

SPITSBERGEN AIRSHIP MUSEUM

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Getting started, and then some

By Ingunn Løyning

Welcome to the first newsletter from Spitsbergen Airship Museum (SAM)! The first of many. We shall keep all our contacts, friends and partners as updated as possible regarding our work and the development in this project. We have not yet decided the frequency of this letter.

We are now well established in our offices in the centre of Longyearbyen. We are situated in the heart of the town, vis a vis the post and bank office. The effect of being visible locally is noticeable. Having a physical address also makes it easier for people to take contact.

Having sent, in mid January, the project description to something that felt like the whole world, we have now got a variety of good response. The response comes from institutions, organizations, politicians, private people, relatives of expedition participants and state departments from a variety of countries.

Sams' first steps

By Ingunn Løyning



[Norsk Luftfartsmuseum](http://www.norsk-luftfartsmuseum.no) (the Norwegian National Aviation Museum) was among the first to answer our email and request for support. It turned out their annual gathering was just around the corner (beginning of February 2007), and they invited us to attend and present the project to the 120 participants from Norway, Sweden and Germany.

Inside This Issue

Getting started and then some	1
Sam's first steps	1
Location	2
Lauro, the home of Umberto Nobile	2
Airship me!	3
Svalbard, EU, ministers and us	3
"Comitato Nazionale"	4
"Totale Pole Airship 2008"	4
LA7	5
"You are sitting at my table tonight"	5

Interesting, and very satisfying, is that the response comes from scientists, historians, anthropologists, aviation enthusiasts, mountaineers and others. This shows that we have managed to capture people the way we intended. As well as a museum, we are also creating an international forum for exchange of interest and knowledge, across the borders of the traditional affiliation divisions. The variety in the response is therefore very encouraging. Click here to see this response: [English](#) [Norwegian](#)

Participating on the annual seminar was very fruitful in many respects. We made many good and interesting contacts. Both from other museums, associations and aviation enthusiasts.

For Spitsbergen Airship Museum it is in many respects of great importance to enjoy such a warm welcoming from this institution. The museum is the national aviation museum and is network responsible for the historical aviation affiliation in Norway (both civilian and military aviation).

We are already looking forward to next year's seminar!

LOCATION

By Ingunn Løyning

In 2006 we managed to get hold of what was the last free terrain in Longyearbyen. This is located on the northern side of Longyearbyen, by the seaside. However; the company Leonard Nilsen og Sønner holds a bigger area of Longyearbyen and has offered us a location in the centre of Longyearbyen. We have been meeting with them and sent them all information, including drawings. Now we are only waiting for a formal reply. Our next door neighbour will be a hotel that is planned opened the spring in 2009.

The political administration in Longyearbyen, Longyearbyen Lokalstyre, is very positive to the



This is a picture of the new location including a drawing by our architect Adrien Lefèvre. For a bigger image: [Click](#)

realization of Spitsbergen Airship Museum. To read their statement: [click](#).

Our architect Adrien Lefèvre is currently working on more detailed drawings of the museum. These will soon be to find on our web site. To see the current drawings: [click](#)

LAURO, the home of Umberto Nobile

[Click to go to the Nobile Museum in Lauro](#)

By Roberto Sparapani

Lauro is a small and bright city, not far away from Napoli, resting between green and smooth hills. The “Umberto Nobile” museum is located exactly in the middle of the old town, very close to the Nobile house. Unfortunately, due restoration work, the building is at the moment closed for public visits. The mayor in Lauro, Vito Bussone is sure to hang over the work a few more months from now.

Our collaboration with the local museum and its Scientific Director, Colonnello Ferrante (who

worked with U. Nobile personally), has already started.

Next month, when the local political elections are over, we will officially present the museum project to all the citizens in a public conference. This in order to involve as many collaborators as possible.

The Nobile figure and glamour is still alive and actual in his old land, and our initiative is well considered as a grate opportunity to remark Nobile’s history in his town. Our common project is to share information, reports, opportunity exhibitions etc to be ready for next year.

“Lauro is the home commune of Umberto Nobile, and a part of his childhood home now makes part of the local museum.”



AIRSHIP ME!

By Ingunn Løyning

We have extended our staff. Florella Bianca Cocconi (Milano, Italia) is now working part time at the office, taking care of translations into Italian, relations in France and other things that we do not have the time to cover. Besides Italian, Florella speaks both French and English, and within short time she will attend a course in Norwegian.

