



Four generations of roads to beautiful Uttakleiv

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Authors Eldar Stig Andersen from Uttakleiv, on the left, and NPRA Cultural Heritage Manager Siv Annie Henriksen, on the right, on a site visit along the road around the mountain together with his brother Ivar Andersen and her colleague Ann Kristin Engh. As children, the brothers had been told stories from when the island of Tåa, in the background, was inhabited. (Photo: Håkon Aurlien)

Four generations of roads to beautiful Uttakleiv

By Siv Annie Henriksen og Eldar Stig Andersen

Norway has a very long coastline, and much of it is in the north. On the northwestern side of Vestvågøy in Lofoten lies Uttakleiv, today a small hamlet with just over 20 inhabitants. Here we find four generations of roads close to each other, built over a long time span and for different purposes. At Uttakleiv and in the surrounding hamlets there used to be a much larger population, bustling with life and with many visitors during the fishing season. The sea and the fish resources were important for the population along the coast. The sea was the only travel route, and the boat and the boathouse were central to everyday life. But in rough weather, an option for safer travel was needed. Nature imposed its limitations, but thanks to unyielding efforts from the locals, the roads were built.

The landscape of steep mountains around Uttakleiv made it difficult to find suitable terrain for road construction.

We know of four roads between Haukland and Uttakleiv, including today's county road that runs in a tunnel under the Mannen mountain. Road construction has been possible due to the drive and hard work of the locals, both with regard to presenting their demands for a road and the actual construction of the roads.

BACK IN TIME

The population of Lofoten and Northern Norway in general have been dependent on the fisheries for their livelihood for a long time. Fish and other resources in the sea were important, and the settlements were previously much more concentrated on the outer coast than they are today. People wanted to live near the rich fishing grounds, just as we today want to live

within close range of shops and services.

Uttakleiv stretches out like a lush green mat between steep and jagged mountains, with the open sea and the horizon to the west/northwest. The flat land was well suited for settlement, and made it possible to engage in farming in addition to fishing. The mountains surrounding the hamlet provide shelter from the wind and weather. At Æsholman in the open sea off Uttakleiv, there used to be a lot of activity, with a number of fishing huts and a number of permanent residents.

Fishing was the most important industry, with large shoals of cod coming from the north towards Lofoten in win-



Fishing hut and fish drying rack at Æsholman around the year 1900. Here Eldar's ancestors had their fishing huts. (Photo from the Norwegian Coastal Administration)



View from the cart road over the lush grassland that is Uttakleiv. (Photo: Håkon Aurlien)

ter. Cod migrates from the Barents Sea to spawn in Vestfjorden in February-March, which forms the basis for the annual fishing season. The fisheries were the main basis for settlement and resulted in a large influx of seasonal workers.

The settlement at Uttakleiv can be traced all the way back to the Stone Age. There is a medieval farm mound at Hjellbakken, in the northern part of Uttakleiv. There has probably been continuous settlement here for thousands of years. The cultural layers in the farm mound, unco-

vered through archaeological excavation, show layers upon layers of remains of activity. Artefacts and radiocarbon datings show activity in the Stone Age, Iron Age and Middle Ages, right up to the 17th century. Findings of flint may indicate activity in the Old Stone Age, and dating has yielded results around 3,500 years BC, which is the New Stone Age. In addition, asbestos ceramics were found that date back to the period after the Stone Age, the Early Metal Age, as well as graves from the Iron Age – all in the same place as the medi-



Profiles from the archaeological excavation of the farm mound in 2008. The picture on the right shows layers upon layers of remains of settlement and activity in the same place. (Photo: Tor-Kristian Storvik, Nordland County Administration)



eval farm mound. In recorded history, all the buildings were gathered here in a so-called building cluster. Today, there are two farms with several buildings clustered together on the farm mound.

Iron Age graves have also been found in several places at Uttakleiv, with skeleton parts and with finds such as brooches, boat rivets and spinning wheels.

Written sources speak of settlements from the 17th century and up to the present day. In Aslak Bolt's cadastre from the 1430s, it is stated that it was the renowned Torget family in Helgeland that owned Uttakleiv, and most of the people at Uttakleiv descend from the Torget family, with famous historical figures such as Hårek of Tjøtta, Einar Thambarskelfir and the Earls of Lade.

