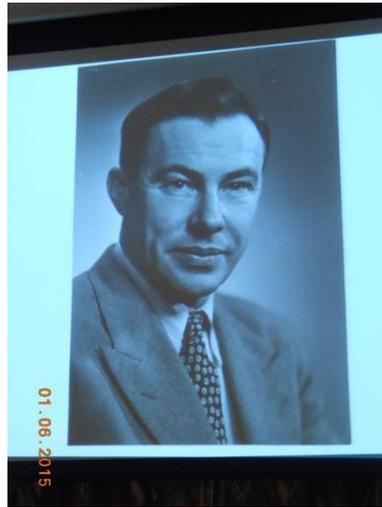


Ellie Targett – Another Man’s Shoes.

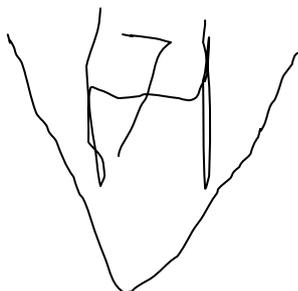
For the May meeting of the History Group we were privileged to have as our Guest Speaker Ellie Targett whose talk, on the Norwegian Resistance Movement in World War Two, centred around her father, **Sven Sømme**, a prominent Professor of Marine Biology and the Norwegian Inspector of Fisheries.



She began by giving background information on her family and her childhood, providing nostalgic family photographs of her young life and amusing us with her wry look at life and anecdotes of her upbringing before ‘Health and Safety’ became so important.

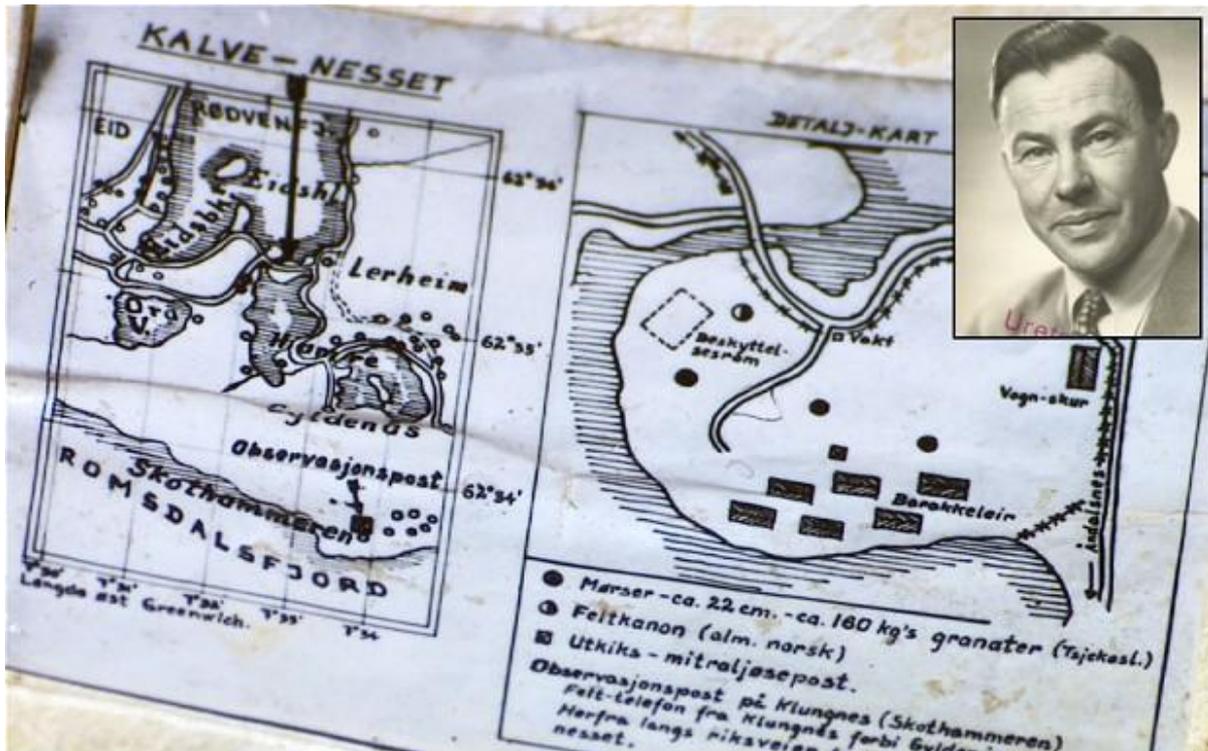
She continued by talking of the day Hitler’s Nazi troops invaded Norway on 9th April 1940. Showing historic invasion photographs and giving details of the offensive, she conveyed the horror of this event. When she recounted the finer points of the punishment of a small community for harbouring a Resistance Fighter, by razing the town to the ground, and showed us the ‘before and after’ photographs, the group were shocked by the brutality of the retaliation.

