

THE WORLD'S MOST BEAUTIFUL SEA VOYAGE HURTIG RUTEN onboard MS Trollfjord 2022

This is a synopsis of our Hurtigruten trip taken recently and we hope that you'll enjoy reading it.

The 'Coastal Express' has sailed the waters to the same ports since 1936, except for some years during WWII. The sea route taken by the 'Coastal Express' is called the 'Coastal Highway No. 1'. A ship leaves daily from Bergen for the 12-day round-trip, with the northern most port of Kirkenes. Now over the years more than 70 ships, specially constructed for the 'Coastal Express', equipped with refrigerated compartments, roll on/roll off facilities, vehicle holds, postal service, as well as conference facilities on board. MS Trollfjord she can accommodate 850 passengers, however we had only 400 passengers. Ships are specially designed single class ships, for loading pallets and planned for enticing international travellers to visit such places as the Lofoten Islands, Trollfjord, Skjervøy Island, Hammerfest, North Cape, Helgeland Coast and of course the Land of the Midnight Sun. We were treated to the best scenery the Norwegian coast can offer. Our Coastal trip was 2,500km long and we stopped at 32 harbors on our way to Bergen.

Facts about the Gulf Stream. *The Gulf Stream arises at the point where the Equatorial Stream presses its warm water into the Caribbean, moving north into the Gulf of Mexico and then south past the southern tip of Florida. At this point it is 100km wide and transports 25 million cubic meters of warm water eastward across the Atlantic ocean, every second. Part of the stream continuous north of the British Isles and approx. 4 million cubic meters per second turns in towards Norway, flowing along the entire coastline past the North Cape. It also flows into the fjords, ensuring that ports as far away as Murmansk in Russia remain free of ice all year around. During severe winters, ice sometimes forms in Kirkenes harbor. Say a word of thanks to the Gulf Stream every day. Even if the weather Gods are not always on your side, you know that the stream is there, safeguarding the sea; the life-supporting environment of both humans and animals.*

KIRKENES 09.00–12.30

VARDØ 16.05–17.00

BÅTSFJORD 20.00–20.30

BERLEVÅG 22.25–22.35

3' = approximately 1 meter.

Our voyage began in the Arctic town of **Kirkenes** just a few miles from the Russian border, but much further east than St. Petersburg and Istanbul. The town is sandwiched between two time zones – Helsinki and Moscow. It is 400 km north of the Arctic Circle. Most of the inhabitants are Norwegian with a Sami minority. We noticed the area has many influences from Norway's neighbor. Road signs are in both Norwegian and Russian. Findings in Varanger Fjord suggest that area was inhabited 9,000 BC. It is the Sami heartland and the municipality is now called Unjarga. Kirkenes is located south of the Arctic timberline and is very fertile compared to the rest of the coastline. The main road from the continent is called E6 and it ends in Kirkenes, hence it is Norway's major coastal Highway.

The star-shaped Vardøhus fortress built in 1737 is found in the port of **Vardø**. The northernmost fortification of any kind and remains a part of the military to this day. Many Finns came here to work in the fishing industry while fleeing the famine in their homeland. The Vadsø museum celebrates the Kveni Finnish immigration. Finnish is taught at schools in Vadsø and Vardø coast. Vardø, on Vardøya Island is connected to the mainland by a 2,892m long tunnel. Vardø was also the Norwegian-Russian trading center where everyone understood “pidgin” Russian/Norwegian. During the winter months shoals of Capelin spawn off the coast and keep the fish oil plants busy. Vadsø is also of vital importance to NATO’s early warning system. We are very happy that Sweden finally wants to join Nato.

The midnight sun and its cycle never take a break here in the northern Norway – a land where the light never fails to inspire. The variations of light associated with the special coastal landscape are the most distinctive feature in this region. Nothing can equal the sight of moonlight playing across the ocean and the snow-clad mountains. One place to experience the display of the light is at Vardø Fortress. The sun is below the horizon from 23 November with 21 January the day the whole sun finally reappears. Fortunate for us, we travelled in August.

