

Report from the Nordic Meteorologist Meeting 7.-11. June, 2010

By Marius O. Jonassen, PhD-student at the University of Bergen, Norway

This year, I was lucky to attend the bi-annual Nordic Meteorologist Meeting (NMM) held in Helsinki, Finland. The conference had as usual participants from the four Nordic countries, but also guests from for example Taiwan and Russia.

The conference contained a significant part of contributions by people working as weather forecasters, but also master students, PhD students and senior scientists were among the contributors.

Mr. Reino Heino from Finland had the honour of opening the conference and central in his speech was the now 50 years long NMM tradition. Following the opening speech, were amongst others display of posters and speeches by T. Andersson from SMS and H. Ólafsson from University of Bergen describing the meteorological observations done by Tycho Brahe and progress in meteorology and weather forecasting, respectively.

Not surprisingly, the recent eruption in mount Eyjafjallajökull was given attention. First one out was G. N. Petersen from Iceland giving an interesting talk on the activity of the eruption plume and the weather situation. M. Sofiev from FMI described dispersion modeling of the eruption plumes and L. Laakso gave a talk on measuring volcanic ash by a manned balloon. Among other topics were forecasting of extreme weather at FMI, and new weather radar systems in use by the Nordic countries.

Progress in weather forecasting technology was another interesting topic discussed during the conference. Met.no from Norway presented two novel tools of this kind. One was the PROFF system, presented by E.A Martinsen, which allows the forecasters to modify the model fields themselves, thereby potentially improving the forecasts. Another system was the PROSA, presented by H. Korsmo, which is a software intended to generate automatic text forecasts.

Following the tradition, a significant weight was put on the social part and the first main happening was a trip to the historical Suomenlinna sea fortress, nicely located on an island just outside Helsinki. At the fortress, we were divided into some 5-6 groups where each group could choose among several social activities, such as archery, fishing, stone-age petanque, blow-pipe and Nordic walking. I especially enjoyed the archery, even though I did not hit the bull's eye! After one activity was finished, we could go to the next so every group could try a bit of each. On the way back, we were taken on a scenic boat sightseeing around the islands in the vicinity of Helsinki.

There were also common activities of more scientific character, like the visit to the Vaisala factory, -a world leading producer of radiosondes. We were given a guided tour in the factory with explanations of each instrument department and in the end a demonstration of a radiosonde launch. We also got served a nice meal in their cantina.

On the second last day, we attended a Banquet on the Uunisaari Island Restaurant. There we got served a splendid three-course meal followed by speeches and traditional entertainment from each of the participating countries. Next time, in 2012, it's Denmark's turn to arrange. Hopefully, they will keep up this nice NMM tradition!