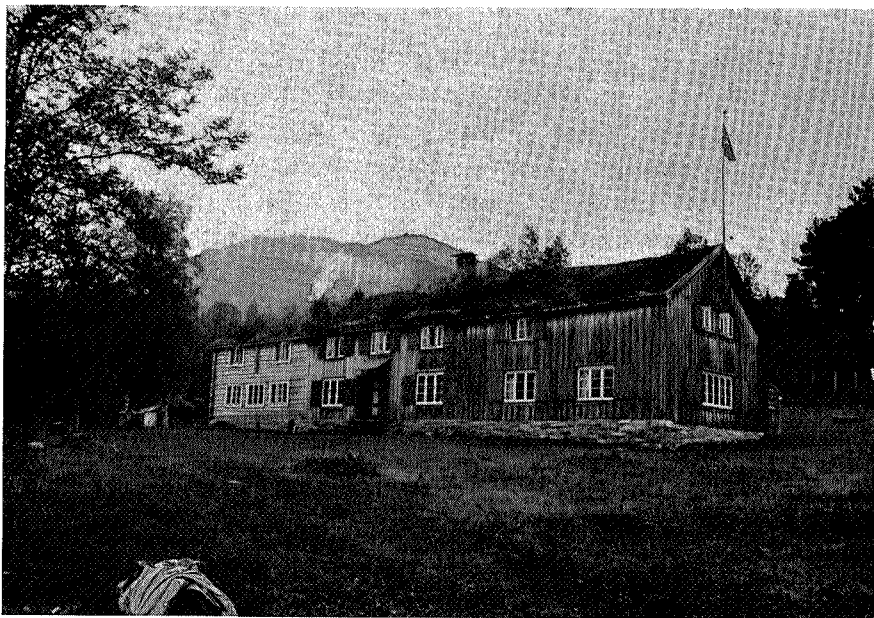




Store Fossdalstjern, Riaren.

Finn Ouren.



Trollheimshytta.

Finn Ouren.

The Road we gladly took

JOHN ADAM, EDINBURGH

«So gaily sings the lark, and the sky's all awake,
With the promise of the day, for the road we gladly take
So its heel and toe and forward, bidding farewell to the town,
For the welcome that awaits ere the sun goes down»

UIST TRAMPING SONG

John Adam var skotsk deltaker i en av T.T.'s fellesturer i Trollheimen i 1967. How can one begin to express the personal thoughts one has for a holiday? It is only when one senses again certain sights, smells and sounds that memories come flooding back, and you relive in a moment what took minutes, hours and even days to be a reality.

For myself, my holiday in the Trollheimen began several months before when I, along with Andrew from England and Brian from Wales, was invited by the Rotary Clubs of Trondheim for a holiday in Norway. It gradually took form as I arrived in Norway, and eventually Trondheim. Here, I was to meet Helge Foss, the leader of our «expedition», whom I am sure will pardon me for calling him, a hardy character of several years experience in these hills. It was he who introduced us to the area in which we would walk.

He encouraged us with tales of long distances to walk through snow covered mountains, and water sodden valleys, in spine chilling winds and rain. But, he promised, for us the weather, at least, would be fine, although the distances would not be any shorter. That was when the week in the hills began to really have some formate, and I began to have second thoughts about it. However, he assured us, the party of walkers would not be entirely male but would consist of 10 males and 5 of the fairer sex, among them his wife — surely

it was possible for me to keep pace with these ladies, or at least not to be left too far behind on the paths.

My next memory is of arriving at Kåsa i Storlidalen in brilliant sunshine to be greeted by the hostess. Coffee and waffles were quickly produced and just as quickly consumed. It seemed so pleasant to just sit under the fir tree, sunning oneself — was it really necessary to go wandering among those far off hills?

In the evening Jens Martin produced his fishing rod and invited us to try our luck at catching our breakfast, but with no rod how could we? Helge Foss came to our rescue. At the back of our hut, further up the hill, he had some friends who holidayed there, perhaps they could help. We climbed the hill and were immediately welcomed. Not only did they provide us with the necessary rods and tackles, but also a boat and a pretty daughter to row it. Our first evening was certainly successful, at least for me, for I caught my first trout at my third attempt at fishing in Norway. To complete the evening, we sat and ate the fish, (we *did* catch one more) kindly cooked for us by the hostess of the hut.

In the morning we left Kåsa in brilliant sunshine to walk to Innerdalen. Through the woods, climbing the slopes to the Gate of Innerdalen, then through the long valley to the hut at Innerdalen, and it was over! No blisters, no rain just sunshine, fresh air and the scenery to lighten the way. And after, how wonderful it was to lie back and let the tiredness seep through you and away!