Since the project Spitsbergen Airship Museum is an international project, we work in three languages. This means that all work that is done needs to be translated into 2 other languages.

As all other project in the starting phase, we try to work on as many fronts as possible at the same time. The amount of languages involved makes the work load even bigger, and it is a big relief that Florella now takes care of the French part. One of the things



*Florella
Bianca
Cocconi*

she has been working on is contact with [Jean Louis Etienne](#). He will in 2008 (he hopes) pass Svalbard in an airship, going from France crossing the North Pole to Alaska.

Further Florella is in touch with the former “Latham” factory, which is situated in the home commune of Guilbaud (the pilot of the “Latham”) Caudebec-en-Caux, France.

Svalbard, EU, ministers and us

By Ingunn Løyning

The current of warm water, the Golf Stream, makes it possible to arrive in Svalbard year round. Hence there are permanent settlements with well developed infrastructure; the archipelago is the only site in the Arctic where visitors can arrive the whole year, either for visiting or for research purposes.

The Norwegian State desires to present Svalbard as a showcase and Norway tries to preserve the archipelago as pristine as it is today.

This, in combination with the growing international collaboration regarding the northern areas, climate and so on, makes Svalbard a meeting place in respect of national representation.

This means that ministers from Europe and the rest of the world, on a more or less regular basis,

are to be found visiting the archipelago. Now in May there was a delegation consisting of amongst others the Norwegian minister of justice, Knut Storberget and the commissary of justice in the EC for the last 5 years, the Italian Franco Frattini, arrived. They stayed for a couple of days in Ny Ålesund, the research platform at 78 degrees north, and then came to Longyearbyen. In Longyearbyen a part of their program was a presentation of the Spitsbergen Airship Museum.

Frattini (who has visited Svalbard as a tourist 2 times earlier) and his group showed great interest in the museum project. Needless to say; for the project it is a great opportunity to have the possibility to make connections in higher political spheres.

"Comitato" (committee)

By Roberto Sparapani

A few weeks ago the ["Associazione Italia al Polo Nord"](#) (the association Italia at the North Pole) submitted a proposal to the Italian Minister of Culture, Francesco Rutelli, to build a National Committee to celebrate the Polar Exploration in the frame of the IPY, and applied for funding. The committee is called "COMITATO PER LA VALORIZZAZIONE DELLE ESPLORAZIONI POLARI NELL'AMBITO DELL'ANNO POLARE INTERNAZIONALE 2008 (INTERNATIONAL POLAR YEAR - IPY)" (committee for celebrating the polar explorations in the frame of IPY 2007-2008).

There are many initiatives included in the project. The aim is to collect all experience and potential cultural capacity in Italy. Not all of this activity and potential is well coordinated or published.

Jean-Louis Etienne & "Total Pole Airship"

By Florella B. Cocconi

Jean-Louis Etienne is a French adventurer who has had quite some adventures both in the Arctic and the Antarctica.

His next adventure is to fly over the North Pole in 2008 in nothing less than an airship.

In April Jean-Louis was in Svalbard for a couple of days, and Stefano and Florella met him over lunch.

The meeting was organized in collaboration with Armelle Querelle, one of the responsible in his staff, Septième Continent, who put us in direct contact with Jean-Louis.

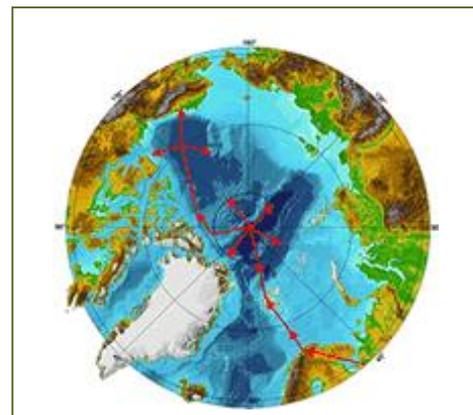
During lunch we discussed ways to finance the projects, and a possible collaboration. Etienne is very positive to making a temporary exhibition, for SAM to exhibit, about his results from the expedition in 2008.



Of particular interest for the committee is the Spitsbergen Airship Museum; the official opening and the how the project aims towards imparting knowledge and interest about the Polar Regions to the younger generations. This will be one of the major targets.

