

SPITSBERGEN AIRSHIP MUSEUM

Newsletter 5, March 2013

Spitsbergen Airship Museum, Pb 644, 9171 Longyearbyen, Norway 0047 913 834 67 / 0047 957 357 42
ingunn@spitsbergenairshipmuseum.com

www.spitsbergenairshipmuseum.com

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The newly constructed Spitsbergen Airship Museum. It is now centrally located and found right behind the tourist information centre.



New location

We are thrilled to have finally moved premises! The old museum was located by the church on Skjæringa. We found this location to be slightly out of the way, and the electricity bills for heating the building were horrendous. No other building in town was suitable for a move in, and so we decided to build our own from scratch!

The “old” museum wended down in Autumn 2010 and construction on the “new” museum started in Summer 2011. After several months of hard work (...and a few delays), the doors were finally opened again to the public in July 2012: just in time for the summer tourist season here on Svalbard.

Many improvements have been made from the original museum design, not least that we now have a much larger space to exhibit on. The roof and outer walls are painted black as to retain and absorb as much heat as

possible during the “lighter” months of the year. The overall structure is encased in over 30cm of insulated gypsum boards, and heating is exclusively from the coal and wood burners.



View inside the museum on the second floor

We have a library of both old and new polar books and are trying to create a cosy space in which our visitors can

enjoy them. It is still working progress, but coming into the warm and read about our great polar heroes by a roaring fire is a welcome addition.

As to create a mellow light to the Museum, all windows have been covered by custom made blinds. We were after something special and came across the old sails from the Noorderlicht, also known as the “boat in the ice” for those of you who have travelled up to Svalbard before.



Cozy space with roaring fire

New material

We have brought into our collection two new boat models: Fram and Gjøa. Though these of course cannot count as airships, they did nevertheless play an important role in the exploration of the North. The Fram was commissioned by Nansen and frozen into the Northern ice pack in 1893, as an attempt to reach to North Pole. It was later used by Amundsen as a means to reach Antarctica in 1910 – the same expedition where he reached the South Pole. Gjøa was the first ship to sail across the Northwest Passage in 1903 by Amundsen. Both of these remarkable boats certainly inspired the next generation of polar aviation pioneers.



Model of the Fram ship

We have also permanently incorporated the Wellman centenary exhibition into the museum. Now that we have a lot more space, this section will be particularly helpful in understanding the attempts to the pole made by Amundsen and Nobile.

In storage we also have of the life boat used on the Wellman expeditions. Unfortunately this very special piece is extremely fragile and we will have to wait until the coming summer to be able to transport it out.

The Spitsbergen Airship Museum is a never ending project, and over time we hope to incorporate new artifacts and material.

New website

We are really stepping into a new era here at the Museum. As well as joining Facebook, we have also revamped our website which was in need of a serious facelift. At the moment we have only featured the essential information. Over time we hope to update the online archive of pictures and documents, allowing visitors to access these fascinating items from anywhere in the world.

Spitsbergen Airship Museum

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The exhibition tells the story of three airships, departing from Svalbard, and their flights towards the North Pole:

- Wellman with the AMERICA in 1906, 1907 & 1909
- The NORVEG in 1906 (Claim first time at the North Pole)
- The ITALIA in 1928 and the following search and rescue expeditions

Old films, photos, maps, newspapers, postcards, drawings, original artifacts, clothes and more.
The Airship-shop sells old and new books & souvenirs.

Opening hours

Mon-Thurs: 10-12

Fri-Sun: 12-15

Snapshot from our new homepage

You will be able to find us on www.spitsbergenairshipmuseum.com. As for Facebook, search for the Spitsbergen Airship Museum 

Final words from the High Arctic

The spring season is now in full swing, and we have been blessed with magnificent weather for the past few weeks. Unlike last year, the fjords have finally frozen. Most of the Spitsbergen Airship Museum staff also work as guides on the island, and so have been able to go on some wonderful adventures. The birds have also started to come back!



Below: Paulabreen glacier front. Right: Van Mijenfjord

