

Jostedalalen – a brief historical overview

Informasjonsmøte for reiselivstilsette

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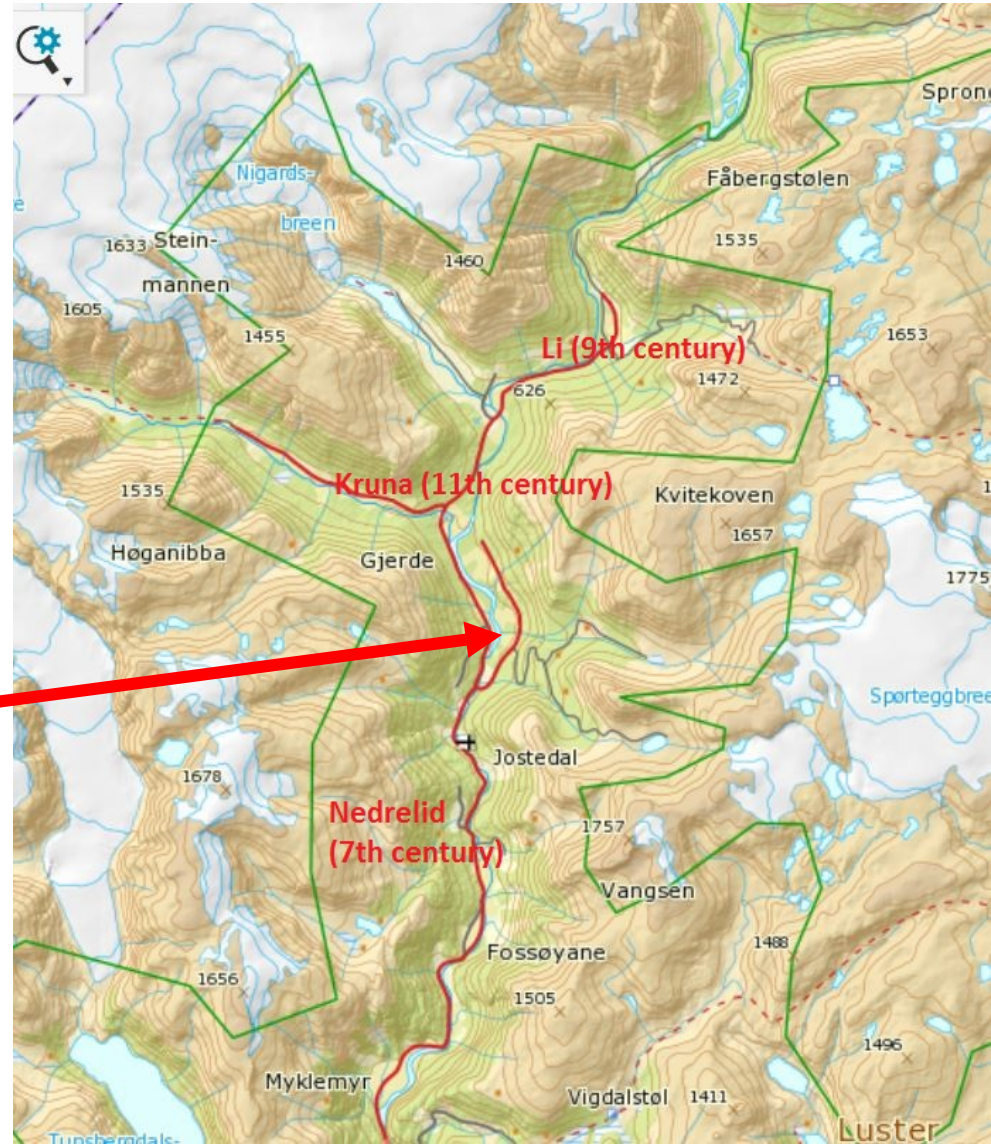
Pre-modern Jostedalen (<1900)

- Isolated
- Marginal agricultural area
- Small farms
- Poverty
- A small local community – few and poor tax payers
- The pastor in the Jostedal: lowest income of all church districts in Norway



The first settlement

- The Viking Age
- Growing population
- Archeological research
- One Viking axe (Kjervik)



The medieval society

- We know almost nothing
 - Jostedalen mentioned in three written sources (ca 1320)
- A church and a pastor
- Farms probably on the same places as today
- Some of the mountain pastures (*stølane*) on a higher attitude than today

