



# ST. OLAV WAYS

THE PILGRIM PATHS TO TRONDHEIM



## 1 Foreword

This little paper tells you about my experiences on the St. Olavs trail in Norway. It is written in English (even though my English has deteriorated some in the last decades) English because more of my friends may be able to read it.

Pictures: all pictures were taken with my Iphone 6.

Have fun reading it.

## 2 The Idea and the planning

### 2.1 Two years before (Spring 2014)

After having participated in den Trondheim-Oslo Bicycle race (Styrkeproven) around 2000 I came across the Olavstrail and thought it be interesting do cover the distance – the same as the Bikerace – on foot and from south to North instead of North to South. The plan was always on my mind and purpose was to do the Pilgrimage from Oslo to he Nidaros Dome in Trondheim after my retirement in 2015. Thus I started to read more about this trail.

### 2.2 One Year before (summer 2015)

My plans to go to Norway in 2015 had to be postponed because the 40<sup>th</sup> Class Reunion in Winfield, Iowa would take place and I did not want to do both trips in 2015. In the aftermath it was a wise choice because in 2016 I heard that 2015 was one of the worst summers ever!

### 2.3 One Month before (April/May 2016)

The decision was clear. I was going to do the Olavstrail hike in the summer of 2016. The planning and preparation started. First all the hiking gear hat to be checked and partly replaced. From all my readings I thought it be wise to take a tent along. I bought a real light (just about a little more than 2 lb.) tent and a new sleeping bag with a comfort zone as low as -5° centigrade. I also bought new, quite sturdy hiking boots and started to pack the backpack. Two challenges arose: The weight and the volume. Finally I managed both and could hold the weight down to 13 Kilos.

Then a flight to Oslo was booked – not return flight because I did not know when and from where I was to fly home. Six weeks of planned vacation is a long time an one has to control the cost. Thus I booked a bed in a hostel in Oslo for just NOK 700 for three nights. Finally I reserved, resp. announced my coming in the first three pilgrim hostels along the way.

I was read for the hike!!



Overview of the Trail

### 2.4 In Oslo

Once in Oslo there were a few things to be done:

- Get a pilgrims pass
- Buy a Norwegian SIM-Card with enough data for the hike
- Find the starting point of the Olavstrail.

This was all done on the first day after my arrival in Oslo. I planned before, that I would not stay in the Olavsgard Hotel as my pilgrims guide said, but I would stay another night in the hostel. This was easy, as there was a direct bus line to the central bus terminal in Oslo

After having found the starting point – which had been moved from its original position I walked the first 5 kilometers till Oestre Aker church and took a bus back to downtown. Thus I had the worst part of the trail, leading thru the Oslo suburbs done!

When I left Switzerland it was cold and rainy. Once I got to Oslo it was 30° and sunny.

It was not my first trip to Oslo, but only this year I learnt that you can take the express train to downtown, a train leaving every 10 minutes. Passengers are more or less strictly directed to the express train. But there is also a normal train going to the Oslo Central station, leaving every 20 to 30 minutes. The express train is NOK 200 and the normal train NOK 90!!! And: the express train is just about 5 minutes faster.



The first Milestone



The first Trailmarker

### 3 The Hike

#### 3.1 June 3, 2015: Gjelasen

Pilgrims Day	1
Start	Oslo – Oestre Aker Church
End	Bus Stop Hellerud
Km / Km Total	17/17(includes 5 km from he previous day)
Ascent / Total	300 / 300
Weather	Sunny, very hot
Hostel	Ankerhostel Oslo
Dinner	Seafood Pasta



Road to Gielarasen

This was the first day of the pilgrimage, yet I did not sleep at a pilgrim hostel but in my Hotel in Oslo, because it was easy to take buses. The first part was thru Oslo suburbs and I took wrong turns twice but without big detours. Then the first hill: Gjelasen: The last mountain on the Styrkeproven bicycle race. Not steep but after 20 hours or more of cycling it is steep enough. On could not see the E6, but the roar from the cars and trucks were around. The trail led thru forest, quite rough terrain. A little cheat on this day: I walked without the big bag pack, thus I did not carry 40 lbs. on my back! found the Hellerud Bus Stop quickly, yet I waited for the bus in the wrong direction...but I noticed

that just in time before the bus came. So far not nature, just Oslo suburbs passing many kindergardens, an IKEA store, churches, Trainstations.

#### 3.2 June 4: The First Pilgrim Hostel

Pilgrims Day	2
Start	Bus Stop Hellerud Oslo
End	Arteid Vestre
Km / Km Total	17/34
Ascent / Total	310/610
Weather	Sunny, very hot
Hostel	Arteid Vestre Pilgrims Hostel
Dinner	Soup

This was the first walking day with the full bag pack, including my tent. I started rather late (10 am) and took the bus to the Hellerud station. The day started with asphalt roads but soon meadows and forest were the walking environments.

Meadows with tall grass, the scent was just overwhelming. Nature was here at last and I hoped it would stay like that for a while!

Even though it was close to noon it was chilly and long trousers and long sleeves would have been nice, but it was bearable. Long trousers because of the many nettles hidden along the trail. In Frogner I found a supermarket and could buy some food. My lunch were a few yoghurts and bananas. It was a short day, so my legs felt good after the hike. I spent the night in a really cozy stabbur, with shower an bathroom in an adjacent building.

After supper I got mails from the upcoming hostels. That was the plan, just book/reserve the nights for two or three days in advance. In this way I was flexible enough in the planning of the daily hikes.



The Stabbur at Arteid Vestre

The hostel offered three bedrooms, one in the attic which seemed the best for me. So I slept up there an had a good nights rest. Had to, because the following day was the longest of the all, but I did not know that at that time yet.

In this hostels I met other pilgrims. Edgar from Belgium with whom I walked the full way to Trondheim. We usually slept at the same places, sometimes he a day ahead- met the last time in Trondheim where he greeted in front of Nidaros dome. There was also a retired Belgian couple. The had to be in Trondheim on July 3 or July 4, so they took a train for some stretches.

### 3.3 June 5: Long Walks on Asphalt

Pilgrims Day	3
Start	Arteid Vestre
End	Risebru
Km / Km Total	32/66
Ascent / Total	390/1000
Weather	Sunny, very hot
Hostel	Risebru Pilgrims Hostel
Dinner	Soup, Fried eggs

We started this long day at 7:30! For this day Edgar and I decided to walk together. It was ok for the day but we both found out that it be better to walk alone, so everybody can walk at its own pace. But we managed this really hot day with some difficulties and we had to find out that there was a new route which was some kilometers longer than the previous one. In addition we missed a turn on a rather poorly marked intersection and thus added another 2 to 3 kilometers to the day's hike.

The day was hard and I found out that even on flat terrain on cannot walk much faster that 4.5km an hour. Sure the 30 lbs. backpack is slowing one down. This is important to know. For I like to know approximately when to arrive at the day's finishing point. There's nothing more embarrassing than to find out that on the projected time that there are 5 or 7 or even more kilometers to go.

People along the way were really friendly, always having time for a chat or offering fresh icewater. With about 1 ½ kilometers to go, the owner of the Risebru hostel picked us up an drove us to the hostel. He even gave Edgar a ride to Lethohallen Hotel which was some 3 kilometers down the road, The hostels was Class A with a washing machine and offered Food(Bread, eggs, Butter) included in the NOK 300 price.

**3.4 June 6: The Nice Lady in Eidsvoll**

Pilgrims Day	4
Start	Risebru
End	Eidsvoll
Km / Km Total	15/81
Ascent / Total	100/1100
Weather	Sunny, hot
Hostel	Eidsvoll gamle Prestegard
Dinner	Soup, sandwiches

After the hard day to Risebru, the passage to Eidsvoll seemed like a day of leisure. Only 15 kilometers, mostly flat. Lots of asphalt to start and to end the day, But also nice passages thru forests and along rivers. My legs felt tired at the beginning but got much better during the day.

