

Commissioner:

Sarah Williams, Deputy Editor, BBC History Magazine

Request for an article of 180 words for the 'Milestones' section of *BBC History Magazine* (June issue) on the topic of Norway's marking of 100 years of independence (1905-2005). Deadline – 6 April.

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Draft version

The 7 June 1905 is a momentous date for the people of Norway. On that day the parliament in Oslo dissolved the union with Sweden that had been forced upon Norway by the Treaty of Kiel (1814). This agreement had in turn terminated many centuries of Danish influence by establishing a 'personal union' under the king of Sweden. This ceased abruptly when King Oscar II was compelled to abdicate the Norwegian throne on 26 October 1905. Although Norway had experienced a great deal of autonomy during the Swedish period the symbolic significance of full independence was enormous and enduring. This is confirmed by the events currently taking place throughout Norway to mark the centenary of 1905. A seemingly endless array of exhibitions, conferences, performances and publications has been inspired by this anniversary (see <http://www.norway2005.no>). They say as much about the present as they do the past by revealing current Norwegian attitudes towards themselves, their heritage and their place in the world. This is therefore an excellent example of how history can be used to understand the present and shape the future.