

English Supplement



Helsinki on the European urban map

Peter Clark, the University of Helsinki's Professor of European Urban History, looks at Helsinki through the lens of history.

"A star performer" is Peter Clark's description of Helsinki in his book *European Cities and Towns 400–2000*, just published by Oxford University Press. [Page 3](#)

Neoclassical city icons open to the public

The Helsinki City Hall opened its doors to the public. Two new facilities in its lobby now serve residents and visitors. More about Virka Info and Virka Gallery see [page 2](#)



Pertti Nisonen

Contents

- 2 Neo-classical city icons open to the public
- 2 Revitalizing the City Hall area
- 3 Helsinki on the European urban map
- 5 Women have a strong presence in city governance
- 5 Municipal Glossary
- 6 Vocational Training Leads to Better Skills
- 7 Exploring Helsinki
- 7 Exhibitions
- 7 The City of Helsinki Research Grant 2009
- 8 New counselling service provides support to immigrants and recruiters
- 8 Information sessions on entrepreneurship
- 8 The international Cultural Centre Caisa

Neo-classical city icons open to the public

By Johanna Lemola

The Helsinki City Hall building celebrated its 175th anniversary in late 2008 by opening its doors to the public. In November, the City Hall inaugurated two new facilities in its lobby area to serve residents and visitors: a general information point, Virka Info, and a gallery for exhibitions, Virka Gallery.

The information point is equipped with wireless Internet access and a Helsinki City Library computer terminal available for use free of charge. Staff on hand assist customers in the use of city services. They also accept diverse City-related applications, forms and initiatives.

Virka Gallery puts on display exhibitions that present aspects of Helsinki and other cities. The lobby, in addition to the City Hall's large Assembly Hall, is also used for concerts and other public events.

Virka Info and Virka Gallery are open Mon–Fri at 9.00–19.00 hrs and Sat–Sun at 11.00–17.00 hrs. Information phone service is available Mon–Fri at 9.00–15.00 hrs, tel. (09) 3101 1111. Address: Pohjoisesplanadi 11–13. Next exhibition: Open Panorama, photographs by **Taneli Eskola**. ■

Maiju Saukkonen (left), Pia Martikainen and Ari Kallinen welcome everyone to Virka (the Finnish word translates as "office").



Revitalizing the City Hall area



Mika Lappalainen

The redefinition of the City Hall's function is one of the first steps to revitalize the City Hall area in the Neo-classical city centre. This area was the heart of lively entertainment in the 19th century. There are now plans to restore the area's character by turning it into an appealing city site with restaurants, shops and clubs. Refurbished courtyards will be opened during 2009, followed by similarly transformed city blocks bordering the Market Square.

The Helsinki City Hall building, completed in 1833, is one of the public buildings in Helsinki's Neo-classical city centre designed by German architect Carl Ludvig Engel. ■

Perit Niemi

Helsinki on the European urban map

By Johanna Lemola

Municipal authority and fiscal resources are keys to the city's role

Peter Clark, the University of Helsinki's Professor of European Urban History, looks at Helsinki through the lens of history.

"A star performer" is Peter Clark's description of Helsinki in his book *European Cities and Towns 400-2000*, just published by Oxford University Press.

"I come to the contemporary scene as a historian", he points out, yet marvels at some of Helsinki's current accomplishments: Helsinki is among Europe's leading metropolises in terms of productivity and income ("gross value added"). The city earns Europe's top approval by residents for public transport and cultural services, and second to top for education and safety.

In the new book, Professor Clark looks at the evolution of Europe from the

Peter Clark, the University of Helsinki's Professor of European Urban History.



Patric Lindström

Middle Ages onwards through the history of urban centres and their imprint on the continent's economic, social, political and cultural life.

As he explains Helsinki's place in Europe, he draws lines through the continent which show the continuity of urban settlement. The youngest of those lines is an arc that stretches from Ireland to the Finnish-Russian border crossing Helsinki.