The hostel in Eidsvoll was very nice. Lots of rooms, even a living room, a nice garden and a real friendly old lady, who was the housekeeper. She just handed over the keys and told me to drop them into the mailbox in the next morning. Soon after my arrival Edgar arrived, thus we spent the night at the same place, each of us in his own room! The lady offered to drive me downtown, so I could do some shopping. Later I learnt, that she even drove a pilgrim to the doctor, because of knee-problems. She also said that the small Toyota she was driving was her rat, her small car – she also owned a camper....at 77 years of age!!!



Mailboxes



Trashcan cover

**3.5 June 7: Finnsbraten: The lonely Cabin**

Pilgrims Day	5
Start	Eidsvoll
End	Finnsbraten
Km / Km Total	19/100
Ascent / Total	400/1500
Weather	Sunny some clouds, rain in the afternoon
Hostel	Finnsbraten Cabin
Dinner	Soup, sandwiches

At last: The day marked the first day which led thru real nature. Forests, lakes, little brooks. Soon after the outskirts of Eidsvoll I met Nan, a norwegian Girl from Oslo again, after having met her on the way to Arteid Vestre on the second day. We walked together for some days but we did nit always sleep in the same places. She was a good companion telling me many facts about Norway, teaching me some Norwe-

## Pilgrimsleden 2016 – The Gudbrandsdalen Path

gian words and pronunciation. And: There are no dwarfs and fairies in the Norwegian woods but trolls and Huldras. What is a huldra?

*Huldra is a seductive forest spirit from Norse mythology that has been known to offer rewards to those who satisfy them sexually and death to those who fail to do so. It is said the huldra are a type of troll, but much smaller. From the front, the huldra is a beautiful young woman but also has a cow's tale and whose back appears to be like a hollowed out tree. Most men would most likely run away once they caught sight of the tail. In Sweden, the huldra is said to have the tail of a fox, which has to be better than a cow's tail.*

We got deep in the woods, which also meant no service on the cell phone. This was the only time I did



Silver Lake

not have phone service and it was just about the worst day. At home in Switzerland I had a painter do some work and there were some decisions to be made and just on this day: No service on the phone. The solution to this problem was found on the following day. We passed a beautiful lake where we ate lunch and soon after we came to the Lysjohimet cabin. This is an unattended Cabin without electricity and water (but clean water in the nearby river). I decided the day before to stay at another unattended Cabin: Finnsbraten.

This cabin was about a kilometer off the path on a beautiful hill with nice views. Most likely because of its remote location there were not many pilgrims in Finnsbraten: 15 for the year 2015 and for 2016 five so far.



Finnsbraten Cabin

No electricity, but it had a gas stove. Unfortunately I couldn't find matches, yet a smart pilgrim carries a lighter with him. Nice cabin: Kitchen, sleeping room with four bunk beds and a small living room. There was a well in the nearby forest where one could pump water. A really nice place. In the late afternoon there was heavy rain and I was glad to be inside. This was the first day I used my walking sticks and they worked well. No more swollen hands and an efficient tool in rough terrain.

I went to bed early because I wanted to start before six on the following day, because I hoped to get near phone service before eight so I could solve the problems with the painting at home.

**3.6 June 8: Near E6**

Pilgrims Day	6
Start	Finnsbraten
End	Espa
Km / Km Total	19/119
Ascent / Total	300/1800
Weather	Sunny, chilly in the morning
Hostel	Hestnes Gard
Dinner	Steak in Restaurant nearby

In order to be near phone service I started the day's hike a 5:30 in the morning. The bushes in the forest were wet and wet grass or bushes is about the worst thing when it come to wet boot. When you walk thru the forest on a narrow path one keeps asking himself when the next trail marker would appear. Lift your head and there it is!

I missed the correct turn at an intersection und thus walked the wrong way or about 5km. It was no problem because the path went parallel to the marked one so after about an hour I was on the correct track again. Since I left so early in the morning, it was cold and I walked with the rain coat for most of the time.



Typical Norwegian Fence

I even considered taking out my gloves. The hostel – Hestnes Gard – was not on the trail but about 2.5 kilometers towards the E6. I took the correct turn, but after about 35 minutes I wasn't sure turned back, called the lady from the hostel and she told me the correct way, which was the one I was on and went back. No problem, it was a nice day and the extra 3 or 4 kilometers did not hurt. The backpack was no problem for the whole day so I guess I was getting used to carry the weight better day by day.

The hostel was nice, yet no shower. A nice old Stabbur I shared with Edgar. Nearby was a gas station and a restaurant. So I had steak and French fries for Supper.

**3.7 June 9: Stange Church: Will it ever come Closer?**

Pilgrims Day	7
Start	Espa
End	Stange
Km / Km Total	27/146
Ascent / Total	300/2100
Weather	Sunny
Hostel	Hekestra Gard
Dinner	Soup

Again I started early. The day's hike was long and in order to avoid the extreme heat it's good to be an early bird. The first part till Tangen was along the highway but no big problem. The car and truckdrivers take all careful and one never feels unsafe when walking on the road. In Tangen I could shop for food and took a little break.

After Tangen the trail led thru forests and pastures, yet not always well marked. In Ekberg Gard - farm about one hour from Tangen – there is a small cabin with two beds. Unfortunately I did not find it, although I never considered sleeping there. An after I left the forest, one of the most embarrassing parts of the hole hike came: Stange Church!!! One could see the steeple of Stange Church from far away and is seemed close, so one may think that this church will be reached in less than one hour. But this was a completely wrong assumption, because after walking for more than 1 ½ hours there was a sign:  
 → Stange Kirke 2.9km So the total distance must have been more the 8 kilometers. This episode told me, never to guess how long it would take me to get to a certain point and follow the motto:  
 Don't think, just walk!

After having reached the church there were another 3 ½ km left to the hostel: Hekestra Gard. Nice Place: Washing machine, nice shower, bed with sheets and nice blankets and a real good breakfast the next morning. The lady in charge wasn't there when I arrived but she told me where I would find the keys. Again, full confidence with us pilgrims.

Again, Edgar also slept here. He had some problems with his leg. A pule muscle or similar. HE said that it took him more than an hour for the last km! This was the 7<sup>th</sup> day of hiking and I felt that I needed a day of rest which would follow in Hamar.

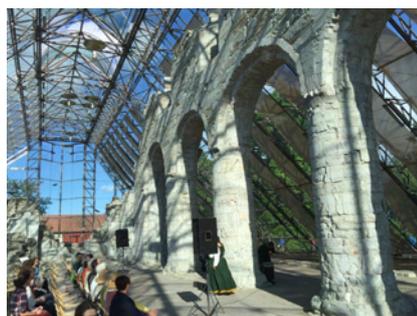
### 3.8 June 10: Hamar

Pilgrims Day	8
Start	Stange
End	Hamar
Km / Km Total	13/159
Ascent / Total	100/2200
Weather	Sunny
Hostel	Pilgrim Center Hamar
Dinner	Pizza

This was a short day, just 14 km to Hamar. Yet nice countryside along a Golf Course and a nice view across the river to the Vikingskipet Ice Skating Arena. The Pilgrim Center was at the far East end of the City, about 2km off the City Center. I arrived early, then thee was enough time to relax and do some shopping. For supper Nan ordered Pizza, we had a nice evening meal. We, that was Nan, Edgar, Ralph from Austria and me. Two pizzas for four persons...yes the pizzas were big!



Hamar Glass Dome



Hamar Glass Dome

The pilgrim center had a nice setup. Two bedrooms with 5 beds each, a niche kitchen and the big Central room. Dining hall, living room. They also had all the information about all the hostels between Hama and Lillehammer. There was a new Hostel, Ringli, which wasn't listed on any of the guides. It was a good guide for us pilgrims for the next four days. Again, Edgar also slept here. He went on the following day, he said his leg was much better!

### 3.9 June 11: Restday in Hamar

The Zero-Walking-Day was filled with sightseeing, shopping and relaxing. The pilgrim Center had two bicycles, so Nan and I went downtown. I bought some food and equipment:

- another Phone Card win 6GB data
- a Bag for the food which I could carry fastened to the top of my backpack.
- Some Turmat freeze-Dried meals.



