

DENMARK, SWEDEN, NORWAY

AND THE

UNITED KINGDOM

Part 1 - Scandinavia

APRIL - JUNE 2005

Jim Russell

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Itinerary - Scandinavia and UK - 2005

Part 1 - Scandinavia

DATE	Day	Destination	Transport	Accommodation
Mon 18 April	01	Mel - Copenhagen	QF9 15:30	
Tues 19 April	02	Arrive Copenhagen	QF3431 07:05	Ansgar Hotel Colbjornsensgade 29 Copenhagen 1653 +45 33 21 21 96
Wed 20 April	03	Copenhagen		Ansgar Hotel
Thur 21 April	04	Copenhagen		Ansgar Hotel
Fri 22 April	05	Copenhagen		Ansgar Hotel
Sat 23 April	06	Copenhagen - Odense - Copenhagen	Train 08:00 Return 17:06	Ansgar Hotel
Sun 24 April	07	Copenhagen – Bornholm – Malmo - Kalmar	Train 06:39 Arrive Ystad 07:55 Ferry Ystad – Bornholm 08:35 – 09:45 Bornholm – Ystad 15:00 – 16:10 Local Train Ystad – Malmo 18:08 – 18:55 Train Malmo – Alvesta 19:13 – 20:32 Alvesta – Kalmar 20:42 – 22:00	First Hotel Witt Kalmar Sodra Langgatan 42 SE-392 31 Kalmar +46 48 01 52 50
Mon 25 April	08	Kalmar		First Hotel Witt Kalmar
Tues 26 April	09	Kalmar - Stockholm	Train Kalmar – Alvesta 07:06 – 08:25 Alvesta – Stockholm 08:34 – 11:40	Lord Nelson Hotel Vasterlanggaten 22 Stockholm 11128 + 46 8 50640120
Wed 27 April	10	Stockholm		Lord Nelson Hotel
Thurs 28 April	11	Stockholm		Lord Nelson Hotel
Fri 29 April	12	Stockholm – Oslo Meet Barb at Tulip Inn Rainbow Opera 1830	Train Stockholm – Oslo 07:00 – 11:49	Tulip Inn Rainbow Munch Munchs Gate 5, Oslo 0130 +47 23 21 96 00
Sat 30 April	13	Oslo		Tulip Inn Rainbow Munch
Sun 01 May	14	Oslo		Tulip Inn Rainbow Munch
Mon 02 May	15	King of Fjords. Oslo – Myrdal – Flåm – Balestrand Retain Voucher and Combination Ticket	Train 61 Oslo – Myrdal - 08:11 – 12:53 Myrdal – Flåm - 13:02 – 14:00 Ferry Flåm – Balestrand 15:30 – 16:55	Kviknes Hotel Boks 24 N-6898 Balestrand +47 57 69 42 00

Tues 03 May	16	Fjærland Glacier	M/s Fjærland 08:15			Kviknes Hotel Balestrand
Wed 04 May	17	Balestrand - Bergen	Ferry 16:45 – 22:00			Neptun Hotel Valkensdorgae 8 N-5012 Bergen +47 55 30 68 00
Thur 05 May	18	Start Hurtigruten – Cruise Bergen	Port Bergen	Arrive	Depart 20:00	
Fri 06 May	19	Cruise Day 2	Florø	02:00	02:15	
			Maløy	04:15	04:30	
			Torvik	07:15	07:30	
			Ålesund	08:45	09:30	
			Geiranger		13:30	
			Ålesund	17:45	18:45	
			Molde	21:15	22:00	
Sat 07 May	20	Cruise Day 3 Meet Nam at Music Museum	Kristiansund	01:30	01:45	
			Trondheim	08:15	12:00	
			Rorvik	20:45	21:15	
Sun 08 May	21	Cruise Day 4	Bronnøysund	00:30	01:00	
			Sandnessjøen	03:40	04:15	
			Nesna	05:25	05:30	
			Ornes	09:00	09:30	
			Bodø	12:30	15:00	
			Stamsund	19:00	19:30	
			Svolvær	21:00	22:00	
Mon 09 May	22	Cruise Day 5	Stokmarknes	00:30	01:00	
			Sortland	02:15	03:00	
			Risøyhamn	04:15	04:30	
			Harstad	06:45	08:00	
			Finnsnes	11:00	11:45	
			Tromsø	14:30	18:30	
			Skjervøy	22:00	22:45	
Tues 10 May	23	Cruise Day 6	Oksfjord	01:45	02:15	
			Hammerfest	05:15	06:45	
			Havøysund	09:30	09:45	
			Honningsvåg	11:45	15:15	
			Kjollefjord	17:30	17:45	
			Mehamn	19:45	20:00	
			Berlevag	22:30	22:45	
Wed 11 May	24	Cruise Day 7	Batsfjord	00:30	01:00	
			Vardø	04:00	04:15	
			Vadsø	07:30	08:15	
			Kirkenes	10:00	12:45	
			Vardø	16:00	17:00	
			Batsfjord	20:15	20:30	
			Berlevag	22:15	22:30	

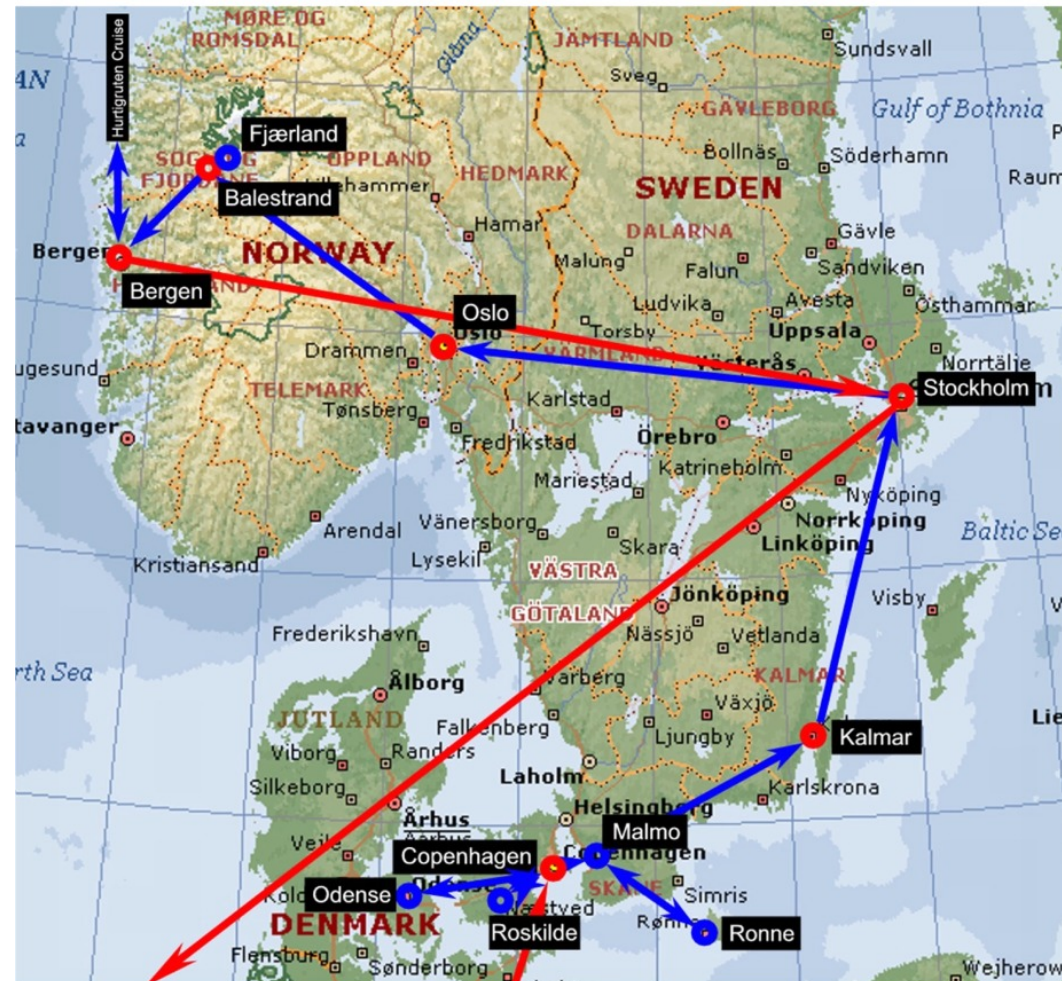
Thurs 12 May	25	Cruise Day 8	Mehamn	01:15	01:15	
			Kjollefjord	03:15	03:30	
			Honningsvåg	05:45	06:15	
			Havøysund	08:15	08:30	
			Hammerfest	11:15	12:45	
			Oksfjord	15:40	15:45	
			Skjervøy	19:15	19:45	
			Tromsø	23:45		
Fri 13 May	26	Cruise Day 9	Tromsø		01:30	
			Finnsnes	02:15	04:45	
			Harstad	08:00	08:30	
			Risøyhamn	10:45	11:00	
			Sortland	12:30	13:00	
			Stokmarknes	14:15	15:15	
			Svolvær	18:30	19:30	
			Stamsund	21:00	21:30	
Sat 14 May	27	Cruise Day 10	Bodø	01:30	04:00	
			Ørnes	07:00	07:15	
			Nesna	11:00	11:15	
			Sandnessjøen	12:30	13:30	
			Brønnøysund	16:50	17:00	
			Rørvik	20:30	21:30	
Sun 15 May	28	Cruise Day 11	Trondheim	06:30	10:00	
			Kristiansund	16:30	17:00	
			Molde	20:30	21:30	
			Ålesund	24:00		
Mon 16 May	29	Cruise Day 12 End Hurtigruten – Cruise Bergen	Ålesund	00:00	00:45	
			Torvik	02:00	02:15	
			Maløy	05:00	05:45	
			Florø	08:00	08:15	
			Bergen	14:30		
			Rainbow Hotel Rosenkrantz Rosenkrantzgaten 7 N-5003 Bergen 47 55 30 14 00			
Tues 17 May	30	Bergen				
Wed 18 May	31	Bergen to Newcastle UK	Bergen – Stockholm AY684 11:35 Stockholm – Heathrow BA779 15:40 Heathrow – Newcastle BA1338 20:45			Isabel Sutcliffe's
Thur 19 May 2005	32					Isabel's

Part 2 – England and Scotland

Fri 20 May	33	Newcastle - Kirkaldy	Car Pickup 09:00 Hertz – Newcastle Airport	Dave and Helen's
Sat 21 May	34	Kirkaldy	Car	Dave and Helen's
Sun 22 May	35	Kirkaldy - Sheffield	Car	Premier Travel Inn, Sheffield (Arena), Attercliffe Common Rd, Sheffield, S. Yorkshire S9 2LU Tel: +44 (0)870 238 3316 Fax: 0114 2423703
Mon 23 May	36	Sheffield	Car	
Tues 24 May	37	Sheffield – Shropshire (Ironbridge)	Car	John & Ann Richardson
Wed 25 May	38	Ironbridge Gorge	Car	John & Ann Richardson
Thurs 26 May	39	Ironbridge - Cheltenham	Car	Jo Bailey's
Fri 27 May	40	Cheltenham	Car	Jo's
Sat 28 May	41	Cheltenham -Bristol (Clevedon)	Car	Visit Paddy Dalloway – Lunch 11:45
Sun 29 May	42	Bristol - Oxford	Car	Jennie and Peter McFadden
Mon 30 May	43	Oxford - London	Car - Drop off 08:30 35 Edgware Road Central London 1 day travel card Zones 1 to 6 6 pounds Visit Joan and Harry at Bromley	Premier Travel Inn, London (County Hall), Belvedere Road London SE1 7PB Tel: 08702383300 Fax: 02079021619 Visit Joan and Harry at Bromley
Tues 31 May	44	London		Premier Travel Inn, London (County Hall)
Wed 01 June	45	UK to New York – Melbourne Depart Heathrow 1025	Heathrow – JFK BA175 10:25 JFK - LAX QF0108 19:20 – 22:10 LAX – MEL QF0094 23:40	
Fri 03 June		Arrive Melbourne	07:55	

Maps – Part 1 - Scandinavia

Scandinavia



Flights

Melbourne - Singapore - London - Copenhagen

Bergen - Stockholm - London - Newcastle

Hurtigruten Ports



Depart Melbourne 15:30, on QF0009, on time for Singapore, London and Copenhagen. A smooth flight to Singapore. Eat dinner but can't be bothered with refreshments before we land. The food is no worse than before, it's just not interesting enough to eat if you're not hungry.

Short stopover in Singapore was quite pleasant. The British Airways – Qantas lounge has been refurbished and enlarged and is bright and cheery with much better catering. Rejoin the plane for the flight onto London. Skip supper and settle down to try to get some sleep. Must have dozed off, as we seemed to be half way there when

I checked our current position. Flight was a little rougher than usual.

Arrived London just after 05:00, Tuesday, grey and raining. I hope it improves before I return to the UK in a month's time.

Denmark

<http://www.lonelyplanet.com/destinations/europe/denmark/>

Full country name: Kingdom of Denmark

Area: 43,094 sq km

Population: 5.38 million

Capital City: Copenhagen

People: 95% Danish; 5% foreign nationals

Language: Danish, English, German

Religion: Lutheran

Government: constitutional monarchy

Head of State: Queen Margrethe II

Head of Government: Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen

GDP: US\$155.3 billion

GDP per capita: US\$28,900

Annual Growth: 1.5%

Inflation: 2.5%

Major Industries: Agricultural products, grains, meat and dairy, fish, beer, oil and gas, home electronics and furniture

Major Trading Partners: EU (esp. Germany, Sweden, UK, Netherlands, France and Italy), USA

Member of EU: Yes

History

<http://www.lonelyplanet.com/destinations/europe/denmark/history.htm>

Nomadic hunters followed the lichen and moss-eating reindeer into post-glacial Denmark. The reindeer heard 'go north' voices, but the Stone Age hunters stayed put, sowing seeds in the ash of slash-and-burn fields, fencing in stock animals and burying their dead vertically. Skill and artistry flowered in the Bronze Age from 1800 BC, trade routes paddled all the way south and the most beautiful and valuable objects were buried in bogs as sacrificial offerings. Iron clanged in from 500 BC and was domestically available, leading to the development of large agricultural communities. Present-day

Denmark can trace its linguistic and cultural roots back to when the region was settled by the Danes, a tribe that is thought to have migrated south from Sweden around 500 AD.

In the late 9th century, warriors led by the Norwegian Viking chieftain Hardegon conquered the Jutland peninsula. The Danish monarchy, which claims to be the world's oldest, dates back to Hardegon's son, Gorm the Old, who established his reign early in the 10th century. Gorm's son, Harald

Bluetooth, completed the conquest of the Danes, speeding their conversion to Christianity. Bluetooth's gob-stopping successors, Forkbeard and sons, got the wood on England, setting up shop and throne and living the sweet life of Anglo-Dane monarchs. They kept it together for half a century or so, but as Viking power waned, the borders of the Danish kingdom shrank back to Denmark.

Blackadderish strife, plots, counter plots and assassinations marked the medieval period. By the late 14th century, upstart dynasties intermarried, eventually forming the Kalmar Union under fair Queen Magrethe; Denmark, Norway and Sweden, now all bunked in together, started to exasperate one another. Sweden was particularly peeved by the profligate Danish spending on wars, and the union dissolved in 1523 when Sweden elected Gustav Vasa as its king. Norway, however, was to remain under Danish rule for another three centuries.

In the 16th century the Reformation swept through the country, leaving burnt churches and civil warfare in its wake. The fighting ended in 1536 with the ousting of the powerful Catholic church and the establishment of a Danish Lutheran church headed by the monarchy. King Christian IV ruled for the first half of the 17th century, undermining fabulous trade and wealth creation by leading his subjects into the disastrous Thirty Years War with Sweden. Denmark lost land and money and the king an eye. Even more disastrous were the losses to Sweden incurred some decades later by Christian's successor, King Frederick III. Denmark emerged slowly from these wars, focusing on civil development and reform.

During the Napoleonic Wars Britain attacked Copenhagen twice, inflicting heavy damage on the Danish fleet in 1801 and leaving much of Copenhagen ablaze in 1807. The Swedes then took advantage of a weakened Denmark, successfully demanding that Denmark cede Norway to them. The 19th century might have started off lean, dismal and dominated by a small Frenchman with a big ego, but by the 1830s Denmark had awakened to a cultural revolution in the arts, philosophy and literature. A democratic movement in Denmark led to the adoption of a constitution on 5 June 1849, which in turn led to the formation of a Danish constitutional monarchy. Germany took control of Schleswig in southern Jutland, after its inhabitants, people of both Danish and German heritage, revolted against the new constitution.

Neutral in WWI, Denmark reaffirmed its neutrality at the outbreak of WWII; but, on 9 April 1940, with German warplanes flying over Copenhagen, Denmark surrendered to Germany. The Danes were able to cling to a degree of autonomy, but after three years the Germans ended the pretence and took outright control. Although the island of Bornholm was heavily bombarded by Soviet forces, the rest of Denmark emerged from WWII relatively unscathed. Under the leadership of the Social Democrats, a comprehensive social welfare state was established. Denmark is still providing its citizens with extensive cradle-to-grave security.

When Norway broke its political ties with Denmark in the early 19th century, the former Norwegian colonies of Iceland, Greenland and the Faroe Islands stayed under Danish administration. Iceland, under Danish rule since 1380, declared itself an independent state in 1918, although foreign policy was still controlled from Copenhagen. Iceland became completely independent in 1944. The Kingdom of Denmark still includes Greenland and the Faroe Islands, but both are essentially self-governing. The Faroe Islands has had home rule since 1948, Greenland since 1979. In part because Denmark retains responsibility for their banking, defence and foreign relations, Greenland and the Faroe Islands each have two parliamentary representatives in the Danish Folketing. Unlike Denmark, however, neither Greenland nor the Faroe Islands is part of the EU.

Although Denmark voted to join the European Community (now the European Union) in 1973, the Danes have been hesitant to support expansion of the European Union (EU). Indeed, when the Maastricht Treaty, which established the terms of a European economic and political union, came up for ratification in Denmark in June 1992, Danish voters rejected it by a margin of 51% to 49%. After being granted exemptions from the Maastricht Treaty's common defence and single currency provisions, the Danes, by a narrow majority, voted to accept the treaty in a second referendum held in May 1993.

In September 2000 the Danes signalled a deeper discontent with European integration when they rejected adoption of the euro, despite strong support for the pan-European currency by the government and business leaders. An election in November 2001 brought a centre-right, conservative coalition to power with a campaign that focused on immigration. Fears generated in the wake of the September 11 terrorist attacks on the USA were an important factor. The debate over Denmark's position in the world continues, especially in regard to Europe, immigration, Denmark's role in Iraq and the rise of the far right.



Radhus - Copenhagen

Flight is scheduled for 07:05 so I settle in the BA Terraces Lounge and use their internet connections to check emails. David Hart at Qantas Travel has found suitable flights for me to visit Que and Hans in Dhaka before I go to Burma. Organizer of the Burma trip has confirmed my name is on the list. Provided he gets the numbers the trip should be on.



Hans Christian Andersen Boulevard

Flight to Copenhagen is delayed a few minutes due to tarmac traffic and other planes queued to take off. This does not matter too much as I was going to arrive at the hotel a bit early to check in. Flight is good and as we approach Copenhagen the weather clears and I have a good view of the flat farmland of Denmark and the connecting Copenhagen and Malmö in Sweden.

A short wait for the bag, then through passport control, get some cash and onto the train to the city centre that runs every 10 minutes. Map for the hotel is not good and I walk a little further than necessary to the Ansgar Hotel. By now it is 11:30 and the room is ready. It is clean, comfortable and the hotel is close to the Central Station.

After freshening up I head for the tourist information centre to buy a Copenhagen Card for travel on the public transport and admissions to many museums and other attractions.



Inderhavn

I planned to walk around a little to orientate myself and finished up walking for about 3 hours along Hans Christian Anderson's Boulevard, it is the 200th anniversary of his birth, past the town hall, across the bridge and along Amager Boulevard, passing the remains of the former defensive bastions of the city.

I have spotted the unusual steeple of the Vor Freslers Kirke (The Church of Our Savior) and cross a foot bridge over the Stadsgraven, formerly part of the defensive moat, and head toward it. I wander through residential street and finally come to it.

This is not hard, Copenhagen is very flat and bicycle friendly and landmarks can be seen from many locations. Bicycles have right of way, cars actually stop for them, and you step off the footpath onto a bicycle path at your own risk.



Hans Christian Andersen

The kirke is open and I go in. Inside is a large open and simple space with an ornate altar and a very ornately carved organ. Some one was playing and it sounded very good. The tower stands 90m tall and is built of wood sheathed with copper and the protective railings of the external stairs spiraling to the top are gilded so that from a distance the tower is spectacular.



Christianshavns Kanal

Vor Freslers Kirke is in the district of Christianshavn and nearby is another, Christians Kirke. I find it easily. It is located amongst new apartments and very modern office buildings. I walk west along the bank of the Inderhaven thinking I will be able to cross the Christianshavns Kanal and continue my walk back to the hotel. Wrong, I have to retrace my steps.

Back at the hotel I have a short rest before going out to get something to eat.

It has been a pleasant sunny day, but the breeze has been cool, and now, at about 1900 it is starting to get cold. Some light snow is forecast for tomorrow, we'll see.

Copenhagen

<http://www.lonelyplanet.com/destinations/europe/copenhagen/index.htm>

Copenhagen has been Denmark's capital for 600 years. It's an appealing and largely low-rise city comprised of block after block of period six-storey buildings. Church

steeple punctuate the skyline, with only a couple of modern hotels marring the view.

No matter what your interests, Copenhagen has a whole lot of sightseeing and entertainment on offer. Historic or modern, gay or straight, sleek shops or cosy cafes - it's all nestled right in the heart of a compact city and presented with typical Scandinavian assurance and flair.

Area: 88 sq km

Population: 662,000

Country: Denmark

Time Zone: GMT/UTC +1 (Central European Time)

Telephone Area Code: There are no area codes in Denmark; just dial the eight-digit number.



Christianshavns Kanal

Orientation

Copenhagen sits on the east coast of Denmark's largest island, Zealand (Sjælland). A prominent point of orientation in the city is the main rail station, Central Station (Hoved Banegården), which is bordered to the west by the primary hotel precinct and to the northeast by the longstanding entertainment attraction of Tivoli. Just

north of Tivoli is Rådhuspladsen, the central city square and the main terminus for the local bus network. To the east is the city's waterfront, including the canal-riddled district of Christianshavn.



Vor Freslers Kirke

Copenhagen boasts the world's longest mall, Strøget, which is an amalgamation of five streets - Frederiksberggade, Nygade, Vimmelskaftet, Amagertorv and Østergade - running right through the centre of the city between Rådhuspladsen and Kongens Nytorv, the square at the head of the Nyhavn canal.



Windmill - Kastellet - Copenhagen



Church and Parade Ground - Kastellet - Copenhagen

Copenhagen – History

<http://www.lonelyplanet.com/destinations/europe/copenhagen/history.htm>



Kastellet - Copenhagen



Commandant's Office - Kastellet - Copenhagen

In the centre of Copenhagen is a small, canal-encircled island called Slotsholmen, which serves as Denmark's governmental seat. It was here in 1167 that Bishop Absalom constructed a small fortress within a harbourside village to try and stifle regular raids by the German Wends on the east coast of Zealand, thereby laying the foundations for the future capital of Denmark. The fortress inflated the village's sense of self-worth,

causing it to grow significantly and to adopt the name Købmandshavn (Merchant's Port) - the moniker was eventually shortened to København.



Vor Frøens Kirke

The fortifications built by the bishop were destroyed during an attack on the town by ransackers from northern Germany in 1369 and work on a new defensive structure, Copenhagen Castle, began seven years later. The city's fate as the capital of Denmark was secured in 1416 when the reigning monarch, King Erik of Pomerania, moved into his sturdy new castle quarters. Grand Renaissance buildings such as the Rundetårn (Round Tower) - established as an

observatory and still regularly used for that purpose - and Børsen, home to Denmark's stock exchange, were added in the first half of the 17th century by the aesthetically minded ruler Christian IV.



Entrance - Kastellet - Copenhagen

Copenhagen grew swiftly in size and population, and by the beginning of the 18th century had around 60,000 people living within its confines. The next 100 years weren't kind to the burgeoning capital, however. By 1711 nearly one-third of the population had died from bubonic plague, and a pair of fires (in 1728 and 1795) turned large areas of the city, including most of its wooden buildings, to ash. To top it all off, in the midst of the Napoleonic Wars in 1807, Britain's Admiral Horatio Nelson decided he'd had enough of Denmark profiting from wartime foreign trade, and of rumours that the neutral Danes were considering putting their naval fleet at Napoleon's disposal, and ordered a savage bombardment of the city. Much of Copenhagen went up in flames (again) and the British rubbed salt into the wound by confiscating the entire national fleet.



Port of Copenhagen

Several decades later, Copenhagen had turned its attention away from the atrocities of war and was concentrating on the cultural revolution that was daubing, scribbling and philosophising its way across the country. The philosopher Søren Kierkegaard, the writer Hans Christian Andersen, the verbose theologian Nikolaj Frederik Severin Grundtvig, and Christoffer Wilhelm Eckersberg, founder of the Danish School of Art, all contributed to this artistic 'Golden Age'. Copenhagen benefited physically from the revolution through the grand neoclassical statues bestowed on it by sculptor Bertel Thorvaldsen.

