

New Norwegian Mountain Centre opens. A report by Tony Howard

In June of 2016 the long-awaited Norsk Tindesenter, or Norwegian Mountain Centre was opened by Crown Prince Haakon Magnus in Åndalsnes in Romsdal in its fjord-side building, its architects having been inspired by the surrounding mountains and snow capped peaks. I was invited there a month later for a special event at Romsdal's Mountain Festival by Fred Husøy, a driving force behind the creation of the Tindesenter for which he was presented with Norway's "Mountain Goat of the Year Award" by a joint committee of the Mountain Festival and DNT (The Norwegian Trekking Association).

Above the Tindesenter shop and its already popular quayside restaurant and past a bust of one of Norway's most famous mountaineers, Arne Randers Heen, who lived in Romsdal and whose idea the mountain museum was, is a stunning twenty one metre high climbing wall, the highest in Norway. Adjacent to it is a library and reading room which has one of Norway's largest collections of mountaineering literature including English as well as Norwegian books. Beyond is a multimedia experience depicting "The motivation, triumphs and tragedies of Norwegian mountaineering" with sixteen diverse interactive installations about climbing, mountaineering, backcountry



Fred Husøy with Tony Howard



The Norske Tindesenter, Åndalsnes, Romsdal

skiing and base jumping. The cinema screen is unique being 3D and simulating a rock wall whilst the digital archive of over 7000 photos, videos and summit books including Slingsby's first ascents in the 1880s, as well as newspaper articles and more are sure to tempt you in endlessly.

The museum covers Norwegian climbing history from its origins and includes alpenstocks and boots from Norwegian pioneers in the 1820s like Carl Hall, Matias Soggemoen and Erik Norahagen, up to equipment used by Arne Randers Heen (old hawser laid ropes and worn out tennis shoes and the like that were *de rigueur* for climbers pre the mid 1950s), as well as modern equipment and personal stories from the lead climbers of today and examples of early nuts up to today's cams. Also on display is an early Edelrid chest harnesses used by the 1965 Norwegian Troll Wall first ascent team. Gear from the simultaneous English first ascent is there too including my own leather waist belt made in 1963, a precursor of the Troll Mark 2 and the later Troll Mark 5, the template for almost all modern sit harnesses. Displayed alongside the Mark 5, are the Troll Whillans and Troll Black Master, the latter billed as "the first lightweight sit harness". An eight metre high photo of Trollveggen (the Troll Wall) is almost overpowering in its proximity. A remarkable video of a huge chunk of it falling down is even more scary!

The Tindesenter has been a dream that took years in the making and is a credit to its designers, so much so it's easy to spend half a day there and still want to go back for more. If you are climbing in Romsdal it's an essential visit even if it doesn't rain!

Website: <http://www.tindesenteret.no>



Tony with a historical selection of harnesses (see above text)