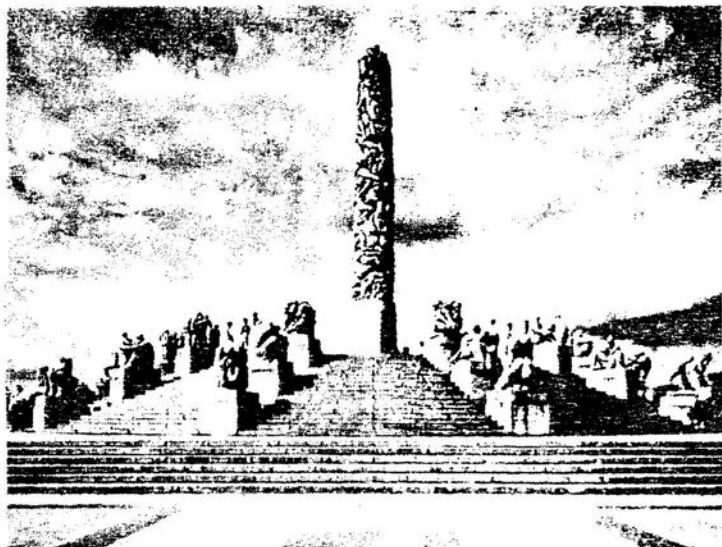


VENTURE

44



Norway Special

NUMBER 59

MARCH 87

VENTURE 44 The magazine of the 44th Gloucester
(Sir Thomas Rich's School) Venture Scout Unit

NUMBER 59 (Norway Edition)

MARCH 1987

EDITOR James Foster

NORWAY. It has been responsible for many things. Not least ravaging and murdering hordes of Vikings; an answer to taste - Gamleost - and also A-ha. Not really a catalogue of things designed to recommend itself to any foreigner.

However Norway is well known for its spectacular, wild beauty, its deep fjords and calm undisturbed landscape; and also its radical energy schemes and non nuclear policy. With such natural assets it is not hard to see why Norway tries hard to preserve what it has.

It is hoped that instead of providing you the reader with just the bare mechanics of what we did, ate and saw it actually tries to convey a flavour of the country, and also recreate an image of the people, their life-style, and the atmosphere of Norway to those unlucky members who did not go on the Expedition.

Do not rush into the sweet joys contained in this brief magazine, distilled from the writings of the people who went, but rather restrain your eagerness and sample it gently. The comments preceding each article are in fact snippets from Steve Clutterbuck's diary. I trust that they will be sufficient to help pin down the geography of the journey.

Thanks go to Steve for a years worth of dedication to produce the last few magazines. It is hard work and often the translation of peoples thoughts into coherent English excites some criticism. However any constructive complaints may be directed to; 1 The Bin, Sometime Place Gloucester, which will be delighted to receive them.

But enough of the waffle, Read on, Macduff.....

James Foster

Wednesday 23rd July

Harwich. Boat trip - reasonably calm; incredibly expensive. Cards in Neptune Bar. Slept well in couchette.

Thursday 24th July

On ferry until 5.55pm. At Kristiansand meet Phil Cecilia and Rachel, who accompanied us throughout trip. Drove through great scenery to Svenes. Good campsite, played football, "Green grow the rushes". I could get to like this place.

Friday 25th July

Shopping at Treurgen, then on to campsite at Åmot.

HVA SKAL JEG BETALE?

Norway is generally accepted to have one of the highest costs of living in Western Europe. This can be attributed to numerous reasons, but whatever the truth careful financial planning is required when visiting Norway.

The first indication of the difference in prices was discovered when a rather hungry member of the unit purchased two rather small ham sandwiches from the ship cafeteria for around £1.70. Despite this limitation we survived rather well as a Unit. The V.S.L. used his invaluable experience to cull together economical yet satisfying meals. Breakfast was nothing unusual - cereal, bread, and possibly eggs or beans as an extra.

Lunch was a "spreads on bread" effort, and among the favourite pastes and spreads were: Mackerel, Liver Paté, Peanut butter, and a brown gooey mix entitled Chocolate Spread. Wiser heads in the unit commented that chocolate was surely for eating in slabs, and not plastering on bread. As bread cost a pound, one litre of milk about the same, and twenty pence for a single egg, huge fried breakfasts were ruled out (much to Jason's evident

disappointment). And then there was cheese. Some cheese was recognisable; but there was one avoided like the plague. Possibly because it tasted and smelt like the plague. The V.S.L. claims that he sincerely liked the foul stuff, but as it is so horrible this claim was regarded at best as dubious. Dinners were tinned English dishes - chicken, stew, etc. But one Norwegian delicacy that we sampled was the enigmatic fishballs. They had hung over our heads like threats. Experienced people nodded wisely when interrogated on their taste. Finally they arrived.. This writer firmly believes that you liked them or not there were no half measures!

Cooking and washing up, potentially explosive issues, were managed efficiently. The whole group participating in what became a smoothly running rota.

The return journey was the climax to some members culinary aspirations whilst in Norway. For here on the boat was the eagerly anticipated 'Cold-table' For £7 you could eat as much as you wanted. Some members over used this, and suffered as a result.....

Prices varied in Norway. Something might be terribly expensive relatively, or it might just be massively more than what you'd pay in England. Petrol isn't too bad, Coke was terrible, and alcohol prohibitive.

Generally the visit was useful in expanding our horizons of a foreign style of living. Food and prices are often the most obvious things about another country, and in a way we were lucky as witnesses rather than being victims of the high prices. Nevertheless 'ware the purse when in Norway, it could cost more than you bargained for!

Dave Wright

Saturday 26th July

Went to Dalen - going by the size of towns so far it is huge. After lunch the wooden church at Eidsborg. Also go for a trek to visit a famous gorge which didn't seem to exist. Ah well, you win some....

The warm weather seems to be going. Cool and cloudy at the campsite this evening.

EIDSBORG STAVE CHURCH

Most of the churches built in Norway during the Middle Ages were stave churches. Timber was - and still is - the natural building material. Norwegians prefer wooden houses. Boat construction in Viking times had developed the technique of building into a fine art.