The place has been attractive, with many natural resources on which to sustain a livelihood. Millhouse operation and kelp burning are also activities that have been carried out, in addition to agriculture and fishing.

THE SEA ROUTE TO UTTAKLEIV

Most travelling and transport took place

by sea until the 20th century. From the middle of the 19th century, there were steamships in scheduled service along the entire coast, with regular port calls.

For the locals, the boat and the boat-house were central to everyday life. The usual sea route ran along the shipping lane northwards; to Vesterålen, further north or east towards Borgevær and Borgepollen, to Gimsøya and further onwards to Austvågøy. Towards the south, the natural boat route would be through Nappstraumen, from where one could get to Skullbru through Offersøystraumen, southwards along the coast or further west towards the islands of Flakstadøya, Moskenesøy, Værøy and Røst.

The sea was a travel route, but when the weather was rough, and conditions became too difficult with cold winds, drifting snow, large waves and strong undercurrents, it was necessary to have an alternative for travel and transport. A travel route on land was needed. The only possible route on land ran over the mountain, and the natural choice was the valley between the peaks of Mannen and Tuva (Himmeltindan).

Bronze brooch from around the year 900, found at Uttakleiv around 1880. The ornaments are of the same type as on the Gokstad ship. (Photo: Eldar S. Andersen)



One of a number of kelp kilns along the beach. The people of Uttakleiv had a period of about 50 years when they made very good money from burning kelp. Eldar's grandfather Jørgen Andersen explained that agriculture provided 1/3, the Lofoten fishery 1/3 and kelp burning 1/3 of the Uttakleiv hamlet's annual income. The iodine factory at Stamsund bought all the ashes and used them for iodine production. (Photo: Eldar S. Andersen)





Map showing the four roads to Uttakleiv. Road No. 1 = Pack horse over the mountain, in use until 1902. Road No. 2 = Horse and wagon over the mountain, drivable from 17 October 1902. Road No. 3 = New road around the Veggan mountain, opened in the autumn of 1947. Road No. 4 = Tunnel through the Mannen mountain, opened on 3 October 1998.

ROADS OVER THE MOUNTAIN

The oldest known travel route is the bridleway, or pack animal trail, running over the mountain (road 1 on the map).

The trail followed the natural and easiest route on foot or by horse. In winter, sledges may also have been used. One may assume that the same route has been used way back in time. The name Uttakleiv may be derived from "utan kleifar", meaning "off the steep hill". The name has been spelt in a number of other ways over the years: Vtan kleiff (Aslak Bolt's cadastre from the 1430s, later becoming Uden Kleff, then Ytterkleff, and around the 1720s Yttre Klev.

The bridleway partly follows the same line as the later cart road over the mountain, but has a slightly straighter and steeper line up from Uttakleiv and from Haukland. The oldest bridleway is not clearly visible in the terrain, and the drawn-in route is somewhat uncertain, but the oldest people alive today confirm that this route was a bridleway.

When heavy goods were to be transported in spring and summer, the goods were carried by pack horses across the mountain. In winter and on days with a lot of snow, only the sea route remained open. Except on stormy days: Then the hamlet of Uttakleiv would be totally iso-



There are no photos from the construction of the road over the mountain. Here is a roadworks team at work on a cross-border national road further south in Nordland, around 1900.

The road is aligned with sharp bends, adapted to the terrain between rocks and boulders. (Photo: Siv Annie Henriksen)

lated and it was important to have stored enough food, fishing equipment and other necessities.

In the 1950s and 1960s, Eldar's mother (92) experienced that roads would be closed for weeks at a time. She still feels the anxiety of perhaps not having ensured sufficient supplies in the fall, such as flour, sugar and other foodstuffs that can be stored throughout the winter, either as frozen or dry foods.

Eventually, it became necessary to widen the bridleway and build up a road that could be used by a horse and wagon. Improvements or extensions of the path were made in several stages. A new and more accessible route was chosen over the mountain, marked as number 2 on the map. Both Nordland amt (county) and Buksnes herred (rural municipality) contributed to the construction of the road.

