundgren had seven daughters with a fine farm close to Hälsingborg. Things started to go badly when he lost his savings in the share collapse of 1931, and this was compounded by three or four bad harvests because of summer droughts, so having previously sold plots for summerhouses and then having built his own summerhouse at Skäret, he said he would have to sell his farm. But Rud, the eldest daughter, and two sisters, Ella and Brit-May, decided to open a coffee house, she knew how to bake a special Skåne cake (eggs, flour, butter baked on an open fire, which rises and becomes quite big) which was an instant success, and business thrived. The King, Prince Eugen and others patronized the splendid friendly open-air tables served by the charming sisters, and after the war, Crown Prince William tried to make a film of it. Thousands still visit the café “Flikorna Lundgren” to this day for their coffee and Skåne cake and it is now run by Ella’s son, Mats Feine.

“Ella and Brit-May” “Words from the psalms” “At the Lundgren’s café” “Woman milking sheep”, are paintings from this time.

In Sweden there is a very strong craft tradition for weaving. Not only did this engender a highly developed feel for texture, but it also resulted in some remarkably innovative weavers. Alice Lund established a famous workshop for the highest quality weaving, but was also greatly indebted to Folke for his outstanding decorative skills in providing designs suitable for weavers.

“ - I first met Alice Lund, I believe, over breakfast one winter’s morning in 1941 in the Regnbågen (Rainbow) restaurant on Sture Plan, Stockholm. This led to my starting to work with her but then it was only on a freelance basis and when needed, and this often resulted in disagreements. Alice was alright, but a very hard taskmaster: I would often draw a deep breath, but...she had a certain manner about her so that one always gave way. In the end ours was a rich and rewarding working relationship.”

The upshot was that Alice Lund signed an agreement on the 20th of February 1947 to pay Folke 200 kroner per month in exchange for not less than 10 whole working days a year in her workshop “together with all the sketches that I need, loosely described - but I know that we understand each other”, and with no obligations on her part to pay for travel or living expenses.

“ - And this arrangement lasted until 1965, I think, without my ever receiving an increase.”

Alice Lund was 13 years older than Folke, from a well-to-do Stockholm family. She was sent to the school for industrial design (now known as Konstfak – and very famous) to while away some years (1918 to 1923), before marrying a suitable husband, where she concentrated hard on drawing, painting and decorative art. Her best friend there was Sofia Widén, who studied textiles. In her last couple of years she fell in love with an architecture student called Erik Lund from Falun who was considered totally unsuitable, but she defied her parents and went to Chicago, where he was working, to marry him.

She came back to visit her family in 1930 with her little son Jan-Erik, and to her surprise was soon joined by her husband. As Chicago was being terrorized by Al Capone and there was no work to be had in the Depression, he just sold their house in the States and returned home. Then Alice’s husband suddenly died in 1934 and she realized how fortunate she was to have a training in textile design. She went to help her sister-in-law, Karin Lund, who taught weaving in Dalarna, then went to work for the church textile firm, Libraria, and designed mitres, chasubles and antependiums. But her special skill lay with interior design, where she had a very refined taste, favouring natural forms, pale complementary tones and the beauty of open-weave textures for curtains, and shapes inspired by frost patterns for rugs. She exhibited weavings with Karin Lund in Stockholm in 1934 and this led to many orders. Then they were joined by another weaver, Barbro Wahlund, the daughter of the chairman of Domnarvet, so a fine old house was made available as a workshop near the steelworks and Alice, Karin and Barbro formed a partnership “to produce textiles below Stockholm prices and to sell directly in the localities.” Barbro was friendly, Alice was ambitious, but tragically Karin became ill and died of TB in 1938, so despite growing success with subtle, simple patterns instead of traditional folk weaving, Alice had to start again, not least because Barbro left for another job. Alice established Alice Lund Textiles in 1939 as sole designer and attracted renewed attention by exhibiting at the World Fair in New York in 1939. Commissions for interiors followed in the 1940s and this accelerated when Folke provided a continuous stream of sketches for rugs, drapes and pictorial weavings.

He provided a huge artistic impulse. He was ready to use stronger colours and expressive patterns like columns and zigzags. He had a natural ability with form to create abstract yet irregular patterns. His feel for the textures in weaving was reflected in his compositions. Alice Lund felt inspired by his sketches, which she copied and repeated in varying colour relationships, and though Alice Lund too was a designer, on the whole Folke’s colour sense

and mastery of composition clearly indicated who had designed what, where this was not actually stated. Theirs was a very fulfilling working partnership which resulted in some inspired creations. The inspiration also extended to a very enjoyable lithograph, "Weavers" [Fig. 18], derived from a close appreciation of Alice Lund's workshop with all its handlooms. Folke also painted a large wall hanging on hessian of "The birds in the forest" which used to hang in Alice's dining room together with an expressive "Floral landscape with hogweed" and an expressionistic "Crab."

It should be mentioned that in 1952 Alice Lund was joined by Sofia Widén, who had for 20 years been artistic director of Licium, the leading designer for church fabrics in Sweden. One day while Alice was in hospital for back treatment, Sofia rushed in and said she had to get out of Stockholm and wanted to move to Dalarna. Alice advised her to see the year out and then see, so with that they joined forces. This strengthened their creative appeal, as Sophia was original, adventurous and less restrained. So it came about that she embroidered the "Gods Eye" motif [Fig. 19] that Folke designed for Kristinegården, to go in their small meditation room.

In terms of literature, the themes of Homer have attracted more versions and adaptations in plays, novels and poems than any other theme, certainly in the English language. And so it was that Gebers, the Stockholm publishers who had brought out Brita's book "People and Paint" in 1939, approached Folke and asked him to make 20 pen and ink drawings of the Greek Myths with many scenes from the Iliad. These drawings measuring 16 by 21 cms were highly dramatic and often extremely detailed, the result of vivid imagination and painstaking handwork, but the whole project came to naught.

"They paid for everything, but at the last moment the book didn't come out: too inhibited!

In English the Homeric flood never faltered with Auden, Durrell, Fitzgerald, Graves, Gunn, Kitto, Logue, Rieu, T.E.Shaw and Walcott all weighing in about then, but perhaps in Sweden there was not

such a taste for violence and heroism. At any rate the drawings were retained by Folke and exhibited in 1948 in Stockholm and in 1951 in Malmö, without any sale. There are records of 10 of these, including:

"The 12th labour of Hercules", (Hercules, dressed in the skin of the Nemean lion which he had had to kill as his first labour, brings up from the underworld the triple-headed dog, Cerberus, who guards the gates of Hades);

"Horse on a sacrificial pyre" (surrounded by the waiting army and fleet);[Fig. 20]

"Death of a warrior", perhaps Patroclus.

"The stoning of Polydorus," as King Priam watches helplessly from the battlements (Achilles killed three of his sons that day);

"Hector";

"Achilles in battle";

"The Amazons";

"A Charioteer":

"A man sacrificed on a pyre";

"The death of Hippolytus." (His father, Theseus, invoked one of the three curses given to him by Poseidon, against his son, and so " - A monster, an enormous bull bellowing and roaring above the pounding hooves of the horses which, terrified, reared and crushed the charioteer Hippolytus.")

Everywhere the violent passions of the gods unleashed on fickle man.

Time flew with two more summer visits to Arild whose special atmosphere resulted in a steady flow of canvases. Dr. Gösta Rhöde and his wife Helen, from whom they borrowed the summer house, were also there. They had two boys who were absolute terrors, always wanting to play with their willies. Their parents, being doctors of psychology, just thought such things should be without inhibition. One day Folke and Brita left Beatrice happily playing in her pen, and

went for a short walk, but when they came back her face had been covered in cow muck. Otherwise everything was perfect, especially for Mieke, as the Lundgren sisters let her eat as many buns as she wanted.

Here Folke met Yngve Fänge, who was a ship owner. In the 1930s Yngve, who came from Hälsingborg, had four or five cargo vessels, and occasionally he went to Edinburgh in search of business. Every evening he would dine in a certain restaurant which also had a bar, and there he met a man called Jim Clark with whom he became great friends. Jim told Yngve about all his experiences, boxing, endless tales about the Great War and how when he was in India a penny had stopped a bullet aimed at him. This penny throughout his life had been his lucky charm. He wrote a book describing all the occasions it had helped to save his life, and eventually in the late 1930s he gave it to Yngve, who knew the book by heart, recounting Jim's life of adventure and danger. As a page from the book shows, fighting for his life in the trenches was harrowing and terrifying.

After the war Yngve's business flourished. He had married Martha Lundgren, and so he asked Folke to make a stained-glass window of the "Lucky Penny" story which had protected the lives of all its owners. He made the window at Ringström's, Stockholm.

This work with its small pieces of glass and intricate lead lines, its extremely detailed painting of the glass, and its somber tonality follows directly, in its composition, the teaching of Heinrich Campendonk, and before him, Thorn Prikker, who wanted to create mood out of mystical ornamentation, and opposed the joyous release and easy effect of Impressionism. So Folke's windows, made at Ringström's in these early years, all created this same mood of detailed symbolic absorption as exemplified by "The Lucky Penny", and also in Säter, Sörsjö and Östervåla churches: They only make an impact if you look at them very carefully. This was fine during an age of fervent and devout belief, but works less well when the congregation adheres to its religion more out of tradition, seeking only to be reminded of the more obvious symbols of belief.

On the 13th of November 1948 Folke opened with 68 works in the Galerie Moderne, Stockholm (now gone). There were three reviews in the national press, which were not retained.

" - Signe Schults was an experienced and nice gallery madame. Her son did all the picture hanging, all the while drinking litres of pils. That was the only gift he had, hanging pictures. The first person to come was an unknown textile manufacturer from Södertälje who immediately bought three pictures. When the exhibition was over I decided to deliver them personally and, on arrival, he went to a drawer in which there were three sets of picture lights. He had bought the pictures after he had bought the picture lights, as he didn't have anything for them to illuminate. It was not a particularly successful exhibition, I was in a transitional period, which was reflected in the work."

The textile man purchased an expensive canvas "Weavers" and also "Deer" and inquiries in Södertälje from their town historian revealed that it was a Mr. Tornvall, the art lover and town's only textile manufacturer, but his business had moved south in the early 1960s and closed in 1971, when all the paintings were sold. So the trail of paintings has vanished.

By this time Folke had built up a personal art group of 15 members who each subscribed 500 kroner to give them first choice of his assembled work. This was the ideal way to finance a long stay in France, which extended to a very happy year. December found them in Paris, in Rue Monsieur Le Prince, near Place Rostand and the Luxembourg Gardens, the inspiration for several paintings [Fig. 21]. Mieke became a French schoolgirl, everyone drank in the heady air of culture, and Folke's style underwent a total change from patterned detail to flowing arabesques, loose and free, with lines of movement just conveying a minimum of pictorial information. The whole family's love affair with France was consummated in a perfect end to the decade. There was enough money to live modestly and to work unhindered in the land of art.

One of the paintings in Galerie Moderne was "Maurice Paints." Painting a painter is a special kind of portraiture and only one remove from a self-portrait. Folke never did any self-portraits for, however much he admired van Gogh as a painter, he had none of his despairing persona and viewed his excessive moralizing as neurotic. His inner wellspring functioned best in the presence of good-humoured company and self-absorption was practiced with the object of communicating more profound contemplative moments to others. In the painting, Maurice stands amid Beatrice's rag dolls in front of canvases of grotesque or Byzantine faces, with a braced, concentrated, taut expression, working on a small canvas.

In real life, Maurice's father was a furniture maker in Fontainebleau, but Maurice chose art, went to the Ecole des Beaux Arts and, in 1946, won a scholarship to go on a study tour having completed his training. He opted for Sweden and soon after, arriving in Stockholm, he met the daughter of the director of Nordiska Kompaniet (like Harrod's). Through her, he got a part-time job in their Fine Art department. The distinguished lady in charge, knowing his ambitions, introduced him to all the painters, who came by in quite large numbers, amongst whom was Folke. "Ah French! Then you must come and stay!" And gave him his address. Feeling it would be too intrusive to take up such a casual, if hearty, greeting, Maurice continued his sweet way in Stockholm and was just walking the street one day when he felt this great thump on his back with the warm greeting "Why haven't you come to see us?"

After that he took the train to Mariefred and swept along by such company, decided to stay. They found a little room for him on the waterfront and he swam in the lake daily till October. After that Folke introduced Maurice to others as "the man who came for two days and stayed for two years." A huge friendship was cemented between Maurice Guillon and Folke, which extended between both their families, all of whom have devoted themselves to the life of art. Another painting shows Maurice as very much one of the family. [Fig. 22].

In the spring, for Easter, they left Paris for Grand Lucé, a village south of Le Mans, where they were able to live with Maurice's parents on a farm just outside the village. From here came "The Calvados distiller". A trip was also made to Grez sur Loing, as there is a painting titled "The lock on the Loing". The rest of the summer was spent at Bressolieres, renting a village house in the vicinity of Amboise. Farmyard life really came into their lives with horses and carts, cows, crops and wine. Every morning M. le Fèvre, the farmer, would bring down a fresh chèvre de monsieur. This was a prolific time but not many paintings can be found as there is no list of those subscribers. Amboise itself was a Royal Château with hunting grounds and Leonardo da Vinci's last resting place: he died there while working for Francis the First.

CHAPTER 7

ASPNÄS

Turn left a mile out of the village of Knivsta and after another mile, there's a track on the left hand side flanked by half a dozen mail boxes. Up the track, gravel and full of potholes, between the birches, past a field, round some boulders, a house on the right, called Ledingenäs, exactly as in "Wild Strawberries," - standing at the end of its birch drive and surveying an extensive lake. Passing through a farmyard, the road disappears into the dark forest, dense with unhusbanded trees, up and down some inclines until, with a steep descent, one sees the roof of a deep-red timbered house surrounded by outhouses and an orchard. Ten buildings in total, if one includes the double cubicle twin-seated privy and the ice room, scattered on the bank that runs down to the bathing house, perched on the rocks in the Valloxen lake with all its four corners pinnacled with the busts of rococo ladies. The house and the bathing house were designed by the architect, Lars Israel Wahlman, at the turn of the century in the Jugendstil, thereby supplanting a tiny but much older house which still remained. Closer to Uppsala than to Stockholm, it felt wild and remote at the end of its 2 km drive, surrounded by 15ha. of natural woodland hemming the 10 km long lake. At that time, the lake was crystal clear and teeming with crayfish and elk would come onto the lawn in search of apples. It had to be quite something to make Folke and Brita want to leave those happy years at Lugnet behind but this place was a paradise, even more secluded and yet more accessible, exposed to all the natural elements, with all those buildings for studios, winter studios, summer studios, Brita's studio, Mieke's studio, thinking ahead -- Beatrice's studio, and a delight of a house, - not too big and with a central fireplace.

" - In the winter of 1950 to 51, we bought Aspnäs near Knivsta. I signed a contract in the legal department of the Svenska

Handelsbanken in Stockholm. That morning I had already been to our friendly helpful bank in Mariefred and took out 5000 kr. (that was everything we had), which was required as a deposit. That little bank hardly had that much cash, so in the end they put together a huge wad of small notes to round it up to the 5000 kr. On the train to Stockholm I checked the sum several times and every time made a different total, but when everything was signed and the moment came to hand over the deposit, it tallied in the end.

" - The Hede family we bought Aspnäs from were very fine old-fashioned people, and two spinster Hede sisters wept in anguish at the thought that they were losing their beloved childhood home.

" - But then came the difficulties. By good fortune I now had my first major commission with the chapel at Säter through Sven Söderholm but I was still a long way short of the sum required. So I booked several exhibitions and painted like a man possessed. Three months after signing the contract I had to pay the balance. Banks were hard and niggardly in those times so it was impossible to borrow. If I did not come up with the rest, then my 5000 kr. deposit was forfeit. But the cash turned up and everything sorted itself out. Many newsclips for 1951 are missing to testify to all the activity but that year was such a boom year for me I no longer remember exactly what happened and where."

Returning from France, both Folke and Brita joined four other Strängnäs group painters (Allan Ebeling, Geerd, Hellström-Lindh, Andersson-Sernius) in the other locale in Eskilstuna, the New Salon, where the critics noticed bolder tones and a reduction of form in some works, while still showing great patience and care in others, as in several drawing portraits and a small townscape. He showed 14 works and sold "Pigs", "Stone pickers", "Great Tits", and "Still life with Peacock." This last work has a macabre quality being a still life composed entirely of dead animals (peacock, sheep, rat, starling). Brita was highly praised for her "Self-Portrait" and "Fetch Water." In October Folke exhibited in Hallstahammer, in the Bultloca, and sold "Fishermen" and "Gäss."

In October 1950 an approach was made by the Rev. Folke Dalborg, chairman of Säter Church Council, requesting Folke to make cartoons for two windows for the funerary Chapel in the churchyard that was already under construction and due for completion next October. This was on the recommendation of the architect for the project, Sven Söderholm, who was away at the time on a bursary in Italy. He was described by Sigurd Persson as "a very fine and intellectual, aesthetic artist, who suffered from a stammer and after designing Sörsjö joined the church's building committee and became bureaucratic rather than creative." He it was who bought the painting "Stones" and Folke knew him as a man infused with classical aestheticism. This letter duly came from Rome:

"Caro Amico, sono felice che questo compito a te piace. Sono anche convinto della tua capacità di fare qualche cosa bellissima. The windows are in no way intended just to provide light, but their purpose is to provide decorative art. Daylight will flow down over the processions through tall narrow windows and the wide altar shall be set alight by the coloured windows. The sought composition which of course you will design, that comes closest to my heart, is something akin to the altar windows in Gotland (where the influences in their turn are French Gothic). In Säter, I suggest a few images of man's life from the cradle to the grave, with the emphasis on life's joys and riches. If, however, the church committee would prefer the dogmatic Christian side to be represented, of course I can say nothing against this...."

"The whole work shall draw one in to closer examination. I am not at all afraid of deep rich colours (ruby, emerald etc). Should you prefer to make a totally abstract construct with a unity of form, I would also think that suitable. The chapel is positioned so that the light shines through at the usual time for funerals, but during the sunless days of winter one must be content with the glimmer of candlelight in the windows instead. In general I have avoided much chiaroscuro, the floors are light, the walls deep red, the ceiling dark and simply constructed."

Two months later another letter arrived from Rome where Söderholm wrote:

"You have got to grips with this commission in just the way I was expecting and hoping... Everything you write about I find just right, especially your toning down of colours and theory of lead lines. I am very grateful that you will construct the windows yourself and I hope the committee will approve your increased charge. Your approach with a Crucifixion and a Resurrection window now seems to me a self-evident solution. If after all this I should venture to offer some detailed criticisms, I hope you will not be put out: Of the various images "Crown of Thorns" is strikingly beautiful (at least as fine as Rouault) and also "The Marys" with their classic movement and play of lines is completely worked out. "The Cock" will surely be perfect after your planned reworking and it does fit in well compositionally. "Gethsemane" is a very fine idea, but it will surely be difficult to give it an equally obvious, easily understandable, symbolism as in the earlier examples. "The Last Supper" is fine for me, though the still-life under the Marys gives me a restless, fragmented impression. "The Empty Grave" with its silvery light is most impressive, though even here I share my thoughts on Gethsemane. "John and Peter" seem, in terms of style and scale, to stand apart rather from the other images, naive and pygmy-like in comparison. "The Good Shepherd" [Fig. 23] has to compete with your exceptionally expressive "Crown of Thorns", which might work with a graded light intensity. The textual coping in the Resurrection Windows seems absolutely right, and if there isn't room for the complete texts in all three languages on the Crucifixion window, I would replace it with just INRI. In conclusion the impression of "New Growth" is quite clear, whereas "Seed Fall" is perhaps not quite so clear in the windows under the altar. Accordingly I would simply like to say that the more you can reduce the monumentalism in the Crown of Thorns and Marys and give a lighter message, the more your work will gain in clarity."

The church council held a meeting to consider the cartoons and make a decision, which Folke attended:

“ - I remember that at that committee meeting, the old boys thought that the price was high and they wondered if it could not be a little cheaper, whereon I replied that I had just bought a house, and that that was the exact amount I needed. The old chaps were dumbfounded and didn't know what to reply, and then there were the sounds of protests and indeed objections. But all the time there was one man who always kept a dour appearance and never uttered a single word. This man I thought was going to be especially difficult and I had no idea where I stood with him, and then, just as the discussion was taking a rather ominous turn, he opened his mouth, requested order, and stated “I have counted up the pieces of glass and have formed the opinion that there will be almost 8000 pieces, which comes to less than one kroner per piece, all hand-painted, inlaid in lead and then installed. “ The argument was won. That was Education Officer Hedman.

The meeting of Säter PCC of the 14th of December 1950 formally agreed the quotation for 7000 kr., Work to be executed at N.P. Ringströms AB, Stockholm, master glaziers, the total including the artist's sketch and fee. Folke indicated that he needed six months to complete the job. It was not an alien task to him. On the top floor of the Rijksakademie he had completed his apprenticeship in leaded glass years before, overlooking the Heineken Brewery, with its waft of malt and hops pervading the air. It was a new direction, which was to lead to the eclipse of his painting for two decades, not a development he intended or really wanted.

On the first Sunday in advent 1951, the Consecration took place in the presence of the Bishop of Strängnäs, Bishop Cullberg and his East German Lutheran guest, the Rev. Ernst Detert, from Oranienburg, who was to give the sermon, while the vicar, Folke Dalborg, celebrated Holy Communion, and the organist, Anders Bond, composed a fine cantata for the choir about mortality and eternal life called “Elegy for a small town churchyard.” After the service everyone went to the nearby school for coffee where, in a series of speeches, the vicar praised the community for their self-sacrifice. The Rev. Detert said

how glad he was to come to this community and specially praised the Bishop for having chosen not to remain silent during the years of the Nazi Terror. The Bishop praised the artists and craftsmen who had created such a lasting work of art. Architect Söderholm was reported in the Säter news as being not just an able architect but also a really fine speaker, being not only amusing in his anecdotes about the construction but also fulsome in his praise for his helpers and the people of Säter, concluding by emphasising how, having been to Rome visiting sites of antiquity, in all highly developed cultures, the funeral rite plays an important role. Folke writes:

“You should know that Sven had a severe stammer, but this time it hardly showed, which was curious. Bishop Cullberg was a really pompous prelate who, with dignity and strong self-belief, revelled in taking the lead in the consecration ceremonies, though to his credit, he was a very good speaker.”

Architect Söderholm sought something dark and mysterious in this funeral chapel, with only the glowing candles on the altar, set in Sigurd Persson's silver candle holders, and Carl Deurell's bleached spruce and linen wall lights giving a little warm light in the gloom. This special setting for the last rites has now been totally ruined by the recent introduction of enormous, clumsy clusters of ceiling lights, more befitting a municipal car park than the architect's original vision. The reason given by the sexton for the inclusion of these ghastly lights was so that the congregation was better able to read their hymn sheets.

In February 1951 while Folke was working on the Säter Windows, he was also exhibiting again at Galerie Moderne, with 68 oil paintings. A few works originated in Arild and Mariefred but the great majority derived from France with scenes from Bressolières and Amboise, from the Abbey of Fleury at St. Benoît-sur-Loire, where Max Jacob had sought refuge in the 1930s until he was discovered and murdered by the Nazis; also from Grand Lucé, from Paris and Grez sur Loing. Mainly depictions of rural life, there are also varied subjects like “ By the Sorbonne,” “ Rag and Bone Lady,” “ Somali

Students," "Ball Players," " In front of the restaurant," " Star Fish " and "Sparrow Chicks." An unusual work came from a fascination with Rudyard Kipling. A large wall hanging was made, monochrome on hessian, dimensions 175x245cms, titled "The Road Song of the Bandar Log". The Jungle Book was a parental favourite for reading aloud and these lines were noted down:

"Here we go in a flung festoon
 Halfway up to the jealous moon!
 Don't you envy your pranceful bands?
 Don't you wish you had extra hands?
 Wouldn't you like if your tails were--so--
 Curved in the shape of Cupid's bow?
 Now you're angry, but never mind,
 Brother thy tail hangs down behind!" Apor, Apor, Apor.

This last work was purchased by Sixten Wohlfarht, who was to become chairman of the Domnarvet steelworks.

A long way upstream from Amboise lies St. Benoît-sur-Loire which has always been famous for its seventh century abbey and, in particular, for its 11th century Tour Gauzlin. This is mounted on a porch, modelled on the celestial Jerusalem of the 21st chapter of Revelation: "And... one of the seven Angels...showed me...the holy Jerusalem...which had a wall great and high...and had 12 gates." Twelve entrances were created by the 16 pillars under the tower and each pillar was surmounted by a capital, allowing full expression from the Romanesque stonemasons who depicted scenes from Revelation, daily life and the Life of Christ. These works of early medieval art were an inspiration to Folke with their direct simplicity. This is first seen in a gouache at Galerie Moderne, " A Capital from the Church of St. Benoît. "

The critics acknowledged a painter in transition, and were not very favourable, though there were notices in seven national

newspapers. Comments included "mosaic painting no longer satisfies him;" "his latest painting has a concise colourist expressiveness;" "still has not found his permanent style;" "a more masculine colour language;" "still a strong inclination for the decorative;" "expressive figures of angled, simplified lines and heavy paint;" "playful pictures of village streets and farms in Touraine." [Fig. 24].

Whatever the critics may have thought, the show was a resounding success, with 18 paintings sold for 8200 kr. However, there was still a pressing need for finance, so a gallery was found in the extreme south, S.D.S Centralen, Malmö, and Folke opened again on the seventh of April 1951, with another one-man show. The catalogue notes giving his CV stated that he had exhibited in Brussels, Zurich and London but there are no records of this. 51 works were displayed, almost entirely the recently unsold paintings, with the addition of two scenes from Aalsmeer, Holland (a large market-gardening centre), and the other painting of a painter, " Einar Jolin paints Mieke." (A painting by Einar Jolin was recently sold by Bukowski's for 21,000kr.)

The critics were consistent: "art of a profoundly decorative nature, with reality altered into ornamental patterns, sometimes with exquisite colour combinations... elegant refinement shines through... one unexpectedly thinks of Dufy. In the last work the canvas is prepared with sand [Fig. 25], which must have its origins in Cubism... One perceives an aesthetic refinement in colour variation, reaching its climax in " Two Friends " with a delicate combination of grey-green, grey and blue." As Marianne Bråhammar concluded in " The Daily Worker, "--"Folke Heybroek has an artist's unfailing taste and a child's playful way of seeing things. Both these things allow one to succumb to the enjoyment of his painting." At any rate he was reviewed in five newspapers and sold 15 paintings totalling 6575kr. Folke writes:

" - It was spring in Malmö and unfortunately there was a transport strike, with no trains or buses, so thanks to this it was rather quiet. I was the guest of, amongst others, the Director of the South Sweden Daily (SDS), who had the gallery. He was a Skåne man

of the Viking breed who took deep draughts of ale in a well-polished black cowhorn accompanied by clouds of black-shag tobacco smoke. I mostly lived with Erik and Anna Hjortsjö in Lund, whose children rushed up and called me Tolde."

In a letter to Brita in 1975 he reminisced, " - I also met Ingmar Bergman there and a fellow called Åke Falck, that is, at the exhibition, and was invited back with them for the evening, where they played with electric trains in the attic. Yes, that Ingmar Bergman was only a director at the Malmö Theatre then, but I didn't thrive in their company."

Erik Hjortsjö was a second cousin, a leading consultant in x-ray therapy in Lund University hospital, who not only purchased paintings from Folke, but also promoted culture generally. In the centre of Lund he converted a studio for use as a theatre, art gallery and concert hall and, when this was ready, three and a half years later in October 1954, he opened its doors with a piano recital and an exhibition of some 20 paintings by Folke. The SDS news clip is the only information and describes the paintings as a sympathetic but not especially notable form of modernism, where the figure studies seemed to follow Moore and the Campigli.

In March 1951, Folke sent canvases to a group exhibition for Sollefteå Art Society, in Northern Sweden, where the ceiling price was 300 kr. and his "Magpie," [Fig. 26] which the local press could only describe as charming, was offered.

One of Alice Lund's major collaborations with Folke now came to fruition with a large weaving for Borlänge Courthouse. This was a tapestry hanging behind the Judge's Chair with the coats of arms of the five major towns of Dalarna and above, a row of 14 figures representing the many varied occupations from that area. The colours then were bright and vibrant, with all the beauty of natural dyes. Unfortunately, fading over 50 years has taken away much of its vibrancy of colour. The background is carefully designed with discreet individualism, emphasising the judge's structured and formal role.

More painting, more painting throughout 1952 and new-found freedom in the harmony and seclusion of Aspnäs. A studied loosening of form, with very delicate colour balance, characterised one group of paintings: "In the Park", " The Derkert Family ", " In the Bedroom", " Beatrice ", [Fig. 27], " Dachshund with Pups," and " Dans le Vieux Parc Solitaire et Glacé."

In between, he modelled a small sculptural group. [Fig. 28].

The next exhibition soon followed in the Konsthall, Uppsala, the nearby fine old university city, which had been a great Viking centre and centuries later was also the seat of Linnaeus. Uppsala Nya Tidningen reviewed it thus on the fifth of March 1953:

"In the first room we meet "A Scene in a Park", also an illustration to a few lines of Verlaine, which, in its use of light, contrasts with the large " Story of King Ahab," which hangs in the gloom opposite. (King Ahab came by Naboth's vineyard by following his wife, Jezebel's, advice, to declare Naboth King of Judah and then get two men to bear witness that Naboth blasphemed God, whereupon he was stoned to death. But God, through Elijah, said dogs would lick up his blood in the place where Naboth had died and so, while fighting the Syrians, an arrow struck Ahab between the joints of his armour, and the blood ran out into his chariot and the dogs licked up his blood. Kings ch.1,21). In the same room, one finds a third type of Heybroek's art: "In the Bedroom" - a composition of elegiac beauty, built up of broad brush strokes, with an illuminating sunshine against a white background. In all the variations on dachshunds, horses and human figures he has sought effective simplifications...Besides this, one is also aware of various studies of medieval art. Despite the unsympathetic method of display, his drawings are challenging, especially in the suite from the Iliad. The bad impression at the entry because of the poor display was rapidly offset by a general impression of an independent and distinctive artist of importance."

One painting " Old Woman with Young Woman ", [Figs. 29 & 30] from a scene so typical of French village life, was purchased by

Frederik Ljungström, who had become a firm friend and admirer. In 1952 he came to Aspnäs to give Mieke extra tuition as he was the maths teacher at the Cathedral School, Uppsala and Mieke was falling behind. He was simply bowled over by so much creativity. When he became the Headmaster, he read out a poem he had composed about his painting, to the school:

“She the young woman on the country lane
By the old lady’s side
She the young woman carrying the blue inside her
Enclosed by life.....

The old lady on the country lane
By the young girl’s side
Carried the grey within her
As a victory over life

She the old
With age’s experience
Saw the girl in blue
With the red blood

She held her by the hand
Slowly the blue greyed
And it blued into the grey
The old lady gave life to the young girl.

Mr. Ljungström bequeathed the painting to the school on his retirement, which prompted him to send the poem to Folke, adding the comment that for the rest of his life he would never forget that magical summer in Aspnäs.

There is a truly wonderful rustic church near Enköping called Björksta. Its walls are composed of massive granite boulders and its lofty solid tower is set on a rise dominating the surrounding lightly undulating land. It is a region of rune-stones, rock carvings and burial mounds. A curious feature of the churchyard is that it has been filled with vast quantities of topsoil to provide enough depth for burial, so that only the gentry lie there, the rest being buried in an out-lying graveyard where there is a greater depth of soil. The Treschow estate, with its magnificent drive of oaks, is in the parish of Björksta at Målhammar.

In 1953 he was asked by Björksta Church Committee to design and make three new altar windows. A major restoration was taking place and the triple windows behind the altar, which had been walled up since 1858 when the church was struck by lightning and set on fire, were going to be opened up again. The aisle was vaulted with four great arches, terminating in a four ribboned arch at the altar rising from floor level. All this adorned with 15th century wall paintings. An abstract composition was therefore chosen with the stated theme of Jacob’s dream of the ladder. The only clue is an intimation at the top of the central window with the barely discernible letters LYSA (Light). The outlines were formed by cutting the shapes out of steel plate, in front of variously sized rectangles of differently coloured antique glass. He also made an altar cross of iron with five pieces of inset glass, but this is no longer on view.

“ - The window was ordered at the last minute. The vicar forgot about all the arrangements, such as the building committee, the Synod and the historic building’s officer, but by dint of meeting them all personally I managed to get all the permissions just the day before the Consecration. Then installing the windows turned out to be equally awkward, as the templates were inaccurate, so especially up in the arches, they didn’t want to fit. It ended with me high up on scaffolding, lying on my back, and while I held them, the builder welded them in place. Molten drops poured down my arms, I cursed

and screamed, and in this way the work was completed just before midnight after which I had to drive home.

“ - Later it transpired that the vicar had no paperwork regarding the order, so I had difficulties in securing my payment, but the matter was sorted out thanks to Lord Chamberlain Johan Treschow, who was a sort of second cousin to Brita.”

Architect Viking Göransson bought “ Dans le Vieux Parc Solitaire et Glacé ” at the Uppsala exhibition and he and his wife, Ingrid, a fine ceramicist, became good friends. He was the county architect, so it was not long before Folke collaborated with him to provide an artistic feature for a new school. How much art should a local authority provide in a new school, when children can provide their own art, it was asked? Yet if some striking and pleasing element is provided, then vandalism is reduced and respect for property increased.

Örbyhus, a large village in the middle of forests with an old castle nearby, was building a new school in 1953, and Uppsala-Ekeby, the local ceramics works was prepared to donate some coloured tiles, so Folke and the architect devised a scheme whereby standard bathroom tiles could be divided into as many as nine pieces, which are then arranged into a numbered pattern, avoiding all the difficulties of small mosaic pieces. The sketch was easily made on squared paper. In it there are boys playing ball, a couple of parents follow their child to his first lesson, a black child's school transport is a camel's back, while a handsome tiger lurks behind some palms.

“ - I just wanted to bring out a playful and amusing wall that appeals to children's fantasy,” [Fig. 31], Folke stated in a reply to the reporter who found it a bit fanciful to suggest black children rode to school on camels while tigers lurked! When it came to making the wall, Folke said:

“ - I was given a very skilful tiler to whom it was a matter of pride to make each joint exactly the same width, which was...impossible! Halfway through he nearly had a nervous breakdown, so I went out

with him to have a meal somewhere, and then he calmed down.” Later at the investiture in April 1954:

“ - It was a radiant spring day, Brita and I arrived half an hour late. The county council chairman, choir and orchestra stood and waited. Stritt, the car, behaved unusually just then. As I stepped out, it gave an enormous BANG through the silencer, like a gun salute. All the gentlemen, dressed up in morning coats and top hats, jumped, but all were amused and laughed and the sun shone. As soon as we stepped out of Stritt, the orchestra began to play.”

In truth, you can't make a silk purse out of bathroom tiles. The result is not in the same league as the hand-made chamotte ceramics made for other schools, but it is a worthy and ingenious adaptation using inexpensive materials and it is always difficult to refuse a gift.

Not long before this lovely spring day, he had mounted his last exhibition for over a decade, as the demands for decorative commissions were becoming overwhelming. For this, he returned to Lorensberg's, Gothenburg, in March:

“ - It was a cold spring. The way out of Aspnäs was totally icy, but Mieke and Beatrice had been out the whole day and later it turned out that they had scratched out pine needles and moss from under the snow and covered two tracks with it up the steep uphill start to our drive. I drove off at about five o'clock in the evening. Little Stritt was fully laden. After a while a thick, heavy snowfall started. After Västerås (120km.), I was alone on the road. Now and then a snow plough whooshing snow in the dark. Now and then a slow-moving lorry. There was total darkness and the whole time great snowflakes filling the headlights' beams. In some village, through deep snow, I suddenly happened on two mating dogs, who took no notice. Visibility was just a few yards. But then between Skara and Vara near Jung (=300km. further on) my lights suddenly went out and in the difficult conditions before I could stop I slid softly in the deep snow into a ditch and there I was lying on my side. I managed to creep out and gradually I noticed that I was actually next to Jung's church

and on the other side of the road, exactly opposite, there was a large farm. As it was pretty cold and I had no desire to spend the rest of the night outside, I plucked up courage and rang the doorbell at 4 o'clock in the morning. A dog barked on the other side of the door, a light went on; a farmer in long johns opened the door and considered what was going on. I was asked in. He was going to milk cows in any case in an hour's time. So we drank a cup of coffee, and then he got out his big tractor and tweaked me out onto the road again. It became apparent that the lead to the lights had become disconnected, which was a simple matter. Thus I bade my farmer a hearty farewell and continued on my way. Dawn started to break as I approached Alingsås, but as you know, just there are numerous steep hills, and along there all the big lorries had gone into the ditch or skidded, and it was difficult to disentangle oneself from amongst them, but for all that I tootled slowly along past them, and on the other side of Alingsås it was springtime and Gothenburg. (another 110km.)

" - I arrived at Lorensberg's at 8 am and Yngve Land had not yet woken up. So I started to unpack and leant pictures against the side of the car. A sailor, who had surely been out on the tiles all night, stopped and asked how much for a picture? 600kr.! I answered, without giving it a moment's thought. So he peeled off 600kr., put the picture under his arm and disappeared round the corner. So began the exhibition. "

Very little is known of this exhibition, there is no catalogue, just a couple of critical reviews have survived, one of them by Birger Idelius who stated:

"Heybroek has changed his painting method a great deal since he last exhibited here some nine years ago, when he took influences from van Gogh and Ensor behind a complicated spot and line system which transformed the canvas surface into puzzle-pictures in pale colours. Now he is equally studied in his skills when -- inspired by French and Italian modernism -- he cultivates line dynamics in a wide and narrow simplification." [Fig. 32].

The subjects were similar to those in SDS and Uppsala, with the addition of -- "Dachsunds in the Garden" which was purchased by Mr.G.Schiller to provide a striking entrance-piece to the Göta Works. Also mentioned was "Sunday Fishermen," which was one of a series of seven, and humorously conceived: 2 cyclists out fishing, surprised by a cloud-burst, continue their angling in the shelter of an improvised tent. Ragnar Hedén purchased a charming study, titled "Mieke Drawing", [Fig. 33] in Indian ink at from here.

At the same time the Göta Sulphite Company had built a large community hall and for this they needed some artistic decorations. Gustaf Schiller was also on the board of this company, so he recommended Folke, who provided three windows, using sheet metal in front of the glass to delineate the stories of Jason and Medea, Tristan and Isolde and a love story resolved by a duel. All traces of this work have disappeared in subsequent rebuildings, and Folke himself said, "Not so exciting, just a job, I think", even if a couple of faded newspaper snaps indicate something more worthwhile.

It was at this time that the Gothenburg Museum of Art acquired a copy of his lithograph "The Wine Cellar".

In the legends of Sweden, when still struggling to establish nationhood as a separate kingdom, all hopes rested on the young Gustaf Vasa to hold out against the Danes, whose king, Christian the tyrant, was doing his utmost to wipe out the Swedish Royal House. In 1520 young Gustaf luckily evaded the Bloodbath of Stockholm, where his father and two uncles were executed, and he went on the run, whilst everywhere the Danes sought him. Cornered on one farm, the farmer beat him as if he was one of his lazy stablehands, which duped the Danes. Betrayed at another farm, the farmer's wife helped him escape across a frozen lake. Surrounded once more, the farmer drove out his waggon, concealing the young king under a load of hay. The Danes ran it through with their spears, cutting his leg. When the blood began to drip on the snow, farmer Elvsson quickly gashed the horse's fetlock to explain the trail.

Fleeing ever further into the wilds of Dalarna, at first no one believed his stories of the Danish menace until it was almost too late, when, rallying to his cause, they just managed to catch him before he left for exile. After that, Sweden's fortunes recovered and it was near that spot, over four centuries later, that the inhabitants of Sörsjö wanted a new church to replace their worn out chapel.