Christianity was introduced in Norway about year 1000, and a century later there must have been at least 750 in existence. Rigours of time and history wore them down and only thirty remain today. The churches merge a Norwegian concept of religious experience with a pagan art of wood construction. Obviously the authorities now guard and protect them as unique relics of cultural value. The earliest type of design had an almost quadrangular ground plan, but eventually they elongated until they had a nave, colonades and two flanking aisles. To protect the walls against the weather a walkway was built around it with a roof overlap to provide the necessary cover. Everything was made in wood, down to the smallest join-pin. The picturesque dark coating is purely practical - the pitch provides further protection.

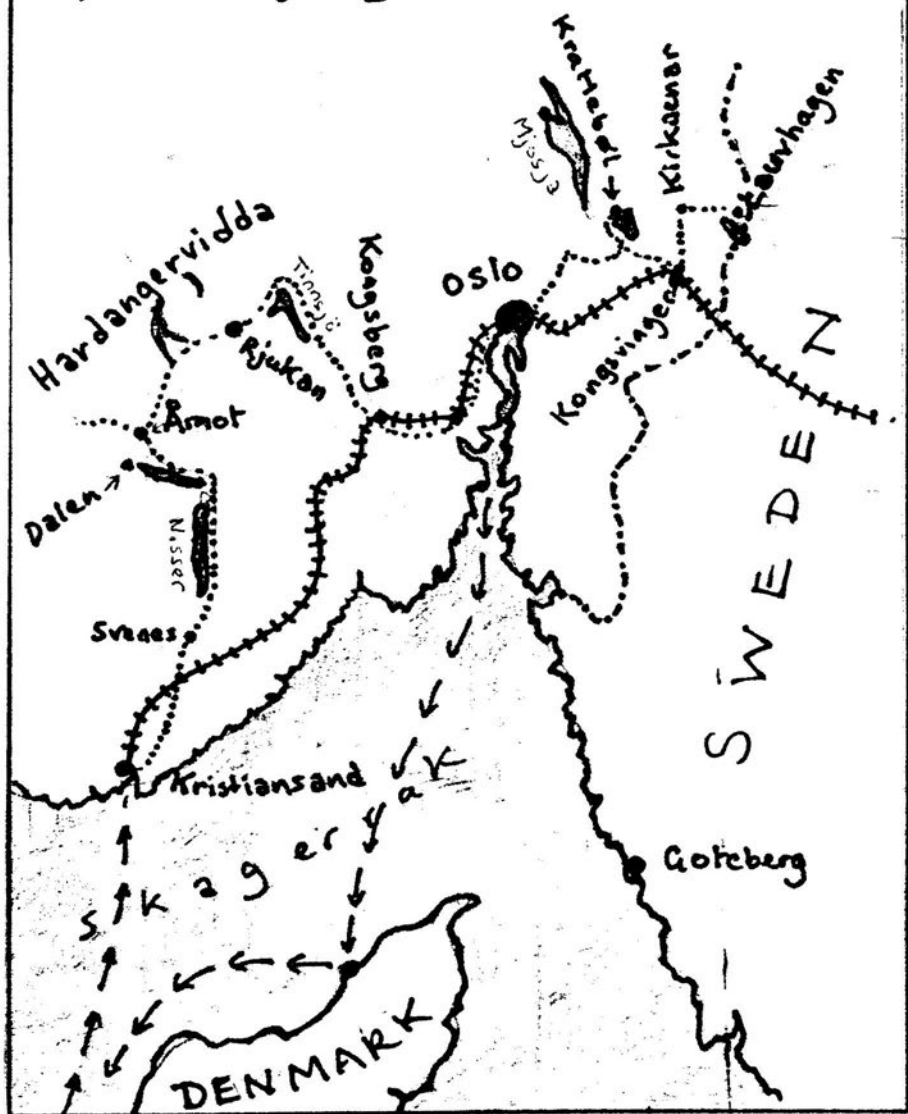
These churches have a double edged function - they are one of the main tourist attractions, yet they are still used on a regular basis for worship. Modern technology has obviously transformed the once primitive condition but even so the traditions of the past are allowed to dominate the atmosphere. Memories of the past were vivid, and it was easy to picture the scene of a few centuries ago. A cold congregation stood huddled, cast into shadow by the flickering light from a feeble candle, staring in rapt attention at the richly dressed priest administering communion. Outside a weak sun glared onto the white snow of winter. Guns, axes, skis and all such stuff lay unprotected yet safe around the small church door. Inside the church the paintings could be discerned, just, but they were colourful and emotive.

When we visited Eidsborg a small group of forty filled the pews. We were given a talk by an attractive

Scale 1 cm = 30 km

44

44



Eidsborg
Stave
Church



Heddadal Church



blonde for half an hour in two languages; Norsk, and English. It was somewhat formal and contrasted with the approach taken by the more imposing structure at Heddal. We were allowed to wander around at our own leisure and thought had obviously been used to present the church in its best light possible. At Eidsborg much of the wall was that of the virgins - the five wise, and the five foolish. As our pretty guide related; "Here are ten virgins. Unfortunately only five remain, due to the action of people rubbing against them." (presumably the virgins that remained were the foolish ones!!)

Personally I should have ~~liked to see~~ the money got from us the tourists used to restore the friezes to what they had been in the past. However, the graveyard was very well kept - there were ~~some quite attractive~~ grave and headstones made of local rock.

The resplendent guide, gloriously set off by her traditional dress and golden jewellery, and flattered by the warm afternoon sun, stood smiling on the steps of the church. It was no surprise to see many of the cameras focussing on her rather than on the church!

Phil Brown

Sunday 27th July

On to Rjukan. The V.S.L. restless, so he set off with Dave Wright, Jase, Duncan, Phil and I to climb out of the valley to the top of the local cable car. Once again we didn't make our destination, but great views into and across the deep valley. Evening story reading.. Jorge Luis Borges (culture!)

THE HEROES OF TELEMAR

We travelled along Route 37 on a cold wet day across moorland and lakes about 3000ft up on the fringe of the Hardangervidda. The road disappeared into a tunnel, and on emerging we saw before us the almost sheer sided valley on the floor of which ribboned out the town of Rjukan. This was to be our base for several days, and whilst there we learned a little about one of the less

pleasant phases of Norwegian history.