Almost the standard Meal

When I packed my backpack I forgot to reserve some Space for the food. With the new bag, this problem was solved. It gave an extra 8 liters of volume!

For supper I ate the first of the freeze-dried meals (Turmat) I bought in Hamar. The taste good and it is a full meal.

We then all fixed the next few days for sleeping, thus the road to Lillehammer was all set up.

Next to the pilgrim center was the Glass Covered medieval Domkirken and also a medieval Festival, with a market, knight tournaments and other attractions.

### 3.10 June 12: Another far distant Church: Veldre Church

Pilgrims Day	9
Start	Hamar
End	Veldre Church
Km / Km Total	23/182
Ascent / Total	500/2700
Weather	Sunny
Hostel	Konfirmatsalen Hostel
Dinner	Turmat Beef and Rice

Nice countryside, not much asphalt. The Chest-Strap on my backpack broke again, after I could fix it in Risebru. There was only one solution the sew some straps together. Luckily I did pack thread and needle. The tourguide said that one can see Veldre Church from a far distance...yet Nan and me never spotted any Church tower. So we kept on walking and walking...mostly uphill. The we finally reached Veldre Church, yet could not find the hostel. After a call with the lady in charge we found it. We were standing just about 10 meters off the really big sign for the hostel.

It was Sunday and we were lucky to find a supermarket in Brumunddal which was open. I stacked up my food and went on towards the day's Goal: Veldre Church.

Once in there, the hostel turned out really nice. Big room with a few beds, nice kitchen with food to buy and nice showers. Later in the evening a norwegian couple joined us.

After 9 days the daily routines and the schedules were fixed:

- Getting up, Breakfast
- Walking 5 to 8 hours, including lunchbreak
- Arrival in the hostel, washing clothes
- Afternoon nap
- Supper
- Sleeping, → at 9 o'clock....Hikers midnight!

**3.11 June 13: Ringli: The nice Place.**

Pilgrims Day	10
Start	Veldre Church
End	Brummundal
Km / Km Total	20/202
Ascent / Total	200/2900
Weather	Sunny
Hostel	Ringli Hostel
Dinner	Turmat Beef and Potatoes

Nan and I started in the morning. There were two highlights for the. One was foreseeable and the other one not. The foreseeable highlight was Ringsaker Church with its altar form the early 16<sup>th</sup> century.

*Ringsaker church is quite unusually built. It is built like a miniature cathedral with a basilica and is transverse shaped. By mimicking the architecture of a cathedral, the church's status was set. In 1594 it was added a spire to the old roman tower. The current spire was built in 1694. In the choir stands the triptych, the church greatest treasure! It was the last catholic priest who also was a canon in the cathedral, Anstein Jonsson Schonch, who gave the triptych to the church, It is made in Antwerpen around the 1530s. It is considered a highlight among the artworks from the late middle ages which is preserved in our churches. The triptych was ordered before the reformation and because it was so valuable they kept, even though it is purely catholic*

There is also a nice, small Pilgrims hostel next to the church with four bunk beds and a little kitchen. So we walked on and started the ascent towards Ringli for me and towards Ringen Rehab Center for Nan where she stayed for the night after eating ice cream at a gas station. Unfortunately, Nan forgot her camera at the gas station so she had to walk back (5 to 6 km) to get it.

The second highlight of the day was the Ringli Hostel where I stayed that day. Nice building, Large Living Room and kitchen on the ground floor and two cozy bedrooms on the upper floor. The lady in charge also offered breakfast. Once more I have to mention how much confidence the hostelkeepers have in us pilgrims. I had a talk with the landlady in the evening after a norwegian couple asked if they could stay there, but not as pilgrims. She denied them to stay there because she said...oh ...with a car, they could carry out everything. But she trusted the pilgrims.



Ringsaker Church



Ringli Hostel

### 3.12 June 14: Johannesgarden: there are many Types of Pilgrims

Pilgrims Day	11
Start	Brummunddal
End	Johannesgarden
Km / Km Total	19/221
Ascent / Total	520/3420
Weather	Sunny, a few Clouds
Hostel	Johannesgarden Hostel
Dinner	Fried Eggs, Soup

The Walk to Johannesgarden was beautiful. Nice forests, pastures and scenic views over Mjøsa Lake. According to my Guide(Weyer) the Olavstrail is supposed to be full of fence-ladders. Yet up to the 11<sup>th</sup> day I did not encounter a single one! The I decides to send the tent home, as soon as will be in Lillehammer. The cabins and hostels along the way are nice and cheap and the availability of rooms was also no problem. Yet people told me that towards the End of July the pilgrim-Trail would be more crowded, since July 29 is St.Olavsdag and many Pilgrims want to reach Nidaros on this date. Thus, the decision to take tent along was based on wrong information. For the same reason, my sleepingbag in to warm, but I will be glad about it once I will use I in a tent.



On the way to Johannesgarden

Johannesgarden is a nice place. Many rooms, mostly single rooms, a few doubles and a kitchen with a stock of some food. They also have a little chapel there. I answered the question of a follow pilgrim if I would have been inside the chapel with "no, what should I do in there", which left a rather frustrated pilgrim.

In Johannesgarden and also in other Hostels I met different types of pilgrims:

- the longwalkers: Pilgrims that walk long distances (up to 45k a day) and then they complain about sore knees and other ailments
- A man who is in Norway for the first time and yet he is leading a pilgrim group from Hamar to Trondheim
- "Campers" with full gear and as a result with rather heavy (20kg and up) backpacks
- Naturelovers that complain about long stretches of asphalt (yet this is clearly stated in all guidebooks)
- Addicted long distance hikers that do a long walk every year.
- Karen who is doing the pilgrimage with her horse
- Pilgrims that walk the trail on weekends and start where they stopped the week before.
- And of course: many people that have walked the camino in Spain.
- A Dutch group of retirees, walking without luggage. A small bus transported their luggage. In this way they could sleep at other places than the hostels near the trail.
- Parttime walkers that start in Hamar or even as close to Trondheim as Oppdahl, Oppdahl because one needs at least 100km to get the pilgrims letter

**3.13 June 16: Lillehammer: The first real rain**

Pilgrims Day	12
Start	Joahnesgarden
End	Lillehammer
Km / Km Total	15/236
Ascent / Total	320/3740
Weather	Rainy
Hostel	Scandic Victoria Hotel
Dinner	Fish soup



Karen on her Horse

This day was another short walk. It was short and flat, I walked together with Nan and Oskar from Germany, who went home after reaching Lillehammer. He had knee-problems, and even the short hike to Lillehammer made his knees hurt. Soon after the start, it started raining, the first rainy day! Not long after the start we all crossed the first fence-ladder! At last. At Lillehammer church we all got stamp for our pilgrims pass and there we met Karen who is doing the pilgrims way on her horse. We met her a few times afterwards and we spotted the trail of her horse on many occasions.

As decided the day before I mailed my tent home, yet kept the mattress and the footprint for the tent. The postage was astonishingly low, due to the fact that it was less than 2 kilos. So this mailing relieved me of 1.2 kilos. The Second mailing I did latter relieved me another 2.7 kilos, so in total, my backpack was lightened by almost 4 kilos

Another important activity was buying food, especially Turmat dried menus. I bought a dozen, expensive, yet tasty and nutritious.



Milestone at Lillehammer Church

For the night I stayed at the Scandic Victoria Hotel. By sheer coincidence, Nan had a room in the same hotel. Maybe Lillehammer is still kind of profiting from 1994 Olympics, yet this hotel could not live up to its reputation. It was ok but not more!

I wanted to see Edgar at the Vandrerhjem, yet it rained so hard I did not go to see him.

