

The Woodturning Cruise Norway - August 2001

A Report from Bob Neill

Bob Neill reports on the Woodturning Cruise, which took place in Norway during August. The event was staffed by a veritable who's who from the turning world, besides the Scandinavians including Petter Herud and Asmund Vignes there were representatives from both the UK and the USA including Allan Batty, Jimmy Clewes, Stuart Mortimer and Dale Nish. Imagine having people of this stature and expertise as shipmates for 10 days – a veritable turners heaven!

This was the second woodturning cruise organised by Odd-Erik Thjomoe and his assistant, Mette Fjermestad with some assistance in promoting it from yours truly.

The journey began in Stavanger and called in at over 12 towns along the coast as far as Tromso (far north of the Arctic Circle) and back. This was a working holiday – with 110 passengers and about 20 demonstrators – all

interested in woodturning, woodcarving, pyrography and the like.

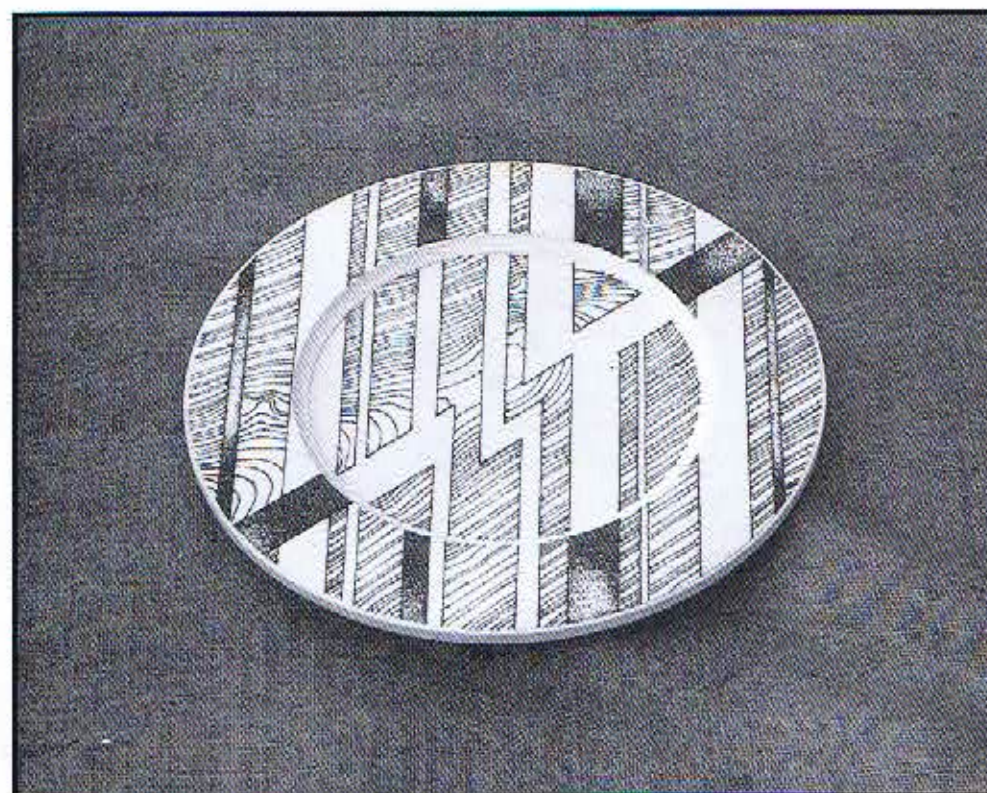
At each port of call the M S Gann, our ship, was open to visitors, who arrived in large numbers. They were all appreciative that the event had been brought to them. During these sessions the visitors and passengers could watch a whole group of internationally famous craftsmen at work.

During the passage between ports of call the demonstrators gave instruction and more 'one-to-one' assistance to the passengers. We had a few wet days but on the whole the weather was good with the fjords and mountains providing an ever-changing dramatic backdrop to our activities. At most of our stops visits to places of interest were organised and conducted by knowledgeable local guides.

Although I was working most of the time I did make the effort to join some of the trips – along the spectacular Atlantic Ocean Road, which is built on islands with connecting bridges. At Tromso I was able to visit the Polar Exhibition with many artefacts associated with the famous explorers, including Amundsen who beat Scott to the South Pole in 1911.

Breakfast, lunch and dinner was included – there was an excellent choice meeting the demands of the most exacting palate. From the point of view of the organisers the trip proved a great success both in promoting woodturning and as a commercial venture – sales in the shop exceeded expectations.

For me this was 'a trip and opportunity of a lifetime' – I just hope it happens again very soon.....watch this space.....Skal!



Left : Pyrography. A typical piece of Bob Neill's monochrome work

Facing Page : Men at Work!

Top : Petter Herud (Norway)

Bottom : Allan Batty