"Up until the 19th century, this is a region of small wooden towns", Prof. Clark explains. "Urbanisation comes late here." However, by the late 20th century

these urban settlements form a dynamic region marked by high educational standards and creative industries. Helsinki is a key player in the region.

"Helsinki's development matches that of the larger urban region", Prof. Clark continues. Development only gets under way after Helsinki becomes the capital of the Grand Duchy of Finland in the early 19th century. Increasing industrial activity plays an important role, including the port.

"It's striking that when some of the industrial pillars decline in late 20th century Helsinki, the city keeps growing.

This shows the resilience of Helsinki's economy. Cultural institutions and politics are crucial factors in Helsinki's continued growth."

Prof. Clark elaborates on the underlying forces of Helsinki's strength:

"Compared with many other European cities, Helsinki enjoys remarkable municipal autonomy and fiscal resources. What makes the difference in Helsinki is its City Council. Even in the throes of the deep economic crisis of the early 1990's in Finland, the Helsinki City Council put an emphasis on cultural institutions and cultural strategies. They also started to

develop important links with both public and private sector players."

Prof. Clark's own chair in European Urban History at the University of Helsinki is a good example of those links. The chair is partly funded by the City, partly by the University, with the purpose of advancing urban knowledge to steer sound urban policy.

After Prof. Clark accepted the chair in the year 2000, the relocation to Helsinki began the latest chapter in the long and distinguished career of this Oxford-educated urban historian, a citizen of the United Kingdom.

"Being an immigrant is not easy – neither for the person nor the community", he describes the beginning. "But I have felt that Helsinki has been very welcoming – particularly the City Council."

His adjustment has been eased by his Finnish wife, **Marja Holmila**. The couple met only months after his arrival in Helsinki. She is a research professor of Alcohol and Drug Research at the National Institute for Health and Welfare in Helsinki.

"I find Helsinki manageable and coherent", Prof. Clark continues on his current home town. "I enjoy the green space and water, as well as the public transport and services. This is a perfect city for me." ■



Patrick Lindström

Women have a strong presence in city governance

The City Council is Helsinki's highest decision making body. The Council's term is four years. There are 85 Councilors. In the new City Council, elected in the autumn of 2008, 49 of the Councilors are women and 36 men. This is the second Council in Helsinki's history with a woman majority.

The Helsinki City Council meets at the City Hall every second Wednesday. The public can attend the meetings, following the procedures from the mezzanine level of the meeting hall. The public entrance is at Sofiankatu 3. The meetings can be viewed live on webcasts and on the cable TV channel DINA. They are also archived and available

online at www.helsinkikanava.fi. The Council meetings are conducted in both Finnish and Swedish.

The next Finnish municipal elections will be held in the autumn of 2012. All Helsinki residents including foreign citizens are entitled to vote.

The Helsinki City Councilors are elected on political party lines. The breakdown by party in the current Council is: National Coalition Party 26, Green League of Finland 21, Finnish Social Democratic Party 16, Left Alliance 7, Swedish People's Party 5, True Finns' Party 4, Finnish Centre Party 3, Christian Democratic Party 2, and Communist Party of Finland 1. ■



The chairman of the new Council is Otto Lehtipuu (Green League), the first vice chair is Harry Bogomoloff (National Coalition Party), and the second vice chair is Rakel Hiltunen (Social Democratic Party).



Photos Periti Nisosen

Municipal Glossary

English – Finnish

City Council – *kaupunginvaltuusto*

Councillor – *kaupunginvaltuutettu*

City Hall – *kaupungintalo*

Municipal elections – *kunnallisvaalit*

to vote – *äänestää*

Party – *puolue*

National Coalition Party
Kansallinen Kokoomus (Kok.)

Green League
Vihreä Liitto (Vihr.)

Social Democratic Party
Sosialidemokraattinen Puolue (SDP)

Left Alliance
Vasemmistoliitto (Vas.)

Swedish People's Party
Ruotsalainen kansanpuolue (RKP)

True Finns' Party
Perussuomalaiset (PS)

Centre Party
Keskusta (Kesk.)

