

WOTAN'S LOG GÖTEBORG TO STAVANGER VIA TONSBERG

Patrick Piper and I flew out to Göteborg on Wednesday 19th May to recommission Wotan. By Thursday afternoon, we had repaired the sliding hatch and replaced the anchor chain. After work, we went to the GKSS for dinner, as we felt we deserved something of a treat. In the stairwell of the club, there was a "Wall of Fame" on which was inscribed the names of GKSS members, who had achieved success in World or Olympic championships. Amongst the names were those of Paul Elvström and Pelle Petersen.

Wotan was launched late on Friday afternoon. While we were filling the water tanks, I had a look in the bilge to find it full of water! A close inspection showed that the calorifier had burst in the frost. The tank was irreparable. It did not take long next morning to by-pass the calorifier and to make the fresh water system watertight. When Oscar Johansson arrived, we set off to the nearby System Bolaget, but it was shut. Horrors of horrors, we were out of booze!

It was not until 1500 on Sunday that we left for Marstrand, some 20 miles up the coast. We motored most of the way, under a blue sky. We entered Marstrand via the narrow Albrektssund Channel and picked up a mooring in the marina at 2100. We set sail from Marstrand at 1100 the next day and motored out past the Marstrand lighthouse. Once we were clear of the islands, we set sail and sailed close hauled up the coast, in perfect weather. The barometer had been falling ominously. Before we left Marstrand, I had called up Stockholm Radio to check the weather forecast. I had received a gale warning for the Skagerrak over my Navtex, but it did not accord with the information that Oscar was receiving on his iPhone. Stockholm radio confirmed the gale warning, but they informed me that my VHF signal was very poor and I could barely pick up their response. Something was clearly wrong with the VHF.

We had a beautiful sail up to Gullholmen, a small fishing village with a marina, which I had visited last year. We arrived at 1500 and found a convenient berth near the town. The marina was almost empty, a change from last year when we just managed to snag the last berth. The number of permanent inhabitants of Gullholmen is a mere 80, but this rises to 6000 during the summer. It is an old fishing village. Many of the houses have been gentrified by the great and the good of Göteborg. Patrick, upset by the loss of his usual fix of claret, asked a gentleman walking along the pontoon carrying a wine bottle, where he could buy some wine. The man burst out laughing and explained that the bottle contained diesel fuel!

We woke on Tuesday to the promised near gale from the north, so we stayed put until the afternoon when we potted the six miles to Lysekil, where, we were assured, there was a System Bolaget. We needed to stock up on wine

before venturing into Norway and Oscar desperately needed a new pair of deck shoes as his smelt appallingly. We had success on both counts. We were warned by the neighbouring boat that the Norwegian customs were on the prowl for smugglers like ourselves!

We had some 45 miles to cover on Wednesday to reach Nord Koster Island, if we were to leave a reasonable distance to sail to Tonsberg the next day. We did not leave Lysekil until almost midday. We motored to Smögen and then set sail as the wind freed. We sailed almost all the way up to Nord Koster in perfect weather, arriving at 2000. The café was shut, but undismayed Oscar produced a splendid dinner and we retired happy and slightly merry to bed.

Most of the passage to Tonsberg was spent looking out for the Norwegian Customs Cutter, which Oscar was convinced was after him. Oscar, despite the threat of several years in prison for smuggling copious amounts of alcohol, could not be prised off the wheel all day. He sat in the stern sheets with a beatific smile on his face! We were met at Munkke Rekka by Oscar's wife Brit and their delightful Springer spaniel Dot. No sooner were we moored on Oscar's jetty than we were being offered showers and having drinks thrust into our hands, such is the hospitality of the Johanssons.

Swan Nautor had advised me to buy an Isotherm calorifier as a replacement for the damaged one. As luck would have it, the Isotherm agent for Norway was 20 minutes down the road at Torp. Thanks to Oscar, before midday, we had a shiny new calorifier and Patrick and I were busy installing it. Oscar kindly picked us up on Sunday morning and gave us breakfast before taking us to the station where we boarded the train for Oslo Gardermoen Airport. Bim met us at Gatwick and drove us all back home.

After a decent interlude of a fortnight and a few Shipwrecked Mariners' meetings, I set off back to Tonsberg with Bim on Friday 11th June. We picked up a car in Tonsberg and drove out to Oscar's house, where Brit insisted that we should stay. Since it was raining and Wotan was looking like a building site, we accepted with alacrity. That evening Oscar and I went to Wotan to connect up the famous calorifier. Oscar was a Chief Engineer on Bergessen Tankers at the age of 28, so there was little he did not know about calorifiers. Nevertheless, we could not make the new calorifier work properly. After a few drinks and a delicious dinner chez Brit and Oscar, things improved. By the next morning, miraculously the calorifier was working on both the engine and shore power!

