As can be expected, a special relationship exists between the coastal population and their boats. A good boat is usually a beautiful boat, as it is to be used in harmony with the element for which it has been created. A boat is not only judged by its usefulness, but also by its appearance, by the fact that it is aesthetically pleasing. This is something which has long traditions in Norway. In the Saga of Olav Tryggvason, we read that around the year AD 1000, the king, had a great ship built. As it was nearing completion, the boatbuilder deliberately hacked at the gunwale because he did not like the line of the vessel. He was allowed to rebuild the ship and the saga tells us that everyone was agreed that the ship was more beautiful after he did this.

With such an attitude to craft, it is understandable that attempts are often made to preserve them after they have gone out of normal use. It usually gets no further than wishful thinking, as maintenance and restoration cost money, and this is rarely forthcoming. Nevertheless, a number of smaller boats built at the end of the eighteenth century or later have survived and can be found preserved in boathouses.

The discoveries of the well-preserved remains of Viking vessels at Gokstad and Oseberg helped to increase the appreciation of the art-historical value of early craft. One of the consequences was that a copy of the Gokstad ship was built and sailed across the Atlantic to the World Exhibition in Chicago in 1893.

In 1906, the sloop “Gjøa” arrived in San Francisco after having sailed through the North West.

The schooner “Fram”, which was built by Colin Archer in 1893 for Fridjof Nansen, held the record for reaching both the furthest north and the furthest south. In 1936 a building was erected to house the vessel. Photo: Norsk Sjøfartsmuseum.

The ship «Gjaia» in 1906 was the first vessel to sail through the North-West Passage. After being exhibited in the Golden Gate Park in San Francisco, she was eventually returned to Oslo in 1972, 100 years after she had been built. Phoebus Norsk Sjøfartsmuseum, Oslo.

Passage. She was the first ship to achieve this. Thanks to the support of Norwegian Americans and the generosity of the city of Chicago, the ship was hauled ashore and placed on exhibition in the Golden Gate Park in San Francisco. This was the first time an attempt was made to preserve a Norwegian sailing vessel, and the problems attached to the preservation of boats became immediately apparent. Care and maintenance were needed and this required both money and the help of willing and understanding people. San Francisco has a warm and humid climate and as a result the woodwork began to rot. An unsuccessful attempt at restoration did not help matters. Fortunately, the vessel was transferred to the Norwegian Maritime Museum in Oslo where she was subsequently exhibited. This was in 1972, exactly 100 years after she had been built in Hordaland. Boatbuilders from there were engaged to restore the «Gjaia» to her original state.

Another polar vessel, the schooner «Fram», had a most glorious past. She was built in 1893 by the famous shipbuilder Colin Archer and was used by Fridjof Nansen between 1893 and 1896 in his attempts to reach the North Pole by drifting northwards with the ice. The «Fram» reached 85°N. Between 1898 and 1902 the vessel was used by the Sverdrup expedition which mapped and investigated great areas to the north-west of Greenland. Finally, in 1911, Roald Amundsen used the «Fram» for his journey to the Antarctic, where he and four other members of the expedition succeeded in being the first men to reach the South Pole. The «Fram» reached 78°38’S and could therefore claim to have reached both the furthest north and the furthest south.

As time went on, the «Fram» began to show signs of wear and an official order was sent out to break up the ship. A committee consisting of private individuals was formed who succeeded in getting her brought ashore and under cover. Their efforts resulted in a new building to house the ship and this stood ready at Bygdøy, just outside Oslo, in 1936, ten years after the museum for the Viking ships had been opened nearby. The «Fram» was the first contemporary vessel to be preserved in Norway.

The interest in early vessels used for transport or fishing steadily increased during the first decades of the present century. From 1928 onwards, Bernhard Fareyvik received an annual state grant to measure boats and take initial steps for their preservation. Behind the elegant clinker-built Norwegian boats there lies a more than thousand-year-old tradition in boatbuilding. Fareyvik’s work produced results, but it was to take a long time before it was made financially possible to present a representative exhibition of the nation’s clinker-built boats. The largest collection is at the Norwegian Maritime Museum in Oslo, which was opened in 1958, but other significant collections are also being built up in other parts of the country.

An attempt was made to preserve some of the larger sailing ships, but the enthusiastic groups of private individuals were soon drowning in financial problems. Suddenly, however, things began to improve. In 1962, Norway’s first lifeboat was brought back from the USA. It had been designed and built by Colin Archer in 1893. The ship was placed in the care of the Norwegian Maritime Museum, with the intention of bringing it indoors, but there was not enough money for this. The idea was put forward that the ship could be preserved afloat and put into use. Of course there was opposition, but in fact this was the only possible way of saving the vessel. It proved to be an excellent solution. The «Colin Archer», lifeboat no. 1, was leased out to a private person who has carried out a superb piece of restoration work, naturally in conjunction with the Museum and under constant control. The idea of preserving vessels in functioning order has subsequently been accepted and this is of paramount significance for the preservation of craft in Norway.

