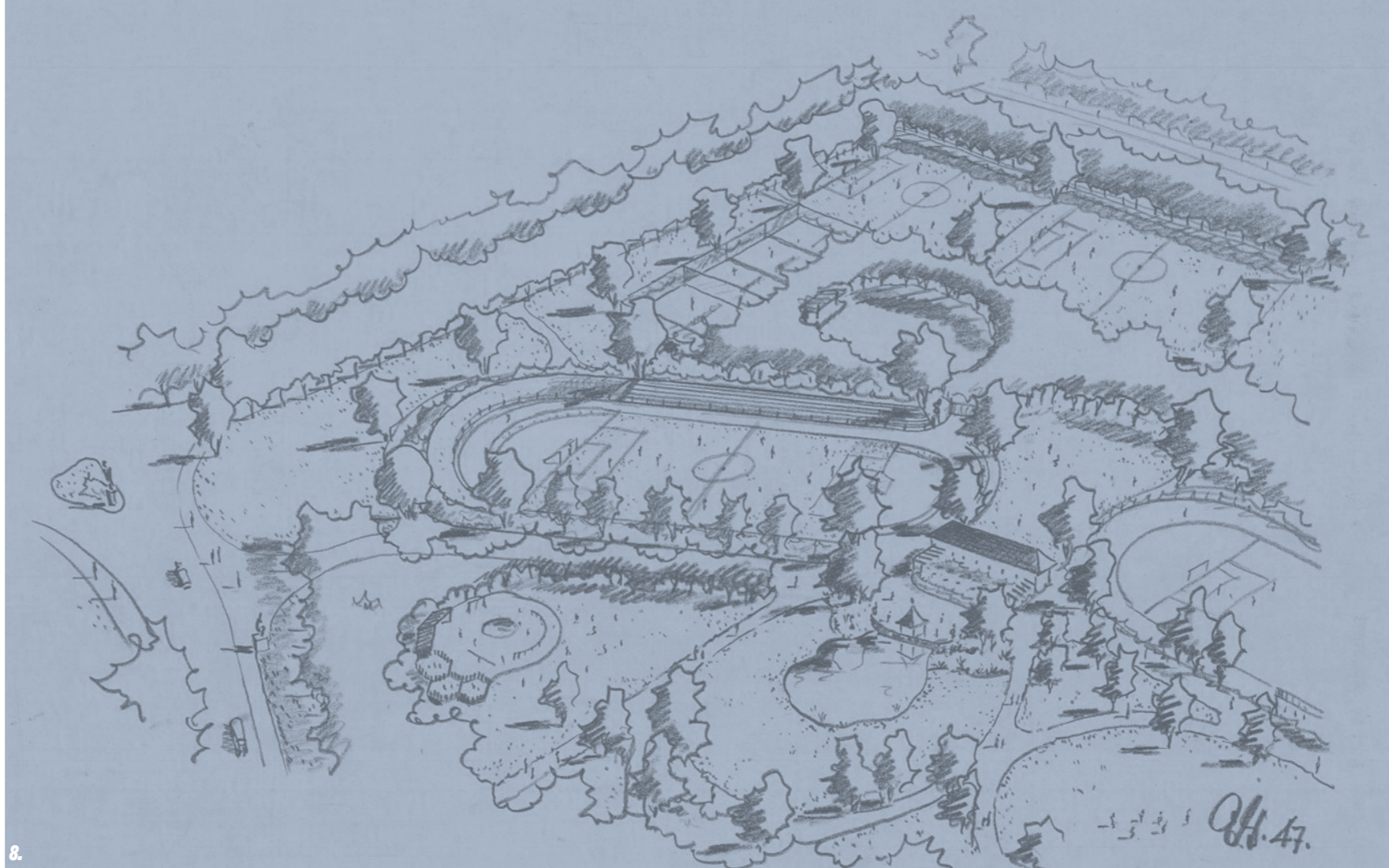


# 1948 // NATIONAL PROFILE NORWAY

By Lei Gao, Annegreth Dietze-Schirdewahn



## LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE IN 1948

The Norwegian League of Garden Architects (Norsk Hagearkitektlag, NHL), now the Norwegian Association of Landscape Architects (Norske Landskapsarkitekters Forening, NLA), was founded in 1929 with sixteen members. The concept *Garden Architecture* comes from a German tradition and means roughly the same as *Landscape Architecture*. Scandinavian countries followed the German tradition when the profession was established in the early 20th century. Norway was the first country in Europe to provide landscape architecture education as a higher education qualification. In 1919, the Norwegian College of Agriculture (Norges landbrukshøgskole, NLH, later became the Norwegian University of Life Sciences, NMBU) enrolled the first group of students in the garden architecture programme.