In September/October the Minister of Culture should give his response, and hopefully funding.

In any case, in October the committee is planning the "Airship me! day" in Rome. The [CNR](#) (Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche) that has recently given its official support (Patrocínio) to Spitsbergen Airship Museum is deputized to host this meeting in their main offices in Rome.



[To the North Pole in an Airship in 2008](#)

He is also positive to share his different experiences with SAM, and given us the authorization to use his name when presenting the project Spitsbergen Airship Museum.

After an hour and a half of good discussions, we left each other agreeing to keep in contact, to exchange updates, and a possible new meeting in 2008 when he according to plan arrives in Svalbard with the airship.

LA7 (Italian television)

By Roberto Sparapani



Spitsbergen Airship Museum on TV

The Italian interest for the Polar Regions is higher than ever before, and still increasing. Hence, the media has an increased interest. Every year more and more TV crews arrive in Svalbard (in 2007 we have counted three Italian TV-crews so far).

In April there was the LA7, the third largest Italian network, mainly dedicated to cultural and political entertainment. Massimo Mapelli, one of the more active reporters in LA7, has made a reportage from Svalbard and Greenland, trying to document the actual situation in the Arctic in respect of climate change and native people's adaptation to these changes.

The production includes several interviews with local experts on climate, as well as social affairs. Also Svalbard is documented, in respect of both history and nature.

The project Spitsbergen Airship Museum is presented as the connection between the past, the present and the future of Italian activity on Svalbard.

The reportage is about 45 minutes long and a preview was transmitted Sunday the May 27th, in the evening.

The whole program will be transmitted in June, and we will give the details regarding the date as soon as we know.

"You are sitting at my table tonight" By Ingunn Løyning

At the Aviation Museum in Bodø in February, attending the annual seminar, on my way to find the coffee stand, someone stopped me in the stairway. My attention was immediately captured by the presentation of the most delicate and original business card I had (and have) ever seen. The hand presenting me this piece of art belonged (and still does!) to Arild Kjaeraas.

Kjaeraas was at Svalbard in the 1970ties, working for the Norwegian Mapping Institute, and told me that he have since then had a passionate relationship to the archipelago.

Kjaeraas established the company ["Proinor"](#) in 2004, making models of planes, trains and dollhouses. He has published a series of booklets called

"Profiles in Norway", containing copies of instruction manuals, color profiles, scale drawings, technical descriptions and a brief history. In addition he has a passion for polar aviation.

After making me aware of his interests and activities regarding planes and the arctic, Kjaeraas said: "You are sitting at my table during dinner tonight!".

This was the start of a collaboration that is on the edge of being formalized by SAM ordering a Fokker, a Junker and a Savoia-Marchetti 55 in the scale 1:12. Later we will also order a Latham (1:12) and a "Norge" (1:18).

Kjaeraas is headed for the Arctic again!

(But who shall make the boats, Arild??)



Arild Kjaeraas
and some of a Tupolev TB3

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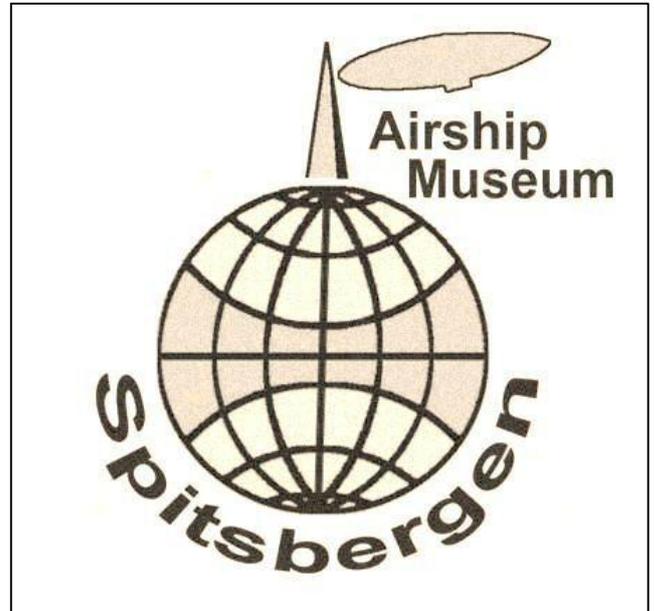
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Motto:
AIRSHIP ME!



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