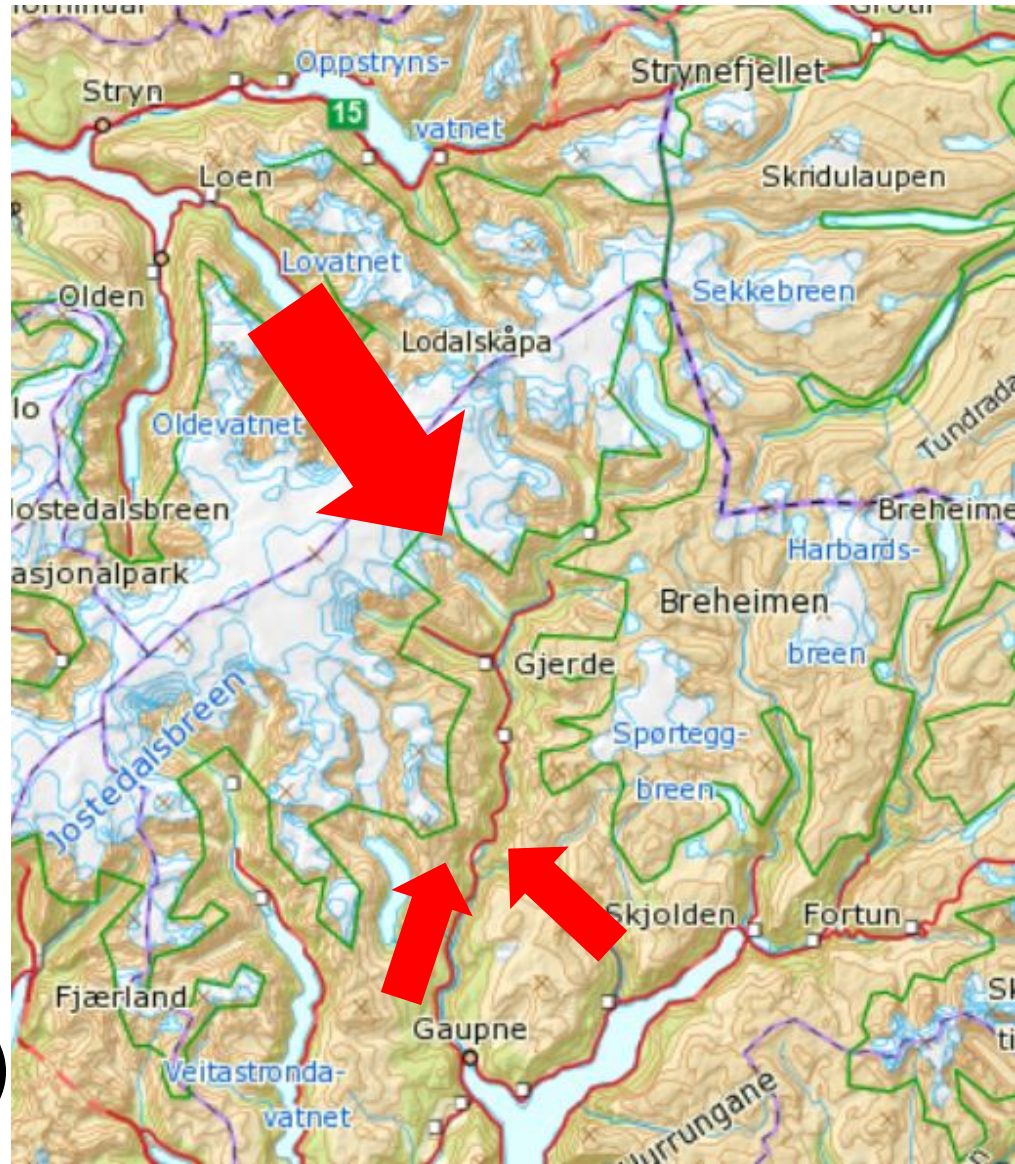
The great disaster (14th century)

- 1349: The Black Death to Norway
- 2/3 of the population died
- The famous legend *Jostedalsrypa* (Snow Hen)
- Bjørkehaugen



