

## A new use for an old route

*Kongevegen over Filefjell - The King's Road across Filefjell* - is a collaborative project involving the public and private sectors. It aims to teach people about the importance of the history of transport over Filefjell, and to support the creation of a 100 km long continuous cultural heritage path between Lærdalsøyri and Vang. The historic Royal Route is the theme for the project, but where it no longer exists or is unsuitable for hiking alternative paths are combined to a continuous route.

However, *Kongevegen over Filefjell* also offers hikers a complete holiday experience that enlivens all of their senses. You can leave your cares behind as you walk along historic paths through spectacular scenery, and then enjoy good food and drink when you stop for the night. The joy of travelling slowly!

Over the coming years, cultural heritage sites and other attractions will be developed, the forest and vegetation will be cleared, and sections of the road will be restored. *Kongevegen over Filefjell* is a valuable resource for the local community, offering fine walks in the local area and helping to attract tourists to the area. The route is part of the investment in tourism on both sides of the mountains, but it will also make it possible to upgrade, restore and maintain a piece of road engineering heritage of high national value.



Restoration of the road at Galdane, 2014. Photo: Sverre Hjørnevik.

## A collaboration between

Oppland County Council, Sogn og Fjordane County Council, Lærdal Municipality, Vang Municipality, Valdres Nature and Culture Park, The Norwegian Public Roads Administration, Valdresmusea AS, Musea i Sogn og Fjordane and The Kongevegen Business Network.

**For more information:** Visit us at "Kongevegen over Filefjell" on Facebook and [www.turapp.no/Kongevegen](http://www.turapp.no/Kongevegen).

## Great walks along Kings Road across Filefjell

**Galdane** – The dramatic Galdane along the River Lærdalselvi is today a lovely footpath. From Sjurhaugen to Seltun, approximately 4 km. It makes a great circuit with return via Seltunåsen.

**Vindhella** – One of the most famous stretches of road in Norway. From Borgund stave church to Husum, approximately 2 km. It makes a great circuit with return via Sverrestien path.



Hikers on the King's Road. Photo: Kirsten Inga Kamrud.

A round trip in the mountain farming area of **Honingane**. Being upgraded to universal access. Approximately 2 km.

**Maristova – Kyrkjestølen** – Norway's highest stretch of the King's Road, reaching up to 1,250 metres above sea level. Approximately 10 km.

Through **Øvre Dalen** – From the mountains down to the agricultural villages in Valdres. From Varpe to Hermundstad, approximately 3.5 km.

**Kvamskleiva** – High above Lake Vangsmjøse. From Syndrol to Hemsing bridge, approximately 4.5 km.



Stone cabin at Kyrkjestølen. Photo: Tine Eikehaug.