At the head of the valley, visible from the tunnel mouth stood the old Vemork Power station, no longer in operation and soon to be opened as a museum. Stretching up behind this are the large pipes bringing water down from numerous lakes on the plateau above. During the war the occupying Germans were using Vemork for manufacture of heavy water, an important component in their attempts to develop the atom bomb before the west. Hidden away in an easily defended and almost inaccessible valley it was an ideal site. A railway line, less than 20km long runs from the Power station to the Tinnsja lake. The Germans sent the heavy water by rail to a ferry boat whence it was despatched to Germany. Our tents were pitched beside the railway, to the delight of Duncan.

The Norwegian resistance was active in Telemark, and when intelligence reports were assessed it became clear that the Vemork plant had to be destroyed. Attempts at bombing proved unsuccessful as the area was well protected, and the allies did not wish to harm the civilian population. An attempt to drop some British commandos from gliders on Hardangervidda failed. A small dedicated group of resistance fighters managed on one occasion to blow up the ferry carrying heavy water in railway wagons but sadly some civilians died as well.

The eventual brilliant and audacious attack that Hollywood recreated with the help of Kirk Douglas in the film "Heros of Telemark" involved a winter foray from a bitter cold vidda. The brave resistance fighters climbed down the frozen waterfall behind the station and blew up key pipes and appliances. The saboteurs escaped in the confusion and hid on the high ground for some time then escaped across country into neutral Sweden. Although the damage was repaired, the heavy water programme was held up and the race to develop the nuclear bomb was won by the allies. The destruction of Vemork was a vital blow in the fight against fascism.

Before we left the Rjukan area we spent a morning visiting a more up to date hydroelectric station at Mar on the outskirts of town near our campsite. Like most

modern Norwegian plants it is entirely underground, and we were shown the turbines, the control room, and the great underground pipes bringing water. The main pipe is nearly a mile long, and climbing beside it is a wooden stairway with 3975 steps, which is claimed to be the longest staircase in the world.

F.H.

Monday 28th July

We went on a hike today.....

HARDANGERVIDDA, DAY I.

A cold day of uncertain promise peeped over the mountains that crushed the valley in which we had our camp. Dawn was always strange in this strange land - and was different to the English one. First there was dark, and then there was light. Today was the hike, and the most serious aspect of the expedition so far. Later on that day, at about eleven o'clock preparations were started. The kit was assembled on to a sheet in front of the van. The quantity was small and it seemed woefully inadequate to deal with the rigours of a Norwegian mountainside. The food appeared to be some crispbread and a few tins.. Some people declined the opportunity to take part, wisely deciding to remain at base camp. The various bits were handed out until everybody had roughly an equal share of the whole, but there wasn't much, and it seemed to be mostly sleeping bags, with even the tents fitting into anxiously small spaces.

We then rattled up to the foot of a smaller mountain which also possessed a cable car. Once we had crammed in the hillside scrolled smoothly beneath us, and wasn't particularly unnerving. However I didn't look down, so I didn't have any object to relate our height to.

We arrived at a lonely cafe at the top of the hill, and after taking yet more photographs of typical scenery we set off on easy gravel path. However the grass merged into forest, the forest blurred into moorland and the moor took on a progressively bleaker aspect the further we walked on into the afternoon.

Some people alternated in map reading and despite the presence of several mountains and numerous lakes it was hard to distinguish one particular feature from another.

The place was lonely. The dull coloured clouds were still and sluggish, sleeping dogs of unawakened danger. The stone was cold and naked, and the colourless nature of the rock contrasted with the new vegetation that was relatively colourful in ochre and green. As we passed through this plateau like landscape, progressing further it started to rain. Not gentle English spring rain but a thin bitter shower that had a prolonged existence. We sliced our way through the sodden moss, and the cold, cold air. This was a very depressing moment; the rain and thick mist conspired together to thwart us from any further penetration of the vidda's concealed secrets.

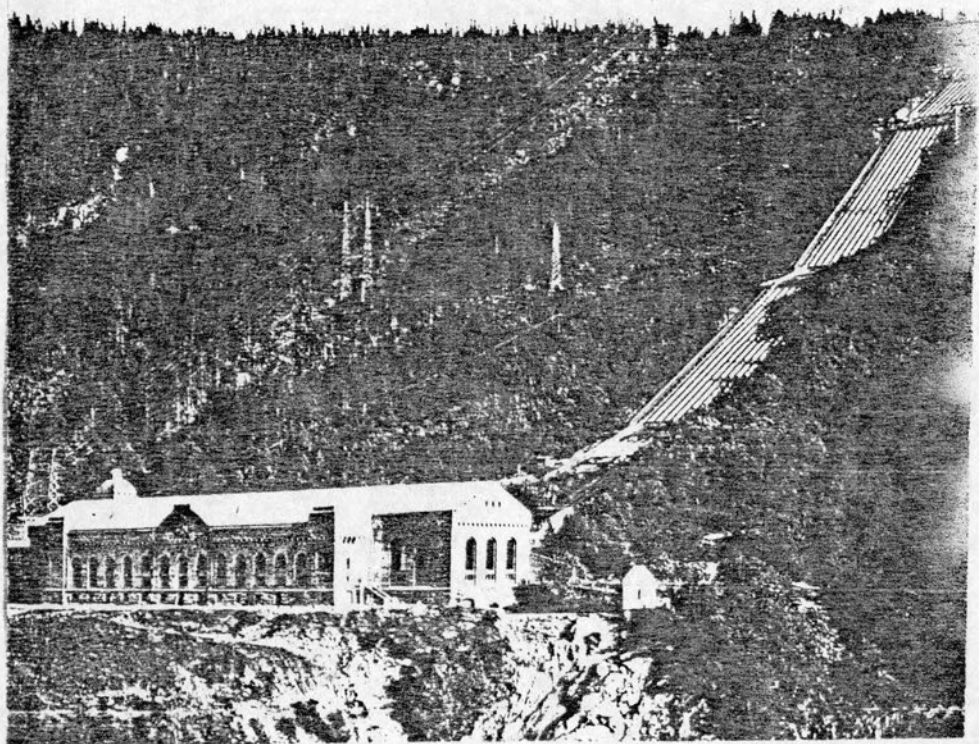
The mountain had character. It felt different to the slumbering children that we have in England - this was a piece of the earth that had a primeval power of stone and water, and it knew it's own strength.

