

We finally got our Scandinavian tour done. It had been planned three years ago, however previously things always happened that meant deferral. This year we did it!

Sailing from Hull to Rotterdam on April 27th we arrived in Holland at 0900hrs. The crafty Dutch police breathalysed every driver coming off the boat, so woe betide anyone who'd made too much of a night of it!

Arriving on a Sunday meant traffic was light and we progressed through Holland and well into Germany before pitching up for the night. We stopped in an authorised rest-place attached to the local swimming baths in Neumünster 40kms north of Hamburg €12 for pitch with electric, but no water/dump point unless you paid €5 more. We didn't.

The next day brilliant sunshine and we made swift progress to Odense in Denmark. We stopped in the Park& Ride got the ebikes off the back and cycled into town. It was delightful and cycling in Denmark is really well provided for, nice cycle lanes and routing away from the traffic and thru pleasant urban landscaping. The city centre was a bit of a work-in-progress and a lot was being dug up and rebuilt. However we enjoyed the sunshine and had a good walk round the centre. Hans Christian Anderson used to live there (we didn't spot him).

We kept on across the bridge to København (Copenhagen), the journey there was fine, but we had a nightmare of struggle to find anywhere to stop. The aires-du-repose were all non-existent, the local campsite which I tried to book on-line from England was full. The Copenhagen traffic was grid-locked and it was getting late in the day. Using the search engine on my phone we found a campsite about 15Kms south of the city and phoned them, they could accommodate us but they were closing reception and agreed to leave a pass card in a secure box, we were to let ourselves in and park-up in a holding area.

Safely ensconced for the night we relocated to our correct pitch the following morning and decided to visit Copenhagen via ebikes. That was great success and we did the town.



Little Mermaid

Apart from the little mermaid there's lots of interesting architecture including a round tower with a internal ramp way for climbing up to the observatory. It was built in 1642 King Christian IV for his astronomer royal Tycho Brahe.



Round Tower

So we followed the footsteps of Tsar Peter the Great who apparently went up on his horse.



Anne on the Tower ramp.

The next day we we drove over The Oresund Bridge, to Sweden



We'd bought a special pass transponder which sits in the windscreen. Which is identified by the toll barriers. This automatically id's the vehicle and charges the toll directly to my prepaid Revolut Card.

It's a clever system and regardless of whether I'm in Sweden, Danmark or Norway it converts the charges from local currency to £'s sterling at the current bank rate, no commission!

It's very useful as all roads in Norway and many in Sweden and Denmark are tolled and there are endless small charges continually being incurred.

There's no other way of paying these charges and failure to have the vehicle registered would result in numerous fines!

We got to Gothenburg later that day and opted to stay in nice well organised campsite close to the city (5kms out).

We booked in for two nights as we wanted to explore.

The ebikes got us into town and we went down to find the 'Lipstick Tower' which the guidebook recommended, it was closed. It was May Day so the local trade unions were having a march, but the shops were open and we had a wander around the old town and did some window shopping.

The next morning we were surprised to find that the two motorhomes next to us had been robbed overnight. The police were in attendance and money, camaras, phones and ipads stolen. We were untouched, why? I'm not really sure, maybe we looked too poor?

We moved on to Norway and Oslo next. The campsite we'd chosen was the only place handy for the city. However it as very hilly around and the local bus and train service was the easy way to go into town, so we used it.

We bought a round trip ticket to the Kon-tiki and Maritime mueseums, they were on a penisnsula across the harbour so it was boat trip but stunning expos:



The Viking ships Museum

The Kon-tiki and Ra Museum:



Thor Heyerdahl was quite mad to sail across the Pacific and Atlantic oceans on such flimsy craft, bonkers.

Next we went to the maritime museum to see Roald Amundsen's boat the Fram:



The presentation of which is really stunning. They have housed it in a special building and you can explore it externally from every angle then head on board and go from deck to deck seeing into the cabin's where the crew lived, alongside 116 huskys. I bet smelt pretty rich couped up with that lot!

We had bought around 500 quids worth of Norwegian krona three years ago when this trip was first envisaged, this was the first time we'd tried to spend some of it, we were told the notes had all been changed last year and none of our money was legal tender! The local Norge Bank changed what we had on hand, but we'd got 4800Nkr still hidden in the RV. It was Friday afternoon at 14:45 when this information hit us, so there was no way of getting back to the RV and fetching the rest. We'd just have to use the Revolut Card for everything!

We had originally planned to drive westwards from Oslo to the west coast but the weather forecast was poor, so we headed North. The next few stop-overs were less formal:



As you can see the weather conditions were perfect but the further north we got it became noticeably colder.



We headed up the E6 which was a single carriageway road, up towards and beyond Mo-I-Rana, we reached the Arctic Circle on 6th May: The RV outside the Arctic Circle Outpost.



It was -6°C and we drove through several snow storms, but we kept gas and diesel supplies high and we had enough food and water to last until summer.

It was unsurprisingly cold and barren, we decided to turn it round and head south.

It took 3 days to get down to Trondheim.

We found a few nice over-nite spots which cost us nothing and we just kept going.



