

## Back in Owl Notch 44 years later

**On 6 July 1969, 19-year-olds John and Gordon Stainforth started up the Fiva route. The trip was a nightmare and the backdrop for the award-winning book "Fiva - an adventure that went wrong."**

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**Rauma:** Writer, philosopher, film director and rock veteran Gordon Stainforth from Derbyshire in England has been a guest and speaker at this year's Mountain Festival in Åndalsnes. On Tuesday night he drew an audience of more than 200 to a lecture on his life as a climber and his ascent of the Fiva route in 1969.

Two days later came some of the best summer weather of the year and the way was clear for a return to the scene of those dramatic experiences of 44 years ago. *Romsdals Budstikke* joined [the team] and we also had the experience and local knowledge of climber Bjorn Bergsvik as our mountain guide. This came in handy, for it is some years since the two British rock veterans and the journalist were sprightly 19-year-olds!

**The climb.** Our route started from Stigrøra and approached the Trolltindene from the back. Gordon and John wanted to have a reunion with the airy "Owl" notch where the Fiva route emerges. They also hoped they might reach the summit of Store Trolltind for the first time in their lives.

After an hour on the trail in Step Bottom and up scree towards Frokostplassen and Stabbeskaret, the Trolltindene looms up.

- What an amazing view!

**Near death.** Gordon and John are excited by the wild and savage mountain scenery. They point and speak in chorus about their grim memories of when they were about to die, at first down the climbing route when they fell while on the rock face but were stopped by a miracle of a snow bank, and later when they went the wrong way down Storgrovfjellet Cirque and were near death yet again through hunger and exhaustion.

It turned out well in the end, but it was a close thing, as Gordon so masterfully portrays in his book that's been greeted with jubilation by reviewers and won the award for the "Best Book of Mountain and Wilderness Literature" at the prestigious Banff Mountain Festival in Canada 2012.

**Owl Notch.** Passing Troll Spire, the Old Man, the Old Hag, and Brura Notch, we then leave the ordinary route up Store Trolltind. We go up to the precise finishing point of the "Fiva route", a hole in the ridge above the Owl Notch.

We spend a lot of time up there. John and Gordon are visibly moved when they look at the details and remember when they emerged from the abyss of the Fiva Route exactly 44 years and 4 days before.

We shudder a bit all together when we put ourselves out on the edge and look down onto the place where the young and inexperienced climbers "got into very deep water" when they visited Romsdal for the first time in the summer of 1969.

**Finally at the top.** Continuing up to Store Trolltind. From the 1788 meter high peak, we obtain both a beautiful view of the Romsdal mountains and such a "near-Troll Wall Experience" as it's possible for most of us to get.

Then there was just the last half of the trip remaining to be done. It was late evening before we got back down to Stigrøra. Happy to have experienced and looked over Romsdal's wildest mountain scenery from its "tame" side.

- The home of the Trolls was kind to us today!

[Picture captions:]

**Store Trolltind:** To the right in the picture; to the left is the Bridegroom. Midway between is Owl Notch.

**Owl Notch 11 July 2013:** Gordon Stainforth, John Stainforth and Bjorn Bergsvik by escape hole of "Fiva Route" in the "Owl" Notch between the Bridegroom and Store

Trolltind. The notorious climbing route emerges through the hole formed by the large jammed boulder where John sits. It is 44 years and 4 days since the two English climbers reached the summit of "Fiva route" after a dramatic experience that gave rise to Gordon Stainforth's award-winning book "Fiva – an adventure that went wrong." All photos: Iver Gjelstenli

**Troll Path:** Steep scree and loose rock, and the occasional Troll (or is that Arne Randers Heen?) lead to a perfect path.

**Grufs:** John Stainforth just beneath Owl Notch. Further down in the gully with unstable loose scree we see his twin brother Gordon.

**Trolltindene:** Gordon Stainforth approaching Troll Master and the Old Hag, two of the most characteristic pinnacles.

**Stone:** "Here I sat down to change the dressing on my knee," says Gordon Stainforth. He'll never forget the moment when they emerged from the rock face to the "friendly side" of the Trolltindene.

**Store Trolltind:** Gordon and John Stainforth finally on top of Store Trolltind, 44 years and 4 days after their long and dramatic ascent of the Fiva Route in 1969.