

WOTAN'S LOG TONSBERG TO GÖTEBORG

This is a somewhat different cruise in that, apart from myself, all the crew had either just left university or were still up at university. As usual please remember that on your computer there is a delete button!

Saturday was change overday. Brit Johanssen, very sweetly washed our enormous pile of laundry and gave us breakfast, while we pondered how to organise the dropping off and picking up of the crew. Oscar kindly drove Digger and me to pick up the hire car and then lead me onto the E18, which lead to the airport. Oscar and Brit had very kindly invited the new crew and me to dinner. We had a very convivial evening eating dinner overlooking Tonsberg fjord. Quite what time we all retired to bed I cannot remember, but I know it was very late! I don't think the lads quite knew what had hit them!

In the morning, I took the car back and walked down to the town quay or brygga, where Oscar and the lads were waiting to whisk me back to Munkarekke by speed boat. The lads had nobly tried to clean off the brown stains on the hull. They had certainly managed to polish the hull but sadly, it was not much whiter! As we motored down the fjord in the afternoon, we met Thorrey Gunnerson in his yacht *Tilting at Windmills* RCC. We had met first in Saltsjöbaden and then on various occasions in Finland. Thorrey had been all the way up to Tromsø. Thorrey is of Norwegian extraction so it came as no surprise to me that he had undertaken such a demanding voyage. We sailed past the King of Norway's well guarded summerhouse and anchored between Hvasser and Brøtø in the same place that we did on Friday. Douglas did not see the plastic markers, letting out 30 metres instead of the 20 metres that I had requested. We very rarely use more than 20 metres of chain out so the chain past the 20-metre mark rarely sees the light of day. Douglas noticed that the chain on either side of link link was very badly corroded. This would have to be dealt with at once.

Next morning, we hunted around for a suitable buoy on which to moor while we repaired the anchor, but there were none. Once we were out of the fjord we set main and genoa and short tacked out of Sandøsund, shadowed by a Norwegian Coastguard vessel. We sailed very slowly around to the entrance to Sandefjord fjord. Eventually we got our act together, started the motor and headed into Sandefjord. We found a berth on what we thought was the town quay, but of course we ran aground again!

The jetty to which we were moored was concrete and perfect for inspecting and repairing the anchor chain, so we spent most Tuesday playing anchors. The game was to cut the links, using the large bolt croppers with as much cool and lack of effort as possible. I don't think any of us can really claim to have managed it, certainly not me! We identified that a link just beside the rope chain splice was rotten. Tom and Johnny set off into town to do the shopping and to search for some charts. I also asked them if they could find a chandler in town, who might be able to replace the full 60 metres of cable which we carry on Wotan. They came back triumphant with food and the chart I needed plus, tantalisingly three links of 10mm tested chain. The chandler had 30 metres of chain, but we all decided that 30 metres of chain was not

the answer and that we would join what chain we had left together using the chain link, this time Araldited together, and resplice the Anchorplait rope. I walked with Tom up to the chandler in the hope that someone in town might have 60 metres of chain, but no luck. It was rumoured that there was a chandler in Tonsberg with lots of chain. While nosing around the shop, we spotted some Norwegian charts that were legible. They were printed by C-Maps and cost a fortune. We decided that the combination of our existing charts and a magnifying glass, together with the chartplotter would have to suffice.

We eventually set off for an anchorage south of Larvik at 1640, satisfied that we had done a good day's work. We had to motor most of the way but we did manage to roll out the genoa to give us an extra knot. Our anchorage was 1¼ miles along the southern shore from the entrance. We enjoyed a minor rock dodge to enter the fjord and motored in almost a complete calm to our anchorage. No sooner than we had anchored than we saw a motor boat approaching. The boat was driven by Carsten Karlsrud and his English Setter. He said that he too was a Swan owner, so I invited him onboard for a drink. He was a management consultant and lived in Oslo, from where he had driven down this evening after work. He owned Ferm II a Swan 37 built in 1970 and he had a summer house at the other end of the fjord. Carsten was planning to sail up to Tromsø next season and to lay his boat up there for the winter. He estimated that from Larvik to Bergen was about 24 hours solid sailing and that it would take about a week to reach Tromsø from there. After an evening's conversation about the merits of the various local harbours and a moan about what Ferragamo was doing to our beloved Swan marque, he hopped back into his boat and sped off home.