In the winter of 1967 the old paddle-steamer “Skibladner” sank under the great weight of wet snow. The “Skibladner” had been in regular service ever since she was built in 1856, linking the inland settlements around the shores of the 117 km long fjord forming an important communication link with the major route southwards from the south end of the lake. There was no doubt that she had to be raised and restored. Some wanted her to be placed in a museum, but the final result was that she was vers le nord au gré des bagnasses. Le « Fram » atteignit la latitude de 85° 35’ Nord. De 1898 à 1902, le bateau fut utilisé par l’expédi­tion dans ses recherches sur les grands espaces situés au nord-ouest du Groenland, et finalement Roald Amundsen utilisa le « Fram » pour son expédition dans l’Antarctique, expédition où Amundsen et quatre membres de l’expédition firent les premiers à atteindre le Pôle Sud en 1911. Le « Fram » naviga jusqu’à la latitude de 78° 38’ Sud, et fut ainsi le bateau qui atteignit les points situés le plus au nord et le plus au sud. Par la suite, le « Fram » commença à se délab­rer, et les autorités exigèrent que l’on démolisse le bateau. Mais un comité bénévole se chargea de l’amener à terre et de faire construire un bâtiment pour l’abriter. En 1936 – dix ans après que l’on avait mis les bateaux vikings sous toit à Bygdøy, à Oslo – le musée du « Fram » fut terminé, et le « Fram » est donc le premier bateau contemporain saveur­gardé en Norvège.

Au cours de ce siècle, l’intérêt pour les anciens bateaux de transport ou de pêche n’a cessé de croître et à partir de 1928, l’État norvégien reçut une bourse annuelle de l’État pour faire des recherches et essayer de sauvegarder les bateaux. La construction des bateaux norvégiens modernes à la foi, construits à des fins, se base sur des traditions survivant de plusieurs milliers d’années. Les efforts de Fareyvik portèrent leurs fruits, mais il fallut attendre de nombreuses années avant d’avoir les moyens de présenter une belle collection de bateaux norvégiens construits à l’âge. La plus grande collection se trouve au Musée de la Marine à Oslo, qui fut ouvert en 1958, et il y en existe d’autres assez importantes dans différents districts en Norvège.

On a également essayé de sauvegarder de gros voiliers ; malheureusement, les bénévoles perdent rapidement leur enthousiasme lorsqu’ils s’aperçoivent de la difficulté de les faire face aux problèmes financiers. Néan­moins, l’intérêt pour ces bateaux restait vivace. En 1962, le premier bateau de sauvetage norvé­gien fut rattaché aux Etats-Unis. Dessiné et construit en 1893 par Colin Archer, le bateau fut livré au Musée de la Marine, mais maints années après, il lui a été possible de le mettre sous toit, mais l’argent manquait. C’est alors que l’on envisagea de conserver le bateau pour l’utiliser. La réalisation de cette heureuse idée – qui n’était pas des plus populaires au début – était en fait la seule possibilité de sauvegarder le bateau.
The paddle steamer «Skibladner», which was built in 1856 to carry goods and passengers to the settlements around Lake Mjøsa in E. Norway, is the world’s oldest steamship still in regular service.

Vapeur «Skibladner», le plus ancien vapeur du monde en service, construit avec roue à aubes en 1856 pour être mis en service sur le lac Mjøsa.

The fore-and-aft schooner «Svanen» was built in 1916. Since 1974 she has been used for youth work, providing an attractive and exciting alternative to the discotheque. Photo: K. M. Olsen.


repaired and brought back into service, and is today still plying the same route she has sailed for the past 130 years. The “Skibladner” is the world’s oldest steamship in regular service. An enormous effort has been made to restore her as faithfully as possible, but as she is still in regular use, there have been a number of problems. The “Skibladner” takes enough money to cover the running expenses, but the inevitable and costly repairs require a sizeable contribution from the faithful members of the energetic Preservation Society and from government funds. The public authorities have now become more involved in the preservation of old vessels, but to start with this only took the form of a financial contribution, and on far too small a scale.

