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Scandinavian Forest Economics

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**Proceedings
of the Biennial Meeting of the
Scandinavian Society of Forest Economics
Lom, Norway, 6th-9th April 2008**

**Even Bergseng, Grethe Delbeck,
Hans Fredrik Hoen (eds.)**

Ås

**The legendary journey of three valiant english forest
economists from Flåm to Lom
and a celebration of the papers that they missed**

Colin Price

They told Newcastle⁴³'s travel bureau
that this meeting was in Lom⁴⁴.
And left that port where many Euro-
peans travel eastwards from.
And, whether they pronounced it badly,
or the agent had misheard,
he routed them to Flåm, which, sadly,
isn't near Still, undeterred,
they chose to walk, despite unpleasant
weather. Though delayed, at least
they hoped that they would all be present
at the conference's feast.
In snowfall fit for neither man nor beast
they set a compass course north-east.

They should have made their start from Otta,
if they sought a pleasant stroll⁴⁵.
Yet all Englishmen have got a
rod of steel in their soul;
plus this pig-headed disposition:
to turn back is to be disgraced –
the stupider the expedition,
the firmer it should be embraced!
They travelled light, with scant provisions
on the side of *Sognefjorden*,
knowing in today's decisions
past mistakes should be ignored – un-
less past costs will be restored an-
other day, across the board.

⁴³ Natives of Tyneside put emphasis as in NewCASTle.

⁴⁴ In this part of Ottadalen, they *did* seem to pronounce it to rhyme with "from".

⁴⁵ It's only 60 km to walk from Otta, mostly on nice, snow-free forest tracks.

But what they missed! It would have been a
treat our PowerPoints to see!
with papers drawn from each arena
known to *skogøkonomi*:
computer programs to promote a
protocol that would enhance
bird habitats in Minnesota,
carbon stocks in south-west France;
young researchers who express ass-
urance, that demands exist
for aged wood decks (while aged professors
drank their beer, and reminisced.
And drank more beer, and got ... a list
of other beers they might have missed.)

So, while they walked, our gallant trekkers
missed the Danes' strategic games,
talks on harvest costs, and Pekka's
piece on wood construction frames;
Christmas trees and pure ground water;
selling wood to architects;
things that make rotations shorter –
tree stems longer; tax effects.
And any paper lacking mention –
trees' control on global climate,
firewood, forestry extension –
was cut out by need to rhyme it,
make it metric, or the time it
takes to read prose so sublime.

On, north-east, our valiant heroes
painful progress slowly made,
confronting two life-threat'ning zeroes: –
zero sense, and zero centigrade;
grimly grabbing Norway spruces'
branches with each footing missed –
one of cellulose's uses
for which markets don't exist.
(And *that* is one of many diverse topics
that in future you must underscore: you'll
need examples from the tropics,
temp'rate regions, and the boreal.
Any international tutorial
must mean teaching more than immemorial
facts that students used to learn before!)

Onwards still across the *jøkulls*,
up the *fjells* and down the *dals*,
shouting English at the locals
in a landscape like Nepal's;
on, with energy fantastic,
never stopping for a break,
up and down – just like stochastic
walks that market prices take.
So, having talked of fluctuating
rates at which the market lends,
let's now join in celebrating
these, and other, absent friends,
who made mistakes, and could not make amends,
or else were left too poor to come at all, by long-term timber prices' trends.

And there were presentation slots relating
how folk, frozen out by winds of change,
risk exclusion from participating:
meanwhile, high upon the mountain range,
risking being cold cadavers
frozen by the bitter wind,
on, our English heroes traverse
Galdhøpiggen, Glittertind.
But now I must report with deepest sorrow,
the fate that soon awaits these coolest dudes:
they should arrive at Fossheim⁴⁶ late tomorrow,
exactly as our conference concludes.

⁴⁶ Note for non-participants: the conference was held at the Fossheim Turisthotell, Lom.