After Denmark became a democracy in 1849, it went through a lengthy and fairly peaceful period of economic development, not counting a political hiccup in 1864 when a short-lived war was successfully waged on it by Prussia.

Denmark managed to retain neutral status during WWI, but that ploy didn't work during WWII; the Nazis marched on Copenhagen on 9 April, 1940, and ended up occupying it and the rest of the country for five years. Although it survived the war relatively unscathed, Copenhagen was in a dishevelled state by war's end:

many of its neighbourhoods were slums. The city embarked on an ambitious renewal program and extended cradle-to-grave social security programs. Student protests in the late 1960s led to the proclamation of a 'free state of Christiania' on a military base outside Copenhagen in 1971, operating under communal property rules. It attracted so many people - up to 1000 - that the government was forced to allow it to continue indefinitely as a 'social experiment'.



Bare Trees - Marienlyst Slot

Today, Copenhagen is flourishing as a centre of culture and the arts, and has had its historic skyline marred by

only a few high-rise developments. An early highpoint of the new millennium for the Danish people would have to be the victory of the local Olsen Brothers in the 2000 Eurovision Song Contest, ensuring the staging of the 2001 gala event in Copenhagen. In July 2000 the Øresund Fixed Link, a massive 16km (10mi) bridge-tunnel, road-rail link between Copenhagen and the Swedish port of Malmö was opened; it is the first direct land link between Denmark and the rest of Scandinavian Europe. The death of the popular matriarch of the royal family, Queen Ingrid, in November 2000, was a low point for the country. In late 2001, for the first time in half a century, this liberal, tolerant country voted in a right-wing government on a platform of stronger immigration laws. Copenhagen was touched by royal pageantry in May 2004 when Crown Prince Frederik married Australian Mary Donaldson.



Nyboder

Copenhagen – Attractions

<http://www.lonelyplanet.com/destinations/europe/copenhagen/attractions.htm>

Christianshavn & Christiania

One of the highlights of the canal-punctured district of Christianshavn is Vor Frelzers Kirke (Our Saviour's Church), topped by a 95m (311ft), 400-step spiral steeple which affords breathtaking views over the city. On the eastern side of the district is the self-labelled 'progressive' community of Christiania.

Christiania started life as a military camp before being abandoned and taken over in 1971 by ambitious squatters who proclaimed their own 'free state'.

It never achieved full independence but still enjoys status as a rent- and tax-free enclave and a lively, arts-soaked environment. You can stroll or cycle through the area (cars aren't allowed) and check out the local craft market or organic food eateries - informative guided tours are offered daily throughout summer.

Latin Quarter

Copenhagen's Latin Quarter surrounds the old campus of Copenhagen University and brims with pedestrians, cafes and bookshops. Kultorvet, a plaza just to the north of the Latin Quarter, is particularly busy during summer, when its beer gardens and produce stalls are well attended, and when buskers will endeavour to win your patronage.

Directly opposite the university grounds is Vor Frue Kirke (Our Lady's Church), the city's striking neoclassical cathedral which was originally built in the late 12th century and then rebuilt three times after succumbing to various pesky fires. The interior is decorated with sculptor Bertel Thorvaldsen's acclaimed statues of Christ and the 12 apostles.

Good views of the city's rooftops are available from the summit of the Rundetårn (Round Tower), a 35m-high (115ft) pile of bricks a few blocks east of the Latin Quarter. The Rundetårn was erected as an observatory in 1642 and is still used by amateur astronomers in the

wintertime, qualifying it as the oldest functioning observatory in Europe.



Christians Kirke

Nationalmuseet

Nationalmuseet (the National Museum) is a must-see for anyone who wants a comprehensive grounding in Danish history and culture. True to its name, Nationalmuseet has the biggest collection of Danish historical artefacts in the country. On Sundays in summer the ambience is enhanced by free chamber music concerts.

Nationalmuseet has dibs on virtually every antiquity found on Danish soils, whether it was unearthed by a farmer ploughing his fields or a government-sponsored archaeological dig.

The artefacts date from the Upper Palaeolithic period to the mid-19th century. Highlights include the Sun Chariot, which is over 3500 years old, and an exhibition of 3000-year-old bronze *lur* (Danish horns).

Rosenborg Slot

Rosenborg Slot houses a museum and the treasury where the royal regalia and jewels are kept. Downstairs is a public viewing room where you can marvel at incredible jewellery.

It was built in Dutch Renaissance style by Christian IV to serve as his summer home. A century later Frederik IV, who felt cramped at Rosenborg, built a roomier palace north of the city in the town of Fredensborg.

The 24 rooms in the castle's upper levels are chronologically arranged, housing the furnishings and portraits of each monarch from Christian IV to Frederik VII. However, the main attraction lies on the lower level, where the dazzling collection of crown jewels are displayed.

These include Christian IV's ornately designed crown; the jewel-studded sword of Christian III; and Queen Margrethe II's emeralds and pearls, which are kept here when the queen is not wearing them to official functions. These items are considered such a national treasure that the queen is not permitted to take the royal jewels with her when she travels outside Denmark.

Slotsholmen

Slotsholmen is a groovy island connected to the rest of Copenhagen by small bridges, and is the place that Denmark's national government calls home. Slotsholmen

attracts large numbers of visitors who come to check out the palatial (literally) government office.

The original Christiansborg palace was constructed in the 1730s to replace the pokey Copenhagen Castle and several buildings, namely the royal stables and edifices surrounding the main courtyard, date from this time.

Folketinget, the parliamentary chamber, can be toured on Sunday year-round, as well as on weekdays over summer, and this includes a peek at Wanderer's Hall, which contains the original copy of Denmark's Constitution.

For sheer Renaissance grandness, De Kongelige Repræsentationslokaler (the Royal Reception Chambers) won't disappoint - it's where royal banquets are scoffed and heads of state entertained. Underneath the palace are the excavated ruins of two earlier castles, including Bishop Absalom's original 1167 effort.



**Frederick's Church - The Marble Church -
Copenhagen**



The Little Mermaid - Copenhagen

Seeing the sights in Copenhagen and around requires careful planning. Many of the museums, palaces, churches and galleries are open for quite limited hours. Most open at 10:00 and close at 16:00. Fortunately most are open on Monday unlike the rest of Europe.

Today I plan to head for Helsingor and the Kronborg Castle, the fabled Elsinore of Shakespeare's Hamlet.

The castle opens at 11:00 so I start off with a visit to the fortified Kastellet and the statue of The Little Mermaid at the entrance to Copenhagen harbour.

The Kastellet is a five sided earth mound with cannon emplacements on bastions at each corner, enabling defenders to fire on any invaders. Inside are buildings that were previously barracks buildings and now appear to be apartments. There is still a military presence, a guardhouse and small number of soldiers in uniform indicating the area is still a military site.

Nearby is St Albans church, a parish of the Anglican Church of Gibraltar.

Next to the church is the Fountain of Gefion. This fountain has recently been fully restored and commemorates the Myth of Gefion.



Gefion Fountain - Copenhagen

In the Nordic mythology Gefion is the goddess of cultivation of land and the protectress of the virgins. The myth says that from his town Odense on Funen the god Odin sent Gefion to Sweden to find him more land. There she met the mythical king Gylfe who promised her the land she could plough out of Sweden in one day and one night if she would sleep with him. Hereafter Gefion went to the giants' house in Jotunheim in Norway and had four giant sons with a giant. She turned the four sons into oxen, hitched them to a plough and ploughed a great piece of land out of Sweden in the time she was given. She placed the piece of land in Øresund between Funen and Sweden. The hole she left in Sweden was filled with water and thus a lake was created. According to the legend this is the Vänern Lake. If you look at a map you can see the Vänern actually has the exact same size and shape as Zealand.

I have some time before I need catch the train and walk to a church with a very large dome that I can see from the ramparts of the Kastellet. It proves to be Frederick's Church, commenced by King Frederick V as the centre point of a fashionable redevelopment of an area to the East of the existing buildings of King Christian IV, including the naval housing complex of Nyboder. Commenced in 1749 work stopped in 1770 as costs escalated. The church was finally consecrated in 1894. It is more commonly known as the 'Marble Church', because of the predominant construction material, and has a circular nave capped by one of the largest domes in Europe.

As it is too early for it to be open I take some pictures and head to Osterport railway station to catch a train to Helsingor. There is a train in the station and a 30 minute ride through the villages and countryside beside the Øresund sees me at Helsingor. The countryside is still

awakening from winter. Daffodils and other early spring flowers are blooming and the crops are poking through the ground, but there is as yet, only a faint show of green on the trees.



St Albans Church - Copenhagen

Helsingor is a major ferry port for crossing the Øresund to the large industrial town of Helsingborg in Sweden. Car ferries shuttle back and forth across the sound. For tourists the town is more famous as the site of the Shakespearean castle – Elsinore – the Kronborg Slot. Clearly visible across the harbour, the castle sits on a headland overlooking the narrow entrance to the Baltic Sea. It was not

a primarily royal palace, but a grandiose tollhouse for collecting the 'Sound Tolls' extracted from passing ship by the Danes for centuries. The royal apartments have been restored and furnished with examples of furniture and tapestries from Danish palaces. Some of the inlaid pieces were exquisite. An ornate wooden door, which now stands in the ballroom, was formerly the entrance to the queen's quarters.

There has been a fortified castle on the site since the 1420's. Frederick II substantially renovated and rebuilt the castle, as it is today between 1574 and 1585. On the night of 25 September 1629 the castle was ravaged by fire, only the chapel remained. The ornate door to the queen's quarter survived, as it had not been delivered before the fire. It is in excellent condition with a few small cracks in the timber inlays.



Kronborg Slot - Hamlet's Elsinore

Although the chapel survived the fire it did not survive Danish military occupation from 1785 to 1923. Stripped of its religious furnishings it was used as an ammunition store and gymnasium. Fortunately, everything was stored away and after the army left restoration was possible.

The castle also houses the Danish Maritime Museum tracing the history of Danish seafaring. Many of the displays have captions in English, making it a much more interesting museum



Marienlyst Slot - Helsingor



Holger Danske

The casements (foundations, basement, dungeons) of the palace are open and have a number of small displays



**Door from Queen's Apartments -
Kronborg Slot**

showing the inhabitants, servants and soldiers, who lived in poor conditions below the castle.

The stone figure of Holger Danske slumbers in the casements. According to legend he will wake if external enemies threaten Denmark.

Before visiting the castle I had walked to Marienlyst Slot, a pretty little palace set in manicured, formal grounds. Unfortunately it did not open until 12:00 and I couldn't hang around to see the exhibits.



Chapel - Kronborg Slot

As forecast, light snow fell for a few minutes at about 12:30. Back in the town I visited the Elsinore Cathedral, The Church of St. Olai. The church has a long and checkered history. The body of the present church was finished in 1559, but there have been many changes since. Among the items displayed is a canon ball fired by the British on their way to the Battle of Copenhagen (April 2 1801). A contemporary picture of the battle in the Danish Maritime Museum shows the British attacking from the west, or landward side of Copenhagen.

A quick train ride back to Osterport and I set off to visit the 'Marble Church', the altar and the decoration of the ceiling of the dome are quite unusual.



**Navigation Light in a tower -
Kronborg Slot**



**The Church of St. Olai -
Helsingor**



Amalienborg and Frederick's Church

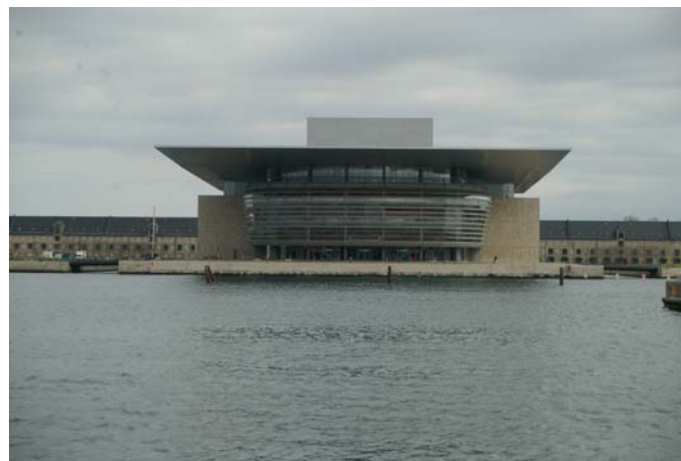


Fredericks Church - Copenhagen

Nearby is the museum at Amalienborg, Christian VIII's palace, displaying the studies of several kings and queens. It is hard to believe they worked in such a clutter of things. Also on display are photographs from the personal collections of recent kings and queens.

A stroll to the banks of the Inderhavn and on the other side is the new, modern Opera House donated by the owner of the Maersk shipping company.

The cafes and bars beside Nyhavn provide blankets to customers sitting outside in the sun.



The Opera House - Copenhagen



Happy Drinkers

Turning for home, a little footsore, I visit first the Jade Museum on the banks of the Nyhavn and the grounds of Charlottenborg and then stroll along the Strojet, the main shopping street of Copenhagen.



Royal Apartments - Kronborg Slot



Helsingør



Dom Kirke - Roskilde

Roskilde is about 35 km west of Copenhagen and was once the capital of Denmark. Prior to the Reformation in the 16C, Roskilde had been both the capital and the centre of the Catholic Church in Zealand. However after the Reformation the power and wealth of the church, particularly the Dom Kirke, declined and the Royal household moved to Copenhagen.



Dom Kirke - Roskilde



Altar Screen - Dom Kirke - Roskilde

Roskilde – 1000 years

<http://www.visitroskilde.com/historieuk.htm>

Royal city and ecclesiastical centre

Should you wish to become acquainted with the history of Denmark, it is natural to start in Roskilde. Through the ages Roskilde has played an important role politically as well as culturally, manifesting itself in the many different cultural activities in this area today.

Legend has it that King Ro founded Roskilde, but historically the town goes back to the Viking Age around the 990s. The many barrows in the area indicate that Roskilde was densely populated throughout ancient times. Lejre is inscribed in the history of Denmark as a central place of worship and a Zealand chieftain's seat.



Clock inside the Dom Kirke - Roskilde

King Harald Bluetooth, who erected the rune-stone in Jelling, was the founder of Roskilde. He built the first

church of wood here, probably on the site of the present cathedral - and was buried here.

Rapidly the town became the centre of the Crown and the rich Catholic Church held a strong position in Roskilde. About 1020 the see of Roskilde was established, and before long there were 14 parish churches and five convents and monasteries besides the cathedral. In the Middle Ages Roskilde was considered one of the biggest and most important cities in Northern Europe with a population of 5,000-10,000.

At that time the cathedral on the plateau was surrounded by the town. Outside the ramparts by the fjord was a small fishing hamlet, Skt. Jørgensbjerg. In the Middle Ages there was a leper hospital here, and in the small village church from about 1080 there are remains from about 1035. It is thus the oldest preserved stone building in the country.

Queen Margrethe I was interred in Roskilde Cathedral about the year 1413, and the cathedral has been the favourite burial place of the Royal Family since that time. Today no less than 38 Danish kings and queens are buried here. The Reformation in 1536 marked a turning point in the history of Roskilde. The Catholic Church administration disappeared and all the convents and monasteries and most of the parish churches were abolished.

Decline was rapid, and by the mid-18th century there were only 1500 inhabitants in Roskilde.



Small Longship under sail

In 1847 the first railway line in Denmark was built between Roskilde and Copenhagen. This infused new life into the town, which grew as a commercial centre, and it has since become a traffic junction and a centre of education, research, trade and tourism.

Apart from the historical significance of the town, it is also the home of the Viking Ship Museum.

After visiting the tourist information office to get a map my first stop was the Dom Kirke.

The present building was commenced in the 1170's by bishop Absalon. It was finished as a Gothic construction, of brick, in about 1280. Since then it has undergone many alterations and additions. The most significant were the changes that occurred after the Reformation in 1536.

Kings and Queens of Denmark have been buried there since 986 when Harald Bluetooth was buried. Prior to the Reformation not all Kings and Queens were buried in the Cathedral. However since the Reformation every King

and Queen has been buried there. Usually the magnificent sarcophaguses that hold the remains of the King and his Queen are paid for by the successor and are not made until both have died so that a matching pair can be produced.



Boat Yard - Viking Ship Museum - Roskilde



Viking Ship - Viking Ship Museum - Roskilde

The sarcophagus of Queen Margrite 1 (1375 – 1412) occupies pride of place in the choir of the cathedral. She

is credited with uniting, albeit temporarily, Norway, Sweden and Denmark.

As the museum is opened at 11:00, 13:00 and 14:00 I decided to go to the Viking Ship Museum and return later.

http://www.khm.uio.no/english/viking_ship_museum/index.shtml

The museum houses the remains of 5 Viking ships discovered at Skuldelev, about 20km north of Roskilde, where they were apparently scuttled to close a narrow, natural channel in the Roskilde Fjord. The reason for the

scuttling is unknown, but it has been suggested that it was to impede an invading Norwegian fleet. They comprised a cross section of Viking ships, an ocean-going trader, and ocean-going longship (warship) able to carry 70-80 men, a coastal trader, a small longship and fishing boat.

During construction of Museum Island nine boats from the Viking Age and the Middle Ages were found, including the longest, at 36m, Viking ship found to date.

A boatyard dedicated to building Viking ships is located on Museum Island and so far replicas of the Skuldelev boats have been built. These boats are fully functional and it is possible to sail on them in the fjord. Three of the ships put out with novice crew and set sail.

Raising sail is no mean task. There is no block and tackle available. On the smaller boats muscle power will do the job, but on the larger ocean going boat a simple windlass is needed to raise the heavy yardarm and sail.

The small longship was the first under way and headed North on a Westerly breeze of around 10 knots. When it turned to return to Roskilde its windward performance was quite incredible for a square-rigged vessel.

In the old gas works by the harbour a glass worker produces some very beautiful and expensive glassware. I looked in and admired the work.



Modern Vikings - Viking Ship Museum - Roskilde



Large Longship.



Method for tightening shrouds



Queen Margrite 1's Gown - Dom Kirke Museum - Roskilde

After visiting the Viking Ship Museum I returned to the Cathedral to see the museum. I was the only visitor. This is an interesting small museum that traces the history of the Cathedral. Captions are in Danish but the information brochure helps if you have time to link the explanations to the displays. The brochure and the display features 'The Bishop', Bishop Niels Jacobsen Ulfeldt (d.1397), who was buried in a grave marked with an ornate sepulchral brass depicting him in full bishop's regalia. At the time the diocese owned 2600 farms and the bishop had several estates. He and the diocese were very wealthy. I asked where the brass was, to be told that it had been sold off to raise money in more recent times.



Queen Margrite 1 - Dom Kirke - Roskilde

My last visit was to the Roskilde Museum. Similar to many local museums it could do with a face-lift. With the aid of notes in English I was able to follow the history of the town and area through the archaeological finds that were displayed.



First history of the Danes - Dom Kirke Museum - Roskilde

Friday 22 April 2005 - Copenhagen

Day 05



Copenhagen - 1839



Christiansborg



Viking Cart - Nationalmuseet - Copenhagen



**Viking Rune Stone -
Nationalmuseet - Copenhagen**

I have planned a busy day. My Copenhagen Card expires tonight.

My planned first stop is the Rådhus to see the Jens Olsen mechanical astronomical clock. Not a good start. No sign of life at the Rådhus and the city is very quiet for a Friday morning at 09:30.

Turns out to be a public holiday 'Common Prayer Day – Fourth Friday after Easter'. Hopefully the other places will be open.



Viking House - Nationalmuseet - Copenhagen



Altar Screen - Nationalmuseet - Copenhagen

The nearby Nationalmuseet is open. The museum traces Danish history through 10000 years, through displays of archaeological artifacts discovered at many sites in Denmark and abroad, from the Stone Age to Middle Ages. There is a display 'Stories of Denmark 1660 – 2000' which includes many familiar objects from the past 400 years. There are also ethnographic exhibitions from

various parts of the world and a small collection of Egyptian and classical antiquities.

The exhibits of Danish history are very interesting and detailed and alone make a visit to the Museum worthwhile.

After two hours I had to move on if I was to do what I planned.

Next stop is Ver Frue Kirke, the Church of Our Lady, and the Lutheran Cathedral in Copenhagen. A service is in progress for the 'Common Prayer Day' so it is not possible to wander around the church. However there does not seem to be a lot to see. Apart from the church decoration is plain. There are two balconies on each side of the church. The church was packed.

I stay for a while and listen to the service. The tunes to the hymns are familiar but I can't understand a word. It was after 1230 when I left and as far as I could determine it had started at 10:00 and another was due to start at 13:00.

About 500m away is the Rundetaarn (Round Tower) built by Christian IV in 1642. A spiral ramp twists round the centre of the tower seven and a half times. It is the site of Europe's oldest working observatory and during the winter visitors can observe the night sky through the large refracting telescope. There are few high-rise buildings in Copenhagen and the tower provides a viewpoint over most of the city.

<http://www.rundetaarn.dk/engelsk/frames.htm>

I am a little ahead of my timetable and I can see from the tower that Rosenberg Slot is not far away, about 800m. I walk through the almost deserted streets to the Rosenberg Park. The trees are turning green but it will be a while yet before the trees are covered in leaves.

Rosenborg Slot is the home of the Royal Danish Collections: The Crown Jewels and the treasures of the Royal Family through 400 years (1500-1900).

The palace is open. The house will close at 14:00. The collection of porcelain, gold and silver ware and jewelry is unbelievable. The crown jewels are also very beautiful although not as extensive as the British Crown Jewels.

http://www.rosenborgslot.dk/asp/menu/menuPages/frontpage_2.asp?countryID=2

Photos were not allowed so I bought the book.



Medieval St George and the Dragon - Nationalmuseet - Copenhagen

It is time to head for the Christiansborg Palace. Two things are of interest there: the ruins of earlier palaces excavated by the National Museum before the present palace was built and the Reception Rooms in Christiansborg.

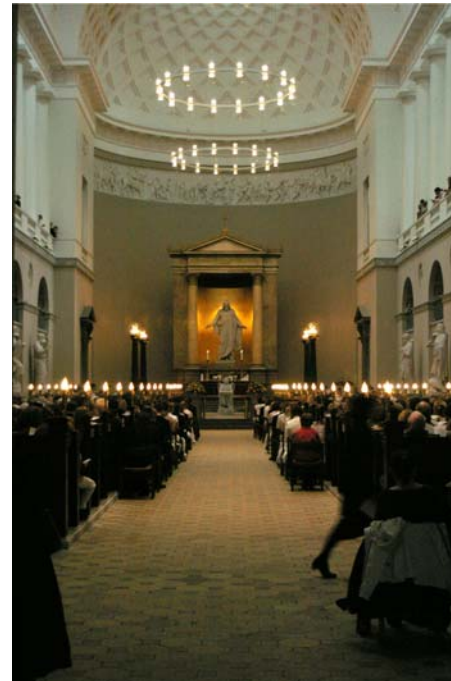
<http://www.ses.dk/147000c>



Migration Advertisement - Nationalmuseet - Copenhagen

http://kongehuset.dk/artikel.php?dogtag=k_en_col_cha

The ruins are from the first palace, the Bishop's Palace built by Bishop Absalon in about 1167. It was destroyed in 1369. The other was Copenhagen Palace built in 1416 by King Erik of Pomerania. It was pulled down in 1731-32 to build a palace suitable for an absolute monarch.



Dom Kirke - Copenhagen



Rundetårn - Copenhagen

There have been three Christiansborgs. Fire destroyed the first in 1794 and the second in 1884. The present palace was started in 1907 and completed in 1929. A monarch has never occupied it. With the end of the absolute monarchy there was friction between the then King and the government and as a result the monarchs have continued to live at Amalienborg.



Ramp inside the Rundetårn - Copenhagen



Ruins below Christiansborg of the former Palaces



Model of the ruins below Christiansborg of the former Palaces



Rosenborg - Copenhagen



Tivoli Gardens - Copenhagen

The Royal Apartments at Christiansborg have become the Office of the Prime Minister. Amalienborg does not have the rooms necessary for major official functions so the Queen and the government use the magnificent reception rooms at Christiansborg. Tapestries are featured in Kronborg, Rosenborg and Christiansborg. They are in excellent conditions despite their age and the

modern ones at Christiansborg are very interesting and colourful.



Tivoli Gardens - Copenhagen

The day is not finished yet. A planetarium named after the famous Danish astronomer, Tycho Brahe is near the hotel. While the displays were potentially instructive, some did not work and the IMAX theatre seemed to dominate the building. Somewhat disappointing.

Finally, a visit to the Tivoli Gardens. Fun parks are not my thing but this has been around a long time. The

rides compare with those at any fun park and the restaurants, of which there are many, were fairly busy. The gardens are starting to bloom with spring flowers and the display of tulips will be outstanding in a few weeks.

<http://www.tivoli.dk/composite-297.htm>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tivoli_Gardens,_Copenhagen

Saturday 23 April 2005 - Odense

Day 06



Sankt Knud's Kirke - the Dom Kirke - Odense

The 08:00 train gets me to the birthplace of Hans Christian Andersen on April 2 1805 at 0935, a little early for anything to be open. Time to find the Rådhus and the Information Centre in the centre of town before it opens. There are many places in and



Sankt Knud's Kirke - Odense

nearby Odense and a 24-hr event pass is worthwhile.