Wednesday morning dawned wet and miserable so a duvet day was declared. I cooked up bacon, eggs and baked beans in an attempt to improve morale. Soon after midday, the weather began to perk up so we set off for Kragerø at 1220. We headed down Vikskfjorden, past the sailing club where Carsten kept his Swan 37, and out into Larviksfjorden. There was quite a swell. Once we had rounded Tvistein light we were able to set main and No.3 genoa with one reef. It was not long before we had taken in reefs two and three in quick succession. We were having a storming sail at 7.5 knots, with up to 30 knots across the deck. Wotan was revelling in it. We rounded the Ranhausen entrance buoy where we had to harden up for Langårsund. We did not quite make Langårsund in one tack, but very nearly. Once inside the islands we were able to roll out the full genoa and crack on. Langårsund is a beautiful narrow fjord, with high vertical sides. There was no way we could sail down it, but we met a yacht goose-winged running down the fjord. By this time the rain had gone and we were sailing under blue skies.

Kragerø is a bijou holiday resort, with attractive white wooden houses overlooking the sea, set in its own skjærgård. The Norwegian holidays were over so the place was almost deserted. I can imagine that in the summer that the place is hopping, there is even a nightclub. Once again, the morning dawned grim. low stratus cloud, rain and very poor visibility, coupled with a strong westerly wind. I decided that we would have to shelve our plan to go one skjærgård further west to Risør, unless the weather improved as it did yesterday. I called Tjøme Radio for a forecast. They gave a forecast of westerly F5, decreasing in the evening, dry with good visibility. I pointed

out that it was raining hard and that I could not see the nearby island. I think the operator had given me yesterday's forecast!

After a session on chart symbols for lights and the rudiments of tides, we had a late lunch. By the end of which it had begun to clear up and the visibility in particular had improved. We decided to go to an anchorage in the Kragerø skjærgård at Barmskilen. This meant retracing our track through the Langårsund, which was no hardship. Douglas had long been trying to persuade me that we should tie up to a ring in the rocks. I had resisted this, on the grounds that I did not want Douglas doing a dive with pike and complications onto a wet and slippery rock. He had found this anchorage in the Norway pilot, which promised rings on the western shore of the bay. As I have said before, the Norwegian charts leave a lot to be desired. They are at a scale of 1:50,000, which does not allow for the provision of much detail. Barmskilen Bay appeared as a mass of rocks with no way in. The chartplotter, on the other hand could blow up the chart to what ever scale you wished, showed that there might be a suitable way in. We met a local in a motor boat who very pessimistic about our chances of getting in. Anyhow we motored gently on. The rings on the western cliffs had been removed by some clear sighted troll, so we tied up to two trees on the eastern shore. Douglas jumped onto the rocks having conned us towards a spot that was steep too so he could simply step off onto the rocks. We were soon moored up. Douglas did his mountain goat act of climbing up the cliff to take photos of Wotan and its crew, who were vainly revamped their gelled hairstyles for the photo!

This log cannot go without a mention of Johnny's Chile con carne. Into it he put chilli sauce, Bovril, but his secret ingredient was dark chocolate! It was delicious!

It was Friday and we decided that the time had come to head east and make for the Swedish coast some 50 miles away. We slipped the ropes to the trees ashore and weighed anchor, which proved to be rather hard work for Johnny who was winching it in. By 1100 we were out of the skjærgård and in the Skagerrak. We set full main and rolled No.3 genoa and headed east. We were able to hold our course until we reached Tvistein light, where we had to start the engine to ensure that we weathered some rather unpleasant looking grizzlers south of the light. About an hour later, it became clear that what we had hoped would be a temporary header was anything but temporary. We started the engine and began some serious motor sailing to ensure that we would reach the Koster Islands rather than find ourselves back in Viksfjorden for the night. By 1600 we had made enough southing that we could afford to stop the engine and sail into the Koster Islands. All was going well and the wind steadily increasing when at 1715 the tensioning rope on the boom vang broke with aloud bang. We soon had the main down and we were powering along at 7½ knots under rolled up genoa. We spotted a small marina on the north-east side of the ferry. Given the forecast of a gale in the Skagerrak, we thought that we could do a lot worse than tie up on the pontoon. When we arrived there were lots of spare berths, but by the time we had come back from having a beer in the local café, the berths were all taken by other yachts seeking shelter.

