

# Legacy tourism and the search for meaning

## Why three brothers, a small village in Norway, and a former wind surfing world champion are rescuing a sunken ship

By John Bechtel

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Legacy tourism, the desire to return to a home country or region in order to identify ancestral heritage, is an important and growing segment of the overall tourism industry. This desire to reconnect with a people or place is part of the universal search for personal meaning. Such travel often results in surprises, as for example, learning for the first time that political boundaries have moved, and although you thought of yourself as basically of Scottish descent, your forebears in the Shetland Islands were descendants of Vikings and you are more Norwegian than you are Scottish. Or learning that the Vikings were not a First Nation, but were themselves invaders and immigrants from previous places.

All of us realize that if you go back far enough, the more closely related we all are. There is continual tension between our need to belong to a group and our need to identify and honor ourself, to differentiate the I from the We.

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**Legacy tourism serves two purposes; it satisfies our curiosity about our heritage and it honors our ancestors, and contributes meaning to our own existence. We matter, because they mattered. Our attachments to groups mitigates our sense of aloneness. We create and leave monuments as evidence that we were here, whether our name is engraved on the monument or not.**

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Our legacy may be financial, as in land or buildings, or it may be intellectual and emotional, as in our literature, music, art, tools, designs, and culture.



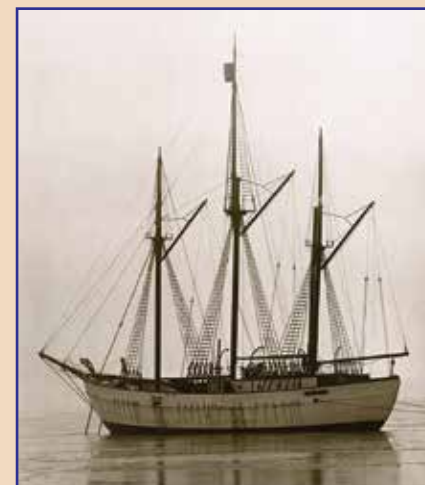
**Vikings in dragon ships left legacy of naval exploration and stories behind.**

What we leave behind us as our legacy may be words and ideas if we are gifted with the ability to articulate our thoughts and philosophies, or it may be in actions and creations that speak loudly of who we were and how we perceived ourselves. It strengthens our sense of connectedness. Sometimes there is ambiguity about the origins and meaning of monuments left behind, such as the Stonehenge phenomenon in England, or the Nazca lines in Peru. These are gaps in the great conversation throughout the ages.

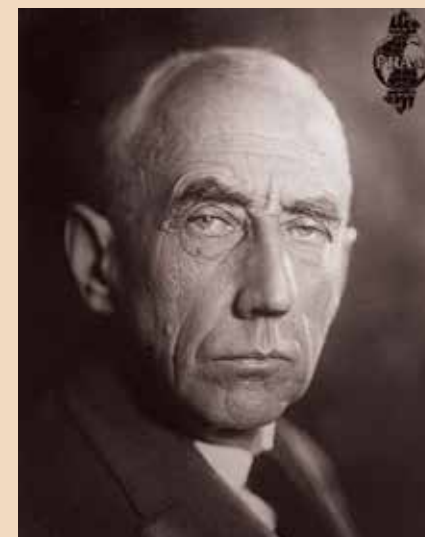
With little arable land but a lot of coastline, the Vikings left behind a legacy of naval exploration, ships and stories.

### The Ship

One such ship is the Maud. Constructed for Norwegian explorer **Roald Amundsen** by boat builder Christian Jensen, and designed for a second trip on Arctic ice, she set sail in June 1916, from the tiny hamlet of Vollen, Norway. The Maud's life of active duty was remarkably short. Amundsen suffered financial shipwreck, went broke, and bankers



**Maud in Oslo before departure from Norway in 1918.**



**Norwegian explorer Roald Amundsen.**

repossessed the Maud, sold it to the Canadian Hudson Bay Company who used it as a storage vessel until it ignominiously sank in Cambridge Bay, Canada, in 1926, a mere ten years after it was built.