Sven Söderholm was the architect, it was to be his last creative construction and when one hears about the tension that ensued, it is perhaps understandable, for he wanted nothing less than his view of perfection. He designed it with the gables wider than the side walls, the gables formed of pre-cast concrete with exposed crushed marble facing, the walls with black hanging slates. The interior was asymmetrically arranged with benches to the left, organ and altar to the right, lit by a series of eight windows to the north with copper inlaid doors surmounted by a Cross in the south wall. Today it all looks undistinguished: with houses built in proximity and the old original slate roof replaced with profiled sheet steel, the original concept has been thoroughly compromised. Then it was being compared in Dagens Nyheter with Matisse's Vence or with Assi.

Sigurd Persson made six candlesticks, two vases and the font.

Folke made the three altar windows. His method, as in Säter, was to create colour and image from many multi-hued, jewel-like pieces of glass set in lead, so the lead lines delineate a very detailed image that requires concentration to comprehend.

The left-hand window is an intense depiction of the sun, [Fig. 34], with which Christ himself was identified from earliest Christianity (following the prophecy of Malachi, Ch2,4). Above the Sun, the stars, the moon and the birds of the air, below the Sun, the fishes of the sea.

The centre window is a radiant depiction of Christ, haloed in a golden aura, hand raised in greeting, rather than blessing. [Fig. 35].

The right-hand window shows the Heart, here burning with flames, a Christian emblem of the ardent love of God, with the angels above and the people below. [Fig. 36].

It was consecrated on the 20th of June 1954, to reviews from three national papers.

" - The dedication of Sörsjö merits a story: We arrived at Transtrand (the small town of which Sörsjö is the sub-parish) rather on the late side. Then we went trout fishing with the building contractor. We caught plenty, grilled them on a fire and so it turned into an open-air party with strong drink. We were to receive accommodation in the shopkeeper's house, but they had already gone to sleep, apart from a girl who showed us to our room. Sven requested a call and coffee at 7am. In a very complicated way and with his customary, comical stammer, he tried to explain to the young girl that it was not to be boiled coffee, but expresso. Next morning we drove through the spring snows to Sörsjö; it was a Sunday and I saw three little bears disappear among the trees.

" - When we arrived, Sven began to make a scene, as near the chapel there stood a barn, which upset him. He spoke to the farmer and got his permission to pull it down. Then the building contractor, only a few hours before the consecration and on a Sunday morning, was persuaded to demolish it there and then. He entered the chapel and saw it was packed full of extra chairs. That too upset him. Out with all the chairs, people would have to sit on the slopes by the church, with a loudspeaker relaying the service! Telephone calls all over the place, a taxi arrived with a loudspeaker from Malung. After that he started to complain about the flowers on the altar, more telephone calls and a motor biking maniac came with new flowers from Malung. Then when everything was concluded, Sven went to the church cashier and asked for his allowance for expenses both for him and for me; he ordered board, lodging and drink in Malung, which was to be paid out of my allowance, even though he was the man asking for it. In the car, going home, I had two sheep I'd bought

for the 21st June, which was Mieke's birthday. Sven slept beside me and on each curve toppled over either in my direction or against Stritt's door. Sometimes the sheep panicked and leapt over me. At eight in the morning we arrived in front of the house at Aspnäs and at once there was a party. We called the sheep "Ulrick" and "Sven Malm." (he was another architect).

A LOST POTENT MEMORY

Like the nightjars, eagle owls and woodpeckers that flitted through, mirrored by the numerous acquaintances who supped and sipped, this sanctuary in the woods epitomised everything of natural harmony. Aspnäs, a very special place.

Brita turned her attention to the art of cooking and with proper inspiration from Bocuse gratefully received netted pike and perch from the lake, the former baked in white wine, the latter smoked or with a cream sauce. Forays were made into the woods where the chanterelles, the boletes and the agarics each had their favourite corner; nor were russules, wood blewetts and ink caps ignored, for from summer onwards the daily walk with the dachshunds was rewarded with a small basket filled with a great variety of mushrooms. First her old family silver ladle spooned out the soup from the earthenware tureen, then perhaps a little braised reindeer with whortle berries, rounded off with a Jarlsberg or Herregård cheese until the Boursin became a favourite when that was invented. Confronted with such majestic cooking, not quite like saying grace, it became Folke's custom to be a bit more paterfamilias, to tap his glass and improvise a speech for five minutes, always something amusing, perhaps pondering on some aesthetic highlight, a memory or two dug out from the past celebrating, like Haydn, life, as the greatest gift.

When dinner was over, Mieke and Beatrice did the washing-up, mountains of it, as Brita in her inspirations seized every pan and vessel there was to concoct her creations with their own secret rituals. The best way to wash those dishes was to sing songs and laugh a lot. At this moment, Folke would retire to his studio till round about midnight and, as the girls grew up, Brita too returned to painting, especially after she had her new studio built, extending off her kitchen.

The day began at six. In summer Folke always took a swim first, then drank large bowls of café-au-lait in the bedroom with some smörgås, dogs, children, even parrots, but not goats, all crowded on their bed. The chit-chat was interrupted all of a sudden, with a triumphant dash for “dassen”, where it was fine to sit two a-breast reading old issues of Life or Paris-Match. Father had the job of cleaning out the aromatic compost twice a year. Then work, or a shopping expedition, or a trip away. The day was spent pillaging the larder whenever hunger struck, until Brita’s regular conjuring of dinner.

People could be a bore, but there was nothing nicer than when they arrived. Neighbours, architects, friends from Stockholm and Mariefred, poets and other artists, farmers, relatives, blacksmiths, boyfriends most importantly, all were welcomed at the drop of a hat with coffee and buns, and then their famous apple wine would be brought out of the cold room as Follette, the Paris mongrel and Dolores, the parrot, joined in the fun. When the visitors had left, there was always a sigh of relief that they could get back to work again. It didn’t matter, though, when people arrived. As Bengt af Klintberg put it, “he always had an open house and you could go there at any time, so all poets, artists, writers and architects, they all knew him. He was so hospitable. I remember Svea Jansson (from a very old farming family from the archipelago off Åberg in Finland), who knew over 1000 folk songs by heart which had been passed down from her grandmother. She had given a concert in Stockholm, and afterwards, in the middle of the night nearly, I took her to Aspnäs and immediately it was a fantastic party with many people. It must have been August, because Folke took her to pick apples, and she was so charmed that on the way back she said she hadn’t had such a good time in years.”

Brought up on the big guns of Beethoven and Brahms at the concertgebouw in the 1930s, Folke’s taste in music became personal and intimate rather than mainstream and universal. After swapping a painting at Eskilstuna for a gramophone and records, the recordings

that lasted were mainly French – Ravel’s “Introduction and Allegro” by the Melos ensemble; Debussy’s Sonata for flute, alto and harp and the Danse Sacre with Rampal, Laskine, Pasquier and Tortelier; the quartets of Debussy and Ravel by the Julliard; Bach’s Cello suites by Casals; Bartok’s string quartets by the Vegh and Schubert’s piano trios by the Suk. Other works that were adored were Under Milk Wood with Dylan Thomas, and Brendan Behan singing his folk selection, and records were really listened to by the fireside like a concert. Very occasionally a concert would be attended, usually of an experimental nature: the experience of hearing John Cage and David Tudor in Modernamuseet was very thought-provoking, defining new boundaries of abstraction and, before going to sleep, Cage’s book “Silence” was absorbed as a good night osmosis being another semi-abstract work, just as Ulysses had been in the 1930s. Roy Lichtenstein had shocked the art world in the early 1960s, so Cage, Rauschenberg and Merce Cunningham were invited to Modernamuseet, by Pontus Hyltén and they saw their performances which made a powerful impact, as did a staging of Genet’s “The Screens.” The perfect antidote to all that was a trip to the cinema to see “A Hard Days Night”, which was greatly enjoyed musically, though less so dramatically. Meanwhile most daily music was provided by the birds, Mieke’s highly competent flute playing and Folke’s sung trills and runs in the shower. As the girls grew up, they nearly always had musical boyfriends, like Salmo Sahlin, a great fiddler and also a fine violinist, and Bengt Widlund, a wonderful cellist, and Janne Silén, an organist and choirmaster. To be a musician was high art, a question of temperament, feeling and intelligence, the ephemeral and momentary allied to technique. Much of the time, the old Bang and Olufsen was endlessly played for dancing to Bill Haley, Chubby Checker, Mahalia Jackson, and Elvis when the boys arrived. Jive was in.

There’s a certain time of the year when the earth is still warm and yet the sun’s light is extinguished rapidly, the birds are quiet and the trees are motionless. It’s not quite the last dance of that short unendingly light summer but harvest is in, lanterns can be lit on the

veranda and the Skåne Aqvavit put on ice. Those lucky enough to live by water, and that applies to many in Sweden, extract their nets, bait them with a little smelly fish and, when night falls, are rewarded with the teeming underwater denizens of the deep: crayfish. These are taken home, boiled and the party begins. Friends congregate, 20 crayfish each would be reasonable, a work of several hours unpicking little claws and crevices accompanied by skål (this is a formal, ceremonious toasting, guests may not toast the hostess, but you are honoured if she toasts you) and "helan tar" (bottoms up, and if you can't take a whole, you can't have the half) sung very tunefully and at length, to allow you to prepare for your fiery draught. Even in those days drinking and driving in Sweden was totally forbidden. At Aspnäs there was, however, a crayfish pavilion where guests could sleep and Maurice Guillon remembers Allan Ebeling there with his wife- "a huge and powerful man and quite extraordinary: he made a sculpture in his house in 1956, there wasn't enough space so he made a hole in the roof of his house and continued." Crayfish, a word to gladden the heart in Sweden.

And then they all died. 1957. The pest, or was it? No one really knows. Till then the Valloxen was transparent to a depth of 6m, but the wondrous Fairy liquid arrived and as all sewage emptied straight into the lake, it wasn't surprising all kinds of blooms and algae took over and the water became murky.

Beatrice's pony was a Gotland Rus and could easily live outside with her thick coat of long, yet not shaggy, hair. Keeping her in was another matter. The fences were at the end of their working life and were traditional, made out of pine tops and thinnings, diagonally placed between two poles tied together at the top, that Russie could easily break down. The farmer next door wanted to put up barbed wire, but they liked the look of their traditional wooden fencing so Russie had to get used to electric fencing inside it.

Knivsta school was reached by skiing across the lake in winter. In summer, it was a short row to the other side to collect eggs from Brönneby farm. Occasionally some fish would be netted but the

lake's chief delight was bathing and in the Aspnäs corner nudity was wholeheartedly donned like a rejection of Victorian prudery. Naked they came into the world and naked they remained, when swimming or even working if the work was dusty, for the duration of Sweden's best kept secret – its long hot summer. Mosquitoes, stinging nettles and brambles being trifling afflictions, so clothes' removal when the weather was right was an instinctive homage to the fleeting sun.

There would be drives to Knivsta to collect the post and groceries, visit the bank and the market garden, after which the Dagens Nyheter would be read. The story of Tage Erlander and the Swedish Welfare State was not so interesting but the arts reviews were closely followed and indeed those articles were lengthy and well-informed. Literature was on a particularly high plane with Gunnar Ekelöf, Harry Martinsson, Per Lagerkvist and many more, where Brita had a very discerning understanding. In any case they were close friends of the new wave of writers involved in Happenings and Concrete poetry in the mid-60s. Mieke and Beatrice went with Pi Lind's Pistol Theatre group to Düsseldorf, where they became Sweden's leading exponents of the world-wide Fluxus movement, (=Happenings) and Staffan Olzon, Bengt-Emil Johansson (who now writes special books about birds), and especially Bengt af Klintberg all came into their lives. The 1960s was the decade when every convention was broken. The promise of full employment seemed absolute and wages rose at the expense of capitalist profits, so wealth was more equitably distributed. A universal feeling of freedom gave birth to an endless variety of artistic expression, which might be called shallow, and usually was, if it was not based on some deep foundation of previous artistic experience. It was a very exciting time to live through, when those in pursuit of art felt an added freedom.

No relationship is ever stable and marriage is one of the most problematical; love is the cornerstone, but what sort of love? Total passionate intoxication... and that after babies are born and children growing up? Can there be anything apart from total loyalty to the mother of your children? Brita only knew absolute honesty, and this

can be a disadvantage when married to a man who could be deceitful if another woman fell in love with him, which foolish women were inclined to do just now and then when confronted with Folke's warmth, humour, centre-stage personality and alternating magnetism and sensitivity. Beautiful women laughed in his company and forgot their former and proper selves. Brita could easily sense this but was far too refined to make a scene, nor did she retire into a state of hurt belittlement. She could chat and socialise in a clever, guarded yet amusing way without any obvious criticisms but, deep down, she was sorrowful, as her love for her husband did not diminish but it was somehow less wanted. She had become rather matronly and jolly in the years after Beatrice's birth, but then she became more serious and amazingly slim again on resuming her painting, knowing that by allowing her husband every freedom and by being herself creative, open-minded and perspicaciously witty, she would remain the most important woman in his life, and so their marriage continued, not untrammelled, but at least a happy, loving partnership which is as much as most couples achieve. Everyone dreams about being in love all their lives but love is not only given it is also earned, that state of being which human beings can only occasionally sustain. Like artistic expression, which is on many different planes.

A painting can be like "preparing an elaborate meal", a mural can be "a waistcoat", a lithograph can be "a demonstration", and a church window can be a rejection because of a vicar's dogmatism. To steer through these minefields, Folke viewed himself totally as an artist in society, someone who could not be separated from his work, which reflected his temperament and energy, galvanised by fun and fantasy. He liked to leap over the conventional, while at the same time willingly submitting to architects who had to ensure his work fitted in with the overall concept, which often had first to serve the local community. His reputation soon grew, and he was increasingly allowed full freedom to express himself in his commissions; really only in the first church, Säter, is there any suggestion of more detailed requirements. After this it was just a request for a window, an altar

rail or a crucifix in the most general terms, answered by a proposal with the price, which was successful 9 times out of 10. Furthermore, every commission was delivered on time, which increased confidence, and to budget, and no two commissions bore any similarity to each other, except perhaps in the use of The Good Shepherd motif. The 16 years at Aspnäs breathed with the greatest air of freedom, to live, to think, imagine, enjoy and create, and all that stored imagination was released as if in a welling tide to meet more than 50 commissions. Painting was, needless to say, increasingly put to one side but, as the years without painting rolled by, an ever-increasing tension caused by this forced deprivation developed, until it became a volcanic frustration. Commissions provided an immediate solution to the need to pay for house and home, but the true meaning of a free artist was never lost sight of: to paint entirely from one's inner impulses, with free technique and personal imaginings. Eventually he became utterly sated by the constant outpouring of his creativity into decorative works. There was a rupture with his past, which was followed by a stressful, soul-searching return to brush and easel that was very painful for a year and a half. After such a long interval, it was not easy.

It seemed like a life of grasshoppers and indeed it would have continued so, had not an ugly black cloud appeared out of the blue. In 1954 they received notification that the planned E4 Motorway was to pass right over their house and vault the narrows of Valloxen lake on a 150 m viaduct, cost-effective because it would shave 5 km off the alternative Stockholm to Uppsala route should it run east of the lake.

They had come to this clear spring-fed lake from the Mälaren, which had become increasingly polluted, and now this area was feeling the constant pressure of building, especially with the development of nearby Märsta, a new Stockholm dormitory town and Arlanda, Stockholm's big new airport. So there was a particular need to preserve this as a clean, unspoiled recreation area. All efforts to show that this was the most destructive and short-sighted route possible fell on deaf ears despite strong support from Uppsala's

architects and Uppland's Lord-Lieutenant for a route circumventing the eastern end of the lake. In vain it was that all the family ripped out and threw away all the surveyor's pegs across their land whenever they appeared. The route was fixed in 1959 with work commencing in the early 1960s starting from Stockholm. In the summer of 1966 the motorway finally smashed through this charming, quintessentially Swedish natural landscape and should you return today, you would not be able to find so much as a broken roof tile from the old 17th-century cottage or a scrap of wood from any of the dozen out-houses. The rococo bath house was the last to disappear as it leaned half submerged into the waters, like a Titanic, with its shoulder length rococo ladies clinging on desperately like drowning nymphs.

Meanwhile the work poured in. A big developer called Gustaf Clason, who had bought a painting or two of Folke's, owned Sveavägen 59, a building in the heart of Stockholm, with a floor area of 1100 sq m, which he was converting into a car showroom to be called Gustaf Byrrenius' Bilhall. There was an entrance hall with broad steps either side rising to a gallery, which encircled the central showroom below. Between the stairways, Folke installed a glass mosaic of irregular cubes, rectangles and reliefs in balancing colours as a focal point from the entrance to the stairways in an area of 13 by 7 m. This work has now been buried in concrete as the building has been redeveloped as insurance offices and a drug addiction clinic.

A request from Kristinahamn town council for a new municipal coat-of-arms provoked an amusing proposal making use of the nickname for the town of "Louse hole", which was rejected, so he called them boring, redesigned it with gilded metalwork showing the usual sailing boat, and was pleased that this too was rejected.

In the lost forested wilds of Uppland, word of mouth must have spread amongst the locals about his pleasing tile mosaic for Örbyhus school, as now he made a small ceramic relief, in chamotte, for nearby Vendel school of two boys playfully wrestling, to go above the entrance door. For the village of Östervåla, he made a small window

on the theme of The Comforting Angel for the funerary chapel and in the school close by he made a bannister rail of steel plate on the motif of carrots, which had to be designed to prevent children falling through. At the time, the carrots were painted in orange and green with a laquer finish, but their art department never had enough imagination to restore it, so now it is just a boring red.

" - Round there they were strange people with guilt complexes. The vicar had murdered the bell ringer and the organist hanged himself in the church tower. It was a sort of perfect crime, but the truth came out in the end and there was a notorious court case. Later a detective story was written about it and it also became a film." That was 1955.

1956 brought a fruitful partnership with another architect, Hampus Bergman, who had won a competition to design a community centre in Ankarsrum, Småland. A letter was received from the commune on behalf of the parish council: "to decorate the exterior of our Community Hall. Firstly to design 15 figures in clay, as well as one mould for an iron casting of the Commune's coat-of-arms. The figures shall represent a council chairman, teacher, doctor, child's baptism, mother and child, shopkeeper, smelter, smith, forester, farmer, [Fig. 37], carpenter, roadman, office worker, hunter, and sportsman. For a sum of 12,500 kr., 4000 at the start, 4000 kr., on delivery of the clay models, and 4500kr. on completion."

These figures were much more schematically done than in the Borlänge court-house four years earlier. They show strong signs of gigantism and a loosening of anatomical form in interesting ways, but as Folke himself noted about the finished result – "Unfortunately our Swedish architects are rarely inspiring." Instead of adorning a bannister or the entrance way these 75 cm high squat figurines are positioned round the outside of the rather dull building some 3 ½ m above ground level where they hardly attract attention. Folke's bile must have been raised because beneath the photo of him seated with the locals at the opening luncheon he commented: "In the glasses

nothing more than fruit juice – red, yellow and clear.” The clay models were preserved to decorate Aspånäs hallway and then gradually sold and dispersed.

1957 was the culmination of almost two years work with Toresund church. In 1955 Dagmar Loden, also an artist, had mounted an exhibition for contemporary church artists in Hälsingborg which was called H-55 and was reviewed in the national papers. Participants who later became internationally famous were Jan Brazda, someone with whom Folke had exhibited 12 years earlier in “Artists in Flight to the Land” and who has work in Växjö Cathedral; Sigurd Persson, the excellent silversmith who is still working today and was a firm friend; Ralph Bergholtz (St Mary’s, Hälsingborg, Ansgard church Eskilstuna, and Trollhätten Parish Church) and Sofia Widén, the highly creative embroiderer, who had joined forces with Alice Lund in 1952. Here Folke exhibited a pair of his “silhouette” windows which, at that time, were his preferred method, that is, a combination of stained glass and plate steel with diagrammatic gas welding cutouts. Toresund’s PCC decided to buy these windows and they were incorporated into the three altar windows by Advent, 1955. [Fig. 38]. This was followed in December 1956 by an order for a chasuble and antependium showing a “struggling ram lamb in the Spirit’s flames of fire” from the Greek “Arneios”, rather than a sacrificial lamb, as it was only to be used on Feast Days. A crucifix was also ordered. Finally he was asked to provide an altar rail. This was made of steel plate, with cutouts to represent the 12 disciples.

In the midst of this, Sven Söderholm was effecting a restoration of Nacke church, a fine building in the Northern Jugendstil, for which he asked Folke to make an altar rail. The church is dedicated to the 42nd Psalm of David with the words “As the hart pants after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, oh God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?” The altar rail in this heavy Victorian church was made of elfin fleet-footed deer in wrought iron, so light and delicate it hardly intrudes in the otherwise overbearing atmosphere. [Fig. 39].

At the same time, he was working on an even bigger commission – a window, a crucifix and a font for Skoghall Church. Due to the expansion of the town, a new Church was needed to complement the existing one, Sweden’s oldest functional wooden church from the 16th century. It cost one million kroner with 50,000 raised by the locals, as well as donations, the largest of which was from the Uddeholm company. Two Danes, Aage Porsbo and Karsten Kierkegaard, and a Swede, Jan Hallen, were the architects who won the competition to build it and it has a light, uncluttered feel to it.

The altar window, using the steel silhouette method, was made at home at Aspånäs where he had set up a forge in a lean-to outside his studio, with the help of Lasse and Nisse Andersson, two competent blacksmiths from Knivsta. [Fig. 40]. For the silver halo of the crucifix and for the candlesticks he was helped by the silversmith Bengt Liljedahl. The Christ figure itself [Fig. 41] and the saucers for the candlesticks he had cast in the Boda glassworks, as well as the three angel figures for the font. For all these pieces, he first made the mould in pressed graphite. For the bowl of the font, he had the help of a Boda glassblower. For the triangular base of the font he had the help of Olle de Leon: so that by precise heating of the hardened glass, a bubbled opacity of finish was achieved. [Fig. 42]. While his glasswork was going on, he lived blissfully, home from home, at Erik Höglund’s house, the great Boda designer of the 1950s and 1960s.

“ - The investiture was not without incident. Bishop Gerd Borgenstierna’s stole was a piece of old curtain, at the altar he dropped his crook with a loud clatter and then he baptised his infants with their surname, but apart from that he spoke with strong emotions and passionate feelings.”

The Gothenburg bank ordered a tapestry for their New York branch from the Alice Lund textile works for which Folke made the cartoon, a representation of the passage of cargo vessels back and forth. As his old friend Joep Goedkoop was to become chairman of the Netherlands Chamber of Commerce, Folke sent it to him

for his investiture, in the presence of the mayors of New York and Amsterdam.

On the waterfront of Stockholm harbour, Hampus Bergman designed a new office block for the magnificent old provender mill called Saltsjökvärn and commissioned Folke to make an ironwork. As their emblem was a seagull, he made a frieze of "a cloud of gulls" in steel. This has all been demolished now, apart from the old castellated mill, which is being redeveloped, so this work is lost without trace.

Throughout 1958 the steady flow of commissions continued.

In Mariefred a new funerary chapel was built and two windows ordered. This time he abandoned his steel silhouette method and went to the famous art glazier, Floris Tetterode, from Holland, who was totally experimental, had works all over the world, and lived in a house made entirely of glass. The two windows were made by setting the glass in concrete. However, the results with this method could only be examined when the whole job was ready and with the smaller window, which had been the gift of his dear former neighbour Lisa Hallberg, he woke in the middle of the night thinking about it, and declared next day, much to Floris' amazement, he wanted to remake it, at his own expense of course, as he was not satisfied. So he made another one with which he was perfectly happy. In any case, only a year or two later, he found a home for the reject, in Hammarby church near Stockholm, where a friend's father was churchwarden. For the altar window, he embellished the concrete case with intricate mosaic work, much of it gold, which added a rich lustre to the Christ in Majesty. [Figs. 43 & 44]. The small window represents the Crown of Thorns. An unusual postscript to this work in Mariefred appears in his scrapbook:

"- An indication as to how busy those times were, was that in 1960, nice kind vicar Einar Rydberg (years before, in October 1945 at Eskilstuna, he had bought a drawing "Gammal Apel"= Old Apple Tree) rang me one evening and wondered whether I had received all my money, because when they had checked all the final bills

for the church construction, they had found themselves left with a surplus of 6000 kr. But my papers were in such a chaotic state, that I found it impossible to see what the correct state of affairs was. But together with branch bank manager Malin, who was a man of order and rectitude, and who in his advancing years married our chimney sweep's daughter, we came to the conclusion that there had to be a payment deficiency, and that is how I came to write this invoice for another 6000 kr."

A long way north, near Sundsvall, the architect Johan Thomée commissioned three large altar windows for Njurunda church. These were made at Ringström's in the classic way, painted glass set in lead, all very monochrome using only varying shades of blue. [Fig. 45]. By including a lumberjack chain-sawing a tree, Folke wanted to stress that Jesus was of humble origins and for ordinary people.

The following year, 1959, Thomée again employed Folke, this time at Ånge church, for which a large tapestry altar hanging was provided, made at Alice Lund's Hyttinge workshop. [Fig. 46].

"- I spent a long time also making a crucifix and it was exciting to forge the small figure of Christ out of a lump of silver and to hammer the silver halo around it." [Fig. 47].

Now began a partnership with an architect that was a true odyssey. Sven Söderholm remained a constant supporter but despite his intense learning and culture and extreme sensibility, something happened and after a couple of churches he ceased to be directly creative, joining the church's board and becoming an administrator instead. With other architects, the relationship was confined to just a few jobs, but Rolf Bergh, a very innovative architect, seems to have had an undying admiration for what Folke could do for him and therefore came back to him again and again. They could not have been more different as characters. Rolf was a True Believer for whom church architecture was an expression of his deep-seated faith, whereas Folke was more of the pagan polytheist, who marvelled constantly at the wonder of life. Without being too intellectual

about it, he did consider himself a believer, but this faded with the perceived unnecessaryness of it all, and in the 1960s the whole mental climate changed, for him as well. Nevertheless, he could wholly relate to a “Jesus in Majesty” and the outward symbols of the Bible, as a beautiful story and an important part of his cultural upbringing.

One would like to know much more about Rolf Bergh but their differences can best be illustrated by an anecdote: In later years, Folke made all his windows in Holland. For one particularly large commission, three members of the town’s committee decided to come and inspect the first four windows, so they brought Rolf along. He had never been abroad before. Afterwards they went for a lunch and Rolf, who then stayed on with Folke for a couple of days, told Folke that the chairman insisted that he must try their famous national dish, which he’d found out was called “uitsmijter”, so Rolf was persuaded to have that. When a full plate of bacon and two fried eggs arrived, he wasn’t so impressed! Folke then showed him authentic Holland, with everything from the bohemian quarter of Amsterdam to the burgher mansions, and to the Paulus Potter landscapes, still to be found unaltered if you had local knowledge.

They both had highly imaginative and innovative ideas for churches and worked together a dozen times, not counting several excellent projects which came to nought. Unlike most European countries, in Sweden, to this day, the church is central to the community, organising childcare, youth clubs, the mother’s union and care in old age, apart from just worship. As the population has expanded, church building has continued to meet these more secular needs.

Their first co-operation was for a large, new community centre in Falun to be called Kristinegården, when Rolf Bergh won the first prize out of three architects for a 40 m long three-storey building. On the first floor, there was a large assembly room for 260 people with a stage. Folke designed the tapestry curtains for this, of some 4 x 5 m, which were woven at Alice Lund’s. [Fig. 48]. In an elevated niche window, he carved a sculpture in lime measuring 100x125cm

representing “The Six Days of Creation”. [Figs. 49 & 50]. The complex provided for youth activities in the basement and upstairs a room for the sewing club, as well as a meditation room with a small altar, where an appliquéd and embroidered representation of “God’s Eye” had pride of place. [see Fig. 19]. This was designed by Folke and superbly executed by Sofia Widén, who worked out of Hyttinge. The project was completed two months ahead of schedule and inaugurated by Bishop Cullberg to great acclaim with a packed house of all the local dignitaries. The cost was 1.3mkr, which was raised by donations from all quarters, without the local vicar, the Rev Palm, even having to launch an appeal.

Folke was approached by the committee chairman of Byttorp, to design a tapestry for their new school, which is in a suburb of Borås. As Borås is only a short distance from Hornborgasjö, the meeting place for thousands of cranes to perform their courtship dances in spring and etched into Swedish culture through Selma Lagerlöf’s tales of Nils Holgersson, Folke chose a motif based on 22 cranes. This was woven by Ulla Cyrus, a weaving teacher, size 2 x 2.4 m, and still looks good today, exactly fulfilling her prediction that because of its very dense weave, it should last hundreds of years and become more beautiful with time. [Fig. 51].

The years 1959 and 1960 were so crowded with work and so frenetic that, though there was a palpable excitement at such freedom to work, the endless driving, the rush to finish work, living out of suitcases and a tendency to leave finances to look after themselves, all combined to upset the balance of his life into a more stressed restlessness, which he deeply wanted to redress. His father died in May 1958, in 1959 he was living in Limburg at the hotel Crasborn, Thorn, when his daughter, Mieke, had a serious car accident and finally, something changed in his marriage, as his feelings for Nell van Norden, an old childhood sweetheart, were awakened. Despite all these gusts, the Aspnäs idyll continued and a summer holiday was taken round Småland and Öland, the children sleeping in the Volkswagen bus, the adults with relatives and friends. There was a

romantic return to the childhood haunt of Sjövik on the limpid lake Sommen, to Count von Essen's country house. It looked deserted and neglected but it still had the same magical atmosphere, down a long drive, splendidly set in its own grounds, by its wide crystal lake. A knock on the door elicited no immediate response. After an age, the door opened a crack, a thin ancient gentleman stuck his nose out, introductions, a moment of glee as he turned on his tranny and swept Brita around the bare-boarded hallway to the strains of a waltz... Everyone was invited in to the entrance hall, which was now just bare boards and without a stick of furniture. Charming and polite, the old count was living out his days more as a tramp than a nobleman, all past splendour now gone. Linnaeus' legendary Öland was retraced after a ferry crossing and a visit was paid to Sigurd and Iris Persson at their summer house.

Sala, the judicial centre for Västmanland, received a new courthouse in 1959 with Sven Jönsson from Uppsala as the architect. He asked Folke to decorate the main entrance. This he did with a major ironwork of 14 animals, representing the virtues and vices as found in their human counterparts. So there was the lion for strength and honesty, the pig for excess, fornication and filth, the magpie for kleptomania, chatter and slander, the eagle for high-mindedness and honesty, the stag for directness, the unicorn for justice, the fox for falsehood and lies, the ram lamb for uplifting heartfelt meekness, a bear for violent force, a dove for humility and finally a cow for patience. [Figs. 52-54].

Fashioned out of steel plate, this would have been hammered and shaped with the help of Lasse and Nils Andersson, the two brothers from Knivsta, in the lean-to forge at Aspnäs.

In the same way as the ironwork for the entrance to Brännkyrka Church Hall, Stockholm, which also had animals – a fish, a bird and a sheep, as well as there being abstract forms for the other half of the construction. This made an interesting composition, but it is very badly mounted, with an unnecessary post obstructing its setting. As

the narrator, I should tell you I had first-hand experience with the making of this sheep, being a strong sixteen year old. I held the 3mm. plate to the anvil, while Folke hammered in the relief and then we beat it cold with a 5 or 10lb. sledge for hours, to create wool effect. Holding it against the anvil, the shocks often ran up your arms. When the two sides were finished, Lasse "lastade dom" (=welded them). It was a job which was always very hard physically, like proper blacksmithing.

The final ironwork for that year was for a school at Lerum near Gothenburg. This was an ingenious composition of numerous gymnasts and it was mounted on the side of the sports hall. [Fig. 55]. Five years later there was a complaint from the school authorities that the work was rusting which received very short shrift:

" – Yesterday on my return from France, I received your exceptionally disagreeable letter. Forgive me if say in reply that I feel your comments about a trifling bit of rust are very irritating. A maintenance free ironwork, as we know, doesn't exist and that's why I proposed a more costly copper, and I regret that out of goodwill I didn't make it in copper for the same price as iron. Furthermore, I remarked at the time to architect Andreasson that the rough handling on installation would help it to rust prematurely. But that isn't what I wanted to discuss, rather the cheapest way to combat the rust – which is to paint it, rusty as it is, with tectyl, which should take no more than one day. Signed, Folke Heybroek, 2 sept.'64. = "my birthday."

Architect Andreasson had roused Folke's ire by demanding he pay 1000 kroner to have the work sandblasted and repainted, saying that this would rust again after a few years. And indeed tectyl has been the perfect answer ever since, as the work looks as good as new to this day.

Wood, clay, iron, textiles, paint, glass, mosaic were all turned to during this couple of years, and from one end of this enormous country to another, from Falkenberg in the south to Kalix in the north.

How they heard of him in the far north is a mystery, but it proved a very enjoyable job, namely to sculpt “ The Nine Muses ” for the entrance to a new grammar school in Kalix. [Fig. 56].

“ – There was an exceptionally generous Board of Governors, who liked to drink and celebrate and invite. They paid for my flight to the North where the entire committee met me at the airport and then we took a 60 mile taxi trip to the hotel Valhall in Kalix, where they treated me to salmon and salmon and salmon. And schnapps - they certainly have a trying time with winter darkness - at midday there was street lighting and the snow was three to four feet deep and the stars sparkled in the heavens.

“ - Once they all came down to Stockholm and dined at the Gyllene Freden Cellar (restaurant). When I said it was time for me to drive home to Aspånäs and offered the reason that my dog was waiting in the cold of my car and was hungry, Ivar Andersson shouted to the waiter and told him to go to my car and give my dog some food. The dog received an enormous helping of sausage and bubble and squeak.

“ – Palle Parnevi, from Gothenburg, also had a commission with a large abstract ironwork for the interior. He arrived in a superb open-top Mercedes, an old vintage model. That was in the summer. He had put his work in place there and the entire committee gave thanks with a splendid dinner of salmon and more salmon in the hotel Valhall.

“ – Palle stood up and thanked everyone and then recounted, in highly colourful language, with what delight and joy he had worked on his commission and also with what sweat and tears; he then talked about his poor blacksmith, who had such a large and numerous family, and then about his own problems and all his misfortunes, and now that everything was completed he was actually still thousands of kroner short with everything he owed. After that he sat down, overcome with emotion, and drying his eyes, hid his face in his napkin. Everyone felt deeply sympathetic and stood around feeling terribly sorry for him. So with the dinner and the brandies over, the

committee decided to withdraw for an extraordinary meeting, and when they came back the chairman said that they had decided to offer him a further 8000kr. over and above his quotation.

“ – No sooner announced, than Palle called the barman and treated the whole company to a light supper. They were rather put out by this, but they kept their good humour.

“ – In the autumn we were flown up there once more for the Grand Opening, with the most nauseating prick of a Minister of Education and many other important people. It was just the time when Sweden was clamouring for engineers, and doing away with philosophers and grammar schools for the classics. So I made a long speech on behalf of the Nine Muses and a classical education.

“- Slam.....Slam....Slam.....We must eat.....Salm.....on..” .

The Nine Muses were fashioned out of solid pine, with some six-inch laminations to prevent splitting and are mounted above the entrance doorway to Manhemsskolan where they have been creosoted and are still in excellent condition to this day. Folke burnt out at least half a dozen Black and Decker drills shaping and sanding them in his little boathouse down by the lake. [Fig. 57]. Then he delivered them in a week-long journey, entirely on gravel roads, reaching as far as the wilds of Lappland, where the farmers were “ poor as Abraham Stenhammar from Akkapakte .”

In late winter he was asked by Erland Skantzé, the owner of the Falkenberg brewery, to make a wall painting telling the story of brewing. He spent an enjoyable few weeks as his guest while he carried out the work. “ – The brewer was a short, fat man who mostly drank ale and smoked cigars, as he should.”

The motifs centred on the good kings Hunding, who swam in a barrel, and Hading, who drowned in a barrel, and Gambrinus, who loved ale and enjoyment, which seems a far cry from the Hunding of Wagner’s “The Valkyrie”, who abducted and forcibly married Sieglinde after burning her parents’ house and laying waste their

farm. The painting shows many decorative elements – hops and barley, malting, fermenting, barrelling and the good kings quaffing. The whole scene was painted on hessian and the colour has very much disappeared over the subsequent 50 years and so too has the fine old waterside brewery, now moved to a state-of-the-art brewery owned by Carlsberg, outside the town. “Falcon” beer, a best seller, is still produced there however, and the 5m x 1.2m painting was donated by the Skantze family in 1993 and occupies pride of place in the entrance lobby of what is now Sweden’s biggest brewery.

Meanwhile Gustaf Clason came back to Folke with an even bigger job – an 80 sq m ceramic wall for an office canteen, adapting what had been the roof terrace of Thulehuset - in the centre of Stockholm into an eighth floor restaurant. Commanding views of the city on one side, and Folke’s ceramic wall, which was to convey the feeling of summer and leisure, on the other.

He costed it on the basis of 900 tiles at 90 kr. each, plus miscellaneous and travel expenses to Holland making a total of 13,000 kr. with a further 2000 kr. to install the tiles. He estimated five month’s work to make the various sketches for approval, the 1:1 cartoon, trials on various glazes for approval, followed by painting of glazes and firing, and remaking of any individual tiles that got broken. This entailed a lot of time at the Russel Tiglia ceramic works in Tegelen, Limburg, so Brita came too and they stayed in the hotel Crasborn, Thorn “ – Our second home with Jan and Rie, the darlings .” Brita was busy painting again and made some fine pastels of the special life and villages of the very Catholic province of Limburg. These were Folke’s words at the investiture :

“ –As we are considering a dining-room, we must use hygienic materials. So I suggested these tiles, which are handmade, all 30 by 30 cm, which determine the rhythms in the motif. Each tile is different, looking from close range one can only take in fragments, as in life one only sees things partially. A large-scale composition will not give that feeling of intimacy, of just the “human dimension” which is something I am searching for. In our time when everything is changing, where

technical advances bring new methods every day, with underground, button lifts, lights, the glass and metal of the city centre and people hastening past, in this large room with its curved metal roof and cooking machinery, I wish to create a special dimension of friendly and pleasurable lightness. And therefore : Summer breezes through the trees, a pastoral idyll of bathing, dreams of holidays. That’s how simple it is .” [Fig. 58].

His costs were 15,000, the contract price was 25,000 kr., and the work is still in place to this day, though horribly hidden from all the diners behind a row of dispensing trolleys in what is now the Skandia Insurance headquarters on No 44, Sveavägen.

In 1957, Hampus Bergman was given the task of effecting a restoration of Trönö church. This church was built in 1895 after endless arguments between the locals, who loved their old church, and the Royal authorities, who favoured a big, heavy, impressive, neo-gothic structure to overawe and provide place for all the growing population. But by 1957, this grandiose late nineteenth century lump of a church was altogether too gloomy and large, so seating was reduced from 1000 to 650, the paintwork was lightened and Folke was engaged for altar works. In a huge church, with clear glass and overridingly heavy features, he came up with a daring solution. A wooden framework in oak with silver mirror-like reflectors to enhance the aura thrown out by a Red Jesus, made of solid glass as if freely floating above the altar. Rarely is Jesus incarnated as red, a symbolism that is always avoided despite the clear message of his teaching, and the parish records show that it roused a storm of protest at first, though this eventually subsided.

“ – Internally this cross was dressed with gilded silver and Bo Ekelund came along to help with this in the course of the work. Unfortunately we never told them about this, so I was summoned by the church council in a way that was demeaning and unpleasant, and threatened with prison and court proceedings. But I had an answer, though the vicar let me know in no uncertain terms that I was an eternally damned sinner. In all this, Hampus Bergman was a real

chicken liver, who only wanted to protect his reputation. In truth, he was always difficult to work with, and after this, I managed to avoid him ." [Fig. 59].

The candles, too, were held in the wooden framework to increase the airiness of the whole, with a simple red heart on the antependium. A note as to the costings shows that he used Olle de Leon from Boda for the glass, Bo Ekelund as silversmith and Nilsson brothers for the joinery at a cost of 9500 kr., leaving 1600 margin out of the 11,100 project estimate.

On the 11th of November 1998, Trönö church was being redecorated, when a fire broke out and destroyed this notable crucifix and altar.