We found a patch of ground to camp on. Little else was suitable, being covered in thick, long springy bushplant that would have prevented us from building up the tents. It was tiny, wet, sloping but relatively perfect. Quickly we built up the tents, and started to prepare the food. Once that was eaten there was nothing to do so most of us went to bed, with the wind and the rain, the lake and the mountain singing a soft lullaby that nobody wanted to hear.

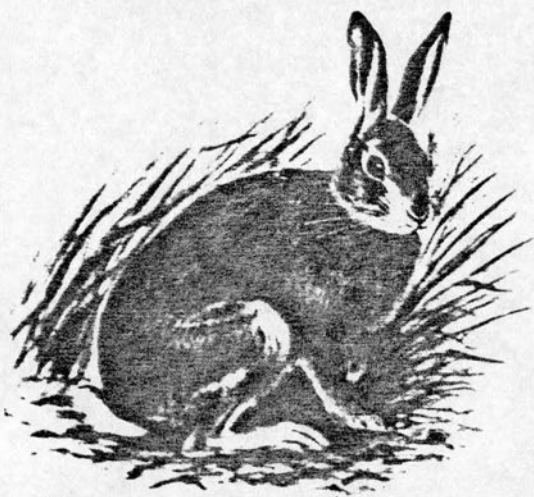
James Foster

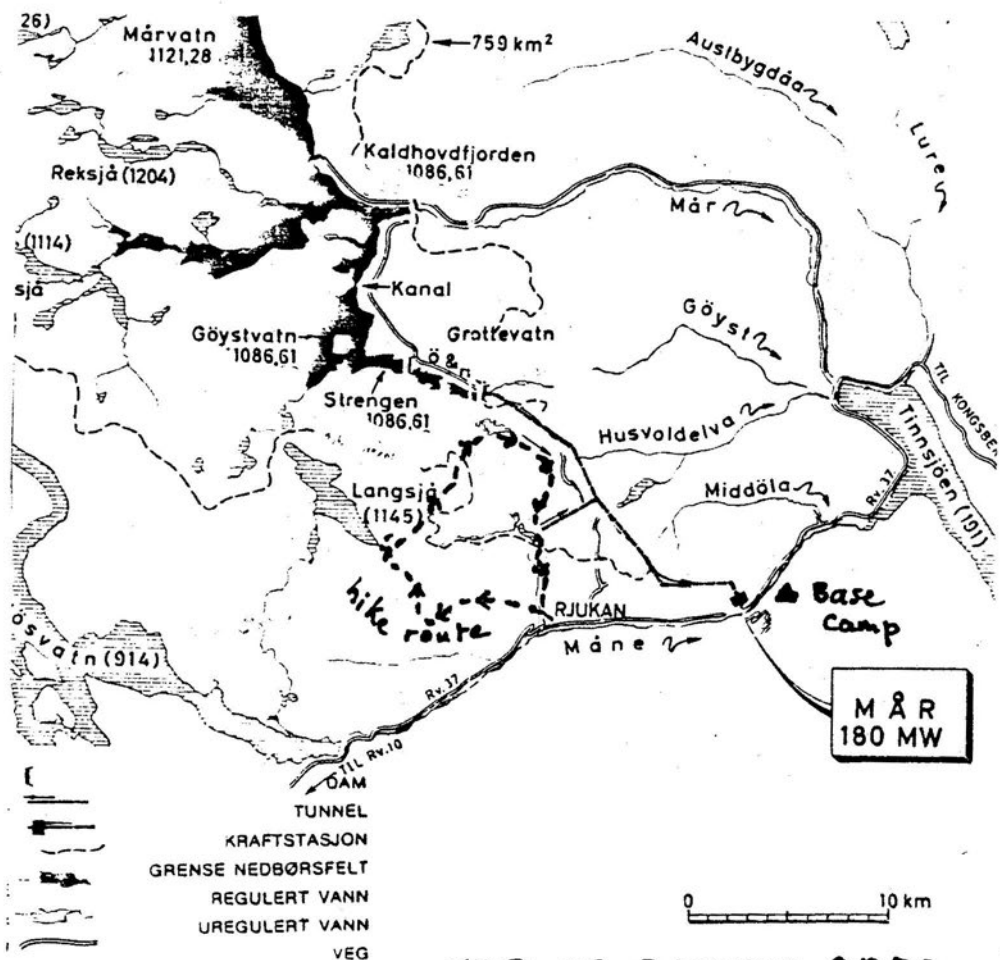
The long, long road over the moors - who trod it first of all? Man, a human being, the first that came here. There was no path before he came. Afterward, some **beast** or other, following the faint tracks over marsh and moorland, wearing them deeper; after these again some Lapp gained scent of the path, and took that way, looking for his reindeer. Thus was made the road through the great Almenning - the common tracts without an owner no-man's-land.

Knut Hamsun 'Growth of the Soil'



Vernore Power Station, Rjukan





MAP OF RJUKAN AREA



Golden
Plover

Birds of
the
Vidda



Ptarmigan

HAFDANGERVIDDA DAY II

We rose early to discover the Norwegian equivalent of a pea souper. The only sound to be heard was the gentle lapping of the waves on the lake shore. Visibility was poor, perhaps only twenty yards, and the air was bitterly cold - we were at over 4000ft, but the rain had stopped.

Reluctantly, slowly, we hauled ourselves out of the pits that had been our beds. In true scout fashion we simultaneously took the tents down and prepared break-fast. Once everything had been packed away, made easier by Jason's generous distribution of advice, we ensured that no trace of our presence remained. There had been the possibility of climbing the nearby mountain aired on the previous day, but the weather and morale of most of the people ruled that suggestion out. Everyone was wearing several layers of clothing - in fact everything that they had with them. There was just one thought on most peoples minds now, to get out of this inhospitable wilderness, return to the cable car as quick as possible and then dry out.

We decided to stick to our original plans rather than return by the easier route we had come on, despite the fact that we could see virtually nothing.