Christian Democratic Party
Kristillisdemokraatit (KD)

Communist Party
Kommunistinen puolue (SKP)

The newly-elected Helsinki City Councilors obtained City laptop computers in their first session in January 2009. The City will gradually shift to electronic documentation.

Vocational Training Leads to Better Skills

Helsinki provides tailor made vocational training courses for nurses, chefs and maintenance men, for instance. A job is guaranteed for every graduate.

Helsinki recruits skilled people in some twenty different trades through tailor made training, from security guards to earth-moving men and from practical nurses to youth workers. The annual number of students is 450. The training programme is implemented by apprenticeship and recruitment training which both stress workplace learning. The two to three year-term apprenticeship contracts aim at a vocational degree, but recruitment training may last only a few months and just complement skills earlier acquired.

"The City organises vocational training in trades in need of labour. Therefore the City can offer a job for all graduated. Moreover, they are offered versatile jobs, competitive wages, company-owned dwellings and a reliable employer. The City does not make its permanent labour force redundant even during recession", says Division Manager **Eija Hanni** from

City of Helsinki Personnel Centre.

The extent of this vocational training is reflected by the fact that the Human Resources Division headed by Ms Hanni plans and co-ordinates training programmes with 20 City Departments and Public Utilities. The students also constitute a many-faceted group.

"People of very different ages and cultural backgrounds seek vocational training, and part of them are switching from one trade to another. Vocational training increases employment, because the majority of the trainees are unemployed or under the threat of becoming unemployed. Apprenticeship students get wages during the training period and the participants in the shorter-term recruitment training get an allowance", Ms Hanni says.

Vocational training tailored to immigrant groups includes more language instruction than on the average. ■



Photos: Petri Niisonen

FRONT PAGE

*More information at www.helsinkirekry.fi
and during office hours at tel. (09)310 43978 (apprenticeship)
and (09)310 43824 and (09)310 37994 (recruitment training).

Books

Exploring
Helsinki

This is a beautiful book for everyone who likes to walk around Helsinki, inspired, as the authors of the book, by **Walter Benjamin's** words:

"Not to find one's way around a city does not mean much. But to lose one's way in a city as one loses one's way in a forest, requires some schooling."

Photographer **Taneli Eskola**, professor of photography in the Helsinki University of Art and Design, and **Julia Donner**, art historian with a special interest in gardens, have wandered through parks and along waterfronts, climbed over rocks and looked out of the train window at the right moment.

The places, paths and gardens pictured are available to everyone.

What do we actually see when we look around us? The researcher and the photographer invite us to join them in exploring and finding secret gardens of our own.

Exploring Helsinki. Places, paths, gardens (Multikustannus Oy 2008)

*A book by Julia Donner and Taneli Eskola
Texts partly in English*

Exhibitions



Open Panorama – Photographs by Taneli Eskola from urban paradises.

Open Panorama – Photographs by
Taneli Eskola from urban paradises

Virka Galleria 25.2.–29.3.

The Helsinki City Hall,
Pohjoisesplanadi 11–13

Mon-Fri 9-19, Sat-Sun 11–17

Asphalt Gardens – Paradises beneath
the Urban Fabric.

Photographs by Taneli Eskola

The Finnish Museum of
Photography 22.1–24.5.

Cable Factory, Tallberginkatu 1 G

Tue–Sun 11–18

Helsinki Zoo Ideas Competition

Laituri 13.1.–28.2.

Old bus station building at Narinkka
Square

Tue–Fri 10–18, Sat 12–16

Replacement Migration – Portraits
from the 21st Century. Photographs
by Malene Nors Tardrup

Caisa International Cultural Centre
4.3.–26.3

Mikonkatu 17 C/Vuorikatu 14

Mon–Fri 10–18

Research

The City of Helsinki Research Grant 2009

The City of Helsinki has allotted 73 000 euro to be distributed as research grants and now invites applications for said research grants. The grants are intended for researchers with a higher university degree, especially for those working on their licentiate's or doctor's thesis. Priority is given to research related to urban economy and industrial and commercial activity, research on the organisation and assessment of services ordered or produced by the city as well

as studies on the living environment and everyday life in Helsinki, including issues related to immigration and the internationalisation development of the city.