**3.14 June 17: Skaden Gard: up and down**

Pilgrims Day	13
Start	Lillehammer
End	Oyer
Km / Km Total	24/260
Ascent / Total	730/4470
Weather	Partly cloudy
Hostel	Skaden Gard
Dinner	Turmat beef



Skaden Gard Hostel

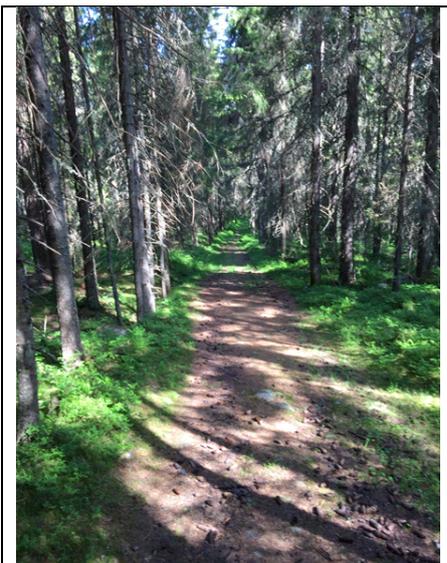
Nan and I left Lillehammer after a rich breakfast in the Hotel. After about 10 Minutes I realized that I forgot my Kindle-Ebook-Reader in the hotel...so turn around get it and walk on.

On the way we passed Hunderfossen, where amongst other attractions one can find the Bobsled run from the 1994 Olympics.

The trail led us thru wonderful forests and pastures. Edgar was ahead of us, he was to stay in the Neramo hotel about 2/3 of the way to Skaden Gard. The walk was ok wouldn't it have been for the last 5 to 6 km. Constantly up and down and we both were really glad when we saw the sign "Sadden Gard 600m".

Nan got a little cabin of her own, while I slept on the second floor of the main building. A little confusion

aroused when we got there. The lady thought I would come a day earlier. When I talked to her two days before I had the feeling that she did not quite understand me when I would stay there. But it turned out to be ok and I got my bed for the night. In Skaden Gard we met a few other Pilgrims. One from Austria who had just walked any existing Pilgrim trail. Then a German guy came along. His goal was to walk 30km every day, pitch up the tent and walk on the next morning



Forest near Lillehammer



Birdhouse in Skaden Gard

**3.15 June 18: Magali Camping: the first Campground**

Pilgrims Day	14
Start	Oyer
End	Magali
Km / Km Total	18/278
Ascent / Total	430/4900
Weather	Partly cloudy
Hostel	Magali Camping
Dinner	Bacon and Eggs

The Walk to Magali was not very long yet there were a few short but steep hills. But after walking for close to two weeks, hills and steep parts did not impress us any more, again Nan and I shared our most important motto:

Don't think, walk

There is no use in bragging about hills, they won't vanish and the goal is not the next mountain, the goal is Nidaros Dome in Trondheim.



Fence Ladder



Cabin at Magali Camping

On a few occasions we really had to look for the trail markers, but we made it. There were many fence ladders we had to cross. The funniest one was the last one. Edgar mounted it, it was quite high whilst Nan and I walked 10 meters and went around the fence!

We met Edgar on the way, he stayed in a Hostel somewhat up on the hill. We continued down a steep descent to the river where we slept at Magali Camping. Nan and I shared a cabin. We could buy groceries at the store on the campground and thus we shared bacon and eggs! It was a well equipped campground. Nice showers, two fully loaded kitchens and a spacious cabin.

**3.16 June 18: Ringebu: The Stave Church**

Pilgrims Day	15
Start	Magali
End	Ringebu Church
Km / Km Total	20/298
Ascent / Total	450/5350
Weather	Sunny, few clouds
Hostel	Gildesvollen
Dinner	Fishsoup

## Pilgrimsleden 2016 – The Gudbrandsdalen Path

Again, a hilly walk yet not really strenuous. We met Edgar again and together we walked towards Ringebu church, on of the largest and oldest stave Churches in Norway. As in other places, as a pilgrim we got free entry to the church while “normal” tourists had to pay an entry fee!

*The church is first mentioned in 1270, although it could be older.*

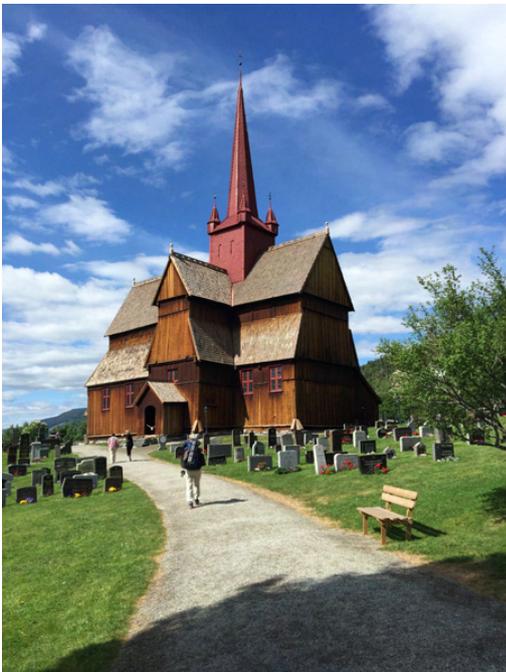
*It was rebuilt into a [cruciform church](#) around 1630 by master-builder Werner Olsen and in 1631 received its characteristic red tower. Of the original church only the nave remains, with free-standing posts in the inner area.*

*Later restoration brought it back a bit closer to its original shape in 1921.*

*The church was painted in 1717, but only the lower half of the walls were done, since the ceiling at that time was lower. At one point the church was painted white within, but during the restoration work in 1921 the church interior was restored to its original colouring.*

*There have been some archaeological surveys of the ground under the church. The last one took place in 1980 - 1981. These surveys have resulted in the finding of about 900 old coins, mostly from the [medieval times](#), especially from the period 1217 - 1263.*

*Post holes from an older church has also been found. The [post church](#) is assumed to be a forerunner of the stave church. The earth-bound posts of these churches were planted directly into the ground, and therefore they were exposed to humidity which caused them to rot over the years.*



Ringebu Stave Church

In Ringebu I met Nicole and Danny, the two Swiss girls who started their hike in Basel in February. I knew Nicole from a speech about the camino in Spain. The two were “announced” a few times before and finally we met. In some of the hostels people told us about the two swiss ladies who were supposed to come a day after me.

Nicole assisted me with the download of the GPS-Tracks from the Outdoor-Guide. So from then on I had GPS-Tracks on Offline-maps, which were a great help for the rest of the walking till Trondheim. Nan found out and reminded me, that contrary to the Weyer guidebook, Ringebu downtown was far away for the church we went shopping in Favang where we found a bakery with really delicious pastry!

The pilgrims hostel in Ringebu belongs to a Dutch wood sculptor. Nice house, kitchen with some supplies, washing machine and nice rooms!

While waiting for her, we met an American group of wood sculptors. That day I wore my pioneer feed hat and one of the Americans (a farmer from Nebraska) was quite surprised to see such a hat in Norway and he was a little confused.

The Weyer Guide which I bought in 2014 was not a wise choice. It is a mixture between a tour guide and a more spiritual pilgrim’s guide. Some of the main mistakes include

- The guide tells the reader it be the ideal tool for planning the pilgrimage. Not quite! No suggestions for daily hikes. The guide is describing stretches between 60 and 100 km, yet for some of the chapters there’s no hostel neither at the start nor at the endpoint.
- Most fatal mistake: Distance between Ringebu Church and Ringebu downtown is supposed to be less than 600 meters, but it is 3.6km which would make it impossible to do some shopping on that day.



- Some pilgrims told me, that they got lost a few time on the westway to Lillehammer. I agree, for some parts the description of the path is rather complicated or just false.
- The guide is complaining about bad or missing markers.  
But no hint or mention that he told about to the pilgrim centers. Me and Nicole
- Markers which are grown over by some shrubs or bushes: Instead of complaining...tear down the green stuff

### 3.17 June 19: Hundorp: The Folkehøgskole

Pilgrims Day	16
Start	Ringebu Church
End	Hundorp
Km / Km Total	16/314
Ascent / Total	600/5950
Weather	sunny
Hostel	Hundorp Pilgrim Center
Dinner	Fish in Restaurant

The walk to Hundorp was easy. In Hundorp I had a zero or near zero walking day. In Hundorp Nan and I met the owner of the hotel and he showed us the Folkehøgskole and explained us some other stories about Hundorp. Mainly the fact that Hundorp was the center of the early Christianization of Norway and the Gundbrandsdal got its name from a medieval farmer in that area.

