

A NEW OSEBERG SHIP IS BEING BUILT IN TØNSBERG



SEE HISTORY
EVOLVE





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HISTORY IN THE MAKING

Almost 1200 years have passed since the Oseberg ship was buried in a mound in the Slagen Valley outside Tønsberg, and it's more than a hundred years since it again saw the light of day. Now it's being resurrected once more.

This is taking place in full public view, in the midst of Tønsberg's busy harbour, easy accessible for anyone who wants to follow the exciting work of building an archaeological replica of our largest national icon.

Building the ship using the same methods and tools as the Vikings did. This is literally history in the making and you can touch and feel it!

Volunteers are welcome to join our team of boat builders, wood carvers, smiths, carpenters, textile workers and history buffs for a short or longer time. Together we can contribute to the ongoing history of the Oseberg ship.

That's what we are doing these days, in the heart of the Viking world - Tønsberg and Vestfold.

Join us in writing history!

Einar Chr. Erlingsen
Chairman of the Board
The New Oseberg Ship Foundation



TØNSBERG YEAR 834

QUEEN OR WITCH?

In the spring of that year, strange things were going on in the Slagen Valley, a few kilometres east and north of present-day Tønsberg. A beautifully decorated ship was being pulled up the little river at the bottom of the valley to its final destination in the middle of a field.

The ship was placed in a ditch and strange things were happening in the months that followed. At some point two dead women were carried carefully on board the ship and placed in made-up beds in a newly built burial chamber mid ships. To accompany them in the grave were various household goods and other daily necessities as well as sleds, beautifully woven tapestries and even a richly decorated wagon.

Some time during that summer the rear half of the ship was covered by a hemispherical grave mound. The front of the ship remained uncovered. We can only wonder at the ceremonies taking place around the ship and the women. Animals were sacrificed and both horses and dogs were placed in the grave with the women, before also the fore ship was covered by the mound in the course of the autumn.

Who were the two women who were given such a magnificent funeral? We don't know this. However, new examinations of their remains have revealed that one woman was around 50 when she died, the other about 80. The older woman has been very short and severely arthritic and probably very hunch-backed. A hormonal imbalance may also have given her a lot of facial hair (beard).



In the autumn of 2007, the remains of the two women in the Oseberg mound were excavated again in the hope of finding out who and what they were.

(Photo: Einar Chr. Erlingsen)

After the excavation, the Oseberg ship and the other artefacts were brought to Oslo for conservation and restoration. They are on show at the Viking Ships Museum at Bygdøy, along with the ships from Gokstad and Tune. A fourth Viking ship, the Klåstad ship, can be viewed at the Slottsfjell museum in Tønsberg.



From the excavation of the Oseberg find the summer of 1904. (Photo: The Museum of Cultural History)

TØNSBERG YEAR 1904

BURIED TREASURE

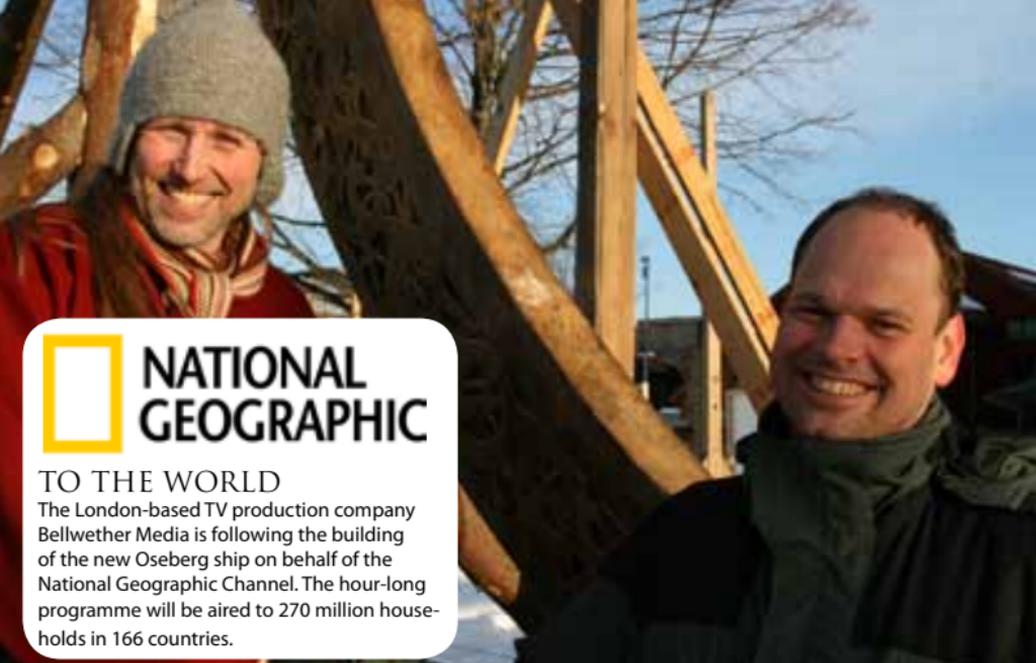
For a number of years, farmer Oskar Rom had wondered at the huge mound in one of his fields. People used to say it was haunted, while some believed victims of the Black Plague were buried there. Yet others whispered of hidden treasure.

