



STORIES FROM AURLANDSDALEN



This wild and beautiful valley surrounded by its tall mountains has been extremely valuable throughout time. The valley of Aurlandsdalen which stretches from Aurland to Hol is one of the old roads connecting Western and Eastern Norway. It was used as a farm road, road to the seasonal farms, to move livestock and later as a walking trail.



SETTLEMENT:

As late as 1850 there were a total of 11 farms and crofts in the valley of Aurlandsdalen – Almen, Sinjarheim, Teigen, Berekvam, Skorsgarden, two at Nesbø, Vikaneset, Aurviki and several farms at Østerbø. The families that lived on the mountain farms mainly made their living off livestock, growing some produce and reindeer hunting. They were dependent on the resources available in the mountains. The mountain people were gripped by the promise of a better life in the United States of America and none of the farms are inhabited in the present day.

You will find some information boards along the historic path.



FAUNA:

The high mountain area had and still has valuable hunting grounds for Norwegian reindeer, and you can find trout in the watercourses. The number of deer in the wood clad hills have risen sharply in recent times. There are also several other animals such as wolverines, foxes, martens, weasels, mink and otters. There are also livestock such as sheep and goats. The largest bird that nests in the valley is the golden eagle, others are e.g. the common kestrel and the willow warbler.

FLORA:

The different types of rock and the locale climate means the valley has a rich flora. Lowest down you find the heat seeking elm and ash trees, the alder wood may stretch as high as 800m.a.s.l. where the birch wood is dominant. The pyramidal saxifrage decorates the mountain walls throughout the valley. Useful plants include oregano, rhodiola rosea and blueberries.

HIKING TIPS:

- Handy to bring with you: plenty of food, rainproof clothing, walking stick if you have bad knees and drinking bottle. Running rivers and streams are a good source of water.
- Follow the marked paths.
- Wear appropriate footwear, the path may be both wet and slippery, and you have to cross a few rivers.
- Don't leave your waste behind: waste includes bottles, toilet paper and packaging.
- It may be a good idea to rest and stretch your muscles at Sinjarheim before starting the harsh descent.
- Be aware that some of the valley lacks mobile phone coverage, especially between Vetlahelvete and Vassbygdi.
- Respect wildlife and livestock; dogs always have to be kept on a leash between April 1st and November 1st.
- Close any gates you pass through as livestock escaping creates major issues.

Contact information

Emergency phones
Ambulance : 113
Fire department : 110
Police: 112

Transport
www.entur.no and
www.norwaysbest.com/
no/ting-a-gjore/bussruter

Taxi: +47 411 10 806
Fishing permit to be bought at e.g.
- www.inatur.no
- the tourist huts

 Turist information
tlf: + 47 913 51 247
www.sognefjord.no



LIFESTOCK TRADE AND TRAVEL:

The road was important as it connected the seasonal farms and farms. Eventually livestock were also brought up the valley to the juicy grazing areas in the mountain. In autumn the animals were driven down to Eastern Norway where they were sold. There were several places used as rest stops travelling up the valley of Aurlandsdalen, often called "Frivoll". It would take approximately 14 days to drive the livestock to Eastern Norway.

Later the road became important for horse packing, transporting resources back and forth to the summer farms and the accommodations at Østerbø and in the valley of Stemmerdalen. The car road was finished in 1974.

THE HISTORIC WALK AURLANDSDALEN

VASSBYGDI - ØSTERBØ
LENGTH: 18 km
TIME: ca 7 hours
LEVEL: challenging path (red)
SEASON: June, July, August, September

- 1 **NESBØGALDEN:** When Asta and Henning H. Tønsberg visited the valley of Aurlandsdalen in 1910 it was easier to travel via "tregalden" rather than across the mountain via Myrane between Østerbø and Nesbø.
- 2 **SKÅRI:** The summer of 1955 was a warm one, and it was a pleasure to be at Skåri both in spring as well as autumn. It was like a holiday for the school age children to travel to the summer farms and leave day to day life in the village behind, even though it was hard work.
- 3 **SINJARHEIM:** It wasn't just the vegetation in the valley that proved fruitful. When the family from Sinjarheim moved to the village there were 15 of them in total. Their love for their farm did not diminish and it was used as a summer farm. The Sogn School of Organic Agriculture and Horiculture (SJH) still use Sinjarheim as a summer farm, and it holds a special place in the hearts of many.
- 4 **BY NESBØ:** Johannes Midje was one of the people who travelled the road to and from the tourist cabins several times with his packhorse. He knew every "tivesja" (local name for a body of water that never freezes), marker, rest stop and bridge along the way like the back of his hand.