Odense

<http://www.odense.dk/English.aspx>

The history of Odense



Organ - Sankt Knud's Kirke - Odense



Saint Albans Church - Odense

Odense is mentioned for the first time in official documents in a letter from the German Kaiser Otto the 3rd from 988. By that time, the town was already the diocese of a bishop but had probably also been the centre of the Odin Cult. Archaeological finds indicate that the original settlement was centred around the current site of the Town Hall. Around 980 and just south of the

town was one of the circular forts from Viking times, called Nonnebakken.



Saint Albans Church

St. Knud

On 10 July 1086 king Knud the 4th was slain in St. Albani Church and was canonised a few years later to become Saint Knud - his earthly remains can still be seen in the cathedral crypt. Specially-imported Benedictine monks from England founded St. Knud's Monastery shortly afterwards, where the English monk Aelnoth wrote Denmark's first literary work in 1100. St. Knud's and several other later monasteries quickly

cemented the town's position as a religious and political centre, and in 1482 a German printer called Johan Snell printed the first two books in Denmark at the invitation of Odense's clergy.



Rådhus - Odense



H.C. Andersen Haven - Odense



Rear of Bymuseet Møntergården - Odense



Saturday Market - Odense

Powerful merchants

During the first 100 years after the Reformation, the town continued to build on its position as a trading centre for the surrounding districts. Merchants such as Oluf Bager exported live cattle from local farms and made huge fortunes that gave rise to some of the magnificent timber-framed quadrangle buildings – some of which were also

built by local nobility who had their winter quarters in the town. The Swedish Wars in the mid-1600s and the resultant tax burden hit Odense hard, and despite state initiatives such as the 'Tugt- og manufakturhuset' (a manufacturing facility for the unemployed and social fringe groups) from 1752 and significant production and export of such items as gloves, the town never really recovered from economic stagnation until around 1800 when the population topped 6,000.



Vor Frue Kirke – the Church of Our Lady



Vor Frue Kirke – the Church of Our Lady



HC Andersen outside Radisson Hotel – Odense

Development and industry

Odense became a port with the opening of its canal in 1803; the roads around the town were improved and from the 1840s the town really began to expand out of its old boundaries. For many years, Odense was second only to Copenhagen in Denmark. The town gates disappeared in 1851 and a few years later, the town spread south of the

river. It was the first Danish town to get a modern water and gas works in 1853 and with the arrival of the railways in 1865, all the conditions were in place for rapid industrialisation. Iron and metals, textiles, food and beverages soon became central elements of the town's commercial life and separate industrial and residential areas started to appear.



HC Andersen house at the end of the street – Odense

Town hall built

As was the case with many other Danish market towns, towards the end of the 1800s (1880-83) Odense built a new Town Hall, designed by architects J.D. Herholdt and C. Lendorf and partially inspired by the Town Hall of Siena in northern Italy. This was later extended to the east to the designs of architect B. Helweg Møller, an extension opened on the 150th birthday of the town's favourite son, Hans Christian Andersen – the 2 April 1955.

The Town Hall was renovated between 2003-2005 ready for the celebrations of the bicentenary of Hans Christian Andersen to start – of course - on the same day, 2 April, 2005.

The council was dominated right up until 1937 by the Conservative party – not least because a large blue collar area that had grown up around the A.P. Møller shipyard was handily kept out of the city boundaries up until 1932. Ever since 1937, the mayor has been a Social Democrat, and during the German occupation of the Second World War, the general strike in Odense held in August 1943 was a major contributor to the collapse of the policy of collaboration with the Germans, on 29 August 1943.

At the inception of the 1900s, Odense had just under 40,000 residents and grew so fast that by 1950, there were 100,000. Over the next couple of decades, the population began to drift away from the centre. Large areas of suburban housing were inducted into Odense Kommune by the reorganisation of local and regional boundaries in 1970, and service industry began to rise at the expense of heavy industry.

Culture

Odense has been a cultural centre since Medieval times and in 1772 its local newspaper (still published today) *Fyens Stiftstidende* was published for the first time. Only a few years later, Odense became the first provincial town in Denmark to have its own theatre. Social and cultural life in what became known as "etatsråderne by" (the State Councillors' city) was subject to deep divisions, but the 20th

century saw significant changes as class barriers came down. In 1966 Odense became a university city and home in 1988 to one of the major national TV network channels, TV2.



HC Andersen house - Odense



HC Andersen Museum - Odense

While I am waiting for the Information Centre to open I walk around the vicinity of the Rådhus. Sct Knud's Kirke

– the Dom Kirke is open, but there is a service in progress, so no visitors.

Behind the Kirke is H.C.Andersen Haven, a pretty park on the banks of the river.



From HCA's life - HCA Museum - Odense



Oceania, by Svend Wiig Hansen - Odense

The Information Office is very helpful and I spend a few minutes planning the day to minimize back tracking.

First stop is Sankt Albani Kirke – Saint Albans Church – a Roman Catholic Church. There had been a church on the site Middle Ages where St Knud was murdered. The first Catholic Church, St Mary's, was built on the site in 1870. The present church was built in 1906-8 in early Gothic style with a Romanesque portal. The Reformation had decimated the Catholic in Denmark and most existing Catholic churches were converted to Reformed Churches.

The Vor Frue Kirke – the Church of Our Lady – is the city's oldest church, dating back to approx. 1250. According to local lore there has been a church on this site for over 1000 years.

As I make my way towards Hans Christian Andersen's Hus I come upon the Saturday Market. A bustling place with many produce stalls featuring fresh vegetables, some with a range of chilies and peppers and many with up to 10 varieties of potato.

The house where Hans Christian Andersen is believed to have been born is a tiny three roomed cottage on a corner.

The Museum is the full length of the block behind the houses and houses things from Andersen's life and traces through the exhibits and descriptions, in English, his life story. There is a library containing editions of his stories in every conceivable language.

The man was an eccentric but his brilliance as a teller of stories has made him a Danish national hero.

http://www.andersen.sdu.dk/index_e.html
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hans_Christian_Andersen



Hans Christian Andersen's Barndomshjen - Odense



Tidens Samling - Odense



The Ugly Duckling - Tidens Samling - Odense



Painting by Jonathan Lasker - Odense

Bymuseet Møntergården: This is the local museum housed in half timbered building in the old part of Odense. Besides the usual collection of local historical exhibits, the current exhibition, 100000 years of Sex, traces attitudes to sex and sexuality through the ages. Enough of the captions are in English to be able to follow the theme. The displays are drawn from archaeological and historical material, mainly from Europe. Some of the

displays are quite explicit and parents are advised that it might not be suitable for children under 12 years old.

Sankt Knuds Kirke – the Dom Kirke – is a large Gothic Cathedral from the 14th C. Below the altar is a crypt containing a number of graves from the Middle Ages. There is a small room showing part of the foundations of the original church St Albans Church. Apparently St Knud was not particularly saintly, but the pope at the time agreed to make him a saint in order to secure Christianity in the area.

Flakhavn a is pleasant open space in front of the Rådhus. Bowls of spring flowers brighten the area and as it is Saturday there are many children playing on the large reclining male figure, Oceania, by Svend Wiig Hansen.

Hans Christian Andersen's Barndomshjen is a tiny three-roomed house in which HCA lived as a child. The house is in what was a very poor part of town and it is said HCA did not acknowledge his time there.

Brandts Passage is an alleyway that is being refurbished with new modern shops, restaurants and a museum centre housed in an old textile mill. A group of bronze figures in a courtyard illustrates HCA's fairytale about the King's new clothes.



Printing Press - Danmarks Mediemuseum - Odense



Rear of Bymuseet Møntergården - Odense

Tidens Samling. I think samling means collection. Anyway the collection housed in the attic of the house at Brandts Passage 29 houses a collection of old magazines in several languages that you can sit and read if you wish and a large room at the far end is divided into spaces furnished in the styles of homes from about 1900 to 1980. Every conceivable piece of junk seems to have been jammed into each space.



Railway Museum - Odense



Royal Carriage - Railway Museum - Odense

The display of most interest is one illustrating HCA's stories using common materials, like old shoes, to portray the characters and the themes of the stories. Each installation is in an old suitcase, similar to those that would have been common in HCA's and were probably used by him on his many travels.

The museum building in the old textile mill, Brandts Kladefabrik, houses several exhibitions. The Danmarks Mediemuseum has a display of printing in Denmark and hand made paper incorporating a watermark of HCA. The museum traces the development of printing in Denmark from its introduction in 1482 to the present. There were few major changes in printing, particularly typesetting, from the time of Gutenberg until the 1920s. There are exhibits of most modern processes for printing and typesetting. The bookbinding section has some very good examples of the craft.

Kunsthallen, Brandts, is a large display space for Art exhibitions. The current exhibition is of works by Maj Lisa Englehardt. Her works are large and many are modern religious paintings and rather surreal landscapes.

Museet for Fotokunst, Brants has an exhibition of snapshots by a number of photographers. Some could well have come from anyone's family photo album. However they chronicle

a period from the early 20th C till about 1960. The snapshots are from a collection of over a million collected by since the late 1960's by the Austrian photographer and artist Christian R Skrein. From this vast collection the exhibition – Snapshots – The Eye of the Century – gives a selection of themes, kids, love, nature, war, nudes, travels, sports, and work. Some show celebrities of the time such as Marilyn Monroe, Adolf Hitler and Charlie Chaplin.

<http://www.schaden.com/book/SkrChrSna03252.html>

Another display of work by Jonathan Lasker featured modern works that I have no understanding of but found most intriguing.

<http://www.speronewestwater.com/cgi-bin/iowa/artists/record.html?record=5>
<http://www.speronewestwater.com/cgi-bin/iowa/artists/related.html?record=5&info=works>

The day is just about done, one last stop and time will run out and everything will close. I head past the Odense Theatre, through the Kongens Have – King's Park – in front of the Odense Slot to the Danmarks Jernbanemuseum. This is Denmark's Railway Museum. Railways and Train ferries have played an important part in modern communication and transport in Denmark and between Denmark, Scandinavia and the rest of Europe. It is housed in the old Engine House and features

locomotives and carriages from the earliest days of rail travel to the present. Included is several Royal Coaches and a dining car from the famous Wagon Lits company whose blue trains once criss crossed Europe and continue today as the luxury trains such as the modern Orient Express.

http://www.jernbanemuseum.dk/GB/index_gb.html



For the Children - Railway Museum - Odense

After all that I caught the 17:06 IC express back to Copenhagen, arriving at 18:18.

SWEDEN

<http://www.lonelyplanet.com/destinations/europe/sweden/>

Full country name: Kingdom of Sweden

Area: 449,964 sq km

Population: 8.87 million

Capital City: Stockholm

People: 90% Swedes, 3% Finns, 0.15% Sami (indigenous Lapp inhabitants)

Language: Swedish, English

Religion: predominantly Lutheran (87%)

Government: Constitutional Monarchy

Head of State: King Carl XVI Gustaf

Head of Government: Prime Minister Göran Persson

GDP: US\$230.7 billion

GDP per capita: US\$26,000

Annual Growth: 1%

Inflation: 2%

Major Industries: Forestry, mining, agriculture, engineering and high tech

History

<http://www.lonelyplanet.com/destinations/europe/sweden/history.htm>

Written records in Sweden survive only from late in the Middle Ages. But the number and variety of fortifications, assembly places, votive sites and graves is impressive. Humankind and metallurgy made late appearances and only in the Bronze Age, after the arrival of Indo-Europeans, was there rich trade. The country's early cultural life is still vividly represented in the *hällristningar* (rock paintings) that survive in many parts of Sweden. In the Mälaren valley, the first known trading posts were established and monuments with runic inscriptions appeared.

The Viking Age was getting under way by the 9th century, and vast repositories of Roman, Byzantine and Arab coins attest to the wealth and power Swedish Vikings accumulated over the next century. Vikings travelled mostly to the east, making their mark in Russia, as well as trading with (and pillaging) Byzantine territories. Pagan gods and slightly more earthbound kings held sway over the domestic population, with Christianity only taking root in the 11th century. Internal squabbles whiled away the bulk of the Middle Ages until Denmark interceded in 1397, when, together with Norway, they joined Sweden in the Union of Kalmar. A century of Swedish nationalist grumblings erupted in rebellion under Gustaf Vasa, who was crowned in 1523. Gustaf then set about introducing religious reform and a powerful centralised nation-state. A period of expansion resulted in Sweden's control over much of Finland and the Baltic countries.

In 1809, the unrestricted power vested in the monarch was undone by aristocratic revolt and Finland was lost to Russia. The same year, Sweden produced a constitution that divided legislative powers between king and Riksdag (parliament). The post of ombudsman appeared as a check on the powers of the bureaucracy. In 1814 the military enforcement of the union with Norway was Sweden's last involvement with war.

Industry arrived late but was based on efficient steelmaking and the safety match, a Swedish invention. Iron-ore mining (important for at least 300 years) and then steel manufacture began to expand, creating a prosperous middle

manufacturing, telecommunications, IKEA

Major Trading Partners: EU, US

Member of EU: Yes

class. But an 1827 statute that scattered the agricultural villages of much of Sweden's countryside had more immediate and far-reaching effects - the old social fabric disappeared. By 1900 almost one in four Swedes lived in cities, and industry (based on timber, precision machinery and hardware) was on the upswing. In this environment the working class was radicalised.

Sweden declared itself neutral at the outbreak of WWI and was governed bilaterally until 1917. But food shortages caused unrest and consensus was no longer possible. For the first time a social democratic government took control. The social democrats dominated politics after 1932, reworking the liberal tendencies of the 1920s to join economic intervention with the introduction of a welfare state. These trends were scarcely interrupted until the 1970s when economic pressures began to cloud Sweden's social goals. It was then that support for social democracy first wavered, looking particularly shaky after the 1986 assassination of Prime Minister Olof Palme and its murky aftermath.

The political breeze shifted to the right in 1991 when a Moderate-led coalition won power. The experiment with rightist economics and the move to EU membership left many Swedes uncertain and disillusioned, allowing the social democrats to sneak back and form a minority government in 1994.

The social democrats suffered further losses in the 1995 elections, but have managed to cling to power under Prime Minister Göran Persson, who relies on the support of the Centre Right party or the Greens. In late 1996, 10 years after Palme's assassination, a leader of a South African hit-squad accused a former Rhodesian soldier of Palme's murder - Palme was a tireless critic of South Africa's apartheid policies.

Recent political debate in Sweden has centred around the widening gap between rich and poor, racial tensions and EU membership. Swedes rejected a September 2003 referendum over entry into the Euro currency zone despite

the assassination just days before of the popular foreign minister Anna Lindh,

a leading campaigner in favour of the move.

Attractions

<http://www.lonelyplanet.com/destinations/europe/sweden/attractions.htm>

Stockholm

Stockholm is, without doubt, one of the most beautiful national capitals in the world. The Old Town is particularly spectacular, and walking around the city's waterways and parks is a glorious way to spend a week-long stretch of European summer.

Visitors and residents alike enjoy strolling along the streets and lanes in the medieval section of Gamla Stan, or exploring its many museums. The city is compact and easily explored on foot, although its watery nature, and many islands and archipelagos, may have you looking around for a boat.

Gothenburg

Sweden's second city, Gothenburg has a magnificent harbour, a brilliant showpiece boulevard, and Liseberg, one of the world's best amusement parks. Its prime attraction is Spaceport Liseberg, which dominates the park at a height of 150m (492ft).

After Liseberg the collected museums are the strongest attractions. The central museum Ostindiska huset has archaeological, local and historical collections. Konstmuseet has impressive collections of European masters and is notable for paintings by Rubens, Van Gogh and Rembrandt. The main museum of maritime history is Sjöfartshistoriska museet. Gothenburg is easily accessible by air, bus, train and boat and, once you're there, a bunch of spanking new hostels in the city centre awaits your weary head.

Vadstena

Set along Lake Vättern, beautiful Vadstena is one of the most pleasant towns in Sweden. The Renaissance castle Vadstena slott looks straight over

the harbour and lake beyond. It was a mighty family project of the early Vasa kings, and it houses in the upper apartments some items of period furniture and paintings, including a Van Dyck. The equally impressive 15th-century *klosterkyrkan* or abbey is a combination of Gothic and Renaissance features. Inside are the accumulated relics of St Birgitta and late-medieval sculpture, including a depiction of the saint during revelation.

Visby

The walled and cobbled medieval port of Visby is a living relic: more than 40 proud towers and the ruins of great churches attest to Visby's former Hanseatic glories. The contemporary ruins of Drotten, St Nicolai, St Lars and St Carin are all within the town walls and contrast with the old but sound cathedral of St Maria. Gotlands Fornsal is the historical museum with a fine collection of the Gotland picture stones of the pre-Viking period. During the second week of August, costumes and re-enactments commemorate medieval week. Visby is on the island of Gotland, which is serviced by flights from Stockholm and ferries from a number of mainland cities.

Öland

Öland is a small island containing ruins, fortifications and 400 windmills. The biggest Iron-Age ring fort on the island, Gråborg - with a diameter of 200m (656ft) - is an incredible sight. Nearby, Eketorp has been partly reconstructed as a museum to show what a fortified medieval village must have looked like. Equally impressive are the ruins of Borgholm Castle, which was eventually burned and abandoned early in the 18th century. Also prominent are the lighthouses at the northern and southern tips of the island. Öland is reached from Kalmar via a 6000m (19,680ft) bridge, the longest in Europe. Öland is a popular place to celebrate Midsummer.



Ronne



Ronne Post Office

Early start to catch the 06:39 train to Ystad and the fast ferry to Ronne on the island of Bornholm. Bornholm is off the Swedish coast, but is Danish. The Danish Inter City Express connects with the ferry at Ystad in Sweden. The train travels across the Øresund on the lower level of the high level Øresund Bridge.

Bornholm History

http://www.archipelago.nu/SKARGARD/ENGELSKA/DENMARK/bornholm_history.htm



Town Square - Ronne



Wedding Guard of Honour

Ancient times

Bornholm was formed 1,700 million years ago, but it was only 10,000 years ago that the first humans came to the island in hollowed-out tree trunks.

The Vikings, who ravaged much of Europe from the sea at around the turn of the last millennium, also persecuted Bornholm.



Church - Ronne

On an outcrop of rock between Ekkodalen and Jomfrubjerget, a rampart was built that served as a refuge for the peasant population during attacks from the sea. The oldest royal castle in the Nordic region, Lilleborg, is situated at Almindingen.

In the southern part of the Paradisbakkerne hills, there is an even more ancient refuge, from around the year 500, when the people of Bornholm fought against wandering tribes. Gamleborg, situated in the Paradisbakkerne hills, was also used as a defence against the Vikings. Still more ancient are

the many passage graves and dolmens from the Neolithic Age, a large number of barrows and rock carvings from the Bronze Age.



Ronne Harbour

The Swedish War

The 800-year-old meter-thick walls in the island's four roundchurches, the castle ruins of Hammershus and the many refuge castles stand as clear testimony to the island's more recent history, with its battles against pirates, against plundering foreign fleets, against the church and royal might.

During the Swedish War of 1658, the people of Bornholm decided to free themselves from the Swedes. They shot the Swedish commandant and handed over the island to the king of Denmark, who had to promise never to cede Bornholm to foreign powers.

At the end of the Second World War, Bornholm's two largest towns, Rønne and Nexø, were bombed and occupied by the allied Russian forces. The occupation lasted eleven months after the end of the war.



Villum Clausens



Malmö

After the bombs

After the bombings towards the end of the war in 1945, Rønne and Nexø were extensively rebuilt. A gift from the Swedish state enabled 300 wooden houses to be constructed in the two towns. The areas in which they are located have been maintained, and even Swedish town planners travel to the island to see how it was done.

The history of Bornholm since the Second World War has been shaped by the Russian bombing and occupation of the island. The will of Bornholm to defend itself is reflected in a Home Guard that, in proportion to the size of the island, is unequalled in Denmark.



Canal - Malmö



Main Square - Malmö

The three armed forces are all represented on the island, which is of major strategic importance to NATO. This is the eastern listening post of the Atlantic Alliance that, particularly during the Cold

War and the turmoil in Eastern Europe, played a vital role in supplying information to the rest of the world. Despite the great distance of the island from the Danish capital, Copenhagen, and the rest of the country, a large majority of the people of Bornholm wish to retain the link with Denmark. There has, however, constantly been a Bornholm independence movement that desires autonomy. Thus, in many places, the special Bornholm flag can be seen; unlike the Danish flag, it sports a green cross. Until 1970, Bornholm consisted of 15 rural districts and six municipalities. In the

municipal reform, they were consolidated into five, i.e. Allinge-Gudhjem, Hasle, Nexø, Rønne and Aakirkeby. Higher-level issues are dealt with by Bornholms Amt (the County of Bornholm).

On a Sunday morning in April, Ronne, the main town on the island of Bornholm, must be the quietest town on earth. Population 15000, there must have been about 100 out of their houses. There are a number of attractions, most of which are not in Ronne. Bus services on Sunday are every 2 hours so any idea of traveling out of Ronne

by public transport is out of the question. Anyway it didn't make any difference just about everything was closed. The couple of places of interest in Ronne are closed on Sunday in April. I spend several hours wandering the streets photographing the quaint, colorful buildings. The only piece of action is a wedding at the church, complete with a mounted guard of honour from the local riding school. The wind is freezing and eventually I seek shelter to avoid frost bitten ears.



3299 Main Square - Malmö

The ferry the Villum Clausens was built by Auscat Ships in West Australia. There are many more people on the ferry this afternoon compared with this morning. I suspect people are returning to the mainland for work and school tomorrow.

On return to Ystad I am able to catch an earlier train to Malmö. The train passes through farmlands with pastures green with new growth and pretty yellow (ochre) and white farmhouses. Occasionally rabbits and pheasants can be seen feeding in the fields.

As a result I am able to spend a little time, before my next train, having a quick look at the area near the station. Maybe I should have had more time as it seems an interesting city.

Comfortable, uneventful train journey to Kalmar, arriving at the hotel at 22:15 and crashing for the night.



3301 Bicycle Park - Malmö Railway Station



Queen Margarita 1 - 1382 - 1450
- Kalmar Läns Museum

Kalmar

<http://www.kalmar.se>

<http://www.travelershub.com/outbound/europe/kalmar.html>

Seaport on the southeast coast, 390 km (242 miles) south of Stockholm, Kalmar was once the third largest city in Sweden. Kalmar is connected to the Öland Isle by the longest bridge in Europe, spanning more than 6 km

over the Kalmar Sound. Öland is a popular resort island where the Swedish Royal family spends its summer season. According to a statistics Kalmar receives about 3.5 million visitors during the summer season and almost 4.9 million vehicles cross the Öland Bridge each year. Kalmar is also known as "the lock and key to Sweden", because of ready access on the Baltic Sea to Denmark, Germany, Poland, the Baltic States, and northern Sweden including Stockholm. Due to these distinctions, Kalmar was a periodical battleground of conflicts between the Scandinavian powers and rival Swedish factions. Kalmar is also known for the famous Kalmar Union of 1397 pact, which joined Sweden, Norway and Denmark into a single Scandinavian kingdom. With a rich culture dating back to the Stone Age the Kalmar region is rich, with high-class agricultural land, forests of leaf and fir trees.



Guns from the Kronan - Kalmar Läns Museum

History

The history of Kalmar dates back to the Stone Age. Excavations in Ljungbyholm, just south of Kalmar, during 1968-69, uncovered relics from about A.D. 600 and the Bronze and Stone Ages.



Medieval Kalmar Kalmar- Läns Museum



3320 Model of the Kronan - Kalmar Läns Museum



From the Kronan - Kalmar Läns Museum

Due to its strategic position, the port of Kalmar was an important axis along the routes of the Vikings, whose period of domination reached its peak in the eleventh century. During the decade of the 1120's, King Gigurd of Norway, crusading in the name of Christianity, laid waste to Kalmar. From 1307 until 1612, the Hanseatic League besieged Kalmar less than twenty-three times, indicating the magnitude of port's importance to the region. In 1386, when the Swedish Lord High Jonsson Grip died, Margareta the daughter of a Danish king (whose wife was a daughter of a

Norwegian king) found the opportunity to unify the three Scandinavian territories of Sweden, Denmark and Norway. Margareta's son and her only heir, Olav, had died in his infancy, but Margareta assured the continuation of the Scandinavian Union by selecting her great nephew Erik as her successor. The fifteen-year-old Erik was coronated on Trinity Sunday in 1397. It was on this day the most sweeping pact of the Kalmar Union was drafted. Queen Margareta died of plague in 1412, when Erik realized the full role of the kingship.

In 1470, Christian, Erik's successor in Denmark, brought troops to Stockholm to administer the Kalmar Union, but was defeated by the newly elected Swedish regent Sten Sture. In June 1523, Gustav, nephew of Sten's widow was elected as the king of Sweden. Meanwhile the Kalmar Union had come to an end.

It was during the mid-sixteenth century that much of Kalmar's most impressive architecture was erected under the reign of Christina, who was well educated and bred in Latin traditions. During her rule, Sweden saw a period of architectural splendour, which was dominated by the baroque styles.



Bridge to Öland



Kalmar City Wall



Viking Windlass

In April Kalmar is not the centre of tourism in Sweden.