In the summer of 1903, Mr. Rom decided to investigate matters. He had only been digging a short time when he discovered a piece of beautifully carved wood. He realized that this was a most unusual find and decided to pay professor of archaeology Gabriel Gustafson at the University of Oslo's Department of Antiquities a visit.

The excavations began on June 13 in 1904 and were soon to show sensational results. In the course of just three months professor Gustafson and his team uncovered the ship, the grave goods and the other contents of the mound.

Thanks to the outstanding conditions much of the grave's contents were very well preserved. The carvings on the ship and the many artefacts were just as fresh as when the mound was built over them; even though the ship and its fittings had been pressed together and contorted from being weighed down under tonnes of earth, rocks, clay and turf.

The Oseberg find is one of the most significant archaeological finds of all time. When it comes to understanding Scandinavian Viking times the find may well be compared to the significance the Tut-Ankh-Amon's untouched grave had for Egyptologists a few decades later.



**NATIONAL
GEOGRAPHIC**

TO THE WORLD

The London-based TV production company Bellwether Media is following the building of the new Oseberg ship on behalf of the National Geographic Channel. The hour-long programme will be aired to 270 million households in 166 countries.

Boat builder Geir Røvik and TV producer Malcolm Neaum from Bellwether Media.
(Photo: Einar Chr. Erlingsen)

TØNSBERG 2010 – 2012 THE NEW SHIP

On June 17 2010, a new era began in the exciting history of the Oseberg ship. The building of an exact replica of the most beautiful – and the oldest – ship from Viking times began.

The New Oseberg Ship Foundation is heading the project. The Foundation cooperates with professional environments such as the Museum of Cultural History/The Viking Ships Museum in Oslo, the Viking Ships Museum in Roskilde, Denmark, NTNU/Marintek (the Norwegian University of Science and Technology) as well as leading experts in traditional boat building in Norway and Denmark. The project is funded by among others Vestfold County Council, the municipality of Tønsberg, a number of foundations, local businesses and private citizens.

Earlier copies of the Oseberg ship have not been very seaworthy. One of the main goals of the new project has therefore been to investigate and check



Making thread for weaving the 90 sq m woollen sail. (Photo: Håvard Solerød)



AWARDED

In the spring of 2011, the local newspaper Tønsbergs Blad awarded The New Oseberg Ship Foundation a prize of NOK 100.000, for spreading engagement and happiness in the local community.

The building work takes place outdoors year round. (Photo: Luis Malibrán)

some of the decisions made when assembling the ship in 1904. When the ship was taken out of the mound it was in two thousand pieces that were put together in a gigantic jigsaw puzzle. The experts of the day had to make some calculated guesses in their efforts. All in all they did a fantastic job, but they also made some mistakes.

The pre-project for the new Oseberg ship has involved laser and computer scanning of the original, visual checks and measurements and new drawings have been made. A model was built on a scale of 1:10 and tested in the ship model tank at Marintek in Trondheim. The results are interesting: they confirm that the Oseberg ship must have been more seaworthy than assumed previously. We will not get the final answer to this until the ship has been launched and we begin to test its rowing and sailing qualities in 2012.

In addition to the ongoing research the ship will also be accessible for the general public as an example of living history. After having been absent for more than 100 years, the Oseberg ship is about to return to Tønsberg – and in better shape than she has been for the last 1200 years!

WELCOME TO TØNSBERG!

Quality Hotel Tønsberg is one of the new Oseberg ship's chief sponsors. The ship is being built right outside the hotel, right on the town's pulsating pier area.

Telephone: + 47 33 00 41 00
E-mail: q.tonsberg@choice.no
www.choicehotels.no

Tønsberg Vandrerhjem (hostel) is another staunch supporter. In 2009 the hostel was elected the "World's friendliest hostel and the best in Europe" on Hostelling International's web pages.

Telephone: + 47 33 31 21 75
E-mail: tonsberg@hihostels.no
www.hihostels.no/no/Vandrerhjem/Ostlandet/Tonsberg

The Tønsberg guides organise group tours at the building site.

Telephone: + 47 92 21 21 53
www.tonsbergguidene.no

Tønsberg Tourist Information has more information on things to see and do, accommodation etc.

Telephone: + 47 48 06 33 33
E-mail: info@visittonsberg.com
www.visittonsberg.com



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The building site is attracting a lot of interest. A school class visited the site with homemade viking-suites.

(Photo: Einar Chr. Erlingsen)