1959 was rounded off with designs for curtains, carpets and furnishing fabrics for Torna Bara Bank in Lund, which were produced in Alice Lund's textile workshops. There was a very prissy letter from Director Cavallin that he didn't want the curtains in any way to obstruct his view of the street and how his architect wanted the colours of white, red, grey and blue, and this was all honoured. The bank still sits there in the city centre, but otherwise it was a job totally forgotten by Folke apart from a very hearty Skanian lunch on completion.

In 1960, soon after the courthouse, he was engaged to provide a window for the very handsome 18th-century funerary chapel in Sala, standing like an airy observatory in the middle of the burial ground, on each wall a large arched clear glass window with diagonal square panes. The solution here was a marvel of ingenious simplicity : A steel silhouette masking the diagonal lead lines, abstract forms and the figure of Christ able to shine through by the use of coloured glass to radiate His image. The whole inserted in front of the existing structure, so that the classical exterior remained unchanged, whereas the mourners could be comforted by a glowing image of the Saviour. [Fig. 60].

An attractive ironwork on an upstairs balcony was commissioned for Uppsala courthouse and a metal feature to cover an exhaust vent on the ground floor, relatively minor examples of decorative talent. The court has now been converted into a music centre. Another ironwork for Ludvika community hall was conceived as a sculpture of two blacksmiths striking the hour on an anvil, as it was a town famous for its metalwork.

" – But these boring dullards found it too expensive, so I just did a small scale ironwork of two smiths instead ." This can no longer be found.

However the quirky wall carving on three thick boards of "A Happy Horse ," For Ludvika Högsberg's technical college still enjoys pride of place in the dining hall, and this was also executed in that year.

In the entrance hall to No. 1 Strandvägen, right on the edge of Kungsträdgården in the elegant heart of Stockholm, is a wall tapestry executed by Alice Lund and Sofia Widén, which Folke designed for the Hypoteksbanken or Landshypotek. On the theme of sails and seagulls, it is a colourful evocation of Stockholm harbour and wearing its years very well.

" – Only just ready on time, the opening proceedings beginning five minutes late, just as we finished putting up the tapestry. Alice Lund was beside herself with worry, as well as the architect. The Foreign Minister, Richard Sandler was already there, together with Bo von Stackenström (who had hosted one of the van Gogh dinners). Sherry and lunch afterwards were very welcome ."

What better to round off the year than "A Glistening Mermaid " for the shipping insurance brokers, Kjessler Mannestråle, in Hälsingborg. This office continues to this day, high up on the waterfront, opposite the Elsinore ferry and the burnished ironwork with simple curvature was for a time the company's emblem and is still displayed in the entrance lobby.

The year before, Folke had written to Maurice Guillon : “I have a commission for five windows in a Church, three small ones in lively colours, one large one in clear glass, heavily fired, and one long one measuring 10 m by 1 m. There are master glaziers in Rheims, Charles and Brigitte Marq, of the Simon workshop, and I thought of making them there provided that they are not too expensive. I haven’t got their address, could you find it, and better still find out their price per sq metre? Then ask if they are very busy and if they could do it sometime next summer. I prefer to do all the painting myself as I’m very experienced, having already done quite a few. My glazier in Stockholm is very good, but so old, 87 and deaf, and his son died last year. And the idea of seeing you and living in France pleases me especially.”

This is perhaps the moment to digress on some of the main currents in stained-glass making at this time. The Marqs had made Chagall’s window for the church in Assi in 1957, but just when Folke was inquiring, Chagall, in his seventies, was back with the Marqs for the very exacting commission of windows for Metz Cathedral, so they simply didn’t have time to accommodate him. Charles Marq obtained his stained glass from the St. Just-sur-Loire works, which Chagall would then modulate with acid to provide the intensity required; every brushstroke was laboriously translated by acidifying, etching or plating, followed by further months spent by Chagall on a ladder using grisaille for the required chiaroscuro. The purists objected to his general approach to technical problems, arguing that the only correct way to make a window was to enclose a fragment of virgin “pot-metal ” in a lead framework; but Chagall held that the deeper the tonal quality a painter could give to his colour, the greater was the image on the picture plane, and in this respect he saw glass as a continuation of his painting. Matisse, however, in his chapel in Vence didn’t apply paint, whereas Folke had no inhibitions in this respect. Years later he finally came to visit Vence, and in January 1978 he wrote : “Sun at first, followed by rain, thunder and snow on the mountain. We drove to Vence and saw the Matisse Chapel but,

as I had already feared, it was a disappointment, nor do I think it is something that is improved by sunshine, as many claim.”

Folke clearly knew a great deal about Vence and only in the light of his own wide experience with church windows would he have made such a dismissive remark. This chapel was Matisse’s last major work, out of gratitude for the life-giving care he’d been given by sister Marie-Ange after his operation, and it was a big job for an eighty year old invalid working on it, as he did, almost exclusively for four years. The windows were made in the classical way with paper cut-outs for the maquettes to cut the glass. Matisse did have great difficulties in overcoming the limitations of his site, as only the south and west facing walls could house any windows. Nonetheless Matisse gave it his all:

“My only religion is the love of the work to be created, the love of creation and great sincerity.” He believed in the importance of cultural continuity and the Western Christian faith and had therefore baptised his children and married in church.

In Vence, however, Folke felt something was wanting; he felt more enthusiastic about Cocteau’s little chapel at Francheville, which was not so far away. But he was unable ever to make his windows at Marq Simon alongside Chagall and Jacques Villon, whom Folke had just seen in the Modernamuseet. They were simply fully booked and could not fit him in.

As a result, Folke turned to the old familiar business where he had first made a window in 1936 in his academy days, called Bogtman’s, at Zuider Emmakade 45, Haarlem. This is still run by Rutger Bogtman, the son of Ap Bogtman, to this day. Thus began a fruitful cooperation for two decades. Bogtman was familiar with all the methods in stained glass and furthermore had a superb stock of glass including hand blown Welsh. Like the Marqs, he too purchased his special requirements from St. Just. In those days he employed at least a dozen expert glaziers and solderers for leaded glass and there were real craftsman for firing and layering, while Folke provided the maquettes, and selected and painted the pieces of glass.

The year 1961 started with another project, this time for Eriksberg School in Uppsala, whilst it was still under construction and where he contracted to create various shapes and figures representing “ Earth, Wind and Sea ” from the poems of St. Jean Perse. This poet wanted his words to resonate totally anonymously, hence his *nom de plume*, with words creating impersonal abstraction, “The sea in us carrying its vast sibilant sounds and strong refreshing tides round the world...” “And of this sea there will be no question, but that it rules the hearts of men...” “Keeping the bright noon of your vision floating on the winds...”

The walls of this school were being constructed out of poured concrete between two faces of shuttering, so Folke hit on an idea, inspired in its simplicity, of creating reliefs in this wall simply by making shapes in three-quarter inch planking that fixed onto the face of the shuttering and afterwards colouring it.

“ – This wall happened in an exciting way as my artistic work began before the building came into being. We were muffled up for this cold, freezing job and Lasse and Nisse Andersson nailed and sawed mightily. The school governors wanted a strong wall, which the children would be unable to damage. When the whole wall had been cast and primed, Mieke and Beatrice finished the job by colouring it.” [Figs. 61 & 62].

It’s there to this day, some 200 sq m, and now an internal wall. The nine-year-old children say they like it a lot with its semi-abstract curving shapes, and the elderly schoolmaster in attendance would dearly like to find out how to repaint it, as it’s a trifle faded.

Then came some weavings for a rug, leading up to the altar, for Härlanda church, near Gothenburg. Folke’s only comment, “I remember that the church roof collapsed and several workers were killed during its construction.” This is a dark, heavy, brick built church of some grandeur and in its obscurity it is still possible to admire the patterned weave on the altar steps even if the overall effect is not particularly striking.

The road between Knivsta and Haarlem and Knivsta to Limburg began to become thoroughly well worn, in those days in a VW van, two ferry crossings and a 1200 km drive, a journey that could scarcely be done in less than three days.

It was now that Rolf Bergh, his brother Tore, a sculptor, and Olle Holmgren formed a team with Folke. A new church for Östertälje was in question. “ – This really was one of my more inspiring commissions, where we had an intimate team working together from the start and it showed in the results.”

A model was made, of which there is a good photograph, which presages most of the finished construction. [Fig. 63]. The method of construction was thoroughly modern and at the limits of the technically possible – walls and two-thirds of the roof all in one piece of poured moulded concrete, with the south pitch a flat slope vertically curved, the north pitch in a concave curve, the top six feet of the peak being poured subsequently. Internally, the sides of the mould were made of 3 inch boards, which left all the wood grain imprinted, the cement surface being a pleasant light grey finish. The result gives an amazing tent-like feel to the whole, with narrow high-level windows on the south eave allowing a few sunbeams to play their light across the altar’s gilded sculptures. [Fig. 64].

Folke’s contribution was three small windows for the chancel and two large windows (2 ½ m square and 10 m x 1m) for the North Wall, the high-level south windows being clear, as was the glass in the west gable. The long north window at eave’s level represents a series of parables with the River Jordan running through : The foolish virgins, the mustard seed, the sower and the neighbour who wished to beg a little bread and who knocked on the door in the night. [Figs. 65 & 66]. The large window behind the organ by the vestry represents “The Cloud standing in the desert.” [Fig. 67]. In the chancel, in a niche above the font, stands “Fish.” [Fig. 68]. To the left of the altar- “I am the Alpha and the Omega,” to the right- “ The Mouths that breathed with Tongues of Fire.” [Fig. 69].

In the spring of 1961, he wrote to Brita : “ – My three windows are now totally finished, they have just come out of the oven and are ready for assembly. I am working furiously on the larger one, I was never satisfied with that “rain window ”, so all week I was seized with panic and re-sketched it again and again in my hotel room with the furniture pushed to one side, so that the chambermaids were unable to come in and clean. Finally on Saturday and today, I borrowed Dick’s (Elfers’) studio and at seven in the evening the problem was solved. Neat, beautiful and right. Very pleased. On Monday Ap (Bogtman) was there again, so I drew up a time-schedule to overview the situation clearly : I never thought I’d work like this with windows.”

“ – At the end of the week I plan to travel home to you and to work on the Tierp Savings Bank job for two weeks, then both of us can go to Holland...”

There is not a jarring note in this fully 20th century church. Unless it be the daring purples of the “Alpha and Omega ”and the garish oranges of the “Tongues of Fire ”, but they are challenging, bordering on the edge of bad taste, bold motifs with strong lead lines and jewel-like “pot-metal” glass. The small recessed “ Fish,” in deepest oceanic blue, comes out as strongly as any medieval window and brings home to us one of Christianity’s most ancient emblems : at a time when Christians were being heavily persecuted, the image of the Greek word for fish, ICTHUS, (Jesous Christos Theou Huios Soter = Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour) was a convenient and discreet sign of their affiliations that could be posted in the hidden corners of the catacombs. This window is very movingly placed, as a contemporary affirmation, just behind the font. The large plate glass vestry window looks out on the shaded pines through a life-giving veil of rain. Then there are the enjoyable parables to study, if the sermon is boring and long.

To complete the description of this church : an Easter chorale by the choir demonstrated how good the acoustics were, the lovely sponged pews and the natural oak pulpit, the splendid altar issuing

from one block of stone with its lightly chiselled base, the simple well proportioned Cross, with excellent gilded sculptures in each arm standing out on pre-cast concrete protuberances. As Folke said then:- “Here everything came together.”

In August, he was back in Holland to finish the windows at Bogtman’s, stopping over at Delden on the Dutch border with car troubles :- “They’re putting the heating on in the hotel for my cold and that’s a comfort. At once my work went much better. I’ve had to struggle very hard to take command of this project and to bring out the tensions in the right way and not just to copy out the sketches, but now it works and everything fits together.”

Then from Bogtman’s he wrote to Brita: “Bloody hell, what a lot of shit they make here in this workshop, it’s distracting and about as intolerable as their pop music but I do at least have my own workshop where I can do what I want and their glass is hellish good. Perhaps Ap and I will take the train to St. Just for a couple of days to buy glass...This is a quiet sleepy country with clumsy people stuffed with white bread, I love you, and would so dearly like to hear something. You my only wonderful heart, you so beautiful, when are you coming?”

He goes on to describe what he found in answer to a request to provide a stained-glass window for some tiny community, which happened to lie roughly on his route while passing down through southern Sweden,

“ – Curate Ala Rik was a dirty little gnome with a huge beret and the chapel is a monument to ugliness. All built with loving bequests. They’re going to get a window anyway, as it is Småland, which is a bit touching.

What is a bit touching, is that Småland for him, a land of lakes, forests, undulating little farms scratching a living from the thin soils, was always a paradise; since his boyhood summer holidays, all things Swedish were bathed in natural beauty and all his mother’s siblings held in high affection, whereas, apart from great aunt Greta, his

father's family were all stuffy, stodgy and viewed with indifference, so a job for Småland had to come to fruition and in his scrapbook 20 years later he recalls,

“ – Once I received a request from some nonconformist church, Philadelphia or something, in a place called Höreda, Horda, Hörda or such. There is a lake nearby and the building was situated in a dark spruce forest, is all I remember. The building looked the same as most nonconformist churches in the countryside, but I do remember that artistically it was a fine window.

In England we may have numerous Whitchurches and Newport, but the people of Småland are taking things to extremes with Horda's, as there are seven such places within a 50 mile radius between Huskvarna and Växjö and this window is in Horda, near Rydaholm. It is a pleasing version of “ The Good Shepherd ” on the east wall of an otherwise undecorated church and is still very much in use. Folke delivered it to Curate Alariksson later that year.

That journey south also took him on to Tegelen, Limburg where he had an excellent working relationship with the Russel Tiglia Ceramics works and delighted in his home from home at Crasborn's Hotel, Thorn. The job in hand was a ceramic wall for the new Savings Bank in Tierp where the architect was Hans Matell.

“ – There I drew ants which carry their particles to the ant hill. [Fig. 70]. There was a fine lunch afterwards with many worthies from the board - big fellows, mostly farmers with big hands, money in the bank and who slept soundly at night, eyes radiating confidence and well-being. But they had also been astute and tight fisted, so when the moment came that I should offer thanks for the wonderful lunch, I stood up, ting'd my glass and requested a moment's silence. Briefly and weightily I said, “ He who saves .. never craves, good health, wealth and a toast to you all. ” Loud applause all round at such a witty artist.

1962 might appear to herald a slight slackening of work but it was mainly taken up with one big commission and a small work that Folke notes in his scrapbook: “ I made a Holy St. Erik as an emblem

for Stockholm's Nation in copper and iron.” Each county has its hall of residence (=Nation) at Uppsala University, Sweden's Oxford, and Stockholm wanted an emblem for their new hall of residence. The new-found freedoms of the 1960s were a challenge to all creative people, resulting in this cheeky construct for “The Holy St. Erik” which, nowadays, hardly anyone notices or even is aware what it represents.

Teddy Brunius wrote a feature about Folke in Uppsala Nya Tidning (18-09-'64) asking which feature of his art he liked the best?

“ -- Difficult to say, in Stockholm's Thulehuset I made a ceramic wall, I've done many varied church windows, and in 1962 I finished a large iron work for the Domnarvet Steelworks in Borlänge. Ore, water and iron were the theme for this decoration, and I made three central figures in welded steel, namely an old mountain troll, Näcka the river sprite, and a blacksmith. I also studied the structure of ore, iron and steel under a microscope and picked up abstract forms from this. The workers get considerable interest from looking at these works and I feel that this is more important than all those displays in Modernamuseet or at the Venice Biennale.

“ – Do you mean art is best when displayed in the heart of the workplace?”

“ – Not always. A school or a church provide different challenges for artists. But behind all decorative art, it's still painting which is most central to me. When I paint, I find new things, which I can then use in my decorative art. I have experimented with many materials, but always at the core lie whatever intuitive impressions I have painted myself towards. ”

The scrapbook states tersely “ – For the main entrance to Domnarvet the figures were made entirely at Aspnäs. [Figs. 71 - 73]. It was a real back-breaking job. In the stairwell of the entrance lobby, the balustrade was all made on-site, with an ultra-modern rip torch. That was fun.” [Fig. 74].

These works are all still in place exactly as in the original. The steelworks continues as a major employer in the town. A division of Stora Kopparberg, which had financed the Swedish army that saved Protestantism in the 17th century, they pioneered stainless steel and the world-beating Kalling process in the 20th century. In the 1960s the company was hugely important for the wealth of Sweden, which produces the best steel in the world.

As Folke put it “ – Sixten Wohlfahrt (the M-D) was a very important patron. In the foundry I made large flowerpots for Domnarvet’s streets, squares and parks. I designed a series of fire backs and fire irons, which they made as gifts for good customers, and the King also received one for his hunting lodge in the mountains. Stora Kopparberg had an unparalleled good atmosphere with a fine established culture; and Sixten and Anna in Domnarvet were really fine people, just as Kallings and Yngström. It is a sadness when such things come to an end.”

There was a genuine friendship between Folke and the Wohlfahrts; he was often at Borlänge and Alice Lund was also a firm friend in that circle. Eventually Sixten left Domnarvet to become Lord Chamberlain of the Crown Estate and a close confidant of the King, but before that Folke painted his portrait with the Domnarvet setting in the background. The picture captures Sixten’s warmth and good nature very well. [Fig. 75].

In the autumn of 1962, he was back at Bogtman’s working on the windows for Trävattna church. The old medieval church had burnt down in 1849, but was replaced on the same spot in 1854, with its clean and clumpy exterior. They decided to order three stained-glass windows to ornament the altar and they wanted the central window to feature a Cross. Accordingly the upper half of the three windows featured God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Ghost representing the Trinity. The lower halves represented, on the left : the Annunciation, the Birth and the Flight into Egypt, with on the right: scenes from the Sermon on the Mount, and in the centre: the Last Supper and the Passion. [Figs. 76 & 77].

1963 was the last really hard winter in Europe and early March found Folke back at Bogtman’s. “ – it’s been bitterly cold here these last three days and I’m working in long-johns and sweaters, with blue fingers. Now I’m almost ready with the windows. I am very curious as to how the whole will look when it’s all put together at the end of next week. In fact one never quite knows, as you never see more than a part at a time, sometimes I think it’s good, sometimes I think it’s too light and thin.”

With that, he set off for Russel Tiglia’s, to make the chamotte tiles for his design for Lagundagården school, Örsundsbro. Hans Matell was the architect for this new school for a village just off the Mälaren, dominated by a huge grain silo and with fishing in the reed-filled lake a subsidiary activity. This very lively ceramic relief is a minor masterpiece providing a glowing note in the gloomy entrance of this rather featureless 1960s building. [Figs. 78 & 79]. It was very appropriate that, at the time of my visit in early April, the booming of the bitterns was to be clearly heard in the vicinity. The work was completed in a week or so, loaded up in the Volkswagen bus and then, between sheets of plywood, the Trävattna windows were also loaded. Whenever time allowed he was also making sketches for Rolf Bergh’s alterations to Engelbrekt’s church, Stockholm.

It was a time of constant creative effort. He lived in a modest hotel in Amsterdam where, at the end of a long day, he felt the need for good company. Dick and Mien Elfers on the Amstel and of course his old academy friend Hans van Norden on the Reguliersgracht. His wife, Nell, was a very good pianist. Something happened, they knew each other from long ago, when Nell was on holiday at Bergen aan Zee and made friends with his sister, Karin. Folke’s cup was overflowing, the only thing missing was romantic love and that too, as unpredictable as the wind, now happened. All just between themselves, her son Arthur was only 15, her daughter Josine 18, there was no question of breaking up two families but it was a love that would not subside.

The other major project he was involved with now was the making of windows for Berthåga Crematorium, “gub grillen”, as he liked to call it. This is Sweden’s, if not the world’s, oldest crematorium, started in the 1890s with a public subscription of 5000 kr. In 1961 architect Kurt von Schmalensee had the job of completely rebuilding it. Chapels, one large and one small, passageways for guests to assemble and disperse and, underneath, the infernal workings.

For the small St. Steffan’s chapel he made a wonderful sunburst roundel of leaded, painted glass, about 1.5m in diameter of brilliant yellows and blues with very bold overlapping of colours, catching the afternoon sun, being S/W facing. [Fig. 80]. It’s worth mentioning that Folke’s daughter, Mieke, then 23, who had studied at the Rijksakademie, made a large tapestry covering the wall which the mourners face. In her own way, woven or with knots, she made a highly original version of the Tree of Life, the fibres all natural and in natural dyes – a remarkable work.

For the larger St. Erik’s chapel, on the south wall he placed a block of nine square windows, the outer seven indicating the changing positions of the sun, while the two central lower windows indicate the fiery sun’s central core. [Fig. 81]. Other light came from nine 3m tall slit windows, in thick glass of many hues, and in the main passage were a couple of very thick appliquéd niche lights, known by glassmakers as dalle de verre when they form part of the wall’s structure. The former were all made at Bogtman’s, whereas the latter came from Tetterode, the expert in massive glass. In late March 1963 he writes:

“ – On Sunday morning, after coffee at the van Norden’s, who were still with sleepy heads and in their pyjamas, I drove off to Karin’s (his sister in Hamburg). At the last-minute, Josine, Nell’s daughter, kept me company to get away from a broken love with a genius. She’ll housekeep for Mieke and me for a while. Monday, freezing fog and the ferry between Puttgarden and Rödby got stuck in the pack ice several times, continuing its way with ear-splitting crashes as it broke through. At the next ferry we were diverted, as it was in need

of repairs after ice damage and the roads of Germany and Denmark were still flanked with 1 m drifts. On Tuesday we reached Trävattna, where next day I oversaw the installation of the windows: with a real dope, who needed all my enthusiasm to get going in the damp cold. I’d had a horrible night in the hotel in Floby with trains rushing by, so I was at work at 7 the next morning and with a real effort everything was in position by 4. It looked very good.”

Earlier that March, having finished school and bent on a life of painting and art at her young age, Beatrice was taken by Brita to that spot beloved of Scandinavian painters, where she herself had kindled her own muse of painting : Grez sur Loing, to spend some months painting, learning the French language and culture. Beatrice soon made friends and savoured everything French. They managed to rent a couple of rooms on Rue Wilson, the back of the house sloping down to the Loing with a pleasant patch of garden. When Folke was in Tegelen, he took the train down to visit her for three delicious restful days such as hadn’t occurred in years, in the misty tranquil air of spring. This doesn’t happen in Sweden, where there is no Corot landscape. So this time became a moment of self awareness - that it was painting he must return to. At the same time, he felt a paternal concern for Beatrice, expressed in a stream of letters, as, being cut off and bereft of her great love of the moment, it was an especially sensitive and analytical time for her. Brita too was free now and resumed her own career with a six month sojourn in Italy, where she made The Carrara marble works the subject of a series of paintings.

Folke’s brief French idyll over, it was back to the paradise of Aspnäs, though with four commissions requiring attention it was very hectic. He and Lindberg met with von Schmalensee to work through further ideas on Uppsala crematorium and Folke’s contributions were extended. Already he had collaborated with Borje Lindberg to help make the large ceramic relief that is the principal votive feature of St. Erik’s Chapel. Now he helped design several abstract ironworks that screened the entrance hall windows and, finally, he was engaged to oversee the construction of a massive boulder wall. This formed the

eastern flank of the whole complex, by which you approached it from afar, through a timeless, empty park of rocks and scattered junipers. For the architect this great barrier was to symbolise the boundary between life and death and have something of the Wailing Wall. Designing the wall was to take up a fair chunk of Folke's summer of 1964. [Fig. 82]. As he wrote to Brita, who was back in Italy again:

" - I drive to Uppsala every morning and work with the Uppland's stonemasons on the wall at the crematorium. They look like squared dinosaurs, with big paunches like Big Gus, and work in deliberate slow movements but things get done in little phases.

Vast boulders piled up in the dead landscape, a true Valhalla, where the spirits never rest, eerie and brooding, that wall is neither straight nor regular. To visit the crematorium freely, it's deserted on Mondays, as it's cooking day (tel.018-187000).

It should be mentioned that, in these years of the early 1960s, there were other projects for which much work was done, although they never came to fruition. About the time of Östertälje, Hampus Bergman was designing a new church on Öland, perhaps at Eketorp, for which Folke made a truly original and daring maquette. Unfortunately, whatever happened, Hampus and the vicar disagreed irreconcilably and the whole project fell through. "A shame, as it was a fine proposal."

As always, a prophet is not without honour save in his own land, and it can safely be said that the Knivsta powers-that-be treated their own local artist abominably: "I worked long and hard with Harald Tafvelin (architect) on the restoration of Knivsta church. There is nothing to show for it but I learned a great deal from him. The old-boy worthies of Knivsta were hopeless meddlers." In Amsterdam he had found little pots of Japanese lacquer paint of an incredible lustre, so his proposal was to create 18 paintings of 15 x 28cm. Mounted on the gable-end of each pew in the central aisle of the church, screwed on in a small brass frame. As part of his proposal, he actually completed seven of the miniatures, as a personal mark of respect for the "fijn

schilder "tradition: Jonah and the whale, Samson and Delilah [Fig. 83], Noah's Ark, David and Goliath, Moses in the rushes, Journey through the Red Sea and the Night Shepherds.

The whole project fell through, and the completed works gradually disappeared to individual customers with the comment: " - They were, in my eyes, very fine, and precursors to the organ shutters in Engelbrekt and to the van Eeghen's dining-room cupboard." After the disappointment with Knivsta, Sigurd Persson said that Folke had all sorts of plans to make an illustrated Bible of which these scenes would be a part, to mirror Rembrandt, whose birthday he shared. Instead, these biblical scenes have never been brought together and are all scattered.

Then work started with Rolf Bergh on Engelbrekt's church.

" - This was an especially demanding job running on for over a year. To redo the façade of the organ. As the organ itself was being completely rebuilt, we had first to utilise Lars Israel Wahlman's old wood works and then make the new ones, while still keeping the proportions and something of the art nouveau style. The organ builder also had strong opinions regarding sound quality. He was Olle Grönlund from Lappland and twice I had to travel there to try things out in situ. And eat bubble and squeak and drink tree spirit. Then I had to think about the upper figures and in the centre a star which twizzled round and allowed glass bells to tinkle. I had to find several engineers to get over the difficulties. In the end it was electric. The organist was hypersensitive about the motor noise, despite our having already given him a demonstration, and it was the same with the shutters. I painted the shutters in a lacquer finish, hoping to bring out all their quality."

" - The renovation was consecrated by the Archbishop in the presence of the old King and the Queen. Although Engelbrekt is a very fine, genteel and distinguished community, the committee nearly trampled on each other after the ceremony to approach the Royal Highnesses.

“ - In all other churches, the shutters are moved by hand and they have various simple and effective mirrors, but here everything had to be elaborate – with a closed-circuit TV for the organist to watch the conductor and the altar.

This description glosses over some of the birthing pains. In April 1963, returning to Sweden from Holland, he wrote to Brita, “Rolf is so impulsive and made me a bit fed up. I’d worked hard for a whole week on Engelbrekt and we both thought it looked good. Then he rang and said the organ builder had designed a totally different pipe arrangement, so now I have to start again. He’s often like that, and I’m used to leaving things till the last minute, but this time I thought he’d thought it all through.”

Engelbrekt is a magnificent church, built in 1890. Of cathedral proportions, it dominates that quarter of the city. Soon after the organ works, Folke was asked to decorate the student side-chapel adjoining the main church. For this, he made a window at Bogtman’s on the theme “ The moon over Golgotha ”and also some ironworks with Gunnar Appelö, while Mieke made weavings.

It now transpires that, in 1990, there was a “restoration” of Engelbrekt church. It sits in the heart of the most respectable part of Stockholm and, the people being deeply conservative, probably resented these efflorescences of the 1960s. In consequence, these works have all been removed, apart from the figures and the rotating star above the organ, in a move that intended this church wholly and solely to preserve Wahlman’s original concept. The student chapel seems cold, austere and uninviting now. It took the church authorities four years to reveal where they had decided to store these items, and by then they had no idea of the significance of the windows. These windows, measuring 6m. square, are non-figurative and are a powerful abstract expression of the pain of death by crucifixion. A rebuild of the organ had made the shutters seem out of place, but they are excellent works exploiting all the possibilities of a diptych: When the shutters are closed, one sees David playing the harp, its tones floating aetherially upwards, until they descend on the ear of

the musing King Saul: An old testament story of the power of music. When the shutters are open, the Angels trumpeting the birth of Jesus are revealed, while the shepherds keep watch over their flocks in the starlit night . [Figs. 84 & 85].

It was a glorious summer, a release from that terrible winter. Folke was working flat out on several excellent commissions; Brita was inspired by the Carrara marble works; Mieke had met Salmo, a brilliant violinist; Beatrice savoured life in France; and Josine formed an attachment with Salmo’s fellow conservatoire friend, the cellist Bengt. It was another Eden of creative freedom:

“ – Josine and Bengt are living in the studio by the lake, he playing cello while she is painting with great lightness through a sort of in-bred virtuosity, which can play tricks on her sometimes, but she is undeniably gifted, and it is amazing how she benefits from being here.”

In May it was “ – Beaming sun here in Dalarna; I came here a few days ago (to Alice Lund’s at Hyttinge) and have worked with the Aspeboda project which will be beautiful, I think, typical Rolf. Lasse Wahlstedt arrived, the dyer of yarns, and we shall decide the colours for Aspeboda...”On my return, I’m going to the crematorium and then I’ll be at home a whole week to work on the Södertälje cartoons.” In late May he was back at Bogtman’s, working on the crematorium windows, and returning mid-June for the consecration of Aspeboda church.

Aspeboda, famous for being the Church of five spires, and for its medieval paintings, was gutted by fire in 1959. Daringly rebuilt by Rolf Bergh, it was a stroke of luck that the roof structure had been dismantled for repairs just before the fire, so that it could be put back, thus preserving the exterior. For the interior, Folke designed numerous motifs that were executed in Alice Lund’s weavery. On the gallery, there was a weaving of the words of the 23rd Psalm, on the organ loft, “The people shall go out to their calling and to their work until the evening..” and most striking of all, some abstract motifs

on three sides of the pulpit –in the centre, with the thought, “Jesus calmed the waves ” flanked by “ The Lord went before them, by day, in a pillar of cloud, by night in a pillar of fire ” and by “ peace, calm and quiet.”

This was just in time, because in July, Alice Lund, who had been finding business increasingly difficult, sold out to a textile engineer and that ended a wonderful collaboration of over two decades.

Years later, Folke noted cryptically: “- In the porch I left a little visiting card in the shape of a devil.” In Sweden, there is the notion that the Devil is all around you and so it is a safeguard to the vicar in his church if, in some remote corner, he can just catch a glimpse of him.

“ – I went to Aspeboda with Rolf Bergh for the inauguration of the weavings “ Storm and Stillness ” to great acclaim. Later, Rolf asked me if I would paint a little devil on the wall. The wall was clean, new and whitewashed. Such a thing one doesn’t do in half a minute. I don’t know how it is, that somehow you become a bit feverish in front of a blank surface. And at the same time I felt inexorably drawn to it. So suddenly with a little rusty red paint, I painted it, in a few minutes.”

Aunt Greta, his father’s youngest sister, had died in March 1962 and Folke and his cousin Maja were her executors. “Big argument,” Folke writes to Brita, “with Maja who wants to sell Greta’s house and put her maid in the street – but the will clearly states otherwise. I had an extraordinary outburst from cousin Frank in support of my stand. After that, I had enormous difficulties in recovering all my warm creative impulses, today finally they came back and I really got going with the cartoons for the Södertälje windows.”

Folke’s aunt Greta had a special place in his affections. She had studied to be a “fijn schilder ” in Laren with a well-known Dutch painter and was accomplished, though without any strong motivation. She met Piet Mondriaan, who made a striking portrait of her in 1908, and on the 27th of April 1909 they announced their engagement. It

was the time when he was passionately interested in Theosophy. His certificate of membership of the Theosophical Society is dated the 25th of May 1909, so everything for him at that time was very serious and philosophical. This was not at all Greta’s outlook: she liked pretty clothes, curtains and domestic comforts and after a while she got bored with his dry obsessions. There never was another woman in his life as far as is known. He remained an acquaintance of Marius’ though, and Folke just remembers Mondriaan, as, when he was just a little boy, during the Great War, he gave him a splendid tin soldier, a French Cuirassier, and he was forever annoyed with his aunt for not marrying him. In the 1920s, he moved to Paris, changed his name to Mondrian, and lived in a tiny flat where the stink of his cabbage soup was so repellent, that the tax inspector retreated convinced that he did live on next to nothing. His only social enjoyment was occasional ballroom dancing. Much later, in the 1970s, Folke liked to reminisce with his benefactor cousin Aat Heybroek about Mondriaan. So he asked him:

“ – Do you know the real reason why Mondriaan never married aunt Greta ?”

“ – I can’t really say, ”said Aat.

“ – Because she didn’t have square breasts.”

Talking of which, in the endless hot summer days of Aspnäs, nudity was the natural state of being, in the constant warmth, without midges and refreshed by dips in the lake. Anders Zorn in the era of extreme Victorian prudery, painted numerous chaste scenes of buxom ladies bathing but in Aspnäs nudity wasn’t so much painted as lived. Folke writes to Beatrice in July:

“ – Vivi wants Brita back above all and had a bad turn with 45 degrees of fever and was in a crisis for a while so she came here. Luckily we have a splendid housekeeper in Josine who dusts, tidies and cooks all completely naked, as all maids should do, especially fat Margit. Actually it went really well with Vivi until there was an earthquake in Italy and then she went totally potty and back to bed;

but then I had a letter from Brita who was extremely happy, working well and so I think it would be a shame if she came back.

Aspnäs was home to a variety of animals, Poyo the collie, Dolores the parrot, Follette the mongrel, who was smuggled in under Beatrice's skirts from Grez, Pimi the Gotland Rus pony, an omnipresent mountain goat, and finally the ancient dachshund Netta. About the goat, Folke wrote this to Beatrice:

“ – The goat is still here, despite my believing from time to time that now it will die – hurrah – after it nearly expired in the apple store, or when it ate the tube of lead white or the box of nails. Suddenly it couldn't walk – but it was foot rot. And then over all our terrain, every veranda, everywhere in every room, the bath house, the crayfish pavilion, in sketch books and on gramophone records there are goat droppings. Coffee beans – it looks like some wonder from the Bible, manna, and it just gets more and more, one walks on ball bearings. The goat is beautiful and I do like it, but it is as with mother-in-law, she too is beautiful and I like her, but, dear oh dear, what a lot of work. And who sorts out the mess? Not your big sister –no,no...your old daddy, the old chap.. but...but...but, it'll sort itself out, don't you think?

The summer was coming to an end. Mieke was stuck in a big painting problem, “ she would prefer to paint, but she doesn't know how to resolve it, she will soon break through.” Salmo and Bengt were conscripted, shaven-headed, and in uniform. Everyone was suddenly travelling. It was only a moment ago, the 19th of August, that Janne Silén, Mieke and Salmo gave a fine concert in Alsike church. Folke, late in the summer, had fiddled with some drawing to see if he could find a loose end from which to take up his painting again, but all he could find was tiredness and lassitude. So 1963 spilled over into 1964.

It was not until the height of summer in 1964 that Berthåga and Engelbrekt were completed. Then came the moment to enjoy a deferred 50th birthday party - in Sweden an especially important anniversary. A three day Dutch-Viking fest of music, stories, dances,

songs, swims and imbibing, with a banqueting table on the defunct tennis court, which the animals scavenged over when periodically unattended. Many babies were made, but there was also a concerted last effort made by numerous architects and artists to unite in getting the planned motorway route changed. A few more of these almost equally legendary parties were thrown later on to fight this. All in vain.

After this unceasingly restless activity, the dream of a quiet, reflective summer was realised.

“ – I had a wonderfully relaxing time. At the end of it, together with Sigurd Persson, we had an exhibition in Uppsala Konsthall. It was called “ In Memory of a Horse ” and “ In Memory of a Goat. ” You had to go in over a jump and then through a goat gap in a fence, it was great fun and the whole lot was illuminated with 100 candles in Sigurd's beautiful candlesticks. Beatrice filmed it all, and we never had so many visitors. Wonderful! It was both painting and sculpture at once, mostly constructions. Of course I didn't sell anything. ”

This exhibition was nothing but a mad bit of 1960's genius and spontaneity, starting with 20 “Horses”. Entering through his 1938 Bönhamn “Fisherman's Door”, the first item was his 1941 painting “Horses on the Mere.” Then there were 18 constructs with horsey sounding names like “Concourthiphik”, “Hik”, “Hik Hek”, “Hika Hek” and “Jarry's Memory.” [Fig.86]. Equally there were 20 “Goats”, playing on “Goasts” or “Togas”, not forgetting “Nanny in the Cabbage”, “Billy in the Tree” [Fig.87], “Goat's Cheese” and “Gigoatic Memory.” [Fig.88].

All this loosening of form was rather similar to another highly original summer show he had in the Linnaeus Gardens, Uppsala of some “ Potty Thrones ”, at about this time, in response to his favourite girlfriends of the next generation having babies. Two potties survive. [Fig.89].

1965 was a year when work was short. “ – I have not so much to do and I am a little worried about the future but the Good Lord

who arranges everything will surely help me in this case." Through the good offices of his brother-in-law, he got an uninspiring job to paint two really enormous Winged Horses in oils for Mobil's head office, then in Solna, now in Danderyd, where they can no longer be traced.

The year began with the investiture of the Södertälje windows, made at Bogtman's and the result of a generous bequest by a parishioner. The church, dedicated to St. Ragnild, dominates the centre of the town, the home of the great Scania Vabis lorry factory. In the eighteenth century the Russians raided and burnt the whole town to the ground in a vengeful act – "The Russians are coming" became another way of saying "flee for your lives." By 1960 the church's nineteenth century austerity needed embellishing, so through Rolf Bergh, Folke was charged with making two windows for the south aisle. One featured "The road to the City of God", and the other "Man and the Kingdom of the Birds." [Fig.90].

A livelier project was to decorate the new courthouses for Solna, a district of Stockholm, under the auspices of architect Sture Andersson: two large courts and a small children's court. Folke designed and Beatrice wove and embroidered a long textile for the front of the bench of eleven magistrates, using words from the first ancient laws of Sweden. Beatrice bought a new Huskvarna sewing machine and made it durably and well, so that it all looks fine to this day.

" – We chose this text as it was a fine example of how a single action could lay the foundations for a law – on top of which what admirable straight talking, and so direct compared to our lawyer-speak of today. If only one could be so frank in today's society." The text is Old Norse and difficult to decipher!

By December 1965, various conflicts and desires, internal struggles and deep-seated emotions were all stirred up which, in combination, undermined the magical harmony of the last decade. The biggest hammer blow of them all was unquestionably the

enforced exodus from Aspånäs, which had virtually moulded their family development into a balance of creative inter-dependency and individual independence. Mieke and Brita were the most independent, Folke was paterfamilias but craved love and attention in his extrovert and childish way and Beatrice had great inner strength within a secure family framework. All this was bulldozed away, and forlorn arguments about massive levels of compensation could never re-establish the family balance in a new environment.

CHAPTER NINE

NYKVARN

Decision time. In the autumn of 1965, with Brita in Rome and Mieke in Provence, Folke was persuaded by Beatrice that the Aspnäs dream could be re-enacted at Nykvarn (= New Mill), so they decided to buy it. Not long before, Folke had written:

“ – My horrible fight with the disgusting engineers is not finished yet and I feel nearly hopelessly down, something which is unusual for me.”

Buying Nykvarn was already a gamble as there was a big argument about the level of compensation for Aspnäs, though this was narrowing from a difference of 400,000 kr. to 100,000 kr. A dispersal sale of equipment was held in the mill, which was packed with local farmers and raised a useful 20,000kr. Financially, things looked all right at first, even though Folke was buying four dwellings and a huge mill-house. He would keep the retired miller, Helmer and his wife Lily, in his employment for general maintenance and to help keep the electricity turbines working. By December, it was terribly cold, -15 degrees C. outside, and minus seven inside the big mill, so he started purchasing two inch planking to plug the holes, and efforts were made to insulate and provide heating, while still living in Aspnäs. In February there was a real note of panic:

“ – S.O.S., this is Scott, Shackleton, -35 degrees, thank God Sweden has still got whisky, we had to abandon the car for three days after Brita’s exhibition in Örebro, where she did so well, selling for 9000kr. “ This was followed in April by:

“ – Hurrah, hurrah this is the first day we have a thaw...my life is still very miserable, but soon it will be better. ”

The truth of the matter was that Folke had put up with a really miserable winter. He had moved to the icy mill but he was the only one there for most of the time, Beatrice having rented somewhere in Stockholm. In April 1966, as winter ended, like a bear out of its lair, he sloughed off the snow. Via Bogtman’s, where he made the window for the student chapel for Engelbrekt already described, and via Dear Old England, as he thought of it, he departed on a vague personal odyssey to the land of his dreams.