Landscape architects in Norway, Denmark

and Sweden have collaborated since the early 20th century. In 1920, the Danish journal *Havekunst* (Garden Art) was launched as a Nordic journal of landscape architecture, of which the editors, authors and subscribers came from all these countries. As seen from *Havekunst*, design competitions, courses and study tours were held on a regular basis among these Scandinavian countries. The first Nordic Congress of Garden Architects was held in Stockholm in 1934. These three countries also played an active role in the early period of IFLA. On the list of delegates present at the first IFLA Congress in London 1948, there were seventeen delegates (plus one family member) from Norway, fifteen from Sweden, and seven (plus three family members) from Denmark. The Norwegian delegation was the largest outside the British delegation at the first IFLA conference. In addition to being founding members and participating in the Congresses and Council meetings, Swedish members were responsible for editing the first Yearbook (Chief editor Ulla Bodorff

from Sweden) and hosting the 3rd IFLA Congress in Stockholm in 1952. At some of the early IFLA Congresses and Council meetings, Scandinavian representatives were sometimes asked to represent other absent Scandinavian countries (for example, Norway did not send any delegate to the second IFLA Congress due to financial stress).<sup>1</sup>

## NOTABLE INDIVIDUALS

### **Olav Aspesæter (1907-1994)**

studied at the Norwegian School of Horticulture (Statens hagebruksskole) at Dømmesmoen in 1930 and became a candidate of horticulture at the Norwegian College of Agriculture (Norges landbrukshøgskole, NLH; later became Norwegian University of Life Sciences, NMBU) in 1934. He studied at the Institut für Gartengestaltung der Universität Berlin in 1935 and undertook study tours to a number of European countries. He became Assistant County Gardener in Hedmark county in Norway in 1935,

Garden Architect in the Oslo Park Service in 1936, City Gardener in Bergen in 1940 and Professor in Horticulture at NLH in 1954. He was Director of the Office of Parks and Sports facilities in Oslo municipality from 1964, member of the Grand Council of IFLA from 1955, Vice-President of IFLA 1962, President of IFLA 1969-1974, treasurer and member of the working committee from 1967. ANLA holds some of Aspesæter's lecture materials, as well as information related to his president-period in IFLA.<sup>2</sup>

**Eyvind Strøm (1899-1988)** graduated in 1925 from the Norwegian College of Agriculture (Norges landbrukshøgskole, NLH; later became Norwegian University of Life Sciences, NMBU). After visits to Switzerland, Germany, Italy, France and England, he settled in Oslo in 1926 as a practicing garden architect. In 1927, he established the garden architect office *Strøm and Hindhamar*, which soon became very successful.

In 1936, Strøm was employed at Oslo Park Authority. He and colleagues were given the tasks of providing detailed solutions for realizing the green infrastructure of Oslo according to the masterplan approved in 1934. The plan identified the most important need as “lifting urban population out of the dirt and unhealthiness” (Eike 2018). It opened up a new era of urban development in Oslo. However, it was not easy to implement due to the limited space available for green infrastructure. Strøm started with a study trip to Europe, where he explored how parks, sports grounds and other green infrastructures were developed in cities.

