

Scandinavian Tour April 2017



**An account of a journey made by three syncros
courtesy of the blog on:**

<https://thelittleredbus.com/>

Three go mad in Norway!



So on Friday night, three Syncros set off from the home on route to the mountains of Norway. The plan is to travel through Denmark, into Sweden, then cross into Norway around Oslo, hopefully hooking up with some locals for a few nights in the mountains wild camping. In total around 15 nights away.



Each vehicle has a very different set up, but all have Eberspacher diesel heaters and all vehicles run on diesel. The first day was long, very long. We crossed via the Eurotunnel into Calais at 0635, then drove to Brugge for beer and supplies. Then, apart from a couple of fuel stops we pressed on into northern Germany, just north of Munich. The next morning we headed for Legoland in Billund, Denmark. At total run of five countries, 1200km (from the tunnel exit) in just over 30 hours! All vans behaved well and we arrived in Legoland safely.

Three go mad in Norway Pt2



Ok, so what's with the Chinese dragon? On the way to Norway, in central Denmark is the town of Billund. This is the stuff of dreams for children and adults alike, because it's the home of Legoland!



Legoland was more theme park than expected, with roller coasters etc. But the Lego exhibits were stunning. The rides are ok but very short, although once you pay the entrance fee, that's it. Food as you'd expect was extortionate, £48 for a salad and a burger & chips! There are picnic areas for you to eat your own food. You also pay to park. Afterwards we set off to find a campsite nearer to the crossing point with Sweden. We also decided it was time to go.



in disguise and try to blend in!

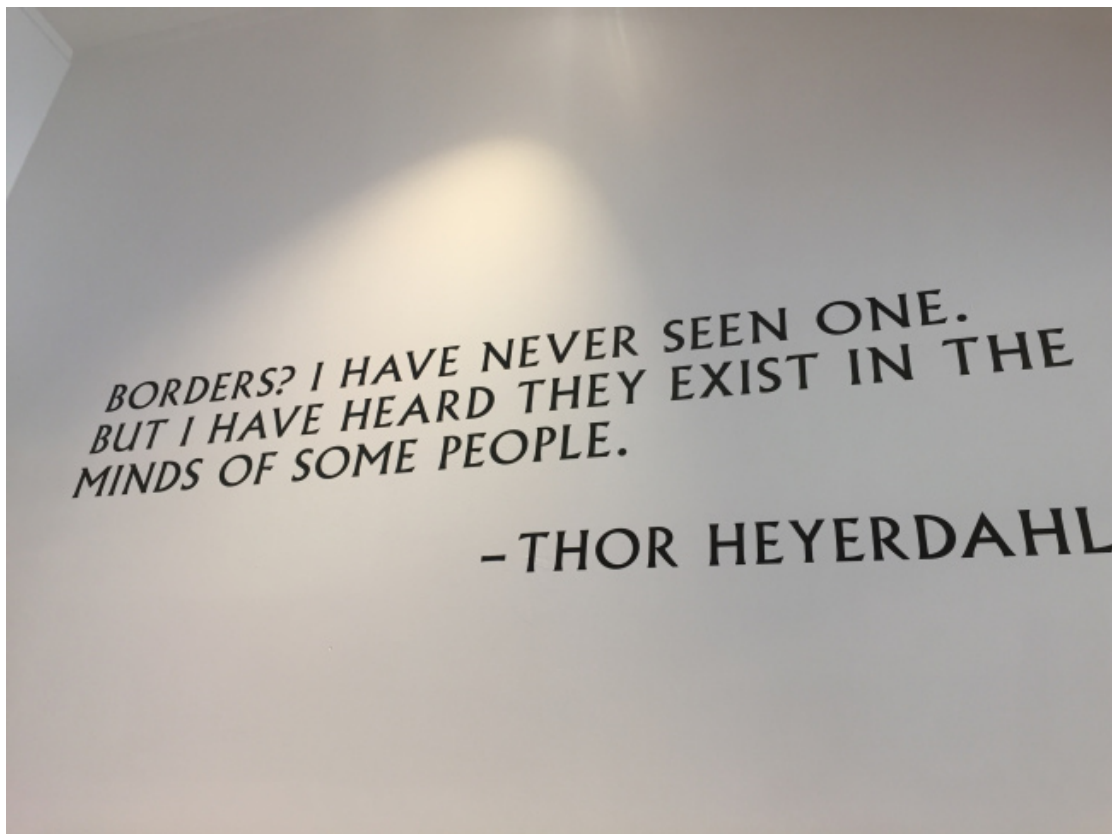


The crossing to Copenhagen island was over a stunning bridge, with incredible views. However the much anticipated crossing to Malmo was somewhat anticlimactic. Both were very expensive, albeit cheaper than a ferry crossing (£20 & £30 respectively). Still, undeterred and sporting our natty beards, we headed to Hölviken Viking settlement. Although off season, it is an excellent short stop location with many houses to visit and a small but informative museum. Many of the exhibits normally have live actors explaining them, but being off season they weren't manned, so they only charged a nominal amount.



Next stop Gothenburg..... or not?