“ – But as a matter-of-fact I had difficulty in finding my way in France. You know how it is, the whole winter you dig snow and you dream about hot weather and so on. And then all of a sudden, it is spring and hot, and you don’t know what to do with it. Anyhow I like France. Once upon a time I worshipped it. Perhaps I am too old to worship anything any more. No, that is not true. But to tell the truth I have horrible big difficulties to feel and to see. I had my big white sheet of paper and I felt something and I saw, I mean I imagined that I saw, but then I asked what is the good of doing it, and I heard a voice saying I couldn’t create, as if I was caught up in one of those habitual currents which after a certain time forms experience in your mind, so that one repeats words without being aware any longer when you originally spoke them. And you say to yourself it is no use. I cannot paint, can’t say anything worth saying. This is an unknown and very problematic situation for me.

But then suddenly, without any reasonable reason, suddenly your blind eyeballs begin to see a little anyway, recognise, and suddenly without being aware of it, you are in the middle of the current that you left I don’t know how many years ago. The current is heavier and everything goes more slowly, I feel it like a certain rhythm that goes up and down between my consciousness and the unconscious parts of my creating will.

Here I fell asleep and that was a good thing and now it is a grey cloudy morning with screaming swallows passing my open window and the snowdrops of the Pyrenees have disappeared in mist...the

light here is somewhat like Eire. Suddenly it is clear and suddenly misty, otherwise I must admit that Eire is ten times more beautiful by reason of its emptiness and solitude. It still makes me think of Eire with all the sheep on the thorny bushed hills and the mother-of-pearl light in the misty valleys.”

After Whitsun, Folke returned to Sweden, curious about his mill. The compensation was settled and he hoped not to be too overwhelmed by torrents of work. He was refreshed by a few weeks away, visiting Oxford, where he had met Michael Black, who was remaking the Sheldonian’s Roman Emperors and opined that they were very nice, but nothing to do with art, whereupon Michael did show him one or two of his creations. Then he took a slow road on little byways through his beloved France in a lonely voyage of deep soul-searching, enjoying the modest auberges of the Gers but in the end resisting any temptation to buy a house there with a stream and a few trees in the garden.

Folke got back just in time for the big thaw. The bottom floor of the mill was awash, Helmer’s house was an island, and he had three anxious, sleepless nights; but then the raging river subsided and the waterfall began to whisper. They moved all their belongings from Aspnäs, telling their artist friends to keep using it in the interim, although already the bathing house had toppled into the lake, half submerged and leaning precariously.

“ – The move to the mill took place in earnest in June 1966, with working and fighting in sawdust, stones, chimneys, planks, falling asleep exhausted in the evening with that wonderful feeling that there is no force in your body, and in the morning beginning again. Salmo plays the violin in the smithy on the isle and the otters swim close by.”

Salmo was such a funny, madcap individual, it’s not hard to understand where Folke got the inspiration to have another shot at representing Näckä with the quirky painting “Näckä’s Polska.” [Fig.91]. Apart from often being represented in late Romantic

Swedish painting by, amongst others, Ernst Josephsson and therefore making this an artistic challenge, Folke never lost his fascination with water sprites. In his teens, his parents had taken him to the galleries of Munich, where he never forgot a kitsch representation of Proteus amongst some mermaids in a swelling sapphire sea. Playing a violin in a waterfall or swimming under the stars beneath Wahlman’s bathing house, water and beauty went together.

It was an exhilarating time packed with activity... and expense... as long as the work kept coming in.

Then he had a job again: To decorate 400 sq m with murals for Knivsta’s new school. For much of the six months that it took him he worked out of the deserted Aspnäs, as it was so close by and numerous nomadic friends would also pitch up there on fine sunny days.

“ – It is great fun and I have a marvellous idea. I bought an old Swedish encyclopaedia and, with this as a basis I made paintings with themes derived from it. I punned, made rebuses and used a lot of word play and found myself working in a very relaxed and unstressed mood which was wonderful, considering all the aggravations I had been through. From A to Z, the whole lexicon...Anderssons, Atoms, Apes, Americans, Anti-Semites, Adolf – each letter had a wall. When at last the whole job was ready, I left a box of mandarin oranges at the base of each of the many walls I had decorated and waited for break time. By now it was midwinter and the school playground had a covering of fresh snow. When the bell sounded, the children rushed out to play and afterwards, everywhere, there was a scattering of orange. That looked beautiful.

“ - The children really liked the drawings and even many years later, I never saw any damage.”

His nephew, Göran, came to see him when he was busy. Folke was scratching his head as it had taken him ages just to get to the letter “I”, so he said that it had got to go a lot faster. Now he happened to have an old Stockholm phone book, which he found had 100 pages

with “Johansson”, so he told Göran to paint the next section with a nice green ground, while he started to paper the wall with a sea of “Johanssons” around the word “Jag”, underneath which he glued a passport photo of himself. Then once the green paint was dry, while Göran finished papering the “Johanssons”, he rapidly painted in an enormous black and white “Kou” (cow), so with a few of those he was on to “L.” A while later, Göran came back another time when Folke had just finished “P” for which, amongst other things, he had painted a little naked “Poike” (boy), but this time of course someone had scratched out the little fellow’s willie.

“Are you going to paint it back in?” asked Göran.

“I was thinking about that”, Folke replied “but now I have suddenly hit on the solution” and with that he went off to the school nurse. “Look!” he said, and at the same moment applied a sticking plaster to the injury. And that was never tampered with.

It was an excellent project: joyful, light-hearted, wacky and always of interest to any inquisitive mind. The dullards of the school administration didn’t know what to do 20 years later when bits of it fell off, or a few cracks, scratches and marks appeared. So they decided to paint the whole thing out. One wonders what they do in their art department, now they’re happy with clean white walls again. And as for their local artist...

After Knivsta school, which was finished in the late winter of 1966, “Les Lettres de mon Moulin” were filled with exuberant tales from the Merry Miller. Maurice and Annette savoured these wonders the next summer and Folke showed off his boating skills on the millpond. The unsuspecting were taken out on the broad smooth waters in a little coracle, Folke would allow himself to drift towards the waterfall. Then with a few careless strokes he would “lose control” and everyone would go tumbling down the waterfall for a good soaking. It was his favourite trick and once he even tricked an important visitor in a smart suit.

In the summer Rolf Bergh had a church for Folke, Brämhult, near Borås.

“ – but when I saw the highly ornate interior with all its charming paintings, I realised that windows, for which I had been asked, would be too much of a good thing, and yet I could still understand the PCC’s dissatisfaction with the existing arrangement. So I came to the realisation that the most important aspect, the altar, was unbalanced and had arrangements that were not in keeping.

“ - Mieke made an altar weaving, a pediment was raised behind the altar, which I painted with marble effect and clear glass windows were installed either side.

Effective as the results were, this project was thereby changed into a much reduced commission. Brita had departed for the summer to Paris, where she had the loan of Maurice’s studio. Folke wrote to her:

“ – I have contacted all the architects I can think of, and all are so pleased to see me and have plenty of time to chat and discuss things – but none of them have any work. At this very moment, the government has appointed Miss Laine to retrain all those artists who want to change their occupation, and 50 depressed artists have opted for that – but I would rather become a clochard.

“ – At the moment I’m slaving on the portrait of Agneta Tolstoy.

Agneta was married to Peter Tolstoy, the great-grandson of Leo, who farmed just up the road from the Mill, and they became instant friends with Folke and Brita. Brita’s uncle Gösta had sold Bultofta farm, near Hälsingborg, to Peter’s father in the forties’, so Peter had met them before, when they came to Skäret. Agneta, very young, had two children and was expecting her third and these are all depicted, whereas only Peter’s legs are shown, as he was very tall.

When Agneta asked Folke to do the portrait, he agreed on two conditions – that he could have three very wide 3in. thick planks he’d spotted in Peter’s barn, and that he must be free to paint it in his way,

rather than how she wanted it. [Fig.92]. During the sittings, realising that she had come from a very formal background, he created a lasting impression, by turning the conversation to make her realise how important it was that she should be less duty bound and live more for herself. Her view of her life was consequently changed and eventually she took up a career as a clinical psychiatrist.

The word must have got around, as other friends nearby were the Treschows, from Målhammar, with its magnificent avenue of oaks, in contrast to the Tolstoy's beautiful avenue of birches. Johan Treschow, equerry to the King, came to see Folke to ask him to make a full-length portrait of his wife in front of the grounds of his estate. This was a daunting commission, with additional emphasis on the hands and a ring and Agneta, a close friend of Marianne Treschow's, mischievously suggested that Folke had told her that to have the last laugh on such a formal job, he had concealed a tractor in the background. It seems to be only a rumour, unless it was later painted out, but they are both fine portraits. To Brita he wrote:

" – That was very difficult, and I've given it my utmost, but what else should one do? Portraits are difficult, but fun, you're better at them, I'd rather avoid them" [Fig.93].

In the spring of 1967, he had been at Bogtman's making a small window for the bride's room at Oxelsund church, a new church designed by Rolf Bergh. This window was a donation by Rolf to the church, and later he wrote to Folke thanking him very much for having executed it completely to his satisfaction. This is an amazing church in the form of a gigantic concrete buoy, so that it acts as a navigation aid for the port, but has been dubbed St. Cementia by the locals.

While at Bogtman's, he found Erica van Eeghen also working there on a window for Tanzania, and his help and friendship there was much valued. Later in the year she wrote and asked Folke to make something for her 25th wedding anniversary on the 18th of December. This resulted in lacquered panels to go on their Empire

style dining room cupboard, which featured the sun, the moon and seven stars – their children.

It was hand to mouth stuff. The Enköping Art Society was only able to offer them a slot for all four Heybroeks in autumn 1967. The cold by Christmas was so intense that Mieke went to France, Beatrice and Brita preferred Stockholm. They all made little arty items and invited the public to come and buy Christmas presents, taking it in turns to attend.

" – These were icy cold days like Sorsele, (in the far north) -28°C, I could not find the energy to do anything but on Christmas Eve I cut the tree, found a leg of lamb and phoned Granny Vivi, now 90, who came in a taxi and we had a quiet and cosy day, just Brita, Betty, Vivi, and Fjone. Sigurd came on Christmas Day and we made a trip on skis, as it was not so cold. Now it's terrible again, Helmer has warned that the water may dwindle, I haven't told the family as they are already annoyed it's so cold, and mostly stay in bed as long as possible."

Like Charles XII before Pultava, they were beaten by the weather in their damp, draughty old mill. It was beautiful, it was romantic, but for four months of the year it was hell. Everything was falling apart. Folke and Brita were becoming increasingly estranged and after Christmas there were some dramatic scenes. Folke's mantra became " for the cost of heating and firewood here, I could live simply in France as a painter."

" – I'd saved a little money and even decided on the night of my departure. I had also written a letter to Nell, where I said it was better to end our liaison, which was going nowhere and I wanted to restart my life with painting. As you see it was a big decision and that night I slept very well and already felt myself free.

" – Imagine the next day... Betty and Manne arrived and said, " Daddy, you are a Santa Claus and I want a wedding." I sat down and I looked out of the window at the snow and I took a cigarette and a glass of red, and hey presto, I'm still in it... in this huge, beautiful mill."

“ – We had a magnificent marriage....

“ – and the money I’d saved disappeared in a waterfall.

That may sound like sour grapes. In fact it was just the most doleful of confidences to his old friend Maurice. No one else would have known. Troubles were put to one side. It was a sublime wedding. Brother Hans, vicar, officiated in the Mill, the bride looked stunning in white, the Klintbergs magnificent in white tie, music from the friends – Janne and co., then a 50 yard procession to Brita’s house across the bridge above the steaming waterfall under the crisp, starry sky and cold, cold, cold to the steamed up candlelit windows, where the wedding feast had been prepared. The table was a work of art, white linen with an upper tiered deck, wherein were holes out of which “grew ” great bunches of white tulips, silver candelabras dotted about, the bride’s chair wound in rosemary and the bridal couple beneath two great sheaves of wheat. Vosne Romanée, speeches and a cabaret to the tune of “Domino ” and then back to the Mill, the bigger party for all the guests, wild dancing with Manne showing all his skills like a saltimbanque out of Härjedalen. It was the last throw of the mill dice and no one anymore had the will to go on with it.

A couple of weeks later, they held a family consultation and decided to try and sell the place, if they could find some crazy person to buy it.

Folke’s Treschow portrait was finished to general approval and then he was immediately busy with another painting commission: “ of an old Colonel on horseback in the Battle of Austerlitz.”

“ – That was easier because as soon as you came to a difficult piece, you just painted heaps of smoke and dust.” This work can’t be traced.

Otherwise work had dried up altogether, as it does when things get tight. Plenty of people came to look at the mill but they were time wasters. This time the spring floods had seriously damaged the dam that held back the boulders and weeks were spent hammering six inch nails into ten by two planks.

In May he wrote to Maurice: Mieke had established a base in Joucas, Vaucluse but was in weak health after a severe bout of pneumonia after jaundice. Brita was estranged and virtually separated after a row in March, living mostly in Stockholm. Nell, however, had written that she had decided she couldn’t live without Folke and she had told her husband Hans and his old father that she was leaving for Sweden. Just then fate would have it that Brita was found to be gravely ill with cancer of the palate, and indeed she had smoked 40 Chesterfields a day for as long as anyone could remember.

“ – I felt as if I was adrift at sea in a tiny craft amongst the waves and I let chance and my fated destiny decide. What gives me the greatest concern is Brita’s situation. She is not well at all, the poor soul, and I feel dreadfully sorry for her...A small cancerous mouth abscess has been successfully operated, but the final all clear is still to come which worries me greatly. Poor Brita, I still haven’t had a chance to talk to her in her present state.

“ – As you can see, I’m preoccupied with a great deal. I need your advice and friendship. I haven’t at all lost hope that all will sort itself out alright.”

In his sketchbook, he wrote:

“ - If you are alone

let it be so

for you will get plentiful company

in a little while

I gave you the silver coin

which you brought back

weighed down under the copper coin

which was mine.

And we made a campfire from pieces of the tree “ Nothing ”

And pieces of the tree “Something ”by rubbing them together

And we listened to the rain.

Following surgery and two month's constant attention in Karolinska Sjukhuset with the best radiotherapy unit in the world, Brita's speech was impaired but she was determined to develop "Prataz" speech via therapy which is, as she said, "like contemporary poetry, of which Sweden's leading exponents are Öyvind Fahlström and Bengt-Emil Johansson." Brita ventured to return to her house at the mill to savour some moments of sunshine, but she only stayed for two days because, as she put it, "Folke had allowed Nell to come during my illness."

Such moments are always the worst, with feelings of betrayal, a heart-rending situation when Brita still loved Folke so much, and guilt, for Folke couldn't help himself: it was Nell he loved, no longer Brita. Unlike Folke, Brita could only be absolutely honest in matters of the heart, she was too noble to stand in his way by embittering their daughters or even to drag him down in recrimination or self-justification. It was a fact: she still loved him, they would divorce and when, if ever, the pain subsided, she would get on with her life. For his part Folke did all he could to soften the break, giving what he could and writing cheerful, chatty letters in a flow that was to be at least monthly until his dying day. More worries were added when Beatrice had an early confinement, the baby weighing only 1.7 kg, though soon everything went well enough, apart from the, as yet, unquantifiable effect of her rubella during pregnancy.

One might imagine that the creative impulse would take a back seat in all this emotional turmoil, but not a bit of it. There was a desperate need to sell something to have any money at all. Folke was flat broke, as the Revenue had landed him with a thumping Demand. So all this time he was painting small items from around the mill, which he called "Lettres de mon Moulin" and sold to passers-by. In October 1968, all four Heybroeks, Brita as always as Brita Horn, participated in a four-way exhibition in Enköping, then at Västerås, followed by Södertälje.

Folke exhibited "The Vindel River" upside down, as a form of loaded message, to show the ugliness of the commercial world,

especially in the fate of this river, which was one of Sweden's last wild rivers, then threatened with hydro-electric dams. In general rivers were his central theme, living as he did by a waterfall. Hence also his "Apropos an Orange", where there is a river flowing through, past the face of Bengt af Klintberg. This is an oblique tribute to an inspirational Fluxus theatre performance in Düsseldorf in January 1963, where the wildest spirits were Pi Lind, Bengt af Klintberg and Staffan Olzon, with Mieke and Beatrice also performing. As an example of this Dadaist kind of theatre, improvised and jokey, Bengt composed a piece called "Orange Event No. 17 for Folke Heybroek: "- you may peel an orange, on the bridge when the train goes underneath and the clock strikes the hour and drop the peel in the Stockholm stream below." At any rate, the painting was purchased by Södertälje Commune and hangs in the town's library above the children's books section. Bengt was disappointed to miss the chance of purchasing "Apropos an Orange" – so, Folke obliged him, as the nation's folklorist and a well-known novelist, with another "Orange Portrait" a year later but this time featuring a Dutch canal.

The other "painting" that was exhibited in Enköping was "Apropos the Greeks", [Fig.94], which was bought by Carlo Derkert for the Modernamuseet. Nearly all his pen and ink drawings of the Greek myths, which he had made in 1947, were still lying about in the mill, so at that moment he made the impromptu decision to cut them all up into small elements and glue the whole into an eye-bewildering, teeming collage. Carlo Derkert was Director of the Modernamuseet so this became one of their six works by Folke.

These twenty drawings had been lying about for two decades and in 1968 seemed about as dead old art as you could get. And yet. At the time they had cost endless effort, patience, imagination and time. It was a moment to return with a vengeance, to make something so detailed, it was actually unwatchable, in the same way as Homer's description of the shield of Achilles wrought by Hephaestus is so endless that one can hardly think of a shield any longer. There have been those who have attempted to depict it, so why not attempt the

even more impossible depiction of the entire Iliad and Greek myths in one collage? An almost similarly impossible task had already been completed not long before in Knivsta school, in the village next to where he lived and to which both his daughters owed their "education", where 24 large walls were covered with an alphabetic theme of an entire encyclopaedia.

" – From our exhibition at Enköping, Beatrice sold a funny thing to a church. She made a cross with a mountain in the middle and with snail's houses crawling up from each direction, all painted white. In came a dirty, noisy old vicar, very like your old vicar Mallinson in Binsey, and he bought it for his church in Enköping.

Unhappily, just when his financial straits were at their worst, it was a time when several projects came to nothing. The ever-constant Rolf put him in line for Skrea, Saxdrägla, Halmstadt, Sågmyra, Tungelsta and Tuna churches and for Märsta's new school. Regarding Skrea, Folke wrote to Rolf:

"Dear Friend,

How unpleasant it felt when I came in there. The church was locked, but after a few enquiries, first with the caretaker farmer who was mixing up pig food and then with a funny old boy on the other side of the road, at last I was able to gain access.

My friend, my usual sense of anticipation apart, I became rather depressed when I came into that church. There was a threatening and resounding echo from under the vaults.

I sat down a while and chewed on some of those apples that had rolled out of your drawings. Then I was after all captivated and began to receive a few ideas:

Place the altar objects on the floor, remove the altar floor.

Make a new altar painting.

A window on one side of the altar with simple divisions in beautiful green glass.

An ironwork symbol on the front shutters of the organ."

Conclusion: "Skrea came to nothing, they were strict Sectarians from the west coast, hopeless to work with."

About Halmstad, he wrote to Brita: " That job was a big disappointment – partly they were far too awkward, partly the church was irredeemably ugly, I just can't think how Rolf could have made anything of it."

With Valsta school, Märsta, Folke came a lot closer. This was his proposal:

" - Gunnar Ekelöf has died this last half-year ago. One of the great authors of modern European literature has completed his work, and the landscape of contemporary Swedish literature is at once much flatter. At the same time his lyricism has been such an integral part of so much of the Swedish people's consciousness that the loss of the poet almost overshadows the presence of the poems. His voice is everywhere present.

Gunnar Ekelöf lived in Sigtuna. When I was thinking recently as to how to bring forth something artistic for Valsta school, I hit upon thoughts of him and all those youthful living messages. They must speak to the young, his combination of innocence and awareness, naiveté and intellectualism.

Uppland is the land of Rune stones. Why not develop a "Song's Odyssey", I thought. Incised lines from Ekelöf's poems on large round concrete slabs placed round the school, which make smaller spaces which young persons may pass through, hide behind, race round, sit upon and chat."

For Tuna church a lot of effort was made. This was a fine proposal with a very imaginative window, in the village that was part of Dag Hammarsköld's estate.

" – For a Baptism window in Tuna church, the title of the window is " Jesus' Family Tree, " as found in St. Luke, chapter 3. A background

of many infants crawling and climbing amongst each other. Painted in a grisaille technique, which gives the window a warm grey tone. This multitude of small babies can instil in us many different associations of ideas, amongst others the earth's great fruitfulness. Against this background, Jesus' long family tree of 77 generations is written in. Which, through its length, allows us to realise how all those branches continue into our own time. All this to be made in leaded, painted, fired antique glass for the sum of 12,000kr., with a fee of 1200kr. for the sketch proposal. [Fig.95].

This proposal met with a very uncompromising rejoinder from the Rev. Erik Björlander, who could not stomach the doctrinal implications and wrote thus to Folke:

Dear Brother,

The proposal with all these children, as far as my pastoral mission is concerned, is misconceived. This is also the decision of the PCC. The payment for the restoration works goes ahead but funds for a window are in any case deficient, so this will have to await several year's savings. I shall ask certain parties about donations.

What I myself request is a reduced emphasis on the actual genealogical table. The genealogy should only be mentioned as part of the Church's wider understanding of Jesus Christ, The Son of God.

JESUS CHRIST	GOD'S SON
Family tree	according to Luke 3
Representation	

The family tree has to fit into a theological whole. Liberal theologians wish to argue that Jesus' divine parentage can be disputed by God's own Word. This is an incorrect interpretation of the family tree and a false doctrine. Stories of the birth therefore take precedence. The actual signification must be clear and the baptismal aisle's window must not preach a different message.

Tuus, Erik H. Björland

p.s. the 1200kr. is forwarded to your wife. Dated 14.8 69

Folke was at an impasse, the PCC then demanded the reworking of the windows, so Folke replied requesting that he be released from his commission. Folke then submitted a new reworked proposal, the PCC were grateful for the zeal and continued readiness to complete the commission but since he had offered to withdraw, the PCC wished to let the whole matter rest and it was actually the artist's own affair that he had worked on further with the scheme. In the interim, Folke had appealed to Rolf, a true Believer to help him and indeed Rolf did, to the extent that a revised sketch then became acceptable. But to summarise:

" – It was all just about to go ahead, when there was an election, the Social Democrats won, they found expensive windows were superfluous, and that curtains would be just as good. Several years later I saw that a window had been put in there anyway, and that it was made by some fifth rate local "craftsman", a pity, as that was a fine proposal. That man's name was Wide Jansson.

Folke's revised sketch took some totally different texts from Luke 3,verse 15,

"Let us now go even unto Bethlehem and see this thing which is come to pass." and

"Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also, that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed." Verse 35.

The above thoughts might well have had something to do with his feelings for Brita, however happy he was with Nell. In August 1969 it was "My dear Bamsa ", in October " Dear little Bamsa " and in early 1970 was " Dear little Bamsa, you can't imagine how happy I am you are on the road to recovery and that the worst crisis is behind. You are constantly in my thoughts and I cannot rid myself of a dreadful unease." This because on the 27th of January, she underwent another major operation for mouth reconstruction, which was going to take a couple of months to bring things mostly back to normal, but at least she had been given the all clear on the cancer front.

However, Brita's emotional state was distraught. With this poem, she wrote a heart-rending letter about her feelings to Maurice... "I stay at my mother's from time to time, I live sometimes here, sometimes there, while awaiting Folke." (July '68) : -

Nog vill jag sörja och gråta
 men vem ska jag gråta hos?
 Så sorgsamma vindarna låta
 när hagarna mistat sin ros.
 Nog vill jag sucka och kvida
 min ensamma längten all
 i dalarna hjorderna bida
 när ingen dom leder i vall.
 Nog ville jag vandra och söka
 men vem ska jag söka i vind?
 Så ensliga stigarna kräka
 när ingen mig väntar i grind.

(Well may I shed heavy tears / but whom shall I shed them for? ./
 Such sorrowing winds one hears / sougning in the hedgerow's core. /
 Well may I languish and lament / my lonely longings for all, / speak to
 the earth in the meadows, / implore my own deep heart's call. / Well
 may I seek and search, / with whom can I share in this fate? / so utterly
 alone, that I grate the stones / leading up to my untended gate)

Folke gave nearly every penny he earned from his art at this time to help Brita and Beatrice, but it wasn't much, everything had got out of hand at the mill and he was as good as totally flat broke.

Another factor had come into the balance to precipitate further stellar explosions in the family. Mieke had met Ulysse in Paris but when he came to the Mill with all its hiatuses in August 1968, he didn't fit in at all. With his rock hard personal convictions, he was temperamentally the exact opposite of Folke and his self-deprecating

naïve ironies and love of wit and enjoyment. They shared a passion for art and aesthetics but in such a different way that the gap remained unbridgeable. In September, Folke wrote to Maurice:

" – You know I am a grandfather to Juli Aurora Sofi, who is the most beautiful child I've seen on earth. Slowly I think things are improving and commissions and sales are coming back. Mieke got three good orders this week. She is very happy and also impatient as her commissions prevent her returning to France to her little mas in Provence and also to a certain wild boy called Ulysse. Mieke has always had a taste for wild animals. When she was young, she had a Finnish bearhound whose only passion was biting. Ulysse reminds me of the painter Vlaminck – I like him a lot even if my words above give the opposite impression. No, I like him a lot, with his pure and frank and slightly juvenile nature. Unhappily, his stay here ended in a great row, which I much regret. But they are things that must often happen with his choleric nature, it's perhaps my fault not to be big enough in spirit to let him be himself. But at the same time, I find it a trifle ridiculous that he considers people like Manne, Betty, Nell and me mentally restricted, when we are not at all. On the contrary, we are warm, friendly and open-minded. Also, his notion that we do not like him is absurd. In any case, I tried to explain this a little to him, and that, coupled with the fact that he can't hold his wine, well... resulted in an explosion like two fighting bulls. And the Lord knows I'm not a bull at all, and that makes me very unhappy for Mieke as I was actually very happy about her great happiness, and it was so wonderful to see her flowering. You can imagine my remorse next morning, after they'd departed without so much as a word."

This natural antipathy lasted to the end of Folke's days: It was simply best that they never met, a tragic situation for Folke and Mieke, who loved each other so much, that from now on Mieke could only pay her father fleeting visits of a few days while passing north or south.

At last, at the end of November, someone was found to buy the mill:

“ – It all began with a friend from Gothenburg I have not seen for years. A sculptor who lives with his family on a farm outside Gothenburg. But the town needs his farm to build ugly houses on. He came to the mill and fell in love with it immediately. His wife is an architect and they have three small children. He was at art school with Ulf Axén, so he bought it on the spot for 97,000kr., less than I ought to have, but it’s not a house you can sell that way, more alive, like a ship, only a new captain is taking the helm. The main difficulty was that he needed to supplement his income, for which he keeps 200 ewes (which earn him 2000kr.a month) but I managed to get Johan Treschow, whose lady I made a portrait of, to rent him 40ha.”

They were called Lennart and May, and a year or so later Folke painted a portrait of Lennart.

Now he was able to take a lease on a flat for Brita in Stockholm and also to help Beatrice and Manne a little. Mieke, in France, was informed that Brother Ihman’s shoulder and a cold tree were the new home for Dolores, her parrot. Dolores had therefore gone to live in the Emmaus Project, Grytting, a refugee centre run by monks, where they helped the displaced and anguished, she who could talk a little and featured in Knivsta school. For the moment, the four smaller houses round the mill were kept.

Looking back, Folke felt that artistically he didn’t achieve very much in those three years at the mill, except in that all their varying works on it and his efforts to restore it, were a form of rustic art. Houses that had been “modernised “ were ripped back to their fine old 10in. boards, hidden fireplaces were exposed and a handsome new one made, and the working mill received endless repairs and even new turbines. To this day, it is a well-known centre for the arts, with a fine pottery and exhibition room in the big mill, craft sales and a tea room across the Sagån river under the shadow of Bloody Sven’s great burial mound.

CHAPTER TEN

NAARDEN

On New Year’s Eve some 50 good friends came to the mill for a valedictory party. The next important occasion was at the end of January:

“ – We expected Lennart in the morning, but that day there was a howling snowstorm, so they only arrived at 4 o’clock the following morning, with 200 hungry sheep. It was terribly cold. Two big trailers struggling in the snowstorm, three exhausted men. His wife came behind with the car, three frozen children and her next expected one, the only being who was warm. Three times she had driven off the road and visited ditches.

There was nothing to stop them now except making sure “Azam”, the 2CV, was in good order and this was effected by means of barter with Otto Sowa, Uppsala’s Citroen dealer. In exchange for “Cacti” and “Battle”, paintings from the 1930s, his own vehicle was thoroughly serviced and provided with a trailer and, with the addition of a work by Beatrice and by Mieke, a decent 2CV was found for Beatrice as well. Folke tried to clinch it all on the day he intended to leave, but he ended up going to Sowa’s, finding no one there, getting furious and simply leaving the pictures on his doorstep. Sowa was as good as his word, it was just that he had a business crisis with a bad debt and a bit later he rang to say everything was in order. By now it was evening, there was snow falling fast and at first the heavily loaded Azam wouldn’t get up the hill and away from the mill in the deep snow. Helmer came to help and they got going.

“ – We mostly drove in second and third gear and I couldn’t understand how Lellan (=Azam) kept going but she purred along perfectly albeit at a crawl.” Over the hilly little roads, it was all

Folke and Nell could do to reach Nörrköping for the night; then Hälsingborg, then his sister's in Hamburg for a couple of days, then Nell's sister, then their new residence.

This was the old bakery, No.3 Jan Massenstraat, Naarden, to be rented from Frans Beuys on a short-term basis. Naarden was a fortified village, which in olden times guarded one of the few dry land approaches to Amsterdam. Picturesque today, its heavy fortifications date from the wars with Louis XIV and before that from the time of the Spanish Fury, when it fell, in 1572 to the Duke of Alva, who unleashed more of the cruelties and massacres for which his name is a byword.

On arrival, this house turned out to be uninhabitable, with no water or electricity, not having been lived in for the last 12 months. But an old friend, also in Naarden, lent them her garden summerhouse till they could get the basics laid on. Definitely a bore, as the sudden feeling of freedom carried with it a strong urge to paint but no matter, once the water supply and electricity were reconnected it was only a question of tin baths by the stove, paraffin cookers, and polythene sheets in the attic to collect the leaks from the roof. There the water would accumulate like a veritable swimming pool and have to be bailed out after heavy rain like a rowing boat. It was a charming house with a box bed, stove and a little garden at the back, enough space for a makeshift studio and a grand piano. Spring was in the air, the birds were singing, Nell was playing Schumann and Chopin and there wasn't a care in the world.

Nell would earn their livelihood from piano lessons and Folke would paint and, if a commission came along, he would give the proceeds to Brita, who was herself soon busy painting. Before long Bengt Widlund, now a 'cellist with the Netherlands Chamber Orchestra, came to visit:

" – Come through, I wish to show you something very beautiful."

In the back room there was a handsomely painted screen, clearly a recent decoration by Folke, and there behind it stood Nell, rising like a Venus from her tin bath.

Naarden was a delight and exactly suited Folke and Nell's requirements from life at this time, with so many things that were different to Sweden. There was a street scene, full of children, old boys, traditional people and old ladies, who lived openly and didn't draw their curtains after dark. While shopping, an old lady pinched an orange out of his basket to see if he'd notice. A girl from along the street rang their doorbell, till she was chased away by the neighbour's daughter. At least ten tomcats were yowling in the garden for the lovely Nisse until some fencing was put up. They got a terrific shock when a girl on her brand-new birthday bicycle was run over by a lorry. Everything vanished. Then she crawled out totally unharmed. What a mercy. For several days after New Year's Eve, it was like all-out war, even little boys had firecrackers, one of which they would sometimes pop through his letterbox, where it flew round his studio chasing Nisse. On Fête day, there was a children's procession with drums and trumpets and funniest of all was a competition for all the district's street-musicians:

" – A plump old street songstress in a greasy raincoat stole my heart and made me shed tears of emotion,- it was virtually a "happening".

Naarden was a very atmospheric place, steeped in history, still with its own sense of community despite its proximity to Amsterdam, with interesting walks, woods, wetlands and meadows and closeness to the Zuider Zee.

" – people think differently here, even artists, in a way they are more conservative, but at the same time with a human touch, which compensates for a lot and disarms everything disagreeable. Also, I'd bargained for a quiet time in this corner but heaps of people keep popping in, although my painting is progressing apace.

The deal was that if they couldn't find the rent, they had to look after Frans Beuys' antique shop, down the street. At first a lot of time had to be spent there, Folke had hoped to be able to paint and work while shop-keeping, but it was too busy. To supplement their income, he repaired bits of damaged furniture:

" – At Frans', I made three dolls a lot more antique, now they are standing peeping out of a soup tureen. Funny, you apply boot polish, ash and bitumen and they become far more ancient. I've made numerous "antiques" and "old masters" look a lot more authentic using thick brown-sauce. A big, busty Danish woman came in and bought a chipped teapot and a cracked rummer, and I lost the bill for everything because I'd packed it in the box."

Another idea was for Nell to bake hard pancakes on which Dutch proverbs, curlicues and magic spells were painted, for example, "Santa is soon arriving on a steamboat from Spain " and these were hung around Frans' shop for two florins each and soon sold.

Meanwhile Nell soon found piano pupils, while Folke struggled to get into a fruitful painting vein. At first it was:

" - I shall have to postpone my exhibition, as I cannot paint so quickly, I need discipline in my handwriting and painting. I must concentrate on my real self and open the sluices of my innermost nature and slowly, slowly the spring flood rushes through. And then one must watch out one doesn't become isolated on tiny islets of tradition or the islands of routine. Looking ahead, I look forward to new contacts, breaking my own isolation through others.

" – I notice more and more as I age, instead of living through one's surroundings and people, one finds freedom through work. Of course you are never totally divorced from all your daily contacts, unless you build a beautiful finely spun mask as a veil around you and, thanks to that, you can suddenly paint something very different to what you imagined.

" – I have myriad ideas, which I am constantly chasing after, so at this moment a time has arrived when I am painting much faster.

He prepared stiff canvases of slightly irregular shape with glue, linen composite and canvas and suspended them from 18mm. dowel with handsome linen string. As he wrote to Brita " Painting goes well if slowly. Far too slow in relation to my ideas. What am I painting you wonder? Actually nothing special – a mix of memories, diary sketches, images - some abstract, and poetry – but as a whole, when I do take an overview, I think it looks good.

"A field with 100 Teddybears, Winnie the Pooh in the green grass.

"A large handsome baker's bicycle in a sunset landscape

"Naarden by night with a giant Cock on Good Friday's Eve-very black.

"A funny thing about Nell against a blue sky with a bird

"A fried egg on a paraffin stove

"A coot on her nest

"A dandelion in the black earth.

" – My last painting just dangles from a pin. At the top, Jesus walking on the water, below a mountain of food, machines and troll-like people with mouths gaping for grub and substance. I don't mean that they are looking for god or Jesus, but walking on water is clearly unusual. On the other side, haloed in the sun's rays, a racing cyclist pedalling towards a dot on the horizon. Also,

" – A black night and a black rabbit and a black Nell and above a moon (I love the moon so much, just as much as I dislike astronauts), with a flight of geese passing in front.

" – then I've done little small things on pieces of wood for a quick sale.

" - A large painting of trees, many peculiar trees and all sorts of cats... with a poem.

The summer arrived with a spell of wonderful weather. In the 1960s, Folke had formed a friendship with Palle Fischer, who was professor of Danish at Stockholm University and a good friend of

Bengt af Klintberg. Folke was offered the use of a classic clinker-built wherry, so Palle came down to join them. The wherry was in Haarlem. Now everyone knows that Holland is incredibly built-up and covered in roads but few know that by carefully threading your way on little waterways and lakes, you can rediscover the old Holland of Cuypp, Ruysdael, and Potter along the Amstel, Gein, and Vecht.

“ – In a boiling heat wave, we made a four-day rowing trip of over 100 kms. It was totally wonderful, thousands of impressions and a lovely craft of over eight metres length. Laden with blankets, wine and food, sheep skins and painting stuff. We passed by long canals, cows, sheep, goats, low and high drawbridges. Palle made drake noises to the ducks, we ate under pollard willows and saw the most curious boats, people and fishermen, whose floats we rowed over. Lovely little villages, towns, lakes and wider waters. We swam as in Sweden – yes, that was amongst my most enjoyable of experiences.

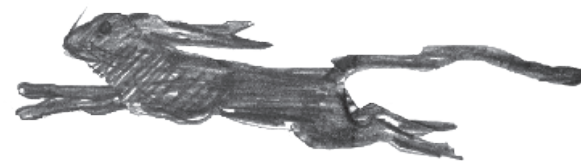
“ – Now Liane is moored nearby, but I shan’t be using her too much as I have so many impressions I wish to work through, of which I keep seeing more and more. Tonight Palle takes the train home, he is such an easy, helpful guest and without him we’d never have made it. Every so often I felt a little nudge from the bench behind – “le petit marin a tellement soif! Est-ce que le petit marin peut boire un coup? The second day was the hardest – backache and a sore behind.

Images from water were to play a big part in Folke’s paintings in the future. Palle Fischer, who later won the annual prize for Denmark’s finest writer, was to include in a considerable section of his last novel “ The Jugglers Last Balls ” reminiscences from this boating trip, where from page 58 onwards “Peter” is actually Folke. This book started with the protagonist falling out with his lady and then taking a concentrated trip downwards into drinking and depression. Certainly, in their madness and gaiety together, drinking always played its part. It’s easy to be censorious about drinking when you can’t feel or hear the fun, Palle needed to drink, Folke loved the fun and liked a drink. In 1970 Palle came down again and off they went in Liane for trips once more, only just for day trips:

“ – Great fun with Palle, who’s like a brother, and goes to the pub at 8 a.m. for a few genevers and hard-boiled eggs at “ Onze Willem’s.” We take splendid rowing trips. We swam in the canal and just as stark-naked Palle hoisted himself aboard like a dark Näckä, a silver-haired, respectable lady cycled by, and careered off the road in a faint. We couldn’t help laughing. I sketch and make notes all the time.”

Palle was the indispensable element in making magical boating trips in Liane, the three in the boat all got on so famously well, it was constant good humour, jokes and fun.

At last Folke had another commission. Rolf Bergh wanted him to provide decorations for the organ of Holy Trinity Church, Gävle, with the object of making it more baroque. So Folke proposed to make trumpeting angels emerging from the organ pipes. Some he made in Holland, in June, when he had to look after Frans Beuys’ shop while he was on holiday, and some in Sweden in August and September at Ulf Axén’s in Mariefred – about three angels in total amongst the pipes plus some panels inspired by Zephyr round the keyboards up in the gallery. He spent time working at the church and, as a concession, the churchwarden allowed him to live in the church. He slept in the pews and it so happened he was just returning from the washroom in his underwear when he heard the church door open. It was the vicar. He simply ducked down under the pews and the vicar never noticed. However, after that, his nickname changed from Carlsson (på taket, the rally driver, because he drove too fast when he once had a Citroen DS), to “Kahlson” (= underpants), except he tried to get out of that by calling himself Rabbit (Kanin), and Brita became Lapinette.