Kalmar was once a key town in the defence of Sweden against the Danes. After the breakdown of the union of Norway, Sweden and Denmark the Danes and the Swedes were regularly at war for control of the Baltic Sea.

Kalmar was on the then frontier of Denmark and Sweden.

These days Kalmar is a quiet city of 35,000 people with a busy little port shuttling timber and other goods in and out of the area in small Baltic traders.



Entrance to Kalmar Castle

In the Battle of Öland 1676, the Kronan capsized, exploded and sank in 26m of water about 6km of the coast of Öland not far from Kalmar. It seems the reasons for the loss were similar to those for the loss of the Mary Rose in England.

The Kronan was 53m long, had 3 masts and displaced 2300 tons. She carried 126 guns, 550 seamen and officers and 300 soldiers. She came into service in 1672 and at the time was one of the largest warships afloat. One Portuguese and two English ships were larger.



Kalmar Castle



Chapel - Kalmar Castle

The site of the wreck was discovered in August in 1980. Excavation of the wreck became the responsibility of the

Kalmar Läns Museum and the displays of artefacts raised from the wreck are the highlights of the museum's displays. To date some 25000 items have been raised, from personal effects to relics of the ship. Low salinity in the Baltic meant that timbers were unaffected by shipworm. Thus, many wooden items look in almost new condition except any painted decoration has gone.

Displays, based on archaeological finds in this area, known as Möre, trace the life and culture of the people who lived in the region over 10000 years up to the Age of Vikings.

A display of life in Kalmar in the Middle Ages includes a model of the old city (Gamla Stan) showing the relationship of the Castle to the City and the now demolished Storkyrkan. This 5 aisled Gothic church was located in the Gamla Kyrkogården (graveyard) where there are many old gravestones that are kept clean by the city.

Kalmar Castle

The history of this legendary castle stretches back over 800 years. During the 12th c a defence tower was erected to protect against pirates and other sea-faring enemies. A harbour was constructed and in the course of time a castle grew around the original tower.

Kalmar Castle became soon "The Key to the Kingdom", a significant defensive fortification on the Danish border with an essential part in international, political life.

The Castle acquired its present appearance in the 16th c, when the Vasa kings, Erik XIV and Johan III rebuilt it in the style of a Renaissance palace and furnished it in continental manner. The last king, who lived in the Castle and issued governmental documents, was Karl XI. He was on the throne from 1673 to 1692.

Kalmar Castle played a fundamental role in Scandinavian policy already in 1397, particularly as the meeting place

for the signing of the Union of Kalmar. On July 20th, 1397 Queen Margaret I signed the controversial yet memorable pact which joined all of the Nordic countries under a common ruler. In 1997 the city of Kalmar and the Castle celebrated the 600 years anniversary of the Union of Kalmar.



Courtyard - Kalmar Castle

Kalmar Castle has had a chequered history. Important for the defence of Kalmar in the days when Kalmar was a border town, the castle was regularly strengthened as warfare changed. It was regularly attacked and sometimes taken.



Table laid for a banquet - Kalmar Castle



The King's Chamber - Kalmar Castle

With the disappearance of the border the Castle had no military significance and was used as gaol and a distillery at different times. Fortunately, by the end of the 1850's, interest in saving the Castle was growing and the first restorations commenced in 1919. Restoration continues. Many of the rooms are unfurnished. Others in the Royal Apartments and the Chapel are beautifully restored. One

display features a Royal feast, complete with a white swan and a pheasant as part of the table decoration.



The Checkered Hall - Kalmar Castle



Gamla Stan - Kalmar

The Konstmuseum is the local small art gallery in Gamla Stan. There is a gallery of permanent works and 2 galleries for special exhibitions. An exhibition of photographs from the city of Kaliningrad is interesting. I think it was the work of a group of students.

The medieval centre of Kalmar is today known as the Old Town - Gamla Stan. It lies just besides the Kalmar Castle. There are some well-preserved 17th and 18th century but most of the buildings are 20th C homes and apartments.



Kalmar Cathedral

This entire area of the town was devastated by fire in 1647, after which the city council decided to move the centre to the island of Kvarnholmen, where it stands today. They also required new buildings to be of stone and any existing timber buildings to

be clad in stone to minimize the risk of fire spreading through the city.

The population followed slowly, after much pressure, and the wealthier citizens gradually began to build summerhouses on the land where the Old Town once was.



20th C Apartments - Gamla Stan - Kalmar



Town Square - Kalmar

On at least one occasion the Danes attacked Kalmar Castle from the land. As a result the city lay under the fire from both sides and any shots that fell short, fell on the city



Kalmar Cathedral

Kalmar Cathedral is situated in the main square. Commenced in 1660 under Charles X and finished in 1682 under Charles XII, it is known as "Charles Church".

The Cathedral in Kalmar is the only one in Sweden without a bishop. This imposing building was designed by Tessin the elder and built in Italian baroque style in the second half of the 17th century.

The exterior of the Cathedral is being renovated and is encased in scaffolding. Although there have been planned changes to the building. These were never realised and consequently it is one of the few unchanged buildings from Swedish Great Power Era.

Early train from Kalmar to Avesta to join the express to Stockholm

This part of Sweden is flat and the train passes through farmland and forests with occasional pretty lakes. On arrival at Avesta the previous train to Stockholm was still in the station, almost an hour late. Fortunately my train is on time and arrives a few minutes later. The countryside remains much the same until we are approaching Stockholm and it becomes a little hillier.

Stockholm

<http://www.lonelyplanet.com/destinations/europe/stockholm/>

Stockholm is, without doubt, one of the most beautiful national capitals in the world. The Old Town is particularly spectacular, and walking around the city's waterways and parks is a glorious way to spend a week-long stretch of European summer.

This lovely, lively city, with its maritime bent and international flavour, is a magnet for immigrants as well as tourists. Over 15% of greater Stockholm's population are immigrants. Just stroll through the

quaint streets, and you'll hear everything from Polish to Japanese.



Stockholm Cathedral - Dom Kirke - Gamla Stan

The city is ideally situated for trade connections, with the 24,000 islands of the *skärgård* (archipelago) protecting the urban islands from the open seas. In fact, the city is best seen from the water, but once on land you won't want to miss out on the parklands of Djurgården, the alleys of Gamla Stan or the 50-plus museums bursting with world-class treasures.

Area: 188 sq km
Population: 755,000
Country: Sweden
Time Zone: GMT/UTC +1
Telephone Area Code: 08

Stockholm is built on islands, except for the modern centre (Norrmalm), which is focused around the ugly Sergels Torg. This business and shopping hub is linked by a network of subways to Centralstationen (central train

station); the popular gardens of Kungsträdgården lie just to the east. The subways link with the metro (tunnelbana or T) stations. The triangular island Stadsholmen and its neighbours accommodate Gamla Stan, separated from Norrmalm by the narrow channels of Norrström near the royal palace, but connected by several bridges. To the west of this is Lake Mälaren.



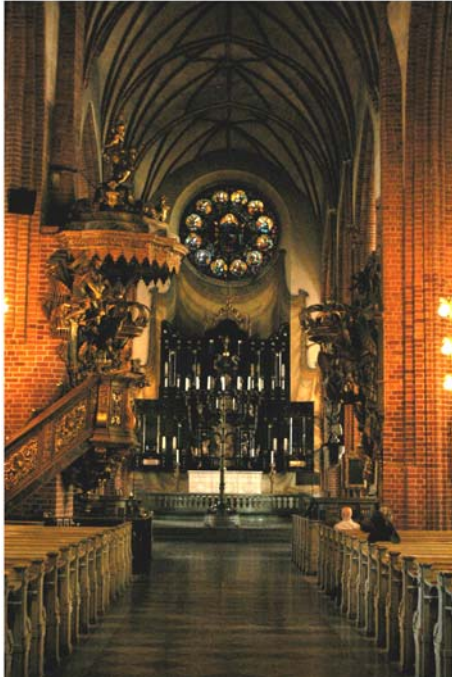
Helgeadsholmen from the Palace

Orientation

On the south side of Stadsholmen, the main bridge Centralbron and the Slussen interchange connect with the southern part of the city, Södermalm, and its spine Götgatan. From its top end the giant golf ball of the stadium Globen is the southern landmark, although you'll cross water again at Skanstull before reaching it. To the east of Gamla Stan is the small island of Skeppsholmen, and farther down Strandvägen and past the berths you cross to Djurgården, topped by Skansen.

History

<http://www.lonelyplanet.com/destinations/europe/stockholm/history.htm>



Stockholm Cathedral

Swedish political power had been centered around Mälaren for centuries, but it was forced to move to the lake's outlet when the rising land made navigation for large boats between the sea and lake impractical. Sweden's most important chieftain in the mid-13th century, Birger Jarl, ordered the construction of a fort on one of the strategically placed islets where the fresh water entered the

sea, and traffic on the waterways was controlled using timber stocks arranged as a fence, or boom. Stockholm, meaning 'tree-trunk islet', may well be named after this boom.

The oldest record of the city consists of two letters dating from 1252. Within a hundred years, Stockholm was the largest city in Sweden, dominated by an impregnable castle (which was never taken by force) and surrounded by a defensive wall. During the period of the Kalmar Union, the king's governor directed affairs from the castle. The city was periodically ravaged by fire until timber buildings with turf roofs were replaced with brick structures. By the late 15th century, the population was around 6000, and Stockholm had become a significant commercial centre. Shipping copper and iron to continental Europe was a lucrative trade that was dominated by German merchants.



Biblical Scene - Wooden Figures - Stockholm Cathedral

In 1471, the Danish King Christian I besieged Stockholm while attempting to quell the rebellious Sten Sture, but his 5000-strong army was routed by the Swedes just outside the city walls at the Battle of Brunkeberg (the fighting took place between what is now Vasagatan, Kungsgatan and

Sergels Torg). Even after the Danish retreat to Copenhagen, trouble between unionists and separatists continued. Things escalated in 1520 when city burghers, bishops and nobility agreed to meet the Danish King Christian II in Stockholm, and the king arrested them all at a banquet. After a quick trial, the Swedes were found guilty of burning down the archbishop's castle near Sigtuna, and 82 men were beheaded the following day at Stortorget (the main square by the castle). This ghastly event became known as the 'Stockholm Blood Bath': heavy rain caused rivers of blood from the bodies to pour down steep alleys descending from the square.



Strömkajen from the Palace - Stockholm

A major rebellion followed and Gustav Vasa finally entered the city in 1523 after a two-year siege. The new king then ruled the city with a heavy hand - though the role of commerce dwindled and the church was extinguished entirely, royal power grew and the city revolved around the court. Gustav's son Erik XIV (and later kings) racked up taxation on the burghers to fund wars. However, some did well from arms manufacture, and the city's importance as a military headquarters increased. At the end of the 16th century, Stockholm's population was 9000, but this expanded in the following

century to 60,000 as the Swedish empire reached its greatest extent.



Royal Pew - Stockholm Cathedral

In the 17th century, town planners laid out a street grid beyond the medieval city centre and Stockholm was proclaimed capital of Sweden in 1634. Famine wiped out 100,000 people across Sweden during the harsh winter of 1696-7, and starving hordes descended on the capital. The old royal castle (Tre Kronor) burned down, also in 1697. In 1711, plague arrived and the death rate soared to 1200 per day - from a population of only 50,000! After the death of King Karl XII, the country (and the capital) went into stagnation.

In the 18th century, Swedish science and arts blossomed, allowing the creation of institutions and fine buildings. Another period of stagnation followed the assassination of King Gustav III; promised 19th-century reforms never arrived, and bloody street riots were common. Further town planning starting in the 1860s created many of the wide avenues and apartment blocks still to be seen today.



Opera House - Stockholm

The city rapidly industrialised and expanded, and by 1915 it was home to 364,000 people. The 1912 summer Olympics were held in Stockholm. The next major transformation of the city started in the 1960s, when large 'new towns' sprung up around the outskirts and extensive areas of 'slums' were flattened to make way for concrete office blocks, motorways and other unsightly developments. The financial and construction boom of the 1980s helped make the city a very expensive place. Once that bubble burst during the 1990s recession, the devalued krona actually helped Stockholm - Swedish tourism grew, and foreign tourists arrived in ever-increasing numbers.

Since the country's entry into the European Union, Stockholm's progress towards becoming an affordable, vivacious tourist destination has continued apace. The easing of licensing restrictions on bars and restaurants, such as hours during which alcohol could be sold, type of alcohol sold and age of clientele, caused a huge increase in the number of licensed premises, helping create the vibrant Stockholm you see today.



Sankt Jakobs Kirke

Attractions

<http://www.lonelyplanet.com/destinations/europe/stockholm/attractions.htm>

Haga Park

Haga Park is a pleasant for walks, bicycle tours or strolling between museums. Gustav III's Paviljong is a superb example of late neoclassical style. The furnishings and décor reflect Gustav III's interest in all things Roman, developed during his Italian tour in 1782. In Fjärils & Fågelhuset (Butterfly House), there's an artificial tropical environment with free-flying birds and butterflies. There's also a shop and cafe. Haga

Parkmuseum has displays about the park, its pavilions and the royal palace, Haga slot.



St George and the Dragon

Kungliga Slottet

Kungliga Slottet is the largest royal castle in the world still used for its original purpose. It was constructed on the site of the 'old' royal castle, Tre Kronor, which burned down in 1697. The walls of the north wing of the castle survived and were incorporated in the new palace, but the medieval designs are now concealed by a baroque exterior.

The new palace, which has 608 rooms, was designed by the court architect Nicodemus Tessin the Younger, and wasn't completed until 57 years after the fire.

The Changing of the Guard usually takes place in the outer courtyard at 12:10pm daily from June to August (but at 1:10pm on Sunday and public holidays). The rest of the year it's on Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday only. It can last over 20 minutes and is quite an interesting spectacle.



AC Chapman

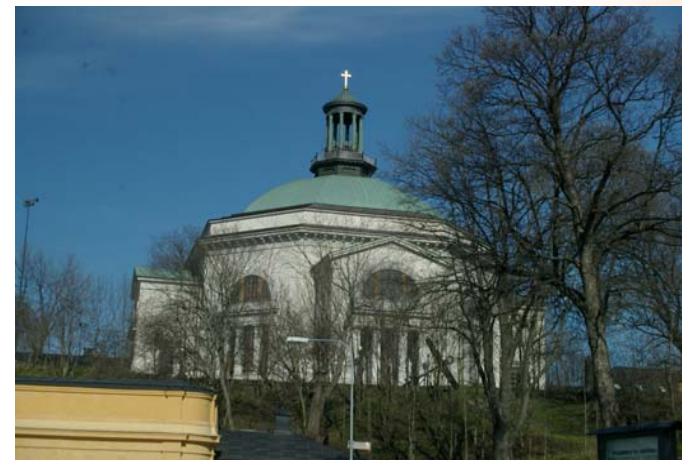
By the outer courtyard, there's a shop selling souvenir books and kitschy gifts. Indoor photography in the Royal Palace isn't permitted.

Skansen

Skansen, the world's first open-air museum, was founded in 1891 by Artur Hazelius to let visitors see how Swedes lived in previous times.

Today, around 150 traditional houses (inhabited by staff in period costume) and other exhibits from all over Sweden occupy this attractive hill top. It's a spectacular 'Sweden in miniature' and you could spend all day here.

There are 46 buildings from rural areas around the country, including a Sami camp (with reindeer), farmsteads representing several regions, a manor house and a school.



Skeppsholmen Church

The Skansen Aquarium is a must - en route to the fish (including piranhas) you'll walk among the lemurs and see pygmy marmosets, the smallest monkeys in the world.

Stadshuset

The town hall is topped with a golden spire and the symbol of Swedish power, the three royal crowns. Inside is the beautiful mosaic-lined Gyllene Salen (Golden Hall), Prins Eugen's fresco re-creation of the lake view from the gallery, and the hall where the annual Nobel Prize banquet is held. Entry with tours only.

Stockholm cards are good value. Besides entries to many venues, public transport and parking is included. Invaluable if you have a car. A word of caution, many of the museums are now free.

I decide to walk from the Central Station instead of taking the underground as suggested by the hotel info. It didn't take any longer than catching a train to Gamla Stan first.



Västerlånggatan

The Lord Nelson Hotel is a quaint hotel in the main shopping street of Gamla Stan, Västerlånggatan, close to the palace and the cathedral. It is decorated with memorabilia from the days of Nelson and sailing ships and the rooms (small) are fitted like ships cabins.



Strandvägän in the background

First task is to work out what I can see and when. Many things are closed one day of the week, not always Monday, many have different opening hours at this time of year and some have different opening hours on different days of the week. Also I try to group things by location to minimize travel times.

Stockholm Cathedral is built on the site of a smaller church destroyed by fire in the 13th C. The new, larger church was consecrated in 1306. Major alterations took place during the 15th C including raising the vaulting of the ceiling. The late Gothic structure that emerged now constitutes the core of the Storkyrka – the five aisled Stockholm Cathedral. The lavish baroque Royal Pews, pulpit and other gilded decorations were added in the 17th C. The exterior is inspired by Italian Baroque. Its appearance was determined by the city architect in the 18th C to fit in between Tessin's Royal Palace and the Stock Exchange.

The huge wooden statue of St. George and the Dragon was unveiled in 1489.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stockholm_Cathedral

As I pass the palace on my way to Strömkajen to check times for the sightseeing ferry I also check opening times for the palace.

The Riksdagshuset – Parliament Building – is on my way. A large imposing building, the vista is currently marred by building works.



Armémuseum



Medieval Army Camp

There is no doubt Stockholm is a beautiful city, scattered across several small islands. The buildings are grand and the busy waterways create marvellous views. I walk along the Strömkajen to the island of to take a closer look at the church, taking photos of ships and buildings as I go.

The National Museum is near the bridge to Skeppsholmen. The museum has collections of paintings, sculpture, decorative arts, drawings and prints. Decorative arts from the period 1500 – 1740 are presented in a permanent display 'Design in Sweden'. The permanent exhibit, 'Modern Design', tracks Swedish design in the 20th C. There was some controversy about building the museum during the 19th century. Some members of parliament believed it to be only for the rich.

<http://www.nationalmuseum.se/Default2705.aspx>



Artillery men

The current special exhibition is 'The Body. Art and Science.' featuring historical and contemporary studies of the body: anatomical drawings, drawings from life, illustrations from medical books, wax casts and installations based on the body.

An interesting exhibition!

The Armémuseum chronicling the lives of soldiers, they're families and everyone else through Swedish history from the Vikings to the present time. There are

some interesting displays and notes, in English, are very helpful.

<http://www.armemuseum.org/uk/frameuk.htm>

One display contrasts an English Castle, Bodiam Castle, with a contemporary Swedish castle belonging to a nobleman of the same social status. Sue and I visited Bodiam, it is not very large, but it is much larger than the Swedish castle.



Nordiska Museet - Djurgården

Wednesday 27 April 2005 - Stockholm

Day 10

I intend to spend the morning at museums on Djurgården Island. Getting there I stroll along Strandvägen past many wooden sailing vessels, and fine apartment blocks with views of the harbour. This area, known as East Stockholm, was once a mixture of poor and rich, including summer homes for members of the royal court. In the early

20th C the area was redeveloped as an up market residential area, which it continues to be.

The morning light provides a totally different view of places I had photographed yesterday, so more pictures.

Djurgården Island has extensive parklands and many museums. It was once the royal hunting area.

Perhaps the highlight museum is the Vasa Museum on Djurgården Island. The museum is located in a dry dock that was part of a naval dockyard during WWII.

<http://www.vasamuseet.se/Vasamuseet/Om/Museet.aspx?lang=en>



Rikstagshuset - Parliament Building



Royal Palace - Stockholm

Launched in 1627 the Vasa commenced its maiden voyage on August 10 1628. 20 minutes later it was struck by a gust of wind, heels, recovers and was then hit by another gust and capsizes and sinks in 32m of water in Stockholm harbour.

The ship was the most expensive, lavishly appointed and one of the largest, a Royal Ship, in Sweden at the time. She was however much smaller than the Kronan which capsized in the Battle of Öland. The Vasa is 47.5m long, displacement of 1210 tons, 64 guns, 145 crewmen and 300 soldiers.



Strandvagen



Sankt Erik

The ship was located in 1956 and in 1961 the ship was finally raised. The hull was in such good

condition that after it was pumped out the ship was able to float alone.



Model of the Shipyard - Djurgården



The Vasa - Vasa Museum

An investigation into the capsizing revealed that the ship was known to be tender and probably had insufficient ballast. Besides sailors, not a full crew, there were women and children on board, families of crewmen, and some of these were drowned. Their remains were found in the hull.



The Vasa - Vasa Museum

When you walk into the museum you are awestruck by the sight of this enormous ship, with little obvious damage, towering over you. The lavish decoration has disappeared and researchers are recreating the paints that were used and will decorate a model in the exact same colours and paints.

Many items have been recovered from the bottom of the harbour and are on display.

Nearby is the Nordiska Museet, housed in a spectacular building built in 1907. The exhibitions display

aspects of everyday life of the Swedish people over the centuries.

<http://www.nordiskamuseet.se/>
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nordiska_museet



Reconstructed carvings from the Vasa



Toy Display - Nordiska Museet

A display of furniture traces the changes in domestic furniture and houses of ordinary people since 1500.

Another shows the development of tableware, mainly Swedish, during the same period. Several areas highlight changes in fashions and shoes.



Table Setting - Nordiska Museet



Fashions - Nordiska Museet

The museum would be more interesting if more information in English was provided.

The Historiska Museet chronicles the history of Sweden in permanent and special exhibitions. As with other

museums I have visited work is in progress on new displays for the coming summer season so a number of galleries are closed.

<http://www.historiska.se/info/english.html>



**Gustav Vasa - 1496-1560 -
Nordiske Museet**

The Viking display describes everyday Viking life, crafts and customs. It also shows the richness of finds in some gravesites that reveal the wealth of some Viking leaders.

There is a rich collection of medieval religious art. The altar screens that

have come from churches all over the country are brilliantly coloured and many are in excellent conditions. Likewise the wooden carved figures are in much better condition than others I have seen in Europe. There is a beautiful display of gold and silver religious items.



Wooden Vault from the 14th C - Historiska Museet



Altarpiece from 1479 - Historiska Museet

The outstanding exhibition is the collection of gold and silver items discovered in hoards throughout the country.

This is housed in The Gold Room in a vault in the basement of the building. Many of the items display the skill of Viking artisans.



Painted Wooden Ceiling - Historiska Museet



Boat - Medieval Museum of Stockholm

It is mid afternoon and there is time to do two more things before everything shuts. I can catch the 15:30 sight seeing boat so I head back towards Strömkajen. On the way I come across Saluhall Market. Spend a few minutes

looking at the range of foods and buy an enormous panini for dinner.

The boat trip takes about an hour in the channels around Djurgården Island. A different view of some of the places I had photographed from land and a rest for the feet.

The tour passes between Skeppsholmen (Ships home) and Djurgården. Skeppsholmen was once the headquarters of the Swedish navy and shipbuilding centre. The Vasa was built here.

Last stop is The Medieval Museum of Stockholm. This is a scholarly presentation of medieval Gamla Stan and

has displays of life and history of the medieval town. The museum is located under Norrbro and the forecourt of the Parliament and is centred on a portion of the town wall from around 1530 that was discovered in 1978-80. More explanations in English would have been helpful.

Wednesday 27 April 2005 - Stockholm

Day 11

The plan for the day is quite simple, explore Gamla Stan and Riddarsholmen and visit places of interest.

Nothing opens until 11:00 so there is plenty of time to wander around the narrow streets of Gamla Stan and admire its 17th and 18th C buildings.

At about 10:00 I am wandering past the palace when a small procession led by mounted police and including a fine carriage drawn by four horses and another simpler carriage come up the hill, enter the courtyard and disappear into the palace. A band is playing to greet them. I have no idea who it was.



Main Square - Gamla Stan



Svenska Akademien - Nobel Museum

Gamla Stan and the smaller island of Helgeandsholmen form the boundary between the freshwater Lake Mälaren and the Baltic Sea. Barriers have been built under the bridges connecting the islands and the mainland and Södermalm to prevent seawater entering Lake Mälaren. A canal and locks to the south of Södermalm connect the sea with the lake.



Main Square - Gamla Stan

Riddarsholmkyrkan is Stockholm's only remaining medieval abbey, built in the 13th C. It is the last resting place of the Swedish monarchy and aristocracy. On the off chance that it will be open I visit it first. No luck it is not open until the 15th May.



Riddarsholmkyrkan

Nearby is the Riddarshuset. According to the guidebooks it is open from 11:30 to 12:30, but not today. Commissioned in the 17th C by Swedish nobility, to whom it still belongs, it was the place where the nobility met to discuss matters of state and in the time when the Swedish parliament had four estates, the nobility, the clergy, the bourgeoisie (propertied commoners in the towns such as merchants, tradesmen, lawyers, etc), and the peasantry (freehold yeoman farmers); this was where the nobility met.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parliament_of_Sweden#History



Coaches approaching the Palace



On Riddarsholm Island

Plan B had to be brought into operation. The Nobel Museum in the Swedish Academy building is now open and is not far away. The building was once the stock exchange. This is an interesting, small museum that records the Nobel Laureates achievements. This year is the 100th anniversary of the Nobel Prizes. Through a series of short films the museum presented by various Nobel Laureates the museum tries to define a culture of

creativity that has lead to the most significant achievements of the last 100 years.

