

# From London to Røros: A Return to Ink and Iron – “I care about old machines and why you should too”

A report about a week of volunteering work at the Pressemuseet Fjeld-Ljom in Røros, Norway  
April 2025, by analogue printmaking enthusiast and Visual Communication student and volunteer

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*In July last year, I set off for the first time from my home near Munich, Germany, to Røros, Norway, to get to know the Pressemuseet and the work of the Fjeld-Ljom Venner. It was a week full of fulfilling activities, teamwork, meaningful connections, and constant learning. By the end of it, one thing was clear to us all: sooner or later, I would return – to continue supporting this project of typesetting and printing a fully analogue newspaper, meaningful in more ways than one.*

Time passed, and I began studying Visual Communication at the Royal College of Art in London. Surrounded by new challenges and opportunities, I wanted to return to Røros. And so, during the semester break, I planned my return. I looked forward to the reunion – and I wondered: What would await me this time?

As I arrived in April – it was a little colder, with less daylight than I remembered from my visit the year before. But I was once again warmly welcomed by Jan Erik after a long but smooth journey.

It didn't feel like many months had passed at all. The town of Røros remained as picturesque and quiet as I remembered it. Coming from London, where I had been living and studying for six months, the contrast was striking. It felt good to be back, and I was excited to contribute to this year's newspaper edition.

**Working on the typesetting machines, I quickly found, is like riding a bike – once you've learned it, it comes back naturally.** (I still have a lot to learn, however, what the veterans taught me last year has stayed with me.)



*I am fully locked in on the Intertype.*

I was quickly able to make myself useful again among the team, and we made swift progress. Of course, a week of typesetting, layout, and printing is never free of technical issues – last year I learned that even machines that usually run like clockwork have their quirks:

Stuck matrices, a loose release mechanism, dirty magazines, and worn-out parts are natural occurrences – but the press veterans fix them effortlessly with a few skilled moves. I learn by observing and giving them a hand. Each small repair brings me a step closer to a deeper understanding of how the linecasting machines work.

Maintenance and reorganizing the warehouse – where spare parts for the museum's working machines are stored – are part of the routine. We used the week to tidy up around the museum too: storing fonts and magazines in the “Lageret” and moving metal furniture onto newly installed shelves.

At Fjeld-Ljom, the Linotype and Intertype are mainly used to produce the body text of the newspaper – but it wouldn't be complete without its eye-catching titles, which are made on the Ludlow. By inserting a composing stick with arranged matrices into the machine, a headline is produced without the help of a keyboard. I love that this combines the technique of setting type by hand with the mechanical casting mechanism. And when carried out correctly – Ragnar shows me how – the process is quite fast.



*The composing stick and jobcase for the Ludlow.*



...plexity, unlike any realm of living

Unconventional ways of looking into what we are in our essence are important if we strive to see from different perspectives and points of view.

But maybe we are not so entirely different from our creations, the machines we have invented and the ones we are using to create. Because they are made by humans, they embody human and organic thought within their processes and purpose of existence.

All of those speak directly and unmistakably to all human senses. The stimulation of touch, smell, hearing, vision - and even taste - brings the subconscious processes to the forefront of the happenings of making.

Analog machines in typesetting and printmaking are operated in ways that require repetitive, accurate steps of action.

This means, we are granted access to our - usually difficult to reach - inner world.

It takes time, patience and concentration in the beginning. Later those are the key to smooth and focused movements, which enable the operator of the machine to enter a meditative state while making. Through their hands' leadership the mind is gently pushed into the background.

Feel for your bodily thinking  
as like your hands; start moving  
and experience your intuition.

Some reflective and wandering thoughts while typesetting on the Intertype linecaster

Textual fragments about thoughts on machine and body and thought, set on the Intertype and printed on the "Kneleddspresse".

***Analogue printmaking and the work that surrounds it, I believe, teaches us something digital tools can't: patience, precision, and presence and it can reveal how we think with our bodies.***

After the rest of the team packed up on Sunday, I stayed behind for two extra days to spend more time on a solo project with the Intertype.

I composed a few lines on a theme that keeps turning up in my work - the relationship between humans and machines, and how the body thinks through the process.

These days, few people seem to be aware of the subtle brilliance of analogue typesetting and printmaking - its slowness, skill, and slightly dangerous charm.

I genuinely admire the press veterans - Carl Peter, Jens, Ragnar, Tore, and the rest of the crew. Their intuitive knowledge still holds real value today:

***These machines still run because they care.*** Engaging with that work makes you present. It reminds me of crossing a little makeshift bridge barefoot on a hike, through ice-cold water: It wakes you up in a world of fast, forgettable output. Handmade work takes time, touch, and attention - and that makes it worth sharing.

I'm already looking forward to continuing this work in August, when I'll return to Røros for another week of learning, collaboration, and newspaper-making. There's still so much to discover - and I'm excited to reunite with the team, roll up my sleeves, and get back to the machines.

*Tusen takk to Jan Erik, Annikki, and the team who make this exchange possible. Vi ses!*