In 1938 Strøm became the Head of the Planning Department at Oslo Park Authority. In this position he designed the neighbourhood parks Torshovparken and Torshovdalen, together with the City Gardener Marius Røhne. Strøm was also involved in the further development of the park belt along the river Akerselva, and many other projects in and outside Oslo.<sup>3</sup>

1. Historical Archive of Norwegian Landscape Architecture (ANLA). <https://blogg.nmbu.no/ila-samling/>

2. Wikipedia. 'Olav Aspesæter'. Available at: [https://sv.wikipedia.org/wiki/Olav\\_Aspes%C3%A6ter](https://sv.wikipedia.org/wiki/Olav_Aspes%C3%A6ter)

3. Annegreth Dietze-Schirdewahn, 'Public Park Policy and Modernism in Norwegian Landscape Architecture. The collection of Eyvind Strøm (1899-1988). A Blog about Historical Archive of Norwegian Landscape Architecture. (available at: <https://blogg.nmbu.no/ila-samling/2018/09/public-park-policy-modernism-norwegian-landscape-architecture/>)

4. Linda M. Le Geyt, Changing the face of Canada: profiles of Landscape Architects (Canadian Society of Landscape Architects, 1997), pp.40-43

Aftenposten (Newspaper) Bergens tidende (Newspaper) Kommunal håndbok for Oslo, 1949

5. Annegreth Dietze-Schirdewahn, 'De kvinnelige pionerer i disiplinen. Del 2' (The Women Pioneers in the discipline. Part 2). A Blog about Historical Archive of Norwegian Landscape Architecture. Available at <https://blogg.nmbu.no/ila-samling/2021/03/de-kvinnelige-pionerer-i-disiplinen/>

6. NLA. NLA's æresmedlem Elise Sørsdal er død

(NLA's honorary member Elise Sørsdal has died). Available at: <https://landskapsarkitektur.no/?mid=56313>

7. Annegreth Dietze-Schirdewahn and Karsten Jørgensen, 'Samlingen etter Karen Reistad (1900-1994) er ordnet' (The collection by Karen Reistad (1900-1994) has been arranged). Available at: [http://www.umb.no/statisk/lip/LLP%20FORSKNINGSGRUPPER/Historie%20og%20gr%C3%B8n%20kulturav/webpresentasjon\\_reistad.pdf](http://www.umb.no/statisk/lip/LLP%20FORSKNINGSGRUPPER/Historie%20og%20gr%C3%B8n%20kulturav/webpresentasjon_reistad.pdf) [in Norwegian] Annegreth Dietze-Schirdewahn, 'The collection of Karen Reistad (1900-1994). A Blog about Historical Archive of Norwegian Landscape Architecture. Available at <https://blogg.nmbu.no/ila-samling/2018/03/the-collection-of-karen-reistad-1900-1994/>

8. Eyvind Strøm, 'Sketch of Idrettsparken og Lystlunden (Sports Park and Lystlunden Park) in Horten (1947)'. (Collection in the Historical Archive of Norwegian Landscape Architecture (ANLA)).

9. Bergens tidende, lørdag 6. november 1954, available at [www.nbno.no](http://www.nbno.no)

10. A brief report of the IFLA Congress in London 1948 shown in the 'Annual report of NHL 1947/48'. Source: Årsmelding fra Norsk hagearkitektlag 1947/48

**Sigurd Hoff (1912 – 2003)** studied horticulture at the Norwegian School of Horticulture (Statens hagebruksskole) between 1930 and 1932. Anxious to see other places, Hoff travelled to England, Germany, Italy and Hungary. He returned to Norway and attended the Norwegian College of Agriculture (Norges landbrukshøgskole, NLH; later became Norwegian University of Life Sciences, NMBU) from 1936 to 1939, graduating with a major in garden architecture. During the early years of World War Two, Hoff worked as a Garden Architect and Park Planner for the cities of Stockholm and Oslo. Hoff was the leader of the Horticulture Department (Hagebrukskontoret) at Oslo municipality, responsible for allotment gardens and other private gardens in the city between 1947-49 and possibly for longer (Kommunal håndbok for Oslo 1949 (available at [www.nb.no](http://www.nb.no))). In 1950, Hoff was employed in the Oslo Municipality Planning and Construction Office (Oslo Kommunes plan- og anleggskontor). In 1953, he applied for the position Professor in Garden Architecture at NLH but was not offered the post (Aftenposten: Ukens nytt, torsdag 27. august 1953 (available at [www.nb.no](http://www.nb.no))). Between 1951-1954, Hoff was a teacher at the Norwegian School of Horticulture (Statens hagebruksskole), and was City Gardener (Bygartner) in Bergen from 1954 to 1957 (Bergens tidende, lørdag 6. november 1954 (available at [www.nb.no](http://www.nb.no))). In May 1957, he resigned his position in Bergen municipality due to the misuse of municipal labour for private purposes (Bergens tidende, mandag 20. mai 1957 (available at [www.nb.no](http://www.nb.no))). In June 1957, Hoff and his family immigrated to Canada, following the suggestion of Edwin Kay (1889-1958), one of the nine founding members of The Canadian Society of Landscape Architects and Town Planners. Hoff and