We cruised Norway’s coastline to arrive in the small port of **Båtsfjord** in the evening and then on to **Berlevåg**. Norway’s most easterly point is Hornøya Island at 31°10’ 10” east – in other words further east than St Petersburg and Istanbul. ‘Ishavsveien’ (ice-ocean-road) road is open all year connecting E6 to both Båtsfjord and Berlevåg communities. In 1973 French engineers constructed a tetrapod mole –four-armed 15 tonne concrete giant blocks – which are connected in such a way that the water can pass through them, as protection against storm waves. Waves as high as 9.8m have not been able to break the mole. From a distance we were able to make out Mount Tanahorn, a sacred site for the Sami, rising 269m above the sea level to the west. Kjolnes Lighthouse located atop a cliff overlooks the Barents Sea. She continues to send out her important signals. Our seas were calm, so we never got seasick during our voyage.

MEHAMN 01.20-01.30
KJØLLEFJORD 03.25-03.35
HONNINGSVÅG 05.45-06.00
HAVØYSUND 08.00-08.15
HAMMERFEST 11.00-12.45
ØKSFJORD 15.50-16.05
SKJERVØY 19.30-19.45
TROMSØ 23.45-01.30

The short time in ports is planned for loading/unloading of goods, regular mail along with fresh vegetables and fish. We were never disturbed at night by loud notices. Our Captain and crew handled the ship marvelously. Our cabin on the Promenade Deck was cozy and quiet on the starboard side of the ship. We had a 2,000 km long travel with distance view of Norway’s coastal towns.

All the fishing villages along the coast of Finnmark area are now linked to the E6 highway throughout the year. Norway is known for building long tunnels, some of them with a roundabout. Fruholmen, Europe’s most northern lighthouse, flashes off the coast of

Hjemsøy, where also thousands of razorbills and guillemots nest on the rocks.

Hammerfest, located at 70° 39'48", is the most northerly town. In 1789 Hammerfest was granted "Market Status" thus the 40 inhabitants were exempt from taxation. Trapping expeditions to the Northern Arctic and trade with Russia brought growth to the town, as did the expanding trawler fleet. Hammerfest brought in electric street lighting in 1891. The city was razed to the ground during WWII by the Germans, and later rebuilt as a modern town. Snøvit gas field came into production 2007 piping gas to Melkøya, where it is cooled to LNG and freighted worldwide. In Kvalsundet turbines were installed on the seabed that are driven by the tide-run and generate electric power. Stuffed polar bears can be seen in Isbjørnklubben, but no longer roam the streets in Hammerfest, once the northernmost town in the world until Longyearbyen in Svalbard claimed the title.

Sørøya Island has been populated since the Stone Age along with the remains of a Dutch whaling station. In 1944 it became famous because the population refused to succumb to the German occupiers. A total of 1,000 people escaped to large caves and watched as their villages were razed. They were eventually rescued by Norwegian and British vessels and taken to **Båtfjord**. The Germans paid a heavy price for their occupation of Norway in WWII. From Seiland Island you can glimpse the glaciers Nordmannssjøkelen 1,075m and Seilandsjøkelen 981m above sea level. The Kautokeino Sami live here with their reindeer herds. The mild climates in Alta municipality offers the 19,000 inhabitants whom are farmers grow grains despite the high latitude! This is most unusual at this northern location. The prize-winning Alta Museum was built surrounding 2,500 rock carvings, which are now on the UNESCO World Heritage List. Professor Kristian Birkeland built an Aurora Borealis observatory on the peak of Halde 970m. In WWII British midget submarines seriously damaged the battleship 'Tirpitz' and sank the 'Scharnhorst' on Christmas Day 1943, North of the North Cape.