There was a newspaper report on this, showing a fine bit of lime wood carving of the trumpeting angel but he was very dissatisfied with the result and, in truth, everything was too small to create a proper impact, which was the risk one ran if one didn't visit the site beforehand. To Mieke he wrote:

“ – I hope you never went to Gävle to see my angels, they have such a totally different feeling to what I had in mind, I feel they are a miserable effort. Still, it was nothing more than a nice commission, I had never baroqueised anything before, so it was quite exciting as a new experience. Anyway the result is no longer so important, it's how it continues in real life.

It was his first return to Sweden. He also had his proposal for Märsta school with him and went to hear the decision of the ruling committee. At the start of this he heard a very disagreeable secretary get up and say: “ At a previous meeting, we decided once and for all that we weren't going to have any art at this school.”

“ – So I got up and asked who had given these instructions, they were flagrantly contrary to what the schools committee had in fact decided. On top of which, I said I thought this proposal was a very good one and that the general opinion of all on this should be sought and that I personally very strongly favoured it.”

With that he left and it wasn't much later that his whole proposal disappeared into the air.

Folke rounded off his visit with a week staying in Stockholm with Beatrice, who in late October had her first solo exhibition at “ Hos Petra ” on Nytorosgatan 4, with some 30 exhibits. Folke was highly enthusiastic about it “ Everyone so admires your special paintings and you must do more. They are exactly how one likes to represent the world, with the poor outlook for so many animals and with so many species extinctions, and yet not dogmatically overbearing, just with warmth and wisdom. Your exhibition was terrific, as were the catalogues and critics. Now I am home again, they make me see painting in a new way.”

Beatrice had made a great leap in maturity and was now perhaps Folke's chief muse and inspiration in painting ideas. From now on they both derived many impulses from each other artistically. In November, he hardly made it back home as duckling Lellan, his 2C.V., struggled the whole way, limping from friend to friend in three jumps via Janne, Palle, and Kaa but at least he had a painting of Beatrice's which he kept hanging permanently by his father's old easy chair.

Horrible post when he returned to Naarden, nothing but bank and tax demands. To Beatrice, he wrote:

“ – I can't think how I'll pay, you absolutely mustn't lend me anything, as you won't get it back. We should have put everything in Bamsa's name. The bank just needs a few hundred to fend them off. You can help yourself to anything that's stored at the mill, otherwise the bailiffs will have it. Personally I find the whole tax system crazy when you have to pay out vast sums when you haven't got a penny, and that it carries forward year after year. You can't take feathers off a shiny frog....we aren't worried, though things are very tight for the moment. I had a terrified letter from Mieke, who shouldn't worry about my tax demands. Chuck 'em in the waste-paper basket, which is far too good a place for them. I've spoken to them and nothing is going to happen just yet. Taxation is a baroque form of punishment for artists.”

“ - Nell's pupils are out of action for various reasons as well but somehow I always have a fiver remaining in my wallet.”

Bengt af Klintberg had happily accepted his painting and paid for it and though cousin Aat had returned the first painting he selected after a three-day trial period, he took another one:

“ – They were so disturbed and unnerved by it, they wanted something more soothing. So now I shall paint “ Little Birds in a Tree ”, I decided, so I hope they'll buy after all.”

He still sent Brita the proceeds of his Gävle angels, though only after he'd repaid the 600kr. that Rolf Bergh had lent her during her

illness. It was very precarious, but he was optimistic about everything and finding enough time to paint – almost – apart from the distraction of a growing stream of visitors and the financial necessity for commission work.

Culturally he also enjoyed Holland. At Frans Beuys' shop he'd met a Frenchman from Marseilles with a stall on the Paris flea market, who did deals with Frans and had recently had a role in Jacques Tati's film, then being made in Eemes, because it was the flattest part of Holland. He wrote to Beatrice:

" - It's a shame about Tati, he's been forced into a something he can't get out of by big business and U.S. financiers. One day he'll do something great again on a small scale, as he is so strong; and you should make a film about the world's war memorial, as for instance all the nations with flowers spiralling through; Children playing, ragged in the rain, a bit like the Kienholz Monument in the sun under dead trees."

In 1968, Edward Kienholz had made the celebrated " Portable War Memorial.", as a statement that America was a war junkie. Now it was doing the rounds, all 9x3x2.5metres of construction and conceptualism.

Folke wrote to Brita:

" - Not much happening on the art front. Kienholz at the Stedelijk was much better before when in Stockholm. On top of which they've brought in all those boring Americans with complicated machines; neons and sterile laboratory items say absolutely nothing to me. And it is a scandal that we still keep bringing all that shit over here and spoiling the way ordinary people view art. For America is sold. And won't be any good until there has been a major crisis and revolution. What would happen then we just can't know, nor what would happen in little, little Europe, which still talks about culture. One can only continue as usual. The one as a cycle repairman, the other as a plasterer and I as a painter, which is going quite well as it happens now."

Then to Beatrice:

" - Last night was very late again. There was an international steam rally and our town won, lots of fireworks. At the same time there was a big protest about Cambodia and people picked all the narcissi and daffodils around and gave them to the police on duty, many missed the last bus home, so the police removed the boarding from a demolition house and straw was provided so you could sleep there."

The people responded to the attitude of the establishment, by voting in considerable numbers for the " Kabouter Party " (= the Garden Gnomes Party) in the local elections, which was a follow on from "Provo" and the white bicycle movement. Also at the Stedelijk in the autumn, there was a big exhibition of Alexander Calder:

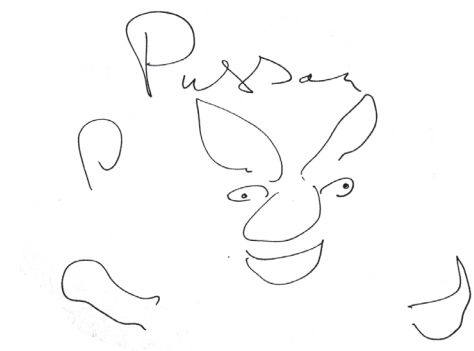
" - Great fun, but quite dated. What I liked was a little ball hanging in balance and striking ten or so different iron saucers in a John Cage-like concert. For all that, I'm much more European than American, more attached to the Paris School, Matisse etc. than Rauschenberg – far more poetic and beautiful. Otherwise the Stedelijk is far more active than Moderna, e.g. they can have as many as ten exhibits at once – three big rooms of the American Tom Wheeler, that is, three similar white rooms in darkness with a small neon strip in the middle of the wall – sterile, horrid, meaningless for sure, and yet a sensation when you go in there and experience it.

In contrast to that, I delighted in three rooms of "peintres de Dimanche " which were excellent. Not naïvists, but straightforward amateurs from all over the world. That's what imparted most to me."

Another time there was a visit to Peter Vos. " - He's very famous now and as friendly and uncomplicated as Chagall, I'll send some articles on him." To Beatrice:

" - Today in the Stedelijk, I was at a rabbit exhibition – 800 pink, pale blue, yellow even, creatures; with a public mostly of rabbit breeders smoking cigars, and the rabbit with first prize had a huge

chrysanthemum bouquet in front of his cage. There was a special smell in the place and the judges were all red-faced. On the walls were paintings of the nation's finest rabbit painters. The best I've seen for ages, I was in heaven. Your idea of a continuation, with tracks in the snow, earth and sand was brilliant, we must do it at once,



With that, Folke painted a picture with 110 rabbits. (P = Kisses)

Then he was working on a large item, "mostly of birds, myself, Nisse the cat and skaters, sun between the trees and a certain melancholy but not too much, I feel."

One day, there was a knock on the door and after an incredible wild-goose-chase via Amsterdam, Brussels, and back to Amsterdam, all in 24 hours, Engineer Forsberg finally tracked down Folke in order to buy the old Wahlman house at Aspnäs before the bulldozers arrived, which Folke found to be a happy conclusion. In December, like manna from heaven, Rolf Bergh called on him at last to provide two windows for a new church at Byttorp, Borås. In mid-March 1970, Beatrice rang Frans that Vivi had died, aged 96. His lack of money wouldn't allow him to journey to Stockholm for the funeral, perhaps it wasn't the moment to be at Brita's side, so he wrote as sympathetically as possible offering to come north after Beatrice's exhibition in Hamburg, which he had planned to attend en route to Byttorp.

His own painting continued until early in March, when a visit was paid to England for a fortnight, a country that suited his temperament less than France or Holland. "I found it very beautiful, lovely trees, of a different shape to anywhere else. The little villages are rustic and picturesque (a clichéd word that suits the case very well), but all the softness of England as I experienced it in Bucks and Sussex doesn't give me any inclination to paint or work. I mean the landscape is almost too beautiful. Yes, there are nice corners on this farm with all the large barns and old machines and the animals are delightful in my eyes, with all those shitty black cows and staring sheep; but I would always have some difficulty in painting here."

It is true, there are no works from England.

Returning to Holland, he was thoroughly upset that Brita, at the end of April, was faced with a series of further operations with the worrying overtone that her cancer was not yet finally beaten but that if all went well, her mouth would be successfully rebuilt and speech restored. These operations took place in April and were completely successful, so it was a huge relief that the worst was behind her.

Somehow or other in May, they made the journey to Sweden, discussed all the works to be done on Byttorp church with Rolf Bergh, which were then approved by the church authorities and this secured the sketch payment and down payment for the windows. So some 1800 kr. went to Beatrice to help Brita and also to repay Rolf the 600 kr. he had so kindly lent, when Brita had broken her arm, falling on the stairs because of builder's rubbish, the November before. Folke and Nell made an idyllic journey back past Skäret, which was as delightful as ever, on tiny roads through Holland, with cherries to pick by the wayside, storks with their young on the farmhouses, a lot of sketching, to return to their burgeoning Naarden garden. The rest of 1970 was a lively, harmonious time happily devoted to painting.

The only clouds on the horizon were Beatrice's increasing marital difficulties. At the time of their wedding, Manne, who was a couple of years younger, was unformed, brilliant though he was, and still

under the sway of his strong-minded and influential parents, with their uprightness and position in society. It was a secret she kept from all except her sister, but in the spring of 1969, Beatrice was hospitalised after a miscarriage when she just kept bleeding. "I didn't realise I was pregnant but it was as if I was with child. Clearly my letter is not as happy as yours, though it is the first spring day with a clear blue sky and white light. You know how beautiful it can be in Sweden. Now I have been able to walk a little after lying in hospital with anaesthetics."

At this time, Manne was intent on designing and making furniture, while they both shared the care of their adored daughter, Juli. By December 1969, the doctors were aware that Juli's deafness was serious, something which Folke still tried to put a gloss on, far off as he was, "I feel for you with you Juli's problems, I still can't accept it as final. Anyway she may be a painter, and in any case the world is filled with ever more horrible noise."

Such upsetting statements were most unhelpful, even from her beloved father and, with the attendant soul-searching, put her in a very demanding mood vis-à-vis her husband, "The more Manne goes on with his breakaway life from the Klintberg clan and joins me, the less we get on. He is a wonderful person, so polite and warm, but we have the same word to say completely different things." Later it was, "We have reached a sort of agreement, we are friends sort of, warmly accept each other; that terrible divisiveness seems behind... I am alone with my dreams and paintings in the day."

Beatrice, only 25, was in an acutely creative, artistic phase which made even greater demands on Manne – a successful exhibition in Stockholm, Hos Petra, under her belt, her mind was set on the next one – she continues her confidences to her big sister: "Wild thoughts fill my head at night about great paintings and fantastic films and I detest the people around me who sabotage these possibilities. It's horribly lonely and cold – a swirling snowstorm outside, the only time I can write is at night when all are asleep:-"

"On a bare volcanic mountain, a solitary man is seen killing snakes and butterflies, which he eats. A solitary soldier walks into this world, he is killed by the solitary man who out of extreme hunger devours him. At the same time, a young fellow in his castle, the son of the ruler, secretly goes out and screws sows out in the fields, scandal. The handsome solitary man of the mountains is found out over his cannibalism by the "civilised." He is impaled in the desert and eaten up next night by jackals and hyenas. The beautiful son of the ruler with his natural instincts is devoured by the sows he screwed.

"What is the difference, what am I trying to say with that? Kill all the jackals, while I sit and relate everything to exorcise the wounds? Man's desire for survival is enormous, that's fine, one accepts almost anything." Later she wrote:

"Love is a mystery but painting, music, writing is great and then loneliness never becomes acute; I shall remain in town till the person I am able to live with crops up." As Folke often said, everything always raged around Beatrice.

It didn't help that in April 1970, Beatrice befriended a Czech hitchhiker who came with Lennart to the mill. The Czech didn't want to stay there but make his way to Uppsala to study. He had had to flee his own family watermill, and was in a refugee camp in Sweden, where all there was, was ping-pong all day. So Cyrill John, as he was called, hitched further on his way in the grey snow. "Later in the evening (on TV, radio) we heard a Czech student had immolated himself outside the Russian Embassy. I was seized with the most terrible pangs of sympathy, as Cyrill had rung from Uppsala and asked if he could come back, which he never did.

For me the whole night trembled with burning birds trying to fly into a dark blue heaven. Next day everything became clear. Someone had allowed in a king of the roost and Sweden is a welcoming hen yard. So Cyrill was going on hunger strike outside the Soviet embassy, he's in his fifth day, poor fellow, how he must freeze. I feel one does such a thing both due to a personal crisis and the political

situation, this chap Cyrill is totally introspective, he would so like to have contacts with people but somehow or other he is stuck, so one feels he is having a mighty struggle with his honour: this business with hunger striking and not sleeping means that all vibrations are on the surface, it's such a shame that everything has to be fight and struggle."

Brita too liked to be engagée with people, issues, causes, in the sense of the personal well-being of the unfortunates of society, whereas Beatrice, although a great fighter for beauty and aesthetic awareness, with so many raw nerves from things that had gone wrong in her own life, felt a helplessness in the face of the great ugly forces of the world. Folke, not being her first confidant, underestimated her deepest angsts, being a nature that thrived in relaxed jollity. He saw the original things Beatrice made and had a massive empathy and need for her creative insights. If she could just keep going with her creativity, he thought, she would live through her slings and arrows of outrageous fortune.

Beatrice's burning desire to pursue her art would brook no obstacle. This created great unhappiness. At first Manne's family urged him to be constant, by early 1971 the sham enacted by both sides could no longer be maintained and they parted. Beatrice stuck to her painting and was hardly able to support herself, let alone care for Juli. Klintberg senior made Juli a ward of court and the decision of the court granted Juli's custody to Manne. It was true, he was a wonderful father and did everything for her so that she achieved miracles but Beatrice was woefully diminished, especially in herself.

A long stay in Naarden helped her back to finding the strength for painting and then she found a kindred spirit in Tor, a Norwegian painter. Fate struck again and most cruelly, as he went down with crippling meningitis for which his ex , like a Fury, blamed Beatrice. Recrimination, guilt, a terrible loneliness and a new deep low. It's 1973 now, all this time, Folke was powerless to lighten the drama, however much they meant to each other, which was everything.

In the 1950s and 1960s, Borås grew rapidly, the church authorities saw a need for another church in a suburb called Byttorp, and Rolf Bergh, in 1962, was appointed architect. The site was on a knoll with a bare outcrop of rock, which he wanted to feature as the floor and principal foundation of his church, but unfortunately structural engineers found that that particular stone was brittle, so they had to make do with an engraved sample of it as a cornerstone in the sacristy. Folke had seen the church before but asked Mieke to visit it, as "I would still like your first impression of it and hear what sort of window you think would be appropriate. I actually favour something abstract, as I seem to remember pretty dreadful pillars with sculptures – remind me what they represent again? I can imagine something with a cascading movement for the windows." His proposal was accepted and for the first half of 1971 Folke took his daily trip to Bogtman's to make two windows 4 .2 m. high by 1.3 m wide each in 16 panels.

"– I never imagined it would be such a job – I've got about 8000 pieces of glass all of which have to be fitted and glued correctly, so I'm working Saturdays and Sundays to get it finished in a month's time. On top of which Ap had a heart attack a few weeks ago and now works a lot slower, but the one thing I am pleased about is that they will be good. But I can't deny that I shall be happy when these windows are completed and delivered and I can get back to my painting again unhindered. These windows are like a sort of yoga introduction, all that patient trial and error, roughly like my detailed studies of plaster casts at the Academy, or as you did at Fahlerants, or what the hell that school was called?"

These windows were appliquéd glass, on the north side shades of blue lightening towards the top [Fig.96], on the south side a paler window to lighten the chancel – no motif, just layered variations of chromatic opacity. For the sacristy chapel, a "curtain" window was also made and he designed the motif for the altar cloth.

On return, Folke painted " a Journey through Sweden " [Figs.97 - 99] on a theme of Thomas Tidholm, the Swedish poet who bewailed

the ruthless destruction of the Swedish landscape with roads, factories and blocks of flats. Folke too hated the desecration of clear felling, a modern practice. He continued to paint steadily for the rest of the year, apart from another solo trip to Sweden, mainly to earn money for Brita as there was a proposal for angels for Eskilstuna church which was rejected, and to try and rekindle the dying embers of the Tuna window project.

At the end of 1971, his new-found world of Naarden was rocked by the announcement that they would have to leave their house:

“ – Our pleasant existence in Naarden came completely off the rails. Frans wanted us out, as he wanted to do things with the house. One night we were at a big party to celebrate Henk Verkuyll becoming professor of linguistics, so we had gone to bed at five in the morning. Then early that same morning, the doorbell rang. Nell sleepily answered the door and I heard her making conversation with someone in English and in the end she asked a most polite gentleman in. Sir Alastair Bottomley. He was a famous orthopaedic surgeon from London and collected pianolas. He had just been to a conference in Stockholm, where he had personal contacts through whom he met the pianola collector Stig Hedén. He called him Stinky Dean, it took a little while to realise whom he meant, but I understood once he spelt it out. So via, via, via, they had sent him then to Folke.

“ – He was such a perfect gent one felt it impossible not to help him, so we invited him to stay for breakfast and slowly, slowly I hit on a casual little memory I had of a fairly recent radio programme produced by Hans Zoet, whom I'd known many years ago, which was why it came to mind.

“ – I rang him up. At the end of the line, a woman. I gave my name. And she replied “ Folke! Is that you? This is Anna.” Oh, so she was now with Hans Zoet. Anyway I soon was given some pianola addresses that I passed on to Sir Alastair Bottomley, who departed contentedly from the scene, and then Hans and Anna came along in the afternoon.

“ – Well, well, little jokes, lots of fun, how lovely etc, but when I said that we were going to have to leave this little paradise, Anna said: “Right, I shall have to ring uncle Paul at once, he's an estate agent in Zierikzee, he'll surely know something.” Well, that was music to our ears and I said, just like the queer I met afterwards in Germany, “ Ach wohner sie in Zierikzee, da möcht ich gehen sterben.”

“ – Paul had about 30 little houses and for next to nothing.

“ - At the same moment, I was in the final stages with another little house in France which I had found but where we never came to live.” -- “La Picherie,” in the Perche region, in the Orne department, was set in truly lost rural France, next to ancient hunting forests with their vast sense of isolation and feeling of emptiness. In reality, it would have been too cut off. Their daily bread came from Nell's piano lessons, it was hard enough selling paintings in Holland, and their dreams of France could happily be realised by temporary idylls at Maurice's little farm in Le Grand Lucé.

It was a blessing in disguise. Naarden had become almost a drop-in centre and the only way Folke could have gone on would have been for him to have taken a separate studio. “ – All those people who swarm by, it needs to be stopped,” he wrote to Beatrice, “I look in my diary, 11/2 Bengt and Chrisje Widlund came and stayed the night, 13/2 Joep Goedkoop visited, we heard owls.17/2 to Amsterdam for Nell's lessons, saw two exhibitions, Jerry Keiser very bad. 18/2 my pupil Albert Insinger came and showed his work, nothing special. Toni and Milene v-d-Berg came.19/2 piano tuner, then Tatte and Daniel Rosenzweig, great fun, left on Sunday. later Gerard. later Corrie Martyns with children. 20/2 Aat and Sabine. 21/2 Bengt and Chrisje. 24/2 architect Paul Hertzbergen, then Gerard 27/2 Maggie and Hansje.”

Even if "Painting should be in fits and starts and company can't be escaped and is wonderful", there had to be a balance and here only 4 days out of 17 were undisturbed.

During his remaining time in Naarden in the first half of 1972, he made two windows for a small church at Rydd, just outside Skövde. [Fig.100]. These were completed by the end of April and were made of leaded coloured glass in vertical strips, abstract and without painting, merely to adorn either side of the altar, which, unusually, was placed in the corner. They were blue on the one side, green on the other. For this he collaborated with Beatrice who made a splendid crucifix which was suspended above the altar. [Fig.101]. The whole created a very intimate and humbling effect. Later the church was shared by the vicar with the Armenian Christians of whom there had been an influx to the town. They were perfectly happy with the existing iconography but the continuing growth of Rydd meant that for the present era, the whole intimate arrangement would have to be completely swept away with a large expansion of the building.

At some time that spring, he welcomed Manne, his new lady "Kajsa" (Karin), and his only grandchild Juli, who came to stay. He wrote to Beatrice " – It was great that they were here so we could picture their relationship. I have always been doubtful whether it was right for you to stand away from Juli but I think now you made the right decision. Juli is a wonderful child, Manne has made an enormous achievement with her, Juli is calm and played most days with the children in the street, going from house to house. We could even drive off, while she simply waved goodbye as she wanted to stay behind and play and roller-skate. Kajsa is a terrific little 19 year old, kind warm and normal."

The windows were delivered to Rydd. Beatrice met Folke and Nell there in June and then they returned and, almost immediately afterwards, vacated Naarden. In these years it was Folke's principle wish to paint at home:

"Is it lack of imagination that makes us come to imagine places, not just stay at home or could Pascal have been entirely right about just sitting quietly in one's room? Continent, city, country, society: the choice Is never wide and never free and here or thereno. Should we have stayed at home wherever that may be?"

- he wrote in his sketchbook.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

ZIERIKZEE

Life went on pretty much unchanged. Piano lessons were concentrated into three days a fortnight, as most of Nell's pupils were in Amsterdam, staying Wednesday and Thursday nights in Henk Verkuyll's house on the Jan Luykenstraat, which curiously enough, was a house Folke had lived in before, when his father once rented it. One big difference they both thrilled to was the proximity of the sea and the majesty of the vast dune-filled beaches, where they could bathe or enjoy the profusion of waders. Folke wrote to Beatrice:

" – Today is the 29th July,(1973) so that is 17 days I am here. I took down a big wall of breeze block and plasterboard, so now the room next to the street is spacious and pleasant. It all looked so cheap here with self-adhesive plastic tiles in imitation wood over the lovely planks, yes it's strange how people cover over real materials with false – tiled walls with plasterboard and wooden partitions with polystyrene. The old dears who owned the house took out all the taps, so we had no water and all the wiring had burnt out previously.

" – With all the recent rain, our garden is like something in a dream of douanier Rousseau, especially when Nisse creeps through the labyrinthine green. We were very busy here, when suddenly Carlo and Kerstin (Derkert) came for a week like a breath of fresh air. The weather was hellish, so then I felt forced to go and visit exhibitions with him, allowing one to see the paintings from the Pushkin Museum in Moscow, with Cézanne, v.gohg, seurat etc amongst whom Rousseau; also the scrapbooks of van ghog where van gogh cut out engravings and woodcuts from French and English weeklies, he chose all those images with social pathos, drew frames round them, enlarged them and then made paintings of them. Then there was his conflict with Gauguin who reproached him for lacking fantasy. Van Gogh wanted the truth as his foundation – and thanks to that he started to paint

those whorls and waves: This was him meticulously following all the curves of the engraver's burin, except working in oils. Thus I've seen many fine things by him I'd never have seen otherwise. Carlo (the Director of Stockholm's Modernamuseet) was very impressed by my paintings and wants to buy at least 4 just for himself and has begun with a payment of 300 kr. and thinks I should exhibit in Stockholm, recommending Glas as a good gallery.

August was a flurry of activity to make the house habitable, "I've enlisted our neighbours from Naarden, Wally and Marcel, and they renewed the wiring and even installed a shower and replaced the taps. I bought some planks from a dear old boy and made a draining board, repaired the roof and chimney, made up some small shelves. Today the kitchen is finished, I'll remove a wall for my studio, so I can start painting again in a fortnight."

" – I'm reading a fat book on Strindberg and art, I was given by Carlo. It's a lot about Grez naturally and very interesting. At that time everyone painted symbolic things based on mythology but he wanted everyone to become realist and do commonplace things that everyone could easily understand. It's the same situation as now, where abstract art has alienated the public from art." Soon he was writing:

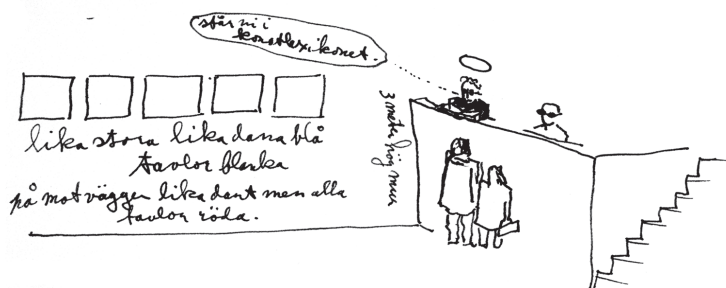
" – At last I'm under way with painting, which continues at the drop of a hat, as one only has to sit down with all one's notes and sketches when a sort of obsession grips one as to how one is going to express all this; but then one overflows with ideas, which is necessary as I must do a lot of things. Sometimes they drop off the production line and find a buyer as that is also necessary, as it's not so easy here as it was in Naarden to live off Nell's piano and other little jobs like Frans' shop or gardens. But against that I have much more time with hardly any visitors." Then;

" – I'm painting shit hot and next week I'm off to Amsterdam to try several galleries. Today I finished a large striking canvas, which I am happy with but which is hard to describe, you really should

borrow the idea of "The boy on the mountain." My painting goes well, I have also painted water lilies, but now I shall mainly do small items. That sells best." A little later it was:

" – You know I'm having great difficulty finding a gallery. Messing about like a travelling salesman amongst a lot of pompous old snobs while carrying around my beautiful paintings and only getting a frosty reception when little Nell and I stand there like a dear happy couple, it really draws on your willpower and at the same time your laugh muscles.

" – The worst comedy was in a gallery called Miau. We stood below the reception, "Are you in the Netherlands Lexicon of Artists?", with behind us one wall of paintings all the same size in blue, and opposite, a wall all the same size but red.



" – The funniest was a gallery with a man like Hemingway but without any salt, sugar instead, who asked, "Are you immigrants?" So far I've approached ten galleries, which were shit. All galleries here function as in Sweden 20 years ago, with the cult of name and so on, and to find a pleasantly relaxed gallery just as an individual person is almost unthinkable. They often like my stuff a lot but one specialises in science fiction, another in naïve, etc and they don't dare to deviate from their chosen path.

At last he found somewhere, with Debbie Wolff at the Galerie Balans, Leidschegracht 74, Amsterdam, with an offer for January 1973, which provided the impetus for further concentrated work right over the Christmas period "thanks to my excitement at the coming exhibition." A shooting neighbour dropped them a nice hare but otherwise it was "no visits, turkey, food, candles - I worked well and read all my Christmas letters."

But then came a bombshell, in the form of a cancellation by Balans, which led to a furious accusation of breach of faith. Folke was adamant he'd been given a firm promise for January, but Debrah replied thus:

"Clearly my letter to you has been completely misunderstood. You write how annoying it is to deal with people who chop and change. This is something I have never done. The moment I met you I clearly stated that I had absolutely no room for you. I made space after pressure from Frans (Beuys), so that I thought I had a slot in January. I like your work and the moment I agreed to your exhibition I naturally had no idea about the consequences on the other agreements, about which I have written to you. Amazement and disappointment was also the case with the other artists and as I had spoken to them far earlier, I had to bear that in mind. You can easily think "you should have known that ages ago" but I'm only human and therefore not faultless. I hardly do anything else each God-given day except keep in mind the hopes and wishes of artists and I find it singularly unpleasant to be charged with insensitivity. I hope that we might be able to do something in June, but if you have arranged something elsewhere please let me know."

That was definitely a very annoying set-back, which furthermore led to a serious shortage of money. He had spent the best part of two years devoting every spare moment from commissions to accumulating pictures for an exhibition, and here he was, doubly disappointed because he knew Balans was a very good venue, scraping the barrel for something to do. Artist's materials are not

cheap and he never stinted on quality. As he put it in his colourful English:

“ - Old Folke was chocked and rubbed in his work, when he suddenly got a letter from his gallery that the owner, Mrs. Deborah, had been a little absinthe minded and had made three appointments at the same time and as I was the last she was obliged to put me off. I was very sad and angry, while painting I can be in the skies, but the date for an exhibition must be exact and I was just painting on a hot wave towards that date and to be rubbed is like a coitus interruptus. Out of the 50 galleries I've visited there are 3 left which sound interesting, Hjalman, which is nordic and a bit boring, Ritee, and Liplaa.”

“ - Today I found Jo Liplaa in Galerie Sfinx, who laughed spontaneously and thought it was terrific. She booked me in for the 9th of May.”

The exhibition of 40 paintings took place from the 9th to the 27th of May at Galerie Sfinx, 241 o-z Voorburgwal, and 31 works were sold. Carlo Derkert came to the exhibition and bought “ Konninginnedag ” (= Queen's Day), together with private buyers, friends and family from most of north-west Europe. There were no reviews in the press, times had changed since his last exhibition. No one wanted to read mature art criticism anymore, nor did it fit all the new-found freedoms. Also there were over 100 galleries in Amsterdam, which made it impossible to cover them all. Occasionally a big feature would be presented on a particular artist or group, but otherwise if one wanted press reviews one paid for them oneself like any other form of advertising and a photo was a lot extra. Folke gauged that he could organise his own publicity, and the sales proved him right. A lot of people came to the Opening and later they had a merry party in the garden of “ Le Cul de Sac ” in the heart of the red light district.

Endless analysis could be devoted to these paintings, which either tell a story, summon up ideas, exploit painterly devices, or throw in words in a great blend of fantasy and truth. Beatrice came

from Sweden and was particularly smitten with the image of Jesus combing his neatly parted hair under his crown of thorns. Something Folke had witnessed in a Thorn Passion Play. To emphasise the fact that he wanted to capture the fleeting image, almost in a stream-of-consciousness kind of art, he summarised what he had painted thus:

“ To find the right expression in Napoleon's face. [Fig.102].

“Landscape with 10,000 brown hens.

“The worldwide smile of Juli. [Fig.103].

“Landscape with 10,000 mussels.

“Water lilies, potatoes, dear old Fanny and Netta.(=their pet dachshunds from 1960s)

“A wryneck.

“A family on an auto-cycle.

“A Swedish forest, a dull Stockholm suburb in the snow.

“A pink crazy pig, a water nymph, Zierikzee in water famine, violets.

“The yellow pansy, a herring, a flying carrot, teddy bears.

“A man going to market with a cow.

“Last week I painted myself on top of a big hill as a little boy, much later I came back as an old man and there was nothing left of the hill, then I was obliged to paint that again, myself sitting on a very low hill.

“Follette with a dog collar and a blue butterfly(=a mongrel Beatrice smuggled in from Paris)

“A happy wild boar, which hunts naked women who are just about to take a dip.

“A cat on a cloud and she clawed the cloud so that a little blood ran out, which she watches over.

“Some coltsfoot shoots on a piece of wood with a gnome.

“ - I have spent the whole of Easter painting peas falling from

a sky filled with pink clouds down to a very evil earth. [Fig.104]. To paint peas is not a simple task like showering confetti, no, they have a shaded side and a side which reflects a strong light which is tiny but intense and I can assure you it is quite a task. In conclusion, I am very happy, as there remain only a few more pictures which I can make a soup of, a little pepper here or salt there, before everything is ready."

The following pictures survive from the exhibition:

[Fig.105 – details 106-109].

[Fig.110 – detail 111].

[Fig.112 – details 113 & 114].

[Fig.115 – details 116-118].

[Fig.119 – detail 120].

[Fig.121 – details 122-124].

It is an interesting footnote to the times that there was considerable state support for the arts then. The government actually paid a 20 percent subsidy on the value of gallery sales of original works. On top of which almost any person could register as a practising artist and in return for a regular income from the state, the artist had periodically to provide the state with works they had produced.

Folke was totally opposed to this artificial way of encouraging artists, feeling that without that great struggle to create and survive, the work would usually be worthless, and he never registered or took state handouts knowingly. He was in fact a kind of illegal immigrant being unregistered for anything, a Swedish citizen, with hardly any rights in Holland and he preferred to be free as a bird, away from the stultifying levelling of the Swedish welfare state with its exorbitant taxes. It moulded his pragmatic attitude to art, which after this exhibition, partly because his work-rate and energy were inevitably falling off, tended towards fulfilling commissions and demands from individuals, so that only three more series of works, which might have constituted an exhibition, were produced. In 1978 he expressed his views thus to Brita :

" – Here in Europe every artistic event is becoming more élitist; isolated shows within museum walls, something only for specialists and a more or less limited public, no longer in contact with the wider community. But it mostly brings to mind the Emperor's New Clothes from China.

" - And all those thousands and thousands of so-called artists manage well on the contra presentation system – i.e. the government department buys art from them twice a year, art which then vanishes into enormous blocks of flats, where no one can find it any longer and where it slowly disappears from lack of care. But this golden era is now over and the state thinks it's cheaper just to give them normal unemployment benefit. Excellent! In this way we are rid of masses of unneeded artists. No, I think it's best to offer nothing to artists and let art live in freedom, buffeted by wind and cold, sun and warmth. Well anyway, time will tell, we'll manage, it's just a matter of not giving up."

Via Nell's musical circle, Folke had got to know Anner Bylsma, Holland's internationally known cellist, and they became firm friends on a very high plane of understanding, each recognising the other's special talents. For artistic creativity, Anner maintained, "Pupils who start with many problems in exams and tests end up fine and vice versa, because all teaching takes away fantasy, I was taught to bow straight, now I often bow sideways and over the bridge". Exactly the kind of individualism Folke approved of. So when Folke moved to Zierikzee, Anner started looking in that direction too and plumped for a large, Victorian vicarage in Zonnemaire less than 10 miles away. Cold, draughty and damp, it might have suited some part of Anner's nature, married as he was to so many hours with his cello, but it had nothing homely about it for a wife and family. In the vast empty attic upstairs there stood a tiny partitioned box with a door and a pocket-handkerchief skylight; within - a bed, a table and a chair were all the reward for being maidservant to a stern calvinist minister in this part of the world.

When Folke saw it he told Anner, "I've got to do something to get God out of this place" and Anner heartily agreed. So he came to

be the house carpenter and also their gardener. He purchased timber and made a four-poster bed, rather as in Naarden, a feat he was to repeat in his house in the Varremarkt, Zierikzee in order to divide his front-room studio from Nell's piano room; and then he made and arranged a shower room. It was always open house for them, they were welcome there at any time and, as Anner was totally unpractical, Folke could think up his freestyle carpentry for them whenever he felt inspired. Usually he was driven there by financial need. Later, when Anner left his wife, who stayed in the house and then found Jan, the ship's carpenter, the story went round that Folke said of Jan "It all fits perfectly, but he manages to make all his wood look like plastic." Jan got to hear of this, so he said, "Folke manages to make everything look wonderful, but it always falls to bits."

Meanwhile, in the Varremarkt, musical life blossomed. Every Sunday, Nell had a quartet, cello, violin and flute, with Nell on the piano. Folke started sketching this and it was not long before he had a commission to make a painting of it. "Just now I am doing a very complex picture of the trio who come and play with Nell... I have of course made Nisse cat very large in the foreground and the quartet is arranged behind her back and then you look out of our window into the garden and through the kitchen door into the kitchen and there am I, sitting with a glass and a bottle, just as in one of those old Masters." [Fig.125].

"When last we were in Amsterdam and Nell gave lessons, I sidled off for a while and went to the Rijksmuseum and had a look at all those lovingly painted pictures – and found that a lot more inspiring than all those paintings in the galleries. Obviously there is some shite as well, but when you randomly walk about at will without thinking of anything in particular, then, in that overwhelming richness, you suddenly see a little pearl, or a big one or you learn something. In fact I have learned all too late to discover the joy in this."

Folke's anxious concerns for his daughter were never far away: Beatrice had suffered terribly in '72 while trying to nurse Tor back from meningitis, which had proved a hopeless task but she still managed

to work for an exhibition in Lund in mid-September 1972, together with Brita. Folke had tried to revive his old contacts from his exhibitions in Lund and Malmö in 1951 but, for all that, the results proved disappointing. As a change of scene from missing her daughter and losing her new partner, Beatrice came to live in Zierikzee for almost three months, interrupted by a visit to France to stay with her old friends, Daniel and Tatte, during April, all of which to try and put a lot of sadness behind her. Folke wrote to her there:

" – As an old dolt of a dad, if I can offer you some advice, stay there in that divine and impious land with its wine and its Pompidoux. In a few weeks the nightingale will arrive and now, with Picasso gone, there is more room for us both here and there, and after that, outside this and above that."

Beatrice stayed till she'd seen Folke's exhibition at Sfinx and then went back to Stockholm, where she found a job in television making a children's programme. When Sfinx was all over, Folke had to return to Sweden for a preliminary discussion about a big window contract but he was soon back.

Palle Fischer came down at the end of June to make some trips in Liane. Henk Verkuyl, the boat's owner, experienced a curious little Happening titled:

"Conversation on the Scheendijk"

Stage directions: Henk cycling along the Scheendijk canal towards village on narrow lane. Meets lady in a yellow car. The lady stops, Henk too, naturally enough.

Lady: Have you seen a balloon by any chance?

Henk: Do you mean a hot-air balloon?

Lady: Yes

Henk: Do you come from the Nederhorstse Berg?

Lady: (surprised)Yes

Henk: Are you Mrs. Zoet?

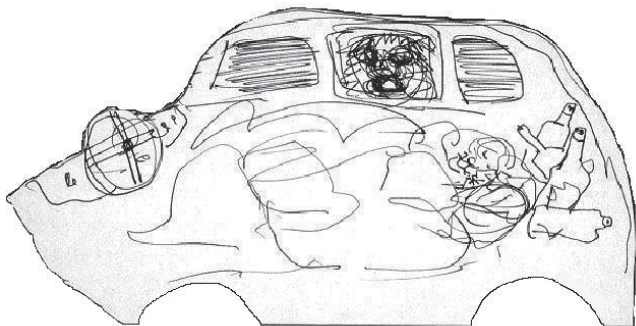
Lady: (dumbstruck) Yes

Henk: Then you know Folke and Nell?

Lady: (flabbergasted but delighted) Of course. I was in Zierikzee last week, only they weren't there.

Henk: Yes...They are here on the Scheendijk."

But then the weather broke, and turned horribly wet, so they decided to abandon boating and take up Maurice's kind offer of Grand Lucé instead. A mad trip down to France in Lellan, no back seat, Palle just perched amongst the Calva' bottles saw them camped overnight in a sloping field with a fine panorama and then later Nell asleep between the two reprobates with, outside, the glowering face of some irate farmer.



Next day they sailed into Grand Lucé, Maurice's splendid barrel of red and best 20 year-old-old Calva's soon to the fore with many a laugh and a story. Maurice was absolutely amazed how rapidly that barrel was drained, Annette had said beforehand that it was quite ridiculous stocking up with so much wine.

Back from his joyful interlude in Grand Lucé, his mind turned to painting and to a commission for sixteen 6x1m windows for Skövde's new church, for which this time he chose the theme of The Bread and The Wine. Otherwise a certain emptiness beset him, seated amongst his brushes, and looking for further inspiration after his exhibition.

At the end of August, he could not resist an invitation to go to England, stay on a farm and paint bulls, including a fine Hereford

called Orlando but none of this has survived. What has survived is a wall-frieze telling a story for little Rose and Laura Heybrook, the words of which were:

"A sparrow sat on a roof, an avocet came and ate the sparrow, a golden oriole came and ate the avocet, a minotaur came and ate the golden oriole, a dragon came and ate the minotaur, a curmudgeon came and ate the dragon, a nid-nodder came and ate the curmudgeon, a jack-sprat came and ate the nid-nodder, an unshrinkable crimped haddock came and ate the jack-sprat, a pedigree rub-a dub came and ate the unshrinkable crimped haddock, a canary bird came and ate the pedigree rub-a-dub---Then came Uncle Sam and caught the canary bird and put her in a cage."