When we got to Trondheim we searched for an over-nite halt, the first one was a building site and no longer available, however we struck lucky using a phone app, which identified a “Bobil Parking” on the quayside. It was perfect level and electricity water, dump point all inclusive 36 hours parking 200Nkr (£17.50).

Trondheim is a delightful city with modern facilities and historic interest in a beautiful setting.



We spent a happy 4 hours walking round and soaking up the Norwegian culture, one of the highlights was supposed to be the Archbishops palace and crown jewels. We bought the combi ticket for 3 museums and crown jewels.

What a con! The Norwegians had obviously been horrified of the recent theft of the Swedish CJ's in 2018 and decided to put theirs behind

bars in reinforced glass case 30 ft away from a guarded barred doorway. They thoughtfully provide a pair of binoculars (on a chain) to use to see them. Upon leaving I had moan to the ticket office and behold I got our money back £34 !!!



We wandered thru town, and found a Norge Bank! So a quick dash back to the RV and took our 4800Nkr out of the safe and went and changed it for useable money.

We wanted to drive the Atlantic Ocean Road, so with clear weather forecast we headed that afternoon to Kristiansund. Once again the aires-du-repose was a building site, and so was the next one. So we retraced our steps a round 5Kms back to forestside parking bay we'd spotted.

It provided free parking for the night:



After a restful night we headed for the Atlantic ocean road, this Island hops for around 10kms on the most extreem edge of Norways north west coast.



The tolls are quite eyewatering and they have the cheek to charge for passengers extra! However it is stunning and a definate bucket list drive. An opentop Porsche would have been ideal..... Norwegian speeding fines are horrendous so maybe the RV was a good bet.

After a short hop on a Fjord Ferry, We ended that night in Alesund. We were parked right on the quayside looking out over the Atlantic.



The following morning we had good walk around Alesund, we were parked within easy reach of the centre, but found nothing of interest. I looked it up in the Lonely Planet guide, they found nothing of interest either... Ho hum.

Later that morning we headed out for Bergen, which although only 150 miles away takes two days of ferries and tunnels. So we decided to go via the Norwegian Glacier Museum in Fjærland.



The architecture is quite special but the content rather tame. There was a film about four people wandering around up a mountain quite what the relevance of which was lost on us.

We went on to find a over-nite spot and found a quiet parking area off a layby overlooking the Fjord.



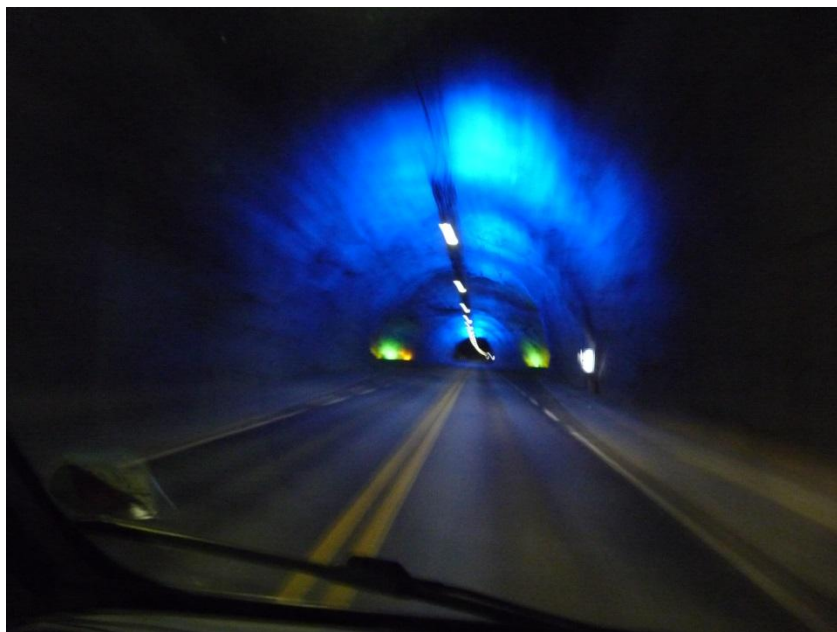
We were about 150kms from Bergen but most of the journey was either via ferries or tunnels. Some of the tunnels were 25kms long. They were of differing quality some well lit and ventilated other were like driving down a tin mine as Anne suggested.



The views we fantastic and you couldn't do them justice with a camara.

The tunnels were quite stressful driving as oncomming traffic included some bit HGV's and the lanes were not very wide.

With the RV you always need to be vigilant of the height and size of your own vehicle too.



The good thing about ferries is it gives you a break from driving or sitting in the RV.



Progress is not quick but there's so much to look at and experience it's fabulous.

Ferries varied in costs but around the £25-£45 mark, we went on 12 in total. Plus the P&O and Kristiansand to Hirtshals crossings approximatley £1500 all in.



In Bergen we stayed about 10kms out of the centre at a Bobil Park Platz with electricity water and dump points. The building behind us was like an abandoned bus station, that had been convered into a weight training gym. It was reasonably cheap and was restricted to 48hours stay. Ideal for us we got the ebikes off the back and made it into the city initially on the Saturday and the next day Sunday.