Kay both attended the first IFLA Congress in 1948. Hoff was the keynote speaker from Norway, and Kay was an influential landscape architect in Canada. Hoff soon found work with Principle Investment, a development company in Toronto. He designed landscape plans for shopping centres based on his Norwegian experience. Later, Hoff launched his career with the government of Saskatchewan and worked on park planning at Cypress Hills, Moose Mountain, Duck Mountain, as well as landscape design along the Trans Canada Highway and other roads. He also functioned as the Provincial horticulturist, training caretakers of parks and landscapes. Besides this, Hoff introduced adventure playgrounds to Canada. After retirement, Hoff worked as a volunteer, providing the landscape plans for a number of hotels in Jamaica and Costa Rica.<sup>4</sup>

**Sigrid Brevik (1910-1982)** was born in Oslo in 1910. She completed her horticultural education at the Norwegian School of Horticulture Veia (Statens Gartnerskole Veia) in 1931, and then studied garden architecture at the

Norwegian College of Agriculture (Norges landbrukshøgskole, NLH; later became Norwegian University of Life Sciences, NMBU) between 1932 and 1934. She first worked as an assistant to Ludvig Johannes Lindemann (1893-1963), professor of chemistry at NLH, and then worked as an assistant in the garden architect firm Norske Hager between 1936 and 1943. From 1944, she started to work as an independent garden architect. Sigrid Jahnsen was married twice, which led to her being registered with different surnames. In 1937 she married Olav Eugen Hotvedt (1908-1937), who died of poliomyelitis in the same year. In 1945 she remarried the civil engineer and head teacher Paul Fredrik Brevik (1909-1961). Sigrid can therefore be found with three different surnames in the archives: Jahnsen, Hotvedt and Brevik. In 1944, Sigrid Hotvedt made a plan for the garden of Odals Værk Company. Her older sister Aagot Jahnsen (1902-1979) was married to Helge Berger Opsahl (1895-1979) who was co-owner and manager of the farm and the company. Before 1944, the garden was laid out in the English style, while the new proposal presented a neoclassical style with geometric shapes, terraces and staircases.

In 1947, Sigrid Brevik won the 2nd prize in the redevelopment of the Botanical Garden in Tøyen, Oslo. Since there was no first prize, her plan was put into implementation. She worked with Rolf Nordhagen (1894-1979), professor of botany and responsible for the Botanical Garden in Tøyen from 1945. They collaborated between 1947 and 1953 (or 1955) to realise the plan. In 1954, Nordhagen was interviewed about the upgrade of the Botanic Garden in Tøyen, where he specifically mentioned the collaboration with Sigrid Brevik: "... I

myself have greatly enjoyed my efforts to make the garden in Tøyen contemporary and beautiful. Oslo municipality has constantly helped us in the work to modernize the garden. And in this work I have found a gifted and responsive colleague in garden architecture, Mrs Sigrid Brevik. She has a firm grasp on these things - and then she is fearless." (Daily newspaper 1954). Sigrid Hotvedt/Brevik was very active in NLA. She was a deputy member of the board for Karen Reistad for many years. She also contributed to juries for various competitions under the auspices of the garden architect team, such as the competition for the Stabekk teacher's school for housekeeping at Stabekk in 1947. In 1951, she was a member of the committee that organized the 7th Nordic Congress of Garden Architects (together with Trygve Lyftingsmo and Erling Berge).<sup>5</sup>