Some twenty years ago House of Norway offered a program in Hall of Nations in San Diego, CA. The program was about 'the sinking of the Tirpitz'. Gathered were a grandson, of a Norwegian farmer, who observed the attack and saw parts of the ship fly into the air landing close to his house; a German Luftwaffe pilot stationed in the area, who could not fly because there was no gas for the planes; and a British pilot who had been part of the fleet of attack bombers that actually sank the 'Tirpitz'. 20% of the ship still remains at the bottom of the sea. A remnant of artificial smoke chemicals used to disguise the ship has caused environmental damage to the sea and forest. All three men live in San Diego and shared their unique memories of the events of sinking the 'Tirpitz'. We clearly remember the presentation and the three men, who connected by coincidence, became good friends.

We continued cruising Norway's coastline south to **Øksfjord**, where Norway's fifth largest glacier Øksfjordjøkulen, at 1,204m, is the only glacier on the mainland Norway to 'calve' directly into the sea. The Coastal Express crossed LoppHAVET, one of six stretches of open sea, on our voyage south. We crossed the 70 km long of Kvænangen Fjord, and then sailed to **Skjervøy**. This traditional trading center, owned by one family for a long time, recalls the legends about the king of Skjervøy, who lived 300 years ago. His name was Christen Michelsen Heggelund. Sami settlement sites found here date back to the Stone Age. In 1893 Nansen's expedition left for the North Pole with a mission to search for open waters to reach North American west coast. The expedition ships got stuck in pack ice for three years. The polar vessel 'Fram' finally returned in August 1896 to Skjervøy. All Hurtigruten ships have been docking at this vital fishing port since 1896.

As we made our way to **Tromsø**, we could also glimpse the Lyngen Alps, which boast some of the highest peaks in all of Norway.

TROMSØ 23.45–01.30
FINNSNES 04.20–04.40
HARSTAD 08.00–08.30
RISØYHAMN 10.45–11.00
SORTLAND 12.30–13.00
STOKMARKNES 14.15–15.15
SVOLVAER 18.30–20.30
STAMSUND 22.15–22.30

We docked in **Tromsø** just before midnight. In the summer months, you can stroll around the still busy city in glorious 24-hour daylight, and see the magical play of the moon on the sea.

We passed the whitewashed Trondenes Church, the world's northernmost medieval stone church. The church sits on the peninsula and is the former court and seat of the most influential families during the Viking Era. The Coastal Express entered historical waters in Toppsundet. To the east is Trondenes, to the north the islands of Bjarkøy and Grytøya, rich in Iron Age findings. Elgsnes, to the west, boasts former sacrificial sites and burial mounds and a memorial chapel to Greenland's apostle, Hans Egede. To the southwest, Kvæ Fjord is an agricultural area famous for its strawberries some of them served for breakfast on the ship.

We sailed through Risøyrenna – a dredged channel between the islands of Hinnøya and Andøya. It has enormous peat bogs, cloudberry marshes and coal deposits - not commercially viable! The mine at Ramså is known as 'The open geology book'. It consists of 300 km thick deposits of sandstone containing coal under layers of sandstone and shale as well as the complete skeletons of ichthyosaurs, enormous fish-like dinosaurs, which roamed the area 150 million years ago. The Norwegians arriving much later, left burial mounds as well as the remains of former Iron Age settlements. Today 'whale safaris' are a major attraction – 20m long, 40 tonne sperm whales swim in the seas here. On the coast there is also a large airbase important to NATO because of its location. Many nations launch their research rockets and balloons from 'Oksebåsen'. Our ship passed under several long beautiful bridges linking islands together.

Sortland is the headquarters of Norway's coastguard. They patrol large areas of the North Atlantic, waters surrounding Svalbard and Barents Sea. The Museum of the Coastal Express is located in **Stokmarknes**. *Richard With* established Vesteraalens Dampskibsselskab in 1881, that later became known as 'the Coastal Express'. While standing out on the deck we spotted a Norwegian submarine leaving port only to submerge out of sight.

Svolvær is the capital of Lofoten. You can't mistake Svolvægeita 'the Goat Mountain' with its two noticeable horns 1.5m apart. Daring adventurers have been known to jump from one to the other. Unfortunately we could not see any of them due to our rainy weather, at this point, but it would have been fun! We boarded a 3-hour buss tour to **Stamsund**.