The road was staked out by oppsynsmann (warden) Ulstad in 1896. In Buksnes Rural Municipality's negotiations on the road plan in September 1897, it was proposed that NOK 400 of the county's road funds be spent on Uttakleiv-Haukland, on the condition that the farmers would provide labour for a similar amount. The municipality would add the same amount. The local population in effect carried out the actual construction. At that time, it was common for farm owners to have a duty to contribute to road construction, and the farmers had to bring their own tools.

The work took several years, and the new and drivable road was completed just after the turn of the century. The first flour sack was transported over the mountain by horse and wagon from Haukland by Franz Andreassen Uttakleiv on 17 Octo-



ber 1902. The final improvements were completed in 1907. The road over the mountain was in use until a new road was completed in 1947.

The road was built as a chaussée, which was the prevailing road construction principle in the latter half of the 19th century. A characteristic feature of such roads was that they followed the terrain, without too steep ascents. The cart road over the mountain therefore zigzags across the steep sections, with many sharp bends following the terrain among rocks and boulders. On both sides of the mountain, the road is supported by dry-stone walls stone of varying heights, and with stone-built culverts. Along the road, rows of guard stones have been placed to form guard rails. The builders used local rock



The road is built up in the terrain with dry walls, and lined with guard stones. (Photo: Ann Kristin Engh)

materials from boulders and rocks along the road. Quarrying and cutting stones was heavy labour, and enormous efforts were invested by the people of Uttakleiv. The ideal was that the road should not be too steep, because then it would be too hard for horses to pull their wagons. But the road across the gorge still had steep sections, and the horses only managed to

pull half loads. And in winter, the road was not always usable.

The steepest part is on the way up from Haukland, especially at the top on the Haukland side. Here the walls are close together and the distance between

Examples of functional culverts made of stone. (Photo: Siv Annie Henriksen (left) and Håkon Aurlien)



The upper part of the cart road, overlooking Haukland. At the top right we see the trail used by hikers on their way up to the top of the Mannen mountain. (Photo: Ann Kristin Engh)

the bends get shorter and shorter as you approach the top. A small stream is led through culvert structures in the wall. Walking here, one can easily imagine the labour and skills it must have taken to put up these walls in the steep terrain by hand, and by the use of tools such as digging bars, sledgehammers and stone chisels. Further down towards Haukland there are lengthier loops of roads with sharp bends at the ends, where the road is also supported by stone walls.

At the top, the road levels out, and the road runs on the west side of a small lake, Lomtjønna. Here the entire area is rather wet, and stone embankments have been built to carry the road across the wet parts.

Over the years, many of the rock formations and the experience of the wild nature along the road have inspired sto-

Masonry culvert under one of the road walls, at the upper side of Haukland. Notice the stone slabs that have begun to slide out. (Photo: Ann Kristin Engh)





The walls on the steepest section over Haukland. (Photo: Ann Kristin Engh)

ries about trolls and underworld creatures:

Sitting at the top of the mountain, looking out over Haukland Beach, the hamlet of Haukland and the Veggen mountain (“the Wall”), young girls would be enjoying themselves on a nice summer day. They were responsible for herding the sheep down to Uttakleiv to be milked there. Sheep’s milk is made into strong and nutritious cheese. Here you can scan a QR code (explained later in this article) to hear the tune to “Seterjentens Søndag” (The Herd Girl’s Sunday) by Ole Bull, a relative of the Uttakleiv people.

In Trollkroken (“Trolls’ corner”) one would imagine the trolls coming out of the mountain, between the boulders. Here you can use the QR code to hear the musical piece “Dovregubbens Hall” (Hall of the Mountain King) – which ends with a “thump, thump, thump”, signalling that the troll is coming out of the mountain.