<http://nobelprize.org/nobel/nobelmuseum/>



Radhus - Stockholm



Riddarshuset

At this time of year the Royal Palace Apartments and Museums are open from 12:00 to 15:00, a small window. The Palace is only round the corner from the Nobel

Museum and when I arrive I find a crowd gathering in the courtyard. I soon discover it is the full changing of the guard, mounted band, guardsmen on horses, etc. After the guard has changed the band stays on and plays for some time. If I am to see all the things that are open in the palace I cant stay and listen to music. Anyway it can be heard from inside the palace.



Royal Palace Apartments - Stockholm

The royal apartments and reception rooms, particularly the rooms featuring the Swedish orders of chivalry are interesting. The present castle dates from around 1750. It is

built on the site of the Tre Kronor castle that was destroyed by fire in 1697. Renovation of the northern section of the castle had commenced in 1692 under the direction of Nicodemus Tessin the Younger. He was commissioned immediately to prepare plans for rebuilding the palace and within six weeks of the fire he produced plans for a new palace incorporating the undamaged northern section.



Changing the Guard

The Tre Kronor Museum is the cellars of the present palace and traces the history of the palace from the earliest castle on the site through the Tre Kronor castle to the present. The old castle walls and other buildings, ovens and wells can be seen.

The Treasury houses and displays the Swedish Crown Jewels dating from the 16th C are on display. The crowns and orbs and sceptres seem in contrast to the British Crown Jewels: they are brilliant yet have a lightness in design which is not evident in the British Crown Jewels. Perhaps the Swedish flair for design is an innate trait as most of the jewels were made in Stockholm.

The Armoury has a display of weapons, armour, royal carriages and items of memorabilia from the wars that Sweden has fought with its neighbours.



Changing the Guard



Royal Palace Apartments - Stockholm

There is a current exhibition, Princesses, featuring Swedish princesses over the last few centuries. It was complete with participation areas for school children and there were school groups visiting the exhibition. No

English information so I have no idea what was said about the princesses.

Yesterday I passed the Hallwylska Museet. I planned to visit it if I had time and as it was only 15:00 I had time to go back and have a look. 'A private palace from the turn of the last century, with valuable collections of art, handicrafts, and everyday household items. On entering the palace you feel you are going back a century in time', is the description in the guidebook.

Built in the 1890's the building incorporated features such as electric lighting, bedrooms as private areas, a bathroom, and central heating. Wilhelmina von Hallwyl insisted that the best finishes and materials be used throughout and real Italian and Swedish marble is used in a number of rooms, unlike the Royal Palace where walls are painted to look like marble.



Royal Carriage - Palace Stables - Stockholm

During her lifetime Wilhelmina von Hallwyl collected more than 50,000 items. The collection is diverse, furniture, paintings, ceramics, arms, and silverware. The house and its collection are fascinating and I was fortunate to join an guided tour which included parts of the house not open to unguided visitors.

I finished the day with a meal at a restaurant in the main square of Gamla Stan, Stortorget. People are eating outside, it's about 12C, so it's not too warm, but there is no wind and it is quite pleasant. In case you find it cold the restaurants provide a blanket. It was pleasant at first but it soon became quite cold as the sun disappeared.



Tre Kronor

Tomorrow Oslo

Norway

<http://odin.dep.no/odin/engelsk/norway/history/032005-990454/>
<http://www.lonelyplanet.com/destinations/europe/norway/index.htm>

Full country name: Kingdom of Norway
Area: 324,220 sq km
Population: 4.54 million
Capital City: Oslo (pop 508,730)
People: 97% Nordic, Alpine & Baltic, with a Sami minority
Language: Norwegian Nynorsk, Norwegian Bokmål, Northern Sami
Religion: Christian (86.3% Evangelical Lutheran)
Government: constitutional monarchy
Head of State: King Harald V

Head of Government: Prime Minister Kjell Magne Bondevik
GDP: US\$149.1 billion
GDP per capita: US\$33,000
Annual Growth: 3.5%
Inflation: 3.1%
Major Industries: Oil, natural gas, computers, high technology, fishing, fish farming, forestry, shipping, shipbuilding, paper production
Major Trading Partners: EU (esp. UK, Germany & Sweden)
Member of EU: No

Norway is a ruggedly beautiful country of mountains, fjords and glaciers. The 'Land of the Midnight Sun' has delightfully long summer days, pleasantly low-key cities, unspoiled fishing villages and rich historic sites that include Viking ships and medieval stave churches.

Norway prizes its stunning natural wonders and retains a robust frontier character unusual in Europe. It's not all frozen tundra, either. The temperate

south includes rolling farmlands, enchanted forests and sunny beaches as well as the dramatic Western Fjords.

North of the Arctic Circle, the population thins, the horizons grow wider and the temperature dips. Here the terrain ranges from soaring coastal peaks to vast boreal forests and barren treeless peninsulas. Adventurous travellers can journey even further north to the Svalbard archipelago, where seals, walrus and polar bears sun themselves on ice floes.

History

<http://www.lonelyplanet.com/destinations/europe/norway/history.htm>

Norway's first settlers arrived over 10,000 years ago, at the end of the Ice Age. These early hunters and gatherers followed the glaciers as they retreated north, pursuing migratory reindeer herds. The country's greatest impact on history was during the Viking Age, a period thought to have begun with the plundering of England's Lindisfarne monastery by Nordic pirates in 793 AD. Over the next century the Vikings made raids throughout Europe, establishing settlements along the way. Viking leader Harald Hårfagre (Fair-Hair) unified Norway around 900 and King Olav, adopting the religion of the lands he had conquered, converted the people to Christianity a century later. The Vikings were great sailors and became the first to cross the Atlantic Ocean. Eric the Red, the son of a Norwegian exiled to Iceland, colonised Greenland in 982. In 1001, Eric's Icelandic son, Leif Eriksson, became possibly the first European to explore the coast of North America when he sailed off course on a voyage from Norway to Greenland. However, the Viking Age came to an end in 1066 when the Norwegian king Harald Hardråde was killed at the Battle of Stamford Bridge in England.

In the 13th century Oslo emerged as a centre of power. It continued to flourish until the mid-14th century when bubonic plague decimated its population. In 1397 Norway was absorbed into a union with Denmark which lasted over 400 years. Norway was ceded to Sweden in 1814. That same year a defiant Norway - fed up with forced unions - adopted its own constitution, but its struggle for independence was quelled by a Swedish invasion. In the end, Norwegians were allowed to keep their new constitution but were forced to accept the Swedish king. Growing nationalism eventually led to Norway's peaceful secession from Sweden in 1905.

Norway stayed neutral during both world wars but was occupied by the Nazis in 1940. King Håkon set up a government in exile and placed most of Norway's huge merchant fleet under the command of the Allies. An active Resistance movement fought tenaciously against the Nazis, who responded by razing nearly every town and village in northern Norway during their retreat. The royal family returned at the end of the war.

In 1960 Norway joined the European Free Trade Association but has been reluctant to forge closer bonds with other nations, partly due to concerns about its ability to preserve small-scale farming and fishing. North Sea oil and natural gas finds brought prosperity to the country in the 1970s, as left-wing governments over two decades fostered increased central planning, economic controls, socialised medicine, state-sponsored higher education, and what the government has liked to represent as the 'most egalitarian social democracy in western Europe'. Norway has since achieved one of the highest standards of living in the world.

Although modern Norway enjoys an EU concession which grants it trading privileges as a member of the EFTA (along with other European non-EU members Iceland, Switzerland and Liechtenstein), it continues to remain outside the EU and has so far refused to compromise its position on fishing, whaling and other economic issues.

While a majority of Norwegian voters remain adverse to taking directives from Brussels and hope to maintain their internal controls and subsidies, many folk - particularly urban-dwellers and people in the southern part of the country - recognise that Norway cannot remain forever isolated from the larger world economy.

The day starts with forecast for 15C in Stockholm and as the train leaves Stockholm Central at 07:00 the sun is shining. By 09:00 it has become overcast as we head west towards Norway and at about 10:30 it starts to rain.

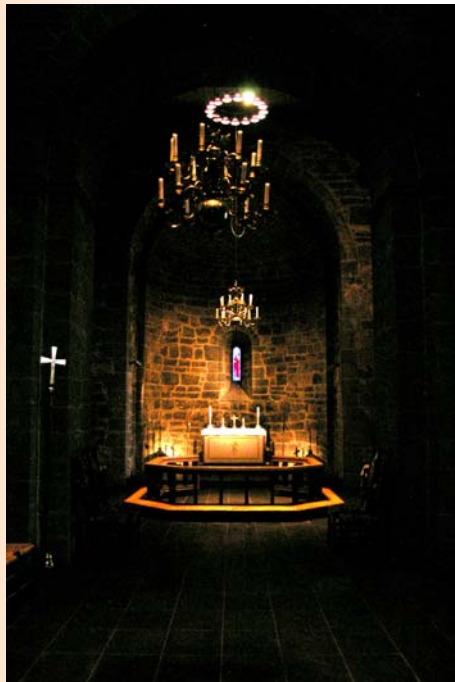
We are travelling through farmland and forest and there are signs that winter

has not long gone. There are patches of frozen snow in gullies and the farmers have just started ploughing for the new crops. Spot one deer in a field.

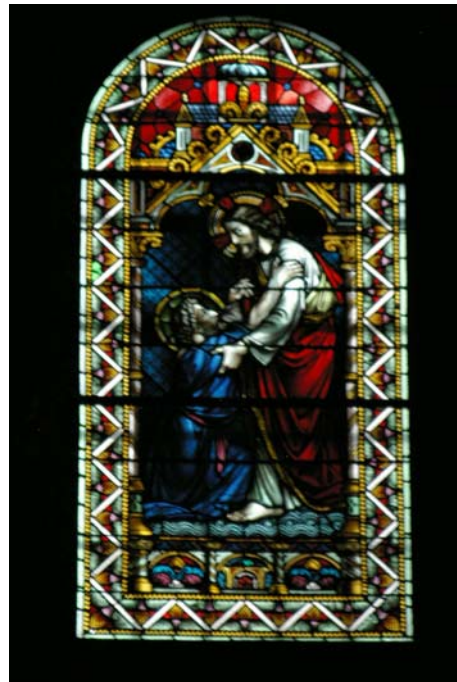
Oslo is dull and damp when we arrive. Hotel is about 10 minutes walk from the central station. Planning for the weekend is complicated by Sunday, May 1, being Labour Day and a public holiday so some museums and galleries will be closed. The Information Centre has a list of what is

and what is not open and an Oslo card will be worthwhile for 2 days.

Near the hotel is the Gamle Aker Kirke – Old Acre Church – the oldest church from the Middle Ages in Oslo. It was built around the year 1150 and despite 2 fires due to lightning strikes and several renovations the interior remains basically the same as the original.



Gamle Aker Kirke - Old Acre Church



Gamle Aker Kirke - Old Acre Church



Gamle Aker Kirke - Old Acre Church



Dom Kirke - Oslo

The Dom Kirke is unusual amongst cathedrals I have seen on this trip. Most are Gothic Cathedrals. This is not: it has a simple arched wooden planked ceiling covered with paper upon which the decorations have been painted. Unfortunately the paper is coming off the ceiling along the plank joints.

A small orchestra was practicing in the Cathedral and the acoustics were magnificent.

The rain is now very light so I can walk around and have a look at the centre of the city.



Houses near Gamle Aker Kirke

Before I left home I arranged to meet Barbara Kilfoyle and her friend Helen at their hotel for dinner. They are waiting for me in the lobby and we have a drink before venturing out in the rain to find somewhere to eat. Barbara has some ideas, with the help of the Lonely Planet Guide so we hop on a tram and head to the Grünerløkka district. We soon find a place where the food and the price look OK. We go in, no one is eating, so I ask if food is being served. It is! We sit down and order and a very pleasant meal is soon produced. A bottle of wine costs a fortune, we have it anyway.

Back on the tram to the Central Station and I get off to walk back to my hotel. I think Barbara and Helen should have got off too. I'll see where they finished up when I see them tomorrow night.

Saturday 30 April 2005 - Oslo

Day 13

With a holiday tomorrow I plan to see those museums that are not going to be open tomorrow. Oslo Rådhus is supposed to open at 09:00.



Parliament - Oslo



Oslo Harbour

I start out intending to have a quick look at the old fort and visit the Rådhus soon after nine. On the way I pass the Parliament building at one end of a park which leads up to the Royal Palace. I arrive as planned to find it is not open today. There is a

function on and young people with parents are arriving. The young women are dressed in traditional costume and the boys are all in suits. Could be a graduation ceremony. Anyway all I can do is have a look at the outside, particularly the highly coloured illustrations of Norse Legend, and take a few photos.

Odin on Sleipner

Odin, the most powerful of gods, is riding his eightlegged Sleipner, the fastest stallion in the world. Odin's spear Gungne strikes everything he hurls it at. On his arm he has the valuable ring Draupne, which drips eight equally beautiful rings every ninth night. Odin's two ravens Hugin (thought) and Munin (memory) fly out every day into the wide world and bring news back to their master. Here they guide Odin in the twilight of the forest.



Odin on Sleipner



Royal Palace - Oslo



Victoria Terrace



Rådhus - Oslo



Residence near the Palace

The next museum I plan to visit is supposed to open at 11:00, more of that later, so I head off to the Royal Palace (Slottet) and the Slottsparken which surrounds. I pass the National Theatre, an impressive building that was surrounded by scaffolding, so no picture. As I walked into the Slottsparken I noticed a large white building, shown as Victoria Terrace on the map. I don't what it was but it appears that it is now part of some government department offices.

Like palaces in Denmark and Sweden the palace was designed to show the rest of Europe how important Norway was. It is quite impressive, standing at the top of the hill looking down on Karl Johans Gate and the Parliament building.



Colbjørnsensgata

From the front of the Palace to Frogner Parken and Vigelansparken is about 2km through some rather

upmarket houses and apartments. There is a mixture of building styles from timber clad buildings to more modern brick apartment blocks. Nevertheless it is a very pleasant and will be leafy part of town.



Palace Guard

Frogner Parken is a large park to the north west of the centre of Oslo. Its main claim to fame is that within it is the Vigelansparken contain over 200 statues of nude human figures of all ages and in all sorts of relationships to one another. There are children playing, parents playing with their children, lovers, older people sitting together. If you can imagine it there is probably a sculpture portraying it.

Time to head back to the Kulturhistorisk Museum (The University Museum of Cultural Heritage). When I arrive I find it opened at 10:00 and doesn't close till 18:00, contrary to all the published material I have.

http://www.khm.uio.no/english/hist_museum/index.shtml

This museum was opened in 1904 and includes displays of the life of Norwegians through 9000 years. The Stone Age to Viking age is portrayed through the artefacts that have been found and reconstructions of life at various times.

Part of the medieval display includes a vaulted church ceiling, from the 12th C, similar to that of the Dom Kirke. In this case the decoration is painted directly onto the boards.



Fountain - Vigeland Park

An interesting display is the collection of coins from about 950 to the present.

The display of life in the Arctic is very good. The display features the way of life of the Eskimos, Sámi and Inuit in a cold and harsh environment.

Around the corner is the Nasjonalgalleriet (The National Gallery). It is part of the National Museum of art, architecture and design and houses the largest collection of work by Norwegian artists.



Vigeland Park



Kulturhistorisk Museum



Column – Vigeland Park

There are many works by Edvard Munch, including the famed 'Scream'. One room features his work, but there are other pieces throughout the gallery. Cezanne, Monet and Manet are well represented.

The collection of sculpture is quite small and includes works by well known sculptures such as Rodin.

The final museum for the day is the Kunstindustrimuseet (Museum of

Applied Art). Also part of the National Museum of art, architecture and design, the museum exhibits Norwegian and international applied art, fashion and design from the 7th C to the present. The exhibitions of 20th C design in furniture, domestic appliances, glassware and decorative items presents an explanation and illustrations of the various design styles of the century.



Sami Costume

The museum has large collection of 16th and 17th C tapestries, works by many of the famous weavers in France, Brussels and Norway. I have been impressed rightly or wrongly by the condition of the tapestries and furniture from the 16th and 17th C in museum and castles

in Scandinavia. For some reason, they seem to have survived the centuries better than similar items in other parts of Europe and Great Britain.

It's my turn to find a place to eat so I check a couple of places near my hotel; listed in the Lonely Planet is the Stortorvets Gjæstgiveri Restaurant near the main square. This is the oldest restaurant in Oslo. Prices are a bit rich, but then they are everywhere in Scandinavia if you want a decent meal. Barbara and Helen decide they would like to splash out a little and so that is where we had a very nice meal and shared a bottle of red.

By the way they realised as soon as I got off the tram last night that we were at the station and they should get off too. The tram had to stop for traffic lights and the driver kindly let them off, otherwise they would have been on a tour of Oslo.



Stortorvets Gjæstgiveri Restaurant

The suburban area of Bygdøy is home to five museums and many palatial homes and one of the museums opens at 09:00 today.

A little out of town, Bygdøy can be reached by bus or ferry. I choose the bus as it is quicker and stops right outside the Vikingskiphuset – The Viking Ship Museum – that also opens first.

http://www.khm.uio.no/english/viking_ship_museum/index.shtml



Buckets found with one of the ships



Oseberg ship - Viking Ship Museum



Vikingskiphuset - Oslo

An early, 08:30, Sunday morning walk through the centre of Oslo gives a very poor impression of the city. It is filthy, broken bottles, drink containers, food wrappers and vomit litter the streets. I might add it is not much better later in the day. An impression of Copenhagen, Stockholm and Oslo is one of a lot of rubbish on the streets.



Modern apartments - Bygdøy

The Viking Ship Museum houses three ships and the relics that were found with them. The ships were all found in graves of important people. The ships are different. The Oseberg ship, excavated in 1904, was a burial ship for an important Viking woman. The ship was lightly constructed and archaeologists believe it was a ceremonial ship and had not been used for ocean going voyages. No valuable jewellery was found at the sight. It had probably been looted by grave robbers on the Middle Ages. However, many wooden and bronze items were found. A wooden cart and a number of sleighs were also found. This was the richest of the finds.



Carving from a sleigh found with one of the ships



Fram - Bow reinforcement



Small boat construction



Stave Church - Norsk Folkemuseum

The other two ships, the Gokstad ship excavated in 1880 and the Tune ship excavated in 1867, are more substantial ships, suitable for ocean voyages. Each was the burial ship for an important man. The Tune appears to have been built for sailing as its design differs from the others.

Although the Viking ships from Norway, Sweden and Denmark are very similar these Norwegian ships seem to differ in a number of ways from the Danish ships. Hulls seem broader and flatter, oars pass through holes in the hull that are closed when the ship is under sail and there are covered decks. There are no seats for the rowers.



Palatial home - Bygdøy

The Kon-Tiki Museum is the home for the Institute for Pacific Archaeology and Cultural History. The display features the voyages and research by Thor Heyerdahl from the Kon-Tiki expedition in 1947 to the voyage of the Tigris across the Indian Ocean in 1978.

The balsa log raft Kon-Tiki and the reed boat Ra II are on display. The Institute continues to sponsor research and next year a new Kon-Tiki expedition is planned.

On display outside the Fram Museum is the Gjøa; the first vessel to sail through the North West Passage. Built in 1872.

<http://www.fram.museum.no/en/>
http://college.hmco.com/history/readerscomp/ships/html/sh_038400_gjoa.htm

Captain Roald Amundsen and 6 crew members sailed Gjøa from Norway on 17th June 1903.



Ra II - Kon-tiki museum - Bygdøy



Kon-tiki

Stayed 23 months in Gjøa Harbour to carry out scientific research. Continued to King Point in summer 1905 and completed the transit to Nome

in 1906. Arrived in San Francisco October 1906 and was placed in the Golden Gate Park.



Gjøa - First ship to travel through the North West Passage

Gjøa was returned to Oslo in 1972 and officially delivered to the Norwegian Maritime Museum on 17th July 1972



Fram

The Fram museum displays the achievements of Norwegian Polar explorers, Fridtjof Nansen, Otto Sverdrup and Roald Amundsen. Each of these

explorers used the ship Fram for their expeditions to the Arctic and Antarctic. The building was built around the Fram after she had been hauled out of the water.

The Fram is described as the world's strongest ship. In some places the hull is 80cm thick and bow and stern are both reinforced with steel to protect against ice. Her hull shape is such that pressure from the ice forces the ship up and does not crush the ship. She has survived 2 years in the pack ice. It was the Fram that carried Amundsen to Antarctica for his expedition to the South Pole beating Robert Scott by about a month.



Fram - massive frames.

Norsk Sjøfartsmuseum – Norwegian Maritime Museum – has a large display of models of ships, ancient and modern, that have sailed the seas from Norway. There is also a collection of traditional boats, mainly built around the beginning of the 20th C, from Norway's coastal communities. The construction and hull shape of the boats is very like the Viking ships.

Finally the Norsk Folkemuseum is an open air collection of buildings from the 17th C to the early 20th C. The highlight of the exhibition is the Stave

Church from Gol, Hallingdal, built around 1200. The church required extensive restoration and changes made during the Reformation were removed. Paintings on the nave and apse date from 1652.



Fram - model

<http://www.norskfolke.museum.no/>



Stave Church - Norsk Folkemuseum

Rural buildings, homes and farm buildings, from many areas of Norway are displayed.



Farm - Norsk Folkemuseum



Barn - Norsk Folkemuseum

In 1624 the town of Oslo was destroyed by fire. King Christian IV decreed the town be moved closer to the Akershus Fortress. The town was called Christiania and was laid out with wide streets to prevent fire from spreading and buildings were to be of stone or brick. In the 1800's new suburbs appeared that were not so well planned. Examples of houses and other buildings from the 1600's to the early 1900's have been relocated in the museum, providing snapshot of architecture in Oslo.

Time at the museums has just about run out so back on the bus to the city and a walk around the enormous Akershus Fortress that looks out over the Oslo Fjord.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Akershus_Fortress



Norsk Folkemuseum



Akershus Fortress - Oslo

Here I am at the historic Kvikne's Hotel on the shores of the Sognefjorden looking out over the fjord at a snow-covered mountain. There has been an inn here since 1752, the Holman Inn, which was bought by the Kvikne family in 1877 and renamed the hotel Balholm. The family still runs the hotel today.



Yacht at Flåm

It has been a rather dull and overcast day with occasional light rain.



Frozen Lake - Geilo



Finse Railway Station

Today has been travel day, leaving Oslo at 08:11 and climbing into the mountains through pretty suburbs of Oslo. Pictures from the train are a waste of time as trees flash by in the foreground. The trip to Myrdal where I will

change trains will take nearly 5 hours. We climb continuously and as we do pockets of snow on the northern slopes of the mountains appear and besides rivers and lakes there is still the remains of the winter ice. However the birch trees are bursting into leaf. Two weeks ago in Copenhagen the buds were just starting to open.



Waterfall - Flåm Railway

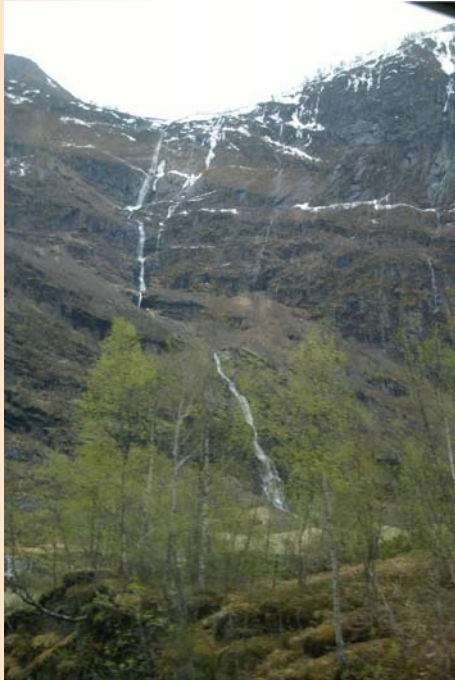
As we pass farms there are buildings similar to those in the Norsk Folkemuseum complete with sod roofs. A sod roof provides excellent insulation.

The train continues to climb and at Geilo we have passed the tree line and a stark black and white landscape is developing. The nearby lake is frozen.

About 4 hours from Oslo we reach the town of Finse the highest point on the Oslo – Bergen train line at 1222m. Here you can ski all the year round and snow is up to the eaves of many buildings. There are no roads to Finse.

<http://www.finse1222.no/engindex.htm>

We are now on the Hardangervidda Plateau and as we begin our descent the train passes through many snow sheds some of which are still covered with snow.



Another waterfall - Flåm Railway

At Myrndal we change to the Flåm railway that descends over 800m, through the Flåm river valley, in 20km to Flåm village on the Aurlandsfjorden arm of the Sognefjorden. There are spectacular waterfalls and gorges to be seen during the descent. At one point the train completes a 360° turn inside the mountain.

<http://www.flaamsbana.no/eng/Index.html>
<http://www.sognefjord.no/>



Flåm River



Flåm Railway Station

The village of Flåm is a pretty little village of 400 people serving as base for the railway and a terminal for the ferry to Gudvangen and the Sognefjorden express boat to Bergen. It is the express boat that I am to catch to Balestrand.



Flåm

Despite the grey weather the scenery as we travel down the fjord is spectacular; rugged snow capped mountains, thundering waterfalls, picturesque villages and seals on the banks of the fjord.