In 1974 the Norwegian Maritime Museum bought the three-masted fore-and-aft schooner “Svanen”, which was built in 1916. She was soon brought into use in connection with youth work and now takes 25 youngsters at a time on a fortnight’s training cruise, together with the permanent crew. Each year some 500 young people of both sexes share this experience, sleeping in hammocks on the orlop deck and taking part in all the duties on board, including hoisting and taking in the sails, standing at the helm, taking the watch, and so on. For today’s youth, spending their free time in the deafening music of the discotheque, or going around all day with Walkmans pounding in their ears, or just being constantly subjected to the roar of city traffic, the tranquillity on board a sailing ship makes a powerful impression. The “Svanen” project is without doubt a most successful social operation. It has made it possible to preserve a typical coaster, and it is much more agreeable to see a ship sailing under full canvas than to look at it lying lifeless in an exhibition.

Putting vessels worthy of preservation back into use is in fact an attractive way of preserving them. The problem has often been to find a use for them. Instead of pulling them up on to dry land and erecting an expensive building over them, or the frais courants, mais les réparations plus importantes exigent des subsides d’association privées, ainsi que de l’Etat. Après avoir donné de maigres subsides au début, l’Etat s’est enfin engagé dans les efforts de sauvegarde des navires. Aujourd’hui, le «Skibladner» est le plus vieux vapeur à roues du monde assurant toujours un service régulier.

En 1974, le Musée de la Marine acheta la goélette à trois mâts «Svanen», construite en 1916. Ce bateau a tout de suite été mis à la disposition des jeunes. Chaque année, quelque 500 personnes font de la voile pendant une semaine. À chaque croisière, le bateau embarque 25 jeunes garçons et filles en plus de l’équipage. Les jeunes dorment dans des hamacs sur le pont et participent aux tâches nautiques à bord, telles que tenir la barre, monter et descendre les voiles, servir à la cuisine, etc. Pour les jeunes qui passent leurs temps dans des discothèques bruyantes ou qui se promènent avec leurs inséparables «Walkmans» dont la musique assourdissante se joint
tying them up to a wharf and letting them just float there uneccessarily, they could be used in the way they were intended. Many people have been seized by the idea and have put in an impressive amount of work to prevent these valuable memorials of the past from disappearing. If a vessel is simply left moored to the quay or placed in a building, then interest will gradually dwindle. The original enthusiasts grow old, and it is difficult to get the younger generation to carry on with the necessary maintenance on a private basis. To look after a sea-going vessel and to have the opportunity of sailing it is much more enticing. The 1960s were an important period regarding the preservation of vessels, as new methods were found. A variety of uses was possible. Young people formed themselves into groups in order to buy and restore sloops, fishing smacks and ketches. Museums gave them advice and guidance, and they used the boats during their holidays. Among larger projects can be mentioned the passenger ferry "Borøyund", built in 1910, which has been taken over by the Veteran Ships Club (Norsk Veteranomskibklubb), and which is now used for day-trips or short excursions. Another society has taken over the steamer "Kysten", using her partly for regular services between Oslo and Tonsberg, partly for excursions along the coast. The Polar sloop "Havny" has been restored and is used for trips with juvenile aux bruits de la circulation, le silence à bord d’un voilier est fort impressionnant. Il est certain que le profil social de ce projet est très positif tout en garantissant la sauvegarde d’un côtier typique. C’est du reste nettement plus amusant de voir un bateau toutes voiles dehors plutôt que de le visiter dans un musée.

En les remettant en état de naviguer, on avait trouvé une excellente façon de sauvegarder des navires révélateurs. Au lieu de les amener à terre et de constituer un bâtiment coûteux pour en faire un musée, ou de les laisser ancrés passivement à un ponton, on les a remis à flot. Le problème était souvent de leur trouver une destination conviviale. De nombreuses personnes se sont engagées dans la sauvegarde et ont fait de gros efforts pour empêcher que cet héritage naval ne disparaisse. En effet, un bateau à quai ou dans un musée perd de son intérêt et, en plus, au fur et à mesure que les personnes qui, les premières, se sont engagées dans la sauvegarde, viellissent, il s’est avéré difficile de trouver des jeunes prêts à se charger bénévolement des travaux de conservation nécessaires. L’idée de prendre en charge un bateau tenant encore la mer et d’avoir la possibilité d’en profiter, est nettement plus tentante.

