

Log for distribution 23rd July 2008

This log covers a four and a half week period, so I will confine myself to a brief description of each part of the voyage, though Bim will say it is too long. I would remind you that you have a delete button!

Cruise of the Stockholm Skärgård 16th- 19th June

Chris and Annie Creak arrived to find Wotan out on a mooring and the boatman just about to leave for the night! Anyhow suffice it to say that by the time Bim and I arrived Wotan was lying bows-to in pole position for the KSS Saltsjöbaden marina restaurant, to which we all repaired with some relief.

After a whirl on the Saltsjöbanan to the local supermarket we were off to KSS Sandhamn. The wind picked up at the bottom of the Saltsjöbaden fjord and we had a delightful sail up to Sandhamn, which is the Cowes of Stockholm. We treated ourselves to dinner in the Vardhus, which is a very old and well known restaurant. The round the archipelago catamaran race was stopping off at Sandhamn, so we saw a trail of exhausted competitors who had been sailing since 0200 that morning and were off at 0200 tomorrow, rather than me!

The next day we had some time to kill before we anchored off Suzanne Sjosted's house in Stavnas for dinner. So we sailed around the archipelago and found an anchorage between three islands for lunch. After lunch we circumnavigated Sodra Stavsudda and anchored off Stavnas, where we were met by Suzanne and Leif, who took us ashore for dinner, with more friends.

Next morning we planned to sail round to Stockholm and to moor on Djurgården. We chose one of the raft of approved routes into Stockholm and we were not disappointed. There were *huttas* on almost all the islands with Swedish flags or pennants flying from their flag poles. We were not ready for the armada of yachts and motor boats speeding out from Stockholm to the archipelago for Midsommer's Eve. We passed under the walls of Vaxholm castle which commanded the entrance to Stockholm and on to Djurgården, where we moored below the museum housing Prince Eugene's art collection.

Chris and Annie left to go to a wedding in England while we set off with Kerstin Olszowska to spend Midsommer's Eve with her sister Ingalil. Her family is very musical, indeed Ingalil's daughter Anna, who was our nanny, is an opera singer. We decorated and erected the maypole and then danced around it singing songs with all the children. We were required to make up drinking songs to the tune of *My Bonnie lies over the Ocean*, which we sang to the accompaniment of much schnapps and a wonderful dinner.

On Sunday Anna and her husband Joe came for a sail with us from Saltsjöbaden. To get to Saltsjöbaden we had to take Wotan through the Baggenstaket, which is the back passage to end all back passages! Joe and Anna joined us for a sail to Napoleonviken, thus named because it is so small, where we anchored for lunch. We then returned gently to KSS Saltsjöbaden marina. On our return I espied an RCC burgee, which belonged to Torrey

Gunnerson and his *Tilting at Windmills*. He had come up from Australia to compete in the round Gotland race.

Cruise from Stockholm to Mariehamn 25th June – 3rd July

Robert and Ginna Gayner arrived to join us for the trip to the Åland Islands. We spent the first day visiting Stockholm the Vasa museum. Carl Sjosted met us in Stockholm and took us to lunch in the market, which an experience not to be missed. Late that evening we pootled off to revisit Napoleonviken. The next morning we set off to Sandhamn to revisit the Vardhus restaurant, but the KSS Sandhamn marina was full as the Round Gotland Race was due to start at the weekend. We found a delightful anchorage not far away on Harö.

We had decided not to anchor in Norrasundet the night before, but it looked so good we had to pay it a visit. Norrasundet is a bay surrounded by islands with *huttes* all around the shore, a wonderful place for children to sail in perfect shelter. We then sailed up between the two Möjas dodging the ferry, which, with complete right of way, simply went where ever it liked! After a brief lunch anchorage, we headed on up the central channel to Blidö. This channel gives you a very good view of the archipelago.

We motored up to Gräddö, which was *en fête* as a motor boat race had finished there. We visited the local lifeboat, which was very well equipped. They use a hovercraft to get across the ice in mwinter. We left Gräddö the next day to explore the outer archipelago before making the leap across to Mariehamn. We spent the night in Stor-Långören, which was designated our “favourite anchorage”. It was miles from anywhere with a small fisherman’s hut to which the elderly fisherman and his wife returned in their small outboard powered open boat late in the evening. The sun set on a bearing of 325°, 55° north of west. On the way out, we got stuck on a rock for about 5 minutes. Eventually we were able to corkscrew our way off, my fault entirely! It rained almost all the way to Mariehamn, but cleared up as we entered the harbour. The ASS (Åland Sailing Club) boasted a marina in the Västerhamn, with a pagoda like clubhouse, built at the turn of the last century, which was now a very smart restaurant. We had a lovely dinner there overlooking the marina.

Before dinner, we had a compulsory tour of the square rigger Pommern, which had been owned by Gustav Erikson. It had traded grain from Spencer Gulf in Australia until the outbreak of the World War II. Eric Newby, who wrote *The Last Grain Race*, sailed on an Erikson square rigger around the world. I cannot recommend visiting the ship too highly.

We slipped from the ASS in the late morning and sailed south and into the Ledfjarden, through the Staholm narrows and round to Bomarsund, where we anchored under the remains of a Russian fort. This fort had been destroyed by a combined British and French fleet in 1854 during the Crimean war. We had been advised to go to Kastelholmen, but the slight snag was the chart showed a power cable with a 19m clearance, we needed at least 20m. We set off on the basis that if it really only had 19m clearance, we would anchor off and go in to see the castle in the dinghy. In the event there was a sign advertising a 22m clearance, which, together with the effect of the catenary,

gave us plenty of clearance. We moored in Kastelholmen marina and visited the open air museum, consisting of farm houses and buildings from all over the Åland Islands. We also went to the castle, which had been burnt down on several occasions, but had been lovingly restored.

