



4-8 July, 1999 XVI Soroptimist International Convention,
Helsinki, Finland

We thought you would love to hear how some of our members are enjoying their tours etc. so here we go with a couple of them.... so sit back, relax and let your imagination run riot. Pour out a glass of wine, enjoy the experience

-- Kate Moore.

Sunshine in the Arctic

by *Chris Fulton, Maidstone Club, South East England Region, SIGBI*

Brilliant sun to the north at midnight, shining across the Arctic Ocean was a wonderful reward for deciding to drive to Convention by the scenic route.

I have a small motor caravan and crossed from Newcastle in northern England to Bergen in Norway. I then drove along the Norwegian coast, over ferries and through tunnels but with views of some of the most beautiful scenery I have ever seen. It took over a week to reach the North Cape, the most northerly point of Europe at 71 degrees 10' north. At that point the weather improved dramatically and I experienced five days and nights of continuous sunshine and high temperatures. The drive South through Finland with forests and lakes all the way to Helsinki.

Excursion to Jean Sibelius' home and Artist Museum

by *Maria Jose Elias, Lisboa Sete Colinas Club, Portugal Region, SIE*

4th July. A sunny and warm Sunday. After 38 km through the countryside, we found Ainola, Sibelius' home, at the eastern shore of Lake Tuusula. The Finnish greatest composer wrote 7 symphonies, the Finland Hymn, the "Swan of Tuonela". His wife Aino, who gave the name to the house was also a pianist. The graves of Sibelius (1865 - 1957) are near the house.

Many Finnish masters of literature, fine art and music have been inspired by this eastern party of the lake. A great friend of Sibelius, the painter Pekko Halonen (1865-1933) the most lyrical portrayer of Finland and its people lived nearby, at Holozenniemi. We visited his log wilderness studio that combined home and studio facility. It is nowadays a very interesting museum and it has been restored to its original condition. Through the windows we see the lake and the marvellous forests of pine, birch, spruce, aspen, juniper, and many other trees, showing all sorts of green tones.

We finished with a lunch of Krapu, one of the main farms of Tuusula Lake Road. Krapu means kettle and is a symbol of the long tradition of hospitality to guests.

We arrived at Finlandia Hall by 5.00 pm just in time for the Opening Ceremony.

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Ateneum - Museum of Finnish Art Kaivokatu 2 (almost opposite the Railway Station)

A place worth visiting in Helsinki, recommendations from Kate Goddard, Beverly & District Club, Yorkshire Region, SIGBI

Wonderful paintings, and sculptures displays in generous space in an interesting building. Free cloakroom and leave your bags and parcels. Lift. Good toilet arrangements. A cool and quiet cafe and good supply of postcards of the art collection in the museum shop.

Open Tuesday - Friday 9.- 18.00 hours

Wednesday - Thursday 9. - 20.00 hours

Saturday and Sunday 11. - 17 00 hours

Closed Monday

Price 15-45 finnmaks (probably higher prices for special exhibitions). Free with a Helsinki Card.