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More comfortable perhaps than any other people on earth, Norwegians are looking afresh at what it means to be Norwegian.

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Norway Today

Few countries can look to the future with quite the same confidence as Norway – economic crises are, after all, something that other countries have. Norway is nonetheless facing some important issues that threaten to cause, if not a crisis, then at the very least widespread ripples of disquiet across Norwegian society. Primary among them are the still-distant (but now imaginable) end of the oil boom and the challenges of building a truly multicultural society.

Best in Print

The Almost Nearly Perfect People

(Michael Booth; 2014) Entertaining look at modern Scandinavia with Norway at centre stage.

Island Summers: Memories of a Norwegian Childhood

(Tilly Culme-Seymour; 2013) Love letter to the Norwegian coast.

The Ice Museum

(Joanna Kavenna; 2006) Vividly captures our fascination with the Arctic North.

Fellowship of Ghosts

(Paul Watkins; 2004) Solo foot journeys through Norway's high country.

Rowing to Latitude

(Jill Fredston; 2002) A journey by rowboat along Norway's coast.

Best on Film

North of the Sun (2013) Documentary depicting nine months on a remote stretch of Arctic coast.

Max Manus (2009) Rollicking film about the Norwegian Resistance.

Cross My Heart and Hope to Die

(1994) Prize-winning evocation of an Oslo childhood.

Wives (1985) Rueful portrayal of three friends reunited at an Oslo school reunion.

Nine Lives (1957) Widely ranked among the best Norwegian films of all time.

A Multicultural Norway?

On 22 July 2011, Norway lost its innocence. That was the day when Anders Behring Breivik detonated a car bomb in Oslo aimed at the nation's political class (eight people were killed), and then, disguised as a policeman, gunned down 69 young political activists on the island of Utoya. When later captured, Breivik claimed that he had acted to save Norway and Europe from being taken over by Muslims. Norway's measured response to the most deadly attack in modern Norwegian history was praised around the world and the country united in condemning the attacks and its motives.

And yet, the massacre left deep scars in a country wholly unaccustomed to political violence, let alone terrorism of any kind on its home soil. More than that, it brought to the forefront a debate that had been simmering for a long time. In 1970, just 1.5% of people living in Norway were immigrants. Now, one out of every eight residents of Norway was either born overseas or was born to two immigrant parents. This radical demographic shift has changed the way that Norwegians think about their country.

On the one hand, mass immigration is a central pillar in Norway's own national story – in the dark days of the 19th century, Norwegians emigrated in their thousands to escape hardship. Later, the fabulous oil wealth of the late 20th century nurtured the deeply held belief that Norway, as one of the richest countries on earth, had to serve as an example of a responsible and tolerant global citizen, and modern Norwegians are rightfully proud of their tolerance and generosity in assisting troubled countries get back on their feet.

At the same time, there is unease in some quarters about what the rise in immigrant numbers means for ethnic Norwegians and their sense of national identity. At parliamentary elections in 2005, 2009 and again in