At the top there are rock formations that are associated with a story about the underworld:

“Old Auntie” from Uttakleiv had been to visit relatives at Haukland. As she was walking home along the old bridleway over the mountain and came to the highest point on the route, it was natural to take a little

break. She sat down with her back against a small rock and in front of her there were several other rocks lying closely together. The wind came in from the south and made a little whistling sound between the rocks. “Oohoo–oohoo – oohoo”. Old Auntie, who was chronically afraid of ghosts and underworld beings, was horrified and rushed down to the hamlet of Uttakleiv and told people that the underworld people were up in the mountains. The young ones, in particular, were of course scared. Then a few weeks later, the old vicar was giving an outdoor sermon at Uttakleiv. Everything went well and people came from near and far to attend the old vicar’s sermon. When the vicar’s party were returning home, they took a natural break at the top of the mountain before descending to Haukland. Just like Old Auntie had done, the old vicar sat down leaning his back against a rock, at the same place where she had been sitting a few weeks earlier. The vicar’s party then proceeded to walk down to the hamlet and home. But then it so happened that the old vicar fell severely ill and was bedridden for several weeks. Word of this, of course, reached Old Auntie, and then she would tell a new story: The underworld people didn’t like it that the old vicar was sitting above their heads, so they came up to the surface and smote him. This caused even more fear among the children, and they would not dare to walk across the mountain at dark.



The road around the mountain allows a magnificent view of the scenery at Uttakleiv. (Photo: Håkon Aurlien)

THE ROAD AROUND THE MOUNTAIN

When cars were introduced, a better road was needed as the 20th century progressed. The cart road over the mountain was too narrow, and the bends too sharp. It was not drivable by car, and improving it was not considered cost-effective. A new road with easier accessibility was desired, and it was routed along the sea, around the Veggen mountain. At this point in time, Uttakleiv had 130 inhabitants.

The planning of the road around the mountain started in 1933. The plan was to use local funds, and a national government contribution of about 1/3. The national funds were so-called relief funds from the social budget, to aid unemployed people and seasonal workers. This was a system introduced during the depression in the interwar period. Work on the road began in the late 1930s, as relief work. But the voluntary efforts of the local people, who were eager to have a new road, started earlier. Documentation of the progress

is carved into rocks along the road, with the years 1932, 1934 and 1935. 500 metres from Uttakleiv towards Haukland, Eldar’s father climbed a ladder up on a large rock that was blasted into two parts. There he carved the year 1934, and this is how we know how far they had built the road at this point.

The roadwork was demanding and formed a particular challenge for the local people. They had to carry out this work in addition to being fully occupied during the Lofoten fishing season, the ploughing and sowing season, and the harvest or hay-making season. It was only at the end of August each year that they were ready to work on the road. But then they were eager to take part, and many gained valuable experience through the roadwork.

Sigfred Olsen was a blacksmith and stone crusher, and Sigvard Olsen was foreman. In addition, Johan Adolfsen, Helmer Bjørnsen, Leif Leonhardsen, Andor Andersen, Lars Andersen, Hans Andersen, Cato Andersen, Toralf Ander-



Kurt Hansen from Uttakleiv showing us the carved date and the year 1935. This is as far as the work on the road around Veggen had come, and the milestone was celebrated. (Photo: Håkon Aurlien)

sen and many others worked on the road, all having their own specific tasks in a well organised work system. The women also took part, by ensuring that the men always had good food handed out at Veggen and by keeping the men in clean and warm clothes. Some of the women also took part in the horse driving and worked along with the men on the road.

Work on the road continued during the Second World War, but the locals carried out a quiet form of resistance through a kind of go-slow protest. The work was thus greatly delayed during the war. The occupying power used considerable pressure, and they often came across the mountain on horseback or on motorcycles. Then the alarm would go off on the farms, and illegal radio devices had to be hidden away.

The road was fully completed in the autumn of 1947, but already in 1943 it was used by German military vehicles with iron wheels.

Veggen is a very steep mountain, and probably derives its name from the fact that it is like a wall plunging straight into the sea towards the west. There was almost no room for a road here, and parts of the rock had to be blasted away. The

road was built on embankments along the shoreline. From the road there is a great view out to the open sea, which also makes the road exposed to the wind and weather.

The new road meant easier access to and from the village, and schoolchildren could now be shuttled, first by taxi, later by bus, instead of having to walk the long and strenuous route over two mountains to get to and from school.

It also became easier to transport goods, both what the locals needed to buy and goods to be transported out, such as raw materials from fisheries and agriculture. Now the milk could be delivered to the dairy factory at Vestvågøy, which meant a higher and steadier income.

The road along the foot of the steep mountain was very exposed to rockslides and avalanches. In the spring of 1966, there was a large rockslide with huge boulders, and the road was blocked. One of the rocks from the slide is still lying by the edge of the road (photo to the right), and another one twice as large landed in the sea.