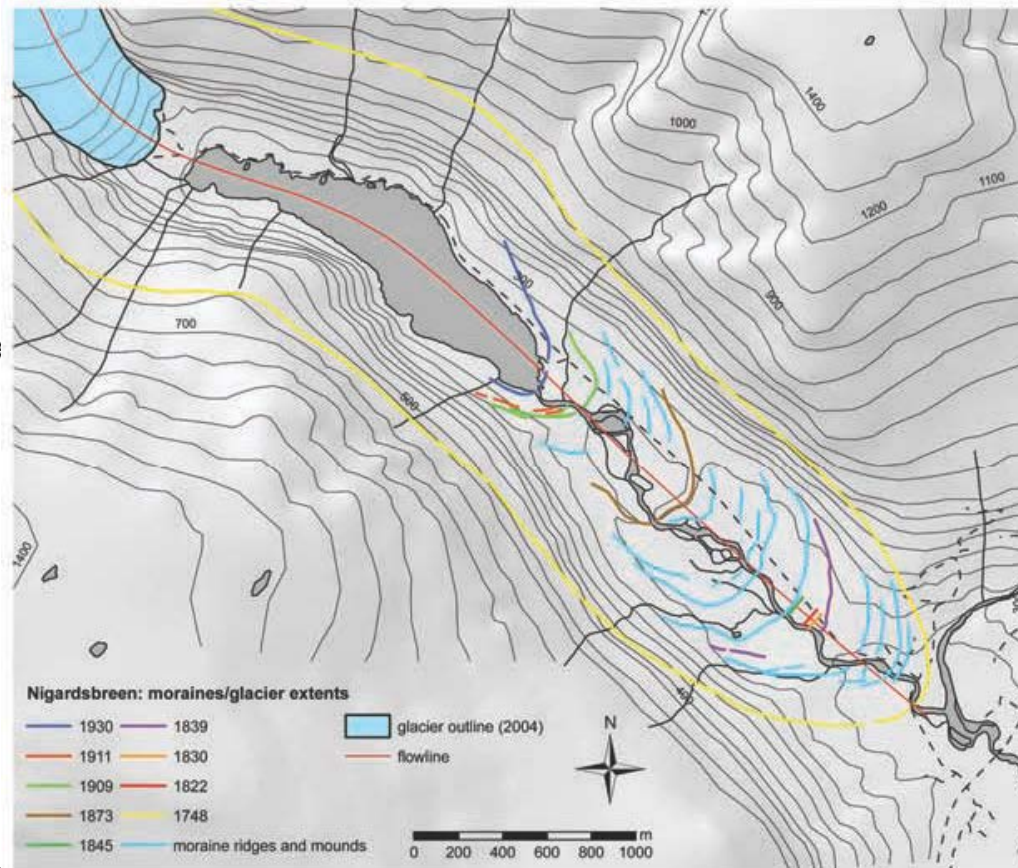
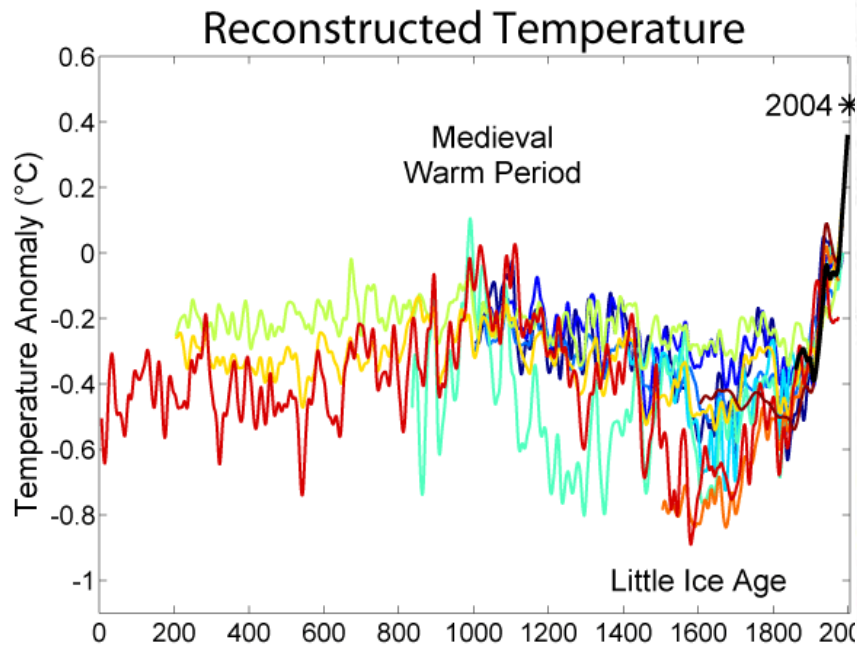
The second settlement

- After 1500: growing population in Norway
- Ca 1596: the first written source (a tax record)
- A church, a pastor, 25 farmers
- Settlers from Luster and Nordfjord
- Place names from Nordfjord: Grov, Bergset, Høgenibba (in Krundalen)



The Little Ice Age

- Forced major problems in marginal grain areas
- During several years the grain did not get ripe (barley, *bygg*)
- Expanding glaciers