In 1990 the Hudson Bay Company sold the boat to the Norwegian municipality of Asker to raise it from the frigid Arctic waters and tow it home to Vollen to be restored.

A permit from the Canadian government was procured for this purpose, but the permit expired when it was learned the estimated cost of the operation would be upwards of \$43,000,000.

In 2011 an Asker family business named Tandberg Eiendom AS, (Continued on page 00)



**Above: Maud on a barge on the way to Aasiaat, Greenland where it has been freeze drying, (below) awaiting its final tow to Vollen, Norway, where it will be totally restored.** PHOTOS FURNISHED BY JAN WANGGAARD



**Aerial view of Vollen, Norway, home of the Oslofjord Museum. The Museum, originating as a large wooden ship collection, is where Roald Amundsen built his polar exploration ship, Maud.**

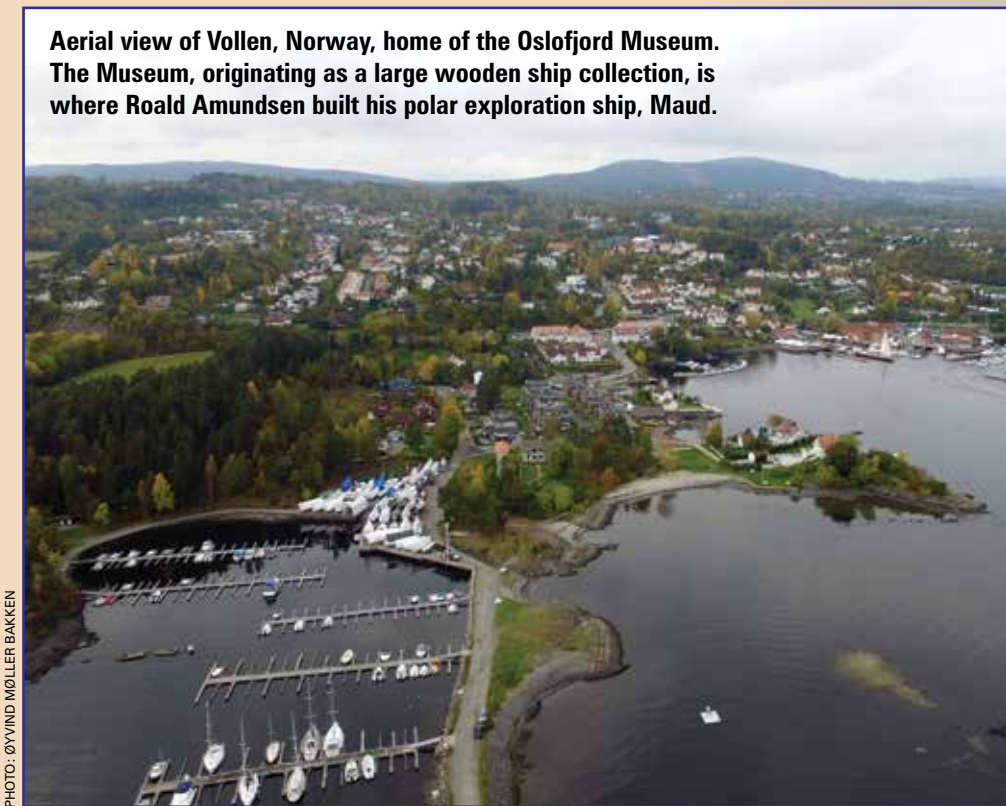


PHOTO: ØYVIND MØLLER BAKKEN

Norway's Geiranger Mountain, Fjord and Village.

PHOTO: WALLPAPER ABYSS





Vollen's Oslofjord Museum—the low, one-story building in front.

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announced their plan to undertake the project entirely at their own expense. In 2016 the Maud was raised from its watery grave in Cambridge Bay, as reported to our readers in the Fall 2016 issue of this magazine in the article The Maud Goes Home (which you can read here <https://tinyurl.com/y8vusvmh>).