#### **Folk high schools in brief**

*Folk high schools are one-year boarding schools offering a variety of exciting non-traditional and non-academic subjects, as well as academic subjects. The idea of folk high schools is learning for life, an opportunity to grow both individually, socially, and academically in small learning communities. All students live on campus in close contact with staff and their fellow students. One important part of the folk high school experience is to form a community, in and out of class.*

#### **The whole person**

*The folk high schools do not grant degrees or conduct exams. They are a supplement to the regular education system, with the aim of nurturing "the whole person". You develop knowledge in a subject you will make use of every day for the rest of your life: yourself. By taking away the pressure of grades and exams, you learn to motivate yourself. You choose the topics that interest you, for instance outdoor life activities, theatre, sports, music, creative arts, media and communications, just to mention a few.*

#### **Schools for all people**

*The term "folk high school" is a literal translation of the Norwegian word folkehøgskole. However, this translation may give you the wrong idea. Folk high schools are not "high schools" in the sense of upper secondary school institutions designed to prepare students for college or work through exams. Folk high schools are separate from the rest of Norway's educational system. Students can be any age and can have any level of educational experience. Indeed, these are schools for all people, all "folk". However, almost all students who attend folk high schools are young adults between the ages of 18 and 25. And in most of the schools, you have to be 18 years old before you start.*

#### **77 schools and many courses**

*You will have many choices about where to study; there are 77 folk high schools spread throughout Norway. Each school offers a unique curriculum, a program of subjects in keeping with the profile of the school and the qualifications of the staff. Students come from all parts of Norway as well. Diversity in the student body is highly valued. To find a list of all Norwegian folk high schools choose "velg skole" in the left column at this page.*

At the hostel I met Danny and Nicole again. It was the last meeting on the Olavstrail. We watched the football game together and went to bed early

**3.18 June 20: Sygard Grytting: Sleeping where the King slept.**

Pilgrims Day	17
Start	Hundorp
End	Harpefoss
Km / Km Total	6/320
Ascent / Total	200/5150
Weather	Cloudy, rain in the afternoon
Hostel	Sygard Grytting
Dinner	Turmat



Sygard Grytting: Main Building

The walk to Sygard Grytting was short and I arrived there well before noon. Thus I had enough time to relax. In the early afternoon it got colder and started to rain, since I was in a non-heated barn, I was glad to have the warm sleeping bag. In the afternoon I walked back to a gas station to get some groceries and when I was back in Sygard Grytting I met Wendy and Kathrin from Germany. Kathrin found out that a few years ago the King of Norway stayed for three days in Sygard Grytting. Sygard Grytting is one of the most renowned wooden Hotels of Norway.

**Sygard Grytting**

*- one of Norway's oldest wooden hotels - owned by the same family during the past 700 years.*

*Around 1300 AD - more than three hundred years before the Pilgrim Fathers left Plymouth in southern England to establish the first European settlement in the "New World" - Sygard Grytting provided lodgings for medieval pilgrims on their way to the St Olaf Cathedral in Trondheim.*

*During the summer season 1 July - 15 August you may spend the night in the "langloft" - a 700 year old building (the only medieval hostel preserved and still in use in this country) - or you may get a more comfortable room (with private bathroom) in one of the log buildings built between 1650 and 1860.*

**3.19 June 21: Kvam: Long walk, but worth it**

Pilgrims Day	18
Start	Harpefoss
End	Kvam
Km / Km Total	23/343
Ascent / Total	900/7050
Weather	sunny
Hostel	Kirketeigen camping
Dinner	Steak, French fries

I started the hike early and after a short while I met Kathrin. We got lost a few times and some locals showed us back to the right track. The newly acquired GPS-Tracks were a big help. Shortly after we were back on track we parted and walked on our own for the rest of the day. We met again on the Kirketeigen campground in Kvam. The walk included two big hills each leading up to around 700 meters and was one of the hardest days of the whole trip. In the outdoor-guide they tell you, that once you mastered this day one has nothing to fear for the rest of the trail till Trondheim. Nice walk around rocky Cliffs with spectacular views of the Gudbrandsdal!



DNT Cabin above Sygard Grytting

After the first hill came Vinstra, home of the Peer Gynt museum!

Then the second hill, steeper than the first one and no rocks or benches to sit down for lunch. Halfway down the second hill came a Giraffe sculpture where I sat down to eat lunch, as did Kathrin some time later. The decent went on and led to a asphalt road and one could see the village of Kwam...in far distance...it turned out to be more than one hour of walking and again no place to rest. So I got to Kwam an found the campground...really nice and cheap. They charges pilgrim NOK 200, a bargain, compared to the normal rate for a rent which was NOK 170. Did some shopping and ate a steak at the local restaurant.

### 3.20 June 22: Varphaugen: Tough and Dangerous

Pilgrims Day	19
Start	Kwam
End	Sjoa
Km / Km Total	13/356
Ascent / Total	900/7950
Weather	Partly cloudy
Hostel	Varphaugen Rafting Center
Dinner	Turmat



Forest above Kwam

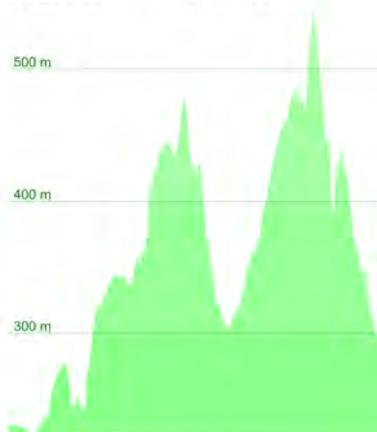


Descent towards Sjoa

This was the toughest day so far. Kathrin and I walked a mere 13km and it took us close to 6 hours. Right outside Kwan we encountered nettles on the trail. No use walking there in shorts, so we change to a construction truck along the newly built E6 and went back to the trail shortly thereafter, yet we could have stayed on the track much longer which would have saved us more than half an hour of time. Then the first hill came. Steep! The track was well marked, yet it was narrow and the descent from the first hill was wet and slippery. We both decided to stay within calling distance, so in case of an accident we would have not been far apart from each other. The trail was in such a shape that when one falls down one could brake just any bone. After having lunch near the top of the second hill wen went down towards Varphaugen to discover that there was a last little hill with a short distance to go. The track profile will give you an idea of the day's walk.

## Pilgrimsleden 2016 – The Gudbrandsdalen Path

13.1 km  
 553 m      ↑ 553 m  
 223 m      ↓ 481 m



Profile of the Day

This walk is marked as dangerous in the most guides. It was ok for us, since it was dry. Yet with rain an even more slippery rocks some pilgrims may be well advised to take a bus instead!

The campground at sjoa rafting center – although praised in the tour guides was not as expected. No water heater in the cabins, a poorly equipped kitchen and no WIFI in the cabins only close to the main building.

### 3.21 June 23: Otta: almost a rest day

Pilgrims Day	20
Start	Sjoa
End	Otta
Km / Km Total	13/369
Ascent / Total	300/8250
Weather	sunny
Hostel	Kili pensionat
Dinner	Pizza

The walk from Varphaugen to Otta was short and included a little hill. Although the walk was short, I felt really tired once I got to Otta. So it was a good decision only to go to Otta instead of Jörundgard, as I once planned. I felt tired and a little rest would be good, because the following days includes the Dovrefjell. We had a nice pension on the outskirts of Otta. Me and Kathrin plus a Swiss who joined us. We did some shopping and had pizza in a local restaurant.

On the way I discovered some Norwegian features:

- In Otta and also in Oslo a discovered a norwegian peculiarity: When one pays in a supermarket, the change is not counted by the cashier but given automatically by a “change-dispenser”. Manual work is minimized.
- Norwegian windows generally open to the outside.
- Known from former travels to Norway: Hotdogs are sold at every gas-station
- Post-offices are mostly shop in shops in supermarkets or gas-stations
- Roads are salted in Summer to avoid dust. In this way, the roads are less dusty.