Fortunately, no one was injured in the rockslide. The school bus had driven by just before.



The car road around Veggen, on the way from Haukland with a view to Tåa. (Photo: Håkon Aurlien)

The boulder that remained at the edge of the road after the great rockslide in 1966. (Photo: Eldar S. Andersen)



Eldar's story:

When the great rockslide happened in the spring of 1966, I was 9 1/2 years old and went to Valberget school. It was soon decided that we were to ride our bikes to the rockslide area, about 2.5-3.0 kilometres, and then we were to walk across the slide area.

Our bikes would lie there waiting for us until the school day ended in the afternoon. On bad weather days, we were taken there by horse, all of sitting in the dump wagon. On the other side of the rockslide, the school bus would be waiting for us. It had to turn around at Tåa and then reverse the rest of the way to the slide area, about 800-900 metres through a number of sharp and narrow bends.

The same thing would happen on our way home. Then we would be sitting in the bus as it reversed all the way from Tåa to the rockslide area. The youngest ones to walk across the rockslide were Solaug (7) and my brother Ivar Andersen (8). The rest of the schoolchildren who had to cross the rockslide were Karl-Werner (11), Arvid (14), Anne Lise (11), Inger Tove (8 1/2), Per (11), Ståle (12), Steinar (13), Terje (10 1/2) and Tove (12). The big ones would look after the little ones when we walked across the dangerous rockslide area.

There were 11 dairy farmers at Uttakleiv and all had to drive the milk cans up to the landslide site and carry them over the rocks and boulders. The same thing would happen to the empty cans; they had to be picked up on the other side of the rockslide.

This rockslide triggered demands for a tunnel through the Mannen mountain and 32 1/2 years later we were able to celebrate the completed tunnel.

THE TUNNEL

It was gradually realised that the road around the mountain was very unsafe. A new large rockslide occurred in 1968, and during the 1970s and 1980s there were several other rock slides and avalanches on this road. Due to all the slides, the inhabitants of Uttakleiv demanded that an alternative road had to be built, and

it would have to run in a tunnel. But the reply to their demand was that there were insufficient funds, and that it was not possible to prioritise a tunnel to a place with so few inhabitants. The locals did not give up, and with pressure and persuasion, they finally received a promise that planning of the tunnel would be initiated.

Eldar's story continues: Uttakleiv Grendelag – Uttakleiv Community Association - started their tunnel campaign as early as 1966, when they presented their demand for a safer road.

On 10 September 1997, Minister of Transport and Communications Sissel Rønbeck visited Uttakleiv, where she received a warm welcome from young and old in the hamlet. Tables were laid with freshly baked waffles, bread rolls, freshly picked and sugar-stirred berries from Uttakleiv, and coffee.

Ivar Andersen, spokesman for the tunnel project working group, said he found her brave to have made her way out to Uttakleiv. "We've been promised NOK 3.5 million from the municipality and 17.5 million from the county. So now we only need 4 million from national funds. Have you brought something in your suitcase, Sissel Rønbeck?" asked Ivar. "I cannot come here to Uttakleiv and turn you down. If it had been difficult to find 4 million, I would have scraped it from other places on the map. In other words, the money is there," replied Sissel Rønbeck, thus receiving spontaneous applause.

She added that this wasn't actually a budget leak, but that it would be too long for the people of Uttakleiv to wait until 7 October (when the national budget was to be presented). "You have a right to some peace of mind," she said.

Years of struggle for a rockslide-free road to and from Uttakleiv were crowned with success. Since we also know that the tunnel excavation started with the first blast on 7 January 1998, this must be the fastest tunnel ever, 880 metres of fully paved tunnel in just under nine months.

All credit to tunnel excavators EEG

Ras nr 88 på tre år

Idag morgen k et nytt inras over ve i til Uttakleiv i oten. - Ras nmer 88, nor Ivar Ander oppgitt.



Minister of Transport and Communications Sissel Rønbeck came to Uttakleiv and signalled national support for the tunnel project through Mannen, and the fourth road was soon to be reality.

Henriksen and their subcontractors, and to the Norwegian Public Roads Administration.