The return journey was not easy to navigate. It was to be a real life test of mapreading skills for everybody, and was not a joke. However, it was not as difficult as might have been imagined, and once the mist had cleared after several hours, it got progressively easier.

We marched almost in silence, occasionally pausing to wait for you-know-who (indeed on some occasions to find him in the mist!) and at first all was dry(ish). However the wet returned, infiltrating everything subtly, almost unnoticeably. My allegedly waterproof gear, rucksack etc succumbed to the might pressure of Norway's impressive water system; it all got soaked.

At length familiar features jolted our memories and we realised we were approaching the cable car. Near the end it was amazing how quickly the scenery changed. It went from moorland to grass, then to forest in the space

of a few short minutes. After that it was a gentle slope on a gravel path, to the cable car, to the van, and then to the campsite, and the comparative dry.

I think the beauty and loneliness of this uncorrupted soil has made an impression on each of us that will not be quickly forgotten. Nevertheless we had accepted an enjoyable, but taxing challenge, and had returned triumphant.

Chris Brockwell

Tuesday 29th July

I don't mind walking in the rain, but I like going back to somewhere dry. The campsite at Rjukan wasn't dry - they had had thunderstorms in our absence. However, we used all our backwoods skills - and the spin drier that was available at the site...

Wednesday 30th July

We moved off today, but before going we went up to the Power station. "This place is more like a nookie factory" (Quote D.W.), nearly all of the employees that we saw were young, attractive females!

We moved to Kongsberg, some people making the 110km journey by bus. Found a site - not as good as those used so far, but O.K. Early night, off early tomorrow.

Thursday 31st July

Today we did Oslo. Some went by train, and we met at the Ostbahnstasjon. Went by ferry to "Framheim" where we went round the building housing the polar ship Fram, in which Fridtjof Nansen, and later Roald Amundsen explored in both the Arctic and Antarctic. We also visited "Kon-tiki", the exhibition of Thor Heyerdahls adventures.

IMPRESSIONS OF A CITY

I came to Oslo with a certain amount of excitement, and a great deal of interest. My view of the city would, I thought, be influenced by my vision of London (large cars

larger buildings, and hemmed in by crowds and high rise). However, after our two visits to the city my final view of Oslo bears little resemblance to my impression of our capital city, London.

I found myself drifting into the rhythm and atmosphere of the city with relative ease, something I find hard to do in busy London. The people were going about their business with a certain amount of hurry, but they were infinitely more relaxed than their English counterparts.

Things on the whole were expensive in the city itself. For example we were told by Paul, a friend of the V.S.L. that a glass of beer in a restaurant cost around 30 Kr that is about £2-70. No hum. Paul is a high ranking government official and used his influence to get us some where to park, as this is a big problem in the city.

The city itself is very tidy and I felt it was very well laid out. There was not much trouble in moving from one place to another. It had something happening on every street corner; buskers, artists, street traders, junk stalls all contributed to the interesting mix.

My longest lasting memory, however, is of the awesome Frogner Park. This place must be experienced to be believed. It was designed by Vigeland in the early part of this century. It is full of bronze and stone statues of men, women and children in some fairly indescribable positions. It is dominated by a massive vertical column depicting human forms intertwined. It is essential to be truly open minded about this place; to reject it on the basis of morality would be to underestimate the power of the art involved. It is irrelevant whether you like it or not: It is concrete poetry. I also think it needs a second visit. I found it slightly unsettling but I should certainly welcome the opportunity to wander around it again. Oslo is an experience totally different to London and an enjoyable contrast. We didn't spend much time there but I am sure I saw enough to give a true reflection. However there was plenty I didn't see and the best way to appreciate Oslo's atmosphere is for you to go and visit it yourself.

Steve Clutterbuck

Friday 1st August

We got to Krattebøl, where we were greeted by Ernest and Margaret Davies of the Nansen International Centre for whom we would work during the next week.

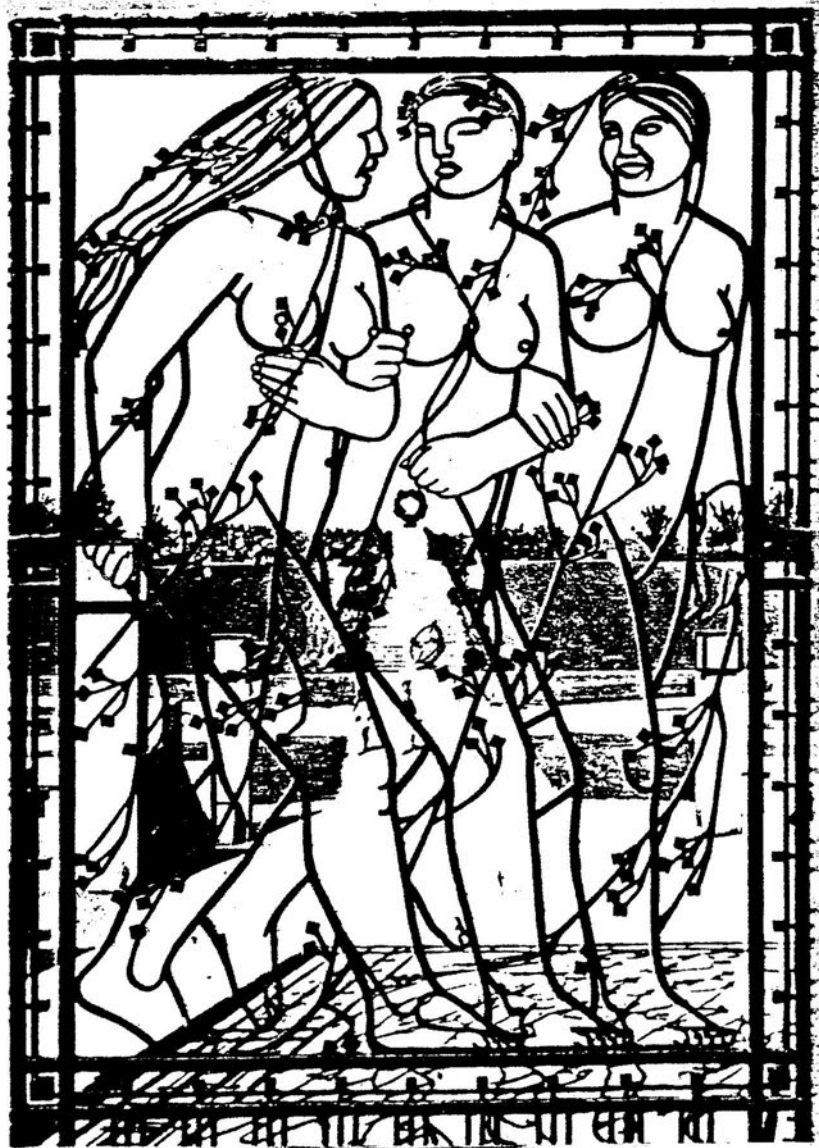
Krattebøl will be well remembered by those who took part in the expeditions of 1980 and 1983. But on this occasion, our stay was only long enough for a tasty meal before setting out for a 100km journey to the new centre at Lauvhagen in Finnskogen (the Finn's wood)

