

## Lofoten Isles LMC – Trip 2006

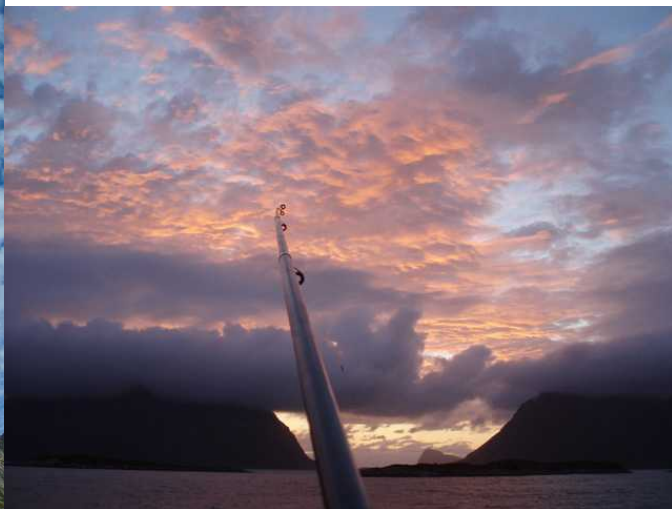
Where to start, with such an excellent trip as this... Start at the end and work back then I presume. Arriving back in England slightly concussed and after a weeks idle travelling, and hunting for crags seemed like a bum way to finish a trip where we had actually achieved an awful lot. However, this seems to be the problem with Norway; the weather, when it's good it seemed to be awesome, when it is bad it is bad.



So concussed, I hear you ask? Well it tends to happen when you have a hold break off in your hand when you are bouldering, then land head face on to the rocky beach below you. However, thanks to the team for their courteous patching up of me... Made me look bad for all of 5 days!!!

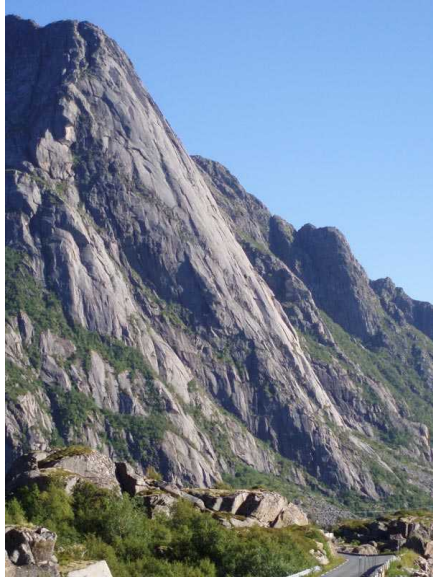
So moving further back, why bouldering on friable rock once again I hear you ask... Well it all started when the weather changed its mind from being absolutely stunning to blowing a gale and raining constantly for 3 days on the Lofoten Islands, quite a contrast from the stunning weather we had for the previous 6 days.

I could carry on doing the ask questions bit but lets get to the nitty gritty of this article.

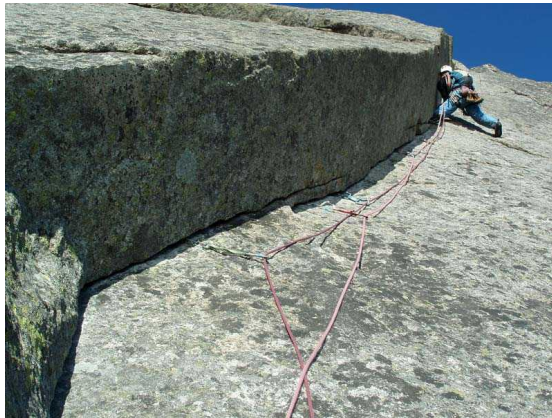


Stunning weather and the Lofoten Islands are something of a rarity and to have 6 days was amazing. To also have roadside crags which are 13 pitches long and 3 stars nearly sums the place up in 1 sentence. However, to add in the fabulous views and variety in climbing sums it up in around 2 sentences very nicely!!!

However, I am going to pick out 3 routes that we did on the main island just to sell it some more; I know these are within the E range. However, do not be put off because there is plenty to do for everyone's climbing grades...



This time I'm in no particular order because I've probably confused you all so much already. The first must be the absolute World Classic of a route which is called Vestpillaren (E2 5b (for me – E2 5c) – although the guide says it doesn't have a pitch harder than E1 5b (yeah right), just long and sustained). This is truly an awesome route, with something for all the family – there is also an alternative start so that you can miss out 2 of the low down harder pitches. If you are to climb 1 route on the island this must be at the top of the list.