The forecast for Saturday was for south-west F7-8 with the prospect of some moderation towards evening. Oscar called to see if we were alright, as he had seen

the forecast. He half expected us to be back at Munkkarekke. He confirmed that the forecast for Sunday was 5-8m/sec and fair weather. It was still blowing 27 knots at 1700, so I finally decided that we should stay put. A number of boats did leave in the morning, but it seemed to me that it was simply not worth the risk. In any event we were not in any hurry. Douglas and I sorted out the boom vang by installing a new strop, which I hope will be strong enough. We treated ourselves to a beer in the café once again, before returning to Wotan for supper. By late evening the wind was coming and going, but generally it was around 20 knots.

While there was still a near gale warning for Skagerrak for Sunday, the more detailed forecast gave wind speeds of 10-15m/s, which is equivalent to 20-30 knots. This was rather better than yesterday when the wind was rarely less than 27 knots all day. We slipped our moorings at 1015 and motored gently down Kostersund. We rolled out the genoa or at least some of the genoa. We were off! We screamed down Koster fjorden and 7 knots and then bore away for Havstenssund. Just before we reached Havstenssund, Douglas noticed that our RCC Burgee was no longer flying at the top of the mast! Calumny, I was still flying a Blue Ensign! Clearly the lock nuts holding the burgee frame had come undone in the wind. We anchored in Kvannekilen for lunch, in almost the same spot that I had done with Digger, Henri and Yves. I thought that if the wind and seas were no worse than they were coming down from Nord Koster, we had a reasonable chance of getting down to Fjällbacka. We had almost reached Väcker light when it became obvious that the short steep seas were going to make the passage south extremely unpleasant. The only boats we saw were going north heavily reefed. The lads in the cockpit were all soaked, but taking everything in good heart. We reversed our track and headed back to our previous anchorage, where we anchored apparently successfully. A short while later Douglas shouted we're dragging. Only moments before, I had checked my anchor bearings, which were rock solid, or so I thought! We recast our anchor and it dragged again. It came up with most of the bottom vegetation draped all over it. This time I decided to anchor further out on the north-west side of the pipeline, which we had to avoid. This would be closer to the anchorage marked on the chart, and there were indications too that the bottom was mud, though it would be somewhat less sheltered. The anchor held. By nightfall the wind was still blowing at 20 knots plus, so I think we had made the right decision.

By next morning, the wind seemed to have abated somewhat but the forecast promised wind up to 15m/sec in the afternoon and rain passing through the area. Well what do you know it was raining! We weighed anchor at 0942 and headed off south. The seas around Väcker light were nowhere near as bad as yesterday, so we pressed on. We stopped in Hamburgsund to see if we could get some more water and fuel, but the fuel kiosk had shut for the season. We set off south again hoping to reach Kungshamn opposite Smögen, where we were assured there would be fuel and water available. Once we were out of the shelter of Hamburgsund, it became obvious that the forecast of 30 knot winds was correct. We stayed inside the skärgård as far as possible. However to get to Kungshamn we would have to go out into the open sea. I decided that enough was enough. We went into Bovallstrand, via a very narrow passage, where we tied up in a small marina, soon to be followed by a Swan 44. The marina offered a supermarket and nearby a fuelling station, so we were quids in! Douglas and I helped Boo Hever who was single handing in the Swan

44 into a berth. He told us that tomorrow was going to be hot and sunny. We said pull the other one!

Just as we were about to leave on Tuesday morning, Boo came round to see us. He stayed for coffee. It turned out that he kept his boat in Walborgs Marina outside Gothenburg where we were going to lay Wotan up. We then slipped for the fuel berth, where we took on 50 litres. We were now fuel and watered up. The day was fine and sunny with southerly winds of 10-13 metres/sec, equivalent to approximately 20-26 knots. We saw Bo leave going north with a friend from Bovallstrand crewing him. We had a very fast fetch out of Bovallstrand, but we soon had to start motor sailing as we headed south towards Smörngen. Once southwest of Smörngen, we were able to sail once again. Smörngen looked very empty compared with three weeks ago. We took the inshore route south of Lysekil and through the Gullholmen-Hälleviksstrand channel. We had a good beat out to Kåringö Kummel light, before bearing away for Krågsundgap and Mollösund. Just south of Mollösund, we decided that since two of the batten cars had come away from their fittings and one of the battens had begun to work loose and the wind was gusting well over 30 knots, we should cut our losses, drop the main and take the inshore "squiggly" channel down to Rönnäng. The channel that we chose took us through Toftösund, Bokholmssund, Hjärterösund and into Bäckerö fjord. I don't think Wotan could have got own a much narrower channel. During this squiggle the wind speed reached 37 knots across the deck. We berthed at the inner end of the marina beside the mast crane. Quite how we were going to get out if the wind stayed where it was, I was not sure! A kindly gentleman told me that I was not supposed to berth in this berth as it was used to lift boats out and service them.

