

## Knatten at Haaø Island



*Knatten at Haaø.*

Haaø (Håøya), and later also the Rams Island, have for many generations been popular holiday resorts for the family. In earlier times, the ancestors of Ellen (Tellefsen) Opsal were pilots, farmers and fishermen. Ellen's great-grandfather, the pilot Svend Hanssen Haaø, was a friend of the world-wide famous poet Henrik Ibsen, and was the model for the famous poem Terje Vigen (see separate article).

From the 1930-40s, there haven't been residents at Haaø. The pilots' houses on the island have been holiday cottages for the descendants.

Torleiv Opsal (id. 3-5-7) and his siblings Anna, Karl and Thora, were all born in Grimstad. Torleiv settled in Kristiansand after his education as teacher at Notodden. In Kristiansand, he met Ellen Tellefsen in the gymnastics club in the city. They married in 1923. As Ellen was descending from the Haaø-family, they both had close ties to Grimstad and the archipelago.

Ellen and Torleiv spent the summers at Haaø, and when the property Blomsterhaven (now Rosenhaven) came on sale in 1925, they bought the property along with Ellen's sister, Valborg and her husband Reinholdt Samuelsen.

Torleiv's sister Thora and her husband Jørgen Andvig often visited Haaø. They also wanted to stay at the island, so they rented the neighbour property Knatten from 1929, from Ellen's aunt Betzy. The Andvig family lived at Knatten every summer until 1939.

In 1939 aunt Betzy wanted to sell Knatten. As Thora and Jørgen Andvig had been living there for 10 years, they got the first right to buy the property, but they turned down the offer. They were living in Oslo, and felt that the Southern Coast was too far away. Torleiv and Ellen then bought Knatten together with Ellen's sister Valborg and her husband Reinholdt Samuelsen.

The two families now owned two properties, so they decided to have one of the houses for each family, but keep the land in common. Thus Torleiv and Ellen got the property Knatten, as Valborg and Reinholdt got Blomsterhaven. Today these properties are still owned by the descendants of Opsal and Samuelsen, and all of them are descending from the first known resident at Haaø, Jens "Krabbe" Haaø, from 1550.



*The new cottage at the Rams Island, seen from the main landing stage at Haaø.*

After World War II Haaø again became a popular holiday resort for the family. Thora and Jørgen Andvig wanted to spend more time at the Southern Coast, and succeeded in buying the neighbouring uninhabited Rams Island in 1947. They quickly built a house on the island. In this way Haaø Island and Rams Island became a popular meeting point for the Opsal-siblings. Both their sister Anna and their brother Karl and his wife Bertha lived in the Stavanger area. They visited the islands several times. There are a number of photographs from the 1950s, as both Anna and Bertha were eager photographers.



*In front of Knatten. From left: Jørgen, Torleiv, Ellen, Anna (behind), Thora, Bertha and Karl.*

In 1960 the land belonging to Knatten and Rosenhaven were divided into two parts. After Jørgen Andvig died in 1957 Thora kept Rams Island till 1963. She was 75 years and wanted to sell the island. Her daughter Vibeke Andvig bought the property. Today the owners of the island are Vibeke's children.

At Haaø the property at Knatten is divided into three parts, to the family of each of the three children. Torleiv and Ellen's children Randi and Tor built cottages on the property respectively in 1967 and 1963, while Øyvinn took over the Knatten house. Currently Torleiv and Ellen's grandchildren are the owners of the three properties after Knatten.



*In front of Knatten in 2004.  
Descendants from the Opsal and Andvig families at Haaø and Rams Island.  
Vibeke Andvig on the left hand side in red jacket.*

*A summer evening  
at Brennevinnsheia*