To get back to the Västerhamn you needed to pass through Lemstrom's canal, the bridge over which only opened once an hour. Thanks to Robert, who was navigating, we arrived on the dot and went straight through, not without a brief brush with the bottom! We were, all too soon, back at the ASS marina. Robert Ginna and Bim left for England early in the morning and Grant Phillips and Patrick Piper arrived on the evening flight.

Cruise from Mariehamn to Helsinki 5th – 14th July

Grant and Patrick were sent on a compulsory visit to the Pommern and did not return for two hours, so engrossed were they. We set off for Degerby in the mid afternoon, arriving there in the early evening after a wonderful fetch up the Ledfjarden. The marina was full so we anchored south of the island of Degerö, off the village beach. We had been told that we should visit Kökar one of the outer islands of the Åland group. We followed the main route to Kökar, which must have been one of the wiggliest routes you can imagine! We went into the Helsö marina, which was up an attractive fjord. We bagged what we thought was the last berth. No sooner had we tied up than several yachts came into the end of the pontoon, dropped their stern anchors and tied up to the pontoon bows-to in petal fashion. That would not work very well in the Hamble!

We had a gentle day motoring to Verkan marina on Korpo. I had bought a spring loaded clip, which all local sailors carry, for tying to the loop on the stern buoys off a marina. We gave it its first outing at Verkan and it worked very well. Verkan marina has a restaurant which serves the most delicious spare ribs, which we noticed everyone had ordered. Later we found out that Verkan was famous for its spare ribs! You could also order hot bread rolls to be delivered to your boat in the morning! We followed the main drag into Turku, shadowed by the Finnish navy, which escorted us into Turku. We discovered that it was the 90th Anniversary of the foundation of the Finnish navy. In the morning we visited Turku castle, which had also burnt down several times, and the maritime museum, with its exhibition of 100 odd outboard motors. Both the castle, which had been beautifully restored, and the maritime museum were well worth visiting. We made a quick tour of Turku, which has an impressive railway station, before setting off for Gulkrona. After a lovely morning and early afternoon with a good sailing wind, it came on to rain in the late afternoon as we approached Gulkrona. The marina was full so we anchored in a rather unsatisfactory anchorage in the lee of Vargskär, a nearby island.

We set off early in the morning and had a "bumplet" on the way out. The skipper muddled up his ECMs and WCMs, but he got away with it, just! We had been told about Grandma's Café at Kaiserhamn, by our next door neighbour in Helsö, who had also marked our card regarding the NJK anchorages, which we had been invited to use. We used our stern anchor to

moor at Kaiserhamn, but shame, we were called back from the café to sort out a dragging anchor. I should point out that it was the first time I had used the anchor, though no excuse! We had a most enjoyable lunch before heading off the NJK Laangholm. Laangholm proved to be a spectacularly beautiful anchorage, though the entrance required you to pass very close to a rock awash! The owner of the yacht beside us, who had kindly helped us onto our berth, then proceeded to go for a swim with his wife in 15°C water!

Next morning, as we were leaving, there was a shout. This was Torrey bringing *Tilting at Windmills* into the anchorage. We helped him tie up, agreed to meet in Helsinki and we were off. We had a great sail in company with our NJK friend until he took an inshore passage I considered too shallow for Wotan. In the final approach to Hanko, as we were taking down the main, Grant called to say that he could not turn the wheel to starboard, ugh! I went down below to see what had happened. The bracket holding the autopilot hydraulic ram had sheared and the ram was jamming the steering. It was not a difficult matter to lash the ram out of the way, but Grant and Patrick had a much hairier time avoiding oncoming boats! We found a berth in the marina on Smultrongrundet and set about removing the bracket and tying off the ram. We found a wonderful restaurant called Makasiini on the front, where we had an exceptionally good dinner.

In the morning we squiggled out past an underwater rock only for me to impale Wotan on the corner of the fuel berth. The first hole I have ever put in the gel coat, shame, there was no need! We headed off to NJK Munkshamn hoping that it would not be the student weekend, when old farts like us have to keep away. Sure enough it was! We found a boat full of students, who invited us to stay, but explained, in impeccable English, that they were going to “get shit faced”. We made our excuses and left! We spent the night in a well sheltered and attractive anchorage off Tostholm near the Barosund channel.

Next morning we set off up the Barosund channel. So narrow was it that it was afforded its own large scale chartlet in the chart book! We anchored in NJK Hogholmen for lunch before heading off to Esbo, where we hoped to meet Max Eckholm RCC. Esbo harbour is huge and surrounded by houses with jetties and yachts bobbing alongside. We anchored off what we thought was Max’s club and called him. We were soon moored along side his 30’ yacht *Gefion*, which had been designed and built by his father in 1956. He came for dinner on Wotan and then he invited us to his house where we listened to his long playing opera recordings, well into the night. He had crossed the Atlantic in *Gefion* as well as circumnavigating the British Isles nine times!

The final leg was to Helsinki, where we arrived at 1300. We passed through the narrows by Sveaborg castle and moored at the NJK marina on Blekholmen in the middle of Helsinki harbour, beneath their iconic clubhouse.

Anthony Fawcett
23rd July 2008