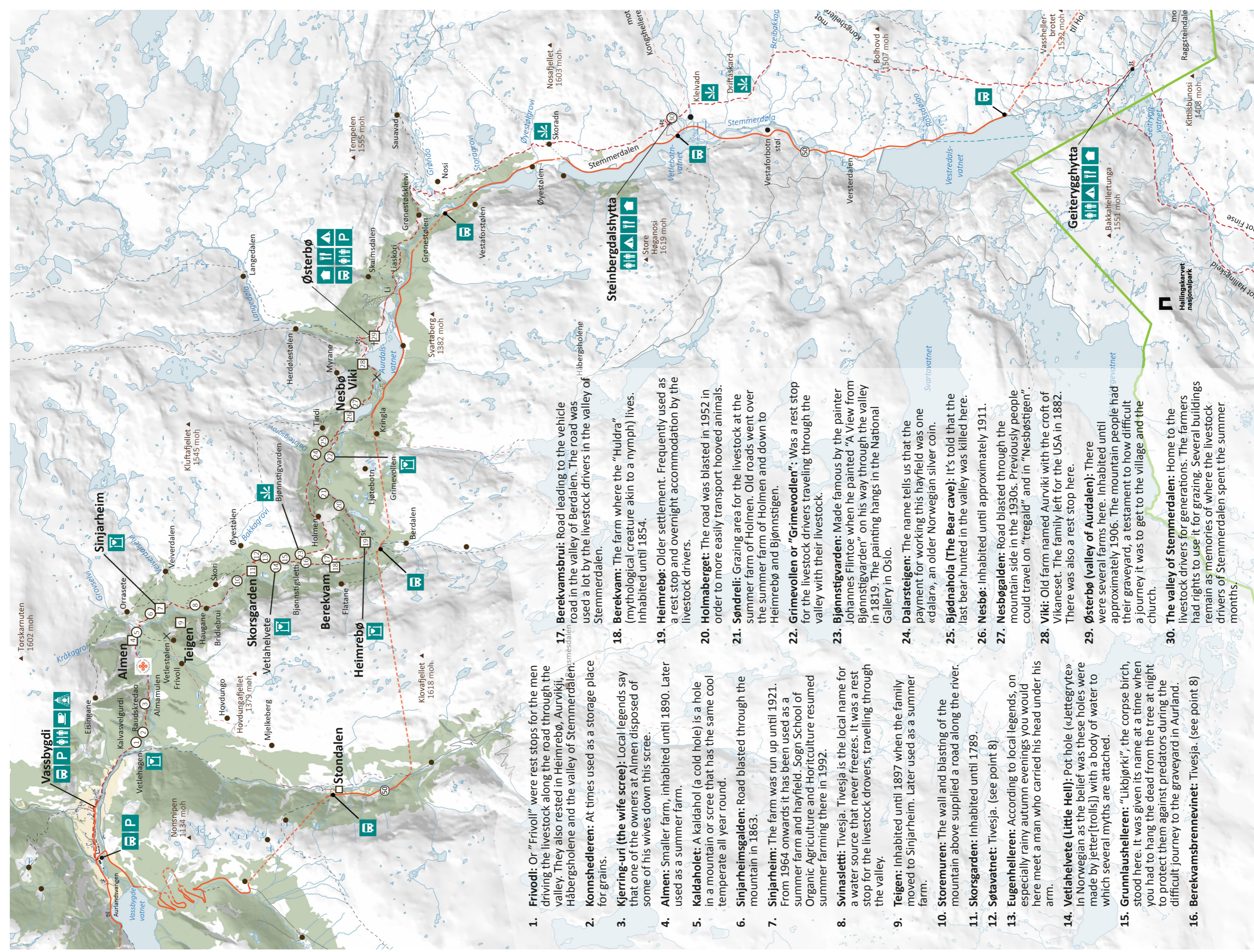
HISTORIC WALKS:

Historic Walks is a collaboration between The Norwegian Trekking Association and the Norwegian Directorate for Cultural Heritage which raises the profile of old roads and encourages their use for hiking. The chosen paths ensure great recreational experiences combined with exciting cultural heritage. We have unveiled 11 Historical Walks since 2015, each with a different story to tell. Cultural heritage and both known and forgotten stories have been collected on the way and made available on information boards along the paths.