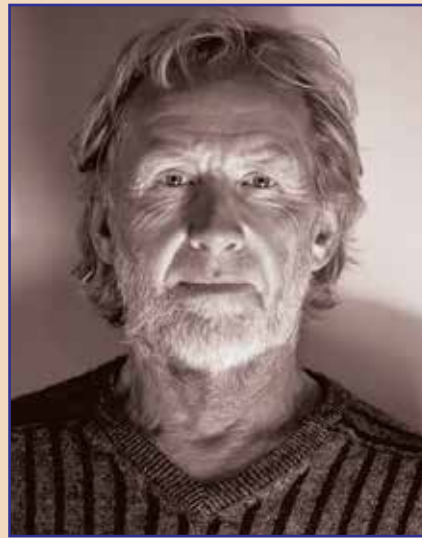
On August 17, 2017, the Maud left Cambridge Bay mounted on a barge, and was towed to Aasiaat, Greenland, where it has been freeze drying ever since.

When the ice melts in a few months, the Maud will limp home towed on a barge across the perilous and often stormy North Atlantic. It will be housed in a temporary museum and fully restored, a process which may take several years. Tourists will be able to observe the restoration in progress.

## The People

The Tandberg family real estate development philosophy has been that historical artifacts are part of the local identity and must be preserved. They consider themselves stewards of their heritage. Their acceptance of responsibility for the raising and return of the Maud is an outgrowth of these cultural beliefs. It's what they do.

The Maud Museum combined with the existing wooden boat Oslofjord museum will contribute significantly to the coastal hamlet of Vollen becoming a prime tourist destination. Our readers may want to add it to their next Oslo itinerary.



Jan Wanggaard

The three brothers who own the Tandberg family business chose **Jan Wanggaard**, someone local from Asker, who they had known for years, to head up the project. Born in 1958, Jan had an early passion for boats, and he was interviewed at the age of 12 on Norwegian television after he built his first boat, a fiberglass rowboat, in 1970.

In the next twelve years he became the world champion wind surfer, only to leave competition at the peak of his career in 1984. Fame and fortune did not interest him nearly as much as setting his own clock and priorities.

Competing as a windsurfer was a yardstick by which he could measure his own development, but no more. He says his satisfactions came from challenging himself physically and intellectually to be his best.

For the rest of the 80s, Jan earned

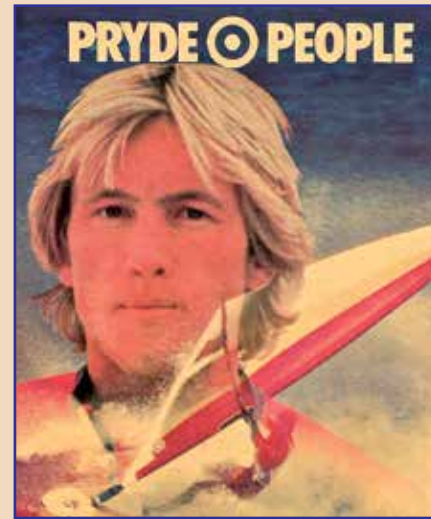


PHOTO FURNISHED BY JAN WANGGAARD



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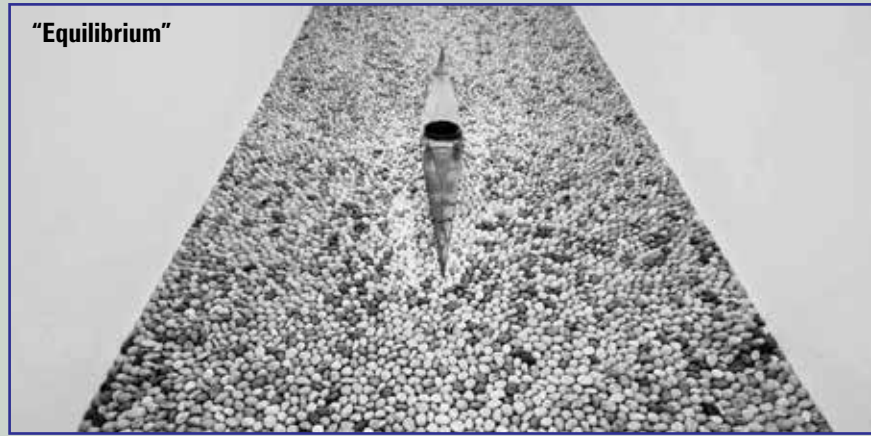
Above: Jan Wanggaard, world champion wind surfer, circa 1984.

