



# Walking and working together



**ASCENT teams from Trolltunga and Mournes and their guests**

TROLLTUNGA PATH

SELJESTAD  
RECREATIONAL AREA  
AND  
BUERDALEN VALLEY

ODDA

NORWAY

## A working partnership across borders – the value of practical study visits

*In September 2018, the team from ASCENT Mournes visited Odda and the ASCENT Trolltunga team for a 5 day study visit with the purpose of seeing for themselves the impact of the 90 000 visitors on the site, the work that has been carried out there and to suggest and demonstrate techniques drawing on their own experience.*

The Trolltunga team put together a varied programme for the week which included hiking the length of the Trolltunga trail, discussing solutions for various pressure points along the route, working side by side and completing two trials in two different sites. A thematic seminar was also arranged, with attendees from the local community in Odda and including interested parties from Bergen and northern Hordaland. In addition to carrying out physical work which will

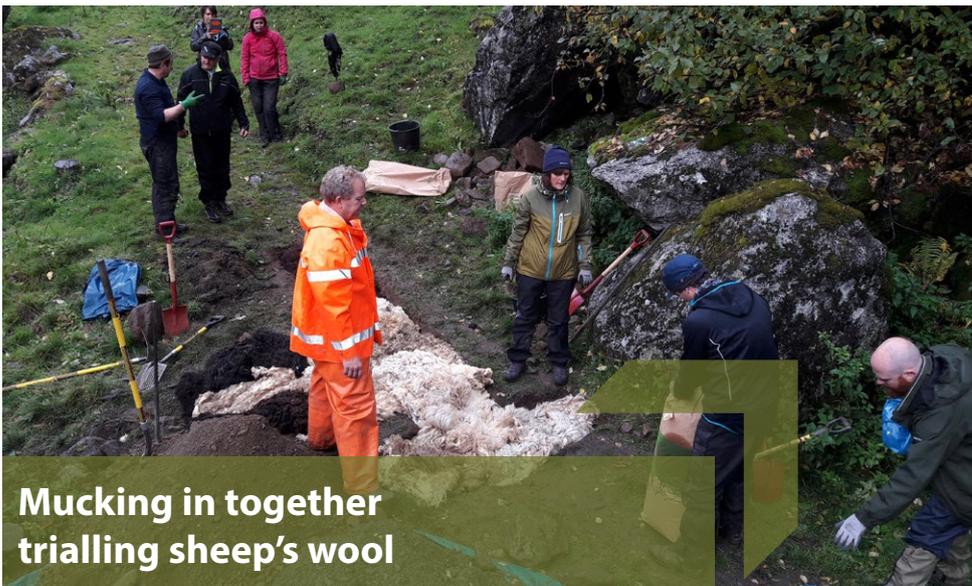
be a real benefit to the Trolltunga path, one of the key benefits of such a visit is the forming of a network between the skilled organisations on both sides. Having spent several days together, the two teams and visiting parties have established a base of mutual trust and understanding which forms a good starting point for future cooperation. During one of the trials and for the thematic seminar there was the opportunity to bring in relevant organisations from outside

the immediate local area in Odda. Valuable connections were made and this interaction sparked plans for future cooperation that would not have been obvious from the original application and project plan. The study visit, with an emphasis of practical work side by side as well as the theoretical approach, demonstrated the importance of establishing a solid and trusting relationship between the practitioners in order to fully benefit from the shared expertise.

# Outcome

From the ASCENT Trolltunga perspective, the study trip delivered several valuable results. The connection established by the two teams will lead to a reciprocal study trip to the Mournes by the Trolltunga team in order to learn more about the Mourne way of managing paths. As a direct result of the discussions in the thematic seminar, plans are also being made for a study trip specifically to learn about the volunteer network and we are also considering whether an exchange work experience/volunteer network might be possible as part of the ASCENT legacy, involving DNT the Norwegian Trekking Association. Connections were made with the Norwegian Heathland Centre, with plans for the Mournes team to visit to learn more about their heathland management practise. The visit to

Seljestad recreational area allowed the Mournes team to see the Norwegian approach to building simple two-plank plank bridges across long stretches of marshy area. Two trials were carried out. The first trial showcased two different styles of drain built on a section of the Trolltunga path badly eroded by water. The second trial was a day dedicated to trialling the use of sheep's wool as a building material trialled in the Buerdalen Valley. The thematic seminar was attended by approx. 20 people and included presentations on Nepalese Sherpa building technique, DNT's network of cabins and trails in Norway, the economic effect on the Trolltunga visitors to the Odda community and the organisation and management of the Mourne Heritage Trust's activities.



**Mucking in together trialling sheep's wool**

## FURTHER INFORMATION

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## Key Findings & Learning Points

While building techniques can be learnt through short courses, webinars and literature, the key to a successful learning/teaching relationship is to establish an environment of mutual trust and understanding between the participants. By forming a trusting relationship, all parties involved have an open mind and feel confident that the practises demonstrated are relevant and comes from a place of goodwill.

Spending several days together and allowing for some space in the itinerary for social interaction allows for discussions to flow, which in turn reveals new opportunities for partnerships and cooperation. Comparing techniques, tools and demonstrating skills and willingness to work hard provided a unique environment for mutual learning and new ideas.