

Visiting family in Norway. November 2019

Saturday 26 October. Venice to Oslo

Our cruise on the MSC Sinfonia with Marit and Roar Berg finished in Venice and we disembarked smoothly. We took the people mover to Piazzale Roma and caught the ATVO bus back to Marco Polo airport. We then flew Norwegian to Oslo – a 2½ hour flight. We stayed the night in Marit and Roar’s wonderful new apartment.



Sunday 27 October.

We went to church with Marit and Roar (like Hillsong) then in the afternoon met their family: Marie-Celine, Andreass and Kine and their twins Lucas and Jacob. Grethe Tiller, Marit’s aunt was there also. In the evening we went to Magnar and Rosa’s place - a very happy reunion, especially as Roar, Wenche, Vera and Marthe were there to welcome us.



Monday 28 October.

We were picked up by Jan and Turid Andresen and taken to their place on Lake Mjosa. On the way we visited a wood-carving workshop, the Skibladner paddlesteamer and the local church overlooking the lake. Late in the afternoon we were taken to visit Jan and Turid’s son John and daughters Emma and Tia. We then went to Wenche and Olav Myrvang’s place for supper, where we met with all of their family. We had lots of laughs and lovely cakes! Jan and Wenche are brother and sister.



Tuesday 29 October.

We took the train into Oslo and met up with Marit and Stein Jarum. We wandered around the centre of Oslo and saw the main sights: the Opera House, the Cathedral, Parliament, the Royal Palace, and the Brygge (port). Later in the afternoon we met Leif Thorstensen, a DNA match from Kathy’s family tree. Leif’s great great grandfather was brother to Kathy’s great-grandmother. We spent the evening with Magnar and Rosa.



Wednesday 30 October. Kathy's 64th birthday.

We had a quiet day and visited Rosa where she works in a rest home; and Magnar's parents Reidun and Arne. We then had a lovely surprise birthday dinner with Magnar, Rosa, Arne, Roar, Wenche and Marthe: pizza, cheesecake and ice cream, plus lots of laughs.



Thursday 31 October. Valdres.

We were picked up by Asbjorn and Froydis Haraldsen and were driven up to Valdres in the mountains: a very scenic drive. Along the way we stopped to see the Hedalen Stave Church. We stopped for provisions in Fagernes, the main town in Valdres, where it was the start of the Rakfisk festival. Rakfisk is trout that has been processed by slow fermentation. Its smell and taste are a learned delight! We then went up to Asbjorn and Froydis' cabin in the woods. There we met with Torggrim and Karin Myher, and Halvard and Wenke Haraldsen, who have cabins at the same site. Halvard, Asbjorn and Karin are siblings. We had a lovely dinner (deer stew) at Wenche and Halvard's cabin, with lots of laughs.



Friday 1 November.

We all went for a lovely walk up the road and had a coffee at Vasetstollen. (Norwegians love coffee!). The views up in the mountains are amazing. For lunch we had rakfisk at Karin and Torgrim's cabin then in the evening traditional soup at Froydis and Asbjorn's cabin. Froydis' daughter Aina and her family joined us.



Saturday 2 November.

We all went down to Fagernes for the Rakfisk festival. People come from all over Norway to try the rakfisk and buy supplies so it was very crowded. It was such a privilege for us to be there. We also had time for a wander around Fagernes and to see the folk museum. In the evening we all met at Wenche and Halvard's cabin for rakfisk, salmon and moose burgers. The hospitality and love shown toward us by our family is amazing.



Sunday 3 November.

We packed up the cabins and drove back to Asbjorn and Froydis' place in Soerumsand. On the way we stopped at the grave of Froydis' parents because it was Remembrance Sunday when people light a candle at the grave of their ancestors. We visited Elizabeth (Asbjorn and Froydis' daughter), Per and Martin, briefly before heading for Wenche and Halvard's place in Holter.



Monday 4 November.

We went for a walk with Wenche to try to find the fattig hus (poorhouse) where Kathy's grandfather Harald lived with Anna, Karoline and Johan, before he left his family behind and headed for New Zealand. In the evening Rolf and Ingrid came for dinner and we had another enjoyable evening reminiscing.



Tuesday 5 November.

We drove up to Elverum with Rolf and met up with Elin and Mari at the Norsk Skomuseum. (Forestry and nature). Elin is Rolf's sister and Wenche and Halvard's daughter. The museum was great and the lunch incredible! Afterwards we all met at Elin's place where we met Terje and skyped Lina. We then had 'the world's best cake' before heading back to Holter, and another evening of reminiscing with Rolf. Yet another wonderful day!



Wednesday 6 November.

We were picked up by Arnhild and Harald Nilsen in their brand new Audi electric SUV. We drove north past Lake Mjosa, stopping for lunch at the tallest wooden hotel in the world. There we met Roar and Wenche Haraldsen who will be staying with us. (Arnhild, Magnar and Roar are Arne and Reidun Haraldsen's three children). North of Lake Mjosa we stopped at the Lillehammer Olympic ski area, where we had our first play in snow. Then it was on to Arnhild and Harald's beautiful cabin in Hafjell – a mountain ski resort area. Wonderful!



Thursday 7 November.

We walked up to the top of the mountain in Hafjell. This was an absolutely amazing experience - like being on top of the world. They were making snow for skiing, but most of the time we were walking in ice at around -10°C. We walked for 5½ hours, and the scenery was just breathtaking. This walk in the mountains was something to be remembered always!



Friday 8 November.

We drove back from Hajfell to Nannestad, travelling back along the other side of the Mjosa. It began to snow! We had some beautiful views (to add to all the other beautiful views we have seen in Norway). The white countryside was so different to what we had seen just a few days earlier. It was great to get back to Magnar and Rosa's, but we sure had a wonderful time with our family in each of the places we visited.



Saturday 9 November.

In the morning we got all dressed up and walked through the snow with Magnar to visit the church where our Norwegian story started. It was wonderful to remember the amazing turn of events that led to our discovery that Harald, Kathy's grand-father had left a family behind in Norway when he came to New Zealand in 1903. Our coming to Norway to visit the church where Harald was baptised led to a wonderful meeting with his descendants and to a beautiful ongoing relationship between the families in Norway and New Zealand. In the evening Marianne and Roger, and Martin and Liv Grethe visited with Maren, Ingrid and Alina. We were treated to an amazing show by the girls, with poi, animal charades and a story.



Sunday 10 November.

On our final day in Norway we went for a walk in the snow, saw Martin's new snowplough, and then had a wonderful family get-together to celebrate Arne's 91st birthday. Moose hamburgers and kringle! Grethe and Inger came, together with the families of Arne and Reidun's children: Arnhild, Magnar and Roar. It was very sad to say goodbye to the family! They have shown us incredible love and generosity, making our couple of weeks in Norway so memorable. We have been showered with love, fed till we nearly burst, and shown incredibly beautiful places in each of the parts of Norway we visited.



Monday 11 November. To Marseille.

We were picked up by Roar and Wenche and taken to Gardermoen for our flight to France. It was snowing but we made it safely via Air France to Charles de Gaulle airport in Paris, then took a bus to Orly airport and another flight to Marseille. At the airport we transferred by bus to the Holiday Inn Express, St Charles, right opposite the main train station. Next is our cruise on the MSC Musica - all the way to South America.



We had a truly wonderful time with our family in Norway. Tusen tak to you all.