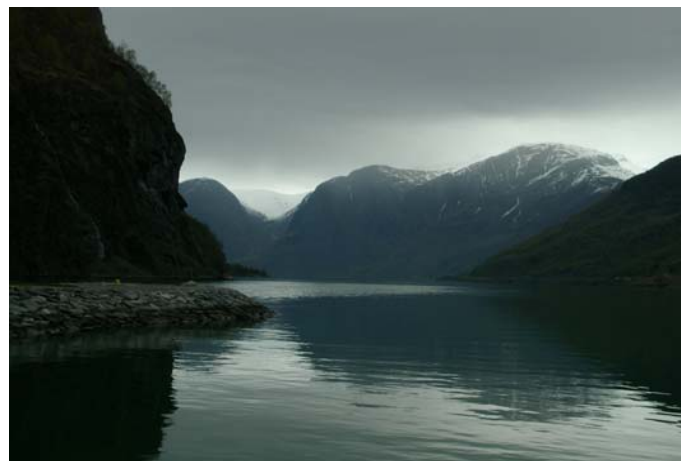


Ferries at Flåm



Waterfall - Sognefjorden

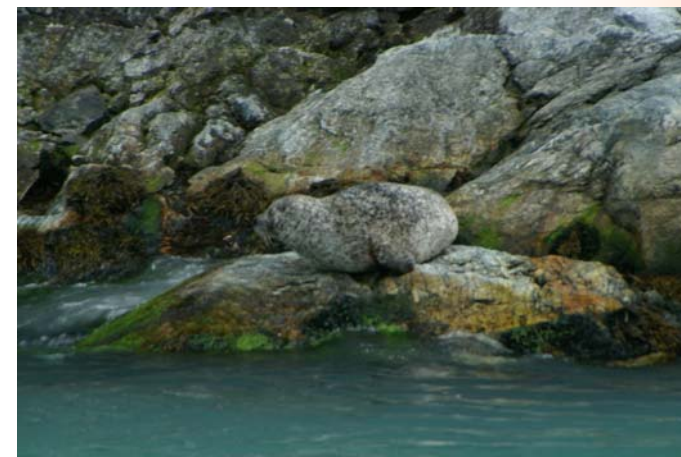
I am staying in the multistorey block of the hotel in a comfortable room overlooking the fjord and the ferry dock. As I write this a pretty little passenger ship the Lofoten ties up for the night.



Aurlandsfjorden



Undredal - Sognefjorden



Seal - Sognefjorden

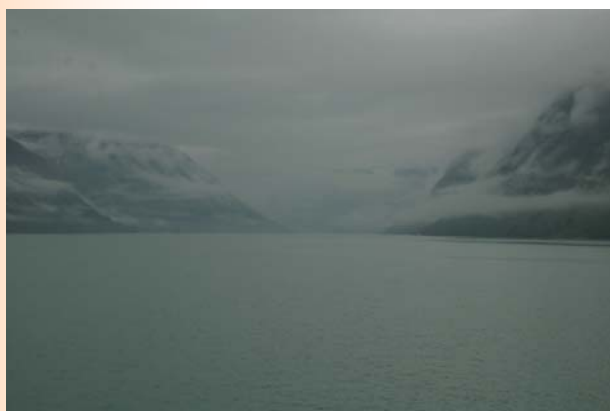
The dining room and several other rooms where you can sit and read are in the original building that is in the 'Swiss' architectural style. There is an impressive collection of artwork on the walls of these rooms.

Dinner comes with the deal and I enjoyed a very nice four-course meal in the company of 2 people from Palo Alto, California. Dolphins are swimming in the fjord below the window.



Kivkne's Hotel - Balestrand

Today I have an excursion to Fjærland to visit the Norwegian Glacier Museum and two glaciers fed by the massive Jostedalsbreen icecap; the Supphellebreen and the Bøyabreen. (breen = glacier)



Fjærlandfjord

Besides the glaciers, Fjærland's other claim to fame is second hand bookshops. There is 4km of shelving in a large number of small bookshops.



Fjærlandfjord



Fjærland

We travel on the vehicle ferry, Fjærlandfjord, named after the fjord, which is a branch of the Sognefjorden; there are 7 of us, no vehicles. It is

very early in the season. The others are going to overnight in Fjærland. There is a family with two small boys who have booked a cabin near the Museum and the others are planning to walk up on to the glacier and overnight there.



MS Lofoten at Fjærland



Otzi - the Ice Man - Glacier Museum



Supphellebreen with two French boys

There are a number of small settlements on the banks of the fjord. Some are farms and others are summer homes. Many seem to be accessible only from the fjord.

The fjord is a pale green colour due to the presence of suspended clay brought down by the melt waters. Although the Sognefjorden is 1200m deep in some places, the entrance is relatively shallow. The fjord is tidal however the upper layers of the upper reaches are fresh due to the large volumes of water from the snowfields.



Supphellebreen



Bøyabreen

The weather is not brilliant, showers of rain, low cloud with occasional sunshine on the snow-capped mountains. The ferry trip takes about an hour and a half. At Fjærland a bus is waiting to take us to the Glacier Museum.

http://www.bre.museum.no/index_engelsk.html

We arrive just in time for the screening of the 18 minute, multiscreen film of the ice flow and the glaciers. Filmed from a helicopter it provides a spectacular introduction to the region.



The Fjærlandfjord



Hotel Mundal - Fjærland

There are excellent displays showing exploration in the Antarctic, the role that things trapped in glaciers play in providing a record of the earth's climatic history, the

formation of glaciers, what happens when volcano erupts through a glacier, stories of people trapped in the ice and discovered years later. There is a comprehensive display about the 5000 years old iceman, Otzi, found in the European Alps in 1991.



Avalanche of Snow

The rain has eased but it is still overcast.

We head next to the Supphellebreen, this is the lowest lying glacier in southern Norway, just 60m above sea level. The glacier is kept alive by ice avalanches from the glacier 800m higher up the mountain. It is possible

to walk right up to the face of the glacier and the children with us were able to play on the ice.



Church - Fjærland



Jostedalsbreen

The icefall at Bøyabreen moves down the mountain at 2m a day, so regular icefalls (calving) are expected. This is the main source of melt water for the river. There is a lake at the bottom of the icefall that is still frozen over and the snow is too deep to walk to it.



School group returning to the aquarium



Letterbox - Fjærland

The visits to the museum and the glaciers finish at about 13:30, back at the ferry dock, leaving about 2 hours to look at the town. There is not a lot to do; a walk around the town, a peep inside the church and a few minutes browsing in some of the many second hand bookshops does not take very long.

On our arrival a couple that were conducting a bird watching pilot program for the Hotel Mundal approached us. I think this is the only one in town. It was built in 1891 in the 'Swiss' style. It, along with the Kvikne's Hotel, is one of the few remaining large wooden hotels in Norway. They wanted to know if anyone was interested in spending some time looking at birds on the wetlands in the river estuary. I thought

it a good way to spend some of the time after the tour and when I returned alone they were waiting for me.



View from my room

The wetlands have recently been declared a sanctuary and are closed to humans during the summer to allow

migrating birds visit and to breed. Up to 50 varieties of birds visit the wetland and today there were about a dozen. There were several varieties of seagull, a tern, several petrels, a variety of waders and several different ducks.

An observation tower is to be built to make it easier to see the smaller birds nesting in the tussocks. The project seems a worthwhile one.

A stroll around the town and it soon time to return to the ferry. The weather has improved a little and there is some sun on the mountains making the trip back more pleasant.

There is a brilliant view of the Jostedal Glacier, bathed in bright sunlight.

The weather seems to be clearing and with a little luck the fine weather will return. The view of the mountains from my room window is much clearer tonight.

Wednesday 4 May 2005 – Balestrand to Bergen

Day 17



Kivkne's Hotel - Balestrand

The dolphins are still swimming back and forth outside the dining room window.

Balestrand is a pretty little town that has been summer tourist centre for at least 150 years. It is centrally located for access to the glaciers, mountain walks, fishing and visits to other fjord side towns.

The weather is looking much more promising today and I decide to walk up into the forest on one of the nature walks that are available. They all start near the school that is located about 100m up the mountainside.



Grave Mound - Balestrand



Nature Walk - Balestrand

It is a pleasant walk up the hill and when I get to the start I find the walks are graded. Some climb to the top of nearby mountains that are snow covered at present. There are warnings that the walks are for experienced walkers only. One is however quite easy, along well marked paths, and with lots of signs in English explaining features of the forest and identifying the trees and wildlife.

I descend to the fjord and back to the town past a little wooden Anglican church, St Olaf's, that was built in 1897 as the result of fund raising efforts by Margaret Sophia Green

Kivkne, the English wife of Knut Kvikne. She was the daughter of an Anglican minister. It was built in the style of the Stave Churches using contemporary methods. It is a pretty little church and its large windows make it quite bright inside.



House - Balestrand



Viking King Bele's Grave Mound

St Olaf's is now the responsibility of Diocese of Gibraltar in Europe whose headquarters are in London and which cares for chaplaincies in Europe.

There are a number of grave mounds in Balestrand. I passed one on the way up the hill. Few relics were found and it is not clear if it was a Viking grave or much earlier in 4th of 5th C, the migration period. A site beside the fjord contains several grave mounds and barrows. Sufficient artefacts have been found to establish that the site was first used in the migration period and again during the Viking Age.

There is a small aquarium in Balestrand that focuses on the aquatic environment of the Sognefjorden. At this time of year things are quiet and payment is on an honour system; put your 25kr in a slot and take a ticket.

The displays are excellent and so is the explanatory book in English that is closely linked to the displays, unlike some others I have seen. The aquarium has been conducting research on the aquatic life and ecology of the fjord, monitoring fish stocks, water temperatures and nutrient levels for 25 years. Most of the fieldwork is done by school children that visit the aquarium and go out onto the fjord and collect data and specimens. The specimens they collect are used to maintain the displays.

There has been a group of children each day and this afternoon there is a group untangling fishing nets on the jetty.

The afternoon weather is still OK, but from time to time a strong cold wind blows down from the mountain and the formerly sunlit snowfield becomes shrouded in cloud. It looks like a good reason not to take the mountain walks at this time of year, unless you are well prepared.



**St Olaf's - English Church -
Balestrand**



Roof - St Olaf's

The express ferry to Bergen leaves at 16:55 so I return to the hotel for a while as there is little else I can do in the time left.

The ferry arrives on time and departs for the 3¼ hr trip. There are several stops at pretty little towns. At first we travel past towering snow capped mountains and cascading waterfalls. The mixture of sunlight and cloud

on the fjord and the mountains produces some marvellous lighting effects. Later as we approach the entrance to fjord the mountains are smaller and most of the snow has gone.



Kivkne's Hotel - Balestrand



School group at the Aquarium



Sognefjorden Aquarium



Sognefjorden



Sognefjorden



Sognefjorden



Bergen



Cargo Ship - Sognefjorden



Sognefjorden

The approaches to Bergen are through a series of channels between the mainland and islands. At some places the channel is very narrow and the ferry has to slow down to negotiate some of the narrow, sharp turns in the channel.

The Hotel Neptun is 100m from the ferry dock.

Thursday 5 May 2005 - Bergen - Cruise Day 1

Day 18

The day dawns pretty wet and miserable.

After a rather late breakfast I set out at about 09:15 to reconnoitre; there is no one about and then the penny drops, it's Ascension holiday, 40 days after Easter. Nothing is going to be open. This doesn't

matter as I planned to leave visits to museums etc until I returned from the cruise.

I wander about and take a few pictures in the drizzle and notice the Fløibanen, the funicular from the city to Mount Fløyen is nearby. It is too wet to

do much so I return to the hotel and by checkout time at 1200 the weather has cleared a little and I head for the Fløibanen without a plan for the afternoon. The station at the top is at 320m above sea level, so there are spectacular views of the

city, even in the drizzle. The mist and drizzle clears occasionally giving a much brighter view.



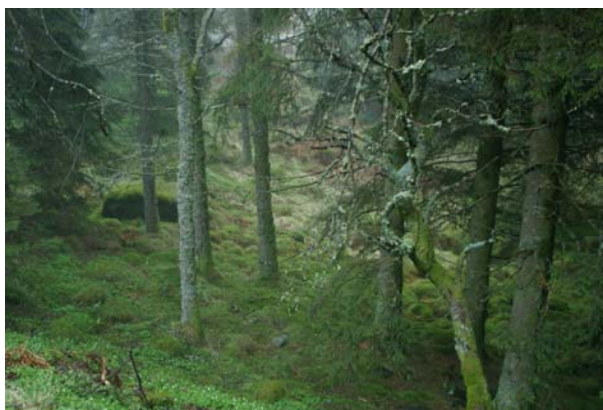
Theatre - Bergen



Jogger in the mist - Mt Fløyen

I was about to head down again when I noticed families picnicking in the rain and scouts and cubs heading off into the forest along well marked walking tracks. I had a chat with the ladies registering the participants. It was a family day and parents and scouts and cubs (boys and girls) were engaged in different walks, up to 5km through the forest on the mountain. The cubs were going on a

marked trail, the scouts had to follow instructions and use a map. They had to pass checkpoints on the way.



Forest - Mt Fløyen



Bergen - through the mist from Mt Blåmanen

I was wearing my walking boots; I've worn these most days, as they are much better on the rough cobbled footpaths here, so I decided to go for a walk. About an hour and quarter later I finished up on the top of Mount Blåmanen at 568m. Can't see more than about 100m for the cloud and rain, then suddenly the clouds clear and below me is the city.

As I start down it gets brighter and I have a marvellous view of Bergen.



Lake on Mt Blåmanen

Back at the Fløibanen station at about 15:00 I head down to the city and take a quick walk around the World Heritage listed area of Bryggen. This is a series of timber warehouses and shops that were constructed by members of the Hanseatic League of merchants who dominated trade in the region in the late Middle Ages. The weather is deteriorating and it is nearly 16:00, pickup for the cruise is at 17:00, so I head back to the hotel to dry out.

The Hanseatic League

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hanseatic_League

<http://www.infoplease.com/ce6/history/A0822651.html>

The Hanseatic League was a mercantile league of medieval German towns. It was amorphous in character; its origin cannot be dated exactly. Originally a Hansa was a company of merchants trading with foreign lands. After the German push eastward and the settlement of German towns in

the Slavic lands of the Baltic, the merchant guilds and town associations led (13th cent.) to leagues. Most notable was the company of German merchants with headquarters at [Visby](#); pushing east, they founded a branch at [Novgorod](#). In London, where German merchants had traded since the 11th cent., the privileges granted to Cologne merchants were extended to other Germans, and a Hansa of German merchants was formed (see [Steelyard, Merchants of the](#)).



Bergen from Mt Fløyen Lookout

A major impetus to the league's development was the lack of a powerful German national government to provide security for trade. In order to obtain mutual security, exclusive trading rights, and, wherever possible, trade monopoly, the towns drew closer together. In 1241 [Lübeck](#) and [Hamburg](#) concluded a treaty of mutual protection.

Other cities joined this association, and a strong league grew up led by Lübeck. Ports and inland towns from Holland to Poland entered the league, but the north German cities remained the principal members.



Cathedral - Bergen

The league vigorously extended its operations, founding principal foreign branches at [Bruges](#) and [Bergen](#).



Warehouses - Bryggen

The Hansa towns reached their summit in their victories over [Waldemar IV](#) of Denmark, gaining in the Treaty of Stralsund (1370) a virtual trade monopoly in Scandinavia. Their Baltic hegemony continued through numerous wars until their defeat by the Dutch in 1441. Despite its success, the league suffered from lack of organization.

Although assemblies of the league met irregularly at Lübeck, many towns did not send representatives, and decisions were subject to review by the individual towns. The number of members fluctuated, probably from less than 100 to over 160.



Fish market area - Bergen



Bryggen - warehouse fronts

By the 16th cent. internal dissension, curtailment of freedom by the German princes, growth of centralized foreign states and consequent loss of Hanseatic privileges, advances of Dutch and English shipping, and various changes in trade all operated against the league. The last diet was held in 1669, but the league was never formally dissolved. Lübeck, Hamburg, and [Bremen](#) are still known as Hanseatic cities.

See P. Dollinger, *The German Hansa* (tr. 1970).



Modern apartments - Bergen

Pickup arrives on time and I am on board the MS Nordlys just after 18:00 with most of the other passengers. Buffet dinner is served at 18:30 and needless to say there are enormous amounts of food.

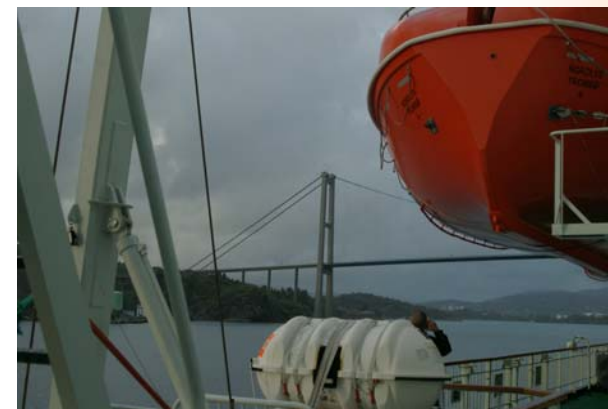
We set sail sharp at 20:00.

The Hurtigruten – Norwegian Coastal Voyage will take us to the far north of Norway and back. We will make stops at 33 ports. Each port is visited twice, usually once in daylight and once at night.

Some stops are very short; no more than 15 minutes.

<http://www.hurtigruten.com/index.asp>

A safety briefing and an introduction to the officers at 21:00 finish the formal activities. It is getting dark so I head to my cabin write up the days notes.



Departing Bergen

Friday 6 May 2005 - Cruise Day 2
Florø, Måløy, Torvick, Ålesund, Geiranger, Ålesund, Molde

Day 19

During the night the Nordlys called at Florø and Måløy. I heard one, not the other; my inside cabin is well insulated from outside noises and without a porthole I need the alarm to tell me its morning.

We have come some distance North and it is cold on deck. Full windproof fleece jacket is needed for the first time.

First stop in the morning is at Torvik, the little port for the municipality of Hærøy. To the East is the town of Ulsteinvik, a centre for fishing, shipbuilding and light industry. We stop for 15 minutes to load some freight and passengers. The next stop at 0845 is at Ålesund.

Ålesund has a population of 39,000 and lives off the sea. The fishing fleet operates from Greenland

to the Barents Sea, providing a basis for an extensive fishing industry. The town was burnt to the ground in 1904 and rebuilt in Art Nouveau style. Our stop of 45 minutes allows us to leave the ship and have a look round. We will have another chance to look around when we return tonight.

The summer cruise includes a full day trip into the Geiranger Fjord to Geiranger and return.



Torvick



Ålesund



En Route to Geiranger



Near Torvick



Ålesund



Geiranger Fjord

Earlier the weather had been fine and overcast with patches of morning sun. Now as we enter the fjord it has become very grey, with rain showers about.

There is an optional return to Alesund by bus that I have chosen not to do. The fjord is 100km long. Not as long as Sognefjorden. The fjord soon becomes rather narrow with high mountains rising to 2000m, steep mountainsides and rugged cliff on

each side. Occasionally there are farms perched on the hillside. On one mountainside there are three farms so separated vertically that they each start planting their crops one week apart; the lowest first and the highest last.

Strictly the Geiranger Fjord is just the last 16 km of the trip and the most spectacular. Here the cliffs press in and tower above the ship and waterfalls tumble down the mountain. As we get closer to

Geiranger we pass three notable waterfalls, the Bridal Veil Falls, the Seven Sisters Falls and opposite the Friaren – Courtier Falls. The Eagles Road with its 11 zig zags up the mountain and out of the valley soon appears and this is the route the buses will take.



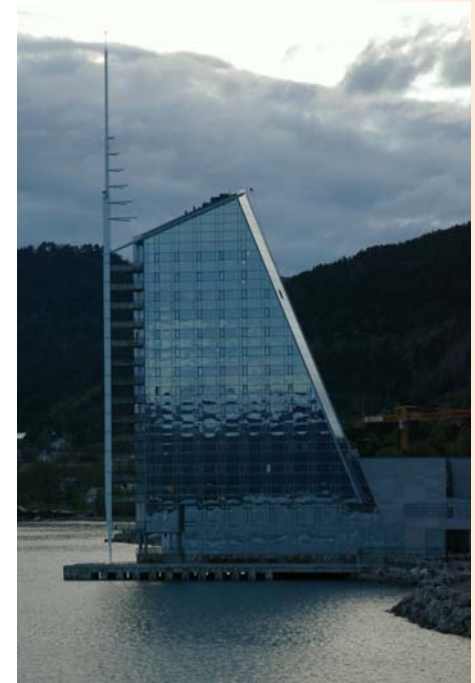
Bridal Veil Falls - Geiranger



Seven Sisters Falls - Geiranger



Eagles Road over the mountain



Modern Glass Hotel - Molde



Geiranger



Boat to take overland tour group ashore



Geiranger Fjord



Molde

We return to Ålesund too late to spend any more time in the town as dinner is at 18:30 and the ship sails at 18:45.

The ship heads north and then east into the Romsdalen Fjord, heading for Molde. Molde faces south and on the other side of the fjord are the Alps of Romsdalen – 87 snow clad peaks.

Molde was blitzed in 1940 and 2/3 was destroyed. Most of the town, including the modern cathedral, was rebuilt in the 1950's.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Molde>



Freighter heading south



Returning to Ålesund

Originating from the two major farms Reknes and Molde (later renamed Moldegård), a small port called *Molde fjære* was formed, based on trade with timber and herring. In 1614 the town gained formal trading rights, and in 1742 cityhood. One third of the city, mostly wooden buildings and rose gardens, was destroyed in a fire on 21 and January 22, 1916. A second fire struck when the Germans bombed the city in April 1940,

destroying about two thirds of the city. The Germans were chasing the king, his government and gold reserves, which were fleeing, and thus stayed in Molde from 22 to April 29, making Molde the capital of Norway for a week.



Endless snow capped mountains



Sports Stadium - Molde

Overnight we have called at Kristiansund.

On deck before breakfast, there is morning sun and some blue sky. Perhaps today will be brighter. We pass two of the many small ships that ply these waters.

<http://www.stud.ntnu.no/~ragnvald/trondheim/historie-eng.html>
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trondheim>

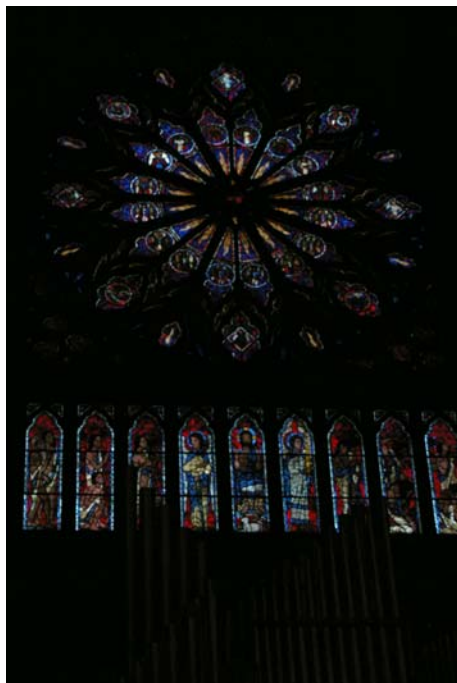


Trondheim

Today's optional tour visits the Nidaros Cathedral and the Ringve Music Museum.



Museum of Music History - Ringve



**Rose Window - Nidaros Cathedral
- Trondheim**

Next stop is Trondheim at 08:15. We will be there till 12:00.



West Facade - Nidaros Cathedral - Trondheim



Nam, with wife and son

Nidaros, now Trondheim, was Norway's first capital city is situated in Trondheimfjord at the mouth of the River Nid. Norway was unified in 872 after the people of Trøndelag had defeated all Norway's local chieftains in great sea battles. Nidaros remained the capital until Hakon Hakonsson moved to Bergen in 1217. During

these years, Trondheim developed into Norway's religious centre. It began with the death of Olav at the battle of Stiklestad in 1030. Pilgrims came from far and wide to be healed at St Olav's shrine in Nidaros.

The town became the seat of the archbishop in 1152 and remained Norway's ecclesiastical centre until the Reformation in 1553.

In the 11th C, a church was built over the shrine of St Olav.

<http://www.nidarosdomen.no/english/nidaroscathedral/>

The cathedral was built between 1070 and 1300. The earliest parts, the transept are Romanesque; the remainder is Gothic.



Narrow channel at Stokksund



Turn to port under the cliffs



Spectators watch us pass under the bridge at Stokksund



Rørvik

The church was ravaged by fire five times between 128 and 1719. For some time after the last fire the church was largely in ruins, until, in 1867 restoration work commenced. Unlike most of the churches I have visited in Scandinavia, this church has a full complement of stained glass windows including a magnificent, 9m-diameter rose window on the western end of the nave.

The stained glass windows tell the stories of the Old and New Testaments, as they do in most cathedrals. However, in most cathedrals the stained glass windows were installed when the peasants could not read or write. Gabriel Kielland mainly created these windows between 1908 and 1930.

The West Front is a screen façade, featuring three rows of large statues. At the bottom we find the apostles, in the middle and number of saints and at the top prophets and kings from the Old Testament.

The Museum of Music History at Ringve houses a collection of musical instruments from the 17th C to the 20th C. Victoria Bachke, a Russian artist who fled from the revolution in St.Petersburg and married in Trondheim, formed the collection.