I had been told that Tobias of GS Marin started work at 0700, so I went up to see him at 0700 in the pouring rain. He was a young man very proud of the yacht service and storage business he had built up with 5,000 sq m of undercover storage and a forklift which could lift 35 tonnes. Unfortunately, his stainless steel fabricator friend, who could have straightened the pulpit was working days and would not be able to do the work on the pulpit until tomorrow. So, I decided that there was no point in waiting in Rönnäng, better either to have the work done in Walborgs or back in the UK. In the meantime, I could shorten the guardrails by the simple expedient of chopping off some of the wire. I returned to the boat and caught the Swedish weather forecast. It sounded rather better than usual, with a forecast SW 9-14 m/s decreasing to 4-8 m/s in the afternoon. There seemed to be three choices, go cruising south of Gothenburg and return to Walborgs on Thursday, sail to Lilla Bommen marina in Gothenburg to give the lads a chance to see Goteborg, or sail over to Skagen in Denmark. I had looked at Reeds, which declared that Skagen was described as "holding no particular attraction". We all agreed that the Lilla Bommen option was the best.

On Wednesday morning, we motored out through Kalvesund and into Marstrand fjord. The wind and seas were horrendous. Wotan was taking it green over the decks and the lads were getting soaked. Once we reached Marstrand things improved because we were in the shelter of the islands and the seas were much calmer, though the wind was just as strong. We ghosted through Marstrand and then motored down Albrektssund, where we met an SAR RIB towing a Maxi 850, with, as I was told by the lads, a crew of retirees! Hang around said I, I hope you realise what

you are saying! We set sail with two reefs in the main and four rolls in the genoa, just south of Albrektssund and stormed down towards Bjorkö. I was asked to turn the CD player on loud in the cockpit. This provided the background music to a series of videos of Wotan belting along at 7 knots plus. This was all topped off by seeing a tornado out to the west of Bjorkö. We had to heave-to to avoid two ferries plying between Bjorkö and the mainland, before bearing away down the channel leading to the main entrance channel to Göteborg.

We moored up in Lilla Bommen marina, where we had moored twice before. The lads went to have a look around Göteborg, while I, as a retiree, retired to my bunk for some serious deckhead rivet inspection. I went to the Viking, the four master moored off Lilla Bommen to access the internet. The barmaid at the Viking told Douglas and me a little bit about the history of the ship. She was built in 1907 and sailed under the German, Norwegian and Finnish flags. Its last trading voyage was in 1948, after which it was moored in Göteborg. It was in 1998 that Liseborg, who own the Liseborg Amusement park, bought the ship and converted her into a four star hotel.

Next morning, while the Itchenor lads went into town to the supermarket, Douglas and I set about repairing one of the luff batten fittings which had failed again. After this Douglas, thanks to the efforts of Tom and Johnny, went up the mast to bring down the burgee mast, which had been bending in the wind. We set off under power down the Älv River to Wahlborgs Marina in Hinsholmskilen, about 8 miles away. On the way there we saw the Swedish Navy having a training fire fight in the base where Carl did his naval training as a national serviceman. The noise was impressive, but I think they were only firing blanks! There was a 49er Olympic dinghy screaming across the water outside the GKSS marina. The wind was quite strong and the crew very professional. We wondered if they might have been the Swedish Olympic 49er crew in training.

It was Friday and Tom and Johnny were due to fly back to the UK. We accompanied them to the tram stop near the marina. No sooner had we arrived there than there was a hoot and a tram appeared around the corner. A brief goodbye and they were off. When Douglas and I arrived back at the boat the wind was hotting up. We saw 38 knots across the deck on the anemometer. It was so bumpy that quite honestly working on deck stripping off the main would not have been possible. Erling Johansson, the owner of the marina, came over to ask us if we were feeling seasick! He then said he was worried that our pontoon might not be able to stand the stress. He asked if we could shift berths. I said that it was not really possible unless he wanted me to do a lot of damage! The berth he suggested I should move to was broadside to the wind. He said he had seen 25 m/s or 50 knots on his anemometer, which is a comfortable storm force 10!

Now that Wotan is tucked up, I can't quite say safely tucked up, as at the moment Wotan is pitching up and down like mad, in her winter marina, I think it is an appropriate time to wind up this season's log.

Ant Fawcett
4th September 2009