income from various odd jobs like repairing fish nets or building patios for neighbors in the fishing village where he lived.

He also studied industrial design in England, and made a name for himself as an artist, with exhibitions in Italy, Luxembourg, and Norway. His years in England gave him a platform to pursue his interests without distraction. He worked at being true to his nature while living with purpose and stability.

Jan moved to Lofoten in the north of Norway in 1989. He says the 16 years he spent in Lofoten were a transition period and gave him time to study the history of boats. His interests in the maritime went broader and deeper as he focused on acquiring hands-on experience with building them with the tools and methods of his ancestors.

When Jan accepts and engages with a project, he gives it his all, feeling that



he is doing what he was born to do. It is a calling for him, and he is happiest when he is close to nature. He says the frenetic pace of modern life puts man in conflict with his own nature, and that people are all struggling to achieve and compete, instead of being at peace with themselves. Jan has a natural affinity and respect for indigenous peoples and early explorers like Amundsen and Harald Sverdrup.

Norway was a new nation when Amundsen began his voyages, and in that time period, being an explorer took your whole life. Amundsen was dutiful and painstakingly careful about attention to details. Although he has been accused of being a glory hound, Jan thinks he was just playing the game because he had to keep the gates to funding open.

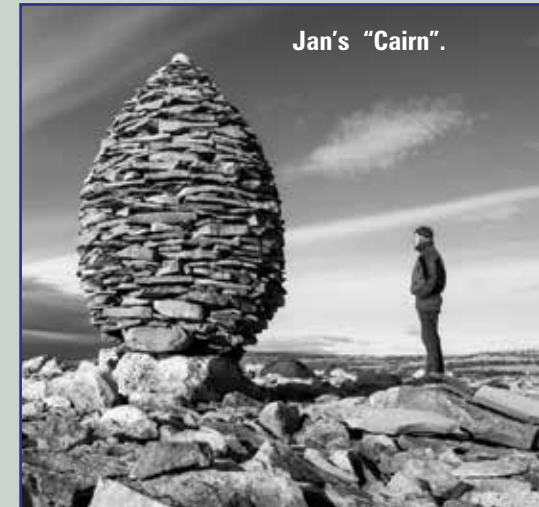
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As an artist, Wanggaard has exhibited in Italy, Luxembourg and Norway.



Building and studying traditional kayaks.

PHOTOS FURNISHED BY JAN WANGGAARD



Jan's "Cairn".

"Misværmarit" one of several boats designed, constructed, and utilized by Wanggaard.





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Jan sees himself as more of an explorer of uncharted human spirit. He says he is not rooted in a particular country, and that he often feels as did the philosopher Heraclitus, who sat beside the river and cried in contemplation of human nature. Even at his tender young age of 60, he feels people he remembers from his childhood were more connected and less arrogant than they are now.

Perhaps Jan's best known work of art is his replica of the solar system on a precise scale of 1:200,000,000. He found and finished stone models of the planets around the Lofoten Islands. He had the 1600 pound planet Saturn lifted into place by helicopter. An award-winning Norwegian documentary with English subtitles was made of the project, entitled *Panta Rei* (Everything flows) in 2008, and that was shown in the Louvre in Paris.