Ellie mentioned Quisling: a Nazi sympathiser, very right wing, who was a puppet figure, and became ‘President’ of Norway in the occupation. Under his time in power many people, including the Jewish population, tried to flee. Only 26 Jews survived out of approx 700 in the whole Norway. We saw pictures of horrendous conditions and heard heart-breaking details.



This depiction was the secret symbol of the Resistance Movement with ‘V’ for Victory and ‘H7’ for King Haakon VII, living in exile in England during the War.

Sven Sømme, in his role as Inspector of Fisheries, was often based on an island. When his Inspector's House on the island was occupied, by the Nazis, he listened secretly to the BBC on a tiny radio, at great risk to himself. On December 1st 1941 he published a secret newspaper/newsletter based on the information he received via the radio and posted it to friends. As a result he was invited to join the Resistance Movement. He typed 'innocuous' letters about the fishing conditions he was experiencing etc, but used invisible ink between the double spacing to give vital information to the Resistance, on Nazi movements etc. He also used microfilm under stamps with hand-drawn maps and other vital information to keep the Resistance Movement informed.



In October 1942 his brother Jacob, the Head of Intelligence in Norway, was captured, tortured and subsequently executed. Even under the most appalling torture he never gave up any information.

Knut Hankelig, another member of the Resistance Movement, heard that 'heavy water' was being manufactured in Telemark, Norway and being shipped to Germany by ferry, with the intention of making nuclear weapons. The ferry was bombed and the 'heavy water' never got to Germany. We were shown photographs of the ferry before and after it was bombed. This 'heavy water' would have been used to deadly effect and would have altered the whole course of the War.

On the 18th June 1944: Sven Sømme was captured by Nazis. Ellie gave us details of the capture and his eventual escape to Sweden. Considered an extremely dangerous convict, there was a full high-level hunt for him, throughout Norway, by the Nazis. Sven Sømme was saved from recapture by a young girl who gave him a secret hideout. Ellie showed us photos

of her at that time and later as an old lady. Being captured for spying, Sven Somme managed to escape and kept out of Nazi hands in a 200 mile pursuit across Norway, at times leaping from tree to tree to avoid leaving tell tale tracks in the snow. Sven Sømme's escape to Sweden involved crossing rivers and lakes, climbing mountains, crossing ravines, hiding in huts and tents, and clambering through passes and forests, often in deep snow. Unable to trust anybody, the Resistance Fighters found secret ways of communicating with each other by, for example, whistling in a distinctive way, matching torn pieces of paper and 'tree-pinging', a unique way of using saplings to travel across snow-covered terrain without leaving traces.

Many years later, using information recorded by her father at the time of his historic journey, Ellie followed in Sven Sømme's footsteps and recreated the journey with a small group, meeting some of the people who had helped her father to get through to Sweden during the war. There were emotional reunions as these friends, now very old, recounted the conditions her father had had to endure and their memories of him. Ellie showed us photographs of her journey and of the friends who had helped her father.

This thrilling account held the Group enthralled and fascinated by her detailed reconstruction of the memorable life, events and journey of one of Norway's most famous spies and heroes.

Heidy Hague