So, where were we? Ah yes, Gothenburg.....



Last time I left you, we were heading from Hölviken looking forward to a night or two in Gothenburg. However, things weren't as easy as hoped. Many campsites claiming to be open all year round, were either shut or simply didn't exist. One was an apartment block in a suburb of the city! We did however meet a really nice chap called Hüseyin Sürer. He was driving past as we refuelled and swung in to check out the vans – the loves of his life as he put it! He even had spare T3 parts in the trunk of his car. After he kindly led us to a supermarket, we bid him farewell and headed towards Oslo.

After struggling to find anywhere open, we eventually stopped in a quiet lane, next to a fjord and wild camped for the night.





The next morning we woke to find a very frosty but glorious start to the day, with interested observers in the field watching with curiosity. We decided to head northwards to Oslo. It's worth noting:

1. There is a border between Sweden and Norway and they do conduct random checks. If you are carrying alcohol (you need to as Norway is awfully expensive), then you are limited to a bottle of spirits and 4 ltrs of wine per person.
2. All major roads in Norway have tolls. Also roads into the cities. You can stop and pay at gas stations, but it is simpler to set up an auto pass account online with EPC – [Auto Pass](#) . This will automatically bill you as you pass the many toll cameras. But it will also bill you for any parking or speeding fines you incur! .
3. Norwegians have low speed limits and heavy fines. They therefore don't speed and drive patiently. There are many cameras. .

So, on to Oslo. We camped in central Oslo, with good bus connections to the main attractions. You can buy a pass that gives you all day travel on any public transport for around £9. Oslo had loads to see, but we started with the Fråm Museum, Norway's best museum (apparently).



Fråm was a ship that took famous Norwegian explorers to the Arctic and Antarctic, returning safely despite being frozen in ice and drifting across the oceans looking for the Northwest passage and many other incredible voyages of discovery. The museum is fantastic, with lots to see and interactive exhibits for younger visitors. [Fråm Museum](#)

Next door is the Kon-Tiki museum, a tribute to an incredible man and one of my childhood heroes, Thor Heyerdahl. He famously built and sailed a raft to Polynesia from Peru, retracing previously unproven steps of ancient tribesmen, despite being told it was impossible and being a very weak swimmer!



His other vessel, the Ra is also represented, a papyrus reed boat which he sailed between the west coast of Africa and Barbados. The man was a legend! Finally we strolled around Oslo and took in some land marks before returning to the vans and preparing to move on to Lillehammer the next day.

So far we have crossed UK, France, Belgium, Germany, Denmark, Sweden and are now in Norway. The route is unclear and will be led by the changeable weather, which so far has been warm and sunny, cold and sunny, grey and windy and we have seen the first flurries of snow. More later!

So, what next? Lillehammer and into the mountains!



After leaving Oslo we set off for Lillehammer in eastern Norway, the home of the 1994 Winter Olympics. We had an idea to catch some snow and test our vans in winter conditions, but other than that, we had no real plans or clues as to what Lillehammer would have in store. Lucky really..... Lillehammer on an Easter weekend, has nothing in store..... The road up is a pleasant drive through many small towns and villages, past crazy cyclists and runners (it was about -2 degrees). We also found our first snow!



We arrived and found some over priced camping, albeit a nice site with some good views of the slightly plain Fjord. Although it was Easter and the start of the holidays, most of the facilities were shut but the site still charged the holiday rate? Also, it mostly rained....





Looking at the coming weather patterns, we elected to partly retrace our steps and head towards the west coast over the mountains to Bergen, but due to the distance and the likely conditions expected on route, we reluctantly agreed on breaking the journey at Flåm. The route through the mountains was stunning, really stunning. There was a lot of snow, with the sky starting out quite grey and uninspiring. After a while the clouds broke and we were treated to beautiful snowscapes and brilliant sunshine. The roads were pretty icy and we had a near miss with one van dramatically getting its tail out on a slippery hill! No harm done though, just a few extra heartbeats....



We made it to Flåm after crossing through the longest road tunnel in the World, the Laerdal Tunnel: 24.5km long, split 12.5km steeply down and 12km steeply up.... not what Gloria the elderly 1.6TD van wanted to hear. High revs and second gear gets awfully loud and smoky when you're under a mountain.....



Flåm itself is not an inspiring town, being created to service the cruise ships coming into the Aurlandsfjord, but the campsite is great and very friendly, just two minutes from town. And what a location! There are some must do activities, such as taking the Fjord cruise, or heading up the mountains on the impressive Flåmsbana railway (named the Lonely Planets most incredible train journey 2014!). There is also a small free railway museum, several walks, a small supermarket, a cracking bakery for fresh bread and delicious giant cookies, plus a Viking styled bar with a micro brewery on site – very nice, but wow, very expensive! We elected to take the cruise onboard a small electric cruise ship and we're glad we did. Tickets for everything are available in a large ticket office in the town centre. Book early as they sell out and for the cruise it's the bus service to the start point that sells out first. You can get a taxi there for about the same price and still make the cruise, something the office didn't tell us about.