FRIDIJOF NANSEN

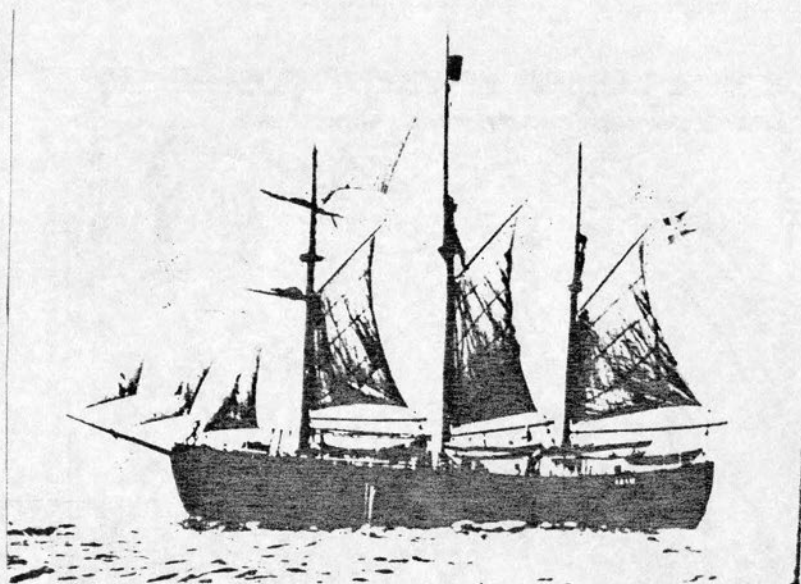
He was born in Store-Fron, near Oslo, on October 10th 1861. He went to school in Oslo, and in 1880 passed the university entrance exam to study zoology. As a young man he was a great outdoor athlete, and was accomplished in skiing, skating, hunting and fishing. In 1882 he joined the sailing ship Viking, and he saw Greenland's mighty icecap. In 1887 he devised a plan in which he would start from the east, as opposed to the more normal west; and which got him to the highest point of his journey in Greenland, 8920ft. Forced to winter in Godthaab, he then studied the Eskimos, and wrote a book, "Eskimo Life".

In 1890 Nansen presented a plan first to the Norwegian Geographical Society, and then to the Royal Geographical Society of London in 1892 for a most dangerous trip. He proposed to build a ship that would be so constructed as to not only resist the ice's crushing effect, but also in fact use it by floating- stuck in the ice - to the North Pole. The idea was accepted and the Norwegian government together with the N.G.S. paid for 2/3 of the cost. Nansen raised the remainder and in June 1893, Fram, (Forward) set sail. In September she proved her designer right and she was trapped in the ice, but not crushed.

Fram drifted towards the pole, then away and so the intrepid Nansen left the ship with Fredrick Johanesen to walk to the pole. The journey was more difficult than imagined and they didn't make the pole. Forced to winter at Jackson Island, they survived on walrus meat for food and blubber for fuel.



THE VIGELAND PARK



Fram in action....



The crew for the Polar journey.

But they were eventually reunited with Fram and they arrived in triumph in Vardo, Fram and her crew unharmed.

During the next twenty years Fridtjof Nansen studied oceanography, until in 1920 he led a delegation to the League of Nations. He was put in charge of the League's repatriation programme. He helped create something known as the "Nansen Passport" which enabled half a million refugees to return to their homes by September 1922. He was awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace next year.

Nansen died at the age of sixty one at his home at Lysaker near Oslo in 1930. His name lives on in the centres which have been developed by Ernest Davies inspired by the humanity and spirit of adventure of one of Norway's most famous sons.

Ali Smith

LAUVHAGEN

Lauvhagen, the site of the new Nansen International Centre, is a traditional wooden Norwegian farm building with traditional big barn, and traditional bog.

(The modern toilets of Norway were of a very high standard, clean and well equipped. The traditional bog is something else! No wonder the vikings raided England, not for rape and pillage, but the pleasure of using a flushing toilet! The traditional model was sited in a shed, and was a bench with two holes cut in it over a deep pit. Certain scouts took one look and vowed never to enter again, and were seen at dusk creeping away into the forest with bog roll and spade.)

Our sleeping accommodation was an old grain storage barn called a Stabbur. This built off the ground on some mushroom shaped stones, to keep the rats out. (Chris became quite paranoid about rat attacks in the night...) There was a bell on top, once used to call in farm labourers for meals. The big barn was used for general storage, and for hanging up Elk shot on the estate (allowed 65 a year).

Time at Lauvhagen was spent working in and around the

buildings and in the forest, canoeing, eating, and sleeping. Other regular activities included nearly blowing up the boiler in the sauna (with a little help from Alex and myself, the shower temperature once got to 97°C) walking through the forest to Sweden and cycling without lamps, and taking football lessons from ten year old Ben who is Ernest's son and stayed with us at Lauvhagen.