### 3.22 June 24: Vollheim: Crossing the Railway

Pilgrims Day	21
Start	Otta
End	Haugen
Km / Km Total	27/396
Ascent / Total	600/8830
Weather	Cloudy
Hostel	Vollheim Camping
Dinner	Fishsoup

## Pilegrimsleden 2016 – The Gudbrandsdalen Path

The hike to Vollheim was to be around 27km. I knew this from the start, yet I did not expect it to be so difficult. The first part till Jörundgard was ok. My original plans include a night in Jörundgard, but after passing the site, I thought it to be a wise choice to change my plans. The part till Jörundgard/Sel Commune led along the river Lagen. Nice walking. The river with almost no current, quite different from the rapids around Sjoa.

What is Jörundgard:

*In 1991, a project group was organised to work on preparing offers in Nord-Sel in association with Kristin Lavransdatter and Sigrid Undset.*

*At the same time, work was begun to make a film of the novel "The Bridal Wreath". The film crew was looking for a suitable place for the outdoor scenes and they wanted to build a real farm, not just a prop farm that would be torn down after the last scene was shot. Jørundgard stood almost where the old Jørundstad had been.*

**Five houses** were built with help from the employment office in Sel, which held a special labour market course in log notching techniques.

*There were 15 participants in the course, and together they built the forge, barn, long loft, stable and cookhouse. In addition, Norsk Film contributed by building the "årestue" (log house with an open hearth in the centre and a smoke vent in the roof), cowshed, weaving house, storehouse and a stave church, as well as erecting fences around the entire farm. Also, the "årestue" that was used during the indoor filming in the studio on Jar was notched together on the farm in the summer 1996. Moreover, three trailer loads of props and interiors used in the film were driven up and placed in the houses around the farm, and the outer courtyard was enlarged in 1996-1997 with a pigsty, sheepcote and a house for exhibiting church accessories. The barn was moved from the inner courtyard to the outer courtyard so that it was correctly placed in relation to medieval customs. A new long loft was erected where the barn once stood.*



Crossing the Railroad

The second part of the hike started easy and became difficult very quickly. One had to know that the trail crossed the railway line. Yet there was no tunnel underneath nor an overpass- The trail led along the track with two warnings not to follow the track. The trail went along the river instead. Constantly up and down. Steep. Ladders in some places. And suddenly the railroad crossing was visible. The trail crossed the railway line above a tunnel. But even there, I had to walk up quite a way, going down on the distant side. Going down on ladders and stair-

ways. Yet the ordeal was not over yet- From the railway line, the trail went uphill up to 650m. Near the top I sat down for lunch. I knew there was quite a distance to cover till Vollheim camping but I made it. It was one of the longest days. 27.5km and I felt quite good after the 7 hours of walking!

**3.23 June 25: Budsjord: The fjell is coming near**

Pilgrims Day	22
Start	Haugen
End	Dovre
Km / Km Total	16/412
Ascent / Total	400/9250
Weather	Sunny, some clouds
Hostel	Budsjord
Dinner	Fishsoup

The days walk was rather short. After walking in wet grass some days before, which ended in totally wet boots . yet dry feet, I decided to stay on the highway till Dovre, not taking the marked trail thru meadows and forest. Once in Dover I started looking for the supermarket, which I supposed in the center of town so I walked there instead of just walking strait ahead. So I walked about 40 Minutes too much, no big problem it was an easy day. This was the last chance to get some food till Oppdahl – except for Sandwiches in hostels and hotels. Thus I bought quite a bit und my backpack got really heavy. After eating lunch – yogurt and bananas I started the walk uphill till Budsjord, a really nice old farm/hotel with some stabburs for pilgrims.

On that night there was a concert in Budsjord. Classical baroque instrument. Two excellent musicians. Great performance! And because there was concert we pilgrims (me and Sonja from Belgium) did not get the usual soup for supper but an excellent norwegian meat buffet for the same price. Excellent food and nice company.

**3.24 June 26: Furuhaugli: Dovrefjell at its best**

Pilgrims Day	23
Start	Haugen
End	Dovrefjell
Km / Km Total	22/434
Ascent / Total	900/10150
Weather	Rainy
Hostel	Furuhaugli Camping
Dinner	Turmat

This was the day of the ascent to the Dovrefjell. Sonja and I walked more or less together. Each of us walking alone, yet staying an yelling distance. She was to stay at Fokstugu and I went on to Furuhaugli camping. Sonja did not call ahead for the stay in Furuhaugli since she thought that there were not many pilgrims, which was true, but there were other guests in Fokstugu and she was lucky to get a bed because the day before and the day after it was booked out. I always called in advance – at least two days – so I had a more or less guaranteed bed! The ascent was steep and tough and we were glad once we made it. The weather was perfect for the seep part. Cloudy skies and not too warm. Once on top we fought our way till Fokstugu crossing snow-fields, creeks, marshy parts and rocky trails. I ate lunch in Fokstugu then went on to Furuhaugli. Just bout 8km, yet narrow and rocky trails which slows one down abut I made it in time to the Campground



on the Dovrefell

just before it started to rain. Around 7 p.m the rain was really hard. So that was another lucky day with the rain coming after the walking.

This was the first (and to be the only) day, where both of us had to fight the mosquitos, not that bad, but before applying some spray, it was bothersome on the arms, the neck and around the eyes.

Furuhaugli was ok, WIFI nice showers and a restaurant where I ate good waffles and icecream. Edgar stayed in Hagesetter – a cabin between Furuhaugli and Hjerkinn (my next stay) - and was not satisfied at all. Expensive, small room, had to pay extra for wife, so another good choice not to stay there.

### 3.25 June 27: Hjerkinn: Dovrefjell again

Pilgrims Day	24
Start	Dovrefjell
End	Hjerkinn
Km / Km Total	17/451
Ascent / Total	300/10450
Weather	Rainy
Hostel	Hjerkinn Fjellstue
Dinner	Buffet at the hotel

A rather short walk led me to the Hjerkinn Fjellstue Hotel where I was to stay for two nights. The weather was ok...windy and a few raindrops. And again: the real rain came around 7 p.m...another lucky day. This was the real Dovrefjell hike. Beautiful landscape. Lichen all over, dragonflies and a nice lake where I sat for a long break. Looking back or forward one could see amazing colors from all the lichen and bushes.

Hilly trail and it was amazing to see the difference between the trail on 1250m and 1100m. Higher up rocky trails, 150m down nice path and also marshy sections which were partly covered with wooden boards.

I could see the hotel from far away. It is a rather expensive hotel, but they have a cabin with 5 beds for pilgrims. I had supper in the restaurant together with Karen who was riding her horse to Trondheim. In the past days as on the following till Trondheim one could always see the tracks from her horse.

During the day I was not quite sure if I really needed a day of rest, but when I walked up to the E6 from Hotel which was moderately uphill and about 2km I felt my tired legs!

### 3.26 June 28: Rest day in Hjerkinn

In the morning I walked up to the E6 and beyond for a lookout for Snohetta mountain, one of the highest peaks in Norway. Nan who was ahead of me, took a buss to a cabin near Snohetta and was to walk to Kongsvold from there. She would stay a day ahead of me till three days before Trondheim. Up near the Train station I managed to do another Geocache after having done one in Hundorp.

I had enough time for planning. I decided where I would stay the following days, booked a flight home, booked a trainticket to Oslo from Trondheim...that because I would stay another three days in Oslo to go and see the Fram and Konitiki Museum. Also booked Hotels in Oslo and Trondheim, thus I was all set for the rest of the hike. For all cases I planned an extra day in Trondheim if I was to slow in the last 10 days.

At supper I met Terje from Norway. We were to hike the last 10 days together, not hiking, as we walked alone, but we stayed at the same hostels all the way till Trondheim. So another good Friend was met, after Edgar and Nan now Terje.