<http://www.ringve.com/english/start.html>

Most of the instruments are stringed instruments, particularly instruments similar to the harpsichord and piano. Various violins and organs are also in the collection.

The Ringve estate was once the farm of the Wessel family. A family later bought it to established an orchard to provide fruit for their soft drink business. The business failed and the farm was sold. However, the orchard forms the basis of the botanical gardens that encircle the buildings.

The port and the railway station are on islands reclaimed from the sea during the past 150 years.

These islands are separated from the city by a canal flanked with old warehouses and berthed boats.



Marina - Rørvik

Nam, who lived with us for a while when he was studying at Latrobe University, met me at Ringve with his wife and 14 months old son. We only had a few minute to talk. It was good to see him again. He is working and studying at the technical university in Trondheim.



Nesting Gulls - Rørvik



Munkholmen

Trondheim, particularly around the old warehouse area, is very picturesque. The buildings are built over the water, three stories high, with gable roofs, and each painted a different colour. They are from the 17th and 18th C and were owned by the same wealthy merchants who had summer farms in the vicinity of Ringve.

Ship departs Trondheim at 12:00 in bright sunshine, at last. To starboard is the island of

Munkholmen, first a monastery, later a fort and now a restaurant.

<http://www.trondheim.com/content.ap?thisId=7994950>



Rørvik



Bridge at Rørvik

Our next port of call will be Rørvik at 20:45.

At around 16:20 we are at Stokksund. Here we enter a very narrow channel, turn to starboard and pass under what seems a bridge too low and then

turn hard to port into another narrow channel under a towering cliff. There are sightseers on the bridge to see us pass.

When it's all over clear sea can be seen ahead. I don't think it was necessary to go that way. The

islands could be passed to the west in the open ocean. Still it is pretty exciting for the passengers.

After dinner we dock at Rørvik. We are a few minutes late however departure has been delayed until 21:30 so there is time for quick walk around. It

is quite a pretty town, neat and clean, few trees and reminiscent of far north towns in Alaska. Not bad at this time of year but wild, cold places in winter.

Sunday 8 May 2005 - Cruise Day 4

Brønnøysund, Sandnessjøen, Nesna, Ørnes, Bodø, Stamsund, Svolvær

Day 21

Overnight the ship has called at Brønnøysund, Sandnessjøen, and Nesna.

We crossed the Arctic Circle ($67^{\circ}33'$) around 07:15. It is sunny, but there is a cold 15knot wind so thermal singlets are the go on deck.



Boat for the Svartisen Glacier tour

At 08:30, off the fishing village of Grønøy, the ship stops to allow those who are doing the excursion to the Svartisen Glacier to transfer to a small ship for the voyage into the fjord.

Once they are away we head on to Ørnes.



Grønøy

Overnight the scenery has changed. Yesterday there were few high mountains coming down to the sea. We travelled past small coastal hills and low islands and skerries to the west, mostly free of snow. Today the mountains rise quickly from the sea and are snow capped once again. Little villages nestle in the valleys by the sea, against a backdrop of rugged mountains.

We make a very short stop at Ørnes; drop off and pick up some passengers, a car and some fruit and vegetables. Along the way we have loaded and unloaded freight at most ports.



Ørnes



Ørnes



Sculpture - Bodø

As we head towards Bodø a seagull soars in our slipstream, effortlessly keeping up with us. We are travelling at 14 knots.



Soaring Seagull

Bodø is the administrative centre for Nordland County and has a population of 41,000 people. Local industries include fishing and an engine factory. It is the site of Norway's northern defence headquarters and the seat of the bishop of northern Norway.



Saltstrauman



Zodiac excursion to Saltstrauman



Eider ducks on the edge of the whirlpool



Spring flowers

The city is not old; it was established in 1816, and until 1836 had only 200 people. The arrival of herring off the coast in 1860 resulted in rapid growth of the town. By the time the herring left the town was well established.

The town was blitzed in May 1940 and 60% was destroyed. One area was not, said to be because that was where the brewery was.



Cathedral - Bodø

It is a modern town as most of the town dates from after WWII.

Bodø Cathedral was built in 1956. Its modern design features a spire that is separate from the church. It was not popular at the time.

The aviation museum is housed in a building designed to represent a propeller. One blade houses the air force display and the other a civil aviation display.

To the south of Bodø is the Saltstrauman tidal flow where 372 million m³ of water flows through the narrow straight between Saltfjorden

and Skjersfadjorden every 6 hours at up to 40kph.

A bridge, 41m above Saltstrauman, now spans the strait, allowing traffic to safely pass from one side to the other.

The rushing water causes eddies and whirlpools and in this maelstrom eider ducks go about the business of gathering food deep below the water.

Saltstraumen – The Worlds Strongest Maelstrom.

<http://home.c2i.net/rune.dahl/saltstraumen2.html>

The Tidal Current

Saltstraumen is created when the tide try to fill the Skjerstad fjord. The height difference of the sea surface can be as much as 1 meter or 3 feet between the inside and the outside of the narrow sound.

In the attempt to level out the two sides, the water increases its speed and turns into something that looks like a very strong river. However this "river" has a twist, it runs both ways.

Within a time frame of 6 hours a massive 372 million cubic meter of seawater passes through a 150 meter wide and 31meter deep passage.

The speed of the stream is estimated to be up to 22 knots or 40 km per hour, and it is about 3 km long.

Huge whirlpools are formed , sometimes they can be as much as 10 to 15 meters in diameter.

The current is strongest around new and full moon. In addition to the moon phase the weather is also an important factor to strength of the stream because storms that comes in from the sea increases the tide level. The sun will also influence the current to some extent.

There is an old saying that the stream is at its strongest of the year on good Friday .



Måløy/Skarholmen lighthouse



Approaching Stamsund

This corresponds good considering that the combined gravity pull from the moon and the sun its maximum.

Every time the current turns there is a "time window" when larger ships can pass through the sound. They can obtain information about these times from a local signal station on the VHF. At these times the current is almost calm.

On the last page of the two local newspapers "Avisa Nordland" you will find a daily column with the times when Saltstraumen is at its strongest. Adjust when you want to see the maelstrom in accordance with this to avoid disappointments.



Stamsund

The tourist information centre can also tell you what time it is best to view Saltstraumen.

Anyone being in a boat or down by the sea must show caution because Saltstraumen is dangerous, there are underwater currents even when the surface is calm.

Fishing

Saltstraumen is one of the best places for sport fishing in Norway and the clean oxygen rich water hosts a verity of species both fish, plants and other sea creatures.

The coal-fish is most common, but you can also catch salmon, trout , herring , flounder , halibut , catfish , haddock , Norway haddock and other.

The fjord inside Saltstraumen is more than 500 meter deep and here you can find deep-sea fish like red fish as well.

During special wind and weather conditions, some of these deep sea fish swims closer to the surface where they taken by the current and lifted all the way up . Due

to sudden drop of pressure the fish are instantaneous killed and floats around for anyone to pick.



Svolvær

The largest black pollack ever to be fished was taken by a sport fisher in Saltstraumen, and from time to time black pollack of 20 kg or more are taken.

Almost everybody who tries to fish in Saltstraumen will catch something. The most common tackle to be used is "stingsild".

The "Stingsild" looks like a small herring with a hook at one end.

Still there are a lot of people who prefer the much cheaper "mark".

The "mark" is a hook inside a small colored rubber tube, that suppose to imitate a maggot.

What ever you choose you are almost certain to catch some fish.

Wild Life



Bridge at Saltstrauman

The wildlife around Saltstraumen is quite versatile. Here you can find moose , fox , otter and ferret . During the summer months they tend to keep away from people, but they are often seen during the winter.

Motorists must be aware that the moose often walks along roads during winter nights and that they are very hard to see before it is too late. If there is a collision it can be just as bad for the driver as for the moose.

There are always a lot of birds in and around the current. Here are large colonies of seagull, eider ducks , ducks and lots more. As Saltstraumen is a blessing to people and fish, it is also an excellent food resource for birds.

And not to forget the "king" himself, the fish eagle. In the district around Bodø you will find the greatest concentration in Europe , so these majestic birds can be seen almost every day.

History

Saltstraumen as we know it today have only been for 2 to 3 thousand years. Before that the landscape was pressed down by huge glaciers.

When the ice melted the land was pushed up narrowing the sound and gradually creating the current we know today.

During the age of the Vikings the sea stood only 2 to 3 meter higher than now.

Traces of human activity dates back 10 thousand years when the sea was about 80 meters higher up . The area provided them with everything they could wish for , food and shelter.

There is an 8 thousand year old picture of a moose carved into a rock , witnessing a rich wild life.



Fish drying racks - Svolvær

The oldest music instrument ever to be found in Norway was discovered in the area. It is estimated that the "brummer" as it is called is between 4 to 5 thousand years old.

When attached to a string and swung in the air it makes a humming sound.

In the local museum it is possible to see objects from the Iron Age, but most of the items on the exhibition are from the last and this century.

In Sundstraumen , another and much smaller maelstrom that together with Saltstraumen fills the Skjerstad fjord ,

you can find a cut in the rocks that look like it has been made by an ax . According to legend this cut was made by Olav Trygvason , the Viking chief that christened Norway. At that time the district was ruled by "Raudin Hin Rame" , a notorious Viking chief and sorcerer . When Olav Trygvason came Raudin started a storm that blew Trygvason's fleet out to sea again.



Fishing boat - Svolvær

Whenever Trygvason tried to sail through Saltstraumen the wind and the current were against him. He finally managed to get to Raudin Hin Rame by cutting his way through solid rock and thereby creating Sundstraumen. Even after being defeated Raudin refused to let himself be christened, so Trygvason tortured him in order to convict him.

Though Trygvason forced an adder down his throat Raudin would not change his belief and therefore died when the adder made his way out.

If you visit the museum in Saltstraumen so take a look at the boat they have on display.

This type of boat is genuine to Saltstraumen and was designed to handle well when they were rowing in the

current. This type of boat was extreme easy to row in this kind of waters.

At about 16:10 we are abeam the Måløy/Skarholmen lighthouse on the island of Landegodeøy. At this point the Lofotveggen – the Lofoten Wall is to the west ahead of us. The snow covered peaks of this chain of islands stretches for 100km.

Also at this point we enter the open ocean for a two hours crossing to Stamsund. The light wind is behind us and the sea is calm. It is fine and overcast here, but, out to the west there is a large rain squall.

Stamsund is a tiny little port with very large dockside warehouses painted

blue and white. It is usually a short stop but we have to unload more cars than usual and are late leaving. The town was built in the early 20th C and has a population of 1300 inhabitants, one of Lofoten's largest fish products plants, a cod liver oil refinery and its own shipping company with seven trawlers

Consequently we arrive at the larger town of Svolvær about half an hour late. Fish processing and hotels are big in Svolvær. We could smell the fish on the drying racks when we were a couple of kilometres from the town. The Svolvær fishing fleet catches 25-50 million kg of each year, the largest in the world.

It is 23:40 and we are north bound through Raftsundet, a very narrow passage with mountains rising up on both sides. It is light enough to take photos.

There are three stops between now and breakfast, with a bit of luck I'll sleep through them.



Entrance to Raftsundet

Monday 9 May 2005 - Cruise Day 5

Stokmarknes, Sortland, Risøyhamn, Harstad, Finnsnes, Tromsø, Skjervøy

Day 22

A good night; woke to the sound of us pulling into Harstad at 06:30.

The sun is shining brightly and the weather looks promising. Still very cold in the wind.

Harstad is a town of 23,000 inhabitants and is the central meeting point for the islands that cluster around Hinnøya, Norway's largest island.

http://www.eurotravelling.net/norway/harstad/harstad_history.htm



Harstad



Harstad School



Tromsdalen Church - Tromsø

The town flourished during the 'herring years' at the end of the 19th C. When the herring stocks were exhausted, industries shipbuilding and maintenance of the fishing fleet were developed. There is also significant agriculture, particularly dairy and meat products to supplement the fish products industries. In recent years the town has become the centre for oil exploration in the region.

Three kilometers from the centre of the town is Trondenes Church, a small stone church beside the sea. King Eystein erected the area's first church here in the 12th C. It was probably a wooden building. It was

here that Bishop Jon Sigurd probably carried out the first baptisms of children in northern Norway in 999.

<http://www.tdm.no/default.asp?cmd=400&Lang=E>



Harstad



Trondenes Church



Arctic Circle Ceremony

Trondenes

<http://www.destinationviking.com/destination/sagaland/trondenes2.htm>

Trondenes was an important centre of power in the Viking and medieval ages. According to the sagas, the renowned chieftain's family on the island of Bjarkøy, and of the peninsula of Trondenes on Hinnøya Island, sacrificed to Norse gods and held great feasts here. They ruled over an entire kingdom in the districts of Southern Troms and Vesterålen.

Trondenes played an important part during the christianization of Northern Norway. The local chieftains had to be pacified before the kings could unify the country, and bloody battles were fought. The chieftain of Bjarkøy, Tore Hund, managed to kill king Olav Haraldsson (St. Olaf) at the battle of Stiklestad in 1030, as a revenge for the death of his nephew Asbjørn Selsbane at Trondenes. However, in the end the pagan chieftains at Trondenes and Bjarkøy lost the struggle against the king and Christianity.

The largest stone church north of Trondheim was erected at Trondenes after the chieftains had lost the battle against the unification of Norway. Trondenes Church remains the most forceful symbol of the Christianization of Northern Norway.



Tromsdalen Church

At 10:30 the 'Arctic Circle Ceremony' with King Neptune was held on the sun deck.

Soon after we call at the port of Finnsnes. It is a small port that is an important trading centre with some small manufacturing industries allied to the fishing industry. It is here that

the Gisund Bridge links the mainland to the island of Senja.

Tromsø is the capital of arctic Norway and gateway to the Arctic Ocean. The first church was built in 1252 and the Catholic Cathedral is the only wooden cathedral in Europe. For 200 years the town has flourished as natural centre of trade and commerce for the surrounding region. Tromsø has a university with a large hospital.

http://destinasjontromso.no/english/useful_info.html



Finnsnes

Famous Polar expeditions lead by Nansen and Amundsen left from here. There is a statue to Amundsen by the harbour commemorating his death searching for the explorer Umberto Nobile.

Tromsø has been relatively untouched by war. A skirmish in the Napoleonic wars was won by the British. During WWII the most significant events were the short period that Tromsø was the capital after the South fell to the Germans and the sinking of the German battle ship Tirpitz nearby.



Between Finnsnes and Tromsø



Tromsø

Tromsø – History

<http://www.world66.com/europe/norway/tromso/history>

Archaeological finds show that settlers inhabited the area as far back as 7,000 years BC, indicating that they followed the receding glaciers North as the last Ice Age

came to a close. Inscriptions on exposed granite walls from the era show scenes of fishing and reindeer hunting. (Many of these primitive drawings can be seen today near *Straumshella* at Kvaløya--see "Day Trips" section.)



Catholic Cathedral - Tromsø

The early seeds of township can be found in the establishment of Tromsø's first church in 1252. In addition to abundant fishing and subsistence farming, the town's geographical location made it a natural center of trade. Extensive commerce from hunting and whaling expeditions to the arctic, as well as the so-called *Pomor-trade* with the

great neighbour to the east, attracted merchants from Germany, France, Britain and Russia. Tromsø finally gained full trading privileges and a town charter in 1794. The international influences created a lively local culture; a German visitor in the 19th century was so surprised to find such a well developed social and fashion scene that he proclaimed it "the Paris of the North," a nickname that stuck and that you will hear often to this day.



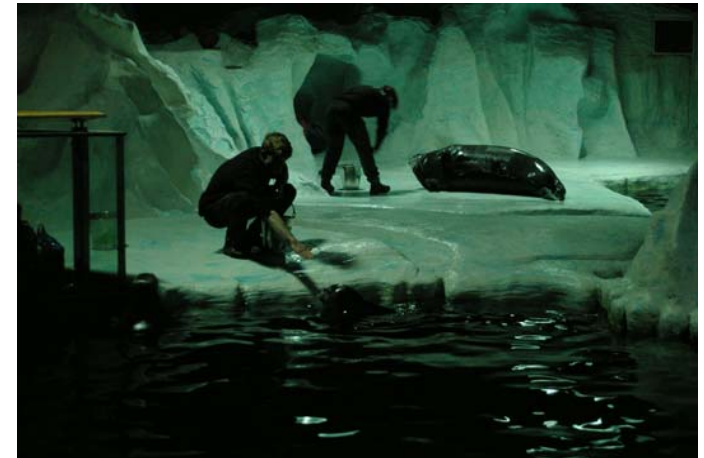
Tromsdalen Church

As the town grew, it acquired a Shipyard (1848), the Tromsø Museum (1872), and the World's Northernmost Beer Brewery (1877), *Mack*. In the 1890s, the town truly cemented its position as *Porten til Ishavet* -- the gateway to the Arctic. Many Arctic Expeditions started here, and famous explorers Fritjof Nansen, Roald Amundsen and Umberto Nobile all drew on the expertise found in the city.

The city limits originally covered only part of the island of Tromsø. After a number of consolidations of the nation's many municipalities in the 1960s, the city ultimately grew to cover an area over 2 500 square km, making it the largest city in the world.

Tromsø was occupied during the Nazi Germany occupation in World War II, but the city was spared the scorched earth tactics that the retreating Germans applied in the province of Finnmark to the north. In 1944, the British Airforce was finally able to catch up with and sink the gigantic German battleship "Tirpitz," which the Nazis had hidden in the fjords and sounds around Tromsø.

The 1960s saw some notable improvements in communications for the city; *Tromsøbrua*, the bridge that connects the island to the mainland, was completed in 1961, and the *Langnes* airport opened in 1964, marking the end of the seaplane era for the city.



Seals at Polaria - Tromsø

Further modernizations took place through the 1970s. A catastrophic fire in 1969 had consumed many wood buildings, and much of the city centre had to be rebuilt. The establishment of the University of Tromsø in 1972, the world's northernmost university, helped propel city growth further.

Today, Tromsø is an important regional administrative seat, a center for education, and the home of one of the nation's largest hospitals. Alumni of the University have

gone on to establish high-tech industries in such varied fields as biotechnology and aeronautics. However, traditional trades such as fishing, fish-processing, and more recently fish-farming, are still important to the local economy.



Memorial to 52 fishermen lost in one storm

The population had grown to approximately 62,000 by the end of 2003.



Polaria



Rusty Russian Trawlers - Tromsø

The city tour included visits to Polaria, a centre associated with the Polar research centre and the Tromsdalen Church, an Arctic Cathedral symbolizing the

dark period and the Northern Lights. It has Europe's largest glass mosaic.

Polaria has exhibits of wild life and the impact on man's pollution on the Arctic environment. A multi-screen film of the Arctic around Spitzbergen was spectacular. However I come away from these films having enjoyed the views and very little the wiser.

<http://www.polaria.no/en/>

A seal pool with 3 male and 3 immature female bearded seals is a feature. We were there, of course, to see them being trained to respond to human commands. Some of these are useful as they make it easier to care for them. Others were claimed to be to keep the seals stimulated, not a circus performance. Seemed to me to be no different to any seal show I've seen.

Tromsdalen Church (The Arctic Cathedral) is a towering A frame construction. Very bright inside due to the way large window areas have been included at each end and between overlapping slabs of the roof. Built about 1962, the church is under major renovation.

http://www.destinasjontromso.no/english/useful_info_articles_the_arctic_cathedr.html

Across the fast flowing Tromsøysundet are a series of conical mounds. We are told they are to protect a school against winter avalanches.

Øksfjord and Hammerfest past me by during the night. When I woke we were about to depart from Hammerfest. No problem we will return to Hammerfest in a few days.



A wet, cold morning



Havøysund



Fishing boats at Havøysund

Yesterday was a beautiful, sunny day. We are approaching 71°N. Today is overcast, the clouds shroud the tops of the mountains, it is raining lightly, temperature on deck is 2C and overnight there was light snow. 'A great day for visiting a bird colony'.



Havøysund

A brief stop at Havøysund to unload and load cargo. Lunch is early today as there are two excursions; one to Nordkapp and the other to the bird colonies at Gjesvær.

We arrive at Honningsvåg shortly before midday. There is still some light rain but it seems a bit better for the excursions.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Honningsv%C3%A5g>
<http://www.visitnorway.com/templates/NTRarticle.aspx?id=41718>
<http://www.northcape.no/>



Honningsvåg

Honningsvåg is a centre for fishing and the fleet catches about 40m kg of fish each year. The Norwegian State College of Fisheries is located here. It is only 2112 km to the North Pole from here.

I am going to see the birds at Gjesværstappan. First we must cross the central plateau of the

Magerøy to the little fishing village of Gjesvær. The road was built in 1999 and winds up the mountain to snowfields broken only with outcrops of rock; the trip takes about 40 minutes. There are no natural trees; the tree line is 140km to the South.

<http://www.birdlife.org/datazone/sites/?action=SitHTMDetails.asp&sid=3148&m=0>



Honningsvåg



Kittiwake at Gjesværstappan

Gjesvær is on the western side of the island and cold westerly wind is building up. It is pretty, small

fishing village, with very narrow streets, as there were no cars until the road was built. We transfer to 50ft boat and every one is supplied with waterproof, windproof winter suits. In the cabin it was cozy; on deck it was freezing.



Great Black Backed Gull



Razorbill

The bird islands are a short distance from the harbour and we are soon amongst flocks of kittiwakes, puffins, razorbills and guillemots. Soaring overhead are white tailed eagles. These have a wingspan of 2.5m. Great black backed

gulls, cormorants, gannets and herring gulls are roosting on the rock faces. Occasionally a seal pops up from the deep.



White Tailed Eagle



Roosting Gannets



Troll's Head

The light rain continues and the wind continues to strengthen bringing higher seas on the western side of the island where the birds are. Undeterred the skipper takes the boat right in under the cliffs for a better look at the birds.

A great excursion and not to be missed.

We drove back over the plateau in heavier rain and strong winds. The bus driver thought the rain might have ruined the view at Nordkapp. I will do that excursion in a few days and hopefully the weather will have improved.

The ship does not round Nordkapp, instead traveling through the Magerøy Sundut, thus avoiding the open sea to the north on its approach to Honningsvåg.



Gjesvær



Bird watching boat - Gjesvær



Gannet



Finnjerka

As we make our way to Kjøllefjord we are in open sea and a fair swell has built up. The ship is moving about quite a bit. The westerly is now about 25knots from directly astern. If this wind keeps up we could be in for a rough night as we will not be protected by islands as we have been for most of the trip so far.



Honningsvåg



Kjøllefjord

As we approach Kjøllefjord we pass a spectacular cliff formation known as Finnjerka (Finnkerka). Kjøllefjord is a fishing village and we stop only to load and unload passengers and freight and we are soon on our way again.

At about 19:15 we round Kinnarodden, mainland Europe's most northerly point, 71°8'0" N.

Mehamn is another small fishing village where we call briefly. It has a large fish processing plant.

We have another stop this evening at Berlevåg but I don't expect to be up for it. We have been told tonight is the last night the sun sets in these latitudes. If the weather clears we should see it before we head south.



Mehamn

Wednesday 11 May 2005 - Cruise Day 7

Båtsfjord, Vardø, Vadsø, Kirkenes, Vardø, Båtsfjord, Berlevåg

Day 24

Called at Båtsfjord and Vardø during the night.

The wind has abated and it is fine and overcast. Our first call is in the morning at 07:30 is Vadsø. Vadsø has a population of 6100 and is the local administrative centre. An influx of Finns fleeing famine in Finland in 19th C means there are many Finnish-

speaking people in the area. Finnish is taught in schools.

The unusual steeple of the church with its linked twin towers can be seen from the ship as we enter the port.

<http://www.varanger.com/region.php?lang=eng&rid=2>
<http://www.visitnorway.com/templates/NTRarticle.aspx?id=41790>

Fishing and public administration are the main industries. In February and March, when shoals of capelin come in from the ocean, the fish oil factories are very busy. Cod follow the capelin from March to June. The town centre is hidden from the port. However it was completely rebuilt after WWII.

We have traveled some distance south and at Kirkenes we are south of the Arctic tree line and the area is very fertile compared with the rest of the Finnmark coast. The

town is very close to the border between Norway and Russia and Finland is only 40 minutes away by bus. Kirkenes is well into the Bøkfjorden and water temperatures are not influenced by the Gulf Stream and in winter the harbour often freezes and ice breakers are required to keep the port open. There is still some ice floating on the fjord.