Following a leisurely Sunday breakfast, Bim and I left Oscar's, having been spoilt rotten, and returned to Wotan. After some cleaning and polishing, we set off for Oslo by car. We visited the Folk Museum on Bygdøy. The museum is definitely a *merite le detour* in Michelin terms. There were wooden houses from all over Norway, many highly decorated, indicating the pride the craftsmen took in their work. The highlight for both of us was the stave church. This church, built in 1100, was made entirely of wood. The roof and belfry were supported by a dozen thick poles, or staves, hence the name. The chancel was decorated with a painting of the last supper and other religious

events and personalities were depicted on the walls. We met the Creaks at the airport and drove back to Tonsberg in the pouring rain.

The next morning, we motored off down the east side of Notterøy and ran aground in the narrows, despite a lady trying her best to waive us off the offending sand bank. After refuelling at Vrengen, we headed south to the open sea and had something of a trog down to Kragerø. Just as we neared Kragerø, the heavens opened. We moored where we had moored last year and settled down to dinner on board.

We awoke to a wonderful morning. After wandering around Kragerø we finished up in a delightful coffee shop overlooking the harbour. The wind was SE 3, which promised a great sail down to Risør. Risør turned out to be as good as it was billed. We had lunch moored on the gastebryggen, followed by a wander around town. We then motored all the way to Lyngør!

Lyngør is an island on which no cars are allowed. We found a berth on the sail maker's jetty. Below the sail loft there was a bar restaurant where we all ended up for a drink. While we were having a drink, a retired Norwegian naval officer joined us. He was something of a history buff. He told us about the battle between a Norwegian gunboat and the frigate HMS Dictator, which took place in 1812, a cable away from where we were sitting. The unfortunate gunboat was blown out of the water, by the frigate, which had warped itself into the harbour.

A day later, we entered the Blindleia sound through the narrow gap at Krossen. I had been lent a series of Norwegian charts by Ted Watts RCC, including some detailed charts of the Blindleia. Without these charts, we would have been sunk on the first rock! Blindleia is a very attractive archipelago, with lots of upmarket hutties on its shores. We stopped for a late lunch in Mulebergersundet, before carrying on to the islands of Akerøya and Furøya. We eventually anchored for the night in Ulvøyasund below a very smart house where several ladies, who were clearly not short of a bob or two, came out for drinks and dinner on the veranda. This was sadly the end of our cruise of the Blindleia.

Friday proved the most challenging day to date as the wind was particularly strong. We negotiated the narrow channel north of Vestre Randøya, but it was not until we reached Ny-Hellesund that we were really tested. The sund was very narrow with houses on both sides. The only exit appeared to be through a gorge with a 12m cable over it. This was not an option. I was about to turn back and confess my mistake, when I saw another exit and headed for it! We spent the night at Mandal where we had a wonderful dinner at the Hydrofoilen Restaurant on the beach.

The next day, we rounded the fearsome Lindesnes Point in a light wind. There were quite big seas round the point. I would imagine that in bad weather the place would have been truly horrid! Once around Lindesnes, we headed north to Korshavn. Korshavn was absolutely beautiful. The channel through it was narrow, with attractive houses on either side. There were people enjoying

themselves in small motor boats and in waterside cafés. We anchored for the night in an almost totally land locked fjord called Skarvøyviga.

On Sunday 20th June, we were due to round the dreaded Lista Point, but there was no wind. We went into Kirkehavn for lunch through the narrowest channel yet. You could literally touch the sides! Kirkehavn is a beautiful fishing village, with a white wooden church on the hill overlooking the harbour. We spent the night in Nesvåg, a delightful fishing hamlet. We moored alongside Sjødis, an old fishing boat. We invited the owner and his two children on board for an evening drink. We slipped out of Nesvåg in the morning hoping that we might be able to make it all the way to Tananger. However, it soon became obvious that the sea and the winds were against us so we settled for Sirevåg, the last sheltered harbour before Tananger. Sirevåg is a highly developed fishing port, with large processing plants along the quay.

We decided to leave at 0800 to try to catch the lighter early morning winds, as we were in for a bash to windward under motor. We got off lightly because by 0930 I had logged the sea state as moderate and an hour later as slight. Once we had rounded the Jaerens Rev buoy, we were able to sail all the way up the coast past Tananger and into the archipelago to the west of Stavanger. As we entered Stavanger fjord, we saw the massive sight of a Hereema heavy lift barge. We had seen its cranes peering over the headland long before we saw the barge itself. We moored in Børevika beside the Norwegian Oil Museum, again well worth a visit.

The morning dawned without a cloud in the sky. We visited Lysefjord to see the famous Pulpit Rock with its 600 metre drop into the fjord. We anchored in a magical bay on the west side of Ådnøy for lunch. We retraced our footsteps to Stavanger, from whence Bim and the Creaks returned to England.

ACFF
19th August 2010