When working we split up into two groups for farm and forest. The first forest group consisted of myself, Steve Dave, Dave, Alex, Adam and Frank. The woods had been thinned, any unhealthy or twisted trees cut down to let the remaining trees grow tall and straight. Kjell, the local forester showed us what to do. The felled trees had to be stripped of branches, then two strips of bark peeled off to speed the drying process, then dragged to the road side and stacked. The branches were removed by axe and the trunks stripped with axe or knife. The stacks were constructed by placing the thick ends of trunks on top of each other, the ends fanning out behind. This enables the wood to dry out quickly, not to collapse in heavy snow, and be easily seen in a snowdrift. During the first morning we completed six stacks, and four in the afternoon.

The next day the groups swapped, with Ian, Duncan, Chris James, Gary and Lisa (two helpers at Lauvhagen). Dave Williams and I had to explain what to do. The technique was different for birch trees and conifers, which meant knowing the one from the other. This proved rather hard for a couple of people who probably wouldn't know an oak tree if it fell on them.

Before we left we had completed many stacks, and we were complimented by Kjell on their quality. The time in the forest was one of the most enjoyable parts of the visit, the only drawback was being eaten alive by the inch long mosquitoes (except, strangely enough, Duncan).

Jason Stone.

Saturday 2nd August

After lunch canoeing. Alex, Adam and James fell out of their canoes. Evening, we visit Sweden.

Sunday 3rd August

Today was a day of culture. We went to a village fete

THE DAY OF THE GOAT

After a few days of hard work at the Nansen centre it was decided that the party needed to be introduced to a bit of Norwegian culture. This was to take the form of a visit to a local folk festival at Kirkenær in a sort of outdoor folk museum.

On arrival at the festival we were amazed to find what appeared to be a neo-Nazi meeting, because an old man was conducting a religious service, with a captivated audience, national flags, and the presence of the military, although the soldiers were a little too laid back for real squaddies.

The party was well equipped to survive such rabid indoctrination, especially when someone sniffed out the possibility of lots of free food. It was either waffles, traditional bread, or something to do with goats. They like goats in Norway. We were invited to partake of such delicacies as cheese, cream and yoghurt, all of which everyone sampled generously, and in some cases, immoderately. It was found that the festival consisted of much more than a food handout. Traditional Norwegian crafts such as candle making, soap making, felt making and wool dyeing were on display too. One of the novel aspects of their culture were the birch bark techniques. Thin strips of birch bark were used to construct surprisingly strong structures such as baskets and mats. Another aspect that I personally found interesting was the wood carving. The displayed work, simple tools and recently finished carved models, done without any sanding and varnishing shows a high degree of skill.

In the afternoon there was a particularly fascinating ploughing display. This is a highly underrated sport with lots of tense action and fast moving scenes. I would have yawned except I was asleep. Of slightly more interest was a display of ancient farming implements looking not too dissimilar to the ones our ancestors used. Perhaps any

anthropologists amongst you could offer an explanation?

The more adventurous of the party took part in a horse shoe throwing competition. The English can beat them at football, outplay them at cricket, and overpower them in rugby but at the national sport of throwing horse shoes they are the unchallenged masters. Mind you, in Scotland they probably throw the horse.

However several intrepid members of the Unit challenged Norwegian superiority in this field, but they didn't get very far.

Another competition that was particularly Norwegian was the wood bundle carrying race. Basically you had to pick up lots of long thin branches into quite a heavy load and carry it as fast as you could for about twenty yards. Nobody attempted this, not even Dave Wright, but several members could be seen discussing wisely the best tactics...

On the whole everybody enjoyed themselves, even if the food was about the most cultural some of us got. Even so there were remarkably few complaints, and quite a few compliments on the whole.

Dave Williams

THE NIGHT OF THE ELK

So far very few people had spotted an elk. So, since we had been assured this was one of the best places for elk hunting, it was decided to organise a party of people to rectify this oversight.

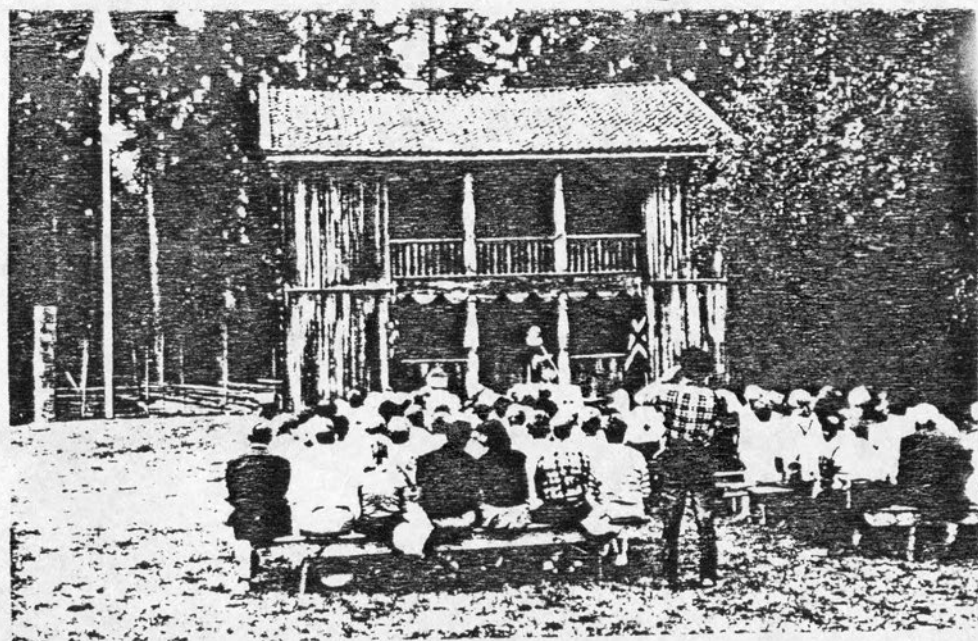
It was still early evening when we boarded the safari Bedford, and set off in hot pursuit of any elks. Eyes on stalks, we quietly and efficiently stalked them from the van. Funnily enough we didn't see any. Could it have anything to do with the roaringly silent van, I wonder?

The only thing our accomplished Nimrods managed to hunt out was a road block. This had been set up to help prevent the black market of alcohol that was almost literally flooding in from Sweden as a strike prevented purchase of alcohol on our side of the border. Not that it was of much interest to us, as none of us could afford



Gruodag

The Service





Canoeing on the Swedish border



Work in the Forest

alcohol, never mind it being black market. So having bluffed our way through the roadblock (only Frank having the vocabulary to cope with this) the van was parked and we waited and waited, and waited....

