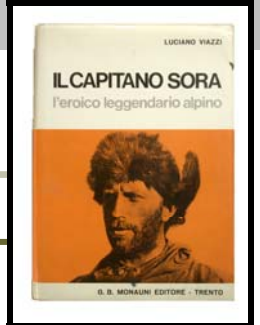


SPITSBERGEN AIRSHIP MUSEUM

NEWSLETTER NO 4, JULY 2008

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Spitsbergen Airship Museum shall impart the history and importance 3 airships have had in the Arctic.

"America" (Wellman Chicago Record Herald Polar Expedition) in 1907/1909, "Norge" ("Amundsen-Ellsworth-Nobile, Transpolar Flight") in 1926 and the "Italia" expedition in 1928, as well as the rescue expeditions following the 1928 expedition.

The 9 nations that participated in these historical events will be represented.

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Arctic Silence

2008 is the year of the Spitsbergen Airship Museum. Though the start of the year has been silent from our part, we have moved forward the last months. In January we travelled in Italy and visited a variety of people and institutions. In February we attended the yearly seminar at the National Norwegian Aviation Museum that this year took place at Sola, Norway.

A lot of work has also characterized the silence. In order to make money to finance the Museum we have been very busy with our normal jobs, and, as expected, office hours have unfortunately been limited.

Through working with people we have met and communicated with a lot of different people from a variety of countries, both tourists and scientists.

Even though time has been limited regarding office work, we have had a quite fruitful winter. People seem to have heard about the project. Even lecturers on overseas cruise ships coming to the Arctic in summer have started to contact us for information.

We have also signed the contract regarding renting localities, and nowadays time is filled with detailed planning of the interior of the museum, dividing the available space on the different themes, planning and ordering the models, panels, the choosing of pictures, documents, search for more items and more.

More about our activities you can read about in this newsletter.

Gerd and Michele

We have now signed the rental contract with the [Svalbard Museum](#). The contract is running for 3 years with an option of an additional 3 years (for more details see our newsletter no 3). The localities are in box!

This means we are now more concrete in our work, and we have come to an agreement with the (in Scandinavia very well known) Gerd Schwalenstøcker at Duksund Snekkerverksted (outside Tromsø in Norway) regarding the interior of the museum. Gerd has been in Svalbard on several occasions and knows the archipelago, the history, and the people well. He was (among other things) the one making the Andreè exhibition at the 100 year anniversary in Svalbard. We believe we have found the best man possible to create the interior. Gerd and his colleague Michele Widerøe were visiting us last week, and they immediately came up with very interesting solutions. Gerd is originally from Germany and he has lived in Norway the last 40

years. Michele is Cuban and she has lived in Norway for 10 years. After the summer they will return and start the work. Very exciting!

As well as having decided who shall be responsible for the interior, we have contacted different modellers, both for landscape and boats. Arild Kjaeraas at [Proinor](#) has nearly finished the first plane.

So, if everything goes as planned, and we don't see why it shouldn't, the opening will be in the middle of November :D



The future location of Spitsbergen Airship Museum, seen from south in April

Once upon a time, 80 years ago

2008 is the year where many things are 80 years ago. On May 25th it was 80 years ago that the airship "Italia" crashed on the pack ice.

On June 18th it was 80 years ago the Norwegian national hero Roald Amundsen disappeared with the Latham looking for Nobile and his men.

On July 12th it was 80 years ago the Russian icebreaker Krassin rescued Nobile and his men from the drifting ice.

On July 14th it was 80 years ago the Russian icebreaker Krassin rescued Sora and his men from the drifting ice.

Obviously, in between and after these dates other events related to the crash and the search and rescue operations took place.

We have made a small collection of links for you to follow, so you can stagger your appetite for information until we open our doors in November: (If you have any interesting links regarding the 80th anniversary, we are happy if you share them with us)

- 1: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Umberto_Nobile
- 2: <http://www.aftenposten.no/fakta/innsikt/article2487366.ece>
- 3: <http://www1.nrk.no/nett-tv/distrikt/NDOS/verdi/61955>
- 4: http://www.nrk.no/kanal/nrk_gull/1.6043252
- 5: http://archiviostorico.corriere.it/2008/luglio/05/Tor_na_tenda_che_salvo_Nobile_co_9_080705042.shtml
- 6: http://www.hiddeneurope.co.uk/newsdesk_info.php?newsdesk_id=40
- 7: <http://www.aftenposten.no/nyheter/iriks/article2498209.ece>
- 8: <http://www.aftenposten.no/fakta/innsikt/article2487366.ece>
- 9: <http://www.nordlys.no/nyheter/article3610957.ece>

Giri d'Italia

When we started this project, we decided to visit different people and institutions in Italy to inform about the museum and to find out if they were interested.