And so it was that at five to midnight on the second of September, in a foreign bed, Nell suddenly woke up, remembered and pinched Folke happy birthday as he had reached 60; and then a kiss and a hug. Everyone else had forgotten the inveterate birthday celebrator, except Beatrice whose letter was waiting in Holland.

In that letter there must have been some reference to an income tax demand. As she had Folke's power of attorney, they were applying to her... "tell them you don't exactly know where I am living just now, last I was in France but it could be I am in England painting bulls, tell them not to worry, that I am working hard and will straightaway put it right, once I get some windows, as I've never let down the tax people."

On their return, Nell took on a piano pupil from the town. "He's a very nice 14 year-old boy. You won't believe me but in contrast to Holland, people are good-looking here and being an island, they have different names too. It's a pleasure to go out at the end of school and look at the children pouring out with a nice expression on their faces. It is just a small town, rather like Mariefred, you know — coffee and cream cakes at 11. One day Nell's pupil's mother came and sat through the lesson and we chatted away and it turned out that she had only been to primary school. Well, later in the afternoon she

came back, all dressed up, and made me promise never to breathe a word about her schooling. Such are the little dramas that occupy the townspeople here.”

They were getting to know the town, with its 6000 souls, under the shadow, almost, of the Great Tower from 1250 called “ Dikke Jan,” especially as it was the one which “Mondriaan painted so many times.” This tower is only one-third of its planned height, the Hanseatic town’s trade was eclipsed in the 15th century and they couldn’t afford the rest, so its chief attraction for Folke was the imperious pair of kestrels who lived and wheeled about there.

The Bread and Wine windows project was maturing. When wheat germinates, which comes first, the root or the shoot? Then a careful study was made of the tiny insignificant flowers on the vine. So the sketches matured. In between were painting commissions, one of flowers and another of Toni’s children.

A ‘cellist dinner was held in the Varremarkt, “ - René van Ast, Anner Bijlsma and Bengt Widlund are coming, Holland’s 3 most famous cellists. Rene is an old Zierikzee person, Anner bought a house here, Bengt just happened to be here, so we thought it would be fun if they all came together. Frans Brügger, Holland’s best flautist is also from here, so I’ll send you a recording,” he told Mieke. To Beatrice:

“ - At the moment I am in a retrospective mood. I found your letters in the attic, they are wonderful, so many lovely drawings and interesting personal thoughts. I see more and more that these spontaneous drawings eventually provide the key to all your paintings. Paintings are so often speculations and constructions, as well as intensifying the formal and structural. For a long time I have lain awake thinking I am a shockingly bad “Morfar” (=mother’s father=grandfather in Swedish) for Juli and never send her anything. But I was incapable of sending anything warm to that loveless community until one night I had a flash of inspiration thinking I would write a story for Juli that would be just for her: A large

scrapbook or binder into which she can insert all the pages of stories. I am working on it. It will be mainly about a rabbit, as it is easy to write about oneself, at least for me.” At the end of October he wrote “ Soon I will forward part one of my book “Morfar’s stories for Juli. ” It’s about 60 pages and still I am only 5. The next section will deal with the years 5- 20 I think, beyond that I don’t know. It’s a zany job without much content, though personally I took much pleasure in it.

In November, an Amsterdam couple, who had decided they wanted a painting, came and decided to commission a portrait instead.

The next day, they were invited to an Exhibition and Opening party in Laren for “ 5 van Norden Painters.” Old Mr. van Norden, who was in his nineties now, was a painter in the school of Breitner and a member of the “Independents” in 1900 until he came to a ceramic factory in Gouda, owned by a wealthy man called Mr. Lob, who liked art and started “Die Distle” ceramics. He stayed there as a decorator until 1920. Then his son, Hans, who was always a free painter, and his daughter, Hilda, from Paris, together with the two granddaughters Evelyne and Josine.

“ - Soon perhaps I will be 90, then you can all set up an exhibition when Juli will be 35. Frightening to be so terribly old but it is fun when you are so lively, characterful and kind. The whole family was there and hundreds from Amsterdam. It started at 3pm with speeches, then we ate and drank till 11, when everyone rapidly left to get home before the driving ban began at midnight. We took it quietly as we only had to walk to Aat and Anke’s nearby. Next day we took the bus home, nearly everyone was cycling, though several had taken out their old horse traps. We saw a dramatic accident with a coach, which had collided with a road sign – a horse with a bloody knee and a coachman in livery lying in the road. The bus driver stopped to see if he could help.

“ - Next day at home I worked on my window sketches for Skövde, the day starting with the organ grinder outside my window

and his horse waiting for my piece of bread. It was such fine weather that round 4 o'clock we went for a walk by the sea. The dunes looked pink and tanned in the evening light, the sea was rough and glistened. The beach was vast and desolate and the sky purple pink. On the sands a little heap stood out, a sleeping seal. When we were almost by it, it awoke. I saw its large black eyes, whereon it hissed, then hobbled all the way to the water, plunged into a wave, surfaced again looking at us while the breakers crashed all round. In the evening a girl with a cello and a lady with a violin came and they played wonderfully with Nell.

The Saudis had cut their oil output in response to the Six Day War, so that there were severe shortages in Europe. Holland's response was to ban driving on Sundays. Folke described it thus: "Hardly any thing is happening culturally in Holland just now as everyone is preoccupied with the ridiculous oil crisis, newspapers, the radio, TV and the people in the street only speak of that. And every day the police find petrol hoarded in the most crazy places, there have been so many accidents the police have decided to stop prosecuting for hoarding as long as it is handed in for safe keeping."

By the end of November, the sketches for Skövde's windows were ready so it was time to journey north again for further deliberations with the church committee and the architect, who approved everything. There was time to stay with Beatrice who once again had an exhibition, at Prisma, when even Folke was amazed at her output and energy.

The old family was reunited. "Brita was in very good form, and gay, and prepared the most unbelievably big dinners and we had fun. It's nice to grow old and wise. Betty was very busy, working on a TV show that she had invented herself, with dolls she made and her own songs and her own script which comes out at the end of January. She doesn't like the TV job but as she cannot make a living off her pictures, she has cleverly discovered that TV pays fabulous amounts for shitt and once she has finished she has enough money to go on painting again the rest of the year. Best of all was to see Juli

who is now five years old, and Truls (=Folke's daughter, Mieke) who is working so hard."

Before leaving for Sweden, Folke had had one letter from Beatrice "full of fine thoughts, so one feels how you are living and getting stronger by the day" and soon after another "giving me dread in the pit of my stomach, so I must get in Lella and go to you." On return to Holland he wrote:

" My darling, with every mile I drove away from you, I sensed how my and your unease increased, especially yours. Be aware we all have this in us to a greater or lesser degree, which is necessary and normal within prescribed limits, you have to learn to live with it, to be a friend of it. With your own angst, it takes a long time. We all deal with it in different ways. For myself, I have reached the conclusion in the last couple of years or so that I am just living in the present, after which there is nothing, I am dead. One day I am here, later I am dead. And my life has been so...and so.. especially in the beginning when it was very hard work, yet despite that more and more wonderful and I am so incredibly grateful for this that all my angst has disappeared, whereas you wonder if it is fear of death the root of one's anxiety but really it is not so, it's more than that.

"But it is easy for me to talk as I have Nell, whereas when one is alone it becomes a nightly monologue. Alone in bed and at breakfast isn't healthy for anyone, though writing and painting help.

"Do you think there's a true artist without angst? It's hell to have it but one must live with it like a friend. I must admit, sometimes, when everything goes against you, then... if you don't watch out, anxiety can suddenly become an enemy just briefly.

" Fun that you're writing a book, you find out so much while you are involved.

" – It was the second of January and about midnight, after painting a good while, I thought of writing letters but then two unknown fellows from Zierikzee rang the door bell and asked to see

my paintings, they were opticians on the square and nice country people. Now, a week or so later, we are going out for our first invitation in Zierikzee, two kind men who have invited us to their tiny house on the edge of the harbour for dinner. Tonight we shall eat whelks (India-rubber), mussels (good, but rather tough this year) and small crabs. That's the advantage of having undrawn curtains, as everyone can see that you are a painter. They came in and looked and now they are saving up for a painting."

Upsetting news came that Palle was in hospital "absolutely finished and the victim of alcohol" as was Sven Söderholm, also suffering from alcohol damage, but worst of all was the news that Brita slipped on the ice, was in hospital and down to only 42 kilos as there were complications. To Beatrice: "People should stay in the kitchen cupboard like the sugar bowl. I fretted all night and came to the conclusion I must come to Stockholm and take care of Bamsa. It's my responsibility not yours to help out, you have enough to do. The difficulty is I have no money and have just started painting new things with a view to sale. So I have to wait till the new year."

Brita soon made a good recovery, Folke helped with any little money he could, but it was Beatrice who had all the worries about her mother on a day-to-day basis.

Folke wrote to Sven Söderholm and asked him if he would like to buy another painting. That worked, and he received a letter in reply promising that he had already given the money to Brita as an advance. Folke was pleased and wrote to Brita: "I'm glad I've stayed here, as I'm in a wave of inspiration and have too few hands to express myself. Just got to concentrate on Söderholm's, then three more paintings and I am done with all my commissions, just now I've got a huge drive to paint my own things. I am tired of all these tasks like "flower arrangements" or "loaf of bread on a nice breadboard" (I've already done that several times, so I can do that without thinking. I find it very Dutch that they fall for something so simple), I've just finished "wildflower meadow" for Sam van Eeghen, I'm painting a tiny bird, a goldcrest amongst snowdrops, as a commission and then I have to

make six children's portraits in wood, difficult and slow. I particularly want to make a lot of children's toys and have an exhibition on that."

Other paintings from this period were: [Figs.126-129].

The Söderholms duly came and visited and Folke felt he had painted a fine picture for them to take home. At about this moment, Folke finally landed the major commission of windows for the new church at Skövde, and this meant there was a need to meet the parties involved at the location to form the overall picture. In the event he made a swift visit in the beginning of May, as in the meantime he had his one and only commission in Holland.

An architect had sought him out to make a wall painting for a building by the swimming pool in Diever, near Hoogeveen, Drenthe. This needed to be completed in April for a May opening. As Diever is famous for its open-air performances of Shakespeare, Folke found inspiration for this commission in Twelfth Night, Act 1,sc.ii, "Where, like Arion on the dolphin's back, I saw him hold acquaintance with the waves", but he concealed the message in a rebus to make an 11m. long wall frieze with 14 images in six sections of 1.8 m. Obviously it was translated into Dutch " Daar zoals Orion op de dolfyn zag ik hem vriendschap sluiten met de golven " " – At the opening ceremony it was great fun with euphoniums, tubas and big brasses and a procession in superb weather – it was just like something out of the film "feu fou" by Bert Haanstra." Unfortunately in this day and age there is no longer a demand for open-air swimming pools in temperate climates and inquiries in 2003 revealed that this pool had just been demolished and of the wall frieze nothing was known.

During his fortnightly three days in Amsterdam, Folke often visited some exhibition. To Brita he wrote " – A huge exhibition of Kudo, the Japanese, with only putrefaction-- is nothing to make you happy. Everyone's reading Proust now as he has finally been translated into Dutch. For myself, I read Dickens, Nicholas Nickleby at the moment and before that Dombey and Sons and consider them superb."

Now the hammer blow fell. To reconstruct how Beatrice found her fragile world had imploded....Discovering that the father of your unborn child has faithlessly been sleeping with one of your own good friends, what do you do to ease the pain of betrayal? Those tranquillisers prescribed so long ago, when one was so low after losing the presence of Juli and then Tor one after the other, still unopened in the cupboard, a moment of panic and despair, ring Folke....

At 10:30am on the Friday before Ascension day, Folke received a brief phone call from Beatrice, hardly any words, something in her voice made him realise she was desperate, "come now." There was no flight available that day he found out. Then telephoning her number vainly for hours, it was suddenly answered by Christian who told him that she had taken a bottle of pills. On the following Tuesday she died. " – I can tell you it must be an accident, a few days ago she bought a new bicycle, an exhibition was going on and there are beautiful fresh pictures standing in her studio. She always had warm hope and love of life, everything breathing and awaiting, and every letter telling about her fight for right and truth, tenderness and warm love. Walking at the summit. One little wrong step in the dark and it happened. Some people become 80 and others 28 and have done even more. The funeral will take place in Berthåga Crematorium on the 31st of May."

She who had just played " Jag är trädet " (I am a tree) in her very own children's TV programme, was borne lifeless in a wooden box and placed beneath Mieke's Tree of Life tapestry in the glow of Folke's sunburst window. Family and friends, an intimate gathering, no words, only music, much of it as used in her TV series, recently composed by her friend Lasse Dahlberg, two musicians, flute and cello, and the organist. Le jardin suspendu by J.Alain for organ. Tanso by L.Dahlberg for flute, cello and organ. The adagio from the sonata in a flat by J.B.Locillet for flute, cello and organ and finally "to Beatrice " for flute, cello and organ by L.Dahlberg. A fitting farewell which words could never have expressed.

Brita's wave of sorrow was expressed in a portrait of an iconic Beatrice, harrowingly divided and bleeding, a silvered angelic presence that could only fade with the bitter tears of time, which is in the possession of her faithful friend, Ella Feine, one of the Lundgren sisters.

Folke took up his pen " – those 24 days I was away from Zierikzee seem like months of heavy black dark, and now I'm back it just feels emptier and emptier. Yesterday I went for a long walk with Nell by the wild seas and the heavy waves tried to help by singing a consoling song. Back in my daily living, I realise what a gaping hole has appeared. As I've never really been in hospital, I never in my most extreme fantasy imagined that Swedish hospitals could be so awful and I begin to wonder if a large element in Bea's cry arose from her ghastly hospital experiences with Tor, Bamsa (=Brita), and even Juli; I mean, I've spoken to Nell and her circle and they can think of no one who took their life in such circumstances, and yet there were things in her work and in her writings that make me feel there was a fate in this.

" – Tomorrow I'm determined to go into my studio and try and work." Painting and his own work proved hopeless, so he dulled the pain by turning to gardening and carpentry, especially at Anner Bijlsma's vicarage, where he was always welcome. Music and lively conversation proved excellent therapy and, suddenly, he was genuinely busy again with the Skövde windows. To Mieke:

" – I'm busy doing alterations in the house, which I am compelled to do in view of the 7m high windows I am making. Sixteen sections, 7m high = 112 m square and I have to paint and draw that, all in this little house – I'm going to set up a roll of paper like a blind, so you only have to drag it down from the ceiling and roll up the finished part on the floor. If I should meet my end you'll have to finish it, not that I have any fears on that score, but you know what I want and how. You mustn't think I'm depressed, the opposite is true, as I found a supply of good cheap wine and my creative flow is in full flood.

In October they had an invitation to help with a friend's new house in Provence, as a form of holiday.

" - So we dug, painted and did carpentry in an ugly imitation Provençal new-build which looks like a marzipan pig. The owner is happy, 10,000 other Dutch and 10,000 English in similar new-builds, it's warm and they think it's France, funny to see — a bit Hollywood and a bit Knivsta. The journey there and back was wonderful. One day we left Albi, went over the uplands towards Montpellier to a little hamlet called Camarès, where we spent the night, blue skies and hoar frost but a big fire in the fireplace while granny sat knitting beside it. As usual, a potage, lamb chops grilled on the fire, a little cheese and then the starlit night, as in Sweden it chills the nostrils. Very fine, featured small people and beautiful houses. One day I found a fine loaf of bread at a baker's in the shape of an ear, which pattern I have in mind to use in my window, only about 5 m high instead. Then we returned to the Luberon and spent the night in a dear little hotel in Cuceron where we laughed about cuc goes ron ron, continued to St. Didier where Moni (his niece, Monica) and Mike are. Moni does portraits, the whole village wants one, I don't know how she does them so quickly but in ten minutes it's a good likeness, with a touch of glamour. She makes no pretence that it is in any way art but the people are happy and she really has the knack. I can't do that, and I have to confess I am a bit jealous, Bamsa could probably match her. If one could do those in ten minutes for 50 francs each you could live well, you only need a little charcoal and paper. But then you'd never do real art. There was a sudden snowstorm there and we saw many frozen swallows lying on the ground."

It took until mid-January to complete the first two window cartoons, meanwhile he had completed a painting commission for "An Oystercatcher." [Fig.130]. At first, having taken the cartoons to Bogtman's, Folke only had to be present to select the glass. He was such an established customer, that he had the freedom of all Bogtman's extensive stocks and this time he happened on a large forgotten stock that Ap's grandfather had bought 60 years earlier, "from an old man

in Wales with a long silver beard. That glass is so fantastic and of such a unique quality, like most things made by humans a long time ago." He took the newly painted cartoons to Bogtman's, spent a long-time selecting all the glass and then left them to cut it.

He started with three sections, "Let there be light", "Dividing the day from the night", "The earth brings forth fruits after their own kind", and then the story of wheat for the next five sections. To settle which came first, the root or the shoot, he had to satisfy his curiosity.

" - I have made an experiment with wheat grains in flower pots and the shoot comes nearly at the same time as the roots. After three days, I saw the first shoot, but later the roots grow much quicker than the shoot, astonishingly quickly - almost 8 cm in three days and always three roots, with the middle the longest, it has something of the three rivers of paradise. The first window with the wheat grain is ready now and is in fact very sexy and warm. You feel the aura of the safe lap of Christ's mother Mary behind her son. In former times, there wasn't a halo like a plate behind the heads of the holy saints, but a mandala that had this shape () and this enclosed the whole person."

At first progress was slow, Folke only going to Bogtman's when Nell had her piano lessons in Amsterdam but by mid-May the first four windows were finished. " The first 20 sq m of these endless windows are the worst but the day will come when I know I'll manage it." At this stage the Skövde church committee wanted to come to Holland to see them, and naturally there was concern as to what they would think of them. Bogtman actually had a place in his workshop where he could mount these four 7 m. high windows. Folke was not impressed with the insularity of the committee:

" - They took a taxi from Hoek-van-Holland to Haarlem and stayed in an expensive hotel where they asked for uitsmijters(=fried ham and eggs), but then they have always got money for that as they put it down for expenses against tax. They thought that what I was doing was nice enough but mostly they nagged and nagged

as to whether they would be ready in time for the consecration in late October. Rolf stayed an extra day and I showed him a little of old Holland – granny and granddad van Norden in their Hofje (= almshouse), Josine in her enormous attic, Henk in my old house, Corry and Martyn in their mental hospital and we looked at the countryside and he was dumbfounded people were so warm and welcoming without that screwed up politeness of Sweden. The committee thanked me for my hospitality and when I complained about all the extra costs, which was true, they sent me 12,000kr.extra without ado.” The era of 20 percent inflation had arrived.

In March, Brita and Mieke exhibited jointly at Konstgården, Hälsingborg where Folke reminded them to invite his old contacts Hjortsjö, Jeppson, and Gunnar Norrman. Brita had written extolling Bergman’s film “The Magic Flute” which made Folke remember how he had met him at his 1951 exhibition in Malmö.

“ I understand that Bergman is a man of enormous gifts, but so were Wagner and Schopenhauer and they don’t make my heart feel much, though in this case I can’t judge as I haven’t seen the film.” A year later Folke also commented to Brita, “ everyone here has read in the papers that Bergman has turned his back on the land of his birth. This made me think of Ekelöf who already in 1940 wrote, “I am a foreigner in this land...” To Mieke he wrote “ I know it’s important for Bamsa, but Skåne is difficult...my original thought was that you’d be very big in Russia and could be the power behind a movement there. You are so close to the earth and Giono-esque that that must fit. The main thing is don’t lose heart, you are three big personalities so people will be amazed. Your message is in wood.” This has proved the case. Mieke and Ulysse are wood sculptors. Much of their inspiration comes from Anatolia. They have never been to Russia, and are now well established with a permanent exhibition of their work in Joucas, Vaucluse.

In May, Folke was hindered as Dagmar Loden had sent a sketch for a small window for Stockholm’s North Crematorium, a place Folke was familiar with from the occasion of his father-in-law’s funeral.

Folke had the job of interpreting the sketch, selecting the glass and getting it made at Bogtman’s all of which went satisfactorily.

When his younger brother sent him words of condolence at the anniversary of Beatrice’s death, his reaction was angry and positive: “My little vicar brother wrote some priestly rubbish about time healing all ills and penned stupid consoling words suitable for a Swedish village and I was ungracious enough to write back that time heals wounds when you fall flat on your face but that there are wounds that never heal, only you get used to these wounds like someone disabled.”

At least there was time for a memorable party. Floris Tetterode was celebrating the 50th anniversary of their business as glassmakers.

“ – I too was invited, with a very fancy invitation card, beautifully made. Princess Beatrix was to open the Jubilee and the cream of Amsterdam was invited. I’ve never witnessed such elaborately designed dresses. Tetterode, very old, recalled his 78 years, then in conclusion said that glass shards symbolised good luck, while asking Princess Beatrix to pull on a cord, and with that, a ton of glass pieces showered down from the ceiling with a tremendous noise and great cloud of dust, so that everyone started to cough and then gradually people were able to see each other again. There were ladies there looking like feather dusters in pastel colours and they drank like fish as they were two metres tall and big and fat but up there in the heights, I did discover some lovely eyes after all. Incredible crinolines in 20 layers jutting out, so one had to stand a yard away, in turquoise and lavender or black and silver. Indian maharajas with very refined silvery hair, indulging in naïve conversations about love with the air of knowing about yoga and the migration of souls. Carel Appel was also there, as Tetterode gave a window by him to the city of Amsterdam and he was a very sympathetic kind of guy and quite modest. Then there was Marthe Röling who is a famous individual thanks to her enormous mouth paintings. She only paints mouths, but the strange thing is that they only get better, it’s not my style but for her style she’s got something. She is beautiful, had cadmium yellow

eye shadow, was dressed as a Turk, with a turquoise veil streaked here and there with ultramarine snake skins, walking on foot-tall shoes that looked like basket-work chairs and made of woven bark. Her man was a famous psychiatrist who was as bald as Yul Brynner, just a small black skin round him and in high lavender boots – he was fun – they wish to show everyone how crazy the world is. I came straight from Bogtman’s rather tired and dirty but Floris was so pleased and happy that I came, and my stained working clothes showed to quite good effect in the company.”

By June, the pressure was on to get all the windows finished, which was eased by being able to live with relatives very close to Haarlem, in Elswout, where he was amused by the twin boys’ naughty antics. His warm and friendly relationship with Ap became a bit strained:

“ – He is beginning to show his age by being increasingly surly, grumpy and stingy. He’d prefer it if I completed one window a day so he’s soon rid of me and can give his bill and he couldn’t care less how the windows look, which doesn’t make the job any easier; but they do have superb glass and excellent all-round arrangements. Deep down I wonder if he detests me as I am always friendly and cheerful with his staff, so that he wrongly suspects I’m a “Red” and of course it’s not easy for him to keep up with all the wage increases and social payments the “reds” have imposed.” Having had a heart attack some years ago and with inflation raging, it is not surprising that Ap became irritable, and perhaps Folke had played on his unusual name with an “Aap” (=monkey) too many. They went to a concert:

“ – Sometimes, but rarely, very famous is also absolutely fantastic – as with the Russian singer Galina Vishneskaya: she sang Cavalleria Rusticana, Stravinsky and a lot more, so that you were, for once, chilled to the marrow. Those Russians have a temperament like no other - to sing like that in a huge concert hall, absolutely unaccompanied, the whole audience dead silent. The worst thing with our times is how all people are levelled and gifted people are standardised, well adjusted and goalless.

Progress was good until mid-July, when Ap took his three-week holiday. With eight windows finished and an enforced break from work, at least it was less of a hindrance when their friends came to stay just then. Ingrid Atterberg from Uppsala and Erna Knutson from Denmark both came to do ceramic works near Leiden, which Folke helped arrange and they stayed in Zierikzee the while. Having become inspired by his windows, he used the interval to take up his brushes and finish the portrait commission for Toni v.d.Berg which was a large canvas of a small boy, “when one works in a detailed way as I do, it’s very laborious doing portraits as everything has to relate and in a small boy’s face one can only do a whisk of paint. But it is a fine picture with a contemporary transparency glowing through and beautiful in colour.”

While Bogtman’s were closed, Folke pushed on and completed all the Skövde cartoons. To relax, they went to Anner Bijlsma’s to work in the garden or for Nell to play in an ensemble. “Sometimes we go to Anner’s and lie hidden in the long grass and flowers, while they play quartets and other pieces endlessly.” To Mieke he wrote: “it’s such a strange time, everything upside down. The Arabs with their camels sell oil and have influence over us with their tiny population, as we are utterly dependent on all energy supplies. In Holland we have excellent cherries but it’s too expensive to pick them, so they are all cut down with generous subsidies, as they have lower cost pickers in Italy and enormous, gas-guzzling aeroplanes fly them here; but soon their costs will be too high and then we’ll fetch them from another low-cost country, like South America. It’s all so mad, you do best living simply as you do in Sweden, where nature is even more bountiful than France. Here the sea gives mussels, oysters and fish, just now garfish, at Rinus’ I found a delicious Gris Fumé, perfect with fish, which I last had at LeFèbre’s, near Amboise.”

He took a free evening to visit old Mr. Van Norden, now 94.

“ - He paints every day and his paintings become more and more fantastic and colourful, doing two to three pictures a week. He is deaf, but he sees well and speaks through these free expression paintings.

Bent, shrunken and dried out, he could pop off at any moment and he knows it. But he just paints on. Only watercolours – the rest is too complicated.”

So at the end of July, it was the final effort for 6 - 8 weeks to make the other eight windows about the vine and the grapes. At least he was confident at having remastered his glazing skills after a gap of a few years and was proud of the “warm force” in that final “ear of wheat” window of the previous series, where the ear was 6 m long and each grain nearly 50 cm across. Similarly with the vine flowers – “they are smaller than lice but I have enlarged them to 50 cms.”

“ – The last five windows went all by themselves, during the day I worked with them and at night I slept with them, working everything out and seeing it very clearly, so suddenly I was ready two weeks early. A lorry came and took 144 panels packed in big cases and a couple of days later, Nell and I started our leisurely journey north to Skövde, where Arthur was going to come by train to help install everything. We went via Giethorn, a fabulous place for a painter, Hamburg, Copenhagen, where Palle was much better and writing his next book, and that peninsular by the Kattogat, where the Björns lived, then a few days in a friend’s cottage deep in the forest with black grouse, elks and adders till it was the 3rd. October when the lorry, with its windows for the newly constructed church, was due at Skövde.

“ – But when we arrived, just as I feared, it was all a big disappointment. There is a famous picture of an old-fashioned church in Broadway situated between huge skyscrapers. This had the same feeling, big flats, a highway, a supermarket and then a church one could only identify by its cross; in the same way as one finds one’s Massey Ferguson dealer by his marque. Installing the windows of course didn’t happen just like that, as I could see at once that they wouldn’t fit. The contractor had had his thoughts and without telling us had altered the hangings. It really was a problem. The whole committee was quivering with excitement behind me just to see me put in the first panel, but I didn’t even try as I could see it wouldn’t

fit. So I said just that. “But it must,” said the chairman, “The bishop is coming in a fortnight for the dedication.” He was a man as big as an elk. I simply showed why it wouldn’t fit and the elk almost fainted, everyone else came up with conflicting suggestions. I sent them all away and said I needed to sleep on the problem for a night and that I’d tell them what I thought was the best solution the next day. We calmed the elk down with a glass or two and I rekindled his hopes by telling him that I had passed through hotter fires of heresy before. Next morning I pronounced my solution to the builder. It was a real struggle but we succeeded thanks to Arthur’s good help and a lot of silicon filling. The panels had to be installed from the outside, it was very cold with snow, and the windows were 25 feet tall, up and down those horrid aluminium ladders.

“After ten days it was done and we could all sit and reflect for at least an hour on what those windows mean and for me it was a beautiful impression that will last.” [Fig.131].

He gave a very different impression at the inauguration:

“ - All the officials and citizens admired the windows very much and said aah and ooh and tack, tack, tack, tack, tack (=thanks) and then we had to sit down and the organ began to play (not so well) and a choir began to sing (not so good). The Bishop tapped on the door to lead in the procession but one half was jammed and after the sexton had broken his nails, someone came with a hammer, bang bang, – before the whole procession could enter. This bishop had nothing in common with the bishops I used to meet when I lived in Sweden, his staff was in plastic, his cloth was like cheap curtain hangings, his mitre in papier-mâché and his sermon was of a quality that comfortably fell in with the poor minds of the citizens. Two hours of preaching and praise for all the windows, till I felt put out with all their praise, as I felt sorry and worried for the architect and the other artists. At last it came to an end and everyone rushed out and fortunately the sanitary facilities were, as always in Sweden, very well equipped. Twenty-two WCs ! Coffee and cake with whipped

cream and chatter, chatter gossip. My, how I was longing for a nice glass of red or better still, a strong tasty Calvados.

Folke put it mildly when he said

“ - The windows are splendid and their concept too was well realised, but on installation it was all a huge disappointment, thanks to the strange use of the space by the architect, who made a peculiar concoction of a building, full of mistakes and illogical structures.” He also had something to say about the large and bulky crucifix: “Above the altar hangs some sort of black image of Uno Lindberg’s – the man who is known as the pussycat of Sundbyberg, I believe – but nothing is gained by getting annoyed about it, as it will be there anyway and most of the congregation will probably hurry home to the ‘fridge to get out a cold beer after church. There are so many wonderful refinements in this church: the ping-pong room, a squash court, badminton hall, sauna, woodwork room, weavers room, film room, dark room, coffee room and...one more coffee room. Art is in any case wonderful to be involved in.”

To sum up, the effect of these windows is ruined: A stanchion in front of each one, plus a wide, horizontal, shiny pine surround to hold clusters of lights in front, could hardly do more to detract from them.

After three years, on and off, of creative thought, culminating in a surge of effort for over a year, it was back home to a creative vacuum. “It is difficult for me to start again and I sit in my studio with two empty hands. Nell is a good help, as she never gets upset to see me doing nothing, she feels how thoughts grow and waits patiently. Fortunately, the floor of my studio was rotten with fungi growing through, so I could occupy myself with repairing.”

GLOAMING

The Indian summer was over, the return from Skövde was functional rather than rhapsodic but with enjoyable stopovers with old friends. Ulf and Gunila Axén in Mariefred and next night with Folke and Kerstin Sundberg in Gothenburg. Folke S. was an architect and his wife had made a large textile for a bank which they went to look at. The Sundbergs gave them a splendid kick-sledge because they thought it belonged more in Holland and they thought there was going to be a cold winter. Next night to Palle’s in Copenhagen, though only his wife Bodil was there, so they went to a restaurant with the world’s stoutest chef. Then to Hamburg where his sister always welcomed them: a walk along the Elbe followed by a visit to a vast textile exhibition, at which there were hardly any weavings, it was mainly yarn sculptures and items like gigantic spiders webs, aesthetic and close to art but really only useful in large public buildings.

Folke felt he should, for old time’s sake, have called in to see Alice Lund as well, who had moved south to near Hälsingborg. He had been slightly needled by Mieke’s report that Alice always liked to make fun of Folke’s way of speaking Swedish “ She’s stupid if she says I can’t speak Swedish properly – ask Brita. I’m excellent at Swedish, almost better than the Swedes. Of course I have an accent but so do Darlkarls, Stockholmers, and Smålanders – note well I never use slang or corruptions.” This was true, his Swedish was perfect. But in the end they felt they had reached the limit of dropping in on old friends.

Nearly all the money from the windows went to Brita via his bank but, as he was unregistered for tax anywhere, he told Brita to say that he’d gone to St. Didier, Vaucluse to paint, should the taxman ring up. As Brita was a most truthful person who could never tell a

lie, he apologised to her for being a troublesome rabbit but he was, after all, an artist and intended to remain one for the future and to live a life of liberty. Liberty was something he consciously chose. He had taken a few thousand kr. cash from his account in the Uppland's bank and that was that. He'd undertaken so much work far too cheaply, if inflationary costs were taken into account and he never attempted to accumulate any wealth.

Disaster struck at his sister Karin's: Folke briefly left his car unlocked in the evening and a bag was stolen containing his three best sketchbooks. "As I knew they weren't worth anything, I hunted everywhere in the area next morning without any luck. Then I told Karin to put an ad. in the paper offering a reward. She never did that but set off somewhere for the lost property office and reported it. And today they arrived in the post...I kissed my little books, I was so delighted."

But his Muse was almost dead. "One almost seeks excuses for not painting. Every day I sit in my studio and one becomes aware of little ideas which well out, and sure as not I'll soon be underway, but it's always a hellish struggle at first." Odd jobs in the kitchen, in the studio and also many visitors:

" - Ingrid Atterberg returns next week to complete her ceramic works. We were also clobbered by Joep and Margo Goedkoop (Mieke's godparents) from America, tiresome and sad as they are, sottish wrecks of whisky, wisky, wishy, wichy, wiiey, who could no longer eat anything, only drink and take medicines. And these are business people, how can they function? That's why the world looks as it does with these 50 - 60 year old children. When they left we felt totally exhausted."

Enjoyable diversions came in the shape of exhibitions. The Boyman's museum showed " The Symbolist Painters ", which he found equally as exciting as Symbolist literature.

" - One takes great pleasure in all their theatrical gestures even though one realises it hasn't left a big influence on art and it

is often rather bloodless but it can make you laugh and that too is important."

His old architect friend Dick Elfers was now a director of the Rijksmuseum and his son Joost had put together an exhibition called " Anamorfosen."

" - That is paintings you have to look at through trick mirrors, to make them appear normal. It's a sort of happening, as everywhere you see spectators bent into the most improbable positions to make out the images. The paintings came from all over the world, Leonardo was a good exponent and the Chinese used it to make hidden sexual images, old men titillating themselves after a goblet of rice wine with dinner, as without a mirror you can't see anything. As he wrote to Mieke:

" - The Opening was extraordinary: never seen such outrageous clothes, as in a period play, or from a carnival, or from Louis XVI's court. As always, Marthe Röling took the prize in my eyes. She's exciting, and somehow she is going in exactly the opposite direction to you. This is not a cynical remark but there continues to be a large group of people who relish the bizarre, the surrealist, but not the macabre, are just very positive about life and then completely over the top. You know, Joost brought in a steam carousel, and people felt impelled to dance, totally wild and abandoned, till they suddenly stood there completely naked. She's an exceptional talent at designing clothes: they look like stained-glass windows in a church or mother-of-pearl gleaming leopards or old brass bedsteads or unrehearsed peacocks. I, as a simple Swedish boy, wander around wide-eyed, muttering like silly-billy, "well well, isn't that fascinating?" Anyway one of many truths was revealed."

He wrote to Carlo Derkert and recommended he invite Anamorfosen to Stockholm. But in general, the urge to paint wasn't there, it was a fallow time of friends and gardening and odd jobs, and chauffeuring Nell to her 12 pupils round Amsterdam.

A trip to England in January 1976 cleared the air somewhat. He described it in terms of painting bulls, sheep and dogs, " They still pay

for such things here "which was hardly the case, but the idea of dogs matured and developed and during February four dog portraits were completed. Two of them were promptly sold, which was a problem as he didn't want to let them go before he'd built up a series of about 20. " but doing more, one suddenly finds that a tough proposition, I want them to look natural, so each time it is a new beginning." Cousin Aat's son visited him with a splendid mongrel called Quefflec which had a wide flat swayback, straw red hair hanging below its bald stomach, a black mouth always smiling and eyes as big as saucers, so later he couldn't resist painting its portrait. This was a pleasant, lightly humorous, new beginning - to paint mongrel dogs of character and when he applied a little bit of his own fantasy to them he found a ready market for these endearing paintings.

In March, he sent a further episode of Morfar Stories to Juli and then in April he was delighted by her visit en famille, which was followed by a visit from the Widlund family. This was followed by a visit from the lovely Siléns, bringing copious supplies of wonderful Swedish fare. In mid-May he wrote to Brita:

" - I had a great urge, after preparing some twenty canvases, for a totally banal subject - a farm in a field with cows and trees, here and there a figure. So I have been out to make observations and note it all down, taking a lot of time to work things out, but then I lost all desire to paint.

" - On the 17th, I took a long, long walk and saw...as in a nightmare and felt as if timeless and in that diffuse light over the beach, I felt an invisible presence. It's very good to walk there, just walking as if in an eternity. And to think, and not to think, and to think after all that which was a fact, that life that was lost and those who suffered shipwreck and went under. On the endless beach suddenly a little ladybird settled on my shirt, and then a little white butterfly came and flew off over the limitless sea. Then a bit further on, there was an old lady sitting in black clothes, cooking crabs on a fire of driftwood and its blue smoke rankled and disappeared in the sea mist. In the little harbour, fishermen cleaned their nets and it

smelt of salt, fish, tar. I'd walked for six hours, too far to go back to my car but happily a bus came, so I joined the passengers, a priest with a big stomach and an old lady who got off at a farm, followed by the priest at the next village and then it stopped at the lighthouse, near my little car which took me quickly back to the lively world."

Grief is little understood, but how could he be happy when now there was also news that Mieke was acutely ill and had to fly to Sweden? He knew that it was "le cafard "in his case, he never had that till now. Beatrice gone was killing his ability to paint, he was in a pit he had to climb out of, it wasn't depression or angst, but just a love cut off, like a mutilation. Fortunately Nell, Brita and Mieke could help him. And the Bijlsma's, their music was like a lifting of spirit, as well as their life and company:

" - Last night we went to a concert near here with Anner Bijlsma. He's a lovely person and surely Holland's leading cellist. He played a piece I remember you playing on the flute, Bach Partita in G minor. Anner, together with Frans Vester, had realised the piece didn't really suit the flute as the breathing spaces didn't fit but he had a baby cello from Bach's time and so he showed it must have been written for just that instrument, and it was utterly perfect. At the moment there is a heat wave and after the concert it was full moon and flat calm so we went to the beach for a swim in its light. Even though the sea was filled with jellyfish and we got stung, if you don't scratch, it feels almost pleasant like nettle rash. Emerging from the water, one's entire body was illuminated by a sort of phosphorescence. Then we went to the Heerenkeet pub and Bart and Piet offered sloe gins, so today I feel so good, also with your lovely letter, that I find, a renewed will to live, gardening, preparing canvases for my next series or going to work on my idea for a mobile," he wrote to Mieke.

That spring and summer, Folke spent many happy hours tending the Bijlsma's garden in Zonnemaire. Anner brought down a number of pupils for an extended weekend and Folke cooked them all a dinner with much merriment. During their long practice sessions, Anner sometimes ordered them to stop and once told them they could all

go out and dig a patch of his garden, as a useful bit of exercise. They set to with a will, but after only half an hour they had to stop, utterly worn out and only a tiny patch done, so Anner, not impressed said “ It’s just like cello practice, you must work at it steadily and with determination to achieve anything.”

Folke heard this dialogue, which was to be the inspiration for his “mobile”, in the form of a crazed metronome. “ I’m fooling around with some mobiles – a picture of an old boy who’s digging, the landscape doesn’t move, but the old boy really digs; another one with an old boy who loads hay, and another one with an old boy who cuts wood. But it’s not so easy as I only want them to move with a simple pendulum action and not mechanically or with a battery, a sort of balance wheel with an equilibrium weight.”

With his swing action pendulum, he cunningly combined a cellist playing the cello in front of an audience, and above, a stolid farmer loading hay with a pitchfork onto a trailer. Anner was delighted... watch that farmer, that’s how you dig the whole garden, slowly and rhythmically all day, same with the cello, he said. Later he took it to his rehearsal room, where it has pride of place and if a pupil should be tiresome, he simply swings his “metronome” and tells him to play the piece in time to that, something rather difficult and awkward. [Fig.132].