Lofoten is well known for its rich fishing waters, its wild nature and its picturesque fishing villages. We travelled along sheltered inlets, white sandy beaches, farmland and wide-open fields. This landscape, particularly the unique light and the fishing have for hundreds of years attracted many Norwegian and foreign artists. We visited a Kaviar Factory, a local old landmark transformed into an international art exhibit hall, displaying art by current artists.

Next we sailed along the 20km long Raftsundet between Hinnøya and Austvågøy under Lofotsveien. The peak Trolltindan towers some 1,045m and Blåfjellet 998m above sea level on the other side. Our Captain took our ship into tiny Troll Fjord 2 km long and only 100 m wide. The mountain walls looked so close you could almost reach out and brush them! Don't worry; First Captain Maryanne Bendiksen knows her way out. *She knows that the trolls sleep for 1,000 years after their midday nap and before they start throwing stones at the ship.* To exit the fjord, she rotated MS Trollfjord 180degrees on the spot and sailed back out. It was a spectacular experience!

Troll Fjord is famous for the **Battle of Troll Fjord**, which took place here in 1880. The battle between fishermen in steam-driven fishing boats and fishermen in 'fembørringer' boats only equipped with sails and oars for five oarsmen. Huge quantities of fish had swum into the fjord. The larger steam driven boats trapped the fish in large nets angering the smaller boat fishermen. The battle was described in 'The Last Viking' by Johan Bojer and depicted by painter Gunnar Berg 'The battle of Troll Fjord', which hangs in **Svolvær** Town Hall.

The world's largest catches of cod are made in Svolvær between January and April. It's called Skrei cod, and it surpasses any other fish in taste and texture. *Young men with 'Frisk Fisk' company drive 24 hours straight from Narvik to Upplands Väsby/Stockholm and deliver fresh Skrei cod by preorder to us. They notify us by text on our phones when and where to pick up our purchases. If you have not eaten this Skrei cod you have missed a delicious meal.*

It is comforting to see the flashing lights of Skrova lighthouse near **Svolvær**, even when we know that the instruments onboard the ship can handle everything perfectly. Skrova is also home of a marine biological research station. Based on research, the people decided to continue whaling, the life of previous generations.

Lofoten cathedral in Kabelvåg/Storvågan is the largest wooden church in the north, with a seating capacity of 1,200, always full during the fishing boom. The statue of King Eystein nearby reminds us of the first church he built in 1120. Intensive excavation findings indicated that this was the center for Hålogaland (circa 1100-1400). This may have been the third market town during the middle ages. Bruraberget was the site of courts and the Vågåbok book of laws originated here. It's due to Lofoten fishing that the area flourished some 900 years ago. A Viking Chieftain's farm has been excavated and is located in nearby **Borge**. All 'first trippers' the marine term for a sailor on their first voyage in the Lofoten fishing fleet, were encouraged to remove their hats and greet Vågekallen, while praying for good weather and a large harvest.

Stamsund is a man-made fishing village defiantly built into the mountain. J.M. Johansen initiated the construction of the village during the first half of 1900s. It is now one of

Lofoten's largest fishing villages with excellent quay facilities. Stamsund has the largest fish producing plant, a cod liver oil refinery and its own shipping company with 7 trawlers.

Whaling and seal hunting, and aqua culture, are all part of the survival of humans on the Norwegian coast since pre-historic times. Today we talk about 'sustainable development' that protects the environment and provides the possibility of renewable resources. Seals became over-hunted. They destroyed fishing nets and ate too much fish. The magnificent large whales now swim undisturbed. Norwegians argue for sustainable whaling of Mink whales. The Atlantic stock is large enough to allow limited hunting according to the Norwegians. The smaller Mink whale is found around the world. In Antarctic alone there may be 750,000 animals. Along the coast we often saw 'fish farming ponds' mostly of salmon and trout. Scientists are also reviewing and improving the quality of food resulting in larger and tastier fish i.e. cod, halibut, sea urchin, char, eel, wolf fish and mussels. Income from farmed fish exports has passed 68 billion Norwegian kronor/year, equivalent to 6.8 billion dollars.