Les années 60 ont joué un rôle important pour la sauvegarde des bateaux. En effet, on a trouvé de nouvelles méthodes de conservation, et les possibilités d’utiliser ces bateaux sont nombreuses. Des groupes de jeunes ont acheté des caboteurs, des delinquents. This project has been extremely successful. All these schemes for preserving old vessels by finding a use for them have given a spin-off. There has been an increased interest for using old boats and keeping them in use. It was necessary to form some kind of organisation which could help with the restoration work, give financial help in a crisis, and also get an idea of how many vessels there were which were worth preserving. In 1977 a special committee for vessels was established. The Ministry of the Environment provided an annual sum of money for the preservation of vessels, and the committee drew up a list of those vessels which deserved a grant. In 1978 the Norwegian Council for Cultural Heritage was established and this has also made substantial grants, making it possible, for example, to save the 75-year-old steamship "Hestmanden". The Vessels Committee was disbanded in 1985 and its function has been taken over by the Ministry of the Environment.

barques de pêche et des galassies pour les restaurer ensuite. Ils se sont fait conseiller par les musées pour les travaux de restauration et utilisent les bateaux pendant leurs vacances.

Parmi les initiatives les plus importantes, on peut mentionner que le Club des anciens bateaux de Norvège (Norsk Veteranomskibklubb) a pris en charge le « Borøyund », un petit vapeur construit en 1910, qui, aujourd’hui, est loué pour des excursions d’une journée ou des croisières de courte durée. Une autre association utilise le bateau à vapeur « Kysten », lui permettant ainsi ou bien de naviguer régulièrement entre Tonsberg et Oslo, ou bien d’effectuer des croisières le long de la côte. Le caboteur arctique « Havny » a également été restauré et navigue actuellement avec de jeunes reprises de justice. Les résultats de ce projet ont été fort positifs. Toutes ces mesures pour conserver les anciens bateaux à flot ont fait tâche d’huile. L’intérêt pour les sauver et les utiliser a considérablement augmenté. C’est ainsi qu’il a fallu créer une organisation prête à assister dans les travaux de restauration, offrir une aide financière en cas de crise et également établir un inventaire des bateaux dignes d’être sauvegardés. En 1977, on a établi un comité de sauvegarde des bateaux. Le Ministère de l’Environnement a alloué chaque année une certaine somme pour les travaux de restauration proposés par le Comité. En 1978, le Conseil norvégien à la Culture fut fondé. Ce conseil a accordé des subventions importantes qui entre autres ont permis de sauvegarder le bateau à vapeur « Hestmanden », construit en 1911. Le Comité pour les bateaux fut dissous en 1985, et c’est le Ministère de l’Environnement qui reprit ses fonctions.

Il faut également noter une autre nouvelle tendance, celle d’utiliser les anciens bateaux à des fins pédagogiques. En effet, ces bateaux se prêtent fort bien aux excursions scolaires. Les écoliers ont ainsi la possibilité de s’adonner à la pêche, de faire connaissance avec la côte et d’apprendre les bases de la navigation.

Les trois bateaux-écoles « Statsråd Lehmkul » (1914), « Serlandet » (1927) et « Christian Radich » (1937) ont été construits pour former les mariniers. Cependant, avec les progrès technologi-
A new aspect of the work is the use of old vessels for education purposes. They are especially suitable for taking school-children on excursions, giving them the opportunity of fishing, helping them to become better acquainted with the coastal landscape and its natural history, and providing them at the same time with a basic knowledge of navigation.

The three training ships, the “Storsø Lehmkuhl”, built in 1914, the “Sørlandet” from 1927 and the “Christian Radich” from 1937 were built for the training of sea-cadets. Ship-owners have lately found that with today’s high technology in shipping and navigation, sailing ships are no longer really useful for training seamen. Now only the “Christian Radich” functions as a training ship in the true sense of the term, while the “Sørlandet” is used as a sea-going high-school offering an optional extra year’s schooling (Folkehøgskole). Public opinion insists that the vessels should be preserved and the Stadshus ensured that they are maintained in a seaworthy condition.

Apart from the vessels which have already been mentioned and are now preserved, there is also the schooner “Anna Rogde”, built in 1868, and the “Pauline”, a small cargo-carrying jot, as well as a number of sloops, including the “Anna”, the “Mathilde” and the “Anna Kristina”. Two Polar vessels have also been preserved, as well as a tug, a car-ferry, and a tramp steamer. Other projects are under way. The motor-torpedo boat, the “Hitra”, which was one of the Shetland boats during the last war, has also been saved.

The society known as Kysten, meaning simply “the coast”, has a large number of members spread throughout the land and has been instrumental in saving many small craft and working vessels. The Colin Archer Society maintains and sails a large number of rescue vessels and pilot boats.

There is a noticeable reaction against the fibre-glass boat with its plastic laminate fittings. Many manage to get hold of old clinker-built boats. The preservation of boats and ships has become a feature of cultural heritage work in Norway and has incidentally had an activating effect on the prosperity of the coastal communities.