In January 2007 and January 2008 we have been in Italy and done a "Giro d' Italia". In Rome we met Maria Schettino Nobile (Umberto Nobile's daughter) and her family, expert on Nobile Ovidio Ferrante, Contessa Maria Fede Caproni, the C.N.R and the Air Force Museum in Vigna di Valle. We were also in Lauro (where Nobile was born) and in Fermo at the Italian Polar Museum.

Thereafter we went to the North of Italy, to Trento, to visit the Tridentino Museum, and to Foresto Sparso (Bergamo) the place where Captain Gennaro Sora was born.



We started contacts with all of them and many others, associations and private people who are connected to the survivors etc. The response has been very enthusiastic and everyone has promised us their participation and help. We have now started the work inside the museum building, and therefore we will again visit most of these contacts for the last final rush before the opening in November. The third "Giro d' Italia" will take place between 8th and 30th September 2008.

Relatives

As it is about 80 years since much of the history the museum shall impart took place, relatives of the different participants are very much up and about. As we have mentioned we have contact with the family of Umberto Nobile, but also other relatives.

Some relatives we have visited, others we have met here at Svalbard and others again we have had email and phone contact with.

Contact with relatives is important for several reasons. First because they have information about the history in an incomparable way. Secondly they can act as a confirming party regarding the museum and its work. Thirdly we find it important to give the chance to participate in and to influence the museum.



Recently we got in contact with Annalisa Coviello, the grand daughter of Michele Coviello who was a sailor aboard the Città di Milano in 1928 when it was in Ny Ålesund. It turns out that Coviello these days is publishing a book, based upon her grandfather's diaries and pictures he left her.

The book is called "1928: dalla Spezia al Polo Nord" and is published by Edizioni Giacché, has 144 pages and 133 (!) photos. Price: €18 (Hopefully there will be a translation into English).

Seminar at Sola

Every year the [National Norwegian Aviation Museum](#) in Bodø organizes a seminar in order to get all persons and organizations occupied with aviation history to meet. This year the meeting took place at Sola (Sola = the sun in Norwegian) on the south western coast of Norway.

The days at Sola were hectic and very interesting. Almost 100 people gathered to attend lectures and update each other on their activities. Norway is a long country and people live far apart, so this gathering is a very welcome meeting place.

We started out at [Sola Flyhistoriske Museum](#) (which is a part of the [Jærmuseet](#)) with a social gathering. The next days were packed with different lectures, presentations and social mingling.

The Spitsbergen Airship Museum is the only museum in this network that represents the Arctic and aviation history at and around the North Pole. We had a presentation on the development in the project, and the planned progress during the spring.

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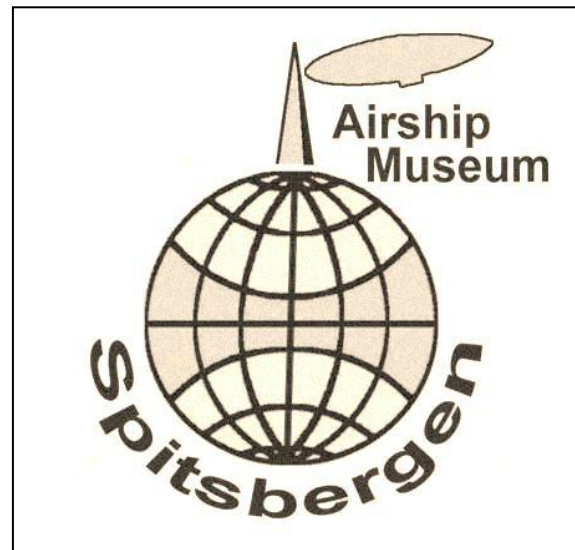
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Motto:
AIRSHIP ME!



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