The applications with research plans, CV's and possible references shall be submitted in two copies to Helsinki Urban Facts (Siltasaarenkatu 18–20 A 5. floor), P.B. 5500, 00099 CITY OF HELSINKI by March 9, 2009 at 16.00 hrs at the latest.

Grants will be announced on Helsinki City Science Day, May 19, 2009. The application form is available from www.hel2.fi/tietokeskus/eng/ or it can be ordered by phone at (09) 310 36298.

For further information, please contact
Mr. **Markku Lankinen**, Senior Researcher, tel. (09) 310 36365 and
Mr. **Markus Laine**, acting Research Professor, tel. (09) 310 36522

New counselling service provides support to immigrants and recruiters

A new counselling service that provides support to immigrants has opened on 2nd February. The service is available to employees of the Cities of Helsinki, Espoo and Vantaa and the employees of Seure Henkilöstöpalvelut. The counselling is offered to immigrants arriving in Finland and to immigrants who have lived in Finland for a while, as well as to immigrant employees and their recruiters.

The counselling service provides help in matters related to working, living and housing in Finland. The service is free of charge, to both employees and employers.

This service will be developed by the "Easy Entrance to Finnish Working Life"

project, whose aim is to create a model for the integration services for immigrants by the end of 2010.

The "Easy Entrance to Finnish Working Life" project is implemented by Seure Henkilöstöpalvelut. The project partners are the Cities of Helsinki, Vantaa and Espoo, in addition to Seure's owners. The project is funded by the European Social Fund and Seure's owner cities.

Counselling Seure Henkilöstöpalvelut

Fredrikinkatu 51-53 B, 1st floor.
(09) 310 29914

neuvonta.seure@hel.fi

Open Mon-Fri 8.30 am-4 pm

Information sessions on entrepreneurship

The entrepreneurship information sessions organised by EnterpriseHelsinki are held in English and they are open for everyone who plans to start a business of his/her own in the Helsinki region. Topics include: Business idea, How to start a business, Forms of enterprise, Taxation etc.

Sessions this spring: 19.3. 23.4., 14.5. Sign up by calling (09) 310 36360 or send e-mail YritysHelsinki@hel.fi. More information. www.yrityshelsinki.fi

The international Cultural Centre Caisa

Caisa is an international cultural centre in the core of Helsinki. It is subject to the City of Helsinki Cultural Office. Its object is to support the development of a multicultural city by promoting interaction between people from different countries, encouraging the independent original practice of new ethnic minority cultures whilst integrating them into a Finnish society and giving out information on Finland.

Caisa organises concerts, food festivals, exhibitions, seminars, courses, clubs and its own multicultural singing competition. The Ourvision Singing Contest 2009 tryouts have started, see www.ourvision.fi.

Address Mikonkatu 17/ Vuorikatu 14
Mon-Fri 10-18

Helsinki Info is a printed newspaper published by the City of Helsinki and distributed to all Helsinki households six times a year.

Helsinki Info's English Supplement resembles the main publication in format but is published online on the City Website, also six times a year.

Next issue 30.3.2009

Publisher: City of Helsinki www.hel.fi

Editor-in-Chief: Rita Ekelund
Phone (+358 9) 310 36074
City of Helsinki, Communications
P.O. Box 1
FI-00099 City of Helsinki, Finland

Graphic design: Guassi Oy

Send us feedback:
helsinki-info.palaute@hel.fi

Info kit

Information for immigrants

Info Bank is an online service aimed at immigrants, offering information on Finnish society and life in Finland in 15 languages. The website also contains local information on Helsinki.
www.infopankki.fi

Service for tourists

A new, more user-friendly Helsinki Tourism website was launched in January. Information on Helsinki for all visitors in 10 languages.
www.visithelsinki.fi

City of Helsinki.
www.hel.fi