The climbing is excellent and sustained, with awesome crux pitches, and just truly awesome positions. I can't think of a bad pitch on the entirety of the route and this is 12 pitches of excellent climbing, quite sustained climbing.

The adjacent picture taken while climbing the 20 metre corner that you can see from the road, truly awesome sustained climbing, and near the top!!

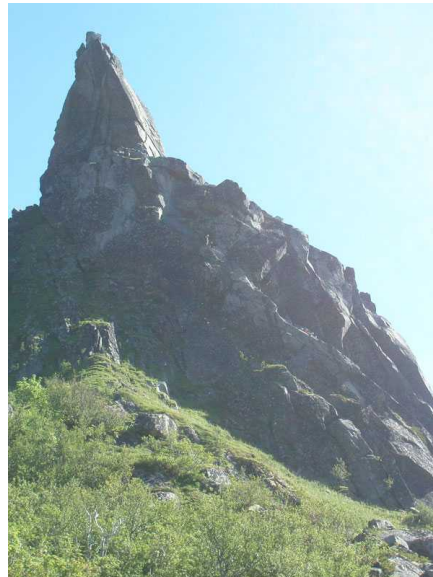
The last pitch is 1 one of the finest ways to come off a route; climbing up a groove and then making 5a moves across a blank looking slab to the escape gully just finishes this route off superbly with a last move to die for!!! It says in 1 guidebook if you are to be called a climber you must do this route, it isn't far wrong from the truth. This is a must tick for any climber climbing in this grade range.





Second up, this is so hard, but I thought I better limit myself to 3 routes. So the next 1 must be Solens Sonner, which had a dual ascent by Will Wheale and John Harold behind me and my dad. This route was done at around about 8pm at night, and finished at around 10pm – land of the midnight sun et al. This route is just awesome with a middle pitch that fully tests anyone's slab climbing ability, and full trust of the feet, the crux pitch (E2 5c) is a blank run across a slab then a

smeary step up to a crack, then absolutely stunning sustained 5b climbing until the bolt belay. The last pitch (meant to be 4 pitches but done in 3 by our party) is just slab climbing at its best, run up a diagonal crack/slab and then just keep running up the slab past bolts. I was falling about myself laughing at the outrageousness of this pitch, 4 bolts and a small wire in 55 metres of climbing!!! There really was nothing more!!! Only 5a climbing though... Another must tick for anyone visiting.



The last but not least piece of the jigsaw is Engleviner (Angel Wings) which is located on the Silver Goat above Solvaer graded at E3 5c, with no pitch less than 5c, and once again only 3 pitches. The line is stunning, obvious and quite intimidating (the picture above you can just nearly pick it out!!!). According to the guidebook it doesn't see many ascents, however, this just adds to the quality of rock that is found; very rough meaning the friction is superb.



The first pitch starts with another slab move of doom, leading to an immaculate finger crack traverse with the crux at the end which is just awesome, a powerful rock over move – decision whether to place gear or just go for the move is the only 1. My preferred choice was to do the move!!! This then leads in to some more solid 5b climbing and a traverse back across the slab on hand jams, and a broken crack, leading to an awesome hand jamming crack.



Second pitch is a beautiful hanging groove line with an overhang at the top, sustained, interesting, and the best move of the route when you least want it, when your pumped below the overhang!!! The groove/corner system is such stunning climbing, with hand jams and finger locks, which increase the brutish nature of this climb (you can tell it is an American route!!!). Then after that it's not over, this is truly an awesome pitch, my whoops of joy gave it away to everyone, even the girls on the other route commented about it (in a laughing manner so I found out)!!!



The final pitch is a little easier but takes a direct line up a steep crack, you climb down and then climb up the crack, as you climb up it becomes harder, with wild moves at the top. First an excellent hand jam and balance move to an undercut, and then wild lay back moves to finish the route off. This is 1 of the finest, most sustained routes I've done so far.

Lofoten is just truly awesome, I know I've given you a brief run down of 3 of the best routes I've selected and done while there. But I thought this would be the only way to wet someone's appetite. We only climbed in the main area as well, so I mean there is plenty more everywhere else to be done.

For a place with all grades, all stars, all makes, all sizes, Lofoten is the place to go!!!