Ivar Andersen and Ståle Olsen were quoted in the newspaper: "The tunnel helps ensure stable settlement and development of a safe and attractive local environment. An environment where we can enjoy living together as a community and at the same time, regardless of the season, weather and road surface conditions, be able to take part in activities outside of our hamlet. In this connection we would like to thank Minister of Transport and Communications Sissel Rønbeck; County Mayor Alf Ivar Samuelsen, Mayor Frank Rist, and the contractors who built a fantastic tunnel through the Mannen mountain and not least "our Arne". At Uttakleiv we are on first-name terms with the Road Director in Nordland, Arne Løvmo. Ah, and we must not forget to thank ourselves. The members of Uttakleiv Community Association have shown an indomitable spirit and never given up. The result is a safe hamlet and we are very proud of the efforts we have invested."

On Saturday 2 October the tunnel was ceremoniously opened. Arnold Hansen was able to see his granddaughter Lena Hansen cut the ribbon during the opening of the Uttakleiv Tunnel together with Road Director Arne Løvmo.

When the official opening ceremony was over, everyone was invited by the Norwegian Public Roads Administration to take part in a historical walk from Haukland to Uttakleiv. The oldest person to walk the old travel route was Leander Arnljot Endor Andersen, who was born on 20 October 1917 at Uttakleiv. He did this walk 18 days before his 81st birthday. He had walked this route more times than anyone else who walked across the mountain that day.

Eldar's mother, Nilly Karoline Andersen, did the walk eight days before she turned 69, with her three sons and three grandchildren. When everyone arrived at Korsen (the junction at Uttakleiv), they were given a cap by Road Manager Arne



The Uttakleiv tunnel takes the local residents, and with time quite a few tourists, from Haukland Beach to Uttakleiv. The names of the 13 children who got a safer road to school are carved on a memorial plate dated 2 October 1998. (Photo: Håkon Aurlien)

Løvmo, which bore the caption “Uttakleivstunellen 02.10.98”, as well as a pin. Afterwards, a monument was unveiled at the Uttakleiv junction, where the names of all the children at Uttakleiv under the age of 17 are engraved on a plate donated by the Norwegian Public Roads Administration.

Now it was the local people’s turn to invite their fancy guests to take part in a work task before the gala dinner. All were given farmer overalls sponsored by Felleskjøpet at Vestvågøy. Everyone was curious to know what the task would be, and then the keyword was revealed. The task was “Cowhouse work”. The work was to take place in the cowhouse belonging to Ståle Kato Olsen, and the keywords for the tasks to be done were: Muck out, clean teats, attach milking machine cups to four teats per cow, give the animals supper and make sure they are ok.

When the job had been done, accompanied by much laughter and merriment, a celebratory strong drink was served in the milking room. Outside the cowhouse

door, several taxis were waiting to take the guests to Leknes Hotell so that they could take a quick shower and put on their best clothes before returning by the same taxi to Haukland. There they were escorted into the banqueting hall by the party committee and were shown to their seats at the banquet table which was decorated to perfection.

For the post-dinner party with coffee, cake, dancing and entertainment, 200 guests were invited. When the party was over in the wee hours, all the Uttakleiv people carried small flashlights so that they could get safely through the now officially opened but still unlit Uttakleiv Tunnel. Lights were added a while after the opening.

PRESERVATION AND MAINTENANCE Together, the four roads constitute a road environment showing differences in route selection and building techniques over the years. But only two of the four are protected in terms of cultural heritage. The cart road over the mountain and the car road

The steep hillside at Uttakleiv, with clear signs of wear and tear. Rock and soil materials from slides and from a broken road wall are blocking the hiking trail down on the Haukland side. (Photo: Siv Annie Henriksen)

around the mountain (roads 2 and 3 on the map) are listed as objects no. 11 and 12 in the National Protection Plan for Roads, Bridges, and Road-Related Cultural Heritage. The roads are not listed as fully protected, but they still have great value as cultural heritage. The reason why they are not listed as fully protected as part of the national protection efforts is that national ownership of these roads has not been finally determined. The roads nevertheless enjoy some protection through the protection plan, and are included the national list in the national cultural heritage base Askeladden.