Dovre fjell



Dovre fjell



Dovre fjell



Fokstugu Hostel, highest Farm in Norway

### 3.27 June 29: Gourmet Meal in Kongsvold

Pilgrims Day	25
Start	Hjerkinn
End	Kongsvold
Km / Km Total	14/465
Ascent / Total	400/10850
Weather	Cloudy
Hostel	Kongsvold Hotel
Dinner	Fishsoup



Kongsvold Fiellstue

Onwards from Hjerkin to Kongsvold. Another day going uphill. The trail led straight up the mountain and after reaching the crest...there was another one and another on, but finally I made it. On the way I met an Italian couple camping on the top of the hill. They told that it was quite cold at night. No wonder, being 1200m up in the mountains and one may compare 1200m in Norway with 2000m in the alps-The rest of the walk was easy and I spotted the Kongsvold hotel early. The hotel is a rather luxurious place, having cheap bed for pilgrims as in Hjerkin Fjellstue. I ate supper with Terje, a fancy 3-course meal, one would have never expected in a remote place like this.

### 3.28 June 30: Ryphusan: Windy and Cold

Pilgrims Day	26
Start	Kongsvold
End	Ryphusan
Km / Km Total	21/486
Ascent / Total	800/11650
Weather	Rainy
Hostel	Ryphusan Cabin
Dinner	Turmat and Fishsoup

The hike to Ryphusan was one of the toughest according to the Guidebooks. In addition there is only one Cabin between Kongsvold and Oppdahl.

There was the big discussion among us pilgrim weather to the marked trail or the E6 till the junction up to the mountains. We, the group that stayed in Kongsvold all took the E6. Nan who was a day earlier took the trail and she told us later that it was a really tough walk. It must have taken her at least double the time, compared to walking on the E6.

The days walk was 23km. It was the first day where I misjudged my walking time badly. I planned on walking close to 7 hours considering the steep ascents, yet I was in Ryphusan after 5 ½ hours! There are 3 hills, beginning with the steepest – Värstigen then two moderate hills. It was rainy and windy. I had to wear the raincoat for the whole day for the first time. After reaching the second hill it started raining. It also got very windy, so I had to wear a fleece under the raincoat also a first on the trail. The wind was so strong there was no chance to sit down and have lunch. I just made a short break behind a big boulder. So Terje and I picked the worst day for the fiercest part of the trail. On this this day we passed the highest point :1350m.

Terje was waling ahead of me, most the time I could see him, thus I knew where the trail was leading thru.

Because of the windy weather and the short breaks I reached Ryphusan Cabin around 3 p.m. Where I found Terje in his sleeping on a bed because it was cold and he could not manage to turn on the heater. Sonja and Thomas – another norwegian, walking the trail with his dog – were in the cabin before and preferred to walk on towards Oppdahl. Terje also decided to walk on. I stayed there, because I had the walk to Ryphusan an my mind 24 km...and not close to 40 till the next campground. Later on I managed to turn on the heater and soon after it was nice and warm in the cabin. Ryphusan cabin is stocked with some food, so we had enough to eat. There are about 12 beds...really nice!

Once the cabin was warm, an American joined me and later on two Norwegians. At the time of their arrival rain was just pouring down and the three were soaked thru.



My two best friends



Milestone on the Dovrefjell



Ryphusan Cabin



Väsertigen

### 3.29 July 1: Oppdahl: unknown Ski-resort and shopping

Pilgrims Day	27
Start	Ryphusan
End	Oppdahl
Km / Km Total	27/513
Ascent / Total	130/11780
Weather	Rainy
Hostel	Verke Hytteun
Dinner	Pizza

Because it was another long walk I started early. It was cold in the morning but got warmer during the day.

I managed the long walk patty easily. It felt like 15km walking on the first day....after close to 30 days of walking one gets used to!

Soon after Ryphusan I decided to take a shortcut – there was even a trailmarker, I walked along the river and after about 15 to 20 minutes I had to stop because I could not continue...it was too dangerous for me. So what was there to do, because I did not want to go back....searching for spot to cross and I found one.

Lucky guy. I later found out that Terje and the two swiss girls also took this shortcut. Terje must have crossed the river on the same spot as I did. The girls wrote in their blog, that they took off the boots and crossed the river in their clogs! On the way down to the valley I crossed beautiful pastures, rivers and forest



to

cabin just after Ryphusan



Pilgrims Chapel near Oppdahl



Pilgrims Chapel near Oppdahl

On the way I passed a chapel, which was built entirely by volunteers for the pilgrims on the way to Trondheim. Beautiful building. They say that their altar is the window with a stunning view across the valley.

Shortly thereafter I passed the campground where Terje, Sonja and Thomas stayed for the night. The trail led thru pastures onward to Oppdahl. Could see Oppdahl church from a far distance...I decided to take a shortcut and walked directly into Oppdahl. On the way I hit my shinbone....the bone kept hurting for a few days....no serious injury!

In Oppdahl I had another parcel of equipment to send home. 2.5kg less in my Backpack. Bought some sandals, threw away the old jogging shoes, ate pizza, did all the laundry and enjoyed the nice cabin I had for the night.

**3.30 July 2: Haverstolen: the long Gravel Road**

Pilgrims Day	28
Start	Oppdahl
End	Berkak
Km / Km Total	23/536
Ascent / Total	300/12080
Weather	Sunny
Hostel	Haverstolen Hostel
Dinner	Turmat

I started around 9 a.m and soon after I met Terje who at first did not find the trail and thus walked some detours. We decided to walk on our own yet to have the lunchbreak together. He was to stay at the same hostel I did.

Oppdahl is quite a big ski resort and thus having many Cabin complexes.



The trail was nearly 100% on a gravel road and led us past many of the mentioned cabin complexes. I was not in really good shape. About halfway there was a big wagon with a sofa in it. There I took a little nap and afterwards I felt much better. I read in the guestbook that Nicole and Danny had a short stay there too.

The Haverstolen hostel was first class. Nice rooms, washing machine, food supplies and nice view.



Haverstolen Hostel



Forest flowers



on the way to Haverstolen

### 3.31 July 3: Meslo Gard: the final Hill as a Test

Pilgrims Day	29
Start	Berkak
End	Rennebu
Km / Km Total	18/554
Ascent / Total	300/12380
Weather	Rainy
Hostel	Meslo Gard
Dinner	Turmat



the shortcut: an old river bed

Today a rather short walk to Meslo Gard hostel, which is rated as one of the best on the whole tour. Just too bad that on this day the owner was not there. Yet nice house, Beds with Blankets, no sleeping bag needed and a nice Kitchen. The waling was easy..in the beginning..then with about an hour to go one had the choice to follow the river or follow the original trail up to a hill. And what a hill. Steep and almost never ending. The views were beautiful yet the price one paid for them was lots of sweat. In the beginning I probably would not have walked up that easily, my physical fitness had improved over the weeks Just before there was a shortcut, following an old riverbed...nice gain in time...but slippery

While talking with the owner's sister she told me that Magne Myrmo the last cross country world champion on wooden skis was born and raised just across the river from Meslo Gard. The fact about the wooden skis is supposedly known by everybody in Norway.

### 3.32 July 4: Segard Hoel and its amazing farmer

Pilgrims Day	30
Start	Rennebu
End	Meldal
Km / Km Total	23/577
Ascent / Total	320/3740
Weather	Sunny
Hostel	Segard Hoel
Dinner	Sodd and Pizza



Bridge near Rennebu

We left rather late, because we wanted to do some shopping in Rennebu and the supermarket would only open at nine. Yet Terje and me cheated a little bit, instead of going up on a hill we followed the river till Rennebu. Rennebu has one of only 5 Y-shaped churches in Norway. Unfortunately it was not open.

We walked on. On the way I missed an intersection. Terje was a little bit ahead of me. When I got onto the original trail again he just came around the corner and we walked the rest till our hostel Segard Hoel together.