We loved the fresh air and breathtaking views, staying for a couple of days. Next stop, Bergen.

Bergen and on to Pulpit Rock – Preikestolen



Having fallen in love with the fjords, we set off once again in convoy to find more breath taking views. Our first point of call was Norway's second largest city, Bergen. It is an old and colourful city, with a real juxtaposition of the old and the new. Life is centred around the picturesque harbour, where old German trade buildings have been repurposed as cafes and shops, but still retain their charm.





After exploring the alleyways and rickety staircases, we camped on the bank of a scenic fjord and enjoyed the setting sun. Tomorrow we will head of to Stavanger by yet another ferry and on to Preikestolen, known as Pulpit Rock.

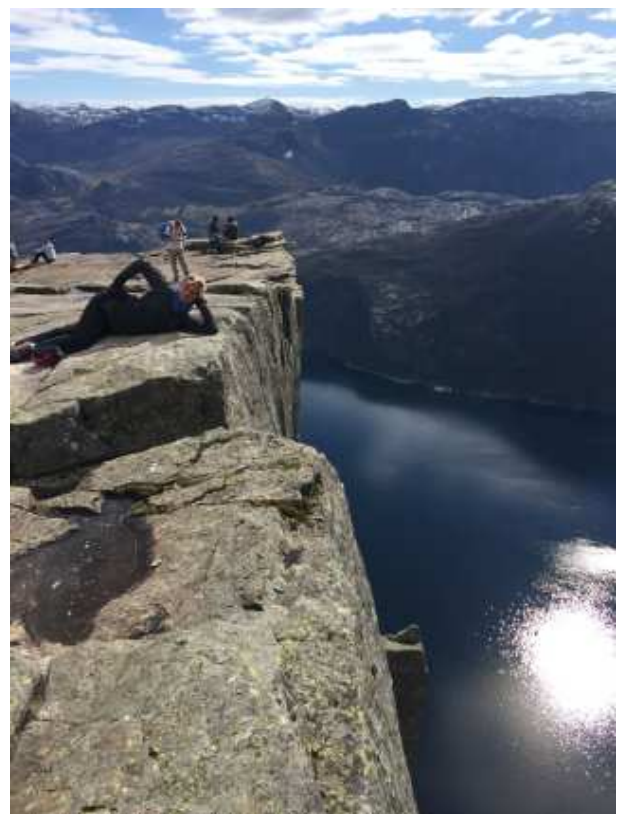
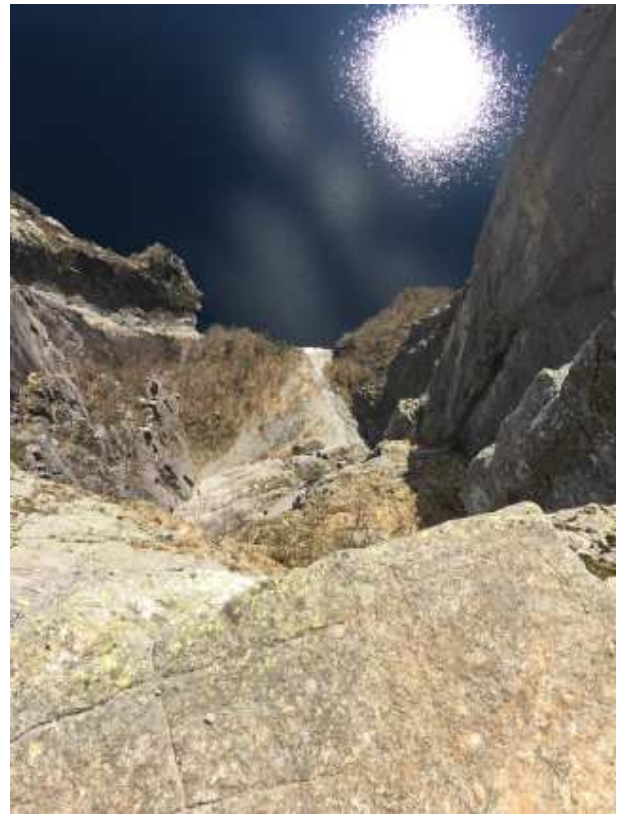




Preikestolen has to be one of the busiest and most photographed sights in Norway. Accessible from the visitors centre and car park, it is a steep and fairly strenuous 2.5hr ascent and early in the year the proper equipment is essential. Crampons are available to rent and even at Easter there's a lot of ice to negotiate and we saw several parties slipping and falling in very inappropriate footwear and clothing. In the shade it was very cold, but in the sun you were at risk of sunburn. The rock itself sits 650m above the fjord and is breathtakingly beautiful, well worth the effort. There is a large and well equipped campsite close by with a very warm reception and great facilities. There are many adventurous activities locally from kayaking and mountain biking, to climbing, helicopter tours and a zip wire.

[Preikestolen](#)







The Pulpit Rock – Preikestolen



This for me was the highlight of the tour. Stunning views rewarded the effort and even someone of moderate fitness can and should achieve the climb. Care should be taken and appropriate gear worn and carried, but wow! So worth it!