In practice, this means that the Norwegian Public Roads Administration has a responsibility to ensure that roads are maintained and presented as cultural heritage, so that they are kept as intact as possible for the future. The goal is to preserve the roads with as much of the original materials as possible.

Maintenance of the two protected roads is carried out by Uttakleiv Community Association in cooperation with the Norwegian Public Roads Administration and Nordland County Administration. The Community Association also monitors the condition of the roads, and will notify the Administrations in the event of rockslides or other major damage.

The road over the mountain was repaired up to the summit on the Uttakleiv side in 2007 and 2008. The road was then improved and prepared for use; holes were sealed and a new gravel surface was provided. Drainage was also improved, with new culverts, and ditches were widened and cleaned on the wettest sections. The stone walls were in quite good condition still and they were thus not improved



in connection with this upgrade.

In the years since, Uttakleiv Community Association has continued their great efforts to maintain the two protected roads. They monitor road conditions, they add new gravel where needed and they keep culverts and ditches open. In addition, vegetation and rock materials from slides are removed so that the roads are kept drivable.

The part of the cart road that winds down the hillside on the Haukland side has not been maintained or restored after it was closed down. Unfortunately, it has not been possible to reach an agreement with the owner of the land the road crosses about maintenance and protection of this road section. But there is a great need to repair the walls, culverts and areas affected by slides. The steep terrain and erosion due to water and use have over time caused major damage to the terrain. Hikers do not follow the road with the long loops, and thus trails are instead formed crosswise to the road direction. This leaves marks in the terrain outside the cart



Here, parts of the old road have disappeared into a gorge formed by rockslides and water erosion. One of the rocks is lying at the very edge. (Photo: Håkon Aurlien)

road, and elsewhere in the mountain. The vegetation cover is very thin, trails form easily and the dry red sand becomes visible.

Running in the middle of the area, and crosswise to the zigzagging road, is a small stream. Landslides and floods have dug out a deep gutter, and a large boulder has fallen all the way down the hill. An equally large boulder is lying at the top, at the very edge of the rockslide area.

Geologists have studied this part of the road and assessed the road condition and the risk of rockslides in the surrounding area. A comprehensive geological report was produced in 2012, assessing slide hazards, and recommending measures for protection and repair. The situation was reassessed by geologists in 2021, and it was concluded that the road condition has not significantly deteriorated. Nevertheless, it was recommended to put up a sign informing hikers of the risk of rockslides, so that those who venture up or down the steep hill are aware that they are putting themselves at risk, and know that they are walking at their own risk and must tread carefully.

TOURISM AND FACILITATION

The roads take us through a breathtaking landscape. The whole area is very popular as a tourist destination and hiking area, as

is the case for large parts of Lofoten. There are tourists here not only during the summer but also in winter. They come to experience the landscape and the scenery, in combination with the midnight sun, the northern lights and the winter weather.

Tourists have been coming to Uttakleiv for several hundred years. Since about 1850, tourism in Norway has been increasing, as a result of better means of transport. In the 19th century, a tourist was considered to be a person on a leisure trip who sought out fishing, hunting, beautiful landscapes and historical sites.

When the road was built around the Veggen mountain in 1947, it provided easier access and the number of visitors increased. For a ten-year period from the late 1960s to around 1980, many French school classes were camping at Uttakleiv. The number of tourist visits kept growing throughout the 20th century, reaching a peak just before the corona pandemic. The large increase in tourism poses a number of challenges. It is demanding to prepare for such large numbers of tourists.

Uttakleiv Community Association has responded to the huge influx of tourists by facilitating environmental protection and the prevention of littering. The organisation was founded in October 1966, and we may say that it was some kind of organised visitor management in



Motorhome parking at Skaret on Uttakleiv Beach. (Photo: Håkon Aurlien)

its infancy. At Uttakleiv, they have built facilities such as parking, toilet facilities, information signs etc., and created systems for waste disposal and motorhome tank dumping. In 1995, Uttakleiv Community Association decided to start encouraging voluntary payment from tourists. The number of tourists kept on increasing, and only a few of the visitors left some money for operation of facilities. The extent of the voluntary efforts by the locals by far exceeded the revenues, and a fixed payment system was therefore introduced. When tourist counts revealed about 300,000 visitors a year, a system was initiated that included beach hosts and payment terminals.