Advancing glaciers

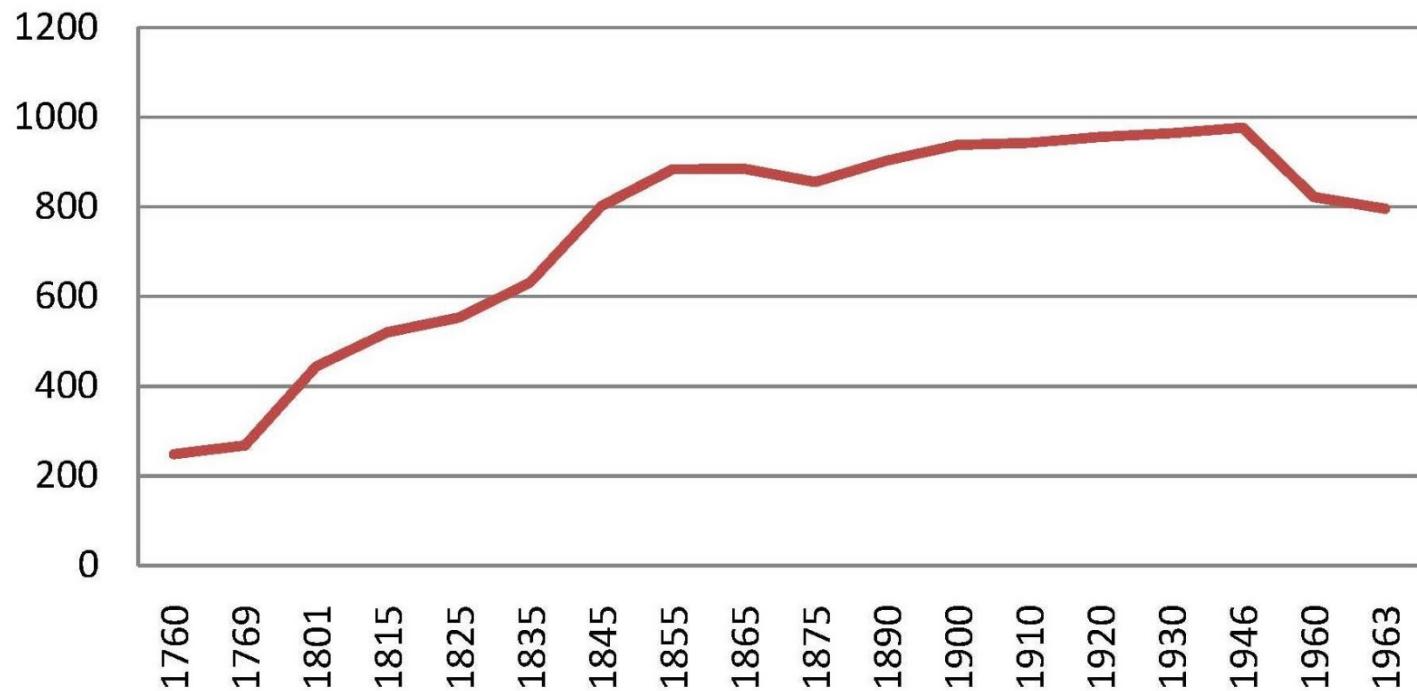
- 1740s: The farm Nigard destroyed
- Pasture areas destroyed (Nigardsbreen, Krundalen)
- 1742–43: emergency aid to Jostedalen (200 barrels of grain)



Farming and farmers

How did they survive?

- Grain cultivation (>1800 potatoe)
- Cattles and sheep
- Hunting
- Trade



Emigration

- The 1885 census: 885 people in Jostedalen
- 1851–1930: >800 people emigrated from Jostedalen to North America
- Visitors from USA/Canada every summer
- The dream of a better life



Getting there

- Before the 1870s: only paths
- A trip to Gaupne/Luster/Marifjøra: 2–3 days
- Traffic across the glacier
- The cattle trade
- The first glacier guides (1826)



Tourists discover Jostedal

- ...and Jostedal discovers tourism
- 19th century: some adventurers (artists, scientists)
- 1880s: mass tourism reaches the Fjords (cruise tourism)
- 1916: bus transport Sogndal–Jostedal
- 1920: Jostedals-bredens Turisthotel



Mass tourism in Jostedal

- Post WWII: privat car tourism
- 1951: Solvang kafe og pensjonat (Jostedal hotell 2002)
- 1954: Nigardsbreen gjesteheim
- 1958: Brevegen
- 1972: the first boat on Brevatnet
- 1987: Jostedalen breførarlag
- 1993: Breheimsenteret
- 2003: IceTroll

Jostedalen after WWII

- Decreasing population – Årdal
- Still dominated by farming
- 1958: electric power (late!)
- 1963: Jostedal municipality merged with Luster and Hafslo – Gaupne
- 1970-/80s: two powerplants (Leirdøla, Jostedal)
- Jostedalen integrated in the modern welfare state
- Biggest employer: the municipality
- Better roads – possible to work in Gaupne

Literature

About the history of Jostedalen in English:

- The exhibition at Breheimsenteret
- Introduction in Lars Øyane: *Gards- og ættesoge for Luster kommune. Vol. 5. Jostedal sokn.* 1994, pp. XIV–XXIII.
 - Digital edition: http://urn.nb.no/URN:NBN:no-nb_digibok_2008020701034