Aurlandsdalen is a cooperation project between: **DNT Oslo og omegn, Friends of Aurlandsdalen og Nærøyfjorden World Heritage Park.**

The project is supported by the bank DNB and the Norwegian Environment Agency and all the paths have been created in collaboration with local tourist businesses and other organisations.





- Frivold:** Or "Frivoll" were rest stops for the men driving the livestock along the road through the valley. They also rested in Heimrebø, Aurlviki, Håbergsholene and the valley of Stemmerdalen.
- Konnshedleren:** At times used as a storage place for grains.
- Kjerring-uri (the wife scree):** Local legends say that one of the owners at Almen disposed of some of his wives down this scree.
- Almen:** Smaller farm, inhabited until 1890. Later used as a summer farm.
- Kaldaholet:** A kaldahol (a cold hole) is a hole in a mountain or scree that has the same cool temperate all year round.
- Sinjarheimsgalden:** Road blasted through the mountain in 1863.
- Sinjarheim:** The farm was run up until 1921. From 1964 onwards it has been used as a summer farm and hayfield. Sogn School of Organic Agriculture and Horticulture resumed summer farming there in 1992.
- Svinasletti:** Tivesja. Tivesja is the local name for a water source that never freezes. It was a rest stop for the livestock drovers, travelling through the valley.
- Teigen:** Inhabited until 1897 when the family moved to Sinjarheim. Later used as a summer farm.
- Storemuren:** The wall and blasting of the mountain above supplied a road along the river.
- Skorsgarden:** Inhabited until 1789.
- Søtavatnet:** Tivesja. (see point 8)
- Eugenhelleren:** According to local legends, on especially rainy autumn evenings you would here meet a man who carried his head under his arm.
- Vetlahelvete (Little Hell):** Pot hole («Jettegryte» in Norwegian as the belief was these holes were made by jetter[trolls]) with a body of water to which several myths are attached.
- Grunnlaushelleren:** "Likbjørki", the corpse birch, stood here. It was given its name at a time when you had to hang the dead from the tree at night to protect them against predators during the difficult journey to the graveyard in Aurland.
- Berekvamsbrennevinet:** Tivesja. (see point 8)

- Berekvamsbrui:** Road leading to the vehicle road in the valley of Berdalen. The road was used a lot by the livestock drivers in the valley of Stemmerdalen.
- Berekvam:** The farm where the "Huldra" (mythological creature akin to a nymph) lives. Inhabited until 1854.
- Heimrebø:** Older settlement. Frequently used as a rest stop and overnight accommodation by the livestock drivers.
- Holmaberget:** The road was blasted in 1952 in order to more easily transport hooved animals.
- Søndreli:** Grazing area for the livestock at the summer farm of Holmen. Old roads went over the summer farm of Holmen and down to Heimrebø and Bjønnstigen.
- Grimevollen or "Grimevodlen":** Was a rest stop for the livestock drivers traveling through the valley with their livestock.
- Bjønnstigvarden:** Made famous by the painter Johannes Flintoe when he painted "A View from Bjønnstigvarden" on his way through the valley in 1819. The painting hangs in the National Gallery in Oslo.
- Dalarsteigen:** The name tells us that the payment for working this hayfield was one «dalar», an older Norwegian silver coin.
- Bjødnaehola (The Bear cave):** It's told that the last bear hunted in the valley was killed here.
- Nesbø:** Inhabited until approximately 1911.
- Nesbøgalden:** Road blasted through the mountain side in the 1930s. Previously people could travel on "tregald" and in "Nesbøstigen".
- Viki:** Old farm named Aurlviki with thecroft of Vikaneset. The family left for the USA in 1882. There was also a rest stop here.
- Østerbø (valley of Aurdalen):** There were several farms here. Inhabited until approximately 1906. The mountain people had their graveyard, a testament to how difficult a journey it was to get to the village and the church.
- The valley of Stemmerdalen:** Home to the livestock drivers for generations. The farmers had rights to use it for grazing. Several buildings remain as memories of where the livestock drivers of Stemmerdalen spent the summer months.

- Attraction
- Viewpoint
- Parking
- Train station
- Bus stop
- Serviced tourist cabin
- Self-service tourist cabin
- Camping facilities
- Refreshments
- Uthus

- Abandoned farm
- Abandoned summerfarm
- Historic Walk
- Other marked paths
- Old paths
- National Park
- Car road