This metronome is a form of sculpture and should be compared to the work made to celebrate Henk Verkuyl’s elevation to the professorship in February 1970. Henk was such a good friend, he was one of the family, so when he became professor, Folke made him a piece of art that was pure leg-pull and stuck a symbolic fl.10 note in the side pocket of his old threadbare student coat in case he should be disestablished, which still sits there today, although no longer legal tender, as his tenure of the linguistics chair of Utrecht has continued gloriously for decades. Other sculptures typically in this genre are his Potty Thrones, of which one survives in the form of a Bear for Francis Heybrook and another in the form of a Funny Man for Ditte

Axén and there were several more of these. As Folke saw it, they were especially useful to help potty train infants, particularly boys, but nowadays, with throwaway nappies, no one makes the slightest attempt to potty-train, nor do even two year olds mind rushing about when wet or even dirty, as throwaways are so comfy.

In the previous December he had met a lady “ who completely agreed with my feeling that I should draw again.” When the long hot summer of 76 arrived, he was able to write to Maurice, “In the afternoon my model is coming. Yes, I’ve found a rather ugly round one with a fine superstructure, legs like sugar beet and arms like carrots, tiny upper lip, stubby nose, little mouth, who sits, stands or lies down, totally naturally, for hours on end. She’s a little complex and awkward, which is perhaps part of the attraction. I have done about nine versions already, and especially want to do it with a natural background amongst greenery. It’s a new departure for me, she could be a replica from a Renoir model, very compact and strong; also like Maillol, I’ve no idea what I’ll do with this, but I’ll hit on something. It’s my first attempt at this sort of thing since the academy, where it was only with the object of making an anatomical study, whereas this is for my own purposes and satisfaction, perhaps as a homage to Renoir. That may be a little out of date, but perhaps that’s up to date. I find it very exciting, I didn’t have an easel at first, but I quickly made a large elegant one to Nell’s surprise. The garden has never looked better, so many roses and other exciting flowers and a fig tree laden with figs...My model sits on a little green seat, reading, surrounded by pale pink poppies amongst the greenery, with me and my easel in a Panama and in hooped stockings. It was five o’clock before we knew it, when we all drove to the sea.”

A pity Folke was so rude about Vreneli Komter’s undressed body. Vreneli selflessly volunteered to pose, while Folke made a number of charcoal sketches, to help Folke get out of his state of total painter’s block. It was only natural she might be a little awkward with one of Anner Bijlsma’s best friends, as she had not long been left by Anner but she had by then found another partner in the ship’s carpenter Jan,

and to celebrate this, he followed up his sketches by painting a canvas of Vreneli, nude amongst the greenery, for Jan's birthday. [Fig.133].

This warm human contact and the hot weather worked wonders for Folke.

" - Slowly I'm increasing my desire to paint, after all that's happened in the last couple of years, I've hardly felt like it. My bladder behaves itself in this hot weather and there is long daylight. Imagine I'm sitting out in the open at 10:45 pm. I even feel like making a series "Cavorting in the greenery." I may never be a great painter but anyway I make enjoyable images people like. I do them all with the warmth and depth of my experience and with skill and real pleasure. Though strangely nowadays, I feel an even greater pleasure fiddling in the garden, it so fascinating watching all those wonders nature offers up and it's as if creating and growing oneself," he wrote to Mieke, " and I enclose a fig leaf from our tree, which is still rather small, though the tree is bearing eighteen figs, in case it is as hot with you as here. You can wear it, or otherwise give it to Gösta or Brita (the next door farmer and his wife), as it will be comfortable when he goes to dig up his potatoes.

" - I painted an amusing mongrel yesterday. Round and fat, salt and pepper coloured like Netta (Mieke's ancient dachshund), though even shorter-haired, with two large bat-like ears and shortsighted eyes. A small feather-like tail and ugly, spindly legs. The next dog will be more shady coated, melancholic, brown muzzled, with its head a pale pink grey brown. This doesn't take floods of fancy but is still surprisingly demanding, just to get the right expression and posture on the animals and I'm not just as quickly satisfied as some may imagine."

For the moment it was August, and he launched into landscape in between his dogs.

" - The grain and stubble were much more golden than usual, golden as in a van Gogh painting and the harvesting machinery is very brilliant too, as well as those enormous straw stacks, which this

year they are saving as fodder instead of burning it. I'd like to go out and paint but why go and collect more impressions when I'm so far behind with existing ideas I intend to execute -i.e. a series of 20 dogs for an exhibition in Antwerp when only eight of them are sitting here, although I've done a good few more. But I do want a series on Dutch landscapes, mostly of farms and on these I've been busy for a long time with sketches for a series of 25, in the size the Swedes call 10a. Of these I've now got three ready. This isn't a summer, it's a sort of tropical sirocco, over 30 degrees daily, so it's nice to stay indoors and paint and I have of a sudden become a little inspired, something I haven't felt in ages. Sometimes one works and paints dutifully but nothing comes of it, but then without warning something is released, my brush works of its own accord without wiggles. I sit there quite untroubled, whether it's first thing in the morning, in the heat of the day or the evening. I think it's principally the weather, one sits in light clothes and one's bladder behaves itself thanks to the heat. Mostly one is chilled below the knees otherwise and has to piss like a dog that's let out and has to cock its leg every couple of hours.

Folke had a worried phone-call from his sister-in-law about Erik, his nephew, whom she hadn't heard from for ages and who was now studying art at the Rijksakademie. As he didn't know Erik's address, he went to look him up at the Akademie " - That was a nostalgic moment, very little had changed, they still drew plaster-cast heads and it all looks exactly the same. The lecturers were very pleased with Erik and praised his work. He took an old barge in the harbour and made a little room on it from materials everyone else was throwing out, including an old stove which he fires with wood that is also thrown out; I think the throwing out boundary runs north of about Belgium to Switzerland." Later, Eric was torn as to whether to make his career in Holland, but decided to return to Sweden, Folke couldn't help him much in this " - It's not easy to be a young artist now, as no craft is required anymore and pupils can try just about anything they fancy." The Akademie was clearly in transition to the free and concept art centre that it has become to this day.

Another nostalgic impulse must have seized him as, unprompted, he decided to remake the Stenström family portrait that had once been a part of “There was once a Rabbit” (lot 3 at Sfinx). They were the “Wild Strawberries” family next door to Aspnäs. He sent it to Brita as a memento but when she said she thought it was good, he suggested she send it to Bengt Stenström, who might want to buy it. “Nils and Amy, Magnus and Bengt are a real likeness I feel, even if the others are slightly caricatured, but not in a bad way.” The offer was duly accepted. The Stenströms also have one of the few examples of sculpture Folke made, in chamotte on a black granite base and only 19x6x12cms. - “Family enjoying the setting sun.” [see Fig. 28].

Folke, out of necessity, also had a special relationship with Aat Heybroek, who was a coffee Heybroek rather than a sugar, the two branches of the family having diverged along those lines in about 1800 so that they were only third cousins. Aat always had a soft spot for Folke and, though no one else knew it, Aat stepped in during Folke’s hour of need in 1973 and bought his house in Zierikzee for him, and left him free to adapt it to his own liking. In exchange, all Aat asked was a bit of company from time to time, Aat having retired after an intense working life running a large wholesale electrical goods business; but how can one bridge two totally different ways of life? – the one free and creative, the other driven, and disciplined, orderly and routine.

To try and deal with the constant influx of visitors during holiday periods, Folke fitted out another sleeping area above the garage. He made a painting of a problem that intrigued him just then, which was of a pair of hedgehogs mating, and his pictorial solution to this was placed under the eaves of that low-slung room. With that, Folke vented his opinions to his daughter:

“ – Yesterday we had the boring arrival of Aat and Anke, who live in the Midi where it was too hot to bear. Aat doesn’t want to disturb us at all. But at 7am. he immediately wants tea and a rusk, and then tea and a sandwich at 8, and a cup of tea at 9 and tea and bread and honey at 10, milky coffee at 11, a small glass of red wine at

midday with some cheese, and at 1.30, omelette with red wine, then a nap, then pastis and grenadine at 3, which he calls his tomato pick-me-up, and then tea and cake at 4, then they go and have a swim but they’re back again at 6 for red wine, another slug at 7 and another at 8, when it’s soup (fennel), fish and potatoes, fruit salad, and at 9 coffee and Calva, 10 an evening stroll, 11 a beer, 12 tisane, 1am shower and rinsing the false teeth and then to sleep. But they say they don’t want to cause us any trouble. The day after tomorrow they go and we’re free again, he’s so dull and with such an inferiority complex, it’s a shame for him and he is so nice it is only fair to be nice back to him, as he admires and wonders at me.”

It may have appeared a one-way friendship but Folke always extended his warmest hospitality and good cheer to him and his family, it was the interruption to his work and routine that grated. Furthermore, Aat bought some paintings, firstly in Naarden and then at Sfinx, where he bought “A Beautiful Journey” with the central theme from J.W.F.Buning’s poem “Ballad of a farmer”, which repeats the refrain “And the farmer just ploughed on”, (“ploegde voort”, voort means “gee up” as well as “on”). His other small art works included 4 or 5 miniatures on pieces of wood: little birds, a seascape, rabbit scenes, and a goldfinch.

A week’s visit from his nephew Erik plus girlfriend rendered him even more irritable “Painting is a problem, you have to wait till you’re in the mood and now it’s such an ugly harsh totally-white dry light, I’ve spent a night wrestling and then I look at it and chafe for a breakthrough.” He’d tried to restore his equilibrium with letter writing – “for once we are undisturbed, after we’ve had totally unexpected visits the whole summer long, and now there’s one of those eternal symphonies of Bruckner on the radio, and that’s like hearing the sea hour after hour, occasionally swelling in great boiling waves, wave after wave, and how is he going to end this piece I’m wondering? – perhaps he’ll just stop and announce it’s midnight and we can continue first thing tomorrow.”

Requests came in in a desultory fashion. "A dear couple asked me to paint their child and though they were a handsome couple with a lovely child, they unfortunately also had two really sweet mongol children they'd left behind, and so you can imagine it was no longer so easy for me. I preferred to say thank you but no but that's a bit too direct, so I just let out a few little hints. Even if I have no great desire to paint, it's fun to make people happy with what you can bring to life with your own hands."

In September, they sojourned in a remote part of Friesland with friends, where deer and black woodpeckers lived and puffballs, boletes and agarics abounded. Folke made one of his character kitchens for his hosts, "in a weak moment I agreed to do it, I needed the money", but a cut on his finger turned nasty and, by the time they were back in Amsterdam, his whole arm had swelled up. "Fortunately the Swedes had donated a Red Cross hospital to Amsterdam, so I took myself to their casualty department and said, " Good morning, I'm Swedish and I've got blood poisoning in my arm, would you be so kind as to amputate it ?" "Unfortunately," they replied, "We need a doctor's referral first." " But I don't know any doctors" I said. They rang one and I had to drive off. He lived in a fine old house on the canal and I recognised him at once as someone I'd bawled out. I'd met him on a nature reserve near Naarden with a lot of nesting birds and he was allowing his beautiful big Springers to run loose. I told him to put them on the lead, which he refused to do, then I made clear why. Anyway he prescribed me penicillin 4x a day and after five days I was able to write and paint again." From his time in Friesland, he completed a commission for a painting 140x90cms. "with many things in it."

He went to a relative's very grand 60th birthday party. He'd taken the Amstel Hotel for 200 people. " At first I didn't want to go, in the end I laughed a lot. Especially with a really fat baroness at the table of honour, who was born Vanderbilt (you know from America). Her husband did golden puzzles of Marilyn Monroe naked on a green ground and is an extremely perverted famous homosexual. I couldn't

help laughing when her chair suddenly collapsed and in a panic she grabbed the tablecloth, which flew across in a roar of broken crockery. That was the high point, then ages of boring speeches."

A visit from his sister raised his spirits still more and with that he launched into a new series – seascapes. Living on an island flanked by the sea, this was so much an element in his life he could hardly ignore it. At first, the motifs allowed some additional subject matter – a beach fisherman, a pair of gulls, buoys or a far horizon but, in later years, gradually everything was left out except the wide beach and the vast sky meeting the waters, an abstract loneliness for the beholder, something of Bruckner's mood, even if he was not especially an admirer of his music.

" – I find it surprisingly hard to paint nothing," as he put it. These dozen or more paintings rapidly found buyers as they came into being over the next year.

This little well of inspiration was interrupted by the festive season, to which he was severely allergic. " It's that dreadful time of year again, first Lucia, then Xmas and New Year and as the madness approaches I have vague desires to decamp as it is so annoying when people invite us to join in, all those usual old drivellings and soft centred delights – but at the moment I am struggling through it with a little painting between the dark moments. All day today I did a seascape."

On the 23rd of December Christmas-phobia reached its height:

" – I got up, mist everywhere, the Fat Tower, which serves as our barometer, was barely visible, so standing there, taking in all that grey melancholy, I got an irresistible sudden urge for warmth and sun and thought, today we are going. Nell still asleep only with happy thoughts, so I woke her up, explained my plan, she's always easy and accommodating, so I began to put things together, worrying about poor lonely Nisse. So in the afternoon we were ready and planning to go to Grand Lucé. But the fog had changed to freezing rain and after the big bridge, enormous snowflakes froze solid onto Lella's

windscreen and lights and we ploughed through slippery snow. Nell said her seat was sliding about, it was really the whole car, right and left lorries and expensive cars in the ditch and into trees, dented wings and only Lellan cruising bravely on, but then I saw a snow-covered sign somewhere between Ghent and Antwerp on which was written "Nazareth". It was actually a little early to celebrate Xmas but perhaps one could find a comfy manger for the night, and so we arrived at an old-fashioned farmer's inn, where a stout lady cut a huge loaf into slices with a knife, holding the loaf against her heavy bosom and that was all faith-inspiring. Big, kind Flemish people, redolent of Breughel and then we had home-made beer and smoked ham and our bedroom had a heavy carpet with mauve roses with gold leaves. But we slept really well and next morning we soon went back north and Nisse was so happy and I thought I was terribly sensible, as freezing in Grand Lucé isn't fun and we would have.

" - And I have so much to do: here, close to the sea, everything changes between dawn and midday, frost, snow and then a thaw and then no wind, you'd hardly believe it. We made a long three-hour walk, like a dream so beautiful, sometimes shiny rich, black ploughing, and then far off against the golden sky the familiar silhouette of Zierikzee and yet in a new appearance and light, a mere with eider, the canal with frozen stiff-legged herons, flocks of hundreds of geese, my eyes were incapable of photographing all these fine impressions. At dusk we reached Bijlsma's where we dined and then they drove us home. I'm so pleased we didn't leave, my eyes can see again, I must work."

On New Year's Eve, 1976, they went to the beach from 11pm. "There's so much noise it's like total warfare. Nisse retreated to the darkest cupboard. The Dutch spend fl27m. on fireworks which could have provided a pleasant Xmas party in some poor country. Actually it's only blokes who insist on it, they're like stupid boys, women and children stay at home and are unhappy."

Unfortunately, Brita slipped on the ice and broke her collarbone, which created worry and concern, but she soon recovered, was well

looked after and then came down to stay at Rue Dauphine in Paris in March, borrowing Maurice's` studio. Folke told her to go and look up Pontus Hyltén, their friend from the Moderna, who was now running the "BowBoor," saying he'd also had a catalogue from Bengt af Klintberg about a Moderna exhibition, by a Japanese, using photography, "which was old hat as they were doing that in Holland ten years ago, the same time as Christo in America when it was real, but then it led to a school and became sloppy, heaps of pretensions, intellectual drivel built up around it, when actually it had become merely provincial."

By mid-February: " The weather is lovely, you really have to fix yourself to your painting stall to overcoming the desire to garden and smell the earth but now my painting is better and better so it's more satisfying to keep going when you're getting results. About time after so many years marking time." He was working for himself again and feeling more inspired than by his mongrels.

In between painting, he was reading – "I've found an interesting English book on toads, it could only be an Englishman who spends his whole life studying them but the English are excellent at writing about scientific matters while making it read like a novel. I badly need some toads to eat up the slimy slugs which wreck everything, though I've discovered another solution – simply make a compost heap, then they leave living leaves alone." Then someone told him he had an established toadery. " There is a family of about 25 living in a dugout at the end of a long fissure and if you lie flat on the ground and shine a torch up there you can see them. They're always there winter and summer and in summer they come out to hunt for food; early in spring they set off on a long hazardous journey to water, to lay their eggs. The walk commences with the male clambering on his chosen one's back and so he sits for the duration of that long walk, contented. You may well suppose they are screwing, but that's not the case, no he is only sitting there. If they aren't crushed on a road and reach the water after their three or four-day walk, she lays her eggs and he, on her back, fertilises them."

The short winter days were spent producing mongrels and seascapes but he had become dissatisfied with his studio – too many distractions, music lessons, visitors, passers-by – so he decided to make a new one in the garden end of the garage. He had a dear neighbour, Bartus, who was eager to help and also a meticulous craftsman; the problems were the correct light, warmth and space. So he decided to make a large free-standing hearth, with ducting in the chimney breast to store the heat and with a simple flue through the roof. This project took until August on and off, especially as he paid for it by doing a number on the Bijlsma's bathroom. The studio is charming, he was delighted in its functionality and it is intact to this day.

In Amsterdam in March, Folke visited Dick Elfers' exhibition, "He only had Still Lives with apples or glass bowls with eggs. They were very refined aesthetically in colour, surface and composition and one thought of an older artist with a lot of experience looking back with satisfaction over a long life. But it has no message, just carefully and well done and rather boring in the long run as it is so uninteresting. But it does show the best side of Dick I think. Next day I was able to get on my hobbyhorse with him as to how he has spoilt the Rijksmuseum. What was formerly an enjoyable sort of junkshop stuffed with hidden treasures that you happened on, has now become a sort of snobbish shopping centre with its wares formally mounted on a hard flat wall, a constricting white roof, doors which open and close automatically, vast amounts of glass, marble and shiny metal, giving the feel of a modern block of flats. My criticisms were taken to heart and he's going to reflect on them, he has completed half the Rijksmuseum and yet he is prepared to listen to me I've noticed."

The next day was billed as a big Happening at the Stedelijk with Lin Han Paik. To Brita, he wrote:

"– He was the guy who once sawed up grand pianos at the Moderna and performed with 120 TVs on Pistol Theatre and was married to the naked cellist in the polythene bag. She now performs with two small TVs in her bra, which give her colour response to her

music. It will be funny to see if he still recognises me, like many others he was very attracted by my daughters, that tiny little fellow with his piping little Korean voice and all his destructive ideas, though I'm afraid it's all got a bit studied now." He continued to Mieke:

"– Unfortunately Paik wasn't there, just his naked cellist woman who asked in an affected educated voice "How are your beautiful daughters?" it was only a retrospective of everything – a room full of smashed pianos, next room photos of his naked floosie, next room all his theatre and performances and then the rooms with different TV situations – e.g. a room where you see yourself, another room with swimming goldfish. It has nothing to do with Happening anymore, it's just stuff to look at. Paik, for his part, is happy in the USA, showing here what he's done over the years."

He railed against many cultural changes. "It's a shame Sweden has become like this, the heaviest energy user of any country in the world and to think people get up at 6, race round the country, leave their child in the crèche and day-care centre, as with grim faces they struggle along in their solitary chill with their welfare and state lunches of vile food. I happened to read a Dagens Nyheter in Amsterdam, which I hadn't done for years and what a change I found, a strange new language of unarticulated meanings, platitudes and foolishness – tasteless and unpleasant. A large article about a man hailed as a genius – architect Lennart Holm – now a developer and writing that all the old houses should be pulled down as it is too expensive to restore them. Here they do the opposite, pull down ugly new houses and rebuild them as of old, if they can find the architect's old drawings, which is also quite crazy but a lot more sympathetic. Another area where the world has gone mad is India. Mrs Gandhi lost her election as she wanted compulsory male castration for all men with more than two children, and she knows each month brings 3 million more babies, so they will number a billion in 1990. So now an old boy of 81 has won the election, who by prayers and faith urges his people not to fuck after 30. And then we are trapped by technical advance and old-fashioned economics. Do we make fewer cars?"

Answer – unemployment. Fewer TVs – the same. So it's Australian apples to Holland, Dutch apples to Italy, Italian wine to the Côte de Rhone – all these madnesses will sort themselves out. But there'll never be any uniformity in Holland as in Sweden – just think of the alcohol test – not one doctor here volunteered to implement it, so the police had to train their own, which they can't afford. Here they say leave freedom, art and life to be your own."

Back in Zeeland, they went for a walk along the coast to a marshy area where there are many interesting birds nesting and found a stork which had somehow got stuck in a pool. "Soon I was up to my knees in mud and then I discovered he'd somehow got caught in a tangle of wire under the water. We freed him, but he was totally caked in mud and couldn't stand, so we took him home and showered him first with tepid water. There was a lot of interest, people crowded round with advice, a vet even arrived, so we gave him a spoonful of Advocaat which really perked him up, though he didn't touch any fish. Next day I rang the stork centre, which told me to give him day-old chicks, mice, young rats or beetles. I got some chicks which he ate with relish, then we put him in a sack, head sticking out, sitting on Nell's knee till we drove him to the stork centre near Utrecht."

In between these diversions, he was painting more seascapes and mongrels. By July, he had painted 23 dogs but only had three left [Fig. 134] and now he had been offered an exhibition in Antwerp for the autumn. "So now I have to think up another 22 mongrels, which does seem a bit dull, as in the meantime I have new ideas – with landscapes and bathers." As usual he kept no record as to where his paintings went, relying on his memory for some of them. Furthermore, part of his spleen vis-à-vis the world at large might have stemmed from his worsening urinary problems, which he accepted somehow as an inescapable family trait. Leaks appeared in the valley gutter of his roof and he felt impelled to repair it all himself with new timbers and lead work but it took its toll on his energy and, from then on, he refused to waste time on any more major building works.

One day that summer, he was invited to take tea with an old flame from the days when he was 17. "She had decided she wanted to commission a large painting by me for her dining room and that's why I was invited for tea at 3. Oh, well, for a venal person like me, it seemed like tea and the chance of a job. I had completely forgotten our wilder moments when I was 17 and she 15 but, as soon as I rang the doorbell and she opened it, I felt I was entering a trap, well not exactly, it would be wrong to say that, except that she was still extremely attractive but with a rather hard tone of voice as rich people often reveal. I immediately felt the need for a piss. And then there was the tea. She was rather lightly dressed and the door of her bedroom stood ajar with an inviting bed, but I got more and more anxious to wee and, in my panic, I did say yes please to another cup of tea, after which I peed every five minutes until I stood free on the pavement at 5pm. She is much quieter now and probably pities me for my old man's problems – but her picture was excellent and she was delighted with it."

His fame as a dog portraitist had spread and he was called on to paint one of Holland's most famous dogs, known as "Jan Hond" even though she was a bitch. "Jan Hond came to stay, she's very old now, with a weak heart and coughs a lot. She had heart attacks in the night but survived, so eventually I completed my portrait and they are delighted. She's a sort of bull terrier, who mostly sleeps but sometimes she gets quite lively and then I have to encourage her with little biscuits. She became famous in various Dutch films and advertisements."

It was full summer again and with Nell and a friend, he made a long rowing trip with Liane. A dreamlike two-day voyage where he felt strong and inexhaustible, covering 30 kilometres a day without feeling it, whereas his 38 year old fellow oarsman was dead in the evenings with enormous blisters. Invited to join the Derkerts for the Venice Biennale, they were tempted, but, unable to contact each other to confirm details, they stayed at home instead. Peter Weiss died and Folke wrote to Carlo of his memories of him in 1940 at "Artists in

flight to the land." They went to the Porno Exhibition in Rotterdam and found it very boring, more a sort of sex exchange and about as exciting as an exhibition of 200 paintings of a herring on a plate. It was typically Dutch and thick with condom salesman but a great relief to spend time in the beautiful Boyman's afterwards. With that they set off for Turne, Friesland for a week where Folke painted "A real farmer and his farm", which had somehow reminded him of the Silén's farm across the lake from Aspnäs, and also "A small farm." This job done, they drove to the newly opened Rubens exhibition in Antwerp:

" – An enormous display for which they needed three large museums in different parts of the town. Yes, well of course, he is a great painter and it was a unique opportunity to see so many works of this giant put together but actually I was neither warm nor cold from it, I just think if he'd only painted a third as much. It was typically Belgian, being very badly hung, altar paintings were hung low giving a crazy perspective and then, all those enormous allegories from Greek myths with acres of flesh and women's thighs. No thanks, I know Renoir's bathers who are warm and close to life. Then I found a museum for his drawing and one marvelled at the freshness of it and how young it felt compared to the painting. It was fun to be in Belgium, different food, differently dressed people, it felt like abroad.

" – Speaking of Renoir, I read an anecdote about him last night: Durand Ruell, visiting, saw his little son playing with lead soldiers, so he said – watch out or he'll be a general. Renoir answered "but if I give him bricks, perhaps he'll become an architect and spoil Paris even more."

The rest of August disappeared with streams of visitors.

Back in Amsterdam in October, he visited "one of the better members of the Cobra Group called Lucebert. He has painted celebrities exactly as he sees them on his colour TV. His paintings were then shown on colour telly and then one began to play with

the notion of painting his paintings, just as one saw them on TV, a dizzying thought like Russian dolls."

In December, he was painting the Widlund family: "My painting of the Widlunds is really good, I think. They are sitting in a Swedish landscape with a spruce and, instead of having one's own spruce for Christmas, I painted it so well that it's sending out its pine essences. You know those trees with delicate growth at the top and a little robin hidden in the green shade. My new studio is shit hot, the finest light you can imagine, and my stove- hearth works beautifully."

Christmas came, Folke was finishing several paintings, portraits, farms, dogs and seascapes. "We didn't celebrate at all and happily no one came either." In January, 1976, he had to break off from his painting, "My body needs some activity" so they went to Aat for a fortnight in Provence.

" – We, who have so often said no, just have to go this time. He is paying for the journey, he wants a hand with his garden and wants me to make a new cupboard and to paint his children. Without rich people wanting my pictures I wouldn't be able to live on, so I have to cultivate the rich like rare plants and feed and water them to make them still richer, so they can buy still more paintings. Plenty of my school friends live there to avoid tax. They would rather stay in Holland, where all their roots and friends are, not forgetting good old Dutch bubble and squeak, but because they hate giving a penny to the state they'd sooner isolate themselves with black cypresses and a pale blue swimming pool under a clear blue sky without clouds and moan about bad plumbers and power cuts.

" – At 5pm on the 12th, we took the train direct to Cannes, at 11 we reached Paris for an hour, I didn't dare go too far, just to a little café outside Gard du Nord to breathe the air of Paris. Then we woke near Marseilles, reached Cannes at 10, where cousin Aat met us. Then we came to their beautiful boring house plus swimming pool in Plascassier but, fortunately, it was sleet all day and the next. I walked via a stream to the pretty old village up the hill and entered Chez

Raymond to find swarthy sombre fellows talking of “catastrophe.” Then we drove to Antibes and visited the Picasso museum. Tuesday the 17th the rain stopped, we took breakfast outdoors and made a long walk among the olives and anemones and heard birds singing. Wednesday, we soaked up the sun, then drove to Biot to visit the Fernand Léger museum. It was the exact antithesis of Picasso whose tearoom art one sometimes felt ashamed of, whereas Leger was strong, large-scale and inspired by the monumental. Unfortunately his widow, Nadja, has put up a ghastly mausoleum and many of his paintings are tastelessly translated into huge tapestries or painted glass which are frozen and stiff Trotskyiteisms. Well, as said, there’s never a painter who only leaves pearls and masterpieces. And just to find 10 of the latter is already very stimulating. On Thursday, sun at first followed by rain and thunder, we go to Vence to see the Matisse chapel but as I already feared, that was a disappointment, nor do I think it is something improved by sunshine as many claim. Friday, we visit Nice, wonderful flower market, huge - under glass domes, the market ladies red-nosed warming their hands on braziers. The accent is virtually Italian. Then to Villefranche, I wanted to see Cocteau’s fisher Chapel, that was totally fantastic and actually the experience of the trip, lunch also in a superb little fish restaurant, then as the rain eased off we walked round the coast to Cap Ferrat on small stony paths between the cliffs and the sea, past the great parks of Baron Rothschild and a lot of other rich people whom unfortunately I didn’t find at home. The cliffs and waves were beautiful and impressive with unknown birds we later identified by the book as blue rock-thrush and black wheatear. On Sunday, rain, we drove to Grasse to see the Fragonard museum. Grasse is horrible, Fragonard is a superb painter. In fact the whole area is blighted, Dutch, rich English and Belgians everywhere – only talking about which joint they’re going to dine in, but never one for the locals as they get stomach ache and food poisoning then. I also wanted to see Renoir’s house but that was closed for the winter. So the time passed and the difference between here and the Midi is nothing, as our rosemary is flowering just like theirs, but not mimosa of course, but I don’t even like that.

“ – Now I’m going to paint again and try and catch up. The Widlunds were pleased, the next commission is the doctor’s family with four children. Family portraits are difficult, one probably succeeds with all of them except one, but I have my methods. First I finish the entire painting – background, clothes, hands, feet, cats and dogs and then I only need to fit in the faces and the picture is ready. I think most do it the other way round.”

Another family portrait was for a teacher with three children. March continued with an oval portrait of two cats, [Fig.135], to fit in an old frame he’d saved from Frans Beuys’ shop. This was for Femke Boersma, an actress who had just completed a role in the film “ Pastorale ‘43”, by Simon Westdijk and Femke invited Folke to the Premiere:

“ – It was all flash photos, red carpets into Tuschinski, (Amsterdam’s fabulous art deco cinema) lots of furs draped over bare shoulders, amazing dress designs, Tails and DJs, wonderfully elegant queers in silk suits and Femke in a pale burnous-like creation – I wasn’t at all prepared for this, nor do I have any formal dress, so I decided to be rude, a bit like Staffan Olzon used to be, my scruffiest trousers and a huge sweater and a bit unshaven, just a bit of perfume, dabbed behind my ears. I was a totally unknown face in Amsterdam, so they all wondered who the hell was keeping Femke company, and that was just what was so amusing – as I am after all a distinguished silver haired old gent with plenty of self-confidence. But, of course, some of the cognoscenti did come up and say hello, Marthe Röling and Joost Elfers.

“ – The film was good. About a small town in the Occupation but not about heroes, only about those who did nothing, who tried to live in peace and just get by and survive. Maybe it was a bit long but I liked it and even remember bits of it, usually I just forget all those stories in no time. Then it was followed by a splendid buffet with champagne... so I landed with my nose in the caviar.

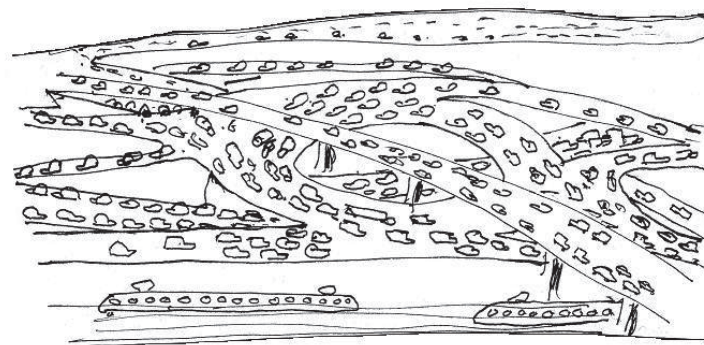
Spring was welcomed: “Holland is so beautiful just now, fruit trees blossoming, the moisture-laden sun permeates the light, cattle

grazing in lush meadows and the sound of larks in the heavens. Oddly, there is a plague of cuckoos, there are even cuckoos all over the town, calling like besotted creatures from all angles and chasing each other." With it, came a request from Vargön for sketches for two big windows for their planned new church.

" – It's curious how one composes the sketches. At first you haven't an idea in your head, yet Vargön church has a tiny budget, only 25000kr., and still wants very large windows. You get stuck into the project and then you hit on a solution that seems most appropriate and fits the budget. One is old and experienced but the strange thing is one doesn't want to follow any old paths, which would be too soporific, one travels new sidetracks which just happen and appear." Not without reason, Folke kept his fingers crossed about landing this commission.

" – Over the winter we were dreadfully hard up, although I had painted a lot and sold and odd-jobbed like hell. We always have two wallets, one for our daily needs and one with our savings. Nell was out on errands but I suddenly had to pop out and took the main one and I don't know what happened, but it's gone. Lost also is a sweet photo of Betty and a Swedish driving licence." Losing the money was a crying shame but losing the licence was a real problem, driving was essential for Nell's music lessons in and around Amsterdam; Folke was stopped by a spot check soon afterwards but while rummaging about in a pile of papers he bluffed his way out of it and the policeman just waved him on. He asked Mieke to try and get him another licence in Sweden, sending a photo and some particulars, " I hope you have sufficient information, can't give you more, tell them your old Dad was done over in Amsterdam's red light district when he was with a little yellow-skinned Chinese girl." That worked, he got his licence, his other worry being that the tax people might be after him. What a disaster to lose all your savings like that, they just took it on the chin and got on with life. Clearly the two-window commission was much hoped for but then followed another setback.

" – It was such a beautiful Sunday morning and I felt splendid and first I worked in the garden and then I did a little painting in my studio and so, I went for a piss and to my astonishment not a drop did come. Complete stop in the water pipe. After five hours the pressure was nearly insupportable, so I went to a friendly doctor nearby who helped me, you cannot imagine the relief of getting rid of two gallons. So he said, Folke this is very bad and you must go immediately to a hospital, and he was right as in the night he had to help me again. There was not a chance of driving quickly to Sweden, where I have my health insurance; very inconvenient, nothing to do, take it like a man. Tomorrow the cutters come with their knives and "maltraite" my most delicate belongings. This is the view from my twelfth floor window in the Rotterdam hospital...



....now and then they smash, that is a nice interruption."

On a postcard of a painting in the Uffizi by Carlo Dolci of a supplicating Mary, he wrote:

" – Today it is Saturday and I came home a week after my operation on the 13th of June and now I am sitting in the garden and relaxing in our little paradise surrounded by roses and honeysuckle. I now have a week's holiday and on the 29th begins a tiring month, when I drive daily to Rotterdam for a few seconds radiation on the

evil spot and after that I ought to be cured." At first the treatment seemed inconsequential but the hour's drive to Rotterdam and the waiting in the middle of the day made all work impossible and, by the end, the whole journey and treatment was as much as he could bear. Then he had a three-week interval till they wanted to complete another 15 sessions. On each return, he plunged into the sea, thinking the great oceans would help cleanse away his radiation. At the end of August "My holiday ends tomorrow, they knew what they were doing, at the end I felt inwardly totally burnt away, then gradually everything healed and now I feel almost normal again. I organised a few canvases and long to start again, till now I hadn't the energy. Tomorrow I'll tell that wise professor I only want 8 sessions and not the 15 they plan. I felt that was more than sufficient, I'm healing my wound and if I take more I won't have any resistance against the bad.

" – Besides I want to live and work as long as it goes and not hang onto life and become a wreck, for then it's better it's over. My new studio is the tops and longs for me.

" – At the end of my first 20 radiations I had a horrible test, when they took a tiny part of my lymph gland. At the hospital they didn't know I was driving, no wonder hospital costs are so high when everyone demands a taxi; after the operation I lost quite a lot of blood, so I told the nurse I'd better ask my wife to order a big joint of beef for when I went home and she took it seriously and even said she could organise it on the sickness benefit, not knowing I wasn't registered," he wrote, apologising for forgetting Mieke's birthday for the first time, saying he was injected with blue paint that day; it wasn't that he forgot, he just couldn't write.

By mid-September, some sort of normality had returned. The tests all gave a clean bill of health, but he was told he would have to report for tests and check ups every three months for the next 15 years.

" – In that case they'll have to find another research rabbit, as now they've already made a nuclear power station of me. It's a shame

the dark evenings are here, just when I want to prepare canvases and paint myself out."

They went to Nell's grandson for his birthday down in Limburg and enjoyed an Indian-summer night, camping out and with a heavy dew. They came by Thorn and found it utterly changed in two decades, just the Church of the Virgin under the Limes as of old, where Folke could light candles for Beatrice and his other loved ones. Painting resumed:

" – I've struggled with a dog today, I mean a painting. Last week a couple visited and thought they'd like to buy a dog on the spur of the moment, so I left them to choose at their leisure. So what did they do? They came back with the one I'd only half finished. Well, I didn't think that was quite good enough nor fair and now I have to finish it. But my feelings for this dog are no longer the same, there's a tension there I don't want."

Then there were problems with the devaluation of the Swedish kroner, which was compounded by generalised inflation.

" – Aap wrote to say he had to put his price up to fl.750. So then I had to write to the priest at Vargön and tell him the whole bill would now be 40, 000Kr., we'll see what they reply."

By November 1978, Folke was feeling much recovered and, even if the Antwerp Exhibition had to be abandoned, orders were coming in. Two further cats were completed and a young couple wanted a romantic landscape which for him was a new departure which he soon had half completed but then, when he knew how it was going to be, he lost impetus. However, it was for his wine merchant on a barter basis, and at first he stalled saying it needed another coat of varnish but after the fifth "coat", as the due date approached, suddenly it was ready, everyone happy. Folke jokingly called it his "Ruysdael."

Anner, Frans Vester and René van Ast came by and they had a wonderful evening with music, wine, lots of talk, platters of field mushrooms, piles of crabs and oysters, which he knew where to find

on the seashore, as well as surplus onions, curly kale, carrots and potatoes from their farmer friends. The pièce de résistance was an omelette of wood blewets: Folke had spotted them in a small private wood but Rottweilers always roamed there except at genever time, when they went indoors for company, and then he could jump the fence and quickly hunt around. But Anner had moved away after his marriage had broken up, so Folke needed another patron for odd jobs when he found himself painted out, so now he did more gardening for Carina Schoen in Schuddebeurs.

Grandad van Norden died and Hans wanted Folke and Nell to come to the funeral, otherwise only immediate family, “ – Amazing to be 96 without one day ill, just painting every day, a stranger and stranger item towards the end, mostly I didn’t find it so beautiful but I did find it original, and poor Hans will now probably be compelled to put on a retrospective exhibition of all those thousands and thousands of items.”

The “ Ruysdael ” was still tacky when it was handed over just before Christmas. [Fig.136]. “My wine merchant is so happy that he showers me with the best bottles.”

His portrait of Dr. Buytendijk’s family, whom Folke called Frets instead of Frits, worked out very well, and had to include cows for Dutchness but, above all, it showed his delight in an idealised harmonious large family, almost exactly reminiscent of his own happy childhood. [Fig.137 – detail 138]. At this moment fortune smiled on him with a wan little sun, which could well have been a consequence of the Skövde grapevine:

“ – You know what’s happened? I received a letter from a church called Öglunda, which is old and close to Hornborgasjön (famous in Sweden as the morass where the cranes congregate). They had made an exploratory trip around Sweden and then they discovered my windows and now they want three chancel windows. That’s fine. So if it all works out, I’ll be in a bonanza, like one of those sheiks, next year.”

In the 12th century the church was only three metres wide and 10 m long, but the village grew and by law all villagers had to have a place, so they built extensions in the 17th and 19th centuries, first on the north side and then a much bigger one on the south side, thus changing the orientation from west-east to north-south, so for the first time he had to work with south-facing chancel windows.

“ – I have made a compelling and inspired proposal to replace the present very uninspired setting. It will be absolutely traditionally made, with proper painted windows and leaded, the central window will comprise Maria, whom I have given the expression of my mother, with innocent pale blue eyes. These three windows in the chancel will form a classic triptych. I know nothing about this church committee, so I keep my fingers crossed.”

From Vargön he heard that the Rev. Fridefors was still locked in his committee discussions but that “the 40 day’s knot should soon be undone.” Folke was wrong: It was mid-September 1979, before he got full approval to go ahead, “That took them a year and a half from my sketch proposal and, as soon as I told Aap all was ready and we could start, he told me his prices had gone up three times, so now I’m going there to take the sizes and then I’m going to try and get paid more along the lines of the oil sheiks.”