Again a really nice Hostel with full facilities. Nice rooms, blankets, washing machine and the supper was included in the price. We had sodd, a traditional norwegian meal

*Sodd is a traditional Norwegian soup-like meal with mutton, meatballs, potatoes and carrots. The difference from regular soup is that all the meat and vegetables in Sodd are boiled separately.*

*“Sodd” means to seethe and is traditional food from the Trøndelag area in Central Norway. The dish is often served in weddings, confirmation ceremonies or during the Norwegian National Day together with thin flat bread (Flatbrød).*

*Genuine Sodd from Trøndelag consists of meatballs and dices made of mutton and beef, and broth. The meatballs are made with cornflour, whole milk, heavy cream, ginger and nutmeg. It is important to ensure that the Sodd is not boiling, but holds high temperature.*

*Sodd was first described in the Saga of Haakon the Good dating back to the 1200s. In the 1800s, it was usually made with horse meat.*

*It is common to serve ginger ale, lager, home brewed or alcohol-free beer with Sodd.*



The owner, a farmer told us, that he and his wife were always eating supper with the pilgrims, in this manner he said he would hear new ideas and thoughts from people around the world. He was about 55 and he gave the farm to his son a few years ago. He told us, that his son needs a future, he could always find something to make a living. What a generous man!

**3.33 July 5: Gumdalen the Stabbur with Luxury**

Pilgrims Day	31
Start	Meldal
End	Svorkmo
Km / Km Total	26/605
Ascent / Total	300/12880
Weather	Rainy, then sunny
Hostel	Gumdalen Hostel
Dinner	Fishsoup with crabsticks

The day started with rain and ended with quite sunny whether. In between 28km of walking. Up and down, thru forest, along highways. After about 2 hours of walking I met Nan. She has been always a day ahead, but she put in a few shorter days. But we walked separately, non together as before on the way Lillehammer.



Just after Lokken the trail led thru forest again, up and down and on the way another milestone. After this day only two days would remain on the way to Trondheim and it felt good to have walked more than 500km without big difficulties, no injuries and no accidents. As for me the other pilgrim always wondered why I did not have any blisters on my feet. I don't know. Never had big problems with my feet when walking. Astonishing for most people, because my hiking boots were new and this is according to the most hikers not a good idea....but so what ....it worked out. The hostel of the day, a renovated stabbur I shared with two norwegian ladies was really nice. It even included a dishwasher and an ensuite bathroom.

**3.34 July 6: Skaun an the sleeping churchgoers**

Pilgrims Day	32
Start	Svorkmo
End	Skaun
Km / Km Total	20/625
Ascent / Total	400/12380
Weather	Partly Cloudy
Hostel	Skaun Menigetshus
Dinner	Turmat

The day to Skaun proved to one of the most beautiful but also most difficult ones. Nice forests and marshes with cotton-grass. Many of the marshy parts were covered with wooden boards, others were not. It took some time to learn where to walk in the marsh, soft surface. The visible track was not always the best way to walk, sometimes just next to it was much better. But the marshes were long and the boots got wet ...on the outside!, I never had any wet feet on the whole hike. It is amazing: I bought the boots some time before going to Norway and afterwards I found out that wit two other types my Lowa boots were among the best hiking boots in their class.

The hostel had a new feature. For the first time there was a supermarket right next to it. Better late than never, but with only two days to go, shopping for groceries was not that important any more.



Skaun Church



The guide in Skaun Church

After the reformation all pictures and statues were removed from the Norwegian churches, hence also in Skaun. The word was to be meant paramount to all other things. Formerly the services were held in Latin – a language the normal people did not understand, so they looked at the pictures and paintings. With the paintings removed, people were supposed to listen the sermon. Yet, quite a few people fell asleep in the pews and the sexton punched the sleeping men and woman with a nail mounted on a long stick. Some other peculiarities of the church were: It was built around 1160, yet did not have a roof for the first 100 Years. The Church is 34 meters tall and was last mounted in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. There's a stairway inside and for the last 10 meters there are metal steps on the outside. Nowadays they would probably take a helicopter if there were any problems with the steeple top



Pilgrims Toilet in the forest



Cotton Grass

**3.35 July 7: Skaden Gard: Rowing**

Pilgrims Day	33
Start	Svorkmo
End	Sundet Gard
Km / Km Total	18/643
Ascent / Total	400/13680
Weather	Sunny
Hostel	Sundet Gard
Dinner	Sodd

The second last day of hiking was on the schedule. Not very far, not demanding. Just an easy walk. But in the first few days he hills an this day probably would have been a problem. The day also market the fact that we were on sea level again.

The hostel was special insofar, that the hostelkeeper got us pilgrims with a rowboat from across the river. While waiting I put down my backpack not considering the rising tide. Once I got my pack to put it into the boat, the bottom was fully soaked. Luckily the sleeping bag pack was pretty watertight. The rest of the clots were wet with salt water. But Il could wash everything in the washing machine at the hostel.



one of the big trailmarkers



me in a marshy part



Boat Service

**3.36 July 8: Nidaros: The final Steps**

Pilgrims Day	34
Start	Sundet Gard
End	Trondheim
Km / Km Total	21/664
Ascent / Total	520/14200
Weather	Sunny
Hostel	Gildevangen hotel
Dinner	Chicken Nuggets



The last day came and it was about an average day. Some hills, some forest, some pastures going uphill, going downhill.

When I got to the Nidaros Dome Edgar from Belgium was there to greet me. We then went to the pilgrim Center to get our pilgrims letter and the final stamps in our pilgrims pass.

And suddenly it felt strange. No more walking tomorrow. The group of us, NA, Edgar, Terje, Sonja and Thomas would part we probably will never meet again. There were good friendships, we all had a common goal: To reach Nidaros dome!

## 4 Conclusions/Lessons Learnt

### 4.1 The Hike: Summary

Date	Hike Day	Days Endpoint	Km	Total	Ascent	Total
June 3	1	Hellerud Bus Stop	17	17	300	300
June 4	2	Arteid Vestre	17	34	310	610
June 5	3	Risebru	32	66	390	1000
June 6	4	Eidsvoll Gamle Prestegard	15	81	100	1100
June 7	5	Finnsbraten	19	100	400	1500
June 8	6	Hestnes Gard	19	119	300	1800
June 9	7	Hekestra Gard	27	146	300	2100
June 10	8	Pilgrim Center Hamar	13	159	100	2200
June 11		Zero Walking day	0	159	0	2200
June 12	9	Konfirmatsalen Veldre Church	23	182	500	2700
June 13	10	Ringli	20	202	200	2900
June 14	11	Johannesgarden	19	221	520	3420
June 15	12	Scandic Hotel Lillehammer	15	236	320	3740
June 16	13	Skaden Gard	24	260	730	4470
June 17	14	Magali Camping	18	278	430	4900
June 18	15	Gildesvollen	20	298	450	5350
June 19	16	Pilgrim Center Dale Gudbrand	16	314	600	5950
June 20	17	Near zero day: Sygard Grytting	6	320	200	6150
June 21	18	Kierketeigen Camping Kvam	23	343	900	7050
June 22	19	Varphaugen Camping	13	356	900	7950
June 23	23	Kili Pensionat Otta	13	369	300	8250
June 24	21	Vollheim Camping	27	396	600	8850
June 25	22	Budsjord	16	412	400	9250
June 26	23	Furuhaugli Camping	22	434	900	10150
June 27	24	Hjerkinn Fjellstue	17	451	300	10450
June 28		Zero walking day	0	451	0	10450
June 29	25	Kongsvold	14	465	400	10850
June 30	26	Ryphusan	21	486	800	11650
July 1	27	Vevke Hyttetun Oppdahl	27	513	130	11780
July 2	28	Haeverstolen	23	536	300	12080
July 3	29	Meslo Gard	18	554	300	12380
July 4	30	Segard Hoel	23	577	200	12580
July 5	31	Gumdalen Gard	28	605	300	12880
July 6	32	Skaun Menigethus	20	625	400	13280
July 7	33	Skaden Gard	18	643	400	13680
July 8	34	Gildevangen Hotel Trondheim	21	664	520	14200

## 4.2 Equipment/Planning

- I had a tent with me, which would not have been necessary. I read books and reports about the Olavstrail. Unfortunately I read it from pilgrims that were on the road to Trondheim for July 29, St. Olavs day.
- My Backpack was too heavy, some of the weight due to the tent. Then wrong and too heavy clothing.
- Wrong Guidebook. Mine was the Weyer from 2014 the Outdoor from 2016 would have been better.

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