**Elise Sørsdal (1912 - 2011)** completed her education at the Norwegian School of Horticulture Veia (Statens Gartnerskole Veia) in 1932. She graduated as a garden architect at the Norwegian College of Agriculture (Norges landbrukshøgskole, NLH; later became Norwegian University of Life Sciences, NMBU) in 1944. She had a two-year temporary position at the horticulture school in Staup before being employed as a garden architect at the Park Office in Trondheim from 1946-1951. In 1948, she designed the plan for the expansion of the city park (Byparken) in Mosjøen. The park was restored between 2003-2008, it was protected by the National Heritage in 2009, and in 2010 was awarded the "Green Park of the Year". From 1951 to 1954, Sørsdal was employed as an assistant at the Department of Garden Art at NLH. The department was then under the leadership of Olav Moen, a pioneer in Norwegian

landscape architecture. In 1951, Elise also participated in the work on a study for quality requirements for plans and execution in order to raise professional standards for green systems in residential buildings. Elise taught at the Norwegian School of Horticulture (Statens Gartnerskole), Jensvoll, Lier, from 1966 to 1979.

Elise Sørsdal made a valuable contribution as secretary of the Norwegian Association of Landscape Architects (NLA) and became NLA's honorary member in 1983 for her pioneering efforts in the profession in Norway and internationally. She was one of the seventeen delegates from Norway on the first IFLA Congress in 1948, and was the representative of Norway in the founding meeting of IFLA in Cambridge on 14 August 1948.<sup>6</sup>

**Karen Reistad (1900-1994)** was a pioneer in Norwegian landscape architecture and a central figure in the development of the profession in Norway after World War Two. She was educated as a visual artist from the Art Industry School (Kunstindustriskole) in Oslo in 1921, and continued her education at the Norwegian School of Horticulture (Statens Gartnerskole) in Oslo. Between 1923 and 1925 she studied at the College of Garden Art (Höhere Lehranstalt für Gartenkunst) in Berlin.

Reistad started her career in Aker municipality, where she was given responsibility for various projects

## Konkurranser.

- a. Omlegging og rasjonalisering av Universitetets Botaniske Hage, omtalt i referat 3/5.  
Konkurransen ble utlyst i juli d.å. Innleveringsfristen er satt til 15/1-49.  
Juryen består av: prof. Rolf Nordhagen, arkitekt Micheelsen, overgartner Søren Steinsvøll og bygartnerne Marius Röhne og Olav Aspeseter. De to første representanter Universitetet, de tre siste N.H.L.
- b. Gravminner (for landskirkegårder), omtalt i referat 27/11, 3/2 og 8/4.  
På møtet den 27/11 var det enighet om at denne konkurransen ikke burde være begrenset til gravminner for landskirkegårder, men at den skulle omfatte gravminner i alminnelighet. I tillegg til de 2000 kr. som Gartnerhellen tidligere har stilt til disposisjon, har den forberedende komiteen, Lyftingsmo og Skedshelm, oppnådd å skaffe 3000 kr. til, mesteparten fra steinhoggerfirmaer i Oslo.  
På møtet den 3/2 ble det besluttet å søke samarbeide med: Norske Arkitekters Landsforbund, Østlandske Steinindustriforening, Foreningen Brukskunst og Norsk Billedhoggerforening. De tre førstnevnte har hver oppnevnt 1 medlem til juryen. Norsk Billedhoggerforening ønsket ikke å være med. Vårt lag er representert i juryen ved Lyftingsmo.
- c. Omlegging av eldre hager, omtalt i referat 27/11.  
Det gjenstår 11-1200 kroner til en konkurranse hvor det skal nyttes oppgitte grunnlag. Da det ikke har vært noen stemning for å gå igang med denne konkurransen nå, er den utsatt inntil videre. Juryen består av: Bredo Morstøl form., Pål Sæland og Henry Eidissen secr.

## Utvalg og komiteer.

- a. Forhandlingskomite med hagearkitekt- og Anleggsgartnermesterlaget.  
Representanter for vårt lag: Hildrum, Reistad og Strøm.  
De har hatt 3 langvarige møter med representantene for Hageark. og Anleggs- g.m.laget, uten å være kommet fram til noe positivt resultat.
- b. Faguttrykkutvalget: Hoff, Lyftingsmo og Strøm, har i samarbeid med redaksjonskomiteen for det planlagte norske hagebruksleksikonet satt opp en liste over de ord og uttrykk som de mener bør behandles innenfor anleggsgartneri og hagekunst. Listen er sendt samtlige medlemmer av vårt lag til uttalelse. De tilføyelser som medlemmene har kommet med er meddelt red.komiteen for leksikonet.
- c. Undervisningsutvalget: Sæland, Hildrum og Strøm, er omtalt foregående side.