# KONGEVEGEN OVER FILEFJELL

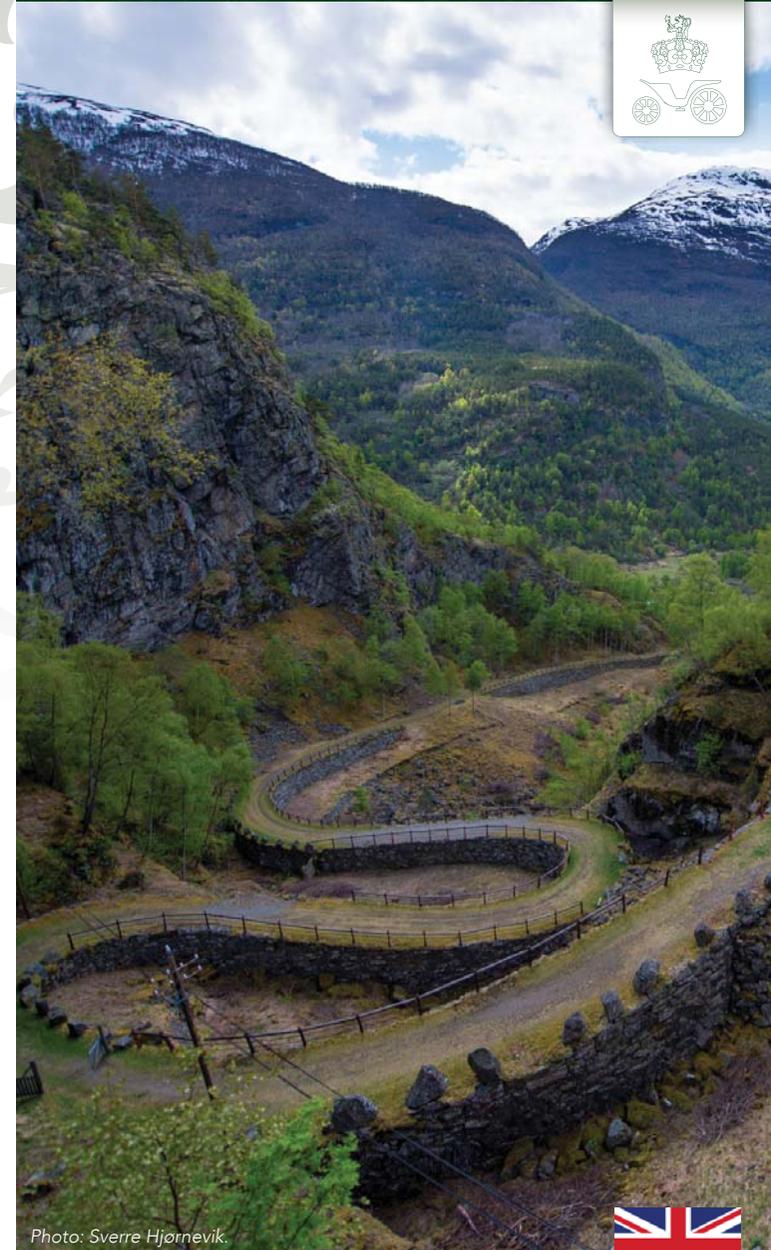


Photo: Sverre Hjørnevik.



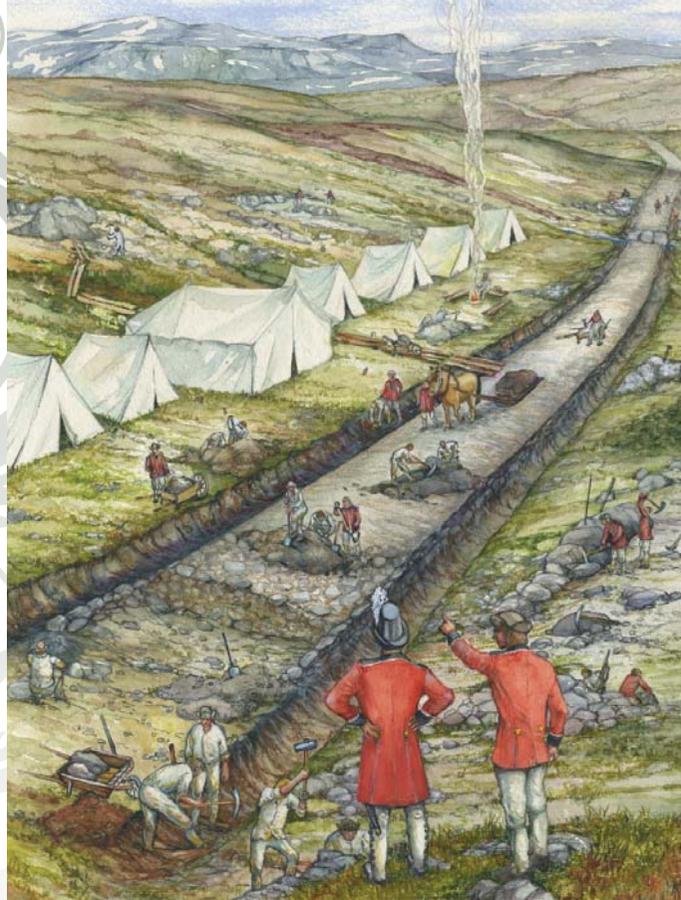
## A journey between regions

In the 1790s, the completion of Kongevegen over Filefjell – the King's Road across Filefjell, perhaps the most spectacular section of Den Bergenske Kongevei – the Royal Route to Bergen – made it possible to travel by horse and cart from Eastern to Western Norway for the first time. To the west, the route ended at Lærdalsøyri, where you could continue by boat to Gudvangen, or even the whole way to Bergen. The King's Road was a huge transport project, and an important step in the modernisation of Norway. It replaced the old footpath and bridleway, which since the Middle Ages had had a reputation for being one of the most difficult and dangerous routes in Norway. King's Roads has since been upgraded and altered many times, first changing its name to Bergenske Hovedveg – "the Bergen Highway" – before becoming the current E16.



Kvamskleiva 1819. Wilhelm Maximilian Carpelan.

The King's Road across Filefjell is one of Norway's finest pieces of civil engineering heritage, built by hand using simple tools at a time when dynamite had not yet been invented. The route runs from the narrow, dramatic fjord landscape at the head of Sognefjorden over the Filefjell mountains and down to the rural villages in Valdres. It is a journey between regions.



Soldiers building the road over Filefjell, 1792. III. Kjersti Hjelmeland Brakstad.

The section over Filefjell, between Vang and Lærdal, was built between 1790 and 1794. The rugged steep landscape of the Lærdal valley created big challenges for the engineers. On the valley sides, the road had to be built on top of high walls, often with a steep gradient. The project was led by General Road-Master Christopher Hammer and General Road Superintendent Peder Anker, and the work was performed by soldiers. Farmers also had to provide forced labour, which was not exactly popular.

## Unique experiences

For hikers today, the route is both interesting and awe-inspiring. It runs through an amazing landscape, and there are many memorable experiences along the way. The living cultural landscapes, spectacular mountains and great attractions are all waiting to be explored.



Foto Jan Adriansen.

Visitors will encounter rare plants, The worlds longest fjord, a fascinating cultural heritage, legends and stories, and a living local culture. The old King's Road links all of these experiences together.

Anyone can enjoy the hiking path, whether young or old. It is perfect for people who want to combine the best of the Norwegian countryside with mountain hiking in historic footsteps. Walking along Kongevegen over Filefjell is an experience you will never forget. ENJOY!!