Church - Kirkenes

Kirkenes was one of the most bombed towns during WWII (reportedly, second after Malta), with 320 air attacks and more than one thousand alarms. 13 houses were left in October 1944.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kirkenes>



Vadsø



Fish Oil Factory - Vadsø

The town is dominated by the now closed AS Sydvaranger mine workings. The town was built to support the mine but now the most important industries are trade with Russia, ship repairs, tourism and the service sector. AS Sydvaranger mined iron ore up until

1996. Export began in 1910, providing some 1,800 people with work.

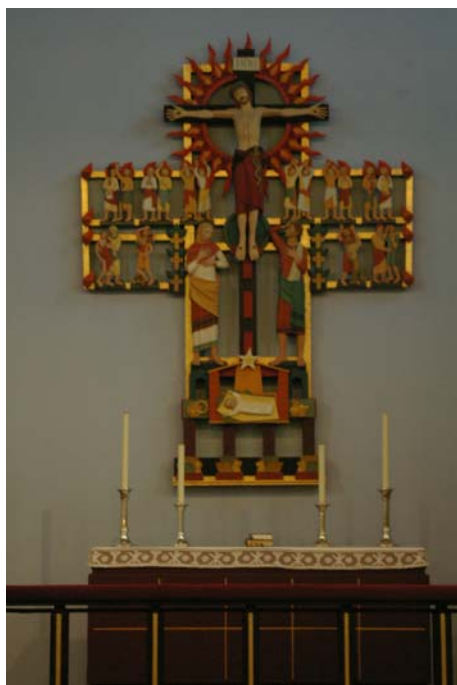
http://www.scantours.com/kirkenes_and_surroundings.htm



Mine workings - Kirkenes



Ice on the fjord - Kirkenes



Church - Kirkenes

We are now retracing our path back to Bergen and on the way we will call at ports visited at night, during the day.

When we left Kirkenes at 12:45 the weather was reasonable, but now at 15:30 there is a wall of grey to the south, behind us, and increasing wind. It is 3C on deck.

We called at Vardø early this morning. Now, on our return trip we have a chance to take a look at the town. It is not a tourist resort. It is a working fishing village somewhat overshadowed by the presence of NATO Cold War radomes.

Before the construction of the walls protecting the harbour the Ocean Express had to ferry cargo and people ashore by boat. The entrance is very narrow and when we left a fishing boat waited outside until we were through.



Winter Snow - Kirkenes



Main Street - Kirkenes



Entrance to Vardø



NATO Radomes - Vardø

Fortresses have been built at Vardø since the 14th C as protection against Russian and Karelian raiders. The present Vardøhus Fort was built between 1734 and 1738 and has stood fast against invaders from the east. It is the reason that Varanger is still Norwegian territory. It has never actually been touched by war, and apart from some anti-aircraft fire in 1940, has only fired its guns to welcome the return of the sun in January. It is an

octagonal fort with 4 towers, 10 cannons and a small museum.



Rescue launch - Vardø

We are told that for 30kr we can visit the fort and the guide will be on the wharf to lead us. Like the children of Hameln following the Pied Piper, a crowd from the ship follows him through the town. When we get there we are told there is no guiding today as the ship was in late. It was, but we are going to leave 15 minutes later. It didn't matter. The leaflet and the signs were enough information.

Interesting as this is the most northern fort in the world. 2/3 of the town was destroyed in WWII, between 1942 and 1944.



Vardøhus Fort



Children of Hameln



Vardøhus Fort

We pass close to the Hanøya/Vardø lighthouse, Norway's most easterly point at 31°10'10" E, further east than St Petersburg and Istanbul.

We stop briefly at Båtsfjord and Berlevåg during the night.

Thursday 12 May 2005 - Cruise Day 8

Mehamn, Kjøllefjord, Honningvåg, Havøysund, Hammerfest, Øksfjord, Skjervøy, Tromsø

Day 25

Brief stops at Mehamn and Kjøllefjord before we reach Honningvåg at 0545.

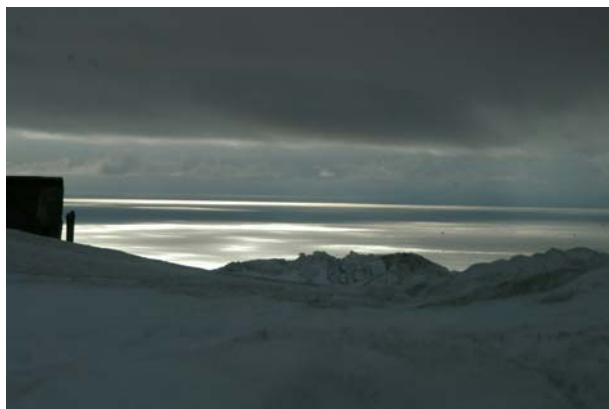
Today I am booked for the alternate visit to Nordkapp as the trip to the bird islands clashed with the trip to Nordkapp two days ago. Departure from Honningvåg is at 06:15 after a cup of coffee

and a biscuit. Breakfast will be available at Nordkapp.

Nordkapp is almost the most northerly point of Europe at 71°10'21" N, 2080 km from the North Pole. Europe's northernmost point is the nearby small headland Kniverskjellodden at 71°11'08" N. This point can be reached by walking track. The walk takes about 6 hours.



Frozen Lake - Nordkapp Plateau



View east of Nordkapp

The road across the Nordkapp Plateau, which rises 307m above sea level, was completed in 1956. Prior to then visitors climbed the 1008 steps from Hornvika. A number of prominent people made the

journey to the edge of the world before the road was built.



Kniverskjellodden - the most northerly point

The North Cape was given its name by Richard Chancellor, in 1153, who was searching north of Siberia for Northeast Passage to India.



Visitor Centre - Nordkapp

Today there is a spectacular visitors centre with the obligatory multi screen video.

We are lucky. Those who visited two days ago were unable to see the views for mist and rain. Today it is clear, overcast with occasional sunshine. We can see all round and below to the fleet of tiny fishing boats fishing for cod.



Children of the Earth Monument



Fishing boats on the sea below Nordkapp

Children of the Earth Monument symbolizes the ability of children to work together. The medallions were modeled by children and then cast in full size

to be placed together with the sculpture of mother and child by Eva Rybakken. The Children of the Earth Foundation awards a substantial prize each year to a project or organization that is working to advance the living conditions of children.

<http://www.barnavjorden.org/eng/welcome.htm>



Sami man, reindeer and tourist

We will not be returning to the ship at Honningvåg but will travel by land to Hammerfest to catch up with the ship. This gives us a chance to learn a little about the Sami people, reindeer herding and the changes in vegetation that occur as we move from island to

mainland and from sea level to plateau. Each year four Sami families bring their 5000 reindeer from about 200km south to Magerøy for the summer. Some have arrived and we stop to take some photos and visit a souvenir shop. No comment.

<http://www.itv.se/boreale/samieng.htm>

The island of Magerøy is above the Arctic Tree line, however soon after we emerge from the tunnel connecting Honningvåg to the mainland we encounter small trees, as yet without leaves.



Reindeer

As we make our way along the western side of Porsangerfjorden towards Olderfjord we see many more reindeer grazing amongst the snowdrifts. Olderfjord is a camping resort for Russians. There are many caravans set up as permanent campsites.

From Olderfjord we climb over the plateau to Skadai (Sami place of many rivers) and on to Kvalsund. At Kvalsund we cross, via a suspension bridge to the island of Kvaløya and Hammerfest.

Beneath the bridge and under the water is a tidal power station that harnesses the energy of the fast tidal flow to produce electricity.



Church - Hammerfest

As we travel along the west coast of Kvaløya the island that is being developed as natural gas terminal can be seen in the Sørøysundet. The gas is coming from a field in the North Atlantic.

We arrive in Hammerfest soon after the ship and so have time to have a look around the town before we sail.

We will have brief stops for the remainder of the day until we reach Tromsø at 23:45. In a couple of days the midnight sun will appear. If it is clear tonight it will almost appear. It is due in Hammerfest tomorrow night.

At 12:45 the temperature outside was 13C, now at 15:30 it is 8C and rain is coming in from the west.

There is a reasonable sunset at 23:30 so I have tried to get photos at 10-minute intervals. Gave up at 00:20 when cloud developed. Also the mountains increasingly obscured the sunset as we entered Tromsø harbour.



Camping ground at Oldenfjord



Setting Sun at 2330 - Tromsø

Friday 13 May 2005 - Cruise Day 9

Finnsnes, Harstad, Risøyhamn, Sortland, Stokmarknes, Svolvær, Stamsund

Day 26



Tromsø sky - 00:21

Finnsnes was an earlier morning stop. At 0800 we arrive at Harstad where the first of the days bus trips begins. We have been here before and the stop is short so I do not try to go into the town.



Coastguard at Risøyhamn

Our next stop is Risøyhamn and then Sortland in the region known as Vesterålen. This requires us to sail west to Risøyhamn and then south through the dredged channel of Risøyrenna to Sortland.



Risøyhamn

Prior to the dredging of the channel in 1922 it was necessary to sail south from Harstad through the Tjeldsundet straight and the Coastal Express (Hurtigruten) was unable to service these towns.



Sortland - Coastguard ships



Stokmarknes



Entering Raftsundet



Church at Sortland

Sortland is the headquarters for the Norwegian Coastguard and the main town for Vesterålen. There is a pretty church on the hillside.

We called at Stokmarknes on our way North in the early hours of the morning. We arrive at 14:30 and have an hour to look around. It was in this town that the Coastal Express was born when Richard Wick established Vesterdaalens Dampskibsselskab in 1851.



The Finnmarken and Hurtigrutens Hus Museum

There is an excellent small museum in Hurtigruten Hus displaying the history of the Coastal Express in peace and war. There are models of many of the ships. More than one company operates the ships to provide the daily service. The evolution of the ships is described. While the company emphasizes that the ships are working ships, not cruise ships; there is no doubt the major business is carrying tourists. Inter island passengers and freight is only a small part of the business. A 'Finnmarken' from an earlier era is now part of the museum



Swirling currents in Raftsundet

The ship will retrace its route through the narrow Raftsundet. We passed this way late at night on our trip North. The current in this sound can run at up to 7 knots and it is clear when we enter it that a strong current is running against us.



In Raftsundet



In Raftsundet

Apart from the spectacular snow clad mountains on each side of us, the highlight of this passage is Trollfjorden. This 2km long fjord has an entrance 100m wide and is where Norwegian Trolls live. In the summer season the ships go into the fjord. At this time of year we just poke our bow into the entrance as there is a risk of avalanches if we go into the Fjord.

<http://gonorway.no/index3.html> (search for Raftsundet)



Trollfjorden

An historic battle took place here, known as the Battle of Trollfjord, in 1890. The battle was between fishermen in 4 steam driven boats and

fishermen in boats with sails and five oarsmen. Huge quantities of fish had swum into the fjord and were being trapped in a seine formed by the nets of the larger boats. Outside were 5000 fishermen in 1300 traditional Nordlandboats. It came to open fights, including knives, boathooks and axes. The blockade was broken, but this marked the start of a new time in the fisheries. Capitalism, big boats and fishing nets had come to stay.

http://www.geocaching.com/seek/cache_details.aspx?ID=157732

We continue on our way to Svolvær.



Svolvær

Saturday 14 May 2005 - Cruise Day 10
Bodø, Ørnes, Nesna, Sandnessjøen, Brønnøysund, Rørvik

Day 27

We called briefly at Bodø and Ørnes before breakfast. During the morning we have another brief stop at Nesna and then at 12:30 we have an hour at Sandnessjøen.

It is a miserable day outside, rain and strong winds. A good day to sort some the photos.

At about 09:30 we cross the Arctic Circle southbound. There is a marker on a small island to starboard.

We have been battling strong southerly winds all morning and we are 20 minutes late arriving at Nesna where the wind is on the beam blowing the ship towards the wharf. The twin bow and stern

thrusters are up to the job and we berth without incident. Wind gusts are around 35 knots.

The town is shrouded in rain, thus only a couple of photos for the record.



Nesna through the rain

At Sandnessjøen it is still raining; again a couple of shots for the record.



Sandnessjøen

Our stop at Brønnøysund was to be short, however we arrive early and there is enough time for a short

walk. Apart from the usual fishing and support industries the town also hosts the Brønnøysund Registers for companies, personal chattels, accounts and fees for the whole of Norway. It has an air of prosperity about it, clean streets, new housing and large shops. As we sail south we pass Torghatten, the mountain with a hole through it. The whole, carved by ancient seas, is 112m above sea level, 160m long, 25-30m high and 12-15m wide. It is clearly visible from the ship.



New Apartments - Brønnøysund



Waterfront - Brønnøysund

Last call for the day is Rørvik. We had been here on day 3 but as we had docked at a different place I didn't recognise the town at first.

Rørvik is the capital of large island group called Vikna, consisting of 6000 islets, skerries and islands. The area has many fishing, fish farming and farming communities. According to legends, sea serpents live here. The last sighting, in 1926, was by two boys. The serpent was 200m long and had 60 humps. Unfortunately they did not have a camera.



Across the Sound - Brønnøysund



Traditional Boat - Brønnøysund



Hole in Torghatten



Frankie, Justin and Ruth - Rørvik



Main Square - Rørvik

Sunday 15 May 2005 - Cruise Day 11
Trondheim, Kristiansund, Molde

Day 28



City and Port - Trondheim



Rådhus - Trondheim



Norwegian Army Command - Trondheim



Vår Frue Kirke - Trondheim

We arrive early at Trondheim, at 06:00.

It is, again, cold and wet. Fortunately I have booked to do the city tour. This tour also visits the Nidaros Cathedral as well as the city sights. I used the time whilst the others were doing the guided tour of the Cathedral to take some more photos in and around the cathedral.

30,000 students boost Trondheim's population when semester starts at the colleges and university. The resident population is about 140,000.



St Olav's Shrine - Dom Kirke - Trondheim

The tour takes us to a vantage point overlooking the city. From there the winding Nid river is clearly visible, and in the distance, the Kristiansten Castle.

Olav Trygvason founded Trondheim in 995. He is remembered in statues and the name of the main street.



Archbishop's Palace - Dom Kirke - Trondheim

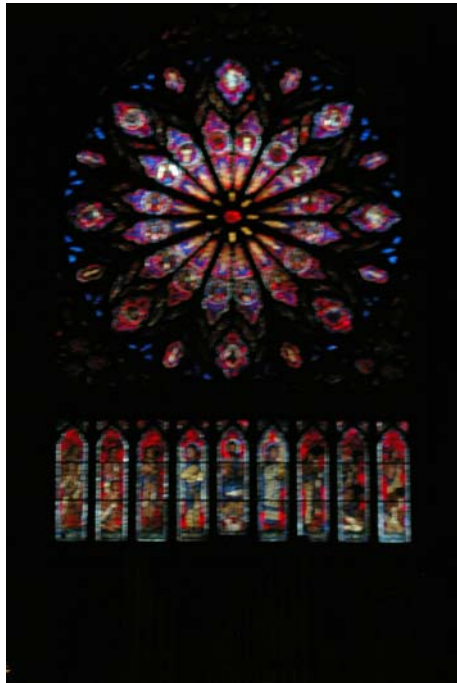


Dom Kirke - Trondheim

As we leave Trondheim there is a lifeboat drill for some of the crew. The boat was lowered to the water, the engine started, and then the boat was recovered. This exercise resulted in our arriving late at Kristiansund and thus having a very short stay. We were unable to go ashore.



Canal - Trondheim



Rose Window - Dom Kirke -
Trondheim



Stained Glass Windows - Dom
Kirke - Trondheim



West Facade - Dom Kirke -
Trondheim



Detail - West Facade - Dom Kirke
- Trondheim



Kristiansen Castle - Trondheim



Houses on the rocky shore - Kristiansund



Fishing Boat Harbour - Kristiansund



Lifeboat Drill for Crew - MS Nordlys

Kristiansund is spread across three islands connected by bridges. The harbour is protected from all directions and has been in use since the Stone Age. Houses up to 10,000 years old have been uncovered 40m above the current sea level. The islands are very rugged with steep cliffs and large rocky areas around the shores. The colourful houses wind there way up the hillsides.

During the last three centuries there has been continuous change in the fortunes of the town. In the 17th C the Dutch purchased timber here. This

was replaced by herring, then cod fishing and as local fish stocks diminished the fishermen had to build larger boats to travel to Lofoten. Herring returned and until WWI the town flourished. Fish were dried on the large flat rocks that are everywhere and exported to southern Europe.



Drilling Platform - Kristiansund



Offshore Oilfield support ship - Kristiansund



Old Warehouses - Kristiansund



Stone Church - Kristiansund

German bombers largely destroyed the town in 1940. It has been rebuilt in the original style.

In 1992 the town was linked to the mainland by a tunnel and two bridges.

While fishing, fish processing and shipbuilding are still important, the town is also the base for off shore oil and

gas field development and operation. As a result it is a very busy port.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kristiansund>
http://www.eurotravelling.net/norway/kristiansund/kristiansund_history.htm

We are due at Molde after dinner. As we are still behind time we may have

a short stop there also. Fortunately we were able to go ashore at Molde on the way north.

We arrive a little late and departure is delayed to allow some time ashore. We enter the harbour with the modern glass hotel and the sports stadium to port. We tie up at the southbound Hurtigruten dock. The newest of the Hurtigruten fleet, the MS Trollfjord berths soon after at the northbound dock.

Today is Whitsunday, tomorrow is Whit Monday and Tuesday 17th May is of the Constitution Day, celebrating the Constitution agreed May 17th 1814. Later that year Sweden invaded and the king was ousted. The Swedes accepted the constitution. Separation from Sweden occurred in 1905. I believe there will be great celebrations.

Monday 16 May 2005 - Cruise Day 12
Ålesund, Torvick, Måløy, Florø, Bergen

Day 29



Old Schooner - Florø

Ålesund, Torvick and Måløy have been visited since midnight with the

usual accompanying racket from the bow and stern thrusters and we dock and depart.



Church - Florø

During the night there has been some light snow and there is a dusting of fresh snow on the trees at the top of the mountains. Yesterday the outside temperature never got above 5C. This morning there is sun and occasional rain/light snow. The outside temperature before breakfast was 3C. The little sun has raised the temperature a bit.

Our last call before Bergen and the end of the trip is Florø at breakfast time. This is the administrative centre for the Flora region and also another base for the offshore oilfields. We dock some distance from the main town centre and, as the stop is short, we are unable to go ashore.



Florø

The town is colourful in the weak morning sun. A few interesting boats in the harbour, but they are difficult to photograph with the low sun almost directly into the camera.



Stabben Lighthouse

We depart on time for the last leg to Bergen. We soon pass to port of the Stabben Lighthouse and head into open sea. We will be unprotected by islands to the west for much of the remainder of the trip. The sea is calm although the westerly wind seems to be gradually strengthening.

We have to leave our cabins at 10:00 and we are due to arrive in Bergen after lunch, at 14:30.



Atløy - An old coaster - Florø

Ship docks on schedule but then there is a 45minute wait for everyone to get the bags before we finally set of for hotels and railway station. Some who have planes to catch are getting toey.

Finally settled into the Rainbow Rosenkrantz in the old part of Bergen.



Statsraad Lehmkuhl



Gathering fleet for Constitution Day



Bryggen and the Fløibanen

There is a warning of much student partying tonight and earplugs are offered, gratis, by the hotel. Freebees are rare in Norway. Except at mealtimes a cup of coffee was 5kr on the ship and don't dare stay around until the second dinner sitting turn up for their coffee.

Tomorrow is Constitution day and the harbour at the bottom of the street is

packed with yachts and motorboats, small, large and very large, including a couple of warships and the tall ship Statsraad Lehmkuhl.

Boats are rafted up at least four deep for 500m along the dock. The wind is blowing straight up the fjord and that and boats milling about are making it pretty choppy.

The weather is improving, it has been sunny all afternoon, but the weather changes very quickly, so we'll see what its like in the morning.

After catching up with the emails I wander out to find a place to eat, not that I need to after what we have had on the ship. Its 21:30 when I return.

No sign of the wild parties and it is very quiet. Went to bed with the sun streaming in the window.

Tuesday 17 May 2005 - Bergen

Day 30



**Mother and Daughter - Bergen
Constitution Day**

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constitution_of_Norway

<http://odin.dep.no/odin/english/norway/history/032091-991290/dok-bn.html>



Parade Leaders - Bergen

17th May is Norway's Constitution Day and an official flag-flying day.

It is Norway's biggest day of national celebration, commemorating the signing of the country's first constitution in 1814 and its release from Danish rule after 400 years of subjugation. The celebration of 17th May started as a private party in the town of Trondheim in the 1820s, but took on more of a public nature when in 1823 the event was reported in a newspaper. In 1827, May 17th was publicly celebrated in the capital Christiania (now Oslo) for the first time. The celebration caused political strife since Norway was in union with Sweden after the Napoleonic wars and right up to 1905. The Swedish king Carl Johan regarded the 17th of May celebrations as a demonstration and it was not until after his death, in 1844, that the day was celebrated in full freedom.

The citizens' procession, in which only men participated, was part of the celebrations from an early stage. In 1870 the day was marked by a procession of children, on the initiative of the distinguished writer and politician, Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson. In 1889 girls also took part, initially without flags, but with flowers in their hair. In subsequent years more and more women joined the processions.

In the inter-war years, there was political dispute between the working and the middle classes as to how May 17th should be celebrated. The workers saw it as a symbol of the bourgeoisie and refused to take part. During WWII, the

German occupiers forbade any celebration of 17th May. After the liberation in 1945, Constitution Day gained a whole new significance, one which it has held to this day.



Kong Oscars Gate - Bergen

May 17th is a political and patriotic day which is marked by flags, music national dress, parades, speeches and the laying of wreaths on monuments. The royal family symbolises the unity of the people through greeting the procession of Oslo schoolchildren from the balcony of the royal palace. Church services are also held.



Roofs of Bryggen - Bergen



Students - Bergen

Constitution Day is above all the children's day, with the schools as natural assembly points. The flag is hoisted in the schoolyard and the children walk in the processions under the special banner of their school. In the afternoon games and entertainment are arranged in the schools for both the children and their families. The pupils who have completed their 12 years of schooling, the russ (from the Latin cornua depositurus = to put aside one's horns) start

their celebration on May 1st but form a colourful contribution to the 17th of May processions in their red or blue outfits. They add a more light-hearted element of carnival to the procession and the adults generally turn a blind eye to their noisy and boisterous behaviour.



Opening Salute - Bergen

This is the day to wear new clothes but the bunad, or national dress is becoming more and more universal on 17th May. Each region of the country has its own version of the bunad with which to mark both national and local affiliation.

The hotel has notices telling guest that celebrations will start at 07:00 with the firing of guns at the Palace, just down the road, and this will be followed by a parade through the neighbouring streets.

What they didn't say was that the first band would march past the back of the hotel at 05:30. I wake to the sound of drums from the direction of the Palace, check the clock, no it is not 07:00 and I haven't slept through the start of the official celebrations. I get up and take a photo or two of the band out of my window. I also have a view of Statsraad Lehmkuhl and the rooves of the Hanseatic warehouses (Bryggen) next door. It is also a little

disconcerting to have the morning sun streaming through the same window as the setting sun.



Mariakirken - Bergen

The 07:00 parade starts nearby, I don't know exactly where, so I follow the people dressed in national costumes and soon find where the parade is assembling.

At the head of the parade are the city dignitaries, senior military and police officers, and others I can't recognise. Uniforms and medals are being worn and the dignitaries are in suits, national costumes and top hats, including the women.



Parading Firemen - Bergen



Family on Parade - Bergen

Two very impressive bands follow them.

Finally there is a student band leading a mob of students wearing red bib and brace overalls with the braces down and blowing whistles continually.

The red (and blue) overalls are traditionally worn during the period between when students finish high school and they start university.



Students on Parade - Bergen



Veteran Fire Engine- Bergen

I return to the hotel for breakfast to find that half of Bergen seems to have booked in for breakfast and the room is packed with people in national costume. The

hotel guests are shunted into a back room and people are being shuffled around to get more diners in.



Statsraad Lehmkuhl - Bergen

The main parade starts in the city centre and makes its way to the castle and back. It starts at 10:30. I go out to find a vantage point at around 09:30 and find that now there is police tape closing some nearby streets. It is also obvious the parade goes round the corner by the fish market. I check with a couple that seem to have settled in to watch the parade. Yes, the parade rounds the corner, not once, but twice and many of the participants also come by on their way to the assembly point. I chat to the couple and as time

for the parade approaches we find positions by the kerbside. Meanwhile after a pleasant early morning it starts to rain and I am told the forecast is for snow above 300m. ie at the upper Fløibanen station.



St Catherine's Hospital - 1250 - Bergen



Håkonshallen - Bergen

Sharp at 10:30 a salute is fired from the mountainside above the Fløibanen station and the head of the parade

soon appears, led by the same dignitaries as the earlier parade. The rain has stopped and it is quite pleasant.

It seems that everyone in Bergen is either in the parade or watching it. After 1¼ hour I am getting stiff from standing in the one place and the parade is still going past. Every organisation you can imagine is represented. The couple decide to leave and I do also. Almost immediately it starts to rain, they all whip out their umbrellas, and then it starts to hail, serious cold stuff. The hotel is one block away and I head for cover.



Castle - Bergen

he weather improves in the afternoon and I go to the castle and the Dom Kirke. On the way to the castle I stumble on display featuring the ruins of St Catherine's Hospital, the first hospital for women in Norway,

established in 1250. It is near Mariakirken dating from the Middle Ages.

The Dom Kirke is quite modest, but nearby is the Korskirken, the Church of the Cross-, reputed to have had a

piece of the cross of Calvary. True or not there has been a church on the site since the 12th C and it has been a church for seamen and others not attached to a particular parish. It was not open. In the evening as part of the celebrations there is to be a concert.

A male choir presented the concert of church music.

All the museums have been closed. There are still plenty of people about in their national dress and some stop and talk about the day.

Wednesday 18 May 2005 - Bergen to Newcastle, England

Day 31

Today has mostly been a non-day, airports and planes. Isabelle was on the same plane and able to come and sit with me on the flight from London to Newcastle

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