As we left the Land of the Midnight Sun we sailed further south along the **Helgeland** coast. **We crossed the Arctic Circle '66° 33N'** just after breakfast. On the aft deck interested passengers gathered for this special event to commemorate the moment with a traditional of tasting a spoonful of good ol' cod liver oil. We remembered the awful taste when mother forced us to accept a spoonful of that green stuff, yet we volunteered in accepting it again. It did not taste anything like our memories told us. It tasted just like good oil! We followed the tasting with a glass of champagne, telling our friends nearby that it was good to try and acknowledge that this good vitamin oil was actually good for us. We received also a certificate that we have now passed the Arctic Circle.

BODØ 02.30-03.30

ØRNES 06.25-06.35

NESNA 10.25-10.35

SANDNESSJØEN 11.45-12.15

BRÖNNØYSUND 15.00-17.25

RØRVIK 21.00-21.30

We again entered Viking land and now share the stories from Sandnessjøen, where Viking Chieftain Torolv Kvedulvsson lived on the Sandnes farm. He collected taxes from the Sami people for Harald Hårfagre, who became too powerful for the king's liking and paid with his life. On Herøy island stands Helgeland's Cathedral built around 1100s

The Saga of Helgeland Mountains and mythical trolls.

This is the story of a man called Vågekallen, who lived in Lofoten, just beyond Henningsvær. He missed the company of women, as the ladies further south did not take much notice of him. In fact, Ms. Lekamøya even called him a simpleton. One night, when Ms. Lekamøya had gone to Tjøtta to make unleavened bread, something happened: 7 beautiful sisters escaped from their father, the King of Sulitjelma, and were dancing naked in the fjord. The water temperature proved too warm for Vågekallen. He jumped on his horse and rode south in great haste causing a lot of commotion. The 7 sisters fled southwards with Vågekallen hard on their heels. Ms. Lekamøya heard noises from the din from where she was baking at Tjøtta. She dropped her rolling pin, peel and pastry board and set off home to Leka. Hestmannan was

woken by the noise and shot an arrow south. However, Skarvågsgubben (King of Brønnøy Island) saw this and threw up his hat to intercept the arrow, which landed in the sea. They were all turned to stone as they forgot the sunrise, and can still be seen here to this day. From north to south: Vågekallen in Lofoten, Hestmannen on his horse and well guarded by the Rødøy Island Lion and the 7 sisters on Alsten. Today, the pastry board, rolling pin and peel are stone monuments at Tjøtta and the hole through the Brønnøy king's hat, 'Torghatten', can still be seen. Ms. Lekamøya stands at Leka. Just look and you'll find them all (even on the map).

Hårek from Tjøtta was a great chieftain and one of St Olov's assassins at Stiklestad in 1030. Another well-known Saga character who lived here is the minstrel, Øyvind Finnson Skaldespiller (born in 912). Ms. Lekamøya's baking utensils can also be found here. A farm site with the remains of 12 houses and 25 burial mounds in the shape of a star has also been unearthed here.

Let us introduce the seven sisters to you: Botnkrona 1072m, Grytfoten 1066m, Skjæringen 1037m, Tvillingene 980m, Kvasstinden 1010m, Stortinden 910m. According to Norwegian folk tales, trolls are turned into stone if they do not hide before the sun rises. This was the case for the seven beautiful sisters who, as mountains, are still just as beautiful. The seven Sisters mountain range and the distinctive Torghatten Mountain with a hole through it, has been one of Norway's best-known natural phenomena. The hole is 25m wide, 112m above sea level. Scientists claim that the sea washed against a weak point in the mountain, creating a hole, at a time when the land was some 100m lower than it is today. Mythological stories claim it was Hestmannan's arrow, which whisked through the Brønnøy King's hat so long ago that made the hole.