The Tandbergs knew Jan from Asker and approached him about the Maud project. Jan has recently been busy with the plans for the future museum. They will build a temporary building around the Maud on the barge itself that has carried her from Cambridge Bay, and this building will serve the dual purpose of providing work space for the preservation effort and simultaneously provide observation



**Jan balances on Jupiter, one of the planets he designed in his replica of the solar system. Below, he is positioning the planet in location.**

PHOTO FURNISHED BY JAN WANGGAARD

possibilities for the public. understand his choice of where to live and work and the inspiration he drew from his natural environment.

The permanent museum housing of the Maud, fully restored, will be an interactive arts and science interpretive center.

Jan's stone art is part of his legacy to the world. Jan says he communicates more through action than by words. If you have never been to the Lofoten Islands, this summer may be an ideal time to visit a breathtaking and remote location, even by Norwegian standards.

Nature is both Jan's gallery and his medium. Some people inscribe their initials on a tree. Jan creates stone monuments. The message is the same. I matter. So do you. We were here. Some came before us; others will come after us. We are all connected.

The Tandberg brothers, with the support of their community, and Jan Wanggaard's hands-on knowledge of the sea, are set to bring the Maud home to Vollen this summer, so that future visitors can experience first-hand the lure and legacy of the sea and its Norwegian explorers.

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## The place

The Lofoten Islands are where Jan Wanggaard spent his most formative artistic years. It is not difficult to



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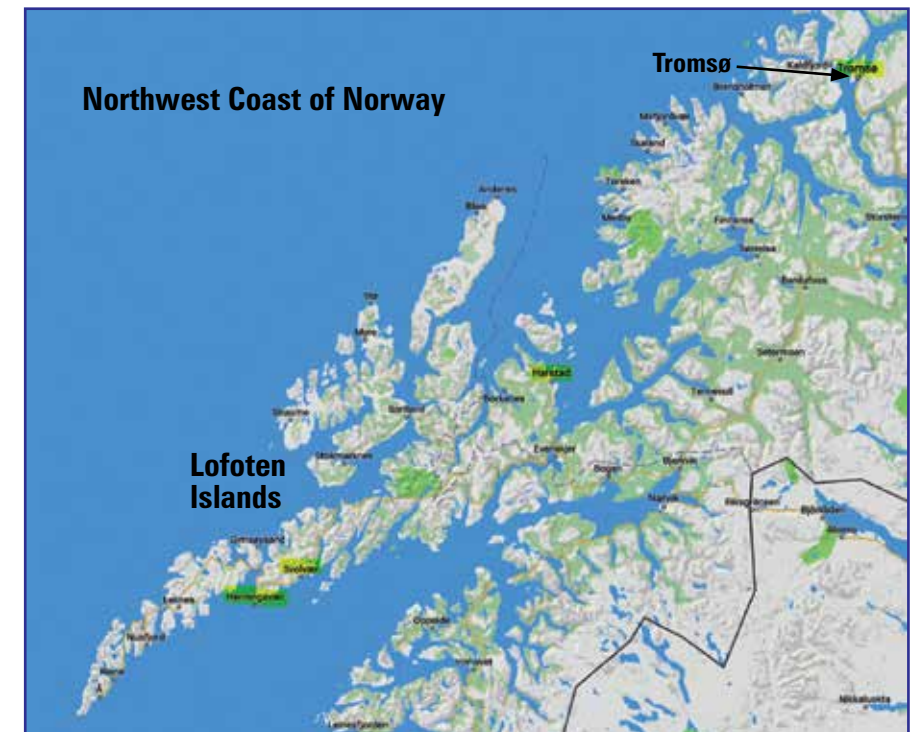
**Beautiful Lofoten Islands.**



PHOTO: YOUTUBE



**Rustic rorbuer (fishing houses) line the waterfront in the village of Reine.**



Lofoten (pronounced "lufutn") is an archipelago in the county of Nordland, Norway—known for a distinctive scenery with dramatic mountains and peaks, open sea and sheltered bays, beaches and untouched lands. Though lying within the Arctic Circle, the archipelago experiences one of the world's largest elevated temperature anomalies relative to its high latitude.