

WOODTURNING, CARVING AND PYROGRAPHY.... UP AND DOWN THE FJORDS

During the early part of this August, I was one of fifteen demonstrators on a woodturning cruise travelling from Stavanger in Southern Norway to Tromsø (far above the Arctic Circle) visiting over twelve cities along the way. The voyage began with rain and overcast skies, but after a couple of days the sun shone for most of the cruise. The mountain ranges were quite breathtaking with over eighty peaks along one range, here and there we would suddenly come across some spectacular waterfalls. Then there was Trollfjorden Fjord - the entrance was so narrow I could nearly touch the side of the mountain, trust the Captain!

During the twelve day trip we saw some of the most beautiful scenery in Norway, visiting a different town or city each day, such as Bergen, Trondheim, Tromsø, Ålesund, Molde, Svolvær, etc. In Norway, towns and cities are built around the harbours, so each time we docked, we were nearly in the centre of the town or city. It was good news for the ladies who love to shop! Although I was demonstrating most of the time, I managed to go on some of the organised coach trips or to have a couple of hours browsing around the shops, museums, exhibitions and craft shops.

I could never have dreamt it! Coasting up Norway, crossing the Arctic Circle into the Land of the Midnight Sun with a band of woodturners, carvers and equipment salesmen, promoting woodturning along the way. This was the dream of my good friend Odd Erik Thjømmø, the Manager of WWW Verktoy AS, based in Stavanger. I have demonstrated at a variety of craft shows for him in Oslo, Trondheim and Stavanger during the last few years (remember my Diary of a Craftworker in Craftsman last year?). The ship 'M.S. Gann' is one of the famous Hurtigrute vessels that have sailed up and down the coast of Norway providing essential transportation and

communication for remote fjord and coastal communities.

These days M.S. Gann is a school ship and is used for training youngsters in seamanship for most of the year. During the summer it is used for three cruises. On boarding we had over one hundred paying passengers, mainly woodturning enthusiasts, some with their wives, there were about 47 ladies.

During the passages from harbour to harbour the demonstrators gave instruction on a one-to-one or sometimes a group demonstration.

Passengers were also able to use the lathes, under instruction, and some of the carving and pyrography equipment. Woodturning has become a very popular hobby and business for some Norwegians, so when we docked at the various towns or cities, there was always a good crowd waiting to come on board to watch the demonstrations or purchase items from the shop on board. My wife Del and I were running the pyrography workshop, which was always very busy and popular. We sold a large number of machines via the shop, too.

There are so many marvellous memories of a trip which took us to new places, introduced us to unusual foods and new friends. It proved that there is more to woodturning, wood carving and burning wood....

P.S. I was in charge of putting the flags up.... Guess what?.... I put the Welsh flag up on the main mast as we came into Bergen.... the Norwegians thought we were the Welsh Navy.

For details of the next cruise, contact
Odd Erik Thjømmø
WWW Verktoy AS
5 Johagen 2
4016 Stavanger
Norway
Tel: (0047) 51 88 68 00

Photographs by Roger Bealey, one of the passengers on the cruise.



1. Alan Barry from UK
2. Group of Demonstrators, (Bob 5 from left)
3. Dale Nish, the Father of woodturning in the USA
4. Bob Neill at work
5. One-to-one with young student
6. Petter Herud
7. Bergen
8. Jimmy Clewes from UK
9. Land of the midnight sun
10. Norwegian landscape
11. Our leader walks the plank