Alstahaug Church, dating back from the 1100s and extended in 1865, is a prominent landmark on the southern tip of Alsten. The churchyard dating from 1650 has been fully restored. This is where poet, priest and painter, Petter Dass (Dundas) rests. It is as a poet that he is famous in Norway. No one else captured the essence northern Norway and the people here as well as he did. 'Nordlands Trompet' is his colorful masterpiece and a cultural heritage, with its hymn 'Herre Gud ditt dyre navn og ære'. Viking Chieftains resided here well before the time of Petter Dass. A royal grave measuring 30m diameters and 8m in height is a massive grave for a Viking Chieftain.

We reached **BRØNNØYSUND**, a small coastal town, mid-afternoon and explored the bustling marina on a walk along Havnegata. In the center of town is Brønnøy Church – a stone church in the Neo-Gothic style dating back to 1870. Although Brønnøysund is situated in central Norway, it is still considered part of northern Norway.

Our last stop of the day was the cozy fishing port of **Rørvik** in the picturesque Vikna archipelago. On the second weekend in July the people of Løkta arrange Bjørnmarket, an annual event. We missed this opportunity because we sailed by in August. In Sandnessjøen we saw the elegant Helgeland Bridge crossing Leir and Vefna Fjords. Quite impressive construction!

Trondheim 06.30–09.30
Kristansund 16.30–17.30
Molde 21.15–21.45

Ålesund 00.30–01.20

Torvik 02.35–02.45

We spent the morning in **Trondheim** the first capital of Norway. It was called Nidaros and established 997CE. Most important is the Gothic memorial of Nidaros dome, the biggest middle ages building in Scandinavia. Three queens and seven kings were crowned here. Trondheim began with the death of St. Olav at the battle of Stiklestad 1030. Pilgrims came from afar to be healed at St. Olav's shrine in Nidaros. The town became a seat of the archbishop in 1152 and remained an ecclesiastical center. The area was governed by popularly elected local chieftains, and was the port of departure for many Viking expeditions. Many a Viking ship was dragged onto the sandy banks of River Nid for trade or festivities after an expedition. The chieftain's men (bodyguards) were of the strongest dependable men available. People of Trøndelag unified Norway 872CE.

Leiv Eiriksson completed his military service here before returning home to Greenland (which at the time was part of the Norwegian territory). Torfinn Karlsefni also docked here, after the long expedition to Leiv Eiriksson's home in Vinland (Newfoundland). He brought home timber from 'the new country', which he sold to a merchant from Bremen. This was the first ever of American goods shipped to Europe taking place here around 1000AD.

King Olav Haraldson was elected 1016. He converted the population to Christianity and he was declared a saint 1031. He was buried in Kristkirken, the place where Nidaros Cathedral was later built 1320. In 1681 a catastrophic fire burnt most buildings to the ground and a new city was designed and built.

In Bergen we visited Stiftsgården built 1778, with its 64 rooms, is the largest wooden building and serves as a royal residence. The colorful wooden buildings served as shipping and storage locations along Bryggen from the 1700s. Many buildings have been renovated. Today shops, bakeries, bookshops and restaurants have taken over this charming area. Bakklandet previously offered housing to seamen and traveling businessmen. They have since been converted to delightful modern apartments.

We sailed south through Trondheimsfjorden passing the islands of Munkholmen and Hitra. Our voyage continued past beautiful island scenery and some of Norway's smallest communities and arrived at **Kristiansund**, known, as Norwegian Klipp-Fish capital due to its long tradition of exporting of salted and dried fish. The protected harbor offered space for all arriving fishing boats and of course for our ship MS Trollfjord. The town was almost completely destroyed by German bombs in April 1940. The rebuilding meant redesigning the whole town and resulting in interesting architecture and many wooden buildings painted in bright colors. Tingvoll Church previously known as Nordmøre Cathedral survived the bombing. It was built around year 1200.

ATLANTERHAVSVEIEN begins in Averøy. It is an impressive and beautiful road connecting several islands by long bridges, far west from the mainland. It offers a dramatic transfer between oceans; sky and land built in 2005 and recognized as one of the best construction works with an extraordinary visionary design.