The Tuesday morning was a different matter! Guided by the host of the hut we were to climb the peak of Dalstaarnet, 1394 metres up. Any stiffness in the legs was quickly removed by the initial climb on the path to Storfale, as it wound its way between trees, perspiration and mosquitoes. After a welcome breather, it was off once more to what felt like to me an eternal ladder up the side of the mountain up which the guide seemed to run. By midday we had reached the cleft in the rock which separates Dalaarnet from Taarnfjeld and with only a few more metres to go we rested and enjoyed some coffee and smørbrød. Donning our «crash helmets» we were off up the last part scrambling over the rock until suddenly we were there, on what seemed the top of the world! Down there, that dot was our hut, there was the path we had followed the day before,



Ramsjøhytta.

Øivin Jystad.

and tomorrow, there was where we would go. Then everyone having signed the «visitors book» it was returned to its tin can in the cairn, and we set off downhill. A sudden shout broke down international language barriers as loose rocks were set loose and hurtled down. However, we all returned safely after a most exhilarating day.

Wednesday we headed north on the path for Kårvatn, up the initial steep rise, through the snow covered pass between Snefjell and Skjæringsfjell which gives a magnificent view of the peaks lying further to the north, then down a long slow descent to the hut itself. After a traditional meal of Norwegian porridge with grated nutmeg which left us just able to raise ourselves from the table, an impromptu dance took place on the grass at the front of the building. In Scotland, it would be called a ceilidh, when folk gather informally to sing and dance to traditional tunes. There is a remarkable similarity between the tunes of Norway, the tempo of them and the dances set to them, to those of Scotland and after a bit of persistent coaxing, I was able to join in the gaiety. Another notable memory of my holiday is slotted into place.

By now the weather had broken. Rain fell all that night and when we left the next day a thick mist obscured the mountains we were to cross. It was not long before we were all wet through from

brushing against the trees and bushes and from the rain which fell. However, as we plodded on, I found myself whistling and humming snippets of tunes heard the previous evening, as well as some Scottish tramping songs. The body may have been dampened but the spirits certainly were not! The sun shone on us briefly at the side of Nøstådals lake, but we had no sooner dried out and begun our journey again than the rain once more started. However, this also added its own novelty. Streams and rivers were now swollen with rain as well as melting snow, but they still had to be crossed! One was crossed by means of two branches of trees placed across it; I remember another, as I tried to cross on the stepping stones, being swept off these by the current, and finding to my surprise, that I was up to the knees in the water, but I was over, and those across were able to laugh at the not-so-fortunate on the other bank as they stopped and stared at the river. Before we finally reached the hut, we were to cross some very muddy ground, often disappearing over the ankles in it. Eventually we reached Trollheimshytta.

It was intended to spend two nights at Trollheimshytta, and on the second day to make an assault on Snota. But, on that day Snota was blanketed in thick mist and any pleasure from climbing it would have been lost in the mist, so the attempt was abandoned. This may have been just as well for on our first evening in the hut, as well as on the second, we sat before a huge roaring log fire and sampled the local brew of ginger beer, and after much singing of international songs, German, French, Swiss, American, English and Scottish as well as Norwegian, we retired to bed. But before falling asleep, I had a last look at Snota, half hidden in cloud, but the outline quite clear in the moonlight. How I wish I could have climbed it!

Saturday, and our last real day's walk, and thankfully the sun had returned. Our journey was to take us to Jøldalshytta, but before we left, the party split in two, some to go by the shorter southern route over Geithetta, the second by the route over Trollhetta. This is the one I was to join, and how glad I am now that I did. The path rose tortuously steeply at times over more very rough country but there was a certain thrill as one crossed first one peak, then a second over 1600 metres and a third over 1400 metres.

As you crossed the ridge and looked down on the blue «Eye of the Troll» it was easy to imagine that here it was possible that such a monster could exist; or in such scenery Grieg could find inspiration and solace for his music. Then on across the snow field and down to the valley and the hut at Jøldalshytta to find that the other party had not yet arrived, in fact, they had been slowed down by rain and snow! The final evening and following morning were spent idly in chatting and singing; a feeling of anti-climax having overcome everyone.

These are the memories which go to make up my holiday, but this does not take into account the warmth given to strangers in the midst of Norway. The language barrier was non-existent as — I feel guilty as I say this — English became the international language. I always felt one of the party and was able to join in the pranks, the jokes, the singing and dancing without feeling «out of it». All of it has left one with one ambition — to return as soon as possible!