Look! Look! cried someone, and to everybody's surprise an elk was seen. Three eventually arrived and that eminent regius professor F.Henderson was on hand to offer the opinion that it was a cow elk with two calves. Yes, but whilst we talked about it they made off and disappeared. As it got dark, we all returned, and I was quite pleased to have seen them. Brushing off the last traces of Norwegian nature, we came back to the centre, having failed to capture the episode on film.

Adam Foster

Tuesday 5th August

Krattebøl Dave Wright and I with Frank and Ernest away from Finnskog to do some wood cutting. Frank on the chainsaw all day. Gorgeous evening meal then back to Lauvhaugen to some bad news. Celia had driven the car in to the forest to take some food to the working lads. She was driving slowly when another car hared round a bend. The Ford was badly damaged and was eventually dragged away by a tractor. Neither Celia nor Rachel were hurt thank God, but the incident put a damper on the whole group that evening.

Wednesday 6th August

More work in the forest, then more canoeing on another lake. Dave Williams tries eskimo roll in 2ft of water..

Thursday 7th August

Woke up with a terrible sore throat. Today was the day of goodbyes. How someone can put up with the 44th for any length of time defeats me, but Ernest managed so our thanks go to him.. Fond farewells to all at centre, then off by various routes and methods to Oslo again.

Farvel, farvel,

Takk for mange heldig timer
Jeg skal komme igjen!

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

I must confess before I start that as far as the U.K. is concerned I am a rail nut with more than a passing interest in the now fragmented parts of the old National Bus Company i.e. I am declaring an interest in accordance with true Hanseatic tradition.

However as far as Norway was concerned, I had been totally ignorant of their rail and road systems. Even now I don't claim to be an expert, but I now do have a sketchy experience that enables me to portray a fairly accurate image of the buses and trains of Norway.

Nevertheless, I had been promised a rail trip and I also managed to squeeze in a bus journey as well. The bus journey was quite long - approximately 65 miles - from Rjukan to Kongsberg in a Volvo. Inside it had a fairly standard layout, roughly the same as an English coach really. However the seats reclined but the difference is minimal. Also there is a large space at the back just where the back seats should be to deposit rucksacks etc. That is a good idea - one up to the Norwegians.

You may remember that at the slide show the V.S.L. said that I had missed my aim of travelling on a Norwegian train. That is actually strictly true because that train was in fact Swedish. However a Norwegian loco was added, and this was a bonus rather than a setback. I was hauled in both Swedish and Norwegian rolling stock which had come a good distance from Stockholm by the time that we joined it at Kongsvinger, and it was by then rather full. Even so we sat down at seats without tables, but despite the extra comfort of the seats themselves there was limited leg room which cramped me a bit. The trains had an equivalent of the bus back space to leave bags and other luggage, but so does B.R.

But the verdict on the respective systems? Well mind the prosecution would offer the evidence of the toilets as Exhibit 'A'. The Norwegian cubicles were even more cramped than those provided by British Rail, a feat that is the triumph of the volume of solid bodies over

available space. Exhibit 'B' ladies and gentlemen of the jury is the absence of openable windows. I personally usually spend half of any journey at an open window that allows me to enjoy the sights without any-thing or body being in the way or inconvenienced.

And so in summing up I direct you the jury to acquit BR of the charge of gross inferiority to the Norwegian rail system. I did however enjoy immensely the opportunity to make the compariso, and I look forward to other chances to go on such trips.

Duncan Jennings

THE JOURNEY HOME

On arriving at Oslo at midday we met up with Phil to help push his car up onto the ship. We made good use of some free time after lunch ; we had another good look at the places of interest in Oslo. Having arranged a rendez vous at Frogner park we met up with the others there. On then to the ferry terminal. After eating a dinner prepared in cold drizzle we boarded the ferry and quickly got to our cabins - complete with showers!

When we left Oslo it was dark. The last image of Norway we received was the sight of the moon shining onto a brightly lit town, with the reflected neon lights dappling the waters as we rippled silently past.

When we woke up the next day it was discovered (by the early birds anyway) that we were in Denmark. Some people came up from the cabins hearing a rumour about a small speck on the horizen being Denmark, but a small expeditionary force actually landed and trod Danish tarmac.

Much of the day was spent beating the VSL at nomination whist, until the evening when everybody prepared for the Cold Table. Reference to this sordid affair is made elsewhere in the magazine. Next morning many were dismayed to see England, and hear on the radio the soothing tones of the Radio Two breakfast D.J. By midday we were on dry land, enacting the ancient custom of pushing bent Ford Escouts through customs sheds in Harwich.

On the way back we dropped Steve off at the Queen rock concert at Knebworth, and after that it was just a few hours more until we reached Gloucester and home. So ended the Expedition of '86

Ian Heathcock

Thus ended the third visit of the 44th Gloucester Venture Scouts to Norway and the Nansen International Centres in the 1980's. Each visit has been different - different people, different routes, different work, but there have been a few important similarities. Each has been an adventure which has been enhanced by the fellowship that developed during the trip both within the Unit and between the Unit and those who we have met and worked with at the centres at Krattebøl, Rosenborg, Breivold and latterly Lauvhaugen. We are greatly indebted to N.I.C. and particularly to Ernest and Margaret Davies, who have given us a wonderful opportunity to get to know a great deal more of the "real" as opposed to the "tourist" Norway, and some of it's people. Our thanks to them all and to everyone we met and worked with in Finnskogen.

Finally, as a well known M.C.P. I must admit to have been a little doubtful as to the effect on the party of being accompanied on much of our journey by a two year old baby and her mother. I don't know why, because having Cecilia and Rachel along added an extra dimension to the party, making it a much more enriching experience for us all.

F.H.

So what next?? The 1987 Expedition will take the form of a cycle tour round the northern coast of Scotland. The exact dates have yet to be fixed, but it will almost certainly be during the last two weeks of August.

As well as cycling, a little gentle mountain climbing will occur, as well as a two day jaunt across the Pentland Firth to the Orkneys.

More details by the end of March.