In 2014 we traveled by car with cousins Birgit and Christer Grabb visiting Trondheim, Kristiansund, Atlanterhasveien, Molde, Ådalsnes, Trollstigen, Ålesund, Geiranger, Jotonheimen,

Lillehammer and Oslo. We were reminded of the many locations we visited with them and how extraordinary beautiful the Norwegian landscape is.

Back onboard MS Trollfjord we sailed further out at sea towards **Molde**, known to be “the rose island” due to its location close to the Golf-stream and its large flower fields. We docked in **Ålesund** in the middle of the night. Ålesund is Carl’s favorite city in Norway.

Tourists arrive in **Ålesund** to look at the ‘Art Nouveau Architectural building style’. The town was completely destroyed by fire 1904. European architects, builders, artists, investors and local craftsmen rebuilt the town in three years. In 2014 we visited Fjellstua, and enjoyed the fantastic view over the town and nearby islands.

This is our last day onboard MS Trollfjord sailing towards Bergen. We approached **Florø**, located on the tip of southern mainland Norway. The islands exert a calming influence on the waves of the Norwegian Sea. The inland Batalden has long been a sailing mark from Vikings on their return journeys to the further west. Florø is mainly involved with fish farming. Our Captain never failed to guide our ship safely through the island group of Solund/Sula, just outside the mouth of Sogne Fjord. At the entrance of the fjord the cold water is held back allowing the relatively warm surface water into the fjord. This means that the Gulf Stream also keeps Norway’s longest fjord relatively ice-free during winter months. Vardetangen is the most westerly point at 4° 56’58” in Norway. At Ågotnes lies a supply base for the North Sea oil fields. Oil is pumped through a sub-sea pipeline from the Oseberg field to the terminal at Sture.

MS Trollfjord docked at **BERGEN** at ‘The town between the 7 mountains’ on schedule at 14.45. By this time we had experienced “The most beautiful voyage at sea”. We sailed close to the glacier Josteldalsbreen and the entrance to the mighty Sognefjord. Bergen is an international city with the charm of a small village. The waterfront colorful wooden building at Bryggen is on UNESCO’s world heritage list, and Fisketorget (Fish square) and Mariakirken a Romanesque church dating from 1100. It is also the oldest building in Bergen. According to historical sources, King Olav Kyrre established the town in 1070. The great King Håkon Håkonson moved to Bergen in 1217 and the town became the capital of ‘The Kingdom of Norwayæ’. Although the capital was moved to Oslo in 1299, Bergen remained an important city. As all music lovers of the world do, we visited Troidhaugen and listened to the wonderful music by Edward Grieg.

Hurtigruten staff was well prepared to get us off the ship in an orderly manner. After picking up our luggage we found the bus that would take us to our hotel. We had booked two nights accommodation at Radisson Blu Royal in Bergen located right on the waterfront. Great location! Our hotel room was nicely appointed, quiet and very comfortable. The breakfast, at the hotel, served just about anything you might want to taste. The display was awesome! We soon found our land legs again and strolled along cobblestone pedestrian walkways. Thank Odin for comfortable shoes. We were greeted by a warm sunny day and continued to play tourists. The sidewalk along the pier is wide, where young and old enjoyed gathering, drinking, talking and the sun. Bergen is known as a very rainy city.

August 24 we set aside a full day of sightseeing day in Bergen. We took Fløybanen funicular up to Fløyen. What a trip! Our reward was fantastic views of Bergen and the

surrounding mountains. What a day to remember! On the way going back down we got seats on the front row and Calle recorded the fast trip down. We were somewhat apprehensive, but it was great fun! We enjoyed the old port – Bryggen – and the many stores located in renovated buildings. Nice!

August 25 we took a taxi to the train station in time to catch the train departing Bergen at 08.15 for Oslo connecting to the airport train to Oslo airport, followed by an hour flight to Stockholm Arlanda airport.

Again at home we spend time to look at our many photos, remembering a wonderful trip, thinking of new friends we met on board. We gladly share information gained from our trip. We are emptying our bucket lists, yet there are so many more places in the world we would like to visit.

As always, it is nice to travel but always good to come home.

Ingrid and Carl 'Calle' Englund