On the beach it is popular to spend the night in a tent. Uttakleiv Community Association works hard to protect the area so that the large number of tourists does not cause too much damage to the thin layer of vegetation. Their efforts have resulted in a number of awards. Among other things, they have received an award

for protection of the cultural landscape (Nordland County Governor's Cultural Landscape Award, December 2017). They received this award for "their work to protect the natural and cultural landscape, and for facilitating travel and recreation in a magnificent and very popular area on the outer side of Lofoten". The people of Uttakleiv are proud of the heritage they have inherited from their ancestors, and they are protecting this heritage carefully so that it will be preserved for future generations.

Uttakleiv Community Association has also been involved in communication projects. In 2016, they set up information boards at Uttakleiv and Haukland. At the same time, they established a system for storytelling along both the bridleway and the car road, consisting of signs with QR codes. Visitors may scan the code with their mobile phones, and be directed to texts, music and other materials conveying information and stories related to the exact place where they are standing.



Eldar Stig Andersen next to one of the information boards. (Photo: Håkon Aurlien)

You will find 22 stories about trolls and the underworld, about Norway's national flower, Isaac of Tåa, and Nils, the last of the otter hunters at Uttakleiv. We visit roadworks carried out in the old-fashioned way and hear stories about rockslides from Veggen. We also get to hear about the finds from the Viking Age, such as the bronze brooch.

For most people, the hikes up to the top of the Mannen mountain in the west and the peaks of Himmeltindan in the east start on the Haukland side and ascend the steep hill where the road has



THE WAY AHEAD

In 2021, an inspection of the roads to Uttakleiv was carried out. The roads have been well maintained, but you can see that there is a need for some repairs to the walls along the cart road. In some places, stones in the wall and in the culverts have shifted, and some of the materials in the road body itself have been washed away. Here, slightly larger repairs to the walls are required. The plan is to bring in contractors with expertise in historical dry stone walling so that the damage can be repaired.

In some places, parts of the wall will then have to be taken down. Then the

A partly collapsed culvert in need of repair. (Photo: Håkon Aurlien)

not been upgraded. A network of trails has formed, running more directly uphill, crosswise to the road. These trails are well visible and resemble ditches in the terrain where the vegetation has been worn away. The hiking trails to the mountain tops are very popular and widely used, and even outside the most hectic summer season there is a constant stream of people on their way up and down the hill.

Facilitation of general passage is an area of priority for the Norwegian Public Roads Administration. The historical travel routes are well suited for hiking and at the same time learning about history and road construction in the old days. Preparing close-down roads for hiking or cycling purposes will benefit society in the form of improved public health and environmentally friendly travel. The largest efforts in this respect have been laid down in the projects of the Kings' Road over Filefjell and the Kings' Road over Dovrefjell.



The beach area at Uttakleiv is popular as a camping site. (Photo: Eldar S. Andersen)

foundation under the wall must be stabilised before the wall is rebuilt stone by stone. Stone masonry will take place by hand in the old way, with some cutting or shaping of stones if needed. After such repairs, the walls may remain in place for many decades.

The road walls in the cart road over the mountain are partially hidden under grass and turf. With some of the vegetation removed, also from the sides of the walls, the beautiful structures will be uncovered and the road will be more visible in the terrain. This will enhance the experience of how the road interacts with the terrain, and provide a better understanding of the work that was invested in the construction of the road at the end of the 19th century.

Through two years of pandemic, the great pressure from busloads of tourists has been somewhat relieved, but at the same time domestic tourism has increased. Tourist pressure is also expected to pick up again. If the number of tourists increases too much, the beautiful landscape and unique hiking experiences may be ruined by litter and by the wear and tear of trampling feet on the terrain. It may be a good idea to try to manage the influx

and at the same time steer onto alternative routes hikers who want to experience the beautiful scenery through spectacular summit hikes. Through purposeful management and restriction, it may be possible to achieve more sustainable use, and even better preservation of both roads and nature.

Restricted access will also make the experience more exclusive and valuable to those who travel here. In order to control the development, it is necessary to reach an agreement on this issue, and to continue the good cooperation between many parties.

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