The city is very touristy in a nice way, we stopped for a coffee and cake and sat out in the sunshine:



The 10Kms ebike ride was quite complex ducking and weaving the main arterial roads that thread they way into the city. As it sits in the hills around the fjord, the ebikes were essential, I don't think I would have made it without battery power.

Anne drinking a coffee in the pavement café.



The old Wharehouses– wooden tinderbox if you ask me.

In side of these warehouses is a labyrinth of wooden alleyways, with shops and boutiques, you can buy any tourist idems here for 250% of their value. No need to run out of fridge magnets.

You can see we were really lucky with the weather.



View from the top of the funicular.

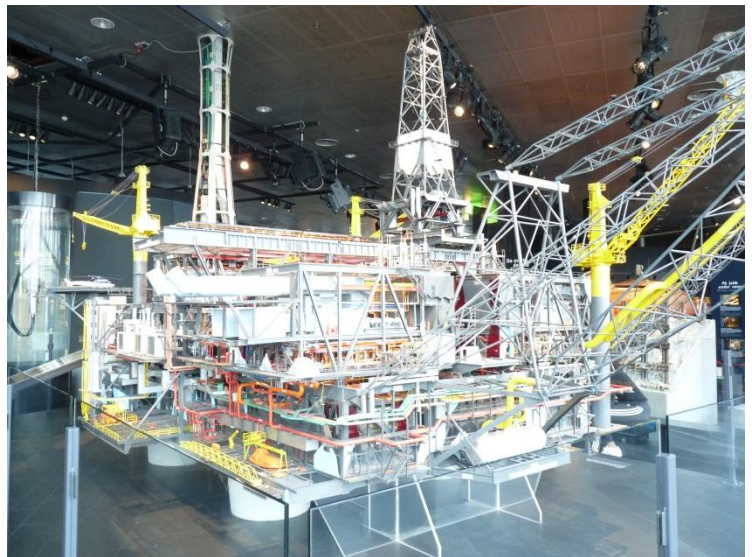
We drove from Bergen to Stavanger in one day, when I said drove, 3 hours of ferries and 3 hours driving. We had identified a Bobil Parking Campsite about 3kms out of the city centre and booked ourselves in for 3 nights.

The cycle ride into town was delightful, cycletracks and dedicated lanes made it easy and safe.

Stavanger is less trashy than Bergen and has a modest understated old town of white wooden houses and warehousing around the quite small port area.



The highlight of the town is the Oil museum, where Norway's history and development of their oil resources is told. It's a fascinating place with interactive science and technologies. There's also a film cinema and we watched yet another strange film about a father and son relationship in the 1980's oil exploration bonanza. The context of which left us both puzzled. Weird.



We booked the Pulpit Rock bus online for the next day.

To reach the Pulpit Rock we set out at 0715 hours cycled into Stavanger, locked the ebikes into a cycle rack (Not too close to the port) with 3 cycle locks, Caught the ferry to Tau, then the Pulpit Rock excursion bus to the foot of the Preikstolen.

Then the fun begins! The rock itself is 4Kms away up a rock path:



The views on the way up are fabulous and we had perfect weather conditions, it was sunny and blue but temperatures were fresh and cool.

The rock path is not for the faint hearted, it is a joke to call it a path really it's just marked out by some rocks having a red "T", painted on them.

There are occasional sign posts and some up and down sections.

They suggest you need to take food drink and appropriate footwear and clothing, good advice!

It was a tough climb and it's good job we are both fit. (Well sort of)



There were quite a few people on the climb some of the youngsters were springing from rock to rock like mountain goats, others were less nimble.



The rewards make the whole climb worthwhile.



The drop to fjord below is 640Mtrs.

The climb had taken 2 hours, we spent 30 minutes eating our lunch on the top. Then 1.5 hours getting down again.

We booked the Kristiansand to Hirtshals ferry on-line, and had given ourselves an extra day “in-case” of delays. Therefore, we left Stavanger and footled down the coast to Vestbygd Farsund. Here we looked for an aire-du-repose near the lighthouse. It did not look right so we asked a local who directed us to the fishing/yacht haven. Here we found electric etc. with a helpful sign saying “Bobil parking 200Nkr, please pay the harbor master”. So I sought out the said Harbor Master who refused payment say “it’s free”. What a nice man.



The location was idyllic; we had restful night and enjoyed the sea airs.

The next day we got to Kristiansand and got the SeaCat to Denmark.

What a powerful boat that is! It travelled at around 40knts.

We arrived in Denmark around 1800Hrs, so did not mess about trying to find somewhere to stop. We headed for a campsite and booked in for the night.

The next day we explored the west coast of Denmark driving down the massive sand dune peninsular. After Norway Denmark is unspectacular, nice enough

but nothing to get excited about.

We took two days getting down to Germany, and then in final push went to Apeldorn our old home in Holland. We looked up our old flat, still there 42 years on. We parked, with about 6 other RV's, in a freebie aire-du-repose near the Swimming pool and cycled into town. We recognized nothing! It was delightful town but much grown in the intervening years.

The next day we went on to Gauda, and browsed the town, yet another treat, full of character and cheese. We even bought a fridge magnet!