“ – Nell made a delicious mushroom soup from your (Mieke’s) dried mushrooms, smelling of the Swedish forests but soon after dinner I got stomach ache, so like a little boy, I went to lie down on my tummy, and started to wonder if I had eaten a wrong mushroom which was poisoning me. No fuck, no bedtime story for Nell, just spewing, puking and pooh-ing several times in the night after which I thought I’d be better. But in the morning it still hurt but a bit unusually, so I lay and thought, appendix. I drove to the Zierikzee hospital and there was a doctor, who said I’d be operated in the hour. It was hellish painful, worst of my life, but it goes quickly, four days later I was home, but I thought where is that spiteful god plaguing us all the time, we, who are so kind, only paint, love animals, tend

plants, don't chew gum, have washing machines, TV or Coca-Cola. But now it's a little lighter and everything returns to normal."

He congratulated Brita on her Opening in January with this reflection: " We, you and I, have lived and profited from a strange half-world – the era of art collectors and great art collections was just over but still continued as a following wave with a more culturally aware middle-class, who unconsciously, on a small-scale, took up where the big collectors had left off. They had comfortable houses and some money to spare and their cultural level was a bit higher then, as TV had not yet levelled down their thought processes. In Sweden the new systems of patronage weren't so bad but because of untalented low quality, everything became numbingly boring. Here in Europe every artistic event is becoming more élitist, with isolated shows within museum walls, no longer in contact with the wider community, and mostly bringing to mind the emperor's new clothes."

Brita was offered a room at the Swedish cultural Institute in Paris, so Folke went to visit her there. "– She was living wonderfully in a palatial house in the Marais, in great form, lively and dramatic. With her finger to her mouth, she told me to whisper, as artist Strindberg and family were next-door, could overhear everything we said and that would only make them argue, being deeply conservative. I remember him as a pitiful type from Söder. We paid a visit to that inhuman "Bowboor." When I said goodbye to Bamsa, typically I'd lost my return ticket but fortunately the train was packed and I sat down on a seat marked "reserved" right in the middle of a group of American tourists, whose tour leader had a group ticket and thus I was able to steal through. I did feel ashamed at sneaking through as if I was an American tourist, as they are the world's most tasteless people; just their way of eating, they smack their lips while eating their plastic wrapped hamburgers they bring with them and drink beer out of a can. They are totally tasteless, I think, not only with their chewing gum. Now I'm stopping, soon I'll write a cheerful letter, "som en krutdurk med stå kuk."

Folke and Nell had a lovely Christmas, the fishermen had given them five crabs, three boys and two girls; before that, they'd been to the little harbour with the Heerenkeet pub while an elemental storm raged. "The coastguards were out keeping around the clock watch, they were all hollow-eyed and exhausted from lack of sleep as the storm had been raging for four days. You couldn't even see the little harbour for foaming breakers and three vessels had been torn off their moorings. The plate glass windows buckled and were totally drenched with spray. Occasionally a frozen coastguard would come in for a bowl of soup. Everyone only talks of the weather and the forecast but it ended happily, no breaches, only damage to the dikes and dunes, which already today they are repairing flat-out with clay and concrete."

1979 was a bits and pieces year, a few paintings, trips to Sweden to keep the Vargön and Öglunda window commissions warm, Amsterdam, piano lessons and exhibitions, medicals, a lot more gardening, quite a bit of work for his new patron, Carina Schoen, and above all relaxation and enjoyment.

He made a picture for Joke Noest, to her taste. Also "a superb picture, a commission: A chemist divorced, as did a teacher (both men) and now they have married each other and they are so happy and now the teacher wants to give his chemist a present and that is that I should paint him. I imagine a fine empire-style frame with two pillars and a pediment and our friend with a light blue background and a white bathrobe and black chest hairs."

" – It's sublime to be painting and making things, I thrive in my new studio, I don't need to think of an exhibition as, whoosh, as soon as any thing is ready someone takes it. Last week a man came, lives nearby, to order a painting of a three master in a storm and I thought he probably thinks he can have that for fl.50 so I thought I'd scare him off and ask fl.750. Well, nothing of the kind, he never blinked and came again today to ask if it was ready. So I said comeback in three months and then maybe.

“ – In the dunes there are so many nightingales that they are crazed trying to mark out their territories, which are scarcely bigger than our little garden, as there is another one sitting on top of the next bush screaming out his property rights. They aren’t singing beautifully, not all at once like that, there was a baby boom last year, I never saw or heard so many. But I still do have truly poetic memories of that bird, once in a large deciduous wood with oaks, it was warm and evening shadows were darkening the branches. Then it was sublime. Yesterday the last bean geese left for the Arctic.”

Odd jobs for Carina, angels for her ceiling, making a curious painting of her house, [Fig.139], a bookcase, and a lot of gardening; a story for Rose’s ninth birthday and, surprise, surprise, just before his 66th birthday he received his first old age pension. “I get about double what I expected, 2200kr a month, so now I can lie on my back and just drink wine, even though they deduct 400 in back tax, I don’t know how they got that, I never declared it, I’ll never know but 1800 comes to me in a neat little postgiro once a month. First I bought an alarm clock and the rest will pay my appendicitis debts, after that I’ll blow it all on a really good Cahors which Fred from the White Raven can get.

They left for Sweden and returned finally with the green light for Vargön, it had taken them such an age to make up their minds. “Vargön is an industrial community with Sweden’s largest aluminium works and polluted air. The vicar was a sad grey figure with kind eyes and a bit of a worrier, his wife’s doing, and the small grey vicarage lay in a hollow triangle surrounded by 3 main roads, so you looked at lorry wheels from the window. In the sitting room, behind the sofa, a print of that boy with a tear running down his cheek, like dripping starlight. On another wall, a black ground with a glittery tiger and opposite a similar picture of a pyramid and a camel in glitter. On the fourth wall, an altar with a cross and a Jesus by Guido Reni in repro. We were given a plate with fried potatoes, fried gammon and a glass of milk, just my cup of tea – you can’t help laughing.

“ – It’s grim indeed to note down such things, in truth I don’t do it out of nastiness or as a criticism, merely state that it exists with a glint in my eyes. Then I had to give a descriptive talk to 40 ladies in a needlework group and got another 20,000, drink their coffee and eat all their cakes they had baked, - “Oh, No, thank you very much! etc” , the whole game, yes, well, I know that game so well and once upon a time I used to play it. I really enjoy doing these windows, prices have now gone up so much you can’t imagine, it’s hellish what these women believe in, but without them we wouldn’t be able to live. The whole Church committee are foolish and have got bad taste, they are building this church with their own labour, they have no architect but they have something delightfully casual too in their blue-eyed innocence.” While Folke was there he was also able to have a good look at the nearby Öglunda church.

On the return journey they opted for their favourite Fasborg – Gelting (Germany) ferry, where “We opted for the full breakfast, and there were also Danish wives on board who also took the full breakfast – with schnapps. When, after 2 ½ hours, they are in Gelting they don’t go ashore but simply change tables in the saloon and settle down for an even more elaborate lunch, their husbands puffing away on fat cigars.”

Returning to Amsterdam for Nell’s piano lessons, Folke went to a Paul Elfers Opening: “ It was only pen and ink drawings of snowfall and a diary of the previous winter. It was fine and white but perhaps a little sterile, which is a property of snow and ice. There were masses of people including that ice-cold gallery madame, Debra Wolff, who would dearly like me to exhibit, but I’m not going to do that.”

Speaking of his quarterly medical tests: “I am rather relieved today. I still have three-monthly tests to see if I’ve got cancer. It’s a nasty feeling, and actually you only want to know the answer if it’s all clear. I had two tense days, I don’t like it. I’d rather not know, so luckily it was okay, so then I had an extra glass with Frets, my nice doctor.” Writing to Mieke he said:

“ – When I was last in Amsterdam, I met Joost Elfers, who is a funny vitamin injection. In a fortnight, he will be opening in the Stedelijk on the subject of strange eccentric, fantasising architect’s works from the world over. This exhibition will then travel the world for several years.

“ – He was so pleased to see me, dropped everything, told me all about the family, while we shared a glass at some table. After this he will just be a banker who finances art projects and films with offices in Paris, New York, London and Amsterdam. Clearly in direct opposition to state-sponsored art and the government scheme for artists, which is very shrewd, and critical of the social way, and you’ll see that he will succeed as you don’t find many who are such life-force pressure-cookers.

“ – I straightaway had a great urge to make a big exhibition on some outlandish project like “In memory of a horse or a goat” but different. My idea was to make paintings of all the pictures I remember from museum visits when I was a child and which left an impression. Not as copies but as one remembers them in one’s inner consciousness. My parents took me to museums when I was very young. Thus I saw holy St Sebastian tied to a tree and pierced by many arrows. And Salome who danced with St John’s bloody head in her hand. That was more the drama which made the impression than the art. A battle between a large white swan and a tiger (was that Delacroix?). Beautiful naval battles. Laocoon gripping the writhing snake, which tries to crush him and his poor sons who were smaller versions of himself, which came out as a bad sculpture from an uncultured time – my parents never thought I was living through it, empathising with the pain, even though we saw it was badly done, often in plaster casts. Then there was Botticelli’s “Birth of Venus”, which could fill my eyes with tears of emotion, there it wasn’t a drama but a feeling of ethereal beauty. Also, wild boar hunted by dogs, and I could never get enough of all those Dianas in the hunt. Or of Breughel’s “The Tower of Babel”, which hangs in Rotterdam, which in my eyes then was a huge painting, and yet was so small

when I saw it later. Bad German paintings of the Minotaur and of Neptune hunting mermaids in the waves, where the blue I found was very beautiful. But not Rubens which hung in a room in Munich, I only learnt to value him much later.”

February 1980 came and there was now an urgency to make progress with the two large Vargön windows, for which this had been his proposal: “The large south facing window should be rather dark, with warm tones to damp down the strong natural light, in my sketch I have attempted to convey something of the Whitsun miracle – as a white light surrounded by rays revealing themselves on a mountain [Fig.140]. The north window is to be a light blue tone symbolising the River Jordan as I imagine the font will be placed close by. I can understand why you questioned my design, but it’s with these thoughts: a river becomes wider and wider but sometimes one uses artistic freedom to balance everything, the whole window is the Jordan, and I have altered my original sketch as I wasn’t satisfied with it.”

Vargön was a budget job with the windows placed in an insensitive setting. Mieke and Erik came to help with the installation and when they saw the switch-on red lights on the points of the huge, suspended Cross dangling from the ceiling, they couldn’t contain themselves with laughter. “ Traffic Lights ”, said Folke. But still the windows are effective.

In late March came the news that Öglunda PCC had decided to go ahead with Folke’s proposal for three windows in the chancel. At first, it was making the Vargön windows in the week in Haarlem and, in between, sketching the cartoons for Öglunda in his studio. “ I worked the whole day on Jesus who restored the blind man’s sight and in the evening when it was ready, I was quite content and tired and worn out from all the concentration. I offered it alongside the other images and then I realised it didn’t really match. So I shall re-do it tomorrow or the next day. Perhaps I’ll do the Sower tomorrow and leave today’s work to fallow a while. In a big job it’s a great effort to

get everything to match to your satisfaction." For three months he was working on all five windows at once and had to live with the van Eeghen's near Haarlem during the week to get the work finished. In May he wrote:

" – The Öglunda windows are shit hot. I'll be the last to make windows. After me there'll be no one who can do it anymore, at least not with the same freedom and in such a wonderful workshop and with all that stock of old glass, which I now know through and through, like an old wine cellar one has husbanded for generations. Just imagine I first began here in 1935, you should be aware that often I know more than they do. Once, for instance, like a whimsical little blue tit one summer's day hiding a tasty morsel in a bark fissure, I hid a small piece of green glass of exactly the hue I require and then I found it where I thought under a thick layer of dust and cobwebs, like 40 years of dust. And that's how it is with lots of things in this workshop. Bogtman's selection of glass gets smaller and smaller, they are one of the last glass works left, St. Just in France has cut its range of glass colours, it's only a question of time before it all ends. Next year the last old boy, Joshua, becomes a pensioner, then there's only young Rutger, Ap's son, who is very nice and has all the feeling for the whole business, but not the dynamism to go out and get work. Bogtman's now only employs two people instead of the 25 in former days and it feels rundown, and what are they going to do with stained glass in Holland? Churches are all being demolished here, and that's a good thing, as ugly as they are, no one misses them. But it is strange, why only windows in churches? Obviously conference rooms and recreation facilities are mainly used in the evening. Clearly, it's impossible to find a use for church windows, or even stained glass in plain day rooms, although there are dentist's waiting rooms, hospitals, asylums, prisons and police stations. Surely stained glass isn't dead yet with all those poor rented flats with views of other concrete bunkers?"

For years, Ap had enjoyed Folke's jibes, jokes and slips of the tongue, often at his own expense, and still he wrote Folke a very

friendly commiserating letter comparing notes on their respective prostate operations. "In my case, two years ago, it took one month, with ten days in hospital and the rest at home practising your pissing, a bundle of laughs it certainly wasn't, and I'm very sorry you're having such a dreadful time." Ap warned that his charges were rising by some 20 percent a year, saying it was unbelievable what was happening to his prices of French glass. He also said that there were far fewer artistic commissions, he only had Meine Jansen (curiously enough, Folke's old Akademie colleague from their Colmschate days in 1935) busy with an appliqué and Frits van Holt with a church window, otherwise it was only restoration work.

Öglunda was a conscious last throw – aiming at a culmination of all his efforts in this medium. [Fig.141 – details 142-149]. "As I felt it was my last commission (not meant pessimistically), I informed all my young artist friends. Erik was the first to react and hitched down and worked with me and as I am the last master glazier at Bogtman's, it's good that such a skill doesn't disappear. In this instance I worked totally traditionally with etching, glass painting, firing etc." It's true that Erik Heybroek, today a fine professional painter, actually painted the oak tree that figures in the "Good Shepherd" scene, it's also true that there is currently no demand for artistic glass at Bogtman's, and Eric has never had glass commissions. One should look on these Öglunda windows as an out and out masterpiece. "The windows look all right but when one has worked from 8 till 6 without a midday sleep, I'm completely worn out after dinner and can only idly stare at the boring TV news at my friend's where I am living and creep in my nest at 10."

The work finished, Folke and Nell made a two-week idyllic trip north to meet up with the delivery of the lorry-load of windows in mid-June. They stayed with friends in Giethorn, that pretty Dutch town, and then took up another friend's offer of a simple cottage in the Swedish forests where they got lost in long, endless walks. But once the windows were installed, Brita and Juli apart, they decided the list of old friends was too long and so they looked up none of

them on the way home. Creatively exhausted, Folke could only re-decorate his house exterior on his return, and wrote to approve Brita's plans to paint the portraits of French writers as her future project, suggesting Sartre, as he had such a curious face, Aragon and Artaud, and concluding that "Proust is worth several portraits, one of them framed with Madeleine cakes."

By the time the mentally undemanding work of decorating his house was complete, his batteries were recharged and he was ready to embark on a new series. On some hot summer days they had taken excursions in their 2cv and seen people relaxing on the water and then, there were all those memories from Liane. The theme was "a happy, warm summer's day" or just people sunning and enjoying themselves.

" - So far I'm still struggling and not especially pleased. It is to be sun and summer and to make people happy, but not anecdotal. Something of Matisse's joy but in my way and in Holland. [Figs.150 & 151]. Most likely I'll stir myself to renewed heights and then fall flat on my face with another idea I'm incapable of bringing to fruition - no, orders and commissions are far more straightforward, like going to a dance."

They visited the Mauritshuis in The Hague for a Ruysdael exhibition and he found him not as special as he'd imagined, and then, a bit later, returning to Amsterdam for Nell's lessons, they experienced some disturbed nights and didn't get a wink of sleep.

" - The first night a car alarm went off in the small hours and the owner in his dressing gown jumped ceaselessly round, unable to turn it off. The whole road woke up and was furious with him and eventually the police came and succeeded in silencing the torture.

" - A while ago there was a scandal when a female lawyer embezzled fl.13m. from someone's estate and she was sent to prison. Unfortunately her house was exactly opposite ours. Standing unoccupied for a while, it wasn't long before squatters were attracted in the form of a bunch of punks, green, orange and silver hair and

safety pins in their ears, tattoos etc. But then the house was auctioned and the new owner hired some big strong security guards, and the second night we were there all those poor young punks were thrown out with plenty of howling cats in their arms. Like the wild West. Not a policeman in sight, tears, screams and hardly any sleep. A fortnight later we were in town again and woke around 3am to an almighty commotion. A large lorry drove down the middle of the road and out jumped 200 youths, armed with crash helmets, shields and baseball bats, unloaded a huge steel plate and a large beam as a battering ram. While the bailiffs hurled stones and fired catapults, they stormed the building shielded by the plate, exactly as in the Middle Ages, captured the ground floor through the doors and windows, and five minutes later, to a great cheer, the guards were ejected, rather like Nazi collaborators after the war. I was very worried about my little car, which was standing in the middle of the battleground, it was a wonder nothing had hit it. I dressed and went out to see if I could rescue it, but a polite young man spotted me - "We're completely in control of the situation, all the streets are cut off with spike mats, the police can't get in. They were like soldiers without firearms, though they did have gas masks, radios and walkie-talkies, the bailiffs didn't lift a finger, just spat in disgust. Then welding equipment was brought in and the whole ground floor secured, all in the small hours. I was allowed to move my car to a safer area with guidance from the walkie-talkies, everyone kind and helpful to an old white-haired rabbit in a Lella. You can see why we were glad to be back in Zierikzee for a little peace."

There, an invitation to attend the consecration of the Öglunda church refurbishment was awaiting them. Folke, having found he'd made almost nothing from the job because of inflation and devaluation, wrote back and explained that he'd under-priced and couldn't afford to come. The committee then, very generously, sent him a return ticket, promised all expenses and added a large ex-gratia payment agreeing that they thought the windows had been for a very low price. Bishop Brattgård was going to dedicate the windows on

the 23rd of November and so Folke decided to go, "... as I could not resist the temptation to warm myself in the sunshine of admiration and the hot showers of compliments that they try to cover my humble and even coquettish person with." Unfortunately the occasion was ruined for him by a dose of the 'flu.

" - I finally arrived on Saturday evening, after endless changing of trains, ending with the bus to churchwarden Svensson's in Öglunda, it was drenching rain and I got soaked, even that night I had a dreadful sore throat, chill and runny nose. None of this was improved by the consecration ceremony, cakes, buns and coffee. All I was longing for was Nell and a stiff drink." Brattgård's sermon rang out in these words:

" This is a heavenly perspective, a message from heaven to earth, in these windows heaven and earth meet in this church. How one wishes to interpret them one can choose for oneself... One motif is of the sorrowing Maria Magdalena standing in the garden where Jesus was laid in the grave. Those sorrowing in Öglunda can be comforted by these windows, you are not left alone in your sorrow, there is a light and wonderful message."

Then the congregation was led to Martha Andersson's grave, whose generous bequest had provided for the windows.

" - On the Monday morning, I felt I was going to die, so I took the next train home via Gothenberg, instead of to Stockholm to see Brita and perhaps Juli and, on this, there was a restaurant car and at last I got a little sour bottle of red wine and a cheese sandwich. On the Elsinore ferry a proper schnapps and some caramelised brisket. Bloody hell, I had some gut ache, and felt like a stuffed python. At last I reached Amsterdam at 9:30pm. where little Marius (Mr. Boot, the baker from next door) was waiting for me. He was full of good cheer, so I laid the whip across his shoulders as it was a north wind and he drove me back to Nell at never less than 120 kms."

The year 1981 opened with a commission to paint a kingfisher. Friends came by in their droves in the holiday period, the shooting

neighbour kept him well supplied with hares for rich casseroles. In the middle of January he started painting again for the first time in a year, continuing his summer series but by April he was mostly unwell, only able to absorb himself in his own little garden. He was inexplicably tired with pains in his leg and shoulder. Frits wasn't happy....

" - and so I had my stupid fiction, Frets didn't like the look of and which was tested, and it wasn't a fiction at all but it was that stupid crab " - a subject he had so dramatically portrayed in a painting Alice Lund bought in 1951. [Fig.152].

He was put on hormone treatment; "Have you heard that 6 days ago I added to the number of women?" he wrote to Mieke, "I have to take one pill a day of hormones and already the pains have gone away and I feel much better. In hospital I met a woman with a beard, she had my man's hormones, and now I am curious to know if I will no longer need to shave, should take up embroidery and perhaps borrow a bra from Nell and also whether this will affect my painting." By June, he felt much recovered and painted a very large Dutch cattle dog as a commission.

An old friend, An Rutgers van der Loeff, was making a gardening book composed mostly of gardening enthusiasts who could also paint. The theme of the book was to make a painting of your garden and write a description of it. The book is called, "With my Garden in the Clouds" and Folke's contribution was titled "Tegen rozen zeg je U", which is difficult to translate as English has no polite, respectful form for "you", but maybe "Roses you call "Your Worship"" will do. He describes his garden thus:

" - At the time of the restoration of Big Jan, the Tower, which was then a sanctuary for owls, bats and hawks, became a tourist attraction, but the stones forming the paths in our garden we salvaged from the unwanted rubble of the tower.... We have three trees, 2 pollard-willows grown from twigs we kept from a walk in Naarden and a picnic in Oudewater, and a fig, which is delicious and good enough for the Biblical Zacheus to find a hiding place, but it grows too fast.

Then our beautiful single hollyhocks – all grown from seeds we’ve collected, the yellow from Denmark with Palle, the crimson from England with Susie, the pink from Friesland with Mathilde, and the unusual brilliant white from Amsterdam.

Roses are too perfect to give a nickname to. Zéphérine Drouhin I at worst call Zefereeny, when I have to put soft soap on her leaves against greenfly. I call Dorothy Perkins Mary Poppins as I can just imagine her with those roses in her hat. But I always address Alfred de Rougemont and Louise Odier as “Your Worship.”

Now it’s evening and I’m going to look at my painting of it all. The picture is a bit too neat and tidy, a bit like the anxious mother combing her child’s hair before a photograph. And I’ve cheated by putting in flowers that aren’t there yet. But to put it all in perspective I’ve put some knickers on the line, as I learned from my mother that washing on the line wasn’t proper. But a painter finds it charming.”

Otherwise painting progressed slowly. His old friend, Hans van Norden, had an exhibition of 77 works which he found far better than expected. In October, he wrote to Carlo Derkert “I managed to fit in a superb exhibition of Hercules Pieterzn. Seghers, some of whose works are in Holland, but his works are so delicate, it’s rare to see the other ones. This time they came from Germany, England and France. He is so intimate and unobtrusive that one should always experience the very special pleasure of his work in quiet solitude. This Hercules is no ordinary painter with his postage-stamp size clustered images and all his varied techniques and experiments. He surely led an isolated existence even if Rembrandt was interested in him and even possessed several of his works and worked to a conclusion some of his unfinished pictures – as with Tobias and the angel.”

Then they left for France, for an idyllic stay in Grand Lucé, taking long walks and savouring the rural le Sarthe region, Maurice’s calvados and wood fires in the big chimney, with a leg of lamb hanging there to roast. On the return journey, they visited Giverny, near Rouen, which had just become a museum.

“ – Monet always said “ I live for nothing other than painting and gardening ” and he called his garden his finest creation. At first he rented the house. His wife had died and left him with two small children, then Alice Hoschede arrived, - her husband was a big art collector but had left her - to help him, except she had 6 children. So poor Monet suddenly had a household of 10 and was very hard up. But when he was in his fifties things improved, Theo van Gogh bought a painting from him for 10,000fr.and then he could buy the whole paradise. He took on a gardener and six men. And every minute he couldn’t paint, he gardened, and the garden had to change a great deal with each season though at the same time it had to have a wild natural look. Much later, at the turn of the century, he managed to buy a plot of land on the other side of the railway at the foot of the garden and a little tributary of the Seine ran through it. He constructed a large dam with creosoted poles and then came the water lilies and these he sat and painted, more than 230 Nymphaeas. His son, Michael, died not so long ago and left everything, including the paintings, to the Beaux Arts in Paris. The original paintings are in the Musée Marmottan, and, although the garden is far too fussy now with asphalt paths, waste-paper baskets everywhere and even a coca-cola machine and although the paintings are all reproductions, something of Monet’s spirit breathes on near the lily pond, where, under a white parasol, almost like a Pollock Tachist, canvas after canvas came into being, winter and summer, rain and shine....The Japanese woodcuts which he collected, like van Gogh, are still there.”

Mieke was with him for Christmas and he had several other visitors. He read “Voyage au bout de la Nuit” by Céline and found it just about the most depressing view of life one could read, full of hatred of people and society, with a loathing of life. Nor could he understand why so many young French people read it.

“ – How can one write 700 tightly filled pages so full of vomit? – like the bishop in Prévert’s poem, “est-ce que j’ai vomi tout ça.” They delighted especially in all the wintering birds in Zeeland.

He was often in his studio again, "painting is a pleasant activity one can still enjoy even when no longer physically the strongest." In May he had a big check-up, his weight had dropped considerably and he was compelled to go onto the full-dose hormone treatment.

In July he changed from painting "The happy warm summer's day" series to a series of very pale, aesthetic beach scenes, just the beach, the sea, the sky. "I needed to simplify and eliminate a great deal after my rich summer paintings. It's hellish difficult to paint just about nothing."

"- For some time now we'd had a woman neighbour who looked after the cat when we went to Amsterdam and even did some first-rate cleaning, which was greatly appreciated. Once she took a coffee break and looked through a recently published gardening book. But she had also spotted the oil painting in my workshop, where I'd put it to frame it, as Carina had bought it. I could have sold it five times over but she offered first, with a good price and cash. Anyway, Ineke had seen the painting, so when we came home, she said to Nell, "How clever of Folke to paint a picture exactly like the image in the book, unbelievable, not a leaf missing and exactly the right colours, he's really good." We laughed a lot, decided not to tell her, I'll be more famous like that." And indeed his fame had spread, as many strangers came to look at his garden that summer.

The Revenue took a swingeing attitude to his failure to submit a tax declaration, knowing as they did about his window income, and deducted 6000kr. from his pension, almost 3 ½ months worth. " - It's absolutely out of proportion to the little profit I made from the work; it was almost impossible to keep track of all my travel expenses and staying with friends, I always gave them housekeeping after a while. Working with windows, it's god one pleases, as evidenced by Öglunda off their own bat suddenly sending me another 3000kr.in gratitude, which I asked them to put in my old bank account with Uppland's Bank, of which Folke Berglund is manager."

As he wrote to Maurice: " - I'm working almost every day and I tell those who commission me to clear off and, with a kick, to show

my gratitude, as I have to paint according to my own ideas once again. The strange thing is the discovery that it's ten times harder. With commissions I functioned like lemons in a press and the juice ran out with endless pleasure and the greatest ease, but, but, when one is impelled to work in complete freedom, of consciousness and spirit, of awareness and of intelligence, with all my great experience and skills - all these things together create problems and one is obliged to put one's heart in the lemon press and it's not enough even with a few drops of blood. But I have made a lot of progress these last five months and still want to fulfil projects."

And so came into being those haunting empty seascapes. [Fig.153 - detail 154 & figs.155-159].

In August, Nell sat down and said her ankle hurt. It was a bit swollen and she must have had an insect bite. Nice Dr Frits, who was moving away to a new job, happened to ring, finishing with an inquiry after Nell's health, to which the reply was that her ankle was a bit swollen just then from a fleabite. "I'm coming", psychic Frets announced. It was a thrombosis, hospital and an operation followed soon after. Just then, at 10 at night, there was a knock on the door. It was Daniel Rozensweig, who had a year before said he wanted to write a book about Folke, only this time he'd been sent by the Centre Pompidou to make a film. He could not have come at a more agitated time but Folke agreed. Daniel didn't start work till 11am, whereas Folke was up at 6.30, nor did he eat anything till after 9pm by which time Folke was dead from all the questions and reminiscences as well as worrying about Nell. The films were made, Daniel continued on to Sweden to photograph the works there - but, 20 years later, the results were unusable. Daniel fell ill and tragically died, so that the unedited reels were forgotten.

Nell made a good recovery and with the autumn the desire to visit France became irresistible. Once again Maurice lent them le Grand Lucé. Almost unconsciously Folke's strength was fading fast. He had thought of a wider tour but, in the end, he just managed a week in that lovely old farmhouse. And for that week he was rejuvenated,

splendid walks in the Forest of Jupille, omelettes with Raymonde's eggs, coffee and a little drop of Maurice's "Fantasy", sleep of the just, having first fixed a number of rattling windows. Daniel had taken two of Folke's paintings in Zierikzee but still owed for them.

" - Imagine Phoque in his open-air shower at first light, Raymonde comes running - telephone - it was Daniel - so he's coming to see us. He is extremely nice and I'm a bit concerned to upset him because of money matters. But I never asked him to buy a painting from me, and I have always held as a principle to give everything to my friends, except paintings. A baker doesn't give his bread away for nothing. Of course, I can fix the price for a friend, which is what I've done in his case but rarely as a present especially when one is talking of two good paintings," he wrote to Maurice.

Daniel came down from Paris and after much talk round the subject, handed over 10 one hundred franc notes. The next day they were leaving France. " Our return journey was sad but agreeable. After passing the Forest of Reno we found a large basketful of girolles and arrived at the Hotel de France, Trourouvre, with very nice young owners, where they prepared them for us with guinea fowl breasts, really good. Next day rain, cold, north winds but just before our paradisial spot we're used to taking lunch at, out came the sun. The gentians had faded but the trees were resplendent in their autumn colours."

Much time was spent in the studio from the summer onwards, at night he saw it clearly how it should be but then, after the day's work was over he was not satisfied, feeling his painting lacked force. He struggled on, gradually more of his canvases were left unfinished. By Christmas, he was so unwell he had to spend more and more time in his box bed. After his adored Dickens of the last years, he found T.H.White's "The Once and Future King" - " You'll find everything in life there", and spent his time reading with just a few little excursions, as he watched the cancer literally eat his body away.

" Life is fascinating, the most important thing is to live it with all the richness, love and warmth we possess in our poor weak bodies."

At this stage, living for the present wasn't much but a recapitulation could be both enjoyable and useful, as a summation of all those wonderful years he had lived through. Somehow or other in the flight from Sweden in 1969, with 425 kilos on Otto Sowa's little trailer rather than the maximum 350, he had taken newsclips, letters, bills and photographs and these were now all arranged, with all the narratives you have just read, in three scrapbooks. An excellent record, despite his writing in 1979 " - I have always been very bad in the organisation of all the documentary material about myself. If you organise those things too well, it will be too easy for the art doctors to write down my history at some time in the far future. That is what makes Constable's book such dull reading, as every little shit is noticed." When Mieke was exhibiting at Eskilstuna, he wrote to her " I have so many fond memories of Eskilstuna, partly from when we exhibited there and partly of Allan (Ebeling). He was the best thing in Eskilstuna, and "Lillan" you surely remember, many of his things are still there in the Torshälla river, though that's not even his finest, so many of which have vanished, and thus far he still hasn't come into art history so the question is, will he ever? But what the hell does that matter, he mattered a lot for many people and I am happy and grateful that I could count myself as one of his friends and I saw his greatness, his possibilities and his limitations, and achieving publicity and fame is one business and being an artist is another."

Across the road lived an old carpenter with a splendid workshop, where Folke occasionally used to hunt for pieces of wood for frames or repairs and there he had spotted a stack of thick well-seasoned planks of lime, a wood he used so often in his carvings. " Nell and I call him Mr. Strongbox, because he's built like a block of granite and radiates a strength that Lasse Andersson and those other Vikings could only muster a fraction of, with his square hands like shovels." In exchange for a coffin made of these, completely simple, with wax

polish and wooden handles, Folke agreed to make a painting of his choosing – “ a three master at sea in a storm.”

By the end of February, his end was fast approaching, his beloved sister Karin and Nell at his bedside. With a desperate urgency, he requested them to find his little painted wooden box, sent them out to shop for delicious things, fresh rolls, a pear, fresh herring, lamb's ear lettuce, a little smoked ham and some mature Gouda, there it all was in the box on a little table by his bedside. (he was horrified at the thought his last meal might be that disgusting hospital food). He couldn't eat any of it but, at peace now, he lay back and the life went out of him.

On the 4th of March 1983, some 60 mourners gathered at de Algemene Begraafplats by de Bosdrift, Hilversum. It was such a still, sunny, beautiful morning with the birds singing. Six friends and family bore the coffin to the grave, where his parents already lay buried.

Not long before, when Brita was in Paris, on a Swedish Institute study trip, Folke had written to her: “ You must try and wait a little longer yet, otherwise I think your aim to die in Paris is a good one. If I have the good fortune to live a little longer, I'll go and look out a place for you in Père Lachaise between Sartre and Eluard, so you will be between kindred spirits. For myself I shall snuggle into Pappie's grave, that'll be the simplest.”

Twenty-three years after his death, it's difficult to evaluate finally Folke Heybroek's stature as an artist. Whereas some of his contemporaries' paintings are selling for tens of thousands (e.g. Peter Weiss, Folke Hallstrom-Lindh, Einar Jolin), at a recent auction in Stockholm, one of Folke's paintings sold for £60! His early series from Bonhamn are of the highest quality, inspired, powerful and evocative, but, apart from the record of a few snapshots, they have nearly all disappeared into the hands of private purchasers, seemingly without hope of rediscovery. In the war years some intense, highly-worked, semi-abstractions resulted in a small output of unique workmanship. Throughout, a great decorative ability was displayed in lithographs and drawings. Then in 1949 came a visit to Paris and many experiments with loosening of form, some of which are brilliantly successful, some just too sketchy, but always demonstrating a masterful ability to capture the mood, the feeling, the moment. This could be in the most hurried gouache sketch. Somehow, by nature, his eye would not really allow him to thrive in the world of arabesques, where the figurative is subjected to artificial constraints systematically approaching abstraction. His eye loved the beauty of the world out there, landscapes, people's characters and the interaction between them, in all their minutiae, and this reached its height of expression in his 1974 exhibition at Liplaa's. These 40 canvases were a distillation of years of focused observation, not without an overarching delight in the divine comedy of life. Here abstraction was thrown in as an antidote to realism – they are canvases that repay constant re-observation, being so faceted with memories, sketch book notes and the sub-conscious.

Then, once again there was a falling off, as cats, dogs and individual commissions placed him firmly as the artist in society, answering needs and providing pleasure by skill and fantasy. Yet still there was no end to the different ways in which he applied his creativity. Intensely proud of his craft, the one thought that would

provoke an angry rebuttal would be to anyone who let slip the remark, when faced with a seemingly banal piece of elementary art, like a pile of bricks, that "I could do that." But, like a summing up, as he realised his life was coming to an end, he focused again on overarching themes – a happy day on the water, and the majesty of the sea shore. There must be at least 15 canvases on each of these subjects, most of which cannot be traced. These paintings convey contemporary mood perfectly.

From the middle years a vast output of excellent decorative art is still in the public domain, needs no more analysis, and can be visited. Perhaps this is his most significant achievement, but he always thought of himself as a painter first.

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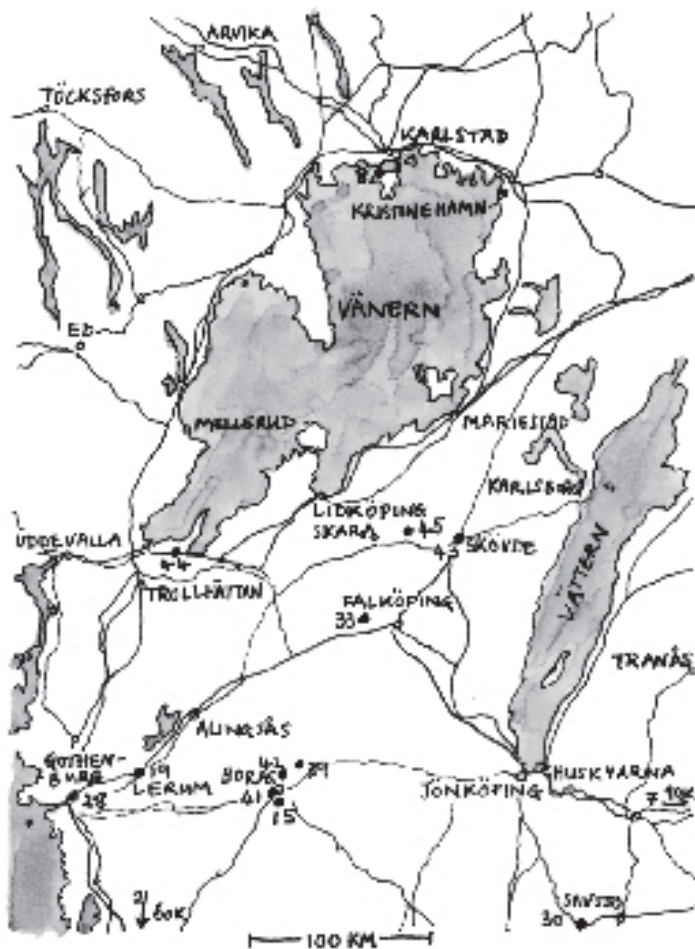
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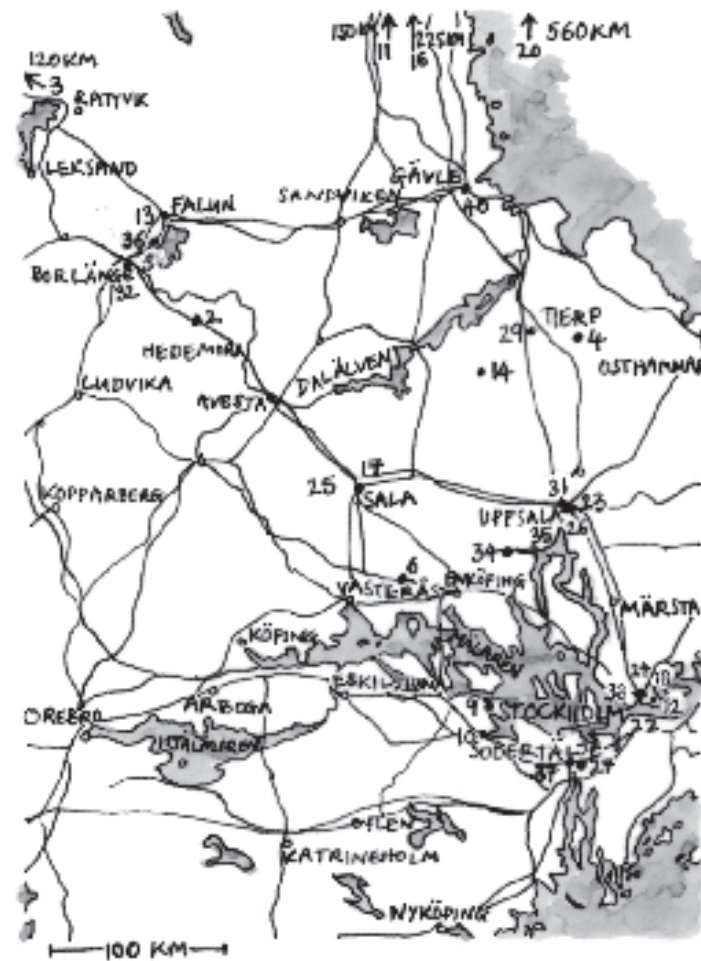
1. Artists directly acquainted with Folke Heybroek are noted as such.
2. His decorative works are indicated in bold.

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1. Lidköping Mekaniska Verkstad (L.M.V.)
2. Säter Grave Chapel
3. Sörsjö Chapel
4. Örbyhus School
5. Borlänge Tingshus
6. Björksta Church
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11. Njurunda Church
12. Näcka Church, Stockholm
13. Kristinegården, Falun
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16. Ånge Church
17. Sala Court
18. Brännkyrka Church Hall, Stockholm
19. Lerum School
20. Kalix School
21. Falkenberg, Carlsberg-Pripps New Brewery
22. Thulehuset, Stockholm
23. Uppsala Court
24. Hypoteksbank, Stockholm
25. Sala Grave Chapel
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29. Tierp Bank
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31. Stockholm's Nation, Uppsala University
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- 34. Örsundbro School
- 35. Berthåga Crematorium
- 36. Aspeboda Church
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- 40. Träfäldighet's Church, Gävle
- 41. Byttorp Church, Borås
- 42. Rydd Church, Borås
- 43. Skövde Church
- 44. Vargön Church
- 45. Öglunda Church



“Explore the life of this painter who is like a Northern pulse of Spring, clear, impetuous, warm yet unstained, before bursting into the marvellous panoply of a summer that never grew listless.”

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