## Internasjonal Hagearkitektkongress i London 1948.

Kongressen ble åpnet den 9. august. Den ble holdt i County Hall. 17 nasjoner var representert. Fra vårt lag møtte 16 deltakere.

De tre første dagene var viet foredrag og diskusjoner. Sigurd Hoff var "speaker" for vårt lag. Han snakket om "Economics and the Landscape".

Soinere var det forskjellige utforder. De norske deltakere var særlig begeistret for turen til Cambridge. Her ble kongressen offisielt avsluttet den 15. aug.

Lørdag den 14. aug. var det innkalt en representant fra hvert land til et uformelt møte på Jesus College, for å drøfte dannelsen av et Internasjonalt forbund av hagearkitekter. For vårt lag møtte sekretæren. Alle representantene var enige i at det var ønskelig å få et slikt forbund, og hver enkelt fikk i oppdrag å legge saken fram for sine respektive organisasjoner.

I forbindelse med kongressen ble det også holdt en Internasjonal utstilling av tegninger og fotografier. Det meste av det materialet som var med fra Norge var skaffet tilveie av Oslo Parkvesen, ved Eyvind Strøm og fra Oslo Kirkevergekantor ved Pål Sæland.

Et mere utførlig referat fra kongressen og utstillingen vil bli gitt på et av de første møtene i laget. Det er da også meningen å få et ordskifte om samme.

Elise Sørsdal  
sekretær.

including cemeteries. She also worked on private assignments. From 1942, she worked full-time on her own practice. In 1954, Reistad was appointed as the State's cemetery consultant, a newly created position linked to the demand for regulated burial grounds and the care of war cemeteries. Reistad embraced this task with great enthusiasm and designed many extensions and new establishments for cemeteries and war cemeteries. In 1953, Reistad became a part-time teacher at the Department of Horticulture at the Norwegian College of Agriculture (NLH. Now Norwegian University of Life Sciences, NMBU) with responsibility for the Cemetery planning course. Reistad was one of the founders of The Norwegian League of Garden Architects (NHL, now Norwegian Association of Landscape Architects, NLA) in 1929 and was the association's chairperson between 1954 and 1956. She became an honorary member of NLA in 1963. Reistad was one of the delegates from Norway for the first IFLA Congress in 1948.<sup>7</sup>

## IFLA CONFERENCE REPORTS

### *Brief report of IFLA Congress 1948 on the "Annual report of NHL 1947/48"*

A brief report of the IFLA Congress in London 1948 appeared in the "Annual report of NHL 1947/48" (Årsmelding fra Norsk hagearkitektlag 1947/48)

[English translation]

International Congress of Landscape Architects in London 1948.

The Congress was opened on 9 August. It was held at the County Hall. Seventeen nations were represented. From our association there were sixteen participants.

The first three days were devoted to lectures and discussions. Sigurd Hoff was the [keynote] speaker from our association. He talked about "Economics and the Landscape".

Later there were different events. The Norwegian participants were particularly excited about the trip to Cambridge. Here, the Congress officially ended on 15 August.

On Saturday 14 August, representatives from each country were summoned to an informal meeting at Jesus College to discuss the issue of an International Federation of Landscape Architects. The secretary of our Association [note: that is Elise Sørsdal. She is also the author of this report] attended the meeting. All the representatives agreed that it was desirable to have such a federation, and each representative signed on behalf of their respective organisations.

In connection with the Congress, an international exhibition was also held with drawings and photographs. Most of the materials from Norway were provided by the Oslo Park Service (Oslo Parkvesen) by Eyvind Strøm, and from Oslo Church Administration (Oslo Kirkevergekantor) by Pål Sæland.

A more detailed report from the Congress and the exhibition will be available at one of the first meetings of the Association. It is then also intended to have a discussion about it.

Elise Sørsdal (secretary)